

ROBIN DES BOIS

ON_{the} TRAIL

The defaunation bulletin
n°41. Events from the 1st June to the 31th August, 2023



Quarterly information and analysis report on endangered
animals poaching and smuggling
Published on August 6, 2024
Original version in French

ON_{the} TRAIL

Publication Director : Charlotte Nithart.

Editors-in-Chief : Jacky Bonnemains and Charlotte Nithart.

Writing : Jacky Bonnemains, Gaëlle Guilissen,
Elodie Crépeau-Pons and Jean-Pierre Edin.

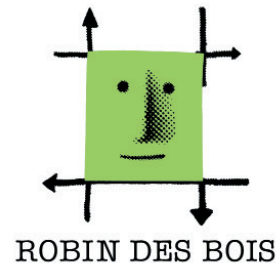
Research : Gaëlle Guilissen, Elodie Crépeau-Pons, Elisabeth Lavarde,
Jean-Pierre Edin, Juan Andrés García Bodniza, Lise Contant and Christine Bossard.

Cartography : Gaëlle Guilissen and Elodie Crépeau-Pons.

Cover : *Chrysidia rhipheus*. Photo Piotr Lukasik (CC BY-NC)

English translation : Brian Chasanoff, Cora Funke,
Ariana Seniuk and Elisabeth Lavarde.

**Carried out by Robin des Bois (Robin Hood) with the support of
the Fondation Franz Weber and the Fondation Brigitte Bardot**



"On the Trail" gets sponsorship from the Séché Environnement group



Previous issues in English :

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

Previous issues in French :

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

Robin des Bois

Non Governmental Organization for the Protection of Man and the Environment
Since 1985

14 rue de l'Atlas 75019 Paris, France

tel : 33 (1) 48.04.09.36

www.robindesbois.org

contact@robindesbois.org

NOTE AND ADVICE TO READERS

"On the Trail", the defaunation magazine, aims to get out of the drip of daily news and 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" also relates ongoing trials and the evolution of regulations and sanctions.

• A single event may refer to several species (e.g. simultaneous seizure of ivory, bear bile and snake skins); it is then analysed in the "Multi-species" chapter, with the exception of events that bring together the following species and which have their own chapter:

- Pangolins + elephants / felines / rhinos / calaos
- Elephants + hippos / walrus / felines
- Various reptile species (simultaneous seizure of several reptile species)
- Various marine species (simultaneous seizure of several aquatic species)

• Geographic regions at the continental scale are based on the UN classification.

• The US\$ conversion rates used are those applicable during the month of the event.

• Each event reported and/or analysed is from a recension of one or more articles or press releases. This critical review eliminates inconsistencies in date, price and quantity if necessary, and if possible mistakes or looseness about the description of the species. The original source(s) are enriched by cross-checking and additional information from previous issues of "On the Trail", by Robin des Bois' investigations and archives, and by international bibliography and iconography.

Robin des Bois thanks the Species Survival Network, the NGO Save the Elephants and the Eagle Network for their alerts which enrich the daily monitoring carried out by the "On the Trail" team.

• When a species is CITES-listed at the time of the event, the Appendix is specified after its scientific name.

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.

PICTOS



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



Judgment and sanction. Condemnation, acquittal, fine...



Trapping. Poaching by jaw trap, snare, net ...



Poisoning. By chemicals, pesticides and medicines: cyanide, carbofuran, diclofenac, M99 ...



Full moon. Moonlight poaching

ACRONYMS

EAGLE : Eco Activists for Governance and Law Enforcement

ENV : Education for Nature – Vietnam

IBAMA : Instituto brasileiro do meio ambiente e dos recursos naturais renováveis

KWS : Kenya Wildlife Service

LAGA : Last Great Ape Organization

PROFEPA : Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente

SAPS : South African Police Service

SPCA : Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

SSB : Sashastra Seema Bal

SVW : Save Vietnam Wildlife

SWT : Sheldrick Wildlife Trust

USFWS : United States Fish and Wildlife Service

WCCB : Wildlife Crime Control Bureau

CONTENTS

3	NOTE AND ADVICE TO READERS
5	ON THE FRONT LINES
7	PANGOLINS
16	PANGOLINS, ELEPHANTS, FELINES, RHINOS AND HORNBILL
17	ELEPHANTS
31	MAMMOTHS
32	ELEPHANTS, HIPPOS, WALRUSES AND FELINES
33	RHINOCEROSSES
40	FELINES
57	WOLVES, PAINTED DOGS, FOXES, HYENAS, RACCOON DOGS AND FENNEC FOXES
61	BEARS
71	SAIGA ANTELOPES, GAZELLES, ANTELOPES, URIALS, ALTAI ARGALIS, PRONGHORNS, ...
75	GIRAFFES
76	DONKEYS AND ZEBRAS
79	HIPPOPOTAMUSES
79	GAURS
80	MUSK DEER, DEER AND MOOSE
83	GUANACOS AND VICUÑAS
84	PRIMATES
96	ARMADILLOS, COATIS, PACAS, AGOUTIS AND CAPYBARAS
98	OTHER MAMMALS
100	BIRDS
140	VARIOUS REPTILE SPECIES
142	TORTOISES AND FRESHWATER TURTLES
151	SNAKES
156	GECKOS, MONITOR LIZARDS, LIZARDS, SKINKS AND CHAMELEONS
158	ALLIGATORS, CROCODILES, CAIMANS AND GHARIALS
164	AMPHIBIANS
167	INSECTS, ARACHNIDS AND ANNELIDS
169	MULTI-SPECIES
183	VARIOUS MARINE SPECIES
185	CORALS
186	GIANT CLAMS, QUEEN CONCHES, HORNED HELMETS, DATE MUSSELS, GOOSENECK BARNACLES, ...
188	ABALONES
193	SEA CUCUMBERS AND SEA URCHINS
199	SEAHORSES
200	MARINE OR FRESHWATER FISH
211	MARINE TURTLES
215	MARINE AND FRESHWATER MAMMALS
222	SOURCES
228	INDEX

AFRICA

CAMEROON

June 21 and 22, 2023

Waza National Park, Extreme North Region, Cameroon

- A watchman for the NGO Global Earth Keeper died from a gunshot wound during a firearms recovery operation.
- The alleged suspect was arrested the following day.¹



ETHIOPIA

June 2, 2023

Omo National Park, Nations Region, Ethiopia

Miliene Tolom, a ranger for the Ethiopian Wildlife Protection Authority, was shot and killed on a surveillance mission in the Omo Park.



The Omo Park, covering over 4,000 km², lies west of the Omo River, 870 km from Addis Ababa. It contains grassy and bushy plains, hills, savannahs and forested mountains. Several ethnic groups live in or near the park (Mursis, Bena, Surmas, Nyangatom, Bodi and Dizi), though conflicts occasionally break out among them or with groups from neighbouring Kenya and South Sudan. 73 mammal species, including lions, zebras, giraffes, wild dogs and colobus, and 312 bird species have been reported at the park.²

KENYA

August 10, 2023

Kinyoro, Trans Nzoia County, Kenya

Nine KWS (Kenya Wildlife Service) rangers and the police must arrest a man suspected of poaching and theft. They are met by a raving lunatic. He riles up the neighbourhood, screaming, and instantly kills Corporal Amos Lemermug in a pool of blood with a machete to the back. Another ranger is slashed. The crowd sides with the madman. The rangers fire in the air to disperse the crowd, and the criminal takes the opportunity to flee.³



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

June 27, 2023

Okapi Wildlife Reserve, Ituri Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Djibril Mutambala Kabengano, an eco-guard at the Okapi Wildlife Reserve, died while on duty. His patrol came into conflict with an unidentified gang near the "Mondial", a clandestine gold mine.



Kabengano, 27, leaves behind a widow and 2 orphans. Since 2019, the Okapi Reserve has been co-managed by ICCN (Congolesse Institute for Nature Conservation) and the NGO WCS (Wildlife Conservation Society). Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site, the Okapi Wildlife Reserve spans 13,726 km² and is home to around 5,000 okapi.⁴

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Saturday, June 17 and Saturday, June 24, 2023

Similipal Tiger Reserve; Adelbeda, Mayurbhanj District, State of Odisha, India

- Just 3 weeks after ranger Bimal Kumar Jena was killed on duty (see "On the Trail" n°40 p.8, ref.11 and 12), another tragedy rocked the Similipal Reserve. Six rangers were alerted by the sound of gunshots overnight in the Barhakamuda area, south of the reserve. One of them, Mathy Hansdah, 40, from the village of Tingria, was fatally shot in the chest by one of the ambush poachers who refused to surrender after the statutory summons.



- In the village of Adelbeda, 10 suspects between the ages of 26 and 61 were arrested. The eldest member of the gang had taken 3 of his sons on this wild goose chase. Authorities seized 2 homemade rifles, bows, arrows and bamboo spears, and Mathy Hansdah's family was awarded 2.5 million rupees (30,250 US\$), despite previously claiming 20 million rupees (242,000 US\$) in damages.⁵

**Mid-August 2023**

Manas National Park, Chirang District, State of Assam, India. Border with Bhutan.



Noweswar Basumatary died on Sunday August 13. On Saturday August 12, he had been arrested in the Malibhita section of Manas National Park and, during interrogation, he had said that he knew where his gang's weapons were hidden. "A team of police and forest officials went to search for the guns, which were used to kill rhinos. Noweswar Basumatary suddenly attacked a police officer with a dao (machete), which was kept in front of a tree. In self-defence, the police team fired at him, and he sustained a bullet injury. We immediately rushed him to the hospital, but the doctors declared him dead". These were the words of the Chirang district Superintendent of Police. Similar scenarios in the State of Assam have already been reported in "On the Trail".⁶

Deaths of suspected or confirmed poachers after arrest in Assam, see "On the Trail" n°11 p.62 (ref.45), n°35 p.42 (ref.32 et 33) and n°40 p.7 (ref.10).



PANGOLINS

All 8 species of pangolins are listed under CITES Appendix I: the 4 African species (the giant pangolin *Manis gigantea*, the Temminck's ground pangolin *M. temminckii*, the long-tailed -black-bellied- pangolin *M. tetradactyla* and the white-bellied pangolin *M. tricuspis*) and the 4 Asian species (the Indian pangolin *Manis crassicaudata*, the Philippine pangolin *M. culionensis*, the Sunda pangolin *M. javanica* and the Chinese pangolin *M. pentadactyla*).

On the Trail n°41
Value on the black market according to media or official sources
The values were estimated at the time of the seizures

1 kg of pangolin scales

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref. (year)
Asia	India	1,210	59 (2023)
	Indonesia	2,850	45 (2023)
	Malaysia	2,800	47 (2023)
	Thailand	1100	50 (2023)

1 pangolin

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref. (year)	
Africa	Namibia	2,670	38 (2023)	
Asia	China	1,790	42 (2023)	
	India	9,732	70 (2023)	
	Viet Nam		165	53 (2023)
			210	56 (2023)
			845	
			110	44 * (2023)
	295			

* see chapter Multi-species

WESTERN AFRICA

NIGERIA

July 19, and November 14, 2023
Lagos, Lagos State, Nigeria

- The High Court sentenced 3 Vietnamese subjects, Phan Viet Chi, Phan Hong Quan and Duong Van Thang, and Mory Berrette, a Cameroonian or Guinean subject depending on the source, to 6 years' imprisonment or fines of 2.7 million naira (3,510 US\$) each for holding, transporting and attempting to smuggle 397.5 kg of pangolin scales out of the country. As part of a plea bargain, they committed to cooperate with the judicial authorities and to provide any information they might have that would lead to the arrest of the other links in the smuggling operation.

- In November 2023, 2 of their accomplices, Fofou Dadjo Evariste, a Cameroonian subject, and Babangida Mahmoud, a Nigerian subject, who had been arrested at the same time as the Vietnamese, were sentenced to 2 years' imprisonment or fines of 300,000 naira (390 US\$) for Evariste and 100,000 naira (130 US\$) for Mahmoud.¹



CENTRAL AFRICA

CAMEROON

Beginning of June 2023
Mefou National Park, Centre Region, Cameroon



A badly injured pregnant female pangolin was seized and transferred to the Tikki Hywood Foundation shelter. She was released 3 weeks later.²

Mid-June 2023

Mefou National Park, Centre Region, Cameroon

A female pangolin who was rescued from poachers in January (see "On the Trail" n°39 p.8-ref.3) regained her freedom after 5 months of care, undergoing a partial tail amputation and losing her newborn shortly after the rescue.³

July 2023

Mefou National Park, Centre Region, Cameroon

Release of a 3rd female long-tailed pangolin seized a few weeks earlier. Despite the partial amputation of her tail, she has all the abilities necessary to live in the wild.⁴

End of July 2023

Mefou National Park, Centre Region, Cameroon

Seizure of a female white-bellied pangolin by agents of the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife with the support of the NGO Global Conservation. She was released 10 days later after recovering from pneumonia.⁵

July 31 and October 25, 2023

Nkoteng and Nanga-Eboko, Centre Region, Cameroon

- Two young men were arrested on their motorcycle for carrying 47 kg of giant pangolin scales after poaching them around the Sanaga River.



- Blaise Ismaël Emini Ovamba was sentenced to 6 months in prison and fined 500,000 CFA francs (800 US\$). Alfa Oumarou was sentenced to 25 days in prison and fined 200,000 CFA francs (320 US\$). The 2 must jointly pay one million CFA francs (1,600 US\$) in damages.⁶



August 2023

Mefou National Park, Centre Region, Cameroon



A male pangolin with one injured paw from a trap arrived at the Tikki Hywood Foundation centre after being rescued by Ministry of Forests and Wildlife agents.⁷

End of August 2023

Mefou National Park, Centre Region, Cameroon

Agents of the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife rescued a juvenile male pangolin and brought him to the sanctuary. The pangolin didn't wait long to jump into the water.⁸

End of August 2023

Mefou National Park, Centre Region, Cameroon



The Tikki Hywood Foundation sanctuary received 2 pangolins: a male injured by a trap and a female in good condition. She quickly regained her freedom.⁹

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

July 7, 2023

Kisangani, Tshopo Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo



The ICCN (Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation) recovered 500 kg of pangolin scales and made 3 arrests. Conserv Congo points out that at least 1,000 pangolins were captured and killed to build up this stock.¹⁰

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

July 14, 2023

Kabarnet, Baringo County, Kenya

Wildlife protection officers, posing as potential buyers, seized a 60 cm-long pangolin and arrested Nicodemus Lagat. The pangolin was captured near Barwessa in northern Baringo County, 25 km from Kabarnet. Lagat may be conditionally released on bail pending trial if he can fulfill the 500,000 shillings bond (3,560 US\$). Otherwise, he will remain in prison.¹¹

MALAWI

Beginning of July 2023

Lilongwe Wildlife Centre, Lilongwe, Central Region, Malawi

A young female pangolin weighing 4 kg was seized late in the evening. After several weeks of good care, the little creature, who had arrived banged up and was struggling to take a few steps, was successfully returned to the wild.¹²

End of August 2023

Mchinji, Central Region, Malawi

Five years' imprisonment with hard labour for Jackson Yakobe and Selemani Felix, nationals of Mozambique. On the stand, they denied everything, forcing the prosecution to summon the 5 witnesses who had carried out the arrest. In the end, they pleaded for leniency. "We're the only ones who earn a living for our families". They thought they had achieved this by trying to sell a live pangolin in Malawi. See "On the Trail" n°40 p.11 (ref. 14).¹³



MOZAMBIQUE

End of August 2023

Tete, Tete Province, Mozambique

The 3 of them were trying to sell a pangolin captured in Chiúta in Tete for 30,000 meticaís (470 US\$). One of them fled. According to Celina Toque, spokeswoman for the National Criminal Investigation Service (SERNIC) of Tete province, the State would have been robbed of 209,000 meticaís (3,260 US\$) if the case had been successful. Both are now at the police station.¹⁴

End of August 2023

Majune District, Niassa Province, Mozambique

Arrest by SERNIC (Serviço Nacional de Investigação Criminal) of 3 men trying to sell a pangolin captured in the Niassa Reserve for 250,000 meticaís (3,930 US\$). The pangolin was released.¹⁵

UGANDA

June 2, 2023

Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

Samuel Mwanje, a retired UPDF (Uganda People's Defence Forces) captain, and businessman Sam Kakooza have been charged. They were arrested back in May 2022 in possession of 446 kg of pangolin scales in the Wakiso district, Central Region.¹⁶

ZAMBIA

July 22 and 26, 2023

Zambia

A female Temminck's ground pangolin was seized from traffickers. In good health, weighing 8.68 kg, she was released a few days later in a confidential location.¹⁷

August 13, 2023

North Luangwa National Park, Muchinga Province, Zambia

Release after 2 years of training of a female pangolin, born to a mother who had been seized from traffickers in Sioma (Western Province) and who had given birth prematurely, as often happens in stressful situations. Her release was a real delight. Her first act was to take a bath in a marsh, the second to explore the surrounding area and the third to find some ants. This success, which everyone hopes will be permanent, is due to the collaboration between the caretakers at the North Luangwa Conservation Project refuge, Zambia's national parks administration and the Veterinary University of Zambia, with the support of the Oak Foundation.¹⁸

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

June 2, 2023

Vryburg, North West Province, South Africa

Officials stopped 4 men who were driving to Mahikeng, where they hoped to sell a female pangolin for 60,000 rand (3,050 US\$). The pangolin was transferred to the care of specialists at the Johannesburg veterinary clinic. Unfortunately, she was in a very poor state of health due to the long duration (3 to 4 weeks) of her captivity. She died during treatment, and tragically, x-rays revealed that she was pregnant.¹⁹

June 8, 2023

Hoedspruit, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Among the suspects trying to sell a live pangolin was a Kruger ranger, from the Letaba observation post. The operation was jointly executed by police, SANParks (South African National Parks), the Hoedspruit Rhino Breeders Forum and Care for Wild Rhino.²⁰

June 9, 2023

Mahikeng, North West Province, South Africa

Officials arrested 3 suspects, ages 27, 34 and 42, in a shopping mall. They wanted to sell a live pangolin for 200,000 rand (10,170 US\$). Veterinarians at the Johannesburg clinic took care of the pangolin.²¹

June 25, 2023

Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa



A pangolin is seized in the Honeydew district and 3 individuals arrested.²²

June 29, 2023

Port Shepstone, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Sifiso Magagula was arrested in possession of a smoked pangolin. His nationality was not disclosed. He attracted the attention of authorities while attempting to sell pangolin scales online.²³



July 4, 2023

Brits, North West Province, South Africa

Three officers tracked down 4 men they had just learned were in possession of 2 dead pangolins. They cornered Mpofu, Gwenzi, Mchuma and Zhou near a high school and indeed found 2 dead and even skinned pangolins inside their bags.²⁴

July 7, 2023

Heuningvlei, Northern Cape Province, South Africa

Police freed 2 live Temminck's ground pangolins from captivity in a discarded watering while searching the cattle farm after receiving a report. One arrest.²⁵

July 22 and 24, 2023

Kimberley, Northern Cape Province, and Tzaneen, Limpopo Province, South Africa

The Hawks spokeswoman announced that 4 men between the ages of 48 and 58 were arrested for selling a live Temminck's pangolin. They were duped by a masked policeman offering a tempting 250,000-rand sum (13,360 US\$). The pangolin was seized, as was the traffickers' Mercedes. The Hawks and Kimberley police organised the operation. The female pangolin was taken to a vet in Kuruman for a check-up. During the journey, she prematurely gave birth to a 250-gram male cub. Females often do this when injured and stressed. "On the Trail" documented one who gave birth in a police station in Zimbabwe (n°7 p.32), and another who gave birth in a police station in Cameroon (n°39 p.8, ref.3). The 2 pangolins rescued from trafficking were transported from Kuruman to Tzaneen and handed over to the Provet Animal Hospital thanks to a contribution from the Aspinal Foundation.²⁶



End of July 2023

Tzaneen, Limpopo Province, South Africa

A female pangolin who reeked of gas arrived at Provet. Traffickers had transported the pangolin under the hood of their car. Her front paws were burned by the combustion engine and her eyes infected. The recovery was long and painful at first, but 90 days in, she's getting better and better. The pangolin has been treated at an undisclosed location to protect her and her caretakers, and fortunately, her release is on the horizon.²⁷

August 17, 2023
Mmabatho, North West Province, South Africa



Sentencing of 3 of the 4 men arrested in Mahikeng on April 22, 2022 in possession of a pangolin for whom they wanted a lot of money (see "On the Trail" n°36 p.12, ref.26) to 5 years' imprisonment suspended on condition that they each pay 40,000 rand (2,270 US\$) to the Johannesburg veterinary clinic, whose competence and dedication to pangolin rescue are well known. The fourth man is still at large. A warrant has been issued for his arrest. After being released on bail like the others, he has failed to respond to court summonses.²⁸

August 18, 2023
Germiston, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Two truck drivers travelling between Zambia and Gauteng had stashed a pangolin in their cargo. They were arrested by the SOCI (Serious Organised Crime Investigation). They remain in custody until their first court appearance on August 28.²⁹

August 23, 2023
Midrand, Gauteng Province, South Africa

In a joint operation by the Hawks and the SAPS canine brigade, 2 Temminck's ground pangolins were seized, and 2 suspects arrested.³⁰

August 20, 27, and 31, 2023
Pretoria and Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa

- Three customers with a suitcase took an Uber from Sandton (a district of Johannesburg) to Pretoria, 47 km away. The driver noticed that the suitcase was moving. He purposely stopped at a roadblock. There was a heavy police presence in and around the capital for the BRICS summit (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). The suitcase was opened. Inside was a Temminck's ground pangolin who, taken care of by the vets at the Johannesburg clinic, turned out to be a juvenile female in gestation, with injured claws on her 2 front paws and damaged scales on her back. After 15 days of treatment, she was loaded onto a Bateleurs plane, whose pilot François du Plessis had volunteered, bound for a habitat chosen by the Zululand Conservation Trust. Bateleurs, see "On the Trail " n°7 p.32 (ref.2), n°11 p.58 (ref.7) and n°36 p.50 (ref.30).

- Arrival at the Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital of 2 Temminck's ground pangolins seized in Midrand, 30 km away. One female, who was still bottle-fed and starting to eat ants, was transferred after a few weeks to the Provet Animal Hospital run by Dr. Debbie English in Hoedspruit (Limpopo province). There, she had her daily ration of live ants, which the clinic at the time was in short supply of.³¹

End of August 2023
Gauteng Province, South Africa



A Temminck's ground pangolin was seized on national highway 4. Police arrested 4 people. Joint operation by the Silverton and Benoni canine brigades, the Cullinan endangered species unit and the GDARD (Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development).³²

BOTSWANA

June 2023
Tsabong, Kgalagadi District, Botswana.



Zambian national Elisha Perseverance Banda was sentenced to 6 months in prison for the illegal possession of a pangolin, and 6 months in prison for smuggling a pangolin into Botswana. The 2 sentences run concurrently. Mokgadinyana Othomile, his accomplice, pleaded not guilty. His trial was postponed to September 25, 2023.³³

July 23 and end of August 2023
Francistown, North East District, Botswana. Border with Zimbabwe.



Maposa and Sibanda from Plumtree in Zimbabwe entered Botswana by devious means. They somehow took possession of a long, scaly animal, that police seized from the modest guesthouse where they were staying. A laboratory certified to the courts that the animal was a pangolin. Maposa and Sibanda told the court, "We like rearing animals, and we left Zimbabwe to escape poverty". "We thought this animal had been sent to us by God and by rearing him we will be more like creating employment for ourselves as people will be coming to see him and pay us." The magistrates were not swayed by their candor and sentenced the duo to 4 years in prison for illegal possession of an animal protected by law, with an additional year of prohibited entry into Botswana. The 2 sentences run concurrently.³⁴

NAMIBIA

Mid-June 2023

Namibia

NAMPOL (Namibian Police Force) seized a female pangolin and placed her under the care of the PCRf (Pangolin Conservation and Research Foundation). The care team, deeming her state of health favourable, released her into a confidential, suitable habitat. Another bit of good news: trap cameras revealed that she has given birth, and will likely carry the baby on her back for some time to come.³⁵



June 23, 2023

Outapi, Omusati Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.

A 43-year-old man is arrested for trying to sell a pangolin armour.³⁶

July 9, 2023

Grootfontein, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

Police regretted to announce that a female corporal officer in the national army was caught on Sunday transporting a live pangolin, that she sought to sell for 50,000 dollars, or over 2,500 US\$.³⁷

July 14, 2023

Oshakati, Oshana Region, Namibia

Arrest of 3 men arrested trying to sell a live pangolin valued at 50,000 dollars (2,670 US\$).³⁸

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

June 12, 2023

Gongbei Border Post, Zhuhai Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Macao.

60 giant pangolin scales weighing 500 grams, or 8.3 grams per scale, were found inside the trunk of a Macao resident's car.³⁹

June 2023

Huanggang Checkpoint, Shenzhen Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

Seizure of 600 pangolin scales in 2 plastic bags from the boot of a vehicle attempting to enter mainland China.⁴⁰

August 2023

Diantanzhen Checkpoint, Baoshan Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Myanmar.



Authorities recovered 37.58 grams of Sunda pangolin scales from the cab of a truck entering China. The plastic bag containing the scales was concealed in a carton of water bottles.⁴¹

August 2023

Jiangyin, Wuxi Prefecture, Jiangsu Province, China



Xu (not his real name) wanted to impress his boss at a banquet. He bought an 8.8 kg pangolin from Chao (not his real name), a fish trader, for 12,320 yuan (1,790 US\$). The case became known and Xu was sentenced to 5 months in prison and fined 5,000 yuan (726 US\$) for putting at risk endangered wild animals. The court's official WeChat account gives no news of Chao.⁴²

SOUTHEASTERN ASIA

INDONESIA

June 7, 2023

Pontianak and Setalik, Sambas Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

Seizure of 20 kg of scales in the boot of a Daihatsu Luxio. Subsequent seizure in a fishing hamlet of 37 kg at the home of M.N.D., considered to be the mastermind behind the trafficking. He is believed to be linked to the South Kalimantan network, 2 links of which were dismantled with the seizure of 360 kg of scales on May 17, 2023 (see "On the Trail" n°40 p.14, ref.36). According to the political and judicial authorities, the 3 seizures originated from the poaching of around 1,700 Sunda pangolins and inflicted a total loss of 84.36 billion rupiah on the environment, i.e. 5.6 million US\$ and 3,300 US\$ per pangolin.⁴³

July 8, 2023

Samarinda, East Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

Following the seizure of 360 kg of pangolin scales in Trisakti, Banjarmasin City, on May 17, 2023 (see "On the Trail" n°40 p.14, ref.36), the 3 links in the case, A.T., A.F. and R.S. have now been arrested. A.T., who lives in Samarinda, was the last to be arrested. In the forests around Tenggarong, he caught or bought from villagers scales or live or dead pangolins, who were then put in the cooking pot to be scaled. When he had 10 to 25 kg of scales, A.T. would contact A.F. to transport them to Banjarmasin, 570 km from Samarinda, and A.F. would sell them for between 700,000 and one million rupiah/kg, or between 46 and 66 US\$/kg to R.S.⁴⁴

August 5, 2023

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

Seizure of 38 kg of pangolin scales. Estimated value: 43 million rupiah per kilo (2,850 US\$). The trafficker was planning to smuggle them to China.⁴⁵

End of August 2023

Sei Mawang, Kapuas Hulu Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia. Border with Malaysia.

Border guards discovered a *Manis javanica* pangolin at the home of a resident who was about to cross the border into the State of Sarawak (Malaysia). After negotiations, the man and his family finally agreed to voluntarily hand over the pangolin to the Indonesian military.⁴⁶

MALAYSIA

OPERATION JAGUAR

July 14 and 18, 2023

Kelang, State of Selangor, and Kuala Lumpur, Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

On closer inspection, what follows is one of the biggest corruption scandals in international wildlife trafficking. Behind the good intentions that institutions boast of and which earn them congratulations can hide perverted manoeuvres that earn them a lot of dirty money. On Friday July 14, 2023, the MACC (Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission), after receiving confidential information from Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, and after verifying the reliability of the information on the ground, mounted a lightning raid on the port of Kelang. On the second floor of a tire wholesaler's building, MACC seized 1,800 kg of pangolin scales in 97 bags, worth 5 US\$ million on the basis of 2,800 US\$ per kilo, which is the average black market price in China and Viet Nam. Seven people from Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Malaysia were immediately arrested. On the same day, several luxury cars were seized in Kuala Lumpur.

MACC tells us more about what it calls "Operation Jaguar." The first testimonies of those arrested have been collected and compared. An eighth person has been arrested. A ninth is wanted. He is Sheikh Biman Sheikh Ahmad, age 43. His last known address was released to the press and public on July 17, and an appeal for witnesses was launched to locate him and help with his arrest. He is the key link in the trafficking and deception operation.

Sheikh Biman Sheikh Ahmad turned himself in the next day. He was the head of the crime syndicate, whose mission was to smuggle the scales, which were destined for destruction after being seized. In fact, they were diverted from storage under seal thanks to the corruption of at least 2 senior customs officials and consignees at Kelang port.⁴⁷

Destruction of pangolin scales in Malaysia, see "On the Trail" n°23 p.67 (ref.38).

Seizures of pangolin scales in Malaysia, see "On the Trail" n°2 p.74, n°6 p.38 (ref.18), n°7 p.35 (ref.24), n°10 p.53 (ref.1), n°14 p.35 (ref.27) and p.108 (ref.33), n°17 p.42 (ref.14, 16 and 17), n°18 p.38 (ref.12) and p.40 (ref.3 and 4), n°19 p.53 (ref.25), n°23 p.67 (ref.37 and 38), n°24 p.48 (ref.13), n°25 p.117 (ref.102), n°27 p.124 (ref.54 and 56), Covid-19 Special Edition p.20 (ref.84 et 85) and p.21 (ref.88), n°28 p.65 (ref.41), n°29 p.19 (ref.40), n°32 p.15 (ref.42 and 43), n°35 p.10 (ref.25 and 26), n°36 p.194 (ref.52), n°37 p.15 (ref.4) and p.187 (ref.48).

August 11, 2023

Kota Kinabalu, State of Sabah, Malaysia

Vitlin Perdeos, from whose hands a pangolin was seized at kilometre 35 of the Kimanis-Kendingau road on November 16, 2020 at 4:30 p.m., is still out on bail, awaiting a trial and a verdict that are long overdue. Vitlin Perdeos pleads not guilty and is not represented by an attorney. Five witnesses for the prosecution have been called for a preliminary hearing.⁴⁸

PHILIPPINES

July 27, 2023

Province of Palawan, Philippines

Seizure of 27 kg of pangolin scales in 3 bags from 2 cars travelling in a convoy. Five arrests. Palawan pangolins (also known as Philippine pangolins) are designated as a critically endangered species by Resolution 15-521 of the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development Staff (PCSDS) Wildlife Enforcement Section.⁴⁹

THAILAND

August 16, 2023
Som Sa-at, Kalasin Province, Thailand



A truck coming from Songkhla Province in the south and heading towards the border with Laos in the north, 1600 km away, was stopped with 1400 kg of pangolin scales in 42 bags under around a hundred bags of fertiliser. The scales originally came from Malaysia and their final destination was China via Laos. They were "harvested" from 3,000 to 4,000 Sunda pangolins. Their local value is estimated at over 50 million baht, or more than 1.45 million US\$ and 1,100 US\$/kg. The driver was paid 20,000 baht or 670 US\$ for the delivery. His journey was interrupted after 1,500 km. Thailand benefited from intelligence provided by the US embassy in Bangkok. This is the largest seizure of pangolin scales ever made in the country.⁵⁰

VIET NAM

June 15, 2023
Between Yen Tri and Hang Tram, Hoa Binh Province, Viet Nam

Arrest of Bui Van A. who was transporting a live Chinese pangolin weighing 6 kg by motorbike from Yen Tri to Hang Tram (7 km).⁵¹



July 11, 2023
Dong Ha, Quang Tri Province, Viet Nam

The People's Court sentenced a 56-year-old woman to 5 years in prison for attempting to sell 4 Sunda pangolins for 13,490,000 dongs or 545 US\$ from a motel in Lao Bao back in December 2022 (see "On the Trail" n°38 p. 12, ref.42).⁵²



July 20, 2023
Dong Xoai, Binh Phuoc Province, Viet Nam

Bui Cong Thanh was stopped by police while transporting a 6.8 kg pangolin on his motorcycle to a buyer in Tan Loi. He bought the pangolin 3.9 million dongs (165 US\$) to an unknown person and wanted to sell him at twice this price to a customer.⁵³

Sunday, July 23 and Monday, July 24, 2023
Dong Xoai, Binh Phuoc Province, Viet Nam

Mrs. N.T.H. from Phu Ly caught a 7.7 kg Sunda pangolin while working in a field and brought him home to sell. The next day, she set off on her motorcycle to Dong Xoai to find a buyer. She was stopped by the town's police on Nguyen Hue Street.⁵⁴

August 17, 2023
Dong Hung, Quang Binh Province, Viet Nam

Mr. Nguyen Duc Viet, a delivery driver, heard a noise in a parcel and alerted the forest rangers, who enlisted the help of the police and opened the parcel. They discovered a 4.5 kg Sunda pangolin. He was transferred to the Phong Nha National Park rescue centre in the hope of being released.⁵⁵

FAMILY AFFAIRS

August 26, 2023
Tan Phong, Tay Ninh Province, Viet Nam

Small cross-border negotiation between a Cambodian and a Vietnamese on an 8 kg pangolin. Watch out, you can be tricked into buying a force-feed pangolin. The deal goes for 5 million dongs (210 US\$). Vu Minh Long and his brother Vu Minh Tan soon sold him for 20 million dong (845 US\$). During delivery, they were arrested.⁵⁶

August 2023
Hung Thong, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of 2,534 kg of pangolin scales and 2,095 kg of Siamese rosewood (*Dalbergia cochinchinensis*, Appendix II) under the floor of a truck trailer, in a compartment designed to deceive customs and police vigilance. Le Van Sang, the driver, and Pham Dinh Hieu, Vietnamese subjects, admitted coming from Laos, crossing the border at the Cau Treo post, Hà Tĩnh province, and having Nghe An as their destination, a journey of 190 km for the Vietnamese part of the smuggling. The value of the scales and wood is estimated at 10 billion dongs, or over 420,000 US\$. The operation was organised by the province's economic and traffic police.⁵⁷

SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

Beginning of June 2023

Seoni District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Sentencing of 15 poachers to 3 years' imprisonment and a fine of 10,000 rupees (121 US\$) each for poaching pangolins and smuggling their scales in the Pench Tiger Reserve in 2015. The identification and arrest of the gang was credited to the SIT (Special Investigation Team) founded in 2015, which has since been replaced by the STF (Special Task Force). According to the Madhya Pradesh services, the use of pangolin scales in the manufacture of drugs known as crystal meth, crank, speed, or ice adds to the consumption of scales prescribed by alternative medicine and increases demand.⁵⁸



June 3, 2023

National Highway 6, Champhai District, State of Mizoram, India. Border with Myanmar.

Seizure in a luxury car heading towards Aizawl of 44 kg of scales with an estimated value of 4.4 million rupees (53,237 US\$ or 1,210 US\$/kg). Arrest of Lalmuankim and Issac. The merchandise had crossed the Myanmar-India border unhindered.⁵⁹



June 12, 2023

Tamor Pingla Wildlife Sanctuary, Surajpur District, State of Chhattisgarh, India

The man had been spotted by the WCCB. Federal agents supported by forest guards from Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh cornered him on the border between the 2 States, in the wildlife sanctuary. He was in possession of 3.4 kg of scales.⁶⁰

June 25, 2023

Near Lote, Ratnagiri District, State of Maharashtra, India

930 grams of scales. Two arrests. Milind Vasant Sawant and Mina Mohan Kotia, aged 55 and 62, were selling the scales directly from a hotel parking lot on the Mumbai-Goa expressway.⁶¹

June 28, 2023

Surrounding area of Matoli, Kanker District, State of Chhattisgarh, India

They wanted to sell him for a million rupees (12,000 US\$). The jackpot! The 3 of them on the motorbike with the 11-kg pangolin were stopped at a roadside checkpoint. Dashru Potai, Ashok Potai and Naresh Meshram live in Madhya Pradesh.⁶²

Night of July 9 to 10, 2023

Seoni District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

On Sunday night on the Chhapara-Bhimgarh road, 5 people aboard 3 motorcycles were stopped and caught in the act of transporting a live pangolin, who was immediately released after a health check. His captors are in police custody.⁶³

July 21, 2023

Nabarangpur District, State of Odisha, India

A motorcycle was stopped on the Nabarangpur-Kusumi road. The passenger was holding a live pangolin in his arms. Sanjit Pulasika was arrested, while the driver fled into the forest. The 2 men were trying to sell an Indian pangolin, found in the State of Chhattisgarh.⁶⁴

July 2023

Similipal National Park, Mayurbhanj District, State of Odisha, India



After the death of guard Bimal Kumar Jena (see "On the Trail" n°40 p.8, ref.11 and 12) in the ambush of 26 poachers on the evening of May 22, 2023, and the death of guard Mathy Hansdah (see page 6, ref.5) on June 16 under fire from another group of poachers, a vast operation to demilitarize the tribal communities considered by the political authorities and State services to be hotbeds of wildlife delinquency and sedition was launched in and around the Similipal Tiger Reserve. The operation was reportedly welcomed kindly by most of the population. Law enforcement agencies are said to have received information contributing to the seizure of 158 single barrel muzzle loaders, 3 pistols, 2 small hand guns, 2 long-barrel air guns, 72 pieces of ball bearings used as pellet, 500 grams' gun powder, 4 handmade bombs, arms manufacturing equipment, pangolin scales, a pair of deer horns (family Cervidae) and 295,000 rupees (3,597 US\$). The presentation of the arsenal was staged at the beginning of August in Baripada, capital of the Mayurbhanj district, in the presence of the Odisha Director General of Police.⁶⁵

Night between August 1st and 2, 2023.

Rairangpur, Mayurbhanj District, State of Odisha, India

The pangolin was about to change hands. Eight traffickers from Jharkhand sold him to traffickers from Odisha. Seizure of a 4-wheeler, a 2-wheeler and 8 mobiles. Decoding will reveal more about the inner workings of the traffic.⁶⁶

FAMILY AFFAIRS

August 8, 2023

Padmatola, Boudh District, State of Odisha, India

The father and daughter were poaching hand in hand. At their home, 2 firearms, hooks, nets, explosives and other poaching utensils and pangolin scales were seized.⁶⁷

August 19, 2023

Tatighat, Balaghat District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Arrest of Anil Prem Singh, after 7 months on the run. He was staying with relatives in Odisha. 7 months ago, he was transporting pangolin scales near the Kanha Tiger Reserve. During the arrest of his 2 accomplices, he had managed to escape.⁶⁸

August 23, 2023

Alipurduar, Alipurduar District, State of West Bengal, India

On January 13, 2023, on the 31/C expressway near Alipurduar, forest police arrested



James Bargaon in possession of a live pangolin. Five years in prison, a first in West Bengal.⁶⁹

3rd week of August 2023

Budheni, Raipur District, State of Chattisgarh, India

Seizure at Satish's home, aged 27, of a 15 kg live pangolin. Estimated value: 800,000 rupees (9,732 US\$). The press description of the salkhapri (local name for the pangolin) reflects the fascination and astonishment that the species arouses. "He looks like a snake and a lizard, He eats ants, he's a mammal".⁷⁰

August 31 2023

Silluk, East Siang District, State of Arunachal Pradesh, India

Local villagers prevented a poacher from stealing a Chinese pangolin from his burrow. The slightly crippled survivor was handed over to forestry officials by Kepang Nong Borang, head of a "green brigade" in Silluk, population 900.⁷¹

PANGOLINS, ELEPHANTS, FELINES, RHINOS AND HORNBILLS

AFRICA

NAMIBIA

July 9, 2023

Grootfontein, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

Arrest of an agricultural worker in possession of the skins of a pangolin, a leopard (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) and a python (*Python* spp., Appendix II). The value of the batch is estimated at 145,000 dollars (7,750 US\$).¹

NIGERIA

June 15, 2023

Lagos, Lagos State, Nigeria

The 6-month prison sentence imposed on Felix Olame, the consignee of a funeral container bound for Viet Nam containing – in addition to rare logs – raw ivory, pangolin scales, big cat bones and skulls and rhino horn (see "On the Trail" n°32 p.19, ref.1), is confirmed on appeal. Other participants involved in this failed smuggling operation are still at large.²



ZIMBABWE

June 2023

Chiredzi, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe

Two men were strolling through the Makanani shopping centre, looking for a bargain. Acting

on information, detectives from the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) arrived on scene, identified the 2 suspects, and seized pangolin scales, 2 lion teeth and 4 hyena teeth (family Hyaenidae) from their backpacks.³

ASIA

INDIA

August 22, 2023

Kaliabor, Nagaon District, State of Assam, India

The whole lot, rhino, elephant, pangolin, tiger (and deer)! Seizure by the Assam Task Force and the Delhi WCCB of 12 tusks and sections, 15 Indian rhinoceros hooves, 2 tiger canines, 1,031 grams of pangolin scales and a pair of spotted deer (*Axis axis*) antlers, in the hands of 4 men, the oldest of whom is 60 and the youngest 20).⁴

INDONESIA

June 8 and September 25, 2023

Medan, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

-275 kg of pangolin scales seized from Edy Surja Susanto alias Aan, Aldi Syahputra and Arbain. The 3 rascals also had in their stock 5 hornbill helmets (family Bucerotidae).

- The 3 men were sentenced to one year in prison and fined 10 million rupiah (655 US\$) each.⁵



ELEPHANTS



African savannah elephants (*Loxodonta africana*). Photo Stan Rullman

The African forest elephant (*Loxodonta cyclotis*) is listed in CITES Appendix I, the African savannah elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) is listed in 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°41
Black market raw ivory quotation from media or official sources
The values were estimated at the time of the seizures

1kg of raw ivory

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref. (year)
Africa	Kenya	2,400	11 (2023)
		725	12, 14 et 22 (2023) et 18 (2017)
		1,450	13 (2023)
		1,400	23 (2023)
		710	24 et 25 (2023)
		1,070	27 (2023)
		700	28 et 29 (2023)
	7,770	30 (2015)	
	Tanzania	1,960	38 (2023)
Asia	India	2,440	84 (2023)

Total quantity of ivory seized in Africa: 1,300 kg

NORTHERN AFRICA

EGYPT

Saturday, July 29, 2023
Cairo International Airport, Governorate of Cairo, Egypt



17 kg of semi-raw ivory seized from the luggage of an Egyptian passenger on a Middle East Airlines flight from Beirut.¹

WESTERN AFRICA

COTE D'IVOIRE

July 1 and 13, 2023
Yamoussoukro, Autonomous District of Yamoussoukro, and Toumodi, Lacs District, Côte d'Ivoire



- Formalism has its limits. L'Info Express reports the arrest of 3 "alleged" traffickers. They appear to be traffickers in the true sense of the word, holding in their hands 2 tusks, each weighing 19 kg. They belonged to a male elephant who could have become a super tusk in 2-3 decades. He was a good guy, weighing in at 4 tons, and was much admired by everyone, including the villages around Taï National Park. In addition to the adult's tusks, the 3 "alleged" traffickers were trying to negotiate 2 pairs of baby elephant tusks weighing 4 kg between them. Because of these 3 "alleged" traffickers, Côte d'Ivoire lost a lot.

- The traffickers were kindly sentenced to 2 months in prison and fined 500 US\$ each.²

NIGERIA

June 2023
Jimeta, Adamawa State, Nigeria
An individual in possession of 4 bags full of raw ivory (89 kg) was arrested 60 km from Cameroon.³

CENTRAL AFRICA

CAMEROON

June 5, 2023
Doulala, Littoral Region, Cameroon
Ibrahim Mohamadou sentenced on appeal to a 12-month suspended prison sentence with 3 years' probation and ordered to pay 62 million CFA francs (101,550 US\$) as damages. He was the driver of the lorry intercepted in Ambam and travelling towards Yaoundé in October 2020 (see "On the Trail" n°31 p.18, ref.8).⁴



GABON

July 2 and December 21, 2023
Kango and Libreville, Estuaire Province, Gabon
On July 2, 2023, Idriss Bance from Burkina Faso fell through the net with 4 tusks in his arms. On December 21 of the same year, he was sentenced to one year in prison, a suspended sentence of one year, and a fine equal to 6,700 US\$.⁵



July 27 and December 1, 2023
Rabi, Ogooué Maritime Province, Gabon
- Arrest by the DGR (Direction générale des recherches), with legal support from Conservation Justice, of Féryl Mouckaga Digossou in possession of sections of raw ivory weighing a total of 0.44 kg.
- Mouckaga Digossou was sentenced to a 12-month suspended prison sentence, fined 100,000 CFA francs (170 US\$), and ordered to pay 1 million CFA francs (1,700 US\$) in damages to the Ministry of Water and Forests.⁶



REPEATED OFFENCE

August 8, 9, 10, 11, 17 and 18, 2023
Lambaréné, Moyen-Ogooué Province, Makokou, Mohoba, Mbela, Zolindin and Bakeba-Bakouaka, Ogooué-Ivindo Province, Gabon
Seizure under the floor of a pick-up truck in a hidden compartment of 120 kg of tusk and tusk sections. Arrest of Ngangni Ibrahim Gaël, a Gabonese national of Cameroonian origin. Accomplices were arrested in the following days: Fabrice Mpizeloube and Patrice Abene Ndoume in Lambaréné, Tonga Assouman in Makokou, and Benoit Zoulaoube, Thierry Ivary, Guy-Roger Sandou, and Romaric Andele in 4 towns and villages south of Makokou. Two additional tusks weighing a total of 11 kg were seized. The network, which seems to have been operating for some time, has collapsed like a house of cards. .../...

KENYA

May 7, 2022 and June 9, 2023**Kahawa, Nairobi County, Kenya**

John Adongo Nyilima, Hamisy Mambande Kassim, Alex Wanjau Ndichu and Amos Saisi Mbakulu had been caught in the act of transporting and attempting to smuggle 2 tusks or tusk sections and 13 carved ivories weighing a total of 10 kg and worth an estimated 1.5 million shillings or 12,700 US\$ in Kiambu county on May 7, 2022. During the second hearing on June 9, 2023 to which a writer for SEEJ was attending, all the defendants were present and the KWS agent who presented himself as a potential buyer stated that an agreement had been reached on the basis of 100,000 shillings/kg or 845 US\$/kg.¹⁰

June 3, 2023**Mombasa, Mombasa County, Kenya**

Samwel Mosima and Bokisa Maleto were arrested at around 9 a.m. for attempting to sell 2 elephant tusks weighing a total of 6 kg, worth an estimated 2 million shillings or 14,500 US\$ and 2,400 US\$/kg.¹¹

June 10 and 12, 2023**Makutano, West Pokot County, Kenya**

- At 4:30 p.m., police arrested Alex Tirop Maywa near the Rafiki Hotel and seized 5 tusk sections weighing 4.8 kg. Estimated value: 480,000 shillings or 3,480 US\$ and 725 US\$/kg.
- Bail set at 2,100 US\$.¹²

June 16, 2023**Nyeri, Nyeri County, Kenya**

Three individuals, including one woman, were caught transporting 12 sections of raw ivory weighing 23 kg, worth 4.6 million shillings (33,340 US\$) and 1,450 US\$/kg in a salon car.¹³

June 17, 2023**Eldume, Baringo County, Kenya**

Nabiki and Chegelarpei, both in their thirties, were riding scooters with 20 kg of raw ivory in their backpacks, worth 2 million shillings (14,500 US\$) and 725 US\$/kg.¹⁴

June 22 and 29, 2023**Kenya**

- A suspect is arrested in possession of a tusk section (one kilo).
- A suspect is arrested in possession of 4 tusks (73.5 kg).
Interventions were carried out with support from the Big Life Foundation.¹⁵

June 25, 2023**Eldume, Baringo County, Kenya**

Buldoza, Kimosop and Chepkwony plead guilty to the possession of 12 tusks weighing 50 kg. The 3 men were released on bail worth one million shillings (7,250 US\$) and a surety worth the same amount.¹⁶



Most of the ivory had been poached in Ivindo and was destined for Cameroon. All suspects were transferred to Libreville Prison. This spectacular operation is credited to the Anti-Poaching Department, the Moyen-Ogooué Judicial Police, and the Moyen-Ogooué and Ogooué-Ivindo Provincial Directorates. The NGO Conservation Justice contributed to the judicial follow-up. A total of 131 kg of tusks were seized, including several taken from baby elephants.⁷

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Beginning of June 2023**Bukavu, Sud Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Border with Rwanda.**

Officials arrest 2 suspects in possession of 30 kg of raw cut ivory.⁸

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

FAMILY AFFAIRS**July 29, 2023****Brazzaville, Department of Brazzaville, Republic of Congo. Border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo.**

A woman and her man are handcuffed together. They were arrested while haggling over 4 tusks, including a pair which had been cut into 4 pieces. The lot weighed 18.95 kg.⁹



June 2023

Greater Mara, Narok County, Kenya

Authorities seize 200 grams of ivory and arrest 1 individual.¹⁷

End of June 2023

Kilifi, Kilifi County, Kenya

Kenga and Zege were sentenced to 7 years in prison for attempting to sell 4 tusks, valued at 3.4 million shillings or 24,640 US\$ and 725 US\$/kg, on September 10, 2017.¹⁸



July-August 2023

Amboseli National Park, Kimana Sanctuary, Kajiado County; Bamba, Kilifi County; Lolldaiga Conservancy, Laikipia, El Karama Conservancy, Laikipia County; Imenti Forest, Meru County; Naibosho Conservancy, Olare Motorogi Conservancy, Masai Mara National Reserve, Mara Triangle, Mara North Conservancy, Ol Kinyei Conservancy, Narok County; Rukinga Ranch, Tsavo West and Tsavo East National Park, Taita Taveta County, Kenya



Report from the KWS and Sheldrick Wildlife Trust mobile veterinary units: rescues, euthanasia and post-mortem examinations.

- The overall breakdown by sex was 16 males and 7 females.

- 16 elephants have a favourable prognosis. Three fell into traps, 9 were speared and 4 were shot: 5 females, including one followed by 2 calves, and 11 males, including 3 sub-adults.

- Two male elephants have an unfavourable prognosis. One was speared in the leg and the other in the hip.

- One male elephant was put out of his misery. He had been treated on 2 occasions following a spear-throw wound to the right front leg (see "On the Trail" n°40 p.21, ref.22). During the necropsy, 15 litres of pus were drained from the main wound. He was between 35 and 40 years old. Another male died of septicaemia after a spear wound. A third male aged between 45 and 50 died of septicaemia and gangrene after being shot with a poisoned arrow. One female was fatally poisoned.



No other option than to put him down to rest

No ivory was stolen from 3 dead elephants when the KWS/SWT teams arrived. However, on 8 August, a post-mortem examination revealed that the tusks had been stolen. The Tsavo mobile veterinary team was alerted by herders who had just discovered the body of a 25-30 year-old female elephant in Ndigiria, Kilifi County. Her body was covered in branches. The crime scene was violent. The ground and trees showed signs of intense fighting. Other elephants must have been present and tried to pull the victim to his feet. The udders contained milk. The general profile showed good health. The left flank was lacerated by "a sharp object". The tusks were cut off after the female elephant's death by professional poachers and ivory traffickers.¹⁹

July 11, August 4, 21 and 28, 2023

Kenya

Big Life Foundation assessment for July and August.

- 2 suspects arrested with 40kg of raw ivory.
- Big Life information leads to the interception of a suspect with 10 kg of raw ivory in his hands.
- Big Life information leads to the interception of a suspect with 54 kg of raw ivory divided into 8 sections in his hands.
- Big Life information leads to the interception of 3 suspects with a 2kg tusk in their hands.

The Big Life Foundation was founded in September 2010 by British photographer Nick Brandt, local ecologist Richard Bonham and American entrepreneur Tom Hill. Its rangers from the Masai community look after 1.6 million hectares of the Amboseli-Tsavo-Kilimanjaro ecosystem (Kenya and Tanzania). The NGO works with the authorities, national parks and other local NGOs to especially combat elephant poaching.²⁰

July-August 2023

Kenya

July-August Assessment from the Mara Elephant Project.

- Seizure in cooperation with the KWS of 3 kg of raw ivory and dismantling of 36 traps.
- Seizure of 21 kg of raw ivory and also 200 kg of bushmeat. Seizure of 34 logs and destruction of 16 charcoal kilns.
- 42 mediations and putting away in wildlife/human conflicts.²¹



July 1st, 2023

Taru, Kwale County, Kenya

Ibrahim Ndoro Tsimba was arrested in a shopping centre by a KWS team from Mombasa in flagrante delicto for attempting to sell 156 kg of raw ivory divided into 6 sections of tusks. The arrest report states that Tsimba is from the Duruma tribe. The value of the consignment is estimated at 15.6 million shillings, equivalent to 113,000 US\$ and 724 US\$/kg. The passenger on the motorbike driven by Tsimba managed to escape (he was arrested on 20 September). According to the SEEJ-AFRICA reports on the hearings, the arrest was eventful, the suspect roused the crowd by shouting, the KWS had to fire in the air to disperse the crowd, Tsimba received a stray bullet in the leg, which was not serious, and Tsimba's release pending trial is subject to a surety of one million shillings or 7,135 US\$.²²

July 10, 2023

Charity, Nyeri County, Kenya

Seizure of 6.1 kg of raw ivory valued at 1.2 million shillings (8560 US\$ and 1400 US\$/kg) in the car used by Edward Irungu Mwangi. Mwangi is eligible for release on bond of one million shillings (7140 US\$) and sureties of 1.2 million shillings. He pleads not guilty.²³

July 25, and September, 12 2023

Kwachikololo and Mariakani, Kilifi County, Kenya

- Ngari Charo Kahindi, aged 35, is arrested for holding 4 tusks weighing a total of 4 kg and attempting to sell them. The value of the lot was estimated at 400,000 shillings or 2,850 US\$ and 710 US\$/kg. Kahindi pleads not guilty.

- During the hearing on September 12, which was monitored by a columnist from SEEJ-AFRICA (Saving Elephants through Education and Justice), the expert from the Nairobi Natural History Museum confirmed that it was ivory [without specifying that it was African elephant ivory, editor's note]. The KWS witnesses stated that after receiving information, 2 teams drove to Kwachikololo, one to negotiate undercover with the seller, the other to intervene when the time came. The suspect's lawyer asked why the photographs attached to the file had been taken at the police station and not at the scene. He was told that for security reasons, KWS officers in these circumstances do not stay on site any longer than necessary.²⁴

July 28, 2023

Mundika, Busia County, Kenya. Border with Uganda.

Seizure 10 km from the border with Uganda by the police and the KWS of 10 tusks with a total weight of 28 kg and an estimated value of 2.8 million shillings or 19,980 US\$ and 710 US\$/kg. The 4 traffickers, 2 men and 2 women, were travelling by boda boda.²⁵

August 10, 2023

Voi, Taita Taveta County, Kenya

Seizure of 2 tusks weighing a total of 21 kg from Kazungu Karisa Mwakombe. It should be noted that on March 19, 2024, the suspect, unable to pay the bail required by the court in Voi, was still being held in custody. He is not represented by a lawyer.²⁶

August 13, 2023

Meru, Meru County, Kenya



23 elephant calf tusks, 79.6 kg, in a car, plus a pair of handcuffs and a truncheon. Two arrests: Harrison Gitonga Kanake, a police officer from Tutwa police station, and a civil society representative, Hassan Galgalo. The value of the ivory is estimated at 12 million shillings, or 1,070 US\$/kg. Already in Meru in January 2023, a policeman on duty in Nairobi had been caught in the act of transporting ivory (see "On the Trail" n°38 p.13, ref.13).²⁷

August 22, 2023

Nairobi, Nairobi County, Kenya

Joseph Kobakuli Komomo, Evans Pkemel and Samuel Gitahi Ndungu have been arrested at around 4.30 p.m. at the Shell petrol station on Jogoo Road, next to the Makadara courthouse, Nairobi East, for possessing, without a licence, 12 sections of tusks weighing a total of 4.8kg, with an estimated value of 480,000 shillings (3,380 US\$ and 700 US\$/kg). Their lawyers are calling for Komomo and Ndungu, who are fathers, and Pkemel, who is a student, to be released on bail under financially acceptable conditions.²⁸

August 30, 2023

Nairobi, Nairobi County, Kenya

Arthur Kisia Mukira and Joseph Soteh Gwini have been arrested in the car park of the Rubis service station in Mukuru Kwa Njenga along the Nairobi Eastern bypass. They arrived on motorbikes seeking to sell 79 sections of elephant tusks weighing a total of 62 kg divided into 3 bags and valued at 6.2 million shillings or 43,690 US\$ and 700 US\$/kg. Mukira is an administrator at the Kibera court. The case is being heard by the Kahawa court. The chief magistrate, Mr Ombewa, has recused himself. Before being appointed to the Kahawa court, he sat on the Kibera court and as such had a professional relationship with Mukira.²⁹

August 30 and October 4, 2023

Kibera, Nairobi County, Kenya

The case dates back to September 25 and December 4, 2015. Kim Young, a Korean national, Patrick Willy and, Dennis Paul Yandi had attempted to ship via EMS (Express Mail Service) Nairobi 2 parcels to the Netherlands containing 2.245 kg and 2.3 kg of small tusk sections. At the time, the September consignment was valued at 1,840,000 shillings (7,770 US\$/kg). Today, the average price is 10 times lower. At the hearing at the end of August 2023, it was noted that the main defendant, Kim Young, on bail like his 2 co-defendants, had disappeared from circulation since the magistrates decided to return his passport. He is believed to be somewhere near Addis Ababa. The Public Prosecutor confirms having asked Interpol to have him apprehended and returned to Kenya, which to all concerned, including himself, would appear to be a procedure doomed to failure. Kim Young was 60 at the time of the crime. The case is getting bogged down. A new hearing took place on October 4, 2023, in the presence of Willy and Yandi, who are also out on bail. SEEJ recorded that the public prosecutor has extended by 45 days the deadline for Interpol to track down Kim Young, apprehend him, and repatriate him.³⁰

Thursday, August 31, 2023

Mwatate, Taita Taveta County, Kenya

After receiving reliable information, a KWS team went to the Bedu Bar and stopped a suspect carrying a bag, asked him to open it and discovered 4.6 kg of raw ivory inside. Dishon Mwangondi Mwangongo is arrested, appears in court on Friday 1 September and pleads not guilty.³¹

MALAWI

August 30, 2023

Jenda, Northern Region, Malawi. Border with Zambia.

Two tusks and a scale in a bag. Arrest of Shadrack Makondetsa. His accomplice fled.³²

UGANDA

July 12 and 31, 2023

Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

It's up to them to choose, if they can choose. Five years in prison or payment of a fine equal to 1,360 US\$ for Robert Ecat and Charles Kanyenya, who admitted to having in their possession 3 tusks or sections of raw ivory weighing 10.65 kg at a Kampala bus station on July 12. The judge said she had taken into consideration that the 2 defendants were first-time offenders, had already spent 3 weeks in custody, and had not wasted the court's time. At the time of New Vision's closure on August 1, neither Ecat nor Kanyenya had paid the fine.³³



TANZANIA

June 2023

Katavi Region, Tanzania

Juma Malosa, 47, was caught carrying 10 sections of raw ivory, looking for a buyer. He lives in a tiny village that can't be found on any map.³⁴

June 2023

Karema, Katavi Region, Tanzania. Border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Officials seized 6 tusks on Lake Tanganyika and arrested Maiko, 19, Maridadi, 62, and Msumeno, 73.³⁵

June 4, 2023

Iringa Region, Tanzania

Speaking to the press, the regional police commander announced the arrest of David Mapunda (42), a Mafinga resident caught in possession of 2 tusks and an elephant tusk fragment, alongside other incidents such as the handing over of weapons by Idodi villagers.³⁶

June 9, 2023

Lushoto, Tanga Region, Tanzania

Hassan Kashamba, Eliudi Andrew and Godson Kitau illegally procured and attempted to sell 5 elephant tusks worth 104 million shillings (44,120 US\$) in June 2022. They were sentenced to 20 years for the first charge and 20 years for the 2nd. Neither the magistrates nor TANAPA (Tanzania National Parks) made any mention of the sentences running concurrently in their articles or statements.³⁷



July 2023

Masasi, Mtwara Region, Tanzania

Yusuph Hamis Makuti, age 43, was sentenced to 30 years in prison for possessing 43 kg of raw ivory divided into 24 sections which originated from 6 elephant calves. The ivory had a total estimated value of 207 million shillings (86,000 US\$ or 1,960 US\$/kg).³⁸



July 9, 2023

Handeni District, Tanga Region, Tanzania

Four tusks. 120 kg. The 2 men were transporting them by motorcycle. At their home, 2 muzzleloaders and ammunition were seized. Their accomplices are being sought.³⁹

End of July to mid-August 2023

Rufiji District, Pwani Region, Tanzania

Three elephants shot on sight and killed. The tusks were cut off 2 of the elephants by poachers in the Juhiwangumwa area next to Nyerere National Park. A patrol tried to intervene. One ranger was injured.⁴⁰

End of August 2023

Dar es Salam, Dar es Salam Region, Tanzania



The Kisutu court sentences Jumanne Hamis to 20 years in prison and payment of a fine equal to 400,000 US\$ for transporting and attempting to sell 8 elephant tusks on March 30, 2017. The prosecutor had called for a harsh sentence for "a crime of economic sabotage and the squandering of the country's economic resources." His alleged accomplice was acquitted. The court heard 11 prosecution witnesses, and no elephant tusk was presented as evidence. Jumanne Hamis defended himself without a lawyer.⁴¹

ZIMBABWE

June 13, 2023

Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe

Police detectives, posing as buyers, arrested Killion Wonder Jakalasi and Gilbert Marengu and intercepted 4 sections of unstamped raw ivory, undoubtedly of illegal origin, in a pink supermarket bag.⁴²

Beginning of July 2023

Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe



Conviction of Musiniwa, a policeman, Kabanda, a retired policeman, and Kakomo, a ZimParks ranger, to 9 years in prison for transporting, possessing, and attempting to sell raw ivory in Harare in April 2022 (see "On the Trail" n°36 p.27, ref.54). Kakomo was tried in absentia. He is still at large and is under an arrest warrant.⁴³

July 15, 2023

Zambezi National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe



A 6-year-old elephant suffered deep chest injuries from a trap. Thanks to an alert from the Victoria Falls Anti Poaching Unit, he received the necessary care.⁴⁴



© Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust

July 19, 2023

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



The left hind foot was well cut by the steel wire trap. It took a little sedative and a fairy's fingers to heal the little elephant, who had only just been born and was already struggling with an unsuspected problem. No sooner had she regained her strength than she went to drink milk under her waiting mother.⁴⁵



© Kariba Animal Welfare Fund Trust

July 22, 2023

Bulawayo, Bulawayo Province, Zimbabwe

Three men including Primate Shoko and Christopher Shoko were caught on the outskirts of Cowdray Park with 4 tusks or sections of tusks.⁴⁶

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

June 24, 2023

Potchefstroom, North West Province, South Africa

The Flying Squad and an anti-narcotics team stopped a Renault SUV, uncovered 3 elephant tusks and arrested 4 men. The provincial police spokesman claims that his team received a tip several hours before.⁴⁷



August 2023

KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

The Democratic Alliance is pleased to learn that several arrests have been made after the Jozenic and the tourists on board were shot at during an attack by poachers targeting elephants swimming towards Swaziland through the Pongolapoort Dam reservoir (see "On the Trail" n°39 p.16, ref.32). However, the Democratic Alliance is outraged that in the same area, coal-exporting trains travel at high speed, crushing antelopes and rhinos, without the locomotive drivers being prosecuted.⁴⁸

August 29, 2023

Alexandra, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Police seize firearms, ammunition, flashing beacons, signal jammers, and an elephant tusk from the looters' hideout, among the quarters of meat that they had just robbed from a truck taken hostage. Four arrests.⁴⁹

BOTSWANA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

June 2023

Botswana

Setabosha Sembongo and his son were fined 20,000 and 10,000 pula (1,450 US\$ and 730 US\$), respectively, for transporting 65 tusk sections weighing 65 kg in their white Corolla back in March 2016. They hid them in the forest and loaded them into their car at around midnight. Informed of the scheme, 4 police officers and 2 wildlife protection officers executed the interception. While caught in the act, the father said he was on his way to Gweta to deliver the tusks to 2 buyers from Zambia. Since the facts occurred a long time ago, the father and son were given 7 days to pay the fines, and if they fail to do so, they will spend 2 years and one year in prison, respectively.⁵⁰



End of August 2023

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



A baby elephant was rescued. He freed himself from a trap but was dragging it, the cut on his neck growing deeper and deeper. It took the Elephants Without Borders team 2 weeks to locate and rescue the calf.⁵¹

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION

June 5, 2023

Yau Tsim Mong District, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China

50 items of alleged elephant ivory seized in a store.⁵²

CHONGQING AUTONOMOUS MUNICIPALITY

Beginning of August 2023

Chongqing Autonomous Municipality, China

Seizure in an incoming parcel of a fan with ivory slats. Total weight: 72.2 grams.⁵³

TIANJIN AUTONOMOUS MUNICIPALITY

Beginning of August 2023

Tianjin Autonomous Municipality, China

- Seizure in an incoming parcel declared to contain a "teapot" of a knife and a fork with "milky white handles with obvious criss-cross lines" (274.6 grams) which laboratory analysis proved to be made of ivory.

- Seizure in an incoming parcel declared to contain "foodstuffs" of a bracelet consisting of 100 ivory pearls (88.7 grams).

Total weight: 363.3 grams.⁵⁴

GUANGDONG PROVINCE

July and August 2023

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport and Jiuzhou Port, Guangdong Province, China

- 33 bracelets, amulets, pendants and other carved ivories (1,410 grams) seized from the luggage of an inbound passenger.

- 2 ivory bracelets (39.63 grams) seized from the luggage of an incoming and an outgoing passenger. The Gongbei customs technology centre reported that the bracelets were made of African elephant ivory.

- Seizure in the luggage of 2 incoming passengers of 5 ivory bracelets (280 grams) wrapped in aluminum foil or hidden in milk powder cans. Laboratory analysis proved them to be modern ivory.

Total weight: 1,729.63 grams.⁵⁵

HUBEI PROVINCE

August 2023

Wuhan, Hubei Province, China

Seizure of 2 painting scroll with tips made of ivory in an incoming parcel. Total weight: 50 grams.⁵⁶

JIANGSU PROVINCE

Beginning of July and August 18, 2023

Nanjing Port and Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, China

- 32 ivory chess pieces (898.34 grams) seized from a passenger's suitcase.

- Seizure in an incoming parcel of 6 painting scroll with tips made of ivory and an incense burner head in ivory (209.2 grams).

Total weight: 1,107.54 grams.⁵⁷

LIAONING PROVINCE

June and July 2023

Dalian International Airport and Shenyang, Liaoning Province, China

- 2 ivory birds (390 grams) seized from the baggage of an incoming passenger.



- Seizure in an incoming parcel of 35 bracelets, necklaces and other jewellery in ivory (4875 grams) wrapped in aluminium foil.

Total weight: 5,265 grams.⁵⁸

SICHUAN PROVINCE

August 2023

Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China



Seizure of 8 painting scroll with tips made of ivory in an incoming parcel. The Chengdu Customs Technology Centre reported that the items were modern ivory. Total weight: 1,008.31 grams.⁵⁹

GUANGXI ZHUANG AUTONOMOUS REGION

August 2023

Pingxiang, Chongzuo Prefecture, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

Seizure in an incoming container of several pieces of rosewood furniture (*Dalbergia* spp., Appendix I or II) declared as "mahogany" and 13 ivory bracelets hidden in small cardboard boxes. Total weight of rosewood: 258.95 kg. Total weight of ivory: 648.95 grams.⁶⁰

TAIWAN

August 2023

Taiwan-Taoyuan International Airport, Taipei Special Municipality, Taiwan

Officials seized 114 carved ivories weighing 2.1 kg as well as 4 bits of red coral (genus *Corallium*) weighing 70 grams in a parcel from abroad.⁶¹

SOUTHEASTERN ASIA

INDONESIA

June 9, 2023

Karang Ampar, Central Aceh Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia



A Sumatran elephant is found dead. She was upside down, 4 legs in the air, swollen, with a deformed vulva and anus. She had been poisoned in an oil palm or rubber plantation. She was around 15 years old.⁶²



July 11, 2023

Tesso Nilo National Park, Pelalawan Regency, Riau Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia



Yet another Sumatran elephant has been poisoned on the island of Sumatra, after which it is named and for which he is in some ways an ambassador. Emblematic and peaceful, the Sumatran elephant is surrounded by batteries of trees used to make paper and oil. Tommy Freddy Manungkalit, spokesman for ARIMBI (Anak Rimba Indonesia), is calling on the European Union to boycott the RAPP (Riau Andalan Pulp and Paper) and IKPP (Indah Kiat Pulp and Paper) paper mills whose industrial plantations surround and suffocate the 1,000 km² Tesso Nilo, where elephants, tapirs, Malayan sun bears and pangolins have taken refuge and are accessible to poachers. For the most part, at least the elephants and bears, they are considered pests and obstacles to profitability.

RAPP is the main branch of APRIL (Asia Pacific Resources International Holdings), one of the world's leading paper manufacturers, with most of its mills in China and Indonesia. APRIL is part of the Royal Golden Eagle Group, owned by Indonesian businessman Sukanto Tanoto. The RAPP factory, located in Pangkalan Kerinci, is PEFC certified. It has an annual production capacity of 2.8 million tonnes of pulp and 1.15 million tonnes of paper. Between 2016 and 2022, APRIL contributed up to 32.4 billion US\$ to Indonesia's GDP. Its products are sold worldwide.

IKPP is an Indonesian paper production company with 3 factories. It employs around 6,000 people. In 2017, it produced 3 million tonnes of pulp, 1.7 million tonnes of writing and printing paper, 2.1 million tonnes of packaging and 108,000 tonnes of tissue. Its turnover from March 2023 to March 2024 is 3.22 billion US\$.

The press office of the BKSDA (Balai Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam) in Riau Province states that the elephant was found dead at 7am on the edge of the south-western Tesso Nilo by workers "from a palm oil plantation". Next to the body of the 12-year-old male elephant was a bag of brown sugar, commonly used in a mixture with agricultural poison to bait jungle animals and get rid of them. The BKSDA points out that "the Sumatran elephants are protected by law", that they are useful for the development of the forests and that they belong to the heritage of future generations. A blathering which will be replaced in a few years' time by a tribute and a posthumous admission of impotence. "The Sumatran elephants were protected by law, were useful to the forests and future generations will unfortunately be deprived of them."⁶³

August 15, 2023

Way Kambas National Park, East Lampung Regency, Lampung Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

An adult Sumatran elephant carcass, decomposing and devoid of tusks, was discovered by a patrol on a survival exercise. Whatever the cause of the elephant's death, the theft of the ivory is obvious.⁶⁴

THAILAND

August 16, 2023

Ban Nam Phu, Loei Province, Thailand



Discovery of a dead elephant near the Phu Luang Wildlife Reserve. The forehead bore the perforating mark of a rifle bullet. Post-mortem examination should confirm the hypothesis of poaching. The tusks are present. The elephant may have fled after being ambushed.⁶⁵

August 20, 2023

Khao Chao Sub-District, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, Thailand



The metal detector reacted when it passed over the head of the elephant's corpse. The vets then extracted 2 large bullets from his left cheek. According to the vets, the elephant died several weeks after the shooting as a result of a generalised infection.⁶⁶

SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

Night of Thursday 1 to Friday 2 June 2023

Borapada, Dhenkanal District, State of Odisha, India

Electrocution of a female elephant aged around 25 years on a farm run by Subas Das.⁶⁷



June 3, 2023

Bhavnagar, Bhavnagar District, State of Gujarat, India

6.8 kg of carved ivories and one kilo of ivory powder seized from Rajendra Maniyar's shop. Maniyar says they have been on the shelf for years and that he is not involved in ivory trafficking.⁶⁸

June 4, 2023

Chennai, Chennai District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of 2 tusks (4 kg). Seven arrests and seizure of the vehicle. The operation was carried out by customs under the new powers granted to them since an amendment to the Wildlife Protection Act came into force on April 1, 2023. The 7 men came from Karnataka. They were intercepted at the junction of the North Boag Road and the GN Chetty Road.⁶⁹

Beginning of June 2023

State of Tamil Nadu, India

Indictment of M. Murugan (62), R. Vellaiyan (60), K. Thangam, J. Mathew John (53), C. Johnson (51), V. Nidhin (30), K. Ashokan (50) and H. Abdul Azeez Karattil (34) for attempting to sell 2 elephant tusks allegedly found in a hole on a bank of the Vairavanur river.⁷⁰

June 8, 2023

Panikoili, Jajpur District, State of Odisha, India

Mamata Moharan, aged 48, Rajesh Sethi, Bhabotosh Jena and Somanath Nayak, aged between 26 and 33, were on their way from Bhubaneswar to Baleswar (200 km) to sell an elephant tusk. They were arrested by the forest police, who had just received information betraying them.⁷¹

June 16, 2023

Satkosia Tiger Reserve, Angul District, State of Odisha, India

The elephant was around 50 years old. His body, overgrown with vermin and closely watched by scavengers, was discovered by people collecting firewood in the forest. The rifle bullet hole near the left ear is obviously suggestive of poaching, but forest officials say the wound is old and the elephant may simply have died of old age. One whole tusk has been secured. The other tusk is broken. One half is missing.⁷²

June 16, 2023

Coimbatore, Coimbatore District, State of Tamil Nadu, India



Three years' imprisonment and a fine of 10,000 rupees (121 US\$) for T. K. John, A. John Selvaraj, S. Rajenderan and P. Christudas responsible for the fatal electrocution of a male elephant in 2010 in Chadivayal. They had surrounded their farm with an electric fence and connected it to the public grid.⁷³

June 19, 2023

Chennai, Chennai District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

We are in the "Kollywood" district, the Tamil Bollywood. Four men were trying to sell 3 alleged elephant pearls known as Gaja Muthu weighing 150, 220 and 350 grams for 15 million rupees, i.e. 181,500 US\$ and 252 US\$/gram. Genetic analyses will be carried out to determine whether they are fakes or genuine Gaja Muthu. The suspects claim to have "obtained" the beads from the Sathyamangalam Reserve.

Gaja Muthu or elephant beads, see "On the Trail" n°15 p. 101 (ref.97), n°19 p. 112 (ref.139), n°22 p. 100, n°23 p.134 (ref.151), n°24 p.79 (ref.106), n°32 p.51 (ref.215), n°35 p.33 (ref.122 and 125), n°36 p.39 (ref.120) and n°37 p.37 (ref.125).⁷⁴

June 27, 2023

Kozhikode, Kozhikode District, State of Kerala, India

Sharath was arrested at a bus stop by a flying squad as he was transporting 5 sections of raw ivory and a lock of elephant hair from Alappuzha at the request of a friend. Sharath's mission was to meet a buyer in Kozhikode.⁷⁵

June 29 2023

Doddabyrankuppe, Mysuru District, State of Karnataka, India



Electrocution of an elephant believed to be around 35 years old. His head was in the thicket and his legs were on the old Mysuru-Manandavadi road. With his trunk, he touched a cable laid by a farmer who fled and was found. The electricity was supplied by solar panels and, as is all too often the case, with a lethal voltage that exceeded authorised standards. Electric traps kill animals and people.⁷⁶



June 29, 2023

Dhupdhara, Goalpara District, State of Assam, India



Electrocution of an adult elephant in a banana plantation. He was burned at the head and the trunk.⁷⁷

July 1, 2023

Chengarakara, Ernakulam District, State of Kerala, India

Arrest of P.A. Aneesh and Akhil Mohan, the sellers, and Shyamlal and Aneeshkumar, the buyers. Seizure of 2 tusks, a car, and a motorcycle. The sellers are said to have "found" them in a ruined house in northern Kerala. Are they the tusks of a wild elephant or a domestic elephant? Investigators are trying to find out.⁷⁸

July 2, 2023

Jamukeswar, Mayurbhanj District, State of Odisha, India

Seizure by forest officials of 4 tusks. Five arrests. Suspects' identities withheld to facilitate investigation.⁷⁹

July 14, 16 and 20, 2023

Vazhakode, Thrissur District, State of Kerala, India



After being electrocuted some twenty days ago, an elephant has been buried by employees of a rubber plantation. A certain Akhil Mohan, arrested in possession of a defence section in Kodanad a fortnight ago, revealed the scandal and led the police to a suspicious burial mound in the heart of "the rubber plantation", whose owner had fled. The body was exhumed. Half of a large tusk was missing. The elephant was between 15 and 20 years old. Around ten people are being questioned. Roy Maniyanchira, the owner of the plantation, resurfaced on July 20. He admitted the electrocution and that the carcass had been buried, but denied any involvement in ivory trafficking.⁸⁰

July 16, 2023

Gumla, Gumla District, State of Jharkhand, India

Seizure after surveillance by 9 forest officials of 2 tusks under the seat of an electric scooter. Arrest of Prem Jaiswal and Navalkishore Mahato. They wanted to smuggle ivory into Odisha. After 4 hours of interrogation, they were taken to prison.⁸¹

July 27, 2023

Chipyana Buzurg, Gautam Buddha Nagar District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Seizure in a laptop bag of a defence of 1.8 kg. The 2 suspects were travelling in a stolen car.⁸²

FAMILY AFFAIRS

July 30, 2023

Kambibane, Kodagu District, State of Karnataka, India



The elephant, aged around 20, was electrocuted in a plantation by a cable connected to the public network. Kumar, the farmer, and his son Gagan are on the run.⁸³

July 30, and August 21, 2023

Kozhikode, Kozhikode District, State of Kerala, India

- Jaffar Sadique, Mohammed Basil, Abdul Rasheed and Shukkoor were arrested on Sunday night near the bus station with 8 kg of raw ivory valued at 1.6 million rupees or 19,500 US\$ and 2440 US\$/kg.
- Three weeks later, plot twist in the investigation, thanks to the confessions of the suspects. An civil police officer from Tamil Nadu is allegedly involved in the case. He has been on holiday for 3 months and has not yet returned to duty. During his "holidays", he uses SIM cards in his wife's name. He is in hiding. The Tamil Nadu police now needs to check that the ivory seized at Kozhikode in Kerala did not come from seized stocks.⁸⁴

August 4 and 7, 2023

Around Volka, Alipurduar District, State of West Bengal, India

- On Friday morning, the head of an elephant with his tusks removed was spotted drifting in the river Sankosh, not far from the Buxa Tiger Reserve.
- On Sunday evening, at around the same spot, it was the elephant's leg that was spotted in the river. Volka is on the border between Assam and West Bengal. Carried by the Sankosh, a tributary of the Brahmaputra, the dismembered elephant puzzle is thought to have come from Assam.⁸⁵

August 7, 2023

Around Nagarasampatti, Krishnagiri District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Interception of 2 motorbikes near the public secondary school. Seizure of a pair of tusks. Four arrests.⁸⁶

August 11 and 13, 2023

Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve, Erode District, State of Tamil Nadu, India



Arrest of Kondan and Mohan, suspected of being responsible 2 days earlier for the electrocution of an elephant by clandestine lines strung around a maize plantation.⁸⁷

August 17, 2023

Naxalbari, Darjeeling District, State of West Bengal, India. Border with Bhutan.

Seizure at a bus stop of a section of tusk (945 g). Arrest of Riwarz Pradhan, a police officer in Darjeeling, Tapan Thapa, a BSF (Border Security Force) soldier, and Prabhu Munda, Dharam Das and Riyan Kharia. The raw ivory is believed to have come from the head of an elephant drifting in the Sankosh river (see above) 170 km by road from Naxalbari. The 5 traffickers are believed to be from Alipurduar.⁸⁸

August 18, 2023

Tengatoli, Morigaon District, State of Assam, India

Seizure of a 2.5 kg tusk at the home of Asmat Ali by guards at the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary.⁸⁹

Night of 21 to 22 August 2023

Satali Mandalpara, Alipurduar District, State of West Bengal, India

The fence was electrified and reinforced with razor blades, a double barrier to prevent access to a rice field. At night, the elephant received a fatal shock. "Last year, we issued letters to tea garden authorities and elected representatives of panchayats to ensure illegal energised fences are not put up anywhere" says the deputy field director of the Buxa Tiger Reserve - west division. "It seems we have to repeat the campaign."⁹⁰



OPERATION WILEP

August 22, 2023

Kamakhya, Kamrup Metropolitan District, State of Assam, India

Seizure by the GRP (Government Railway Police) of 2.34 kg of raw ivory on board the Lachit Express from the hands of Sandeep Joshi, who was travelling from Dhemaji district to Guwahati.⁹¹

SRI LANKA

June 4, 2023

Polonnaruwa District, North Central Province, Sri Lanka

Electrocuted or shot, buried, covered in leaves and branches, such is the expeditious fate of a wild elephant who had got into fields belonging to the army and whose history, age and sex are unknown.⁹²



August 30, 2023

Gemunupura, North Western Province, Sri Lanka

Blood was dripping from his mouth. There was no sign of a shot and no fence nearby. The elephant may have been poisoned. Crowds on foot, bicycle and motorbike surrounded the corpse in the dry forest.⁹³



WESTERN EUROPE

GERMANY

July 27, 2023

Düsseldorf, North Rhine-Westphalia Land, Germany

A 27-year-old nurse was fined 1,080 € (1,180 US\$) for buying for 80 € (87 US\$) an ivory statuette (2 crocodiles facing each other) as a souvenir of his holidays in Greece, for 80 € (87 US\$); he's claiming he thought it was made of bone.⁹⁴



AUSTRIA

End of June 2023

Vienna International Airport, Vienna State, Austria

Customs in Asia and Africa are familiar with the logs inside which raw ivory is concealed, but customs at Vienna airport discovered a miniaturized variant when they dismantled the wooden sculptures that a Polish traveller was bringing back from Uganda via Istanbul. They seized ivory statuettes inside 3 of them.⁹⁵



SOUTHERN EUROPE

ITALY

End of August 2023
Roccaraso, Province of L'Aquila, Abruzzo Region, Italy



Seizure by the carabinieri at an antiques fair of elephant ivory jewellery, statuettes, letter openers, crucifixes, and figurines valued at 4,500 € (4,955 US\$). The 66-year-old seller, who lived in Rome, had no CITES documents to prove the traceability and legality of the items.⁹⁶

EASTERN EUROPE

CZECHIA

June 28, 2023
Litovel, Olomouc Region, Czechia

The 80-year-old man was selling an elephant humerus and 2 elephant tusks for 300,000 crowns (13,710 US\$). According to expert reports, they came from 3 different elephants and there was no guarantee of their legal origin. He faces 3 years in prison and the permanent seizure of his elephant souvenirs which, if his memory is as good as his accounts, he claims to have held since the 1980s.⁹⁷

OCEANIA

FRANCE (NEW CALEDONIA)

July 21, 22, and 23, 2023
Nouméa, South Province, Overseas Collectivity of New Caledonia, France

Seizure of 71 carved ivories (necklaces, bracelets, figurines, knives, toothpicks, etc.) during the 23rd Collectors' Show.⁹⁸



MAMMOTHS

EUROPE

RUSSIA

Beginning of June 2023

Khabarovsk Krai, Russia

Seizure of 16 tonnes of mammoth ivory bound for China and the Netherlands (European Union) without the approval of the Ministry of Culture. The smuggled goods are worth 192.4 million roubles i.e. 2.4 million US\$ and 150 US\$/kg.¹



July 25, 2023

Bikinsky District, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia. Border with China.

Seizure by the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (FSB) under the wooden floor of a private property of 1.5 tons of mammoth tusks and tusk sections with an estimated value of 50 million roubles (582,650 US\$ or 390 US\$/kg).²

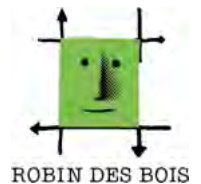


ANALYSIS OF SALES OF MAMMOTH IVORY BY AUCTIONEERS IN FRANCE BETWEEN 2020 AND 2023

In September 2019, the NGO Robin des Bois, a CITES observer, launched a survey of the French market for raw and worked mammoth ivory. This Analysis of sales of mammoth ivory by auctioneers in France between 2020 and 2023 shows that the overwhelming majority of items sold as mammoth ivory may in fact be elephant ivory. The risk of fraud could be ruled out by an expert assessment, but this is not compulsory and remains marginal. Of the 135 sales of "mammoth" worked ivory analysed, only 27 lot descriptions (20%) refer to an expert by name. Only one of the experts mentioned is known for his expertise in ivory, while the others are known for their expertise in Asian or Far Eastern art. Schreger angle examination is often cited in CITES literature as a means of determining whether a worked ivory is elephant or mammoth ivory. Only one advert refers to it. The fact that a CITES permit was available for 3 lots, even though they had been authenticated by an expert, shows that confusion reigns, or that the most cautious sellers, or those with a good knowledge of the market's tricks, prefer to obtain a CITES permit, even though it is not compulsory.

The mammoth ivory trade erases the scruples of some consumers on the grounds that mammoths are extinct. However, in France and Europe, this trade is not subject to the provision of evidence that would make it possible to rule out an illegal trade in elephant ivory. It is therefore Robin des Bois' opinion that if France and the European Union do not impose an independent expertise prior to sale or do not extend their elephant ivory regulations to mammoth ivory, an Appendix II listing of the genus *Mammuthus* would reduce the risks of laundering and facilitate the work of anti-fraud agents. Such a listing would also help to combat the smuggling of mammoth tusks, the environmental damage caused by brutal and unauthorised excavations in the permafrost and archaeological and cultural looting. This report was sent to CITES. The full report (pdf 50 pages, 2.1 MB) is available at :

<https://robindesbois.org/wp-content/uploads/Analysis-sales-mammoth-ivory-auctioneers-France-robindesbois.pdf>



"Large medicine woman. Far East, ancient work. Mammoth ivory." No expert. Estimated 200-300 €.



"Calmels Laguiole knife. Three-piece knife. Fossilised mammoth ivory handle." Estimated 400-500 €.

ELEPHANTS, HIPPOS, WALRUSES AND FELINES

AFRICA

ANGOLA

July 20, 2023

Luengue-Luiana National Park, Cuando Cubango Province, Angola

Dried elephant meat and 2 tusks, a carcass, and a litre of lion fat, 2 firearms, and 50 cartridges were seized from the bivouac of a 50-year-old poacher.¹

KENYA

June 23 and July 3, 2023

Meru, Meru County, Kenya

- Arrest of Martin Kinoti Limbere and Douglas Mutembei in flagrante delicto. They were carrying 25 kg of raw ivory and a leopard skin (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) in a car.

- The court at JKIA (Jomo Kenyatta International Airport) subjected their provisional release to an individual surety of 2 million shillings (14,500 US\$). In the first pre-trial hearings, SEEJ-AFRICA (Saving Elephants through Education and Justice) noted that the weight of the raw ivory seized had decreased to 21.4 kg, whereas the seizure report mentioned 25 kg. SEEJ-AFRICA does not rule out the possibility that these differences in weight are attributable to the calibration of the scales used by the KWS and by the police, while noting that to the best of the knowledge of its court reporters, the weights declared in the proceedings are often lower than the initial weight of the seizure and rarely or never higher. Without declaring it openly, SEEJ-AFRICA comes to suggest that a fraction of the seizure is diverted for personal use by the parties involved between the date of the seizure and that of the first hearing where the suspects are questioned about the course of events.²

UGANDA

August 2023

Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

Sentencing of Tumukunde Alex to 10 months in prison or payment of a fine equal to 170 US\$ for illegal possession of 2 cat skins and raw ivory.³



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

August 4, 2023

Bunia, Ituri Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Seizure of 72 kg of ivory and 7 hippopotamus teeth (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) by defence and security forces in a hotel. Arrest of 4 people, including Franck Mambweni, holder of a Monusco pass (United Nations Organisation Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo). An investigation is underway to verify the authenticity of this document.⁴

EUROPE

POLAND

End of August 2023

Krakow and Tarnów, Lesser Poland Voivodeship, Poland

Seizure by the Warsaw-based Economic Crime Department and the Customs Section of the Ministry of Finance in 2 art galleries of 228 elephant ivory items, walrus tusks (*Odobenus rosmarus*, Appendix III in Canada), and stony coral branches (Scleractinia, Appendix II). The legality and traceability of the items were not attested by the CITES certificates issued after investigation by the Ministry of the Environment. Most of the ivory items were described as "Asian antiques." The overall value of the seizure is estimated to be 600,000 zloty (150,000 US\$).⁵



RHINOCEROSES



Eastern black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis* ssp. *michaeli*). Photo Chris Fisher

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: the Indian rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis*, the Sumatran rhinoceros *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*, and the Javan rhinoceros *Rhinoceros sondaicus*.

On the Trail n°41

Black market horn quotation from media or official sources

The values were estimated at the time of the seizures

1kg of raw horn

Continent	Pays	US\$	Ref. (year)
Africa	South Africa	6,000	15 (2023)
	Kenya	20,820	3 (2015)

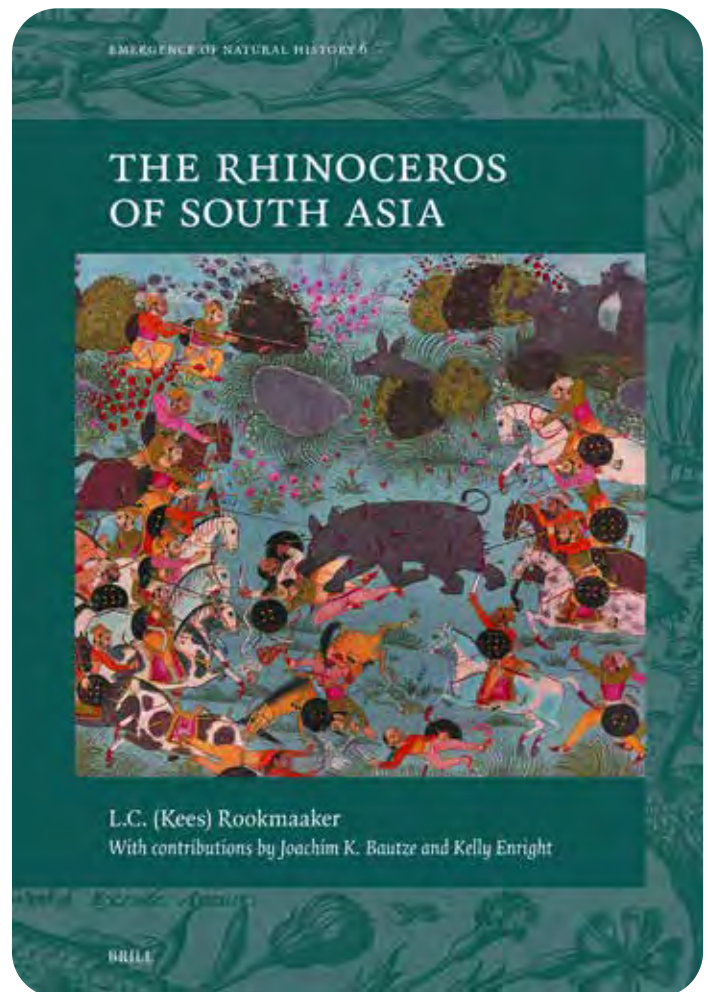
“THE RHINOCEROS OF SOUTH ASIA” BY KEES ROOKMAAKER

Three species of rhinoceros once inhabited South Asia, two of which disappeared over a century ago. This survey aims to reconstruct the historical distribution of these large mammals resulting in new maps showing the extent of their occurrences. Thousands of sources varied in time and nature are used to study the interactions between man and rhinoceros. The text is supported by over 700 illustrations and 38 maps showing the importance of the rhinoceros in the scientific and cultural fabric of Asia and beyond.

This book can be viewed and downloaded free of charge online (pdf 889 pages, 143.8 MB): <https://brill.com/display/title/64767>

Rookmaaker, Kees. 2024. *The Rhinoceros of South Asia*. Leiden, Boston: Brill (Emergence of Natural History, vol. 6), pp. i-liv, 1-835 (4to). With contributions by Joachim K. Bautze and Kelly Enright.

In the picture on the cover, full of flowers, colors and water, 13 archers and horsemen armed with shields assault a male rhinoceros with spears, arrows and braided manes from the front and back, with his left flank alone covered with some 15 wounds. The muskets aiming at a teen rhino hidden in the groves may soon turn on him, blocking his only remaining escape route. This anonymous painting, dating from 1690-1695, is the last surviving evidence of the presence of rhinos in the princely State of Raghogarh, now absorbed into the State of Madhya Pradesh.¹



RHINOCEROS RED CROSS SOUTH AFRICA

Rhino poaching is declining in Kruger Park, now Bunker Park, and spreading to other provinces, notably KwaZulu-Natal. But poaching is not the only pressure. The National Biodiversity Economy Strategy (NBES) project aims to “optimise biodiversity-based business potentials across the terrestrial, freshwater, estuarine, marine and coastal systems, and to contribute to economic growth with local beneficiation, job creation, poverty alleviation, and food security.” In the words of President Ramaphosa, biodiversity for local communities is currently as useful as “Rembrandts lying in the attic”. The NBES’s “extractivist” approach sees biodiversity as a mine and wants by year 2036 to multiply plant trade and bioprospecting, which involves the use of plants for pharmaceuticals and cosmetics, as well as to double and triple the consumption of antelope, zebra and crocodile meat. NBES also aims to increase financial resources from sport hunting and trophy exports. In 2022, the 6,000 hunters from the USA, Europe and other continents killed 36,500 wild animals, according to figures from the South African Guides and Hunters Union. To meet the financial targets for trophy hunting set by the NBES, 16,500 international hunters would be required by 2036, and thousands of elephants, lions, buffalo and white rhino legally killed. The economics of vision tourism are completely ignored.

On the subject of rhinos, NBES opens up a new avenue. The idea is to open the floodgates to “medical” tourism and encourage the world’s upper classes to come to South Africa for cures based on ground horn powder. This innovative approach, based on ancient prescriptions now disproved by traditional Chinese and conventional medicine, would make it possible to avoid listing rhinos in the CITES Appendices. Since horns are not legally exportable, the idea would be to bring to South Africa customers obsessed by the supposed preventive and curative virtues of horns, and keen to rejuvenate and boost their sexual activity.

NBES seeking to rally the voices of some rural communities and the rhino horn trade lobby, together with the voices of hunters and hunting guides, undoubtedly helped President Ramaphosa’s African National Congress party secure a relative majority in the May 29, 2024 general election.²

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

June 23, 2023

Mombasa, Mombasa County, Kenya

Mr. Hajji and Mr. Mwinyi were sentenced to 4 years in prison for holding a rhinoceros horn (1.406 kg) worth 20,820 US\$/kg at the time of the incident (December 27, 2015), and 15,530 US\$/kg on the day of the trial (June 23, 2023). Hajji and Mwinyi, construction workers, said in their defence that they “found” the horn while working at a building site the day after Christmas and wanted to “give it” to a sorcerer (see “On the Trail” n°11 p.56, ref.3).³



July 28, 2023

Marsabit, Marsabit County, Kenya

The court authorizes the 48-hour extension of police custody for Abudho Ali Katello, Diya Sosa, and Abdullahi Mohamed. On the night of July 28, their truck was searched at the Karantina checkpoint on the Isiolo-Moyale expressway, and 2 trophies suspected to be rhinoceros horns were seized. The KWS needs more time to find out whether the horns are genuine or counterfeit.⁴

August 9, 2023

Meru National Park, Meru County, Kenya

The rangers spot a white rhino in trouble, limping. The KWS and SWT veterinary teams intervene. It's a female. She was anaesthetised from a Lewa Wildlife Conservancy helicopter with 5 mg etorphine and 80 mg azaperone. Her breathing during the operation is supported by an injection of butorphanol and doxapram. The steel cable of the trap surrounds the right front and hind legs and causes superficial lacerations. It is sheared off with wire cutters. The wounds are sprayed with an antibiotic. The wake-up antidote was quickly injected. She woke up after 3 minutes, got up and walked off into the savannah unhindered and limp-free.⁵



ZIMBABWE

July-August 2023

Imire Reserve, Mashonaland East Province, Zimbabwe

Following the poaching of 4 white rhinos in a private reserve, the owners decided to relocate the last 4 rhinos who survived the slaughter. They were transported to the Imire Private Reserve. Major logistical resources were deployed, including helicopters, cranes and transport by truck with police escorts. The 4 rhinos are aged between 2 and 13. At first, they will be kept in a boma (enclosure) to help them adapt and to monitor their health and psychological state. Just before she was transferred, the vets discovered a bullet in the shoulder of the little 2-year-old rhino. The operation was supported by the Aspinall Foundation, WeWild Africa and ZimParks.⁶

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

June 4, 2023

South Africa

Council of Contributors, a rhino protection NGO founded in 2017 that operates in South Africa and Kenya, announced that in the same reserve under a full moon, one rhino was killed, and another was shot in the neck. Fortunately, the latter had the bullet extracted and wound treated. The prognosis is favourable. The press release adds that all rhinos in the (unnamed) reserve have been dehorned to prevent poaching during the next full moon on July 3.⁷



June 20, 2023

Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Freedom Ndlovu was sentenced to the following prison terms: 2 years for breaking into and entering the Kruger; 10 years for poaching 3 rhinos; 10 years for the possession of an undeclared weapon; 10 years for the intent to commit a crime with this weapon; 5 years for the possession of undeclared ammunition; 10 years for committing an organised crime, and 2 years for the possession of a dangerous weapon [an axe]. This amounts to 32 years in prison. The SAPS (South African Police Service) press release did not specify whether certain sentences run concurrently. Ndlovu is also banned for life from owning a weapon. Ndlovu was 32 at the time of the verdict. The story dates back to August 2016. His accomplice Alsony Baloyi was sentenced in June 2021 to 23 years in prison (see “On the Trail” n°33 p.65, ref.21). A 3rd man, Fanual Nqobe, is still at large.⁸



**June 26 and 29 and July 5, 14 and 15, 2023
Mahikeng, Rustenburg and Brits, North West
Province, South Africa**

- It was on Sunday April 20, 2014, the new heist of the century (see "On the Trail" n°5 p.71), with the Daily Maverick calling it a military operation. A gang robbed the province's coveted and highly protected Heritage House and made off with 80-90 kg of rhino horns. The hooded men entered the vault containing seized horns, horns broken in rhino fights, horns from preventive dehorning and splinters scattered during chainsaw cutting. According to images, they were moving through the cellars and upstairs as if they were at home and even knew where the security cameras were located. Many questioned where the temple guards were and why it took SAPS almost 10 hours to arrive on scene. Three second-hand suspects were arrested in June 2014.

- Nine years later, the Hawks, the elite police force, are allegedly on the trail of the organisers.

- Overnight on June 29, Elias Manganda, an alleged Malawian national, was arrested in Rustenburg, 200 km from Mahikeng. Officials seized 5 cars - a Range Rover, Land Rover, BMW, Nissan X-Trail and Honda Civic - and reliable sources claimed that some 15 men were involved in the Heritage House robbery.

- On July 5, Lindani Mthombeni was arrested in Brits, 50 km from Rustenburg.

- On Friday, July 14 and Saturday, July 15, Lonjezo Kanjipiti and Lefa Mankgaba, were also arrested in Rustenburg. Authorities still have yet to examine these 4 suspects' bail applications, prove their guilt, track down possible accomplices, and find the horns, which according to the South African press at the time, were worth 15 million US\$, or 187,500 US\$/kg on the Asian retail market.⁹

**July 4, 2023
Skukuza, Kruger National Park,
Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**



Enock Ngobeni, a Mozambique national, entered illegally Kruger Park through the Tshokwane section with an accomplice who fled with the firearm on April 17, 2022. He poached 2 rhinos and cut the 4 horns that were in his pack when he was arrested by rangers alerted by gunshots. He was sentenced by the Skukuza "rhinoceros" court to 28 years in prison:

- 2 years in prison for trespassing in the Kruger National Park.

- 1 year in prison for violation of the immigration act.

- 10 years for killing a protected species (a rhinoceros) without a permit.

- 10 years for killing a protected species (the second rhino) without a permit.

- 4 years for conspiracy to commit an offence.

- 1 year for possession of a dangerous weapon (the axe).

Some sentences are combined. Enock Ngobeni, age 31, will spend 22 years in prison.¹⁰

**July 4, 2023
Hoedspruit, Limpopo Province, South
Africa**



Preventive arrest of 5 men about to break into the Kruger National Park. Seizure of a 303-caliber rifle, 10 rounds of 303-caliber ammunition, and an axe.¹¹

**July 7, 2023
Between Makhanda and Fort Beaufort, Eastern
Cape Province, South Africa**

At 6 a.m., police stopped a vehicle between Makhanda and Fort Beaufort. They discovered a rifle, ammunition, and all the essentials for poaching in several hiding places, and arrested 2 men from Gauteng who were charged with preparation of an organised crime and illegal possession of a firearm and ammunition.¹²

**July 15, 2023
Calcutta, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

A clandestine rifle was seized. It was in the hands of 22-year-old Daniel Makwakwa, who was reportedly going with others to use it in the Kruger. The SAPS statement said that thanks to the cooperation between the public and the police, an attack on wildlife had been prevented. The rifle will be subjected to a ballistics assessment to possibly link it to a wildlife or common law crime. Makwakwa's release on bail will be examined in the coming days.¹³



July 28, 2023

Mtubatuba, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa



The long-awaited trial (it had been postponed 30 times in 9 years) of Dumisani Gwala, presented as a rhinoceros horn mogul, has given birth to a tiny punishment. Gwala received only a 6-month suspended prison sentence and a 20,000 rand (1,070 US\$) fine for rebellion against law enforcement officers. The judge found that the evidence against Gwala was inconsistent and inadmissible, and deplored the fact that the police had not been more “proactive” and “cautious” in gathering evidence. Addressing Gwala and his accomplice Mageba, the judge said he wasn’t sure of their innocence but didn’t have enough evidence to establish their guilt. “If you were indeed involved in what you were accused of, now is your chance to stay away from it.” “You’ve been given a second chance and I suggest you take it.” Is this really the last time “On the Trail” will retrace Gwala’s actions and relationships? see “On the Trail” n°12 p.71 (ref.30), n°14 p.63 (ref.21) and 66 (ref.41), n°18 p.72 (ref.31), n°19 p.86 (ref.20), n°20 p.81 (ref.15), n°21 p.75 (ref.17), n°31 p.45 (ref.15), n°32 p.62 (ref.18) and n°40 p.44 (ref.20).¹⁴

Beginning of August 2023

Kempton Park, Gauteng Province, South Africa

A routine patrol believed they spotted suspicious driving maneuvers by a Toyota Etios on Expressway 21. The vehicle was stopped and a suspected rhinoceros horn was discovered under the driver’s seat. Hlulani Baloyi was unable to justify its presence. The horn weighs 1.6 kg and is estimated to be worth 170,000 rand (9,630 US\$ or 6,000 US\$/kg).¹⁵

August 4, and December 6, 2023

Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

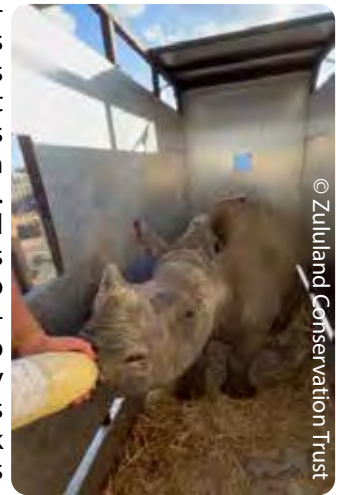


Mogale is sentenced to 6 years’ imprisonment, Ngomane and Nkosana Ndlovu to 8 years’ imprisonment, for premeditating as a conspiracy the poaching of rhinos in the Kruger Park, where they had sneaked in with weapons and all the necessary paraphernalia, without having time to carry out the act thanks to the anticipated action of the rangers.¹⁶

August 2023

KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Arrival at the orphanage of a rhinoceros aged around 6 months and weighing almost 260 kg. His mother is believed to have been the victim of poaching. He is very agitated and in the early days it was decided, as much to protect him as to protect the care team, to place him in a specially built lodge. He remains nervous and drinks milk greedily. The team is working hard to gradually gain his trust.¹⁷



August 24, 2023

Skukuza, Parc National Kruger, Province du Mpumalanga, Afrique du Sud



Thomas Yingwana, 35, a Mozambican subject, sentenced to 16 years in prison. He had been arrested on November 22 by rangers who had spotted his footprints.

- 2 years for trespassing.
- 1 year for contravention of the Immigration Act of South Africa.
- 6 years for possession of unlicensed firearm.
- 2 years for illegal possession of ammunition.
- 4 years for possession of an unlicensed firearm with an intention to commit crime.
- 1 year for possession of dangerous weapon (an axe).

As some sentences are combined, the effective sentence will be 9 years’ imprisonment.¹⁸

NAMIBIA

June 2023

Outjo District, Kunene Region, Namibia

Discovery of 2 white rhinos poached and stripped of their horns. No suspects have yet been identified. Since the beginning of the year, 23 rhinos have been poached in the country.¹⁹

June 19, 2023

Outapi, Omusati Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.



Acting on a tip, police arrested 2 Angolan individuals on the Ruacana-Outapi road in possession of an undeclared large-caliber firearm, a machete, a screwdriver, a flashlight and a telescope. They allegedly sought to poach at least one rhinoceros in Otjiwarongo, in the Otjozondjupa region, as part of a conspiracy. They entered Namibia without requesting permission.²⁰

July 13 to 16, 2023

Otjiwarongo, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

The police spokeswoman confirms that after the discovery of suspicious footprints in a private reserve, a special operation was mounted as a matter of urgency. It resulted in the arrest of 2 intruders who were not in possession of weapons. Three others escaped. The rhino being tracked was not injured.²¹

August 18, 2023

Maroelaboom, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

A female black rhino is found dead near a watering hole in Eden Farm, a private reserve. A bullet was located in her stomach using a metal detector. The victim's horns were intact.²²

SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

June 27, 2023

Hugaltoli, Morigaon District, State of Assam, India

Arrest of Saharuddin. He is allegedly involved in the poaching of a rhinoceros in March (see "On the Trail" n°40 p.47, ref. 40) and other animals in the Kaziranga and in Laokhowa wildlife sanctuary.²³

June 30, 2023

Manas National Park, Baksa District, State of Assam, India

Discovery of a charred rhinoceros skeleton in the heart of an impenetrable forest area. Among the bones, the horn was nowhere to be found. The poaching is believed to have taken place in May 2023. To burn a rhinoceros corpse, you have to feed the fire for several hours. The fatal fumes and odors did not attract the attention of the guards, much to the astonishment of wildlife conservationists. Coincidence or not, in May, in Rangia (80 km from Manas Park), Zahirul Islam had been arrested during a roadside check. There was a rhinoceros horn in his car.²⁴



NEPAL

June 24, 2023

Manahari, Makwanpur District, Bagmati Province, Nepal

The death occurred several weeks ago. The rhino is believed to have been killed with bladed weapons. The horn is missing. It left Parsa National Park to an unknown destination and unknown hands.²⁵

July 5, 2023

**Ramgram
Nawalparasi
Province, Nepal**

**Municipality-18,
District, Lumbini**



Two rhinos, a mother and her calf, were electrocuted near the Narayani River on January 20 (see "On the Trail" n°39 p.29, ref.16) and the horn of the 14-year-old female had been cut off by poachers.

Today, July 5, 2023, the Chitwan National Park administration revealed that the 3 suspected poachers had been arrested on May 26. One of them, Krishna Bahadur Mahato, admits to the crime and says he was incited to commit it by watching several videos on YouTube and TikTok. While working as a daily agricultural labourer, he spotted a rhino in the vicinity, stole cables from a construction site, and set up an electrical ambush by plugging into the Siddeshwar temple's network. According to statistics, since 2015, 204 rhinos have died in Chitwan (952 km²). Of these, 42 died in rhino fights, 19 by drowning in swamps, 16 after tiger attacks, 10 by electrocution, 10 as a result of disease, 9 by firearms, 5 by poisoning, 3 by falling into pits, and 28 for unknown reasons.²⁶

WESTERN EUROPE

BELGIUM

June 30, 2023

**Namur, Province of Namur, Walloon
Region, Belgium**



Seizure of a horn that the original owner claims to have received in 1959 from a cousin returning from the Belgian Congo. In 2016, he decided to part with it and sold it to 2 cellar and attic emptiers via a written agreement. The 2 purchasers then attempted to declare and validate their acquisition on the CITES Belgium website in the hope of reselling it. Their justification file was refused and the horn seized.²⁷

FRANCE

End of June 2023

Chambéry, Department of Savoie, France

Unease persists at the Natural History Museum. Plant, mineral and animal collections are said to be at the mercy of looting by some members of the staff or their accomplices. There are still a few crumbs of rhinoceros horns in the showcases, but a horn photographed in the 2013 inventory has disappeared. A complaint against a person unknown has been lodged by one of the co-presidents. Other pieces are said to have disappeared from the storerooms. The truth is hard to come by. For several years now, the Natural History Museum of Savoie has been undergoing an interminable crisis of governance, which Chambéry town hall and the Regional Directorate of Cultural Affairs have allowed to deteriorate.²⁸



Puma (*Puma concolor*). Photo Sofia Salas

On the Trail n°41

Black market feline part or live feline quotation from media or official sources

The values were estimated at the time of the seizures

Animal	Part or specimen	US\$	Country/Region	Ref. (year)
Tiger	Skin	11,000	India	15 (2023)
Leopard	Skin	2,830	Namibia	41 (2023)
Serval	3-month old live serval	6,330	Norway	73 (2021)
	Live serval	720	Russia	74 (2023)
Jaguar	Live jaguar cub	30,000	United States of America	78 (2022)
		20,000		
	Small tooth mounted as a pendant	150	Suriname	80 (2023)
	Big tooth mounted as a pendant	300		

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

July 27, 2023

Phoenix, State of Arizona, United States of America

Alcaraz was sentenced to three years' probation, banned from owning an exotic animal and ordered to pay 6,000 US\$ restitution to the sanctuary that took in the tiger he was trying to sell for 25,000 US\$ on the Internet. For more information, see "On the Trail" n°39 p.31 (ref.2).¹



August 25, 2023

Dallas, State of Texas, United States of America

A tiger was in misery at the back of a yard. The police, with the help of the zoo and Dallas Animal Services, also removed from block 5700 in Johnson Lane, roosters, chickens and dogs, which had been exploited in illegal fighting rings.²

MEXICO

FAMILY AFFAIRS

August 15, 2023

Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, State of Mexico, Mexico

The young man, Angel N., was riding in his car with a tiger cub (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) in the passenger seat. He was intercepted on Texcoco Avenue. He declared that the tiger cub was a gift from his father and that he had been bought on a ranch in the State of Chihuahua. Gabriel N., the father, went to the police station with the tiger's "papers." The police found them to be falsified. The tiger cub was handed over to Los Reyes Zoo (La Paz, Baja California State).³



© PROFEPa

ASIA

CHINA

Beginning of June 2023

Dalian International Airport, Liaoning Province, China

Seizure of a tiger claw pendant in the luggage of a passenger from abroad. Total weight: 6.88 grams.⁴



June 3, 2023

Khadupani, Nuapada District, State of Odisha, India



Authorities seized a 15-cm-by-15-cm tiger skin fragment, 4 pangolin scales, a bow and several arrows, a battery and steel wire from 4 men, their ages ranging from 23 to 62. After scouring the Sunabeda wildlife sanctuary in Odisha, the gang moved into the nearby Chhattisgarh forests to capitalize on the lack of surveillance along the 2 States' border. Recently, the Chhattisgarh authorities lost contact with one of the adult tigers that often stormed the Udanti-Sitanadi Reserve and looked stealthy in trap-camera photos. The seized square of skin and claw are believed to come from the missing tiger.⁵

June 21, 2023

Paoni Tehsil, Bhandara District, State of Maharashtra, India

Forest officers intercept 2 men on a scooter. They are carrying a tiger skin measuring 82 cm long and 79 cm wide. Experts are skeptical. "The length of the tail of a tiger or tiger cub is approximately one-third of the length of the whole skin, and not a few centimeters." They also note anomalies in the stripes on the chest and belly. "This instant skin is suspected to be a fake one unless there is some mutation in tigers." The foresters admit that at first they had their own doubts, but checks were made and the skin was washed with turpentine and did not fade. Genetic analysis will tell the truth. Deciphering the 2 suspects' telephones revealed black magic practices and the manipulation of an owl's leg and a porcupine quill.⁶



© Lokmat Times

TIGERS - followed

June 6, July 2, 6, and 13, 2023

Dhansai, Narmadapuram District, and Betul District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

-Monday June 26 and following days. Discovery of a decapitated tiger carcass at Churna in the Satpura Tiger Reserve. In its initial investigations, the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department, through the voice of its director in Bhopal (capital of Madhya Pradesh), favoured the hypothesis of a natural death followed by decapitation for black magic purposes. "There are still some groups of people who believe that money can rain if body parts of tigers are worshipped." The event comes as a shock to the Indian tiger conservation community, which is unconvinced by the preliminary statements and wonders how a decomposing tiger corpse in the heart of the reserve could have escaped the vigilance of the patrols for several days. What's more, the patrols reportedly arrived on the scene 18 hours after being informed. Ajay Dubey (see "On the Trail" n°39 p.20, ref.55, and p.32, ref.5, and n°40 p.33, ref. 102), a wildlife defender and campaigner in favour of the RTI (Right to Information Act), is calling for a CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation) enquiry and points out that since the beginning of 2023 100 tigers have died a violent death throughout the country, with Madhya Pradesh beating the record with 26 deaths.

- Saturday July 1. The Madhya Pradesh Forest Department promises a reward of 25,000 rupees (302 US\$) to the informer who leads to the arrest of the "poachers". Seven to 8 suspects were questioned, without any conclusive outcome, including sorcerers and charlatans. A dog squad was put on the case, but heavy rain covered the tracks. The story of the tiger decapitated and emasculated on an island in the middle of the River Ken in 2020 has resurfaced (see "On the Trail" n°30 p.54, ref.8).

- Sunday July 2. Anis Uikey was found hanging from a tree in Dhansai (population around 100). According to his family, he had not been able to endure the interrogation he had been subjected to the previous day.

- Thursday July 6. Dogs fight over an unrecognisable, emaciated tiger head with disarticulated jaws, 500 metres from Dhansai and 2 km from the ditch where the decapitated tiger was found. Without having sufficient proof, the services say that the head and the headless tiger come from a single individual and that the puzzle has been put back together.

- Thursday July 13. Kamal Kumre and Shuban Balavi are arrested in Betul, 480 km from Dhansai. They are suspected of taking part in the beheading. The police have reportedly found the guillotine-axe. To be continued.⁷

FAMILY AFFAIRS

June 28, July 23 and 31, August 16 and 18, 2023

Dharapur, Kamrup Metropolitan District, State of Assam; Ambeshivani, Gadchiroli District, State of Maharashtra; Karimnagar, Karimnagar District, State of Telangana; Dhule District, State of Maharashtra;



Gita Langkok, West Karbi Anglong District, State of Assam; Shillong, East Khasi Hills District, State of Meghalaya; Gyaspur, Vidisha District, State of Madhya Pradesh; Dwarka, South West Delhi and West Delhi Districts, National Capital Territory of Delhi, India

- Seizure on Wednesday night in a B&B of the skin of a tiger (2.74 meters long), 18 kg of bones and claws. Four arrests, Ramu Das, Om Prakash, Raiputi and Maya, 2 men and 2 women from the Bawaria tribe. They presented themselves as "mules". They are said to have received 25,000 rupees (302 US\$) for transporting the goods. They are said to have picked up "the goods" in the State of Bihar. They were destined for an intermediary in Shillong, Meghalaya, who, according to them, would in turn smuggle them to Myanmar. One suspects that the final destination was China. The origin of the ex-tiger is the subject of argument. Some say he originated in Maharashtra, others in Uttar Pradesh or Madhya Pradesh. The 4 "mules" had a child with them. Children and the handicapped are used by the gangs to make them look good, to make them look like family or inspire pity, and to ward off suspicion of the uniforms. The Child Welfare Commission took him in. His father joined the first 4 suspects in prison. There are now 5.

- Based on their testimonies, 16 people were arrested in Ambeshivani, 6 men, 5 women and 5 children. Traps and the means to make them, 3 tiger claws and cell phones were seized. Quickly decrypted, they led to the arrest of other suspects in Karimnagar in Telangana and Dhule in Maharashtra. The tiger's web expands and returns to the centre in a sensational twist.

- Mishram Raghunath Jakhar, 81, former field investigator for the NGO Wildlife Protection Society and retired employee of the Delhi Forest Department, is suspected of organising tiger trafficking while extorting money from poachers and traffickers in exchange for his silence. His advanced age and alleged health problems have enabled him to avoid prison and obtain immediate release without bail, provided he attends court on time and stays in the Gadchiroli district.

- To make matters worse regarding the conflict between the State services and the so-called "parallel" action of the federal police (WCCB), Assam piles on and on August 16 its Task Force arrested Teringpi at his home in the rebel district of Karbi Anglong. It found nothing of the tiger, but seized 760 grams of pangolin scales. On Friday August 18, the Madhya Pradesh Task Force arrested Adil Singh alias Sonu Singh Bawaria alias Kalla Bawariya, the "bête noire" wanted in India and Nepal and suspected rightly or wrongly of poaching more than 12 tigers. In any case, he was carrying tiger vibrissae and teeth and pangolin scales.

The seizure of the tiger skin in Dharapur in Assam on Wednesday June 28, who according to the latest revelations was indeed poached in the Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve (Maharashtra), has thus uncovered an improbable network spread across 6 States.⁸

TIGERS - followed

Friday 30 June, Monday 3 and Tuesday 18 July 2023

Rudraram, Kondamausam and Kandla, Bijapur District, State of Chhattisgarh, India



The tiger skin is 2.15 metres long and one metre wide. It was seized by a joint team from the Indravati Tiger Reserve, the Udanti-Sitanadi Tiger Reserve and Bijapur forest officials. Seven arrests: Vikram Thakur, Pritam Lal Sahu, Tameshwar Jain, Kaka Dipak, Manoj Kursam, Kishore Dashrahiya and Aarti Das Gandharva. They live in the village of Rudraram on the outskirts of the Indravati Tiger Reserve. Six other arrests followed, including 2 police officers. Bad news that blot the copybook! According to the Times of India, it is an Amit Kumar Jha, an officer with the 222nd Battalion of the CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force) stationed at Naimed in a district where the Naxalite rebellion is strong, who ordered the poaching. For the skin, he is said to have paid a deposit of 750,000 rupees (9,074 US\$) to the poachers, whose confession made it possible to find the tiger's bones and the noose to which he had fallen victim in a hole in the village of Kondamausam near the border with Maharashtra.

As of July 18, 39 people had been arrested and, in addition to the skin and bones of the tiger, a leopard skin, 4 claws of sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I), 2 antlers of spotted deer (*Axis axis*), 2 horns and a skull of Indian muntjac (*Muntiacus muntjak*), 2 antlers of sambar deer (*Rusa unicolor*), a skull and 2 claws of owl (*Strigiformes*, Appendix I or II) were also seized. Seven suspects are still being sought.⁹

July 8 and 12, 2023

Itakhola, Sonitpur District, State of Assam, India

- Arrest of 3 traffickers. They were in possession of a tiger skin and an assortment of bones. Two of the men come from Assam, the third from Arunachal Pradesh. According to the DRI (Directorate of Revenue Intelligence), which led the operation in cooperation with the district police, the tiger skin and bones came from the Pakke Tiger Reserve at Bhalukpong in Arunachal Pradesh. This is not the opinion of an expert who, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that the tiger's skin bore striking similarities to that of the tiger that in late 2022 had escaped from Orang National Park and set foot on Umananda Island in Kamrup-metropolitan district after swimming across the Brahmaputra. The fugitive was captured, anaesthetised and released on December 25, 2022 in Nameri National Park near Itakhola. The Assam Forest Department had chosen to settle the tiger in the Nameri National Park, where there were only 2 or 3 tigers left before its arrival. The NGOs deplore the fact that the faltering population of tigers in the Nameri National Park (200 km²) is not subject to constant and reinforced protection. They also deplore the fact that the forestry division of western Assam tolerates illegal sand extraction in the Jia Bharali river, which flows

through the national park. In 2021, the local media Northeast Now denounced a quarry and stone "mafia" that was gradually nibbling away at the park's heritage with the alleged complicity of a number of politicians and forestry administrators.



- On July 12, 2 suspected poachers, Berag Daimary and Ghan Basumatary, were arrested by a brigade of forestry officers with the help of a local NGO. The 2 suspects live next to the park.¹⁰

July 22, 2023

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

Seizure by WCCB and police of a 3.35-meter-long tiger skin, the largest ever seized in the State, and 10.4 kg of bones. Arrest of Krishan Kumar, Gajendra Singh, Sanjay Kumar, and Harish Kumar.¹¹



July 25 and 27, 2023

Kothamangalam, Erode District, State of Tamil Nadu, India



After the discovery of a decomposing tiger corpse on July 25, it took the forest services 2 days to ascertain that he had been caught in a trap. Wounded, deprived of food and water, dragging the trap for 2 km, the 6-year-old tiger probably died after several days of pain and cruelty. On July 27, 7 villagers from Sujilkottai, including a 17-year-old minor, were arrested. They are suspected of having set the trap on the banks of the Bhavanisagar dam reservoir. Their priority target was a deer or wild boar. They are said to have extensive experience making traps from motorcycle brake cables. The adults were referred to the Sathyamangalam court and the minor was placed in a specialised institution.¹²

TIGERS - followed

July 31, 2023

Ashti Kakade, Chandrapur District, State of Maharashtra, India



Discovery in a ditch of the body of a 6-year-old female tiger near a field. Prima facie, investigators believe that she was electrocuted on Manohar Domaji Kulme's estate and that the body was then transported outside in an attempt to exonerate the farmer. The investigation and post-mortem examination should confirm this hypothesis.¹³

August 8, 2023

Pandarpani, Seoni District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India



Following the arrest by the Bhopal STSF (State Tiger Strike Force) and its Jabalpur counterpart of 4 men selling vibrissae, bones and claws, the remains of a tiger poached a year ago were found at the bottom of a hole in the forest.¹⁴

August 9, 2023

Telwadhi Forest, Jamui District, State of Bihar, India



Seizure of a freshly poached tiger skin. The value is estimated at 900,000 rupees or nearly 11,000 US\$. The arrest of Naveen Kumar Pandey and Deepak Ravidas is a credit to the cooperation between Kolkata's wildlife crime unit and the 16th SSB Battalion in Jamui.¹⁵

August 16, 2023

Khandal, Bhandara District, State of Maharashtra, India



This is the 28th tiger to die by violence or accident in the Maha since January 1st, 2023. The Maha tops the list, followed by neighbouring Madhya Pradesh (27 tigers), Uttarakhand (15), Kerala (11), Assam (10) and Karnataka (10).¹⁶

August 19, 2023

Around Bondri, Nagpur District, State of Maharashtra, India



The body of a tiger was discovered at night on the edge of a field at the foot of an electrified fence. This is the 29th violent death of a tiger since the beginning of the year in the Maha. It happened 3 km from the Pench Tiger Reserve. The roaming of wild animals in the villages around Ramtek clashes with human activities and presence. A defensive electrified network has been insidiously installed to defend land and agricultural production.¹⁷

INDONESIA

June 5, 2023

Teluk Meranti, Pelalawan Regency, Riau Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Two men, J.I. and Y.W., age 37 and 29, are in the hands of the police and the justice system after being caught in the act of transporting 2 skins and 4 fangs of Sumatran tiger (*Panthera tigris sumatrae*). A 3rd man is heard as a witness.¹⁸

June 12, 2023

Melelang Jaya, Gayo Lues Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia



Seizure from Kamilin alias K.M. of the skin and bones of a Sumatran tiger (*Panthera tigris sumatrae*). K.M. wanted to sell them for 190 million rupiah (12,700 US\$). Blinded by greed and the imminent pleasure of becoming a millionaire, he fell into the trap set by the police, who entered the bargain with all the appearances of a serious and wealthy buyer. K.M.'s confession demonstrates once again that electrified fences around crops are not only used to prevent wild boar incursions. They are also seen as nets for capturing, killing and marketing high-value prey. A tigress became entangled in K.M.'s electric trap set around a corn plantation. She died instantly. With the help of A.K., now on the run, K.M. skinned the feline, gutted her of her organs and meat, which were buried in a hole and covered with earth. The skin was then processed and tanned by the 2 men ("the work of professionals" say the investigators), then offered for sale on the black market along with the 15 or so kilos of bones.¹⁹

MALAYSIA

June 16, 2023

Pos Blau, State of Kelantan, Malaysia

Rescue of a Malayan tigress (*Panthera tigris jacksoni*) whose left front paw was caught in a trap.



Twenty-one members of the NWRC (National Wildlife Rescue Centre), MTCC (Malaysian Tiger Conservation Centre) and Kelantan Wildlife Services took part in the extrication. Uncertainties about the 80-kg tigress's ability to return to the forest and regain her freedom remain.²⁰



TIGERS - followed

August 2023

Temerloh, State of Pahang, Malaysia

In December 2022, Burhanuddin Kamil Adenan was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment and a fine of one million ringgit (228,830 US\$) or a further 3 years' imprisonment in default, for having been in possession of a dead tiger cub and 2 tiger skins.

In August 2023, on appeal, the prison sentence was reduced to one year and the fine to 350,000 ringgits (76,850 US\$) or a further 18 months' imprisonment in default.²¹



NEPAL

July 6, 2023

Kohalpur-11, Banke District, Lumbini Province, Nepal

Seizure of a tigress skin and 6.8 kg of bones. The skin was pierced by 2 bullets in the neck. Four arrests.²²

VIET NAM

June 7, 2023

Thinh Dan, Thai Nguyen Province, Viet Nam

Transfer of 6 Indochinese tigers (*Panthera tigris corbetti*). The tigers left the Khac family's illegal private menagerie and were transported by truck in appropriate cages to the Hanoi wildlife refuge (85 km away). This handing over was based on the wishes of Mr. Nguyen Khac. His health is failing, and he wants to ensure that his tigers, that he has been breeding for some 20 years, have as secure a future as possible. The operation was supported by ENV (Education for Nature – Vietnam). There are an estimated 300 tigers in private farms and zoos, and some operators are still trafficking in tiger cubs, skins, fangs, meat, claws and vibrissae.²³

July 4, 2023

Quynh Giang, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

Nguyen Tri Ngoc and Ngo Sy Thanh taken into custody. Seizure of their car and 2 mobile phones. They were transporting a dead tiger weighing 235 kg.²⁴

TIGERS AND LIONS

EUROPE

FRANCE

July 10, 2023

Santranges, Department of Cher, France

The exhibition of wild animals will be banned starting December 1st, 2028. If France does not want to find itself in a Mexican-style situation, with animals being abandoned, left to roam, sold to private individuals and obscurely trafficked in dependent and abused animals, it is necessary to think ahead and increase the financial resources and accommodation capacity of approved shelters.

A phantom circus stranded on the football field in Santranges on June 18th caused a stir in the village of 425 inhabitants. The gendarmes and inspectors from the Office Français de la Biodiversité (OFB, French Biodiversity Agency) intervened for the first time on July 6 after the mayor lodged a complaint about illegal occupation of the land. Two of the menagerie's tractor-trailers were seized; they had been stolen from transporters in south-east France and Brittany. Children on holiday are unable to play football, and local residents complain about the invasion of flies attracted by the animals and the accumulation of rubbish. "We're at a total impasse especially as they don't respect the deadlines set for their departure". "In the end, I had no choice but to lodge a complaint," says the angry mayor, well aware of the difficulties involved. On Monday, July 10, the PSIG (Peloton de Surveillance et d'Intervention de la Gendarmerie, Gendarmerie Surveillance and Intervention Platoon) from Vierzon and the mobile gendarmerie squadron from Saint-Amand-Montrond intervened alongside the OFB. Four lions in poor health and of unknown origin, and a tiger, were anaesthetised by a vet from Beauval zoo on behalf of the departmental prefecture, seized and transferred to the approved Tonga refuge in Saint-Martin la Plaine, 330 km from Santranges. The 4 lions are lionesses, 2 aged 13 and 2 probably around ten years old. The tiger is an 11-year-old tigress. Soon, after veterinary diagnosis and urgent care, they will be out on the grass for the first time in their lives. Tonga's director is lucidly anticipating some difficult years ahead: "Our role in taking in animals is never easy when it comes to seizures, but fortunately this remains the exception. We guarantee our support to the circuses in their transition to the end of wild animals in shows and will work with them to find solutions for the placement of their animals." The circus, still with its zebras and ponies, left Santranges limping along on July 30 for an unknown destination, after unsuccessfully demanding the return of its beasts.²⁵

RUSSIA

July 7, 2023

Karaozek, Astrakhan Oblast, Russia. Border with Kazakhtan.

Seizure in the back of a car in cat cages of 2 tigers and 2 lion cubs that the 60-year-old driver wanted to sell to an illegal zoo in Kazakhstan.²⁶

**LIONS - *Panthera leo* (Africa), Appendix II
Panthera leo persica (Asia), Appendix I**

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

June 23, 2023

OR Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Lion bones were recovered from the suitcase of a Russian passenger flying to Viet Nam via Qatar. At first glance, the suitcase appeared to contain the bones of 5 lions. Lion bones unknowingly replace tiger bones in tiger wine. The Daily Maverick highlights that this flow of lion bones into Asia stems from a resolution at the 2016 CITES Plenary Conference in Johannesburg permitting the sale of captive lion skeletons on the international market.²⁷



August 30, 2023

Free State Province, South Africa

Gert Claasen, a wildlife trader, was sentenced to a 12-month suspended prison sentence and ordered to pay a fine of 4,000 rand (220 US\$) for keeping felines, including 2 lions, in captivity at Petrus Steyn and mistreating them in the midst of "a putrid odour that attracted a hoard of flies". The Mail & Guardian confirmed in July 2023 that there are 519 declared facilities in South Africa with 7,400 lions in captivity, compared with 3,000 to 3,500 wild lions. At the request of the Department of the Environment, a working group was appointed in December 2022 to consider the conversion of lion breeders and issue recommendations by the end of 2023 at the latest. A plan to phase out lion farming was presented on April 3, 2024. The recommended options are:



1: Engage voluntary exit candidates to finalise the pathways and exit terms (euthanasia of compromised lions, population control through sterilisation, removal to safe havens, permitting hunting or trading activities until the herd has been depleted for two years)

2: Acquisition and incineration of lion bone stockpiles contingent upon sterilisation of lions and compliance with the voluntary exit principles.

3 : Issue a short-term directive to ensure consistent application of animal well-being is assured through issuing of permits and conducting oversights.

4 : Prohibit captive lion breeding in the medium term to safeguard benefits of voluntary exit.²⁸

KENYA

July 24, 2023

Mara Triangle, Narok County, Kenya. Border with Tanzania.

The cub was in a troop of a dozen lions. He was seriously wounded and his life threatened by a large open wound on his right front paw caused by a throwing weapon. The lionesses stayed 100 meters away for the entire one-hour



operation, which involved disinfecting the wound and suturing the muscles and skin. Despite the difficulty of the operation, the size of the wound and its position, the prognosis is optimistic.²⁹

ZAMBIA

June 19 and 22, 2023

South Luangwa National Park, Eastern, Central and Muchinga Provinces, and Malama, Eastern Province, Zambia



Authorities rescued 2 lions with steel ropes around their necks, one adult and a 2.5-year-old sub-adult. Both have recovered.³⁰

AMERICA

MEXICO

Mid-June 2023

Huichapan, State of Hidalgo, Mexico

Seizure of a 2-year-old female African lion suffering from a deformed spine due to being kept in too small of a cage and nutritional deficiencies. The unfortunate animal of unknown origin was entrusted to the Pachuca wildlife rehabilitation unit.³¹



Mid-June 2023

Celaya, State of Guanajuato, Mexico

Tipped off by an anonymous report, the city police rescued a female lion cub between life and death from an empty house in the Villas de Roque district. Her claws were amputated, and she was transferred to the PIMVS (Predio Incorporado para el Manejo de Vida Silvestre Fuera de su Hábitat Natural). The diagnosis is very guarded. Abandoning pet lions and tigers is on the rise in Mexico.³²

ASIA

INDIA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Night from August 14 to 15, and August 20, 2023

Anandpur, Gir Somnath District, State of Gujarat, India



Indictment of the 2 brothers Jitubhai and Virbhanbhai Parmar. They had protected their peanut plot with an electrified fence connected to the grid power available for irrigation purposes on the night of Sunday August 13 to Monday August 14. Noticing the death of a sub-adult Asiatic lion in the early hours of the morning, they waited until the following night to throw the body into the Babarva River. On Friday 18, people crossing a bridge were shocked by a pestilential smell. They alerted the police and the lion's body was discovered lying in the riverbed. The 2 brothers were arrested on Sunday 20 and remain in custody for at least 14 days. The electrocution occurred just 4 days after thousands of schools and colleges took part in an awareness campaign organised by the State Forest Department to mark World Lion Day, highlighting the fact that the last Asiatic lions are to be found in the Gir forest and in particular in the Gir Somnath district.³³

KAZAKHSTAN

Beginning of June 2023

Karaganda, Oblys de Karaganda, Kazakhstan

Three employees of the zoo wanted to sell under the counter 2 lion cubs stolen from the zoo. They wanted 6 million tenge (13,550 US\$) for them. An inspection of the zoo by the city's services (500,000 inhabitants) is underway to check that other animals have not been stolen and already sold by the 3 employees or their accomplices.³⁴

LAOS

July 21, 2023

Pak Ngum District, Vientiane Prefecture, Laos

By publishing on its Facebook page that it had just safely transported 10 lions from South Africa to Laos, the logistics company Air Planners Laos has stirred up a storm of protest and concern. The official destination is a new zoo in a suburb of Vientiane that is not easily accessible to tourists. Those who have seen it say that it looks more like concrete blocks where the animals are bred than a zoo where the animals are shown, and point out that the parliament has just passed a law at the instigation of the presidency that encourages the breeding and marketing of the products of the breeding of wild animals without distinguishing between natives and exotics. The origin of the lions only strengthens the camp of the whistle-blowers. South Africa exports both farmed lions and farmed lion bones. The animal rights community in Laos and Asia sees this import of 5 lions and 5 lionesses



as the relocation of the South African practice and the accelerated emergence of a lion bone industry to replace the flourishing and declining tiger bone industry, due to a lack of resources.

Tiger farming in Laos or smuggling from Laos, see "On the Trail" n°14 p.51 (ref.33), n°20 p.71 (ref.67), n°24 p.56 (ref.11), n°26 p.63 (ref.15), n°28 p.78 (ref.18), n°33 p.81 (ref.25), n°35 p.48 (ref.23), n°36 p.58 (ref.17 and 19) and n°38 p.52 (ref.18).

Importation of lion by-products into Laos, see "On the Trail" n°17 p.62 (ref.59).³⁵

EUROPE

SLOVAKIA

June 28, 2023

Stropkov, Prešov Region, Slovakia

A travelling circus was holding in its menagerie without authorization 4 lions and 10 African lionesses (*Panthera leo leo*) with an estimated value of 193,000 € (207,360 US\$). H.N., the circus owner, has been charged with violating the Law on the Protection of Flora and Fauna by the Regional Office for the Suppression of Environmental Crime. He faces 8 years' imprisonment.³⁶

CZECHIA

End of June 2023

Louny, Ústí nad Labem Region, Czechia

A lion of unknown origin living in a fenced enclosure at a private home was seized by the region's veterinary administration. The roars of the 3-year-old white big cat were causing concern in the neighbourhood. He was transferred to an approved establishment for keeping lions in the Hradec Králové region.³⁷

UKRAINE

June 29, 2023

Kotelva, Poltava Oblast, Ukraine

A lion bites a man in the zoo of the Sapphire hotel complex. UAnimals points out that it is forbidden to keep wild animals in restaurants and entertainment resorts. "At Sapphire, animals live in mud and drink from puddles, and children were previously allowed to pose with lion cubs," reports the NGO in its comments, which contrast with Sapphire's statements on its website. "The Sapphire complex is located on the edge of a pine forest, where you can enjoy the rich aroma of pine needles and appreciate the wonderful landscape of the territory. It's the best place for a bright vacation. It's home to many different species of animals. It's a place where every visitor can find happiness, relax and unwind in contact with nature with their loved ones". At Sapphire, there's a grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II), a golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II), monkeys (*Chlorocebus* spp., Appendix II), deer (family Cervidae) and camels who are bored.³⁸

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

**June 16 and beginning of July 2023
Manyeleti and Sabi Sand Nature
Reserves, Mpumalanga Province,
South Africa**



- Rangers intentionally shot the province's wildlife tourism superstar, Tavangumi. The leopard was spotted struggling in the Manyeleti Reserve on June 16, with limited mobility. His abdomen was constricted by the noose of a metal trap from which he had managed to escape. He was anaesthetised and freed from the iron ring a few days later, but all was not well. The iron collar had penetrated his flesh, and Tavangumi's coat was scarred. Rangers and thousands of fans on Facebook monitored his recovery and movements.



- On June 29, he was reported in the nearby Sabi Sand Reserve near the rangers' allotments and had attacked a brigade dog.

- On June 30, he wandered near a gate in the reserve that was close to visitors and children, refused to leave the premises, and again approached the guards' allotment. After 5 hours of deliberation, it was decided to shoot Tavangumi, and the Sabi Sand Reserve's official statement modestly referenced euthanasia.

- The province's oppositional FF Plus (Freedom Front Plus) party issued a statement citing the Manyeleti Reserve's deplorable conditions. It mentions the abundance of broken fences through which poachers can easily enter at night with traps and hunting dogs, without even having to break-in. The reserve is filled with traps, and the FF Plus spokesman states, "There is a lion in the same reserve with the ugliest scars on his face after his mouth was caught in a snare. He looks like the Joker." "Nowhere in the budget for the new financial year were provisions made for anti-poaching programmes, but the MTPA [Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency] budgeted 18 million rand (over 915,000 US\$) for marketing." "The management of our reserves is a joke; we have been trying to do something about this for so long now. The buildings in the reserves are falling apart, the grass of roundabouts is being pulled out and wild grass is growing along the paths. It's simply not managed properly."³⁹

CAMEROON

August 8, 2023

Dschang, West Region, Cameroon

Jean Valerie Bouna and Jean Mbe were each fined 150,000 CFA francs (250 US\$) and jointly ordered to pay 4.6 million CFA francs (7,700 US\$) in damages for illegally possessing 3 leopard skins (and one crocodile skin) in June 2021. One of the suspects died between June 2021 and August 2023, and a woman was acquitted for lack of evidence. See "On the Trail" n°33 p.218 (ref.2).⁴⁰



NAMIBIA

August 23, 2023

Hochfeld, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

Two men ages 26 and 34 were arrested in possession of a leopard skin worth 50,000 dollars or 2,830 US\$.⁴¹

ASIA

INDIA

June 2, 2023

Around Odlabari, Jalpaiguri District, State of West Bengal, India

Mohammad Belal Ali, 33, was carrying an 80-cm long, 30-cm wide skin in his vehicle. He intended to take it to China via the town of Malbazar, 15 km from the border with Bhutan, but was intercepted by forest officials.⁴²

June 11, 2023

Surajpur District, State of Chhattisgarh, India

Seizure of a leopard skin during a joint operation by the WCCB and the Forest Department. No further information released.⁴³

June 13, 2023

Baiju Nagar, Pilibhit District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

No bullet holes, no visible wounds. The leopard found dead in a cultivated plot of land was probably poisoned.⁴⁴



Night of June 15 to 16, 2023

Kalamdangari, Nabarangpur District, State of Odisha, India

Nighttime seizure at Majhi's home of leopard skin, deer antlers, parts of currently unidentified animals, bladed weapons, and a bow and arrow. Two of Majhi's accomplices have also been arrested.⁴⁵

LEOPARDS - followed

June 22, 2023

Delhi, National Capital Territory of Delhi, India

The skin of an adult and the skin of a youngster. Four arrests.⁴⁶



June 22, 2023

Near Kuthanur, Kanniyapuram and Mangala, Chamarajanagar District, State of Karnataka, India

Death of 3 leopards in and around the Bandipur Tiger Reserve. A man named Ramesh claims that his dog was attacked by a leopard and that he sprayed the dog's corpse with pesticides in retaliation. A female leopard died of poisoning. After the autopsy, she was burned following regulatory protocol. As for the other 2 leopards, a 5-year-old male and a 3-year-old female, according to the forestry services, who are to be temperately trusted in these circumstances, they died as a result of a fight with other leopards. Post-mortem tests should enable us to confirm or deny these allegations.⁴⁷



June 29, 2023

Petke, South Goa District, State of Goa, India

"Prima facie, it appears that the leopard's rear body got stuck in the snare and he suffered critical injuries. He was unable to free himself from the trap. A team rushed to the spot to attempt to rescue the leopard, but he had succumbed to his injuries," a Forest Department official told The Indian Express.⁴⁸



July 5, 2023

Raikia, Kandhamal District, State of Odisha, India

Seizure of the skin, teeth and claws of a leopard. Arrest of 11 poachers during a surprise raid by the special Squad of the Forest Department.⁴⁹

July 14, 2023

Kadrimidri, Chikmagalur District, State of Karnataka, India



Rescue of a 3-year-old female leopard caught in a trap by veterinary surgeon Murali Manohar from Shivamogga. Favourable diagnosis. No fractures or haemorrhages. After she woke up, it was decided to release her. In the districts of Chikmagalur and Shivamogga, it is good form to say that traps are for wild boar; they are more and more catching leopards and other wild animals.⁵⁰

July 23 and 24, 2023

Bahalada and Rangamatia, Mayurbhanj District, State of Odisha, India

Seizure of 4 leopard skins in the villages on the hills overlooking the Similipal Tiger Reserve. Three men were arrested, Budhram Singh and Mangal Singh from Balada and Rupay Marandi from Bangriposhi, and 2 others escaped from Baripada forest officers and the reserve's deputy director. The following day, Marandi, who had been hospitalised after feeling unwell while in police custody, regained his senses and escaped. An investigation has been launched to establish the circumstances surrounding his escape. As a consolation for the police, a man suspected of having been involved in poaching leopards, tanning the skins and attempting to sell them was subsequently arrested.⁵¹

July 25, 2023

Around Karnalapattu, Chittoor District, State of Andhra Pradesh, India



Electrocution of a leopard in the forest. His 2 front paws are burnt. He is around 7 years old. The miasma of the leopard's decomposition alerted some passing shepherds.⁵²

July 27, 2023

Dadoo Marhama, Anantnag District, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, India

Lynching with clubs of a leopard accused of attacking and killing a 2-year-old child and threatening domestic livestock.⁵³

August 13, 2023

Srinagar, Srinagar District, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, India

The tax authorities are also looking after leopards. After collecting tips on a skin trafficking operation, the Ministry of Finance's Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) sent agents based in Mumbai to the Territory on the Pakistani border, with the mission of baiting the gangs and reducing them to zero. The results were respectable. Four leopard skins were seized and 8 traffickers arrested, including a policeman in Srinagar (population over 1.6 million), the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir. The leopards were reportedly poached around Ladakh, Doda and Uri.⁵⁴

LEOPARDS - followed

August 16 and 17, 2023

Around Melavoi, Sri Sathyasai District, State of Andhra Pradesh, India

Near the Kakulakonda forest, a dead sub-adult male leopard was spotted on Wednesday. On Thursday, a dead sub-adult female was spotted nearby. Foam was coming out of their mouths. A dead goat sprayed with agricultural poison was used as bait.⁵⁵



August 18, 2023

Satara, Satara District, State of Maharashtra, India

The peaceful grocery shop was used as a front for trafficking. In the store-room, customs seized a leopard skin. One of the members of the gang was in Dubai at the time of the search, possibly to find a buyer at the best possible price. One arrest. The investigation is ongoing to find out more about the organisation and frequency of the trafficking.⁵⁶



August 28, 2023

Borgaon Forest, Gondia District, State of Maharashtra, India

Electrocution of 2 leopard cubs and their mother. Nothing to do with crop protection. The electricity cable was strung by farmers across 200 m of forest. The electricity was diverted from an 11,000 volt line. "This is not the work of a beginner", said the members of the NGOs who visited the site. The 4 suspects unrolled their electric trap at dusk and lifted it at dawn. When they saw the 3 electrocuted leopards, they took the bodies and threw them away in the forest, out of sight. But the smell of putrefaction did not escape a cowherd grazing his small herd. In 8 months, 5 leopards and 8 tigers died of electrocution in the Maha.⁵⁷



IRAN

July 25, 2023

Dana County, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, Iran

An undated photo of a dead leopard is circulating on social media. An appeal for witnesses is launched. Close examination of the photo places the corpse between the villages of Deh Sheikh and Deli Bahram Begi in Dana County. He has not been found by the guards combing the area, and for the moment the grim news has not been officially confirmed.⁵⁸

August 2023

Aras Sistan Protected Area, Razavi Khorasan Province, Iran. Border with Turkmenistan

A leopard cub captured in the Aras Sistan Protected Area was quickly seized from a resident of Kalat, but it was too late to be considered for release where he had been captured. His mother, provided she was still alive and had not been killed by the same or another man, would not have come looking for him and would have been repelled by the man's scent in the best case scenario. The leopard cub was therefore entrusted to the Mashhad Zoo veterinary clinic on a temporary basis.⁵⁹

PAKISTAN

June 21, 2023

Manahi, Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

He was honorably known as "Prang". He hunted here and there in the mountains and was the victim of rumours and retaliation. The Divisional Wildlife Officer reminds that leopards do not come into conflict with humans unless they are threatened.⁶⁰



VIET NAM

Beginning of August 2023

Long Thanh, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

Seizure from the home of Thái Văn Sơn of 2 frozen leopards.⁶¹

CARACALS - *Caracal caracal*, Appendix II except for the Asian populations listed under CITES Appendix I

EUROPE

SPAIN

Mid-July 2023

Santiurde de Toranzo, Province of Cantabria, Autonomous Community of Cantabria, Spain

Seizure by the Guardia Civil of 2 8-month-old caracals. They were caged in a garden, but astonishment, then concern, spread through the village of a few hundred inhabitants as they wandered through the streets and public garden, led by their master who proudly held them on a leash. The 2 wild animals are believed to have been born in Spain in a clandestine kennel near Toledo. They were bought on impulse via the Internet. The matador had been impressed by snippets of videos on TikTok and Instagram and named them Lilo and Stitch after 2 cartoon heroes.⁶²



CARACALS - followed

FRANCE

June 7, 2023

Pont-Sainte-Marie, Department of Aube, France



A bailiff and the police entered an abandoned apartment and came face to face with the only occupant of the premises, a caracal. They first called the OFB (French Biodiversity Agency), whose agents tried unsuccessfully to transfer him to a cage. A vet was then called in to anaesthetise the animal. According to his initial observations, "the caracal was in good health. He was well muscled, not fat, as can happen to these wild animals in captivity. His coat was beautiful. He was fed regularly." The feline from the savannahs of Africa and the deserts of the Middle East and Asia was handed over to a licenced caracal caretaker. The fashion for caracals as pets and showing off animals is spreading throughout the European Union and neighbouring countries.

Pet caracals in Europe, see "On the Trail" n°28 p.85 (ref.66, 67 and 68), n°33 p.90 (ref.86) and p.96 (ref.114 and 115), n°34 p.83-84 (ref.135), n°35 p.62 (ref.123), n°36 p.66 (ref.67 and 68), n°37 p.193 (ref.82) and p.195 (ref.92), n°38 p.62 (ref.74), p.66 (ref.94) and p.67 (ref.95), n°39 p.40 (ref.49) and n°40 p.59 (ref.75).⁶³

FAMILY AFFAIRS

June 7, 2023

Lillebonne, Department of Seine-Maritime, France

On June 7, 2023, a trafficking operation involving domestic animals, including cats, dogs (spitzes), horses and non-domestic animals, including caracals, was dismantled after several months of investigation by the police under the authority of the Public Prosecutor at the Le Havre Judicial Court. Over 350 animals were allegedly sold. A Lillebonne couple was arrested and around 80 animals were seized. Police also seized 15,000 € (16,115 US\$), their 7 properties, their vehicles and their bank accounts.

The young caracal that escaped from his enclosure in Lillebonne in February 2020 after a storm is believed to belong to the couple ("On the Trail" n°28 p.85, ref.68).⁶⁴

SERVALS - *Leptailurus serval*, Appendix II

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

July and October 2023

Greytown, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa



In October 2023, 3 poachers were sentenced to 8 months' imprisonment or a 2,000 rand (100 US\$) fine each, plus 5 years' probation, for killing a serval, 3 southern reedbuck (*Redunca arundinum*) and 4 oribis (*Ourebia ourebi*), 3 of whom were pregnant, in a single night in July.⁶⁵

AMERICA

CANADA

Sunday, August 27 and 28, 2023

Halifax, Province of Nova Scotia, Canada

At the corner of Sunset Avenue and Withrod Drive, a serval was seen and filmed chasing a domestic cat. The keeping of servals is prohibited in Nova Scotia. However, it is permitted in Ontario. It is therefore possible that the serval escaped or was abandoned after being purchased in Ontario and smuggled to Nova Scotia. The 2 provinces are separated by 1,500 km.⁶⁶

MEXICO

Beginning of June 2023

Morelia, State of Michoacán, Mexico



Seizure of a male serval. The small African feline was being used as a stallion in a Mexican breeding program for hybrid cats, sold at a high price on the market. He was handed over to the Benito Juárez Zoo for veterinary examination.⁶⁷

EUROPE

BELGIUM

Sunday, August 13, 2023

Comines-Warneton, Province of Hainaut, Walloon Region, Belgium. Border with France.

A serval running loose in the town was captured by firefighters and police in the gardens of the Chaussée de Wervicq after several hours of effort. The serval has been taken in temporarily at a shelter in Hainaut. The Pairi Daiza Zoo refused to take him in. It claims to be reserved exclusively for reptiles and amphibians. Between France and Belgium, serval trafficking knows no borders.⁶⁸

BULGARIA

Saturday, August 5, 2023

Lozenets, Burgas Province, Bulgaria

A so-called third-generation savannah cat, bred from a serval, ran away from his owner in the resort. Identified by the police, she was supposed to bring the animal's original "passport" to the station, but she vanished from circulation, as did the feline. The fact that he could carry a microchip identifying him as a cat proves nothing. Veterinarians, as Robin des Bois has known in France, are capable of making mistakes or being accomplices to falsification.⁶⁹

FRANCE

Beginning of June 2023

Department of Haute-Savoie, France



Seizure of a serval in a private home. After a temporary stay in the zoo "Le Domaine des Fauves" (The Big Cat Domain) in Isère, he was transferred to the shelter of the association Tonga Terre d'Accueil in Saint-Martin-la-Plaine.⁷⁰

July 4, 2023

Lille, Department of Nord, France

A male serval was wandering around town, jumping from garden to garden. After a few hours, he was put to sleep with an anaesthetic dart and taken in charge by the police with the help of the SDIS (Departmental Fire and Rescue Service) vet, and taken temporarily to Lille Zoo. He was then



transferred to the Saint-Martin-la-Plaine refuge, 720 km away, where 20 servals, whose ownership is claimed by no one, have been taken in over the past year. The African feline is very popular in Belgium and northern France. Is the serval craze at its peak? What will be the next pet star?⁷¹

Saturday, July 22, 2023

Bruay-sur-l'Escaut, Department of Nord, France. Border with Belgium.

A stray serval entered a private park, rested in an empty stable, and climbed a tree when one of the house dogs chased him. He didn't come down again until the municipal police and the fire department, one of whom specialised in rescuing wild animals, intervened to anaesthetise him, collect him in a net, and put him in a cage before transferring him temporarily to a licenced pet shop. Chantal Richard, the owner of the premises, who is known under the artist name of Sloane and is a performer with a certain Peter of the 80s hit "Besoin de rien, envie de toi," had noticed that her dogs, including Hanoi, had been very nervous for 2 days. The beast is not aggressive, unlike the serval seized in a nightclub in Valenciennes recently (see "On the Trail" n°36 p.66, ref.70) and is obviously less impressive than the black panther running loose in the nearby town of Armentières (see "On the Trail" n°26 p.68 and n°27 p.77, ref.40), but he remains dangerous for small wild and domestic animals. A serval eats at least 1 kg of fresh meat a day.⁷²

SERVALS - followed

NORWAY

June 22, 2023 and January 8, 2024

Os, Hordaland County, Norway

A large spotted cat roams Os south of Bergen. He has been seen by several witnesses. He has been mistaken for a lynx, an ocelot and even a jaguar. It's a serval. He was bought for 70,000 kroner (6,330 US\$) at the age of 3 months. He was smuggled into Norway. He is now 2 years old. After a few days, he disappeared from the radars. His "mistress" managed to get him back. She is in hiding, giving exclusive interviews to a few media outlets. She says she walks her pet every day on a leash on an exercise ground. She says she knows what she is doing is illegal, but at the same time she's done things legally. The male serval is neutered and vaccinated, but this does not exempt him from the threat of euthanasia by the Norwegian Environment Agency and the Food Safety Authority. He becomes a star at the end of the TV news. The NGO NOAH claims to have found a way to send him back to South Africa, but the government replies that this is impossible without knowing his country of origin. Six months after the appearance of the stealth serval, the Bergen public prosecutor launched legal proceedings against his owner, a young woman in her twenties who, after threatening to go into exile with her serval, is currently living in Bjørnafjorden, home to 26,000 inhabitants, some of whom sleep in fear in fortified housing. The serval feeds on animals weighing between 200 and 300 grams. Keep an eye on kittens!⁷³

RUSSIA

August 3, 2023

Krasnodar, Krasnodar Krai, Russia

Two servals purchased on the Avito website by an intermittent resident of Krasnodar waited with bated breath in a screened-in pen for a passer-by to spot them and report their presence to an authority, which they did. They were seized in their blockhouse and transferred to Safari Park, where their fate will not necessarily be enviable, but in any case will be more comfortable. The woman who had bought them "for her personal needs" for 100,000 roubles (1,440 US\$) was fined 4,000 roubles (45 US\$).⁷⁴



CLOUDED LEOPARD - *Neofelis nebulosa*, Appendix I

ASIA

INDIA

June 7, 2023

Bomdila, West Kameng District, State of Arunachal Pradesh, India

Seizure of the skin of a clouded leopard from a clothing store run by a 42-year-old woman. The operation is credited to the WCCB, the Arunachal Pradesh Flying Squad and district forest officers.⁷⁵

JAGUARS - *Panthera onca*, Appendix I

AMERICA

BRAZIL

August 22, 2023

Paranaíta, State of Mato Grosso, Brazil

Regivan de Souza Santos was surprised at his home by the Ibama (Instituto brasileiro do meio ambiente e dos recursos naturais renováveis) and police while cooking jaguar meat and bones in a large pot for his hunting dogs. He was released on bail for 1,320 reais (260 US\$), banned from bars, discos, and other establishments serving alcoholic beverages, and required to report to the police station every 5 days and answer all court summonses. The jaguar's head was found hanging from a tree on his property.⁷⁶

COLOMBIA

July 24, 2023

Alcalá, Regional Autonomous Corporation of Valle del Cauca, Colombia

A jaguar skin seized from a restaurant wall. There are fewer than 60,000 jaguars left on the American continent.⁷⁷

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

July 10, 2023

State of California, United States of America

Abdul Rahman sentenced to one year's probation and ordered to pay 30,000 US\$ in restitution to the San Diego Lions, Tigers, and Bears Animal Sanctuary. Rahman had bought a jaguar kitten for 30,000 US\$ from Trisha D. Meyer, known as Mimi Exotic or Mimi Erotic. Realizing he wasn't cut out to take care of him, he sold him at a loss (20,000 US\$) to a friend whose wife was pregnant and who didn't really appreciate the gift, so much so that the jaguar was abandoned in a cage at the entrance of the San Diego sanctuary. To find out more about Trisha Meyer's trafficking in Houston, Texas, see "On the Trail" n°38 p. 64 (ref.82).⁷⁸



JAGUARS - followed

PERU

Beginning of June 2023

San Juan de Pavayacu, Province of Alto Amazonas, Department of Loreto, Peru



Following a report on the "Forest and Fauna" alert number (929970825), a team from the UGFFS (Unidad de Gestión Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre), supported by the national police and the NGO Panthera, traveled up the Tigre River for 11 hours. They seized 2 small jaguars in the process of being domesticated from a house, both with alopecia forming and one with a fractured right paw. During a meeting with members of the indigenous community, information was provided on the usefulness of wild animals and possible sanctions following improper capture and detention. The 2 jaguars are now in the hands of RAREC (Rainforest Awareness Rescue Centre) zoo veterinarians for a thorough health check.⁷⁹

SURINAME

June 12 and 14, 2023

Suriname

Seizures in 2 jewellery stores of 7 and 4 jaguar teeth. A small tooth mounted as a pendant with gold was sold for 5,500 dollars (150 US\$), and a large one for twice that amount.⁸⁰

OCELOTS - *Leopardus pardalis*, Appendix I

AMERICA

COLOMBIA

Beginning of July 2023

Pereira, Regional Autonomous Corporation of Risaralda, Colombia

To prove his point, the informant showed the department's environmental authority the images taken by his hidden camera. The ocelot, trapped in a house, was seized by the specialised police and transferred to a refuge, whose caretakers hope he will one day be able to be released.⁸¹

ECUADOR

August 2023

Near Camarones, Manabí Province, Ecuador

Officials seized 2 ocelots from a private property and made one arrest.⁸²

PUMAS - *Puma concolor*, Appendix II, except for the populations of Costa Rica and Panama, which are in Appendix I

AMERICA

ARGENTINA

June 14, 2023

Santa Rosa de Río Primero, Province of Cordoba, Argentina

Following a report and a search warrant, environmental police and volunteers specialising in wildlife management seized an adult puma. By court order, he was transferred to the Pumakawa Refuge in Villa Rumipal.⁸³

BRAZIL

June 22 and 23, 2023

Rio Verde de Mato Grosso, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil

Held in police custody and fined 1,000 reais (200 US\$), the 2 farm workers who, they say, on the orders of their boss on June 22 harassed 2 mountain lions with dogs and killed them with firearms, were granted provisional release on bail of 26,400 reais (5,275 US\$) each, equivalent to 10 months' minimum wage.⁸⁴



CHILE

June 2, 2023

La Serena, Elqui Province, Coquimbo Region, Chile

The pumas are the victims of a campaign of yaunts and denunciations. During the month of May, 4 complaints were lodged against them. They allegedly attacked 2 horses and "stole" a pet in El Hinojal, Las Mollacas and Quebrada de Talca, and what was bound to happen, a scapegoat puma was shot and killed at point-blank range. The region's SAG (Servicio Agrícola y Ganadero) has been unable to corroborate any of the offences alleged against the pumas around La Serena.⁸⁵

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

August 2023

Halfway, State of Oregon, United States of America

Officials seized 2 rifles and the skin of a mountain lion that a father and his 13-year-old son shot at night using spotlights.⁸⁶

MEXICO

Beginning of June 2023

La Reforma, State of Sinaloa, Mexico



Rescue of a 9 to 10-month-old puma kitten tied to a pole at a construction site in the fishing village. He was abandoned by the people keeping him in captivity.⁸⁷

BOBCATS AND LYNX - *Lynx* spp., Appendix II

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

July 7, 2023

Tucson, State of Arizona, United States of America



Simmons, 71, a retired deputy for the Pima County Sheriff's Department, was sentenced to 200 US\$ in compensation to the Arizona Wildlife Fund and ordered to take a 6-month course on urban wildlife at the University of Arizona for shooting at point-blank range one of the 31 bobcats on the outskirts of Tucson enrolled in a university research program on the species' behaviour and ability to withstand urban pressures. Known as Sadie, the female was perfectly integrated and accepted by local residents. She had just given birth to a litter of kittens. Simmons, known to pick quarrels with wild animals, would have wanted to protect his 4 Chihuahuas from an imminent attack by Sadie, who was staring at them, perched on a wall of his property.

Bobcats in Tucson, see "On the Trail" n°40 p.63 (ref.97).⁸⁸

August 2023

Vinton County, State of Ohio, United States of America



A man who poached a bobcat in winter 2022 was sentenced to pay 250 US\$ in restitution. The fur was found during a search of his home.⁸⁹

EUROPE

GERMANY

Beginning of June 2023

Jützenbach, Thuringia Land, Germany

The Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*) was walking on 3 paws (he had probably lost a front paw in a trap). He was emaciated and has been wiped out by an anonymous shot. In the words of Bernhard Stengele, Thuringia's Minister for the Environment, "the lynx is finding it hard to settle into our cultural landscape".⁹⁰

POLAND

June 6, 2023

Dobra, West Pomeranian Voivodeship, Poland



Imported from Austria in February, where he had been living in semi-freedom in a wildlife park, the one-year-old Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*) was found dead in a snare 10 meters from a deer who had also fallen victim to the trap war.⁹¹

MULTI-FELINES

ASIA

SAUDI ARABIA

June 5, 2023

Riyadh, Riyadh Province, Saudi Arabia

Dismantling of a private zoo. Evacuation of 43 animals, including a lion, a leopard and a canine.⁹²

INDIA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Beginning of June 2023

Chandan Ghat and Newsa, Dindori District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Seizure of a tiger skin and a leopard skin by the STF. Arrest of 8 people, including an ex-sarpanch, the husband of a sarpanch, and a schoolteacher. A sarpanch is the head of a village or community, presiding over its "gram panchayat" (council). He is elected for a 5-year term by elected members of lower councils. He is the intermediary between the community and the government.⁹³

JORDAN

July 20, 2023

Jordan

The RSCN (Royal Society for The Conservation of Nature) under the direction of General Obaidullah Al-Maaytah seized a lion and 2 cheetahs and arrested their owner. The animals have been transferred to a refuge pending a decision on their fate by the RSCN, headed by the Queen of Jordan.⁹⁴



WOLVES, PAINTED DOGS, FOXES, HYENAS, RACCOON DOGS AND FENNEC FOXES



Fennec fox (*Vulpes zerda*). Photo Nedjla

AFRICA

KENYA

June 10, 2023

Oi Maisor Ranch, Laikipia County, Kenya

Two-stage rescue of an adult painted dog (*Lycaon pictus*).



- He is hanging from a tree by the noose of a steel trap. The rescuers cut the rope, but the painted dog escaped at full speed with his shackle, which sooner or later threatened to strangle him.

- Arriving on the scene, the flying veterinary brigade located the fugitive, anaesthetised him, freed his neck from the steel wire, and administered all necessary ointments. The revival antidote was injected after 1 hour and 20 minutes of treatment. Favourable prognosis. The survivor's pack comprises 15 individuals.¹

AMERICA

CANADA

July 7, 2023

Squamish, Province of British Columbia, Canada

A grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) was shot near the dump. The shooter missed. The wolf has since been seen. He is crawling around. Anyone who can give news of him or help identify who shot him should call the officer at Sea to Sky Conservation, the local wildlife protection agency.²

CHILE

August 2, 2023

Rancagua, Cachapoal Province, O'Higgins Region, Chile

Arriving at the scene of dog abuse reported by local residents, the PDI (Policía de Investigaciones) found Foxhound dogs in a very poor state of health and housing, and a poor colpeo fox (*Lycalopex culpaeus*, Appendix II) in a cage. The dogs were transferred to a rescue kennel and the colpeo fox to a rehabilitation centre. The 28-year-old man was taken to court. Investigations are continuing into whether the dogs were used to hunt colpeo foxes, who enjoy protected status in South America.³

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

August 7, 2023

Washington County, State of North Carolina, United States of America

The CBD (Center for Biological Diversity) is promising 10,000 US\$ to help identify and bring to justice the poacher of a red wolf (*Canis lupus rufus*, Appendix II) shot in the chest on May 18 in Washington County along a road bypassing the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge. This bounty is in addition to the 5,000 US\$ promised by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The stoic red wolf is identified from his red fur and tends to weigh between 45 and 80 pounds, much less than the more common grey wolf, who can reach up to 170 pounds, and can now be counted on a little more than the fingers of 2 hands. Red wolf, see "On the Trail" n°23 p.96 (ref.2), n°30 p.69 (ref.5) and n°36 p.72 (ref.5).⁴

ASIA

CHINA

August 2023

Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China



Seizure by postal customs in a parcel from abroad of 156 "handmade" accessories made from Pampas fox tails (*Lycalopex griseus*, Appendix II) by Icelandic brand Feldur Verkstæði, which specialises in the trade of fur garments and accessories. Pampas foxes live in South America. Their fur is particularly sought-after.⁵



Pampas fox (*Lycalopex griseus*)

INDIA

July 1st, 2023

Murakata, Paschim Medinipur District, State of West Bengal, India

Lynching of a striped hyena (*Hyaena hyaena*, Appendix III in Pakistan). Harassed by enraged men, beaten with clubs, drooping under stones and bricks, taking refuge here and there before being beaten again, she ended up dying on the side of a road. The NGO HEAL (Human and Environment Alliance League) expresses its indignation. It is demanding that the forestry services, who initially classified the hyena's death in the category of collisions and small town news, launch an investigation to unmask those responsible for the atrocity. In 2020, in the sinister village of Purulia, a striped hyena was killed, decapitated and cut into pieces.

Purulia, see "On the Trail" n°9 p.51 (ref.49), n°31 p.72 (ref.10) and n°35 p.55 (ref.78).⁶

REPEATED OFFENCE

July 28, 2023

Kempegowda International Airport, Bangalore Rural District, State of Karnataka, India



Seizure of 2 raccoon puppies (*Nyctereutes procyonoides*) hidden in packets of noodles and cookies at midnight after a 4-hour flight from Bangkok. One of the puppies died at the airport a few hours after landing. The survivor, after receiving the necessary care and food, was sent back to Thailand by Thai Airways, with the agreement of the Thai government. The trafficker had already been caught in the act at Chennai airport with animals of other species in his belongings. He was fined 80,000 rupees (975 US\$).⁷



Raccoon dog (*Nyctereutes procyonoides*)

EUROPE

GERMANY

Saturday, July 8 and Sunday, July 9, 2023

Sehnde, Lower Saxony Land, Germany

In a garbage bag floating in the Mittellandkanal was the headless, tailless corpse of a grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II). The ex-wolf's torso was riddled with bullets. The next day, around 7 p.m. on Sunday, 2 other walkers spotted another blue bag in the same canal. Inside were the victim's head and tail. The wolf expert from the Hanover region confirmed that the torso, head and tail are coming from the same wolf.⁸

AUSTRIA

July 11 and end September 2023

Tulln an der Donau, Lower Austria State, Austria

- In the evening, a dead grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) drifted near the north bank of the Danube. The carcass was brought ashore. The wolf was shot several times. He was then thrown into the river by the poacher(s). Anyone who can help establish the truth is asked to contact the police. A complaint has been lodged.

- At the end of September, in the absence of any new information, the case was closed. It's the wolf's omerta.⁹

FRANCE

FAMILY AFFAIRS

June 22, 2023

Crupies, Department of Drôme, France

On March 4, 2022, the body of a grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) was discovered by walkers in the town of Crupies. A report was sent a few days later to agents of the French Biodiversity Agency (OFB). When OFB agents came to collect it, the body had disappeared.

The omerta within the town of Crupies was broken thanks to the persistence of the OFB agents and the Nyons Departmental Gendarmerie. Three people, well known to local associations and institutions, were arrested on June 22, 2023.

The case file shows that Mr. X wanted to eliminate as many wolves as possible using carbofuran (a toxic insecticide banned for use in France since December 13, 2008). After several failed attempts, Mr. X managed to kill one on March 3, 2022 with a poisoned bait placed near his farm. Mr. X boasted about his "success" on his Snapchat profile to his family and friends. During his interview, he admitted that he had infiltrated the "Wolf/Lynx" monitoring network to obtain information on the location of dens in order to continue his slaughter.



Mr. Z, Mr. X's cousin, was involved in hiding the body and Mrs. Y had given Mr. X recommendations on the use of carbofuran.

Mr. X, Mr. Z and Ms. Y were due to appear before the Valence Criminal Court on December 12, 2023. The hearing has been postponed to September 10, 2024.¹⁰

ITALY

July 6, 2023

Between Ponsacco and Cascina, Province of Pisa, Region of Tuscany, Italy

Happy vacations! Early morning horror movie for hundreds of locals and tourists in their cars on the Florence-Pisa-Livorno road. A grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) was hanging from an overpass, dangling at the end of a rope.¹¹

THE NETHERLANDS

Sunday July 9, 2023

Wapse, Province of Drenthe, The Netherlands

Using a pitchfork and shovel, a sheep and goat farmer tried to ward off a grey wolf cub (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) that he felt was threatening his herd. The hand-to-hand combat ended badly for the man, who was bitten, and even more so for the young wolf, pierced by the tines of the fork, who took refuge under solar panels and was shot dead with a rifle 2 hours later on the orders of the mayor. The NGOs Faunabescherming and Animal Rights have lodged a complaint against the mayor of the Westerveld local authority, to which the municipality of Wapse belongs, the deputy mayor and the police officer who fired the shot. The wolf conservationists accuse the elected representatives of having taken a definitive and hasty decision without consulting the experts at the Ministry of the Environment and its departments. The complaint was dismissed by the public prosecutor. "The Public Prosecutor's Office is of the opinion that the actions of the mayor, the deputy mayor and the police officer fall within the execution of an exclusive administrative task so that criminal prosecution is not possible." However, the public prosecutor's office considers that "alternatives to slaughter have not been sufficiently explored."¹²

ROMANIA

August 16 and 22, 2023

Timiș County, Romania. Border with Hungary and Serbia.

There's no shortage of grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) shooters raising their arms or shouting for joy in France and other EU countries. In Romania, police officer and hunter Cristian Petrescu is under fire for killing a wolf and simulating his beheading. To a journalist who managed to catch him on the phone 6 days later, he replied: "Lup? Nu se poate așa ceva, noi nu avem în zonă lupi..." (A wolf? that's not possible, there are no wolves in the area).¹³

RUSSIA

August 18, 2023

Vnukovo International Airport, Moscow Oblast, Russia



A suitcase full of rotten fruit, packets of potato chips, and dried fish, inside which were 3 wicker cases containing the corpses of 12 little fennec fox puppies (*Vulpes zerda*, Appendix II), did not escape the vigilance of the customs officers' malinois, even though the Russian passenger coming from Egypt via Istanbul had taken the green corridor for people who supposedly have nothing to declare. The little fennecs died of asphyxiation and suffocation. The man had spent 3 days in Egypt to buy the 12 unfortunate little victims for 600 US\$ (50 US\$ per specimen), who according to him were alive when they were "packed".¹⁴

SWITZERLAND

Mid-August 2023

Canton of Valais, Switzerland



Matthias Schnyder, a sheep farmer, was sentenced to pay 4,000 Swiss francs (4,600 US\$) suspended for 2 years, fined 950 Swiss francs (1,100 US\$), and ordered to pay 2,200 Swiss francs (2,535 US\$) in legal costs for using an undeclared weapon to kill a grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) who, he said, had already killed 4 of his sheep, wounded 4 others, and was again threatening his herd.

According to data from the University of Bern, since 1998 in Switzerland 54 wolves have been shot "legally," 38 in road collisions, 11 poached, 4 fell to their deaths, 3 drowned, 2 were buried by an avalanche, 2 died after a fight with other wolves, and 6 died of unknown causes. It should be noted that after 3 road collisions, autopsies revealed the presence of lead ammunition in the wolves' bodies. Wolves in the canton of Valais, see "On the Trail" n°12 p.101 (ref.24), n°16 p.63 (ref.8), n°30 p.176 (ref.101), n°32 p.100 (ref.35) and n°33 p.100 (ref.16).¹⁵





Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*). Photo 武亦乾 Yiqian Wu

AMERICA

CANADA

June 27, 2023

Province of Quebec, Canada

Publication by the Ministry of the Environment of the list of people convicted following the dismantling of a poaching network in February 2019 (see "On the Trail" n°24 p.86, ref.23). A wide range of animals were slaughtered: fish, birds, deer, frogs... Three suspects were also charged with illegal possession of American black bears (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II):

- Normand Gauthier, of Yamachiche, was fined 6,000 dollars (4,420 US\$) and had his hunting licence suspended for 24 months.
- Bruno Noël, of Louiseville, was fined 3,550 dollars (2,615 US\$) and had his hunting licence suspended for 24 months.
- Martin Noël, of Louiseville, was fined 2075 dollars (1530 US\$) and had his hunting licence suspended for 24 months.

Total fines amount to 84,350 dollars (62,130 US\$).¹



June 30, 2023

Parry Sound, Province of Ontario, Canada

On October 1, 2022 near Magnetawan, Zoltan Miriszlai was in a tree-top hut with a weapon-mounted light ready to shoot with a bow and arrows. He was watching at night, when hunting is prohibited, for the arrival of an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) attracted by bait. He was spotted by a conservation officer and sentenced to 8 months' imprisonment and a fine equal to 2,760 US\$.²



July 5, 2023

Saint-Albert, Province of Alberta, Canada

Here he is, the hiker with a loaded rifle slung over his shoulder, who on Saturday August 6, 2022, in Jasper National Park, Alberta, instinctively shot an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II), even though carrying a loaded weapon is prohibited in national parks in Canada and elsewhere. Painchaud confused poaching with hiking. He was fined 7,500 dollars (5,660 US\$) and his Mossberg Model 510 20-gauge shotgun was confiscated for good. See "On the Trail" n°37 p.62-63 (ref.2).³



OPERATION POCLETTE

July 18 and 25, 2023

Montreal, Province of Quebec, Canada

Tran Dinh Tuan Vu was fined 5,000 dollars (3,770 US\$), Thi Kim Loan Nguyen was fined the same amount and Minh Truong Hai Nguyen was fined 24,000 dollars (18,100 US\$) for transporting American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) gall bladders between New Brunswick and Quebec between May 2017 and August 2018 and selling them to members of the expatriate Asian community, thereby committing offences under the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act. The 3 individuals pleaded guilty. They had been arrested as part of Operation Pochette (see "On the Trail" n°22 p.72). The fines will be paid into the Environmental Damages Fund.⁴



FAMILY AFFAIRS

July 19, 2023

Bracebridge, Province of Ontario, Canada

Fines of 6,000 dollars (4,525 US\$), 4,500 dollars (3,395 US\$), 2,500 dollars (1,885 US\$) and 3,000 dollars (2,260 US\$) for Louis Diamandakos, Michael Diamandakos, Eugene Gelsomino and Sandy Gelsomino. The Diamandakos of Peterborough and the Gelsominos of Nobleton pleaded guilty after poaching an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) and 3 deer (family Cervidae) on the night of Saturday November 19, 2022, north of Orillia in the Coopers Falls Road area, and transporting the bodies in their all-terrain vehicles. They had been caught in the act by guards after local residents were alerted by gunshots.⁵



Thursday August 10, 2023

Province of British Columbia, Canada

The wreck of a grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*, Appendix II) was drifting in the Squamish River. Necropsy shows that he has been shot between August 7 and 9. A rope tied to his body helped the poacher(s) drag him to the coastal river to let him take his chances elsewhere, why not in the Pacific.⁶

Saturday, August 19 and 23, 2023

Between Contact Creek, Yukon Territories, and Iron Creek, Province of British Columbia, Canada

Killing spree over the weekend. Four American black bears (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) were shot by unknown gunmen along the Alaska Highway. The bodies were found at kilometres 896, 911, 912 and 932 (2 in the Yukon, 2 in British Columbia). The poacher(s) faces up to 4 years in prison for shooting bears without reporting them, with the aggravating circumstance of wasting the meat. Autopsies will determine whether all the adult victims were related. Perhaps some cubs have been orphaned without having acquired self-sufficiency.⁷

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

June 7, 2023

New Miami Colony, State of Montana, United States of America

On the banks of the East Lake Road, discovery of a grizzly bear cub (*Ursus arctos horribilis*, Appendix II) who was riddled with bullets 2 or 3 days ago. An appeal for witnesses has been launched. A reward will be given to anyone providing information leading to the conviction of the person or persons responsible for the shooting.⁸

July 10, 2023

Roxbury, State of New York, United States of America



In the morning, a man shot an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) for no other reason than that he was passing near his home. Local residents alerted by the gunshots reported the incident to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and 2 officers were dispatched to the scene. After cross-checking eyewitness accounts and carrying out their due diligence, they knocked on the suspect's home in the late afternoon and found the bear's body hidden under a swimming pool. The man is liable for shooting and killing a bear illegally, killing a bear out of season, and discharging a firearm within 500 feet of a dwelling.⁹

July 14, 2023

Fairbanks, State of Alaska, United States of America

The sales pitch was, if you can call it that, enticing. Jun "Harry" Liang promised customers that, if they killed a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II), he would buy them 5,000 US\$ worth of gallbladder, which is known in Chinese medicine to promote optimal health in all forms, but which is forbidden to buy and sell in the United States. It's true that Liang, whose tourist visa expired in 2016, is not invested in compliance with US regulations. His safari offer was written in Mandarin and only available on the xiaohongshu.com ("Little Red Book") platform, and Liang exchanged with his clients on the Chinese app WeChat. So 60,000 US\$ for a weekend of bear hunting for 2 guys, with the added bonus, while waiting for the bear, the possibility of paying for a prostitute for 1,800 US\$ per evening or 500 US\$ per "short time". To complete the postcard, Liang promised his exclusively Chinese clients coming from China or based in the US the chance to see the northern lights. We don't know at this stage whether Liang's bargains met his expectations, or how much he paid for a hunting guide made in the US. This guide wasn't a stickler for codes of conduct, and in any case didn't fully understand what was going on, since his clients and bosses, under the guise of a travel and hunting agency based in Fairbanks, Alaska, and appropriately named "AK Aurora Travel, Inc.", spoke exclusively in Chinese, that is, Mandarin. Marketing went off the rails when a Mandarin-speaking HSI (Homeland Security Investigations) agent with some funding to carry out his mission, infiltrated Liang's system and found himself paying deposits at a discreet hunting ground near the Chena River, within driving distance of Fairbanks, and at a shooting range where he had to pay a further 1,000 US\$ for a compulsory hunting lesson before being thrown into the deep end of bear and, incidentally, caribou hunting. Liang was arrested on July 14, 2023. He is, among other crimes, charged with organised violation of the Lacey Act, which prohibits any form of trade or transportation of protected wildlife, plants or animals, illegally captured or held, money laundering, wire fraud, and illegal alien in the possession of a firearm. He faces a maximum 30-year prison sentence. To be continued.¹⁰

July 18, 2023

Delta Junction, State of Alaska, United States of America



Edward A. Bundy sentenced to pay 12,000 US\$ to the Lacey Act Reward Fund and 18 months' probation with a prohibition from hunting "anywhere in the world" for illegally hunting 5 wild animals in Alaska, including an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) and caribous (*Rangifer tarandus*), and transporting or attempting to transport the trophies to his home in Arkansas.¹¹

**End of July and beginning of August 2023
Gladwin, Roscommon and Ogemaw Counties,
State of Michigan, United States of America**

- A summons was issued to an unnamed individual for having, one month before the opening of the American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) hunting season, prepared a fine hunting tally by distributing an abundance of treats in a clearing.
- Also, the individual received a warning for abandoning plastic packaging and a cut-up metal barrel in and around the baiting site.¹²

Beginning of August 2023

State of Michigan, United States of America



A bear cub (*Ursus* spp., Appendix II) caught in a leg-hold trap was rescued and released. Agents had to use pepper spray to keep the mother away during the operation.¹³

August 14, 2023

Clarksburg, State of Massachusetts, United States of America

Police received an alert at 7:33 p.m. on Monday 14. The informant said he had heard a gunshot and had every reason to believe that an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) had been killed at a private residence close to his home. The police immediately attended the scene and found that an American black bear had indeed been killed. The shooter, whose name has not been released so as not to interfere with the investigation, has been summoned to appear in court.

For 2023, Massachusetts has authorized black bear hunting under strict conditions from September 5 to 23, November 6 to 25 and November 27 to December 9.¹⁴

August 15, 2023
Lackawaxen, State of Pennsylvania, United States of America



The body of this 250-300 kg American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) was found riddled with small pellets near Clubhouse Drive in the Tink Wig Lake and Community Association housing development. The death occurred over the weekend of August 12-13. A call for witnesses has been launched "Thank you in advance for your assistance in helping to protect Pennsylvania wildlife."¹⁵

August 18, 2023
Sanford, State of Florida, United States of America

An American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) and her 2 cubs were shot 16 times, as witnessed by a surveillance camera in a green residential area of Sanford. The bear was well known and appreciated by the locals. The next day, the cubs were still roaming the neighbourhood. They were captured 3 days later and transferred to the Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park run by the State of Michigan, 150 km from Orlando, with the prospect to release them in December 2023. The violent death of their mother has provoked much emotion and reminders of the art of coexisting with bears. A man is suspected of having done the irreparable in the middle of the night while walking his dog. He allegedly shot to protect his dog. There are between 4,000 and 4,500 bears in Florida (170,000 km²). The NGO Save the Florida Black Bear reminds us that everyone must make an effort to live in harmony with bears. "If you have dogs, don't let your dogs chase and bark at the bears. Right now, a lot of these bears have their cubs." Lauren Pierce, who often saw the bear from her windows, stresses that all bears deserve respect. "We're building up every inch of Seminole County and that's where they lived and now, they have no place to go." A spokesman for the FWC (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission), meanwhile, reminds us that "you shouldn't leave garbage and leftover food lying around". Living with bears requires discipline.¹⁶

End of August 2023
Menominee County, State of Michigan, United States of America

At the end of 2022, a hunter killed an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) without a licence. He tagged the bear with his wife's permit. He took the remains to a taxidermist. The taxidermist was cited for agreeing to stuff a bear while knowing or having the ability to know that he had been illegally hunted. The hunter's actions were reported to the prosecutor. The bear skin has been seized.¹⁷

ASIA

ARMENIA

June 8 and 11, 2023
Getap, Vayots Dzor Region, Armenia

International Animal Rescue reports that it rescued a brown bear cub (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) stubbornly perched on a tree from a hopeless situation. He had a dog collar around his neck. He had either been abandoned by the human home where he was held captive or had escaped.¹⁸



CHINA

FAMILY AFFAIRS
July 16, 2023
Tianyuan Township, Wuxi County, Chongqing Autonomous Municipality, China

First, in 2021, the police seized traps, knives, cables, and other accessories from a notorious poacher, confirming the information gathered in the neighbourhood and demonstrating the possibility of poaching without proving its reality. Second, the investigation raised suspicions that the suspect had electrocuted and butchered an Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I), and revealed that the bear's body had been placed in his brother's freezer. Through 2 accomplices, the bear's bones, paws, and skin were then sold to 2 buyers for 11,000 yuan (1,600 US\$). Meanwhile, what was left of the Asian black bear was hidden in a manure pit. The 6 individuals involved from start to finish in this conspiracy are now in the hands of the justice system.¹⁹

INDIA

August 7, 2023

Takula Community Development Block, Almora District, State of Uttarakhand, India

Seizure of 3 Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) dried gall bladders with a total weight of 340.62 grams, estimated to be worth 3.5 million rupees (42,580 US\$ or 125,235 US\$/kg) on the international market. Arrest of Digar Singh, Manoj Upadhyay and Jagat Singh, aged between 30 and 55.²⁰



July 2023

Kaleybar, East Azerbaijan Province, Iran

Gunshots. Alerts. The patrol deployed to track down the poachers. After 4 hours of hunting, one was arrested, the other fled and shortly afterwards a dead brown bear cub (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) was discovered.²³

July 2023

Baghat, Semnan Province, Iran

The body of an adult brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) was discovered north of the town of Shahroud. He bears the impact of a bullet on his chest, followed by abundant blood loss. According to the Ministry of the Environment officers who were dispatched to the scene, the bears are disturbed or even displaced by mining operations in the mountains and descend into the foothills, moving closer to dwellings and exposing themselves to reprisals and cruelty.²⁴

IRAN

June 2023

Gonabad, Razavi Khorasan Province, Iran



Seizure of 2 Baluchistan bear cubs (*Ursus thibetanus gedrosianus*, Appendix I), stowaways on a bus travelling from the province of Sistan and Baluchestan, 700 km from Gonabad, to Mashhad, 290 km away. Traffickers arrested. Environmental protection officers ensured that the cubs were returned to their province of origin.²¹

End of June 25, 2024

Khalkhal, Province d'Ardabil, Iran

27 months in prison for killing a brown she-bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) without good reason.²²



Beginning of August 2023

Veresk, Mazandaran Province, Iran

A brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) was found dead in the village hills. It is possible that during the drought period, he came down from his mountains to get closer to human activities and find alimentary windfalls. The proximity of his body to apple orchards suggests that he may have been the victim of scare shots fired by farmers. Koros Rabiei, head of wildlife protection in the province, recalls that an agreement has been reached between the Environmental Fund and the Agricultural Insurance Fund to compensate for damage caused by bears.²⁵

August 2023

Tale-e Rudbar, Mazandaran Province, Iran

An orchard, a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II), a trap, anaesthesia and care. Let's hope he's back up in the mountains, away from apples and people, where he'll find enough protein and carbohydrates to spend the winter in a cave!²⁶



PAKISTAN

June 2023

Bet Mir Hazar Khan, Province of Punjab, Pakistan

Interception of a pick-up. Seizure of a live Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I). Three arrests. The operation is credited to wildlife conservationists Irfan Farooqui, Abdul Razzaq, Arshad Iqbal, Muhammad Tahir and Muhammad Shahbaz Kazim.²⁷

July 19 and 31, 2023

Siran Valley, Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

- A female Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) is seriously injured after a poaching attempt. Her 2 cubs are missing. They are believed to have been kidnapped by the gang. The bear, who had taken refuge in a cave, was captured and cared for. She did not survive her injuries.

- Arrest of 2 suspects in the Mansehra district. They were allegedly involved in the poaching operation. According to information gathered in the village of Bugermung, they seized a single bear cub and then released him to avoid being identified and prosecuted. Village elders presented the police with a written document certifying that they had witnessed the release of the cub. In view of their presumed age, the bear cub left behind after the poaching of his mother and the cub released by the poachers should be capable of self-sufficiency at this time of year.²⁸

TAIWAN

June 2, 2023

Heping District, Taichung Special Municipality, Taiwan

An Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) was found dead, his paw caught in a steel noose. He is thought to have died of thirst near the river Hengliu.²⁹



Beginning of July 2023

Zhuoxi, Hualien County, Taiwan

Following the rescue of a Formosan black bear (*Ursus thibetanus formosanus*, Appendix I) in Zhuoxi in early May 2023 (see "On the Trail" n°40 p.74, ref.25), a new representative of the protected species has been caught in a trap in the Zhuoxi area. The adult male bear was caught in a trap set by a coffee planter fearing the intrusion of wild boar. He informed the veterinary services. As part of the government's plan to save the species, a bonus of 6,000 yuan (830 US\$) is promised to anyone who immediately reports the capture of a bear in a wild boar trap. This initiative is designed to prevent concealment, clandestine butchering and the sale of meat. The bear's left front paw was compressed and swollen by the steel noose. Amputation was avoided. The convalescent was transferred to a shelter for injured or brutalized wild animals in Taitung County, some 100 km away.³⁰



Sunday 27 - Wednesday 30 August 2023

Hualien County, Taiwan

A female Formosan black bear (*Ursus thibetanus formosanus*, Appendix I) was caught in a steel wire lasso trap for at least 2 days. The more she tried to get away, the more the noose severed her paw. The rescue team had no choice but to anaesthetise and amputate her on the spot at nightfall. In the evening, the little 35 kg adult was rushed to the WildOne wildlife rescue centre. Three days later, despite the care given to her by the entire veterinary team, she died.³¹



©林業保育署花蓮分署提供

VIET NAM

July 2023

Long San, Long San Province, Viet Nam

Pham Van Tu sentenced to 12 months in prison for attempting to sell 2 Asian black bears (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I).³²



July 2023

Gonabad, Razavi Khorasan Province, Iran

Nguyen Huu Dung sentenced to 13 months in prison. He regularly posted advertisements on social networks offering wildlife products for sale: pangolin scales, bear bile, tiger skin, tiger bone extract pills, etc. He had been warned by ENV on several occasions. At the time of his arrest, he was carrying 11 Malayan sun bear paws (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I).³³



© ENV

July 28, 2023

Di An, Bonh Duong Province, Viet Nam

Rescue of 2 Asian black bears (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I). They were being kept in a domestic home. The female bear, weighing 150 kg, is in poor condition. She has gall bladder lesions, her right front paw is partially amputated, and her left hind paw is injured. The 120 kg male bear also has gall bladder lesions. His coat on the abdomen is bare. His abdomen is affected by total alopecia due to friction with the concrete slab where he was lying. The 2 bears had been captive for 20 years. They had long been subjected to the extraction of bile used in traditional medicine. They were transported to the veterinary refuge of Tam Dao National Park in northern Viet Nam, 1,800 km from Di An, a journey by truck under medical supervision lasting at least 28 hours.³⁴

EUROPE

FINLAND

End of August 2023

Rovaniemi, Lapland Region, Finland

Sentenced to 20 day-fines, being 580 € (640 US\$), for shooting a female brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) followed by her cub, in violation of the Hunting Code.³⁵



FRANCE

June 6, 2023

Foix, Department of Ariège, France

- A retired sheep farmer was given a 2-month suspended prison sentence. His invectives were described as "threats to agents entrusted with a public service mission" and he must pay 500 € (540 US\$) in damages to each of the agents of the Office Français de la Biodiversité. On August 25, 2017, he took part in a demonstration of defiance and hostility towards 4 OFB agents who on the Saleix mountain pasture were investigating the death of a flock of ewes. In a panic attributed to an attack by a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II), they had fallen to their deaths at the foot of a rocky outcrop. Around thirty farmers who fired several warning shots at the top of a ridge at the same time have not been identified. The echoes of the shootings in the mountains during the period when hunting is banned have caused concern among civilians, herds and wild animals. During the summer of 2017, several hundred ewes in circumstances that have not all been identified thus "rocked down" and tension was high in Ariège.



- Another ewe farmer sentenced to a 6-month suspended prison sentence. On September 12, 2017, he had taken part in a night-time performance in which around thirty (still the same) hooded guys, some of them armed, announced "the reopening of bear hunting and active resistance to State agents". The skit was punctuated by 2 rifle shots. The video of the braggarts was sent to the local media and caused quite a stir in the huts and in the valleys.

- Philippe Lacube, now President of the Ariège Chamber of Agriculture, was acquitted. He was suspected of making the video or helping to make it and sending it to the media. In a way, he was the press attaché for the anti-bear operation.

- Another breeder, Jonathan Rives, was also acquitted. He was suspected of having lent one of the conspirators his Benelli Supernova 12-gauge shotgun, which was formally identified by ballistics experts as being in the hands of one of the conspirators.

All this posturing, intimidation and failure to tell the truth ultimately had the result the farmers' clan wanted: the plan to reintroduce bears to Ariège and the whole of the French Pyrenees has been suspended sine die.³⁶

ITALY

June 27 and the beginning of August, 2023

Roccaraso, Province of L'Aquila, Region of Abruzzo, Italy

How long will the familiar European brown bear (*Ursus arctos arctos*, Appendix II) withstand provocation, intimidation and reprisals from the public? She was chased by a car, filmed by the relentless driver and seen on the social networks fearfully taking shelter on the doorstep of a house with her cub. The mother was missing 2 cubs. A 61-year-old man has been arrested. He is accused of mistreating animals and breaching the municipal by-law banning the harassment of bears and approaching them to a distance of less than 300 metres from April 2021. Roccaraso is in the Abruzzo Natural Park.³⁷

MONTENEGRO

Sunday July 2, 2023

Rasun-Anterselva, Province of Bolzano, Region of Trentino-Alto Adige, Italy. Border with Austria.

Georg Kurt Schrodell, a 65-year-old German national, sees the carabinieri arrive at the hotel where he stopped off on his way back from a vacation in Slovenia. They came to arrest him. He thinks it's a misunderstanding, but it's all very real. He was unaware that he had been sentenced in absentia in Romania to 15 months' imprisonment and a fine of 40,000 € (38,825 US\$) in October 2022 for killing a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) in November 2017, and that he was the subject of a European arrest warrant at the request of the Romanian police (see "On the Trail" n°40 p.76, ref.36). Following his arrest, Romania requested his extradition, but his lawyers are contesting this. "He was deprived of his right to defence, since he was not notified of his conviction and could not appeal." "We don't even know which participant in the hunt touched the animal." Last we heard, at the end of August 2023, he was still under house arrest in a building in the town of San Genesio Atesino, province of Bolzano.³⁸

August 31, 2023

San Benedetto dei Marsi, Province of L'Aquila, Region of Abruzzo, Italy

A brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II), who entered a private property by chance or perhaps was attracted by a chicken coop, was fatally wounded by Andrea Leombruni, a shopkeeper. During the night, Leombruni took his 7.62 caliber rifle and shot the bear, who, according to initial reports to the press and NGOs, was on all fours and was not in an aggressive posture. The commune of San Benedetto dei Marsi is in the Abruzzo, Lazio, and Molise Park. The habits, behavior and postures of bears are part of the local collective culture, and 56-year-old Leombruni was not to be denied. He shot the bear in the middle of the night, unaware that she was a bear, just as he might have shot a burglar. The 2 cubs fled. In September, they were observed by rangers. They are together, feigning fights and sometimes approaching villages. According to the furtive images from the camera traps, they seem to have enough fat reserves to go into hibernation when the cold and snow arrive, provided they can find a den. In their droppings, the rangers found blackberry and pear residues. They are 11 months old.³⁹

End of July 2023

Blizna, Municipality of Podgorica, Montenegro

The NGOs Four Paws and Animal Survival International denounce the inaction of the Montenegrin authorities in the face of the persistent captivity of a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) aged around 7 years in the clandestine Blizna zoo operated by Miljan Milicković (see "On the Trail" n°38 p.80, ref.42). Worse still, a 6-month-old bear cub allegedly abandoned in July outside the door of the hidden zoo has joined the so-called Ljubo. Miljan Milicković says he adopted him out of pity and necessity.

Wild animals in captivity in Montenegro, see "On the Trail" n°35 p.50 (ref.40) and p.186 (ref.76), n°38 p.80 (ref.42) and this issue p.136 (ref.170), p.180 (ref.67), p. 181 (ref.68).⁴⁰

POLAND

Beginning of June 2023

Gdynia Port, Pomeranian Voivodeship, Poland

Seizure of 2 stuffed American black bears (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) in a container from the USA. They were indeed declared as hunting trophies, but were not accompanied by an export permit.⁴¹



ROMANIA

June 6, 2023

Milova, Arad County, Romania

Terror reigns around Milova. At the end of May, a bear was seen, a bear was spotted, a bear was heard. Are there 3 of them, or one? Elected representatives alerted sport hunters and called on the National Directorate of Veterinary Services for help. The mayor of Conop called for the invaders to be relocated and even "euthanized". On Tuesday June 6, mushroom pickers come across a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) caught in a trap described as a "wild boar trap". The entire area is cordoned off by the police, and a cool head prevails. In the presence of the gendarmerie, the 3-year-old bear is sedated under spotlights and freed from the snare that was strangling him. His movements are closely monitored by gamekeepers and hunters, and mushroom picking is prohibited in the forest.⁴²



August 11, 2023

Girdoveni, Dambovită County, Romania

A brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) whose paw had been severed by a trap from which he had managed to escape in a desperate effort was found dead in a pool of blood near the garden of a 70-year-old woman. The rural police were immediately alerted. An investigation has been launched to find the snare setter.⁴³



RUSSIA

Beginning of June 2023

Yekaterinburg Koltsovo International Airport, Sverdlovsk Oblast, Russia

Customs officers seized 5 Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) or brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) claws from the luggage of a woman living in Yekaterinburg and flying out to Dubai.⁴⁴

June 13, 2023

Yamburg, Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District, Russia

A man sets off across the tundra on a snowmobile to collect firewood. Just in case, he takes a rifle and it went wrong for a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) at the side of the road, behind a bush. He was riddled with 6 bullets. The man, already known to law enforcement, took the corpse home, skinned him and hung his pelt on the wall of his house. The loss is estimated at 180,000 roubles (2,250 US\$). The 63-year-old is the subject of new criminal proceedings.⁴⁵

Saturday June 17, 2023

Krasnogorka, Nizhny Novgorod Oblast, Russia

Two rifles, a dead brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) in the back of the car wide open, and a man who is none other than the director of forest and wildlife protection for the oblast (over 76,600 km²). He was arrested by Kstovsky game wardens.⁴⁶

Saturday June 25, 2023

Motygino, Krasnoyarsk Krai, Russia

Two brown bear cubs (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) disemboweled at the dump. The day before, they had been gambolling peacefully in the bilberry thickets on a path leading to the village, home to 5,000 inhabitants who are now afraid of the mother's revenge and are taking their rubbish elsewhere.⁴⁷

End of June 2023

Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, Kamchatka Krai, Russia

I'm a member of the Krai Wildlife Protection Service, I'm patrolling the town forest and I come across a trap that's well known to our services, an open barrel tied to the taiga and at the bottom of it there's a big piece of rotten fish. This attracts the brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) and if he's unlucky enough to get his paw in, he can't get it out again because of the reinforced iron claws. I did the stakeout for several days with the others, but the person didn't come to see if his bear trap had worked. So, we removed it.⁴⁸



Sunday July 16, 2023

Yelizovo, Kamchatka Krai, Russia

A brown bear cub (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) was found near an illegal scrap metal and car wreck dump. His snout had been cut off, his paws amputated and he was partially eviscerated, with a cable around his neck, possibly the remains of a trap. The experts who quickly arrived on the scene established, without being able to say his sex, that the cub was around 2 years old, and that he died on Saturday or Friday.⁴⁹

Sunday July 23 and October 24, 2023

Kaznacheevo and Aleksin, Tula Oblast, Russia



- A 27-year-old woman and her child were scratched by a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) through the bars of the enclosure at Aleksin-Straus Zoo. This zoo no longer exists legally. It is not listed in the Cerberus database of Rosselkhoz nadzor, the administration responsible in Moscow and Tula oblasts for registering all establishments exploiting domestic or wild animals. The zoo's owner, Ararat Uzunyan, died in 2020, and since then the zoo has been in compulsory liquidation, but some Uzunyan's heirs continue to run it and look after the bears, monkeys (*Chlorocebus* spp., Appendix II) and ostriches with precarious means.

- The 2 zoo managers were fined 140,000 and 150,000 roubles (1,450 and 1,550 US\$).⁵⁰

July 27, 2023

Nogliksky District, Sakhalin Oblast, Russia



A female brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) entangled in a fishing net set by poachers in the Parkata River managed to make it back to shore despite injuries, bruising and the risk of drowning. Forest rangers, a veterinary team and members of the Boomerang association managed to approach her by boat, anaesthetise her, free her from the net, give her emergency treatment, administer green clay to the wounds before withdrawing. From the boat, they watched the survivor wake up. She sat up straight. Her first move was to drink from the river, while her frightened cub looked on. Favourable prognosis.⁵¹

Beginning of August 2023

Zabaykalsk, Zabaykalsky Krai, Russia. Border with China.

Seizure of 7 dried gall bladders and 6 bear teeth (*Ursidae*, Appendix I or II) from a Russian woman on her way to China.⁵²



August 1st, 2023

Grozny International Airport, Chechen Republic, Russia

Before flying to Dubai for, he says, a friend's wedding, the 23-year-old Russian passenger was relieved by customs officials of some unexpected gifts: 12 Asian black bear paws (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I), 180 kg of red king crabs (*Paralithodes camtschaticus*), and 19 kg of chaga mushrooms (*Inonotus obliquus*). Chaga mushrooms are prized for their supposed antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. They are also said to prevent heart and digestive disorders.⁵³

August 16, 2023

Satka, Chelyabinsk Oblast, Russia

Double pain for a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II). At around 10.30 p.m., a car hit him (or chased him?) on the road near the forest. He fell into the ditch. A man got out of a following car with a gun and shot him dead. The scene was filmed by a witness. An investigation is under way. Bear hunting is banned in the oblast.⁵⁴

SAIGA ANTELOPES, GAZELLES, ANTELOPES, URIALS, ALTAI ARGALIS, PRONGHORNS, ...



Indian gazelle (*Gazella bennettii*). Photo Avinash Bhagat

AFRICA

SUDAN

Beginning of July 2023 and beginning of 2024 Khartoum, Khartoum State, Sudan

RSF (Rapid Support Forces) members broke into a wild animal refuge on the outskirts of Khartoum 2 days in a row, killing a young camel (genus *Camelus*) (the mother was spared because of her size and the inability to transport her), 2 gazelles (family Bovidae) and 2 deer. They transported the bodies in their truck to butcher and eat them. Gazelles found in Sudan include dama gazelles (*Nanger dama*, Appendix I), dorcas gazelles (*Gazella dorcas*, Appendix III in Algeria and Tunisia), Soemmerring's gazelles (*Nanger soemmerringii*), red-fronted gazelles (*Eudorcas rufifrons*) and Heuglin's gazelles (*Eudorcas rufifrons tilonura*). A total of 26 lions, several small felines, 5 hyenas, the female camel, birds including ostriches, monkeys and reptiles still live in the refuge, which, in times of peace, operates like a zoo. They all suffer from the sound of bombing raids and disruptions to the electricity supply, which prevent borehole pumps from working and inflict water shortages. Electric fences are useless even when powered by solar panels. The lions are in danger of escaping, adding further panic to a Sudan embroiled in civil war between paramilitary RSF troops and the Sudanese Armed Forces. The director of the zoo-refuge, Hamid, does his best to ensure that the lions have the 135 kg of meat they need every day (5.2 kg per lion).

"There are some safe places in Sudan. We call different traders to prepare meat for the animals and they bring it in from al-Jazirah State. We pay them in cash. The meat is cow, horse, donkey – anything that is available." Before the war, Sudan Animal Rescue had a truck, but the RSF stole it a few days after the war broke out. Negotiating with Egypt and Ethiopia is difficult; Hamid says he has contacted international organisations, but nothing has worked. "The situation is getting worse day by day." Middle East Eye contacted the RSF but received no response.

In November, with the help of the NGO Four Paws, 47 animals that survived disease and hunger were evacuated to Dinder National Park and Um Barona National Park. Some had to be evacuated again in early 2024 when the conflict spread to this area. Now, 11 lions live in the Lionsrock sanctuary in South Africa.¹

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

End of August 2023

Paulden, State of Arizona, United States of America

The decapitated carcass of a pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana*, Appendix I in Mexico) shot to death is discovered.²

AZERBAIJAN

Beginning of July 2023**Novxani, Absheron District, Azerbaijan**

The owner of AF Hotel-Aqua Park was fined 2,000 manats (1,175 US\$) for illegal possession and mistreatment of 3 goitered gazelles (*Gazella subgutturosa*) and birds. The animals, who were used as attractions for guests, will be transferred to the Samaxi safari park, 130 km from the Aqua Park hotel. On its website, the hotel presents itself as a dream establishment for adults and children alike.³

**Beginning of August 2023****Nagorno-Karabakh Region, Azerbaijan**

The Armenian media site Asekose.am published a video of several Azerbaijanis poaching a wild goat (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) and expressed indignation: "Where are Armenian ecologists? Why don't they speak up?" Nagorno-Karabakh, an enclave in Azerbaijan with a majority Armenian population, proclaimed its independence in 1991 as the Republic of Artsakh, but was not recognized internationally, by Armenia or by Azerbaijan, the 2 countries disputing "ownership". After the second Nagorno-Karabakh war (September-November 2020), Azerbaijan took control of several areas of the region. In September 2023, a new offensive drove out almost the entire Armenian population and brought the entire region under Azerbaijani rule.⁴

CHINA

July 2023**Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China**

Seizure of 5 saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) in the luggage of a traveller disembarking from a flight from abroad. The horns were carefully wrapped in aluminium foil. They are around 30 cm long.⁵

July 29, 2023**Korgas Border Post, Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, China. Border with Kazakhstan.**

Seizure of 4 saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II). The man inspected by customs had taped them around his stomach and thighs. Total weight: 920 grams.⁶

July 3, 2023**Nohar, Hanumangarh District, State of Rajasthan, India**

The Court of Appeal upheld the sentence of 3 years' imprisonment and a fine of 1000 rupees (12 US\$) imposed by the first trial on 2 poachers of an Indian gazelle (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III in Pakistan) also known as chinkara, ordering that half the fine be awarded to Rajendra Bishnoi who had revealed Mana Ram's actions to the police. The Court of Appeal praised Rajendra Bishnoi for the accuracy and timing of his information.



The Bishnoi ethnic group and the defence of chinkaras, see "On the Trail" n°9 p.91 (ref.11), n°19 p.117 (ref.16), n°29 p.80 (ref.25) and p.81 (ref.32), n°31 p.83 (ref.16) and p.184 (ref.83), n°32 p.246 (ref.92) and n°40 p.79 (ref.8).⁷

July 24, 2023**Bhakhri, Jaisalmer District, State of Rajasthan, India**

Discovery by Bishnoi of 3 butchered Indian gazelles (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III in Pakistan), one of whom was a pregnant female. The foetus was found among the remains.⁸

IRAN

July 2023**Sarigol National Park, North Khorasan Province, Iran**

From his car, he was shooting at urials (*Ovis vignei*, Appendix I) on the edge of the national park. The vehicle was blocked by rangers. A freshly killed urial, a shotgun, 14 rounds of ammunition and a knife were seized inside. The poacher-driver was arrested. The car was impounded.⁹

KAZAKHSTAN

Mid-June 2023**Sozak District, Turkistan Region, Kazakhstan**

Altai argali meat (*Ovis ammon nigrimontana*, Appendix II) was seized from the poacher's bag and 2 rifles from his car. The police had carried out a roadside check at an exit from the Karatau Reserve, which is home to around a hundred plant species, 36 of which are listed in the Kazakshtan Red Data Book, and around a hundred bird species, 12 of which (white stork, black stork, short-toed eagle, booted eagle, steppe eagle, golden eagle, bearded vulture, saker falcon, demoiselle crane, houbara bustard, Eurasian eagle owl) are in the Red Data Book and 20 mammal species, 3 of which (argali, beech marten, Indian crested porcupine) are also in the Red Data Book.¹⁰

**Mid-June, Saturday July 1st, and July 24, 2023
Aktobe and Shilikti, Aktobe Region, Kazakhstan**

- Seizure of a shotgun, an air pistol and a saiga antelope horn (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) from a villager.

- Seizure of 30 saiga antelope horns from a car on the Bogoslovsk road.

- A motorcycle, a 34-year-old man, a knife, 3 saiga antelope carcasses and an investigation opened under article 339, paragraph 2 of the Penal Code.¹¹



June 23, 2023

Korgalzhyn District, Aqmola Region, Kazakhstan

Near the nature reserve and Lake Kyzylkol, the traffic police discovered a saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) inside a Niva car.¹²

July 2023

Ulytau District, Ulytau Region, Kazakhstan

On the Ulytau-Sarlyk road, seizure of 2 carcasses of saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II), a smooth-bore shotgun, 106 rounds of ammunition and 3 hunting knives from a Toyota 4Runner by district police and officers of Okhotzooptom, the wildlife protection service. Arrest of 2 men aged 36 and 52 living in Satpayev.¹³

Mid-July 2023

Arkalyk, Kostanay Region, Kazakhstan

Seizure in a car of 3 bags of cut meat suspected of being saiga antelope meat (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II). Activation of article 339 of the Republic's Penal Code.¹⁴

July 24, 2023

Nura District, Karaganda Region, Kazakhstan

Police and Okhotzooptom seize 5 saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) from a caravan. An investigation is opened into illegal handling of rare, endangered and prohibited plant and animal species, their parts and derivatives.¹⁵

Beginning of August 2023

Atyrau, Atyrau Region, Kazakhstan

Sentence of 4 and 7 years' imprisonment for the 2 men who were holding 2421 saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) weighing a total of 500 kg, i.e. around 200 g/horn, in their home with a view to reselling them (see "On the Trail" n°40 p.81, in Bereke).¹⁶



Beginning of August 2023

Shalkar, Aktobe Region, Kazakhstan

The carcasses of two saiga antelopes (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) and a 16-gauge shotgun were found in the car of a man who had no option but to admit his guilt.¹⁷

Saturday, August 5, 2023

Kyzylsay, Mangystau Region, Kazakhstan

17 goitered gazelle (*Gazella subgutturosa*) carcasses and meat, a rifle, nearly 100 rounds of ammunition, an axe and several knives were seized from a poacher's home and car during a joint operation by the police and Okhotzooptom.¹⁸

Saturday August 5, 2023

Zhairem, Ulytau Region, Kazakhstan

At around 9 p.m., police and Okhotzooptom officers arrested a motorcyclist. He was carrying 3 decapitated young saiga antelopes (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II).¹⁹

FAMILY AFFAIRS

August 10, 2023

Taskala District, West Kazakhstan Region, Kazakhstan

Seizure from 2 cattle-breeding cousins of 20 hemp plants in a car wreck, "plant substances with a peculiar odour", a 16-gauge shotgun, 40 cartridges and 9 saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II).²⁰

KYRGYZSTAN

June 23, 2023

Kyrgyzstan. Border with China.

Seizure of 845 sub-adult saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) (165 kg, an average of 195 grams per horn) bound for China. They had been smuggled in from Kazakhstan or Uzbekistan. At least 2 arrests.²¹



August 22, 2023

Kok-Oyrok, Chüy Region, Kyrgyzstan

Abyshov Kalysbek was arrested with the carcass of a Himalayan ibex (*Capra sibirica*, Appendix III in Pakistan) and a 12-gauge shotgun found in his tent.²²



In Chüy Region, wildlife wardens travel on horseback

UZBEKISTAN

Sunday July 9, 2023

Navbahor District, Navoiy Region, Uzbekistan

The 2 poachers are arrested. They are merciless. In the boot of the Niva, a female goitered gazelle (*Gazella subgutturosa*) and her calf were found dead and bloodied. The rifle was seized. Damage is estimated at 33 million sums or 2,865 US\$. The car was impounded.²³

Mid-July 2023

Qorovulbozor District, Bukhara Region, Uzbekistan

Two men on the run shot at a wildlife ranger, Mirali Hojiyev, who was trying to stop them from poaching goitered gazelles (*Gazella subgutturosa*). Hojiyev was wounded in the arm and taken to the hospital, where he was treated for non-life-threatening injuries. A few days later, the regional Prosecutor General announced that one of the shooters had been arrested.²⁴

PAKISTAN

Beginning of June 2023

Near Salt Range National Park, Province of Punjab, Pakistan

Arrest of a man suspected of poaching and seizure of the carcass of a female urial (*Ovis vignei*, Appendix I). Fine of 100,000 rupees (350 US\$). An accomplice fled the scene.²⁵



Beginning of June 2023

Jhelum District, Province of Punjab, Pakistan

The poacher managed to elude the wildlife protection officers. He left behind the body of an urial (*Ovis vignei*, Appendix I).²⁶



TURKIYE

August 1st, 2023

Antalya Province, Türkiye

The bill is high for the 3 poachers. A 28,000 lira (1,040 US\$) fine each and 300,000 lira (11,130 US\$) compensation for the wild goat (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) who was killed and butchered.²⁷



EUROPE

RUSSIA

June 21, 2023

Federal City of Saint Petersburg, Russia

At the request of the prosecutor of the Lomonosovsky district in the Leningrad oblast (bordering St Petersburg), the Petrodvortsovy municipal district court blocked access to 3 websites offering saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) for sale.²⁸

June 21, 2023

Kharabali, Astrakhan Oblast, Russia

In violation of article 258.1 of the Penal Code of the Russian Federation (illegal possession of parts of particularly valuable wild animals belonging to species listed in the Red Book of the Russian Federation and protected by international treaties), a man from the steppes was sentenced to one year's correctional labour with 10% of his salary paid to the State. He had 8 saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II).²⁹



Saturday August 19, 2023

Safarovka, Saratov Oblast, Russia. Border with Kazakhstan.

The carcasses of 5 saiga antelopes (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) are seized from a truck. In 2021, Russia and Kazakhstan signed an agreement on the protection of cross-border saiga antelope populations.³⁰

AFRICA

KENYA

July-August 2023

Kuku Ranch, Kajiado County; Naivasha, Nakuru County; Olarro Conservancy, Narok County; Sergoit, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya



Summary of the "giraffe" interventions by KWS and SWT mobile veterinary units: 5 adult giraffes, including one Nubian or Rothschild giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis Camelopardalis*, Appendix II) and one sub-adult (4 males and 2 females) were rescued. Five were caught by a leg in a trap or dragging steel wire. One had the head of a spear stuck in his left hind leg. All the prognoses are favourable.¹



July 6, 9, 15, 19, and August 8, 12, 14, 20, 24, 25, 28 and 31, 2023
Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya



Big Life Foundation's giraffe assessment in Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County. They are subjected to real harassment, caught in traps, shot with bows and arrows, killed by throwing weapons, butchered and mutilated with machetes by strangers fleeing into the savannah. The rangers count the dead, at least 12, get their hands on 200/300 kg of meat in sacks, destroy traps and help arrest a few suspects. Most of them escaped on motorcycles, no doubt benefiting from local complicity. Since the Covid-19 years, giraffe meat has been more sought-after than cattle meat. Upstream it's free, downstream it's expensive.²

ZAMBIA

Beginning of July 2023

South Luangwa National Park, Eastern, Central and Muchinga Provinces, Zambia



Rescue of a giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*, Appendix II with reservation from Zambia) with one leg stuck in a trap.³

Mid-July 2023

South Luangwa National Park, Eastern, Central and Muchinga Provinces, Zambia



Rescue of a male giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*, Appendix II with reservation from Zambia) whose left hind leg was stuck in a trap.⁴





Cape mountain zebra (*Equus zebra ssp. zebra*). Photo Osoandino

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

End of June 2023

Ongeluksnek Nature Reserve, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. Border with Lesotho.

Radically depopulated! The Ongeluksnek Reserve has been stripped of 30 zebras (genus *Equus*, *Equus zebra hartmannae* and *Equus zebra zebra*, Appendix II, found in South Africa) and 20 hartebeests (*Alcelaphus buselaphus*) by bushmeat-seeking looters from the Drakensberg Mountains in neighbouring Lesotho.¹

August 23, 2023

Bisley Valley Nature Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

A poacher, an old hand, a craftsman working tailor-made and not driving a BMW, was caught at 2 a.m. by a patrol on the Bisley road pushing a large trolley loaded with a skinned zebra (genus *Equus*, *Equus zebra hartmannae* and *Equus zebra zebra*, Appendix II, found in South Africa) that he was bringing back from the reserve known for the ease with which looters can get in and animals out.²

August 31, 2023

Natal Lion Park, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

A lion eating a zebra (genus *Equus*, *Equus zebra hartmannae* and *Equus zebra zebra*, Appendix II, found in South Africa) in the lion park is nothing unusual, but 3 poachers skinning a zebra in the park in the early hours of the morning attracted attention. Guards from the Mi7 National Group, a security agency, quickly arrived on the scene. They found the remains of a zebra, but the poachers had already left with the meat.³

KENYA

June 16, 2023

Limuru, Kiambu County, Kenya

In the forest, 25 donkey carcasses, or what was left of them, were discovered. The meat and skins were already packed, and according to police, these donkeys were stolen. Health authorities ordered the destruction of the meat and hide packages.⁴

June 17, 2023

Mirithu, Kiambu County, Kenya

A police raid on a homeowner's yard resulted in the discovery of 30 donkey bodies. The owner was absent, and a dozen of his bloody-handed employees escaped through holes in the fence. The meat and skins were stored in sacks, and only one killer, Mbugua, was arrested. He is currently in custody.⁵

June 17, 2023

Kikuyu, Kiambu County, Kenya

A man was arrested in his home. He is suspected of stealing around 50 donkeys, killing them, butchering them, and cutting them into jerky to be sold in markets and butcher shops. Several knives and machetes were seized. Accomplices are sought. Police boss Donald Kirui wants to get his hands on the network. Kenya's donkey population has been in great danger since the highest court lifted the ban on donkey slaughterhouses in 2020.⁶

June 23, 2023

Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya

An adult zebra (genus *Equus*, *Equus grevyi*, Appendix I, found in Kenya) has recently died. He was pierced in the back by an arrow.⁷

July-August 2023

Rumuruti, Laikipia County; Naivasha, Olmurogi, Nini Farm, Nakuru County; Mara Ripoi Conservancy, Mara North Conservancy, Narok County; Managa, Nyamira County; Ndi, Lumo Conservancy, Taita Hills Wildlife Sanctuary, Taita Taveta County, Kenya



Report on zebra interventions by KWS and SWT mobile veterinary teams. Eleven adult zebras (genus *Equus*, *Equus grevyi*, Appendix I, found in Kenya) (6 males, 5 females) and one foal were rescued. The 11 adults were trapped or dragging steel wire around their necks or torsos. An arrow was embedded in the foal's left flank. Ten prognoses were favourable. Two females were put down to avoid irreparable pain and disability.⁸



Favourable prognosis



She has been put down to rest. Her left front hoof was almost entirely severed by the trap

Mid-August 2023

Kiahiti, Kiambu County, Kenya

The police, alerted by villagers complaining about the braying of the donkeys in the middle of the night, and feeling sorry for the donkeys facing the axe, discovered a new clandestine slaughterhouse in the thicket. Seven donkey carcasses were freshly cut up. The traffic is destined for markets where donkey meat is sold under the name of beef, and for the informal and popular roadside circuit where donkey liver, intestines and other offal enter anonymously into muturas, supus and matumbos. Three men fled the scene.⁹



NIGERIA

Mid-August 2023

Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos State, Nigeria

The NCS (Nigeria Customs Service) announced that airport customs officers had seized 25 packages of dried donkey genitalia, declared as bovine genitalia. The shipper was Chinese, while the consignee was in Hong Kong. The consignment carried an estimated value of 1.3 million US\$. In previous seizures of donkey penises in Nigeria (see "On the Trail" n°35 p.85, ref.13, and n°37 p.88, ref.22), a penis was valued between 25.50 and 71.50 US\$. The 25 parcels contained at least 18,000 penises.¹⁰

August 2023

Adamawa and Taraba States, Nigeria

Seizure of 200 donkey skins and a vehicle.

It is interesting, but unfortunately anecdotal given the vastness of Africa, that Nigeria, through the customs authorities of its 36 federated States, systematically refers to the CITES listing of the wild donkey (*Equus africanus*) to justify the seizure of donkey skins bound for China: "Donkey is categorized as an endangered animal under convention on international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora (CITES) to which Nigeria is a signatory". African domestic donkeys (*Equus asinus*) are morphologically very close and genetically descended from wild donkeys, but this argument has not (yet) been accepted by the CITES authorities, who have preferred to exclude the domesticated form *Equus asinus* from Appendix I. "The ban on the export of donkey skins from Nigeria is in line with the Federal Government's policies for the protection of endangered species, protection of the local economy, and to promote the National Forest Policy."¹¹

End of August 2023

Kebbi State, Nigeria

Customs seized 16 bales of second-hand clothing, 10 sacks of snuff and 1,080 donkey skins.¹²

AMERICA

CANADA

June 13, 2023

Saskatoon, Province of Saskatchewan, Canada

Nicholson, the spokesman for the province's Ministry of the Environment, would not say where the zebras (genus *Equus*) were seized in accordance with Captive Wildlife Regulations. The 5 zebras were transferred to Saskatoon Forestry



Farm Park and Zoo in a stable protected from the cold. Zebras do not tolerate temperatures below -5°C for long. They are not made for Canadian winters. Now they rub shoulders with caribou. Since 2021, the list of wild animals prohibited from captivity in private homes has included perissodactyls (ungulate mammals with an odd number of toes on their hind limbs), including zebras. Captive zebras in North America, see "On the Trail" n°33 p.123 (ref.13).¹³

ASIA

MONGOLIA

August 1, 2023

Bulgan, Khovd Aimag, Mongolia

B.Z. was sentenced to 2 years' probation and a fine of 13.9 million tugriks (4,030 US\$) for poaching an Asian wild ass (*Equus hemionus*, Appendix I or II). Mongolia has both Mongolian wild asses (*Equus hemionus kulan*, Appendix I) and kulans (*Equus hemionus kulan*, Appendix II).¹⁴



HIPPOPOTAMUSES

AFRICA

KENYA

June 27, 2023

Naretai Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya



There was no alternative but to finish off this adult female hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) who was immobilized in a swamp. One of the spears was embedded in her 2 jaws, leaving her unable to graze or breathe, while the other was stuck in the pond.¹

NAMIBIA

July 28, 2023

Katere, East Kavango Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.

In Katere, police caught a man butchering an entire hippopotamus carcass (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) worth an estimated 100,000 \$ (5,340 US\$). In Swartwater, an unknown man stole 17 sheep from a village. Only one carcass was found, and the value of the flock is estimated at 25,500 \$ (1,360 US\$). The police have arrested both perpetrators.²

Hippopotamuses, see also p. 32 (ref.4) et p. 174 (ref.33).

GAURS

ASIA

INDIA

July 25, 2023

Kakkodi, Kozhikode District, State of Kerala, India

Seizure of 3 gaur (*Bos gaurus*, Appendix I) horns (as well as a pair of spotted deer antlers and a coral) from a private home during an investigation into sexual abuse of children.¹

THAILAND

July 13, 2023

Khlong Sai, Nakhon Ratchasima Province, Thailand

A male gaur (*Bos gaurus*, Appendix I) died. Seven bullets were found in his body. He was 300 meters from Khao Yai National Park and 2 km from a forest where hunting is prohibited. He was around 12 years old and weighed around 800 kg.²

MUSK DEER, DEER AND MOOSE



Bokharan deer (*Cervus elaphus bactrianus*). Photo vladimir_epiktetov

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

COLORADO

July 10, 2023

Cripple Creek, State of Colorado, United States of America

Sentencing of Steven Samuelson to a suspended sentence of 2 years in prison on a felony charge. It will be waived if he meets the terms of the plea agreement and 2 years of unsupervised probation. He must also pay a 20,000 US\$ fine. He had poached a moose (*Alces alces*) with a bow in September 2021 in Teller County and attempted to decapitate him before covering him with branches. He pleaded guilty to a felony charge of willful destruction of wildlife, among other offences, failure to prepare wildlife for human consumption, and hunting without a valid big game licence. See "On the Trail" n°37 p.92 (ref.8).¹



GEORGIA

July 17, 2023

State of Georgia, United States of America

Sentencing of Allen Rudolph to a fine of 6,500 US\$ and 2 years of probation with a ban on entering federal and State forests, wildlife refuges, and protected areas, for poaching a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) in November 2021.²



August 21, 2023

Talbot County, State of Georgia, United States of America

After receiving an anonymous yet reliable tip-off, Dean Gibson, an officer with the Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division, went to the designated residence, whose occupant admitted having killed a deer (family Cervidae) in velvet out of season. The trophy was seized.³



MICHIGAN

End of August 2023

Oakland County, State of Michigan, United States of America

A white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) chest and 8 antlers are seized from a taxidermist. The deer was shot in January, and the poacher will be prosecuted.⁴

NEBRASKA

July 28, 2023

Lincoln, State of Nebraska, United States of America

Michael T. Ban was sentenced to 2 years' probation, banned for one year from participating in any form of hunting or fishing activity, fined 5,000 US\$ and ordered to pay 4,000 US\$ in restitution for poaching a mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) in Nebraska with the complicity of the hunting and taxidermy company Noble Outdoors. The owner of Noble Outdoors and his 16 associates, guides and clients were sentenced to 65,000 US\$ in fines and restitution for poaching mule deer and pronghorns (*Antilocapra americana*, Appendix I in Mexico) and transporting trophies to States other than Nebraska, where Noble Outdoors is based.

Noble Outdoors, see "On the Trail" n°37 p.92 (ref.5 and 11) and n°38 p.98 (ref.27).⁵



OHIO

July 2023

Columbiana County, State of Ohio, United States of America

A TIP (Turn-In-a-Poacher) enabled Jesse Janosik, an Ohio wildlife ranger connected to Columbiana County, to find the remains of 2 white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) in a ditch with other trash, and to trace them back to a suspect's home, where the 2 deer trophies were seized. The poacher had lacked a hunting licence and deer hunting permit for several years. He was sentenced to over 500 US\$ in fines and court costs.⁶



OREGON

August 1st, 2023

Pendleton, State of Oregon, United States of America

Walker Erickson, 28, a hardcore deer poacher (family Cervidae) and trophy collector, was fined 75,000 US\$ and ordered to spend 2 weeks in prison for the next 3 hunting seasons, as well as losing sine die his right to buy a hunting licence. See "On the Trail" n°38 p.97 (ref.20).⁷



PERU

August 16, 2023

Cajamarca, Province of Cajamarca, Department of Cajamarca, Peru

Seizure in the Las Maruchitas restaurant of one stuffed whitetail deer (*Odocoileus virginianus peruvianus*) and 2 stuffed deer head trophies.⁸

ASIA

MALAYSIA

July 17, 2023

State of Sarawak, Malaysia

A pair of deer antlers (family Cervidae) seized by airport customs. No one has taken any steps to regularise its entry into Malaysia, so it will be destroyed by court order.⁹

UZBEKISTAN

Sunday June 11, 2023

Lower Amudarya State Biosphere Reserve, Republic of Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan

Alert! A shot is fired in the buffer zone of the reserve, in the Jumurtov sector. A white car is chased by the guards. Seizure of a dismembered Bokharan deer (*Cervus elaphus bactrianus*, Appendix II) and 2 rifles. One arrest. The ecological value of the poached Bokharan deer is estimated at 99 million sum or 8,670 US\$.

Bokharan deer are called "khangul" (royal flower) by the locals. They are suffering from the removal of tugay forests and global deforestation. There are also non-permanent residents, caracals that come from the nearby deserts. The caracals gave their name to the republic of Karakalpakstan (166,600 km², 2 million inhabitants).

The reserve (18,000 hectares, core + buffer zone) is crossed by the Amu Darya, which flows into the Aral Sea basin, which is endorheic (its waters do not reach the world ocean). This basin used to be known as the "virgin forest" of Central Asia, thanks to the tugay forests composed of luxuriant, salt-resistant trees. They were excessively harvested for firewood. Tugay forests were also used to make nets and other fishing gear. The tugay now occupies just 10% of the reserve.¹⁰

Sunday, July 16, 2023

Lower Amudarya State Biosphere Reserve, Republic of Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan

At 6 a.m., 2 Bokharan deer (*Cervus elaphus bactrianus*, Appendix II) were found dead in traps. Reserve rangers stood by to identify and arrest the poachers. Sh.A., R.B. and I.D. were arrested after several hours of surveillance and shadowing.¹¹



EUROPE

ROMANIA

June 8, 2023

Petrila, Hunedoara County, Romania

Seizure of animal traps and a red deer trophy (*Cervus elaphus*) from 2 men who know each other well by the Weapons, Explosives, and Dangerous Substances unit. Discovery of 5 war or hunting watchdogs without vaccinations, health records or documents of origin.¹²



July 4, 2023

Valcea County and Bucharest, Romania

The 8 searches led by police officers from the Weapons, Explosives, and Dangerous Substances unit resulted in the seizure of 19 hunting weapons, 156 rounds of ammunition, 200 grams of explosive powder, 3 night-lighting projectors, and 16 deer trophies. Eight people were charged with poaching, weapons and ammunition offences, and illegal use of weapons.¹³

July 12, 2023

Arges County, Romania

As part of an investigation into a conspiracy suspected of poaching brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II), 27 simultaneous searches led by the Weapons, Explosives, and Dangerous Substances unit resulted in the seizure of 17 hunting weapons, 2 pistols, bullets and ammunition of various calibers, other pyrotechnic items, 100 kg of wild animal meat, 8 antlers of red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) and roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*), and wild boar tusks (*Sus scrofa*). The searches were carried out under the supervision of the Bucharest Military Prosecutor's Office as part of the Ministry of the Interior's directives to combat crime in all its forms and ensure public peace and order.¹⁴



August 31, 2023

Iara and Viisoara, Cluj County, Romania



Seizure by the Weapons, Explosives and Dangerous Substances unit and the Turda rural police at the home of 4 men suspected of poaching in a conspiracy of several hunting weapons with an estimated value of 10,000 € (11,000 US\$), the trophies of 8 red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) and over 6,000 € in cash, possibly linked to trafficking in antlers and other deer parts. Traces of blood and other biological signatures from poaching activities were detected in 3 cars.¹⁵

RUSSIA

June 29, 2023

Vladivostok, Primorsky Krai, Russia

Indictment of the captain of a ship who, in January 2019, agreed to transport against payment 57 Siberian musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*, Appendix II) preputial glands to an "East Asian State", presumably China. The value of the 57 glands is estimated at 2 million roubles (28,800 US\$) or 505 US\$/gland.¹⁶

July 25, 2023

Ulan-Ude, Republic of Buryatia, Russia

A Russian citizen was sentenced to a 5.5-year suspended prison term for attempting to board a scheduled flight in July 2022 from Ulan-Ude to Ulan-Bator in Mongolia. At the time he was in possession of 54 preputial glands of Siberian musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*, Appendix II) weighing a total of 1,479 grams, or 27.4 grams per gland. Burprirodnadzor specialists in charge of controlling wildlife trafficking in Buryatia have estimated the damage inflicted on the wildlife of the Republic of Buryatia at 9.72 million roubles (113,000 US\$ or 2,100 US\$ per gland).¹⁷



AMERICA

ARGENTINA

Beginning of June 2023

Abra Pampa, Province of Jujuy, Argentina

At the corner of Mitre Avenue and Siberia Argentina Street, the patrol was intrigued by a man carrying a bag and the woman accompanying him. The 2 fled when they were ordered to stop, leaving behind the bag containing 8 tanned vicuña hides (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix II). The 2 suspects were arrested at the end of Avenue Mitre. They are originally from Humahuaca.¹

June 22, 2023

Bajo Caracoles, Province of Santa Cruz, Argentina

Seizure of guanaco meat (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II), approx. 10 kg, from a pick-up truck. It was destroyed in the presence of witnesses.²

Mid-July 2023

San Antonio Oeste, Province of Río Negro, Argentina

Two individuals from the seaside resort of Las Grutas were arrested by the rural brigade on a departmental road. In their pick-up truck were 3 dead guanacos (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II), 3 rifles, and 2 knives.³

July 23, 2023

Sarmiento, Province of Chubut, Argentina

On provincial road no. 24, an individual was transporting in a Toyota Hilux 6 shoulders, 5 loins, and 5 quarters of guanaco meat (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II) without a hunting licence or other supporting documents. The meat was seized and destroyed.⁴

Beginning of August 2023

Sierra Grande, Province of Rio Negro, Argentina

Seizure of a dead guanaco (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II) from the trunk of a vehicle intercepted on national highway 5 by the Rio Negro rural brigade.⁵

Beginning of August 2023

Veintiocho de Julio, Province of Chubut, Argentina

Seizure of 200 kg of guanaco meat (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II), a Marlin model XT - 22M repeating rifle with scope, a Zastava model LK M85 calibre .223 Remington repeating rifle and knives from a Toyota Hilux on provincial road no. 10. The driver and passenger were charged and left free with their 3 hunting dogs, all Spanish greyhounds.⁶

FAMILY AFFAIRS

August 21, 2023

Antofagasta de la Sierra, Province of Catamarca, Argentina

Joaquín and Oscar Calpanchay were arrested after killing a vicugna (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix II), and their pick-up truck was seized, along with a 22-caliber rifle and butcher knives.⁷

BOLIVIA

August 16, 2023

Santuario de Quillacas, Province of Eduardo Abaroa, Department of Oruro, Bolivia

Poaching of 35 vicuñas (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix II) and shearing of their wool by individuals or conspiracies operating stealthily at night on all-terrain motorcycles and quads. The President of the Pueblos Montaña Foundation is calling for the area around the lakes in the Poopó and Uru Uru highlands where the carnage took place to be included in the list of protected areas, with enhanced protection.⁸

August 30, 2023

El Alto, Province of Pedro Domingo Murillo, Department of La Paz, Bolivia

Seizure on the (black) market of 2.2 kg of vicugna hair (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix II), 0.7 kg of vicugna wool and clothing and blankets made of vicugna wool, 4.7 kg in all, with an estimated value of 17,500 bolivianos or 2,530 US\$, corresponding to the poaching of at least 25 vicuñas. El Alto is 390 km from Quillacas and the villages where 35 vicuñas were poached on August 16, 2023 (see above). The Ministry of Environment points out that only the ANMV (Asociación Nacional de Manejadores de Vicuñas) trademark registered by the State in December 2009 guarantees the legal origin and quality of the by-products of vicugna shearing.⁹

PERU

August 4, 2023

Llusco District, Province of Chumbivilcas, Department of Cusco, Peru

Carnage in the high plains. Vicuñeros killed, sheared and butchered around a hundred vicuñas (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix II) on the night of Friday August 4 to Saturday August 5. The communities and cooperatives whose sole resource is the wool of the vicuñas, who live in semi-liberty in enclosures covering several hundred hectares, had warned of the arrival of "strangers", but the police arrived too late and could only remove the scattered corpses. They only found around forty, although they admitted that the death toll from the raid was higher. The vicuñeros have rifles with silencers and night-vision goggles that are the envy of the police.¹⁰



Mountain gorilla (*Gorilla beringei*). Photo Davide Diana

WESTERN AFRICA

COTE D'IVOIRE

June 2023

Yapo-Abbe Sanctuary, Lagunes District, Côte d'Ivoire

A presumed Campbell's mona monkey (*Cercopithecus campbelli*, Appendix II) with a hind leg injury is welcomed after seizure.¹

GUINEA

July 16, 2023

National Park of Upper Niger, Faranah Region, Guinea

An orphaned chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) seized by the authorities near Mamou arrives at the Chimpanzee Conservation Center.²



© Chimpanzee Conservation Center

SIERRA LEONE

Mid-June 2023

Freetown, Western Zone, Sierra Leone

Arrival at the refuge of a baby female chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I). Her story is unclear, except that she is an orphan. A man entrusted her to the sanctuary, saying he had "found" her a week ago and that she was not adapted to life indoors. She already had injuries to her legs from the ropes holding her down. She is the fourth chimpanzee to arrive in Tacugama since the beginning of the year.³

CENTRAL AFRICA

CAMEROON

June 21, 2023

Ngoumou, Centre Region, Cameroon

Sandrine Antsiabot Mpam was fined 2.5 million CFA francs (4,100 US\$) and ordered to pay the same amount in damages. In September 2022, she was transporting and attempting to sell a mandrill (*Mandrillus sphinx*, Appendix I) (see "On the Trail" n°37 p.96, ref.8).⁴



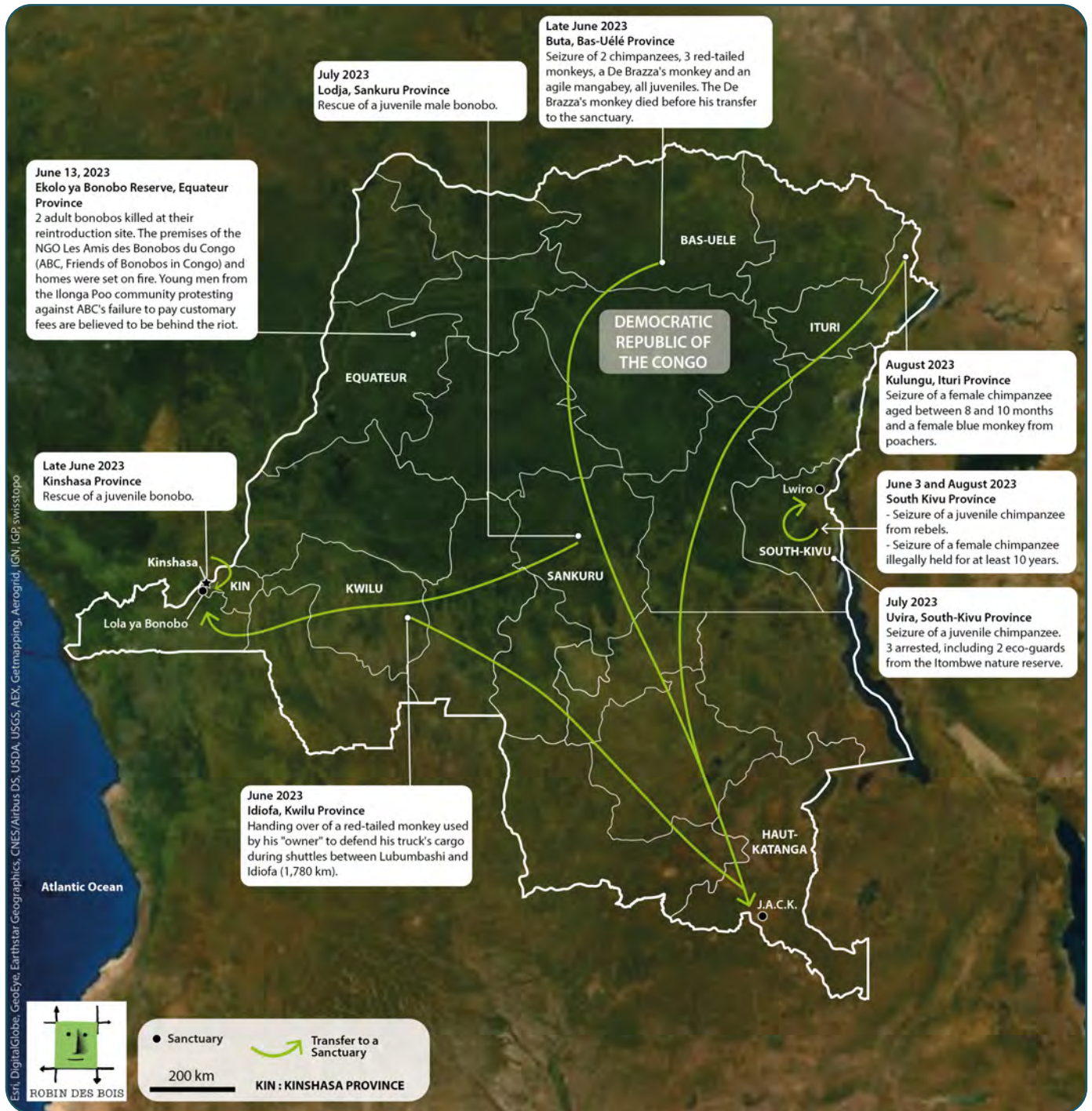
August 18, 2023

Ebolowa, South Region, Cameroon

Arrest of a trafficker in possession of a baby chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) and 2 other traffickers in possession of a drill or mandrill (*Mandrillus spp.*, Appendix I). The female chimpanzee was chained near a dog. The mandrill was seized in the street. The operations were carried out by the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife with the support of the NGO LAGA.⁵

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Seizures, handing over and rescues of primates between June 1 and August 31, 2023



- Red-tailed monkey (*Cercopithecus ascanius*, Appendix II)
- Bonobo (*Pan paniscus*, Appendix I)
- Blue monkey (*Cercopithecus mitis*, Appendix II)
- De Brazza's monkey (*Cercopithecus neglectus*, Appendix II)
- Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I)
- Agile mangabey (*Cercocebus agilis*, Appendix II)

August 2023
Kulungu, Ituri Province



EASTERN AFRICA

RWANDA

August 8, 12 and 13, 2023

Volcanoes National Park, Northern Province, Rwanda



August was a difficult month for the Isimbi gorilla group in Volcanoes National Park. A young mountain gorilla (*Gorilla beringei*, Appendix I) aged 2 years and 5 months was caught in a trap attached to a bamboo tree. The guards had managed to cut the steel rope allowing the young boy to rejoin his group. By chance or by design, the gorillas managed to free him from the end of the rope that was still cutting into his arm. Woe is him! 4 days later, he was once again caught in a trap, this time a rope holding him by the ankle. Once again, the guards managed to cut the rope and the young boy set off again, following in the footsteps of the dominant male without leaving his side. Through the lens of his camera, the Gorilla Doctors veterinary surgeon could see from a distance the wounds caused by the noose still clinging to his right ankle, from which his family was unable to free him this time. An emergency operation was scheduled in the vast hospital that is the forest. The dominant, protective male and the young gorilla, who was finding it increasingly difficult to keep up with him, were anaesthetised from afar after their morning nap, with appropriate doses for each. When both were immobilised, the rope was untied and the veterinary team immediately withdrew, not taking the time or risk to carry out a full medical examination. After waking up simultaneously, the 2 gorillas left to rejoin their family. The ankle wounds seem to have healed. The young gorilla's movements have regained their naturalness and ease, and the older one does not seem to have been affected by the after-effects of the anaesthetic. Traps are a walking disaster. There are more and more of them in the park, and the educational exchanges between the rangers and the local communities are not yet successful.⁶ Gorillas in Rwanda, see "On the Trail" n°5 p.52 and n°28 p.67 (ref.4).

SOUTH SUDAN

July 19, 2023

Zamoi Forest, Western Equatoria State, South Sudan

Federico Ufoo, 37, father of 5, says he has no other means of feeding his family and paying for his children's school fees than to go hunting in the forest with his homemade rifle. He shot an olive baboon (*Papio anubis*, Appendix II) with his only ammunition. Olive baboon meat is sold on the market. He missed. The wounded monkey attacked and bit him after Ufoo tried to stab him with a knife. Federico Ufoo is being treated at Nagero hospital.⁷

ZAMBIA

Beginning of July 2023

Copperbelt Province and Lusaka, Lusaka Province, Zambia

- Three vervet monkeys (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) aged 7 months, 8 months and 4 years were freed from their bonds and chains by the NGO Zambia Primate Project and received first aid with the help of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife, the NGO Angwa Conservation and the Unza veterinary clinic.

- A 6-month-old baby vervet monkey from Lusaka was wounded in the face and running out of vital energy. He had been bitten by dogs after being abandoned. Another 3-year-old vervet monkey was captured the same weekend in Lusaka. Also, an ex-pet, he was aggressive after being abused. Humans were not among his friends.

- The 5 vervet monkeys have been transferred to the primate sanctuary in Kafue National Park and should, for most of them, regain total freedom thanks to the skill of their carers.⁸

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

Beginning of July 2023

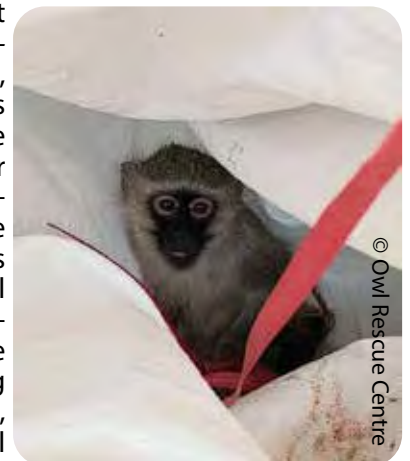
Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

A female vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) is wandering the streets. She is wearing a leather belt around her abdomen, proof that she was kept as a pet and managed to escape. After several unsuccessful attempts, Monkey Matters Eastern Cape, which specialises in primate rescue and rehabilitation, got hold of her.⁹

Beginning of August 2023

Koster, North West Province, South Africa

The little vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) was tied up in a large bag and held for ransom in a dis-used factory. The good Samaritans of the NGO Owl Rescue Centre obtained his release without loosening any purse strings, using a great deal of persuasion.¹⁰



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**August 25, 2023
Letsitele, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

It's not just road accidents that kill vervet monkeys (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II), most of which are unintentional and traumatic for drivers and passengers. By contrast, all the shots are cheerfully voluntary. One



18-month-old vervet monkey was left with a fractured skull and, after several weeks of care and de-termination, is now ready to set off again.¹¹

**August 31, 2023
Hartbeespoort, North West Province, South Africa**



The X-ray of her skeleton bears witness. The juvenile female vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) was riddled with bullets that afternoon. Urgently transported to the veterinary clinic for birds and small native and exotic animals, she was fervently tended to by veterinary doctors Georgie Spanos and Daria Spence, but at 8.30 p.m., "she has crossed the rainbow bridge".¹²

**June 13, 2023
Henderson, State of Nevada, United States of America**

Indictment of David Christopher Noble, administrator of a website exposing tortures, sexual mutilations and murders of juvenile and adult monkeys (Primates, Appendix I or II), and illegal holder of a firearm. David Christopher Noble is a former officer in the United States Air Force. In 2006, he was relieved of his post and sentenced by court martial to 6 months in military prison for fraud and an unprofessional relationship. The investigation was carried out by Homeland Security Investigations (HSI).¹³

**June 14, 2023
Brownsville Port of Entry, State of Texas, United States of America. Border with Mexico.**

Thwarted attempt to infiltrate the United States with a spider monkey (*Ateles spp.*, Appendix I or II) captured in southern Mexico. Ms Herrera, stuck on the Gateway International Bridge in the Mexico-Brownsville direction, claimed to HSI that she was returning from Matamoros where she had seen a Mexican vet for her pet spider monkey. Ms Herrera lives in Brownsville. On her mobile phone, customs officials found several messages between her and an unknown correspondent about the best way to smuggle a spider monkey into the United States. The spider monkey was returned to Mexico and Ms Herrera was charged with violating the CITES Convention, regulations on the prevention of epidemics and the ban on importing monkeys as pets.¹⁴

**August 3, 2023
Brownsville Port of Entry, State of Texas, United States of America. Border with Mexico.**

Seizure of 7 spider monkeys (*Ateles spp.*, Appendix I or II) in the backpack filled to the brim by the trafficker. They have been snatched from their parents, who were feeding on leaves, fruit and insects in the treetops. In Mexico and Bolivia, to get straight to the point, trees are sometimes felled and surrounded by nets.¹⁵

BOLIVIA

August 14, 2023

Calexico Port of Entry, State of California, United States of America. Border with Mexico.

Customs officers seized 3 baby spider monkeys (*Ateles* spp., Appendix I or II) under the back seat of a van. A man and a woman in their thirties were handed over to HSI (Homeland Security Investigators) and FWS (Fish and Wildlife Services). The spider monkeys were placed in quarantine with the US Department of Agriculture Veterinary Services pending their repatriation to Mexico.¹⁶



Mid-August 2023

Manatee County, State of Florida, United States of America

The "owners" of a spider monkey (*Ateles* spp., Appendix I or II) were "very cooperative" in handing him over to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, but they didn't escape a ticket.¹⁷

End of August 2023

Encinal, State of Texas, United States of America



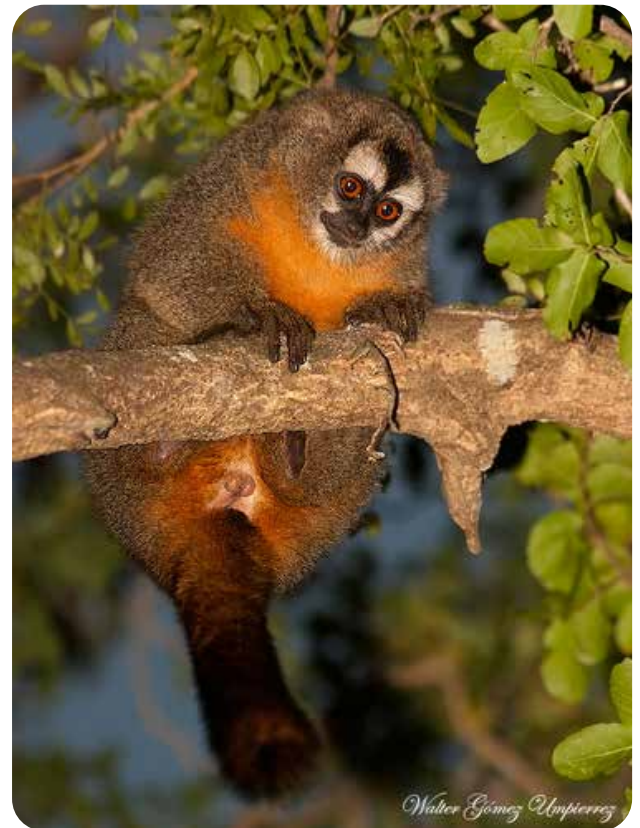
Arrival at Born Free sanctuary of a vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II). His owner had bought him in Mission, Texas, 3,000 US\$ from a breeder when he was a baby and brought him home to Wisconsin. Over time, the cuddly toy became an aggressive, biting and expensive animal in his cage, and the lady who had bought him on impulse took him to Born Free in a thoughtful gesture. There are an estimated 15,000 (not so) domestic primates in the USA. The only way to stop trafficking, which is detrimental to animal welfare and public safety, is to promote the Captive Primate Safety Act to senators and other decision-makers.¹⁸

August 9, 2023

Guanay, Province of Larecaja, Department of La Paz, Bolivia

Seizure of an Azara's night monkey (*Aotus azarae*, Appendix II, also known as Azara douroucouli) who, while waiting to be sold, had been acting as an attraction and clown in a restaurant. He was transferred to the Senda Verde refuge.

The Azara night monkey lives in the trees of the forests of Bolivia, Paraguay and Northern Argentina. He sleeps during the day and feeds and works at night to escape predators. He rarely comes to the ground, and in dense forest he moves from tree to tree on vines. His body measures between 240 and 370 mm, with a tail that can reach 400 mm. He weighs between 0.6 and 1 kg. During the first week of life, the newborn huddles close to his mother's groin. From the second week onwards, the father takes over and looks after him until 4-5 months old. The Azara's night monkey is used as a laboratory animal. He is killed for his fur and meat. He also suffers from habitat destruction.¹⁹



August 22, 2023

Oruro, Province of Cercado, Department of Oruro, Bolivia

In application of the Mother Earth Act and the Penal Code, a tufted capuchin (*Cebus apella*, synonymous with *Sapajus apella*, Appendix II) in a situation of captivity and "mascotism" (mascotismo) was seized by the Pofoma (Policia Forestal y Preservacion del Medio Ambiente) at the home of a private individual.²⁰

BRAZIL

REPEATED OFFENCE

June 5, 2023

Carapicuíba, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure of 4 marmosets (*Callithrix* spp., Appendix I or II) by the environmental military police from an individual who had already been convicted on 2 occasions for animal abuse. The 4 tiny monkeys (and 10 birds) were sent to CRASPET (Centro de Reabilitação de Animais Silvestres do Parque Ecológico do Tietê).²¹

June 30, 2023

Irauçuba, State of Ceará, Brazil

Capture by the BPMA (Batalhão de Policiamento de Meio Ambiente) of a capuchin (*Cebus* spp., synonymous with *Sapajus* spp., Appendix II) running loose in a private garden. He was dragging a chain. He was handed over to the Itapipoca Environmental Institute.²²

OPERATION SAPAJUS

August 31, 2023

Camaçari, State of Bahia, Brazil

As part of Operation Sapajus, a search and seizure warrant issued by the Second Federal Court of Bahia led to the release of a capuchin (*Cebus* spp., synonymous with *Sapajus* spp., Appendix II) held in a private home under cover of falsified documents. The capuchin has been transferred to an Ibama facility where his ability to live again in the wild where he was captured will be assessed and, if possible, improved.²³

COLOMBIA

Beginning of June 2023

Bello, Regional Autonomous Corporation of Antioquia, Colombia

This white-faced capuchin (*Cebus capucinus*, Appendix II) wasn't a pet. He was a hostage in an empty house. Tied closely to a bar, toothless in the upper jaw, rationed, plaintive, he was rescued by the police and an environmental brigade.²⁴

Beginning of June 2023

Bogotá, Colombia

Seizure of a female night monkey (*Aotus* spp., Appendix II) and a juvenile squirrel monkey (*Saimiri* spp., Appendix I or II) in 2 private homes. The night monkey had been captured in Piedras, in the Department of Tolima, over 200 km away.²⁵

July 23, 2023

Pereira, Regional Autonomous Corporation of Risaralda, Colombia

Two chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) were shot dead – specifically, a 30-year-old male and a 40-year-old female. They had left their enclosure at the Ukumarí Bioparque after the keeper failed to lock the doors. Whether or not he did so by accident or out of malice is unknown. They were shot by rifles when approaching a public garden. Widespread indignation has spread throughout the country. Many cannot fathom why rifles were used instead of anaesthetic syringes, including Raúl Gasca, director of the Hermanos Gasca circus. He had donated the male chimpanzee to the Bioparque many years ago and proclaimed that “Pancho” was not a savage, but instead accustomed to people: “I used to spend time with him. He lived with me in a caravan. In the morning, he would drink coffee with me.” Gasca was also outraged that the same fatal tactic was used against Chita. “Female chimpanzees are more docile than males and it's strange that she met the same fate as Pancho.” Public authorities and the park's management hold a different opinion. It is even categorical and looks like a copy-paste served up by public or private authorities elsewhere in the world in the same circumstances. Chimpanzees are wild and powerful animals. Once they have felt the anaesthetic syringes, they can go into a rage for the 10 to 30 minutes it takes for the sedative to put them to sleep. And it was all the more urgent to react as the fugitives were coming near a public garden.

Chimpanzees shot after escaping from zoos, see “On the Trail” n°31 p.106 (ref.58), n°36 p.117 (ref.66) and n°38 p.118 (ref.58).²⁶

MEXICO

July 2023

State of Mexico, Mexico

Seizure of a Geoffroy's spider monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*, Appendix II) on a commercial premise. His prison guards had made him wear a harness allowing him to enjoy 20m² of “freedom”.²⁷

PANAMA

Beginning of June 2023

La Chorrera District, West Panama Province, Panama

A generous family and animal rights activist bought a few-week-old mantled howler (*Alouatta palliata*, Appendix I) for 100 US\$ from a resident of Pacora, Coclé Province, who had been keeping him captive. After calling the 311 emergency number, she immediately handed him over to the local branch of the Ministry of the Environment, which freed him from all the ropes that were tying him up and carried out a health check.²⁸

SOUTHEASTERN ASIA

INDONESIA
Orangutans
June 1 - August 31, 2023



Orangutans (*Pongo* spp., Appendix I).



© Tribun Pontianak

August 1, 2023
 Nanga Kompi, Melawi Regency, Western Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island



© MGIN/Heri Susetyo

June 23, 2023
 Surabaya, Surabaya City, East Java Province, Java Island

**June 21 and 23, and September 22, 2023
Surabaya, Surabaya City, East Java Province,
Java Island, Indonesia**

Fendi Fadli has been charged with attempted smuggling of a one-year-old Bornean orangutan (*Pongo pygmaeus*) between Sungai Tabuk, South Kalimantan province, Borneo, and Surabaya, East Java province, Java.

By 3 p.m. on June 21, he had received 800,000 rupiahs (50 US\$) to transport the orangutan. He then boarded the *Haida* car-ferry in the port of Banjarmasin. On June 23, after passing the disembarkation controls of the *Haida* without a hitch, he was nabbed by the police on the outskirts of Surabaya while he and the young orangutan were waiting for a caller only known by his cell phone number. The police found the 800,000 rupiah ferry premium on his person. The orangutan was hidden in a batik-draped birdcage. He was handed over to the BKSDA.

On September 22, the orangutan was repatriated on a Lion Air flight to Central Kalimantan where he comes from. The little orphan will spend some time in a forestry school before being released.²⁹

**July 3, and October 30, 2023
Alue Pineung Timue, Langsa Regency,
Aceh Province, Sumatra Island,
Indonesia**



In a hideout near the home of Nanta Agustia, suspected for several months of being at the heart of trafficking in orangutans and other wild animals, the police spot an individual leaving with a bag and getting into a car, which is followed. A little further on, the driver pulls out of the bag what looks like a young orangutan and puts him in a cage. The car was intercepted, the driver fled and the 4-year-old Sumatran orangutan (*Pongo abelii*) was seized. He was transferred to a shelter in Sibolangit. Nanta Agustia admits to being the "owner". He was transferred to Langsa correctional prison.

On October 30, 2023, he was sentenced to one year and 5 months' imprisonment and a fine of 40 million rupiah (2,570 US\$), or a further year's imprisonment in the event of non-payment. The prosecutor had asked for 2 years and 6 months. The NGO HAKA, which groups together lawyers specialising in the defence of the province's forest fauna and flora, regrets that the prosecutor's case was not heard. Nanta Agustia's troubled past has not been taken into account. He is suspected of being linked to 20-year-old Tomas Raider Chaniago, sentenced in October 2022 to one year in prison for trafficking an orangutan captured in Gunung Leuser National Park (see "On the Trail" n°36 p.109, ref.35 and 36, and n°38 p.112, ref.36).³⁰

**August 28 – September 4, 2023
Stabat, Langkat Regency, North
Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island,
Indonesia**



Terbit Rencana PA alias Cana (kanan), the ex-Regent of the Langkat Regency, has lost his cap and his ceremonial uniform, but he still benefits from a kind of immunity that protects political personnel, the military and companies when it comes to breaches of wildlife protection laws and regulations. This immunity is relative, however, since he has been in pre-trial detention in Cipinang for the past 19 months.

In January 2022, as reported in "On the Trail" no. 35 (p.102, ref. 43), several wild animals were seized from his luxury home, all without certificates of origin, including a Sumatran orangutan (*Pongo abelii*, Appendix I) in a state of ill-treatment, a male aged between 15 and 20 years. At the end of the investigation, he was charged with intentionally capturing, injuring, killing, storing, possessing, keeping in custody, transporting and trading in protected species of fauna, either by himself or through henchmen. Stabat's prosecutor demanded 10 months' imprisonment with a further 3 months if Terbit failed to pay a fine of 50 million rupiah (3,300 US\$). The judges sentenced him to 2 months' imprisonment with a suspended sentence and 4 months' probation. Stabat's prosecutor has given himself a few days to lodge an appeal.

On Monday September 4, activists from the Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Forum (FOKUS) and the Indonesian Orangutan Forum (FORINA) demonstrated silently and in large numbers in Medan in front of the public prosecutor's office of North Sumatra province, under the slogan "Justice for the orangutans". "We want to encourage the Attorney General to appeal against the judges' decision", declared the President of FOKUS at the time. A petition for the orangutans was handed to his assessors. Following the demonstration, the Attorney General's Office announced that the Stabat prosecutor had lodged an appeal on September 1.

In Indonesia, particularly on the island of Sumatra and in the Northern province, convictions for abusive detention of orangutans or trafficking are surprisingly lenient, as if *Homo sapiens* man, by appropriating the forest, could also appropriate the man of the forest (*Pongo abelii*).³¹

INDONESIA - EXCLUDING ORANGUTANS

**Beginning of June – End of August 2023
Sampit, Ketapang Regency, West Kalimantan
Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia**

Handing over by a family of a gibbon (*Hylobatidae*, Appendix I) to a BKSDA team. He was not in great shape. After 3 months of care and relearning to live in the wild, he was released.³²

REPEATED OFFENCE

Beginning of June 2023

Denpasar, Bali Province, Lesser Sunda Islands Archipelago, Indonesia

The NGO PETA Asia is denouncing, with video evidence, a seller of slow lorises (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I) and macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II) at the Satria bird market.³³

June 14 and 22, 2023

Pulo Brayan and Tanjung Mulia, Medan City, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

- A long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) repeatedly escaped from his cage, causing alarm in the village. The BKSDA and the NGO Scorpion intervened, caught the uncooperative macaque refusing the servitude and transported him to Scorpion's macaque refuge in Batang Toru.

- Eight days later, the BKSDA and Scorpion were out again to capture a long-tailed macaque who had escaped from his cage. He too was taken to the Batang Toru macaque refuge.³⁴

June 15, 2023

Padang, West Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

A long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) in captivity bit a young woman and her 10-month-old baby. The macaque's owner had to sign an acknowledgement of responsibility. He was ordered to hand over his pet to the authorities. After analysis, the macaque was found not to be a carrier of rabies and it is planned to release him into the Bukit Gado-Gado sub-district.³⁵

June 27, 2023

Blok Pusung Genderuwo Forest, Malang Regency, East Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia

Release of 3 Javan langurs (*Trachypithecus auratus*, Appendix II) in 3 different areas of the Pusung Genderuwo protected forest. Ex-pet animals, they followed a training at a specialised school in Malang co-managed by the British foundation Aspinnall. Given the proximity and the similarities in climate and diet between the school and the release sites, the 3 langurs were released into the wild without going through semi-liberty rehabilitation enclosures.³⁶

August 5, 2023

Nelayan Indah, Medan City, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

The male long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II), who has been in captivity for 8 years, often escapes from his cage, and his "master", who no longer masters anything, is afraid he'll bite neighbours. He called the Belawan fire department for help. He was voluntarily handed over to Sumatra's BKSDA (Balai Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam - Natural Resources Conservation Centre) with the assistance of the fire department and the Scorpion Foundation, which saved the master from prosecution. The BKSDA appreciates the cooperation with the fire department and hopes that it will strengthen.³⁷

August 16, 2023

Rengas Pulau, Medan City, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

The firefighters at the Belawan fire station and the Directorate General of Natural Resources and Ecosystem Conservation get along well. Another call to the fire department resulted in the safe, voluntary hand over of an aggressive, runaway long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) to a team from the BKSDA and the Scorpion Foundation.³⁸

August 23, 2023

Suka Ramai, Binjai City, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Following an alert sent to the North Sumatra branch of the BKSDA, hand over of 2 long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) held since their infancy by a family who could no longer afford to care for them.³⁹

THAILAND

June 6, 2023

Nong Mek, Udon Thani Province, Thailand

Seizure in the back of a car of 26 sedated long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) and one macaque who had died from suffocation, all crammed into airtight bags and apparently intended for "exotic" restaurants in Laos. Two arrests (Phuthanet and Pongpat aged 21 and 32) and seizure of a luxury car. The operation is credited to the NRECD (Natural Resources and Environmental Crime Division) and the police. The 27 macaques had been captured in central and southern Thailand. The 26 survivors were transferred to the Khon Kaen wildlife sanctuary, around 100 km from Nong Mek. After observation and care, they will be released into habitats suited to their needs.⁴⁰

June 9, 2023

Klaeng District, Rayong Province, Thailand

34 long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) were seized. They were transferred to a no-hunting zone. Two men were arrested: Panuwat Sribua-on, aged 54, and a certain "Tor", a Laotian aged 35. They sold the macaques for 3,000 baht (86 US\$) per specimen to a wildlife broker living in Nong Khai, in the north, near the border with Laos. Four pipes and 30 tranquillizer darts were seized as evidence. The long-tailed macaques were captured in a cave near Wat Khao Ha Yot in Chonburi province. The macaques were then transported in sacks to the district of Klaeng, Rayong province, 55 km from the capture location. They arrived completely groggy and, stored in a cellar and in cages, awaited transport by road, again under sedation, to Laos, 750 km away.⁴¹

REPEATED OFFENCE

June 10, 2023

Khun Krathing, Chumphon Province, Thailand

48 macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II), 47 alive and one dead, on the road (over 1,000 km) that runs from Satun in the south to Chachoengsao in the north, in bags in the back of a car. Thanks to a roadside check, the journey stopped halfway on Highway 4. The two men had to earn 25,000 baht, or 730 US\$, for conveying. This was the 2nd time they provided this "service".⁴²

June 14, 2023

Khao Din, Province of Suphanburi, Thailand

One bag. Twelve macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II), little ones and mothers. Three already dead. All at the end of their lives in the mango plantation. The alarm was raised by the chief of the Moo 11 village. They had been captured by poachers working for a wholesaler and abandoned because they did not meet the order criteria. They were handed over to the care of the Chawak Wildlife Reserve.⁴³

June 18, 2023

Si Prachan District, SuphanBuri Province, Thailand

Seizure in the Ford Ranger of Chum Phrae and Nang Keen, a Cambodian, of 33 macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II) captured 400 km south of Si Prachan. The 2 traffickers were travelling towards Sa Kaeo province, on the border with Cambodia. In addition to the usual rumours of consumption in private banquets or fine restaurants, there are rumours of animal experimentation, including extravagant research into vaccines against cancer and systemic lupus erythematosus. Each specimen could sell for up to 12,500 baht (360 US\$). These dumbfounding profits are a way of enticing poachers and middlemen, and it is by no means certain that the price of the macaque would be as high in the end.⁴⁴

June 30, 2023

Ban That Subdistrict, Udon Thani Province, Thailand

Nong Khai, the macaque city. The black Chevrolet driven by Bangkok resident Suthin Yuphong was intercepted on the approach to Nong Khai with 35 long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) in the back. It was a hot day, and during the first few hours of the investigation, the air conditioning was kept on in the SUV to prevent the monkeys from sunstroke. They were destined for Laos. In good condition, a macaque taken at no expense from the forests and outskirts of towns sells in Laos for at least 10,000 baht (290 US\$). In place of the back seat of the Chevrolet, the cargo had a potential value of 10,150 US\$ if it arrived in good condition on the other side of the Mekong after an illegal crossing by boat.⁴⁵

July 3, 2023

Hat Yai International Airport, Songkhla Province, Thailand

Seizure on the premises of Nim Express of 106.5 kg of alleged macaque or langur (*Cercopithecidae*, Appendix I or II) meat. The species present in Thailand weigh between 3 and 10 kg. The seizure therefore represents between 10 and 35 individuals.⁴⁶

July 26, 2023

Nong Khai Checkpoint, Nong Khai Province, Thailand. Border with Laos.



Seizure by local police, military and environmental forces in a pick-up truck reported by a confidential informant of 62 long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) alive on the banks of the Mekong. Eight men were loading the iron and plastic cages into a boat. They fled. The long-tailed macaques were destined for Laos. According to Phuvit Siripanit, Rattanawapi district police chief, they were being smuggled internationally to supply animal experimentation laboratories. They were transferred to the Phu Pha Man National Park animal sanctuary for observation.⁴⁷

VIET NAM

July 4, 2023

Kien Giang Province, Viet Nam

Seizure from a private home of a long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) kept captive in a cage made of corrugated iron.⁴⁸

Mid-July 2023

Lao Cai Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of a loris (*Nycticebus* spp., Appendix I) offered for sale by a woman on the roadside.⁴⁹

SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

June 18 and 19, 2023

Jaitpur Ghosi, Udham Singh Nagar District, State of Uttarakhand, India

Rhesus macaques (*Macaca mulatta*, Appendix II) do definitely not go hand in glove with mangoes. Poisoning of 8 rhesus macaques in a mango plantation. They were accused of plundering mangoes and jeopardising the profitability of the farm. Mangoes sprayed with an agricultural poison were insidiously offered to the small troop of macaques. Stone dead, they were then hidden in bushes or buried. The alarm was raised by village women who had come early in the morning to cut grass. They had been intrigued by a moaning, panic-stricken baby macaque. Nine arrests. The 2 farmers and 7 farm workers were charged with offences under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, the Wildlife Protection Act and malicious intention of outraging religious feelings.⁵⁰



PAKISTAN

July 20, 2023

Karachi, Province of Sindh, Pakistan

Seizure of 14 juvenile monkeys concealed in mango crates on a bus from Charsadda (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province) arriving in Karachi. The day after their transfer to the court as evidence, the monkeys were visited by the judge. One of the monkeys escaped under the noses of the judge and court staff. It took 20 hours of tracking to recapture him. Pending their eventual return to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the monkeys have been entrusted to the Karachi Zoo, provided that management can provide regular proof of the quality of their accommodation. The 2 traffickers were fined 50,000 rupees (175 US\$).

Pakistan is home mainly to rhesus macaques (*Macaca mulatta*, Appendix II), but also to Nepalese grey langurs (*Semnopithecus schistaceus*, Appendix I) and grey langurs (*Semnopithecus entellus*, Appendix I).⁵¹



WESTERN EUROPE

FRANCE

August 1st, 2023

Le Havre, Department of Seine-Maritime, France

"On the Trail" n°40 p.114 (réf.81) mentioned the case of a common marmoset (*Callithrix jacchus*, Appendix II) entrusted during May 2023 to the La Tanière zoo-sanctuary near Chartres in the Department of Eure-et-Loir. The hand-long pocket monkey had been seized from a man who had bought him in Belgium for 1,800 € (1,990 US\$). The resident of Fécamp in Normandy, a former cod and herring long-distance fishing port, was given a 4-month suspended prison sentence and fined 600 € (660 US\$) by the Le Havre criminal court.⁵²



SOUTHERN EUROPE

ITALY

Sunday July 30, 2023

Cartigliano, Province of Vicenza, and Favaro, Metropolitan City of Venice, Region of Veneto, Italy

A one-month-old baby rhesus macaque (*Macaca mulatta*, Appendix II) was stolen during the night after unknown persons broke in the Cartigliano zoo, 90 km from Venice. Two days later, he was found in a bag on the outskirts of Venice by a passer-by who was quick to report the lucky discovery. The case

of the baby macaque's kidnapping caused a stir on social networks in the Veneto region and beyond. Photographic comparisons quickly enabled investigators to foil the benefactor. He was one of the 2 kidnappers. He had been filmed by the surveillance cameras of the zoo he was visiting with his family on Sunday afternoon, a few hours before the theft. The 2 Venetians, aged 35 and 37, already known to the law, are charged with aggravated robbery and mistreatment of animals, as well as illegal carrying of offensive objects. When they entered the rhesus macaque enclosure to kidnap the baby, the breeding pair stood up and the 2 men beat them with clubs they had taken the precaution of equipping themselves with. The veterinary surgeon called to the scene the morning after the abduction found the 2 adult macaques prostrate and swollen.⁵³



ARMADILLOS, COATIS, PACAS, AGOUTIS AND CAPYBARAS



Lesser capybaras (*Hydrochoerus isthmus*). Photo Suzanne Labbé

AMERICA

ARGENTINA

August 11, 2023

Department of Rosario de la Frontera, Province of Salta, Argentina

Seizure by the rural and environmental police of 10 live Southern three-banded armadillos (*Tolypeutes matacus*) in a van coming from the province of Santiago del Estero. Following recommendation from the prosecutor, they were released.¹

BRAZIL

June 17, 2023

Paracatu, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

Fine of 30,000 reais (6,000 US\$) for a man who boasted on social networks that he had captured a giant armadillo (*Priodontes maximus*, Appendix I). After locating and identifying him, the environmental police searched his home and found the carcass of a giant armadillo in a backyard and a yellow-faced amazon (*Amazona xanthops*, Appendix II) in a cage on a terrace. Two nets for capturing birds and mammals were also seized. The armadillo meat and shell were buried in the Paracatu landfill site.²



REPEATED OFFENCE

June 22, 2023

Bariri, São Paulo State, Brazil

Seizure under search warrant of a capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*) covered in ticks in a freezer along with 2 rifles from a 63-year-old man. He was released on bail for 200 US\$. He is a repeat offender (see "On the Trail" n°40 p.115, ref.5).³

June 25, 2023

Planaltina, Federal District, Brazil

The Cerrado Military and Environmental Police seized a dead six-banded armadillo (*Euphractus sexcinctus*) from a suspect vehicle. The driver was released after signing a report and admitting his guilt.⁴

June 27, 2023

Canavieiras, State of Bahia, Brazil

Seizure in flagrante delicto on the banks of the Pardo River of a dead paca (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras), 2 rifles, and ammunition aboard a small boat. One arrest. The paca was incinerated under the supervision of the IBAMA.⁵

July 3, 2023

Quixeramobim, State of Ceará, Brazil

After receiving reliable information, the State's BPMA (Batalhão de Policiamento de Meio Ambiente) raided a poaching scene near Caraibas. The suspects managed to escape, but left behind 4 firearms, roughly 15 rounds of ammunition, an armadillo trap, 2 nets, a dead six-banded armadillo (*Euphractus sexcinctus*), food supplies and hunting gear.⁶



July 18, 2023

Ipumirim, State of Santa Catarina, Brazil

The military police raided a home where a man was threatening to kill his wife. They recovered a revolver, 2 shotguns, 27 rounds of 12- and 32-gauge ammunition, and frozen meat from a South American coati (*Nasua nasua*, *Nasua nasua solitaria*, Appendix III in Uruguay).⁷

July 30, 2023

Linhares, State of Espírito Santo, Brazil

Seizure by BPMA (Batalhão de Polícia Militar Ambiental) and Vale Nature Reserve rangers during a roadside check of agouti (genus *Dasyprocta*) and deer (family Cervidae) carcasses and traps. The 2 occupants of the vehicle were taken to the Linhares police station. They were accompanied on their wild escapade by 2 hunting dogs.⁸



August 22, 2023

Igarapava, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Based on rumours of poaching, the environmental military police went knocking on the door of a private individual. His daughter let them in, and firearms, paca meat (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras) and 2 live animals of unspecified species were seized. The father was fined 17,735 reais (3,755 US\$).⁹



August 24, 2023

Branquinha, State of Alagoas, Brazil

At dawn, a military police patrol in the city centre noticed a man walking in a strange manner. From strange to suspect there was just one step: a search of the individual led to the seizure of a machete on his belt, a 28-caliber rifle, 2 cartridges, a cutlass, a flashlight, a dead armadillo (family Dasypodidae or Chlamyphoridae) and a dead South American coati (*Nasua nasua*, *Nasua nasua solitaria*, Appendix III in Uruguay), that he was carrying in a bag.¹⁰

August 31, 2023

Santana do Livramento, State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. Border with Uruguay.

The little car was overloaded. There were 11 carcasses of capybaras (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*) in the back seat, weighing a total of 280 kg. The driver was not a hunter. There were no weapons on board. Wild meat trafficking with Uruguay is suspected.¹¹

COLOMBIA

June 11, 2023

El Salitre Bus Station, Bogotá, Colombia

Seizure of 5 kg of meat from the lesser capybara (*Hydrochoerus isthmius*). The poaching is said to have taken place in El Banco, Department of Magdalena, 700 km away.¹²

**Beginning of July 2023
Bogotá, Colombia**

- A Western mountain coati (*Nasua olivacea*) was rescued from a garden. He was wearing a collar around his neck. He's a pet who had either run away or been abandoned.

- A second stray Western mountain coati was rescued from a schoolyard.

The 2 operations were carried out by agents from the Secretary of the Environment of Bogotá and the carabineros.¹³

MEXICO

June 2023

State of Hidalgo, Mexico

A tamandua (*Tamandua mexicana*, Appendix III in Guatemala) moved to safety. He was for sale at a garage sale. He was transferred to a PIMVS (Predio Incorporado para el Manejo de Vida Silvestre Fuera de su Hábitat Natural).¹⁴



OTHER MAMMALS

AFRICA

TANZANIA

July 2023

Masasi, Mtwara Region, Tanzania

The Masasi court has sentenced a resident of Miule village in the Tandahimba District to 20 years in prison after finding him guilty of possessing the claws of Cape aardvark (*Orycteropus afer*), locally known as "mhanga". Yusuph Stephen Mkwemba, age 42, will get out of jail at 62. The value of the claws, considered to be government property, is estimated to be 1.52 million shillings (630 US\$).¹



ASIA

AZERBAIJAN

Beginning of August 2023

Zaqatala District, Azerbaijan

Officials arrested Elchin Nadirov, Elshan Aliyev and Huseyn Huseynov and seized a "large number" of hedgehogs (family Erinaceidae). The 3 came from Yevlax, 150 km away, to poach them.²

CHINA

August 3, 2023

Shunde District, Foshan Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China



A new addition to the range of genitalia imported into China. Customs seized in an express parcel from abroad 10 key rings made of kangaroo testicles (family Macropodidae) "made in Australia", a "genuine Australian souvenir".³

INDIA

August 21 and end of August 2023

Chennai, Chennai District; Kambam, Theni District; Coimbatore, Coimbatore District; Madurai, Madurai District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

In the course of a week, the TN WCCB (Tamil Nadu Forest and Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) seized 14,000 brushes with bristles made from mongoose hair (*Herpestes* spp., 7 species listed in Appendix III in India). Six arrests. Every year, an estimated 100,000 mongooses are poached in India for the needs of water-colourists worldwide.⁴

VIET NAM

End of June 2023

Vinh Long, Vinh Long Province, Viet Nam

Thanks to ENV's emergency line, 3 otters (*Lutrinae*, Appendix I or II) captive in a private home were seized by the urban police and handed over to the care of Bu Gia Map Park.⁵

July 1, 2023

Quy Chau District, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam



Seizure from Mrs. Truong Thi Huong's house of 14 dead squirrels (*Sciuridae* family) and a pangolin, that she was going to sell in restaurants according to an old habit. There are 19 species of squirrel in Viet Nam. "On the Trail" has noted seizures of black giant squirrels (*Ratufa bicolor*), Pallas's squirrels (*Callosciurus erythraeus*), Finlayson's squirrels (*Callosciurus finlaysoni*) and flying squirrels in Viet Nam.

Squirrels in Viet Nam, see "On the Trail" n°24 p.90 (ref.54), n°28 p.132 (ref.70), n°29 p.158 (ref.54), n°30 p.169 (ref.64), n°31 p.104 (ref.49) and p.111 (ref.15), n°32 p.246 (ref.86), n°33 p.235 (ref.99), n°34 p.222 (ref.74) and n°38 p.208 (ref.47 and 48).⁶

EUROPE

FRANCE

July 19, 2023

Cognac, Department of Charente, France

At around 4 a.m., a man who was stealing in a van a lot of building tools was found with cannabis, heroin, cocaine and a European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) in the pockets of his overalls.⁷

GREECE

June 29, 2023

Larissa, Region of Thessaly, Greece

The road police rescued a northern white-breasted hedgehog (*Erinaceus roumanicus*). It was in a cage inside the vehicle. The 4 Romani men were about to turn it into a delicacy. It was handed over to the town's forest officers and the Romani were not prosecuted.⁸

ITALY

Saturday July 15, 2023

Coreglia Antelminelli, Province of Lucca, Region of Tuscany, Italy

At around 1 a.m., a 60-year-old man kills with a rifle a crested porcupine (*Hystrix cristata*), which, he said, was threatening the integrity of his vegetable garden. He was in the process of eviscerating it for consumption when he was surprised by a carabinieri patrol.⁹

Mid-July 2023

Careri, Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria, Region of Calabria, Italy

A man living in Locri and another in Plati, riding a moped and pilfering in the Careri woods, initially refused to identify themselves to the carabinieri of the Aspromonte National Park. In the driver's vest, there were 2 dead fat dormice (*Glis glis*).

Fat dormice in Italy, see "On the Trail" n°30 p.102 (ref.5) and p.176 (ref.105), n°32 p.253 (ref.125), n°34 p.136 (ref.27 and 28), p.137 (ref.29 and 30) and n°34 p.229 (ref.106), n°36 p.121 (ref.9) and p.200 (ref.81), n°38 p.123 (ref.14) and n°39 p.88 (ref.13).¹⁰

End of July 2023

Civitella Paganico, Province of Grosseto, Region of Tuscany, Italy

Elements of the LAC (Lega per l'Abolizione della Caccia) reported the activities of a poacher to the police. In the fields, he had placed a trap cage baited with corn kernels, he had placed the unfortunate crested porcupine (*Hystrix cristata*) that had been lured. Next to the cage, he had placed a metal snare for foxes, wild boars and deer. He was identified and charged with hunting during a period of general prohibition, using prohibited devices and killing a protected species.¹¹



End of July 2023

Porto Torres, Province of Sassari, Autonomous Region of Sardinia, Italy

From the top to the bottom of Western Europe, European hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*) are victims of deliberate cruelty. This one in a harbour parking lot was decapitated after having been beaten with an iron bar.¹²

UNITED KINGDOM

Saturday July 15, 2023

Holt, Norfolk County, England, United Kingdom



In Holt, among 4,725 residents, one or more vivisectionists caught a European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*), bound its legs with blue adhesive tape, cut out its spinal cord and sprayed it with blue paint. Recovered while still alive, it was finished off by a veterinarian.¹³

OCEANIA

FRANCE (NEW CALEDONIA)

June 28, 2023

Koné, North Province, Overseas Collectivity of New Caledonia, France

Pressures on bats. The 4 species of bats in New Caledonia also bear witness to the difficult cohabitation between the indigenous populations and the law enforcement forces. The dialogue boils down to gunshots when 2 poachers came out of the forest with rucksacks, guns and torches, and 3 gendarmes supported by wardens from the North Province found themselves face to face, then face to back and back to face. No one was hurt and the 2 groups vanished in the night. The 4 species of bats in the province are the ornate flying fox (*Pteropus ornatus*, Appendix II), the Pacific flying fox (*Pteropus tonganus*, Appendix I), the New Caledonia flying fox (*Pteropus vetulus*, Appendix II) and the New Caledonia blossom bat (*Notopterus neocaledonicus*).¹⁴



Kanak ceremonial axe with jadeite disc set in a piece of wood fixed in half an inverted coconut. The handle is wrapped in barter cloth, braids, natural fibres and bat hair.



Bearded reedling (*Panurus biarmicus*). Photo Erik Eckstein

NORTHERN AFRICA

ALGERIA

Saturday August 12, 2023
Adrar, Adrar Province, Algeria



A griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*, Appendix II) was for sale at the weekly pet market in the Sebt souk. It was seized and initially handed over to the El-Amel shelter with its release in mind.¹

WESTERN AFRICA

LIBERIA

June 5, 2023

Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County, Liberia

At the age of 85, this young man climbs trees with a cage, sets baits plastered with birdlime, comes down with the captured parrots (*Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II except for 2 species), get them out of the birdlime with wood ash, and sells them for 500 Liberian dollars (3 US\$). 26 parrots were seized from Kofi Budi, who was put behind bars at the Zwedru Correctional Prison for a time. There are 3 species of parrot in Liberia: timneh parrots (*Psittacus erithacus timneh*, Appendix I), Senegal parrots (*Poicephalus senegalus*, Appendix II), and red-fronted parrots (*Poicephalus gulielmi*, Appendix II).²



CENTRAL AFRICA

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

July 16, 2023

Kibombo, Maniema Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Seizure of 52 red-fronted parrots (*Poicephalus gulielmi*, Appendix II), one of them dead. They were caught near the Lomami River, a tributary of the Congo, on the border between the provinces of Maniema and Sankuru, during a 3-month break in which all hunting is prohibited. The carriers of the precious cargo were heading for Kindu, a town already well known to "On the Trail" for parrot smuggling (see "On the Trail" n°4 p.30 and n°12 p.27, ref.2).³

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

June 28 and August 10, 2023

Pointe-Noire, Pointe-Noire Department, Republic of the Congo

45 grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) captured at Tchimpounga were in the hands of Ekofo, Sita, Ntondele, and Malonga. They were rescued by the police, gendarmerie, and Forest Economy officers, with the support of PALF (Project to Support the Application of the Wildlife Law), and handed over to the Jane Goodall Institute's care team before being released.



The 4 men were jointly fined 2 million CFA francs (3,350 US\$) and ordered to pay damages of 3 million CFA francs (5,000 US\$).⁴



EASTERN AFRICA

UGANDA

July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023

Semuliki National Park, Western Region, Uganda. Border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The park is described as a paradise for bird lovers, but it is hell for the African green-pigeons (*Treron calvus*) that stop here during their international migratory flights. In the clearings and open spaces of the park where they alight in great numbers to feed on greenery and figs, they are treacherously covered by nets set by poachers. In the fresh markets, green-pigeons are regarded by the people living near the park as invigorating gourmet delicacies, able to prevent or heal anaemia and chronic fatigue, and to "purify" the blood of children. The price of dead green-pigeons has been on the rise since the Covid-19 pandemic. The poachers' guild is hyper-organised, with its green-pigeon watchers who also monitor the movements of the park rangers, its collectors and killers of green-pigeons entangled in nets and its female resellers on the markets. The trafficking code of conduct prohibits the theft of nets, punishes offenders and controls supply on the markets to maintain sale prices at acceptable levels of profitability in all seasons in the communities of Batuku, Babira, Batooro, Bamba, Bavaluma and Bakonzo in the districts of Bundibugyo and Ntoroko.

The Uganda Wildlife Authority reports 37 arrests between July 2022 and June 2023 and 455 nets confiscated. The alert launched in Uganda by the radio Voice of Toro should be duplicated in all tropical and sub-Saharan African countries. The IUCN, relying on the illusory criterion of the African green-pigeon's vast range, persists in classifying the species as being of "least concern".⁵



Treron calvus

ZAMBIA

Mid-June 2023

Kibale National Park, Western Region, Uganda

Of the 122 grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) seized in April 2022 at the Democratic Republic of the Congo border (see "On the Trail" n°36 p.125, ref.11), 55 have been released. The 64 survivors, still under the care of the Uganda Wildlife Conservation Education Centre, should also return to their natural habitat.⁶

June 2023

Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

Sentencing of Okello Anthony to a fine of one million shillings (270 US\$) or one year in prison for the illegal possession of a pair of parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II except 2 species). He has already paid half the fine and is waiting to pay the second half to be released. Uganda is home to at least 4 species of parrots: grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I), Meyer's parrots (*Poicephalus meyeri*, Appendix II), Cape parrots (*Poicephalus fuscicollis*, Appendix II) and red-fronted parrots (*Poicephalus gulielmi*, Appendix II).⁷



July 11, 2023

Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

A nurse of Ugandan nationality and a "businessman" of Kenyan nationality are accused of illegally possessing 18 lesser birds-of-paradise (*Paradisaea minor*, Appendix II), native to the island of New Guinea and neighbouring archipelagoes. The species has been listed in Appendix II of CITES since July 1, 1975, and the holders, whose commercial intentions may be suspected with good reason, do not have a permit issued by the CITES export office of the country of origin. Hosea Isingoma's and Mwaura Njuguna's lawyer claims that the charges against his clients are unfounded, on the grounds that lesser birds-of-paradise are not listed in Appendix I, the only Appendix that prohibits international trade.⁸

Mid-July 2023

Kikonge and Nabyewanga, Central Region, Uganda

Fatal poisoning of 11 grey-crowned cranes (*Balearica regulorum*, Appendix II) by rice and corn planters. Eight others were seen nearby flying in disorder towards the last marshes. They are suffering from irreversible mobility issues. The police spokesman points out that yellow-billed ducks (*Anas undulata*) were also victims of the trap. He assures that the area has been decontaminated to avoid a massacre and reminds that the colonization of marshes by agricultural activities is liable to prosecution and conviction.⁹



August 2023

Lusaka, Lusaka Province, Zambia

Two grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) seized from traffickers by the Department of National Parks and Wildlife have been returned to semi-freedom in the "spacious aviary" of a bird sanctuary. Grey parrots are exotic birds in Zambia. They cannot be released back into the forests. They risk multiplying to the detriment of Meyer's parrots (*Poicephalus meyeri*, Appendix II), a native species.¹⁰

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

June 2023

Hartbeespoort, North West Province, South Africa

Rescue of a marsh owl (*Asio capensis*, Appendix II) which was for sale on the side of the road. It was confined in a shopping bag. It joined 7 other owls already in the care of the owl rescue centre.

Its 15 or so vernacular names testify to its presence in Africa. The species is threatened by the draining of marshes, collisions with fences, agricultural burning, overgrazing, and the contamination of its habitats by chemicals. Nests are usually at ground level.¹¹

June 16, 17, and July 1, 2023 Greater Kruger, Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces, South Africa



On Friday, June 16th, when emergency services arrived on scene, they uncovered a mass poisoning with a tragic death toll. A total of 46 vultures, a bateleur eagle (*Terathopius ecaudatus*, Appendix II), a lion (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II) and 3 cubs were found dead. Meanwhile, 8 vultures – specifically 6 white-backed vultures (*Gyps africanus*, Appendix II), a lappet-faced vulture (*Torgos tracheliotus*, Appendix II) and a hooded vulture (*Necrosyrtes monachus*, Appendix II) – were between life and death. They were transferred by ambulance to EWT's (Endangered Wildlife Trust) Moholoholo vulture recovery centre, several hours away. As the days passed, the vultures recovered and were released back into the wild on July 1. From January 2019 to July 2023, 796 vultures were poisoned in Kruger Park and nearby reserves.¹²

July 2023

Moholoholo, Limpopo Province, South Africa



Rescue of a cape vulture (*Gyps coprotheres*, Appendix II) caught in a trap. The prognosis is favourable, and it should be able to resume its flight shortly.¹³

August 11, 2023

Matlosana and Potchefstroom, North West Province, South Africa



Poisoning of 7 Cape vultures (*Gyps coprotheres*, Appendix II) and white-backed vultures (*Gyps africanus*, Appendix II) by the carcass of a sheep sprayed with agricultural poison. Two survived. The bodies of the 5 victims and the trapped sheep were buried to prevent further serial deaths of scavenging animals. Poisoning and electrocution on power lines and pylons are the 2 main causes of the disappearance of vultures, followed by poaching and the use of certain body parts in magic and divination rituals.¹⁴

August 11, 2023

Louis Trichardt, Limpopo Province, South Africa

The so-called Charles Mudau, a preacher calling himself Prophet Mudau, sprinkled a holy, oily, and salty lotion into the eyes of a barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II). Claiming that the owl's daytime activity was a breach from the nocturnal habits of its species, and that it was therefore inhabited by the devil, he found it necessary and life-saving to exorcise it "in the name of Jesus". After a complaint from the local branch of the SPCA



(Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals), the prophet and 3 of his servants were charged with illegal possession of a protected species and cruelty to animals.¹⁵

August 16, 2023

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



"Hi friends, I'm selling a "little egg" that has never flown before. If you want it, you can have it for 600 rand (34 US\$)". The little egg in question was an white-backed vulture chick (*Gyps africanus*, Appendix II) for sale via Facebook. Thanks to the diligence of the province's anti-poaching unit, the trafficker was arrested, risking 10 years in prison.



The chick was handed over to VulPro, which shares his wonderment with us: "Well this little guy is doing so well and in fact, has joined another nestling its same age to become a twin. The wild and captive bred nestlings are two-peas in a pod and are being raised together to avoid human imprinting so both can be released when the time comes. Who said vultures are not incredible birds! Which other species could you put another youngster in its brood or pack and expect the parents to raise them all with motherly love and heartfelt acceptance? Vultures truly show us the meaning of pure acceptance, peace and love."¹⁶

August 30, 2023

Hartbeespoort, North West Province, South Africa

A spotted eagle-owl (*Bubo africanus*, Appendix II) was rescued from a pet shop selling it for 4,999 rand (280 US\$). It was falsely advertised as a Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*, Appendix II), a species found in North America. Under certain conditions, selling exotic wildlife is permitted, but not native species.¹⁷

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

June 3, 2023

Edmonds, State of Washington, United States of America

Shot on sight on an osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*, Appendix II). It crashed into a garden and died a few minutes later. Half of a couple devoted to feeding their chicks in the first month of summer has been wiped out.¹⁸

Beginning of June 2023

Bay County, State of Florida, United States of America

A black-and-white insectivorous bird of prey that migrates between North and South America, glides above marshes and rivers, performs aerial acrobatics and uses its tail as a rudder, has been shot dead by a sour-tempered man supposedly to protect his chickens from a fake danger. Still seen in around 40 countries or islands on the American continent, the swallow-tailed kite (*Elanoides forficatus*, Appendix II) is said to make sporadic appearances in the Canary Islands. He was charged with poaching and police seized a high-calibre rifle and a raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) going around in his cage from his home.¹⁹



Beginning of June 2023

Palm Beach County, State of Florida, United States of America

Inspector Brevik, accompanied by Lieutenant Padillia and Investigator Merizio, swooped on an individual who was trapping birds and putting them in cages. They seized a mockingbird (family Mimidae), 5 painted buntings (*Passerina ciris*) and 5 indigo buntings (*Passerina cyanea*), all protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.²⁰



June 15, 2023

El Dorado, State of Arkansas, United States of America

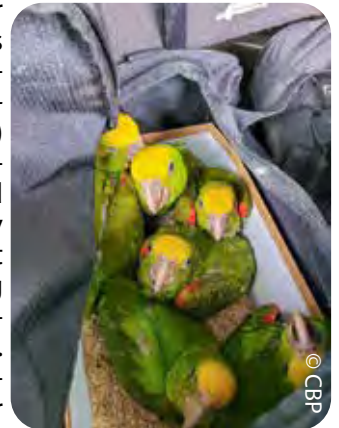
Sentencing of Christopher Lane Shackelford, 20 years old, resident of Magnolia, to 24 months of federal probation, with the first 60 days to be served on home detention and ordered to pay 2,025 US\$ in restitution and fees for shooting a bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) on January 16, 2022 and retrieving it from a marsh to make trophies.²¹



June 16, 2023

San Ysidro Port of Entry, State of California, United States of America. Border with Mexico.

Customs and Border Protection officers seized 13 yellow-headed amazons (*Amazilia oratrix*, Appendix I) from the back of a vehicle. They were handed over to the veterinary services to check that they were not carrying avian influenza or other contagious diseases. The smuggler was taken into custody under the responsibility of the HSI and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.²²



REPEATED OFFENCE

June 26, 2023

Rapid City, State of South Dakota, United States of America

Harvey Hugs, 59, sentenced to 3 years in federal prison followed by one year's probation for trading in golden eagle tails and wings (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II) between August 20 and November 3, 2020. Genetic analyses showed that 14 eaglets had been killed. Hugs sold a pair of wings and the tail of a specimen for 1,000 US\$. He was also ordered to pay 70,000 US\$ in restitution and 300 US\$ to the Federal Crime Victims Fund.²³



REPEATED OFFENCE

End of June 2023

Hillsborough County, State of Florida, United States of America

After receiving a tip-off, the environmental officer arrived just in time to see the individual already known to his services emerge from his house and shoot 2 black-bellied whistling ducks (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*, Appendix III in Honduras).²⁴

July 1 and 9, 2023
Homer, State of Alaska, United States of America



Rescue of a male sandhill crane (*Antigone canadensis*, synonymous of *Grus canadensis*, Appendix II). An arrow shot from a bow by a poacher was embedded in its chest and wing. Thanks to the efforts of local NGO Kachemak Crane Watch, International Crane Foundation in Wisconsin, injured eagle, owl and crane caretaker Jason Sodergren, retired veterinarian Ralph Broshes, and the help of local residents, the crane, which continued to feed 2 chicks with its partner as if nothing had happened (proving the exceptional resilience of these waders), was caught in a net after several days. The arrow was removed and antibiotics given by Homer's veterinary clinic administered. Fortunately, no bones were broken, the bird's breathing appears normal, and if all goes as hoped, it and its flock will be able to migrate to California for the winter. The person who committed this wildlife crime has not been identified. An appeal for witnesses has been launched. Any useful information should be forwarded to the Alaska Wildlife Troopers.²⁵

July 7, 2023
Philadelphia, State of Pennsylvania, United States of America

In a press release, Customs and Border Protection officers announce the seizure from a parcel from the United Kingdom of an arrangement of stuffed birds, one banded cotinga (*Cotinga maculata*, Appendix I), one spangled cotinga (*Cotinga cayana*), 2 regent bowerbirds (*Sericulus chrysocephalus*), one blue-bellied roller (*Coracias cyanogaster*) and one campo troupial (*Icterus jamacaii*). The recipient lives in Onondaga County, New York. He is in violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which prohibits the purchase, possession, import and export of dead migratory birds without special authorization.²⁶

July 16, 2023
Washington Dulles International Airport, State of Virginia, United States of America

Seizure of 2 white-eared bulbuls (*Pycnonotus leucotis*) from a woman of Iraqi origin and naturalized American citizen disembarking from Dubai. Customs had been informed of the attempted intrusion by the airline.²⁷

July 18, 2023
Washington Boro, State of Pennsylvania, United States of America



The great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*, Appendix II) has just been through a very difficult time. After an unexplained fall, it remained stuck in a manure pit for at least 2 days. After several days of shampooing and care and, even more complicated, the removal of a rubber bullet from the corner of its right eye, it's looking refreshed.²⁸



It takes to the skies again

**August 7, 2023
Phoenix, State of Arizona, United States of America**

A great horned owl chick (*Bubo virginianus*, Appendix II) saved from the streets and from death by a benefactor has suffered another great misfortune. His benefactor kept it at home, instead of handing it over immediately to a shelter, NGO or authorized service that could have taken care of it and prepared it for an active life in its preferred natural habitats. And after



6 months, realizing that the little owl was getting big and that he couldn't continue to care for it properly, he handed it over to Liberty Wildlife, too late for the raptor to regain its freedom.

Liberty Wildlife's plea to those who have discovered abandoned fledglings in streets, parks and natural environments: "These birds (and pretty much every bird you see around from mourning doves and hummingbirds up to raptor species) are protected by state and federal laws. By not turning the owl in immediately, the finder has intentionally created a pet and sacrificed this owl's chance of ever returning to the wild. It is completely imprinted on people. This means it won't know what species it needs to mate with or which species are predators. It has no fear of humans. But it still doesn't make a good pet because wild instincts are still there so if it gets mad or hungry, it still knows to use those talons for safety and to get food. Sorry for the long post but it's been a busy breeding season here in Phoenix and we get more intakes than you expect that are people who kept these animals in their homes for extended periods of time - excuses ranging from 1) we're too far away from the specialised institutions 2) we wanted our kids to watch it grow to 3) I didn't know that was illegal. Well, hopefully you've read this far and now you know!!!"²⁹

**August 8, 2023
Saint Louis, State of Missouri, United States of America**



- According to "On the Trail" n°40 p.128 (ref.26), Michael Amato pleaded guilty in May 2023 to smuggling stuffed cranes (*Gruidae*, Appendix I or II) and owls (*Strigiformes*, Appendix I or II), buzzards, hawks, eagles and harriers (*Accipitridae*, Appendix I or II), from Malta, the UK, Germany and other countries between 2018 and 2021, all listed in CITES Appendices I or II. - Three months later, he was sentenced to time served, 3 years' probation and ordered to donate 5,000 US\$ to the World Bird Sanctuary (Missouri). His 67 trophies were confiscated.³⁰

**OPERATION ORNERY BIRDS II
August 8, 14, 18, September 6, 11, 2023 and April 25, 2024
Tampa, State of Florida, United States of America**



Ernesto Gonzalez Campos sentenced on April 25, 2024 to 18 months' probation, a 1,000 US\$ fine and 50 hours' community service for having captured, domesticated and sold on 3 occasions between 2020 and 2021, indigo buntings (*Passerina cyanea*), painted buntings (*Passerina ciris*), rose-breasted grosbeaks (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*), and blue grosbeaks (*Passerina caerulea*). All 4 species are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The Tampa court had already handed down 5 convictions for trafficking in birds protected by the Treaty and prized for their colorful plumage and singing abilities:

- Jorge Luis Mena Graveram Sr., 59, of St. Petersburg, was sentenced on August 8 to time served, one year of supervised release and a 200-US\$ fine.
- Eliernesto Baez Garcia, 29, of St. Petersburg, was sentenced on August 14 to time served, one year of supervised release and a 200-US\$ fine.
- Ariam Rodriguez Diaz, 32, of Ocala, was sentenced on August 18 to one year of probation and a 1,000-US\$ fine.
- Jorge Alberto Gonzalez-Gonzalez, 57, of Tampa, was sentenced on September 6 to one year of probation and a 1,000-US\$ fine.
- Adrian Michel Ortega Rodriguez, 42, of Tampa, was sentenced on September 11 to one year of probation and a 500-US\$ fine.³¹

**Mid-August 2023
Nogales, State of Arizona, United States of America. Border with Mexico.**

22 green parakeets (*Psittacara holochlorus*, Appendix II) seized and handed over to Profepa.³²

End of August 2023

Will County, State of Illinois, United States of America

A resident was arrested for shooting a hawk (Falconiformes, Appendix I or II) perched on a power line in a residential area.³³

End of August 2023

Houston, State of Texas, United States of America

Antonio Cabrero Ruano, Roberto Guimary Machado, Luis Valdez Machado, Iran Almarales Garcia, Ediel Barroso Quintero and Alexander DeJesus Lechuga, aged between 22 and 59, are in prison. As part of a conspiracy, they captured songbirds around Houston during the migration season, when they leave Canada in autumn to spend the winter in South America. A total of 300 birds were seized at their home, all of them master singers that fetch good prices in singing competitions with bets, a national sport in Cuba and practised by Cuban and Caribbean communities in public gardens in the United States. Colourful indigo buntings (*Passerina cyanea*), painted buntings (*Passerina ciris*), rose-breasted grosbeaks (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*), blue grosbeaks (*Passerina caerulea*) and house finches (*Haemorrhous mexicanus*) are sold throughout North America at high prices. The species are clearly threatened by poaching, captivity and exhaustion from training for singing competitions. The 6 traffickers were charged with violating the 1918 Treaty on the Protection of Migratory Birds in North America. Two other members of the gang, Reydel Cabrales Rosa, a Cuban national, and Luis Alonzo Martinez, a national of El Salvador, have already been charged and pleaded guilty. They live in Houston.³⁴

OPERATION ORNERY BIRDS (formerly ANGRY BIRDS)

August 31, and October 25, 2023

Miami, State of Florida, United States of America



Ten individuals had captured hundreds and possibly thousands of small songbirds and migratory birds between May 2020 and October 2022 in conspiracy (see "On the Trail" n°40 p.127, ref.17). They traded them throughout the country via websites frequented by traffickers and pet bird enthusiasts.

- On August 31 2023, the penalty fell on 7 of them. A 1,000 US\$ fine and 6 months' probation for Espino Gonzalez.

A 250 US\$ fine, one day in prison and one year's probation for Hernandez Valero.

A 1,000 US\$ fine, one day in prison and 6 months' probation for Diaz Montesinos.

A 3,000 US\$ fine, one day in prison and 6 months' probation for Santana Menduina.

A 2,500 US\$ fine and 3 years probation for Onelio Hernandez Jr.

50 hours community service, one day in prison and 9 months probation for Cruz Sardina.

A 2,500 US\$ fine, one day's imprisonment and one year's probation for Hernandez Rivera.

- On October 25 2023, the final sentence was imposed on the last 3 suspects.

A 5,000 US\$ fine, 150 hours of community service and 3 years' probation for Alain Armando Hernandez.

Four months' imprisonment and one year's probation for Daniel Hernandez Matos.

A 3,000 US\$ fine and 6 months' probation for Conrado Torres Aleman.³⁵

LATIN AMERICA

ARGENTINA

August 2023

Del Viso, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina



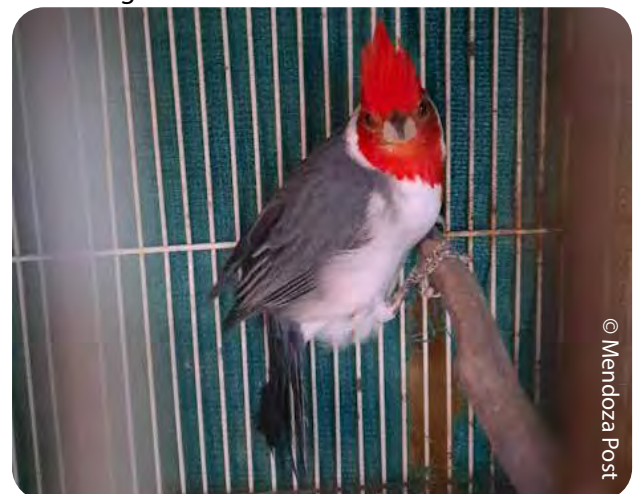
The BCA (Brigada de Control Ambiental) is showing off the 11 hooded siskins (*Spinus magellanicus*), saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*) and double-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulea*) it has rescued from captivity, trafficking and "mascotourism", and handed over to the Tëmaiken Foundation for release.³⁶

August 8, 2023

Alvear, Province of Corrientes, Argentina. Border with Brazil.



The rural police seized 19 yellow cardinals (*Gubernatrix cristata*, Appendix II), a red-crested cardinal (*Paroaria coronata*, Appendix II), a trap and 27 cages in the Bowen district in the early afternoon. A. M. is suspected of poaching and trafficking.³⁷



© Mendoza Post

August 8, 10, 14 and 18, 2023
San Miguel de Tucumán and Tafí Viejo,
Province of Tucumán, Argentina



August was a busy month for the Directorate General of Rural and Environmental Crime under the direction of Commissioner General Silenio Castaño and Senior Commissioner Luis Godoy, and a real relief for 206 birds and 2 turtles.

- The patrol's intuition was right. After intercepting a motorbike and the motorcyclist, 50 red-crested cardinals (*Paroaria coronata*, Appendix II) were counted and taken to the Horco Molle refuge in Yerba Buena (Tucumán) where, after a health check, they should be released. 'One man was travelling on a large motorbike and was carrying large cardboard boxes with holes in them, which caught our attention because this is typical of the illegal transport of wild birds,' says commissioner Luis Godoy.

- Around a hundred birds were seized, including double-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulescens*), dark-throated seedeaters (*Sporophila ruficollis*), hooded siskins (*Spinus magellanicus*) and red-headed cardinals (genus *Paroaria*), as well as traps, nets, glue and other ploys to catch as many birds as possible in as little time as possible.

- The rural police, who were observing the movements at 700 rue Perú, noticed the arrival of 2 suspects carrying large bags. They intervened immediately. Inside the bags were cages and inside the cages were 18 birds, including golden-winged caciques (*Cacicus chrysopterus*), blue-grey saltators (*Saltator coerulescens*), and black-backed grosbeaks (*Pheucticus aureoventris*). They were taken to the Horco Molle refuge, where the vet deemed the capture to be recent. He recommended that they be released without delay.

- Seizure of 38 birds in calle 26 in Tafí Viejo and at 2600 Magallanes Passage in San Miguel de Tucumán, including saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), red pileated finches (*Coryphospingus cucullatus*), hooded siskins (*Spinus magellanicus*), cowbirds (genus *Molothrus*), saltators (genus *Saltator*), black-backed grosbeaks (*Pheucticus aureoventris*), and shiny cowbirds (*Molothrus bonariensis*), as well as 2 turtles, 14 traps and 33 cages. The birds were transferred to the Horco Molle refuge.³⁸



© Secretaría de Estado de Comunicación Pública - Gobierno de Tucumán

August 2023
Luque, Province of Córdoba, Argentina



A multicolored extravaganza. Seizure of 120 birds, including yellow cardinals (*Gubernatrix cristata*, Appendix II), red-crested cardinals (*Paroaria coronata*, Appendix II), golden-billed saltators (*Saltator aurantiirostris*), blue-grey saltators (*Saltator coerulescens*), pampa finches (*Embernagra platensis*), black-and-rufous warbling-finches (*Poospiza nigrorufa*), many-colored rush tyrans (*Tachuris rubrigastra*) and red pileated finches (*Coryphospingus cucullatus*). They were handed over to the Tatú Carreta Reserve in Casa Grande. The environmental and rural police also seized 12 cages and 13 traps.³⁹



Embernagra platensis

© Pablo Balduino

BOLIVIA

Mid-June 2023

Oruro, Province of Cercado, Department of Oruro, Bolivia

Seizure of 2 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II) that a woman was trying to sell on the market.⁴⁰

July 29, 2023

La Paz, Province of Pedro Domingo Murillo, Department of La Paz, Bolivia

Seizure of 8 Darwin's rhea feathers (*Pterocnemia pennata*, Appendix I) during the University Folk Carnival. They were removed from the costumes of the Taller Cultural Tinkus Wistus and Tonada Potosina brotherhoods. Feline teeth and skins, Andean flamingo feathers (*Phoenicoparrus andinus*, Appendix II) and parrot feathers are also prohibited at events of this type.⁴¹

August 1, 2023

La Paz, Province of Pedro Domingo Murillo, Department of La Paz, Bolivia

Seizure by the Pofoma of a blue-fronted amazon (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II) kept as a pet in a private home. Injured in the wings, it must undergo a veterinary examination before being taken to a rescue centre.⁴²

Brazil

Seizure of 2,385 birds between June 1 and August 31, 2023



Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, GeoEye, USDA FSA, USGS, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, and the GIS User Community



1 vinaceous-breasted amazon (*Amazona vinacea*, Appendix I). August 27, 2023. Jaguariáiva, Paraná



1 red-and-green macaw (*Ara chloropterus*, Appendix II). June 10, 2023. Marabá, State of Pará



11 birds, including red-headed cardinals (genus *Paroaria*), double-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulescens*) and saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*). August 19, 2023. Marau, State of Rio Grande do Sul



17 birds including 8 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), 4 yellow-bellied seedeaters (*Sporophila nigricollis*) and 1 blue-fronted amazon (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II). July 31, 2023. Itapoã, Federal District

2,385 birds seized in Brazil Map details

240 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*)
 161 hooded siskins (*Spinus magellanicus*)
 152 double-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulescens*)
 112 green winged saltators (*Saltator similis*)
 102 grey pileated finches (*Coryphospingus pileatus*)
 76 tanagers (genus *Thraupis*)
 75 jays (genus *Cyanocorax*)
 75 yellow-bellied seedeaters (*Sporophila nigricollis*)
 67 red-crested cardinals (*Paroaria coronata*, Appendix II)
 50 red-headed cardinals (genus *Paroaria*)
 39 lined seedeaters (*Sporophila lineola*)
 37 ultramarine grosbeaks (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*)
 35 campo troupials (*Icterus jamacaii*)
 30 thrushes (family Turdidae)
 27 white-throated seedeaters (*Sporophila albogularis*)
 26 red-cowled cardinals (*Paroaria dominicana*)
 25 buff-throated saltators (*Saltator maximus*)
 21 copper seedeaters (*Sporophila bouvreuil*)
 20 finches (genus *Sicalis*)
 20 rufous-collared sparrows (*Zonotrichia capensis*)
 17 variable orioles (*Icterus pyrrhopterus* synonymous with *Icterus cayanensis pyrrhopterus*)
 16 chopi blackbirds (*Gnorimopsar chopi*)
 14 striped cuckoos (*Tapera naevia*)
 13 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II)
 10 red pileated finches (*Coryphospingus cucullatus*)
 8 giant cowbirds (*Molothrus oryzivorus*)

7 pale-breasted thrushes (*Turdus leucomelas*)
 6 white-faced whistling ducks (*Dendrocygna viduata*)
 6 rheas (*Rhea americana* or *Pterocnemia pennata*, Appendix II)
 6 great-billed seed finches (*Sporophila maximiliani*)
 5 rusty-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila collaris*)
 5 blue-black grassquits (*Volatinia jacarina*)
 3 red-and-green macaws (*Ara chloropterus*, A. II)
 3 white-naped jays (*Cyanocorax cyanopogon*)
 3 Brazilian tanagers (*Ramphocelus bresilia*)
 2 lovebirds (*Agapornis* spp., Appendix II except *Agapornis roseicollis*)
 2 blue-fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II)
 2 vinaceous-breasted amazons (*Amazona vinacea*, Appendix I)
 2 caatinga parakeets (*Aratinga cactorum*, Appendix II)
 2 ringed teals (*Callonetta leucophrys*)
 2 doves (genus *Leptotila*)
 1 yellow-crowned amazon (*Amazona ochrocephala*, A. II)
 1 yellow-chevroned parakeet (*Brotogeris chiriri*, A. II)
 1 crested caracara (*Caracara plancus*, Appendix II)
 1 chestnut-capped blackbird (*Chrysomus ruficapillus*)
 1 epaulet oriole (*Icterus cayanensis*)
 1 chestnut-bellied seed finch (*Oryzoborus angolensis*, synonymous with *Sporophila angolensis*)
 1 rufous-bellied thrush (*Turdus rufiventris*)
 854 unidentified birds

COLOMBIA

June 1, 2023

San Antonio de Prado and La Estrella, Regional Autonomous Corporation of Antioquia, Colombia

Voluntary release of 3 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), 3 seedeaters (genus *Sporophila*), an orange-winged amazon (*Amazona amazonica*, Appendix II), a yellow-crowned amazon (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II), a motmot (genus *Momotus*), and 2 red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II) after uniformed men raided private homes. Since the beginning of 2023, 320 wildlife specimens have been released by the Metropolitan Police, mainly armadillos, parrots, and iguanas.⁴³

Beginning of June 2023

Bogotá, Colombia

Seizure of 5 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*) in the Las Ferias District. A man was selling them on the side of the road. He had caught them in San Sebastián de Buenavista, Department of Magdalena, 750 km away.⁴⁴

Beginning of June 2023

Bogotá, Colombia

Seizure of 2 yellow-crowned amazons (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II) illegally kept as pets. The Ministry of the Environment urges all citizens travelling in the country during vacations not to buy wild animals and to take care not to transport any without their knowledge. "When travelling, it is possible that animals such as snakes seek warmth in the frame of the car during the night. Before returning to Bogotá, please check that there are no stowaways in your car," said Carolina Urrutia, Secretary of the Environment.⁴⁵

July 10, 2023

San Bernardo Del Viento, Regional Autonomous Corporation of Córdoba, Colombia

The 123 hotline for reporting environmentally-threatening behavior to the authorities worked. Seizure by SIJIN (Seccional de Investigación Criminal) of 27 birds, including 6 rosy thrush-tanagers (*Rhodinocichla rosea*), 6 finches (genus *Sicalis*), 2 owls (Strigidae, Appendix I or II) and a blue-grey saltator (*Saltator coerulescens*). The trafficker falls under article 328 of the Penal Code. The birds have been quarantined and will shortly be released back into their natural habitat.⁴⁶

Mid-July 2023

Filadelfia, Regional Autonomous Corporation of Caldas, Colombia

Seizure of 4 yellow-headed amazons (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I), a blue-fronted amazon (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II) and a red-tailed squirrel (*Sciurus granatensis*). They were transferred to the department's CARV (Centro de Rehabilitación y Valoración). The operation was triggered by a report from a citizen and carried out by the Caldas police.⁴⁷

Mid-July 2023

Cartagena de Indias, Regional Autonomous Corporation of Bolivar, Colombia

Seizure of 35 birds at the Bazurto market: brown-throated conures (*Aratinga pertinax*, Appendix II) (4), burrowing owls (*Athene cunicularia*, Appendix II) (5), blue-black grassquits (*Volatinia jacarina*) (6) and 20 finches (family Thraupidae and genus *Spinus*). They have been handed over to the CAV (Centro de Atención y Valoración de Fauna de Cartagena) and will be released in due course.⁴⁸

Mid-July 2023

La Mesa and El Colegio, Regional Autonomous Corporation of Cundinamarca, Colombia

Seizure of 5 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II) held captive in private homes. They were taken to a wildlife training centre in view of their release.⁴⁹

August 12-13 2023

Yotoco, Regional Autonomous Corporation of Valle del Cauca, Colombia

Seizure of 5 aras (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II). They have been placed in the San Emigdio wildlife assessment and recovery centre, which will decide what action to take.⁵⁰

August 2023

Ibagué, Regional Autonomous Corporation of Tolima, Colombia



For the first time in their lives, a yellow-headed amazon (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I) and 4 tropical mockingbirds (*Mimus gilvus*) saw a policeman. They were handed over to the veterinarians of the Tolima Regional Autonomous Corporation for health assessment, appropriate care and release.⁵¹

COSTA RICA

June 5, 2023

Las Tablillas, Alajuela Province, Costa Rica. Border with Nicaragua.

Seizure of 2 orange-chinned parakeets (*Brotogeris jugularis*, Appendix II) on a bus in the closed bag of a Nicaraguan national. The birds were about to die of asphyxiation.⁵²

June 9, 2023

Cariari, Province of Limón, Costa Rica

Following a report to Sitada (Sistema de Denuncias), rangers from the Tortuguero Conservation Area seized 3 great green macaws (*Ara ambiguus*, Appendix I), a scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*, Appendix I), 2 other parrots (Psittaciformes, Appendix I or II except 4 species), a conure (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II except 2 species), and a squirrel (family Sciuridae) which were in very poor health.⁵³

EL SALVADOR

August 19, 2023

El Amatillo, Department of La Union, El Salvador. Border with Honduras.

Two women, aged 68 and 80, tried to bring in 33 yellow-naped amazons (*Amazona auropalliata*, Appendix I), 11 red-lored amazons (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II), one southern mealy amazon (*Amazona farinosa*, Appendix II) and one chestnut-mandibled toucan (*Ramphastos ambiguus swainsonii*), crammed into bags. One of the amazons had died of suffocation. The 45 surviving birds were handed over to the La Cañada wildlife rescue centre.⁵⁴



© Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales

ECUADOR

June 6, 2023

Tena, Napo Province, Ecuador

Sentencing of Narciso Rodolfo V. B. to one year in prison, a 1,800 US\$ fine, and 3,000 US\$ in damages for poaching a black-and-chestnut eagle (*Oroaetus isidori*, Appendix II) in March 2021. In addition, he must take a 120-hour course on wildlife and ecosystem protection. In the whole of Ecuador, 256,370 km², there are only 200 members of this endangered species.⁵⁵



© David F. Belmonte

GUYANA

HAIR CURLER NETWORK REPEATED OFFENCE

June 19, 2023

Georgetown International Airport, Cheddi Jagan Timehri, Demerara-Mahaica Region, Guyana



Businessman Nazir Khan, a Guyana passport holder residing in Canada, attempted to smuggle 5 towa-towa, better known as chestnut-bellied seed finches (*Oryzoborus angolensis*, synonymous with *Sporophila angolensis*). On July 14, he was released on bail pending trial. In 2014, while flying to the USA, he was caught for the same offence, this time with 22 towa-towa in curlers. He was acquitted on a plea of good faith. He was unaware that towa-towa were banned from export without a permit, and claimed that the 22 songbirds were for his own personal entertainment. Nothing could be further from his intention than to trade them in singing competitions. Since 2014, the export of chestnut-bellied seed finches and large-bellied seed finches (*Oryzoborus crassirostris*) has been completely banned.

Recently, 6 Nazir Khan imitators were caught red-handed and convicted of violating the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act (2016):

- Harrigobin Lalta fined one million dollars (4,745 US\$) for attempting to export 15 songbirds to Canada,
- Seenarine Ramparshad sentenced to 6 months in prison for attempting to export 3 songbirds to New York,
- David Persaud fined 300,000 dollars (1,425 US\$) for attempting to export 6 songbirds to New York,
- Deryck Singh fined 750,000 dollars (3,560 US\$) for attempting to export 8 songbirds to Barbados,
- Deochand Dhanraj fined 700,000 dollars (3,320 US\$) for attempting to export 6 songbirds to New York,
- Lakesha Brown fined 500,000 dollars (2,370 US\$) for attempting to export 15 songbirds to New York.⁵⁶



© Guyana Wildlife and Conservation Commission

MEXICO

Beginning of June 2023

Morelia, State of Michoacán, Mexico

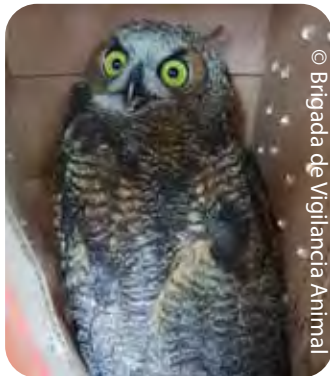


Seizure of 40 birds, including a yellow-headed amazon (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I), a red-lore amazon (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II), house sparrows (*Passer domesticus*), silky-flycatchers (family Ptilogonidae), brown-backed solitaires (*Myadestes occidentalis*), curved-billed thrashers (*Toxostoma curvirostre*), American robins (*Turdus migratorius*), and cedar waxwings (*Bombycilla cedrorum*). They were handed over to Benito Juárez Zoo for examination and care, with the goal of releasing them.⁵⁷

June 8, 2023

Mexico City, Mexico

On the streets of the Azcapotzalco District, a great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*, Appendix II) was in the hands of an 18-year-old man. He wanted to sell it for 15,000 pesos (855 US\$). Within a week, Mexico City's Animal Vigilance Brigade had seized a bearded lizard (*Heloderma horridum*, Appendix II), possums, chameleons, and tarantulas.⁵⁸



June 21, 2023

State of Mexico, Mexico

Seizure of a red-lore amazon (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II) and 2 orange-fronted conures (*Eupsittula canicularis*, synonymous with *Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II) offered for sale.⁵⁹

June 30, 2023

Mexico City, Mexico

Claudio Rangel Fernández seized a live elf owl (*Micrathene whitneyi*, Appendix II), about 5 months old, that he was trying to sell on the streets of the Venustiano Carranza District. In the cardboard box he used as a display, there was also a dead saguaro owl. Fernández is said to poach birds of prey in the State of Veracruz, 1,000 km from Mexico City.⁶⁰

June 2023

Santiago de Querétaro, State of Querétaro, Mexico

Profepa seized 4 orange-fronted conures (*Eupsittula canicularis*, synonymous with *Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II) and 2 parakeets (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II) at a market and sent them to a UMA (Unidad de Manejo para la Conservación de la Vida Silvestre) for observation and veterinary care, with a view to their release. The seller is subject to an administrative procedure.⁶¹

July 2023

State of Puebla, Mexico

Seizure of 122 house finches (*Haemorhous mexicanus*), 10 Scott's orioles (*Icterus parisorum*), 3 finches (genus *Carduelis*), 2 lesser goldfinches (*Spinus psaltria*), a green shrike-vireo (*Vireolanius pulchellus*), a brown-backed solitaire (*Myadestes occidentalis*) and a tropical mockingbird (*Mimus gilvus*) in the back of a pick-up truck.⁶²

July 2023

State of Tabasco, Mexico

Seizure of an olive-throated conure (*Eupsittula nana*, Appendix II) and a white-fronted amazon (*Amazona albifrons*, Appendix II) offered for sale at the roadside.⁶³

July 2023

State of Chihuahua, Mexico

Seizure of 27 pyrrhuloxias (*Cardinalis sinuatus*), 20 indigo buntings (*Passerina cyanea*), 7 house finches (*Haemorhous mexicanus*), 5 blue grosbeaks (*Passerina caerulea*), 5 white-crowned sparrows (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*), 5 Northern mockingbirds (*Mimus polyglottos*), 2 red-winged blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) and a curve-billed thrasher (*Toxostoma curvirostre*).⁶⁴

July 2023

Metropolitan Area of the Valley of Mexico, Mexico

Seizure of 3 orange-fronted conures (*Eupsittula canicularis*, synonymous with *Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II), 5 house finches (*Haemorhous mexicanus*), 4 Northern mockingbirds (*Mimus polyglottos*), 3 yellow grosbeaks (*Pheucticus chrysopheplus*), 2 brown-backed solitaires (*Myadestes occidentalis*), 2 grey silky-flycatchers (*Ptilogonys cinereus*), 2 orioles (genus *Icterus*), 2 Northern cardinals (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) and a bunting (genus *Passerina*).⁶⁵

July 2023

State of Michoacán, Mexico

Seizure at a market of 2 orange-fronted conures (*Eupsittula canicularis*, synonymous with *Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II), 33 house finches (*Haemorhous mexicanus*), 4 thrashers (genus *Toxostoma*), 4 painted bunting (*Passerina ciris*), 3 brown-backed solitaires (*Myadestes occidentalis*), 3 San Blas jays (*Cyanocorax sanblasianus*), 2 Northern cardinals (*Cardinalis cardinalis*), a cedar waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) and a Northern mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*).⁶⁶

July 2023

State of Guanajuato, Mexico

52 birds seized from a street vendor: 4 orange-fronted conures (*Eupsittula canicularis*, synonymous with *Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II), red-lored amazons (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II) and 46 passerines (order Passeriformes).⁶⁷

July 14, 2023

State of Morelos, Mexico

Seizure of 7 ostriches (*Struthio camelus*, Appendix I in 12 African countries). Their owner had no documents proving their legal origin.⁶⁸

July 24, 2023

Greater Mexico City, Mexico

Seizure of a red-lored amazon (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II) and an olive-throated conure (*Eupsittula nana*, Appendix II).⁶⁹

August 14, 2023

State of San Luis Potosí, Mexico

The parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II) were either for sale on the public highway or being transported. They were placed in UMA (Unidad de Manejo para la Conservación de la Vida Silvestre) to receive the necessary care and to assess their suitability for release. Profepa has lodged a complaint against the keeper of the birds.⁷⁰

August 2023

State of Guanajuato, Mexico

In response to a citizen alert, the environmental police seized a orange-fronted conure (*Eupsittula canicularis*, Appendix II) and secured it in a PIMVS. Its disgusting cage was destroyed.⁷¹

PANAMA

July 21, 2023

David District, Chiriquí Province, Panama

Seizure under the awning of a house of 41 birds shut up in 12 cages: rose-breasted grosbeaks (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*), orchard orioles (*Icterus spurius*), yellow-backed orioles (*Icterus chrysater*), yellow-faced grassquits (*Tiaris olivaceus*), chestnut-bellied seed finches (*Oryzoborus angolensis*, synonymous with *Sporophila angolensis*), yellow-crowned euphonias (*Euphonia luteicapilla*), yellow-throated euphonias (*Euphonia hirundinacea*), variable seedeaters (*Sporophila corvina*), tropical mockingbirds (*Mimus gilvus*), bronzed cowbirds (*Molothrus aeneus*), palm tanagers (*Thraupis palmarum*), blue-grey tanagers (*Thraupis episcopus*), white-tipped doves (*Leptotila verreauxi*), clay-colored thrushes (*Turdus grayi*) and saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*). They were released with a great flap of wings of freedom. The operation was triggered by a report from a "citizen" and carried out by agents of MiAMBIENTE (Ministerio de Ambiente).⁷²



Beginning of August 2023

Puerto Caimito, Panamá Oeste Province, Panama

The family from which the MiAmbiente (Ministry of the Environment) team seized an orange-chinned parakeet (*Brotogeris jugularis*, Appendix II), a military macaw (*Ara militaris*, Appendix I), and a grey-headed chachalaca (*Ortalis cinereiceps*), and who claimed that the birds had arrived of their own accord in the garden of their house, later admitted that the military macaw had been captured in the forest. The 3 birds are in poor condition, with deformed legs and plumage loss caused by small cages, poor feeding and lack of ventilation.⁷³

PERU

June 28, 2023

Kimbiri District, Province of La Convencion, Department of Cusco, Peru

Seizure by Serfor (Servicio Nacional Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre) of a blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II). It was held in captivity and regarded as a sports club mascot. It was transferred to the Sivia zoological park.⁷⁴

July 28 and 29, 2023

District of Coyllurqui, Province of Cotabambas, Department of Apurímac, Peru

Seizure by Serfor of an Andean condor (*Vultur gryphus*, Appendix I) taken on board by a folk brotherhood during the national day parades on July 28 and 29. The adult female is in very poor condition, very thin and dehydrated, with wing and tail feathers partly cut. As for its release, the prognosis is very guarded. For the time being, an agreement has been reached with Abancay Zoo to set aside an enclosure and special food for it. The department of Apurímac, 20,896 km², is allegedly home to some 30 Andean condors.⁷⁵



August 2023

District of Callería, Province of Coronel Portillo, Department of Ucayali, Peru

The "Los Pihuchos de Ucayali" gang received a blow to the head. Environmental police seized 500 white-winged parakeets (*Brotogeris versicolurus*, Appendix II) worth 750,000 sols (208,380 US\$ or 415 US\$ per bird) and 100 orange-winged amazons (*Amazona amazonica*, Appendix II) worth 30,000 sols (8,335 US\$ or 83 US\$ per bird) from a truck. The birds were stacked in cardboard boxes. The truck was impounded, along with a three-wheeler full of folded cardboard boxes soiled with bird droppings. Three arrests, Yolin Cleto Meza Borquez, Oscar Manuel Riojas Portilla and Omar Enrique Chacón Reyna. The parakeets and amazons were handed over to the Gerffs (Gerencia Regional Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre) for reintroduction into their natural habitats.⁷⁶

SURINAME

July 19, August 4 and 22, and December 5, 2023

Paramaribo, Paramaribo District, and Zanderij, Para District, Suriname



- Hold-up worth over 2 million dollars in a warehouse in Paramaribo, Suriname. Twenty-three Lear's macaws (*Anodorhynchus leari*, Appendix I), which sell on the international black market for up to 100,000 US\$, were stolen at around 1 a.m. on August 22, a few hours before they had to be recovered by Brazilian experts and investigators who flew in on a federal police plane. They were part of a batch of 29 specimens poached in Brazil and seized in Suriname in July after being smuggled through French Guiana. Suriname's Minister of Foreign Affairs apologized to the Brazilian ambassador and did his utmost to avoid a diplomatic incident, assuring him that Brazil's cultural and genetic heritage would be recovered in good condition. Lear's macaws, magnificent cobalt-blue birds, are sought after as far away as India.

- On December 5, 2023, the birds had still not been found. Some say they were not stolen, but flew away, and a judge sentenced a Chinese underling without conviction to 12 months' imprisonment, 8 of which were suspended (he was released from prison on the day of the verdict after 4 months' pre-trial detention) and a fine equal to 130 US\$. The animal exporter, a Peruvian of Chinese origin, and his interpreter, suspected for a time of masterminding the theft, were acquitted.

In Paramaribo, even the zoo is a supermarket for traffickers. In April 2022, thieves broke in to kill and carry off 2 caimans (see "On the Trail" n°36 p.180, ref.20). "How do you want me to secure 11 hectares, I'm not going to call the army," lamented the zoo director. Paramaribo is also a hub for jaguars poached by illegal gold miners. In the capital's shops, the skin is tanned, the body is boiled to extract the supposedly aphrodisiac fat, and the teeth and claws are pulled out. In Paramaribo, a jaguar's tooth sells for around 30 US\$, while in Beijing, a big fang fetches around 3,000 US\$.⁷⁷

VENEZUELA

July 17, 2023

Caracas, Capital District, Venezuela

Arrest in the parish of La Vega of a 22-year-old man and seizure of 16 cages and 26 birds, including 6 vermilion cardinals (*Cardinalis phoeniceus*), 5 grey seedeaters (*Sporophila intermedia*), 2 Orinoco saltators (*Saltator orinocensis*), a yellow-rumped cacique (*Cacicus cela*), a pale-eyed thrush (*Turdus leucops*) and a slate-colored grosbeak (*Saltator grossus*). The birds were placed under the responsibility of Minec (Ministerio de Ecosocialismo).

At the end of June, Minec announced the release in Waraira Repano National Park of 35 birds that had been seized from traffickers and 3 sloths (suborder Folivora) who had been roaming on roads.⁷⁸

August 26, 2023

Lara State, Venezuela

The Ministry of Ecosocialism has announced the seizure of more than 370 birds, including macaws (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II). They were in the grip of a network specialising in wildlife trafficking. The operation was carried out by the Environmental Guard attached to the Bolivarian National Armed Forces. In May 2022, the Venezuelan Observatory of Environmental Human Rights (OVDHA) warned of "an accelerated loss of biological diversity" in the country, which could lead to the violation of fundamental guarantees for rural and indigenous populations.⁷⁹

CARIBBEAN

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

August 9, 2023

Saint Joseph, Tunapuna-Piarco Region, Trinidad and Tobago



The Longden Street residence was searched by a team from the Ministry of Agriculture and by the police. 33 birds were in a shed in cages that were too small. The occupant had no certificate of origin. Contrary to his statements, the birds did not pass the domesticity test. They were captured a short time ago. The occupant

is suspected of being a trafficker. He was taken to the police station. The 33 birds, 5 green-rumped parrotlets (*Forpus passerinus*, Appendix II), one blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II), one yellow-crowned amazon (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II), 8 chestnut-bellied seed finches (*Oryzoborus angolensis*, synonymous with *Sporophila angolensis*), 7 yellow-bellied seedeaters (*Sporophila nigricollis*), 3 grey seedeaters (*Sporophila intermedia*), 2 plumbeous seedeaters (*Sporophila plumbea*) known locally as "herito", one large-bellied seed finch (*Oryzoborus crassirostris*), one double-collared seedeater (*Sporophila caerulescens*), one paca (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras) and 3 red-rumped agoutis (*Dasyprocta leporina*) were placed at Emperor Valley Zoo pending a court ruling and veterinary diagnosis.⁸⁰

CENTRAL ASIA

KYRGYZSTAN

June 29, 2023

Issyk-Kul Region, Kyrgyzstan

Ministry of Natural Resources officers took to the streets to seize 10 eagles (*Aquila* or *Hieraaetus* spp., Appendix I or II) and falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II) from street photographers, the most robust of which were promptly released.⁸¹

Beginning of August 2023

Issyk-Kul Region, Kyrgyzstan

A raid led by the Ministry of Natural Resources and the police on an enclosure where birds of prey (*Aquila*, *Falco* or *Hieraaetus* spp., Appendix I or II) were being domesticated for use during the tourist season by street photographers, most of whom are minors.⁸²



UZBEKISTAN

Mid-June 2023

Tashkent Independent City, Uzbekistan. Border with Kazakhstan.

Seizure of a falcon (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II) in the Shirin neighbourhood. It was offered for sale by A.Sh. and M.A. It was temporarily entrusted to the city zoo. Criminal proceedings have been initiated against the traffickers.⁸³

July 21, 2023

Paxtachi District, Samarqand Region, Uzbekistan

Mr. Muhammadiyev handed over the Eurasian eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II) in his possession to the district wardens. It was taken to Zarafshan National Park for a health and behavior check, and will be released back into the wild as soon as possible.⁸⁴

End of July 2023

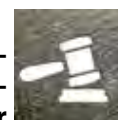
Guliston, Tashkent Region, Uzbekistan

A cinereous vulture (*Aegypius monachus*, Appendix II) listed in the Red Book was handed over by the company manager who held it illegally. It was taken to the Tashkent Zoo for a health check.⁸⁵

August 8, 2023

Tashkent Independent City, Uzbekistan. Border with Kazakhstan.

Officials seized a goldfinch (genus *Carduelis*) in the Tchi-lanjar district and fined M.M. 3.3 million sums (285 US\$).⁸⁶



August 15, 2023

Tukmangit, Navoiy Region, Uzbekistan

B.B. was fined 3.3 million sums (285 US\$) for keeping a steppe eagle (*Aquila nipalensis*, Appendix II) inside a cage at home. The eagle took to the skies again.⁸⁷



EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

June 2023

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 625 grams of "bird's nests" in the luggage of a disembarking passenger. He had concealed them among his clothes.⁸⁸

June 2023

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China

A cage containing a live Mongolian lark (*Melanocorypha mongolica*) was seized from the luggage of a man entering Hong Kong.⁸⁹

June 2023

Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Seizures on skiffs between Hong Kong and Macao (60 km) of 42 bags of bird's nests. Total weight: 21.4 kg. A bird's nest weighs between 3 and 14 grams, the number of nests is between 1,530 and 7,130. Total value: 200,000 yuan, or 28,280 US\$, and between 4 and 18 US\$ per nest.⁹⁰

June 20, 2023

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 82 bird eggs in the accompanied luggage of a traveller from abroad. The eggs were each wrapped in cotton. Under the beam of a spotlight, "a biological activity" was revealed in each of the shells. The eggs were passed on to an incubation specialist. They all hatched, enabling ornithological experts to identify amazon parrots (*Amazona* spp., Appendix I or II). The trafficker is criminally liable.⁹¹

July 2023

Nanning Wuxu International Airport, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

Seizure of 12 packets of bird's nest in the luggage of a passenger from abroad concealed in aluminium foil. Total weight: 7.2 kg.⁹²

July 2023

Maguan County, Wenshan Zhuang and Miao Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Viet Nam.

Customs seize 5 Chinese hwameis (*Garrulax canorus*, Appendix II) shut up in small cages in the luggage of 2 passengers attempting to enter Viet Nam.⁹³

July 30, 2023

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

There is less risk of being caught by customs officials with eggs in your luggage than with gesticulating chicks if they haven't died during the journey, but the risks remain. Seizure in You (not his real name)'s briefcase of 50 eggs wrapped in cotton, which experts identified after a few days as the eggs of the red-and-green macaw (*Ara chloropterus*, Appendix II).⁹⁴

August 9 and 23, 2023

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



- Huang (not his real name) was carrying in a backpack and a handbag 220 eggs wrapped in cotton and stored in 3 chicken egg boxes.

- Customs experts identified 176 grey parrot eggs (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I, origin Africa), 30 monk parakeet eggs (*Myiopsitta monachus*, Appendix II, origin South America) and 14 roseate cockatoo eggs (*Eolophus roseicapilla*, Appendix II, origin Australia). What happened to the eggs remains a mystery. Did they hatch, and if so, at what success rates, or were they destroyed?⁹⁵

August 2023

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

10.33 kg of bird's nests seized from the luggage of a traveller disembarking from abroad.⁹⁶

MONGOLIA

July 5, 2023

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

An investigation is underway after a classified ad selling a 62 cm-long Dalmatian pelican beak (*Pelecanus crispus*, Appendix I) was detected. Two suspects have been identified. Pelican beaks are traditionally used to groom horses and apparently give them strength and speed. Pelican beaks in Mongolia, see "On the Trail" n°36 p.132 (ref.42) and n°38 p.139 (ref.74).⁹⁷

SOUTHEASTERN ASIA

INDONESIA

June 13, 2023

Surabaya, East Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia

Ronald Gulo Bin Moni Gulo sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment and a fine equal to 670 US\$, with a further month's imprisonment in the event of non-payment, for attempting to smuggle into Surabaya on January 25, 2023, after leaving Banjarmasin (South Kalimantan) by van aboard the km *Dharma Rucitra 1*, Java island, 18 white-rumped shamas (*Copsychus malabaricus*, Appendix II), 32 greater green leafbirds (*Chloropsis sonnerati*) (40 grams), 12 olive-winged bulbuls (*Pycnonotus plumosus*) (30 grams), 60 Javan blue flycatchers (*Cyornis banyumas*) (15 grams), 13 chestnut-capped thrushes (*Geokichla interpres*) known as "anis kembang", 2 Asian fairy-bluebirds (*Irena puella*) known as "colibri ninja", 75 purple-throated sunbirds (*Leptocoma sperata*), 4 Oriental magpie-robins (*Copsychus saularis*) and 5 long-nosed monkeys (*Nasalis larvatus*, Appendix I) with prominent stomachs due to the gasification of the leaves they feed on. The sea journey from Banjarmasin to Surabaya took at least 23 hours, and at arrival, 18 out of the 206 birds had already died.⁹⁸



Purple-throated sunbird (*Leptocoma sperata*)

ROBIN DES BOIS INVESTIGATION

Dharma Rucitra 1 (ex-Vega). IMO 8921767. Built in 1990 in Shimonoseki (Japan) by Mitsubishi. Length 135 meters. Indonesia flag. Classification society International Ship Classification. Along with the *Venilia*, *Virgo* and *Virtus*, the *Vega* was one of a series of 4 Japanese ferries operated by Higashi Nihon Ferry Co Ltd. She carried 600 passengers at a service speed of 20 knots. Acquired in June 2014 by DLU, Dharma Lautan Utama PT (Indonesia). Ticket prices from Surabaya to Banjarmasin range from 350,000 rupiah in economy class to 550,000 rupiah (23-37 US\$) in VIP class for an adult passenger.⁹⁸



Dharma Rucitra 1, July 24, 2023, Banjarmasin

June 27, 2023

Surabaya, East Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia

Pusahri Bin Madin sentenced to 5 months' imprisonment, a fine of 2 million rupiah (133 US\$) with an additional month's imprisonment in the event of non-payment, 600,000 rupiah (40 US\$) in damages to the State and 5,000 rupiah (0.33 US\$) in legal costs for holding and attempting to smuggle in Surabaya after getting off a car ferry coming from Makasar 8 knobbed hornbills (*Aceros cassidix*, Appendix II) caught in South Sulawesi. The seizure was carried out by the national police with the support of the NGO FLIGHT (see "On the Trail" n°40 p.140).⁹⁹



August 4, 2023

Special Capital Region of Jakarta, Java Island, Indonesia



Sentencing of Ahmad Annur, 22, mechanic on board the *Aishakamila*, to 2 years' imprisonment, a fine of 50 million rupiah (3,300 US\$) and 5,000 rupiah (0.33 US\$) in court costs for smuggling on Saturday February 25, 2023 into the port of Makassar (South Sulawesi province) on board the roll-on roll-off ship 2 knobbed hornbills (*Aceros cassidix*, Appendix II) and 83 ornate lorikeets (*Trichoglossus ornatus*, Appendix II), hiding them on deck n°1 and intending to deliver them to a recipient only known by his cell phone number, in the port of Tanjung Priok, special territory of the capital Jakarta after 3 days by sea. Annur had been paid 1.3 million rupiah (87 US\$) to deliver the birds on behalf of a certain Leo Sastra. The smuggling attempt was reported to the police a few hours before the *Aishakamila* arrived in Jakarta. The ship was searched from top to bottom. When the birds were discovered on deck n°1 in a compartment for neon lights, cables, sockets and other electrical equipment, 8 of the ornate lorikeets were dead. See "On the Trail" n°39 p.100.¹⁰⁰

August 5, 2023

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

Seizure of 10 hornbill helmets (family Bucerotidae). The total value is estimated at 500 million rupiah, or 3,300 US\$ per helmet. There are 13 species of hornbill in Indonesia. Hornbill helmet "ivory" is sold at exorbitant prices in China, between 6,000 and 10,000 US\$/kg (see in particular "On the Trail" n°9 p.100, ref.56, and n°20 p.102, ref.84). The NGO Rangkong Indonesia recorded 51 offers on the Internet to sell hornbills between January 2017 and August 2021.¹⁰¹

August 31, 2023

Surabaya, East Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia



Sentencing of Ahmad Munif Bin Kholilullah, in charge of cabin maintenance in the economy class aboard the *Dobonsolo*, to 5 months' imprisonment and a fine of 5 million rupiah (330 US\$) for having on July 9, 2022, on departure from Jayapura, Papua province, hid in the fire-fighting room, with the complicity of the chief engineer, 36 lesser birds-of-paradise (*Paradisaea minor*, Appendix II) with the intention of delivering them on July 16 to Surabaya, Java Island, after stopovers in Serui, Sorong, Ambon, Bau Bau and Makassar. Once or twice a day, he would feed the small stowaways with bananas or papayas and water them. *Dobonsolo*, see "On the Trail" n°37 p.158 (ref.41) and n°40 p.119 (ref.13).¹⁰²

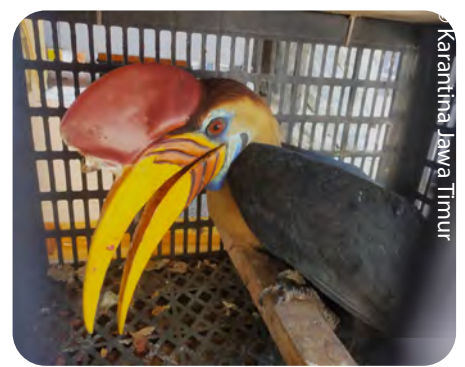
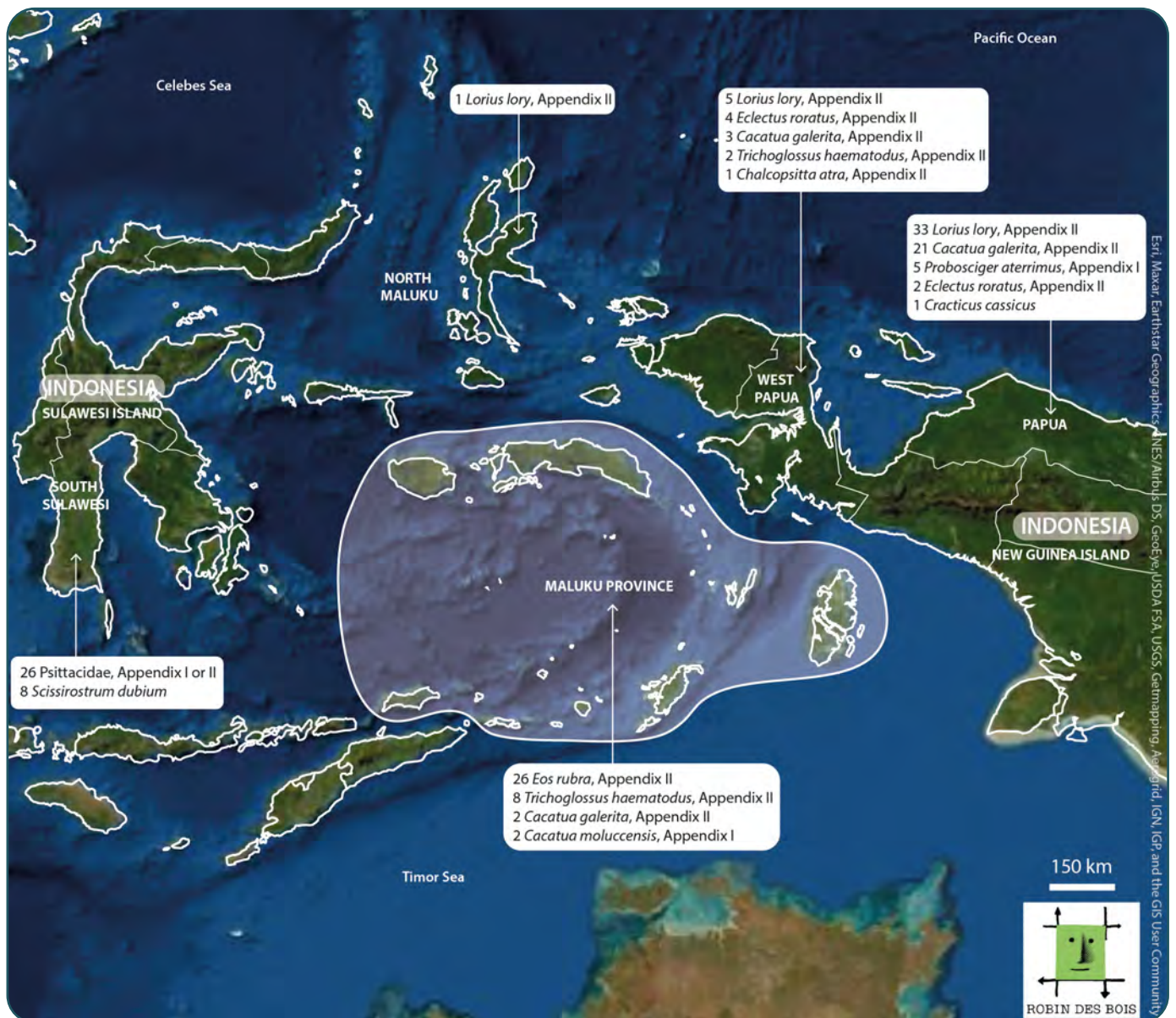
Seizure of 17,932 birds between June 1 and August 31, 2023 in Indonesia. Map details

- 2,955 prinias (genus *Prinia*)
- 2,136 bar-winged prinias (*Prinia familiaris*)
- 1,724 munias (genus *Lonchura*)
- 769 yellow-vented bulbuls (*Pycnonotus goiavier*)
- 749 white-eyes (family Zosteropidae)
- 485 Javan mynas (*Acridotheres javanicus*)
- 401 grosbeak starlings (*Scissirostrum dubium*)
- 385 long-tailed sibilas (*Heterophasia picaoides*)
- 335 Sangkar white-eyes (*Zosterops melanurus*)
- 231 black-naped orioles (*Oriolus chinensis*)
- 175 purple-throated sunbirds (*Leptocoma sperata*)
- 150 weavers (family Ploceidae)
- 145 white-eyes (genus *Zosterops*)
- 141 long-tailed shrikes (*Lanius schach*)
- 135 black-capped bulbuls (*Pycnonotus melanicterus*)
- 96 woodpeckers (genus *Picus*)
- 84 fulvous-chested jungle flycatchers (*Cyornis olivaceus*)
- 84 olive-backed tailorbirds (*Orthotomus sepium*)
- 71 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II)
- 66 blue-crowned hanging parrot (*Loriculus galgulus*, Appendix II)
- 60 lemon-bellied white-eyes (*Zosterops chloris*)
- 55 barred doves (*Geopelia maugeus*)
- 50 drongos (genus *Dicrurus*)
- 47 salmon-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua moluccensis*, Appendix I)
- 41 chestnut-capped laughingthrushes (*Garrulax mitratus*)
- 40 black-capped lorries (*Lorius lory*, Appendix II)
- 30 blue flycatchers (genus *Cyornis*)
- 30 streaked bulbuls (*Ixos malaccensis*)
- 27 red lorries (*Eos rubra*, Appendix II)
- 26 sulphur-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua galerita*, A. II)
- 20 zebra finches (*Taeniopygia guttata*)
- 13 red-and-blue lorries (*Eos histrio*, Appendix I)
- 12 eagles (Accipitridae, Appendix I or II)
- 11 coconut lorikeets (*Trichoglossus haematodus*, A. II)
- 10 Asian glossy starlings (*Aplonis panayensis*)
- 10 greater green leafbirds (*Chloropsis sonnerati*)
- 10 metallic pigeons (*Columba vitiensis*)
- 10 crows (genus *Corvus*)
- 10 Asian koel (*Eudynamis scolopaceus*)
- 10 blue nuthatches (*Sitta azurea*)
- 10 green-pigeons (genus *Treron*)
- 10 ornate lorikeets (*Trichoglossus ornatus*, Appendix II)
- 9 brown-cheeked bulbuls (*Alophoixus bres*)
- 9 orange-headed thrushes (*Geokichla citrina*)
- 8 yellow-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua sulphurea*, A. I)
- 8 laughingthrushes (genus *Garrulax*)
- 7 eclectus parrots (*Eclectus roratus*, Appendix II)
- 6 Sulawesi hawk-eagles (*Spizaetus lanceolatus*)
- 5 olive-backed sunbirds (*Cinnyris jugularis*)
- 5 palm cockatoos (*Probosciger aterrimus*, Appendix I)
- 4 Tanimbar corellas (*Cacatua goffiniana*, Appendix I)
- 4 lesser bird-of-paradises (*Paradisaea minor*, A. II)
- 4 Javan white-eyes (*Zosterops flavus*)
- 3 crimson sunbirds (*Aethopyga siparaja*)
- 3 black lorries (*Chalcopsitta atra*, Appendix II)
- 2 knobbed hornbills (*Aceros cassidix*, Appendix II)
- 2 short-tailed starlings (*Aplonis minor*)
- 2 scarlet minivets (*Pericrocotus flammeus*)
- 1 hooded butcherbird (*Cracticus cassicus*)
- 1 changeable hawk-eagle (*Spizaetus cirrhatus*)
- 5,990 unidentified birds

Indonesia

Seizure of 17,932 birds between June 1 and August 31, 2023





Yellow-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua sulphurea*, Appendix I) and knobbed hornbills (*Aceros cassidix*, Appendix II)
 August 3, 2023
 Tanjung Perak Seaport, Surabaya, East Java Province, Java Island

VIET NAM

End of July 2023

Vu Quang National Park, Ha Tinh Province, Viet Nam

Handing over by a resident of the town of Nam Binh to the Ha Tinh forest rangers of a crested serpent eagle (*Spilornis cheela*, Appendix II), which she had just bought to remove it from trafficking. The bird of prey will be transferred to Vu Quang National Park for full release.¹⁰³

Beginning of August 2023

Da Lat, Lam Dong Province, Viet Nam

A collared scops owl (*Ottis lettia*, synonymous with *Otus bakkamoena*, Appendix II) caged in a store was confiscated and set free.¹⁰⁴

SOUTHERN ASIA

AFGHANISTAN

June 2023

Balkh Province, Afghanistan

Wardens in the desert 300 km from Kabul have released and handed over to Allah's care 2 falcons (Falconiformes, Appendix I or II), which a trafficker has agreed to part with.¹⁰⁵

August 2023

Maymana, Faryab Province, Afghanistan

In accordance with the 114th directive of the Supreme Authority of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, a man who was selling a falcon (*Falco* spp. Appendix I or II) in the city was arrested. He promised to give up his poaching activities. The falcon was released.¹⁰⁶

INDIA

June 1st, 2023

Bejpukur, South 24 Parganas District, State of West Bengal, India

Seizure at Salauddin Mir's home of 933 dried white-breasted kingfishers (*Halcyon smyrnensis*), 57 dried grey junglefowls and 868 feathers (*Gallus sonneratii*, Appendix II) and 180 feathers of Indian peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan). The birds were caught in plains and forests. The feathers were offered for sale via the Internet and shipped on order to Russia, Japan, Bulgaria, the United States of America and Chile, in particular for use as flies for fishing whitewater fish or as decoration on clothing, hats and other accessories. The kingfishers had not yet been plucked. The investigation is ongoing to determine whether Mir was working alone or in conspiracy.¹⁰⁷



White-breasted kingfisher (*Halcyon smyrnensis*)

August 21, 2023

Bengaluru, Bengaluru Urban District, State of Karnataka, India



Since the beginning of the weekend, the residential area of Girinagar has been a good place to sell ornamental birds. Sunil Kumar was displaying 95 purplish-red birds of an unknown species in cages. On Monday evening, the police intervened and quickly realised that these mysterious birds were hiding an unprecedented ploy. They were in fact munias (family Estrildidae), whose sale on the pet bird market is banned under the Wildlife Protection Act, and which the trafficker had soaked in chemical textile dyes. Munias are orange, brown, grey-black. They were captured in Tamil Nadu and transferred by train, coach or other vehicles to Karnataka. Cover-up of birds with dyes, see "On the Trail" n°14 p.105 (ref.13), n°22 p.35, n°28 p.46 (ref.28), n°30 p.109 (ref.22) and n°38 p.135 (ref.52).¹⁰⁸

India

Poaching and seizures of birds (2,271) and feathers (1,068) between March 1 and May 31, 2023



Poaching and seizures of birds (2,271) and feathers (1,068) between March 1 and May 31, 2023 in India
Map details

933 white-breasted kingfishers (*Halcyon smyrnensis*)
 706 rose-ringed parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*)
 165 munias (family Estrildidae)
 181 parakeets (genus *Psittacula*)
 99 plum-headed parakeets (*Psittacula cyanocephala*, Appendix II)
 60 cockatiels (*Nymphicus hollandicus*)
 57 grey junglefowls (*Gallus sonneratii*, Appendix II) and 868 feathers
 26 sun conures (*Aratinga solstitialis*, Appendix II)
 19 hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II)

6 palm cockatoos (*Probosciger aterrimus*, Appendix I)
 6 Alexandrine parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II)
 4 Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) and 200 feathers
 4 eagles (Accipitridae, Appendix I or II)
 2 light-vented bulbuls (*Pycnonotus sinensis*)
 2 yellow-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua sulphurea*, Appendix I)
 1 collared kingfisher (*Todiramphus chloris*)



2 yellow-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua sulphurea*, Appendix I). July 25, 2023. Coimbatore, Coimbatore District, State of Tamil Nadu



82 plum-headed parakeets (*Psittacula cyanocephala*, Appendix II). July 31, 2023. Madhupur, Deoghar District, State of Jharkhand



86 birds including sun conures (*Aratinga solstitialis*, Appendix II) and cockatiels (*Nymphicus hollandicus*). August 8, 2023. Madhupur Border Outpost, Nadia District, State of West Bengal

IRAN

July 5, 2023

Fardis, Alborz Province, Iran

Seizure of 3 birds of prey (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II), including a saker falcon (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II) and a kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II or *Falco naumanni*, Appendix II) from a poacher whose file was referred to the judicial authorities. The birds were released.¹⁰⁹

July 2023

Shalamcheh Border Post, Khuzestan Province, Iran. Border with Iraq.

Seizure by border guards and release of 150 white-eared bulbuls (*Pycnonotus leucotis*), ornamental birds that a smuggler was attempting to smuggle into Iraq. The total value of the seizure is estimated at 450 million rials or 10,700 US\$ and 70 US\$/bird.¹¹⁰



Pycnonotus leucotis

July 2023

Nishapur, Khorassan-e Razavi Province, Iran

Arrest of 2 poachers who had just removed 2 levant sparrowhawk chicks (*Accipiter brevipes*, Appendix II) from their nest. Each fined 30 million tomans (715 US\$).¹¹¹



July 2023

Nishapur, Khorassan-e Razavi Province, Iran

The police of the city (276,000 inhabitants) under the command of Colonel Hossein Ahmadi seized 2 falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II) from a private home.¹¹²

July 2023

On the edge of Dena Protected Zone, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, Iran

Acting on confidential information, environmental protection officers seized 3 saker falcons (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II) in a village. They were in a cage awaiting sale. They were set free in the protected area. The trafficker was handed over to the judicial authorities.¹¹³

July 23, 2023

Chaman Bid, Province de Khorassan Septentrional, Iran

Two men on a motorcycle driving towards the Golestan forest fled from a roadside checkpoint, throwing a bag containing 3 falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II) into the ditch. Apparently in good health, they were handed over to the environmental authority of the Maneh and Samalqan prefectures. According to Colonel Mehdi Mehran Far, the arrest of the traffickers is a matter of days.¹¹⁴

Beginning of August 2023

Namin, Ardabil Province, Iran. Border with Azerbaijan.

Arrest by forest rangers of a "foreign" poacher who traps birds of prey. Seizure of a falcon (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II), 4 pigeons used as bait, capture gear and a motorbike.¹¹⁵

NEPAL

June 20, 2023

Kawasoti, Nawalpur District, Gandaki Province, Nepal



A golden jackal (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III in India) ate a poisoned carcass and 4 oriental white-backed vultures (*Gyps bengalensis*, Appendix II) ate the jackal's carcass. In February, 5 oriental white-backed vultures near a river, in the same area, had already been fatally poisoned. The word of DB Chaudhary, defender of vultures in the district, goes unheard. For the farmers, all the illegal, cruel and indiscriminate means to keep the wild beasts at bay remain valid.¹¹⁶

PAKISTAN

July 9, 2023

Islamabad Capital Territory, Pakistan

Seizure of birds by the IWMB (Islamabad Wildlife Management Board) at the Sunday market in sector H-9 of the federal capital: Alexandrine parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II), rose-ringed parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*) and black partridges (*Melanoperdix niger*). These partridges fetch a high price, between 50,000 and 1.5 million rupees (175 to 5,250 US\$). They are exploited in singing competitions in rural Sindh and Punjab. The competitions are known as "chakriyan" and "boliyan" depending on the region. Black partridges may be hunted on Sundays in 40 tehsils (sub-districts) of Punjab, but their sale is prohibited in the Federal Territory of Islamabad by a Wildlife (Protection, Preservation, Conservation and Management) Ordinance, 1979. Black partridge are also being sold on the Internet, and environmentalists are calling on the Ministry of Information Technology for vigilance. The IWMB has already seized markhor trophies (*Capra falconeri*, Appendix I) and leopard skins (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) from the same bazaar.¹¹⁷

WESTERN ASIA

ISRAEL

June 21, 2023

David Ben Gurion International Airport, Central District, Israel

Seizure of 28 rosellas, including eastern rosellas (*Platycercus eximius*, Appendix II), in the luggage of an Israeli coming from Belgium. The total value is estimated at 10,000 € or 10,940 US\$ and 390 US\$ per bird.

Rosellas are native to Australia and feed on seeds and fruit. They can compete with local species for food and tree cavities where they are nesting.¹¹⁸

August 28, 2023

David Ben Gourion International Airport, Central District, Israel

Seizure of 34 exotic birds, including blue-fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II) and white-bellied parrots (*Pionites leucogaster*, Appendix II) with a total estimated economic value of 70,000 € or 77,000 US\$, in the suitcase of an Israeli subject coming from Belgium.¹¹⁹

TURKIYE

Beginning of June 2023

Çobanbey Customs Gate, Kilis Province, Türkiye. Border with Syria

Seizure of 550 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) in the Türkiye -Syria direction. F.H., driver of the vehicle, is fined 720,252 lira (35,300 US\$).¹²⁰



NORTHERN EUROPE

DENMARK

Saturday August 5, 2023

Otterup, Funen Island, Southern Denmark Region, Denmark

A common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) crashes in a garden. A few seconds earlier, local residents heard gunshots. They were all the more shocked because hunting is banned in summer. The investigation was botched and quickly dismissed by the authorities. The Ministry of Ecology was virtually unreachable over the weekend. Poaching crackdowns take a break on Saturdays and Sundays when the poachers are out and about. The Danish Ornithological Society is calling for a 7-day-a-week alert number to be set up.¹²¹

UNITED KINGDOM

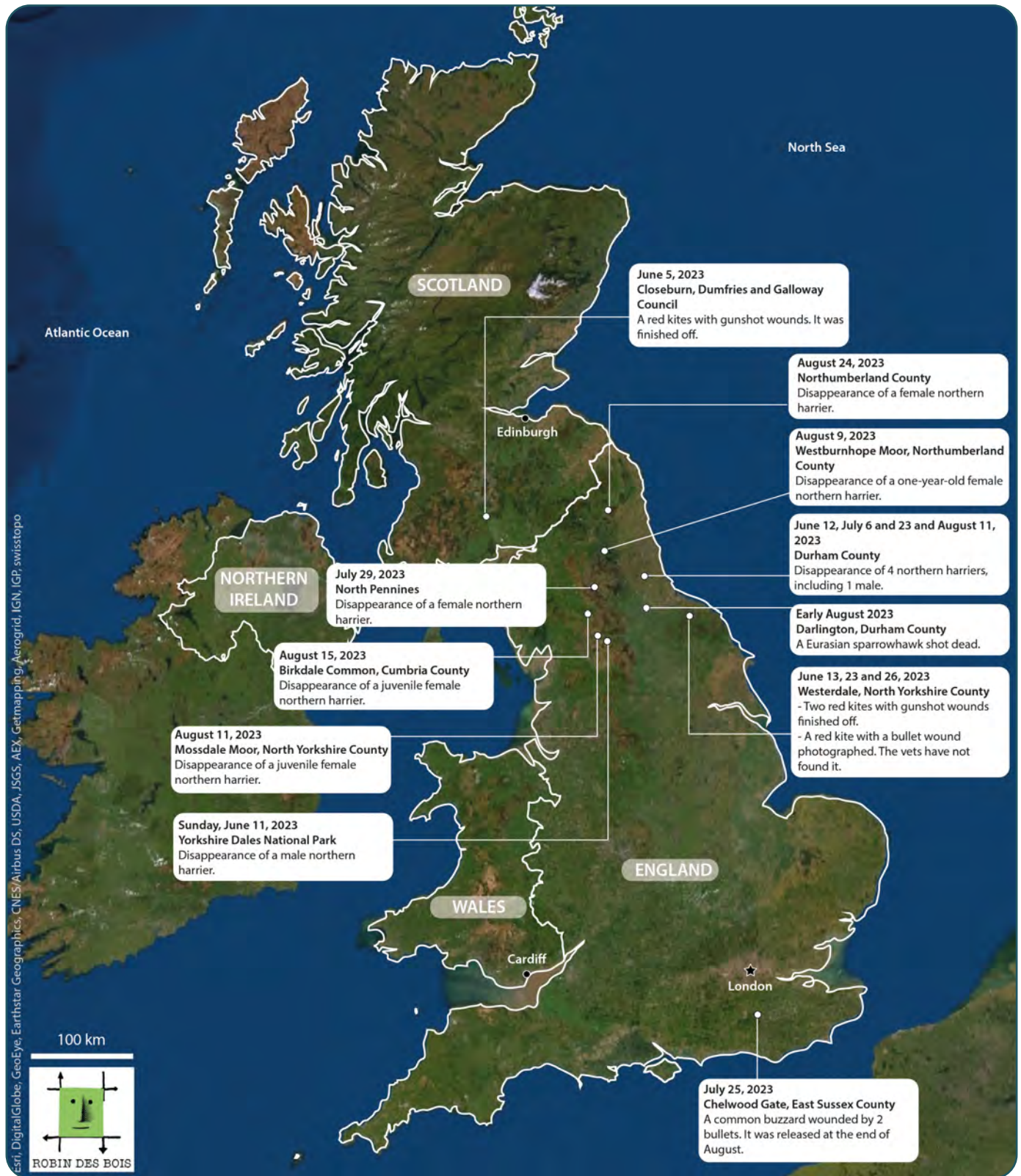
July 17, 2023

Crewe, Cheshire County, England, United Kingdom

Alan Mee must pay a fine and legal costs of 823 £ (1,040 US\$) and may never possess birds again after holding captive and mistreating 3 tawny owls (*Strix aluco*, Appendix II) in Newton-le-Willows in 2022. At least 2 of these owls had been caught in the wild (see "On the Trail" n°36 p.143).¹²²



United Kingdom Poaching of raptors (16) between June 1 and August 31, 2023



"Disappearance": bird with a GPS that stopped transmitting
 10 northern harriers (*Circus cyaneus*, Appendix II)
 4 red kites (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II)
 1 common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II)
 1 Eurasian sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*, Appendix II)

WESTERN EUROPE

GERMANY

Beginning of June 2023

Lingen, Lower Saxony Land, Germany

A farmer was fined 3,500 € (3,760 US\$) for capturing a female northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II) on his land in Lengerich, then hitting it with an iron bar before smashing it against the rear door of his vehicle (see "On the Trail" n°38 p.156, ref.135).¹²³



Beginning of June 2023

Kallmünz, Bavaria Land, Germany

Police officers noticed a dead Eurasian eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II) on the side of a road. They could have bought into the "road collision" excuse but were intrigued by the fact that the owl bore no signs of impact. A toxicological analysis by the laboratory of Munich's Ludwig-Maximilian University proved that the owl had died of bendiocarb poisoning.¹²⁴



June 20, 2023

Kahrstedt, Saxony-Anhalt Land, Germany

Following an inspection by the Salzwedel Veterinary and Environmental Office, many exotic animals were seized from a clandestine private zoo, including red-crowned cranes (*Grus japonensis*, Appendix I).¹²⁵

June 20, 2023

Hofgeismar, Hesse Land, Germany

Kassel police and administrative authorities recovered a kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II) listed for sale for 2,000 € (2,150 US\$) on the online platform Quoka.de. The 2-year-old bird of prey was captured in early June and released after a health check. It has not been able to feed its offspring with its partner. The traffic was reported to the authorities by CABS (Committee Against Bird Slaughter) activists.¹²⁶

Eng of June 2023

Salzwedel, Lower Saxony State, Germany

An 82-year-old game warden is fined 1,800 € (1,935 US\$) for poaching a female white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*, Appendix I) in February 2022. His hunting licence has been withdrawn. See "On the Trail" n°35 p.134 (ref.95).¹²⁷



Beginning of July 2023

Sinzing and Pettendorf, Bavaria Land, Germany

The list of poisoned birds of prey in Bavaria is growing. Experts from Munich's Ludwig-Maximilian University proved that a red kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II) found in late April and a peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) found in early July were poisoned with carbofuran.¹²⁸



Sunday, July 2, 2023

Claffheim, Bavaria Land, Germany

A red kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II) died of poisoning in the forest. A toxicological test is currently underway to confirm the vets' initial findings. In the same district, on April 7 in Irsingen and at the end of September 2022 in Leutershausen, 2 red kites were fatally poisoned with pentobarbital (see "On the Trail" n°36 p.145, ref. 97, and n°37 p.138, ref.97).¹²⁹



Beginning of August 2023

Papenburg, Lower Saxony Land, Germany

Sentenced during initial trial to a fine of 900 € (990 US\$) for setting up a cage near Rhede in May 2022 to trap birds of prey (Falconiformes or Strigiformes, Appendix I or II). See "On the Trail" n°36 p.146, réf.103.¹³⁰



August 4, 2023

Essen, North Rhine-Westphalia Land, Germany

Under a search warrant, the police and veterinary services raided a house in Frintroper Straße. They found dogs, chickens, ducks, geese, quail and rabbits on the upper floors and in the garden, and 28 exotic birds in the cellar, including blue-and-yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) and red-and-green macaws (*Ara chloropterus*, Appendix II).¹³¹

**Mid-August 2023
Biberach District, Baden-Württemberg
Land, Germany**



A member of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Wanderfalkenschutz (Working Group for the Protection of the Peregrine Falcon) spotted a trap cage baited with a live hen on a farmer's land. The CABS was alerted and filed a complaint. When questioned by the police, the man admitted that he was attempting to capture birds of prey.¹³²

**August 2023
Coburg Urban District, Bavaria Land,
Germany**



The northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II) had been found dead on the Bausenberg hill. The results of the necropsy have just been published. It was poisoned with bendiocarb. In 2021, in the same area, 2 white storks (*Ciconia ciconia*) were poisoned with promecarb. This summer, another stork is not accounted for at the end of the breeding season. The LBV (Landesbund für Vogel- und Naturschutz in Bayern) and the GLUS foundation (Gregor Louisoder Umweltstiftung) fear another poisoning. It may be rotting in the mountains, killing scavenging animals in the process.¹³³

**Saturday August 26,
2023
Kalbensteinberg, Ba-
varia Land, Germany**

A red kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II) and a domestic cat were poisoned by the corpse of a small bird impregnated with carbofuran. The LBV has lodged a complaint. "This is not an isolated case. From all Bavaria, we do not stop receiving alarms."¹³⁴



© Heidi Seifis

AUSTRIA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

**June 28, 2023
Wels, Upper Austria State, Austria**

The father was fined 1,200 € (1,290 US\$), likewise for one of his sons, and the other son 8,000 € (8,600 US\$). Withdrawal of hunting licences for all 3. They had shot a long-eared owl (*Asio otus*, Appendix II) and its 4 chicks at close range on Sunday April 23. See "On the Trail" n°40 p.152 (ref.128).¹³⁵



**June 29, 2023
Salzburg, Salzburg State, Austria**



Fine of 200 € (215 US\$) for a Syrian who sold on the Internet between August 2021 and October 2022 a hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I), a grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I), 3 kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II), a Eurasian sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*, Appendix II), 2 little owls (*Athene noctua*, Appendix II), 2 flamingos (Phoenicopteridae, Appendix II), a northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II), a cattle egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) and a little egret (*Egretta garzetta*). The 40-year-old man, father of 7, pleaded guilty. He said he believed that the ban on selling wild animals only applied to live animals. Because of his health problems and difficulties adapting to the German community, he benefited from the leniency of the court.¹³⁶

**June 30, and August 18, 2023
Korneuburg, Lower Austria State, and
Klagenfurt am Wörthersee, Carinthia
State, Austria**



- A 61-year-old man from Zwerndorf, employed as a seasonal worker, who had already served 3.5 years in prison in Portugal for ordinary offences, was sentenced to one year in prison, 9 months of which were suspended, for bringing Bali mynas (*Leucopsar rothschildi*) from the island of Bali in Indonesia into Austria. The species is endangered and listed in Appendix I of CITES.

- The director of the Turnersee ornithological park in Carinthia was given a 4-month suspended prison sentence after agreeing to take in secretly the 8 Bali mynas in 2017 as a, so he says, favour to their owner, who could no longer afford to look after them. The investigation has not been able to clarify whether the agreement between the 2 men was accompanied by a financial transaction.

- Once again for Zupanc, the bird keeper at his Turnersee bird park. This time, he was summoned by the Klagenfurt court for taking in, without fanfare, the 26 grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I), 3 New Zealand parakeets (*Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae*, Appendix I) and 2 sulphur-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua galerita*, Appendix II) that the heirs of billionaire Heidi Goëss-Horten wanted to get rid of. Without a buyer, they threatened to release them into the wild or euthanise them. "I didn't realise that a donation had to be validated by CITES; I wanted the best for the birds." The birds were seized and Zupanc was given a further 3-month suspended prison sentence, without the suspended sentence granted a month and a half earlier by the court in Korneubourg being revoked. Zupanc's record is therefore marred by a 3-month suspended prison sentence and another 4-month suspended sentence. When's the next one?¹³⁷

Sunday August 6, 2023

Schärding District, Upper Austria State, Austria

More poaching for a weekend's pleasure! 2 black storks (*Ciconia nigra*, Appendix II) found dead in a bush on the banks of the Danube. According to the preliminary investigation, they have been killed by lead shot. The poaching site is believed to be different from the site where the birds were found. It is thought that the bodies were moved by the poacher(s) and dumped to cover their tracks. The NGO Naturschutz Oberösterreich Schärding has promised a reward of 4,000 € (4,400 US\$) to anyone who can identify the person or persons responsible. There are thought to be 2 pairs of black storks in the district. The 2 victims are males.¹³⁸

BELGIUM

Beginning of June 2023

Brussels, Brussels-Capital Region, Belgium



As already mentioned in "On the Trail", birdlime is on the rise in Europe and makes sticky songbirds as beautiful as flowers. Discovery near a canal on a green wasteland forgotten by concrete of cereal sticks, a basin of water and bits of wood coated with the capturing mixture, an installation designed to attract European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*) and black redstarts (*Phoenicurus ochruros*). The responsables are unknown.¹³⁹

Beginning of August 2023

Brussels, Brussels-Capital Region, Belgium

Grabby hands on white swans. In 2022, only 34 mute swans (*Cygnus olor*) were recorded by Brussels Environment. In 5 years, the swan population has become endangered. Is the enigma easy to see through? People living near the ponds report that the swans are captured to be eaten or to be bred clandestinely and their eggs traded.¹⁴⁰

FRANCE

Sunday, June 18, 2023

Anet, Department of Eure, France



A showman kept a female European goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) locked inside a cage. The gendarmerie and OFB seized the cage and released the bird.¹⁴¹

June 20 and October 26, 2023

Labastide-Saint-Pierre and Montauban, Department of Tarn-et-Garonne, France



D. B., living in Labastide-Saint-Pierre, was denounced by a neighbour. He was catching European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), Eurasian blackcaps (*Sylvia atricapilla*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and Eurasian blue (*Cyanistes caeruleus*) and great tits (*Parus major*). Acting on a search warrant, the OFB seized 7 live birds and 23 dead birds from his home, as well as lime twigs, nets and 11 cages. No evidence of clandestine trade was found during the investigation. The man claims to be passionate about birdsong. At the end of a procedure deemed expeditious by One Voice, LPO (Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux, Bird Protection League), ASPAS (Association pour la Protection des Animaux Sauvages, Association for the Protection of Wild Animals) and FNE (France Nature Environnement), the cruel naturalist music lover was only fined 1,000 € (1,075 US\$).¹⁴²

End of June 2023

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



Baited with seeds and a domestic canary (*Serinus canaria*) in a cage, European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) were encouraged to become entangled in a mist net by 2 tenants of the allotment gardens in the Grand-Rue du Petit-Courgain. OFB agents caught them in the act on August 25, 2020. They wanted, they said, to capture a male goldfinch and mate it with the female canary to obtain hybrids (mules). The 2 trappers claimed to have failed in their attempt and did not convince the courts. They received a 3-month suspended prison sentence, a suspended fine of 3,000 € (3,225 US\$) and were ordered to pay the LPO 750 € (805 US\$) in damages and legal costs.¹⁴³

**Beginning of July 2023
Onjon, Department of Aube,
France**



The farmer suspected of poisoning 2 common buzzards (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) in March 2021 by spraying a fresh wild rabbit carcass with carbofuran was acquitted. The defendant and his lawyer sowed doubt by bringing up old family disputes and suggesting that the defendant's father, who died a month after poisoning the 2 birds of prey, was responsible for the crime.¹⁴⁴

**Beginning of July 2023
Department of Ille-et-Vilaine, France**

The OFB seized 2 barn owls (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II) living in a wire-mesh IBC (Intermediate Bulk Container) after having been "collected", as the OFB so euphemistically stated. The director of the Languidic refuge in Morbihan was more direct, offering a clear diagnosis: "Almost non-existent pectoral muscles, soft bone syndrome, defective plumage, no tail and haematoma on the left-wing fingers for one of the two: a condition that reflects poor feeding and restraint in a very small space. We're thinking of pressing charges for mistreatment."

Since the start of the year, the PIAFS (Protection et Intervention pour les Animaux de la Faune Sauvage) care centre has taken in 700 wild animals from Morbihan, Finistère and Ille-et-Vilaine, three departments in Brittany. These animals include over 350 hedgehogs infected with staphylococcus aureus or victims of pesticides or collisions. Most are not surviving, but not all is bleak. Badgers, foxes, and mustelids have been released after undergoing treatment by volunteer caretakers.¹⁴⁵

**Night of Saturday, July 1—Sunday, July 2; Friday,
July 7; Sunday, July 23, and Monday, October
23, 2023**

**Lescar and Lons, Department of Pyrénées-
Atlantiques, France**

- Three grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I), 5 blue-fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II) and a sulphur-crested cockatoo (*Cacatua galerita*, Appendix II) were stolen during the night. - Police found 2 parrots in travellers' camp 5 days later. - Three weeks after the theft, the third parrot was caught flying around a house in Saint-Faust, 7 km from Lescar. It was tamed, gently captured and brought back to Exotic Park. - Three months later, an amazon is said to have returned to the park on its own. The other 4 amazons and the cockatoo are still missing. They are sometimes sold on the black market in France for around 1,500 € (1,640 US\$). Exotic Park previously had a pair of cockatoos stolen (and never found) overnight in June 2019.¹⁴⁶

**July 10, 2023
Mont-de-Marsan, Department of
Landes, France**



Romuald Balauze sentenced to a 3-month suspended prison sentence, fined 600 € (655 US\$) and ordered to pay 1,500 € (1,640 US\$) in damages to ASPAS for capturing and keeping Eurasian bullfinches (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*, Appendix III in Ukraine), common linnets (*Carduelis cannabina*, synonymous with *Linaria cannabina*, Appendix III in Ukraine), European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), Eurasian siskins (*Carduelis spinus*, synonymous with *Spinus spinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine), common blackbirds (*Turdus merula*, Appendix III in Ukraine), ortolan buntings (*Emberiza hortulana*), chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*), bramblings (*Fringilla montifringilla*) and European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*).¹⁴⁷

**July 11 and December 6, 2023
Valence, Department of Drôme, France**



On December 31, 2022, the Vautours en Baronnies association found a dead cinereous vulture (*Aegypius monachus*, Appendix II) on the Montagne d'Angèle in the Baronnies Regional Nature Park, as well as a dying bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*, Appendix II) nearby. Despite intensive care, it did not survive. A necropsy revealed that the vulture was hit by around 20 lead bullets. After a tenacious investigation by the OFB, a sheep farmer from the village of Chaudebonne was identified as the suspect in the death of the 2 birds of prey. He admitted the facts, confusingly explaining that his flock was threatened by the 2 birds of prey. On December 6, 2023, he was given a 4-month suspended prison sentence and ordered to pay nearly 30,000 € (32,000 US\$) in moral damages to associations including the LPO. The court did not consider ecological damages. The 62-year-old farmer's firearm was confiscated, and he has been banned from hunting for 2 years.¹⁴⁸

**Between July 18 and 20, 2023
Fontenay-de-Bossery, Department of Aube,
France**

Foxes do not leave tyre tracks. The theft of the 8 Montagu's harrier chicks (*Circus pygargus*, Appendix II) that the combine harvester had taken care to avoid in the field can only be attributed to humans. Montagu's harriers are enemies of voles and friends of farmers. Montagu's Harriers in France, see "On the Trail" n°33 p.176 (ref.115), p.177 (ref.122) and p.178 (ref. 123), n°36 p.148 (ref.111), n°37 p.138 (ref.100) and p.139 (ref.105).¹⁴⁹



© João Esteves

Montagu's harrier (*Circus pygargus*)

End of August 2023

Saint-Quay-Portrieux, Department of Côtes-d'Armor, France

In the middle of the closure of the hunting season, when all the guns should be in their holsters, a common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*) was injured by lead shot. It was taken to the LPO (Bird Protection League) mobile bird care unit on Ile Grande and then to the CVFSE (Wildlife and Ecosystems Veterinary Centre) in Nantes. Prognosis guarded.¹⁵⁰

REPEATED OFFENCE

August 30, 2023

Nîmes, Department of Gard, France

Mr. "G." is accused of having poached European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) in January 2018 in a public garden in Nîmes with an accomplice, using seeds, birdlime and an electronic acoustic lure. He claims to have sold them for 15 € (16.5 US\$), prompting incredulity on the part of specialists attending the trial and the prosecutor himself. Captured goldfinches fetch at least 100 € on the black market, and can fetch as much as 1,000 € (1,100 US\$) if the bird shows great singing potential and is likely to do well in singing competitions. G. was fined 1,000 €, half of which was suspended, and returned to prison to serve 2 years for other delinquent acts.¹⁵¹



THE NETHERLANDS

August 11, 2023

Boekel, Province of North Brabant, The Netherlands

Several weapons, flashlights, a stuffed common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) and "soft" drugs have been seized by police from a man suspected of poaching in the woods. He defended himself by saying that the ex-hawk came from an inheritance and that he goes into the woods at night to go through them with a metal detector and collect scraps.¹⁵²

SOUTHERN EUROPE

CROATIA

Beginning of July 2023

Medulin and Fažana, Istria County, Croatia

Dubrovnik, Zadar, Split, Rijeka, Pula, Fažana, Medulin, Rovinj, Poreč and Umag, all street photographers, were on the move in tourist towns in summer 2022. For summer 2023, Fažana and Medulin have returned. Andrea Deklić of the NGO Nature Histrice (Nature Istria) denounces the harassment and exploitation of barn owls (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II) and deplores the fact that city police refuse to combat the growing trend of animal paparazzi. At best, foreigners who show off and mistreat birds of prey and parrots (Psittaciformes, Appendix I or II except for 4 species) or green monkeys (*Chlorocebus sabaues*, Appendix II) receive an administrative fine to be paid later on. Their animals are not confiscated. A highly organised group and trafficking operation is at work in the Balkans, profiting greatly from stupid tourists. A photo sells for between 15-30 € (16-33 US\$). The majority of hucksters are Ukrainians, and the practice, as seen in "On the Trail", is also well established in Russia.¹⁵³

July 11, 2023

Beli Manastir, Osijek-Baranja County, Croatia. Border with Hungary and Serbia.

A 51-year-old Polish national was carrying several small winged stowaways in cages in his car. The birds were taken to Osijek Zoo, while the man is charged with trading in protected species and torturing animals.¹⁵⁴

SPAIN

End of June 2023

Utxesa Natural Reserve, Province of Lleida, Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain



Indictment of 2 individuals who, using 2 mist nets and electronic callers, captured 3 bearded reedlings (*Panurus biarmicus*) in the nature reserve. To set up their "kasumi-ami", they had cleared 40m² of the nature reserve. In Catalonia, the species is on the brink of extinction, and the only remaining colony is actually in the Utxesa Nature Reserve (240 hectares), 180 km west of Barcelona.¹⁵⁵

June 28, 2023

Sant Antoni de Vilamajor, Province of Barcelona, Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain



Officials seized 20 songbirds including European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*), 10 nets, 2 air rifles and 17 crossbows and arrested the poacher.¹⁵⁶

Beginning of July 2023

Province of Valencia, Valencian Community, Spain

Authorities recovered 2 Eurasian eagle owls (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II) from 2 Spanish men who listed them for sale on the Internet. The Guardia Civil acted within the framework of the TIFIES plan (Spanish action plan against illegal trafficking and international poaching of wildlife species).¹⁵⁷

July 22, 2023

Barcelona, Province of Barcelona, Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain

A man and a woman were caught selling 23 lovebirds (*Agapornis* spp., Appendix II except *Agapornis roseicollis*), 2 green-cheeked conures (*Pyrrhura molinae*, Appendix II) and 1 "kakariki" parakeet (*Cyanoramphus* spp., Appendix I or II) in a shopping centre parking lot. The lovebirds come from southern Africa, the green-cheeked conures from South America and the kakariki parakeets from New Zealand. The 2 sellers run a bird farm in Murcia, but they are not authorized to sell exotic birds, nor are they listed in the CITES Appendices. They have also sold birds online and personally delivered them to Barcelona, Tarragona and Valencia. Criminal proceedings have initiated for the illegal operation of a breeding farm, mistreatment, illegal transport and street sale of animals. Seprona (Servicio de Protección de la Naturaleza) agents entrusted the birds to a specialised shelter.¹⁵⁸

Beginning of August 2023

Caravaca de la Cruz, Autonomous Community of the Region of Murcia, Spain



Two fruit trees bore cross-shaped sticks. They were coated in birdlime. In his garden, the man engages in catching songbirds and selling them. The pots of birdlime, the electronic lure and 2 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) in a cage were seized by Seprona, the environmental branch of the Guardia Civil.¹⁵⁹

Beginning of August 2023

Salteras, Province of Seville, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain



In a vehicle fleeing a roadside check, the Guardia Civil found dead and stuffed into a bag 35 European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*), 12 serins (*Serinus serinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 5 common linnets (*Carduelis cannabina*, synonymous with *Linaria cannabina*, Appendix III in Ukraine), one European goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 8 warblers (genus *Sylvia*), 4 house sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) and 2 yellow wagtails (*Motacilla flava*), 4 live linnets and 2 live goldfinches used as decoys, a mist net 24 metres long and 2 metres wide, and the ropes and masts needed to set it up.¹⁶⁰

August 13, 2023

Onda, Province of Castellón, Valencian Community, Spain

On the edge of the forest, two men had deployed a very fine-mesh mist net known as an invisible net, in which birds, despite their keen eyesight, become entangled in full flight, and a flap net or "enfilat". Controlled remotely, it folds over the prey by pulling on 2 ropes. The Guardia Civil tracked down the 2 accomplices in their cabin. Eight encaged birds, including a European goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and a 9th tied to a stick stuck in the ground, were used as decoys.¹⁶¹

Mid-August 2023

Baena, Province of Cordoba, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain



Seizure by the Seprona of mist nets, 6 common linnets (*Carduelis cannabina*, synonymous with *Linaria cannabina*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 3 European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*) and one European turtle dove (*Streptopelia turtur*) that were all released, and of 3 serins (*Serinus serinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 2 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), one common blackbird (*Turdus merula*, Appendix III in Ukraine), one European greenfinch and 2 house sparrows (*Passer domesticus*), all dead. One arrest.¹⁶²

GREECE

July 4 and 6, 2023

Giannitsa, Region of Central Macedonia, Greece

Anna Gergou and other bird lovers in the town of Giannitsa (population 30,000) are appealing for help. In the span of a year, a maniac (or several) has killed 20 small birds of prey with an air pistol, including a lesser kestrel (*Falco naumanni*, Appendix II). Giannitsa is at risk of being overrun by small rodents.¹⁶³

July 28, 2023

Regional Unit of Boeotia, Region of Central Greece, Greece

A team of game wardens from the 4th Central Greek Hunting Federation arrested 2 poachers in possession of 80 songbirds, including European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine). Electronic bird callers and nets were also seized.¹⁶⁴

ITALY

Sunday August 6, 2023

Artena, Metropolitan City of Rome Capital, Region of Lazio, Italy

The Velletri public prosecutor's office has ordered the destruction of an "altana", a fifteen-metre-high hunting stand on a wooded hill used by poachers to shoot falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II), eagles (*Aquila* spp., Appendix I or II), buzzards (*Buteo* spp., Appendix II) and other rare species sought after by lovers of stuffed birds after treatment by taxidermists who are not always forthright. Altanas' hunting is open in the Lazio region.¹⁶⁵

Poaching and seizures of birds (995) between June 1 and August 31, 2023 in Italy. Map details

309 fieldfares (*Turdus pilaris*)
280 song thrushes (*Turdus philomelos*, Appendix III in Ukraine)
89 thrushes (family Turdidae)
83 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine)
42 European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*)
40 Atlantic canaries (*Serinus canaria*)
40 serins (*Serinus serinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine)
32 garden warblers (*Sylvia borin*, Appendix III in Ukraine)
12 European rollers (*Coracias garrulus*)
11 European robins (*Erithacus rubecula*, Appendix III in Ukraine)
8 common redstarts (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*)
8 Eurasian blackcaps (*Sylvia atricapilla*, Appendix III in Ukraine)
7 griffon vultures (*Gyps fulvus*, Appendix II)
6 red-billed leiothrixes (*Leiothrix lutea*, Appendix II)
4 kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II)
3 red kites (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II)
2 grey-crowned cranes (*Balearica regulorum*, Appendix II)
1 American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*, Appendix II)
1 Eurasian hobby (*Falco subbuteo*, Appendix II)
1 barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II)
16 unidentified birds



3 kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II). End of June, 2023. San Giuseppe Vesuviano, Metropolitan City of Naples, Region of Campania

Italy

Poaching and seizures of birds (995) between June 1 and August 31, 2023



One barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II). Beginning of August, 2023. Rome, Metropolitan City of Rome Capital, Region of Lazio

MALTA

Beginning of June 2023

Valletta, South Eastern Region, Malta

Four poachers fined between 1,200 € and 2,500 € (1,290 US\$ and 2,685 US\$). They had been caught trapping passerines in autumn 2022 (see "On the Trail" n°38 p.164, ref.181).¹⁶⁶

Sunday June 11, 2023

Buskett Gardens, Southern Region, Malta

Rescue of an Eleonora's falcon (*Falco eleonora*, Appendix II) with the left wing fractured by a rifle bullet.¹⁶⁷

July 4, 2023

Valletta, South Eastern Region, Malta

Six poachers fined between 1,200 € and 2,800 € (1,310 US\$ and 3,060 US\$). They had been arrested in March 2023 in the act of poaching passerines (family Fringillidae) with nets (see "On the Trail" n°40 p.158, ref.149). Several dozen birds were seized.¹⁶⁸



August 31, 2023

Xwejni, Gozo Region, Malta

Early this afternoon, a greater flamingo (*Phoenicopterus roseus*, Appendix II) landed on a rock, exhausted by the storm during its migratory flight. In front of the tourists, a guy shot it, grabbed the body [and feathers, editor's note] and rushed off in a car that sped off. "Gozo has become a mecca of illegalities," says Mark Sultana, director of BirdLife Malta.¹⁶⁹

MONTENEGRO

Mid-June 2023

Debeli Brijeg Border Post, Municipality of Herceg-Novi, Montenegro.

After a 4-day drive from the UK, the 4 peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) were finally detected by Montenegrin customs officials as they entered the country. They are now being fed and cared for. Their unfortunate companion, a gyr falcon (*Falco rusticolus*, Appendix I), did not survive the transport conditions. No information has been released on the number or identity of the traffickers and about their final destination.¹⁷⁰



SLOVENIA

End of June 2023

Koper, Coastal-Karst Region, Slovenia

Klavdio Kac, former director of the Glem tourist office, is once again in trouble with the law and with DOPPS (Društva za opazovanje in proučevanje ptic Slovenije, Society for the Observation and Study of Birds in Slovenia). For the past 10 years or so, he has had a reputation for poaching small birds. They are allegedly sold to Italian clients for cooking. Eurasian siskins (*Carduelis spinus*, synonymous with *Spinus spinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine), European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), sparrows (genus *Passer*) and cirl buntings (*Emberiza cirlus*) are victims of his cross-border traffic. In autumn 2020, 5 live goldfinches were again seized from Kac. In court in Koper, he describes himself as a victim of slander. The Italians who come to his house are family members, the birds at his house have fallen from nests in the cypress trees after a storm and have been taken in by him, and the others enjoy his company. It's not Kac who goes to the birds, it's the birds which go to Kac. His smooth talk didn't work. He was given a 5-month suspended prison sentence.¹⁷¹



EASTERN EUROPE

BULGARIA

Beginning of June 2023

Kamen, Sliven Province, Bulgaria

The body of an adult male imperial eagle (*Aquila heliaca*, Appendix II) was discovered by the side of a road. It has been dead for 2 or 3 days. The cause of death is thought to be a collision or simulated collision. Rusko Petrov, a veterinarian at the Stara Zagora bird rescue centre, run by the Green Balkans NGO, believes that poaching is the culprit. The Regional Directorate of Food Safety and the Oblast Police will clarify the cause of death. Officials are racing to ensure that its partner has not abandoned the chicks. If necessary, they will be removed from the nest and hand-fed. June marks the middle of nesting season.¹⁷²

July 21, 2023

Perushtitsa, Plovdiv Province, Bulgaria

Officials seized 6 songbirds, European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*) in a private home.¹⁷³

HUNGARY

June 22, 2023

Budapest, Hungary

A 68-year-old man was sentenced to a suspended prison term of one year and 7 months, together with 3 years' probation requiring him to take part in community activities on the protection of birds and nature, for having captured at least 22 songbirds in March 2019, April and November 2021, including Eurasian siskins (*Carduelis spinus*, synonymous with *Spinus spinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine), common linnets (*Carduelis cannabina*, synonymous with *Linaria cannabina*, Appendix III in Ukraine), Eurasian bullfinches (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*, Appendix III in Ukraine), European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*) and dunnocks (*Prunella modularis*) with 10-meter-long nets on his property in Csepel, with a view to breeding and cross-breeding them. By November 2021, the authorities had caught and released a Eurasian siskin, a common linnet, 2 Eurasian bullfinches, a European goldfinch, 2 chaffinches and a dunnock.¹⁷⁴



August 12, 2023

Újfehértó, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, Hungary

A poisoned white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*, Appendix I) is being treated in the veterinary clinic at Hortobágy National Bird Park. It is the 3rd since the beginning of the year to have been baited with eggs or meat impregnated with concentrated carbofuran. The organophosphate pesticide causes convulsions and total loss of mobility. The ecological value of a white-tailed eagle in Hungary is estimated at one million forints, or 2,870 US\$. The 2016 census counted around 800 specimens. According to veterinary surgeon János Déri, the only antidote for the eagle's fatal symptoms is an injection of atropine, provided it is administered within a few hours of the onset of the attack.¹⁷⁵



POLAND

Mid-June 2023

Hrebenne, Lublin Voivodeship, Poland. Border with Ukraine.

Seizure of a green-cheeked conure (*Pyrrhura molinae*, Appendix II) transported without any documents by a woman coming from Ukraine. The conure was taken to Zamość, where it was placed in quarantine.¹⁷⁶

August 3, 2023

Szczecin, West Pomeranian Voivodeship, Poland. Border with Germany.



A total of 18 merlin feathers (*Falco columbarius*, Appendix II) were found inside a parcel sent from Ukraine to a resident of Choszczno county. The value indicated on the declaration was 20 US\$.¹⁷⁷

Beginning of August 2023

Warsaw Chopin International Airport, Masovian Voivodeship, Poland

A live jandaya conure (*Aratinga jandaya*, Appendix II) found inside a parcel from the United States is seized and entrusted to the Zamość zoological park.¹⁷⁸

ROMANIA

Saturday June 3, 2023

Târgu Bujor, Galati County, Romania

Arrest of a 46-year-old man in the act of trapping songbirds. Release of 2 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and 2 common linnets (*Carduelis cannabina*, synonymous with *Linaria cannabina*, Appendix III in Ukraine).¹⁷⁹



RUSSIA

June 5, 2023

Ozinki Border Post, Saratov Oblast, Russia. Border with Kazakhstan.

Customs officers, alerted by chirps coming out of the toolbox in a MAN truck, uncovered 3 steppe eagles (*Aquila nipalensis*, Appendix II) inside. The driver was a 26-year-old Uzbek national from the Uzbek city of Uchqo'rg'on. He was headed to the Russian city of Shuya (3,700 km), and the interception took place 2,560 km into the journey. The eaglets were transferred to Khvalynsk National Park (255 km² in Saratov oblast) for release. They are being rehydrated and fed 4 times a day with fresh meat. "With the help of veterinarians, we'll get them out of this bad situation," says park spokeswoman Svetlana Pochtennova.¹⁸⁰



June 8, 2023

Moscow Federal City, Russia

Seizure of a tawny owl (*Strix aluco*, Appendix II) and arrest of the photographer who was exploiting it on Maroseyka Street. The owl was taken to the local wildlife rehabilitation centre. It had lost feathers, particularly on its tail.¹⁸¹

June 9, 2023

Moscow Federal City, Russia

Seizure of a tawny owl (*Strix aluco*, Appendix II) in the hands of a photographer on Pokrovsky Boulevard in the historic centre, following a report via the municipal Telegram channel "Save the owls".¹⁸²

June 19 and August 3, 2023

Kamchatka Krai, Russia

- A suspended sentence of 2 years and 6 months in prison, together with 3 years' probation, for capturing 6 gyrfalcons (*Falco rusticolus*, Appendix I) and storing them in a cellar pending their sale. The loss to the State is estimated at 13 million roubles, or 162,600 US\$ and 27,100 US\$ per gyrfalcon. The trials of his accomplices are to follow. Three falcons died in captivity. The other 3 were released after a period of observation and rehabilitation. See "On the Trail" n°39 p.121 (ref.142).

- Indeed, on August 3, 2023, the other 3 suspects were sentenced the same.¹⁸³



Mid-July 2023

Alushta, Republic of Crimea

A street photographer showed off 2 kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II) at a seaside resort and offered passers-by pictures for a fee. He was arrested and the 2 birds were returned to the city's zoo (population over 30,000).¹⁸⁴



July 19, 2023

Smolensk, Smolensk Oblast, Russia. Border with Belarus.

A grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I), a roseate cockatoo (*Eolophus roseicapilla*, Appendix II), budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*) and cockatiels (*Nymphicus hollandicus*) were recovered from 10 cages. A resident of Novokouznetsk, located 4,000 km from Smolensk, was driving the birds to "an acquaintance's house" in Minsk. The driver lacked any documentation proving the legality of the attempted export. The birds were transferred to the Smolensk Ecological and Biological Centre.¹⁸⁵

July 25, 2023

Sochi, Krasnodar Krai, Russia. Border with Georgia.

In Georgia, 2 northern goshawks (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II) were found in the spare wheel compartment of a car heading for Abkhazia. They were transferred to a zoo in Sochi, and the driver faces an administrative fine of 45,000 roubles (525 US\$).¹⁸⁶



Beginning of August 2023

Gelendzhik, Krasnodar Krai, Russia

Two young "self-employed" people were exploiting 2 white-tailed eagles (*Haliaeetus albicilla*, Appendix I) and a hawk (Accipitridae, Appendix I or II). They offered tourists pictures for a fee. The 3 birds were returned to the zoo for health and domesticity checks.¹⁸⁷

August 4, 2023

Alekseevka, Republic of Bashkortostan, Russia

Unknown gunmen shot 2 imperial eaglets (*Aquila heliaca*, Appendix II). One died, the other was between life and death. The latter is now out of the woods, thanks to veterinarians who yet had little experience of the treatment and convalescent behavior of these birds of prey, which reach a wingspan of 2 meters when fully grown. After sharing information between experts, it was decided not to extract the lead shrapnel from the lungs. The status quo is preferable to an operation whose outcome would not necessarily be favourable. About the etymology of imperial eagles, see "On the Trail" n°38 p.167 (ref.198).¹⁸⁸

Weekend of August 5-6, 2023

Chelyabinsk, Chelyabinsk Oblast, Russia

Four men were caught offering pedestrians a photo op with a tawny owl (*Strix aluco*, Appendix II) and a barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II) along the banks of the Miass, a sub-tributary of the Ob. Ministry of Ecology officers spotted the men, who were soon after taken to the police station.¹⁸⁹

SLOVAKIA

Beginning of June 2023

Rimavská Sobota, Banská Bystrica Region, Slovakia



Conviction of "a man" whose identity is carefully concealed to a suspended sentence of 3 years in prison and 3 years of probation, during which the convict, who claims to be unemployed, must find a job or prove that he is actively seeking employment. Between 2014 and 2018 at least, he ran an international trafficking operation involving exotic birds, all listed in Appendix I or II of CITES, which had arrived in or been bred in Slovakia under circumstances that have also been redacted. The birds were destined in particular for the Spanish market. Trafficking took place under the cover of several successive import-export companies, all of which have now been dissolved. Collaboration between the Slovak and Spanish services made it possible to establish a precise inventory. The birds were shipped from Košice Airport, the country's second largest airport, with direct flights to Dublin (Ireland), London and Liverpool (UK), Prague (Czech Republic), Warsaw (Poland), Vienna (Austria), Zadar (Croatia) and Zürich (Switzerland). The proceeds of trafficking were transferred to the bank accounts of the mother and wife of the convict, who is only known to be 49 years old and a resident of Rimavská Sobota (population 21,300). The birds were concentrated and fed in cages, and even bred in at least 3 buildings in the municipality of Rimavská Sobota. The trafficker's income is said to have been no more than 100,000 €, which, given the rarity of illegally traded species and their demand on the pet market, is at first sight a gross underestimate. However, given the volume and duration of the trafficking, the diversity of species originating from all continents, their listing in Appendix I or II of CITES, and the fact that there are no regular flights

between Košice airport and Spain, the question arises as to why Europol or Interpol were not involved in the investigation.

Inventory of the birds seized:

515 New Zealand parakeets (*Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae*, Appendix I),
2 ochre-marked parakeets (*Pyrrhura cruentata*, Appendix I),
2 Cuban parrots (*Amazona leucocephala*, A. I),
2 yellow-headed amazons (*Amazona oratrix*, A. I),
1 blue-winged macaw (*Primolius maracana*, A.I),
1 grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I),
402 rosellas (*Platycercus* spp., Appendix II),
378 yellow-collared lovebirds (*Agapornis personatus*, Appendix II),
340 red-rumped parrots (*Psephotus haematonotus*, Appendix II),
186 eastern rosellas (*Platycercus eximius*, A.II),
110 superb parrots (*Polytelis swainsonii*, Appendix II),
98 rock pebbles (*Polytelis anthopeplus*, Appendix II),
3 Bourke's parrots (*Neopsephotus bourkii*, A.II),
41 Australian king-parrots (*Alisterus scapularis*, Appendix II),
35 Pacific parrotlets (*Forpus coelestis*, Appendix II),
28 maroon-bellied parakeets (*Pyrrhura frontalis*, A. II),
21 Derbyan parakeets (*Psittacula derbiana*, A.II),
18 green-cheeked conures (*Pyrrhura molinae*, Appendix II),
17 Australian ringnecks (*Barnardius zonarius*, A. II),
16 red-winged parrots (*Aprosmictus erythropterus*, A. II),
14 Senegal parrots (*Poicephalus senegalus*, A. II),
10 red-breasted parakeets (*Psittacula alexandri*, A. II),
10 blue-fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, A.II),
9 nanday conures (*Nandayus nenday*, Appendix II),
9 ornate lorikeets (*Trichoglossus ornatus*, A.II),
8 jandaya conures (*Aratinga jandaya*, Appendix II),
8 princess parrots (*Polytelis alexandrae*, Appendix II),
6 Patagonian conures (*Cyanoliseus patagonus*, Appendix II),
6 red-capped parrots (*Purpureicephalus spurius*, A. II),
5 roseate cockatoos (*Eolophus roseicapilla*, A.II),
5 sun conures (*Aratinga solstitialis*, Appendix II),
4 orange-winged amazons (*Amazona amazonica*, A. II),
4 eclectic parrots (*Eclectus roratus*, Appendix II),
3 Meyer's parrots (*Poicephalus meyeri*, Appendix II),
2 Fischer's turacos (*Tauraco fischeri*, Appendix II),
2 dusky parrots (*Pionus fuscus*, Appendix II),
1 red-fronted parrot (*Poicephalus gulielmi*, A.II),
1 western corella (*Cacatua pastinator*, A.II).¹⁹⁰

UKRAINE

End of July 2023

Tatariv, Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast, Ukraine

UAnimals on all fronts! Thanks to its vigilance and to the oblast national police's reactivity, a street photographer exploiting a white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*, Appendix I) was obliged under article 164, paragraph 1 of the Code of Administrative Offences to hand over his abused "work tool" to a statutory aviary in Yaremche.¹⁹¹

VARIOUS REPTILE SPECIES

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

July 11, 2023

Krugersdorp, Gauteng Province, South Africa

26-year-old Rapule Punna Elias Mokwena, known as the "Doctor", was sentenced to 45 months in prison for capturing and selling flap-necked chameleons (*Chamaeleo dilepis*, Appendix II) for 250 rand (13 US\$/specimen), as well as turtles and snakes. Half the prison sentence was suspended, with no possibility of release by paying an alternative fine. Mokwena is also prohibited from transporting, appropriating and possessing wild animals. He sold the animals in plain sight at the junction of National Highway 14 and Route 24 in Tarlton, a Johannesburg suburb, where other dealers have been selling jackal puppies and honey badgers for ages. Traffic jams at the crossroads enable dealers to lure in motorists. The police occasionally raid this cursed spot, but animal traffickers invariably return to the scene, just like souvenir vendors and pickpockets at the base of the Eiffel Tower. The Doctor's conviction followed a joint complaint by the Johannesburg Veterinary Clinic and the NGO FORA (Friends of Rescued Animals) (see "On the Trail" n°39 p.136, ref.1).¹



EGYPT

June 27, 2023

Cairo International Airport, Governorate of Cairo, Egypt

An Egyptian traveller coming from Oman had 2 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I) and 73 juvenile snakes (order Squamata) in his luggage, 25 of which were dead.²

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

End of August 2023

Broward County, State of Florida, United States of America

Police inspected a home where turtles and iguanas were reportedly being held without a permit. Result: a gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*, Appendix II) released, an iguana (*Iguana* spp., Appendix II) entrusted to a licenced facility, and 7 warnings for their "owner".³

August 30, November 17, and April 22, 2024

Miami, State of Florida, United States of America

Often at the forefront of fashion week scandals, "On the Trail" has meticulously chronicled the smuggling of bags to Miami and New York organised by Nancy González, designer and producer under the eponymous brand of exclusive leather goods made from caiman skin (*Caiman* spp., Appendix I or II) and python (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II) skins captured in the jungles of Colombia and neighbouring countries (see "On the Trail" n°37 p.148, ref.1). His 4,000 US\$ bags have been celebrated the world over, including in Paris and in TV series such as "Sex and The City". U.S. justice had been demanding his extradition since July 1, 2022, which was carried out on August 30, 2023, thanks to an agreement between Colombia and the United States. Mrs. Nancy González de Barberi, 70, was charged on November 17, 2023 in Miami with fraudulent importation of bags made from 2 species listed in the CITES Appendices, and sentenced on April 22, 2024 to 18 months' imprisonment followed by 3 years' probation.⁴



ASIA

INDIA

End of August 2023

Jaleswar, Balasore District, State of Odisha, India

Railroad police arrests a trafficker in possession of 25 Bengal monitor lizards (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I), 2 turtles and a waterbird.⁵

INDONESIA

June 8, 2023

Sentani Airport, Jayapura Regency, Papua Province, New Guinea Island, Indonesia

Seizure of a bluetail monitor (*Varanus doreanus*, Appendix II), 3 scrub pythons (*Morelia amethystina*, Appendix II), 5 giant blue-tongued skinks (*Tiliqua gigas*) and 10 Pacific bluetail skinks (*Emoia caeruleocauda*) threaded into sealed plastic bottles with small holes, from a package said to contain a "robotic toy".⁶



Emoia caeruleocauda (10 to 12 cm long)

July 27, 2023

Sentani Airport, Jayapura Regency, Papua Province, New Guinea Island, Indonesia

Seized: 41 green tree pythons (*Morelia viridis*, Appendix II), 15 peach-throated monitors (*Varanus jobiensis*, Appendix II), 6 Biak emerald monitors (*Varanus kordensis*, Appendix II), 4 mangrove monitors (*Varanus indicus*, Appendix II), a brown tree snake (*Boiga irregularis*) and a frilled lizard (*Chlamydosaurus kingii*) – all juveniles. The 2,455 km² island of Biak has 135,000 inhabitants and marks the only identified habitat of the varan lizard which bears its name. The species is arboreal but regularly comes ashore to feed on insects. The island is easily accessible by boat to wildlife brokers. Sentani airport serves the town of Jayapura.⁷



VIET NAM

June 2, 2023

Cua Lo, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

Seizure in a traditional medicine store of a stuffed green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*, Appendix I) and an Indochinese box turtle (*Cuora galbinifrons*, Appendix I). Once again, the authorities acted on a tip from the public.⁸

August 11, 2023

Van Quan, Vinh Phuc Province, Viet Nam

Mrs Nguyen Thi Phuong, 57, resident in Yen Bai province, and Mr Nguyen Dinh Hau, whom she had recruited to deliver 10 turtles, big-headed turtles (*Platysternon megacephalum*, Appendix I) and keel-backed turtles (*Cuora mouhotii*, Appendix II), and 59 Chinese cobras (*Naja atra*, Appendix II) to a customer in Vinh Tuong, were charged and held in custody. Phuong admits that he bought the reptiles from poachers and wanted to sell them at a profit. This would not be the first time that Phuong and Hau have engaged in wildlife trafficking. Their car was checked at the IC6 toll booth on the Noi Bai-Lao Cai motorway.⁹

EUROPE

FRANCE

July 4, 2023

Hucqueliers, Department of Pas-de-Calais, France



The gendarmes seized 5 snakes, including a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix I or II) and a python (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), plus 11 turtles from a private individual who had neither the capacity to house them nor the documentation proving their legal origin. The gendarmes were responding to "a completely different case" and called in specialists from Opale Capture (named after Côte d'Opale, the tourist name for the coastline where Belgium borders the Baie de Somme) to transport the animals to the Calais wildlife care centre.¹⁰

TORTOISES AND FRESHWATER TURTLES

Most important seizures :

371 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I)
291 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssononia gangetica*, Appendix I)
219 musk turtles (*Sternotherus* spp., Appendix II)



Gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*). Photo Darkriver

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

End of August 2023

East London, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

The 2 rescued leopard tortoises (*Stigmochelys pardalis*, Appendix II) can thank SPCA agents! Tied up with a chain through a hole in their shells, they were neglected, in desperate need of shade and water. Now they're in good hands.¹

MADAGASCAR

June 20, and August 3 and 21, 2023 Antananarivo and Antananarivo-Ivato International Airport, Analamanga Region, Madagascar



- Resh, an Israeli national posing as a plumber by profession, is in pre-trial detention in Tsiafahy prison. He was caught with 59 juvenile radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) before his flight to Thailand. He had a fortune in his suitcase. On the international market, the value of a specimen ranges from 9,000 to 200,000 shekels (2,500 to 53,000 US\$). His lawyer, Mordechai Tzivin, who defends Israeli interests in Madagascar, says that his client is "legit" and that he was put on the wrong track by a Madagascan seller who claimed that exporting the turtles to Thailand was legal.

In a conversation with his lawyer which was reported to the Ynetnews media, Resh, originally from Beitar Illit, south of Jerusalem, complains of the humiliation, violence and religious discrimination to which he says he is subjected in prison. "I sleep in a crowded room with 150 people. I'm here with 800 other detainees, all of them Black, Christian and Muslim. I'm the only White person and the only Jew here. I gave the jailer my food to get my tefillin*, but then another person asked for money. When I refused, he punched me in the eye and took my tefillin away." "I pay 200 US\$ a week to have kosher food but other prisoners have stolen it from me on several occasions." The family of the alleged trafficker has launched a fundraising campaign to raise 270,000 US\$ to pay for legal fees and other expenses. Promoters and contributors include Americans from the Satmar Hasidic sect, former Miss Israel Rana Raslan, rabbis and Tsaal reserve general Ehud Shani, who was director of cabinet at the Ministry of Defence.

- Resh was sentenced to 2 years in prison and fined 400 US\$, far less than the 100,000 US\$ fine for which he was liable. In court, he continued to claim that he was unaware of the illegality of his trafficking and that he had been misinformed by the Madagascan seller. He has lodged an appeal. He is also supported by the Israeli embassy in Madagascar.²

*In the Jewish religion, each of the two cubic leather cases contains a small piece of parchment on which are inscribed four essential passages of the Law, attached by straps to the forehead and left arm during prayer.²

End of June 2023

Madagascar

Three Madagascans have been detained: 2 men at the Tsiafahy prison and a woman at the Antanimora central prison. They were in possession of 9 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) and sought to sell them.³

July 21, 2023

Ankadindravola, Analamanga Region, Madagascar

Two women are in police custody for selling 8 land tortoises (Testudinidae, Appendix I or II), which are protected by Malagasy law and CITES, on the street. The most commonly trafficked turtles in Madagascar are spider tortoises (*Pyxis arachnoides*, Appendix I) and radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I).⁴

August 3 and 4, 2023

Magnary, Atsimo-Andrefana Region, Madagascar

Seizure at the top of the beach of 37 adult tortoises (Testudinidae, Appendix I or II), upside down on their backs and ready to be slipped into international traffic after being transferred by road to Antananarivo-Ivato airport. The main turtles trafficked in Madagascar are spider tortoises (*Pyxis arachnoides*, Appendix I) and radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I).⁵

August 8, 2023

Antananarivo, Analamanga Region, Madagascar

Turtle trafficking remains high in the capital. Seizure of 79 spider tortoises (*Pyxis arachnoides*, Appendix I) in the Ankorondrano district. They were caught around Toliara, 900 km away. The 2 suspected traffickers were remanded in custody in Tsiafahy prison. They intended to sell each turtle via Facebook for 150,000 ariary (35 US\$).

At the same time, the teams of Marie Orléa Vina, Minister of Natural Resources, intercepted wood traffickers: 500 logs, including rosewood (*Dalbergia* spp., Appendix I or II), were seized at Morarano Gare, and 4 traffickers of bottle trees (*Pachypodium* spp., Appendix I or II) were arrested. They are also being held on remand in Tsiafahy prison.⁶



NORTHERN AMERICA

CANADA

Beginning of August 2023 Dorchester, Province of Ontario, Canada



In the course of a week, 5 snapping turtles (*Chelydra serpentina*, Appendix II with reservation from Canada) were caught in traps made of odds and ends, fishing line and hooks. It is a scene of desolation for local residents and devotees of the Mill Pond reservoir on the River Thames, where wheat mills were built in the 19th century. All that remains today are the relics of wheels and wings. On the other hand, the kilometre-long reservoir is a lively ecosystem, with white oaks, white pines, maples, raspberries, cottontail rabbits, white-tailed deer, raccoons and beavers on the banks, and fish and snapping turtles in the water. They are targeted by poachers who kill them for traditional medicines, out of evil superstition, or who keep them alive to sell them on the pet market.⁷

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Beginning of June 2023 Spring Valley, State of Illinois, United States of America

"Typically, when fisherman distance themselves to that degree something illegal is taking place." This individual was no exception. Busy 1.5 km from the bridge where the others were gathered, he failed to hide the 2 softshell turtles (*Apalone* spp., Appendix II) he had just caught when officer Scott Wagner surprised him. Other turtles were already tied up in bags. He received a summons.⁸

Beginning of June 2023 Bunker Hill, State of Illinois, United States of America

A group of idle teenagers didn't find anything better than to catch a snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*, Appendix II), shoot it with a rifle and then set it on fire. After an interview with an environmental officer, they received written warnings and will be summoned to court at a later date.⁹

Beginning of June 2023 By the Lake Saint Clair, State of Michigan, United States of America

The man got off with a simple verbal warning. He had caught out-of-season undersized smallmouth bass (*Micropterus dolomieu*) and an undersized snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*, Appendix II).¹⁰

Mid-June 2023**Gogebic County, State of Michigan, United States of America**

Following a tip-off from a colleague in the neighbouring State of Wisconsin, environmental officer Jenni Hanson interviewed a man in possession of the remains of a snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*, Appendix II). He finally admitted that one of his friends had shot it in May, out of season. The meat and shell of the turtle were seized. The 2 men will face justice shortly.¹¹

Mid-June 2023**Oscoda County, State of Michigan, United States of America**

An anonymous tip arrives on the RAP (Report All Poaching) line: a woman is allegedly keeping several reptiles and a raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) in her home. On site, the situation is worse than expected: a baby raccoon is locked in an aquarium, a good-sized snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*, Appendix II) is wandering around the bathroom, 41 snapping turtle eggs are in a box, a hog-nosed snake (genus *Heterodon*) has managed to get out of its cage and no one can find it. Seizure of 2 wood turtles (*Glyptemys insculpta*, Appendix II), a painted turtle (*Chrysemys picta*), the snapping turtle, the 41 snapping turtle eggs and the raccoon.¹²

June 24, 2023**East Marion, State of New York, United States of America**

Release of a diamondback terrapin (*Malaclemys terrapin*, Appendix II) that a man had just "found" on the beach and that landed in his cooler. The individual received a ticket for unlawful possession of a protected species and another ticket for illegal take of a protected species.¹³

End of June 2023**South Bay, State of Florida, United States of America**

Indictment of a man caught on the banks of a canal catching Florida softshell turtles (*Apalone ferox*, Appendix II) with 31 hooks and salted pork. Seven live specimens were kept in rice bags.¹⁴

July 2023**LaSalle County, State of Illinois, United States of America**

CPOs Martin and Hahn conducted a boat patrol on the Illinois River. Two individuals were located with hidden bags of softshell turtles (family Trionychidae) that were taken with fishing poles. Both were cited. Turtles were released back into the Illinois River. Softshell turtles found in the State include the smooth softshell turtle (*Apalone mutica*, Appendix II) and spiny softshell turtle (*Apalone spinifera*, Appendix II).¹⁵

July 11, 2023**Lee County, State of Florida, United States of America**

Authorities recovered 4 gopher tortoises (*Gopherus polyphemus*, Appendix II) from a cage, deprived of water in the scorching heat. They were transferred to a veterinary clinic in Fort Myers.¹⁶

Mid-July 2023**Pasco County, State of Florida, United States of America**

Court summons for an individual offering wild-caught turtles for sale. The main turtles poached in Florida are the gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*, Appendix II), the softshell turtle (*Apalonespp.*, Appendix II) and the alligator snapping turtle (*Macrochelys temminckii*, Appendix II).¹⁷

End of July 2023**Orange County, State of Florida, United States of America**

A phone call on the Wildlife Alert line leads Lieutenant Mendelson and agents Easterbrook and White to a house. The owner admits to owning a gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*, Appendix II), but there are actually 5 in his home. They were all caught 2 years ago. The man is issued a notice to appear. The tortoises are entrusted to a rehabilitation centre.¹⁸

End of July 2023**Lasalle County, State of Illinois, United States of America**

Two individuals were caught in the act of poaching softshell turtles (*Apalone spp.*, Appendix II) on the Illinois River, the major tributary of the Mississippi. The turtles, still alive, immediately regained their freedom.¹⁹

Beginning of August 2023**Marion County, State of Florida, United States of America**

Following a tip-off, agent Galvan released a gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*, Appendix II) that a motorist had just taken from the roadside.²⁰

Beginning of August 2023**Saint Clair County, State of Michigan, United States of America**

The lady had "found" an Eastern box turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*, Appendix II) she doesn't know exactly when, perhaps 35 years ago, in a State other than Michigan, she doesn't know exactly where. Before disposing of it, relieved to learn that it would be entrusted to a "turtle rehabilitator", she received an oral lesson on the rules and constraints of "pettism" from wildlife warden Sydney Griffor.²¹

Mid-August 2023

Broward County, State of Florida, United States of America

Authorities inspected a hotel authorized to exhibit wild animals. Despite a largely positive report, they did find a gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*, Appendix II), which requires special authorization for keeping due to its endangered status in Florida. The owner stated that the turtle had been entrusted to him, but he received a warning and lost custody of the turtle.²²

End of August 2023

Alachua County, State of Florida, United States of America

An individual who killed a gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*, Appendix II) for personal consumption has been indicted. He was also found in possession of 6 eggs.²³

End of August 2023

Collier County, State of Florida, United States of America

Two people emerged from a small, wooded area with a gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*, Appendix II) in their car. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission officers questioned them. The 2 suspects, one of whom is a woman, claim to have wanted to save the turtle, but offered different accounts. The woman, who already owns several exotic turtles, has been indicted.²⁴

End of August 2023

Tosohatchee Wildlife Management Area, State of Florida, United States of America

An individual attempting to leave the Tosohatchee Reserve a little too quickly was caught red-handed with 2 Florida box turtles (*Terrapene carolina bauri*, Appendix II) in his trunk.²⁵

LATIN AMERICA

BRAZIL

End of August 2023

Beruri, State of Amazonas, Brazil

73 km from Manaus, in a town with a population of 20,700, 2 men were selling 22 turtles including 15 yellow-headed sidenecks (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II). They were all seized.²⁶

MEXICO

July 4, 2023

Municipality of Libres, State of Puebla, Mexico

In a big wrecked BMW, police found 267 turtles in roughly 20 plastic crates, including 150 Mexican mud turtles (*Kinosternon integrum*, Appendix II), snapping turtles (*Chelydra serpentina*, Appendix II) and giant musk turtles (*Staurotypus* spp., Appendix II), altogether worth nearly 30,000 US\$ on the black market.²⁷

Beginning of August 2023

Huajuapán de León, State of Oaxaca, Mexico



An alligator snapping turtle (*Macrochelys temminckii*, Appendix II) 65-70 cm long and 40 cm wide, expelled from a domestic home where it had been for too long to be set free, was wandering in the Rancho Tatoto district. It has been entrusted to a UMA. Profepa will look after its welfare by ensuring that "the conditions of confinement are appropriate and guarantee its health and dignity". According to the National Commission for Protected Natural Areas (Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas - CONANP), alligator snapping turtles are being trafficked in the city (population 78,000). An investigation has been launched. The University of Florida has published a report on the extinction of the species in the Gulf of Mexico and Mexico. The prosecutor described the alligator snapping turtle as "the dinosaur of the turtle world".²⁸

PERU

June 21, 2023

Port of Masusa, Iquitos, Province of Maynas, Department of Loreto, Peru



Aboard the M/F *Manuel* in the river port, 57 yellow-headed sidenecks (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II) and one South American river turtle (*Podocnemis expansa*, Appendix II) were seized. They have been provisionally divided amongst the Reptilians Turtles & Tropical Fish Zoo and the CREA (Centro de Rescate Amazónico). The operation was led by customs and a Gerfor unit (Gerencia Regional de Desarrollo Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre).²⁹

ASIA

CHINA

Beginning of June 2023

Futian Checkpoint, Shenzhen Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.



Seizure of 2 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) native to the Mediterranean basin. They were wrapped in black stockings in a woman's luggage.³⁰

Beginning of July 2023

Futian Checkpoint, Shenzhen Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.



Seizure of 10 leopard tortoises (*Stigmochelys pardalis*, Appendix II) from the luggage of a traveller attempting to enter China soil.³¹

July 13, 2023

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

Two nets containing 219 very young turtles were seized from a Macau resident's shoulder bag. Tests determined that they were common musk turtles (*Sternotherus odoratus*, Appendix II) and flattened musk turtles (*Sternotherus depressus*, Appendix II).³²



July 19, 2023

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department seized 14 big-headed turtles (*Platysternon megacephalum*, Appendix I), 2 yellow-margined box turtles (*Cuora flavomarginata*, Appendix II), 4 South Asian box turtles (*Cuora amboinensis*, Appendix II), 2 giant Asian pond turtles (*Heosemys grandis*, Appendix II), 4 wattled-necked softshell turtles (*Palea steindachneri*, Appendix II), 3 Reeves' turtles (*Mauremys reevesii*, Appendix III) and 7 turtle eggs. One man was arrested after being identified by his listings for sale on social networks.³³

July 28, 2023

Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Border Post, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong and Macao.



Seizure of 3 adult red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II) from South America under the back seats of a vehicle.³⁴

August 10, 2023

Qingmao Border Post, Zhuhai Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Macau.



Seizure from a traveller going to Macao of 4 juvenile yellow pond turtles (*Mauremys mutica*, Appendix II) and one juvenile yellow-margined box turtle (*Cuora flavomarginata*, Appendix II).³⁵

INDIA

Beginning of June 2023

Kaziranga National Park, Nagaon District, State of Assam, India

In a camp of mahouts who travel the Kaziranga on elephant back, Kaziranga rangers seized 7 spotted pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I). Karna Bawri, Ram Naik and Sobhan Bawri deny any trafficking and speak in unison of personal consumption.³⁶

June 15, 2023

Chennai International Airport, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Two men flying to Bangkok on an AirAsia flight carried 369 newly hatched Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I). In 2022, a total of 3,600 live Indian star tortoises, captured in Andhra Pradesh, were seized at the Chennai International Airport.³⁷

June 22, 2023

Lucknow, Lucknow District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

At the Nakkhas market, officials seized 108 Indian roofed turtles (*Pangshura tecta*, Appendix I) that were recently removed from their shells and caught by fishermen on the banks of the Gomti, a tributary of the Ganges River. The trafficker, Kashyap, alias Guthali, purchased them for 200 rupees each (2.40 US\$) and sold them for at least 300 rupees (3.60 US\$) in West Bengal, Karnataka, and metropolises such as Bangalore.³⁸

June 24, 2023

Agartala, West Tripura District, State of Tripura, India

Seizure by Tripura forest officers of 6 Indian roofed turtles (*Pangshura tecta*, Appendix I). Raju Miah was trying to sell them in a pet shop near the bus station.³⁹

July 11, 2023

Belgharia, North 24 Parganas District, State of West Bengal, India

Two brown roofed turtles (*Pangshura smithii*, Appendix II) seized alive by WCCB agents and the Forest Department.⁴⁰

OPERATION WILEP

July 22, 2023

Varanasi District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Seizure of 4 live Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssoniana gangetica*, Appendix I) on board the Malda Town Express train from New Delhi to Malda (West Bengal). No arrests.⁴¹

July 28, 2023

Air Cargo Complex, Andheri East, Mumbai Suburban District, State of Maharashtra, India



Seizure of 162 live tortoises and turtles from parcels coming from Thailand, including Greek tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II, Southern Europe, North Africa and Middle East), red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II, South America), African spurred tortoises (*Centrochelys sulcata*, Appendix II, Peri-Saharan and West Africa), red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, South America), Asian leaf turtles (*Cyclemys dentata*, Appendix II, Southeast Asia), red-bellied short-neck turtles (*Emydura subglobosa*, Australia and Papua New Guinea) and albino red-eared sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*), an invasive species.⁴²

End of July 2023

Bhubaneswar, Khordha District, State of Odisha, India

Officials seized 2 Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II) and 3 red-eared slider turtles (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) at the Zinzibar hotel and questioned the hotel manager and staff about their origin and fate.⁴³

OPERATION WILEP

August 4, 2023

Gonda, Gonda District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

An RPF patrol spotted and seized a turtle (probably an Indian flapshell turtle, *Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II) at the third stop on express train 15113 from Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh) to Chhapra Kacheri (Bihar). The turtle looked abandoned but may have been under the watch of a smuggler.⁴⁴

3rd week of August 2023

Around Sagolia, Dhubri District, State of Assam, India

In an electric rickshaw that was also seized by the police, Bhaskar Barman and Indrajit Barman were carrying 3 live turtles, including an Indian narrow-headed softshell turtle (*Chitra indica*, Appendix II) and an Indian peacock softshell turtle (*Nilssoniana hurum*, Appendix I). They were travelling from Tufanganj in West Bengal to Gauripur, 54 km away.⁴⁵

OPERATION WILEP

August 23, 2023

Malda, Malda District, State of West Bengal, India

RPF seized 51 live turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I, or *Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II) under the seats of car no. 6 of the Farakka Express.⁴⁶

August 28, 2023

Malad, Mumbai Suburban District, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure of 2 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I) in a private home by elements of the forestry police after information from the NGO PETA.⁴⁷

FAMILY AFFAIRS

August 28, 2023

Mirzapur, Mirzapur District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India



Brother and sister Rakesh and Lakho were carrying 236 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I) in 12 bags on the Jodhpur-Howrah Express. They had boarded a general coach at Prayagraj and were due to get off at Asansol. They were arrested by the GRP (Government Railway Police) and the RPF.⁴⁸

INDONESIA

August 9, 2023

Slamet Riyadi Harbor, Ambon City, Maluku Province, Maluku Archipelago, Indonesia

Seizure of a South Asian box turtle (*Cuora amboinensis*, Appendix II) on the quayside in the belongings of a passenger. The port of Slamet Riyadi has car ferry links to other ports of the Moluccas and the island of Sulawesi.⁴⁹

VIET NAM

Beginning of June 2023

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

The woman had bought the 2 yellow-headed temple turtles (*Heosemys annandalii*, Appendix II) from a street vendor with the intention of releasing them in a pagoda. The monks dissuaded her and advised her to contact ENV. The 2 turtles finally made their way to the Cu Chui refuge.⁵⁰

June 2023

Quang Ninh Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of 2 African spurred tortoises

(*Centrochelys sulcata*, Appendix II) used as an attraction in a restaurant. The owner was fined 40 million dong (1,704 US\$). Both were taken to Cuc Phuong National Park.

African spurred tortoises are native to Saharan Africa and can measure up to 80 cm in length. Their life expectancy is 70 years.⁵¹



June 2023

Can Tho Municipality, Viet Nam

Good draw for the ENV hotline! Thanks to a report, 2 Chinese stripe-necked turtles (*Mauremys sinensis*, Appendix III in China) and 10 red-eared sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*, an invasive species) were seized in 2 aquarist shops.⁵²

June 28, 2023

Ha Long, Quang Ninh Province, Viet Nam

Nguyen Thanh Thuy, 26, was charged. He had "by chance" caught a big-headed turtle (*Platysternon megacephalum*, Appendix I) while swimming in a stream and purposely tried to sell it for 3 million dong (128 US\$) on the Internet.⁵³

Beginning of July 2023

U Minh District, Ca Mau Province, Viet Nam

An habitual hunter showing off on TikTok and YouTube remedied his image by voluntarily handing over a yellow-headed temple turtle (*Heosemys annandalii*, Appendix II) that he captured to forest rangers.⁵⁴

REPEATED OFFENCE

July 26, 2023

Ha Lam, Quang Nam Province, Viet Nam

The People's Court sentenced Huynh Thi Kim Cuong to 10 years in prison for selling Indochinese box turtles (*Cuora bourreti*, Appendix I) and big-headed turtles (*Platysternon megacephalum*, Appendix I) in 2021. In 2018, he had already received a suspended prison sentence for holding and attempting to sell 126 turtles and king cobras (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II).⁵⁵

EUROPE

BELGIUM

June 28, 2023

Ghent, Province of East Flanders, Flemish Region, Belgium

Sentenced in absentia to 2 years' imprisonment and a fine of 48,000 € (51,570 US\$) for smuggling "large numbers" of endangered tortoises (*Testudinidae*, Appendix I or II). The man used false names and hidden bank accounts to conceal the profit from the sales. Hermann's tortoises and Greek tortoises in Belgium, see "On the Trail" n°14 p.21 (ref.19), n°19 p.24 (ref.31) and n°40 p.166 (ref.9).⁵⁶



BULGARIA

Beginning of July 2023

Erden, Montana Province, Bulgaria

Following a report, oblast environmental officers seized 11 adult and 16 juvenile Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermannii*, Appendix II) in the yard of a bistro.⁵⁷

July 11, 2023

Kaspichan, Shumen Province, Bulgaria

Seizure of 21 Greek tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II) and Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermannii*, Appendix II), 6 adults and 15 juveniles, from a private home. A 62-year-old man is indicted.⁵⁸

FRANCE

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Sunday June 25 and 28 and August 17, 2023

Lille, Department of Nord, France

- Night-time theft from the zoo of 4 Greek tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II) and a laughing kookaburra (*Dacelo novaeguineae*), a kind of kingfisher native to Australia. The animals were quickly put up for sale on Snapchat, 700 € (750 US\$) for the bird and 400 € (430 US\$) for each tortoise. The 2 perpetrators of the theft and attempted sale were foiled by investigating detectives who pretended to be buyers.

- The 2 cousins, aged 22, were sentenced to a year's imprisonment for one, a 6-month suspended sentence for the other, a 1,000 € (1,100 US\$) fine for each, and ordered to pay 800 € (880 US\$) to the Stéphane Lamart association, which has been campaigning for the protection of animals and against mistreatment for 23 years.⁵⁹



June 28, 2023

Draguignan, Department of Var, France

Quentin Mallet sentence to a fine of 700 € (750 US\$) and 1,000 € (1,075 US\$) in damages to ASPAS for clearing a Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermannii*, Appendix II) habitat. Denis Mallet et fils specialises in agricultural work and forage-based activities.⁶⁰



August 2, 2023

Toulouse, Department of Haute-Garonne, France

Around 11 p.m., a tortoise (*Testudinidae*, Appendix I or II) was seized from a stolen Mercedes. It was sent to the Toulouse veterinary school. The driver is known to the police. The day before, another turtle, about 30 cm long, had been rescued by firefighters from a public road in Saint-Jean, and was also sent to the Toulouse veterinary school.⁶¹

August 29, 2023 and April 23, 2024

Bessières, Department of Haute-Garonne, France

The OFB is entrusting 2 alligator snapping turtles (*Macrochelys temminckii*, Appendix II) seized from a private individual to the Refuge pour Tortues de Bessières. They are 10 cm long. When fully grown, they can measure 80 cm in length and weigh around 100 kg. The Refuge des Tortues is the French specialist in the recovery of alligator snapping turtles. A 40 kg adult male seized in Normandy or found in a pond after having been thrown away like a piece of bulky furniture recently arrived at the Refuge de Bessières, which is not stingy with its educational comments.

But on Tuesday 23 April 2024, an unexpected turn of events occurred. Three people, including the refuge's director, were taken into custody on suspicion of embezzlement, releasing invasive species and improperly housing protected animals. The refuge was searched by the OCLAESP (Central Office for Combating Environmental and Public Health Offences), the OFB (French Biodiversity Office), the DDPP (Departmental Directorate for People's Protection), the DREAL (Regional Directorate for the Environment, Planning and Housing) and the GGD 31 (Departmental Gendarmerie Group of Haute-Garonne).⁶²

HUNGARY

Beginning of August 2023

Balatonlelle, Somogy Province, Hungary

A 70cm-long alligator snapping turtle (*Macrochelys temminckii*, Appendix II) was discovered in a plastic crate near road n° 7. The species owes its name to its knife-like jaw, which enables it to chop up its prey effortlessly. It can only be legally kept in zoos, but many hobbyists have acquired juvenile specimens through the back door. After a few months, they get rid of them because of their voracity, their food costs and their appearance, which is considered disturbing. Contrary to appearances, alligator turtles are not dangerous and their behaviour is peaceful except when they are on the defensive. However, in the aquatic environments of countries where they are thrown away, their voracity can cause serious damage to biodiversity. In Hungary, they risk harming populations of the European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*, Appendix III in Ukraine).⁶³

ITALY

Mid-July 2023

Cirò, Province of Crotone, Region of Calabria, Italy

The Carabinieri seized 16 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) and 7 yellow-bellied sliders (*Trachemys scripta scripta*) of American origin, considered invasive, from a private individual who bred them for commercial purposes.⁶⁴

July 27, 2023

Pianezza, Metropolitan City of Turin, Region of Piedmont, Italy

Turin's carabinieri captured a 15 kg alligator snapping turtle (*Macrochelys temminckii*, Appendix II) from Florida, with a 41 cm-long and 38 cm-wide shell, in the Rio Fellone canal near a children's playground. If not euthanized, the dangerous creature will be handed over to an approved and suitable detention centre. The turtle is believed to have been abandoned during the summer months by at least one person who either went on vacation or realized that their pet was becoming too cumbersome, voracious and aggressive with time. An adult alligator snapping turtle bite is as powerful as that of a shark. Its sale, possession and importation into Italy are prohibited.⁶⁵

Beginning of August 2023

Recale, Province of Caserta, Region of Campania, Italy

It's the month of August, the month of abandonment, the month of good pets that become obstacles to going on vacation or moving house. The Carabinieri rescued 5 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) abandoned on the Via Gadoia with a malformation of the shell, a sign of lack of exposure to light and poor feeding.⁶⁶

Beginning of August 2023

Tirano, Province of Sondrio, Region of Lombardy, Italy. Border with Switzerland.



Seizure of a juvenile Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) by Customs on the Piattamala pass in a car coming from Switzerland.⁶⁷

August 11, 2023

Florence, Metropolitan City of Florence, Region of Tuscany, Italy

Seizure of 37 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) by the carabinieri in a private home where the occupant had declared to be in possession of... 2 Greek tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II).⁶⁸

ROMANIA

June 12, 2023

Răzoarele, Constanta County, Romania. Border with Bulgaria.

He "found" the Greek tortoise (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II) in a forest in Băneasa, "felt sorry for it", took it back to his home in Răzoarele and tried to sell it on a social network.⁶⁹

June 20, 2023

Turdaş, Hunedoara County, Romania

He had "found" a Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) and then tried to sell it on a social network. Hermann's and Greek tortoises are the only tortoises in Romania. Both species are threatened by habitat fragmentation, forest fires and poaching.⁷⁰

UNITED KINGDOM

Saturday, July 1 and Monday, July 3, 2023

Dudley and Tipton, West Midlands County, England, United Kingdom

During a break-in at Dudley Zoo on Friday night, 2 Coahuila box turtles (*Terrapene coahuila*, Appendix I), freshwater turtles native to Mexico, were stolen. An alert with photos of the 2 missing turtles was sent out on social media, and they were found near a playground in Tipton, 4 km from Dudley, on Monday July 3.⁷¹

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

Beginning of June 2023

Howick, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

A woman thought she bought an exotic royal python (*Python regius*, Appendix II) on the market, but in fact bought a male South African python (*Python natalensis*, Appendix II), a protected species. The snake cost 1,000 rand (50 US\$). As soon as she realized she was in breach of the law, she took the python to the FreeMe Wildlife NGO, which will release it in cooperation with environmental authorities.¹

Beginning of June 2023

Matsheng, North West Province, South Africa

A Southern African python (*Python natalensis*, Appendix II) was rescued from a remote village. Its body and head were in a bag, completely deprived of the 5 fundamental freedoms for animals: freedom from hunger, thirst and malnutrition; freedom from fear and distress; freedom from physical and/or thermal stress; freedom from pain, injury and disease, and freedom to express normal behavior of its species.²

NAMIBIA

July 31, 2023

Okombahe, Erongo Region, Namibia

Arrest of a 49-year-old man in his store. He was holding 2 python skins (*Python* spp., Appendix II) valued at 60,000 dollars (3,200 US\$) in a plastic bag. Police also found an unlicensed revolver in his possession.³

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

July 15, 2023

Nassau County, State of New York, United States of America

A 4.26-meter-long Burmese python (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II) was cramped in a 1.5-meter-long terrarium stored in the garage. The species is considered a public health hazard, and his possession is subject to a special permit in New York State. The animal was seized and transported by road to a licenced facility in Massachusetts, 200 km from Nassau County.⁴

July 26, 2023

Dallas, State of Texas, United States of America

Lawrence Matl sentenced to 15 months' probation with a ban on owning a pet and 998 US\$ in restitution to the city of Grand Prairie (population 204,973) for facilitating by carelessness the escape of a female West African banded cobra (*Naja savannula*) in August 2021, which had been shut up with a male in a Plexiglas box for 15 days and was never recovered (see "On the Trail" n°35 p.160, ref.10).⁵



August 4, 2023

Washington Dulles International Airport, State of Virginia, United States of America



Seizure from a passenger bound for San Francisco of 50 bottles of oil from the Vietnamese brand VicoGreen, intended for external use to relieve skin irritations and burns. It contains oil from the python (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II) and tamanu seed oil (*Calophyllum inophyllum*), a plant that grows on the shores of the Indian and Pacific oceans in Southeast Asia, Australia and Madagascar.⁶

August 19, 2023

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

Two itinerant photographers in Battery Park (10 hectares) on Manhattan Island offered passers-by the chance to pose with 2 snakes for a fee. The 1.8-meter-long Burmese python (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II) and the 3.6-meter-long reticulated python (*Malayopython reticulatus*, synonymous with *Python reticulatus*, Appendix II) were seized by 3 New York City ecoguards with the assistance of the New York City Parks Enforcement Patrol. The 2 individuals were ticketed. Battery Park takes its name from the artillery that was installed as early as 1683 to protect New York harbor, and is popular with tourists. It is also known for being the first place of settlement in New York (the Dutch arrived in 1625).⁷

CARIBBEAN

FRANCE (GUADELOUPE)

August 8, 2023

Les Abymes, Department of Guadeloupe, France



The requirements for owning a snake are so complex and variable that those who wish to own some or even trade in them pretend not to understand them and transgress them. Police seizure of a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix I or II), 1.7 meters long, 10 kg, in a home.⁸

ASIA

CHINA

June 26, 2023

Futian Checkpoint, Shenzhen Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.



Seizure in the luggage of a traveller coming from Hong Kong of 6 royal pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II) carefully packed in socks. Total weight: 1.4 kg.⁹

July 24, 2023

Futian Checkpoint, Shenzhen Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.



The man was carrying 14 juvenile snakes in his trouser pockets, including 3 royal pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II) put in socks and stockings. His shifty eyes as he crossed the border caught the attention of customs officers.¹⁰

July 2023

River Port of Dongxing, Fangchenggang Prefecture, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China. Border with Viet Nam.

In the 4 white socks closed by a rubber ring, there were 4 very young reticulated pythons (*Malayopython reticulatus*, synonymous with *Python reticulatus*, Appendix II).¹¹

July 2023

Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

Authorities are said to have seized 8,306 reticulated python gall bladders (*Malayopython reticulatus*, synonymous with *Python reticulatus*, Appendix II) in a package from abroad declared to contain "bath towels".¹²

INDIA

June 2, 2023

Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Nagar, Chandauli District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India



Discovery by an RPF patrol of a bag abandoned at the station containing a cobra (*Naja* spp., Appendix II) and a brown sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II). The Pt. DDU Junction station is one of India's major railway junctions. More than 125 trains stop here every day.¹³

OPERATION WILEP

July 13, 2023

Asansol, Paschim Bardhaman District, State of West Bengal, India

The 2 brown sand boas (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) were squirming desperately in a burlap bag on board train n°03659 linking Asansol Junction with Bardhaman Junction. Despite the support of the Criminal Intelligence Directorate, the RPF was unable to identify the trafficker. The snakes with alleged magical properties were handed over to the Forest Department to be released into the wild.¹⁴

July 13, 2023

North Agra Border Outpost, Dakshin Dinajpur District, State of West Bengal, India. Border with Bangladesh.



Yet another jar seized by the 61st Battalion of the BSF (Border Security Force). Labelled "Cobra SP Red Dragon, Made in France Code No.6097", it contains 2.46 kg of alleged cobra venom with an estimated value, if authenticity is confirmed, of 120 million rupees or nearly 1.5 million US\$, 600,000 US\$/kg and 600 US\$/gramme. Cobra venom mixed with other drugs is appreciated by the gilded youth of the metropolises as a psycho- and physioactive drug. The jar of liquid worth a thousandweight in gold was carelessly wrapped in an old Bangladeshi newspaper, waiting to be picked up by a link in the mysterious cobra network.¹⁵

July 30, 2023

Tiruchirappalli International Airport, State of Tamil Nadu, India

There were in the cart of Mohamed Mohideen, disembarking from Kuala Lumpur, 47 pythons (*Pythonidae*, Appendix I or II) of various sizes and 2 saurians in several perforated plastic boxes. Exchanges are underway to have the reptiles returned to Malaysia.¹⁶

OPERATION WILEP

August 3, 2023

Amla, Betul District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

RPF agents turned their attention to a man onboard train no. 22175 from Nagpur (Maharashtra) to Jaipur (Rajasthan). He was carrying a basket containing "a black snake", probably an Indian cobra (*Naja naja*, Appendix II). Both were forced off the train and handed over to the Forest Department, along with a letter addressed to the station officer.¹⁷

FAMILY AFFAIRS

August 16, 2023

Panchupali, Baleshwar District, State of Odisha, India

Seizure by 25 forestry agents of 26 venomous snakes, most of them Indian cobras (*Naja naja*, Appendix II), and dismantling of a venom trafficking operation. Three arrests, including a 27-year-old woman. The trio capturing the snakes presented themselves as rescuers. They were paid to capture snakes in gardens or rural homes and return them to their natural habitat. In fact, they would take them home and, after gouging out their fangs and eyes, intensively harvest the venom to sell to counterfeit drug formulators or drug traffickers. They also put on lucrative displays at weddings and religious ceremonies.¹⁸

OPERATION WILEP

August 18, 2023

Itarsi, Hoshangabad District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

A man was begging on a train with an Indian cobra (*Naja naja*, Appendix II) slithering in his basket – a well-known scam. Passengers are all too happy to get rid of the frightening nuisance by donating a few rupees. In most cases, the cobra's fangs have been broken. This time, RPF agents put an end to the racket.¹⁹

Monday August 21, 2023
Jabalpur, Jabalpur District, State of Madhya Pradesh, and Hyderabad, Hyderabad District, State of Telangana, India



- Monday is Naga Panchami, the day of snake worship for Hindu, Buddhist and Jain devotees. Charmers invade trains and buses to beg for money in return for rituals promising happiness, or go door-to-door. Snakes are captured in the forest, deprived of food and water, their venom glands removed and stored in wicker boxes. Most are over 1.5 meters long. Some twenty men were arrested. One rarely hears of female snake charmers. They've been charged with animal abuse and violating the Wildlife Protection Act, and apparently that doesn't deter them. They say they've been doing this for generations, and that's all they can do. 50 snakes were seized including 10 Indian cobras (*Naja naja*, Appendix II) (3 had their mouths sewn shut). They were handed over to the care of the veterinary school.

- The GHSPCA (Greater Hyderabad Society for the Prevention of Animal Cruelty) and the NGO PFA (People for Animals) are mobilized for the Naga Panchami. Their mission is to rescue the snakes. Naga Panchami, see "On the Trail" n°6 p.21 (ref.7), n°10 p.19 (ref.5) and n°14 p.22 (ref.2).²⁰

MALAYSIA

August 2023
Miri, State of Sarawak, Malaysia

Following a court ruling, the juvenile python (*Pythonidae*, Appendix I or II) seized alive by customs on July 14 is to be euthanized. No one has claimed ownership or taken any steps to regularize its introduction into Malaysia.²¹

EUROPE

ITALY

Sunday July 30, 2023
Livorno, Province of Livorno, Region of Tuscany, Italy

At night, after midnight, in an underground parking lot, one might expect other dangers than the presence in the corner of the walls of a royal python (*Python regius*, Appendix II) at least 2 meters long. The police and fire department were called in urgently, and animal association members awakened to identify, capture and secure the escaped or abandoned strangler snake.²²

THE NETHERLANDS

June 2023
The Netherlands

Seizure of a drum with an anaconda (*Eunectes murinus*, Appendix II) skin from Suriname.²³

POLAND

Mid-June 2023
Krościenko Border Post, Subcarpathian Voivodeship, Poland. Border with Ukraine.



Seizure of a handbag made of python skin (*Pythonidae*, Appendix I or II) from the luggage of a 64-year-old Ukrainian woman entering Poland.²⁴

Sunday July 16, 2023
Gdynia, Pomeranian Voivodeship, Poland

The town's police weren't expecting to be called out on a summer's Sunday after a cardboard box was discovered in a small wood, from which a now dead boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix I or II) had tried to escape to reach its native America. Summer holidays come first. Boas are abandoned like rubbish.²⁵

**Saturday August 5 and 8, 2023
Gdańsk, Pomeranian Voivodeship,
Poland**



Two Tunisians in the city centre offered passers-by a street show, begging for money by displaying a python (*Pythonidae*, Appendix I or II) and a boa (*Boidae*, Appendix I or II). Urban police seem helpless and overwhelmed by this wave of wild animal showmen or photographers exploiting wild animals. The 2 men, aged 39 and 41, were ticketed and fined in the same way as a motorist who obstructs the public highway. They left with their menagerie.²⁶

RUSSIA

**Beginning of August 2023
Moscow Federal City, Russia**

A boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix I or II) is captured on the old Arbat street from a photographer who used it to attract tourists.²⁷

CZECHIA

**June 29, 2023
Capital City of Prague, Czechia**

Exotic animal photos on the streets of Prague are profitable. Tourists act as accomplices.

A 41-year-old exhibiting a royal python (*Python regius*, Appendix II) on Karlova Street was deprived of his live work tool by the capital's police. He exploited it by depriving it of water in a humiliating and forced labour with, between shots, placement in a zipped plastic cell.

Another 39-year-old exploited a white boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix I or II) and a Burmese python (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II) on Celetná Street. As the police approached, he was tipped off by a member of his community and fled with his 2 snakes in a box on a sack truck, and the patrol found him at work on Týnská Street.

A few days earlier, another 33-year-old photographer exhibited a royal python on Husova Street.

All 3 men are foreigners. The animals were seized and as a first step entrusted to the exotic animal pound.²⁸

GECKOS, MONITOR LIZARDS, LIZARDS, SKINKS AND CHAMELEONS



Grey monitor (*Varanus griseus*). Photo Gregory Askew

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

July 24, 2023

Kempton Park, Gauteng Province, South Africa



Gerald van der Westhuizen was fined the equivalent of 53,450 US\$, half of which was suspended, and Elisha van der Westhuizen was given a 5-year suspended prison sentence for illegally exporting 18 giant dragon lizards (*Smaug giganteus*, Appendix II) to Mexico and Germany between April 2019 and August 2021, and making concealed profits from them. In May 2019, one of their packages said to contain "a gift teddy and candies" had been intercepted in the postal sorting at OR Tambo International Airport. It contained 6 giant dragon lizards, 2 of which were dead. Gerald and Elisha van der Westhuizen were linked to German traffickers Daniel Lohde and Marko Drescher. See "On the Trail" n°34 p.180 (ref.1). *Smaug giganteus*, see "On the Trail" n°39 p.123 (ref.1).¹

AMERICA

MEXICO

August 2023

State of Guanajuato, Mexico

Following a "citizen's denunciation", the State Profepa seized an iguana (family Iguanidae) whose owner did not hold a certificate of origin. It was passed on to a PIMVS.²

ASIA

CHINA

July 2023

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

Inside the passenger's black bag was an empty plastic box with an incomprehensible label. Intrigued customs searched the passenger and found in a small belly bag an "unknown live animal", "rolled into a ball like a pine cone", which turned out to be a shingleback lizard (*Tiliqua rugosa*, Appendix III in Australia) weighing 468 grams after expert examination by CITES nomenclature specialists.³

INDIA

June 14, 2023

Berachampa, North 24 Parganas District, State of West Bengal, India



Arrest of Abujafar Mondal and Sahajahan Hossain in possession of 2 tokay geckos (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II). They were remanded in custody for 14 days.⁴

OPERATION WILEP

July 10, 2023

Titwala, Thane District, State of Maharashtra, India

Arrest of a man in possession of an Indian chameleon (*Chamaeleo zeylanicus*, Appendix II) at the railway station in this small town on the outskirts of Mumbai. Seizure credited to the Railway Protection Force assisted by the Forest Department.⁵

August 5, 2023

Gopalnagar, Satara District, State of Maharashtra, India

On Saturday night, after receiving detailed information, forestry officers went to a suspicious address. Seizure of a dead Bengal monitor lizard (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I) ready for consumption. Hunting and transporting a Bengal monitor lizard is prohibited by law and carries a maximum fine of 10,000 rupees (120 US\$).⁶

UZBEKISTAN

June 14, 2023

Kasbi, Qashqadaryo Region, Uzbekistan

Seizure at M.I.'s house of 20 grey monitors (*Varanus griseus*, Appendix I), alive and rotting in a cellar, and 43 grey monitors, skinned and dried. Damage to nature is estimated at 27,300 US\$. The survivors of the traffic were set free in the arid zones of the Mubarak district, close to the Kasbi district.⁷

THAILAND

June 2, 2023

Si Nan National Park, Nan Province, Thailand



Seizure by a patrol of 13 live and 3 dead Bengal monitor lizards (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I), a scale, hunting and cutting equipment and a vehicle. One arrest. The dead lizards were burned on site.⁸

EUROPE

ITALY

Beginning of August 2023

Prato, Province of Prato, Region of Tuscany, Italy



Two dried tokay geckos (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II) 20 cm long were seized in a restaurant run by Chinese expatriates. They were used to prepare alcoholic and rejuvenating infusions.⁹

ALLIGATORS, CROCODILES, CAIMANS AND GHARIALS



Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*). Photo Pål A. Olsvik

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FLORIDA

June 12, 2023

Sarasota County, State of Florida, United States of America

Poaching doesn't pay!

"When a Road Ranger stopped to assist someone, they thought was a stranded motorist but then saw two people far off the roadway with what appeared to be a freshly killed American alligator [*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II], the Florida Highway Patrol relayed the information to our officers. The two subjects were seen loading the alligator into their truck and taking off on I-75. Utilizing traffic cameras, our officers were given real-time information as they responded, allowing them to work with FHP to apprehend two people with the poached alligator rolled in a tarp. When the officers uncovered the alligator, they found the long metal shaft through its skull was still connected to a speargun. Both individuals [Ricardo Rodriguez and Ricardo Lopez Perez] were charged with the illegal take of an alligator and taken to jail." (Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission).¹

June 22, 2023

Plant City, State of Florida, United States of America

Harassment of a baby American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) in a city parking lot. Suspended by its tail, it is thrown onto the hot asphalt with a can of alcoholic tea across its snout. The 15-second video taken by an outraged passerby does not show all the phases of the ordeal. The alligator toddler was recovered unharmed by the city's animal control unit and placed safely in a convalescence tank. The torturers have been charged with illegal possession of a protected species and cruelty to animals.²

End of June 2023

Volusia County, State of Florida, United States of America

Following an anonymous tip-off, 2 agents from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission seized a rifle, 7 bags of meat and the skin of an American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II). The poachers have been charged.³

Beginning of July 2023

Union County, State of Florida, United States of America

Arrest of 2 individuals, one for killing an American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) behind his house, the other for being caught in possession of the carcass.⁴

Beginning of July 2023

Nubbin Slough, State of Florida, United States of America

Environmental officers on patrol caught a man in the act of attempting to capture an American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) out of season, using a fishing rod and a gun. As an aggravating circumstance, the poacher was under conviction and prohibited from possessing firearms.⁵

OPERATION FREEZER FARM

Beginning of July 2023

Sainte Lucie County, State of Florida, United States of America

Arrest of 2 individuals for poaching American alligators (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II), white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) and tarpons (genus *Megalops*). Between them, they account for a total of 7 felonies and 52 misdemeanours.⁶

Mid-July 2023

Manatee County, State of Florida, United States of America

A man is charged with capture and possession of an American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II).⁷

Mid-August 2023

Hendry County, State of Florida, United States of America

Three men were caught red-handed with an American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) shot in the head out of hunting season.⁸

Mid-August 2023

Seminole County, State of Florida, United States of America

Arrest in the marshes by FWC (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission) agents on the nights of 14 and 15 August of 7 American alligator poachers (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II).⁹

End of August 2023

Duval County, State of Florida, United States of America

A woman who couldn't bear the sight of a poached and butchered American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) in her home sent photos of her husband and his friends committing the act to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Confronted with such evidence, they had no choice but to admit the facts.¹⁰

End of August 2023

Brevard County, State of Florida, United States of America

A man received a summons for attempting to hunt American alligators (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) outside the area authorized by his permit.¹¹

ILLINOIS

June 13, 2023

Danville, State of Illinois, United States of America

Seizure of an American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) held in a private home. It was entrusted to a wildlife rehabilitator.¹²

End of June 2023

Franklin County, State of Illinois, United States of America

Seizure of a baby American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) held in a private home.¹³

LOUISIANA

July 26, 2023

Baton Rouge, State of Louisiana, United States of America

Things are heating up in Baton Rouge in the middle of summer. A bad-tempered guy is practicing his shooting. A bullet goes through a partition and lands in the neighbour's house. The police arrive at the troublemaker's house, receive a hostile reception and seize firearms and a 91-cm-long American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II).¹⁴

PENNSYLVANIA / KENTUCKY / NEW JERSEY

August 6, 7 and 23, 2023

Apollo, State of Pennsylvania, Murray, State of Kentucky, Middlesex, State of New Jersey, United States of America

Three American alligators (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) foreign to the climate and ecosystems of the 3 States but kept as pets by private individuals and in the end expelled from their homes and cowardly discarded in rivers, lakes or other waterholes have met contrasting fates.

- The first was baited and caught in the Kisky River by 2 kayakers who wished to remain anonymous. It was then transported to Pittsburg to a specialised shelter, Nate's Reptile Rescue. It is 4 years old, 1.2 m long and shows clear signs of domesticity. It had been reported in the river since 30 July.

- The second had been noticed for several days in a spillway near a recreation area. It was caught by the State Fish and Wildlife Service and deliberately killed without further ado.

- The third was noticed for the first time in Middlesex at Creighton Lake Recreation Park. Police fired several shots at it but missed. The park was closed for 72 hours, and then reopened with a ban on swimming and fishing. The alligator was caught a few days later 3 km further on. It was coming up from the lake. It tried to escape into a street. Surrounded by police flashing lights, it surrendered. It was transported to Cape May Zoo before going to a sanctuary in Florida, where it came from.¹⁵

TEXAS

June 2023

Nacogdoches, State of Texas, United States of America

In early summer, newly hatched American alligator babies (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) are easy to find and catch, because of their distinctive calls. "That call isn't for you, it's for their mama. Please leave them be and let their mothers care for them," say the Texas rangers. A baby alligator caught a week or 2 ago in a swamp has just been freed and returned to where it was caught by a resident deaf to the rangers' calls and charged with illegal possession of a protected species.¹⁶



TENNESSEE

June 21, 2023

Knoxville, State of Tennessee, United States of America

Abandonment of a spectacled caiman (*Caiman crocodilus*, Appendix II) on a company's unloading dock. It was in an aquarium. Knoxville police requested the assistance of TWRA (Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency) to take charge of the little crocodilian and transfer it to a specialised facility.¹⁷



LATIN AMERICA

COLOMBIA

Mid-June 2023

Santa Rita, Regional Autonomous Corporation of Magdalena, Colombia

Seizure of 234 spectacled caimans (*Caiman crocodilus*, Appendix I or II) caught in their natural habitats and hidden in ponds under floating wood. The owner was trading in them. The profits he was able to make from the sale are estimated at 1,000 million pesos or 225,000 US\$. After assessing their state of health, the crocodilians were released into the wetlands of the south of the department.¹⁸

MEXICO

July 11, 2023

Altamira, State of Tamaulipas, Mexico

Individuals fumble a nest of Morelet's crocodiles (*Crocodylus moreletii*, Appendix I) and attempt to take hold of 2 barely hatched young. The police arrive. The thieves flee. As a precaution, the 2 individuals, small enough to fit on a plate, were taken to a UMA (Unidad de Manejo para la Conservación de la Vida Silvestre) and will be released in due course.¹⁹



August 2-6, 2023

Venustiano Carranza, Mexico City, Mexico

Seizure of a Morelet's crocodile head (*Crocodylus moreletii*, Appendix II) (and buffalo meat) during the "Feria de la Torta", an annual event dedicated to meat.²⁰

PANAMA

Beginning of June 2023

Chepo District, Panama Province, Panama

Seizure in a bushmeat cooking and drying workshop of 1,632 presumed American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*, Appendix I) or spectacled caiman (*Caiman crocodilus*, Appendix II) fillets.²¹

PERU

June 2, 2023

Port of Don José, Iquitos, Province of Maynas, Department of Loreto, Peru

Seizure of the remains of the carcass of a South American spectacled caiman (*Caiman crocodilus*, Appendix II). It was donated to charity.²²

June 2023

Port of Petroperú, Requena, Province of Requena, Department of Loreto, Peru

Seizure on a boat of 40 kg of South American spectacled caiman meat (*Caiman crocodilus*, Appendix II). The meat was donated to the Isaura Casiana Mafaldo school.²³

CARIBBEAN

JAMAICA

Beginning of August 2023

Black River and Slipe, Saint Elizabeth Parish, Clarendon, Saint Thomas, Saint Catherine and Westmoreland Parish, Jamaica

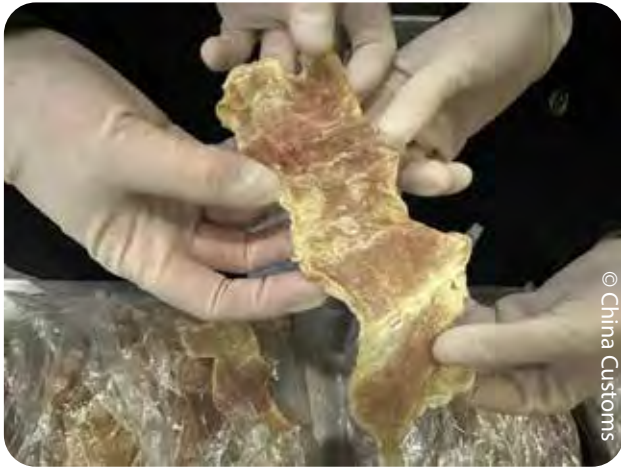
Concern about the fate of the American crocodiles (*Crocodylus acutus*, Appendix I), the only species that occurs in Jamaica's inland waters. Already in 2017, its meat was selling for around 35 US\$/kg. Today, on informal markets, it sells for twice as much. The choice cuts are the tail and hind legs. The rest of the bodies often rot in the mangroves. American crocodiles are also victims of the property market. Developers need space for their projects. The tourism industry, on the other hand, is lamenting. The JHTA (Jamaica Hotel & Tourist Association) estimates that the Black River, which is home to under a thousand American crocodiles, including only 200 to 300 adults, attracts more than 70,000 people a year on dedicated cruises. The Black River (53 km) and its ecosystem is one of the island's last natural jewels. Crocodiles are poached by the dozen in the most remote corners of the mangroves. They are baited with chicken legs or backs attached to hooks. In 4 years, only 12 people have been brought to court, and most have been acquitted for lack of sufficient evidence of poaching activities.²⁴



ASIA

CHINA

Beginning of June 2023
Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport,
Zhejiang Province, China



Seizure of 4.16 kg of crocodile meat (Crocodylia, Appendix I or II) in 4 plastic bags from the baggage of a passenger from abroad.²⁵

June 2023
Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport,
Guangdong Province, China



Seizure of 205 bands and 5 belts made of crocodilian skin (Crocodylia, Appendix I or II) in 3 parcels sent from abroad.²⁶

August 11, 2023
Hekouzhen Border Post, Honghe Hani and Yi
Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province,
China. Border with Viet Nam.



Seizure of 1,447 crocodile skins (Crocodylia, Appendix I or II) dyed white and black and ranging in length from 0.75 m to 1.40 m and of 964 crocodile leather straps ranging in length from 1.1 m to 1.4 m and dyed brown and white. The total value is estimated at 3 million yuan (419,000 US\$). The skins and straps were crammed into 12 bags hidden in bushes. The border patrol's attention was drawn by a strong, suspicious odour of animal origin. The crocodile parts were obviously intended for luxury leather goods and illicit workshops.²⁷

INDIA

June 13, 2023
Raghopur Diyara Island, Vaishali District, State
of Bihar, India

A mugger crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*, Appendix I) suspected of having snatched a young boy in the waters of the Ganges River and eaten him as he and his family prepared to celebrate a puja on a happy occasion was caught in a net by the crowd and lynched, beaten with sticks and iron bars. The authorities arrived on the scene shortly afterwards, stating that the population should not take justice into their own hands even in tragic circumstances, and that the perpetrators of the offence against the Wildlife Protection Act will be prosecuted.²⁸

July 31, 2023
Chandrupatla, Mulugu District, State of
Telangana, India

After the rainy season, mugger crocodiles (*Crocodylus palustris*, Appendix I) carried by rivers in flood come out onto the banks to sunbathe and venture into rice fields, ponds and other bodies of water. They are a source of concern to the locals, and are also regarded as food and commercial goods. A crocodile was captured near the village and its meat was auctioned off. An arrest. Accomplices evaded police questioning. Some of the meat was seized.²⁹

INDONESIA

August 16, 2023

Banyuasin Regency, South Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

The salt-water crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*, Appendix I) was caught by workers on an oil palm plantation, then cut into several pieces with a sickle. According to Martialis Puspito, director of the local branch of the BKSDA, the crocodile was "at home". Signs had been set up near the river to deny access to the workers and their families, and the familiar, non-aggressive presence of the endangered specimen was known to all.³⁰

August 22, 2023

Laut, Ogan Komering Ilir Regency, South Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia



Seizure by the provincial criminal police (Ditreskrimsus) of 58 salt-water crocodiles (*Crocodylus porosus*, Appendix I) from 3 illegal farms: 11 from Sukarni (aged 48, former village chief), 13 from Amrun (aged 73) and 34 from Supratman (aged 43). The 3 establishments were surrounded by concrete walls and apparently unknown to the neighbours. According to one of the suspects, the crocodiles were sold for 5,000 Indonesian rupiah per centimetre, i.e. 0.30 US\$, once they had exceeded one metre in length. For example, a crocodile measuring 1.2 metres in length sold for 36 US\$. The traffic had been organised since 2014 by a certain Budiman, a farmer who died a few years ago. The identity of his successor is unknown at this stage of the investigation.³¹

NEPAL

June 26, 2023

Chitwan National Park, Chitwan District, Bagmati Province, Nepal



A male gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*, Appendix I) has died. It clearly bears the ghara at the end of its snout, a kind of hump and instrument which grows at the age of sexual maturity and enables them to vocalize and blow bubbles during courtship displays. It was found lifeless in a net with a hook in its abdomen on a bank of the Budhi Rapti, a tributary of the Rapti that flows through Chitwan National Park. The Rapti, Reu and Narayani rivers, tributaries of the Ganges River, are home to 4 to 5 males for every 200 and a few females. The Rapti is home to a few gharials, including just one male, and it was perhaps this single adult male that was killed in the Budhi Rapti. "Any unnatural death of a gharial is a serious threat for conservation, but the death of a male can have even severe consequences on the population." Gharial, see "On the Trail" n°5 p.29, n°8 p.18 (ref.5), n°12 p.25 (ref.2), n°18 p.26 (ref.6), n°27 p.37 (ref.7) and n°29 p.145 (ref.12).³²

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

August 2023

Gulf of Carpentaria and Townsville, State of Queensland, Australia

- The CrocWatch website and its emergency telephone number (1300-130-372) are overheating. At least 5 salt-water crocodiles (*Crocodylus porosus*, Appendix II) were found dead in August in the Norman, the coastal river of the Gulf of Carpentaria. The CLCAC (Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation) rangers are on full alert. Although they keep repeating that reptiles are not a danger to human populations, poaching acts come one after the other for several months in Queensland (see "On the Trail" n°40 p.186, ref.32 and 34). Several crocodiles are decapitated. Dylan Leschke, a fisherman on the Norman, is at his wits' end. "I've never seen anything so disgusting out there - wasting a 3-tonne beast like that". Salt-water crocodile heads sell for around 3,000 US\$ and the black market in skins continues to thrive.

- The body of a salt-water crocodile was discovered in the mangroves of the Ross River on August 15. It was 2.6 m long. A 4-m long steel wire protruded from its snout. At its end, the wire was attached to a big stone at the bottom of the marsh. During the post-mortem examination, the forensic veterinarians found a large hook in the stomach. A bait trap had lured the crocodile. It drowned. "It would have died a slow, agonising death," said Tony Frisby, head of the rangers. With his colleagues and the help of pro crocs, he embarked on the difficult task of tracking down similar devices.³³

AMPHIBIANS

AMERICA

COLOMBIA

Beginning of July 2023

El Dorado, Bogotá International Airport, Colombia

A Mexican tree frog (*Smilisca baudinii*) was seized from the luggage of a passenger travelling from Costa Rica.

Smilisca baudinii range from the southern United States to southern Costa Rica. They live in forests, close to waterholes, and take refuge in tree holes during the dry season. Males measure 7.5 cm and females up to 9 cm. Their colour varies from green to brown. Their populations are declining due to urbanisation. They are also sold as pets.¹



Smilisca baudinii

MEXICO

June 27, 2023

Altamira, State of Tamaulipas, Mexico

Seizure of axolotls (*Ambystoma mexicanum*, Appendix II) on the Plaza de la Constitución in the town centre. The hawkker was selling them for 3,000 pesos (170 US\$) each.

Axolotl in Mexico, see "On the Trail" n°18 p.116 (ref.30), n°20 p.120 (ref.33), n°26 p.34 (ref.1) and n°35 p.178 (ref.25).²



ASIA

CHINA

June 2023

Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

Seizure in a parcel from abroad of 12 frogs, including blunt-headed burrowing frogs (*Glyphoglossus molossus*) from South-East Asia, considered to be the most delicious and sold at food markets and at the roadside. They are gradually being extirpated from their favourite habitats, dry evergreen forests and sandy areas near ponds and pools. The species is endangered. The specimens sold on the markets are increasingly small and have not reached sexual maturity. It's a slippery slope.³



Glyphoglossus molossus

June 2023

Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 8 marbled newts (*Triturus marmoratus*) in a parcel from abroad. Marbled newts are native to western France and northern Spain and Portugal. The species is in serious decline as a result of a number of combined threats, foremost of which are the eutrophication and pollution of its aquatic habitats and the arrival in Western Europe, via international traffic in salamanders and newts, of the pathogenic fungi *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans* and *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*, which cause massive mortality in frogs, salamanders, newts and limbless vertebrates.⁴





© François-Xavier Taxi

Marbled newt (*Triturus marmoratus*)

August 2023

Huangdao District, Qingdao Prefecture, Shandong Province, China



Hou Moumou, Yan and Gao (not their real names) sentenced to 6 months in prison for poaching and trading in dozens of Asiatic toads (*Bufo gargarizans*) between August and October 2022.⁵

PHILIPPINES

August 2, 2023

Ninoy-Aquino International Airport, Manila, National Capital Region, Philippines

Seizure by airport customs from a parcel sent from Malaysia to San Pedro Laguna and said to contain "accessories" of 5 "horned" frogs (genus *Ceratophrys*) with a total estimated value of 81,800 pesos or 1,490 US\$ and 300 US\$ per specimen.⁶

EUROPE

SPAIN

August 2023

Valencia, Valencian Community, Spain

The Guardia Civil notices an offer on the Internet to sell yellow-banded poison frogs (*Dendrobates leucomelas*, Appendix II) and manages to locate the advertiser. At his home, 19 specimens were seized in 2 terrariums. They were quarantined at the Benidorm Herpetological Institute. They tested negative for ranavirus, *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* and *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans*.⁷

Amphibians, see also page 179 (ref.58).

TRADE IN FROGS' LEGS MUST BE CURBED!

Paris, Munich, March 6, 2024 – In a joint letter, 557 experts from research, nature conservation and veterinary medicine have called on French President Emmanuel Macron to end the overexploitation of frogs in Asia and Southeast Europe for the EU's hunger for frogs' legs. France, as the largest consumer, should initiate the international protection of the most traded frog species through the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The letter is an initiative of Robin des Bois, the Veterinarians for Biodiversity (Vétérinaires pour la Biodiversité) and the German organisation Pro Wildlife. A similar request was made by 46 NGOs on January 25 to Mr Béchu, the French Minister for Ecological Transition. So far, this letter has gone unanswered. *"Are the French doomed to be froggies? It's time to remember that frogs are also voluntary helpers for farmers. When they disappear, pests proliferate and the use of pesticides increases"* points out Charlotte Nithart, President of Robin des Bois.

France is the largest consumer of frogs' legs

According to a study by Robin des Bois and Pro Wildlife the European Union imports an average of 4 070 tonnes of frozen frogs' legs annually, indicating France as the largest consumer with more than 3000 tonnes imported annually. The annual EU imports are equivalent to 80-200 million frogs, with the vast majority sourced from wild populations, in particular from Indonesia, Turkey and Albania. Frogs' legs are also imported from Viet Nam, but these originate from farms that also have a negative impact on the wild frog population.

Frogs' legs trade is destructive to nature

Recent field studies indicate that several species and populations are already experiencing a significant decline, i.e., current data suggests that the fanged river frog (*Limnonectes macrodon*) has apparently disappeared from commercial imports to France. Even common species such as the crab-eating frog (*Fejervarya cancrivora*) and the rice-field frog (*Fejervarya limnocharis*) are already in decline due to intense commercial harvests and exports for many years. However, frogs play a crucial role in ecosystem function and continuous oftakes disrupt their functions.

Alain Moussu, President of the Vétérinaires pour la Biodiversité, highlights: *"Veterinarians have joined this initiative in large numbers because they are both sensitive to the cruelty that prevails in this market and concerned about the ecological imbalances caused by the collapse of amphibian populations and the subsequent risks for human health linked with the increasing mosquitos' populations."*

France has a particular responsibility

"It's absurd: the natural frog populations here in Europe are protected under EU law. But the EU still tolerates the collection of millions of animals in other countries – even if this threatens the frog populations there. This is not at all in line with the EU's recent biodiversity strategy." criticises Dr Sandra Altherr, head of science at Pro Wildlife.

"Frog populations native to France and the EU are protected against commercial exploitation; the EU should no longer permit the overexploitation of frog species and populations in the major supplying countries to not only threaten the targeted species and populations but also the respective ecosystems and their services for humans", the joint letter to President Macron reads. It continues: *"We see France as having a particular responsibility to take the lead on this issue. Please arrange your Environmental Ministry to take the necessary steps and become the champion of amphibian conservation at the next CITES meeting."* This letter was also sent to Mr Berville, Secretary of State for the Sea and Biodiversity.

Further information: <https://robindesbois.org/en/grenouilles-appel-de-plus-de-550-scientifiques-et-veterinaires/>



Limnonectes gyldenstolpei



Apollo butterfly (*Parnassius apollo*). Photo Nicolas Helitas

AMERICA

COLOMBIA

August 18, 2023
Sonsón, Department of Antioquia, Colombia



Seizure of 100 scorpions of the species *Tityus antioquiensis* from a 50-year-old man presenting himself as a shaman. He wanted to use them to make non-conventional medicines. They were hidden in egg cartons.¹

ASIA

AZERBAIJAN

Beginning of August 2023
Varvara, Yevlax District, Azerbaijan

Arrest in the marshes of Azer Jafarov. He was poaching northern medicinal leeches (*Hirudo medicinalis*, synonymous with *Hirudo orientalis*, Appendix II) which are listed in Azerbaijan's Red Book of Protected Species. Jafarov lives in Sumgait, 300 km from Varvara.²

CHINA

June 12, 2023
Jiangning District, Nanjing Prefecture, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure in a parcel from abroad of 129 dead insects of 7 different species, including *Batocera lineolata* from East Asia and *Odontolabis brookeana* from South-East Asia.³

July 2023

Hefei, Anhui Province, China

96 preserved insects of 10 different species, including *Stellognatha maculata* native to Madagascar, seized in a parcel from abroad.⁴

August 14, 2023

Xiangzhou District, Zhuhai Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China



Customs recovered 168 dead butterflies of 3 different species in a parcel from abroad: *Hypolimnys dexthea*, *Chrysidia rhipheus* and *Argema mittrei*, all from Madagascar.⁵

EUROPE

SPAIN

July 2023

Teruel, Province of Teruel, Autonomous Community of Aragon, Spain

A French citizen fined 1,200 € (1,310 US\$) for catching 364 lepidopterans, including 27 Apollo butterflies (*Parnassius apollo*, Appendix II) and 6 moths (*Zygaena ignifera*), and beetles including scarab beetles in the Sierra de Albarracín.⁶



Argema mittrei

MULTI-SPECIES

Events concerning among others elephants, rhinos, felines, bears or pangolins and their by-products are indicated by these pictograms:



Cases concerning exclusively pangolins, elephants, felines, rhinos and hornbills see page 16; elephants, hippos, walrus and felines see page 32.

WESTERN AFRICA

LIBERIA

July-August 2023
Gardnersville and Monrovia, Montserrado County, Liberia



Conviction of Joseph D. Bestman, director of the Noah Art School in Gardnersville, for keeping (and mistreating) 7 African sharp-nosed crocodiles (*Crocodylus cataphractus*, Appendix I) and African dwarf crocodiles (*Osteolaemus tetraspis*, Appendix I) and 2 sooty mangabeys (*Cercocebus atys*, Appendix II) to a fine equal to 100 US\$ payable within 24 hours. Failing this, the fine will be replaced by a 3-month prison sentence. According to him, the purpose of this "mini-zoo" was to establish contact between the animal world and the students. The animals were transferred to the Libassa Wildlife Sanctuary. After a period of observation, the 3 female African sharp-nosed crocodiles were released into suitable habitats.¹

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

June 14, 2023
Hekpoort, Gauteng Province, South Africa



A private security patrol discovered a mass grave near the Stallard Farm workers' dining hall: ostrich (*Struthio camelus*, Appendix I in 12 African countries), serval (*Leptailurus serval*, Appendix II), zebra (genus *Equus*, *Equus zebra hartmannae* and *Equus zebra zebra*, Appendix II, found in South Africa), Cape porcupine (*Hystrix africaeaustralis*) and blesbok (*Damaliscus pygargus phillipsi*) remains were discovered under piles of green waste. The patrol arrested 3 workers and seized cannabis in several parts of the dining hall and dormitory.³

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

July 10, 2023
Pocatello, State of Idaho, United States of America



Yan 'Bo' Fong, chef and restaurateur, was sentenced to 8 years' suspended imprisonment and 20 years' probation, together with fines and legal costs of 90,000 US\$ and 100 hours' community service for committing a number of wildlife offences. He served or sold to customers at his restaurant in Pocatello meat from puma (*Puma concolor*, Appendix II), from bobcat (*Lynx rufus*, Appendix II), gall bladders and paws from American black bears (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II). He is sine die banned from hunting, fishing and setting traps in Idaho. He has already been convicted of similar offences in Montana in 2022 (see "On the Trail" n°34 p.214, ref.21, and n°36 p.189, ref.21).⁴



CENTRAL AFRICA

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

See next page, August 16, 2023, United States of America.

EASTERN AFRICA

TANZANIA

End of July to mid-August 2023
Rufiji District, Pwani Region, Tanzania



Five zebras (genre *Equus*), 4 antelopes (family Bovidae) and one African buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*) died in traps in the Juhiwangumwa protected area next to Nyerere National Park.²

FAMILY AFFAIRS

July 31, 2023

Saint-Johnsbury, State of Vermont, United States of America



Logan Bogie, 20, is charged with poaching 7 white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) at night between October and November 2022 with the help of his buddy Wyatt Roy, aged 18. Logan Bogie also killed an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) behind the home of his father, 50-year-old Calvin Bogie III. Calvin Bogie Junior, 72, son of the late Calvin Bogie I, also tried to conceal Logan Bogie's night activities. To justify himself, the youngest member of the dynasty told police that he was very upset by the break-up with his girlfriend and had an "inability to resist the temptation."⁵

August 1st, 2023

Washington Dulles International Airport, State of Virginia, United States of America

Seizure of 77 dried seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II), 5 vials of snail ointment and 5 dead snakes in the luggage of a Vietnamese travelling to Fairfax (Virginia).⁶

August 16, 2023

United States of America

The US Embassy in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, is designating the following individuals as generally ineligible for entry into the United States: Cosma Wilungula Balongelwa, Léonard Muamba Kanda and Augustin Ngumbi Amuri due to their involvement in significant corruption. The wives of Cosma Wilungula Balongelwa and Léonard Muamba Kanda are also ineligible for entry into the United States.

Leonard Muamba Kanda is the former Department Head of the DRC Management Authority for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

Cosma Wilungula Balongelwa was sacked from his post as Director General of Congolese Institute for the Conservation of Nature (ICCN) in August 2021 for squandering funds and diverting them to private ends, but he denies any involvement in the export to China or other countries of chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I), gorillas (*Gorilla* spp., Appendix I), okapis (*Okapia johnstoni*) and other animals listed in the CITES Appendices. In June 2018, "On the Trail" n°21 p.108 (ref.7) reported on negotiations between China and the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the export of 6 gorillas, 8 chimpanzees and 8 bonobos (*Pan paniscus*, Appendix I) to the zoos in Taiyuan (Shanxi province) and Anji (Zhejiang province). A so-called scientific programme served as an alibi for the project.

Those close to Augustin Ngumbi Amuri, director-coordinator of the DRC CITES Management Authority, claim he is innocent and maintain that "the United States Department of State was misled and misinformed by its sources, which included certain non-governmental organisations and obscure forces intent on damaging the reputation of a worthy son of the Democratic Republic of the Congo."

Read also about smuggled exports of protected species from the Democratic Republic of the Congo "On the Trail" n°11 p.66 (ref.14).⁷

August 28, 2023

Coeur d'Alene, State of Idaho, United States of America



Under the Northern Leather and Craft Supply banner, Gordon A. Wilson, 66, sold fur frills, deer antler buttons and beads, coyote, raccoon and lynx skins, as well as poached puma (*Puma concolor*, Appendix II) skins, including kittens, from 2016 to 2022. His catalogue also included talons and heads of golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II). Wilson advised poachers who brought him eagles freshly killed with rifles or crossbows to throw the carcasses in the dumpster. He was sentenced to over 100,000 US\$ in restitution to Idaho, 5 years' probation and the permanent withdrawal of his hunting and trapping privileges.⁸



© Coeur d'Alene Press

LATIN AMERICA

ARGENTINA

June 2, 2023

Province of Chaco, Argentina

Seizure during a search of 2 black howler monkeys (*Alouatta caraya*, Appendix II), a caiman (*Caiman crocodilus* or *Caiman latirostris*, Appendix II) skin, a seven-banded armadillo (*Dasypus septemcinctus*) shell, a rhea (*Rhea americana* or *Pterocnemia pennata*, Appendix I or II) egg, 15 empty birdcages and 2 rifles.⁹

August 30, 2023

San Fernando, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina

A world first. In the presence of the Minister for the Environment, more than 6,000 antlers, horns, skulls and skins of rhea (*Rhea americana* or *Pterocnemia pennata*, Appendix I or II), peccary (Tayassuidae, Appendix I or II), red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), blackbuck (*Antilope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Pakistan and Nepal), Asiatic buffalo (*Bubalus arnee*, Appendix III in Nepal), kudu (genus *Tragelaphus*), oryx (genus *Oryx*), nyala (*Tragelaphus angasii*), zebras (genus *Equus*), lion (*Panthera leo*, Appendix I or II), puma (*Puma concolor*, Appendix II), rhinoceros, elephant, wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) and warthog (genus *Phacochoerus*) tusks, all trophies seized over the last 20 years by the State authorities (see in particular "On the Trail" n°32 p.235, ref.19, and n°37 p.182, ref.19). An irremediable and positive action which contrasts with the auctioning by US Fish and Wildlife of deer antlers seized in the USA. In addition, the Ministry of the Environment has filed a civil suit in a case of poaching of marsh deer (*Blastocercus dichotomus*, Appendix I) in the Paraná delta. The poachers were fined over 30 million pesos (109,880 US\$). It's not certain that the new government of Javier Milei, whose emblem is the chainsaw, will pursue this policy in favour of biodiversity.¹⁰



BOLIVIA

July 2023

Trinidad, Province of Cercado, Department of Beni, Bolivia



Scandal in the men's prison. Prisoners make wallets, hats, belts and bags from parts of jaguar (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I), South American tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*, Appendix II), boa (Boidae, Appendix I or II) and rhea (Rheidae, Appendix I or II). The items are then sold on local markets or in handicraft shops. The main buyers are believed to be temporary residents of Asian origin. How the trafficking is organised remains a mystery. Is it prison work under the supervision of the prison director and the guards, to ensure an income for the prisoners, or is it the work of a conspiracy of prisoners engaged in clandestine and lucrative trafficking, with the complicity of the prison staff and an outside commercial network?¹¹

BRAZIL

Beginning of June 2023

Cocal, State of Piauí, Brazil

Transfer to the Ibama of Parnaíba of 2 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), a tufted capuchin (*Cebus apella*, synonymous with *Sapajus apella*, Appendix II) and an armadillo (family Dasypodidae) seized under a search warrant along with 5 rifles, 36-calibre ammunition, lead shot and a chainsaw.¹²

July 8, 2023

Colatina, State of Espírito Santo, Brazil



Seizure of 2 frozen skinned armadillos (family Dasypodidae or Chlamyphoridae), 1.3 and 4.5 kg, 2 firearms, 11 rounds of ammunition, 17 grams of black powder and 3 double-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulea*) in cages.¹³

Mid-July 2023
Irecê and Cafarnaum, State of Bahia, Brazil



Seizure by the 47^a Fiscalização Preventiva Integrada "wildlife" team of 180 animals, including tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II), buff-throated saltators (*Saltator maximus*), campo troupials (*Icterus jamacaii*), red-headed cardinals (genus *Paroaria*) and yellow-bellied seedeaters (*Sporophila nigricollis*). After a veterinary examination and some care, 70 birds have regained their freedom.¹⁴

July 19, 2023
Colombo, State of Paraná, Brazil

Seizure of lovebirds (*Agapornis* spp., Appendix II except *Agapornis roseicollis*), green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II), black-bellied sliders (*Trachemys dorbigni*), four-toed hedgehogs (*Atelerix albiventris*) and snakes "living in an inappropriate and cramped environment, fed with spoiled food" among dead animals. The survivors were handed over to the care of Curitiba's Agua e Terra Institute.¹⁵

August 3, 2023
Passagem Franca do Piauí, State of Piauí, Brazil

The civil and military police, after gathering consistent evidence, seized under search warrant an armadillo (family Dasypodidae or Chlamyphoridae) and 3 agoutis (genus *Dasyprocta*), all butchered, a scale for weighing the meat, 3 firearms, 58 cartridges and 3 live birds.¹⁶

August 20, 2023
Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Seizure in the port of São Raimundo aboard the Salmo 23 of 145 kg of "pirarucu" or arapaima fillets (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), 93 kg of paca meat (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras), 14 kg of deer meat and 15 turtles. Two arrests, 50 and 62 years old.¹⁷

August 25, 2023
Mesquita, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Seizure of 44 wild birds, including green winged saltators (*Saltator similis*), blue-black grassquits (*Volatinia jacarina*) and rusty-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila collaris*) and 2 capuchins (*Cebus* spp., synonymous with *Sapajus* spp., Appendix II). Their prison guard was taken into custody and brought to justice.¹⁸

COLOMBIA

June 11, 2023
El Dorado International Airport, Bogotá, Colombia

Seizure of a black caiman skull (*Melanosuchus niger*, Appendix I or II), a shortfin mako shark jaw (*Isurus oxyrinchus*, Appendix II), and a tiger shark tooth (*Galeocerdo cuvier*) in a package from Hollywood, United States of America, bound for a North American national living in Medellín, Department of Antioquia.¹⁹

August 12, 2023
Barranquilla, Regional Autonomous Corporation of Atlántico, Colombia

Seizure in the Galán District of 12 finches (genus *Sicalis*), 3 red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II) and one Central American agouti (*Dasyprocta punctata*, Appendix III in Honduras) by the Carabinieri, the Judicial and Criminal Investigation Section of the National Police and the Army. After observing their behavior, veterinary surgeon Daniel Pardo and the Ministry of the Environment recommended their release. This was done in an Atlántico reserve.²⁰

August 12-13, 2023
Matecaña, Regional Autonomous Corporation of Valle del Cauca, Colombia

Seizure in a private home of 3 macaws (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II), 8 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), 2 yellow-crowned amazons (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II), 2 ostriches (genus *Struthio*), a collared peccary (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II), 5 central American agoutis (*Dasyprocta punctata*, Appendix III in Honduras), 7 capybaras (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*), a four-toed hedgehog (*Atelerix albiventris*) and 4 turtles (order Testudines). They were transferred to the San Emigdio refuge in Palmira.²¹

OPERATION LIBERTAD

August 26, 2023
Regional Autonomous Corporation of Caldas, Colombia

Seizure and transfer to the Centro de Atención y Valoración de la Fauna Silvestre of chestnut-fronted macaws (*Ara severus*, Appendix II), Central American agoutis (*Dasyprocta punctata*, Appendix III in Honduras) and opossums (family Didelphidae) just seized and release after several months of training of owls (Strigidae, Appendix I or II), yellow-headed caracaras (*Milvago chimachima*, Appendix II) and agoutis "in an area away from human and urban settlements, and with a wide vegetation cover that will provide these wild specimens with an optimal environment to thrive in their natural ecosystem".²²

ECUADOR

August 2023

Esmeraldas Province, Ecuador

From a private home, officials confiscated a blue-headed parrot (*Pionus menstruus*, Appendix II), a red-ored amazon (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II), 2 collared peccaries (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II) and 6 Colombian wood turtles (*Rhinoclemmys melanosterna*, Appendix II). One arrest.²³

August 28, 2023

Tena, Province of Napo, Ecuador

2 men sentenced to 8 months in prison, fined 1,350 US\$ and ordered to pay 2,000 US\$ in compensation to the Ministry of the Environment for transporting 2 black agoutis (*Dasyprocta fuliginosa*) and one orange-winged amazon (*Amazona amazonica*, Appendix II) on their motorcycle after capturing them.²⁴



FRANCE (GUIANA)

July 18, 2023

Macouria, Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France



Seizure by gendarmes and OFB agents of a tufted capuchin (*Cebus apella*, synonymous with *Sapajus apella*, Appendix II), 4 red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II), a golden-winged parakeet (*Brotogeris chrysoptera*, Appendix II) and an orange-winged amazon (*Amazona amazonica*, Appendix II). The birds had their wings clipped, the capuchin at liberty in the house had apparently been "brought back" from Suriname 2 years ago, and the red-footed tortoises were between 4 metal sheets at the bottom of the garden.²⁵

August 2, 2023

Matoury, Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France

OFB agents spotted several ads on the Leboncoin website offering wild animals for sale ending with the same telephone number. Backed up by the Information Systems Division (DSI), they seized a red-footed tortoise (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II) and 8 melodious birds from the sellers' rooms. The most sought-after birds in French Guiana are the chestnut-bellied seed finches (*Oryzoborus angolensis*, synonymous with *Sporophila angolensis*), the large-bellied seed finches (*Oryzoborus crassirostris*), the ruddy-breasted seedeaters (*Sporophila minuta*), the wing-barred seedeaters (*Sporophila americana*) and the violaceous euphonias (*Euphonia violacea*).²⁶

MEXICO

June 29, 2023

Carmen, State of Campeche, Mexico

The Guatemalan howler (*Alouatta pigra*, Appendix I) and the yellow-headed amazon (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I) were used as decoration and entertainment in a restaurant. Intervention by Profepa and the Fiscalía General de la República. The 2 species are considered by the Semarnat (Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales) to be in danger of extinction.²⁷

Beginning of August 2023

Teziutlán, State of Puebla, Mexico

Seizure of 42 wild animals during the Feria 2023 : 2 Mexican redrump tarantulas (*Tliltocatl vagans*, Appendix II), 2 boa constrictors (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II), 2 western indigo snakes (*Drymarchon melanurus*), 7 green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), 11 mud turtles (*Kinosternon* spp., Appendix I or II), 9 white-lipped mud turtles (*Kinosternon leucostomum*, Appendix II) and 9 Meso-American sliders (*Trachemys venusta*).²⁸

PANAMA

End of July 2023

Vacamonte, Panama Oeste Province, Panama

Seizure from an apartment of a Geoffroy's tamarin (*Saguinus geoffroyi*, Appendix I) and 2 orange-chinned parakeets (*Brotogeris jugularis*, Appendix II) by agents of the Ministry of the Environment of the Republic of Panama (MiAMBIENTE). One arrest.²⁹

PERU

August 14, 2023

Iquitos, Province of Maynas, Department of Loreto, Peru



Gerfor (Gerencia Regional de Desarrollo Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre) and the environmental police, under the direction of the environmental prosecutor's office, seized from the "Anaconda" handicraft bazaar and the neighbouring "La Balsa" restaurant 8 jaguar tooth necklaces, a skull and a fragment of jaguar skin (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I), 3 wallets made of jaguar and anaconda skin (*Eunectes* spp., Appendix II), 2 crocodile skulls (*Crocodylia*, Appendix I or II) and 2 small stuffed crocodiles, a stuffed boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix I or II), 10 macaw feathers (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II), 2 preserved butterfly paintings and 2 bottles filled with dried butterflies and insects.³⁰

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

June 13, 2023

Kwai Tsing Container Terminals, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China

Discovery of a new channel for smuggling various goods, including wildlife parts, between Hong Kong and mainland China. Opening of 15 suspicious containers on board a container ship bound for Singapore (2,600 km by sea). Seizure of a billion electronic components (integrated circuits, printed circuit boards and capacitors), 20,000 bottles of wine and other gourmet products, 27,000 vinyl records and classical music CDs, dried shark fins, dried swim bladders, dried sea dragons (genus *Phycodurus* or *Phyllopteryx*) and tendons of sika deer (*Cervus nippon*) or red deer (*Cervus elaphus*). Traditional Chinese medicine recommends the consumption of deer tendons to boost physical and sexual energy and prevent osteoporosis. Alternatively, tendons from domestic livestock are recommended, albeit they are said to be with a lesser efficacy. Some 10 years ago, Hong Kong's tax authorities inspected 29 medicinal stores and discovered that in 28, the tendons sold under the name of red deer tendons were in fact cow tendons. Deer tendons, see "On the Trail" n°35 p.89 (ref.13).³¹

June 2023

Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China



Seizure of 59 items of jewellery and accessories made from ivory, red coral (genus *Corallium*) and hawksbill turtle shell (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I). Total weight: 219.1 grams.³²

July 12, 2023

Ap Lei Chau Island, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China



© Hong Kong Customs

Customs seized 60 hippopotamus teeth (*Hippopotamidae*, Appendix II), 3,300 live turtles (species unspecified) and 500 tins of veterinary products for dogs as a truck was being unloaded and a speedboat approached with her lights off. The cargo, which was bound for mainland China, is valued at 2 million Hong Kong dollars, or over 55,000 US\$. Three arrests on the docks. One man managed to jump into the speedboat, which then fled with her crew.³³

July 20, 2023

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



Seizure in Fu (not his real name)'s luggage of an item made from hawksbill turtle shell (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I), 7 items made from African forest elephant ivory and one item made from savannah elephant ivory, as assessed by the Gongbei customs technical centre.³⁴

SOUTHEASTERN ASIA

INDONESIA

June 26, 2023

Surabaya, East Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia

Sentencing of Angger Okta Mudhir and Ardyo Putro Nugroho to 7 months' imprisonment and a fine of 10 million rupiah (668 US\$) with a further 2 months' imprisonment in the event of non-payment for intentionally detaining and transporting 18 mangrove monitors (*Varanus indicus*, Appendix II), 2 yellow tree monitors (*Varanus reisingeri*, Appendix II), 34 green tree pythons (*Morelia viridis*, Appendix II), one little filesnake (*Acrochordus granulatus*) and 12 crowned pigeons (*Goura spp.*, Appendix II) dead. Crowned pigeons are large pigeons with a hoopoe on their head, endemic to New Guinea.³⁵



Western crowned pigeon (*Goura cristata*)

July 5, 2023

Pekanbaru, Riau Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Seizure by the police and transfer to the BKSDA shelter of a salmon-crested cockatoo (*Cacatua moluccensis*, Appendix I), a black eagle (*Ictinaetus malayensis*, Appendix II), a Sulawesi hawk-eagle (*Spizaetus lanceolatus*, Appendix II) and 6 leopard cats (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II).³⁶



July 18, 2023

Special Capital Region of Jakarta, Java Island, Indonesia



Two sentences of one year and 4 months in prison and 2 fines of 670 US\$ for transporting and attempting to sell 2 siamangs (*Symphalangus syndactylus*, Appendix I), 2 black-capped lorries (*Lorius lory*, Appendix II), 2 leopard cats (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II), a binturong (*Arctictis binturong*, Appendix III in India) and 5 lesser mouse-deer (also called lesser Malay chevrotain, *Tragulus kanchil*), all local animals.³⁷



Tragulus kanchil

August 10, 2023

Medan, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia



Destruction by fire as in Argentina of stuffed animals or their parts, which were used as exhibits in trials that have now been exhausted: a hornbill helmet (family Bucerotidae), 3 skins and 44 pieces of skins of Sumatran tiger (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), 15,5 kg of pangolin scales, 5 deer antlers (family Cervidae), 317 skins of blood python (*Python Brongersmai*, Appendix II), 38 skins of reticulated python (*Malayopython reticulatus*, synonymous of *Python reticulatus*, Appendix II), and 5 hawksbill turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I).³⁸

August 28, 2023

Sorong Seaport, Western Papua Province, New Guinea Island, Indonesia

Seizure under a bunk on board the km *Gunung Dempo* (route: Jayapura-Nabire-Wasior-Manokwari-Sorong-Makassar-Surabaya-Jakarta) of one sulphur-crested cockatoo (*Cacatua galerita*, Appendix II), 2 eclectus parrots (*Eclectus roratus*, Appendix II), 9 green tree pythons (*Morelia viridis*, Appendix II), 8 white-lipped pythons (*Leiopython albertisii*, Appendix II), one scrub python (*Morelia amethystina*, Appendix II), and 2 mangrove monitors (*Varanus indicus*, Appendix II).

Gunung Dempo, see "On the Trail" n°13 p.30 (ref. 25), n°35 p.180 (ref.37) and n°38 p.106 (ref.34).³⁹

LAOS

3rd week of August 2023

Dak Cheung District, Sekong Province, Laos

Seizure of 302 captive birds in 2 days by the enforcement unit of the law on aquatic animals and wildlife. Several Finlayson's squirrels (*Callosciurus finlaysonii*) and flying squirrels (family Sciuridae) unfortunately died during the WWF-supported operation. Dak Cheung district borders Viet Nam.⁴⁰

MALAYSIA

Beginning of July 2023

Banggi Island, State of Sabah, Malaysia

Alerted by rumors, the State police decided to monitor alleged poachers from Borneo on the 440 km² island of Banggi. Their vigilance is paying off. Two men, ages 30 and 66, both heavily and illegally armed, were arrested in possession of meat from pangolins, mouse deer (Tragulidae family) and wild boar (*Sus scrofa*).⁴¹



OPERATION HUNTER FAMILY AFFAIRS

From August 18 to 20, 2023

Kampung Landai, Kampung Belantek, Kampung Galau and Kampung Bukit Berangan, State of Kedah, Malaysia

Frozen meat from muntjac (genus *Muntiacus*), from sambar deer (*Rusa unicolor*), from mouse deer (family Tragulidae) and from porcupine (family Hystricidae), antlers, skulls, skins and bones, and birds, hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II), white-rumped shamas (*Copsychus malabaricus*, Appendix II), hanging parrots (*Loriculus*, Appendix II), hornbills (family Bucerotidae), leafbirds (genus *Chloropsis*), common emerald doves (*Chalcophaps indica*), black-headed bulbuls (*Pycnonotus atriceps*), black-crested bulbuls (*Pycnonotus flaviventris*), hooked-billed bulbuls (*Setornis criniger*), white-breasted waterhens (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*), were seized from the 6 members of the organised family gang whose main job was to loot the Ulu Muda Forest Reserve, cut up, stuff, auction on social networks and sell on local markets. What was seized in the cages and refrigerators is estimated at 100,000 ringgits, or 22,000 US\$, and the business has been going on for 10 years. The firearms, silenced bows, traps, knives and arsenal are just some of the items seized by the Perhilitan.⁴²



VIET NAM

July 20, 2023

Kon Tum, Kon Tum Province, Viet Nam

Seizure by the road control police of a pangolin and a big-headed turtle (*Platysternon megacephalum*, Appendix I). The driver stated that he had been asked by an unknown person to transport the 2 animals from the side of a road in Tan Canh and hand them over at the Trung Tin crossroads in Kon Tum (50 km) to an unknown recipient.⁴³



August 2023

Di An, Binh Duong Province, Viet Nam

Mai Van Dai, a chicken farmer, had bought a 1.8 kg Sunda pangolin over the Internet for 2.6 million dong (110 US\$), and sold him for almost 3 times as much. She was on her way to deliver him when she was arrested. In addition, 2 dead Bengal monitor lizards (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I) were seized at her home.⁴⁴



August 8, 2023

Vu Quang, Ha Tinh Province, Viet Nam

Mrs Hoang Thi Ngoc sentenced to 24 months' imprisonment and a fine of 50 million dong (2,112 US\$) for keeping 2 African elephant tusks in her luxurious flat without a permit and for also keeping bottles of tigers' (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) and king cobras' (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II) wine on her shelves, the tasting of which was supposed to heal her joints and prevent osteoporosis.⁴⁵



SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

June 2, 2023

Chandaka Tehsil, Khordha District, State of Odisha, India

Seizure of 2 Bengal monitor lizard hemipenes (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I) or "hatta jodi," 11 musk deer preputial glands (*Moschus* spp., Appendix I), one Bengal fox skin (*Vulpes bengalensis*, Appendix III), and 12 sea fans (order Alcyonacea) by the Forest Division with information provided by the WCCB.⁴⁶

June 3, 2023

Khudupani and villages around, Nuapada District, State of Odisha, India

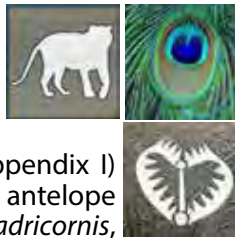
Seizure at Badan Manjhi of a tiger (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) skin, claws and canines, a sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I) in pieces, leopard (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) parts, wild animal organs, 4 Indian peafowl chicks (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), bird feathers, a net, a muzzle-loading gun, a bow and arrows. Arrest of 5 accomplices aged between 36 and 62. Manjhi says he came across a rotting tiger carcass near the Udanti-Sitanadi Tiger Reserve and his village. The villagers salvaged everything that could be salvaged.⁴⁷



June 14, 2023

Kalamdongri, Gariaband District, State of Chhattisgarh, India

Confiscated from Kurso Bhatra: a leopard (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) skin and 3 bones, 2 four-horned antelope or "kotri" (*Tetracerus quadricornis*, Appendix III in Nepal) heads, a sambar deer (*Rusa unicolor*) antler, 10 Indian crested porcupine (*Hystrix indica*) quills and a snare trap. Mohan Singh Rawat was found in possession of leopard teeth and bones. Dumar Manjhi was caught with a bone and other animal parts, plus 2 bones and the tail of a leopard, 20 Indian peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) feathers, a spear, arrows and 250 grams of cannabis. Kalamdongri marks the buffer zone of the Udanti-Sitanadi Reserve, 5 km from the Odisha border. The operation was jointly executed by Chhattisgarh and Odisha forces.⁴⁸



June 23, 2023

Shastri Park, North East Delhi District, National Capital Territory of Delhi, India

Seizure by the police of 19 spotted pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I) and 40 Alexandrine parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II) and rose-ringed parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*) from a pet shop. The manager fled the scene. He is charged with an offence under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and section 429 of the Indian Penal Code on maiming of an animal. The operation was launched thanks to a report from the NGO PFA (People For Animals).⁴⁹

June 26, 2023

Siliguri, Darjeeling District, State of West Bengal, India

Arrest by the RDF (Rapid Deployment Force) at a bus station of 2 individuals from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh on their way to Nepal, carrying in their belongings 3 antlers and 4 skin pieces of spotted deer (*Axis axis*) and 350 ml of alleged Indian cobra (*Naja naja*, Appendix II) in a jar and 15 vials. According to Deepak Rasaili, in charge of the investigation, Sikander Kumar and Sanju Baidh or their accomplices capture cobras in the forests of Assam, kill them, and scald them to extract the oil. Five milliliters are sold in India for 20,000 rupees (240 US\$), and even more in China, Thailand and Indonesia. More and more rumors are driving up prices and pressure on the various cobra species. The oil is said to prevent hair loss, skin cancer and increase virility.⁵⁰

June 28, 2023

Kurnool, Kurnool District, State of Andhra Pradesh, India

As is often the case, few details in the WCCB tweet: seizure today of fire corals (*Millepora* spp., Appendix II), shellfish and an oil suspected to be Bengal monitor oil (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I).⁵¹

FAMILY AFFAIRS

July 3, 2023

Chhapra, Saran District, State of Bihar, India

Seizure of claws and skin fragments of tiger (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), bear nails (Ursidae, Appendix I or II), turtle shells, snake skins and deer antlers in a well-known grocery and a herbal store run by cousins Ranjit Kumar Gupta and Akash Kumar Gupta. They claim that these items are used in black magic rituals.⁵²



August 9 and 10, 2023

Ayodhya, Ayodhya District, and Lucknow, Lucknow District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Seizure of 39 presumed leopard teeth (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), 140 sea fans (order Alcyonacea), 106 "Siyar Singhi", these alleged golden jackal horns (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III in India) made from mud mixed with skin and tufts of jackal hair, and 2 "Hatha Jodi", Bengal monitor lizard hemipenes (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I). Three arrests: Brijesh Kesharwani, Sanjay Tiwari and Dayaram Dubey, who runs a shop near the Lucknow courthouse selling items for tantric rituals, black magic, self-fulfilment and the elimination of negative forces. All the fetishes seized were intended for export to other States in the federal republic.⁵³



August 21, 2023
Chennai International Airport, State of Tamil Nadu, India



Seizure of 30 Grand Cayman blue iguanas (*Cyclura lewisi*, Appendix I) from the Caribbean island of Grand Cayman, 19 royal pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II) from West and Central Africa, and 4 fiery squirrels (*Sciurus flammifer*) from Venezuela, in the luggage of a passenger arriving from Bangkok, Thailand, which is increasingly establishing itself as one of the world's major wildlife shopping centre.⁵⁴

August 22, 2023
Kempegowda International Airport, Bangalore Rural District, State of Karnataka, India

The passenger disembarking from a Thai AirAsia flight from Bangkok on Tuesday night is 32 years old and was about to leave the arrivals area when customs officials pulled him aside and explored his trolleys full of packages. Inside were 234 animals, including an asphyxiated red kangaroo (*Macropus rufus*) and cobras (family Elapidae, 12 species in Appendix II), royal pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II), alligators (*Alligator* spp., Appendix I or II), chameleons (family Chamaeleonidae, 209 species in Appendix I or II), iguanas (family Iguanidae, 40 species in Appendix I or II) and turtles, all juveniles and live. The animals belong to exotic species that have become all the rage on the Indian market in recent years. Exchanges are underway with Thailand to discuss the repatriation of animals obviously purchased on Bangkok's cosmopolitan market.⁵⁵



PAKISTAN

July 13, 2023
District of Rahim Yar Khan, Province of Punjab, Pakistan



The chase between 5 poachers and an anti-poaching flying squad ended in a serious road collision. Inside the all-terrain vehicle of the 5 poachers, Muhammad Abu Bakr, Ishfaq, Sohaib, Muhammad Sajid and Moman Khan, a houbara bustard (*Chlamydotis undulata*, Appendix I), 2 Indian gazelles (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III) and 16 grey francolins (*Ortygornis pondicerianus*), all dead, were discovered and seized. Two members of the anti-poaching brigade were injured and taken to hospital.⁵⁶

August 12, 2023
Tehsil de Batkhela, Province de Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan



Seizure of an Asian black bear cub (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) and 3 macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II), all a few months old. They were not in the house as pets. Rather, they were livestock. The owner intended to sell them. The cub was temporarily handed over to Peshawar Zoo, and the monkeys to the Wildlife Safari Park in the Malakand district.⁵⁷



© The Free Press Journal

WESTERN ASIA

ISRAEL

June 10, 2023

David Ben Gurion International Airport, Central District, Israel

Seizure of 21 protected animals, including reptiles and red-eyed tree frogs (*Agalychnis callidryas*, Appendix II) native to Latin America, which an Israeli was trying to bring into Israel. "The animals were handed over to the Veterinary Service and will be returned to their place of origin". The press release from the Border, Customs and National Parks Police says no more, i.e. very little and not enough.⁵⁸



Red-eyed treefrog (*Agalychnis callidryas*)

TURKIYE

June 2023

Istanbul, Istanbul Province, Türkiye

Seizures in 2 weeks by the Regional Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks (DKMP) of 63 protected animals or their parts: 4 carved tusks, a macaque (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II), 12 fallow deer (*Dama dama*, *Dama dama mesopotamica*, Appendix I), 2 roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) trophies, one wallaby (family Macropodidae), 13 Burmese pythons (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II), 4 tarantulas (family Theraphosidae), 20 parrots (Psittaciformes, Appendix I or II except 4 species) and 6 peafowls (*Pavo muticus*, Appendix II or *Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan). At least 2 arrests. The total amount of fines imposed for illegal trade in endangered species is equal to 8,255 US\$. The total amount of fines imposed for ecological damage is equal to 90,000 US\$. The DKMP in other respects warns against capturing young fallow deer in their natural habitats in May and June and taming them in enclosed areas. Both practices are illegal.⁵⁹



WESTERN EUROPE

GERMANY

July 26, 2023

Frankfurt am Main, Hesse Land, Germany

A 60-day fine (a total of 900 € or 985 US\$) for a man of Vietnamese origin living in Germany who had brought back a tiger claw (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) and 10 dried seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II) from Asia as a gift for his family, and who had been arrested at Frankfurt international airport.⁶⁰



FRANCE

June 8, 2023 and July 10, 2024

Saint-Martin-sur-le-Pré and Baconnes, Department of Marne, France

Mr. X, 78 years old, was arrested on June 8, 2023 for unauthorized possession at his home and on the premises of his hunting company of species protected by national and international regulations: 2 African elephant feet stuffed and transformed into stools, 2 African elephant raw ivory tusks, a stuffed leopard (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), 3 leopard claws, a stuffed northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II), a stuffed kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II), a stuffed Montagu's harrier (*Circus pygargus*, Appendix II) and a stuffed common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II). Mr. X, a fan of African safaris who was unable to prove either the legality or the origin of the animals held, appeared before the Troyes Criminal Court on June 12, 2024. Robin des Bois has joined the case as a civil party. On July 10, Mr X was fined 8,000 € (8,750 US\$), of which 4,000 € was suspended, ordered to publish his conviction in the regional newspaper L'Union for 3 days at his own expense, and to pay 900 € (980 US\$) to Robin des Bois for moral damage and legal costs. The court did not find that the stuffed leopard had been illegally detained. The Troyes public prosecutor's office and Mr X have appealed. To be continued.⁶¹



July 19, 2023

La Chapelle-en-Vercors, Department of Drôme, and Department of Isère, France

Following the discovery between April and May 2023 of several bodies of common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II), Alpine ibexes (*Capra ibex*), red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), European roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) and red foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*) near Vassieux-en-Vercors and Saint-Agnan-en-Vercors, 5 individuals, all holders of hunting licences, were arrested. Deer and ibex trophies, 11 hunting weapons, 200 rounds of ammunition, 2 pick-ups, binoculars and other spotting and dazzling tools were seized. The trial was due to take place on February 5, 2024 in Valence, in the Drôme department. It has been postponed to October 14, 2024.⁶²

August 29 and 30, 2023

Salbris, Department of Loir-et-Cher, and Sorigny, Department of Indre-et-Loire, France

It's the end of the vacations and the return of the transhumance. At the request of the Blois public prosecutor, customs, the OFB and the gendarmerie carried out checks at exit 17 of the A10 freeway and exit 4 of the A71 freeway. The checks were intended to test the deployment of COLDEN (Operational Committees for the Fight against Environmental Crime). European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and Greek tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II) were seized from vehicles coming from Spain and North Africa. They received first aid from a Beauval zoo veterinarian and were handed over to the Tours Natural History Museum and the Sauve qui Plume non-profit organisation. Two giant African land snails (*Lissachatina fulica*) unfortunately escaped seizure. Their transport and import into the European Union are not yet punishable, even though they are being illegally bred and the species is invasive.⁶³

SOUTHERN EUROPE

SPAIN

OPERATION LURIA

August 2023

Daroca and Manchones, Province of Zaragoza, Autonomous Community of Aragon, Spain



Seizure of 50 remains on the 2 properties of a wildlife collector: a skin with head of a lion (*Panthera leo*, Appendix I or II) and a skin with head of a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix I or II), skulls and trophies of red foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*, 3 subspecies listed in Appendix III in Spain), of wolves (genus *Canis*), of Pyrenean chamois (*Rupicapra pyrenaica*, *Rupicapra pyrenaica ornata*, Appendix II), of wild goats (genus *Capra*), of wildebeests (genus *Connochaetes*) and of European roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*), a common otter (*Lutra lutra*, Appendix I), a common genet (*Genetta genetta*), a western capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*) and an Eurasian jack (*Garrulus glandarius*), all stuffed. Three arrests.⁶⁴



ITALY

June 13, 2023

Aielli, Province of L'Aquila, Region of Abruzzo, Italy



Sirente Velino Regional Park staff and a team from Rewilding Apennines discovered the carcass of a pig sprayed with an agricultural poison and tire tracks, demonstrating an evil intent to maliciously kill grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) or griffon vultures (*Gyps fulvus*, Appendix II). The deadly bait was removed from the appetite of wild animals under the supervision of the park vet. Investigations are underway to identify the pesticide and the poisoners. Poisoning of griffon vultures or wolves in the Sirente Velino Park, see "On the Trail" n°40 p.157 (Lazio, map of poaching and seizures of birds in Italy) and p.209 (ref.95).⁶⁵

Beginning of July 2023

Acerra, Metropolitan City of Naples, Region of Campania, Italy

Seizure by carabinieri of 3 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) and 2 European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*) in the yard of a house. The birds were immediately released.⁶⁶

MONTENEGRO

July 11 and 27, 2023

Budva Municipality, Montenegro



Animal rights activists, CZIP (Centre for Protection and Research of birds of Montenegro) first of them, are protesting against the presence in the town of 2 Ukrainian photographers displaying 2 or 3 barn owls (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II), a monkey (Primates, Appendix I or II) and a python (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), and offering passers-by the chance to pose for money with their live and imprisoned "work tools".⁶⁷

August 14, 2023
Bar, Municipality of Bar, Montenegro



In the tourist-filled streets along the Adriatic, street photographers are busy day and night. Zoran Tajkun, or at least that's how she introduces herself, of unknown nationality, gives change to customers, holding in her left hand a poor caiman (*Alligatoridae*, Appendix I or II) dragged along between the Soho Pizza and Azzuro restaurants on the banks of the river Željeznica. She also has a python (*Pythonidae*, Appendix I or II) in stock. Nearby, a fellow exhibits parrots (*Psittaciformes*, Appendix I or II except for 4 species) with impunity, and in other streets of the town, where the crowds are dense, another exhibits a barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II). The municipality of Bar is a zoo. The CZIP (Centar za zaštitu i proučavanje ptica, Centre for the Protection and Study of Birds) is outraged at the inertia of the relevant ministries.⁶⁸

EASTERN EUROPE

POLAND

June 2, 2023 and January 19 and 25, 2024

Nowy Sącz and Limanowa, Lesser Poland Voivodeship, Poland



- Sentencing of Mariusz S., the operator of a pet shop, to 8 months' imprisonment, a 5-year ban on keeping animals, a 10-year ban on working in an animal-related profession, a fine of 6,000 zlotys (1,425 US\$), 10,000 zlotys (2,375 US\$) in damages to the SPA in Krynica-Zdrój and 10. 000 zlotys in legal costs, for mistreatment of animals and unauthorized trading in protected species, including 2 crimson rosellas (*Platycercus elegans*, Appendix II), 2 blue-and-yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II), 6 Asiatic rock pythons (*Python molurus*, Appendix I), a reticulated python (*Malayopython reticulatus*, synonymous with *Python reticulatus*, Appendix II), 2 boa constrictors (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix I or II), a green iguana (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), a tufted capuchin (*Cebus apella*, synonymous with *Sapajus apella*, Appendix II) and a common marmoset (*Callithrix jacchus*, Appendix II).

- Another 10-month prison sentence for similar offences in Limanowna. Mariusz S. operated 4 pet shops.

- First conviction upheld on appeal, with Mariusz S. required to pay 840 zlotys (215 US\$) in legal costs. See "On the Trail" n°35 p.186 (ref. 78).⁶⁹

ROMANIA

June 21, 2023

Siriu, Buzău County, Romania



Police raided 11 homes in Siriu (population 3,000). Poaching in conspiracy of 8 brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) and deer (family Cervidae) is suspected. The animals were regularly baited in the vicinity of the town and shot after being harassed by a pack of hunting dogs. Seizures of 8 kg of meat, bones, bear furs, deer trophies, 129 rounds of ammunition, traps and axes. Three suspects are in custody.⁷⁰



RUSSIA

June 15, 2023

Chelyabinsk, Chelyabinsk Oblast, Russia

Police finally react to the exploitation of animals exhibited by street photographers in the city. Seizure of a long-eared owl (*Asio otus*, Appendix II) and a green tree python (*Morelia viridis*, Appendix II) in the presence of the Spasi Menya! (Save me!) association. After urgent veterinary treatment, they were transferred to a specialised shelter. They were luckier than the 2 owls and boa exploited by photographers at the beginning of May. At the time, the police did not respond to the complaints (see "On the Trail" n°40 p.162, ref.177).⁷¹

June 28, 2023

Suzun, Novosibirsk Oblast, Russia

A phantom zoo created from scratch in an abandoned sawmill by a man now on the run was causing concern in the community of Suzun (population 15,500). A dead crocodile (*Crocodylia*, Appendix I or II) was found at the end of Krylov Street, and elsewhere the corpse of an ostrich (genus *Struthio*). Five presumed Alaskan wolves (*Canis lupus pambasileus*, Appendix II) (half wild, half domestic) roam the streets and suburbs, returning to the sawmill more or less every evening. Together with a cold and malnourished python (*Pythonidae*, Appendix I or II), they have just been seized and transferred to the Novosibirsk zoo.⁷²

July 10, 2023

Moscow Oblast, Russia

Seizure by the FSB of an alleged tiger skeleton (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), 310 bear paws (*Ursidae*, Appendix I or II), 79 saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II), 10 kg of Caspian red deer antlers (*Cervus elaphus maral*) and 1.7 tons of crabs bound for "a Middle Eastern country". Two arrests.⁷³



July 12, 2023

Kraskino, Primorsky Krai, Russia. Border with China.

Customs officers seized 12 bear fangs and 2 bear patellas (*Ursidae*, Appendix I or II), 3 preputial glands of Siberian musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*, Appendix II) and 518 tails and 19 penises of deer (family *Cervidae*) in a cache inside the fuel tank of a coach. The Chinese driver acknowledged of being informed of the attempted smuggling into China.⁷⁴



August 15, and September 13, 2023

Timofeevka, Promorsky Krai, Russia

The tigers (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), the lions (*Panthera leo*, Appendix I or II), the bears (*Ursidae*, Appendix I or II), the grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II), the foxes (genus *Vulpes*), the hyaenas (family *Hyaenidae*), the racoons (genus *Procyon*), the camels (genus *Camelus*), the ostriches (genus *Struthio*) and their captive companions at the 70-hectare "White Lion" zoo were visited by inspectors from the environmental prosecutor's office. The list of offences notified to the management is endless. It includes the absence of a licence to keep animals on the Red List, the failure to disinfect premises and cages, unregulated feed rations, inadequate veterinary supervision and improvised waste storage. In his defence, the zoo's director argues that all the regularisations are in progress. "We can't do everything in one day". The zoo opened in 2019. Two administrative fines have been imposed, one for breaching the veterinary and health rules applicable to biological waste and the other for harming rare and endangered animal species listed in the Red Book of the Russian



Federation. The total amount is minimal: 55,000 roubles or 580 US\$. The zoo has since been granted a licence authorising the use of animals for cultural and entertainment purposes, and most of the offences have reportedly been rectified. Visits have not been interrupted. The zoo is owned by the Asnovinykh family, who also run Sadgorod Zoo in Vladivostok.⁷⁵

UKRAINE

**August 11 and Saturday 12, 2023
Solotvyno, Zakarpattia Oblast, Ukraine. Border with Romania.**

Fines of 6,800 hryvnias (185 US\$) for 2 street photographers who, on the banks of Lake Solone, were exploiting a white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*, Appendix I) and a monkey (*Primates*, Appendix I or II).⁷⁶



OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

OPERATION ASTER

Mid-August 2023

Wollongong, State of New South Wales, Australia

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) biosecurity officers seized a rhinoceros iguana (*Cyclura cornuta*, Appendix I), 2 green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), and 6 Indonesian tarantulas from a private home.

Minister for the Environment Tanya Plibersek said the protection of our native species relied on keeping exotic animals out of our country. "The conditions these animals are put through in order to be snuck past our borders are cruel and shameless".⁷⁷

End of August 2023

Melbourne, State of Victoria, Australia

Melbourne man charged with cruelty and illegal possession of 40 wild animals, 26 live, 3 recently dead and 11 stuffed, barn owls (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II), pythons (*Pythonidae*, Appendix I or II), dingoes (*Canis lupus dingo*, Appendix II), an Australian freshwater crocodile (*Crocodylus johnstoni*, Appendix II) and arboreal marsupials.⁷⁸

VARIOUS MARINE SPECIES



French angelfish (*Pomacanthus paru*) in Belize waters. Photo Holly Greening

AFRICA

MAURITIUS

AMERICA

BELIZE

FAMILY AFFAIRS

July 25, 2023

La Gaulette, District of Rivière-Noire, Mauritius

Seizure from Yee Fee Yiong Tse Kiong's home of 1,600 kg of dried barbaras (local name for sea cucumbers) in raffia bags, shark fins and Indian sandalwood (*Santalum album*), 4 slot machines, smuggled cigarettes, tyres and boat engines. Yiong Tse Kiong's son was also arrested. The 2 were released on bail of 15,000 rupees (330 US\$), a modest sum considering the value of all "the goods" seized, starting with the sea cucumbers whose total value on the island market is estimated at 3 million rupees (65,290 US\$) and 40 US\$/kg.¹

June 6, 2023

Belize City, Belize District, Belize

Sentencing of Randolph Aragon and Vidal Orellano to a global fine of 96,425 dollars (47,835 US\$) for fishing 24 queen conches (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II) and 28 Caribbean spiny lobsters (*Panulirus argus*) out of season, and for fishing 81 angelfishes (family Pomacanthidae) whose fishing is prohibited at all times and already butchering 58 of them on board. If the fines are not paid within 5 months, Aragon and Orellano will face seizure of their property and 6 months' imprisonment. A 3rd man escaped punishment. He convinced the court that he had gone on the boat for a night sail.²



ASIA

CHINA

June 28, 2023

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China

Seizure of contraband worth 1.8 million US\$, including cell phones, shark fins, dried swim bladders, branches of red coral (*Corallium* genus) and "bird's nests", in a truck waiting on a quay as a speedboat with all lights off approached. Driver arrested. Speedboat escaped.³



July 2023

Fuzhou Changle International Airport, Fujian Province, China

Seizure of 9 dried seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II), 6 giant clam (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix II) pieces of jewellery, 3 hawksbill turtle shell (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I) and stony coral (*Scleractinia*, Appendix II) bracelets in the luggage of 2 passengers from abroad.⁴

Beginning of August 2023

Lianyungang, Jiangsu Province and Hainan Province, China

Chen doesn't only have friends. The police have received information about his trafficking in marine species. At his home, "a large number" of giant clams (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix II), hawksbill turtle shells (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I) and coral fragments (class Anthozoa) were seized. Chen initially claimed that they were old gifts before giving the name of his supplier, a certain He whose clandestine workshop in Hainan, more than 2,000 km away, was visited in the process. Once again, a "large number" of items made with giant clam shell, hawksbill turtle shell and coral were seized, including jewellery. Some of the clamshells were in the process of being worked.⁵



AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

August 25, 2023**Anchorage, State of Alaska, United States of America**

Albert Correia, one of the members of the conspiracy of coral traffickers between the Philippines and the United States (see "On the Trail" n° 36 p.203, ref.1 and n° 40 p.214, ref.2) was sentenced to 2 years' probation and ordered to pay a community service payment of 5,000 US\$ to the Marine Environment and Resources Foundation for coral reef restoration in the Philippines. He is prohibited from any trade in corals.¹

MEXICO

End of June 2023**Santiago de Querétaro, State of Queretaro, Mexico**

Seizure of 10 live corals (class Anthozoa) from a parcel at a delivery service warehouse.²

July 8, 2023**Torreón, State of Coahuila, Mexico**

Seizure of live corals (class Anthozoa) from a parcel in a courier warehouse.³

ASIA

CHINA

July 2023**Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China**

61 kg of red coral (genus *Corallium*) seized from a consignment of goods arriving on the national territory.⁴

July 2023**Dulata Border Post, Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, China. Border with Kazakhstan.**

Red coral (genus *Corallium*) pearls seized from a traveller's luggage.⁵

July 2023**Shenyang, Liaoning Province, China**

Seizure of 2,840 grams of necklaces, bracelets and other jewellery made from red coral (genus *Corallium*) in a parcel shipped from abroad and said to contain "artisanal paint".⁶

EUROPE

DENMARK

End of July 2023**Copenhagen International Airport, Capital Region, Denmark**

29 fragments of stony coral (Scleractinia, Appendix II) seized from a traveller's luggage.⁷

POLAND

July 2023**Terespol, Lublin Voivodeship, Poland. Border with Ukraine.**

Seizure of a fossilized coral (class Anthozoa) listed in the CITES Appendices in the luggage of a man on board a coach coming from Ukraine. He said he was unaware that a permit was required to transport it to another country.⁸

August 23, 2023**Warsaw Chopin International Airport, Masovian Voivodeship, Poland**

Two corals are seized from a tourist's luggage upon returning from Bali, Indonesia.⁹

RUSSIA

July 7, 2023**Novosibirsk Tolmachevo International Airport, Novosibirsk Oblast, Russia**

27 coral fragments seized from the luggage of a woman coming from Dubai.¹⁰

GIANT CLAMS, QUEEN CONCHES, HORNED HELMETS, DATE MUSSELS, GOOSENECK BARNACLES, ...

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

August 6, 2023

Bahia Honda State Park, State of Florida, United States of America

He was taking advantage of his Sunday afternoon to poach queen conches (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II), whose fishing has been banned in Florida since the 1970s, and undersized lobsters (order Decapoda). Jose Manuel Mejia Melo was arrested and the 3 queen conches and 4 lobsters seized.¹

ASIA

CHINA

Beginning of June 2023

Lanzhou Zhongchuan International Airport, Gansu Province, China



Three necklaces made in Viet Nam seized from a passenger's handbag. The pearls are believed to be made with giant clam shells (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix II). Total weight: 141 grams. Price of a necklace: 1.82 million dong (77.5 US\$).²

June 2023

Chongqing Autonomous Municipality, China

Seizure of 539 white playing pieces made from giant clam (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix II) shell in a parcel from abroad whose X-ray examination had attracted the attention of customs officials. Total weight: 3.11 kg.³

June 2023

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 5 giant clam shells (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix I or II) weighing a total of 6 kg. The she-traveller disembarking from an international flight failed to fool the customs officers and their X-rays.⁴

Beginning of July 2023

Wuhan Tianhe International Airport, Hubei Province, China

Seizure of 3 giant clam (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix II) shells or pieces of shell in the luggage of a passenger from abroad. Total weight: 1.371 kg.⁵

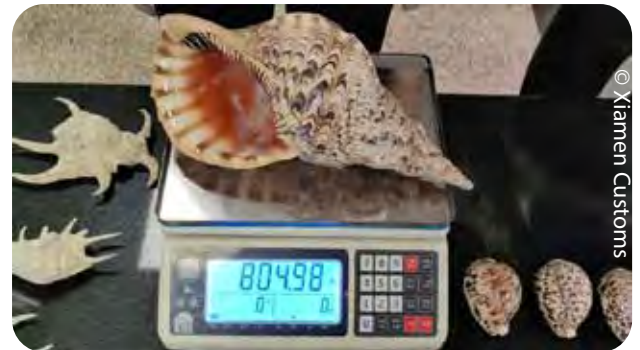
Beginning of July 2023

Yantai Penglai International Airport, Shandong Province, China

Seizure of a queen conch (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II) shell weighing around 980 grams in the luggage of a passenger from abroad.⁶

July 2023

Xiamen-Gaoqi International Airport, Fujian Province, China



The incoming passenger's baggage was scanned for a large number of oval and conical objects. Seizure of 58 shellfish including 3 triton's trumpet shells (*Charonia tritonis*), 29 tiger cowries (*Cypraea tigris*) and chiragra spider conches (*Harpago chiragra*).⁷

Beginning of August 2023

Chongqing-Jiangbei International Airport, Chongqing Autonomous Municipality, China



A horned helmet (*Cassis cornuta*, Appendix II) weighing 1.61 kg is intercepted from a passenger's baggage returning from abroad.⁸

August 2023

Wuhan Tianhe International Airport, Hubei Province, China

Four giant clam shells (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix II) seized from an abroad passenger's luggage. Total weight: 446 grams.⁹

August 2023

Tianjin Xingang Port, de Tianjin Autonomous Municipality, China

Seizure of 3 horned helmets (*Cassis cornuta*) weighing a total of 3.68 kg and a triton's trumpet shell (*Charonia tritonis*) weighing 0.28 kg.¹⁰

EUROPE

CROATIA

July 11, 2023

Kornati Archipelago, Šibenik-Knin County, Croatia

50 meters from a nautical police motorboat, a restaurant serves its customers date mussels (*Lithophaga lithophaga*, Appendix II), the capture and sale of which are prohibited. Croatia should take its inspiration from Italy on the other side of the Adriatic, where the Guardia Costiera and other forces intensify their efforts to counter the chisel-and-hammer looting of date mussels from cliff crevices.¹¹

SPAIN

July 13, 2023

A Coruña, Province of A Coruña, Autonomous Community of Galicia, Spain

Seizure of 15 kg of gooseneck barnacles (*Pollicipes pollicipes*) and a boat around the islands of San Pedro and in the outer harbour. Four arrests. It is believed that the perpetrators are veterans of gooseneck barnacles. The shellfishes, which fetch a high price in restaurants for the rich, have been donated to organisations dedicated to supporting the poor.¹²

Mid-August 2023

Ferrol, Province of A Coruña, Autonomous Community of Galicia, Spain

The Galician coastguard and the Guardia Civil were watching the fishermen from a distance. They waited for them to come ashore before checking them. 34 kg of gooseneck barnacles (*Pollicipes pollicipes*) were seized and donated to the Xunta de Galicia Centre for Minors, which provides day care for children from families receiving social services.¹³

ITALY

Mid-June 2023

Manfredonia, Province of Foggia, Region of Apulia, Italy

Seizure of 15 kg of date mussels (*Lithophaga lithophaga*, Appendix II). Arrest in flagrante delicto of 2 divers in possession of the equipment of the perfect looter: chisels, hammers and buckets.¹⁴

MONTENEGRO

Beginning of August 2023

Municipality of Tivat, Montenegro

Seizure of 2 kg of date mussels (*Lithophaga lithophaga*, Appendix II) in a restaurant.

Owner fined 1,300 € (1,430 US\$). The NGO Stop Krivolovu (Stop Poaching) deplores the fact that penalties are not proportionate to the damage inflicted on the seabed and that poaching is not yet enshrined in the penal code.¹⁵



ABALONES



Roe's abalone (*Haliotis roei*). Photo Andrea Ruggeri

Haliotis spp.

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

OPERATION SHANELA

May to mid-July 2023

Western Cape Province, South Africa

Partial report on Operation Shanella. Seizure of 36 firearms, 795 rounds of ammunition, 24 kg of dagga, 139 Mandrax tablets and 804 dried abalones. Operation Shanella, launched in May 2023, aims to prevent and fight crime in particularly violent areas, with regular stop and searches, roadblocks, high visibility patrols, compliance inspections at liquor outlets.¹

June 3, 2023

Near Makhanda, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

Interception on Route 350 of a Toyota bakkie and nearly 6,000 abalones in 17 bags. The vehicle was travelling from Port Elizabeth to Bloemfontein (700 km). The consignment's value: 51,870 US\$ or 9 US\$ per abalone.²



June 4, 2023

Trompsburg, Free State Province, South Africa

Officials intercepted 53 garbage bags full of abalone from a van on National Route 1. The 2 occupants and their cargo were headed for Bloemfontein, a province in the Free State, which appears to be a key inland hub for national and international abalone trafficking.³

June 12, 2023

Between Cookhouse and Cradock, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

The chase began on National Highway 10, between Port Elizabeth and Cookhouse, and continued on between Cookhouse and Cradock. The fully functional, 30,000 US\$ Nissan Navara bakkie was finally blocked by a police vehicle driving in the wrong direction for reinforcement. Police seized 17 bags and 6,699 abalones, worth an estimated 3.1 million rand on local markets, or 157,650 US\$ and 23 US\$ per abalone. Two arrests.⁴

June 13, 2023

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Acting on information, police raided a workshop where thousands of abalones were cooked and processed. Two arrests.⁵



June 20, 2023

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

A vehicle was stopped on the R300 expressway for traffic violations. Another violation was discovered inside: 14 bags full of dried, shucked abalones. Local councillors are complaining that not enough is being done to dismantle the gangs trafficking abalone and rock lobster, as well as those with firearms and drugs.⁶

June 23, 2023

Grabouw, Western Cape Province, South Africa

From June 19 to 25, the province's traffic police set up 244 roadblocks, at which 33 arrests or attempted arrests were made. This includes one for smuggling abalones in garbage bags - 3,731 specimens to be precise, worth 1.8 million rand (91,540 US\$ and 24 US\$ per abalone). The driver fled the scene.⁷

June 27, 2023

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Tao Wu, one of the Chinese men caught in the act in November 2022 (see "On the Trail" n°31 p.197, ref.11), was sentenced to 24 months in prison for illegally operating an abalone processing plant, 12 months of which will be suspended, or a fine of 100,000 rand (5,080 US\$), half of which is also suspended, and to 36 months in prison for illegal possession of abalone, suspended on the condition that he not be convicted of a similar offence for 5 years. His accomplice Wie-Wen Wie evaded court summonses after his release on bail. A warrant has been issued for his arrest.⁸



OPERATION SHANELA

Monday July 3-Sunday July 16, 2023

Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

New partial report on Operation Shanella. Seizure of 39 firearms, 29.4 kg of dagga, 594 Mandrax tablets and 5,126 abalones.⁹

July 8, 2023

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Dismantling of an abalone drying workshop in the Constantia residential area. Seizure of 985 specimens awaiting export by smuggling to a foreign country. Estimated value: 1.94 million rand (103,690 US\$ and 105 US\$/abalone). One arrest.¹⁰

**Wednesday, July 12 and Thursday, July 13, 2023
Overstrand, Western Cape Province, South Africa**

- Seizure of 3,745 abalones from a bakkie Ford Bantam. Estimated value: 680,000 rand or 36,340 US\$ and 10 US\$/ abalone.

- Seizure of 1,484 abalones at the junction of roads 43 and 44. Estimated value: 270,000 rand or 14,430 US\$ and 10 US\$/round.

The 2 operations were carried out by the city's RRU (Rapid Response Unit). No arrests.¹¹

July 14, 2023

Cookhouse, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa



The traffickers never run out of innovation, and the police are not caught out. A truck carrying a Volkswagen Touareg is stopped by the anti-gang unit and the SAPS. Inside the car, there are 3 million rand worth of abalones (160,340 US\$ and 50 US\$/ abalone). Arrest of the tow truck driver and passenger.¹²

Saturday July 15, 2023

Le Cap, Province du Cap-Occidental, Afrique du Sud

Police pursue the suspicious vehicle up to Old Dassenberg Road. Seizure of 649 abalones. Arrest of the 4 passengers.¹³

Saturday July 15, 2023

Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

The rear of the Nissan is dripping with water. The police stop the car and discover more than 1,000 fresh abalones in the trunk.¹⁴

Sunday July 16, 2023

Cookhouse, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa



The SAPS patrol the RN10 and are interested in 2 cars driving in convoy. The Audi Q5 is blocked. The driver ejects and tries to jump onto the trailer of a passing truck. He falls. He is run over. His identity is unknown. Arrest of the 2 passengers. Seizure of 43 bags. Final count: 4,785 abalones. Estimated value: 3.8 million rand or 203,100 US\$ and 42 US\$ per abalone. The 2nd car, a Chevrolet Spark, was found abandoned on Cradock Road. An investigation is launched to establish the responsibilities for the death of the Audi driver.¹⁵

July 21, 2023

Melkbosstrand, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Five divers who had just caught 300 undersized abalones fled as the patrol approached, taking advantage of the night.¹⁶

**Saturday, July 22-Sunday, July 23 2023
Swartland and Overstrand, Western Cape Province, South Africa**

Control operations by the K-9 and Rural Safety Units. Seizures included 22 whole Mandrax tablets, 6 powdered Mandrax tablets, 34 halves and 10 quarters of Mandrax tablets, cocaine, methamphetamine and 13 fresh abalones and 2 lobsters. In all, 20 arrests in Overstrand and 7 in Swartland.¹⁷

July 23, 2023

Edenburg, Free State Province, South Africa

At around 11 p.m., the driver of a Bakkie Isuzu refuses to comply with a roadside check. A chase ensues as far as Edenburg. The Isuzu leaves the road. The driver takes off running. He is caught by the police. He is 50 years old. Seizure of dried abalones. The value is estimated at 2 million rand or 107,000 US\$.¹⁸

July 24, 2023

Bloemfontein, Free State Province, South Africa



David Mbewu, a Malawian national, Thabiso Johannes Khaile, a Lesotho national, Marvin Fazel Kekana and Randy Alfred Mapoe, South African nationals, were each fined 10,000 rand (530 US\$), and Jinghuan Zhen, a Chinese national and leader of the gang, was fined 100,000 rand (5,340 US\$), 90,000 of which was suspended. The 5 men have 4 days to pay the fines. Failing this, the alternative penalty is 4 years' imprisonment. The amount of the fines is ridiculous compared with the value of the fresh and dried abalones in their possession on December 21, 2021 (see "On the Trail" n°34 p.240, ref.23). Clareece Genevieve was acquitted.¹⁹

End of July 2023

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Table View police raid on an abalone drying facility near West Beach. Arrest of 3 foreign nationals. Seizure of 7,855 abalones, a Land Rover, gas cylinders, bags of salt, cooking pots and drying racks. Estimated value of nearly 200,000 US\$ or 25 US\$ per abalone.²⁰

August 4, 2023

Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa



Seizure in the mouth of the Swartkops of 4 super-motorised semi rigid rubber ducks, 25 diving suits and 1,984 shucked abalones (386 kg or 195 grams per abalone).²¹

Between August 11 and 13, 2023

Overstrand, Western Cape Province, South Africa

The Rural Safety Units, K-9s and police continue their crime-fighting operations despite the complications caused by the cab strike. Seizure of 190 abalones worth 43,835 rand (2,480 US\$ and 13 US\$ per abalone). One arrest.²²

August 11, September 1st, 2023
Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa



- August 11, 2023. Conviction of 4 male and 1 female members of the DAFF (Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries) arrested by the Hawks on March 5, 2018 in Gansbaai (see "On the Trail" n°20 p.9, ref. 20). They were reselling seized abalone to traffickers and escorting twice-illegal shipments to clandestine drying and processing plants. They were charged with money laundering, corruption and organised racketeering. Adam Baadjies: 52 years' imprisonment. Rudolf Andrew Louw: 47 years' imprisonment. Allistair Hillmar Maans: 47 years' imprisonment. John Stephanus Karelse: 47 years' imprisonment. Mrs Linda Nkeleni: 47 years' imprisonment. Thanks to the concurrent imposition of certain sentences, the actual sentences ranged from 10 to 15 years' imprisonment.

Five of their accomplices in the abalone mafia networks were sentenced to 6, 8, 18 and 25 years' imprisonment. Also benefiting from the concurrent sentences, they were effectively sentenced to terms ranging from 3 years' correctional supervision to 5 years' imprisonment. Courtley May, after a court settlement, was sentenced on August 15, 2018 to a fine of 20,000 rand (1,500 US\$) or 24 months' imprisonment and 8 years' suspended imprisonment. As a reminder, Solomon Sauls, who faced 42 charges in the same case, had been sentenced on February 12, 2021 to 18 years' effective imprisonment and Preston Paul Julies to 5 years' effective imprisonment (see "On the Trail" n°32 p.264, ref. 11 and 13).

- September 1, 2023. Two other DAFF members compromised in the same case, Nomvuyo Concellia Motloug and Winston Mervin Busch, were sentenced taking into account the concurrent sentences to 3 years' correctional supervision and 5 years' imprisonment.

- Two DAFF agents, Zihle Diko and Craven Siyabulela Mxaku, died before the trial, and Donovan Williams, a member of the Abalone Mafia, died in 2019 in a settlement of scores between traffickers.²³

August 18-20, 2023
Stanford, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Seizure of 442 abalones with an estimated value of 80,000 rand (4,530 US\$ and 10 US\$ per abalone), a pick-up truck, cell phones and a knife. Three arrests.²⁴

August 21, 2023
Between Cookhouse and Cradock, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

At around 9.20 p.m., the SAPS received a report of a suspicious Toyota Avanza on the N10 towards Cradock. The vehicle is immobilized after a chase. Seizure of 1,253 abalones in 9 bags, with an estimated value of 390,000 rand (78,760 US\$ and 63 US\$ per abalone).²⁵



REPEATED OFFENCE

August 25, 2023
Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

Arrest of a 43-year-old man suspected of involvement in the smuggling of 4,400 abalones seized in May 2021 in Cradock and 65 bags of frozen abalones seized in October 2021 in Hofmeyers. He had previously eluded the police. The value of the 2 seizures was estimated at around 240,000 US\$. Ten of his accomplices were arrested on May 11, 2023 in Port Elizabeth (see "On the Trail" n°40 p.221, ref. 15).²⁶

August 30, 2023
Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

The 7 poachers were spotted unloading bags from their boat and transporting them towards the parking lot. After a "tactical approach", the men aged between 20 and 47 were arrested in possession of 1,283 abalones with an estimated value of 350,000 rand or 19,830 US\$ and 15 US\$ per abalone. Captain Sandra Janse Van Rensburg warns that SAPS "members are leaving no stone unturned as they clamp down on criminals".²⁷

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FAMILY AFFAIRS / REPEATED OFFENCE August 7, 2023

Fort Bragg, State of California, United States of America

Leroy Nicholas Robles Jr, 58, was arrested in March 2023 in possession of 31 abalones and over 15 grams of fentanyl. He was released pending trial. He was caught again in April in possession of 15 abalones, which he had been poaching with his brother. He admitted in court that abalone trafficking was his main source of income, with an average sale price of 40 US\$/abalone. His criminal record, painted gloomier by 6 felony convictions and 11 misdemeanours, was not in his favour. He was sentenced to 24 months' imprisonment for abalone poaching conspiracy.²⁸



ASIA

CHINA

August 19, 2023

Kamaishi, Iwate Prefecture, Japan

Arrest by the coastguard of a 25-year-old man suspected of poaching 102 abalones, 101 of them with a shell smaller than 9 cm.²⁹

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

June 9, 2023

Joondalup, State of Western Australia, Australia

- A resident of Ballajura was fined a total of 4,750 dollars (3,110 US\$). He had been caught on December 10, 2022 with 82 abalones in his bag, 67 more than the maximum authorized quota.

- A Beechboro resident was fined a total of 5,755 dollars (3,770 US\$). He had been caught searching for abalone without a permit and outside authorized hours. He had also refused to obey law enforcement representatives during his arrest.³⁰



June 12, 2023

Geraldton, State of Western Australia, Australia

Adrien Paul Hipper is fined the equivalent of 5,890 US\$ for catching 127 Roe's abalones (*Haliotis roei*) at dawn on Friday December 23, 2022 near the mouth of the Moore River, where the species is highly endangered and protected by a ban on catching except on 4 Saturdays in summer between 7 and 8 a.m. See "On the Tail" n°38 p.227 (ref. 22).³¹



FAMILY AFFAIRS

June 22, 2023

Korumburra, State of Victoria, Australia

Abalone poaching and trafficking become established practice hold in Victoria and other States, taking advantage of a patchwork of regulations on recreational fishing days and periods, on the size of abalones allowed to be caught (11, 12, 13 cm) depending on the sector, and on the number of abalones according to the 3 species: brownlip abalone (*Haliotis rubra conicopora*), greenlip abalone (*Haliotis laevigata*) and Roe's abalone (*Haliotis roei*). A Chinese couple who emigrated to Australia in 2004 and 2005, Rong Lei and Tinggang Xu, were fined a total of 2,342 dollars (1,530 US\$) for catching 60 abalones in November 2022 near Phillip Island. Fishing is limited to 5 abalones per person and 34 of them were undersized. They claimed that their illegal catch was intended, in accordance with Chinese tradition, to provide medical care for their one-month-pregnant daughter, and that they had not been informed of the regulations governing abalone fishing.

Mr. Sun, another Australian of Chinese origin, was fined 1,171 dollars (765 US\$) for fishing abalone out of the authorized period in the intertidal zone between the lowest low tide and the highest high tide, and for attempting to conceal his catch from fisheries inspectors.³²



SEA CUCUMBERS AND SEA URCHINS



Brown sea cucumber (*Isostichopus fuscus*). Photo Sylvain Le Bris

AFRICA

WESTERN SAHARA

August 2023

Off Dakhla, Western Sahara

Seizure by the Moroccan Regional Fisheries Delegation of almost a ton of sea cucumbers and diving equipment. The sea cucumbers were reportedly returned to the water. Nicknamed "the Viagra of the seas" by the press, they are poached for export. More and more fishermen are being tempted by sales prices of 800 dirhams/kg (80 US\$/kg). Noise of buildings springing up like mushrooms thanks to the dirty money from trafficking is rife on the docks. Western Sahara is a territory of 266,000 km² claimed by Morocco and by the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), proclaimed in 1976 by the Polisario Front against Spanish occupation. The UN considers Western Sahara to be a "non-self-governing territory". The Organisation does not recognize Morocco's sovereignty over the territory. Nor does it recognize the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, unlike the African Union, which considers the SADR a full member of the Union.¹

SEYCHELLES

July 24, 2023

Off Cerf Island, The Seychelles

Seizure of an unspecified quantity of sea cucumbers aboard a fishing boat and 2 canoes 6 miles off the coast. 46 arrests.²

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

June 19 and 13, 2023

State of California, United States of America. Border with Mexico.

Kathy Zhao and Luis Xiao have been indicted for 2 attempts to smuggle brown sea cucumber (*Isostichopus fuscus*, Appendix III in Ecuador) through the Calexico port of entry in California. In all, the 2 accomplices smuggled 23 kg of sea cucumbers with a total value of 10,222.5 US\$, or 435 US\$/kg.³

FRANCE (MARTINIQUE)

August 21, 2023

Fort-de-France, Territorial Collectivity of Martinique, France

Seizure of sea urchin gonads (edible parts) smuggled from Venezuela 480 km from Martinique. The white sea urchin (*Tripneustes ventricosus*) from Venezuelan waters is particularly prized. The cargo, which was unfit for consumption, was destroyed. The public prosecutor set the fine at 5,000 € (5,500 US\$), and the vessel and crew were allowed to return to sea. The Direction de la mer reminds us that "in agreement with the Comité régional des pêches maritimes de la Martinique, sea urchin fishing is currently closed and that buying sea urchins from hawkers encourages poaching activities and exposes people to severe health risks".⁴



MEXICO

Beginning of June 2023

San Francisco de Campeche, State of Campeche, Mexico



Boarding by the Navy of a small boat, seizure of 65 kg of sea cucumbers, 3 pairs of fins, 4 goggles, 4 weight belts, a snorkel, a compressor, an air tank, 50 metres of hose and an outboard motor. An arrest.⁵

ASIA

INDIA

June 8, 2023

Devipattinam, Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of 45 kg of cooked sea cucumbers, cooking pots and a gas cylinder from the home of Ayub Khan, aged 53.⁶

June 22, 2023

Vedalai, Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

After several hours of searching by Coast Guard divers, 1,137 kg of sea cucumbers were seized from the seabed in 67 bags thrown away by smugglers on the verge of being caught. The seizure is valued at 51.1 million rupees, or 618,274 US\$ and 544 US\$/kg.⁷



July 7, 11, 12, 2023

Kalighat, North and Middle Andaman District, Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, India



Arrests on beaches and in mangroves of 16 Burmese fishermen "coming to collect sea wealth from Andaman and Nicobar islands which have immense value in the international market" says local newspaper Andaman Sheeka. The fishing boats were seized. Several of them were carrying sea cucumbers. The fishermen, who had come from Myanmar (350 km away) at their own risk in rudimentary boats, are often grouped together, knelt down and photographed under the watchful eye of armed soldiers.⁸

August 1, 2023

Uchipuli, Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India



In the evening, the coastguard seized 130 kg of sea cucumbers hidden in 6 bags on shore. Estimated value: 5.7 million rupees (69,344 US\$ or 533 US\$/kg).⁹

August 2, 2023

Natham, Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure in the garden of a house of 690 kg of fresh sea cucumbers, including 600 kg already cooked. The seizure is valued at 30 million rupees (364,968 US\$, or 529 US\$/kg).¹⁰

August 29, 2023

Mandapam, Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

- Seizure of 242 kg of cooked sea cucumbers and 325 kg fresh from the sea. Faizer Ibramsha arrested. Poo Marakayar and Kathar are on the run.
- Seizure of 722 kg of cooked sea cucumbers. Anwar Sathik is on the run.¹¹

INDONESIA

June 18, 2023

Sorong, South West Papua Province, New Guinea Island, Indonesia

Seizure of 8 specimens of white teatfishes (*Holothuria fuscogilva*, Appendix II).¹²



MALAYSIA

July 1, 2023

Off Sandakan, State of Sabah, Malaysia

A fishing boat from Viet Nam, more than 1,000 km away, is boarded at night near Gubbins Rock. Seizure of the boat, a drum containing sea cucumbers and catching gear. The whole lot is valued at 1.6 million rupees (342,500 US\$). "The Marine Police Force will continue to patrol the waters of this State in an effort to curb the intrusion of foreign fishermen who steal the country's sea produce", says Assistant Commissioner Ahmad Ariffin. The captain and the 4 fishermen are arrested and photographed, sitting or kneeling under the surveillance of an armed soldier. The 5 Vietnamese fall under the Fisheries Act 1985 and the Immigration Act 1959/63.¹³

July 17, 2023

Off Pulau Tengah, State of Johor, Malaysia

Two Vietnamese men are arrested and their fiberglass boat seized. They had allegedly entered territorial waters at night to catch sea cucumbers.¹⁴

SRI LANKA

June 1, 2023

Off Mamunai and Chundikulam, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

All lights out, 25 men in 7 boats were diving for sea cucumbers, and when they were surprised by the arrival of the Navy, they had already picked 1,068 from the bottom of the gulfs.¹⁵

June 6, 2023

Off Veththalakerni, Kadaikadu, Mamunei and Kudarappu, Northern Province, Sri Lanka



Still at the northern tip of the country, the cat-and-mouse game between the Navy and petty offenders continues. Seizure of 669 sea cucumbers, 6 boats and arrest of 18 individuals aged between 18 and 42.¹⁶

Beginning of June 2023

Galle, Southern Province, Sri Lanka

This time, at the southern tip, 2 Chinese tourists were caught red-handed catching and carrying 3 sea cucumbers in Hikkaduwa National Park. They each got a fine equal to 320 US\$ and the cucumbers were returned to the sea.¹⁷



July 8, 2023

Chalei, Chundikulam and Iluppaikkadavai, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 1,870 sea cucumbers aboard 4 motorized fishing boats during the night and 12 arrests by a Navy motorboat.¹⁸

August 4, 2023

Thoppur, Eastern Province, Sri Lanka

Nighttime seizure on the beach by the coastguard of 116 sea cucumbers just out of the water, diving equipment and 3 dinghies. Nine poachers arrested.¹⁹

EUROPE

SPAIN

July 21, 2023

Madrid, Community of Madrid, Spain

Seizure in an unsanitary Chinese restaurant of sea cucumbers, turtle shells, red swamp crawfish (*Procambarus clarkia*) in an aquarium, adulterated brandy and smuggled medicines.²⁰

August 21, 2023

Chiclana de la Frontera, Province of Cadiz, Autonomous Community of Andalucía, Spain

Traffic in sea cucumbers is growing in the Mediterranean. Demand comes both from Asia and from Asian stores and restaurants in Europe. The Guardia Civil's Nature Protection Service (Seprona) seized over 30 kg of sea cucumbers. They were being unloaded from an unregistered boat. One of the poachers managed to escape on board, but was identified. An accomplice was arrested on the quayside. The "carajo" were still alive and were tossed back to the water.²¹

ITALY

Poaching and seizures of purple sea urchins (over 18,000) between June 1 and August 31, 2023. Map next page.



500 purple sea urchins (*Paracentrotus lividus*). July 11, 2023. Scicli, Province of Ragusa, Region of Sicily

Poaching and seizures of purple sea urchins (over 18,000) between June 1 and August 31, 2023



Purple sea urchin (*Paracentrotus lividus*)



400 purple sea urchins (*Paracentrotus lividus*). July 11, 2023. Ortona, Province of Chieti, Region of Abruzzo



6000 purple sea urchins (*Paracentrotus lividus*). July 18, 2023. Ancona, Province of Ancona, Region of Marche

PORTUGAL

August 16, 2023

Olhão, District of Faro, Portugal

162 kg of live sea cucumbers seized and returned to the water by the Coastal Control Unit's Nature Protection Service. A 39-year-old man was arrested and his boat seized. The press reports an Asian market value of 400 €/kg (430 US\$/kg).²²

RUSSIA

June 15, 2023

Korsakovsky District, Sakhalin Oblast, Russia

Seizure of 3,678 Japanese sea cucumbers (*Apostichopus japonicus*) by the FSB. The damage is estimated at 5 million roubles (63,290 US\$ or 17.2 US\$ each). The survivors were returned to Lake Busse, where they had been captured. The lake is connected to the Sea of Okhotsk. Arrest of 3 Korsakovsky residents.²³

Mid-June 2023

Poltavka, Primorsky Krai, Russia. Border with China.

Seizure of 3.5 kg of dried Japanese sea cucumbers (*Apostichopus japonicus*) in plastic bags taped on the stomach of a Russian tourist. One kilo of dried sea cucumbers corresponds to 30 kg of live sea cucumbers.²⁴

Beginning of July 2023

Kraskino, Primorsky Krai, Russia. Border with China.



Two Chinese passengers on a bus from Primorsky attempted to return home with over 10 kg of sea cucumbers in plastic bags taped to their stomachs and legs, and slipped into their sneakers instead of the soles. The value of the seizure is estimated at 300,000 roubles or 3,500 US\$ and 350 US\$/kg.²⁵



July 24, 2023

Pulkovo International Airport, Federal City of Saint Petersburg, Russia

Seizure in the bag and suitcase of a Chinese passenger bound for Beijing of 864 dried Japanese sea cucumbers (*Apostichopus japonicus*) (4 kg or 4.6 grams per specimen) native to the Far East. The tourist is said to have bought the echinoderms for 60,000 roubles (700 US\$ and 175 US\$/kg) at a market.²⁶

July 27 and December 1, 2023

Pokrovka, Primorsky Krai, Russia

The 43-year-old man who, in March 2022, attempted to smuggle 122 kg of cooked and dried Japanese sea cucumbers (*Apostichopus japonicus*) into China has been indicted. The seized goods are worth an estimated 3.9 million roubles or 37,880 US\$ and 310 US\$/kg. He pleaded guilty.²⁷

August 1st, 2023

Kraskino, Primorsky Krai, Russia. Border with China.

The network "sea cucumbers hidden in the soles of sneakers and taped to thighs" is confirmed. Bagheera, the customs dog, was not distracted by body odor. The restless Chinese citizen was stopped in his attempt to smuggle 3.7 kg of dried "trepan".²⁸

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

July 2023

State of Western Australia, Australia

Arrests of "foreign" fishermen with unspecified quantities of sea cucumbers on board followed one another in coastal waters: one boat on July 5, one on July 20, 4 on July 21, one on July 22, 2 on July 23 and one on July 26. In all, 89 fishermen were apprehended and released.²⁹

Hippocampus spp., Appendix II.

See also p. 170 (ref.6), p.179 (ref.60), p.184 (ref.4).

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

August 7, 2023

San Diego, State of California, United States of America

Jorge Morfin was sentenced to complete a three-year term of probation and pay 1,000 US\$ restitution to the government of Mexico for attempting in October 2022 to import 600 dried seahorses from Mexico via Tecate, weighing a total of 6 kg or 10 grams per specimen. The seahorses were immersed in 10 plastic bags containing granulated laundry detergent.¹



ASIA

CHINA

Beginning of July 2023

Dalian Zhoushuizi International Airport, Liaoning Province, China

Seizure of 362 dried seahorses (500 grams or 1.38 grams/seahorse) in the luggage of a passenger from abroad.²

August 2023

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China



Consecutive seizures in the baggage of 3 passengers from abroad of a total of 9,591 dried seahorses (16.73 kg or 1.75 grams per specimen).³

INDIA

July 4, 2023

Devipattinam, Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

In the bag of Naganathan who was travelling on a motorcycle were 90 dried seahorses. Ten of the 41 known species of seahorses live in Indian waters, or rather survive. By the year 2021, around 13 million individuals will have fallen by-catch victims to the trawl nets deployed by the Indian fishery, according to Project Seahorse.⁴

August 19, 2023

Palakkad, Palakkad District, State of Kerala, India

Sathya Ezhilarasan was caught at the bus station with 96 dried seahorses in a box. Sathya is from Chennai in Tamil Nadu, 500 km away, and the case has been referred to the WCCB to investigate this interstate trafficking. A smuggling route between South India and China via Sri Lanka is suspected.⁵

EUROPE

ITALY

Beginning of August 2023

Prato, Province of Prato, Region of Tuscany, Italy

The restaurant, run by Chinese citizens, offered an indigestible digestive liqueur said to be tonic. The macerate, consisting of 6 seahorses floating in alcohol with an unidentified plant composition, was seized and the case referred to the public prosecutor.⁶

CZECHIA

August 1, 2023

Václav Havel International Airport Prague, Capital City of Prague, Czechia

A passenger on board a flight from Hanoi via Dubai has 73 dried seahorses seized from his luggage upon arrival.⁷

August 10, 2023

Václav Havel International Airport Prague, Capital City of Prague, Czechia

The 13kg parcel imported from Hanoi in Viet Nam contained 360 tablets and 90 sachets of unspecified composition. Upon testing, customs identified among the ingredients seahorse, costus root (*Saussurea costus*, Appendix I), a plant native to India and Pakistan, desert livang cistanche (*Cistanche deserticola*, Appendix II) native to China and Mongolia and cibot rhizome (*Cibotium barometz*, Appendix II) from East and South-East Asia. The shipment was seized. The three plants are reputed to have a wide range of therapeutic virtues, from the fight against male infertility to hair beauty.⁸

MARINE OR FRESHWATER FISH

WESTERN AFRICA

NIGERIA

Mid-August 2023

Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos State, Nigeria



The NCS (Nigeria Customs Service) announces the seizure of a shark fin consignment bound for China, valued at 287,470 US\$ and corresponding to over 1,000 sharks. A Nigerian national arrested.¹

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

June 2023

Caledonia, State of Minnesota, United States of America



A year of investigation, stakeouts and shadowing between May 2020 and 2021, sometimes including whole nights on the banks of the Mississippi, observing 5 suspects and gathering evidence of poaching of shovelnose sturgeons (*Scaphirhynchus platyrhynchus*, Appendix II). Several hundred specimens were captured, most of which were disembowelled on site, the females stripped of their eggs and dumped in the river. Shovelnose sturgeon caviar sells for 1,600 US\$/kg on the black market. So much effort and hundreds of hours of vigilance have resulted in derisory sentences for Vladimir Parsikovas (fine and restitution of 2,475 US\$, 10-year revocation of hunting and fishing privileges), Viktor Parsikovas (125 US\$), Soma Miller (2,375 US\$, 10-year revocation), Artyom Miller (2,075 US\$, 10-year revocation), Pioter Miller (875 US\$), Sergej Jestrebov (1,325 US\$, 3-year revocation).

The shovelnose sturgeons are the smallest of the North American sturgeons. They average 60 cm in length. They are distinguished by their shovel-shaped head and long, flat snout, their rough skin and razor-sharp scales on juveniles.²



Beginning of June 2023

Off Pensacola, State of Florida, United States of America

Officer Hahr was on patrol in the Pensacola Pass when he observed a charter vessel returning from the Gulf of Mexico. He stopped the vessel to check their catch, and the captain stated they had caught a blacktip shark (*Carcharhinus limbatus*, Appendix II). When inspecting the shark, Officer Hahr identified it as a spinner shark (*Carcharhinus brevipinna*, Appendix II), a similar species, and provided information about the difference between blacktip and spinner sharks. The spinner shark was approximately 10" [25 cm] under the legal size and the captain was issued a citation for possession of the undersized shark.³

Beginning of June 2023

Kleber Dam and Tippy Dam, State of Michigan, United States of America

A few hours' surveillance of the Black River and Manistee were enough to catch in the act at least 5 anglers looking for lake sturgeon (*Acipenser fulvescens*, Appendix II) outside the fishing season.⁴

FAMILY AFFAIRS

June 9, 2023

San Diego, State of California, United States of America. Border with Mexico.

Mara W. Elliott, San Diego District Attorney, is launching legal proceedings against the brothers Tanner and Trevor Whitmarsh, suspected of having fished grouper (family Serranidae), sea bass (clade Percomorpha) and parrotfish (family Scaridae) in Mexican waters without a licence, under the guise of recreational fishing trips aboard their vessel *Deadeye*, and illegally selling them hand-to-hand to seafood and sushi restaurants, fishmongers and fish wholesalers. They are also suspected of having fraudulently acquired a 90-kg mako shark (*Isurus* spp., Appendix II) and a 150-kg tuna (family Scombridae) and sold them through the same channels.⁵

Beginning of July 2023

Off Sugarloaf, State of Florida, United States of America

Two officers on patrol spotted a man cutting up a nurse shark (*Ginglymostoma cirratum*) and throwing its fins into the sea. They approached him for questioning but, according to him, he had done nothing and the fins were already floating when he arrived by boat. The officers discovered the shark's mutilated carcass wrapped in a towel and hidden under lifebuoys at the stern of the boat. The man is arrested.⁶

July 29, 2023

Okaloosa Island, State of Florida, United States of America

A decapitated, tailless shark discovered in the dunes of the Eglin Air Force Base on the island.⁷

August 17, 2023

Terrebonne Parish, State of Louisiana, United States of America

An inspection of Harly J. Walker's shrimp boat while fishing in Cocodrie Bay led to the discovery of Harly J. Walker himself (he was already the subject of an arrest warrant for failure to appear) and 3 undersized blacktip sharks (*Carcharhinus limbatus*, Appendix II). Harly did not have the necessary licence to fish for sharks, nor was his boat in compliance with the law. He was taken to prison, the sharks were donated to a local charity and 136 kg of prawns were auctioned off.⁸

FAMILY AFFAIRS / REPEATED OFFENCE

August 2023

Sauvie Island Wildlife Area, State of Oregon, United States of America

The brigade of "troopers" on a night mission spotted an adult and a young man at 2.30 a.m. at the confluence of the River Gilbert and aptly-named Sturgeon Lake, where fishing is prohibited from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. They witnessed an unusual family scene: an adult man pulling a white sturgeon (*Acipenser transmontanus*, Appendix II) out of the water and a young man finishing off the fish by ... shooting it in the back of the head. The gun and sturgeon were seized and the father, who had already been sentenced to a fishing ban from 2016 to 2019, was issued a criminal citation for unlawful take of sturgeon and aiding/counselling in a wildlife offence.⁹

LATIN AMERICA

BRAZIL

June 5, 2023

Alta Floresta, State of Mato Grosso, Brazil



The military and environmental police seized 25 fish, including 3 arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) and 2 South American silver croakers (*Plagioscion squamosissimus*), on the banks of the Rio Teles Pires, a tributary of the Rio Tapajós. The fisherman was arrested.¹⁰

OPERATION MAKAIRA

June 19, 2023

Santa Catarina, State of Santa Catarina and São Paulo Guarulhos International Airport, State of São Paulo, Brazil

- Seizure of 27.6 tonnes of shark fins representing the illegal capture of 4,400 blue sharks (*Prionace glauca*, Appendix II) and 5,600 shortfin mako sharks (*Isurus oxyrinchus*, Appendix II) in the South Atlantic. This is the largest seizure ever made in Brazil, where shark fin consumption is said to be non-existent with the exception of expatriate Asian communities.

- Seizure of 1.1 tonnes of fins on their way to Asia.¹¹

June 20, 2023

Fortaleza, State of Ceará, Brazil

Arrest of a man by the military police. He had just caught a 1.8-metre long bull shark (*Carcharhinus leucas*, Appendix II).¹²

July 19, 2023

São Paulo-Guarulhos International Airport, State of São Paulo, Brazil



Seizure of 160 kg of shark fins on their way to Hong Kong. The sender, a Chinese national based in Brazil, was initially fined 1,900 US\$. Genetic analyses are currently underway to determine the species involved, and heavier fines will be imposed on the trafficker if the species is listed in the CITES Appendices.¹³

July 22, 2023

Marajó Island, State of Pará, Brazil

Seizure of 50 kg shark fins and 90 kg of fish of the genus *Cynoscion*, of which one of the representatives well-known to "On the Trail" is the acoupa weakfish (*Cynoscion acoupa*), in a car aboard the car ferry *Ana Beatriz IV* on her way from Macapá to Belém. The fins are valued at 239,500 reais or 49,420 US\$ and 988 US\$/kg. The operation is credited to the Antônio Lemos district river base, which brings together civilian and military firefighters and police responsible for public safety and the prevention of all forms of trafficking. Marajó Island is a coastal island located at the mouth of the Amazon and Tocantins rivers.¹⁴



August 22, 2023

Palmas, State of Tocantins, Brazil

Ornamental fish of the species *Betta splendens* and *Poecilia reticulata*, known as guppies, were travelling in bags of water sent by post from Moju near Belém in the State of Para to Pedro Afonso, 950 km away. One fish had already died.¹⁵



COLOMBIA

August 24, 2023

Cali, Department of Valle del Cauca, Colombia

Visitors to the theme park had reported that some of the animals on display were emaciated. In addition to 13 goats and a cow, the environmental police seized an arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II).¹⁶

PANAMA

OPERATION SHARK

July 13, 2023

La Pita, Panamá Oeste Province, Panama

A shark poaching and fin trading network has been dismantled. Police seized about 6.79 tons of shark fins (more than 135,000 fins) from a 20-foot container hidden on a farm in La Pita (60 km from Panama City). The fins were dried, cooked and packaged, ready to be exported to Asia. After a dozen searches in Panama City, the San Miguelito district (Panama province) and the Coclé province, 5 people were arrested: René Payán and Dagoberto Valdelamar (both Panamanian), Juan Emilio Cerda (Nicaraguan), Paula Andrea Madrid (Colombian) and Michelle Loo (Chinese). Payán and Valdelamar caught the sharks, Madrid bought the fins from them, Cerda processed them, and Loo managed and financed the process. Pending trial, 2 traffickers have been remanded in custody, 2 others are under house arrest, and one must report regularly to authorities.

Requiem sharks (Carcharhinidae, Appendix II) and hammerhead sharks (Sphyrnidae, Appendix II) are the most targeted species for their fins in Panama's waters.¹⁷

PERU

End of June 2023

Chimbote, Province of Santa, Department of Ancash, Peru

Seizure of 182.42 kilos of shark fins drying on the terrace of a house.¹⁸

VENEZUELA

July 15, 2023

Macanao Peninsula Municipality, Nueva Esparta State, Venezuela

During a routine check, the PNB (Policía Nacional Bolivariana) discovers 358 shark fins in a large bag labouriously carried by Williams José Larez Perdomo. Among the most common sharks in Venezuelan waters are the blacktip shark (*Carcharhinus limbatus*, Appendix II since November 25, 2023), the blue shark (*Prionace glauca*, Appendix II since November 25, 2023), the shortfin mako (*Isurus oxyrinchus*, Appendix II) and the great hammerhead (*Sphyrna mokarran*, Appendix II).¹⁹

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

June 2023

Qingdao, Shandong Province, China

Seizure of 24 live medakas (*Oryzias latipes*) in 12 plastic bottles in 2 postal parcels declared to contain "coffee". The specimens each measured between 2 and 3 cm in length.²⁰

July 2023

Jinan, Shandong Province, China

X-rays revealed in a foreign courier ornamental fish eggs of the species *Nothobranchius eggersi*, *Fundulopanchax sjostedti* and *Nothobranchius ocellatus*, all endemic to Africa. The traffickers hollowed out a commercial catalog to house the 6 egg packets.²¹

August 2023

Dongxing Border Post, Fangchenggang Prefecture, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China. Border with Viet Nam.

Seizure of 39 *Poecilia reticulata* or guppies from South America in the baggage of an incoming passenger. Each fish was in a bag of water.²²

Seizure of *Poecilia reticulata* in Brazil, see above.

August 8, 2023

Tai O, Lantau Island, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China



The speedboats continue their shuttles to mainland China. The vessel had just loaded various contraband goods from the shore, valued at the equivalent of 2.3 million US\$. These included dried shark fins.²³

SOUTHEASTERN ASIA

MALAYSIA

August 2023

State of Sarawak, Malaysia

Following a court ruling, a juvenile Asian arowanas (*Scleropages formosus* or *Scleropages inscriptus*, Appendix I), an ornamental fish whose value at adulthood can reach or exceed 50,000 US\$, seized alive by airport customs on July 12 in a polystyrene box, is to be euthanized. No one has claimed ownership or taken any steps to regularize its introduction into Malaysia.²⁴

SOUTHERN ASIA

BANGLADESH

June 26 and 27, 2023

Off Dublar Char Island, Bagerhat District, and Sundarbans National Park, Khulna Division, Bangladesh



Boarding of a trawler and an other boat engaged in illegal pesticide fishing. Arrest of 14 sailors, seizure of nets and 2 bottles of an unspecified pesticide in the first, arrest of a poisoner and seizure of 4 bottles of Ripcord (registered trademark of BASF) in the second. Ripcord is a contact insecticide of the synthetic pyrethroid family, formulated on the basis of cypermethrin and containing petroleum distillate as an emulsifier. In France, it is classified as "Very toxic to aquatic organisms, may cause long-term effects in the aquatic environment". BASF's slogan is "We create chemistry for a sustainable future".²⁵

INDIA

July 28, 2023

Air Cargo Complex, Andheri East, Mumbai Suburban District, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure of 4 live stingrays (order Myliobatiformes) from parcels coming from Thailand. The order Myliobatiformes has representatives all over the world.²⁶

August 17, 2023

Fraserganj, South 24 Parganas District, State of West Bengal, India

At first, Forestry Department and Coastal Police officers thought that the 70 crates stored in the house contained dried fish commonly known as "shutki". On closer inspection, the fish were juvenile sharks and the crates also contained cut and dried fins. In all, 1.5 tonnes were seized, corresponding, according to the authorities, to the capture of around 45,000 sharks. Akash Das and Ranjit Bag have been arrested. These are just the small links in a trafficking operation that could have ramifications in neighbouring Bangladesh and south-east Asia.²⁷

August 19, 2023

Ichalkaranji, District de Kolhapur, Etat du Maharashtra, Inde



Seizure in a private home of a 45.7 cm long barca snakehead (*Channa barca*) weighing 2.5 kg, a rare fish endemic to the upper reaches of the Brahmaputra (see "On the Trail" n°22 p.12, n°36 p.219, ref. 35 and n°38 p. 237, ref. 39). The fish is currently in an aquarium in the offices of the Deputy Conservator of Forests. The local branch of the WCCB is not interested in becoming a zoo and would like to see the fish reintroduced into its natural habitat as soon as possible. The chiefs in Nagpur and Mumbai replied that they first had to ensure that the fish was not farmed, otherwise it could not survive in the wild.²⁸

IRAN

Beginning of August 2023 Near Nosratabad, Sistan and Baluchestan Province, Iran

800 km from the shores of the Arabian Sea, the pick-up was carrying 43 sections of shark in a polystyrene box. It was intercepted on the road and the cargo was seized.²⁹

SRI LANKA

June 6, 2023 Galle Fishery Harbor, Southern Province, Sri Lanka



Seizure of 600 grams of shark fins on the docks. Arrest of 7 fishermen.³⁰

June 6 and 12, 2023 China Bay and Irrakkakandi, Eastern Province, and Yan Oya, North Central Province, Sri Lanka



Seizure of 143 water gel sticks and 5 detonators hidden in bushes. Two arrests. Explosives are a non-selective method that destroys both habitats and fish of all ages.³¹



July 16, 2023 Dikovita Fishery Harbor, Western Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 10.238 kg of dried shark fins on board a trawler that had just docked.³²

EUROPE

OPERATION LAKE October 2022-June 2023 Europe

Extracts from the report of the Europol-led operation between October 2022 and June 2023. The LAKE operation is dedicated to European glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II), eel fry.

- 32 participating countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Canada, Colombia, Georgia, Moldova, Morocco, Northern Macedonia, Serbia, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America; plus DG SANTE (Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety), EFCA (European Fisheries Control Agency), Eurojust, OLAF (European Anti-Fraud Office) and Interpol.

- 25 tonnes of live glass eels were seized, representing over 83 million individuals on the basis of 0.3 grams per glass eel. As far as possible, they were returned to suitable natural environments.

- 256 arrests in France, Spain, Portugal, and in China and Malaysia, which are not included in the list of participating countries. Seizure of over one million € (1.07 million US\$). Sequestration from bank accounts of over 2 million € (2.1 million US\$) in illegal income.

The Secretary General of CITES officially congratulated Europol and its Deputy Executive Director on the efficiency of the operation.³³

NORTHERN EUROPE

UNITED KINGDOM

June 29, 2023 United Kingdom

Shark Fins Act comes into force. The import and export of shark fins and all products containing fins, including canned soup, are banned in the UK. The Act applies to all species of shark. The prohibition does not apply where the shark fins are naturally attached to the body of the shark, and the body is substantially intact, ignoring any removal of the head and internal organs. The Act consolidates the 2003 and 2009 regulations prohibiting finning of sharks in UK waters (England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Overseas Territories) on board foreign vessels, and by UK vessels worldwide.³⁴

WESTERN EUROPE

AUSTRIA

January-June 2023

Austria

Customs officials are reporting a surge in trafficking in sturgeon caviar (Acipenseridae, Appendix I or II), with figures to back this up. Seizures:

- 2015-2020: 5 to 9 kg per year.

- 2021: 12.9 kg.

- 2022: 15.1 kg.

First half of 2023: 9 kg.³⁵



FRANCE

REPEATED OFFENCE

June 2, 2023

Marseille, Department of Bouches-du-Rhône, France

"My grandfather used to do it, my father used to do it, it puts butter on your bread," declared Louis Di Trento in court. On the night of Tuesday November 29 to Wednesday November 30, 2022, he had been caught at the helm of his trawler harvesting gilt-head sea bream (*Sparus aurata*) in the Calanques National Park. The prosecutor replied, "It's not just a little butter on your bread, it's caviar". Di Trento was fined 5,000 € (5,370 US\$) and ordered to pay a total of 20,700 € (22,240 US\$) in ecological damages to the Calanques Park administration and environmental associations, including France Nature Environnement. The trawler *Joseph Di Trento* has been banned from fishing for a year. This is the 10th time Louis Di Trento has been convicted of illegal fishing activities.³⁶



Week of June 12 and September 5, 2023

Marseille, Department of Bouches-du-Rhône, France



Mr. X was arrested on June 14, 2023 for poaching Atlantic bluefin tunas (*Thunnus thynnus*), gilt-head seabreams (*Sparus aurata*), Atlantic bonitos (*Sarda sarda*), woodcocks and wild boars. He also shot a pet. Mr. X posted photos of his achievements on his Instagram account. He appeared before the Marseille Correctional Court on October 2, 2023. Robin des Bois was a civil party in this case. On November 6, 2023, he was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment, 6 months of which were suspended, and fined 4,000 € (4,240 US\$). He was also banned from holding a hunting licence and taking the hunting exam for 5 years. Mr. X was also ordered to pay damages to Robin des Bois. He appealed the judgement on November 7, 2023.³⁷

THE NETHERLANDS

June 5, 2023

Noardeast-Fryslân, Province of Friesland, The Netherlands

Seizure of 14 European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) bow nets. Release of captured eels. Arrest of the poacher by the Forest Administration and the Frisian Environmental Service.³⁸

June 29, 2023

Enkhuizen, Province of North Holland, The Netherlands

Arrest of a poacher caught in the act of transporting live European eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II). He was raiding the bow nets of a professional fisherman subject to strict quotas and rules. At his home, the police and the NVWA (Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority) discovered and seized bow nets and live and frozen eels. During the investigation, it was established that he killed the eels by administering salt, a killing technique that has been banned for years due to the slow agony suffered by the victims. The live eels were released into open waters.³⁹

SOUTHERN EUROPE

SPAIN

Beginning of August 2023 Jandia, Province of Las Palmas, Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands, Spain



A member of the public raised the alarm by calling 112. Two poachers were caught red-handed with a cut-up smooth hammerhead (*Sphyrna zygaena*, Appendix II).⁴³

Beginning of July 2023 The Hague, Province of South Holland, The Netherlands

Seizure in the international postal sorting centre of several parcels loaded with a total of 120 kg of dried shark fins, i.e. some 4,000 shortfin mako shark fins (*Isurus oxyrinchus*, Appendix II) and 29 smooth hammerheadfins (*Sphyrna zygaena*, Appendix II), originating from between 800 and 1,300 sharks according to a conservative estimate. The consignments came from Hong Kong, with the Netherlands as their destination, further proof of the attachment of expatriate Chinese communities to traditional culinary preparations supposed to have aphrodisiac properties.⁴⁰



July 20, 2023 Ketelmeer Lake, Province of Flevoland, The Netherlands

A man fishing for European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) without a permit was apprehended by a joint team from the NVWA and the provincial police despite his rebellion. It is forbidden to fish here at any time of year, as the lake is polluted by PCBs, dioxins, aromatic hydrocarbons and TMEs (Trace Metal Elements) at levels that endanger human health.⁴¹

August 22, 2023 Sneek, Province of Friesland, The Netherlands

European eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) caught accidentally must be returned to the water immediately. The poacher, who was operating at night in the Natura 2000 area, had deliberately caught them and put them in plastic bags hidden near the bank. Environmental officers released them and fined the offender.⁴²



ITALY

June 8, 2023 Castellammare di Stabia, Metropolitan City of Naples, Region of Campania, Italy



Seizure on board the fishing vessel of 7 tons of little tunny (*Euthynnus alletteratus*), which were not recorded in the electronic catch register. The captain was fined 2,000 € (2,150 US\$). The fish were donated to charity.⁴⁴

EASTERN EUROPE

ROMANIA

Mid-June 2023

Țândărei, Ialomița County, Romania
Seizure of 2 kg of sturgeon caviar (Acipenseridae, Appendix I or II) during a roadside check. The 36-year-old man's car was also seized by police.⁴⁵

June 22, 2023

Sulina, Tulcea County, Romania
Coastguard action to prevent and fight poaching in the Danube Delta. 440 meters of nets removed. A live sturgeon (Acipenseridae, Appendix I or II) was released, while 42 kg of silver carp (*Hypophthalmichthys molitrix*) were seized and handed over to a fishmonger.⁴⁶

End of June 2023

Galați, Galați County, Romania. Border with Moldova and Ukraine.



Justice forgets it. The 27 accused, including 11 officials from the Fisheries Agency, in the misappropriation of dozens of sturgeons (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) supposedly caught for scientific purposes, and the under-the-cover sale of caviar, were only ordered to pay a total of 30,000 lei (6,500 US\$) in damages to the Fisheries Agency and 100,000 lei (21,650 US\$) in legal costs.⁴⁷

August 24, 2023

Musura Bay, Tulcea County, Romania. Border with Ukraine.

Border guards dismantled nets measuring 1,125 meters-long during an anti-poaching operation. Five sturgeons (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) were rescued and released back into the wild.⁴⁸

August 28, 2023

Sacalin Island, Tulcea County, Romania

Border guards and agents from the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve dismantled 320-meter-long nets during an anti-poaching operation. Seven sturgeons (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) were rescued and released back into the wild.⁴⁹

RUSSIA

June 1, 2023

Kalininsk, Saratov Oblast, Russia

At the prosecutor's request, access to several websites offering Huso sturgeons (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II), sterlet sturgeons (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II) and other sturgeons for sale has been blocked.⁵⁰

June 5, 2023

Khabarovsk, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia



A man who bought 30 kg of Amur sturgeon (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II) and Huso sturgeon (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II) caviar in Komsomolsk-on-Amur with a view to reselling it was sentenced to a 5-year suspended prison sentence, with 3 years' probation.⁵¹

June 6, 2023

Nadym, Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District, Russia



In December 2020, a resident of Nadym and a resident of Yamalsky agreed to go into the sturgeon trade. The former would find buyers, the latter would find suppliers among the Nenets, an indigenous Samoyed people, and bring the fish back to Nadym. They were caught with 14 Siberian sturgeons (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II). They received a 5-year suspended prison sentence with 3 years' probation, and a fine of 200,000 roubles (2,500 US\$) each. Their Toyota Land Cruiser has also been confiscated.⁵²

June 7, 2023

Novosibirsk, Novosibirsk Oblast, Russia



Sergey Gorbachev, 48, was sentenced to a one-year suspended prison sentence, one-and-a-half years' probation and a fine of 300,000 roubles (3,750 US\$) for trafficking in over 23 kg of black caviar. He was arrested in December 2022 in possession of 49 plastic jars containing 8,485.48 grams of Huso sturgeon (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II), 13,341.6 grams of Amur sturgeon (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II) and 1,992.81 grams of a mixture of Amur sturgeon and Huso sturgeon caviar. The 49 jars will be destroyed when the sentence comes into force. For the time being, Gorbachev S.I. can still lodge an appeal.⁵³

June 14, 2023

Krasnoyarsk, Krasnoyarsk Krai, Russia

Criminal proceedings are opened against a Federal Fisheries Agency inspector for smuggling Siberian sturgeon (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) flesh and caviar with 3 accomplices between June 1 and September 15, 2022. When he was arrested, 8 sturgeons and 10 kg of caviar were seized from their vehicle and his home.⁵⁴

June 15, 2023

Komsomolsk-on-Amur, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia

Indictment of a 22-year-old man for selling 0.5 kg of sturgeon caviar (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) over the Internet. His customers were undercover police officers. At his home, 80 other 0.5-kg jars were discovered and seized.⁵⁵

June 22, 2023

Nikolayevsk-on-Amur, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia

Indictment of a 36-year-old man. He was arrested on October 2, 2022 in possession of 78.35 kg of sturgeon meat (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) and 21.64 kg of caviar on the Selikhino-Nikolayevsk-on-Amur road.⁵⁶

June 23, 2023

Tobolsk, Tyumen Oblast, Russia



Two poachers sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment suspended with 3 years' probation for poaching a Siberian sturgeon (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) on August 23, 2022 in the Irtysh. The 2 men had already paid 480,000 roubles (6,000 US\$) as ecological damage on their own initiative.⁵⁷

June 28, 2023

Komsomolsk-on-Amur, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia



Indictment of a 38-year-old woman arrested on May 18, 2023 while transporting 160 kg of sturgeon caviar (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) on the Selikhino-Nikolayevsk-on-Amur road. "I collected the boxes from strangers on the side of the road at the request of my friend, to whom I was delivering the parcel", she explained. The "package" contained 317 500-ml jars and 2 250-ml jars.⁵⁸

July 6, 2023

Khabarovsk, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia

Indictment of a 47-year-old man accused of attempting to sell 121 tins containing a total of 26 kg of caviar and by-products from *Huso* sturgeon (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II). He was arrested on November 22, 2022.⁵⁹

July 12, 2023

Gorkovskoye, Omsk Oblast, Russia

Two residents of Novopokrovka are sentenced to 2 years of suspended imprisonment and one year of probation for poaching 2 sterlet sturgeons (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II) and a bream (*Abramis brama*) in the Irtysh River.⁶⁰



July 21, 2023

Komsomolsk-on-Amur, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia

A trafficker in caviar and sturgeon meat (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) including *Huso* sturgeon (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II) was sentenced to 3.5 years' probation. His 6 helpers caught the fish in the Amur, and the eggs were extracted from the females' bellies in a garage. In all, some 140 liters of caviar and 90 sturgeon carcasses were seized. The conspiracy had reportedly delivered glass jars of caviar by road and by train. Before the trial, the Belgorod man entered into a cooperation agreement with the prosecutor and pleaded guilty. He also agreed to reimburse the territorial administration for ecological damages estimated at 27 million roubles, or over 300,000 US\$. His cooperative attitude facilitated the investigation and justified, in the court's eyes, the relative leniency of the verdict.⁶¹



July 31, 2023

Novosibirsk, Novosibirsk Oblast, Russia

K.S. Kornev is sentenced to a one-year, 6-month suspended prison sentence for attempting to sell a Siberian sturgeon (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) weighing 3.78 kg. He will have to report to the judicial authorities once a month, and is not allowed to move without notifying them.⁶²



August 4, 2023

Nikolayevsk-on-Amur, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia

In October 2022, a woman bought a *Huso* sturgeon (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II) from a poacher on the banks of the Amur River and took it home, where it was soon discovered by the police. She received a suspended sentence of 6 months' community service, with 5% of her salary deducted by the State, and 6 months' probation.⁶³



August 9, 2023

Komsomolsk-on-Amur, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia

Back in June 2020, 5 poachers were arrested in possession of 10 Amur sturgeons (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II) and one *Huso* sturgeon (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II), weighing 150 kg in all. They had been poaching since 2015. Now, they have received prison sentences ranging from 5-5¼ years either in a general or strict regime penal colony, depending on the case. They also had their 3 boats permanently confiscated and were issued fines ranging from 100,000 to 300,000 roubles (1,100 to 3,320 US\$), or 800,000 roubles (8,850 US\$) in total. Ecological damages were estimated at 1.8 million roubles.⁶⁴



August 9, 2023

Bolshebereznykovsky District, Republic of Mordovia, Russia

Oleg Zakharov, Anatoly Nifatov (retired), and Mikhail Veretennikov and Alexei Boyarkin (both unemployed) received a 2-year suspended prison sentence for trafficking sterlet sturgeons (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II). They caught at least 33 specimens between July and October 2021 (see "On the Trail" n°34 p.256, map of sturgeon and caviar poaching and seizures) and extracted at least 2 kg of caviar. They then sold the sterlet meat at 1,000 roubles/kg, or 14 US\$/kg, and the caviar for 25,000-50,000 roubles/kg, or 345-690 US\$/kg. They voluntarily repaid the ecological damages estimated at 250,000 roubles (2,765 US\$) before their conviction. They benefited from the complicity of Alexei Ilyushov, a high-ranking police officer who informed them about anti-poaching patrolling in exchange for part of their catch. He was also given a 2-year suspended prison sentence.⁶⁵



August 10, 2023

Tobolsk, Tyumen Oblast, Russia

Artem Dilieu and Ilya Lunegov received a 5.5-year suspended prison sentence with 6 months' probation and must repay damages exceeding 5.6 million roubles (62,560 US\$) for poaching 606 sterlet sturgeons (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II), 5 Siberian sturgeons (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) and 6 nelmas (*Stenodus nelma*) in the Irtysh between April 20 and June 30, 2022.⁶⁶



August 11, 2023

Kizlyar, Republic of Dagestan, Russia

B.M. Magomaev was sentenced to 200 hours of community service. He was arrested in October 2022 with 110 kg of sturgeon (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) in his vehicle.⁶⁷



August 16, 2023

Omsk, Omsk Oblast, Russia

Two poachers who captured 4 sterlet sturgeons (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II) in the Irtysh near the village of Naberezhnyi back in June 2022 have been indicted.⁶⁸

Mid-August 2023

Kizlyarsky District, Republic of Dagestan, Russia

Sh. Aliyev has been indicted after getting arrested in May 2023 with 207 kg of sturgeon (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) in his car in Kraynovka.⁶⁹

August 19, 2023

Bogorodskoye, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia

Two poachers who, in May 2023, were found with a freshly caught Amur sturgeon (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II) and Huso sturgeon (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II) in their boat near the village of Doudi have been indicted. The fish, still alive, were released into the water.⁷⁰



Mid-July, 2023.
Vylkove, Odesa Oblast, Ukraine

August 29, 2023

Ust-Ishim, Omsk Oblast, Russia

Nikolai Belitzer, 63, was previously caught in possession of 114 poached fish, including a Siberian sturgeon (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II). It was later proven that he had poached sturgeons on several occasions. The retiree was just given a 2-year suspended prison sentence with another 2 years' probation. He must also repay ecological damages amounting to 700,000 roubles (7,740 US\$), and his boat has been definitely confiscated.⁷¹



August and December 2023

Khabarovsk, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia

- A couple was arrested on the highway between Khabarovsk and Tchita with 380 kg of caviar from Amur sturgeon (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II) and Huso sturgeon (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II), as well as 6 kg of Amur sturgeon meat. The man received a 2-year prison sentence. The woman received a 5-year suspended prison sentence, 2 years' probation and a fine of one million roubles (11,000 US\$).
- The prosecutor, dissatisfied with the sentence, appealed. In December, the court followed his recommendations and sentenced the smuggler to 5 years in prison.⁷²



Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine. Seizures of caviar (658.25 kg, minimal value 21,675 US\$), poaching and seizures of sturgeons (2,209 specimens + 1,195.9 kg of meat) between June 1 and August 31, 2023. Map next page.



July 2023
Volodarsky, Astrakhan Oblast, Russia

Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine Seizures of caviar (658.25 kg, minimal value 21,675 US\$), poaching and seizures of sturgeons (2,209 specimens + 1,195.9 kg of meat) between June 1 and August 31, 2023



Based on a minimum price on the black market of 20,000 roubles/kg (235/kg US\$) of caviar, the minimum value of the caviar seized is 154,690 US\$.

Sturgeon, unidentified species (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II)
 Beluga (*Huso huso*, Appendix II)
 Amur sturgeon (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II)
 Sakhalin sturgeon (*Acipenser mikadoi*, Appendix II)

Starry sturgeon (*Acipenser stellatus*, Appendix II)
 Russian sturgeon (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Appendix II)
 Siberian sturgeon (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II)
 Sterlet sturgeon (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II)
 Huso sturgeon (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II)

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*), leatherback turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*) and flatback turtles (*Natator depressus*).

AFRICA

CAPE VERDE

June 6, 2023

Fonte Bila Beach, Fogo Island, Cape Verde

The NGO Vitó, while monitoring sand traffic on the beach using a drone, noticed a sea turtle's abnormal behavior. Spotters went to check out the scene and saw a poacher in the process of killing and skinning the turtle. He threatened the Vitó conservationists with his knife. Police were called to the rescue, and seized 22 kg of meat. The poacher disappeared but has been identified. Four sea turtle species nest on the beaches of Cape Verde: green turtle, Ridley sea turtle, loggerhead turtle and leatherback turtle.¹

FRANCE (MAYOTTE)

August 12, 2023

Department of Mayotte, France

The Sea Shepherd representative notes that, despite his team's efforts and the "sea turtle pact" implemented by the prefecture (see "On the Trail" n°36 p.231 ref. 4), sea turtle poaching is persisting and even increasing. The Management Board of the Mayotte National Marine Park met in Bandréle. 33 of the 46 members were present. Here too, concern is growing. In the first half of 2023, 180 cases were recorded by the Réseau d'Echouage Mahorais des Mammifères Marins et Tortues marines (REMMAT or Mahorais Stranding Network of Marine Mammals and Marine Turtles), compared with 150 during the whole of 2022. The ZAC (concerted development zone) project at Badamiers, in Petite-Terre (Mayotte's second largest island), adds to poaching a source of nuisance and pollution for sea turtles and their nesting. The discharge of wastewater from this zone dedicated to economic activities and the disturbance caused by artificial lighting are not sufficiently taken into account, according to the council. The day-to-day life and future of the turtles, whose meat is increasingly sought after on an archipelago that is going off course socially and economically, are increasingly threatened.²

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

June 7, 2023

Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park, State of Florida, United States of America

A loggerhead turtle's nest has been raided by a human. When raccoons attack a nest, they leave excavation marks and eat the eggs on the spot, leaving shells behind. Here, predation is discreet, and the flagging tape surrounding the circular sanctuary have been cut to facilitate access and complete looting.³



© Rumya Sundaram

August 25, 2023

Juana Díaz, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, United States of America

An adult hawksbill turtle on a beach in Juana Díaz was loaded onto a wheelbarrow by a local resident and taken home. Shortly before being butchered, it was rescued and returned to the beach thanks to the joint intervention of the NGO Tortugueros del Sur and the FWS (Fish and Wildlife Service).⁴

LATIN AMERICA

BELIZE

FAMILY AFFAIRS

July 19, 2023

Belize City, Belize District, Belize

Aged 20, 72 and 38, the mixed intergenerational trio (2 women and a man) were caught red-handed cutting up a hawksbill turtle. In court, the eldest tried to exonerate the 2 women. "They were only passing by", he said.⁵

COLOMBIA

August 2023

Francisco Pizarro and Tumaco, Regional Autonomous Corporation of Nariño, Colombia

In 3 operations, the Colombian navy rescued 43 turtles from human consumption.

- 23 leatherback turtle hatchlings were seized in a bag aboard a motorboat.
- 3 Ridley (or olive Ridley) sea turtles were removed from a warehouse where they were destined to die.
- 15 adult leatherback turtles were abandoned by local fishermen who realized that a patrol was on their trail.

After a brief, positive health examination, the 43 specimens poached for their meat, scales, shells and eggs were returned to the Pacific Ocean by the Navy's Fourth Infantry Brigade and experts from the Nariño Regional Autonomous Corporation.⁶

COSTA RICA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

July 4, 2023

Limon Province, Costa Rica

The 10 green turtles had a narrow escape. Just as 6 poachers were about to shoot them, the 5 men and one woman spotted Provincial Public Force and Coast Guard officers and jumped into their 4x4. They didn't have time to get very far. Montero, Arrieta, Jiménez and 3 members of the Quirós family were arrested, their boat and car seized, while the turtles were taken to the rescue centre in Puerto Viejo. Three of the suspects were already known to law enforcement for common crimes.⁷

MEXICO

Mid-August 2023

Santa Cruz Xoxocotlán, State of Oaxaca, Mexico

Arrest of a certain Jesus, aged 30, with 300 sea turtle eggs he was selling in the Riviera del Atoyac district. Eggs are traditionally a culinary and said to be restorative specialty in the isthmus of Oaxaca. Sea turtles are in danger of extinction, and national law prohibits the consumption of their eggs and meat, the use of all their parts as well as their export, notably to the USA. The seller and the trafficker are not likely to be released on bail after their arrest.⁸

NICARAGUA

August 22, 2023

San Jorge, Rivas Department, Nicaragua



In seizing 592 Ridley sea turtle eggs, the Inland Waters Naval Detachment applied the national army's motto: "We are the people in uniform serving the people". The naval force has among its duties the preservation of the environment.⁹

PANAMA

Mid-August 2023

Horcones and La Villa de Los Santos

It's peak egg-laying season for Kemp's Ridley and Ridley sea turtles on the beaches of the Pacific Ocean. Global seizure of 2760 eggs, all unfit for consumption and stolen for too long to be subjected to artificial incubation. They are destined for destruction.

- 1857 Kemp's Ridley turtle eggs. They were hidden under sheet metal.
- 903 eggs. Arrest of a man transporting them in 2 buckets.¹⁰

SOUTHEASTERN ASIA

INDONESIA

June 13, 2023

Port of Waisai, Raja Ampat Regency, Southwest Papua Province, New Guinea Island, Indonesia

Seizure of 3 live green turtles aboard the *Sabuk Nusantara 96*. They were released on Salio beach in the Pacific Ocean. The *Sabuk Nusantara 96* links Manokwari, West Papua Province, to Ayau, South West Papua, calling at Waisai.¹¹

REPEATED OFFENCE

July 27, 2023

Kayangan Seaport, North Lombok Regency, Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia

Officials seized 300 kg of green turtle meat from 10 polystyrene boxes on a car ferry bound for Bali and arrested the truck driver, truck owner, and the man who held the meat. He hoped to sell it to Bali restaurants for 150 rupiah/kg (10 US\$/kg), or 3,000 US\$ for the total lot. The 3 men are from the island of Sumbawa.¹²

July 27, 2023

Kapek Harbor, Sambas Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

Interception of a boat and 2 traffickers approaching the port of Kapek, transporting 1,286 sea turtle eggs in 9 boxes and 2 bags from the Tambelan Islands. The Tambelan Islands are around 130 km off the coast of West Kalimantan. The archipelago is made up of 68 islands spread over 90.4 km² and populated by around 5,000 inhabitants. Its beaches are frequented by green and hawksbill turtles, whose eggs are regularly plundered.¹³

MALAYSIA

OPERATION TARING GELORA

**August 21, and September 5, 2023
Off Sandakan and Sandakan, State of Sabah, Malaysia**



Abdul Nasir Razak, a Filipino refugee immigrant to Malaysia, was sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment from the date of his arrest and fined 100,000 rupiah (21,550 US\$) for attempting to import 4,200 sea turtle eggs from the Philippines. The batch is valued at 8,400 rupees or 1,840 US\$ and 0.4 US\$/egg. Razak was intercepted on the night of August 21, 2023 off Sandakan by 2 navy patrol boats. His boat was also seized. If he fails to pay the fine, he will have to serve a further 12 months in prison.¹⁴

PHILIPPINES

From July 27 to August 3, 2023

Barangays of Ginablan, Agnipa, Agpanabat, Lunas and Calabogo, Romblon, Province of Romblon, Philippines



Nine turtles found fatally wounded off 5 fishing ports. Romblon's Environment and Natural Resources Department attributes the death of the 9 turtles, most of them females, to fishing with explosives.¹⁵

VIET NAM

June 12, 2023

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



Con Dao National Park on the island of Con Son, 85 km from mainland Viet Nam, is popular with sea turtles, which come to dig incubation chambers before depositing their eggs. After a few days' holiday, Mrs. H. returned to Bac Ninh with 5 small round, bumpy treats containing 5 miniature, unborn Ridley sea turtles.¹⁶

July 3, 2023

Quang Ngai, Quang Ngai Province, Viet Nam

Seizure from a beachside restaurant of a sea turtle, used for 9 years by the owners as a tourist catch.¹⁷

Mid-August 2023

Cam Ranh, Khanh Hoa Province, Viet Nam

A sea turtle on sale in a restaurant is seized and released.¹⁸

SOUTHERN ASIA

SRI LANKA

July 30, 2023

Wellamankaraya Fishery Harbor, North West Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure by the Coast Guard of 5.35 kg of sea turtle meat from a fishing boat that had just docked. The species found off Sri Lanka include loggerhead, leatherback, hawksbill, green and Ridley sea turtles.¹⁹

July 31, 2023

Manipay, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Two men were caught transporting 4 sea turtles by road when police checked their truck. They were heading for Colombo, 400 km south, to sell the dead turtles to hotels and restaurants.²⁰

EUROPE

DENMARK

July 2023

Greve, Zealand Region, Denmark

Seizure of a hawksbill turtle shell from a parcel during a customs inspection of a courier company.²¹

OCEANIA

FRANCE (FRENCH POLYNESIA)

Saturday July 8, 2023

Papeete, Island of Tahiti, Overseas Collectivity of French Polynesia, France

Seizure in the harbour from the schooner *Tuhaar Pae* coming from the island of Raivavae, 700 km south of Tahiti, of 17 kg of sea turtle meat in a cooler. The recipient, a school principal, was arrested when he came to pick it up.²²



Cape fur seals (*Arctocephalus pusillus*). Photo Erik Schlogl

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

June 7, 2023

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa
Stranded on popular Long Beach were 6 Cape fur seals (*Arctocephalus pusillus*, Appendix II), 2 females and 4 males, fatally harpooned through the heart and lungs.¹

Cape fur seal, see "On the Trail" n°14 p.17 (ref.2), n°15 p.10 (ref.1), n°26 p.17 (ref.1 et 2), n°33 p.281 (ref.2), n°39 p.187 (ref.1) and this page ref. 4.

CAMEROON

End of July 2023

Mpobo, Littoral Region, Cameroon

An African manatee (*Trichechus senegalensis*, Appendix I) survived an upstream harpoon attack for some time, but then died and drifted towards the mouth of the Nkam and the Atlantic Ocean. Fishermen from Mpobo caught his rotting carcass and butchered it. After smoking the meat, it was distributed or sold to villagers at risk of poisoning.²

August 14, 2023

Bonapea and Mpobo, Littoral Region, Cameroon



The AMMCO (African Marine Mammal Conservation Organisation), despite its incessant information campaigns, has spotted 4 traps for the African manatee (*Trichechus senegalensis*, Appendix I) in the mangroves at the mouth of the Nkam.³

NAMIBIA

July 1, 2023

Namibia

Ladies and gentlemen, the great slaughter is about to begin. This Saturday July 1st is to be marked with a red stone.

The minister of Fisheries has issued 86,000 permits to kill Cape fur seals (*Arctocephalus pusillus*, Appendix II). Expect to see many people using hakapiks and rifles. The fur industry is in decline due to environmentalists' concerns and global warming. New by-products such as the suntan oil "Namibian Sunshine" and penis powder are having trouble to make name in the Southern African market. The Chinese market remains promising but marginal. Instead, the government justified this mass slaughter on the grounds that fur seal populations pose a threat to the fishing industry and parliament is approving. Deputies claim that marine mammals eat too many fish to the detriment of human eating.⁴

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

August 8, 2023

Fort Myers, State of Florida, United States of America

Following several reports, the home of Gary Lee Stone, 70, on Coconut Drive was searched in May 2020. Hundreds of images and videos of North American manatees (*Trichechus manatus*, Appendix I) had been collected, some proving illegal interactions with the animals. Stone had admitted that the human feet, hands and legs visible on the videos were his. Images also showed him in possession of a small loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*, Appendix I). He has been charged with intentionally disturbing manatees and sea turtles. In his defence, Stone is claiming he was carrying out informal research, with no intention of publishing in a scientific journal. None of the documents seized from his home resemble the beginnings of research, and it is hard to see photos of a manatee grazing on his feet appearing in a journal such as Applied Animal Behaviour Science. When his trial was due to begin, the charges against him relating to sea turtles were dropped and those relating to manatees were reduced. The hearing has been postponed. To be continued.⁵



ASIA

CAMBODIA

June 17, 2023

Kep, Kep Province, Cambodia. Border with Viet Nam.

Dugong meat (*Dugong dugon*, Appendix I) was for sale at a farm stall in the fresh market. Dugongs are a very rare commodity. There are just a handful in Kep's mangroves. It is forbidden to capture them, butcher them, extract oil from them and cut them up. The shopkeeper says she bought the forbidden meat from a street butcher and was assured that it was the meat of a catfish.⁶

CHINA

July 2023

Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure by customs of a sperm whale tooth (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) in a parcel coming from abroad.⁷

SOUTH KOREA

August 24, 2023

Pohang, North Gyeongsang Province, South Korea

Commercial whaling has been banned in South Korea since 1986. And yet, it continues. 55 fishermen have been taken to court, 13 have been remanded in custody by the Pohang Coast Guard and 12 are under judicial supervision in connection with illegal whaling between January and June 2023 and the capture of 17 Minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*, Appendix I). The total value of the 17 whales is estimated at 1.6 billion won, i.e. 1,250,000 US\$ and 73,500 US\$ per whale. The mother ship was not equipped with an explosive grenade-launching harpoon. The hunt was much more discreet, as befits a clandestine operation in waters criss-crossed by merchant ships and fishing boats. The hunters launched hand-held harpoons and spears from the edge of the boat. The whale slices were placed in weighted nets and attached to buoys. The deck of the mother ship was regularly washed with detergent to prevent the detection of whale odor and DNA. Harpoons and other throwing weapons were hidden among traditional fishing gear. The underwater nets were regularly lifted and the transport ship delivered the whale meat by night to small ports with little or no traffic. It was then loaded onto fish trucks and delivered to restaurants. The 2 fishing boats had a tent on the foredeck, which prevented reconnaissance aircraft from having a complete picture of what was happening on board. But traces of blood spotted in the wake of the mother ship were considered by investigators to be interesting clues. The truth was uncovered relatively quickly, but the fact that such a network of shipowners, fishermen, wholesalers, restaurateurs and consumers was able to structure itself and continue for 6 months, at a rate of 2 to 3 whales a month, in a country where there is one surveillance camera per inhabitant, is beyond comprehension and demonstrates that Japan, which openly practices whaling, is not the only country in Asia to capture and exploit whales with small scale vessels in coastal waters. This new plot illustrates the resistance of the whaling culture in South Korea. Already in 2016 in the same province, 27 tonnes of whale meat from the pirate hunt of around 40 Minke whales had been seized in cold storage and the "old-fashioned" hunting methods with harpoons were the same./⁸

Two fishing boat captains, 30 fishermen and a delivery driver were sentenced to prison terms of 10 to 18 months and fines of 1.5 million to 5 million won (1,350 to 4,500 US\$). See "On the Trail" n°13, p.12, ref.4 and n°14, p.11, ref.4.

Local whale meat trafficking is also said to be supplied by illegal imports from Japan. In May 2023, 6 people were arrested in Busan. They are suspected of being behind the smuggling of 4.6 tonnes of Minke and Bryde's whale meat (*Balaenoptera edeni*, Appendix I) in 2021 and 2022.

In 2005, at the 57th International Whaling Commission in Ulsan, Robin des Bois observer Charlotte Nithart photographed whale meat on sale in markets and restaurants.

South Korea is still a member of the International Whaling Commission and is therefore obligated to declare its violations. Between 2016 and 2021, it declared 46 illegal catches to the IWC.



The Minke whales have a fusiform body 8 to 9 m long, weigh 6 to 8 tons and have a small, pointed, triangular snout with 270 to 348 baleen plates on each side of the jaw. They live in the Southern Ocean, North Atlantic and North Pacific. They feed on krill, small white fish like sand eels and cephalopods like squid. They reach sexual maturity at around 7 years of age, and gestation lasts 10 to 11 months. The calf, who measures 2 to 3 m at birth, is nursed for 6 months. Their life expectancy is estimated at 30 to 60 years. The killer whales are the Minke whale's main natural predator. They are also the victims of illegal commercial whaling, drowning in fishing nets and collisions with ships. In an 8-m Minke whale, there would be around 1 tonne of blubber and 2.5 tonnes of meat.^{7bis}



INDIA

June 1st, 2023

Bengaluru, Bengaluru Urban District, State of Karnataka, India

Seizure of 6.5 kg of sperm whale ambergris (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) in the hands of C. Selvaraj, 35, and M. Hariharan, 24, who, according to preliminary investigations, are fishermen. They allegedly bought the block for 200,000 rupees (2,420 US\$ or 372 US\$/kg) in Kerala and intended to resell it for 2 million rupees (24,199 US\$ or 3,723 US\$/kg) in Karnataka.⁸

June 4, and July 14, 2023

Srivilliputhur, Virudhunagar District, and Chennai, Chennai District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

The ambergris controversy

Ambergris is an intestinal concretion. It is exclusive to sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I). It can find its way into human hands in a variety of ways: expelled by living sperm whales, escaped from dead and decomposed sperm whales, found by beachcombers, extracted from the guts of dead sperm whales that have stranded or that have been towed ashore, extracted from sperm whales that are victims of directed hunting or unintentional victims of fishing activity. Ambergris, whose value per kilo on the international market is astronomical, is the stuff of dreams for discoverers, traffickers, counterfeiters and perfumers.

- On Sunday June 4, 16 kg (or 10 depending on the source) of ambergris and 2 motorbikes were seized. Five men were arrested, including a certain Dharmaraj. The 5 men had been set up by WCCB agents playing the role of potential buyers. They were put in prison.

- The Madras High Court, while granting Dharmaraj bail, was confronted by his lawyer with the question of whether it can be considered illegal to possess ambergris until the investigation has proved that it comes from sperm whale hunting. The lawyer does not dispute that sperm whale hunting is prohibited, but he does not rule out the possibility that harvesting ambergris at sea or on the coast may be authorized. The Madras High Court is seeking clarification on this matter from the State and federal authorities. The Public Prosecutor, for his part, had said that under the Wildlife Protection Act, any possession of ambergris is prohibited. This is also the interpretation of Robin des Bois. India, Australia and the United States have prohibited the possession and trade of ambergris as part of a strictly protected animal in their national laws. These rules are stricter and clearer than those of CITES and the European Union, which open the door to legal trade in ambergris if the sperm whale has not been "manipulated". CITES Resolution Conf. 9.6 (Rev. CoP19) on trade in readily recognizable parts and derivatives agrees that "urine, faeces and ambergris that has been naturally excreted are waste products and are therefore not covered by the provisions of the Convention". Similarly, European regulation 2021/2280 on trade in species of wild fauna and flora states that "urine, faeces and ambergris which are waste products and gained without the manipulation of the animal concerned are not subject to this Regulation".⁹

July 22, 2023
Nasirpur, Kaushambi District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India



Four fishermen - Ranjeet Kumar, Sanjay, Deevan and Baba – caught a Ganges river dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*, Appendix I) in their net in the Yamuna. Instead of setting him free, they carried him on their shoulders back home to Nasirpur village and cut him up to sell and eat. Capturing, transporting and selling these freshwater dolphins is prohibited under the Wildlife Protection Act (1972). Only a few hundred remain in the Ganges and Brahmaputra basins.¹⁰

End of July 2023
Kanwatheertha, Kasaragod District, State of Kerala, India



Discovery by the forestry services at the home of a 75-year-old farmer of part of a whale skeleton, including vertebrae, purchased from a fisherman in 2007 for 27,000 rupees (330 US\$) and kept in a garden shed. The work was sequestered and placed under the responsibility of its holder, until, in accordance with the orders of the hierarchy, a destination worthy of its rarity was found. The most impressive species of whale off the coast of Kerala is the blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*, Appendix I).¹¹

August 13, 2023
Tagarapura, Chamarajanagar District, State of Karnataka, India

Seizure by a flying squad of the CID (Crime Investigation Department) of over 3.1 kg of suspected ambergris, sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) "vomit" as the saying goes in India. Arrest of Anand Devadiga and Babu Appanna Naika of Shiraali living in the Karwar district. They were travelling in their Maruti Alto from Mysore to Tamil Nadu, a distance of 350 km.¹²

August 7, 2023
Shahdadt, Province of Sindh, border with Baluchistan, Pakistan

The Ganges river dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*, Appendix I) is said to have been the victim of a mistake. Poachers apparently targeted him, thinking they were shooting at a dangerous [and edible] animal "like a shark", writes the newspaper Dawn. Freshwater dolphins are blind and navigate exclusively by echolocation. The specimen was around 18 months old and 137 cm long. His body had been spotted drifting in a canal. He was hastily buried by unknown persons. He was exhumed by experts from Sindh and Baluchistan and transported to Sukkur, where he was temporarily placed in a cold room for an autopsy. He has been pierced by 2 rifle bullets. According to the 2019 census, there are 1419 Ganges river dolphins in the Indus between Guddu and Kotri dams. The victim swam 150 km from the Sukkur dam to the edge of Balochistan via the Khirthar canal. The police forces of the 2 provinces are cooperating to find the perpetrators of this crime, which has aroused great emotion in the country. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto junior, an artist and activist, addressed the unidentified men in a tweet, saying "You have killed a part of Sindh".¹³



EUROPE

UNITED KINGDOM

July 26, 2023

Oxford, Oxfordshire County, England, United Kingdom



What a bargain! The trafficker in sperm whale teeth (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) (see "On the Trail" n°37 p.232, ref.12), a certain Tevita Lavaki, a lance corporal by profession, was sentenced to 120 hours of community service, ordered to pay a penalty of 114 £ (144 US\$) and 85 £ (108 US\$) in legal costs. The police had seized 46 bleached and polished sperm whale teeth from his home, ready to be shipped for between 400 US\$ and 500 US\$ each. Tevita Lavaki is from Fiji Islands, where sperm whale teeth are traditionally given as ritual gifts or bartered.¹⁴



© Thames Valley Police

RUSSIA

June 2023

Olenia Bay, Murmansk Oblast, Russia

Just as the Sevastopol military port in Crimea is protected by bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*, Appendix II) (see "On the Trail" n°37 p.233, ref.15), the submarine base 30 km northeast of Murmansk on the Kola Peninsula is said to be protected by belugas (*Delphinapterus leucas*, Appendix II), among other means of intrusion detection. Their enclosures were identified using open-source satellite imagery.¹⁵

OCEANIA

NEW ZEALAND

August 30, 2023

Aramoana, Otago Region, New Zealand

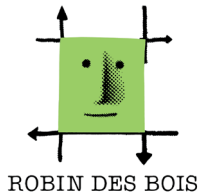
A female New Zealand sea lion (*Phocarctos hookeri*) has been shot dead near the port and beach. She was well known to everyone. She was born on New Year's Day 2021. Two more years and she could have been part of the population of 30 sea lions of breeding age on the Otago Peninsula. In 1993, a pioneer had landed on the peninsula after 100 years of total absence of the species. The profile of the 'pakake' differs according to sex. Females (rāpoko) measure between 180 and 200 cm long and weigh between 85 and 160 kg. Gestation lasts around 10 months. Males (whakahao) measure between 240 and 350 cm long and weigh between 320 and 450 kg. By the age of 8-9, they are strong enough to hold and defend their territory and harem. The species is endangered. It has enemies among fishermen.¹⁶



© Pierce Lunderback

IMPRISONED, IMPALED, HARPOONED, DESECRATED THIS IS THE HARD LIFE OF CETACEANS

June 10-August 6, 2024



France

The decree of June 28, 2024 laying down the general characteristics and operating rules of establishments authorised to house live cetacean specimens is a model of hypocrisy. It is supposed to ban cetacean shows from December 1, 2026 and set out the management procedures for dolphins born in jail and sentenced to life imprisonment. In conjunction with the Ministry of Ecology, Marineland in Antibes (Alpes-Maritimes, Southern France) and Planète Sauvage in Port-Saint-Père (Loire-Atlantique, Western France) have found a workaround. They will be able to carry out scientific experiments in the containment pools. This animal experimentation and "medical" training will be open to the public for a fee. In the closing stretch of the negotiations, a new concession was made to the dolphin owners. There is no longer any question of publishing a ministerial decree setting out the list of research programs, but simply a "document setting out the framework for the research programs". There are currently 12 bottlenose dolphins at Antibes and 11 at Port-Saint-Père. The average commercial value of one dolphin is 250,000 €. The "herds" could grow with research into the reproductive cycle, and the dolphins could be sold internationally if transport does not exceed 24 hours. Marineland, which is in a flood area, will be able to continue operating. The municipality of Antibes has been classified as under a state of emergency 31 times since 1987, and during the floods of 2015 the untransportable animals were swimming in muddy, unhealthy waters. However, the June 2024 decree simply asks those in charge of the establishments to take "all measures to prevent flooding of their accommodation facilities, as well as the consequences for the animals".

Experiments on dolphins in captivity, see "On the Trail" n°33 p.281, ref.3.

Link to Robin des Bois' contribution: <https://robindesbois.org/projet-darrete-etablissements-autorises-a-heberger-des-specimens-vivants-de-cetaces/> (in French)

United States

The European-flagged *MSC Meraviglia*, built in Saint-Nazaire, rammed a Sei whale between Bermuda and New York. The fatal accident occurred as the ship approached the Brooklyn terminal. The 13.4-meter-long whale was embedded in the bow of the 316-meter-long vessel. The Swiss company, the world's 5th largest cruise operator, said it was "deeply saddened". The *MSC Meraviglia* was travelling at full speed (42.4 km/h), in a hurry to unload its cargo, take a break for cleaning and disinfection, and set sail again with a new cargo for Canada, a trajectory that intersects with that of the right whales. It is estimated that at least 20,000 whales are killed every year in collisions with maritime traffic. Instead of condolences, Robin des Bois expects MSC (Mediterranean Shipping Company) and the other leaders of mass cruising to reduce the speed of their "Gigantic" and to mobilize human and technological resources on board to detect whales in the World Ocean, including the Arctic. Trying to avoid whales is a mission for all responsible shipowners. For the record, in 2012, CMA CGM's container ship *Mont Ventoux* arrived in the port of Marseille (France) with a dead fin whale on her bulbous bow, and in 2015, Mitsui O.S.K. Lines' car carrier *Euro Spirit* arrived in Le Havre (France) and passed through the François I lock also with a fin whale (15 meters long, 13 tons) on her bulbous bow.



Sei whale (*Balaenoptera borealis*)

Japan

On one hand, the “small” whaling fleet based in the ports of Abashiri, Kushiro and Hachinohe has a global licence for 142 Minke whales (8 meters long, 10 tons) to be caught within territorial waters (up to 22 km from the coast) between May and October. On the other hand, the *Kangei Maru*, a new whaling factory ship, has a quota of 187 Bryde’s whales (15 to 16 meters long, 30 to 40 tons) and 25 Sei whales (14 to 16 meters long, 14 to 17 tons) to be caught within Japan’s Exclusive Economic Zone, up to 370 km off the east coast. The *Kangei Maru* was inaugurated with great fanfare in the port of Shimonoseki on March 29, 2024. She is the same length as her predecessor, the *Nisshin Maru*. The Japanese government refused to subsidise it. The Japanese Fisheries Agency granted a loan. However, the shipowner Kyodo Senpaku Co received a subsidy from the city of Shimonoseki. The *Kangei Maru* costs 46 million euros. She is not cut out for the grand-scale hunting in Antarctica. She does not appear to be ice-strengthened. Her operation is primarily intended to perpetuate the tradition of Japanese whaling at all costs, and to promote the consumption of whale meat. In the 1950s, during Japan’s reconstruction after the Second World War, eating whale was a necessity. Nowadays, it’s more of a chore and an unnecessary expense, especially for younger generations. Between May 26 and 28, the *Kangei Maru* was in the vicinity of the Fukushima nuclear power plant. This has to be seen as an attempt to take whales to detect any radionuclide concentration due to the release of extinguishing water from the reactors that crashed in 2011. On 6 August, the *Kangei Maru* is 210 km east of the island of Hokkaidō. She is, as always, accompanied by the 69-meter-long *Yushin Maru 3*, a “whale catcher” whose job it is to spot the whales, harpoon them with penthrithite grenades and tow them, dying, to the *Kangei Maru*, the factory ship where they are butchered and frozen. Locating the whales is facilitated by the use of a drone based on the *Kangei Maru*. Following public consultation, the Fisheries Agency would like to extend the quota to fin whales (18 to 20 meters long, 48 tons). The decision could be taken in July-August.



Iceland

Once again, Iceland has given in to the siren calls of whaling, playing on both "Come and see our beautiful whales" for tourists and "Go and kill my whales" for shipowner Loftsson and his *Hvalur* whaling ships. 128 fin whales are on death row between June and September.

New Zealand

On the weekend of May 11-12, 2024, a week after his stranding on a remote beach in the Southland region, the sperm whale’s carcass was amputated of its lower jaw. Unknown assailants cut it off with a chainsaw, taking hold of 20 to 25 conical ivory teeth in the process. Sperm whale teeth are traded internationally, illegally and profitably. The largest weigh one kilo. A kilo of sperm whale ivory sells for between 2,000 and 5,000 € (2,380-5,960 US\$). Such mutilations are not uncommon in Oceania. Eden (New South Wales) in Australia was also the scene of an exceptional theft. A sperm whale skull weighing a ton, which was suspended to facilitate the draining of spermaceti, was stolen from the oceanographic museum. The gang had a crane and a flatbed truck at their disposal. Five months later, the vandalized, cracked and dislocated remnant was deposited by the thieves or their accomplices near the museum.

Norway

Analyses of whale steaks sold in supermarkets confirm that sub-arctic Minke whales are contaminated by PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkylated substances) from Tefal frying pans and fire-extinguishing foam.

SOURCES

Detailed sources for each event are available on request by e-mail to contact@robindesbois.org indicating the "On the Trail" issue number, chapter and reference of the event.

Animal Diversity Web; CITES France Database; Catalogue of Life; Checklist of CITES Species; CITES - Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora; DORIS - Données d'Observations pour la Reconnaissance et l'Identification de la faune et la flore Subaquatiques [Data from Observations for the Recognition and Identification of Underwater Fauna and Flora]; Encyclopedia of Life; iNaturalist; Interpol; IUCN Red List of Threatened Species; Maurice Fontaine & Bernhard Grzimek (dir.). *Le Monde animal en 13 volumes [Grzimek's Animal Life Encyclopedia]*. Editions Stauffacher, Zurich (1971-1975); Oiseaux.net; Species+.

AFRICA

NORTHERN AFRICA

Algeria: Echorouk; L'Express DZ.

Egypt: Al Arabiya; Al-Masri al-youm; Arab News; International Business Times.

Sudan: Middle East Eye.

Western Sahara: Hibapress; Le 360.

WESTERN AFRICA

Cabo Verde: inforpress.

Côte d'Ivoire: Akatia; EAGLE; EAGLE Côte d'Ivoire; L'Info Express.

Guinea: Chimpanzee Conservation Center.

Liberia: Focused Conservation; FrontPage Africa; Libassa Wildlife Sanctuary; The DayLight.

Nigeria: Channels Television; Daily Post (Nigeria); EnviroNews Nigeria; Nigeria Customs Service; The Nation (Nigeria); The Punch; The Sun (Nigeria); Within Nigeria.

Sierra Leone: Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary.

CENTRAL AFRICA

Angola: Jornal de Angola.

Cameroon: African Marine Mammal Conservation Organization; Alwihda; Global Earth Keeper; LAGA; Limbe Wildlife Centre; Tikki Hywood Foundation Cameroun.

Democratic Republic of the Congo: 7sur7.cd; Actu30; Adams Cassinga; Afrik21; Conserv Congo; Cophegs DRC; Digitalcongo.net; Environews RDC; Friends of Bonobos; Gorilla Doctors; iciLome; J.A.C.K. - Jeunes Animaux Confisqués au Katanga; La Libre Afrique; Les Volcans News; Lwiro Primates; Mediacongo.net; Okapi Conservation Project; WCS.

Gabon: 7Jours Info; Afrik 21; Conservation Justice.

Republic of the Congo: Agence d'information d'Afrique centrale; EAGLE; Groupe Congo Médias; PALF; Polele-Polele.

EASTERN AFRICA

Ethiopia: Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority

Kenya: Big Life Foundation; Citizen Digital; Directorate of Criminal Investigations (Kenya); KahawaTungu; Kenya Broadcasting Corporation; Kenya News Agency; Mara Elephant Project; Nairobi News; NTV (Kenya); SEEJ-AFRICA; SEEJ-AFRICA (Saving Elephants through Education and Justice); SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit; SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit; SWT/KWS Meru Mobile Veterinary Unit; SWT/KWS Mount Kenya Mobile Veterinary Unit; SWT/KWS Rift Valley Mobile Veterinary Unit; SWT/KWS Sky vets Unit; SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit; The Star (Kenya); Xinhua.

Madagascar: 2424.mg; Jewish News Syndicate; L'Echo du Sud; L'Express de Madagascar; La Vérité; Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (Madagascar); Times of Israel; Ynetnews.

Malawi: Lilongwe Wildlife Trust; Malawi 24.

Mauritius: Defimedia.info; L'express (Maurice).

Mozambique: Carta de Moçambique

Rwanda: Gorilla Doctors.

Seychelles: Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR).

South Sudan: Eye Radio.

Tanzania: Daily News (Tanzania); HabariLEO; Mwananchi; News Ghana; The Citizen (Tanzania); Xinhua.

Uganda: EAGLE Ouganda; Jural Media; Monitor (Uganda); New Vision (Uganda); Uganda Wildlife Authority; Voice of Toro.

Zambia: Conservation South Luangwa; Giraffe Conservation Foundation (GCF); Solwezi Radio; Wildlife Crime Prevention Zambia; Zambia Primate Project.

Zimbabwe: Alexandre and Chloé Bès; Imire Rhino & Wildlife Conservancy; Kariba Animal Welfare Fund Trust; The Chronicle (Zimbabwe); The Herald (Zimbabwe); Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust; Zimlive.com.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Botswana: Elephants without Borders; Mmegi; The Standard (Zimbabwe); The Voice (Botswana).

Namibia: Allgemeine Zeitung (Namibia); Informanté; Namibia News Digest; New Era; Pangolin Conservation and Research Foundation; The Namibian; The Online Citizen; Windhoek Observer.

South Africa: Algoa FM; Blue Sky Society Trust; Community Safety & Support; Council of Contributors; Daily Dispatch; Daily Maverick; Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (South Africa); Endangered Wildlife Trust; Environmental Investigation Agency; Financial Times; Grocott's Mail; Hawks; Independent Online; Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital; Krugersdorp News; KwaZulu-Natal Democratic Alliance; Letaba Herald; Limpopo Mirror; Mail & Guardian (South Africa); Monkey Matters Eastern Cape; National Council of SPCAs; News24; Nombekana Safaris and Wildlife Photography; Owl Rescue Centre; Potchefstroom Herald; Prof Ray J; Provet Animal Hospital; RNews; SA Government News Agency; SAPS; Scales Conservation Fund; South African Government; SPCA East London; The Citizen; The Vervet Forest; The Witness; TimesLIVE; Umoya Khulula Wildlife Centre; Virginia Chipurnoi (Humane Society of New York); VulPro; Western Cape Government; WildEarth; WION; Zululand Conservation Trust.

AMERICA

NORTHERN AMERICA

Canada: CBC/Radio-Canada; City of Saskatoon; Government of Ontario; Government of Quebec; Ministry of Environment and Climate Change; Orillia Matters; British Columbia Conservation Officer Service; The Squamish Chief; The Star Phoenix; The Whitehorse Star; Yukon News.

United States of America: ABC 10News San Diego; Alaska Public Media; Embassy of the United States in the DRC; Arizona Daily Star; Arizona Game & Fish Department; Born Free USA; Breaking Latest News; Cable News Network; Coeur d'Alene Press; Courthouse News Service; EastIdahoNews.com; Edmonds Beacon; Environmental Crimes Monthly Bulletin; Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; Fort Worth Star-Telegram; FOX 10 Phoenix; FOX 35 Orlando; Fox21 News Colorado; Georgia Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division; Grand Forks Herald; Homer News; Illinois Department of Natural Resources; Key Biscayne Independent; KGUN 9; Knoxville News Sentinel; KOAA News5; KXLY 4 News Now; Liberty Wildlife; Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries; Michigan Department of Natural Resources; Middlesex Borough Police Department; Minnesota Department of Natural Resources; Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; mypanhandle.com; New Jersey 101.5; New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; NewsChannel 5; NewsNation; NorthEscambia.com; Operation Game Thief, Pennsylvania Game Commission; Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife; Oregon State Police; Outdoor Life; Outsider; People; Profepa; Raven Ridge Wildlife Center; Redheaded Blackbelt; SDNews.com; Southwest Ledger; Tennessee Lookout; Texas Game Wardens; The Berkshire Eagle; The Charlotte Observer; The Daily Beast; The Dallas Morning News; The Key West Citizen; The News-Press; The Scioto Post; The Spokesman-Review; The Washington Post; The Washington Times; Times Leader; Tribune-Review; U.S. Attorney's Office - District of Alaska; U.S. Attorney's Office - District of Nebraska; U.S. Attorney's Office - District of Oregon; U.S. Attorney's Office - District of Puerto Rico; U.S. Attorney's Office - Middle District of Florida; U.S. Attorney's Office - Southern District of California; U.S. Attorney's Office - Southern District of South Dakota; U.S. Attorney's Office - Southern District of Texas; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; U.S. Attorney's Office - Western District of Arkansas; U.S. Department of Justice - Office of Public Affairs; U.S. Department of State; Unfiltered with Kiran; Upstate New York; US Border Patrol RGV Sector; US Customs and Border Protection; US Fish and Wildlife Service; USA Today; WMBB-TV; WPSD Local 6; WQCS; WTVR CBS 6.

LATIN AMERICA

Argentina: Informato Salta; La Unión de Catamarca; LA17; Mendoza Post; Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development; Rio Negro Police; Environmental Police of the Province of Cordoba; Radio Suquía; Secretary of State for Public Communication of the Government of Tucumán; Sol Play 91.5; Télam; TiempoSur; Todo Jujuy; TodoRoca.

Bolivia: ATB Digital; La Patria; La Voz de la Naturaleza; Ministry of Environment and Water of the Plurinational State of Bolivia; NTN24; World Animal Protection.

Brazil: ((o))eco; State News Agency of the State of Paraná; Agência Pará; Alô Juca; Amazonas Atual; Azulzinho Itabuna; Blog do Carlos Britto; BR104; Canal Rural; Confirma Notícia; Correio do Povo; Folha do Litoral News; G1 BA; G1 PI; G1 Tocantins; Ceará State Government; Piauí State Government; GZH; Hoje em Dia; HORAH Notícia; Ibama; Imprensa24h; Itapevi Realidade; Jornal Bom Dia; Vitória da Conquista City Hall; MB Notícias; Public Prosecutor's Office of the State of Ceará; O Atibaiense; Ondas de Ibagué; Paraná State Civil Police; Federal Police of Brazil; Military Police of Espírito Santo; Military Police of the State of Mato Grosso; Military Police of Ceará; Military Police of the Federal District; Pop Mundi; Portal do Holanda; Portal R7; Rádio Geração; Rádio Vale FM; Registro Diário; Reporter MT; SCC10; Sputnik Voz do Povo; State Environmental Superintendence - Ceará State Government.

Chile: ADN; Diario El Día.

Colombia: Metropolitan Area of Valle de Aburrá; Área Política; Caracol Radio; Regional Autonomous Corporation of Cundinamarca; Regional Autonomous Corporation of Valle del Cauca; DiariOriente; El Colombiano; El Espectador; El Tiempo; Mayor's Office of Bogotá; National Navy of Colombia; Noticias Caracol; National Police of Colombia; Radio Nacional de Colombia; RCN Radio; Semana.

Costa Rica: La Región; La Teja; Sinac; Teletica.

El Salvador: Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (El Salvador).

Ecuador: El Universo; Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition (Ecuador).

Mexico: Aristegui Noticias; El Imparcial de Oaxaca; El Sol de Puebla; El Sol de Tampico; EstamosAqui.mx; National Guard; Infobae; MiMorelia.com; NVI Noticias; Periódico Correo; Profepa; Quadratín Michoacán; Revista Proceso; Mexico City's Secretariat for Citizen Security; TV Azteca; Vértigo Político.

Nicaragua: El 19 Digital.

Panama: A Crítica; Office of the Attorney General of the Nation - Public Ministry of Panama; El Espectador; El Siglo; En Segundos; Ministry of the Environment of the Republic of Panama; NTN24; Panamá América.

Peru: Agencia Peruana de Noticias (Andina); El Búho; Loreto Regional Forestry and Wildlife Development Management; La República; Public Prosecutor's Office - Santa Prosecutor's District; Serfor; TCS Ahora.

Venezuela: El Diario (Venezuela); El Pitazo; La Vanguardia; Public Ministry of Venezuela.

CARIBBEAN

Jamaica: Jamaica Observer; The Gleaner.

Trinidad and Tobago: Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries.

ASIA

CENTRAL ASIA

Kazakhstan: Ak Zhaik; Forestry and Wildlife Committee of the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan; Atyrau Region Police Department; Turkistan Region Police Department; Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan; Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Kyrgyzstan: AKIpress News Agency; Kaktus; Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision; NABU Kyrgyzstan.

Uzbekistan: Ministry of Natural Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

EASTERN ASIA

China: 12371.gov.cn; Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department; China National Radio; Chinanews; Ctdsb.net; Chinese Customs; Gongbei Customs; Guangzhou Customs; Tianjin Customs; Xiamen Customs; Enorth.com.cn; Gansu Daily; Global Times; Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department; Macau Daily Times; Modern Express Post; QingdaoNews.

Japan: FNN; Japan Today; TBS News Dig; The Guardian; The Japan News; Yomiuri Shimbun.

Mongolia: Eagle News; iSee.mn; Medee MN.

South Korea: Donga.com; Marine Connection.

Taiwan: International Community Radio Taipei; Public Television Service Foundation; UP Media; Xinhua; Yahoo Taiwan.

SOUTHEASTERN ASIA

Cambodia: The Phnom Penh Post.

Indonesia: Aceh Journal National Network; Antara News; Antara News Kalbar; Antara News Lampung; Barantin Kini; Beritajatim.com; Borneo Orangutan Survival UK; Buletin iNews; West Papua Natural Resources Conservation Center (BBKSDA Papua Barat); Maluku Natural Resources Conservation Center (BKSDA Maluku); Bandar Lampung Class I Agricultural Quarantine Hall; East Java Animal, Fish and Plant Quarantine Center; Papua Animal, Fish and Plant Quarantine Center; Centre for Orangutan Protection; Detikcom; Directorate General of Natural Resources and Ecosystem Conservation; Police Public Relations Division (Indonesia); Fajar Papua; FLIGHT – Protecting Indonesia's Birds; Garda Animalia; Haba Aceh; Harian Berkat; IDN Times Sumsel; IDN Times Sumut; Indonesia Maritime Information Centre; iNews Kalteng; KalbarOnline.com; KaltengOnline.com; Kicknews.Today; Kompas; Kumparan; Lintas iNews; Medcom.id; Media Indonesia; Media Merah Putih; Ministry of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia; Mistar.id; Mongabay; NuansaNTB; Oke Line; Oke Medan; PETA; Pontianak Post; Radar Surabaya; RadarTuba.co.id; Radartvnews; Directory of Decisions - Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia; Rilis Id – Lampung; Satu Harapan; Scorpion Foundation Indonesia; SuaraLampung.id; SUARANTB.com; SumutPos.co; Case Tracking Information System - Surabaya State Court; Terasmaluku.com; The Jakarta Post; The Orangutan Project; Tribun Gayo; Tribun Pontianak; Tribun Sumsel; TvOneNews.

Laos: Radio Free Asia; The Laotian Times.

Malaysia: Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia; Harian Metro; Malay Mail; New Straits Times; Overseas Chinese Daily News Malaysia; The Borneo Post; The Star (Malaysia); Traffic; Utusan Malaysia.

Philippines: Bureau of Customs; Palawan News.

Thailand: Bangkok Post; Channel News Asia; Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation; Khaosod English; Khmer Times; Mgronline.com; Thai PBS; The Nation Thailand.

Viet Nam: Báo Công lý; Báo Công Thương; Bao Dân Việt; Báo Hà Tĩnh; Bao Tin tức - TTXVN; Cong An Nhan Dan; Docnhanh.vn; ENV; Ho Chi Minh City Police Newspaper; Lao Dong; Kon Tum Province Police; Thanh Niên; Tiền Phong; Tuoi Tre Online; VietNamNet; VietnamPlus; VnExpress International; VTC News.

SOUTHERN ASIA

Bangladesh: Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR).

India: ABP Live; Amar Ujala; Andaman Chronicle; Andaman Sheeka; Argus News; Arunachal Times; Asian News International; Bangalore Mirror; Bansal News; Blitz; Border Security Force North Bengal; Border Security Force South Bengal; Borok Times; Business Today; Central Railway Protection Force; Country and Politics; Daijiworld; Dainik Jagran; Deccan Chronicle; Deccan Herald; Devdiscourse; Down To Earth; DT Next; East Coast Daily; ETV Bharat; Greater Kashmir; Hindustan Times; Humari Baat; IBC24 News; India Today; Indian Coast Guard; Jagran; Kalinga TV; Karmactive; Live Hindustan; Lokmat Times; Mathrubhumi; Millennium Post; Ministry of Finance; Mongabay; Nagpur Today; Naidunia; Navbharat Times; New Delhi Television; News Track; News18 Tamil Nadu; Newsroom Odisha; Northeast Now; Odisha Bytes; Odisha Reporter; Odisha TV; Ommcom News; On Manorama; OpIndia; Pawsome; PETA India; PiPa News; Prabhat Khabar; Pragativadi; Pratidin Time; Public Relations Officer of Chennai; Pune Mirror; Railway Protection Force; Railway Protection Force - Asansol Division; Railway Protection Force - Lucknow Division; Railway Protection Force - Lumding Division; Railway Protection Force - Malda Division; Railway Protection Force Northern Railway; Railway Protection Force West Central Railway; Republic World; Sakshi Post; Sambad English; Sangbad Pratidin; Seithipunal; Siliguri Times; Star of Mysore; Telangana Today; The Assam Rifles; The Assam Tribune; The Free Press Journal; The Goan Everyday; The Hindu; The Hitavada; The Indian Express; The National; The New Indian Express; The Pioneer; The Print; The Sentinel; The Siasat Daily; The Statesman; The Telegraph India; The Times of India; The Uncut; The Week; Vande Bharat TV; Vikatan; Vygr; WCCB; Wildlife Crime Prevention Volunteer ER; Wildlife Trust of India.

Iran: National Environmental Protection Agency; Borna News; Esfahanemrooz; Iranian Labour News Agency; Irib News Agency; Karaman Habercisi; Khabarban; Khabaronline; Mehr News Agency; Rokna News; Tasnim News Agency; The Islamic Republic News Agency; Young Journalists Club.

Nepal: Mongabay; myRepublica; Nepal News; The Kathmandu Post.

Pakistan: Associated Press of Pakistan; Dawn; The News International; The Veterinary News & Views; UrduPoint; Veterinary News and Views.

Sri Lanka: Colombo Gazette; Sri Lanka Coast Guard; Sri Lanka Mirror; Sri Lanka Navy; The Sunday Times.

WESTERN ASIA

Armenia: Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets; International Animal Rescue.

Azerbaijan: Asekose.am; Bizim Yol; Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan; Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan; Pravda.az; XəbərAl.Az..

Israel: Israel Nature and Parks Authority; The Times of Israel.

Jordan: Amman Net.

Saudi Arabia: Al Madina; Saudi Gazette.

Türkiye: Batman Sonsöz; Habertürk; Hürriyet Daily News; Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Türkiye.

NORTHERN EUROPE

Denmark: Dansk Ornitologisk Forening / BirdLife Denmark; The Danish Customs Agency.

Finland: Lapin Kansa.

Norway: Dagsavisen; NOAH; NRK; Rovdyr.org; Trønder-Avisa.

United Kingdom: Birmingham Mail; Cheshire Constabulary; East Sussex Wildlife Rescue & Ambulance Service; Eastern Daily Press; ITV; North Yorkshire Police; Oxford Mail; Raptor Persecution UK; Suffolk Constabulary; UK Government.

WESTERN EUROPE

Austria: Kleine Zeitung; Kronen Zeitung; Kurier; Federal Ministry of Finance (Austria); NÖN; OÖNachrichten; ORF.

Belgique: L'Avenir; La Voix du Nord; Ligue Royale Belge pour la Protection des Oiseaux; Nieuwsblad; RTL Info; Sudinfo; VRT.

France: 76actu; Actu Toulouse; Alouette; ASPAS; Bladi.net; BLOOM; Charente Libre; Ferus; France 3 Centre-Val de Loire; France Bleu Drôme Ardèche; France Bleu Nord; France Bleu Occitanie; France Bleu Orléans; France Bleu Provence; France Bleu Touraine; Gendarmerie of Eure-et-Loir; Gendarmerie of Drôme; Gendarmerie of Marne; High Commission of the French Republic in New Caledonia; L'Echo Républicain; L'Est Eclair; L'Opinion Indépendante; La Dépêche du Midi; La Gazette Ariégeoise; La Nouvelle République; La Provence; La République des Pyrénées; La Voix du Nord; Le Berry Républicain; Le Courrier Cauchois; Le Dauphiné Libéré; Le Parisien; Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux; Lille Actu; Martinique la 1ère; Mayotte Hebdo; Midi Libre; Nouvelle-Calédonie la 1ère; One Voice; Ouest-France; Paris-Normandie; National Police; National Police of Seine-Maritime; Prefect of Martinique; RCI; SDIS 59; Sea Shepherd France; Sud Ouest; Tahiti Infos; Tonga Terre d'Accueil; Zoo de Lescar.

Germany: AZ-Online; Committee Against Bird Slaughter; Hanover Police Department; Eichsfelder Nachrichten; Nürnberger Nachrichten; PIRSCH; Essen Police; North Hesse Police Headquarters; Rheinische Post; Süddeutsche Zeitung; Tatort Natur; Volksstimme; Wild und Hund.

The Netherlands: Netherlands Enterprise Agency; Algemeen Dagblad; Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority; Dutch Customs; Nederlandse Omroep Stichting; NL Times; Omroep Brabant; National Police (The Netherlands); RTV Drenthe; Frisian Environmental Service; Waterkant.

Switzerland: Le Nouvelliste; Schweizer Bauer.

SOUTHERN EUROPE

Croatia: Osijek-Baranja Police Department; Index; Morski HR; N1; Slobodna Dalmacija.

Greece: Anna Gergou; iHunt.gr; onlarissa.gr; Zoosos.gr.

Italy: Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata; Alto Adige; Arma dei Carabinieri; Associazione Nazionale Protezione Animali Natura Ambiente Sezione di Livorno; Canale Dieci; CASCINA notizie; CasertaNews; CataniaToday; ChietiToday; ChietiToday; Committee Against Bird Slaughter; Corriere Adriatico; Corriere della Calabria; Corriere Fiorentino; Cuoio in Diretta; FirenzeToday; Friuli Oggi; Giornale La Voce; GreenMe; Grosseto Notizie; Il Fatto Quotidiano; Il giornale dei Castelli Romani; Il Giorno; Il Mattino; Il Messaggero; Il Resto del Carlino; Il Tirreno; Kodami; L'Eco dell'Alto Molise e Alto Vastese; L'Unione Sarda; La Gazzetta del Medio Campidano; La Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno; La Nazione; La Nuova Sardegna; La Provincia Online; La Repubblica; La Stampa; Lega Italiana Protezione Uccelli; Lega Nazionale per la Difesa del Cane; MARIGLIANO.net; Messinaora.it; Newsbiella.it; Notizie di Prato; OstuniNews; PiacenzaOnline; Police Headquarters of Ragusa; Autonomous province of Bolzano - South Tyrol; Quotidiano di Puglia; Quotidiano di Sicilia; Ragusa Oggi; RagusaNews; ReggioToday; ReteAbruzzo.com; Rewilding Apennines; RomaToday; Serchio in diretta; SiracusaOggi; Südwest Presse; Tgcom24; VeneziaToday; VicenzaToday; Metropolitan City of Florence; Virgilio Notizie; Voce di Strada.

Malta: BirdLife Malta; Committee Against Bird Slaughter.

Montenegro: Environmental Protection Agency of Montenegro; Animal Survival International; Center for Protection and Research of birds of Montenegro; CZIP – Centar za zaštitu i proučavanje ptica; Stop krivolovu; Vijesti.

Portugal: National Republican Guard of Portugal; SIC Notícias.

Slovenia: Slovenske Novice; Žurnal24.

Spain: Antena 3; Cadena SER; CARTV; Castellón Diario; Cn8; Diario de Teruel; El Día de Córdoba; El Periódico de España; eldiario.es; Europa Sur; France 3 Occitanie; Generalitat de Catalunya; Heraldo de Aragón; La Vanguardia; La Voz de Cádiz; Metrópoli Abierta; Ministry of Internal Affairs (Spain); Telecinco; Xunta de Galicia.

EASTERN EUROPE

Bulgaria: BNR Radio Bulgaria; BNT; Bulgarian News Agency; Regional Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs - Shumen; Regional Environment and Water Inspectorate - Stara Zagora; Ministry of Environment and Water (Bulgaria); Telegraph (Bulgaria); TrafficNews.bg.

Hungary: Hortobágyi Madárpark; Magyar Nemzet; Hungarian Police; The Prosecution Service of Hungary; Szabolcs Online; Courts of Hungary; ZooZoo Portál.

Poland: Tax Administration Chamber in Gdańsk; Tax Administration Chamber in Lublin; Tax Administration Chamber in Rzeszów; Tax Administration Chamber in Szczecin; Tax Administration Chamber in Warsaw; Gazeta Krakowska; Gazeta.pl; Limanowna.in; Gdynia Town Hall; Polish Police; Metropolitan Police Headquarters; TVN24; Zachodniopomorskie Towarzystwo Przyrodnicze.

Romania: Adevarul; Arad Online; Coast Guard; Gazeta Dâmboviței; Hunedoara County Police Inspectorate; Ialomița County Police Inspectorate; Monitorul Cluj; Observator; Romanian Border Police; Romanian Police; Renasterea Banateana; ZIUA de Constanta.

Russia: 47 channel; A24; Municipal administration of the seaside town of Gelendzhik; Yenisey Territorial Administration of the Federal Agency for Fishery; North Caucasus Territorial Administration of the Federal Agency for Fishery; AMurMedia; AMURPRESS; ASTV.RU; Babr24; Baikal-Daily; BezFormata; Biyskiy Rabochiy; Bloknot Astrakhan; Bloknot Krasnodar; Bloknot Taganrog; Amur Basin Environmental Prosecutor's Office; Astrakhan Oblast Prosecutor's Office; Omsk Oblast Prosecutor's Office; Saratov Oblast Prosecutor's Office; Tomsk Oblast Prosecutor's Office; Vladimir Oblast Prosecutor's Office; Far East Transport Prosecutor's Office; Ural Transport Prosecutor's Office; West Siberian Transport Prosecutor's Office; Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District Prosecutor's Office; Khabarovsk Krai Prosecutor's Office; Kamchatka Krai Prosecutor's Office; Moscow Government Information Centre; The investigative committee of the Russian Federation in the Astrakhan Oblast; The investigative committee of the Russian Federation in the Sakhalin Oblast; The investigative committee of the Russian Federation in the Tyumen Oblast; The investigative committee of the Russian Federation in the Tula Oblast; The investigative committee of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Mordovia; The investigative committee of the Russian Federation in the Khabarovsk Krai and the Jewish Autonomous Oblast; The investigative committee of the Russian Federation in the Krasnoyarsk Krai; The investigative committee of the Russian Federation in the Kamchatka Krai; Saratov Oblast Hunting and Fishing Committee; Moscow Municipal Economic Complex; Department of the Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance for Moscow City and Moscow and Tula Oblasts; Transport Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia for the Siberian Federal District; Upper Ob Territorial Department of the Federal Agency for Fishery; Virtual Customs; DV Novosti; Enisey TV; First Tula; Fishnews; Fontanka.Ru; Gorod55; GTRK Tomsk; H.I. Sutton; In the City of N; Interfax Russia; International award "My affectionate and necessary animal"; Kam 24; Kamchatka Today; KAMCHATKA-INFORM; Khabarovsk Territory Today; Kommercheskie Vesti; Komsomolskaia Pravda Khabarovsk; Komsomolskaia Pravda Novosibirsk; Krasnoyarskiy Rabochiy; KubNews; Life; Living in Nizhny; Mash; Ministry of Ecology of the Chelyabinsk Oblast; Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia; Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia in Astrakhan Oblast; Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia in Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District; Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia in Khabarovsk Krai; Moskovski Komsomolets Sakhalin; Moskovski Komsomolets Yamalia; Moskovski Komsomolets Yekaterinburg; Moydom Moscow; MSK1.RU; Naval News; New Day; New Siberia; News VL; NEWSTULA.RU; Nizhegorodskaya Pravda; Northern City; Novaya Buryatia; NSK TV; OINFO; Omsk news feed; Omsk Region Information Agency; Our Krasnoyarsk Territory; Pchela.News; Petersburg Newspaper; Police de Iougra; Pro Gorod; Regional Information Agency Birobidzhan; RIA Dagestan; RIA Novosti Crimea; RO Today; Joint Press Service of Krasnodar Krai Courts; Unified press service of the Tyumen Oblast judicial system; Federal Service for Supervision of Natural Resources; Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (FSB); Federal Customs Service; Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance; Siberian News Agency; Step Vesti; Stolica S; SuperOmsk; Seafarers' Union of Russia; Taganrog Pravda; Temryuk Info; Transsibinfo; Leninsky District Court in the City of Novosibirsk; U.S. Naval Institute; Volga-Caspian Management Unit of the Federal Agency for Fishery; UTV. RU; Vecherniy Saransk; Vzglyad-info; Yenisei-Info; Yugra District TV and Radio Company.

Slovakia: Enviroportal; MY Novohrad; Police of the Slovak Republic; SP21 Spravodajský portál 21; Rimavská Sobota District Court.

Czechia: The Customs Administration of the Czech Republic; Ekolist.cz; eXtra.cz; iDNES.cz; Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic; Naše Praha; Police of the Czech Republic; PrahaIN.cz; Refresher.

Ukraine: Bessarabia INFORM; Poltavshchyna; State Border Guard Service of Ukraine; UA-Reporter.com; UAnimals.

OCEANIA

Australia: ABC News; Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (Western Australia); Herald Sun; Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR); Midwest Times; Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; Sohu; State of Queensland (Department of Environment, Science and Innovation); The Guardian; The West Australian.

New Zealand: Department of Conservation.

Angul District, State of Odisha, India

N°14 p.93 (ref.113). **N°18** p.100 (ref.124). **N°20** p.104 (ref.102). **N°23** p.89 (ref.65) and p.130 (ref.124). **N°26** p.27 (ref.7). **N°29** p.18 (ref.26, 27 and 28). **N°30** p.38 (ref.139). **N°31** p.32 (ref.106) and p.162 (ref.8). **N°32** p.246 (ref.93). **N°33** p.50 (ref.193) and p.209 (ref.12). **N°34** p.40 (ref.144), p.41 (ref.148 and 154), p.42 (ref.158) and p.75 (ref.87). **N°35** p.31 (ref.110). **N°36** p.37 (ref.106 and 111) and p.64 (ref.56). **N°37** p.30 and p.31 (map). **N°38** p.31 (ref.106), p.33 (ref.113) and p.58 (ref.54). **N°39** p.87 (ref.5). **N°41** p.27 (ref.72).

Animal experimentation (capture, trafficking or use of animals)

N°9 p.40 (ref.30). **N°12** p.47 (ref.32). **N°15** p.79 (ref.25). **N°17** p.91 (ref.25). **N°26** p.54 (ref.11) and p.59 (ref.37). **N°27** p.69 (ref.27), Covid-19 Special Edition p.5. **N°30** p.91 (ref.18) and p.97 (ref.60). **N°31** p.99 (ref.19) and p.182 (ref.73). **N°32** p.304 (ref.16). **N°33** p.63 (ref.10), p.142 (ref.55) and p.281 (ref.3). **N°35** p.97-98 (ref.30). **N°37** p.100 (ref.23). **N°38** p.109 (ref.23) and p.111 (ref.31). **N°39** p.76 (ref.19), p.80 (ref.37 and 39) and p.83 (ref.54). **N°40** p.101 (ref.19), p.110 (ref.60 and 62), p.111 (ref.65 and 67), p.113 (ref.79). **N°41** p.94 (ref.44 and 47) and p.220.

Cape fur seal (*Arctocephalus pusillus*, Appendix II)

N°14 p.17 (ref.2). **N°15** p.10 (ref.1). **N°26** p.17 (ref.1 and 2). **N°33** p.281 (ref.2). **N°39** p.187 (ref.1). **N°41** p.215 (ref.1 and 4).

Caracals (*Caracal caracal*, Appendix I or II) as pets in Europe

N°28 p.85 (ref.66, 67 and 68). **N°33** p.90 (ref.86) and p.96 (ref.114 and 115). **N°34** p.83-84 (ref.135). **N°35** p.62 (ref.123). **N°36** p.66 (ref.67 and 68). **N°37** p.193 (ref.82) and p.195 (ref.92). **N°38** p.62 (ref.74), p.66 (ref.94) and p.67 (ref.95). **N°39** p.40 (ref.49). **N°40** p.59 (ref.75). **N°41** p.50 (ref.62) and p.51 (ref.63 and 64).

Crested porcupines (*Hystrix cristata*) (poaching and seizures)

N°13 p.101 (ref.2). **N°30** p.16-18. **N°31** p.133 (ref.110). **N°33** p.149 (ref.23). **N°34** p.229 (ref.109). **N°35** p.112 (ref.12) and p.185 (ref.69). **N°36** p.121 (ref.10). **N°37** p.115 (ref.17 and 18) and p.181 (ref.12). **N°39** p.88 (ref.12 and 14). **N°41** p.99 (ref.9 and 11).

Erhus made of python skin (Pythonidae)

N°10 p.18 (ref.2). **N°12** p.23 (ref.6). **N°24** p.25 (ref.4). **N°25** p.29 (ref.4) and p.112 (ref.73). **N°31** p.155 (ref.10). **N°32** p.210 (ref.16, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23) and p.241 (ref.62). **N°33** p.199 (ref.16). **N°34** p.194 (ref.7) and p.195 (ref.9). **N°35** p.160 (ref.14 and 15). **N°36** p.172 (ref.6 and 7). **N°37** p.163 (ref.9, 11 and 12). **N°40** p.174 (ref.4 and 5).

European glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Annexe II) (seizures and convictions in France and Spain)

N°4 p.10. **N°5** p.10. **N°12** p.9 (ref.12). **N°13** p.11 (ref.14 and 14bis). **N°16** p.9 (ref.19 and 20) and p.10 (ref.21, 22, 23, 24 and 25). **N°18** p.12 (ref.15). **N°20** p.18 (ref.24 and 25). **N°21** p.11 (ref.20 and 21), p.12 (ref.22, 23 and 25), p.119 (ref.74). **N°22** p.13. **N°23** p.16 (ref.32 and 33). **N°24** p.15 (ref.16, 17, 18 and 19). **N°25** p.17 (ref.30 and 34) and p.18 (ref.37). **N°27** p.21 (ref.41). **N°28** p.19 (ref.20, 21, 22, 23 and 24). **N°31** p.211 (ref.41). **N°32** p.288 (ref.65, 66, 67, 68 and 69). **N°33** p.266 (ref.38) and p.267 (ref.41). **N°34** p.253 (ref.36 and 37). **N°35** p.205 (ref.43, 44 and 45) and p.206 (ref.46, 47, 48 and 49). **N°36** p.221 (ref.43 and 44). **N°37** p.218 (ref.59). **N°38** p.239 (ref.52, 54 and 55). **N°39** p.177 (ref.29), p.178 (ref.31) and p.179 (ref.33). **N°40** p.240 (ref.49, 50 and 51). **N°41** p.204 (ref.33).

Flying foxes (*Pteropus* spp., Appendix I or II, or *Notopterus neocaledonicus*) in New Caledonia (France) (poaching and seizures)

N°8 p.93 (ref.3). **N°9** p.92 (ref.17). **N°10** p.70 (ref.27). **N°11** p.89 (ref.17). **N°32** p.148 (ref.16). **N°40** p.116 (ref.2 and 3). **N°41** p.99 (ref.14).

Frankfurt, Hesse State, Germany (wildlife smuggling via the international airport)

N°4 p.38. **N°5** p.31. **N°6** p.18 (ref.23), p.32 (ref.37) and p.96 (ref.126). **N°7** p.75 (ref.78). **N°11** p.63 (ref.52). **N°15** p.24 (ref.4). **N°18** p.21 (ref.22). **N°23** p.15 (ref.27) and p.134 (ref.156). **N°26** p.43 (ref.35) and p.96 (ref.138). **N°28** p.8 (ref.11), p.34 (ref.17), p.90 (ref.17) and p.115 (ref.107). **N°29** p.91 (ref.23). **N°33** p.230 (ref.72). **N°36** p.204 (ref.8). **N°39** p.25 (ref.80). **N°41** p.179 (ref.60).

Gaja Muthu or elephant beads

N°15 p. 101 (ref.97). **N°19** p. 112 (ref.139). **N°22** p. 100. **N°23** p.134 (ref.151). **N°24** p.79 (ref.106). **N°32** p.51 (ref.215). **N°35** p.33 (ref.122 and 125). **N°36** p.39 (ref.120). **N°37** p.37 (ref.125). **N°41** p.27 (ref.74).

Gang Mabuza-Nyalunga-Mnisi (rhinos South Africa)

N°6 p.62-63 (ref.16). **N°7** p.62 (ref.5). **N°9** p.66 (ref.44). **N°12** p.69 (ref.19). **N°15** p.82 (ref.41). **N°21** p.77 (ref.30). **N°22** p.79 and p.81. **N°23** p.104 (ref.26). **N°28** p.4, ref.4. **N°30** p.45 (ref.18). **N°40** p.43 (ref.11) and p.45 (ref.25). **N°41** p.27 (ref.74).

Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*, Appendix I)

N°5 p.29. **N°8** p.18 (ref.5). **N°12** p.25 (ref.2). **N°18** p.26 (ref. 6). **N°27** p.37 (ref.7). **N°29** p.145 (ref.12). **N°41** p.163 (ref.32).

Hair curler network (smuggling of songbirds concealed in curlers)

N°20 p.43 (ref.91). **N°23** p.43 (ref.15). **N°25** p.42 (ref.18). **N°28** p.45 (ref.19). **N°32** p.153 (ref.22) and p.154 (ref.29). **N°37** p.121 (ref.27) and p.124 (ref.32). **N°39** p.92 (ref.16). **N°41** p.112 (ref.56).

Kinkajou (*Potos flavus*)

N°4 p.97. **N°7** p.106 (ref.18). **N°8** p.98 (ref.26). **N°15** p.118 (ref.55bis). **N°17** p.116 (ref.31). **N°21** p.113 (ref.37). **N°26** p.105 (ref.35). **N°27** p.66 (ref.7), p.114 (ref.11) and p.126 (ref.71). **N°33** p.146 (ref.6) and p.222 (ref.15). **N°34** p.218 (ref.49). **N°35** p.110 (ref.3) and p.176 (ref.12). **N°37** p.181 (ref.12). **N°40** p.118 (ref.7).

Lwiro (Primate Rehabilitation Centre), Bukavu, South Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

N°6 p.41. **N°8** p.35 (ref.1). **N°9** p.36 (ref.2 and 3) and p.37 (ref.7 and 11). **N°11** p.37 (ref.1 and 4) and p.38 (ref.7 and 8). **N°12** p.27 (ref.2) and p.41 (ref.5, 6 and 7). **N°13** p.43 (ref.8 and 9) and p.44 (ref.11 and 12). **N°14** p.37 (ref.8 and 10). **N°15** p.50 (ref.6). **N°16** p.41 (ref.2 and 3). **N°17** p.45 (ref.6 and 7). **N°19** p.56 (ref.4 and 5). **N°20** p.57 (ref.4). **N°23** p.72 (ref.9 and 10). **N°25** p.54 (ref.1). **N°27** p.64 (ref.1). **N°28** p.67 (ref.3). **N°30** p.90 (ref.10) and p.91 (ref.13 and 14). **N°31** p.97 (ref.12) and p.114 (ref.7). **N°32** p.128 (ref.10 and 11) and p.129 (ref.12, 15, 16, 17 and 18). **N°33** p.132 (ref.15 and 16). **N°34** p.120 (map) and p.140 (ref.16). **N°35** p.94 (ref.9 and 10). **N°36** p.104 (ref.12 and 13), p.105 (ref.15) and p.124 (ref.8). **N°37** p.97 (map), p.98 (ref.10) and p.117 (ref.5). **N°38** p.106 (map). **N°39** p.74 (ref.6). **N°40** p.99 (map). **N°41** p.85 (map).

Mammoth ivory

N°3 p.76. **N°7** p.71 and p.88 (ref.63). **N°8** p.82-84. **N°9** p.103 (ref.80). **N°11** p.9 (map), p.83 (ref.76), p.87 (ref.1) and p.97 (ref.49). **N°12** p.92 (ref.94 and 102). **N°13** p.77 (ref.5) and p.95 (ref.100). **N°14** p.88-89 (ref.87) and p.110 (ref.43). **N°15** p.87 (ref.1) and p.105 (ref.120). **N°16** p.82 (ref.75) and p.90 (ref.1 and 2). **N°17** p.108 (ref.1 and 2). **N°18** p.106 (ref.149). **N°20** p.101 (ref.79), p.110 (ref.1) and p.111 (ref.2). **N°21** p.102 (ref.1) and p.116 (ref.50). **N°23** p.135 (ref.1 and 2), p.136 and p.151 (ref.49). **N°24** p. 80 and p.81 (ref.1 and ref.1, left column). **N°26** p.97 (ref.1). **N°27** p.83 (ref.9 and 10) and p.129 (ref.82). **N°29** p.32 (ref.68) and p.41 (ref.126). **N°30** p.163 (ref.39). **N°31** p.40 (ref.1) and p.41 (ref.4). **N°32** p.52 (ref.221) and p.54 (ref.2). **N°33** p.39 (ref.111) and p.231 (ref.77). **N°34** p.33 (ref.82) and p.48 (ref.1, 2 and 3). **N°38** p.37 (ref.1 and 2). **N°40** p.36 (ref.1 and 2). **N°41** p.31.

Merida, State of Yucatan, Mexico (wildlife smuggling via the international airport)

N°2 p.18 and p.19. **N°4** p.27 and p.33. **N°5** p.27. **N°19** p.9 (ref.8). **N°20** p.12 (ref.2 and 4). **N°21** p.8 (ref.3) and p.25 (ref.4). **N°24** p.61 (ref.48). **N°25** p.12 (ref.6), p.15 (ref.18 and 20) and p.32 (ref.5). **N°26** p.54 (ref.9). **N°28** p.45 (ref.23). **N°29** p.115 (ref.34). **N°34** p.115 (ref.14) and p.146 (ref.47). **N°35** p.44 (ref.1). **N°36** p. 69 (ref.77).

Musical instruments with ivory parts (pianos, violins, cellos, etc.)

N°5 p.95. **N°22** p.102 (Nouvelle-Zélande). **N°28** p.110 (ref.70). **N°29** p.31 (ref.63). **N°32** p.36 (ref.117), p.37 (ref.122) and p.42 (ref.176). **N°33** p.38, p.39 (ref.109) and p.44 (ref.161). **N°34** p.37 (ref.125). **N°35** p.27 (ref.85). **N°37** p.27 (ref.61) and p.37 (ref.127). **N°38** p.27 (ref.74) and p.36 (ref.131). **N°39** p.17 (ref.39) and p.18 (ref.46). **N°40** p.28 (ref.67).

Poisoning by agricultural toxins (pesticides, insecticides, rodenticides, such as: aldicarb, bendiocarb, brodifacoum, bromadiolone, carbofuran, chlorpyrifos, Curater, endosulfan, fenthion, Furadan, metaldehyde, monocrotophos, parathion, sulfotep, Temik, Thimet, ...)

N°2 p.37. **N°4** p.30, p.54 and p.83. **N°7** p.20 (ref.1) and p.27 (ref.39). **N°8** p.20 (ref.2), p.26 (ref.32) and p.75 (ref.30). **N°10** p.69 (ref.15). **N°11** p.51 (ref.44), p.74 (ref.46) and p.84 (ref.83). **N°12** p.27 (ref.3), p.57 (ref.25) and p.102 (ref.2). **N°13** p.59 (ref.37), p.61 (ref.52), p.102 (ref.10) and p.103 (ref.14). **N°14** p.27 (ref.1). **N°15** p.36 (ref.59), p.64 (ref.50), p.65 (ref.52) and p.101 (ref.94). **N°16** p.75 (ref.10). **N°17** p.38 (ref.69) and p.55 (ref.5). **N°18** p.32 (ref.32), p.34 (ref.49), p.54-55 (ref.26), p.58 (ref.59) and p.85 (ref.20). **N°19** p.33 (ref.2) and p.71 (p.50). **N°20** p.34 (ref.4), p.46 (ref.109), p.48 (ref.121), p.69 (ref.55) and p.106 (ref.118). **N°21** p.37 (ref.72 and 75), p.52 (ref.19), p.69 (ref.86) and p.98 (ref.113). **N°22** p.44 (27 juillet 2018) and p.56 (12 août 2018). **N°23** p.46 (ref.36), p.50 (ref.59), p.55 (ref.84, 85, 88 and 89), p.89 (ref.67), p.94 (ref.92), p.114 (ref.10) and p.118 (ref.36). **N°24** p.43 (ref.65). **N°25** p.42 (ref.16), p.44 (ref.35) and p.116 (ref.98). **N°26** p.36 (ref.1), p.47 (ref.55), p.61 (ref.3), p.62 (ref.8 and 10), p.64 (ref.22) and p.66 (ref.39). **N°27** p.41 (ref.2), p.42 (ref.5), p.48 (ref.33) and p.49 (ref.40). **N°28** p.47 (ref.39 and 41), p.80 (ref.39), p.93 (ref.3) and p.135 (ref.78). **N°29** p.54 (ref.7), p.55 (ref.12), p.56 (ref.15), p.68 (ref.82), p.118 (ref.44), p.126 (ref.102), p.128, p.129 (ref.110) and p.131 (ref.129). **N°30** p.119 (map). **N°31** p.68 (ref.103), p.72 (ref.9), p.110 (ref.8), p.114 (ref.9), p.116 (ref.19), p.133 (ref.110) and p.181 (ref.66). **N°32** p.70 (ref.6), p.73 (ref.23), p.78 (ref.51), p.100 (ref.34), p.145 (ref.6), p.156 (ref.39), p.172 (ref.108), p.173, p.180 (ref.156 and 157), p.181 (ref.163), p.182 (ref.170 and 171), p.183 (ref.175 and 176), p.194 (ref.243) and p.195 (ref.244 and 246). **N°33** p.46 (ref.172), p.87 (ref.60), p.115 (ref.25), p.169 (map), p.172 (ref.102), p.173 (map), p.179 (ref.132), p.182 (ref.140) and p.239 (ref.122). **N°34** p.41 (ref.148), p.156 (map), p.161 (map), p.162 (ref.109) and p.179 (ref.217). **N°35** p.52 (ref.54), p.67 (ref.18), p.128 (map), p.133 (ref.80), p.134 (ref.91), p.135 (ref.99), p.136 (ref.106 and 109), p.143 (ref.147), p.145 (ref.163), p.146 (ref.167) and p.185 (ref.71). **N°36** p.59 (ref.23), p.71 (ref.2), p.138 (ref.62), p.144 (ref.92), p.145 (ref.97 and 98), p.146 (ref.101), p.147 (ref.110), p.155 (ref.135), p.159 (ref.162) and p.191 (ref.34). **N°37** p.133 (map), p.137 (ref.86 and 90), p.138 (ref.94), p.140 (ref.110), p.147 (ref.144 and 146) and p.176 (ref.1). **N°38** p.50 (ref.8), p.68 (ref.1), p.70 (ref.12), p.71 (ref.14), p.73 (ref.26), p.148 (map), p.154 (ref.127), p.155 (map), p.156 (ref.133), p.159 (ref.157), p.161 (ref.173), p.164 (ref.185) and p.169 (ref.209). **N°39** p.34 (ref.14), p.109 (ref.85), p.111 (ref.97 and 99), p.112 (ref.102), p.119 (ref.129 and 131) and p.122 (ref.146). **N°40** p. 21 (ref. 22), p. 50 (ref.12), p. 51 (ref.20), p. 52 (ref.25), p.53 (ref.36),

p.56 (ref. 52 and 57), p.67 (ref.16 and 17), p.69 (ref.27), p.89 (ref.1), p.113 (ref.78), p.124 (ref.5), p.131 (ref. 44), p.144 (ref. 90), p.145 (ref.94, 95 and 96), p.147 (ref.104 and 108), p.148 (ref.111), p.149 (map), p.150 (ref.116, 117 and 118), p.151 (ref.123, 124 and 125), p.153 (ref.135), p.155 (ref.145), p.158 (ref.154 and 155), p.159 (ref.157, 158 and 159), p.160 (ref.163), p.161 (ref.168), p.163 (ref.180 and 183), p.204 (ref. 73), p.209 (ref. 95). **N°41** p.25 (ref.62), p.26 (ref.63), p.49 (ref.47), p.50 (ref.55), p.59 (ref.10), p.95 (ref.50), p.102 (ref.9), p.103 (ref.14), p.125 (ref.116), p.128 (ref.124 and 129), p.129 (ref.133 and 134), p.131 (ref.144), p.137 (ref.175), p.180 (ref.65) and p.203 (ref.25).

Rathkeale Rovers

N°1 p.22. **N°2** p. 48, 49, 50, 52 and 53. **N°4** p.67 and p.69-70. **N°5** p.76. **N°7** p.75 (ref.78). **N°8** p.66 (ref.55 and encadré). **N°9** p.69. **N°10** p.49 (ref.49bis). **N°12** p.72 (ref.48/49). **N°13** p.76 (ref.61). **N°14** p.97 (ref.129). **N°15** p.86 (ref.75). **N°16** p.70 (ref.37). **N°18** p.78 (ref.70). **N°19** p.87 (ref.28 and 29). **N°27** p.88 (ref.23). **N°30** p.49 (ref.37bis). **N°32** p.55-58. **N°34** p.60 (ref.62). **N°40** p.39 (ref.9).

Satpura Tiger Reserve, Narmadapuram District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

N°4 p.56. **N°10** p.40 (ref.43). **N°11** p.47 (ref.21). **N°23** p.89 (ref.70). **N°25** p.113 (ref.83). **N°41** p.42 (ref.7).

Servals (*Leptailurus serval*, Appendix II) alive in Europe and Northern America

N°11 p.52 (ref.51). **N°26** p.68 (ref.52). **N°27** p.79 (ref.57). **N°28** p.86 (ref.69 and 70). **N°31** p.66 (ref.92). **N°32** p.88 (ref.117, 118 and 119) and p.251 (ref.119). **N°33** p.91 (ref.87 and 88) and p.96 (ref.114). **N°34** p.78 (ref.106, 107 and 108), p.82 (ref.131), p.83-84 (ref.135) and p.227 (ref.98). **N°35** p.58 (ref.94), p.62 (ref.123) and p.187 (ref.84). **N°36** p.66 (ref.69 and 70) and p.67 (ref.71). **N°37** p.55 (ref.60). **N°38** p.62 (ref.76), p.66 (ref.94), p.67 (ref.95) and p.214 (ref.81). **N°39** p.41 (ref.51, 52 and 54). **N°40** p.59 (ref.77 and 78), p.60 (ref.79). **N°41** p.51 (ref.66), p.52 (ref.68, 69, 70, 71 and 72) and p.53 (ref.73 and 74).

Shahtoosh (stoles made from the wool of the Tibetan antelope *Pantholops hodgsonii*)

N°3 p.76. **N°5** p.109. **N°6** p.100 (ref.10). **N°8** p.93 (ref.12). **N°9** p.91 (ref.13). **N°11** p.49 (ref.30). **N°16** p.103 (ref.61). **N°20** p.114 (ref.24). **N°23** p.140 (ref.26) and p.142 (ref.45). **N°28** p.119 (ref.23). **N°32** p.109 (ref.6). **N°33** p.113 (ref.13). **N°34** p.101 (ref.15). **N°35** p.75 (ref.7) and p.76 (ref.11). **N°40** p.79 (ref.10), p. 80 (ref.11).

Sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) (teeth thefts, seizures and convictions)

N°2 p.5, p.70 and p.77. **N°3** p.76. **N°4** p.13. **N°7** p.116 (ref.69). **N°9** p.88-89 (ref.95). **N°10** p.9 (ref.3). **N°11** p.12 (Multi-espèces marines), p.97 (ref.49) and 98 (ref.55). **N°12** p.12 (ref.6). **N°13** p.114 (ref.74 and 75). **N°15** p.11 (ref.6) and p.87 (ref.1). **N°16** p.12 (ref.1). **N°17** p.16 (ref.10), p.99 (ref.74) and p.117 (ref.33). **N°18** p.13 (ref.2). **N°20** p.128 (ref.78). **N°21** p.14 (ref.1). **N°22** p.124 (août 2018). **N°24** p.17 (ref.5 and 8). **N°25** p.19 (ref.4), p.20 (ref.10) and p.111 (ref.69). **N°26** p.18 (ref.7). **N°27** p.23 (ref.1) and p.127 (ref.74). **N°29** p.41 (ref.124 and 126) and p.180 (ref.6 and 7). **N°30** p.174 (ref.95), p.179 (ref.8), p.197 (ref.6) and p.200 (ref.17). **N°31** p.41 (ref.2 and 4) and p.188 (ref.103 and ref.2). **N°32** p.241 (ref.61) and p.305 (ref.22). **N°33** p.59 (ref.4, 5 and 6) and p.282 (ref.8). **N°34** p.49 (ref.1 and 6) and p.227 (ref.97). **N°35** p.35 (ref.5), p.215 (ref.2) and p.217 (ref.9 and 10). **N°36** p.43 (ref.2). **N°37** p.197 (ref.4), p.232 (ref.12) and p.233 (ref.13). **N°38** p.213 (ref.77) and p.252 (ref.4). **N°40** p.38 (ref.6). **N°41** p.216 (ref.7) and p.219 (ref.14).

Spiders in and from Poland

N°25 p.37 (ref.4). **N°31** p.166 (ref.10). **N°33** p.217 (ref.30). **N°34** p.208 (ref.10 and 12) and p.209 (ref.13). **N°37** p.178 (ref 9 and 10). **N°40** p.190 (ref. 19).

Totoaba (*Totoaba macdonaldi*) (Contraband of swim bladders)

N°1 p.3. **N°4** p.6. **N°5** p.13. **N°6** p.6 (ref.1, 2 and 4). **N°7** p.5 (ref.5). **N°8** p.5 (ref.4 and 5) and p.8 (ref.1). **N°10** p.7 (ref.2 and 3) and p.8 (ref.12). **N°11** p.6 (ref.2) and p.7 (ref.7). **N°15** p.8 (ref.11). **N°16** p.8 (ref.12, 13 and 14). **N°17** p.4 (ref.1) and p.11 (ref.19). **N°18** p.10 (ref.5). **N°19** p.13 (ref.20). **N°20** p.15 (ref.11), p.16 (ref.13, 14 and 15) and p.22 (ref.3). **N°21** p.10 (ref.10, 11, 12 and 13) and p.18 (ref.1). **N°22** p.11 and p.12. **N°23** p.13 (ref.15, 16 and 17) and p.14 (ref.20). **N°24** p.14 (ref.8). **N°25** p.15 (ref.16, 18, 19 and 20) and p.16 (ref.22, 24 and 25). **N°26** p.15 (ref.10). **N°27** p.20 (ref.28). **N°29** p.172 (ref.18) and p.173 (ref.23). **N°30** p.178 (ref.5), p.188 (ref.7), p.189 (ref.14) and p.191 (ref.21). **N°31** p.208 (ref.21 and 22) and p.210 (ref.34). **N°32** p.301 (ref.7). **N°33** p.259 (ref.2), p.263 (ref.16), p.265 (ref.26) and p.282 (ref.7). **N°34** p.38 (ref.128), p.232 (ref.2 and 3), p.249 (ref.14), p.250 (ref.17) and p.252 (ref.30). **N°35** p.200 (ref.5), p.202 (ref.17 and 18) and p.203 (ref.24). **N°40** p.210 (ref. 2), p.211 (ref.3), p.234 (ref.7), p.237 (ref.24).

Vaquitas (*Phocoena sinus*)

N°16 p.16 (ref.2). **N°17** p.10 (ref.15) and p.11 (ref.14). **N°19** p.15 (ref.1). **N°22** p.19. **N°27** p.20 (ref.27). **N°32** p.301 (ref.7). **N°33** p.282 (ref.7). **N°40** p.211 (ref.3).

Robin des Bois

Non Governmental Organization for the Protection of Man and the Environment

Since 1985

14 rue de l'Atlas 75019 Paris, France

tel : 33 (1) 48.04.09.36

www.robindesbois.org

contact@robindesbois.org