

ROBIN DES BOIS

ON_{the} TRAIL

Information and analysis bulletin on animal poaching and smuggling
n°5 / 1st April - 30th June 2014

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Introduction

Numerous messages have been sent to Robin des Bois from Africa, Asia, Europe and the American continent. They come from Custom officers, CITES delegates, governmental institutions, Non-Governmental Organizations and from the general public. They all testify to the usefulness of "A la Trace" and the English version "On the Trail".

The closer that species with substances considered to be of value come to global or local extinction, the more the means to attack and to defend them turn murderous. The total of human mortality in this war on wildlife is increasing.

Thefts of seizures, including from governmental safety vaults, are multiplying. These hold-ups yield, for those who organize them, more money than bank and cash transportation robberies.

Smuggling of live felines and monkeys are increasing as well as the smuggling of skulls and bones, notably of gorillas and elephants.

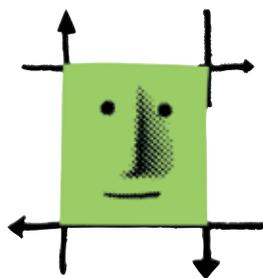
There is a general tendency to more severe sentences on traffickers, as well as harder judgments but release on bail is still common.

Archaic practices such as the use of poisoned arrows and trap jaws clash with modern techniques used by criminal police. Analyses of DNA are used to confuse tiger hunters in India and trace horns and ivory seized by African custom officers.

"On the Trail" n°5: 506 events at the heart of smuggling and poaching endangered species on land and at sea.

ON_{the} TRAIL

Carried out by Robin des Bois with the encouragement and financial support of the Fondation Brigitte Bardot, the Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux and the Fondation Franz Weber



ROBIN DES BOIS



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CITES* Appendices

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.

* Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. 180 Member States.

The Following Vessels Are Wanted by Interpol

1 – **The Stellar**, ex-Sungari, ex-Phoenix, ex-Shoei Maru. IMO 8916011. Warning, this vessel changes names and flags as fast as the wind shifts direction. The last known flags are Cambodia, Namibia and Sierra Leone. As all vessels involved in transshipment of Illegal Unreported and Unregulated fishing (IUU) she is in a very bad state with large tires on both sides of the hull serving as fenders. The last known port of call was Busan – South Korea, June 3. The *Stellar* docked in Vigo in Spain under the name *Gloria Brasil* under Namibian flag.



The *Gloria Brasil* at Vigo in 2010
© Angel Luis Godar Moreira /
Capture Robin des Bois sur Shipspotting



2 - **The Samudera Pasific n°8** is suspected of illegal fishing and violations of labor laws. Following the illegal depart from Cape Town in South Africa on December 29, 2013, she had most probably changed name, flag and even IMO number. Fishing gear: tuna drifting longline. This vessel is a risk of pollution to the marine and coastal environments. It is possible that the last operator scuttled the vessel to avoid investigations.

Samudera Pasific n°8
© Interpol

The *Samudera Pasific n°8* made its get away from Cape Town at the same time as the **Berkat Menjala n°23**. These fishing vessels were under sequestration in the South African port. They belong to a group of 10 longliner tuna fishing vessels whose last known owner is established in Indonesia. They take part in IUU fishing on the high seas and in the Exclusive Economic Zone of South Africa. The 75 crew members, mostly of Taiwanese and Indonesian origin, were virtually slaves. Some of them have not been paid for 3-5 years.

Berkat Menjala n°23
© Interpol



Notice Interpol *Stellar*: <http://www.interpol.int/content/download/25280/350544/version/9/file/P0208%2006%2014%20F%20-%20public.pdf>

Notice Interpol *Samudera Pasific n°8*: <http://www.interpol.int/content/download/23447/350473/version/21/file/P0151%20F%20public.pdf>

Notice Interpol *Berkat Menjala n°23*: <http://www.interpol.int/content/download/23449/350471/version/15/file/P0152%20F%20public.pdf>



Sea Cucumbers

AMERICA

REPEATED OFFENSE

Seizure of 300 kg of sea cucumbers (*Isostichopus fuscus*, Appendix III in Ecuador)

Campeche, Campeche State, Mexico

April 2014

When inspectors arrived, 30 people fled from 3 boats. One suspect was quickly identified. This is José Moisés Quetz Chavez, already known for similar offenses. In August 2013 he was arrested in Lerma for being in possession of 250 kg of sea cucumbers in a Ford pick-up truck. The other passengers had escaped.

After 2 weeks of investigation, authorities seized 300 kg of sea cucumbers, 30 kg of periwinkles and 10 kg of octopus in an underground storage between Campeche and Lerma where the goods were kept, weighed, and cleaned. It was then divided into small batches, and one by one, was removed from the storage to Volkswagen Jetta, with extreme precaution to go unnoticed by the authorities.

300 kg of sea cucumbers boiled up would equal 3 tons of live animals.

Note that the authorities had already known the location because the previous tenant was a drug dealer.



Seizure of 2.5 t of sea cucumbers - 55,955 animals (*Isostichopus fuscus*, Appendix III in Ecuador)

Ensenada, Baja California, Mexico

May 21, 2014

Surprise inspection of a business. The business responsible has 5 days to justify the merchandise's origin. If it cannot, it risks a fine and a prison sentence.



Seizure of 12,341 sea cucumbers (*Isostichopus fuscus*, Appendix III in Ecuador)

Tijuana, State of Baja California, Mexico

April 2014

Checking the attached documentation to the load, the inspectors realized that there was a problem. Nothing matched, neither the description nor the quantity nor the volume. After a closer inspection, they found 36 boxes of 12,341 fresh, frozen or cooked brown sea cucumbers instead of the 1759 semi-dried ones reported.

ASIA

Seizure of 2 t of sea cucumbers (class *Holothuroidea*)

Chereapani Reef, Union Territory of Lakshadweep, India

April 7, 2014

After 4 hours of hot pursuit, the Coast Guard's ICGS Rajdoot caught a Sri Lankan high seas longliner. The 16 poachers were eventually arrested and their spoils seized. These experts in night diving collected 2 tons of sea cucumbers on board, totaling 120,000 US\$. According to the commanding Officer of ICGS Rajdoot, it is the first time that Sri Lankan fishermen were arrested along the West Coast. The only species listed under CITES is *Isostichopus fuscus* (Appendix III in Ecuador) but in the Indian waters sea cucumbers are protected.



Corals

AFRICA

Seizure of 45 kg of coral (class Anthozoa) El Aaiún, El Taref Province, Algeria April 11, 2014

After receiving anonymous reports, the El Kala customs caught 2 smugglers and seized 45 kg of coral, diving flashlights, a compass and binoculars. The suspects tried to transport the coral to Tunisia and then Europe. They would be sent to the public prosecutor in court in El Kala in a few days.

The term “precious coral” refers to about 30 species belonging to the genus *Corallium* and *Paracorallium*. Precious corals were heavily exploited around the world by the jewelry, souvenir, and some homeopathic product industries. Although trade has mainly targeted and are most demanded by the jewelry sector, such as *Corallium rubrum* in the Mediterranean Sea and the North East Atlantic Ocean, *C. Secundum*, *C. konojoi*, *C. elatius*, *C. regale* and *Paracorallium japonicum* of the Pacific Ocean. These activities have threatened the entire class of corals.

Theft of a seizure of 900 kg of black corals (*Antipatharia* spp., Appendix II) Androy Region, Toliara Province, Madagascar May 2014

The looting of black corals in Madagascar locally called Tangoaraky and nicknamed rosewood of the sea is in full swing just like the looting of rosewood on earth (*Dalbergia* spp., Appendix II to Madagascar). Divers are as well equipped and equally informed. They escape the police with complicity “in the higher level of the chain of command” according to the local press. Still, searches of vehicles on the roads enabled the seizure of 13 bags of black corals but the most important catch, 900 kg, disappeared. Divers are paid 6 US\$ per kg for black corals, 8.5 US\$ / kg for fishmongers and exporters up to 290 US\$ / kg.



Bottles of the poaching divers found unburied on the beach

Marine Mollusks

ASIA

Seizure of 20 tons of giant clams (*Tridacnidae* spp., Appendix II) Mengalum Island, Sabah, Malaysia April 10, 2014

The seizure is estimated to be worth RM 500,000 (153,248 US\$). 20 tons were found on board of a vessel operated by 2 companies, one Malaysian and one Vietnamese. 9 of crew members were arrested. According to police, this is the first arrest of such nature, but they believe that the poachers have been working for quite some time. Malaysian law theoretically prohibits the harvest, trade, and purchase of giant clams, but clam meat or shells are openly sold in the markets. The Malaysian water is home to 7 of the 9 species of giant clams. Filtering nitrates, ammonia and other chemical compounds, the clams are important at protecting coral reefs.



Seizure of 68 kg of giant clams (*Tridacnidae* spp., Appendix II)

Xiamen, Fujian Province, China

May 30, 2014

A Taiwanese passenger intended to board a plane from Xiamen to Taizhong, Taiwan, but when he was going through security, an airport agent stopped him to open his luggage for further inspection. The 6 gift boxes appeared larger than usual. Later the experts came and identified them as giant clams. Giant clams are one of the 7 treasures of Buddhism, along with gold, silver, aquamarine, crystal, ruby, and emerald.



Seizure of 25,615 smooth top shells (*Austrocochlea rudis* unlisted in CITES), 3,249 helmet shells (family *Cassidae* unlisted in CITES) and 970 trumpet shells. Minglanilla, Cebu Province, Central Visayas Region, Philippines

June 5, 2014

An Anti-Illegal Fishing Task Force on the islands of Cebu operation. The truck was stopped in Minglanilla. The estimated local market value is around 2 million Philippine pesos (45,700 US\$). Helmet shells are very large gastropods. The shell is thick and heavy. It was used to make cameo carvings for jewelry and for interior decorating. The trumpet shell is used as a musical wind instrument and as a decorative object.



Fishes

AMERICA

Conviction for illegal possession of lake sturgeon meat and eggs (*Acipenser fulvescens*, Appendix II) Province of Ontario, Canada



April 2014

2 men from Ontario transported 12.27 kg of lake sturgeon eggs and 1.82 kg of lake sturgeon meat. They were each fined 10,000 Canadian dollars (9059 US\$). One of them was also fined 750 Canadian dollars (679 US\$) for his false statement to the conservation officer. He pretended to be transporting salmon. The sentence also prohibits them to be within 3 m proximity of the Mississagi River in 5 years.

Lake sturgeons are native to Canada and the United States. Their slow growth and late maturity make them particularly vulnerable to overfishing. From 1879 to 1900, commercial fishing in the Great Lakes has brought in 1,800 t / year of sturgeons. Pollution and dams also threaten the species.



Conviction for traffic of wild species

Florida, USA

15 April 2014



The director of the aquarium and the president of the board were sentenced to prison and probation (see "On the Trail" n n°3 p. 6). The aquarium itself as a judicial entity was sentenced to a fine of 10,000 US\$ and 50,000 US\$ in damages for the US Department of Fish and Wildlife Foundation which will use the money for research on marine life and coral reefs in Florida. The managers of the aquarium and the company are blamed for having bought and exhibited rare leopard and lemon sharks captured in the ocean without permits. A green turtle from a dubious origin was also seized in the tanks of the aquarium that benefit from the status of a nonprofit organization with an educational purpose.

Seizure of a totoaba (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I)

San Felipe Port, Baja California, Mexico

April 2014

He was about 82 cm long. There were 3 men in the car. They were all arrested.

Seizure of 10 tons of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) and conviction

State of Amazonas, Brazil

April 19, 2014

At dawn, the Environmental Police of the State of Amazonas boarded a boat heading towards the neighboring state of Para and seized 10 tons of arapaima. 2 men, age 55 and 66, were fined. The status of this species is unknown. A specimen of arapaima can reach up to 2 m long and weigh more than 100 kg. Over the last 2 months the team seized more than 50 tons of illegally caught fish. Goods will be donated to charity.



© Flagrante

Conviction for smuggling and trafficking 13 dragon fish (*Scleropages formosus*, Appendix I)

San Diego, California, United States

May 2014

The 2 men had the awful idea of importing 13 dragon fish. They had the wonderful idea of listing them for sale on Craigslist for 2800 US\$ each, an act that allowed federal agents to flush them out. They pleaded guilty and were sentenced to a fine of 1000 US\$ each and 2 and 3 years of probation. The dragon fish is believed to bring luck, prosperity and long life to the owner. They live in fresh water and can reach 90 cm long. Highly sought after by aquarists, an individual can surpass tens of thousands of US\$. They have been listed in Appendix I of CITES since 1975. Nearly 40 years later, they are nearly all gone in their natural habitat.



Poaching of 11 sharks including a hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna lewini*, Appendix II)

Cocos Island Marine National Park, Costa Rica

June 14, 2014

Fishing is strictly forbidden in the National Park waters.

Park rangers set free in the morning 11 sharks caught in fishing nets set up by the poachers. 7 of them died before their intervention, silky sharks (*Carcharhinus falciformis*, unlisted in CITES) and grey reef sharks (*Carcharhinus amblyrhynchos*, unlisted in CITES).

For tuna fishing, poachers set up a Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) a sort of raft under which shoals of small fish seek shelter and become live bait for the tunas and sharks.

For the 36th anniversary of the Park, the administrator comments: "Illegal fishing remains the biggest threat; 20 guards struggle daily to protect this natural gem."

Since the beginning of the year, guards of the marine park have saved 15 yellowfin tunas (*Thunnus albacares*), 4 sharks, a dolphin and taken in 13 dead yellowfin tunas, the 7 sharks already mentioned here and another silky shark.

The Cocos National Park, situated 550 km off the Pacific coast of Costa Rica, is the only Island of the tropical oriental Pacific harboring a wet tropical forest. The National Park's marine life has become famous and many divers believe it to be the best place in the world to observe the world's larger ocean species such as sharks, rays, tuna and dolphins.



© David Delgado / La Nación



© Marta Cambra



© La Nación

REPEATED OFFENSE

Court hearing for sturgeon and caviar trafficking (*Acipenseridae* spp., Appendix I or II)

Yolo, State of California, United States

June 19, 2014

Nikolay Krasnodemskiy, 41 years old and Petr Dyachishin were seen in February 2010 fishing adult non regulatory sized sturgeons and transforming the eggs into caviar. The fish and caviar were sold on the very black market. All sturgeon or sturgeon egg sale is prohibited when the origin is leisure fishing. Fishermen must rigorously protect adults in capacity to reproduce. These must be released and tagged so as to help researchers collect scientific data on populations.

Already in in 2005, Mr. Krasnodemskiy had been caught several times while poaching sturgeons and his fishing license was cancelled. When it was renewed, he once again began dealing in illegal sturgeon fishing and trade.

"Stopping this sort of repeat offender will help ensure the species future." "This person's license must be permanently revoked." is what is said at the highest levels of the US Fish and Wildlife Service in California. The judgment will be set in August.



Laws on sturgeon fishing in California :

- It is forbidden to fish green sturgeon (*Acipenser medirostris*, Appendix II);
- Fishermen can catch Sacramento Sturgeon (*Acipenser transmontanus*, Appendix II) measuring between 101 cm and 152 cm from the nose to the fork of the tail fin;
- The fishing line must carry only one barbless hook;
- Sacramento sturgeons over 172 cm must be immediately released;
- All green sturgeons must be immediately released;
- Sturgeon fishing is forbidden on the Sacramento River between the Keswick dam and the 162 interstate highway bridge in Counties of Shasta, Tehama and Glenn.

Seizure of 118 kg of arapaima flesh (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II)

Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil

June 29, 2014

The seizure took place in the market. 3 sellers got nabbed; 2 managed to escape.

AFRICA

Seizure of 2300 kg bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*, unlisted on CITES)

Medenine, Medenine Governorate, Tunisia

June 16, 2014

The Tunisian Ministry of the Interior published on its Facebook page a statement on the seizure of 2,300 kg of bluefin tuna in Zarzis. The fish were taken in an area that prohibited fishing. The forces of the Medenine sea guard carried out the operation. Tunisia is a member of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and has a quota of 1000 t / year of bluefin tuna. According to some commentators, the 2,300 kg seized are only a small portion compared to the annual amount of illegal fishing for bluefin tuna in Tunisian waters. Some of tuna was given to charity, the other removed for sanitary reasons. In 2010, when the bluefin tuna was at the top of the news, Tunisia was one of the strongest opponents to the listing of bluefin tuna in CITES.



ASIA

Seizure of 500 kg of thresher shark (*Alopias* spp., unlisted in CITES)

Cebu Islands, Region of Central Visayas , Philippines

June 11, 2014

New operation of the special brigade against illegal fishing who boarded a truck on the main Island of the Cebu archipelago transporting 500kg of thresher shark meat. Thresher sharks use their tail fin to knock out their prey.



The 3 truck drivers said they were « transporting fish ». An ocean expert confirms that the meat definitely is that of thresher sharks. Several local workshops use it to be sold in « fish snacks » to make Japanese type tempura. Wholesalers find extra income from selling shark fins to restaurants, shark skin to the leather industry and liver oil to the pharmaceutical industry. The Task Force against illegal fishing is under the authority of the DENR, the Department for the Environment and Natural Resources.

EUROPE

Seizure of 192 swordfish (3200 kg) (*Xiphias gladius*, unlisted in CITES) and conviction

Off the coast of Salento, Lecce Province, Italy

March 31, 2014

The coast guards, patrolling in the area since dawn, intercepted the trawler *Attila II* at around 7pm. On board: 192 swordfish. 3200 kg. The Decree of January 13, 2014 of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry prohibited fishing, transshipment, storage, and landing of swordfish in the Mediterranean Sea for the first few months of the year. The value of the seizure is estimated at 30,000 euros. The poachers were severally fined with 4000 euros. The crew did not have professional licenses. The captain will also be heard in court for this case.



Seizure of 10 kg of sturgeon (*Acipenseriformes* spp., Appendix I and II)

Kamyzyaksky District, Astrakhan Oblast, Russia
April 2014

The police were looking for a thief, but instead they found a sturgeon poacher. The man is a resident of Kamyzyak, a town of the Volga delta. He is charged with illegal fishing and trafficking of aquatic biological resources.

Seizure of 2 European eels (*Anguilla Anguilla*, Appendix II)

Lacroix-Saint-Ouen, Picardie Region, France

May 11, 2014

Alerted in August 2013 of the presence of traps in the Oise River, agents of the French national agency for wildlife (ONCFS) monitored the site so they

could catch the 2 men in the act with fishing gear and seized 2 European eels among other fish. Fishing them is doubly forbidden: the fish are endangered and contaminated by PCBs. 16 traps were seized and judicial proceedings have been initiated.



Seizure of 4 t of sturgeon and 80 kg of caviar (*Acipenseridae* spp., Appendix I or II)

Romania

May 16, 2014

Romania has prohibited sturgeon fishing since 2006. Illegal fishing, however, never ceased. Clandestine networks are organized and developed. 400 police officers and 3 helicopters tackled the network. They also visited poachers and businesses in 5 regions and especially in the city of Tulcea near the Danube Delta. To eradicate illegal fishing and trade, other forceful operations are necessary.



The Danube near Tulcea

Fisherman bitten by a piranha (family Characidae, subfamily Serrasalminae, unlisted in CITES) Saint-Dié-des-Vosges, Vosges Department, France

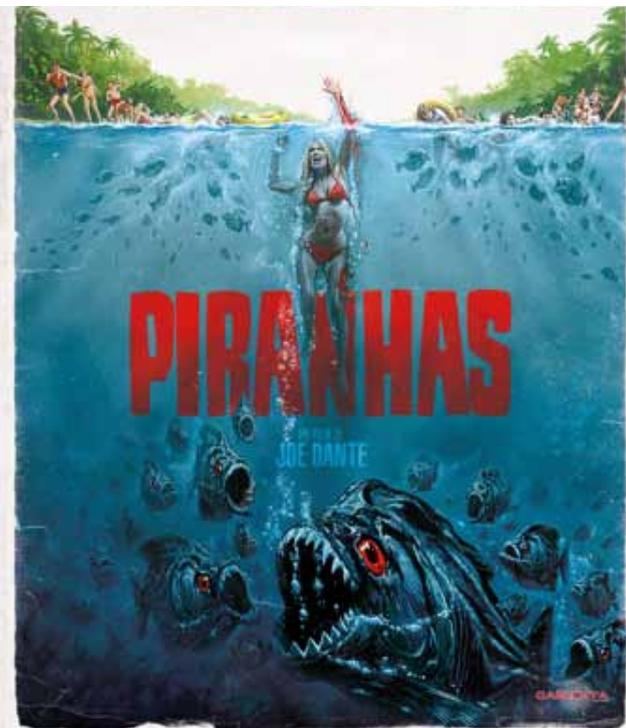
May 23, 2014

Phosphorus grenades from World War II are hidden in the depths of the Vosges Lakes, but this is the first time that an amateur fisherman was bitten by a piranha there. The carnivorous fish, native to South America, had been thrown in by an aquarist. When will France and the European Union ban this invasive species that is likely to become accustomed to inland waters under certain weather conditions? Such a measure is urgent according to climate change specialists.



The State of New York has already sided with 24 other states in the United States. Joel Rakower, an aquarium filler close to retirement and based in the Queens under the trade name Transship Discounts has been sentenced to a fine of 70,000 US\$. He ordered from his Hong Kong supplier nearly 40,000 piranhas. The 2 crooks had reported on customs documents Silvertip tetra (*Hasemanina nana*), a species native to Brazil and loved by aquarists. Piranhas are prohibited in half the United States because they are dangerous to people and the environment.

"... in certain rivers in the American tropics there are myriads of butcher fish, small and voracious like teeth swimming freely, who cut up a horse to shreds the very moment that one carefully leads into the river before attempting to pass..."
A. Pieyre de Mandiargues. Le musée noir. 1963



Seizure of European glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II)
Department of Charente-Maritime, Region of Poitou-Charentes, France
June 17, 2014

Frequent rotations of a small airplane from an airfield in the region caught the attention of the gendarmerie who has been tackling glass eel poaching for several years now (see on the subject « On the Trail » n°4).

The alert came right in the high end of the glass eel season on the Atlantic Coast. Glass eels are also known under the name eesgann. Sale outside of the European Union is forbidden. At the same time demand from Asia is very strong.

1 t of glass eels, cash, marine maps and other documents were seized. 7 people were sent before the judge. 3 are indicted. This trafficking network has international branches.

Marine Mammals

AMERICA

Whale remains (*Cetacea* spp., Appendix I or II) for sale on the Internet
Cap-Saint-Georges, Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada
May 5, 2014

The whale had washed up on their beach, they failed to carry him back to sea. It was impossible to dig a grave in the hard substrate. It was expensive to hire a knacker's yard, so they decided to sell it on Ebay. The advertisement was quickly removed.

"Currently, the Canadian government has no policy and scientific program, logistical or financial support for communities affected by a dead marine mammal on their banks. Decisions are made case by case. And often the decision is to do nothing" reports the newspaper Le Gaboteur Wayne Leywell, author of a guide to the whales in Newfoundland and Labrador. "The only provincial investment in this area is to put pictures of whale tails in its tourist brochures." We therefore will never know how the whale died.

ASIA

Delivery of 2100 t of fin whale meat (*Balaenoptera physalus*, Appendix I with reservations from Iceland and Japan)
Port of Osaka, Osaka Prefecture, Japan
May 7, 2014

2100 t of fin whale meat loaded on the *Alma* at the Icelandic port of Hafnarfjordur at the end of March (see "On the Trail" 4 p. 13) arrived in Osaka.

On June 17, the whale hunters of the Hvalur H/F Company hunted and killed 19 fin whales in a week according to EIA (Environmental Investigation Agency). Since 2006, Iceland has exported more than 5,400 t of meat to Japan and killed a thousand whales. The International Whaling Commission did not validate these self-allocated quotas. The next commission meeting will be held in September 2014 in Portoroz, Slovenia.

Like Iceland, Norway has difficulty selling their stock of whale meat in the domestic market and would like to export it to Japan. According to Frank A. Jenssen, a specialised journalist, "in about 10 to 15 years, there may be no whalers left in Norway, and it would be a tragedy." For others, this would be good news.



The ex-Japanese Sea Lion

It just so happens that live species do politics, unknowingly and to their detriment. That this role be assigned to an extinct species is rare if not to say unique. This is the case of the *Zalophus japonicus* commonly known as a Japanese sea lion, who long since has disappeared from their former range between the Korean Peninsula to south of Kamchatka and of which the center was Japan.

That is why the common name "Japanese sea lion" had overtime established itself across the entire globe.



In 1991, the Japanese Environmental Agency confirmed the species to be extinct. The Agency founded this decision notably on reports from 1941 by Japanese fishermen obliged to abandon an ancestral activity, all the sea lions had, little by little disappeared from their nets and from view. A non-sighting 50 year period is required to officially declare a species extinct. The Japanese government's declaration was actually only following the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Not long after the announcement of extinction in official gazettes, sightings came to the surface and were taken into account by the Japanese government. They concerned the capture of a young male in the north of the Hokkaido archipelago and sporadic sightings near the Takeshima Island in the Sea of Japan in the 1970s-1980s. These sightings were not confirmed and did not occur again. Specialists express strong doubts and believe the first incident to be a confusion with another species, genetically close but geographically distant, the Californian sea lion (*Zalophus californicus*), a specimen who could have escaped from one of the numerous marine parks along the Japanese coast during a tsunami or because of a human mistake. However, in 2003 the Japanese Ministry of Environment amended the status of the Japanese sea lion and classed it among the critically endangered species. This administrative decision translated into a hunting ban (even scientific hunting) of a marine mammal which no longer exists and opened the way to create one or many sanctuaries where the virtual sea lion was susceptible to actually be. This new Japanese position feeds a historic conflict between Japan and South Korea concerning a tiny 0.23 km² archipelago composed of two main islets that South Korea calls Dokdo and Japan calls Takeshima. It was around this rocky confetti that the very last presence of a few tens of sea lions had been confirmed at the beginning of the 50s.

There is territorial conflict over the archipelago. Both countries claim sovereignty. South Korean claim is based on the maritime demarcation line drawn up by the Allies in 1946 as a post-war occupation policy. Whereas for Japan, Takeshima is an integrated part of their sovereign territory. Each country states to be able to prove their claims with historical evidence dating back to the XV century. In 2002, South Korea announced its intention to create a Marine National Park around Dokdo.

In 2007, South Korea, North Korea, China and Russia, all united for the right cause announced a rescue project of the lost sea lion, renamed the Dokdo sea lion. Korea took the lead and handed out identification sheets and observation charts to fishermen under the hypothesis that they would come across the marine mammal and to avoid all confusion requested that the Sea of Japan be referred to as the East Sea.

Japanese sea lions never swam more than sixteen kilometres from the shore. According to observations by Japanese zoologists in the 1950s the males could weigh up to 450 to 560kg reaching 2.3 to 2.5 meters in length. A pup of 4 months could reach 65cm in length and weigh 9kg. The colour of their skin would vary from a dark brown to black for the males, to a straw yellow with a darker underside, throat and breast for the females. They would relax and reproduce on beaches and rocks with direct access to the sea.

Prehistoric dumps show that the Japanese sea lion was already part of peoples in area's diet during the Jōmon period (several thousands of years B.C.). Targeted hunt downs and slaughters were organized each year from 1720 during the Meiji period in Uraga near Tokyo. These practices continued up until the beginning of the XXth century.

The gregarious habits of the sea lions and their relatively reduced mobility eased the extermination of the species which was persecuted for supposedly damaging fishermen's nets.

Japanese sea lions were hunted for their oil for lamps, for traditional medicine, for their skin, their meat, which yet was not considered tasty, and even for their whiskers used as pipe cleaners.



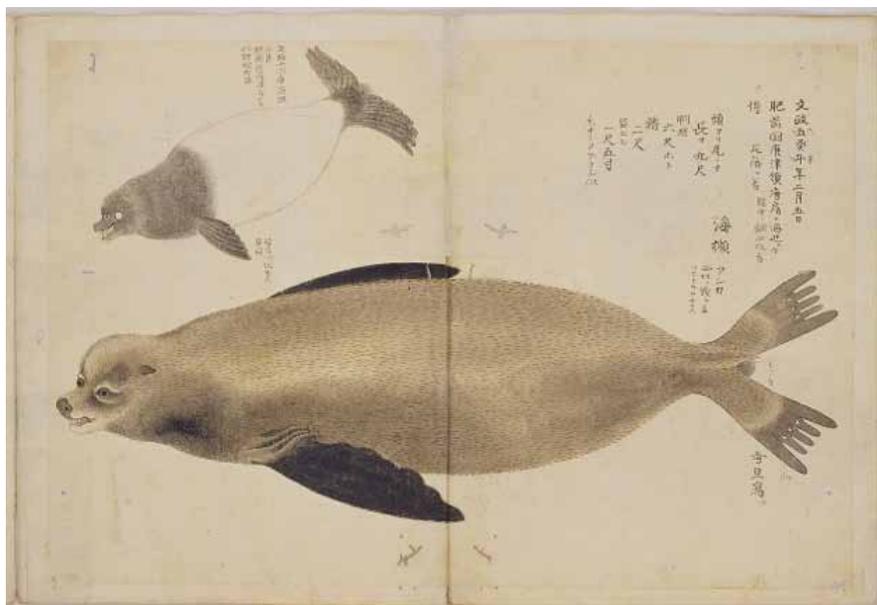
In the 1900s dozens of individuals were captured for the circus trade and trained to balance a ball on the end of their nose. The remaining population was estimated to be between 30,000 and 50,000 individuals whereas the yearly catch in Japan remained in the thousands.

To project the responsibility of the extinction of the Japanese sea lion only on Japan would be to lack objectiveness. Japan has a longlived tradition of fishing and marine mammal hunting records and it is thanks to them and to archaeological research that the habits and the misfortunes of the *Zalophus japonicus* are somewhat known.

All neighbouring countries of the living and extinction range have had a role to play.

Less than a dozen Natural History Museums in Japan and across the world own stuffed specimens, skins and some skulls.

Place names in Japan show the traces left behind in the county by the extinct sea lion such as Ashika-Iwa, "sea lion rock", and Inubosaki, the city of the "barking dog" in reference to the sea lion call.



Illustrations : Wakansanzue Ashika / Yamagata Museum / Hasegawa Settan (1778-1843)

Multi Marine Species

AMERICA

Seizure of 2.76 kg of dried totoaba (*totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) and 4.62 kg of dried sea cucumber

Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico

April 2014

2 Chinese traffickers are arrested for the capture and illegal possession for commercial purposes of totoaba. The illicit goods were distributed in 2 plastic bags.



Seizure of 2 olive Ridley turtles and 1kg of meat ((*Lepidochelys olivacea*, Appendix I), and of a totoaba and 6 swim bladders (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I)

El Golfo de Santa Clara, State of Sonora, Mexico

May 2014

4 searches. 15kg of dried shark fins were also found. They were separated into 3 bags of 5kg each. 2 people have been arrested. They were accused of detention and commercialization of products of endangered species. They risk 9 years in prison.



Seizure of a marine turtle shell (*Cheloniidae* spp., Appendix I) and a sea horse skeleton (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II)

Guaranda, Province of Bolívar, Ecuador

June 2014

They were on display in one of the town's restaurants.

Saltwater Crocodile

ASIA

Seizure of a saltwater crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*, Appendix I or II)

United Arab Emirates

April 2014

Intervention by the Ministry of Environment and Water stopped an illegal transaction and seized a baby crocodile that was later transferred to the Dubai Zoo. Now the little one is sharing the aquarium with Larry, a famous Nile crocodile, survivor of smuggling and put in the spotlight by a Gulf News journalist. The zoo has recently received several victims of smuggling. Larry is adapting well today, but his new companion is still in a state of shock according to Dr Reza Khan, a specialist and the head of the zoo. He refuses to eat alone. The 2 buddies measure about 60cm long and get along very well. If they are 2 males, when they reach about one meter they will start to fight and he will have to separate them. If they are 2 females, then they can continue to co-exist. They are still too young for their sex to be determined.



Poaching of a saltwater crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*, Appendix I)

Kranji Reservoir, Singapore

April 18, 2014

The saltwater crocodile is perhaps the largest reptile on Earth. He was certainly the largest in the region. Nicknamed Barney, the 400 kg heavy, 3.6 m long lifeless body was found. A metal rod in his eye and a large fishing hook lodged in his jaw. Subaraj

Rajathurai, the director of Strix Wildlife Consultancy, denounces the lack of autopsy and the slowness of the authorities. Poachers have not been identified. For this act, they face a fine of 1,000 US\$.

Crocodylus porosus facilitates many ecological processes. They regulate populations of fish and invertebrates. When young or adolescent, they serve as prey for birds and medium-sized mammals. The fact that they open passages in shallow waters makes them engineers of the estuarine ecosystems.



Seizure of 15 crocodile teeth and 3.5 l of crocodile oil and fat, 11 turbo shells, 30 deer horns, one deer skin; 2 people charged.

Port Blair, Andaman Islands, India

May 25, 2014

The seizure took place in 2 parts on the archipelago where the population has increased by 10% in 10 years. Firstly, a sidekick was arrested in possession of 300 ml of crocodile oil, a crocodile tooth, one turbo shell, one deer horn and one deerskin. Proclaiming that he acted on behalf of a wholesaler and was paid by "commission", the suspect then led the investigators to the home of a bigger fish where they found and confiscated 5 l of crocodile oil, 14 crocodile teeth, 10 turbo shells, 29 deer horns and one deerskin.

The estuarine crocodiles are driven out of their natural habitats, mangroves, marshes, estuaries and coastlines in general because of uncontrolled urbanization, rice paddies and deforestation. The crocodiles changed their feeding behavior because of discharges of untreated wastewater, poor waste management, slaughterhouses and hotel effluents. Crocodiles became somewhat dependent on human activities and would venture on land. Fatal attacks multiplied and can be counted on one hand since 2010. Divergent views from experts say the loss of life due to estuarine crocodiles are actually stable figures, but thanks to the media that recently connected to the most isolated islands there are more frequently known of.

The effects of the tsunami in the Indian Ocean 10 years ago have also affected the habitat of estuarine crocodiles and the range of tides.

Axis axis deer were introduced to the Andaman Islands in the beginning of last century, but the population is endangered due to hunting.



Marine Turtles

Total from 1st April to 30th June

**574 marine turtles and
8210 marine turtles eggs seized**

AMERICA

Seizure of 8192 Ridley turtle eggs (*Lepidochelys olivacea*, Appendix I)

Arriaga, Chiapas State, Mexico

April 2014

4 Guatemalan women loaded 18 plastic bags filled with Ridley Turtle eggs into the bus. Destination: Tapachula in Chiapas State. In the batch, 23 were broken. Undamaged eggs were placed on the beaches of Puerto Arista, but hatching is very uncertain.



**Seizure of 82 hawksbill turtle shell jewelry (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I)
Puntarenas, Province of Puntarenas, Costa Rica
April 2014**

Rings, earrings, combs, and bracelets were displayed for sale in Puntarenas. Police, assisted by a biologist expert in identifying shells, seized 82 objects whose value is estimated at 300,000 Costa Rican colons (550 US\$). Sellers face fines of up to 3 times the average monthly wage of 399,400 Costa Rican colons (731 US\$). There is a similar case in "On the Trail" n°3 p. 7 in Los Angeles de Heredia.



© SINAC

Good News

Release of a green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*, Appendix I)

Vietnam

May 8, 2014

EVN talked to the owner. A useful discussion. The turtle was released into the river by the "master" himself.



© ENV

Seizure of 6 baby marine turtles and 18 marine turtles eggs (Appendix I)

BR-101 near Itabuna, State of Bahia, Brazil

May 2014

They were in a box filled with powdered materials. They were confined to a suitable center.



© Bahia Todo Dia

REPEATED OFFENSE

Conviction for poaching 316 marine turtle eggs (Appendix I)

State of Florida, United States

June 26, 2014

2 years of prison for 300 turtles eggs dug up on Juno Beach. « On the Trail » has spoken twice of this sad case. Cornelius Coleman was taking orders. The mastermind has not been troubled.



ASIA

Seizure of 555 marine turtles (Appendix I) including hawksbill turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) and green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) - 177 of which still alive

60 nautical miles from Palawan Island, Philippines

May 6, 2014



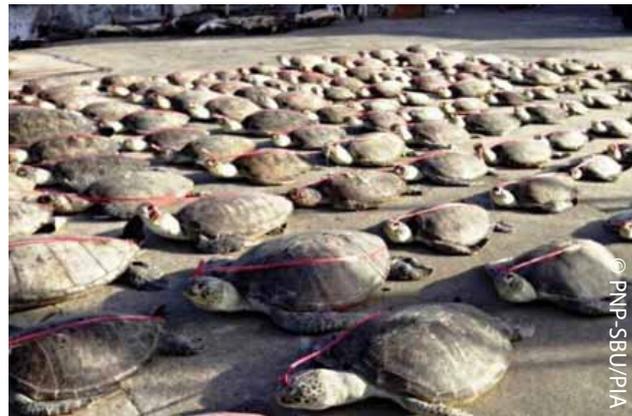
© Philippine National Police

The Philippine special units boarded the Chinese ship *Qionghai 09063* with nearly 555 endangered sea turtles onboard 60 nautical miles from Palawan. They were apparently caught by Filipino fishermen near the Balabac Strait known as the "turtle corridor" and delivered to the Chinese mother ship close the half moon shoal not far from the Spratleys archipelago. 11 marine smugglers were arrested. In response, the Chinese foreign minister urged the Philippines to cease provocations. China claims that this area disputed by several countries claiming sovereignty is Chinese. In return, the Filipino Presidency has stressed that it was the duty of the national marine police to enforce environmental laws while ensuring the sovereignty of the country's Exclusive Economic Zone. Both countries are parties to CITES.

The *Qionghai 09063* was hard to maneuver for problems with the rudder. Fortunately. "Otherwise, our boat cannot catch up with it because our boat is really slow compared to the foreign fishing vessel," said Philippine National Police director general. The Chinese ship was toed to the Liminangkong Port to be repaired and the crew taken in. Traffickers don't sufficiently keep up with repairs on their ships. Already in April 2013, the *Min Long Yu* grounded on the coral reefs of Palawan with on board 10 t of frozen pangolins (*Manis* spp., Appendix II) and 12 Chinese smugglers (see "On the Trail" n°1 p.10).

A local fishing boat was arrested at the same time as the *Qiongquionghai 09063* with 70 sea turtles on board. Other fishing boats were allegedly involved in the trafficking and transshipped their catches on *Qiongquionghai 09063*. The fishermen were supposedly paid 15,000 et 30,000 Filipino pesos (between 350 and 700 US\$) per turtle depending on size. The 5 Filipino sailors /smugglers suffered the same fate as their Chinese colleagues. China has called for their release and return of the vessel. Only 2 of them, under-age were freed. Others face 12 to 20 years in prison. 177 of the live turtles were released.

The 177 turtles, still alive, could not be freed. On the deck of the ship, they were immobilized and tied by a string sewing their gouged eyes.



**Seizure a sea turtle (Appendix I)
Hue, Thua Thien, Vietnam
May 2014**

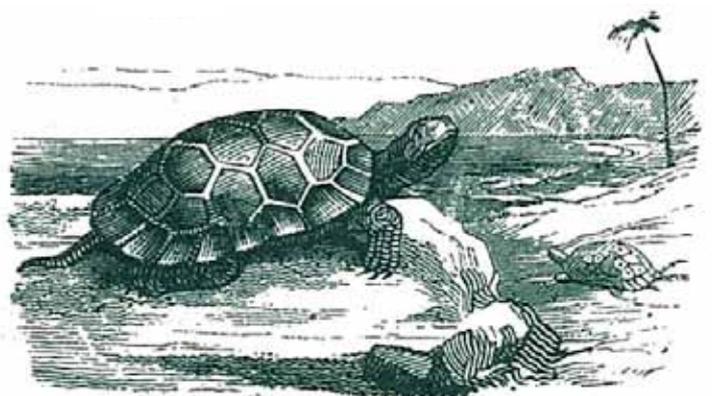
She was held captive for 5 years in a restaurant. A tourist notified the authorities and within 2 days the case was settled. Local authorities in Hue confiscated the turtle from the restaurant owner.



**Seizure of 2 stuffed hawksbill turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I)
Shanghai, China
June 16, 2014**



Inside there were 2 freshly stuffed turtles. The recipient of the postal package lived in Shanghai.



Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises

Total from 1st April to 30th June

5589 tortoises and freshwater turtles

AFRICA

Seizure of 9 Angonokas (*Astrochelys yniphora*, Appendix I) and 512 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I)
Ivato International Airport of Tananarive, Analamanga Region, Madagascar
May 10, 2014

The 2 species are in danger of extinction. They live exclusively in the wilderness on the island of Madagascar. The future is not looking good for the Anagonokas. According to the estimation in 2008, there are fewer than 200 adult individuals in a small range of 25 to 60 km² nibbled away by savannah fire. Zebus take the place of turtles. In "On the Trail" number 4, one attempted exportation is noted.

The radiated tortoises are a bit less endangered. Their thorny forest habitat at the south and the southwest part of the island covers 10,000 km but is at risk of deforestation.

The 521 hatchlings were divided into 2 suitcases belonging to an Egyptian traveler. They were heading to East Africa via Kenya Airways. After the discovery of reptiles, the airport customs summoned the passenger by a loudspeaker. He never showed up. The tortoises were transferred to Turtle Survival Alliance, a capable and renowned facility for its work.

Seizure of 1014 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I)
Prince Said Ibrahim International Airport, Moroni, Grande Comore Island, Comoros
May 31, 2014

Airplane is not the only means of transportation to export the turtles from Madagascar. Thousands of turtles were found in 8 suitcases at the airport of Hahaya. The turtles first sailed aboard a sailboat from Mahajanga (Mahajanga) to Anjouan (500 km) before they landed in Grande Comore to be shipped by plane to Tanzania. The trip stopped there thanks to the vigilance of customs. The agents still need to organize a trip back since Madagascar is the only natural habitat of radiated tortoises. The pet turtles market is unpopular in both Tanzania and Kenya. If the contraband were not interrupted, the Malagasy tortoises would have ended up in exile in Asia.



AMERICA

Seizure of 31 living turtles, yellow-spotted river turtles (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II)
Almeirim, State of Para, Brazil
May 2014

Also seized were turtles of the *Mesoclemmys van derhaegei* species, unlisted in CITES. He paid 887 Brazilian reais (399 US\$) for the merchandise to another man whose name he didn't know but who lived near Almeirim. He risks a fine of 500 Brazilian reais (225 US\$) per animal.



Podocnemis unifilis

ASIA

Seizure of 200 turtles
Kothapalli, Andhra Pradesh, India
April 22, 2014

2 individuals from West Bengal were carrying 200 turtles to the Odisha region. They were arrested.

Seizure of 460 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix II)
Trivandrum International Airport, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India
April 28, 2014



Customs first thought it was mango. A passenger, intended to fly to Sri Lanka, final destination Bangkok, was transporting 460 star tortoises in his luggage. The baby tortoises were soaked in a solution containing sleeping pills and were so tightly tied that only their shells were visible. The dealer admitted that he was aware that many tortoises would have died long before arrival. Despite the losses, he would still make a large profit. Star tortoises are

highly sought after by collectors and exotic pet lovers. Babies can sell for up to Rs 10,000 (165 US\$) a pair. Because the suspect seemed very nervous, the airport officials who are trained to study body language of international travelers, became alerted. According to investigators, such young tortoises show that illegal breeding farms exist, possibly in the region of Tamil Nadu or Andhra Pradesh.

Seizure of 230 black pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I)

Suvarnabhumi Airport in Bangkok, Samut Prakan Province, Thailand

May 2014

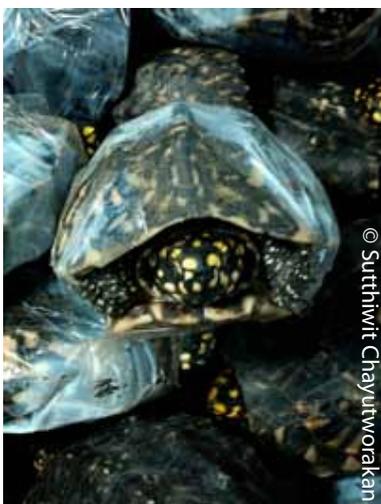
The Bangkok International Airport continues its mission to track turtles smuggling.

The aircraft originated from Calcutta. The turtles were divided into the 4 bags abandoned on turnstile No. 18.

The customs spokesman thinks that the smugglers abandoned the baggage last minute because they feared of being caught with the bag. The fate of the turtles is unknown. Their value is estimated at 1 million baht or 30,800 US\$.

IndiGo Airlines had transported the illegal specimens.

Their habitat extends from Pakistan to Bangladesh and then to India and Nepal. Black pond turtles are considered pets and are subject to illegal wildlife sale in the markets of Bangkok and the island of Borneo.



Seizure of 16 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix II)

Auroville, Tamil Nadu, India

May 6, 2014

A collector, a receiver of the stolen goods, or a sly trader, she kept the elegant turtles in a pond with 25 corals and 4 conches. She lives on the edge of the Indian Ocean. A starry turtle is worth 1000 US\$ in the American black market.

Seizure of 5 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I), 2 live

Bhitarkanika, Orissa, India

May 10, 2014

They were caught in the waters of the Madampur Cut.

The 3 dead were buried and the 2 live ones were put back to the area where they were captured.

Seizure of 158 live black pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I)

Auraiya, Uttar Pradesh, India

May 14, 2014

The small truck was abandoned on the side of the road after an accident on the Auraiya – Etawah expressway. All the turtles were uninjured.

Seizure of around 1000 Hamilton Turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I)

Keshtopur Ghoshpara, Calcutta, State of West Bengal, India

May 24, 2014

Kolkata, haunted by reptiles and chimpanzees. Traffickers had been laying low for some months after the arrest of a bigwig in the suburb of Baguiati. Now, they are back in business. 1000 Hamilton turtles were discovered and seized east of the Indian megacity. They had been captured in the states of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh. They were destined for markets in China and Bangladesh.

A spokesman for Customs notes that animal trafficking is on the rise. According to him, all turtles are victims, mainly Olive Ridley turtle. Geckos are also on top of the list. India both exports and imports illegally. At the beginning of the year, chimpanzees were found in Kolkata after being caught in Central Africa, shipped to Bangladesh and then smuggled to South India by river and road (see "On the Trail" n°4, page 47).

Seizure of 50 live Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix II)

Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

May 29, 2014

Fortunately for the turtles, they were seized at the beginning of the train ride in the Chennai Central Railway Station. Otherwise they would have traveled over 1,000 km to reach (in what situation ?) Surat in Gujarat. They were probably captured in the forests south of India or in Andhra Pradesh.

The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WLCCB) is in charge of the investigation and proceedings.

The State Forest officials of Tamil Nadu usually over-

see similar cases, but the WLCCB has information to uncover an international gang. Along with the turtles, ornamental fish for aquariums were part of the delivery.



Seizure of 2 spotted pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I) and 33 Indian tent turtles (*Pangshura tentoria*, Appendix II) Dehradun, State of Uttarakhand, India June 5, 2014

Barely hatched, the turtles are bought at low prices from poaching fishermen by commercial agents who sell them to aquarium merchants who sell anything that can be put into an aquarium. According to Traffic there could be about 30 in the capital city of the State of Uttarakhand and 60% of the population own an aquarium at home or in the office. Dehradun counts a population of about 600,000 inhabitants.



Pangshura tentoria

Seizure of 47 Philippine pond turtles (*Siebenrockiella leytensis*, Appendix II) El Nido, Palawan Island, Philippines June 9, 2014

The bamboo box was there on the dock, abandoned, with fresh water turtles and scorpions all alive. For unknown reasons (maybe for fear of the police) the “merchandise” was not taken on board an El Nido fishing boat pending transfer to a Chinese fishing ship at sea.

For the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development Staff, the CDDP, the scorpions are a first. “We know that prices on the international trade market can reach quite high just as for some beetles but we hadn’t seen this yet.” The scorpion dart is supposed to possess magical powers according to Chinese legends and live scorpions are becoming

on the international market a sought out curiosity. The CDDP spokesperson worries “They have found a new source of profit. Scorpions play an important role in our ecosystems. Their capture must be avoided otherwise populations will rapidly decrease.”

Only 3 species of African scorpions are listed in CITES; the dictator scorpion (*Pandinus dictator*, Appendix II), the giant Senegalese scorpion (*Pandinus gambiensis* Appendix II) and the emperor scorpion (*Pandinus imperator*, Appendix II).

The pond turtles are in critical danger of extinction. They are the most threatened turtle in the Philippines. Small populations survive in the north of Palawan Island and in the North of Dumarán Island.

Seizure of an elongated tortoise (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II)

Vietnam June 2014

Act quickly and save wild animals! ENV’s motto has struck again. 5 minutes after it was posted on Facebook, the picture of the small elongated tortoise was spotted by a hunter of wildlife sellers. She is now in the Cuc Phuong National Park.



Seizure of 229 black pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I) Tashkurgan Tajik Autonomous County, Xinjiang Province, China June 15, 2014

Urumqi customs seized the pond turtles in a pick-up truck near a brick factory close to the China-Tajikistan border. Each turtle is worth around 25,000 yuan (4015 US\$), so they are estimated to be 5,725,000 yuan (919,212 US\$) in total.



Seizure of 1290 South Asian box turtles (*Cuora amboinensis*, Appendix II)

**Kampung Derdap, State of Kelantan, Malaysia
June 21, 2014**

The truck driver realized he was being followed. Near the border he stopped, ran towards the river, dived in and escaped to Thailand.

Police had been following him in an undercover car since Kampung Bunut Susu, about 15 km from the border to Thailand. Inside the truck under boxes of fish, in 160 plastic boxes were crammed 1290 box turtles, a half-aquatic, half-land turtle. The customs first believed the live reptiles were headed for restaurants in Thailand. A further destination such as China is not to be excluded. Total value of the turtles is estimated at 200.000 RM (62.000 US\$). This is the largest seizure since the beginning of the year according to the director of the Natural Park and wildlife conservation of Kelantan. According to latest news the turtles are in custody in a specialized institution and their long term future has not yet been decided on.



**Seizure of 45 turtles
Indore, Madhya Pradesh, India
June 26, 2014**

The turtles were waiting in a bag at the bus stop. No one claimed property when the forest guards arrived. They were taken to a local zoo.

GANG

**Seizure of the meat of 2 turtles
Palamau Tiger Reserve, Jharkhand State, India
June 30, 2014**

Tiger hunters entered into the Palamau Tiger Reserve (PTR) near the Belta dam in the middle of the afternoon.

They were spotted by 3 guards. The guards were attacked by the hunters with sticks and axes. Reinforcement arrived and after a long search, 5 of the tiger hunters were finally tracked down. 8 fled.

The guards recuperated axes, a battle axe, nets, traps, a mobile phone, old firearms but also turtle meat. This partial success should not hide the truth. The reserve is not patrolled well enough. 124 guard posts are planned. 26 are filled. Workers average age is close to sixty. They do what they can but patrols are hard. The forest is dense, made up of Palas

and Mahua, the Hindi name of *Buteamonosperma* and *Madhucaindica*, 2 species of trees after which the reserve is named.



EUROPE

Seizure of 70 live Greek tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II)

**Sète Port, Languedoc-Roussillon, France
April 28, 2014**

The Sète port customs seized 70 Greek tortoises hidden in the engine compartment of a van. They had traveled from Morocco in 2 sports bags. The driver was returning to Belgium.



Seizure of 16 Greek tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II)

**Almeria, Spain
May 2014**

Graeca Operation. The plan is to dismantle Greek tortoises trafficking. He sold the tortoises over the internet. The police located him in Almeria and arrested him. At his place, there are 16 Greek tortoises. Other interventions have allowed to retrieve of 27 other specimens.

Seizure of 28 juvenile Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II)

**Haute Corse, Corsica region, France
May 2014**

Wonderful. The police of Corsica, a Mediterranean island under French administration, deal with Hermann's tortoises in their mission as environmental police.

The suspect did not know that the turtles are endangered and she convinced the police that neither she nor her entourage was engaged in illegal trading. The turtles will be entrusted to a Corsican Natural Park. They will have more space than in the lady's garden who was "unaware" she broke the law.



Seizure of 47 live black-breasted leaf turtles and 2 eggs (*Geoemyda spengleri*, Appendix II in Canada)

Prague-Václav-Havel Airport, Province of Bohemia, Czech Republic

June 6, 2014

They were in terrible shape, packed in layers in 2 sealed plastic boxes. No air, lying on rotting leaves and in excrement. All that is known is that they were in a "foreigner's" back back. They were saved by the Custom controls' scanner and the survivors were taken to the Prague zoo to receive emergency care.

Leaf turtles are well liked in Europe. Parents buy them as presents for their children. They come from China, Vietnam and Laos.



Seizure of 4 Greek tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II)

Weeze International Airport, Lander of North Rhine Westphalia, Germany

June 2014

The 47 year old man thought of his children. How nice. He brought back the Greek turtles in a busted old cardboard box as a souvenir.

Unless it was to make a little money. Greek turtles from Morocco and Algeria have been bled dry. The pet trade is ferocious.



Testudo graeca

Snakes

AMERICA

Seizure of a dead pit viper (*Crotalus* genus) Bogota, Cundinamarca Department, Colombia April 2014

He exhibited it without authorization and used it to attract clients looking for natural products. In the genus *Crotalus*, only the Cascabel is listed on CITES (*Crotalus durissus*, Appendix III in Honduras).

AFRICA

Seizure of a python skin (*Pythonidae* spp., Appendix I or II) and conviction

**County of Taita Taveta, Kenya
April 20, 2014**

He was not the only one trying to sell the python skin. Local market value: 30,000 Sh, that is 344 US\$. Yet he is the only one to appear before court. He was convicted under 2 charges: illegal possession of a protected animal species or animal parts and for the sale.

He was sentenced to 5 years prison term or a 1 million Sh fine, the prison option turning out to be his only possible choice. The judge accepted to grant the accused a 14-day delay to form an appeal and furthermore it was specified in the judgment that the python skin exhibited as proof in court was to be handed over to the entitled forest ranger and secured.

ASIA

Seizure of 80 kg of live pythons (*Pythonidae* spp., Appendix I or II)

**Koh Thom district, Kandal Province, Cambodia
April 4, 2014**

The hunter with pythons on his motorcycle was arrested just before the border between Cambodia and Vietnam. Vietnam is the world's largest exporter of python skins. Vietnam prohibits the poaching of wild pythons, but these populations are endangered because of uncontrolled hunting for almost a century and today the decline is accelerating because of the destruction of forest habitats. All the Vietnamese production is supposed to come from breeding farms. The pythons there are fed with live small rodents, chicken eggs and live quails.

Wild pythons are probably captured in Cambodia and introduced into farms in Vietnam. The skins are ultimately marketed under the name of python from farms, approved by Vietnam and the CITES Convention. The IUCN report on the "Assessment of Python Breeding Farms Supplying the International High-end Leather Industry" was based in part on the absence of seizures of live pythons at the border between Vietnam and neighboring countries to declare that it is unlikely that external smuggling constitutes a large proportion of Vietnamese exports of python skins. The event of the captured pythons



on the border between Cambodia and Vietnam occurred a few days after the report and crushed the optimism of the IUCN. IUCN work was supported by the French luxury brand Kering, which notably includes Saint Laurent, Gucci, Balenciaga, and Mc Cartney.

Seizure of one liter of snake venom Valpoi, Stte of Goa, India June 18, 2014

The pure venom repeat offender was once more arrested near a bus stop (see "On the Trail" n°4 p. 23) with a one liter bottle the value of which is Rs. 1 crore that is to say more than 160,000 US\$. Yet the Forest Department in Goa refutes the declarations made by the criminal police. It would only be a touch of venom in a lot of jiggery or gur, a palm syrup extract used in Asian cooking especially dishes with curry, crème brûlée and rice pudding. "It looks like real venom but it's a fake" say forest officers. In order to clarify the situation, the yellow liquid has been sent to be analyzed at the Indian institute for wildlife fauna in Dehradun.

EUROPE

Seizure of 3 snakes including a cobra snake (family Elapidae)

**Highway 8 near Stuttgart, Baden-Wurttemberg, Germany
May 2014**

He had nothing to declare. He said that he had only brought back coconuts as a souvenir of his trip to Vietnam for his brother. At least that is what the Serbian national said to the Stuttgart Customs control officers on Highway 8 heading to the direction of France, where the so-called brother lived. The search of the vehicle told the truth. In a bottle of alcohol bathed the carcass of a cobra. 2 other snakes of an unknown species were also found. The accused is facing charges and had to pay bail. 5 cobra species present in Vietnam are listed in CITES.



© Zoll, Douanes allemandes

**Finding of a boa (*Boidae spp.*, Appendix I or II)
Bourg-de-Péage, Region of Rhône-Alpes, France
June 2, 2014**

2 boas were found roaming within 15 days in a private garden and on a pathway not far from the first one. Madam Mayor, also elected to Parliament, filed a complaint for "breach of the peace." One would be a male and the other a female.

Once again, lack of rigor from French authorities regarding the supervision of commercialization and harboring of exotic animals is pointed to. The snakes were caught by firemen. What will be done with them is unknown. There are no limits to the cruelty and negligence of such animal owners. Examples are plenty.



In this house in Haute Loire, Massif Central, on March 1, 2 pythons and 2 boa constrictors were burned alive.

OCEANIA

**Seizure of a live python (*Pythonidae spp.*, Appendix or II)
Mount Austin, New South Wales, Australia
April 8, 2014**

The python was nestled in the back of a basement. The owners will later be interrogated by police.



**Seizure of 2 Stimson's pythons (*Antaresia stimsoni*, Appendix II), a spotted python (*Antaresia maculosa*, Appendix II) and a carpet python (*Morelia spilota*, Appendix II)
Bendigo, State of Victoria, Australia
April 2014**

Another case of licenceless pythons in Australia. The maximum penalty in the State of Victoria is a 34,646 Australian dollar fine or 2 years of prison.

"We have zero tolerance for people who are illegally keeping wildlife" says the DEPI officer (Department of Environment and Primary Industry). "Accurate record keeping helps guard against illegal exploitation of wildlife." Any suspicious activity involving wildlife can be communicated to DEPI Victoria on 136 186.

The Stimson's python can measure up to 1.50 me-

ters long. They are found on the Australian continent, all except precisely the State of Victoria.



**Seizure of one boa constrictor (*Constrictor constrictor*, Appendix I and II)
Drumcondra, State of Victoria, Australia
April 24, 2014**

Boa constrictors are forbidden in the State of Victoria, except in zoos. They can transmit a fatal python virus on the Australian continent. Red-eared slider turtles (*Trachemys scripta elegans*), corn snakes (*Pantherophis guttatus*), Burmese pythons (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II) are also banned from import, trade and livestock. The police searched a private home after receiving an accurate report. The boa is 6 years old and 2 m long. She can measure up to 4 m grown up. For information regarding wild animal trafficking, call 136 186.



**Seizure of a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II)
Geelong, State of Victoria, Australia
April 29, 2014**

The owner of the exotic boa native to South America risks a 35,000 US\$ fine. DEPI senior investigator says "Boa constrictors can spread potentially devastating diseases to our native wildlife."

Boas can transmit IBD (Inclusion Body Disease) to the endemic python species. This illness causes alteration in the tissues of the eye, brain, spinal cord, peripheral nervous system.

Sauria

ASIA

Poaching spiny tailed lizards (*Uromastyx* spp., Appendix II)

Gulf states

April 2014

The intensive hunting of spiny tailed lizards in the deserts of the Gulf states has made 4 species endangered in Saudi Arabia.

The triumphant photos of the 2 hunters towering near a pick-up dumpster full of "dhabi" (the common name of these lizards in the Gulf) generate unanimous protests, from the Wildlife Commission of Saudi Arabia and naturalists of the region.

The 2 hunters were arrested. Their families and lawyers demand that they be released. "They did nothing wrong and did not break any laws. There is no law that bans hunting dhabi and those who were detained were not hunting in reserves, but in open areas." The brother of one of the hunters argues, "it is just hunting animals and that were eventually given to relatives and friend."

Instead, many protests are based on the doctrine of Islam prohibiting "all forms of excess and abuses." "Hunting should be to eat according to the needs."



The spiny tailed lizards are endangered because of hunting, degradation of dry lands including the cutting of acacias for charcoal production and increases of all-terrain vehicles. They are also sought after as pets. Rumor is that their oil has invigorating virtues. Abdullah Al Qhidani, an influential naturalist in Saudi Arabia, regrets the gradual disappearance of Dhabis and concludes in a single sentence: "We used to see them in large numbers, but today, we have to look for them painstakingly and we do find them, they are just a few." Nevertheless, the spiny tails are listed in Appendix II of CITES and international trade is controlled. But in the Middle East, each country including Israel must quickly strengthen its national laws and change its predation traditions in respect to the spiny tails.

Conviction for poaching a monitor lizard (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II)

Bicholim, Goa state, India

May 2014

The man was arrested in 2012. He had killed a lizard and was in possession of 2 other. The Court gave its verdict: 6 months in prison.



Seizure of 4.2 kg of water monitor meat (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) and conviction

Tam Dao, Vinh Phuc Province, Vietnam

May 29, 2014

Tam Dao is a tourist town located at the edge of the Nam Esake National Park. Its landscapes are remarkable, as is its gourmet cuisine. Ha Chi 1 restaurant added to its menu lizard meat and as an advertisement, put the animal in a cage by the sidewalk for several days. Price: 750,000 VND (33 US\$) per kilo. The authorities were not particularly eager to react and it was only after the ENV intervention that they proceeded to verification and seized the water monitor. These illegal practices on the streets, presenting the captured wild animals to the public, are common in the city according to ENV. State action is absent. Indifference or complicity? In this case, the restaurant owner provided a document attesting to the purchase of the animal the next day. He was sentenced to a fine of 700,000 VND (35 US\$) for failing to declare his goods. The second condemned (the lizard) was returned to the owner and therefore is sentenced to the death penalty.



The Long Haul of San Salvador Rock Iguanas

(*Cyclura rileyi*, Appendix I)

“On the Trail” n°4 listed the seizure of 13 San Salvador rock iguanas, at Heathrow Airport in the United Kingdom on February 13, of which 12 were still alive, and the conviction the young smugglers to a one year prison sentence. The animals were repatriated to the Bahamas escorted by two British Border Force officers. During the CITES Standing Committee, which was held in Geneva from July 7 to 11, the CITES Management Authority of the Bahamas reported the illicit traffic. ‘On the Trail’ has selected excerpts:

The iguanas were originally thought to have been poached from the island of San Salvador which is one of the islands in the Bahamian archipelago with a wild population of rock iguanas. However, information from the two women indicates that the iguanas actually originated from a population in the Exuma Islands chain.

A site visit conducted in April 2014 by researchers reported that only two iguanas came out to be fed at Sandy Cay in Exuma in comparison to April 2013 where 11 iguanas were present. It is likely that the iguanas originated from this cay. The researchers concluded that the iguanas, if returned to the cay, it is likely that they may suffer from aggression if other iguanas have moved into the territory.

The CITES MA authorities of the United States advised The Bahamas MA of an application they had received seeking to import Bahamian iguanas from a commercial reptile dealer in Austria (Jürgen Schmidt, doing business as CYCLURA.INFO), claiming that they had been “captive bred” (the parental stock were reportedly imported from The Bahamas by in a zoo in Dusseldorf, Germany; Aquazoo Löbbbecke Museum, which is closed through the spring of 2015).

The Bahamas MA notified the United States that no live *Cyclura* spp. iguanas had ever been exported to anywhere in the European Union at any time for any reason; therefore, the iguanas in question could not be of legal origin, even if hatched in captivity (as stated on the CITES import permit application submitted to the United States).

Bahamian iguanas are valuable to The Bahamas. They are the largest extant terrestrial vertebrates native to The Bahamas.

Rock iguanas provide critical ecosystem services through seed SC62 Inf. 4 – p. 3 dispersal and the structuring of trophic relationship on the islands, islets, and cays which they inhabit; these services are essential to maintain the health of the ecosystems in these areas.

A brief review of Internet offers of sale of rock iguanas from The Bahamas suggests that the primary recipients of these smuggled animals may be in certain countries of the European Union, although additional analysis is needed as attempts to smuggle the animals into the United States have also been uncovered.

The seizure of the shipment in the UK shows that poaching of Bahamian rock iguanas is currently taking place.

The willingness of the people in the countries of the EU to pose alongside captive Bahamian Rock iguanas in pictures on the internet possibly identifying their facilities, demonstrates that they feel that they can operate with impunity as there is no applicable law to stop such activities, nor does there appear to be the desire to develop a legal mechanism to counter the commercialization of both smuggled iguanas and their offspring.

The breeding and subsequent sale of progeny from successfully smuggled animals serves as a financial incentive to poach and smuggle additional specimens

Parties should regulate, as appropriate within their national systems, the ownership, possession, sale, and advertising of CITES-listed living specimens of species endemic to the Caribbean to keep illegally acquired specimens, and their progeny, from entering domestic or international trade.



The iguanas were given the permission to travel in the cabin with a safety belt © UK Border Force

Crocodylians

Saltwater crocodiles, see page 13

AMERICA

Seizure of 23 spectacled caimans and 62 spectacled caiman skins (*Caiman crocodilus*, Appendix I or II)

**Barranquilla, Atlántico Department, Colombia
April 2014**

The police set up their checkpoints on the Eastern Road (National Highway 25) that connected Ipiales with the border between Ecuador and Colombia at Barranquilla and its port. 1580 km. In one day, the installation of the checkpoints resulted in:

- The arrest of a 47-year-old man. He loaded 23 spectacled caiman packed in fiber bags into the luggage compartment of the bus inter-connecting public transport Calamar (Bolívar Department) to Barranquilla.

- The arrest of a 30-year-old man. He was on a motorcycle. When he saw the device, he tried to avoid it by taking a detour. The police was not fooled and stopped him. Found 62 spectacled caiman skins were found in his bag. From Barranquilla, the skins were expected to be exported to countries such as Japan, New Zealand, Germany and Italy, where they will be used in the manufacture of shoes and other fashion accessories.

Subspecies *Caiman crocodilus apaporiensis* is in Appendix I, and the animal is present in southeast Colombia, 200 km from Rio Apaporis.



Seizure of a live American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II)

**Ocean Shores, State of Washington, USA
April 9, 2014**

Landlords are rarely thrilled when their tenants have pets, even less so when the pet is an alligator. So it happened that the owner of the small apartment leased by April Rognlin, 51 years old, reported to authorities of the tenant's possession of an alligator, which is illegal in the state of Washington. Officers of the Fish and Wildlife Department took Snappy, a no less than 1.2 m long alligator, to a shel-

ter for reptiles. "I am heartbroken." Said Ms. Rognlin. "It was like a dog or a cat."

The average length of the male is between 4 and 4.5 m and may reach up to 5 to 6 m in rare cases. Females are less than 3 m long.

Water pollution causes a decrease of reproduction and visible deformations of the specimens that were exposed to high concentration of contaminants.



© Drew Mikkelsen / KING 5



© Ocean Shores Police Dept.

Conviction for smuggling American alligators (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II)

**Key West, Florida, United States
April 15, 2014**



© U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The individual was sentenced to 5 months in prison followed by 5 months of house arrest. He took the young alligators from the Big Cypress National Reserve. Founded in 1974, it covers an area of 2,916 km².

The individual is also accused of trafficking sea fans of species *Gorgonia flabellum* and *Gorgonia ventalina*, tropical fish and sharks.

His accomplice, the traffic leader, pleaded guilty and was sentenced on March 26 to 3 years of suspended prison and a fine of 15,000 US\$.

During the period from December 2008 to December 2011, the 2 men made many trips from Florida to Michigan in order to supply the aquatic animals and reptiles shops.

Seizure of 2 Morelet's crocodiles (*Crocodylus moreletii*, Appendix I or II) and 4 green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II)

Merida International Airport, Yucatan State, Mexico

April 2014

Destination Mexico canceled! The specimens were reported as toys to the airline. The young alligators were transferred to El Centenario Zoo where they would receive the necessary care.

Morelet's crocodiles are in Appendix I except for the populations in Belize and Mexico.

In a statement, the Profepa notes that wildlife smuggling causes high mortality rate. Only 10% of the animals survive stress, hunger and overcrowding during transport.



Seizure of a live alligator (*Alligator* spp., Appendix I or II)

Frankfort, State of Kentucky, United States

April 2014

"I called police for a domestic dispute. I ended up getting busted for an alligator." Recalled Mr. Rivas. The small reptile measured no more than 40 cm. A buddy had offered it to him. Having moved from Texas, he said that he was unaware that it was illegal to possess such an animal in Kentucky. For local officials of the Fish and Wildlife Service, this is a public safety issue. Alligators grow fast and sometimes escape. "they're (the owners) basically just condemning it to an early demise because we're forced to euthanize it." remarked one of the officers. The sad fact is that rescuers sometime become also killers.

Seizure of 600m of skin from a spectacled caiman (*Caiman crocodilus*, Appendix II)

Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua State, Mexico

April 2014

The 2 parcels had a CITES permit for export from Bolivia to Texas, United States. They landed in Mexico in Ciudad Juarez. The CITES permit was not valid in Mexico. The parcels were labeled "auto parts." The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service informed the Mexican authorities of the suspicious border crossing. A search led to the discovery of rolls of 300m of skin from spectacled caimans that indeed did look like automobile spare parts. No complaints were filed with the Mexican authorities after the seizure.

This event is similar to the case of the money laundering of wild caimans by the breeding farm Crocoland situated in Beni department in Bolivia addressed in "On the Trail" n° 1.



Seizure of 4.2kg of crocodile meat (*Alligatoridae* spp., Appendix I or II) and conviction

State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil

May 1, 2014

Crocodile meat and 2 cardinals (*Cardinalidae* family, not listed in CITES) were transported in a pick up truck. The 63 year old claims he did nothing wrong. The birds were not wild, they came from a farm; and he had won the meat. He now won the right to pay a 3000 Brazilian real fine (1351 US\$) and risks between 6 months to 2 years in prison.



Seizure of 2 American alligators (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II)

Stouffville, Province of Ontario, Canada

May 14, 2014

Locked in a hut in the garden, the 2 alligators were held as pets.



Seizure of crocodile skin (*Alligatoridae* spp., Appendix I or II) and conviction

State of Alagoas, Brazil

May 21, 2014

The skin was in a bar. The son of the proprietor explains that he bought it from a poacher. He is fined 10,000 reais (4482 US\$). And the meat? Was it eaten?



Seizure of one baby Spectacled Caiman (*Caiman crocodylus*, Appendix II)

Clyde, North Carolina, United States

The week of May 26, 2014

A poor alligator was captured in a swamp and put up for sale when 6 months old on the website Craigslist. For his wellbeing, it was taken from the hands of the seller and given relatively more freedom in a specialized rehabilitation center.



Since 1967, the future of the species is considered threatened and since then regulations and preventive measures came to the rescue of alligators in North Carolina, other U.S. states, and internationally. More commonly known as alligators, Spectacled Caimans are victims of wetland destruction and individual trade.

"At 3-months-old, they are 30 cm long. At 3-years-old, they are 10 times as long and many people will not know what to do with them," said a specialist.

"2, 3 years ago, we retrieved one in a bathtub. The occupants of the apartment had left it there after moving."

Seizure of 114 kg of caiman meat (*Alligatoridae* spp., Appendix I or II) and 87 kg of capybara meat (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*, unlisted in CITES)

Santana, State of Amapá, Brazil

June 22, 2014

The cargo was on board a boat on the Amazon River. It had left Prainha (State of Para) heading towards the State of Amapa. The transporter explained that part of the load was for himself and the other was intended for sale. If it is still proper for consumption, it will be given out to natural reserves or shelters to feed the animals.



ASIA

Seizure of 10 l of crocodile fat (*Crocodylidae* spp., Appendix I or II)

Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, India

May 9, 2014

The South Andaman special brigade's operations led to the arrest of 6 people. A 62-year-old man was found in possession of 5 liters of crocodile oil in 3 plastic bottles. During his interrogation, he admitted to selling 5 liters a 45-year-old cook. Immediately arrested, he admitted to having additionally sold 5 liters of oil to a plumber and a guard who tried to resell the liquid on the black market for a profit. These additional 5 liters were also seized.

In a second case, the same intervention team arrested 2 people and seized edible swiftlet nests. Edible swiftlet nests (*Aerodramus fuciphagus*, unlisted on CITES) are constructed from the secretion of the salivary glands. They sell at a high price.

Arrested for attempted crocodile poaching (*Crocodylidae* spp., Appendix I or II)

Satkosia Wildlife Sanctuary, Orissa, India

10 and 11 May 2014

"The place where the poachers were arrested is a core area in the sanctuary and a restricted zone," said the Divisional Forest Officer. 6 people were arrested. Here, crocodiles are hunted with dynamite. Poachers were about to explode a load in the Mahanadi River. The dismantling of a criminal network of illegal poachers and loggers in 2006 had put a brake on the degradation of the sanctuary. But 3 years later, the operations are resumed. Local authorities have been accused of lax monitoring.

The sanctuary is home to a few gavials. The species has been in trouble since 1940. The population of the gaviial has decreased by 96%. Currently there remain less than 200 mature individuals in India and 35 in Nepal. The gaviial, species *Gavialis gangeticus*, is one of the largest species of crocodilian after the saltwater crocodile. An adult male can grow up to 6m long. Despite their impressive size, the gaviial is generally harmless to humans. They only attack to defend themselves. The highly fragmented distribution, habitat degradation, pollution of water and pressure of human activities make the gaviial one of the most endangered animals in the world.

Good News

Release of 6 gavials (*Gavialis gangeticus*, Appendix I)

April 2014

India

6 gavials returned to one of their natural habitats, the Gandak River, a tributary of the Ganges. The 6 released adults, one male and 5 females, were from the Sanjay Gandhi Biological Park in Patna. The line of descendants comes from eggs that were picked up as a precautionary measure at the same river in 1975. Ganges gaviial's feed exclusively on fish. Reintroduction into the wild took place at the best possible spot in the upper banks of the river that runs through 2 protected areas in the states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, where conflicts with human activities are relatively infrequent.



Gavialis gangeticus

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Multi-Species Reptiles

AMERICA

Seizure of a crocodile (*Crocodylidae* spp., Appendix I or II), 2 boas (*Boidae* spp., Appendix I or II) and a pit viper (genus *Crotalus*)

**Tezontepec de Aldama, State of Hidalgo, Mexico
June 2014**

They were found in a trailer car discarded on private property.

ASIA

Seizure of monocled cobras (*Naja kaouthia*, Appendix II), Indonesian spitting cobras (*Naja siamensis*, Appendix II), water monitors (*Varanus salvator*, Appendix II), clouded monitors (*Varanus nebulosus*, Appendix I) and reticulated pythons (*Python reticulatus*, Appendix II)

Dong Thanh, Hô-Chi-Minh-City, Vietnam

April 28, 2014

Police in Hô-Chi-Minh-City seized 500 animals in a facility presenting itself as a commercial breeding farm. Trade in several of the species seized is forbidden or limited under strict Vietnamese national law and the International Convention CITES. Managers of the facility were not able to present the required documents proving their legal origin and legality of their present holding.



All individuals were taken to the Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Center, a certified shelter run by the NGO Wildlife at Risk (WAR). The animals in good health will be released within short time after a period of observation and care. The ones with a more precarious health condition will be healed as long as necessary.

Wildlife at Risk was founded in 2001. The organization is devoted to protection of Vietnamese biodiversity by tackling wild animal trafficking and encouraging endangered species conservation and that of their habitat. The Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Centre is, in Vietnam, the first shelter to take in several different species of wild animals. Since 2006, date of the official opening, it has saved over 2000 wild animals of which over half have been set free. The seized snakes and monitors present several commercial uses: fashion accessories, the pet trade, food market and traditional medicine in the form of

snake wine. Snake wine is a beverage made of rice wine. Snakes or snake parts are put in the bottle. By drinking a glass twice a day, before meals, snake wine supposedly heals eye problems, hair loss, lumbagos, perspiration, fatigue, rheumatism, neurosis, and headaches. It may even “enhance sexual performance”.



Naja kaouthia



Varanus nebulosus

Seizure of 7 snakes including cobras (family Elapidae) and king cobras (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II), 9 turtles including elongated tortoises (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II), giant Asian pond turtles (*Heosemys grandis*, Appendix II) and eastern black-bridged leaf turtles (*Cyclemys pulchristriata*, Appendix II). Conviction Quang Ngai, Vietnam May 7, 2014



Investigating another case, criminal police officers had spotted suspicious bags on a bus. In the first bag were 7 venomous snakes. In the second, the turtles. The traveler has admitted to carrying the animals from Ho Chi Minh City to a restaurant in Quang Ngai. He hoped to make a profit from the business. The journey ultimately cost him a fine of 40 million VND (1900 US\$). The snakes were released and turtles were taken to Cuc Phuong National Park in Ninh Binh Province.

The giant Asian pond turtle is originally from Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam.

There is little data on the Asian leaf turtle. It occupies a small range located in the east of Cambodia and Vietnam.



EUROPE

Seizure of 4 royal Pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II), 2 false map turtles (*Graptemys pseudogeographica*, Appendix III in United States), the carapace of a loggerhead turtles as well as 2 stuffed loggerheads (*Caretta Caretta*, Appendix I), a stuffed hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys Imbricata*, Appendix I), a stuffed Asian box turtle (Turtle *Cuora* spp, Appendix II), a stuffed monitor lizard (*Varanus* spp, Appendix I or II), and 2 coral (*Acropora* spp, Appendix II) Sintra, Lisboa Region, Portugal May 13, 2014

The man was suspected of domestic violence. The animals were discovered during a search of his house. They were transferred to the INCF, the Institute of Nature and Forest Conservation

The Royal Python originated from Africa. Locally they are hunted for their meat and for their skins, but the main threat to them is international, collection for the exotic pet trade.



Graptmemy pseudogeographica

The False map turtle is native to the US. Semi-aquatic, they live principally in the Missouri and

Mississippi basins. Forest work and hydraulic work destroy their habitat, notably their nesting and resting beaches. Camping in the wild also destroys their nests. They drown in gillnets. They are captured for collectors and for consumption. The market for local animals has brought about a decrease in certain populations in Mississippi.



**Seizure of 55 turtles, 30 arboreal alligator lizards (genre *Abronia*, unlisted on CITES), 4 horned vipers (*Cerastes cerastes*, unlisted on CITES) and a five-keeled spiny-tailed iguana (*Ctenosaura quinquecarinata*, unlisted on CITES), all live except for one animal
Frankfurt-on-Main, Hesse, Germany
May 2014**

The judge ordered the detention of a 44-year-old Mexican traveling from Mexico City to Barcelona. During a transfer at Frankfurt, the suitcases were scanned via X-ray machines. Total value: 60,000 euros (82,000 US\$), but a nightmare for the victims. Packed into suitcases, stuffed in bags, immobilized by a thick tape, it was an ordeal for the turtles. One was already dead. In addition to the violations of the regulations on protected species, it is possible that the accused face charges of animal cruelty.

There are 28 species of arboreal alligator lizards. They are threatened by deforestation and protected by Mexican law.

The horned viper lives in the deserts of North Africa and the Middle East.

The five-keeled spiny-tailed iguana is threatened by habitat destruction and collection for the market for new pets. It is a native of Costa Rica and Nicaragua. There are fewer than 2500 mature individuals in the wild.



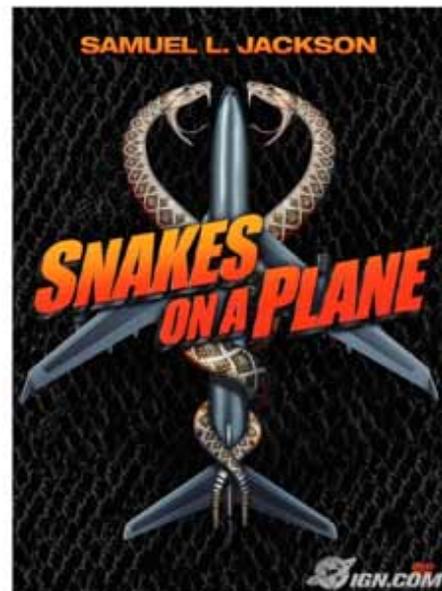
Abronies



Seizure of 180 live snakes, lizards, frogs and turtles

**Pulkovo International Airport in Saint-Petersburg, North-West region, Russia
June 2014**

Once more there has been a remake of « Snakes on a plane », the 2006 Hollywood blockbuster. This time the flight was between Düsseldorf, Germany, and Saint-Petersburg, Russia. German checking services saw nothing. The crowd of reptiles was in the back-pack and the cabin bags of the snake charmer and seller. He was sent back to Germany on the first flight off.



Seizure of 2 Indian rock pythons (*Python molurus*, Appendix I or II), of 2 boa constrictors (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II), of 3 royal pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II), leopard geckos (*Eublepharis macularius*, unlisted in CITES) and 2 tropical frogs (amphibians).

Gran Canaria Airport, Canary Islands, Spain June 2014

It's forbidden to board a plane with a Swiss army knife, knitting needles and a tube of toothpaste but passenger's luggage can hide pythons, boa constrictors, leopard geckos, more than 5000 insects including 3500 crickets, 200 cockroaches and a good deal of grass hoppers and worms destined to feed the reptilian and batrachian menagerie.

On landing the 2 passengers denied doing any wrong. They presented themselves as exotic animal salesmen without being able to present any documents proving it. The insects were left to their carriers. The other animals were seized and put under the care of a Crocodile Park and a shelter for wild animals. Investigations are underway. The flight linked Madrid to the Canary Islands.



Amphibians

ASIA

Sale of 100 axolotls (*Ambystoma mexicanum*, Appendix II) on the internet Xiamen, Fujian Province, China May 2014

The axolotl is a neotenic salamander whose metamorphosis is incomplete. Before the authorities could react, the Axolotls for sale on a Chinese forum in Xiamen found a buyer. We do not know their origin. The Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau of Xiamen announced that they received no import declaration.



Ambystoma mexicanum

The *Ambystoma mexicanum* is native to the river systems of 2 Mexican lakes, Xochimilco and Chalco. Critically endangered, its range is less than 10 km², fragmented and continuously declining. When they were abundant, roasted axolotls were sold as a delicacy in the markets of Mexico. Now they are

rare, they supply the international market for pets. The animal is bred in captivity and there are more of axolotls in aquariums than in Mexican lakes. The ability of the axolotls to regenerate parts of their bodies that are amputated or damaged (paw, tail...) makes that the animal is sought after by scientists and amateur experimenters.



Xochimilco lake

Seizure of 3500 tiger frogs (*Hoplobatrachus tigerinus*, Appendix II) and 2000 Günther's frogs (*Hylarana guentheri*) Nanning, Guangxi Province, China June 4, 2014



The Nanning forest police received report that merchants were selling protected animals in the seafood wholesale market, so they visited the market and seized 3,500 tiger frogs and 2000 Günther's frogs. These frogs were shipped from Pingxiang, Guangxi, so the police suspects that they were captured from Vietnam, smuggled into China and secretly sent to Nanning to be sold.

EUROPE

See in the chapter Multi-Species Reptiles the seizure of June in Gran Canaria Airport, Canary Islands, Spain.



Birds

Total from 1st April to 30th June

1864 seized birds

AMERICA

Seizure of an ocellated turkey (*Meleagris ocellata*, Appendix III Guatemala)

Yucatán, Mexico

April 7, 2014

Profepa has been increasing operations against poaching in the municipalities of Homun, Hui, Sotuta, Tecoh and Sierra Papacal. Result: 9 poachers were arrested and inspectors seize an ocellated turkey, a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*, unlisted in CITES) and 2 common spiny-tailed iguanas (*Ctenosaura similis*, unlisted in CITES). The latter 2 species are protected at the national level. Inspectors also seized 9 firearms, 9 bikes, 1 motorbike, and 82 cartridges of various calibers.



Meleagris ocellata

Seizure of 4 red-lored Amazons (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II), 4 lilac-crowned amazons (*Amazona finschi*, Appendix I), 2 olive-throated parakeets (*Aratinga nana*, Appendix II), 3 orange-fronted conures (*Aratinga canicularis*, appendix II), 2 white-capped parrots (*Pionus senilis*, appendix II), 2 keel-billed toucans (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*, Appendix II), a white-fronted amazon (*Amazona albifrons*, Appendix II), an American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*, Appendix II) Chiautempan, Tlaxcala State, Mexico
April 2014

The suspect held at home 19 wild birds that he illegally offered for sale. He was arrested. The birds are in poor condition. They have cut wings and head injuries. They are given for care to the rehabilitation center of Reyes la Paz in the state of Mexico.



Seizure of a yellow-faced siskin (*Carduelis Yarellii*, Appendix II) and a plain parakeet (*Broto-geris Tirica*, Appendix II)

Bauru, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil

April 2014

A total of 10 birds were seized from 2 homes. Also recovered were 2 double collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulescens*, unlisted in CITES), 4 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*, unlisted in CITES), and 2 creamy bellied thrushes (*Turdus amaurochalinus*, unlisted in CITES). A man and a woman were arrested.

The catches of the yellow-faced siskins supply for the domestic and international markets. Mature population is estimated to be between 6,000 and 15,000. The statistics are impressive. In 2013, 554 wild animals were seized in the region of Bauru. In April 2014, there are already 463 accounted.



Carduelis Yarellii

Conviction for illegal sale of bald eagle feathers (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II), rough-legged buzzard feathers (*Buteo lagopus*, Appendix II), Ferruginous Hawk feathers (*Buteo regalis*, Appendix II) and crested caracara feathers (*Caracara cheriway*, Appendix II) Lawrence, Kansas State, United States



April 9, 2014

Brian K. Stoner sold hawk feathers in violation of the Lacey Act, which prohibits the commercial trading of protected animals. The Lacey Act was enacted in 1900 after the extinction of the American pigeons (see "On the Trail" No. 4, p. 39). The individual pleaded guilty. He also tried to sell an ornament made of feathers from 2 species of North American and Central American eagle feathers. The transaction took place in the house of an accomplice, Ruben D. Littlehead, also well known to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



Haliaeetus leucocephalus

Stoner was sentenced to one year of probation. Feather seizures were handled by specialist services USFWS in Colorado. The National Eagle Repository manages all the feathers of dead eagles found in the territory of the United States. They are available to the Native Americans who use the feathers in ceremonies. There are many more demands than there are feathers.

**Seizure of 280 canary-winged parakeets (*Brotogeris versicolurus*, Appendix II), 85 parrots (*Psittaciformes* spp. Appendix I or II), 5 macaws (*Psittaciformes* spp. Appendix I or II)
Yurimaguas, Loreto Region, Peru
April 2014**

The river port of Nueva Reforma is a traffic hub. If they had not been seized, the birds crammed into cages would have come to Tarapoto to be sold illegally. The parakeets and the parrots were released. The macaws were given to the leisure center of Mochahu.



Brotogeris versicolurus

**Seizure of 2 yellow-headed parrots (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I), 4 parakeets (*Psittaciformes* spp., Appendix I or II), 3 owls (*Strigidae* spp., Appendix I or II)
Cartagena, Bolivar Department, Colombia
April 15, 2014**

The seizure took place at dawn in the Bazurto central market.

In the "butcher" section, 13 kg of capybara meat (*Hydrochoerus Hydrochoerus*, unlisted in CITES) were confiscated. The sellers were quite displeased with this action of environmental authority officials (Establecimiento Publico Ambiental Cartagena), and police agents who were verbally abused and threatened with their utensils.



**Seizure of 103 tropical birds
Maiquetia International Airport - Simón Bolívar
in Caracas, Vargas State, Venezuela
May 2, 2014**

A German citizen was preparing to fly to France – the name of airline was not mentioned – with 103 birds, including several protected species in her luggage.

She was charged with aggravated smuggling. The act is punishable by 10 years in prison.

**Seizure of a juvenile Scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*, Appendix I)
Belize
May 5, 2014**

The Scarlet macaw of Belize is prized for its plumage. Taken from the Chiquibul Forest, it finds itself locked in a cage. Last year, Friends for Conservation and Development (FCD) identified 13 active Scarlet macaw nests along the Upper Macal and Rascapulo rivers. 11 nests were monitored, 2 fell because they were not solid enough and one was abandoned for reasons unknown. Scarlet macaw couples laid 24 eggs, 12 of which hatched with only 5 chicks taking flight. This shows the vulnerability of the species. The Scarlet macaw is under threat from poaching. There are no more than 200 individuals in the wild. The Upper Macal and Rascapulo rivers are the last remaining habitats of the largest parrot in Belize. Despite presence of observers from FCD in strategic areas, during the breeding season, activities of poachers in Guatemala increased this year. On May 5th a poacher was intercepted. He was carrying a young chick not even a week old. Unfortunately, the chick died and the Scarlet macaw thief made a getaway. Poaching eggs goes hand in hand with illegal deforestation.



REPEATED OFFENSE

**Seizure of a toucan (family Ramphastidae) and 8 red-masked conures (*Aratinga erythrogenys*, Appendix II)
Cuenca, Province of Azuay, Ecuador
May 7, 2014**



The birds were discovered in cages at the home of an individual. They suffered from stress. They were taken to Pumapungo Park. The man is already known. He was arrested for the first time for selling wild birds without authorization in the Free Feria market of Cuenca.

Indictment for illegal importation of 14 ruby-throated hummingbirds (*Archilochus colubris*, Appendix II), 3 black-chinned hummingbirds (*Archilochus alexandri*, Appendix II), 5 violet-crowned Hummingbirds (*Amazilia violiceps*, Appendix II), one Allen's hummingbird (*Selasphorus sasin*, Appendix II) and 38 female hummingbirds (*Trochilidae spp*, Appendix I and II) dead
Texas, USA

May 16, 2014

They were all dead and dried. Hummingbirds weigh between 3-6 g and are sold as good luck charms. U.S. Fish and Wildlife agents seize the birds in packages sent by the post or at airports. Carlos Delgado Rodriguez is charged with 5 indictments. Violation of the CITES Convention, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the Lacey Act, the Federal Trafficking Law, and the Texas State Law. He faces up to 20 years in prison and a large fine.



Archilochus colubris



Selasphorus sasin

Seizure of 108 parrots and parakeets (*Psittaciformes spp.*, Appendix I or II)
Road between Dolores and Melchor de Mencos, Departement of Petén, Guatemala
May 2014

The prevention patrols against traffic and sale of flora and fauna are effective. The 108 parrots were

in a carton box on a public road. They were transferred to the Center for the Rescue of Wild Animals.



Seizure of a toco toucan (*Ramphastos toco*, Appendix II) and 5 birds from the Psittacidae family, Appendix I ou II
Barra Mansa, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
May 20, 2014

An anonymous denunciation led IBAMA (Brazilian Institute of the Environment and Natural Resources) to proceed to verification. Seizures count: a toco toucan (*Ramphastos toco*) that could not even turn around in its cage, 5 birds of the Psittacidae family, 3 green-winged saltators (*Saltator similis*, not listed in CITES), a saffron finch (*Sicalis flaveola*, not listed in CITES), 2 double collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulea*, not listed in CITES), one passerine thraupidae (family Thraupidae, not listed in CITES), 2 ultramarine Grosbeaks (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*, not listed in CITES), and one blackbird (order Passeriformes).

They were all transferred to CETAS in Rio de Janeiro (Center for the Rehabilitation of Wild Animals).



Seizure of 580 canary-winged parakeets (*Brotogeris versicolurus*, Appendix II), 8 blue-headed parrots (*Pionus menstruus*, Appendix II), and 3 little monkeys (*Primates spp.*, Appendix I or II). San Juan de Rio Soritor, San Martín Region, Peru May 24, 2014

They were carried in 8 laundry baskets covered in netting. The suspects fled, taking advantage of the thickness of the vegetation. They took with them one of the baskets of birds.



© Diario ahora

Seizure of 17 brown-throated conures (*Aratinga Pertinax*, Appendix II), one amazon (*Amazona spp.*, Appendix I ou II), and 12 orange-chinned parakeets (*Brotogeris jugularis*, Appendix II) San Gerardo, Province of Alajuela, Costa Rica May 27, 2014

They were imprisoned on private property. They suffered from malnutrition and problems with eyesight due to darkness during their captivity. They were meant to be sold.



© David Cook

Brotogeris jugularis



© Sistema Nacional de Areas de Conservacion

Light could not enter.
No ventilation and an excrement floor

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Conviction for the possession and sale of bald eagle parts (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II), golden eagle parts (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II) and great grey owl parts (*Strix nebulosa*, Appendix II) Province of Alberta, Canada

June 5, 2014

"The fines are much higher than we anticipated." The 2 brothers Terry and Harlin Daniels were jointly sentenced to a 6500 US\$ fine and a 1400 US\$ fine. They would sell bones, beaks, claws of eagles and owls, birds of prey of whom hunting is banned in Alberta. Dozens of stuffed birds or traditional costumes and objects decorated with feathers were seized in the family home. The search and seizure had taken place in 2011 after 2 years of investigation.



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Seizure of 11 conures (*Psittacidae spp.*, Appendix I or II), 3 yellow-headed parrots (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I), one Hahn's Macaw (*Diopsittaca nobilis*, Appendix II) and a channel-billed toucan (*Ramphastos vitellinus*, Appendix II)

San Fernando, Island of Trinidad, Republic of Trinidad-and-Tobago

June 12, 2014



3 guys in a black Mazda and a trunk full of birds of all colors, wings roped and legs tied. Some had been stuck into plastic tubes. First information coming from the San Fernando police station says the birds are very young and are dying of thirst. 2 weeks earlier, 50 birds and baby birds had been taken out of metal cages and a cardboard box in an illegal pet shop. Among those found was a young Macaw. The manager was fined the equivalent of 1170 US\$.



© Newsday.com



© Petr Kosina

Diopsittaca nobilis

Seizure of 66 hummingbirds (*Trochilidae* spp, Appendix I or II) and finches (family *Fringillidae*) Ignacio Agramonte-Camagüey International Airport, Province of Camagüey, Cuba June 2014

The live hummingbirds and finches were about to fly off to the United States carefully sown into a passenger's pants. Intrigued by the bulging silhouette, customs officers stopped and searched the man. 2 birds were already dead, others had their beaks tied shut with a rubber band. The passenger faces up to 2 years imprisonment. According to police, this was a specific order. The birds were captured on the island.



© Mheredia

Seizure of 12 birds including parakeets (*Psittaciformes* spp., Appendix I or II) Carthagena, Department of Bolivar, Colombia June 2014

On the Bazaruto market place. Their total value is 3 million pesos (1600 US\$).



© Radio Caracol

Seizure of 215 common rhea feathers (*Rhea americana*, Appendix II) and a Tobas costume made of 150 feathers La Paz, Department of La Paz, Bolivia June 14, 2014

The seizure was carried out the morning of the El Señor Jesús del Gran Poder celebration, often called El Gran Poder. This is a religious celebration that takes place in La Paz city, on the high plateau of the Andes in Bolivia. It takes place every year, on a Saturday between the end of the month of May and the beginning of the month of June. A tremendous parade in honor of Jesus Christ is organized. There are dancers, orchestras, local traditional dishes and drinks. The ceremony marries catholic and local traditions. The costume tailor will have to explain how he got hold of the feathers.



© Fotolog

Dancers in their Tobas costumes

Seizure of a zone-tailed hawk (*Buteo albonotatus*, Appendix II) San Francisco de Campeche, State of Campeche, Mexico June 2014

The hawk is quite young. She shows signs of anemia. She also suffers from muscle loss. One of her wings is damaged. She has a wound on one of her legs and some of her claws are missing. The PRO-FEPA has taken her in.

Seizure of 4 barred parakeets (*Bolborhynchus lineola*, Appendix II)

Mexico City, Federal District, Mexico

June 28, 2014

The 2 traders were unable to submit the documents proving the legal origin of the 4 parakeets, of the slate-colored solitaire (*Myadestes unicolor*, unlisted on CITES), the brown-backed solitaire (*Myadestes occidentalis*, unlisted on CITES), the blue mockingbird (*Melanotis caerulescens*, unlisted on CITES) and the 50 orchids (*Chysis bractescens*, Appendix II, *Encyclia adenocaula*, Appendix II, *Laelia speciosa*, Appendix II, and *Prosthechea vitellina*, unlisted in CITES). They sold the birds at the Nuevo San Lazaro market. The 2 were arrested.



Good News

Release of 20 blue-and-gold macaws

June 2014

Aragoiania, State of Goiás, Brazil

20 macaws were released into an appropriate natural environment. After being seized at markets or in poacher's vehicles their re-education has been progressive. At first the birds were placed at "base camps" where they find shelter and, if necessary, seeds to eat. As days go by they fly further and further away becoming more independent for food, for defensive instincts and for reproduction which they were deprived of in captivity.

According to IBAMA, more than 50% of seized animals are able to survive after release into the wild.

ASIA

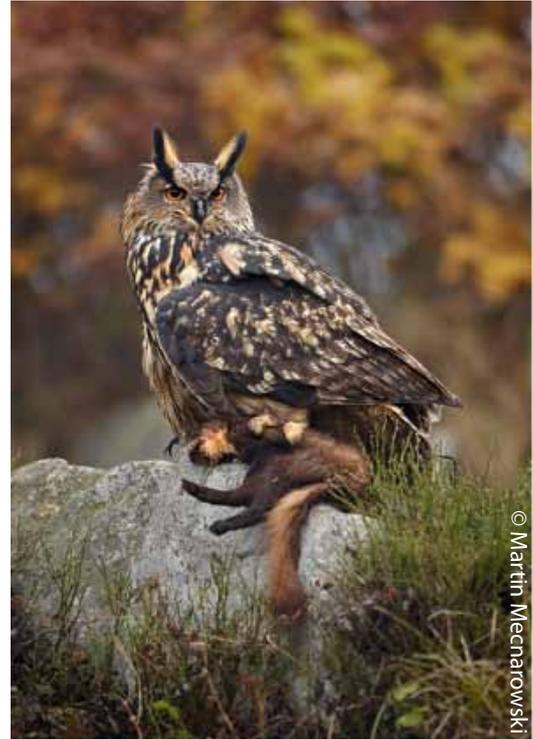
Seizure of 32 Eurasian eagle-owls (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II)

Cangzhou, Hebei Province, China

April 23, 2014

The Cangzhou police examined the luggage compartment of the long-distance bus from Beijing to Xiamen, Fujian. They discovered several bags with bird-chirping sounds. The police opened the bags to discover 32 baby birds. Volunteers from the Cangzhou Wild Animal Protection Center identified species, gave them care and food. After 2 months, they will be sent back to the forest. The owner was

not on the bus or at least was not identified. No suspect was taken.



Good News

Release of 2 Himalayan griffon vultures (*Gyps Himalayensis*, Appendix II)

April 2014

Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India

2 Himalayan griffon vultures resumed flight and their vocation as scavengers in Kaziranga National Park. They were found half dead beside the carcass of a farm animal. It is local practice to spread poison on the corpses of farm animals to kill and poach wild animals that come to feed on them. Vultures are not the primary targets but they are secondary victims. Around a dozen events of this kind are observed every year in Assam. All Asian vulture species suffered a massive decline when Diclofenac, an anti-inflammatory, was commonly and abusively used to treat cattle. Birds of prey were victims of Diclofenac buildup in the viscera of dead animals. The 2 Himalayan griffon vultures were treated for 17 days in a specialized veterinary center near Kaziranga National Park before release.

Seizure of 2 Eurasian eagle-owls (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II)

Taian, Shandong Province, China

May 10, 2014

The police received report that someone was selling wild animals in the Lianhua Mountain tourist area. The Xintai forest police and the Lianhua Mountain security soon arrived and seized 2 Eurasian eagle-owls. According to the merchant, he had picked up the baby owls fallen from their nests on the cliff, fed them for more than 10 days, and wanted to make a bit of profit from his good deed. The police seized

the birds and police ordered the man to stop such activities. He was also fined.

**Seizure of 32 parrots including grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix II) and Eclectus parrots (*Eclectus roratus*, Appendix II)
Muhammad Ali Jinnah International Airport in Karachi, Sindh Region, Pakistan
May 15, 2014**

In Pakistan, the pair of grey parrots sells for more than 50,000 rupees (500 US\$) and a pair of Eclectus is worth between 25,000 and 40,000 rupees (250-400 US\$). Peshawar is the Asian luxury bird hypermarket used by notables and falconers in the Middle East.

The 2 smugglers were fined, and the parrots were put in custody.

Eclectus is native to Australia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.



Eclectus roratus

**Seizure of 2 macaws (*Psittaciformes* spp., Appendix I and II)
Narayanganj Dist., Dhaka Division, Bangladesh
May 15, 2014**

The home of Nur Hossain near Dhaka was searched. 2 caged macaws and a deerskin on the floor were seized along with a loaded gun. Large quantities of illegal drugs were found at the offices of his transport company.

The man is accused of organizing the kidnapping and murder of 7 political and business rivals. Most of the bodies were found weighted down by bricks in the Shitalakhya River. It is the very same river where Nur Hossain made his fortune by illegally extracting millions of m³ of sand. He was arrested in June in India near Kolkatta, residing at one of his properties outside Bangladesh.



**Seizure of 2 Rufous hornbills (*Buceros hydrocorax*, Appendix II), 3 raptors (*Falconiformes* spp., Appendix I or II or III), and one owl (*Strigiformes* spp., Appendix I or II), all live
Santa Elena, Bicol Region, Philippines
May 20, 2014**

The birds are very young, so their chances of survival are slim. They were hidden in boxes on board of a bus owned by the bus franchise Twin Hearts. The bus was traveling to the Manila port. At the end of the journey, everyone will leave and the rare birds will be dispatched worldwide. By Filipino sailors?



Buceros hydrocorax

Seizure of 25 young birds: 10 macaws (family psittacidae, Appendix I and II), 3 African grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix II), and 12 live ring-necked parakeets (probably yellow ring-necked parakeets *Platycercus zonarius*, Appendix II)

**Aranyaprathet Border Checkpoint, Sa Kaeo Province, Thailand
May 22, 2014**

The feathered immigrants were hidden in boxes. The boxes were in a car. The car was driven by 2 Vietnamese. They planned to cross the Aranyaprathet border post between Cambodia and Thailand. They had done their shopping at the international birds market in Bangkok. Normally, macaws live in Central or South America, while the grey parrots live in Africa and yellow ring-necked parakeets in Australia.



Seizure of 48 parrots (*Psittaciformes* spp., Appendix I or II) and 3 hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II)

Manilla, National Capital Region, Philippines

June 2014

As usual the 51 birds captured from the forest were packed in like sardines in a can in their cage of misfortune. Origin and destination unknown.

Seizure of 16 of birds-of-paradise (*Paradisaeidae* spp., Appendix II)

Soekarno-Hatta International Airport of Jakarta, Banten Province, Indonesia

June 9, 2014

The birds-of-paradise chose the wrong destination. They were flying to Paris. The German smuggler is being questioned. None of the birds had an export permit. After a quarantine exam, the survivors will be released in one or more preferred habitats. There are 8 New Guinea babblers (*Pomatostomus isidorei*, unlisted in CITES), a sparrow native to Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, who had failed to land in Paris exotic birds market on the island of Saint Louis, at the dock of Mégisserie, or in a larger animal supermarket.

Seizure of birds including a live young eaglet (*Accipitridae* spp., Appendix I or II)

National Highway 29 near Medziphema, State of Nagaland, India

June 13, 2014

The birds were on sale by the side of the road on the National Highway 29. The 10 dead birds and deer meat were destroyed in the presence of the forest officers. The 2 live birds including the eaglet have been given to responsible persons in charge of organizing their release.



Treron phoenicoptera are among the victims

Seizure of 11 Eurasian eagle-owls, 9 live (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II)

Liulin County, Lüliang, Shanxi Province, China

June 15, 2014

When the highway police inspected a passenger bus in Lüliang, at the Shanxi and Shaanxi province border, there were 3 suspicious bags in the luggage compartments, one with 2 Eurasian eagle-

owl carcasses and the other 2 with 9 live Eurasian eagle-owls. The police arrested the 2 drivers, Zhou and He, who cannot provide the legal documents for transporting the animals. They confessed that someone paid them to deliver the birds and there would be a consignee picking up the packages in Nanyang, Henan Province.

Seizure of one barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II)

Ledong Li Autonomous County, Hainan Province, China

June 16, 2014

A policeman patrolling on the highway discovered a man selling an odd-looking bird in a cage. After the police questioned the man, he said that he captured the bird in the forest. It ate ½ kg of meat each day, so he could no longer afford to keep it and brought it to the highway for sale at 60 yuan (9.63 US\$). The forestry department workers fed the owl and freed it later that night. The police let him off with a warning.



© Edd Deane

Seizure of 6 cockatoos (*Psittaciformes* spp. Appendix I and II), 2 Philippine hawk-eagles (*Spizietus philippensis*, Appendix II), a serpent eagle (*Spilornis cheela*, Appendix II), a blue-backed parrot (*Tanygnathus sumatranus*, Appendix II), a young amethyst brown dove (*Phapitreroname thynis* unlisted in CITES)

Talisay City, Central Visayas Region, Philippines

June 26, 2014

Anthony Madrigal, the Chief Security Officer of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on the archipelago of Cebu casually contacted 4 smugglers, to find out some information. "My contacts told me that it was just a hobby, they however asked 5000 P (114 US\$) for each bird." Among the confiscated animals the cockatoos and eagles are the most endangered. All were transferred to an accredited veterinary clinic. The first diagnosis revealed that the birds were in a very bad condition. One of the Philippine hawk-eagles died. The 2 traffickers were released on bail of 60,000 P (1400 US\$) each. They could face a 2-4 year prison sentence and a fine of 5,000 to 300,000 P (114 US\$ to 6850 US\$) for trade in animals considered critically endangered by the Philippine authority and

lesser fines for animals considered vulnerable. One of the traffickers fled and preliminary investigations are underway for the fourth.



Tanygnathus sumatranus

EUROPE

Use of an eagle by a division 1 football club (*Accipitridae* spp., Appendix I or II)

France

April 12, 2014

The mascot of the football team of Nice in southern France is a protected animal. His exhibition in the middle of the Allianz Arena, the club's new stadium during the home games, is an outrageous circus game.

During the game with Paris Saint-Germain in late March, the eagle was frightened by the excitement and smoke flares used by supporters of Nice and got stuck on top of the stadium. The falconer had a difficult time catching him. This show is full of cruelty. The falconers often enrich their collection with wild animals caught and tamed.

GANG

OPERATION « SHAMROCK »

Seizure of 32 parrots (*Psittaciformes* spp., Appendix II) and 70 CITES certificates

Spain

May 2014

Exotic pet shops are being checked. In Madrid, at a veterinary centre, some administrative irregularities were detected regarding a bird. The investigators dug and were directed towards Malaga where they took action against an unscrupulous breeder who sold the illegal birds to other veterinary centres in Murcia, Barcelona, Cadiz, and Sevilla. 9 people were arrested in total. Some of the animals could be sold

for 16,000 euro. At this price, you could have a falsified CITES certificate and an ID band, or an electronic chip recovered from another, already dead, bird.



Legal proceedings for 3 speed-riders who caused the death of a baby bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*, Appendix I)

Vanoise National Park, Department of Savoie, France

May 2014

Bearded vultures are endangered in the mountains of Europe. Thanks to reintroduction efforts since 1986, there are reportedly 8 breeding pairs in the French Alps, one in the Mercantour National Park, 3 in Upper Savoy, and 4 in the Vanoise National Park. 2 ministerial orders prohibit the disturbance of raptors during the breeding and feeding seasons. The tourist offices, ski schools, and hang gliding clubs use billboards, websites and social networks to advertise this ban.

Unfortunately, 3 speed-riding enthusiasts refused to see or hear the warnings and approached the brooding and rearing zone of a couple that was taking care of a 3-week-old chick. The parents panicked because of the noise and intrusion, and deserted the nest. The chick froze to death a few days later.



"Every reproductive failure especially due to human disturbance is still a significant loss for the long-term efforts to protect the species," regretted the Vanoise National Park management in a statement.

2 ornithologists who came to admire from afar the

birds nested quietly in a rock crevice at 1900 m altitude. They photographed the 3 guys entering the security perimeter. The 3 are liable to a heavy fine.



Theft of 3 young peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I)

Yvoir, Province of Namur, Belgium

June 3, 2014

The cliffs of Yvoir spread over more than a kilometer on the right shore of the Meuse River. With exceptional riches of wild fauna and flora, they have acquired the status of Natural Reserve. The location is also a nesting site for peregrine falcons.

Towards the beginning of May, neighbors spotted a mountain climber rappelling down a 60 m high cliff. Ornithologists from the Royal Society of Natural Science saw first hand after that alert that 3 young peregrine falcons a few weeks old had disappeared from the nesting area. After a blackout period very probably due to contamination of the environment and food chains by DDT (Dichloro Diphenyl Trichloroethane) and inhibition of the birds of prey's reproductive cycles between 1970 and 1990, peregrine falcons are slowly returning to Belgium. One couple even set up nest at the top of the Cathedral of Saint Michael and Saint Gudula in Brussels.

But falcon chick thefts in Yvoir remove 2% of the yearly nestlings in Wallonia according to declarations made by Natagora ornithologists reported by the Belga Press Agency. The theft could have been ordered by a falcon breeder wishing to renew the genetic variety of his colony or by trainers linked with Middle-Eastern or Pakistani falconry. On this subject see "On the Trail" n°3 and the article on falconry and capture of peregrine falcons in Russia and elsewhere.



Suspended sentence for the prohibited offering for sale of a kestrel (*Falco* spp. Appendix I or II) and illegal trade of a western screech owl (*Otus kennicottii*, Appendix II)



Middlesbrough, England, United Kingdom

June 2014

Lee Yafano, is a 41 year old taxidermist from the United Kingdom east coast who specializes in the naturalization and trade of fish and small prey. Police raided his home and workplace in November 2012. While going through his accounts and activity on the net; it was found that he sold to an overseas market stuffed birds with forged documents. The U.S. buyer of a western screech owl especially caught the English investigators' attention. The western screech owl is found in North America, from Alaska to Baja California. It is most probable that the American client of the English taxidermist sent him the dead bird for it to be stuffed. Alerted, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife went to the scene and discovered a huge collection of 150 stuffed birds all illegally held. For the single sale of the kestrel, which was being auctioned at the very moment of the police search, Lee Yafano was given 12 months probation and a fine of £ 1,015. Possession of a live Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II) will be subject to another hearing.



Otus kennicottii

Conviction for making forged CITES certificates, organized crime, money laundering and illegal possession of vultures (*Accipitridae* spp., Appendix I or II and *Cathartidae* spp., Appendix I or III), of booted eagle (*Hieraeetus pennatus*, Appendix II), of grey-headed kite (*Leptodon cayanensis*, Appendix II), of red kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II), of black kite (*Milvus migrans*, Appendix II), of hawk eagles of genus *Nisaetus*, of imperial eagle (*Aquila heliaca*, Appendix I), of lesser kestrel (*Falco naumanni*, Appendix II), of Lapland owl (*Strix nebulosa*, Ap-



pendix II), of spoonbill (genus *Platalea*), of red-footed falcon (*Falco vespertinus*, Appendix II), of peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I), of merlin (*Falco columbarius*, Appendix II), of snowy owl (*Bubo scandiacus*, Appendix II), of golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II) and of short-eared owl (*Asio flammeus*, A. II)

Ghent, Flemish Region, Belgium

June 29, 2014

The investigation lasted 6 years and expanded to 5 foreign countries, led to arrest warrants in the United Kingdom. 5 convicted (4 men and one woman) had indeed illegal business ties with a dealer in Gloucestershire who himself was convicted in May 2013. The case of black kites with CITES certificates of dubious origin caught the attention of the British police and the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU). In fact, these kites were caught in their natural habitat. Poaching activities verified. The director of NWCU is pleased to have cooperated with its counterparts in Belgium, exchanging much key information. Speaking of the gang members, he stressed that they pretended to be involved in bird conservation. "This was all about personal greed."

All of the birds were trapped in their natural habitats. The chicks were hand-fed before being shipped at cheap price in the global trading system via the Internet.

The 5 fake ornithologists were sentenced to 4 years in prison including 3 with no possibility of remission, 2 years in prison including one year with no possibility of remission, 18 months and one year suspended sentence, and fined 90,000, 30,000, 12,000 and 2,750 €.

The property that the gang used and illegal profits amounted to € 515,800 and € 207,655. It all was seized.

All birds are under the custody of the Belgian Government and the judgment ordered that the condemned be liable for expenses.



Collection Henri Heim de Balsac/
Jacques Perrin de Brichambaut

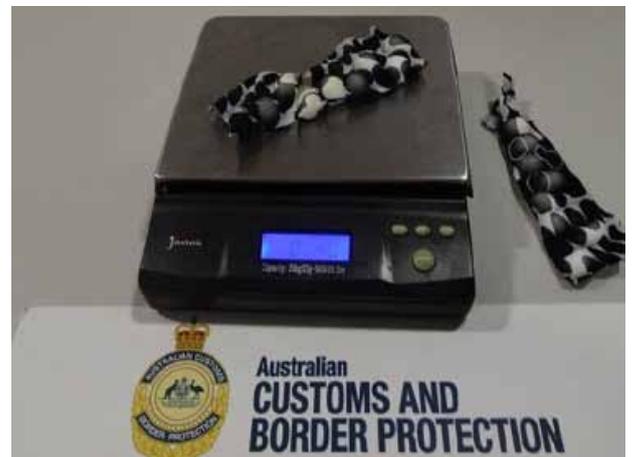
OCEANIA

**Seizure of 16 eggs of unidentified exotic birds
Kingsford Smith Airport of Sydney, State of New
South Wales, Australia**

May 20, 2014

In Australia, it is a common expression to call tiny swimming trunks "budgie smugglers."

Sidney airport customs had to deal with a different type of bird smuggler this time. A 39-year-old from the Czech Republic had concealed in his crotch 16 undeclared bird eggs. The species has not yet been identified. Australian bird watchers are looking at the mystery. Maybe 16 major scandals. To be continued. The man risks 10 years in prison or a fine of 170,000 Australian dollars (160,000 US\$).



Holy Week



Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden
Jan Brueghel l'ancien (1568 – 1625).

In countries of South America, of Catholic faith, wild species of fauna and flora are subjected to trafficking during the month of Lent and the Holy Week. They are used as decorative pieces for ceremonies or as ingredients in traditional dishes. Indeed it is forbidden to eat meat certain days of the Holy Week and animals dependent on aquatic ecosystems assimilated to fish are therefore sought. Capybaras and caimans pay dearly for that. As for the caiman's skin, they join the black market. The same phenomenon impacts turtles and green iguanas. White meat of the Sainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*, Appendix II) and the broad-winged hawk (*Buteo platypterus*, Appendix II) is also part of the feast. Migration of these birds, also called 'Lent hawks' leads them, to their misfortune, to Colombia during this season. Cutting of the palm tree branches deprives yellow-eared parrots (*Ognorhynchus icterotis*, Appendix I) of favored nesting places.

Just as is other districts in Colombia, environmental police in Antioque called for respect of wildlife heritage during the Holy Week and reminded the population that festivities, be they religious or profane, are no justification to consume animal or vegetal protected wild species. Last year, implementation of 140 police operations and checks during the Holy Week enabled the seizure in the sole district of Antioque of palm tree buds, 64 birds, 31 reptiles and 10 mammals.

Animals illegally sold all year round are sometimes saved thanks to operations led during the Holy Week.

**Seizure of 65 kg of Caiman meat (*Crocodylia* spp., Appendix I or II)
Tavapy, Alto Paraná Department, Paraguay
April 4, 2014**

Checkpoints are set up within the time period of Holy Week. One of them resulted in the seizure of caiman meat. They will be destroyed. 3 species of caimans currently live in Paraguay.

**Seizure of 67 Cascabel rattlesnakes and pit viper skins (family *Crotalus*)
Department of Santander, Colombia
April 12, 2014**

The Holy Week definitely attracts smuggling of endangered species. This time, it was Cascabel rattlesnakes and pit viper skins. Police said they were for rituals. They were packed in bags in a cardboard box hidden within a vehicle. The package shipped from La Guajira Department, intended to Giron (Santander Department). The seizure is estimated at 207 million Colombian pesos (103,819 US\$).

**Seizure of an ocelot (*Leopardus pardalis*, Appendix I)
Ponedera, Department of Atlantico, Colombia
April 2014**

The male ocelot was in the luggage compartment of the bus. He was transferred to an authorized center.



**Seizure of 7 brown-throated conure (*Eupsittula pertinax*, Appendix II), 3 parakeets (*Psittaciformes* spp., Appendix II), a yellow-fronted Amazon (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II), a spectacled caiman (*Caiman crocodilus*, Appendix II) and 4 boas (*Boidae* spp., Appendix I or II)
Barranquilla, Atlantico Department, Colombia
April 2014**

The environmental and ecological police conducted the seizure in the public market in Barranquilla as part of the "Living Holy Week in harmony with nature" operation.

Also confiscated were non-CITES animals that are protected in Colombia: 15 canaries (family *Serinus*), 2 indigo buntings (*Passerina cyanea*), a Venezuelan troupial (*Icterus icterus*), a northern mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*), 4 yellow backed orioles (*Icterus chrysater*), 2 smooth-billed anis (*Crotophaga ani*), 5 blackbirds (family *Turdus*), 63 Colombian sliders *Trachemys callirostris*, 38 black-bellied sliders *Trachemys dorbigni* and 70 kg of capybara meat (*Hydrochoerus Hydrochoerus*).



The Entry into Noah's Ark
Enluminure of Jacquemard de Hesdin, XV^e s., France

Pangolins

The 8 pangolin species *Manis spp.* (4 African and 4 Asian) are listed in Appendix II.

The seizure from 1st April to 30th June is equal to 12.388 pangolins

Taking the average weight of 3.5kg per animal and 3 pangolins for 1 kg of scales.

AFRICA

Conviction for illegal possession of a pangolin
Chipata, Eastern Province, Zambia



April 11, 2014

The Court of Chipata sentenced 2 men for possession of a live animal protected by the Zambia's national laws. The accused expressed remorse and tried to justify their act. One said he had 19 children and fostered 8 orphans at home. The other needed to take care of 13 children and an elderly mother. Both men say they have borrowed money from the Cargill Cotton Company and have obligation to repay. The judge did not show much mercy to the fathers' story who also owned a few dozens heads of cattle. He thought that the accused had the necessary resources to survive without the need to capture the pangolin. The Court noted that it is one's duty to protect animals that, in the absence of appropriate measures, may disappear. The 2 accomplices were sentenced to 3 years of forced labor.

REPEATED OFFENSE

Seizure of 120 kg of pangolin scales
Yaoundé, Central Region, Cameroon
April 14, 2014

A woman, well known to the police for trafficking protected species, was arrested in a busy area of Yaoundé because she was in possession of 120 kg of pangolin scales. She had been arrested in December 2012 for smuggling gorilla parts. Authorities suspect that she had been involved in trading scales in the region for a while. Some scales were large and came from giant pangolins. *Manis gigantea* lives in central and eastern Africa. It is the largest pangolin and measure between 125 and 140 cm. The police operation was conducted with the technical support of LAGA.

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Seizure of 198.26 kg of pangolin scales
Lomé, Maritime Region, Togo
May 7, 2014

All species of pangolins are sucked towards China and its neighboring countries. Pangolin scales of the species *Manis gigantea*, *Manis temminckii*, *Manis tetradactyla*, and *Manis tricuspis* leave Africa in the luggage of those flying to or back to Asia and

in even larger quantities slipped into shipping containers. Then we are mainly dealing with networks with in most cases accomplices in the export and import ports. The 200 kg of scales packed in bags were destined to supply these networks.

Upstream, there is a linear organization of hunters, catchers, pangolin killers, scales extraction, and transport. The whole chain of bush meat sellers is mobilized. The mother of one of the 2 "students" arrested in Lomé is also involved in the circuit. Recall that the most effective extraction method is to boil the live pangolins in water.

"On the Trail" has already reported smuggling attempts from Lomé in issue number 4.



ASIA

Seizure of 5 pangolins
Medan, Province of North Sumatra, Indonesia
April 4, 2014

The Medan police searched a house after receiving information from the public. 2 men were arrested and 5 male pangolins seized. According to preliminary results of the investigation, Lueslim Suhardi alias Chin, 42-year-old and the owner of the estate, was the head of the smugglers. The pangolins were to be sold abroad.

Seizure of 13 kg of pangolin scales
Kakadvitta, Development Region Eastern Nepal
April 8, 2014

A man was arrested while trying to smuggle the scales to Nepal in a car that is registered in India. Simply being an intermediary according to him, he received orders to deliver them from Dharan to Nepal. According to police, Nepal and especially the border of Kakadvitta is very popular among traffickers to supply scales that come from India to China.

Seizure of 24 live pangolins
Hepu, Guangxi Autonomous Region, China
April 11, 2014

Customs dismantled a network smuggling pangolins from Vietnam. They were for sale in areas including Guangdong. 12 suspects were arrested and 4 vehicles seized. The 24 pangolins each weighed

between 1 and 9 kg. The species is legally protected in China. The law has heavy penalties that can reach lifetime imprisonment and confiscation of property.



Indicted for smuggling 30 kg of pangolin scales Changsha, Hunan Province, China

April 12, 2014

Pangolin scales, sold for merely 200 to 300 yuan (32 US\$ to 48 US\$) per kg abroad, have an inflated price of 2300 Yuan (369 US\$) per kg in China. Suspect Yao has worked in Cameroon, Africa from March 2012 to January 2013, when he discovered that there is a good opportunity to make money with pangolin scales. He contacted Luo in China to find potential buyers and negotiate a price. Luo found buyers at the price of 2,300 Yuan (369 US\$) per kg. At the same time, Yao contacted Mr. Lin, another Chinese worker settled in Cameroon, who provided him with 30 kg pangolin scales. Yao mailed the pangolin scales to Luo, but the package was detained at the Shanghai Customhouse for inspection. The fine for smuggling pangolin is 40,080 Yuan (6,680 US\$) and imprisonment of 5 to 10 years. Both Yao and Luo pleaded guilty to their crimes and claimed to not know that pangolin trading was illegal in China.

FAMILY AFFAIRES

Arrest of a pangolin smuggler

Nakhon Ratchasima Province, Thailand

April 19, 2014



The Chaiyapaphum Star Tiger Zoo served as a legal cover for smuggling animals, mainly pangolins, and rosewood (*Dalbergia cochinchinensis*, Appendix II). Kampanart Chaimat, the head of the smugglers, was stopped. The Brigade anti money laundering searched the zoo and 2 other areas managed and supervised by his wife and his sister. The pangolins were kept at the zoo after their capture and before

being sent to Malaysia and China.

The number of victims due to the smuggling activities is not known, but it seems that the business was quite successful. The network had 6 million Baht in cash (182,730 US\$), deposits in 28 bank accounts, 29 vehicles and many possessions in real estate.

Journalists investigate pangolin meat in restaurants

Fuzhou, Fujian Province, China

April 22, 2014

Journalists from Haidu News visited a few expensive restaurants in Fuzhou and discovered that they sold pangolins. Firstly, the reporters went to Linluyan Club at 118 East Nanping Road, a rather hidden restaurant. They pretended to make a reservation and asked about the menu. The waiter recommended cubilose (edible bird's nests), shark fins, abalone, king cobra, and pangolin. When asked the price of pangolin, the waiter checked his computer and said that the market price was 1288 yuan (207 US\$) per 500 g. Only live pangolins would be delivered to the restaurant, then freshly killed and cooked. Secondly, journalists visited a private club at Xiangzhanglin City Park on Guixiang Road, but were unable to enter because of the fingerprint lock. According to the nearby storeowners, this restaurant only accepts people whom they know. It also sells king cobra and pangolin.



Seizure of 2 pangolins

Baoshan, Yunnan Province, China

April 2014

Suspects Chen and Guo bought 2 pangolins when they were resting near the Hangzhou-Ruili freeway in Longling County in Baoshan, Yunnan. They were planning to ship the pangolins to Lijiang in the same province. Receiving reports of illegal purchasing of pangolins, the Baoshan forest police along with the drug control police sent out a team to inspect the vehicles. At around 11pm, the police stopped a Mitsubishi car for a search, and found 2 pangolins put in bags in the back trunk. Chen and Guo were arrested. Other than the supposed high medicinal value of pangolin's scales and meat, they have high ecological value. As reporter Heng Zhang wrote, "in a 250 acre forest, termites will cause no harm to trees as long as there is a grown-up pangolin; thus pangolins are crucial at protecting forests".

**Court hearing for smuggling 37 pangolins
Fangchenggang, Guangxi Region, China
April 28, 2014**

The case dates back to January 24 (see On the Trail No. 4, page 42). Ye was hired to transport the pangolins in Guangzhou. He had tried to escape before the checkpoint but was quickly captured. The local press calls for exemplary punishment.

**Seizure of 4 live pangolins, 5 dead pangolins
and 6 kg of pangolin skin
Medan, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia
May 1, 2014**

The investigation led to the arrest of 5 people.



**Seizure of 4 live pangolins (29 kg)
Nam Mon, Lao Cai Province, Vietnam
May 8, 2014**

On 8 May 2014, the district police of Bac Ha (northern Vietnam) in collaboration with the environmental and forest protection services, has filed a report against Mr. Hoàng Văn Đoàn for buying and transporting 4 pangolins weighing 29 kg in total.



Mr. Hoàng Văn Đoàn had bought the animals in Lai Chau (northwestern Vietnam). On his way, he stopped at a farmer's house to feed them. That's when he was arrested.

The pangolins had no documents proving their legal provenance.

The veterinary services were alerted. If their health allows it, the pangolins will be transferred to emergency wildlife service of Hoang Lien National Park who will eventually organize their release.

The Service of environmental protection will fine

the suspect for illegal transport and purchase of animals. The fine will be around 10 to 20 million dong (between 320 and 640 €).

**Seizure of 956 frozen pangolins
Zhuhai, Guangdong Province, China
May 12, 2014**

On the morning of May 12, 2014, the Chinese border police seized 956, or nearly 4 tons, of smuggled frozen pangolin carcasses. Earlier, the police received information of the smuggler's driving route, and waited for him at different points along the way. At 7:15, the police stopped the suspect's vehicle and found the pangolins in the trailer. In the black markets in Southeast Asia, pangolins are sold for as much as 100 Yuan (16 US\$) per kg. Then, the smugglers sell the pangolins back to the Chinese in Guangdong at 4 to 5 times higher the price.



**Seizure of a pangolin
Muara Beliti, Province of South Sumatra, Indonesia
May 13, 2014**



The pangolin hung to his cage shows his unscaled belly

A pangolin craftsman, the intermediate between the hunter-collector and wholesaler provider of large national and international channels, was arrested south of the island of Sumatra. He bought the pangolin at 20 US\$ / kg and sold it for 30. The animal's weight was 8 kg. The event occurred near Bengkulu along the road connecting the south and north of the island. Any regional wildlife, especially snakes, is under strong pressure from illegal hunting.

Seizure of 130 pangolins
Pathum Thani, Central Region, Thailand
May 16, 2014

3 traffickers had settled 50 km north of Bangkok. The 130 pangolins were in a warehouse. They were to be transported to the northeast of the country near the border with Laos and then to China. The trip took a long time. The path of a smuggled pangolin is a long one, nearly 3000 km. As he gradually moves north, the pangolin sees its prices rise. The rates are indicative and scalable. The following are taken from events reported by "On the Trail" in the previous issues.

- Malaysia. 25 US\$ / kg based on average of 6 kg per pangolin;
- Southern Thailand after smuggling over the border with Malaysia. 61 US\$ / kg;
- Northern Thailand before crossing the border with Laos. 153 US\$ / kg;
- China. 350 US\$ / kg.

At each step, the smuggled pangolin is stuffed with rice or corn porridge. Every gram counts. After a period of observation and care, 130 prisoners will be released in a proper environment. For now, they are in a specialized shelter in the same province as their clandestine cell.



© Pongpat Wongyala

Seizure of 21 live pangolins (85.5 kg)
Mong Cai, Quang Ninh Province, Vietnam
May 18, 2014

At 4pm in the Mong Cai (North Vietnam), a city near the border with China, the Brigade for the Protection of the Environment of the Provincial Police caught 3 individuals carrying 3 suspicious bags. At the sight of the police, the trio fled, abandoning the 3 bags. The brigade discovered 21 live pangolins. The investigation of this smuggling case continues.



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Seizure of 46 pangolins, 39 still alive
Riau, Indonesia
May 21, 2014

The 46 pangolins were in rear of the car. They were under the control of 2 men, one of which is a 21-year-old student. They were heading to the tables of restaurants in Medan 500 km away.



© news.detik

Seizure of 2 live pangolins
Wenshan, Yunnan Province, China
May 22, 2014

Liu ordered 2 villagers Long and Li to deliver 2 live pangolins at a fee of 300 yuan (48 US\$) per kg from the China-Vietnam border to Kunming, Yunnan. Li and Long hid the pangolins in the trunk, but on their way through Wenshan, the Wolong region's police stopped them for an inspection. Long, Li, and Liu were arrested for further investigation.



wsnews © Shaomei Tian

Seizure of one ton of pangolin scales

Kwai Chung, Hong Kong, China

May 28, 2014

Cheers to plastics recycling. In a ship container coming from Uganda destined for China via Kenya and Malaysia and supposedly carrying exclusively PET plastic bottles (PolyEthylene) scheduled for recycling also held about one ton of pangolin scales. Based on an average of 3 animals for one kg of scales, then 3000 pangolins would have been recycled into scale-powder for the sex shops of the Chinese pharmacopoeia if the Hong Kong customs had not intercepted the 40 bags hidden among the 470 others. The value of the seizure is estimated at 645.000 US\$ i.e. 645 US\$ / kg.

Seizure of 1 live pangolin

Taipei, Taiwan

June 2, 2014

At 2am on the day of the Dragon Boat Festival, a day commemorating the death of a Chinese poet Qu Yuan, a six-month-old pangolin was discovered crawling next to the shrine in a popular Erawan temple in Taipei. Although pangolins are traditionally the symbol of wealth and luck, the temple gave it to the Taipei Zoo.



Seizure of 22 pangolins and a python (*Pythonidae* spp., Appendix I or II)

Province of Lampung, Island of Sumatra, Indonesia

June 3, 2014

The car turned around to avoid the police check. Police started the chase. A few kilometres further, the car was found empty. Or not quite, the 22 trenggiling (pangolin in Indonesia) were in the trunk with the snake. They were taken to the Bksda shelter, the government service in charge of wild-life protection.

Seizure of 2 live pangolins

Taizhou, Zhejiang Province, China

June 3, 2014

In the Taizhou South Bus Terminal, security agent Wang was inspecting check-in luggage when he found 2 animal-like objects. The boxes were wrapped and sealed with the signs "fragile". Upon opening the baggage, agents found 2 pangolins, both around 1 m long. The larger is a bit darker in

color and weighs 13 kg while the smaller is more yellow and weighs 9.6 kg. The Taizhou Wild Animal Protection Center will watch the pangolins for an afternoon to ensure that they are healthy before sending them back to the mountains.



Seizure of 2.34 t of pangolin scales

Kwai Chung, Hong Kong, China

June 11, 2014



This hasn't been seen in over 5 years in Hong Kong. After the scheme of pangolin scales declared to be plastic waste in a container coming from Uganda, via Kenya and Malaysia, was unraveled, this time in turn it's a container sent from Cameroon with a load declared to be wood that was hiding the pangolin scales. Within 15 days, Customs Officers in Hong Kong have therefore seized about 3.34

tons of scales equivalent according to first expert estimates to approximately 8000 pangolins. A governmental source indicates that in 5 years, a kilo of scales on the Chinese underground market has gone from 2000 HK\$ to 5000 HK\$/kg that is from 260 US\$ to 645 US\$/kg. The 2 attempted smugglings are thought to have been organized by the same network. 48h after the load arrived from Cameroon, a businessman from Malaysia set up in Hong Kong was arrested then let out on bail.



© Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department

Seizure of one kilo of pangolin scales
Kathmandu, Central Development Region, Nepal
June 17, 2014

Police in Nepal announce that one kilo of pangolin scales has been seized and a 25-year-old suspect has been arrested in a Buddhist monastery.

Seizure of 71 live pangolins (220 kg)
Ha Long, Quang Ninh Province, Vietnam
June 22, 2014

At the toll station of the Bai Chay Bridge, 100 km from the Chinese border, the customs control service number 2 intercepted the car. In its rear compartment, 220 kg of live pangolins were discovered, estimated worth 350 million VND or 16,500 US\$. The 2 passengers are from Mong Cai where a pangolin force-feeding facility of was raided a week later.



© Nguyen Hoang



© Jean-Pierre Dalbéra

Seizure of 350 kg of pangolin
Quang Ninh Province, Vietnam
June 30, 2014

After several days of investigation and shadowing, the police raided a transit facility of wild animals in the city of Mong Cai, near the north-west border with China, and caught in their act the Vietnamese and Chinese buyers in the process of force-feeding 66 pangolins with rice and flour before shipping them to China.

3 people were arrested, including the main buyer, Ms. Duong Minh Yen, a Chinese citizen living in Kunming, Yunnan Province. The pangolins as well as a minibus with a fake license plate were seized. The rear seats had been removed in order to transport the pangolins. Some buyers and employees were able to escape.

One of the employees, Mr. Pham Long, said that a 40-year-old man named Xuan recruited him. His job was to hold down the pangolins during the feedings. He was paid 100,000 VND per day equivalent to 4.70 US\$. According to Mr. Long, the feeder's team consisted of 6 Vietnamese. Another suspect, Mr. Tung said that the pangolins arrived daily. The suspects were taken to the police station for further investigation.



© Nguoi lao dong



© Nguoi lao dong



© Duc hieu

Primates

AFRICA

Seizure of bushmeat including those of monkeys (*Primates* spp., Appendix I or II) Maya-Maya international airport, Brazzaville, Republic of Congo April 2014

The PALF-Project for the Application of Law for Fauna is a pilot project in partnership with the Wildlife Conservation Society and the Aspinall Foundation. Cooperation with national authorities resulted in 2 significant seizures in less than 15 days. Full count: more than 70 animal carcasses were found in 2 cargoes departing from the airport of Brazzaville. Monkeys, antelopes, porcupines ... 2 people were arrested.

Good News

Transfer of an eastern lowland gorilla (*Gorilla beringei* ssp. *Graueri*, Appendix I) to his natural habitat

Virunga National Park, Province of North Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo May 2014

Transboundary gorilla. A little orphan gorilla was in the hands of poachers who had just been operating in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Environmentalists from Rwanda managed to take him in. Since August, the gorilla exiled from Congo was treated by veterinarians in northern Rwanda. Ihirwe (which means lucky in the Kinyarwanda dialect) is from a species of gorillas only found in the eastern lowlands. It lives exclusively in eastern Congo. The species is critically endangered.

The transfer operation was made possible thanks to the Government of Rwanda, the Diane Fossey Foundation, the Government of Congo and to transboundary mechanisms put in place by the administration of Virunga National Park where Ihirwe joined 13 other orphans receiving special care and reeducation of how to survive in the wild.



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Seizure of 10 Western gorilla skulls (*Gorillago-rilla*, Appendix I)

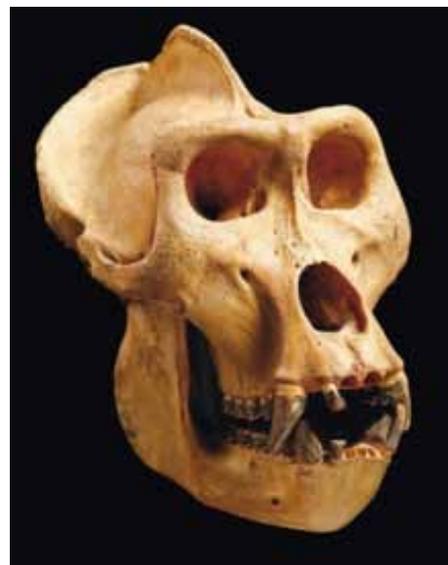
Bertoua, East Region, Cameroon

May 8, 2014

2 creepy individuals pictured with 2 gorilla families on their knees road bicycles from Batouri where they live to Bertoua where they intended to sell the skulls. They were approached by police in the early morning carrying 2 bags in their hands. To avoid control points, they had cycled over 100km on tracks crossing through bush and forest. Gorillas of West Africa who can still be found in Gabon, Congo, and in Central Africa are threatened by deforestation and the proliferation of poachers who supply the numerous slaughterhouses with bush meat.



© LAGA



Gorilla skull "old male with incomplete denture" sold for 6500 €.

Seizure of 7 gorilla skulls (*Gorilla* spp., Appendix I) and 11 chimpanzee skulls (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) and an elephant jaw

Yaoundé, Centre Region, Cameroon

May 21, 2014

Skulls, skulls and jaws. Bones and skeletons are increasingly sought after. This time the dealer trav-

elled by car all the way from Ebolowa to the capital Yaounde. He was arrested while negotiating the sale of the bones. This is not the first time that this dark trade occurs in Cameroon (See "On the Trail" n°4 p.79).

Last Great Ape organization (LAGA) assisted in the investigation and in its outcome in the Nkoleton neighborhood. The skulls were sold to the trafficker in Obam by poachers based in Ebolowa and in Kribi.



Seizure of a mandrill (*Mandrillus sphinx*, Appendix I)

Yaoundé, Central region, Cameroon

June 18, 2014

Fortunately, the mandrill in back trunk of the Toyota caught the attention of the police who proceeded to inspect the vehicle. A mandrill cry in the heart of Yaoundé, that is troubling. The 46-year-old man purchased the monkey near the outskirts of a town named Souanké, near the border between Congo and Cameroon. After hundreds of miles by car, the mandrill could finally breathe some fresh air under the assistance of the NGO LAGA (Last Great Ape Organization).



Seizure of a chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) and conviction

Tokonou, Region of Faranah, Guinea

June 23, 2014

Lancinet Kamisoko was arrested near the Haut Niger National Park. The General attorney of Kankan



was present during the operation led by the Ministry of the Environment with the help of GALF (Guinea Application for the Fauna Law). The presence of this high magistrate proves the importance given by Guinean Justice Instances to criminality against wildlife, a newly promoted interest coming partly from CITES admonitions.

Lancinet Kamisoko is a notorious poacher specialized in chimpanzees. He led his underground business in broad daylight without bothering taking any particular precautions. According to GALF he is of the same sort as Ousmane Diallo (see "On the trail" n°2 p. 26), another big thief of great apes. 10 days later he was sentenced to 6 months in prison and a 5 million GNF fine, that is 714 US\$. The sentence seems weak with regards to the gravity of the offence. It yet shows a homogeneous and progressive tendency, except for mishaps, from West African Courts towards more severity.

The young chimp that was in the hands of Mr. Kalisoko at the time of his arrest was no doubt captured in the Haut Niger National Park. Founded in 1997 from the heart of the Mafou forest, the park covers now more than 7000 km². It suffers several illegal activities such as logging, poaching for bush meat and fishing in the Niger River.

Sanka, that is the name given to the young survivor, has been handed over to the Chimpanzee Conservation Center. Founded in 1997, the CCC has 3 priority missions:

- Taking in and caring for orphan chimpanzees seized by the Guinean Government, giving them the best possible quality of life and teach them the necessary basics to prepare them to return to the wild.
- Release the chimpanzees after several years of learning so as for them to retrieve their natural habitat.
- Educated local populations on the consequences of the disappearing of this species so as to counter illegal trafficking.

The CCC was created in a state of emergency. The young orphan chimps taken in by authorities and NGOs are increasingly numerous. Just as for gorillas, capture of a young one entails destruction of the whole social group and death of the parents. Young chimps are sought for to supply the pets trade and for animal testing.



ASIA

Seizure of a chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I)

Lebanon

April 5, 2014

Charlie was the last known captive chimpanzee in Lebanon. He was released by Animals Lebanon after 9 years of legal battle. According to the NGO, traffickers had illegally brought him into the country in 2005. First offered for sale in a pet store, he ultimately ended up in the Animal City Zoo. In 2006 the Ministry of Agriculture recognized that there had been no permit established for Charlie's importation and therefore authorized a seizure. The first attempt had failed when the zoo owners moved and hid Charlie the day before the seizure.

He was locked in a cage, alone. Doug Cress, coordinator for the United Nations for Great Apes notes that chimpanzees are highly intelligent and sociable. Continued isolation is a cause of great suffering. Medical examination reveals other effects caused by the confinement. Charlie is abnormally small and his right leg suffers from muscle atrophy. Charlie is now transferred to the custody of Animal Lebanon and treated by experts. The latter believe it will take several months before it is finally possible for him to enjoy full freedom in a sanctuary. CITES came into force in Lebanon in 2013.



Good news

Seizure of 2 stump-tailed macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II)

Vĩnh Phúc Province, Vietnam

April 16, 2014

The ENV, or Education for Nature, members contributed to the release of 2 stump-tailed macaques. Via the hotline, some activists warned the Forest Protection Department who were able to recover 2 monkeys and brought them to the Soc Son Rescue Center for shelter. Vietnam is home to 5 species of macaques, all in Appendix II. The seized 2 are stump-tailed macaques *Macaca arctoides*. ENV continues its successful effort to inform the public. There seems to be more and more reports.

Poaching of hundreds of grey langurs (*Semnopithecus entellus*, Appendix I)

Rajnandgaon District, Chhattisgarh, India

April 2014

A carpet of bodies covered the floor as far as the eye can see. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of pieces of monkeys were drying in the sun. This is the sight witnessed by a local resident, who came with a group of neighbors in the Devvadi forest to meet the poachers. The inhabitants noticed the poachers' comings and goings and say that they killed about 40 monkeys per day. The poachers claimed the meat was intended for their personal consumption. The villagers filed a complaint with the forest guards whose station is only 2 km from the scene, but the next day the camps and all in it had vanished. Officials do not seem to be moved by the allegations and claim that such acts are unlikely in this region with strong religious beliefs.

Activists accuse the department of Forest Protection of negligence, or even corruption. AMK Bharos, the president of the Society for Wildlife of Chhattisgarh, said "the illegal trade of bushmeat of jackal, mongoose, fox is active in several parts of the country and it has been a few years that poachers and nomadic tribes of Andhra Pradesh come to southern Bastar to kill snakes. Similarly, now they begin poaching monkey." Meat and processed brain would be exported to China, Japan, Korea and Taiwan. The local residents confirm that the monkey population has been attracting poachers for 5 years.



Seizure of 2 macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II)

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

April 2014

2 macaques held in captivity in Vinh Nghiem Pagoda were released. It took the authorities 2 weeks to seize the animals, the matter being complicated by the need to respect this sacred place. Sacred animal does not necessarily mean protected animal. In Vietnam, releasing captive animals is a symbol of compassion and kindness and often practiced during festivals and religious ceremonies. But the best symbols have their setbacks. ENV is concerned about the proliferation of small wildlife markets that thrive around places of worship. Animals are captured and sold to the faithful to exercise their liberating duty. It is a new vicious circle.



Seizure of a Sumatran orangutan (*Pongo abelii*, Appendix I)

Aceh Province, Indonesia

April 2014



Again Aceh. Palm oil is a curse. The little male orangutan, 10 to 12 months old, was abandoned in a peat bog in process of being converted to an industrial plantation of oil palm. Very thin, it is treated in a specialized center of the Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Program.

Seizure of 6 live slow loris (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I)

Pingxiang, Guangxi Province, China

May 5, 2014

At around noon on May 5, 2014, the border patrol examined a bus from Pingxiang to Ningming. A soldier heard sounds from 2 suspicious sealed boxes from under the seats and found 6 slow lorises inside. According to the driver Huang, a client checked in the luggage in Pingxiang, but he did not know what is in them. The border patrol has handed the case to the Pingxiang Forest police for further investigation.

Seizure of 4 macaques (*Macaca* spp., A. I or II)

Huong Hoa District, Quang Tri Province, Vietnam

May 8, 2014

The 4 macaques used as domestic pets in the mountains of central Vietnam were freed and released in the Bac Huong Hoa National Park.



Seizure of a young macaque (*Macaca* spp, Appendix I or II)

Binh Duong Province, Vietnam

May 20, 2014

ENV's mediation made the release of baby macaque possible. He was handed over to the FPD (Forest Protection Department).

Seizure of a crab-eating macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II)

Vietnam

May 2014

His master was moving. In the middle of the old trash left behind, he abandoned his little captive. Another survivor thanks of the ENV. Hotline: 1800 1522.

**Seizure of a loris (*Lorisidae* spp. App. I and II)
Vietnam**

May 23, 2014

A “happy call” in the words of the NGO that organized the transfer of the little monkey to rehabilitation center, the first step towards an eventual release into the wild.



Seizure of a macaque (*Macaca* spp. Appendix I and II)

Hòa Bình Province, Vietnam

May 30, 2014

Granted permission from his “foster family”, a young caged macaque was transferred to the Soc Son animal rescue center in Hòa Bình.

Seizure of a rhesus macaque (*Macaca mulatta*, Appendix II)

Ya’an, Sichuan Province, China

June 2014

“Someone here has a monkey at home. You should come to look at it.” Following a report from the public, the forestry department seized a Rhesus macaque. Because the monkey was kept as a pet for 5 years, it has lost its wildlife skills and is dependent on humans. The forestry department placed it in a protection area for further inspection, before releasing it if possible to the wild. Because the owner did not harm the monkey, he was not charged of criminal offence but only scolded by the officials.



Seizure of a slow loris (*Nycticebus bengalensis*, Appendix I) and conviction



Hanoi, Red River Delta Region, Vietnam

June 2014

ENV has once again come to the rescue of a slow loris on display in a coffee shop. The picture of the slow loris in a cage had been spotted by an ENV supporter on a social network. He has been handed over by environmental police to the care of a specialized shelter in Soc Son. The coffee shop owner was sentenced 3 weeks later to a 30 million VN\$ fine, that is 1500 US\$, a severe sentence given the standard of living in Vietnam that should deter those who capture, sell and withhold wild animal also protected by law.



Seizure of 2 macaques (*Macaca* spp. Appendix I and II)

Vĩnh Phúc province, Vietnam

June 2014

It turns out that the young chained up macaque was pregnant. Once again the foster family, rather encumbered, decided to handover their pet to the Province’s environmental authorities.



Seizure of a Sunda slow loris (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I) and a parrot (family Psittacidae, Appendix I or II)

Taiyuan, Shanxi Province, China

June 18, 2014

The policeman heard bird-chirping noises in a Range Rover during a normal inspection at the toll station. Upon opening the car door, he discovered a monkey « with very big eyes and a large, colorful parrot ». He thought that these animals must be endangered because he has never seen them before. He brought the driver, Li, back for questions at the forestry department. The experts identified the monkey as a Sunda slow loris and the parrot as a macaw (family *Psittacidae*).



Seizure of a young orangutan (*Pongo* spp., Appendix I)

Mentaya, Province of central Kalimantan, Indonesia

June 21, 2014

The baby kept in a floating home in Kalimantan has been given for care to the COP (Center for Orangutan Protection). One more orphan orangutan whose family was chased off by deforestation and expansion of palm oil plantations.



Seizure of a crab-eating macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II), a northern pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II) and 2 stump-tailed macaques (*Macaca arctoides*, Appendix II)

Province of Kon Tum, Vietnam

June 23, 2014

ENV got off on a good start this week. The hotline once more received accurate information and the FPD (Forest Protection Department) came to a villager's home and freed the 4 prisoners.

Seizure of a gibbon (*Hylobatidae* spp., Appendix I)

Dak Nong Province, Vietnam

June 30, 2014

The head monk of the pagoda had, for some time, held captive a gibbon. After several days of "negotiations", the monk gave up his possession and the gibbon was transferred to an appropriate center for its eventual reintroduction into the Đăk Nông forest.



EUROPE

The return of a stolen ring-tailed lemur (*Lemur catta*, Appendix I)

Altea, Alicante Province, Spain

April 11, 2014

The lemur lived with 32 other fellow creatures in a pen in a leisure park in Benidorm. On March 7, the staff finds that the lock of the pen was broken and a primate had disappeared.

36 days later, the Civil Guard recovered a lemur on the terrace of a residence in Altea. An inspection by a veterinarian and by reading the microchip confirmed that it is the same lemur that was stolen. He is healthy and quickly returned to his friends. Investigations continue to find the thief.



**Theft of 3 cotton-headed tamarins (*Saguinus oedipus*, Appendix I) and 2 emperors tamarins (*Saguinus imperator*, Appendix II)
Blackpool Zoo, England, United Kingdom
April 29, 2014**

On the night of April 29 to 30, individuals broke into the Blackpool Zoo. They cut the fences of 2 pens and took 2 female cotton-headed tamarins, one of them with her baby, and 2 male emperor tamarins. The 5 animals were all born in captivity. Trainers have expressed great concern about their survival. These specimens are particularly rare and in high demand in the European market. The Blackpool police said that the theft was clearly well prepared and premeditated. "The perpetrators knew what they were looking for."

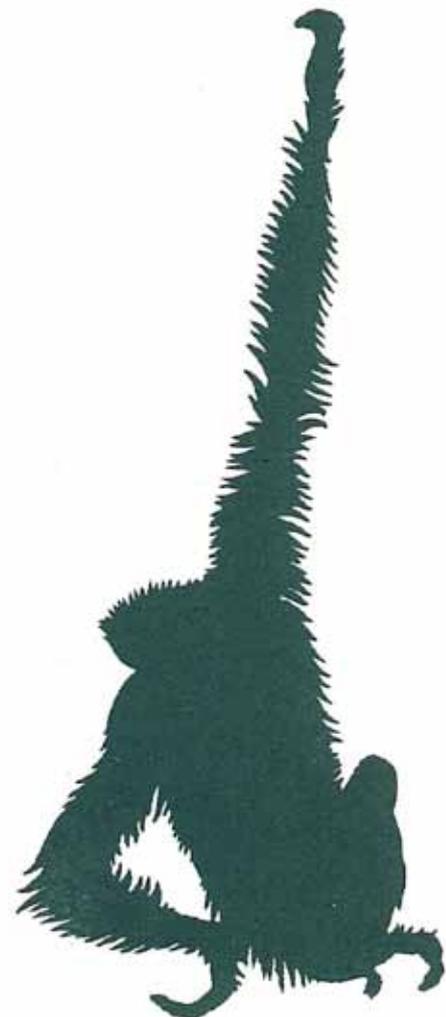
The media coverage, the police searches, and zoo officials' appeals have all been successful. A week later the monkeys were found abandoned by the kidnappers in a house in Brighouse in West Yorkshire. The investigation to find the suspects continues. Almost a happy ending: only 4 of the 5 monkeys were in the house. The 4-month-old baby was not found. Did it survive?



**Seizure of 21 kg of bush meat including monkey meat (*Primates* spp., Appendix I or II)
Lyon Saint-Exupéry Airport, Region of Rhône-Alpes, France
June 8, 2014**



The woman traveling from Morocco had in her luggage antelope meat and monkey meat along with 500 jars of skin bleach to lighten the skin that are dangerous for people's health and banned from sale. The lady claims its all for her personal use. She was sentenced to a custom's fine. All the goods were confiscated and destroyed. There is only one monkey species found in Morocco, the Barbary macaque (*Macaca sylvanus*, Appendix II) - see « On the Trail » n°2 p. 27.



Felines

Tiger (*Panthera tigris*), leopard (*Panthera pardus*), jaguar (*Panthera onca*) and ocelot (*Leopardus pardalis*) are in Appendix I. Lion (*Panthera leo*) is in Appendix II.

**The seizure from 1st April to 30th June
37 skins and stuffed animals seized
23 live animals seized**

AFRICA

Seizure of 2 leopard skins Balessing, West Region, Cameroon April 7, 2014

The hunt lasted 5 hours and resulted in the arrest of 2 men suspected of being involved in leopard skins smuggling in the West Region of Cameroon. The Dschang Brigade police acted in collaboration with the NGO LAGA, which provided logistical support.



Conviction of the poachers of 2 cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus*, A. I) Ubombo, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa April 11, 2014



The 2 felines were killed at the Mkhuze Reserve in the iSimangaliso National Park, known for its wetlands. Ndlovu, the main hunter, pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 5 years in prison. His accomplice, Mathenjwa, who carried the cheetah carcasses, was fined 4,000 R (377 US\$) or imprisonment for 12 months.

Poisoning of 2 lioness and 1 lion Palmwag Conservancy, Kunene Region, Namibia The week of May 19, 2014

5 wild animals were found burnt to ashes in the Palmwag reserve north of Namibia. They were previously poisoned. The mass grave was discovered after the poaching of a female black rhino and her calf. Lions and jackals were killed in April or early May. Jackals were poisoned by feeding on the flesh of the dead lions. There was contradiction in the police report and witnessing that the poachers cut lion legs for their use in traditional medicine. According to police, the lions were killed because they were attacking livestock farmers.



Poaching of a leopard Heatonville, Province KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa June 8, 2014

A leopard was killed for his skin and to make fashion accessories, or it could be for a traditional costume, or for his claws, his whiskers, his tail, all considered as charms in African culture... and Asian culture.

AMERICA

Seizure of a Bengal tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*, Appendix I) Ventura County, California, United States April 2014

Grammy nominee Tyga, the rapper also known as Michael Ray Stevenson, kept a 45 kg, 7-month-old Bengal tiger as a pet. He had posted pictures of the tiger on the social network Instagram. Fully matured, Bengal tigers may weight up to 363 kg. His

neighbor reported to the police about this pet and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife intervened and took the animal to a local facility.



Via Instagram



Via Instagram

“They are part of the family”

Last year, a Brazilian family living in Maringa in the state of Para caused a stir by opening its doors to reporters. The latter were able to admire such madness first hand: 7 tigers in the house. The father likes to open the tigers’ jaw to show their canines. The tigers are tied by leashes like puppy dogs and stroll in the living room and kitchen. The eldest daughter climbs on the back of the tigers in the pool. The youngest thinks that ponies have black stripes. The animals come from a circus. Will the father end up in hospital or in prison? To be continued.



bc

Theft of a lion

Monte Azul Paulista, State of São Paulo, Brazil

May 1, 2014

The 9 year old lion was leading a sad yet peaceful life in the refuge of the Saint-François d’Assise rehabilitation center where he landed following unknown events and circumstances that make up his past.

3 men and one woman stole the lion, who weighs 300 kg after putting him to sleep with an anesthetic shotgun. They left in a small truck. Neighbors saw them, but did not think anything of it. It often happens that animals when healed or back in shape are taken to new horizons.

Oswaldo Garcia Junion who runs the refuge had been caring for the lion for 5 years. Will Rawell, that is his name, be found in a circus or travelling show for worn out exotic animals or in the backyard of a private collector or once more abandoned?



© Informationmg

Seizure of a lion

Acapulco, State of Guerrero, Mexico

May 2014

The 2 month old lion worked in the “Plaza de Isla” mall. He attracted tourists who payed to have a photo taken next to him.



© Profepa

Seizure of a female tiger

Mazamitla, State of Jalisco, Mexico

June 2014



© Profepa

The female tiger was living in someone's home whose neighbors denounced him. Agents from the PROFEPA proceeded to an intervention, and seized her.

Convicted for poaching dozens of bobcats (*Lynx rufus*, Appendix II)

**California, United States
June 2014**

Mr. Tracy Lee Shultz was fined 5,000 US\$ and given one-year probation. No hunting, no fishing, no trapping and no right to accompany someone fishing or hunting. The furs were sold to a licensed dealer. The 15,000 US\$ of proceeds from the sales will be paid to Lassen County Fish and Game Commission to promote and support the protection of the fauna and habitat. Nick Buckler had started to track the poacher at the end of 2012. The department of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife in California had received a tip off stating that Shultz spent the winter trapping bobcats and grey foxes. For a period of 2 months and a half, the agent of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service remained on site on the trail of the suspect. Shultz had set his traps in isolated areas in the north of California. They were checked once a week. On a number of occasions, the ranger released wild animals caught in the traps. Otherwise, they would have died of cold in a matter of days and nights. It was at Shultz's home that the furs were seized as well as a trailer, an all-terrain vehicle, his logbook and 50 traps.



ASIA

Seizure of one leopard skin and 2 leopard claws (*Panthera pardus fusca*, Appendix I)

**Pandharkawda, State of Maharashtra, India
April 2, 2014**

The authorities seized one leopard skin and 2 leopard claws. 6 suspects were arrested. The suspects bought the skin in the Andhra Pradesh. The animal had been killed about 3 weeks earlier.



Seizure of one Indian leopard skin (*Panthera pardus fusca*, Appendix I) and 4.25 kg of Bengal tiger bones (*Panthera tigris tigris*, Appendix I)

**District of Tanahu, Western Development Region, Nepal
April 3, 2014**

The illegal merchant was Indradhoj Karki, a 57-year-old man, hid leopard skin and leopard and tiger bones in his house. The leopard skin measured 1.80 m by 36 cm. Denying his role in the case, Karki claimed that 3 other men gave him the parts. Police are currently trying to locate them.

Conviction for smuggling of a Siberian Tiger (*Panthera tigris altaica*, Appendix I)

**Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, China
April 2014**

Follow-up of the Siberian tiger case in "On the Trail" n°4 p. 53. A 30-year-old man was sentenced to 7 and half years in prison and 8000 US\$ in fine. He was arrested in January 2014 in possession of the dead tiger that he had purchased for 30,525 US\$ (190,000 yuan) and intended to sell with a 10000 US\$ profit. The cause of death and the origin of the animal remain unknown.



**Arrest of a tiger poacher
Kalagarh, Uttarakhand, India
April 2014**

The forest department arrested Banshi, a poacher, and confiscated the knives and steel traps that he used to trap and kill tigers. Dhara village, near Kalagarh range of Corbett Tiger Reserve, has become a sanctuary for the poachers. People from 3 communities, Bavaria, Sapera, and Kunjar have been involved in poaching. While a fourth community that lives inside the forest, Gujjars, provides information on the animals' paths. "In the last 3 years, 51 tigers and 441 leopards have been killed by poachers in Uttarakhand" India Times reported.

**Conviction of a tiger poacher (*Panthera tigris*,
Appendix I)
Nagpur, Maharashtra, India
April 17, 2014**

Suraj Pal, better known as Chacha, was arrested last September for possession of 18 kg of tiger bones and fur. The court refused his new bail plea because of his long history of poaching. Releasing him would "adversely influence the investigation and also alert absconding traders."

Since the beginning, "On the Trail" has been following thread by thread the intertwined web where Bengal tigers and other felines are caught. On this issue, it is important to mention that the famous tiger poacher Sansar Chand is said to be dead.

**Reopening a leopard poaching case (*Panthera pardus*,
Appendix I)
Nagpur, Maharashtra, India
April 18, 2014**

In 1999, the forest department arrested 3 people for poaching a leopard in Gorewada. One leopard skin, nails, wire snares, weapons and other material during a raid were found at Potbale's house; however, the 3 had been on bail since then because the forest department never legally pursued the matter. The forest officials recently decided to reopen this case in court 15 years after the facts.

**Poaching of one Bengal tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*,
Appendix I)
Nainital, Uttarakhand, India
April 2014**

The mutilated body of a tiger was found in Bailpav. Many body parts have been removed, such as the skin and the whiskers. Authorities suspect that "the villagers may have extracted body parts to sell them to the traders who are connected to Chinese market via the Nepal route". The professional poachers would usually take the entire carcass. The offenders remain unknown.

**Seizure of 2 lions and a tiger
Chouf District, Mount Lebanon Governorate,
Lebanon
April 8, 2014**

2 lions and 1 tiger illegally held at a private zoo in the Chouf district were taken in by Animals Lebanon.

**Seizure of a leopard skin
Magardarra, Madhya Pradesh, India
April 28, 2014**

The 3 accused were caught near the Magardarra railway station. They were carrying 2 chital deer skins (*Axis axis*, unlisted in CITES), around 0.9 m long, and a leopard skin, around 1.52 m long. They claimed to have purchased the wild animal skins from a person in Kabeerdham district.

**Seizure of a tiger skin and a leopard skin
Coimbatore, State of Tamil Nadu, India
May 1, 2014**

Just look how beautiful these 2 sqished, flattened felins are, hugging the grounds so delicately, awaiting children's play, the masters feet, visitors inspection and emitting the sour odor of the fallen beast. The tiger and the leopard were poisoned, scorched, salted and tanned in the forests of the protected hills of Kodaikanal before being served on a platter in the town of Coimbatore for the small amount of Rs 70 lack that is 118 000 US\$ to a very interested buyer who was non other than an inspector from the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau. The 2 poachers are behind bars. The conductor of the whole operation is still at large.



Seizure of 4 young live tigers
Udon Thani, Province of Udon Thani, Thailand
May 21, 2014

The expensive car was licenced in Bangkok. It was parked near a Muang lake less than 100 km from the border to Laos and more than 400 km from Bangkok. A guy from the area was intrigued. He saw the driver park the car and another vehicle came to pick him up. Through the window the eyewitness saw 4 "large cats" sleeping in plastic cages. He gave the alert. Experts from the Forest Services noticed that the tigers seemed used to humans and their paws were soft as velvet, a sign that the animals had never lived in the wild. The tigers' sleepiness was seemingly caused by "tranquilizers" administered before the transport stage. Given the car's itinerary and proximity to the border, they believe the young tigers were raised in a farm in the East or South of Thailand and destined to be sold in Laos where the nouveau riches are prone to follow the fashion for captive and decorative felines.

The 4 tigers were taken to the Wildlife Conservation Center in Phu Khieu in the Province of Chaiyaphum. 150 km more to drive.

Acquittal of 4 leopard skin smugglers
Gadchiroli District, State of Maharashtra, India
May 2014

5 years after their indictment, the 4 suspects of illegal trade in leopard skin were acquitted by a court. The evidence was biodegradable, so they eventually disappeared naturally.

2 people arrested with one leopard skin
Thankot, Katmandu District, Nepal
May 27, 2014

2 thirty-year-old men regularly went on murderous sprees in the forest. In their storage in Katmandu, the police caught them with one chital skin, one leopard skin and 6 logs of red sandalwood (*Pterocarpus santalinus*, Appendix II). The red sandalwood is used in traditional medicine for its supposed healing effect for a variety of ailments such as hiccups or skin diseases. It is also used to make furniture and musical instruments. It is also used as an ingredient for some dye. India and Japan are the main markets.



Chital

2 people arrested for possession of one leopard skin

Kinnaur District, l'Himachal Pradesh State, India
June 1, 2014

An Chansu, near the India-China border, the villagers tried to haggle for a leopard skin. The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau was aware. It had already found a well-known middleman who made an agreement with those of Chansu.

Negotiations then moved on to a second possible buyers. The 2 sides agreed on an approximate price of RS 2 lakh (3400 US\$). And the end, there had been a turn of events. The buyer was a cop and the 2 villagers arrested under Article 51 of the Wildlife Protection Act. They face up to 3 years in prison for possession of protected feline skin and 7 years for poaching.

This is the first time that such wrongdoing is found in the district of Kinnaur region but is unfortunately a common occurrence elsewhere:

- September 2013: seizure of one leopard skin in the district of Mandi
- February 2012: 2 people arrested and 2 leopard skins seized in the district of Mandi
- January 2012: 3 people arrested in the district of Shimla in possession of many animal parts including one leopard skin, 2 leopard skulls and 7 Leopard canines.
- February 2009: 4 people arrested in the district of Shimla in possession of 8 leopard skins.

Poaching felines is on the rise in the state of Himachal Pradesh. 90% of the demand comes from neighboring China.

Arrest of 3 tiger poachers
State of Madhya Pradesh, India
June 2, 2014

The little 4-year-old orphan girl tiger had been released 5 months ago into the Bandhavgarh National Park after having grown in semi-liberty inside the park. On May 25 she was electrocuted with a steel wire attached to a strong battery stretched across her path. Her teeth and nails were ripped off. The radio collar that enabled to follow her movements has disappeared. The body is kept in a freezer. The autopsy will be practiced in conformity with NTCA protocol (Natural Tiger Conservation Authority).

Good news in June. The 3 poachers who killed the 4 year old tiger have been arrested according to a communiqué from the Madhya Pradesh State forest services. The radio collar was found broken about 1 km away from where the trap was. The electrical technique is frequent in the area. During the night from the 25 to 26 of December 2012, a 2.75 m long tiger had gotten tangled in a wire of the same voltage (11 kilowatts). 3 weeks before, another tiger had been caught in the same way.

Other Bengal tigers had been electrocuted over the same time period in neighboring districts Katni and Kathotia. After this slaughter, the director of the forests administration has been removed.

2 forest agents wounded during the attempted arrest of leopard skin traffickers

Pathanamthitta, State of Kerala, India

June 4, 2014

The 2 officers were wounded and their car damaged after the attempted arrest of 2 traffickers in possession of a leopard skin.

Conviction for illegal possession of a leopard skin

Pithoragarh, State of Uttarakhand, India

June 2014

The 2 people arrested in June 2011 holding a leopard skin were sentenced to 3 years of prison without remission and 20,000 rupees fine, equivalent to 339 US\$.



Court hearing for slaughter and consumption of tigers

Qinzhou, Region of Guangxi, China

June 5, 2014

A Chinese tycoon who supervised tiger electrocutions followed by their dismemberment, evisceration and sale of the meat, blood and other by-products has pleaded guilty at his first court hearing before the People's Tribunal in Qinzhou. Mr. Xu admitted to being responsible for the death of 3 tigers during the first few months of the year. His lawyers speaking for him, he alleged being virtually addicted to tiger blood and penis. Mr. Xu had been caught red handed during a "tiger festival" along with 14 other guests all part of financial high society in the Guandxi region. Police had interrupted the feast.

Tiger festivals were organized in the town of Leizhou and around for about 10 years by a 54 year old man, Chen Moufei (see "On the Trail" n°4, p.58). Mr. Xu is an important businessman at the head of an investment fund that runs several hotels and other properties in China and abroad. According to new law that assimilates consumption of protected species to trafficking, this Mr. Xu could be sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. Unless... To be continued.

Seizure of 3 live baby tigers and one leopard carcass (31.5 kg)

District of Pathiu, Province of Chumphon, Thailand

June 6, 2014



On The Trail # 5. Robin des Bois

3 baby tigers and the body of a leopard were hidden under a blanket and some fruit inside the pick-up truck driven by Sumonta Tembaeb, 55 years old. The live and the dead could have been sold for 1 million baht meaning 30,000 US\$ on the Thai market. The driver said she was recruited by "a foreigner" to transport the animals. She would have been paid 10,000 baht that is more than 3064 US\$. The itinerary is a dotted line. At least 200 km. The car was coming from the south, maybe from Malaysia.

Seizure of a clouded leopard's skin, 110 bones and 1.5 kg of teeth (*Neofelis nebulosa*, A. I)

Nepal

June 10, 2014

The 2 associates from the same neighborhood made a good team. One transported the skin, the other the complete skeleton of the ex-clouded leopard captured in the wild or taken from an illegal breeding farm, unless it was from a corrupted zoo.



© Frank Mouters



Ram B. Tamang

Laxman Bal

© Sawen



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REPEATED OFFENCE

Arrest of the poacher of at least 30 tigers Gurgaon, State of Haryana, India June 10, 2014

A regular to whom at least 30 tiger killings can be claimed has been arrested. Bheema Bavari had managed to escape mid-May from an attempt to arrest him. The Forest conservation director in Uttarakhand speaks of a great victory. "Our investigation services are doing excellent work and the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) helped us in this mammoth task".

Time will tell if the arrest of Bheema Bavaria preceded by that of the younger brother of Sansar Chand will be enough to weaken poaching of tigers and other felines in the Indian State. The Bavarias and the Bahelias are numerous, well organized and withhold ancient culture. They also have a good flair for business.

Seizure of a leopard skin

Katmandu, Central Development Region, Nepal June 2014

There were 4 of them on the leopard skin measuring 1.82 m long and 42 cm wide. They were arrested 15 km away from Katmandu.

Rescue of 2 Indochinese tigers (*Panthera tigris corbetti*, Appendix I)

Quỳnh Lưu District, Nghe An Province, Vietnam June 13, 2014

A police pursuit at night of a suspicious looking truck ended with an unexpected and incredible event. To block the police, the passengers of the truck threw out 2 live tigers, a male weighing 90kg and a female 75 kg. The animals were picked up off the asphalt of the National Highway 1, unconscious with open wounds to the chest and head. The truck made a getaway.



The tigers that had been anesthetized by the traffickers were immediately taken to the Pu Mat National Park in the neighboring district. 5 hours later the tigers woke up and only started to eat after 4 days. If these 2 tigers are wild animals and were captured by poachers, they alone account for 1/10th of the population of tigers in Vietnam which is believed to be no more than 20. There might even be less. In Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet-

nam and China, Indochinese tigers are critically endangered. The 2 miraculously saved tigers could also come from illegal breeding. However, their temporary guardians have noticed over time that they are shy and reluctant to approach humans.



Pu Mat National Park is not equipped to be used as a transit area or to prepare the tigers to be released into their natural habitat. All relevant authorities in Vietnam are urgently looking for a suitable solution and appropriate accommodation. In the meantime, they are in a cage feeding on meat and live chickens.

The event took place in central Vietnam. The truck was heading north.

Education for Nature Vietnam has counted nearly 300 violations of regulatory protection of tigers between 2006 and 2013. These include 120 incidents of advertising and selling tiger bone TCM, teeth, claws, and byproducts, and 55 illegal possession cases. There were also cases of partial or whole skeletons and frozen tigers.

Court hearing for tiger poaching Nagpur, State of Maharashtra, India June 17, 2014

The duo is accused of killing a tiger in the Melghat Reserve in June 2013. They were turned in by 2 accomplices. During the first trial, their request for bail was refused. In appeal, it was accepted because of breaches in the procedure.

The 2 applicants must pay Rs. 25.000 in bail, that is 415 US\$. The Court decision specifies that the 2 men must communicate to the court their addresses and telephone numbers, both the home and cell phone numbers.

The decision of the High Court could possibly become jurisprudence. It goes against the severity expected and hoped by police services, the Maharashtra State Forest department and NGOs for the protection of local fauna.

FAMILY AFFAIR

Conviction for tiger poaching Amravati municipality, Maharashtra, India June 18, 2014



In India, the Tiger mafia network is definitely caught in the net of justice. "On the Trail" regularly features police progress and the poaching decreasing. 45 people were arrested in less than a year and release on bail is increasingly rare.

3 poachers have just been sentenced to 5 years in prison for killing a female tiger in March 2013. Formal DNA evidence was provided by the Centre for Cellular & Molecular Biology (CCMB) in Hyderabad. DNA samples from the tiger meat and blood from the wild beast, taken at the scene of the crime, matched traces under the poachers' finger nails.

Seizure of a leopard skin and leopard parts Kathmandu, Central Development Region, Nepal June 2014

A woman and 2 men were found in a rental room in Baafal, in the neighborhood of Kathmandu with the skin and other parts of a leopard. The remains were under the bed, packed in a bag. The 3 suspects are kept in custody for a week while waiting for investigations to be pursued.

EUROPE

Seizure of 4 lions in a circus Fléron, Province of Liège, Belgium May 19, 2014

First seizure of lions since the introduction on 10 March of a law prohibiting the exploitation of wild animals in circuses.

At the end of the first inspection, the Belgian veterinary services had notified the director of a "French Canadian" circus the ban on using the 4 lions in the show and had found that housing environment and conditions of the beasts did not comply with the animal welfare requirements.



2 months later, no solution or improvement having been proposed by Mr. Simon Dubois, owner of the circus, the lions were seized and provisionally staying at Natuurhulpcentrum, a wild animal shelter, at Opglabbeek. Simon Dubois said that he was about to sell the 4 lions to a "French buyer" and is attempting an urgent plea to court to retrieve the animals. The Andibel association, representing the interests of businesses working with animals as well as circuses, has already filed 4 similar appeals before the State Council and the Constitutional Court.

Seizure of tiger claws and teeth Sheffield, England, United Kingdom June 9, 2014

The young women would sell tiger claws and teeth on the Internet. She was let out on bail pending further investigation.

"Tiger parts" were found during the search of her home.

Good News

Release of 5 Amur tigers (*Panthera tigris altaica*, Appendix I)

June 2014

Russia

Borya, Kuzia, Ilona, Svetlaya and Ustin left for the Taiga where they came from. They had been taken in as orphans, victims of the poaching of their mother. Hopefully the 5 will soon lose the nicknames given to them during their semi-captivity and reinforce longlastingly the declining population of Amur tigers. The good fairies watching over the last Siberian tigers are the Centre for Rehabilitation and Reintroduction of tigers in Alexeyevka, the tiger group at IUCN and ... Vladimir Putin.



Bears

ASIA

Seizure of a sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I)

Cambodia

April 2014

Preventing a bear from being cooked in a soup or used in an Asian grandmother's pharmacy to cure rheumatism is commendable especially healed and released into his natural environment after captivity. The bear from Cambodia was unlucky to be supposedly saved by an Australian "businessman" and put in a zoo. Thanks to a new smart phone application launched by Traffic, the poor bear finds himself saddled with the ridiculous nicknames Mr. Hobbs and in the clutches of Canberra Zoo.

Seizure of a live sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I) and conviction

Johor Bahru, State of Johor, Malaysia

May 13, 2014

The sun bear was kept in a cage. Police set up a stake out in front of the workshop for a week. In the end, they interrogated 5 people familiar with the area. A few days later, the car washer was arrested for illegal possession of a protected animal, offence for which he could face up to 100,000 RM fine, e.i. 31,000 US\$ or 3 years imprisonment. For not having paid the fine, Mohd Roshdam Bilal remained in jail. The judge specified that the sentence would run from the time he was arrested.



The delicious little bear was almost cooked. Investigations confirmed that a bowl of bear paw soup is sold in Malaysian restaurants between 400 RM and 900 US\$, that is 124 and 279 US\$.

The Sun bear is now only occasionally found in parts of continental South-East Asia from West Bangladesh and North-East India to the North of Yunnan Province in China. They are also still present in the South and East of Sumatra and in Borneo. They have been eliminated from several regions. For lack of data, precise population counts do not exist.

Arrest for trafficking in bear bile (family Ursidae, Appendix I or II)

Ha Long, Province of Quang Ninh and Chi Linh District, Province of Hai Duong, Vietnam

May 30, 2014

The 2 traffickers were being searched for by Interpol

and South Korean Justice. They made money off of bear bile. They got together with illegal breeding farms of bears from Vietnam to sell the bile in vials to South Korean tourists. Bile is said to heal about anything, particularly rheumatism. It is drawn in inhumane and inanimal conditions from captive bears taken from the forests. The men were arrested by the Narcotics Bureau of the Hanoi police force.

Arrest of sloth bear poachers (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I)

Rajnandgaon Forest, State of Chhattisgarh, India

June 1, 2014

In central India, a pair of poachers killed one sloth bear and dismembered him in the forest to sell the gallbladder and 4 paws on the black market. The illicit trade was stopped. The 2 were arrested.

EUROPE

Poaching of 2 polar bears (*Ursus maritimus*, Appendix II)

Vaygach Island, Arkhangelsk Oblast, Russia. Arctic

Late April or early May 2014

FSB agents found the body of a recently killed polar bear in an in the Fedorov discarded weather station. 2 hours later, a helicopter located another dead polar bear on ice.

Upon examining of the bodies and 2 scenes, the agents found that poachers used snowmobiles to chase the bears and killed them with bullets shot to their chests and heads.

The discoveries were made on Vaigach Island near Novaya Zemlya.

The international trade of live polar bears or their fur is still permitted under certain conditions.

In Bangkok in March 2013, polar bear's listing on Appendix I of CITES was rejected. All international trade could have been banned this year had it passed. This new must is popular among the wealthy high-class Chinese: stuffed bears for interior design and livelihood. One costs 600,000 yuan or nearly 100,000 US\$. If the client is not rich enough, he could dial down to an arctic fox for 80,000 yuan (13,000 US\$). In France a mounted white bear sells 20,000 euros, adults for 40,000 euros and the skin for 18,000 euros.



Inspection of hunter's sheds on the Island of Vaygach

Rhinoceroses

The white rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* and black rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* ranging in Africa are listed in Appendix I, except for the white rhinoceros populations of Swaziland and South Africa which are listed in Appendix II for trade of live animals and hunting trophies.

The 3 Asian rhinoceros species are in Appendix I: *Rhinoceros unicornis*, *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*, *Rhinoceros sondaicus*.

555 rhinoceros killed
in South Africa, Namibia, Kenya,
Nepal and India
since the 1st January 2014



New threat:

Social networks and blogs with geotagged photos give poachers additional information about the location of the rhinoceros and other targeted animals. It is therefore necessary to disable the geotagging function of your devices and not provide the location and date of the shooting.

AFRICA

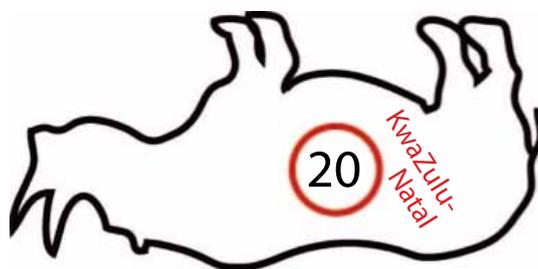
Poaching of 2 white rhinos
Windhoek, Region of Khomas, Namibia
April 1, 2014



Namibia's horns ache. The event happened after the big news of attempting to export to China 14 rhino horns. 2 white rhinoceros who had lived on a farm for a long time, after their mother's death or disappearance, were killed by bullets. The bodies were found 100m away from each other, quite far from the main farm. Poachers were careful enough to lure their victims away. The workers and residents of the farm did not hear the gunshots.

Poaching of a rhinoceros
Hluhluwe Imfolozi Park, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
April 1, 2014

One rhinoceros in the 360 km² park. "We're happy that in this particular incident we could recover the horns of the rhino," said the spokesman of the Department of Environmental Affairs. What will happen to them? 20 rhinos have died since the beginning of the year in the province..



Arrest of 3 person suspected of rhino poaching
Tembe Elephant Park, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
April 1, 2014

3 new candidates for dehorning rhinos were stopped on their way inside the Tembe Park, unless their targets were elephants and their teeth.

Poaching of a black rhino
Nakuru National Park, County of Nakuru, Kenya
April 2, 2014

Chaos at the national park of Lake Nakuru, one of the jewels of Kenya with 300 bird species and UNESCO recognition. The KWS staff confirmed that a black rhinoceros had just been shot while the Park management denies the event. A third version claims that it is a buffalo that was shot and not a black rhino. At the national park, park rangers admitted quietly that it is a rhinoceros, and that they were asked to not speak about it.

Already, in "On the Trail" version 4, there are accounts of 6 rhinos poaching in Nakuru National Park.

Poaching of a rhinoceros
ISimangaliso Wetland Park, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
April 2, 2014

Dead for nothing. The white rhinoceros was riddled with bullets but poachers did not have time to dehorn him.

Until April 3, there have been 243 violent deaths of rhinos in South Africa.



**Arrest of 2 men suspected of attempted rhino poaching
Gravelotte, Limpopo Province, South Africa
April 5, 2014**

A car, 3 AM. Close to the Kruger Park. A machete, an ax, ammunitions. 2 men. A large caliber rifle. There were 2 suspects. The National Environmental Biodiversity Act includes conspiracy to commit a crime of rhino poaching.

**Arrest of 2 employees of the Kruger Park suspected of rhino poaching
South Africa
April 7, 2014**

Is something rotten in Kruger Park? A tour guide and a water controller are suspected of rhino poaching. They were arrested at their homes. A first hearing was held before the court of White River. They remain in custody. South African National Park said in a statement that the 2 individuals were not part of the Ranger Corp.

**Poaching of 4 rhinoceros
In a private reserve in Mogwadi / Mara, Province of Limpopo, South Africa
April 2014**

4 rhino carcasses were found during the Easter weekend, including that of a 3-month-old baby lying next to its mother. The owners of the private farm wish to remain anonymous. They fear negative consequences for their lodging and safari tourism business. We only know that poaching series was several months ago and it took place in the north of South Africa in the region of Mogwadi / Mara. All horns disappeared.

**Arrest of 2 men suspected of rhinoceros poaching
Kruger National Park, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa
April 10, 2014**

The 2 suspects were near the Crocodile Bridge. Probably some guys from Zimbabwe. They apparently moved away from Park empty handed with a G3 rifle with a silencer and a good stock of ammunition.

"The public can report incidents of poaching and give tip-offs to the anonymous tip-off lines 0800 205 005, 08600 10111 or Crime Line on 32211."



Type G3 rifle

**Arrest of a person suspected of rhino poaching
Kruger National Park, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa
April 11, 2014**

Ammunition, poaching equipment, a .458 rifle, 2 suspects. One managed to escape in the area of Kingfisherspruit.



.458 rifle

**Arrest of a person suspected of rhino poaching
Kruger National Park, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa
April 12, 2014**

Tshokwane rangers apprehended 2 suspects. One managed to escape to Mozambique. The other was left behind with a 375 rifle, ammunition, and basic tools for dehorning.

**Arrest of 2 men suspected of rhinoceros poaching
Kruger National Park, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa
April 13, 2014**

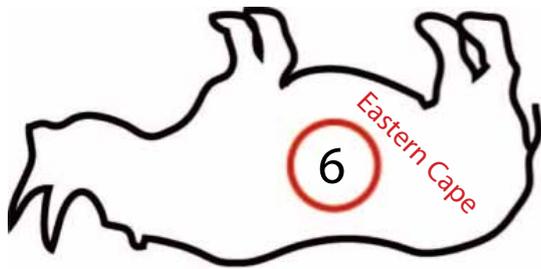
At Stolsnek, a group of 5 was spotted. 3 fled. 2 were arrested with the help of the canine unit and a helicopter.

April 15 : full moon



**Poaching of 3 rhinoceros
Pumba Reserve, Province of Eastern Cape, South Africa
April 2014**

All the way south in South Africa, 500 km from Cape Town, 3 rhinoceroses are slaughtered. There have been 6 victims since the beginning of the year.



**Poaching of one rhinoceros
Somkhanda Reserve, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
April 2014**

The Somkhanda Reserve is within the 320 km² territory managed by the Gumbi community. Somkhanda is the name of one of the founders of the community. The reserve is the pilot project of the "South African Green Economy Modeling". It employs 75 people, all recruited from the community. Some of them work on the maintenance of fences and the chief of the reserve himself organizes his teams of guard for patrolling. The Gumbi rangers work in silence with whistles, hand and voice signals. Nevertheless, one of the few white rhinos introduced into the reserve was poached and his horns were stolen.

**Court hearing for rhino poaching
Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa
April 15, 2014**

It was September 10, 2010. The soldier in uniform was inside the fence of Kruger Park. His accomplice was outside. The scene remains engraved in the memory of a ranger who testified anonymously. It was 3:45am a night of full moon. One of the rangers opened fire in self-defense according to him. The soldier-poacher was wounded in the shoulder. The 2 accomplices claimed to be motivated by peaceful intentions. They were looking for the lost cattle and gathered fodder. 2 rhino horns were found nearby, and the soldier was armed.

During the trial, 4 years after the event, the prosecutor of Nelspruit announced that according to the inquiry, the 2 suspects could be responsible for the poaching of 6 additional rhinos. The trial was adjourned to September 8 of this year.

**Poaching of a black rhino
Palmwag concession, Kunene Region, Namibia
April 16, 2014**

Things are getting rough for rhinos in Namibia. Several poachers struck a black rhino with 5 bullets. The Palmwag Reserve is home to the largest population of black rhino in Africa. The horns are gone. In response to the resisting accusations, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) has issued a statement. "It is important to note that the Government of Namibia is not and will never be secretive about the cases of illegal killing of wildlife and illicit trade in wildlife products." MET states that investigations are underway and that some discretion is required

as long as they have not been successful and that the suspects are not brought before the courts. The Palmwag reserve covers 4500 km² of land.

**Court appearance for rhinoceros poaching
Nelspruit, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa**

April 17, 2014

He had just shot a rhino and cut one horn while he was still alive. Put in custody, he will be judged by the law before the end of May. His accomplice managed to flee to of Mozambique.

Kruger Park rangers deliberately killed the dying rhino to end his suffering.

**Arrest of 2 men suspected of attempted rhino poaching
Letsitele, Province of Limpopo, South Africa**

April 19, 2014

2 young people between the ages of 22 and 24 years were stopped in their car. The police had blocked all the roads around Letsitele after being informed of an attempted attack on the rhinoceros. On the car, they found the usual arsenal without license, ax, knives, and ammunition.

The 2 suspects appeared herewith the first time before the Court of Tzaneen. They were released on bail of 2000 R each or 200 US\$. The trial is expected to take place in May.

**Poaching of one rhinoceros
Dinokeng Reserve, Province of Gauteng, South Africa**

April 2014

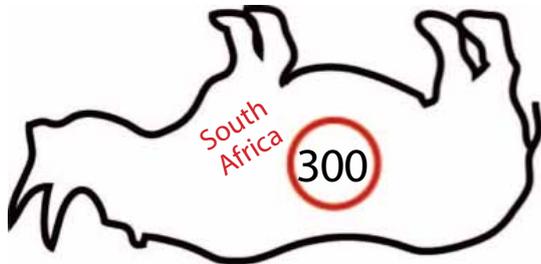
The Dinokeng Reserve is in the large suburb of Pretoria. An expressway and a slum border its 200 km² area of land. The Big Five (lion, leopard, buffalo, elephant, rhino) live alongside the squatters. Dinokeng is also an area of poverty and exclusion. A rhino had just been shot and dehorned. In Vietnam, a horn can be worth up to 100,000 US\$.

It's been a year since the Park management decided to inject some indelible and toxic pink dye into the horns, a substance used to get rid off ticks on horses and sheep. Those who consume the horn powder will fall ill and pink dye is detectable by customs scanners and border police.



This remarkable and costly operation was implemented thanks to private sponsors. It was presented as a deterrent precaution. Since the opening of the park in 2011, no rhino poaching had been found. The injection requires anesthesia for the animals.

At the end of April, the overall rhino death toll since the beginning of 2014 reached 300 for all of South Africa.



**Theft of 112 pieces of rhino horns
Mpumalanga Province, South Africa
April 20, 2014**

The hold-up of the century. 15 million US\$ according to the South African press. The bank was poorly protected. The burglars took advantage of the weekend to go through a window and break into 2 safes, which obviously was not safe enough. They left with 112 rhino horns. Total weight 80.135 kg. The spokesperson of Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency or MTPA's (where the break-in took place) confirmed that the stolen horns came from seizures in the neighboring province of KwaZulu-Natal. "Some of the pieces of rhino horns on the MTPA premises were micro-chipped, DNA-sampled and photographed according to the National Norms and Standards" "The pieces taken were kept in our storage for purposes of registering them, record keeping and later move them to another secure location where a bulk of stock is kept." But things are somewhat messy. Other sources say that the missing horns had been as a precaution voluntarily cut from live rhinos to prevent poaching.

3 suspects were arrested in June. They are not staff members of the MTPA. Their contradictory statements show a good knowledge of poaching. A trip to Mozambique the next day of the horn theft poses hints of their responsibility. A jackpot of 130,000 R (12,500 US\$) was found buried near the latrines of a suspect's sisters home. "It is my savings since 2001." The same suspect confessed to the court of Nelspruit that he was an informant to rangers on the poachers' incursions inside the Kruger Park. Whatever the result of the investigation is, the case casts confusion and doubt on the rigor of the Province and the federal government in the management of the Rhinoceros file.

**2 black rhino poaching
Palmwag concession, Kunene Region, Namibia
May 2014**

Palmwag returns to the front stage. 2 carcasses were near a place in which a black rhino was shot in April. The horns and poachers have vanished.

Results so far: 6

In 2013, the overall balance was 4 rhinos slaughtered.



**Poaching a white rhino
Hluhluwe Imfolozi Park, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
May 2014**

2 poachers died. Self-defense. The white rhino had just been killed. "The guards had no choice but to protect themselves." The ax, the gun and the 2 horns were seized.

**Poaching of a white rhino
Kwaggashoek Reserve, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
May 3, 2014**

-1

**Crossfire between guards and rhino poachers
Zululand Rhino Reserve, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
May 10, 2014**

On the same day that took place the auctioning of live rhinos organized by Ezemvolvo, guards of the Zululand reserve opened fire on 3 rhino poachers. The human toll of the altercation has not been officially disclosed. There could be casualties on both sides. The death count on the rhino side is also uncertain.

**Arrest of 3 suspected rhino poachers
Kruger National Park, South Africa
May 10 and 11, 2014**

A busy weekend in Kruger Park. 5 suspected poachers were intercepted. Ammunition, rifle caliber 416, another 458 weapons were seized. A suspect was injured. 2 others managed to escape towards Mozambique.



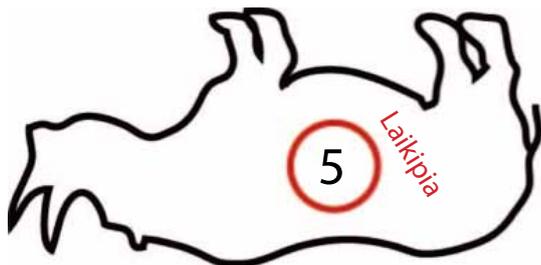
© SANParks

Discovery of 2 rhino carcasses
Tembe Elephant Park, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
May 2014

Tembe, the Big Five Park (elephant, lion, leopard, buffalo, rhinoceros). There are 2 less.

Poaching of rhinos
Oi Jogi Ranch, Laikipia County, Kenya
May 13, 2014

Thermal cameras, electric fences, radio collars. Nothing works. This is the fifth rhino since the beginning of the year. Poachers are very familiar with guards and rhinos little ways.



376 rhinos killed to this day in 2014 in South Africa, with 245 in the Kruger Park. 106 suspected poachers were arrested.



Auction 36 live rhinos
Durban, South Africa
May 14, 2014

Strengthening the protection of national parks pushes the poaching mafia to refer to private reserves whose main activity is to provide naturalists and tourists the vision of wildlife in a peaceful and unspoiled ecosystem. The director of Ezemvolo is concerned about this new trend. Ezemvolo "on nature" in Zulu language, is a government organization. Its objective is to develop ecotourism and local jobs through the maintenance and development of

wildlife and to ensure distribution of animals in national parks and private reserves. To this end, Ezemvolo has auctioned 36 rhino to reserve managers in Zululand, the Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga. The 36 pachyderms were sold for about U.S. \$ 1 million, including horns so to speak. "I urge all those who will buy rhino do their utmost to protect them," solemnly declared Bandile Mkhize at the opening of the auction.

Other animals were offered for sale. Ezemvolo thus conforming to naturalists' advice wishes to avoid degradation of ecosystems overpopulating species and improve the genetic heritage of each protected public or private area.

According to Ezemvolo, profits from the auctioning (26 since the early 90s) are devoted for the most part to the environmental management of parks of which Ezemvolo has responsibility.

Arrest of a poacher
uMkhuze Game Reserve, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
May 14, 2014



Times are tough. Night clashes are becoming more violent between poachers and anti-poaching patrols. A poacher was mortally wounded. 2 others fled. A big gun with silencer was found. A helicopter flew over the reserve 360 km², more than 3 times the size of the city of Paris (105.4 km²), in search of a possible rhino victim of the trio before contact with the guards.

Conviction for poaching a rhino
Mtubatuba, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa
May 16, 2014



The Mozambique poacher held in South Africa has made amends. "What I have done is illegal and goes in the wrong direction." The charges against his 2 companions were not considered sufficient by the judges. Antonio Sendes Langa was sentenced to 8 years in prison for poaching a rhino in Imfolozi Park managed by Ezemvolo. In April, a rhinoceros had already been poached in the park. 37 to this day in KwaZuluNatal.



3 white rhino poaching

Tala Private Game Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

May 17, 2014

2 rhinos aged 30 and 20 years will be buried on Monday, May 19. A small third whose horn had been cut while he was alive is being healed. He might get better. The 3 animals were hit by anesthetic-guns, a veterinary tool normally used to sedate wild animals before surgery and that turns into a weapon if doses or injected products are lethal. The sale of anesthetic-guns is free. They are not considered weapons and their possession does not involve permits. They are easy to carry but the presence in the team of poachers or connivance of a veterinarian or medical professional is strongly suspected. Targeted rhinos or elephants weigh several tons and simply lying on one side for several hours or days can cause fatal complications unrelated to the toxicity of injected products.



Rhino poaching 2

Private Reserve, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

May 2014

-2.

Present death toll: 385 in South Africa



Seizure of a pair of rhino horns

Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

May 20, 2014

The exchange of fire took place near Crocodile Bridge in the Kruger Park. A poacher escaped. 2 horns and a firearm were recovered.

Poaching of 2 white rhinos

Hluhluwe Imfolozi Park, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

May 2014

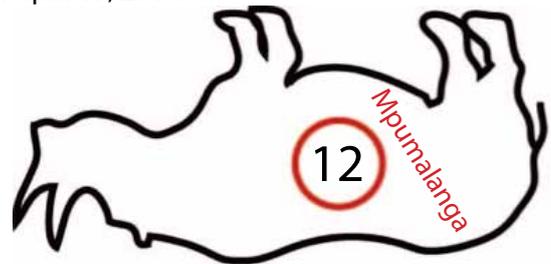
The female and the male had been dead and dehorned for several days.

Arrest of 4 poachers

Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

May 22, 2014

Is the quartet a virtuoso in rhino slaughter? It could be involved in the dehorning of the rhino still alive on April 17, 2014.



Court appearance for possession and illegal trade of 14 rhino horns and a leopard skin (*Panthera pardus pardus*)

Katutura, Khomas Region, Namibia

May 22, 2014

Their request for release on bail was denied. 3 Chinese citizens who had tried to export no less than 14 rhino horns and a leopard skin at the end of March (see "On the Trail" No. 4 p. 66) remain behind bars. DNA tests showed that the profiles of the horns were on the Rhino DNA Index System (RhODIS) database which indicated that all the rhino horns were from the region. During the hearing, the 3 defendants told tall tales and gave implausible explanations. They claimed that they hardly knew each other. They also claimed to have come to Namibia to sightsee or to explore future business in the construction sector. One of them said that if he was caught carrying a suitcase with horns, it was to help a fellow citizen. The suitcase was very heavy. A Chinese citizen living in Zambia had given 3000 US\$ to Li Zhibing to deliver 2 bags to China, a simple service. He did not know what was inside. He did not have the keys.



After hearing the accused and their lawyers the judge said he was convinced that despite their denials, the defendants knew each other and acted together, they took the same flight Beijing/South Africa, had spent 2 days together in Zambia, had crossed the border post Wenela in the Zambezi region, Namibia, together and had stayed together in Namibia. Noting also that someone had paid the airfare and the hotel costs for the 3 accused, the judge said there was no doubt about the involvement in the attempted export of other branches of the illegal. He felt that if the trio were released on bail there was no guarantee that they would stay in Namibia awaiting their trial which will be held in August.

The transfer of the accused to the Windhoek Central Prison was ordered. The 3 accused complain about prison conditions, aggressions by other prisoners in the cells at the central police station in Windhoek. Beware of an escape.

**Poaching of a rhino
Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province,
South Africa
May 27, 2014**

South African authorities are eager to accuse Mozambicans of having a strong presence in the ranks of rhino poachers in the Kruger Park. This incident shows that the rangers or former rangers and park police officers are not above suspicion.

The official police van concealed a large caliber rifle with silencer, cartridges and typical poaching equipment. The 2 policemen could not give a plausible explanation. They were arrested with the former ranger who accompanied them. The vehicle was stopped and the search was carried out by HAWKS, a special body for the fight against environmental crime in cooperation with the direction of the Kruger Park. The interception took place inside the Park not far from the place where had been discovered the body of a black rhino.

**Arrest of 5 poachers
Gravelotte, Limpopo Province, South Africa
May 28, 2014**

5 suspects were going aboard a Volkswagen Polo to the private reserve of Letsitele. The intention to poach pachyderms is supported by the discovery in the vehicle of a Sako 375 caliber rifle with silencer, a butcher knife, an ax, cartridges.

2 men suspected of poaching had been arrested in April 2014 in the reserve.

419 so far in South Africa. And still going up!



Sako 375

**Arrest of 3 suspected rhino poachers
Kruger National Park, South Africa
May 2014**

Elements of the 1st Parachute Battalion have stepped in after rangers discovered traces of poachers inside the Kruger Park. 3 suspects were finally "caught" and a fourth was shot.

**Seizure of 3 rhino horns
Frontier Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa and Mozambique
May 2014**

Soldiers from the 10th Infantry Battalion were on patrol along the border between KwaZulu-Natal and Mozambique. They spotted and intercepted 3 men carrying 3 rhino horns. The trio fled running and dropping 3 horns that were handed over to the police Manguzi.

**Arrest of 4 people suspected of poaching
Zulu Nyala Game Lodge, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
June 3, 2014**

The 4 suspects accused of rhino poaching were arrested near the Reserve with a firearm and a silencer, ammunition and 3 axes. They hadn't had the time to use them. Yet in South Africa, to have the intention, the means and to be in position of poaching rhinos is assimilated to poaching. The gang of 4 is aged 18 to 30. They had started to cut open the fence. One of the accused is the half-brother of the director of Imfolozi, the largest reserve for protected animals in KwaZulu-Natal. He apparently put forward this family relationship at the time of arrest in an attempt to escape it. The 3 other accused are from Mozambique.

**Seizure of 2 rhino horns
Alldays Animal Farm, Province of Limpopo, South Africa
June 6, 2014**

The 2 presumed rhino poachers requested to be let out on bail. They face charges for illegal possession of firearms, ammunition, poaching, possession of rhino horns and breaking and entering through the fence of the Alldays private reserve. Their request was refused.

Poaching of a black rhino

Kenya

June 2014

10 gunshots in the dark. At noon, the body of the female rhino was found. Her baby managed to escape and was filmed the next day by a camera set up in the park. All night and until morning, 22 rangers from KWS were on the alert to catch the poachers during their retreat. In vain.



Arrest of 3 poachers

Polokwane, Province of Limpopo, South Africa

June 13, 2014

The 3 suspects were equipped with the essential tool kit: large caliber rifles, axes and saws. They were marauding around Vaalwater. Investigators are searching for ties with previous cases. Profiling of the 3 is being done. They were refused bail.



Fusil calibre 416

Death of one poacher

Kruger National Park, Province of Limpopo, South Africa

June 2014

Gun play in the Park. Death of a poacher. 2 others escaped. The gang had been chased by rangers for 48 hours. The Kruger National Park covers over 20,000 km².



Seizure of a rhino horn

Atteridgeville, Prov. of Gauteng, South Africa

June 17, 2014

6 o'clock in the morning. One car. One horn. 3 suspects.

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Conviction for poaching one rhino

Naphuno, Province of Limpopo, South Africa

June 23, 2014

Horn by horn, the Hawks, the Kruger Park criminal police unit, had succeeded in tracking down through the network and nabbed the 2 Mathebula brothers aged 49 and 37. They had escaped after crossfire with rangers in the park. 3 accomplices had been killed and a machine gun, 2 hunting rifles and a hand gun had been picked up by their dead bodies and kept as evidence.

The 2 brothers from Mozambique were sentenced to 12 years in prison.

Poaching of 2 black rhinos

Uukwaluudhi Conservation zone, Region of Omusati, Namibia

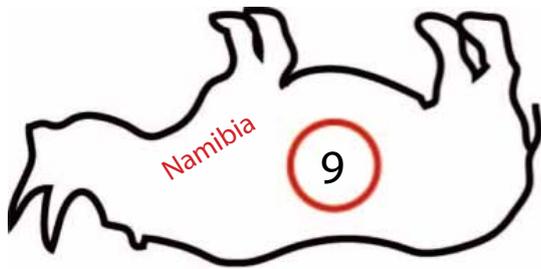
Bodies found on June 26, 2014

The priority wildlife protection zone covers 1437 km². It has quite recently been founded with agreement from the traditional kingdom of Namibia and the present government. Black rhinos were entered to this land. They are part of the traditional natural heritage of the State and local communities benefit from eco-tourism. Unfortunately this optimistic scenario has just been tarnished by a massacre. 2 of the 4 prehistoric herbivores have just been found, their horns removed. The third body was not mutilated. He maybe died of natural causes. A poisoning is not excluded. A fourth rhino was voluntarily put to death by veterinarians. His bullet wounds could not be healed. 3 others who were hit less severely and one who remains unharmed were captured and taken to a new location kept secret.



A black rhino in Uukwaluudhi

Counting of the dead, the agonizing and the survivors was fulfilled by Jaco Muller responsible for Help Our Rhino Now Namibia (HORN Nam). After being warned of the fact that the group of black rhinos had not been seen by anyone for some time, he flew over the area in a ULM. The first attacks occurred apparently some months ago, the last one only a few days ago. At least 9 rhinos have been killed by poachers in the country since the beginning of the year. The eco-tourism dream is becoming a nightmare.



AMERICA

OPERATION CRASH

Conviction of 2 people for smuggling rhinoceros horns

Las Vegas, State of Nevada, USA

April 3, 2014

The sale took place in a Las Vegas palace hotel on March 19, 2014. When the transaction stalled, the sellers were exchanging 2 black rhino for 55,000 US \$. The buyers were agents of the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). 2 sellers, the 63-year-old N. Levine and W. Quan alias Lu, live in California. Levine was the boss of Lu, a big boss with a choice pedigree. In 1989, Levine became involved with Pablo Escobar, head of the Medellin drug cartel. He served as a cocaine distributor in California, a thriving market. Already at that time, drugs and wildlife went hand in hand. The first was hidden in the second. South American traffickers stuffed condoms full of cocaine in boa constrictors who were supposedly transported for the pet market in Florida.

After his first indictment of the last century, Levine had disappeared from the circuits, but the FBI found here and there in safety deposit boxes rented in banks and other secure locations under the name Michael Stark nearly 6 million US\$ in cash. Stark was a pseudonym for Levine.

From 1989 to February 1995 Levine used the name Joel Walmick in Oregon where the cops busted him. He pleaded guilty to cocaine selling and spent 2 years and 8 months in prison.

Almost 20 years later Lu, Levine's sidekick, for some months had been in contact with the USFWS fake buyers.

These 2 arrests are to be credited to the Operation Crash that "On the Trail" has been following step by step from the first issue and has so far led to 17 arrests and 9 convictions including a member of Rathkeale Rovers, and the Chinese art dealers in New York. "Crash" is the English word for a rhinoceros herd. From the United States, the horns were exported to Hong Kong, China and Vietnam. They often came from stuffed rhino heads stolen from museums or acquired at the edge of the law. Taxidermists are good suppliers and it is an email sent by Lu that caught investigators' attention as recounted by the very good National Geographic article. "This is Lu I got the giraffe from you."

The 2 black rhino horns are safe in a vault near Denver (Colorado) together with ivory and other animal preciousities confiscated at the border or in the United States. They will be destroyed under new governmental rules.

OPERATION CRASH

Conviction for rhino horn and ivory trafficking United States

May 2014

OPERATION CRASH

70 months of prison. That is the maximum penalty in the United States for wildlife trafficking. Zhifei Li is at the head of a network that has landed in Asia 4.5 million US\$ worth of rhino horns and ivory sent from the US. Mr. Li was director of the Overseas Treasure Finding in Shandong, a Province in East China bordering the Yellow Sea and the boss of 3 Asian deal seekers who would go about finding the precious raw material on American soil. One of them, Qiang Wang had been sentenced to 36 months imprisonment in December. He was also in charge of packing, camouflaging and securing the group's exports.

Mr. Li, 30 years old, pleaded guilty to 11 charges. He attempted to soften the judges' harshness by telling of his 4-year-old little girl in China who suffers with illness. He was sentenced to 3.5 million US\$ in damages. Identified as early as 2011, Mr. Li was definitely over when he was photographed and filmed while buying a black rhino horn for nearly 60,000 US\$... from an American police officer in a Miami hotel.

OPERATION CRASH

Court appearance for trafficking in rhino horns and objects made of horns and elephant ivory Frisco, State of Texas, United States

June 24, 2014

« I am pleased that the state of Texas is doing its part in Operation Crash and that the suspect is pleading guilty. » « Congratulations to investigators for their work. » These words come from the General Attorney. Qiu, 43 years old, has been an expert in Asian antiques for 7 years. He is also a personal assistant to Zhifei Li who as we know was sentenced in May to 70 months in prison. Qiu met Li in 1989 at an auction. Since then he has been traveling the United States to buy rhino horns and elephant tusks at a good price. He then would take care of their illegal export to Hong Kong. In all 10 kg of horns were packaged and hidden in porcelain vases exported as antiques. Arriving in China, the horns were then transformed into libation cups known to professionals as « Zuo Jiu », that in Mandarin literally means "as if it were old". To drink tiger wine or another drink in a libation cup made of rhino horn or to own one ensures good health and all possible prosperity. Fragments of the horn carved off were ground into powder. Keratin that the horn is made of, the same substance as human fingernails, is supposed to have medicinal and aphrodisiac properties. After transactions were completed, Mr. Li would transfer substantial commissions to Mr. Qiu's bank accounts in the United States and China. A 25 months prison sentence and 150,000 US\$ in fine are requested against him.

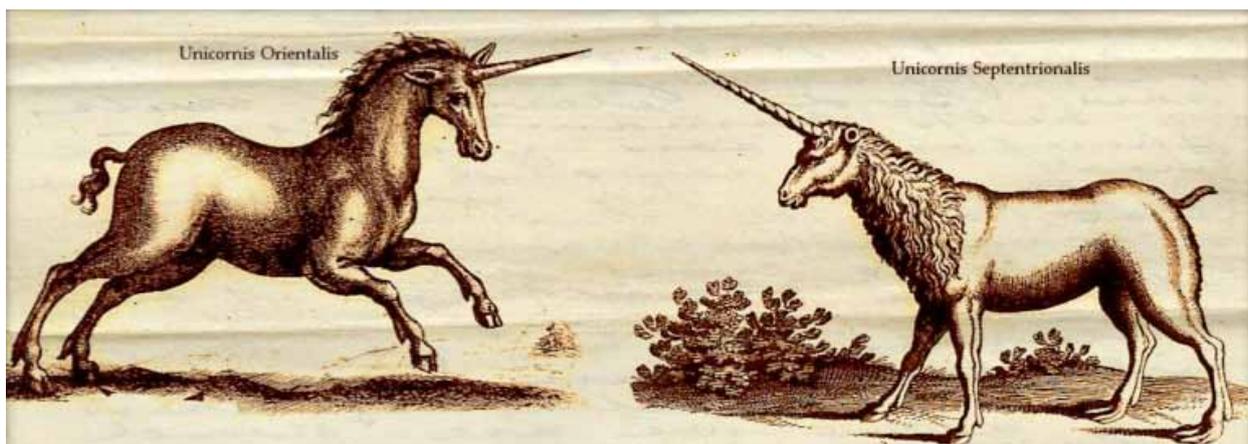
Unicorns Are Real



The Works of M. Ambroise Paré, ... : with figures & portraits both of anatomy and many surgical instruments, & several beasts. Paré, Ambroise (1509?-1590). Edited by Gabriel Buon in Paris in 1575.

Summary: Evidence showed that Portuguese doctors had been in search of “rare and precious things” on the “new lands” for a long time, but never found the unicorns. The “locals” claimed that rhinoceros horns have the same virtues as those of unicorns. It is considered “as a preservative against all poisons.”

Unicorns, mythical animals however described by Aristotle and Pliny the Elder as early as Ancient Greece times, crossed seas and for thousands of years settled in both the West and the East. They were known to be invincible and could cure from any poison. For lack of unicorns, legends settled for rhinoceros horns and showed in the real world in the forms of djambias, Yemen and Middle Eastern daggers and libation cups. A more recent rumour, a distant echo of the unicorn, a Vietnamese dignitary claimed that rhinoceros horn's powder cured cancer, a modern poison.



How are rhinoceros horns useful for rhino ?

- Quarrels and fights between males or between males and females precede mating, especially when the females are accompanied by their suckling offspring feeding. Their horns are part of the arsenal of the rhinoceros. In defence, the genre has developed an exceptionally heavy and thick skin, all the more padded as the species have long and slender horns;
- Horns are visual aids. In Africa, they overlook bush and emerge as an identification tag;
- Horns are dissuasive. The rhinoceros simply needs to show them, or charge up to a few centimetres and stop in front of the buffalo, to intimidate the intruder away. Again, females use this device especially when they are feeding puppies;
- The horns are used to dig ponds, dry riverbeds, and to remove tubers;
- It is well known that the horns are used to guide the young in the right direction.

ASIA

Theft of a rhinoceros horn Jaldapara National Park, State of West Bengal, India

April 2014

Fight between the rhinoceros or poaching. In any case, the horn has disappeared. Is the Jaldapara Natural Park direction trying to divert attention by speculating that the horn of one of the duelers' was broken so violently that it flew to the ground and was buried by the force of the projection and trampling? There is serious doubt. Attacks against rhinos are no news in the forest. The episode of October 2009 is still engraved of many people's minds. A gang had isolated and later shot a rhinoceros. The wounded beast had escaped from the forest and was literally lynched with stones and sticks. Terrified, he ultimately threw himself into a river. He died 2 days later.

REPEATED OFFENSE

Conviction for poaching of a rhinoceros and selling its horn

Nepal

April 12, 2014

"Yes, I did it. I did it for money." The 70-year-old man did not defend himself in front of the court. He also didn't ask for the assistance of a lawyer. In fact, he was indefensible and was sentenced to 13 years in prison and a fine of Rs 100,000 or just over 1000 US\$.

The man is a repeated offender. In 2003, he was arrested for the same offense and sentenced to 15 years in prison. Complaining of severe health problems, he had received a release to India for treatment. His family then quickly produced a death certificate to the Nepalese authorities.

The man who no longer existed was recalled to the realities of human justice when he was denounced by one of his accomplices in the dehorning of a rhinoceros shot dead in Chitwan National Park in 2011.



The resurrected poacher



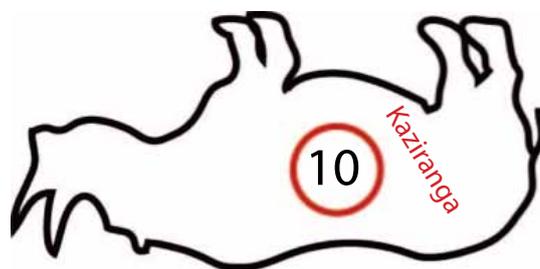
A rhino disguised as a sacred cow (in "Catalogue of anti-poaching methods rhino contemporaries hadn't thought of". It Was Better Before Press. Paris. 2035.)

© Bruno Congar / Robin des Bois

Poaching of a rhinoceros Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India May 2, 2014

And 10 in Kaziranga. 10 since the beginning of the year. The guards found some AK47 cartridges and a rhino carcass in the extreme north of the park. It was a male and his horns were cut.

3 days before, cartridges and AK47 rifle caliber were also found beside a male rhino carcass.



Poaching of a rhinoceros Chitwan National Park, Central Development Region, Nepal May 2, 2014

2013 has been a good year for the few hundreds of rhinos in Chitwan National Park. There is no sign of any of them being killed even though trafficking and transports of valuable animal parts plague the park.

At end of April 2014 a new battalion of Nepalese forces replaced the 1,100 men who had been deployed in the protected zone for the last 3 years. The Chitwan National Park covers 93,000 ha. This is the smuggling trail between India and China. Military recruits were welcomed a few days later by loud gun shots at night west of the Park. When the first soldiers arrived on site a few hours after, they could only ascertain the death of a rhino and the removal of the horn.

Poachers emphasize pressure at the time of military shifts. They want to take advantage of the lack of experience and field knowledge of new troops

dedicated to the protection of the Park. This is the first time that night shots are operated by horn-mercenaries.

The Nepalese government wants to convince the local communities living around parks that living wildlife is more profitable than dead wildlife. Sighting tourism and positive image of a region contribute to the collective economy. Poaching benefits only to those who organize it. Those who practice it take a lot of risks and little money. Despite the government's efforts, more traps are placed in the buffer zone of the park. It is said that there are more and more shotguns in the villages.

**Poaching of a rhinoceros
Kaziranga National Park, Assam, India
May 2, 2014**

This time it is at the north of the Park where a male was killed at dawn. 11 empty cartridges of AK47, the machine gun often used for poaching, were counted at the scene.

**Poaching of a rhinoceros
Kaziranga National Park, Assam, India
May 4, 2014**

Since 1930 poachers had infiltrated the park and from 1950 rhinos were declared endangered at Kaziranga National Park. Today, the fight continues and poachers are getting ahead despite the 24/24h watch of the Indian rangers. The victim, a female, was killed south of Park 5 km from Brahmaputra.

**Death of a poacher
Kaziranga National Park, Assam, India
May 10, 2014**

A clash took place between the park guards and rhino poachers. One of the poachers was killed. His weapon and ammunition were recovered and hopefully put in good hands. Rangers riding on elephant back chased the rest of the gang.



**Poaching of a rhinoceros and death of a poacher
Kaziranga National Park, Assam, India
May 18, 2014**

A poacher and a rhinoceros died today in the park. The first was 27 years old. The second was a female rhinoceros. Her horn was found at the scene with cartridges, an ax, and some food. Poachers had infiltrated the park by boat across the river. The 5 survivors should be hiding in the forest.



**Poaching of a rhinoceros
Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India
May 23, 2014**

Kaziranga has lost its 16th rhinoceros this year. The outlaws were heavily armed. Their faces were hidden by black masks. According to some sources,

political activists of the district of Karbi Anglong organized the attack.



**Death of a poacher
Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India
May 28, 2014**

An exchange of gunfire between guards and poachers happened early in the day. A poacher was killed and another could be wounded.



.303 caliber rifles and ammunitions were recovered. The fatal encounter took place a few kilometers from the national route 37.

**Seizure of 6 rhinoceros horns
Doha International Airport, Qatar
May 2014**

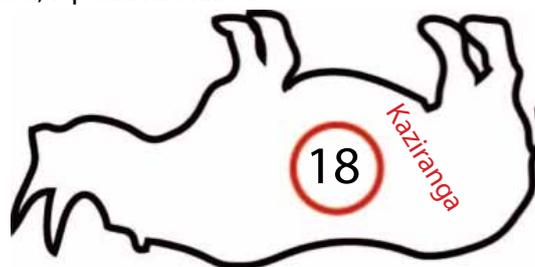
The 6 white rhinoceros horns were found in a Vietnamese citizen's luggage leaving from Mozambique and in transit for Vietnam.

**Poaching of one rhino
Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India
Body found on June 3, 2014**

Dead mid-May. Found beginning of June. The horn is gone. 6 empty cartridges near the body. The victim was a male.

**Death of 2 poachers
Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India
June 4, 2014**

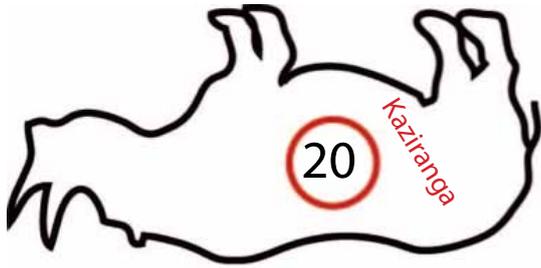
2 poachers killed. Cartridges and firearms on site. Increase in poaching activities in the last 2 years. Since the beginning of the year 18 rhinos killed, 7 poachers killed.



**Seizure of a rhino horn
Madarihat, State of West Bengal, India
June 6, 2014**

2 men were arrested on the road the other night. They were in possession of a horn. Police are trying to verify its authenticity. There are many fake horns on the market.

Death of one poacher
Kaziranga National park, State
of Assam, India
June 11, 2014
 - 20 to this date.
 +1 poacher killed. 8.



Seizure of 4 rhino horns
Ipsala, Region of Marmara, Turkey
June 2014

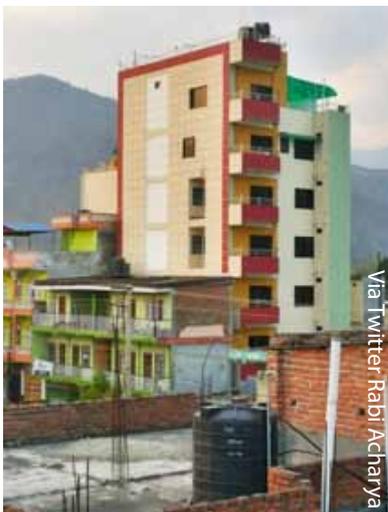
The Greek bus had just entered Turkey. The mobile customs brigade found on board 4 horns worth locally 130,000 Turkish pounds, i.e. 61,000 US\$. The bus driver was taken into custody.



© Douanes turques

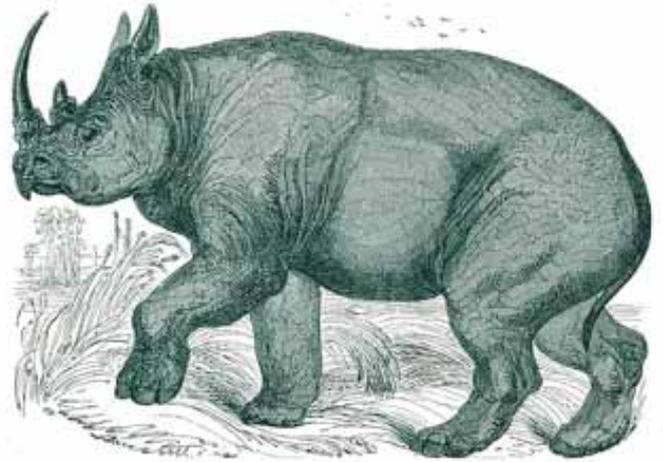
Seizure of a rhino horn
Hetauda, Central Development Region, Nepal
June 24, 2014

A young 17-year-old boy along with 3 others aged 21, 27 and 30 were in a hotel room in Lokpriya. On the table there was a rhino horn that would have changed owners by the end of the transaction. Police believe that the mastermind of this trafficking has not been arrested.

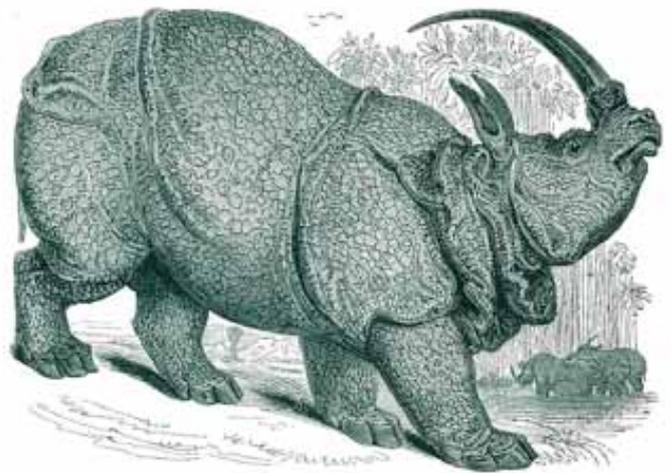


Via Twitter Rabi Acharya

Lokpriya Hotel



RHINOCEROS BICORNE, D'AFRIQUE.



RHINOCEROS DES INDES.

Elephants

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

The seizure of ivory from 1st April to 30th June is equal to 907 elephants
Taking the average weight of 4.5 kg per tusk. The 1748 seized ivory articles of which the weight was not communicated have not been included in the total.

AFRICA

Seizure of 42 pieces of elephant tusks, several kg of ivory, 40 kg of bushmeat and 8 pieces of leopard skins



South Sudan

From January to April 2014

The South Sudan wild animals are war victims. The soldiers and rebels often eat them, and they are destined for international smuggling. The evil dates way back. 3 decades of civil war between the north and south communities have more than decimated the Sudan elephants.

There were more than 100,000 in 1970, but now there are fewer than 5000. South Sudan gained its independence in 2011 but has not yet restored peace. Between 2 and 3 million firearms are in circulation in the new state whose population is estimated at 11.5 million. The number of firearms seems to increase with the proliferation of militias and armed groups in the states of Upper Nile and Jonglei. Lasting 6 months, the conflict opposing the armed forces loyal to President Salva Kiir and those of former Vice President Riek Machar has facilitated and stimulated poaching.

- Several kg of ivory had just been seized in an Egyptian trader's baggage in the international airport of the capital city Djouba.

- From January to April, 30 tusks were confiscated in the suburbs of the capital.

- 12 tusks were seized in the Lantoto National Park that extends to Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The brave Colonel Joseph Taban Zachariah responsible for peace in the Park pleads for elephants, leopards and giraffes. "If this game park is well guarded then the economy could rely on a new

income that would complete that of oil." Mr. Taban believes that the National Ministry of Interior, Wildlife Conservation and Tourism are all responsible for strengthening the monitoring process, discouraging poaching and smuggling. His teams seized 40 guns in the poachers' packages last year. One of the suspects, an amateur in elephants hunting, admitted that he began such activities after the heads of the network promised him more than 25,000 South Sudanese pounds (3,200 US\$) for his involvement in the ivory war. South Sudan is at the center of a red zone where the plunder of wildlife and forests rages. Taban is not the only voice in the wilderness. Among the concerned Ministries' staffs, public statements are clear and unbiased. "Rebels are poaching and the government forces are also poaching because they are all fighting in rural areas and the only available food they can get is wild meat." "If you go from here between Mangala and Bor [just outside of the capital, Juba] you will see a lot of bush meat being sold along the road" Officials say that if South Sudan's variety of wildlife, including elephants, giraffes, buffalos, white-eared-kobs, gazelles, antelopes, reedbucks and lions, were protected ecotourism for the country's wildlife could contribute up to 10 percent of South Sudan's GDP in 10 years time.



Seizure of 2 elephant tusks
Ntoum, Province Estuary, Gabon

April 2, 2014

Applauded one day, implicated the next, the Gabonese DGDI (General Directorate of Documentation and Immigration) is progressing through many stages. After a car accident, one of its agents was found in the middle of an ivory and bush meat trade. Inside the vehicle there were indeed a good quantity of bush meat and 2 elephant tusks.



Seizure of 35 elephant tusks
Likula, Mtwara Region, Tanzania

April 2, 2014

Loot worth nearly 300,000 US\$ were found in the home of a humble villager, the 32-year-old Julius Abeid. 35 elephant tusks. The area is hot. 3 chaps were arrested at the same time with a large amount of ammunition, a spear, 2 knives, food supplies, and poison. The intergenerational suspects (69, 23 and 24) working their way to Lukwila Lumesule Reserve.

One man convicted to 6 months in prison for trafficking 8 pieces of ivory (12kg)

Koulamoutou, Province of Ogooué-Lolo, Gabon

April 3, 2014

6 days after his arrest, the ivory smuggler Abdou Dankassoua appeared before the court. The prosecutor had asked for 6 months in prison and 7 million FCFA fine (€ 10,640). The case was under consideration. On April 3, the accused, a Nigerian citizen, was sentenced to prison as requested. The fine was slightly reduced. The imposed prison term is the maximum penalty possible in Gabon for trafficking in protected animal species. A short time compared to the 5 and 3 years imprisonment in Congo and Cameroon but enormous compared to the 10 days inflicted not long ago on a woman caught red handed dealing in a well organized wildlife traffic in the area. As for Dankassoua, he was caught in the center of the country with 6 elephant tusks in the parking lot of a Petro Gabon service station.



Seizure of 7 tusks
M'Vengue El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba Airport of Franceville, Haut Ogooué Province, Gabon

April 4, 2014

Aftershock in the province of Upper Ogooué. 3

smugglers including Hamadou Djamad alias Abib were caught out at the M'Vengue airfield. Abib is a skilled repeated offender. He had managed to get out of the clutches of justice a year ago. At the time, the evidence of his intentional involvement in the ivory smuggling had not been established. The DGDI and Water and Forest services collaborated together to stop Abib and take his spoils.



Seizure of 3 pieces of ivory
Narok Narok County, Kenya

April 7, 2014

The suspects had rented a house in a residential neighborhood. They escaped through a back door when they realized that the police were at the front door. They left behind 3 tusks with a total weight of 48 kg, and an approximate value of 14,000 US\$. The ivories probably come from poaching in the neighboring Masai Mara game reserve where many hunters roam for elephants, rhinos and hippos.

A taxi driver, an accomplice in the crime, would have transported the tusks by night to Nairobi.

Seizure of 80 kg of ivory
The International Airport of Lilongwe - Kamuzu, Central Province, Malawi

April 7, 2014

A citizen of Malawi, a doctor at Kamuzu Central Hospital, was headed off in the International Airport in the capital city Lilongwe with 80 kg of ivory destined for China. He was sentenced to 6 months imprisonment or MK 1 million fine (2,300 US\$). He chose the second option. In March the government launched a 6-month campaign (Stop Wildlife Crime) with radio, TV, print media and posters in major cities and at border posts.



Seizure of 16 kg of ivory
Koumpentoum, Tambacounda Region, Senegal
April 8, 2014

The axis Bamako / Mali - Dakar / Senegal has become a major route for smuggling cannabis. It is an open secret according to the Senegalese press. It is also a clearance lane to sneak out poached ivory from Mali taken on the last elephants in the Sahel. 16 kg of ivory were discovered by the Senegalese customs in the baggage compartment of an "Africa Star" bus, a Malian company. The shipper of the cargo has not been identified. He had entrusted the "goods" to the bus driver who was to deliver them at the bus station in Dakar.



Seizure of 5 kg of ivory and conviction
Matetsi, north of Matabeleland Province, Zimbabwe
April 12, 2014



Arrested on April 12, the suspect was sentenced on April 14 to 9 years in prison by the Provincial Court of Hwange. The area is notorious for the massive poisoning of elephants and other wildlife by cyanide.

Death of an elephant poacher
Democratic Republic of Congo
April 14, 2014



Morgan is dead. He and his band of 30 total outlaws were ambushed in the DRC army. 2 soldiers and 2 rebels were killed in the operation. Acts of torture, cannibalism, sexual slavery were attributed to this warlord and moreover elephant poacher. Ivory was his main resource. He gained fame by attacking the facilities of the Okapi Natural Reserve northeast of the country in the Ituri forest and murdering forest rangers (See "On the Trail" 2 p. 29). His main motivation would be to get revenge on the anti-poaching team of the reserve. It covers 13,700 km² and is a World Heritage Site. Morgan had nothing to do with UNESCO or okapi. In the attack on the headquarters of the Reserve and its dependencies, Morgan and his cronies had killed 14. Morgan had recently diversified into the attacking of underground gold mines, another form of robbery in an isolated area

where illegal logging also proliferated. Morgan died, and for all that the forest is not saved.



Seizure of 2 elephant tusks (15 kg)
Kapkures, Laikipia County, Kenya
April 16, 2014

The suspect was released on a bail of 11,000 US\$. 2 elephant tusks were found at his home, estimated worth 17,000 US\$ in the East African market.

Seizure of 131 ivory pieces
Nairobi, Nairobi County, Kenya
April 17, 2014

Almost a million dollars in a water tank near the T-Mall commercial center in Nairobi. The 2 suspects are from Kenya and Guinea. They are submitted to special surveillance. They should be presented to the judges in the next few days. 4 accomplices are still at large.

Virunga National Park Director Mugged
On the road between Goma and Rumangabo, Province of Nord-Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo
April 17, 2014

Emmanuel de Mérode, director of the Virunga National Park since 2008 was the victim on April 17 of what strongly resembled an ambush as he was driving towards Rumangabo and the Park offices. He was hit by bullet several times in the chest. He was first taken to the Goma hospital then taken to Nairobi in Kenya. He was able to return to work nearly a month later.



Seizure of 8 pieces of ivory (13 kg)

Kajiado, Kajiado County, Kenya

April 18, 2014

In front of a hotel, the 3 suspects were arrested with 13 kg of ivory. Their car had been followed since the day before following a tip off.

Poaching of one elephant

Ithumba, Kitui County, Kenya

April 2014

We the poachers shot at the elephant 7 times - our arrows were poisoned - we followed it for hours and hours to take off its ivory when it collapsed and started dying. This bastard elephant made us crawl all over the savanna. He tried to reach his herd and get closer to the anti-poachers.

We the veterinarians shot an arrow coated with soporific medicine so that the poor staggering elephant would fall asleep. Then we tried to heal the wounds and remove muscles that were starting to become necrotic. There was enough poison in the flesh of the young elephant to kill several human families. We really believed he would be able to get better. He recovered at first, but a week after the attack he died and we were heartbroken to see our failure.

5 men suspected of poisoning were brought in for questioning.



© David Sheildrick Wildlife Trust/KWS/Barcroft



Discovery of 2 elephant Carcasses

Masai Mara National Reserve, Narok, Kenya

23 April 2014

Due to insufficient fuel reserves, the rangers do not often patrol the Ngama hills. As a result, they discovered 2 elephant carcasses in a state of very advanced decomposition. Bone, hide, skulls. 2 months at least. At 500m apart. The same day, according to villagers. The bones were there, the tusks were gone.



© Elephant Aware Masai Mara

The poaching of 6 elephants

Dawida ranch, Taita Taveta County, Kenya

April 24, 2014



Ruthless, the gunmen riddled the 2 adult females and 4 vulnerable and tuskless young with bullets. They ran off with the 4 tusks of the mothers. Without the least hesitation, judges let the 15 suspects out on bail.

Voices rose to condemn the justice for being too merciful. "The Penal Code is much more severe than before for the poaching of protected animals but justice continues to bail the poachers." "After their release, they will return to hunting."

According to a spokesman, KWS has recruited 600 new guards and they are now in training. Salaries were raised. They will now be paid 500 shillings per day (6 US\$) in sanctuaries for elephants and rhinos and 200 shillings (2 US\$) in any other wildlife reserves.

The new leadership of KWS intends to prohibit, except when in self defense, to shoot at sight at poachers and promote the arrests and gathering evidence to facilitate trials and enforcement of legal penalties.

Seizure of 4 pieces of ivory

Nyahururu, Nyandarua County, Kenya

April 25, 2014

49 kg / 35,000 US\$ on the local market. A traffic control detained the luxurious vehicle occupied by 2 women and a man. Elephant poaching is sharply rising in northwestern Kenya. The area has about 300 elephants, including 250 adults.

Poaching of one elephant

Isiolo, Isiolo County, Kenya

April 2014

"Save the Elephants" has poignant eulogies. "Fare-

well Flower, we will miss you.” Her body was found riddled with bullets and stripped of its tusks. She had ventured into a dangerous area near the town of Isiolo, where the heavy rains provided her with abundant food.



Arrest of a Poacher
Lolgorien, Narok, Kenya
26 April 2014

Yes, he admits poaching in the Nyewkweri forest. 300 km² and more travelled by elephants and underground charcoal producers.



Seizure of one ivory
Nairobi, Nairobi County, Kenya
April 2014

The police came undercover as buyers. 4 people were arrested. Estimated value: 100,000 shillings (1,149 US\$). A well-led case that hopefully will encourage judges not to bail the smugglers.



Seizure and conviction for the illegal purchase of an ivory object weighing 92g



The International Airport of Victoria Falls, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

April 28, 2014

The businessman is the leader of the Chinese delegation at the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair. After the fair, he went to admire the site of Victoria Falls on the Zambezi River. At the airport, a sniffer dog lingered on his luggage and spotted an ivory cube. He spent 2 days in custody before being sentenced to a fine of 100 US\$ or 10 days in jail. He chose the first option. Sum Bin argued he did not know that the souvenir was made of ivory.

Poaching of 68 elephants

Garamba National, Eastern Province, Democratic Republic of Congo

April-May 2014

The Garamba National Park covers 5000 km² of savannas, forests, marshes. If Africa has a center, it's here. In the last 2 months, 68 elephants were killed. This new wave of violence is attributed to the Lord's Resistance Army, a terrorist group established in 1988 which aims to overthrow the Ugandan government. The LRA already would have, 2 years ago exactly, amputated the Park of dozens of elephants. According to observers, the LRA has considerably strengthened its firepower and ammunition are no more rationed. The Park is attacked from all sides and poached ivory can also flow out from all sides by the ports of West Africa such as Lomé in Togo and Mombasa in Kenya. Hand grenades were thrown at park rangers by poachers from South Sudan, some of whom were wearing military uniforms. One clash lasted 45 minutes. Park management is concerned. Deserters from the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo are also in the area.

The amazing thing is that an unidentified helicopter has been used to hunt elephants and strafe from above as proven by the bullets trajectories found on at least 9 elephants. 2 years ago, 23 elephants were killed by helicopter, an unknown craft never photographed that unchecked rumors attributed to the Ugandan military. Innovation, poaching co-operated by helicopter has a particular signature: elephant head and genitals are cut and removed along with the tusks.

Seizure of 6 pieces (12 kg) of ivory

Road between Meru and Nairobi, Kiambu County, Kenya

May 2, 2014

If the incorruptible canine brigade also starts dealing, the dogs won't know where to turn to. In the 2 dog handlers' car blocked at a nighttime checkpoint between Meru and Nairobi, there was ivory. The defendants denied any liability. They were released on bail of Sh 1.5 million or 17,240 US\$. The trial will take place soon.

Poaching of one elephant
Masai Mara, Narok County, Kenya
Carcass found on May 2, 2014
53

Conviction for possession of 2 elephant tusks (5.61 kg)
Gokwe, Midlands Province, Zimbabwe
May 2, 2014



In September 2013, he was caught in a bus line with a bag between his legs, and in the bag, the ivory. He had managed to escape. And then he was taken and sentenced to 10 years in prison with the possibility of reduction for good behavior, a bonus of one year.

Seizure of 16 pieces (221 kg) of ivory
Kazungula, Southern Province, Zambia
May 2014

In the truck cabin, the ivory stockpile did not escape the vigilance of the Zambian customs' scanner. The truck came from Botswana. The trailer was full of salt. The driver is 25 years old. He is in custody. He works for the company Cheaplina General Dealers.

Seizure of 12 pieces of ivory (12 kg)
Mundoro village, Kiambu County, Kenya
May 5, 2014

First Court appearance May 7, 2014. The accused woman denied the charges and was released on bail of Sh 2,000,000 (U.S. \$ 22,750). The seizure is estimated at 2.3 million Sh (U.S. \$ 26,162). Joyce Wanjiru's trial will take place during the summer.

Seizure of 7 defenses (17 kg) elephant
Nairobi, Nairobi County, Kenya
May 9, 2014

While Chinese Premier parade in Africa and announces the donation of Sh 850 million, nearly 10 million US\$ to help governments fight against poaching and environmental crime, another example of blurring strikes Kenya. Ivories estimated 1.7 million Sh were aboard the car. The 2 drivers claimed to have been delivered by an agent of the KWS. This agent has also been identified. It is likely that the goods were destined for China. At the same time, the Chinese Prime Minister and the President of Kenya made some sort of tribute to the elephants by visiting the Nairobi National Park ivory pyre memorial, there where in July 1989 12 tons of illegal tusks had been burned barely a few steps away from the KWS headquarters.



Seizure of 32 pieces of ivory (2.5 kg)
Kigali International Airport, Kigali Province, Rwanda
May 10, 2014

2 Chinese employees of Chinese cement Cemerwa Bugarama were going home. Once the ivory found in their luggage, they quickly tried to bribe airport officers with a hundred dollars. "Corruption is taboo here, the police in particular. We do not hesitate to arrest anyone trying by means of money to cover illegal activity, whether Rwandan or foreign" swears the Kigali Police spokesman. Ivory came from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Arrest of a poacher, another shot
Waza National Park, Far North Region, Cameroon
May 11, 2014

Waza National Park is situated in northern Cameroon and borders with Nigeria, an area of high risk. A patrol guard was confronted by a dozen poachers. One of the poachers was killed another was arrested and taken to prison in Garoua. With the help of IUCN, the Cameroonian government is trying to deter local populations from illegal poaching and deforestation. The aim of the project is to find financial means to support the livelihoods of communities for sustainable development of the Waza National Park and its surroundings. To improve infrastructure and facilities necessary for conservation of biodiversity and restoration of degraded ecosystems in and around the Park. The Waza National Park is a pot of gold of elephant tusks and reserves of bush meat for illegal border crossing poachers.

The poaching of one elephant
Kruger National Park, Limpopo Province, South Africa
May 2014

"The first confirmed elephant poaching incident in the Kruger National Park (KNP) in well over 10 years" according to the South African National Parks. In reality, at least 3 elephants were poached in Kruger since 2007. To cover up the scandals, the park authorities developed the concept of "accidentally or rather opportunistically killed": The previously killed elephants were said to be unintentional victims of traps intended for other targets. This time in May, the elephant was purposely killed, so it made its way in the statistics. This is the third elephant killed for its ivory in South Africa recorded by "On the Trail" in the past year.

The poaching of one elephant
Mt Kenya National Park, Kirinyaga County, South Africa
May 2014

Mountain Bull was the lord of Mount Kenya. One could see the splendor of his beauty here. In October 2012, his tusks had been cut in half in the hope that he would be less inclined to push down fences bordering agricultural plots of Mount Kenya Na-

tional Park. Mountain Bull tended to follow his own itineraries rather than the corridors' arrows. He was not killed for his rebellious behavior. The poachers riddled him with arrows to steal his remaining tusks.



Ivory seizure
Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi County, Kenya
May 13, 2014

The Chinese man took a flight to Guangzhou. He was coming from Kinshasa. He had with him 2 hefty pieces of ivory valued at nearly 2000 US\$, Kenyan value. Probably around 2 kg.

Poaching of 7 elephants
Indamane, Mali
Night of May 13 to 14, 2014

Murder by full moon. 7 elephants from the Sahel were found dead without their tusks. One of the females was about to give birth. The elephant's gestation period is 22 months. The fast intervention of a mission by Malian armed forces and the mobilization of local brigades put in place by the Wild Foundation led, a month later, to the arrest of the presumed poachers and the gang leader. Indamane is situated about thirty kilometers from the water hole of Banzena a source of residual water at the end of the dry season. Rebel groups sabotaged the holes before their retreat. Elephants negotiate with great difficulty access to the source with steadily increasing numbers of domestic livestock.

At all 4 cardinal points of Africa, elephants are hunted down and exterminated. Those in the north are the most vulnerable. Their population count is low and they have a short lifespan due to the troubled region. One of the trade routes of poached tusks is Algeria. Another is Senegal.



Poaching of an elephant
National Reserve of Masai Mara, Narok County, Kenya
May 2014



Hello to all. I was 40 years old. My tusks were found in the den of an anteater.



Theft of 62 tusks, disappearance of 108 tusks and 20 kg of ivory, looting of government stocks
Lindi, Lindi Province, Tanzania
May 16, 2014

1 - The 62 tusks were stolen from police headquarters Lindi (population: over 40,000) in the south near the shores of the Indian Ocean. This alleged stronghold serves as storage of all ivory seized by Tanzanian services.

2 - A week before, a devastating report on the management of seized ivory had been published by the CAG (Controller and Auditor General), the country's Court of Auditors. 108 tusks placed under seal disappeared as well as 20 kg of ivory pieces. The report that the Tanzanian Parliament was informed of in priority also reveals a number of large elephant tusks made safe were surreptitiously and gradually exchanged against smaller one. The total weight of the relief corresponds to 203 kg of ivory. In other words, large tusks seized and taken on elephants 40 years old and more and weighing a total of 498 kg were replaced on the shelves by many for many with subadult elephant tusks for total weight of 295 kg. AGC does not hesitate to use weights and

measures and let the cat out of the bag, reaking of scandal.

This yet did not prevent subsequent theft of 62 tusks. Suspicion falls on a former officer in charge of the management of seals that left office more than 2 months ago.

The regional police chief in the province of Lindi calls all those who may have information about this individual to communicate it without delay. Rumors claiming that the former employee of the police and the Ministry of Justice had resumed his studies at the University of Dar es Salaam or the University of St. Augustine were denied.

Anyway, the pseudo student if it is indeed him could not have been alone to steal 62 tusks. They weighed 568 kg in total.

It is urgent that all African countries destroy their stocks of illegal ivory.

**Seizure of 2 elephant tusks (25 kg)
Mariakani County, Kilifi, Kenya
May 19, 2014**

2 times 25 kg. 1.3 million Sh. The tusks were hidden in the frame of the van. The vehicle was decorated with red ribbons as if carrying a grieving family. The cops have yet stopped it near Mombasa. It was coming from Kangundo nearly 500 miles north-west. The 2 drivers were Kenyans. They led investigators to 2 other links in the chain, a Congolese and an Arab man in charge of exfiltrating the ivory through the port of Mombasa.

The 4 ivory fiddlers were cooked by anti-terrorist police who have long suspected Al Shabaab, "youth", to be partly funded by the ivory trade.



**Seizure of 388 objects made of ivory and conviction
Dakar, Region of Dakar, Senegal
May 20, 2014**



"Ivory salesman." Modou Sarr claims this is his profession on his Business card. His associate Eloi Siakou Sokoto admits to the Dakar Court that ivory trade brings in much more money than any other business. The 2 traffickers had been arrested in possession of 388 pieces of ivory jewelry, a bunch of doodads estimated worth near 6 million Francs CFA (12,474 US\$). Despite the fact Senegal is Party to the CITES Treaty since 1977 and that the 400 elephants it housed at the time have now disappeared, the Senegalese Court showed clemency. The 2 men were sentenced to 3 months prison term, 2 of which are suspended and a 500,000 Francs CFA

(1040 US\$) fine. The penalty set within the hunting and wildlife fauna protection code is of a maximum one year sentence. According to Senegalese press it is the first time ivory and protected species traffickers are convicted by the country's courts.



**Poaching of one elephant
Masai Mara National Reserve, County of Narok, Kenya
May 2014**

Another elephant poached and mutilated in the Masai Mara National Reserve. This time, the Olarro Conservancy was sorry to have to break the news. "We have research facilities to be able to determine a variety of causes of animal fatalities but the spear wounds were obvious here."



**Seizure of 1746 ivory pearls and objects
Saint Denis, Réunion, France
May 2014**

Ivory bric-a-brac, necklaces, bracelets, pearls, net-sukes, statuettes, checker pieces. The shop lady swears it's all part of her own personal collection.



Seizure of 8 tusks

Thika Superhighway, Nairobi County, Kenya

May 26, 2014

The 8 freshly cut tusks were hidden in a bag of charcoal inside a limousine. 2 passengers led the cops to 2 go between who were in contact with a potential buyer.

Court hearing for illegal possession of 3232 tusks and ivory objects

Khayelitsha, Province of Western Cape, South Africa

May 26 and 27, 2014

The tusks were all fresh. At the root they were still bleeding. Total value of the seizure made by police in 2 storage units is estimated at 21 million R, that is 2 million US\$. Cheng Jie Liang's fingerprints were found on the tusks, on bags of tusks and ivory objects and on the entrance badges of the storage facility.

The chief inspector in charge of the case believes that if the ivory had reached China it could have sold for up to 118,000 R, i.e. 11,300 US\$ per kg. More evidence against the suspect is that pictures of the tusks were found in his cell phone.

Poaching of 2 elephants

Aberdares National Park, Kenya. The park extends into several counties.

May 2014

The Aberdares National Park, with an area of 767 km², is divided into 2 parts: a higher part, which rises to 4000 m and a lower part covered by tropical forest, the Salient. The Aberdares are west of Mount Kenya. The Wildlife Defenders called for genetic analysis on the carcasses to be able to link poaching to ivory seizures from anywhere in the world.

Arrest of an ammunition trafficker

Franceville, Province of Haut-Ogooué, Gabon

May 28, 2014

To each their own specialization in the elephant demolition business. This one sold caliber .375 and .458 bullets to the shooters, such ammunition being forbidden in Gabon. He has been put in custody.

Poaching of one elephant

Tsavo National Park, County of Taita Taveta, Kenya

May 30, 2014

Satao, an icon, was the most majestic elephant in the Park. Millions of tourists would come in hopes of catching a glimpse of him. Given the state in which Satao was after these maniacs had their hands to him, it was difficult for him to be identified. Some clues helped out his friends from the Tsavo Trust. He has been seen 15 days earlier at about the same spot. His wide ears without any wounds or indent are recognizable at a glance. He was at least 45 years old. He was killed with poisoned arrows. Satao's death was extremely upsetting for wildlife protectors. They call upon President Uhuru Kenyatta to declare poaching as "National disaster". Counting

done by airplane in the Park all the way into its prolonged grounds in Tanzania in February 2014 gave a total count of 11,000 elephants against 12,573 in 2011. The poison seller was arrested. In June, men suspected of being his killers were arrested. Poachers pose as nomadic herdsmen. The Tsavo ecosystem covers 40,000 km², the size of Switzerland.



Poaching of 3 elephants

Virunga National Park, Province of North-Kivu and Orientale Province, Democratic Republic of Congo

May 2014

Dozens of dead vultures lying next to tuskless dead elephants. Guards in the Virunga National Park have now come upon such a poaching scene 3 times. The vultures' death proves the elephants' poisoning. The Congolese NGO IDPE (Innovation for the Development and Protection of the Environment) is worried about these massive poisonings that put at risk scavenger animals as well as consumers of bush meat. The bush meat market is growing, escaping any form of sanitary control.

Virunga Park is in the East of the Democratic Republic of Congo, right next to Uganda, 400 km south of the Garamba Park. It covers 7900 km² of volcanoes, lava, savanna, swamps, topped by the deemed eternal snows of the Rwenzori 5000 m high and eroded by the echoes and setbacks of civil war.

In addition, the park is under the threat from the seismic testing to find petroleum by the English company SOCO.

Poaching of 2 elephants

Miang, Province of Woleu-Ntem, Gabon

May 30 and 31, 2014

Several people are involved in the death of the 2 elephants. Only one of them, half marijuana dealer, half ivory dealer, was caught by police. He gave some very vague information on the larger trafficking network. One of his presumed accomplices has already been convicted in 2011 for elephant poaching. He is presently on the run. The mastermind is apparently from Cameroon. In Minvoul in December 2013 (see "On the Trail" n°3) a trafficker had already been arrested. Also in Minvoul in August 2013 (see "On the Trail" n°2) ivory dealers had been caught red handed in one of the city's hotels. The team of policemen, agents of the forest and waters



services and members of the NGO Conservation Justice went to the poaching crime scene. They took note of the doings that seemingly date back several weeks according to the state of the bodies. They met with the local villagers and expressed the firm will of administration services and civil society to counter the intense poaching activity in the Province of Woleu-Ntem.



© Conservation Justice

**Seizure of 34 tusks and 4 elephant tails
Chobe Parc National, North West Province, Botswana
June 3, 2014**

The body of the Zambian poacher has just been sent back to his home country. He was part of a gang illegally at work in Botswana. There was cross-fire with the guards in the Chobe National Park on the other side of the border between Zambia and Botswana. The other 13 poachers fled into the park (10,566 km²). Beside the tusks, inside the poachers' camp there were 4 axes, 4 elephant tails, 12 bags of bush meat and a digital scale.



© Ian Sewell

A baby elephant crossing the Chobe River

**Seizure of 228 tusks and 74 pieces of ivory (2152 kg)
Mombasa, County of Mombasa, Kenya
June 5, 2014**

Big seizure of tusks and big unraveling in Mombasa, Kenya. Shooting in all directions, beware lost bullets.

The stock was found in the building of a Fuji Motors East Africa LTD garage, Tom Mboya Avenue, in the Tudor neighborhood. The tusks were undergoing conditioning in preparation for imminent export via Mombasa, main launching pad for African ivory

destined to Asia. They were being packed in nylon and sisal bags. Police acting on sudden and circumstantial information burst into the building during the night from Friday to Saturday. 2 suspects were immediately arrested, a young man about 20 from the County of Lamu and the garage director aged 52.

Just after the police operation, officers on the spot were submitted to an active attempt of corruption. They were offered the equivalent of 57,000 US\$. They refused. A car without any license plates quickly arrived with the money in cash. Visual examination of the tusks reveals they were taken from forest elephants and savanna elephants. 74 of them weigh 5 kg and 154 about 10 kg.



© Kelvin Karani/Standard

After the big netting, there's more trouble. A police officer, one of those who part took in the operation, starts talking to the press anonymously telling them that his hierarchy was aware of the trafficking and protected it. « Once we get information, they usually « eat » from it ». According to the same source, the real owners of the illegal ivory are one of the town's businessmen and a politician who lost last year's parliamentary elections. Again the same informer says another stock is in waiting to be shipped off near the Coast General hospital. High rank police would have discouraged lower policeman from acting. Finally, just to add to the scandal, the same policeman says that the first elements of the case prove that all the tusks come from Tsavo Park and the Boni forest in the County of Lamu destroying the hypothesis according to which the ivory could have come from a foreign country.

Police forces responsible for the surprise operation in the stockpile garage have been reprimanded according to reports from local newspapers. The director the Mombasa County police denies any officers were displaced or that they received any form of punishment. On the contrary, they would have been proposed for a promotion. The 2 directors of Fuji Motors have been released after paying Sh 10 million i.e. 114,000 US\$ in bail following the decision from the Mombasa court on June 23. Their lawyer assures that their released will in no way impact the ongoing investigations, that for this type of felony the penal code enables bail, that the bail amount will in itself guaranty the accused will present themselves for the trial. The judges did not follow prosecutions plea underlining both risks that the suspects escape seen the life prison sentence

and 220,000 US\$ fines they face and risks for their physical security if they were set free.

**Discovery of 117 elephant carcasses
Masai Mara National Reserve, County of Narok,
Kenya
June 2014**

The cemetery was uncovered in the course of a count to evaluate elephant populations in the wide spread Masai Mara reserve famous for its crocodiles, pink flamingos, zebras, a dream like post-card of exotic tourism and renewed peace between animals and human communities.



The elephant grave could be for most part supplied by supposed conflicts between farmers and elephants who would in some way exercise a prior right to the land. Without entering in detail into this neighborhood quarrel, one must note that there were at least 117 elephants and that none of the 234 corresponding tusks were found in the mass grave. Man-Elephant conflicts are the source of an important underground business that greatly surpasses the annual income for sedentary or nomadic farming.

**Seizure of 50 small ivory tusk (125,1 kg)
Lomé, Maritime Region, Togo
June 8, 2014**

Mr, N'Bouké is not the only one in Togo carrying out evil deeds. 2 traffickers, one from Togo one from Benin, were arrested after being stopped by a mobile national police squad. The ivory was in the luggage compartment of a bus leaving the bus station in Lomé towards Côte d'Ivoire. The 50 tusks are from baby elephants killed in Ghana and Benin according to information yet to be verified. A certain person called Big Guy was going to receive the tusks on arrival of the bus in Côte d'Ivoire.

**Poaching of one elephant
Tsavo East National Park, County of Taita Taveta,
Kenya
June 12, 2014**

A second large tusker has been found dead in the park. Just like Satao he also was killed with poisoned arrows. The return of this ancient technique is thus confirmed. Death comes slower, but without loud gunshots poachers avoid triggering reaction from the rangers.



**Seizure of 2 tusks
Kericho, County of Kericho, Kenya
June 13, 2014**

The boda-boda pilot, a motorcycle taxi, was transporting the 2 tusks. This ride will cost him a lot instead of bringing in big. He was arrested in a Kericho street, town in which he will soon visit the court room. The owner of the tusks escaped police. The value of the seizure is of Sh 1 million, that is 11,500 US\$ on regional markets. The tusks were "fresh", maybe 3 days old from the elephant slaughter.

**Seizure of 4 ivory pieces (19 kg)
Kazungula, Southern Province, Zambia
June 13, 2014**

The « businessman » from Livingstone had 19 kg of ivory in his suitcase. He was coming precisely from Botswana and the ivory very likely came from poaching in Chobe Park.

**Cyanide poisoning of dozens of elephants
North Mozambique
June 2014**

The cyanide virus is spreading to Mozambique. After major catastrophes in the Hwange Park in Zimbabwe where last year hundreds of elephants were poisoned by cyanide sodium poured into water spots of salt pits (see "On the Trail" n°2 p.2), this time Mozambique is hit according to recent WWF reports. Spreading cyanide into the environment kills elephants, main targets, vultures who feed on the carcasses, hyenas and other members of ground or bird wildlife impacted directly or indirectly by the cyanide or residue. These cyanide campaigns would apparently be, just as in Zimbabwe, supported actively by local populations to whom an extremely minor part of trafficking benefits go to. Locals, who know well the area, are in charge of placing the cyanide on elephant trails.



**Seizure of over 100 elephant bones
Mundemba, South West Region, Cameroon
June 17, 2014**

2 skulls, 5 molars, 40 premolars, 8 chin bones, one jaw. The 2 bone carriers are second hand salesmen. The first rank death lords took the ivory, these ones pick up the bones on the battle field. A less risky business seen the penal code than the ivory business but that is more and more lucrative given the increasing demand for elephant bone powder of

Chinese communities in Africa. Ground up rhino horn is miraculous. Why not elephant bone flour? One of the 2 skeleton pillagers is part of the Cameroon maritime police force. Along with his colleagues, he is among other missions in charge of uncovering smuggling operations on board ships leaving or entering national waters and ports of the country. 2 years ago, another member of this elite force was caught in Douala trying to sell ivory. The other suspect, Mangolo, is a well-known bush meater, practicing his talents, illegally of course, in the Korup National Park, where other than the elephants live mandrills and colobus monkeys. Mangolo knows the park well. He remembers the places where elephant bodies lay. That can become handy for one making money off of their bones.



Arrest of an ivory trafficker
Kabo, Department of Sangha, Congo
June 17, 2014

An ivory delinquent was caught by police in Kabo near the Trinational Sangha Park that regroups the Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park in Congo, the Lobéké National Park in Cameroon and the Dzanga-Ndohi National Park in the Central African Republic. The announcement was made by the PALF (Projet d'appui à l'Application de la Loi Faunique) that unites the ministry for Forest Economy affairs and sustainable development, the Wildlife Conservation Society and the Aspinnall Foundation.

Conviction for illegal possession of ivory and trafficking (700 kg)
Lomé, Maritime Region, Togo
June 18, 2014



Emile N'Bouké, a loud and strong headed personage ran his shop « Rose Ivoire » in the Togo capital since the 70s. Last year police put an end to his trading business finding in the store's stocks and in his home nearly 700 kg of ivory (see "On the Trail" n°2, p.60).

His trial fascinated the public. The court room was full and one could here from the street N'Bouké hollering the arguments in favor of his innocence thanks to the loud speakers that were set up. "All my

ivory comes exclusively from Chad." "I had trusting relations with its former president." « All the ivory I'm questioned about is prior to 1990 and the ban on international ivory trade. » But the ivory « god-father » for Togo and neighboring countries had a hard job before him faced with prosecution all pumped up and more importantly well informed. Indeed, Togolese investigators sent samples of the seized ivory to 2 expert laboratories in the United States. The first one at the University of Washington proved thanks to genetic research that N'Bouké's ivory had multiple origins including Gabon and Cameroon. DNA testified. The second, the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California, led a radioactive datation of the samples and proved beyond doubt that N'Bouké's tusks were post 1990 and for some even post 2010.

N'Bouké's counter-attack was somewhat embarrassing. "If I did something illegal, why did the Director of Wildlife and hunting in Togo let me go ahead." "He came to my home not long ago, he asked me for some sort of taxes and left with 13 ivory pieces supposedly seized without providing any sort of receipt." Kotchikpa Okoumassou, this named director present in the courtroom, didn't even hunch and Court did not ask him to answer to insinuations coming from the accused.

Emile N'Bouké was sentenced to 2 years in prison and the equivalent of 10,300 US\$ fine, which is a pretty heavy sentence for Togo. The US Fish and Wildlife assisted Togo and identification and dating of the seized ivory.

Seizure of 41 kg of ivory
Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi Area, Kenya
June 18, 2014

3 Chinese citizens have just been set free on bail. They were caught in possession of 41 kg of ivory on board their Toyota car around Nairobi on June 18 near 7 a.m. They were preparing to export the loot towards China. They first pled guilty then retracted their confession the next day pretexting not having understood the charges held against them. Since the beginning of last year, no less than 15 Chinese and Vietnamese citizens have been caught red handed in possession of ivory or attempting to smuggle it out. The Kenyan government continues to say that the battle against poaching is not yet lost and persists in not recognizing the elephant massacre as a national disaster despite repeated appeals from Non-Governmental Organizations.

Death of 3 poachers
West Tsavo National Park, County of Taita Taveta, Kenya
June 20, 2014

3 dead poachers/ a firearm/ ammunition. Crossfire with rangers.



**Death of 2 poachers
Kulanze, County of Taita-Taveta, Kenya
June 2014**

Within 4 days, 5 poachers have been killed. This fight took place when the troop of rangers inside the private reserve ordered a group of suspects to surrender. The gang did not comply. Guards shot. The shooting lasted several hours. The poachers apparently entered the reserve through the County of Tana River. "From studying 2 of the poachers' profiles, we can retrace the whole group's organization." Declares a local police official and he does not refrain in congratulating the 7 guards for their determination in protecting endangered animals species, part of national heritage.



**Death of 6 poachers
Timau, County of Meru, Kenya
June 23, 2014**

The « Shot dead » in the Anglophone African press always causes a shiver. This time the ones shot are not the rhinos but the poachers who, when stopped for a road check, started to threaten and shoot at policemen. AK 47s, ammunition, machetes were found in the car. A 7th suspects managed to escape. Some months earlier at the same spot, very close to the Meru National Park, 2 poachers met the same fate in the same circumstances. They were wearing police uniforms. 5 of their accomplices ran off.



**Court appearance for ivory trafficking
County of Mombasa, Kenya
June 24, 2014**

Nicholas Maweu had been let out on bail for Sh 5 million i.e. 57,000 US\$, a good amount proving personal fortune or a network of rich and loyal friends. Maweu is accused in an important case of fraudulent export of ivory from the Mombasa Port, in a 20 foot long container that left from neighboring Uganda, destined to Malaysia and of which the cargo was registered as dried fish (see "On the Trail" n°2 p. 53).

The presumed trafficker's lawyer put forward the fact that new elements of investigation were ab-

sent from the file, in particular copies of the witness questioning. He requested the trial be postponed and release on bail be prolonged. The prosecution did not see any reason to object and the Court trial will take place in September.

**Seizure of one tusk (7 kg)
Meru, County of Meru, Kenya
June 2014**

KWS had received information. Officers disguised themselves as interested buyers. A meeting took place with the tusk seller. He fell into the trap. He is being questioned. The KWS believes there are other tusks in his home or not far. The Meru National Park is not far either. It attracts poachers (cf. the death of 6 of them on June 23).

**Poaching of one elephant
Reserve of Kankan, Guinea
June 28 or 31, 2014**

Elephants do not know administrative boundaries. This particular elephant left the Côte d'Ivoire to reach the forests of north-eastern Guinea, with the idea to get in contact with the last elephants in the Reserve of Kankan. He was hunted down by a poacher from Fananyiniko village. He collapsed after a few kilometers, riddled with bullets. With the help of 2 accomplices his tusks and tail were cut off. Controversy between the inhabitants on the consumption of the meat followed. Photos were taken and transmitted by outraged villagers. 2 weeks later, Sekou Doumbouya, the poacher, was sentenced to the maximum penalty of the Guinean wildlife code, one year in prison and a fine equal to 1430 US \$.



**Hustle and bustle at Kenyan Wildlife Service
Kenya
April-June 2014**

Who is corrupted and undermine efforts to fight against poaching in Kenya? Suspensions, reintegrations, accusations, money laundering and staff transfers at KWS follow one after the other. William Kiprono, the director, gave an update in June: "The board of Trustees recently interdicted 32 employees from across the country over suspicion for acts of omission and commission in relation to the illegal killing of wildlife. This was meant to pave way for further investigations. 3 other employees have been removed from the Service. The affected position range from assistant directors to rangers." To be continued.

Death of a ranger and arrest of 2 poachers
Lukulu, Western Province, Zambia
June 2014



RIP Dexter Chilunda

Mr. Chilunda was responsible for the supervision of the Plaine Liuwa National Park. With his team of guards, he went into the park, where gunshots had sounded. There they ran into the 2 poachers. One of them fired. Mr. Chilunda was killed leaving behind a widow and 7 children. He had 20 years of experience in the protection of wildlife. The 2 men suspected to be the poachers involved in the incident have just been arrested. ZAWA, Zambia Wildlife Authority is thankful for the solidarity movement in the neighboring communities, which contributed to the arrest of the suspects. Liuwa Plain National Park is west of Zambia. It is famous for the collection of blue wildebeest (*Connochaetes taurinus*) migrating from Angola during the wet season. It stretches over 3660 km². It is home to lions and occasionally elephants and wild dogs (*Lycaon pictus*). This nomadic endangered species is also called painted wolf, African wild dog, or spotted dog.



Elephants to the Farmers' Rescue

A toxic invasive plant is extending its grip on East African savanna and grasslands. The *Solanum campylacanthum* is misleading. It is for this reason that it was given the common name "Sodom apple." This false sister to the eggplant produces a bright yellow fruit which sheep and cattle cannot resist, ignoring the risk of emphysema, pneumonia, ulcers and death.

Kenya, not lacking for problems, is obliged to spend a fortune to eradicate the invasive plant without really knowing how to go about it.

The gradual conversion of the savanna into pastoral lands leaves room for the Sodom apple to proliferate and spread quickly in overgrazed areas. Farmers often overload the pastures with too many cattle per hectare and to do so drive wild animals away. The Ecology and Biology Department at Princeton University and Kenyan agronomists carried out a 5-year study of which the encouraging conclusions could facilitate coexistence between elephants and farmers. Pachyderms and antelopes are 'browsing' herbivores that feed on all different kinds of plants and can somehow withstand natural poisons whereas sheep and cows are 'grazers' primarily eating grass which is rarely toxic. Elephants relish on Sodom apple. They feast on the invasive plant right to the roots and thus leave the space for endemic plants to grow.

The case of the Sodom apple portrays an opposing view to popular belief, wildlife and livestock are not always in competition for food they can even be complementary.



Solanum campylacanthum

AMERICA

Seizure of 7 bows

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

May 31, 2014

Going off key at the Opera. The Budapest Festival Orchestra had trouble playing Dvorak at the New York Lincoln Center. 7 violins and cellos had been seized upon arrival at the Kennedy Airport. The bows contained pieces forbidden by US Customs in accordance with the latest rules set by the Obama Administration on ivory trafficking.

Stefan Englert, the orchestra director believed to have complied to the new rules by producing photographs and letters from manufactures to officials certifying the string instruments were not made using any illegal ivory.

Claire Cassel, spokesperson for the US Fish and Wildlife replies that the frogs and the screws on the 7 bows are made of ivory and it is not possible to allow them to enter the country. Everything possible was done so that the musicians could use other instruments. The violins and cellos were sent back to Hungary without any fine and especially without confiscation.



OPERATION SCRATCHOFF

**Conviction for ivory smuggling
New York, State of New York,
United States**

June 4, 2014

For him West Africa was an ivory mine. He had over 400 pieces brought to the US through complicated routes. Today's smugglers are his disciples. 10 years ago and more, he already was importing ivory tusks painted black, ivory hidden in clay, ivory placed inside musical instruments. He never set foot in Africa, his henchmen would go there for him. A certain Abutu Sherif of African origin living in the United States was a regular traveller to Gabon. He would



go there with specific instructions on the measurements and themes of the artifacts to sculpt out of the raw ivory tusks. He trained Sherif to do everything, false billing, false certificates and how to dye the tusks so that they appeared older and would sell for more.

Victor Gordon was a famous and respected antique dealer well set up in a typical Philadelphia street with wooden and bronze African sculptures supposedly authentic on display in his shop window and in the back rooms a stock of illegal ivory estimated worth 800,000 US\$, one of the biggest collections American investigators have ever uncovered over the 8 years of Operation Scratchoff.

Despite his age, 71, he has been sentenced to 30 months in prison, 150,000 US\$ in compensation and a 7500 US\$ fine. Gordon's conviction is the ninth resulting from Operation Scratchoff.



ASIA

**Poaching of one elephant
Chaibasa, Jharkhand, India**

April 4, 2014

The viscera were sent to a laboratory. Identifying the poison could help locate suspects. The body of 40-year old male elephant was found on the banks of the Karan River between the State of Jharkhand and the State of Odisha. Shooters threw the poisonous darts and then tracked the dying elephant for 3 to 4 days before stealing the 2 heavy tusks. The border between the 2 Indian state forests serves as a migration corridor to 40 gray... and white pachyderms, unfortunately for the males.

**Poaching of one elephant
Teuping Panah, Aceh Province, Indonesia
April 2014**

It took 6 hours of walking in the jungle for the team of BKSDA (Natural Resources Conservation Agency) to reach the scene of the ambush. A villager anonymously provided specific details. An elephant trainer accompanies the BKSDA team in the case that other members of the herd led by 3 females and 2 adult males would have surrounded the body of the victim. Several locals' accounts and observation reports attest to the survival of such ritual. When in-

investigators arrived on site, the elephant mourners were there. The mahout pushed them away. An active trap had killed the 12-year-old young elephant. A steel wire stretched across his pathway triggered the projection of a sharp wooden stake that stuck him between the eyes. His tusks were then cut with a chainsaw. 11 inhabitants of neighboring villages were subsequently questioned and charged. They admitted to killing 3 elephants in 3 months with the same tactic.

There are no more than 3 to 400 elephants left in the Indonesian province of Aceh. The overall population of *Elephas maximus sumatranus* is now fewer than 2000. In the past 30 years, it has lost more than half its population, according to the IUCN. The end is near. In 2012, only in the province of Aceh, 25 elephants were killed. Palm oil producers and their henchmen have deliberately poisoned 14. Farmers consider anything that moves and is furry or feathered as a pest. Anything goes, orangutans, hornbills, and civets. Boar traps abound and capture anyone with 4 legs, bears, elephants and tigers. The canopy was very dense in Aceh until 2005. The urgent need for firewood and for reconstruction after the great tsunami in 2004 began to damage forests. The end of a 30-year conflict between the Indonesian government and Aceh autonomous movements has sounded the death bell for the trees and paved the way for the "palmerization" of western Indonesia. Deforestation is ongoing and conflict grows between wildlife and agriculture, which consumes space, forests and lowland habitats, that has always been elephants' home.

"It is essential that everyone sits down around a table to find solutions to collaborate." "Farmers, regional administration, and ourselves, we must all get started, otherwise the situation will get worse" alarmed the director of the regional delegation of BKSDA.

But there is still ambiguity in the air. Elephants, blamed for all the troubles, are killed with an endless ferocity and their bodies brutally cut and stripped. The small tusks of the young elephant found dead in the jungle were sold more than 2,000 US\$ to a broker from the south of the province. The police chief says to be tracking the suspects and thinks that the ivory has already left Indonesia.

Seizure of 7 elephant tusks and other ivory accessories

Suvarnabhumi Airport in Bangkok, Samut Prakan Province, Thailand

April 2014

The Cambodian national had to deliver 22 kg of tusks and ivory pearls to a dealer from Hanoi. Collaboration between Thai and Vietnamese services will commit to identifying the recipient and the partner of trafficking. The "commodity" is estimated at 2 million baht (61,500 US\$) based on the market price of ivory in these 2 countries, 3 times more than Kenya.

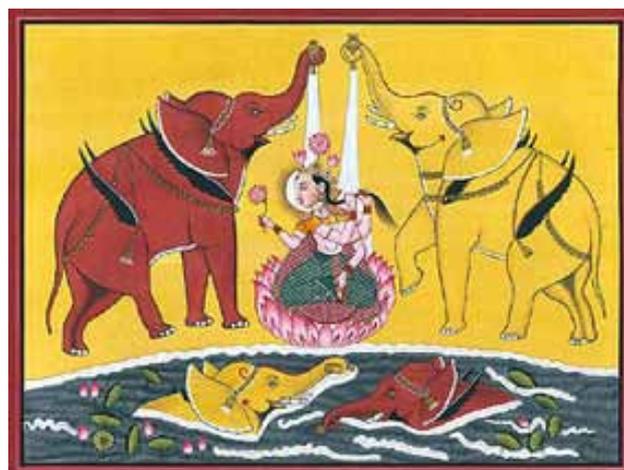


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Seizure of 2 Ivory idols **Soltimod and Bhaktapur, Central Development Region, Nepal**

8 April 2014

5 of them handling 2 religious statues in ivory representing the Hindu divinity Krishna (848g) and Laksmi (745 g). The 5 suspects residing in Bhaktapur are from 19 to 44 years old. The inquiry is searching for the origin of the ivories: stolen antiques or false antiques coming from a clandestine workshop.



Laksmi, goddess of wealth, abundance and riches being bathed by elephants.

Ivory trafficker on bail **Shuangfeng District, Hunan Province, China**

11 April 2014

An important and influential business man benefited from justice's clemency. Li Dingsheng was arrested in December 2012 for having illegally acquired 25 tusks of a total of 172kg, an evident traffic completed at 3 different occasions in the summer of 2012 and denounced to the police by anonymous sources. The main charge should have been "illegal purchase, transport and sale of parts of wild animals threatened with extinction," an offence subject to a minimum of 5 years of prison. M. Li was simply accused of "illegal operation", an offence subject to a maximum of 5 years of prison. Furthermore, he was promptly released on bail and the date of his trial has still not been set. The administration of the Shaungfeng District in the Hunan Province has claimed this provisional bail to be motivated by "medical reasons". In fact, M.

Li benefited from all of these indulgences thanks to pressure from those in local affairs. At least one confidential courier was sent to the policy authorities in charge of the procedure. It was revealed by the China News Service: "If M. Li is detained for a long period, it would inevitably have an impact on his business and, as a result, the economy of the region. Mr. Li's companies have borrowed money from local banks and his detention would probably trigger a major social instability."

A famous political commentator in Pekin, Hu Xingdou, confirmed that the risks of disturbing economic development often serve as a pretext for the liberation of businessmen or company managers.

Indictment for Ivory Trafficking Shandong Province, China

17 April 2014

The deal was quickly wrapped up. Sun was arrested in a foot massage salon and was firmly accompanied home. A heap of bracelets, seals, amulets, and other ivory jewelry was discovered. At the end of the afternoon, Lee and Qian, 2 accomplices, arrived to speak business. They were arrested by police officers. The value of the seized ivories is evaluated at 500,000 yens, or 59,000 Euros.

Sun was indicted for illegal purchase of products from animals protected by national law, Lee for illegal sale of products from animals protected by national law and Qian for illegal transport of products from animals protected by national law.



Poaching of an elephant Hindol, State of Orissa, India

19 April 2014

The same day of the slaughter of a 25 year old male elephant, 3 poachers were arrested by forest guards. The 4th fled.

Seizure of 3 idols made from elephant tusks, 4.19kg of ivory.

**Kupondole, Central Development Region, Nepal
April 20 2014**

The shop proposes deer antlers, tortoise scutes and a collection of ivory statuettes, a man blowing into a conch shell, another doing physical exercises. On the shelves there are also archeological carvings Buddhist style, Tibetan made. The merchant is subject to the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1973 and the Ancient Monument Preservation Act 1956. He runs the risk of receiving respectively a 5 to 15 year prison sentence with a fine equivalent to 1000 US\$ and a 5 year prison sentence and/or a

fine equivalent to 257 US\$.

In the shop the Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) team found, in local currency, the equivalent of 4700 US\$.

Attempt Poaching of a female elephant Palamau Tiger Reserve, Jharkhand, India

April 2014

An elephant was hit by several gunshots to her front right foot. The witnesses saw her limping around at the edge of the Reserve. Veterinarians were dispatched to the place to tend to and care for her. After 2 days of investigation and tracking, it was not possible to find the injured. According to a Reserve official, it is possible that the elephant is on slowly healing and that she joined a small herd of adults accompanied by 2 or 3 baby elephants. An optimistic version. Come on, until proved otherwise, we'll believe it!

Attempted kidnapping of a baby elephant Uda Walawe Parc National, Provinces of Sabaragamuwa and Uva, Sri Lanka

May 1, 2014

"Owning elephants in Sri Lanka is like owning a Mercedes or Ferrari " sums up a wildlife protector in Sri Lanka author of a report on the issue entitled « Innocent freedom to a captive hell ». There is strong upset in the country after the attempted kidnapping of a baby elephant in the National Park. For once the gangsters fell into a trap. A journalist had found out about the planned attempt. He was on site with a camera. He filmed a truck and several 4 wheels drive cars leaving the park. One of the passengers in the convoy leaped onto the journalist and ripped off his camera that was found some hours later by the side of the road emptied of all images. General alarm was given and the little elephant was found the next day a few kilometers away from the park.

Renting out elephants in Sri Lanka is an important source of high income. One could say it's an investment as big as an elephant. They can be rented out by the week for religious festivities, pompous weddings and long term for attraction parks and their tourists for 15,000 to 20,000 US\$ a month.

At least 50 to 60 elephants have been captured in the wild and their natural habitats over the last 3 years. There are close to zero elephant births in zoos and fenced shelters and the number of captive elephants declared to the administration is in constant increase. Wildlife protectors believe that trafficking networks benefit from political protection and everything is arranged to generate confusion and reduce judicial risks for all participating parties. For instance the Grand Book that comprised a detailed inventory of elephants presently held in captivity mysteriously disappeared last year from the offices of the Sri Lankan Department for wildlife. A recent decision from the Ministry adds to doubt about the will of public officials to deal with the issue to the benefit of wild elephants. For the approximate equivalent of 17,000 US\$, a modest amount seen

an elephant's life span and the revenue they can procure, all owners of captive elephants that have not followed procedures for declaration can receive amnesty. A "blank check" that allows anyone to capture illegally then later own legally a baby elephant whose mother nursed for 2 years in the forest after carrying him for 2 years of pregnancy. Many permits are unduly delivered before capture in order to avoid any hassle over paperwork during transport between the wild areas and private detention places. "There are elephants with permits and permits without elephants" It is also common to make believe the trapped baby elephants were solitary and aggressive « hora aliya ».

Solutions promoted by local NGOs: verify the diligence and legality of holding permits. Return the supposed « hora aliya » to natural habitats or to the Pinnawala orphanage. Train some of the orphan elephants in the Pinnawala center to participate in the main religious processions of Perahera, in the Bouddhiste faith. To enforce existing laws that for example state that anyone involved in an offense against an elephant cannot be let out on bail, that all elephant holders must inform within 8 days any birth or miscarriage or death of an elephant, and finally that any elephant that has not benefited from these formal obligations be considered as stolen from the public domain.

Thanks to this last attempted rapture and the constant work of environmentalists, the subject has now become one of a sensitive nature and has been presented to be dealt with in Parliament.

There would be about 6000 elephants left in Sri Lanka (65,610 km²).

In contrast, the Tamed Elephant Owner's Association, whose director is a Buddhist monk, complained about a shortage of elephants and urges the authorities to capture wild elephants for domestication to animate the religious festivals. A procession-demonstration including of 24 elephants took place at the beginning of April between the parliament and the Sri Lankan wildlife services.



Baby elephant under sequestration after an attempted capture. The bruise on his side probably was caused by the injection of tranquilizers.

**Seizure of 4 pieces of ivory (11 kg)
Red Fort, National Capital Territory of Delhi, India
May 3, 2014**

Instead of selling clothing in their little shop, they decided to jump the step and sell 11 kg of ivory poached in Assam. Total value Rs 70 lakh, 116.000 US\$. It seems that the buyers were not arrested. As for their part, the 2 Indians who were denounced and were waited for at the scheduled meeting spot by a whole team of anti-trafficking officers, are behind bars.

**Theft of elephant tusks, hairs of the tail
Hua Hin, Province of Prachuap Khiri Khan, Thailand
May 4, 2014**

Drugged, mutilated and shaved. This is what was done to 2 domesticated elephants of 60 and 24 years old. The first one's tusks were sectioned more than half way up its length, the second's tail hairs were taken to make bracelets supposed to bring "happiness and power".

The honorable elder elephant died 3 days later from the wounds inflicted by the electrical saw used to mutilate him or by cause of the anesthetic. The "products" stolen from the 2 animals are estimated worth 500.000 baht (15.485 US\$).



**Seizure of 3 kg of ivory, an elephant tusk and 650 kg of elephant bone
Meulaboh, Aceh Province, Indonesia
May 4, 2014**

2 crooks were arrested. The first was a shop owner and his reputation was well established. The second supplied. From the retailer, there was the ivory and the bones from the skeletons of at least 2 elephants. The supplier also sold young tigers and live orangutans, gibbons, skins of several feline species including clouded leopards.



Arrest for poaching an elephant

Hindol, State of Odisha, India

May 5 and 8, 2014

Follow up of the case of April 19. The poacher was arrested. He had received 40,000 R that is 661 US\$ to do the job from a local trafficker. 3 accomplices were also arrested. A forest-guard was suspended from service. He had not informed his hierarchy of the poaching. 2 other agents were also suspended, for abandonment of service.

Seizure of 3008 kg ivory

Autonomous Port of Sihanoukville, Sihanoukville Province, Cambodia

May 9, 2014

More than 250 elephants. The largest seizure ever made in Cambodia. It was allegedly seeds. The consignee of the container was Olair Worldwide Logistics, registered with the Ministry of Commerce. The container had left the port of Mombasa in Kenya. The regional customs directorate and the port had been alerted to this suspicious cargo. The container had transited through Malaysia and Vietnam. The final destination was not clarified. The tusks were distributed in bags of 5. Cambodia seems to be becoming the port of arrival for illegal ivory on the East Asian mainland replacing Thailand, which is increasingly monitored.



Illegal sale of 4 elephant tusks

Karachi, Sindh Region, Pakistan

May 2014

The small tusks of 2 young elephants, 7 and 9 years old, under the custody of the Karachi Zoo, were cut. The animals had been sold by Tanzania. To avoid any criticism of commercial transaction between Pakistan and African countries, it was officially a gift. The previous zoo director was fired after the death of 4 lions. The new director had been sanctioned for abuse of power and different unexplained offenses. After a suspension for several months, he had returned to the KZG, Karachi Zoological Garden. According to the Pakistan Observer, the elephants were put to sleep in an unidentified manner by some staff members of the zoo in order to facilitate the theft of the tusks. The 4 tusks were between 30.5 and 35.5 cm long. Their value in the local market is Rs 2.5 million or 25,500 US\$.

After several years of wandering inside the zoo, a special enclosure for elephants was inaugurated a few days before the crime.

May 14 : full moon



Poaching of one elephant

Keonjhar, Orissa, India

May 2014

The elephant was 40 years old and sprayed with bullets. 24 bullet wounds in total. 3 days ago, he arrived alone in the forests of Dhenkanal. It is the fourth elephant killed in the area in 4 years.

Revocation of a politician and business leader for tusk smuggling

Zhejiang Province, China

May 2014

She was a member of the CPPCC (Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference) of Zhejiang Province, which has 54.5 million inhabitants. Shao Yanfang was also chair of the board of directors of Jinhua Zhengpeng Construction Engineering Co. Ltd., a large company specializing in construction and public works.

She hid 22 elephant tusks in her home. The seizure took place at the end of 2013. The survey revealed that in previous years she had bought 36 tusks from 2 brothers surnamed Wang. The fate of 14 tusks and Ms. Shao is unknown. The investigation of the case is in the hands of the prosecutor of the city of Yong Kang. On May 14, the CPPCC has dismissed her from her position.

Conviction for illegal possession of 17 kg of ivory. 54 kg of ivory seized in Shanghai since the beginning of the year.

Autonomous municipality of Shanghai, China

May 19, 2014

The 48-year-old antique dealer had bought the ivory in Zhejiang Province (why not from Ms. Shao) for a sum of 350,000 yuan or 56,000 US\$. He brought back the share to Shanghai. It went downhill for Weng last October. He pawned it to pay back an urgent debt. The pawnbroker turned it in to police after seeing on television the destruction of illegal ivory under the order of the Chinese government.

Arrested for attempted sale of an ivory cane

Pune, Maharashtra, India

May 2014

The beautiful foldable walking stick decorated with carved flowers and dyed in red, blue and brown proved to be, after several expert inspections, in ivory. The 2 young men aged 30 and 22 who were trying to sell it fell under the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972. The Khadak police filed the complaint 7 months after the arrest.

Seizure of 6 tusks and 64 pieces of ivory (37.87 kg)

**Dayao Bay, Liaoning Province, China
May 22, 2014**

The Dalian customs carried out a big blow, a relatively small amount compared to the average of seizures in China, but this time from a particularly scandalous origin: Japan.



The ivories were hidden in clothing and framed paintings



CITES decided in Harare in 1997 that Japan was the sole beneficiary of the first sale of raw ivory from government stockpiles from Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe. During the second sale authorized in 2007, China was also buyer and South Africa a seller. In total, Japan bought 90 t of ivory during the "2 unique sales" according to the Orwellian terms of CITES.

Sometimes hidden in the shadow of Chinese smuggling, Japan's role in the extinction of elephants brings back bad memories, thanks to the action of the Chinese Customs. Last year, Japan Tiger and Elephant Fund exposed the flaws in the control of the Japanese domestic market. The report detailed the example of a former president of Takaichi, Inc., the leading Japanese hankos manufacturer, and the Japan Federation of Ivory Arts and Crafts Association. The man was arrested in May 2011. His son and antique dealers were involved with him in a vast enterprise of illegal ivory trade. 58 tusks were seized. Between 2005 and 2010, Takaichi had illegally sold between 572 and 1622 tusks as hankos, the traditional Japanese signature seals.

The seizure of May 22 also indicates that Japan is a hub of ivory.

**Seizure of more than one ton of ivory
Port of Hai Phong, Hai Phong Province, Vietnam
May 24, 2014**

Again the ivory tusks were stashed in charcoal bags. The goods were declared under the name of Du Huong Commercial Construction in Mong Cai; the other side of the border is China. This is the third time since the publication of "On the Trail" that a significant amount of ivory is found in the port of Hai Phong.

In August 2012, the tusks were hidden in 24 t of cattle hides.

By a curious turn of logistical gymnastics, the container had previously transited through Hong Kong. The port of departure is not known.



Seizure of a pair of tusks, 2 teeth and a few elephant bones

Kallugundi, State of Karnataka, India

June 6, 2014

A lookout brigade in the Madikeri Forest arrested 4 traffickers. Forest guards presented themselves in civil clothing and as interested buyers. They were taken to the hiding place and could inspect at ease the wide variety of merchandise. Haneef is the gang leader. He is a former member of the gram panchâyat, the local self-government. On the local black market, the 8 kg of ivory and bone are estimated worth Rs 7 lakh that is 12,000 US\$. The gang is composed of a dozen members.

Seizure of 15 kg of ivory

Province of Kon Tum, Vietnam

June 8, 2014

A mobile brigade of border-police intercepted on Sunday a Vietnamese driver who was bringing home 15kg of ivory. "He was planning to sell it." Without anymore details on where and who would buy it.

Seizure of 2 tusks (15.5 kg)

Anekal, State of Karnataka, India

June 9, 2014

The followers of Veerappan, an organized gang, are numerous. The ghost cutter of sandalwood and elephant heads work on and on in the forests of Krishnagiri. In one year, a dozen tusks were seized. Machetes and firearms are confiscated in hollow trees and rock cracks. The police in Achetty fear that a highly organized gang took over forests. 2 people were caught selling 2 fairly heavy tusks at a crossroad at the exit of Anekal, 33,000 inhabitants. The 2 suspects are from Anchetty 40 km from Anekal. The city is at the center of the poachosystem. The leopard and deer skin, ivory and other animal materials sold in the region have ties with the "Anchetty Connection." The 2 from crossroad claim to be only sellers, so they do not know the hunters.



Seizure of 83 pieces of ivories

Shanghai, China

June 17, 2014

The Shanghai customs inspected the passenger bags of flight ET682 originating from Ethiopia. 4 Chinese men had large amounts of ivory orna-

ments in their bags, totalling 83 pieces, and weighing 4.3 kg.

Arrest of an elephant poacher

Salem, Tamil Nadu State, India

June 18, 2014

He earned the nickname Veerappan Junior. In the state of Karnataka, he is accused of killing at least 6 "tuskers" and spreading fear and intimidation. In the neighboring state of Tamil Nadu, Saravanan Gounder, 45 years old, he is only accused of petty crimes, theft, and carrying illegal weapons. He was arrested on Wednesday, June 18. The Police Commissioner from the Salem district announced that under the Article 109 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CRPC), under a guarantee of good behavior, he will be presented to tax authorities and released on solvable bail. On the other side of the border in Karnataka, he is the subject to a manhunt. The Tamil Nadu police said they had only known of this manhunt for 24 hours.

Seizure of 39 pieces of raw ivory and 100 pieces of carved ivory (90 kg)

Tan Son Nhat International Airport- Ho-Chi-Minh-City, Vietnam

June 22, 2014

The load was once again coming from Africa without having been detected despite the theoretical many airport verifications. The sender and receiver are 2 phantom companies. The ivory was declared to be food products. Total value: 4 billion VND (187,840 US\$).



FAMILY AFFAIRS

Seizure of 790 kg of ivory

Hong Kong, China

June 10, 2014

The 15 Vietnamese « tourists » were carrying 750 kg of raw ivory, and also some pearls, bracelets, chopsticks, hankos, Japanese traditional signature seals made in Africa. The flight route of these tourists from Angola included transit through South Africa and Ethiopia. From Hong Kong, they were planning to get to Cambodia via South Korea. The ivory was packed in 32 suitcases. The smuggling Vietnamese caravan comprised 10 men and 5 women aged 20 to 54. Hopping about on their trip they were transporting around the world the equivalent of 8 mil-



lion US\$. Some tusks were stained with blood. Network organizers had chosen to spread the risks over many shoulders. One can imagine that this sort of scheme had proven successful previously. A new mode of operation is being invented. The Chief of Customs in the Hong Kong Airport believes that smuggling networks are attempting to take advantage of the sophisticated airway networks.

Cambodia could be being used as a warehouse for markets in Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and especially China.

The new recommendation of CITES calling for DNA research when the ivory seizure exceeds the weight of 500 kg would enable if followed to scientifically determine the region where the elephants were killed and confirm the hypothesis that the elephants from the forest of Congo were the first victims of this channel.



**GANG
REPEATED OFFENCE**

**Seizure of 4 large tusks
North-East Region, Thailand**

June 2014

Everything is upside down. "On the Trail" often speaks of police disguised as civilians to catch traffickers red handed and seize the ivory. This time its poachers disguised as policemen. They contacted ivory sellers on the Internet. They set up a meeting. Come the planned day and time, 8 members of the gang arrived disguised as policemen. They violently took the ivory and turned it over to an ivory seller in Bangkok 500 km from there. Police heard of the case. The real police managed to arrest the fake. Investigations revealed that the gang led by Rattanachai Photikul, 26 years old, had already put this method in practice at least 7 times. Value of the 4 tusks is estimated at 6 million Baht (185,000 US\$).

**Seizure of 77 tusks (110 kg)
Tan Son Nhat International Airport in Hô-Chi-Minh-City, Vietnam
June 11, 2014**

Bis Repetita at the Ho-Chi-Minh-City Airport. The flight came from Nigeria via Doha, capital of Qatar. "Customs procedures are now performed electronically, and the smugglers are taking advantage of this to ship illegal goods by air, making us increase our vigilance and inspect any suspected goods," declares officials in the Tan Son Nhat airport. The seizure is estimated at 4.4 billion VND (207,000 US\$) local value.



**Poaching of one elephant
Lubuk Kembang Bunga, Province of Riau, Indonesia
June 2014**

The body was found in a dreadful state. The head and the trunk were cut up with a chainsaw to « ease » extraction of the tusks. Despite the massacre, bullet wounds were still visible. This is the 45th Sumatran elephant killed since the beginning of 2012 from poaching and supposed man-elephant conflicts.



Seizure of 80 kg of elephant bones
Bangalore, State of Karnataka, India
June 21, 2014

Madhu is his name, he was attempting to sell the ribs and thigh bones. According to his declarations he had owned them for 3 years. The bones are said to come from digging up an elephant who had fallen into an electrical trap and had been buried in the Eslur forest. If investigations prove on the contrary that the bones come from rampant poaching at the border between the Karnataka and Tamil Nadu States, the young man risks in theory a 6 year prison term. The forest conservation director reminds all that anyone who finds elephant parts must declare them to his services within 24h.



Conviction for smuggling ivory
Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, China
June 2014

Zhu, 60 years old, owned a handi-crafts shop in Suzhou. On April 1st law enforcement officers seized 10 ivory products worth 28,000 Yuan (4,503 US\$). During his bail, he tried to sell the remaining ivory products. Again, the police seized 18 kg of ivory products, valued at 74,000 Yuan (11,925 US\$). He was convicted to 5 years and 6 months in prison and a fine of 200,000 Yuan (32,164 US\$).



EUROPE

Conviction for the theft of an elephant tusk
Folkestone, England
2 April 2014

Craig Deane had stolen an elephant tusk from an educational zoo of Wingham in September of 2013 (See "On the Trail n°2 p. 67). The tusk was not found. It was valued at 4,000 Euros. It was part of ivories confiscated by English customs and had been lent to the Wingham institution. The sentence of 120 days in prison imposed on Craig Deane for theft of ivory will be mixed with those of 35 months which he received for breaking into Wingham Wildlife Park.



Seizure of 211 ivory objects
London Heathrow Airport, England
2 April 2014

The 211 decorative objects in ivory were covered in boot polish. The airport customs were not fooled. This technique of camouflaging is not unknown. The package transported by DHL came from Zambia and was headed to France via the UK. The recipient lives in the suburbs of Paris. The sender in Lusaka. Both are Zambian. The Zambia Wildlife Authority requested to Interpol that the seized ivory be returned in order to, they say, facilitate the completion of the investigations.

Seizure of 60 kg of ivory
Schirnding, Bavaria, Germany
May 7, 2014

« We only have some candy and a picnic » declared the driver of the minivan halted for a road-side check on the way from Regensburg to Frankfurt. The 3 Asian passengers of the vehicle were coming from the Czech Republic not particularly known for its herds of wild elephants. Customs officers did not back down and ended up finding 60 kg of ivory among the luggage.

Seizure of 280 carved ivory
Var Department, Region of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, France
May 2014

Kamasoutra positions, necklaces, statuettes, decorated tusks, bracelets. The 6 hour long search was maybe not enough. There might be still more hidden somewhere. The 70 year old couple spent their time and money buying ivory on the Internet, in garage and antiquity sales and the opaque networks seldom known but by the insiders.

An information notice had been issued by a brigade specialized in international trafficking of protected species based in Chambord. Investigators from the ONCFS (Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage) say they do not know what will become of this ivory collection. They mention the options of either destruction or transfer to a museum. Is the doctrine in favor of destruction initiated in France on February 6 just a hay fire?



**Seizure of 14 pieces of ivory (35,3 kg)
Prague-Václav-Havel Airport, Province of Bohemia, Czech Republic
June 15 2014**

More tusks cut to pieces that scanner monitors in the Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris did not see. Luckily their colleagues in Prague caught up their mistake. The ivory was wrapped in aluminum paper. Customs spokesman says total value is of 100,000 US\$ on the European market. This is the second ivory seizure of importance this year in Prague (see "On the Trail" n°4 p.88).

The netting also included seizure of a good deal of amphetamine pills hidden in the passenger's toilet-tries heading for Hanoi via Prague.

OCEANIA

**Indictment for illegal import of 31 ivory pieces
Napier, Region of Hawke's Bay, New Zealand
May 2014**

The man imported carved ivory 31 times. The maximum penalty in New Zealand for this offense is 5 years imprisonment and/or a 85,400 US\$ fine.



© Department of Conservation

Naturabuy.fr The French Internet Site That Kills

"Beautiful deer hoof corkscrew," "hippo tooth from 19.5 to 27 cm long", "a sawfish rostra, 35 teeth", "elephant molar a little bit crackled", "a pair of elephant tusks, record for Chad 1970-1980. 1.69 m, 40.3 kg, 1.67 m, 39.7kg", reserve price 70,000 €, "elephant skull", reserve price 5,000 €.

One can read on the site:

Question: "Hello, would you happen to have other skulls please? For example felines?"

Answer: "I have a panther skin with its head, no other skulls for the moment. Regards."

Numerous animals or parts of protected animals are offered to for purchase when, according to sellers with CITES certificates are yet to be issued by the French authorities.

Naturabuy is a subsidiary of the Mondadori group publisher in France of about thirty magazines including Closer, la Revue Nationale de la Chasse (The National Hunting Journal), Vital, Top Santé, Science et Vie, Grazia and Télé Poche.

"Naturabuy is not liable for any false declaration made by the purchase dealer".

CITES is overwhelmed by the Internet phenomenon and the influx of sales of animal parts or animals that is the Convention's role to protect. For the time being, CITES only collects information on the flux of the transactions, means of transport and the role of the Internet in the expansion of environmental criminality.

Internet is a lot faster than CITES and the 180 member countries. Internet is the hare, CITES is the tortoise. It is not at all sure that the modern tale will end in favour of the tortoise (*Testudindae*, Appendix I and II) as in La Fontaine's fable.

Once again, Chad, the Philippines and the Union of the Comoros, 3 countries impacted by the looting of endemic wild flora and fauna and by the transit of illegal cargo, are speaking out. They are asking that sellers be obliged to prove the administrative regularity of animal parts when they are posted on the internet for sale and that new rules be implemented in this field.

A status report by Interpol written with the support of IFAW concluded, following 2 weeks of surveillance of the most known Internet sites, that 4,500 ivory objects were sold worth around 1.45 million €.

In France Naturabuy is one of these environmental crime pushers.

Ivory From the Past

There is great unease. The European Union informed the CITES secretariat that there were 20,000 pieces of ivory exported between 2002 and 2012 while importing countries reported a number of 35,000. These wandering ivories are said to be pre-Convention. Those who want to sell them must prove that the ivory entered the European Union before 1976, the date at which the African elephants were first listed to a CITES Appendix. According to the European Union Committee on trade in wild fauna and flora, "very good falsifications" of French certificates are in circulation in Europe. They enable illegal ivories to be placed on the European market and to be exported around the world.

The repeated sales at the Cannes Auction arouse suspicions in this regard. According to the Auctioneer Nicolas Debussy, the French Riviera is an ivory tank. Mr. Debussy and his partner Carine Aymard actively conducted research and are willing to perform all the necessary administrative steps on behalf of the ivory sellers. On May 13, Robin des Bois published the article "French Riviera Pensioners Endangering Elephants" (1).



Poster on the Cannes Enchères street window

The certificates that the Cannes Auction establishes according to the method "let us do the red tape" are issued by the regional authority of the French government, the Regional directorate of environment of Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur (DREAL) (email: cites-paca@developpement-durable.gouv.fr). According to other sources, the DREAL of the Poitou-Charentes region has an active role in the pre-Convention ivory market (email: cites-poitoucharente@developpement-durable.gouv.fr).

On May 14, Robin des Bois wrote to the Minister of Ecology and asked her to at least call the DREAL in each French region to be extremely strict and rigorous during investigation procedures for export permits. 2 and half months later, no news.

On July 15, a third sale took place. 1 ton of ivory disappeared under the hammer of Mr. Debussy, a real jackhammer. In the current atmosphere in France, Mr. Debussy wants more flexible and simplified export rules. On the contrary, some CITES member states are worried about this market expansion that might encourage the international commercial demand for ivory. They are not the only ones. 23 NGOs around the world like Robin des Bois call for the stop of commercial trading of ivory, including the pre-Convention ivories (2).

Other auction rooms and brokers in Europe exploit the market opportunity of antiques and ivory pre-Convention often called post-colonial ivory, including Bruun Rasmussen in Denmark (see "On the Trail" #4 p.69), Ox Gallstone in Bonn, Germany, and Dentex Trading Nieuw-Vennep in the Netherlands with a regional office in Hong Kong.

(1) <http://www.robindesbois.org/english/animal/French-Riviera-Pensioners-Endangering-Elephants.html>

(2) http://www.robindesbois.org/english/animal/Elephants_Ivory_Trade_Ban.pdf

<http://www.robindesbois.org/english/animal/europe-an-open-market-for-the-ivory-trade.html>

Others mammals

AMERICA

AFRICA

Release of 2 zebra poachers

Tanzania

April 2014

The Court of Appeals ordered the release of 2 zebra hunters caught in 2011 in the Serengeti Park. Betrayed by their tracks, they were caught in the act with bows, arrows, knives and machetes, traps, and according to the guards, zebra and warthog meat. Esteeming that the illegal hunting and the detention of the trophies were not proved, the appeal judges only retained the offense of illegal entry into the Park with forbidden weapons. Considering that they had already served their sentences for the 2 main charges, the court ordered their release. Originally, the 2 individuals were condemned to 23 years of prison or 8,000 US\$ of fines.

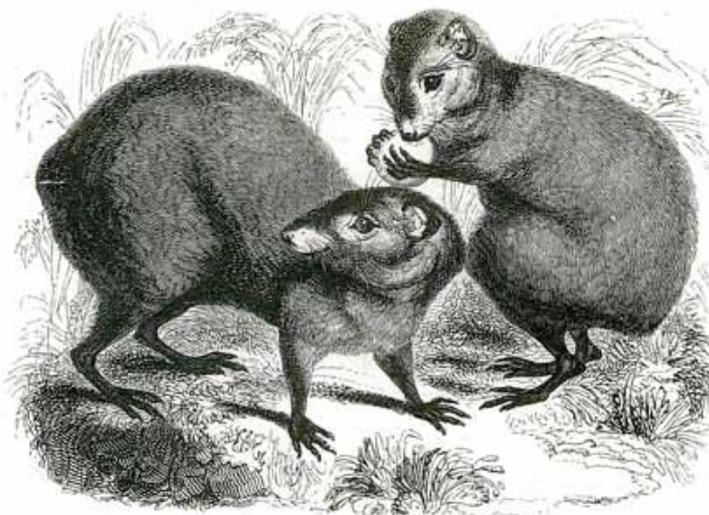
Poaching of a hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) and conviction of 5 poachers



Masai Mara Natural Reserve, County of Narok, Kenya

May 19, 2014

The 5 killers of a hippopotamus residing in the Mara River were sentenced to a 5-year prison term with an additional 3 months for having illegally entered Kenya. The ivory of a poached adult individual's canines are intended for the international trade market and the tons of meat for the interior market or that thereof neighboring countries. In this case, poachers used traditional bows and arrows.



AGOUTIS.



PACA BRUN.

Conviction for illegal possession of 8 agoutis (genre *Dasyprocta*) Chaguanas, Chaguanas Municipality, Trinidad and Tobago 8 April 2014



Ganesh Mahase, manager of the Gems bar at Cunupia was fined \$800 local, or 123 US\$. The species does not exist in the wild on the islands of Trinidad and Tobago. The captive agoutis were presented to the court during the hearing. Witnesses of trafficking of protected animals can call the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources Hotline at 800-HALT (4258).

Seizure of paca meat (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras)

Mayaro, Trinidad and Tobago

10 April 2014

The rodent is protected by the national laws. 40kg of meat were flushed out of a freezer.



Seizure of 2 agouti carcasses (genus *Dasyprocta*)

Campos Novos, Santa Catarina State, Brazil

April 29, 2014

They were offered for sale in a supermarket. They had been shot dead. Other animal products of dubious origin were recovered. The owner of the supermarket was fined R \$ 2,500 (1,126 US\$). It is also a criminal offense. He was denounced anonymously.

One species of agouti (*Dasyprocta punctata*) is listed in CITES Appendix III in Honduras.



Seizure of 2 paca carcasses (family *Cuniculus*)

Varginha, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

April 30, 2014

Dismantling of a network of poachers in Brazil. 5 search warrants resulted in the seizure of 27 firearms, 13 traps, and 972 cartridges of different calibers. 6 people were arrested.

The pacas were found frozen with 3 capybara skins (*Hydrochoerus Hydrochoerus*, unlisted in CITES).



Seizure of 2 live armadillos (family *Dasypodidae*) and 2 live pacas (genus *cuniculus*)

Mucuri, State of Bahia, Brazil

May 2014

A roadblock allowed for the interception of a stolen motorcycle in January 2014. The driver explained that he had bought it a month ago without knowing it had been stolen. When they went to the salesman's home, the police discovered the animals.



Seizure of a coati (family *Procyonidae*)

Pasaje, Province of El Oro, Ecuador

May 2014

After a check up, he will be transferred to the Arenillas Zoological Park. There are 3 species of coati, the white-nosed coati (*Nasua narica*, Appendix III in Honduras), the South American coati (*Nasua nasua*, Appendix III in Uruguay), and the Mountain coati (*Nasuella olivacea*, not listed in CITES).



**Seizure of an agouti (genus *Dasyprocta*) and 3 pacas (genus *Cuniculus*)
Bujari, State of Acre, Brazil
June 2014**



4 people arrested. They will have to answer to charges of illegally hunting animals and illegal possession of firearms, ammunition and knives.

Conviction for poaching of a wood bison (*Bison bison athabasca*, Appendix II) and 2 muskoxes (*Ovibos moschatus*, unlisted in CITES)



**Milton, Province of Ontario, Canada
May 2, 2014**

Deceit in reality TV. Thomas Pigeon, part of a reality TV show well-known in Canada called « Canada in the rough » has just been sentenced to 8000 Canadian dollars (7373 US\$) fine for illegal possession of 2 muskox trophies and a wood bison.

To approach one of these mammals within 1.5 km with a motorized vehicle in the intention to hunt them is prohibited in Nunavut and in the North-West Territories.

Yet, for the needs of his show, the director and his team approached their targets on snowmobiles and the animals were killed at short range without any hope of escape. The show's editing led to believe that Thomas Pigeon, chief of the hunting squad, had proceeded on foot through the forest as the rules require.

Some years later, the real video reached the Ministry of Natural Resources in Ontario. Thomas Pigeon pleaded guilty.



**Poaching of 2 Mexican bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*, Appendix II)
Loreto, State of Baja-California, Mexico
June 1, 2014**

The 3 poachers were caught red handed. The PROFEPA seized the 2 bighorn sheep already dead, 2 guns, a knife, ammunition and a raft.



ASIA

**Seizure of a red panda skin (*Ailurus fulgens*, Appendix I)
Soltimod and Bhaktapur, Central Development Region, Nepal
7 April 2014**

There were 4 of them onto the panda skin measuring 72cm by 33. It can be sold around 1,800 US\$. 2 motorcycles were seized on the same occasion. The 4 suspects are called « temporary residents of Kathmandu ».



**Poaching of a blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra* Appendix III in Nepal)
Kaimur district, Bihar State, India
April 22, 2014**

According to a blog Wildlife Crime in India, villagers seized a police officer who had just poached a blackbuck. The species is extinct in its native range, Bangladesh.

Seizure of Eld's deer meat (*Rucervus eldii*, Appendix I)

Bishnupur, Manipur, India

27 April 2014

The good news is that the Eld's deer was considered to be extinct in 1950 and that 20 years later, some species have been found. In 1977, the marshes of Lake Loktak were declared a National Park with the single goal of saving the revived species. The weak genetic diversity of the isolated population makes it very vulnerable to epizootics transmitted by agricultural livestock. However there would be now more than 100 Eld's deer.

The bad news is that poachers are on the move. 4 of them have been identified. 2 successfully evaded the police patrols assisted by some representatives of civil society. From there, venison cooked and raw was found at the home of a poacher, another was intercepted as soon as he returned home with a huge piece of meat in his arms.

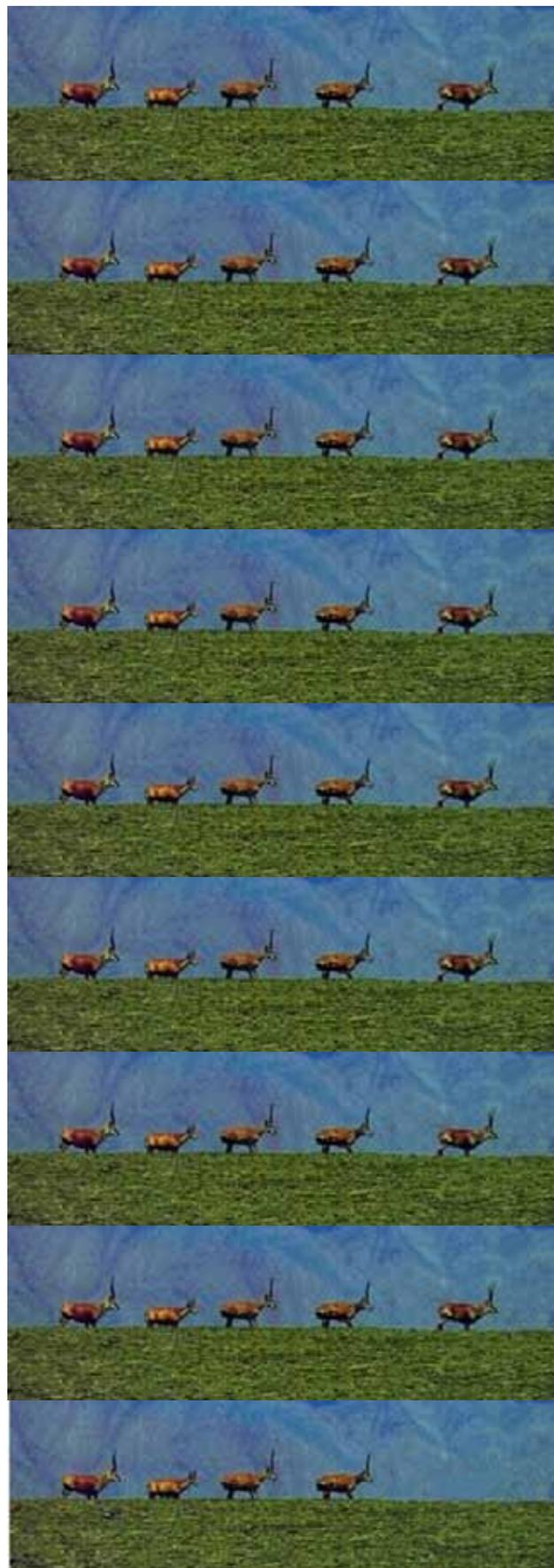
Conviction of a person for possession of 11 shahtoosh wool-shawls, Tibetan antelope (*Pantholopshodgsonii*, Appendix I)



National Capital Territory of Delhi, India

April 2014

The individual's sentence is not yet known to "On the Trail." Traffickers of shahtoosh could face up to a 2 year prison sentence and a fine of 1 million Rs (16,600 US\$). His arrest dates back to November 2002. He had in his possession 11 shahtoosh wool shawls spun with Tibetan antelope down. 4 antelopes are needed to make one shawl. Shahtoosh means queen of wools in Persian. The "Chiru" frolic in Tibet in winter and migrate to Kashmir in summer. The species is considered extinct in Nepal. The "Toosh" mafia kills the antelopes to shave off their underfur. Tibetan antelope shawls are on the top of wedding gift lists in India and Pakistan. A genuine shawl, can sell for at least 25,000 US\$. Fortunately for Tibetan antelopes, there is shahtoosh and shahtoosh. Some shawls are made with sheep, Pashmina goat wool, they are sold under the prestigious brand at a price of 4,000 US\$. Nevertheless, the Tibetan antelope are endangered even more so that their reproductive cycle is slow and that the survival rate of the young is low. The Tibetan antelope are even more threatened than the vicuña which, unless poached, are circled, marked, shorn and released to meet the global demand for wool known, just like the Tibetan antelope wool, for its lightness and its soft feel.



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44 antelopes are needed to make
11 shahtoosh wool shawls

**Seizure of a musk deer skin and bones (*Moschus* spp., Appendix I)
Kookal, State of Tamil Nadu, India
May 4, 2014**

One more case of poaching in the Kodaikanal hills. According to secret information that somehow reached forest guards ears, a gang of poaching taxidermists were hard at work in a hut. Police forces raided the place by night and seized head and antlers, hides and bones from musk dears, sambars (*Cervus unicolor*, unlisted in CITES), a goat protected under Indian law. A stuffed leopard head was also seized. The hut's occupants managed to escape.



Cervus unicolor

**Seizure of 9 small-clawed otter skins (*Aonyx cinerea*, Appendix II), 1 person arrested
District of Solan, State of Himachal Pradesh, India
May 31, 2014**

The state police and the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau seized 9 small-clawed otters. One of the poachers was arrested.



**Seizure of 2351 pieces of saiga antelope antlers (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II)
Khorgas, Xinjiang Province, China
June 1, 2014**

The Khorgas customs seized 66 boxes of 2351 pieces of saiga antelope antlers, estimated worth 70,530,000 Yuan (1,132,000 US\$). The police had received reports of this case starting January 2014 and after half a year of investigation, finally captured one suspect on June 1, 2014. Khorgas is a town near the China-Kazakhstan border. Saigas were victims

the promotion of their horns by the WWF; the NGO argued that they could be an alternative to the so-called healing properties of rhinoceros horns.



The female saiga does not have horns and soon they will no more have males.



**Seizure of 4 bear skins (*Ursidae* spp., Appendix I or II) and a wolf skin (*Canis lupus*, Appendix I or II)
Altay, Region of Xinjiang, China
June 2014**

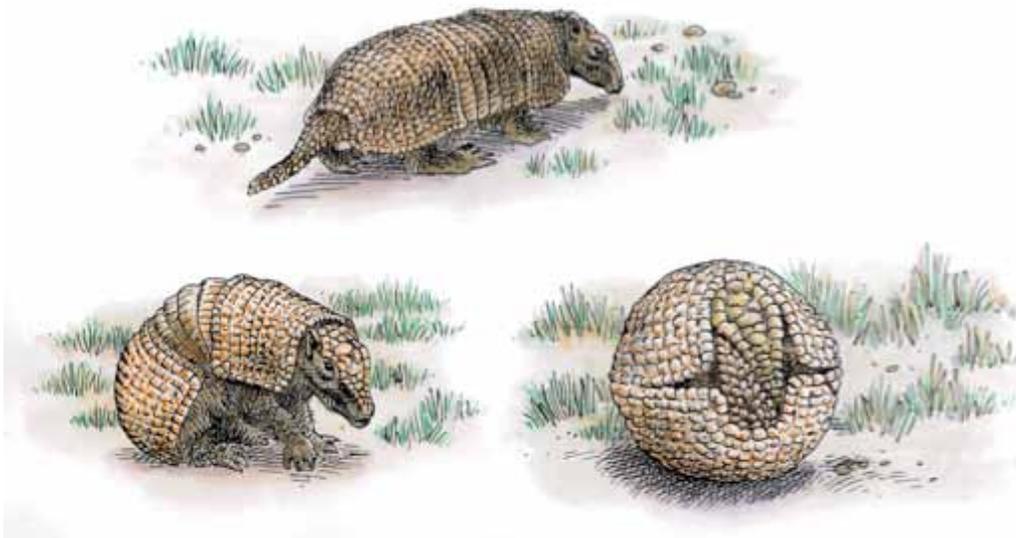
At the far Northeast end of China, in the triangle bordering Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan and Tajikistan, customs seized 4 bear furs and one wolf skin smuggled into China by the traffickers. Suspects whose number and origin have not been disclosed were arrested.



**Seizure of 7 Siberian musk deer preputial glands (*Moschus moschiferus*, Appendix I)
Bangalore, Karnataka State, India
June 27, 2014**

The duo was hoping for big deal. Each gland contains between 20 and 30g of a musky secretion used in perfumes and traditional medicine. After being dried in the sun each gland sells for several thousands of Euros.

World Cup



© Bruno Congar / Robin des Bois

Several armadillos, mascot of the World Cup, were seized during the month of May in Brazil
When facing a danger, the mammal rolled up into ball

Operations against trade and trafficking of wildlife intensified starting in the month of May. IBAMA (Brazilian Institute for the Environment and Natural Resources) is reinforcing checks in 12 Brazilian Airports. Brazilian biologists feared an increase in wildlife trafficking, dealers around the world would likely mingle with the crowds of tourists and fans. They were right? The number of seizures described in "On the Trail" in Brazil doubled since the last quarters.

2 loads of Northern seahorses (*Hippocampus erectus*, Appendix II) and decorative fish sought for by collectors from all over the world were seized at the Sao Paulo Airport on June 13 from the state of Bahia. Northern sea horses is the sixth most exported marine species from Brazil under the restrictive application of the CITES Appendix II. The 2000 sea fish, yellow line goby *Elacatinus figaro*, called neon fish, and Brazilian basslet (*Gramma brasiliensis*) are considered threatened with extinction under Brazilian law. The biological value of the seizure is inestimable, monetary value is 189,000 Brazilian Reals, i.e. 86,000 US\$.



Gramma brasiliensis



Hippocampus erectus



Elacatinus figaro

Animal attractions, small circuses without the center ring or tents have proliferated: heart-melting monkey "performances", piranha demonstrations or even swimming with Amazon river dolphins (*Inia geoffrensis*, Appendix II). At numerous small floating guest-houses and bed and breakfasts in areas like Manaus, guests and fans are welcomed by python snakes, caimans, three-toed sloths and macaws. Photos, videos, appetizers accompany the relaxing moments when wild animals are exhibited and cunningly exploited. The Manaus Environmental Police threatened to ban these practices. Exhibitors defend themselves by stating that the animals are not pets, they have not been given nicknames and are released after 10 days to be replaced by newly caught animals.

Multi-Species

AFRICA

Seizure of 10 rhinoceros horns (20 kg in total), 500 g of powdered rhinoceros horn, sea horses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II) and sea cucumbers Conakry, Conakry Region, Guinea April 8, 2014

A first in Conakry, a first in Africa ! 3 directors of the Shanghai Construction Group (SCG) on a mission in Guinea to direct several constructions such as that of the hotel Kaloum are implicated in the traffic. The total value of the spoils seized in the 5 star hotel construction site kitchen is estimated at a first glance to approach the equivalent of 1.2 million US\$. The accountant, the interpreter and the director of the construction are the primary suspects. The trafficking would have been conducted in connection with the general director of the SCG in Guinea. All of the construction workers are Chinese. Only the security agents are Guinean.



The search directed by the substitute prosecutor was confronted with lively protests from Chinese promoters. It yet was successful. The accused were taken to the Direction Centrale of the Police Judiciaire (DCPJ). The Minister of the Interior arrived on the scene of the police custody shortly after and met the head of the Interpol office in Conakry.

Interpol is involved in the procedure because of the international character of the case. There are no rhinos in Guinea; the horns come from South Africa. They would have been reduced into powder with files and vices from the construction site. The Interpol's international procedure that makes countering environmental crime a main priority excluded one of the suspects, the accountant Wang Fuxing on the motive that only the sea horses were found in his personal belongings. The 2 remaining defendants were released under judicial control.

In May of 2013, the Secretary of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) recommended to Member States to suspend all trade of CITES species with Guinea convinced of delivering false export certificates for species as vulnerable as great apes. This recommendation is still in effect.

The NGO GALF (Guinea Application of Fauna Law) is indignant that proceedings of the instruction are chaotic and call on the international community for heightened vigilance in following the affair.

The directors of the Shanghai Construction Group with regards to Guinean law only risk a 3 to 6 months jail sentence.

The traffic has been ongoing for 2 years. The rhinoceros horns are not exported raw towards China. They are reduced into power and put into small bags, which obviously complicate inspections and detection in Guinean and international customs.

REPEATED OFFENSE

Seizure of crocodile meat (*Crocodylidae* spp., Appendix I or II), monkey meat (*Primates* spp., Appendix I or II) and elephant meat Republic of Congo 10 April 2014

A cop arrested by police officers. It's not usual, but it happens. Aimé Y. was the regular provider for vendors of bush meat on the market of Ouenzé in Brazzaville. He managed a cold room in which the police officers found large quantities of protected animals reduced into meat. The presumed poacher operated with the help of a AK 47 machine gun in the Fauna Reserve of Léfini (6300 km²) 140km north of Brazzaville. Due to a lack of control chimpanzees, gorillas, lions, and servals have long since disappeared from this "on paper" sanctuary.

Aimé was still a police officer even though 3 years ago he had been implicated in the poaching of 3 elephants. The Crocodile meat, monkey meat, elephant and meat from other non-identified species was burned.



The river Léfini

REPEATED OFFENSE

Seizure of ivory and 2 leopard hides and conviction Franceville, Haut-Ogooué Province, Gabon

24 April and 21 May 2014

"On the Trail" already mentioned 6 times the Haut-Ogooué province as a place for the transit of precious animals materials, forbidden from transport and sale according to international and Gabon laws. 4 traffickers (Ms. Rose Mbida Mfomo is the leader) were arrested in the month of April at the hotel Apily in Franceville. Ms. Rose had been out of prison 3 months after an earlier stay of 10 days for the possession of ivory and feline hides. She relapsed. She left the hotel Apily escorted by police forces and draped in a panther hide as big as her. 2 of her partners in fortune were carriers of a largely sized tusk and another spotted fur. A dead panther sells on the African market for 10,000 US\$ and ivory sells for 2000 US\$ the kg.



The 4 were facing the maximum sentence, 6 months of prison and a fine of 10 million CFA francs (15,250 Euros). But, Ms. Rose has high up relations. The day following her arrest, she was released. Only her 3 companions were sentenced on May 21 to one year of prison each, a fine of 1 million FCFA and a total of 15 million FCFA (22,870 Euros) in damages. They are also banished from Gabon for 5 years for default of immigration cards. Thing seem to always go in threes, so maybe Ms. Rose may make another appearance.



Seizure of snakes, turtles and ornate monitor lizards (*Varanusornatus*, Appendix II), crocodiles (*Crocodylidae* spp., Appendix I or II) and pottos (*Perodicticus potto*, Appendix II)

**Muyuka, Southwest Province, Cameroon
April 30, 2014**

A team from Limbe Wildlife Center and the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife has, since the end of April, took care of a micro-zoo in Muyuka situated 123km from the coastal town of Limbe. In Muyuka, 36 animals were crammed into a cage 2m by 4m separated by corrugated iron sheets. This rescue puts the Limbe sanctuary in a delicate situation. The ultimate aim of the sanctuary is to enable the release of as many animals as possible into their natural habitats following a quarantine period and teaching, if necessary, of reflexes to eat and dodge predators.

Funds and space are scarce in Limbe, www.limbe-wildlife.org.

The potto is a primate. It measures from 30 to 40cm and has a short tail (3 to 10cm). It weighs about 1.5kg. It is a nocturnal. It lives in Equatorial Africa.



Perodicticus potto

The good news is that a potto taken to the Limbe shelter in January was released into the Korup National Park in April. Ready to go, the adult is lively and agile; the nocturnal primate has high survival chances.

**Seizure of 2 gorilla skulls and 2 gorilla skins (*Gorilla* spp., Appendix I) and elephant parts
East of Cameroon**

June 5, 2014



The 39-year-old man sold gorilla furs and skulls. He also has a solid reputation for being an ivory trafficker.

Seizure of 12 pieces of ivory (50 kg), 30 claws and 8 lion teeth (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II)

**Namanga, County of Kajiado, Kenya
June 11, 2014**

The whole loot was hidden in a Vietnamese citizen's luggage. The smuggler came from Tanzania and had crossed the border in Namanga. He has been taken into custody in the police station closest to where he was arrested. He will be presented before court in the days to come.

Court Hearing for possession of 4 elephant tusks and 2 cheetah skins (*Acinonyx jubatus*, Appendix I with a reservation from Namibia)

**Windhoek, Region of Khomas, Namibia
June 13, 2014**

The Indian and the 2 Chinese fell according to them into a trap. Their curiosity is what got them into trouble. Someone, who by the way escaped, set up a meeting with them in a luxury car « to show them something that might interest them ».

Police on patrol just happened to look into this saloon car parked by the side of the road and found there the 4 elephant tusks. Continuing its action, police then accompanied one of the suspects to the Namibian capital's Chinatown and noted the presence of 2 cheetah skins hung on the wall of his shop headquarters. Some days later, bail for the 3 accused was refused.

Seizure of 8 tusks, dried elephant and monkey meat (*Primates* spp., Appendix I or II) and a pangolin skin (*Manis* spp., Appendix II)

Between Divundu and Ndiyona, Kavango Region, Namibia

June 28 and 29, 2014

The 12 Namibians, arrested over the weekend with

tusks and dried bush meat, were finally released on bail ranging from 2000 to 3000 N (188 to 282 US\$). The trial is scheduled for September.

The Deputy Minister of Environment and Tourism Uahekua Herunga announced that the military presence in the region Zambezi, Kavango East Kunene and Erongo will be strengthened in order to deter and counteract poaching. The Minister was outraged that a number of citizens have been communicating with foreign poachers about route information and location of the target species.

The newspaper New Era presented its statistics at the ministerial speech: between 2005 and June 2014, 123 cases of elephant poaching were recorded. 222 tusks weighing 1910 kg were confiscated. 105 suspects were arrested between 2005 and 2013. Regarding rhinos from 2005 to June 2014, 11 cases of poaching were recorded. 18 horns weighing 14.3 kg were confiscated. Their local market value is estimated at N \$ 599,532 or 56,500 US\$. 9 suspects have been arrested.

Seizure of a dead African fish-eagle (*Haliaeetus vocifer*, Appendix II) the skeleton and a shell of a green turtle (*Cheloniemydas*, Appendix I), the skins of a rhinoceros and a hippopotamus (family *Hippopotamidae*, Appendix II) and the skin of an African rock python (*Python sebae*, Appendix II) KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa June 27 to July 1, 2014

4 days of controls and searching. The Ezemvolvo (KZN), South African Police Service (SAPS) and Zululand Anti-Poaching (ZAP) teams were at work. Seizures were carried out but no arrests. There was, however, no poaching in the area for 5 days. The officers heralded it as a success. 50kg of buffalo meat was also seized. Buffaloes are called dagga boys from the word dagga meaning mud in Zulu.

**FAMILY AFFAIRS
REPEAT OFFENCE**

She went to the wrong school with her father who took her at the age of 9 to hunt the Big Five in Zimbabwe and she was a good student. At the age of 13, she left the family ranch in Texas once again for a South African party when she first used her Rem-

ington 416 on a white rhino. At the age of 14, it was a massacre. She scored an elephant, a buffalo and a lion all shot with her father's 470 Nitro Express then a hippo and to top off the celebrations a leopard. At 19, Kendall Jones is also a second year student at the University of Texas and a cheerleader during football and basketball games.



AMERICA

Seizure of 2 white-faced capuchins (*Cebus capucinus*, Appendix II) and 2 live yellow-crowned Amazons (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II) Lebrija, Santander Department, Colombia April 2014

9 wild animals are seized from a commercial establishment in response to complaints about their living conditions. First veterinary examination reveals a state of stress. Monkeys have skin problems, nutritional status is mediocre and depressive mental state.

Birds have nice feathers and an acceptable nutritional status. They are transferred to a wildlife rescue center before being released back into their natural environment. The merchant did not provide documents proving their legal origin.



Cebus capucinus



Amazona ochrocephala

Seizure of a Bolivian three-toed sloth (*Bradypus variegatus*, Appendix II), a macaw (*Psittaciformes spp.*, Appendix I or II) and a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II) Santa Marta, Magdalena Department, Colombia April 2014

The seizures took place in several areas. The three-toed sloth of Bolivia has a value of 2234 US\$ (4,312,000 pesos), the macaw 2,331 US\$ (4,500,000 pesos) and boa constrictor 1554 US\$ (3,000,000 pesos).



Bradypus variegatus

Seizure of 2 parrots (*Psittaciformes spp.*, Appendix I or II) and an ocelot skin (*Leopardus pardalis*, Appendix I) Nossa Senhora do Livramento, Mato Grosso, Brazil April 10, 2014

The suspect was denounced for illegal hunting. In his home were 4 firearms, ammunition of different calibers, 3 parrots, and an ocelot skin. He explained that the ocelot skin does not belong to him. A friend left it there after a barbecue. The 41-year-old farmer was arrested for illegal possession of firearms and ammunition, animal abuse, illegal possession of wildlife, and smuggling of weapons. He is released on bail in waiting of trial.

Seizure of a culpeo (*Lycalopex culpaeus*, Appendix II), a puma skin (*Puma concolor*, Appendix II) and an ocelot skin (*Leopardus pardalis*, Appendix I)

Salinas, Bolívar Province, Ecuador April 11, 2014

They were discovered in the local Matiavi cultural center in Salinas during the operation. An administrative investigation is to determine responsibility. Once again, a notice is made to the public not to buy or sell this type of "product".

The main threat to culpeo is hunting for its fur although the trade has generally declined. It is present in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador and Peru.



Seizure of 3 white-tailed deer heads (*Odocoileus virginianus*, Appendix III Guatemala), a Central American Red Brocket's head of the species *Mazama temama* (*Mazama temama cerasina*, Appendix III in Guatemala), 15 white-lipped peccary heads (*Tayassu pecari*, Appendix II), a puma head (*Puma concolor*, Appendix I or II), and 2 crocodile skins (*Crocodylidae* spp., Appendix I or II)

Huehuetenango, Huehuetenango Department, Guatemala

April 21, 2014

The police crack down took place in a private individual's house where there were more than 20 stuffed wild animal heads. The poacher is charged for damage to the natural and cultural heritage of the nation.



Seizure of a variety of wings of canary-winged parakeets (*Brotogeris versicolurus*, Appendix II), macaws (*Psittaciformes* spp., Appendix I or II), monkeys (*Primates* spp. Appendix I or II) including Andean night monkey (*Aotus miconax*, Appendix II), forest tortoise (*Chelonoidis denticulata*, Appendix II turtles), Central American agouti (*Dasyprocta punctata*, Appendix III Honduras), 6 red-and-green macaws (*Ara chloropterus*, Appendix II), 2 scarlet macaws (*Ara macao*, Appendix I), 3 blue-and-gold macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II), red-lore amazon (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II), 2 turquoise-fronted parrot (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), 3 mealy parrots (*Amazona farinosa*, Appendix II), a toucan (family *Ramphastidae*), 3 black-headed caiques (*Pionites melanocephalus*, Appendix II) and an anteater (family *Myrmecophagidae*)

Pucallpa, Ucayali Region, Peru

April 2014

The city of Pucallpa is pointed to. Operations are organized to restrain smuggling, breeding or exhibition of wild animals without authorization.

- In the market of Bellavista, 102 animals were seized. They were caged in poor condition with signs of dehydration. They were transferred to Pucallpa Natural Park where they went into quarantine and received veterinary care. They will then be released in a suitable habitat in the Park.

- In an individual's house in downtown Pucallpa, a dozen other animals were seized.



OPERATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF JAGUAR

Seizure of a jaguar, a white-tailed deer and 3 white-tailed deer trophies (*Odocoileus virginianus*, Appendix III Guatemala), a green iguana (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), 4 Central American red brocket trophies species *Mazama temama* and a puma skin (*Puma concolor*, Appendix II) Mexico

Between April 22 and April 27, 2014

Organized in 15 states of Mexico, the operation for the protection of jaguar took place from April 22 to 27, 2014. An individual was arrested. 3 vehicles, firearms and ammunition were also seized. In the state of Jalisco, an inspection is conducted within the Bioto refuge. Officials could not provide legal documents for the 4-year-old jaguar. The male was placed in sequestration.



Seizure of 15 live and 22 stuffed armadillos (family Dasypodidae), 70 paws and skins of foxes (family Canidae), a stuffed squirrel (family Sciuridae), the head of an Andean condor (*Vultur gryphus*, Appendix I), and the skin of a rattlesnake (genus *Crotalus*).

**Puno et Juliaca, Region of Puno, Peru
May 2014**

The seizures took place in Juliaca and at the Alasitas feria in Puno. The feria is organized in the setting of the Fiesta of Alasitas and of the Cruces, a traditional religious holiday organized from the 3rd to the 8th of May. Were the armadillos on an illegal path to the World Soccer Cup in Brazil?



Priodontes maximus

Seizure of the carcasses of 3 monkeys (*Primates* spp., Appendix I or II), and the carcass of a paca (genus *Cuniculus*)

**BR 317 Road, State of Acre, Brazil
May 2014**

3 people were arrested. They are accused of poaching and of illegal possession of firearms.



Seizure of 12 Morelet's crocodiles (*Crocodylus moreletii*, Appendix II), and a live margay or tree ocelot (*Leopardus wiedii*, Appendix I)
**State of Tabasco and State of Chiapas, Mexico
May 2014**

The crocodiles were discovered at the home of an individual in the Tabasco State. They were accompanied by 86 pond slider turtles (*Trachemys scripta*) and Mexican Musk turtles (*Staurotypus triporcatus*). The tree ocelot is young. He was discovered at Villaflores in the home of people intending to sell him. They were told on. The cat was transferred to a special center in waiting for reintroduction to his natural habitat. Tree ocelots live in the tropical forests

of Central and South America. A little larger than a domestic cat, they measure between 42 and 79 cm long, and weigh around 2.6 to 9kg. Several decades ago, the tree ocelot was one of the most exploited cats in Latin America for the fur trade. The fur industry transferred to the species due to the overexploitation of ocelots. At least 15 tree ocelot pelts were necessary to make a coat. Close to 14,000 tree ocelots were killed between 1976 and 1984. Hunting and illegal captures are persistent problems in certain regions. Tree ocelots are arboreal, which is why deforestation is a definite threat for the species.



Seizure of 4 titis (*Callicebus* spp., Appendix II) and an iguana (family Iguanidae)
**Playa del Carmen, State of Quintana Roo, Mexico
May 2014**

The Profepa and the federal police explore Playa del Carmen. They mean to infiltrate the tourist-heart of the city to locate exotic animals being illegally exploited and then to seize them. The operation started at 9pm and ended 3 hours later.

The media was not allowed to photograph seizure operations because the agents did not wish to be identifiable to traffickers.



Seizure of one hummingbird (*Trochilidae* spp., Appendix I ou II), one armadillo (family Dasypodidae), and the meat of a paca (genus *Cuniculus*)
**Rio Casca, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil
May 14, 2014**

5 Saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*, not listed in CITES), one passerine (family Thraupidae, not listed in CITES), one thrush-like wren (*Campylorhynchus turdinus*, not listed in CITES), one Green-winged Saltator (*Saltator similis*, not listed in CITES) were also seized. There was also hunting and capture tools and cages.

Seizure of a capuchin (*Cebus* spp., Appendix II) and of an agouti (genus *Dasyprocta*) Tingo María, Region of Huánuco, Peru May 2014

The anonymous call was quite clear: in the shop, each animal was sold between 400 and 500 dollars. There were also 3 pal-throated sloths (*Bradypus tri-dactylus*, unlisted in CITES) and a coati (*Nasus nasus*, unlisted in CITES). All the animals were in very poor shape. It is quite uncertain that they will ever be able to return to their natural habitat.



Seizure of 2 parrots (*Psittaciformes* spp., Appendix I or II) and 2 turtles (species unknown) San Jeronimo, Province of Imbabura, Ecuador May 2014

After veterinary controls, they were transferred to the Guayabillas Zoological Park.

Seizure of a dozen parrots (*Psittaciformes* spp., Appendix I or II) and iguanas (family Iguanidae) Trujillo, Region of La Libertad, Peru May 2014

They were up for sale on the Palermo market. Their total value was estimated at 2140US\$.



Seizure of 135 birds, including 18 parakeets, 7 macaws (*Psittaciformes* spp., Appendix I or II), and 3 siskins Estância, State of Sergipe, Brazil May 26, 2014

The sellers were set up in the Estancia market and were offering to sell the wild birds. They were able to vanish by blending into the crowd. A species of siskin present in Brazil, the yellow-

faced Siskin (*Carduelis yarrellii*, Appendix II), is registered in CITES.

The actions against the traffic and sale of wild animals has intensified between May and June in Brazil.



Seizure of 4 pythons (*Pythonidae* spp., Appendix I or II), 3 marmosets (*Callithrix* spp., Appendix I or II), and parrots (*Psittaciformes* spp., Appendix I or II) Iaçú, State of Bahia, Brazil May 28, 2014

7 people have been arrested. They were accused of crimes against indigenous flora and fauna. In the seizure can also be found giant cowbirds (*Molothrus oryzivorus*, not listed in CITES), ultramarine grosbeaks (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*, not listed in CITES), illegal wood, 2 trucks and 2 vans. The animals were taken to CETAS in Salvador (Center for the Rehabilitation of Wild Animals).



Seizure of a tiger and a Geoffroy's spider monkey couple (*Ateles geoffroyi*, Appendix I or II) Zapopan, State of Jalisco, Mexico June 2014



Pecari tajacu

The leaders of the « Chuyin » circus were not able to present legal documents for the 8 month year old female tiger, for the couple of Geoffroy's spider monkeys or for one collared peccary (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II except for population of the United States and Mexico). The PROFEPA ordered for them to be put in receivership. The travelling circus did not possess stationary installations necessary to take proper care of the individuals. They have been transferred to the Center for wildlife conservation and research under responsibility of the Secretariat for the Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT).



Ateles geoffroyi

Seizure of 187 animals including green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), macaws, parrots, cockatoos (*Psittaciformes* spp., Appendix I or II), geckos (family *Gekkonidae*), tarantulas (family *Theraphosidae*)

**Naucalpan de Juárez, State of Mexico, Mexico
June 2014**

On its Internet site the company Maskota (« +Kota ») boasts to be the leader on the Mexican market for anything concerning pets. It explains that these pets are its reason to be and that its true goal is to find them a home full of love, care and protection. The company has over 260 branches throughout the country.

Problem is that all is not as lovely in these various branches. In Naucalpan de Juárez, shop managers were not able to present documents proving the legal origin of the animals, nor those authorizing sale. They received a fine of 971.400 pesos (75.500 US\$) and the animals were seized.



The Naucalpan de Juárez branch is now permanently closed and listed on the Register of offenders against wild animals.

Unfortunately this is not an isolated case. Already on 20 May 2014, in the Puebla branch (State of Puebla), 13 animals were seized, a 116.568 pesos (9000 US\$) fine was inflicted and it also had been listed on the Register.

Seizure of 61 kg of paca meat (genus *Cuniculus*), 116 kg of tapir meat (*Tapirus* spp., Appendix I or II), 66 kg of collared peccary meat (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II), 23 kg of fresh arapaima flesh (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), 6 turtles and 2 Muscovy ducks (*Cairina moschata*, Appendix III in Honduras)

Manacapuru, State of Amazonas, Brazil

June 7 and 8, 2014

It all was being sold on the Manacapuru market. The traffickers took off when they saw the police.



Seizure of 80 animal skins including those of pumas (*Puma concolor*, Appendix I or II), jaguars (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I), ocelots (*Leopardus pardalis*, Appendix I), boas (*Boidae* spp., Appendix I or II), anacondas (*Eunectes* spp., Appendix II), capybaras (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*, unlisted in CITES), foxes (genre *Vulpes*, unlisted in CITES) and other snakes and lizards

**Santa Cruz, Department of Santa Cruz, Bolivia
Jun 2014**

One man was arrested. « This sale is totally illegal and it is killing the natural heritage in Santa Cruz and Bolivia. » stresses the Secretary for sustainable development and for the environment of the Bolivian Government.



Seizure of paca and turtle meat (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras)

Pucallpa, Region of Ucayali, Peru

June 2014

Restaurants are being targeted! Surprise inspections have caught 4 of them. They offered on their menus local dishes for which the basic ingredients are non-other than lizard, deer, turtle and paca meat.

Seizure of 258 animals including iguanas (family Iguanidae), macaws, parrots, cockatoos (*Psittaciformes* spp., Appendix I or II), geckos (family Gekkonidae), tarantulas (family Theraphosidae)

Mexico

June 2014

Maskota is once more shaken. Since the Naucalpan de Juárez branch was closed down, 30 more inspections have been carried out in 26 States of the country. Once more, irregularities have been found and led to seizure of 258 animals.

The PROFEPA is particularly attentive to Maskota activities. Between 2010 and 2014, 20 branches of the company have been visited. Each time, irregularities were found. They sometimes were of a serious nature with cases of shameful and disrespectful treatment of the animals. Continued vigilance is needed.



Brachypelma Smithi (Appendix II)
on the Maskota Internet site

ASIA

Seizure of 2 stump-tailed macaques (*Macaca arcoides*, Appendix II), a pangolin, 3 Asian palm civets (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus* Appendix III in India) and 2 king cobras (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II), live

Thừa Thiên-Huế Province, Vietnam

April 2, 2014

A brigade for the repression of anti-environmental activities intercepted an individual carrying numerous wild animals around on the Saddle Kim Quy. Trần Duy Minh, 35 years old, was in possession of macaques, cobras, civets, salamanders and a pangolin in cages which were specially adapted to the back of his motorcycle. Trần Duy Minh said he bought the animals in Laley close to the Lao-tian border. He was not able to show receipts proving their legal origin or a transport permit. He was charged. The animals were transferred to the Forest Department.



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Seizure of 13 specimens of the following species : ebony leaf monkey (*Trachypithecus auratus*, Appendix II), Javan hawk-eagle (*Nisaetus bartelsi*, Appendix II), lack giant squirrel (*Ratufa Bicolor*, Appendix II)

Kabupaten de Jember, Province of East Java, Indonesia

3 April 2014

Twitter and Facebook were his marketing means. His gangster business had been uncovered by the NGO Pro Fauna. Police seized at his home several birds of prey and some monkeys. The seized animals had been trapped by his suppliers in at least 3 National Parks in the province of Java. There are no more than a few hundreds of Javan hawk-eagle. Each year 30 to 40 specimens are caught in the jungle to be locked in cages. They measure 50 to 60 cm high. They are also under the threat of logging.



Nisaetus bartelsi

Hunters and pet lovers have their eye on the lack giant squirrel (1.5 kg) and his sumptuous tail. © Sean Chaffey



Seizure of 6 kilos of bone and leopard skin (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) and an otter skin (sub-family Lutrinae) Baikunthapur Forest, West Bengale, India April 4, 2014

There were shady comings and goings in the forest of Baikunthapur near the Bhoutan border. Nomads from Rajasthan, experts in trapping and camouflage and forever connected to trafficking networks would rove the clearings, paths and banks searching for the tracks from fur animals. They had set up camp in the Oodlabari district and 3 of them were arrested in the Darjeeling one by a police patrol reinforced by sniffer dogs. The loot was found in their bundles. It all was destined for China via Nepal and Tibet. The father of one of the carriers was taken by the same brigade last summer with a good stock of pangolin scales and dried sea horses. There is probably complicity among local inhabitants.

Seizure of a stuffed Indochina tiger (*Panthera tigris corbetti*, Appendix I), 3 live pig-tailed macaques (*Macaca nemestrina*, Appendix II) and a live rhesus macaque (*Macaca mulatta*, Appendix II)

Da Nang, Da Nang City, Vietnam April 2014

The café Suôi MB, 116 Nguyen Dang Dao Street, Da Nang City, was the target of the environmental police raid. The property had previously been the subject of several reports on the presence of wild animals in captivity.

Indeed, 3 pig-tailed macaques, a rhesus macaque, a hawk, 3 peacocks, 3 pheasants, a mynah bird and red-billed blue magpie were inventoried. They were later put in sequestration pending the outcome of the administrative investigation. The property owner is responsible to take care of them and feed them.

The origin of the animals is uncertain. The café manager could only produce certificates of legal ownership of the peacocks. The stuffed Indochinese tiger was immediately removed and transferred to the department for the control of forest products in the city of Da Nang. Ms. Ngo Thi Vinh Trinh claims a customer gave it to her as a thank you gift for financial support.



Seizure of more tiger teeth (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) and 27 ivory pipes

Jakarta, Special Capital Region Jakarta, Indonesia

April 2014

The « Golden Shop » of Djakarta openly sells tiger teeth, shark fins, turtle shells and ivory pipes. It is now closed. Its manager risks 5 years of prison and a fine of 100 million rupees, or 9,000 US\$. He also had an online store, which is also closed.

Seizure of 6 boxes of pangolin scales (*Manis spp.*, Appendix II) and 1200 pieces of Siberian weasel skins (*Mustela sibirica*, Appendix III in India)

Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

April 8, 2014

The customs police received reports of illegal smuggling activities from Hong Kong to Shenzhen. They located a suspicious boat that changed directions as soon as it saw the patrol, but the suspects escaped after abandoning the boat at the shore. The tail hairs of this species are demanded by the paintbrush industry and known as the “Kolinsky sable-hair brush”.

Estimated value of the seizure is 1.1 million Yuan (177,070 US\$).

Seizure of one frozen pangolin (*Manis spp.*, Appendix II), 12 serow feet (genus *Capricornis*), one muntjac carcass, 8 muntjac feet (genus *Muntiacus*)

Chiayi District, Taiwan, China

April 11, 2014

The police discovered firearms, protected animal parts, and carcasses after searching Luo's house. While he claimed that he retrieved the weapons and found the animals dead in the forest, the police did not believe him. He was brought to the court for further investigation.

One species of serow present in China is recorded in Appendix I of CITES, the Chinese serow (*Capricornis milneedwardsii*). One species of muntjac in China is recorded in Appendix I of CITES, the black muntjac (*Muntiacus crinifrons*).



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Seizure of Norther Pig-tailed Macaque (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II), long-tailed Macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II), a python (*Pythonidae spp.*, Appendix I or II) and crocodiles (*Crocodylidae spp.*, Appendix I or II)

Dak Lak Province, Vietnam

22 April 2014

Some kind of small dubious zoo on the edge of the road with a small bar next to it was tempting to those curious to see animals captured illegally from natural areas – macaques, crocodiles and pythons – and held in ill being conditions.

Complaints that had been filed had been dragging on for months and ENV obtained assurance from the Dak Lak People Committee that the freed animals have been returned to the Chu Yang Sin National Park and that the zooers would have to pay a fine of 40 million dong, or 2,000 US\$.

Seizure of the carcasses of 4 muntjacs (genus *Muntiacus*) and 2 palm civets (family *Viverridae*)

Mekong River, Chiang Rai Province, Thailand

April 2014

The remains of 4 muntjacs and 2 civets killed in Laos were being transferred on a Laotian boat to the Thai bank of the Mekong. The Thai customs intervened. There were about 150 kg of meat on board the boat, destined for restaurants and market stalls. The muntjac species present in Laos is included in Appendix I of CITES. Its international trade is prohibited.

Imprisonment for 6 years and a fine of 10,000 Yuan (1,600 US\$) for smuggling of 10 live pangolins, 10 black bear paws (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I), 2 bear gallbladders, 4 Montjacs (genus *Muntiacus*)

Yongren, Yunnan Province, China

May 8, 2014

On September 11, 2013, the first seizures occurred after stopping an ordinary van at the toll booth on the freeway. The van was heading to Panzhihua, Sichuan Province, China. The black bear paws are estimated to be worth 16,700 yuan (US \$2672). Then, the police searched Wu's home and discovered deer of different species among them the Southern red muntjac (*Muntiacus muntjak*) and the tufted deer



(*Elaphodus cephalophus*) which is around 60 cm tall and weighs about 20 kg, making it one of the smallest deer. On May 8, 2014, Wu confessed his crimes in court and was sentenced 6 years in prison and a 10,000 Yuan (1603 US\$) fine.

**Seizure of 4 pangolins (*Manis* spp.) 3 live, and 8 black bear paws (*Ursidae* spp., Appendix I or II)
Dali, Yunnan Province, China
May 19, 2014**

Police discovered 4 pangolins and 8 black bear paws in the luggage compartment of a sleeper bus. 3 of the 4 pangolins were still alive. After rescuing them, the police sent them to the local wild animal shelter.

**3 poachers arrested
Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary,
Jharkhand, India
May 19, 2014**



The Bishu Sendra Parv takes place during the full moon. Practiced for many centuries, it is the rite of passage for young boys to enter into adulthood. The ability to show courage and skill by hunting on this occasion must be demonstrated. Hundreds of nomads come to Dalma in May armed with traditional weapons and head out into 200 km² of hills and meadows, a protected sanctuary since 1975. Each year, authorities rally for several weeks to try to convince of the symbolic nature of the gathering and put forward the obligation to protect wildlife. At the same time, the South Eastern Railway strives to curb the influx of travelers who travel without a ticket to Dalma. In the scattered villages in the area, wells are dug to provide water to the gathered public and information is available to encourage them to produce honey rather than living off hunting. 15 checkpoints are responsible for deterring those who clearly demonstrate the intent to hunt. The Dalma Sanctuary Wildlife is populated with over a hundred elephants, deer, bears, giant squirrels, monkeys and peacocks. Despite the educational efforts by the Regional Forestry Department, hunting is not completely avoided. 3 individuals were caught deploying nets to capture squirrels and birds. The 3 poachers were taken to the main prison in Ghagidih.

**Seizure of 2 saltwater crocodiles (*Crocodylus porosus*, Appendix II), a siamang (*Symphalangus syndactylus*, Appendix I), a giant squirrel (*Ratufa* spp., Appendix II), 4 slow loris (*Nycticebus* spp., Appendix I), 2 eagles (*Accipitridae* spp., Appendix I or II) and a stuffed Sumatran tiger (*Panthera tigris sumatrae*, Appendix I)
Aceh Province, Indonesia
May 27-28, 2014**

In house cleaning continues in Aceh. The police searched the properties of 2 suspected go betweens of hunters and dealers. One specializes in primates, the orangutan first and foremost. He was

not, however, at his home. The seized animals were alive with the exception of the tiger.



Seizure of 14 François' leaf monkeys (*Trachypithecus francoisi*, Appendix II), 7 pangolins (*Manis* spp. Appendix II), 6 leopard cats (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II in China), 2 civet cats (species not indicated), and 5 bear gall bladders (*Ursidae* spp., Appendix I and II). 2 suspects arrested.

**Chongzuo, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China
May 28, 2014**

Police on patrol found a suspicious vehicle at the China-Vietnam border. The driver seemed nervous and stuttering, so the police searched his car and found 6 bags full of frozen animals under the seats and in the trunk. 2 suspected smugglers were arrested, they said they purchased the rare animal products from Vietnam at a low price, and were set to sell them in Nanning (3.5 million inhabitants) at a profit.



Seizure of hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II), an elongated tortoise (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II), a white-bellied sea eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*, Appendix II), a Palawan hornbill (*Anthracoceros marchei*, Appendix II) and a palm cockatoo (*Probosciger aterrimus*, Appendix I)

**Pasay, Region of Grand Manille, Philippines
June 2014**

Abraham Bernales had been running his illegal business as a wild animal salesman for many years. No one seemed to know in the neighborhood according to their hearings. The town council also apparently was unaware.

Yet hill mynas, talkative and imitators make a lot of noise. They are among the most popular bird pets in Asia. So popular that there are perhaps more mynas in cages than left in the wild.

The future of the Palawan hornbill is even darker. There would only be a few thousand individuals left in the wild. He also falls victim to cages and the transformation of wild forests into industrial plantations.



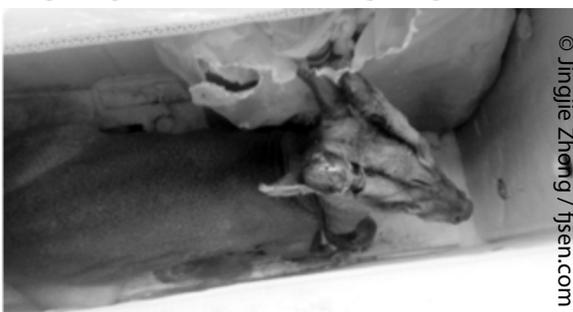
Hydrosaurus pustulatus



Anthracoceros marchei

**Seizure of 17 muntjacs (*Muntiacus*, species not indicated) and 3 civets (family *Viverridae*)
Fuqing, Fuzhou, Fujian Province, China
June 3, 2014**

On the night of June 3, the police receive a report that a bus travelling from Fuzhou to Shenzhen, Guangdong, with the plate number ending in 2292, was transporting a large number of wild animals. The local police stopped the vehicle for a search on the Fuqing Bridge and found the animals hidden in the luggage compartment. The 34-year-old suspect Huang said that someone had commissioned him to transport the animals from Lianjiang, Guangdong to Shenzhen, Guangdong.



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Seizure of 420 pieces of elephant tusks, 8 wreathed hornbill casques (*Rhyticeros undulatus*, Appendix II), one Mongolian gazelle antler (*Procapra gutturosa*)

**Luoyang, Henan Province, China
June 6, 2014**

The Luoyang forest police bureau formed a team of 30 men, all dressed in ordinary clothes to investigate the antiques markets. They highlighted 4 stores with endangered animal parts and brought the storeowners and workers back for questioning. Then, the police checked in the homes of these owners. Investigations continue.

Seizure of a young orangutan (*Pongo* spp., Appendix I), 3 Java gibbons (*Hylobates moloch*, Appendix I), 4 siamangs (*Symphalangus syndactylus*, Appendix I), a slow loris (*Nycticebus* spp., Appendix I), 97 Burmese pythons (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II) and 2 palm cackatoos (*Probosciger aterrimus*, Appendix I)

**Soekarno-Hatta International Airport in Jakarta, Province of Banten, Indonesia
June 6, 2014**



© GRASP

Indonesia is surely the reservoir in which mafias and exotic pet maniacs come in to grab and exhaust wildlife in its most colorful and threatened forms. All the animals kidnapped by the 3 individuals had been given sleeping pills. 5 of the 6 species present are listed in Appendix I of CITES. International trade is strictly forbidden.



© Agus Priambudi, PHKA

The 3 culprits are Chinese (1) and Kuwaiti (2). The plane was planned for Kuwait City. The illegal market for live great apes is increasing. According to GRASP (Great Apes Survival Partnership) since the beginning of the year almost 2 individuals a week are seized by Customs and taken in to rehabilitation centers and sanctuaries in Africa and Asia. Chimpanzees, gorillas, bonobos, orangutans are victims of the exotic pet trade, tourism and questionable zoos.

GANG

Conviction for the poaching of tiger, otter (*Lutrinae spp.*, Appendix I or II) and turtle Haldwani, State of Uttarakhand, India



June 7, 2014

The 8 were sentenced to 7 years in prison (the penalty may be adjusted under the circumstances of good behavior) and Rs 20,000 fine (339 US\$) for working under the orders of Narayan Chand, son of Sansar Chand, a poaching and smuggling master whose death was announced a few weeks ago. There were 10 defendants in this case. One died during the trial. The other released on bail did not appear before court.



Seizure of 3 young orangutans (*Pongo spp.*, Appendix I), 2 Malayan sun bears (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I), 2 gibbons (*Hylobatidae spp.*, Appendix I or II), 4 eagles (*Accipitridae spp.*, Appendix I or II) and a langur (*Primates spp.*, Appendix I or II)

**Province of Central Kalimantan, Indonesia
June 2014**

The operation was jointly organized by the COP (Center for Orangutan Protection), Orangutan Foundation, Bornean Orangutan Survival Foundation (BOSF) and the Indonesian Forest Ministry. Its now the traffickers turn to be behind bars.

Conviction following the seizure of 3 leopard skins and 2 Himalayan black bear gallbladders (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I)



Pithoragarh, State of Uttarakhand, India

June 10, 2014

3 defendants were arrested in December 2011 with the support of WPSI - Wildlife Protection Society of India. Each was sentenced to 3 years in prison and a fine equivalent to 679 US\$.

Conviction of 3 men for smuggling pangolins (*Manis spp.*, Appendix II) and bear paws (*Usidae spp.*, Appendix I or II)



Qingdao, Shandong Province, China

June 20, 2014

Chen is a seafood merchant from the south of China to Qingdao. Since 2012, he bought bear paws from another merchant because it was profitable. He later resold some bear paws at a higher price to Li. Li is also guilty of buying along with his nephew pangolin and alligator paws. The 3 men have been convicted from one year to 2 years in jail and were each fined 30,000 Yuan (4810 US\$).

Seizure of a Malayan sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I) and a gibbon from the species *Nomascus gabriellae*, Appendix I



Hanoi area, Red River Delta Region, Vietnam

June 10, 2014

The 2 animals now at the top of the endangered species list were in cages in a farm in Hanoi. They were saved from this uncomfortable spot and might later be released into their natural habitat if they prove capable of feeding themselves and defending themselves on their own.



Seizure of baby primates (*Primates* spp. Appendix I and II) and chicks of birds of prey (*Accipitridae* spp. Appendix I and II) Jakarta, Special Capital Region Jakarta, Indonesia June 24, 2014



© Centre for Orangutan Protection



© Centre for Orangutan Protection

Seizure of black corals (*Antipatharia* spp., Appendix II), 2 shells and 29 scutes from hawksbill turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I), giant clams (*Tridacnidae* spp., Appendix II), 2 serpent-eagles (*Spilornis cheela*, Appendix II), a crested goshawk (*Accipiter trivirgatus*, Appendix II), white-bellied sea-eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*, Appendix II) and a monitor lizard (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I and II)

**Philippines
June 2014**

Offers for sale on the Internet and social networks proliferate in reservoir-countries and facilitate the globalization of endangered animals and plants trade. In the Philippines, the Authority for the protection of the environment and natural resources thanked animal rights defenders for their cooperation by scrutinizing offers on the web. Thanks to their persistence and attention, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources – DENR– has reliable and additional information. Thus, at Earl

Galupo's house in Pagadian City geological and biological marine treasures were discovered and seized. The raid and seizure stopped an old and flourishing trade. Mr Galupo was using www.sulit.com now renamed www.olx.ph and posted photos of sea turtle shells on Facebook. To demonstrate his statement, the DENR spokesman noted that they had rescued a monitor lizard in Morong, 2 birds of prey in Santa Cruz (that were attached to sticks used as perches) and 2 serpent eagles in Manila. "Indeed, social media and public assistance play an increasing role in helping authorities fight the illegal wildlife trade."



© News by

Charonia tritonis



© Kevin Lin

Accipiter trivirgatus

EUROPE

Seizure of a worked ivory tusk, a stuffed crocodile (*Crocodylidae* spp., Appendix I or II), a rostrum of swordfish (*Pristidae* spp., Appendix I), and a turtle shell

**Avignon, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, France
7 April 2014**

Like many times a year, the customs of Avignon went to the international second hand fair at exhibitions center in Châteaublanc. As usual they didn't leave empty handed. The violators had to pay a customs' fine.

Seizure of naturalized animals including a common kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II), an owl (*Strigidae* spp., Appendix I and II), a Eurasian Spoonbill (genus *Platalea corodia*), a monkey (*Cercopithecus* spp., Appendix I and II), a parrot (*Psittaciformes* spp., Appendix I and II), an iguana (family Iguanidae), of carved ivory and of a hornbill skeleton (family Bucerotidae)
Düsseldorf, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany
May 14, 2014

The dwelling of the Düsseldorf businessman looked something like a vampire's den. No blood but a lot of dead animals, stuffed or soaking in ethanol. The so-called businessman regularly purchased trophies illegally on e-Bay. "His dodgy passion for collecting animals" was exposed when Customs, intrigued by the frequency of parcels from Indonesia, opened one of them. The artist has a great sense of staging. A mountain hare (*Lepus timidus* not listed in CITES) wears a feline skull around his neck.



FAMILY AFFAIRS

Conviction for selling stuffed endangered animal species on Internet

Department of Jura, Region of Franche-Comté, France

June 10, 2014

2 taxidermists, father and son, would sell their trophies on the Internet. A wild cat (*Felis silvestris*, Appendix II) and vultures were part of the sale. No taxidermist products or tools were found at their home



In front of the judge they tried to come off as the Aromas village idiots. This triggered indulgence despite charges for illegal sale of wild animals, possession of prohibited hunting material, transport of dead game subject to hunting regulation, capture and possession of protected species. They were sentenced to 1000 € suspended fine and to must pay symbolically 1 € to ASPAS (Association pour la Protection des Animaux Sauvages).

Seizure of 90 kg of queen conches (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II) and 10 live tortoises (*Testudini-dae* spp., Appendix I or II)

Le Marin Marina, Martinique, France

June 15, 2014

The French cook on the ferry catamaran took advantage of a call in the Grenadine islands to do a little shopping and bring back onboard the terrestrial and marine fauna and 2 kg of cannabis. Back in Fort de France in Martinique, the boat was searched by border police. Customs seized everything including 150kg of sea urchins.

Seizure of ivory, walrus tusks, a zebra skin and beetles

Rostock, Lander of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany

June 2014

The collector regularly received packages from Canada, the United States and Switzerland. He would buy parts of animals protected by CITES without certificates on Internet.

18 species of Beetles are listed in CITES. The satanas beetles (*Dynastes satanas*, Appendix II) is from Bolivia. They live in wet forests in Departments such as La Paz and Cochamba at altitudes of 900 and 2000m. They are threatened by habitat loss due to the development of fruit and coca plantations. Individuals are sold to collectors for high prices. Satanas beetle fights are organized. The other 17 species all belong to the *colophon* genus (*Colophon* spp., Appendix III in South Africa).



OCEANIA

Conviction for possession of 11 orangutan skulls (*Genus Pongo*, Appendix I), 25 monkey skulls (*Primates spp.*, Appendix I and II), a bear (*Ursidae spp.*, Appendix I and II), a lynx (*Lynx spp.*, Appendix I or II) and a tiger, teeth and skin of orangutan, of lynx and otter (*Lutrinae spp.*, Appendix I and II) and a headdress of birds of paradise feathers (*Paradisaeidae spp.*, Appendix II)

Sydney, New South Wales, Australia
May 2014

On the Australian penal code paper traffickers of endangered species protected by national and international law are hit hard.

In the courts, Australia is soft. The teacher who had transformed his home into an orangutan shrine was given a 12 month suspended sentence and 384 hours of community service. The fact that he had to pay a 4000 AUS\$ (3707 US\$) fine was not for his contribution to the illegal traffic of orangutan skulls but for the illegal possession of firearms. Smuggling of great ape skulls adds commercial value to their dead bodies and contributes to pushing them out of this world. Expelled from Indonesia due to palm oil plantations, orangutans will be extinct in 2020 unless for a miracle.

Isabel McCrea, director of IFAW Oceania, is disappointed that the teacher was not jailed for his crimes. "He had knowingly broken the law over a number of years, even requesting that endangered animals be killed and their body parts sent to him." The first and only prison sentence for smuggling protected animals was handed out in Australia was last year to a Chinese citizen. He was given a 12-month for attempting to export 30 native live lizards from the Australian continent.



ON the TRAIL n°5

ROBIN DES BOIS

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for the Protection of Man and the Environment
Since 1985

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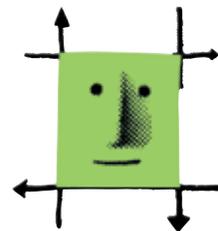
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Tarantula-Mania

In April, the French National Office for Wildlife and Hunting (Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage - ONCFS) seized between 2,000 and 3,000 dead tarantulas and 140 adult and juvenile live tarantulas in Amnéville, eastern France. The different species are currently being identified. The story began 30 years ago in French Guiana, when the future trafficker was doing his military service. He returned to France with his first tarantulas in his knapsack. Multiplying his trips over the years to Guiana, to Mexico and to Brazil, over the years he became a wholesaler. The animals were sold "just to pay for my next trip, it was not a commercial interest." He adds "all enthusiasts do the same thing." Officially, he is a retired hairdresser who receives low-income assistance from the French government. A live tarantula is estimated to be worth €2,000 and a dead specimen could reach up to €1,000. A German channel is under scrutiny. The dealer was already questioned by customs at Charles de Gaulle (Roissy) airport, in October 2013. The French National Office for Wildlife and Hunting continued the investigation. The man is being prosecuted for non-compliance with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, CITES. His first defence was short: "I'm not good with paperwork, I'm just a collector."

Every time there is a seizure of tarantulas it entails hundreds of individuals, however the busts rarely make news headlines. In October 2012, a German couple returning from Peru was arrested at the airport in Amsterdam, Holland, with 200 live tarantulas in their suitcases. In August 2011, custom officers in Zurich, Switzerland discovered boxes coming from the Dominican Republic containing 261 Mexican Redknee Tarantulas (*Brachypelma smithi*, Appendix II) they range exclusively along the Western coast of Mexico. The package was addressed to a Swiss dealer where a further 665 tarantulas of different species were discovered. Illegally imported via the post from Central America but not listed at CITES, the 665 spiders were not seized. The individual was only charged with tax evasion. In December 2010, operation Spiderman (US Fish and Wildlife Service) led to the arrest of a German citizen who had sent over 600 spiders to the United States. To bypass the numerous border controls between Mexico and the United States, Mexican tarantulas are sent to Europe before being re-dispatched to America.



Nazca Lines (ancient geoglyphs) - between 400 and 650 AD- sky view Peru.



Theraphosa blondi are found in South America its body measures 10 cm. Its common name is Goliath bird-eating spider (here a hummingbird). The smallest tarantulas measures less than one centimetre.

Maria Sibylla Merian (details) - entre 1701 et 1705



Tarantulas fascinate and terrorise

Around 2450 species of tarantulas have been identified but all remain slightly mysterious. Only 23 species are listed under Appendix II CITES (*Aphonopelma albiceps*, *Aphonopelma pallidum* and the *Brachypelma* spp.). Tarantulas are the largest spiders. The Arachnida class differs from the insect class in particular by their chelicerae which protrude in the form of hooks. The tarantulas' chelicerae work in unison; it is from there that the venom is inoculated.



Under the 8 eyes, 2 chelicerae

According to Plutarch (46-125 AD), the tarantula was considered divine by the Egyptians because the animal was blind and that "before Light there was Darkness".

Aphonopelma chalcodes live in the desert in the south west of the United States.

Tarantulas live in hot regions and are found on all 5 continents. The family Atypidae live in Northern Europe and are found as far north as Denmark a population from the genus *Atypus* live 20km south of Paris. The animal is solitary and when two individuals meet, cannibalism lurks. The *Macrothele* from Africa are an exception, they live together in a tubular funnel shaped web which can reach up to 1m². Tarantulas are sedentary they live in burrows, in shelters or crevices in the ground which are sometimes closed with a flap door. Some species are arboreal. Even though they are not blind tarantulas have bad eyesight despite its 4 pairs of eyes. Specialized organs and numerous sensory hairs help to detect prey. The family of American Theraphosida is equipped with stinging hairs to bombard predators. Tarantulas are able to amputate a leg caught by an enemy; it will grow back during successive moults. This technique is ineffective against professional hunters and against spider wasps that sting and paralyze the tarantula before laying an egg in its abdomen. The tarantula is then buried alive and is used to host and to feed the spider wasp's larvae.



Tarantulas usually hunt at dusk or at night, watching for prey in front of its shelter with the caution of a diplomat. It feeds on insects, other spiders, scorpions, reptiles, amphibians, small mammals and chicklings. The *Avicularia* is nicknamed 'matoutou' in French Guiana and the French Caribbean and is welcome into the kitchen at night to eat cockroaches. Neutralized by the venom, the tarantula's prey is liquefied with a regurgitated intestinal solution and then sucked up. Some species of the family Dipluridae can weave webs which stretch over one meter, but this is rare. Tarantulas produce a liquid silk to weave their webs. It solidifies when in contact with air. The tarantula uses it to line their den to shelter themselves in silk-like tubes between branches and leaves and to protect their eggs.

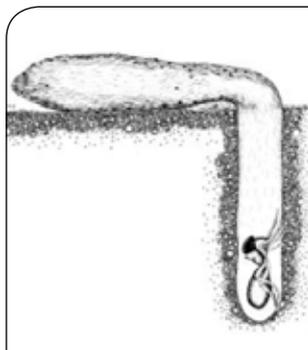
Males also use silk to weave a small web on which they deposit drops of semen that will then be transferred to their copulatory bulbs before heading off to find a partner. The call of some species, which is audible to humans, could be a nuptial song. When on courtship males sometimes 'strut their stuff' by tapping their legs. If the female agrees, mating can take place, the male attempts to lift her in order for his bulbs to contact the female genitalia. He then releases gently and finally flees at full speed. It is not systematic but some females try to eat the male after they got what they wanted. In fact, an intensive hunting season begins for the female while the eggs are kept in the spermatheca. Once fertilized the eggs are deposited in a silk cocoon and the female tarantula devotes herself to them, often fasting for several weeks or months. Depending on the species, the cocoon is carried between their chelicerae, camouflaged, regularly exposed to the sun and very often defended aggressively. Juveniles are already hairy. They disperse rapidly after a few days or weeks, and are able to hunt by their own means, including their conspecifics. Most do not reach breeding age.

The young spiders disperse on the ground in a limited range; ballooning which consists in being carried by the breeze at the end of a thin thread is a rare event. Most tarantulas have a very restricted distribution, they are particularly vulnerable to being hunted and the destruction of their habitat from deforestation and fires. Only female tarantulas moult until the end of their life, adult males are often recognizable by the loss of their hairs. Depending on the species, the male life span varies from a few months to a few years while females can reach up to 20 years. The easier capture of the males threatens the reproduction of isolated populations.

Mexican red-kneed tarantula in captivity. The animals that were caught in the nature can sometimes be identified by bald patches on their abdomen because they have projected their hairs to defend themselves or they have rubbed off during transportation.



Theraphosa blondi, highly valued for its large size, is not yet listed in CITES. A German wholesaler sells juveniles, online, for €209. Chinese custom officers found 5 in postal packages coming from Germany, once again in December 2012. Each was estimated to be worth almost 3,000 yen (US\$ 481). Tarantula maniacs play it practical and with humour: "very docile, easy, doesn't need to be taken for a walk." The ironical categorizations and reassuring words trick amateurs. Surprising, but true, species which are deadly to humans are rare. They belong to the genus *Atrax* and *Hadronyche*. The most famous the *Atrax robustus*, Sydney funnel-web spider, is found in a 200km radius around Sydney, Australia. Rarely deadly, a tarantula bite is painful. They can also protect themselves with their hairs which cause itchiness and can cause respiratory and visual discomfort. These wild animals are natural insect repellants and have no business been closed into terrariums indoors. As long as the lack of knowledge on the state of the populations is not reduced, commercial trade of all the species must be considered damaging to worldwide biodiversity and very worrying.



A diagram of an *Atypus affinis* 'silk sock' and of the above ground section in the Sonian Forest in Belgium.

Sock hunting

Atypidae tarantulas, found in Europe, have a unique hunting practice. They build a 'sock' trap consisting of a closed silk tube which is partly constructed underground and the rest above, camouflaged by debris. The tarantula lives inside the tube. It waits until a prey walks by and bites it through the silk, then drags it inside to feast quietly. During the reproduction season, the male leaves his home and taps on the female's 'sock' before entering. *Atypus affinis* can live for around a decade. Its sock thickens over time.

The Corsican pioneer tarantula (*Ctenyza Satwagesi*)

"Although the tarantula is heavily armed with pickaxes, hooks and rakes, it is no small matter for them to excavate and dig a tunnel thirty centimeters into the soil; it carries out this work with vigor and determination. Its lair peaks straight down. Despite such a rapid steepness, the tarantula would only be half safe in its home, if it didn't have a door blocking the entrance; nothing surpasses its ingenious construction. Indeed this door is a lid wider on the outside than the inside. (...) Yet the lid is only 6 millimeters thick it is built with over thirty layers of soggy earth, bound together by multiple silk layers. On the outside, nothing betrays the door, its rough surface mixes with the surrounding soil; but inside it is smooth and lined, like the lining of a well (...). The door opens with ease, from the inside and outside, when the tarantula enters and exits the door closes behind it by its own weight into a groove falling perfectly into place. Well barricaded the spider seems to be protected from all danger; a simple door however, is not enough; if an enemy that has caught wind of its movements it could break into the home, the tarantula has incorporated this possibility: the lid is pierced with around thirty small holes. When the spider hears a prowler, it swiftly closes the door, and pushes its claws into the holes of the cover, clinging with strength: the door is locked; not just anyone can break in."



Moeurs pittoresques des insectes et des araignées. Victor Rendu 1870

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