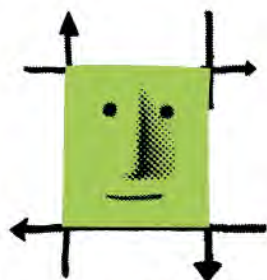


ON the TRAIL

The defaunation bulletin
n°34. Events from the 1st September to the 31th December, 2021



Quarterly information and analysis report on endangered
animals poaching and smuggling
Published on October 25, 2022
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Non Governmental Organization for the Protection of Man and the Environment
Since 1985
14 rue de l'Atlas 75019 Paris, France
tel : 33 (1) 48.04.09.36
www.robindesbois.org
contact@robindesbois.org

Publication Director : Charlotte Nithart
Editors-in-Chief : Jacky Bonnemains and Charlotte Nithart
Art Directors : Charlotte Nithart and Jacky Bonnemains
Writing : Jacky Bonnemains, Gaëlle Guilissen, Elodie Crépeau-Pons, Jean-Pierre Edin, Brian Chasanoff, Maria Stella Siqueira De Carvalho, Lise Contant and Jean Eudes Mesland-Althoffer
Research, Assistant Editor : Jean-Pierre Edin, Gaëlle Guilissen, Elodie Crépeau-Pons and Irene Torres Márquez.
Cartography : Dylan Blandel, Gaëlle Guilissen and Elodie Crépeau-Pons
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English translation : Cora Funke, Brian Chasanoff, Maria Stella Siqueira De Carvalho, Gaëlle Guilissen and Christine Bossard.

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NOTE AND ADVICE TO READERS

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

"On the Trail" highlights the new weapons of plunderers, the new modus operandi of smugglers, rumours intended to attract humans consumers of animals and their by-products. "On the Trail" gathers and disseminates feedback from institutions, individuals and NGOs that fight against poaching and smuggling. End to end, the "On the Trail" are the biological, social, ethnological, police, customs, legal and financial chronicle of poaching and other conflicts between humanity and animality. No continent is spared.

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

- Pangolins + felines / elephants
- Elephants + hippos / rhinos / sperm whales
- Marine and freshwater multispecies (simultaneous seizure of several aquatic species)
- Multi-species reptiles (simultaneous seizure of several reptile species)

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

- The main sources are indicated at the end of each event. Each event reported and/or analysed is from a recension of one or more articles or press releases. This critical review eliminates inconsistencies in date, price and quantity if necessary, and if possible mistakes or looseness about the description of the species. The original source(s) are sometimes enriched by cross-checking and additional information from previous issues of "On the Trail", by Robin des Bois' investigations and archives, and by international bibliography and iconography. The US\$ conversion rates used are those applicable during the month of the event.

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

- When a species is CITES-listed, the Appendix is specified after its scientific name.

CITES APPENDICES

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (182 Member States).

Appendix I : species threatened with extinction. Trade in specimens of these species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances and under import and export permits.

Appendix II : export permit required in order to avoid utilization incompatible with the species survival. Import permit if required by national law.

Appendix III : species that are protected in at least one country, which has asked other CITES Parties for assistance in controlling the trade. In the case of trade from a State that included the species in Appendix III, an export permit of that State is required.

PICTOS



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



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



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



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



Full moon. Moonlight poaching

ACRONYMS

EAGLE : Eco Activists for Governance and Law Enforcement

ENV : Education for Nature – Vietnam

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

IEW : Iran Environment and Wildlife Watch

KWS : Kenya Wildlife Service

LAGA : The Last Great Ape Organization

OIC : Orangutan Information Centre

PROFEPA : Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente

SAPS : South African Police Service

SPCA : Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

SSB : Sashtra Seema Bal

SVW : Save Vietnam Wildlife

SWT : Sheldrick Wildlife Trust

USFWS : United States Fish and Wildlife Service

WCCB : Wildlife Crime Control Bureau

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AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

October 16, 2021

Stolznek Section, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Alerted by gunshots, the rangers come upon 2 poachers. One of them is armed. He is fatally injured during an exchange of fire. His accomplice manages to escape. On the spot, the rangers find a large-calibre weapon, the dehorning tools and a backpack with 2 fresh horns. Not far away, a male black rhino with both his horns removed is lying.

DefenceWeb, October 18, 2021.¹



BOTSWANA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

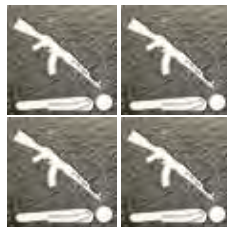
November 22, 2021 and January 20, 2022

Kasane, Chobe District, Botswana

The circumstances surrounding the death of 3 Namibian fishermen and their Zambian cousin on the shores of Sedudu Island and the motives of the 4 BDF (Botswana Defence Force) soldiers who riddled them with bullets on the night of November 5, 2020 are still unclear. The island is in the middle of the Chobe River and "On the Trail" in the n°31 p.5 recalled that the island of the drama is claimed by Botswana, the country of the shooters, and Namibia, the country of 3 victims.

In the Kasane court, the families and friends of the brothers Tommy, Martin and Wamunyima Nchindo reiterated that they were fishermen, that they did this job to support their families and that they were not engaged in any other activity. Inspector Michael Josaya appointed by the Botswana Police for the purpose of the investigation landed on the island at 7 a.m. on November 6, 2020 and made the first observations. He saw 2 boats in the river, one with the body of Tommy Nchindo, the other with the bodies of Wamunyima Nchindo and his cousin Sinvula Munyeme. The 4th body was on the bank of the island.

"We removed the canoes from the river, and started our search." "We found several items among which were 3 elephant tusks in a maize bag in the canoe Tommy Nchindo was in." "We could not take fingerprints because the tusks were floating in water the whole night." And Josaya added at the request of the Namibian judiciary participating in the trial that in the victims' boats there were no weapons, bullets or empty cartridges. Immediately after the event, the BDF had made the same observation in the middle of the night.



Two weeks after the event, a joint Namibian and Botswana diving team attempted to inspect the river and swamp bottom but the attempt was cut short as "the area was infested with hippos".

The evidence that the 4 victims had a weapon to poach one and a half elephants or to engage in an exchange of fire with the BDF soldiers was not provided. The only bullets that were found were in the bodies of the victims, 4 in Martin, 5 in each of the other victims.

On January 20, 2022, after deliberation, the Kasase regional court ruled in favour of the BDF. "In many incidents when the BDF arrested Namibians fishing illegally in Botswana, they usually released them the next day." According to Judge Taboka Mopipi, "in this incident, something unusual must have happened to cause the BDF to deviate from their normal character." The movement Namibia Lives Matter wants to challenge the judgement before the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union and the United Nations. The Namibian, November 23, 2021; New Era, January 19 and 21, 2022.²

KENYA

October 7, 2021

Between Lerata and Wamba, Samburu County, Kenya

Lengiremishoi Hassan, a member of the NRT (Northern Rangelands Trust), was killed in the line of duty in an ambush on the road from Lerata to Wamba. He had been the dedicated driver for the Namunyak Community Conservancy for 4 years.

Northern Rangelands Trust, October 8, 2021.³



UGANDA

September 7, 2021

Karuma Wildlife Reserve, Murchison Falls National Park, Western Region, Uganda

Four men from the same village were fishing clandestinely in the Nile springs. Robert Jawibe, aged 32, Steven Ongewun, aged 42, and Geoffrey Ochoa, aged 43, did not come back. In unknown circumstances, they were reportedly shot dead by wildlife rangers. Michael Otto survived. Shot in the leg, he was rescued and gave damning testimony against the rangers. The bodies have not been returned to the families. The Karuma town council has protested. A complaint has been lodged at the town police station. The UWA (Uganda Wildlife Authority) has declined to comment for the time being. New Vision, September 19, 2021.⁴

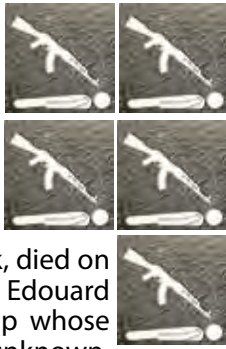


DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

October 15 and 31 and November 5 and 20, 2021

Virunga National Park, Chanika Subregion, Museya and Mikeno Area, North Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

- Emery Bizimana Karabaranga, a guard at Virunga National Park, died on the southwestern shores of Lake Edouard in a clash with an armed group whose motives and affiliation are unknown. Aged 31, he leaves a widow and 2 children. For the past 4 years, he had been carrying out his missions in a calm and dedicated manner. "Virunga National Park is deeply indebted to Ranger Emery for his distinguished service and expresses its deepest condolences to the family and loved ones of Ranger Emery." "May the earth be light to him," said the statement from The Elite AntiPoaching Units And Combat Trackers. "The Provincial Direction of ICCN will continue its efforts to ensure the protection of the ecosystems of Virunga National Park in accordance with the law and human rights. It will also continue to support sustainable development projects for the benefit of the park's neighbouring communities."



- New scuffles near the Kyavinyonge fishery on Lake Edouard left 3 assailants dead and 3 Virunga Park guards and FARDC (Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo) members wounded. "ICCN calls for an end to this senseless violence, respect for Law No. 14/03 on nature conservation and dialogue between all parties to jointly advance conservation and sustainable development objectives."

- Chief Brigadier Mutazimiza Kanyaruchinya Etienne, 48, joined the ICCN in 1995. He leaves behind a widow and 4 children. He was killed on the night of Saturday, November 20, in a surprise attack by suspected ex-M23 members seeking to establish themselves in the Virunga National Park in the cross-border triangle of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda.



Virunga National Park, October 15 and November 5 and 20, 2021; The Elite AntiPoaching Units And Combat Trackers, October 17; 2021; Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation, November 5, 2021; Environews RDC, November 21, 2021; Politico, November 21, 2021.⁵

November 30, 2021
Upemba National Park, Haut-Katanga, Lualaba and Haut-Lomami Provinces, Democratic Republic of the Congo



In a press release issued on December 7, 2021, the ICCN (Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature or Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation) announced the death on November 30 of Emmanuel Kaloba Nkolwe, a 41-year-old ecoguard who had been serving since 2012. His death is attributed to the Mai-Mai Bakata Katanga rebel group in the south of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Congo Rassurance, December 7, 2021; HumAngle, December 8, 2021.⁶

September 24, 2021

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China

On September 25, 2021, a speedboat powered by 6 outboard motors deliberately collided with the pursuing marine police boat at 90 km/h. In the impact, a policewoman was thrown into the water and her body was found 2 days later a few miles from Lantau Island.



Lam Yuen-ye, the policewoman killed in the collision with a speed boat

Since Covid came into play, smuggling has raged between Hong Kong and mainland China.

In 2020, Hong Kong Customs seized the equivalent of 70 million US\$ worth of goods, 230% more than in 2019.

The Director of Customs Investigations explains this boom is due to the suspension of air traffic, road traffic, rail traffic and regular maritime traffic. In order to meet the demand in mainland China, the networks have developed a sea to sea strategy with clandestine cargo transfers between fishing boats and speed boats, the nautical equivalent of the "go-fasts", the convoys of high-powered cars used in France to transport drugs or elvers.

A speed boat specially equipped and motorized for smuggling carries shark fins, bird's nests, computers and touchscreen tablets at the same time. The Asian smuggling triads are wholesalers. They manage to bring together sea cucumbers, flat screens and French grand crus wines in transit sheds.

In 2021, the tension between the traffickers and the law enforcement officials went up a notch.

On the night of Thursday September 23 to Friday September 24, around 1 a.m., customs and maritime police spotted 5 men loading 2 speed boats on a beach in Lung Kwu Tan, west of Hong Kong. The smugglers fled in a boat, all lights off, leaving a truck behind. Shortly thereafter, Customs raided a nearby warehouse and discovered the smugglers' fancy department store. On the shelves were:

- 9.60 tonnes of shark fins including thresher shark fins (11,000 HK\$/kilo or 1,410 US\$/kilo). About 15,000 sharks were victims of this trade.

- 370 Hermès, Gucci, Vuitton and Burberry bags, all new.

- 60 collector's watches.

- Hundreds of cacti from Mexico.

- 2 tonnes of bird's nests, abalone and fish bladders worth 74 million HK\$ (9.5 million US\$).

- 10 kg of Cuban cigars worth 400,000 HK\$ (51,370 US\$).

- 7 tonnes of grapefruit from Taiwan worth 37,000 HK\$ (4,750 US\$).

This is the largest seizure ever made by Hong Kong Customs. Its overall value is equal to 27 million US\$. The case was revealed on October 7 due to difficulties in making an accurate inventory, identifying animal and plant species and estimating the value of each category.

During October, Hong Kong Customs seized 59 speed boats from clandestine shipyards.

On November 2, a traditional ceremony honored Lam's memory and then she was buried in the Wo Hop Shek public cemetery plot reserved for officials killed in action.

The Standard, September 30, 2021; Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department, October 6 and 7, 2021; South China Morning Post, October 6 and 11, 2021.⁷



A thresher shark

PAKISTAN

November 3, 2021

Malir, Province of Sindh, Pakistan

The body of Nazim Sajawal Jhokio was found at around 2.30 a.m. on the night of Wednesday, November 3, thrown away like rubbish near the “Jam House”, one of the residences of Jam Awais, a PPP (Pakistan People’s Party) member of the legislative assembly. Nazim Jhokio, 27 years old, leaves a widow and 4 children but also a family, friends and supporters who are demanding justice and truth.



On the morning of Tuesday, November 2, he had filmed a group of Very Important Persian Gulf Persons who had come to hunt houbara bustards (*Chlamydotis undulata*, Appendix I) at the invitation of the influential member of the assembly, and the young reporter’s penultimate video shows him grappling with the group of hunters, protesting against the death of the migratory birds, whose meat is highly prized by the elites of Qatar and Saudi Arabia. “I am not scared. I am getting threats and I will not apologise,” Nazim said in his last message to his family and friends, some hours before his body was discovered. The forensic medical expert’s report said he bore torture marks inflicted by hard and blunt objects, marks of severe beating on private parts of his body and multiple bruises all over the face purple red in colour.

On Thursday afternoon, November 4, several hundred people gathered around the Jhokio family and Nazim’s coffin to hold a sit-in on the expressway near Ghaghar Phatak. The procession then went to the cemetery for the burial and returned to block the traffic until late at night.



Dawn, November 4, 6, 7, 10, 2021 and January 10, 14, 23, 2022.⁸

SRI LANKA

October 18, 2021

Palk Strait, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

While a Sri Lankan Navy patrol boat was expelling an Indian trawler out of territorial waters, the 2 vessels collided. The Indian fishing boat based in Tamil Nadu sank. One man fell overboard and was not found.

BBC, April 7, 2021; The Hindu, October 13, 2021; New Straits Times (with AFP), October 19, 2021.⁹



PANGOLINS



Temminck's ground pangolin (*Manis temminckii*), cf. Mozambique. Photo Colleen Begg

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

On the Trail n°34

Value on the black market according to media or official sources
The values were estimated at the time of the seizures

Value of 1kg of pangolin scales

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref. (year)
Africa	Nigeria	4,160	4 (2021)
Asia	China	8,375	38 (2020)
		6,250	3* (2021)
	Indonesia	420	40 (2021)
	India	1,335	67 (2021)

* cf. chapter Pangolins, felines / elephants / rhinos

Value of a pangolin

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref. (year)
Africa	Zimbabwe	3,000	18 (2021)
	South Africa	13,300	23 (2021)
		16,630	25 (2021)
Asia	China	770	39 (2021)
	Viet Nam	440	51 (2021)

WESTERN AFRICA

GHANA

November 23, 2021

Kumasi, Ashanti Region, Ghana

Last night, a man bought a pangolin from a hunter on the road to Kumasi. He then contacted the NGO A Rocha Ghana to have the pangolin released. A Rocha Ghana, November 24, 2021.¹

LIBERIA

September 2021

Kpan, Margibi County, Liberia



Arrival at the shelter of a very young white-bellied pangolin orphan. Libassa Wildlife Sanctuary, September 24, 2021.²

September 2021

Liberia

For the first time in Liberia, a man has been indicted for wildlife trafficking. In his home, there were 2 live female white-bellied pangolins that were transferred to the Libassa Wildlife Sanctuary. There was also a stack of dead animals, including primates (order Primate, Appendix I or II), pythons (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), civets (family Viverridae) and duikers (subfamily Cephalophinae). Libassa Wildlife Sanctuary, September 28, 2021; Tikki Hywood Foundation, September 28, 2021.³

NIGERIA

September 14, 2021

Ikeja, Lagos State, Nigeria

1,009 kg of scales and 5 kg of claws were found in a Mercedes Benz bus travelling from Ikeja to Lagos. The bags weighed between 50 and 92 kg. Value: 1.7 million naira or 4.2 million US\$, which is 4,160 US\$/kg. 2,500 pangolins died in total. Two men, Salif Sanwidi and Sunday Ebenyi, were arrested.

Channels Television, October 4, 2021; Nigerian Tribune, October 4, 2021; PM News, October 4, 2021; Premium Times, October 4, 2021; The Sun, October 4, 2021; Wildlife Justice Commission, October 4, 2021.⁴

October 17 and November 2, 2021

Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

4 + 3. Pangolin Conservation Guild Nigeria activates, rescues and releases.

Pangolin Conservation Guild Nigeria, October 17, and November 2, 2021.⁵

CENTRAL AFRICA

CAMEROON

October 14 and December 3, 2021

Bertoua, East Region, Cameroon

A white pick-up truck. A black tarp. 77 kg of scales. The bus driver going between Bertoua and Lom Pangar had built a network of poachers and outlets. Guy Rostand Tapa Kouokap was handcuffed.

He was sentenced to 8 months in prison and ordered to pay 400,000 CFA francs (690 US\$) in fines, legal fees and damages. The operation was successfully carried out with the support of the NGO LAGA (Last Great Ape Organization).

EAGLE, October 15 and December 2021; Alwihda, October 27, 2021; LAGA, October and December 2021.⁶

October 27, 2021

Mbam-et-Inoubou Department, Center Region, Cameroon

On the Bafoussam-Yaoundé national road, it is common to see people brandishing stunned pangolins at the end of a stick. This time, LAGA was there to arrest the man and seize the dead pangolin. EAGLE, October 2021; LAGA, October 2021.⁷

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

September 11, 2021

Mbandaka, Equateur Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Rescuing a specimen from the market. "The idea is to reintroduce him back to his home as soon as possible."

Adams Cassinga, September 11, 2021.⁸

End of September 2021

Democratic Republic of the Congo. Border with Uganda.

Several dozen kilos of giant pangolin scales seized from a minibus.

Adams Cassinga, September 30, 2021.⁹

EASTERN AFRICA

MALAWI

September 26, 2021

Lilongwe, Central Region, Malawi

Lonis Songa, Moses Kambani and Charles Benjamin, aged 29 to 39, attempted to sell 3 live pangolins for 7 million kwacha (8,640 US\$) at a shopping mall.

Malawi 24, September 27, 2021.¹⁰

October 24, 2021

Mangochi, Southern Region, Malawi

Maundu and Rashid White Jusa, aged 49 and 55, acquired a live pangolin in Mozambique and were going to sell him at the Nkambiri trading center. Their motorcycle, the pangolin and the black laptop bag they packed him in were seized.

Malawi 24, October 25, 2021.¹¹



ZIMBABWE

**August 17 and end of September 2021
Hwange District, Matabeleland North
Province, Zimbabwe**

Zulu, a 45-year-old miner, was carrying a pangolin skin covered with 319 scales weighing an average of 9.4 g in a blue bag on the Hwange-Victoria Falls Road. His figure, attire and bag matched an anonymous tip received by the police. He was sentenced to 9 years in prison. The Chronicle, September 29, 2021.¹⁶



MOZAMBIQUE

**September 30 and October 10, 2021
Nacala-Porto District, Nampula Province, and
Niassa Reserve, Cabo Delgado and Niassa
Provinces, Mozambique**

Five individuals were deceived by agents of SERNIC (Serviço Nacional de Investigação Criminal) and ANAC (Administração Nacional das Áreas de Conservação). They “disguised themselves as buyers of the mammal,” who, weighing 11 kg, was then transported to the Niassa Reserve and immediately taken to the river where he drank.



Carta de Moçambique, October 5, 2021; Niassa Lion Project, October 7, 2021.¹²

**End of November 2021
Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe**



The 2 orphaned pangolins seized by police are slowly recovering from abuse. Tikki Hywood Foundation, December 7, 2021.¹⁷

**December 3, 2021
Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe**

At the Total gas station on Julius Nyerere Road, 3 men, including a police officer, attempted to sell a pangolin for 3,000 US\$.

ZimNews, December 8, 2021; Fauna and Flora Zimbabwe, December 13, 2021.¹⁸

UGANDA

August-September 2021

Uganda

Interception of a bushmeat seller. Rescue of a mother and her cub.

Tikki Hywood Foundation, September 27, 2021.¹³

October 2021

**Kyenjojo District, Western Region,
Uganda**

A pangolin thief was fined 5 million shillings (1,360 US\$) and released in Kibale National Park.

Tikki Hywood Foundation, October 28, 2021.¹⁴



November 18, 2021

Luweero District, Central Region, Uganda

Seizure of 52 kg of scales by the Special Wildlife Crime Unit.

Focused Conservation, November 30, 2021.¹⁵

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

**Beginning of September 2021
Limpopo Province, South Africa**

Rescue of a male pangolin from traffickers in a joint operation by the African Pangolin Working Group and SAPS.

Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital, September 5, 2021.¹⁹



September 6, 2021

Tembisa, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Three thugs in possession of an abused, malnourished, thirsty female pangolin were arrested by the police. The victim is in the hands of veterinarians. Prognosis is very poor. Pangolin K9, September 6, 2021; African Pangolin Working Group, September 7, 2021.²⁰

September 26, 2021

Hoedspruit, Limpopo Province, South Africa



For the second time, this adult female pangolin is in the care of the Provet Animal Hospital. She was taken in a few months ago after a failed trafficking attempt. She was pregnant and after a long convalescence, she was released in a habitat that was suitable but also frequented by poachers. Bad luck and also good fortune! For the second time, she was rescued from trafficking by the police force after having been dragged and mistreated for at least 2 weeks. For safety reasons, the pangolins treated by Provet are bunched together outside the main facility.

Provet Animal Hospital, September 26, 2021.²¹

End of September 2021

Phalaborwa, Limpopo Province, South Africa

From September 19 to 29, police in the province had their hands full with rapes, robberies, drug trafficking, stolen weapons and livestock, and also a pangolin taken hostage by a 25-year-old man. SAPS, September 28, 2021.²²

**October 1, 2021 and February 3, 2022
Kuruman, Northern Cape Province,
South Africa**

Sentencing of Siphos Bosman, age 25, to 12 months in prison and a fine equal to 385 US\$ for possessing and attempting to sell a pangolin for 200,000 rand (13,300 US\$). Both punishments are suspended for 5 years but will be served if he commits a similar offense in the meantime.

SAPS, October 5, 2021, and February 9, 2022.²³



October 20, 2021

Lephalale, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Arrest of 3 suspects attempting to sell a live female pangolin.

Pangolin K9, October 20, 2021; Focused Conservation, October 22, 2021.²⁴

REPEATED OFFENSE

October 29, 2021

Hoedspruit, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Euvin Kanki Sibuyi, age 28, Pieter Ntuwane, age 32, and Jackobus Bogishi Makgoro, age 28, were about to sell a pangolin in the morning for 250,000 rand (16,630 US\$). They were caught just in time by the police. Makgoro remains in prison. He is a repeat offender. The other 2 were released on bail for 5,000 rand (330 US\$) pending trial.

Pangolin K9, October 29, 2021; Letaba Herald, November 12, 2021.²⁵

October 31, 2021

Bedfordview, Gauteng Province, South Africa

The female weighing 7.9 kg narrowly escaped. She was seized last night from a trafficker who was hiding under a bed. This was a joint operation between the National Police, the Hawks, the Green Scorpions and the Bedfordview cops. Early that morning, the suspect was located in the city with the victim, but he managed to disappear into the crowd.

African Pangolin Working Group, November 1, 2021; Bedfordview CPF, November 1, 2021; Suburban Control Centre, November 1, 2021.²⁶

Beginning of November 2021

**Vereeniging and Cullinan, Gauteng Province,
South Africa**

Rescue of 2 pangolins from the hands of traffickers thanks to the joint operation of the African Pangolin Working Group, the Pretoria K9 Brigade, and the Tshwane authorities.

Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital, December 20, 2021.²⁷

NAMIBIA

September 12, 2021

Otavi, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

Arrest of Alberto Johannes Joel in possession of a live pangolin.

The Namibian, September 22, 2021.²⁸

October 12, 15 and 17, 2021

**Windhoek, Khomas Region, and Otjiwarongo,
Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia**

- Arrest of Ephriam Gawanab. Seizure of a live pangolin.

- Arrest of Sawares Willemse and Morne Seibeb. Seizure of pangolin armor.

- Arrest of Erasmus Josef. Seizure of a live pangolin. The Namibian, October 18, 2021; Namibian Sun, October 22, 2021.²⁹

October 15, 2021

Katima Mulilo, Zambezi Region, Namibia

Arrest of Chika Ilukena and Mayuni and Nicky Mundia in possession of a live pangolin. Namibian Sun, October 27, 2021.³⁰

October 18, 2021

Outapi, Omusati Region, and Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia

- Seizure of a live pangolin from Frans Haishonga, Naule Muramba, Salvador Shilomboleni, Daniel Muule and Willem Halukonga, 4 Namibians and one Angolan who is also suspected of illegal immigration.

- Seizure of a pangolin armor and arrest of Martin Kapia in Katutura district.

Namibian Sun, October 27, 2021.³¹

October 19, 2021

Ndiyona District, East Kavango Region, Namibia

Arrest of Samuel Johannes for possession of a pangolin armor.

Namibian Sun, October 27, 2021.³²

October 29, 2021

Epukiro, Omaheke Region, Namibia

Arrest of Tjovanga Kamburona, Tjarirove Kamburona and Nguvarua Tjombe in possession of 2 live pangolins. 100 people were arrested for poaching or trafficking pangolins between January and September 2021.

The Namibian, October 13, 2021; Namibian Sun, November 4, 2021.³³

November 9, 2021

Oshikango, Ohangwena Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.

Arrest of Sam Kalwenya, Erastus Hailulu, Jose Kambinda and Baptisca Tchitongo, 2 Namibian nationals and 2 Angolan nationals. Seizure of 3 pangolin armors.

Namibian Sun, November 17, 2021.³⁴

November 15, 2021

Rundu, Kavango East Region, Namibia

Seizure of a pangolin armor and arrest of a 29-year-old man around 11:30 a.m. next to the Ngandu Safari Lodge.

Namibia News Digest, November 17, 2021.³⁵

November 19, 2021

Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia

A man was arrested while trying to sell 7 pangolins to an undercover police officer. The events occurred in the township of Katutura (meaning "the place where we don't want to live" in Herero). With a population of more than 200,000, this is where the Black population of Windhoek was displaced in the 1960s under apartheid.

Allgemeine Zeitung, November 23, 2021.³⁶

December 5 and 9, 2021

Oshikango, Ohangwena Region, and Kahenge, Kavango West Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.

- Arrest of Jeremia Abraham, George Immanuel, Tomas Fonesca, Fullipe Buali and Shikha Clauda, 2 Namibians and 3 Angolans, in possession of a pangolin armor.

- Arrest of Joao Kasanga, a 48-year-old Angolan national, in possession of 2 pangolins valued at 6,200 US\$.

Republikein, December 12, 2021; Namibian Sun, December 15, 2021; Namibia Daily News, February 20, 2022.³⁷

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

September 2021

Jiangjin District, Chongqing Municipality, China



An herbalist was sentenced to a 3-year suspended prison term and a fine of 10,000 yuan (1,545 US\$) for selling pangolin scales between March and December 2020. In her store, authorities seized 1.599 kg of scales estimated to be worth 88,064 yuan, which is 8,375 US\$/kg.

Mrs. "Yuan" allegedly bought the scales 3 months before pangolins were listed in Appendix I of protected animals in China. She called the scales "a wonderful medicine" even though Chinese pharmacopoeia had already excluded them from its remedies.

Chongqing Jiangjin Court, September 28, 2021.³⁸

November 5, 2021

Licunxiang, Ganzhou Prefecture, Jiangxi Province, China



Rumors of pangolin trading in Licunxiang. Police investigated and caught "Chen", "Liu" and "Hua" in possession of a pangolin. They were selling him for 6,000 yuan or 770 US\$. The victim had been captured in the forest. He weighed 9.4 kg and was 93 cm long from snout to tail.

Gongjiang Police Station, November 9, 2021.³⁹

SOUTHEASTERN ASIA

INDONESIA

August 7, September 16, October 27, 2021 and January 4, 2022

Luwuk Bunter and Mentawa Baru Hulu, East Kotawaringin Regency, Maduraejo and Mendawai, West Kotawaringin Regency, Central Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia



Simultaneous and coordinated seizures of about 22 kg of scales, 300 grams in Luwuk Bunter village and 5,900 grams in Maduraejo village, 11,880 grams in Mendawai and 4,500 grams in Mentawa Baru Hulu. The overall seizure is estimated to be worth 6 million rupiah/kg or 420 US\$/kg. Four suspects are in the nets of justice.

PROKAL.co, November 2, 2021; Borneo News, December 13, 2021, January 4 and 11, 2022.⁴⁰

September 29, 2021

Rengas Bandung, Muaro Jambi Regency, Jambi Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia



R.A., age 21, and W.A., age 26, were riding a motorcycle and taking a break at the gas station in Jalan Lintas Timur Rengas when they were surrounded by police, BKSDA and elements of the "Tiger Brigade." They were in possession of 8 kg of Sunda pangolin scales. One of the suspects is said to be an auxiliary police officer. They were sentenced to 5 years in prison and fined 100 million rupiah (6,975 US\$).

Antara, September 30, 2021; VIVA.co.id, October 1, 2021.⁴¹

October 18, 2021, and February 8, 2022

Nanga Taman, Sekadau Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia



S.K. and B.W., who were carrying 14 kg of scales taken from about 140 Sunda pangolins on a motorcycle, were ambushed by police on the Sekadau-Nanga Mahap Road. Sustyo Iriyono and Eduward Hutapea who are leading the investigation are convinced that the scales were going to be sent abroad. "We need to dismantle the whole chain from capture to export." The traffickers were sentenced to 5 years in prison and a fine of 50 million rupiah (3,470 US\$) or an additional month in prison for non-payment. Inilah Jogja, October 19, 2021; Kompas.com, October 20, 2021, and February 8, 2022.⁴²

November 2021

Matur and Palembang, Agam Regency and Bukittinggi, West Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Seizure of 2,600 grams of scales from N.H. (age 40), D.F. (age 37) and A.C. (age 31). Two accomplices, J.F. and R.N., are also in the hands of justice.

Kumparan, November 14, 2021, Padang Court, November 17, 2021.⁴³

November 10, 2021, and February 22, 2022

Suka Ramai, Kampar Regency, Riau Province, and Jambi, Jambi Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia



Sentencing of Tigor P. Tambunan to 2 years in prison, subject to adjustment, and a fine of 20 million rupiah (1,390 US\$) for holding, transporting and attempting to sell 8 kg of scales in November 2021. Jernih.ID, November 13, 2021; Jambikita.id, February 22, 2022.⁴⁴

November 25, 2021

Gegerung, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Seizure of 36.7 kg of Sunda pangolin scales and 2 arrests in front of Bahyung Coffee. The operation was carried out by elements of the Rapid Response Force (Satuan Polisi Reaksi Cepat), also known as Tiger Brigade and officers of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. The seller's motorcycle was also seized.

Kompas.com, November 27, 2021.⁴⁵

MALAYSIA

October 12 and 15, 2021

Sibu, State of Sarawak, Malaysia



Sentencing of Andrew Talie (age 34) and an 18-year-old young man to one month in prison and a fine equal to 240 US\$ with an additional month in prison in the case of non-payment. They were holding and transporting 4,468 Sunda pangolin scales alongside Jalan Tanah Wang. The Borneo Post, October 15, 2021.⁴⁶

VIET NAM

September 7, 2021

Dien Bien Phu, Dien Bien Province, Viet Nam. Border with Laos.

Dao Huy Thanh and Lo Van Hon were transporting 2 adult pangolins by motorcycle to a sale and tasting venue. One of the pangolins was riddled with rubber bullets and in a very precarious state, but thanks to the care of Save Vietnam's Wildlife veterinarians, the bullets were successfully extracted.

Bao Tin tuc - TTXVN, September 7, 2021; Save Vietnam's Wildlife, October 21, 2021.⁴⁷

September 10, 2021 and February 2022

Tuy Hoa, Phu Yen Province, Viet Nam

Seizure from Nguyen Sang Lan of 400 grams of Sunda pangolin scales that he intended to sell via the Internet. He was caught in the act by a patrol on Can Vuong Street. He was about to meet an alleged buyer who was none other than a cyber policeman. He was sentenced to a one-year prison term.

ENV, September 14, 2021.⁴⁸



September 16, 2021

Bac Kan Province, Viet Nam

Four traffickers were arrested on their way to China with 4 pangolins in an iron basket. They had to make an extra trip of several hours to transfer them from the Covid-19 red zone in Hanoi in the north to the Ninh Binh green zone in the south. One of the pangolins was in very bad shape. Several scales were missing on the tail. Necrosis was spreading. He died en route.

Save Vietnam's Wildlife, September 17 and 18, 2021; ENV, September 21, 2021.⁴⁹



September 21, 2021

Bo Y Border Gate, Kon Tum Province, Viet Nam. Border with Laos.

In her car, Mrs. Nguyen Thi Vui was carrying half a kg of raw gold worth 700 million dong (30,715 US\$) divided into 5 ingots. Under the front passenger seat, there was a dead pangolin ready to be cooked. Like the gold, he was smuggled from Laos.

Ho Chi Minh City Police Newspaper, Sept. 22, 2021.⁵⁰



November 4 and 6, 2021

Nghi Xa and Nghi Van, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

Successive rescues of 3 pangolins weighing an average of 7 kg on board the motorcycles of Hoang Quoc Dung and Bui Van Ky, who came from the border with Laos. There, an individual pangolin is sold for around 10 million dong (440 US\$).

Bao Nghe An, November 8, 2021.⁵¹

November 30, 2021

Dak Lak Province, Viet Nam

She had bought the 2.9 kg Sunda pangolin "from strangers" and was transporting him on her motorcycle. She was intercepted by the police of Dak Lak and sentenced to a suspended prison term of one year and 3 months. ENV, December 22, 2021.⁵²



SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

September 1, 2021

Midiakia, Kandhamal District, State of Odisha, India

Ten forest rangers from Baliguda, some of whom pretended to be buyers, arrested Midiakia Bhimsen Bada-set from Parigad village, Sitanshu Mukhi from Tikabali, Mahadev Beherdalai from Mahasingha and Sukadev Digal from Jangugan. They rescued a 10 kg, 1.05-meter pangolin. KalingaTV, September 1, 2021.⁵³

September 2, 2021

Dhopave, Ratnagiri District, State of Maharashtra, India

Arrest of Mahesh Mahipat Pawar, Sandesh Shashikant Pawar and Milind Jadhav. Rescue of a pangolin. Seizure of a car.

The Times of India, September 4, 2021; Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), September 6, 2021.⁵⁴

September 9, 2021

Dhanubhanga, Goalpara District, State of Assam, India

Three traffickers arrested; a pangolin freed from the plastic bag they were confining him in. Successful operation by the WCCB and the Forest Department. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), September 10, 2021.⁵⁵

September 15, 2021

Raipur, Raipur District, State of Chhattisgarh, India

WCCB policemen arrest ... a fellow policeman in possession of 3.5 kg of scales which he was trying to sell. Jitendra Koch, a native of Madhya Pradesh, was an agent of the CISF (Central Industrial Security Force) at Swami Vivekananda Airport.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of India, September 16, 2021; The New Indian Express, September 16, 2021; Live Hindustan, November 9, 2021.^{56 and 57}

September 24, 2021

Anandapura, Uttara Kannada District, State of Karnataka, India

Not acting by chance, the Virajpet Flying Forest Brigade rescued a pangolin, apprehended 3 men and seized a Maruti Omni van.

Star of Mysore, September 26, 2021.⁵⁸

Saturday, October 2, 2021

Ratnagiri District, State of Maharashtra, India

One bag. 4.3 kg of scales. One motorcycle. Rakesh Dhulap, 27, is in police custody until Tuesday.

The Times of India, October 4, 2021.⁵⁹

October 3, 2021

Banawali, Bijnor District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Fifteen people were arrested on Sunday night. An underground meeting was in progress. Three conspirators managed to escape. Six came from Bihar, one from Haryana. The others were locals. At the heart of the scene was a live pangolin. The rural police rescued him and seized 3 cars, 11 phones, and 3 USB flash drives.

Dainik Jagran, October 5, 2021; The Times of India, October 5, 2021; Times Now, October 5, 2021.⁶⁰

October 5, 2021

Bhubaneswar, Khordha District, State of Odisha, India

Arrest of 2 individuals and seizure of 2.18 kg of scales by WCCB, police and Forest Department in the State capital.

WCCB, October 8, 2021.⁶¹

October 7, 2021

Khordha District, State of Odisha, India

The OD 24 A 5569 -registered Tata car was on the NH-16 road when it was stopped by the Special Task Force. A live pangolin was released, and the 2 passengers were handcuffed.

Odisha TV, October 8, 2021.⁶²

October 8, 2021

Maharapadar, Balangir District, State of Odisha, India

Foresters from Khaprakhol and Lathor had disguised themselves as buyers. The fake deal took place in an open field. The sellers are in custody. The pangolin has been released.

KalingaTV, October 9, 2021.⁶³

October 18, 2021

Chikili, Nabarangpur District, State of Odisha, India

"We launched a sudden raid while the poachers were waiting for a customer. We have rescued the male pangolin and have arrested 4 people involved in the case," says the district Assistant Forest Conservator.

Odisha TV, October 19, 2021.⁶⁴

October 21, 2021

Santipur, Kokrajhar District, Assam State, India

Prompted by a tip-off from the WCCB border unit, elements of the 6th SSB battalion assisted by forest guards seized a live pangolin and arrested 3 traffickers near the village market on an island in the Brahmaputra River.

Sashastra Seema Bal, October 21, 2021; Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), October 22, 2021.⁶⁵

October 22, 2021

Nagarabhavi, Bangalore Urban District, State of Karnataka, India

They had heard that pangolin scales were in high demand during the Covid-19 pandemic and that it was the right time to sell the 8.2 kg of scales they had been accumulating. Their buyer lived near the university. Ibrahim and Mariswamy were arrested before they even got there.

The Hindu, Oct. 22, 2021; Deccan Herald, Oct. 23, 2021.⁶⁶

November 2, 2021

Matigara, Darjeeling District, State of West Bengal, India

Seizure of 5 kg of scales valued at 500,000 rupees (6,678 US\$ or 1,335 US\$/kg). Two men on a motorcycle were arrested. They will remain in custody for 14 days. Two other motorcyclists fled the scene.

The Telegraph India, November 4, 2021.⁶⁷

November 3, 2021

Harihar, Davangere District, State of Karnataka, India

The break in the roadside dhaba was not lucky for 18 customers who were eating. In their 2 vans, 5 bags containing 67 kg of scales were seized. The gang is responsible for the death of 200 pangolins, provided that they do not hold any other stock.

The New Indian Express, November 4, 2021.⁶⁸

November 4, 2021

Jamapalli, Bargarh District, State of Odisha, India

Badal Baria is caught red-handed transporting a live pangolin.

KalingaTV, November 4, 2021.⁶⁹

November 6, 2021

Dhaligao, Chirang District, State of Assam, India

The trio is of a higher caliber. They are part of a network that stretches from Assam to West Bengal. The 3 men fell into the trap of plainclothes policemen who offered to buy a live pangolin for the high price of 10 million rupees which is 133,500 US\$!

Guwahati Plus, November 6, 2021; WCCB, November 8, 2021.⁷⁰

November 9, 2021

Mayanguri, Jalpaiguri District, State of West Bengal, India

Live pangolin seized; one person arrested by WCCB investigators supported by the district forestry division.

WCCB, November 10, 2021.⁷¹

November 16, 2021

Dhalapathar, Khordha District, State of Odisha, India

Seizure of 4 kg of scales. Two arrests. Three teams of foresters in civilian clothes brought down the 2 poachers in the trap. Two acted as buyers. Others were ready to cover the buyers when the sellers were arrested. Even more foresters waited at a distance, ready to intercept the runaways if the deal went bad.

Ommcom News, November 17, 2021.⁷²

November 17, 2021

Jakikia, Kandhamal District, State of Odisha, India

Two arrests. Rescue of a live pangolin. Baliguda Division Foresters are on alert.

Ommcom News, November 18, 2021.⁷³

Night of November 18 to 19, 2021

Karanjia, Mayurbhan District, State of Odisha, India

Police on Wednesday night said they arrested 14 dealers in possession of a "huge quantity" of scales at a motorcycle and bicycle store while they were negotiating with street vendors. The value of the seizure is said to be around 40 million rupees or more than 534,000 US\$!

Prameya News, November 11, 2021; KalingaTV, November 19, 2021.⁷⁴

November 20, 2021

Sashipur Border Outpost, Chirang District, State of Assam, India. Border with Bhutan.

The young male seized by SSB elements could have disappeared into Bhutan, whose border is 500 meters away, and met a bad fate in China. He was handed over to the forest post of Amteka. No arrests were made.

Sashastra Seema Bal, November 20, 2021.⁷⁵

November 21, 2021

Odlabari, Jalpaiguri District, State of West Bengal, India

Seizure of 2.1 kg of pangolin scales and one spotted deer (*Axis axis*) skin found in an SUV. Bishnu intended to smuggle them to Nepal.

The Telegraph India, November 22, 2021.⁷⁶

November 25, 2021

Mahuldia, Mayurbhanj District, State of Odisha, India

Odisha Special Task Force rescued a pangolin from imminent death and arrested Nilamani Dehury on Satkosia-Nalda road.

Odisha TV, November 25, 2021.⁷⁷

December 11, 2021

Malbazar, Jalpaiguri District, State of West Bengal, India

Seizure of a pangolin armor with all its scales. Two arrests.

WCCB, 13 December 2021.⁷⁸

December 18, 2021

Bhanupratappur, Kanker District, State of Chhattisgarh, India

Seizure of 53 kg of scales, plus cash and 6 phones in a luxury SUV that was heading to Kanker, which has a population of over 37,000. Six arrests were made. The Free Press Journal, December 18, 2021.⁷⁹

December 30, 2021

Jubaguda, Kandhamal District, State of Odisha, India

Rescue of a 91-cm-long live female pangolin. Two arrests. Odisha is a cursed place for pangolins. Many are rescued by the STF or forest officials but many more are captured in the secrecy of the forests, scalded in pots, scaled with the family or kept alive and force-fed to be sold at restaurants.

KalingaTV, December 31, 2021; Orissa Post, December 31, 2021.⁸⁰

PAKISTAN

Beginning of December 2021

Abbottabad, Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

1.3 kg of scales found in the hands of 4 traffickers who were fined 330,000 rupees (1,880 US\$).

Dawn, December 12, 2021.⁸¹



PANGOLINS, FELINES / ELEPHANTS / RHINOS

AFRICA

UGANDA

December 23, 2021

Nakalama, Central Region, Uganda

Gasama Sikhou, a Senegalese shopkeeper, is in trouble in Uganda. On the eve of Christmas and the festive season, the police discovered and seized 8 raw tusks (50 kg), 800 kg of pangolin scales and a tortoiseshell mask. The total value is estimated at 700 million shillings or 198,000 US\$.

NTV Uganda, January 3, 2022; New Vision, January 5, 2022.¹



AMERICA AND AFRICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

OPERATION KULUNA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

November 3, 2021

Seattle, State of Washington, United States of America, and Democratic Republic of the Congo

"Herdade Lokua, 23, and Jospin Mujangi, 31, of Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), were arrested on November 3 outside of Seattle, Washington, and were indicted by a federal grand jury for conspiracy, money laundering, smuggling and Lacey Act violations for trafficking elephant ivory and white rhinoceros horn from DRC to Seattle.

In August and September, 2020, the defendants sent 3 shipments containing a total of about 22 kg of ivory by air freight to Seattle. In May 2021, they sent another package with approximately 2.25 kg of rhinoceros horn. At the same time, the defendants conspired to conduct large transactions via ocean freight, offering the buyer more than two tonnes of elephant ivory, one tonne of pangolin scales, and multiple intact rhinoceros horns. On November 2, they arrived in Washington State to negotiate the details of such a deal and were arrested in Edmonds. In order to conceal the tusks and horn, Lokua and Mujangi had them cut into smaller pieces which were painted black. They were then mixed with ebony wood to avoid detection by customs authorities. The packages were all declared as "wood" with values between 50-60 US\$. The buyer paid the defendants 14,500 US\$ (or 660 US\$/kg for 22 kg) for the ivory and 18,000 US\$ (or 8,000 US\$/kg for 2.25 kg) for the horn. Lokua and Mujangi also sold 25 kg of pangolin scales to a U.S. buyer but ultimately did not ship them.

Immediately after the arrests, the task force in DRC acted on information provided by HSI (Homeland Security Investigation)-Seattle to seize 938 kg of ivory and 34 kg of pangolin scales in Kinshasa worth approximately 3.5 million US\$."

US Department of Justice, November 8, 2021.²

ASIA

CHINA

November 1, 2021

Beijing Municipality, China

When leaving an Ethiopian Airlines flight from Addis Ababa, Sun (fictitious name) attempted to smuggle 2 carved ivories weighing 83.95 grams valued at 3,497 yuan or 540 US\$ and 26.68 kg of pangolin scales valued at 166,730 US\$ or 6,250 US\$/kg. Sun stated that the scales were to be used for treatment for his 90-year-old mother, expressed regret for no longer being able to support his parents and 2 daughters. Acknowledging that Sun was a first-time offender, that he pleaded guilty, that he repented and that one of his daughters immediately paid the criminal fine of 60,000 yuan, the court said it showed leniency in sentencing him to 5 years and 6 months in prison.

China Court, November 3, 2021.³



INDONESIA

December 2, 2021

Agam Regency, West Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Destruction by fire of tiger bones and pangolin scales after 3 seizures and exhaustion of procedures in Agam and West Pasaman regencies. The destruction of evidence was carried out under the supervision of judicial and police personnel and was recorded in a report.

Tribun Padang, December 3, 2021.⁴



For sale in France, rhinoceros foot mounted as an ashtray
and elephant foot mounted as a tray.
Sold at auction for 500 € in June 2022.
Robin des Bois Archives

ELEPHANTS



African savannah elephant (*Loxodonta africana*). Photo Larry Swift

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

The months of September to December 2021 are characterised by active pan-African poaching divided between young elephant tusks and big old tusks. International smuggling has been paralysed by the suspension of maritime logistics corridors, but the seizures of 456 kg of raw ivory (with 6 tonnes of pangolin scales) in Viet Nam, January 2022, and 6 tonnes of raw ivory (with 29 kg of rhino horns and suspected farmed tiger canines) in Malaysia, July 2022, show that destocking is underway and "business" is picking up. With the seizure of 938 kg of ivory in November 2021 and 1,500 kg in May 2022, the Democratic Republic of the Congo confirms its major role as a reservoir of undeclared raw ivory.

The Covid-19 biennial has put elephants under stress in Asia. They die by electrocution in the fences that protect crops. The tusks are sometimes cut up and buried for resale in future years. Fields become fortresses. In Bangladesh, more than 100,000 encroachers have taken over 100,000 hectares of forest that were the historic home of the country's 200-300 elephants.

On the Trail n°34

Black market raw ivory quotation from media or official sources The values were estimated at the time of the seizures

Value of 1kg of raw ivory

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref. (year)
Africa	Kenya	900	28 (2021)
	Tanzania	1,220	62 (2021)
	Zimbabwe	170	66, 68, 70 (2021)
		165	69 (2021)
Asia	China	1,100	83 (2021)
	India	1,185-1,220	161 (2021)
		333	170 (2021)

NORTHERN AFRICA

EGYPT

Mid-October 2021

Cairo International Airport, Governorate of Cairo, Egypt

Seizure of ivory rosaries and 223 ivory sticks from the luggage of 2 Syrian passengers disembarking from an Egypt Air flight from Beirut.

Al-Masri al-youm, October 20, 2021.¹

WESTERN AFRICA

COTE D'IVOIRE

Sunday, October 31, 2021

Abidjan, Abidjan Autonomous District, Côte d'Ivoire

Eventful seizure in a hotel of 11 tusks, including 7 from baby elephants. Arrest of 4 individuals, including a former member of the National Assembly. The UCT (Unité de lutte contre la Criminalité Transnationale organisée) and the CCDO (Centre de Coordination des Décisions Opérationnelles) separately claim ownership of the operation. The ivory is believed to have come from Burkina Faso.

Afrique Sur 7, November 9, 2021.²

November 19 and 30, 2021

Treichville, Abidjan Autonomous District, Côte d'Ivoire

Seizure at the jeweller's of 2 engraved tusks, 17 elephant hair bracelets, a complete tail awaiting hair removal, 12 bundles of hair ready to be mounted as jewellery, 8 rings, records of sales between 1999 and 2018 and a leopard (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) tooth. Chibre Parfait Gueye claims to bring the hair from Cameroon. He was only sentenced to a 12-month suspended prison term and a fine of 300,000 CFA francs (530 US\$).

EAGLE, November 24, 2021; EAGLE Côte d'Ivoire, November 2021.³



LIBERIA

October 9 or 10, 2021

Lofa County, Liberia

Wologizi Park Director reveals that earlier this month, 2 elephants were fatally poached. Two men were arrested and a third is on the run. They did not have time to take the tusks. According to ELRECO (Elephant Research and Conservation), there are 350 to 400 forest elephants in the country. Wologizi Park is located in northern Liberia near the border with Guinea. It is home to elephants, hippos and chimpanzees.

Eyewitness News (with AFP), October 11, 2021.⁴

SENEGAL

September 19, 2021

Blaise Diagne International Airport, Diass, Thiès Region, Senegal

Seizure of 5 elephant ivory bracelets from a Chinese traveler on an Air France flight going to China. Financial transaction of 1.08 million CFA francs (1,940 US\$). The NGO EAGLE Senegal provided its expertise to identify the ivory and carry out the operation.

EAGLE Senegal, September 2021.⁵

CENTRAL AFRICA

CAMEROON

October 18, 2021

South Region, Cameroon

On appeal, Jean Paul Mah Mvomo and Adamou Pekassa were sentenced to 6 months in prison, fined 1.8 million CFA francs (3,200 US\$) and ordered to pay 66.457 million CFA francs (118,000 US\$) in damages. The courts consider they are both the only responsible for poaching 81 elephants, transporting 216 tusks or sections of tusks and 81 elephant tails (see "On the Trail" n°19 p. 101).

Colonel Ango Ango escaped conviction. His Toyota Fortuner bearing the marks of the gendarmerie was used as a transport vehicle. Ango Ango was already on the scene when the Djoum Reserve brigade arrived at Minko'o to search the vehicle. On the other hand, on June 9, 2019, the U.S. Department of State made public the decision to ban his entry into the United States, justifying this decision by the determination to fight corruption and transnational trafficking of live wildlife or their parts. =>



The excerpts from judgment n°130/COR of July 3, 2018 handed down by the court in Djoum show how Colonel Ango Ango managed to extricate himself from a very compromising situation and avoid an indictment and conviction that would have been infamous for the corps, which he was a prominent member of. His regalian mission consisted, among other things, of fighting against intense ivory trafficking in the southern region (see "On the Trail" n°1 p. 29, n°2 p. 56, n°6 p. 74, n°7 p. 79, n°13 p. 89, p. 90, n°16 p. 80, n°17 p. 98, n°21 p. 90).

During the night of December 11 to 12, 2018, the Dja Biosphere Reserve antenna in Djoum received information that a large shipment of ivory tips was circulating on the Djoum-Oveng road. A mission was immediately formed. The first team travelled on a borrowed motorcycle, while the second, composed of six members, set off in the official vehicle. A thorough search of the first car was unsuccessful. Two individuals were on board. A second large vehicle approached and with a set of headlights, the driver was asked to stop. He pretended to comply but forced the roadblock. The officers returned to their base and during the debriefing received another phone call. The informant on the phone demanded a fee of one million CFA francs (1,735 US\$). He was assured that he would be paid and said that the getaway vehicle was in a pygmy camp in Minko'o, 3 km from town. The police raided Minko'o and found an empty Toyota Fortuner with military registration, fully enclosed except for the rear trunk, hidden in the bushes. They discovered packages with ivory tips, elephant tails and a modern hunting weapon. "Responding to a gunshot summons, an individual emerged, was handcuffed and transferred to the service car." The fugitive presented himself as an officer of the gendarmerie with the rank of colonel and declared his name as Jean Claude Ango Ango upon arrival at the station.

Mah Mvomo claimed to have arrived in Djoum in the evening with Colonel Ango Ango, whose he drives for. He went out to look for mineral water in town, and met an acquaintance to whom he revealed that he had just lost his little sister and that he was short on money to participate in organizing the funeral. This acquaintance called on a third party and the third party offered him to transport by car parcels for 50,000 CFA francs (87 US\$) to solve his problem. Mah Mvomo returned to the home of his colonel boss, surreptitiously took the vehicle out and set off for Oweng. In a grove, his fellow traveller loaded packages in the back while instructing him not to look at the contents.

Adamou Pekassa claimed that at around 9:00 p.m. that night, while leaving a romantic walk, he met his friend Endeke Nnanga at the village of Minko'o and took him in his vehicle. In the village of Nkan, a suburb of Djoum, he was stopped by the eco-guards who searched the vehicle without finding anything suspicious. At around 3:00 a.m., he received a phone call from an unknown correspondent asking him to urgently go to the central market of Djoum where his store is located. Believing that it was a fire or a burglary, he decided to go out and at the level of the Dja biosphere which adjoins the market, he was arrested. He said he did not know Mah Mvomo.

Michel Aimé Pouna, in his capacity as head of the Dja Biosphere Reserve in Djoum, stated under oath that Pekassa, on the night of the event, had successively offered him 5, 8 and 11 million CFA francs (8,680, 13,890 and 19,100 US\$) in exchange for the release of the cargo, which he verbally admitted to owning.

The same Michel Aimé Pouna specified that not being a judicial police officer with special jurisdiction at the time of the events, he could not hear Colonel Ango Ango on the record.

Endeke Nnanga admitted that on the night of the events, he was indeed in his friend Pekassa's vehicle, that he knew Colonel Ango Ango, his uncle, very well. After his separation from Pekassa, he returned to his home in the city and could not be reached because he had forgotten his telephone in his village.

Questioned briefly and on the spot, and heard as a simple witness without a report, Colonel Ango Ango did not justify his presence at the scene by making clear and coherent statements. According to the minutes of the trial, he said that he wanted to help one of his nephews named Endeke Nnanga, that under his leadership, they went to the place where the Toyota was hidden, that he got Mah Mvomo out, that his nephew was in the company of a certain Pekassa, unknown to him, and that Mah Mvomo and Pekassa were the two co-owners of the shipment. The colonel then slipped away after having written his version of the facts on a piece of paper and leaving his military vehicle on the spot for an undetermined time. The precise inventory of the "goods" at the time of the facts was concluded on January 13, 2019, and it was determined there were 81 elephant tails and 216 tusks. The investigation file did not deem to cite the total weight of raw ivory or even to mention its origin.

Extract from the minutes of the clerk's office of the Court of First Instance of Djoum, judgment n°130/COR of July 3, 2018; Alwihda, July 13, 2019; LAGA, October 2021.⁶

November 17, 2021

Lobeke National Park, East Region, Cameroon. Border with Central African Republic.

The park covers more than 2,178 km². The park is home to 300 species of birds and almost as many butterflies, but Kalashnikov bullets also fly through the sky. Eight elephants have just been shot and stripped of their ivory. According to an official statement, 3 men, one shooter and 2 carriers, were arrested within hours. Lobéké is very close to other protected areas including Nouabalé-Ndoki in the Republic of the Congo and Dzanga-Sangha in the Central African Republic. The government fears a new epidemic of elephant poaching. It has announced the deployment of military reinforcements and eco-guards in the park. The park is permanently inhabited by the Baka, the indigenous people of the Congo Basin.

Voice of America, December 6, 2021; Le Bled Parle, December 7, 2021; Afrik 21, December 9, 2021.⁷

GABON

September 8, 2021

Mouila, Ngounié Province, Gabon

This is the transnational timber company. Alex Abaou, a Filipino citizen, and Jean Baptiste Mezeme Mba, a Gabonese citizen, both employees of the Chinese company Mont Pelé Bois, used a work vehicle to transport and trade 4 tusks to Mouila. Two of the tusks were from elephant calves a few months old. They were received by a welcoming committee of the judicial police, Water and Forests, and Conservation Justice.

The Chinese company Mont Pelé Bois in Mokoko Mbaka was established in the province of Nyanga during the summer of 2021, in the midst of the Covid crisis. The prefect, the village chiefs, and the "bigwigs" of the Water and Forestry Department had all considered the arrival of the Chinese investor to be a breath of fresh air which would create jobs. But, even before exporting moabi logs and other species, the employees of Mont Pelé Bois were trying to export ivory.

7Jours Info, September 9, 2021; Conservation Justice, September 14, 2021; EAGLE, September 15, 2021.⁸



FAMILY AFFAIRS

September 14 and 15, 2021

Baposso, Likokodiba and Mouloundou Department, Ogooué-Lolo Province, and Moanda, Haut-Ogooué Province, Gabon

This is the story of a whole family united by the bonds of poaching. Brothers-in-law, nephews, a mistress, uncles, and probably the elders who remained in the shadows were all involved. They poached, cut up the raw ivory, and rode motorcycles or taxi-buses between Bambidie-village, Moanda, and the hotels of Mulundu to find buyers or people who would commit to finding buyers.

Gervais Bamdjogo, alias Koko and Ralph Ngayikoukoudié, shot an elephant on the edge of Likokodiba. Alain Moukombou and Romuald Kassa were disturbed by the judicial police and the wildlife brigade of Ndangui in a hotel room. They had about 20 pieces of raw ivory on their bed. When reconstructed, the puzzle revealed 6 elephant tusks. A new search turned up 14 pieces of raw ivory from 4 elephants.

Gabonreview, September 16, 2021; EAGLE, September 17, 2021; Conservation Justice, September 23, 2021.⁹

September 29, 2021

Kango, Estuaire Province, Gabon

Yvon Mabicka Mougongou, Paulin Mangui, Jan René Mavitsi and Fernand Yombet are under arrest. They were in possession of 4 elephant tusks cut into sections. In one month, 10 ivory traffickers were put out of business. The gendarmerie, the judicial police, and the Water and Forestry Department are working hard with the support of the NGO Conservation Justice.

Conservation Justice, September 30, 2021.¹⁰

October 7, 2021

Makabana, Nyanga Province, Gabon

The 2 Malians were on a trip to Gabon with 6 ivory tips and elephant organs in their bags. Intellivoire, October 7, 2021.¹¹

October 28, 2021

Mitzic, Woleu-Ntem Province, Gabon

Jean Baptiste Essono Mba, age 24, known under the pseudonym of "Apostle," was working in Mitzic as a security guard. In the hotel around 9:00 a.m., he was deceived by the DGR (Direction Générale des Recherches), the agents of the Water and Forests of Woleu-Ntem and Conservation Justice. In a green bag, there were 2 baby elephant tusks weighing 1.45 kg each that he claims to have "picked up" at the edge of a river near his village.

EAGLE, October 30, 2021; Conservation Justice, October 2021; Gabon Media Time, November 1, 2021.¹²

November 12, 2021

Nialy, Ngounié Province, Gabon

40 kg of tusks stolen from 5 elephants. Four arrests. The suspects were presented to the prosecutor in Mouila, the province's capital.

China Internet Information Center (with Xinhua), November 12, 2021.¹³

November 19, 2021 and January 7, 2022

Makokou, Ogooué-Ivindo Province, Gabon



Léon Désiré Mbazza and Jean Remy Nzambe were in possession of 2 tusks. They were sentenced to 6 months in prison, 3 of which are suspended, and a fine of 100,000 CFA francs (170 US\$). They were also each ordered to pay 500,000 CFA francs (860 US\$) in damages. Conservation Justice participated in the legal follow-up of the case.

Conservation Justice, November 2021 and January 2022.¹⁴

November 19, 22 and 23, 2021 and January 7, 2022

Port-Gentil, Ogooue-Maritime Province, Gabon



The Cameroonian citizen nicknamed "Eddy" and a Nigerian citizen nicknamed "Polo" were caught in a hotel with 2 ivory tusks. They declared that they belonged to a man nicknamed "Crayon" who, when arrested in the old port of Port-Gentil, said that the tusks were in fact the property of Jean Claude Mavoungou Mvoubou, who was in turn arrested in the Mini Prix district. The ivory, weighing 9 kg, was seized and the 4 suspects were kept in custody by the Ocean Gendarmerie and then transferred to the Special Court of Libreville where they were arrested.

Mavoungou Mvoubou was sentenced to 12 months in prison, 6 of which were suspended, and "Eddy," "Polo," and "Crayon" each received 24 months in prison, 12 of which were suspended. They also must pay a fine equal to 3,200 US\$ and damages of 8,640 US\$.

EAGLE, November 20, 2021; Conservation Justice, November 21, 2021 and January 2022; Gabonreview, November 22, 2021.¹⁵

November 25, 2021

Port of Owendo, Estuaire Province, Gabon

Perhaps the investigation will reveal which ship and to which country the ivory, had it not been seized, was headed to. Owendo is Gabon's lumber port and most traffic goes to China. The 2 Nigerian dockworkers had just received a delivery of 6 tusks at the port. They are suspected of being regular wildlife trafficking intermediaries.

Yecllo.ci, November 26, 2021.¹⁶

December 11, 2021

Lambaréné, Moyen-Ogooué Province, Gabon

The alleged fishermen of Lake Mandje were dragging 6 sections of raw ivory in a remote corner of the city when they were surrounded by a joint team of the Judicial Police and Water and Forests, supported by lawyers from Conservation Justice. The 14.5 kg of ivory was secured and the 2 individuals, Prime Ndambaye and Fred Massamba, were taken into custody. Shortly thereafter they broke down the cell door and the next day only Massamba was caught. The reconstructed puzzle of the 6 sawed pieces corresponds to a pair of tusks. EAGLE, December 11, 2021; Conservation Justice, December 12, 2021; Gabonreview, December 13, 2021.¹⁷

December 24, 2021

Ntoum, Estuaire Province, Gabon

Simon Pierre Mezui M'Ella and Cleve Guinzinga were arrested by the OCLAD (Office Central de Lutte Antidrogue) and the city police. Two raw ivory tusks are in the car. They weigh 3.975 kg. Mezui M'Ella is put under arrest. Guinzinga is released. He was allegedly unaware of the shipment.

Conservation Justice, December 2021.¹⁸

December 30, 2021

Makokou, Ogooué-Ivindo Province, Gabon

It's getting crazy in Gabon. Traffickers are everywhere, and so are the police. On the last day of the year, Mrs. Ndjamboli was arrested by the OCLAD in possession of 2 tusks. They were seized and the trafficker should be presented to the prosecutor of the special court in Libreville, 600 km away.

Conservation Justice, December 2021; EAGLE, December 2021.¹⁹

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

September 4, 2021

Butembo, North Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Thanks to cooperation between the forces of Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, 2 men of Congolese origin carrying 50 kg of raw ivory were arrested in Butembo near the border between the 2 countries. The reconstructed puzzle of the 9 pieces of tusk reveals that 2 elephants were poached, probably in the Virunga National Park.

Adams Cassinga, September 5, 2021; Environews RDC, September 5, 2021; Journal des Nations, September 6, 2021; Conserv Congo, September 8, 2021.²⁰

November 10-11, 2021
Beni, North Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo



100 kg of raw ivory. Four arrests. The military justice system (a state of emergency is in force in the province) handed over to ICCN all the ivory that has been seized over several months. This return to the civil authority in charge of the application of the CITES Convention in the Democratic Republic of Congo was achieved through the intermediary of the “green lawyers” of ACEDH (Alerte Congolaise pour l’Environnement et les Droits de l’Homme) and Conserv Congo. Adams Cassinga, November 10 and December 11, 2021; Conserv Congo, November 10 and December 11, 2021.²¹

FAMILY AFFAIRS
December 9, 2021
Goma, North Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Border with Rwanda.
 Seizure of almost 100 kg of raw ivory. Arrest of a man and a woman. They are believed to be linked to rebels operating in the Virunga Park. Adams Cassinga, December 9, 2021; Conserv Congo, December 11, 2021; 7sur7, December 15, 2021.²²



REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

October 11, 2021 and February 19, 2022
Between Mbouambé and Léfini, Department of Pool, Brazzaville, Department of Brazzaville, and Makoua, Department of Cuvette, Republic of the Congo

- Recipient.
 Between Mbouambé and Léfini, during a routine check, water and forest agents found a cooler containing raw ivory and 3 elephant tails on a bus coming from Makoua bound for Brazzaville. Since no passenger claimed ownership, they decided to board the bus and track down the cooler. When they arrived at the Mikalou bus station in the sixth district of Brazzaville, this time they got hold of the recipient of the cooler who, unsuspecting, was caught in the act with his elephant relics.



- The sender.
 Four months later, on February 19, 2022, a man was arrested by the police in Makoua and placed under arrest in Brazzaville on February 24. He was accused of serial poaching, transport and attempting to sell a fully protected animal species, from head to tail. The 2 criminals are facing 2 to 5 years in prison. Groupe Congo Médias, October 25, 2021; Projet d’appui à l’Application de la Loi sur la Faune Sauvage (PALF), October 2021 and February 2022; First Médiac, March 9, 2022.²³

December 23, 2021
Dolisie, Department of Niari, Republic of the Congo

Dieu Merci Ndinga Ignoumba is not a man like others. He is a pastor and his fellow trafficker is a military man. The 2 tusks, divided into 6 sections, were hidden in an army bag during their transfer from Mbiribi (on the border with Gabon), where Ngatse was stationed, to Dolisie. Joint operation of the gendarmerie, forestry agents with the support of PALF (Projet d’appui à l’Application de la Loi sur la Faune Sauvage). EAGLE, December 23, 2021; Polele-Polele, December 27, 2021; Projet d’appui à l’Application de la Loi sur la Faune Sauvage (PALF), November 2021.²⁴

KENYA

September 16, 2021

Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya

He was stabbed in the back. Anesthesia. Removal of the knife. Disinfection. Antibiotic spray. Revival antidote.

SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, September 2021.²⁵

September 25, 2021

Siana Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

The young male was at his worst. Lurking in a thicket, he bore 2 wounds on his hind legs. Under anesthesia, crews found a spear was thrown at his left knee and after gently turning the victim over, the same injury was located on his right knee. "His prognosis was considered grave and the team decided to stop his further suffering by administering euthanasia."

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, September 2021.²⁶

September 27, 2021

Mara Triangle, Narok County, Kenya

The tip of the arrow was barbed. Fortunately, it was not poisoned. It was located with a metal detector. It was removed with great difficulty from the left front carpal joint. After cleaning the wound, several antibiotics and anti-inflammatories were applied and injected. Favorable prognosis.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, September 2021.²⁷

October 4, 2021

Bungoma, Bungoma County, Kenya

A baby elephant tusk was in the clutches of James Wandili and Moses Crusho, who are suspected of being part of a transnational crime syndicate. The small animal was poached in eastern Uganda or in the forests of Mount Elgon in Kenya. The seizure weighs one kilo. It is estimated to be worth 100,000 shillings or 900 US\$.

Nation, October 4, 2021.²⁸

October 6, 2021

Dol Dol, Laikipia County, Kenya

The 4 men were transporting the 4 tusks of 2 adult elephants. A phone call put the KWS on their trail and they were quietly arrested in the early hours of this Wednesday. They were taken to the Nanyuki police station. "We want to ensure that anti-poaching activities are taking place," he said. "We'd rather see elephants than ivory," said Rose Malenya, a senior KWS officer in the county.

The Star, October 7, 2021.²⁹



"Hifadhi maisha ya wanyama wa porini uridhi wetu wa taifa" (in Swahili),
"Saving the lives of wild animals, our national commitment"

October 7, 2021

Mara Triangle, Narok County, Kenya

More traps than normal during the pandemic. People are hunting for bushmeat and the traps are mutilating young elephants.



- The calf was dragging the wire of a trap between his jaws. Unbearable in the short term. The mother refused to move away from him despite the movements of the helicopter. The crews were forced to anesthetize her while they manually restrained the baby elephant. The cable was cut, the head and ears were treated for scratches and disinfected. Then the mother was awakened and they both left.



- The baby elephant was doing badly. His only advantage was that he was in a large, caring family, which was also a disadvantage when it came to preparing for surgery. The teams had great difficulty in removing the herd. The trap wire was strangling the baby's neck. The trachea was perforated and 20% of the exhaled air was escaping. Favorable prognosis.



- The mother was very aggressive. The teams put her to sleep so that they could manually immobilize and lay down her cub to assess the extent of the damage. The trap wire was gripping the neck and at the same time the left front leg, making it difficult to remove. The numerous wounds were washed and disinfected. On the injured leg, maggots were already present. The baby elephant has come a long way. Favorable prognosis.



SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, Oct. 2021.³⁰

October 10, 2021

Lumo Conservancy, Taita Taveta County, Kenya



The female elephant calf was spotted by rangers at Taita Hills Sanctuary. A wire was strangling her. Under anesthesia, she was freed and given antibiotics. When she woke up, she was guided to her herd but the next day she got lost. She was directed to the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust orphanage.

SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2021.³¹

October 15, 2021

Meru National Park, Meru County, Kenya

Seizure of 4 tusks and a section. Two suspects were arrested. An expert report confirmed that it was elephant ivory.

SWT/KWS Meru Mobile Veterinary Unit, January 2022.³²

October 15, 2021

Pardamat Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

Favorable prognosis for an elephant. The arrowhead was removed from the top of the left front leg. It was not poisoned. The wound was treated.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2021.³³

October 17, 2021

Roka, Tsavo East National Park, Kenya



During an aerial survey north of Tsavo-East National Park, 2 decomposed elephant carcasses were spotted on the banks of the Tiva River. The exact cause of death cannot be explained, but the heads of the 2 elephants had been cut off and the tusks were missing. The remains were covered with branches. Poaching has been documented.

SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2021.³⁴

October 22, 2021

Taita Hills Sanctuary, Taita Taveta County, Kenya



The prognosis is favorable after the baby female elephant was isolated, anesthetized and the metal snare around her neck was removed. She got up, was guided back to her herd, and rejoined it peacefully.

SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2021.³⁵

October 24, 2021

Masai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya



Seizure of 51 kg of raw ivory divided into 7 sections. One man was arrested, and thanks to his confession an accomplice was caught.

Mara Elephant Project, November 5, 2021.³⁶

October 26, 2021

Samburu National Reserve, Samburu County, Kenya



The majestic "Sarara" is in danger, a spear is stuck in his stomach. The veterinary team of Samburu is immediately mobilized. The removal of the spear was not an easy task. After a few months of monitoring, Save the Elephants announces on social networks that "Sarara" is cured and that he is back on his feet.

Save the Elephants, December 5, 2021 and February 10, 2022.³⁷

November 1, 2021

Misuni, Makueni County, Kenya

The male is currently living on the community lands. There is not enough water left in the park. He was shot in the neck with a throwing weapon. He was saved by the syringe of an anaesthetic gun and the intervention of the veterinarian while his assistants were constantly watering the giant's ears. SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, Nov. 2021.³⁸

November 4, 2021

Kitani, Tsavo West National Park, Kenya

The male limps as he arrives near the Kitani Lodge watering hole. After drinking, he went as best he could to take refuge under a tree. He was anesthetized. His ears were sprayed during the whole operation. He had been hit with a spear in the right front leg, above the foot. The prognosis is favorable.

SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, Nov. 2021.³⁹

November 8, 2021

Teita Sisal Estate Sanctuary, Taita Taveta County, Kenya

Favorable prognosis. The female elephant calf was in the waterhole with 2 adult elephants. A purulent wound on her left flank was spotted by the guards and treated by the 4 veterinarians and assistants.

SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, Nov. 2021.⁴⁰

November 10, 2021

Mara Triangle, Narok County, Kenya

The prognosis is very guarded. The baby elephant is a major casualty of the trap war. He has scratches on his back. Predators began harassing him when he was in the trap's grip. He managed to get out at great cost. Half of the trunk is amputated. The wound on the right hind leg goes all the way to the tibia.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, Nov. 2021.⁴¹



November 12, 2021

Mara North Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

Etorphine works after 8 minutes. The fresh spear wound was washed and disinfected. After the injection of the revival antidote, he got up after 2 minutes and 30 seconds and rejoined his herd. The prognosis is favorable.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2021.⁴²



November 12, 2021

Mwea National Reserve, Embu County, Kenya



This is a survivor of the trap war. The wounds are not infected and the bleeding around the metatarsal joint of his left hind leg was still localized. It was the rangers' early warning that saved him.

SWT/KWS Mount Kenya Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2021.⁴³

November 14, 2021

Loisaba Conservancy, Laikipia County, Kenya

This one was shot by a rifle. He is limping with his left front leg. The bloody wound is located near the shoulder. It was cleaned, disinfected, sprayed with antibiotics and covered with green clay. The prognosis is not completely favorable. The joint was affected and in the medium-term, arthritis could set in.

SWT/KWS Mount Kenya Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2021.⁴⁴

November 16, 2021

Busia County, Kenya

Seizure of 6 sections of raw ivory weighing 14.5 kg. One arrest.

Mara Elephant Project, November 2021.⁴⁵

November 16, 2021

Namunyak Wildlife Conservancy, Samburu County, Kenya

He was shot by a rifle. The wound is deep. The bullet is lodged in 15 cm of superficial tissue. The shoulder joint was not affected. Prognosis favorable due to timely veterinary action.

SWT/KWS Mount Kenya Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2021.⁴⁶

November 23, 2021

Ithumba, Tsavo-East National Park, Kenya



The elephant tasked with the delicate mission of being a substitute mother for the orphaned elephant calves of the SWT (Sheldrick Wildlife Trust) returns to the enclosure with an arrow in her right rump. Operation successful, prognosis favorable. SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2021.⁴⁷

November 25, 2021

Buffalo Springs National Reserve, Isiolo County, Kenya

An adult elephant drinks from the Ewaso River. She swings from one front foot to the other. She sprays her belly with mud. Her gait is stiff and unusually slow. She has been put to sleep, examined and treated urgently. Her discomfort and behavior are attributed to a bullet that went into her left rump and could not be removed. After washing the wound, clay was injected and antibiotics and anti-inflammatories were sprayed. The evolution of the behavioral symptoms should be monitored if the elephant is relocated within a few days. Guarded prognosis.

SWT/KWS Meru Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2021.⁴⁸

November 25, 2021

Shaba National Reserve, Isiolo County, Kenya

The etorphine had its effect in 5 minutes. The elephant lay on the wrong side. It was difficult to access the bullet wound. With everyone's effort, it was possible to turn it over. The lameness was due to a bullet in the left front leg. The prognosis is favorable. There is no fracture.

SWT/KWS Mount Kenya Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2021.⁴⁹

December 10, 2021

Galana Ranch, Tana River County, Kenya

The elephant limps. He spends most of his time in a watering hole. He is trying to heal himself and relieve pain. Emergency intervention is requested by witnesses. 18 mg of etorphine in a syringer. The elephant collapses after 9 minutes. His ears were watered the whole time, which was essential on this very hot day. The left hind leg is purulent between the knee and the foot. The deep wound is due to a spear blow. The prognosis is guarded.

SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, December 2021.⁵⁰

December 13, 2021

Meru National Park, Meru County, Kenya

In this type of attack, deaths are usually sudden. In this particular case, the elephant ran away and her death from sepsis occurred long afterwards. The elephant died near a watering hole.



A large wound was discovered on her back. It was caused by a weapon throwing from a high point. The tip pierced the abdominal cavity.

SWT/KWS Meru Mobile Veterinary Unit, December 2021.⁵¹

December 14, 2021

Mara North Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

The tip of the arrow was stuck a few centimeters away from the right eye. Delicate and successful operation. Favorable prognosis.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, December 2021.⁵²

December 19, 2021

Lolldaiga Ranch, Laikipia County, Kenya

The adult elephant was hit in the rump by 2 bullets and veterinarians are having difficulty assessing the anatomical damage. The bullets were not removed. The wounds were treated. The prognosis is guarded.



SWT/KWS Meru Mobile Veterinary Unit, Dec. 2021.⁵³

December 26, 2021

Masai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya

The bullet wound is deep. It is on the knee joint of the left front leg. The prognosis is guarded.

Between September and December 2021, the whistleblowers, the KWS and the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust treated and, in most of the cases, rescued 25 elephants.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, Dec. 2021.⁵⁴

MALAWI

September 11, 2021

Mponda, Southern Region, Malawi

Police are searching for 2 gangsters who fled on a motorcycle in the middle of the night to Mozambique just before they were intercepted by police who had been informed of their suspicious presence by residents of Mponda. During the chase, they got rid of a bag that the rear passenger was carrying on his head. Inside were dozens of elephant molars, according to police spokeswoman Amina Tepani Daudi.

Malawi 24, September 12, 2021.⁵⁵



October 21, 2021
Between Kasungu and Kamboni, Central Region, Malawi



16 kg of raw ivory. Amin Makina, Kandodo Mwale and Boyce Banda were picked up on the road between Kamboni and Kasungu by an emergency roadblock after police received an informative message.

Malawi 24, October 23, 2021.⁵⁶

End of November 2021
Liwonde National Park, Southern Region, Malawi



The prognosis is favorable. Veterinarian Amanda Salb and her team mobilized in the emergency to remove the metal trap that encircled one of the elephant's legs. The purulent wound was cleaned and treated.

Lilongwe Wildlife Trust, November 30, 2021.⁵⁷

MOZAMBIQUE

End of October 2021
Mecula District, Niassa Province, Mozambique

Seizure of 2 elephant tusks weighing a total of 4.5 kg on the banks of the Lissiane River. The poachers had hidden them but they were discovered by villagers. They informed the border police.

Carta de Moçambique, October 29, 2021.⁵⁸

UGANDA

September 11, 2021
Between Entebbe and Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

The Subaru had been followed for several days on the outskirts of Kampala. When the suspects realized the trap, they broke through a roadblock on the Entebbe road and drove off the road after hitting several cars. John David Opio, a bit battered, was immediately arrested but Lieutenant Bright Saad Kakooza managed to escape. Inside the car wreck were 7 pieces of raw ivory weighing a total of 50 kg, an army uniform, bullets, a civil aviation pass (allowing free movement through Entebbe International Airport) and a cell phone.

NTV Uganda, Sept. 11, 2021; New Vision, Sept. 12, 2021.⁵⁹

October 8, 2021
Kiryandongo District, Western Region, and Nwoya District, Northern Region, Uganda

Two seizures on the same day.

- Two tusks weighing 25.5 kg each. One arrest.
- Seven sections of tusk weighing a total of 7 kg. One arrest.

Focused Conservation, October 15, 2021.⁶⁰

RWANDA

October 27, 2021
Kigali, Kigali City, and Rusizi District, Western Province, Rwanda



The Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB) arrested Murokozi Desire, Gisa Derrick and Kaburaburyo Cyriaqué, nationals of Burundi, and Nicodem Bagabo, a national of the Democratic Republic of Congo, as they attempted to smuggle 45 kg of raw ivory and some carved ivory, including bracelets, into Rwanda. Murokozi was driving a diplomatic vehicle of SINELAC (Société Internationale d'Electricité des Pays des Grands Lacs).

Rwanda Investigation Bureau, October 27, 2021.⁶¹

TANZANIA

September 8, 2021
Mitewa, Ruvuma Region, Tanzania

Seizure of 12 kg of raw ivory with a value equal 14,800 to US\$ or 1,220 US\$/kg. Two arrests.

The Guardian, September 11, 2021.⁶²

End of November 2021

Kakoi, Manyara Region, Tanzania

Seizure of 2 tusks in a private home by TAWA (Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority) and Tarangire National Park rangers. Only the wife of the alleged trafficker was present at the scene. Tarangire-Manyara is a sensitive area. Meat, zebra tails and striped pelts are as much in demand as ivory. Sensitive indeed, but also nibbled on from all sides by human activities of all kinds. "Encroachment of conservation areas is becoming notorious." "It is high time that the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism plants permanent beacons to mark and separate territories," says to Walter Pallangyo, manager of Chem-Chem Ecologde. The Guardian, November 26, 2021.⁶³

ZAMBIA

REPEATED OFFENSE

October 19-November 23, 2021

Livingstone, Southern Province, Zambia. Border with Zimbabwe.

Businessman Chrispin Chilufya was arrested with 193 kg of dried elephant skins. He was sentenced to 5 years in prison with hard labor. For evading court summonses after being arrested in possession of 241 kg of raw ivory in 2019 (see "On the Trail" n°25 p.85), he was sentenced to one year and 6 months in prison. The 2 sentences are combined.

Mwebantu, November 23, 2021.⁶⁴



Mid-December 2021

Lusaka, Lusaka Province, Zambia

Dorcas Nyondo, 46, mother of 11 children, was sentenced to 6 years in prison for the illegal possession of 30 kg of raw ivory. In the Carrousel shopping mall, she was trying to sell it with an accomplice who managed to escape. Judge Judith Chiyayika justified the severity of the sentence by pointing out that illegal possession of government trophies was on the rise and that there was a need to discourage would-be traffickers with deterrent sentences.

Zambia Daily Mail, December 20, 2021.⁶⁵



ZIMBABWE

Beginning of September 2021

Between Binga and Sibuya, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Nyoni from Bulubuza village was sitting in the bush 100 meters from the Binga-Sibuya road. When he saw the police, he tried to run away with 7 kg of ivory valued at 1,190 US\$ (170 US\$/kg). He was caught and taken into custody at Siabuwa police station.

The Standard, September 12, 2021.⁶⁶

September 15, 2021

Victoria Falls, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Arrest of 5 men aged 43 to 53. They claim to have "collected" ivory in the savannah. It is estimated to be worth 55,000 Zimbabwean dollars or 640 US\$. On the basis of 170 US\$/kg, the raw ivory seized would therefore weigh 3.76 kg. The Chronicle, October 5, 2021.⁶⁷

September 20, 2021

Saint Mary, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Arrest of Mr. Augustine Bokisi. He was illegally holding a tusk of ivory weighing 11.79 kg valued at 2,000 US\$ (170 US\$/kg). ZimNews, September 22, 2021; The Herald, September 24, 2021.⁶⁸

October 5, 2021

Victoria Falls, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Before auctioning off his old Toyota, Stanley Takavada either didn't remove 2 elephant tusks hidden under the back seat and in the spare wheel compartment, or he didn't know that someone had stashed them there without his knowledge. The buyer found them after towing the car to a garage and immediately informed the police before the seller called him to recover "2 things". Takavada was surrounded by police as he left the garage with 2 tusks weighing a total of 5.59 kg and worth 80,775 Zimbabwean dollars (930 US\$ or 165 US\$/kg) in his hands.

The Chronicle, October 15, 2021.⁶⁹

November 12, 2021

Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe

Appearance of Nkululeko Chuma and Tawenga Dandambira. They were transporting raw ivory valued at 2,500 US\$ and weighing 14.7 kg based on the country's current rate of 170 US\$/kg. The Herald, November 12, 2021.⁷⁰

November 2021

Tsholotsho District, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

The district is accused of selling off elephants. Each year, it grants the right to hunt 25 elephants to safari hunters. An elephant is usually sold for between 40,000 and 60,000 US\$. Lodzi Hunters and Mathuphula Safaris, citing the difficulty of bringing in international hunters in this Covid-19 year, have not agreed to pay more than 10,000 US\$. The 4 community leaders are usually part of the negotiations. They were excluded this year. Normally, the communities receive 60% of the revenue. There are rumors of corruption in the district. Several rural decision-makers bought cars right after the elephant sale as if they had simultaneously won a big prize.

The Chronicle, November 22, 2021.⁷¹

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

October 21, 2021

Stolznek Section, Southern Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

The body of a suspected poacher is discovered by rangers after a few hours of searching in a restricted area. A phone message had vaguely informed them of the victim's location. The man was trampled by an elephant, according to preliminary findings. Isaac Phaahla, a spokesman for the park says the tip was likely given by an accomplice. "No animal was killed in the immediate vicinity," he said. "Kruger National Park management continues to warn poachers that it is dangerous to hunt illegally in the park. Criminals stand to lose their lives and freedom." See about a similar event "On the Trail" n°25 p. 76. News24, October 22, 2021.⁷²

October 22, 2021

Phalaborwa, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Rescue by Elephants Alive, with the help of LEDET (Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism) and Foskor mine guards of a juvenile elephant whose leg was caught in a trap.

Phalaborwa Natural Heritage Foundation, October 24, 2021.⁷³



November 24, 2021

Balule Nature Reserve, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Rescue in the reserve of an adult elephant whose hind leg was deeply cut by a trap. Balule Nature Reserve, see "On the Trail" n°18 p. 108, n°19 p. 87, n°23 p. 104, p. 123, p. 124, n°24 p. 72, n°32 p. 77.

Ian Nowak, November 24, 2021.⁷⁴

December 13 and 14, 2021

Phalaborwa, Limpopo Province, South Africa

New intervention in Phalaborwa. Four rescuers take a break before waking up the bull elephant and freeing his hind leg from a nasty trap just above the foot.

Phalaborwa Natural Heritage Foundation, December 14, 2021.⁷⁵



BOTSWANA

Beginning of September 2021

Camp Elephant Sands, Central District, Botswana

Through an open letter to its "dear elephant friends", the Elephant Sands Eco Camp, while expressing respect for the government's decisions, laments that elephant hunting campaigns extend beyond designated areas and into private property.

"We would just like to tell the public we as Elephant Sands will fight till the bitter end for the elephants in the Elephant Sands area." "Even with Covid-19 financial struggles, we shall not be bought. Our motto is "where elephants rule" and Elephant Sands will always remain a safe haven for elephants." "In due course a further update will be given."

Elephant Sands, September 10, 2021.⁷⁶

September 23, 2021

Francistown, North East District, Botswana

Gaosego Seipato was caught in May 2019 with a 5.512-kg tusk in his luggage while attempting to run away from a police checkpoint between Matshelagabedi and the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) training center. Seipato pleads guilty and asks for leniency from the court. "I have no criminal record," he said. "I am asking the court to not send me to jail but instead to fine me, which will teach me a lesson in future that if I find a government trophy, I should immediately take it to the nearest police station."

The judgment was reserved. Seipato, age 36, living in Matsiloje is a "tenderpreneur." In some southern African countries including Botswana, a tenderpreneur is an intermediary linked to the government or the private sector who obtains contracts or wins tenders in order to facilitate the development of external services. =>

NAMIBIA

Tenderpreneur is a catch-all term for “tendering” and being a “contractor”. Some analysts consider that tenderpreneurs can be, if unchecked, actors of “kleptocracy”, a perversion of democracy that by manipulating legislative, executive and judicial powers contributes to the enrichment and supremacy of elites.

Mmegi, September 15, 2021.⁷⁷

Mid-November 2021

Francistown, North East District, Botswana

Poul Garirayi, a native of Zimbabwe, was sentenced to 2 years in prison for attempting to sell 5 tusks (total weight of 5.4 kg of raw ivory) of unknown origin on August 21 at Sunshine Plaza. He escaped a harsher sentence by making an act of contrition with great zeal and by putting forward his very old mother and his 3 children whom he alone feeds and educates. He received a prison sentence for entering Botswana illegally. The 2 sentences are combined. Garirayi said he also risked catching Covid in the overcrowded prison. On the other hand, this clever talker did not mention once any remorse towards the 3 elephants victims of his trafficking.

The Voice, November 19, 2021.⁷⁸



December 17, 2021

Botswana

Botswana is auctioning 8 hunting packages totalling 83 elephants. Safari organisers, if interested, must prove that they have sufficient experience in hunting elephants, are up-to-date with their tax obligations, employ professional hunters (preference will be given to national hunters), have no previous criminal record related to wildlife regulations and must pay a security deposit equal to 17,000 US\$ for each package.

The public information notice on the auction and registration of candidates was published in the official gazette on December 2, 2021. The auction will take place on December 17 and 18.

The NGO Future for Elephants explains its concern. “There is a great risk of negative effects on the gene pool of the animals, because usually the biggest and most magnificent elephants are hunted.” This is the 2nd auction of elephants (and other less iconic species) since the ban on sport hunting was lifted in 2019. It reportedly brought in 2 million US\$ for the government.

For Isaac Theophilus, director of the Botswana Wildlife Producers Association, “hunting is a management tool in wildlife conservation and those who are criticizing Botswana are not conservationists.”

Department of Wildlife and National Parks, December 2 and 17, 2021; Daily Sabah (with DPA), December 13, 2021.⁷⁹

October 19, 2021

Omakange, Kunene Region, Namibia

Tjipjueja herunga and Eino Jeetheni arrested in possession of 2 tusks.

According to official reports, 5 elephants have been poached since the beginning of the year and 64 suspects have been arrested in connection with elephant poaching or ivory trafficking.

Namibia Economist, October 8, 2021; The Namibian, October 13, 2021; Namibian Sun, October 27, 2021.⁸⁰

December 9 and 10, 2021

Swakopmund, Erongo Region, and Rundu, Kavango East Region, Namibia

- Arrest of 71-year-old Petrus Steenkamp in a restaurant with 4 tusks. He attempted to sell them to undercover police officers.

- Arrest of Theobald Shindimba, Bernard Kanyanga, Gustav Rumayi, Gabriel Namukuwa and Makanga Hausiku, also in possession of 4 tusks.

Republikein, December 12, 2021; Namibian Sun, December 15, 2021.⁸¹

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

July-December 2021

State of Maryland, United States of America

Investigators from The Humane Society of the United States and Humane Society International tracked down ivory and discovered ivory figurines, jewelry and jewelry boxes, cutlery, lamps, candle holders, napkin holders, carved tusks, and knitting needles in about 20 antique stores and gift shops. Some items were on sale. Some were marked “ivory”. Others were anonymous. Some were marked “mammoth ivory” or “bone”. Ivory trackers also spotted a lamp with a giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*, Appendix II) bone base. Between 2006 and 2015, the United States of America imported 40,000 giraffe by-products. A law banning the sale of items from great apes, felines, hippos, elephants, pangolins is under consideration in Maryland. Once passed by the House of Representatives and signed by the Governor, it will prevent Maryland from participating in the looting of wildlife in Africa and Asia.

The Humane Society of the United States, February 1, 2022.⁸²

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION

December 31, 2021 Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China

Last day of free ivory sales in Hong Kong. There are no crowds in the stores. In mainland China, the measure has been in force since December 31, 2017. On the black market, one kg of raw ivory is estimated to be worth 1,100 US\$/kg. Channel News Asia (with AFP), December 31, 2021.⁸³

BEIJING AUTONOMOUS MUNICIPALITY

October and December 2021 Beijing Autonomous Municipality, China

A small circle was engaged in processing raw ivory into carved pieces in a sweatshop from 2016 to 2020. 53 ivory items including Buddha effigies and 4 tortoise shells were seized. The main suspect claims to have inherited the ivory from his father and that he carved it for personal pleasure.

The 7 defendants were sentenced in the first instance to between 6 months to 6.5 years in prison, to pay 1,000 to 220,000 yuan (155 and 34,450 US\$) to be used for ecological restoration and to make public apologies in national media.

Beijing Youth Daily, October 19, 2021; Central Committee of Political and Legal Affairs, December 31, 2021.⁸⁴



SHANGHAI AUTONOMOUS MUNICIPALITY

September 2021 Shanghai Pudong International Airport, Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China

A painting scroll with ivory tips was found in the incoming mail.

Chinese Customs, September 18, 2021.⁸⁵

December 21, 2021 Shanghai Pudong International Airport, Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China

Seizure in the luggage of 2 passengers of 17 pieces of carved ivory including a Buddha amulet and a bracelet. Everything was hidden inside shoes and a box of powdered milk.

China Daily (with Xinhua), December 21, 2021.⁸⁶

TIANJIN AUTONOMOUS MUNICIPALITY

October 2021 Tianjin Autonomous Municipality, China

Seizure in the incoming mail of an ivory seal weighing 33 grams. Chinese Customs, October 26, 2021.⁸⁷

December 2021 Tianjin Autonomous Municipality, China



Seizure in 2 packages declared to contain wooden boxes of 6 pieces of carved ivory including 2 pairs of binoculars and 3 pieces of cutlery with ivory handles. Total weight, 534.38 grams. Chinese Customs, December 27, 2021.⁸⁸

ANHUI PROVINCE

October 2021 Hefei, Hefei Prefecture, Anhui Province, China

Once again, the spectrometer detected the Schreger lines and put customs officials on the trail of carved ivory. Since the beginning of 2021, postal customs have seized 4,600 grams of ivory in packages from abroad.

Xiaoxiang Morning Herald, October 20, 2021.⁸⁹

GUANGDONG PROVINCE

September 2021 Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Six forks and one knife with ivory handles seized in the incoming mail. Total weight, 112 grams. Chinese Customs, September 22, 2021.⁹⁰

September 2021 Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

14 ivory painting scroll tips seized in the incoming mail. Total weight, 321.8 grams. Chinese Customs, October 3, 2021.⁹¹

October 2021 Hengqin Checkpoint, Zhuhai Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 5 pieces of ivory jewelry. Chinese Customs, October 20, 2021.⁹²

October 2021

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Ivory jewellery, 2 bracelets and one necklace, found in a passenger's luggage at check-in. They were concealed inside the box of a 12-year-old bottle of Johnnie Walker Black Label whiskey and a carton of Kent cigarettes.

Chinese Customs, November 4, 2021.⁹³



October 2021

Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Two ivory bracelets found in the incoming mail weighing 46.4 grams.

Chinese Customs, November 9, 2021.⁹⁴

November 2021

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 23 pieces of jewelry weighing 707 grams made from ivory and red sandalwood (*Pterocarpus santalinus*, Appendix II). Bracelets, pendants, amulets, and more were found the luggage of incoming passengers.

Chinese Customs, November 17, 2021.⁹⁵

November 2021

Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of ivory jewellery, 6 bracelets, 2 pendants and one amulet, from the luggage of a passenger from abroad.

Chinese Customs, November 22, 2021.⁹⁶

December 2021

Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of a painting scroll with ivory tips in a parcel.

Chinese Customs, January 8, 2022.⁹⁷

GUANGXI ZHUANG AUTONOMOUS REGION

November 2021

Nanning, Nanning Prefecture, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

Seizure of 2 ivory figurines weighing 51.96 grams in a package from abroad. They were allegedly made of wood according to the accompanying slip inside the parcel.

Chinese Customs, November 23, 2021; Cover News, November 24, 2021.⁹⁸

HUBEI PROVINCE

October 2021

Wuhan, Hubei Province, China

One ivory mahjong set found in a package from abroad, weighing 1,809.8 grams.

Chinese Customs, October 28, 2021.⁹⁹

October 2021

Wuhan, Hubei Province, China

Seizure of a pair of ivory earrings in a package.

Chinese Customs, November 3, 2021.¹⁰⁰

November 2021

Wuhan, Hubei Province, China



Seizure of 2 painting scrolls with ivory tips, 42.3 grams.

Chinese Customs, November 24, 2021.¹⁰¹

HUNAN PROVINCE

Beginning of December, 2021

Changsha, Changsha Prefecture, Hunan Province, China

Seizure of 2 pieces of carved ivory: a cigarette holder weighing 46.8 grams and a pendant weighing 37 grams.

Chinese Customs, December 14, 2021.¹⁰²

JIANGSU PROVINCE

Beginning of December, 2021

Suzhou, Suzhou Prefecture, Jiangsu Province, China

The cutlery was made of metal and ivory. The feast will not take place. The package from abroad was opened by the postal customs.

People's Information Network, December 14, 2021.¹⁰³

LIAONING PROVINCE

Beginning of November, 2021

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

The potato chip package in the parcel actually concealed an ivory necklace.

Chinese Customs, November 14, 2021.¹⁰⁴

November 2021

Dalian, Liaoning Province, China

Seizure in the incoming mail of a leaf-shaped piece of carved ivory.

Chinese Customs, November 26, 2021.¹⁰⁵

December 15, 2021

Dandong, Dandong Prefecture, Liaoning Province, China

Seizure of 20 pearls and an ivory rose brooch in a package from abroad.

Chinese Customs, December 15, 2021.¹⁰⁶

NINGXIA HUI AUTONOMOUS REGION

October 22, 2021

Yinchuan, Yinchuan Prefecture, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, China

Appearance of 2 men who in 2020 engaged in trafficking carved ivory, including 35 bracelets, 2 brooches, 2 cups, 12 chopsticks, and 2 miniature tusks. The items weighed a total of 1,008 grams and their origins were unknown. The 2 defendants acknowledged their responsibility and expressed their repentance and their willingness to participate financially in the restoration of the environment and the safeguarding of wildlife. The judgement has been reserved.

Jiupai News, October 22, 2021.¹⁰⁷

SICHUAN PROVINCE

Beginning of September 2021

Luzhou, Luzhou Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China

Seizure in incoming mail of tips from a painting scroll and 2 panels with ivory inlays.

Chinese Customs, September 17, 2021.¹⁰⁸

September 27, 2021

Luzhou, Luzhou Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China

Seizure of an ivory fan in an incoming package.

Chinese Customs, September 29, 2021.¹⁰⁹

Beginning of October, 2021

Luzhou, Luzhou Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China

Two panels with ivory inlays found in a package from abroad.

Chinese Customs, October 14, 2021.¹¹⁰

October 2021

Luzhou, Luzhou Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China

An ivory fan found in an incoming package.

Chinese Customs, October 25, 2021.¹¹¹

October 2021

Luzhou, Luzhou Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China

Seizure of 5 pieces of carved ivory, including earrings, in parcels from abroad.

Chinese Customs, October 29, 2021.¹¹²

October 2021

Luzhou, Luzhou Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China

A carved ivory tablet found in a package from abroad.

Chinese Customs, November 1, 2021.¹¹³

November 10, 2021

Chengdu-Shuangliu International Airport, Sichuan Province, China



Seizure in the luggage of a passenger from abroad of a polished section of tusk weighing 980 grams. Chinese Customs, November 26, 2021.¹¹⁴

Beginning of November, 2021

Luzhou, Luzhou Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China

Seizure of carved ivory in a postal parcel from abroad.

Chinese Customs, November 16, 2021.¹¹⁵

November 17, 2021

Luzhou, Luzhou Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China

Seizure of an ivory fan in a package from abroad.

Chinese Customs, November 18, 2021.¹¹⁶

November 29, 2021

Luzhou, Luzhou Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China



Seizure of 3 panels with ivory inlays found in a parcel.

Chinese Customs, December 1, 2021.¹¹⁷

December 7, 2021

Luzhou, Luzhou Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China

A painting scroll with ivory tips.

Chinese Customs, December 8, 2021.¹¹⁸

December 2021

Luzhou, Luzhou Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China

Another painting scroll with ivory tips.

Chinese Customs, December 20, 2021.¹¹⁹

December 30, 2021

Luzhou, Luzhou Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China

Again a painting scroll with ivory tips found in an incoming package.

Chinese Customs, December 31, 2021.¹²⁰

YUNNAN PROVINCE

September 7, 2021

Pu'er and Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefectures, Yunnan Province, China

In April 2020, 14 elephants left the Xishuangbanna National Park in an organized group. Their journey north to the city of Kunming (8 million inhabitants) held the whole world in suspense since June 2021 (see "On the Trail" n°30 p. 40). The herd has spontaneously returned to their homeland, according to an official statement reported by China Daily. They were 16 at the beginning, 3 took the wrong way, another was anaesthetized before being driven back by truck to Xishuangbanna and 2 baby elephants were born along the way. They returned to 14 at the end of August. To dissuade them from further migrations, a 0.67 km² "dining room" was built from December 2020 and May 2021 with 5 salt pans and plenty of edible plants. The development cost 100 million yuan or 15 million US\$. Xishuangbanna National Park is home to about 300 elephants.

Global Times, September 8, 2021; China Daily, September 11, 2021.¹²¹

September, 2021

Kunming, Kunming Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China

Seizure in the hand luggage of an incoming passenger of 3 ivory bracelets. Total weight, 18.1 grams.

Chinese Customs, September 28, 2021.¹²²

ZHEJIANG PROVINCE

Beginning of September 2021

Jiaojiang District, Zhejiang Province, China

Wang runs a plastics workshop but his real passion, according to the People's Information Network, is "wenwan", which literally translates as "toys of culture and sophistication". Wenwan refers to the attachment of certain social classes to objects that mark wealth and refinement. Ivory and other by-products of wild animals are part of the wenwan.

Wang had opened a tea shop in which ivory jewellery was displayed for sale outside of his official activity. It was seized by the authorities in 2018. The sale of any raw or carved ivory had been banned since January 1 of the same year. DNA analysis proved that the jewellery was made of modern ivory from elephants poached in the early 2000s. Wang was sentenced to 7 months in prison. The Oxford Martin Programme on Wildlife Trade, July 27, 2018 ; People's Information Network, September 15, 2021.¹²³



September 2021

Yiwu, Jinhua Prefecture, Zhejiang Province, China



Seizure of 257 painting scroll tips with a total weight of 4.95 kg. Two tips were made of sika deer (*Cervus nippon*) horn and 2 tips were made of hardy rosewood (*Dalbergia hupeana*, Appendix II).

Chinese Customs, September 29, 2021; Xiaoxiang Morning Post, September 29, 2021.¹²⁴

December 8, 2021

Yangshan Port, Zhoushan Prefecture, Zhejiang Province, China



Another batch of old pianos with ivory keys weighing 218.6 grams. They came from Europe.

Chinese Customs, December 9, 2021.¹²⁵

TAIWAN

End of October 2021

Taiwan-Taoyuan International Airport, Taiwan

An elephant tusk in the luggage of a returning traveler named "Chang." There were not many people in the airport. People stayed at home for fear of Covid, but some had Hermes scarves and Chanel bags worth more than 20,000 new Taiwan dollars (720 US\$) in their luggage, which should have been declared and taxed. The ivory and luxury items were seized.

Broadcasting Corporation of China, December 7, 2021.¹²⁶

SOUTHEASTERN ASIA

INDONESIA

November 14, 2021

Alue Meuraksa, Aceh Jaya Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia



She died after days of struggle and hope. She had fallen into a trap and her trunk was half amputated. She has been wandering around the village. The bastard did not denounce himself.

In 9 years, in the eastern tip of the island of Sumatra, 25 elephants died of poisoning or trapping. The Sumatran elephant population declined by 50% between the years 2007 and 2014 and since then there has been no census. A species is going extinct under the pressure of industries and human population.

Since Covid-19 came on the scene, it's been a struggle to eat and to make money from forest meat.

Associated Press, November 15 and 16, 2021; VOI, November 16, 2021.¹²⁷

SINGAPORE

OPERATION GOLDEN STRIKE

August-September 2021

Singapore

This is a new trend detected by Operation Golden Strike. In the space of one month, customs intercepted 2 highly unusual shipments. The packages were declared to contain bird cages, but the bird cages were full of ivory. The first contained 256 ivory items, the second 184.

Operation Golden Strike, organised under the supervision of Interpol, was funded by the Chinese government. Its aim was to identify the wildlife smuggling networks between Africa and Asia. It lasted 8 weeks and involved 23 countries, 13 from Africa and 10 from Asia. It claimed the seizure of 1,202 ivory items (over 4 tonnes), 423 kg of pangolin scales plus 78 scales, 50 rhino horns (72 kg), 46 totoaba (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) swim bladders, 42 shark teeth, 33 red corals (genus *Corallium*), turtles and tortoises, more than 120 birds, 3,785 molluscs and 1,336 parts of other CITES protected species.

Interpol, January 24, 2022.¹²⁸

September 1, 2021

Singapore

Ban on the sale of ivory comes into effect. Non-commercial transactions are still possible if the tusks have educational or religious uses.

Ivory in Singapore, see "On the Trail" n°4 p.85 and p.88, n°9 p.77, n°11 p.36, n°13 p.79, n°18 p.105, n°20 p.107 and p.125, n°25 p.53, n°26 p.52 and p.95 and n°30 p.34.

Mothership, August 27, 2021.¹²⁹

THAILAND

September 22, 2021

Bangkok, Thailand

After 18 years of legal battles, the Supreme Court has decided: Pang Yo must be returned to her owner, Mr. Chob, from whom she was stolen to be exploited in a tourist brothel in Phuket. So Pang Yo took the road (25 hours) to reach her native land, the province of Surin. Mr. Chob had tears in his eyes according to the Bangkok Post. "No one will ride her, and she won't be put to work," he said.

Bangkok Post, September 25, 2021.¹³⁰

November 10, 2021

Thung Phaya, Sanam Chai Khet District, Chachoengsao Province, Thailand

The 20-year-old elephant took refuge in the Khao Ang Rue Nai Wildlife Sanctuary, which is surrounded by oil palm, sugarcane, and eucalyptus plantations. People shot at him to protect a sugarcane plantation. The wounded elephant's path was intermittently monitored by a drone. A hunt for the bull elephant was launched to save him. Sunita Wingwon, who was leading the operation, said the elephant covered his back wounds with mud, a self-medication that may not be enough to prevent widespread infection.

Bangkok Post, November 16, 2021.¹³¹

November 28-December 31, 2021

Khao Sip Ha Chan National Park, Chanthaburi Province, and Pattaya Veterinary Hospital, Chonburi Province, Thailand



Despite the efforts of veterinarians, the 2- or 3-year-old female elephant died at the end of her ordeal. She had fallen into a pit trap on November 28, her right front foot was almost torn off and 10 bullets were removed from her left shoulder. She died on December 31.

Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, November 29, 2021, and December 2, 5, 13 and 31, 2021; Chiang Rai Times, December 12, 2021.¹³²



December 11, 2021

Pluang Thong, Chonburi Province, Thailand

Death of a female elephant, about 25 years old. Her head and neck were riddled with bullets. The murder took place between 4 and 5 a.m. near a rubber tree plantation. She was pregnant and about to give birth. The fetus was a male.



The almost newborn

The mother

Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, December 11, 2021; Bangkok Post, December 13, 2021; The Thaiger, December 13, 2021.¹³³

December 21, 2021

Pong Nam Ron District, Chanthaburi Province, Thailand



The male, about 18 years old and weighing 7 tonnes, died by electrocution with his trunk attached to the overcharged fence. According to local legends, he was a tough guy. At the age of 15, he had escaped from the Khao Takrub detention center in Sa Kaeo province where his bad reputation as a thief of fruit and grain had led him. Six months later, he was recaptured by the forest police in Makhm, Chanthaburi Province, and taken back to Khao Takrub, some 100 kilometers away. Named Sidor Daeng, he was an escape artist. He was buried after a Buddhist ceremony.

Bangkok Post, December 21, 2021; The Nation, December 22, 2021.¹³⁴

VIET NAM

December 17, 2021

Dak Lak Province, Viet Nam

A memorandum of understanding has been signed between the provincial government and the NGO Animals Asia to eliminate the exploitation of the 27 elephants that carry tourists on their backs and suffer from physical, mental and psychological distress.

Animals Asia, December 17, 2021.¹³⁵

November 2021

Bangladesh



At least 33 elephants died from violence during 2021, 20 of them from electrocution. Most of the victims resided in the Chittagong Hills and the coastal district of Cox's Bazar.

A campaign to eradicate elephants is underway and could result in their extinction in Bangladesh by 2030 if the government and the judicial system do not react. Currently, Bangladesh is home to less than 260 elephants.

All lights are red. The railroad line between Chittagong and Cox's Bazar has cut off a natural corridor and 40 elephants cannot leave the Teknaf pocket because of the Rohingya refugee camp.

In 28 other districts, 160,000 squatters have taken over 104,000 hectares of forest. The most affected and coveted is Cox's Bazar, where settlers are cutting down trees and growing lemons and other fruits instead, raising livestock, and methodically eliminating wild animals by shooting them on sight and using electricity diverted from the public grid.

YeniSafak, November 28, 2021.¹³⁶

November 6, 2021

Moittali Beel, Chittagong District, Chittagong Division, Bangladesh



An elephant in her fifties has just died from electrocution. Blood is flowing from her trunk. She met her death at the edge of a rice field. "Farmers had set up a trap with a live electric wire fence to keep wild elephants from destroying their paddy field when they descended from local hills looking for food and water during the dry season," says a district guard.

The hills are being overrun by human settlements. The elephants are losing ground every day and are facing a food shortage.

Bangi News (with Dhaka Tribune), November 6, 2021; Bangla Tribune, November 8, 2021.¹³⁷

November 9, 2021, January 2 and February 13, 2022

Malakakocha, Sherpur District, Mymensingh Division, Bangladesh



A wild elephant died as he approached an orchard. He was electrocuted and the entire village watched except for Amej Uddin, Md Ashraful, Somej Uddin and Md Shajalal who fled. They eventually surrendered. They were taken into custody, which is the first time this has happened in the district. Their lawyer is seeking their release on bail. "They are not guilty." "The incident of elephant killing was not planned."

New Age, November 9, 2021; The Daily Prothom Alo, January 2 and February 16, 2022.¹³⁸

**November 13 and 27, 2021
Harbang, Cox's Bazar District,
Chittagong Division, Bangladesh**



It's war. Henchmen hastily removed the elephant electrocuted at the edge of the paddy field. But, getting a 2-tonne creature to disappear is no easy task and the forest officials guided by locals soon found the site. Not a word about the tusks. The victim was a male elephant in his early twenties.



Fourteen days later, Jane Alam, age 35, son of Shamsul Alam, was fatally trampled by Harbang's elephant gang. He had just been surveying his fields inside the forest, a domain theoretically and historically reserved for elephants. Jane Alam was being prosecuted for helping to electrocute the elephant and attempting to bury him.

Monirul H Khan, a professor of zoology at Jahangirnagar University, told the Daily Star that elephants, thanks to their sense of smell, can "memorize" for a period of time the smell of a human who represents a threat and avenge the death of one of their own. Monirul H Khan is involved in post-mortem examinations of elephants whose deaths are suspicious.

The Business Standard, November 13, 2021; United News of Bangladesh, November 14, 2021; The Daily Star, November 28, 2021.¹³⁹

FAMILY AFFAIRS

**November 30 and December 14, 2021
Lotmoni, Chittagong District,
Chittagong Division, Bangladesh**



Jail for a father and son guilty of electrocuting an elephant and trying to hide his body. During the month of November, 5 elephants died due to human cruelty and greed in Satkania, Chakaria (40 km from Satkania), Eidgah (40 km from Satkania) and Banskhali (15 km from Satkania).

Daily Bangladesh, December 14, 2021; United News of Bangladesh, December 14, 2021.¹⁴⁰



INDIA

**September 3, 2021
Mirza, Kamrup District, State of Assam,
India**



This is at least the 14th elephant to die from electrocution in Assam since the beginning of the year.

India Today, September 3, 2021.¹⁴¹

**September 5, 2021
Balasore District, State of Odisha, India**

Seizure of 3 tusks. Arrest of 5 people. They wanted to sell the tusks for more than 200,000 rupees or 2,700 US\$.

The Pioneer, September 7, 2021.¹⁴²

**September 8, 2021
Jodhpur, Jodhpur District, State of Rajasthan,
India**

Two Internet sellers of ivory jewelry and games fell prey to a WCCB cyber patrol and local police and were arrested with their pockets full at a hotel.

Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change of India, September 10, 2021; Patrika, September 10, 2021.¹⁴³

**September 12, 2021
Balipasi, Angul District, State of
Odisha, India**



The carcass of a 35-year-old male elephant was found. The tusks, intact, were put in a safe place by the forest officials. He had died a few days earlier, electrocuted in a trap placed there by ivory traffickers. Traps were found at the scene.

Orissa Post, September 12, 2021; The New Indian Express, September 12, 2021.¹⁴⁴

**September 13, 2021
Baksa District, State of Assam, India**

The shortness of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) communiqués makes it unclear what the person in possession of a carcass who was arrested by a patrol was planning to do. The suspect and the remains were handed over to the Kumarikata forest station. Sashastra Seema Bal, September 2021.¹⁴⁵

**September 23, 2021
Paranthumpara, Idukki District, State of Kerala,
India**

The cave is used by an Ali Baba of ivory. Two freshly cut tusks of about 5 kilograms have just been discovered there and the forests will be combed to try to find the corpse of the elephant. This is the fourth time in the district since the beginning of the year that raw ivory has been found by police and forest officials.

The Hindu, September 23, 2021.¹⁴⁶



**Night of September 23 to 24, 2021
Egmore, Chennai District, State of Tamil Nadu,
India**

A lawyer is returning from a party in his Mercedes-Benz. He was allegedly “drunk” and he hit 3 motorcycles, overturned an autorickshaw and hit the car of a certain Wilson, who is living in Egmore. The police responded to the scene and found 3 raw ivory tips and some carved ivories in the trunk. The Times of India, September 25, 2021.¹⁴⁷

**September 27, 2021
Mahisigotia, Angul District, State of
Odisha, India**

Post-mortem examination concludes that the male elephant who was about 20 years old was poisoned by drinking rice beer mixed with pesticides from a barrel. Down To Earth, September 29, 2021.¹⁴⁸



**October 9, 2021
Devala, Nilgiris District, State of Tamil Nadu,
India**

The situation is getting tense. Forest officials are armed as they patrol the forests to spot and ward off illegal gold miners. Gold panning is an old practice in the area. It began during the British colonial period and continues today over hundreds of hectares. Gold miners dig and excavate pits 20 to 45 meters deep and do not fill them in when they leave to prospect elsewhere. Pits by the hundreds, some say by the thousands, are traps for wildlife.



On Saturday, the body of an elephant aged about 10 to 12 years was discovered at the bottom of a 15-meter pit. The elephant's remains were uncovered by heavy rains. The layer of earth that covered him was gullied. Obviously, gold seekers had covered him to avoid a scandal or perhaps to return for the tusks after the corpse decomposed. For the traffickers, ivory has the advantage of not rotting, and over time its value on the black market increases. A few days earlier, a one-month-old baby elephant was rescued with great difficulty. He had fallen to the bottom of another pit.

The hope for gold attracts people from Devala, Pandalur and Nadugani and the unemployed from Kerala. By increasing land patrols, drone surveillance and fines, the government hopes to clear the forests from this scourge which comes in addition to poaching.

Gold mining pits, see “On the Trail” n°32 p.127. The Hindu, October 9, and December 14, 2021; The Times of India, October 11, 2021.¹⁴⁹

**October 11, 2021
Prabhasuni, Deogarh District, State of Odisha,
India**

The trafficker had set the bar very high. He had made an agreement with a buyer. He sold the 2 elephant tusks weighing 2.322 kg for 1.5 million rupees or more than 20,000 US\$. The transaction turned out badly. A patrol arrived on the scene around 6 a.m. The seller tried to flee and was caught. The intended buyer remains unknown. The New Indian Express, October 12, 2021.¹⁵⁰

**October 16, 2021
Bhandarpura, Jalpaiguri District, State
of West Bengal, India**

The trunk was burnt. The elephant was lying in the rice field. This is the 14th electrocution in the State over 1.5 years. The Times of India, October 17, 2021.¹⁵¹



**FAMILY AFFAIRS
October 16, 2021
Palakkad, Palakkad District, State of
Kerala, India**

Mr. Riyasuddin surrendered to the police. He has been remanded in custody. His father is still at large. Under their responsibility, in May 2020 a grapefruit (according to the latest sources) filled with explosives had torn the mouth and mortally wounded a pregnant elephant who had thrown herself into a river to calm the pain (see “On the Trail” n°29 p.38). Hindustan Times, October 19, 2021.¹⁵²



**October 22, 2021
Amteka F V, Chirang District, State of Assam,
India**

Two tusks were seized and one arrest was made during a joint patrol by SSB and Kachugaon Forest Department. The Bhutan border is about 10 km away. Sashastra Seema Bal, October 22, 2021.¹⁵³

**October 23, 2021
Kamarei and Jamarahata Forests, Angul
District, State of Odisha, India**

Day of mourning in Odisha. Three males died.

- The first one is about 15 years old. He was electrocuted by a trap in the Kamarei forest.

- The carcass of the second one was lying in the Jamarahata forest. He was about 25 years old. Poisoning is suspected.

- The third is about 7 years old. He died of septicemia, the origin of which is not known.

The latest census shows that there are fewer than 2,000 elephants in Odisha. Only a few hundred are breeding males over 20 years old and there are around 150 juvenile males. The imbalance between the 2 genders raises concerns and uncertainties about the ability of the elephant population to reproduce and perpetuate itself. From all causes, 282 elephants have died between the year 2018 and August of 2021 in the State. For elephants, it is much easier to die than to be born in Odisha.

Orissa Post, October 24, 2021; Down To Earth, October 25, 2021; The Statesman, October 26, 2021.¹⁵⁴



**October 23, 27 and November 3, 2021
Boluvampatti Forest Reserve, Coimbatore
District, State of Tamil Nadu, India**



K. Thambi alias Raman, V. Maruthupandi and V. Chinnan had "collected" the tusks of an elephant that died under unknown circumstances several weeks ago and hid them 500 meters from the skeleton in thorny and impenetrable bushes pending being able to sell them.

The Times of India, October 25, 29 and November 6, 2021; The Hindu, October 29, 2021.¹⁵⁵

**October 24, 2021
Teesta Check Post, Jalpaiguri District, State of
West Bengal, India**

The tip about a truck coming from Arunachal Pradesh via Assam and heading towards Gujarat (3,000 km) with 2 wild elephants in the trailer was reliable.

A roadblock at the Teesta border post on National Highway 10 achieved to intercept the exceptional convoy at night. Three people, including a mahout, were questioned under official investigation. They presented falsified documents to justify the transport of the 2 chained elephants. The adult female and the adolescent male were taken to Gorumara National Park where they underwent a medical examination. They are in good health.

Down To Earth, October 25, 2021; The Times of India, October 26, 2021.¹⁵⁶

**October 27, 2021
Chaglijhar, Udalguri District, State of Assam,
India**



In 4 days, 3 elephants have been electrocuted in Assam. When they are not electrocuted, they are poisoned. Post-mortem examination detected poison in the digestive system. The male elephant was about 30 years old.

Northeast Now, October 28, 2021.¹⁵⁷

**October 27, 2021
Antulia, Angul District, State of Odisha, India**

Sudar Naik was unjustifiably holding an elephant calf tusk. Angul District, see "On the Trail" n°31 p.32 and p.162, n°32 p.246 and n°33 p.50 and p.209. The New Indian Express, October 28, 2021.¹⁵⁸

**October 27, 2021
Chirang District, State of Assam, India**

Joint roadblock set up by the Forest Department and SSB. Two individuals carrying 2 pieces of ivory with a total weight of 6 kg fell into the trap. Sashastra Seema Bal, October 27, 2021.¹⁵⁹

**November 2 and 15, 2021
Athagarh, Cuttack District, State of Odisha, India**

The Athagarh forest division is in turmoil. The carcass of a male was discovered in August 2020 at the bottom of a hole roughly covered with soil. The post-mortem had found several bullet wounds and fractures. The poaching had not been reported to the higher authorities. The tusks were still in place but after all the hole could be considered as a vault while waiting for a good opportunity. Ivory does not rot.

Fourteen months later, Aisa Akhtar Nisa, a forest officer, was the only one to be suspended from duty after an administrative inquiry, as if one man was able to bury an elephant weighing several tonnes. Odisha TV, November 1 and 15, 2021; The New Indian Express, November 4 and 16, 2021.¹⁶⁰

**November 9 and 10, 2021
Lunagarh, Kendujhar District, State of Odisha,
India**

Seizure of a tusk weighing 3.059 kg estimated to be worth 280,000 rupees (3,740 US\$ or 1,220 US\$/kg) and a tusk weighing 3.605 kg estimated to be worth 320,000 rupees (4,274 US\$ or 1,185 US\$/kg). Five arrests.

Orissa Post, November 11, 2021.¹⁶¹

**November 13, 2021
Kendubhatta, Bargarh District, State of Odisha,
India**

Seizure of a 3.35 kg tusk from Ramesh Pradhan. In 2020, 11 tusks were seized by the Special Task Force. 300 km from Kendubhatta, the inhabitants of Bhusandpur are having restless nights. An elephant was seen on the road near the Ugratara temple. In the night, villagers gathered and shouted to guide the elephant to the forest.

News Live Odisha, November 14, 2021.¹⁶²

November 19, 2021

Madanpur Rampur, Kalahandi District, State of Odisha, India

Thanks to information provided by the Meher family involved in a cat claw trade in Sinapali (see p.82), a search resulted in the seizure of 4 kg of raw ivory. Sinapali and Madanpur Rampur are about 100 km apart.

The New Indian Express, November 19, 2021.¹⁶³

November 25, 2021

Sogathur, Dharmapuri District, State of Tamil Nadu, India



At daybreak, a car and a motorcycle were blocked at a road check. Two tusks weighing a total of 25 kg were seized and 3 men aged between 22 and 32 years were arrested. They claim to be humble couriers. The bigwigs, named Sethu, Shaktivel, Suresh and Annamalai, were probably in the lead car which managed to escape.

The Hindu, November 25, 2021; Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change of India, November 26, 2021.¹⁶⁴

November 26, 2021

Surroundings of Runikhata, Chirang District, State of Assam, India

The individual was carrying 2 tusks. Bhutan is 25 km away by road. A joint patrol of the SSB and the Forest Department intercepted him.

Sashastra Seema Bal, November 26, 2021.¹⁶⁵

November 29, 2021

Tirap Reserve Forest, Tinsukia District, State of Assam, India. Assam-Arunachal Pradesh Border.

A domesticated elephant was used as a dump truck and tractor by timber smugglers from Arunachal Pradesh who were illegally cutting timber across the border in Assam. The elephant is under the care of the forest reserve rangers. The mahout will be brought to court. The NGO Green Bud Society congratulates the Digboi forest division for the release of the elephant. One of his fellow elephants in a similar boat had died during a skirmish between Assam forces and timber thieves in Arunachal Pradesh (see "On the Trail" No. 33 p.51).

Northeast Now, November 29, 2021.¹⁶⁶

December 2, 2021

Baitalpur, Deoria District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Roadblock on the Gorakhpur-Deoria road. A car is trapped. There are 9.5 kg of raw ivory in a bag. Noor Alam Khan, Waqar Ahmed and Shadab Ahmed of Deoria are arrested. WCCB, December 2, 2021; Devdiscourse, December 3, 2021.¹⁶⁷



FAMILY AFFAIRS

December 6, 2021

Malligenahalli, Chikkamagalur District, State of Karnataka, India



It's early morning when the night's harvest is being gathered. There may be wild boar or deer. But this Monday the catch was big and compromising. A male, 35 years old, lay near a cornfield, struck by electricity. Raghu, the farmer, and his mother bravely fled the scene until things calmed down and the forest department found ways to bury the victim in the Tyagadabagi forest reserve from where he left for a night out.

The Hindu, December 7, 2021.¹⁶⁸

December 7, 2021

Vepanapalle, Chittoor District, State of Andhra Pradesh, India



This is the 10th in 2 years. A 4 to 5-year-old elephant separated from his mother for unknown reasons died of electrocution near a grain field. His body was cremated. Subramanyam, the farmer, is being questioned by the police.

The Hindu, December 8, 2021.¹⁶⁹



December 7, 2021

Gudvela, Balangir District, State of Odisha, India

Bipul Bag was holding a 9 kg tusk valued at 225,000 rupees (2,997 US\$ or 333 US\$/kg). Orissa Post, December 8, 2021.¹⁷⁰

December 12, 2021

Borbhetagaon, Karbi Anglong District, State of Assam, India



A 20-year-old pregnant elephant and her 4-year-old male calf die in a rice field. Preliminary results of post-mortem examinations suggest poisoning. A forestry official expresses dismay. "We see people turning up in huge numbers to pay their respect to the dead elephants but one of them has caused the injury or death." "It is a strange situation."

The Telegraph India, December 14, 2021.¹⁷¹

REPEATED OFFENSE

December 18, 2021

SH84 Road between Tirumakudalu Narasipura and Thyur, Mysuru District, State of Karnataka, India

Seizure of 5 pieces of raw ivory (8 kg). Four arrests. Three men fled, including the ringleader, a certain Robert Pinto Periyarugam, known for poaching in the neighboring State of Tamil Nadu.

Star of Mysore, December 19, 2021.¹⁷²

December 19, 2021

Ramanagara, Ramanagara District, State of Karnataka, India

Seizure of a pair of tusks (25 kg). Arrest of a 29-year-old man.

The Hindu, December 19, 2021.¹⁷³

December 22, 2021

Madulijhar, Barpeta District, State of Assam, India



Arrest of 5 people around 5:30 p.m. Seizure of 2 tusks, their vehicle and 3 phones.

It is the WCCB that says it: Assam has a sad record, 9 elephants poached in 2021. It is followed by Odisha and Tamil Nadu, 8 each, and by Karnataka and Uttarakhand, 3 each, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, Meghalaya, Chhattisgarh, and Maharashtra, 1 each.

Barpeta Police, December 22, 2021; India Today, December 23, 2021; The New Indian Express, January 21, 2022.¹⁷⁴

September 15, 2021

Nepal

The illegal export of domesticated elephants to India is mentioned in "On the Trail" no33, p. 50. It is caused by the collapse of tourist activities and revenues due to the Covid-19 crisis. Official statistics show that 130 elephants normally carry tourists on their backs or perform other tasks for cash. Unemployed elephants are sold to Indian elephant brokers who cater to the constant demands of wealthy individuals who want to flaunt their social success, temples that hold processions to enthruse worshippers and collect offerings, and the event industry that stages spectacular weddings and other occasional celebrations. A domesticated Nepalese elephant can be sold in India for 10 million rupees (136,000 US\$). The Nepalese NGO Association Moey was the first to sound the alarm in March 2021. Six months later, the Supreme Court, at the request of the government and a group of lawyers, banned the export of domesticated elephants. However, the Supreme Court's order could be circumvented by contractors signing elephant leases rather than sales contracts with their Indian counterparts. In Nepal, there were 130 domesticated elephants before Covid-19. Rishi Tiwari, director of the United Elephant Management Cooperative in Sauraha, says he was running 55 elephants before the confinements and that about 20 were "sent" to India. "Since elephants are protected under CITES, we cannot say they have been sold." "We have to say that they have been displaced," he adds. Nepali Times, September 16, 2021; Online Khabar, September 19, 2021.¹⁷⁵



October 3, 2021
Koshi, Sunsari District, Province n°1, Nepal



An adult male elephant that suffered from a bad reputation died in a rice field. He was electrocuted. In 2020, a herd of 6 elephants was released from Koshi Tappu Reserve. He is accused of deliberately entering houses or their annexes and killing 20 people in Udayapur and Gaighat. "Makuna" (an elephant with small tusks or who is tuskleless in Hindi) was part of this herd.



The director of the Koshi Tappu Reserve deplors the loss of a male elephant that contributed to the reproduction and future of a fragile population. "Makuna" was buried where he died. myRepublica, October 3, 2021; The Rising Nepal, October 3, 2021; The Himalayan Times, October 7, 2021.¹⁷⁶

PAKISTAN

September 9, 2021 - June 2022
Islamabad, Islamabad Capital Territory, Pakistan

The High Court recommends the prohibition of the import of elephants by referring to the National Wildlife (Protection) Act 2012 and the CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora). It was requested by the Pakistan Animal Welfare Society, which opposes the project to import elephant calves from Zimbabwe. The government of the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had agreed in principle, but the federal government had serious reservations (see "On the Trail" n°32 p.51). In 2020, the High Court had ruled that the animals in the Islamabad zoo, and primarily the elephants, had rights and should be transferred to sanctuaries where their dignity and vital needs would be respected.

The High Court's rulings on environmental issues are fully appreciated by Prime Minister Imran Khan.

Indeed, in June 2022, Environment Minister Sherry Rehman announced a ban on the import of all exotic mammals whether or not they are listed in the CITES Appendices. "We will not be issuing any NOCs (No Objection Certificate) to any zoo or private owner for any exotic mammal to be brought to Pakistan." "It is against all laws of nature to import any exotic mammal, big or small, and throw them into spaces where they neither grow nor survive." Dawn, September 10 and November 30, 2021; The News International, June 11, 2022.¹⁷⁷

SRI LANKA

September 6, 2021

Sri Lanka

"On the Trail" n°33 p.55 gave details on some of the new regulations relating to the protection of domesticated elephants as published in the Official Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka on August 19, 2021. On September 9, in accordance with a stunning decision taken by a Colombo court, 13 elephants were loaded with great difficulty into semi-trailers and returned to their "owners". These elephants had been in the good care of the Pinnawala and Uda Walawe orphanages for 6 years. They enjoyed the pleasures of social life and idleness without being subjects to the constraints and brutalities of religious processions, tourist activities, other exhibitions of pet and ornamental animals and logging. As baby elephants, they had been clandestinely captured in national parks and subjected to the "crushing" of their natural instincts. In 2015, they were seized from their "owners" who had disguised their wild origin by claiming they were from a domesticated elephant line on the basis of forged documents. The 13 elephants will undergo a second wave of "crushing".

Ishini Wickremesinghe, Director General of the National Zoological Gardens, resigned immediately. She was responsible for restoring the natural instincts of the elephants taken out of captivity and ensuring their physical and psychological well-being in the Pinnawala orphanage.

Global March for Elephants and Rhinos, September 7, 2021; Colombo Gazette, September 9, 2021; New Straits Times (with AFP), September 10, 2021; The Morning, September 13, 2021.¹⁷⁸

September 17, 2021
Nawagathagama, Northwestern Province, Sri Lanka



Carnage. The lord with the long tusks was chased from a cultivable land by 5 gunshots. He collapsed a little further on amidst shards of ivory. The veterinarians arrived quickly on the scene, but they could not do anything else than to attend the last moments of the elephant. He was at least 50 years old. Daily Mirror, September 18, 2021.¹⁷⁹

November 10, 2021
Uda Walawe National Park, Sabaragamuwa and Uva Provinces, Sri Lanka

During a surveillance patrol of Uda Walawe and Lunugamvehera Parks, the 581st brigade of the armed forces found at daybreak a sub-adult elephant aged between 6 and 7 years old with his front right leg and rear left leg tied with big ropes to a tree. The soldiers alerted the park rangers. The witnesses noted that the animal was unusually calm and drugged. Four to 5 people reportedly ran away as the soldiers approached. The elephant was taken to the Uda Walawe orphanage. This episode proves that the capture of elephant calves or subadults in national parks by gangs who domesticate them using force and psychotropic substances and sell them on order to Buddhist clergy, businessmen and political leaders, persists.

News 1st, November 11, 2021; The Sunday Times, November 14, 2021.¹⁸⁰

November 2021 and March 8, 2022
Kaladiya, Northwestern Province, Sri Lanka

The adult male elephant that died from electrocution was buried by the farmer and his relatives at the scene of the tragedy. The case came to the attention of the court. The prosecutor of Puttalam wanted to see it clearly. The carcass was exhumed by an excavator. The 2 beautiful tusks were there. The grave was a vault. In Sri Lanka as elsewhere, ivory does not rot.

Four months later, Mr. D. Roshan Anuruddha Dissanayake alias "Ali Roshan" was sentenced to a fine of 500,000 rupees (2,445 US\$) or in case of non-payment to 6 months in prison. D. M. Sineth Nishantha, M. D. Janaka Ruwan Dissanayake and K. Jayaweera Perera were fined 1,220 US\$ each. A woman, Vadiwel Walli Amma, is also charged in this case but she pleads not guilty and her case has been separated.

News 1st, November 26, 2021 ; The Sunday Times, March 13, 2022.¹⁸¹



December 16, 2021

Europe

After much discussion and hesitation, the European Commission has published updated rules for the ivory market within, to and from the 28 EU member States.

- Raw ivory: internal EU trade is suspended except for the purpose of repairing musical instruments or pre-1947 antiques of high cultural, artistic or historical importance (authorisation on a case-by-case basis). Imports into the EU which were still possible under conditions are now suspended. Exports have been suspended since 2017.

- Worked ivory acquired after 1947: internal EU trade is suspended except for musical instruments if the ivory was acquired before 1975 (authorisation). Imports and exports of worked ivory acquired between 1947 and 1975 are suspended, again with possible derogations for musical instruments (authorisation). Imports and exports of worked ivory acquired between 1975 and 1990 remain prohibited.

- Pre-1947 worked ivory ("antiques"): a certificate is finally required for internal EU trade. Imports and exports are suspended except for musical instruments and antiques sold to museums (authorisation).

The full revised guidance document "EU regime governing trade in ivory" is available in several languages with a useful summary table on page 13 of the pdf: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.C_.2021.528.01.0019.01.FRA&toc=OJ%3AC%3A2021%3A528%3AFULL European Commission, December 16, 2021.¹⁸²



NORTHERN EUROPE

UNITED KINGDOM

October 1, 2021

Gillingham, Dorset County, England, United Kingdom

Seizure of an undocumented tusk in a private home. PC 740 Rob Hammond, October 1, 2021.¹⁸³

WESTERN EUROPE

GERMANY

September 15, 2021

Mannheim, Baden-Württemberg, Germany



Eight animal figurines seized in a parcel from Switzerland.

German Customs, September 15, 2021.¹⁸⁴

FRANCE

September 22, 2021

Reims, Department of Marne, France

Auctioneers Pierre Guizzetti and Thierry Collet, well known in Reims, are not drinking champagne. They are each fined 4,000 € (4,720 US\$) for selling ivory without really knowing and proving where and when it came from.

L'Union, September 23, 2021.¹⁸⁵

October 21 and November 5, 2021
Dieppe, Department of Seine-Maritime, France

Mrs. Annick Colette claimed 50,000 € (58,000 US\$) in compensation after the sealing of the ivory stock she was holding in Dieppe, a town in Normandy that was once famous for its privateers and virtuous ivory carvers. Mrs. Annick Colette presents herself as the heiress of this tradition. She used to make ivory objects and she declared at the bar that she dedicates part of her work to the restoration of antique ivory objects. She was unable to produce invoices prior to August 2016, the date on which the ministers in charge of Ecology and Agriculture, save for some exemptions, prohibited the commercial use and sale of raw tusks and ivory carved after March 2, 1947 throughout the country.



Between September 2016 and December 2017, Annick Colette invoiced 13 repair or restoration services of up to 4,500 €, which provided half of her revenue. Of the 20 invoices presented to the court, several were illegible. The administrative court seems to express a certain annoyance towards the professional casualness of the plaintiff who claims to have only become aware of the new restrictions imposed by the decree of August 2016 during an inspection of her ivory collection in January 2017 by the agents of the ONCFS (National Agency for Hunting and Wildlife) which has since become the OFB (French Biodiversity Agency). Before rejecting the claims of Mrs. Annick Colette, the judgment finally notes that the prejudice she alleges and attributes to the decree of the Ministers of Ecology and Agriculture is not of an abnormally serious nature, since the said decree authorizes the issuance of exceptional exemptions for the restoration of ivory objects manufactured before 1990.

Les Informations Dieppoises, November 1, 2021; Administrative Court of Rouen, November 5, 2021.¹⁸⁶

THE NETHERLANDS

Mid-November 2021

Rotterdam, Province of South Holland, The Netherlands

Cyberpatrol stops 2 men who were trying to sell a tusk via the Internet.

De Telegraaf, November 17, 2021.¹⁸⁷

SOUTHERN EUROPE

ITALY

October 29, 2021

Desenzano del Garda, Province of Brescia, Region of Lombardy, Italy

The elephant tusk was in the trunk. The driver, caught off guard, said he inherited it from his father. The tusk has been seized pending more conclusive information.

Bresciaoggi, October 29, 2021.¹⁸⁸

November 14, 2021

Metropolitan City of Naples, Region of Campania, Italy

Seizure of 2 tusks bound for the Philippines in a moving container.

Customs and Monopolies Agency, November 14, 2021.¹⁸⁹

December 23, 2021

Empoli, Metropolitan City of Florence, Region of Tuscany, Italy

Seizure by the Florence Carabinieri of a tusk displayed in a bedroom.

Carabinieri-Comando provinciale di Firenze, December 23, 2021.¹⁹⁰



ASIA

KAZAKHSTAN

October 1, 2021
Nursultan Nazarbayev International Airport, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan



Seizure of 2 tonnes of mammoth tusks and a woolly rhinoceros (*Coelodonta antiquitatis*) horn (56 kg). The cargo was being shipped by a Moscow-based company that had opened a branch in Nur-Sultan for the occasion. The final destination was China. The total value of the fossil wildlife remains is estimated at 173 million tenge or 405,000 US\$. The Russian citizen on mission in Kazakhstan was arrested and detained.

The woolly rhinoceros (*Coelodonta antiquitatis*) inhabited Eurasia from England to eastern Russia. More imposing than the African rhinoceros, they had a thick brown fur. They had 2 horns, the longest of which could measure more than a metre. They became extinct about 14,000 years ago.

Is woolly rhinoceros horn about to replace rhinoceros horn in China, just as mammoth ivory is replacing elephant ivory? Seizure of woolly rhinoceros horns in China, see "On the Trail" n°16 p.90.

Sputnik Kazakhstan, October 12, 2021.¹

EUROPE

RUSSIA

November 17, 2021
Chita, Zabaykalsky Krai, Russia

Chita Customs handed over to the Aleksey Kirillovich Kuznetsov Museum 15 sections of mammoth tusks seized in September 2019 in a false compartment of a car driven by a Russian citizen who was on his way to China. Along with the mammoth ivory, there were 233 horns of saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II).

Federal Customs Service, November 17, 2021.²

November 23, 2021
Blagoveshchensk-Heihe Checkpoint, Amur Oblast, Russia. Border with China.

Seizure of 2 mammoth tusks, 108.5 kg, on board a ship on the Amur River bound for China. The market value of the seizure in Russia is estimated at 250,000 roubles, i.e. 3,550 US\$ and 30 US\$/kg. The smuggling is worth it. In China, mammoth ivory sells for 10 times as much.

Federal Customs Service, November 23, 2021.³

ELEPHANTS, HIPPOS / / RHINOS / SPERM WHALES

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

November 16, 2021

Durban, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Thunderclap in the residence. At the home of 2 residents of the Zimbali Eco Estate, where the local bourgeoisie is entrenched, the Hawks seize 52 kg of raw and carved ivory, 19 sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) teeth, 3 hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) teeth and 14 warthog (*Phacochoerus africanus*, Appendix II) teeth.

SAPS, November 17, 2021; Daily Dispatch, November 18, 2021; Independent Online, November 18, 2021; Focused Conservation, November 19, 2021.¹

CAMEROON

End of October 2021

Ebolowa, South Region, Cameroon

Seizure in the trunk of a car south of Yaoundé of 4 tusks, 2 rhino horns, a fresh leopard (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) skin... and 14 bundles of non-biodegradable plastic bags whose use and manufacture have been banned since 2014 in Cameroon. According to Koaci, this is a well-oiled network with ramifications in security circles.

Koaci, October 28, 2021.²

COTE D'IVOIRE

December 6 and 20, 2021

Côte d'Ivoire



Two elephant tusks, 4 teeth and the lower jaw of a hippopotamus had been seized from a gang of 5 whose leader is a representative of the influential Lebanese community. They were only sentenced to a 3-month suspended prison sentence and a fine of 300,000 CFA francs (515 US\$).

EAGLE, December 10, 2021 ; EAGLE Côte d'Ivoire, December 2021.³

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

December 14, 2021

Kirumba, North Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Seizure of 30 kg of raw ivory and 20 kg of hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) teeth. Two arrests.

7sur7, December 15, 2021 ; Adams Cassinga, December 15, 2021.⁴



ASIA

CHINA

November 2021

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 3.82 kg of carved elephant ivory and hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) teeth from the luggage of an incoming passenger.

Chinese Customs, November 24, 2021.⁵

EUROPE

UKRAINE

November 19, 2021

Kyiv, Kyiv Oblast, Ukraine



Seizure by customs in 2 parcels sent from Odessa to France and Germany of 5 sperm whale teeth (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I), 3 sperm whale ivory figurines and what is presumed to be a walrus tusk (*Odobenus rosmarus*, Appendix III in Canada). Ukraine Customs, November 19, 2021.⁶

Hornbill ivory, see chapter «Birds».

Other seizures of hippopotamus teeth, see chapter «Multi-species».

RHINOCEROSSES



White rhinoceroses (*Ceratotherium simum*). Photo Charleyhesse

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

The 3 Asian rhinoceros species are in Appendix I: the Indian rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis*, the Sumatran rhinoceros *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*, and the Javan rhinoceros *Rhinoceros sondaicus*.

On the Trail n°34

Black market horn quotation from media or official sources The values were estimated at the time of the seizures

Value of 1kg of raw horn

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref. (year)
Africa	Zimbabwe	18,500	4 (2021)
	South Africa	65,000	11 (2019)
Africa / America	DRC / USA	8,000	2* (2021)
Asia	India	25,000	53 (2021)
Europe	France	59,000	61 (2021)

* cf. chapter Pangolins, felines / elephants / rhinos

CENTRAL AFRICA

ANGOLA

October 28, 2021

Lubango, Huila Province, Angola

The 2 men, aged 21 and 32, claim to have the 10 horns from a man whose age and identity are uncertain and who promised them a commission if they sold them for 4 million kwanzas (6,600 US\$). The unknown man is believed to be hiding in the Cuando-Cubango province, where a forest ranger was recently involved in elephant poaching, ivory trafficking and the sale of skins with pangolin scales. The rhinos have disappeared from Angola, unless some of them, ignoring the borders and braving the minefields, have returned. Novo Jornal, October 28, 2021.¹

EASTERN AFRICA

MALAWI

September 28 and October 26, 2021
Lilongwe, Central Region, Malawi

Sentencing of Yun Hua Lin to 14 years in prison. He is the leader of the Lin-Zhang gang. In his private properties, 103 sections of horns from 5 rhinos were seized. On October 26, Yun Hua Lin filed an appeal. The judgement requires Lin, after serving his sentence, to be returned to China. See "On the Trail" n°25 p.104, n°26 p.101 and n°29 p.20.

Malawi 24, June 11 and September 28, 2021; The Nation, June 12, 2021; Nyasa Times, August 31 and October 28, 2021; Environmental Investigation Agency, September 28, 2021.²



MOZAMBIQUE

December 10, 2021

National Road 4, Maputo Province, Mozambique



They were arrested at night on National Road 4 in a minibus that was traveling towards Maputo. The 3 men were carrying 2 horns in a satchel, which they said they were going to sell in the capital on behalf of a "boss" from the Moamba district.

Club of Mozambique (with Miramar), December 14, 2021.³

ZIMBABWE

October 12, 2021

Bulawayo, Bulawayo Province, Zimbabwe

Mpumelelo Moyo, Bongani Akim Zwelibanzi Gazi and Mbonisi Ndlovu were in possession of a 20-cm-long horn, weighing 6.5 kg and with an estimated value of 120,000 US\$ or 18,500 US\$/kg. Pindula, October 15, 2021.⁴

FAMILY AFFAIRS

October 13, 2021

Maranda, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe

The trick for these 2 cousins, aged 37 and 48, was to be disguised as construction workers. Tipped off by an anonymous phone call, they were easily recognizable at the crossroads at about 6 a.m. on their way out of town. Underneath the trowels, bubble levels and yardsticks, they had a disassembled 303 caliber rifle along with 8 rounds of ammunition hidden in a sugar box in their saddlebags. Police suspect they waited for a third man to drive them to the Buby Valley Conservancy where, abandoning their masonry tools, they used the reassembled gun and 7.62 mm bullets to poach rhinos.

ZimEye, October 28, 2021.⁵

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

September 2, 2021

Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa



The 3 men, on November 26, 2017, had broken into the Kruger Park with the intention of killing rhinos. They were heavily armed. When rangers heard the echoes of gunfire, they approached the area with tracking dogs. They saw the 3 poachers shooting at 2 rhinos and called a helicopter to assist. They eventually neutralized the gang, seized the horns, and photographed and collected the evidence.

Walter Hendrik Mangane, age 59, was sentenced to 45 years in prison and Shangani Mathebula, age 26, and Emmanuel Mdluli, age 33, were sentenced to 30 years in prison.

Lowvelder, September 3, 2021; SAPS, September 4, 2021.⁶

September 9, 2021

Greater Kruger National Park, Limpopo Province, South Africa

The Council of Contributors reported the discovery of a gunshot wound on a rhino during a dehorning operation that began in August 2021 (see "On the Trail" n°33 p.67). A few



days after this preventive operation, another rhino, this time just dehorned, was found wounded by 2 bullets. He was treated and fitted with a GPS transmitter before being released.

Jana Meyer, September 9, 2021; Council of Contributors, September 12 and 19, 2021.⁷

September 9, 2021

Hoedspruit, Limpopo Province, South Africa

STIHL saws everything from okoumé trees in Gabon, firs in the Arctic, cedars in California, hedges in Normandy and rhinoceros horns in South Africa. In 45 minutes, the victim was disfigured. They anaesthetized him, cut his horns, rounded the 2 stumps, coated them with oil, and woke him up.



Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre, September 9, 2021.⁸

September 12, 2021

Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

The orphaned rhino cub rushed from the Kruger Park to the care center was received with fervor but was wounded in the neck and starving. He died 3 days later.

Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary, September 12, 13 and 15, 2021.⁹



September 15, 2021

Bothongo Rhino and Lion Nature Reserve, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Poaching around 4 a.m. of a mother and her daughter. The management of the reserve is devastated. The anti-poaching force seemed proportionate to the risks. The APU (Anti-Poaching Unit) costs an average of 30,000 US\$ per month. Krugersdorp News, September 15, 2021.¹⁰

September 16, 2021

Brakpan and Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa



Arrest of Stephanus Peter Peters, 53, police inspector, and Lina Zhang, 39, sworn interpreter. They are suspected of attempting to ship 30 rhino horns with a total weight of approximately 40 kg and an estimated value at the time of the crime (May 2019) of 2.6 million US\$ to Malaysia. The cargo was concealed in a wooden box declared to contain wine. See "On the Trail" n°25 p.77.

They were released on bail for 5,000 and 20,000 rand (340 and 1,370 US\$).

Independent Online, September 17, 2021.¹¹

September 21, 2021

Vrededorst, Free State Province, South Africa

The men were looking to kill rhinos in an organized gang. They were tracked down by police officers. An exchange of fire took place in the early evening and one of the police officers was injured in the leg. He was rushed to the hospital while the suspects vanished into thin air leaving a .375 caliber rifle, 16 rounds of ammunition, a silencer and an axe. SAPS, September 22, 2021.¹²

September 26, 2021

Barberton Nature Reserve, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

To reduce the risk of poaching and attacks on staff, rhinos housed and cared for at the refuge are dehorned whenever possible and the horns are immediately transported elsewhere. "A sad but necessary evil in the fight to keep these animals alive." As if to apologize, refuge officials say it's as easy as cutting your fingernails.

Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary, September 26, 2021.¹³



October 1, 2021

Eastern Cape Province, South Africa



Rhinos are dehorned everywhere and one can't help but wonder about the future of the horns, about the safety of storage, about their status, and about attempts to recover them by Chinese and Vietnamese mafias or by lone opportunists.

Council of Contributors, October 1, 14 and 21, 2021; Dr William Fowlds, October 15, 2021.¹⁴

**October 7, 2021
Rustenburg and Mahikeng, North West Province,
South Africa**

Stephen Maqoboza is the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Officer for Economic Development, Environment, Conservation and Tourism.

Motsamai Wells Masigo has had a career with the police force for 19 years. He is now the director of a fictitious security agency. They were both caught in the act of transporting 17 horns from a "a well-known game farm near Upington in the Northern Cape."

Maqoboza made connections by attending several pseudo-rhino hunts by Vietnamese, Laotian and Thai bit players after which the horns were cut up and shipped to Asia as trophies (Chumlong Lemtongthai, see "On the Trail" n°2 p.47, n°6 p.68 and n°22 p.81).

They were each released on bail of 50,000 rand or 3,325 US\$.

News24, October 8, 2021; Foreign Brief, October 11, 2021; Oxpeckers, October 13, 2021.¹⁵



© SAPS



© SAPS

**October 8, 2021
Thornybush Nature Reserve, Limpopo Province,
South Africa**



© Panthera Photo Safaris

Dehorning is surging. Rhino Revolution demands the removal of the nasal and frontal horns of 250 rhinos in the reserves around Kruger Park. Rhino Revolution, October 8 and 24, 2021.¹⁶

**October 11, 2021
Ntambanana, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South
Africa**



© Thula Thula

Cutting rhino horns is as easy and natural as cutting your own nails. The horns are put in a safe place as soon as possible.

Thula Thula - Exclusive Private Game Reserve, October 11, 2021.¹⁷

**October 14 and November 18, 2021, and January
16, 2022**

**Bapsfontein, Gauteng Province, and Delmas,
Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

On October 14, Rogerio Domingo Moiane, a Mozambican national, and Clifford Mashego, walking along Road 50, attracted the attention of a patrol. The search of their bag led to the discovery of a big rhino horn. The 2 men live in the Ivory Park township near Tembisa, which is home to 200,000 people in an area of about 10 km².

During his first appearance, Moiane claimed that the 4 police officers, 3 men and a woman, demanded 30,000 rand or 2,000 US\$ in exchange for their freedom. The prosecutor denied Moiane's claim. The tracking of the police car and its AVL (Automatic Vehicle Locating) trajectory



© Samora MZIZI

did not record the stops at the Delmas golf course and near the KFC restaurant where Moiane claimed he was robbed. The suspect said he worked for a Chinese metrics company, earned 7,500 rand (500 US\$) a month and had travelled to Africa and Asia. The prosecutor confirmed that Moiane travelled to China, Australia, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Eswatini, Mauritius, Uganda and Zambia.

Moiane was already subject of an arrest warrant for allegedly possessing an unlicensed firearm in 2016 or 2017, according to sources. He had been released on bail and had freed himself from his legal obligations.

Moiane is now in Modderbee prison.

Daily Maverick, November 18, 2021; SAPS, January 16, 2022.¹⁸

**October 15, 2021
Stolznek Section, Kruger National Park,
Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

The two poachers were sitting under a tree. They tried to run away before being surrounded by the rangers. They were arrested. They had with them a high-powered rifle, ammunition and the whole equipment of dehorning.
DefenceWeb, October 18, 2021.¹⁹

**October 20, 2021
Mogwase, North West Province, South Africa**



Sentence of Arlindo Muhlana, Adam Hlongwane and Gamula Chauke, citizens of Mozambique, to 35 years in prison each for illegally hunting rhino cows, illegally chopping off rhino horns, illegal possession and transfer of 6 rhino horns, illegal possession of firearms and ammunition, and trespassing in a protected area. They were arrested after the poaching of 3 white rhinos in the Pilanesberg Reserve in 2018 (see "On the Trail" n°22 p.78).
News24, October 21, 2021; Daily Dispatch, October 24, 2021.²⁰

**REPEATED OFFENSE
October 20 and November 3, 2021
Zeerust, North West Province, South Africa**

Thomas Chauke was caught with 3 accomplices on October 20 in flagrante delicto. They were transporting 4 fresh horns cut from 2 rhinos they had just killed in the Madikwe Reserve, which was decrypted on November 2 by AFIS (Automated Fingerprint Identification System). Thabo Zachariah Muyambo had been sentenced to life imprisonment in June 2019 for kidnapping. He was released from kgosi Mampuru Prison, Pretoria, in December 2020 after using an underground tunnel that had escaped the guards' attention. After this discreet and spectacular escape, there was talk of complicity among prison staff.



© Mail & Guardian

And Muyambo did it again when, on November 3, 2021, just before appearing in Zeerust for his bail hearing, he managed, under unknown circumstances, to escape through corridors linking his prison cell to the courtroom. The question is whether Muyambo benefited from the incompetence of his escort, from his complicity, or from a lack of coordination between the AFIS and the court in Zeerust. Is Muyambo protected, and if so, why?

Save the Beasts, November 3, 2021; Mail & Guardian, November 26, 2021.²¹

**October 21, 2021
KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa**



© African Wildlife Vets

The rhino had survived poaching and the removal of his 2 horns. He was anesthetized and the wounds were treated by veterinary doctor Rowan Leeming. A geolocation collar was fixed over a hoof. His movements will be monitored. The prognosis is relatively good.
African Wildlife Vets, October 21, 2021.²²

**October 30-31, 2021
Limpopo Province, South Africa**

It is the beginning of the high poaching season. Already, 4 rhinos have died in 48 hours. The Limpopo Rhino Conservation group includes several private owners. All precautions are taken to avoid a massacre in the run-up to the end of the year celebrations.
Limpopo Rhino Conservation, November 1, 2021.²³

**November 5, 2021
Skukuza, Kruger National Park,
Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**



© Lowvelder

Sentencing of Jordan Samuel Mathonsi and Gorge Masangu to 27 years' imprisonment for unauthorized entry into a national park, illegal immigration, poaching rhinos, possession of a weapon without a license, possession of ammunition without a license, and possession of a prohibited weapon with the serial number removed. Most of the sentences are combined. The 2 Mozambican nationals are expected to each spend 16 years in prison.
Lowvelder, November 7, 2021.²⁴

November 12, 2021

Bloemfontein, Free State Province, South Africa



Wilson Kwintshana is sentenced to 7 years in prison. In April 2017, armed with a gun, he broke into the store of a taxidermist called "African Artistry." He stole 2 rhinoceros horns. According to the investigation file, they were sold to an intermediary in Johannesburg for 200,000 rand (13,210 US\$) and then shipped to Switzerland. News24, November 24, 2021.²⁵

Mid-November 2021

Klaserie Private Nature Reserve, Limpopo Province, and KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa



The dehorners are working hard to anaesthetize the animals. In one day, 2 teams cut off the horns of as many black and white rhinos as possible who had not been dehorned for 2 years and that, on the eve of the end of year celebrations and the full moon, could have attracted poachers. Klaserie Private Nature Reserve, November 19, 2021; Council of Contributors, November 22 and 24, 2021.²⁶

FAMILY AFFAIRS

November 19, 2021

Middelburg, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa



"On the Trail" n°30 p.45 retraces the arrest of the father and the son. They were returning from Mozambique, their country of origin, with 2 horns and a garbage bag full of shark fins. They were sentenced to 6 years in prison for possession the horns, 5 years for attempted bribery and 3 years for possession of the shark fins. News24, November 20, 2021; SAPS, November 20, 2021; Save the Beasts, November 20, 2021.²⁷

November 22, 2021

Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

At dusk on Monday, poachers took advantage of stormy weather and rain to kill a female black rhino in an undisclosed reserve. Her orphaned offspring, an 18-month-old male, was found on Wednesday. Under police escort, a pick-up truck transported the little victim to the Care for Wild orphanage. Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary, November 26, 2021.²⁸

November 2021

Hazyview, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Eight suspects are arrested on the outskirts of Kruger Park. They were in possession of 4 firearms, ammunition and rhino horns. DefenceWeb, December 10, 2021; Independent Online, December 13, 2021.²⁹

2014 - end of November 2021

South Africa

In response to a question from Member of Parliament Annerie Weber, Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana said that between 2014 and 2021, the tax department seized 865 kg of horns via customs. The largest seizures were in July 2021, October 2019 and July 2017. The minister did not respond to all of the member's requests. She wanted the overall record of Customs seizures between 2011 and 2021 and each of the reports. On this particular point, she was told that the Hawks and the DFFE (Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment) were in a better position to answer her. See on this subject "On the Trail" n°33 p.66, n°27 p.90 and n°18 p.72. Independent Online, November 25, 2021.³⁰

November 23 and December 1, 2021

Selati Game Reserve, Limpopo Province, South Africa

In the Selati Private Game Reserve, the body of a female white rhino was discovered on November 23. She had been poached and her horns were removed despite having been previously dehorned. The horns grow back, as do fingernails. Her calf was found 9 days later at the edge of a waterhole, 6 km from the carcass of his mother. Emergency care was given by Ben Muller and he was taken to the Care for Wild shelter. After a few days, the caretakers gave him a new companion, a zebra who was also orphaned.



Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary, December 1, 2021; Letaba Herald, December 10, 2021.³¹

End of November 2021

South Africa

Last-ditch rescue of a poached southern white rhino (*Ceratotherium simum simum*), shot in the neck and left for dead in the bush.

Saving the Survivors, December 3, 2021.³²

December 8, 12 and 17, 2021

Inverdoorn Private Game Reserve, Western Cape Province, South Africa

It is carnage. A first and a second rhino uncovered in the night with flashlights, bloody, crouched or upside down, dehorned and dead. Two others suffered the same fate and are still alive, breathing with heartbeats. A fifth has a bullet in her head, she is barely living.

All the horns are gone. Everything happened between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m.

The reserve had converted to preventive dehorning and had even replaced the original horns with synthetic prostheses. The information had been widely spread by the media and word of mouth. At the entrance to some banks, there is a notice saying that there is no cash inside; outside the electric fence of the peri-urban reserve, there are signs saying that inside the horns are worthless. At least one rhino was savagely assaulted and amputated by poachers who took 2 fiberglass horns.

Four days later, 4 men were arrested, aged between 27 and 56. They are from Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi and on December 17 a fifth man from Zimbabwe was arrested. He is 23 years old.

The female survived. The veterinarians are considering a long facial reconstruction protocol for her.

Aquila Collection, December 9, 12 and 17, 2021; Save the Beasts, December 13, 14 and 20, 2021; TimesLIVE, December 13, 2021; Independent Online, December 15, 2021.³³

December 9, 2021

Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Kruger says in a statement that a team dedicated to preventive dehorning came across a dying female rhino with several bullets in her head and front legs and a huge hole in her nasal cavity instead of the main horn. The rhino was put out of her misery.

The Witness, December 11, 2021.³⁴

December 10, 2021

Barberton Nature Reserve, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Mothers are murdered in the reserves, and orphans flock to Care for the Wild. Sixteen months old, a few months or even a few hours old, still carrying the umbilical cord. The younger they are, the less of a chance there is of saving them.

Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary, December 11, 12 and 14, 2021.³⁵



December 1-15, 2021

MalaMala Game Reserve, Mpumalanga Province, Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park, KwaZulu-Natal Province, Kruger National Park, Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces, and Inverdoorn Game Reserve, Western Cape Province Western Cape Province, South Africa

The counters are ticking away as if from one or several origins, the urgent orders for fresh horns are coming in and special courier lines are going to deliver them without fail. There must be a lot of horns in the FedEx bags or packages.

30 between December 1 and 15.

Council of Contributors, December 15, 2021.³⁶

December 22, 2021

Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Arrest of 2 men in the early morning. They came from Mozambique with firearms, ammunition, a large knife, and some food as luggage. Esau Dlamini and Samson Maluleke are in custody after appearing before the special rhino court.

Eyewitness News, December 23, 2021; SAPS, December 23, 2021.³⁷

December 23, 2021

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



A suspicious package comes under close scrutiny in the cargo section of Tambo International Airport. In boxes of Cadbury and Ferrero chocolate that were the official subject of the shipment, 6 horns and fragments (4 kg in total) were slipped in. Ah, the perfect holiday gift! The Chinese sender was arrested at his home in the suburbs of Johannesburg and large sums of cash were seized under the driver's seat of his car.

SAPS, December 24, 2021; Save the Beasts, December 24, 2021.³⁸

December 30, 2021

Jock Safari Lodge, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

During the morning inspection, something abnormal is spotted. A male is moving strangely and a young one is circling him. Both were anaesthetized during the day. The male was shot through the jaw, the cub was airlifted to Care for the Wild. The body of the mother, who was probably poached to death, has not yet been found.

Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary, December 30, 2021; Jock Safari Lodge, December 30, 2021.³⁹

BOTSWANA

October 1 and 4, 2021

Kiri and Chitabe Camps, Okavango Delta, North West District, Botswana

Ian Khama, Botswana's former president, who has always shown his willingness to conserve wildlife and sees wildlife tourism as a major economic resource and source of international prestige for the country, announces that a rhino has been poached in Kiri camp on October 1 and another on October 4 in Chitabe camp. "Therefore with no end in sight to this massacre, the extinction of rhinos in the Okavango is imminent."

Seretse Khama Ian Khama, October 5, 2021; Voice of America, October 20, 2021; Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Tourism, October 22, 2021.⁴⁰



October 22, 2021

Okavango Delta, North West District, Botswana

In response to Ian Khama's statements, the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Tourism issued the following statement :

"Rhinos became extinct in the wild in the then Bechuanaland Protectorate in the late 1800s. The Government re-introduced 138 white rhinos into northern Botswana between 1967 and 1986. These animals were distributed between 3 game reserves in northern Botswana. An aerial count shortly thereafter recorded a 20% decline from the expected population size. Another aerial count done in the early 1990s pointed out an 80% population decline with some carcasses observed on-site. This decline was attributed to poaching.

A decision was made in the early 1990s to relocate the remaining animals to a fenced sanctuary. This led to the establishment of Khama Rhino Sanctuary (KRS), and the few animals that could be recovered were moved there in 1993. The KRS demonstrated the importance and success of managing small

populations of endangered species under fenced conditions for the purposes of concentrating security effort in small areas while providing optimal environment for rapid population growth. Fenced estates are important in maintaining stock where later, animals can be used to re-stock other areas once the species population increase."

"Following the surge in rhino poaching within the Okavango Delta a number of initiatives were implemented to address the problem. These included increase in foot and aerial patrols, dehorning of rhinos and removal of the critically endangered black rhinos to fenced areas. While these measures have worked to differing levels, following from the successes gained from using sanctuaries to protect the species. Government has now taken a decision to move all rhinos from the Okavango Delta into sanctuaries. This environment will allow for conservation and rapid propagation of the species under a secure and smaller area. Over the next few years, the animals from the sanctuary will be used to re-populate other areas, including the Okavango Delta."

Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Tourism, October 22, 2021.⁴¹

NAMIBIA

September 17, 2021

Outjo, Kunene Region, Namibia

Arrest of Ignasius Mbaraka Mutunda. He is suspected of rhino poaching in June 2020. The Namibian, September 22, 2021.⁴²

September 19, 2021

Bukalo, Zambezi Region, Namibia



The police have been on alert for 2 days. A source informed them of the presence of poachers in possession of rhinoceros horns. On Sunday, they spotted a suspicious car coming from Ngoma, about 30 km away, and followed it. The driver tried to lose his pursuers, but the race came to an abrupt halt with a collision at a roadblock. No injuries were reported. The 2 suspects were arrested, and fake rhino horns were seized.

The Namibian, September 20, 2021.⁴³

VIET NAM

October 29, 2021

Otjiwarongo, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

Champion Haraseb, Paulus Daniel, Josia Many, Mbike Kakonda and Absalom David were arrested. They are suspected of planning to poach rhinos.

According to official sources, 14 rhinos have been poached since the beginning of the year and 113 people have been arrested in connection with rhino poaching or horn trafficking.

Namibia Economist, October 8, 2021; The Namibian, October 13, 2021; Namibian Sun, November 4, 2021.⁴⁴

January-November 2021

Namibia

112 rhinos have been dehorned in the country so far this year, 82 black and 30 white. In Namibia, dehorning operations have been taking place since 2014. Since 2018, 778 rhinos have been dehorned. These amputations must be repeated regularly.

Namibia Daily News (with Xinhua), November 22, 2021.⁴⁵

December 5 and 12, 2021

Okakarara, Otjozondjupa Region, and Okahao, Omusati Region, Namibia

- Patric Tjiposa, David Petrus, Kapenda Tjiposa, Puuta Muhenje and Gilberto Fortunato are arrested for conspiring to poach a rhino. Their vehicle, a firearm and ammunition are seized.

- David Kashenye and Ruben David are arrested for poaching rhinos in October.

Namibian Sun, December 15, 2021.⁴⁶

December 12, 2021

Namibia

Two arrests for poaching a rhino in October 2020. Allgemeine Zeitung Namibia, December 14, 2021.⁴⁷

SOUTHEASTERN ASIA

MALAYSIA

September 9, 2021

Near Kuala Lumpur International Airport, Malaysia



Seizure of 50 horns and horn fragments from a truck near the airport mosque. Two men were arrested. They are facing 3 years in prison and a fine of 100,000 ringgit or 24,055 US\$. According to the Perhilitan, this is the biggest seizure in Malaysia over the last 5 years. Analyses are underway to verify the authenticity

of the horns and to date them. Rhinos have been extinct in Malaysia since 2019.

The Star, September 15 and 22, 2021; Traffic, September 21, 2021.⁴⁸

September 9, 2021

Hung Nguyen District, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

Seizure at Le Dung Thai's home, a truck driver, of ecstasy, marijuana and 711.915 grams of suspected rhino horn fragments.

Phap Luat Plus, September 17, 2021.⁴⁹

September 23, 2021

Noi Bai International Airport, Hanoi Municipality, Viet Nam

Seizure of 26 fragments of suspected rhinoceros horn from the luggage of 2 passengers on a Qatar Airways flight. Total weight: 9,345 grams.

Thuong hieu & Cong luan, November 2, 2021.⁵⁰

November 18, 2021

Haiphong Port, Viet Nam



Seizure in 2 containers from Manila, Philippines, of 19.5 kg of rhino horns. Authenticity was confirmed by the Academy of Science and Technology.

VietNamNet, December 1, 2021.⁵¹

Beginning of December 2021

Viet Nam

36-year-old Do Minh Toan was sentenced to 14 years in prison for his involvement in smuggling 125 kg of horns in July 2019 (see "On the Trail" n°26 p. 78)

The Phnom Penh Post (with AFP), December 9, 2021; Voice of Ho Chi Minh City's People, December 6, 2021.⁵²



SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

September 22, 2021

Bokakhat, Golaghat District, State of Assam, India



Deliberate destruction by fire of 2,479 rhino horns seized from poachers and traffickers or cut from the carcasses of rhinos who had died since 1979 and were previously stored in vaults. The longest was 57 cm long and the heaviest weighed 3 kg. The average weight of the destroyed horns was 560 grams. The total weight was 1,305 kg and their financial value on the black market was almost 33 million US\$ on the basis of 25,000 US\$/kg. "Through this event, we want to convey to the world that rhino horns are just a mass of compacted hair and there is no medicinal value to them," said Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. "Some are saying that instead of destroying the horns we should have sold them." "But like the way we can't sell seized drugs to earn revenue, the same way a government can't earn money by selling rhino horns." "All horns recovered from rhinos dying naturally or during disasters and accidents would henceforth be burned annually." Before being burned, the horns were cleaned, weighed, photographed, wrapped and sealed by a team of scientists in front of several witnesses. 21 horns were fake and 15 were from African rhinos. 94 exceptional horns were kept for display and educational purposes. 50 horns were kept in court offices as evidence. The "cremation" of the horns accompanied by Vedic mantras and rituals took place in a stadium some 20 km from Kaziranga Park. The 6 pyres were lit by drones. Hindustan Times, September 22, 2021; The Hindu, September 22, 2021; The Indian Express, September 22, 2021; WCCB, September 22, 2021; The Times of India, September 23, 2021.⁵³

NEPAL

End of September 2021

Kathmandu, Kathmandu District, Bagmati Province, Nepal

They allegedly joined 15 others to kill a rhino in Chitwan National Park a year ago. Nange Tamang Lama is the sixth to be arrested. He has been transferred to Bharatpur jail.

The Rising Nepal, September 24, 2021.⁵⁴

September 27, 2021

Chitwan National Park, Bagmati Province, Nepal

Death of a female about 10 years old. After entering a rice field, she was retaliated against and was killed by a throwing weapon. The body was not amputated of its hooves or horn.

Online Khabar, September 28, 2021.⁵⁵

December 8, 2021

Butwal, Rupandehi District, Lumbini Province, Nepal

Arrest of 3 persons aged 28 to 58 years in room 118 of Hariyali Hotel. Seizure of a horn.

Khabarhub, December 9, 2021.⁵⁶

December 20, 2021

Kathmandu, Kathmandu District, Bagmati Province, Nepal

Six men aged between 20 and 42 years were holding a horn. It was seized. They have been arrested.

Khabarhub, December 20, 2021.⁵⁷

WESTERN ASIA

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

October 15, 2021

United Arab Emirates

Arrest in Abu Dhabi of Zeng Denghui. He was the subject of an Interpol red notice. He had fled from 858 Aerodrome Road in Victoria Falls where he was under house arrest with 6 accomplices. On December 23, 2018, between 20 and 30 kg of rhino horn sections had been seized from their home. In April 2019, they had been released on bail and under judicial supervision. A few months later, thanks to the complicity of a Bulawayo police officer, they managed to reach the Sango border post in eastern Zimbabwe with a stolen car before reaching Maputo in Mozambique and reportedly boarding a Chinese fishing boat in the hope of reaching mainland China. This scenario did not succeed, at least for Zeng, whose extradition Zimbabwe is requesting. Peicong Wang, Liu Cheng, Yu Xian, Long Zhu, Chen Xianfu and Qiu Jinchang are still on the run. See "On the Trail" n°23 p.101 and n°26 p.75.

The Sunday Mail, December 5, 2021.⁵⁸

QATAR

OPERATION GOLDEN STRIKE August-September 2021 Qatar

Seizure of 10 kg of rhino horns from Mozambique to Viet Nam.

Interpol, January 24, 2022.⁵⁹

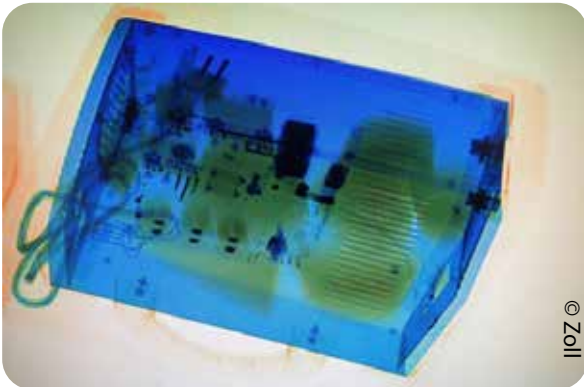
WESTERN EUROPE

GERMANY

December 2021 Leipzig/Halle Airport, Saxony State, Germany

Seizure in 2 parcels going from Angola to Viet Nam with transit through Germany of 3.8 kg of horns. In the first package there was a loudspeaker filled with polyurethane foam where 8 pieces of horn were hidden. In the second package, there was a soldering station filled with foam where 7 pieces of horn were hidden. The authenticity was confirmed by the Senckenberg Institute in Dresden.

German Customs, January 18, 2022.⁶⁰



FRANCE

September 23, 2021 Nantes, Department of Loire-Atlantique, France



The Cameroonian subject defends himself without a lawyer at the bar of the court. He is accused of having imported a small rhinoceros horn weighing 120 g into France. He swears that this family heirloom transmitted from father to son for 3 generations is made of bull horn. "My father drank from it all his life, I am his successor," he proclaims. "It can be used as a dowry." Three experts, including one from the Museum of Natural History, confirm the rhinoceros origin. On the basis of 50,000 €/kg (59,000 US\$/kg) as postulated by the customs representative, the value of the horn is 6,000 € (7,080 US\$). The Cameroonian electrician who has no fixed address and who says he sleeps in his car in the suburbs of Paris was sentenced to 3 months in prison because of a previous suspended sentence for fraud, and to a fine of 1,000 € (1,180 US\$). The controversial horn seized at the Nantes airport has been definitively placed under the responsibility of the French State. Ouest-France, September 24, 2021.⁶¹

SOUTHERN EUROPE

ITALY

October 12, 2021 Verona International Airport, Province of Verona, Region of Veneto, Italy

The Rathkeale Rovers may have made a brief and tumultuous appearance in Verona. A British registered Ford C Max with a broken rear window was found in the airport's short-term parking lot. The barrier of the lot was broken. In the car there were burglar tools, a portable generator, English truck license plates, and ropes. Near the exit of the parking lot, an open backpack was abandoned with what is presumed to be 2 rhino horns in excellent condition weighing 1,647 grams and 496 grams. "We are dealing with a well-organized criminal organization," says the head of the airport's air police.

An organized and sprawling gang, but one that sometimes gets out of hand and has misadventures worthy of the Pieds Nickelés. Between 2011 and 2018, the Rathkeale Rovers have been involved in theft, smuggling, expertise of rhinoceros horns, whose authenticity has yet to be verified, but also in the express sale of low-quality bitumen and the sale of classic cars. They have no doubt other trades to their bows.

Rathkeale Rovers, see "On the Trail" n°32 p.56. VeronaSera, October 12, 2021.⁶²



Jaguar (*Panthera onca*). Photo Lappugla

On the Trail n°34
Black market feline parts quotation from media or official sources
The values were estimated at the time of the seizures

Animal	Part	US\$	Country	Ref. (year)
Tiger	Tooth	334	India	13 (2021)
	4 canines, 17 teeth and 19 claws	40,000		17 (2021)
Lion	Head	21,600	South Africa	35 (2021)
	Lion cub	5,800	Kazakhstan	43 (2021)
Leopard	Skin	4,775	India	56 (2021)
	Skin with claws	93,488		76 (2021)
Leopard cat	A live specimen	18.8 US\$	China	111 (2021)
	Skin	68 US\$	India	112 (2021)
Caracal	A live specimen	7,500-10,000 US\$	United States of America	131 (2018)
Serval	A live specimen	7,500-10,000 US\$	United States of America	131 (2018)

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

December 29, 2021

Naples, State of Florida, United States of America

A Malayan tiger from the Seattle Zoo was executed around 6:30 p.m. by a sheriff's deputy. He was holding in his mouth the arm of an employee in charge of cleaning the zoo's gift store after it was closed to the public. Against all instructions, the employee entered the tiger's enclosure to pet him or feed him. After the shooting, the tiger let go and retreated to the back of his den. A drone flyover told police and zoo management that he had died. ABC News, December 30, 2021.¹

MEXICO

End of September 2021

Puerto Libertad, State of Sonora, Mexico

Seizure in a villa of a 2-year-old female Bengal tiger plus narcotics, bulletproof vests, 4 stolen luxury cars and several automatic weapons. La Jornada, September 23, 2021.²

ASIA

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

End of October 2021

Dubai Emirate, United Arab Emirates



Police captured a tiger cub, a few months old, who was roaming around near the home of his owner, who had bought him on the Internet and was unaware of his escape. In September, another stray lion cub was captured by the police and transferred to "Dubai Safari."

Al Bayan, November 3, 2021; Khaleej Times, November 4, 2021; The National, November 4, 2021.³

September 9, 2021

Sitapur, Nagpur District; Bhatari, Chandrapur District, State of Maharashtra, India



Petty dealers and poaching gangs are swarming the State, and the Forest Department is struggling to contain the depopulation of the cats. Today its agents conducted 2 raids. Based on information obtained from their cyber cell, they first arrested Rajkumar Markam and Kamalsingh Bhalavi in Sitapur, in possession of a claw and 3 tiger bones. Then a raid in Bhatari village resulted in the seizure of 6 claws, 13 whiskers, weapons and snares. Ramchandra Bawne, Yogesh Todase and Prabhakar Todase, known and hardened poachers, were about to make their delivery at a tollbooth on National Highway 7. They had electrocuted the tiger last January. The thugs led investigators to a cache where 5.5 kg of bones were buried. The skin of the feline was not found.

The Times of India, September 11, 2021.⁴

REPEATED OFFENSE

September 15, 2021

Hosahalli, Chamarajanagar District, State of Karnataka, India



The forest patrol came across the corpse of a 5 or 6-year-old tiger in an elephant proof trench. The animal had porcupine spines on his front paw from a recent fight, but had died from a brain hemorrhage caused by a snare trap. The case was handed over to Rana, the ace sniffer dog of the Bandipur Tiger Reserve. The canine investigation was conducted smoothly. The trail led to Chandru's house, in front of which Rana stopped. Chandru was already charged with various wildlife crimes. The Hindu, September 15, 2021; The Times of India, September 15, 2021.⁵

September 20 and 21, 2021

Mandla, East Nimar District, and Balaghat, Balaghat District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India



First 4 arrests on Monday, traffickers holding 4 claws and 30 vibrissae. Then following their statements, 4 other arrests on Tuesday and seizure of bones, poaching equipment and the snare trap used to kill the tiger.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), September 22, 2021; WCCB, September 22, 2021.⁶



TIGERS - followed

October 3 and 5, 2021

Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary, Mulugu District, State of Telangana, India

Madakam Naresh, Erumaiah, Madakam

Mukesh and Deva had just set off in a car to Chhattisgarh State to meet buyers interested in tiger parts when they were intercepted at a roadblock. They were carrying a claw as a sample. When questioned by police and forest guards, they confessed to trapping the 4-or-5-year-old tigress on September 21, skinning her, burying the carcass and sharing the claws. They led officers to the poaching site where bones were found. Two days later their accomplices Madakam Ramu, Muchaki Andha, Madakam Sathish, Kovasi Iduma and Muchaki Rajkumar also came into possession of snares, knives, axes and some bones.

The Hindu, October 3, 2021; The Times of India, October 4 and 5, 2021; The New Indian Express, October 7, 2021.⁷

October 5, 2021

Padoli, Chandrapur District, State of Maharashtra, India

Lomesh Nanaji Dable is a sarpanch (local elected official, equivalent to a mayor) of the village of Chichbodi who claims to be a tantric magician, but he is also a vulgar poacher. Tracked for 10 days by the Forest Department, he was caught with his accomplice Kalidas Maorti Raipure as they were about to sell the dried corpse of a tiger that Dable had captured in May in the Sawali forest while the mother was out hunting. According to the forest guards, the cruel sarpanch had left him to starve in a hut built on his farmland.

The Live Nagpur, October 7, 2021; The Times of India, October 8, 2021.⁸

October 10 and 18, 2021

Haladgaon, Wardha District; Nagpur, Nagpur District, State of Maharashtra, India

The Chevrolet was checked and searched on Sunday night at the Naka toll on the Wardha-Nagpur road. On board were 7 men, 2 tiger canines and 2 whiskers. They were going to trade them with a dealer from Nagpur. They told the police that they were from a tiger poached in Umarda forest. With the information provided by the 7 suspects, the forest officers searched the homes of 4 accomplices and seized 10 kg of bones, 2 canines, 5 claws and 3 whiskers from the same tiger.

Explaining the upsurge in seizures of tiger parts in such a short span of time, Narendra Chandewar speaking on behalf of the forest department said that "during pandemic, many people lost their livelihood and may not have anything left to fall back on." The Live Nagpur, October 11 and 18, 2021; The Indian Express, October 12, 2021; The Times of India, October 12 and 19, 2021.⁹



FAMILY AFFAIRS

October 11, 2021

Manoharpur, Mandla District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India



Another tiger electrocuted. The farmers say that they wanted to get rid of the wild boars. In fact they wanted to enjoy their meat. The body of the tiger was butchered before daybreak. His remains were found by the police in bags weighed down with stones in the reservoir of a dam. The head and paws were missing.

The Free Press Journal, October 11, 2021; MP Breaking News, October 12, 2021.¹⁰

October 30 and 31, 2021

Kagaznagar, Komaram Bheem District; Wadagaon, Adilabad District, State of Telangana, India



Kotnaka Dev Rao and Godugu Avinash were first arrested in the city with a tiger skin. They gave the names of their accomplices in the tribal village of Wadagaon. Pendur Dev Rao had killed the cat with an electrified trap set in his rice field. Athram Krishna was responsible for skinning the corpse. Kotnaka Dev Rao, Godugu Avinash, Mesram Manku, Mesram Deepak, Mesram Chandrakanth, Mesram Eshwer, Mesram Laxman and Pendur Mukund Rao were part of the gang. The matter escalated when local tribesmen tried to prevent the arrest of the suspects and then tried to take over the forest post and set up a road block. The tension subsided when the forest guards agreed to register the petition of the aborigines alleging the deterioration of the sanctity of their homes during the raids. Pendur Dev Rao, from whose house the lower jaw and bones of the cat were seized, is at large.

Telangana Today, November 1, 2021.¹¹

Sunday, October 31, and November 7, 2021

Singhpur, Satna District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India



The skinned carcass of the 22-month-old tiger P234-21, known to thousands of admirers as Heera, was found overnight about 100 kilometres from the Panna Tiger Reserve. P234-21 was looking for a new territory. An electrocution and the trafficking in his skin and other organs saleable on the black market are suspected. Three men, Ramprakash Bagri, Munna Chaudhary and Krishna, are arrested. The geolocation collar was found 300 metres from the carcass. The last signal was on October 13. Why didn't the forest officers react before the macabre discovery? In their newsletter of August 2, 2021, they said yet that they were following Heera's every move. "We are playing "Big Brother". We will continue to track him through satellite as he moves in to newer territories." =>

TIGERS - followed

On Sunday, November 7, Heera's skin was, in turn, found floating in a pond. The 3 farmers, after finding the tiger electrocuted in the protective fences of their fields, skinned him to "hide" the meat and then, according to their own testimony, threw the skin into the water.

According to an investigating officer, the farmers acted out of panic. The fact remains that skinning a tiger weighing more than 150 kg is not something that novices can do and the fate of Heera's paws, claws, teeth and head has not been clarified.

Panna Tiger Reserve Newsletter, August 2021; The Free Press Journal, November 1, 2021; The Times of India, November 1, 2 and 7, 2021; Hindustan Times, November 12, 2021.¹²

November 10, 2021
Chennagolli, Kodagu District, State of Karnataka, India



Pavan Poovaiah had been in the sights of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) forest cell for several days. A fake buyer was negotiating with him to buy 6 tiger teeth for 150,000 rupees (2,000 US\$, or 334 US\$/tooth). An appointment was made today at a bus stop. The trafficker and his accomplices Santosh Kumar, Ganesh and K.V. Santosh fell into the trap.

The New Indian Express, November 10, 2021.¹³

November 11, 2021
Waygaon, Chandrapur District, State of Maharashtra, India



She was just over 2 years old and was the daughter of the famous Madhu, the tigress that rules over part of the buffer zone of Tadoba National Park. She was found dead in a field, electrocuted by a trap set by Nilkant Dadmal, an agricultural worker employed by Jitendra Randive. The latter lives in the city. He is wanted.

The New Indian Express, November 11, 2021; The Times of India, November 12, 2021.¹⁴

November 15, 2021

Gondpipri, Chandrapur District; Bhamragarh, Gadchiroli District, State of Maharashtra, India

For almost a month, undercover forest guards had been negotiating with the gang. The deal was finally closed for 6 million rupees (80,132 US\$). A night meeting was arranged. When the gang arrived on motorcycles, the agents surrounded them to find Bandu Badde, Sudhakar Nimma, Sandeep Sadmake, Subham Dorle and Rakesh Dongre carrying a skin, 4 canines and vibrissae. They gave the name of their supplier, the poacher Doli Pungati, who was arrested at the border with Telangana.

The Times of India, November 16 and 17, 2021.¹⁵

November 20 and 21, 2021

Banjari and Hanthidah, Singrauli District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India



The transmitter collar of the tigress T-30 had suddenly stopped working on November 5 at about 11:30 p.m. The forest guards were looking for her since then, helped by sniffer dogs. On Saturday, they discovered the skin and collar in 2 blood-stained jute bags hidden in a pit near the village of Banjari. The interrogation of the suspects made it possible to locate on Sunday near Hanthidah 5 other bags immersed in the river Gopad. They contained the cut carcass. At least 12 people are involved in the crime. The tigress had been electrocuted by a 2-km-long cable which was connected to a transformer. Press Trust of India, November 22, 2021.¹⁶

FAMILY AFFAIRS

November 23, 2021

Umred, Nagpur District, State of Maharashtra, India



The tiger was electrocuted when he touched the fence surrounding a field. Waghade, the farmer, buried him. During the Diwali festival, his brother-in-law came to his house. They decided to exhume the tiger, cut off everything that was profitable and throw away the carcass. They took on board Tarachand Neware, 41, a member of the PRT (Preliminary Response Team) dedicated to tiger rescue, and Kulmethe, chairman of the JFM (Joint Forest Management) committee responsible for ensuring sustainable forest management. The official forestry services got wind of the case and the 5 morticians were arrested in possession of 4 canines, 17 other teeth and 19 claws. They had struck a deal with a (fake) buyer on the basis of 3 million rupees (40,000 US\$). The Times of India investigation confirms that electrocution and poisoning are the 2 modus operandi of the poachers to eliminate tigers and leopards in order to protect their crops. Farmers try to make a profit with the remains.

This is the 36th tiger to die in Maharashtra so far this year. On November 15, 6 people were arrested in Gondpipri with the skin of a tiger poached in Gadchiroli.

The Hitavada, November 25, 2021; The Times of India, November 25, 2021.¹⁷

TIGERS - followed

From November 29 to December 27, 2021

Wayanad District, State of Kerala, India

Since the night of November 29, a tiger has been causing concern and even panic in the vicinity of the village of Kurukkanmoola, in the district of Wayanad (more than 800,000 inhabitants). In 15 days and nights, he is accused of having killed 14 goats and young calves. Drones, domestic elephants, 100 forestry agents and spotters were mobilized to locate the fugitive. They set up 5 cages with bait, but he remained elusive.

On December 13, images captured by thermal cameras revealed that he was severely wounded in the neck by a metal trap from which he managed to escape. The flesh is raw. On December 17, the calf of a retired schoolteacher was taken and partly eaten and a goat 1 km away suffered the same fate. After a crisis meeting, the Kerala Forest Minister said that the government was doing its utmost to alleviate the fear and anguish of the villagers. For more than 2 weeks, children have not been going to school and rural people have been ordered to observe curfew. The Chief Conservator of Forests defends the tiger: "He is actually a victim of extreme cruelty. He might have tried to break free from the snare trap that got encircled around the neck and resorted to taking cattle after the injuries made him incapable of hunting in the wild." This pro-tiger advocacy did not have the desired effect. Instead, it has exacerbated the anger of the people. "Once he can't get animals, he may turn to human beings," says one resident. Searches are intensifying in the forests of Tholpetty and Ammi where the pictures of the tiger were taken. More than 50 cameras have been installed and tension has risen again on the Mananthavady side because footprints attributed to the cattle-eating tiger have been spotted. The religious authorities sent a compassionate mission to Kurukkanmoola, the most affected village.

On December 21, the emotion is at its peak and the farmers' unions prepare a demonstration to protest against the impotence of the government. From then on, 3 teams were on the spot 24 hours a day with anaesthetic guns and the 200 trackers who were now mobilized were powerless even to see the tiger alive, let alone to discover him dead.

Finally, at the end of the year, noting that nothing had happened on the livestock front for the last 10 days, it was decided at the highest level to remove the baited cages that risked catching other tigers and leopards thus adding fuel to the fire.

"The operation needs to be wound up as no immediate conflict is presumed and the staffs are required to attend to other important duties like preparation for the coming fire season." As for the tiger, dead or alive, he has vanished into the wild.

The Times of India, December 15 and 28, 2021; Hindustan Times, December 17, 2021; On Manorama, December 21, 2021; The Hindu, December 28, 2021.¹⁸



December 21, 2021

Jaganadapuram, Khammam District, State of Telangana, India

A tuk-tuk driver in financial trouble, Punem Vignesh was convinced by a certain Dileep of a good deal: to buy a tiger skin from traffickers he knew in the village of Avupally in Chhattisgarh and sell it at a good price in Telangana. Very bad advice. Having brought along his friends Sodi Chanti, Soyam Ramesh, Chiraa Srinu and Chinthala Bala Krishna, the little gang was caught on their 2 motorcycles at a roadblock. They were carrying an adult tiger skin. Telangana Today, December 21, 2021; The Times of India, December 22, 2021.¹⁹

December 24, 2021

Pombhurna, Chandrapur District, State of Maharashtra, India



A female tiger accused of having killed several people over an unspecified period has roamed around the village since the morning of Friday, December 24. Her last misdeed was killing a goat which prompted farmers with various utensils and firecrackers to push her away. In order to cross the road, she runs into a 12-meter long storm water pipe and is blocked at the exit by a mud plug. A team of forestry rescuers arrived on the scene in a hurry. The crowd is already there, attracted by the beast's fire. The foresters manage to unclog the pipe and push her into a cage. The young tiger had her lower jaw completely dislocated. She was transferred to the WRTC (Wildlife Research and Training Centre) in Gorewada on Friday, December 26 and the veterinarians found her to be completely dehydrated and in a state of starvation. Placed on saline, she was unable to swallow anything, not even a boiled egg or water, and blood tests indicated a generalized infection. A trap camera shot taken on Sunday, December 12, shows that by then she was already disfigured and unable, if not to kill, at least to eat and drink.

She was the victim of a homemade bomb hidden in a piece of meat, stoning, or a metal trap. On Sunday late afternoon, she began suffering cardiorespiratory problems. She died around 7 p.m. The Times of India, December 24 and 25, 2021; Nagpur Today, December 27, 2021.²⁰

TIGERS - followed

December 27, 2021

Sagbara Taluka, Narmada District, State of Gujarat, India



Kishore Ahir does not deny that it is a tiger skin. But the district police are suspicious - it's their culture. For them, it could be a fake skin made from another animal like a goat or dog. It has been seen before. Arrested after a 2 km car chase and breaking through a roadblock, the suspect claims to use it in rituals. He also claims that the passengers he was carrying who managed to escape were the ones who bought it. The police handed over the knapsack to the Forest Department for examination. Bharat Times, December 29, 2021.²¹

December 28, 2021

Pench Tiger Reserve, Nagpur District, State of Maharashtra, India



The female tiger known as T-35 was found dead near a watering hole 200 meters away from a wild boar carcass. Poisoning is suspected. The previous morning, tourists saw her trying with difficulty to get up. According to the testimonies, she seemed paralyzed. After several attempts, she managed to enter the thickets and disappeared.

Since January 1, 2021, 42 tigers have died in Maharashtra, and the data collected by the NGO Wildlife Protection Society of India on the whole country is in line with this. In 2020, 111 tiger deaths were counted. Three days before the end of 2021, counts estimated 164 deaths, including T-35. "2021 was a bad year for tigers too. So many deaths are unusual. The population might not grow at this rate. It is a setback to tiger conservation." T-35's 2 tiger cubs are 11 months old, maybe a little older, and despite the cameras deployed in the reserve, it is not known what happened to them.

The Live Nagpur, December 29, 2021; The Times of India, December 29, 2021.²²

December 30, 2021

Aheri, Gadchiroli District, State of Maharashtra, India



The case is unclear at the moment, but there is no doubt about poaching. A stray dog was first found chewing on a tiger bone by villagers. The carcass of a tigress was then discovered 50 m from a field, head and paws cut off and carried away. Forest officials suspect local poaching by electrocution. The Times of India, December 31, 2021.²³

INDONESIA

October 17, 2021

Tanjung Leban, Bengkalis Regency, Riau Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia



A beautiful dead Sumatran tiger was found in a former forest converted to a cultivated field with her paws caught in a trap. A post mortem examination is conducted by the acting head of the BKSDA to determine the exact date of death.

Indonesia has already lost 2 subspecies; Bali tigers in 1937 and Java tigers in the 1970s. Sumatran tigers are also becoming extinct. There are between 200 and 400 left according to varying accounts. Tempo, October 17, 2021.²⁴

October 25, 2021

Gegerung, Bener Meriah Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Arrest of the 3 people for selling a Sumatran tiger skin at a gas station.

Inilah Jogja, October 27, 2021.²⁵

TIGERS - followed

THAILAND

September 9, 2021

Suan Phueng, Ratchaburi Province, Thailand.
Border with Myanmar.



Seizure in a private home of a 4-kg skin and 3 kg of bones belonging to a tiger aged about one year. From head to tail, the animal was approximately 170 cm long. A bullet hole was found in the right cheek bone. Two arrests.

Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, September 9, 2021; Matchon September 9, 2021; WFFT, September 11, 2021.²⁶

VIET NAM

September 16, 2021 and February 2022

Ha Tinh Province, Viet Nam



Seizure of a 160-kg tiger in a freezer at Chung's house. Chung says he agreed to keep the tiger in his home for a sum equal to 400 US\$ after meeting a truck driver specializing in container transport in a roadside restaurant.

Tigers in Viet Nam, see "On the Trail" n°4 p. 53, n°5 p. 65, n°6 p. 53, n°7 p. 49, p. 53, p. 54, n°8 p. 44, n°11 p. 49, n°13 p. 61, n°15 p. 64, n°16 p. 54, n°17 p. 61, n°18 p. 57, n°19 p. 72-73, n°21 p. 67, n°22 p. 69, n°23 p. 90, n°24 p. 56, n°25 p. 62-63, n°26 p. 63, n°27 p. 71, n°28 p. 78, n°29 p. 56, n°30 p. 55, n°31 p. 56, n°32 p. 75, n°33 p. 80-81.

VN Express, September 18, 2021; ENV, September 20, 2021 and February 20, 2022.²⁷

EUROPE

RUSSIA

Beginning of September 2021

Lazovsky District, Primorsky Krai, Russia

Arrest of 2 inhabitants of the district known to be poachers and marketers of skins and organs of Amur tiger (*Panthera tigris altaica*). In this huge territory, it is estimated the tiger population is just a few hundred.

Lenta.ru, September 6, 2021.²⁸

October 25, 2021

Dalnerechensky District, Primorsky Krai, Russia

Rescue of a Siberian tiger also known as Amur tiger (*Panthera tigris altaica*). The 2-3 month old female was trapped in an underground system of 11 traps known locally as the "badger town." The mother stuck around while her offspring was freed. "We acted as fast and as carefully as we possibly could," summarized Sergey Aramilev, general manager of the Amur Tiger Center.



Regnum, October 25, 2021; RIA Novosti, October 25, 2021; The Siberian Times, October 26, 2021.²⁹

November 12 and 17, 2021

Federal Cities of Saint Petersburg and Moscow, Russia

One after the other, 2 idiots showing tigers and trying to make a profit came to the attention of the police and politicians.

- In St. Petersburg, a circus employee was walking down Novye Zavody Street with a 6-month-old tiger cub inviting tourists to pose for photos. He was fined 3,000 rubles (45 US\$) for violating the federal law on the responsible treatment of wild animals, which prohibits them from being kept and handled in cities.

- In Moscow on a film set, singer Nikolai Baskov noisily goofed off with a tiger and drew a scolding from Vladimir Burmatov, the chairman of the Duma's ecological committee.

Ridus, November 12, 2021; Rossiyskaya Gazeta, November 12, 2021; Izvestia, November 18, 2021.³⁰



TIGERS - followed

November 20, 2021

Krasnoarmeysky District, Primorsky Krai, Russia

An Amur tiger (*Panthera tigris altaica*) is found dead in a forest. Two versions of events are circulating to explain this catastrophe.

1 - Ilya Korchevets, a senior official in Vladivostok responsible for economic security and the fight against corruption, who, along with some friends, was on a hunting trip, scared off a gang of poachers and discovered the victim's body at nightfall.

2 - Lieutenant Colonel Ilya Korchevets is said to be the poacher of the animal emblem of Eastern Russia in a forest of Dalneretchensk, 420 km from Vladivostok.

Gazeta.ru, November 28, 2021; GTRK Vladivostok, November 28, 2021; KazanFirst, November 28, 2021.³¹

December 2021

Engels, Saratov Oblast, Russia

Rosprirodnadzor, the federal service for monitoring natural resources, seized a tiger from a resident. He was handed over to a zoo in Tula.

Bel.ru, December 28, 2021.³²

TIGERS AND LIONS

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

End of September 2021

Brandfort District, Free State Province, South Africa

The SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) visits a lion farm with a search warrant. During the last fire season, it was licked by flames and obscured by smoke. The fence posts are charred. The fences have collapsed. The 59



lions and 3 tigers have not escaped. They are in a desperate state, some are blind, others asphyxiated. The paw pads are burned by the ashes, they spit blood. Their lungs are swollen from inhaling the smoke. If they had something to eat, they would not eat because of blisters in their mouths. In dead silence, after a case by case examination by the veterinarians, 30 lions were euthanized. The only concern of the owners was to get the bones back after the cremations. The SPCA filed a complaint for animal cruelty.

Bloemfontein SPCA, October 3, 2021.³³

LIONS - *Panthera leo* (Africa), Appendix II.

Panthera leo persica (Asia), Appendix I.

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

October 1, 2021

Baltimore, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Two lions escape from a private ranch and a hunt ensues. The first one is quickly killed. The president of the National African Farmers Union (NAFU) confirms that his members shot him. "The lion was a danger to the villagers and farmers." It should not take long before the second one suffers the same fate. They can hear him roar not far away.

Sowetan LIVE, October 4, 2021; TimesLIVE, October 4, 2021.³⁴

December 9, 2021

Zeerust, North West Province, South Africa

Seizure of a lion's head. Joseph Modime and Emily Mashaba were trying to sell it to a traditional healer for 350,000 rand (21,600 US\$). They were released on bail for the equivalent of 95 US\$.

Save the Beasts, December 10, 2021; TimesLIVE, December 13, 2021; News24, December 14 and 20, 2021.³⁵



KENYA

October 2, 2021

Olgulului, Kajiado County, Kenya

A male and a female, about 2.5 years old, died within a few meters of each other in a span of one or 2 days. Blood flowed from their mouths. All the signs of poisoning are noted by the veterinarians. The 2 victims also have wounds on their flanks from throwing weapons. According to the stomach contents, they were poisoned by eating a cattle carcass.

Two km away, 5 other corpses, 3 males and 2 females aged about 1.5 years, were found in a ditch. They were covered with branches. Their stomach contents reveal they were poisoned by eating a sheep carcass.

SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2021.³⁶



LIONS - followed

November 26, 2021

Nguruman, Kajiado County, Kenya

The lioness and 3 cubs were walking through the savannah. They came across dead and trapped cattle. Two syringes of poison were found nearby. Two cubs “tapped” into the heart of the poisoned flesh. They died. One of the cubs was hit with a spear. The mother and third cub were spared.

SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2021.³⁷



NAMIBIA

September 15, 2021

Okahao, Omusati Region, Namibia

lita Rehabiam lipinge was arrested for possessing a lion carcass. He allegedly supplied a poacher with a rifle and ammunition on May 30. lipinge was released on bail for 1,000 Namibian dollars or 70 US\$.

The Namibian, September 22, 2021.³⁸

October 8, 2021

Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy, Kunene Region, Namibia

A farmer injects poison into the corpse of one of his goats, who is believed to have been killed by a lion. Four lions share the dead goat and die. Two hyenas (family Hyaenidae) thinking they have a good deal attack the lion carcasses and die in turn. A man is interviewed. The police and the dog followed his tracks from the ditch where he had thrown the carcasses before covering them with stones to his home.

Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism Namibia, October 10 and 11, 2021; Informanté, October 11, 2021.³⁹



ZIMBABWE

September 9, 2021

Binga District, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

The police knew that Wankie Sibanda and Dickson Mumpande were trying to sell the skin and other parts of a lion. Undercover, they contacted Sibanda who, after receiving a deposit of 2,800 US\$, led them to Mumpande’s house where the skin (4.6 kg), fat (1.025 kg) and 7 teeth of the poached lion were waiting for them at the edge of the dam. Pending the availability of a sworn interpreter in Tsonga and their appearance in court, the 2 men are under judicial supervision.

The Chronicle, September 11, 2021.⁴⁰

September-October 2021

Umtshibi, Hwange National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

ZimParks is reportedly looking for a buyer for 3 adult lions captured after attacking livestock. A Chinese broker is reportedly interested. After the release of the pictures of the 3 lions, the ZimParks spokesman denies a prospect of a commercial transaction. The intention of ZimParks would be to one day transfer the trio to the heart of the park to prevent them from attacking livestock.

The Standard, December 26, 2021.⁴¹

AMERICA

GUATEMALA

November 22, 2021

El Chal, Department of Petén, Guatemala

Near the border with Mexico, the lion in the zoo kills his keeper, escapes and is quickly killed in the undergrowth. He was about 20 years old. The keeper’s name was Santos Esquivel Nájera.

El Herald, November 22, 2021.⁴²

ASIA

KAZAKHSTAN

Beginning of December 2021

Almaty, Almaty Region, Kazakhstan

For sale via WhatsApp a 2-month-old lion cub for 2.5 million tenge (5,800 US\$).

According to the national law, the seller must have a CITES certificate and a permit proving their ability to deal with wild animals. Without knowledge of zoopsychology and without anticipating the size and strength of an adult lion, it is dangerous for oneself and for the animal to buy a lion cub as a pet, say experts in Kazakhstan. According to them, a cub, depending on his age, eats 500 grams to 6 kg of meat and drinks up to a quarter of a liter of milk a day. For an adult, it takes 7.4 kg of meat per day plus at least one chicken and one rabbit per week. Newtimes.kz, December 6, 2021.⁴³



LIONS - followed

SINGAPORE

December 12, 2021

Changi International Airport, Singapore



Two of the 7 lions in transit at the international airport escaped from their cage under unknown circumstances. They were anesthetized. Traffic was not interrupted. Singapore Airlines refuses to say where they came from or where they were going for reasons of confidentiality. One of the escapees had a black mane. The color of the mane varies between individuals. Lions with black manes may be more successful with females according to research by Peyton M. West and Craig Packer.

The Star, December 13, 2021; Nature World News, December 14, 2021; Coconuts, December 15, 2021.⁴⁴

EUROPE

FRANCE

September 28, 2021

Paris and Saint-Ouen-sur-Seine, Department of Seine-Saint-Denis, France

The fate of wild animals exploited in bankrupt circuses, hit by the exhibition ban, the exploitation of animals that die in service are regularly discussed in "On the Trail". Many of these animals are stuffed by taxidermists. A report from the veterinary services of the Bouches-du-Rhône department reveals that a lion who died in service in the "Nouveau Cirque Triomphe" was entrusted to a shady taxidermist. The NGO One Voice, alerted by this report, investigated in Paris. They found a taxidermist well known by the circus world who transforms dead lions into bedside rugs.

One Voice, September 28, 2021.⁴⁵

NORTH MACEDONIA

September 26, 2021

Kumanovo, Kumanovo Municipality, and Skopje, Skopje Municipality, North Macedonia

A lion cub is shown off in luxury cars, exotic gardens, cherubic postures, leash walks and in the hands of Skopje notables. The press officer of the capital's zoo sparked off the scandal by republishing the images and videos.

The savannah model is believed to be staying in a five-star hotel in the capital, but a search of the hotel by sworn inspectors gave nothing and no one is able to say how he got into the country. One possible origin is the Maja e Zezë Resort in Gjilan, Kosovo. "On the Trail" n°27 p.75 mentioned the case of the lion "John" displayed in front of a restaurant in this municipality without any request for import or detention having been filed with the authorities. However, the director of the Zezë Resort denies any link with this new case of animal exhibitionism. "We still take care of the adult lion that has been with us for years and will stay here until the institutions find an adequate solution for him, but we do not have a little lion." Several authoritative voices including Radmila Peševa and the NGO Anima Mundi note that on specialised websites lion cubs and other young animals are offered for sale in North Macedonia and that the catering-hotel industry also uses eagles, falcons, bears to attract customers. Meta.mk, October 1, 2021; Global Voices, October 3, 2021.⁴⁶



ROMANIA

September 2021

Picior de Munte, Dâmbovița County, Romania

Cave lions disappeared from Europe more than 11,000 years ago, but African lions still remain in Europe in wire sheds, on concrete bedding and on gravel driveways. The NGO Four Paws says that 2 cubs were playing in a parking lot in Germany. They were seized and put in "a good sanctuary." The investigation of their origin led not far from Bucharest, to the village of Picior de Munte where 7 adult lions of unknown origin are locked up. After negotiations with the owner and administrative procedures necessary for the transport of the lions by truck between Romania and the Netherlands, they were taken to the Felida sanctuary for "big cats" run by Juno van Zon.

Four Paws, September 7, 14, 19, 23 and 28 and October 1, 2021.⁴⁷

LIONS - followed

RUSSIA

November 10, 2021

Federal City of Saint Petersburg, Russia

"A woman from Saint Petersburg who kept an African lioness in her flat and organised photo shoots with her has been fined," reports the VKontakte page of the association Veles. The lioness is in fact an 8/9-month-old cub. Her parents are said to work in a circus in Sochi. Later she was destined for a circus in Murmansk. In the meantime, she was exploited as an animal model in a flat and posed with clients. The woman from Saint Petersburg received the visit of inspectors from Rospirodnadzor (the federal service for supervision of natural resources). She was fined and the little lioness was entrusted to a wild animal shelter.

MR7, November 10, 2021.⁴⁸



LEOPARDS - *Panthera pardus*, Appendix I

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

December 4-5, 2021

Phalaborwa, Limpopo Province, South Africa

During the weekend, about 50 volunteers removed 58 land and water traps. They found the remains of 7 animals including a leopard entangled in a steel wire.

Phalaborwa Natural Heritage Foundation, December 6, 2021.⁴⁹



GABON

December 13, 2021

Mouila and Lébamba, Ngounié Province, Gabon

Seizure of 2 skins and 20 teeth. Arrest of a Malian, Mamadou Kouyate, a Guinean, Diallo Mamadou Saliou and a Gabonese, Nicaise Mboumba.

EAGLE, December 14, 2021; Conservation Justice, December 15, 2021; 7Jours Info, December 17, 2021.⁵⁰

KENYA

September 9, 2021

Kipini Conservancy, Lamu County, Kenya

Unfortunately, the leopard struggled to free himself from a trap. His right front paw was cut off and his right rear paw was fractured. The veterinarians had no choice but to euthanize him.

SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, September 2021.⁵¹



October 13, 2021

Gazi, Tsavo East National Park, Kenya

The beast still had resources. He was tied to a tree by a steel wire. His chest was encircled. Ketamine and medetomidine for anesthesia. Atipamezole and yohimbine for recovery. Antibiotics and anti-inflammatory drugs in between. Favorable prognosis.

SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2021.⁵²



ASIA

INDIA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

September 1, 2021

Kamanahalli Forest, Haveri District, State of Karnataka, India

Somappa Lamani, the father, and Santosh Lamani, his son, are admitted to the district hospital. They say they were attacked by a leopard. The next day, the lifeless and legless body of a female leopard approximately 3 years old was discovered in the forest. The Lamanis admit that they were injured while tracking the leopard and the 4 paws are found at Manjunath Lamani's house.

The Times of India, September 3, 2021.⁵³



LEOPARDS - followed

September 3, 2021

Shivdav, Kolhapur District, State of Maharashtra, India

He hid a rifle and 13 rounds of ammunition in his house, 3 leopard (or tiger) claws in a jar of turmeric, and the liver of the feline in a freezer. He had already sold 2 claws. He was hunting in the forest with his jeep and his rifle. The police gave some details about the modus operandi of 55-year-old former police assistant Vasant Vaskar.

The Times of India, September 4, 2021; Mid-Day, September 5, 2021.⁵⁴

September 12, 2021

Kafladi, Pithoragarh District, State of Uttarakhand, India

Chandan Giri, a 70-year-old monk, leading an ascetic life was making prayers and religious discourses in a temple sitting on a leopard skin with the head and teeth. At the time of the search and seizure, the skin was hidden under his bed. He said he had received it as a gift from one of his disciples.

Hindustan Times, September 13, 2021.⁵⁵

Mid-September 2021

Sawantwadi, Sindhudurg District, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure of a leopard skin with an estimated value of 350,000 rupees (4,775 US\$) and a car worth 450,000 rupees (6,140 US\$). Arrest of Venkatesh Raul, Nitin Suryawanshi, Kiran Sawant, Samir Gurav and Dinesh Gurav.

ABP Live, September 17, 2021; The Times of India, September 19, 2021.⁵⁶

September 14 and 15, 2021

Warje and Saswad, Pune District, State of Maharashtra, India

Rahul Patil, deputy chief conservator of forests says, "We laid a trap by sending decoy customers to the 3 suspects and arrested them at Warje on Tuesday." "We have recovered one leopard skin." "During the trio's interrogation, we learnt that 5 people were going to sell 2 more animal skins. We accordingly laid a trap on Wednesday and arrested all of them." "We have recovered a leopard and a tiger skin from them." Among the 8 suspects was an Ayurvedic medicine practitioner and teacher.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), September 16, 2021; Punekar News, September 16, 2021; The Times of India, September 18, 2021.⁵⁷

September 20, 2021

Kodavali, Ratnagiri District; Dhakore, Sindhudurg District, State of Maharashtra, India

Jayesh Babi Parab, age 23, Darshan Dayanand Gadekar, age 20, and Dattaprasad Rajendra Naik, age 22, were arrested on the Mumbai-Goa highway at a gas station. In a bag, there was a leopard skin. It was seized along with the 2 motorcycles. Parab is the manager of a flour mill. In their first confession, they said that the skin belonged to Ajit Chandrakant Natu, age 48, an employee of the flour mill in Panab. Natu confirmed this and during the search of his home, the antlers of a sambar deer (*Rusa unicolor*) and his skull were found.

The Times of India, September 23 and 26, 2021.⁵⁸

October 4, 2021

Narkhed Taluk, Nagpur District, State of Maharashtra, India

A decapitated leopard cub is floating in a ditch on the side of the Banor-Thadipaoni road. The head was found 100 meters away. The Times of India, October 6, 2021.⁵⁹



October 5 and 25, 2021

Ahiya, Mathura District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

On October 5, the carcass of a leopard was found in the forest near Ahilyaganj village. Near the carcass, the slipknot of a clutch cable was found. It had tufts of hair on it. Three weeks later, 7 people from the village were arrested. They say they set the trap to protect crops from wild animals.

IBC24 News, October 26, 2021; The Times of India, October 27, 2021.⁶⁰



October 6, 2021

Sirtiguda, Kandhamal District, State of Odisha, India

The STF (Special Task Force) arrested Bidyadhar Nayak. He was in possession of a 1.82-meter-long skin. More than 150 leopards have been poached in Odisha over the last 10 years.

Odisha Police, October 6, 2021; The Statesman, October 6, 2021.⁶¹



October 17, 2021

Rudri, Dhamtari District, State of Chhattisgarh, India

Seizure of 2 leopard skins. Two arrests. Live Hindustan, November 9, 2021.⁶²

October 18, 2021

Kapasira, Boudh District, State of Odisha, India

Arrest, on Monday night of Jibardhan Bhoi. He was wrapping 2 leopard skins in old clothes. KalingaTV, October 19, 2021.⁶³

October 18, 2021

Kolkata, Kolkata District, State of West Bengal, India

Discovery in the center of the megalopolis near Creek Row of 2 skins in bad condition. They measured 2.11 meters and 1.72 meters from the skull to the tail. Three tails in 2 plastic bags were also found near a garbage bin.

Leopards in Kolkata, see "On the Trail" n°23 p. 85. The Telegraph India, October 19, 2021.⁶⁴

LEOPARDS - followed

October 18, 2021

Madamaneri, Chittoor District, State of Andhra Pradesh, India

The 3-year-old leopard died in the fields, very close to the forest. He was caught in moped brake cables.

The Hindu, October 19, 2021.⁶⁵



October 29, 2021

Bhainsola, Dhar District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Acting on a tip-off, STF and WCCB intercepted a convoy on Saturday on the Petlawad-Rajod road. One leopard skin and 6 claws were seized along with 6 phones, one car and 2 motorcycles. Among the 6 people arrested and placed in custody are 2 school teachers.

The Free Press Journal, October 30, 2021; Hindustan Times, October 31, 2021; WCCB, November 1, 2021.⁶⁶



October 31, 2021

Badedonga, Kondagaon District, State of Chhattisgarh, India

Seizure of a leopard skin. One arrest. Live Hindustan, November 9, 2021.⁶⁷

November 2, 2021

Chatani, Mayurbhanj District, State of Odisha, India



Arrest near a bus stop of Ajit Kumar Giri and Chandrakant Kurji. Seizure of a leopard skin.

Orissa Post, November 2, 2021; Pragativadi, November 2, 2021.⁶⁸

November 9, 2021

Mathuradih, Dhamtari District, State of Chhattisgarh, India

As the police approached, the unknown man ran away with a bag in his hand. The police chased after him and confirmed he had a leopard skin in the bag. He finally declared his identity to be Prem Lal Mandavi, age 42, a resident of Sonpur. He was betrayed by an anonymous phone call saying that someone on Sihawa road was about to sell a leopard skin.

Live Hindustan, November 9, 2021; The Pioneer, November 10, 2021.⁶⁹

November 10, 2021

Brahmanipali, Deogarh District, State of Odisha, India



Several accomplices fled but Prahallad Parida and Pandav Pradhan were arrested and a leopard skin was seized.

Leopard skin in the district of Deogarh, see "On the Trail" n°25 p. 67, n°26 p. 67, n°32 p. 85, n°33 p. 88. Orissa Post, November 11, 2021.⁷⁰

November 10, 2021

Baunsuni, Boudh District, State of Odisha, India



New attacks on leopards in the district. The skin was in the hands of Abanikanta Kahanra and Egara Kahanra.

Odishabarta, November 11, 2021; Sambad English, November 11, 2021.⁷¹

LEOPARDS - followed

November 15, 2021

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

The female leopard, approximately 5 years old, was trapped in a trap cage. The intervention of forest rangers and veterinarians was complicated by the presence of a large crowd. It lasted 2 hours. The animal was immobilized with an anesthetic syringe and then transferred by truck to the health center of Ranibagh, 60 km away. She suffers from several injuries to the front paw. The Times of India, November 16, 2021.⁷²



November 18, 2021

Pithoragarh, Pithoragarh District, State of Uttarakhand, India

Arrest of 2 men in their 20s at the city limits. They were trying to sell a 2.13-meter-long skin. The Times of India, November 19, 2021.⁷³

November 19, 2021

Manchi, Dakshina Kannada District, State of Karnataka, India

The male leopard, about 9 years old, was caught in a trap. He was anesthetized, treated for some superficial wounds and released late at night. Volunteers from the National Environment Care Federation (NECF) assisted in the operation. The Times of India, November 21, 2021.⁷⁴



November 20, 2021

Purughat, Boudh District, State of Odisha, India

Seizure of a leopard skin and arrest of the person who was about to sell it. Odisha TV, November 22, 2021.⁷⁵

November 21, 2021

Khudel, Indore District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

The 5 villagers admit to poaching the leopard in the forests. The skin with claws is valued at 7 million rupees (93,488 US\$). The Free Press Journal, November 21, 2021.⁷⁶

November 21, 2021

Temer Bhita, Jabalpur District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

A leopard was strangled to death by the noose of a steel wire. The dog squad led the investigators to Munna Lal's house, 500 meters away. At his home, materials for making traps were seized. Newstrack, November 21, 2021.⁷⁷



November 21, 2021

Ghantapada, Boudh District, State of Odisha, India

Leopards are dropping like flies in the district. New seizure of a skin. It was in the hands of Sachitan Nayak, age 28. Odisha TV, November 22, 2021.⁷⁸

November 23, 2021

Bhauwala, Dehradun District, State of Uttarakhand, India

In Dehradun district, leopards and other wild animals are no longer welcome. A juvenile female leopard fell into a trap. She was rescued by forest officials. Her life is not in danger. A few weeks earlier, a leopard died in Masandwala. Four Nepalese poachers admitted to setting the trap.

The Times of India, November 25, 2021.⁷⁹



November 23, 2021

Nagar Panchayat of Parikshitgarh, Meerut District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

The leopard was spotted in a sugarcane field. This caused panic and he was attacked from all sides. He was injured in the neck, shoulders and unable to move his hind paws. When Wildlife SOS volunteers and the Kampur Zoo veterinarian arrived on the scene, they administered emergency first aid. He was then transferred under anesthesia to the Etawah Safari Zoo veterinary clinic 370 km away. Unfavorable prognosis.

The Times of India, November 25, 2021.⁸⁰

End of November 2021

Koloshi, Sindhudurg District, State of Maharashtra, India

A witness quickly alerted the NGO SARRP (Spreading Awareness on Reptiles and Rehabilitation Programme) who quickly alerted the forest department. The adult leopard was freed from the metal trap in which he had become entangled. The prognosis is favorable. Mid-Day, November 22, 2021.⁸¹



December 4, 2021

Salekasa, Gondia District, State of Maharashtra, India

The Times of India writes that "It's raining tiger and leopard skins and body parts in the region." Ten suspects are in custody. They had in their possession the skin of a leopard, the 4 cut paws, teeth and whiskers. For about 4 months, they were looking for buyers. They say they "found" the dead leopard near a hill in Salekasa.

Gondia, see "On the Trail" n°4 p. 55, n°15 p. 62, n°23 p. 83, n°26 p. 66, n°28 p. 80, n°31 p. 62, n°32 p. 246, n°33 p. 86.

India Today, December 6, 2021; The Times of India, December 6, 2021.⁸²



LEOPARDS - followed

December 8, 2021

Srisailam Forest, Nagarkurnool District, State of Telangana, India

Krishna Goud, head of the forest department in the district, announces that K. Krishnaiah, a farmer, had set a trap in one of his fields. A leopard was captured and he transported the body with 2 accomplices to the Srisailam forest by the road leading to Hyderabad. He pulled out 18 claws and 4 teeth and then set fire to the remains. Telangana Today, December 8, 2021.⁸³

December 10, 2021

Imli Kheda, Sehore District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Discovery in a forest of the skinned body of a leopard. Most of his skin is gone. The conditions of his death will perhaps become clear following the post mortem examination. The Free Press Journal, December 11, 2021.⁸⁴

Night of December 13 to 14, 2021

Wardha, Wardha District, State of Maharashtra, India

Four men were arrested last night near a bus stop. They were planning to sell a skin which was seized along with a motorcycle and 4 phones. 15 forest rangers mounted a successful operation. The Live Nagpur, December 14, 2021.⁸⁵

December 15, 2021

Garganda Tea Garden, Alipurduar District, State of West Bengal, India

When we drink a cup of tea, we are not always aware of the dramas that unfold on the plantations. On Friday morning, in the Garganda tea garden, the body of a leopard was reported by workers. It didn't take a post mortem to realize that he was the target of throwing weapons and had been hit by sticks. Already in 2018, 2 leopards were killed under the same circumstances at the same plantation. Leopards and tea plantations, see "On the Trail" n°12 p. 53, n°17 p. 55, n°23 p. 85, n°24 p. 58, n°25 p. 65 and p. 66, n°28 p. 80, n°29 p. 62 and p. 64, n°30 p. 62, n°31 p. 60, p. 61, p. 62 and p. 63, n°32 p. 82 and p. 84 and n°33 p. 89. The Telegraph India, December 16, 2021.⁸⁶

December 16, 2021

Surroundings of Batrakhhol, Angul District, State of Odisha, India

The male leopard, about 6 years old, fell into a trap. He was strangled. The poachers tried to hide the body but were reported by cowherds. The body of the leopard was found and the poachers were not formally identified. In the area, there are more and more wild boars and farmers are looking to get rid of them and profit from the meat. They also try to kill leopards and profit from the sale of their paws or skin. Orissa Post, December 19, 2021.⁸⁷



December 19, 2021

Mandla District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Leopard skin and bones, 3 motorcycles and 3 men aged 27, 30 and 35. The dirty art of poaching has been passed down from generation to generation. Devdiscourse, December 20, 2021.⁸⁸

December 24, 2021

Mandla District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

One skin found and 2 traffickers arrested by WCCB and local police. WCCB, December 27, 2021.⁸⁹

December 29, 2021

Gambharimunda, Khordha District, State of Odisha, India

Sahoo on Banapur Road was carrying a leopard skin and was cornered by police at the very spot where confidential information said he would be. Ahmedabad Mirror, December 30, 2021; KalingaTV, December 30, 2021.⁹⁰

December 31, 2021

Baddiwala, Panchkula District, State of Haryana, India

This may be the last leopard of the year in the Morni Hills. Her body was found in the early morning of January 1 near the village. It was a subadult female. She had been shot in the stomach with a "topidar", an archaic rifle used decades ago to scare away "pests" with its loud bangs or to kill them at close range. Many locals or collectors are still attached to topidars and owners of these guns, in so far as they are known, will be questioned by the investigators. This is not the first time that a leopard has fallen into a trap in the Morni Hills area. In May 2020, "On the Trail" n°29 p.61 reported that a dying leopard had been found, with one of his paws amputated, at the bottom of a well, and to this day the culprits have not been identified. Local elected officials and community councils in the district prefer to look suspiciously at users of new trekking trails opened in protected areas with the permission of forest officers. They say that during weekends and holidays, poachers and other opportunists comb the forests, pretending to be trekking enthusiasts. The Indian Express, January 6, 2022; The Times of India, January 9, 2022.⁹¹

LEOPARDS - followed

MALAYSIA

December 9, 2021

Kampung Kelatap, State of Perak, Malaysia

An 18-year-old man says he was attacked by a leopard while collecting firewood in the forest. Perhilitan arrives on the scene to locate and capture the animal. The team is suddenly attacked while in a rubber plantation near the village of Kelatap. An officer in self-defence fired 3 shots and the leopard collapsed. Aged between 9 and 10 years, he had several open machete wounds and was dragging a metal trap on his right hind paw. Perhilitan believes that the big cat had become aggressive because of the abuse he had suffered and urges everyone to refrain from setting traps that can endanger other people and are cruel to wildlife.

New Straits Times (with Bernama), December 10, 2021.⁹²



NEPAL

End of October 2021

Kohalpur, Banke District, Lumbini Province, Nepal



In room 205 of the Sagar Guest House, 3 men between the ages of 24 and 35 were arrested in bad company. They had with them the skin of an adult leopard.

myRepublica, October 31, 2021.⁹³

SRI LANKA

October 21, 2021

Norwood, Central Province, Sri Lanka

The female, about 4 years old, had been rotting for several days in the tea plantation. She was there to find prey. She never came out. A devil's trap hit her in the middle.

Poaching and tea plantations in Sri Lanka, see "On the Trail" n°29 p. 64, n°30 p. 62 and n°33 p. 89. Daily News, October 23, 2021.⁹⁴



EUROPE

SWEDEN

September 25, 2021

Bastad, Skåne County, Sweden

An unknown person dropped off an Ikea bag with a leopard skin inside at the yard sale.

Bjäre NU, October 1, 2021.⁹⁵

CHEETAHS - *Acinonyx jubatus*, Appendix I

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

Beginning of December, 2021

Limpopo Province, South Africa

An adult female cheetah died from a snare trap. Field rangers rescued her 2 8-month-old cubs by luring them in with an impala carcass. They will be released in the wild. African Wildlife Vets, December 9, 2021.⁹⁶



ETHIOPIA

Mid-December, 2021

Jijiga, Somali Region, Ethiopia

The Covid-19 pandemic has slowed down the business of the wild animal trafficker. He kept the young female cheetah in deplorable conditions for 2 years. She finally escaped and caused panic in the streets. Re-captured, she was taken to the police station. She was finally transferred to the Ensessa Kotteh shelter of Born Free.

Born Free Foundation, December 20, 2021.⁹⁷



December 28, 2021
Kebri Dahar, Somali Region, Ethiopia



He was malnourished, dehydrated, and had a dull coat. The 6-7-month-old male cheetah seized from traffickers was taken into the care of Ensessa Kotteh at the request of the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority.

Born Free Foundation, February 11, 2022.⁹⁸

KENYA

September 25, 2021
Masai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya

A male cheetah was spotted with a deep wound on his right hind paw, presumably from a spear. He was treated and the prognosis is favorable.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, September 2021.⁹⁹

MOZAMBIQUE

Beginning of November, 2021
Maputo Special Reserve, Maputo Province, Mozambique

One of 4 cheetahs reintroduced into the reserve a month ago died from a snare trap after breaking through the fence.

Peace Parks Foundation, November 11, 2021.¹⁰⁰



SOMALIA

REPEATED OFFENSE
September-October 2021
Aynabo District, Sool Region, and Sanaag Region, Autonomous Region of Somaliland, Somalia

Eleven cheetah cubs, all 3-8 weeks old were seized in 4 separate rescues. Seven people have been sentenced to one year in prison along with small fines. An 8th defendant, Cabdiraxmaan Yusuf Mahdi, was sentenced to 4 years in prison and a 3 million Somaliland shilling fine (5,000 US\$) as a repeat offender. These rescues followed a 10-month period without any seizures. Cheetah Conservation Fund UK, August 22 and November 3 and 8, 2021.¹⁰¹



November 6-7, 2021
Haridad, Salal Region, Somaliland Autonomous Region, Somalia

According to Dr. Laurie Marker, the head of Cheetah Conservation Fund, 4 or 5 cheetah cubs die for each one that reaches the market. The Somaliland government rescued 2 5-month-old cheetahs from a nomad. They were severely dehydrated and malnourished, and are now under the care of the CCF.

Reuters, February 3, 2022.¹⁰²

CARACALS - *Caracal caracal*, Appendix II except for the Asian populations listed in Appendix I.

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

December 20 and 21, 2021
Royal Oak, State of Michigan, United States of America

Seizure at Elaine Westfall of 4 obese caracals. The police decided on this intervention after the felines of African origin had repeatedly escaped. In addition, she was in violation of city statute prohibiting the ownership of non-domestic animals.

Detroit Free Press, December 22, 2021.¹⁰³

ASIA

VIET NAM

October 21, 2021
Hanoi, Viet Nam



Seizure of a caracal being held captive as a pet. According to ENV (Education for Nature – Vietnam), this would be a first in Viet Nam.

ENV, October 26, 2021.¹⁰⁴

ASIA

CHINA

September 17, 2021

Qingdao, Shandong Province, China

Wang and Zhao are sentenced to 3 months in prison and 6 months of probation. Zhao had bought a serval in Russia for the equivalent of 8,140 US\$. The 2 men were also fined 1,545 US\$, ordered to pay the equivalent of 2,630 US\$ for ecological damages and 465 US\$ to Shandong University, which estimated the value of the ecological services provided by a serval. Finally, Wang and Zhao are ordered to pay 1,687 yuan (245 US\$) to a zoo for housing the serval. Xiaoxiang Morning Herald, December 2, 2021.¹⁰⁵



EUROPE

FRANCE

October 27, 2021

Nîmes, Department of Gard, France



A serval on the loose was captured on the road, near the Nîmes Ouest exit, by the Unité Spécialisée en Intervention Animalière (USIA) of the fire department. He was handed over to the Direction Départementale de la Protection des Populations (DDPP) while awaiting transfer to a host organization.

Le Parisien, October 27, 2021.¹⁰⁶

Beginning of December 2021

Saint-Martin-la-Plaine, Department of Loire, France

The refuge Tonga Terre d'Accueil has taken in 2 new servals following judicial seizures. The first is a 3-year-old male and the second is a female estimated to be 1 year old.

Tonga Terre d'Accueil, December 7, 2021.¹⁰⁷

HUNGARY

November 23 and 26, 2021

On the border of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén and Heves Counties, Hungary



A serval died in the Budapest Zoo. Abandoned, he had been discovered in the Bükk National Park sick, emaciated and dehydrated. Covid-19 finished him off.

Budapest Zoo & Botanical Garden, November 27, 2021.¹⁰⁸

SNOW LEOPARDS - *Panthera uncia*, Appendix I

ASIA

CHINA

September 5, 2021

Siziwang Banner, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China

A snow leopard rescued from the hands of traffickers had been entrusted to the Ordos Zoo as a temporary measure pending its upcoming release into the wild. The zoo appropriated the animal and promoted him. People got angry. The zoo finally withdrew the advertisement and the panther was released.

Species Impact Victim Statements (SVIS), September 5, 2021; Global Times, September 22, 2021.¹⁰⁹

CLOUDED LEOPARDS - *Neofelis nebulosa*, Appendix I

ASIA

THAILAND

October 22, 2021

Phop Phra District, Tak Province, Thailand. Border with Myanmar.

Arrest of 26-year-old Aung Chit of Myanmar. He was carrying the skin (1.5 kg) and bones (1.6 kg) of a clouded leopard.

Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, October 22, 2021.¹¹⁰

LEOPARD CATS - *Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II except the populations from Bangladesh, India and Thailand which are listed under CITES Appendix I

ASIA

CHINA

**November 30, 2021
Jinpingzhen, Yibin Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China**



Living in Jinping, county of Pingshan, Zeng and his accomplice Luo capture and kill a Bengal leopard cat with a trap. Tao informs them that Wan, living in Pingshan, buys wild animals. After checking the photo, Wan bought the leopard cat for 120 yuan (18.80 US\$). Wan then skinned and butchered him and sold the meat for 520 yuan (81.50 US\$) to Fang who runs a hotel in Yibin, 78 km from Pingshan.

Zeng, Wan, Fang, Luo and Tao are being prosecuted for hunting, selling, buying and transporting legally protected wild animals.

Xiaoxiang Morning Herald, December 27, 2021.¹¹¹

INDIA

OPERATION WILDNET

September 20, 2021

Baripada and Kendujhari, Mayurbhanj District, State of Odisha, India



Laxman Murmu had poached the Bengal leopard cat in Similipal National Park 2 months ago and sold the skin for 5,000 rupees (68 US\$) to 2 middlemen who were trying to sell it via Facebook. They were arrested in a hotel by fake buyers and real police. At Murmu's house, nets, bows, arrows and 2 pistols were seized.

Outlook India, September 20, 2021; Down To Earth, September 21, 2021; Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), September 22, 2021; The New Indian Express, September 22, 2021.¹¹²

THAILAND

December 3rd, 2021

Lum Nam Pai Wildlife Sanctuary, Mae Hong Son Province, Thailand

A road check was carried out on the poacher who was driving a Honda Wave motorcycle near the Ban Bo Krai Forest Area. He tried to escape, but failed. He was in possession of a dead Bengal leopard cat, a gun, ammunition, a knife and an envelope containing 153 methamphetamine pills.



Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, December 4, 2021.¹¹³

VIET NAM

**November 5, 2021
Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam**

A leopard cat was voluntarily handed over to the Ho Chi Minh Forest Protection Department. He was later transferred to the Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station. ENV, November 10, 2021.¹¹⁴



December 3rd, 2021

Dak Song District, Dak Nong Province, Viet Nam

The leopard cat was voluntary handed over to the Forest Protection Department of a Bengal by his "owner". Since then, he would have been released into the wild.

ENV, December 10, 2021.¹¹⁵

December 29, 2021

Cuc Phuong National Park, Ninh Binh Province, Viet Nam



A leopard cat has been rescued. He was suffering a wound on his right hind paw caused by a trap.

SVW, December 30, 2021.¹¹⁶

JAGUARS - *Panthera onca*, Appendix I

AMERICA

BOLIVIA

Beginning of November, 2021

Bolivia

After a 3-year-long investigation, 5 Chinese nationals have been arrested for trafficking jaguar fangs and bones from Bolivia to China. Mr. Ren Ji Liao, Mr. Yeh, Ms. Xiao Hong, Mr. Ma, and Ms. Ma Zhang Yang are currently either in prison or out on bail. Jaguar fangs can be sold as tiger fangs. Jaguar populations are rapidly declining in South America. Save the Beasts, November 1, 2021.¹¹⁷

BRAZIL

Mid-October, 2021

The Pantanal, State of Mato Grosso, Brazil



Two jaguars were found dead within 164 feet of each other, thanks to GPS tracking collars. Officials are investigating the possibility of poisoning.

National Geographic: October 14, 2021.¹¹⁸

End of October, 2021

Arame, State of Maranhão, Brazil

A group of hunters filmed themselves killing a female jaguar. They also threatened the Guardians of the Forest, indigenous wildlife protectors. Two individuals have been arrested.

International Union for Conservation of Nature- October 27, 2021.¹¹⁹

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

October 14, 2021

New Orleans, State of Louisiana, United States of America

A 7-month-old female jaguar was rescued from trafficking by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. She was placed in the New Orleans Audubon Zoo.

Las Vegas Sun, November 18, 2021 ; NPR, November 19, 2021.¹²⁰

End of October, 2021

Alpine, State of California, United States of America

A jaguar about 4 months old was abandoned. He was rescued and placed in the Lion Tigers & Bears exotic animal shelter. Officials believe the jaguar was a pet from an illegal breeding operation in a State where regulations on keeping exotic species are much more lax than in California. Oklahoma was cited.

MCU Times, October 28, 2021.¹²¹

SURINAME

Beginning of November, 2021

Suriname

A man on TikTok posted a video of a freshly killed jaguar. A local NGO protested and TikTok responded, "We haven't encountered any illegal activity or animal abuse».

Pauline Verheij, November 6, 2021.¹²²



OCELOTS, *Leopardus pardalis*, Appendix I

AMERICA

ECUADOR

Mid-September 2021

Cotacachi Cayapas Reserve, Imbabura and Esmeraldas Provinces, Ecuador

Six female ocelots rescued from illegal wildlife traffickers were released into the wild in the reserve after being in rehabilitation for nearly one year.

France 24 (with AFP), September 12, 2021.¹²³

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

AMERICA

BRAZIL

November 26, 2021

São Carlos do Ivaí, State of Paraná, Brazil

One of his hind paws was caught in a trap. The puma was extricated and freed by the police.

GMC Online, November 27, 2021.¹²⁴



© Polícia Militar Ambiental

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

December 7, 2021

Poweshiek County, State of Iowa, United States of America

The dead mountain lion, weighing about 54 kg, had a torn off snare around his neck. He was found by deer hunters.

WOWT (with AP), December 11, 2021.¹²⁵



AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

September 15, 2021

Anchorage, State of Alaska, United States of America

Mrs. Lynx and her 5 cubs had taken to hunting rabbits on the outskirts of South Anchorage. On Wednesday the 15th, the mother and one of her offspring were shot by a local resident who feared for the safety of his chickens. On Thursday the 16th, a young lynx was run over by a car. On Tuesday the 21st, the last 3 were captured in a tree in the garden of a neighbor who had alerted the agents of Fish and Game, the Wildlife Protection Agency in Alaska. By late afternoon, Fish and Game announced that the animals had been "euthanized." No approved facility was able to house them on a long-term basis in Anchorage and veterinary authorities refused to allow the lynxes to be transferred elsewhere in Alaska to avoid the possible spread of Covid-19 and other contagious diseases. Therefore, an offer from the Portage Zoo, 75 km from Anchorage, was declined.

Alaska's News Source, September 23, 2021.¹²⁶



December 10, 2021

Jackson County, State of Illinois, United States of America

Justin Bauersachs, Greg Cottom and Sally Albers were arrested for poaching deer and bobcats on private property.

KFVS12 Heartland News, December 21, 2021.¹²⁷

EUROPE

SWITZERLAND

Beginning of November 2021

Municipality of Vernayaz, Canton of Valais, Switzerland

The Service de la Chasse, de la Pêche et de la Faune (SCPF) filed a complaint against a person unknown following the discovery of a lynx shot dead.

Canton of Valais, November 8, 2021.¹²⁸

RUSSIA

October 28, 2021, and mid-February 2022

Krasnoslobodsky District, Republic of Mordovia, Russia



A park ranger who was also a poacher killed a lynx for his fur. He wanted to decorate his home with the skin. He bragged about it on social networks. The corpse was found at his home. The remains of a roe deer (genus *Capreolus*) were also seized.



Nikolai Magurov was sentenced for the lynx poaching to 6 months of correctional labour with deduction of 5% of his salary which will go to the State. His hunting license was revoked for 3 years. Izvestia Mordovii, November 1, 2021 and March 18, 2022; Stolica S, November 14, 2021.¹²⁹

MULTI-FELINES

AFRICA

KENYA

Beginning October 2021

Amboseli-Tsavo-Kilimandjaro Ecosystem, Kenya



Seizure of 5 leopard skins and a serval skin folded like linens in a small suitcase. Two arrests. Big Life Foundation, October 8, 2021.¹³⁰

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

October 18, 2021

Washington, State of New York, United States of America



Christopher Casacci, 38, was sentenced to 18 months in prison for trafficking exotic African cats (cf. "On the Trail" n° 28 p.8). From February to June 2018, he imported and sold dozens of caracals and servals, each for 7,500-10,000 US\$. He operated his business under "ExoticCubs.com", which he claimed was a "big cat" rescue organization. Casacci falsified transport documents, describing the animals as domestic crossbreeds "Bengal cats" and "Savannah cats". US Department of Justice, April 27 and October 18, 2021.¹³¹

ASIA

INDIA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

November 18, 2021

Sinapali, Nuapada District, State of Odisha, India

Seizure of 42 tiger or leopard claws. They are being identified by experts. Arrest of Manoj Meher and Dhaneswar Meher.

The New Indian Express, November 19, 2021.¹³²

SULTANATE OF OMAN

Beginning of December 2021

Dhofar Governorate, Sultanate of Oman

Seizure by the Royal Police of 5 cheetahs and 2 young lynxes. Arrest of 4 people, 2 from the Sultanate of Oman and 2 nationals from a neighboring country, without further details.

Watan Newspaper, December 19, 2021; Environment Authority, December 19, 2021.¹³³

VIET NAM

December 18, 2021

Muong Chanh, Thanh Hoa Province, Viet Nam. Border with Laos.

Arrested in possession of a clouded leopard and an Asian golden cat, Lo Van Dam regularly supplied cat, porcupine and other wild animals' meat to restaurants in the province and beyond. VietNamNet, December 20, 2021.¹³⁴

EUROPE

THE NETHERLANDS

October 21, 2021

Boekel, Province of North Brabant, The Netherlands



Identified on Twitter, a trafficker of lynx fur jackets and coats was arrested. A stuffed lion was also seized at his home.

Wijkagent Milieu & Drugs, October 21 and 22, 2021.¹³⁶

FRANCE

REPEATED OFFENSE

November 30, 2021, May 20, 2022 and July 4, 2022

Charleville-Mézières, Department of Ardennes, France

Three individuals were arrested for trafficking protected caracals and servals which were sold for between 8,000 and 10,000 € (9,000 to 11,000 US\$). The felines were chipped as "domestics". Robin des Bois has brought a civil action in this case.



It is just after 9 a.m. in the large courtroom of the judicial court of Charleville-Mézières when the immediate appearance of Mr. Thomas, sports coach, Mandet, hairdresser, and Bertrand, veterinarian, begins. Before any debate, the prosecutor asks that one of the officer of the French Office of Biodiversity (OFB) be heard, in order to bring a technical perspective about the file. Opposition from the defense lawyers, both on the method chosen (why not have informed the parties beforehand?) and on the merits (what is the added value of such an intervention with regard to the numerous hearings in the file?). 10-minute suspension of the hearing. The court grants the request, and the officer, now a witness, is isolated to remain unbiased by the debates that will occur in the court all day.

Mr. Thomas is the first to be heard. He was already charged in 2010 for breeding and selling primates without authorization, with which he has since complied. He is now accused of transporting at least 5 servals and 2 caracals from the Netherlands and holding and selling them without certificate or authorization on French territory.

Mr. Thomas was in relation with a certain "Lars" who managed a private "zoo" in the Netherlands. This "Lars" supplied him with juvenile servals.

In total, Mr. Thomas had 949 French and European contacts listed in his phone, each associated with the trade of a particular species.

Mr. Thomas had no knowledge, at the time of the events, of the regulations applicable to servals, but he said he was "always honest about the origin" of the young felines with his clients. He says he always chose buyers who had knowledge of or experience with domestic cats.

Although he recognizes the facts which are reproached to him, his hearing lasts approximately 2 hours. It is punctuated by his lapses in memory. He describes himself in particular as not having "too much notion of time," with "problems of memory" while admitting not having "justifications or medical certificates to prove it." He justifies his actions as a service given to these animals to avoid their euthanasia carried out in the private Dutch zoo. In this view, Mr. Thomas would be a philanthropist. For him, appearing in court is a trauma. He admits that the "game was not worth the candle". The president of the court notes that the young felines were transported in the trunk of his car from the Netherlands to France, sold on the parking lots of shopping malls and delivered without precaution to unconscientious buyers.

Around 11:30 a.m., it is Mr. Mandet's turn to take the stand. Accused of having kept a serval and a caracal without authorization or certificates, and of having opened and operated a non-domestic animal farm without authorization, Mr. Mandet knew the regulations since he took a 300-hour training course in 2020 in order to obtain a certificate of competence, without success. Recognizing the facts which are reproached to him, he admits his powerlessness to resist the purchase of a serval, then of a caracal without obtaining the necessary authorizations. Mr. Mandet acquired a caracal (Kovu) to replace the serval (Simba) who had escaped from his cage. He denies his intention to breed the serval with a Bengal cat (Isis), who he bought in Russia for 3,500 €. However, he offered for sale 2 of the expected "Savannah" juvenile hybrids.

Mr. Bertrand is the last to be heard. A veterinarian in Charleville-Mézières, he is suspected of complicity in the possession and transfer of non-domestic species. After recalling precisely the functioning of his clinic and detailing his professional agenda, he claims not to have realized the illegal situation of his client Mr. Mandet.

To defend himself, he pleads his lack of knowledge about servals and caracals and mentioned the responsibility of other vets in the clinic for marking the animals as "domestics".

Questions are first asked by the representative of the Order of Veterinarians on the caesarean section which led to the death of the Bengal cat and her kittens. He is asked about the reasons which pushed his associate, Eric Denis, to turn against him. Mr. Bertrand answers with his silence and his tears. Initially the only one kept in custody, Mr. Denis cleared himself of any responsibility by indicating that only his associate was responsible for this activity in the clinic.

Shortly after 3:00 p.m., when the OFB officer is called to the stand, the defense objected again to his hearing, this time on a procedural matter: he had been removed from the hearing to remain untouched by the debates, and had gone to lunch with his colleagues who had been present all morning at the hearing. Suspension of the hearing. The tribunal, to avoid any complication, finally rejects the hearing of the witness.

It is then the turn of the 10 civil parties to take the floor. The NGOs which are not represented by a lawyer speak first: FNE, Champagne-Ardenne Nature Environnement (CANE), Nature et Avenir then Robin des Bois. In its plea, the NGO insisted on the inaptitude of caracals and servals to live in cages, their role in their original ecosystems and the mistreatment caused by these traffics. Robin des Bois is the only NGO seeking compensation for ecological damage. The other civil parties represented by lawyers follow (SPA, ASPAS, Association Stéphane Lamart, Association Brigitte Bardot and the refuge La Tanière). The Order of Veterinarians insists on the dysfunctions of the clinic, describes Dr. Bertrand's behavior towards his young colleagues as "minimal complacency". He affirms the Order's intention, once the case has been tried in criminal court, to refer the case to its disciplinary board.

At 4:30 p.m., the prosecutor begins his closing arguments, which lasted no less than 45 minutes. Going back to the regulations governing the trade of non-domestic species, he detailed the elements that allowed him to characterize the organized gang between Mr. Thomas and Mr. Mandet.

He requires for Mr. Thomas 3 years' imprisonment, of which 2 are suspended for 2 years, and 1 is suspended with house arrest, accompanied by a fine of 20,000 € and a five-year prohibition on exercising an activity related to animals.

He requires for Mr. Mandet a sentence of one year in prison including 8 months suspended and 2 months of house arrest, accompanied by a fine of 4,000 € and a 2 years prohibition on exercising an activity related to animals.

The prosecutor accompanies his demands with a request to publish the sentence in the local press.

The hearing was suspended at about 5:45 p.m. The room emptied of a large part of its civil parties and almost all the public.

At the resumption of the debate, Mr. Mandet's lawyer says that all this case "is a fantasy." He describes Mr. Mandet as "a boy who had a very difficult childhood and whose only passion is cats and felines." According to him, if his client is banned from running an animal business, he will have no other option than "drug trafficking to survive".

Finally, Mr. Bertrand's lawyer pleads for the release of his client. "This case has been cleared up as much as this room has been cleared up" he ironically says, "the public is less attached to justice than to rumor."

The hearing will end at 7 p.m.

The judicial court of Charleville-Mézières delivers its judgment on July 4, 2022. Mr. Thomas was sentenced to a fine of 10,000 € and 2 years in prison with 1 year probationary suspension under electronic surveillance. Mr. Mandet was sentenced to a fine of 2,000 € and 12 months' imprisonment. Mr. Bertrand, the veterinarian, was discharged.

Court notes and Robin des Bois archives; Le Parisien, December 2, 2021; France Bleu Champagne-Ardenne, December 3, 2021; L'Ardennais, January 6, 2022; Radio 8, January 6, 2022.¹³⁵

WOLVES, JACKALS, PAINTED DOGS, FOXES AND HYENAS



Colpeo fox (*Lycalopex culpaeus*). Photo Damián Ganime

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

November 16, 2021

Kruger National Park, Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces, South Africa

The park is full of traps. 590 were extracted in 3 months. Two African wild dogs (*Lycaon pictus*) have recently been extricated and treated.

News24, November 21, 2021.¹



November 2021

Tzaneen, Limpopo Province, South Africa

After a farmer shot a pregnant aardwolf (*Proteles cristata*, Appendix III in Botswana), her 2 babies were saved thanks to a C-section. They received constant care for 5 weeks and were transferred to the Umoya Khulula Wildlife Centre for rehabilitation.

Umoya Khulula Wildlife Centre, December 5, 2021.²



KENYA

November 12, 2021

Olgulului, Kajiado County, Kenya

Six jackals (family Canidae) were found dead after feeding on a dead sheep's remains. Officials conducted a post-mortem examination and suspect poisoning. SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2021.³



AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

October 14, 2021

United States of America

The court ruled in favor of the Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife, Endangered Wolf Center, Wolf Conservation Center and David Parsons, a former Fish and Wildlife Service wolf recovery coordinator. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must revise its recovery plan for the Mexican wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*, Appendix II). Over 70% of Mexican wolf mortalities are human-caused. The Fish and Wildlife Service must in particular add concrete actions to reduce poaching to its plan. From 1998-2019, 105 wolves were killed. 186 specimens currently live in the U.S.

Earthjustice, October 15, 2021 ; NM Political Report, October 19, 2021 ; Wolf Conservation Center, October 24, 2021 ; KOLD, November 1, 2021 ; KNAU Arizona Public Radio, November 8, 2021.⁴

October-November 2021

State of Wisconsin, United States of America

Wolf hunters are angry. A judge blocked the November trophy hunting season for the gray wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) and prohibited the issuance of wolf hunting licenses. Some hunters have threatened on the Internet to override the ban. Wolves in Wisconsin, see "On the Trail" n°32 p.96.

Animal Wellness Action, December 9, 2021.⁵

November 8, 2021

State of Minnesota, United States of America



A grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) identified as WOC was illegally shot and killed less than 3 days into deer hunting season.

Voyageurs Wolf Project, November 10, 2021.⁶

PERU

November 9, 2021

District of Comas, Province of Lima, Department of Lima, Peru

Rescue of a colpeo fox (*Lycalopex culpaeus*, Appendix II) wandering in the city. About 8 months old, he was immobilized by a tranquilizer dart. Capturing him by hand would have been difficult, even dangerous for him. He was known in the neighborhood as Run Run. He was transferred to the zoological park of Las Leyendas. To achieve the operation, it took no less than the agents of Serfor who observed Run Run for 48 hours to identify strategic locations to be stunned, municipal staff, specialists from the Lima Zoo, 2 private companies that provided drones and logistics and the support of the neighborhood residents.

Serfor, November 9, 2021.⁷

ASIA

INDIA

September 3, 2021

Sigra, Varanasi District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India



Arrest of 5 traffickers in possession of 143 striped hyena bones (*Hyaena hyaena*, Appendix III in Pakistan), worth around 2 million rupees (27,284 US\$).

Amar Ujala, September 4, 2021 ; Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), September 6, 2021.⁸

October 15, 2021

Sogihal, Gadag District, State of Karnataka, India

A video of 3 people killing an Indian wolf (*Canis lupus pallipes*, Appendix I) and dragging the carcass from a motorbike has triggered an investigation. In their defense, they say the wolf attacked one of their friends and had rabies.

The New Indian Express, October 17, 2021.⁹

QATAR

OPERATION THUNDER 2021

October 2021

Qatar

Seizure of an Arabian wolf (*Canis lupus arabs*, Appendix II) in the course of Operation Thunder.

Operation Thunder is co-organised by the World Customs Organisation and Interpol and co-funded by the European Commission's department for International Partnerships, the UK DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) and the USAID (United States Agency for International Development). Since 2017, its objective is to fight wildlife crime and timber trafficking through multiple operations.

For this 5th edition, authorities from 118 countries have in particular seized 478 kg of ivory, 487 kg of ivory-derived products, 75 big cat by-products, 29 live big cats, 856 kg of pangolin scales, 531 turtles and tortoises, 171 birds, 336 reptiles and 4,843 kg of marine organism by-products.

The plant world is not left behind. Nicaragua intercepted the smuggling of 657 m3 of rosewood (*Dalbergia* spp., Appendix I or II) to China, while Hong Kong authorities seized 3.2 tonnes from the United Arab Emirates. In total, 75,320 kg of wood and 1.4 million plant products were confiscated.

Trends this year include an increase in illegal money transfers to hide the profits of trafficking and the linking of wildlife trafficking to other trafficking, such as counterfeit medicines, luxury food products and vehicle parts.

Interpol, November 30, 2021; World Customs Organization, November 30, 2021.¹⁰



Canis lupus arabs

EUROPE

GERMANY

September 21 and 26, 2021

Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania State, Germany

Three dead grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) were found, 2 of them drifting in the Elbe river in Horst and one in Plöwen near the border with Poland in a corn field. They had been shot.

Since the beginning of the year, 11 wolves have been poached in the State. Since the year 2000, at least 64 wolves have been illegally killed in Germany. In Munich, Bavaria, 1,200 sheep farmers demonstrated for better protection of their flocks. Hunters and farmers demand that "the status of the wolf be changed from strictly protected to conditionally protected."

Norddeutscher Rundfunk, September 30, 2021; Tagesschau, October 2, 2021.¹¹

December 15-18, 2021

Wittenberg District, Saxony-Anhalt State, Ludwigslust-Parchim and Vorpommern-Greifswald Districts, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania State, Germany

Four more gray wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) died in eastern Germany. Two were shot, one of them in a pond, and one was the victim of an accidental or deliberate traffic collision. The fourth was run over by a train.

During 2021, 190 livestock were killed or injured by wolves in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, sheep, calves, fallow deer in pens according to data from the Ministry of Environment.

T-online, December 20, 2021.¹²

December 31, 2021

Eimke, Lower Saxony State, Germany

A grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) shot dead is found in a field on New Year's Eve, the last day of the year. The Minister of the Environment of Lower Saxony points out that there is no exemption in the State allowing the shooting of a wolf on sight.

Bild, January 3, 2022; Jagderleben, January 3, 2022.¹³

FINLAND

Mid-December 2021

Ilomantsi, Region of North Karelia, Finland

Finland oversees the hunting of grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) but does not intend to be overrun. Police have opened an investigation into poaching that took place in mid-December 2021.

Police of Finland, January 25, 2022.¹⁴

December 20, 2021

Joensuu, Region of North Karelia, Finland

A man is sentenced to a suspended prison sentence of 4 months and will be banned from hunting for 2 years. From 2017 to 2020, he was depositing poisoned baits made of minced meat, strychnine, cyanide and birch sugar in the forests of Lieksa, Juuka and Kuhmo or introducing the baits into dead birds or rodents. The man, obsessed with grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II), compiled information about the presence of the packs from breeders, residents and specialized websites. At least 4 wolves died as a result of his actions and other animals probably suffered. Iltalehti, November 30, 2021; Iltä-Sanomat, November 30, 2021; MTV Uutiset, December 20, 2021.¹⁵



December 29, 2021

Finland

The Finnish Wildlife Agency announces that from February 1 to 15, 2022, 18 grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) may be voluntarily killed: 8 in the Saunajärvi area (Kuhmo, Kainuu region), 2 in the Liminka-Lumijoki area (North Ostrobothnia region), 5 in the Kauhajoki-Karvia area (South Ostrobothnia and Satakunta regions), and 3 in the Somero area (Finland Proper), Nummi-Pusula (Uusimaa region), and Tammela (Kanta-Häme region). The number of hunters will be limited to 50. The aim is to reduce the wolf population, which is at its highest level in 100 years.

Wolves in Finland, see "On the Trail" n°15 p.73, n°32 p.98. Yle News, December 29, 2021.¹⁶

FRANCE

Friday, September 24, 2021

Saint-Bonnet-en-Champsaur, Department of Hautes-Alpes, France

A female grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) is found hanged in the town hall square. Blood was flowing from her mouth. The discovery was made in the early morning by a woman who came to clean the town hall. A banner saying "Wake up, it's too late" accompanied the scene. The evening before, a meeting between the mayor and his deputies had ended around 10:30 p.m. According to the first elements of the investigation, the wolf was poached during the night of Thursday to Friday. A bullet was lodged in her side.

The local spokesman for the FDSEA (Fédération Départementale des Syndicats d'Exploitants Agricoles) stresses that dog and sheep breeders are under pressure and calls for the resumption of shooting. According to the president of the Chamber of Agriculture of the Hautes-Alpes, "this is the political act of someone who can't take it anymore" and "the people responsible are the public authorities, who are not capable of putting in place a policy that respects property and people." The NGOs Ferus and One Voice have filed a complaint and the Alpine Society for the Protection of Nature is considering doing so. The Minister of Ecology, Barbara Pompili, denounced "an inadmissible act."

Alpes 1, September 24, 2021.¹⁷

December 19, 2021

Montredon-Labessonnié, Department of Tarn, France

The Three Valleys Zoo's troubles with the prefect of the department and with the courts began in October 2020 due to non-compliance. A new incident has just led to a new closure of the establishment. Nine grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) that had just been delivered to the zoo escaped from the enclosure on Sunday afternoon. Visitors were evacuated without harm. Four wolves were shot by the management of the establishment and the other 5 were anesthetized by the State services and placed in an enclosure deemed more secure. The zoo is closed until further notice. Wolf escapes in France, see "On the Trail" n°31 p.74. Breeding of wolves, see "On the Trail" n°29 p.72. La Dépêche du Midi, December 23, 2021; Actu Toulouse, December 24, 2021.¹⁸

ITALY

Beginning of December 2021

Peveragno, Province of Cuneo, Region of Piedmont, Italy

After a long investigation and ballistic analysis, the carabinieri arrested a hunter who was subsequently indicted for poaching a grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II). The case dates back to the beginning of the year.



The body of a wolf had been found on the side of a road and his death had been initially attributed to a collision with a car. At the defendant's home, 15 firearms and hundreds of rounds of ammunition were seized. He is suspected of poaching other protected species.

Corriere Torino, December 4, 2021.¹⁹

SWEDEN

October 6, 2021

Stockholm, Stockholm County, Sweden

After a long list of controversies and shortcomings in the grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) enclosure endangering both visitors and animals, the management of Skansen Zoo has decided to no longer breed or house wolves. The last 4 wolves were killed behind closed doors in the early morning of October 6.

Skansen is an open-air museum established in 1891 on the island of Djurgården, in Stockholm. It covers 300,000 m². It aims to present the past ways of life with reconstructions of houses and demonstrations of crafts. It includes a zoo section that houses Scandinavian animals (bears, lynx, elks, bison, otters, seals, owls ...), exotic animals and domestic animals.

Djurrättsalliansen, October 6, 2021.²⁰

THE NETHERLANDS

October 1, 2021

Stroe, Province of Gelderland, The Netherlands

A male grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) was discovered by someone taking a walk. He was dead in a ditch. Known as GW1490m, he had arrived in the province at the end of 2020 after crossing the German border. GW1490m had mated with GW1792f but the romance ended when the female wolf was killed in a traffic collision. She was pregnant with 8 cubs at the time. In Gelderland, there are reportedly between 15 and 20 wolves.

The foundation De Faunabescherming (a Foundation for the protection of wildlife) is offering 16,000 € (18,650 US\$) to anyone who can give decisive information about the perpetrators of the death of the male wolf. After being attributed to a traffic collision, his death was finally attributed to a firearm. De Faunabescherming wants to put an end to wolf poaching. "There would be enough prey for wolves in the Netherlands if deer and wild boar were not hunted."

Nederlandse Omroep Stichting, October 13, 2021;
Nederlandse Omroep Stichting, October 19, 2021;
Barneveldse Krant, November 16, 2021.²¹

POLAND

October 10, 2021

Białogard District, West Pomeranian Voivodeship, Poland

Police, veterinarians and 2 volunteers from the NGOs Larus and Wilk succeeded after administering an anesthetic to release a grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) caught in a trap. The alarm had been given in time by local people and the animal was treated for his superficial wound, awakened and released. The crime of poaching was established and the perpetrators are still at large. Polish police, October 15, 2021.²²



November 30, 2021

Koszęcin, Silesian Voivodeship, Poland

A Lithuanian hunter with 30 years of experience with guns mistook a grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) for a red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*). Sabina Pierużek-Nowak, a doctor of biology, states on behalf of the NGO Wilk that "as a result of similar mistakes, an average of 140 wolves are killed each year by firearms in Poland."

Zycie Czestochowy i Powiatu, December 5, 2021;
Czestochowskie24.pl, December 6, 2021.²³

ROMANIA

Mid December 2021

Straja, Suceava County, Romania

A man is fined 1,000 lei or 265 US\$. For 2 years, in his garden he has been raising a grey wolf cub (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) who was sold to him by "an unknown person." Consulted by the police, the county authorities said they were not competent and the wolf remains in the garden.

Cancan, December 21, 2021.²⁴



Sweden, see previous page

UKRAINE

November 4, 2021

Boryspil International Airport, Kyiv Oblast, Ukraine



The package was supposed to carry 3 Siberian Husky puppies to Nepal according to the customs documents. The puppies were actually 3 grey wolf cubs (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II). The shipper was charged with violating customs regulations. The cubs were handed over to an "eco-park" in Kharkiv oblast.

Kyiv Customs, November 4 and 5, 2021.²⁵



Brown bear (*Ursus arctos*). Photo Boris Bubnov

AMERICA

CANADA

End of September, 2021 North Vancouver, Province of British Columbia, Canada

Zuzana Stevikova was fined 60,000 \$ (47,000 US\$) for feeding American black bears (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) in summer 2018. She reportedly bought "up to 10 cases of apples, 50 pounds (23 kilos) of carrots and up to 15 dozen eggs" per week. In September 2018, 3 bears who began frequenting the area and grew unafraid of humans were put down.
Global News, October 1st, 2021.¹



October 9, 2021
Yellowhead County, Province of Alberta, Canada
Alberta wildlife officers are searching for whoever shot and killed a female brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) with a high-powered rifle. Her 2-year-old cubs managed to escape and should be fine surviving on their own.
Western Standard, October 14, 2021.²

Beginning of November, 2021 Province of British Columbia, Canada

A Lower Mainland poacher was fined 7,500 \$ (5,900 US\$) and banned from hunting for 2 years for shooting an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) to death near Pemberton in May 2020. His extensive history of breaking rules aggravated his penalty.
Castanet, November 13 and December 6, 2021.³



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

September 8, 2021 Missoula County, State of Montana, United States of America

A female brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) was shot to death south of Seeley Lake. According to the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Department, the geolocated collared bear had no history of conflict with humans.
KBZK, September 28, 2021.⁴

September 9, 2021

Priest Lake, State of Idaho, United States of America

The day before, residents heard rifle shots. Fish and Game officers found a female American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) who had been shot multiple times. Her 3 cubs are nowhere to be found. In August, the family reportedly frequented the Hills Resort area. The mother had attacked 2 dogs while defending her young. Afterwards Fish and Game staff tried to trap the family to no avail. Idaho Fish and Game, September 10, 2021.⁵

October 22, 2021

Black Mountain, State of North Carolina, United States of America

Ashlee Mooneyham thought she saw a Halloween costume on the side of the road during her early morning run. It turns out that it was a severed paw from a real bear (Ursidae, Appendix I or II). She also found a plastic bag containing salt next to it, presumably a means of preserving the paw. WPDE ABC15, October 23, 2021.⁶



October 26, 2021

Sebring, State of Florida, United States of America

A 43-year-old man shot an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) and one of her cubs to death in the Sun n' Lake community. He was arrested.

U.S. News (with AP), November 30, 2021.⁷

October 29, 2021

Stockton, State of California, United States of America

A severed American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) head was found sitting in a tree at Louis Park. Officials are unsure of how it got there. ABC10, November 2, 2021; The News & Observer, November 3, 2021.⁸

November 2021

Yreka, State of California, United States of America

Cody Dylan Setzer, 29, was sentenced to 2,290 US\$ in fines, 200 hours of community service, 12 months of probation, and a suspension of his hunting and fishing privileges. He and an accomplice took 2 one-month-old American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) cubs from their den. Finding that he could not care for them, Cody brought the bears back to their den and contacted wildlife officers. He claimed to have just found them, but authorities were not fooled. California Department of Fish and Wildlife, March 15, 2022; NBC News (with AP), March 17, 2022; Outdoor Life, March 17, 2022.⁹



November 6 and 20, 2021

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

American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) hunting in Greene County is illegal. Nevertheless. On the opening day of crossbow hunting season, one hunter-poacher shoot and wound a bear. Two weeks later, a hunter heard 4 shots fired and notified the authorities about it. In total, officers caught 9 hunters for illegal bear hunting in the region. New York Almanack, November 29, 2021.¹⁰

October 14 - November 10, 2021

Collier County, State of Florida, United States of America



A 250-pound (113 kg) female American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) had her head stuck in a plastic container for nearly a month. Wildlife agents used a dart to tranquilize and rescue her. She has been released into the Picayune Strand State Forest. Tampa Bay Times, November 17, 2021.¹¹

December 2021

State of North Dakota, United States of America



Joseph Stolarczyk (59) of Wisconsin smuggled an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) carcass from Canada to North Dakota. He pleaded guilty. He was sentenced to one year of probation and a 5,000 US\$ fine. KVRN Local News, October 7, 2021; U.S. News (with AP), December 10, 2021.¹²

December 10, 2021

Jacksonville, State of Florida, United States of America

A 250-pound (115 kg) American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) was shot in the head and killed in Duval County. Anyone with information is encouraged to call the Wildlife Alert Hotline at 1-888-404-3922 and may be entitled to a 1,000 US\$ reward.

Action News Jax, December 15, 2021.¹³

December 13, 2021

Grand County, Utah State, United States of America



In 2018, William "Bo" Wood and Clifford Stubbs chased an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) with dogs for over 90 minutes until the animal collapsed from exhaustion. Wood proceeded to put the bear in a cage at his hunting camp for 2 days. After the bear recovered, he released him and chased him yet again. Wood is a 31-year-old dog trainer from Florida, and Stubbs is a 48-year-old concrete contractor in Utah.

Wood was sentenced to 6 months in prison and 18 months on probation. He was only sentenced for holding the bear captive, not for chasing it. In Utah it is legal to hunt and harass bears with dogs. Stubbs was sentenced to one-year suspended jail, a 1,500 US\$ fine and 52 hours of community service. The Salt Lake Tribune, June 7, November 12 and December 14, 2021.¹⁴

ASIA

CAMBODIA

September 25, 2021

Cardamom Mountains National Park, Kampong Speu Province, Cambodia



Heroic villagers rescued an Asian black bear cub (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I). Despite the presence of poachers, they managed to extricate him. He was caught in a trap. Khmer Times, September 26, 2021.¹⁵

CHINA

October 19-26, 2021

Mudanjiang, Mudanjiang Prefecture, Heilongjiang Province, China

Cao Bo's (pseudonym) mountain park is presented and visited as a serene cultural tourism destination dotted with stuffed or reconstructed animals and pagoda-like kiosks. The overnight stay in the vast estate is not cheap! The trouble started for Cao Bo when he was accused of illegal clearing for the needs of his amusement park. He was also reported by false friends and associates for possessing 232 kg of bear paws (Ursidae, Appendix I or II) which were seized in the outbuildings and kitchens. There were more than a hundred paws seized and they are each worth around 1,000 US\$.

In the first instance in November 2020, Cao Bo was fined 364,000 US\$. He has appealed, arguing that the bear paws allegedly served at his business banquets were made of cow hooves.

Lychee Watch, October 26, 2021.¹⁶

INDIA

September 27, 2021

Pithoragarh District, State of Uttarakhand, India

Interception of 2 traffickers in possession of a bear (*Ursus* spp., Appendix I or II) gall bladder and a bundle of Nepalese and Chinese banknotes.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), September 28, 2021.¹⁷



Beginning of October, 2021

Kora, Tumakuru District, State of Karnataka, India



A 3-year-old female sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I) was extracted from a snare trap. Unfavourable prognosis. The Hindu, October 13, 2021.¹⁸

November 24, 2021

Meteli, Jalpaiguri District, State of West Bengal, India

Curious people approached to see the Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) who had ventured into a tea plantation. A young boy went too far and was fatally attacked by the bear. The angry crowd lynched him.

The Telegraph India, November 25, 2021.¹⁹

November 29, 2021
Puduppeerkadavu, Erode District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

A sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I) who got caught in a snare was rescued and released into the forest.
The Hindu, November 30, 2021.²⁰



December 17, 2021
Goujugallu, Tumkur District, State of Karnataka, India

Forest officials arrested 6 poachers who had attacked a sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I) and started to butcher him.
The New Indian Express, December 17, 2021.²¹

December 26 and 29, 2021
Ulhasnagar, Thane District, State of Maharashtra, India

Anwar Abdul Rauf Khan and Mohammad Arif Sirajuddin Khan were arrested for bringing 645 bear claws and teeth (*Ursidae*, Appendix I or II) into a shop. They were trying to compromise the owner, Sanjay Nagpal, with whom they had a longstanding dispute.
The Indian Express, December 30, 2021.²²

IRAN

September 8, 2021
Firuzkuh, Tehran Province, Iran
Poaching of an adult male brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II).
Iran Environment Watch, September 9, 2021.²³

Beginning of October, 2021
Paband National Park, Mazandaran Province, Iran

A couple of poachers were caught by hikers smoking the meat of an adult female brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) that they had just killed. They went down to the village to inform the police, but when they arrived the couple had disappeared. They left behind the skin, head and some of the meat. The poachers were identified thanks to the photos and videos provided by the hikers.
Iran Environment Watch, October 5, 2021.²⁴



JAPAN

November 1, 2021
Sayo, Hyogo Prefecture, Japan
A 12-year-old female Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) was put down. She was reproached for lingering in a private property.
The Mainichi, November 2, 2021.²⁵

KAZAKHSTAN

November 3, 2021
Altai District, East Kazakhstan Region, Kazakhstan
Arrest of a 45-year-old man on suspicion of trapping a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II). Seizure of meat and skin.
Inbusiness, November 10, 2021.²⁶



November 6, 2021
Glubokoe District, East Kazakhstan Region, Kazakhstan
Seizure of the meat, head and paws of a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) from the freezer of a 51-year-old man.
Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, November 15, 2021; YK-news.kz, November 15, 2021.²⁷

NEPAL

Beginning of December, 2021
Kathmandu District, Bagmati Province, Nepal
Four individuals were arrested in possession of one Asian black bear gall bladder (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) weighing 65 grams.
Birendra Johari, December 11, 2021.²⁸



THAILAND

Mid-October 2021
Umphang Wildlife Sanctuary, Tak Province, Thailand. Border with Myanmar.



Arrest of 2 individuals carrying the remains of a smoked Malayan sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I) in a bag. Two accomplices fled. Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, October 17, 2021; Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand, October 23, 2021.²⁹

VIET NAM

September 12, 2021, and March 3, 2022
Pa Phay, Dien Bien Province, Viet Nam. Border with Laos.

facebook



The Facebook advertisement regarding the sale of a live Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) leads directly to Nguyen Xuan Duc, age 24. He was caught transporting the young 31 kg female on his motorcycle. Nguyen explains that he bought her at the border. Six months later he was sentenced to 18 months in prison plus 36 months of probation. The bear joined the Tam Dao Sanctuary. ENV, September 13, 2021 and March 10, 2022; Thuong Truong, September 13, 2021; One Green Planet, October 11, 2021.³⁰

September 14, 2021

Hanoi, Viet Nam

Seizure of 200 vials of bear bile that the man was selling on social networks. He was selling bear bile, teeth, claws, tiger glue and ivory. He had been spotted 2 months before but Covid-19 restrictions prevented an earlier intervention. ENV, September 15, 2021.³¹



End of October 2021

Long An Province, Viet Nam

Three Asian black bears (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) are entrusted to ENV by the operator of a bile farm. ENV, October 28, 2021.³²

October 30, 2021

Hanoi, Viet Nam

They had frozen a bear and had disguised him as a tiger to sell him for a higher profit on the Internet. The main suspect was sentenced to 3.5 years in prison, and his 2 accomplices received 2 years in prison with 4 years of probation. The police also seized 6 Malayan sun bear paws (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I) and 10 binturong legs (*Arctictis binturong*, Appendix III in India). ENV, November 3, 2021.³³



November 8, 2021

Uong Bi District, Quang Ninh Province, Viet Nam



A 30 kg Asian black bear cub (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) was seized from traffickers' hand and placed in a refuge. Three individuals have been arrested. People, November 10, 2021 ; ENV, November 15, 2021.³⁴

November 23, 2021

Hanoi, Viet Nam

Arrest of 2 men who were carrying 2 bags packed with 16 bear paws.
ENV, November 23, 2021.³⁵

December 11, 2021

Son La Province, Viet Nam

Evacuation of an Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) from a bile farm.
ENV, December 13, 2021.³⁶

December 2021

Lai Chau Province, Viet Nam

Sentencing of 4 men arrested in June 2021 in possession of a head, 4 paws, bear bile and 2 Asian black bear cubs (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) to 3 years, 2 years, and 15 months in prison.
ENV, January 13, 2022.³⁷



EUROPE

BELARUS

October 2021

Vitebsk Oblast, Belarus

A brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) was shot in the chest by a hunter. The bear had been surprised by a hunting party. The shooter claimed self-defense.

Narodnya Naviny Vitsebska, October 22, 2021.³⁸

FINLAND

August 20-October 31, 2021

Ilomantsi and Kontiolahti, Region of North Karelia, Finland

Police are investigating the poaching of 2 brown bear cubs (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) during the hunting season. Only bears older than one year can be hunted.

Maaseudun Tulevaisuus, November 6, 2021.³⁹

22 October 2021

Kihniö, Region of Pirkanmaa, Finland

A 175-kg male brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) with a trap deeply embedded in one paw was finished off by the authorities.

Ilta-Sanomat, October 25, 2021.⁴⁰



FRANCE

FAMILY AFFAIRS / REPEATED OFFENSE

September 1, 2021

Blois, Department of Loir-et-Cher, France



It's not an acquittal, but it's a relief for the couple of trainers prosecuted for acts of cruelty towards tamed animals. The victims include 4 brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) without space and veterinary care, a Barbary macaque (*Macaca sylvanus*, Appendix I) lacking everything, and parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II) locked up in the dark

Dany Bruneau, age 65, and Alexandre Poliakov, age 56, living in Chauvigny-du-Perche, were only sentenced to a fine of 150 € (175 US\$). Poliakov also received a suspended prison sentence of 4 months. Refuge de l'Arche, May 12, 2021; France 3 Centre-Val de Loire, May 13, 2021; 30 millions d'Amis, September 2, 2021.⁴¹

November 20th, 2021

Seix, Department of Ariège, France

During a wild boar hunt in a mountain area known to be frequented by brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II), a fight broke out between a female bear escorted by her offspring and a 70-year-old experienced hunter. The hunter was injured but will survive and the bear died from one or more gunshot wounds. An investigation is underway to find out if the bear deliberately attacked the hunter or if the opposite was true. It may be possible for the bear to be granted extenuating circumstances since she would have had the reflex to protect her 2 cubs, who are now orphaned.

Ferus, November 21, 2021; France 3 Occitanie, November 21 and 26, 2021; Pays de l'Ours, November 21, 2021; Le Monde, November 22, 2021; Le Parisien, November 22, 2021; Actu Occitanie, November 23, 2021; La Dépêche du Midi, November 23, 2021.⁴²

GREECE

September 10, 2021

Vrontero, Region of Western Macedonia, Greece

Discovery of the carcass of a 6-year-old brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) killed with a firearm. The bullet passed through the back and pierced a lung. ARCTUROS, September 16, 2021; Kathimerini, September 17, 2021.⁴³

POLAND

September 21, 2021

Sulejówek, Masovian Voivodeship, Poland



A brown bear skin (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) seized in May 2020 was given to the Józefa Piłsudskiego Museum for display. It had been offered for sale on an auction site by a 28-year-old man residing in Jarosław (Subcarpathian Voivodeship). Polish Police, July 22, 2020 and September 21, 2021.⁴⁴

ROMANIA

September 4, 2021

Between Cazaci and Brates, Neamt County, Romania

The poachers took only the meat of the adult brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II). They did not bother to bury the remains, instead they put everything in a bag and threw it under a bridge at the confluence of the Tarcau and Cheia rivers, in a hunting reserve in the village of Tarcau. It was a villager who made the discovery and notified the authorities. Playtech.ro, September 8, 2021.⁴⁵

September 10, 2021

Ceahlău, Neamt County, Romania

It took 12 hours for a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) caught in a trap to be released. The town hall had not signed a contract with a local hunters' association to cover the costs of such interventions and the Ministry of Environment refused to intervene without certainty that the animal was outside the boundaries of the commune. In the end, it was the head of the hunting association Lupul cenușiu (Grey Wolf) who anesthetized the bear and set him free.

Ziarul Atitudinea de Neamt, September 10, 2021; Palytech.ro, September 13, 2021.⁴⁶

September 18, 2021

Bacau County, Romania

Anesthesia and release by the agents of the National Environment Guard of a 3-year-old brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) caught in a trap. Observatorul Prahovean, September 19, 2021.⁴⁷

September 27, 2021

Popeni, Bacau County, Romania

A 1.5-year-old brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) caught in a trap was rescued by the agents of the National Environmental Guard. "These actions are not without risks, especially since in this case the mother of the cub was nearby and able to attack and injure the bear's rescuers at any moment." Bacau.NET, September 29, 2021.⁴⁸



October 1, 2021

Hângănești, Bacau County, Romania

New rescue of a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) caught in a trap, this time 5 years old.

Desteptarea, October 1, 2021.⁴⁹



November 1, 2021

Andreișu de Jos, Vrancea County, Romania

A brown bear cub (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) trapped by a snare in a tree on the hunting ground n°42. He was rescued by members of Ajvps Vrancea Clubul Focsani, a local association of hunters, assisted by a veterinarian.

Ziarul de Vrancea, November 4, 2021.⁵⁰

Mid-November 2021

Brosteni, Suceava County, Romania

Fortunately for him, he was not far from the village and his cries attracted attention. A 300-kg brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) was trapped in a tree where he had been lured by a cattle carcass placed several meters high. The poachers only had to wait and shoot him. But the forestry agents anesthetized him, extracted him from the trap and released him in another area of the forest.

Monitorul de Suceava, November 16, 2021.⁵¹



December 2021

Arad County, Romania

Following an article published by the media Libertatea in March 2021, the courts have investigated the keeping of brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) by Gheorghe Cilan. The man bought a 5-month-old pair from the Brasov Zoo in 1992, who later had 4 cubs. It is possible that his breeding is illegal, and it is certain that he is abusive. Since his purchases took place before the amendment of the law banning the possession of protected species by individuals, it is impossible to confiscate them until the investigation is completed, which relieves the authorities. "Frankly, even we, until we came across such cases, did not imagine that there were people with CITES species in their garden."

Libertatea, December 2, 2021.⁵²

RUSSIA

Beginning of September 2021 Bratsk, Irkutsk Oblast, Russia

A 1.5-year-old brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) is roaming around the airport, robbing garbage cans and beehives. He is missing a front paw. He tore it off while trying to free himself from a trap. The inhabitants contact the K-9 shelter based in Irkutsk, 640 km away. Specialized in dogs, it also welcomes some wild animal victims of human cruelty. When they arrived on the spot, the team of the refuge had a bad surprise. The forest guards say that it is forbidden to capture the bear without a permit. Only after the intervention of the vice-president of the Legislative Assembly of the oblast, Larisa Egorova, who was visiting Bratsk, was a permit issued. After several unsuccessful attempts, the bear was finally captured and moved. "This is primarily a human error and we must repair what can be fixed. He couldn't have dug a den for the winter with one paw. He would have started attacking people and would have been shot," says the director of K-9.

Moskovski Komsomolets Baikal, September 3, 2021.⁵³



September 8, 2021 Kozulsky District, Krasnoyarsk Krai, Russia

A 47-year-old man had killed a bear (*Ursidae*, Appendix I or II) caught in one of his traps with 2 shots. He had then taken the meat to his mother's house and sold the skin and paws. He had kept 5 liters of bottled fat at home. The man is under house arrest pending trial. Enisey TV, September 9, 2021.⁵⁴



September 23, 2021 and February 11, 2022 Chelyabinsk, Chelyabinsk Oblast, Russia



The mood at the zoo is dark. Two brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) died of arsenic poisoning. A bag containing 7 kg of meat was found nearby. Two weeks earlier, one of the bears already showed symptoms of mild poisoning, and in the previous days, sika deer (*Cervus nippon*), caribous (*Rangifer tarandus*) and roe deer (genus *Capreolus*) were also strangely ill. Two died. The city council does not exclude the possibility that the poisoner is one of the zoo employees. After a few months of calm, a new incident occurred on February 11. An 8-month-old lynx (*Lynx* spp., Appendix I or II) was eaten by a snow leopard (*Panthera uncia*, Appendix I) after the door to his enclosure was left open. There are whispers that this may not have been an accident.

Znak, September 24, 2021; 31TV.RU, February 14, 2022.⁵⁵

October 2021 and February 2022 Kuraginsky District, Krasnoyarsk Krai, Russia



Arrest of a 37-year-old man and seizure of a brown bear skin (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) hanging on the wall of his house. A handyman working for a hunter, he admitted to poaching the bear on his boss' land in his absence. He was only interested in the skin, which he intended to resell.

He was sentenced in February 2022 to 6 months' suspended community service with deduction of 5% of his income to the benefit of the State. He also has to pay back damages of 180,000 rubles (2,315 US\$).

NewsLab, December 2, 2021; Khakasia Online Magazine, February 18, 2022.⁵⁶

October 2021 Barnaul, Altai Krai, Russia

Discovery of 2 brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) aged 3 and 4 years locked for 2 weeks in tiny cages in a car wash. They are believed to belong to a circus. Rosprirodnadzor (the Federal Service for Supervision of Natural Resources) is going to inspect the place and demands explanations from the owner.

Moskovski Komsomolets Altai, October 25, 2021.⁵⁷

October 20, 2021 Uvatsky District, Tyumen Oblast, Russia

Three friends are attacked by a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) while fishing. One of them is killed, the second, the boxer Ilya Dmitrevich Medvedev (age 23), kills the bear with a knife to defend himself and is injured, the third manages to take Medvedev to the hospital. It is not long before another version of events is mentioned by a former head of the hunting department in the district. "There were many shell casings next to the bear's den. When you fish, you're on the river. If you get off the boat in a protected area with a gun, that's poaching." Radio Komsomolskaya Pravda, October 20 and 21, 2021.⁵⁸

October 20, 2021

Bayandayevsky District, Irkutsk Oblast, Russia

Two local officials of Pribaikallesproekt, a branch of Roslesinforg, the Forest Management Agency, are caught in a company car with skins, paws and fat of brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II). The lot was supposedly found in the forest. But the men filmed themselves with a telephone killing a bear and her 3 cubs asleep in their den. They had entered the forest under the cover of an official mission with 7 accomplices, 2 of whom were identified. The analysis of their telephones also reveals regular exchanges with managers of large restaurants in Moscow, including Emin Agalarov and Grigory Leps, founders of the restaurant "Lesnoy," and with Rustam Tangirov, the chef. The bear meat was sent to Moscow by plane. About a dozen restaurants were involved in this trade. The paws, fat and other parts were sent to China.



The media notes that the case seems to have been forgotten. And for good reason, the internal investigation of Pribaikallesproekt concluded to the innocence of the 2 men and accredits the thesis that the car was heading to a dump to get rid of the skins, paws and bear fat found in the forest. They were still dismissed.

Ministry of Internal Affairs, November 25, 2021; RU-Criminal, January 29, 2022; NEWS.ru, January 31, 2022; Nakanune.RU, February 1, 2022; Novaya Gazeta, February 2, 2022.⁵⁹

October 22, 2021

Belyashi, Altai Republic, Russia

Arrest of a 34-year-old man. He is suspected of having shot a bear (*Ursidae*, Appendix I or II) in retaliation for the death of 2 horses. The revenge was not entirely selfless, as he intended to sell the trophy.

News of Gorny Altai, October 22, 2021.⁶⁰

Beginning of November 2021

Moscow Oblast, Russia

Since 2018, it is forbidden to use wild animals to train hunting dogs. But testimonies with supporting videos prove that the practice is still going on around Moscow. There are reportedly at least 18 illegal training centers, some of which use brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II). PETA, November 2, 2021.⁶¹

November 2021

Dzerzhinsky District and Kaluga, Kaluga Oblast, Russia



- Closure following an inspection by authorities of a hunting dog training center using Red Book animals, including at least one brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II).
- Sentenced the owner of the center to a fine of 5,000 rubles (70 US\$).

Glas Naroda, November 20, 2021; RIA Novosti, November 26, 2021.^{62 and 63}

SWEDEN

September 20th, 2021

Pauträsk, Västerbotten County, Sweden

Following a tip-off, the police discovered remains of brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) fur and traces of blood. Since no legal hunting had taken place in the area, poaching was suspected. Sveriges Television, September 22, 2021.⁶⁴

GAZELLES, ANTELOPES, WILD GOATS, SEROWS, BUSHBUCKS, MARKHORS ...



Blackbuck (*Antilope cervicapra*). Photo Yuwaraj Gurjar

AFRICA

SENEGAL

December 19, 2021

Keur Ayib, Kaolack Region, Senegal. Border with Gambia.

A trafficker with a baby bushbuck (*Tragelaphus scriptus*) hidden in a cardboard box was arrested. He has a long history of trafficking parrots and mammals with Abdourahamane Sidibe who himself was arrested in 2017 for trafficking chimpanzees and manatees.

EAGLE, December 21, 2021 ; Sen360.sn, December 22, 2021.¹



© EAGLE

ZAMBIA

End of September, 2021

Muwele, Muchinga Province, Zambia

Violence ensued when police officers tried to arrest 2 men for illegally selling southern lechwe (*Kobus leche*, Appendix II) meat. As police apprehended one suspect, other community members mobilized to rescue him and recover the meat. They wrecked 3 official cars. Policemen fired warning shots to no avail, and 13 people sustained minor injuries. Five suspects, 4 males and one female, have been arrested.

Department of National Parks & Wildlife, October 1, 2021.²

AMERICA

CANADA

September 2021

Peace River Regional District, Province of British Columbia, Canada

Poaching of 7 underage Mexican bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*, Appendix II in Mexico). The disappearance of juveniles has a significant impact on bighorn sheep populations.

My Prince George Now, September 18, 2021.³

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

November 22 and December 7, 2021 Highland Mountains, Madison County, and Virginia City, State of Montana, United States of America



Harold Horine, 45, was fined 5,245 US\$ and had his hunting, fishing and trapping privileges suspended for 2 years for poaching a Mexican bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*, Appendix II in Mexico). He left the meat to waste and claimed he mistook the sheep for an elk.
For The Win, December 22, 2021.⁴

December 8, 2021 Albuquerque, State of New Mexico, United States of America



Carlos Ortiz, 28, was sentenced to 1.5 years of probation and a 7,600 US\$ fine for guiding a client to hunt and kill Mexican bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*, Appendix II in Mexico) in August 2020. Ortiz was a Reaper Backcountry Outfitters employee, he was not allowed to work as a guide in the Carson National Forest.
US Department of Justice, December 9, 2021.⁵

ASIA

SAUDI ARABIA

Beginning of September 2021 Al-Qasim Province, Saudi Arabia

Police discovered 2 dead goitered gazelles (*Gazella subgutturosa*) in the broken down vehicle. The poacher was arrested after an attempted escape. He faces a fine of 100,000 rials (26,700 US\$) for possession and use of a prohibited weapon and 25,000 rials (6,670 US\$) for each of the poached animals.

Goitered gazelles live in semi-arid and desert habitats. Their range is decreasing year by year. They are still present in the Arabian Peninsula, Iran, Turkey, and in the Gobi Desert. Their horns which measure 25 to 45 cm long are the source of their misfortunes. The trophies of the males are highly sought after. The species is listed in Appendix II of the Bonn Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals and in Appendix II of the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats.
Ajel, September 10, 2021.⁶

CHINA

October 2021 Fangcheng District, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China



Two men are charged with smuggling wildlife products from protected species. At the end of May 2021, the first man was caught in the act of transporting horns and some bracelets that Vietnamese people had smuggled into the district by river. The second man's home was searched after the first man confessed. A total of 146 saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) were seized, worth 2.92 million yuan (451,000 US\$ or 3,090 US\$/horn), as well as 6 rhino horn bracelets weighing 195 grams, worth 48,785 yuan (7,540 US\$, or 1,256 US\$/bracelet).
CVC Knowledge, May 11, 2021.⁷

November 2021 Qingdao Prefecture, Shandong Province, China

Seizure in 2 incoming parcels of 3 pairs of horns of saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) mounted on skull and a knife with horn handle. The trophies and knife were in the middle of sweaters and denim pants.
Chinese Customs, November 29 and 30, 2021.⁸

CYPRUS

October 4, 2021 Kampos, Nicosia District, Cyprus

Five men, 21- to 51-years-old, were arrested for poaching 2 Cyprus mouflons (*Ovis gmelini*, Appendix I). Police found the 2 mouflons with their heads cut off in plastic bags in one of the suspect's vehicles following a tip off.
Cyprus Mail, October 5 and 8, 2021.⁹

INDIA

Night of September 10 to 11, 2021 Bhikhodai Jooni, Jaisalmer District, State of Rajasthan, India

An Indian gazelle (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III in Pakistan) was shot and killed. The suspects have not yet been identified.
The Times of India, September 12, 2021.¹⁰

September 18, 2021 Kadbanwadi Forest, Pune District, State of Maharashtra, India

Two Indian gazelle or chinkaras (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III in Pakistan) were poached. Several villagers saw and filmed 3 suspects killing the animals with an airgun from their car.
Hindustan Times, September 20, 2021.¹¹

October 4, 2021

Gadag District, State of Karnataka, India

Police interrogated 3 individuals carrying large quantities of meat. They revealed they had poached blackbucks (*Antilope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Pakistan) and were on their way to sell the meat for 300 to 400 rupees per kg (4 to 5.3 US\$/kg). The Times of India, October 6, 2021.¹²

October 17, 2021

Phalsoond, Jaisalmer District, State of Rajasthan, India

Beerma Ram was arrested after evading police for 7 months. He has reportedly killed over 1,000 Indian gazelles (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III in Pakistan) over the last 18 years. The Times of India, October 20, 2021.¹³

October 27, 2021

Mallabadi, Kalaburagi District, State of Karnataka, India

Three businessmen from Hyderabad and 2 from Chandapur were arrested for shooting a blackbuck (*Antilope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Pakistan) to death. They were identified as Wasif Hassan (52), Peer Ahmed (21), Ali Hussain (42), Hanumanth Helawar and Venkatesh Helawar. The Hindu, October 29, 2021; The Times of India, October 30, 2021.¹⁴

FAMILY AFFAIRS

End of November, 2021

Delhi, National Capital Territory of Delhi, India

Five Kashmiri men were arrested in possession of 13 Shahtoosh shawls, which are made from the fur of Tibetan antelopes (*Pantholops hodgsonii*, Appendix I). Mohd Yaseen Wani, his son Mohd Imtiaz, Asif Hussain, Gowhar and Ashraf Mir all pleaded guilty. Wani and her son traded the shawls in their carpet shop in the shopping arcade of the Marriott Hotel in Saket. The Indian Express, November 24, 2021.¹⁵

December 3, 2021

Kalatalav, Bhavnagar District, State of Gujarat, India

Budha Vegad, farmer, and Javedkhan Pathan, driver, were arrested for trapping a male blackbuck (*Antilope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Nepal and Pakistan) in a net and butchered it. Three other suspects reportedly fled. The Indian Express, December 6, 2021.¹⁶



Beginning of December, 2021

Jambhalewadi, Satara District, State of Maharashtra, India

Nathu Sakharam Karanjkar, a Jambhalewadi resident, and Rajkumar Maruti Indalkar, a Kalambe resident, were arrested while carrying an injured four-horned antelope (*Tetracerus quadricornis*, Appendix III in Nepal). The Times of India, December 8, 2021.¹⁷

December 29, 2021

Bengaluru, Bengaluru Urban District, State of Karnataka, India

Lokesh Narayanappa and Yarriswamy were arrested in possession of 2 blackbucks (*Antilope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Pakistan and in Nepal) skins and 4 horns near the Sarakki market. Country and Politics, December 31, 2021.¹⁸

IRAN

September 2021

Famenin, Hamadan Province, Iran

The meat of 2 Cyprus mouflons (*Ovis gmelini*, Appendix I for the populations of Cyprus) is seized from a freezer. Elsewhere in the house, authorities found 150 rounds of ammunition, a firearm and hunting utensils are. Where are the heads and horns? Irib News Agency, September 13, 2021.¹⁹

November 2021

Bafq, Yazd Province, Iran

Wild animals approach towns and villages to drink. The wild sheep (*Ovis vignei*, Appendix I or *Ovis gmelini*, Appendix I for the populations of Cyprus) was shot in the hills by a poacher accompanied by his whole family. To foil the guards, they pretended to go on a picnic. Irib News Agency, November 14, 2021.²⁰

November 2021

Tabas, South Khorasan Province, Iran



Seizure of a trophy, bones, and meat of a urial (*Ovis vignei*, Appendix I) and the weapons that killed him along with many others. Irib News Agency, November 30, 2021.²¹

KAZAKHSTAN

Beginning of September 2021

Kyzylorda Region, Kazakhstan

The police don't know what to do. While searching for wedding banquets that defy Covid prevention measures, they intercept cars full of poached fish. At kilometer 13 of Kumkol road they block a pick-up truck and seize 6 saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) carcasses. Khabar 24, September 2, 2021.²²

Mid-September 2021 Aktobe Region, Kazakhstan

Sentence to 5 years in prison for poaching saiga antelopes (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) and selling the horns. The 31-year-old man sold them each for 60 to 80,000 tenge (140 to 190 US\$).

Gazeta Diapazon, September 15, 2021.²³



October 18, 2021

Zharkamys and Karazhar, Aktobe Region, Kazakhstan

- Seizure of 5 kg of saiga antelope meat (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) and a Ural motorcycle without license plates that was used to chase the panicked antelopes in the steppes.

- Seizure of 4 bags weighing 10 kg of saiga meat, along with firearms and 104 rounds of ammunition. Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, October 22, 2021.²⁴

October 26, 2021

Zhideli, Turkestan Oblys, Kazakhstan

From Kazakhstan to Saudi Arabia, goitered gazelles (*Gazella subgutturosa*) are being shot. Arrest of a poacher by police and officers of Okhotzooptom, the committee for the protection of animals in Kazakhstan.

KTK, October 26, 2021.²⁵

OPERATION POACHER

October 28, 2021

Zhangeldi District, Kostanay Region, Kazakhstan

- Seizure of 2 butchered saiga antelope carcasses (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II). Arrest of the 45-year-old man who also used to travel the steppes by motorcycle to hunt them. Meat and horns were also found.

- Seizure of 2 saiga antelope carcasses from a 29-year-old man who used his 4x4 car for hunting. Kazinform, October 30, 2021; Gazeta Diapazon, November 2, 2021.²⁶

November 3, 2021

Saryagash District, Turkistan Region, Kazakhstan

Sentence to one year of "restriction of freedom" of a man who was selling saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) horn. Authorities seized 150 horns from him.

Kazinform, November 3, 2021.²⁷



January-November 2021 Kazakhstan

Between the beginning of 2021 and the end of November, 4,235 horns and 141 carcasses of saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) were seized according to accounts of the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources.

Kazinform, October 6, 2021; Azattyq Rýhy, November 29, 2021.²⁸

Beginning of December 2021

Altyn Dala Reserve, Kostanay Region, Kazakhstan

Sentenced to 7 years in prison for attempting to market 96 saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II). The man was a guard of the reserve. During the great epizootic disease of 2015 (see "On the Trail" n°16 p. 93), he had sawed the horns off the corpses, buried them and then dug them up 6 years later to sell them for great profit. In addition, the forban must pay 140 million tenge in ecological damages (325,000 US\$).

Astana TV, December 2, 2021; Khabar 24, January 19, 2022.²⁹

Beginning of December 2021

Atyrau Region, Kazakhstan

Since the beginning of 2021, 7 carcasses and 750 horns of saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) have been seized.

Six poachers were convicted and the ecological damage is estimated to be 1.656 billion tenge (3.5 million US\$). The damage for a male horned saiga is estimated at 500 MCI (Minimum Calculation Index, i.e. 3,390 US\$) and for a female or a juvenile at 350 MCI (2,370 US\$).

ATPress.kz, December 3, 2021.³⁰



December 2021

Kyzylorda Region, Kazakhstan

There are 2 main categories of saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) poachers in Kazakhstan.

- Shepherds and farm workers who have a monthly income of 40-60,000 tenge (100-140 US\$). They are occasional and opportunistic poachers and sellers.

- The pros are armed with all-terrain vehicles and automatic weapons. They have the resources to export large shipments to China or Russia. They are cruel and ready for anything.

On July 13, 2019, 2 game guards were ambushed and Erlan Nurgaliyev was beaten to death. Petr Nitsyk survived. Three of the 7 assailants were given life sentences, the other 4 to 6 years in prison.

On July 23, 2019, 2 rangers chased a poachers' SUV and Kanych Nourtazinov died from several gunshots before he even reached the hospital (see "On the Trail" n°26 p. 5). Some high-ranking anti-poaching officials then wished that such radical methods as "shoot to kill" against saiga poachers would be authorized as in some southern African countries against elephant and rhino poachers. On VKontakte and other Internet sites aimed at all those who speak Russian in the former Soviet republics (Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Belarus) advertisements for the sale or purchase of saiga horns are common. Some photos show fresh horns with blood on the base. Prices in Ukraine range from 20 to 400 US\$ for a pair of horns depending on condition, weight and length (one horn weighs between 95 and 172.5 grams). The species is extinct in Ukraine and the horns come from Russia where less than 5,000 saiga survive and Kazakhstan. Protected but not overly so, the saiga is listed in Appendix II of CITES. International legal trade in its horns remains surprisingly possible despite all the warning signs of extinction. Hong Kong imported 3.14 tonnes of horns which made their way from Kazakhstan to Singapore in 2019 and 1 tonne of horns from Russia in 2020. China imported 1.5 tonnes of horns from Ukraine in 2019 and the origin of this stock is unknown.

DKNews, December 15, 2021; Species Impact Victim Statements (SVIS), January 4, 2022.³¹

December 13, 2021

Shet District, Karaganda Region, Kazakhstan

Interception of a vehicle carrying 15 bags of saiga antelope meat (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) on the road between Almaty Oblis and Sverdlovsk Oblast in Russia. The driver from Astana was armed.

Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, December 20, 2021.³²

KYRGYZSTAN

End of December 2021

Ak-Talaa District, Naryn Region, Kyrgyzstan

Joint operation of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology and the NGO Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union Kyrgyzstan. Several poachers were arrested. In their car there were 3 guns and a skinned Himalayan ibex (*Capra sibirica*, Appendix III in Pakistan).

Kloop, December 27, 2021.³³

UZBEKISTAN

December 12, 2021

Taxtako'pir District, Republic of Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan.

The men ran away when they saw the inspectors of the Committee for Ecology and Environmental Protection. By the side of their abandoned car, there was a knife, an axe, a bullet, butchering utensils, 14 goitered gazelle carcasses (*Gazella subgutturosa*) and 5 rabbits. After a quick investigation, the 4 poachers were arrested at their homes in Qorao'zak and Taxtako'pir districts. The ecological damage is estimated at 190.5 million soums or 18,000 US\$.

Fergana, December 14, 2021.³⁴

PAKISTAN

Beginning of October, 2021

Chitral, Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Said Akbar, Saidur Rahman and Ejaz Ahmed were sentenced to 6 months' "rigorous imprisonment" and a fine of 100,000 rupees (590 US\$) for poaching a markhor (*Capra falconeri*, Appendix I) 3 years ago. Markhor hunting permits are sold around 15 million rupees (88,000 US\$).

Dawn, October 8, 2021.³⁵

October 2021

Balochistan Province, Pakistan

The federal government has imposed a suspension on the hunting of urials and ibex in Balochistan for the year 2021-2022. There was influence peddling in the allocation of the 25 hunting permits for each species and some of the goats slaughtered did not have horns that met the minimum length.

Dawn, October 8 and 22, 2021.³⁶

November 4, 2021

Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

"The ratings of the dead markhor (*Capra falconeri*, Appendix I) with its long spiral horns keeps increasing," said "On the Trail" in its issue 28, p. 120. The rise is confirmed in 2021. The auction price of permits to hunt a specimen in the Toshi-I Reserve, Chitral district, has reached 160,250 US\$ for the November 2021 to March 2022 hunting season. It was awarded to Mehran Safari while Shikar Safari took a license for 155,100 US\$ in Toshi-II Reserve, another for 125,100 US\$ around Gehrait and another for 135,150 US\$ around Keigah in Kohistan district. The 4 permits total up 597,200 US\$ compared to 502,500 US\$ the previous year. Dawn, November 5, 2021.³⁷

November 25, 2021

Shishkat, Gilgit-Baltistan Territory, Pakistan

Officials arrested Sharifuddin and Naseeruddin for poaching a female Himalayan ibex (*Capra sibirica*, Appendix III in Pakistan). Dawn, November 27, 2021.³⁸

December 4, 2021

Shimshal, Khunjerab and Misgar National Park, Gilgit-Baltistan Territory, Pakistan



It's legal ! Mr. Waleed, a Lahore resident, and 2 foreigners hunted 2 Himalayan ibexes (*Capra sibirica*, Appendix III in Pakistan) and a blue sheep (*Pseudois nayaur*, Appendix III) under territory's trophy hunting program. Waleed hunted a blue sheep with 71 cm horns after purchasing a permit for 6,600 US\$. One of the foreigners, a Spanish citizen, hunted a 116.8 cm horns Himalayan ibex after purchasing a license for 8,000 US\$, and the other, whose origin is unknown, hunted a 121.9 cm horns ibex after paying 6,200 US\$. Dawn, December 6, 2021.³⁹

December 2021

Lower Chitral District, Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

It's legal ! Aleksander Egrov, a Russian national, hunted an 8-year-old Kashmir Markhor (*Capra falconeri*, Appendix I) with 91 cm horns. Dawn, December 23, 2021.⁴⁰



TURKEY

October 22, 2021

Kemah District, Erzincan Province, Turkey

A man who exposed himself on social networks to have the remains of 2 wild goats (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) poached in the mountains was identified, arrested and sentenced to administrative fines and compensatory damages. Hurriyet.com.tr, October 22, 2021.⁴¹



October 2021

İliç District, Erzincan Province, Turkey

Two men who were known to poach wild goats (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) in the mountains were caught in the act of transporting a carcass and were each fined 63,432 liras (7,165 US\$). Cumhuriyet, October 31, 2021.⁴²



Beginning of November 2021

Gülnar District, Mersin Province, Turkey

Two dead wild goats (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) aged 3 to 4 years were in the backpack of a poacher carrying a semi-automatic rifle of which he was not the owner. He has to pay a fine of 122,224 liras (12,715 US\$). Cumhuriyet, November 5, 2021.⁴³



Beginning of November 2021

Uludere District, Şırnak Province, Turkey

Fines of 185,000 liras (19,330 US\$) for 2 poachers who had killed 2 wild goats (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) with 2 Kalashnikovs. Hurriyet.com.tr, November 10, 2021.⁴⁴



November 2021

Darende, Malatya Province, Turkey

Alerted by numerous “rumors” of poaching in progress, gendarmes and wildlife guards raided the Peteklik area and caught 4 men who had just killed a wild goat (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) and her kid on the steep rocks. They were fined 127,526 liras (13,270 US\$).

Gazete Duvar, November 22, 2021.⁴⁵



November 2021

Erzincan Province, Turkey

The drone flying over the mountains resulted in the location and destruction of 18 “güme,” which are wooden, stone or concrete cottages, covered with metal sheets. Built around 20 years ago, they served as a refuge and a home base for a congregation of wild goat poachers (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) not far from the Black Sea. Gün Haber (with DHA), November 26, 2021.⁴⁶



Beginning of December 2021

Hırmanlı, Mersin Province, Turkey

This time, it was on the Mediterranean coast where 2 men were caught poaching 2 wild goats (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan).

NTV, December 6, 2021.⁴⁷



December 2021

Çemişgezek District, Tunceli Province, Turkey

Two arrests. Seizure of 2 wild goats (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) fatally poached.

Anadolu Agency, December 9, 2021.⁴⁸



December 2021

Mazgirt District, Tunceli Province, Turkey



A group of Spaniards came to hunt endangered wild goats (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), a practice that was recently banned in the province. “We tried to explain to them that the mountain goats they want to hunt are important and sacred to us. They said they would show sensitivity. We don’t want sensitivity; we want them to give up on the idea of hunting altogether,” said Munzur Conservation Board spokesperson Hasan Şen. But the Spanish killed at least two.

Hürriyet Daily News, December 10, 2021.⁴⁹

December 2021

Nurhak District, Kahramanmaraş Province, Turkey

G.A. and T.Y. had just killed 2 wild goats (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) and were starting to butcher them when they were caught by a patrol of DKMP, the Directorate of Nature and National Parks. The offenders thought they were unheard, unseen and untraceable in the mountains.

Habertürk (with IHA), December 10, 2021.⁵⁰



December 28, 2021

Bağlar, Erzincan Province, Turkey

This may be the last poaching of the year, a horrible year for wild goats (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan). In this second Covid year they have been poached for meat and to sell the horns and skins.

Habertürk (with IHA), December 28, 2021.⁵¹

VIET NAM

FAMILY AFFAIRS

November 29, 2021

Ha Tinh, Ha Tinh Province, Viet Nam

Cao Minh Luan, Le Trong Tuong, and Tran Cong are under house arrest. Tran Cong Hung is behind bars. In 2017, he was sentenced to 15 months in prison for a wildlife crime. All 4 of them are involved in trapping a Southern serow (*Capricornis sumatraensis*, Appendix I), transporting the animal alive and selling him dead or alive. Bao Tin tuc - TTXVN, December 6, 2021; ENV, December 11, 2021.⁵²



EUROPE

RUSSIA

Mid-November 2021

Kedrov, Tomsk Oblast, Russia

At the request of the prosecutor, access to websites that allow the sale of saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) is now restricted. Babr24 points out that the WWF promoted the hunting of saiga by calling their horns alternatives to the alleged healing properties of rhino horns. Babr24, November 19, 2021.⁵³



Mid-November 2021

Moscow Federal City, Russia

The seller of saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) via websites and free classified ads fled the Republic of Kalmykia to Moscow 1,400 km away. He was arrested and faces 5 years in prison. The online newspaper Obzor recalls that according to experts, the current situation of the saiga is comparable to the extermination of bison in Canada and the United States of America in the 19th century. Obzor, November 21, 2021.⁵⁴

Beginning of December 2021

Veliky Novgorod, Novgorod Oblast, Russia

At the request of the prosecutor, 6 websites containing information about the sale of saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) are blocked or restricted from access. 53 News, December 8, 2021.⁵⁵

December 24, 2021

Volgograd, Volgograd Oblast, Russia

The police were puzzled by an offer to sell saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) via the Internet. They ambushed the seller who claimed in his message to have found them while clearing out his attic. An undercover policeman played the interested party. The horns were seized and the junk dealer was sentenced to a one-year suspended prison term. Argoumenty i Fakty (AIF), December 24, 2021; Moskovski Komsomolets Volgograd, December 24, 2021.⁵⁶



Giraffa camelopardalis, Appendix II

AFRICA

KENYA

September 15 and 16, 2021
Meru National Park, Meru County, Kenya



It was going from bad to worse. The male giraffe's right front leg was fettered by a metal ring at the fetlock joint and it was dragging behind him. The trap was removed and the wound was treated. Prognosis is good.
 SWT/KWS Meru Mobile Veterinary Unit, September 2021.¹



September 17, 2021
Kiboko, Chyulu Hills National Park, Makueni County, Kenya

An arrow was stuck in his back. During anesthesia it was removed and the wound was treated. Prognosis is good.
 SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, September 2021.²

September 24, 2021
Naivasha, Nakuru County, Kenya



The alert was issued by Richard Hartley. Tracking and rescue was carried out by Kongoni Valley Private Reserve staff. The left hind leg was injured by a trap. Prognosis favorable.
 SWT/KWS Rift Valley Mobile Veterinary Unit, September 2021.³

October 3, 14 and 17, 2021
Mgeno Ranch, Taita-Taveta County, Kenya



Rescue of 3 male giraffes. Under threat of strangulation by metal snares, they were anesthetized. The rangers controlled their collapse with ropes to avoid spinal fractures. Mgeno Ranch is infested with traps from bushmeat traffickers. The prognosis is favorable. Increased security and a systematic campaign to detect and remove the traps is needed.

Mgeno Ranch is one of 37 ranches in Taita-Taveta County. It covers an area of 21.5 hectares.
 SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2021.⁴



October 8 and 22, 2021
Mara Triangle, Narok County, Kenya



- The giraffe was entangled in the metal drag of a trap wrapped around the left hind leg. Favorable prognosis.
 - The left hind leg of the giraffe was entangled in a metal noose. The injuries were superficial. The alert was given in time by the rangers. Prognosis is favorable.
 SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2021.⁵

October 31, 2021
Naisurua Conservancy, Makueni County, Kenya



Anaesthesia. Controlled collapse. Examination. Cutting pliers to remove snares around the neck and front hooves. The male giraffe's mobility was impaired. He was at the mercy of predators. Favorable prognosis.
 SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2021.⁶

December 22, 2021

El Karama, Laikipia County, Kenya

The trap wire was wrapped over the right rear fetlock joint. Anaesthesia. Controlled collapse under ranger supervision. Blindfolded to prevent corneal burns. The giraffe quickly recovered in the expected time. Favorable prognosis.

SWT/KWS Meru Mobile Veterinary Unit, Dec. 2021.⁷



UGANDA

September 2021

Murchison Falls National Park, Northern and Western Regions, Uganda

The Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and the Giraffe Conservation Foundation are claiming the rescue of 52 Nubian giraffes (*Giraffa camelopardalis camelopardalis*) entangled in wire traps for the months of September, October and November.

The UWA and the Giraffe Conservation Foundation, taking into account the latest genetic analysis, consider that the Nubian giraffes constitute a single subspecies with the Rothschild giraffes (*Giraffa camelopardalis rothschildi*). According to them, Uganda hosts more than half of the wild population, 1,575 specimens, mostly in the Murchison Falls Park. The others are found in Ethiopia, South Sudan and Kenya. Nubian giraffes have large rectangular spots and are darker than those of other subspecies. There are no markings on the bottom of the legs.

Giraffe Conservation Foundation, November 10 and December 5, 2021.⁸

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ZIMBABWE

September 30, 2021

Victoria Falls National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe



Rescue of a male giraffe. Under anesthesia, abnormalities in blood pressure in the neck and head plus blood oxygenation expose giraffes to irreversible risks. The procedures are timed. The trap in the left hind leg was removed. The prognosis is favorable.

Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust, October 1, 2021.⁹

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

October 12, 2021

United States of America

GIRAFFES IN COURT

Giraffes were listed on CITES Appendix II in 2019. This was supposed to make international trade of live giraffes and dead giraffe parts subject to export certificates and other safeguards. Unfortunately, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe have lodged a reservation and therefore are not bound by this decision which was approved by more than 2/3 of the CITES Parties. While rangers and veterinarians struggle to save giraffes caught in traps in Eastern and Southern Africa, the United States of America continues to import thousands of giraffe skin, horn, hair, tail, bone and leg trophies each year. NGOs HSUS (The Humane Society of the United States), HSI (Humane Society International) and Center for Biological Diversity are suing the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) for failing to respond to an April 2017 request to list giraffes under the protection of the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). The US FWS was statutorily given one year to respond to the 3 NGOs' reasonable request and 3 years after the deadline, the US administration remains silent on the matter. According to the ESA taxonomy, a species is "endangered" if the population is in danger of extinction throughout its range or in a significant part or parts thereof, and a species is "threatened" if it is likely to become an "endangered" species in the foreseeable future throughout its range or in a significant part or parts thereof.

Giraffes have lost 40% of their numbers over 2 to 3 decades due to the invasion of their habitats by agricultural activities, conflicts of use, deforestation, poaching, human consumption, the alleged medicinal virtues of some of their organs, sport hunting trophies, and the transformation of their remains into various objects that are completely useless or replaceable. See hereafter the seizure of a bottle opener made of giraffe bones in Sweden.

The giraffe deserves to be classified as "endangered" under the US FWS criteria and therefore automatically protected by section 9 of the ESA which prohibits import or export except for scientific purposes or to enhance the survival or propagation potential of the affected species.

The importation of corkscrews made of giraffe bone, cushions made of giraffe skin, and bibles covered with giraffe skin do not seem compatible with these noble objectives.

The most elegant and haughty of land animals and their spokespeople expect the District of Columbia courts to force the US administration to come out of the woodwork.

Center for Biological Diversity, October 12, 2021; The Humane Society of the United States, October 12, 2021.¹⁰

EUROPE

SWEDEN

End of November 2021
Stockholm County, Sweden

Sentence of a resident of Söderköping to a fine of 6,900 kronor (800 US\$). In October 2020 he attempted to import a bottle opener made of carved giraffe horn and a crocodile effigy made of giraffe bone into Sweden without a certificate.

Sveriges Television, November 25, 2021.¹¹



ZEBRAS AND DONKEYS

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

September 27, 2021

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

Rescue of a female zebra (genus *Equus*, subspecies *Equus zebra hartmannae* and *Equus zebra zebra*, Appendix II, found in South Africa) caught in a trap and her foal whose hoof was cut by a steel wire. Bisley Valley Nature Reserve, see "On the Trail" n°31 p.79 and n°33 p.221.

Maritzburg Sun, October 1, 2021.¹



End of November 2021

Greater Kruger National Park, Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces, South Africa

Removal of 136 traps in one week and dismantling of 2 poaching camps by the Hemmersbach Rhino Force. One zebra (genus *Equus*, *Equus zebra hartmannae* and *Equus zebra zebra* found in South Africa, Appendix II) and 4 impalas (*Aepyceros melampus*) could not be saved. Hemmersbach Rhino Force, December 5, 2021.²



Beginning of December 2021

Limpopo Province, South Africa

A male zebra (genus *Equus*, *Equus zebra hartmannae* and *Equus zebra zebra* found in South Africa, Appendix II) limps on his right hind leg. Intervention of vet Johan and his assistant. Release, disinfection, application of honey for medical purposes.

Saving the Survivors, December 2, 2021.³



KENYA

September 1, 2, 12, 13, 18 and 24, 2021

Naivasha and Hells Gate National Park, Nakuru County, and Mount Elgon National Park, Bungoma and Trans Nzoia Counties, Kenya

- A zebra (genus *Equus*, *Equus grevyi*, Appendix I, found in Kenya) is trapped at a watering hole on Peppercorn Ranch and a zebra found late at night is in the same boat. Both interventions are successful and suggest a quick recovery.

- A zebra's left front leg is injured in a trap. The wound is severe. Washing with water and rinsing with iodine. Application of an insect repellent and administration of appropriate medication. Prognosis relatively favorable.

- Release of a zebra strangled by a trap. Favorable prognosis.

- A steel wire around the right hind leg. Water, iodine, antibiotic, anti-inflammatory, deworming and Butasal (a solution to strengthen the metabolism). Favorable prognosis.

- Another wire encircling the neck. Favorable prognosis.

- Zebra was anesthetized with 5 mg etorphine and 100 mg azaperone. He was awakened with 24 mg of diprenorphine. Meanwhile, the trap line around the left front leg was removed. The wound was tended to and medication was applied and injected.

- A zebra in distress was reported. After 3 days, he was relocated. He had a trap line around his back right leg. Favorable prognosis.

- This time the trap line was a nylon rope. It was embedded in the flesh of the left front leg. Favorable prognosis.

SWT/KWS Rift Valley Mobile Veterinary Unit, September 2021.⁴

September 19 and 26, 2021

Mara Triangle, Narok County, Kenya

- She was being strangled. She was struggling not to be outrun by the herd. Examination after immobilization revealed a deep, infected wound around her neck. The line and knot were removed, medication applied and administered. She got up and walked to the nearby herd. Prognosis favorable.

- He was lonely, vulnerable and overwhelmed with pain. Under anesthesia, removal of the wire that was strangling him and hindering his left rear leg. All wounds were cleaned, all maggots removed by hand and disinfected. It was high time! But the prognosis is good as long as he gets back to his herd.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, September 2021.⁵





Illustration Bruno Congar - Robin des Bois

September 24, 2021

Masai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya

A zebra (genus *Equus*, *Equus grevyi*, Appendix I, found in Kenya) is found dead by a patrol. He was shot with a poisoned arrow. Anne K. Taylor Fund, September 25, 2021.⁶



- The zebra was limping on his left front leg. The examination showed traces of a trap which he had managed to get rid of. After some care, he was reunited with his herd. Favorable prognosis.

- The right front leg was partially amputated by a trap. The veterinarians gave the best possible care, but the prognosis is guarded.

- Rescue of a zebra injured in the back by a metal trap. Prognosis is favorable.

- The injury caused by the trap on the left front leg was severe. Prognosis is guarded.

SWT/KWS Rift Valley Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2021.⁸

October 3, 21 and 26, 2021

Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, and Taita Hills Sanctuary, Taita Taveta County, Kenya

- Removal of a right hind leg trap that was severely impeding the movement of female zebra (genus *Equus*, *Equus grevyi*, Appendix I, found in Kenya). Favorable prognosis.

- Rescue of a female zebra with a wire tangled around her neck and right front leg. Favorable prognosis.

- Further removal of a wire from around the neck of a female zebra. Prognosis is favorable.

SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2021.⁷



October 13, 15, 22 and 29, 2021

Naivasha, Kamathatha and Soysambu Conservancy, Nakuru County, Kenya

- The wire removed by the vets was so long that it had wrapped around the neck and right front leg of the zebra (genus *Equus*, *Equus grevyi*, Appendix I, found in Kenya). Favorable prognosis.

- A nylon rope was embedded just above the left front hoof of a zebra. It was removed and the wound was treated. Positive prognosis.

- A metal wire was removed from the neck. Favorable prognosis.



© SWT/KWS

November 22, 2021

Mashuru, Kajiado County, Kenya

A trap had been around his neck for a long time but had not strangled him. The knot in the trap had broken when the zebra (genus *Equus*, *Equus grevyi*, Appendix I, found in Kenya) tried to break free. The injuries were superficial. Prognosis is favorable.

SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2021.⁹



December 11, 2021

Mpala Wildlife Conservancy, Laikipia County, Kenya

The zebra's (genus *Equus*, *Equus grevyi*, Appendix I, found in Kenya) injury was treated in time by the Mount Kenya veterinary team. The trap wire was tied around the right hind leg. Prognosis favorable.

SWT/KWS Mount Kenya Mobile Veterinary Unit, December 2021.¹⁰



December 21, 2021

Jua Kali, Laikipia County, Kenya

The zebra (genus *Equus*, *Equus grevyi*, Appendix I, found in Kenya) was accompanied by 2 other males. He was reported by rangers at Umande station. The trap line was covered by the scar above the hoof. Only the knot was visible at the fetlock. Under general anesthesia, the flesh was exposed and the wire was removed and untied prior to injecting and spraying antibiotics and other appropriate medications. After the wake-up antidote, the zebra straightened up and headed for some thickets with a much improved gait. Prognosis relatively favorable. Prior to treatment and during recovery, all zebras are vulnerable to attack by lions.

SWT/KWS Meru Mobile Veterinary Unit, December 2021.¹¹



December 23 and 24, 2021

Soysambu Conservancy and Naivasha, Nakuru County, Kenya

Immobilization, examination and treatment. The wound around the left rear leg was treated. Prognosis is guarded.

SWT/KWS Rift Valley Mobile Veterinary Unit, December 2021.¹²



NIGERIA

October-November 2021

Lagos, Lagos State, Nigeria

Seizure of 36 shipping containers of charcoal worth 920,000 US\$ and 61 containers of wood worth 16.8 US\$ million destined for the Middle East. 185 bags containing about 1,800 donkey skins worth 147,000 US\$ were destined for China.

Leadership, December 1, 2021; TVC News, December 3, 2021.¹³



Domestic donkey (*Equus asinus*). Photo Frederic Doucet

MUSK DEER, DEER, ELKS AND MOOSE



Rocky Mountain elk (*Cervus canadensis* spp. *canadensis*). Photo Maddie Hartlaub

AMERICA

CANADA

End of October 2021 Fort Nelson, Province of British Columbia, Canada

The BC Conservation Officer Service seized 136 kg of moose (*Alces alces*) meat. It has been donated to the Archway Food Bank in Abbotsford. Energeticcity.ca, October 30, 2021.¹

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

September 2, 2021 Elkton, State of Oregon, United States of America

Jase Billman, 20, shot a bull elk (*Cervus canadensis*) to death from a roadway using a .270 caliber rifle. He then recruited 3 friends and family to decapitate the animal and butcher his meat. Cottage Grove Sentinel, September 21, 2021.²



REPEATED OFFENSE

September 2021 State of Montana, United States of America



Justin Hadley was sentenced to 5 years in prison for over 30 poaching-related charges, including the possession of parts from 2 deer and a bull elk (*Cervus canadensis*). When he is released, he will have to wear a GPS tracking device during hunting season for 5 years. During investigators' 4-year probe into Hadley, he proudly boasted that he had poached a mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) with his truck. Hadley had already been sentenced to 10 years in prison in 2006 for poaching a moose (*Alces alces*), Mexican bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*, Appendix II in Mexico), and a deer in the Bitterroot National Forest. Free Range American, September 28, 2021.³

September 28, 2021 Perry County, State of Kentucky, United States of America

The search is on for the suspect who poached a bull elk in the Big Creek area and decapitated him. A 2,500 US\$ reward is being offered for information leading to the poacher's arrest. ABC 36 News, October 26, 2021; WKYT, October 27, 2021.⁴

October 2, 2021
Shepherd, State of Montana, United States of America

Brayden Reed, 18, is accused of 18 misdemeanors regarding 3 deer poaching incidents at the Ah-Nei Recreation Area. He reportedly shot 2 mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) bucks and removed their antlers and some meat, and discarded the remaining carcasses. He shot the third several days later on private property.
KTVQ, November 26, 2021.⁵

October 9, 2021
Jefferson County, State of Colorado, United States of America

A 4/5-year-old, 272 kg bull elk (*Cervus canadensis*) had a tire around his neck for over 2 years. After numerous sightings and attempts, wildlife officers were finally able to tranquilize him and remove the tire. They had to cut the antlers off.
Colorado Parks & Wildlife, October 11, 2021.⁶



October 13, 2021
Radford, State of Virginia, United States of America

Police are on the search for poachers who shot 3 large white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) with a cross bow, cut off the heads, antlers and tails.
Radford City Sheriff's Office, October 18, 2021.⁷

FAMILY AFFAIRS

October 21, 2021
Gallia County, State of Ohio, United States of America

Aaron Jones (32), Brittney Marcum (31), Randy Jones Jr. (64), Charlotte Jones (63), James Copley (58), Justin Wells, William Gilbert (27) and Justin Butterfield (23), workers and associates at A&E Deer Processing, a deer-meet processing facility, face 91 charges altogether. They reportedly poached 30 white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) and stole over 320 kg of meat.
WSAZ, October 21, 2021.⁸

November 1 and 24, 2021
Northern State of Utah, United States of America



A deer was shot by a rifle and found decapitated, the rest of his body left to waste in a wild dump, off the Wahsatch exit, near Evanston, in neighbouring Wyoming. A few weeks earlier, a bull elk (*Cervus canadensis*) was found at the same place, in the same state. A witness alerted the authorities.

In 2021 in Utah, 1,153 animals including 180 deer, 113 elk (*Cervus canadensis*), 5 moose (*Alces alces*), one Mexican bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*, Appendix II in Mexico), 11 bears (*Ursidae*, Appendix I or II) and 17 pumas (*Puma concolor*, Appendix II) were poached compared to 1,079 in 2019.
ABC4 Utah, December 29, 2021; Cache Valley Daily, January 12, 2022.⁹

November 15, 2021
Munster, State of Indiana, United States of America

Nikola Kutansky, 35, was arrested after a 3-year-long investigation for stealing stuffed animals, ammunition and other items, including a deer trophy, from the Willow Slough Fish & Wildlife Area office.
Kiro 7, November 18, 2021.¹⁰

December 9, 2021
Springfield, State of Oregon, United States of America

A poacher shot a mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) and decapitated him before driving off in a white pick-up truck.
Newsweek, February 3, 2022; Oregon Capital Chronicle, March 2, 2022.¹¹

December 31, 2021
Spokane County, State of Washington, United States of America

Three bull elks (*Cervus canadensis*) were poached in Fairfield. Two were decapitated.
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, January 4, 2022.¹²

December 31, 2021
Buchanan County, State of Virginia, United States of America



Who shot an elk (*Cervus canadensis*) multiple times and tried to remove his head in War Fork? 6,000 US\$ reward to anyone with information leading to an arrest.

Mountain Top Media, January 26, 2022.¹³

MEXICO

Beginning of October 2021
Merida International Airport, Yucatan State, Mexico

Seizure of 4 antlers of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*, *Odocoileus virginianus mayensis*, Appendix III in Guatemala) and Central American red brocket (*Mazama temama*, *Mazama temama cerasina*, Appendix III in Guatemala) from a package. Noticias de Yucatán, October 2, 2021.¹⁴

ASIA

CAMBODIA

October 7, 2021
Song Rukhavoan Wildlife Sanctuary, Otdar Mean Chey Province, Cambodia. Border with Thailand.

Rescue of a female Eld's deer (*Rucervus eldii*, Appendix I) weighing between 150 and 200 kg stuck in a trap. Since the beginning of the year, 30,000 traps have been removed by rangers in national protected areas. Eld's deer, see "On the Trail" n°5 p.109, n°19 p.117 and n°24 p.88. Khmer Times, October 9, 2021.¹⁵

NEPAL

Beginning of November 2021
Baragung Muktichhetra Rural Municipality, Mustang District, Gandaki Province, Nepal

Rumors of trafficking the preputial glands of musk deer known locally as "kasturi mriga" are confirmed. The joint operation of ACAP (Annapurna Conservation Area Project) and district police resulted in the discovery of 5 dead alpine musk deer (*Moschus chrysogaster*, Appendix I), 3 females and 2 males. The poachers had amputated the genitalia of the 2 males and left the 5 bodies at the mercy of vermin and scavengers. The carcasses of 2 golden jackals (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III in India) caught in traps were also found. 171 traps were dismantled. "The discovery of such a large number of traps shows that wildlife poaching and smuggling of their body parts have picked up pace in the area," says the district ACAP officer. The main victims of the spike in poaching are musk deer. One female was disinterred. She was alive and was released a few days later.

Mustang is haunted by poaching. Bears are killed for their gall bladders, deer, snow leopards and red pandas for their skins, teeth and bones and Himalayan monals for their crests and feathers. The Kathmandu Post, November 14, 2021.¹⁶

PAKISTAN

September 2021
District of Rawalpindi, Province of Punjab, Pakistan



A hog deer (*Axis porcinus*, Appendix III) legally kept as a pet had run away from home. He crossed the path of 5 people who found him appetizing and posted photos of their meal on social networks. But the authorities, looking for the fugitive, made the connection. The 5 suspects were each fined 10,000 rupees (60 US\$). Dawn, September 20, 2021.¹⁷

EUROPE

RUSSIA

Mid-October 2021 and Beginning of February 2022

Saiano-Shushensk Nature Reserve Yermakovskoye, Krasnoyarsk Krai, Russia

Three Siberian musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*, Appendix II) died in traps. They were victims of 3 poachers, living in the nearby village of Verkhneusinskoe, who had set 112 traps in total. They also had 2 guns and ammunition in their possession. They intended to take the preputial glands of the chevrotains.

In February 2022, 2 of them were given suspended prison sentences of 3 years and 2 months. The last one received a 2-year suspended sentence. They also have to pay 1,260,000 rubles (16,200 US\$) in damages.

Channel 7 Krasnoyarsk, November 8, 2021; Eisey TV, February 7, 2022; Newslab, February 7, 2022.¹⁸



**November 16, 2021
Irkutsk, Irkutsk Oblast, Russia**

Seizure of more than 6 kg of preputial glands of Siberian musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*, Appendix II). The value of the goods is estimated at more than 9 million rubles (128,000 US\$ or 21,300 US\$/kg). This is the largest seizure of chevrotain preputial glands in 10 years. The customs officers found out that the consignor managed to send 14 kg of preputial glands from 2020 to Hong Kong and South Korea, the value of which is estimated to be 40 million rubles this time. He used false permits. The chevrotains were poached in the oblast and in the neighboring Republic of Buryatia. Federal Customs Service, November 16, 2021.¹⁹



**Mid-December 2021
Shelekhovsky District, Irkutsk Oblast, Russia**



Arrest of a 56-year-old poacher in possession of the carcass of a Siberian musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*, Appendix II) and 6 traps. He says he hunts for food because he has no job since he was released from prison, but the police think that it is the preputial glands of the animal that interest him. One gland is said to be worth 1,400 rubles per gram (18,800 US\$/kg). IRK.ru, December 20, 2021; IrkutskToday, December 20, 2021.²⁰

CZECHIA

**End of November-beginning of December 2021
Plzeň-North District, Plzeň Region, Czechia**



The police are on the lookout. A serial killer of deer (genus *Cervus*) and fallow deer (*Dama dama*) is at work. Once the crime is completed, he disappears with the head of his victim. iDNES.cz, January 12, 2022.²¹



GUANACOS AND VICUNAS

LATIN AMERICA

ARGENTINA

September 1st, 2021 Between Telsen and Puerto Madryn, Province of Chubut, Argentina

On the Ruta Provincial N° 4, kilometer 130, the police seized inside a Fiat Fiorino 600 kg of frozen guanaco meat (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II) split into 52 bags piled up in 5 large plastic trashcans. The driver was taken into custody. Diario Jornada, September 1st, 2021.¹



October 2, 2021 Cerro Dragón, Province of Chubut, Argentina

Daniel Díaz and César Banegas were transporting 4 dead guanacos (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II) in their Toyota Hilux on the Ruta Provincial N°20. The guanacos were seized and the 2 poachers were taken to the Sarmiento police station. El Patagónico, October 2nd, 2021.²



Beginning of October 2021 Trelew, Province of Chubut, Argentina

The police seized 1.5 tonnes of guanaco (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II) meat split into 34 plastic bags from a van. Diario Jornada, October 5, 2021.³

Mid-December 2021 Bariloche, Province of Río Negro, Argentina

A truck was checked on the Ruta Nacional N°23. Among the 200 kg of goat meat and 260 kg of lamb meat from a clandestine slaughterhouse, there were approximately 400 kg of guanaco meat (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II). According to the driver and the passenger, the lots came from Ingeniero Jacobacci, Clemente Onelli and Comallo and were to be sold in Bariloche (a 1.5 to 3-hour drive). Río Negro, December 18, 2021.⁴

December 31st, 2021 Esquel, Province of Chubut, Argentina

80 kg of guanaco (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II) and lamb meat were seized at a store on Darwin Street. Diario Jornada, January 2nd, 2022.⁵

PERU

Beginning of October 2021 Cojata, Province of Huancané, Department of Puno, Peru

Poaching of 3 vicuñas (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix II). No one was arrested. La República, October 2nd, 2021.⁶

Mid-October 2021 Matalaque, Sánchez Cerro Province, Department of Moquegua, Peru



Raul Mamani Paucara, a poacher, was arrested in possession of 13 vicuña skins (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix II). He also had with him a .22 caliber rifle, 14 cartridges and 78 rounds of ammunition. He was remanded. Peru.com, October 13, 2021.⁷

WESTERN AFRICA

LIBERIA

September 13 and 16, 2021 Gbarma District, Gbarpolu County, Liberia

Peter Wonmein was arrested by Forestry Development Authority (FDA) agents. He was carrying 17 dried monkeys and one live baby monkey, probably colobus monkeys (*Colobus* spp., Appendix II, *Piliocolobus* spp., Appendix I or II, or *Procolobus* spp., Appendix II), and 6 guns. He was sentenced 3 days later to a fine equal to 250 US\$. The confiscated meat was burned with other recent wildlife seizures.

This arrest is at the center of a controversy between the FDA and Senator Botoe Kanneh, a former jerky seller known to defend hunters. Agents accuse Kanneh and her bodyguards of attacking them during the arrest of Wonmein. A few days earlier, the same bodyguards allegedly snatched 8 bags of recently confiscated bushmeat from their hands. On September 26, Botoe Kanneh was again accused of provoking an attack on FDA and WCTF (Wildlife Crime Task Force) agents during an arrest. She claims that the rangers are attacking hunters who are in their rights instead of patrolling protected areas.

The New Dawn, September 17, 2021; Daily Observer, September 21, 2021; FrontPage Africa, October 4, 2021.¹

October 7, 2021 Kpan, Margibi County, Liberia



A young sooty mangabey (*Cercocebus atys*, Appendix II) was rescued from wildlife trafficking. He was handed over to the Forestry Development Authority and transferred to the Libassa Wildlife Sanctuary. Libassa Wildlife Sanctuary, October 7, 2021.²



November 12, 2021 Kpan, Margibi County, Liberia

The green monkey (*Chlorocebus sabaeus*, Appendix II) was illegally kept as a pet. He still had a chain tightened around his waist when he arrived at the sanctuary.

Libassa Wildlife Sanctuary, November 13, 2021.³



December 7, 2021 Kpan, Margibi County, Liberia

The green monkey (*Chlorocebus sabaeus*, Appendix II) was for sale on a beach. A person of good will but ill-informed with regard market rules bought him with the intention of handing him over to a rescue center. The Libassa Wildlife Sanctuary finally took him in.

Libassa Wildlife Sanctuary, December 7, 2021.⁴

December 2021 Kpan, Margibi County, Liberia



A very young Campbell's mona monkey (*Cercopithecus campbelli*, Appendix II), still a suckling, arrived at the sanctuary. His mother was poached.

Libassa Wildlife Sanctuary, December 14, 2021.⁵

End of December 2021 Marshall, Margibi County, Liberia

Arrival of 4 orphaned chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) at the Liberia Chimpanzee Rescue & Protection sanctuary. Like all their comrades, they were victims of the bush meat trade or pet market. Liberia Chimpanzee Rescue & Protection, December 29, 2021.⁶

CENTRAL AFRICA

CAMEROON

Beginning of September 2021

Limbe, South West Region, Cameroon



Arrival at the shelter of a young tantalus monkey (*Chlorocebus tantalus*, Appendix II) who was a victim of the pet market. A rope is wrapped around his waist.

Limbe Wildlife Centre, September 8, 2021.⁷

September 2021

Ebo Forest and Douala, Littoral Region, and Yaoundé, Central Region, Cameroon

The Ebo forest, classified as a protected area, will not be subject to industrial exploitation until further notice (see "On the Trail" n°30 p.152). On the other hand, it is increasingly frequented by poachers who seek out monkeys to sell their smoked meat to "bayam sellam," the wholesale and retail buyers in the Douala markets. Baboon meat (*Papio spp.*, Appendix II) sells for as little as 7,500 CFA francs/kg (13.50 US\$/kg) and gorilla meat (*Gorilla spp.*, Appendix I) for as much as 20,000 CFA francs/kg (35 US\$/kg). Demand for bushmeat is increasing during the long Covid-19 period.

Mongabay, September 11, 2021.⁸

September 28, October 8 and November 22, 2021

Douala, Littoral Region, Cameroon

- Arrest of Eric Kamdem and Serge Kamhoua Kamdem in flagrante delicto for holding a baby chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) who was stolen from a local orphanage. The chimpanzee was physically abused in the sheds of a ceramics store run by a Chinese trader.

- Arrest of 2 other suspects at the same location, one of whom is considered the "mastermind" of the trafficking. The 4 arrests are credited to the police and the Water and Forestry agents with the assistance of the NGO LAGA.

- Eric Kamdem and Serge Kamhoua Kamdem were sentenced to 3 months in prison and fined 1.5 million CFA francs (2,650 US\$) in damages. They initially faced 3 years in prison and a fine of 10 million CFA francs.

EAGLE, September 30 and October 2021; LAGA, September, October and November 2021; Camer.be, October 13, 2021; CamerounWeb, October 18, 2021.⁹



October 5, 2021

Mefou National Park, Central Region, Cameroon

Welcoming a baby female chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) to a shelter that in late December was caring for 147 orphaned and abandoned apes. Ape Action Africa is overwhelmed. To support, visit <https://www.givingdayforapes.org/organization/Ape-Action>.

Ape Action Africa, October 10, 2021.¹⁰

November 4, 2021

Bafang, West Region, Cameroon

Seizure of a young drill (*Mandrillus leucophaeus*, Appendix I) in the hands of 3 traffickers. They explained that they had recently bought him in Nkondjock in the Littoral region and had come to Bafang, about 50 kilometers to the north, to resell him. Three arrests. The young drill is transferred to the shelter of Limbé where he will receive the necessary veterinary care and where he will join peers.

EAGLE, November 4, 2021; Alwihda, November 18, 2021; LAGA, November 2021; Camer.be, December 21, 2021.¹¹

November 26, 2021

Haut-Nkam Department, West Region, Cameroon

Arrest of 3 poachers. They were in possession of a female baby drill (*Mandrillus leucophaeus*, Appendix I) about 3 months old. They were trying to sell her. She was transferred to the Limbe refuge. The operation was successful thanks to the cooperation between the gendarmerie, MINFOP (Ministry of Forests and Wildlife) and the NGO LAGA. Limbe Wildlife Centre, November 26, 2021.¹²

GABON

FAMILY AFFAIRS

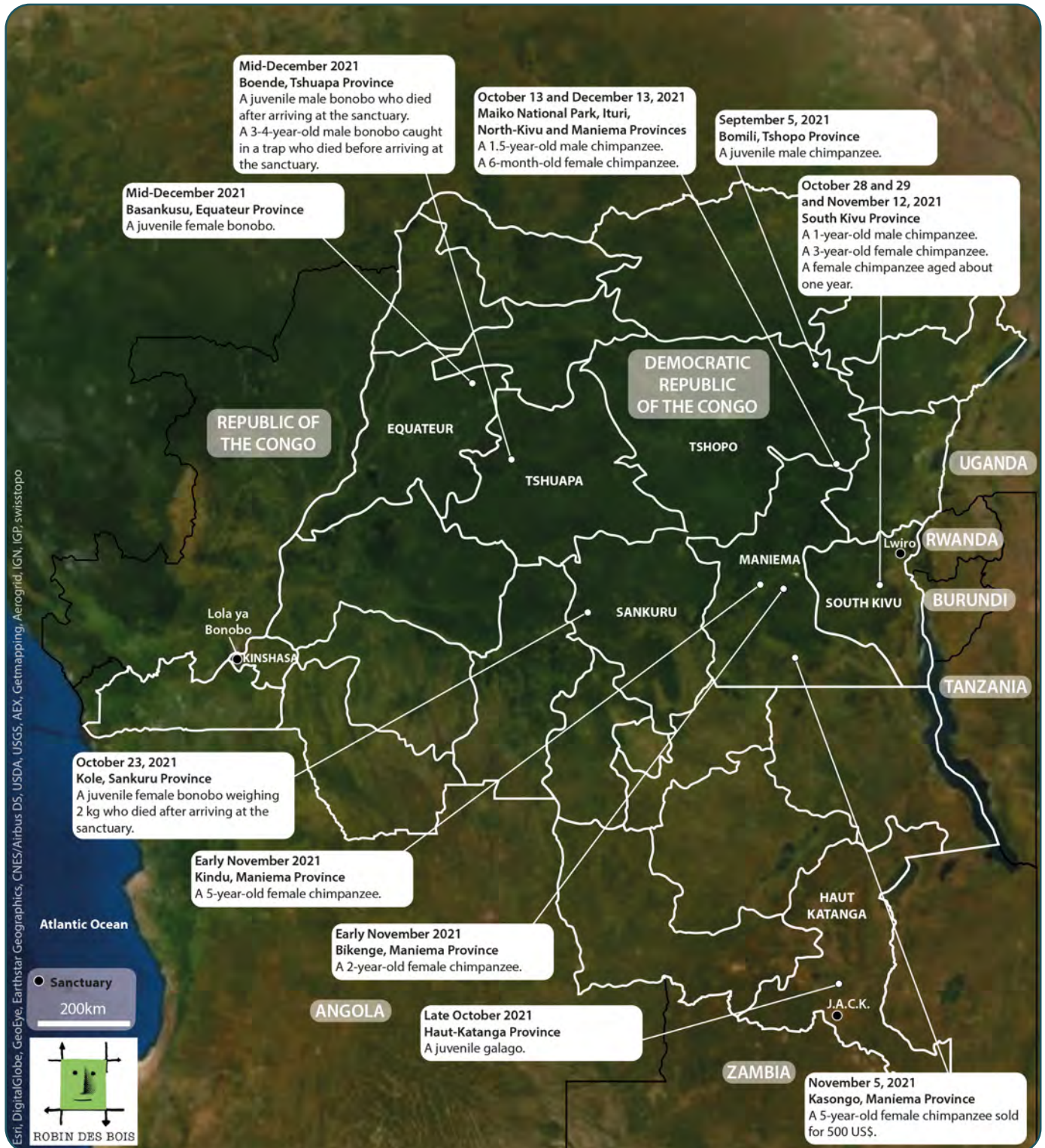
September 17, 2021

Moabi, Nyanga Province, Gabon

Poacher Albin Jerbo N'foumbi Koumba, age 17, was looking for bushmeat and monkeys for petty trade with his brother. He was allegedly attacked and captured by a male gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla*, Appendix I), who took him by force to the heart of his camp. His brother shot "in the face" the captor who let go. Koumba was evacuated to Tchibanga hospital where his superficial wounds were stitched up by a Cuban doctor assigned to the anti-Covid-19 response.

Gabon Media Time, September 18, 2021; Gabon Actu, September 19, 2021.¹³

14 primates seized in the Democratic Republic of the Congo between September 1 and December 31, 2021



Bonobo (*Pan paniscus*, Appendix I)
Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I)
Galago (*Galago* spp., Appendix II)

Sources: Adams Cassinga ; Association Gorilla ; Conserv Congo ; Friends of Bonobos ; J.A.C.K. – Jeunes Animaux Confisqués au Katanga ; Lwiro Primates.



September 5, 2021
Bomili, Tshopo Province



October 13, 2021
Maiko National Park, Ituri, North-Kivu
and Maniema Provinces



November 12, 2021
Lwiro Primate Rehabilitation Centre, Bukavu,
South Kivu Province



December 13, 2021
Maiko National Park, Ituri, North Kivu
and Maniema Provinces



Mid-December 2021, Boende, Tshuapa Province, and Basankusu, Equateur Province



October 23, 2021, Kole, Sankuru Province,
Democratic Republic of the Congo



October 28 and 29, 2021, Lwiro Primate Rehabilitation
Centre, Bukavu, South Kivu Province

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

September 17, 2021
Mombasa, Mombasa County, Kenya



His mother was stoned to death. The very young Syke's monkey (*Cercopithecus albogularis*, Appendix II) was spotted in a tree and rescued by Colobus Conservation.
Colobus Conservation, September 20, 2021.¹⁴



September 30, 2021
Ukunda, Kwale County, Kenya

The baboon (*Papio* spp., Appendix II) was trapped, painted blue and had a can tied around his neck. He was then released in order to scare off his entire troop, a cruel and futile attempt. The Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit was unable to capture him for treatment.
SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, September 2021.¹⁵



Mid-October 2021
Mombasa, Mombasa County, Kenya

A thorough stoning left her nearly blind. The female vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) is being cared for at the Colobus Conservation Center. The prognosis is positive.
Colobus Conservation, October 18, 2021.¹⁶

MALAWI

Beginning of December 2021
Lilongwe, Central Region, Malawi



The Lilongwe Wildlife Trust welcomed a new trafficking victim, a baby vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II).
Lilongwe Wildlife Trust, December 14, 2021.¹⁷

ZAMBIA

October 29 and November 5, 2021
Kafue National Park, North Western, Central, and Southern Provinces, Zambia
20 vervet monkeys (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) rescued from trafficking were released into the wild by the Zambia Primate Project.
Zambia Primate Project, October 28 and November 9, 2021.¹⁸

November 18, 2021
Mpongwe, North-Western Province, Zambia



25th rescue of the year 2021 by the Zambia Primate Project. The very young vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) was for sale.
Zambia Primate Project, November 18 and 20, 2021.¹⁹

November 22, 2021

Lusaka, Lusaka Province, Zambia

Seizure at Jackson Lumuya of a female blue vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) illegally held for 6 years.

Zambia Primate Project, November 22, 2021.²⁰

December 1, 2021

Lusaka, Lusaka Province, Zambia



Delivery to Zambia Primate Project of a juvenile blue vervet (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) orphaned by poaching and used by his keepers to lure and trap other vervets.

Zambia Primate Project, December 1, 2021.²¹

December 1st, 2021

Lufwanyama District, Copperbelt Province, Zambia



A teenager was walking down the street with a female vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) wearing a dog hoodie. Captive for 3 years, she was transferred to the Zambia Primate Project.

Zambia Primate Project, December 5, 2021.²²

Mid December 2021

Mazabuka, Southern Province, Zambia

At the age of one week, he was wandering alone in a farm. Vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) mothers never abandon their young. He was probably a victim of poaching. He was transferred to the Zambia Primate Project.

Zambia Primate Project, December 18 and 20, 2021.²³

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

Mid-September 2021

Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa



A female vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) arrived at the veterinary hospital. Her "owners" had abandoned her when they moved. Her baby teeth were pulled out but her adult teeth should grow in, which is a prerequisite for her eventual release into the wild.

Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital, September 16, 2021.²⁴

Beginning of October 2021

Johannesburgh, Gauteng Province, South Africa



The Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital welcomed a male Mohol galago (*Galago moholi*, Appendix II) illegally kept as a pet.

Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital, October 6, 2021.²⁵

October 14, 2021

Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa

New arrival at the Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital. It is a young orphan chacma baboon (*Papio ursinus*, Appendix II). His mother was shot by poachers.

Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital, October 14, 2021.²⁶

Week of December 6, 2021

Ballito, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

The female vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) was shot in the face. A pellet lodged near her right eye. She was taken in by the Monkeyland-KZN center. Monkeyland-KZN, December 8, 2021.²⁷

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Beginning of September 2021

State of Texas, United States of America



The 5-year-old vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) was handed over to the Born Free USA primate sanctuary after biting his "owner".

PR Newswire (with Born Free USA), September 13, 2021.²⁸

October 2021

Chicago, State of Illinois, United States of America

The vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) illegally kept in Chicago as a pet travelled more than 2,000 km before arriving at the Born Free USA sanctuary in South Texas. Born Free USA, November 15, 2021.²⁹

October 13, 2021

Fort Lauderdale, State of Florida, United States of America

Gary Tucker, a 64-year-old man from Texas, was sentenced to a 3-month house arrest term and a 3-year probation period, as well as a 5,000 US\$ fine for knowingly and wilfully making a materially false, fictitious, and fraudulent statement to Special Agents of the US Fish & Wildlife Service during a criminal investigation on international trafficking of primates, specially long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) from Southeast Asia. Gary Tucker had denied knowing of any audit visits by his employer Orient BioResource Center (OBRC) to primate "suppliers" in Cambodia. Tucker was well aware of the traffic.

US Department of Justice, August 4 and October 14, 2021.³⁰



November 14, 2021

Houston, State of Texas, United States of America

Not all of the 720 long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) arrived alive. They were shipped to Texas from Cambodia, via Madrid, plus a 6-hour stopover in Tbilisi, Georgia, on a Spanish airline called Wamos Air. The number of dead remains unknown and officials are not in a hurry to give details. The fate of the survivors is not much better. They are in the hands of the laboratory Envigo Global Services Inc. In 2020, imports of long-tailed macaques from Cambodia to the United States jumped 82.8% (8,571 individuals in 2019 to 15,664 in 2020) and the United States is not the only market (for example the United Kingdom see "On the Trail" n°30 p.97 or Canada n°31 p.98). Action for Primates, November 17, 2021; The Independent, November 19, 2021.³¹

November 17, 2021

Warren, State of Ohio, United States of America



The Ohio Department of Agriculture seized a grivet monkey (*Chlorocebus aethiops*, Appendix II) from Erik Belk Jr., also known as Rico Exotic. The tik toker did not have the necessary permit. He also exhibited a ring-tailed lemur (*Lemur catta*, Appendix I), a coati (family Procyonidae), and a raccoon (genus *Procyon*). WOIO, November 30, 2021 ; Newsweek, January 25, 2022.³²

December 9, 2021

Rialto, State of California, United States of America

A 4-year-old tufted capuchin (*Cebus apella*, synonymous with *Sapajus apella*, Appendix II) was seized from a private individual. NBC Los Angeles, December 11, 2021.³³

December 10, 2021

Minneapolis-Saint-Paul International Airport, State of Minnesota, United States of America



Seizure from a passenger arriving from Cameroon of 6 bags containing 2.7 kg of cow skin, plant seeds, as well as 2 primate forearms and 0.450 kg of bushmeat.

US Customs and Border Protection Chicago Field Office, December 10, 2021.³⁴

December 30, 2021
Progreso, State of Texas, United States of America. Border with Mexico.

The Jeep Patriot of the 20-year-old US driver was checked on the Progreso International Bridge. Four spider monkeys (*Ateles* spp., Appendix I or II) were found inside a travel bag. She was fined an unspecified amount and the monkeys were returned to Mexico. US Customs and Border Protection, January 4, 2022.³⁵



LATIN AMERICA

ARGENTINA

Mid-December 2021
Buenos Aires, Argentina



The 6-year-old black howler monkey (*Alouatta caraya*, Appendix II) was found inside a small wardrobe in a house in the Belgrano neighborhood with, among other injuries and pathologies, missing teeth, mutilated vocal cords, broken bones due to severe malnutrition, and an atrophied body with a size and weight far below that of a healthy black howler monkey. He was taken care of by the veterinarians of the Fundación TEMAIKÉN. La Nación, December 14, 2021.³⁶

COSTA RICA

End of November 2021
Costa Rica

Two rescues but no hope of release into the wild:
- A mother howler monkey (*Alouatta* spp., Appendix I or II) and her baby arrived at the International Animal Rescue center dehydrated, lethargic and feverish. The mother was showing signs of heavy domestication.
- Another howler monkey arrived at the center with a severe hand injury. He was transferred to the Sibú sanctuary to spend the rest of his life there. International Animal Rescue, November 24, 2021.³⁷

FRANCE (FRENCH GUIANA)

December 16, 2021
Matoury, Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France

The gendarmes seized a young red-faced black spider monkey (*Ateles paniscus*, Appendix II). His "owner", who also illegally kept birds, will be summoned before the criminal court. France-Guyane, December 16, 2021.³⁸

PERU

November 18, 2021
Callao, Constitutional Province of Callao, Peru

The National Forest and Wildlife Service (SERFOR) rescued 2 common squirrel monkeys (*Saimiri sciureus*, Appendix II) who were abandoned on the street. El Comercio, November 18, 2021.³⁹

THE CARIBBEAN

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

October 29, 2021
Mayaro, Mayaro-Rio Claro Region, Trinidad and Tobago



The police was conducting an anti-crime operation and looking for firearms. They found a young Guyanan red howler monkey (*Alouatta macconnelli*, Appendix II). A 33-year-old man was arrested and the monkey was transferred to the Emperor Valley Zoo in Port of Spain (69 km). Trinidad Express Newspapers, October 30, 2021.⁴⁰

SOUTHEASTERN ASIA

INDONESIA ORANGUTANS

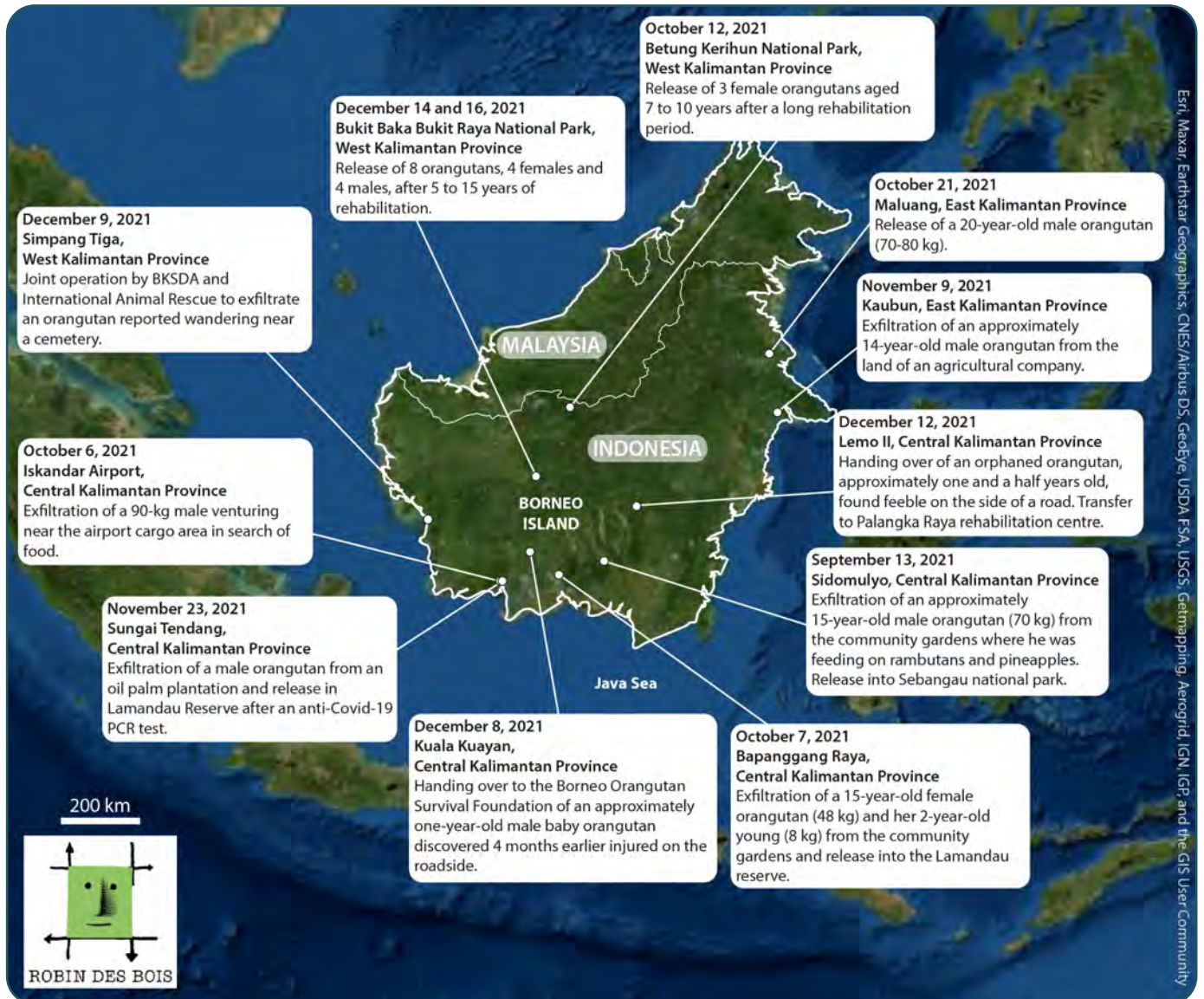
September 1 - December 31, 2021



Orangutan (*Pongo* spp., Appendix I)

Sources: Antara News ; ANTV ; Berita Sampit ; Borneo News ; Borneo Orangutan Survival UK ; Cable News Network Indonesia ; iNews ; Klik Samarinda ; Kumparan ; Majalah Sawit Indonesia ; Medcom.id ; Ministry of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia ; Okezone.com ; Orangutan Information Centre ; Republika ; Serambi Indonesia Daily ; Siaran Depok ; Suara Kalbar ; Suara Kaltim ; Tribun Kalteng ; Tribun Kaltim ; Tv One News ; Wonogiri ; News Café.

Orangutans in Indonesia - Borneo September 1 - December 31, 2021



September 25, 2021
Sumber Bakti, Aceh Province



October 7, 2021
Bapanggang Raya, Central Kalimantan Province



September 13, 2021
Sidomulyo, Central Kalimantan Province



December 2021
Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park, West Kalimantan Province



November 23, 2021
Sungai Tendang, Central Kalimantan Province



December 17, 2021
Suka Makmur, Aceh Province



December 8, 2021
Kuala Kuayan, Central Kalimantan Province



October 12, 2021
Betung Kerihun National Park, West Kalimantan Province

INDONESIA - EXCLUDING ORANGUTANS

September 7, 2021

Lematang, South Lampung Regency, Lampung Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

facebook

Arrest of 3 men who were offering for sale on Facebook 2 siamangs (*Symphalangus syndactylus*, Appendix I), one adult and one juvenile, one juvenile agile gibbon (*Hylobates agilis*, Appendix I) and 3 Javan langurs (*Trachypithecus auratus*, Appendix II). After a period of rehabilitation, they should all be released into the wild.

Lampung Post, September 10, 2021; FLIGHT - Protecting Indonesia's Birds, September 11, 2021.⁴¹

September 14, 2021

Badung Regency, Bali Province, Lesser Sunda Islands, Indonesia



I Nyoman Giri Prasta, prefect of Badung Regency, had posted a video on Instagram where he makes a siamang (*Symphalangus syndactylus*, Appendix I) perform antics. Scandal. The video is removed from the social network and replaced by a video where the elected official hands over the animal to the authorities. The young female will be released into her natural habitat after a stay in a rehabilitation center in West Sumatra. No charges are expected to be filed against Prasta.

Mongabay, October 7, 2021.⁴²

Beginning of October 2021

Nuso Barong Island, Jember Regency, East Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia

Release of 40 long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) on the island of Nusa Barung. To attract crowds and money, they were forced to stand all day long, wearing clothes and masks (see "On the Trail" n°24 p. 52). After 2 years of rehabilitation, the uninhabited island should offer them peace of mind.

Action for Primates, October 8, 2021; Tv One News, November 8, 2021.⁴³

November 2, 2021

Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta Special Territory, Java Island, Indonesia

Handing over of 2 long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) held in a cage behind a restaurant. The owner explains that he bought them 3 years ago. They are now too aggressive.

Center for Orangutan Protection, Nov. 9, 2021.⁴⁴

THAILAND

September 1, 2021

Lam Luk Ka District, Pathum Thani Province, Thailand

Search of Pitak Thongsuk's house and seizure of 6 macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II). He used to hunt them with tranquilizer darts. He sold them for 31 to 46 US\$ in Phichit province. An accomplice is still at large. Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, August 31, 2021; Bangkok Post, September 1, 2021.⁴⁵

September 14, 2021

Ratchaburi, Ratchaburi Province, Thailand



The 8 macaques (*Macaca*, Appendix I or II) were traveling in the trunk of the utility vehicle, kept in old plastic boxes. They had been captured near Thung Luang temple. In the trunk, there was also a metal trap and corn used as bait. Pornthep Buaphaeng, Udom Oankhampa and Pichet Padnaphan admitted that they were paid 800 baht each (24 US\$) to deliver the monkeys to a broker who wanted to sell them abroad.



They were sentenced to one and 6 months in prison and fined 22,500 baht (690 US\$). Considering their clean record, the judge was lenient and at the last moment ordered a release with 2 years of probation under judicial control. They will have to pay the Department of National Parks damages of 8,000 baht or 245 US\$, but the fine can be replaced by community service hours.

Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, September 14, 2021.⁴⁶

October 1, 2021

Aranyaprathet District, Sa Kaeo Province, Thailand. Border with Cambodia.



The pick-up truck refused to stop at the road check. It took flight, the police forces set off in pursuit and caught up with it. The truck crashed into a road sign. The driver ran away into the forest. In the truck were 45 long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) in 25 boxes. They were between 2 months and one year old. One of them died in the collision. They were destined to be exported. The survivors, 25 males and 19 females, were entrusted to the Wild Animal Rescue Center located in Nakhon Nayok province.

Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, October 1, 2021; The Nation Thailand, October 2, 2021; Chiang Rai Times, October 3, 2021.⁴⁷

November 26, 2021

Ban Khok Chang Phatthana, Hua Hin District, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, Thailand

Seizure of the carcass of a stump-tailed macaque (*Macaca arctoides*, Appendix II) weighing 6.6 kg that 3 men had shot. Seizure of 2 firearms and a knife. Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, November 27, 2021.⁴⁸

VIET NAM

September 27, 2021

Ba Dinh, Quang Ngai Province, Viet Nam

Interception of a truck on highway 24. Inside, 6 frozen primates. The species are not identified. The driver, Ta Dinh Long, said he was recruited by a certain Tuan to make the 60 km trip from Ba To district to Quang Ngai City.

Cong An Nhan Dan, September 28, 2021; ENV, October 2, 2021.⁴⁹

Beginning of October 2021

Quang Binh Province, Viet Nam

Sentence to 5 years and 6 months' imprisonment for the buyer and 2 years and 6 months for the seller of 5 red-shanked douc carcasses (*Pygathrix nemaeus*, Appendix I). They had been arrested in January 2021.

ENV, October 14, 2021.⁵⁰



Mid-October 2021

Ba To District, Quang Ngai Province, Viet Nam

The patrol of forest guards and police officers surprised a group of poachers who fled upon their arrival, leaving behind motorcycles, gas canisters, 53 rounds of ammunition and the lifeless bodies of 5 grey-shanked douc langur (*Pygathrix cinerea*, Appendix I) weighing between 8 and 15 kg.

VnExpress International, October 18, 2021; Bao Tin tuc - TTXVN, October 24, 2021.⁵¹



Mid-October 2021

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Handing over of a 4 kg male buff-cheeked gibbon (*Nomascus gabriellae*, Appendix I) transferred to the Cu Chi rescue station.

ENV, October 17 2021.⁵²

October 18, 2021

Hanoi, Viet Nam



Seizure of a long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) held in a tiny scrap metal box in a karaoke bar.

ENV, October 20 and 27, 2021.⁵³

October 21, 2021

Thai Nguyen Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of a loris (*Nycticebus* spp., Appendix I) weighing 800 grams offered for sale on Facebook. Arrest of the seller.

ENV, October 22, 2022.⁵⁴



End of October 2021

Bac Lieu Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of 2 buff-cheeked gibbons (*Nomascus gabriellae*, Appendix I), 7 pig-tailed macaques (*Macaca leonina* or *Macaca nemestrina*, Appendix II) and a long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) held in captivity for several years in a zoo that advertises itself as ecotourism.

ENV, October 29, 2021.⁵⁵

Mid-November 2021

Quang Binh and Ky Anh Province, Ha Tinh Province, Viet Nam

Nguyen Hong Dinh witnessed the capture of the red-shanked douc langur (*Pygathrix nemaeus*, Appendix I), he decided to buy him to entrust him to the authorities. He joined Vu Quang National Park. VnExpress International, November 24, 2021.⁵⁶

Mid-December 2021

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

The baby macaque (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II) weighing barely one kg was tied to a shelf in a pet shop and dressed in a pink vest like a doll. He joined his fellow animals at the Cu Chui rescue station.

ENV, December 16, 2021.⁵⁷

December 2021

Lam Dong Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of a Northern pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II) chained to a tree. He was released in a forest far from the prison.

ENV, December 26, 2021.⁵⁸

SOUTHERN ASIA

BANGLADESH

October 12, 2021

Baritilla Ghona, Cox's Bazar District, Chittagong Division, Bangladesh

The farmer was illegally occupying the forest, which is not unusual in the area. To protect his crops, he also placed poisoned bananas around his field. About 50 rhesus macaques (*Macaca mulatta*, Appendix II) fell into the trap. He was in the process of burying them when forestry officials arrived at his home.

The Daily Star, October 14, 2021.⁵⁹



INDIA

November 10, 2021

Navi Mumbai, Raigad District, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure near Kamothe railway station of a young rhesus macaque (*Macaca mulatta*, Appendix II) barely 2 years old chained at the neck by a nomadic couple. The woman explained that she had captured him a few days ago. They were given a reminder of the law while the young primate was handed over to a shelter in Pune.

The Times of India, November 11, 2021.⁶⁰

EUROPE

End of November 2021

Europe

According to reports in the Guardian, the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) is considering killing, neutering or keeping several dozen male gorillas (*Gorilla gorilla*, Appendix I) in isolated captivity to combat gorilla overpopulation in enclosures. EAZA has not denied this. 69 EAZA member zoos hold 463 gorillas, 212 males, 250 females and one of unknown sex. The regulation of males in order to achieve a birth control compatible with the zoos' surface area (and perhaps with their economic balance) is already practiced for pumas, ocelots and white tigers. Culling would be "the most appropriate tool if we are strictly talking from the biological point of view" but "it could be controversial in several countries and in some cases even illegal." They acknowledge the "gorilla action plan" that has been sent to all zoo managers.

The NGO Born Free is "calling for a full, independent investigation into the way EAZA zoos are run, their zoo-based captive breeding programmes, and the brutal and potentially terminal consequences for many of the animals involved." In an attempt to quell the controversy, an EAZA spokesman said that, under certain conditions, unwanted male gorillas in zoos could be given to a rewilding project.

The Guardian, November 26, 2021.⁶¹

WESTERN EUROPE

GERMANY

October 6, 2021

Hanover International Airport, Lower Saxony State, Germany

Two 10-cm long chacma baboon canines (*Papio ursinus*, Appendix II) were seized from the luggage of a 63-year-old man coming from Namibia.

German Customs, October 12, 2021.⁶²

BELGIUM

November 5-19, 2021

Charleroi and La Louvière, Province of Hainaut, Walloon Region, Belgium

A rhesus macaque (*Macaca mulatta*, App. II) roams the streets and rooftops of Gilly, a district of Charleroi. He makes the firemen, the policemen and the animal shelter team go round and round, and the inhabitants throw apples at him. Some are tempted to adopt him. The detention of primates is forbidden in Belgium, and the small fugitive was thus held illegally. He was finally caught after 2 weeks.



At the same time, a capuchin (*Cebus* spp., synonym of *Sapajus* spp., Appendix II) was seized from a private individual.

They were transferred to the Natuurhulpcentrum in Opglabbeek.

7sur7, November 5, 12, 15, 2021; Metro, Nov. 5, 2021; La Nouvelle Gazette, Nov. 8, 2021; RTBF, Nov. 19, 2021; Sudinfo, Nov. 22, 2021.⁶³

SOUTHERN EUROPE

ITALY

December 22, 2021

Boscoreale, Metropolitan City of Naples, Region of Campania, Italy

The Guardia di Finanza seized inside a warehouse dozens of exotic animals, including a marmoset (*Callithrix* spp., Appendix I or II), all crammed into small cages. No one was arrested.

Il Corrierino, December 22, 2021; Lo Strillone, Dec. 22, 2021; L'occhio di Napoli, December 23, 2021.⁶⁴

EASTERN EUROPE

RUSSIA

October 12, 2021

Krasnodar Krai, Russia

Customs officers seized 5 ring-tailed lemurs (*Lemur catta*, Appendix I), 8 cotton-headed tamarins (*Saguinus oedipus*, Appendix I) and 6 pygmy marmosets (*Callithrix pygmaea*, Appendix II) destined for the Chinese market. Russian Federal Customs Service, Oct. 12, 2021.⁶⁵

On the Trail n°34. Robin des Bois

PECCARIES, ARMADILLOS AND AGOUTIS

AMERICA

BRAZIL

September 1st, 2021

Duartina, State of São Paulo, Brazil

The environmental military police searched the home of a poacher. The result: hundreds of rounds of 22, 38 and 40 caliber ammunition, as well as 13 kg of collared peccary meat (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II), 3 kg of armadillo meat (family Dasypodidae) and 2 kg of frozen small-billed tinamou meat (*Crypturellus parvirostris*). He was sentenced to a first fine of 9,000 reais (1,659 US\$).

G1 Bauru e Marília, September 1st, 2021.¹



September 4, 2021

Bonito, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil

Arrest of a 45-year-old man for illegal possession of firearms and poaching. In his farm, police officers seized a .22 caliber pistol, 30 rounds of ammunition, 10 kilograms of collared peccary meat (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II) and 5 kg of Central American agouti meat (*Dasyprocta punctata*, Appendix III in Honduras), frozen. He was sentenced to a first fine of 1,500 reais (276 US\$).

Bonito Notícias, September 6, 2021.²



September 16, 2021

Bonito, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil

Seizure of 4 rifles of 22 caliber, 65 ammunition and 5 kg of meat from 2 collared peccaries (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II). Three poachers were taken to the police station. They were released after paying a bail of 1,000 reais (184 US\$) each. The owner of the farm was also fined 1,000 reais.

Diário Digital, September 17, 2021.³



December 30, 2021

Fátima do Sul, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil

The police seized a nine-banded armadillo (*Dasypus novemcinctus*) and one agouti (genus *Dasyprocta*) inside a pick-up truck. A man was fined 5,500 reais (978 US\$).

Dourados News, Decembre 31, 2021.⁴



COSTA RICA

October 4, 2021

Guácimo, Limón Province, Costa Rica

Seizure at the Ecolirios Hotel of a 22 kg male white-lipped peccary (*Tayassu pecari*, Appendix II). He served as a tourist attraction.

La Nación, October 5, 2021.⁵

FRANCE (FRENCH GUIANA)

October 2021

Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France

During a special operation against yellow-headed sideneck egg poaching (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II), a man was caught for exceeding the hunting quota. He had killed 3 white-lipped peccaries (*Tayassu pecari*, Appendix II) instead of the authorized 2.

French Biodiversity Agency, January 2022.⁶



Collared peccaries (*Pecari tajacu*). Photo Kurt Holz

OTHER MAMMALS



Fat dormouse (*Glis glis*). Illustration Bruno Congar - Robin des Bois

AFRICA

CAMEROON

End of November 2021

Ma'an, South Region, Cameroon

64 porcupines (family Hystricidae) with a total weight of 600 kg were seized in a pick-up truck. Le Bled Parle, November 26, 2021.¹

KENYA

October 26, 2021

Kipini Conservancy, Lamu County, Kenya

The hippo (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) was lying in a pond. Five spears riddled his body with 3 piercing the intestines. He was attacked by people who wanted his meat and teeth. He had managed to escape and take refuge in the water and mud, which elephants also often do in such situations. The veterinarians realized the extent and irreversibility of the damage and decided to euthanize him.

SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2021.²

NIGERIA

November 15, 2021

Kabba, Kogi State, Nigeria

Killing of an African civet (*Civettictis civetta*, Appendix III in Botswana). "This is just one of the atrocities against going on in Nigeria."

Izuchukwu Okpani, November 16, 2021.³

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

September 28, 2021

Lake Mai-Ndombe, Mai-Ndombe Province, and Kindu, Maniema Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Butchering of a hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) "found dead naturally" by a group of men, at least one of whom is armed.

Conserv Congo, September 28, 2021; Adams Cassinga, October 1, 2021.⁴

AMERICA

CANADA

Beginning of October, 2021 Regional District of Fraser-Fort George, Province of British Columbia, Canada



A hunter who illegally killed a North American porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatus*) has been fined an unspecified amount. CityNews Vancouver, October 6, 2021.⁵

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

September 24-26, 2021 Oldham County, State of Texas, United States of America

Five pronghorns (*Antilocapra americana*, Appendix I in Mexico) were found dead on private land. Only the skulls and horns were missing. NewsChannel 10, October 12, 2021.⁶

End of September 2021 Custer County, State of Idaho, United States of America



A dead pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana*, Appendix I in Mexico) buck was found dead near Pettit Lake Road with a small bullet hole in his hide in August 2019. Missouri residents Griffen Whiteside, 21, and Dylan Davidson, 25, were arrested and sentenced to 15-year hunting license revocations, 14 days in jail, 10 years of probation and 2,325 US\$ in fines. A third accomplice, Sydney Wallace, 20, was sentenced to a one-year hunting license revocation and 715 US\$ in fines. Whiteside shot the pronghorn using a small caliber .17 HMR. A deeper investigation into the trio revealed that they had also poached 2 other pronghorns, an osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*, Appendix II), 2 red foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*), a duck, 3 chipmunks, 2 ground squirrels (family Sciuridae), and a chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*). Davidson was later arrested for violating his probation conditions and was sentenced to a lifetime hunting license revocation and to an additional 30 days in jail, 3 years of probation, and fines exceeding 7,700 US\$. Idaho Fish and Game, September 30, 2021.⁷

October 21, 2021 White Pine and Lincoln Counties, State of Nevada, United States of America



Garrett Higbee, 22, was sentenced to 90 days in prison and fined 14,000 US\$ for poaching a bull elk (*Cervus canadensis*) and a pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana*, Appendix I in Mexico). His accomplice, Jordan Cryst, 25, was sentenced to 14 days in prison and a 5,000 US\$ fine for killing 2 mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*). Eminetra, October 21, 2021.⁸

ASIA

INDIA

September 11, 2021 State of Tamil Nadu, India

Madras hedgehogs (*Paraechinus nudiventris*), also known as bare-bellied hedgehogs, are not only threatened by insecticides, cars, barbed wire, they are also killed for medicinal purposes. "There is no scientific evidence that the quills of hedgehogs can cure cough" warn the forest authorities. What we do know for sure, the NGO Arulagam reminds us, "The species benefits our farming community by consuming a broad array of insects." The New Indian Express, September 11 and 12, 2021.⁹

September 24, 2021 Dindigul, Dindigul District, Tamil Nadu State, India

Surprise visits by WCCB and Forest Department to hardware and stationary stores in the city. Five arrests and seizure of 1,511 mongoose hair paintbrushes (*Herpestes* spp., Appendix III in India). Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), September 28, 2021.¹⁰

October 2021 Chelakottukara, Thrissur District, State of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, Thiruvananthapuram District, India

The police ordered the city and the residents to cut down 6 large trees where bats hibernated. The press applauded when the local police helped people cut down the trees. This new outbreak of bat hunting follows a localized Nipah outbreak in Kozhikode district. A 12-year-old boy reportedly died. Blood and faeces samples from local bats were examined at the virology laboratory in Pune and no results were found linking this Nipah outbreak and bats. This finding did not stop the war on bats from spreading in Thiruvananthapuram, the State capital. A spectacular colony near the State Bank of India building was violently expropriated and an urban forest almost disappeared.

The bat rabies that arose at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic had calmed down although in Kerala during September 2021, more than 30,000 positive cases were being reported daily. It has been revived by a localized Nipah outbreak.

The 3 species sacrificed are Indian flying foxes (*Pteropus giganteus*, Appendix II), Leschenault's rousette (*Rousettus leschenaultii*) and *Latidens salimalii* known in English as Salim Ali's fruit bat. Nipah, see "On the Trail" n°26 p.99. Down To Earth, October 28, 2021.¹¹

November 11, 2021

Sherkot, Bijnor District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Police seized 8 kg of small Asian mongoose (*Herpestes javanicus*, Appendix III in India and in Pakistan) hairs and 1,580 paint brushes made from it.

The Times of India, November 13, 2021.¹²

November 24, 2021

Ahmedabad, Ahmedabad District, State of Gujarat, India

Seizure of 7,608 mongoose (*Herpestes* spp., Appendix III in India) hair paintbrushes from a store, one arrest.

WCCB, November 27, 2021.¹³

December 15, 2021

Karad and Malkapur, Satara District, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure of 1,735 paintbrushes made of mongoose (*Herpestes* spp., Appendix III in India) hairs and skin while raiding 5 bazaars. Owners Rajendra Vitthal Supnekar (37), Sandip Devkar (45), Tohim Nazir Shaikh (39), Naweed Vaikar (24) and Akhtar Vaikar (51) have been heard.

The Times of India, December 16, 2021; WCCB, December 16, 2021.¹⁴



December 31, 2021

Warunji Phata, Satara District, State of Maharashtra, India

A small male Indian civet (*Viverricula indica*, Appendix III in India) was disentangled from a trap set up by a farmer. The Times of India, January 2, 2022.¹⁵



NEPAL

October 9th, 2021

Nepalgunj, Banke District, Lumbini Province, Nepal. Nepal-India border.

A red panda skin (*Ailurus fulgens*, Appendix I) from the bag of 28-year-old Maniram Sunar. The Rising Nepal, October 11, 2021.¹⁶

December 3rd, 2021

Sepukhola, Jajarkot District, Karnali Province, Nepal

Two arrests at a restaurant. Seizure of a dead red panda (*Ailurus fulgens*, Appendix I), 71 cm long from head to tail. District Police Office, Jajarkot, December 3, 2021.¹⁷

PAKISTAN

December 2021

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan

Sheraz Ahmad Farooqi was arrested and fined 30,000 rupees (170 US\$) for posting on social media a picture of his Indian crested porcupine (*Hystrix indica*) poaching exploits. UrduPoint, January 1, 2022.¹⁸



PHILIPPINES

October 2021

San Miguel, Biak-na-Bato National Park, Province of Bulacan, Philippines



Joint operation of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)- Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO), the Police of San Miguel town and the Anti-poaching Task Force. Arrest of Rolando Santiago, Reynante Donito Gonzales, Rejie Mangahas and Ronald Santiago. Seizure of 6,000 wrinkle-lipped free-tailed bats (*Chaerephon plicatus*). They are valued at 9,000 pesos (1,770 US\$). They sell for 1.5 pesos in local markets. Department of Environment and Natural Resources, October 18, 2021; SunStar, October 18, 2021.¹⁹



Flight of *Chaerephon plicatus*

VIET NAM

September 9, 2021

Pu Mat National Park, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

Arrival of 3 Asian palm civets (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III in India) at Pu Mat rescue center. One of them was caught by the leg in a trap. Amputation is being considered. Save Vietnam's Wildlife, September 20, 2021.²¹



End of October 2021

Binh Phuoc Province, Viet Nam

An individual selling 2 small-clawed otters (*Aonyx cinerea*, Appendix I) on TikTok was arrested and ordered to pay 500 million in fines (22,000 US\$). The otters were confiscated. ENV, November 1, 2021.²²



November 3, 2021

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

An individual who advertised 2 small-clawed otter (*Aonyx cinerea*, Appendix I) pups for sale on Facebook was arrested. The otters were seized. ENV, November 4, 2021.²³



November 9, 2021

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Tong Thanh Thuan, 26, was sentenced to 1.5 years in prison for selling 2 small-clawed otters (*Aonyx cinerea*, Appendix I) on his TikTok account.

Trung tam Con nguoi va Thien nhien, November 15, 2021.²⁴



November 12, 2021

Hô Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Seizure of a small-clawed otter (*Aonyx cinerea*, Appendix I) and transfer to the Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station.

ENV, November 12, 2021.²⁵

November 2021

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

An individual who offered small-clawed otters (*Aonyx cinerea*, Appendix I) for sale on TikTok and Facebook was arrested and sentenced to 18 months in prison. Two otters were seized. ENV, November 27, 2021.²⁶



EUROPE

ITALY

September 2, 2021

San Nicola, Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria, Region of Calabria, Italy

The *Glis glis*, commonly known as the fat dormouse, is protected by the Bern Convention (Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats). S.P. was noticed by the carabinieri because of the flashlight he was using to stun the fat dormice. They were also heard shooting a Flobert rifle, which has a small caliber for small game. S.P. was surrounded and disarmed and in his house the carabinieri found 17 fat dormice in a freezer. La Nuova Calabria, September 2, 2021.²⁷

Mid October 2021

Delianuova, Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria, Region of Calabria, Italy

Fat dormice (*Glis glis*) do not sleep peacefully in Calabria. At the home of cannabis growers, the military seized 235 frozen fat dormice and more in a cage. The hunting of fat dormouse goes back a long way in the country. It is said that the legionaries of Caesar and other emperors carried them in their invasion campaigns and raised them so as not to depend on looting. Today, fat dormice are part of the food folklore of the 'Ndrangheta and of business banquets. Throughout Calabria, the dormouse (average weight 100-250 grams) is expensive. When taken out of the forest, it sells for a minimum of 5 € (5.8 US\$). In the territory of Guardavalle alone, 20,000 fat dormice are poached every year.

Il Fatto Quotidiano, October 16, 2021; La Stampa, October 16, 2021.²⁸

October 30, 2021

Bianco, Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria, Region of Calabria, Italy

Seizure at the home of 58-year-old P.M. of 600 rounds of ammunition under a pile of straw, 3 pistols above a cupboard and 20 fat dormice (*Glis glis*) in a cage. "They're going to be released into the woods," he said. "They were captured and force-fed with acorns, nuts and chestnuts before being killed and served on tables."

Gazzetta del Sud, October 30, 2021.²⁹



November 19, 2021

Palmi, Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria, Region of Calabria, Italy



Seizure at D.M.'s home of a Beretta, 2 magazines, ammunition and 10 frozen fat dormice (*Glis glis*).
StrettoWeb, November 19, 2021.³⁰

UNITED KINGDOM

September 2021

Maidstone, Kent County, England, United Kingdom

Fine of 1,600 £ (2,200 US\$) for destroying without implementing compensatory measures a colony of great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) that had settled in an unused swimming pool. The destruction also affected 2 colonies of brown long-eared bats (*Plecotus auritus*) and common pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) that were living in a barn that had been converted into a house.

Kent Police, September 22, 2021.³¹



September 10, 2021

Heckmondwike, West Yorkshire County, England, United Kingdom

Two young girls kicked a European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*), chanting "Kick it drop it, kick the spikey fuck." Taken from his attackers, he died on arrival at the vet.

Leeds Wildlife and Rural Crime Team, September 16, 2021.³²

September 27, 2021

Orsett, Essex County, England, United Kingdom

Collected from a schoolyard, a European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) who was hit by 3 bullets was successfully treated.

South Essex Wildlife Hospital, September 27, 2021.³³

October 2, 2021

Wishaw, North Lanarkshire Council, Scotland, United Kingdom



What could be funnier than throwing a litter of 5 European hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*) into the bonfire? Some young vandals did it. Three were pulled from the flames and handed over to the SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) and only one survived. He was released after a long recovery.

Daily Record, January 17, 2022.³⁴

October 31, 2021

Southampton, Hampshire County, England, United Kingdom

From the north to the south of the UK, European hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*) are being martyred. Halloween night was the occasion for very young people to break private property or street furniture and to attack an unfortunate hedgehog that was tortured and taken by witnesses to Pip Hollingworth, a hedgehog veterinarian who had no other option than to euthanize her. "She was a healthy, beautiful young hedgehog."

Daily Echo, November 3, 2021.³⁵



Ostrich (*Struthio camelus*). Photo Eden Fontes

NORTHERN AFRICA

EGYPT

Beginning of October 2021

Ras Gharib, Governorate of Red Sea, Egypt

Seizure of 2 sooty falcons (*Falco concolor*, Appendix II), a lanner falcon (*Falco biarmicus*, Appendix II), a kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II) and 2 black kites (*Milvus migrans*, Appendix II) trapped by poachers taking advantage of their migration to countries further south. They fled when law enforcement arrived. The kestrel was already dead. The survivors should be released quickly.

Al-Masri al-youm, October 18, 2021.¹

Mid October 2021

Governorate of Faiyum, Egypt

Dismantling of 14 poaching camps and seizure of 20 falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II), among which were European hobbies (*Falco subbuteo*, Appendix II), which were released after a veterinary inspection.

Al-Masri al-youm, October 20, 2021.²

End of October 2021

Between Zafarana and Ras Gharib, Governorate of Red Sea, Egypt

The campaigns to dismantle poachers' camps are in full swing during the falcon migration season. This time, 5 poachers were arrested and 14 falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II) were seized and released.

Al-Masri al-youm, October 25, 2021.³

November 12, 2021

Giza, Governorate of Giza, Egypt

Seizure of 14 live falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II) and arrest of the 3 poachers.

Yom7, November 12, 2021; Sada El-Balad, November 12, 2021.⁴

MOROCCO

September 2021

Midelt and Tinghir Provinces, Drâa-Tafilalet Region, Morocco

Dismantling of a gang poaching European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and seizure of about 100 specimens.

A goldfinch is sold on local black markets for between 10 and 30 dirhams (1 to 3 US\$) and is resold a few weeks later for 150 to 200 dirhams (17 to 22 US\$).

Hespress, September 27, 2021.⁵

SENEGAL

November 6, 2021

Ouezzane Province, Tanger-Tetouan-Al Hoceima Region, Morocco

Release of 12 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) transported by motorcycle in cramped dirty boxes. One arrest. Hespess, November 6, 2021.⁶

November 17, 2021

Marrakesh Menara International Airport, Marrakesh-Safi Region, and Sidi Bennour, Casablanca-Settat Region, Morocco

Seizure of 8 falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II) drugged and hidden in the luggage of a Qatari passenger boarding a private jet to Madrid. The investigation led the authorities to Sidi Bennour where game hunted by the falcons was found in freezers. Officially, the houbara bustard (*Chlamydotis undulata*, Appendix I) is not mentioned, but it is common knowledge that falconers in the Gulf countries are particularly fond of it and pay a lot of money to hunt it.

Le360, November 19, 2021; Hespess, November 18, 2021; L'Opinion, November 24, 2021.⁷

December 1, 2021

Oujda-Angad Prefecture, Oriental Region, Morocco. Border with Algeria.

Seizure of 5,000 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) about to cross the Algerian border piled in wooden boxes. They were released near the Moulouya National Park.

Hibapress, December 4, 2021; L'Opinion, December 4, 2021.⁸

WESTERN AFRICA

COTE D'IVOIRE

REPEATED OFFENSE

October 28, 2021

Côte d'Ivoire

Sory Ibrahima Balde, still under a 12-month suspended sentence for trafficking a baby chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) in December 2020 (see "On the Trail" n° 31 p. 95), is now facing up to 3 years in prison for having 12 parrots in his store, including 8 timneh parrots (*Psittacus erithacus timneh*, Appendix I) and 2 grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I). Eagle assisted in the investigation.

EAGLE, October 2021; EAGLE Côte d'Ivoire, October 2021.⁹

LIBERIA

Mid-September 2021

Kpan, Margibi County, Liberia

Arrival at Libassa Wildlife Sanctuary of 3 timneh parrots (*Psittacus erithacus timneh*, Appendix I) rescued from wildlife trafficking. One of them had its wings cut off.

Libassa Wildlife Sanctuary, September 21st, 2021.¹⁰

October 16, 2021

Kidira, Tambacounda Region, Senegal. Border with Mali.

The Air and Border Police arrested a Malian driver who was heading to Dakar 650 km away with 2 grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I). The birds were handed over to the National Parks Directorate. Eagle Senegal supported the operation.

EAGLE Senegal, October 2021.¹¹

TOGO

REPEATED OFFENSE

October 26 and January 17, 2021

Lomé, Maritime Region, Togo

The operation led by agents of the Central Office for the Repression of Illicit Drug Trafficking and Money Laundering (OCRTIDB), the Ministry of the Environment and Forest Resources and the NGO Eagle led to the seizure of 41 grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) in a warehouse in the Tokoin Habitat neighborhood and to the arrest of Barrigah Théodos, Kpade Yao and the Nigerian national Nengi Boro Innocent.



The latter is already known for trafficking in reptiles and parrots. The three men belong to a network that extends in West Africa from Cameroon to Côte d'Ivoire. A fourth man, Kpade Yaovi, was released after being questioned at the police station; his involvement in the case was considered minimal. Tried 3 months later, Nengi Boro Innocent, Barrigah Théodos, and Kpade Yao were found guilty of possession, circulation, and illegal marketing of endangered wildlife. Nengi Boro was sentenced to 24 months in prison and a fine of one million CFA francs (1,730 US\$), of which 500,000 (865 US\$) was suspended. Kpade Yao and Barrigah Théodos were each sentenced to 12 months in prison, including six months suspended, and fined one million CFA francs, including 500,000 suspended.

EAGLE, October 27, 2021; EAGLE Togo, October 2021; Ndarinfo, November 4, 2021; Togodailynews.info, January 22, 2022.¹²

CENTRAL AFRICA

CAMEROON

September 17 and November 16, 2021 Ebolowa, South Region, Cameroon

Gambo Mouhamadou and Tchaptchet Christian were arrested in the New Bell neighborhood in possession of 20 grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) probably captured in the Campo Ma'an National Park. They belonged to a trafficking network that included Nigerians and Ghanaians. On November 16, they were sentenced to a one year suspended prison term along with a 3-year probationary period and to 1,500,000 CFA francs (2,651 US\$) as damages. The operation was conducted with the support of the Last Great Ape Organisation (LAGA).

EAGLE, September 21st, 2021; Camer.be, September 27, 2021; LAGA, September and November 2021.¹³



November 18, 2021 Limbe, South-West Region, Cameroon

A white-faced scops-owl (*Ptilopsis leucotis*, Appendix II) was handed over to the Limbe Wildlife Centre by a young woman who had been keeping it in captivity for several days. It will be able to be released into the wild.

Limbe Wildlife Centre, November 18, 2021.¹⁴



End of December 2021 Limbe, South-West Region, Cameroon

The Limbe Wildlife Centre rescued 15 grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I). Their legs and wings were injured by limestick traps. Since July 2020, the center has cared for and released over 170 parrots.

Limbe Wildlife Centre, December 31st, 2021.¹⁵



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

September 6, 2021

Lodja Airport, Sankuru Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Congolese authorities and Conserv Congo seized 2 shipments of 30 grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) each on the tarmac of the airport on their way to Kinshasa with false papers. A trafficker and the owner of a freight company were arrested. At least 29 parrots were subsequently transferred to the Lwiro Chimpanzee Sanctuary. The investigation led to an additional seizure of 20 parrots in a village near the airport.

Adams Cassinga, September 6, 11, 13, and 17 and October 10 and 22nd, 2021; Environews RDC, September 6, 2021; Conserv Congo, September 8, 2021.¹⁶

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

November 28 and December 3, 4 and 6, 2021 and January 26 and 31, 2022

Lifoula, Department of Pool, and Brazzaville, Department of Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo

Dismantling of a network involved in the trafficking of grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I):

- Arrest of Chancel Matsounga and Job Mampaka, a master corporal in the

Congolese army. They were holding 28 grey parrots in a cage in the courtyard of the café of which they are the manager and owner respectively, together with a vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) and a red-tailed monkey (*Cercopithecus ascanius*, Appendix II). The animals were taken in charge by veterinarians from the Jane Goodall Institute in Tchimpounga.

- A few days later, successive arrests of Hassan Kiwa Melela, a wildlife trafficker from the Democratic Republic of Congo, in possession of 2 grey parrots, and then of Jonas Ndovo, who was selling a grey parrot on the streets of the capital Brazzaville.

- On December 6, 2021, another national of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Valentin Ibanda, was arrested on suspicion of being the supplier of the network and 15 grey parrots were seized from his possession.

At the beginning of 2022, the first sentences were handed down: Ndovo was fined 200,000 CFA francs (345 US\$). Matsounga and Job Mampaka were each given a 2-year suspended prison sentence and fined 5 million CFA francs (8,640 US\$).

EAGLE, November 30 and December 6, 2021; Projet d'appui à l'Application de la Loi sur la Faune sauvage (PALF), November and December 2021 and January 2022; Panoramik-actu, December 4, 2021; Groupe Congo Médias, December 14, 2021.¹⁷



EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

September 4, 2021

Mairua, Kajiado County, Kenya

Rangers from SORALO (South Rift Association of Landowners) report a snared ostrich (*Struthio camelus*, Appendix I in 12 countries) to the KWS. The bird was immobilized, examined and treated. The prognosis is positive.

SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, September 2021.¹⁸



October 7, 2021

Kimana, Kajiado County, Kenya

Francis Lumba and Maina Mwangi were looking to sell 2 owl eggs (Strigiformes, Appendix I or II, except *Sceloglaux albifacies*) in the market.

Mwakilishi.com, December 17, 2021.¹⁹

October 26, 2021

Lake Bogoria, Baringo County, Kenya

The ostrich (*Struthio camelus*, Appendix I in 12 countries) had an arrow lodged in the chest. It was extracted but may have been poisoned. The prognosis is uncertain.

SWT/KWS Rift Valley Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2021.²⁰



November 12, 2021

Olgulului, Kajiado County, Kenya

Death by poisoning of 26 vultures and 4 eagles. A sheep carcass was found nearby. Two white-backed vultures (*Gyps africanus*, Appendix II), a Rüppell's vulture (*Gyps rueppellii*, Appendix II), a lappet-faced vulture (*Torgos tracheliotus*, Appendix II), and a steppe eagle (*Aquila nipalensis*, Appendix II) were rescued in time and taken away for care.

SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2021.²¹



UGANDA

March-September 2021

Lwengo District, Central Region, Uganda

In 6 months, 108 cranes were poisoned in the district according to the International Crane Foundation. Eggs were also destroyed. With each planting season, the number of grey crowned-cranes (*Balearica regulorum*, Appendix II) that are victims of farmers increases. They are also increasingly targeted by poaching for food.

The Independent, October 7, 2021.²²



SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

September 24, 2021

Phalaborwa, Limpopo Province, South Africa

The Phalaborwa Natural Heritage Foundation extracted 16 snares during field inspections and rescued a Wahlberg's eagle (*Hieraaetus wahlbergi*, Appendix II) from attempted poisoning.

It was transported to the veterinary clinic. Phalaborwa Natural Heritage Foundation: September 24 et October 6, 2021.²³



October 2021

KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

A lappet-faced vulture (*Torgos tracheliotus*, Appendix II) was found dead by poisoning. In the nearest nest, a chick was dead. The other parent undoubtedly suffered the same fate.

The Citizen, December 10, 2021.²⁴



December 10, 2021

West Rand District, Gauteng Province, South Africa



The South African Wildlife Rehabilitation Center welcomed a young African cuckoo hawk (*Aviceda cuculoides*, Appendix II) that was being kept in captivity. The bird arrived at the center with a concerning infected wound. South African Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, Dec. 13, 2021.²⁵

CANADA

September 2, 2021

St. John's, Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada

Wilson Arthur Brown and Carl Arthur Brown were each fined 10,000 \$ (7,940 US\$) on appeal by the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador and Wilson Pleman Frank Brown was fined 12,000\$ (9,525 US\$) for violating the Migratory Birds Convention Act of 1994. In November 2018, they had been caught by a patrol with a dead long-tailed duck (*Clangula hyemalis*) in their boat outside the hunting season. Wilson Pleman Frank Brown was also prohibited from applying for, using or possessing a migratory bird hunting permit for 2 years, while Wilson and Carl Arthur Brown were sentenced to the same additional penalty for a period of one year. Cision (with Environment and Climate Change Canada), September 3rd, 2021.²⁶



Long-tailed duck
(*Clangula hyemalis*)

December 6, 2021

Sherbrooke, Province of Quebec, Canada

The Société protectrice des animaux (SPA) of Estrie seized 22 birds, including grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I), cockatoos (Cacatuidae, Appendix I or II), macaws (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II) and Senegal parrots (*Poicephalus senegalus*, Appendix II) from a house on Larocque Street. The person in charge of the premises had declared himself a rescue center. The birds had neither natural light, nor ventilation, food and proper care. Radio-Canada, December 7, 2021.²⁷

October 7, 2021

Kincaid Lake, State of Louisiana, United States of America

Two bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) were shot with small caliber firearms. The US Fish and Wildlife Service is offering a reward of up to 2,500 US\$ for information leading to the conviction of those responsible.

KALB News Channel 5, October 15, 2021.²⁸

October 19, 2021

Central Point, State of Oregon, United States of America

Wildlife Images Rehabilitation and Education Center has taken in 10 wild animal victims of gunshot wounds in 2021, 8 more animals than in 2020. These included 3 red-tailed hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*, Appendix II), and 3 Canadian geese (*Branta canadensis*).

Mail Tribune, November 11, 2021.²⁹

November 1st, 2021

Burlington, State of Vermont, United States of America

Jeremiah Ruhl was sentenced to 12 months and one day in prison and then 2 years of probation after his release, for illegal possession of a Stevens .410 shotgun, killing a woodcock (genus *Scolopax*) and a house crow (*Corvus splendens*) without a license and illegal possession of a turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*). All three of these species are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Ruhl had pleaded guilty in September 2019 and was in a federal Drug Court program. Due to his conduct, he was excluded from the program in July 2021 and will not be able to escape prison this time.

US Department of Justice, November 1st, 2021.³⁰



December 5, 2021

Port Matilda, State of Pennsylvania, United States of America

In 2021, 8 bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) suffering lead poisoning were brought to the Wildlife Care Center in Port Matilda. Seven died. One of them had also been dragging a trap on its leg for 10 days.

Environmental lead pollution is a problem in all hunting areas. Birds of prey that consume wounded animals not recovered by hunters are particularly at risk. "When the lead hits the bird's acidic stomach, it gets broken down and absorbed into their bloodstream where it can be distributed to tissues throughout their body," explains the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

Centre Daily Times, December 10, 2021.³¹



ARGENTINA

Beginning of December 2021**Atoka County, State of Oklahoma, United States of America**

The US Fish and Wildlife Service is investigating the death of a bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) that was found with its head, talons, and tail feathers missing.

KTUL, December 14, 2021.³²

December 10, 2021**Seattle, State of Washington, United States of America**

Indictment of Lewis Anthony Rath, 52, for the sale of products fraudulently represented as Native American crafts and for the illegal possession of bird feathers. Rath claimed to be a member of the San Carlos Apache tribe, a means of enticing customers looking for Native American jewelry and carvings. Following a complaint filed against him in May 2019, the Indian Arts and Crafts Board investigated. During the search of his home, feathers of falcons (Accipitridae, Appendix I or II), owls (Strigiformes, Appendix I or II), golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II) and jays (family Corvidae) had been discovered in addition to the jewellery and objects. US Department of Justice, December 10, 2021.³³

December 15, 2021**Kiowa County, State of Oklahoma, United States of America**

A whooping crane (*Grus americana*, Appendix I) that had been shot was rescued near Tom Steed Lake. The bird died on its way to the veterinary clinic. The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service opened an investigation on the case. Three other whooping cranes already died at the same location.

Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, December 15, 2021.³⁴

**September 20, 2021****Cuatro Esquinas, Province of San Luis, Argentina**

Four macaw chicks (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II) about 30 days old were seized during a road check. They were transported to Buenos Aires, 3 hours away, to be treated at the Centro de Conservación de Vida Silvestre before possible release into the wild.

Vía País, September 20, 2021.³⁵

End of October 2021**San Pedro de Jujuy, Province of Jujuy, Argentina**

Over 20 birds, including 3 toco toucans (*Ramphastos toco*), one blue-fronted amazon (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), 4 red-crested cardinals (*Paroaria coronata*, Appendix II), 3 blue-and-yellow tanagers (*Thraupis bonariensis*), one band-tailed seedeater (*Catamania analis*), 6 double-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulea*), one sayaca tanager (*Thraupis sayaca*), 2 black-backed grosbeaks (*Pheucticus aureoventris*), 2 ultramarine grosbeaks (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*), one creamy-bellied thrush (*Turdus amaurochalinus*), and one budgerigar (*Melopsittacus undulatus*) were seized from a private residence and transferred to the Centro de Atención de la Fauna Autóctona de Jujuy.

Jujuy Government, October 29, 2021.³⁶

Beginning of November 2021**Federación, Province of Entre Ríos, Argentina**

The police searched a house and seized 9 yellow cardinals (*Gubernatrix cristata*), 2 red-crested cardinals (*Paroaria coronata*), 2 ultramarine grosbeaks (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*), one golden-billed saltator (*Saltator aurantiirostris*), one black-backed grosbeak (*Pheucticus aureoventris*), and one saffron finch (*Sicalis flaveola*). Police officers also found 31 cages, and under the seats of the vehicles some "perreras", small wood boxes used for the transport of the birds. The Tekove Mymba Foundation assisted in the transferring of the birds to their rehabilitation center in Colón (170 km).

Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, November 5, 2021.³⁷

November 17, 2021**Salto Grande, Province of Santa Fe, Argentina**

A vehicle was arrested on Ruta Nacional No. 44, at kilometer 44. In the trunk, the police found 6 cages and 3 boxes containing 195 birds including parrot chicks (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II). They were transferred to the Granja La Esmeralda Reserve.

Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, November 18, 2021.³⁸

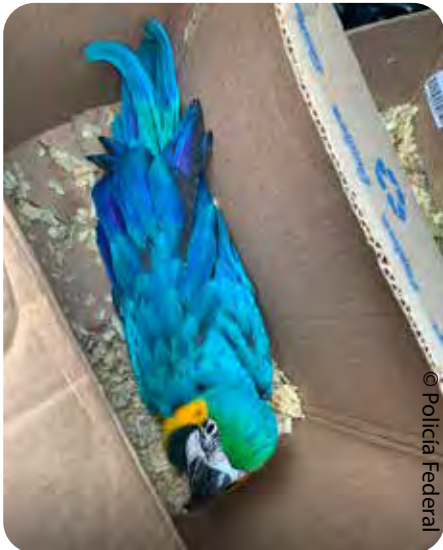


4,487 birds seized in Brazil between September 1 and December 31, 2021 according to official and media sources



Erl. Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, GeoEye, USDA FSA, USGS, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, and the GIS User Community

Sources: A Gazeta ; ABCdoABC ; Acidade on Campinas ; Band ; Campo Grande News ; CBN Maringá ; Correio Braziliense; Correio do Estado ;Correio do Povo ; Diário Digital ; Estado de Minas ; Folha do Litoral News ; Folha Popular ; G1 ; Gazeta de Alagoas ; Ceará State Government ; Hoje em Dia ; Istoé ; Jornal Semanário ; Lei Seca Maricá; LeiaJá ; ND Mais ; Nova Friburgo em Foco ; O Dia ; O Progresso ; Paraná Portal ; Military Police of the Federal District; RIC Mais ; Só Notícias ; Voz da Bahia ; Yahoo Notícias.



© Polícia Federal

Seven birds including one blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II). September 23, 2021. Passo Fundo, State of Rio Grande do Sul



© João Felipe Hoehne

Toucan (family Ramphastidae). October 30, 2021. Cruzeiro, State of São Paulo



© BPA

122 birds including 3 blue-fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II). October 10, 2021. Maceió, State of Alagoas



© PMMA

Six blue-fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II) and 2 aras (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II). September 19, 2021. União de Minas, State of Minas Gerais



© PRF

105 blue-fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II). October 22, 2021. Ponta Grossa, State of Paraná



© PMMA

201 birds including 150 blue-fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II). October 22, 2021, Januária, State of Minas Gerais



© BPA

36 birds including one blue-and-yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II). Nov. 20, 2021. Alagoas



© PMA

Two birds including one blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II). October 15, 2021. Presidente Prudente, State of São Paulo

On the Trail n°34. Robin des Bois

COLOMBIA

September 28, 2021

Cartago, Department of Valle del Cauca, Colombia

The police seized 3 ostriches (*Struthio camelus*, Appendix I in 12 countries) at a checkpoint. The driver, who said he was going to a farm in Cartago, did not have the required transport licence. They were transferred to the animal shelter La Riviera of La Unión.

Regional Autonomous Corporation of Valle del Cauca, September 28, 2021.³⁹

End of September 2021

Montenegro, Department of Quindío, Colombia



The operation by the police and the Corporación Autónoma Regional del Quindío resulted in the seizure of 20 birds, including 12 macaws (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II) and 3 other parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II). Fifteen of them had their wings cut off. Caracol Radio, September 28, 2021.⁴⁰

October 19, 2021

Buga, Department of Valle del Cauca, Colombia

An osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*, Appendix II) had been hit by gun pellets near a fish farm. The prognosis is uncertain.

Regional Autonomous Corporation of Valle del Cauca, October 19, 2021.⁴¹

End of November 2021

Cartagena, Colombia

The Centro de Atención y Valoración de Flora y Fauna Silvestre in Cartagena has new residents: 44 orange-chinned parakeets (*Brotogeris jugularis*, Appendix II), 12 brown-throated conures (*Aratinga pertinax*, Appendix II), 4 turquoise-winged parrotlets (*Forpus xanthopterygius spengeli*, Appendix II), and one blue-grey saltator (*Saltator coerulescens*) seized in Bogotá. El Herald, November 24, 2021.⁴²

COSTA RICA

Beginning of December 2021

Guácimo, Province of Limón, Costa Rica

The 2 great curassows (*Crax rubra*, Appendix III in Colombia, Honduras and Guatemala), a male and a female, served as an attraction at the back of Los Pavones restaurant. They were seized.

La Nación, December 7, 2021.⁴³

ECUADOR

September 8, 2021

Santo Domingo, Santo Domingo Province, Ecuador

Police arrest a man who was attempting to sell 4 Pacific parrotlets (*Forpus coelestis*, Appendix II). They were transferred to the James Brown Rescue Center.

Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition, September 8, 2021.⁴⁴

FRANCE (FRENCH GUIANA)

October 13, 2021

Macouria, Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France

Two Macourians walking on the beach jumped into the water to rescue a scarlet ibis (*Eudocimus ruber*, Appendix II) in distress. The French Biodiversity Agency officers arrived on the scene and found that it was injured by shotgun pellets. Transferred to JungleVet, it did not survive. The scarlet ibis is strictly protected in French Guiana.

French Biodiversity Agency, January 2022.⁴⁵

MEXICO

Beginning of October 2021

Guadalajara, State of Jalisco, Mexico

Seizure of 2 orange-fronted conures (*Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II), one lilac-crowned amazon (*Amazona finschi*, Appendix I), and 3 American robins (*Turdus migratorius*) at the market. The sellers fled.

El Informador, October 10, 2021.⁴⁶

November 9, 2021

Mérida International Airport, State of Yucatán, Mexico



Seizure of 2 Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) in cardboard boxes and 2 yellow-headed amazons (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I) in a wooden box. They came from Guadalajara (1,800 km).

The Yucatan Times, November 9, 2021.⁴⁷

Beginning of November, 2021

San Lorenzo Almecatla, State of Puebla, Mexico

Seizure of 7 monk parakeet chicks (*Myiopsitta monachus*, Appendix II) for sale in the city center. They were transferred to the zoo of Asunción for veterinary care.

Hoy, November 11, 2021.⁴⁸

PARAGUAY

End of October 2021

Asunción, Paraguay



The joint operation of the Ministry of the Environment and the National Police in the Villa Aurella neighborhood resulted in the arrest of 4 traffickers and the seizure of 3 hyacinth macaws (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*, Appendix I). The birds were to be sold via social networks for 6 million guaranies each (872 US\$). The network is believed to have branches in Brazil.

La Nación, October 29, 2021.⁴⁹

PERU

October 15, 2021

Moyobamba, Province of San Martín, Department of San Martín, Peru

Seizure of 2 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II) with their wings cut off.

Neotropical Primate Conservation, October 28, 2021.⁵⁰

Mid-December 2021

Ojherani Checkpoint, Province of Puno, Department of Puno, Peru

Seizure of 2 rhea chicks (*Rhea spp.*, Appendix I or II), 2 to 3 months old, in a backpack in the cab of a truck transporting musical instruments and sound equipment to Arequipa (294 km). The driver admitted to buying the birds at the border between Peru and Bolivia for 100 bolivianos (14.5 US\$).

La República, December 16, 2021.⁵¹

SURINAME

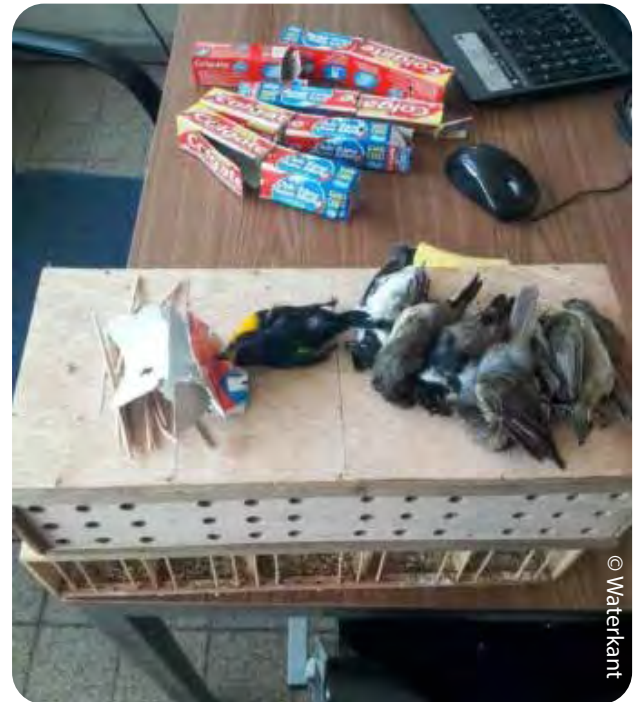
October 15, 2021

Johan Adolf Pengel International Airport, Zanderij, Para District, Suriname



The Dutch citizen was trying to bring home copper seedeaters (*Sporophila bouvreuil*), ruddy-breasted seedeaters (*Sporophila minuta*), chestnut-bellied seedeaters (*Sporophila castaneiventris*), chestnut-bellied seed finches (*Oryzoborus angolensis*), wing-barred seedeaters (*Sporophila americana*), violaceous euphonias (*Euphonia violacea*), and slate-colored seedeaters (*Sporophila schistacea*), 33 specimens in all, some hidden in toothpaste tubes. Eight died even before leaving Suriname. The survivors were released into the wild.

Waterkant, October 18, 2021.⁵²



THE CARIBBEAN

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

September 10, 2021

Sangre Grande, Sangre Grande Region, Trinidad and Tobago

The police and gamekeepers seized 214 birds from a "businessman": red-crowned parrots (*Amazona viridigenalis*, Appendix I), grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I), scarlet macaws (*Ara macao*, Appendix I), chestnut-fronted macaws (*Ara severus*, Appendix II), eastern rosellas (*Platyercus eximius*, Appendix II), jandaya conures (*Aratinga jandaya*, Appendix II), roseate cockatoos or galahs (*Eolophus roseicapilla*, Appendix II), bronze-winged parrots (*Pionus chalcopterus*, Appendix II), red-shouldered macaws (*Diopsittaca nobilis*, Appendix II), red-bellied macaws (*Orthopsittaca manilata*, Appendix II), red-and-green macaws (*Ara chloropterus*, Appendix II), hawk-headed parrots (*Deroptyus accipitrinus*, Appendix II), painted parakeets (*Pyrrhura picta*, Appendix II), brown-throated conures (*Aratinga pertinax*, Appendix II), blue-headed parrots (*Pionus menstruus*, Appendix II), yellow-crowned amazons (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II), white cockatoos (*Cacatua alba*, Appendix II), ultramarine grosbeaks (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*), white-rumped munias (*Lonchura striata*), and Gouldian finches (*Erythrura gouldiae*). All the birds were transferred to the Emperor Valley Zoo. The investigation continues. In the meantime the businessman has not been charged. "I am warning the public that by purchasing some of these animals, especially through the black market, they run the risk of introducing pests and diseases into the country that can be harmful to our birds, other animals and humans as well," reminded Conservator of Forests, Denny Dipchansingh.

Trinidad and Tobago Guardian, September 12, 2021.⁵³

September 29, 2021

Point Fortin Borough, Trinidad and Tobago

In June 2020, they had thrown overboard baskets and boxes filled with rare birds as the coast guard approached (see "On the Trail" n°29 p.116). Two of the three traffickers were each fined a total of 208,000 Trinidad and Tobago dollars (30,120 US\$): 4,000\$ for each of the 22 parrots (*Pionites* spp., Appendix II) and 20 red-bellied macaws (*Orthopsittaca manilata*, Appendix II) and 8,000 \$ for each of the 5 orange-winged parrots (*Amazona amazonica*, Appendix II). In default of payment, they will have to carry out 12 months of hard labor. The case of the third accomplice who persists in pleading not guilty was dissociated. Loop News, September 30, 2021.⁵⁴



December 22, 2021

Chaguanas Borough, Trinidad and Tobago

Deployment of road checks for 3 hours. Two yellow-headed amazons (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I) and 2 blue-and-yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) were seized.

Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries, January 8, 2022.⁵⁵

CENTRAL ASIA

KAZAKHSTAN

November 21, 2021

Karasay District, Almaty Region, Kazakhstan



Seizure of 18 saker falcons (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II) from a Syrian naturalized Kazakh for 11 years. A room had been specially designed to keep them at an adequate temperature. The 31-year-old man explains that they were entrusted to him by a man whose identity he does not know.

Inbusiness, November 22, 2021; Sputnik Kazakhstan, November 22, 2021.⁵⁶

OPERATION POACHER

November 2021

Almaty Region, Kazakhstan

Seizure report: 4.7 km of fishing nets, 4 boats, 4 chainsaws, 10 firearms, an electric generator, 53 m³ of wood, 4,172 kg of fish and a saker falcon (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II).

365 Info, November 26, 2021.⁵⁷

UZBEKISTAN

October 15, 2021

Sirdaryo Region, Uzbekistan. Border with Kazakhstan.

The driver of the KamAZ truck was known by the authorities and he lived up to his reputation. In his sports bag there were 8 swaddled peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) and saker falcons (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II). The occupants of the vehicle intended to sell them for 280 million soums (26,230 US\$). They were arrested, as was the customer who was waiting for them in Syrdariya district (Kazakhstan).

Rost24, October 15, 2021.⁵⁸

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

Beginning of September 2021

Wenshan, Wenshan Zhuang and Miao Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China



Twelve boxes of bird's nests in a vehicle passing through the customs checkpoint. The total weight was 1.3 kg, and knowing that a nest weighs between 3 and 14 grams, there were between 92 and 433 nests.

Chinese Customs, September 13, 2021.⁵⁹

September 26, 2021

Bozhou, Bozhou Prefecture, Anhui Province, China

Market raid. Seizure of 22 birds, hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II), melodious laughingthrushes (*Garrulax canorus*, Appendix II) and Eurasian skylarks (*Alauda arvensis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and arrest of the 5 suspects who were selling them. Jiupai News, September 29, 2021.⁶⁰

November 2021

Wenzhou-Longwan International Airport, Wenzhou Prefecture, Zhejiang Province, China



Seizure of 80 eggs in 2 plastic boxes in the backpack of a passenger coming from abroad. Analysis showed that they are parrot eggs (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II).

Chinese Customs, November 16, 2021.⁶¹



November 8, 2021

Anyang, Anyang Prefecture, Henan Province, China

Seizure of a sun conure (*Aratinga solstitialis*, Appendix II) and a blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II). One arrest.

Xiaoxiang Morning Herald, November 26, 2021.⁶²

December 2021

Heyuanzhen, Siping Prefecture, Jilin Province, China

Arrest of "Zhang" for poisoning a Pallas's rosefinch (*Carpodacus roseus*), 4 common pheasants (*Phasianus colchicus*), 7 azure-winged magpies (*Cyanopica cyanus*), 11 Eurasian tree sparrows (*Passer montanus*), a black-faced bunting (*Emberiza spodocephala*) and 9 other wild birds. The Paper, January 9, 2022.⁶³



SOUTHEASTERN ASIA

INDONESIA

26,968 birds seized between September 1 and December 31, 2021
according to official and media sources



Sources: Borneo News ; Centre for Orangutan Protection ; FLIGHT – Protecting Indonesia’s Birds ; Focusing on Wildlife ; Mongabay ; VOI.



800 birds including Javan mynas (*Acridotheres javanicus*). December 9, 2021. Riau Province, Sumatra Island



November 20, 2021, Bakauheni Port, Lampung Province, Sumatra Island.



12 blue-winged leafbirds (*Chloropsis cochinchinensis*), 9 Asian glossy starlings (*Aplonis panayensis*) and one black-crested bulbul (*Pycnonotus flaviventris*). December 14, 2021. Lampung Province, Sumatra Island



92 blue-crowned hanging parrots (*Loriculus galgulus*, Appendix II), 7 greater green leafbirds (*Chloropsis sonnerati*), 3 blue-winged leafbirds (*Chloropsis cochinchinensis*) and 8 blue-masked leafbirds (*Chloropsis venusta*). November 26, 2021. Tanjung Api-Api Port, South Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island



391 birds including blue-winged leafbirds (*Chloropsis cochinchinensis*), blue-masked leafbirds (*Chloropsis venusta*) and greater green leafbirds (*Chloropsis sonnerati*). November 22, 2021. Solok, West Sumatra Province



4527 birds including 15 blue nuthatches (*Sitta azurea*). September 27, 2021. Bakauheni, Lampung Province, Sumatra Island





Rhinoceros hornbill helmet (*Buceros rhinoceros*). Archives Robin des Bois

September 30, 2021
Sago, City of Pekanbaru, Riau Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia



Arrest of Y.L. and seizure in his shoulder bag of 4 hornbills (family Bucerotidae). He was coming from Sijunjung in West Sumatra Province (270 km) and was planning to sell everything in Pekanbaru for 2 to 3 million rupiah (130 to 200 US\$). Riau Online, October 1, 2021; FLIGHT - Protecting Indonesia's Birds, October 12, 2021.⁶⁴

November 25, 2021
Medan, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

The Rapid Action Task Force, after seizing pangolin scales in Deli Serdang regency at 13:30, arrested at 18:25 in the car park of a KFC restaurant in Titi Kuning a man who was bargaining helmeted hornbill helmets (*Rhinoplax vigil*, Appendix I). Kompas.com, November 27, 2021.⁶⁵

PHILIPPINES

November 3, 2021
Baliuag, Bulacain Province, Philippines

Seizure at a local market of 129 common moorhens (*Gallinula chloropus*) and 60 barred rails (*Gallirallus torquatus*) worth 18,000 pesos (355 US\$). Survivors have been released into the wild. Coconuts, November 10, 2021; Department of Environment and Natural Resources, November 8, 2021.⁶⁶

November 17, 2021
Lingig, South Surigao Province, Philippines
 A 5-year-old male Philippine eagle (*Pithecophaga jefferyi*, Appendix I) that was rescued on March 23 has been released. Philippine News Agency, November 4, 2021.⁶⁷

SINGAPORE

December 7, 2021
Singapore



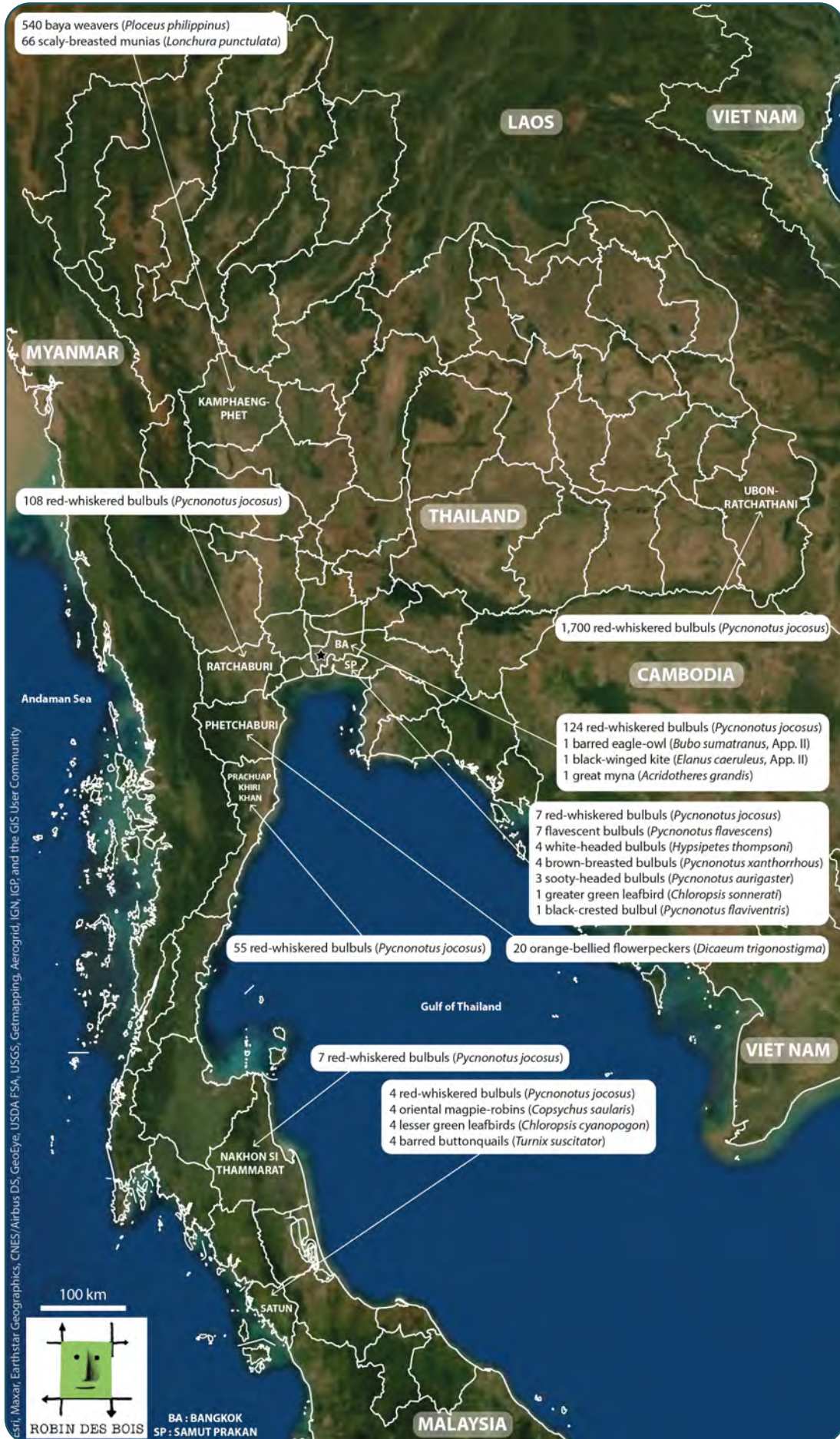
Rosly Abdul Rahim, a 52-year-old man, was sentenced to 6 months in prison for attempting to smuggle 40 live birds into Singapore in 2018. He had 29 Fischer's lovebirds (*Agapornis fischeri*, Appendix II), 4 sun conures (*Aratinga solstitialis*, Appendix II) and 3 crimson-bellied conures (*Pyrrhura perlata*, Appendix II), all of which are endangered species, as well as 3 lesser green leafbirds (*Chloropsis cyanopogon*) and one peach-faced lovebird (*Agapornis roseicollis*). He was offered 100 S\$ (73 US\$) for the misdeed and he hid the birds under his car's rear seats. 14 birds had died just after the seizure. Today, December 8, 2021.⁶⁸

THAILAND

October 16, 2021
Sap Takhian Forest, Phakdi Chumphon District, Chaiyaphum Province, Thailand

Arrest of Sathaporn Chaiyaphet in possession of a crested serpent eagle (*Spilornis cheela*, Appendix II) and 3 dead squirrels. Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, October 17, 2021.⁶⁹

2,666 birds seized in Thailand between September 1 and December 31, 2021 according to official and media sources



Sources: Bangkok Post ; Channel 7HD ; Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation.



Two birds including one barred eagle-owl (*Bubo sumatranus*, Appendix II). December 14, 2021. Bangkok



Orange-bellied flowerpeckers (*Dicaeum trigonostigma*). November 7, 2021. Tha Yang, Phetchaburi Province



40 red-whiskered bulbuls (*Pycnonotus jocosus*) and one great myna (*Acridotheres grandis*). November 2021. Bangkok



108 red-whiskered bulbuls (*Pycnonotus jocosus*). November 23, 2021. Na Mueang, Ratchaburi Province



540 baya weavers (*Ploceus philippinus*) et 66 scaly-breasted munias (*Lonchura punctulata*). October 25, 2021. Tha Khun Ram, Kamphaeng Phet Province



VIET NAM

**October 4, 2021
Hanoi, Viet Nam**

The owner of a bird shop that offered for sale a grey peacock-pheasant (*Polyplectron bicalcaratum*, Appendix II) has been sentenced to 18 months in prison. He was arrested in December 2020 when he was about to deliver the bird sold via Facebook for VND 4.5 million or 195 US\$.
Voice of Ho Chi Minh City's People, October 13, 2021; ENV, October 16, 2021.⁷⁰

facebook



October 15, 2021

Quang Xuan, Quang Binh Province, Viet Nam



In the middle of the migration period, the authorities removed 3,000 meters of nets, 4,000 traps, 205 false wading birds that were used as decoys and released 11 live wading birds. Little egrets (*Egretta garzetta*) are among the species that frequent these marshes.

Trung tam Con nguoi va Thien nhien, Oct. 16, 2021.⁷¹



November 2021

An Giang Province, Viet Nam

A green peafowl (*Pavo muticus*, Appendix II) was seized from a pagoda and transferred to Hon Me Wildlife Rescue Station.



ENV, November 28, 2021.⁷²

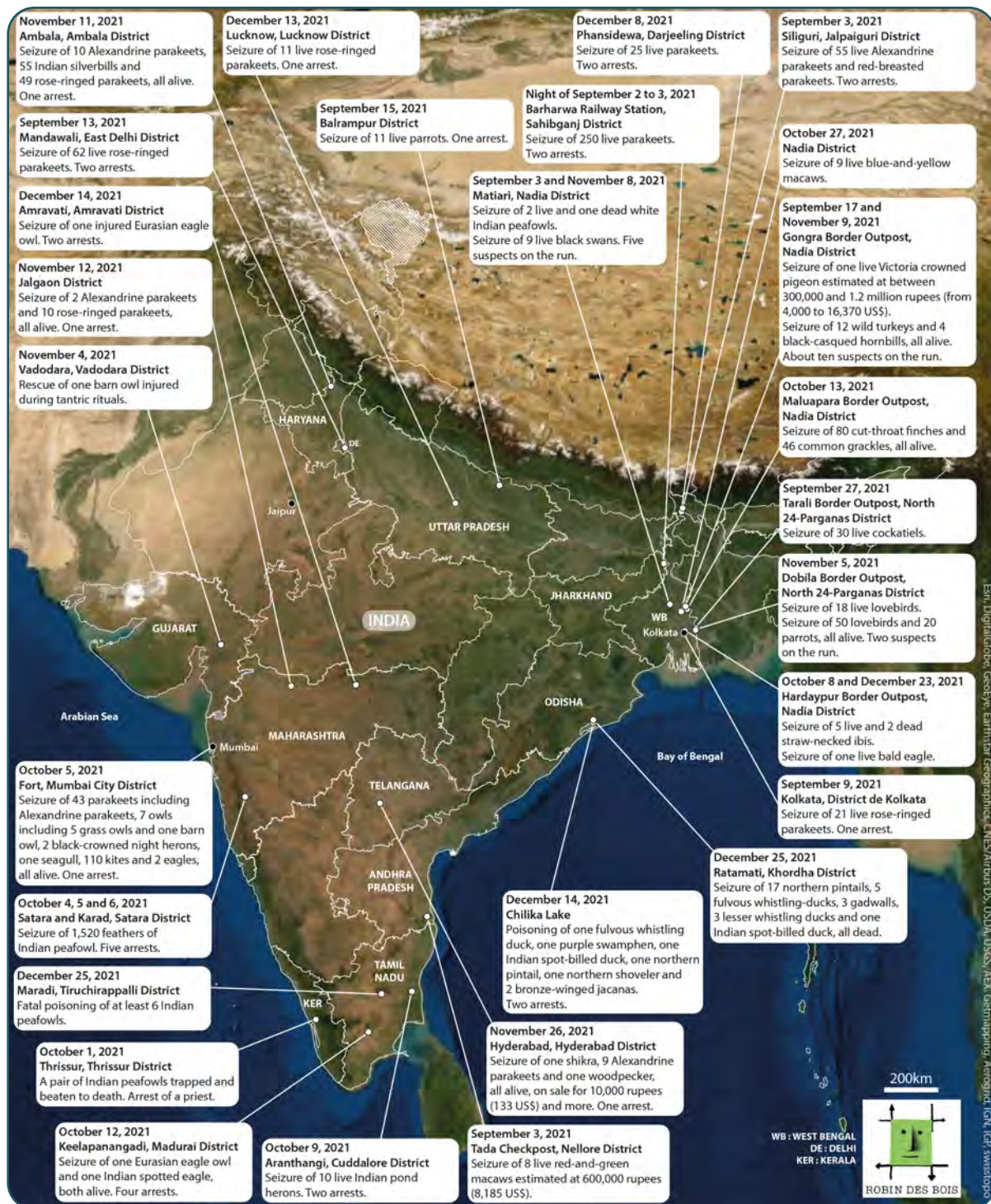
SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA



Alexandrine parakeet (*Psittacula eupatria*). Photo Sanjana Kajawe

1,092 birds poached or seized and 1,520 feathers seized in India between September 1 and December 31, 2021, according to official and media sources



- Eagle and kite (*Accipitridae*, Appendix I or II)
- Indian spotted eagle (*Aquila hastata*, Appendix II)
- Cut-throat finch (*Amadina fasciata*)
- Blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II)
- Red-and-green macaw (*Ara chloropterus*, Appendix II)
- Black-crowned night heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)
- Black-casqued hornbill (*Ceratogymna atrata*)
- Cockatiel (*Nymphicus hollandicus*)
- Indian spot-billed duck (*Anas poecilorhyncha*)
- Gadwall (*Mareca strepera*)
- Northern pintail (*Anas acuta*)
- Northern shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)
- Indian silverbill (*Euodice malabarica*)
- Owl (*Strigiformes*, Appendix I or II)
- Barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II)
- Indian pond heron (*Ardeola grayii*)
- Black swan (*Cygnus atratus*)
- Fulvous whistling-duck (*Dendrocygna bicolor*, App. III in Honduras)
- Lesser whistling duck (*Dendrocygna javanica*)
- Wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*)
- Grass owl (*Tyto capensis*, Appendix II)
- Shikra (*Accipiter badius*, Appendix II)
- Victoria crowned pigeon (*Goura victoria*, Appendix II)
- Eurasian eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II)
- Straw-necked ibis (*Threskiornis spinicollis*)
- Lovebird (*Agapornis* spp., Appendix II)
- Bronze-winged jacana (*Metopidius indicus*)
- Seagull (family Laridae)
- Indian peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan)
- Parrot and parakeet (*Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II except for *Agapornis roseicollis*, *Melopsittacus undulatus* and *Psittacula krameri*)
- Alexandrine parakeet (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II)
- Rose-ringed parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*)
- Red-breasted parakeet (*Psittacula alexandri*, Appendix II)
- Woodpecker (family Picidae)
- Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II)
- Common grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*)
- Purple swamphen (*Porphyrio porphyrio*)

Sources: Asian News International ; Border Security Force South Bengal ; Connect Gujarat ; DNA India ; Down To Earth ; Hindustan Times ; India Today ; Mandal News ; Millennium Post ; Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India) ; Morning Express ; News Sense ; Sashastra Seema Bal ; Sprouts ; Telangana Today ; The Follow Up ; The Hindu ; The Indian Express ; The Statesman ; The Telegraph India ; The Times of India ; Thevar Steffy ; WCCB.

IRAN

Beginning of September 2021

Bojnord, Raz, and Jargalan Counties and Shirvan, North Khorasan Province, Iran

Arrest of 8 poachers of birds of prey. According to the commander of the General Department of Environmental Protection, a specimen of saker falcon (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II) is worth 2.5 to 3 million rials or 60 to 71 US\$ in Bodjnourd prefecture. When it reaches the southern provinces of the country and approaches the Gulf countries, the same specimen would sell for 1,000 times more or 3 billion rials (71,430 US\$). Iranian Students' News Agency, September 12, 2021.⁷³

September 2021 and February 2022 Bandar Deyr, Bushehr Province, Iran

Five people were sentenced to 2.5 years in prison for attempting to export 121 falcons, including 56 saker falcons (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II) and 8 peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I). They must also pay a fine equivalent to 7 times the price of the "goods" which according to Irib News Agency amounts to 157 billion rials (3.74 million US\$). They were arrested in September 2021 while sailing to the Gulf countries. Irib News Agency, February 13, 2022.⁷⁴



End of September 2021 Bushehr, Bushehr Province, Iran

Seizure in a car of 3 falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II) including saker falcons (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II). The police quickly set up a roadblock after receiving information about birds of prey being trafficked. The Islamic Republic News Agency, October 2, 2021.⁷⁵

End of October 2021 Abadan, Khuzistan Province, Iran. Border with Iraq.

Seizure of 2 saker falcons (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II) and 400 white-eared bulbuls (*Pycnonotus leucotis*) and arrest of the trafficker. He intended to cross the Shatt al-Arab marshes at the border with Iraq in order to reach the Gulf countries and sell the birds at very high prices. Khoorna News Agency, November 1, 2021.⁷⁶

Beginning of November 2021 Qatruyeh Checkpoint, Fars Province, Iran

Seizure of 7 birds of prey including peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) and saker falcons (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II) from the trunk of a car. An eighth had not survived the deplorable transport conditions. The survivors were released a few days later. Iranian Students' News Agency, November 8, 2021.⁷⁷

November 2021

Qatruyeh Checkpoint, Fars Province, Iran

Seizure of 2 falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II) in a cab heading to Bushehr, an Iranian port city, capital of the eponymous province. The cab was 560 km from the checkpoint, which is more than a 7.5 hour drive. Two arrests. The port of Bushehr is used for smuggling birds of prey to the Gulf countries. Mehr News Agency, November 18, 2021.⁷⁸

Beginning of November 2021

Amlash, Gilan Province, Iran

Arrest of a 48-year-old poacher carrying the carcasses of 2 pelicans (genus *Pelecanus*). Two species of pelican live in Iran: *Pelecanus onocrotalus* and *Pelecanus crispus* (Appendix I). Irib News Agency, November 8, 2021.⁷⁹

PAKISTAN

September 10, 2021

Torkham Border Post, Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Border with Afghanistan.

Seizure of 2 falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II) from a truck traveling from Afghanistan. The Nation, September 11, 2021.⁸⁰

October 2, 2021

Lulusar-Dudipatsar National Park, Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Sher Muhammad and Khairul Bashar were fined 76,000 rupees (445 US\$) for trapping a golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II) and 2 kestrels (*Falco*, Appendix I or II). The birds were seized during a raid in Kaghan Valley. The News International, October 3, 2021.⁸¹



Beginning of November, 2021

Daraban checkpost and Torkham checkpost, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan. Border with Afghanistan.

- Seizure of 3 peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) from Hizar Hayat. He was trying to smuggle them from Balochistan.

- Seizure of 2 peregrine falcons from Afghanistan. Dawn, November 5, 2021 ; Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Wildlife Department, November 4, 2021.⁸²



WESTERN ASIA

AZERBAIDJAN

September 21, 2021

Khachmaz District, Azerbaijan

Seizure during a traffic check of a Eurasian hobby (*Falco subbuteo*, Appendix II) and a peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus caucasicus*, Appendix I). The poachers, Orhan Gurbanov and Aikhan Hasanov, who came from the capital Baku, 160 km away, are being prosecuted. The raptors have been released. 1News, September 22, 2022.⁸³

September 24, 2021

Shabran District, Azerbaijan

New seizure during a road check. Ilkin Ajamov, who also lives in Baku, 140 km away, was carrying an eagle (*Aquila* spp., Appendix I or II). The bird was released. "The measures prescribed by law were taken".

Caliber.az, September 24, 2021.⁸⁴

CYPRUS

October 3, 2021

Southeast of Cyprus

Arrest of 2 poachers caught setting nets and electronic decoys.

Committee Against Bird Slaughter, October 3, 2021.⁸⁵



November 4, 2021

Avgorou, Famagusta District, Cyprus

The 37-year-old Italian, an activist of the NGO Committee Against Bird Slaughter, discovers nets and an electronic lure. He warns the authorities and waits for them nearby. It is almost midnight when he is attacked by 3 masked men. He is beaten up. His cell phone and camera are stolen. Taken to the hospital, he is treated for a concussion. "Ambelopoulia," a dish made from songbirds and considered to be a "delicacy," is still popular despite being banned.

Kathimerini Cyprus, November 6, 2021.⁸⁶



© Kathimerini Cyprus

December 2021

Zygi, Larnaca District, Cyprus

Since the anti-poaching unit has been disbanded, nothing goes right in Cyprus. Poaching is increasing and violence is becoming commonplace.

- Arrest of a poacher in possession of 6 live song thrushes (*Turdus philomelos*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and one barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II) plus 23 other dead birds. The man who saw the police approaching but did not have time to flee called 2 accomplices to the rescue. One of them physically and verbally threatened a police officer. An activist from the NGO Committee Against Bird Slaughter intervened and was punched.

- Arrest of 2 men aged 41 and 51 years old caught in the middle of a poaching. The older man tried to physically intimidate the police.

Cyprus Mail, December 27, 2021.⁸⁷

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Beginning of September 2021

Hatta Border Post, Emirate of Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Border with Sultanate of Oman.

Seizure in the trailer of a truck arriving from the Sultanate of Oman of 64 saker falcons (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II) tied up and hidden behind crates of vegetables.

The National, September 12, 2021; Emirates Al-Youm, September 12, 2021.⁸⁸

ISRAEL

October 24, 2021

Judean Desert, Southern District, Israel



Agents of INPA (Israel Nature and Parks Authority) discover that the microchips of 9 griffon vultures (*Gyps fulvus*, Appendix II) are banded at the same place and do not indicate any movement for a long time. On the spot, they discovered the carcasses of the raptors and just next to them, that of a goat. Poisoning was immediately suspected but it took two days for the Beit Dagan Veterinary Institute to confirm it. Three days later, the carcasses of 3 other vultures were discovered. There are only 200 vultures left in Israel.

The Times of Israel, October 24, 2021; Rare Bird Alert, October 27, 2021; The Jerusalem Post, October 27, 2021; Vulture Conservation Foundation (with Israel Nature and Parks Authority), October 27, 2021.⁸⁹



© Eyal Ben Giat, INPA

IRAQ

End of October 2021

Baghdad International Airport, Iraq

Seizure of 13 falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II) in the suitcase of a passenger from the United Arab Emirates.

Iraq Newspaper, November 1, 2021.⁹⁰

KUWAIT

Beginning of November 2021

Sabah Al Ahmad Natural Reserve, Jahra Governorate, Kuwait

Seizure of a falcon (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II) from a car driving inside the reserve. One arrest. Release of the bird of prey.

Alrai Media, November 6, 2021.⁹¹

LEBANON

September 2021

Tyre District, South Governorate, Lebanon

Seizure of 3 Egyptian vultures (*Neophron percnopterus*, Appendix II) from a zoo where they were illegally kept in captivity.

Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon, September 27, 2021.⁹²

Beginning of October 2021

Near Lake Qaraoun, Beqaa Governorate, Lebanon

Seizure of 3 kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II) wearing hoods. They were placed right next to trap cages with a live quail as bait.

Committee Against Bird Slaughter, October 6, 2021; Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon, October 15, 2021.⁹³



QATAR

OPERATION THUNDER 2021

October 2021

Qatar

Seizure of 2 houbara bustards (*Chlamydotis undulata*, Appendix I) and a blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) by the Qatari authorities in the course of Operation Thunder.

Interpol, November 30, 2021; World Customs Organization, November 30, 2021.⁹⁴



UNITED KINGDOM (CYPRUS)

October 20, 2021

Ayios Nikolaos, Sovereign Base Area of Dhekelia, Cyprus Island, United Kingdom

Arrest of 2 poachers and seizure of 5 nets in which 150 live birds were entangled. They were released. The police intervened after a report from the NGO Committee Against Bird Slaughter.

Military areas, see "On the Trail" n°7 p.101, n°13 p.48, n°15 p.37, n°16 p.28 and p.35, n°21 p.39, n°30 p.199, n°32 p.27 and p.121 and n°33 p.54.

Committee Against Bird Slaughter, October 22, 2021.⁹⁵

SYRIA

October 2021

Diban, Deir ez-Zor Governorate and Al-Qaryatayn, Homs Governorate, Syria

The falcons in Syria are not spared. During the month, one of them was captured and sold for the equivalent of 15,000 US\$, another for the equivalent of 26,000 US\$. The sources do not identify the buyers, but there is little doubt that falconry from the Gulf countries is involved.

Jesr Press, October 6 and 28, 2021.⁹⁶

TURKEY

October 2021

Çobanbey Border Post, Kilis Province, Turkey. Border with Syria.

Arrest of 2 Syrians who were trying to return home with European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine). Seizure of 222 specimens which were quickly released. The 2 men were fined 216,909 liras or nearly 24,500 US\$. Sputnik Türkiye, October 2, 2021; Turk Press, October 2, 2021.⁹⁷



October 2021

Adana Province, Turkey

Search of a motorcycle with a box of fruits in the back. The police discovered 8 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 2 nets, electronic decoys and a cage. The driver was arrested. He was fined 21,246 liras (2,400 US\$).

New Turk Post, October 6, 2021.⁹⁸



October 2021

Karaburun, Konya Province, Turkey

Conviction of 2 Afghans who were fined 11,344 liras (1,350 US\$) for attempted poaching of falcon (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II) with live bait.

New Turk Post, October 21, 2021.⁹⁹



October 2021

Ankara, Ankara Province, Turkey

Last year it was found wounded, treated and released into the wild. This time the imperial eagle (*Aquila heliaca*, Appendix I) was shot. Biologist Cansu Özcan said, "a large number of pellets were found in many parts of the bird's body".
Hürriyet Daily News, October 25, 2021.¹⁰⁰

October 5, 2021

Istanbul, Istanbul Province, Turkey

Seizure of 45 parrots and parakeets (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II) including 2 Fischer's lovebirds (*Agapornis fischeri*, Appendix II) and 25 parrot eggs in a store in Güngören district. An arrest.
New Turk Post, October 6, 2021.¹⁰¹

NORTHERN EUROPE

IRELAND

October 15, 2021

Portlaoise, County Laois, Ireland

Desmond Crawford received a 3-month suspended prison sentence. On April 19, 2020, NPWS (National Parks & Wildlife Service) officers discovered a common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) hanging by its wings from an electric wire and another hanging by its legs from the fence of one of his fields. Crawford had shot them at close range.
National Parks & Wildlife Service, October 21, 2021.¹⁰²



NORWAY

September 2021

Skogbygda, Southern Norway Region, Norway

A northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II) with a gunshot wound to the wing could not be saved.
Raumnes, September 27, 2021; NOAH, October 7, 2021.¹⁰³

October 29, 2021

Kristiansand, Southern Norway Region, Norway

Thanks to a tip-off, a joint operation by Kristiansand Customs, Agder Police, the National Authority for the Investigation and Prosecution of Economic and Environmental Crime and the Norwegian Environment Agency resulted in the seizure of 2,027 frozen birds about to be loaded on a ferry. Most of the birds were redwings (*Turdus iliacus*) and fieldfares (*Turdus pilaris*) but there were also 10 song thrushes (*Turdus philomelos*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and 31



common blackbirds (*Turdus merula*, Appendix III in Ukraine), species that are prohibited from hunting. The seizure is estimated to be worth 200,000 kroner (23,000 US\$). Three Italian hunters intended to take the birds home for "personal consumption". They were fined 15,000 kroner (1,725 US\$). The authorities fear that due to the decline of birds abroad, Norway is becoming a haven for European poachers.

Norwegian Customs, November 4, 2021; Norwegian Police, November 4, 2021; Rare Bird Alert, November 5, 2021; Rett24, December 15, 2021.¹⁰⁴



Autumn 2021

Gjerpen, Eastern Norway Region, Norway

A common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) fell victim to a novice hunter who mistook it for a pigeon. His father contacted the Norwegian Environment Agency, which confiscated the body but did not prosecute.
Telemarksavisa, March 10, 2022.¹⁰⁵

December 21, 2021

Røros, Trøndelag Region, Norway

A man had been conducting an unofficial research project on birds of prey since the 1970s. Since 2009, his permission to band birds had not been renewed but this did not deter him. A search of his home in 2020 resulted in the seizure of 30 golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II) and Eurasian eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II) eggs plus one frozen Eurasian eagle owl and one great gray owl (*Strix nebulosa*, Appendix II). Between June 1, 2017, and August 1, 2020 and again between June and July 2021, the man had raided several nests of gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus*, Appendix I), peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I), Eurasian eagle owl, and northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II). He took the opportunity to band chicks.

The court found that he had acted illegally, exposed the birds to undue disturbance and danger, emptied eggs without following legal procedures, and kept dead birds without permission. However, the court considered that he had acted for scientific reasons, and he was only given a 60 day suspended prison sentence and ordered to pay 3,000 kroner (330 US\$) in court fees.

Arbeidets Rett, December 21, 2021.¹⁰⁶



UNITED KINGDOM

29 raptors poached or seized
between September 1 and December 31, 2021, according to official and media sources



«Missing»: bird with a GPS that stopped transmitting.
Northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*, Appendix II)
Common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II)
Barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II)
Eurasian sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*, Appendix II)
Red kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II)
White-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*, Appendix I)
Raptor, unidentified species (Accipitridae, Falconidae or Strigidae, Appendix I or II)



November 14, 2021
Chelmsford, Essex County

Source: Gwent Police - Rural Crime Team ; Norfolk Rural Crime ; Northumbria Police ; Police Scotland ; Raptor Persecution UK ; South Essex Wildlife Hospital.

September 23, 2021

Loch an t-Seillich, Highland Council, Scotland, United Kingdom

Discovery in the lake of a golden eagle's (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II) GPS transmitter that had stopped working in 2012. In 2021, Police Scotland opened 14 investigations into the disappearance of 11 golden eagles and 3 white-tailed eagles (*Haliaeetus albicilla*, Appendix I), 2 of which followed the discovery of a GPS transmitter.

Raptor Persecution UK, September 24 and December 6, 2021.¹⁰⁷

October 21, 2021

Stewartry Area Committee, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Scotland, United Kingdom

Arrest of 4 men aged 31-59 for persecution of raptors (Accipitridae, Falconidae or Strigidae, Appendix I or II).

DGWGO, October 21, 2021.¹⁰⁸

November 9, 2021

Suffolk County, England, United Kingdom

Shane Leech, a game warden, was suspected of causing the death of a common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) by bendiocarb poisoning in September 2020. In January 2021, pesticides and firearms were seized at his home. He was sentenced to 80 hours of community service and court fees of 200 £ (275 US\$) for illegal possession of firearms and pesticides. Due to insufficient evidence, he was not convicted of poisoning.

Raptor Persecution UK, August 26, November 2 and 9, 2021.¹⁰⁹



End of November 2021

Selkirk, Scottish Borders Council, Scotland, United Kingdom

Gamekeeper Peter Givens was fined 300 £ (410 US\$) for causing the death of a northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II) and a barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II). Both raptors were victims of a crow trap installed during the lambing season.

Border Telegraph, November 30, 2021; Raptor Persecution UK, January 13, 2022.¹¹⁰



December 16, 2021

Manchester, Greater Manchester County, England, United Kingdom

Hilton Prest, gamekeeper, fined 800 £ (1,070 US\$) for illegally placing a trap cage on a hunting ground. A European sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*, Appendix II), attracted by a common blackbird (*Turdus merula*, Appendix III in Ukraine) also caught in the trap, had died of starvation in February 2021.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, December 16, 2021, and January 13, 2022.¹¹¹



March 2021 and December 2021 United Kingdom

Raptor Persecution UK reveals that a northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*, Appendix II) died in March 2021, its wings having been torn off by its killer. The public body Natural England never communicated about this event at the time and refuses to comment "in order not to prejudice the investigation." The location of the poaching remains confidential. Raptor Persecution UK, March 7, 2022.¹¹²

WESTERN EUROPE

GERMANY

September 2021

Fahrenzhausen, Bavaria State, Germany

Discovery of a common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) with a serious gunshot wound in the forest at the edge of town.

Nürnberger Nachrichten, October 27, 2021; Süddeutsche Zeitung, November 25, 2021.¹¹³

October 2021

Fulda District, Hesse State, Germany

Seizure at a the home of a "breeder" of about 60 birds including European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), Eurasian bullfinches (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and Eurasian siskins (*Carduelis spinus*, synonymous with *Spinus spinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine) plus a large number of traps.

Committee Against Bird Slaughter, Annual Report 2021.¹¹⁴



Beginning of October 2021

Upper Bavaria District, Bavaria State, Germany

A brownish liquid was flowing from the throat of the red kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II) when it was picked up. It died a few minutes later. There is no doubt that it was poisoned.

Committee Against Bird Slaughter, October 4, 2021.¹¹⁵



Mid October 2021

Passau District, Bavaria State, Germany. Border with Austria.

Seizure of 248 finches (family Fringillidae), some of them injured, from the car of a young man. He said he wanted to give them to the child of a friend living in the Netherlands. According to the NABU (Naturschutzbund Deutschland), the man would actually be trafficking the offsprings from crossbreeding of farmed birds and birds captured in the wild.

Süddeutsche Zeitung, November 20, 2021.¹¹⁶

October 19, 2021

Munich, Bavaria State, Germany

The red kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II) was still alive when it was found by firefighters. The veterinarians of the University of Munich were not able to save it. It had 3 pellets in its body.

Nürnberger Nachrichten, 27 October 2021.¹¹⁷

November 2021

Hohenkammer, Bavaria State, Germany

Another raptor has lost its life in Bavaria. This time it was a common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) shot with several bullets. The veterinarians had to put it out of its misery.

Süddeutsche Zeitung, November 25, 2021.¹¹⁸

November 21, 2021

Landau in der Pfalz, Rhineland-Palatinate State, Germany

A female grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) was stolen from the zoo. The so-called "resocialization aviary" only housed grey parrots seized by the authorities.

Speyer-Kurier, November 22, 2021.¹¹⁹

November 23, 2021

Pinneberg, Schleswig-Holstein State, Germany

A female northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II) less than a year old, self-amputated its legs while trying to free itself from a trap. It spent several days in this state before being discovered by someone on a walk. It was put out of its misery.

Committee Against Bird Slaughter, November 24, 2021.¹²⁰



End of November 2021

Cologne, North Rhine-Westphalia State, Germany

Another northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II) was caught in a trap. Severely injured in one leg, it was also euthanized. Since the beginning of 2021, CABS (Committee Against Bird Slaughter) has recorded 78 acts of raptor poaching and persecution (poisoning, shooting, trapping) in Germany.

Committee Against Bird Slaughter, December 1 and Annual Report 2021 and January 14, 2022.¹²¹

AUSTRIA

November 30, 2021

Steyr, Upper Austria State, Austria

Sentence of a 66-year-old fisherman to a suspended prison term of 6 months and a fine of 2,880 € (3,340 US\$). He was accused of killing a black stork (*Ciconia nigra*, Appendix II), 4 or 5 grey herons (*Ardea cinerea*), 2 snakes (family Colubridae), a duck, and cats which he held accountable for plundering "his stock" of fish.

Kronen Zeitung, November 29 and 30, 2021.¹²²



BELGIUM

October 1, 2021

Habay, Province of Luxembourg, Walloon Region, Belgium

Two poachers were caught while trying to capture passerines. They were using wild birds and decoys to attract their victims. The Anti-Poaching Unit (UAB) of the Public Service of Wallonia seized 27 wild birds including European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), Eurasian bullfinches (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*, Appendix III in Ukraine), common linnets (*Carduelis cannabina*, synonymous with *Linaria cannabina*, Appendix III in Ukraine), yellowhammers (*Emberiza citrinella*, Appendix III in Ukraine), common redpolls (*Carduelis flammea*, synonymous with *Acanthis flammea*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and serins (*Serinus serinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine). The capture equipment and the vehicle of the 2 poachers were seized.

Sudinfo, October 8, 2021.¹²³



REPEATED OFFENSE

October 12, 2021

Neufchâteau, Province of Luxembourg, Walloon Region, Belgium

Roland Van Den Eynde, former alderman (deputy mayor) of Soumagne, had been sentenced in 2020 to a suspended fine of 800 € for capturing wild birds in 2018. This time, he appeared in the company of an accomplice for similar offenses that took place in Rachamps in September 2019. The searches led to the discovery of capture equipment, 84 live birds and forged marking rings.

The 2 men were fined 4,000 € (4,660 US\$), half of which was suspended for 3 years. In his defense, Van Den Eynde claimed that he did not sell the birds but that he gave some away and kept others to overcome his loneliness. "In any case, with all the pesticides there are, they are not better off in the wild."

L'Avenir, September 21, and October 19, 2021.¹²⁴



End of October 2021

Langemark-Poelkapelle, Province of West Flanders, Flemish Region, Belgium



Three men were fined between 6,400 € and 5,000 € for poaching and keeping protected species, including European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), Eurasian siskins (*Carduelis spinus*, synonymous with *Spinus spinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*).

Nieuwsblad, October 25, 2021.¹²⁵

REPEATED OFFENSE

November 2021 and Beginning of March 2022

Lier, Province of Antwerp, Flemish Region, Belgium



Surprise search by the Nature and Forests Agency. The trip was not in vain: the agents seized from the 76-year-old man many bird nets and about 100 live birds, sometimes mutilated, including European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), common redpolls (*Carduelis flammea*, synonymous with *Acanthis flammea*, Appendix III in Ukraine), song thrushes (*Turdus philomelos*, Appendix III in Ukraine), house sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) and European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*). Some of them were wearing forged identification rings.

The suspect had already been convicted twice for similar acts. This time, the court sentenced him to 4 months in prison and a fine of 32,000 € (35,900 US\$). VRT, March 4, 2022.¹²⁶



FRANCE

September 6, 2021

Aimargues, Department of Gard, France

A common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) wounded by 10 bullets was urgently transferred to the wildlife hospital of the association Goupil Connexion.

Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux, September 6, 2021.¹²⁷

September 15, 2021

Dax, Department of Landes, France

Jean-Marc Dutouya, "the man with the shovel", condemned in 2018 for violence towards militants of the League for the Protection of Birds and destruction of television equipment (see "On the Trail" n°11 p.28, n°17 p.38, n°21 p.40 and n°22 p.47), finally won his case. He had been fined 400 € and 1,700 € in damages. He will now receive 10,000 € (11,800 US\$) in damages from France Televisions for damage to his image, because his appearance in underwear in the report was not blurred. He was trying to frighten away the volunteers of the LPO who were destroying his traps for chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*) and bramblings (*Fringilla montifringilla*).

La Dépêche du Midi, September 15, 2021.¹²⁸

September 20, 2021

Maubec, Department of Vaucluse, France

During the seizure of a cannabis plantation on a land occupied by travelers, the gendarmes seized 2 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine). Four arrests.

Le Dauphiné Libéré, September 21, 2021.¹²⁹

September 27, 2021

Pierrefeu-du-Var, Department of Var, France



New circumstantial seizure during a search for drugs. This time the lucky one was a scops owl (*Otus scops*, Appendix II) locked up somewhere. The suspect received an 8-month suspended prison sentence for drug trafficking.

Ouest-France, September 30, 2021; Var-Matin, September 30, 2021.¹³⁰

End of September 2021

Mont Mézenc, Department of Ardèche, France



The GPS transmitter of the juvenile golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II) did not indicate any movement. Post-mortem examination revealed several bullets in the body. There are only 5 pairs of golden eagles in the Department of Ardèche.

France Bleu Drôme Ardèche, October 22, 2021; France 3 Auvergne Rhône-Alpes, October 23, 2021.¹³¹

October 2021

Region of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, France

Discovery of the bullet-riddled carcasses of 2 European sparrowhawks (*Accipiter nisus*, Appendix II) and 2 kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II).

Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux, November 15, 2021.¹³²

November 3, 2021

Courbehay, Department of Eure-et-Loir, France



A 64-year-old man was sentenced to a one-year suspended prison term and a 5-year ban on animal-related activities for illegally keeping birds of prey, selling or renting them for shows, and opening and operating a breeding establishment without authorization and without a certificate of competence. 71 raptors were discovered at his home in April 2017. By 2019, another 81 birds were seized, including peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I), Barbary falcons (*Falco pelegrinoides*, Appendix I), saker falcons (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II), lanner falcons (*Falco biarmicus*, Appendix II), Harris' hawks (*Parabuteo unicinctus*, Appendix II), American kestrels (*Falco sparverius*, Appendix II), golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II), steppe eagles (*Aquila nipalensis*, Appendix II), black-chested eagles (*Geranoaetus melanoleucus*, Appendix II) and a caracara (*Caracara spp.*, Appendix II).

L'Echo Républicain, November 2 and 8, 2021.¹³³

November 4th, 2021

Saint-Gaudens, Department of Haute-Garonne, France



A hunter had shot and wounded a red kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II) which was too interested in his chickens in March 2021 (see "On the Trail" n°32 p.185). He said he wanted to scare it away. He has just been sentenced to a fine of 4,000 € (4,640 US\$) suspended for 5 years, 500 € (580 US\$) for moral damages to 2 associations and 847 € (980 US\$) for legal costs. His weapon and ammunition were seized.

Petite République, November 7, 2021.¹³⁴

November 5, 2021

Department of Indre-et-Loire, France

An injured red kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II) found by a passer-by was taken to the rescue center "Sauve qui Plume". Its femur was broken due to a lead pellet. It died a few days later.

Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux, November 19, 2021.¹³⁵

November 6, 2021

Departments of Herault and Vaucluse, France

A Eurasian sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*, Appendix II) targeted by a shooter survived, but will remain disabled. A few days later, a kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II) was also found in critical condition after being shot with a firearm.

Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux, November 15, 2021.¹³⁶

November 12, 2021

Château-Thierry, Department of Aisne, France

The birds of prey had been delighting visitors to the "Eagles of Château-Thierry" since 2010, but not all of them were legal. In 2013-2014, the management of this medieval castle passed from the hands of an association to those of the municipality. In 2020, the French Biodiversity Agency noted that about 15 birds were undocumented. On November 12, the mayor signed the divestment agreement for the first 9 birds of prey: a Eurasian eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II), a black kite (*Milvus migrans*, Appendix II), 3 common buzzards (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II), 2 barn owls (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II), a saker falcon (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II) and a bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II). "It is likely that other birds will have to be disposed of," says the mayor. The "Eagles of Château-Thierry" then offered customers the chance to attend "educational performances" or to become a "falconer for a day" with the birds of prey, which had not yet been seized.

France 3 Hauts-de-France, November 15, 2021.¹³⁷

November 15, 2021

Valence, Department of Drôme, France



Sentencing of Clément Goujon to a suspended fine of 300 € (350 US\$) and to 500 € (580 US\$) in damages for the benefit of ASPAS (Association for the Protection of Wild Animals). Investigators found 22 carcasses of protected birds and a common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) alive at his home. ASPAS, winter 2022.¹³⁸

FAMILY AFFAIRS

**November 16, 2021 and June 14, 2022
Coutances, Department of Manche, France**



Yannick Jeanne, a resident of Condé-sur-Vire, is "passionate" about parrots. Between September 16, 2013 and May 31, 2017, he operated a breeding operation without a certificate of competence at the home where he lived with his mother, Marie-Line Jeanne, in Torigny-les-Villes. He was detected by the French Biodiversity Agency via his ads on the website Le Bon Coin. He is accused of selling 5 blue-and-yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II), born to a couple acquired illegally on December 10, 2013, for 4,800 €, and of breeding for commercial purposes 36 Psittacidae estimated to be worth 34,950 € including 7 grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) estimated at 7,000 €, blue-fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), roseate cockatoos (*Eolophus roseicapilla*, Appendix II) and lovebirds (*Agapornis spp*, Appendix II except *Agapornis roseicollis*).

Both appeared on October 19, 2021. Marie-Line was sentenced on November 16 to a suspended fine of 1,000 € (1,160 US\$) and to the confiscation of the animals. Her son's judgment was postponed to give him time to regularize his situation. He was sentenced on June 14 to a fine of 500 € (540 US\$). The animals remain in his care

La Manche Libre, October 20, 2021; Court of Coutances, November 16, 2021 and June 14, 2022.¹³⁹

December 6, 2021

Marseille, Department of Bouches-du-Rhône, France

The homes of 2 hunters from Marseille were searched following an investigation by the French Biodiversity Agency (Office Français de la Biodiversité, OFB). They had been identified on October 22, 2021 while poaching on the hills of Estaque.

The agents seized 7 frozen and plucked protected birds, as well as 2 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), a common linnnet (*Carduelis cannabina*, synonymous with *Linaria cannabina*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and a European greenfinch (*Chloris chloris*) alive. Capture equipment and hunting weapons were also confiscated. La Provence, December 8, 2021.¹⁴⁰

Mid-December 2021

Arras, Department of Pas-de-Calais, France

A peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) was found dead in the courtyard of the Palais Saint-Vaast. The autopsy revealed the presence of several "old and superficial" pellets. The city of Arras has filed a complaint against a person unknown.

La Voix du Nord, January 22, 2022.¹⁴¹



The Arras falcon pair

THE NETHERLANDS

September 2021

Between Woerden, Province of Utrecht, and Woerdense Verlaat, Province of South Holland, The Netherlands

The trafficking of mute swans (*Cygnus olor*) in the Netherlands was already mentioned in "On the Trail" n°33 p.178. This time, more than 100 juvenile swans with clipped wings and marking rings were found on polders. The plan of the poachers was probably to sell them as adults to customers in Belgium or the Middle East.

RTV Utrecht, October 6, 2021.¹⁴²

OPERATION THUNDER 2021

October 2021

Hoek van Holland, Province of South Holland, Hardenberg, Province of Overijssel, Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, Province of North Holland, and Province of Gelderland, The Netherlands

- Six parrots (*Psittaciformes*, Appendix I or II) were seized from a passenger returning from a cruise in the UK.

- Eight European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) were seized by inspectors of the Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA) at a bird market in Hardenberg.

- Eight songbirds were seized at the airport of Amsterdam-Schiphol from a traveller returning from Suriname.

- The Dutch Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA) discovered 470 wild birds of African origin at commercial premises in the province of Gelderland. A sum of 30,000 € (35,000 US\$) in cash and the birds were seized.

BN DeStem, December 1, 2021; NU.nl, December 1, 2021; Westlanders.nu, December 1, 2021.¹⁴³



SWITZERLAND

FAMILY AFFAIRS

October and end of December 2021

Poschiavo, Canton of Grisons, Switzerland

In the middle of the Christmas holidays, a 61-year-old man, his 30-year old son and a 29-year old friend were caught butchering a red deer (*Cervus elaphus*). They acknowledged other poaching acts, including that of a common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) 2 months earlier.

Intorno Tirano, December 29, 2021.¹⁴⁴

November 18, 2021

Zurich, Canton of Zurich, Switzerland

At the end of February, a pensioner, president of an ornithological association, had taken in a European sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*, Appendix II) which had been knocked down against the fence of the association's aviary. Five weeks later, during a routine check, the police discovered the bird of prey which did not show the slightest scratch but was very agitated in a cage that was too small. Its "rescuer" had provided him with live pigeons and chickens. He was charged with mistreatment of the hawk, the pigeons, and the chickens plus with illegal possession of the hawk. He was sentenced to 70 suspended daily fines of 30 francs (2,280 US\$) and a fine of 300 francs (325 US\$).

Tierwelt, November 21, 2021.¹⁴⁵



Beginning of December 2021

Schattdorf, Canton of Uri, Switzerland

A golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II) found with a bullet wound was entrusted to the care of the nature and wildlife park of Goldau (Canton Schwyz). The veterinarian hopes that it will be able to return to freedom after 2 months of treatment. 20 Minuten, January 13, 2022.¹⁴⁶

SOUTHERN EUROPE

CROATIA

November 13, 2021

Ilok, Vukovar-Syrmia County, Croatia. Border with Serbia.

Seizure of 9 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) in a truck registered in North Macedonia. The driver was fined 21,000 kunas or 3,240 US\$. Jutarnji list, November 18, 2021.¹⁴⁷



SPAIN

Beginning of September 2021

Olot, Province of Girona, Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain

62 birds were seized in a large operation carried out by rural agents. The man had 23 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 15 young and 8 adults, 21 common linnets (*Carduelis cannabina*, synonymous with *Linaria cannabina*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 11 young and 10 adults, 10 chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*), one juvenile and 9 adults, and 8 European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*), 4 young and 4 adults, in his home. The birds were seized and turned over to the Torreferrussa refuge. Some of the birds were used to bait their fellow birds. Hunting materials were also seized (among others recordings of bird songs, folding nets and a mist net).

La Vanguardia, September 9, 2021.¹⁴⁸

Beginning of September 2021

Teruel, Province of Teruel, Autonomous Community of Aragon, Spain

Sentencing of 2 individuals to pay a fine of 3,430 € (4,050 US\$) each for the capture, possession and trafficking of 195 protected birds, including 49 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 17 Eurasian siskins (*Carduelis spinus*, synonymous with *Spinus spinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 32 bramblings (*Fringilla montifringilla*), 73 chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*) and 24 European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*), and a hunting ban for 2 years. 21 birds were found dead.

Heraldo de Aragón, September 9, 2021.¹⁴⁹



September 16, 2021

Madrid, Community of Madrid, Spain

Alberto Sierra Olivan, originally from Logroño (autonomous community of La Rioja), had been arrested in April and June 2016 at the international airport of Lima, Peru. He was attempting to board a flight to Spain, in the first case with 10 Andean cocks-of-the-rock (*Rupicola peruvianus*, Appendix II) and in the second case with 34 birds including toucan barbet (*Semnornis ramphastinus*, Appendix III in Colombia), plate-billed mountain toucans (*Andigena laminirostris*) and crimson-rumped toucanets (*Aulacorhynchus haematopygus*). He had been condemned by Peruvian authorities to 2.5 years in prison but had left earlier and had returned to Spain.

Following his arrest, the Guardia Civil, Europol and Ameripol had launched in November 2017 the Sukazu operation (see "On the Trail" n°19 p.46) leading to the dismantling of an exotic bird smuggling gang, the seizure of 2,000 South American and African birds and the arrest of 29 people.

Alberto Sierra Olivan had been arrested again in 2018 (see "On the Trail" n°21 p. 39) in Logroño under an international arrest warrant for smuggling birds to Spain. Since then, Peru requested his extradition. The Public Ministry declared this Thursday its opposition. According to him, Alberto Sierra Olivan can neither be pursued for traffic of species since the concerned birds are not protected in Spain, nor for customs offense since the estimated value of the birds does not exceed 50,000 €. He will therefore be tried in Spain for administrative offenses.

Europa Press, September 15 and 16, 2021; La Rioja, September 16, 2021.¹⁵⁰

October 16 - November 13, 2021

Hondarribia, Province of Gipuzkoa, Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, Spain

The NGO Eguzki denounces a massacre of birds of prey shot in the province since the opening of the hunting season in early October:

- October 16, Errezil: a booted eagle (*Hieraetus pennatus*, Appendix II).
- October 16, Segura: a black-winged kite (*Elanus caeruleus*, Appendix II).
- October 24, Jaizkibel: a peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I).
- October 27, Usurbil: a Eurasian sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*, Appendix II).
- November 13, Hondarribia: a northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II).

El Diario Vasco, November 26, 2021.¹⁵¹



Mid October 2021

Piedra Buena, Province of Ciudad Real, Autonomous Community of de Castilla-La Mancha, Spain

Arrest of a suspect after the discovery of online ads offering to buy wild finches (family Fringillidae). At the suspect's home, Seprona (Servicio de Protección de la Naturaleza) and environmental officers confiscated protected live birds, mist nets, limestick trapping equipment and electronic lures. The birds were turned over to a wildlife rehabilitation center. 20 Minutos, October 19, 2021.¹⁵²

Beginning of November 2021

Granada, Province of Granada, Autonomous Community of d'Andalusia, Spain



Two suspects were arrested in flagrante delicto of poaching with limestick using 5 decoys. They had time to capture 23 birds. The 28 prisoners were immediately released. Granada Hoy, November 7, 2021.¹⁵³

Mid-November 2021

Granada and Alhendín, Province of Granada, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain



- Arrest of a 70-year-old man. He had placed 27 traps under fig trees and vineyards. Two European robins (*Erithacus rubecula*, Appendix III in Ukraine) were extracted.

- Arrest of 2 men aged 48 and 49. They were hunting finches (family Fringillidae) with limestick. The first one had placed as bait 2 live and 2 stuffed birds, the second one 4 live and 2 stuffed birds. Ideal, November 14, 2021.¹⁵⁴

Mid-November 2021

Province of Castellón, Valencian Community, Spain



The Seprona de la Guardia Civil de Castellón has indicted 10 poachers caught in the act with nets and birdlime. 25 live birds of different species, including song thrushes (*Turdus philomelos*, Appendix III in Ukraine), Eurasian blackcaps (*Sylvia atricapilla*, Appendix III in Ukraine), goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and common chiffchaffs (*Phylloscopus collybita*) were released. More than 80 dead birds.

Europa Press, November 12, 2021.¹⁵⁵

November 29, 2021

Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Province of Las Palmas, Autonomous Community of Canary Islands, Spain

Seizure on a farm of a grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I), a jandaya conure (*Aratinga jandaya*, Appendix II) and 2 nanday conures (*Nandayus nenday*, Appendix II) held without legal documents.

Diario de Lanzarote, December 7, 2021.¹⁵⁶

Beginning of December 2021

Albacete, Province of Albacete, Autonomous Community of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain



The owner of the hunting ground had scattered poisoned black pellets here and there. The main victims were several rabbits and red foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*), and no one would have noticed if a golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II) equipped with a GPS transmitter had not stopped there and been poisoned in turn. Concerned about the motionless signal, environmental officers inspected the area and discovered everything. PeriódicoCLM, December 1, 2021.¹⁵⁷

Beginning of December 2021

El Campello, Province of Alicante, Valencian Community, Spain

Guardia Civil agents managed to find the home of the illegally held blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) that had been reported to them in the neighborhood of Pueblo Acantilado. It was sequestered in the home of its owner. Elperiodic.com, December 10, 2021.¹⁵⁸



Mid December 2021

Monturque, Province of Cordoba, Community of Andalusia, Spain



The 2 suspects had placed 185 traps in the vineyards. To bait the birds, they used jars containing winged ants. 25 birds had died the day the authorities intervened: 9 song thrushes (*Turdus philomelos*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 2 common blackbirds (*Turdus merula*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 2 Eurasian blackcaps (*Sylvia atricapilla*, Appendix III in Ukraine), a Eurasian siskin (*Carduelis spinus*, synonymous with *Spinus spinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 7 black redstarts (*Phoenicurus ochruros*), as well as a garden dormouse (*Eliomys quercinus*) and 3 Algerian psammomomys (*Psammomomys algirus*).

El Día de Córdoba, December 18, 2021.¹⁵⁹

Mid December 2021
Iznájar, Province of Cordoba,
Autonomous Community of Andalusia,
Spain



With his 51 traps and winged ants, he had captured 27 birds on the shores of the artificial lake: 13 European robins (*Erithacus rubecula*, Appendix III), 6 common blackbirds (*Turdus merula*, Appendix III), a song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*, Appendix III), 5 sardinian warblers (*Sylvia melanocephala*), a black redstart (*Phoenicurus ochrurus*) and a chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*). All died. COPE, December 14, 2021.¹⁶⁰

December 18, 2021
Usera, Madrid Community, Spain

A surprise awaited the agents who came to carry out the health inspection of an Asian restaurant. There were 2 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II) in a cage in the kitchen, right next to a pot of boiling water. The employees were silent as to their origin and purpose, but it is unlikely that they were acquired for company. The undocumented birds were entrusted to the care of CRAS (Centro de Recuperación de Animales Silvestres). Europa Press, December 21, 2021.¹⁶¹

Year 2021
Tenerife Island, Autonomous
Community of the Canary Islands,
Spain



In 2021, the wildlife rehabilitation center of La Tahonilla saved the lives of 26 animals that fell victim to rodent glue traps: 7 owls (Strigidae, Appendix I or II), 10 kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II), a European robin (*Erithacus rubecula*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and 8 bats. The use of such traps is illegal. elDiario.es, December 26, 2021.¹⁶²

GREECE

September 10, 2021
Vasiliki, Region of Crete, Greece

A young Bonelli's eagle (*Hieraetus fasciatus*, Appendix II) was shot at close range after capturing a juvenile honey buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*, Appendix II). It was barely 6 months old. Its killer had hidden the carcass, but the active GPS transmitter made it possible to find it, with its prey at its side. The range of Bonelli's eagles extends from the Mediterranean Sea to southern China. They are about 70 cm long and weigh between 1.5 and 2.1 kg. They are recognizable as adults by the contrast between their brown back with a light patch and their white belly streaked with fine dark spots. The juveniles have a russet belly. Life Bonelli, September 15, 2021.¹⁶³

Mid-September 2021
Heraklion Regional Unit, Region of Crete, Greece

This time an Eleonora's falcon (*Falco eleonorae*, Appendix II) was targeted. It was still alive when it was found.

Eleonora's falcons reach 40 cm in length and weigh 340 to 460 grams. They nest preferably on Mediterranean islands and winter in Madagascar. They live in colonies of 5 to 20 pairs and are faithful to their breeding site, which makes them vulnerable to persecution by hunters, the looting of their nests and disturbance by tourists. Anima, September 16, 2021.¹⁶⁴

September 18, 2021
Neapoli, Region of Crete, Greece

The persecution of raptors in Crete is on the rise. A group of high school students and their teacher found the carcass of a common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) shot dead. Haniotika Nea, September 19, 2021.¹⁶⁵

Beginning of October 2021
Kallithea, Region of Attica, Greece



Arrival at the refuge of the NGO Anima of several birds of prey including 2 honey buzzards (*Pernis apivorus*, Appendix II) with gunshot wounds, a marsh harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*, Appendix II) which was poisoned and a short-toed eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*, Appendix II) which was electrocuted. Anima, October 8, 2021.¹⁶⁶

Beginning of October 2021
Naxos Island, South Aegean Region, Greece

Care by Alkioni, the wildlife hospital of the region, of a Eurasian hobby (*Falco subbuteo*, Appendix II) with a gunshot wound. Zoosos.gr, October 15, 2021.¹⁶⁷



October 6th, 2021

Between Kapetaniana and Loukia, Region of Crete, Greece

Return to Crete. A 1.5-year-old golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II) carrying a GPS transmitter was shot at close range in the Gortyne municipality, like the Bonelli's eagle that died in September. The 2 identification rings it was wearing on its legs are missing.

Life Bonelli eastMed project, October 19, 2021.¹⁶⁸

October 20, 2021

Paranesti Municipality, Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, Greece



The GPS signal carried by the 3-year-old golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II) had been strangely inactive since the day before. Authorities found it with a piece of meat in its beak and all the external signs of poisoning. Four kilometers away were the poisoned entrails of a western roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*).

The golden eagle had been monitored since 2019 as part of a doctoral thesis on 5 adults and 11 juveniles in the Rhodope National Park. Among them, another adult and 3 juveniles already died of poisoning, as well as 2 adults that were not monitored by the PhD student.

Hellenic Ornithological Society, October 27, 2021.¹⁶⁹

October 30, 2021

Rafina, Attica Region, Greece



Rescue following a tip-off of 14 European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*), a red-backed shrike (*Lanius collurio*) and a Eurasian magpie (*Pica pica*) trapped by gluaux. The poacher managed to escape by abandoning his equipment.

Anima, October 30, 2021.¹⁷⁰

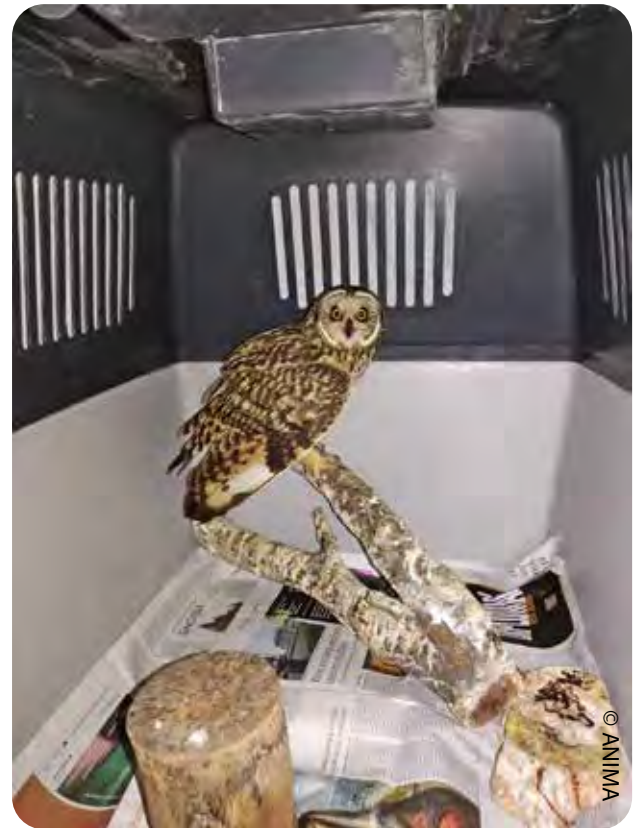


Beginning of November 2021

Kallithea, Region of Attica, Greece

Reception at the refuge of a short-eared owl (*Asio flammeus*, Appendix II) wounded by a bullet. Favorable prognosis.

Anima, November 8, 2021.¹⁷¹



Mid-November 2021

Island of Naxos, South Aegean Region, Greece

Two days, 2 Eurasian sparrowhawks (*Accipiter nisus*, Appendix II) found shot. They are now in the care of Alkioni.

Zoosos.gr, November 21, 2021.¹⁷²

November 28, 2021

Perama, Region of Attica, Greece

The alliance of different national and local services (forestry and police) and the Central Greek Hunting Federation allowed for the seizure of 256 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 100 Eurasian siskins (*Carduelis spinus*, synonymous with *Spinus spinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 17 common linnets (*Carduelis cannabina*, synonymous with *Linaria cannabina*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 3 red crossbills (*Loxia curvirostra*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 2 woodlarks (*Lullula arborea*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 32 European serins (*Serinus serinus*), 6 European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*), 5 ciril buntings (*Emberiza cirilus*), 2 blue tits (*Cyanistes caeruleus*) and one willow tit (*Poecile montanus*) at an open air market in Perama. The birds were entrusted to the Anima association in Kallithea.

Anima, November 29, 2021; Zoosos.gr, November 29, 2021.¹⁷³

Beginning of December 2021
Antiparos Island, Region of South Aegean, Greece

Arrival of a long-legged buzzard (*Buteo rufinus*, Appendix II) with a gunshot wound to the head at the wildlife hospital of Alkioni. Prognosis guarded. Long-legged buzzard, see "On the Trail" n°6 p.121 and n°7 p.27.

Zoosos.gr, December 10, 2021.¹⁷⁴

Year 2021
Kallithea, Region of Attica, Greece

97 birds were found shot dead in 2021 including 4 peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I), 43 common buzzards (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II), 2 northern harriers (*Circus cyaneus*, Appendix II),

9 Eurasian sparrowhawks (*Accipiter nisus*, Appendix II), 2 short-eared owls (*Asio flammeus*, Appendix II), 2 American flamingos (*Phoenicoterus ruber*, Appendix II), 2 kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II), one tawny owl (*Strix aluco*, Appendix II), 3 Eurasian eagle owls (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II), 2 honey buzzards (*Pernis apivorus*, Appendix II), 3 Eleonora's falcons (*Falco eleonora*, Appendix II), 2 long-eared owls (*Asio otus*, Appendix II), 12 yellow-legged gulls (*Larus michahellis*), 3 hooded crows (*Corvus cornix*), one little egret (*Egretta garzetta*), one Eurasian magpie (*Pica pica*), one mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), 3 grey herons (*Ardea cinerea*) and one mistle thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*).

Anima, January 5, 2022.¹⁷⁵

ITALY



Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*, Appendix III in Ukraine. Photo Lappugla



October 2 – November 7, 2021
Province of Brescia, Region of Lombardy



October 21, 2021. Province of Brescia, Region of Lombardy

6,169 birds poached or seized in Italy between September 1 and December 31, 2021, according to official and media sources



Sources: ABMreport ; BergamoNews ; BresciaToday ; Brindisi Oggi ; BsNews ; Calabria Magnifica ; Committee Against Bird Slaughter ; Consenza Channel ; Corriere Brescia ; Corriere della Calabria ; Espansione ; Firenze Post ; Flight for Survival ; Gazzetta del Sud ; Giornale di Brescia ; Giornale di Sicilia ; gonews.it ; Greenreport ; Il Corrierino ; Il Dolomiti ; Il Giornale di Vicenza ; Ilgiornalelocale ; Il Giorno ; Il Lametino ; Il Mattino ; Il Messaggero ; Il Resto del Carlino ; Il Torinese ; Kodami ; LaC News24 ; La Provincia Pavese ; L'Eco Vicentino ; La Repubblica ; La Stampa ; Libertà ; LiveSicilia ; LivornoToday ; MeridioNews ; MilanoToday ; Normanno ; Notizie di Prato ; Ohga ; PadovaOggi ; PerugiaToday ; Prima Brescia ; Autonomous Province of Trento ; Ottopagine ; QuiBrescia ; Autonomous Region of Sardinia ; Sardegna Reporter ; Sardinia Post ; SiracusaOggi ; StrettoWeb ; Telenord ; TorreChannel ; TrentoToday ; Tusciaweb ; Tviweb ; Umbria e Cultura ; Valdinievole Oggi.

NORTH MACEDONIA

End of November 2021

Vitolichté, Prilep Municipality, North Macedonia



Coordination between the Macedonian Ecological Society and the border police prevented the death of 18 griffon vultures (*Gyps fulvus*, Appendix II) at a poisoned dog kill site. As soon as they received the information, police officers went to the site and relentlessly kept out the vultures until the carcasses were removed. "In the case that they were to reach the poisoned animals, we could have faced a complete eradication of these birds in our country." There are an estimated 24 griffon vultures in North Macedonia. The Vulture Conservation Foundation estimates that between 1998 and 2018, 2,300 vultures died of poisoning in the Balkans.

Macedonian Ecological Society, December 3, 2021.¹⁷⁶

MALTA

End of October 2021

Dingli and Mizieb, Northern Region, Marsalforn and Xewkija, Gozo Region, Valletta, South Eastern Region, Malta



"On the Trail" n°31 p. 141 and n°33 p.182 mentioned the trapping of fringillids, including song thrushes (*Turdus philomelos*, Appendix III in Ukraine), for "scientific research", in violation of the European Birds Directive. Hunters participating in the project are obliged to release the finches and to provide information on the species and the number of specimens captured.

This "scientific hunt" which started on October 20 in the administrative chaos is a boon for poachers. The CABS (Committee Against Bird Slaughter) has identified at least 110 suspect sites. In half of these cases, the hunters presented police with a "special permit". Others were properly accredited for "scientific research" but used more nets than the regulatory maximum.

Before the hunting season began, joint efforts by CABS and the police had already resulted in the dismantling of 27 illegal trapping sites and the confiscation of 90 birds, including Eurasian siskins (*Carduelis spinus*, synonymous with *Spinus spinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine), common linnets (*Carduelis cannabina*, synonymous with *Linaria cannabina*, Appendix III in Ukraine), and hawfinches (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*).

Times of Malta, October 20 and 26, 2021; MaltaToday, October 26, 2021; European Commission, November 12, 2021.¹⁷⁷

REPEATED OFFENSE

November 4 and 5, 2021

Rabat, Northern Region, Malta

Two men filmed by CABS members poaching birds in the spring of 2019 have been fined 1,500 € (1,740 US\$). Their hunting licenses have been revoked for 2 years. The next day, one of the convicts was arrested after having just trapped 20 finches, in the same place as the first time.

Since September, CABS has reported 60 cases of illegal trapping to the authorities, resulting in the arrest of 25 poachers and the rescue of 211 birds, among which were common linnets (*Carduelis cannabina*, synonym of *Linaria cannabina*, Appendix III in Ukraine), European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), serins (*Serinus serinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine), hawfinches (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*), chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*), European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*) and larks (family Alaudidae).

MaltaToday, November 5, 2021; The Malta Independent, November 5, 2021; Committee Against Bird Slaughter, November 6, 2021; Times of Malta, November 6, 2021.¹⁷⁸



REPEATED OFFENSE

November 7, 2021

Mizieb, Northern Region, Malta

Surrounded by nature, it was a real fortified camp: 2 meters high barbed wire fences, guard dogs, aviaries full of decoys like hawfinches (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*) and large bird nets. But this did not prevent the police from arresting the 2 poachers and freeing one European robin (*Erithacus rubecula*, Appendix III in Ukraine). One of the poachers presented a hunting permit for "scientific research" but valid for another location. His accomplice had already been brought to justice in 2016 and 2018 for similar facts.

MaltaToday, November 9, 2021.¹⁷⁹

Mid-November 2021

Valletta, South Eastern Region, Malta

Sentencing of 4 poachers of finches (family Fringillidae) to fines ranging from 1,500 to 2,500 € (1,740 to 2,900 US\$).

Their hunting and trapping licenses are suspended for 2 years. They had been identified through CABS videos taken in March 2020.

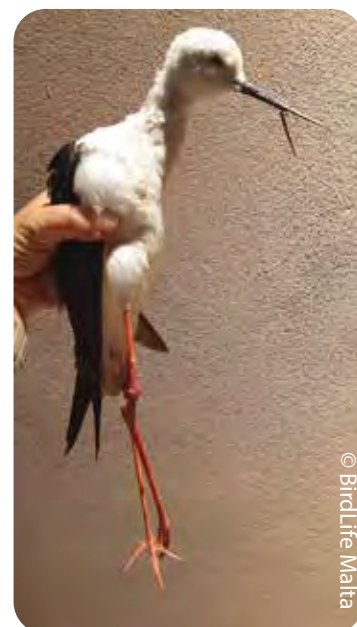
Committee Against Bird Slaughter, November 23, 2021.¹⁸⁰



YEAR OF 2021
MALTA

112 protected birds shot in Malta in 2021 according to BirdLife Malta:

- 54 kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II)
- 23 marsh harriers (*Circus aeruginosus*, Appendix II)
- 7 honey buzzards (*Pernis apivorus*, Appendix II)
- 4 American flamingos (*Phoenicopterus ruber*, Appendix II)
- 3 Eurasian sparrowhawks (*Accipiter nisus*, Appendix II)
- 3 short-eared owls (*Asio flammeus*, Appendix II)
- 3 falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II)
- 3 lesser kestrels (*Falco naumanni*, Appendix II)
- 2 Montagu's harriers (*Circus pygargus*, Appendix II)
- 2 black kites (*Milvus migrans*, Appendix II)
- 2 Egyptian vultures (*Neophron percnopterus*, Appendix II)
- 2 Eurasian golden orioles (*Oriolus oriolus*, Appendix III in Ukraine)
- 2 ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*, Appendix II)
- 1 pale harrier (*Circus macrourus*, Appendix II)
- 1 Eurasian hobby (*Falco subbuteo*, Appendix II)



BirdLife Malta, September 15 and 25, November 17 and 30, 2021 and February 4, 2022; Vulture Conservation Foundation, September 16, 2021; HPF Ranger Unit, October 31, 2021.¹⁸¹

SERBIA

November 28, 2021

Gradinje, Pirot District, Serbia. Border with Bulgaria.

The driver and his passenger had nothing to declare. However, in the vehicle there were 4 Eastern rosellas (*Platycercus eximius*, Appendix II), 47 cockatiels (*Nymphicus hollandicus*), 9 budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*), 4 rose-ringed parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*), 33 pigeons (genus *Columba*), 2 mandarin ducks (*Aix galericulata*), 2 diamond doves (*Geopelia cuneata*), and 2 Jacobin pigeons (*Columba livia*) in cages.

N1, January 11, 2022.¹⁸²

December 3-5, 2021

Jagodina, Leskovac, Bojnik, Lebane and Vlasotince, Jablanica District, Serbia



In 3 days, BirdLife Serbia counted poaching of 34 songbirds with limestick: European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), Eurasian siskins (*Carduelis spinus*, synonymous with *Spinus spinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine), Eurasian bullfinches (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*, Appendix III in Ukraine), common linnets (*Linaria cannabina*) and European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*).

Energetski portal, December 9, 2021; Južne vesti, December 9, 2021.¹⁸³

Mid-December 2021

Sombor, West Bačka District, Serbia



Sentence of a 57-year-old man to a fine of 50,000 dinars (480 US\$) for attempting to sell 3 stuffed birds in front of the "Monstonga" sports complex in January 2020: a European sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*, Appendix II), a Eurasian curlew (*Numenius arquata*) and a black-headed gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*).

Institute for Nature Conservation of Voivodina Province, December 17, 2021.¹⁸⁴

SLOVENIA

September 2021

Domžale, Upper Carniola Region, Slovenia



Birdlife Slovenia receives with bitterness the conviction of a poacher from whom 10 caged songbirds and capture nets were seized in October 2020. The man left the court with a warning. No witnesses were heard. "With such an epilogue, the Slovenian prosecutor's office once again informs bird poachers that they have nothing to worry about." Since the beginning of the year, the NGO has counted 56 cases of bird poaching.

Proti nezakonitemu lovu na ptice v Sloveniji, September 21, 2021.¹⁸⁵

Beginning of September 2021

Upper Carniola Region, Slovenia

Indictment of the owner of a field who was using the corpse of a European sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*, Appendix II) as a scarecrow.

Proti nezakonitemu lovu na ptice v Sloveniji, September 10, 2021.¹⁸⁶



End of November 2021

Cerkno, Gorizia Region, Slovenia

X-ray examination of the corpse of a golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II) revealed the presence of a hunting pellet.

Proti nezakonitemu lovu na ptice v Sloveniji, December 28, 2021.¹⁸⁷

EASTERN EUROPE

BULGARIA

Mid-September 2021

Dyankovo and Razgrad, Razgrad Region, Bulgaria

R.K. had long been suspected of poaching, but he had never been caught. But never say never. He was caught at night with 2 accomplices in the Voden Reserve. At his home, the police discovered about 20 stuffed animals, including a lesser spotted eagle (*Aquila pomarina*, Appendix II), a red-footed falcon (*Falco vespertinus*, Appendix II), a long-legged buzzard (*Buteo rufinus*, Appendix II), a marsh harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*, Appendix II), a pygmy cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmeus*), a common kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), a hawfinch (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*), a hoopoe (*Upupa epops*) and a common otter (*Lutra lutra*, Appendix I). He is suspected of selling his trophies on the Internet.

Trud, September 15 and 19, 2021; BNT, September 19, 2021.¹⁸⁸

September 17, 2021
Krumovgrad, Kardzhali Province, Bulgaria



There was nothing left to do. The dying black vulture (*Aegypius monachus*, Appendix II) still had some poisoned food in its beak when it was discovered. The flies that ventured in died on the spot. After the autopsy, the remains were handed over to the Green Balkans' Wildlife Rehabilitation and Breeding Centre for further research.

Vulture Conservation Foundation, September 29, 2021.¹⁸⁹

September 20, 2021
Yambol Province, Bulgaria

This time, a juvenile imperial eagle (*Aquila heliaca*, Appendix I) with a broken left wing is brought to the Green Balkans center. X-rays reveal the presence of 16 lead pellets. It is in critical condition. Plovdiv24.bg, September 22, 2021.¹⁹⁰

HUNGARY

September 8, 2021
Erd, Pest County, Hungary



The seller was shocked when he saw the police officers show up at his house instead of customers interested in his stuffed birds.

The online advertisement reported by BirdLife Hungary showed pictures of Eurasian golden orioles (*Oriolus oriolus*, Appendix III in Ukraine), common blackbirds (*Turdus merula*, Appendix III in Ukraine), Eurasian bullfinches (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*, Appendix III in Ukraine), European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), hoopoes (*Upupa epops*) fieldfares (*Turdus pilaris*), great reed warblers (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*), common kingfishers (*Alcedo atthis*), bohemian waxwings (*Bombycilla garrulus*), hawfinches (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*), European rollers (*Coracias garrulus*), European bee-eaters (*Merops apiaster*) and little bitterns (*Ixobrychus minutus*). The price was 20,000 forints (70 US\$) for a small bird, 25,000 forints (85 US\$) for a large one or 300,000 forints (1,020 US\$), which is a bargain, for the whole lot.

Hungarian Police, September 10, 2021.¹⁹¹

November 5, 2021
Hortobágy National Park, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, Heves, Hajdú-Bihar and Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok Counties, Hungary

The rules on greylag geese (*Anser anser*) hunting were loosened. Previously, it was limited to the months of December and January in this area. This year it was opened in October. One red-breasted goose (*Branta ruficollis*, Appendix II) was the intentional or accidental victim of this new legislation.

Red-breasted geese nest in Siberia but spend the winter further west in Europe. Their population, estimated to be between 44,000 and 56,000 individuals in 2015, is declining due to overhunting and the loss of the wetlands they love. HVG, November 10, 2021.¹⁹²

ROMANIA

November 11, 2021
Mures County, Romania



The limesticks and cages placed by poachers were removed in time. The birds, including European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and Eurasian siskins (*Carduelis spinus*, synonymous with *Spinus spinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine), were released, except for 3 wounded birds that were entrusted to the care of the Grupul Milvus association. Zi de Zi, November 11, 2021.¹⁹³

November 21, 2021
Constanta, Constanta County, Romania

Arrest of 2 men selling 60 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and Eurasian siskins (*Carduelis spinus*, synonymous with *Spinus spinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine) on a market for 15 to 20 leis per specimen (3.5 to 4.5 US\$). The birds were released.

Digi24, November 21, 2021.¹⁹⁴

December 18, 2021
Lake Sinoe, Constanta County, Romania

The male red-breasted goose (*Branta ruficollis*, Appendix II) had just arrived in Romania after its journey from Siberia when its GPS stopped transmitting. Members of the Romanian Ornithological Society combed the site of the last signal. They found the broken GPS, a piece of carcass and feathers. For them, there is no doubt that this is the work of a poacher. "Previously, we have always found tooth marks on the transmitters. In this case, we found no traces that would indicate that the bird was attacked by a predator."

România TV, January 17, 2022.¹⁹⁵

RUSSIA

September 2021

Priuralsky District, Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District, Russia

The police found the suspect at the Obskaya-Bovanenkovo highway. He was suspected of capturing gyr falcons (*Falco rusticolus*, Appendix I). He did not have any falcons on him. However, he had straps and caps for raptors and live pigeons, and most importantly, he was trying to swallow gyr falcon feathers.

Znak, October 14, 2021.¹⁹⁶

Mid-September 2021

Ust-Bolcheretsk District, Kamchatka Krai, Russia

Sentence of a man to a suspended sentence of 3 years and a fine of 100,000 rubles (1,360 US\$) for the commercial capture of 2 gyr falcons (*Falco rusticolus*, Appendix I) between October and December 2020.

Izvestia, September 16, 2021.¹⁹⁷



October 18, 2021

Stoiba, Amur Oblast, Russia

Discovery of a very weak golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II). The ornithologist in charge of its recovery is sure that it was held in captivity: "Its talons are worn, which is unusual for a wild bird. Apparently it was kept on a concrete floor. I was also alarmed by its behavior. The raptor is not at all afraid of people and easily takes meat in its hands." GTRK Amur, October 26, 2021.¹⁹⁸

October 22, 2021

Krasnoyarsk, Krasnoyarsk Krai, Russia

An Ural owl (*Strix uralensis*, Appendix II) came to an abrupt end on Solnechny Boulevard. It was well known by the locals for its familiarity and was willing to let itself be photographed at close range. It was found in a box with a cigarette in its beak, a stapler closed over its throat and numerous fractures.

Ural owls are similar to tawny owls but are larger (60 cm in height). They usually live in the taiga and are not afraid of humans. Their range extends from northern Europe to Japan.

Pskov Information Agency, October 22, 2021.¹⁹⁹

October 25, 2021

Yuzhnyy, Altai Krai, Russia

A female peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) was found poisoned by locals.

Katun24, October 27, 2021.²⁰⁰



November 2021

Ossora, Kamchatka Krai, Russia

Arrest of 3 men aged 34 to 57 for the capture and detention of 6 gyr falcons (*Falco rusticolus*, Appendix I) since August. The falcons were kept in a cellar awaiting shipment to the United Arab Emirates. The suspects intended to obtain 730,000 rubles (10,370 US\$) per bird. The falcons were released.

Kamchatka-Information, December 15, 2021; Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation, December 15, 2021.²⁰¹

November 3, 2021

Magadan, Magadan Oblast, Russia

Discovered at the edge of Nagayev Bay in critical condition, the Steller's sea eagle (*Haliaeetus pelagicus*, Appendix II) was patiently put back in shape by the volunteers of the Zoospas refuge. According to them, there is no doubt: "While it was just a chick, it was removed from the nest, domesticated and then abandoned." Another one that was used to take paid photos with tourists during the warm weather. Zoospas does not specialize in wild animals, so the young eagle will fly to the Yekaterinburg raptor rehabilitation center, where a fellow eagle with a gunshot wound from 2011 waits.

Steller's eagles reach one meter in length and weigh 6 to 9 kg. They live mainly in far Eastern Russia and go down to Japan and Korea to winter. They can live more than 20 years.

Magadanskaya Pravda, January 23, 2022; Vesti Ural, January 24, 2022.²⁰²

November 10, 2021

Irkutsk, Irkutsk Oblast, Russia

Seven individuals were arrested for capturing a peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) and a saker falcon (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II). They were planning to sell them to falconers or collectors. Some feathers had been plucked to prevent them from flying. They were released after intensive care. IRK.ru, November 10 and 12, 2021; Tayga Info, November 10, 2021.²⁰³

Mid-November 2021

Yamburg, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District, Russia

A female peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) was spotted with its legs tied with a rope. The bird of prey probably escaped from the hands of its captors.

Lenta.ru, November 15, 2021.²⁰⁴

November 26, 2021

Vladivostok, Primorsky Krai, Russia

Two "foreigners" are walking peacefully on the Tsesarevich quay. They start a discussion with a local. Suddenly, police officers surround them. The "tourists" were in Vladivostok to buy gyr falcons (*Falco rusticolus*, Appendix I), and their interlocutor, in connection with the authorities, had lured them with fake falcons.

GTRK Vladivostok, December 15, 2021; News VL, December 15, 2021.²⁰⁵

UKRAINE

December 2021

Kamchatka Krai, Russia

Arrest of a 38-year-old man living in Novosibirsk, more than 4,500 km away. He came to acquire 5 gyrfalcons (*Falco rusticolus*, Appendix I). The falcons were released.

Kamchatka-Information, February 16, 2022.²⁰⁶

9 and mid-December 2021

Krasnoselkup, Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District, and Kashino, Sverdlovsk Oblast, Russia

A 31-year-old man was holding a raptor identified as a golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II) at his home. He reportedly "found" it in May when it was just a chick. He had chained it up and made it his punching bag. The eagle had the right wing broken by a blow of stick. It was entrusted to the Upper Taz Nature Reserve (Tyumen oblast). The man is under house arrest.

At the same time, a white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*, Appendix I) also confiscated from an apartment in a nearby region and suffering from 2 fractures after being beaten was handed over to the Holzan raptor rehabilitation center.

Argoumenty i Fakty (AIF), December 10, 2021; New Day, December 10, 2021; Public Television of Russia, December 20, 2021.²⁰⁷

Mid-December 2021

Novosibirsk, Novosibirsk Oblast, Russia

A female northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II) suffering from multiple wounds after being shot several times in mid-air was handed over to the wildlife rehabilitation center.

Moskovski Komsomolets Novosibirsk, December 15, 2021.²⁰⁸

December 19, 2021

Pervomaiske and Chornomorske Districts, Republic of Crimea

More than 75 great bustards (*Otis tarda*,

Appendix II) died from poisoning by toxic red seeds for rodent control.

This is a major blow to the western Crimean population, estimated at 250 individuals. Even if the poisoning is not intentional, an investigation is opened for crimes against nature. The authorities remind that rodent poisons must be deposited in their roosts to avoid causing damage to the rest of the fauna.

The great bustards can grow to a meter long and weigh 4 kg. They live in groups in steppes and fields. The largest populations are in Russia and Spain. They are also found in Mongolia.

ForPost, December 20, 2021; Crimea News, December 22, 2021.²⁰⁹



September 5, 2021

Mizhrichcha, Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast, Ukraine

An osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*, Appendix II) was found completely bloodied. This young of the year, born in Finland, did not survive its encounter with poachers.

Volodumir Buchko, September 19, 2021; UAnimals, September 20, 2021.²¹⁰

September 23, 2021

Kyiv, Kyiv City, Ukraine

After long negotiations, with the support of the police, the NGO UAnimals managed to get a barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II) out of the Dictator nightclub where it was used as a living decoration.

UAnimals, September 24, 2021.²¹¹



September 26, 2021

Khmelnitskyi, Khmelnytskyi Oblast, Ukraine

This time the police officers paid little attention to the exploitation of falcons (Accipitridae, Appendix I or II) and owls (Strigidae, Appendix I or II). After reluctantly coming to see, they stated that taking paid photos with raptors was a "normal" attraction on the town festival day.

UAnimals, September 27, 2021.²¹²

End of October 2021

Dnipro, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, Ukraine

Borys Filatov, the mayor of Dnipro, receives a visit from a group of inhabitants who have come to congratulate him on his doctorate in political science. When they want to give him a present, he makes a face. The useless gifts pile up on his shelves. But the reality overcomes all his apprehensions.

"We give you an owl to symbolize your wisdom. Of course, it's not made of crystal, it's alive." The tawny owl (*Strix aluco*, Appendix II) came with a cage, a leash, and a box of frozen mice. As soon as their backs are turned, Filatov contacts ornithologists to arrange for the release of the owl, which apparently had just been captured since it was adapted to the wild.

Dnipro City, October 28, 2021; The Evening Dnipro, October 28, 2021.²¹³



Beginning of November 2021
Tuzly Lagoons National Nature Park, Bilhorod-
Dnistrovskiy District, Odessa Oblast, Ukraine



A farmer brings an injured common crane (*Grus grus*, Appendix II) back to his farm to save it and set it free. But the veterinarian he sent for was definite: a lead pellet had broken the bones of its wing and part of it had to be amputated. It will not be able to fly anymore. The bird is in transit in the administrative premises of the Tuzly Liman National Park before being transferred to the Odessa Zoo. Depo, November 5, 2021; Bessarabia Inform, December 8, 2021.²¹⁴

December 20, 2021
Mykolaiv, Mykolaiv Oblast, Ukraine

The New Year is approaching, and with it the white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*, Appendix I) exhibitors are coming back to offer paid photo sessions on Soborna Street (see "On the Trail" n°32 p.196). Volodymyr Topchy, the director of the municipal zoo, denounces the lack of reaction from the authorities. "Last year, we reported these activities for 3 to 4 months. This morning, the same people are back."

Inshe.tv, December 20, 2021.²¹⁵

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

28-29 November 2021
Frankston, State of Victoria, Australia

The robbery took place between 5:00 p.m. and 12:30 a.m. The well-informed burglars forced their way through the front door and made off with 2 scarlet macaws (*Ara macao*, Appendix I) valued at 60,000 AU\$ or 45,000 US\$.

9News, December 7, 2021.²¹⁶

FAMILY AFFAIRS
End of November 2021
Melbourne, State of Victoria, Australia

Former police officer Ann Maree Sloan was fined 1,000 AU\$ (750 US\$) for obstructing justice during an investigation into the poisoning of wedge-tailed eagles (*Aquila audax*, Appendix II).



On September 18, 2019, 2 officers from the Department of Environment, Water, Land and Planning visit the Sloan farmers' home. Three dead eagles poisoned by an insecticide used against moths are found on Brian Sloan's land near Violet Town, then 15 more, then 10 more... in all, 120 birds. Ann Maree Sloan, his wife, receives them. The inspectors found an invoice for 5,940 AU\$ (4,500 US\$) attesting the purchase of the organophosphorus insecticide "Le-Mat" by Brian and Kevin Sloan. They ask to see their 2 cell phones, but the SIM cards are gone. Mrs Sloan denies having removed them, then ends up retracting. Ironically, the agents find nothing conclusive.

Another central figure in the investigation is Ann Maree's 81-year-old mother-in-law, Dorothy. She is accused of setting poison bait that resulted in the deaths of 50 wedge-tailed eagles, a whistling kite (*Haliaeetus sphenurus*, Appendix II) and 48 other raptors in 2019. During a search of her home, officers also found 90 wedge-tailed eagles, 2 whistling kites, 25 other raptors, 15 roseate cockatoos (*Eolophus roseicapilla*, Appendix II), 5 sulfur-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua galerita*, Appendix II), a laughing kookaburra (*Dacelo novaeguineae*), and wildlife carcasses in the freezer.

Country News, June 17, 2021; Shepparton News, November 29 and 30 and December 10, 2021.²¹⁷

NEW ZEALAND

Beginning of November 2021
Golden Bay, Tasman District, New Zealand

Walkers found 2 keas (*Nestor notabilis*, Appendix II) shot dead. One of them was 1 year and 4 months old. The death occurred a few days before.

Keas are parrots endemic to the Southern Alps of New Zealand. They are vegetarians and scavengers. They are shy, gregarious



and noisy. Their name comes from their cry. Their population is estimated at 4,000 individuals. Persecuted in the 1970s by sheep farmers, they are now threatened by ermines and lead poisoning.

Department of Conservation, December 17, 2021.²¹⁸

VARIOUS REPTILE SPECIES



Roughtail rock agama (*Stellagama stellio*). Photo Bachar Azmeh

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

November 19, 2021 and July 21, 2022 Askham and Upington, Northern Cape Province, South Africa. Border with Namibia and Botswana.



Daniel Lohde and Marko Drescher, 2 German nationals, are caught in the act of transporting Armadillo girdled lizards (*Ouroborus cataphractus*, Appendix II), geckos (family Gekkonidae) and tortoises, which they intended to smuggle out of South Africa and introduce to the international exotic animal market. They also had heroin and other illegal substances in their possession.

On July 21, 2022, the Upington Magistrates' Court sentenced Lohde to 11 years' imprisonment or a fine of 175,000 rand (10,870 US\$) suspended for 5 years and Drescher to 10 years' imprisonment or a fine of 175,000 rand suspended for 5 years. In addition, Lohde must pay 350,000 rand (21,740 US\$) and Drescher 100,000 rand (6,210 US\$) to the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment. No sooner had they left court than they were re-arrested for another case of trafficking in endangered species in Gauteng. To be continued. SAPS, November 20, 2021; Independent Online, November 22, 2021; Save the Beasts, November 22, 2021; Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, July 22, 2022; Sowetan LIVE, July 22, 2022.¹

AMERICA

BRAZIL

September 12, 2021 Maceió, Alagoas State, Brazil

Seizure of 54 animals from a private home, including 11 boa constrictors (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II), 3 tegus (*Tupinambis* spp., Appendix II), 9 turtles (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II), 13 corn snakes (*Pantherophis guttatus*) and 2 grassland yellow finches (*Sicalis luteola*). The occupant of the premises said he had purchased them via the Internet. He was promptly presented to the "Central de Flagrantes," the investigation unit of flagrante delicto, and the animals were handed over to the Ibama.

G1 AL, September 12, 2021.²

CANADA

November 12, 2021 Parry Sound, Province of Ontario, Canada



Sentencing of David Ennis to a fine of 2,250 CA\$ (1,820 US\$) for possessing and trying to sell 4 snapping turtles (*Chelydra serpentina*, Appendix III in the United States of America), 2 midland painted turtles (*Chrysemys picta marginata*), 2 northern water snakes (*Nerodia sipedon*) and a gray tree frog (*Dryophytes versicolor*). Wildlife police had been put on Ennis' trail by Canada Post in October 2019. Ontario Government, November 12, 2021.³

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Beginning of December 2021

Bienville Parish, State of Louisiana, United States of America

Rescue of 2 royal pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II) and 5 live dogs in very poor condition and seizure of a dead iguana (*Iguana* spp., Appendix II) and chameleon (family Chamaeleonidae) from the home of 2 people imprisoned for common crimes. They will face new charges of animal cruelty. They are accused of not having taken the necessary steps to feed and maintain their pets during their deprivation of liberty.

KTBS 3, December 8, 2021.⁴

FRANCE (MARTINIQUE ET GUYANE)

End of October 2021

Departments of Guadeloupe and Martinique, France



After 18 months of investigation shared by the French Biodiversity Agency and the judicial customs under the coordination of the public prosecutor's office of Fort de France, Martinique, a wildlife network was dismantled. This resulted in the seizure of 283 animals of 27 species including boas (Boidae, Appendix I or II), monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp, Appendix I or II), geckos (infraorder Gekkota), lizards, pythons (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II) adults or juveniles and scorpions endemic to Martinique or imported from continental France and South America. Arrest of 17 people engaged in the transport, possession, breeding, marketing and falsification of administrative documents. The economic value of the seized animals is estimated at 125,000 € (145,700 US\$). The scorpions were released in appropriate environments but under the authority of the justice department, certain exotic specimens considered as potentially invasive which are unable to be welcomed by the French Caribbean zoos or by authorized persons will be voluntarily killed.

French Biodiversity Agency, October 28, 2021; Martinique la 1ère, October 30, 2021; 20 Minutes, March 14, 2022.⁵

MEXICO

Beginning of October 2021

Mexico City, Mexico

Seizure in the central bus station in a black bag next to a trash can of a boa (*Boa* spp., Appendix I or II), 3 terrestrial arboreal alligator lizards (*Abronia graminea*, Appendix II), 3 geckos, 2 turtles and 2 torquate lizards (*Sceloporous torquatus*). La Crónica de Hoy, October 4, 2021.⁶

ASIA

CHINA

November 2021

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Postal Customs seizure of 4 crocodile skin belts (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II) and 2 python skin handbags (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II).

Chinese Customs, November 29, 2021.⁷



PHILIPPINES

December 2021

Ninoy Aquino International Airport, Manila, National Capital Region, Philippines



Postal Customs seizure in 2 packages declared to contain "children's toys" from Thailand of 6 live black-and-white tegus (*Salvator merianae*, Appendix II) and 22 live bearded dragons (genus *Pogona*).

Bureau of Customs, January 5, 2022; Philippine News Agency, January 5, 2022; UNTV, January 5, 2022.⁸

EUROPE

BULGARIA

October 30, 2021

Sofia International Airport, Sofia City Oblast, Bulgaria

Seizure by customs in a parcel from Argentina of the skin of a broad-nosed caiman (*Caiman latirostris*, Appendix I except Appendix II in Argentina), 204 cm long and 60 cm wide, the skin of a yellow anaconda (*Eunectes notaeus*, Appendix II), 260 cm long and 20 cm wide, and the skin of an Argentine boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor occidentalis*, Appendix I), 235 cm long and 25 cm wide. NOVA, December 7, 2021.⁹

SPAIN

End of October 2021

Badalona, Province of Barcelona, Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain

Seizure in a warehouse of a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix I or II), a python (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), 2 Asiatic rock pythons (*Python molurus*, Appendix II), a green iguana (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), a white-lipped pit viper (*Trimeresurus albolabris*), a green vine snake (*Ahaetulla nasuta*), and 6 kg of marijuana buds, 500 grams of hashish, 1,103 pills and 2 kg of ecstasy powder, 1,500 grams of methamphetamine, 2,300 grams of amphetamine, 8 kg of cocaine paste, 250 grams of hallucinogenic mushrooms and 310 grams of heroin. Six arrests. Crónica Global, October 26, 2021.¹⁰

Beginning of December 2021

Palencia, Province of Palencia, Autonomous Community of Castile and León, Spain

Seizure of a Burmese python (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II), 2 Madagascar day geckos (*Phelsuma madagascariensis*, Appendix II), 2 tokay geckos (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II), a common wall gecko (*Tarentola mauritanica*), a corn snake (*Pantherophis guttatus*), 2 rough-scaled plated lizards (*Broadleysaurus major*), 2 green basilisks (*Basiliscus plumifrons*), 2 Guichenot's giant geckos (*Rhacodactylus ciliatus*), an Algerian skink (*Eumeces algeriensis*) and 2 Central bearded dragons (*Pogona vitticeps*). Arrest of 2 men aged 22 and 24 years. Europa Press, December 9, 2021.¹¹

FRANCE

October 8, 2021

Clamart, Department of Hauts-de-Seine, France

The BAC (Brigade Anti-Criminalité) intervened in a private home for regular crimes and found 5 Greek tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II) and a spiny-tailed lizard (*Uromastix* spp., Appendix II). In liaison with the French Biodiversity Agency, the animals were seized. Placed in police custody, the individual said he bought the turtles at a market in Montreuil, Seine-Saint-Denis, and "found" the lizard in summer in Montpellier in the south of France. Actu Hauts-de-Seine, October 14, 2021.¹²

HUNGARY

October 29, 2021

Budapest Ferenc Liszt International Airport, Hungary

Seizure in a parcel from Egypt of 1,300 exotic "pets" including various squamates (order Squamata), geckos (infraorder Gekkota), snakes, spiders and rougtail rock agamas (*Stellagama stellio*). Rougtail rock agamas are agamas measuring about 30 cm long whose range covers Western Asia, Egypt, and Greece. Captured for the pet market, they are threatened in Egypt.

National Tax and Customs Office of Hungary, October 29, 2021.¹³



ITALY

September 9, 2021

Grosseto, Province of Grosseto, Region of Tuscany, Italy

Seizure in an abandoned house of a black-and-white tegu (*Salvator merianae*, Appendix II), 2 pond sliders (*Trachemys scripta*), 2 geckos (family Gekkonidae), several surviving dogs and cats and a dead dog. The 2 women who occupied the place are wanted by authorities.

La Nazione, September 10, 2021.¹⁴

THE NETHERLANDS

OPERATION THUNDER 2021

October 2021

The Netherlands

Seizure in the framework of Operation Thunder coordinated by Interpol and conducted jointly by the NVWA (Nederlandse Voedsel- en Warenautoriteit), the National Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority, the police and customs, of 145 reptiles and amphibians including alligator lizards (*Abronia* spp, Appendix I or II), rattlesnakes (subfamily Crotalinae) and tree frogs (5 were dead)

in the suitcase of a traveler going from Mexico to Russia, several postal packages full of food supplements based on plant and animal extracts of endangered species, caviar and saiep (4.5 kg), an orchid tuber meal.

At Schipol Airport in Amsterdam, several pieces of passenger luggage were found to contain meat of python (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), queen conch (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II) and iguana (family Iguanidae).

In the province of Overijssel, 121 juvenile boa constrictors (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II) and 10 snakes of the genus *Heterodon* were confiscated from an undeclared breeder pending investigation. Jamie Bouhuys, NVWA inspector, is pleased with this spectacular record and at the same time is concerned about the volume and diversity of trafficking and the dangers to public safety. He cites the example of the owner of a white-throated monitor (*Varanus albigularis*, Appendix II) who no longer dared to open the terrarium door. He had bought it when it was a few dozen centimeters long and it grew to a 1.5-meter-long carnivore with razor sharp teeth.

BN DeStem, December 1, 2021; Westlanders.nu, December 1, 2021.¹⁵



TORTOISES AND FRESHWATER TURTLES

Most important seizures of the quarter :

Red-eared slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) : 9,004
Radiated tortoise (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) : 2,052
Indian star tortoise (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I) : 795

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

Beginning of October 2021

Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa

The veterinary caretakers of Alphen aan den Rijn, Netherlands (see below p.193), should have sought advice from the veterinary clinic in Johannesburg. There, a leopard tortoise (*Stigmochelys pardalis*, Appendix II), former pet, arrived injured and anemic. The left leg was healed and bandaged. Too often people think of land turtles as only eating lettuce, which is not sufficient. The leopard tortoise received a blood transfusion from a fellow tortoise and its diet was supplemented with succulents and other plants. The prognosis was very poor at the time of its arrival, but now it is very good.

Karin Lourens, October 8, 2021; Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital, November 11, 2021.¹



MADAGASCAR

September 2021

Tsihombe, Androy Region, Madagascar

Supervised release of 1,000 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) into a 6-hectare enclosure. The wooden fences will be removed over time to facilitate their dispersal into a suitable habitat, which the Turtle Survival Alliance has chosen not to name for safety reasons.

RFI, September 23, 2021.²



Mid-September 2021

Beloha, Androy Region, Madagascar

Seizure and transfer to the natural area of Analama-havelona of 15 adult and 9 juvenile radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) and seizure of 80 remains (carapaces and offal) from the butchering and commercialization of the meat. Six arrests. Newsmada, September 22, 2021.³

October 21, 2021

Antananarivo, Analamanga Region, Madagascar

It's another version of the Milkmaid and her pail (Perrette et le pot au lait), the fable of Jean de la Fontaine, the 17th century French writer. He already saw himself after a 900 km bus ride from Toliara in the south to Antananarivo (or Tananarive) in the north selling one by one for around 3,000 € (3,500 US\$) the almost 80 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I), taking advantage of the craze in Asia for this endemic species of his big island and the partial resumption of international flights. Everything collapsed because of a phone call received by the gendarmes who were waiting for him at the bus station. The trafficker is about 30 years old.

L'Express de Madagascar, October 22, 2021.⁴

December 30, 2021

Tranovaho, Androy Region, Madagascar

Seizure from the back of a pick-up truck of 868 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) distributed in 12 bags. The gendarmes, once again well informed, were waiting for the arrival of the convoy coming from Soamanitra to intercept it.

The village is known to be a transit platform for turtles captured in the last fragments of dry and thorny forests of the Androy region in the south of the big island. Two of the 3 traffickers were arrested. They had wrongly convinced themselves, in agreement with the other members of the network, that the festive night of New Year's Eve was the best time to move around in peace and deliver the cargo to the north of the island. The turtles were handed over to the Turtle Survival Alliance.

2424.mg, December 30, 2021; Réunion la 1^{ère}, January 3, 2022; Turtle Survival Alliance, January 15, 2022.⁵

UGANDA

September 3 and 20, 2021

Kirambula, Central Region, Uganda

Juvenal Rugambwa, age 57, was not well regarded in the village. He claimed to be the son of Joseph Kibwetere and kept his photograph in his home. Kibwetere is one of the founders, in the 1980s, of the sect called the Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God which believed the end of the world would take place in 2000. In March 2000, when confronted with the falsity of their predictions, the leaders of the sect set fire to a church in which they had locked up their followers. They had previously murdered and poisoned others. Authorities determined that it was not a mass suicide but a murder.

So when his neighbors heard a little girl crying at Juvenal's house and saw him digging a grave in his garden, they didn't hesitate. They climbed over the fence as soon as his back was turned. The grave was open, and the girl was under a tarp. They immediately called the police. Juvenal and his wife Winnie were arrested. They said they dug the grave in case their very sick daughter died. The malnourished girl was transferred to Luweero Hospital. According to some sources, she was a kidnapped child.

Juvenal was released on bail but was arrested again when the police found 4 turtles in his house. They were seized and handed over to the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA).

The Independent, September 10 and 22, 2021; The Observer, September 11, 2021; Daily Monitor, 24 September 2021.⁶

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

September 2, 2021

Eugene, State of Oregon, United States of America

Sentencing of Yuan Xie, age 30, to 5 years of supervised release and 50 hours of community service between May 2017 and October 2018 for purchasing 769 live turtles from reptile fairs or stores. The offenses occurred in 9 States including Alabama, South Carolina, Nevada, and Michigan. He then shipped the turtles them to China by mail. The primary species trafficked by Xie and Xiao Dong Qin, his partner in organized crime, were common box turtles (*Terrapene carolina*, Appendix II), wood turtles (*Glyptemys insculpta*, Appendix II), spotted turtles (*Clemmys guttata*, Appendix II), diamondback terrapins (*Malaclemys terrapin*, Appendix II), and Blanding's turtles (*Emydoidea blandingii*, Appendix II).

Hours of being interviewed by a Maryland social scientist may be counted as community service. "The government supports designating a portion of Xie's community service to participating in academic research related to conservation and the



prevention of future wildlife trafficking," the prosecutor said in his closing statement. Xie, as part of his guilty plea, had already agreed



to pay 2,233 US\$ to a turtle sanctuary near Chicago and The Turtle Conservancy near Los Angeles to offset the cost of housing and caring for the few turtles seized from his former home in Eugene. Qin, his partner, was previously sentenced in February of 2020 to 2 years of probation and ordered to pay 8,000 US\$ to support land turtle habitat restoration. US Department of Justice, May 6 and September 2, 2021; E&E News, September 15, 2021.⁷

September 3, 2021

State of Texas, United States of America

Jorge Alonso Gutierrez was sentenced to 3 years in prison followed by 3 years of supervised release for having acted as an intermediary in a wildlife smuggling ring between Mexico and the United States between April 2015 and February 2020. Gutierrez's role was essentially to receive the goods at Mexico City's Benito-Juárez international airport and pass them on to another link in the chain who transported them by car to the United States via the border crossing point in El Paso, Texas. The economic value of all the live (or dying) animals whose smuggling was facilitated by Gutierrez exceeds 3.5 million US\$. He paid airport employees so that they did not inspect "his" packages. He specialised in birds including toucans (family Ramphastidae), turtles including Central American river turtles (*Dermatemys mawii*, Appendix II), snakes including boa constrictors (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II), lizards including Yucatán spiny-tailed iguanas (*Ctenosaura defensor*, Appendix II). He also handled spiny-headed tree frogs (*Anotheca spinosa*) and red-lipped arboreal alligator lizards (*Abronia lythrochila*, Appendix II). In a few cases, trafficking was in the opposite direction and Gutierrez on order fraudulently imported "goods" from the United States into Mexico, including Gaboon vipers (*Bitis gabonica*), African spurred tortoises (*Centrochelys sulcata*, Appendix II) and black-necked spitting cobras (*Naja nigricollis*). For 4 years, the gang's communications were intercepted by investigators. Some of the messages show the difficulties and cruelties of the "job": "Tape their beaks so they do not make noise and tie them up very well" they say among themselves about toucans known for their noisy cries that can alert road or postal customs.

Alejandro Carrillo, one of the smugglers via the El Paso border crossing, was sentenced in March 2021 to one year and eight months in prison (see "On the Trail" n°30 p.127).

US Department of Justice, September 3, 2021; The Washington Post, September 11, 2021.⁸



October 5, 2021

Miami, State of Florida, United States of America

Michael Van Nostrand and his company Strictly Reptiles Inc. are being prosecuted for trafficking striped mud turtles (*Kinosternon baurii*) that were captured by a team of swamp collectors and exported to China and Japan along with other species under the name of farmed turtles. Van Nostrand has already made a name for himself. The 2008 bestseller "The Lizard King" recounts and embellishes his worldwide search for reptiles of interest to collectors.

US Department of Justice, October 5, 2021; Sun-Sentinel, November 10, 2021.⁹

LATIN AMERICA

BOLIVIA

Mid-September 2021

San Javier, Province of Cercado, Department of Beni, Bolivia

Over 30 yellow-headed sideneck (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II) nets were looted by the Mamoré River. The Beni Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources announced that it was strengthening surveillance around the area, particularly on the pathways that lead to Trinidad where turtle eggs are commercialized.

La Palabra del Beni, September 12, 2021.¹⁰

BRAZIL

September 28, 2021

Monte Alegre, State of Pará, Brazil

The police seized 22 turtles including 5 yellow-spotted river turtles (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II) that were for sale at a shack. The turtles were released into their habitat.

G1 Santarém e Região, September 28, 2021.¹¹

October 5, 2021

Maicá Port, Santarém, State of Pará, Brazil



The police seized more than 200 turtle eggs, 2 live turtles, and a cool box containing turtle meat. Two men were taken to the police station. G1 Santarém e região, October 5, 2021.¹²

October 22, 2021

Araguaiana, State of Mato Grosso, Brazil



During a night patrol on the MT-100 highway, the police seized a hundred of turtle eggs inside a car and one piranha (*Brachyplatystoma filamentosum*). G1 MT, October 23rd, 2021.¹³

November 20, 2021

Caracaráí, State of Roraima, Brazil



Arrest of 5 people, aged between 21 and 38 years and seizure of more than 160 South American river turtles (*Podocnemis expansa*, Appendix II). They were packed in bags stored on a boat and in a shack on a bank of the Rio Branco, a tributary of the Rio Negro.

G1 Roraima, November 21st, 2021.¹⁴

COLOMBIA

September 23rd, 2021

Medellín, Department of Antioquia, Colombia

The authorities seized more than 100 turtles (*Rhinoclemmys melanosterna* and *Trachemys venusta*). They were born in captivity but might be released into the wild. For Medellín Conservation Park's veterinarian Natacha Mejía Castrillón, "the probability of survival is high with these species" as "reptiles are born without maternal care, so they are animals with a high survival instinct."

La Prensa Latina (with EFE), September 24, 2021.¹⁵

Beginning of October 2021
Bogotá, Department of Cundinamarca, Colombia



Gerardo Enrique Álvarez was about to sell 11 red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II) on social networks. He enters the history of Colombia as the first person charged with wildlife trafficking since the Environmental Crimes Act came into force. El Espectador, October 3rd, 2021.¹⁶

ECUADOR

Mid-October 2021
Southern Isabela Island, Galápagos National Park, Galápagos Province, Ecuador

Efforts to save the Galapagos giant tortoises (*Chelonoidis niger*, Appendix I) from extinction are being undermined by a few poachers who are raiding the most remote areas. Forest rangers discovered 15 turtles recently shot on the Sierra Negra volcano. KATU, October 18, 2021.¹⁷



ASIA

CAMBODIA

Beginning of October 2021
Cambodia

Seizure and release of 70 turtles, Asian leaf turtles (*Cyclemys dentata*, Appendix II), South Asian box turtles (*Cuora amboinensis*, Appendix II) and black marsh turtles (*Siebenrockiella crassicolis*, Appendix II). Wildlife Crime Hotline, October 12, 2021.¹⁸

December 2021
Sihanoukville Province, Cambodia

Raid of 2 restaurants in the province and seizure of 7 live Asian leaf turtles (*Cyclemys dentata*, Appendix II) and 2 live Asiatic soft-shell turtles (*Amyda cartilaginea*, Appendix II). Released into the wild. Wildlife Crime Hotline, February 8, 2022.¹⁹



CHINA

December 1, 2021
Qingdao, Shandong Province, China



Two individuals are ordered to pay jointly and severally 30,000 yuan (4,700 US\$) for severe ecological damage. Between December 2018 and May 2019, via the Internet they purchased a radiated tortoise (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) and another exotic tortoise whose species experts were unable to determine. Both turtles died shortly after acquisition. Radiated tortoises in China, see "On the Trail" n°4 p.28, n°6 p.18, n°10 p.16, n°14 p.19, n°16 p.102, n°23 p.154, n°26 p.24, n°29 p.135, n°30 p.130 and n°32 p.204. Xiaoxiang Morning Herald, December 2, 2021.²⁰

INDIA

September 8, 2021
Surroundings of Salhantpur, Siddharthnagar District, Uttar Pradesh State, India

The suspect was arriving from Nepal with a turtle of an unspecified species weighing 845 g. He came across an SSB patrol accompanied by Forest Department officers. Sashastra Seema Bal, September 2021.²¹

September 18, 2021
Dineshpur, Udham Singh Nagar District, State of Uttarakhand, India

The police had received a call on Saturday the next day, 2 men traveling on a motorcycle would be transporting turtles for sale in Kantopa, a village on the road to Kashipur. A roadblock was immediately set up and indeed a motorcycle with 2 men and large bags on board approached and attempted to flee. The 2 men were finally arrested. They declared to have bought the turtles from fishermen in Rampur. Seizure of 8 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I), including one weighing 16 kg. The Times of India, September 19, 2021.²²

Night of September 20 to 21, 2021
Pulbhatta, Udham Singh Nagar District, State of Uttarakhand, India

Once again, a man on a motorcycle refused to comply and sped up. He was caught by the police. He had 33 turtles on his luggage rack. Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I) and Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II) are the most trafficked turtles in the district. Hindustan Times, September 22, 2021.²³

September 22, 2021

Nagaur, Nagaur District, State of Rajasthan, India

One Indian star tortoise (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I), 2 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I) and 3 Indian peacock softshell turtles (*Nilssonina hurum*, Appendix I) were seized from 2 men who had just arrived at a hotel in the city. The motorcycle was also seized.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), Sept. 23, 2021; Dainik Bhaskar, Sept. 23, 2021.²⁴



September 22, 2021

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

Kuldeep was riding a motorcycle with 20 turtles in his bag on the Kashipur road.

Hindustan Times, September 23, 2021.²⁵

Beginning of October 2021

Singha Patti, Kushinagar District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Under 12 bags of onions, Rajneesh, Rakesh, Raju, Suresh, Vinod and Babulal were carrying 218 turtles, 67 adults and 151 juveniles. The truck came from Bihar and was heading to West Bengal (420 km from center to center).

Turtles trafficked between Bihar and West Bengal include Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I), Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I), spotted pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I), Indian peacock softshell turtles (*Nilssonina hurum*, Appendix I), Indian roofed turtles (*Pangshura tecta*, Appendix I), Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II), Indian tent turtles (*Pangshura tentoria*, Appendix II), Indian narrow-headed softshell turtle (*Chitra indica*, Appendix II) and crowned river turtles (*Hardella thurjii*, Appendix II). See "On the Trail" n°2 p.15 and 16, n°3 p.10, n°4 p.18 and 19, n°5 p.18 and 19, n°6 p.17 and 18, n°7 p.14, n°8 p.12, 13 and 14, n°9 p.13, n°10 p.14, 15 and 16, n°15 p.20 n°16 p.18 and 19, n°20 p.25, n°21 p.17 and p.21, n°23 p.28, n°24 p.23 and 89, n°25 p.27, n°27 p.28, n°28 p.28, n°29 p.135, n°31 p.152 and 153 and n°32 p.204 and 205.

Dainik Jagran, October 7, 2021.²⁶

November 12, 2021

Bangalore, Bangalore Urban District, State of Karnataka, India

National Travels employees spot at least 7 unregistered boxes on a bus bound for Chennai (340 km away). After inventory, it turns out that they contain 170 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I) aged about 2 months.

The Hindu, November 13, 2021; The Times of India, November 15, 2021.²⁷

November 15, 2021

Bangalore, Bangalore Urban District, State of Karnataka, India

After a break due to Covid and air traffic disruption, India's start tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I) are once again under heavy pressure. At about 11 p.m., Mutthu Hamad Meera Bin Wahab Haut was intercepted by the police. He was carrying 41 individuals. 21 were dead, 20 were dying. They were at the bottom of the bags. Turtles are treated like stones. He was trying to reach Chennai. It is said that the cargo was destined for the Middle East and the United States of America. Why not Sri Lanka? Some tribes are specialized in catching, storing (which takes the false name of breeding) and trading these turtles. This happens around Kolar, Chikkaballapur and Balegowdanahalli. Interventions by forest officials or other State services are complicated. "Women throw themselves, and sometimes their children, in front of moving vehicles," according to Sharath Babu, an animal rights activist, and it is true that "On the Trail" has often described scenes of violence and hasty withdrawal of law enforcement officers when they intervene in isolated camps to investigate trafficking in endangered species or to take suspects into custody or seize animals awaiting market. Sanjeev Pednekar, a "conservationist" who is very knowledgeable about India's star tortoises, is also concerned about the fate of those that are seized. "The biggest challenge for us is to make sure that rescued tortoises are rehabilitated and released into proper habitats." If possible, this should be away from poaching hot spots.

Deccan Herald, November 17 and 23, 2021; The Times of India, November 17, 2021.²⁸



November 20, 2021

Darjeeling More, Darjeeling District, State of West Bengal, India

Seizure of 3 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssoniana gangetica*, Appendix I). Arrest of 3 men coming from Bihar and heading to Siliguri.

The Telegraph India, November 22, 2021.²⁹

November 21, 2021

Lucknow, Lucknow District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Arrest of Ravindra Kumar, Saurabh Kashyap and Armaan Ahmed in the residential area of Indira Nagar. Seizure of 260 turtles in burlap bags. The most trafficked and poached turtles in Uttar Pradesh are Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I), Indian peacock softshell turtles (*Nilssoniana hurum*, Appendix I), Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssoniana gangetica*, Appendix I), Indian roofed turtles (*Pangshura tecta*, Appendix I), spotted pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I), black softshell turtles (*Nilssoniana nigricans*, Appendix I), Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II), Indian tent turtles (*Pangshura tentoria*, Appendix II), Indian narrow-headed softshell turtles (*Chitra indica*, Appendix II), red-crowned roofed turtle (*Batagur kachuga*, Appendix II) and softshell turtles (family Trionychidae).

Turtles in Uttar Pradesh, see "On the Trail" n°3 p.10 and p.12, n°5 p.18 and p.19, n°6 p.16 and p.18, n°11 p.15, n°12 p.19, n°15 p.19, n°16 p.18-19, n°17 p.20 and p.21, n°20 p.25, n°22 p.22, n°23 p.27 and p.28, n°28 p.28, n°30 p.132, n°31 p.151, p.152 and p.153, n°32 p.205 and n°33 p.192.

Dainik Jagran, Nov. 21, 2021; WCCB, Nov. 22, 2021.³⁰

November 27, 2021

Sagar, Sagar District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

The red-crowned roofed turtle (*Batagur kachuga*, Appendix II) gang is about to be released. Eleven members out of the 13 sentenced to 7 years in prison in June 2021 (see "On the Trail" n°33 p.191) are acquitted on appeal and the sentence of the 2 others is reduced to 3 years. As they have been in prison since their arrest in 2017 (see "On the Trail" n°17 p.41), they are all releasable except Manni Murugushan who is the subject of an Interpol red notice. His extradition is requested by Thailand where he is suspected of having organised the smuggling of 890 turtles in 2012. In justifying the acquittal of almost all the repeated traffickers of red-crowned roofed turtles and pangolin scales, the court noted that the charges of trafficking in conspiracy were without basis and that the forest guards had falsely claimed to be cyber experts. According to the lawyer of Thamim Ansari, one of the convicts, the case was plagued with several other flaws.

On Thamim Ansari's involvement in the trafficking and the identity of the other parties involved, see "On the Trail" n°17 p.41, n°19 p.21-22, n°20 p.25, n°22 p.23 and n°33 p.191.

The Madhya Pradesh Forest Department has announced its intention to appeal the decision. The Times of India, November 28, 2021.³¹



December 11, 2021

Panchpota, North 24 Parganas District, State of West Bengal, India



Four arrests in the city market and seizure of 95 live and 4 dead turtles (species not specified). Operation conducted by WCCB feds, Wildlife Crime Control Unit (WCCU) and State Forest Department. WCCB, December 13, 2021.³²

December 21, 2021

Bandel, Hooghly District, State of West Bengal, India

Babulal Kanjar from Amethi in Uttar Pradesh was stopped by the railway brigade with 100 freshwater turtles in his bag on the Doon Express train. On the Doon Express, there have already been seizures of river terrapins (*Bataguraska*, Appendix I) and Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II) (see "On the Trail" n°21 p.21, n°23 p.28 and n°28 p.28).

Hooghly District, see "On the Trail" n°23 p.28 and p.132, n°28 p.84 and n°30 p.143.

Anandabazar Patrika, December 26, 2021.³³

FAMILY AFFAIRS

December 27, 2021

Sultanpur, Sultanpur District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Seizure of 80 kg of turtle calipee, a light yellow gelatinous deposit that surrounds the lower shell of soft-shelled turtles. The substance is highly sought after in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Bangladesh and India, particularly in West Bengal. It is rumored to have healing and aphrodisiac properties. Calipee, see "On the Trail" n°20 p.25, n°26 p.24 and n°31 p.151 and p.152. WCCB, December 28, 2021.³⁴



December 29, 2021

Belghoria, North 24 Parganas District, State of West Bengal, India

Arrest of Sandipan Biswas and Saurabh Munshi, residents of New Barrackpore, 10 km away, on the expressway and seizure of 50 protected turtles that they were planning to resell.

Asianet News, December 29, 2021.³⁵

JORDAN

October 2021

Jaber Border Post, Jordan. Border with Syria.

Seizure of turtles hidden inside a bag of meat in a vehicle coming from Syria.

International Truth for Studies and Research, October 18, 2021.³⁶

PAKISTAN

October 3, 2021

Karachi, Province of Sindh, Pakistan

The man was denounced. He was arrested on under the direction of Naeem Khan, head of the wildlife trafficking police. He was carrying 40 black pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I). They were released the same day into Lake Haleji, a sanctuary for aquatic wildlife.

The Pakistani newspaper Nation recalls that freshwater turtles contribute to the sanitation of surface waters by eating dead animals. They are to some extent the vultures of lakes and rivers.

Samaa, October 10, 2021; The Nation, October 11, 2021.³⁷

SRI LANKA

Beginning of October 2021

Negombo, Western Province, Sri Lanka

The police arrested 3 people, 2 of them of Indian nationality. They were about to leave Negombo with 223 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I).

News 1st, October 11, 2021.³⁸

THAILAND

September 27, 2021

Mae Sot Border Post, Tak Province, Thailand. Border with Myanmar.

A Thai national is caught at the Mae Sot border post with 100 star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans* or *Geochelone platynota*, Appendix I) and 9,000 red-eared sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*), all destined for the Chatuchak market in Bangkok. Star turtles sell for around 15,000 baht (460 US\$).

Burmese star tortoises (*Geochelone platynota*) are endemic to Myanmar. They look like Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*) but have flattened vertebral scales and the plastron is almost entirely beige-yellow, unlike the patterned plastron of Indian star tortoises.

Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, September 28, 2021; Chiangrai Times, September 30, 2021.³⁹

October 19, 2021

Mahachai, Samut Sakhon Province, Thailand



Seizure of 33 snail eating turtles (genus *Malayemys*) in the “fresh” market near the train station. The genus includes 3 species: Malayan snail-eating turtles (*Malayemys macrocephala*, Appendix II), Mekong snail-eating turtles (*Malayemys subtrijuga*, Appendix II), and Isan snail-eating turtles (*Malayemys khoratensis*). They are bought by Buddhist followers and released in the hope that they will be forgiven for some of their actions that are incompatible with Buddha’s teachings. Terrestrial turtles are sometimes released into swamps and aquatic ones into dry forests.

Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, October 20, 2021.⁴⁰

VIET NAM

September 10th, 2021

Cam Pha, Quang Ninh Province, Viet Nam



Inspection of a truck at 4:30 a.m. The driver did not know that he was carrying 37 turtles of a protected species in addition to his regular load, which his assistant had agreed to deliver to Mong Cai, near the border with China, for the sum of 100,000 dongs or 4.40 US\$. The most trafficked turtles in Viet Nam are yellow-headed temple turtles (*Heosemys annandalii*, Appendix II), South Asian box turtles (*Cuora amboinensis*, Appendix II), giant Asian pond turtles (*Heosemys grandis*, Appendix II), and yellow-headed tortoises (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II).

Bao Giao Thong, January 2, 2022.⁴¹

**October 28, 2021
Bangkok, Thailand**

Acting on information, the “Falcon” task force specialized in the fight against wildlife trafficking seized 7 Asiatic softshell turtles (*Amyda cartilaginea*, Appendix II) weighing a total of 23.8 kg to be sold for 400 baht/kg (12 US\$/kg). For the gullible, Asiatic softshell turtle soup is tonic and good for sex. Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, October 28, 2021.⁴²



REPEATED OFFENSE

**November 10, 2021
Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam**

Seizure of 2 giant Asian pond turtles (*Heosemys grandis*, Appendix II), a South Asian box turtle (*Cuora amboinensis*, Appendix II), 4 Chinese stripe-necked turtles (*Mauremys sinensis*, Appendix III in China) and 4 red-eared sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) in the same temple as in May (see “On the Trail” n°33 p.194). They were transferred to the Cu Chi wildlife sanctuary. ENV is conducting an awareness campaign among the faithful with the help of videos.

ENV, November 24, 2021.⁴³

**November 18, 2021
Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam**

Sentence to 6 years and 6 months in prison of the seller of 64 turtles, including radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I), Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I), African spurred tortoises (*Centrochelys sulcata*, Appendix II), 4 Burmese starred tortoises (*Geochelone platynota*, Appendix I) and 3 leopard tortoises (*Stigmochelys pardalis*, Appendix II). ENV, November 18, 2021.⁴⁴



**December 12, 2021
Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam**

The street vendor fled and the yellow-headed temple turtle (*Heosemys annandalii*, Appendix II) abandoned on the sidewalk was returned to safe hands. ENV, December 12, 2021.⁴⁵

**December 2021
Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam**

Seizure in the car of a wild turtle wholesaler who was about to supply street vendors with South Asian box turtles (*Cuora amboinensis*, Appendix II), giant Asian pond turtles (*Heosemys grandis*, Appendix II), yellow-headed temple turtles (*Heosemys annandalii*, Appendix II), Mekong snail-eating turtles (*Malayemys subtrijuga*, Appendix II) and yellow-headed tortoise (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II), totalling 122. Turtles on the main streets of Viet Nam’s capital are bought by Buddhists, blessed in pagodas, and released anywhere, whether terrestrial or aquatic with minimal chances of survival. Moitruongvadothi.vn, December 19, 2021; ENV, December 23, 2021.⁴⁶

EUROPE

SPAIN

**October 11, 2021
Palma de Mallorca International Airport,
Autonomous Community of the Balearic Islands,
Spain**

Seizure of 6 live Hermann’s tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) packed in a shoebox in a suitcase. The passenger was heading to Valencia. Diario de Mallorca, October 28, 2021.⁴⁷

**Mid-October 2021
Barcelona, Autonomous Community of
Catalonia, Spain**

The investigation began in 2017. While the Guardia Civil was looking closely at a wildlife gang, a reptile breeder from Girona was caught with protected turtles he was bringing back from a fair in Germany (probably Hamm). Phone tapping allowed to link the different cases and to dismantle an international turtle trafficking network, in particular radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I), but also tortoises from Mauritius and the Seychelles. A dozen people are involved, including breeders and veterinarians. They falsified permits and recovered electronic chips from legally captive animals at the time of their death. The dead tortoises were not declared as required by law and the chips were reused for smuggled tortoises. Searches and arrests took place in Barcelona, Girona, Murcia, A Coruña, Las Palmas and Madrid. 350 live tortoises and several shells were seized. The tortoises were sold on black markets in Belgium, Germany, Italy, Malta or Portugal between 10,000 and 20,000 €. The additional offenses of money laundering and membership of a criminal group are being investigated by the judiciary.

=>

Simultaneously, the investigation continues following the arrest of a man in April 2019 at Barcelona airport with 76 Aldabra giant tortoise juveniles (*Aldabrachelys gigantea*, Appendix II) from the Seychelles in his suitcase. It has already led investigators to a farm in Sant Vicenç de Montalt where other reptiles were seized. El Mundo, October 18, 2021.⁴⁸



FRANCE

September 24, 2021 Draguignan, Department of Var, France

The Château de Berne winery is fined 100,000 € (118,000 US\$) and ordered to pay 375,000 € (442,550 US\$) for ecological damage to the Regional Directorate of Environment, Planning and Housing (DREAL) and 3,000 € (3,540 US\$) to the NGOs France Nature Environnement and Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux. They devastated land which constituted a privileged and recognized habitat for Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) in order to enlarge their farm 5 hectares. At least 2 tortoises died in the clearing burns. See "On the Trail" n°29 p.137 for the conviction of another winery in a similar case.

Capital, September 24, 2021; France Bleu Provence, September 24, 2021.⁴⁹

November 26, 2021 Draguignan, Department of Var, France

Another winery, Château des Launes, 30 km from Saint-Tropez, was fined 30,000 € (34,800 US\$) for clearing land in 2019 that could be a habitat for Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II). They face additional fines of 25,000 €, of which 15,000 € was suspended, for building a low wall and modifying the access to the winery in 2020 by encroaching on the Plaine des Maures Nature Reserve. In addition, the estate and its operator were ordered to pay 16,778 € (19,450 US\$) in compensation for ecological damage to France Nature Environnement, the SOPTOM (Station d'Observation et de Protection des Tortues et de leurs Milieux) and the Union départementale pour la sauvegarde de la vie de la nature.

Var-Matin, October 23, 2021; Le Figaro, November 26, 2021.⁵⁰

ITALY

October 7, 2021

Province of Salerno, Region of Campania, Italy

The investigation of the Carabinieri, the environmental police and the association Agriambiente Onlus led to the seizure of 12 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) in a car. One man was brought before the courts. Anteprema24, October 7, 2021.⁵¹

Mid-October 2021

Lamezia Terme, Province of Catanzaro, Region of Calabria, Italy

While searching the house of a 67-year-old woman in the course of an operation against drug trafficking, the Carabinieri seized an African spurred tortoise (*Centrochelys sulcata*, Appendix II). Il Lametino, October 16, 2021.⁵²

Week of October 18, 2021

Tempio Pausania, Province of Sassari, Autonomous Region of Sardinia, Italy

The Tempio Pausania Forestry Department seized 5 marginated tortoises (*Testudo marginata*, Appendix II) at a hotel in Costa Smeralda. After a veterinarian examination, the tortoises were released in their natural habitat.

L'Unione Sarda, October 23rd, 2021.⁵³

December 18, 2021

Mammola, Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria, Region of Calabria, Italy



The police seized 3 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) weighing about 20 grams and measuring around 4-5 cm long. They were handed over to the Tartanet center in Brancaleone. LameziaTerme.it, December 18, 2021; VeritasNews24, December 18, 2021.⁵⁴

THE NETHERLANDS

December 2, 2021

Rotterdam, Province of South Holland, The Netherlands



The 188 leopard tortoises (*Stigmochelys pardalis*, Appendix II) handed over by the RVO (Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland, Dutch Agency for Economic Affairs) to the turtle shelter were not all healthy when they arrived. In the shelter, due to lack of competence and wise care, it only got worse and most died. To explain their absence to the State veterinarians who were making an unannounced inspection visit to the shelter in March 2019, the founders, administrators and caretakers said that they had been given to qualified people and provided fake addresses. 39 tortoises listed in the CITES Appendices were not reported. The official inventory of dead tortoises in recent years was greater than the number of carcasses delivered to the licensed renderer. The water in the quarantine tank was turbid. Tortoises were suffering from various ailments and infected bites.



“The children loved this place on a rainy Wednesday during spring break” says the *Algemeen Dagblad*. But the children did not realize that behind the windows of the aquariums and terrariums was negligence and cruelty. “The RVO entrusted us with these exotic tortoises after receiving assurances that they would be treated well.” “They arrived in little cake boxes and despite our 40 years of experience we didn’t know how to take care of them and we didn’t dare tell the RVO.”

The Schildpaddencentrum foundation was sentenced to 2 suspended fines of 15,000 and 500 € (16,900 and 560 US\$). The court in the prosecutor’s indictment and the judgment focused on the forgery and swept the subject of cruelty and neglect under the carpet.

Algemeen Dagblad, November 18 and December 2, 2021.⁵⁵

POLAND

October 2021

Zosin, Lublin Voivodeship, Poland. Border with Ukraine.

The attempt of a Ukrainian citizen to cross the Polish border safely with an undeclared tortoise shell (*Testudinidae*, Appendix I or II) failed. She explained to the customs officers that she wanted to give it as a gift to her son in Germany, but the customs officers seized it.

Lublin112.pl, November 23, 2021; Onet, November 23, 2021.⁵⁶



Beginning of November 2021

Dołhobyczów, Lublin Voivodeship, Poland. Border with Ukraine.

Seizure in a large Hummer of an unexpected passenger, a Horsfield’s tortoise (*Testudo horsfieldii*, Appendix II). According to the driver with a Lithuanian passport, it was part of the family in ignorance of all formalities imposed by the CITES convention. Horsfield’s tortoises are up to 25 cm long and can live for more than 50 years. They live in desert areas of Central Asia. Two Horsfield’s tortoises were sent into space between September 14 and 21, 1968 in the Soviet space probe Zond 5. Lublin112.pl, November 23, 2021; Onet, November 23, 2021.⁵⁷

SWEDEN

Beginning of November 2021

Örebro County, Sweden

Indictment of a woman who offered to sell 3 Hermann’s tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) online.

Sveriges Television, November 6, 2021.⁵⁸

AFRICA

BURUNDI

September 1, 2021

Burundi

"The Burundian Office for the Protection of the Environment in collaboration with the National Office of Tourism proceeded to the return to the natural environment of 13 snakes consisting of 3 specimens of the royal python (*Python regius*, Appendix II) and 10 specimens of African rock python (*Python sebae*, Appendix II). These snakes were bred in captivity and illegally by a private individual".

Burundian Office for the Protection of the Environment, September 1, 2021.¹

NAMIBIA

October 11, 2021

Rundu, Kavango East Region, Namibia

Arrest of Dominikus Ndara in possession of a python skin (*Python* spp., Appendix I or II).

The Namibian, October 18, 2021; Namibian Sun, October 22, 2021.²

November 12 and 15, 2021

Nkonke, Kavango West Region, Namibia

Arrest of Hausiku Rudolf and Pius Karupu in possession of 3 python skins (*Python* spp., Appendix I or II) estimated to be worth 90,000 Namibian dollars (5,940 US\$), which is 1,980 US\$ per skin. They were trying to sell them. They were released on bail of 3,000 Namibian dollars (200 US\$) on November 15.

The Namibian, November 16, 2021.³

SUDAN

September 2, 2021

Khartoum, Khartoum State, Sudan

Seizure of 3,582 snake skins and skin fragments.

Al Taghyeer, September 2, 2021.⁴

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

October 27, 2021

Niles, State of Illinois, United States of America

Gardeners discovered a boa in the flowerbeds of a residence on Oketo Avenue, captured it and turned it over to the police. According to John Archer, a herpetology expert from Chicago, it is an Argentine boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor occidentalis*, Appendix I). "It probably escaped or worse, it was released," he said. "It would not have survived the winter." For lack of a specialized shelter, he was initially entrusted to a pet shop specializing in snakes. The NGO Friends of Scale, which for a decade in Wheeling was the only group in Illinois authorized to take in abandoned snakes, suspended its activities because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Several days after the discovery, the owner has yet to be identified.

Chicago Tribune, November 1, 2021.⁵

ASIA

CHINA

September 2021

Nanning, Nanning Prefecture, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

Seizure in an incoming package of a sanshin (see "On the Trail" n°32 p. 210) whose case is covered with a python skin (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II).

Chinese Customs, September 24, 2021.⁶

October 2021

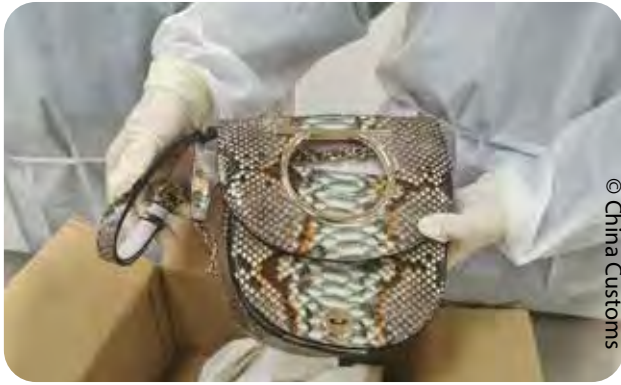
Wuhan, Hubei Province, China



Seizure by postal customs of a zither and 2 erhus whose resonance boxes are covered with python skin (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II).

Chinese Customs, October 19, 2021.⁷

October 2021
Tianjin Binhai International Airport, China



Seizure of a python skin bag (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II) in a package. Chinese Customs, November 4, 2021.⁸

Beginning of November 2021
Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China

Seizure in a package from abroad of an erhu with a case made of Burmese python skin (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II). Chinese Customs, November 12, 2021.⁹



Brown sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II).
Photo Jayant M Deshpande

INDIA

September 15, 2021
Zabardia, Banaskantha District, State of Gujarat, India



Folk singer Arjun Thakor was visited by forest officials in his village after an alarming video was posted on social media. He is shown face to face with an Indian cobra (*Naja naja*, Appendix II) in his left hand and wrapping it around his neck. This kind of display encourages people to turn wild animals into pets. Thakor said he got the cobra from a snake charmer. He has been released on bail. The Indian Express, September 16, 2021.¹⁰

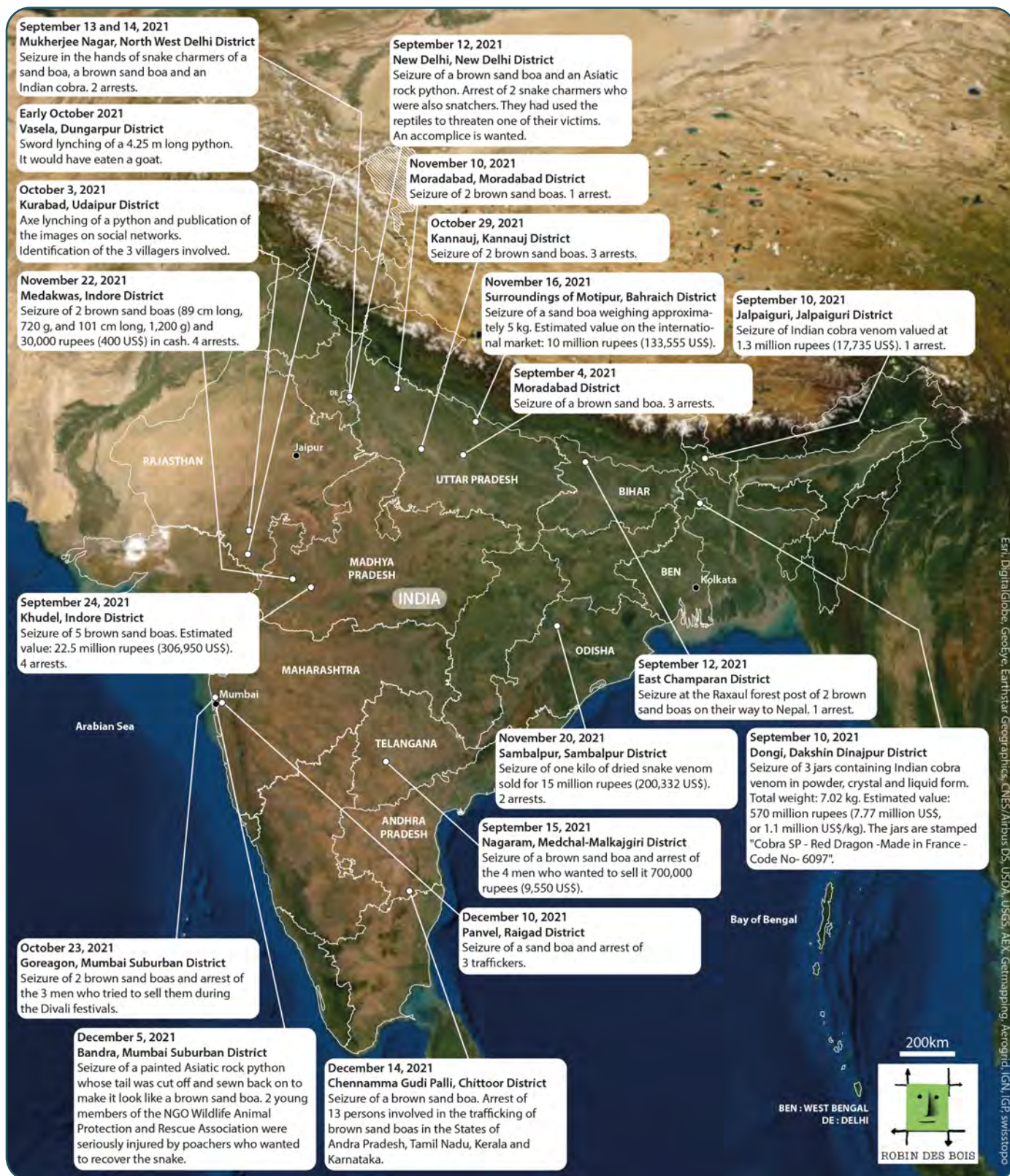
Beginning of October 2021
Narsampet, Warangal District, State of Telangana, India

A “two-headed boa” gang is being dismantled. Eleven people are arrested. They were attempting to capture sand boas (*Eryx* spp., Appendix II) in the forests of the district and deliver them, for a fee, to smugglers from Bihar. Despite the glowing rumors, there is nothing magical about the brown sand boa, although through clever camouflage, its tail resembles its head, making it difficult for its natural predators to attack and making it known in India as the “two-headed boa”. Telangana Today, October 9, 2021.¹¹



September 15, 2021
Nagaram, Medchal-Malkajgiri District, India. Seizure of a brown sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) and arrest of the 4 men who wanted to sell it for 700,000 rupees (9,550 US\$)

Lynchings and trafficking of snakes or venom in India between September 1 and December 31, 2021, according to official and media sources



Sand boa (*Eryx* spp., Appendix II)
Brown sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II)
Indian cobra (*Naja naja*, Appendix II)
Python (*Python* spp., Appendix I or II)
Asiatic rock python (*Python molurus*, Appendix II)

Sources: Devdiscourse ; Hindustan Times ; Mid-Day ; Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India) ; New Delhi Television Sashtra Seema Bal ; Siliguri Times ; The Free Press Journal ; The New Indian Express ; The Siasat Daily ; The Times of India ; WCCB.

VIET NAM

September 2021

Hanoi Municipality, Viet Nam

Sentencing of the seller of a bottle of "king cobra wine" (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II) to 18 months in prison and the buyer to 15 months in prison. They had been arrested in January 2021. ENV, October 8, 2021.¹²



September, October and December 2021 Yen Bai Province, Viet Nam

In September, the police found a king cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II) when searching the suspect's car. At his house, environmental police found 4 more king cobras, 35 Chinese cobras (*Naja atra*, Appendix II) and 2 frozen Asian palm civets (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III in India). In early October, the man was fined 20 million rand (880 US\$) for trafficking Chinese spitting cobras and civets.

On December 28, the trial was held for the transport and possession of the 5 king cobras and the trafficker was fined 550 million rand (24,255 US\$). ENV, December 28, 2021.¹³

EUROPE

GERMANY

October 2021

Erlangen, Bavaria State, Germany

A dead python was discovered by postal customs in a jar inside a package from Great Britain. It was a green tree python (*Morelia viridis*) listed in Appendix II of CITES but it took some time for the experts to identify it. The dead snake had turned blue.

Presseportal, March 1, 2022.¹⁴



November 25, 2021

Hagen, North Rhine-Westphalia State, Germany

Fifty venomous snakes including an Indian spectacled cobra (*Naja naja*, Appendix II), a monocled cobra (*Naja kaouthia*, Appendix II), a puff adder (*Bitis arietans*), a rhinoceros viper (*Bitis nasicornis*), a cobra (family Elapidae), 4 constrictor snakes, 2 venomous scorpions and 2 venomous tarantulas were found in the 45 square meter apartment. It took 8 hours for the specialised fire department from Düsseldorf to protect themselves from bites and stings and bring the animals to safety. The apartment was transformed into a private jungle with exotic plants and vines according to firemen. A man was arrested. He was certainly a fan of the Hamm world fair that exhibits the latest models of exotic crawling and attracts terrarium enthusiasts from the European Union. A systematic search of the building and cellars will be undertaken under the supervision of the Office of Nature, Environment and Consumer Protection of the State to catch possible escaped animals. nrw-aktuell.tv, November 26, 2021; Recklinghäuser Zeitung, November 27, 2021.¹⁵

BELGIUM

October 12, 2021

Grâce-Hollogne, Province of Liège, Walloon Region, Belgium

Rescue of a reticulated python (*Python reticulatus*, Appendix II) native to South-Eastern Asia from an uninhabited house in Rue de l'Égalité.

7sur7, October 12, 2021.¹⁶

SPAIN

September 9, 2021

Palencia, Province of Palencia, Autonomous Community of Castile and León, Spain

The subadult boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix I or II) that escaped from a private home in the city centre was sought for over 48 hours by the specialized firefighters. The snake enthusiast who raised the alarm himself tried to reassure the neighbourhood. "It is only 2 metres long, it is not big enough to feed on domestic animals, it is an arboreal species, it will probably take refuge on a branch or on a balcony". Finally, it was found and caught in a gutter in Lope de Vega Street.

El Confidencial, September 9, 2021.¹⁷

FRANCE

September 21, 2021

Caen, Department of Calvados, France

The drug squad seized 0.5 grams of cocaine and one 2 meter long boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II) and one 1.2 meters long royal python (*Python regius*, Appendix II) from the apartment of a man in his 40s.

Ouest-France, September 24, 2021 ; Calvados National Police, September 24, 2021.¹⁸

October 16, 2021

Forest of Mormal, Department of Nord, France

He was collecting mushrooms in the forest when he suddenly saw an abandoned exotic snake, probably a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II). Alerted by the association Objectif Mormal, the agents of the French Biodiversity Agency did not succeed in locating the animal before nightfall. No news since.

Association Objectif Mormal, October 19, 2021; L'Observateur, October 19, 2021.¹⁹

ITALY

October 19, 2021

Cornigliano, Metropolitan City of Genoa, Region of Liguria, Italy

Abandoned or escaped, the young 60 cm-long royal python (*Python regius*, Appendix II) wandering on the sidewalk of Via Romolo Gessi was kept safe until the arrival of the Carabinieri CITES unit.

Liguria Oggi, October 20, 2021 ; Telenord, October 19, 2021.²⁰

November 23, 2021

Fiorenzuola d'Arda, Province of Piacenza, Region of Emilia-Romagna, Italy

A 4.2-metre-long albino reticulated python (*Python reticulatus*, Appendix II) was found frozen to death at a rest area along the A1 motorway by the traffic police. The photo of the victim was posted on the province's Facebook account with the following message: "Article 727 of the penal code stipulates that any person who abandons domestic animals or animals that have developed captive habits faces one year in prison or a fine of 10,000 € [11,600 US\$]." Corriere di Bologna, November 23, 2021.²¹



End of December 2021

Bologna Guglielmo Marconi Airport, Metropolitan City of Bologna, Region of Emilia-Romagna, Italy

Seizure in the luggage of a passenger arriving from Senegal via Paris of 3 wallets made of python skin (*Python* spp., Appendix I or II).

Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata, December 28, 2021.²²

POLAND

November 11, 2021

Medyka Border Post, Subcarpathian Voivodeship, Poland. Border with Ukraine.

Seizure of 6 adult reticulated python (*Python reticulatus*, Appendix II) skins (4 metres long) in the luggage of a Ukrainian on board a bus.

TVN24, November 11, 2021.²³

RUSSIA

December 27, 2021

Federal City of Saint Petersburg, Russia

A fine of 3,000 rubles (40 US\$) for a man who had bought an Indochinese spitting cobra (*Naja siamensis*, Appendix II) on the Internet and was trying to resell it for profit. The species is venomous.

Komsomolskaia Pravda, December 27, 2021.²⁴



UKRAINE

November 13, 2021

Shostka, Sum Oblast, Ukraine

Discovery of a 3-metre-long python (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II) frozen to death near bins in the centre of the city in north-eastern Ukraine near the border with Belarus.

Summy Oblast Police, November 13, 2021.²⁵

GECKOS, CHAMELEONS, MONITOR LIZARDS ...

AFRICA

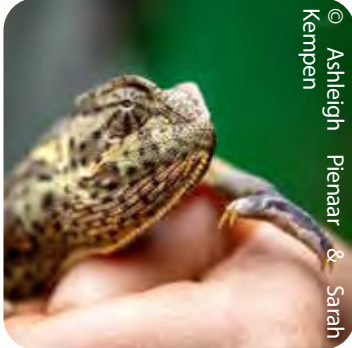
SOUTH AFRICA

End of September 2021

Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Double penalty for the flap-necked chameleon (*Chamaeleo dilepis*, Appendix II): it was captured for the pet trade and one of its limbs was injured, probably by an electric fence. It is doing better since its arrival at the Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital. It should be released into the wild.

Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital, September 27, 2021.¹



© Ashleigh Plenaar & Sarah Kempen

December 2021

Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Another flap-necked chameleon (*Chamaeleo dilepis*, Appendix II) was rescued from wildlife trafficking. Underweight, it was cared for and released back into the wild.

Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital, December 23rd, 2021.²

COTE D'IVOIRE

OPERATION THUNDER

November 25, 2021

Ouangolodougou, Savanes District, Côte d'Ivoire. Border with Burkina Faso.



Customs seized 4 packages from Burkina Faso containing 4,061 dried chameleons. They were hidden under foodstuffs. Total weight: 30 kg. 20 species of African chameleons (family Chamaeleonidae) are listed in the CITES Appendices. Yecllo.ci, January 17, 2022; Fraternité Matin, January 18, 2022.³

SOMALIA

September 14, 2021

Hargeisa Egal International Airport, Maroodi Jex Region, Somaliland Autonomous Region, Somalia



About 200 dwarf shield-tailed agamas (*Xenagama taylori*) were seized in the suitcase of a man heading to an unspecified country. They were wrapped in clothes and placed in plastic boxes. These lizards can be sold for 500 US\$ each on the Internet.

Reuters, September 15, 2021.⁴



AMERICA

FRANCE (FRENCH GUIANA)

FAMILY AFFAIRS

October 2021

Cayenne-Félix Eboué International Airport, Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France

His pregnant daughter living in metropolitan France had "cravings for local products". The customs officers seized the package containing cooked iguana eggs and meat (*Iguana* spp., Appendix II). The ill-informed doting father was given a reminder of the law.

French Biodiversity Agency, January 2022.⁵

MEXICO

End of September 2021

San Luis Potosi International Airport, San Luis Potosi, Mexico



The package was damaged. When the agents looked inside, they saw a plastic box containing a "leopard" gecko (*Goniurosaurus* spp., Appendix II). The seized package was sent in Aguascalientes and bound for Chihuahua. Pulso, September 26, 2021.⁶

ASIA

INDIA

September 16, 2021

Surroundings of Bhuyanpara, Baksa District, State of Assam, India

Two traffickers carrying 2 tokay geckos (*Gekko gekko*, Appendix II) are captured by a joint patrol of the 27th SSB Battalion and the Forest Department. Sashastra Seema Bal, September 2021.⁷

September 19, 2021

Alipurduar, Alipurduar District, State of West Bengal, India

Eight students were arrested for cannabis use. They were eventually given a warning, except for one who was charged for possession of a tokay gecko (*Gekko gekko*, Appendix II). The Telegraph India, September 21st, 2021.⁸

FAMILY AFFAIRS

September 22, 2021

Kadepur, Sangli District, State of Maharashtra, India

Dadaso Tukaram Pol and his son Harshal Dadaso Pol, snake catchers, were called by a resident of Kadepur whose house was besieged by a Bengal monitor lizard (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I). Not only did they catch it, but then, instead of calling the forest officers, they ate it. They were both arrested.

The Times of India, September 22nd, 2021.⁹

October 2, 2021

Panitar, North 24 Parganas District, State of West Bengal, India. Border with Bangladesh.

The 153rd Battalion of the BSF (Border Security Force) acting on information intercepted a trafficker from Bangladesh who was trying to smuggle into West Bengal a live tokay gecko (*Gekko gekko*, Appendix II) near Panitar border post. Dainik Jagran, October 2, 2021.¹⁰

October 5 and 6, 2021

Tholampalayam Forest and Bilichi, Coimbatore District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

The duo had managed to escape, but not for long. K. Rajendran and K. Mani were arrested for poaching 3 Bengal monitor lizards (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I).

The Times of India, October 7, 2021.¹¹

October 9, 2021

Bimlanagar, Baksa District, State of Assam, India. India-Bhutan border

The 2 traffickers were heading to Bhutan to deliver a live tokay gecko (*Gekko gekko*, Appendix II). They were apprehended in time by a joint patrol of the 24th SSB Battalion and the forest guards. Sashastra Seema Bal, October 9, 2021.¹²

October 10, 2021

Howly, BARPETA District, State of Assam, India

Three men were arrested for possession and sale and 2 others for attempted purchase of a 38 cm long tokay gecko (*Gekko gekko*, Appendix II). The gecko had been transported from Meghalaya 291 km away. The unlikely price of 7 million rupees (94,350 US\$) was quoted in the press. The Sentinel, October 11, 2021.¹³

October 11, 2021

Safidon, Jind District, State of Haryana, India



Butti and Omnath were arrested in possession of six red-dyed Bengal monitor lizard hemipenises (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I). Each hemipenis can be sold for between 5,000 rupees (67 US\$) and 20,000 rupees (270 US\$).

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), October 11, 2021; The Indian Express, October 12, 2021.¹⁴

KYRGYZSTAN

October 21, 2021

Panvel, Raigad District, State of Maharashtra, India

Activist Anarjit Chauhan can't believe it. "At around 11.15 a.m. on Friday, while I was standing outside the Panvel Municipal Corporation (PCMC) office, I was shocked to see a 1.5 metre long Bengal monitor lizard [*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I] being tied up and taken in an autorickshaw by two men. I followed the auto till Patel Nagar, where I told the men that it is illegal to capture and transport a scheduled wildlife species like this one, but they refused to release the big lizard." Authorities rely on CCTV footage to identify traffickers. The Times of India, October 24, 2021.¹⁵

October 23, 2021

Tanki Basti, Udalguri District, State of Assam, India. India-Bhutan border

Seizure of a tokay gecko (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II) from Bhutan by elements of 37th SSB Battalion at a checkpoint. No arrest is mentioned. Sashastra Seema Bal, October 23, 2021.¹⁶

November 14, 2021

Bihangapur Border Outpost, Baksa District, State of Assam, India. Border with Bhutan.

The tokay gecko (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II) and the trafficker apprehended by paramilitaries of the 24th SSB Battalion ended up in the hands of the forest guards of Kumarikata post. Sashastra Seema Bal, November 14, 2021.¹⁷

December 12, 2021

Border outpost of Barhni, Balrampur District, Uttar Pradesh State, India. Border with Nepal.

The individual stopped by an SSB patrol was about to cross into Nepal with a cobra (*Naja naja*, Appendix II) or *Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II) in his belongings. The 2 ended their journey at the Itwa forest post. Sashastra Seema Bal, December 2021.¹⁸

December 18, 2021

Kamakhyaguri, Alipurduar District, State of West Bengal, India

Seizure of a tokay gecko (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II) and arrest of 3 Indian nationals by a joint SSB / Forest Department patrol. Bhutan is about 30 km away. Sashastra Seema Bal, December 2021.¹⁹

September 2021

Western Tien-Shan, Kyrgyzstan



Specialists from the UNDP (United Nations Development Program) and the State Committee for Ecology and Development organized an expedition to investigate the reasons for the decline of the grey monitor (*Varanus griseus*, Appendix I) in the Western Tien-Shan. The population is said to have halved in 20 years.

Local people interviewed revealed that the main threat to the grey monitor is poaching. Some admitted to killing specimens to sell their meat and fat, which is reputed to have medicinal properties, after receiving orders from "foreign countries."

The Western Tien-Shan (between 700 and 4,500 meters above sea level) covers more than 5,000 km² across Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it is part of the Tien-Shan Mountain range, which extends into China.

Grey monitors, see "On the Trail" n°2 p.18, n°3 p.20, n°12 p.24 and n°33 p.187. 24.kg, October 7, 2021.²⁰

VIET NAM

November 30, 2021

Ea H'leo District, Dak Lak Province, Viet Nam



A wildlife trafficker is sentenced to a 7-year prison term and a 10 million dong (440 US\$) fine for possession of 14 clouded monitors (*Varanus nebulosus*, Appendix I), civets and snakes.

ENV, December 15, 2021.²¹

Beginning of December 2021

Dak Nong Province, Viet Nam



A trafficker is sentenced to a 6-year prison term for possession of 17 clouded monitors (*Varanus nebulosus*, Appendix I) in the backyard of a residence.

ENV, December 6, 2021.²²

**December 2021
Ho Chi Minh City,
Viet Nam**

Two two-banded monitors (*Varanus salvator*, Appendix II) locked in a metal cage were reported to ENV. The Forest Protection Department intervened. The monitor lizards were transferred to the Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station. ENV, December 27, 2021.²³



EUROPE

RUSSIA

**December 13, 2021
Federal City of Saint Petersburg, Russia**

Seizure of 5 secret toadhead agamas (*Phrynocephalus mystaceus*) in a pet shop. The manager claimed that they were not for sale. A person whose identity she did not know had temporarily entrusted the agamas to her and had never returned to take them back. They were seized with the hope to release them into a natural habitat.

The secret toadhead agama lives in Central Asia, from Afghanistan to China, in sand dunes. When threatened, it opens and puffs out its cheek flaps. It is threatened by the destruction of its habitat for sand mining or conversion to agricultural land. Individuals are being caught in the wild, notably in Dagestan (Russia), to meet a recent growing demand for the pet market. It has been listed in the Russian Red Book since 2000.

47 channel, December 13, 2021; Rossiyskaya Gazeta, December 13, 2021.²⁴



Secret toadhead agama (*Phrynocephalus mystaceus*)

CZECHIA

**Mid-November 2021
Pisek, South Bohemian Region, Czechia**

Seizure of 50 panther chameleons (*Furcifer pardalis*, Appendix II) in a private home. A 32-year-old man was breeding them in his garage. Budějcká Drbna, November 14, 2021.²⁵

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

**OPERATION SHEFFIELD
November 15, 2021**

Melbourne, State of Victoria, Australia

He operated Arcadia Reptile and Bird Australia in Werribee and kept more than 200 reptiles in deplorable conditions in his garage, including shingleback lizards (*Tiliqua rugosa*), black-headed monitors (*Varanus tristis*, Appendix II), and blue-tongued skinks (*Tiliqua scincoides*), most of them illegally caught. The man was also involved in international trafficking. He had supplied a Taiwanese national convicted in 2019 for possession and trafficking of reptiles (see "On the Trail" n°25 p.33). He was found guilty of animal cruelty and sentenced to 12 months of community service.

Anyone with information about wildlife crime in Australia is urged to contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or www.crimestoppersvic.com.au.

Australian Geographic, November 25, 2021.²⁶



**November 19, 2021
Melbourne, State of Victoria, Australia, and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China**

A 26-year-old Victorian man has been arrested and charged with attempted export and export of protected native specimens. It all started with the seizure of 32 lizards hidden under dinosaur toys and bound for Hong Kong at the Melbourne Gateway Facility. In Hong Kong, 4 blue-tongued skinks (genus *Tiliqua*) were also seized upon arrival. When Federal Environment investigators searched the shipper's home, they found 6 more blue-tongued skinks (genus *Tiliqua*) and one eastern blue-tongued lizard (*Tiliqua scincoides*).

Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, January 7, 2022.²⁷

CROCODILES AND ALLIGATORS

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

September 30, 2021

Roodepoort, Gauteng Province, South Africa

When police raided the home of a suspected drug dealer, they found more than just drugs. In addition to 200,000 rand (13,300 US\$) worth of marijuana, they also found a live crocodile (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II). The SPCA was called in to handle it.

Sowetan LIVE, October 1, 2021.¹

Mid-October 2021

Thuma Forest Reserve, Central Region, Malawi

A Nile crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*, Appendix II) female has been released into a protected river after living in the Lilongwe Wildlife Centre for 14 years. It previously lived in a tiny enclosure at a zoo in Musa Mission. Its long-time companion named Bushdog was also released into the wild.

Lilongwe Wildlife Trust, October 19, 2021.²

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

October 10, 2021

Lake Seminole, State of Georgia, United States of America



Two individuals poached a 3.3-m American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II). They were charged.

Law Enforcement Division - Georgia DNR, October 10, 2021.³

October 12, 2021

Jasper County, State of South Carolina, United States of America

Police are searching for whoever cut the tail off of a 3-meter-long American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) and left it to die.

KDFM, October 13, 2021.⁴

Mid-December 2021

Hardee County, State of Florida, United States of America

Road accident. An SUV is lying on the side of the road. Two dead American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) are sticking out of the back window. The 2 road hogs are arrested and admit to have killed the reptiles during a fishing trip.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, December 17, 2021.⁵

LATIN AMERICA

BRAZIL

November 12, 2021

Anastácio, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil

Three men ages 23, 29 and 55 were sentenced to a 12,000 real (2,400 US\$) fine for poaching and butchered a caiman (Alligatoridae, Appendix I or II).

Police seized 8 kg of meat from inside their vehicle. G1 MS, November 13, 2021.⁶

ASIA

CHINA

October 2021

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Guangdong Province, China



Seizure of crocodile skin items (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II) including bags and bracelets made of *Pterocarpus* wood. Total weight, 3.662 kg.

Chinese Customs, November 7, 2021.⁷

**Beginning of November 2021
Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport,
Guangdong Province, China**

Seizure of 11 crocodile (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II) skin handbags. They were destroyed.
Chinese Customs, November 10, 2021.⁸

INDIA

**December 9, 2021
Bengaluru, Bengaluru Urban District, State of
Karnataka, India**

Abdul Khalid and his fellow Gangadhar B.S. were arrested for attempting to sell a young mugger crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*, Appendix I).
The Hindu, December 9, 2021.⁹

EUROPE

DENMARK

**Mid-October 2021
Copenhagen International Airport, Capital
Region, Denmark**



Seizure of 2 crocodile (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II) heads and several dried fish heads in a postal parcel from Africa. It is unclear whether the exotic insects that escaped from the parcel were also seized.

The Danish Customs Agency, November 22, 2021.¹⁰

POLAND

**Beginning of September 2021
Gdansk Airport, Pomeranian Voivodeship,
Poland**



The traveller intended to open a small crocodile (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II) concession in northern Poland. In his luggage were crocodile belts, wallets, briefcases, a travel bag, other crocodile horrors and a stuffed caiman (Alligatoridae, Appendix I or II).

Trojmiasto.pl, September 9, 2021.¹¹

**End of November 2021
Warsaw, Masovian Voivodeship, Poland**



Poland is a victim of crocodilomania. A felt hat hemmed with crocodile skin (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II) and decorated with crocodile teeth and a supposed crocodile skull are found by Warsaw postal customs in 2 parcels declared to contain "promotional items" and "toys".

National Revenue Administration, November 25, 2021.¹²

AMPHIBIANS



Alpine stream salamander (*Batrachuperus tibetanus*). Photo Theodore Papenfuss

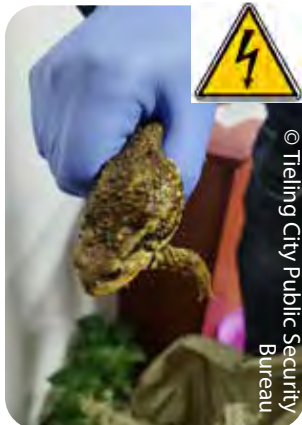
ASIA

CHINA

October 6, 2021 Kongtaigoucun, Huai'an Prefecture, Liaoning Province, China

Arrest of 7 suspects. The Asiatic toad (*Bufo gargarizans*) gang killed at least 8,000 victims. They were blinded in the middle of the night and electrocuted.

Tieling City Public Security Bureau, October 12, 2021.¹



October 2021 Yuechi County, Guang'an Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China

Sentence of 5 people to 6 months' imprisonment, 4 months' imprisonment suspended for 6 months, 3 months' imprisonment suspended for 6 months, for poaching 381 Asiatic toads (*Bufo gargarizans*) at night by dazzling them with flashlights on July 8, 2021.

Jiupai News, October 20, 2021.²



October 2021 Wenjindu Checkpoint, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

Seizure of 110 live frogs in a truck declared to contain "vegetables for export". They were crammed in a box so small that some were at the point of asphyxiation. Chinese Customs, November 9, 2021.³



November 2021 Shandong Province, China



Seizure of several thousand Asiatic toad skins (*Bufo gargarizans*). Linda Wong, November 18, 2021.⁴

**Beginning of November 2021
Lianshui County, Huai'an Prefecture,
Jiangsu Province, China**



A 3-month prison sentence for the capture of 282 Asiatic toads (*Bufo gargarizans*).
Yangtze Evening Post, November 14, 2021.⁵

**November 25, 2021
Min County, Dingxi Prefecture, Gansu Province,
China**



The forestry police seized from Z. M. more than 1,000 dried alpine stream salamanders (*Batrachuperus tibetanus*) that he poached in July and August 2021. The species is endemic to western China and the Tibetan highlands. It lives between 1,000 and 4,000 meters of altitude in small mountain streams. It feeds on insects, crustaceans and their larvae. It is threatened by hydroelectric dams at low altitudes, by human consumption and by traditional medicine.

Minxian Bintong, December 15, 2021.⁶

**December 23, 2021
Gaoping, Nanchong Prefecture, Sichuan
Province, China**

1,400 Asiatic toads (*Bufo gargarizans*) were let go after a thorough study of the release site to ensure that it is suitable for them and will not interfere with human activities. The suspect from whom they were seized will face criminal and financial charges. Sichuan Legal News, January 4, 2022.⁷

EUROPE

HUNGARY

**December 21, 2021
Budapest Ferenc Liszt International Airport,
Hungary**

The tax authorities seized 93 fire salamanders (*Salamandra salamandra*) from a package bound for Germany which was declared to contain "toys." Experts estimate they are worth 4.6 million forints (14,000 US\$). After a time in the Budapest Zoo, they could be released in the Jegénye Valley which is also known as the "Valley of the Salamanders". National Tax and Customs Administration of Hungary, December 21, 2021; InfoRádió, December 23, 2021.⁸

SWEDEN

**End of October 2021
Åkarp and Staffanstorp, Skåne County, Sweden**



Under the names of "handmade figurines," "pastry accessories," and "glassware," he had parcels of salamanders or newts (family Salamandridae), frogs and live toads sent from Canada, Belgium, China, and Japan. The last shipment from the United States was fatal. When he went to pick it up at the collection point, the police were waiting for him. The package containing 55 salamanders had already been opened, emptied and resealed by the Swedish postal customs. They had been alerted by their counterparts in the United States of a regular trade of amphibians and reptile to Sweden. Between 500 and 1,000 small, slimy, crawling, cosmopolitan and alien animals were found in a barn transformed into a terrarium. Snakes were also found in a freezer.

Sveriges Television, October 25, 2021.⁹

INSECTS, ARACHNIDS AND ANNELIDS



Ornithoptera priamus. Photo Shirdipam

AMERICA

COLOMBIA

December 2, 2021
El Dorado International Airport, Bogotá, Colombia



© Secretaría de Ambiente de Bogotá

Seizure in the luggage of 2 German biopirates of 232 tarantulas (families Barychelidae and Theraphosidae), a scorpion with 7 offspring (family Buthidae), 9 spider eggs and 67 cockroaches (family Blaberidae). They were collected in San Luis de Gaceno, department of Boyacá, for research purposes.

Secretary of the Environment of Bogotá, December 2, 2021.¹

ASIA

CHINA

September 2021
Jinan, Shandong Province, China
Four stuffed butterflies found in the incoming mail. Chinese Customs, September 29, 2021.²

September 2021
Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China
Five live beetles found in the incoming mail. Chinese Customs, October 1, 2021.³

November 5, 2021
Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, China
Seizure of a beetle in a package from abroad declared to contain "daily necessities". Chinese Customs, November 10, 2021.⁴

November 2021
Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China
Seizure of 6 live beetles, probably rhinoceros beetles (*Megasoma mars*), or beetles of the genus *Dynastes* or *Allotopus*. They measure 10 cm long and were hidden in plastic boxes filled with wood chips. The package from abroad was declared to contain "plastic toys." Chinese Customs, November 19, 2021.⁵

December 6, 2021

Shanghai Municipality, China

Seizure in 2 packages declared to contain “daily necessities” of 4 beetles (genus *Dynastes*).
Chinese Customs, December 7, 2021.⁶

December 2021

Qingdao-Jiaodong International Airport, Shandong Province, China

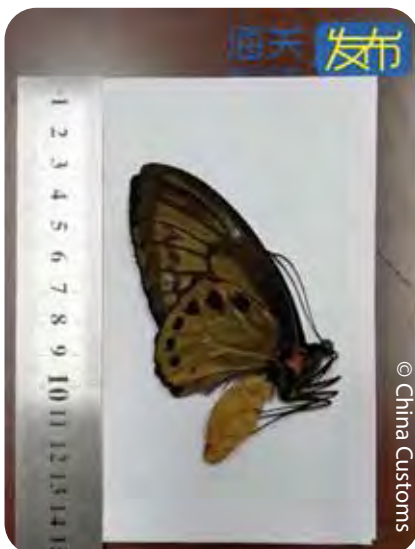
Seizure from 2 passengers of a dozen butterflies including menelaus blue morphos (*Morpho menelaus*), *Protesilaus protesilaus* and king swallowtails (*Papilio thoas*).
Chinese Customs, December 14, 2021.⁷



December 2021

Qingdao, Shandong Province, China

Seizure in 3 incoming packages of 5 butterflies: one goliath birdwing (*Ornithoptera goliath*, Appendix II), 2 Priam's blue birdwings (*Ornithoptera priamus urvillianus*, Appendix II) and 2 common green birdwings (*Ornithoptera priamus*, Appendix II).
Chinese Customs, December 22, 2021.⁸



December 2021

Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China



Seizure of 2 *Morpho hecuba* butterflies in an incoming package.
Chinese Customs, January 4, 2022.⁹

INDIA

September 16, 2021

Chennai International Airport, State of Tamil Nadu, India

The parcel from Poland addressed to a resident of Gajulaka in Andhra Pradesh contained 10 live tarantulas. It was reportedly returned to the sender. DT Next, September 16, 2021; The Times of India, September 16, 2021; The New Indian Express, September 17, 2021.¹⁰

MALAYSIA

October 6, 2021

Seremban District, State of Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

Seizure of 12 secretly held spiders by a 20-year-old man.
Harian Metro, October 22, 2021; New Straits Times (with Bernama), October 23, 2021.¹¹

PHILIPPINES

September 14, 2021

Ninoy-Aquino International Airport, Manilla, National Capital Region, Philippines

Seizure of 17 adult spiders and 809 juveniles in packages declared to contain “figurines” and “medicines” from Poland.
Philippine News Agency, September 17, 2021.¹²

**Beginning of December 2021
Ninoy-Aquino International Airport, Manila,
National Capital Region, Philippines**

Seizure of 10 live spiders hidden in plastic cases in a package from Poland. The spiders seized by customs at the international airport are tarantulas including specimens of the genus *Ornithoctonus*. Spiders from Poland, see "On the Trail" n°25 p.37, n°31 p.166 and n°33 p.217.



Manila Bulletin, December 9, 2021.¹³

THAILAND

**September 17, 2021
Bangkok, Thailand**

The Thai cook of a Japanese restaurant claimed to be in a state of need after his establishment closed due to Covid-19. He was looking to sell 8 butterflies including a kaiserhind (*Teinopalpus imperialis*, Appendix II), 3 Siamese junglequeens (*Stichophthalma louisa*), a *Stichophthalma godfreyi*, a yellow gorgon (*Meandrusa payeni*), an *Actias rhodopneuma* and an *Actias maenas* via Facebook. He claims that it is his personal collection but has no documents to prove it. The value of the 8 butterflies is estimated at 17,400 baht (540 US\$).

Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, September 17, 2021; Thai Public Broadcasting Service, September 18, 2021.¹⁴



facebook

TURKEY

**December 24, 2021
Istanbul International Airport, Istanbul
Province, Turkey**



Seizure of 4,000 southern medicinal leeches (*Hirudo verbana*, Appendix II) on their way to a foreign country. Leeches, see "On the Trail" n°9 p.102, n°25 p.37, n°26 p.35, n°32 p.224 and n°33 p.217. NTV (with IHA), December 25, 2021.¹⁵

EUROPE

FRANCE

**October 7, 2021
Le Havre, Department of Seine-Maritime, France**



Seizure of 128 northern medicinal leeches (*Hirudo medicinalis*, Appendix II) transported in 5 bottles of water of half a litre each in a package from Germany. French Customs, October 20, 2021.¹⁶

POLAND

November 2019 - October 20, 2021 Białystok, Podlaskie Voivodeship, Poland

- A Russian citizen attempted in November 2019 to bring 181 preserved insects into Poland, including 3 Apollo butterflies (*Parnassius apollo*, Appendix II) and 13 protected beetles including leather ground beetles (*Carabus coriaceus*), golden ground beetles (*Carabus auronitens*), blue ground beetles (*Carabus intricatus*), and caterpillar forest hunters (*Calosoma sycophanta*). The trafficker received a "heavy fine."

- The insects were handed over to the Natural History Museum in Białystok, which received 20,000 visitors per year before the itw as closed due to Covid-19. At the Polowce border crossing at the border with Belarus, customs have already seized corals, bear parts, beaver and crocodile skins, and a live parrot that was handed over to the Zamość Zoo.

Polskie Radio Białystok, October 20, 2021.¹⁷



© Izba Administracji Skarbowej
w Białymstoku



© Stefano Tito

Parnassius apollo



© Bernard Dupont

Carabus auronitens



© Luca tringali

Carabus coriaceus



© Bernard Dupont

Carabus intricatus



© Dr. Amadej Tmkoczy

Calosoma sycophanta

MULTI-SPECIES

Events concerning among others elephants, rhinos, felines, bears or pangolins and their by-products are indicated by these pictograms:



Cases concerning exclusively pangolins, felines, elephants and rhinos, see page 18; elephants, hippos, rhinos, and spermwhales (ivories), see page 49.

NORTHERN AFRICA

ALGERIE

Year 2021

Médéa Province, Algeria

Hunting has its limits. Poaching does not. For the last 5 years, the killing machine has been running out of steam. European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), Barbary partridges (*Alectoris barbara*), hares, rabbits, African golden wolves (*Canis lupaster*) and even striped hyenas (*Hyaena hyaena*, Appendix III in Pakistan), whose organs are said to be used for black magic, are the victims. They are hunted down with limestick, ferrets, sloughi dogs, spears and rifle shots.

The African golden wolf lives all over North Africa. Their territory extends from Senegal in the east to Kenya in the west. Its coat is most often golden or pale yellow but it can also be fawn or grey. Adults measure between 88 and 123 cm on average from head to tail and weigh between 6 and 15 kg. The African golden wolf is monogamous and reaches its sexual maturity at 11 months. A litter reaches an average of 6 cubs, each weighing about 189 g. The African golden wolf is omnivorous and feeds mainly on wild boar, carrion or other mammals but also on fruits and seeds.

Liberté, January 19, 2022.¹

EGYPT

September 2021

Giza, Giza Governorate, Egypt

Seizure in 2 exotic animal depots smuggled into Egypt of 55 parrots (Psittaciformes, Appendix I or II) including yellow-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua sulphurea*, Appendix I), 16 monkeys (Primates, Appendix I or II) including baboons (*Papio spp.*, Appendix II), and 23 tortoises.

Al-Masri al-youm, 24 and 25 September 2021.²

Fridays, October 1, 8, 15 and 22, 2021

Cairo, Governorate of Cairo, Egypt

Seizures on the market on October 1, 8 and 15 in or on the cages of street vendors of crocodiles (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II), monkeys, raptors (Accipitridae and Falconidae, Appendix I or II), parrots (Psittaciformes, Appendix I or II except 4 species) and turtles or tortoises that were temporarily handed over to Giza Zoo.

Seizure on the market of a cobra (family Elapidae), 5 scorpions, 19 other snakes, 2 turtles or tortoises, 14 other reptiles and 11 raptors on Friday, October 22. Masrawy, October 18, 2021; Al-Masry al youm, October 22, 2021.³

WESTERN AFRICA

COTE D'IVOIRE

October 12, 2021

Abobo, Autonomous District of Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

Arrest of a 65-year-old Nigerian trafficker and her henchman, Salif. They are known unfavourably in the large market of Adobo. They were selling eviscerated four-toed hedgehogs (*Atelerix albiventris*), dried chameleons, donkey hooves, and skins from ratels (*Mellivora capensis*, Appendix III in Botswana), crocodiles (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II), pythons (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), African civets (*Civettictis civetta*, Appendix III in Botswana), hyenas, and lions (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II). The specimens were smuggled from Nigeria thanks to the knowledge and contribution of Mrs. Adjjenya Akembi. There are no more than 50 lions in Nigeria, yet Salif and Akembi were only given a 6-month suspended prison sentence and a fine of 355 US\$. The seizures were carried out by the TCU (Transnational Crime Unit), the Ministry of Water and Forestry in conjunction with the NGO Eagle.

EAGLE, October 16, 2021; Fraternité Matin, October 25, 2021; EAGLE Côte d'Ivoire, October 2021.⁴



TOGO

July-December 2021

Togo

The number of seizures over the second part of the year 2021 (July to December) amounts to 42 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), 25 royal pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II) and 92 kg of shark fins. Togotopnews, January 17, 2022.⁵

CENTRAL AFRICA

CAMEROON

November 18, 2021 - January 22, 2022
Nkoteng, Center Region, Cameroon

Arrested at his home in Nkoteng in November 2021 with 86 kg of giant pangolin (*Manis gigantea*, Appendix I) scales and a very young olive baboon (*Papio anubis*, Appendix II) tied to a tree, Armel Pene Yoko was sentenced in January 2022 to 2 months in prison. He was also fined 920,250 CFA francs (1,590 US\$), ordered to pay 79,750 CFA francs (140 US\$) in legal fees, and ordered to pay one million CFA francs (1,730 US\$) in damages by the Nanga Eboko court.

EAGLE, November 18, 2021; Alwihda, November 30 and December 22, 2021; LAGA, November 2021 and January 2022; Camer.be, December 28, 2021.⁶



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

September 8, 2021

Kiwanja, North Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Border with Uganda.



Two traffickers are arrested with an okapi (*Okapia johnstoni*) skin and a leopard (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) skin. Conserv Congo reports that an okapi skin sells for 10,000 US\$. Okapi fat also sells for a high price to UN soldiers.

Conserv Congo, September 8, 2021; Adams Cassinga, November 11 and December 6, 2021.⁷

November 5, 2021

Kinshasa, Province of Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Police release a baby chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) known as "Obama" on social media for his forced proximity to local tourists. They also released a male baboon (*Papio spp.*, Appendix II), grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) and a python (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II). The guard says they belong to an army colonel, but this is not certain. The traffickers and their accomplices often play on their alleged connections with high-ranking individuals to obtain their immediate release. Conserv Congo, November 8 and 28, 2021; Projet d'appui à l'Application de la Loi sur la Faune Sauvage (PALF), November 2021.⁸

facebook

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

August-October 2021

Amboseli-Tsavo-Kilimanjaro Ecosystem, Kenya

Big Life claims the seizure of 256 kg of ivory, 434 kg of bushmeat, 2 hippopotamus teeth (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II), 6 leopard skins (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) a serval skin (*Leptailurus serval*, Appendix II), 9 warthog (*Phacochoerus africanus*) teeth, 3,263 kg of sandalwood, 4 poisoned arrows, and 48 traps meant for land animals and birds.

Big Life Foundation, October 24 and November 1, 2021.⁹



UGANDA

November 13 and December 9, 2021
Katunguru, Western Region, and Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

Following the seizure on November 13, 2021 of 25 feline skins, a monitor lizard (*Varanus spp.*, Appendix I or II) skin and pangolin scales from his vehicle after a check on the road between Kasese and Mbarara, Mubiru Erikana was sentenced to 14 years in prison.

eTurboNews, December 16, 2021.¹⁰



ZIMBABWE

September 23, 2021

Victoria Falls, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Philani Nyoni and Christopher Ndlovu were fined 70 US\$ or, in case of non-payment, will be imprisoned for 2 months. They were setting traps to catch zebras (genus *Equus*) and African buffaloes (*Syncerus caffer*) for their meat and hyenas (family Hyaenidae) for different uses. The Chronicle, October 15, 2021.¹¹



SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

September 9, 2021

Milnerton, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Seizure from a 75-year-old man of rhinoceros horn fragments, partially carved ivory, shucked abalone, fish organs, and 40,000 rand in cash (2,735 US\$).

Cape Town Etc, September 10, 2021; SABC News, September 10, 2021.¹²



October-November 2021

Punda Maria Gate, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Four suspects were arrested just outside the Punda Maria Gate in Kruger Park. They were in possession of African buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*) jerky or meat, poison, traps, dry dung, elephant skins and lips, chacma baboon (*Papio ursinus*, Appendix II) arms, and unidentifiable bones. DefenceWeb, December 10, 2021.¹³



November 12, 2021

iSimangaliso Wetland Park, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Four poachers were chased by rangers with the support of a helicopter. The alarm was raised after shots were fired in the reserve where a hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) and a rhinoceros had recently been poached. The 4 fugitives had arrived at the site via Lake St. Lucia in various boats. They tried to join them to escape. An exchange of fire took place. Three poachers fled into the marshes and the fourth threw himself into the lake. Traces of blood were spotted. According to Ezemvelo, the management body of the reserve, the fugitive remains missing after 4 days of joint search by officials and local communities. His 3 accomplices have also disappeared from the radar.

The Witness, November 17, 2021; Independent Online, November 16, 2021.¹⁴



NAMIBIA

Mid October 2021

Fransfontein, Kunene Region, Namibia

Arrest of 2 suspects for possessing bushmeat. The Namibian, October 18, 2021.¹⁵

October 21, 2021

Rundu, Kavango East Region, Namibia

Fabianus Ntjinano, Kazumba Hingura and Dube Vuthana, 2 Namibians and a Zimbabwean, are arrested with 2 pangolin armors, a lion skin (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II) and the skin of a striped polecat (*Ictonyx striatus*). Striped polecats are small mustelids. They are hunted for their meat. Their bones and organs are used in traditional medicine.

Namibian Sun, October 27, 2021.¹⁶



© Gobabeb - Namib Research Institute

Striped polecat (*Ictonyx striatus*)

NORTHERN AMERICA

CANADA

November 17, 2021

Province of Saskatchewan, Canada

Mr McCallum pleads guilty and receives several fines ; 7,600 CA\$ (6,150 US\$) for illegally marketing fish, 2,800 CA\$ (2,270 US\$) for trafficking bear gall bladders (Ursidae, Appendix I or II), 1,400 CA\$ (1,130 US\$) for wasting fish (he threw away edible fish in dumps), 250 CA\$ (200 US\$) for offering guided fishing trips without a licence, and 1,400 CA\$ (1,130 US\$) for possession of prohibited equipment. He used 2 gillnets and caught a large number of lake trout. Global News, December 14, 2021.¹⁷



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

July-September 2021

Old Town and Cross City, State of Florida, United States of America

Four 18 to 20 year olds are charged with hunting deer with illegal methods, closed season, with firearms from vehicles with people nearby, capturing and possessing American alligators (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) and deer (family Cervidae). They were booked at the Dixie County Jail to await trial.

Mainstreet Daily News, December 8, 2021.¹⁸

September 1, 2021
Burnside, State of Kentucky, United States of America



Seizure in a pet shop at Tim's Reptiles and Exotics near a flea market of an African spurred tortoise (*Centrochelys sulcata*, Appendix II), 80 small rodents (gerbils, hamsters, chinchillas, rabbits, guinea pigs) and 40 fish and snakes, whose species were not yet known at the time of the intervention of the authorities and the NGO The Humane Society of the United States. Animals were treated on site and then distributed to specialized shelters such as Liberty Nature Center, Thoroughbred Exotics, Bourbon County Rescue, Paws 4 the Cause, Lexington Humane Society and KY Fish and Tank Rescue. Timothy Lorraine is charged with second-degree animal cruelty. He pleads not guilty. His bond has been set at 2,500 US\$.

The Humane Society of the United States, September 2, 2021; ABC 36 News, September 3, 2021; Yahoo News, September 7, 2021.¹⁹

September 25, 2021
Billings, State of Montana, United States of America

A successful auction of antlers of deer, elk (*Cervus canadensis*) and moose (*Alces alces*), hides of bear (Ursidae, Appendix I or II), cougar (*Puma concolor*, Appendix II), bobcat (*Lynx rufus*, Appendix II) and marten (genus *Martes*), horns of pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana*, Appendix I in Mexico), Mexican bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*, Appendix II in Mexico) and mountain goat (*Oreamnos americanus*). The profits are 260,479 US\$. Artists, designers, decorators, and hunters came from all over the United States and some will leave with their trophies and their travel pass away from Montana. How many of these wildlife pieces were purchased by straw men with connections to foreign buyers? Were the Rathkeale Rovers involved? Perhaps one day we'll find out when there is a seizure in the European Union, Canada or Asia.

Curiously, no NGO has to our knowledge protested against the marketing of parts of remarkable animals, sometimes listed in Appendix I or II of CITES. If there are any, please let us know and we will report on them in a future edition of "On the Trail."

The Whitehall Ledger, September 22, 2021; KTVQ, September 23 and 25 and October 8, 2021.²⁰



November 2021
Beverhead County, State of Montana, United States of America

Between 2017 and 2018, Yan "Bo" Fong is accused of having fraudulently acquired gall bladders, paws and carcasses of bear (Ursidae, Appendix I or II), puma (*Puma concolor*, Appendix II), bobcat (*Lynx rufus*, Appendix II), elk (*Cervus canadensis*) and mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) from a poacher who was actually an undercover game warden. He was released on bail for 15,000 US\$. Southwestern Montana News, November 6, 2021.²¹



December 15, 2021
Little Rock, State of Arkansas, United States of America

Jackson Roe, age 27, a reptile "enthusiast" regularly imported Chinese giant salamander (*Andrias davidianus*, Appendix I) from China, kept alive in plastic jars lined with wet moss. Tipped off by an anonymous informant, US Fish and Wildlife intercepted a package that contained 2 Chinese giant salamanders. Roe admitted to importing without any paperwork a few dozen salamanders over 2 years for 450 US\$ per animal. He also imported an Indian roofed turtle (*Pangshura tecta*, Appendix I), a big-headed turtle (*Platysternon megacephalum*, Appendix I), and a black-breasted leaf turtle (*Geomyda spengleri*, Appendix II). The trafficking of reptiles from Hong Kong occurred from 2017 to 2019. In addition, a Nile crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*, Appendix I or II), a Morelet's crocodile (*Crocodylus moreletii*, Appendix I or II) and an American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) were seized from his home.

Chinese giant salamander, see "On the Trail" n°20 p. 122, n°21 p. 26 and 116.

US Department of Justice, December 16, 2021.²²

End of December 2021
Minneapolis-Saint-Paul International Airport, State of Minnesota, United States of America

During the last week of the year, on the eve of the holidays, customs officials noticed a spike in bushmeat found in the luggage of U.S. citizens and permanent residents arriving from Africa, particularly from Liberia. A representative of the Liberian community in Minnesota (about 50,000 people) recalls that bushmeat known as "jerky" in his country is considered a delicacy. He wants the federal authorities to provide his community with a list of foods that are not allowed into the United States. CBP (Customs and Border Protection) considers the seizures to reveal a "trend that could have deadly effects and lead to another outbreak of disease."

=>

Bushmeat, which has seen a resurgence in consumption in Africa since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, includes smoked meat, jerky, and cured meat from the poaching of non-human primates, antelopes, bats, and many other wild animals from Africa's forests and savannahs. Fraudulently imported into the United States and other countries where African communities are located, it is often declared as "fish."

Star Tribune, January 12, 2022; US Customs and Border Protection, January 12, 2022.²³

LATIN AMERICA

ARGENTINA

End of September 2021

Florencio Varela and San Justo, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina

Seizure from 2 clandestine taxidermy workshops of southern tigrinas (*Leopardus guttulus*, Appendix I), pumas (*Puma concolor*, Appendix I or II), stuffed African lions (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II), a hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) in the process of being tanned, and pieces of African elephant skin. Infobae, September 23, 2021.²⁴



Mid October 2021

Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, Argentina

Seizure in a restaurant of a rhea leg (*Rhea spp.*, Appendix I or II), an armadillo (family Dasypodidae), 2 puffer fish (family Tetraodontidae), a preserved starfish, 5 deer trophies (family Cervidae) and 175 kg of tainted meat. AM 750, October 22, 2021.²⁵

October 25, 2021

Province of Sante Fe, Argentina

Seizure in a controlled car on RN 11 towards Buenos Aires of 8 red-crested cardinals (*Paroaria coronata*, Appendix II) that were tied up and 3 seven-banded armadillos (*Dasypus septemcinctus*), 2 of which were dead.

Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, October 26, 2021.²⁶



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November 23, 2021

Villa Berthet, Province of Chaco, Argentina



© Ministerio de Seguridad de Argentina

A car tried to avoid a traffic search by entering a rural dead-end road. Seizure of 2 broad-snouted caimans (*Caiman latirostris*, Appendix II), a false water cobra (*Cyclagras gigas*, Appendix II), 35 Chaco sideneck turtles (*Acanthochelys pallidipectoris*), a hilaire's toadhead turtle (*Phrynops hilarii*) and 126 Argentine horned frogs (*Ceratophrys ornata*). Arrest of a man and a woman. They are charged with violating the Wildlife Conservation Act and the Animal Abuse and Cruelty Act.

Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development.²⁷

December 16, 2021

Mar del Plata, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina

Seizure in a private home covered by a search warrant from the General Prosecutor's Office of 2 black-and-white tegus (*Salvator merianae*, Appendix II), a rainbow boa (*Epicrates cenchria*, Appendix II), a land turtle (Testudinidae, Appendix I or II), a blue-fronted amazon (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), 2 monk parakeets (*Myiopsitta monachus*, Appendix II), 2 snakes (family Colubridae), 2 yellow-bellied sliders (*Trachemys scripta scripta*), one common snake-necked turtle (*Chelodina longicollis*), 3 spiders, and one plush-crested jay (*Cyanocorax chrysops*).

Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, December 17, 2021.²⁸

BOLIVIA

September 19, 2021

Cotoca, Province of Andrés Ibáñez, Department of Santa Cruz, Bolivia

450 turtle eggs, armadillo meat (family Dasypodidae) and 24 dead eared doves (*Zenaida auriculata*) are seized at the Los Pozos market.

El Deber, September 19, 2021.²⁹

Mid-December 2021

Caranavi, Province of Caranavi, Department of La Paz, Bolivia

One spider monkey (*Ateles* spp., Appendix I or II), 2 macaws (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II), 2 yellow-bellied sliders (*Trachemys scripta scripta*), one deer, and one sloth were used as an attraction in a restaurant. The 7 animals were transferred to the Senda Verde refuge and the Vesty Pakos biopark. *Página Siete*, December 20, 2021.³⁰

BRAZIL

September 9, 2021

Peruíbe, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure in two stages.

- In the woman's car, 61 turtles (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II) are seized.

- In the couple's house, a live jaguar (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I), 8 pythons (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II), housed in appalling conditions, were seized along with 5 other turtles (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II) and rats and mice intended for feeding the snakes and jaguar.

Tribuna de Jundiaí, September 10, 2021.³¹



September 19, 2021

Brejo da Madre de Deus, State of Pernambuco, Brazil

Seizure from a poacher of 3 armadillos (family Dasypodidae) found alive in a basin, caged birds, traps and a firearm. He was released on bail pending final sanctions. *G1 Caruaru*, September 21, 2021.³²



October 24th, 2021

Ceilândia, Federal District, Brazil



Seizure of 20 birds including green-rumped parrotlets (*Forpus passerinus*, Appendix II) and meat of greater rhea (*Rhea americana*, Appendix II), white-lipped peccary (*Tayassu pecari*, Appendix II), armadillo (family Dasypodidae) and paca (genus *Cuniculus*). The man would bargain for the birds and meat from the traders and would pick them up in his vehicle once the deal was done.

Military Police of the Federal District, October 24, 2021.³³

November 5, 2021

Tarabai, São Paulo State, Brazil

Fine of 2,000 reais (360 US\$) for a farmer who kept a six-banded armadillo (*Euphractus sexcinctus*) and 2 yellow-chevroned parakeets (*Brotogeris chiriri*, Appendix II). *G1 Presidente Prudente*, November 6, 2021.³⁴



November 23, 2021

Ituiutaba, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

Fine of 5,500 reais (995 US\$) for the possession of a finch (genus *Sicalis*) and the meat of several armadillos (family Dasypodidae). He faces 6 months or one year in prison.

G1 Triângulo e Alto Paranaíba, November 24, 2021.³⁵



OPERATION ARCA

November 25, 2021

State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

As a result of simultaneous interventions in 14 cities, including Porto Alegre, and 44 searches under a prosecutor's warrant, 200 animals were found, including tufted capuchins (*Cebus apella*, synonymous with *Sapajus apella*, Appendix II), marmosets (*Callithrix* spp., Appendix I or II), birds including owls (Tytonidae, Appendix I or II), rainbow boas (*Epicrates cenchria*, Appendix II), four-toed hedgehogs (*Atelerix albiventris*), turtles (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II), and iguanas (*Iguana* spp., Appendix II). 300 cages and 3 firearms were seized, and 5 people were provisionally detained. The coordination of the Arca operation was carried out by the regional police, Ibama and the NGO Reprass, which for several months had reported a sales network via the Internet and dark applications. *G1 RS*, November 25, 2021.³⁶



End of November 2021

Peruíbe, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure by Ibama in a "hotel farm" illegally installed within a native Indian reserve of 5 macaws (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II), one parrot (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II) and 2 pythons (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II). The capture and seizure of "exotic" fish in a pond should follow. The fines amount to 585,500 reais (104,500 US\$). The commercial establishment was closed.

The Piaçaguera Reserve is home to 358 members of the Tupi-Guarani Tribe divided into 11 villages, covering an area of 2,774 hectares in the municipality of Perúibe. The demarcation of Piaçaguera was approved by President Dilma Rousseff, in 2016 and registered with a notary the same year. In 2018, the land was registered at the Union Heritage Secretariat, finalizing the land regularization procedure.

Yahoo Notícias, November 24, 2021.³⁷



December 7, 2021

Santo Antônio do Aracanguá, São Paulo State, Brazil



Alerted by anonymous tip, the military police seized a tegu (*Tupinambis* spp., Appendix II), 3 armadillos (family Dasypodidae), and 6.5 kg of capybara meat (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*) from a freezer along with a white-eyed conure (*Aratinga leucophthalma*, Appendix II) in cage. Fine of 5,780 reais (1,030 US\$). Rápido no Ar, December 8, 2021.³⁸

OPERATION CURUPIRA

December 31, 2021

Zona da Mata Region, State of Alagoas, Brazil



This was the fifth sequence of Operation Curupira for the year 2021. 215 birds were seized and 250 cages and traps were destroyed. One caiman (Alligatoridae, Appendix I or II), one tegu (*Tupinambis* spp., Appendix II), 3 nine-banded armadillos (*Dasypus novemcinctus*), 2 Southern tamanduas (*Tamandua tetradactyla*) and 2 coatis (genus *Nasua*) were found dead in freezers. The total of the fines approaches 80,000 reais (14,000 US\$). 200 firearms were seized. During the year 2021, the Curupira operation carried out jointly by the Institute of Environment of Alagoas, the Chico Mendes Institute and the Environmental Police saved 1,265 wild birds from captivity and almost 5,000 since 2017. G1 AL, December 31, 2021.³⁹

COLOMBIA

Mid-November 2021

Pereira, Department of Risaralda, Colombia



“Mi casa no es su casa, su casa es el bosque” (My house is not your house, your house is the forest). The anti-wildlife trafficking campaign continues. In Pereira, Dosquebradas and La Virginia, 19 animals including parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), macaws (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II) and turtles were seized.

RCN Radio, November 13, 2021.⁴⁰

COSTA RICA

October 8, 2021

Milano de Siquirres, Limón Province, Costa Rica

A scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*, Appendix I), a great curassow (*Crax rubra*, Appendix III in Colombia, Guatemala and Honduras) and 2 deer (family Cervidae) served as an attraction for the Granja y Paintball Sycomorus. A juvenile sloth (suborder Folivora) that triggered the intervention of SINAC (Sistema Nacional de Áreas de Conservación) had just died of disease according to the owners of the establishment. All the surviving animals suffered from physical and behavioural problems. They are “permeated” by humans and by sadness. La Nación, October 8, 2021.⁴¹

ECUADOR

October 2021

Ecuador



Seizure of felines and birds including a blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) in the course of Operation Thunder.

Interpol, November 30, 2021; World Customs Organization, November 30, 2021.⁴²

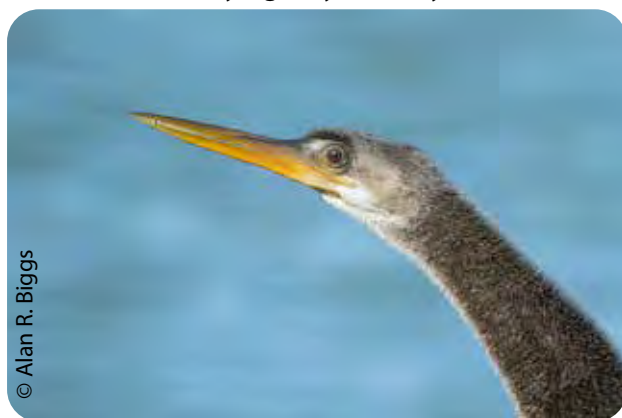
FRANCE

October 23, 2021

Between Farez and Mana, Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France

A caiman (Alligatoridae, Appendix I or II) and 2 aningas (*Anhinga anhinga*) were found in a cooler aboard a poacher’s canoe. The aningas are river birds. They measure 85 cm long with a 115 cm wingspan. When they swim, only the head and the beak protrude, which is why they are called snake birds. On land, they perch on a branch and spread their wings to dry them.

French Biodiversity Agency, January 2022.⁴³



Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*)

Beginning of November 2021

Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France

Seizure in a pirogue (small boat) of 6 tufted capuchins (*Cebus apella*, synonymous with *Sapajus apella*, Appendix II) and 15 kg of white-lipped peccaries (*Tayassu pecari*, Appendix II) meat which was being delivered to Saint Laurent du Maroni. French Biodiversity Agency, January 2022.⁴⁴

PERU

End of September 2021

Pucallpa, Province of Coronel Portillo, Department of Ucayali, Peru

Seizure at Artesanía Guacamayo and Artesanía Amazonas stores of a host of wildlife curiosities including 15 turtle shells, 19 stuffed lizards and a bat, 8 boxes of butterflies and a box of pinned beetles, and 112 odds and ends made of reptile or feline skin. The operators claimed to be unaware that everything they were selling was prohibited from being sold. They were released after the payment of a bail.

Diario Ahora, September 23, 2021.⁴⁵

November 19, 2021

Lima, Province of Lima, Department of Lima, Peru

Abandoned pets are multiplying. Alerted by the rising population, the Serfor (Servicio Nacional Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre) rescued a caiman (*Caiman* spp., Appendix I or II), 3 yellow-headed sidenecks (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II), 3 South American river turtles (*Podocnemis expansa*, Appendix II), a yellow-footed tortoise (*Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II), 2 common squirrel monkeys (*Saimiri sciureus*, Appendix II), 2 American kestrels (*Falco sparverius*, Appendix II) and a black-crowned night heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*). They will be spared from wandering and mistreatment. Agencia Peruana de Noticias (Andina), November 19, 2019.⁴⁶

November 30, 2021

District of Yavarí, Province of Mariscal Ramón Castilla, Department of Loreto, Peru

Seizure of 2 yellow-tailed woolly monkeys (*Oreonax flavicauda*, Appendix I), a white-bellied spider monkey (*Ateles belzebuth*, Appendix II), a tufted capuchin (*Cebus apella*, synonymous with *Sapajus apella*, Appendix II), a blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II), an anaconda (*Eunectes murinus*, Appendix II), 4 yellow-headed sidenecks (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II), an anaconda head and vertebrae of an Amazonian river dolphin (*Inia geoffrensis*, Appendix II) in an amusement park organizing guided tours qualified as "Amazonas Extremo" for the onlookers of Peru, Colombia and Brazil. The yellow-tailed woolly monkeys, as part of the "Amazonas Extremo" survival experiments, ate snacks and drank sodas that the visitors shared with them. The operator is in provisional detention. He faces 11 years in prison.

See "On the Trail" n°23 p. 152.

Mongabay, December 7, 2021.⁴⁷

December 1, 2021

District of Los Aquijes, Province of Ica, Department of Ica, Peru

In the wine cellar Buena Vista, the Serfor on requisition of the prosecutor seized live animals, an amazon (*Amazona* spp., Appendix I or II), a macaw (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II), a mountain caracara (*Phalacrocorax megalopterus*, Appendix II), a tufted capuchin (*Cebus apella*, synonym of *Sapajus apella*, Appendix II), 7 turtles and dead animals, 2 flamingos (Phoenicopteridae, Appendix II), one black-chested eagle (*Geranoaetus melanoleucus*, Appendix II), one Humboldt penguin (*Spheniscus humboldti*, Appendix I), 2 crocodiles (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II), 2 iguanas (*Iguana* spp., Appendix II), 2 anacondas (*Eunectes murinus*, Appendix II), 13 turtle shells and a stuffed pale-throated sloth (*Bradypus tridactylus*).

Diario Correo, December 2, 2021.⁴⁸

SALVADOR

December 27, 2021

El Salvador



These 5 individuals were caught transporting 38 red-lored amazons (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II), 30 orange-fronted conures (*Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II), 6 blue-winged parrotlets (*Forpus xanthopterygius*, Appendix II), 4 yellow-headed amazons (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I), 7 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), one capuchin (*Cebus* spp. synonym of *Sapajus* spp, Appendix II), a spider monkey (*Ateles* spp., Appendix I or II) and a kinkajou (*Potos flavus*, Appendix III in Honduras). National Civil Police of El Salvador, December 27, 2021.⁴⁹

CENTRAL ASIA

KYRGYZSTAN

November 5, 2021

Aksy District, Djalal-Abad Region, Kyrgyzstan

Arrest based on a tip of a 47-year-old man suspected of illegally possessing firearms and belonging to a criminal group. At his home, the officers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs found a Kalashnikov "Saiga" with the serial number erased, a "Mosin-Nagant" military rifle and a dagger along with whole skins of brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II), lynx (*Lynx lynx*, Appendix II) and common otter (*Lutra lutra*, Appendix I).

Kloop, November 10, 2021; Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, November 10, 2021.⁵⁰



October 2021

Friendship Pass Border Post, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China. Border with Viet Nam.

The car smelled "fishy." The driver was nervous. Customs officers seized a large bundle of dried seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II) and tokay geckos (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II) estimated to be worth 200,000 yuan (nearly 31,000 US\$) inside the vehicle.

Guangxi Daily, October 13, 2021.⁵³

October 2021

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Guangdong Province, China



455 grams of items made of carved ivory, giant clam shell (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix II) and red sandalwood (*Pterocarpus santalinus*, Appendix II) found in the luggage of travellers from abroad.

Chinese Customs, November 3, 2021.⁵⁴

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

September 26, 2021

Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China



Seizure of bird's nests, sea cucumbers mixed with watches, fashion accessories, jewellery stamped with Longines, Hermes, Chanel, Bulgari and Chaumet and hundreds of thousands of electronic compounds in a warehouse in Futian Free Trade Zone. The fiscal value of the entire shipment is estimated at 35 million yuan (5.4 million US\$). Chinese Customs, September 27, 2021.⁵¹

September 2021

Zhanjiang International Airport, Zhanjiang Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China



Seizure in an incoming package declared to contain "silver plated necklaces" of 2 carved ivory pieces weighing 27.9 grams and a red coral item (genus *Corallium*) weighing 0.9 grams. Chinese Customs, September 29, 2021.⁵²

October 2021

Xiamen, Fujian Province, China



Postal Customs seized 8 suspected "exotic" feline teeth and 2 brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix I) teeth mounted as pendants in a package from overseas. Chinese Customs, November 8, 2021.⁵⁵



November 2021

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Guangdong Province, China



Seizures from incoming passenger baggage of one nautilus shell (*Nautilidae*, Appendix II) weighing 208 grams, one Triton's trumpet shell (*Charonia tritonis*) about 15 crocodile skins (*Crocodylidae*, Appendix I or II) and ivory items weighing 4.712 kg in total. Chinese Customs, December 1, 2021.⁵⁶

November 13, 2021

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China

Following a major anti-smuggling operation by Customs and Marine Police in the Tung Chung area, a large stock of luxury foodstuffs, veterinary products and the latest electronic products, together with bird's nests and fish swim bladders, were seized. Three vehicles used to transfer the goods to a speedboat were also taken. The speedboat fled in the direction of mainland China. The overall value of the seizure is estimated at 21 HK\$ million (2.7 million US\$). Four men were arrested.

Hong Kong Customs, November 15, 2021.⁵⁷



SOUTHEASTERN ASIA

INDONESIA

October 15, 2021

Semarang, Central Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia

facebook

A suspicious Facebook page is spotted by a cyber patrol in Yogyakarta at the center of wildlife trafficking via the Internet. A man was arrested and 7 Sunda slow lorises (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I), one binturong (*Arctictis binturong*, Appendix III in India), one saltwater crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*, Appendix II) and one New Guinea crocodile (*Crocodylus novaeguineae*, Appendix II) are seized and transferred to the Gembira Loka Zoo. Tempo, October 23, 2021.⁵⁸

December 8, 2021

Kenagarian Sumani, Solok Regency, West Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia



Arrest of A.R., a security officer, H.P., a farmer, and R.S., a farmer, in the car park of a restaurant where they were expecting to meet the buyer of a bear (Ursidae, Appendix I or II) pelt and bones and 2 kg of pangolin scales, but it was police and Ministry of Environment agents who came to meet them. Laggam.id, December 9, 2021; Tribun Padang, December 9, 2021.⁵⁹



LAOS

December 7, 2021

Luang Namtha Province, Laos

Destruction by fire of 200 kg of meat and other parts of cobra (*Naja* spp., Appendix II), civet (Viverridae, Appendix II or III), muntjac (genus *Muntiacus*) and wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) seized from markets by the forestry services. Forest meat is also sold on the social network WeChat.

The Star, December 11, 2021.⁶⁰

MALAYSIA

September 27, 2021

Kerdau, State of Pahang, Malaysia

Seizure in a private home of an eagle (Accipitridae, Appendix I or II), 12 sun conures (*Aratinga solstitialis*, Appendix II), 2 white-breasted waterhens (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*), 2 crested firebacks (*Lophura ignita*), an Asian giant tortoise (*Manouria emys*, Appendix II), an Asian palm civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III in India), deer antlers, a mouse-deer skin (genus *Tragulus*) and a python skin (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II). The suspect was transferred to the Pahang Police Station. The operation was conducted jointly by the Perhilitan, Royal Malaysian Police and Peninsular Malaysia Forestry Officers.

Peninsular Malaysia Wildlife Department, October 12, 2021.⁶¹

October 26, 2021

Malaysia

Parliament has approved the amendment of the Wildlife Conservation Act which doubles the maximum fines and prison sentences for traffickers. Fines will increase from 500,000 ringgit to 1 million ringgit (119,500 to 239,000 US\$). The debates were the occasion for sometimes contradictory comments from parliamentarians. Azman Ismail said that pangolins were treated as objects. Wong Hon Wai pointed out that the railroad project on the eastern coast is endangering the tapir habitat because of deforestation. Salim Sharif called on the government to allow the shooting on sight of wild boars that threaten crops and demanded that farmers be given a firearm permit for this purpose. Johari Abdul asked the ministry to look for ways to control the population of monkeys, saying their increasing numbers was causing a problem in new housing areas where they roam for food. He said that in one case, a monkey [probably a macaque, editor's note] had entered a home and opened the refrigerator to look for food. Lim Lip Eng said that doubling the fines would increase the risk of corruption.

Free Malaysia Today, October 26, 2021.⁶²

SINGAPORE

November 2021

Singapore

The proposed amendment to the Endangered Species Act doubles the maximum fines from 50,000 US\$ to 100,000 US\$ per specimen, or from 37,100 US\$ to 74,200 US\$, and the maximum jail term from 2 years to 4 years. It also includes hybrids of endangered species in the list of threatened species, in accordance with the CITES doctrine, and to exclude from the law their excrement and urine and especially "whale vomit", i.e. sperm whale ambergris (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) which represents a considerable financial stake. Such an exclusion would be, whatever the stakeholders may say, a boost to the multiple techniques of harassment of sperm whales.

The Star, November 12, 2021.⁶³

THAILAND

September 5, 2021

Khao Laem National Park, Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand

The patrol encountered 3 men in the forest carrying fertilizer bags and 2 firearms. After the usual summons, the 3 men were stopped and the bags were searched. Inside were a clouded monitor (*Varanus nebulosus*, Appendix I), 2 black giant squirrels (*Ratufa bicolor*, Appendix II), 2 black hornbills (*Anthracoceros malayanus*, Appendix II), 2 Asiatic brush-tailed porcupines (*Atherurus macrourus*), a softshell turtle (family Trionychidae) and 2 monkeys. Headlamps, 3 machetes, a flashlight, 4 pots, 3 hammocks, 4 lighters and some food were also present along with a CZ452 rifle, 75 rounds of ammunition and a homemade 22 long rifle. The 3 men are charged with violating the the Wildlife Conservation and Protection Act of 2019, the National Park Act of 2019 and the Firearm Act of 1947.

Bangkok Post, September 6, 2021.⁶⁴

September 17, 2021

Chumphon Province, Thailand

On his Facebook page, the man was selling "bull skulls." These were actually trophies of gaur (*Bos gaurus*, Appendix I). At his home, wildlife police also discovered elephant molars, fragments of sambar deer (*Rusa unicolor*) antlers and parts of Southern serow (*Capricornis sumatraensis*, Appendix I).

Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, September 17, 2021.⁶⁵



September 27, 2021

Phetchaburi Province, Thailand

A slow loris (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I) (3,700 baht or 115 US\$), 3 small-clawed otters (*Aonyx cinerea*, Appendix I) (3,500 baht or 110 US\$ each), a leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II) (4,200 baht or 130 US\$) and a mouse-deer (*Tragulus javanicus*) (4,500 baht or 140 US\$) were sold via the Internet and delivered in the luggage compartments of buses.

Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, September 27, 2021.^{65bis}



December 8, 2021

Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand

Premchai Karnasuta has been in the news since 2018 (see "On the Trail" n°27 p.110 and p.126, n°28 p.132 and n°30 p.168).

Caught in flagrante delicto of organized and festive poaching in the national park of Thung Yai Naresuan with a black panther (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) at his feet, he had been sentenced by the court of appeal to 3 years and 2 months in prison and released after one night in jail, his lawyers having drafted and finalized an urgent appeal to the Supreme Court.

Arriving at the courthouse with a white bandage that hid half of his face and leaning on a cane, the diabetic public works magnate did not move the judges. The Supreme Court's verdict was the same as the Court of Appeal's in every respect.

Three weeks later, Mr. Karnasuta's wife wrote to the Minister of Justice requesting that he be transferred to a hospital, enclosing a medical certificate attesting to his poor health, which was incompatible with prison conditions and the additional risk of being infected with Covid. The minister replied that he was leaving it to the prison administration and the usual procedures to judge whether Premchai should be transferred to a hospital. The next day the deputy director of the prison administration said in a press conference that Premchai was being visited daily by a doctor, that he was in a Covid containment cell for another 3 weeks and that his health condition did not justify a transfer to a specialized medical facility.

Bangkok Post, December 9 and 29, 2021; The Nation, December 30, 2021.⁶⁶



VIET NAM

September 2021 and March 21, 2022

Lam Dong Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of a live pangolin (*Manis* spp., Appendix I) caught in a net on the back of Mr. Dong's motorcycle at kilometer 77 on National Road 28. One thing led to another, and at his home, police found 32 small Indian civets (*Viverricula indica*, Appendix III in India), 20 mouse deer (family Tragulidae), 5 porcupines and 35 kg of serow meat and bones (genus *Capricornis*), a Bengal monitor lizard (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I) and 20 live lesser bamboo rats (*Cannomys badius*) in a freezer. He was fined 355.5 million dong (15,580 US\$).

ENV, September 28, 2021; Lao Dong, September 10, 2021.⁶⁷



September 23, 2021

Haiphong Municipality, Viet Nam

Nguyen Duy Thanh is sentenced in the first instance to 11 years in prison. In June 2019, his home in the Vinh Niem district of Haiphong had been searched after one of his henchmen was intercepted in Mong Cai, near the border with China, transporting hornbills. He was found responsible for the trafficking of 8 concave-casqued hornbills (*Buceros bicornis*, Appendix I), 8 oriental pied-hornbills (*Anthracoceros albirostris*, Appendix II), 9 wreathed hornbills (*Rhyticeros undulatus*, Appendix II), 4 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), 10 glossy ibises (*Plegadis falcinellus*), 14 small-clawed otters (*Aonyx cinerea*, Appendix I) and a leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II).

Bao Tin tuc - TTXVN, September 25, 2021; ENV, October 4, 2021.⁶⁸



End of September 2021

Binh Dinh Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of a northern buff-cheeked gibbon (*Nomascus annamensis*, Appendix I) and 2 Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) kept as “pets” by a medical laboratory which certifies that no experiments were performed on them. The 3 animals were reportedly imported from Laos. ENV, October 3, 2021.⁶⁹

October 21 - November 16, 2021

Huong Thuy, Thua Thien Hue Province, Viet Nam

Seizure in Son Hai Quan restaurant of 3 dead Asian palm civets (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III in India), one dead masked palm civet (*Paguma larvata*, Appendix III in India), a clouded monitor (*Varanus nebulosus*, Appendix I) with a left foreleg injury, an Asiatic brush-tailed porcupine (*Atherurus macrourus*) and an Asian palm civet alive, and offal and feathers in a freezer.

The cook was fined 270 million dong (11,865 US\$) and the owner was fined 10 million dong (440 US\$). Hoang claims he bought the animals from an unknown street vendor to treat his wife’s rheumatism.

VietNamNet, October 21, 2021; Nguoi Lao Dong, November 16, 2021.⁷⁰



REPEATED OFFENSE

End of October 2021

Lam Dong Province, Viet Nam

Seizure in a private home of 3 frozen mouse deer (family Tragulidae), a bamboo rat, a civet (family Viverridae) and a coucal. The alert was given 6 months earlier after a report of a Chinese cobra (*Naja atra*, Appendix II) sold via Facebook. The investigation had stalled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

ENV, October 30, 2021.⁷¹



Beginning of November 2021

Da Lat, Lam Dong Province, Viet Nam

Seizure in a feng shui shop of 60 ivory rings and 6 bracelets, 30 elephant tails, 20 bear claws mounted as pendants and 20 wild pig teeth mounted as pendants ENV, November 9, 2021.⁷²



December 2021

Port of Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Experts from the Vietnamese Academy of Science and Technology have identified most of the bones, claws and canines found in the 40-foot container opened by customs in the port of Ho Chi Minh City in October 2021 (see page 233 ref. 5). They are 56.3 kg of tiger bones (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), 9.7 kg of clouded leopard bones (*Neofelis nebulosa*, Appendix I), 6.6 kg of leopard bones (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), 17 kg of lion bones (*Panthera leo*, Appendix I), and 7 kg of Malayan sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I) claws and fangs.

Ho Chi Minh City Police Newspaper, December 24, 2021.⁷³



December 9, 2021

Phiang Luong, Ha Giang Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of 431 frozen and butchered animal parts with a total weight of 109.7 kg including masked palm civets (*Paguma larvata*, Appendix III in India), small wild cats and squirrels. Police suspect that all these “delicacies” were prepared for the Tet holiday, the Vietnamese New Year (February 1 to 10, 2022).

Giao duc va Thoi dai, December 11, 2021.⁷⁴



December 10, 2021

Da Nang Municipality, Viet Nam

The New Year's Eve party is being prepared at the expense of wildlife. A pangolin (*Manis* spp., Appendix I), an Assam macaque (*Macaca assamensis*, Appendix II), 2 Chinese water dragons (*Physignathus cocincinus*), 2 skunks and a turtle (all still alive), 16 kg of frozen forest meat, cages and traps were seized in the backstage of a restaurant. The restaurant was used as a repository for dead and live wildlife in preparation for Tet. Two individuals aged 21 and 23 are "cooked" by the investigators.

Lao Dong, December 10, 2021.⁷⁵



Mid-December 2021

Dien Bien Phu, Dien Bien Province, Viet Nam. Border with Laos.

- Seizure of 15 masked palm civets (*Paguma larvata*, Appendix III in India) (33 kg) and 5 frozen muntjacs (genus *Muntiacus*) (72 kg).

- Seizure of 10 black-throated laughingthrushes (*Garrulax chinensis*) in a bus. Arrest of Hoang Minh Tuan.

Nha bao & Cong luan, December 17, 2021.⁷⁶

December 2021

Pleiku, Gia Lai Province, Viet Nam

The court of Gia Lai province sentenced Nguyen Van Thuc, 35, a resident of Pleiku, to spend 3 years in prison for transporting 4 pangolins and 3 tortoises several km across the city.

Bao Giao Thong, January 2, 2022.⁷⁷



SOUTHERN ASIA

BANGLADESH

November 15, 2021

Ranjitpur and Karamjal, Bagerhat District, and Keshabpur, Jessore District, Khulna Division, Bangladesh

Seizure in Chandra Mahal Ecopark by the 6th Rapid Action Battalion acting under a search warrant of a bear skin (Ursidae, Appendix I or II), a whale skeleton,



2 kangaroo skins, antlers and skins of spotted deer (*Axis axis*) and 43 live animals. 17 of them, a mugger crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*, Appendix I), 3 monkeys, 2 ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*, Appendix II), 2 turtles, 2 spotted deer (*Axis axis*) and 7 egrets (genus *Egretta*) were translocated to the Karamjal Wildlife Breeding Centre with a view to releasing them back into the Sundarbans. The other animals, including Indian peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) and pigeons (family Columbidae), were handed over to the Keshabpur safari park. A mobile court sentenced Mohammad Ali Chakladar, director of the ecopark, to a fine of 50,000 taka (585 US\$). He was engaged in personal trade of dead and live wild animals, all of which were undeclared and of unknown origin. The Daily Star, November 15 and 27, 2021; The Green Page, December 9, 2021.⁷⁸

INDIA

September 11, 2021

Khumti, Pithoragarh District, State of Uttarakhand, India

Seizure of one skin and 27 teeth of leopard (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) and 2 bear gall bladders (*Ursus* spp., Appendix I or II) from the hands of Aan Singh Almia and Trilok Singh.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), September 13, 2021; Outlook India, September 13, 2021.⁷⁹



September 16, 2021

Kalyan, Thane District, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure in the premises of Shubh Sanket Vastu specializing in the sale of aromatic oils and candles, numerology, crystal therapy and tarot cards of 50 Bengal monitor lizard hemipenes (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I) and 250 fragments of gorgonian (order Alcyonacea) and black coral (order Antipatharia). Arrest of Geeta Anand Jakhotiya, the director, age 47, his deputy Navnath Trimbak Ghuge, age 30, and Akshay Manohar Deshmukh, age 22, a Vastu consultant. Vastu shastra is a traditional Hindu science that aims to bring architecture, environment and consciousness into symbiosis.

Hindustan Times, September 19, 2021; Mid-Day, September 19, 2021; The Times of India, September 19, 2021; WCCB, September 20, 2021.⁸⁰

REPEATED OFFENSE

September 17, 2021

Mundhakati, Mayurbhanj District, State of Odisha, India

Five Bengal monitor lizard (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I) skins and a 79 cm sambar deer (*Rusa unicolor*) antler weighing 2 kg are seized in the village from Ramanidhi Bhoie and Kshamanidhi Pradhan, who claim to be herdsman and are not new to catching wild animals. "The monitor lizard skins had been dried on a hot chimney to make it free from moisture and smell. Similarly, there is a demand for sambar antlers because of its medicinal use," says the forest officials.

The New Indian Express, September 18, 2021; The Times of India, September 18, 2021.⁸¹

October 4, 5 and 6, 2021

Kolhapur, Kolhapur District; Satara and Karad, Satara District; Islampur, Sangli District, Maharashtra State, India

Seizure from 4 ayurvedic stores and their sheds of 27 Bengal monitor lizard hemipenes (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I), 1,520 Indian peafowl feathers (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in India), sambar deer antlers (*Rusa unicolor*), 59 gorgonians (order Alcyonacea) and 87.5 kg of red sandalwood (*Pterocarpus santalinus*, Appendix II). All the products were also seized, the "drugs" will be submitted to genetic analysis. Two people are in custody for 3 days. The stores and their outbuildings are under judicial seal.

The Times of India, October 6, 7 and 28, 2021.⁸²

October 5, 2021

Fort, Mumbai City District, State of Maharashtra, India

The income, actions, and motives of Mr. Pradeep Gabriel D'suza and his family are unclear. His insistence on operating a shelter in the middle of Mumbai where birds are locked up, divided, kept out of the sky in a screened-in terrace had already led the WCCB, alerted by neighbors, to seize 191 birds and bats in 2014 and transfer them for examination to the SPCA (Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) in Mumbai. D'suza presents himself as the last resort for injured or abandoned birds. The group has not obtained the 60 square meters of land it believes it needs from the religious authorities or the private sector to carry out its mission, and a lack of trained caretakers and financial difficulties have prevented it from obtaining official bird sanctuary status.

According to him, D'suza's days are entirely devoted to his mission. He gets up at 4:30 a.m. to buy jowar (sorghum) and bajra (millet) in the markets for the pigeons, seeds for the parakeets, fruit for the bats, chicken heads for the owls and kites. At 9 a.m. he cleans the droppings, 15 kg per day, and the rest of the time, he takes care of urgent matters and goes around the "baskets" near the temples of the neighborhood and at the foot of the building where the inhabitants have taken the habit of depositing found birds. The rest of the time, he makes cages.

On October 5, 2021, the WCCB and a team of forestry officers raided the D'suza family's apartment on the fourth floor of the century-old Queen Mansion and seized 43 parakeets (*Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II), 7 owls (*Strigiformes*, Appendix I or II), 110 kites and 2 eagles (*Accipitridae*, Appendix I or II), 2 black-crowned night herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), a seagull (family *Laridae*) and 8 bats (order *Chiroptera*) including 3 Indian flying foxes (*Pteropus giganteus*, Appendix II). D'suza was released on bail pending trial. His attorney produced a copy of a March 2020 letter to the State forestry conservator in which his client explains in detail that he harbors injured birds and flying mammals or abandoned pet birds. "My client is not hiding from the authorities."

DNA India, December 5, 2017; The Times of India, October 6 and 10, 2021; WCCB, October 10, 2021; Sprouts, October 11, 2021.⁸³

October 9th, 2021

Aranthangi, Cuddalore District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of 3 Bengal monitor lizards (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I) and 10 Indian pond herons (*Ardeola grayii*). Chandiran and Babu are in custody. The Hindu, October 11, 2021.⁸⁴

October 12, 2021

Keelapanangadi, Madurai District, State of Tamil Nadu, India



The district is known to host shaheen falcons (*Falco peregrinus peregrinator*, Appendix I), Bonelli's eagles (*Hieraaetus fasciatus*, Appendix II) and birds of passage such as booted eagles (*Hieraaetus pennatus*, Appendix II). Such fame attracts traffickers. One Indian spotted eagle (*Aquila hastata*, Appendix II), one Eurasian eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II) and four jungle cats (*Felis chaus*, Appendix II) were seized in a private home by the Madurai Forest Division (MFD) and the WCCB. Four men are being kept in custody by forest officials for 3 days and may remain in judicial custody for up to 14 days after which they may apply for bail.

The Hindu, October 12, 2021; The Times of India, October 13, 2021; Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), October 14, 2021.⁸⁵

November 12, 2021

Jalgaon District, State of Maharashtra, India



400 fragments of preputial glands of Himalayan musk deer (*Moschus leucogaster*, Appendix I), 3 dead Bengal monitor lizards and 10 hemipenes (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I), 40 black coral fragments (Myriopathidae, Appendix II), mongoose fur (*Herpestes* spp, Appendix III in India) and 40 Indian crested porcupine quills (*Hystrix indica*) seized from a mongoose hair brush making workshop. Arrest of a woman and a man.

Connect Gujarat, November 13, 2021; WCCB, November 15, 2021; Thevar Steffy, November 18, 2021.⁸⁶

December 24, 2021

Pune District, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure of 8 Bengal monitor lizard (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I) hemipenes and 188 pieces of black coral (order Antipatharia) by a joint team of WCCB and Pune Forest Division. Three arrests. Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, December 27, 2021.⁸⁷



WESTERN ASIA

SAUDI ARABIA

November 2021

Jeddah Governorate, Mecca Province, Saudi Arabia

Indictment of 2 men who, via a confidential social network, offered to sell 7 lions (*Panthera leo*, Appendix I or II), another big cat, 3 hyenas (family Hyaenidae) and 2 wolves (genus *Canis*). They face a maximum fine of 30 million riyals (8 million US\$) and/or 10 years in prison.

Sawah News, November 30, 2021.⁸⁸

ARMENIA

Year 2021

Armenia



During 2021, international logistical restrictions imposed by Covid-19 did not curb legal wildlife trafficking. 300 animals were imported from South Africa, including 44 servals (*Leptailurus serval*, Appendix II), 20 caracals (*Caracal caracal*, Appendix II), 44 giraffes (*Giraffa camelopardalis*, Appendix II), 20 Nile crocodiles (*Crocodylus niloticus*, Appendix II), 7 painted dogs (*Lycaon pictus*), 68 antelopes of several species including 7 sable antelopes (*Hippotragus niger*, *Hippotragus niger variani* in Appendix I present in Angola and Zambia), 12 roseate cockatoos (*Eolophus roseicapilla*, Appendix II), 6 scarlet ibises (*Eudocimus ruber*, Appendix II), 10 black swans (*Cygnus atratus*), and 4 Cape porcupines (*Hystrix africaeaustralis*). The lot was purchased by Artur Khachatryan, a wildlife trafficker (see "On the Trail" n°10 p.33 and n°12 p.42). Khachatryan has a main partner in Russia named Eduard Khachaturyan who operates a private zoo near Moscow. Since January 2018 and June 2020, Russian veterinary authorities have banned the import of all animals from South Africa to prevent the spread of avian flu and other zoonotic diseases. Khachaturyan also has connections with zoos in Ukraine from where he imported 5 Amur tigers (*Panthera tigris altaica*, Appendix I) and with Kazakhstan where he exported 30 monkeys of undetermined species the same year. To make things even more opaque, the spokesperson for the Food Safety Inspectorate told Hetq magazine's investigators that inspectors could be denied access to the Khachatryan wildlife platform if the quarantine period is exceeded, which is the case for all animals imported from South Africa before winter.

It is not impossible that the animals imported from South Africa will eventually be shipped back to a country of the European Union. Artur Khachatryan has a one-hectare "storage" platform for the animals in the suburbs of Yerevan. The climatic and food shock must be severe for all the animals and in particular the giraffes which were captured in the savannah.

Hetq, March 17, 2022.⁸⁹

NORTHERN EUROPE

NORWAY

September 29 and December 21, 2021 Norway

Following the recommendations of the Council of Ethics, Norges Bank excludes from its pension funds 4 pharmaceutical companies that use leopard (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) bones, pangolin (*Manis* spp., Appendix I) scales, saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) horns and musk deer (genus *Moschus*) preputial glands in their specialities in one form or another. China Traditional Chinese Medicine Holdings Co Ltd, Beijing Tong Ren Tang Chinese Medicine Co Ltd, Tong Ren Tang Technologies Co Ltd and China Grand Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Holdings Ltd are targeted. Until then, Norges Bank was holding shares to the tune of 27 million US\$ in the 4 companies.

Norges Bank Investment Management, September 29, 2021; Environmental Investigation Agency, October 1, 2021; Council of Ethics, December 21, 2021.⁹⁰



UNITED KINGDOM

October 2021 United Kingdom

As part of Operation Thunder organized by Interpol and the World Customs Organization, British Customs seized 250 endangered species specimens and products: Elephant tusks and pieces of carved ivory, items made of python skin (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II) and tortoise shells, dietary supplements made from crocodile blood (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II) and extracts of cacti and orchids, corals and live animals.

UK Government, November 30, 2021.⁹¹



WESTERN EUROPE

GERMANY

November 2021 Cologne Bonn Airport, North Rhine-Westphalia State, Germany

Customs officers in Cologne had a very busy day. They intercepted and destroyed 15 parcels of bushmeat from Nigeria bound for Germany, Belgium and France. Each package weighed between 100 and 300 kg, a total of half a tonne. Inside, there were mostly fish, shellfish, cow skin and snails. The more refined packages also contained 4 galagos (Galagidae, Appendix II), a porcupine (family Hystricidae) and an antelope (family Bovidae, 7 species listed in Appendix in Nigeria). The meat, often decomposing and poorly packaged, was mixed in with clothing, cosmetics and medicines. German Customs, December 1, 2021.⁹²

December 2021 Saarland State, Germany. Border with France and Luxembourg.

Is the Covid-19 a smuggling accelerator? Customs spokesman Dominik Brach is not far from thinking so. "Of course, in 2021 there were far fewer travellers, but there were far more postal parcels." In 2020, the State customs made 147 seizures. In 2021, the final review will be a four-digit number. Cutlery with ivory handles came from the Canary Islands. A stuffed and framed emperor scorpion (*Pandinus imperator*, Appendix II) came from Tunisia. A rainstick made of wood listed in the CITES Appendices came from Australia. Customs also got their hands on a pair of crocodile (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II) skin boots in an incoming parcel, as well as many other prohibited animal and plant products. Bild, March 5, 2022.⁹³

AUSTRIA

December 7, 2021 Vienna, Vienna State, Austria

Handing over of 22 items made of elephant, crocodile (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II), alligator (Alligatoridae, Appendix I or II) and python (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II) skin, mainly boots and jackets, as well as an elephant's foot, to the Natural History Museum in Vienna by the customs authorities in Klagenfurt am Wörthersee. They were seized in September 2014, along with 252 similar products, from the stand of a Swiss couple at a Harley Davidson gathering in Faaker See for the European Bike Week. The 2 sellers were fined 75,000 € (78,800 US\$) at the time. The seizure was estimated at 130,000 € (171,300 US\$), but the couple was asking for low prices. The items that do not interest the museum should be destroyed. Heute, December 14, 2021; OTS, December 14, 2021; Puls 24, December 14, 2021.⁹⁴



FRANCE

December 9, 2021

Paris-Orly International Airport, Department of Val-de-Marne, and Paris-Charles-de-Gaulle International Airport, Roissy-en-France, Department of Val-d'Oise, France



Once again, this Thursday morning, December 9, baggage handlers at Orly airport discovered dripping, stinking suitcases on a plane from Abidjan. Since May 2021, this type of incident has become an almost daily occurrence with planes arriving from West Africa. The OCLAESP (Office Central de Lutte contre les Atteintes à l'Environnement et à la Santé Publique) was alerted in September but is struggling to put an end to the problem: "There is no organized trafficking, no network to bring down." "When someone travels with meat, it's not for smuggling. It's for family or loved ones." The only thing that has changed is that baggage handlers are now allowed to wear protective suits and single-use gloves.

Until travellers are made aware of the health risks posed by this practice, bushmeat suitcases are seized and destroyed. They usually contain decomposing corpses of pangolin, monkey (Primates, Appendix I or II), agouti (genus *Dasyprocta*), common warthog (*Phacochoerus africanus*), antelope (family Bovidae, 18 species listed in Africa) or fish.

The problem is not limited to Orly airport. In 2021, 17 tonnes of products from animal species were seized at the T2 terminal of Roissy-Charles-de-Gaulle airport, mostly from Africa.

Le Parisien, December 12, 2021; International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), December 17, 2021.⁹⁵



FAMILY AFFAIRS

December 17, 2021

Metz, Department of Moselle, France

"On the Trail" n°25 p.119 reported the seizures in April and May 2019 of a white tiger (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), 9 snakes including 2 royal pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II), a frozen toucan (family Ramphastidae) and 4 sugar gliders (*Petaurus breviceps*) at the home of a man suspected of selling lemurs (Lemuriformes, Appendix I) and squirrel monkeys (*Saimiri* spp., Appendix I or II).

He was sentenced to one year in prison and a fine of 5,000 € (5,640 US\$). He must also pay 1,000 € (1,130 US\$) in damages and legal fees of 700 € (790 US\$) to the association Stéphane Lamart.

Ouest-France, December 24, 2021; Lorraine Actu, December 27, 2021.⁹⁶



End of the year 2021

Department of Var, France

The shop window rich in marine animals attracted the attention of the OFB (French Biodiversity Agency). The agents returned with CITES experts and police officers. The search was not useless. It resulted in the seizure of 180 items mainly from marine species: sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I), sawfish (Pristidae, Appendix I), seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp, Appendix II), giant clams (Tridacnidae, Appendix II), queen conch (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II), nautilus (Nautilidae, Appendix II), sharks, noble pen shells (*Pinna nobilis*), corals, but also terrestrial species: tigers (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II), crocodile (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II), ostriches (genus *Struthio*), butterflies, scorpions...

French Biodiversity Agency, January 21, 2022.⁹⁷



LUXEMBOURG

Mid-November 2021

Schiffange, Canton of Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg

184 animals were found at the home of a Luxembourg woman, including a serval (*Leptailurus serval*, Appendix II) that she bought in Germany, 10 pythons (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), 2 boas (Boidae, Appendix I or II), 9 chinchillas (genus *Chinchilla*), a budgerigar (*Melopsittacus undulatus*), a crab, 30 cats and a Staffordshire terrier. The woman had asked for help on social media to care for her cats.

L'essentiel, November 17, 2021.⁹⁸



THE NETHERLANDS

SOUTHERN EUROPE

OPERATION THUNDER 2021

October 2021

The Netherlands

In the course of Operation Thunder, the police and NVWA (Dutch Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority) seized 8 fur coats made of skins from common otters (*Lutra lutra*, Appendix I), ocelots (*Leopardus pardalis*, Appendix I), lynx (*Lynx lynx*, Appendix II) and gray wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II), plus 3 brown bear skins (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II). Everything was for sale on the Marktplaats website.

BN DeStem, December 1, 2021; Westlanders.nu, December 1, 2021.⁹⁹



December 6, 2021

's-Hertogenbosch, Province of North Brabant, The Netherlands

A 59-year-old man charged with holding and selling endangered species was very clear in front of the judge: "I know it's not allowed but I buy what I like and I don't care about the origin and protection status of the species." He had been engaged in this activity since 2015.

At his home, authorities had seized 70 animals or animal parts: a stuffed grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I), the skulls of an orangutan (*Pongo* spp., Appendix I), a leopard (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), several tigers (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), a lion (*Panthera leo*, Appendix I or II) and a baboon (*Papio* spp., Appendix II), the heads of a leopard,

lion and polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*, Appendix II), elephant and babirusa tusks (*Babirusa* spp., Appendix I) and hippopotamus teeth (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II), alongside an impressive and illegal collection of antique firearms.

In 2017, he asked a man to sell 9 tiger skulls and a lion skull on his behalf. This intermediary is also accused of sending abroad by UPS a seal (family Phocidae), a koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) and a tenrec (family Tenrecidae) stuffed under the name of "educational models".

The court sentenced the twosome to 190 hours of community service and 2 months' suspended imprisonment and to 100 hours of community service. De Telegraaf, November 22, 2021; RTL Nieuws, November 22, 2021; East Brabant District Court, December 6, 2021.¹⁰⁰



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SPAIN

September 18, 2021

Madrid, Community of Madrid, Spain

Police officers are inspecting the Expoterraria fair, which is a reptile, amphibian, arthropod and fish fair. As soon as they arrived at the parking lot, they spotted a man carrying a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II). He presented himself as a simple delivery man. A little later, the police officers passed a minor who has just bought a python (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II). Inside, they noticed 30 straw-colored fruit bats (*Eidolon helvum*) sold without authorization. The animals were seized and handed over to specialized institutions.

El Mundo, September 30, 2021; Herald de Aragón, September 30, 2021.¹⁰¹

October 2021

Spain

In the course of Operation Thunder, the Guardia Civil seized 250 animals or wildlife by-products valued at 250,000 € (291,350 US\$), including ivory, parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), turtles and tortoises, among which there were Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) or Greek tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II), a pig-nosed turtle (*Carettochelys insculpta*, Appendix II) and snake skins.

Interpol, November 30, 2021; World Customs Organization, November 30, 2021.¹⁰²



Beginning of November 2021

Alcobendas, Community of Madrid, Spain

49 stuffed animals, including bears (Ursidae, Appendix I or II), lynx (*Lynx* spp, Appendix I or II), leopards (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix I), crocodiles (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II) and primates, 4 elephant tusks, 4 hippo teeth, 2 rhinoceros horns and 132 worked elephant ivories were seized by the Spanish authorities from the nightmarish house of Marcial Gómez Sequeira, in the affluent neighborhood of La Moraleja. Mr. Sequeira, former director of Sanitas (a health insurance group in Spain), claims he wanted to open a museum to attract tourists.

Público, November 11, 2021.¹⁰³



OPERATION THUNDER 2021

November 24, 2021

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

Seizure of a crocodile skin bag (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II), an Amazon tree boa skin (*Corallus hortulanus*, Appendix II) and a guanaco skin blanket (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II) at the home of a 61-year-old woman who was selling them on the Internet.

COPE, November 26, 2021.¹⁰⁴

End of November 2021

Móstoles, Community of Madrid, Spain

Dismantling of a clandestine taxidermy workshop. Inside, there was a grey wolf skull (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II), 4 trophies of Iberian ibex (*Capra pyrenaica*), 13 trophies of European roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*), a freezer full of animals ready to be stuffed and 123 forged hunting tags. The taxidermist and 22 hunters from the provinces of Ávila, Burgos, Valladolid and Guadalajara and the community of Madrid were indicted. They are accused of crimes against wildlife, falsifying documents, handling illegal goods, and mischief in an organized gang.

Eldiadigital.es, November 25, 2021.¹⁰⁵

ITALY

End of September 2021

Ciminà, Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria, Region of Calabria, Italy

Night arrest by a surveillance patrol in the Aspromonte National Park of 2 residents aged 23 and 49 and seizure of 2 guns, ammunition and specimens of "protected fauna". The suspects were placed under house arrest. The Aspromonte National Park, 64.5 hectares, is home to raptors, grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II), wild cats (*Felis silvestris*, Appendix II) and fat dormice (*Glis glis*).

Il Meridio, September 29, 2021.¹⁰⁶

December 9, 2021

Padua, Province of Padua, Region of Veneto, Italy

The authorities entrust to "Esapolis" a blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II), a royal python (*Python regius*, Appendix II) and a turtle (species unspecified) which were recently seized from individuals in Venice. They will receive veterinary care.

PadovaOggi, December 9, 2021.¹⁰⁷

September-December 2021

Metropolitan Citys of Catania and Palermo and Free municipal consortiums of Caltanissetta, Agrigento and Trapani, Region of Sicily, Italy



In 4 months, 23 people have been indicted for the possession and sale of 112 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) and 130 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine). All the animals were handed over to rehabilitation centers.

Castello Incantato, December 27, 2021; CataniaToday, December 27, 2021.¹⁰⁸

EASTERN EUROPE

HUNGARY

October 1, 2021

Erd, Pest County, Hungary

The owner of a clandestine zoo is charged. His first attempt fell through in 2017. Lions (*Panthera leo*, Appendix I or II), pumas (*Puma concolor*, Appendix II), crested porcupines (*Hystrix cristata*) and arctic foxes (*Vulpes lagopus*) were then seized, but he was not discouraged. He reoffended in April 2018.

The Prosecution Service of Hungary, October 1, 2021.¹⁰⁹



Beginning of December 2021

Győr-Moson-Sopron County, Hungary

In September 2019, 5 men were arrested in an operation that mobilized 138 police officers for 12 simultaneous searches around Mosonmagyaróvár. They were suspected of poaching around the city. The police seized hundreds of trophies of Cyprian wild sheep (*Ovis gmelini*, Appendix I in Cyprus), roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*), red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), fallow deer (*Dama dama*) and wild boar (*Sus scrofa*), as well as firearms, ammunition and game meat.



=>

RUSSIA

September 14, 2021

Samara Oblast, Russia

A tourist center with a mini-zoo is being prosecuted for keeping a tigress (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) and a bear (Ursidae, Appendix I or II) without a permit.

63.ru, September 15, 2021.¹¹³



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POLAND

October 2021

Terespol, Lublin Voivodeship, Poland. Border with Belarus.

A grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) pelt with the head and a stuffed western capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*) were seized by customs officers.

Lublin112.pl, November 23, 2021; Onet, November 23, 2021.¹¹¹



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Mid-October 2021

Limanowa, Lesser Poland Voivodeship, Poland

A pet shop suspected of mistreating animals and selling them without an invoice is inspected by members of Towarzystwa Opieki nad Zwierzętami (Society for the Protection of Animals) accompanied by police officers and a veterinarian. There they found sick animals without access to water. Among them, a female tufted capuchin (*Cebus apella*, synonymous with *Sapajus apella*, Appendix II) and a blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) were offered for purchase without a certificate of origin. They are both seized. A complaint was filed against the managers of the store.

Limanowna.in, March 6, 2022.¹¹²

Mid-October 2021

Slavyanka, Primorsky Krai, Russia

A Chinese national is sentenced to 6.5 years in a corrective colony and a fine of 30,000 rubles (410 US\$) for the purchase and attempted export to China of 23 claws and canines of Amur tiger (*Panthera tigris altaica*, Appendix I), 23 Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) and brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) gall bladders, 225 saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) horns, and musk deer (genus *Moschus*) preputial glands.

He was arrested in August 2020 (see "On the Trail" n°30 p.176). 130,000 Japanese sea cucumbers (*Apostichopus japonicus*) were also discovered during the searches.

Interfax Russia, October 19, 2021; BezFormata, October 20, 2021; Primgazeta, October 21, 2021; Vostok Media, February 16, 2022.¹¹⁴



© Следственное управление Следственного комитета России по Приморскому краю

NEW ZEALAND

OPERATION THUNDER 2021

October 2021
New Zealand



Seizure of a crocodile (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II) skull from Australia, 115 kg of corals, extracts of costus root, the Himalayan medicinal herb, and rosewood chairs from the UK. Stuff, December 1, 2021.¹¹⁸

Year 2021

Chita, Zabaykalsky Krai, Russia

Customs sniffer dogs prevented the smuggling of 76 bear teeth (Ursidae, Appendix I or II), 43 saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II), and 64 pre-putial glands of Siberian musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*, Appendix II) to China.

Krest'ianskie Vedomosti, February 16, 2022.¹¹⁵



SLOVAKIA

December 9, 2021

Slovakia

Thanks to the work of Martin Hojsík, Member of the European Parliament, the Parliament has passed a law banning the keeping of tigers and other large wild carnivores such as bears by private keepers. The ban does not apply to specimens born between January and October 2022 in farms already existing and to zoos and approved shelters. There are reportedly more than 200 caged big cats in private homes in the country. Eurpske Noviny, December 9, 2021; Four Paws, December 13, 2021.¹¹⁶



CZECHIA

OPERATION KAMNAK

September and mid-December 2021
Klatovy District, Plzeň Region, Czechia

Czech customs sought to infiltrate a group of poachers operating in Slovakia and Czechia back in 2017. They were offering charged "exotic" hunts on private land. Tigers (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) were part of the offer. The poachers also imported trophies of endangered animals. Authorities discovered 204 frozen or stuffed bears (Ursidae, Appendix I or II), leopards (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), caracals (*Caracal caracal*, Appendix I or II), lions (*Panthera leo*, Appendix I or II), lynxes (*Lynx lynx*, Appendix II), pumas (*Puma concolor*, Appendix I or II), raptors (Accipitridae or Falconidae, Appendix I or II), owls (Strigiformes, Appendix I or II except *Sceloglaux albifacies*), grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II or I), wood grouse (*Tetrao urogallus* or *Lyrurus tetrrix*), Eurasian elk (*Alces alces*) ... 12 people were arrested. Deník, September 14, 2021.¹¹⁷



African golden wolf (*Canis lupaster*) - cf. p. 211

VARIOUS MARINE AND FRESHWATER SPECIES



Reef manta ray (*Mobula alfredi*). Photo Serena Stean

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

December 12, 2021

Port of New Orleans, State of Louisiana, United States of America

Seizure of 508 “souvenirs of the sea” from the luggage of a woman and her husband during the disembarkation of a cruise ship that had stopped in Montego Bay, Jamaica, Grand Cayman and Cozumel, Mexico. The items include 5 queen conches (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II), 68 fragments of stony coral (Scleractinia, Appendix II), 297 mussel shells, 30 sea urchins and 9 gorgonians (genus *Gorgonia*) that they wanted to use for “artistic projects.”

US Customs and Border Protection, January 25, 2022.¹

MEXICO

OPERATION THUNDER 2021

October 2021

Mexico

Arrest of 3 Chinese nationals involved in the smuggling of totoaba (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) swim bladders, sea cucumbers, corals and methamphetamine.

Interpol, November 30, 2021; World Customs Organization, November 30, 2021.²

ASIA

CHINA

OPERATION “830”

December 1, 2021

Guangzhou, Foshan, Shenzhen, Jiangmen and Maoming, Guangdong Province, China

Arrest of 25 suspects involved in smuggling sea cucumbers, totoaba (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) swim bladders and other seafood products through Hong Kong and Viet Nam and marketing them in mainland China. The platform for the collection and distribution of luxury wildlife products was located on the first floor of a building in Yuexiu District, Guangzhou. The overall value of the seizures was reportedly 198 million yuan (310,000 US\$).

Beijing Net, December 31, 2021.³

SRI LANKA

October 1 to 31, 2021

North Western, Western, Eastern, Northern and Southern Provinces, Sri Lanka



During the month of October, 112 people were arrested by the Navy and Coast Guard from north to south and east to west for fishing and transporting fresh and dried sea cucumbers, possessing dried shark fins, and fishing with explosives. One truck, 26 boats and fishing and diving gear were confiscated. Sri Lanka Navy, November 1, 2021.⁴

VIET NAM

October 6-7, 2021

Ho Chi Minh City Port, Viet Nam

Officially, the 40-foot container was supposed to contain frozen cuttlefish and squid in 1,069 packages. When scanned, the shipment showed anomalies that were incompatible with the homogeneity of the manifest and packaging. The *Ever Clever*, a container ship on her maiden voyage brought the “toxic” box with a strong smell of contraband. The *Ever Clever* flies the Panama flag. Her owner is based in Panama and she is operated by Evergreen based in Taiwan. She was coming from Tanjung Pelepas in Malaysia. The recipient of the container is Vietseatrust Food Import-Export. Unloaded in the ex-Saigon port on September 28, 2021, it was formally opened by customs in Zone 1 of the port on October 6

and 7. Behind 80 cardboard boxes each containing 10 kg of squid as “showcase” were 500 kg of dried seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II), 120 kg of dried gills of Manta ray (*Manta* spp, Appendix II), 100 kg of dried pipefish, 240 kg of dried abalone and 170 kg of bones, horns, claws and canines of wild animals (cf. page 222 ref. 73 for identification), car and motorbike spareparts, clothes, household appliances, agarwood, all in cardboard boxes more or less tied up.

Vietseatrust Food is new on the market. The company has had a fiscal existence since February 2021 and has already cleared 6 containers in Ho Chi Minh City. Customs News, October 8, 2021; Binh Duong Province Customs Department, October 13, 2021.⁵

EUROPE

UNITED KINGDOM

August-October 2021

North-East England Region, England, United Kingdom



Seizure of 20 fish traps in rivers and ponds. They catch common otters (*Lutra lutra*, Appendix I), eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) and white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*). For David Shears, Environment Agency Senior Fisheries Enforcement Officer, “it’s horrific to see evidence of otters having drowned.”

BBC, October 24, 2021.⁶



The *Ever Clever* in Hashihama, Imabari, Japan, July 27, 2021

ASIA

CHINA

October 8, 2021
Dalian Port, Liaoning Province, China



Seizure in a package declared to contain “porcelain ornaments” of bracelets and a brooch made of red coral (genus *Corallium*). Total weight, 65 grams. Chinese Customs, October 9, 2021.¹

November 4, 2021
Foshan, Foshan Province and Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Three arrests. The gang, based in the Guangxi region, was sourcing stony corals (*Scleractinia*, Appendix II) from Viet Nam, raising them in tanks and then smuggling them to Guangzhou Province where they were sold to aquarium stores. Global Times, November 29, 2021.²

November 12, 2021
Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China



Seizure of 1,125 corals (subclass Hexacorallia) from a truck. This led to the arrest of 8 suspects. Chinese Customs, November 12, 2021.³

November 2021
Shanghai Pudong International Airport, Shanghai Municipality, China



Seizure of 41 pieces of stony coral jewelry (*Scleractinia*, Appendix II). Total weight, 282.5 grams. People’s Information Network, November 30, 2021.⁴

December 2021
Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 17 fragments of stony coral (*Scleractinia*, Appendix II) in an incoming package. Total weight, 226.3 grams. Chinese Customs, December 19, 2021.⁵

December 2021
Tianjin Municipality, China

Arrest of 8 suspects involved in the smuggling of 2,392 specimens of stony coral (*Scleractinia*, Appendix II) amounting to 210 kg. The specimens still living were transferred to Tianjin Haichang Polar Ocean World. People’s Daily, December 22, 2021.⁶

December 2021
Heshan, Jiangmen Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of a red coral (genus *Corallium*) necklace in an incoming package. Chinese Customs, January 1, 2022.⁷

EUROPE

ITALY

December 7, 2021

Falcone Borsellino International Airport, Palermo, Region of Sicily, Italy



Seizure in the luggage of a passenger coming from Tanzania of 9 organ pipes (*Tubipora musica*, Appendix II) and 19 stony corals (*Madrepora* spp., Appendix II). Fine of 5,000 € (5,640 US\$). Customs and Monopolies Agency, December 7, 2021.⁸

POLAND

October 2021

Zosin, Lublin Voivodeship, Poland. Border with Ukraine.

Seizure in the personal belongings of a bus driver of Ukrainian origin of 29 live stony corals (*Scleractinia*, Appendix II) which he had carefully packed in plastic bags filled with water. They were entrusted to the zoo in Gdynia.

Lublin112.pl, November 23, 2021; Onet, November 23, 2021.⁹

Beginning of December 2021

Gdansk, Pomerania Voivodeship, Poland

The trajectory of the ship attracted the attention of the customs officers. It came from the Far East and Africa. On board, the officers discovered a white coral on a shelf.

Trojmiasto.pl, December 10, 2021.¹⁰

RUSSIA

November 2, 2021

Orenburg Tsentralny International Airport, Orenburg Oblast, Russia

Seizure in the luggage of an Egyptian passenger disembarking from a flight from Cairo of 4 stony corals (*Scleractinia*, Appendix II) weighing 154 grams.

Federal Customs Service, November 2, 2021.¹¹

Mid-November 2021

Roshchino International Airport, Tyumen Oblast, Russia

Seizure in the luggage of a passenger coming from Cairo, Egypt, of 44 grams of stony coral (*Scleractinia*, Appendix II).

Federal Customs Service, November 19, 2021.¹²

December 15, 2021

Platov International Airport, Rostov-on-Don, Rostov Oblast, Russia

Seizure in the luggage of a Russian passenger traveling on a flight from Dubai, United Arab Emirates, of 19 stony corals (*Scleractinia*, Appendix II). She says they were a "souvenir of holidays".

Federal Customs Service, December 15, 2021.¹³

December 17, 2021

Tomsk Bogashevo Airport, Tomsk Oblast, Russia

Seizure of a 200 gram piece of coral in the luggage of a passenger from Egypt.

Federal Customs Service, December 17, 2021.¹⁴

End of December 2021

Kurumoch International Airport, Samara Oblast, Russia



13 stony corals (*Scleractinia*, Appendix II) found in the luggage of a passenger from Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Argoumenty i Fakty (AIF), December 29, 2021.¹⁵

CZECHIA

October 12, 2021

Václav Havel Airport Prague, Capital City of Prague, Czechia

Seizure of 164 pieces of coral from the luggage of a 70-year-old passenger arriving from Curacao.

Customs Administration of the Czech Republic, October 12, 2021.¹⁶



GIANT CLAMS, DATE MUSSELS ...

AMERICA

FRANCE (GUADELOUPE)

September 30, 2021

Department of Guadeloupe, France

French customs arrested *Kon Zéklé*, a large motorized fishing boat loaded with 417 kg of queen conch (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II) coming from the island of Antigua, in the north of Guadeloupe. In addition to smuggling, Marcus, the fisherman, practices sustainable fishing tourism from Morne-à-l'Eau. Guadeloupe la 1ère, September 30, 2021.¹



ASIA

CHINA

Beginning of October 2021

Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China



Seizure of 2 nautilus (Nautilidae, Appendix II) shells mounted as candle holders. They were imported by a company in Shenzhen. They date from the 20th century.

Chinese Customs, October 14, 2021.²

Beginning of November 2021

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 11 pieces of jewelry made from giant clam shells (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix II).

Chinese Customs, November 19, 2021.³

PHILIPPINES

October 26, 2021

Sipalay, Province of Negros occidental, Philippines

Seizure of 7 tonnes of giant clam shells (*Tridacna* spp. Appendix II) locally known as taclobo. Their value is equal to 490,000 pesos (9,645 US\$).

Seizures of clam shells in the Philippines, see "On the Trail" n°5 p.126, n°6 p.5, n°27 p.11, n°28 p.11, n°31 p.195, n°32 p.261, and n°33 p.248.

The Manila Times, October 28, 2021.⁴

October 28, 2021

Sitio Tabunok, Lipayran Island, Province of Cebu, Philippines

Seizure of 735 horned helmet shells (*Cassia cornuta*) distributed in 48 bags apparently abandoned on the coast. The overall value is estimated at 365,000 pesos (7,185 US\$ or 9.80 US\$ per unit).

SunStar, November 2, 2021.⁵

December 10, 2021

Poblacion, Oslob Municipality, Province of Cebu, Philippines

Seizure of 89 giant clam shells (*Tridacna gigas*, Appendix II), some of which weigh just under 100 kg. Jagger Gaje Vitorillo was selling them on Facebook. He is also said to be connected with sellers of sea souvenirs at the Oslob resorts. The global value of the seizure would reach 500,000 US\$ (5,620 US\$ per shell). The operation was conducted by the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) with the cooperation of the Philippine Air Force (PAF) intelligence.

SunStar, December 12, 2021.⁶

facebook

EUROPE

GERMANY

Beginning of November 2021

Berlin Brandenburg Airport Willy Brandt, Schönefeld, Brandenburg State, Germany

Tourists returning from Kenya attempted to bring 2 giant clam shells (*Tridacna gigas*, Appendix II) each weighing 15 kg onto German soil. The maximum weight allowed for a shell of this species is 3 kg provided that it is used for personal purposes excluding any commercial transaction.

German Customs, November 10, 2021.⁷

CROATIE

October 5, 2021

Slatine, Čiovo Island, Split-Dalmatia County, Croatia

Seizure of 3 kg of date mussels (*Lithophaga lithophaga*, Appendix II) along with the pick and pliers used to unhook them from the crevices of cliffs and rocks.

24sata, October 6, 2021.⁸

December 24, 2021

Split, Split-Dalmatia County, Croatia

Seizure of 10.762 kg of date mussels (*Lithophaga lithophaga*, Appendix II) in a fish shop. It is considered a delicacy for Christmas.

Jutarnji list, December 24, 2021; Index, March 28, 2022.⁹

ITALY

November 24, 2021

Porto Cesareo, Province of Lecce, Region of Apulia, Italy

A young man who was using an ice axe and pliers to “unscrew” date mussels (*Lithophaga lithophaga*, Appendix II) from the rocks was observed by the video surveillance cameras of the local coast guard. After a few hours he was caught with 176 date mussels in his boat.

Quotidiano di Puglia, November 26, 2021; LeccePrima, November 25, 2021.¹⁰

ABALONES

Haliotis spp.

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

September 2, 2021

Between Buffeljags and Stanford, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Police officers chased a car suspected of transporting abalone from Buffeljags at around 8 p.m. The driver accelerated and lost control of his vehicle, which ended up in a ditch. He managed to escape leaving behind 6,123 abalone valued at 2.4 million rand (116,115 US\$).

SABC News Western Cape, September 3, 2021; SAPS, September 3, 2021.¹

September 2, 2021

Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

The 30-year-old Chinese national was about to buy abalone on the black market. When he saw the police officers, he fled in his BMW, to no avail. He was carrying a 9-gauge pistol (serial number removed) and cash. If he could not buy abalone, he tried to buy his freedom. Unsuccessful attempt.

SAPS, September 3, 2021.²

September 9, 2021

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

The police are on the lookout. A vehicle carrying 10 men, some in scuba gear, was reported to them. When they find them on the Ou Kaapse Weg road, the men vanish into the night. However, there were 22 bottles and 12 bags containing 567 abalone and 10 crayfish inside.

Cape Town Etc, September 10, 2021.³

September 14, 2021

Centurion, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Information inspection of commercial premises in the Laezonia area. The freezers are full of abalone. A 26-year-old man is caught on the premises. He tried to offer 10,000 rand (680 US\$) to the police to turn a blind eye and was only handcuffed without delicacy. Seizure of abalone and money.

SAPS, September 15, 2021.⁴

September 16, 2021

Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

It is 2:30 p.m. Members of the K9 unit are in the middle of a training exercise on the coast of Marine Drive. The exercise takes on a new dimension when a diver emerges from the water. Panicked, he immediately disappears into the water, leaving a bag containing 126 abalone.

SAPS, September 17, 2021.⁵

September 17, 2021

Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

It is 9:50 a.m. SAPS, traffic police and metropolitan police officers have set up a roadblock on the Standford Road near Windvogel. The driver of the Volkswagen Golf GTI, 46-year-old Mathemba Mathikinca, was caught off guard. He was visibly nervous and said he was carrying bags of frozen meat. The police officers, doubtful, open them. They contained 349 abalone, 70 kg in all, estimated to be worth 251,280 rand (17,180 US\$ or 245 US\$/kg).

SAPS, September 17 and 20, 2021.⁶

**September 19, 2021
Brackenfell, Western Cape Province, South Africa**

Police officers on patrol see 2 men transferring boxes from a Ford Ranger to a truck out of the corner of their eyes. What's the point of interrupting them? Might as well wait until the truck is loaded. All it takes is a little reinforcement and a little patience. The truck finally appears at the intersection of Viben and Petersen streets. It was immediately stopped, the 2 men, aged 26 and 36, were arrested, and 12 heavy boxes of dried abalone valued at 2 million rand (136,760 US\$) were confiscated. SAPS, September 19, 2021.⁷



**October 9-10, 2021
Gansbaai, Western Cape Province, South Africa**

Further joint operations by the Overstrand Municipality's K9 and Task Team result in 3 separate arrests and the seizure of 1,053 abalone and diving equipment. Overstrand Municipality, October 19, 2021.⁹



**October 7 and 8, 2021
Overstrand Local Municipality, Western Cape Province, South Africa**

Joint operations of the Overstrand Municipality's K9 and Task Team:

- Arrest of a man driving from Hermanus in possession of 4,747 shucked abalone near Houwhoek.
 - Interception on Thursday evening of a suspicious car near Grabouw. The driver managed to escape. Seizure of 5 bags of abalone.
 - Inspection on Friday morning of a suspicious car near Gansbaai. Seizure of 17,324 abalone. Two arrests.
- Overstrand Municipality, October 8, 2021.⁸



**October 12, 2021
Belleville and Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa**

Dismantling of an illegal abalone processing plant in the Welgemoed area. Two Chinese and 2 Zimbabwean citizens were arrested and 11,320 dried abalone valued at 6.5 million rand or 432,300 US\$ were seized. And this is only the beginning.

The activities of another clandestine workshop were stopped in the Stikland district, 8 km away. This time, the abalone and equipment confiscated are estimated to be worth 13 million rand (864,700 US\$). Arrest of a Kenyan and a Somali.

In the neighbouring district of Parow, in Cape Town, 2 Chinese and a Zimbabwean were arrested. Their workshop was full of abalone.

The police do not specify if these workshops were part of the same network.

SABC News Western Cape, October 13, 2021; SAPS, October 13, 2021.¹⁰



October 13, 2021

Lebombo Border Post, Komatipoort, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa. Border with Mozambique.

10:50 a.m. A minibus with trailer arrives at the border post. It is going to Johannesburg. The customs officers notice inconsistencies between the declared goods and the load. 21 boxes were not declared. The reason for this was that they contained 460 kg of dried abalone worth 1.6 million rand (106,400 US\$ or 230 US\$/kg). The 39-year-old driver was taken into custody.

SAPS, October 14, 2021; Sowetan LIVE, October 15, 2021.¹¹

October 13, 2021

Cradock and Hofmeyr, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

The attention of the policemen is drawn by 2 bakkies driving together in the direction of Cradock. It doesn't take much to trigger a small inspection. The first one is caught in the trap. It contains 783 kg of frozen abalone. The 37-year-old driver is arrested. The second one drives off at full speed towards Hofmeyr. After an eventful chase, the police find the forsaken and locked bakkie. In total, the police officers got their hands on 1.4 tonnes of frozen abalone valued at 2 million rand (133,000 US\$ or 95 US\$/kg).

SAPS, October 14, 2021.¹²

October 22, 2021

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Sentence of Peter Nel, age 37, to 5 years' suspended imprisonment and 2 years' correctional supervision. He had surrendered to Touws River police on March 23, 2019. On 18 February 2019, in his truck parked on the N1 towards Johannesburg, police had discovered 2,905 kg of abalone.

SAPS, October 22, 2021.¹³



October 25, 2021

Melkbosstrand, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Another sweatshop has come to an end. Officers from the Hawks and DFFE (Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment) arrested a 27-year-old man and seized 5,206 dried abalones weighing 375.44 kg valued at 2.7 million rand (180,000 US\$ or 480 US\$/kg).

SAPS, October 27, 2021.¹⁴

Beginning of November 2021

Pringle Bay, Western Cape Province, South Africa

A 7-hour joint operation by the Overstrand Municipality authorities, DFFE officers and the government organization CapeNature resulted in the arrest of 9 suspects. These residents of Zwelihle (60 km away) had only had time to catch 38 abalone. Overstrand Municipality, November 11, 2021.¹⁵



November 9, 2021

Between Jeffreys Bay and Thornhill, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

5 a.m. The phone rings in the Humansdorp police station. A local resident is spotting people loading bags and sacks into a red Volkswagen Polo and a blue Audi at Pellsrus beach in Jeffreys Bay. The police immediately went into action and drove along the N2 between Jeffreys Bay and Thornhill. It wasn't long before the suspect cars were spotted and surrounded. The 3 suspects slipped through the net but left behind the equivalent of 600,000 R (39,620 US\$) in abalone.

SAPS, November 10, 2021.¹⁶

November 9, 2021

Grabouw, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Arrest at 5:55 a.m. of a 27-year-old man driving again on the N2 with 1,158 shucked abalone packed in 14 plastic bags.

SAPS, November 9, 2021.¹⁷

November 10, 2021

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Sentence of Qing Yun Jiang, age 56, to a fine of 200,000 rand (13,210 US\$) or 2 years' imprisonment suspended for 5 years and to pay 200,000 rand to the Criminal Asset Recovery Account. He was arrested on May 18, 2020 with an accomplice who was acquitted (see "On the Trail" n°29 p.165).

Independent Online, November 12, 2021; SAPS, November 12, 2021.¹⁸



November 19, 2021
Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa



An explosion shook the suburb of Motherwell at 9:50 p.m. When the police arrive, they discover a destroyed house on Ncwazi Street. Only one room remained. This house has been vacant for 6 months. And yet, inside, there are gas bottles, not too surprisingly, and ... 2,227 abalone. Nobody is there. The seizure is estimated to be worth 1 million rand (66,000 US\$).

Gas explosion in clandestine abalone preparation workshops, see "On the Trail" n°20 p.7 and n°32 p. 264.

SAPS, November 21, 2021.¹⁹

November 22, 2021
Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Feng Zhu, age 50, Zhou Wang Feng, age 47 and Richard Rayson, age 33, were arrested on May 12, 2020 in possession of 4,600 abalone, of which 1,098 were cooked, 1,858 were fresh and 1,644 were dried, with a value equivalent to 52,700 US\$ (see "On the Trail" n°29 p.165).

Feng Zhu and Zhou Wang Feng, Chinese nationals, were sentenced to 2 years in prison for trafficking abalone, operating a clandestine preparation workshop and illegal immigration. They must respectively pay 100,000 rand and 14,620 rand (6,600 US\$ and 965 US\$) into the Criminal Asset Recovery Account. Richard Rayson, a Malawian national, was sentenced to one year in prison, which is to be suspended for 5 years.

News24, November 24, 2021; SAPS, November 25, 2021.²⁰

December 6, 2021
Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

The Maitland Flying Squad on patrol on the N1 at Brackenfell spotted a suspicious car. The hunch was right. The 26-year-old driver was arrested and 496 abalone were seized.

SAPS, December 7, 2021.²¹

December 19, 2021
Table Mountain National Park, Western Cape Province, South Africa

The Airbus H125 helicopter of the new Sea, Air and Mountain (SEAM) Special Ranger Team has already proven its worth. This Sunday, an early morning flight detected the presence of 3 divers in the Cape of Good Hope section. They were arrested without delay. Their diving equipment was confiscated. They are suspected of being involved in abalone poaching.

Independent Online, December 19, 2021; News24, December 20, 2021.²²

December 21, 2021
Bloemfontein, Free State Province, South Africa



The informant had not been mistaken. There was indeed an abalone processing plant in the Olympus Street suburb of Bayswater. A search of the premises yielded a quantity of fresh and dried abalone valued at 7 million rand (432,500 US\$). The Hawks handcuffed Jinghuan Zhen, David Mbewu, Thabo Johannes Khaile, Randy Alfred Mapoe, Marvin Fazel Kekana and Clareece Genevieve. The network would extend to Cape Town where the abalone would be poached before being transported to the Free State.

SAPS, December 21, 2021; Daily Dispatch, December 22, 2021; News24, December 22, 2021 and January 12, 2022.²³

December 22, 2021
Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

By 8.30 a.m. the poachers are in action and the police are informed. Without a minute to lose, they call a private anti-poaching unit and rush to the scene. While the divers of the anti-poaching unit found 2 green bags containing 128 abalone in the water, the police officers chased the poachers. They arrest 2 of them. The third one is too fast.

SAPS, December 23, 2021; The Bay Bulletin, December 23, 2021.²⁴

December 27, 2021

Mothibistad, Northern Cape Province, South Africa

The 2 men, aged 29 and 32, were not lucky. There was a roadblock on the TM Tlhabane road and the police officers insisted on searching their entire vehicle. The result: 20 kg of abalone valued at 50,000 rand (3,090 US\$ or 155 US\$/kg), a scale, a slot machine and some cash. For good measure, their truck was also confiscated.

SAPS, December 28, 2021.²⁵



December 28, 2021

Rouxville, Free State Province, South Africa

Members of the Crime Prevention Squad check Andile Nini, age 28, and Lizo Vengeka, age 42, during a routine patrol on the N6. There are tarpaulin-covered abalone in their car, and not in small quantities: 1.6 million rand (98,850 US\$) in kind. Despite an attempt at bribery, Vengeka is arrested. Nini, the driver, is let off the hook.

News24, January 12, 2022.²⁶

EUROPE

FRANCE

September 6, 2021

Brest, Department of Finistère, France

The 3 fishermen had collected abalone in March, while their fishing is only authorized from April 1, they were in possession of undersized specimens and they had exceeded the maximum quota (in the authorized period) of 20 specimens per person per day in the Molène archipelago. The largest seizure was of 32 abalone of which 30 were undersized. They were fined 650 € (765 US\$), 750 € (885 US\$) and 900 € (1,060 US\$). France 3 Bretagne, September 6, 2021; Ouest-France, September 7, 2021.²⁷



OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

September 14, 2021

Bega, State of New South Wales, Australia

Sentence of Robert James Ahoy, 49, and Clyde William Parsons-Campbell, 20, Aborigines, to 6 months of community service and fines of 2,000 AU\$ and 3,700 AU\$ (1,460 US\$ and 2,700 US\$), respectively. They had been arrested in May 2019 on Bunga beach, Bergami, in possession of 252 abalone, 186 of them under size, more than 10 kg in total, estimated at 1,740 AUD (1,225 US\$ or 120 US\$/kg). They intended to serve them at the funeral of Ahoy's nephew. The aborigines prefer to take the small abalone and let the bigger ones reproduce, a vision opposed to that of the law. The South Coast News, September 16, 2021.²⁸



OPERATION DEEPWOLF

30 October 2021

Perth, State of Western Australia, Australia

Operation Deepwolf aims to fight against the trafficking of seafood products. In this context, the ABF (Australian Border Force) conducted 2 searches in coordination with the DPIRD (Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development) and the State Police. A vehicle allegedly used to transport large shipments of abalone for the black market was seized and several people were questioned, including a 61-year-old woman. Australian Border Force, November 9, 2021.²⁹

SEA CUCUMBERS AND SEA URCHINS

Holothuria fuscogilva, *Holothuria nobilis* and *Holothuria whitmaei* (teatfish): Appendix II.
Isostichopus fuscus: Appendix III in Ecuador.

AFRICA

MOROCCO

End of December 2021

Nador, Oriental Region, Morocco

Road check. Arrest of 4 people, including a Chinese national, in possession of a "significant" quantity of sea cucumbers in a van.

NadorCity, December 27, 2021.¹

AMERICA

MEXICO

Mid-November 2021

Apatzingán, State of Michoacan, Mexico

Dismantling of a drug workshop in the Niños Heroes neighborhood. Seizure of a car, one kilo of fentanyl, one kilo of cut cocaine, 10 liters of acetone, 5 liters of acid anhydride, 3 liters of caustic soda, a hydraulic press, and, lost in the middle of the laboratory, 2.5 kg of sea cucumbers. Two arrests.

La Voz de Michoacán, November 19, 2021.²

ASIA

CHINA

November 15, 2021

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China

Customs seized 930 kg of dried sea cucumbers and 890 kg of lobsters from a speedboat near the Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter. The seizure has an estimated total value of 10 million HK\$ (1.29 million US\$).

Hong Kong Customs, November 16, 2021.³



December 30, 2021

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China



Acting on a tip, police and customs officials observed a crane loading 120 crates on board a small "kaito ferry" and they boarded it off Cheung Chau. There were 3,560 kg of sea cucumbers on board which were being smuggled to the Chinese mainland. The estimated value was 17 million HK\$ (2.2 million US\$). Seven people were arrested, including an 80-year-old woman.

The Standard, December 31, 2021; The Star, December 31, 2021.⁴

INDIA

September 19, 2021

Off Vedalai, Gulf of Mannar, State of Tamil Nadu, India

The Coast Guard knew something was up in the Gulf of Mannar and Palk Bay. At daybreak, they cordoned off the area to prevent the escape of a boat whose name they knew. They found it at anchor without its crew 15 km off Vedalai. There were 200 bags on board, representing 2,000 kg of sea cucumbers. The Tamil Nadu-Sri Lanka sector has lost one of its spearheads.

Press Information Bureau, Government of India, September 19, 2021.⁵

October 19, 2021

Off Uchippuli, Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

The Coast Guard hovercraft crashed into a large wooden boat full of 600 kg of sea cucumbers in 31 bags. The transshipment to another boat bound for Sri Lanka failed. Estimated value of 30 million rupees (404,340 US\$ or 674 US\$/kg)

Indian Coast Guard, October 19, 2021; India Today, October 20, 2021.⁶

October 20, 2021

Rameswaram, Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

300 kg of sea cucumbers packed in nylon bags seized near Seran Kottai beach by marine police assisted by WCCB. One arrest.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, October 22, 2021.⁷

October 24, 2021

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



500 kg of sea cucumbers on a phantom vallam boat. Well informed, the hovercrafts struck again. Tongues are loosened in the fishing villages of the district.

Asian News International, October 24, 2021.⁸

REPEATED OFFENSE

December 9, 2021

Gomaspuram, Tuticorin District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

The land patrol was about to finish its midnight search when it was alerted by the smell of cooking from a small building 50 meters from the sea and very close to a crematorium. Three men were cooking sea cucumbers in large pots. One of the 3, Senthil Kumar, is a regular trafficker as are Mansoor Ali and Meera Shah who have a heavy criminal record in sea cucumbers. They have already been involved in 5 and 6 cases each. Shah is the director of the Vijayakumar company, which specializes in selling seafood.

The Hindu, December 9, 2021; The Times of India, December 10, 2021.⁹

December 16, 2021

Jawara Reserve, South Andaman District, Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, India

A Burmese fishing boat had invited itself into the Jawara Marine Reserve. The 10 fishermen were engaged in catching sea cucumbers. The dive teams, fishing gear, fuel, food were seized along with 500 kg of sea cucumbers.

East Mojo, December 17, 2021.¹⁰

December 21 and 23, 2021

Kalpitti and Kalpeni Islands, Union Territory of Lakshadweep, India

- Seizure on the uninhabited island of Kalpitti of 23 sea cucumbers with a total weight of 7.69 kg. Officials say they were awaiting collection by traffickers.

- Seizure in a house in Kalpeni of sea cucumbers with a total weight of 5.24 kg. The attention of the officials was caught by a rotting smell. A large pile of sea cucumber viscera was rotting in the sun behind the house.

The value of the 2 seizures is estimated at 2 million rupees on the international market (26,637 US\$ or about 2,060 US\$/kg).

Devdiscourse, December 24, 2021.¹¹

December 26, 2021

Mandapam, Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Interception of a van. Seizure of 150 kg of sea cucumbers. Interception of the driver who was betrayed by an anonymous phone call.

The Hindu, December 26, 2021; WCCB, December 31, 2021.¹²

MALAYSIA

OPERATION SEA HORSE

September 26, 2021

Off Tok Bali, State of Kelantan, Malaysia



Within the framework of Operation Sea Horse, 2 Vietnamese fishing vessels were detected at 3:29 p.m. in waters under Malayan jurisdiction. The first one was boarded at 5:07 p.m., the second one at 5:35 p.m. The 2 boats had tried to reach Thai waters to escape the Malaysian Navy. They were escorted ashore. Sea cucumber fishing gear which is prohibited in Malayan waters, including for national fishermen, was seized along with 10,000 liters of fuel. The fishermen, aged between 24 and 53, had not had sufficient time to go into action.

Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), September 2021; Kosmo!, September 27, 2021.¹³

October 10, 2021

Off Tok Bali, State of Kelantan, Malaysia

Bis repetita. This time, the Vietnamese boat and the 6 crew members were fishing. There were 40 kg of sea cucumbers on board. They were seized with the fishing gear and 1,200 liters of fuel.

Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), October 2021; Kosmo!, October 11, 2021.¹⁴

October 23, 2021

Off Tigabu Island, State of Sabah, Malaysia

A Vietnamese fishing boat was boarded 7 miles off the island and escorted ashore. Sea cucumbers and 3,000 liters of fuel were seized as well as a sea cucumber "harvesting" device. It is very heavy and destroys corals on the seabed and is prohibited in Malayan waters. The total value of the seizure is estimated at about 120,500 US\$. The 7 seafarers do not have any identity papers.

Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), October 2021; Harian Metro, October 23, 2021.¹⁵

November 1, 2021

Kota Bharu, State of Kelantan, Malaysia

25 Vietnamese fishermen caught fishing or attempting to fish for sea cucumbers in Malayan waters between February 23 and September 25 were ordered to pay a total of 7 million ringgit (1.69 million US\$). Seven were defended by lawyers.

Sinar Harian, November 1, 2021.¹⁶



SRI LANKA

September 12, 2021

Mannar, Northern Province, Sri Lanka



Interception of a pick-up truck carrying large drums. Inside, there were 72,542 sea cucumbers. The driver and the passenger were interviewed by the police. Sri Lanka Navy, September 12, 2021.¹⁷

October 15, 2021

Kalpitiya, North Western Province, Sri Lanka

Two suspects were coming up from the beach. The first was carrying 1,196 kg of dried sea cucumbers in a truck and the second had 800 grams of dried sea cucumbers in his car. Both shipments are illegal. All the sea cucumbers were juveniles below the authorized size.

Sri Lanka Navy, October 17, 2021.¹⁸

October 16 and 28, 2021

Northern Province, Sri Lanka



Seizure in 2 vallam boats of 706 sea cucumbers and 1,120 kg of turmeric. The turmeric was smuggled from Indian Tamil Nadu. The sea cucumbers come from illegal fishing without a license or quota. Among the most sought after species in Sri Lanka are *Holothuria fuscogilva*, *Holothuria nobilis* and *Thelenota ananas*.

Sri Lanka Navy, October 29, 2021.¹⁹

TURKEY

November 23, 2021

Ayvalık, Balıkesir Province, Turkey

Seizure on board a wooden boat registered in Izmir of 55 kg of sea cucumbers, an oxygen tank, 100 meters of hose, and diving equipment. The sea cucumbers were put back into the ocean.

Cumhuriyet (with DHA), November 29, 2021; Deniz Haber, November 29, 2021.²⁰

EUROPE

CROATIA

September 27, 2021

Rovanjska, Zadar County, Croatia

The man was carrying 148 kg of sea cucumbers in his car. A criminal investigation is opened.

Dnevnik.hr, September 29, 2021.²¹

FRANCE

December 29, 2021

Martigues, Côte Bleue Marine Park, Department of Bouches-du-Rhône, France



Seizure and return to the sea of 985 purple sea urchins (*Paracentrotus lividus*). Observed for 3 hours in the early morning by a team from the OFB, an underwater diver was going back and forth between the water and the coast. He hid his loot in bags and nets at the foot of the cliff. He will have difficulty convincing the judge that his plundering was reserved for personal consumption. He was undoubtedly in cahoots with restaurant owners hoping to liven up New Year's Eve parties. In the Mediterranean basin, all edible sea urchins are in decline.

French Biodiversity Agency, January 19, 2022.²²

ITALY

October 16-17, 2021

Port of Licata, Free Municipal Consortium of Agrigento, Region of Sicily, Italy

Seizure by the Guardia di Finanza of 80 kg of sea cucumbers whose fishing is prohibited by decree of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry dated December 30, 2020.

Quotidiano di Ragusa, October 18, 2021.²³

OPERATION KALIMERA

November 19, 2021

Taranto, Province of Taranto, Region of Apulia, Italy

After the accumulation of information and converging observations, the Kalimera operation was launched at dawn. The mobilization included 100 coast guard members, 34 land vehicles and a helicopter. 17 people were caught and placed under house arrest. They are suspected of having set up a clandestine network of capturing and smuggling of sea cucumbers under the direction of Ivan Cardelicchio and Vito Modesto Colella residing in Bari and Taranto. The 2 leaders coordinated the

illegal trade by recruiting fishermen and divers in the Gulf of Taranto. The turnover of the triad is estimated at 4.5 million € (5.2 million US\$). The overall amount of illegal catches is estimated to be around 15 tonnes.

There are 10 species of sea cucumbers in the Gulf of Taranto.

Il Giornale dei Marinai, November 19, 2021; Quotidiano di Puglia, November 19, 2021; Il Fatto Quotidiano, November 20, 2021.²⁴



End of October 2021

Autonomous Region of Sardinia, Italy

Sardinia suspends sea urchin fishing for 3 years. "The growing commercial interest in sea urchins has led in the last decade to a massive exploitation of the resource, which in many areas of the Sardinian territorial sea is in a state of great distress, as highlighted by scientific research and the operators themselves." 400,000 € (466,000 US\$) for 2021 and 1.2 million € (1.4 million US\$) for 2022 and 2023 are allocated to verify the application of the measure and to compensate for the losses of the licensed fishermen who will be asked to perform other tasks such as cleaning the sea bed.

Ohga, October 27, 2021.²⁵

RUSSIA

OPERATION POUTINE-2021

February-November 2021

Sakhalin Oblast, Russia

Seizures during the first 10 months of the year resulted in the confiscation of 7,500 Japanese sea cucumbers (*Apostichopus japonicus*), 75 tonnes of pink salmon (*Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*) and chum salmon (*Oncorhynchus keta*), 1,000 cherry salmon (*Oncorhynchus masou*) 16 taimens or Siberian salmon (*Hucho taimen*), 10 tonnes of red caviar, 311 crabs and 40 kg of crab meat, more than 169 pieces of fishing gear, 85 diving suits, 33 outboard motor boats and 70 land vehicles.

ASTV.RU, November 19, 2021.²⁶

October 2021

Possiet Bay, Primorsky Krai, Russia

Arrest of a poacher of Japanese sea cucumbers (*Apostichopus japonicus*) from the village of Slavyanka who had collected 700 specimens. They were returned to the sea.

VladNews, January 14, 2022.²⁷

End of October 2021

Primorye Krai, Russia. Border with China.

Four attempts to smuggle ginseng and sea cucumbers were thwarted by customs and special forces of the Russian Federation. The Chinese bourgeoisie believes ginseng has preventive or curative properties for Covid-19. Sea cucumbers are referred to as “marine ginseng.”

- Seizure of sea cucumbers and ginseng roots in a cache on board a diesel locomotive in the Sosnovaya Pad Station. The train was heading to China.

- Seizure of 2,556 ginseng roots in a car heading to China.

- Seizure of 1,001 ginseng roots from a Chinese citizen who had plotted to bring them into his home country.

- Seizure of 410 ginseng roots and 51 kg of Japanese sea cucumbers (*Apostichopus japonicus*) in a car bound for China.

The total value of the seizures is estimated at 85 million rubles (1.17 million US\$).

Kommersant, October 25, 2021.²⁸

November 9, 2021

Putyatyn and Slavyanka, Primorsky Krai, Russia

- Seizure in Putyatyn of 600 kg of fresh and cooked Japanese sea cucumbers (*Apostichopus japonicus*), 1,400 Yesso scallops (*Mizuhopecten yessoensis*) and 40 salmon.

- Seizure in Slavyanka of 200 kg of Japanese sea cucumbers in a refrigerated truck. Considered viable, they were put back to ocean.

The FSB estimates the value of the seizures to be at least 6 million rubles (85,250 US\$) and reports that several weapons and ammunition were also confiscated.

Fishnews, November 9, 2021; Interfax Russia, November 9, 2021; RIA FAN, November 9, 2021.²⁹

Beginning of December 2021

Korsakov, Sakhalin Oblast, Russia



Seizure by the FSB of 120 kg of dried “trepang”, racks and cooking equipment. Ecological damage to aquatic ecosystems is estimated at 15 million rubles or 200,000 US\$.

Interfax Russia, December 9, 2021; SakhalinMedia, December 10, 2021.³⁰

REPEATED OFFENSE

December 14, 2021

Khasansky District, Primorsky Krai, Russia



Sentencing of 2 inhabitants of the village of Kraskino to 2 years and 2.5 years' suspended imprisonment for illegally “harvesting” 559 Japanese sea cucumbers (*Apostichopus japonicus*) with an estimated value of 762,000 rubles (10,200 US\$) in the Ekspeditsii bay considered a “natural monument.”

GTRK Vladivostok, December 14, 2021.³¹

End of December 2021

Ussuriysk, Primorsky Krai, Russia

FSB and customs seize from a house 2 tonnes of dried sea cucumbers hidden behind false partitions. An arrest.

Ussuriysk, see “On the Trail” n°7 p. 56, n°30 p. 176, “On the Trail”. 56, n°30 p. 176, n°31 p. 84, p. 201 and n°32 p. 290. Russian Public Television (OTR), Dec. 28, 2021; Fishnews, Dec. 29, 2021; PrimaMedia, Dec. 29, 2021.³²



OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

October 2021

Rowley Shoals Marine Park, State of Western Australia, Australia

The Australian Border Force (ABF), the Maritime Border Command (MBC) and the Australian Defence Force (ADF) boarded 16 Indonesian fishing vessels suspected of engaging in IUU (Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated) fishing off Darwin. 630 kg of sea cucumbers were seized along with 5 tonnes of salt, 5 canoes and 59 pairs of binoculars. Three boats were burnt at sea after the transfer of their crews on board of 13 boats that were escorted beyond the Australian Exclusive Economic Zone. This brutal, polluting and humiliating practice is unworthy of a country that claims to be democratic and civilized. The increase in the number of pirate boats heading towards or around the Rowley Bank, which is a protected marine park, has been reported to the authorities by tourist cruise organizations and by the fishermen's union of northern Australia. Vice-Admiral Mark Hill, who led the naval operation,



is very authoritative in his interviews. "We are committed to protecting Australia's maritime environment and defending our borders, including against illegal attempts to fish in Australian waters" and humanitarianism: "the increase in illegal fishing was being driven by economic factors in Indonesia." ABC News, November 7, 2021; Australian Border Force, November 8, 2021.³³

SOLOMON ISLANDS

September 16, 2021

Solomon Islands. Border with Papua New Guinea.

The RSIPF (Royal Solomon Islands Police Force) located and boarded a boat in Solomon Islands waters coming from the island of Bougainville, under administrative supervision of Papua New Guinea. There were 20 people on board and the boat was taken out of territorial waters. Interpretations of this incursion differ. According to the police, the Bougainvilleans came with the intention of catching sea cucumbers, knowing that their fishing is suspended in the Solomon Islands and therefore assuming that they must be plentiful in the bay floors. According to other sources, they were on the contrary coming to the Solomon Islands to sell sea cucumbers poached in Papua New Guinea.

Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation, September 17, 2021.³⁴

SEAHORSES

Hippocampus spp., Appendix II

AMERICA

ECUADOR

Mid-September 2021

José Joaquín de Olmedo International Airport, Guayaquil, Guayas Province, Ecuador

A Chinese citizen flying to Amsterdam hid 213 dried seahorses in his luggage. According to the media outlet Algemeen Dagblad, the Chinese believe that eating seahorses helps to solve erectile problems. Algemeen Dagblad, September 21, 2021.¹

ASIA

CHINA

Beginning of September 2021

Sha Tau Kok Checkpoint, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China. Border with Mainland China.

Seizure of 29 dried seahorses weighing 76 grams, from the luggage of an incoming passenger. Chinese Customs, September 10, 2021.²

October 2021

Wanding Border Post, Ruili, Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Myanmar.

Seizure in 4 white bags declared to contain "onions" of 34.4 kg of dried seahorses or 4,381 specimens of 4 different species, including Queensland seahorse (*Hippocampus spinosissimus*, Appendix II), longnose seahorse (*Hippocampus trimaculatus*, Appendix II), spiny seahorse (*Hippocampus histrix*, Appendix II) and Kellogg's seahorse (*Hippocampus kelloggi*, Appendix II). Chinese Customs, October 10, 2021.³

MARINE OR FRESHWATER FISH

AFRICA

MAURITIUS

September 1, 2021

Quatre Cocos, District of Flacq, Mauritius

Will the rays suffer the same fate as the sharks? The corpse of a ray with its fins removed washed up on Palmar beach by the wind and currents. The MMCS (Mauritius Marine Conservation Society) first thought it was a dolphin in the process of decomposition. The truth was soon established thanks to Mark McGrouther, fish specialist at the Australian Museum (Sidney). It was an eagle ray (genus *Aetobatus*). Ray fin soup is expected to replace shark fin soup. Mark McGrouther says that the rays caught in the nets are dismembered and thrown back into the ocean in agony. L'Express, September 8, 2021.¹

October 24, 2021

Quatre Cocos, District of Flacq, Mauritius

After the mutilated ray of Palmar, it is the turn of the mutilated eagle ray (genus *Aetobatus*) of Belle-Mare. The fishermen's tongues are loosening, provided they remain anonymous. The ray fins are each sold for 1,500-2,000 rupees (35-45 US\$) to restaurant owners who welcome tourists from all over the world. L'Express, November 1, 2021.²

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

November 12, 2021

Clifton Court Forebay, State of California, United States of America

A green sturgeon (*Acipenser medirostris*, Appendix II) measuring 1.63 meters long is loaded into the back of an SUV. It's a bit narrow but it still fits with its head and tail pointing up. A witness saw the scene and takes pictures. The Poaching and Pollution Hotline is alerted and well documented with the vehicle's license plate. 90 minutes later, 3 agents from the CDFW (California Department of Fish and Wildlife) arrived at the poacher's home. The sturgeon was still in the car. They discovered that the sturgeon was still alive and issued a preliminary violation report and rushed it back into the water. It gradually regained its senses and moved away. The prognosis is favorable. He is between 25 and 30 years old.

CalTIP (Californians Turn in Poachers and Polluters) was launched in 1981. Call number 1-888-334-2258. Message CALTIP + 847411.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife, February 11, 2022.³

LATIN AMERICA

BRAZIL

September 16, 2021

Manacapuru, State of Amazonas, Brazil



The arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) was donated to charitable organizations. The 818 kg was kept in the cold rooms of the boat under layers of legal and common fish. CITES says the species is endangered. The captain was released on bail of 1,100 reais (200 US\$). He will answer for his actions later in court. Caught in the act, he told the police that he did not understand how the arapaimas got on his boat. Amazonas State Government, September 17, 2021.⁴

September 21, 2021

Coari, State of Amazonas, Brazil

This boat was a big fish. It came from Jutai, 750 km upstream from Manaus. In the holds and behind false bulkheads, the police found 5 tonnes of fresh arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) and 7 tonnes of salted arapaima. On the basis of 100 kg per animal of the Amazon, that makes 120 arapaimas, although the law only authorized him to transport 3.

Rede Amazônica, September 22, 2021.⁵

September 25, 2021

Costa Marques and São Francisco do Guaporé, State of Rondônia, Brazil

After being certified fit for consumption, the 85.5 kg of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), butterfly peacock bass (*Cichla ocellaris*), pirarara (*Phractocephalus hemiliopterus*), and surubis (genus *Pseudoplatystoma*) seized by the military police from a recreational fishing boat and the 30 kg of arapaima seized from an amateur fisherman were donated to the Associação de Pais e Amigos dos Excepcionais (Association of Parents and Friends of Children in Need).

Portal Pesca Amadora, September 27, 2021.⁶

October 13, 2021

Beruri, State of Amazonas, Brazil

On the docks of the Amazonian port of Beruri, the police cast an inquisitive eye on a shady boat. The captain wanted to deliver 549 kg of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) and 70 kg of tambaqui (*Colossoma macropomum*) to Manacapuru. He was prevented from doing so. All the fish of the Amazon ecosystem were seized. The Amazonian Military Police (PMAM) encourages locals to alert them if they have knowledge of criminal acts via the telephone line 181 or 190.

Portal do Holanda, October 15, 2021.⁷

FRANCE (FRENCH GUIANA)

October 23, 2021

Coari, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) (910 kg) and tambaqui (*Colossoma macropomum*) (400 kg) were in a boat going down the Solimões River, instead of going about their own business in the Amazon tributary. Clandestinely captured by the fishermen of São Francisco da Vila Fernandes, they were destined to be illegally sold in Coari. On the local market, they would have been sold for at least 24 million reais (4,460 US\$).

Agência Amazonas, October 24, 2021.⁸

November 5, 2021

Coari, State of Amazonas, Brazil

In the heart of Amazonas, again in Coari, the *B/R Vencedor I*, was harboring 2.5 tonnes of salted arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II).

G1 AM, November 10, 2021; Portal Norte de Notícias, November 11, 2021.⁹

End of November 2021

Peruíbe, State of São Paulo, Brazil

After killing 2 adult hammerhead sharks (genus *Sphyrna*, 3 species in Appendix II), fishermen displayed them on social media with 5 fetuses extracted from the female's belly. Each of them was fined 5,000 reais multiplied by 7, which amounts to 35,000 reais (6,260 US\$).

G1 Santos (with Ibama), November 17, 2021.¹⁰



COLOMBIA

September 25, 2021

El Dorado International Airport, Bogota, Colombia

Seizure of 3,493 shark fins (between 900 and 1,000 sharks were amputated) and 117 kilos of swim bladders bound for Hong Kong. The first elements of the investigation reveal that the shipper's fishing license expired in 2020. He also never had the authorization to catch sharks, let alone export them.

Infobae, September 25, 2021.¹¹

ECUADOR

October 4, 2021

Manta, Manabí Province, Ecuador

Seizure of 26 shark fins on board the *Niño Aisher II* sailing in the early morning 10 miles off Manta. The boat and its 8 crew members were escorted to the Coast Guard dock.

El Universo, October 6, 2021.¹²

OPERATION POLPECHE

October 28, 2021

Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France



From the Maroni to the Oyapock via the Approuague, all the river mouths are invaded by "tapouilles", which are traditional fishing boats from Suriname, Brazil, Guiana and even Venezuela. The whole wooden navy is pouring into Guiana, knowing that it has no shield. However, the French army is doing its best with the few nautical and financial means it has there.

Seizure at the end of the Polpêche operation of 4 tonnes of fish, 23 kg of swim bladders probably from acoupa weakfish (*Cynoscion acoupa*) and 30 shark fins on board 2 tapouilles. "This is the largest seizure of the armies in 15 years," the press release proclaims. This is not enough to calm the fishermen, fishmongers, Guianese elected officials and NGOs who intend to file a complaint against the French State for "ecocide" by passivity.

French Army - Military Operations, October 28, 2021; Guyane la 1^{ère}, October 30, 2021.¹³

MEXICO

End of November 2021

Hermosillo, State of Sonora, Mexico

The Attorney General's Office through the FEMDO (Fiscalía Especializada en materia de Delincuencia Organizada) has charged 6 people of whom very little is known. The leader is a certain David H., "of Asian origin," and the others are Adrián R., Arnoldo C., Leonel G., Raúl R. and Alex M. Their homes have been searched: nothing is known about the evidence of their involvement in the totoaba trade (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I). They are charged and probably still at large. When will the complaint of "ecocide" by passivity be filed against the Mexican State?

Attorney General's Office, November 21, 2021.¹⁴



CENTRAL ASIA

KAZAKHSTAN

December 2021 and January 2022
Tupkaragan District, Mangystau Region, Kazakhstan



Arrested in December 2021 for possession of 38 sturgeons (Acipenseridae, Appendix I or II) weighing 90 kg, a man was sentenced a month later to 3.5 years of "restriction of freedom." in Aktau, January 29, 2022.¹⁵

UZBEKISTAN

End of December 2021
Mirishkor District, Qashqadaryo Region, Uzbekistan



Three arrests for electric fishing in an irrigation canal. Seizure of an inflatable boat, a battery, 2 electric fishing rods and 385 fish including 108 Turkestan barbels (*Luciobarbus capito conocephalus*), a nationally protected species which is considered vulnerable by the IUCN. The population is believed to have declined by 30% between 1980 and 2010 due to overfishing and the construction of hydroelectric dams. Sputnik Uzbekistan, December 24, 2021.¹⁶

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

September 20, 2021
Hong Kong International Airport, China



Seizure of 46 kg of fresh totoaba (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) swim bladders worth 7.4 million HK\$ (950,335 US\$ or 20,660 US\$/kg). The customs release does not confirm that they came from Mexico.

Hong Kong Customs, September 21, 2021.¹⁷

October 2021
Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure in a transiting package declared to contain "clothing" of 28 live fish inside water bags. Chinese Customs, November 2, 2021.¹⁸

SOUTHEASTERN ASIA

INDONESIA

September 11, 2021
Celukan Bawang Port, Buleleng Regency, Bali Province, Lesser Sunda Islands, Indonesia



Seizure on board the *Nadelyn K* of 48 kg of explosives to be used for blast fishing.

Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), September 2021; Memo, Sept. 28, 2021.¹⁹



September 16, 2021
Off Selayar Islands Archipelago, Selayar Islands Regency, South Sulawesi Province, Sulawesi Island, Indonesia



Arrest of 4 explosive using fishermen.

Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), September 2021.²⁰

September 26, 2021
Talagasari, Cianjur Regency, West Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia

No sooner had the whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*, Appendix II) washed up on the beach than people took it in their hands. Shortly after, she was butchered and distributed, one does not know according to what financial haggling. Some take a crumb, others a whole bag.

Tribune Jabar, September 26, 2021; Mongabay, September 30, 2021.²¹

October 2, 2021
Off Buton Island, Southeast Sulawesi Province, Sulawesi Island, Indonesia



Arrest of an explosive using fisherman and seizure of 150 kg of explosives.

Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), October 2021.²²

MALAYSIA



Blasting explosives have been used by Asian fishermen for over a century, particularly in Hong Kong and peninsular Malaysia. After World War II, unexploded ordnance was also “recycled” for freshwater fishing. Today, most “fish bombs” contain ammonium nitrate and kerosene or diesel. The mixture is known worldwide as ANFO (Ammonitrate Fuel Oil). Fish bombs nowadays cost less than 3 US\$. It is the most competitive fishing gear and the easiest to take on board, except in the cases of improper handling or fire on board the boats.

In the first 10 minutes, this express fishing covers the costs of fuel and bombs.

The explosive kills the fish close to the explosion. At the periphery, the pressure wave knocks out the fish, causes internal bleeding, bursts the swim bladders. Most of the dead fish float to the surface. Others sink, they are picked by hand or diving by artisanal

fishermen, with nets by industrial fishermen.

Artisanal blast fishing is carried out within a 10-km radius from the port of departure. The practice is prohibited but difficult to control. When they see any authority approaching, the fishermen throw all the evidence into the sea.

Semi-industrial fishing is carried out by 2 or 3 boats within a 50-km radius from the port of departure. The close explosions, sometimes 6 in a row, kill all the fish within a radius of 500 to 600 metres. The fish are torn to pieces. Almost all of them are sold to flour mills to make meal for aquaculture or land-based farms.

Industrial fishing is out of control. It is poaching in conspiracy with a mother ship and several dozen hunting boats who detect schools of fish with depth finders, collect the dead fish with nets and bring the booty back to the mother ship where the fish are stored in refrigerated holds. Such an armada ravages a coral reef in a few days with bursts of explosions of about 20 litres of ANFO.

The damage inflicted on coral reefs and their ecosystems is considerable and irreversible. All fish and invertebrates are killed, including juveniles, eggs, larvae and spawning grounds. Habitats are destroyed like bombed cities and are no longer able to provide both shelter and food for marine organisms. Coastlines lose their protective shield against waves, storms and marine erosion. As time goes by, things get worse and worse, there are fewer and fewer marketable resources and fishermen increase the doses of explosives to harvest as much as possible. They blast the sea day and night.

Other techniques such as bottom trawling are detrimental to benthic communities and can be regarded as a major disturbance, but blast fishing by its violence, radicalism, non-selectivity and also the impunity and tolerance it enjoys must be regarded as a deadly sin of human covetousness.

Blast fishing is classified by the FAO and UNEP as IUU (Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing) but it is practised constantly or intermittently and is even on the increase in South-Eastern Asia, the Red Sea, Africa, Eastern Europe and South America.

Adrian Chan and Paul A. Hodgson, “A systematic analysis of blast fishing in South-East Asia and possible solutions”, January 2017; Melissa Hampton-Smith, Deborah S. Bower et Sarah Mika, “A review of the current global status of blast fishing: Causes, implications and solutions”, October 2021.²³

September 25, 2021

Off Banggi Island, State of Sabah, Malaysia

Seizure of 7 “fish bombs” and bags of cyanide from a boat drifting without crew.

Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), September 2021.²⁴



December 23, 2021

Sepanggar, State of Sabah, Malaysia

Seizure of several fuses and other items used for blast fishing a few miles off the coast on board an unregistered fishing boat abandoned by her crew. The boat was brought ashore. An investigation is underway.

Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), December 2021.²⁶



December 13, 2021

Tanjung Penaga, State of Penang, Malaysia

Seizure of explosive devices and fish from a small fishing boat abandoned about 500 metres from shore. The boat was brought ashore for investigation.

Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), December 2021.²⁵



PHILIPPINES

September 28, 2021

Off Camarines Sur Province, Philippines

Arrest of 3 fishermen and seizure of 10 goldband fusiliers (*Pterocaesio chrysozona*) fished with blasting explosives. Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region, September 2021.²⁷



October 1, 2021

Off Tubbataha Reef, Province of Palawan, Philippines

Giant humphead wrasse (*Cheilinus undulatus*, Appendix II) were caught with blasting! The Tubbataha Reef Marine Park covers 96,828 ha, including the North and South Atolls and the Jessie Beazley Reef. The giant humphead wrasse, known locally as mameng, is a protected fish. Giant humphead wrasse maintain the balance in the coral reefs by controlling the starfish population. The 26 sailors of a Philippine fishing boat are questioned by police. Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), October 2021.²⁸



October 20, 2021

Off Ternate, Province of Cavite, Philippines

Boarding of 2 fishing boats. Arrest of 5 fishermen. They were fishing with blasting. Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), October 2021.²⁹



VIET NAM

December 7, 2021

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Customs discovered a package from Mexico containing 116 totoaba (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) swim bladders with a total weight of 26.8 kg in a UPS warehouse. Thuong hieu & Cong luan, December 10, 2021.³⁰

SOUTHERN ASIA

IRAN

December 2021

Nishapur, Razavi Khorasan Province, Iran

1,150 kg of shark meat was destroyed. Fish without scales are banned from consumption in accordance with the fatwas of Shiite authorities. Rokna News, December 22, 2021.³¹

SRI LANKA

November 20, 2021

Mannar, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 7,990 Sun 90 water gel sticks with a total weight of 998.75 kg from a house near Shanthipuram beach. These explosives were smuggled from Tamil Nadu. They are manufactured by the Salem-based company Vetrivel Explosives. Sun 90 is mainly used in quarries, mines, for tunnelling and drilling. These uses are being diverted to blast fishing. All water gel sticks contain ammonium nitrate. Two arrests. Sri Lanka Navy, November 20, 2021.³²



NORTHERN EUROPE

DANEMARK

End of December 2021
Copenhagen, Capital Region, Denmark



In 2020, Customs confiscated 2 packages containing jars of sturgeon caviar (Acipenseridae, Appendix I or II). In 2021, Customs confiscated 10 packages, 8 of which at the end of the year. Several packages had the same delivery address. A total of 48 jars, each containing 113 grams of caviar, i.e. more than 5 kg, were withdrawn from trafficking. They came from Ukraine and were mostly stamped "Russian Caviar Malossol (Astrakhan)".

The Danish Environmental Protection Agency, January 21, 2022.³³

UNITED KINGDOM

October 28, 2021
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire County, England, United Kingdom



On May 14, 2019, Mr Croker, 60, of Gloucester, was catching glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) from the Sargasso Sea in an unlicensed area with a prohibited spotlight. As they made their way up the Bristol Channel and into the River Severn, they would become yellow eels during an increasingly inhospitable and polluted multi-year stay.

He was fined 300 £ (400 US\$), charged 30 £ and ordered to pay 10,425 £ (14,000 US\$) in damages 2.5 years later.

Witnesses of illegal fishing should call the Environment Agency hotline on 0800 807060 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

UK Government, November 4, 2021.³⁴

SWEDEN

Beginning of December 2021
Kivik, Skåne County, Sweden



25,000 kroner (2,740 US\$) fine for Buhres fish shop that bought and displayed illegally caught eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) in Hanö Bay on 6 occasions. Sveriges Radio, December 3, 2021.³⁵

WESTERN EUROPE

FRANCE

March 4 and October 12, 2021
Nantes, Department of Loire-Atlantique, France



Poaching of glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) is transmitted from generation to generation. Two young men aged 20 and 22 were fined 2,000 € (2,330 US\$) for capturing or attempting to capture elvers carried by the Gulf Stream in the Loire estuary, which is polluted by hydrocarbons and warmed by the discharges of nuclear power plants, at the gate of the Martinière lock.

Le Courrier du Pays de Retz, October 13, 2021.³⁶

October 25th, 2021
Dax, Department of Landes, France



A Spanish driver was searched by the gendarmerie on January 21, 2013. He was carrying several envelopes of cash, a total of 200,000 € (263,660 US\$). The money was destined for glass eel (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) fishermen in Nantes, Loire estuary, Saintes, Charente estuary, and other hotspots of authorized or illegal elver fishing, known as pibales, in the southwest. The man said that he was acting on behalf of his employer, a fishmonger in the French Basque country, and that these envelopes were intended to pay the suppliers of his boss. Five days earlier, a million euros in cash had been discovered by the tax authorities at the boss's residence, along with a batch of 250 kg of elvers, of which only 195 kg was apparently backed up by invoices. The owner, his wife and a third person in charge of the administration were in court 7 years later at the end of September 2021 and the judgment was delivered today. The 3 defendants were sentenced to suspended sentences of 6 to 18 months. Two of them to must pay a total of 80,000 € (93,230 US\$) in damages to the different civil parties.

Sud Ouest, September 28 and October 25, 2021.³⁷

REPEATED OFFENSE

November 16, 2021
Saint-Malo, Department of Ille-et-Vilaine, France



"On the Trail" told you about it in issue n°30 p.192. Two Belgian poachers, one of whom was a recidivist fishmonger, had been caught in flagrante delicto illegally fishing eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) in Saint-Malo in the commercial port. They have just been sentenced to a 10,000 € (11,600 US\$) fine for the repeat offender and a suspended fine for his accomplice, and to pay 6,000 € (6,960 US\$) in moral and ecological damages to the NGO Sea Shepherd.

Le Pays Malouin, November 17, 2021; Ouest-France, November 17, 2021.³⁸

THE NETHERLANDS

October 28, 2021

Municipality of Winterswijk, Province of Gelderland, The Netherlands

Seizure in a car of a common sturgeon (*Acipenser sturio*, Appendix I), trout (*Salmo trutta*) and Wels catfish (*Silurus glanis*) which were all freshly poached. Two arrests.

European sturgeon disappeared from the Netherlands in the 1950s. Reintroductions are underway.

Omroep Gelderland, October 28, 2021.³⁹

SWITZERLAND

October 5, 2021

Chiasso, Canton of Ticino, Switzerland. Border with Italy.

Sixteen eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) kept alive were in the trunk of the vehicle of an Italian citizen living in Switzerland. He had bought them in Italy and wanted to eat them with his family. They were seized and released. The customs officers asked the trafficker for a deposit until the amount of the fine is decided.

Corriere del Ticino, October 5, 2021.⁴⁰

SOUTHERN EUROPE

ITALY

October 9, 2021

Catania, Metropolitan City of Catania, Region of Sicily, Italy

In the famous Pescheria market, 5 eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) were seized by the CITES carabinieri and released in the Simeto. The carabinieri were very vigilant about tuna and swordfish and precisely 5 undersized swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) were found in a tub and seized. An abandoned cart was found on a nearby street. It was "exfiltrated" from the market when word of mouth about the unexpected visit of the carabinieri spread. It contained slices of swordfish and tainted seabream and anchovies.

LiveSicilia, October 11, 2021.⁴¹

November 19, 2021

Metropolitan City of Catania, Region of Sicily, Italy

Seizure in the freezer of a fish wholesaler of 25 swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) with a total weight of 1,000 kg.

Corriere Etneo, November 19, 2021.⁴²

EASTERN EUROPE

HUNGARY

November 12, 2021

Vas County, Hungary. Border with Austria.

Seizure of 5 kg of black caviar, including beluga (*Huso huso*, Appendix II) and bester (cross between beluga, *Huso huso*, and sterlet sturgeon, *Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II) caviar of the Moldavian brand Aquatir, in the refrigerator of a bus bound for France. A passenger acknowledged ownership. He did not have a license. The value of the seizure is estimated at 4 million forints (12,800 US\$ i.e. 2,550 US\$/kg).

National Tax and Customs Administration of Hungary, November 12, 2021.⁴³

MOLDAVIA

December 8, 2021

Palanca-Maiaki-Udobnoe, Stefan Voda, Moldavia. Border with Ukraine.

New seizure in a bus. This time 2 Ukrainians were traveling to Chisinau, Moldova from Odessa (180 km). They were carrying 21 kg of sturgeon caviar (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) valued at 50,000 lei (2,840 US\$ or 135 US\$/kg). The



2 men had hidden the 154 jars in travel bags and under their sweaters. They were sent back to their country without their cargo.

Publika.md, December 8, 2021.⁴⁴

POLAND

End of November 2021

Warsaw, Masovian Voivodeship, Poland

Seizure of Russian sturgeon (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Appendix II) and starry sturgeon (*Acipenser stellatus*, Appendix II) caviar from the Russian Caviar Joint-Stock Company, whose breeding farm is located in Astrakhan Oblast, Russia, in a package from Ukraine. There was no accompanying legal documentation.

In the course of Operation Thunder 2021 in October, the authorities seized 29 shipments of caviar. One of them was valued at 10,000 US\$.

National Revenue Administration, November 25, 2021.⁴⁵

ROMANIA

September 7, 2021

Isaccea, Tulcea County, Romania. Border with Ukraine.

As the border guards approached, one of the car passengers tried to get rid of a bag by throwing it out the window. This was a waste of time. The bag was recovered. It contained 5 sturgeons (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) still alive, which were immediately released into the Danube. In the trunk of their car, the poachers were also illegally carrying 16 kg of other fish.

Romanian Border Police, September 8, 2021.⁴⁶

December 11, 2021

Fetesti, Ialomita County, and Hârsova, Constanta County, Romania

In the course of an investigation into the theft of boat engines and illegal fishing in the Danube River, the police searched 11 homes and commercial warehouses. Amidst boat engines, fishing nets and carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) eggs, officers discover 125 kg of sturgeon (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) fillets and 6 beluga (*Huso huso*, Appendix II) heads.

Digi24, December 11, 2021.⁴⁷



September 3, 2021
Sekmenevo, Omsk Oblast, Russia



September 15, 2021
Karakiya District, Mangystau Region, Kazakhstan



December 21, 2021
Atyrau Region, Kazakhstan



October 6, 2021
Mago, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia



September 22, 2021
Komsomolsk-on-Amur, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia



Mid-September 2021
Solontsy, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia



December 8, 2021
Zachagansk, West Kazakhstan Region, Kazakhstan



October 12, 2021
Limansky District, Astrakhan Oblast, Russia



October 19, 2021
Bolshebereznykovsky District, Republic of Mordovia, Russia

4,383 sturgeons and 21,843,63 kg of sturgeons seized or poached and 991.7 kg of caviar seized in Azerbaijan, in Kazakhstan and in Russia between September 1 and December 31, 2021, according to official and media sources



Sturgeon, unidentified species (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II)
Amur sturgeon (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II)
Starry sturgeon (*Acipenser stellatus*, Appendix II)
Siberian sturgeon (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II)
Russian sturgeon (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Appendix II)
Sterlet sturgeon (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II)
Huso sturgeon (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II)
The litres of caviar have been converted into kilos on the basis of 1.08 kilos for 1 litre.

Sources: 1News; 360; Almaty TV; Amourskaya Pravda; AmurMedia; Argoumenty i Fakty (AIF); Ast-news.ru; Astrakhan 24; ATPress.kz; BezFormata; Chânnel 7 Krasnoyarsk; Datification; Fishcom. Fishing Compass; Fontanka.Ru; Gazeta.ru; GTRK Kuban; GTRK Lotos; GTRK Tomsk; Haqqin.az; inAktau; Interfax Russia; Izvestia Mordovii; Kazinform; KazTAG; Khabar 24; Kommercheskie Vesti; Komsomolskaia Pravda; Lenta.ru; Liter; Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia; Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan; Moskovski Komsomolets Astrakhan; Moskovski Komsomolets Kalmykia; Moskovski Komsomolets Khabarovsk; Moskovski Komsomolets Novosibirsk; Mosmonitor; Muksun.fm; My City; Newslab; Nyagan.life; Obzor; Ohotniki.ru; Omsk Region Information Agency; Pro Gorod; Punkt-A; RGVK Dagestan; RIA Dagestan; RIA Novosti; Rossiyskaya Gazeta; Russian Public Television (OTR); Sakhalin.info; Sibkray.ru; Stolica S; TASS Russian News Agency; Tengrinews; The Caucasus Post; Tsargrad TV; Tumba.kz; Ural Meridian; V1.ru; Vesti; Vestnik Kavkaza; Vesti Podmoskovia; VladNews; Volga-Caspian News Agency; Vtomske.ru; YamalPro; Yasno; Zapad24; Znak.

**Beginning of September 2021
Amursk, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia**

Two men received 2-year suspended prison sentences with one year of probation for poaching 2 sturgeons (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) in a branch of the Amur River.

TASS Russian News Agency, September 13, 2021.⁴⁸



**September 9, 2021
Omsk, Omsk Oblast, Russia**

Beginning of the trial of A. Ergashboy. He was arrested on October 5, 2020 in the parking lot of the "Lenta" supermarket in possession of a Siberian sturgeon (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) weighing 4.365 kg which he had come to sell to a customer who was actually an FSB agent. He stated that he bought it for 3,200 rubles (40 US\$) from an unknown person.

Gorod55, September 3, 2021.⁴⁹

**Mid-September 2021
Khabarovsk Krai, Russia**

The first mate of a merchant vessel had purchased a 128-kg Amur sturgeon (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II) from fishermen of the Nikolayevsky district. The fish was discovered in a cold room of the cargo ship in the port of Sovietskaya Gavan. He has just been sentenced to 3 years and 5 months' suspended imprisonment and a fine of 80,000 rubles (1,090 US\$).

Moskovski Komsomolets Khabarovsk, September 22, 2021.⁵⁰



**September 21, 2021
Komsomolsk-on-Amur, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia**

A former military man was given a 2-year suspended prison sentence with a 2-year probation. While still on duty, he had poached 5 sturgeons (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) in the Amur River with 4 accomplices and sold the caviar (80 kg). The damage is estimated to be worth 18 million rubles (245,000 US\$).

Moskovski Komsomolets Khabarovsk, September 21, 2021.⁵¹



**End of September 2021
Kerch, Republic of Crimea**

A sentence of 6 months of correctional labor with a 10% salary deduction for the benefit of the State for the possession of 71 Russian sturgeons (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Appendix II) and starry sturgeons (*Acipenser stellatus*, Appendix II).

Vesti Sevastopol, September 28, 2021.⁵²



**End of September 2021
Lenine District, Republic of Crimea**

Five residents are indicted for poaching 72 Russian sturgeons (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Appendix II), belugas (*Huso huso*, Appendix II) and starry sturgeons (*Acipenser stellatus*, Appendix II) in the Sea of Azov in January and February 2021. The damage is estimated to be worth 9.8 million rubles (133,000 US\$).

RIA Novosti Crimea, September 29, 2021.⁵³

**End of September 2021
Astrakhan, Astrakhan Oblast, Russia**

A man had bought a sturgeon (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) carcass in October 2020. He was found by the police and sentenced to a one-year suspended prison term with probation for 1.5 years, plus a fine of 50,000 rubles (680 US\$).

Astrakhan.Ru, September 28 2021.⁵⁴



**Beginning of October 2021
Omsk Oblast, Russia**

Two 26-year-old men were arrested on board a boat on the Irtysh River, a tributary of the Ob River. They had just caught 33 sterlet sturgeons (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II), a species prohibited for fishing, with a bottom trawl, a prohibited fishing method. They pleaded guilty and, pending their conviction, have already paid back the estimated damages of 150,875 rubles (2,075 US\$).

Omsk-Inform, October 5, 2021.⁵⁵

**OPERATION POUTINE-2021
October 6, 2021 and January 11, 2022
90 km from Dudinka, Krasnoyarsk Krai, Russia**

Police officers boarded a suspicious fishing boat on the Yenisey River. They found a dozen Siberian sturgeons (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II), 7 of which were still alive, which they released. The boat and the fishing equipment were confiscated. Three months later the 47-year-old fisherman was sentenced to 250 hours of community service.

Zapad24, October 6, 2021; Channel 7 Krasnoyarsk, November 4, 2021; Ministry of Internal Affairs, January 11, 2022.⁵⁶



October 9, 2021

Ulchsky District, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia

Indictment of 2 men for the capture of 2 Amur sturgeons (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II) and the extraction of 50 kg of caviar valued at 11 million rubles (151,380 US\$). The poaching had been carried out in May 2020 in Mariinski Reid, in the Amur River, on board an unregistered motor boat.

RIA Novosti, October 9, 2021; Rossiyskaya Gazeta, October 10, 2021.⁵⁷

Beginning of November 2021

Lenine, Republic of Crimea

Two men had set a net on the edge of the Kazantip Cape (Sea of Azov) to catch so-iuy mullet (*Planiliza haematocheila*).

When they came to check their catch the following night, they found a Russian sturgeon (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Appendix II) and 18 turbot (genus *Scophthalmus*). They were caught by the police while sharing the loot.

One man was sentenced to 240 hours of compulsory labor and the other to 9 months of correctional work. Vesti Sevastopol, November 8, 2021; Moskovski Komsomolets Crimea, November 8, 2021.⁵⁸

Beginning of November 2021

Surgutsky District, Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District, Russia

Sentence of a 40-year-old man to one year and 7 months in prison, one year of which is suspended, and payment of damages equal to 74,000 rubles (1,050 US\$). He had caught 7 sterlet sturgeons (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II) and Siberian sturgeons (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) in the Tromyogan River, a tributary of the Ob, in June 2021.

Bulletin of the Surgut District, November 9, 2021.⁵⁹

November 2, 2021

Khabarovsk, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia

Between December 2019 and February 2020, 2 poachers captured at least 73 Huso sturgeons (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II) and Amur sturgeons (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II) in the Amur estuary. They stored the carcasses in a disused warehouse in Aleyevka.

One of the 2 poachers has just been sentenced to a 5-year suspended prison term with 2 years of probation. He will also have to pay damages estimated to be worth 18 million rubles (255,700 US\$).

Fishnews, November 2, 2021.⁶⁰

November 24, 2021

Kharabali, Astrakhan Oblast, Russia

Sentence of a 41-year-old woman to one year of correctional labor with a 15% salary deduction to the benefit of the State. She was caught red-handed while transporting 62 juveniles Russian sturgeons (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Appendix II), which she had bought in the Volodarsky district, about 175 km away.

Komsomolskaya Pravda, November 24, 2021; Moskovski Komsomolets Astrakhan, November 24, 2021.⁶¹

FAMILY AFFAIRS

November 26, 2021

Komsomolsk-on-Amur, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia

In July 2020, a resident of Takhta bought more than 300 kg of Amur sturgeon (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II) and Huso sturgeon (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II) caviar from poachers. After packing it in 0.5-liter jars, with the help of a friend he transported the caviar to the garage of a cooperative in Komsomolsk-on-Amur, 740 km away. Shortly afterwards, the couple who ran the cooperative decided to sell some of the caviar. The meeting with the buyer was supposed to be held in Selikhino, about 60 km from Komsomolsk-on-Amur, but their vehicle was intercepted by authorities on their way out of the city.

Two of the smugglers were given suspended prison sentences ranging from 2.5 to 5 years. The third, already convicted of drug trafficking, will have to spend 5 years and 3 months in a corrective labor colony.

Caviar trafficking in Komsomolsk-on-Amur, see also "On the Trail" n°32 p. 273.

Argoumenty i Fakty (AIF), November 26, 2021; Interfax Russia, November 26, 2021; DV Novosti, December 2, 2021.⁶²

Beginning of December 2021

Trusovskiy District, Astrakhan Oblast, Russia

Indictment of an inspector of the Rosrybolovstvo (Federal Agency for Fishery). He is accused of letting 2 sturgeon (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) poachers go in exchange for a part of their catch. The events took place in Streletskoye, on the banks of the Volga.

Moskovski Komsomolets Volgograd, December 4, 2021.⁶³

December 8, 2021

Komsomolsk-on-Amur, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia

The suspect had purchased 18 liters of Huso sturgeon caviar (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II) and 169.5 liters of Amur sturgeon caviar (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II) from 4 residents of Khabarovsk Krai between September and November 2020. On November 30, he tried to hand over part of his stock to a truck driver. He planned to have it delivered to Krasnodar, more than 9,000 km away. FSB agents intervened before. He was sentenced to 3 years in prison with a 3-year probation. 1 liter of caviar is equivalent to 1.08 kg. AmurMedia, December 8, 2021.⁶⁴

December 10, 2021

Selyatino, Moscow Oblast, Russia

Seizure of 15.6 tonnes of sturgeon (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) in a truck from Iran. According to Customs, part of the cargo came from poaching. Samples were handed over to the Research Institute of Fisheries and Oceanography to determine the exact origin of the sturgeon.

Vesti Podmoskovia, December 17, 2021.⁶⁵

**December 20, 2021
Federal City of Saint Petersburg,
Russia**



In 2018 and 2019, Sergei Vyushkov and Yevgeny Shevtsov purchased 30 kg of sturgeon caviar (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) valued at 1.5 million rubles (20,000 US\$ or 670 US\$/kg). They had packed everything in jars with the names of licensed producers and had placed an advertisement online. Unfortunately for them, the customer waiting for them in a hotel parking lot was a police officer. They were fined 300,000 rubles (4,000 US\$) and 315,000 rubles (4,200 US\$) respectively. 47 channel, December 20, 2021; Petersburg Newspaper, December 20, 2021.⁶⁶

**December 21, 2021
Nadym, Yamal-Nenets Autonomous
District, Russia**



A sentence of 5 years in a corrective labor colony for 2 attempted murders and the possession of 2 Siberian sturgeon (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) carcasses. On January 9, 2021, a drunken man attempts to stab a friend during a dispute. The next day, at work, he again pulled out his dagger in front of an annoying customer. This time, the police intervened. The search of his home resulted in the unexpected discovery of 2 Siberian sturgeons. Moskovski Komsomolets Yamal, December 21, 2021.⁶⁷

**REPEATED OFFENSE
December 23, 2021
Astrakhan, Astrakhan Oblast, Russia**



He had purchased 20 sturgeon (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) carcasses including 2 starry sturgeons (*Acipenser stellatus*, Appendix II) in May 2021. This was the third time he was arrested for such a charge. He was sentenced to 2 years in a corrective labor colony and a fine of 500,000 rubles (6,700 US\$). Komsomolskaya Pravda, December 23, 2021.⁶⁸

**December 27, 2021
Tobolsky dDistrict, Tyumen Oblast,
Russia**



Two men were sentenced to 8 months of correctional labor with a 5% salary deduction for poaching Siberian sturgeon (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) in the Irtysh River. Vsluh Ru, December 27, 2021.⁶⁹

**December 24, 2021
Azov and Rostov-on-Don, Rostov
Oblast, Russia**



Severe sentence for 6 poachers arrested in October 2020 with more than 5,000 fish, including a juvenile Russian sturgeon (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Appendix II) weighing 90 grams, plus scabbardfish and pike (see "On the Trail" n°31 p. 212). They were sentenced to 2 years in a corrective labor colony for the "capture of aquatic bioresources" and 5 years in a corrective labor colony for the "capture of particularly valuable aquatic bioresources" (i.e. sturgeon). The sentences run concurrently. The lawyer of one of the convicts is indignant. "Neither the presence of young children in the home nor the presence of sick and retired parents softened the jury's heart." The wives of the convicts published a video addressed to President Vladimir Putin to reconsider the case. They tell of the financial difficulties that drove their husbands to poach. However, the sentence was upheld on appeal on March 22, 2022. 161.RU, January 5, 2022; Argoumenty i Fakty (AIF), January 19, February 4 and 7, 2022; Panorama, February 3, 2022; Privet-Rostov.ru, February 4, 2022; Tsargrad TV, March 23, 2022.⁷⁰

UKRAINE

**Mid-September 2021
Izmail District, Odessa Oblast, Ukraine**

It is 2 a.m. With night vision devices, border guards detect a boat with all its lights off on the Danube. Surprised by their arrival, the 2 poachers try to remove any compromising items, but it is too late. A 140-meter-long fishing net was seized on board and 16 starry sturgeons (*Acipenser stellatus*, Appendix II) and sterlet sturgeons (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II) were released by the guards. Their economic value is estimated at 750,000 hryvnia (28,000 US\$). Odessa Media, September 23, 2021; UNIAN, September 23, 2021.⁷¹



AUSTRALIA

December 4th, 2021

Jervis Bay, State of New South Wales, Australia



A shark fishing contest ended even worse than it started. At the beginning, there was a controversy between the Jervis Bay Game Fishing Club and shark conservationists led by Kate Ahmad. In the end, after the capture and decapitation of a tiger shark (*Galeocerdo cuvier*) and a mako shark (genus *Isurus*), one head was delivered to a taxidermist and the other was placed on the hood of a pro-shark activist's pick-up truck along with graffiti. ABC News, December 8, 2021.⁷²

Mid December 2021

Mooloolaba, State of Queensland, Australia

This is the first time they have appeared in "On the Trail." Two Australian lungfish (*Neoceratodus forsteri*, Appendix II) seized from a private home in Gympie have been entrusted by the Department of Agriculture to the SEA LIFE Sunshine Coast Aquarium, which has committed to showcasing them in an educational and scientific program. Lungfish are freshwater fish with the unique ability to secrete mucus and use it as a cocoon to protect themselves from drought and sunlight when rivers are dry. Their capture is forbidden and the holder of the 2 lungfish measuring 72 and 79 cm and weighing 2.28 and 3.22 kg is fined 5,000 AU\$ (3,620 US\$).

Queensland Government, December 14, 2021.⁷³

October 22, 2021

Port of Papeete, Island of Tahiti, Overseas Collectivity of French Polynesia, France

FAPE - Te Ora Naho, the federation of environmental protection associations, reports that the Playa Zahara, a Spanish fishing vessel that arrived in Papeete on October 22, is carrying carcasses of shortfin mako sharks (*Isurus oxyrinchus*, Appendix II) and blue sharks (*Prionace glauca*) that are expected to be transhipped to another vessel from the same company on November 2. French Polynesia prohibits the transport of dead or living sharks in the waters and ports under its jurisdiction (Article 2211-3 of the Environmental Code).

Playa Zahara (ex-*Ana Barra*). IMO 9297656. Spanish flag. Long-liner vessel. Classification society Bureau Veritas. Length 47.75 m. Built in 2003 in Vigo (Spain) by Astilleros Armon Vigo. Owner Viverdreams FishSL (Spain). Operated in the Pacific under license from the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (SWO and related species license: swordfish). It is not authorized to make transhipments on the high seas. Its last stop was Auckland, New Zealand on July 30, 2022. *Outremers 360°*, November 5, 2021.⁷⁴



Taranaki, July 13, 2021

October 26, 2021

Southern Province, Overseas Collectivity of French Polynesia, France

After debate in the parliamentary hemicycle and the harassment of beach users, tiger sharks (*Galeocerdo cuvier*) and bull sharks (*Carcharhinus leucas*) have been removed from the list of protected animals. According to Assembly President Sonia Backès, "tiger sharks and bull sharks are no longer in danger of extinction and deserve automatic removals." *Nouvelle Calédonie la 1^{ère}*, October 27, 2021.⁷⁵

MARINE TURTLES

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

WESTERN AFRICA

NIGERIA

December 2, 2021

Eti-Osa, Lagos State, Nigeria

Seizure of an adult green turtle from Isiaka Muhammed who was carrying it on a tire. It was released by the KAI (Kick Against Indiscipline) which depends on the LASEPA (Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency).

Vanguard, December 2, 2021.¹



EASTERN AFRICA

FRANCE (MAYOTTE)

OPERATION NYAMBA 5

September 18 and November 18, 21 and 25-26, 2021

Majicavo, Saziley, Angalatsara, Moya and Papani Beaches, Department of Mayotte, France

The turtles come from the sea, climb onto the beaches, are killed by poachers selling meat at night, and tourists circle around them during the day to get as close as possible and watch the eggs being laid, a voyeurism that until now no hen has had to endure in backyard premises.

The NGO Sea Shepherd is back on the archipelago with a delay and a small team. The prefect of Mayotte did not consider the physical protection of sea turtles as a compelling reason to allow people not vaccinated against Covid-19 to travel to Mayotte.

The courts are under a sanitary cocoon and the poaching stooges under the compelling reason of contributing to the food autonomy of the archipelago do not slow down their activities, especially since, according to Sea Shepherd and other testimonies, the beach guards recruited by the Departmental Council are, if not fictitious, then at least phantom jobs.

A freshly butchered turtle is discovered on Papani beach, another one that died a few days ago on Angalatsara beach, another on Moya beach, 3 on Saziley beach, and 2 on Majicavo beach. The argument between Sea Shepherd, which is involved in anti-poaching activities, and the Naturalists, a Mayotte-based NGO which is involved in "awareness of tourists", is heartily talked about by the local press. The reliability of the REMMAT (Réseau Échouage Mahorais de Mammifères marins et de Tortues marines or Maore Network for Marine Mammals and Sea Turtles Stranding) reports is weakened by the irregularity of the surveys and above all by the evolution of poaching practices. More and more live turtles, turned over on their backs, make the journey by "kwassa" to Anjouan, 70 km from Mayotte, or the shells of the turtles cut up on the spot are buried in the forest or loaded into pick-up trucks to be thrown away in landfills or, after cleaning, sent to the luxury markets.

The Association de Sécurité Villageoise de M'tsamoudou Mayotte (or Association for the security of Mtsamoudou villagers, ASVM, see "On the Trail" n°23 p.21) continues bravely to carry out anti-poaching surveillance without benefiting from the moral or financial support of the public authorities.

Sea Shepherd, November 27 and December 3 and 31, 2021; Le Journal de Mayotte, December 1, 2021.²

MADAGASCAR

October 10, 2021

Maroakao, Diana Region, Madagascar

Despite the publication of an order prohibiting the fishing, transport, sale and consumption of sea turtles from October 15, 2021 until April 2022, a collective poisoning has struck the fishing village. Three children and one adult died. At least 12 adults and 5 children were admitted to the hospital in Ambanja after a turtle that came to lay eggs on the beach was captured, butchered and the meat was sold to several families. The marine turtles that come to lay eggs on the beaches of the region are mainly green turtles and hawksbill turtles.

L'Express de Madagascar, October 20, 2021.³

November 29, 2021

Off Mananjary, Vatovavy Region, Madagascar

Seizure by the national gendarmerie of 10 green turtles on board a fishing boat.

Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), November 2021.⁴

December 17-20, 2021

Off Mahajanga, Boeny Region, Madagascar

Seizure of green turtles. Some weigh more than 100 kg. They were in a fishing boat in the Sotema district, at the mouth of the Betsiboka River. The owner fled when the gendarmerie patrol approached. It was perhaps a "mother boat" responsible for collecting the catches of several fishing boats. They were put aside for 3 days in a holding tank. Twelve of them were then put back in the sea off Mahajanga. At least one turtle which was seriously injured during the poaching died. It was given to the museum of the University of Mahajanga upon the authorization of the prosecutor.

Infos 401, December 17, 2021; Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, December 23, 2021.⁵

December 18, 2021

Melaky Region, Madagascar

Two people have died and 20 others are in the hospital after eating sea turtle meat. From November to March, marine turtles are eating toxic plankton. They seem to be immune from it.

Intoxication with sea turtle meat in Madagascar, see "On the Trail" n°19 p.16, n°25 p.21, n°31 p.217 and n°32 p.295.

2424.mg, December 20, 2021.⁶

MOZAMBIQUE

Beginning of October 2021

Goa Island, Nampula Province, Mozambique

Discovery of 18 sea turtle remains, at least one of which was freshly killed. The island of Goa is 5 km from the mainland. It is known for its lighthouse built in 1870.

Carlos Serra, October 10, 2021.⁷

TANZANIA

November 26-28, 2021

Micheweni District, Pemba North Region, Pemba Island, Zanzibar Archipelago, Tanzania

Seven people were fatally poisoned from eating a sea turtle and 24 others are between life and death in Pemba hospital.

The Citizen, November 29, 2021.⁸

End of December 2021

Matemwe, Unguja North Region, Unguja Island, Zanzibar Archipelago, Tanzania

Four children of the same family died. The father, a fisherman by profession, admitted to capturing and butchering the turtles with the help of some colleagues when they came to lay eggs on the beach. 31 children and 16 adults who had also eaten turtle meat or soup are hospitalized.

The Citizen, December 26, 2021.⁹

End of December 2021

Zanzibar Archipelago, Tanzania

Abdallah Hussein Kombo, the Minister of Fisheries and Blue Economy, is banning the capture of sea turtles by artisanal fishermen for the food needs of the local people in violation of national law. "Research has discovered that turtles have turned to eating sea algae and grasses containing various poisons and could be fatal to humans when consumed." "Due to changes in their eating habits, the turtles are now poisonous," adds Dr. Khalid Salum Mohamed, a member of the archipelago's presidential cabinet.

The Guardian, December 31, 2021.¹⁰

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

September 2021

Folly Beach, State of South Carolina, United States of America

Three thugs under the age of 21 broke into a marked loggerhead turtle nest on the beach and took 71 of the 90 eggs. They were identified and stopped by Department of Natural Resources agents after posting video of their feat on social media.

U.S. News (with AP), December 18, 2021.¹¹

LATIN AMERICA

MEXICO

September 22, 2021

Ejutla, State of Oaxaca, Mexico

During a search on the road that goes from Ocotlán to Ejutla de Crespo, seizure of 1,200 eggs, 10 kg of sea turtle meat in a plastic bag, and 1.5 kg of marijuana by the police. An arrest.

El Imparcial de Oaxaca, September 22, 2021.¹²

September 29, 2021

Tonalá, State of Chiapas, Mexico

Luis Alberto "N." is arrested in possession of 168 stolen Ridley sea turtle eggs on San Marcos beach.

Aquino Noticias.mx, September 29, 2021.¹³

PANAMA

End of November 2021
Pedasí, Los Santos Province, Panama



Seizure by the police of 427 Ridley sea turtle eggs from a luxury sedan refuelling in a gas station. The fate of the eggs is uncertain. Six hours after their release by poachers, they are no longer able to hatch. The examinations are in progress. Panamá América, November 24, 2021.¹⁴

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

December 2021
Jinan, Shandong Province, China
Seizure in an incoming package declared to contain “stones” of 4 hawksbill turtle shell brooches. Chinese Customs, December 16, 2021.¹⁵

SOUTHEASTERN ASIA

INDONESIA

End of December 2021
Bali Island, Bali Province, Lesser Sunda Islands, Indonesia

Big commotion south of Badung. 32 green turtles, 3 boats and 21 fishermen are the cause. The boats were seized and the crews were taken to court. The fishermen say that during the Covid-19 pandemic, there is high demand from consumers for the end of the year celebrations and that they have become sea turtle catchers. The 32 turtles were caught by the 3 boats in one night. The intervention was coordinated by a patrol from the naval base of Denpasar. Of the 32 turtles, one was already dead. In the tank where they were transferred for sanitary examination, some of them were defecating plastic fragments and instant noodle wrappers. The teams of the TCEC (Turtle Conservation and Education Center) in Serangan where they are in transit are exclusively feeding them crushed seaweed. Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), December 2021; Bali Post, December 31, 2021; Kumparan, January 5, 2022.¹⁶

MALAYSIA

September 7, 2021
Layang-layang, Labuan Island, Federal Territory of Labuan, Malaysia

An adult female green turtle is found dead on the beach. The day before a hawksbill turtle was found in the same condition on Chimney beach about 10 km away. Daily Express, September 8, 2021.¹⁷

October 2nd, 2021
Bum Bum Island, State of Sabah, Malaysia

Discovery of 11 green turtle carcasses on Bum Bum Island, bags of meat and all kitchen paraphernalia by the Tiger Platoon and officers of the State Wildlife Department. There was no one nearby. Members of the nomadic Bajau tribe and stateless pirates are suspected.

New Straits Times, October 2, 2021; The Borneo Post, October 4, 2021.¹⁸



VIET NAM

Mid-December 2021
Da Nang Municipality, Viet Nam

Here is what happens to a Ridley sea turtle after 3 years of captivity in a fresh water tub, without sunlight and with a terrestrial diet. This ordeal was imposed to it by a Da Nang resident, new candidate for the trophy of the asshole of this edition of “On the Trail”. The unfortunate skinny girl weighing 9 kg was transferred to the Sasa Team Marine Animals Rescue. ENV, December 21, 2021.¹⁹



WESTERN ASIA

TURKEY

September 1, 2021

Side, Antalya Province, Turkey

Two stuntmen in an off-road car speeding along the beach destroyed two loggerhead turtle nests and crushed at least 16 baby turtles that had just hatched. They were struggling to reach the sea and are threatened by many predators, including motor vehicles. Each female lays between 50 and 150 eggs and only one juvenile turtle in 1,000 reaches sexual maturity.

Faced with the increase of various aggressions against loggerhead turtles, the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization announced the creation of wooden barriers 40-50 meters from the sea to protect loggerhead turtle nests in Göcek, Dalyan, Belek, Patara, and the Göksu Delta. The project called Sea Turtle Nesting Areas and Demarcation Project aims to prohibit public intrusion into the protected areas.

At the end of August, in Belek, 60 baby loggerhead turtles were crushed to death under a wooden walkway installed by a 5-star hotel to allow guests to comfortably cross the beach, a practice that is illegal at this time of year but is widespread.

Hürriyet Daily News, September 3, 2021; Hürriyet Daily News, October 1, 2021.²⁰

WESTERN EUROPE

GERMANY

Mid-November 2021

Blumberg, Baden-Württemberg, Germany. Border with Switzerland.

Seizure of a stuffed hawksbill turtle in the car of a 63-year-old man living near Lake Constance on his way from Switzerland.

German Customs, November 25, 2021.²¹

SOUTHERN EUROPE

SPAIN

November 2021

Arrecife, Province of Las Palmas, Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands, Spain

The Guardia Civil seizes a loggerhead turtle shell hanging as decoration in a tool shed.

La Voz de Lanzarote, December 7, 2021.²²

OCEANIA

FRANCE (FRENCH POLYNESIA)

October 8, 2021

Punaauia, Island of Tahiti, Overseas Collectivity of French Polynesia, France

After the discovery of a garbage bag containing freshly butchered turtle shells on the public road, the gendarmerie was alerted and 3 individuals were arrested. They admitted to poaching, butchering and selling the meat.

Polynésie la 1ère, October 13, 2021; Tahiti Infos, October 13, 2021.²³

Beginning of November 2021

Maupiti Island, Overseas Collectivity of French Polynesia, France

Seizure of 6 live turtles freshly unloaded from a fishing boat which belonged to a municipal councilor of Maupiti, which has 1,286 inhabitants. Polynésie la 1ère, November 9, 2021.²⁴

December 7, 2021

Motu One and Bora-Bora Islands, Overseas Collectivity of French Polynesia, France

The overflight of a French Navy Falcon Guardian identified a "poti marara" (Polynesian fishing boat, originally specialized in fishing "marara," the flying fish) near Motu One atoll. The 3 crewmen were trying to cover several sea turtles with a tarp. The atolls of Motu One and Scilly have been classified as territorial reserves since 1992, and any harvesting of natural resources is prohibited.

Sea turtles in Bora-Bora, see "On the Trail" n°15 p.15, n°31 p.218 and n°32 p.298. Five species of marine turtles are present in French Polynesia: loggerhead turtles, hawksbill turtles, leatherback turtles, Ridley sea turtles, and green turtles. "On the Trail" mainly records cases of poaching of green turtles.

Polynésie la 1ère, December 15, 2021.²⁵

MARINE AND FRESHWATER MAMMALS

AFRICA

MADAGASCAR

September 10, 2021

Faux-Cap, Androy Region, Madagascar

A whale, whose age, species and cause of death are unknown, washed up on the beach. The health services and the gendarmes arrived quickly. It was too late. "Even before we arrived on the scene, the animal was already shredded and cut up." "With doctors, we proceeded to go door-to-door to almost all of the houses in Vatamandry. At the same time, an awareness campaign was carried out to prevent local people from consuming the animal's meat," says the gendarmerie. "Despite our warnings about the risks of food poisoning due to the consumption of a dead whale, they did not listen to us," confirms the mayor. At the end of the day, the whale's head was burned.

L'Express de Madagascar, September 20, 2021.¹

MOZAMBIQUE

September 7, 2021

Barra, Inhambane Province, Mozambique

A killer whale (*Orcinus orca*, Appendix I) strands on the beach at low tide. He is rescued by kayakers and a team from the NGO Mega Fauna. He bears no external injuries. Attempts with a tractor and rubber half-rounds to get him back into the water are unsuccessful. For a few hours he stays in the sun and a makeshift tent is set up to put him in the shade until the tide comes in. More and more locals are watching the scene and do not necessarily have the same ideas in mind as the rescuers. There are some in the province and its coastline who see the stranding of marine mammals as a food bonanza. On the rising tide, the killer whale moves on his own and swims on the surface 200 metres from the mangrove and covers 2 to 3 km. His breath was audible from the shore. It seems that he was carried by the currents of the Rio Mutamba estuary. The fishermen's boats came closer and closer to him and at nightfall the clan of rescuers left the area for safety reasons.



The next morning at 6 a.m., the good Samaritans returned to the scene but the killer whale was nowhere to be found. Only the head, some vertebrae and 3 teeth were found on the foreshore, as well as some organs. Even the liver was recovered by the butchers.

Hearsay and testimonies from village chiefs confirmed that the marine mammal had been cut in 2, one part being allocated to a coastal community and the other to an island community. There were unconfirmed reports of meat being sold, although the few police officers who arrived informed onlookers of the health risks. By word of mouth, precautionary measures against sharks were issued, as the decomposing viscera and offal of the killer whale were likely to attract them. It was strongly recommended not to fish and swim in coastal waters for 7-10 days, especially between sunset and sunrise and when the waters are murky. The fate of the teeth is uncertain. Killer whale teeth are trafficked (see "On the Trail" n°7 p.7 and p.116-117 and n°11 p.12).

Stranding of marine mammals in East Africa (Madagascar), see "On the Trail" n°15 p.10 and this issue cf. opposite.

O País, September 10, 2021.²

NIGERIA

October 29, 2021

Oyokotoro, Rivers State, Nigeria

"It's a party." Fishermen have caught an Atlantic humpback dolphin (*Sousa teuszii*, Appendix I) and a butcher is preparing to butcher him.

Naija News, October 30, 2021; Sureyarns, October 30, 2021.³



AMERICA

BRAZIL

September 23, 2021

Faro, State of Pará, Brazil

Seizure of 150 kg of Amazonian manatee meat (*Trichechus inunguis*, Appendix I) plus poaching and butchering material. The victim was captured in the Nhamundá River.

Manatee in Brazil, see "On the Trail" n°4 p. 99, n°10 p. 72-73, n°12 p. 11, n°25 p. 19, n°30 p. 159.

G1 Santarém, September 24, 2021.⁴

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

September 19, 2021

Molokai Island, State of Hawaii, United States of America

A bullet in the head of a juvenile Hawaiian monk seal (*Monachus schauinslandi*, Appendix I). This is the third monk seal to be intentionally killed since the beginning of 2021 (see "On the Trail" n°32 p. 300). Several other carcasses have been discovered on the beaches of the islands. They are in such a state of decomposition that the cause of death could not be determined.

Honolulu Star-Advertiser, December 21, 2021; NPR (with AP), December 21, 2021.⁵

September 22, 2021

Miami, State of Florida, United States of America

Journey to the heart of the Miami Seaquarium.

The inspection report submitted by the veterinarians of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), a service of the United States Department of Agriculture specialized in animal health and welfare, describes with clinical precision the negligence, brutality, aggression and forced labor to which orcas, dolphins and other marine mammals may be subjected in aquatic entertainment venues.

- The trainers don't want to hear anything about the veterinarians' alerts about the health condition of "Squirt," an 11-year-old female dolphin. On May 15, 2021, she began to lose her appetite just before the refurbishment of her resting tank. In addition to training, all animals have 2 shows a day every day. The logbook of May 24 confirms an abnormality, "Squirt's" is eating less and less. The veterinarians are concerned about the effects of the work on the health of "Squirt" and the other dolphins. They recommend the transfer of "Squirt" to a tank reserved for females. A male stalks her. The head trainer refused. The work continues. It is only 3 weeks later that "Squirt" will be transferred and put away from the nuisance and the agitation of her male co-detainee.

- The food ration of "Toki", a 56-year-old female killer whale (*Orcinus orca*, Appendix II), has been reduced since the beginning of 2021 from 72.5 kg to 58.9 kg per day against the advice of the veterinarian who is aware of the seasonal variations in "Toki's" blood tests and her behavioural changes. He fears that she is affected by the decrease in the volume and quality of her rations and that she will end up agitating in all directions to express her distress. By February, an injury to the front of her lower jaw is identified. She is no longer given whole sardines, only pieces and viscera. The veterinary follow-up record of "Toki" mentions these deficiencies 7 times between February 24 and June 2. The veterinarian is also concerned about possible dehydration.

Orcas and marine mammals extract water from fish for their hydration needs. On April 3, in writing, he ordered "Toki" to avoid bow jumps, high jumps, speed runs and to keep her head out of the water when entering the show. The head trainer who has been at the Seaquarium for 6 months refuses to comply. The report concludes the chapter on expectations for cetacean health and welfare: "The attending veterinarian must have the appropriate authority to ensure adequate veterinary care is provided and that they have the authority to oversee the adequacy of other aspects of animal care."

From February 25, 2021 and for one week for cetaceans and 2 to 4 days for pinnipeds, decomposing capelin was the only food. Several animals went on a diet. Antibiotics were administered to "Sam", a 35-year-old female dolphin to prevent infections while she was being fed the spoiled food. "Onyx", a 21-year-old male dolphin developed lesions similar to erysipelothrix. The feeding chapter of the APHIS report concludes: "Feeding poor-quality fish or partially decomposed fish is detrimental to the health of the animals and can result in illness, compromised immune systems and even death."

- Training pools A and B are in poor condition. The lining of the "islet" in the middle of the pool has deteriorated. The cement is bare. The paint on the basin walls is peeling off. Chips and flakes of paint and undercoatings are dispersed in the water. They can be swallowed by the cetaceans as they move around. One trainer confirms that dolphins have brought him bits of paint during exercises.

- The sea lion and manatee enclosures are in the same state of disrepair. Surface coating defects, cracks, and crevices in the concrete can cause skin abrasions and galls. The metal fences between the tanks are in poor condition and sometimes patched with plastic netting which prevents unwanted animals from entering quarantine pens. On April 18, two dolphins, "Cobalt" and "Zo", entered the tank of "JJ Bimini", a female bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*, Appendix II), and beat her while she had respiratory problems and a worrying blood test. Two months later, a radiologist confirmed the presence of at least 4 broken ribs.

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- Many of the remaining training and exhibition pools lack natural or artificial devices to provide sufficient shade and avoid serious and irreversible diseases to the eyes of the animals. The shows take place at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. when the sun is at its zenith and the daylight is most intense. During the 3 p.m. show, which the inspectors attended, the orcas must, at the trainer's signal, raise their heads out of the water and look towards the sun before receiving their fish as a reward. "Toki" has a lesion in his right eye and so does "Lii" the Pacific white-sided leach (*Lagenorhynchus obliquidens*, Appendix II). During the show, the trainers are high up on a simulated boat and around the boat all the scenery that provided shade for the dolphins was washed away by a hurricane and never replaced. In their captive waters, the eyes of the marine animals are both under excess chlorine and light, and they suffer from corneal damage and premature cataracts. In this regard, the APHIS report concludes as follows: "Strategic shade should be provided whenever the animals are holding their heads out of water and looking toward the sky. The facility must review shade for all marine mammal enclosures and ensure that adequate shade/shelter is provided to protect the animals from direct sunlight."

- Total chlorine levels (free chlorine and chloramines) in pond water rarely meet the 1 ppm standard that is supposed to reduce risk. When they are too low, between 0.3 and 0.5 ppm (which was the case between March and April 2021) the tanks are invaded by unicellular algae and parasites (nematodes, arthropods and unidentified species) and the dolphins in particular, but also the sea lions and manatees, react by chuffing more than usual, by rubbing against the walls (at the risk of injuring themselves) and develop skin diseases. On the other hand, the total chlorine content is exceeding the maximum authorized threshold of 1 g/m³ of total chlorine due to insufficient maintenance and dosage errors. These exceedances are not detected by the Seaquarium's technical staff because most of the time, they simply measure free chlorine without taking chloramines into account. Total chlorine is not systematically analyzed. The APHIS report concludes: "While free chlorine is measured with some regularity in the pools, total chlorine measurements are crucial. Chloramines are much more irritating to the skin, eyes and lungs. High total chlorine levels can contribute to the skin and vision problems seen at the facility."

- The report finally points out that the management of the Miami Seaquarium does not have a day-to-day follow-up of the dolphins that for reasons of permanent or temporary incompatibility should not be placed in the same tank. This deficiency explains the injuries and deaths in recent years. "Gemini," a 7-year-old female was injured in the head in front of her blowhole by a congeneric in May 2021. Infrared examination revealed a circular internal wound likely caused by the attacker's rostrum. "Sam," a

35-year-old female, lost her right eye to an attack by a conspecific in January 2021. "Abaco," a 19-year-old male, had been moved to a different tank due to loss of appetite in late March 2020. He drowned, his rostrum was embedded in a pond divider fence and necropsy revealed hemorrhage from a congeneric injury. "Indigo," a 5-year-old male, was transferred on March 30, 2020 to a tank inhabited by 2 dolphins younger than him. The next day, he was found drowned in the bottom of the tank as a victim of acute trauma and pulmonary shock. From February 27, 2019, "fights" were reported between "Echo," a 23-year-old male, and another dolphin. Four days later, "Echo" began circling while breathing heavily and refusing to feed. He died by the end of the day. Necropsy revealed a hemorrhage in the neck and a fractured rib. The report concludes this chapter, "Housing animals that are not compatible together can be detrimental to their health and welfare and cause serious injury leading to death."

Each year, nearly 500,000 visitors pay 49.99 US\$ (children and adults over 10) or 39.99 US\$ (children between 3 and 9) to see stressed, injured and underfed animals.

Inspection Report of United States Department of Agriculture - Animal and Plants Health Inspection Service, September 22, 2021.⁶

September 23, 2021

State of Washington, United States of America

Administrative Judge George Jordan is favourably inclined, under condition, towards the resumption of hunting of North Pacific gray whales (*Eschrichtius robustus*, Appendix I) by the Makah Indian tribe. According to Jordan's recommendations, tribal members could hunt between 5 and 20 whales in 10 years.

The last capture of a gray whale by the Makah was on May 17, 1999. The whale was harpooned in Neah Bay from a traditional armed canoe by at least 7 Makahs, 6 paddlers and a harpooner, and finished off from a zodiac by a Makah with a high-powered rifle.

Two of the hunters posed triumphantly over the corpse of the gray whale being towed onto the beach in this posture common to all those who have just taken the life of an animal whose species is threatened with extinction at the end of a sporting course.

The leaders of the tribe don't spare lyrical words about the future whales to be hunted. "We acknowledge the life of the whale in the process and ceremonies." "We believe that that life isn't taken by us, but that the creature chooses to give its life to us to sustain us and carry out our connection with the ocean."

However, more steps must be taken for the Makah to get a final green light to resume hunting gray whales, including permission from NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration). Everett Herald (with AP), September 24, 2021; The Guardian, November 12, 2021.⁷

November 23, 2021

Anchorage, State of Alaska, United States of America

Uzi Levi, age 70, is a special kind of car rental company. You can pay him in walrus (*Odobenus rosmarus*, Appendix III in Canada). He fell into the trap of an undercover agent of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. For 8 months, Levi and his masked contact exchanged emails and phone calls to haggle over car rentals and Levi agreed to be paid with 6 raw walrus tusks in July 2020 and with one walrus raw tusk and 3 walrus head trophies in September 2020.

US Department of Justice, November 23, 2021.⁸

ASIA

CHINA

September 2021

Xinzheng, Zhengzhou Prefecture, Henan Province, China

Seizure of 5,547 vials each containing 100 capsules of harp seal oil (*Pagophilus groenlandicus*). These dietary supplements are manufactured in St. Laurent, Canada by Biotechnologies Explorer Canada Inc. Recommended use and dosage: 1. Source of omega-3 fatty acids for the maintenance of good health. 2. Helps to support the development of the brain, eyes and nerves in children up to 12 years of age. 3. Helps support cardiovascular health. Suggested use:

Adolescents (9 to 17 y), take 2 capsules 1 time per day. Adults (≥18 y) take 2 capsules 2 times per day." Other harp seal oil products from the same laboratory are recommended for adults, pregnant and lactating women based on 3 capsules per day and 700 mg of oil per capsule.

Chinese Customs, September 18, 2021.⁹



October 2021

Jinan, Shandong Province, China

Seizure in an incoming package of a walrus tusk (*Odobenus rosmarus*, Appendix III in Canada) cut into 4 sections. Total weight, 1,679 grams.

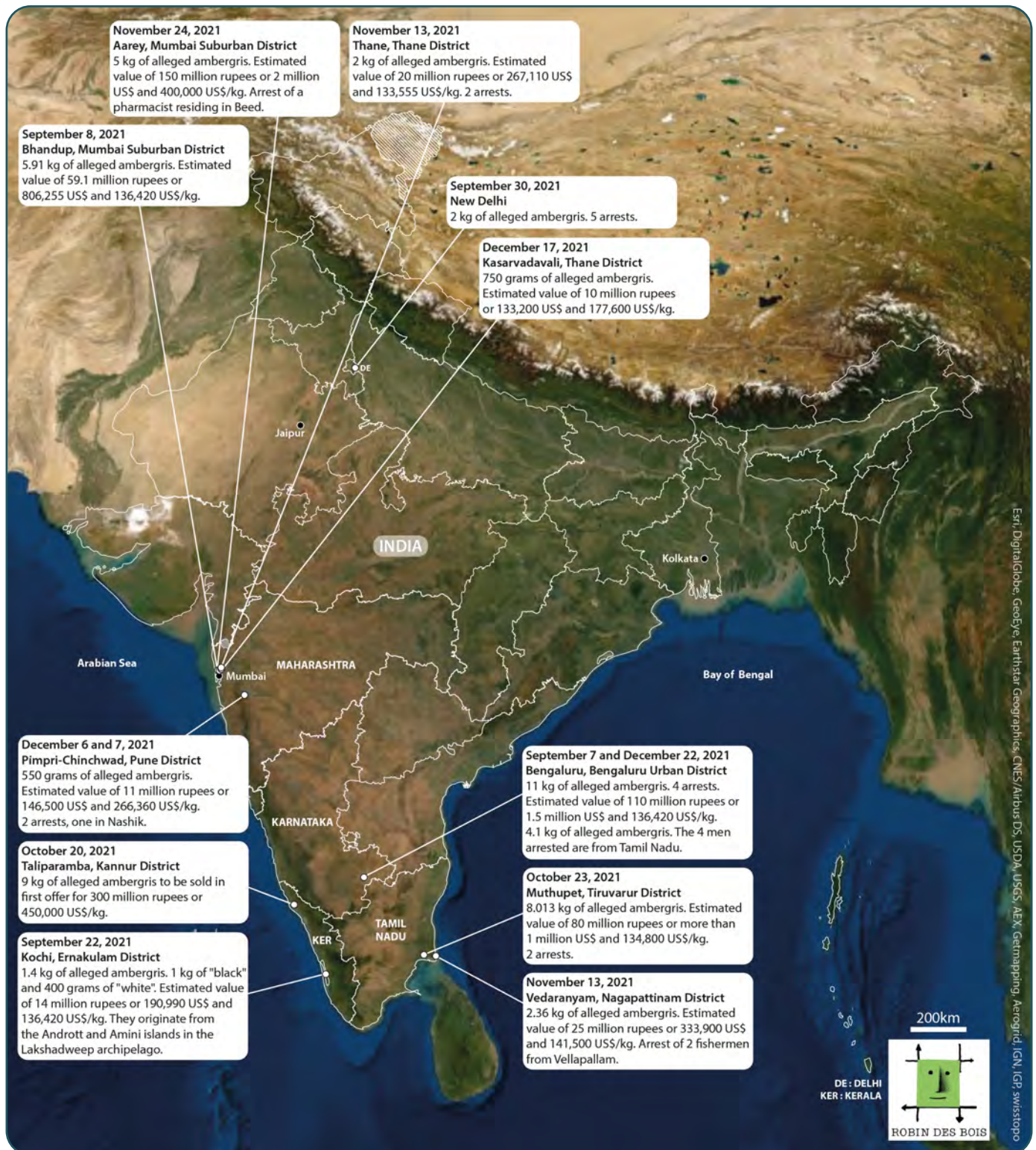
Chinese Customs, November 8, 2021.¹⁰

INDIA

Seizures of alleged sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) ambergris in India, map opposite.



52.083 kg of ambergris seized in India between September 1 and December 31, 2021 according to official and media sources



Sources: Hindustan Times ; Livenewskerala ; Malayalam Samayam ; Mid-Day ; Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India); News 18 ; Outlook India ; Press Trust of India ; The Free Press Journal ; The Hans India ; The Hindu ; The News Minute ; The Times of India.

EUROPE

KAZAKHSTAN

Beginning of November 2021

Atyrau and Mangystau Regions, Kazakhstan

Joint operation by the Kazakhstan border guards and their Russian counterparts. In Kazakh territorial waters, 179 km of nets were removed, resulting in the release of 3 Caspian seals (*Pusa caspica*) and 533 sturgeons (Acipenseridae, Appendix I or II) (see map of sturgeon seizures and poaching p. 256). Tengrinews, November 11, 2021.¹¹

POLAND

September 16, 2021

Pruszcz Gdański, Pomeranian Voivodeship, Poland

Seizure by postal customs of 4 sections of walrus tusks (*Odobenus rosmarus*, Appendix III in Canada). National Revenue Administration, September 22, 2021.¹²

RUSSIA

Beginning of September 2021

Izberbach, Republic of Dagestan, Russia

Sentence of G. M. Shikhov and Z. M. Shikhov and M. A. Abdulzhalilov to 3 years and 6 months' suspended imprisonment, to 3 years' suspended imprisonment and to 2 years and 6 months' suspended imprisonment. They had poached 20 Caspian seals (*Pusa caspica*) with set nets in June 2020. They had been arrested in flagrante delicto by the FSB. Conviction of A. M. Abdulzhalilov to 2 years and 6 months suspended prison for helping to transport the seals from the boat to a land vehicle. The 4 men were trafficking the skins, blubber and meat. They were also sentenced to pay 130,150 rubles (US\$ 1,770) as damages.

Argoumenty i Fakty (AIF), September 2, 2021.¹³

September 2021

Astrakhan Oblast, Russia

During the month, FSB border guards rescued a Caspian seal (*Pusa caspica*) from poachers' nets, in addition to 200 sturgeons (Acipenseridae, Appendix I or II) (see map of sturgeon seizures and poaching p. 256).

Astrakhan 24, September 22, 2021; GTRK Lotos, September 29, 2021.¹⁴

December 2, 2021

Nakhodka Bay, Primorsky Krai, Russia

Closure and dismantling of the floating prison where about 100 orcas (*Orcinus orca*, Appendix II) and belugas (*Delphinapterus leucas*, Appendix II) captured in the Sea of Okhotsk were awaiting sale in China. The animals were returned to the wild between June and November of 2019 and it is unclear how they benefited.

See "On the Trail" n°14 p. 17, n°15 p. 15, n°23 p. 21 and n°25 p. 20.

The White Whale Programme, December 2, 2021; The Moscow Times (with AFP), December 3, 2021.¹⁵

December 6, 2021

Republic of Crimea

Attempted transfer to Ukraine of a Black Sea bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus ponticus*, Appendix II) under the cover of falsified CITES documents. The so-called Neptune was invoiced at 1.2 million rubles or 16,000 US\$. The recipient is not specified. There are strong indications that it was the Odessa dolphinarium.

Federal Customs Service of Russia, December 6, 2021.¹⁶

OCEANIA

NEW ZEALAND

Week of September 6, 2021

Huia, Auckland Region, New Zealand

On Covid-19 Level 4 alert, wildlife emergency services are half paralyzed and a person or persons took the opportunity to decapitate the body of a common dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*, Appendix II) stranded on the beach. "We are disappointed people disrespecting and mutilating marine mammals. Dolphins are a taonga species and it is our duty to respect them in life and in death." "This act is an offense under the Marine Mammals Protection Act. An investigation is underway to find out who did this."

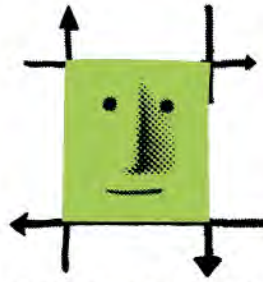
Department of Conservation, September 15, 2021.¹⁷

Beginning of November 2021

Kaikōura District, Canterbury Region, New Zealand

South Australian fur seals (*Arctocephalus forsteri*, Appendix II) were beginning to redeploy after the destruction of their habitats by the 2016 earthquake. 19 of them are found dead in Half Moon Bay and Ōhau Point. At least 8 were shot to death. Several bodies were in an advanced state of decomposition, so it was not possible to perform necropsies. The beaches were stained with blood. Two seal pups lay prostrate among the corpses.

Department of Conservation, November 5 and 22, 2021.¹⁸



ROBIN DES BOIS



FONDATION
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