

ROBIN DES BOIS

ON_{the} TRAIL

Information and analysis bulletin on animal poaching and smuggling
Special Edition - 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, Johannesburg
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For 3 years, the NGO Robin des Bois (Robin Hood) has been publishing in French and in English the quarterly bulletin "On the Trail" on the poaching and smuggling of animal species threatened with extinction. Information come from a thousand sources, institutions, local medias and NGOs on the spot throughout the world. Each event is analyzed, related with a maximum of practical details and further developments are traced through time. The first 13 editions of "On the Trail" already compose a social, judicial and technical chronicle on trafficking and exploitation of wild fauna. While reading "On the Trail" you will be surprised by the mix of superstition and modernity, by the traffickers' inventiveness and by the diversity of the species that are tracked and trapped. Faced with cruelty, squandering and corruption, in every country a number of people do resist. It is for them that every day Robin des Bois' team keeps working on the next edition of "On the Trail".

"On the Trail" n°1 to 13
April 1st 2013 → June 30th, 2016

6509 warnings
among which
4269 seizures
918 poaching
575 judgments



263 lives lost

Marine turtles

Seizure of 138.400 marine turtle eggs.

Pangolins

Seizure of 22,340 pangolins and 32,424 kg of scales.
Giving a total of nearly 120,000 pangolins on the basis of 3 pangolins for 1 kg of scales.

Lions

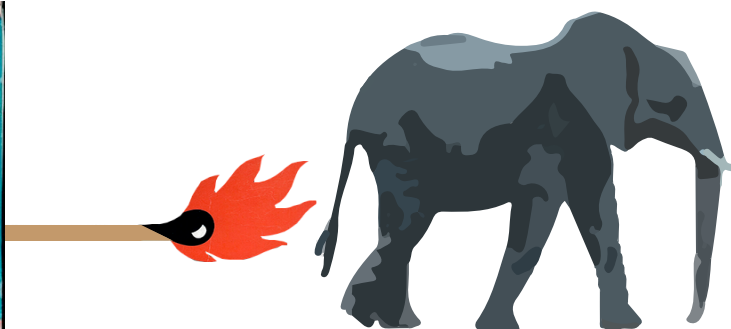
18 seizures of claws, teeth, bones, skulls and lion bone preparations bound for the Asian market.
Lion is taking the place of tiger. He is more and more wanted as tigers are fewer and fewer.

Rhinos

4231 rhinos killed in Africa and in Asia
including very young ones and individuals dehorned as a precaution.

Elephants

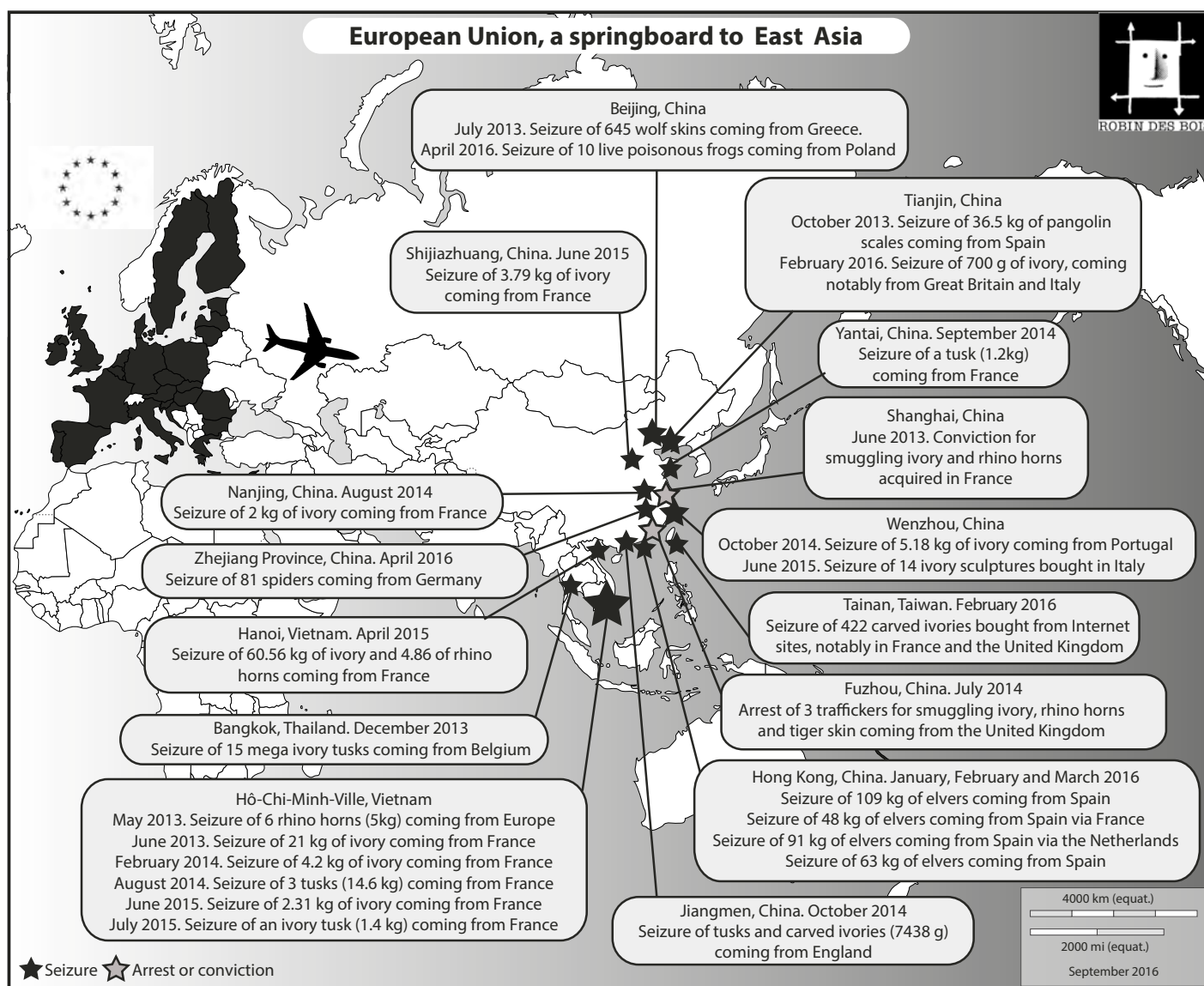
794 seizures of ivory.
At least 30 seizures of African elephant tusks of less than 3 kg, among which a seizure of more than 1000 tusks with an average weight of 1.9 kg. They were ripped off elephants that were not sexually mature.



164 Recidivists
137 Family gangs

The poacher is also policeman, ranger or forest agent, soldier, professor or school teacher, «healer», phytotherapist, «businessman», governor, Bollywood star, emir, professional hunter and fisherman, employee of forest companies, reverend...

The smuggler is also policeman, soldier, peacekeeper, diplomat, port and airport operator, custom agent, national director for a CITES management authority, security agent, dog trainer, senator, parliamentary or other legitimate elected representative, parliamentary assistant, member of a National Fisheries agency, president of an association of wildlife operators, professor or school teacher, lawyer, doctor and other health professionals, «healer», veterinarian, pastor, imam, monk, television entertainer, «artist», snake charmer, auctioneer, antique dealer, pet-shop director, aquarium director, zoo or «leisure park» director, falconer, taxidermist, bus driver, taxi driver, boda-boda driver, hotel manager, travel agency manager, caretaker, real estate agent, director of a cybercafé, director of a public works company, professional in the recycling industry, cement factory worker, charcoal salesman, cell phone salesman, fish seller, wholesale sea-fish merchant, fish-farmer, farmer, breeder, butcher, cook, restaurant owner, plumber, hair stylist, florist, leather goods dealer, jeweler, blacksmith, furniture importer...



55 States for which “On the Trail” did not find any information on seizures of endangered species from April 1st 2013 to June 30th 2016 (n°1 à 13): Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cabo Verde, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea), Djibouti, Dominica, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, Georgia, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, Israel, Jamaica, Kiribati, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Slovenia, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Yemen.

POACHERS' ARSENAL

Automatic and semi-automatic weapons: AK 47 (Russian origin), G3 (German origin), M16 (American origin) ...

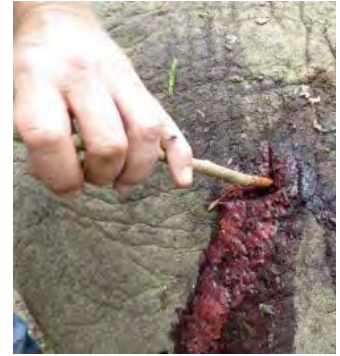
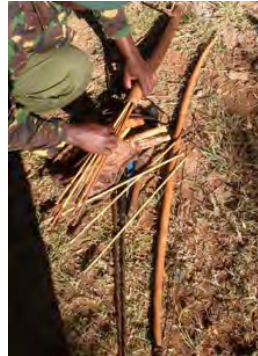


Rifles of all caliber (.303, .308, .375, .416, .458, .470, 22 Long Rifle, air-guns...) sometimes with a silencer or telescopic sights, guns with hypodermic syringes filled with M99 (a powerful anaesthetic)...



Guns, hand grenades, explosives...

Arrows, poisoned arrows, spears ...



Snares, wires, electrical cables, jaw traps, nets, glue...

Intentional forest fires, lynching, chemical products, pesticides and drugs to poison water spots, fruit or carcasses: cyanide, Carbofuran (Furadan), Endosulfan, Diclofenac ...



Axes and machetes ...

Saws, knives, lamps, whistles, reflectors, chainsaws, nets, gloves, masks, night vision binoculars...

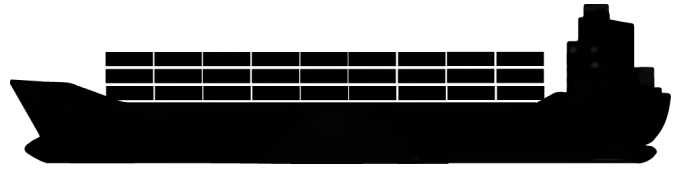


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MODUS OPERANDI

Maritime Containers

It's the ultimate trap. 19.7 million containers are being sent around the world. As easy it is to list the countries in which « On the Trail » has never reported seizures, the one of container port terminals with a zero record would be endless. Congratulations to custom officers in Kaohsiung (Taiwan), in Singapore, in Laem Chabang (Thailand), in Sihanoukville (Cambodia), in Hai Phong, in Hô-Chi-Minh-City, in Da Nang (Vietnam), in Hong Kong, in Shanghai, in Xiamen (China), in Jebel (United Arab Emirates), in Mombasa (Kenya), in Zanzibar, in Dar es Salam (Tanzania), in Port Elizabeth (South Africa), in Lomé (Togo), in Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic), in Los Angeles (United States of America) and in Vancouver (Canada).



False registration

- Dried sea horses → polyethylene pellets.
- Turtles, shells, scales → oval sculptures, shells, shellfish.
- Rolls of caiman skin → car parts.
- Frozen pangolins and scales → frozen shrimps, polyethylene pellets.
- Wolf skins → fur warming scraps.
- Tusks, tusk sections, carved ivory → spare parts, car parts, marble pieces, resin decorations, equipment for physical fitness and gymnastics, macadamia nuts, soy, paint brushes for calligraphy, waste water pipes, cow bones, wooden sculptures, dishes, pen holders, porcelain tiles, clocks, mammoth ivory.
- Gathered elephant ivory and pangolin scales → frozen perch, frozen fish heads, wigs, women's beauty accessories, sesame seeds.

Hiding places

- Pangolin scales among PET plastic bottles (PolyEthylene) to be recycled.
- Ivory and rhino horns mixed in with aluminum cans to be recycled.
- Sea horses hidden in small gas cartridges.
- Turtles in double bottoms Polystyrene crates, in rubber boots, in boxes of corn flakes.
- Turtles wrapped in baby diapers and clothes.
- Reptiles in cigarette packs and insects in children's books.
- Live birds and jaguar teeth hidden in stuffed toys.
- Antelope antlers under the hay in a truck carrying horses.
- Tiger teeth and claws and bear gall bladders in boxes of spring rolls.
- Lion teeth and ivory wrapped in aluminum and condoms.
- Bear paws in a load of tires.
- Bear paws and gall bladders, preputial glands from musk deer mixed with sawdust in bags.
- Rhino horns hidden in frozen lobster heads, at the center of a supposed electrical appliance, in porcelain vases.
- Ivory inside a load of cashew nuts, in the middle of beer or wine crates, under cement bags, under a batch of wooden sculptures or under a layer of dog food, hidden inside the frames of paintings, laid inside musical instruments, inside a coffee machine, in tea bags, in jogging shoes, in bags of charcoal ...
- On the human body : inside socks (pangolin scales), inside shoes (bear paws), tied to legs (birds, turtles, pangolin scales), sown inside pants (birds), inside underwear (birds and eggs), on the abdomen and inside a double sided waistcoat (ivory), inside the lining of jackets and coats (ivory and turtles).
- On women or disabled persons to embarrass agents changed with searches.
- Inside toy and milk bottles' bags for babies who themselves could be sometimes leased, under the stroller seat, inside milk powder boxes and medical plaster packets.
- Inside vehicles: fake floors (sometimes equipped with air vents for storing live animals), spare tyre, spare tyre compartment, fake gas tank, under the car frame, in one BMW motor unit, under the floor mat ...

Extra precautions

- Protected turtles mixed in with unprotected turtles.
- Ivory disguised as chocolate bars, as buffalo horns, painted brown (among wooden bark), painted black, painted red, painted and camouflaged to look like soapstone, covered in shoe shine.
- Tusks painted black and used as stool feet or hidden in polyurethane foam.
- Under layers of aluminum foil, opaque carbon or graphite paper, tin sheets to mislead scan checks, among strong smelling products (garlic, fish...) to trick the sniffer dogs.
- Fake CITES documents, identification ring or electronic chip taken from another animal...



Transportation tricks

- Pangolins in an ambulance, caviar inside a hearse, tusks inside a coffin, live gray parrots inside a truck with fake license plates from a military vehicle, official vehicles.
- Organization of caravans to spread out risks (ex : 15 Vietnamese « tourists » transporting 750 kg of raw ivory, split into 32 suitcases).
- The puzzle technique: rhino horns cut into several pieces and dispersed in different packages or luggage.
- Use of the express postal delivery services less checked than UPS or similar companies.
- Organization of "go-fast" boating and transshipments at sea.

Multi-products connections

Smuggling connections are opportunistic and engaged simultaneously in several endangered species trafficking (ex ivory and pangolin scales) and in trafficking of arms, cigarettes, drugs, game consoles and cell phones, computers, diamonds, gold....



Auction

8 auction houses involved in endangered species trafficking.

THEY SAID

"After people in Rome were tamed to the spectacle of murdering animals, it came the turn of men and the gladiators." Montaigne (1533-1592) quoted in "On the Trail" n°6.

"Hunting and trade in animal parts are a hereditary profession." Sansar Chand, famous Indian poacher who died in March 2014. Tehelka Magazine, Vol 7, Issue 31, 07/09/2010 quoted in "On the Trail" n°9.

"If this game park is well guarded, then the economy will boom [rather] than only relying on oil." The director of Lantoto National Park in South Sudan. The South Sudan Tribune, 12/03/2014.

"I'm not good with paperwork, I'm just a collector." A French tarantula trafficker. France 3 Lorraine. 18/04/2014.

"Owning elephants in Sri Lanka is like owning a Mercedes or Ferrari." Wildlife and Nature Protection Society of Sri Lanka, 04/2014.

"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." A Chinese journalist. Baoshan Yunnan, 13/05/2014.

"The smuggling of wildlife harms the balance of ecosystems and the image of Malaysia." The Minister of Natural Resources of Malaysia. Malaysian National News Agency, 04/07/2014.

"Elephant is big business (...). The whole elephant is valued at US\$10,000, because you will find that someone gets the ivory, another the tail while others go for the meat." Ms Senior warden. Zambia Daily Mail, 08/11/2014.

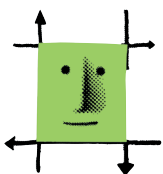
The Namibian Minister for Environment "encouraged Namibians to be a police officer, to be a soldier against poaching in this country." The Namibian, 12/11/2014.

"If all species of vultures vanished, there would be consequences like the rise of different communicable diseases and an increase in problematic scavengers like feral dog, rats and flies." An Indian specialist in vultures. The Telegraph (India), 08/03/2015.

"Shoot on sight is stupid. (...) Every single poacher is an opportunity for information to get more poachers and work your way up the chain to the ringleaders." A specialist in anti-poaching operations. Saving the Wild, 13/05/2015.

"The world-famous reserve is being forced to fight rhino and elephant poaching at the same time with the same resources." Kruger Park chief ranger, South Africa. Oxepeckers, 09/05/2016.

"A lot of people wonder why would anyone want an orangutan skull on their mantel." "Folks want what they can't have." A US Fish and Wildlife Service expert, United States of America. KGW, 25/05/2016.



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To download "On the Trail":

<http://www.robindesbois.org/en/category/balisage/faune/pillage-et-commerce/>
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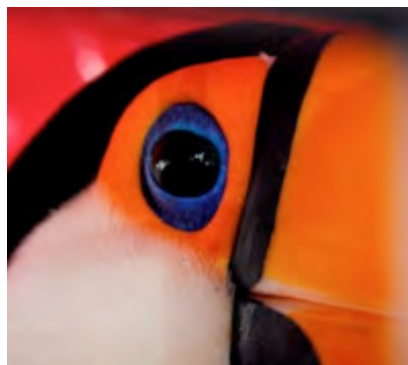
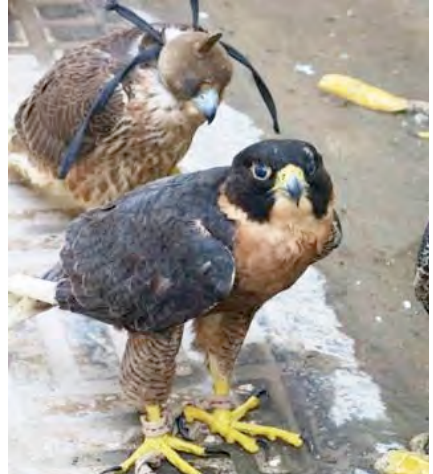
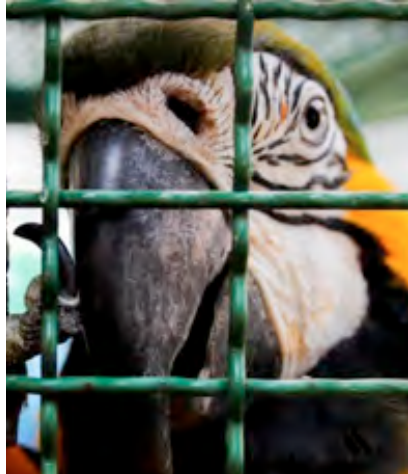
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Robin des Bois is a member of the Species Survival Network (SSN)

EYE TO EYE



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