

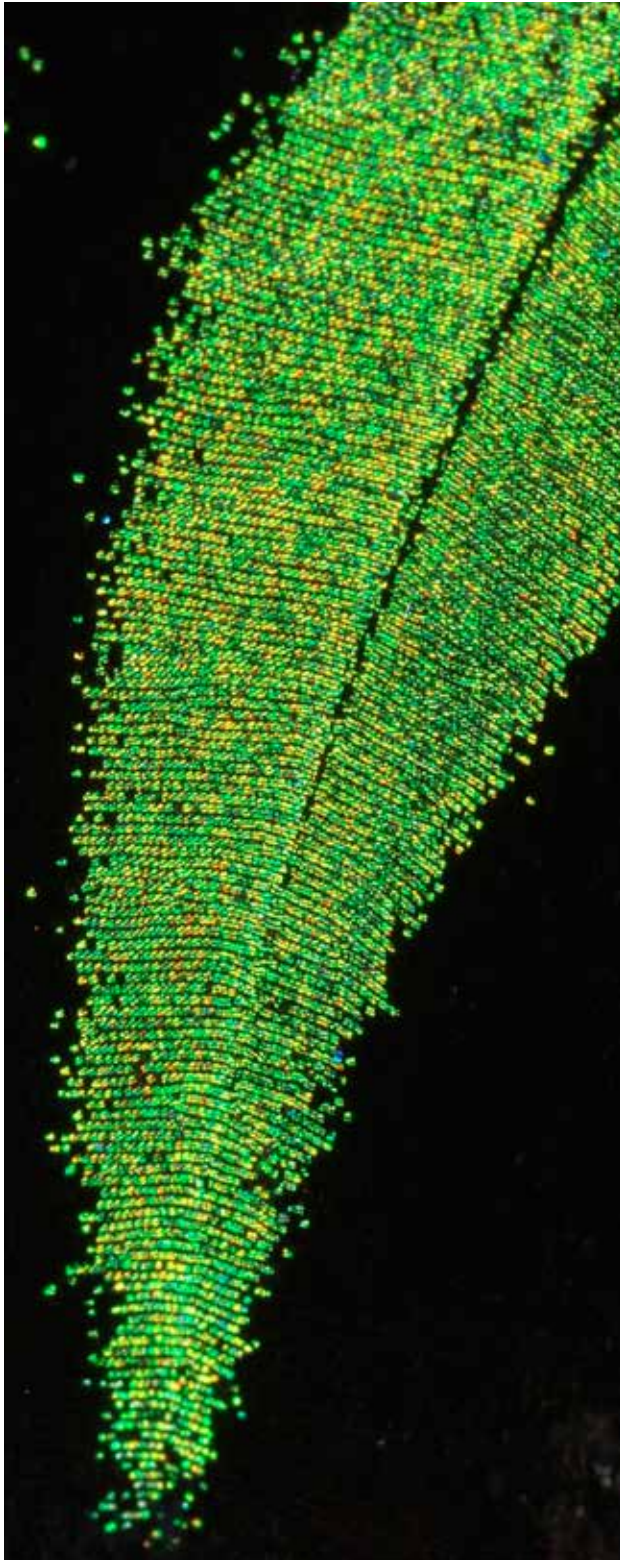
ROBIN DES BOIS

ON the TRAIL

Information and analysis bulletin on animal poaching and smuggling

n°12 / 1st January - 31th March 2016

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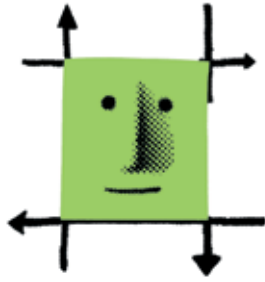
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ORIGINAL VERSION IN FRENCH

ON_{the} TRAIL

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



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Trogonoptera brookiana albescens
(detail) cf. page 33

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. 181 Member States.

Seahorses

AMERICA

March 1, 2016

Houston Intercontinental Airport, State of Texas, United States of America

Seizure of 55 dried seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II) in the luggage of a passenger arriving from Vietnam. The regulations allow only 4 seahorses per passenger.¹



Sea Cucumbers

AMERICA

January 22, 2016

Galapagos Islands, Ecuador

Seizure at the airport of 3 cardboard boxes containing sea cucumbers (*Isostichopus fuscus*, Appendix III and *Stichopus horrens*) destined to Guayaquil. One arrest.¹



Stichopus horrens

ASIA

January 6, 2016

Mandapam, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Before dawn, a police shadowing allowed to arrest 2 fishermen and recover 300 kg of sea cucumbers in 18 cut up barrels. The seizure was destroyed. The buyer fled.²



January 27, 2016

Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure in the fishing port of 130 kg of sea cucumbers (Holothuroidea class). One arrest.³

REPEATED OFFENSE

February 28, 2016

Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of 65 kg of sea cucumbers (Holothuroidea class) in 11 bags at the home of a trafficker arrested for the same reason in 2010. The sea cucumbers were going to be directed to China via Sri Lanka after having been boiled and dried.⁴

Sea Urchins

AMERICA

March 30, 2016

L'Anse aux Bois, Municipality of Sainte-Anne, Martinique

Seizure in the mangrove of 4 bags containing 200 whole white urchins (*Tripneustes esculentus*), 200 broken ones and 8 kg of gonads. Three arrests in flagrante delicto. Fishing for white urchin is strictly limited to professional fishermen, for very short durations, a morning here and there. Illegal fishing plunder the stocks. The gonads are the reproductive organs of sea urchins, commonly called the «coral». To extract it, the sea urchin is cut into 2 using scissors. Live urchins and gonads were returned to the water.¹



Clams, Abalones and Queen Conch

AFRICA

Mid-January 2016

L'Etang Salé, Reunion island, France, Indian Ocean

In the district of l'Etang Salé, there is a lasting controversy about clams. Some speak of traditional fishing, others of natural deaths and some call it poaching and even pillaging. Men were seen near the reef with miner's bar. Giant clams live buried in sediments. Insular NGO Vie Oceane confirms the assertion of poaching. Shells emptied of their flesh are aligned and show traces of shocks. The flesh of clams is appreciated in restaurants, although it accumulates pollutants.¹



Tridacna maxima

1st February 2016

Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia

Global seizure of 79.2 kg of abalone (*Haliotis* genus), 35.2 kg at the airport, 44 kg in a private house. Appearance of Zhi Geng and release on bail denied. Zhi Geng is a Namibia national.

With his partner James Barron Wallace, they were engaged in abalone trafficking. At the beginning of the month, they had tried to export 35.2 kg into Hong Kong. The 2 parcels supposedly containing rice, pasta and dried seafood were really full of abalones. Wallace the sender claimed that he had been deceived. He thought the seafood was sea weed. At Geng's home, police found fresh abalones in the fridge and dried ones in a suitcase, and also in the bedroom rhino horns (see p. 72). This is not a first, "On the Trail" has already stated that smugglers in Southern Africa dealt both in abalone and ivory (see "On the Trail" n°4 page 95).²



AMERICA

FAMILY BUSINESS

Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe Region, France

René and Ornésitha Beausir, the couple of queen conch smugglers, is sentenced to 2 years imprisonment with one year suspended sentence, fined to € 100,000 each for smuggling of prohibited goods, money laundering and illegal employment and € 300,000 customs fine to pay jointly with a permanent ban on engaging in commercial activities.

The queen conch (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II) were smuggled from the island of Antigua. Nearly 22 tons of meat were sold in Guadeloupe after processing in a sweatshop. 3 tons were sold on the island by Carrefour under the partial designation "Guadeloupe origin".

Conch juveniles burrow in the day time to protect themselves from predators. The conch is a benthic mollusk. It feeds on the thin layer of bacteria covering sediments and algae. It does not destroy seagrass beds. It reaches its maximum size between 2 and 3 years and sexual maturity at 3 years. Its life expectancy is estimated to about 6 years. The meat represents 15 to 20% of the weight. It is a detritivorous herbivore that helps maintain ecosystems at bottom of the sea between 2 m and 30 m deep. It is distributed in the Caribbean. In Guadeloupe, the conch fishing is strictly regulated.³



© Christopher Gonzalez

ASIA

March 23, 2016

Hong Kong, China

Seizure of 7000 kg of giant clams (*Tridacna gigas*, Appendix II) and 25,000 kg of dried sea shell estimated at HK \$ 1.4 million (\$ 180,194 US). The big 40-foot container carried according to the waybill 32 tons of scrap metal.⁴



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EUROPE

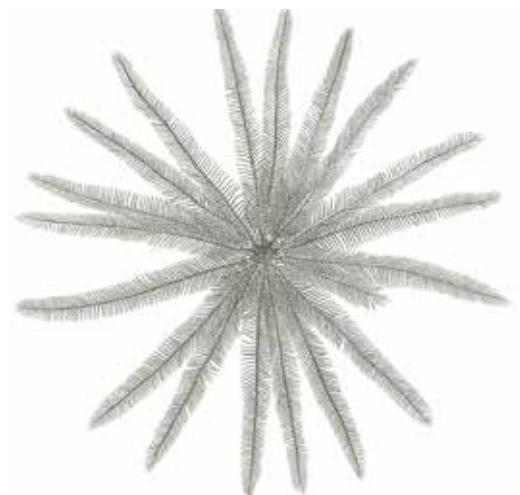
End of March 2016

Casamassima, Puglia Region, Italy

Seizure of 2 shells of giant clams (*Tridacnidae* spp., Appendix II) used as decoration in the fish section of a hypermarket.⁵



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Corals

AFRICA

February 27, 2016

Faux Cap, Androy Region, Madagascar

Seizure in a rooming house of 4 bags of black corals (*Antipatharia* spp., Appendix II) and diving equipment: about 30 oxygen bottles, one compressor, 2 off-board motors, and skins. The owner was arrested. Ten divers, accomplices, and, according to several sources, the son of a minister, fled.¹



The 245 species of black corals have been registered in CITES Appendix II since 1981. They come from all the oceans, and they are particularly common in tropical and subtropical waters from 50 m, on hard substrates exposed to strong currents. They feed on zooplankton. Black corals grow slowly and live for several decades, and certain species even live for a thousand years. They are key habitats for a myriad of marine organisms. Its predators are gastropods, green sea turtles, and jewelers.

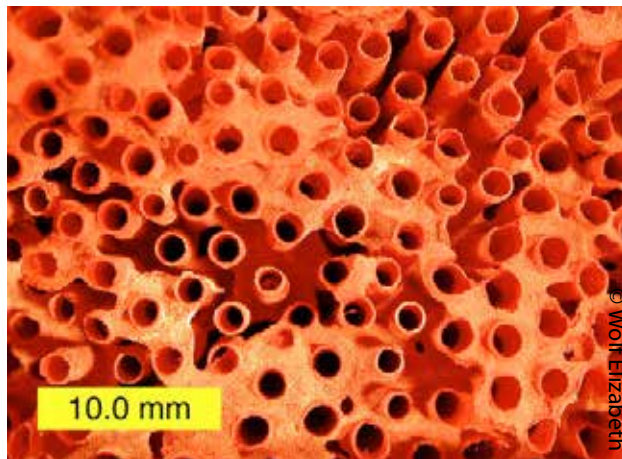


ASIA

February 11, 2016

Tughlaqabad, National Capital Territory of Delhi, India

Seizure of 15,450 kilograms of organ pipe coral (*Tubipora musica*, Appendix II) estimated at 10.8 million rupees (\$ 262,044 US) in a container from China.



Modus operandi: harvest the coral off the Lakshadweep islands, Andaman and Nicobar, in breach with Indian law, smuggle them in China and send them back to India under cover of shilajit, a brown or white-yellowish resin that oozes from certain stones and is used in Ayurveda.

Acting on information, the specialized Customs brigade raided the container. Experts from the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau confirmed that the substance was actually organ pipe coral ripped from reefs 150 to 200 years old. The importer, Vijay Sons, specializes in medicinal herbs. Its director, Manveen Chhokra, risks 6 to 8 years in prison for what is considered the biggest red coral seizure in Asia for several years. As a bonus, 23 kg of antlers from a deer species protected in India since 1972 have been seized in the company store house.²

EUROPE

January 7, 2016

Dortmund, Land of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany

Seizure of 16 pieces of hard corals (*Scleractinia* spp., Appendix II) in the luggage of a passenger from Beijing via Munich.³

AMERICA

January 15, 2016

International Airport in Panama City, Panama

Seizure of 251 kg of great hammerhead shark fins (*Sphyrna mokarran*, Appendix II) in the freight area inside the alcohols and spirits section.⁴



January 28, 2016

Aguas Verdes, Province of Zarumilla, Tumbes Region, Peru

689 kg of shark fins from unknown species discovered in a truck coming from Ecuador. They were divided in 17 bags.⁵



February 23, 2016

Tumbes, Tumbes Region, Peru

Attack! Coastal fishermen captured a whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*, Appendix II), cut off its fins and then released it alive to the sea. A stranger would have offered US \$ 3000 for the fins.⁶



ASIA

January February March 2016

Hong Kong International Airport, China

1- January 5th. Entering 109 kg of elvers, fry of European eel (*Anguilla Anguilla*, Appendix II), in luggage from Madrid, via Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates). Four arrests, 3 men and a woman.



2- February 10th. Seizure of 48 kg of dead eels in 3 plastic bags in luggage from Bilbao via Paris. The seizure is estimated at \$ 420,000 HK (\$ 53,920 US) or \$ 1220 US per kg. One arrest. Ken Shing, director of



Eco Education, explains that there is a very strong demand in Asia and particularly in Japan and that the Japanese eel is endangered.

3- March 4th. Seizure of 91 kg of elvers in 6 suitcases from Vigo via Madrid, Spain, and Amsterdam, Netherlands. Two arrests.



4- March 7th. Seizure of 63 kg of elvers in 2 luggage from Saint-Jacques de Compostela, Spain, via Istanbul, Turkey. Two women arrested.



That is in all 311 kg of elvers = about 1 million individuals. The total amount of contraband would be 10 million elvers according to the Interpol ratio that seizures account for 10% of smuggling.⁷

January 8, 2016

Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium, Motobu, Okinawa Prefecture, Japan

Death of a great white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*, Appendix II).

The fishermen in Yomitan did not intend to catch him in a net. However, they immediately sold him to the aquarium taking care of delivering him alive. A big hype spread, the aquatic zoo boasting about being the only one to display a white shark. He died 3 days after his capture. The species can not bear captivity. The record for the longest torture is held by the aquarium in Monterey Bay in California. The 600,000 liters of sea water basin were not sufficient to acclimate the female white shark. After 198 days and 35 cm of growth, she was released. She was becoming more and more aggressive. That was in 2004. After a few more attempts, the Monterey Bay Aquarium officially gave up to exhibit great white sharks in June 2013.⁸



© BJ Stacey

March 7, 2016

Hong Kong International Airport, China

Seizure of 46 kg of smooth hammerhead shark fins (*Sphyrna zygaena*, Appendix II) in an unclaimed luggage.⁹



© Hong Kong Customs

February 26 and March 14, 2016

Riau Islands, Sunda Islands, Indonesia

Boarding of the pirate fishing ship *Viking* registered in Nigeria and dirty scuttling near the mangrove. Arrest of 10 crew members, including the Chilean captain.¹⁰



© Humas KKP/WP

"This should serve as a warning for others." "You may go freely in the rest of the world, but once entering Indonesia, this is the consequence."

EUROPE

Beginning of February 2016

Camaiole, Region of Tuscany, Italy

Seizure of one kilo of glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) still alive in the cold room of a beach restaurant. The market value is € 400. The owner was heard by Justice. The elvers were entrusted to an experimental hatchery which aims to repopulate inland waters of Tuscany.¹¹

REPEATED OFFENSE

February 8, 2016

Le Pellerin, Department of Loire-Atlantique, France

Seizure of nearly 10 kg of glass eels (*Anguilla Anguilla*, Appendix II) and arrest of 3 poachers. In the middle of the night, 35 policemen and agents of ONEMA (Na-



© Presse Océan - N. Bourreau

tional Office for Water and Aquatic Environments) intervened on the edge of the Martinière canal and caught in flagrante delicto of fishing offense 3 individuals, notorious repeat offenders. They are summoned to court in Nantes in June. They face a € 75,000 fine and a year in jail if traffic by an organized gang is proven. European glass eels fishing takes place on the estuary of the Loire from December 1st to April 30. It is reserved to professional fishermen holders of an authorization and subject to quota: 30 tons for the Loire and coastal waterways of Vendée, 12 for consumption and 18 for the redeployment of the species threatened with extinction. The glass eels were returned to the water.¹²

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Beginning in March 2016

Autonomous Community of Galicia, Spain

It had been brewing for some time. In 2003, the *Viarsa* was chased by the Australian coast guards for a month and had managed to escape after a pursuit of 4000 miles, 6500 km.

In November 2006, Antonio Vidal, Director of the Spanish armament Ribeiro Vidal Armadores SA, was sentenced by a court in Miami to 4 years probation with obligation to renounce any activity related to the Patagonian toothfish (*Dissostichus eleginoides*) and a \$ 400,000 US fine for attempting to import by an organized gang through the Port of Miami 26 tons of Patagonian toothfish after Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, in the name of Fidalur, a subsidiary located in Uruguay. Vidal had escaped prison by cooperating with American justice and giving some information about the "mafia" of the Patagonian toothfish traffic. He also committed to liquidate Fidalur within 45 days and to not oppose extradition request by the United States or any other State if he did not fulfill all the terms of judgment.

Since 2008, 3 of the ships operated by Vidal were on the blacklist of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Antarctic (CCAMLR).

In 2009, the Vidal family had received a European grant to set up a fish processing factory to produce oil rich in Omega 3. The *Corvus* and the *Antillas Reefer* (see p. 7 of this issue) roamed the high seas without license to supply in shark oil the Biomega Nutricion factory in Boiro, autonomous community of Galicia, Spain.

In January and February 2015, 3 vessels credited to Vidal Armadores were spotted with nets of 25 km long by a New Zealand patrol near Commonwealth Bay 110 km from the Antarctic continent.

In March 2016, 10 years after its conflict with the law in United States, Antonio Vidal and 3 of his son are again into trouble, this time with Spanish, European and international justice.

The Civil Guard, Europol and Interpol took action in 3 offices, workshops and warehouses belonging to the Vidal clan. Antonio Vidal did not lose his composure. He acknowledged that 3 of his vessels were fishing in the Antarctic. Alleging that they were flagged in Equatorial Guinea, a non-signatory country of CCAMLR, he claims that they were not in IUU fishing situation compared with the article X of the Commission which, it is true, lacks clarity: "The Commission shall draw the attention of any State which is not a Party to this Convention to any activity undertaken by its nationals or vessels which, in the opinion of the Commission, affects the implementation of the objective of this Convention."

But Equatorial Guinea denies these vessels in its shipping register.

In first intention, Vidal Armadores company, 8 subsidiaries and 7 people, including 5 members of the Vidal family, were sentenced to pay fines totaling € 17.84 million for illegal fishing activity and a further fine of 1.09 million of € for destroying documents.

Vidal Armadores's lawyers want to stay positive. They recognize that the company has made misdemeanors in the past and was thus sanctioned but they maintain that times have changed and that the Vidal family is no longer directly involved in fishing activities showing interest in other sectors such as renewable energies. Very reassuring indeed.¹³

March 31, 2016

Pescara, Abruzzo Region, Italy

Seizure of 200 kg of bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) in a car on the waterfront. The fish were donated to charities. Fine of € 4,000.¹⁴



Marine Mammals

AFRICA

March 25, 2016

Guinea

Arrest of Balla Doumbouya, international trafficker. He was hiding in the forest since the arrest of his accomplices including the former head of CITES office (see "On the Trail" n° 10 p. 71). He is suspected of involvement in international trafficking in live African manatees (*Trichechus senegalensis*, Appendix I) traded around \$ 50,000 US piece but also in chimpanzees (*Pan spp.*, Appendix I). His arrest was supported by the GALF (Guinea : Wildlife Law Enforcement).¹



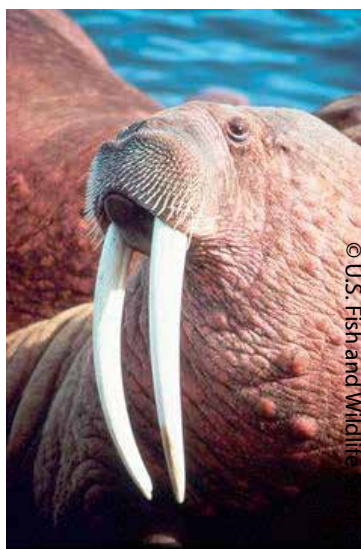
AMERICA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

March 10, 2016

Honolulu, State of Hawaii, United States of America

Curtis Wilmington, the owner of "Hawaiian Accessories", pleaded guilty for smuggling protected species (cf. "On the Trail" n° 9, page 103). The ivory that decorated the jewels were from Alaska walrus (*Odobenus rosmarus*, Appendix III) and whale teeth (*Cetacea spp.*, Appendix I and II). There were also black corals (*Antipatharia spp.*, Appendix II) illegally imported from Mexico. Wilmington concealed the ivory in his acacia koa (*Acacia koa*) expeditions in the Philippines, and received pendants marked "Made in the Philippines" in return. He was in a hurry



to remove this label and sold the jewel as Hawaiian handmade jewelry for \$ 250 US. He could receive a 5-year prison sentence. Other employees from his company, including his daughter, have also been indicted. The koa is a native tree of the archipelago that is over-exploited. It was traditionally used for canoes and uku-leles.²

March 10 and 11, 2016

State of Maine, United States

Extradition from Canada of Gregory Robert Logan for trafficking of 250 narwhal tusks (*Monodon monoceros*, Appendix II) in 7 years activity. A smuggling network of narwhal tusks between Canada and the United States is dismantled. However, the root of the traffic, Inuit poachers, is not eradicated. Logan and his accomplices cleared the tusks in the United States through the Internet having them delivered by FedEx. Logan was initially sentenced in Canada to a CA \$ 385,000 (\$ 284,210 US) fine and 8 months of probation. One of his partners in crime, Zaraukas, is already in jail in the United States. He was also obliged to return to justice 6 tusks and an exceptional piece, the skull of a narwhal with cavities for 2 tusks. See "On the Trail" n° 3. p.4 and n°4, p.12.³



A. Thorburn

March 22, 2016

Manacapuru, Amazonas State, Brazil

Rescue of a female Amazonian manatee 2 months old (*Trichechus inunguis*, Appendix I). A fisherman tried to sell her to a merchant who called the police. The fisherman fled leaving his prey. The aquatic mammal has been handed over to the Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas da Amazonia (Inpa), National Institute of Amazonian Research.



The Amazonian manatee measures up to 3 m and weighs up to 450 kg. The white patch he wears on his stomach is useful to distinguish him from the North American and African manatees. He is the only one to survive in fresh water and can be found throughout the Amazon basin. He can stay 20 minutes under water without breathing. The reproductive rate is very low, about 1 baby every 3 years. Nursing lasts for 2 years. The species has been brutally poached for its meat and for its skin. Manatee hunting is illegal, but populations along rivers still consume its meat despite contamination with pesticides and mercury. The dams divide habitats, fragment populations and reduce the reproductive capacity of the species.⁴

ASIA

March 8, 2016

Kokoya Island, North Maluku Province, Indonesia

Release of 2 dugongs (*Dugong dugong*, Appendix I). Captured by a fisherman, bound by a thick rope like a dog in a kennel, the female dugong had been there for a few weeks, used as clandestine and paying attraction. In a cage nearby her baby hoped for a better fate. The mother was seriously injured at the base of the caudal fin.⁵



EUROPE

Skegness and Gibraltar Point, County of Lincolnshire, England, United Kingdom

Stranding of 3 sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I). Thefts of marine ivory are increasing in Canada (cf. "On The Trail" n°7 p. 7), Iceland (cf. "On The Trail" n°10 p. 9) and in England today. Sperm whale teeth were also reportedly stolen on beaches in Germany.⁶



Marine Turtles

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

AFRICA

February 27 and 28, 2016

Saziley Marine Park, south point of Grande Terre, Mayotte, France, Indian Ocean

Discovery by the Mayotte Naturalists Association of a poached turtle. How long will sea turtles poaching remains somehow the most current currency on the French archipelago?¹

AMERICA

January 21, 2016

States of Michoacán and Oaxaca, Mexico

Three beaches, 3 seizures. In total, 12,188 olive Ridley sea turtles eggs. The rescued eggs were entrusted in the Mexican Sea Turtle Conservancy Center.²

FAMILY AFFAIRS

February 19, 2016

San Diego, State of California, United States of America

Appearance for smuggling in 2014 of 911 eggs from olive Ridley and Kemp's Ridley turtles between Mexico and the United States. Modus operandi: the woman collected the eggs on the beaches of Nayarit State and put them in plastic bags inside a cooler. She then took a bus to Tijuana on a distance of over 2000 km. Her husband reached the Mexican border by car from Hemet, California. He crossed the border on foot and after meeting his wife at the bus station, they divided the eggs and hid them in 2 coolers under fish and shrimps and loaded everything into a pickup truck for export to the United States. The driver was not informed of the nature of the cargo. The couple then crossed the border by the pedestrian lane.



Tijuana pedestrian border checkpoint

The Jimenez pleaded guilty to smuggling, illegal trafficking of protected species by organized gang and agreed to return \$ 9,000 US to the Mexican State for the damage to its natural heritage. On paper, they each face up to 20 years in prison and \$ 250,000 US fine. They are accustomed to this kind of traffic. The eggs were sold between \$ 100 and \$ 200 US per unit. The trial will take place this summer. The "arribada" of sea turtles on the Mexican beaches of the Pacific Ocean is eagerly awaited by poachers and onlookers.³

**February 23, 2016
Porto Seguro, Bahia, Brazil**

A Kemp's Ridley was savagely attacked with a machete when she arrived on the beach to lay her eggs. Once in the center of intensive treatment, she laid 2 eggs. The criminal fled from the beach booed by witnesses.⁴

ASIA

**Mid-January 2016
Vung Tau, Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province, Vietnam**

Seizure of 9 stuffed green turtles in a souvenir shop in Vung Tau.⁵

**February 22, 2016
Thu Duc District, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam**

Seizure of a hawksbill turtle for sale in a fish store. She should be set free in open water off the Kien Giang Province.⁶

**February 22, 2016
Garo Hills, Meghalaya, India. Bangladesh border**
Seizure of 15 loggerhead turtles. While patrolling between Baghmara and Gasuapara, the police tried to intercept a motorbike and its 2 passengers. The vehicle fled and a bag was discarded. Sea turtles captured in the Indian Ocean had just landed in the ditch. A new episode of the smuggling saga between India and Bangladesh.⁷



Hatchlings *Caretta caretta* proceeding towards the sea

**February 27 and 28, 2016
Derawan Island and Tanjung-Redeb, Berau Regency, East Kalimantan Province, Indonesia**

Seizure of 135 paste jewellerys made from turtle shell and sold for \$ 37 US per unit in 32 gift shops. The local NGO Perkumpulan Konservasi Biota Laut Berau and Profaua ask for dissuasive sanctions.⁸

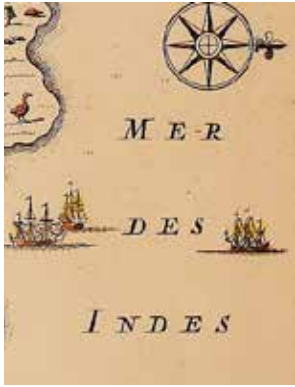
Various Marine Species

**March 27, 2016
Pratas Islands (Dongsha Islands), South China Sea, Taiwan**

Seizure of 3 live green sea turtles, 15 tons of 21 different coral species, 400 kg of shells and 40 kg of chemicals on a Chinese fishing boat.

"Battleship" in Taiwanese waters. The *Kaohsiung*, a patrol boat of the coast guard, and 3 speedboats have boarded the vessel and escorted it to the port of Kaohsiung. The 41 crew members were arrested then examined. They are likely to be brought to justice in Taiwan. The Pratas archipelago is 400 km southwestern Taiwan. The main island is a coral atoll of 2.4 km². The archipelago is also known under the name of Dongsha, sovereignty is the subject of a dispute with the People's Republic of China.¹





The ex Domed Rodrigues Giant Tortoise and the ex Saddle-Backed Rodrigues Giant Tortoise

Rodrigues Island, 103 km², is the smallest of the three Mascarene Islands. It is older than the islands of Mauritius and Réunion. Its bedrock could date back 15 million years and resulted in a magma body to raise out of a break in the ocean floor.

The island was uninhabited by man before the arrival of explorers and the French settlers in the 18th century.

One hundred pioneers, slaves, soldiers of the French republic, "one and indivisible" succeeded in 100 years to exterminate by hunting, capturing, deforestation, fires and introducing invasive species, the local populations of manatees, the lesser frigatebird (*Fregata ariel*), the red footed bobby (*Sula sula*), the Abbott's booby (*Papasula abbotti*), and to extinct 2 species of giant tortoises, Newton's parakeet (*Psittacula exsul*), and Rodrigues day geckos (*Phelsuma edwardnewtoni*).

Two species of giant tortoises shared terrestrial flora and gardening of the wild island. Thanks to particular morphological adaptations, they had complementary feeding niches that eliminated the competition and participated in the maintenance of ecosystems.



Artist view of *Cylindraspis vosmaeri* and *Cylindraspis peltastes*.

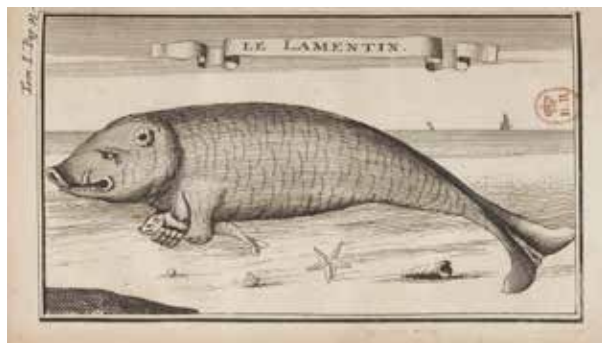
By Julian Pender Hume.

The Saddle-backed Rodrigues giant tortoise (*Cylindraspis vosmaeri*) measured between 110 and 130 cm as a mature adult. Its shell adjusted and risen up at the top of the spine gave it some agility and the capability to extend its long neck vertically. It ate leaves, fruits, grains, berries from bushes and branches at the bottom of trees. "There are sea tortoises who weigh more than 500 pounds." "The land turtles are not so big but the great one carry a man with more ease than a man can carry them."

The Domed Rodrigues giant tortoise (*Cylindraspis peltastes*) was smaller. It did not measure more than 50 cm. It was covered by a dome-shaped shell that touched the ground. It ate herbs and plant residue.



Francois Leguat, in the account of his voyage and his adventures published in 1708 in Amsterdam, reported some picturesque traits or even mysterious behavior of the giant tortoises of Rodrigues Island. "They meet together in the evening in cool places and lie so close that one would think those places were paved with them." "There's one thing very odd among them; they always place sentinels at some distance from their troop, at the four corners of their camp, to which the sentinels turn their backs, and look with the eyes, as if they were on the watch. This we have always observed of them; and this mystery seems the more difficult to be comprehended, for that these creatures are incapable to defend themselves, or to fly."



The Rodrigues giant tortoises had 2 weaknesses, their numerical abundance – "one would see sometimes troops of 2,000 to 3,000" – and the delicacy of their flesh, their oil and their liver.

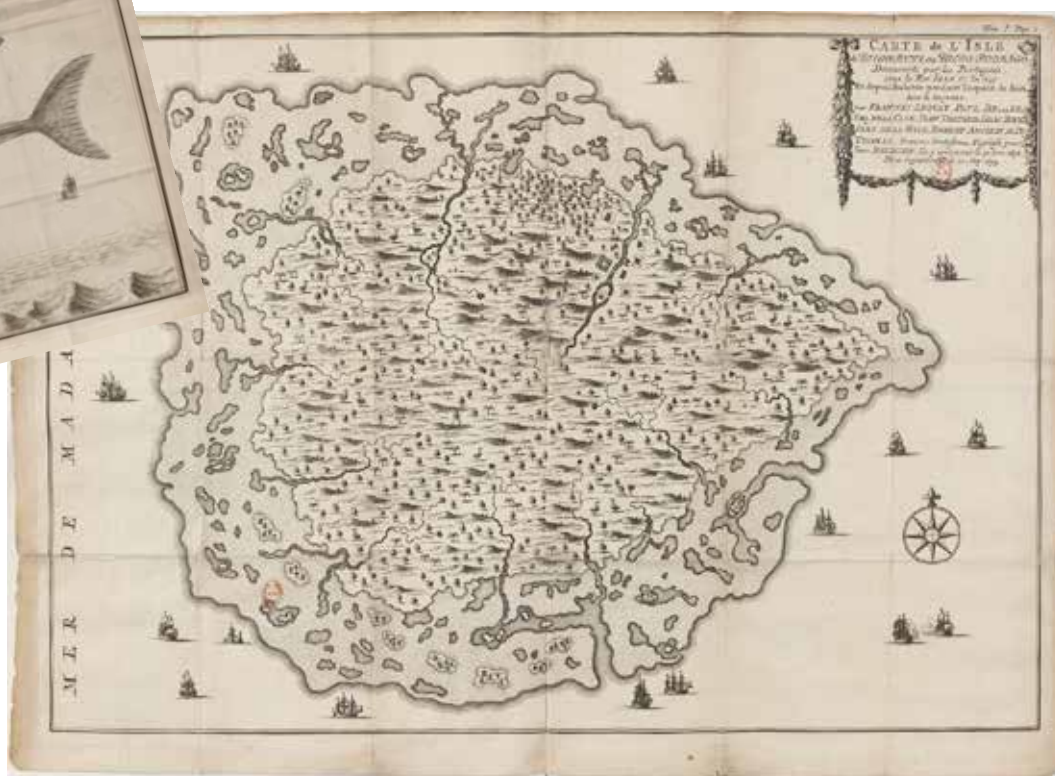
From 1735, the giant tortoises of the island were the objects of regular trafficking with Mauritius Island. It reached its peak between 1750 and 1770 with 4 to 5,000 tortoises per year with an average weight of 9 kg. In 1761, Father Pingré a member of an observation expedition on the transit of Venus spent several months on Rodrigues Island and observed the decline in the size of tortoises captured and shipped. "At first, they were a good size but they no longer have time to grow. Now, when a bigger one is found, it is called a "coach". Giant tortoises of Rodrigues were good and well on their way to extinction.

For years, the tortoises were "turned", that is to say put on their back, transported in a cage, mixed with sea turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) with buckets of sea water poured on them from time to time while awaiting boarding on bricks who made the commute to Port Louis, the capital of the Island of France, today Mauritius Island.

280,000 giant tortoises of Rodrigues had been transported on the Island of France en 40 years. At least a third were dead on arrival but the survivors provided nourishment for the administrators of the island, soldiers, hospital patients, the pioneers; the crews of French, English and Dutch ships load the living animals to eat and fight against scurvy. It was a large trafficking and the only meat available of indigenous terrestrial animals.

In 1795, the civil administrator of Rodrigues Island, Philibert Marragon, observed that, "the tortoises once so common seem absolutely destroyed." "For over a year, we have found two and again, in inaccessible gorges."

All of the species of giant tortoises of the Mascarene Islands were liquidated in a few decades. They disappeared from Mauritius towards 1735, from Rodrigues and Réunion in 1800.



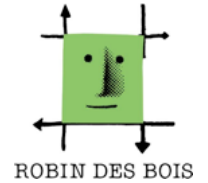
«Voyage et aventures de François Leguat, & de ses compagnons, en deux isles désertes des Indes orientales.» François Leguat , 1708. A Amsterdam, chez Jean Louis de Lorme libraire. MDCCVIII. Bibliothèque Nationale de France

Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles

AFRICA

LIBYA

March 22, 2016
Marj, Marj District, Lybia
Good news from Libya



Robin des Bois Press release. April 11, 2016

Customs officers have just seized a total of 1,700 Kleinmann's tortoises (*Testudo kleinmanni*) in a minibus and a heavy truck. These were the first 2 seizures observed in Libya since the July 2013 publication of "On the trail" n°1, the bulletin of Robin des Bois dedicated to poaching and smuggling endangered animal species. They prove that despite the political and social chaos, wildlife is not completely left to the devices of traffickers and militia. The 2 vehicles were heading to Egypt. The first reports show that the 200 tortoises in the minibus were collected in the desert to the south of Tripoli. The 1,500 tortoises found in 18 bags inside the truck were collected in an area south of Benghazi.



Kleinmann's tortoise is one of the most endangered tortoises. Not long ago, its distribution range included Libya and Egypt. Except for a few isolated individuals, these tortoises have disappeared from Egypt. Its last known habitats were the coastal deserts of Tripolitania, in the western part of the country, and Cyrenaica, in the eastern part. Kleinmann's tortoises need the moisture that the Mediterranean Sea brings. In the scorching heat of the day, and on cold nights, the tortoises bury themselves in the burrows that small mammals have abandoned. Kleinmann's tortoises are vegetarian, but if necessary, they eat insects and the excrement of desert rodents. A female Kleinmann's tortoise lays 5 eggs, with an incubation period of 20 days. Kleinmann's tortoises have camouflage that is almost military. Unfortunately, this is not enough to spare it from the international pet market. A specimen sells for between \$ 700 US and \$ 1000 US.¹

MADAGASCAR

Night of February 2, 2016
Ihosy, Ihorombe Region, Madagascar

Seizure during a road check of 45 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) hidden in a backpack in a bush taxi going from Toliara to Antananarivo. None of the passengers admits owning the backpack and the taxi driver knows nothing.²

February 20, 2016
Soalala, Region of Boeny, Madagascar

Discovery of an angonoka tortoise (*Astrochelys yniphora*, Appendix I) about thirty years old in a bag. She would have been stolen in the Baly National Park at Soalala. According to the NGO Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, thefts are not uncommon in the park. Poachers pick them out of hibernation when they go out of their nest in the rainy season.³



Astrochelys yniphora with its guardian

March 15, 2016

Antananarivo, Analamanga Region, Madagascar

Seizure of 101 radiated tortoises babies from Madagascar (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I). Captured in Toliara, Atsimo-Andrefana region, south west of the island and bound for Asia. Anti smuggling Services intervened in the city of "67 hectares". The baby turtles were going to move from the hands of a woman to those of a man. The 2 were arrested. Foreigners are involved in the case according to the police.⁴



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AMERICA

BRAZIL

February 12, 2016

Paraíso do Tocantins, State of Tocantins, Brazil

Seizure of 6 yellow footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis denticulata*, Appendix II). Alert Number: 0800 63 1155⁵

February 21, 2016

Caracarai, State of Roraima, Brazil

Seizure of 115 live Arrau river turtles (*Podocnemis expansa*, Appendix II) and arrest of 5 "tartarugueiros". They were captured during egg-laying season on secluded beaches. The turtles were released into the wild.⁶



© Luisovalles

Young *Podocnemis expansa*

March 3, 2016

Anavilhanas National Park, Amazonas State, Brazil

Seizure of 48 Arrau river turtles (*Podocnemis expansa*, Appendix II). They were caught in Jauperi River. They were transported on 2 boats, one made of wood, and the other one made of aluminum. The boats were heading to Manaus, 350 km away. The turtles were released back into the water. The offenders were sentenced to a total fine of \$ 96,000 R, or \$ 25,000 US.⁷



© Joako Martin

March 16, 2016

Guajara, Amazonas State, Brazil

Seizure of 95 yellow footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis denticulata*, Appendix II) and 120 kg of wild meat. Arrest of 2 persons and fines of 500 reais or \$ 120 US per animal and per kilo.⁸



March 22, 2016

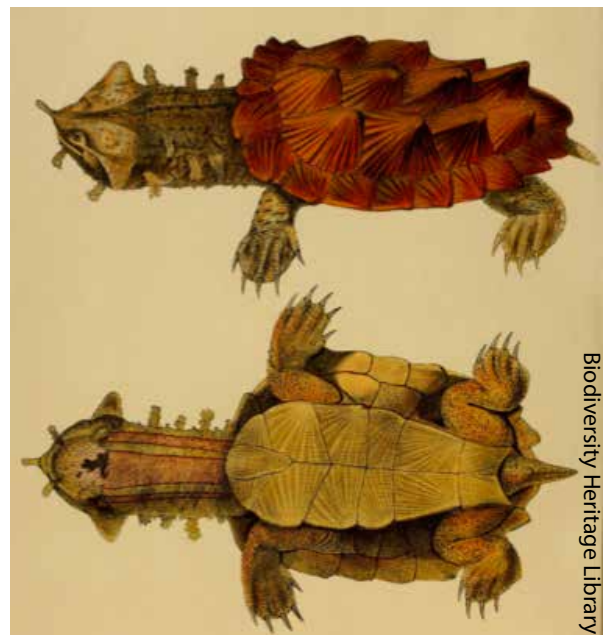
Rio de Janeiro, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Two youngsters aged 15 and 17 were arrested in front of a subway station with 4 baby yellow footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis denticulata*, Appendix II) in a pitiful state. The sale price was 50 reais (\$ 15 US). They confess to having sold at least 16.⁹

March 28, 2016

Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Seizure by Manaus port customs of 14 tortoises including matamatas (*Chelus fimbriatus*). They were going by parcel post to the State of Sao Paulo. The matamata turtle is the only of the genus *Chelus*. Semi-aquatic, she lives in calm and muddy freshwater in South America. The matamata feeds mainly on aquatic invertebrates and fish. The female lays up to 28 eggs, which incubation lasts an average of 200 days. With the color and shape of its shell, it can easily be camouflaged and look like a pile of dead leaves. Her life expectancy is around 35 years.¹⁰



Biodiversity Heritage Library

CANADA

February 17, 2016

Windsor, Province of Ontario, Canada

Seizure of 38 turtles, diamondback terrapins (*Malaclemys terrapin*, Appendix II), three toed box turtles (*Terrapene carolina triunguis*, Appendix II), spotted turtles (*Clemmys guttata*, Appendix II), ringed map turtles (*Graptemys oculifera*, Appendix III) and red eared sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*).

Conviction of Mr. Dong Yan to a fine of \$ 3,500 CA (\$ 2583 US), to 24 months of probation, prohibition from owning any turtle for 10 years, to 50 hours of community service, to the obligation to inform the Environment and Climate Change Canada 7 days prior to leaving the country and to the writing of an article about his arrest, trial and conviction for breaching the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act. The article will be published in an academic journal.

Canadian Press underlines that there are 350 species of tortoises and turtles worldwide and that 140 terrestrial species and 44 aquatic are regulated by CITES.¹¹



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



Malaclemys terrapin

January 31, 2016

New Orleans, Louisiana State,

Indictment of Raymond Chiu, 72, residing in California and Eric Cottrell, 44, in Louisiana charged for acquisition, transportation and smuggling in organized gang of 180 protected turtles including diamondback terrapins (*Malaclemys terrapin*, Appendix II) and release under bail of \$ 300,000 US for Chiu and \$ 25,000 US for Cottrell.

Turtles with legal protection were in opaque bags and mixed at the request of the Chinese buyer with 60 common snapping turtles (*Chelydra serpentina*) known for their aggressiveness and little appreciated by customs. "Customs will think the bags are full of snapping turtles and will not hold an inspection." A second delivery was planned, but



it failed. It included, among others, 20 diamondback terrapins illegally fished with a shrimp net although only the manual capture is allowed in Louisiana, moreover they were under legal size for capture. The 2 indicted's modus operandi has been brought to light through the infiltration of Fish and Wildlife Service agents.¹²

REPEATED OFFENSE

Wednesday, March 23, 2016

State of Louisiana, United States of America

54-year-old John Tokosh was sentenced to 2 years in prison followed by 6 years of probation for participating in trafficking wood turtles (*Glyptemys insculpta*, Appendix II) to Hong Kong. His role was to capture the turtles in Pennsylvania, where this practice is banned, and send them by mail to Louisiana, under the alias Jay Rockington. Every year, Tokosh captured over 500 turtles (cf. "On the Trail" n° 6, p. 13).¹³



ASIA

BANGLADESH

February 12, 2016

Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka, Bangladesh

Seizure of 30 black pond turtles (85kg) (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I). Three people on Malaysian Airlines office are involved in the fishy story as well as a luggage inspector who took to his heels. The total value of turtles stacked in rolling luggage branded Malaysian Airlines is 10 lakh TK (\$ 13,377 US) or \$ 445 US for each turtle. The 3 were sentenced to 100,000 Bangladeshi taka fine (\$ 1277 US) and a year in prison. Malaysian Airlines denies involvement of its staff in smuggling.¹⁴



CAMBODIA

March 14, 2016

Cambodia

Seizure at an eel breeder of 13 live Asian leaf turtles (*Cyclemys dentata*, Appendix II), 18 Malayan snail-eating turtle (*Malayemys macrocephala* Appendix II), 13 soft shell turtles (*Trionychidae* family), 61 tortoise chests, 3 live Burmese pythons (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II) and a dead baby pangolin.¹⁵



© Wibowo Djatmiko

Cyclemys dentata

March 28, 2016

Kandal Province, Cambodia

Seizure of 102 elongated tortoises (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II) and 17 pythons (*Pythonidae* spp., Appendix I or II). The truck sped towards Phnom Penh. The driver fled. The first elements of the investigation indicate that the turtles were harvested in the province of Battambang and all reptiles were on the road to Vietnam.¹⁶

CHINA

February 21, 2016

Huanggang Port of entry, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure by customs of 80 freshwater turtles and one arrest. The individual disembarking the ferry Saturday night was carrying in 3 large bags 34 kg of turtles measuring 10 to 30 cm. He says he saved them and wills to return them to the water. Police said he wanted to sell them on the black pet market held every weekend in Shenzhen.¹⁷

INDIA

January 1, 2016

Dumka, Jharkhand, India

Nocturnal seizure of 2732 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I) in a truck coming from Mainpuri district, Uttar Pradesh. 107 were dead. 2625 survivors were scattered in the Mayurakshi river whose clear water and muddy banks match the species requirements.¹⁸

January 3, 2016

Sasaram, Rohtas district, Bihar State, India

Again turtles in the train, 200, 175 kg. The 3 turtlewomen from Uttar Pradesh were stopped in the Express train connecting Ajmer in Rajasthan and Sealdah Station in Kolkata, 1500 km.¹⁹



January 16, 2016

Rudrapur, Uttarakhand State, India

Herpetological incident on the border of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The roadside check revealed the presence in the white minibus of 222 tortoises. They are part of the festivities of Makar Sankranti or Pongal, the harvest festival (see "On the Trail" n°5 p.18 and n°8 p.53). It is auspicious to have one in the house. Three men were arrested. A fourth one escaped.²⁰

19 and February 27, 2016

Mainpuri district, Uttar Pradesh, India

1- Seizure of 605 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I). The raid by security forces was conducted on the grounds of a Kanjar tribe. The turtles were all packed and ready for transport, the poachers fled. Each turtle can be sold between 10,000 and 100,000 rupees (\$ 145 and \$ 1455 US) on South Asian markets.

2- Seizure of 810 black pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I) and Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II) estimated at Rs 25 lakh (\$ 36,395 US). Black pond turtles are purchased for decorative purposes. If they have 20 nails, they are considered lucky and sell for a very high price.²¹

Mid March 2016

Agra, Uttar Pradesh, India

Discovery of 52 turtles caught in a net in the lake Keetham within the Bird Sanctuary of Sur Sarovar. When rescuers arrived, about forty of them were already dead. Survivors were immediately released. All of the 4 species were under the protection of the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972.²²

March 21, 2016

Mumbai International Airport, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure of 139 radiated tortoises babies from Madagascar (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) and 6 angonoka baby turtles (*Astrochelys yniphora*, Appendix I) going to to Nepal. They were wrapped inhumanly in plastic trays.

Two radiated tortoises were dead. The endemic angonoka tortoises of Madagascar are in imminent danger of extinction. Aware of the threat, Indian Customs intend to repatriate them along with the radiated tortoises.²³



© Kiran Kumar Karlapu

INDONESIA

February 15, 2016

Timika Moses Kilangin Airport, Papua Province, Indonesia



Seizure of 3230 young pig-nosed turtles (*Carettochelys insculpta*, Appendix II). Half of them were already dead. They had been packed in boxes and put into 4 suitcases.

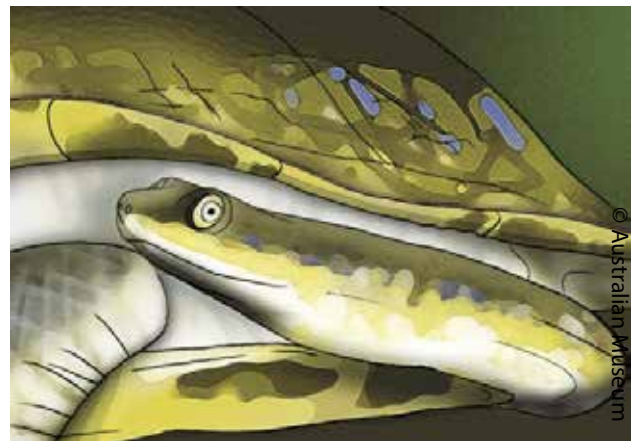
They were going to be embarked in the luggage compartment on a Sriwijaya Air Flight destined for Jakarta via Jayapura. The suitcases had been passed through a side entry at the airport without x-ray controls thanks to the complicity of an airport employee. He risks a maximum penalty of 5 years prison time or a 100 million rupees fine, that is \$ 7000 US.

Turtles are sent to the big cities in Indonesia, Jakarta, Surabaya, Makassar, and Denpasar from where they are exported towards Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, China.²⁴

February 20, 2016

International Soekarno-Hatta Airport in Jakarta, Indonesia

Seizure of 3737 young pig-nosed turtles (*Carettochelys insculpta*, Appendix II) and 883 young Siebenrock's snake-necked turtles (*Macrochelodina rugosa*) destined for Hong Kong and arrest of 5 suspects. The live cargo was in an export warehouse inside the airport. Customs were alerted by the registration documents stating export of 15,200 clown fish. When they searched the container they found among the crates of clown fish 36 crates of a different weight. Inside were the turtles. Total value of the seizure would reach 1.1 billion rupees (\$ 82.500 US). Most of the surviving turtles should soon be released, a few of them will be kept as evidence.²⁵



Macrochelodina rugosa

© Australian Museum

PAKISTAN

February 6, 2016

Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore, Punjab Province, Pakistan



Seizure by customs of 22 tortoises and \$ 1000 US in the luggage of a Chinese national flying to Colombo. He was sentenced to a fine of Rs 100,000 (\$ 957 US). The tortoises were transferred to the Lahore Safari zoo.²⁶



The Nation

Beginning of March 2016
Faisalabad International Airport, Punjab Province, Pakistan

Seizure of 45 black pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I) bound for Malaysia via Doha, Qatar. The choice of the airport was not random. Faisalabad was not yet known to be an air corridor for smuggling. The trafficker based in Karachi was carrying the turtles in his luggage. He is an exporter of dried fish and canned vegetables. He says the turtles come from Lahore.

According to the Sindh Wildlife Department, Chinese nationals rent bungalows in Karachi and poachers bring them turtles captured in the Indus Basin. Turtles are sorted by weight and size for export to China. Those that do not meet black marketing standards are left out in residential areas of the city.²⁷



Florida turtles are not on the CITES list. They were seized in Bangkok because they were transported in conditions that were unacceptable for animal welfare and because they are a risk to public health.²⁸



THAILAND

January 19, 2016
Suvarnabhumi Airport, Bangkok, Thailand

Seizure of 2,800 red-eared sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) in the luggage of an Indian traveler coming from Guangzhou, heading to Chennai in India. They were meant to be sold on the pet market on the Indian subcontinent.

Red-eared sliders, known as Florida turtles, are intensively farmed. The turtle industry in Florida started in the 1960's, in Louisiana and Mississippi. The turtles weigh 7.5 g at birth, and over 2 kg when they become adults. They are omnivorous. Farms in China are slashing the prices now and competing with the latest American farms. Importing Florida turtles to India is a tactless and strictly quantitative response to the capture and massive export of native turtles. Florida turtles transmit infectious agents to humans. They are often discharged into aquatic environments after a few months or years of domestication. They then behave as predators of young native turtles. The monetary value of Florida turtles is relatively insignificant, and they are also on Asian restaurant menus and served for prestigious dinners for Saint Valentine's Day, for example (cf. "On the Trail" n°4 p. 12).

January 30, 2016
Amphoe, Phetchaburi Province, Thailand

Rescue of 3 elongated tortoises (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II) that were about to be eaten. One of the guests immediately informed the Wildlife Friends Foundation. In extremis, the 3 reptiles were rescued and taken to a shelter before being released into a protected area.²⁹



March 19, 2016
Amphoe Mueang Sa Kaeo District, Sa Kaeo Province, Thailand

Seizure in a pickup truck of 489 turtles including 17 soft-shell turtles (Trionychidae family), a monitor lizard (*Varanus* spp., Appendix II), 3 pythons (*Pythonidae* spp., Appendix I or II), 12 cobras (*Elapidae* spp.) and 20 rare snakes. Arrest of the driver.³⁰

VIETNAM

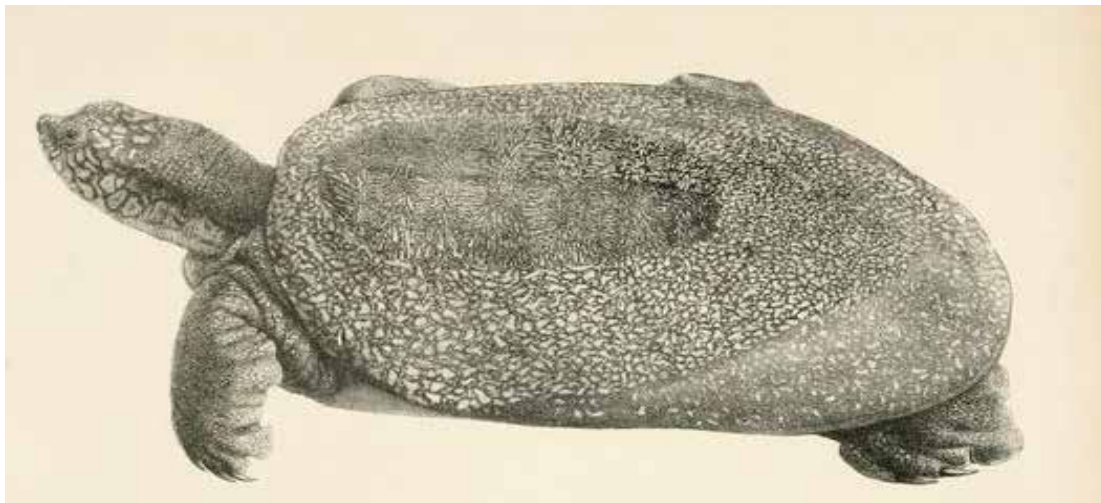
Extinction of a Species or Two

Barring a miracle, the turtle of Hoan Kiem Lake is extinct. The last known specimen of *Rafetus leloii* was spotted dead on the lake surface on 16 January 2016. The optimists still hope that 2 or 3 specimens live in the muddy bed of the lake. Hoan Kiem lake is 600 m long and 200 m wide. The depth does not exceed 3 m. Most worrisome is that the lakeshore have been cemented and the nesting areas have disappeared.

Hoan Kiem lake is legendary. In the 15th century Kim Qui, the golden turtle, presented to the lord Lê Lôi a heavenly magic sword with which he repelled the Chinese invasion. After the victory, Lê Lôi became emperor and once was in a boat on the lake when Kim Qui appeared and asked him to give him the sword back before disappearing into the depths.

Vietnamese biologists estimate that the species have genetic and morphological differences with the Yang-tse giant softshell turtle (*Rafetus swinhoei*, Appendix II) and gave it the name of *Rafetus leloii* in honor of the founder of the dynasty Lê. The world community of herpetologists believes that Hoan Kiem lake tortoises are of the *Rafetus swinhoei* species.

The Yang-tse giant softshell turtles (*Rafetus swinhoei*) are also extinct in the wild. A wondrous attempt at artificial insemination has just failed. They weighed between 220 and 250 kg for the biggest. They were eliminated by the combined actions of the loss of habitat, subsistence hunting, use of shell and bone in traditional medicine and proliferation of hydroelectric dams. They ate fish, crabs, frogs, leaves and water hyacinths.³¹



Rafetus swinhoei

EUROPE

March 10, 2016

Lauzun, Département of Lot-et-Garonne, France

"Hello the police!" "Someone stole my 5 Indian star tortoises from my garage tonight". It is not known where the missing turtles (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix II) came from.³²

March 23, 2016

Massafra, Apulia Region, Italy

Seizure of Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) and red eared sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) in an artificial pond of 10m² and under the bars of a terrarium of 15m². Red eared sliders may pass on salmonellosis by contact.³³

OCEANIA

February 2, 2016

Perth zoo, State of Western Australia, Australia

Theft and return of a radiated tortoise (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) 10 years old. The turtle stolen inside the Perth Zoo was found Saturday night inside a backpack in front of the gates of a police station. The abduction had taken place five days earlier. The turtle would be fine. Hibiscus flowers and strawberries "her favorite foods" were served to her.³⁴



Snakes



AMERICA

January 13, 2016

Clorinda, Province of Formosa, Argentina

The moving truck was coming from Clorinda and going to Buenos Aires, 1500 km. It intrigued the police. Rightly. Inside they discovered 2,098 pieces of yellow anaconda (*Eunectes notaeus*, Appendix II) hides and skins. The snake's range covers Bolivia, Paraguay, Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina.¹



March 30, 2016

Brasilia, Federal District, Brazil

Release of a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II) who had been sent by the post in a plastic box from Rio de Janeiro.^{1bis}

ASIA

January 4, 2016

Dong Nai Province, Vietnam

Rescue of 6 pythons (*Pythonidae* spp., Appendix II) prisoners in a store, thanks to ENV (Education for Nature Vietnam).²

January 10 and 13, 2016

Chalong, Phuket Province, Thailand

Seizure of a reticulated python 2.5m (*Python reticulatus*, Appendix II). One cannot become a snake charmer overnight! After a stolen kiss with a python, Jin Jing, a young Chinese tourist 29 years old, was bitten in the face during the "snakes show" organized by Phuket Bio Technology which adds to the circus games collecting venom from its 85 residents. The tourist has received \$ 3,000 US in damages and the company is forced to interrupt his show pending official authorization and regularization of housing conditions. The biting python was illegal.³

January 18, 2016

Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of an Indian sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) weighing 3 kg for sale on the Internet and arrest of 6 traffickers trapped by a false buyer connected to the police. The set price for the transaction was Rs 8 lakh or \$ 11,800 US. Among the 6 vendors, there was a student, an office worker, a scrap merchant and a film distributor.⁴

January 22, 2016

New Delhi, NCT of Delhi, India

Seizure at the station by the railway brigade and cleaning team of an Indian python (*Python molurus molurus*, Appendix I), 2 brown sand boas (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) and an Indian sand boa (*Gongylophis conicus*, Appendix II) on board the Manduadih Express arriving from Allahabad, 635 km. The NGO Wildlife SOS came to the rescue. Hotline: 91-9871963535.⁵



January 29, 2016

Haikou, Hainan Province, China

Operation Anaconda

Seizure of 26,697 skins, several thousands eggs, oil and meat from pythons (*Pythonidae* spp., Appendix I or II) for a value of 310 million yuan (\$ 48 million US) and arrest of 16 traffickers. After illegal import from Vietnam, the skins were processed in tanneries distributed in Hainan, Jiangsu, Fujian and Guangxi provinces. An import permit obtained by a company specializing in the manufacture of Erhu, a traditional musical string instrument composed mainly of rosewood and snakeskin (see "On the Trail" n°10 p.18), served as a cover for what the Chinese press considers as "the largest ever python skin smuggling case". Shoes, bags and belts made of python skin are highly valued by fashion victims around the world.⁶



March 9, 2016
Satsangha, State of Odisha, India

Seizure of 6 Indian cobras (*Naja naja*, Appendix II) and 7 monocled cobras (*Naja kaouthia*, Appendix II). One arrest. Twelve snakes were released in the forest late at night, the 13th was mortally wounded.⁷



March 9, 2016
Soekarno-Hatta International Airport in Jakarta, Indonesia

Seizure of 3 green tree pythons (*Morelia viridis*, Appendix II) in the luggage of 2 Malay nationals going to Kuala Lumpur.⁸



Young *Morelia viridis*

EUROPE

Beginning of February 2016
Monza, Lombardy Region, Italy

Abandonment of a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II) of 1.2 m long and 3 kg weight in front of the kennel of the Monza National Entity of Animal Protection (Ente Nazionale Protezione Animali, ENPA). The accurately labeled box was deposited at the door of the animal protection society. Remorseful and embarrassed, the owner of the exotic pet even rang the doorbell before fleeing.⁹



March 2016
Levroux, Department of Indre, France

Seizure of an albino Asiatic rock python (*Python molurus*, Appendix I or II). 55 ads in a year on the Internet for snakes sales. The couple had an agreement with a pet store in northern France. They are charged with unauthorized opening of a facility for non-domestic animals.¹⁰

Sauria

AFRICA

March 8, 2016
Ivato International Airport, Region of Analamanga, Madagascar

Seizure of 140 chameleons (Chamaeleonidae family, Appendix I or II) and geckos (Gekkonidae family, Appendix II) in the luggage of a man of Russian nationality awaiting departure on a Turkish Airlines flight Antananarivo-Moscow via Istanbul. The reptiles will not visit Moscow. Unfortunately, they were handed over for "conservation" to the Croc Farm corporation.¹

ASIA

February 27-28 2016
Krishnagiri, Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of monitor lizard meat (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) and a vehicle, arrest of 7 persons and search of 63 cars. It is the rush of the weekend. The blood of lizard cures infertility, quack's promise. The Narikurava, nomadic hunters community (see "On the Trail" n°7 p.97 and n°10, p.29), make it a big business. The clientele is trendy and wealthy.²

EUROPE

Mid March 2016
Bari, Puglia Region, Italy

Seizure of a desert monitor (*Varanus Griseus*, Appendix I) naturalized. An Italian citizen of Algerian origin was brought before the prosecutor.³



Crocodylians

ASIA

January 22, 2016

Fangchenggang, Guangxi Autonomous Region, China. Vietnam border

Seizure in a truck of 88 frozen tails 1.5 m long and 70 frozen Siamese crocodiles (*Crocodylus siamensis*, Appendix I) in 16 insulated crates of about 10 kg each and one arrest. The truck driver maintained he believed he was transporting frozen fish. The luxury industry and food refinements are behind this incredible seizure.¹



February 21, 2016

Hastinapur wildlife sanctuary, Uttar Pradesh, India

New release of 35 gharials (*Gavialis gangeticus*, Appendix I), 12 males and 23 females, aged 2 to 8 years in the Ganges. The sequel will be watched closely by Gangas Mitra, a platform of initiatives for the development of the Ganges. Since 2009, 606 gharials have been released in the holy river (see "On the Trail" n°5 p.29, n°8, p.18).²



Various Reptile Species

AMERICA

January 27, 2016

Culiacán, Sinaloa, Mexico

All smartened up, 27 magdalena river turtles (*Podocnemis lewyana*, Appendix II), a baby American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*, Appendix II) and a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II) are seized in a beauty parlor for animals.¹

ASIA

February 3, 2016

Soekarno-Hatta International Airport in Jakarta, Indonesia

Seizure of 15 live reptiles including green tree pythons (*Morelia viridis*, Appendix II), an Argentine red tegu (*Salvator rufescens*, Appendix II) and an Indian star tortoise (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix II) pending boarding on a Cathay Pacific flight to Hong Kong. Cheuk Wai Ho had come to shop at Pasar Pramuka, the famous birds and exotic animals market in Jakarta.²





Salvator rufescens

February 8, 2016

Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, India

Seizure at the train station of 18 monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I and II) and 16 turtles. Two arrests. According to local authorities, the value of the seizure is Rs 10 lakh (\$ 14,909 US). Demand is very strong in New Delhi and Mathura would be a key transit point for turtles and iguanas collected in the Nagar forests of Rajasthan.³

February 26, 2016

Purple, Kampong Chhnang Province, Cambodia

Seizure of 4 pythons (20 kg) (*Pythonidae* spp., Appendix I or II), 57 turtles (43 kg) and 2 buses that connected Banteay Meanchey to Phnom Penh. The 2 drivers and their assistants were fined 10 million riel (about \$ 2500 US). They can get the bus back when it is paid.⁴



EUROPE

February 23, 2016

Guglielmo Marconi International Airport of Bologna, Emilia-Romagna, Italy

Seizure of 21 crocodile skins (*Crocodylidae* spp., Appendix I or II) and python skins (*Pythonidae* spp., Appendix II), the largest almost 5 m long, in the luggage of a Senegal national coming from Guinea via Morocco and fine of € 30,000.⁵



OCEANIA

March 19, 2016

Blackhall, Queensland, Australia

Seizure of 5 pythons (*Pythonidae* spp., Appendix I or II), 4 blue tongue lizards (genus *Tiliqua*), 2 central netted dragons and a brown snake (*Pseudonaja textilis*) by the Queensland Police in collaboration with the Blackall police and rangers. The reptiles were in pillow cases inside a car intercepted at night.⁶



Amphibians

AFRICA

January 28, 2016

O. R. Tambo International Airport of Johannesburg, South Africa

Seizure of 230 amphibians, including 80 African bullfrogs (*Pyxicephalus adspersus*) and 140 rain frogs (Brevicipitidae family). Ten of them were dead. Vietnam was the announced destination, and the final destination was China.

African bullfrogs are adapted to dry climates. They bury themselves during dry season. Male African bullfrogs can grow to become 20 cm long and weigh one kilogram. African bullfrogs are carnivores and cannibals. However, they seem to be very popular as pets in Asia.¹



Birds

AFRICA

UGANDA

February 28, 2016

Rukungiri District, West Region, Uganda



Seizure of 3 young grey crowned-cranes (*Balearica regulorum*, Appendix II) and arrest of Mucunguzi Brian, 30 years old. "There's no work." "If there was work, I wouldn't sell eggs and birds." Same story heard everywhere. It confirms that wildlife pillaging has become the side job for millions of people. Mucunguzi bred the cranes at his home. They were in very poor condition.¹

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

February 22, 2016

Kasuku, Maniema Province, Democratic Republic of Congo

Seizure of 417 gray parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix II). The birds were roughly grouped by 2 individuals working on behalf of Byart Birds, Kinshasa, historical and official exporter of wildlife. Parrots arrived in packages by dugout canoe in Kindu, they were then conveyed to Kisangani by river way to avoid controls at Kindu National Airport. Final destination before export: Kinshasa.

All gray parrots are caught up in the trees, in their nests, by professional traveling climbers. Most are nestlings. A rescue attempt took place, but only 15 of them were able to take flight. Within 4 days after the seizure, 65 died.

The event comes 3 weeks after an order of the Governor suspending all capture and marketing of gray parrots in and from Maniema province after a recommendation made by the Standing Committee of CITES in Geneva in January 2016. The investigation led in the DRC by the CITES secretariat in cooperation with the national authorities shows that stolen CITES buffers and permits are relatively common and that issuance of genuine export permits is accompanied by informal gifts to officials for the payment of various fees.

The juxtaposition of export licenses from the DRC and of import licenses for all recipient countries between 2007 and 2013 reveals a troubling contradiction. DRC surveys nearly 30,000 specimens for export and importing countries, nearly 50,000. The DRC CITES authority, the State representatives in the provinces, customs, police and gendarmerie forces make praiseworthy efforts which face poverty and insecurity and cross-border wildlife trafficking. Through its borders, the DRC is open on Southern Africa, West Africa and East Africa. In 2014 the main importers of gray parrots from the DRC were in order of magnitude China, Malaysia, Singapore, South Africa and first, Turkey. Note that if the recommended suspension of trade in gray parrots from the DRC dates back to mid-January, the official notification to all member States of CITES has only been issued on March 16, thus opening a latency, blur and reprieve period for international traffic networks.



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Traffic of gray parrots from the DRC has long been a source of tension, friction and suffering. In October 2010, 500 specimens were seized from bird catchers by police authorities and entrusted to Lwiro refuge, managed by the Pan African Sanctuary Alliance (PASA). A month later gunmen stormed Lwiro, threatened the manager at gunpoint and robbed the 500 parrots. In 2011, Byart Birds had already been involved in the death of 730 gray parrots flown between Kinshasa and Johannesburg. Instead of 4 by regulatory package, they were 48.²

ZIMBABWE

January 21, 2016

Maramani ward, Matabeleland South Province, Zimbabwe

Bloodbath in the savannah. Around the carcass of a poisoned female lion lay 41 white-backed vulture carcasses (*Gyps africanus*, Appendix II). Pesticides are used as a weapon by farmers or poachers.³



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BRAZIL

January 22, 2016

Cachoeiras de Macacu, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Seizure of an illegal blue and gold macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) and a hunting rifle from the fazenda belonging to Henrique, a football player from Fluminense.⁴



January 25, 2016

Santana, State of Amapa, Brazil

His wings had been cut, they were barely growing back. Not yet able to fly again, the blue and gold macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) was kidnapped from the aviary in a private natural reserve. This is the second time he falls victim of poaching. Now he is probably in the hands of an illegal breeder. The reserve is frequently faced with attempted theft of animals.⁵

January 26, 2016

Campo Grande, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil

Seizure of 13 birds including 3 toco toucans (*Ramphastos toco*, Appendix II) and 2 blue-fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II). Fine: 38,000 reais (\$ 12,000 US). The birds were trapped in a fazenda to be later sold in town.⁶



February 16, 2016

Rio de Janeiro, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Seizure of a toco toucan (*Ramphastos toco*, Appendix II). He was trying to sell it and the police was very interested. Alert Number: 0300 253 1177.⁷

March 15, 2016

Santana do Ipanema, Alagoas, Brazil

Seizure of 87 birds including parrots (*Psittacidae* spp., Appendix I or II) in the car of a 76 years old man. He was going to sell them in a market in Maceio, 200 km away. The survivors were transferred to IBAMA until further notice. Alert Number: 181.⁸

March 21, 2016

Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Seizure of a blue and gold macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) and a blue-fronted amazon (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II).⁹



March 22, 2016

Belem, State of Para, Brazil



Seizure of a young crested eagle (*Morphnus guianensis*, Appendix II), extremely rare species. He was a prisoner in a private property.

The crested eagle is the only one of the *Morphnus* genus. He lives in Central and South America. This is the second neo-tropical eagle in terms of size : he can measure up to 89 cm and weigh up to 3 kg. Females are larger than males. He feeds on

small mammals, snakes, amphibians and even small birds. The breeding season is from September to December. The female lays 1 or 2 eggs. Incubation lasts 50 days. Few eggs survive natural predators. This very rare bird is almost nonexistent in the country, to the point that some biologists call it the "phantom eagle." In 10 years, only 6 nests were identified in Brazil. His disappearance is firstly due to the eradication of primary forests but also hunting conducted by farmers. The crested eagle has a bad reputation. He is accused of attacking domestic animals.¹⁰



COLOMBIA

March 17, 2016

Neiva, Huila Department, Colombia

Seizure of 2 parrots (*Psittacidae* spp., Appendix I or II).¹¹



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ECUADOR

February 10, 2016

Ricaurte, Los Ríos Province, Ecuador

Two red-spectacled amazons (*Amazona pretrei*, Appendix I) and 2 parrots (*Psittacidae* spp, Appendix I or II). Alert number: 911.¹²



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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



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January 9, 2016
Miami International Airport, State of Florida, United States of America

Seizure of 9 birds carried by a passenger coming from the Havana. Federal law prohibits importing animals. The birds were turned over to the quarantine station in Miami. The species are not mentioned.¹³

January 14, 2016

Beaumont, State of Texas, United States of America

Arrest at his home after being denounced of Joseph Frederick, 18 years old, suspected of poaching 2 whooping cranes (*Grus americana*, Appendix I) in Jefferson County.¹⁴

January 31, 2016

Elko, Elko County, State of Nevada, United States of America

Road inspections for reckless driving resulted in 7 indictments for illegal possession of birds of prey and parts of birds of prey, and for poaching. It was obvious that the man was trafficking in feathers for decorative or ritual purposes. The use of feathers is only authorized for native ceremonies. Upon request and justification, they are available from the National Eagle Repository (cf. "On the Trail" n°5 p. 33).¹⁵



© Tim Hite

February 17, 2016

Hartford, State of Connecticut, United States of America



Court hearing for Thomas Kapusta before the Hartford Federal Court.

He has pleaded guilty of poaching Cooper's hawks (*Accipiter cooperii*, Appendix II) and red-tailed hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*, Appendix II) from September to October 2015.

Kapusta and a partner are fascinated by pigeon racing. The pigeons in training were apparently harassed by the vultures. In September and October 2015, they had shot at close range at birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. The bodies had been thrown in the trash.¹⁶



© Patrick Doheny

Accipiter cooperii

MEXICO

March 20, 2016

Mexico City, Mexico State, Mexico

Seizure of 90 parrots babies aged 20 to 60 days (*Psittacidae* spp., Appendix I or II).¹⁷



PERU

February 23, 2016

Motupe, Region of Lambayeque, Peru

The fruit farmers rented 4 Harris's hawks (*Parabuteo unicinctus*, Appendix II) from an unofficial falconer to chase small undesired birds in the groves and mango plantations. The 4 hawks were seized.¹⁸

REPEAT OFFENCE

March 15, 2016

Bagua, Amazonas Region, Peru

Seizure of more than 700 white winged parakeets (*Brotogeris versicolurus*, Appendix II), in a bus going to Chiclayo 40 km away. They were stashed under suitcases, in a deplorable state. Fine of \$ 12,000 US.¹⁹



ASIA

INDIA

January 14 and 17, 2016

Mundli, Bundi District, State of Rajasthan, India

Thirteen peafowls poisoned (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III). Seven according to forest rangers, within 3 days. The poachers travel by bicycle, there would be at least 3 of them. Peafowl poaching is rampant in the area. It seems to be the doings of members of the Kanjar and Mogeysa tribes.²⁰

January 16, 2016

Ahmedabad, State of Gujarat, India

Kites kill birds. The Uttarayan International Festival (cf. « On the Trail » n°8 p. 25) withholds a sad world record and still beats its own score. Present toll: 1728 birds wounded, cut, entangled, and entwined by the kite tail covered in crushed glass. Sarus cranes (*Grus antigone*, Appendix II), white rumped vultures (*Gyps bengalensis*, Appendix II), pelicans (genus *Pelecanus*) and graylag geese (*Anser anser*), are searched for, spotted, taken in and healed by "Save the Birds", a coalition of NGOs.²¹

January 17, 2016

Chanditala, State of West Bengal, India

Seizure of 5 hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II) and 138 parakeets (*Psittacidae* spp., Appendix II) on a large scale Saturday morning market place on the Hooghly river bank, a branch of the Ganges. Three sellers arrested.²²

January 19, 2016

Peenya, State of Karnataka, India

Seizure of 29 parakeets, 23 alexandrine parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II) and 6 rose-ringed parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*).

Seized but not yet saved! Nineteen baby birds will have to be hand fed 3 times a day and taken care of for 4 to 5 months before being released into the forest. Jai Shankar, an ornithologist, explains trafficking in parakeets: after capture from the nests, 40% die during transport to market places then to the buyers'. They are taught to perform cute tricks or choose cards said to predict the future. They can be exploited in such a manner for a good 10 years. Another possible destiny is to be locked inside a home because of their reputation as a lucky-charm and in southern India because of their kinship with the divinity Madurai Meenakshi, Goddess protector of the home, cut out in one piece from a single emerald jewel, one of the parakeets' favorite colors. Decorative parakeets are sold, according to their color, between 500 and 25.000 rupees (\$ 8 US and \$ 364 US) in India. Exported to Europe, the USA or China, prices flare up depending on distances to travel, local demand and custom checks to be avoided.²³



The price of feeding is very high. Readers of the Bangalore Mirror were invited to contribute financially.

January 30, 2016

Madurai, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure at the Arappalayam bus terminal of 4 Alexandrine parakeet chicks (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II) and 6 arrests: 5 at the arrival of the bus in Madurai when they tried to sell the birds to traffickers who actually were policemen and further on the gross salesman 160 km south of Madurai. Unsurprisingly, investigations show that the network is well implanted and benefits from complicity inside the State owned Bus Company. Wildlife And Nature Conservation Trust and Traffic contributed to this welcomed outcome.²⁴



February 5, 2016

Mhow, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Seizure of 5 Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III), bladed weapons and 2 arrests made by a forest ranger patrol. The 4 peafowls still alive were tied to ropes near the 2 poachers busy taking the feathers off the 5th. An investigation is opened to find out whether this was an occasional week-end activity or a regular activity.²⁵

February 27, 2016

Gangot Village, State of Rajasthan, India

Seizure of 6 poisoned Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III) and arrest of 2 poachers. About 10 carcasses would be found per day in this State. Poisoned seeds are dispersed to lure and kill the peafowls. Their feathers are sold for a lot of money as decorations or to be used in black magic.²⁶

Beginning of march 2016

Patholi, State of Uttar Pradesh, India



Small dusky eagle-owl (*Bubo coromandus*, Appendix II) captured and stuffed into a bag by a whole gang. Rapidly saved thanks to Wildlife SOS, his claws had already been trimmed. The skulls, eyes and blood are used in black magic.²⁷

INDONESIA

January 16, 2016

Indonesia

Bloodbath in Jakarta. More than 2500 birds died in the Bureau for the Conservation of Natural Resources (BKSDA) warehouse during the weeks that followed the monumental seizure of 2711 individuals that « On the Trail » related in Issue n°11. Bird lovers and the Scorpion foundation regret that the birds were not released within days following the seizure. Time lost because of procedures and inertia spread death through the stressed, thirsty and badly fed birds' camp. This painful loss brings forward the problem of animals detained as evidence. Only 208 birds were set free in the East Kalimantan province where they had been captured.²⁹

**When the Indonesian president
Joko Widodo promoted bird trafficking**

It was in February 2015 but still vivid in the minds of all traffickers and pet collectors. The escort of the president who was inspecting the price of rice on different market places in the capital some Saturday morning stopped at the Pramuka market to buy 300 birds, passerines, red robins and squirrels destined to decorate the State palace. To make things worse, the President rejoiced at the low price of the passerines, Rp 50,000 a piece, i.e. \$ 4 US per bird, as if birds were part of the basic necessities for Indonesian households.²⁸

February 25, 2016

Patumbak, Province of North Sumatra, Indonesia

Seizure in a public swimming pool by the "Leopard" brigade of 3 birds: a brahminy kite (*Haliastur indus*, Appendix II), a black eagle (*Ictinaetus malaiensis*, Appendix II) and a hornbill (family Bucerotidae, 24 species listed in Appendix I or II). They were given to the BKSDA. Under the orders of the highest authorities on the island, the "Leopard" Brigade sent an official note to all wildlife shelters and airplane companies reminding that all transport of wild animals must be done with a State permit.³⁰

IRAN

February 10, 2016

Bandar Mahshahr, Province of Khouzistan, Iran

Seizure of a saker falcon (*Falco cherrug.*, Appendix II) transported in a car. One arrest.³¹



He was underneath a car seat, eyelids stitched. It was approaching the Port of Hendijan.

MALAYSIA

February 19, 2016

Klang, State of Selangor, Malaysia

Across South Asia where cohabitate flourishing yet declining biodiversity and use of social networks, sales via Internet of small animals captured from the wild is also flourishing along with its codes, its passwords and astonishing ramifications. The investigation led by the Star, a National newspaper in Malaysia, demonstrated its mechanisms, its banality, efficiency and fearsome impunity. It only took the journalist 2 days and about 20 messages on WhatsApp to buy and have delivered a baby brahmyn kite (*Haliastur indus*, Appendix II).

The Star's detective's first choice was a black baza (*Aviceda leuphotes*, Appendix II) for sale on picture for 250 ringgits (\$ 60 US) not far from Port Klang. He sends a message to the seller claiming to be in the south of the country for a few days and wanting to take the chance to buy a bird of prey as a present for his boss amateur of falconry. The answer back was that the black baza was already sold but instead there was a young brahmyn kite available to be delivered through parcel delivery for 650 ringgits (\$ 155 US).

To the question as to what he meant by "parcel delivery", the announcer explained that the parcel will be put on a bus line to be brought in to a predetermined stop inside a "secured" packaging. To reassure the customer, he added screen shots of pictures of the expedition of another animal made the same day and the same mean for Skudai city. Still on WhatsApp the buyer is informed that according to habit, he will be under surveillance during the transaction, the seller needing to be assured that it isn't a trap or even an "enngang", a Malay expression that in trafficker's slang means an infiltrated undercover agent from Perhilitan, the national office for wildlife protection.

The next day, the pseudo buyer receives an urgent message from the announcer saying the seller, of whom he is only the spokesman, is himself in Malacca and that the easiest would be to go get the bird there. The offer is politely declined and an alternative solution is found. The Star sleuth is invited to come at such time to such place. He ends up in a hair salon run by 3 women in their forties to whom he explains the reason of his presence. Pulled out from among the wigs and hair spray, the very young black baza is immediately handed over to him in a pretty basket.

After verifying it was the intended specimen, the buyer leaves a few moments to go get the money from the nearest ATM.

Enter then 3 well-informed Perhilitan agents.

The small kite is taken to safety and the 3 hairdressers are questioned. Anyone illegally in possession of an individual belonging to this species strictly protected since 2010 risks 10 years prison and/or a 200.000 ringgits (\$ 4764 US) fine. But as they were neither the poachers not the owners but only the runners, they were rapidly released.³³



LIBAN

January 27, 2016

Bint-Jbeil, South Lebanon

Capture of a vulture (*Gyps fulvus*, Appendix II) suspected of being an Israeli "spy" by residents in Bint-Jbeil. The



raptor had on him an identification number and a geo-localization chip from Israel, he comes from a natural reserve within the occupied territories of the Golan. It seems the misunderstanding has been resolved and the bird was released. At least that is what was announced on the Arab Internet site Bintjbeil.org ; an outcome that, if confirmed, would prove that protection of wildlife can be a link between 2 countries in conflict. This vulture in any case had more luck than the houbara bustard crippled with bullets in Afghanistan. (See "On the Trail" n°7 p. 31).³²



NEPAL

January 10, 2016

Itahari, Eastern Development Region, Nepal

Seizure of 6 baby Eurasian eagle-owl (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II) and 2 arrests. They had been picked from the nest by 2 young people and would have been sold in the Gulf countries at the end of their path for around \$ 7500 US according to the chief of police. In Nepal the species is called "Huchil".³⁴

January 2016

Anharat, West Development Region, Nepal



A local brags about having captured 16 owls (order Strigiformes, Appendix II) on his own. "Owls are quite easy to catch as they cannot see during the day". There's no lack of buyers on market places. Owl meat is cheaper than chicken meat. An owl is sold 150 rupees (\$ 1.36 US). This practice is spreading in a country hit by food shortage and disorganized after the major earthquake on April 25, 2015.³⁵

IRAN (see also p. 32)

January 4, 2016

Larestan County, Province of Fars, Iran

Seizure by night in a car of a dead houbara bustard (*Chlamydotis undulata*, Appendix I), a rifle and ammunition.³⁶

PAKISTAN

January 17-21, 2016

Karachi airport and Kirthar National Park, Province of Sindh, Pakistan

Seizure of one peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) and 4 saker falcons (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II). Sentenced to pay a fine of 50,000 rupees (\$ 479 US) and release of the birds of prey under the conspicuous supervision of customs and wildlife services, which came together for the occasion.

The 5 miraculous survivors came from Dubai to be traded, or for the molting season at the end of which they would have been sent back (cf. "On the Trail" n° 11 p. 22). It seems that afterwards, they were sent back to a falcon network in the United Arab Emirates. In any case, they did not come with an import permit. They were released into the sky after 4 days of controversy.

There is a lot of rivalry between customs and the wildlife protection services. The different wildlife management policies in the provinces and at the federal government level make the situation



complicated. The legal battle on falcons is a good example of this, but it is not the only one. In 2013 in Karachi airport, Sindh customs seized 250 grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix II), and had refused to give them to the wildlife protection services, which did not seem to have an appropriate place to quarantine them at the time. The federal government struck a consensus with everyone by providing an official certificate very quickly to the smuggler who suddenly became a legal importer.³⁷

January 22, 2016

Pakistan

Baluchistan courts had cancelled in November 2014 all hunting permits regarding houbara bustards (*Chlamydotis undulata*, Appendix I), but the federal government had continued to deliver permits. In August 2015, the Supreme Court had banished this hunting in all provinces of the country. The federal government and executive power in Baluchistan formed a request that the Court reexamine its decision on grounds that "controlled hunting may be considered a tool for conservation of the species". The Supreme Court came back on its prior position and surrendered the ban on bustard hunting. It intends to reexamine regularly this issue.³⁸ Cf. « On the Trail » n°11 p. 27, n°9 p. 27, n°8 p. 24.

VIETNAM

January 13, 2016

Province of Dak Nong, Vietnam

The raptors and the small macaque here no longer in a cage, chained and blind-folded in a hotel.³⁹



January 28, 2016

Province of Dong Nai, Vietnam

The 3 vultures were there to amuse the crowd. It did not amuse the ENV supporter. They were out of the cage 24 hours later.⁴⁰

EUROPE

GERMANY

March 1, 2016

Geltendorf, State of Bavaria, Germany

The taxidermist and hunter exported stuffed birds of prey. He claims that he bought them in auction houses. He gave his business a veneer of legality via

forged bills and certificates. The 48-year-old man lived in a remote area. At least 30 birds of prey poached in Bavaria were delivered to the United States of America.^{40 bis}



FRANCE

January 5 and 7, 2016

- Brive la Gaillarde, Corrèze Department, France



Conviction of 4 persons to fines between € 300 and 800 each and € 3750 in damages and procedure costs to each of the plaintiffs in the Court case, the League for the protection of birds- "Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux" (LPO), SOS Faune sauvage and the Society for Research and Protection of Birds in the Limousin (Sépol).

The 4 individuals would trap passerines with glue traps. Their cruel activities had been uncovered by an investigation led for several months. The Sépol estimates that in 10 years passerine populations in the region has been halved. They are subjected to intense trafficking because of the beauty of their song and feathers.⁴¹

- Tours, Indre-et-Loire Department, France

Conviction of 2 poachers of European Goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) to 4 months in prison suspended sentence and 2 years on parole, a € 600 fine and damages to be paid to the LPO. In September 2015 he had been caught red handed setting up traps on the banks of the Cher River, a Loire tributary. Goldfinches are registered in the Red List of endangered species by the National Museum of Natural History. It is forbidden to capture them or damage their nest.

January 24, 2016

Saint-Romain-en-Jarez, Loire Department, France

Discovery of the body of an eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II) riddled with lead bullets. The LPO has filed a complaint.⁴²

29 mars 2016

Tarbes, Department of the Hautes-Pyrénées, France



Sentencing to 90 days of a € 10 day fine and € 800 in damages for poaching and sale of common chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*), European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), Eurasian siskin (*Carduelis spinus*), Greenfinches (*Carduelis chloris*), Eurasian bullfinches (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*), European serins

(*Serinus serinus*) and for possession of 2 red kites (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II) and seizure of the poaching equipment. Each bird was sold at least € 50 on the Thursday market.⁴³

ITALY

Beginning of January 2016

Raguse, Autonomous Region of Sicily, Italy

It's increasingly risky to poach at home (see « On the Trail » n°9 p.28). The 5 Malta citizens came to Sicily for poaching. They had enough equipment with them to catch over 500 passerines. They were already at 100 when they were arrested on the road between Raguse and Modica. Five European Goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) and 5

finches (family Fringilidae) were used as decoy. The smugglers planned to return to Malta with their loot with the Pozzalo ferry boat. They had carefully packed the birds in small cardboard boxes. They were so squished they couldn't sing, which would have called attention to them at customs.⁴⁴

During the Night of Saturday January 30, 2016 Paceco, Region de Sicily, Italy

107 stuffed animals, falcons (*Falconidae* spp., Appendix I or II), nocturnal vultures (*Strigiformes* spp., Appendix I or II), birds protected under national law, a kangaroo and reptiles were in garbage bags. The wildlife protection brigade (Eco-zoophile dell OIPA) came to the site following an anonymous call.⁴⁵

February 11, 2016

Naples, Region of Campania, Italy

Seizure of 2 Pennant's parakeet (*Platycercus elegans*, Appendix II) from a private property. Nothing to prove they were acquired legally. A complaint has been filed. The Naples Court will deal with the matter.⁴⁶

March 28, 2016

Naples, Region of Campania, Italy

Seizure inside a pet shop and from the owners' home of 8 goldfinches (*Carduelis Carduelis*), a chaffinch (genus *Fringilla*), 11 canaries (*Serinus canaria*), and 6 other passerines lacking an identification ring.⁴⁷



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MALTA

REPEATED OFFENSE

January 13, 2016

Malta



Sentencing of American flamingo killers (*Phoenicopterus roseus*, Appendix II) to 2 years prison time, € 9000 in fine and for life suspension of their hunting permit. Blood on 5 pink feathers is all that was left of the victim when police, warned by a neighbor, came to the spot. An irrefutable piece of evidence cornered the poachers. A picture of the dead flamingo was in one of their cell phones. Justin, 26 years old, and Cliff, 32, were not new to the job. Eleven stuffed precious birds were found at their home.⁴⁸



Butterflies

ASIA

January 2016

Jinan Yaoqiang International Airport, Shandong Province, China

SWORD OPERATION

Seizure in January of a batch of 261 butterfly specimens of Malay birdwings (*Troides amphrysus*) listed in Appendix II of CITES in 1979, coming from Malaysia and declared as clothing.

Four suspects arrested in February after the discovery at their homes of 2800 butterflies including 1180 listed in CITES in Appendix II, Rajah Brooke's birdwings (*Trogonoptera brookiana*, Appendix II), common green birdwings of the species *Ornithoptera priamus* (Appendix II), Wallace's golden birdwings of the *Ornithoptera croesus* species (Appendix II), Rippins birdwings (*troides hypolitus*, Appendix II). The four species were included in Appendix II of CITES in 1979.

"The biggest butterflies seizure ever made in China" according to the Director of Customs of the city Jinan.

The Wallace's golden birdwing lives on the Moluccas, Indonesia. Its wingspan is 13 to 15 cm. It is threatened by illicit logging in the mountains and aerial application of insecticides for mosquito control on marshes.

The Rajah Brooke's birdwings is exported each year from Malaysia by thousands. The origin is mixed, some butterflies are caught in the wild, but the number of breeding farms from pupae is increasing. Breeding methods, species requirements and food plants stay confidential.

The common green birdwing is endemic to Papua New Guinea. Its favorite habitat is the Louisiade Archipelago. The Insect Farming and Trading Agency (IFTA), founded in 1978 by the government, encourages families, including children, to make butterfly gardens with an average area of 200 m², surrounded by hibiscus and bougainvillea, and inside food plants like Indian birthworts (*Aristolochia tagala*). Training teaches farmers to kill, preserve and pack the butterflies. Some butterflies are supposedly released alive so that wild populations of the spectacular and marketable species remain viable.¹



Troides amphrysus



Trogonoptera brookiana albescens



March 24, 2016

Augsburg, Free State of Bavaria, Germany

EUROPE

The Kaiser-i-Hind (*Teinopalpus imperialis*) listed on Appendix II of CITES since 1987 spins in the canopies of rainforests in the foothills of the Himalayas, Burma, in China's Sichuan and Hubei where, however, it has not been observed for several years. It is also reported in Bhutan, northern India in the region of Darjeeling and in the upper basin of the Brahmaputra, Thailand and Vietnam. He is a butterfly of heights, living in altitude between 1000 and 3500 m. On sunny mornings, the Kaiser-i-Hind approaches the floor of the high plains in search of laurels, daphnes and other Thymelaeaceae which are his main food resources. There he is watched by the catchers who work for international collectors. According

to expert testimony collected in 1984, in Phulchoki mountains, near Kathmandu, each specimen was systematically captured for foreign collectors. The butterfly harvest would tend to accelerate with the revival of cabinets of curiosities. The Kaiser-i-Hind was never observed in degraded or planted forests or cropland. His exclusive habitats are fragmented or shaved by intensive deforestation, firewood harvest, forest fires and the extension of agriculture. Despite their rapid, dipping and unpredictable flight, despite the finery of the wings that make them invisible in the bushes where they hide in fog or rain, there may be more *Teinopalpus imperialis* in private collections and natural history museums than in the mountain forests. The status of his populations on a vast but fragmented area of distribution is unknown.²

March 30, 2016

Barnsley, England, United Kingdom

Seizure in the home of a 51 year-old man of one hundred butterflies illegally imported from China, Vietnam, Costa Rica and put for sale on the Internet. This includes swallowtail butterfly species *Teinopalpus aureus* and *Teinopalpus imperialis* (Appendix II).³

Pangolins

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

The seizure from January 1st to March 31th is equal to 1008 pangolins
 Taking the average weight of 3 pangolins for 1 kg of scales.

“On the Trail” n°12
The value of scales on the black market, according to media or official sources

Continent	Country	US\$	Réf.
Africa	Zambia	7 000	8
	Zimbabwe	2 250	5
Asia	Malaysia	225 (8,5 kg/ animal)	16
		196 (4 kg/ animal)	17
		320	18
	Thailand	597	21

AFRICA

ZIMBABWE

January 7, 2016
Gokwe, Midlands Province, Zimbabwe

The Tikki Hywood Trust drove 600 km by night to save a pregnant female pangolin from being sold. The operation carried out in cooperation with official authorities enabled the arrest of 3 traffickers. As soon as she arrived to the care center she had a full medical check-up.¹

The necessary passage on the scale.



© Tikki Hywood Trust

January 29, 2016
Doma Safari, Province of East Mashonaland, Zimbabwe

Seizure of a pangolin caught inside a plastic canister and arrest of 2 poachers one of whom is a self proclaimed “church prophet”. The pangolin went to join the ranks of the Tikki Hywood Trust refuge and the poachers those of prisoners awaiting trial.²



© The Black Mamba

February 5 and 8, 2016
Harare, Province of Harare, Zimbabwe



Seizure of a pangolin and conviction of Moses Gatsi, 23 years old, to 9 months prison. A meeting had been set up with buyers at the main postal offices in Harare. Moses had led the policemen undercover to his hideout on the outskirts of the city. For his defense he put forwards that he needs to provide for his young brothers and sister since the death of their parents. In deciding on the minimal sentence for illegal possession of a pangolin, the judge took into account that this was his first offense and that the accused pleaded guilty.³



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February 7, 2016
Harare, Province of Harare, Zimbabwe

Seizure of a pangolin in a bag in the back of a car parked in a residential area in Greendale. Three people, 2 Mozambicans aged 31 and a Zambian aged 33, were arrested. They plead not guilty.⁴

February 11, 2016

Zimbabwe, near the border to Mozambique

Seizure of 2 pangolins and arrest of 2 poachers attempting, according to the Matusadona Anti-Poaching Project, to sell them for \$ 5500 US. They were taken to the Tikki Hywood Trust.⁵



February 15, 2016

Rushinga District, near the border to Mozambique, Province of Central Mashonaland, Zimbabwe

Seizure of a male and 2 arrests. This is the 11th pangolin to join the Tikki Hywood Trust care center since the beginning of the year. The NGO is worried with the rise in trafficking.⁶

March 27, 2016

Gokwe, Midlands Province, Zimbabwe



Three men and one woman in a car, 3 pangolins in the back, one adult and 2 babies.⁷

ZAMBIA

January 30, 2016

Monze, Southern Province, Zambia

At 4 p.m. on Saturday at the moment they were attempting to sell the live pangolin, 6 men aged 34 to 58 were arrested by officers from the Department of National Parks and Wildlife. The youngest is Patrick Mulenga, a policeman in Petauke. They face up to 5 years prison term. According to the National Parks spokesperson, the animal was for sale for 80.000 kwachas (\$ 7000 US). The Toyota Hilux Surf that would have been used for transport between Petauke and Monze (600 km) was seized. The Monze Court ordered the pangolin to be set free in the Lohnivar National Park.⁸

ASIA

CHINA

January 15, 2016

Canton-Baiyun International Airport, Province of Guangdong, China

Seizure of 30 kg of pangolin scales coming from Congo via Addis-Abeba, Ethiopia. In 2015, the Bureau for Inspection and Quarantine of the Canton airport (Guangzhou) seized 52 loads of pangolin scales for a total weight of 220 kg.⁹



January 15, 2016

Liancheng Xian, Province of Fujian, China

Seizure of 4 pangolin carcasses in a villager's freezer who was brought into custody.¹⁰

End of January 2016

Province of Guangdong, China

Sentencing to 5 years prison and 20.000 yuans (\$ 3060 US) in fine of the truck driver arrested in May 2014 with 956 frozen pangolins for a total weight of 4150 kg (see "On the Trail" n°5, p. 48). The seizure had been estimated worth 1.6 million yuans (\$ 245,000 US), that is \$ 256 US/pangolin or \$ 59 US/kg. The court declared he had acted in full knowledge of the case.¹¹



February 28, 2016

Zhao'an County, Province of Fujian, China

Seizure of 3 live pangolins about 2 kg each in the luggage compartment of a bus linking Jieyang and Xiamen 300 km apart. The animals were found during a control at a checkpoint at the border of the Guangdong and Fujian Provinces. The passengers all claimed to be innocent and the cardboard box showed no indication of who it belonged to. The pangolins were released into the forest.¹²

March 9, 2016

Pearl River New City Shop, Canton, Province of Guangdong, China

Seizure of 9.034 kg of pangolin scales and 5 dead geckos inside the refrigerators of a hotel complex host for a white collar clientele. The room service offered a pangolin dish under the code name "fish". The high price of this "fish", 1380 yuans (\$ 213 US) caught the attention of an investigative journalist and of the police.¹³



INDONESIA

January 12, 2016

Musi Rawas Regency, Province of South Sumatra, Indonesia

Seizure of a live pangolin on a Honda Revo motor bike and arrest of the trafficker.¹⁴

March 17, 2016

Medan, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia

Appearance of the 4 crew members of a fishing boat carrying hundreds of pangolins (see "On the Trail" n°11, p.32). Transshipment was planned at sea, destination Malaysia. The habit was well established. The prosecutor demands 2 years in prison and 50 million rupees (\$ 3500 US) in fines.¹⁵

MALAYSIA

Janvier 3, 2016

State of Sarawak, Malaysia

High risk rescue. Listening only to his heart, Juni bought on the Internet for 950 ringgits (\$ 225 US) an 8.5 kg pangolin ripped away from nature only days before. He rapidly completed his self given mission: to release him in the forest areas of Sungai Mas. Juni didn't know that his good deed could have cost him a fine worth 10,000 ringgits (\$ 2375 US) and a year in prison for illegal possession of a protected animal.¹⁶

January 27, 2016

Parit Jamil, State of Johor, Malaysia

During a night patrol, maritime police notice a car parked near the beach. Two men fled into the mangroves. Inside the trunk, black and blue bags hid 13 pangolins about 4 kg each. The 2 smugglers were

not caught. The pangolins were taken to the maritime police station in Muar. According to the commander, the animal can be sold on the local black market for 200 ringgits (\$ 49 US) per kilo. The 13 pangolins are therefore worth 10,400 RM (\$ 2531 US).¹⁷



March 1st, 2016

Butterworth, State of Penang, Malaysia

Seizure of 52 pangolins in the back of a Proton Waja and arrest of a 60 year-old man. In November 2015, 46 pangolins had already been found in the trunk of a Proton Waja in Butterworth, located on the main road towards Thailand and the large Asian market (See "On the Trail" n°11, p. 32). This new seizure is estimated worth 70,000 ringgits (\$ 16,621 US), i.e. \$ 320 US/pangolin. According to the Director of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife, the animals should be equipped with a micro chip before being released.¹⁸



February 20, 2016

Lahad Datu, State of Sabah, Malaysia

Seizure of 25 live pangolins in a car found during a road check. A 55 year-old man was arrested. The pangolins transported in a cage were in decent shape. They were turned over to the Wildlife Department. Its Director warns: road blocks will be increasingly frequent to counter trafficking in wildlife in Sabah.¹⁹

NEPAL

January 2, 2016

Kavre, Central Development Region, Nepal

Well informed, police arrested 2 men, aged 23 and 40, in possession of 3.5 kg of scales. According to Pratibha Kaspal from the Nepal Rural Development and Environment Conservation Council, pangolins could disappear in the country within 15 years. An information campaign on protection of pangolins was launched in October 2015.²⁰

THAILAND

January 23, 2016

Mekong River, Province of Nong Khai, Thailand. Border to Laos

Seizure of 15 live pangolins, 2 arrests and one drowning. Officers from the Mekong River Unit, Royal Thai Army and the Natural Resources and Environmental Crime Suppression Division were acting on information given by the Soi Dog foundation. End of November 2015, 460 cobras and 214 turtles had been seized near this same passing point between Thailand and Laos.

During the surge, the 27 year old trafficker attempted to escape by diving from the boat onto which he had been loading the pangolins. His body was found floating on the river. The animals were intended to the Vietnamese black market where their value would have reached 350,000 bahts (\$ 8967 US).²¹



VIETNAM

January 2, 2016

Quang Ninh Province, Vietnam

Seizure of 18 pangolins (70 kg). Arrest of 2 transporters who were paid 500,000 dong each (\$ 22 US) to go to Quảng Bình in Mong Cai, which is 760 km away. This city is on the border with China.²²



January 29, 2016

Ninh Thuan Province, Vietnam

Seizure of 5 live pangolins (15 kg), 14 turtles, and one car. One arrest. The animals were transported by bus from Laos to the district of Dien Chau, a province of Nghe An in Vietnam. They then went by car toward northern Vietnam and China.²³



February 2, 2016

Province of Hung Yen, Vietnam

Seizure of 81 pangolins (311 kg) in a car and one arrest. Native of the center of the country, they were on the road towards China via the Quang Ninh Province. They were taken in by the Soc Son care center in Hanoi. Seventeen of them died the day after arrival.²⁴



March 25, 2016

Quang Ninh Province, Vietnam

The car refused to stop for a road inspection. The police shot its tire. Inside the vehicle, there were 47 young pangolins, weighing 2.2 kg on average. One arrest.²⁵



Pangolins and Elephants



AFRICA

February 9, 2016 Bertoua, East Region, Cameroon

Seizure of 12 tusk tips and over 200 kg of pangolin scales (*Manis* spp., Appendix II) in 5 bags. Arrest of a 43-year-old Nigerian citizen in a bar. The cover of this multi-product trafficker was a small automobile spare parts shop. But for several years, his main activity was selling rare animals parts.



© LAGA

Primates

Gorilla (*Gorilla* spp.), chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*), orangutan (*Pongo* spp.) are listed in CITES Appendix I. Macaque (*Macaca* spp.) is in Appendix II.

AFRICA

CAMEROON

February 9, 2016 Dimako, East Region, Cameroon

Seizure of 4 gorilla skulls, 5 chimpanzee skulls, and a live crocodile, and 3 arrests after wildlife agents set a trap with the technical support of the Last Great Ape Organisation (LAGA).¹



March 16, 2016 Ebolowa, South Region, Cameroon

Seizure of 8 chimpanzee skulls, 4 gorilla skulls, and one mandrill skull (*Mandrillus sphinx*, Appendix I). Arrest of 3 traffickers. One of them told the investigators that he ate chimpanzee meat during his elephant poaching campaigns. Chimpanzee skull revenue complements ivory revenue. The NGO LAGA helped the police and wildlife services of the region in this operation. Apparently, some skulls were painted red upon the request of the Chinese sponsors. They consider that red brings good luck.²



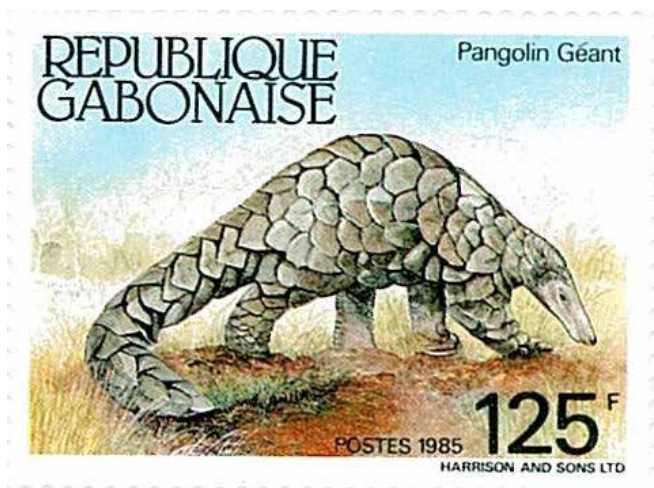
© EAGLE

March 29, 2016 Bafang, West Region, Cameroon

Seizure of 3 fresh chimpanzee heads and 7 chimpanzee skulls, one mandrill skull (*Mandrillus sphinx*, Appendix I), one elephant tail, and the pelt of a young python (*Pythonidae* spp, Appendix I or II). Arrest of a 37-year-old suspect.³



Mandrillus sphinx



GUINEA

February 3 and 16, 2016

Dalaba Prefecture, Mamou Region, Guinea

- He was doing his rounds, selling chimpanzee meat. The man on the motorcycle was interrogated. He split on Lady Dédé Koivogui who would be at the head of the regional network for 14 years. She was arrested, along with another street peddler selling meat. Two accomplices are on the run.⁴

- Lady Dédé Koivogui and 2 of her accomplices received a suspended sentence of 6 months of imprisonment. The NGO Guinée Application de la Loi Faunique condemns the light prison sentence and the trumped up proceedings. The seizure of 106 kg of bush meat ended up becoming 15 kg. The Environment Ministry and the counsel for the plaintiff were not informed of the trial date. An appeal was lodged. The case was transferred to Conakry. The seizure was destroyed after the first decision. Once again, the risks of Ebola are neglected.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

January 13, 2016

Lwiro, South Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Rwanda and the DRC have exchanged favors again, in compliance with the CITES recommendations between Rwanda and the DRC (cf. "On the Trail" n° 7, p. 38). Genetic tests have proven that the male chimpanzee, about 4 years old, is from the lineage of the Congo basin. He fell into a trap. He had 2 wounds on his right knee when he was rescued, and his big toe on his right foot had been pulled off.⁵



February 1, 2016

Lwiro, South Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo



For one month, the Lwiro rehabilitation center knew that there was a baby chimpanzee to rescue from captivity in Pinga, in the province of North Kivu. However, the prevailing insecurity in the zone prevented them from going there by car. The road trip usually takes 13 hours. Virunga National Park was ready to provide aircraft to accelerate the transfer.⁶

Mid-March, 2016

North Kivu and South Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo



This young male chimpanzee about 3 years old is the 64th one of its species to join the Lwiro refuge to relearn social and wild life. He was found in captivity in North Kivu. He was transferred to South Kivu thanks to the cooperation of GRASP (Great Apes Survival Partnership), ICCN (Congoese Institute for Nature Conservation), and MONUSCO (United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo).⁷

End of March, 2016

Kahuzi-Biega National Park, Democratic Republic of the Congo

1 - Oscar Byamungu Mianziro, a park ranger, died in a road block set up by bandits. He was a temporary officer in 2000, a patrolman in 2004, and a guide in 2008. He was familiar with all the gorilla families on the slopes of Kahuzi volcano, the only area of the Park where the number of gorillas is increasing. He was a habituation champion. Thanks to him, all the families were identified and monitored. He had an innate sense for having the gorillas recognize him without disturbing them, and getting close to them without making them flee or become aggressive. Kahuzi-Biega National Park covers 6,000 km². The influx of refugees, deserters, all kinds of traffickers, and coltan miners and their families has resulted in the desertification of what was and still is one of the 6 treasures of biodiversity in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in the middle of Africa.⁸



2 – The baby female plains gorilla was abandoned when she was 8 to 12 months old. Villagers returned her to the Kahuzi-Biega National Park team. A team for Virunga National Park 400 km away came to recover her in an aircraft to bring her to its specialized orphanage. The little one is either an indirect victim of bushmeat, because her mother and other adults in her family were killed to be cut up, smoked, and sold on food markets. Or wildlife traffickers kidnapped her and her mother, and the alpha male of the family was killed while trying to protect her.⁹



© Virunga National Park

SIERRA LEONE

February 22 and March 8, 2016 Moyamba District and et Western Area Rural District, Sierra Leone

- Rescue of 2 young chimpanzees approximately 6 and 8 years old by the NGO Tacugama, probably orphans whose parents were victims of bushmeat poaching or of supposed conflicts with humans. They were trapped in a small bamboo cage and went on a walk from time to time, on a leash.¹⁰

- Rescue of a female chimpanzee about 3.5 months old by the NGO Tacugama. She seems to be from the Kangari Hills Forest Reserve. It seems that her mother was poached. The consumption of bushmeat resumed after the Ebola pandemic. Tacugama reiterates that it is dangerous to consume primate meat, and that it can transmit the Ebola virus.



TANZANIA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

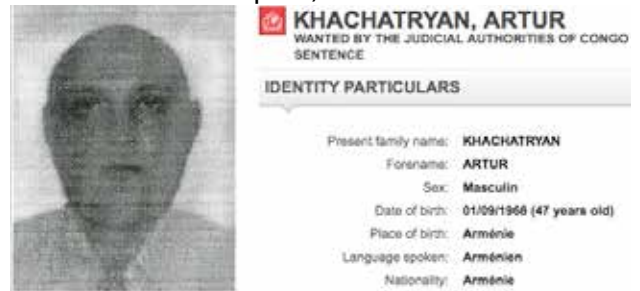
March 23, 2016

Kilimanjaro International Airport, Tanzania

Seizure of 61 vervet monkeys (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II), writ of sequestration of an airplane, arrest of the pilot, arrest of 2 Vardanyan brothers, Dutch nationals operating in Armenia. The activities of several senior-officials of the Tanzanian Ministry of natural resources and tourism were

suspended. The police of the Kilimanjaro region interrogated 7 responsible for the management and surveillance of wildlife and the director of Manyara Birds trappers, a company based in Arusha, specialized in the worldwide export of live animals and in particular birds and reptiles.

Three days after the ban on the exportation of wild animals from Tanzanian soil, the living primates would be loaded on a private jet from South Africa. The aircraft's flight plan was not disclosed and was not known by aviation authorities several hours before takeoff. The monkeys had been captured in the regions of Manyara, Arusha and Kilimanjaro. Close to 500 specimens have been picked up, the seizure would represent only a small part of the order. Manyara Birds would have organized the traps, the collection, the storage and the attempted exportation of the monkeys. The Vardanyan brothers run a zoo 15 kilometers from Erevan. They are linked by friendships and by business with Artur Khachatryan, director of Zoo Fauna Art Company, Armenian and shady specialist in the import-export of wild animals with favorite destinations like Russia and the Gulf countries (cf. « On the Trail » n°10 p. 33).



Khachatryan came to the aid of his Vardanyan friends. According to him, all of the exportation papers for the monkeys were legal and his company Zoo Fauna Art was the destination. His Vardanyan friends were simply at the airport to drop off a suitcase in airplane departing for Armenia. Already in August 2015, Khachatryan has imported in Armenia via Beirut, some sixty vervet monkeys.¹¹

BRAZIL

January 29, 2016



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Sao Vicente, State of São Paulo, Brazil

A surprise visit from the police saved 4 black-tufted marmosets (*Callithrix penicillata*, Appendix II). One of them had its tail cut off. The man present during the seizure claimed he “was not responsible for the animals”. But he still must pay a fine of \$ 16,000 R (\$ 5000 US).¹²

Callithrix penicillata

March 14, 2016

Uberlandia, Minas Gerais, Brazil

Seizure of a black tufted marmoset (*Callithrix penicillata*, Appendix II). A woman had just captured the animal in the city. She was reported. She barely had time to take the small primate at home. The police arrived.¹³

INDONESIA

ORANGUTAN

January 7, 2016

Kedaung, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia

Yet another female surrounded by industrial rubber tree and palm oil plantations. She was about 18 years old. Kedaung villagers had already noticed her several months ago. She was not able to return to her natural ecosystem in Leuser anymore.¹⁴



© Orangutan Info Centre



Orangutan under pressure

January 11, 2016
Langsa, Province of Aceh, Indonesia



Whew! The little 2-year-old left the cage and went off to a nursery.¹⁵

January 14, 2016
Mata-Mata, West Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

Safe! An orangutan about 17 years old was found in the charred surroundings that was destined to become a palm oil grove, shut in a bush. It exhibited all the signs of malnutrition.¹⁶



January 16, 2016
Kapuas Regency, Central Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

A female orangutan about 15 years old was found dead, speared, and cut with a machete. She was far away from dwellings and farming activity. It seems that it was illegal loggers who attacked her. Before the industrial plantation, there is rampant deforestation.¹⁷

End of January, 2016
Balai Pinang, Ketapang Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

An orangutan about 5 years old was rescued. It was chained to a tree and was on a wood frame for 2 years. The association International Animal Rescue took care of it and transferred it to the Ketapang rehabilitation center.¹⁸



It had been lying in garbage for 2 years

January 31, 2016
Palangkaraya, Central Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

The workforce on the palm oil plantation put chains on the orphan. He is now receiving special care.¹⁹



January 31, 2016
North Penajam Paser Regency, East Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

The orangutans chased off of palm tree plantations always suffer from the same trauma. Head wounds, gouged out eyes, swollen hands and feet due to the chains, and broken teeth. This adult will manage. He's already learned to climb up the cage to catch fruit. For orangutans, the art of reliving is all about fruits and climbing.²⁰



**Beginning of February, 2016
West Kalimantan Province,
Indonesia**

The mother and daughter had fled their land devastated by fires. They sought refuge in the trees on the edge of farmland, where extremely angry villagers protected them. Their health condition was terrible. They were taken to a safe place, and then released into a protected forest area.



The worst is yet to come. Experts believe that El Nino will result in a long dry season this year, and that the forest fires will be even more deadly.²¹

**February 10, 2016
Marsh forest of Singkil, Aceh Province, Indonesia**



This male, about 35 years old, was dangerously isolated on an industrial rubber tree plantation. Before releasing it into the rain forest, veterinarians removed a few air gun pellets from its body.²²

**Mid- February, 2016
Sangatta, East Kalimantan Province, Indonesia**



The orphan's skull was cut by a machete. He received care in Samboja Lestari clinic.²³

**February 20, 2016
Belimbing, East Kalimantan Province, Indonesia**

Three females, about 20, 10, and 1 year(s) of age were burned alive in a clearing fire. They did not manage to escape from this former residual forest highly prized for its agricultural value, and encircled by sand quarries. The police buried them on site, 1 km from Kutai National Park, which covers 2000 km². Veterinarians from an NGO then unearthed them for an autopsy. It did not reveal anything new. It seems that the victims were not killed before being burned.²⁴



Ketapang Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

Two young orangutans were rescued. Each time an orphan is found, a mother has been put to torture.

End of February, 2016.

A 2-year-old female was rescued, recovered in a plantation, sold for \$ 95 US, with her neck chained for one month. She is still untamed, biting everyone who comes in her path. The prognosis is positive. She should be back in the forest soon, if she can be self-sufficient in terms of food.



March 11, 2016 She also had her neck tied. As a baby, she was recovered from cleared land. She was fed on condensed milk. As she is 3 years old, she might not be able to recover her survival instincts and to socialize again.²⁵

**February 29, 2016
Batang Serangan, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia**

To ensure their survival, a mother and her daughter were captured in a rubber tree plantation surrounded by palm oil trees. They were then moved to Leuser Forest, 5 km away. They could have been considered as pests where they were before.

They immediately climbed up to the treetops, where they are now.²⁶



March 1, 2016

Indonesia-North Korea

In an effort to strengthen ties between North Korea and Indonesia, rare species and wildlife almost played a role. For several years, there was a plan to send a Siberian tiger to Jakarta, in exchange for exporting an orangutan to Pyongyang. This plan has been abandoned. The living conditions in this zoo in the capital of North Korea are said to be appalling. The conditions in Ragunan Zoo in Jakarta seem to be similar. It is overpopulated with orangutans who have been abandoned or recovered from traffickers. They are usually in transit for 3 months at the most, but some of them have been there for 30 years, according to the president of the Jakarta Animal Aid Network.²⁷

March 23, 2016

Pekanbaru, Riau Province, Indonesia

Three people who trafficked 3 baby orangutans are sentenced to 2 years and 5 months in prison and to pay a fine of 80 million rupees (\$ 6000 US). In the event of non-payment, they are sentenced to 3 additional months in prison (cf. "On the Trail" n° 11, p. 39).²⁸



March 31, 2016

Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park, Central Kalimantan and West Kalimantan Provinces, Indonesia

After 4 months in transit and care in a rehabilitation center, and 52 hours of traveling by truck and boat, the 2 orangutans who escaped from fires were released into a forest far from human activities. For the time being, the forest is considered as safe for the newcomers. Their new territory has a low orangutan density, which reduces the risk of intra-species conflict.³⁰



March 2016

East Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

Thirteen orangutans were trapped in residual forest plots inside a parcel that was being cleared, to make way for a palm oil plantation. Orangutans are not the only expelled animals. Hornbills and gibbons share the same fate. The Centre for Orangutan Protection (COP) has sounded the alarm and ordered AE Corporation and its subcontractors to take responsibility for their actions. COP

reiterates that as per national law, it is prohibited to destroy, trade, store, and possess eggs and nests of protected species. You could say that this ban also concerns orangutans, who build nests on treetops. It is urgent to freeze the works. The starving and disturbed orangutans are starting to eat the first palm tree shoots. They will soon be considered as pests here again.²⁹

THAILAND

ORANGUTAN

February 22, 2016

Phuket Zoo, Phuket Province, Thailand

Milo has caused a big stir. This 13-year-old was imported from Indonesia and exploited because she is photogenic. The "Free Milo" campaign has been successful. The day before the police search, Milo disappeared from the zoo. She was found a few kilometers away in a cage in the middle of a small forest. "I put her where I found her 2 years ago", claims the zoo director. Like all her fellow exhibited orangutans, whom tourists photograph and stuff with sweets, Milo is obese. She should be transferred to the Khao Prathap Chang wildlife sanctuary.³¹



A few days after the Milo affair, a baby orangutan was found in a cat box in front of the sanctuary of Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand. It is assumed that the media coverage and the legal consequences of the Milo affair encouraged someone to put the little redhead playing into the right hands.



CAMBODIA

February 2016

Cardamom Mountains, Koh Kong Province, Cambodia

Long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) continue to be poached. The poachers sneak into boats at nightfall, pointing torches toward the trees, to try to find groups of sleeping macaques by spotting the lightly patched coats. When the men identify the trees of macaques, they jump onto the ground. With their machetes, they clear a large circle around the tree, preventing the monkeys from escaping via the forest canopy. They must flee from the bottom, where nets trap them. This practice has been prohibited since 2010. It fuels the powerful and omnipresent animal experimentation industry. The wild macaques of Cambodia go to the farms of the Indochinese peninsula, and are then exported to the whole world. Laboratories in the United States used 47,930 monkeys in the 2014 fiscal year. They were mainly macaques. All the rivers in western Cambodia are explored, and the trappers work on order. An expert from Fauna & Flora International (FFI) saw them at work, and observed that there were piles of cut branches every 500 meters or so.³²



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INDIA

February 20, 2016

Nashik, Maharashtra State, India

In France, some people can leave a baby in a car in a blazing sun when they go shopping. In India, it was a hospital visitor who left their monkey attached to a bike for hours. In the end, forest department officials removed the monkey, and took it to the animal pound, where veterinarians examined it. We just know that the monkey is a strictly protected species. He is doing well.³³

INDONESIA

February 27, 2016

Pekanbaru, Riau Province, Indonesia

Seizure of 6 slow lorises (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I), one siamang (*Symphalangus syndactylus*, Appendix I) and one gibbon (*Hylobatidae* spp., Appendix I), and 3 arrests, after a joint investigation conducted by the Riau police and the NGO SCORPION on various wildlife markets, including Palapa market in Pekanbaru. A live slow loris sells for the equivalent of \$ 23 US. Killing and cutting it up costs \$ 11 US.³⁴



© Bernard Dupont

Symphalangus syndactylus

March 13, 2016

East Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

Two macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix II), one dusky leaf monkey (*Trachypithecus obscurus*, Appendix II) and 2 leopard cats (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II). The forest wardens and police officers have dealt with random searches in the public buses serving the provinces. The COP (Center for Orangutan Protection) took care of the animals.³⁵

QATAR



© Qatar Ministry of Municipality and Environment

Beginning of March, 2016

Qatar

A baby chimpanzee in baby clothes and in a seatbelt was seized in a car. The driver was stopped.³⁶

THAILAND

Mid-January, 2016

Thailand

A young female white-handed gibbon (*Hylobates lar*, Appendix I) was voluntarily returned to Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand. This species is heading for trouble. Its population has declined 50% in 45 years, in 3 generations.

Fortunately, this 2½-year-old gibbon could not continue her pet career. Her master couldn't handle "her acoustic nuisance" anymore.³⁷



January 26, 2016

Thailand

Three lorises (*Nycticebus bengalensis*, Appendix I) and a young common palm civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III in India).

They were bought on Facebook. A friend of the jailer saw that they were in such terrible condition, and returned them to the association WFFT (Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand). Recently caught adult lorises may be released after an observation period. Civets are choice pets for humankind. They don't take up space, they produce coffee, and their meat tastes good—if you don't want them around any more.³⁸ (cf. "On the Trail" n°1 p. 41)



End of January 2016

Thailand

Mam, the long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II), is now free³⁹



Chained for ten years under a sheet of metal.

February 6, 2016

Koh Phangan Island, Surat Thani Province, Thailand

The NGO Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand rescued a female dusky langur (*Trachypithecus obscurus*, Appendix II) and a stump-tailed macaque (*Macaca arctoides*, Appendix II) which were used as pets.

Dusky langurs are endemic to mainland Malaysia, southern Burma, and southwestern Thailand. They are 50 to 80 cm long, including their tails. They are arboreal and feed on leaves, fruits, and flowers. They are very good at disseminating seeds. Oil palm plantations are threatening their habitats.⁴⁰



Trachypithecus obscurus

Beginning of March, 2016

Bangkok, Province of Bangkok, Thailand

A female northern pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II) was rescued. Remember that macaques in Thailand and Vietnam are often reduced to slavery. They are raised for animal experimentation, and exhibited in coffee shops. The young males are exploited to gather coconuts from the coconut trees. Their labor is highly prized because they are quick and obedient. A good coconut collector sells for some hundred US\$.⁴¹



She lived 20 years in a garbage cage. The only landscape she had to look at was an old tire. Zoos do not want old borders. WFFT hospitably took it in.

March 9, 2016

Thailand

Rescue of a one-year-old long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) who was mistreated. His mother was killed to be eaten. For the time being, he was spared.⁴²



March 18, 2016

Thailand

A Bengal slow loris (*Nycticebus bengalensis*, Appendix I) was rescued in the forest 2 weeks ago, and is doomed to a sad pet's life. It is still in good shape and could be released soon.⁴³



Weekend of March 19, 2016
Ranong Province, Thailand

Another dusky leaf monkey (*Trachypithecus obscurus*, Appendix II) was rescued. These monkeys have an orange coat during their first 6 months on earth.⁴⁴



VIETNAM

February 4, 2016

Nha Trang, Khanh Hoa Province, Vietnam

The long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) that tourists found in a restaurant in the morning was released into a forest thanks to ENV a few hours after.⁴⁵



February 5, 2016

Hoang Mai, Nghe An Province, Vietnam



49-year-old Le Ba Thuan bought 6 monkeys (*Primates* spp., Appendix I or II) and 12 cats to make a glue-like product composed of spinal cords, bones, and cartilage. According to traditional belief, this product has many health benefits and boosts libido. The 49-year-old man had no problems putting pets in his grub. He was sentenced to a fine of 13 million dong (\$ 500 US). His friend put a few photos of removing bones from monkeys on his Facebook page to give him some good publicity. He was not fined. However, the police did find a falcon in his home, and are wondering where it came from and what species it is.⁴⁶



February 23 and 26, 2016
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

The environmental police seized 2 lorises (*Lorisidae* spp., Appendix I or II) sold on Facebook.⁴⁷



March 8, 2016

Nha Trang, Khanh Hoa Province, Vietnam

Release of a northern pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II), locked in front of a street vendor's tricycle.⁴⁸



© Education for Nature – Vietnam

March 21, 2016

Yen Bai Province, Vietnam

A macaque that was confined for 3 years in a salad shaker was rescued.⁴⁹



© Forest Protection Department

March 28, 2016

Hue, Thua Thien-Hue Province, Vietnam

A stump-tailed macaque (*Macaca arctoides*, Appendix II) that was seized in a pagoda was released.⁵⁰

EUROPE

Février 2016

Private zoo of Chleby, Central Bohemian Region, Czech Republic

Plan to acquire 3 red-shanked douc langurs (*Pygathrix nemaeus*, Appendix I), 2 females, and one male from Thailand. There are only 1000 of them left in the wild in Laos and in Thailand. In Vietnam, the American air force poured weed killer onto the jungle so that soldiers on the ground could see better. These beautiful monkeys feed on leaves and bananas. Will a CITES permit be given, as the doucs are in Appendix I and only scientific projects justify their importation?⁵¹



Felines

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

LEOPARDS

AFRICA



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African leopard (*Panthera pardus pardus*)

GABON

February 1, 2016

Tchibanga, Nyanga Province, Gabon

Two pelts, a Toyota taxi, and a firearm were seized, and 4 men, the deliveryman, the 2 salesmen, and the pelt owner were arrested. The purchaser seems to be the only one who escaped from the dragnet.¹



March 16, 2016

Koulamoutou, Ogooué-Lolo Province, Gabon

Five panther pelts, 10 panther teeth, and 2 tusk tips in the bag and home of Claude Toussou Metonhou, a traditional practitioner of Beninese origin. His salesman Antoine Loundou was arrested the next day. They are under a committal order.²

UGANDA

January 23, 2016

Nakapiripirit, Northern Region, Uganda

Légende Seizure of 4 leopard skins, one serval skin (*Leptailurus serval*, Appendix II), and one dead pangolin (*Manis* spp., Appendix II). Among the 4 traffickers, there is one soldier from Moroto garrison and one commander of the Uganda People's Defence Force.³



© Fakebeast

January 23, 2016

Western Region, Uganda

Three poachers coming from Rwanda were arrested. They crossed the border with one dead leopard.⁴

January 23, 2016

Kamwokya, Kampala District, Uganda

A pelt worth 17 million shillings (\$ 4930 US) was seized in a restaurant, and 2 Rwandan nationals—Célestine Bwanakwe, a farmer, and Olivier Aguma, a technician—pleaded not guilty and were released on bail after 15 days. They live in the same county in Rwanda.⁵

REPEATED OFFENSE GANG

**End of January, 2016
Northern Region, Uganda**

For a long time, the son of the pastor has been managing the poaching activities in the Kidepo Valley National Park (1400 km²), on the border with South Sudan and Kenya.⁶



© EAGLE

ZAMBIA

Beginning of February 2016

Livingstone, Southern Province, Zambia

Seizure of 4 leopard skins. Two arrests.⁷

ASIA



Indian leopard (*Panthera pardus fusca*)

INDIA

January 07, 2016

Alwar, State of Rajasthan, India

A man was sentenced to 3 months in prison and a fine of 80,000 rupees (\$ 1179 US) for poaching 2 leopards in Sariska Tiger Reserve 10 years ago. At the time, the skins were sold to 2 smugglers for 5000 rupees (\$ 73 US) each.⁸



January 10, 2016

Alwar, State of Rajasthan, India

A pelt, a firearm, and a car were seized. The encounter was near a soap factory. The police arrived before the clients, and arrested 5 poachers.⁹

January 12, 2016

Karapalli, Malkangiri district, State of Odisha, India

The haggling started at 50,000 rupees (\$ 733 US). It ended at 40,000 rupees (\$ 587 US), and with the arrest of the seller. The purchasers were forest department officials.¹⁰

January 25, 2016

Rajsamand district, State of Rajasthan, India

Two poachers were sentenced to 2 years in prison and 5000 rupees (\$ 74 US) each for illegal possession of a pelt, in December 2008.¹¹



January 26, February 22 and March 17, 2016

State of Uttarakhand, India

- Dehradun

Arrest of 3 poachers who came from Chamoli district to the capital of the State to sell a pelt. The pelt was seized.

- Pauri district

Seizure of bones and 7 pelts that the 4 poachers intended to sell for 2000 rupees (\$ 30 US) each to an intermediary who was preparing to resell them in New Delhi. On the international market, a skin sells for between Rs. 5 lakh and Rs. 8 lakh (\$ 7300 US and \$ 11,700 US). Three of the passengers ran off into the jungle when the car was blocked. They were taken up again. The leopards were lured in by the poisoned bait. For several days, the gang then combed the forest, to find the dead leopards.

- Rishikesh, Dehradun district

A pelt was seized. An experienced poacher named Tikka was arrested. The 2 purchasers were Nepalese. The sales price was set at Rs. 10 lakh (\$ 14,660 US). The animal was killed in the forests of Joshimath.¹²

- Dehradun

Seizure of a leopard skin and arrest.

- Tehri Garhwal district

Seizure of a leopard pelt and parts. Arrest of a man named Pyardas.

January 31, 2016

Motipur, State of Uttar Pradesh, India. India-Nepal border

Seizure of a pelt and arrest of a Nepalese man. The illicit leopard trade between Nepal and India is still doing well.¹³

February 2, 2016

Nabarangpur district, State of Odisha, India

Seizure of 6 pelts, leopard claws, and bear paws (*Ursidae* spp., Appendix I or II). Four of the pelts are from adults. Pelts are pierced with bullet holes. The 2 other victims are leopard cubs, 18 and 24 months old. It seems that the felines were poached in the Karlapat Wildlife Sanctuary. The estimated local value of the skins is between 40,000 and 50,000 rupees (\$ 582 US to \$ 728 US).

The 5 people arrested have introduced themselves as intermediaries. They supposedly did not take part in the killing.¹⁴

February 16 and 20, 2016

Palasia, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Only the head and tail were left. The paws, teeth, and vibrissae were removed, and the pelt was skinned. It was 5 or 6 years old. It was killed 3 or 4 days before it was found. Five people were arrested. All the remains were found in the sand along a river, and in the house of one of the accused.¹⁵

LEOPARDS - CONTINUED

**February 21, 2016
Jaisinghpura Khor,
State of Rajasthan,
India**

A young 4-year-old female was found, with her front left paw caught in an iron trap. She seemed to be awake. This trap is typical of the contraptions used by an old poaching gang which seems to be reviving. There are a lot of reasons to be concerned about the 10 adult leopards and 5 leopard cubs pacing up and down 4000 hectares of forest on the edge of Jaipur, which has 3 million inhabitants. It took several hours to free the victim. She had to be numbed so that she wouldn't thrash about. Very soon, early in the morning, a few villagers (cf. "On the Trail" n°11 p. 46) took a stand to avoid potential lynching, while they waited for the police forces to come to the scene. She was given antibiotics and was temporarily transferred to a zoo. The last we heard, she is doing well, doesn't limp, and could be released very quickly into Sariska Reserve.¹⁶



**March 5, 2016
Telipara, State of
West Bengal, India**

Rescue of a male leopard caught in a trap on a tea plantation. Villagers sounded the alarm. After the leopard was released, he was taken to the Khairbari Rescue Center near Gorumara National Park.¹⁷



**March 5, 2016
Taklihaji, Pune district, State of Maharashtra,
India**

A farmer spotted 2 leopard cubs in the middle of the fields. The forest officials were notified, and they collected the small felines and put them in a box under a tree. The mother came in the afternoon to look for them, and the three of them left together.¹⁸

**March 7, 2016
Usilampatti, State of Tamil Nadu, India**

Seizure of a pelt to sell for Rs. 4 lakh (\$ 5824 US), 4 arrests.¹⁹

**March 10 and 12 mars
2016
Saptur, State of Tamil
Nadu, India**

It seems that the adult leopard killed a 3-month-old calf and put half of its prey to the side. The farmer says that with an accomplice, he covered the carcass with a net, and waited for the leopard to return, and it did return. The feline was trapped in the mesh and was beaten to death. Its teeth and claws were sold, and its skin was traded for debt worth 30,000 rupees (\$ 437 US). 7 people who were more or less involved in the affair will be brought to justice. It seems that the leopard was poached in Srivilliputtur Wildlife Sanctuary, better known by the name Grizzled Squirrel Wildlife Sanctuary in Ceylan.²⁰



**March 19, 2016
Aarey, Mumbai City district, State of
Maharashtra, India**

She was already caught in trap back in 2014, and she got out of it alone. This is why she only had one claw left in her front left paw. She became a mother in 2015, and was definitively caught in a trap in March 2016. She was found by a team of botanists who were making a census of the trees in the forest. Chandni was 6 years old. The experts and rangers were very familiar with her. She was identified thanks to her paw with just one claw. Twenty meters from Chandni, there was another trap set. The officials are concerned about what will happen to her little one. As he was less than 1 year old, he is not independent yet, and could go too close to the homes. There were 7 leopards in the forest of Aarey.²¹

**March 20, 2016
Bahraich, State of Uttar Pradesh, India**

Seizure of a pelt with the jaws and teeth intact. She was heading for China via Nepal. Two arrests.²²



Chandni and her little one in August 2015

LEOPARDS - CONTINUED

IRAN

Mid-March 2016
Andika County, Khuzestan Province, Iran



The leopard and the Kalachnikov.²⁵

NEPAL

January 23, 2016
Aalital, Far-Western Development Region, Nepal



The 1.83 m long pelt, fragments, and bones were hidden in a sheep fold.²⁶

March 9, 2016
Krishnapur, Far-Western Development Region, Nepal

Seizure of a pelt 1.80 m long and 60 cm wide. It seems that the 2 suspects were just escorts who were paid 10,000 rupees (\$ 91 US). The feline would have been poached in Nepal.²⁷

March 23, 2016
Kathmandu, Central Development Region, Nepal

Seizure of a pelt and a motorcycle. One arrest.²⁸

EUROPE

January 28, 2016
Greater London, England, United Kingdom

A skull was put up for sale on eBay for £ 670 (\$ 947 US). The investigation led the police to a home in the neighborhood of Surbiton. The individual did not have the mandatory certificate of origin in his possession.²⁹



February 18, 2016
Middlebourg, Province of Zeeland, Netherlands
Seizure of 3 leopards to be sold online, worth € 2500.³⁰



LIONS



AFRICA

ZIMBABWE

February 2016

Bubye Valley Conservancy (BVC), Matabeleland South Province, Zimbabwe

The Cecil effect (cf. "On the Trail" n°10 p.41). Australia and France have banned lion trophy imports. The United States has registered African lions on its endangered species list. Delta Airlines refuses to transport hunting trophies to the United States. "Big Five" hunters are afraid that there will be a scandal if they hunt in Zimbabwe. The big fortunes of Texas who enjoy hunting in southern Africa are hurt by the drop in oil prices. A lion hunting permit costs \$ 50,000 US, in addition to transport and housing costs. The BVC hunting guide manager considers that Bubye is the greatest success in lion conservation in Africa. When business was booming, Bubye gave 45 t of game meat to neighboring communities every year.

Big-game hunting in southern Africa is in a crisis. Game hunting has probably moved in other regions and continents which are less vulnerable to criticism for the moment.

BVC management considers that the Cecil effect from July 1, 2015 is linked to the current overpopulation of lions on the 3400 km² of the hunting reserve. The density is 15 lions per 100 km², compared to a density of 5 to 8 lions in Kruger Park. Does this mean that BVC management would like to get rid of 200 lions because the Cecil effect made it lose 200 hunting permits and related taxidermy revenue?

Pieter Kat, a lion expert, considers for his part that the overpopulation in BVC is premeditated. According to him the profusion of artificial waterholes resulted in an intentional explosion in the lion population.

BVC management says that the surplus of lions is killing the populations of antelopes, giraffes, leopards, and African wild dogs. It says that as a last resort, if it is impossible to transfer them to ecosystems where they are not in conflict with human activities and other animals, the ultimate solution is to kill lions.

In 1940, the BVC hunting reserve was an enormous ranch founded by the baron Justus Von Liebig, who supplied armies with canned beef. When he began his intensive farming activity in Rhodesia, he offered 2 shillings for the tail of a zebra, giraffe, and other wild animals. For him, it was urgent to eliminate wildlife to make way for farm animals. Unilever then took over the farm. In the 1990s, after several years of drought, the ranch was sold, and converted into a wildlife reserve again. All the fences are electric. The BVC is now owned by Dubai funds.³¹

ASIA

January 22, 2016

Dubai, Emirate of Dubai, United Arab Emirates

A lion wandered off into the residential neighborhood of Al Barsha. The vet service of the city reiterated that it is prohibited to keep wildcats in one's home.³²

Beginning of March 2016

Hafar Al-Batin, Eastern Province, Saudi Arabia



Settling of scores. A lion in captivity killed an apprentice tamer. The tamer then killed the lion. There are an increasing number of domestic wildcats in the Gulf States.³³

LIONS - FOLLOWED

EUROPE

February 8, 2016
Montpellier,
department, France

Hérault



Anthony Crépet was sentenced to 3 months in prison for “being in possession of a protected species without authorization”, and for “illegal possession of weapons”. The lion went off to a refuge in Belgium. It seems that it was bought from a circus (cf. “On the Trail” n°11 p. 51).³⁴



TIGERS

ASIA

BANGLADESH

March 28, 2016
Sathalia, Khulna District, Bangladesh

The Rapid Action Battalion, an elite unit, successfully pursued Maniruzzaman and Ali, who were in possession of a Sundarbans tiger pelt that was 2.70 m long.³⁵

INDIA

January 3 and 4, 2016
State of Uttar Pradesh, India

- **Pilibhit** . Arrest of 2 men suspected of poaching 8 tigers in 2015. Last year, Mondal, a Pilibhit resident, was arrested in Nepal, in possession of tiger skins and bones. He admitted that he was involved in a poaching gang in the reserve. The investigation led to the arrest of 2 accomplices (cf. “On the Trail” n° 8, p. 44).³⁷

- **Pilibhit Tiger Reserve**. Three arrests and seizure of 6 kg of bones.

January to March 2016

The latest news of tiger poachers in Maharashtra, India

- **January 21**. Kuttu, a repeat poaching offender and escape artist, gets what he wants at 6 PM. Kuttu pretended he had a pressing need to attend to, at the same time as one of the other 6 passengers of the Chandrapur-Sakoli bus line. He took advantage of the kindness of the driver who made an unexpected stop. Despite the fact that Kuttu was under heavy surveillance and roped to 2 police officers, he fled into the forest. The only thing he left behind was his sandals. He had just come out of a hearing for one of the many tiger poaching operations he has been mixed up in. He was returning to prison. Nine years ago, Kuttu unsuccessfully offered no less than \$ 6000 US to an officer to avoid arrest.

- **March 15**. Chacha, the famous Bengal tiger trafficker, is doing everything to be released, even legal methods. He has been in preventive detention since September 2013. His lawyer presented his 6th request to release him on bail. Once again, his request was turned down.

- **March 15**. Bhajan Pardhi, another experienced poacher specialized in tigers and leopards, requested an early release from prison. On January 29, he was sentenced to 5 years or prison and a fine of 15,000 rupees (\$ 218 US) for poaching in the Melghat Tiger Reserve. He was in preventive detention for 2 years. The judge of the district court accommodated his request. The Maharashtra Forest Department decided to lodge an appeal with the High Court of Bombay. At least 30 poachers from the Bahelya tribe are in prison now. The release of Bhajan could pave the way for other releases. Experts consider that this would really send the wrong message. “Releasing of poachers like Bhajan will sound death knell for tigers, as these poachers have no job other than killing tigers.”³⁶

January 5 and 7, 2016

Kanker and Rajnandgaon districts, State of Chhattisgarh, India

- Seizure of a pelt skin and one arrest. The pelt came from Madhya Pradesh, the trafficker from Maharashtra.

- Seizure of one pelt and 4 arrests.³⁸

January 19, 2016

Valmiki Tiger Reserve, State of Bihar, India

Seizure of 2 skins and bones of 2 adult Bengal tigers, and arrest of 2 poachers. They were in the middle of the 900 km² sanctuary that is next to Chitwan National Park in Nepal.³⁹

TIGERS - FOLLOWED

January 26, 2016

Melghat Tigre Reserve, State of Maharashtra, India



2000 km² and 42 tigers under the full moon (Pournima). The patrols are on the watch. A steel trap shines in the night. Forest rangers dismantle it. Bahelias set the traps. In 2 years, 30 poachers have been caught there.⁴⁰

January 31, 2016

Pench Tiger Reserve, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

A decaying tiger corpse was found. A young 23-year-old man was questioned. In 8 months, this State lost 6 tigers, 3 of whom were from the Pench reserve. There are 3 causes for these unnatural deaths: poisoning, electrocution by fences that farmers installed on the edge of reserves to protect crops from the intrusions of wild boars, and metallic traps.⁴¹

February 4, 2016

Chikkamagaluru District, State of Karnataka, India

The young 24-year-old man was involved in organized theft, and admits that he was also mixed up with another gang that poached a tiger in the forests of Siddarahalli.⁴²

February 7, 2016

Valmiki Tiger Reserve, State of Bihar, India

Arrest of 10 poachers coming from the neighboring State of Uttar Pradesh, and seizure of 3 nets and other suspicious tools.⁴³

Beginning of February 2016
Bhadrawati, State of Maharashtra, India

Sixteen people were accused of poaching a tiger from the edge of Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve in January 2007. The animal was electrocuted in a deer or buffalo trap. The hunters had thrown the carcass into a well after ballasting it with stone. They were acquitted due to lack of evidence. The jurists reiterate that the seals and photos of the scene of the crime must be kept and be available the day of the trial.⁴⁴



February 10, 2016

Pazhamputhoor, State of Tamil Nadu, India

The authorities always tend to present Tamil Nadu as a State spared from poaching. They believe that this was a retaliation. It seems that the feline attacked a herd. In return, it seems too that it was poisoned when he ate meat sprayed with pesticide. Farmers earn 10,000 rupees (\$ 150 US) if a certified veterinarian states that the domestic animal was attacked by a wild animal. The long wait time for obtaining compensation encourages farmers to take the law into their own hands.⁴⁵

March 14, 2016

Varkala, State of Kerala, India

They came to this mecca of tourism much visited by Indians and middle class westerners, to find a purchaser and the money to buy 3 other pelts in the district of Wanad. The tiger was 3 years old.⁴⁶

GANG

Mid-March 2016

Haridwar district, State of Uttarakhand, India

Seizure of 5 pelts and 125 kg of tiger skulls, jaws, bones, and claws. The estimated value of the seizure is Rs. 70 lakh (\$ 101,920 US).

Arrest of Ram Chandra under the alias of Chandar. Four accomplices ran off into the forest, under cover of darkness, the gang of smugglers from Punjab from the Bawaria clan had an appointment with poachers who came from Nepal and Tibet. There is a lot of concern about this. Is this park becoming the lair of poachers? Jim Corbett hosts 215 tigers, in an area covering 520 km². This is currently the highest density of tigers. The program director of WPSI (Wildlife Protection Society of India), confirms that the human predators come from Punjab and Haryana, and hide in Uttar Pradesh, holding sway over Uttarakhand. He is concerned about the lack of coordination between the governments involved.⁴⁷



The death and skinning of tigers go back to 4 months ago. The pelts and bones were buried on-site.

TIGERS - FOLLOWED

March 19, 2016

Hashimara, State of West Bengal, India. Border with Bhutan.

Seizure of a pelt 3.35 m long, with an estimated value of Rs. 16 lakh (\$ 23,296 US) and 88 bones from Bhutan, heading toward China via Nepal, one car, and 2 motorcycles. Arrest of 4 poachers, 3 Indians, and one Bhutanese living in Jaigaon and Phuntsholin, 2 neighboring cities separated by the border line. IUCN considers that Bhutan is a model country for the planet. Its forest sequesters 3 times more CO² than it emits. The last tiger inventory (2014-2015) seems to prove that the population increased by a third since the last one. To convince the skeptics, a program to equip tigers with radio tracking collars is under way. With these "customized" and harmless traps made in Thailand, the tigers of Manas National Park are captured, put to sleep, and released after biologists make various anatomical measurements, on their testicles and nipples in particular.

What if, outside of Bhutan, these famous Thai traps which capture tigers without hurting them at all were used to capture tigers for the black market, for farms and private zoos?⁴⁸

March 28 and 29, 2016

Pench Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh, India

Discovery of a carcass of an 11 year-old tigress and her 2 young. A third cub was found alive. Five violent deaths since the beginning of the year in the Reserve in addition to the 16 in the country.²³

INDONESIA

January 8 and January 27, 2016

Mukomuko Regency, Province of Bengkulu, Indonésia

Seizure of a skin, teeth, and bones. Arrest of one poacher and 2 traffickers. The police had been monitoring them since 2011, and they had already sold off the by-products of 8 tigers. The gang worked in Kerinci Seblat National Park. In the same park, 3 weeks later, 2 exhausted and fatally wounded tigers were removed from 2 traps that the poachers set.



The increase in deer traps is a major source of concern. Deer are the main prey of tigers, and the tigers can be caught in deer traps. It's as if each farmer around the park and each forest worker is a poacher in the making. Poaching has become a second job. Demand for smoked meat is strong after the Ramadan is broken. This is one of the reasons why the meat industry considers that the proliferation of traps in this national park is a golden opportunity. The traps outnumber the tigers in the 13,000 km² of the park. The last annual campaign to identify the traps resulted in the dismantlement of 564 deer traps and 40 tiger traps, as opposed to 11 in 2011. 79 bird nets were also recovered.⁴⁹

January 20, 2016

Seblat, North Bengkulu Regency, Bengkulu Province, Indonesia

She was rescued from a trap in April 2015, but had 4 claws on her front right paw amputated. She died in a cage in a hybrid establishment, half-zoo and half-circus, where elephants are tamed and shown to the public. She was completely neglected while the Ministry of Environment was making its decision. She could have been used to help reproduce this endangered species. Every 2 or 3 days, she ate 5 to 8 kg of pork, the least expensive meat. She was denied treatment. Since February 2015, a male accused of attacking someone on a rubber tree plantation encountered the same fate. However, all the experts recommended releasing him into the forest in the national park next door.⁵⁰

February 25, 2016

Lubuklinggau, South Sumatra Province, Indonesia

The skin on one side, bones on the other side. It is more common to see a *Pantera tigris sumatrae* skin on a shelf than in a forest.⁵¹

March 05, 2016

Muarabungo, Jambi Province, Indonesia

Seizure of leopard pelt and a car. Four arrests.⁵²



No pelts without skin. Poaching does not like wasting.

TIGERS - FOLLOWED

REPEATED OFFENSE

March 17, 2016

Bireuën Regency, Aceh Province, Indonesia

Seizure of 2 Sumatran tiger skins and bones (*Panthera tigris sumatrae*). 100 million rupees (\$ 7595 US). One arrest. A person by the name of Maskur, an accomplice, is at large. He has already been arrested for the same reason in 2014. He had spent a year in prison. Aceh Province is full of tiger trackers (cf. "On the Trail" n°4 p. 100 et n°10 p. 40). There are less tigers than there are poachers. This does not hinder the WWF of declaring the times are better for the tiger. Given the urgency, the government is soft. It "intends" to strengthen sanctions.²⁴



MALAYSIA

January 20, 2016

Pasir Semut, State of Terengganu, Malaysia

Seizure of a carcass worth 500,000 ringgit (\$ 118,720 US) in a home, and arrest of 3 poachers. The tiger was in the bathtub. It was cut into 4 parts and gutted like a chicken. The feline fell into a trap and was killed at point blank range. Bullet marks on its head and front left paw prove this. There are 200 tigers left in Malaysia. For them, a natural death is a rare privilege. At least 10 of them are poached each year. Instead welcoming the purchaser of the tiger that had just been killed the 2 residents of the home, aged 50 and 60, have been picked by a special team of the Department of Wildlife and National Parks.⁵³



February 1, 2016

Gopeng, Perak State, Malaysia

The man was carrying a dead tiger on his motorcycle 200 km from Kuala Lumpur.⁵⁴

February 6, 2016

State of Terengganu, Malaysia

A road accident and tooth theft. She tried to cross the express lane on the east coast at the 321st kilometer. She was pregnant. A car hit her and she was lying on the edge of the road. Another car stopped, and the 2 drivers grabbed 2 fangs, 7 cm long.⁵⁵



NEPAL

January 25, 2016

Nawalparasi District, Western Development Region, Nepal

Seizure of a pelt and bones. One arrest.⁵⁶

February 10, 2016

Kailali District, Far-Western Development Region, Nepal

Seizure of 2 pelts and 39.5 kg of bones. 8 arrests, including wandering Indian poachers. The entire set was to be sold for 300,000 rupees (\$ 2740 US). The Chinese and Vietnamese are ready to pay 5 million rupees (\$ 45,650 US) for the same set. The 2 tigers were poached one month earlier in Bardiya National Park. It seems that the gang has 6 tigers in its list of conquests. It is said that there are slightly less than 200 tigers in Nepal. Last year, about a dozen dead tigers and by-products were seized.⁵⁷



QATAR

March 9, 2016
Doha, Qatar

Baboons, panthers, and tigers are occupying classy neighborhoods. They are increasingly wandering around and attacking people.⁵⁸



THAILAND

January to March 2016
Tiger Temple, Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand



Transfer of 15 tigers. This is a first step toward putting this Tiger Temple managed by Buddhist monks back in order. Domestic tigers who are drugged and brought up in captivity cannot be released back into the wild. They were escorted via 2 trucks toward pens in Khao Son National Park and Khao Prathap Chang Wildlife Sanctuary.

Everyone must pay to enter the temple. To touch the felines, visitors must pay an additional fee that is the equivalent of \$ 140 US to \$ 200 US. The thing to do is to sit on a tiger, take it for a walk on a leash, and bottle-feed the tiger cubs (cf. "On the Trail" n° 8, p. 46, and n° 9, p. 50). These practices are supposed to stop in mid-April.

The Temple pressed charges against the National Park, Wildlife and Plant Conservation Department, claiming 147 million baht (\$ 4.2 million US) in damages for the financial loss due to the closure of the attraction. An in-camera hearing was held on 25 March. An agreement issued to have been reached. The Temple will no longer be able to raise tigers. Admission will be free. The tigers may no longer be exploited for money. 70 tigers could stay on site for "conservation" purposes. The Temple will need to formalize their request to open the zoo, and the new facilities must be in a location that is separate from the place of worship. The first application was turned down.

Millions of tourists were consenting victims of this fraud that combined religion and circus games.⁵⁹

January 2016
- January 6 et 15. Land of the Leopard National Park, Far Eastern Federal District, Russia

The 3 orphan tiger cubs in the taiga encountered different fates. A 4 month-old-female was not saved, despite the intervention of the veterinarian, and the advice of the best experts from Moscow and London. She weighed 15 kg. At her age, she should have weighed 30 kg.



Her sister is still alive. Her sister was transferred to the rehabilitation and reintroduction Center near Vladivostok. If she doesn't lose her survival instincts, she could be released into the forests where she was born. But her fate is still in the balance.

A 3rd sister was discovered in the snow a few days after the first 2 sisters were found. Everything was done to save her.

The body of the mother was not found. Her skin has probably already made its way to China (cf. "The Chinese Attraction", "On the Trail" n°11 p. 9).⁶⁰

Zhuravliny wildlife sanctuary, Jewish Autonomous Oblast, Russia

A male and female tiger orphan were released in May and June 2014. They are becoming closer and are learning to identify each other with scratches on the tree trunks of the forest. Their joint territory covers 100 km². Experts consider that they are already a couple and that if they are not poached and do not have an accident, they could soon give birth to tiger cubs. Photos taken by movement detection cameras show that the tigress is hunting and can feed herself. IFAW has made a financial contribution to the program for reintroducing Amur tigers, run by the Severtsov Institute of Ecology, which is affiliated with the Russian Academy of Sciences.⁶¹

TIGERS - FOLLOWED

EUROPE

February 2016

Siggiewi, Malta island, Malta

A Siberian tiger conservation program, in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea—sounds like a joke! “Noah’s Ark”, a zoo without a permit on farmland, now hosts 250 animals representing 30 species—including 2 Siberian tigers. The owner, Anton Cutjar, claims he is helping to conserve the legendary species, and improving the quality of life of people with mental and physical disability via contact with captive animals. Cutjar hopes to obtain the administrative papers for his enterprise by highlighting these 2 biological and humanist arguments.⁶²



ONCILLA , CLOUDED LEOPARD, SNOW LEOPARD, BENGAL LEOPARD CAT AND OCELOT

AMERICA

February 1, 2016

Pratânia, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil



The rather wild cat was “found” in the wild. It was an oncilla (*Leopardus tigrinus*, Appendix I). It was seized in a home where it was given milk to domesticate it. A fine of 5000 real (\$ 1500 US).⁶³

ASIA

February 16, 2016

Birpara, Alipurduar district, State of West Bengal, India



Seizure of a clouded leopard pelt (*Neofelis nebulosa*, Appendix I). It was bought with the head in Bhutan for Rs. 10 lakh (\$ 14,560 US), and should be sold in Nepal again for Rs. 13 lakh (\$ 18,928 US). Two men on a motorcycle were arrested. One was from Bhutan. The other one was from Darjeeling. Three accomplices in a car managed to escape.⁶⁴



Neofelis nebulosa

February 19, 2016

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam



It was worth \$ 135 US on the web. It should be released.⁶⁵

March 11, 2016

Darchula District, Far-Western Development Region, Nepal

Seizure of the entire skeleton and pelt of a snow leopard (*Panthera uncia*, Appendix I), poached in Kalju Forest. Two arrests.⁶⁶



March 18, 2016

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Rescue of a baby Bengal leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II) by the Ho Chi Minh City Environmental Police. He was to be sold online.⁶⁷

ONGILLA ... - FOLLOWED

March 30, 2016

Sa Pa, Lào Cai Province, Vietnam

The fates of the 2 little leopard cats were very different. One of them was found dead; the other one was extricated from the restaurant in time.⁶⁸

EUROPE

REPEATED OFFENSE

January 25, 2016

London, England, United Kingdom



Amanda Mason, an Oxfordshire resident, was sentenced to pay a fine of £ 1385 (\$ 2000 US) and £ 120 (\$ 170 US) in legal fees for selling ocelot fur cushions (*Leopardus pardalis*, Appendix I). In December 2014, during Horse Show Olympia, she was interrogated on similar charges and was called to order.⁶⁹

VARIOUS SPECIES FELINES

AFRICA

REPEATED OFFENCE

FAMILY AFFAIRS

January 29, 2016

Douala, Littoral Region, Cameroon

Arrest of 2 brothers 21 and 24 years old, law students, and their 30-year-old cousin, who is an accountant.

They tried to strike an agreement online with a woman claiming that she lived in Uzbekistan, for the export of 2 lion cubs and 2 cheetah cubs (*Acinonyx jubatus*, Appendix I). They made forged CITES permits. It was not proven that the so-called wild animal export company based in Douala had the 4 young felines available.⁷⁰

ASIA

January 25, 2016

Dombivli, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure of a leopard skin and 7 tiger claws. According to the police, the estimated value of the skin is Rs. 7 lakh (\$ 10,200 US), and the estimated value of the claws is Rs. 0.73 lakh (\$ 1070 US). Arrest of 4 professional hunters, 22 to 67 years old.⁷¹

EUROPE

February 16, 2016

National Museum of Natural History, Region of Ile-de-France, France

The hunting trophies were in a house on sale. They were imported without a CITES permit from 1981 to 1991 from Tanzania, Botswana, Zimbabwe and unknown countries. The customs director has just returned them to the director of the museum. "Customs considers that it is its duty to entrust stuffed animals to organizations that are able to give them a second life."⁷²



According to the customs, to be stuffed is to be alive.

AMERICA

March 2016

United States of America

The second life of stuffed animals.

"The art" of taxidermy is spreading to robotics, and could combat poaching, after it has benefited a lot from it. Stuffed deer, bears, and wolves that have been dead for a long time are equipped with remote-controlled mechanical organs that trigger basic movements of the head, paws, and tail.

This new type of decoy is placed in the forest, during the non-hunting season and in unauthorized hunting locations. These decoys attract poachers who are caught in the act by cameras and observers posted nearby.

The poacher traps were developed by Custom Robotic Wildlife in Wisconsin, and trials on them are conducted in Maryland.⁷³



Bears

AMERICA

January 13, 2016 Grand Rapids, State of Michigan, United States of America

Three men of Vietnamese origin were each sentenced to 5 days in prison and to pay a fine of \$ 2425 US, and legal fees, for trafficking parts of American black bears (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II), a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), and a dozen walleyes (*Sander vitreus*). Over the course of the investigation, undercover agents from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sold them 52 gall bladders and 22 bear paws, an adult bear, and one bear cub - all frozen. The threesome was liable to 90 days in prison.¹



January 28, 2016 Tiraque, Cochabamba Department, Bolivia

The spectacled bear (*Tremarctos ornatus*, Appendix I) was attacked and captured by villagers, and is in very poor condition. He is in intensive care at the El Alto zoological gardens.²



February 23, 2016 Pisba, Boyacá Department, Peru

A spectacled bear (*Tremarctos ornatus*, Appendix I) was poached. Four people were arrested.³

February 26, 2016 Newark, State of New Jersey, United States of America

Three-year probation and fine of \$ 5000 US for poaching and the illegal transport of the remains of an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) from the State of New Jersey to the State of New York. He must also pay the Woodlands Wildlife Refuge (in New Jersey) \$ 1250 US.

Mr. Kaszycki killed a 220 kg bear from the top of a tree with a bow and arrow, in the Newfoundland community (in New Jersey), where there was a bear hunting ban. He transported the carcass a few kilometers from there, into a forest of the State of New York, where hunting is authorized under certain conditions. He then declared the bear dead on the official register of the State of New York. To strengthen his version of what happened, he left



guts and other traces of the bear on the scene, at the foot of a tree. He entrusted the skin and skull of the bear to a taxidermist from Pennsylvania, to turn them into trophies. The decision specifies that trophies must be returned to the Woodlands refuge. Kaszycki must also write an article on his criminal record for the gazette of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service of New Jersey.⁴



REPEATED OFFENSE End of February 2016 State of Wisconsin, United States of America

Court appearance of Terry Schmit, the Milwaukee county sheriff's deputy, for the illegal importation of an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) in 2013. He pleaded guilty. His fellow hunter is also accused of illegally importing wolf trophies in 2012 and 2013, which were supposedly gifts from a Canadian fur trapper friend. The 2 men had already been sentenced to pay \$ 11,000 US in joint fines in Ontario, and are prohibited from hunting in Canada for 15 years. The 2 men are awaiting trial in the United States and have already accepted to give up all forms of hunting, fishing, and trapping in North America until 2021. After working for 19 years, the sheriff's deputy now has been relegated to administrative tasks for not reporting to his superiors that he was under a federal investigation.⁵

ASIA

January 16, 2016 Kinabatangan, State of Sabah, Malaysia

The Swedish couple was on a nature cruise on the river, during their visit to Malaysia. They spotted the cadaver of a Malayan sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I) cut in half, with its paws amputated.⁶

January 21, 2016 Baoshan, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Myanmar.

Seizure of 16 gall bladders of a bear (*Pythonidae* spp., Appendix I or II). One arrest. The truck and the driver are Burmese.⁷



January 28, 2016
Manzhouli, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China. Border with Russia.

Seizure of 3 bear gall bladders, 5 claws, and 3 teeth (*Ursus* spp., Appendix I or II) hidden in chewing gum boxes in the suitcases of 2 Chinese travelers.⁸



January 31, 2016
Bolunda, State of Maharashtra, India

Two sloth bears (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I) and one nilgai (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*, Appendix III) were poached. The carcasses were found weighed down with large stones in a well. They had been there for 4 or 5 days already. The bears were mutilated. Their liver, spleen, and penis were removed. According to superstition, bear penis-based treatment is a cure for infertility. Local forest officials report that it is customary to use the liver and other bear by-products to make good luck bracelets.⁹

February 27, 2016
Laos Wildlife Rescue Center, Vientiane Province, Laos

A 2-year-old Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) was voluntarily returned. His master illegally bought it when he was 2 months old.¹⁰

Beginning of March 2016
Thailand

Handing over of a Malayan sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I) less than 6 months old. The WFFT Rescue Center is taking good care of it.¹¹



March 17, 2016
Na Ngiu, Son La Province, Vietnam

An adult Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) who was abused was rescued under rough conditions. The bear is now safe in Hanoi and has calmed down.¹²



EUROPE

January 12, 2016
Zabaykalsk, Zabaykalsky Krai, Russia. Border with China.

Seizure of 25 brown bear paws (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) frozen by men from the FSB, under a wood loaded wagon that was about to enter China. The loot was sent to the local customs office.¹³

End of January 2016
Motyginisky District, Krasnoyarsk Krai, Russia
He was wintering. They were cutting wood in the forest, with a gun. They killed the brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) to extract its gall bladder and cut its paws. The scene of the crime is 1000 km from China.¹⁴

February 4, 2016
Birobidzhan, Jewish Autonomous Oblast, Russia. Border with China.

Seizure of 146 bear paws (*Ursus* spp., Appendix I or II) and 400 kg of jade in a heavy truck with a Chinese license plate. The boxes of bear paws and semiprecious stones were stuck between the wooden loads.¹⁵



February 5, 2016
Yakutsk Airport, Sakha Republic, Russia
Seizure of 11 brown bear paws (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II), weighing 9.5 kg in all. A Chinese citizen was arrested. The airport serves the cities of Beijing and Harbin Taiping in China.¹⁶

February 2016

1 - Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Northwestern Federal District, Russia



The threesome was convicted of trafficking the skin of a polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*, Appendix II), and was granted amnesty thanks to the 70th commemoration of the Great Patriotic War of 1945.

2 - Novy Urengoy, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Russia

Seizure of the pelt of a polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*, Appendix II), worth an estimated 600,000 rubles (\$ 8000 US).¹⁷

To date, no one has gone to prison in Russia for poaching polar bears or trafficking their pelts. The heaviest sentence was 200 hours of community service. However, the Penal Code stipulates 3 years in prison and a fine of one million rubles (\$ 13,000

US) for these crimes. The pelt of a polar bear sells for an average of 1.5 million rubles, or \$ 20,000 US, in Russia and Europe. The demand is increasing, according to the WWF Russia assessment. 53 ads on the web in 2015, as opposed to 38 in the 2013-2014 period.

Mid-February 2016

Blagoveshchensk, Amur Oblast, Russia. Border with China.

Seizure of 7 claws (64.42 g) of bears (*Ursidae* spp., Appendix I or II) in the cabin luggage of a Chinese citizen, thanks to a sniffer dog.¹⁸

March 29, 2016

Poltavka, Primorsky Krai, Russia. Border with China.

Seizure of 9 bear paws (*Ursidae* spp., Appendix I or II) (12.3 kg) in a car heading to China.¹⁹



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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*.

**“On the Trail” n°12
The value of horn on the black market,
according to media or official sources**

Continent	Pays	US\$/kg	Réf.
Africa	Namibia	5043	44 bis

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

January 11, 2016

Mombasa, Mombasa County, Kenya

The 2 men in illegal possession of 1.4 kg of horn will not be released. They were arrested on December 27, 2015 (cf. “On the Trail” n° 11, p.56). The examination of their cellphones suggests connections with drug trafficking and terrorist funding.¹

January 25, 2016

Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Kenya

Seizure of rhinoceros horn bracelets worth an estimated 80,000 shillings (\$ 780 US) and a necklace with a lion tooth worth an estimated 20,000 shillings (\$ 200 US). Arrest of 2 Vietnamese passengers and one Chinese passenger. They came from Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Destination: China via Nairobi.²

February 5, 2016

Maasai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya. Border with Tanzania

A 15- to 20-year old black rhinoceros was poached. Before it was killed and stripped of its horns, the peaceful pachyderm had gone across the informal border between Kenya and Tanzania. It left its traces in the tall grasses of Sand River.³



© Jorge Aguilár

Laikipia County, Kenya

- February 23, 2016. Ol Pejeta Conservancy.

She was 12 months pregnant. The gestation lasts 22 months. A little 2-year-old rhinoceros was following her. This did not stop the discreet poachers from targeting her with a poisoned arrow. The 2 horns of the female black rhinoceros were found in the home of one of the 5 suspects. Their estimated worth on the local black market is \$ 60,000 US.

- March 1 and 7, 2016. Nanyuki. Until further notice, the gang is behind bars. The lawyer recalled that release on financial bond is a constitutional right. The prosecutor is of a different opinion. He considers that if the suspects are released, they could continue their activities, disturb the investigation, and evade legal summons.⁴



MOZAMBIQUE

March 11, 2016

International airport of Maputo, Mozambique

Seizure by the police and customs of 76.6 kg of rhino horns and 6 kg of claws and teeth of lion (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II) in 2 suitcases bound for Kenya. The police director considers that “the 25 rhinos from Mozambique are under protection 24/24” and infers that the stock comes from poaching in the Kruger Park. The owner of the suitcases was not identified. A big channel is on operation, it lost \$ 4.6 million US there.⁵

March 25, 2016

Massingir district, Gaza Province, Mozambique

Spectacular seizure of 2 horns, 9.5 kg and 2.4 kg, aboard a bus to Maputo. Two arrests. Chivambo, 26, says he is unemployed and poacher. He was carrying the equivalent of one million dollars in his suitcase. Mongue, 19, is a bus ticket controller.⁶

ZAMBIA

February 10, 2016

Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park, Southern Province, Zambia

Daring rescue of a female whose two back legs were entangled in the steel wires of a trap. She pulled it along for almost two days. It had already happened to her 2 years ago.⁷



ZIMBABWE

January 5, 2016

Matobo National Park, Matabeleland South Province, Zimbabwe

The 4 men, including the brother of the MDC-T (Movement for Democratic Change) general secretary and a female deputy from the same movement were arrested in Matobo National Park. They were tracking a female rhinoceros. Apparently, a gun was spotted in their vehicle. Park rangers arrested them. They claimed they were going a bit farther to purchase a used car. The local judge exculpated them due to lack of evidence.⁸

January 19, 2016

Masvingo, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe

Appearance of Munashe Mudenge Murwira, secret service agent, for poaching 4 rhinoceros in 2014 and 2015 in organized gang (see "On the Trail" n 11 p.57). The horns were allegedly sold to middle-men in Zambia.

He was released on bail equivalent to a hundred dollars.⁹ (Modified on July 25, 2017)



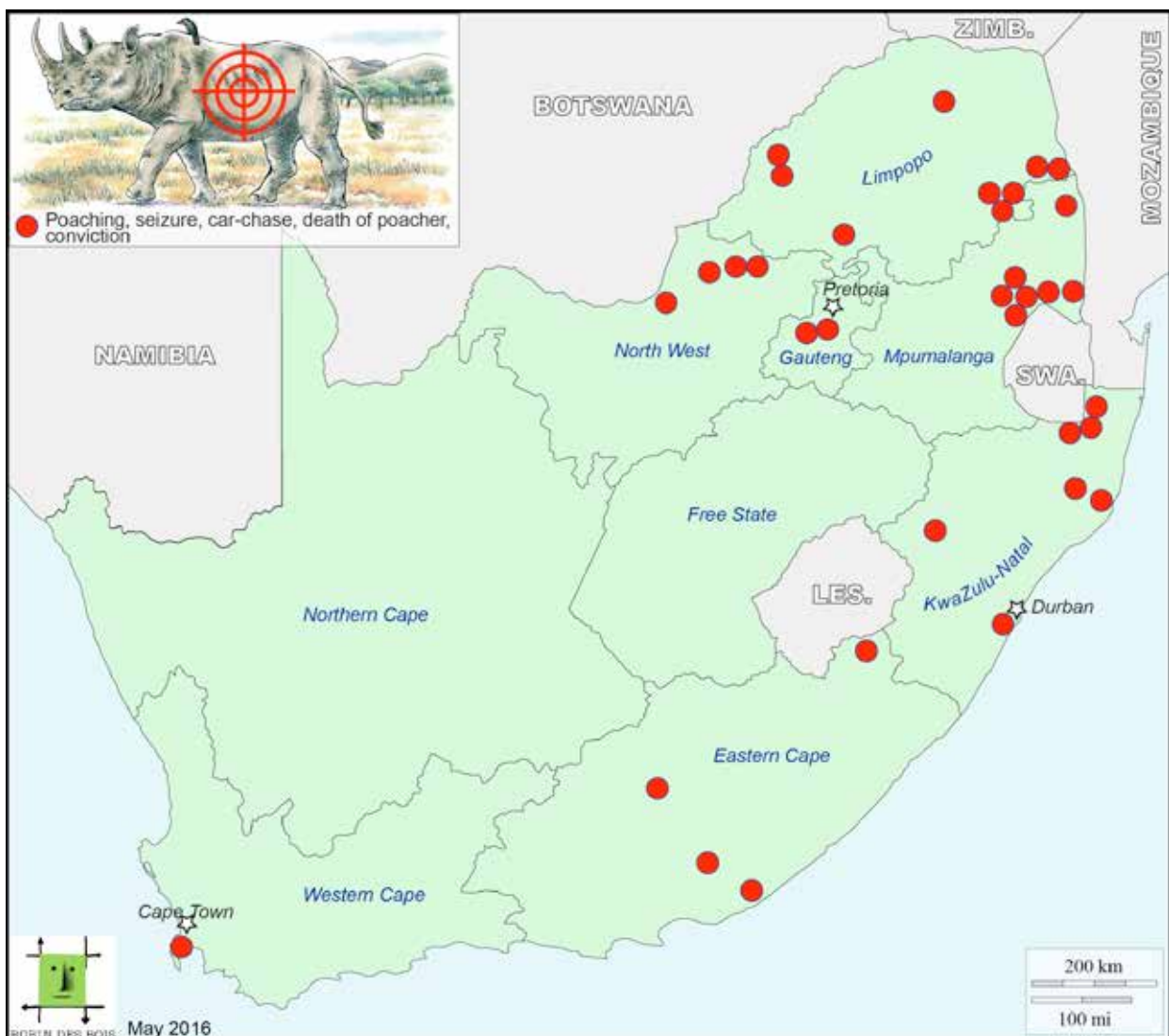
March 27, 2016

Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe

Légende The 2 cow horns were presented as rhinoceros horns.¹⁰



SOUTHERN AFRICA



Rhinos under pressure in South Africa

SOUTH AFRICA

January 1 and 28, 2016

Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

1 – January 1. eZulu Game Reserve. A rhinoceros was poached. This spectacular start to the year was announced by the coordinator of Indalo, which combines a dozen hunting reserves in the province. The objective is to combat poaching and encourage responsible and ecological wildlife management. The 10 hunting reserves cover approximately 100,000 ha. The eZulu reserve promotional brochure says that the reserve offers the best and most exciting hunting safari in a malaria-free region.

2 – January 28. Oceana Beach and Wildlife Reserve. A 15-year-old female was shot dead and was found in some bushes. As a preventive measure, all the rhinoceroses of the reserve had been dehorned a year ago. In the best case for the poachers, they were able to grab the stump of a horn.¹¹

January 13, 2016

Kruger National Park, South Africa

The rangers were set on the trail of 2 gunmen by tourists. A helicopter overflight spotted them. The poachers were identified on the ground and did not respond to the summons. A firefight ensued, the 2 poachers were killed, a gun of large caliber was seized. The press service of the Park qualifies it as a successful operation but no rhino horn was found on site.¹²



Mid-January 2016

Kruger Park, Marloth Park Conservancy, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa

The first shots were heard at around 2 in the morning. They were fired by poachers and targeted rhinoceroses. The rangers surrounded the zone and waited. The clash happened at dawn. One poacher was killed, 2 were wounded, and another one fled. The latter was arrested on site. He was unarmed. The rhinoceros has not been confirmed dead. The tourists staying at Marloth Nature Reserve, and squatters in a camp witnessed the scene. There was also a helicopter that fled over with the head ranger of South Kruger on board. The enclosure of the park and Crocodile River separated the bystanders from the rangers and poachers. One of the poachers worked in the farm next door. The villages, farms, and streets are filled with people who don't do anything in the daytime. Or they do odd jobs and take the poaching plunge at night. If the harvest is good, they will be able to sell the goods. Poaching in this South African park is not just about Mozambicans.¹³



Mid-January 2016

Somkhanda Game Reserve, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

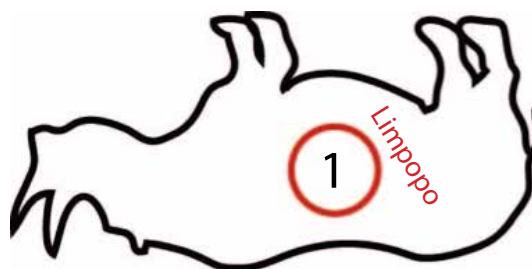
Early in the morning, the NGO Wildlife Act Fund drove out the poachers in action. They came to shoot a rhino. The rhino was wounded and received



care. It is safe now.¹⁴

Mid-January 2016

Hoedspruit surroundings, Limpopo Province, South Africa



-1.¹⁵

January 18, 2016 Hoedspruit, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Two female rhinoceroses were put to sleep with M99 injections. The elder one was pregnant and was fatally wounded after her horns were pulled off. The younger survived the mutilation. She was transferred to a specialized treatment center.¹⁶

OPERATION RINGLEADER

January 19, 2016

Roodepoort, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Release on bail was refused for 4 of the 12 traffickers and poachers arrested at the end of 2015 (cf. "On the Trail" n° 11 p. 59). Activists for Animals Africa

(AAA) attended the trial. 3 police officers mixed up in the business have already been released on bail.¹⁷

January 19, 2016

Nylstroom, Limpopo Province, South Africa

This rhino was brave. He had already survived 2 ambushes. Unfortunately, he did not survive the 3rd attempt.¹⁸



© Palala Rhino Sanctuary

January 20, 2016

Nelspruit, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

The trial of "Big Joe" Nyalunga and his 10 co-accused has been delayed again (cf. "On the Trail" n° 6, p. 62 and n° 9, p. 66). He was arrested in March 2012 with 4 horns and a large quantity of dagga (marijuana). His trial is scheduled for July 7. He and his 4 South African accomplices were released on bail. Four Mozambican accomplices are in prison. Only one of them has been released on bail. A member of the gang, the Vietnamese Ngoc Cuong Pham, was already sentenced to 5 years in prison without remission ("On the Trail" n° 7, p. 62). "Big Joe" is a former policeman turned rhinoman.¹⁹

January 22, 2016

Hoedspruit, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Late at night on Friday, a mother and her little one were killed. The horn of the little one, who was about one year old, was not stolen.²⁰



January 25 and March 29, 2016

Nelspruit, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

New court appearances for poaching, of Leonard Buti Mashego, a former army soldier, and of Michael Sithole, his co-accused (cf. "On the Trail" n°10, p. 48). The investigation accuses them of killing 6 rhinoceroses between June and September 2010. One of them was armed to the teeth and was surveying the Bristol section in Kruger Park, "in search of lost cattle". The other one was "looking for medicinal herbs" in the middle of the night. The public prosecutor considers that the photographic evidence, fingerprints, knives, and horns found near them when they were arrested are damning, and leave no room for doubt about their guilt. The trial is scheduled for May. The 2 individuals have been released on bail.²¹

January 26, 2016

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Seizure of a horn and arrest of a 41-year-old man in his home in the Lotus River neighborhood. The



© SA Police Services

horn was concealed in a blue plastic bag, in a closet. Two cell phones were also seized.²²

January 2016

Pilanesberg National Park, North Western Province, South Africa

Four dead including a female with many fractures who did not survive and 3 wounded.²³

January 28, 2016

Nelspruit, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Court appearance of Simon Nogmane, interrogated on September 2, 2011 in Kruger Park. He was wounded in a shoot-out with the rangers. Two of his underlings fled the scene. A detection dog helped to find a bag with 2 major pieces of evidence: the pair of horns. The carcass was found by a helicopter later.²⁴



© Maluti Police

End of January 2016

Maluti, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. Border of Lesotho

The man fled when the border police came toward him. He left the horn on-site, in a sports

bag.²⁵



February 5, 2016

Ingwavuma, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Two foreigners, a Zimbabwean and a Mozambican, were sentenced to 26 years in prison. Ten years for rhinoceros poaching, 10 years for illegal possession of weapons, and 6 years for illegal possession of ammunition. They had already been arrested last July in Tembe Park in northern Zululand.²⁶

February 6, 2016

Steenbokpan, Limpopo Province, South Africa



© Die Spoorshyfers

Arrest of 2 armed poachers.²⁷

February 9, 2016

Berg-en-dal, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

A female was poached 10 m from the road. The little one disappeared.²⁸

February 10, 2016

Jozini, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

An eventful car chase between 3 private reserves in Zululand. Arrest of 4 suspected poachers released on bail.²⁹

February 10, 2016
Mafikeng Game Reserve, Province of North West, South Africa

The body of the rhinoceros could be seen from the road.³⁰

Mid-February and March 18, 2016
Tam Safaris Game Reserve, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

The province is distraught. Poaching is spreading to the west of Kruger. Five rhinoceroses since the beginning of the year. Tam Safaris is offering 400,000 rand (\$ 28,000 US) to anyone who will help arrest the murderers. The mother and a young 4-year-old pregnant female were dehorned. A 9-month-old survivor was found on the scene of the crime.³¹

February 22, 2016
Umbilo, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

There are 4 of them. They would be made of wood. He said he bought them for 3500 rand (\$ 234 US) at a market. The valuations are pending. For the moment, they are considered to be worth R 588,000 (\$ 39,300 US). He was released on bail of 5000 R.³²



February 25, 2016
Matlabas, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Arrest of 2 suspects. A 3rd suspect had fatal wounds. They were spotted in Marakele National Park by rangers and members of the local community, and then targeted by Heritage Protection Group, a group of professionals dedicated to combating



poaching and crime.³³

February 25, 2016
Mbombela, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Beaten with baseball bats and sjamboks, the business man was attacked in his home and was forced to open the safe. Sjamboks were straps traditionally made of hippopotamus or rhinoceros hide. They are now made of plastic. There were 6 horns and weapons inside.³⁴

End of February 2016
Pilanesberg National Park, North Western Province, South Africa

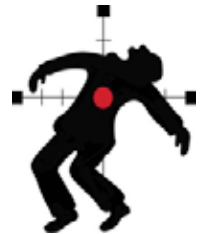
Poaching of two males. An adult and a young of 2 years. Treated urgently. Help arrived on the scene



just after the shooting.³⁵
 A bullet near the eye

March 6, 2016
Houtboschrand section, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

One ranger wounded. One poacher killed. Two others on the run. Hotline: 013 735 0197.³⁶



March 8, 2016
Cyrlidene, Johannesburg suburbs, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Three horns and a piece of ivory seized in a hotel.³⁷

March 8, 2016
Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Shots were fired in the night. The rangers rushed to the scene. The 2 suspects threw down a bag while they were escaping. There was a horn in the bag. In the morning, the poacher hunt continued. A white Toyota bakkie was intercepted. The 2 occupants were wounded. A 2nd horn and guns were found.³⁸



- 31 since the beginning of the year

March 9 and 22, 2016

Mtubatuba, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Justice on the line in KwaZulu-Natal.

Is the pair Ngcobo, judge, and Z.W. Ngwenya, lawyer, tipping the scales of justice to the wrong side? The journalist Jamie Joseph has taken stock of the judicial records of the province. It is clear.

In December 2013, poachers defended by Ngwenya who appeared before Ngcobo at Hluhluwe Court got away with a small fine.

In June 2014, 3 more men were arrested for poaching as part of an organized gang. One of them, Ngubane, pleaded guilty. Ngwenya defended him. He was released on bail and sentenced to a trivial fine. His 2 accomplices, Sikali and Mdule, pleaded not guilty. As of March 7, 2016, they were still in prison, and were denied release on bail. Ngwenya did not defend them. They were referred to a judge other than Ngcobo.

In August 2014, 4 men were arrested inside a Zululand reserve, and indicted for hunting rhinoceroses as part of an organized gang. Ngwenya defended two of them, Siphon Hlope and Zakhele Joko Khumalo. They pleaded guilty. They appeared in front of Ngcobo in Mtubatuba Court. They were sentenced to pay fines with deferred and adjusted payment. The 2 others pleaded not guilty. They appeared in another court, with a different judge, not Ngcobo. They were sentenced to 8 years in prison. The payment of a fine could not substitute for imprisonment.

In December 2014, when Gwala, a big name in horn trafficking, appeared before Ngcobo, after a rough arrest, he was released on a trivial bail of 10,000 rands (\$ 600 US). As a bonus, Ngcobo ordered the adjournment of the seizure of Gwala's 5 luxury cars. Gwala stated that his profession was unemployed. Ngwenya is Gwala's defense attorney. This attorney protects many horn traffickers from the province of KwaZulu-Natal. There is hardly any doubt that Gwala is guilty. He bought horns from undercover secret service agents, five times.

In January 2015, the affair of the police officer Christopher Gumbi is probably the best example of the efficiency of the Ngcobo-Ngwenya twosome. They were involved in horn trafficking on board a police vehicle, and accused of armed robbery, illegal possession of horns, and defeating the ends of justice. Gumbi was released on bail of \$ 32 US, and was acquitted of all the charges in January 2016. The police made up the story, according to the deliberation. At the time, the police spokesperson condemned the infiltration of the legal system by poaching organizations (cf. "On the Trail" n° 8 p.

58).³⁹

GANG

March 11, 2016

Louis Trichardt, Vhembe District, Limpopo Province, South Africa



Six people, the gunman, his assistants, the transporters, and the seller received prison sentences running from 10 to 15 years for rhinoceros poaching in Mapungubwe National Park in 2014. (cf. « On the Trail » n° 11, p. 57).⁴⁰

March 11, 2016

Ladysmith, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa



The Bonnie and Bonnie of poaching (cf. "On the Trail" n° 3 p. 49) have been given the benefit of some leniency. Two years in prison without remission each. A social worker was designated to take care of their children.⁴¹

March 25, 2016

Sibuya Game Reserve, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa



Three rhinoceroses were poached. Two young orphans are in danger. Apparently, they were recovered and transferred to a safe place.⁴²



After several hours of wandering about and death pangs, the only solution was to kill it.

March 28, 2016

Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Next to Satara Camp. The rangers confirm that the horn most certainly left Mozambique. The border is very close, and protected by an iron wire.⁴³

NAMIBIA



January – February 2016

Namibia

34 rhinoceros poached in the first 2 months of the year. 29 carcasses have been found in the Etosha National Park and around, 5 in the Palmwag region and the Klip River. The air and land patrol have joined forces to count the violent deaths. The rate is accelerating. Last year (2015), the final toll was 80. It was 2 in 2012. As promised, the minister Pohamba Shifeta is leaving no stone unturned. He holds that the large Etosha Park (22,275 km²) is home to a lot of squatters and activities that have nothing to do with the protection of ecosystems, trafficking of drugs and alcohol, gambling and breeding animals. There would be number of spies in the Park that give poachers the information on the movements of pachyderms and other high-value animals.

One bright spot in this dark overview. Elephants are less threatened. No known poaching since the beginning of the year. The origin of 3 tusks that a Zambian citizen had in his possession in January 2016 near Kongola remains unknown.⁴⁴

February 1st, 2016

Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia

Seizure of 1.15 kg of rhino horn (29 pieces) worth an estimated 91,000 Namibian dollars (\$ 5800 US) and of 79.2 kg of abalone (Haliotis genus). Cf. p. 4 of this issue. ^{44 bis}

REPEATED OFFENSE

March 11 and 12, 2016

Windhoek, Khomas Region and Opuwo, Kunene Region, Namibia

Four of them are in the dock for poaching and possessing rhinoceros horns. Two of them were released on bail for rhinoceros poaching and rape. They will be taken to the scene of the crime in Etosha Park.⁴⁵



March 11 to 15, 2016

Omaruru, Région d'Erongo, Namibie

Légende Fear, and then satisfaction for the district watch committee. Two poaching attempts failed due to the quick action of the lookout and the veterinarian. The 2 rhinoceroses fled after poachers attacked them. They were found in another area, cared for on the spot, and pulled through. The police heard the 4 suspects. Omaruru District Watch was created one year ago.⁴⁶



OMARURU DISTRICT WATCH

"with the community for the community"

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 13, 2016

Minneapolis, State of Minnesota, United States of America

Yiwei Zheng aka Steve Zheng is a philosopher in the daytime and a mafioso at night. This professor at St. Cloud State University in Minnesota (cf. "On the Trail" n°8, p. 68) pleaded guilty for carved ivory trafficking and the export of horns in breach of the Lacey Act of 1900, the first federal law for wildlife protection. The value of all the animal parts, offered for sale, sold, and exported to China by the professor is \$ 1,500,000 US. The decision will be rendered in May.⁴⁷

January 13, 2016

Waco, Texas State, United States of America

Conviction of Patrick Sheridan to 12 months in prison for rhino horn trafficking in organized gang. Patrick Sheridan is a Rathkeale Rovers member (cf. "On the Trail" n°1 p. 22, n°2 p. 48, 49, 50, 52, n°4 p. 67, p. 69-70, n°5 p. 76, n°7 p. 75, n°8 p. 66, n°9 p. 69, n°10 p. 49). The US justice was actively looking for him. He was arrested in the United Kingdom, as he was disembarking a ferry coming from Ireland. He was then extradited. With several accomplices, he used underhanded and illegal methods to buy 2 black rhinoceros horns in Texas, and had transported them to the State of New York. One of his associates from Rathkeale Rovers had more luck in France. The border police arrested him in the port of Cherbourg as he was disembarking a ferry from Ireland. He was arrested and put under house arrest as he awaited the extradition request from the Texas judicial system. The Court of Appeal of Caen, in the department of Calvados, considered this request was valid despite the support of a weeping family. He pretends have come to France for a pilgrimage to Lourdes, and to cure his serious psychological breakdown. The Paris Court of Cassation then canceled the decision of the court of Appeal of Caen. John Slattery, also known as John Flynn, is free. He has family in France, in a campsite north of Paris. Wildlife traffickers, come take refuge in France! You will receive the best welcome in France. However, John could not attend the trial of his friends and parents in London. To be continued in the next issue.^{48/49}



INDIA

**12, 24 and January 27, 2016
Kaziranga National Park,
Assam, India**

1-Sunday night. Poaching of an adult female rhino, shot dead (AK-47). The 12 men left with horn, skin fragments and hoofs. They arrived in the park by boat on the Brahmaputra.



2-Sunday to 2am. Burapahar sector. Second rhino poached in 2 weeks. 30 empty cartridges of automatic weapons are found on the spot near the body. Disappearance of the horn.

3-Wednesday, 1 am. Burapahar sector. A third one killed by firearms.

The officer in charge of the sector has been mutated. Last months the majority of rhino poaching occurred on the Burapahar side. The guards are still under-equipped and understaffed. Since 2012 nearly 150 rhinos were killed by bullets in the Park.⁵⁰

**February 5, 2016
Orang National Park, State of
Assam, India**

Two poachers died. Their guns were recovered. Three accomplices vanished into the mist.⁵¹



.303 British Jungle Carbine

**Kaziranga National Park,
State of Assam, India**

February 9, 2016. Poaching of one female.

March 22, 2016. Poaching of one female. A .303 rifle and 18 cartridges were found at the scene.⁵²



- 4 in the Park since the beginning of the year.

February 14, 2016

**Natun Para, Jalpaiguri, State of West Bengal,
India**

Sattar Mia, the thinking man of the gang operating in Jaldapara National Park, didn't think enough. He didn't realize that the potential buyers were real police officers.⁵³

February 26, 2016

**Kaziranga National Park, State
of Assam, India**

Another confrontation between the guards riding on elephants and poachers. Two deaths in the camp of the poachers. Three slipped by the Brahmaputra.⁵⁴



NEPAL

January 17, 2016

Nepal

Mr. Agni Sapkota, the Minister for Forest and Soil Conservation, returned from a trip to China with strings attached. He promised his Chinese counterpart who had invited him to deliver 2 rhino couples. The Chinese request must however be endorsed by the Prime Minister of Nepal. In the protocol trip, both countries are committed to a concerted control of wildlife trafficking on border roads. China plans to contribute financially and technically to the opening of a laboratory in Nepal specialized in the investigation of wildlife trafficking and participating in the creation of a wildlife sanctuary near Kathmandu. In a more or less distant past, Nepal has already offered a rhinoceros or a couple in Bangladesh, Pakistan, the United States of America, Germany. The latest donation was to Austria in 2006.⁵⁵

From 1 to 5 March 2016

**Chitwan National Park, Development of Central
Region, Nepal**

Five rhinos including 2 males and 3 females were transferred in Bardia National Park, in the central Region. The operation is costing more than 8 million rupees (\$ 75,800 US) and mobilized several elephants in the Chitwan Park, about 20 rangers and a truck.

The program provides for the transfer of 30 specimens in 3 years including 25 females. The transfer is disputed by NGOs. They emphasize that the Bardia National Park is exposed to poaching and that the removal of 83 individuals in 1985 have not borne fruit. It remains now only 29. According to NGOs, rhinos decline in Bardia and thrive in Chitwan. The 2 parks are separated by 200 km. The Conservatives biological heritage temporise : « After the first phase of relocation, we will study whether Bardiya is suitable for rhinos ».⁵⁶

OCEANIA

March 29, 2016

Australia

Subject to obtaining CITES permits and financing available, the "Australian Rhino Project" will begin this year, will last 4 years and involves 80 white rhinos. \$ 75,000 rhino per head for transport between South Africa and Australia, 15 flying hours. In May, the first 6 white rhinos were quarantined in Johannesburg. Upon arrival in August in Australia, new quarantine in the Dublo zoo. After that, they would be welcomed in a zoo near Adelaide. The developer wants to save the rhinos from extinction.⁵⁷

Rhinos and Elephants

AFRICA

KENYA

January 7, 2016

Ruiru and Githurai, Kiambu County, Kenya

A man, Fredrick James Muchina, was killed in his car. He was shot 6 times as he was going home. Since then, the rumor has spread. He was linked to a poaching operation in 2013. He apparently has something to do with the suspension of 32 KWS officers, and about a hundred elephants killed in Tsavo Park, with a major operation at Solio Ranch. He went into exile in South Africa for some time, to stay safe. The KTN documentary *Poachers and Butchers* indicated that he was the one calling the shots in ivory and horn trafficking in Kenya. One truck driver told the national newspaper *The Standard* that Muchina wanted to hire him to transport ivory and horn cargo to Mombasa. He would have been paid \$ 5,000 US, but he turned down the offer. He thought this was too risky. There have been a few violent deaths that remain a mystery about James Muchina.

He ran 3 gas stations, a sawmill, and had a real estate business. In Gitumbi, his village, rumor has it that he had close ties with China. It's unsettling when everyone's talking about someone who is dead and buried.¹

March 22, 2016. Two months later, in the same county, a few kilometers from where the supposed poaching and trafficking kingpin was living, the police got a hold of 39 tusks in Thomas Ngata's home. 112 kg of ivory taken from old and young elephants. Value: 11 million shillings, or \$ 973 US per kilo. Ngata was Muchina's friend. Police found an invitation for his funeral, and a weighing machine in his home.²



March 30, 2016

Kenya

Return and destruction of illegal ivory and horns.

Another 21 days have been granted to everyone who is in illegal possession of ivory or rhinoceros horn, in any form whatsoever. The trophies and objects can be taken to the KWS headquarters in Nairobi and to the branches in Mombasa, Voi, Nyeri, Marsabit, Kitale, Nakuru, and Meru.

The government guarantees the impunity of donors. In Nairobi on April 30, the destruction of at least 105 t of illegal ivory and 1.5 t of rhinoceros horn is planned. There are already special safety measures that have been implemented to protect the stocks and prepare the transfer to the locations where they are destroyed afterwards.³

UGANDA

February 6, 2016

Entebbe, Central Region, Uganda

Five Vietnamese were sentenced to 3 years in prison, and to pay a fine of 10,000,000 Ugandan shillings (\$ 2950 US) for attempted smuggling of elephant ivory and rhinoceros horns, and for illegal possession of parts of protected species. They instigated an attempt to massively export ivory and horns (cf. "On the Trail" n° 11, p. 66).⁴



TANZANIA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

March 16, 2016

Serengeti District, Mara Region, Tanzania

Thomas Nchagwa, 29 years old, Abraham Nchagwa, 25 years old, and Nyageti Magasi, 50 years old, were sentenced to 30 years in prison each for poaching a black rhinoceros and elephants (cf. "On the Trail" n° 4, p. 62). Ten years for poaching, 10 years for possession of trophies of protected species, and 10 years for illegal possession of firearms. This last sentence may be replaced by the payment of a fine of 300,000 shillings (\$ 1394 US). No information on a possible confusion of sentences. The 50-year-old man says he has AIDS, and that his wife died of AIDS 17 years ago.⁵



CHINA

March 29, 2016
Fangchenggang, Autonomous Region of Guangxi, China

A man was sentenced to 10 years in prison and 50,000 yuan (\$ 7740 US) for the illegal transport of 2.2 kg of ivory, 690 g of rhinoceros horn and 190 g of lion teeth. He was arrested on March 16, 2015 in Fangchenggang. He is from Dongxing, a city that shares a border with Vietnam. The goods were valued at 260,000 yuan (\$ 40,130 US).⁶



INDIA

February 9, 2016
Station of Jaipur, Rajasthan State, India

Seizure of a horn and carved ivory tusks. Arrest of Sav Shankar, he had collected the horn in Mumbai and was to deliver it in Jaipur. He is an employee of Himalayan Export Company specialized in trading and export of furniture and antiques. The leader of the company, Anurag Tiwari, is on the run since the arrest of its employee. The police got hold of ivory in one of its stores and warehouses.⁷

INDONESIA

February 16, 2016

Indonesia

Soekarno-Hatta International Airport in Jakarta
 Two months of seizures presented by the Customs General Directory:

- Five tusk sections for a total weight of 109.15 kg estimated worth 3.27 billion Rp (\$ 246,795 US), i.e. \$ 2260 US/kg inside the luggage of a Chinese passenger coming from Abu Dhabi.
- 163 tusks and 2 rhino horns inside a Zambian traveler's suitcases.

The tusks and horns would be coming directly from Zambia via Hong Kong. They should be sent back to the country they are from.⁸



Elephants

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

“On the Trail” n°12 Black market raw ivory quotation from media or official sources

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Réf.
Africa	Kenya	973	2*
		1000	9
		974	13
		940	14
	Tanzania	1200	28
		540	29
		1 123	39
		1 370	39
		1 195	38
		2 144	30
	1500	31	
Uganda	2 067	25	
Asia	China	6 180	100
	Hong Kong/ China	1 300	101
	India	3 300	112
	Indonesia	2 260	8*
	Malaysia	2 545	121
	Thailand	2 540	195

* cf. chapter Rhinos and Elephants

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

January 3, 2016

Ranch Mgeno, Taita-Taveta County, Kenya

Due to the stench of its decomposing carcass a 25- to 30-year old female elephant was found speared to death. She was deprived of its tusks.¹



© AMF

January 5, 2016

Maasai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya

An elephant and her little one were rescued. The year was off to a good start for the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust. The elephant's back left paw was caught in a trap cut all the way into its bones. Its mother's back was hurt by a spear. The mother also received care. At nightfall, they managed to join their family, who was waiting for them nearby. The health of the baby elephant will be monitored.²



© The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust

Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi, Kenya



January 9, 2016. Seizure of 13 ivory items estimated Sh 60,000 (\$ 600 US). Arrest of Chen Chanxing.

January 11, 2016. Seizure of 3 ivory bracelets estimated Sh 102,000 (\$ 1020 US). Arrest of Chen Wei.

January 11, 2016. Seizure of 5 ivory bracelets estimated Sh 180,000 (\$ 1800 US). Arrest of Fengse Wang.

All 3 were sentenced to Sh 1 million (\$ 10,000 US) fine or 2 months in prison.

Coming from Ghana or Mozambique and going to Canton, they were in transit in Nairobi.

January 15, 2016. Seizure of a bracelet estimated Sh 50,000 (\$ 500 US). Arrest of Phung Van Long and Ngo Van Thana, Vietnamese citizens. They were sentenced to Sh 1.5 million (\$ 15,000 US) or a prison sentence.

By lack of payment of the fines, all offenders remained in prison.

These seizures are credited to the flair of the canine brigade recently deployed in the airport area.³

January 19, 2016

Mount Kenya, Nyeri County, Kenya

A carcass was found. Its tusks were gone. Nine farmers who were collecting firewood nearby say that KWS summoned and beat them up to obtain confessions and information.⁴

January 21, 22 and 23, 2016

Olarro Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

Elephant Aware, Mara Elephant Project, and Kenya Wildlife Service found 4 dead elephants, one after another. Three of them were tuskless, and 2 of them were young males.

Narok County, still ferocious county.⁵



End of January 2016

Kenya

Six months after the serial killing of 6 elephants (cf. "On the Trail" n° 10, p. 56) in Tsavo Park, one of the barbarians vanished into thin air, and now went back home with 20 kg on his rack. He was immediately arrested by the KWS and the NGO Big Life.⁶



From February 1 to 6, 2016

Naboisho Conservancy and Mara North Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

Seven elephants were found dead. No trace of wounds, the tusks were intact. The possibility that they were poisoned is being examined. It appears that intrusive farmers and wildlife on the defensive settled scores.⁷

The Revolutionist



From February 16 to March 5, 2016

Masalani, Garissa County, Kenya

Tired of borders, tired of war. Remembering the old days, Morgan, alias No border, about 35 years old has traveled alone from the delta of the Tana River in Kenya to the border with Somalia and beyond. Walking at night, hiding under the forest canopy shortly after daybreak, he traveled 220 km in 3 weeks. He stayed less than 24 hours in Somalia, perhaps disappointed not to have met a female available for mating, perhaps for other reasons.⁸

February 29, 2016

Kibera, Nairobi County, Kenya

They plead not guilty. Four men and one woman were caught red handed at Navias Donholm supermarket with purchases out of the ordinary: 25 kg of ivory. Listing price: \$ 1000 US per kilo.⁹

February 29, 2016

Nairobi, Nairobi County, Kenya

In big trouble. Four elite police officers from the Government Building Security unit were transporting 5 kg of ivory. Other members of the police and KWS officers arrested them at night, in 2 Toyota 4X4s belonging to the government. They were arrested in the parking lot of the shopping center in western Nairobi.¹⁰



End of February 2016

Kerio, Turkana County, Kenya

This orphan was wandering for several days, and perhaps for months, in the northern part of the country. Her mother had been poached. She is about one year old. Baby elephants need to be suckled for 2 to 3 years.¹¹



March 04, 2016

Meru, Meru County, Kenya

The prison sentences are heavier. The fines are 10 times the value of the seizures. But sometimes justice goes in the opposite direction as well. A 73-year-old man who was already released on bail, after trafficking 93 kg of raw ivory, was arrested again. He was caught in the act with 2 tusks, weighing 15 kg each. The court decided to release him again, for a bond equivalent to \$ 100,000 US. It thus went against the opinion of the prosecutor, who challenges the solvency of the repeat poaching offender, and the flight risk beforehand.¹²

Beginning of March 2016

Kirisia forest, Samburu County, Kenya

Midnight seizure of 8 pieces of tusks (15.4 kg) hidden in a bush. Value: 1.5 million shillings, or \$ 974 US/kg.¹³

March 29, 2016

Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi County, Kenya

Seizure of 18 pieces of raw ivory (64.12 kg) from Mozambique, heading for Thailand, worth \$ 64,000 US, or \$ 940 US/kg.¹⁴

March 30, 2016

Amboseli Ecosystem, Kajiado County, Kenya

Rescue of an elephant wounded by a spear on the top of its back right paw. Collaboration between Kenya Wildlife Service and the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust as part of the SKYVET program.¹⁵



January to March 2016

Mombasa, Mombasa County, Kenya

The role of Feisal is becoming clearer in the affair concerning the 2,152 kg of ivory seized in the Fuji Motors parking lot in the Tudor neighborhood in Mombasa on June 5, 2014 (cf. "On the Trail" n°5 p. 90, n°6 p. 81, n°7 p. 78 and 87, n° 8 p. 79, n° 10 p. 59). The man on the run and wanted by Interpol was arrested in a mosque in Dar es Salaam in December 2014. Witness accounts were provided under oath in the Mombasa Supreme Court, in the presence of KUAPO (Kenyans United Against Poaching) observers. They revealed that Feisal made several attempts to hire drivers to bring furniture and other domestic stuff to the Tudor neighborhood. Each time, the agreement fell through because the vehicles had open trailers. Feisal finally rented an appropriate vehicle from an acquaintance for 4 days. A police inspector confirmed this before the court of witness statements. The Fuji Motors parking log shows that a vehicle entered on May 31 and left on 3 June, and that there was a 9000 shilling receipt signed by Feisal. The truck that Feisal was driving was transporting 2152 kg of ivory.¹⁶

MALAWI

February 4, 2016

Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve, Central Region, Malawi

Liwonde National Park, Machinga District, Malawi

Large-scale project for 500 elephants, in addition to zebras, buffaloes (*Syncerus caffer*), impalas (*Aepyceros melampus*), and waterbucks (*Kobus ellipsiprymnus*). They will be transferred to an enclosed 170 km² area within Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve. Despite the poaching activities and widespread colonization, it is still an excellent bird reservoir, and a pocket of resistance for baboons and waterbucks. The sanctuary should be operational in June. 35 rangers are in the process of being hired and trained. The locations and human resources will be managed by African Parks, an international NGO founded in 2000. It was initially funded by private Dutch funds and the European Union. This NGO manages 10 parks covering 60,000 km² in all, as part of a long-term agreement with the governments of Chad, the Central African Republic, Malawi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Zambia.

The elephants will be transferred from Majete Reserve and Liwonde National Park, where they are too many of them. They have 400 to 500 km to cover. The transport modes are being examined.¹⁷

**February 5, 2016
Blantyre, Southern Region,
Malawi**



They were about to board a South African Airways flight for China. They were trying to fraudulently transport 6 kg of ivory. The ivory was painted black. The Chinese traveler was sentenced to pay a fine of \$ 295 US. This sentence was extremely light for such a serious offense.¹⁸

**March 14, 2016
Mzuzu, Northern Region, Malawi**

Destruction of 2.6 t of ivory that was seized in May 2013. (cf. "On the Trail" n° 1, p. 33, n° 2, p. 54 and n° 10, p. 56). There are 4 t of ivory left.¹⁹



UGANDA

**January 5, 2016
Kampala, Central Region, Uganda**

A bargain. Two tons on sales, The Kampala police was on the deal thanks to an anonymous phone call. An undercover team wanted to see samples before buying the whole. Traffickers arrived at the hotel rendez-vous with 2 tusks of 6 kg. Three fled.²⁰

**January 13, 2016
Ntinda, Central Region, Uganda**

Seizure of 69 kg of ivory and arrest of 4 traffickers. They were looking for someone to buy part of their loot. It seems that they had over 200 kg of ivory for sale. They are in custody at the Ntinda police station.²¹



**January 21, 2016
Kampala, Central Province, Uganda**

The anti-corruption special court has authorized the release on bail of 4 members of the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), Prosper Wasike, Moses Sikuku, chief ranger, John Lapeyo and Moses Olinga, armory clerks, arrested after 1340.65 kg of ivory disappeared from governmental stockpiles (see "On the Trail" n°7, p. 82). Bail was set at 2 million shillings (\$ 600 US) each.

They are accused of having not noticed in due time the "evaporation" of illegal ivory held in the UWA's secured storage under their responsibility. "Loss" of the ivory is so far unexplained. It would have been progressive. It was uncovered because of a thorough inspection. The suspects passports have been confiscated to reduce the risk of escape before their trial.²²

**February 23, 2016
Rubirizi District, Western Region, Uganda**

Arrest of a 38-year-old man for illegal possession and sale of 2 adult elephant tusks. The poaching was in Queen Elizabeth National Park.²³

**March 2, 2016
Karuma, Western Region, Uganda**

Three men were interrogated. They had a pair of tusks weighing 45 kg.

They claim that it was the unbearable odor going all the way to their home that put them on the elephant cadaver track. They also claim that they gathered the tusks just as they would gather wood. The elephant was ancient. Some people say he was no less than 85 years old, as incredible as it may seem. It may have died of natural causes. However, the possibility that it was poisoned or shot on sight is being considered. A bullet hole in one of its tusks is one of the findings of the investigation. The 6 t elephant was one of the monuments of Murchison Falls National Park.²⁴



March 24, 2016

Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

Arrest of 2 soldiers who belong to the elite army troops with 12 pieces of tusks weighing about 20 kilograms in all. Two of them were assigned to Entebbe International Airport security. Immediately afterwards, George Otika, the accountant of the company Entebbe Handling Services (ENHAS) (cf. "On the Trail" n° 10 p. 55) and Able Bamwonjobor, a chauffeur for the presidential residence, were interrogated.

The UPDF officers were arrested in Hotel Africana, in the middle of a tusk sale negotiation. The purchasers were undercover UWA (Uganda Wildlife Authority) officers who have been tracking traffickers in uniform for several months.²⁵



SOUTH SOUDAN

Border between the Warrap State and Unity State, South Soudan

End of January. Poaching of 15 elephants in one day.

February. 17 elephants poached in the swamps.

500 would have been killed during the 2 years of civil war. The number of survivors is unknown. A National Unity Government is now leading the country. Many deserters are somewhat unemployed. They are suspected of now waging war on the elephants. During the civil war, both armies, the official one and the rebels, would poach antelopes and ostriches for food and for money (see "On the Trail" n°2 p. 66, n°5 p. 81, n°8 p. 95). Ivory seized in Uganda or in Kenya could be originated from South Sudan and Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.²⁶



TANZANIA

January 8, 2016

Dar-es-Salaam, Dar-es-Salaam Region, Tanzania

Court appearance of Frank William Silangei and 4 accomplices accused of trafficking 120 tusks worth 3.4 billion shillings (\$ 1.5 million US) in the regions of Manyara, Arusha, and Dar-es-Salaam, between April 1, 2011 and October 28, 2015.²⁷

Katavi Region, Tanzania

1- January 11, 2016. Seizure of 8 tusks weighing 50 kg in all, worth \$ 60,000 US, or \$ 1200 US per kilo. Arrest of a poacher in Katavi National Park.

2 - January 15, 2016. Seizure of 12 pieces of ivory and 3 arrests.²⁸

The Katavi region is under pressure from several thousand refugees and deserters from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Burundi (cf. "On the Trail" n° 7 p. 87, n° 8 p. 70-71, and n° 9 p. 76).

January 14, 2016

Lake Manyara National Park, Arusha Region, Tanzania

Seizure of 54 kg of ivory. Value: 64 million shillings (\$ 30,000 US), or around \$ 540 US/kg. Two arrests. The 330 km² park and the lake are damaged by illegal activities and encroachment.²⁹

January 23, 2016

Mpanda, Katavi Region, Tanzania

Seizure of a 6.5 kg tusk worth 30 million shillings, according to the police. This is the equivalent of \$ 13,745 US, or \$ 2144 US/kg. Two arrests. The motorbike has been seized too. A 3rd passenger is on the run.³⁰

**January 29 - February 11, 2016
Maswa Game Reserve, Bariadi District, Simiyu Region, Tanzania**

A burst of shots from an automatic weapon pierced the floor of the helicopter piloted by 37-year-old Roger Gower, a British citizen. He was working with the Tanzanian authorities to combat elephant poaching in Serengeti National Park and the surrounding animal sanctuaries. Roger Gower was dead. When the helicopter was hit, it was flying at a low altitude, around 3 elephant cadavers. The poachers were still there, hiding in the savanna.



Nine suspects were arrested after the manhunt conducted by the Tanzanian police and services. One of them is a former police officer and is now

a liaison and information officer for Ngorongoro Conservation Area. Since 1959, he has promoted shared use of natural areas by wildlife and Masai shepherds and cattle breeders. The man named Iddy Abdullah Mashaka was double-dealing. He was helping poachers instead of fighting against them. It seems that he coordinated poaching in the Great Lakes region.

When his home was searched, the presumed 28-year-old shooter himself handed over the weapon, a .458 Winchester Magnum, and tusks to the police. The first court appearance of the suspected gang was very stressing. 15 armed soldiers were on duty in the square of the court. The judges refused to be filmed or photographed.

Eight men and one woman are accused of murder, illegal carrying and use of weapons, and possession of ivory worth \$ 17,000 US. This is the equivalent of \$ 1500 US / kg in Tanzania. Everyone pleaded not guilty.³¹

Mid-February 2016
Dar-es-Salaam, Dar-es-Salaam Region, Tanzania



Court appearance of a businessman, a businesswoman, and a driver, aged 45 to 46 years old, for transporting ivory tusks in a coffin covered with the national flag as part of an organized gang, and for planning the acquisition, collection, and sale of government trophies, including 210 tusks and 5 elephant bones, which the Kenyan tax services estimate are worth over 1 million US dollars.³²

Sentences in Tanzania



February 24, beginning of March and March 19, 2016

- Dar-es-Salaam, Dar-es-Salaam Region

February 24. 30-year prison sentence or a fine 10 times the value of the 15 kg of ivory that Christopher Kaulaga illegally possessed. He was arrested on March 22, 2013. The fine was \$ 419,000 US. The ivory is estimated to be worth \$ 45,000 US, or \$ 3000 US/kg.³³

- Dodoma, Dodoma Region

End of February 2016. Two men were sentenced for illegal possession of 2 tusks (43 kg), estimated to be worth 38 million shillings (\$ 17,700 US), or \$ 411 US / kg. They were arrested in Tarangire National Park on May 19, 2014. They were also in possession of one million shillings in cash (\$ 465 US). 20 years in prison each, or a fine of 5 million shillings (\$ 2329 US).³⁴

- Singida, Singida Region

Beginning of March 2016. Seven men aged 26 to 37 years of age were sentenced to 20 years in prison each, and 274.2 million shillings (\$ 127,700 US) for illegal possession of ivory, tufts of elephant hair, and tiger skins, estimated to be worth 34 million shillings (\$ 16,000 US) and for organized poaching. One of the men is a refugee from Burundi.³⁵

- Kibaha, Pwani Region

Beginning of March 2016. Eight people, including 2 police officers, were sentenced to 20 years in prison and a total fine of 64 billion shillings (\$ 29,800,000 US), or \$ 3.7 million US each for illegal possession of 70 elephant tusks (306 kg), estimated to be worth 850.5 million shillings (\$ 396,192 US), or \$ 1300 US/kg. The police officers were also sentenced to 15 years in prison for organized crime. The 2 sentences are concurrent. The seizure took place on July 28, 2013 (cf. "On the Trail" n° 2, p.58).³⁶

- Dar-es-Salaam, Dar-es-Salaam Region

March 19, 2016. 30 years in prison each for ivory smuggling. The 2 Chinese citizens did not succeed in paying a fine of 54.35 billion shillings (\$ 25 million US). 706 pieces from 226 tusks were seized at the end of 2013 in Dar es Salaam. They have also been sentenced to 5 years in prison and a fine of one million shillings (\$ 465 US) for attempted corruption of a government representative, a concurrent sentence with the main one. The 2 men were officially trading snails stuffed with garlic. (cf. "On the Trail" n° 3, p. 60).³⁷



February 25, 2016

Dar-es-Salaam, Dar-es-Salaam Region, Tanzania

Six people were arrested in 2013, after the seizure of 2915 kg of ivory in Zanzibar harbor, estimated to be worth 7,480,125,000 shillings (\$ 3,484,502 US), or \$ 1195 US/kg (cf. "On the Trail" n°3, p. 61). They are eligible for release under a bail of approximately \$ 30,000 US. As they did not have enough financial backing, they remain in prison.³⁸

Katavi Region, Tanzania

February 25, 2016. District of Mpanda. Seizure of 2 machine guns with two magazines and 62 ammunitions on a motorcycle. Two suspects at large.

March 1, 2016. District of Mlele. Seizure of 4 tusks (11.5 kg) estimated at Sh 27.75 millions (\$12,920 US) or \$ 1123 US/kg. One arrest.

March 5, 2016. District of Mlele. Seizure of 3 sections of tusk (11 kg) estimated at Sh 32,530,650 (\$ 15,150 US) or \$ 1370 US/kg. Four arrests including one woman, all residents of the refugee camp of Katumba.³⁹

FAMILY AFFAIRS

End of March 2016

Tarime District, Mara Region, Tanzania

Seizure of 9 elephant tusks, rhinoceros meat, and poaching material. Five arrests, including those of a 76-year-old retired police officer and his son.⁴⁰

ZAMBIA

Zambia: Elephants in the Fog



Zambia pretends that poaching is controlled on their territory and that "their" population of elephant is growing. They cite a number of 33,000 individuals. Building on its preemptory assertions, the European Union Scientific Review Group was in favor of the importation of elephant hunting trophies from Zambia. In Zambia, elephants are listed as Annex I and theoretically, all international trade of living or dead specimens is prohibited. Hunting trophies are the exception to the rule. They are considered as personal effects. Hunting is considered by the host country and by the importing country as a means of protection of wildlife when the revenues that they produce are directed to anti-poaching fund and development of natural and national parks environments. Not everyone shares the optimism of the Zambian officials and the European scientists on the prosperity of elephants in Zambia. On condition of anonymity, an expert says that the poaching wave would have rooted out the migratory elephants in Zambia. The Chinese traffickers well established in Lusaka, Livingstone and Choma are forced to cross the Zambezi to find ivory. Inside the country, the elephants would have been eradicated in the hot spot of poaching around Luangwa.

Kazastrophe

The Zambian minister of Tourism is worried about the number of compatriots who devoted themselves to poaching in Zimbabwe, Angola, Botswana and Namibia. He calls for cross-border and transnational police who will hunt for poachers in the region of Kawango and Zambezi (Kaza). Kaza took form in 2006. It's the biggest cross-covers between 300,000 and 500,000 km² Botswana, Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe. reserves and protected rural communities. bureaucratic paperwork despite the strong Ministry of Cooperation and Development. A Ngwezi National Park in the south-west of projects, which were not followed by field than an illusion. However, the cooperation Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Namibia



End of January 2016

Mosi-oo-Tunya National Park, Southern Province, Zambia

- 1 - Seizure of 4 pieces of ivory (7 kg) and of 2 AK-47 rifles. Three arrests, including that of a Namibian.
 - 2 - Seizure of 11 elephant teeth and 173 pieces of ammunition. One arrest.
- This park covers 66 km². The Zambezi River separates it from Zimbabwe.⁴¹

ZIMBABWE

- Thursday January 7, 2016

Chobe National Park, North-West District, Botswana

The Botswana Defense Force was tracking the group of approximately 20 Zambian poachers at work in Chobe National Park. The latter fled with their weapons and luggage by foot, toward Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe. Before crossing the border, the poachers were attacked one last time. One of them was killed. And a few of the others were wounded.



- Monday January 11, 2016

Hwange National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Two exhausted Zambians went to the police near Victoria Falls. They were lost in the bush and no longer had the strength to cross Zambezi River and illegally return to Zambia.

- Tuesday January 12, 2016

Victoria Falls, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

The Hwange Park rangers and the special anti-poaching unit established contact with the Zambians. Their counterparts in Botswana alerted them. One poacher was killed. The other poachers fled and continued to poach. Each year, during rainy season, a well-organized gang from Zambia intensively poaches rhinoceroses and elephants by making it a priority to comb the national parks of Hwange, Matetsi, and Zambezi in Zimbabwe, Chobe in Botswana, and Linyanti and Bwabwata in Namibia.



- Monday January 18, 2016

Hurungwe District, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe

The rangers and dozen or so men in a bivouac exchanged fire near a sugarcane plantation on the banks of Zambezi River. They managed to escape, leaving ammunition, provisions, clothes, toothpaste, toothbrushes, and 24 elephant tusks behind them, according to the national parks spokeswoman. The language they spoke was used to identify their Zambian nationality. Although the patrolling on the riverbanks has been stepped up, they have not been found. It seems that they went back to Zambia in their canoes.⁴²

- Bulawayo, Bulawayo Province, Zimbabwe January 7, 2016

Seizure of 5.8 tons of cyanide (116 x 50 kg), 360 kg of sulfuric acid (9 x 40 kg) and 1320 kg of nitric acid (44 x 30 kg) in a warehouse belonging to BAC Logistics Belmont. The total estimated value of the chemical products is \$ 22,991 US. The company manager was arrested. Other seizures of cyanide, in smaller quantities, have been conducted. And the people in possession of it have been arrested. They were sentenced to pay a fine of \$ 20 US. The police complained "that what is terrible is that we do what we can against cyanide, but the people we arrest get away with a ridiculously low fine of \$ 20 US."⁴³



- Sikumi Forest, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Mid-January 2016. Another distraught victim of cyanide. It had been dead for 10 days. It still had its tusks. After a brief break due to ponds drying up, new and used cyanide is back again.⁴⁴

January 13 and 18, 2016

Harare, Province of Harare, Zimbabwe

Arrest and release on a procedural error.

George Seremwe is suspected of planning the escape of 6 tusks of questionable origin, and of requesting 3 elephant hunting licenses from the competent authority, in the Muzarabani hunting reserve in Mashonaland Central Province which he runs in partnership with the district. He owns Small World Lodge, a small hotel in Avondale.

The illegal tusks were exported with CITES permits issued by the administration.

The hunt for 3 elephants

in Muzarabani

never took place.

This bogus hunt was used to sell 6 tusks which apparently were stolen from government reserves. In this dirty trick, Seremwe was assisted by a hunting trophy seller and a veteran ranger who worked in the headquarters of the national parks administration. Seremwe was released on January 18. The court refused to imprison him, on the grounds that his custody overstepped the statutory 48 hours. His lawyers insisted that his constitutional right was not respected.⁴⁵

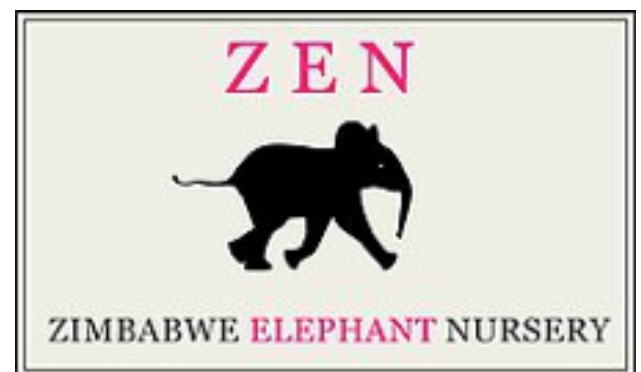


January 19 and February 1, 2016

Hwange National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

A baby elephant in terrible condition was wandering on the fringes of Hwange Park. It was flown in to ZEN (Zimbabwe Elephant Nursery). ZEN hosts 5 baby elephants.

- ZEN announced its death. It did not survive its wounds and trauma.⁴⁶



January 19, 2016

Lake Kariba, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Seizure of 10 tusks from elephants which seem to be from Hwange Park or the Chalala sanctuary on the edge of the Zambezi River. In the nighttime, the black mambas, the elite anti-poaching unit from the province, caught the poachers by surprise. They were trying to sell their loot. Apparently one of them tried to stab a Black Mamba. Another one opened fire. A poacher was killed during the counterattack.⁴⁷



January 25, 2016

Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe

Seizure of 2 tusks. The black mambas arrested 3 poachers. They hold sway between Doma and Mukanga, in Zambezi Valley. The elephant received 5 .303 caliber rifle bullets.⁴⁸

January 31, 2016

Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe

Seizure of 5 tusks and a vehicle, and 3 arrests by the Black Mambas. The identity of the suspects was not revealed. The general public was familiar with only their feet and socks.⁴⁹



February 4, 2016

Zambezi National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

It appears that the lone killer was going across the Zambezi River at night, waiting for elephants to go to the waterholes. It seems that he went back to Zambia at dawn, after he accomplished his crime with the tusks, meat, and skin. The "lone killer" probably was not alone. The Zimbabwe police believe that he is a poacher whom their service is already very familiar with, who poaches hippopotamuses and buffaloes. The same day, an elephant broke its leg on a sandbar on the edge of the river. He was engulfed by the mud. It is not known if it panicked because of a poacher ambush.⁵⁰

February 11, 2016

Hwange, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Thandazani Sibindi appeared in court for the possession of 3 tusks. For his defense, he said that he removed them from 2 dead elephants without saying where and how they were dead. The court didn't believe him. The court demanded that he remains in custody until judgement.⁵¹

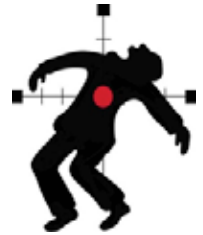
Weekend of February, 13 2016

Chinhoyi, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe

Seizure of 2 tusks. One arrest.⁵²

February 14-18, 2016

They were not tourists at Victoria Falls. The gunshots rang out early Friday morning. The body of the elephant was discovered shortly after, the tusks still present. The rangers remained in ambush. True to their tactic of "hit and run", 3 Zambian poachers arrived shortly after to harvest the ivory. They were cut down by a burst. One died, two fled.



Two bodies were spotted by fishermen at Jambezi along the Zimbabwean side of the Zambezi. They were found 24 hours after by the police. They were mutilated. The crocodiles would have passed by there. They are attributed to poachers in Zambia operating on the south bank of the Zambezi River in Zimbabwe.

Two versions to explain the drama:

1 – The men had been killed during a confrontation with soldiers of Zimbabwe and their bodies had been thrown in the river.

2 – They would have drowned trying to return to their country.

The same day, Christopher Malasa Mandaya, 35 years-old, one of the survivors of the Zambian gang appeared before the tribunal of Victoria Falls. At the moment of his arrest, he had on him, according to the investigators, ammunition, 2 kg of marijuana, 2 axes and butcher knives.⁵³

Mid February 2016

Harare, Province of Harare, Zimbabwe

Seizure of a tusk. Four arrests. Under a fake name, the police set an appointment with the sellers at Chisipite Shopping Centre. The tusk was wrapped in a floral pillowcase.⁵⁴



Saturday February 27 and Sunday February 28, 2016

Dande, Mashonaland Central Province, Zimbabwe

A nighttime hunt in the middle of the mosquitoes and in the heat. Seizure of 8 tusks and a leopard skin (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I). On the Campfire community hunting ground, hunting with bows and guns is authorized, even after sunset. Special permits were issued. Seven arrests, including that of a Mozambican.⁵⁵



**March 12, 2016
Gokwe, Midlands Province, Zimbabwe**



Two poachers were sentenced to 9 and 10 years in prison respectively. They were arrested in Simchembo with a pair of tusks. The Zim Parks general director would like the first sentences for the poachers to go from 9 to 20 years, or even 25 years. Alert number: 0783465409.⁵⁷



**Beginning of March 2016
Gweru, Midland Province, Zimbabwe**

Accused of having poached 3 male elephants in the Shangani Reserve, 4 men were arrested on November 7, 2015 (cf. "On the Trail" n° 11p. 73). A fifth, the leader and supplier of the gun, was arrested later in Harare. Despite their questionable pasts, involvement in the poaching of rhinoceros and elephants in national parks since 2011, in cases of mass poisoning by cyanide of elephants in Hwange Park in 2013 (cf. "On the Trail" n°2 p. 2-3) and in the attempt to break in the secure storage of illegal ivory in Bulawayo, they were until now above the law thanks to their past as rangers for some of them, among who a man named Khumalo.⁵⁸

**March 12,13 and 18, 2016
Mana Pools National Park, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe**

- Two witch doctors killed an elephant.

- A ranger accidentally killed a 50-year-old professional hunter and his 20-year-old son. They worked for the Safari Operators Association. The 2 men of Italian origin were helping anti-poaching teams by offering the knowledge of the terrain and their 4X4.

- The rangers caught the 2 witches. One of the 2 has been released on bail for the same reason, since 2010. He did not respond to the court summons. Poaching is out of control in Zambezi Valley.⁵⁹



Elephant dung are filled with plastic. The elephants have taken up the habit of searching through the landfill of Victoria Falls. One 50 year-old female elephant died in the Malayattur Forest. The autopsy found 50 plastic bags, lighters, and food packaging in her intestines. She was poisoned by the ingestion of non-degradable trash left behind by tourists. The plastic plague spreads around the Victoria Falls World Heritage Site, one of the 7 wonders of the world.⁵⁶



March 27, 2016

Plumtree, Matabeleland South Province, Zimbabwe. Border with Botswana

Seizure of 3 tusks estimated to be worth \$ 1588 US under the hood. They were wrapped up and taped between the radiator and motor of the BMW. 3 people were arrested. A fourth person is on the run. They were heading toward Botswana. After their first appearance, they were released on bail for \$ 100 US each, pending trial.⁶⁰



SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

March 3, 2016

Derdepoort, Gauteng Province, South Africa

At Big Buck Taxidermy, 26 elephant tusks were seized. It appears that 6 of them were taken from elephants recently. The authorities estimate that they are worth 4,000,000 rands (\$ 268,000 US). The origin and the destination are unknown.⁶¹

March 5, 2016

Pretoria, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Seizure of one tusk, 3 cycads (Appendix I), one vehicle, and ammunition. Traffickers are more and more multi-products, fauna and flora in the same ATV.

Cycadales have been the favorite delicacy of stegosaurus. They survived mass extinction, meteorites, frosts and earthquakes. They will not withstand 100 years of human greed. The last are in Southern Africa and Australia. They resemble tree ferns and palm trees.⁶²



BOTSWANA

January 12, 2016

Francistown, North-East District, Botswana

Arrest of a former advisor of the democratic Botswana Congress Party. 59-year-old Stephen Keiphile appeared in Francistown District Court for possession of elephant tusks of unknown origin. He had a large amount of cash on him when he was arrested. He said that he was paid by a Western Union money transfer after selling a car to a Zambian, but the judges did not believe him. He apparently heads up a wildlife trafficking operation. Three of his accomplices were released on bail. As for him, he is in prison.⁶³



March 1, 2016

Francistown, North-East District, Botswana

They were arrested on February 11 of this year on expressway n°1, coming from Zimbabwe. In their BMW, they had 10 elephant tusks (47.36 kg). The 2 poachers who are Zimbabwean citizens have been sentenced to 18 months in prison and a fine of 7000 pula (\$ 636 US).⁶⁴



NAMIBIA

March 12, 2016

Village of Mwitjiku, Kavango East Region, Namibia

At around 5:00 AM, a 54-year-old Namibian in possession of 2 tusks was interrogated. Since December 2015, 26 tusks have been seized, and 7 elephants have been poached in the country.⁶⁵

March 25, 2016

Rundu, Kavango East Region, Namibia

Armed and arrested with 2 tusks on the 25th, released on bail (\$ 123 US) on the 31st.⁶⁶

WESTERN AFRICA

BENIN

February 18, 2016

W National Park of Niger, Alibori Department, Benin

Seizure of 4 elephant tusks and arrest of 5 traffickers, including a retired gendarme. This is another example of a former representative of the police forces who has made a career change late in life to work against the police.

This park is part of a vast trans-border reserve covering a million hectares (10,000 km²) managed by Benin, Niger, and Burkina Faso. Since 2007, it has been listed in the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance.⁶⁷



BURKINA FASO

January 13, 2016

Banfora, Cascades Region, Burkina Faso

Seizure of over 69 kg of ivory, or 16 pairs of tusks in 2 suspicious packages on a bus line coming from Niger, heading for the Ivory Coast.

The manager of the Fada bus station is being investigated. The driver says that he was tricked. He was told that the package contained wooden statues. Is this a channel for removing the remains of the last elephants from Gourma in Mali? ⁶⁸



SENEGAL

February 11, 2016

Dakar, Dakar Region, Senegal

Seizure of 271 carved elephant ivory tusks weighing 5.5 kg in all, and 256 common warthog tusks (*Phacochoerus africanus*) worth 8,500,000 CFA francs (€ 12,325) and 4,500,000 CFA francs (€ 6840). The 3 linchpins of the industry were sentenced to one month in prison each, and a joint fine of 600,000 CFA francs (€ 915). Warthog fang ivory is easier to carve than elephant ivory.



Warthogs are often poached for the bushmeat market. Warthog ivory is often sold to novices at elephant ivory prices. The 3 traffickers were caught in the center of the city by municipal security, with the assistance of the NGO SALF (Sénégal Application de la Loi Faunique).⁶⁹

TOGO

January 13, 2016

Lomé, Maritime Region, Togo

Seizure of 3 ivory pipes and an ivory seal. Arrest of an ivory carver and seller. He had been well established for several years already.⁷⁰

MIDDLE AFRICA

CAMEROON

March 1, 2016

Bertoua, East Region, Cameroon

Two court clerks of High Court of Yokadouma sentenced to 3 years in prison each for trafficking ivory tusks. They were arrested on October 10, 2014 on the road to Yaounde with 2 ivory tusks in their car. The law requires that the seized goods, in this case the tusks, are to be filed as pieces of evidence to be produced during the trial. The court of Yokadouma handles a number of cases of poaching of elephants, big cats and chimpanzees.⁷¹



Yokadouma

March 3, 2016

Ebolowa, South Region, Cameroon

Seizure of 3 tails and 3 feet of elephants in a bag. One arrest.

A 35 year-old man admitted to trafficking once every two weeks in collusion with a police officer who provides him with information on the movements of animals and the wardens. In exchange for this, the corrupt police officer is supplied with cash and bush meat.

Elephants are frequently poached in the Campo-Ma'an National Park. The pillager also "works" in Equatorial Guinea by crossing the River Ntem.⁷²

CONGO

January, 8 2016

Dolisie, Niari, Republic of the Congo

The 5 suspects had presented sufficient guarantees of representation and granted conditional release. They had been caught red-handed with 36 kg of ivory. The Mbinda region is at the heart of poaching. The tusks were on route from Dolisie.⁷³

February 29, 2016

Ouesso, Sangha Region, Republic of the Congo

Three Congolese citizens and one Cameroonian were sentenced to 3 years in prison without remission each, and to pay a joint fine of 2,000,000 CFA francs (€ 3636). This was for poaching an elephant in Sembé in the northern part of the country, near the border with Cameroon, on December 11, 2015.⁷⁴



GABON

Beginning of January 2016

Minkébé National Park, Woleu-Ntem Province, Gabon

Seizure of 28 pieces of ivory. The gamekeepers on patrol came across a poaching camp on the border between Gabon and Cameroon. Six suspects fled. Only one of them was caught. It seems that the home port of the gang was the village of Mébané in the southern region of Cameroon.⁷⁵



January 25, 2016

Tchibanga, Nyanga Province, Gabon

Seizure of 43 kg of ivory twice. Arrest of 2 people in the night. They were trying to sell their merchandise. One hour later, the supplier was arrested in his home.⁷⁶

February 22, 2016

Makokou, Province of Ogooué-Ivindo, Gabon

The court has condemned.

1 - Mahamat Sany, 38 years old, from Cameroon, to 36 months prison time of which 12 are suspended, 1,000,000 francs CFA (\$ 1726 US) in damages, 100,000 francs CFA in fine (\$ 172 US) and ban from Gabon territory for 5 years for illegal possession of big game hunting equipment and hunting of species entirely protected.

2 - Two men to 6 months prison term and a fine worth 100,000 francs CFA (\$ 172 US) each for hunting species entirely protected and by default 2 gold diggers, accomplices, to 6 months prison one of which is suspended and to one million francs CFA (\$ 1726 US) in damages.⁷⁷



Makokou's Court case

March 8, 2016

Cap Estérias, Estuaire Province, Gabon

Seizure of 55 ivory tips hidden in a bush in Cap Estérias, a small city in northern Libreville that is popular with tourists. The traffickers waited for high tide in Corisco Bay before going to Equatorial Guinea.⁷⁸



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

End of January 2016

Miami, State of Florida, United States of America

Four antique dealers from London, from the Antique Enamel Company, John Bull Antiques, Paul Bennett Antiques, and Michael Sedler Antiques were exhibiting 18th and 19th century artwork at the Original Miami Beach Antique Show. This show in Miami attracts over 1000 exhibitors from 28 countries, and over 20,000 visitors. This year it is hosting its 55th edition.

Customs intercepted the special package that the 4 prestigious dealers sent for the fair. The antique dealers were summoned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. They have been criticized for neglecting to indicate the presence of turtle shells and nacre in some curios. The representative of Paul Bennett Antiques was asked to immediately take apart and destroy a few decorative and functional ivory parts on 18th and 19th century coffee and teapots. The ivory head and hands of a silver figurine of a halberdier by Berthold Müller met the same fate. He also had to destroy an 18th century ivory ruler. The antique dealer and the firm specialized in the international transport of antiques and works of art did not account for the federal law prohibiting the import of any form of raw or sculpted ivory for commercial purposes, in force since February 2015.



Antique Enamel Company was forced to remove the feathers of the singing bird from a Swiss 18th century music box. The prestigious London antiques dealer was not able to specify whether the bird feathers were from an extinct or an endangered species.⁸³

March 10, 2016

Ogooué-Ivindo Province, Gabon

Seizure of 15 kg of ivory after a car chase. The Makokou prosecutor was on the spot. Arrests of 5 traffickers in a Toyota on the R15 highway between Makokou and Okondja. Interrogation of 2 poachers who were operating in the province, near Mwagna National Park and the village of Zolende. Seizure of 4 firearms and ammunition.⁷⁹

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

January 22, 2016

Kibati, North Kivu Province,

Yacente Sebinyenzi died in the ambush set by the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). He was a father of 8. He was part of the ranger team in Virunga National Park.⁸⁰



February 4, 2016

Kinshasa, Province of Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Seizure of 30 kg of raw and worked ivory. Three arrests.⁸¹

March 16, 2016

Kinshasa, Province of Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Congolese national police seized 50 kg of ivory and arrested traffickers. Juristrale revealed this information. Juristrale is an NGO composed of legal experts working to strengthen and enforce environmental law.⁸²

Fevrier 17, 2016

Buffalo, State of New York, United States of America

Court hearing before the Buffalo federal court for Ferdinand Krizan, an antique dealer working under the brand « Fred's Unique Furniture & Antiques » in New Jersey. He has pleaded guilty for contraband of a pair of tusks coming from Canada and sold in the United States.

The general attorney, realizing that 30,000 elephants are killed each year did some math: "That makes something like 96 elephants per day. It is shocking when you think of it."

Investigations showed that the antique dealer had bought from an auction in Montreal 2 elephant tusks. A few weeks later, he imported them to the United States by the Rainbow Bridge from Niagara Falls, Ontario, to sell them \$ 50,000 US along with 4 other tusks to a collector in Massachusetts.



© U.S. Attorney's Office

He also illegally sold a narwhal tusk for \$ 8000 US and carved ivory from elephants and hippos. He also practiced trafficking in coral.⁸⁴
See in this issue page 105

OPERATION CRASH

March 9, 2016

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

Court hearing before the New York federal Court for Joseph Chait, director of the Asian Art Gallery and of an auction house in Beverly Hills. He is accused of criminal conspiracy in smuggling of ivory, rhino horns and coral. He has pleaded guilty and risks up to 10 years in prison. His trial will take place next June on the 22. The trafficking in question is worth about one million dollars. He is accused for example of having sold the replica of a statuette representing a divinity made in rhino horn. While being fully aware the sculpture was in no way an antique, he made publicity for it in a sales catalog and offered it for sale to clients living in China. After selling it \$ 230,000 US, he made arrangements with

the buyer to facilitate the export. To that intent, he made a false bill stating \$ 108.75 US with added description "made of plastic". He will be tried in June. He used the same type of tricks for ivory items.⁸⁵

March 9, 2016

Saratoga, New York State, United States of America

Court appearance of Sharam "Ron" Roothparvar, 61 years-old before the Court for trafficking, contraband, sale over the internet and exportation of illegal carved ivory in New Zealand and in Australia between 2012 and 2015. This man is the head of Coins and Antiques Ivory. He has been released on bail of \$ 250,000 US.⁸⁶

March 11, 2016

United States of America

Despite the actions of Friends of Animals, 9 females and 3 males imported from Swaziland landed in the United States for exhibition to 3 zoos in Texas, Nebraska and Kansas. The US Fish and Wildlife Service gave a favorable opinion. The agency has only taken into account the effects of the importation on the future of the species and does not take into consideration the animal well-being.⁸⁷



MYANMAR

**January 1, 2016
Pathein in Chaungtha Reserve, Ayeyarwady, Myanmar**

Two bikers had cut trunk and other smoked meats in their saddlebags. The police, raking through the neighborhood, fell upon the mangled remains of the elephant.⁸⁸



CAMBODIA

**End of February, 2016
Province of Sihanoukville, Cambodia**

Justice made or justice failed in Cambodia? The judge apparently is about to indict Khan Sinith, director of the import/export company Reho Both after an 18 month long investigation concerning the attempted smuggling of 3008 kg of ivory back in May 2014 (see "On the Trail" n° 5, p. 99). Reho Both says it is victim of a set up. The Company Road Express Logistics would have used its name to cover trafficking that it itself had organized. The ivory is still in the customs warehouse in the port of Sihanoukville.⁸⁹

CHINA

The tailors network, again

(see "On the Trail" n°10 p. 64 and n°11 p.82)

**January 3, 2016
Hong Kong International Airport, China**

Seizure of 18 kg of ivory bracelets and cubes hand sewn in clothes and a jacket by a young, 25 year old man. He arrived from Zimbabwe via Dubai, United Arab Emirates.⁹⁰



**January 5, 2016
Xiamen, Fujian Province, China**

Seizure in a postal package of an ivory incarnation of Guanyin, the Buddhist deity of compassion. 1.385 kilos of ivory. Estimated value: 60,000 yuans (\$ 9123 US). No compassion for elephants.⁹¹



**January 2016
Autonomous Region of Tianjin, China**

A court appearance of the manager of a toy store who illegally sold ivory. 242 ivory figures were seized for a total of weigh of 1.064 kg. "I wanted to meet the demands of my customers."⁹²

Port of Shenzhen, Province of Guangdong, China

January 26, 2016. Seizure of 56 objects made of ivory including 5 cylinders, 18 tusk sections and 33 rings for a total weight of 4.8 kg, inside a passenger's bag coming from Hong Kong. At the beginning of the month he had attempted to smuggle in a load of cell phones.

February 28, 2016. Seizure of 14.7 kg of ivory from the bag of a passenger coming from Hong Kong. 360 small ivory blocks were hidden inside 18 tea bags. He claims he was paid 600 yuans (\$ 92 US) to transport the ivory.⁹³



January 29, 2016

Suifenhe, Province of Heilongjiang, China. Russian border.

Seizure of 287 bracelets, 76 tusk sections, 22 pearls and 26 blocks destined to be transformed into stamps for a total weight of 39 kg and worth according to custom's estimates 1.6 million Chinese yuans (\$ 244,856 US), that is \$ 6278 US per kilo. The case happened on 30 July 2015 but has just only been revealed. It is not said if the ivory is elephant ivory, walrus ivory or mammoth ivory. In January 2015, 10 kg of mammoth ivory had been seized in the same province. (See « On the Trail » n°8 p. 82).⁹⁴

February 2016

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, China



"Departure terminal. Illegal export guaranteed" underlines Daniel Stiles.⁹⁵

February 11-24 2016

Port of Tianjin, Autonomous Region of Tianjin, China

Seizure of 700 g of ivory in 6 packages coming from Great Britain, Italy, and the United States of America with the same destination address.⁹⁶



February 19, 2016

Port Luohu, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure by customs of 5.327 kg of ivory works in the carry-on luggage of a Norwegian passenger in the province of Hong Kong.⁹⁷



February 25, 2016

Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure by postal customs of 543 grams of ivory works in postal packages.⁹⁸

February 27, 2016

Dongxing, Autonomous Region of Guangxi, China

At the border post with Vietnam, customs intercepted a van traveling to Nanning. Search and discovery of 2 ivory tusks around 60 cm each.⁹⁹

March 4, 2016

Zhuzai, Guangdong Province, China

The speedboat with a powerful engine just landed at Qiao Island in the middle of the night. It was intercepted by the maritime police. The crew fled. There were 221 tusks whole and in pieces. 450 kg. \$2.78 million US or \$ 6180 US per kilo.¹⁰⁰



March 14, 2016

Hong Kong International Airport, China

Seizure of 10 kg of ivory in the luggage of a passenger from the Côte d'Ivoire via Dubai. Estimated value: \$ 100,000 HK (\$ 13,000 US).¹⁰¹



© Hong Kong Customs

March 15, 2016

Lichuan County, Jiangxi County, China

Sentencing of Liu et Xu for possession, detention and illegal sale of products derived from protected species including the ivory of a mammoth to 12.5 and 13 years in prison and to the confiscation of 900,000 yuans (\$ 138,914 US) and of 1.2 million de yuans (\$ 185,219 US). The volume of traffic reached one ton.¹⁰²



March 15, 2016

Kowloon Peninsula, Hong Kong, China

Thanks to the NGO WildAid HK, the management of the luxury hotel, "Kowloon's Peninsula Hotel" decided to withdraw all of the ivory decorations from their windows and shops.¹⁰³



INDIA

OPERATION SHIKAR

State of Kerala à New-Delhi

Poaching is rife in India. "On the Trail" says this often. The poachers of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka actively cooperate with each other. And police of the 3 neighboring States and the residents do not have a good relationship. The cook of a gang that was plundering the Vazhachal forest provided his testimony. The scandal shot up in June 2015, and surged so that the efficiency of the national fight against ivory trafficking was questioned. In the beginning, the confessions of Kalarikudiyil Kunjumon were considered as unreliable gossip.

And broader investigations ended up in New Delhi, where 488 kg of carved ivory was discovered. Umesh Aggrawal, the founding director of the respectable Art of India, also imported carved ivory from China, Nepal, and Japan, as well as raw tusks from West Bengal and Burma. However, 90% of the ivory came from Kerala. A well-equipped workshop for processing raw ivory was found in the basement of his huge home in New Delhi on October 2nd. The businessman has been trafficking in ivory since the beginning of the 1990's. He had developed the habit of mixing resin, stone, and fake and authentic ivory in his exhibitions.

One of the suppliers of Art of India was "Eagle" Rajan. This nickname comes from his specialization in the manufacture and sale of bird figurines, ever since he was very young. He has been in the international ivory business since 1978. In 1990, after the international trade branch was suspended, his business remained and kept operating in secret. "Eagle" Rajan was arrested on October 4, 2015, in the airport of Thiruvananthapuram, the capital of Kerala. He is one of the key links between the poaching branch and the commercialization branch, in India and internationally. The elephant tusks from Kerala and Tamil Nadu were worked by underground carvers.

The Shikar Operation has also tarnished the reputation of pet elephant owners. They argue that it is difficult to feed elephants with long tusks. They obtained the authorization to cut them off. According to the regulations in force, they should have kept ivory tips as personal belongings, family records, or heritage. The tusks are cut every 4 years. This ivory of domestic origin seems to supply the network of illegal workshops. Based on the initial accounts of the artisans who were foiled, ivory from domestic elephants is whiter than that of wild elephants and more valuable. There are close to 800 domesticated elephants declared in Kerala. The particularly suspicious temples are those that manage a large number of elephants and that do not fill out any register on amputating tusks, and on what the cut sections are turned into.

About fifty people involved in the trafficking have been identified and indicted. Some of them have been imprisoned or released on bail. In March 2016, Babu, a linchpin of the industry, was arrested. He was a liaison between the poachers and people higher up in the chain. He lives a double life. He is a businessman in Kolkata, and a woodman in Kerala.¹⁰⁴

Electro chocks in Odisha



January-February -March 2016

Accidental or intentional electrocutions, poisonings, elephants in this beginning of the year are hit in so many ways (See « On the Trail » n°11 p. 84).

Forest guards apparently pay little attention to villagers' calls when elephants come too close to crops or they wait until a carcass' stench reaches a mile around to discover that an elephant has died. Several have been suspended from the job or transferred following negligence. Most carcasses have had one or both tusks removed. Electrical companies have been consulted, asked, begged to raise the wires higher beyond reach of an elephant trunk. But there's no money for that.

25 years old, 4 years, 5 years, 6 years, male and female, it's a massacre. They are on the migration corridor between the Satkosia and Similipal reserves that goes through the Athagarh forests. The elephants are waited for around the corner, and the forest services would not be in position to dig the poachers out of their hiding places.¹⁰⁵

January 14, 2016

Kaladhungi, Uttarakand State, India

Seizure of 4.5 kg of tusks in a bag. One arrest. The police had spotted two suspicious men on one motorcycle, only one of the them was apprehended. Investigation is still going on. Are they simple carriers or are they poachers ?¹⁰⁶

January, 21 2016

Belagaum District, State of Karnataka, India

Seized of 7 tusks and 2 arrests near a bus stop. The 2 men were 23 and 25 years old and said they were a painter and a locksmith. The elephants were killed in the Khanapur Forest.¹⁰⁷

January 30, 2016
Bankura District, West Bengal State, India

He hit the high voltage electric line with his trunk. It's the fifth electrocution in 10 days. No details on the fate of the tusks.
¹⁰⁸



February 1, 2016
Mayurbhanj District, State of Odisha, India

They at 4 on one motorcycle with 2 tusks, one at 45 cm long and the other 40 cm. Total weight : 2 kg. They claim to have "found" them on one dead elephant in the Similipal National Park.
¹⁰⁹

February 7, 2016
Pulpally, State of Kerala, India

The baker was in the process of examining two tusks of 2.5 kg. They were seized.
¹¹⁰

February 10, 2016
Mumbai, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure of a carved elephant tusk at least 100 years old worth 200 million rupees (\$ 301,266 US). 4 arrests. Among the culprits there is a banker and a businessman specialized in the jewelry trade. A deal was made for Rs 60 millions (\$ 903,799 US) with policemen posing as buyers.
¹¹¹



February 16, 2016
Sangli, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure of a tusk weighing 10.16 kg from a car on the road between Sangli and Kolhapur. Three arrests. The value is estimated at à 2,500,000 rupees (\$ 33,255 US) i.e. almost \$ 3300 US per kilo. The car was also seized.
¹¹²

February 16, 2016
Kavalkinaru, State of Tamil Nadu, India

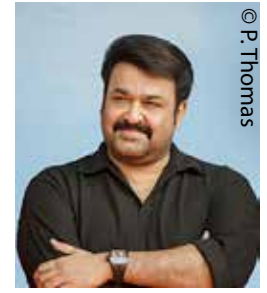
Seized 2.5 kg of ivory coming from Kerala. Four arrests.
¹¹³

February 28, 2016
Harmuti Forest, State of Assam, India

Hit by bullets, he is between life and death. Poachers had just enough time to cut the tail. The rangers quickly arrived to the scene. Three caretakers of the Assam State Zoo in Guwahati are expected on site. The poachers were tracked. They apparently came from Arunachal Pradesh.
¹¹⁴

End of February 2016
Kochi, State of Kerala, India

Charges dismissed. Another major actor in Indian cinema is in trouble with the law because of wildlife (see "On the Trail" n°8 p. 92). A tax control carried out at his home in July 2011 revealed the non-registered and non-justified presence of 2 to 26 elephant tusks according to different sources. Fiscal services refuse to give out any more information. Five years after the tusks were confiscated, the Federal minister for Forests and the Environment accepted to return them to Mohanlal. He had afterwards presented documents proving legal ownership of the ivories. Anyone who receives an inheritance or a donation hunting trophies of animals protected under Indian legislation must have them registered within 90 days. The minister apparently intends to change the law. But at the highest level of the Forest and Wildlife Department, it is said that this is only an exception being made specially for the film artist.
¹¹⁵



© P. Thomas

Beginning March 2016
Nilgiris District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Autopsy behind closed doors of 2 elephants found dead last week, a male and a female. Their meat had been attacked by scavengers. The male's tusks were intact. He had wounds. Local NGOs protest. It is usual proceedings in mysterious cases such as this that one of their delegates witness the autopsy.
¹¹⁶

March, 18 2016
Bagdogra, West Bengal State, India

Border police intercepted a motorcycle and its driver near the Bhutan and Nepal border. Two pieces of tusk were hidden in a bag.
¹¹⁷

INDONESIA

REPATED OFFENSE
January 21, 2016
Pangkalan Kerinci, Province of Riau, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Sentencing of 4 poachers to 2 years and 6 months prison as well as a fine of 20 million Rupees each (\$ 1490 US), plus 3 extra months prison if they fail to pay the fine. In February 2015, they had killed 2 males and a baby elephant in the Tesso Nilo National Park and got caught with 3 pairs of tusks, a rifle, 66 rounds of ammunition and an ax. They were planning to sell the ivory for 4 million rupees per kilo, that is \$ 298 US to a certain Fadli, head of a network who has since escaped.
¹¹⁸



February 12, 2016

Semambu, Province of Jambi, Indonesia

Discovery by villagers of an old carcass stripped of its tusks and jaws inside a rubber tree plantation. An elephant molar is as big as a brick. The victim was apparently poisoned.¹¹⁹

February 18, 2016

Balairaja, Province of Riau, Indonesia

People from around here set up traps in the forest. They are made of ropes and are intended for the deer. Elephants are able to escape from them but drag around the ropes sometimes for many months or weeks. An entangled up baby elephant sinking in mud was pulled out of trouble by the NGO Mahout. They managed to avoid amputation of his front right foot. An adult female followed by her baby were not as lucky. Warned by hikers, the Mahout rescue team were able after a week's work locate and free the 2 tangled victims. Unfortunately, the mother's tail and one baby's hoof had to be amputated.¹²⁰

MALAYSIA

February 26, 2016

Kuala Lumpur International Airport, State of Selangor, Malaysia

Seizure of 159 kg of ivory, coming from Angola inside the luggage of 2 Vietnamese passengers aged 25 and 41. Total value of the smuggling is 1.59 million ringgits (\$ 404,592 US) that is \$ 2545 US per kilo.¹²¹



PHILIPPINES

March 3, 2016

Quezon City, Region of Metropolitan Manila, Philippines

Inauguration in the Ninoy Aquino Park of a statue in honor of elephants victim of poaching. Ashes from the voluntary destruction by burning of over 4 tons of illegal ivory in June 2013 were mixed into the cement.¹²²



SRI LANKA

January, February, March 2016

To be an elephant in Sri Lanka

1 – Grinding in the presence of the Sri Lankan President, Prime Minister and Secretary General of CITES and incineration at high temperature of 359 tusks totaling 1529 kg of ivory seized at the end of May in 2012 in Colombo in 3 shipping containers entering from Kenya (cf. "On the Trail" n°8 p. 88). A religious ceremony bringing Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and Christians followed the destruction.



2 – The interweaving of Buddhist and political circles in the capture and detention is confirmed. A baby elephant and a 20 year-old female were discovered by police in a temple in Polhengoda. A magistrate and two senior monks were summoned by police and taken into custody. One of the religious is a loyal friend of the former President Mahinda Rajapaksa. He raised the small elephant on a leash around the grounds of his temple. 40 elephants would still be illegally held in religious landmarks or with high-ranking officials. 150 elephants were captured in the last 8 years and 80 of them have died from ill treatment and poor conditions during the domestication phase, according to Pubudu Weeraratna, director of the Species Conservation Centre.

3 – Young elephants who are seized from private owners cannot be released. They have lost their social and food instincts. They are grouped in Pinnawala orphanage which has just been expanded. To fight against overpopulation, several residents serve as diplomatic gifts and are shipped with more or less honors and precautions in foreign countries. Nandi risks to have a cold. She just arrived in Auckland, New Zealand, where the average temperature is 15°C, while in Sri Lanka it is 27°C. Sri Lanka has a long practice of gifting elephants. China, South Korea, Japan, the Czech Republic and the United States have, so to speak, benefitted. In Europe, the first to receive an elephant as a gift was the Archduke Maximilian II of Habsbourg in 1550.¹²³

TAIWAN

- **February 20. Tainan, Taiwan.** Seizure at the home of a couple who were non-registered antique dealers of 422 carved ivories (estimated value at \$ 310,667 US) bought from an online auction on Internet site notably in France and the United Kingdom. The couple claims they had in the past began the necessary paperwork but had been discouraged by the slowness of the administrative procedures.¹²⁴



- **March 4, 2016. Taipei, Taiwan.** Seizure from an antique dealer's of 142 carved ivories, anything from spoons to full tusks, and 7 remains of Hawksbill sea turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I). The spoons are estimated worth \$ 15 US a piece, the tusks at \$ 3796 US.¹²⁵

THAILAND

March 27, 2016
Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Bangkok, Province of Samut Prakan, Thailand
 Seizure inside a dozen parcels sent in Mozambique and transported by the Kenya Airways flight company of 315 kg of tusks from African elephants worth 28 million Baths (\$ 800,000 US), i.e. \$ 2540 US per kilo. The person they were addressed to has escaped.¹²⁶



VIETNAM

January 27, 2016
Noi Bai International Airport, Hanoi, Vietnam
 Seizure of 137.5 kg of tusks and carved ivory coming from Angola via Malaysia. The ivory was in 6 suitcases carried by 3 men recruited specially for the transport. Several checking services inside airports, starting in Luanda, were fooled.¹²⁷



Airport or Ivory funnel?

EUROPE

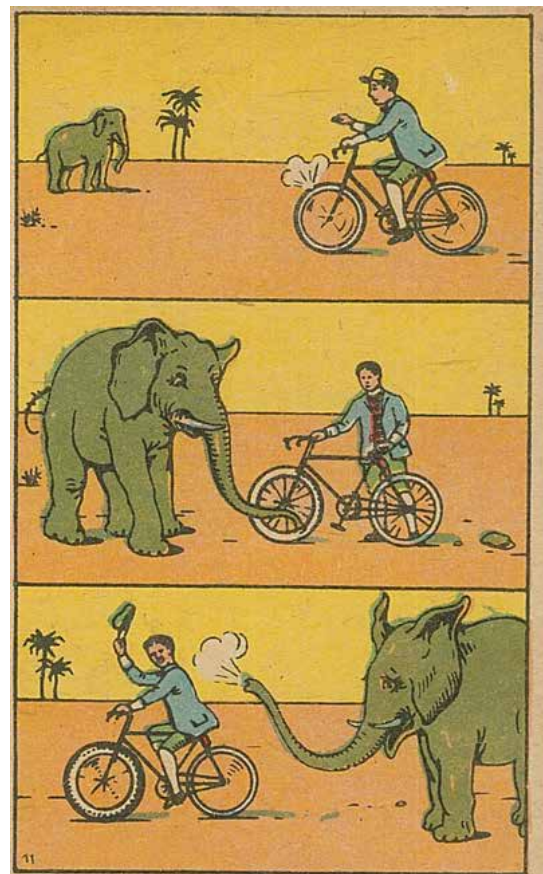
February 17, 2016
Catania, Region of Sicily, Italy
 Seizure of 9 objects made of ivory including a 1.30 m long tusk in a consignment shop.¹²⁸

March 2, 2016
The Hague, Province of South Holland, The Netherlands

During the International Conference Save Wildlife that was held in the Hague from March 1st to 3, 2016, 5 kg of ivory seized at the Amsterdam-Schiphol Airport were turned over to Kenyan authorities to be used as evidence in a case of poaching brought before court.¹²⁹

March 31, 2016
Rome, Region of Lazio, Italy

Destruction by grinding and steamroller of one ton of ivory raw and worked seized by customs.¹³⁰



Other Mammals

AFRICA

Donkey too !

Except for the kiang (*Equus kiang*, Appendix II, cf. "On the Trail" n° 6 p. 100 and n° 7 p. 101), donkeys (*Equus asinus*) are obviously not listed in the CITES Appendix*, but they are dragged into the Africa => China traffic. Two well-documented articles show this.

- January 12, 2016. Kossi Province, Burkina Faso.

It seems that everything has come from Kossi, an area in western Burkina Faso. A Chinese expatriate launched an initiative to collect donkey skins by using the current network of leather collectors and hawkers who go from village to village, and from farm to farm. The business is doing well. Depending on the collection and the quality of the ass skin, it can sell for between 17,500 to 40,000 CFA francs, or \$ 27 US to \$ 61 US per piece. In the streets of Nouba, people say, without being entirely sure, that the Chinese make bags, shoes, and other objects out of them. At the end of each week, the Nouba bus station stocks the skins before they are transferred to Ouagadougou, the capital. Donkey theft is on the rise in the region. They are cut up and skinned in the bush. The meat goes off to the markets, and the skin, which is sold for a lot more than the meat, ends up at the Chinese wholesaler's.

"To avoid risks, the residents must set up an enclosure to be able to fasten their donkeys to the house." Madi Kebre, the regional correspondent for the newspaper Le Pays, voices the concern of many observers of the donkey skin boom: "What will happen to all the small farmers without the precious help of donkeys?"

- February 18, 2016. Molepolole, Kweneng District, Botswana.

The African News Agency gives a detailed account of another donkey raid. The police seized 1200 skins in a warehouse, and arrested 2 men and a woman of Zimbabwean nationality working for Hondge, a Chinese export company based in Harare and in South Africa. Isaac Phiri, the foreman of the company, explained that for several months, donkeys have been bought from farmers in the community farms of Mabut Sane, Kweneng, and Dutlwe. They were then killed and skinned. After the summary recovery of the meat, the carcasses were left in their natural environment. The Chinese businessman was then questioned. He went to the scene to understand why the delivery of the skins was interrupted. He had the equivalent of \$ 20,000 US in cash on him. He has an export license for cow leather in Zimbabwe. According to the latest gossip in marketing, donkey skin contains gelatin that improves blood circulation. The donkey population in China is rapidly declining.²

* Clarification: the African wild ass *Equus africanus* is also listed under CITES Appendix I with an annotation excluding the domesticated form *Equus asinus*.



Equus asinus

Warning for giraffes

Garamba National Park, Orientale Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Warning cry: There are only 38 giraffes left (*Giraffa camelopardalis*) in the Park, as opposed to the 350 giraffes 20 years ago.

If 5 more adults are poached in the coming months, there won't be giraffes in this park anymore. There are many reasons for this decimation. They are fed to South Sudanese refugees. One giraffe produces 270 kg of meat. Its skin is a highly appreciated dowry for weddings. Artisans make hats, bedspreads, belts, and fly swats out of it. A tall story that recently went viral on the web said that its spinal cord cures AIDS (cf. "On the Trail" n°7 p. 96. Already extinct in Mali, Angola, and Nigeria, giraffes and more precisely the subspecies *Camelopardalis congolensis* is also in imminent danger of extinction in the country.¹



January 16, 2016

West Region. Uganda

Seizure of 89 kg of hippopotamus teeth (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II). One arrest.³

January 19, 2016

Tshopo Province, Democratic Republic of Congo

Seizure of over 150 kg of okapi meat (*Okapia johnstoni*) on the national road n°4. The driver fled. The okapi meat coming from Badombi village in the territory of Opienge, Eastern Province, was cremated after approval of the prosecutor.⁴



January 23, 2016

Maasai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya

Ten poachers coming from Tanzania were arrested thanks to the joint and rapid action of the Anne K. Taylor Fund Team (AKTF Team) and rangers from the Reserve. They had just killed a hippopotamus



(*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II). A few days earlier, they had been encircled, and narrowly escaped. They were spotted by a hot-air balloon pilot taking tourists on flights over the reserve.⁵

February 1, 2016

Monze District, Southern Province, Zambia

Seizure of 160 kg of smoked plains zebra (*Equus quagga*) meat. The meat was hidden in plastic bags in a Toyota minibus. Men and women from 23 to 38 years old were on their way to the Lusaka bushmeat market.⁶

February 5, 2016

Lake Kariba, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe

Seizure of 55 kg of plains zebra (*Equus quagga*) meat and automatic rifles. Upon examination, it was determined that the rifles are from the Parachute Regiment based at Inkomo Barracks in Darwendale. Two soldiers were arrested. A third soldier is on the run. Eco-guards caught the butchers in the act, on board a small boat on Lake Kariba.

The week beforehand, another soldier from Wafa Wafa camp on the banks of the lake was sentenced to pay a fine of \$ 200 US for possession of 14 kg of bushmeat.⁷

AMERICA

January 28, 2016

- Huancarama, Colta District, Paucar del Sara Sara Province Sara, Peru

Fifty vicunas (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix I) were poached.

- Llauta District, Lucanas Province, Peru

Thirty vicunas (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix I) were poached. It was rainy season, the best time for poachers. They take advantage of the mist to hide themselves and pass unnoticed. The villagers could face retaliation if they expose what the poachers have been up to. Over 5000 vicunas have been poached in the last 5 years. The illegal market for the world's most expensive wool continues to flourish. Europe and China seem to be the main outlets (cf. "On the Trail" n° 1 p. 16, n° 2 p. 33, n° 3 p. 71, n° 4 p. 50, n° 9 p. 42, n° 10 p. 36).⁸



March 23, 2016

**Buenos Aires, Argentina
Poisoned gift**

Visiting Argentina, Michelle Obama receives from the first lady, Juliana Macri, a shawl made of vicuña wool produced in one year by local weavers. The wool is lawful under the international agreement on vicunas. The fact remains that this luxury gift promotes the most coveted wool in the world and provides additional motivation for poachers. As soon as the first lady of the United States of America makes an appearance with clothes of a brand or a specific model, sales increase. Fortunately Mrs. Obama has the good taste not to wear the shawl in public.⁹

March 29, 2016

Barra do Choça, State of Bahia, Brazil

Abuse of a brown-throated sloth (*Bradypus variegatus*, Appendix II). "I had no specific motivation. I just wanted to abuse him" said the suspect. The animal is traumatized and feeds only with a drip. His nails were pulled out so he cannot climb trees anymore. His return into the wild is impossible. The man was arrested.



The brown-throated sloth lives in the canopy in Central and South America. He weighs 4 kg and is 60 cm on average. He is covered with gray brown hair with darker brown fur on the throat, the eyes and the forehead. He can sleep up to 20 hours a day. The sloth is a solitary. The pairs form only for reproduction. Gestation lasts between 4 and 6 months.¹⁰

ASIA

January 2016

Munsiyari, Uttarakhand State, India

Two days after the snow, the black smoke rose above the Himalayan foothills. As they do every year, the poachers at an altitude of over 2 km start chasing Himalayan musk deer (*Moschus leucogaster*, Appendix I) from the forests and shoot them dead when the deer seek refuge in the short grass of the prairies. It takes 2 days to reach the battlefield by foot.

Forest conservationists acknowledge defeat and provide some hope by strengthening cooperation with Nepal and in financial incentives to villagers, in exchange for information on the movements of poachers and their identities.



Himalayan musk deer live in dense forests and rhododendron bushes on mountainsides. Their feet resemble high heels. This foot structure enables them to climb steep slopes and scale up slanted trees. Their favorite dish is soft grass. Their name comes from the Sanskrit word muschkas (which means testicle). Himalayan musk deer secrete a fragrant substance and mark out their territory by rubbing stones and branches with their tail. Since time immemorial, the peoples of China have used their foreskin gland secretions for its strong scent and supposedly invigorating properties. The musk pouch is placed in the belly, in front of the genital organs. One kilo of musk sells for \$ 50,000 US on the black market.¹¹

FAMILY AFFAIRS

January 10, 2016

Sagar district, Madhya Pradesh State, India

From cricket ball to bullet. Mahmood Khan and his son Ramiz are members of the Madhya Pradesh Cricket Association. With the support of 2 accomplices, they practiced another sport. After they shot a blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III) in a field near a river 20 km from Sagar, they cut it up on site and came back on 2 motorcycles, with the meat loaded into 2 bags. The 4 of them are in prison. The requests to release them on bail have been refused.¹²

February 1, 2016

Gahirat Conservancy area, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan



A 3-year-old markhor (*Capra falconeri*, Appendix I) was shot in the head and died. The rangers came to the scene quickly, but could only assess the damage. The killers fled.¹³

February 4, 2016

Takeshenken, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China. Border with Mongolia.

Seizure of 148 skins, 255 bone amulets, meat, and offal from gray wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II). The customs officers smelled the foul odor coming out of several containers. The police consider that the seizure is worth one million yuan (\$ 153,807 US).¹⁴



February 5, 2016

Mattewara, State of Punjab, India

In Mattewara forest, discovery of the head of a Nilgai (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*, Appendix III). The cause of the death remains a mystery. An autopsy is impossible. But it is common knowledge that antelopes are hunted for their meat in this area.¹⁵



**February 9, 2016
Nagar Valley, Gilgit-Baltistan Territory, Pakistan**

A gun in one hand, and the head and horns of the ibex (*Capra sibirica*, Appendix III in Pakistan) in the other hand. Cartridges on the ground, the cadaver is nearby. The 2 poachers are in preventive detention.¹⁶

February 27, 2016

Panchthar District, Eastern Development Region, Nepal

Seizure of 2 red panda pelts (*Ailurus fulgens*, Appendix I). Two arrests.¹⁷



20 years



6 years



47 years

March 4, 2016

Phetchaburi, Phetchaburi Province, Thailand

The temple had received as an offering an African pygmy hedgehog (*Atelerix albiventris*) originally from the deserts of Africa and widely exported to Asia and South America as a decorative object. The nun handed it over to the Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand.¹⁸



March 10, 2016

Jodhpur, State of Rajasthan, India

A new court appearance for the Bollywood star Salman Khan (cf. "On the Trail" n° 6, p. 99 and n° 8, p. 92). In 1998, he played his worst role in a real western, wildly hunting blackbucks (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III). He pleaded not guilty, refuted the testimony against him, and said that he confessed due to pressure from the forest rangers. His 5-year prison sentence has been suspended. The State of Rajasthan is appealing in the name of equality of all citizens before the law.¹⁹

March 16, 2016

Bangkok, Province of Bangkok, Thailand

Rescue of an oriental small-clawed otter (*Aonyx cinerea*, Appendix II) on the Chatuchak market. It was 3 months old. She will need to be well cared for day and night.²⁰



Otters are snatched up by the exotic pet market. The fur industry is also interested in otters.

March 16, 2016

Kathmandu, Central Development Region, Nepal

Seizure of a red panda (*Ailurus fulgens*, Appendix I) pelt and a motorcycle. Two interrogations.²¹

March 24, 2016

Bengaluru Nagara district, State of Karnataka, India

Seizure of a head and antlers of a Gaur (*Bos gaurus*, Appendix I) and the antlers of a Chital (*Axis axis*, Appendix III) in the home of a 43 year-old man. The trophies would be older than 20 years. However, the holder had not declared them to the forest service after having inherited them.²²

EUROPE

March 1, 2016

Reading, County of Berkshire, UK

Conviction by the court of Mrs Toni Keep, 70, for advertising and illegal sale on Ebay of a pair of marsh deer antlers (*Blastocerus dichotomus*, Appendix I) and a pair of pampas deer's antlers (*Ozotoceros bezoarticus*, Appendix I) and sentence to 12 months probation and a fine of £ 1000 (€ 1270). The antlers were seized.

According to European regulation, parts of protected animal cannot be subject to commercial transactions unless they are prior to 1947 and show a significant transformation by jewelers, artists, decorators or musical instruments fabricants.

Mrs Keep's defenders have argued that the deers antlers were mounted on wooden bases and remained attached to the skulls of animals demonstrating a willingness and artistic competence justifying derogation. The court disagreed. The statements of experts and State officials asserting that "the items had not been significantly altered from their natural raw state" were taken into account.²³



Blastocerus dichotomus

March 7, 2016

Raron, Canton of Valais, Switzerland

This is indeed a male wolf 34.5kg. Killed by firearms. Along the river Rhone. The Institute of Pathology of the University of Berne conducts the autopsy. A criminal complaint was filed against the unknown murderer. The Council of States and the Senate rejected the proposal to open wolf hunting throughout the year in the Valais.²⁴



March 16, 2016

Canton of Grisons, Switzerland

This is another wolf. He was shot and thrown off a bridge. The wolf pack of Calanda alpine mountain is in gun sights, living too close to the agricultural livestock. To teach him the fear of man, gamekeepers in the cantons of St Gallen and Graubünden were ordered to kill 2 wolves of the pack in broad daylight, near houses and openly.

In this case, it is a poaching. Therefore, until the end of March only one wolf can be killed to make an example and to push the pack back in place. Unfortunately for the initiators of this "educational" action and fortunately for the wolves, the pack after snowmelt regained the heights and feeds on deers.²⁵



Multi-Species

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

February 09, 2016

Mfekayi, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Seizure of a dead menagerie: honey badgers (*Mellivora capensis*, Appendix III), bush babies (*Galagidae* spp., Appendix II), red duikers (*Cephalophus natalensis*) and Nile crocodile pelts (*Crocodylus niloticus*, Appendix II). Arrest of 3 heavily armed individuals, seizure of .375 caliber shotgun rifles with silencers, ammunition, and 2 axes.

The bush baby is a small nocturnal primate measuring 15 to 20 cm. It lives in forests and savannas and feeds on fruit, leaves, and insects. It is related to lemurs. It can jump up to 5 m high. It is easily tamed. Too easily.¹



© California Academy of Sciences

Bush baby

February 27, 2016

Kruger National Park, Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces, South Africa



© California Academy of Sciences

An elephant was poached with a firearm. Its carcass was poisoned. 110 white-backed vultures (*Gyps africanus*, Appendix II), 2 lions (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II), and 2 black-backed jackals (*Canis mesomelas*) are dead.

The poachers would like to prevent the vultures from flying over the dead animals. This is the most plausible solution (cf. "On the Trail" n° 11, p. 74). The market value of the dead

vultures is related to witchcraft and quackery.

The carcasses impregnated with concentrated pesticides are toxic waste. Their elimination and soil remediation comes with technical and financial problems.²

BENIN

February 25, 2016

Dassa-Zoumé, Collines Department, Benin

Seizure of ivory, an ear, bones, and an elephant trunk, 10 African civets (*Civettictis civetta*, Appendix III in Botswana), and 15 sitatunga skins (*Tragelaphus spekii*). Four interrogations.³



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CAMEROON

February 15, 2016

Bertoua, East Region, Cameroon.



© Bertoua Info

Mat génie engineering material park had the honor of hosting a "ceremony" to destroy 616 weapons and rolls of cable to make traps.

The governor of the eastern region, Grégoire Mvongo, attended the event. All this equipment used for poaching was seized in the last 5 years by officials from the ministry of forestry and wildlife (MINFOF). 2773 pieces of ammunition will be burned on a shooting range near the city.⁴

MOROCCO

March 2016

Morocco

Tétouan, Tanger-
Tetouan-Al Hoceima
Region.

The NGO Barbary Macaque seized a magot (*Macaca sylvanus*, Appendix II) after residents nearby notified it. The little monkey was exhibited on coffee shop terraces and in the courtyard of the school. His master was taken to the police station, and the macaque was taken to the Rabat zoo.



Khenifra, Région Béni Mellal-Khénifra Region.

In bird shops, 10 cages of European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) were seized. Reports were drawn up, and the birds were released.

Agadir, Région Souss-Massa

Region. A man was sentenced to pay a fine of 400,000 dirhams (\$ 41,145 US) for selling golden jackal (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III), red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), and genet (*Genetta genetta afra*) skins.



Taroudant, Souss-Massa Region. Seizure of 3 golden jackal, red fox, and genet skins, and 2 red fox heads and 4 pieces of genet heads. Reports were drawn up concerning the parties involved.

Jamaâ El Fna, Marrakesh. Water and Forest officials saved a 25-year-old Barbary macaque or magot, illegally imprisoned in a house.⁵

NIGERIA

February 14, 2016

Yankari National Park, Bauchi State, Nigeria

During a routine patrol at around 10 PM, 2 rangers, Umar Mohammed, Yakubu Musa, and 8 colleagues were caught by shepherds armed with bows and arrows. They were illegally occupying the park. Umar and Yakubu were shot by arrows. One of them in his left arm, and the other one under his right eye. The surgeons were able to remove the arrows. They are safe and sound. Four rangers were killed under similar circumstances between 1997 and 2015.⁶



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

March 14, 2016

Virunga National Park,
Democratic Republic of the
Congo



Two new victims among Virunga Park rangers. They were on duty by Lake Edward, where intensive illegal fishing has increased over several years. There was a coordinated attack on 4 advanced ranger posts on Saturday.

It is assumed that the assailants were Mai Mai rebels. Fidèle Mulonga Mulegalega, born in Goma, was 25 years old. He chose to be assigned to monitor an area right in the middle of this national park. Venant Mumbere Muvesevese was 35 years old. He managed several rangers. He left behind his wife and 4 children. A 3rd ranger has died.⁷

The generic term of Mai-Mai is attributed to isolated groups issued from wars in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Mai Mai are deemed violent and enlisting children. Most of their members are originally from North Kivu or South Kivu. To protect against bullets during the settling of political scores or organized crime, the Mai Mai splash themselves with "Magic Water".



Left, RIP Venant Mumbere Muvesevese. Right, RIP Fidèle Mulonga Mulegalega with a baboon behind a ranger post.

ZIMBABWE

January 10, 2016

Zimbabwe

Seizure of a pangolin (*Manis spp.*, Appendix II), python skins (*Pythonidae spp.*, Appendix II) and common zebra skins (*Equus quagga*).⁸



February 13, 2016

Mazunga Ranch, Matabeleland South Province, Zimbabwe

The police and 2 poachers exchanged gunfire. One of them was killed. The accomplice fled, taking away the gun of the deceased. He did not have time to take the 2 hunting knives and the silencer with him.⁹



ZAMBIA

Beginning of February and end of February 2016

Luangwa District, Lusaka Province, Zambia

- Nightmare

Seizure of 14 elephant tails and 216 kg of buffalo meat (*Syncerus caffer*). They were supposed to be sent to the market in Luangwa. 2 arrests.

- Dream

2000 firearms were handed to the local authorities by poachers and their families who support the COMACO (Community Markets for Conservation) agreement. COMACO is in organic farming and distributes honey, peanut butter, rice, and soy drinks under the "It's Wild" brand name. COMACO was created by Dale Lewis, an American from North Carolina who has been living in Zambia for 35 years. COMACO and its partners provide technical and financial support from its volunteers. COMACO radio broadcasts weather information, technical advice, and testimonies 3 times per week. 140,000 families benefit from COMACO, which covers 10,000 km² and includes 13,000 hives. There is less poaching and tree-cutting to make charcoal. The research, logistics, marketing, and human resource management departments of COMACO employ 200 people.



The government keeps an eye on what is happening around Luangwa, and considers that COMACO is a sustainable model for farming, that is compatible with managing natural areas and protecting wildlife. The main partners of COMACO include the Wildlife Conservation Society, Care International, Cornell University, and USAID.¹⁰

AMERICA

ARGENTINA

March 17, 2016

Quilmes, Buenos Aires Province, Argentina

Seizure of 36 animals in the city: 14 cacatoès (*Cacatua spp.*), 5 blue-fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), 7 lovebirds (*Agapornis spp.*), one corn snake (*Elaphe gutatta*), 6 turtles, and one tarentula.¹¹



BOLIVIA

January 29, 2016

Cochabamba, Cochabamba Department, Bolivia

In La Pampa market, seizure of 290 animals cut up into pieces: Andean mountain cat (*Leopardus jacobitus*, Appendix I), vicunas (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix I), yellow-spotted river turtle (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II), armadillos, and toucans.

La Pampa market is known for its unbeatable prices, and is a threat to wildlife. In 2008, the University Mayor de San Simon conducted a study every Saturday morning between April 15 and July 2 in La Pampa market. It identified 271 mammals, including 27 species. The fox (*Pseudalopex spp.*), marsh deer (*Blastocerus dichotomus*, Appendix I), and the Andean hairy armadillo (*ChaetophRACTUS nationi*, Appendix II) were the species that were exposed the most.¹²



Leopardus jacobitus

February 23, 2016

La Paz, Bolivia

Seizure of an American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*, Appendix I) and a lowland tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*, Appendix II) raised as pets.¹³

BRAZIL

February 4, 2016

Brasilia, Federal District, Brazil

Seizure of 12 birds, including a blue-fronted amazon (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), 5 dead armadillos, and 3 firearms. Arrest of 2 poachers in their car.¹⁴

CANADA

February 11, 2016

Montreal, Province of Quebec, Canada

The Montreal Auction House was sentenced to pay a fine of \$ 33,500 C (\$ 25,710 US) for selling a narwhal tusk (*Monodon monoceros*, Appendix II) outside of the country, without an export permit between December 2010 and November 2013, several kitchen utensils made of ivory (worth \$ 45,000 C, or \$ 34,536 US), a leopard fur coat (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), a lynx fur coat (*Lynx spp.*, Appendix I or II), and a crocodile skin handbag (*Crocodylidae spp.*, Appendix I or II).¹⁵



COLOMBIA

March 31, 2016

Barranquilla, Atlantico Department, Colombia

On the city's central market, seizure of a macaw (*Ara spp.*), 3 yellow-crowned amazons (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II), a spectacled caiman (*Caiman crocodilus*, Appendix II), a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II) and 100 kg of fish.¹⁶



March 31, 2016

Cartagena, Bolivar Department, Colombia

The sin of gluttony of the Holy Week (cf. "On the Trail" n°4 p.44). Seizure of a brown-throated sloth (*Bradypus variegatus*, Appendix II), 33 black-bellied whistling-ducks (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*, Appendix III), 77 Colombian sliders turtles (*Trachemys callirostris*) and 15 birds for trade, a deadly week for the animal kingdom. Police says the seizure could have been bigger if the traders had not been informed of the operation. Arrest of 14 people.¹⁷

March 31, 2016

Valle de Aburra, Antioquia Department, Colombia

Lightning raid operation : seizure of over 500 animal including yellow-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis denticulata*, Appendix II), Colombian sliders (*Trachemys callirostris*), Bolivian three-toed slothes (*Rhinoclemmys melanosterna*) and parrots (family *Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II).¹⁸



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

OPERATION SYNDICATE

February 11, 2016

Anchorage, State of Alaska, United States of America



Clark Dixon, a special guest on the TV show "The Outdoor Syndicate" (cf. "On the Trail" n° 11, p. 88) was sentenced to 16 months in prison, and to pay a fine of \$ 75,000 US. Confiscation of his guns and 17 illegal trophies from Noatak Natural Preserve, from 2008 to 2013.

His father, Charles Dixon, was sentenced for illegally flying in a non-resident of Alaska and helping him to hunt bears. Seizure of his plane, Stol Quest SQ4. Operation Syndicate, as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service calls it, resulted in 9 sentences, fines amounting to \$ 208,250 US, \$ 62,500 US of compensation for lost wildlife for Noatak Natural Preserve in Alaska, and the return of 28 hunting trophies. Stol Quest SQ4, worth \$ 200,000 US, was handed over to the U.S. government.²⁰



Stol Quest SQ4

February 3 and 6, 2016

Las Vegas, State of Nevada, United States of America

Safari Club International Convention.¹⁹

The best of recreational hunting, for the big 5 and smaller animals, is in Las Vegas for the Safari Club International Convention. 301 hunts are offered to 20,000 trophy hunting fans who visit the convention each year. Children are welcome to come. The French exhibitors at this event were:

- Atelier 1515
Coutellerie d'Art
Knife 1515. Giraffe bone handle. € 995 (\$ 1130 US)



- Atelier Verney-Carron
The number one French manufacturer of hunting weapons.



- Faro East



- JP Bernon Safaris & Club Faune

- Alain Lefol Safaris
- Tawisa
- Jacques Lemaux Safaris
- Faro West Lobeke

March 7, 2016

Portland, State of Oregon, United States of America

Court appearance of the 2 Malayan underlings for wildlife trafficking (cf. "On the Trail" n° 11, p.93). They spent 10 years selling orangutan skulls and hornbill helmets, and other dreadful curio imports. One of their purchasers in Oregon received 16 packages worth \$ 14,000 US in all. They have pleaded not guilty. They have been released under electronic surveillance.²¹

FRANCE

February 25, 2016

Saint-Laurent du Maroni, Region of Guyana, France

Seizure of 2 green winged macaws (*Ara chloropterus*, Appendix II), a white faced saki monkey (*Pithecia pithecia*, Appendix II), a scooter and 2 rifles. Arrest in flagrante delicto of 2 poachers. They are charged with kidnapping, capture, transport, mutilation and destruction of protected animal species. Injured macaws will be treated and possibly released. The illegal wildlife trafficking in Guyana is as active as drug trafficking.²²



Pithecia pithecia

MEXICO

February 26, 2016

Isla Mujeres, State of Quintana Roo, Mexico

Seizures of Geoffroy's spider monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*, Appendix I or II) and a white-nosed coati (*Nasua narica*, Appendix III in Honduras).²³

March 14, 2016

Mexico, Federal District, Mexico

A tiger (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) and lama (*Lama glama*) were seized on private property. They had been abused. They didn't have anything to eat or drink.²⁴

March 14, 2016

Culiacán, State of Sinaloa, Mexico

Seizure of 5 tigers (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) and 2 American black bears (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) at Hollywood Circus. They were not treated like stars. Their "rooms" were like dungeons. They didn't have much to eat. They were taken to the UMA (Unidades de Manejo para la Conservación de la Vida Silvestre) Fiesta Zafarí Zoo.²⁵

PERU

January 6, 2016

Cajamarca, Cajamarca Region, Peru

21 animals were seized in the Cajamarca central market: 16 yellow-spotted river turtles (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II), 3 American kestrels (*Falco sparverius*, Appendix II) and 2 red-fronted conures (*Aratinga wagleri*, Appendix II). The newspaper La Republica said that although the specimens were in terrible condition, they were alive.²⁶



January 26, 2016

Huaral, Huaral Province, Peru

Seizure of 6 yellow-spotted river turtles (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II), 4 white-winged parakeets (*Brotogeris versicolurus*, Appendix II), 4 yellow-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis denticulata*, Appendix II), one red-lored amazon (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II), one orange-fronted conure (*Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II), and one iguana (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II). Two years in prison for the 2 shopkeepers.²⁷



ASIA

CAMBODIA

The week of February 1, 2016

Cambodia

- February 1. Stung Treng, Stung Treng Province

Seizure of a live monitor lizard (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II), 60 kg of slow loris meat (*Nycticebus* spp., Appendix I), Bengal leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II), and southern red muntjac (*Muntiacus muntjak*). The sellers fled.

- February 3. Banlung, Ratanakiri Province

In an apartment, seizure of 5 clouded monitors (*Varanus nebulosus*, Appendix I), one palm civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III), and the meat of 6 barking deers. The 2 managers of this stock of meat and of animals that are still alive were subject to a fine equivalent to \$ 2,000 US. They weren't able to pay the fine. They will go to trial.²⁸



CHINA

January 5, 2016

Hetita, Haixi Mongol and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province, China

Seizure of 2 snow leopards (*Uncia uncia*, Appendix I), 3 argalis (*Ovis ammon*, Appendix I), one golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II), 6 blue sheep (*Pseudois nayaur*, Appendix III), and 6 goitered gazelles (*Gazella subgutturosa*) from 5 poachers.²⁹



Argali hunted by wolves

January 9, 2016

Zoigê County, Ngawa Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China

Nighttime seizure of 12 carcasses: musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*, Appendix II), wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II), wild sheep, 2 firearms, and one all-terrain vehicle. Arrest of 4 Han Chinese by Tibetans in charge of wildlife protection.³⁰



© Weibo

February 24, 2016

Luohu port, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure in the luggage of a passenger of 495 g of preputial glands of musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*, Appendix II), 28 gallbladders of Asian black bears (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I), 2 gallbladders of brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix I) for a total weigh of 252 g, 424 g of cream made from bear bile, 9.67 kg of gallstones and 538 g in the form of powder. Cattle gallstones and products made from it are supposedly useful in treating liver problems, inflammation and fever. Ox Gallstones company offers to buy them back from the slaughterhouse for between \$ 5,000 and \$ 13,000 US per kilo. They weigh on average 10 g, exceptionally 100 g.³¹

February 28, 2016

Mang, Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China



Seizure of 9 g of rhinoceros horn, meat, and by-products of several species, including 2.65 kg of pangolin (*Manis spp.*, Appendix II), 10.5 kg of barking deer (*Muntiacus muntjak*), 50.5 kg of boar (*Sus scrofa*), and 334 g of animal bile in the kitchens of a restaurant. Arrest of 3 suspects.³²



The three-star poaching table was closed. The important people in Mang (400,000 ha) are regretting it.

REPEATED OFFENSE

End of February 2016

Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, China

Indictment of 32 people, 17 of whom run swanky clubs and restaurants. The scandal that affected the high society of Wenzhou, one of the most affluent cities of China, started in 2015, with a seizure in a farm, of bear paws (*Ursidae spp.*, Appendix I or II), pangolin meat (*Manis spp.*, Appendix II), Chinese giant salamander meat (*Andrias davidianus*, Appendix I), and leopard cat meat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II). The frozen or living animals were illegally imported from Vietnam. One of the supply chain organizers was a wildlife trafficker sentenced to two and a half years of prison. He was released on parole in the beginning of 2015, and went straight back to his old ways. 300 km from there, in April 2014, journalists conducted investigations in high-end restaurants and private night clubs in Fuzhou, and saw that they served pangolins and shark fins ("On the Trail" n° 5, p. 47).³³



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March 3, 2016

District of Gongshan, Yunnan Province, China

Seizure of 2 live Asian black bears (*Ursus Thibetanus*, Appendix I), 6 bear's gallbladders, a skin and bones from a leopard (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), ivory, 3 deer skulls (*Cervidae spp.*), 70 detonators and ammunition at the house of a suspect, maybe a psychopath expert in unconventional hunting, in dissection and tannery or an international trafficker in close links with Burmese providers.³⁴



© Aron White

March 15, 2016
Suzhou, Province of Jiangsu, China

Seizure of 560 kg of ivory, 380 g of rhino horn and tiger teeth in a parcel sent from Hong Kong.³⁵



INDIA

February 15, 2016
Bangalore, State of Karnataka, India

In the Jayanagar neighborhood, the sale took place in the back of a minibus. Seizure of 2 Indian monitors (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I), 10 parrots (*Psittacidae* spp., Appendix I or II), a vehicle, and a mobile phone. Three arrests.³⁶

March 23, 2016
Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Destruction by fire of 42 seizures carried out by forest guards over the past 10 years, including 20 elephants tusks, 18 leopard claws and 4 leopard teeth (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I). Journalists and NGOs were present to witness what was described as a regular event.³⁷



INDONESIA

January 15, 2016
Kedoya Selatan, Special Capital Region of Jakarta, Indonesia

Seizure of a mess of protected species in 3 houses : a skin and half-body of a sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I), a bear skull (*Ursidae* spp., Appendix I or II), a skin, 3 skin pieces, a half-body and a stuffed leopard (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), a half-body of a clouded leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*, Appendix I), a tiger skin and pieces of a skin (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), a stuffed Asian golden cat (*Catopuma temminckii*, Appendix I), a stuffed purple-naped lory (*Lorius domicella*, Appendix II), a stuffed electus parrot (*Eclectus roratus*, Appendix II), a stuffed bird of paradise (*Paradisaeidae* spp., Appendix II), one skull and 3 horns of serow (genus *Capricornis*), a python skin (*Pythonidae* spp., Appendix I or II), a live eagle (*Haliaeetus* spp., Appendix I or II), a live Bali myna (*Leucopsar rothschildi*, Appendix I), 134 bones and 83 fragments of animal bones. Arrest of a certain Eddy Saputra.³⁸



© Indra Nugraha

Beginning of February 2016
Indonesia
February 5. Banyuwangi Regency, East Java Province

Seizure at a veterinary clinic of 11 young peacocks (*Pavo* genus, Appendix II or III), 7 molurus pythons (*Python molurus*, Appendix II) and 2 monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II). He was reselling the animals on Facebook and via Blackberry messaging. In 2015, 5000 sales of wild fauna on the internet have been identified by the NGO Pro Fauna, against 3640 in 2014.



February 8. Yogyakarta Special Region of Yogyakarta

Arrest of a trafficker and seizure of 20 animals including Malayan sun bears (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I), langurs (subfamily *Colobinae*, Appendix I or II), eagles (*Accipitridae* spp., Appendix I or II), peacocks and snakes. Arrest of the Semarang zoo veterinarian. To enrich the collections, he had bought from the trafficker a Malayan sun bear and a hornbill. An audit is launched on the management of the zoo.³⁹

**February 15, 2016
Indonesia**

The interior minister Tjahjo Kumolo handed over his stuffed wildlife collection to the Nature Conservation Agency of Jakarta: 5 tigers (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), 2 sun bears (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I), and one leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II). He had shown his collection at a talk show on national TV. Since then, he has been severely criticized.⁴⁰



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**February 27, 2016
Soekarno-Hatta International Airport in Jakarta, Indonesia**

Seizure of 9 bear claws and 5 gall bladders (*Ursidae* spp., Appendix I or II), 20 tiger teeth (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) and 120 pangolin scales (*Manis* spp., Appendix II). Arrest of a Chinese citizen flying to Xiamen, Province of Fujian, China. He had done his shopping in the Mangga Dua suburbs in Jakarta.⁴¹

**March 29, 2016
Singkawang, West Kalimantan Province, Indonesia**

An orangutan skull (*Pongo* spp., Appendix I) and body parts of pangolins (*Manis* spp., Appendix II), sun bears (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I), and hornbills (Bucerotidae family) were photographed by the Scorpion foundation in a store. The proof was sent to the Ministry of the Environment and Forestry and to the relevant departments of the province.⁴²



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NEPAL

**January 28, 2016
Nepal**
A panel of experts, including the national parks director, recommended destroying the inventory of seizures since 1998: 369 horns (16 of which were fake), 4782 hooves, skulls, and pieces of rhinoceros skin, 69 tiger skins (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), 49 leopard skins (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), 3 snow leopard skins (*Panthera uncia*, Appendix I), 2 clouded panther skins (*Neofelis nebulosa*, Appendix I), 439 kg of tiger and leopard bones, and claws, teeth, tails, and vibrissae of big cats, foreskin glands of musk deer (*Moschus* spp., Appendix I), pangolin scales (*Manis* spp., Appendix II), and turtle scales. The inventory is spread out in various parts of the country, and this is a safety problem, according to the chief conservationist of Chitwan Park. The inventory should be destroyed quickly to avoid theft and "losses", and should be successfully completed in technical terms, to prevent residue from being recovered and sold on the creative Chinese black market.⁴³

PAKISTAN

**February 6, 2016
Badin District, Province of Sindh, Pakistan**
The anti-corruption police arrested a member of the Wildlife Department, Ashfaq Ahmed Memon. He was asking for 20,000 rupees (\$ 193 US) which was going directly into his pocket to grant a hunting permit.⁴⁴

PHILIPPINES

**January 29, 2016
Ninoy Aquino International Airport, Grand Manille, Philippines**
Seizure by the customs of 47 live animals: 11 tarsiers (*Tarsius*, spp. Appendix II), 11 monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp. Appendix II), 3 scops owls (*Otus* spp. Appendix I or II), 3 eagle owls (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II), 8 sailfin lizards *Hydrosaurus pustulatus*, 6 water snakes et 5 rat snakes disguised in 5 polystyrene boxes and declared as "aquatic plants" with a destination of Japan. The packages were destined for a certain, Shoji Masuyama. An airport employee was arrested. He took advantage of his position to engage in animal traffic. He had been betrayed by a phone call in the beginning of the year.⁴⁵



VIETNAM

March 11, 2016

Kon Tum, Kon Tum Province, Vietnam

Seizure of the freshly cut tiger and bear claws to be sold on Facebook for 2 million dong each (\$ 90 US).⁴⁶



March 16, 2016

Dongxing, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China. Border with Vietnam

2207 g of elephant ivory, 691.5 g of rhinoceros horn, and 192.6 g of lion teeth (*Panthera leo*, Appendix I or II). 10 years in prison for the traffickers. The Chinese assessors value the seizure at 26,000 yuan, or a bit over \$ 40,130 US.⁴⁷



EUROPE

SPAIN

January 21, 2016

Santomera, Autonomous Community of Murcia, Region of Murcia, Spain

Seizure of several stuffed animals in an antique shop: one leopard (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), one booted eagle (*Hieraaetus pennatus*, Appendix II), one common kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II), one common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II), one Barbary sheep (*Ammotragus lervia*, Appendix II), and one ocelot skin (*Leopardus pardalis*, Appendix I).⁴⁸



Varecia variegata

FRANCE

January 5, 2016

Saint-Thibéry, Hérault Department, France

Several cadavers of various species, including stuffed parrots, snakes, monkeys, and a small zebu were found in 2 freezers of the zoological gardens. The animals were not declared dead. Autopsies are underway.^{48 bis}

February 3, 2016

Alpes-Maritimes Department, France

Seizure at the home of an « e-trafficker » of panther claws (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), 3 elephant tusks, primate skulls (*Primates* spp., Appendix I and II), alligator heads (*Alligator* spp., Appendix I and II), 2 python skins (*Pythonidae* spp., Appendix I and II), 2 walrus tusks (*Odobenus rosmarus*, Appendix III) and dozens of scorpions. The animal products were mixed in with prehistoric remains and medieval coins.⁴⁹



February 5, 2016

Nice, Alpes-Maritimes Department, France

A 29-year-old Spanish transporter received a one-year suspended prison sentence, and was sentenced to pay a customs fine of € 10,000 and € 17,500 for illegally transporting wildlife in 2013. He did not attend the hearing.

On April 26, 2013 the Alpes-Maritimes customs brigade inspected a refrigerator truck with a Spanish license plate in La Turbie, driven by 2 Slovaks, heading for Italy. They were a few kilometers from the border. The customs officers find in the back number of stacked up crates with 2 female lions (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II), 3 monkeys (*Primates* spp., Appendix I or II), 2 dingos (*Canis lupus dingo*), 2 ruffed lemurs (*Varecia variegata*, Appendix I), 2 turtles (*Testudines* spp.), 10 spectacled caimans (*Caiman crocodilus*, Appendix I and II). In a bag in a corner, they had the cadaver of an albino royal python (*Python regius*, Appendix II), 4 to 5 m long.⁵⁰



UNITED KINGDOM

January 2016

London, England, United Kingdom

Georges Bush, an English citizen, received a suspended prison sentence of 14 months for selling 134 body parts (heads, hands, skeletons) of lutungs (*Trachypithecus* spp., Appendix I or II), grivet monkeys (*Chlorocebus aethiops*, Appendix II), macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II), including crab-eating macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) and 2 leopard cat skulls (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix I or II). He also pleaded guilty to possessing 70 zoophilia photos, and received a 4-month prison sentence to be served immediately.



Indonesia, Asia

Bush was in contact with a poacher on the loose in East Java. After UKNCA (United Kingdom National Crime Agency) and Interpol alerted the BKSDA (Natural Resource Conservation Agency), it seized stuffed sea turtles (Appendix I), green peafowl feathers (*Pavo muticus*, Appendix II), 315 kingfisher skeletons (Alcedinidae family), mouse deer skulls (Tragulidae family), and 30 butterflies.⁵²

March 9, 2016

London Borough of Wandsworth, London, United Kingdom

A team of burglars in a van stole 18 stuffed animals in the warehouse of a well-known taxidermist in London, including: 2 whole lions (*Panthera leo*, Appendix I and II) and one lion head on a wooden coat of arms, one head of a black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*, Appendix I) with fiberglass horns, one chimpanzee (*Pan* spp., Appendix I) with a top hat and a necktie, one scarlet ibis (*Eudocimus ruber*, Appendix II), one sloth (Folivora suborder, 3 species in Appendix II or III), 4 baboons (*Papio* spp., Appendix II), one crocodile (*Crocodylidae* spp., Appendix I and II), one zebra (*Equus* genus, Appendix I, II or not listed in CITES), one common wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II), 2 giraffes (genre *Giraffa*), and one king penguin (*Aptenodytes patagonicus*). Total value of £ 100,000 (€ 126,500). It was a holdup at night. The stuffed animals of London Taxidermy played in films with Harry Potter, James Bond, and the Pirates of the Caribbean. The manager Alexis Turner refutes that the police of Greater London has expressed doubts on whether all these exotic possessions comply with regulations.⁵³



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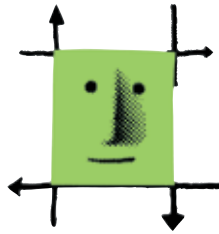
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