

ROBIN DES BOIS

ON_{the} TRAIL

The defaunation bulletin
Quarterly information and analysis report on animal poaching and smuggling
n°28. Events from the 1st January to the 31th March, 2020
Published on October 6, 2020

Original version in French





“On the Trail”, the defaunation magazine, aims to get out of the drip of daily news 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.

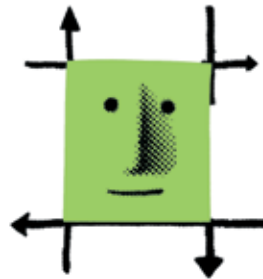
“On the Trail” highlights the new weapons of plunderers, the new modus operandi of smugglers, rumours intended to attract humans consumers of animals and their by-products. “On the Trail” gathers and disseminates feedback from institutions, individuals and NGOs that fight against poaching and smuggling. 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.

Previous issues in English

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

Previous issues in French

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



ROBIN DES BOIS

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Cover : *Panthera tigris ssp. tigris* © Indianwildlife (CC BY-NC)

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Judgment and sanction
Condemnation, acquittal, fine...



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



Poisoning
By chemicals, pesticides and medicines: cyanide, Carbofuran, Diclofenac, M99 ...



Trapping
Poaching by jaw trap, snare ...



Full moon
Moonlight poaching

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.

On the Front Lines

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

End of February 2020

Mawana Game Reserve, Kwazulu-Natal Province, South Africa



Mr. Beyers Coetzee, an ardent defender of elephants, tried to push back in the reserve the herd that had breached the fence, crossed a small river and approached cultivated fields. Two bull elephants who were standing behind

trees and thickets were startled by the firecrackers and considered that there was a threat to all members of the herd. Firecrackers or other devices are commonly used to move away elephants, or even to fragment and capture them. Mr. Beyers Coetzee was trampled by the charge. An employee of the reserve who was at the head of the procession could do nothing except shout at him a few minutes before that the elephants were beginning to get angry.

Mr. Beyers Coetzee had been in conflict for some time with Ezemvelo, the wildlife management body in the province, over the degradation of the fence and the elephant excursions. Ezemvelo is now threatening to kill the entire herd of elephants, considering that it exposes local residents to deadly risks. The friends of the elephants, who were also friends of Beyers, oppose this project.

Dereck Milburn, regional director of the Aspinall Foundation, rejects the prospect of a mass slaughter. "These are not aggressive elephants but they were being pushed hard that day to get out of the community area and the two bulls got frustrated and this was their normal behaviour." "Beyers gave his life to save theirs." An appeal is being launched to raise the 800,000 pounds (1.04 million US\$) needed to build a fence to prevent elephants from wandering around and poachers from infiltrating. Grant Fowlds, author of Saving The Last Rhinos, also says that the elephants have done nothing wrong and recalls that Ezemvelo has been threatening a mass slaughter for 3 years. "If we can get the area fenced we can build game lodges and roads and bring in tourists and the herd will grow and grow along with many other animals and bring huge prosperity." Beyers was about to conclude an agreement with the local landowners to increase the size of the reserve from 10,000 to 40,000 hectares. The lives of 31 elephants are on hold.¹

March 6, 2020
Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Reserve, Kwazulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Two men suspected of poaching rhinos died in a shoot-out. One of the two had already been charged with illegal possession of rhino horns in 2017. A third fled. On the night of March 6, the intrusion of the three men had been detected and reported in a control room by the thermal cameras that equip the fence. Despite the technological deployment, 28 rhinos have been poached in the reserve since the beginning of the year.²



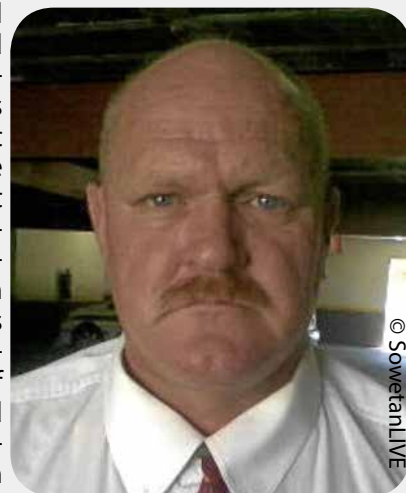
March 10, 2020
Dorset, Limpopo Province, South Africa

In a private reserve near Lephalale, a usual hotbed of poaching, an exchange of fire shook the silence of the night. The guards had been alerted by gunshots as early as 3am. A poacher was fatally wounded. Two dead and dehorned rhinos were found nearby. A manhunt was launched to find two fugitives. The call for information is out. The Crime Stop alert number is available 24 hours a day.³



March 17, 2020
Nelspruit, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Three bullets at point blank range in the front left window of the car at 6.30 a.m. on his way to work. Lieutenant-Colonel Leroy Brewer died instantly. Designated in 2016 as the Hawks' best investigator, he inquired about the most sensitive and dangerous cases in the rhinoceros industry, in particular those of Mister Big and Big Joe, an ex-cop turned horn trafficker ("On the Trail" n°12 p.69, n°21 p.77, n°22 p.79 and 81 and n°23 p.104). Prosecutor Ansie Venter is in a state of shock. "Apparently he did his job too well for the criminals' liking" "I knew Leroy for 9 years and we worked together on a large number of cases" "he loved nature, that's why the rhinoceros cases were so important to him". He was 49 years old.⁴



BENIN

January 25, 2020

Pendjari National Park, Atacora Department, Benin



Death by drowning in the Pendjari river of N'Serma Kataman Sévérin, ranger at the Pendjari National Park during an anti-poaching operation. ⁵

February 9, 2020

Kérérou, Alibori Department, Benin. Border with Burkina Faso.

At around 2 a.m. on the night of Saturday to Sunday, men armed with machetes and shotguns attacked an anti-poaching post on the edge of Pendjari and W parks. They set fire to the shack and left on motorbikes, leaving one policeman dead and 3 others injured. Pendjari, cf. "On the Trail" n°6 p.81, n°7 p.76-77, n°8 p.95, n°10 p.56 and 59, n°13 p.88, n°20 p.114 and n°23 p.93. ⁶



BOTSWANA

March 11, 2020

Chiefs Island, Moremi Game Reserve, North West District, Botswana

Shooting at 3 a.m. between a BDF (Botswana Defence Force) patrol and a band of poachers. One dead among the soldiers and one dead among the poachers.

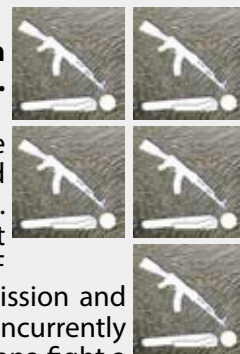
Eleven poachers have been killed in gunfire exchanges with the BDF since the beginning of 2019. According to the official communiqué, the poachers are overarmed, persist in declaring war on the BDF and are harder than ever around Chiefs Islands in the Okavango Delta. ⁷



March 30, 2020

Chobe National Park, North West Province, Botswana. Border with Namibia.

Two gunfire exchanges near the Linyanti Ranger Camp resulted in the death of 5 poachers. "As a professional, prompt and decisive force, the BDF will continue to execute its mission and other assigned tasks, whilst concurrently in collaboration with all Batswana fight a war against the invisible enemy in the form of the Covid-19 pandemic" the official statement said. ⁸



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

March 3, 2020

Virunga National Park, North Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Kambale Vyasaki Germain, 28, died in an ambush by Mai-Mai militias, according to a statement of the Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation (ICCN). Germain, 28, was returning to his base with other eco-guards at around 6 p.m. after having carried out maintenance work on an electrified fence to prevent wildlife from venturing into outside crops. ⁹



ZAMBIA

March 27, 2020

Chisamba, Central Province, Zambia

Death of a ranger. The DNPW (Department of National Parks and Wildlife) patrol was interrogating a suspect when his associates ambushed it. Jonathan Katengulwe died a few hours later, in Liteta hospital, just before he was transferred to the main hospital in Lusaka. ¹⁰



ZIMBABWE

January 7, 2020
Lake Kariba, Western Mashonaland Province, Zimbabwe

Two rangers had disappeared after 4 Zambian poachers were arrested in Matusadona National Park. Their bodies have been recovered after a 7 days searching for. It seems that they were attacked by the poachers during the transfer by boat across Lake Kariba to the town of the same name, tied up, stabbed and thrown into the water.¹¹



ASIA

IRAN

January 27, 2020
Marakan Nature Reserve, Western Azerbaijan Province, Iran. Border with Armenia.

Animal protectors on rounds in the reserve were taken to task by 2 poachers who had just shot 2 urials (*Ovis cycloceros*, Appendix II) with automatic weapons. Baqir Mehr Ali, one of the animal activists, was shot in the legs by a Kalashnikovs' burst. His life is no longer in danger. The poachers were arrested by the police after a chase in the mountains.¹²



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KAZAKHSTAN

February 21, 2020
Karaganda, Karaganda Region, Kazakhstan

Sentenced to life imprisonment for 3 poachers convicted of having in January 2019 beaten to death a ranger who had spotted them and wanted to stop the poaching of saigas (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) antelopes for the sole purpose of dehorning males and fuelling trafficking to China. Four accomplices were sentenced to 6 years. They were only charged with poaching. Yerlan Nurgaliyev was 52 years old. He is hailed by all, including President Tokayev, as an incorruptible icon in a country where corruption is endemic and even more transmissible than Covid-19. Ranger killed in Kazakhstan while protecting saigas, cf. "On the Trail" n°26 p.5.¹³



NEPAL

GANG
March 27, 2020
Parsa National Park, Parsa District, Province No. 2, Nepal

Soldiers from the Siddhibox battalion on patrol this morning around 9.30 a.m. first heard a shot from the Mahadev River side. When they arrived on the scene a shooting started. A band of 11 poachers were on the ground right in the middle of the Covid-19 stay at home order, waiting for animals to come and drink. Firing resulted in the death of Bhim Lal Moktan (45) and the arrest of one of his accomplices, Mohan Singh Moktan. The others fled. Among the soldiers, Warrant Officer Second Class Min Bahadur Chantyal was shot in the right thigh. The combing of the area revealed two front-loading rifles, ammunition and various poaching equipment.¹⁴



© Ospan Ali

Yerlan Nurgaliyev

Seahorses

Seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp.) are listed under CITES Appendix II.

ASIA

CHINA

February 29, 2020

Rongcheng, Shandong Province, China

Seizure by postal customs of 99 dried seahorses. Total weight: 157 g. Average weight: 1.58 g. The package came from Eswatini, ex-Swaziland, a landlocked country in southern Africa.¹

March 13, 2020

Dapeng New District, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of seahorses (approximately 5,250 specimens) from a container originating from Madagascar and officially transporting minerals. Total weight 15.8 kg.²

March 19, 2020

Qingdao, Shandong Province, China

Seizure of 48 seahorses.³

March 21, 2020

Menglian border post, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Myanmar.

Seizure from a vehicle of 44 dried seahorses.⁴

March 23, 2020

Fujian and Guangdong Provinces, China

Seizure of seahorses. Total weight: 716 kg. 26 arrests. Fishing boat crews and port agents are involved. According to initial investigative evidence, the organization has already smuggled 3 tons of seahorse, or, on the basis of 3 g per unit, approximately 1 million specimens. They were injected into the traditional medicine market.⁵

March 24, 2020

Yulin, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

Seizure at a market of medicinal plants and 17,628 dried seahorses. Two arrests.⁶

Corals

ASIA

CHINA

1st January 2020

Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure in a parcel from abroad of a necklace and earrings made of red coral (*Corallium rubrum*).¹

January 3, 2020

Port of Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of stony corals (order Scleractinia, Appendix II) with a total weight of 12.5 kg from the luggage of the crew of the *Yun Run 3*, a 23-year-old reefer ship flying the Panamanian flag. This is the first time that specimens listed in the CITES Appendices have been seized in the port of Ningbo from seafarers.²

January 13, 2020

Hong Kong-West Kowloon Station, Hong Kong, China

6.9 kg of stony corals (order Scleractinia, Appendix II).³

February 13, 2020

Changchun, Jilin Province, China

Seizure in milk powder boxes of 139 pearls and a red coral pendant (*Corallium rubrum*).⁴

March 1, 2020

Mangshi Dehong Airport, Yunnan Province, China

Seizure of 3 staghorn corals (*Acropora cervicornis*, Appendix II).⁵

March 4, 2020

Port of Jiuzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure by postal customs of 2 red coral (*Corallium rubrum*) necklaces in a parcel coming from Japan.⁶

March 18, 2020

Changchun, Jilin Province, China

A necklace made of red coral (*Corallium rubrum*) in a postal parcel from abroad.⁷

March 17, 2020

Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizures in two parcels from the United States of America and Japan of necklaces and pendants made of red coral (*Corallium rubrum*).⁸

MALAYSIA

March 5, 2002

Lundu, State of Sarawak, Malaysia

Seizure of 2,638 corals from a 56-year-old individual unable to justify the presence in his home of such a stock valued by experts at over 30,000 US\$.⁹

THAILAND

January 20, 2020

Koh Kaew, Rayong Province, Thailand

Caught in flagrante delicto for capturing 2 kg of stony corals (order Scleractinia, Appendix II) in front of Laem Phanwa beach, Mr. Tsou Sheng-mou, Taiwanese passport, was brought back under guard to his home where 158 kg of dead corals were found.¹⁰

EUROPE

GERMANY

Between 8 and 10 January 2020
Frankfurt am Main International Airport, State of Hesse, Germany

Seizure of a stony coral (order Scleractinia, Appendix II) weighing 1 kg in the hands of a 29-year-old man from South Korea.¹¹

March 13, 2020
Karlsruhe-Baden-Baden International Airport, State of Baden-Württemberg, Germany

Seizure of 21 fragments of stony corals (order Scleractinia, Appendix II) from the luggage of a 19-year-old man.¹²



March 19, 2020, Qingdao, China

ITALY

February 27, 2020
Palermo Falcone-Borsellino International Airport, Region of Sicily, Italy

3,000 and 15,000 € fines (3,300 and 16,540 US\$) for 2 Italian passengers coming from Cuba and India with fire corals (*Millepora*, Appendix II) and stony corals (*Pocillopora*, Appendix II) in their luggage.¹³



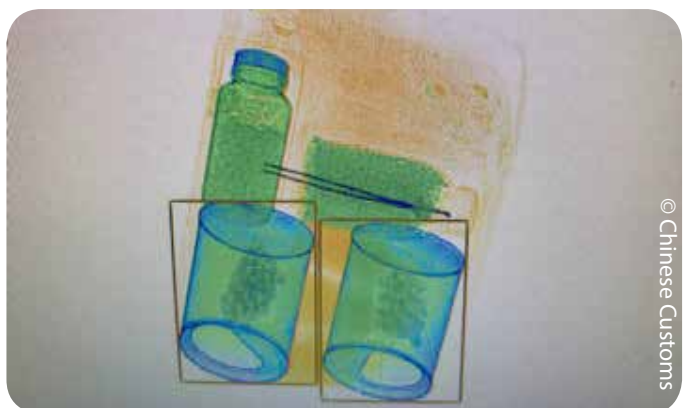
1st January 2020, Wenzhou, China



Scleractinia



Yun Run, cf. January 3, 2020, Ningbo, China



February 13, 2020, Changchun, China

Abalones

Haliotis spp.

SOUTH AFRICA

January 12, 2020

Pretoria, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Seizure in the luggage hold of a bus from Johannesburg en route to Zambia of 8 packages full of abalone. Value of 495,000 rand, or more than 33,000 US\$. The police questioned the driver and controller. They attempted to “buy” the cops with a bribe of 500 rand (34 US\$).¹

January 23, 2020

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

- The chase resulted in the seizure in a vehicle of 4 crates full of dried abalone.

- At the fugitive’s home, a second man was arrested and 1038 abalones were seized along with all the necessary equipment for ordinary meals. The value of all the abalones exceeds 55,000 US\$.²

REPEATED OFFENSE

January 24, 2020

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Sentencing of Wei Hua Li and Martin Ngale to 5 years in prison. They operated an abalone drying workshop, Columbine Road. The first had just been released on parole and an investigation was underway on the second, still for abalone trafficking offenses (see “On the Trail” n°26 p.10).³



January 24, 2020

Tsitsikamma National Park, Western Cape Province, South Africa

48 abalone poaching divers have been questioned. Global seizure of 142 kg. They all came from Gansbaai, about 580 km away, a stronghold of poaching and international abalone’s trafficking (see for instance “On the Trail” n°18 p. 6 -7, n°20 p. 8-9, n°21 p. 5, n°25 p. 7-8, n°27 p.9).⁴

January 31, 2020

Polokwane, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Big seizure in a large pick-up truck tracked by the police. 37 parcels full of abalones. The value reaches 500.000 US\$. Three arrests. They were about to enter Zimbabwe. Investigation underway to find out the final destination.⁵

February 11, 2020

Grahamstown, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

The appeal of Marshelle Blignault (or Blignaut) failed. The sentence of 12 years in prison is confirmed.

Mrs. Blignault, through her lawyer, invoked the submission to violence and omnipotence of her ex-husband Morne Blignault, sentenced to 20 years in prison for a massive and profitable trafficking of abalones. The court was not sensitive to the defendant’s battered wife posture. “While it is not to be doubted that your former husband was the principal driving force behind the enterprise you performed a vital role in the ongoing management of the enterprise without which it could not achieve its purpose.” According to the investigation file, the couple’s trafficking brought in about 5 million US\$ (see “On the Trail” n°22 p. 7 and n°24 p. 9).⁶



© Devon Koe

February 13, 2020

Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

20.000 US\$ of abalone in the car. Three arrests.⁷

February 24, 2020

Mfuleni, Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Two men and 4 women were arrested in a private home. Seizure of 371 nice size dried abalones.⁸

February 25, 2020

Northern Cape Province, South Africa

HAWKS, DAFF (Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries) agents and Colesburg police intercepted a small white truck carrying 860 kg of dried abalone valued at 7 million rand (552 US\$/kg) on National Highway 1 from Cape Town to Gauteng Province. The drivers are not South African nationals.⁹

February 27, 2020

South Africa

Night seizure by the Dark Water Ops, a private poaching enforcement company, of 156 abalones and scuba tanks.¹⁰

February 27, 2020

Off the coast of Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Thirteen poaching divers left Hout Bay in 2 rubber dinghies around 8:00 p.m. The night poaching turned into a tragedy. One of the boats took on water offshore and the 13 men regrouped in the only inflatable boat still afloat. In turn, the refuge boat was submerged. One man managed to reach the beach and sound the alarm. Three survivors were spotted and rescued. Two were in a state of severe hypothermia. Barring a miracle, 9 men perished at sea.¹¹

**March 6, 2020
Philippi, Cape Town, Western Cape Province,
South Africa**

Seizure of 428 abalones and 5,425 rock lobster tails (*Jasus lalandii*) and all cooking, storage and packaging accessories. Four arrests.¹²

**January to March 2020
Robben Island, Western Cape Province, South
Africa**

The former secretary general of the EPPA (Ex-Political Prisoners Association) deplors that Robben Island has become a poacher's paradise. It is rich in lobsters (*Jasus lalandii*) and abalones. Robben Island is both listed common heritage of humanity and a protected marine area. In 3 months, 50 divers were briefly arrested. But they come back.¹³

**March 2020
South Africa**

Of the 681 tons of abalone seized since 2010, 73 tons have been auctioned off and allocated to workshops consistently declared and authorised to cook and pack wild abalone. More than 500 tons have been stolen from the stocks or diverted by DAFF agents and re-injected into smuggling flows.

Frauds amount to 40 million rand, or 26 million US\$ for the year 2019 alone and 9 million rand, or nearly 600,000 US\$ for the first 3 months of 2020. This is the assessment published by Environment Minister Barbara Crecy in response to a parliamentary question. The minister added that the stocks of abalone seized are now monitored by internal cameras and that "theft" alerts followed by immediate reaction by armed patrols are operational.¹⁴



January 31, 2020, Polokwane, South Africa



February 13, 2020, Eastern Cape, South Africa



February 24, 2020, Mfuleni, South Africa

Conches, clams, nautilus, dates mussels ...

AMERICA

COLOMBIA

Early February 2020

Mahates, Department of Bolivar, Colombia

490 shells of queen conches (*Lobatus gigas*) from the archipelago of San Bernardo, destined for the souvenir and decoration industry, were seized from a coach heading for Santa Marta. The only legal exploitation of conches is reserved for the artisanal fishermen of Banco Serrana on the island of San Andrés.¹

MEXICO

February 21, 2020

Ensenada, State of Baja California, Mexico

Clam traffic. Pismo clams (*Tivela stultorum*) are subject to special protection. Seizure of 600 frozen and 24 fresh specimens.²

ASIA

CHINA

Early January 2020

Lanzhou Zhongchuan International Airport, Gansu Province, China

Five bracelets made of giant clams beads (*Tridacnidae* spp., Appendix II), 40 g each.³

January 13, 2020

Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of 2 scaly clam (*Tridacna squamosa*, Appendix II) shells in the luggage of a passenger disembarking from Doha, Qatar.⁴

February 20, 2020

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure on arrival of a flight from Yangon (ex-Rangoon), Myanmar, of 1.25 kg of giant clams (*Tridacnidae* spp., Appendix II), 1.95 kg of horned helmets (*Cassia cornuta*) and 800 g of tiger cowry (*Cypraea tigris*). Tiger cowry is a carnivorous gastropod that measures 7-10 cm in adult size. It is present in tropical waters of the Indo-Pacific region. On Reunion Island, it is also called "coquille ravauder" (shell to darn) or "coquille le bas" (shell stocking) because it was used to mend stockings and socks. Today it is very popular with tourists and disappears little by little from the lagoons to end up as paperweights, key rings, pencil holders and dust catchers on shelves.⁵

March 3, 2020

Mangshi Dehong Airport, Yunnan Province, China

Seizure of 3 horned helmets (*Cassia cornuta*) in the luggage of a Chinese passenger coming from Myanmar.⁶

March 6, 2020

Hekou, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Viet Nam.

Seizure by river customs on the Nanxi River of 2 horned helmets (*Cassia cornuta*) weighing 3 kg.⁷

March 9, 2020

Zhengzhou Xinzheng International Airport, Henan Province, China

Seizure of 3 nautilus (*Nautilidae*, Appendix II).⁸

March 15, 2020

Nansan border post, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Myanmar

Seizure of 2 giant clams (*Tridacnidae* spp., Appendix II) weighing 802 g, 2 horned helmets (*Cassia cornuta*) weighing 4.5 kg, 6 queen conches (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II) and 3 Chiragra spider conches (*Harpago chiragra*).⁹

March 18, 2020

Changchun, Jilin Province, China

A bracelet and pearls of giant clams (*Tridacnidae* spp., Appendix II) in a postal parcel from abroad.¹⁰

March 2020

Zhanjiang, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure by postal customs of 3 giant clams (*Tridacnidae* spp., Appendix II) in a package from Cambodia.¹¹

PHILIPPINES

February 6, 2020

Taytay, Province of Palawan, Philippines

More than a ton of southern giant clams (*Tridacna derasa*, Appendix II), small giant clams (*Tridacna maxima*, Appendix II), scaly clams (*Tridacna squamosa*, Appendix II) and giant clam shells (*Tridacna gigas*, Appendix II) were seized. Known locally as "taklobo", they were sold for between 600 and 1000 pesos, or 12-19 US\$ per unit.¹²

SRI LANKA

January 7, 2020

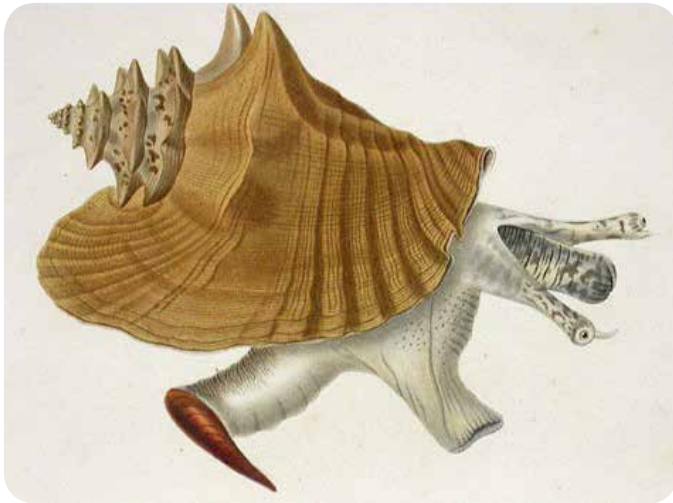
Talaimannar, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 477 conch shells (genus *Strombus*) in a back store. An arrest.¹³

January 13, 2020

Kirinda, Southern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizures in 2 houses of 440 conches (genus *Strombus*).¹⁴



Lobatus gigas, cf. Early February 2020, Colombia



Cypraea tigris, cf. February 20, 2020, China



Tivela stultorum, cf. February 21, 2020, Mexico



Strombus, January 7, 2020, Sri Lanka

February 6, 2020
Daluwa and Udappuwa, North Western Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure on the beach by the Navy of 4 conches (genus *Strombus*) and the equipment of 2 scuba divers.¹⁵

February 24 and 25, 2020
Mannar and Thalaimannar, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizures of 1550 and 284 conch shells (genus *Strombus*). Two in custody.¹⁶

March 13, 2020
Talaimannar, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure by the Navy of 420 conch shells (genus *Strombus*) in a fisherman's hut.¹⁷

March 30, 2020
Talaimannar, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

More than 1000 conches (genus *Strombus*) under regulatory size were hidden in the dunes awaiting a night pick-up behind Navy patrols.¹⁸

EUROPE

ITALY

January 4, 2020
Castellammare di Stabia, Naples Metropolitan City, Campania Region, Italy

Seizure in the fish market of 10 kg of date mussels (*Lithophaga lithophaga*, Appendix II).¹⁹

February 21, 2020
Vasto, Province of Chieti, Abruzzo Region, Italy

Unexpected check in the restaurants of Vasto (more than 40.000 inhabitants). Global seizure of 1 kg of date mussels (*Lithophaga lithophaga*, Appendix II). "The capture of a single date torn from the underwater cliffs with a chisel contributes to the desertification of a fragile environment," emphasizes the local press.²⁰

Gooseneck Barnacles

EUROPE

SPAIN

March 23, 2020

San Pedro Islands, Province of A Coruña, Autonomous Community of Galicia, Spain

Seizure of 20 kg of gooseneck barnacles (*Pollicipes pollicipes*). Poachers abandoned the bag as the guards approached. They ran away into the mountain. All restaurants are closed during this period of Covid-19 lockdown. To whom was this shipment destined?¹

FRANCE

REPEATED OFFENSE

January 5, 2020

Saint-Gildas-de-Rhuys, Department of Morbihan, France

Saint-Gildas-de-Rhuys, stronghold of the gooseneck barnacle (*Pollicipes pollicipes*) smuggling. In August 2019, 3 Spaniards were arrested with 110 kg (see "On the Trail" n° 26 p. 12). Today 5 Spaniards, 3 fishermen and 2 buyers, have been caught with 109 kg. They had been tracked since November. The semi-rigid boat, its 70 horsepower engine, the trailer and 2 vehicles were also seized.²

Sea Cucumbers

See "A Sea Cucumber Ending" in "On the Trail" n°4, p.107. *Isostichopus fuscus* is listed under CITES Appendix III in Ecuador. Three other species are included in Appendix II with entry into force in August 2020.

AMERICA

MEXICO

Early January 2020

Mexico City, Mexico

Seizure in a logistic platform of 2,056 dried sea cucumbers about to take off for Hong Kong. They were distributed in 2 plastic bags inside 2 cardboard boxes.¹

Early January 2020

State of Yucatán, Mexico

Sentencing of Wilbert "D" to 1 year in prison, a fine of 24,260 pesos (1,280 US\$) and damages of 154,534 pesos (8,200 US\$) for poaching in Yucatan and transporting 572 kg of Florida sea cucumbers (*Holothuria floridana*).²



End of January 2020

State of Yucatán, Mexico

Conviction of Reyes "L" to 11 months in prison and 780 US\$ fine for attempting to land and market 154 kg of chocolate chip cucumbers (*Isostichopus badionotus*), about 1,500 specimens.³



February 1, 2020

Bahía de los Ángeles, State of Baja California, Mexico

In the evening, Guillermo Eduardo "N", 31 years old, and Jesús Miguel "N", 25 years old, were going the wrong way. They were stopped by a patrol that, after spotting a flagrant smell of marijuana, conducted a complete search of the vehicle and found 18 "pepino del mar" in the back.⁴

ASIA

INDIA

January 11, 2020

Off Agatti Island coast, Lakshadweep District, Union territory of Lakshadweep, India

Seizure on board a ship of 219 sea cucumbers. 46 fresh specimens each weigh 1.5 to 2 kg, 74 dried specimens weigh between 300 and 600 g. 99 were frozen. They were all packed and ready for shipment. According to the 4 crew members who were held in custody for 14 days and the crosschecks of the investigators, the network starts in the Lakshadweep archipelago, passes through Mumbai and Bangalore before moving on to Sri Lanka and then on to Southeast Asian countries and China. A second smuggling route would pass through the Maldives.

"There is a need to tell the fishing community that the health of the reefs depends upon these sea cucumbers. It is in the interest of the community to protect these species to ensure the reefs survive as sea surface temperatures are rising every year" says Deepak Apte, director of the Mumbai Museum of Natural History, a fine speech that does not press on enough while sea cucumber fishermen earn 200,000 rupees in a day or more than 2,730 US\$ from illegally catching and trafficking sea cucumbers.⁵

January 21, 2020

Agatti Island, Lakshadweep District, Lakshadweep Union Territory, India

Seizure of 52 dead sea cucumbers weighing a total of 10 kg with an estimated value of 500,000 rupees or 700 US\$/kg.⁶

February 12, 2020

Suheli Par Island, Lakshadweep District, Union territory of Lakshadweep, India

This is the third seizure of sea cucumbers in one month in the archipelago and it is the largest: 852 kg, 1,716 eviscerated sea cucumbers, 4.26 crores in economic value, i.e. 698 US\$/kg. Also seized were 9 catching hooks, one 2.5m harpoon, three knives, nets, baskets, 167 kg preservatives, 200 litres of kerosene, a GPS set, packing materials. The lot was stored on a desert island. It was being transferred to a fishing boat registered in Tamil Nadu. According to the SCPTF (Sea Cucumber Protection Task Force), they were to be transhipped to a Sri Lankan registered vessel once they reached international waters.

The WCCB (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) has asked Interpol to publish a purple notice on the modus operandi of this industry in order to facilitate the awareness of other States on sea cucumber trafficking. The Lakshadweep archipelago consists of 36 islands with a total surface area of 400,000 km². 11 of them are inhabited, 25 are considered uninhabited and only 6 forest service officers are responsible for detecting and putting an end to the trafficking of fauna and flora.⁷

February 27, 2020

Cheriyapani Atoll, Lakshadweep District, Lakshadweep Union Territory, India

The administration of the archipelago has established around Cheriyapani a no-go zone of 239 km² where sea cucumbers should be able to graze the seabed with peace of mind. The Dr KK Mohammed Koya Sea Cucumber Conservation Reserve was initiated by the chief wildlife warden of the archipelago's fauna and flora, Mr. Damodhar AT. This is a first in the world. However, it would be like beating the air if the archipelago's fishermen and additional means of surveillance do not work together to repel the looters. In all waters under Indian jurisdiction, sea cucumbers have enjoyed the same legal protection as tigers since 2001.⁸



March 9, 2020

Akkaraipettai, Nagapattinam District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure in 2 sheds of 1,200 and 1,050 kg of fresh and dried sea cucumbers. P. Senbagaraman and Chandru alias R. Chandrasekar are heard by the police. In theory, they face 3 to 7 years in prison.⁹

March 10, 2020

Keechankuppam, Nagapattinam District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of 3 tons of dried sea cucumbers following the search at the home of a certain S. Ramadoss. Minimum value of the catch: 10 million rupees or 140,000 US\$ or 47 US\$/kg on the local market.¹⁰

March 21, 2020

Tuticorin, Tuticorin District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of 164 kg of dried sea cucumbers.

- 70 kg in a shed.

- 94 kg in a car's boot.

The spokesman for the maritime police confirms the existence of a smuggling route to Sri Lanka with a final destination in China. Thailand is also mentioned.¹¹

March 26, 2020

Arumuganeri, Thoothukudi District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

An unexpected search at Pon Kutti, a salt producer, resulted in the seizure of 1,500 kg of dried sea cucumbers on the terrace and in an outbuilding. The value of the lot is estimated at 10 million rupees, or 140,000 US\$ or 94 US\$/kg. Pon Kutti, who was absent at this time, is being actively sought.¹²

SRI LANKA

January 5, 2020

Mandaitivu, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

"The Navy has been conducting operations in waters around the island to prevent depletion of fish and ocean resources." Seizure of 13 kg of sea cucumbers in a boat, of a net, and also of 34 kg of a fish that was banned to be caught.¹³

January 7, 2020

Mirinchimunai, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 201 kg of fresh sea cucumbers in a private house. The owner is heard by the police.¹⁴

January 8, 2020

Silavathurai, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure by the Navy of 24 sea cucumbers and 17 kg of fish also illegally caught, a boat, an outboard motor and fishing gear. Two arrests.¹⁵

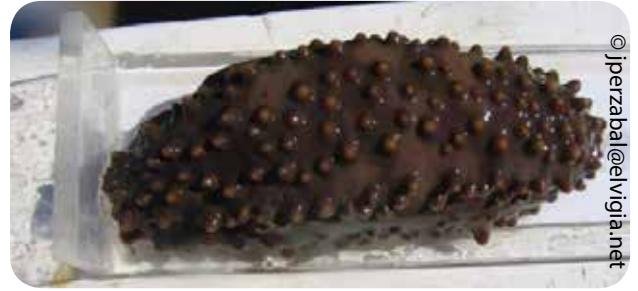
January 13 and 14, 2020

Palaitivu, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 195 sea cucumbers including sandfish (*Holothuria scabra*), 4 dinghies, 4 speedboats and arrest of 18 poachers.¹⁶



March 9, 2020, Akkaraipettai, India



February 1, 2020, Bahía de los Ángeles, Mexico



February 7, 2020, Mannar, Sri Lanka

January 16, 2020
Erukkalampiddy, Northern Province, Sri Lanka
 24 kg sea cucumbers, including *Holothuria edulis*.¹⁷

February 5, 2020
Mannar, Northern Province, Sri Lanka
 The Navy is not letting down the pressure. Seizure of 350 sea cucumbers. A boat, diving tanks and 2 suspects aged 26 and 36 were handed over to the fisheries services.¹⁸

February 7, 2020
Mannar, Northern Province, Sri Lanka
 The night watch in the gulf was fruitful. It interrupted a sea cucumber harvest by 12 divers. Seizure of 4 boats and diving equipment. The suspects all live in Mannar.¹⁹

February 19, 2020
Jaffna, Northern Province, Sri Lanka
 Four arrests. They are between 19 and 30 years old. They were in the process of harvesting sea cucumbers by scuba diving. Seizure by the Navy of 1795 specimens.²⁰

February 21, 2020
Jaffna, Northern Province, Sri Lanka
 Seizure of 2,450 fresh sea cucumbers. Confiscation of 2 boats and diving equipment. Seven people in custody, aged between 33 and 46 years old.²¹

February 25, 2020
Mannar, Northern Province, Sri Lanka
 Seizure on the beach of 350 sea cucumbers. Confiscation of a boat, outboard motor, fishing gear and cell phone. Two people in custody aged 31 to 53 years old.²²

March 4, 2020
Off the island of Iranathivu, Northern Province, Sri Lanka
 Patrol around the island Iranathivu. Seizure of 245 sea cucumbers, 2 boats and 16 scuba tanks. Six arrests.²³

March 4, 2020
South-east of Kalmunai Point, Northern Province, Sri Lanka
 930 sea cucumbers in the bottom of the boat. Arrest of the diver. Seizure of the outboard motor and diving equipment.²⁴

March 6, 2020
South-east of Kalmunai Point, Northern Province, Sri Lanka
 The 602 sea cucumbers were seized on board a boat that was boarded in the south of the province but the 2 fishermen who were arrested are living in Jaffna, in the very north, where sea cucumber plundering and smuggling are at their highest.²⁵

March 12, 2020
Konthapiddi, Mannar District, Northern Province, Sri Lanka
 Another seizure in the gulf. The 3 suspects, the boat with outboard motor, the fishing and diving gear and the 105 sea cucumbers were handed over to the Mannar Fisheries Directorate. Based on the information currently available, the final fate of the boat, the diving gear, the sea cucumbers and the penalties imposed on the offenders are not known, neither in this case nor in the other cases.²⁶

March 16, 2020
Vinayasodi, Jaffna District, Northern Province, Sri Lanka
 Seizure off the coast of Jaffna of 175 sea cucumbers. Boarding of a boat. Arrest of a 25-year-old fisherman.²⁷

Marine and Freshwater Fish



© Amanda Flannery

Carcharhinus falciformis, cf. January 24, 2020, Miami, United States of America and January 22, 2020, Colima, Mexico

AMERICA

ARGENTINA

End of March 2020

Esperanza, Las Colonias Department, Province of Santa Fe, Argentina

Seizure of a hundred streaked prochilods (*Prochilodus lineatus*) in a car. Break in the cold chain. Risk of intoxication. Small-scale food trafficking is increasing during Covid-19 lockdown.¹

BRAZIL

January 22, 2020

Óbidos, State of Pará, Brazil

Two o'clock in the morning. Seizure on board the *Thaiane Mirella* of 4.5 tons of flag-tailed prochilodus (*Semaprochilodus insignis*) loaded at Fonte Boa in the Amazonas. The *Thaiane Mirella* was heading towards Santarem in Para at approximately 1,300 km. The prochilodus smelled bad. They were dumped. Under the prochilodus, there were arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), 8 tons. They were not spoiled. They were donated to charity.³

January 24, 2020

Porto Velho, State of Rondônia, Brazil

Successive seizures by the Federal Highway Police in 2 cabs heading to Guajará-Mirim, of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), tambaquis (*Colossoma macropomum*) (30 kg) and cocaine (8 kg).⁴



February 6, 2020

Juruti, State of Pará, Brazil

The seizure took place at dawn, in the back of a pick-up. The 434 kg of fish from the Amazon basin, arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) and tambaquis (*Colossoma macropomum*), were donated to charities and hospital and school canteens.⁵

February 11, 2020

Maraã, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Operation "Embarque Seguro". Seizure on board the *Almirante Azevedo* of 989 kg of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II). The *Almirante Azevedo* regularly transports passengers and goods between Manaus and Japura.⁶

February 17, 2020

Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Seizure of 1 kg of gold and 400 kg of fish, arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), tambaquis (*Colossoma macropomum*) and butterfly peacock basses (*Cichla ocellaris*) in a fishing boat at quay. The illegal shipments are believed to come from Japura, 700 km upstream from Manaus.⁷

February 25, 2020

Porto Velho, Rondonia, Brazil

Seizure by the road police on BR-364 towards Porto Velho of 400 kg of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II). Between November 1 and March 15, fishing for arapaimas is totally prohibited; outside this period, it is strictly controlled. Two arrests.⁸

March 12, 2020

Tabatinga, State of Amazonas, Brazil

The boat, which was sailing upstream the Amazon, was carrying 2500 kg of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) fillets more than 1000 km from Manaus and was heading towards the tri-border between Brazil, Peru and Colombia. The 2 crew members were arrested and immediately charged with violation of fisheries regulations and attempted smuggling. After veterinary examination, the salt-preserved arapaima fillets were donated to charity.⁹

March 25, 2020

Alcinópolis, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil

Illegal capture of a spotted sorubim (*Pseudoplatystoma corruscans*). Fine equal to 199 US\$. The poacher had published photos of his exploit on social networks.¹⁰



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 24, 2020

Miami, State of Florida, United States of America

Seizure at the international airport of 635 kg of dried fins of thresher sharks (*Alopias* spp., Appendix II), silky sharks (*Carcharhinus falciformis*, Appendix II) and hammerhead sharks (family Sphyrnidae). Origin: South America. Destination: Asia. Value: Between 700,000 and 1 million US\$, i.e. 1,100 to 1,600 US\$/kg.¹¹

FRANCE (SAINT-BARHELEMY)

January 29, 2020

Off the coast of Saint-Barthélemy, France

La Confiance, a French patrol boat, diverted a ghost ship without a flag and fishing license to the port of Marigot, island of Saint-Martin. Silvertip sharks (*Carcharhinus albimarginatus*) were in the fish hold.¹²

MEXICO

January 22, 2020

Colima, State of Colima, Mexico

Appearance of the manager of a seafood export company. He is suspected of having attempted to fraudulently ship 10.9 tons of shark fins in May 2019 from Manzanillo to the Philippines by container ship, of which 456.5 kg of silky sharks (*Carcharhinus falciformis*, Appendix II), 2,200.5 kg of fins of the genus *Alopias* including smalltooth thresher sharks (*Alopias pelagicus*, Appendix II) and Pacific sharpnose sharks (*Rhizoprionodon longurio*) - see "On the Trail" n°26 p.14 . During the investigation, the man was released on bail with an obligation to report to the police once a month. Manzanillo, see n°11 p.6, n°24 p.10 and n°25 p.12.¹³

February 27, 2020

Ciudad Juárez International Airport, State of Chihuahua, Mexico

Seizure in the freight area of the airport adjacent to the border with the United States of 23 plastic bags each containing 5.5 kg of totoaba fillets (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I), giving a total of 126.5 kg. No documents accompanied the shipment and the shippers also defrauded on the weight. Each package was supposed to contain 4 kg of "goods".¹⁴

PERU

Mid January 2020

Callao, Province of Callao, Peru

Seizure in a warehouse of 3 tons of frozen meat and fins of shortfin mako sharks (*Isurus oxyrinchus*, Appendix II) landed without authorisation from a foreign vessel and destined for the domestic market. The shipment is valued at around 20,000 soles, or 6,000 US\$.¹⁵

ASIA

CHINA

January 15, 2020

Kwai Chung, Hong Kong, China

New seizure in a container from Sri Lanka of shark fins. Approximately 502 kg. Value equal to 50,000 US\$, or about 100 US\$/kg.¹⁶

March 31, 2020

Port of Hong Kong, China

Seizure in a container from Morocco of 392 kg of shark fins worth about 110,000 HK\$ (14,600 US\$ and about 40 US\$/kg).¹⁷

SRI LANKA

March 16, 2020

Negombo, Western Province, Sri Lanka

During a raid on the fish market, the Western Naval Command seized around twenty thresher sharks (*Alopias* spp., Appendix II) weighing a total of 660 kg with their fins and heads cut off. The National Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Act prohibits the capture, transport, transfer, storage and sale of thresher sharks or parts.¹⁸



February 11, 2020, Marañ, Brazil



Feb. 25, 2020, Porto Velho, Brazil



February 6, 2020, Juruti, Brazil



March 12, 2020, Tabatinga, Brazil



February 27, 2020, Ciudad Juárez International Airport, Mexico



January 24, 2020, Miami, United States of America



BULGARIA

Mid-February 2020
Between Vardim and Svishtov, Veliko Tarnovo Province, Bulgaria

Discovered by a patrol of fishery guards of 14 illegal lines loaded with 700 hooks baited with a Russian sturgeon, osciètre, (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Appendix II) male, emitter of pheromones that attract egg-bearing females from which caviar is made. When it was hooked by the poacher(s), the lure was alive. When the device was discovered, he was dead. Fishing with cruel and non-selective "karmacis" is banned in Bulgaria and since 2011 all sturgeon fishing is prohibited. There are 4 species of sturgeon in the Danube. They are all threatened with extinction. Last year a 200 kg female beluga (*Huso huso*, Appendix II) was extracted from the hands of poachers near Aydemir. She was still alive. She was put back in the water and her track was lost by Bulgarian or Romanian specialists stationed along the Danube. She may have died as a result of the capture, she may have been recaptured by the looters.¹⁹



FRANCE

January 13, 2020
Departments of Ille-et-Vilaine, Loire-Atlantique, Vendée, Morbihan and Charente-Maritime, France

In the early hours of the morning, 70 officers from the DIRM (Interregional Directorate of Sea) and the French Office of Biodiversity, Customs and Maritime Gendarmerie launched a coordinated survey in 5 of the coastal departments of western France with the aim of checking the legality of catches of glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) by professional fishermen.

7 kg of glass eels out of the 184 caught during the night were seized and released into coastal rivers. Four professional fishermen were fined and will be prosecuted in court for failing to report the catch or fishing within 50 m of the dams.²⁰

January 16, 2020
Amiens, Department of the Somme, France

Sentencing of 2 fishermen to one month suspended jail and 4 others fined 900 €, or 1,005 US\$, for poaching glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) in the Bay of the Somme river in March 2018.²¹



January 26, 2020
Toulouse-Blagnac International Airport, Department of Haute-Garonne, France

Conviction of a Malaysian national who, according to him, came to spend four days on holidays in south-west France, to 18 months in prison, 6 of which were suspended, and a 7,600 € fine (9,000 US\$) for attempting to export 21 kg of glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II). He was about to return to Kuala Lumpur via Istanbul when he was caught by customs officers with glass eels stored in pockets of ice water, a process well known to traffickers that aims to keep eel fry alive by placing them in a state of semi lethargy.²²



January 29 and 30, 2020
Castets, Department of Landes, France

On Wednesday and Thursday, customs officers seized on board 2 vehicles 160 + 160 kg of glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) coming from Portugal and bound for Paris. The two drivers are Chinese, as is the consignee. The investigation is in the hands of JIRS, the specialized inter-regional jurisdiction in Paris.²³

OPERATION LAKE
February 17, 2020

Trignac, Department of Loire-Atlantique, France
 Arrest in the swamps of 3 men engaged in the capture of glass eels in the middle of the night (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II). Seizure of about 600 specimens.²⁴

ITALY

Beginning of March 2020
Sant'Agata di Militello, Region of Sicily, Italy
 Seizure in the freezers of a supermarket of 310 kg of molluscs, crustaceans and fish, including tunas and swordfish ready for marketing despite numerous violations of national and European regulations on the protection of endangered species. They were unfit for consumption.²⁵

March 5 and 11, 2020
Giulianova, Province of Teramo, Abruzzo Region, Italy

Seizure of 5 swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) on board a fishing boat and on the docks. A 14,000 € fine (15,300 US\$) and withdrawal of 20 points from the fishing license.²⁶



POLAND

February 21, 2020

Budomierz - Hruszów border post, Lubaczów County, Podkarpackie Voivodship, Poland. Border with Ukraine.

Seizure in the luggage hold of a coach coming from Ukraine of 150 kg of glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II), a record for Polish customs. Arrest of a Ukrainian national.²⁷

PORTUGAL

January 2020

Districts of Porto, Braga and Aveiro, Portugal

Coordinated operation of the maritime police forces. Twenty searches. Seizure of 400 kg of glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II), 10 vehicles and cash. Dismantling of a workshop to make nets and other poaching tools and a packaging workshop for the shipment of glass eels by air.²⁸

UNITED KINGDOM

**February 7 and March 6, 2020
London, England, United Kingdom**

Sentencing of Mr. Khoo to two years suspended imprisonment and 240 hours of community service for attempting to transport 200 kg of glass eels to Hong Kong (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II). He was caught at Heathrow airport in February 2017 (see "On the Trail" n°16 p.11). He had been engaged in this traffic since 2015. The cumulative value of the shipments is estimated at 53 million pounds, or more than 69 million US\$. Mr. Khoo bought the glass eels from Spain and other European countries, kept them alive and repackaged them in a barn in Gloucestershire before shipping them or transporting them to Hong Kong.²⁹



Mister Khoo with 2 gold bars in his hands. Glass eels are worth their weight in gold.

March 2020

Hong Kong, China

An academic article published in March 2020 in Sciences Advances confirms the impregnation of the Chinese eel market by clandestine imports of glass eels followed by fattening. Genetic analyses carried out after purchases in 49 Hong Kong supermarkets under 13 different brands reveal that 45% of the eels distributed came from European eels (*Anguilla Anguilla*, Appendix II) caught in the coastal rivers of the Atlantic Ocean, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Maghreb.



The eels are sold in Hong Kong as fillets, frozen, pre-cooked or as sushi. All of them have been smuggled since the CITES records of the Hong Kong Administrative Region do not include any mention of the import of *Anguilla Anguilla*. Most of the packages were labelled "Product of China" and one European eel fillet was labelled *Anguilla japonica*. One kilo of glass eels corresponds to about 3,500 specimens and is sold on the Asian market for up to 7,400 US\$. In 2 years, the increase in weight rate is 1,000, i.e. a 0.35 g elver weighs 350 g after 2 years. The return on investment is tremendous. "The high-value trading associated with eel farming has inevitably attracting attention from criminal organizations with reports of eel trafficking to criminal syndicates worldwide", say the authors, who point out, based on Europol's balance sheets, that 100 tons of glass eels, corresponding to around 300 million specimens, were illegally shipped to Asia during the 2017-2018 winter fishing season. Among those allegedly responsible for this cheating are the multinational companies A.S. Watson and Dairy Farm, which specialise worldwide, including in Europe, in the distribution of consumer goods and food products.³⁰

RUSSIA

End of January 2020

Novosibirsk Oblast, Russia

Seizure by border guards of 110 kg of caviar of the species Amur sturgeon (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II) and huso sturgeon (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II) from the territory of Khabarovsk approximately 3,800 km away. The value of the shipment is equal to 371,500 US\$, i.e. 3,380 US\$/kg. It was destined for Kazakhstan.³¹

January 2020

Khabarovsk, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia

Seizure by FSB agents of 13 kg of caviar in 500 g jars to be sent by parcel post to Krasnodar, 9,000 km away. Two arrests. At the sender's premises, 30 kg of caviar and 20 kg of other sturgeon parts (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) were discovered.³²

SWITZERLAND

January 4, 2020

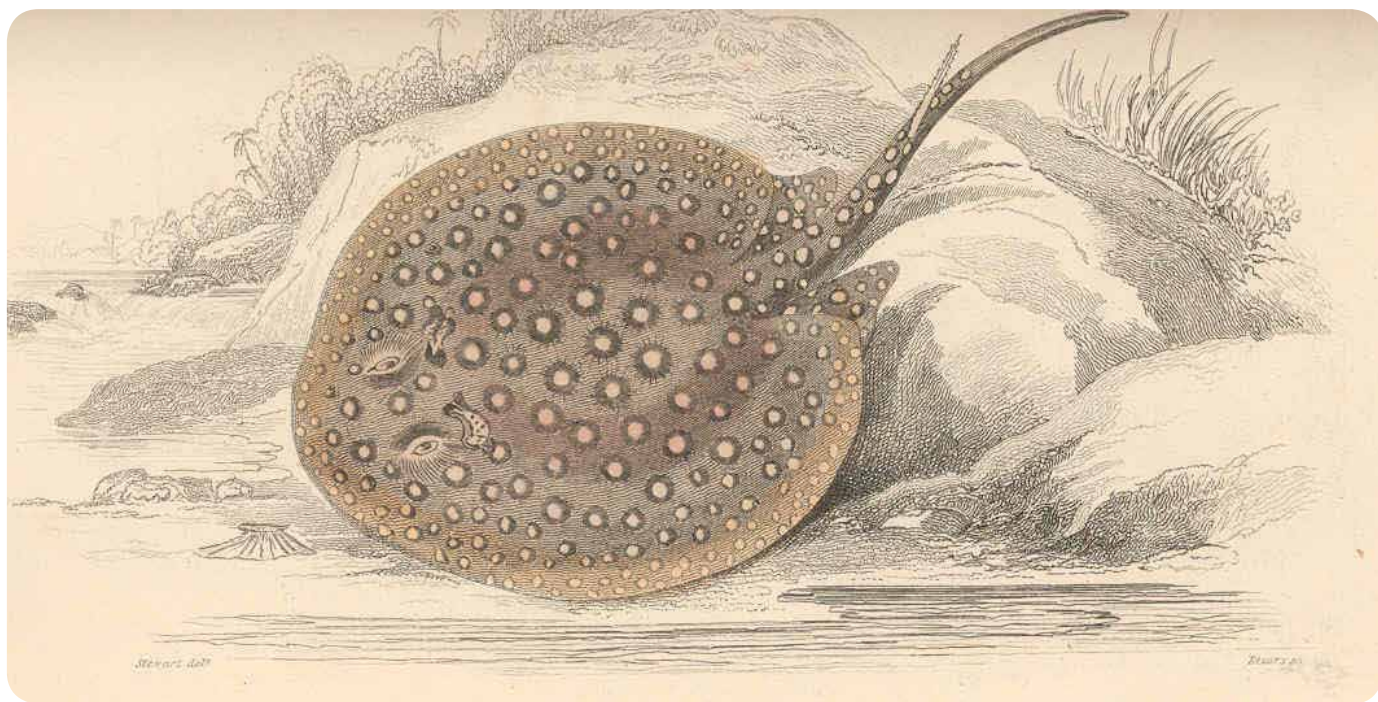
Oberriet border post, St. Gallen Canton, Switzerland. Border with Austria.

Two Swiss citizens attempted to introduce into their country 2 Amazonian freshwater stingrays (*Potamotrygon* spp., Appendix III) which are sought after worldwide for ornamental aquarium purposes. At the back of the car, they were dipped in 2 plastic boxes. The identity of the 2 smugglers was not revealed. They were fined less than 1,000 Swiss Francs or 1,100 US\$. A *Potamotrygon* is traded between 150 and 1,800 US\$ on the European and American markets.



The genus *Potamotrygon* is listed in CITES Appendix III at the request of Brazil and Colombia. Export from Brazil is authorised for 6 species. It is subject to a quota. These quotas are based on old or even non-existent biological data. The export of individuals larger than 30 cm in diameter is prohibited in order to give the species a chance of survival. Declared exports from Brazil between 2003 and 2016 collapsed. In 2003, 7,367 *Potamotrygon motoro* were exported compared to 31 in 2016. In 2003, 1,058 *Potamotrygon orbignyi* were exported, 0 in 2016.

Pond farming is authorised. Only 2 to 3 companies have declared their interest. Their preliminary experiments have not led to any concrete outcomes. All officially exported specimens are of wild origin.³³



FRANCE (FRENCH POLYNESIA)

March 21, 2020

**Arutua Atoll, Tuamotu Archipelago, French Polynesian Overseas Collectivity, France
Stowaway sharks, Robin des Bois' press release,
April 13, 2020**

The *Shen Gang Shun 1*, a 49-meter long Chinese tuna vessel ran aground at 8:20 a.m. on Saturday, March 21 on Arutua Atoll, Tuamotu Archipelago in French Polynesia, following a clear navigational error. The 36-crew members were evacuated in difficult conditions by a Dauphin helicopter mobilized by the High Commission of the French Republic in Polynesia. They then joined, thanks to the maritime shuttle from the neighboring island of Rangiroa, three tuna vessels belonging to the same owner as the *Shen Gang Shun 1*. The wreck was therefore abandoned, including by its captain, who is Taiwanese according to the records of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission. After the evacuation of the wreck, local fishermen boarded the vessel and found tuna and blue sharks (*Prionace glauca*) with their fins cut off in the holds.

The day before the grounding, the *Shen Gang Shun 1* had left Papeete on the island of Tahiti, after repairs and refueling. The presence of sharks had escaped the vigilance of the port controllers. The port of Papeete is a major hub for the Chinese fleet in the South Pacific, which uses it for repairs, refits, supply and bunkering. According to the High Commission, the air, sea and satellite resources deployed by the French State guarantee that no foreign vessels fish in waters under Polynesian jurisdiction. Teva Rohfritsch, Minister of the Blue Economy of French Polynesia is on the same line. Nevertheless, the transit through Papeete of Chinese tuna vessels hiding in their holds frozen sharks with their fins cut up is in violation of the local Environmental Code which prohibits, at any time and in any place within the Exclusive Economic Zone of French Polynesia, the possession and transport of all shark species.

In any case, such a practice tolerated in Papeete is prohibited in Concarneau, in Boulogne-sur-Mer, in any other fishing or commercial port of the mainland France and liable to seizures, fines, detention of vessels and legal proceedings.

To date the wreck is still on site and would be responsible for an oil spill. The cargo of sharks and bait, 82 tons in all, is in such a state of decomposition and bacteriological risk that it has been decided to dump it at sea.³⁴



Marine Mammals

ASIA

INDIA

January 17, 2020

Jalalpur Jora, Meerut District, Uttar Pradesh State, India

The Ganges dolphins (*Platanista gangetica*, Appendix I) on the Ganges River are fighting pollution, debris during floods and river sand traffic. These small freshwater dolphins are also victims of murderous practices. Their oil is used to prepare bait for catfish fishing in the Brahmaputra River and to "cure rheumatism". Its meat sells for the equivalent of 6 €/kg (6.7 US\$/kg) at the roadside or in fresh markets.

A new danger is threatening the emblematic and endangered species. The rivers linking West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh have just been declared navigable waterways. The Ganges dolphins are by nature blind and can only find their way by echolocation. They are disoriented by the vibrations of ongoing dredging operations and by the noise of the propellers. Groundings are on the increase. The Indian naturalists are alarmed: "Between river transport and freshwater dolphins, you have to choose, the two are not compatible". The government remains silent. For it, the development of waterways is a priority.¹



March 1, 2020

Vashi, Mumbai City District, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure of 2 lumps of ambergris weighing a total of 7 kg from the intestines of 1 or 2 sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) by Rizwan Fadnis, welder, and Rajesh Surve, travel agent. They were arrested at a bus stop next to a railway station. They say they picked up the lumps on a beach in Goa. They were trying to sell them, insisting on the alleged aphrodisiac properties of ambergris consumption. On the perfume and cosmetics market, ambergris also known as "sperm whale vomit" sells for around 40,000 US\$/kg.²



Dolphins and other protected marine species are sold on an illegal market on Sine beach 30 km from Kabupaten of Tulungagung (more than 970,000 inhabitants).³



INDONESIA

March 21, 2020

Kalidawir District, Tulungagung Regency, East Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia

- Arrest of a fisher accused of catching 9 long-beaked common dolphins (*Delphinus capensis*, Appendix II). He said he found them dead in his nets.

- Arrest of the fishmonger who had bought the dolphins. The fins were cut off, according to the investigators. It would therefore be a well-organized industry.



Various Marine Species

AMERICA

BRAZIL

March 10, 2020

Guaratuba, State of Paraná, Brazil

Seizure of 37 tons of shrimps and other seafood products by Ibama (Instituto brasileiro do meio ambiente e dos recursos naturais renováveis) and the police. They have been caught during the closure of the fishery from March 1 to May 31.¹

MEXICO

March 5, 2020

Progreso, Yucatan State, Mexico

Official informations on the discovery of a relatively original drug trade between Costa Rica and Mexico are filtering through in dribs and drabs. The bundles of narcotics were stuffed into frozen sharks coming from Costa Rica by road. The Mexican importer was also smuggling sea cucumbers to Asia and the United States for 417 and 250 million pesos respectively, or 19 and 11.4 million US\$

This is not the first time that cocaine is imported from Costa Rica through fish, 10 years ago it was already sharks, 4 years ago it was through swordfish. Although no links have been established to date with this drug connection, it should be noted that Guillermo César Calderón León, customs administrator in Progreso, was relieved of his duties or transferred. He is suspected of having facilitated the import of ephedrine sent to Mexico by a Chinese mafia to produce a drug related to amphetamines.²



March 21, 2020

Between San Felipe and Mexicali, State of Baja California, Mexico

Seizure in a black Dodge pick-up truck at the "El Chinero" checkpoint of 40 kg of totoaba meat (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) and 6.5 kg of loggerhead turtle meat (*Caretta caretta*, Appendix I).³

ASIA

CHINA

January 22, 2020

Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of 3 dried Queensland seahorses (*Hippocampus spinosissimus*, Appendix II), 15 g total, and 2 giant clam pearls bracelets (*Tridacnidae* spp., Appendix II), 55 g.⁴

INDIA

March 3, 2020

Ganapathipalayam, Erode District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Search at D. Naguleshan and Veera Rajkumar. The 2 buddies aged 24 had been in the sights for 3 months. They were displaying various corals, conches and shells taken from the sea bed on OLX, an application of the "top tip" type. Volunteers from an NGO played the role of the interested buyer. The cops came up after to seize everything on the shelves.⁵

EUROPE

SPAIN

REPEATED OFFENSE

January 14, 2020

Maó, island of Menorca, Balearic Islands, Spain

Fine of 960 € (1,075 US\$) for a man carrying 6 Mediterranean slipper lobster (*Scyllarides latus*), 3 groupers (subfamily *Epinephelinae*), 3 greater amberjacks (*Seriola dumerili*) freshly caught in a closed fishing area. The fine can be paid within 8 months. The man is a repeat offender.⁶



Scyllarides latus

FRANCE

March 6, 2020

Marseille, Department of Bouches-du-Rhône, France

Conviction of 4 poachers to 385,000 € (422,100 US\$) in damages, to 35,000 € (38,300 US\$) for ecological damage and damage to the image and reputation suffered by the Calanques National Park for having over the years poached sea breams, groupers and other fish (4.6 tons), octopus (322 kg) and nearly 17,000 dozens of sea urchins. Five fishmongers and restaurateurs who regularly bought poaching's stuffs were condemned to 3,000 € (3,280 US\$) in damages (see "On the Trail" n°22 p.20).⁷

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*).

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 23, 2020

Brownsville, State of Texas, USA

Conviction of Baldemar Veliz to one year probation and a 500 US\$ fine for capturing, killing and dismembered 2 green turtles on Padre Island (see "On the Trail" n°26, p. 21).¹



HONDURAS

January 9, 2020

Tela, Department of Atlántida, Honduras

The Tela Bay covers more than 80.000 ha. It is protected since 2017 by a decree of the National Congress. It is home to 46 species of coral and hawksbill turtles lay their eggs on its beaches. The city council has just issued a decree according to which the sale of sea turtle eggs on the sly will be punished by a fine of 1,000 lempiras (40 US\$). One egg is sold for between 100 and 120 lempiras (4 and 4.80 US\$). They are considered aphrodisiacs by men.²

MEXICO

January 26, 2020

San Pedro Huamelula, State of Oaxaca, Mexico

This is the 8th arribada of olive Ridley's turtles. Profepa (Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente)'s lookouts patrolling on quads spotted 4 individuals on the beach. They carry big bags. They put them aside and run away. There were 4,900 freshly digged up eggs inside. They were put back at a good depth under the sand. Their viability would not have been compromised.³



© Martián Sánchez Vilchis

Early February 2020

Playa La Escobilla Sanctuary, State of Oaxaca, Mexico

The roadblock on the coastal road resulted in the seizure of 8,000 olive Ridley turtle eggs in garbage bags. In the area, 19,000 eggs have been seized since December 2019.⁴

Early February 2020

Between Santiago Pinotepa Nacional and Salina Cruz, State of Oaxaca, Mexico

The driver fled. 2,150 olive Ridley's turtle eggs were recovered by the police. The vehicle is registered in Mexico City.⁵

Early February 2020

Mexico City, Mexico

Raul "N" was driving a Volkswagen in the greater Mexico City area. On the passenger seat there were 16 olive Ridley's turtle eggs.⁶

February 19, 2020

Colima, State of Colima, Mexico

Sentencing of a man to 10 months and 20 days in prison and a fine of 25,347 pesos (1,350 US\$) for transporting 137 olive Ridley's turtle eggs in the center of the city in a cab. In addition, after serving his sentence and receiving the necessary information, he will be required to present arguments in 12 city schools in favor of local wildlife and in particular olive Ridley's turtles.⁷



PANAMA

Mid-February 2020

Pocri, Province of Los Santos, Panama

One arrest at the beach of La Yeguada. Seizure of a bag half full of sea turtle eggs.⁸

Mid March 2020

Province of Los Santos, Panama

Conviction of a bus driver to 7,678 US\$ for having transported on the Las Tablas-Tonosi line in September 2018 4,765 sea turtle eggs that were picked up on the beaches of Tonosi.⁹



© Carlos Domínguez-Rodríguez

Lepidochelys olivacea

CHINA

March 19, 2020

Qingdao, Shandong Province, China

Seizure of 20 bracelets and 4 fans made of hawksbill turtle shell.¹⁰

INDIA

January 2020

Paradip Coast, Jagatsinghpur District, State of Odisha, India

Paradip, next to the turtle sanctuary of Gahirmatha, becomes a hell. It's not a sanctuary, it's a graveyard. 199 turtles of which 164 females lie on the beaches. The corpses are attacked by scavengers and give off



pestilential smells over 15 km. In spite of the ban, fishermen swarm at sea and carry out a massacre in their fishing gear. Some of them throw the wounded turtles that drift on the beaches like driftwood. Others keep them on board to trade their flesh and shells. It's the rout. In spite of their efforts and because of their pathetically small means, the vessel patrols are powerless and the fine words of the authorities no longer mask the implacable reality.¹¹ Turtles in Odisha State, see "On the Trail" n°19 p. 17, n°21 p. 17, n°24 p. 20.

January 15, 2020

Hukitola Island, Gahirmatha Marine Wildlife Sanctuary, Odisha State, India

Night seizure on board a fishing boat of 4 live olive ridley turtles, immediately released back into the water. All fishing activities are prohibited up to 20 km from the coastline over an area of 1320 km² between early November and late May, the sea turtle egg-laying period. Since November 2019, 36 fishing boats have been boarded in the no go zone and more than 300 fishermen have been fined.¹²

March 19, 2020

Chothavillai Beach, Kanyakumari District, Tamil Nadu State, India

- Between December 2016 and March 2017, approximately 15,000 olive ridley turtle eggs distributed among 154 nests were recorded.

- Between December 2019 and March 2020, fewer than 3,000 eggs were recorded, distributed among 29 nests.

The decapitated carcasses or with their fins removed are washed up on the beach. To free the turtles entangled in the nets, fishermen cut off their ends.¹³

MALAYSIA

Beginning of March 2020

Kota Kinabalu, Sabah State, Malaysia

Arman Amri holds a valid IMM13, a residence permit granted to immigrants from the Philippines or Indonesia. On July 9, he was caught at his place of work in flagrante delicto transporting 57 green turtle eggs. He works as a stevedore in the central market of Kota Kinabalu and earns 50 rupees a day, or 11 US\$. A green turtle egg sells for around 4 US\$ on the black market. He faces a fine of 50,000 Malaysian rupees, or 11,875 US\$ and a year in prison. The court ordered his release on bail of 15,000 rupees (3,560 US\$). Two of his 11 adopted children agreed to answer for him. Arman Amri is 53 years old.¹⁴

SRI LANKA

January 25, 2020

Negombo, Western Province, Sri Lanka

The young man was trying to sell 1.6 kg of sea turtle meat.¹⁵

January 27, 2020

Between Mandaitivu and Chirutivu, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 2 sea turtles, the boat and the nets. Three arrests.¹⁶

January 31, 2020

Mannar, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

A 29-year-old man hid 2.25 kg of sea turtle flesh in his home.¹⁷

February 11, 2020

Mannar, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 25 kg of turtle meat and fishing gear on board a boat.¹⁸

March 23, 2020

Serunuwara, Eastern Province, Sri Lanka

The 3 fishermen between 36 and 50 years of age held on board 11 kg of turtle meat and 150 eggs.¹⁹

VIET NAM

January 2, 2020

Kien Giang Province, Viet Nam

Splash! Directly from a basin in a restaurant at the ocean. The hawksbill turtle was saved by an operation of ENV and the police.²⁰

January 8, 2020

Con Dao, Ba Ria Vung Tau Province, Viet Nam

Conviction of Vo Ngoc Trung to 3 years and 5 months in prison for having kept 80 kg of olive Ridley's turtle meat and about 20 eggs in a freezer at home.²¹



February 7, 2020

Kien Giang Province, Viet Nam

Direct sale on the market of a cut up sea turtle. Police intervention. Seizure of 12.5 kg of flesh, guts and fins.²²

Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles

Cumulative quarterly seizures: 4 examples

- 1,029 Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II)
- 2,157 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix II)
- 2,500 matamata turtles (*Chelus fimbriata*)
- 4,000 pig-nosed turtles (*Carettochelys insculpta*, Appendix II)

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

REPEATED OFFENSE

Sunday, March 8, 2020

North West Province, South Africa

Seizure of 4 leopard tortoises (*Stigmochelys pardalis*, Appendix II) from 3 street vendors along the R556 Sun City Road. One of them is a multi-recidivist.¹

MADAGASCAR

March 7, 2020

Antananarivo, Analamanga Region, Madagascar

The man, who is believed to be an agent of the Ministry of Justice according to the Malagasy Alliance for the Protection of Animals Voahary Gasy, was trying to sell 2 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) through the press at a unit price of 55 million ariarys, or 7,500 US\$. The Alliance has set up a legal unit that monitors in particular the effective enforcement of jail sentences imposed on wildlife offenders.²

AMERICA

BRAZIL

REPEATED OFFENSE

March 17, 2020

Torres, State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

Seizure by the highway police on the BR 101 of 1,820 juvenile black-bellied sliders (*Trachemys dorbigni*), of which about ten were already dead. The driver and the turtles came from Pelotas and were on their way to Sao Paulo (1,380 km). At the end of the journey, the mortality would have reached a few hundreds. On the markets, one specimen sells for 50 reais (11 US\$). The man had been arrested last year for trafficking parrots in Sao Paulo.³

COLOMBIA

Beginning of March 2020

El Dorado Airport, Bogotá, Colombia

As the Covid-19 global air blockade was being put in place, the inspection tour of the airport's freight sector bore fruit. The canine brigade immediately stopped in front of parcels bound for the United States and Japan. Inside the bags were 2,500 matamata turtles (*Chelus fimbriata*), 150 of which were already dead. The species lives exclusively in the Amazon basin. It sells for around 200 US\$ each on the internet as a pet.⁴

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 28, 2020

State of Oklahoma, United States of America

Sentencing of William T. Gangemi to two years probation, a 100,000 US\$ fine to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife and a 250,000 US\$ fine to the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation to compensate for the damage inflicted by the capture of several hundred western box turtle (*Terrapene ornata*, Appendix II) and three-toed box turtle (*Terrapene carolina triunguis*). His "partners" have already been condemned. Cf. "On the Trail" n°20 p.24, n°21 p.20, n°23 p.26, n°24 p.22, n°25 p.26.⁵



MEXICO

January 14, 2020

Mexico City, Mexico

Discovery by the National Guard in the bus station north of the capital city of a package containing 44 turtles: 40 common sliders (*Trachemys scripta*), 3 painted wood turtles (*Rhinoclemmys pulcherrima*) and a spiny softshell turtle (*Apalone spinifera*, Appendix III in the United States).⁶

ASIA

CAMBODIA

Mid-February 2020

Phnom Penh, Phnom Penh Province, Cambodia

Seizure by the Wildlife Alliance at a restaurant of 14 live Malayan snail-eating turtles (*Malayemys macrocephala*, Appendix II), 54 shells and 34 plastrons.⁷

INDIA

OPERATION TURTSIELD

January 12, 2020

Bangaon, North 24 Parganas District, State of West Bengal, India

Seizure of 983 Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II) and 2 Indian peacock softshell turtles (*Nilssonina hurum*, Appendix I) at a market. After court authorisation, they should be released in the marshes. Arrest of Sanjay Biswas and Ajay Biswas.⁸

January 16, 2020

Kochi, Ernakulam District, Kerala State, India

Arrest of Madhu, Bhaskar, Elamkovan, Andrews and Jiji in a hotel and seizure of 5 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I). They were in town to sell them but a tip came to the attention of the Forest Intelligence Service.⁹

TURTSIELD OPERATION

FAMILY AFFAIRS

January 25, 2020

Naihati, North 24 Parganas District, West Bengal State, India

22 arrests, including women and children. The traffickers were travelling with their families scattered in the cars of the Purvanchal Express which runs down from Assam to Kolkata; the children, sisters-in-law, guys and even grandmothers, each had in their bags a few Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix II) and all in all, they had 654 of them, including 12 dead. This is the caravan modus operandi.

From January 2019 to January 2020, 3,734 Indian softshell turtles were seized, of which 110 dead of thirst and suffocated. They were destined for the food and pet markets in the megacities of West Bengal and Bangladesh. The survivors were released into the Ganges River Basin.¹⁰

Night from February 2 to 3, 2020

Chandauli District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Interception of a truck carrying 678 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I). Two arrests.¹¹

February 3 and 10, 2020

Kalla, West Godavari District, State of Andhra Pradesh, India

Seizure of 350 freshwater turtles in a pick-up truck. They were caught in the district's wetlands. Arrest of Sukumar Pal and Bipula Biswas. They intended to deliver them to West Bengal. After holding a community council in the village of Chinchinada, the district forestry services released the miraculously saved turtles into a tributary of the Godavari River.¹²

February 6, 2020

Bongaon, District of North 24 Parganas, State of West Bengal, India

A good early morning catch for WCCB federal agents and district rangers: more than 300 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I) crammed into 13 plastic crates. Two men were arrested.¹³

February 19, 2020

Delhi, Delhi National Capital Region, India

A beleaguered trafficker preferred to get rid of a box containing 4 turtles including 3 Indian tent turtles (*Pangshura tentoria*, Appendix II) in a car park near the Kashmere Gate ISBT. A baby Indian tent turtle sells for more than 350 US\$ on the French market.¹⁴

March 5, 2020

Dhanbad, Dhanbad District, Jharkhand State, India

Seizure in a sleeping car of the Howrah-Jodhpur Express of 46 Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II). Arrest of Arti Kumari residing in Uttar Pradesh. She was going to deliver to Kolkata the turtles captured on the Sultanpur side. The tortoises flow through the station of Danbad. In February 2019, about a hundred Indian flapshell turtles had been seized in the Doon Express, in April 2018, 141 river terrapins (*Batagur baska*, Appendix I) and in October 2016, 12 others in the Chambal Express.¹⁵

March 7, 2020

Kolkata, Kolkata District, West Bengal State, India

New big turtle deal on the Purvanchal Express. Seizure of 521 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I) and 2 Indian peacock softshell turtles (*Nilssonina hurum*, Appendix I). Two arrests.¹⁶

MALAYSIA

February 5, 2020

Sebatik Island, Sabah State, Borneo Island, Malaysia. Border with Indonesia.

Seizure of 4,000 baby pig-nosed turtles (*Carettochelys insculpta*, Appendix II) on board a passenger boat in the mouth of the Pulau River, valued at an estimated 1 million Malaysian rupees, or 245,000 US\$. The Indonesian captain said he was approached at the docks by a cab driver and agreed to carry three large pieces of luggage and two boxes to Tawau in Malaysia for 50 rupees (12 US\$) without checking what was inside. According to investigators, the turtles were smuggled to Sebatik Island from the neighboring Indonesian province of North Kalimantan. Sebatik Island covers 452 square kilometers. The northern part is Malaysian (25,000 inhabitants), the southern part is Indonesian (80,000 inhabitants).¹⁷



Mid-February 2020, Phnom Penh, Cambodia



January 25, 2020, Naihati, India



March 7, 2020, Kolkata, India



February 3 and 10, 2020, Kalla, India



February 5, 2020, Sebatik Island, Malaysia



January 20, 2020, Sarp border post, Turkey



January 29, 2020, Mueang Ang Thong, Thailand



End of March 2020, West Lothian, United Kingdom

PAKISTAN

January 26, 2020

Islamabad, Federal Territory of Islamabad, Pakistan

Home seizure in sector G-9/3 of 3 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I) purchased via the Internet.¹⁸

SRI LANKA

February 10, 2020

Puttalam, North Western Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 85 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I). They are extinct in the country. They were probably smuggled from Tamil Nadu, India. They were intended for export. An interpellation.¹⁹

THAILAND

January 29, 2020

Mueang Ang Thong District, Ang Thong Province, Thailand

Seizure and rescue in the Buddhist temple of Ang Thong of 369 yellow-headed temple turtles (*Heosemys annandalii*, Appendix II), 158 giant Asian pond turtles (*Heosemys grandis*, Appendix II), and 36 south Asian box turtles (*Cuora amboinensis*, Appendix II) subjected to abject living and hygienic conditions. The superior monk defends himself by charging the faithful who would have considered the temple and its dependencies as a sanctuary where the turtles would be under the double protection of Buddha and his servants. The operation was carried out by the special Falcon Dong unit. An investigation is underway. The value of the 563 turtles is estimated on the local market at 10,000 US\$. At least 10 times more on the international market.²⁰

TURKEY

January 20, 2020

Sarp border post, Province of Artvin, East Black Sea Region, Turkey. Border with Georgia.

Seizure of 5,550 juvenile freshwater turtles behind the door linings of a vehicle driven by Ruslan Gurbanov, an Azerbaijani national.²¹

EUROPE

GERMANY

February 25, 2020

Munich International Airport, State of Bavaria, Germany

Seizure of a Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) "as big as a clothespin" in the banana bag of an Austrian.²²

SPAIN

Mid March 2020

Puzol, Province of Valencia, Spain

Seizure in a private home of 25 common tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II). The man was engaged in clandestine breeding.²³

ITALY

February 14, 2020

Metropolitan City of Palermo, Region of Sicily, Italy

Seizure on landing of the car ferry *Catane* from Tunisia of 1,500 kg of cigarettes inside the seats and a Greek tortoise (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II) in shoeboxes.²⁴

March 20, 2020

Catania, Sicily Region, Italy

Seizure of 2 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) in the course of transaction. The seller and the buyer were arrested.²⁵

End of March 2020

Uboldo, Province of Varese, Lombardy Region, Italy

Seizure of 145 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II). They were for sale via the Internet.²⁶

UNITED KINGDOM

End of March 2020

West Lothian, Scotland, United Kingdom

Seizure of 113 red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II). They were seized just before being eaten in exotic restaurants in the United Kingdom. The Five Sisters Zoo to whom they were handed over is launching a sponsorship campaign. 30 £ per baby turtle (38 US\$) to improve their living conditions as much as possible.²⁷

Snakes

AMERICA

BRAZIL

March 4, 2020

Curitiba, State of Paraná, Brazil

Seizure inside a sofa bed of a 4 m long corn snake (*Pantherophis guttatus*). The man who was in the police's sights after an anonymous tip had hidden the beast and it was after half an hour of searching and about to leave empty-handed that the brigade heard strange noises coming from the sofa. Endemic to the United States, corn snakes are exotic animals in Brazil. ¹

COSTA RICA

End of February 2020

Barva, Province of Heredia, Costa Rica

Wauthion Vargas is heard by the police. He was attempting to sell a juvenile anaconda (*Eunectes spp.*, Appendix II) via the Internet. ²

March 9, 2020

San Carlos, Alajuela Province, Costa Rica

Seizure in a car of an eyelash viper (*Bothriechis schlegelii*) that the driver, a man named Newman, and his accomplice had just captured in the Arenal Volcano National Park. ³

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Beginning of March 2020

Orange County, New York State, United States of America

Seizure at Darren Paolini's home by Conservation Officers reinforced by specialists from the Bronx Zoo of 157 live venomous snakes, including 50 rattlesnakes and 31 dead snakes. Paolini had reported to the attention of the DEC (Department of Environmental Conservation) by rushing to the hospital after being bitten by a cobra. He got away with a 500 US\$ fine. He was involved in reptile breeding and trade. He breeds them, and then trades the babies for new breeding snakes. ⁴



ASIA

CHINA

February 25, 2020

Jiujiang, Jiangxi Province, China

The so called Fang had captured 5 snakes listed on the provincial list of wild terrestrial animals of scientific and economic interest and 2 cobras (*Naja* genus) protected by the international CITES Convention. His trial at second instance was broadcast by 50 media outlets and followed live by more than 15 million people. The People's Court took note of Fang's confession and his participation in the arrest of his accomplice. The court considered that Fang was likely to benefit from mitigating circumstances and sentenced him to 8 months in prison for poaching protected species and to 5 months for having contravened the general ban on hunting in the Wuning xian in force since 2018 and applicable for 5 years. The 2 sentences are running concurrently. Fang must also pay a fine of 5,000 yuan (729 US\$). ⁵

INDIA

January 3, 2020

English Bazaar, Malda District, State of West Bengal, India

Overnight seizure at a hotel of a bottle of suspected cobra venom estimated at 15 million rupees (210,290 US\$) on the international black market. Arrest of Rafik Ali, Ashik Mandal and Masud Sheikh. ⁶

GANG

February 6, 2020

Allahabad District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

The sand boa (*Eryx spp.*, Appendix II) was at the bottom of a bag in the SUV. The three men wanted to sell it in Bihar State. ⁷

February 8 and 19, 2020

Simplung and Kathalbari, North Tripura District, Tripura State, India

- A local guy was selling at the Saturday market the meat of 6 pythons (*Pythonidae*, Appendix I or II) or the equivalent of 150 kg, at the rate of 1,000 rupees/kg or 14 US\$/kg. The practice is also common in the markets of Banglabari, Sabual and Khedachera. Forest officers turn a blind eye. Python meat, but also deer, birds and other wild animals plundered from the forests.

- Arrest of 3 men aged 45 and 60 claiming to be farmers. They would have "found" the pythons by working their plots of land. They beheaded them, skinned them, cut them into pieces and prepared them for a festive Sunday meal while surrounding themselves with a viral advertisement on social networks. ⁸

February 13, 2020

Taluk de Anaimalai, Coimbatore District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

News item in India. A python (*Pythonidae* spp., Appendix II) gets a group of villagers goat. Manikumar catches a python in the act of swallowing his goat. He immediately calls to the rescue the so-called Maruthamutu and Ramachandran. The desperate efforts of the three rescuers lead to the python regurgitating few minutes later what they had hoped was still a goat, if not alive then at least edible, and which was unfortunately an unspeakable and unsaleable puke. The revenge was relentless. Ramachandran held the snake by the tail, Manikumar held it in the middle and Maruthamutu sliced its head off with an axe. Relieved but embarrassed, a few hours later Manikumar summoned two other companions from his village to rid him of the cumbersome corpse. The python was found by a team of forest agents burnt along a river's bank on the edge of the forest. Maruthamutu served 14 days in custody for killing a protected species, the others are currently untraceable.⁹

February 20, 2020

India-Nepal border area, Araria District, Bihar State, India

Seizure of 3.53 kg of Indian cobra venom (*Naja naja*, Appendix II) in 2 lead jars, estimated at 120 million rupees or 465,000 US\$/litre. The venom is used for pharmaceutical purposes or sold on the drugs and narcotics market. In 2017, the Bihar financial brigade seized 1 kg of cobra venom about to be smuggled into France. Cobras are captured in the forests on the border of Bihar and West Bengal. After the extraction of their fangs, they are subjected to systematic and exhausting extortion of their venom. Snake venoms in India, see "On the Trail" n°3 p.13, p.15, p. 16, n°4 p. 23, n°5 p. 22, n°9 p. 17, n°10 p. 19, n°14 p. 22, p. 92, n°15 p. 23, n°18 p. 22, p. 23, n°19 p. 26, n°23 p. 31, p. 32, n°24 p. 25, p. 26, p. 30, n°25 p. 30, n°26 p. 27 and n°27 p.32.¹⁰

February 21, 2020

Chandigarh, Union Territory of Chandigarh, India

A student vet outraged by the ill-treatment of a sand boa on the forecourt of a temple by a snake charmer praising the occult powers of his hostage and begging the faithful caused a scandal and the arrival of the cops. The Indian sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) was seized and taken to the SCPA in Sector 38 West. According to charlatans, the snake has a magical anatomy, i.e. 2 heads and 2 mouths, which would enable its holders to be covered with wealth by the goddess Lakshmi, to have extraordinary sexual strength, or to prevent diseases. A very attracting speech in these Covid-19 times.¹¹

February 24, 2020

Baheri, Bareilly District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

The Indian sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) was beginning its trip from Nepal to its final destination in China. The survivor weighed 1,700 g. Sellers expected no less than 1 million rupees, or 13,400 US\$ from the buyer in Nepal. Four arrests.¹²

February 25, 2020

Pudupattu, Chittoor District, State of Andhra Pradesh, India

Dharma, 20, Mani, 30, and Seethan, 28, are in pre-trial detention. On Tuesday night, they were caught in flagrante delicto transporting a sand boa (*Eryx* spp., Appendix II). It was in a plastic barrel. It was released in a forest near Tana.¹³

February 25, 2020

Ranipur, Betul District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Rescue of a cobra (*Elapidae* family) and 6 sand boas (*Eryx* spp., Appendix II). They were in the hands of young apprentice snake charmers during the festival dedicated to Shiva. Their mouths were shut with glue and nylon thread. Their fangs were ripped out. They were weakened and in moulting period. Adil Kahn, a volunteer from the NGO People for Animals, and the forestry services took the snakes to a veterinary clinic.¹⁴

March 19, 2020

Halalpur, Bhopal District, Madhya Pradesh State, India

Seizure of 2 sand boas (*Eryx* spp., Appendix II) in the hands of Sanjay Kumar Yadav and Sonu Jathav. They wanted to sell them for 500,000 rupees each or 7,500 US\$.¹⁵

MALAYSIA

January 13, 2020

Kampung Kolam, Perlis State, Malaysia. Border with Thailand.

Discovery by a patrol at the end of the afternoon, 100 m from the border with Thailand, of a bag hidden in the thickets with 150 monocled cobras (*Naja kaouthia*, Appendix II) tangled inside. The traffickers missed. According to Abu Hassan Rodzi, spokesman for the border police, "they were waiting for the right moment to throw the bag over the fence."¹⁶

EUROPE

GERMANY

Between January 8 and 10, 2020
Frankfurt am Main International Airport, State of Hesse, Germany

Seizures of 240 capsules of Pygeum, a bark of African almond (*Prunus africana*, Appendix II) known to treat prostate problems, from the United States and a vial of balm presumed to contain king cobra's fat (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II) from Thailand. All items were purchased via the Internet.¹⁷

SPAIN

Mid-March 2020
Province of Almería, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain

The prosecutor requires one year imprisonment for the internet vendor of 2 royal pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II). He also owned 3 boas constrictors. The 5 snakes were without any identity papers.¹⁸

FRANCE

January 13, 2020
Saint-Avold, Moselle Department, France

Sad end for a python (*Pythonidae*, Appendix I or II) on the conveyor belt in the waste sorting room. Frightening of the employees.¹⁹

UNITED KINGDOM

February 13 and 15, 2020
Sunderland, County Tyne and Wear, England, United Kingdom

- Abandonment of 13 royal Pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II) in front of a fire station. One of them froze to death.

- Abandonment of 15 corn snakes (*Pantherophis guttatus*) and a carpet python (*Morelia spilota*, Appendix II). The reptiles were crammed into pillows. The survivors were handed over to the RSPCA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals).²⁰



February 8, 2020, Simlung, India



January 13, 2020, Saint-Avold, France

Sauria

AMERICA

COLOMBIA

Early January 2020

Bosconia, Department of Cesar, Colombia

Seizure by the Corpocesar (Corporación Autónoma Regional del Cesar) in the vehicle of Ronald Alfonso Rodriguez of 15,840 iguana eggs (*Iguana* spp., Appendix II) that, according to veterinary services, led poachers to gut at least 200 female iguanas. In fact, in their frantic search for eggs, poachers do not differentiate between males and females and it is the future of the species that is threatened. According to the local press, Rodriguez, who is said to be a regular in traffic, was yet quickly released pending trial. He lives in Cienega Magdalena and gets his eggs from Cuatro Vientos and El Paso (see "On the Trail" n°17 p.27, n°20 p.28, n°22 p.32, n°25 p.108 and n°26 p.105). According to departmental data, 10,149 iguana eggs were seized in 2019. ¹

March 19, 2020

Pueblo Bello, Department of Cesar, Colombia

Every year, wildlife traffic peaks during Holy Week in April and to take advantage of this, a man was selling 51 iguanas in the town (*Iguana* spp., Appendix II). During the Covid period, people are encouraged to stay in their homes except for family gatherings. Iguanas are appreciated on the tables during the festivities. The iguanas have been released. ²

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

OPERATION SOUNDS OF SILENCE

January 8, 2020

Tampa, State of Florida, United States of America

Akbar Akram pleads guilty of having between January and December 2016 imported 20 monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) from the Philippines, wrapped in socks closed with adhesive, which were concealed in electronic equipment, with full knowledge of his violations of the laws of the country of origin and the United States of America. He also admitted having delivered some of them to collectors in Colorado, Connecticut and Massachusetts. He claims that each specimen had a local value of 1,000 US\$ but the instruction file states that their value can be as high as 2,500 US\$. The most sought after on the US market are yellow-headed water monitor (*Varanus cumingi*), white-headed water monitor (*Varanus nuchalis*) and marbled water monitor (*Varanus marmoratus*). An associate who received packages labeled "electronic equipment" has already been sentenced by a federal judge in Boston to 24 months probation. Not all of the trafficked white-headed water monitors survived the 5 air trips organized by the 2 Philippine suppliers. The monitors swim long distances in rivers and swamps and the fate of the survivors confined in terrariums is particularly denaturing. ³

GUATEMALA

February 27, 2020

Quetzaltenango, Department of Quetzaltenango, Guatemala City, Guatemala

Merchants either don't understand it at all or pretend to. For 10 years they had been allowed to sell wine, lizard meat and other species' meat at the Calvario Feria on the 1st Friday of Lent, and all of a sudden the PNCP (Policía Nacional Civil) turned up and loaded all the offal. "The seized meat will be irremediably destroyed and there is no question of it being distributed to anyone," the official statement said. "It is not only a question of protecting biodiversity but also of protecting human health", "there are diseases that are transmitted from animals to humans", adds the governor of the department, echoing the emerging crisis Covid-19. ⁴

ASIA

CHINA

OPERATION GUARD 2020

March 5, 2020

Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, Hefei, Anhui Province and Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China

This is a new overabundant seizure of dried tokay geckos (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II). These 20.3 t represent 400,000 to 600,000 specimens. Eleven suspects were arrested. They were introducing the lizards in China by sea and meeting the needs of traditional medicine in the provinces of Guangdong, Sichuan and Anhui. Tokay geckos reduced to powder, tablets, infusion, elixir would have the power to treat premature ejaculation, depression, cancer, AIDS. There is no doubt that the viral marketing of gecko's prosperous and imaginative mafia has attributed to it a certain degree of effectiveness against the Covid-19 pandemic. The numerical importance of the last two seizures of a species considered endangered and for this reason listed in Appendix II of CITES since November 2019 points to the battery farming authorised on the island of Java in Indonesia and the plundering of the last wild populations in that country. ⁵ Cf. "On the Trail" n°26, p. 108.

INDIA

January 8, 2020

Vazhapadi, Salem District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Poaching of a monitor lizard (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II). Five apprehensions. The group had broadcast images of the stalking on WhatsApp. ⁶



February 7, 2020

New Town, District of North 24 Parganas, State of West Bengal, India

Wake up at dawn and arrest of a man by the WCCB and Kolkata police. He was holding 2 tokay geckos (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II). ⁷

February 18, 2020

Uttar Safakamar, Barpeta District, State of Assam, India

Seizure of 6 tokay geckos (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II). One arrest.⁸

February 20, 2020

New Town, District of North 24 Parganas, State of West Bengal, India

Seizure of 11 tokay geckos (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II) by the WCCB and the Kolkata police. Three arrests.⁹

March 17, 2020

Jabalpur, Jabalpur District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Seizure of 19 monitor lizard hemipenis (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) known as "Hatha Jodi" (see "On the Trail" n°17 p. 23, p. 25, n°18 p. 24, n°22 p. 29, n°26 p. 30). Two arrests.¹⁰

March 19, 2020

Dhaniapara, Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal State, India

Seizure of a tokay gecko (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II) in the hands of Ashraful Rahman.¹¹

SWITZERLAND

January 9, 2020

Weinfelden, Canton of Thurgau, Switzerland

Seizure of a 90 cm long iguana (*Iguana* spp., Appendix II) from a Turkish national who was trying to sell it via the Internet.¹²



Gekko gecko



March 5, 2020, China



March 17, 2020, Jabalpur, India

Crocodylians

AMERICA

BRAZIL

February 10, 2020

Porto Santana, Santana, State of Amapá, Brazil

Seizure in the fishing port of 8 kg of yacare caiman meat (*Caiman crocodilus yacare*, Appendix II) and 5 kg of paca meat (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras).¹

COLOMBIA

February 19, 2020

Santa Barbara de Pinto, Department of Magdalena, Colombia

Seizure in a poaching camp of 57 juvenile brown spectacled caimans (*Caiman crocodilus fuscus*, Appendix II). In an interview given to the local media, Seguimiento.co, Francisco Erazo Gomez, responsible for the protection of wetlands in the department, said that the caimans were destined for breeding and to be sacrificed later, when they had grown tall. Caiman hides are highly sought after by national and international leather goods industry. The survivors were returned to the marshes. Wildlife trafficking is increasing in the department. Along with caimans, jaguars and *Trachemys callirostris* turtles are the first targets.²

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

End of February 2020

Groveport, State of Ohio, United States of America

"Our 25-year-old scaly friend is retiring to an animal sanctuary in sunny Myrtle Beach." This is the police statement following the seizure of an American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) from a basement. In 2012, the state governor banned the keeping in private homes of hyenas, lions, tigers, jaguars, cheetahs, elephants, hippos, monkeys, alligators, crocodiles, and other wildlife that could harm the integrity of local residents and their guardians. In 2011, a lunatic who ran a private zoo on about 30 hectares in Zanesville (Muskingum County, Ohio) opened the cage doors and fences and the police force were caught unaware and shot to death 49 animals, including 18 Bengal tigers.³

PERU

January 27, 2020

Juliaca, Province of San Roman, Department of Puno, Peru

Sentencing of Jhersson Alexander Quispe Zambrano to 2 years and 1 month suspended imprisonment for detaining 2 common caimans (*Caiman crocodilus*, Appendix II) which, after seizure, were returned to the wild.⁴



February 5, 2020

Juliaca, Province of San Román, Department of Puno, Peru

Abandonment of 2 caimans (*Caiman* spp., Appendix I or II) in a public garden. They were recovered by agents of the Serfor. They are about 4 years old and weigh 7 and 9 kg. They measure 1m and 1.10 m long. The owner has been identified.⁵

ASIA

CHINA

January 20, 2020

Jinan Yaoqiang International Airport, Shandong Province, China

Seizure of 4 crocodile leather belts (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II). Total weight 735 g.⁶

INDIA

February 11, 2020

Periyur, Coimbatore District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

R. Rajan alias Palanisami and K. Mariappan were skinning a baby mugger crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*, Appendix I) when forestry officers and a ranger ran over them. Mariappan, 60 years old, ran away. The victim had been captured in a blind channel of the Bhavani River.⁷

SINGAPORE

March 11, 2020

Singapore

Conviction of Tan Chee Wei, 23 years old, to a fine of 9,000 \$ (6,500 US\$) for attempting to sell a fake gharial (*Tomistoma schlegelii*, Appendix I) without any certificate of origin. In this case of illegal sale of a specimen listed in CITES Appendix I, the national law provides for a maximum fine of 36,000 US\$. Tan Chee Wei was also fined 600 US\$ for illegally possessing 3 hedgehogs. For the past few months, he had been leading a group on Telegram and boasted that he was providing exotic animals' fans with geckos, *Ceratophrys* frogs singled out by horns above their eyes, and mice to feed snakes and birds of prey. In addition, Tan Chee Wei has to pay 3,435 \$ or 2,500 US\$ to the Singapore Zoo for the crocodylian's caring costs. He wanted to sell it for 1,000 \$ or 720 US\$. He had ordered it from a Johor Baru broker in Malaysia.⁸



EUROPE

UNITED KINGDOM

February 5, 2020
Kent County, England, United Kingdom

New seizures of skulls of Siamese crocodiles (*Crocodylus siamensis*, Appendix I) purchased via eBay. Collectors say in chorus that they "did not know [they were] committing an offence". A skull sells for around US\$40. Each time they get away with it with the utmost discretion by a reprimand.⁹

Beginning of March 2020
Waltham Abbey and Southend, County Essex, England, United Kingdom

The disease of the skull of the Siamese crocodile (*Crocodylus siamensis*, Appendix I) continues to spread in the United Kingdom. The 2 skulls purchased via an illegal auction site from a Chinese seller were donated to WWF. Hopefully the NGO will not be contaminated.¹⁰

Various Reptile Species

ASIA

CHINA

March 18, 2020
Taiyuan, Shanxi Province, China

The anti-smuggling section of Customs, the provincial forest services and the food fraud and drug squad assisted in the arrest of 5 Internet wildlife sellers and the seizure of 3 iguanas including a spinytail iguana (*Ctenosaura* spp., Appendix II), a veiled chameleon (*Chamaeleo calytratus*, Appendix II) and a yellow pond turtle (*Mauremys mutica*, Appendix II).¹

INDIA

March 6, 2020
Anjuna, North Goa District, State of Goa, India

Seizure in a tourist shop of boots, jackets and bags made of python (*Python* spp., Appendix I or II), monitor lizard (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) and crocodile (*Crocodylia* spp., Appendix I or II) skins. Operation coordinated by WCCB and the Goa Forest Department.²



EUROPE

ITALY

Beginning of March 2020
Monte San Savino, Province of Arezzo, Region of Tuscany, Italy

The Carabinieri raided a leather workshop and came face to face with carefully labeled cardboard boxes: sea turtles (Appendix I), Nile crocodiles (*Crocodylus niloticus*, Appendix I or II), American alligators (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II), two-banded monitors (*Varanus salvator*, Appendix II), black-and-white tegus (*Salvator merianae*, Appendix II) and reticulated python (*Python reticulatus*, Appendix II). Hides, skins and scales from all continents were seized and will be used as evidence in the trial of a man whose identity has not been revealed.³

Beginning of March 2020
Mesoraca, Province of Crotone, Region of Calabria, Italy

Two vipers and three Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) were consigned to a shed. The owner of the house was stunned when they were seized by the Carabinieri.⁴

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

January 23, 2020
Belmore, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

Seizure from a Chinese couple aged 29 and 32 of 43 lizards, 40 tortoises, 30 snakes and 22 freshwater turtles. The reptiles were accompanied by 22 frogs and 5 salamanders. Between November 2018 and January 2020, the 2 traffickers had attempted to ship to Taiwan and Hong Kong several packages of toys and audio equipment in the middle of which were packed and concealed live animals native to Australia or exotic. The pair was released on bail and strict conditions of representation pending trial.⁵



Amphibians

EUROPE

GERMANY

March 14, 2020

Hamm, State of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany

Despite the cancellation of the world fair for insects, reptiles and amphibians due to Covid-19, the Slovak trafficker had gone to Hamm to make the delivery in his hotel room of 108 strawberry poison frogs (*Oophaga pumilio*, Appendix II) and 4 Vicente's poison frogs (*Oophaga vicentei*, Appendix II), poisonous and multicoloured frogs ordered by customers. All specimens came from Panama. The economic value of the seizure is estimated to be at least 25,000 € (27,500 US\$).¹



Insects and Arachnids

AMERICA

BRAZIL

OPERATION THERA'

February 13, 2020

Serra, State of Espirito Santo, Brazil

Lightning operation after the discovery in a postal parcel of cocooned tarantulas threaded in plastic tubes. Additional seizure of 2 boas constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II), 2 yellow-bellied seedeaters (*Sporophila nigricollis*), a golden-capped conure (*Aratinga auricapillus*, Appendix II) and adult tarantulas.¹

February 29, 2020

Guarulhos International Airport, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Interpellation of a Japanese passenger leaving for Bangkok and in possession of 99 live beetles (Coleoptera order) threaded in plastic bottles.²

ASIA

CHINA

March 9, 2020

Chongqing, China

Seizure of 4 common green birdwings (*Ornithoptera priamus*, Appendix II) and 2 southern tailed birdwings (*Ornithoptera meridionalis*, Appendix II) from a postal parcel coming from abroad.³



Ornithoptera meridionalis

SINGAPORE

March 25, 2020
Singapore

Herman Foo Yong He is sentenced to a 12,500 US\$ fine. He had imported 14 tarantulas by parcel post from the United Kingdom :



2 skeleton tarantulas endemic to several South American countries (*Epebopus murinus*), 3 golden blue leg baboon tarantulas (*Harpactira pulchripes*) from South Africa, 2 Venezuelan suntiger tarantulas (*Psalmopoeus irminia*), 1 red-rump baboon tarantula (*Eucratoscelus constrictus*) from Mexico, 2 rear horned baboon tarantulas (*Ceratogyrus darlingi*) from Southern Africa, 1 straight horned baboon tarantula (*Ceratogyrus marshalli*) from Southern Africa, 1 king baboon tarantula (*Pelinobius muticus*) from Eastern Africa, 1 specimen of the genus *Ami* and another specimen of the family Theraphosidae.

In his flat, he kept 1 Gooty ornamental tarantula (*Poecilotheria metallica*, Appendix II), 1 Mexican redleg tarantula (*Brachypelma emilia*, Appendix II), 1 Mexican redknee tarantula (*Brachypelma smithi*, Appendix II), 2 Singapore blue tarantulas (*Lampropelma violaceopes*), 1 Costa Rican zebra tarantula (*Aphonopelma seemanni*), 1 Guatemalan tiger rump tarantula (*Davus pentaloris*), 1 ornamental

baboon tarantula (*Heteroscodra maculata*), 1 Thailand golden fringe tarantula (*Ornithoctonus aureotibialis*), 1 cobalt blue tarantula (*Cyriopagopus lividus*) from Myanmar, 1 Antilles pinktoe tarantula (*Caribena versicolor*) from the West Indies, 1 Chaco golden knee tarantula (*Grammostola pulchripes*), 1 rear horned baboon tarantula (*Ceratogyrus darlingi*), 3 other specimens of the family Theraphosidae, 1 fat-tail gecko (*Hemitheconyx caudicinctus*), 3 common leopard geckos (*Eublepharis macularius*) and 1 four-toed hedgehog (*Atelerix albiventris*).⁴

SRI LANKA

January 13, 2020

Bandaranaike International Airport, Colombo, Western Province, Sri Lanka

Arrest of a 30-year-old Chinese citizen. He was hiding 200 live scorpions (Scorpiones order) in plastic boxes. He was about to board a Sri Lankan Airlines flight to Guangzhou. After having paid a fine of 100,000 rupees, or 550 US\$, he was allowed to return home without the scorpions. According to the customs spokesman, he is trained in wildlife looting around the world. In Sri Lanka, he is said to have obtained the insects through the good offices of rikshaw drivers. Sri Lanka is home to 18 species of poisonous scorpions.⁵



Harpactira pulchripes

Birds

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

January 2020

Near Randburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa

The breeding of grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) by Mr Meiring, vice-president of PASA (Parrot Breeder's Association of South Africa), was led by a bastard. Animal protectors, veterinarians and the police, when they arrived on the scene after anonymous tips, came across cages littered with rubbish and rats and covered with a rug of spider web. To top it all off, there was a mass grave of at least 300 rotting parrots in the courtyard. Mr Meiring, the senior official responsible for the abomination, is the one who issues his South African colleagues with the CITES certificates that are essential to their business. International trade in wild grey parrots is banned, but South Africa is on the active list and meets the demand by hosting multiple "farms" even though the grey parrots originate from equatorial Africa. Twenty surviving parrots have been seized. Meiring claims that the rotting ones in the yard came from a recently broken-down freezer where he had been storing the remains of the dead for the past ten years. He probably wanted to trade the skulls at the amulet market in Johannesburg. In South Africa, a live parrot trades for at least around 2500 rand, or 180 US\$. Grey parrots in South Africa, see "On the Trail" n°27 p.41.¹

ALGERIA

End of January 2020

Maghnia, Tlemcen Province, Algeria. Border with Morocco.

Seizure of 600 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) on the national road 7. An interpellation.²

EGYPT

March 2020

Cairo, Governorate of Cairo, Egypt

Trapped in Egypt by the Covid-19 lockdown, 16 Maltese poachers will be repatriated home through the intermediary of their embassy. These 16 poachers are entangled in a story of 700 dead birds fraudulently imported from Egypt and Sudan to the Maltese archipelago: eagles and vultures (Accipitridae, Appendix I or II), flamingos (*Phoenicopterus* spp., Appendix II), storks (family Ciconiidae), ibises (family Threskiornithidae), egrets (family Ardeidae), spoonbills (genus *Platalea*) and

falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II). They were intended for the lucrative taxidermy and interior design markets. Maltese poachers used to spray the guards with cash and the birds with bullets during their trips to the national parks of Egypt. Their favourite areas were Lake Nasser and the southern border with Sudan. The 16 Maltese refugees from Covid-19 in Cairo have rifles in their luggage. At the same time, they claim not to have killed a single bird. For years, Egyptian customs officers have been seizing parcels bound for Malta here and there, where bird remains are concealed under plastic and false designations.³

GUINEA-BISSAU

End of February - March 2020 Bafatá and Bambadinca Region of Bafatá, Gabú, Gabú and Quebo Region, Tombali Region, Guinea-Bissau

400, 600, 1,000, 1,600, 2,000 hooded vultures (*Necrosyrtes monachus*, Appendix II) are found lying on the ground in a triangle of death between Bambadinca, Gabu and Quebo. The carnage began in February and spread beyond March. At least 200 victims were beheaded. The hypothesis of mass poisoning in this obscurantist period of Covid-19 is now confirmed. Magical powers are attributed to the heads of vultures, and charlatans may have traded them as antidotes to the new coronavirus.⁴



KENYA

January 15, 2020

Gafarsa, Isiolo County, Kenya

Two orphaned ostriches (*Struthio camelus*) in the state of 18 cm high chicks were collected and raised by hand. Now that they are 1.8 m tall, they take up too much space. The village assembly, rather than eating them, requested their transfer to a suitable place. They were relocated with all the care due to their stature to a county reserve.⁵



February 6, 2020

Maasai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya

Death of 20 vultures that had fed on a poisoned carcass of spotted hyena, their eternal rival or partner in spotting and eating the carrion of the savannah.⁶



SENEGAL

February 8, 2020

Blaise Diagne International Airport in Dakar, Thiès Region, Senegal

Seizure just before take-off for Algiers of 131 Senegal parrots (*Poicephalus senegalus*, Appendix II) in the hold luggage of an Algerian passenger. Some specimens were suffering from malnutrition, fractures and dehydration and others had already died. After a week of care, the survivors were released. Operation of the CAAT (Cellule Aéroportuaire Anti Trafic) in cooperation with the Water and Forestry Service and the NGO EAGLE-Senegal.⁷

TUNISIA

January 24, 2020

Tataouine, Governorate of Tataouine, Tunisia

Appearance of 7 poachers, 5 Saudis, a Qatari and a Tunisian for having detained in an all-terrain vehicle 3 saker falcons (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II) 50 km from Tataouine in the locality of El Mihri. They were preparing to hunt bustards. The falcons were seized, while the poachers were released pending (endlessly?) their trial. Bustards and falcons in Tunisia, see "On the Trail" n°3 p.22, n°11 p.19, n°16 p.28 and n°24 p.34.⁸

ZIMBABWE

Mid-January 2020

Featherstone, Eastern Mashonaland Province, Zimbabwe

Poisoning of 52 white-backed vultures (*Gyps africanus*, Appendix II). Seventeen of them escaped death and are under intensive treatment. The raptors are said to have eaten a poisoned carrion left behind by a farmer to get rid of stray dogs.⁹



AMERICA

ARGENTINA

Early February 2020

Caucete and Sarmiento, Province of San Juan, Argentina

Seizure of 5 great kiskadees (*Pitangus sulphuratus*), 5 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), several cages and catch accessories.¹⁰

February 4, 2020

Paso Córdoba, Province of Río Negro, Argentina

Seizure in a farm of 12 red-crested cardinals (*Paroaria coronata*, Appendix II), 2 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), several traps and cages.¹¹



BRAZIL

January 19, 2020

São José do Hortêncio, State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

The honourable Knob family is appalled. On Sunday, a parrot was stolen from her home. He was alone in the house. He could say goodbye in Portuguese and even in German! Unfortunately, he couldn't say "I'm calling the police". "He was part of the family," lamented the son, Jairo Knob. "He has been with us since 2014."¹²

OPERATION "AVE RARA"

February 13, 2020

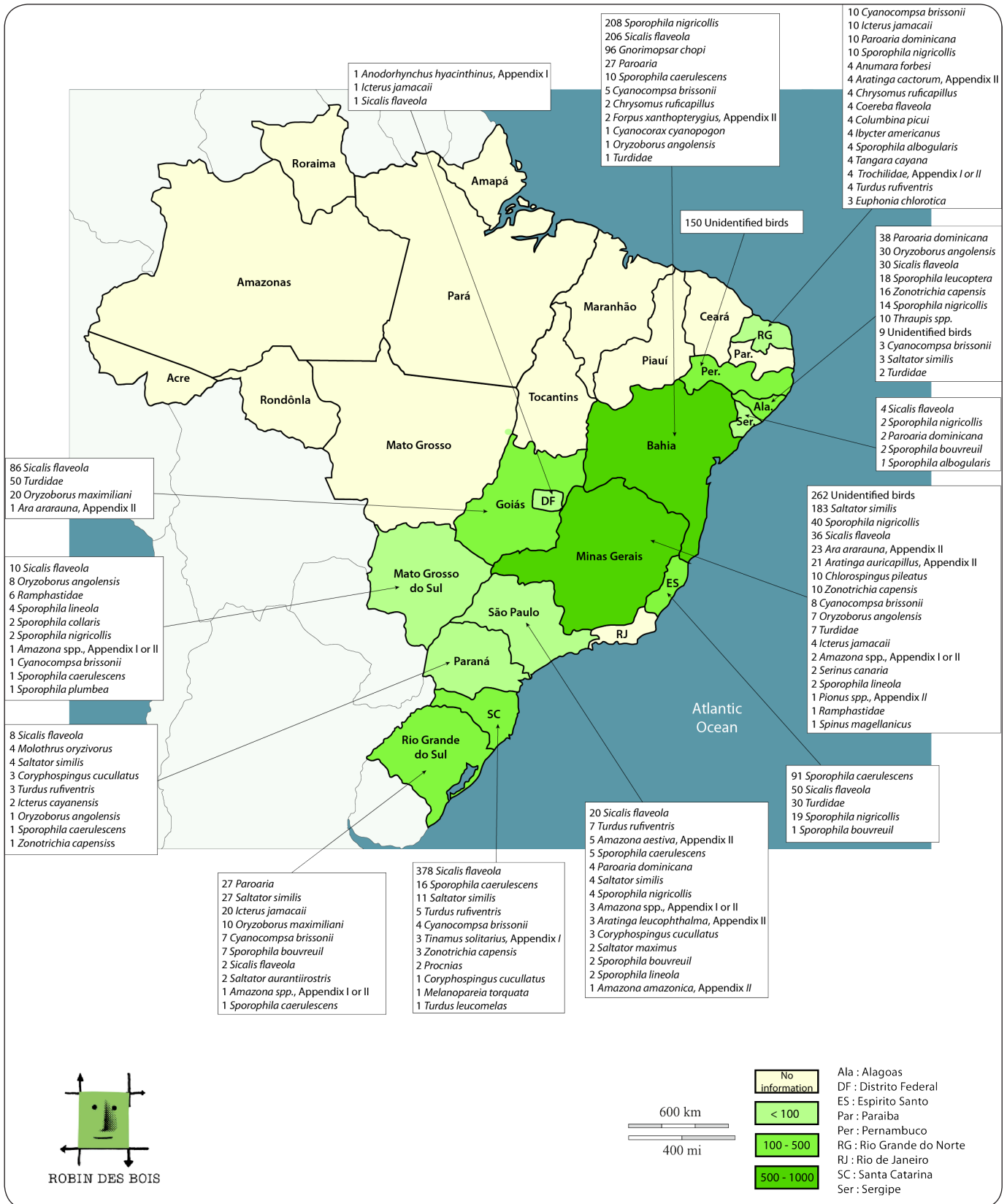
Caruaru, State of Pernambuco, Brazil

Seizure by the Ibama (Instituto brasileiro do meio ambiente e dos recursos naturais renováveis) and the police of around 100 amazons (*Amazona spp.*, Appendix I or II), yellow-bellied seedeaters (*Sporophila nigricollis*), white-throated seedeaters (*Sporophila albogularis*), white-naped jays (*Cyanocorax cyanopogon*), dead birds and live collared peccaries (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II). The master of the place is a trafficker. According to his family's testimonies, he is travelling.¹³

State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil

The traffic of blue-fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II) is increasing sharply. 431 chicks were seized from the cars of poachers, wholesalers or from the homes of vendors and other intermediaries during 2018. From January to November 2019, 1,045 chicks were seized, an increase of almost 150%. Glauca Seixas, a specialist in the species for some thirty years, notes that out of the 300 nests she monitors, 85% are known to traffickers and are regularly looted. The PMA (Policia Militar Ambiental) makes the same observation. The poachers climb palm trees at night with their bare hands or with ladders or even fell them to recover the chicks more easily. Lieutenant Ismaël Fais adds that this radical practice is detrimental to the reproduction of the species since the blue-fronted amazons, like other parrots, want to lay and incubate their eggs in the same trees year after year. Michel Lopes Machado, environmental analyst at the Ibama deplors the fact that in most cases chick raiders are repeated offender or even multi-recidivists. According to him, the sanctions are not severe enough. They have no deterrent effect. Other observers say that the sanctions as they stand are not applied. Out of 10 stolen chicks, only one survives, only to be ultimately bought at a market or pet shop and end up in a cage.¹⁴

2,605 birds seized in Brazil from the 1st January to the 31th March, 2020 according to official sources and the media





Saltator similis



COLOMBIA

February 14, 2020

Cúcuta, Norte de Santander, Colombia

Seizure of 53 songbirds protected by national law from a couple of traffickers: saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), black-striped sparrows (*Arremonops conirostris*), large-billed seed finches (*Oryzoborus crassirostris*), lesser goldfinches (*Spinus psaltria*), indigo buntings (*Passerina cyanea*), ruddy-breasted seedeaters (*Sporophila minuta*), greyish saltators (*Saltator coerulescens*) and rose-breasted grosbeaks (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*).¹⁵

Mid February 2020

Manzanares, Department of Caldas, Colombia

Seizure in a ranch of 3 ostriches (*Struthio camelus*, Appendix I in 12 countries), 4 yellow-fronted amazons (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II), 8 eared doves (*Zenaida auriculata*) and an iguana (genus *Iguana*). The operation mobilised 20 police officers and a dog brigade. The 16 wild animals would have an economic value of 100 million pesos, or 29,425 US\$.¹⁶

End of March 2020

Bogotá, Colombia

Seizure of a hundred birds in the Restrepo square market. Closure of 29 exhibition and sales stands. The police operation lasted 7 hours.¹⁷

COSTA RICA

Beginning of March 2020

Puerto Viejo, Heredia Province, Costa Rica

Seizure of 11 macaws, including great green macaws (*Ara ambiguus*, Appendix I) and scarlet macaws (*Ara macao*, Appendix I), 2 parrots (family Psittacidae) and an emu (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*).¹⁸

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 30, 2020

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

Appearance of Francis Gurahoo. A fan of the curled-up network, he had attempted to import 34 songbirds captured in Guyana to New York via JFK airport (curled-up network, see "On the Trail" n°20 p.43, n°23 p.43 and n°25 p.42). He risks 24 to 33 months in prison. The true finches (Fringillidae family) take part in singing competitions organised in public gardens in Queens and Brooklyn. The public is mainly made up of bettors from Guyana, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Brazil. Very large sums of money are committed to these acoustic performances. The songbird mafia favours specimens from South America. They are said to be more melodious and courageous than their North American rivals. Gurahoo expected to get more than 100,000 US\$, or 3,000 US\$ per singer out of smuggling. Before entering the ring, the birds undergo intensive and aggressive training (see "On the Trail" n°23 p.40).¹⁹

February 24, 2020

Miami International Airport, State of Florida, USA

Seizure of 2 small Cuban grassquits (*Tiaris canorus*), one of them dead, in a plastic box with small air holes and supposedly containing 500 mg of vitamin C. The traveller came from Varadero, Cuba.²⁰

February 5 and March 2, 2020

Madison, State of Wisconsin, United States of America

Taylor, a falconer and raptor dealer in Michigan, had exchanged a male northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II) bred in captivity for a female goshawk captured in a nest in Vilas County, Wisconsin, by one James Kitzman in May 2017. The two accomplices had asked their entourage to "keep it hush-hush and not tell anybody". Taylor was fined 10,000 US\$ in February for violating the Lacey Act, the landmark law that prohibits the barter, sale and transport of illegally acquired wildlife, and the Migratory Birds Treaty. Kitzman was sentenced for the same offences in March to a 15,000 US\$ fine and a 3-year ban on falconry.²¹



March 25, 2020

San Juan, Puerto Rico, United States of America

Balcony climbers stole a macaw (genus *Ara*, Appendix I or II) in a cage. Its economic value is 1,000 US\$.²²

MEXICO

End of January 2020

Manuel Crescencio Rejon de Mérida International Airport, Yucatan State, Mexico

Alerted by noises emanating from a package in the cargo area of the airport, an employee alerted the relevant authorities. The military ara (*Ara militaris*, Appendix I) came from Guadalajara, 1430 km by plane from Merida.²³

February 14, 2020

Mexico City, Mexico

Seizure in a private home of 5 brown-backed solitaires (*Myadestes occidentalis*) and a northern mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*).²⁴

February 19, 2020

State of Querétaro, Mexico

Seizure of a scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*, Appendix I).²⁵

March 11, 2020

Mazatlan International Airport, Mazatlan, State of Sinaloa, Mexico

Finding in 2 abandoned packages of 12 military macaws (*Ara militaris*, Appendix I) in very poor condition. They were handed over to the UMA (Wildlife Conservation Management Unit) "Acuario Mazatlán", which is said to have an appropriate care unit.²⁶

PERU

January 13, 2020

Jorge Chávez International Airport in Lima, Peru

Arrest of Hugo Conings, Belgian passport, 53 years old, in possession of 20 wild birds including tanagers (genus *Tangara*), sira tanager (*Tangara phillipsi*) and toucanets (Piciform order) hidden in a suitcase. He claims to have wanted to give them as a gift to a member of his family. All specimens were captured in the high Amazon basin and are noted for their bright colours and elegance. They are traded for more than 1,000 US\$ in the European Union. Since 2015, the Peruvian authorities have detected this type of traffic up to four times a year on flights to Spain, France, Belgium and Russia.²⁷

March 3, 2020

Mollendo, Province of Isaly, Department of Arequipa, Peru

Seizure on the market of 11 pacific parrotlets (*Forpus coelestis*, Appendix II) on the stall of a street vendor. The heads of the birds were dyed to attract customers. The man hid a twelfth of them in his pockets. He was dead.²⁸

EL SALVADOR

March 6, 2020

San Vicente, Department of San Vicente, El Salvador

Known locally as catalnicas, 21 orange-chinned parakeets (*Brotogeris jugularis*, Appendix II) were seized from a street vendor's basket.²⁹

VENEZUELA

Beginning of March 2020

Freites, Anzoátegui State, Venezuela

During a routine check on a bus from Maturin to Valencia, police had a suspicious bag opened. Six military macaws (*Ara militaris*, Appendix I) and 10 not yet feathered parrot chicks - whose species will not be determined for a few weeks - came out of secrecy. A man and a woman were taken to the police station.³⁰

ASIA

CAMBODIA

March 18, 2020

Cardamom Park, Cambodia

Seizure and rescue of a wreathed hornbill chick (*Rhyticeros undulatus*, Appendix II) that was heading off to some cruel fate on a bush motorbike. An interpellation.³¹

March 22 and 29, 2020

Battambang Province, Cambodia. Border with Thailand.

Seizures of 161 painted storks (*Mycteria leucocephala*) and arrest of 11 poachers. Most of them are believed to be migrants coming from Thailand through the forest trails.³²

End of March 2020

Ta Khmau Municipality, Kandal Province, Cambodia

Seizure of 46 parrot chicks (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II) on the stalls of a market.³³

CHINA

February 2020

Kunming, Yunnan Province, China

X has been sentenced on appeal to 10 years jail and a 30,000 yuan fine (4,320 US\$) for smuggling and trading 148 Alexandrine parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II) into China via Tengchong airport. The value of the traffic is estimated at 1.46 million yuan or 1,575 US\$ per specimen.³⁴



February 2020

Zhengzhou, Henan Province, China

Seizure in a postal parcel of 25 eviscerated common kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) from India.³⁵

February 3, 2020

Xian from Shidian, Yunnan Province, China

The local forest police caught a poacher in the mountains in the act of netting. In the net there were 19 Himalayan griffons (*Gyps himalayensis*, Appendix II) still alive. At his home 7 more individuals of the same species and a golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II) were seized, which were confined in 2 steel cages, plus a bag of vulture feathers and poaching kits. The raptors should be released as soon as possible.³⁶

March 3, 2020

Suqian, Jiangsu Province, China

Conviction of X for poaching by poisoning 3,737 birds including 3,351 black-faced bunting (*Emberiza spodocephala*) and planning to sell them frozen to relations and other interested persons. The trial was an opportunity to give an ecology course on the disappearance of terrestrial and marine species that participate, without humanity being aware of it, in the balance of food chains and the regulation of insects. The migration of toxic substances in water and soil and their accumulation in human and animal systems were also addressed at the bar. The trial was broadcast live and accessible to millions of people. To attract and kill the passerines, X used apps of their songs and bread crumbs impregnated with an agricultural poison.³⁷



**March 5, 2020
Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province,
China**

Sentencing of X to 8 years in prison and a 8,000 US\$ fine for trading in frozen larks and black-faced bunting (*Emberiza spodocephala*) and 7 live owls, which he sold for 400 yuan each, or 60 US\$. X and his accomplices were also ordered to pay jointly 75,000 yuan, or 10,700 US\$, in ecological damages. According to the official doctrine, this sentence is part of the country's efforts to control poaching and the use of wildlife, which, according to the "preferred hypothesis", are responsible for the emergence of the new coronavirus.³⁸



**March 9, 2020
Xuzhou, Jiangsu
Province, China**

X has been sentenced to 6 months in prison for poisoning 63 birds, including oriental turtle dove (*Streptopelia orientalis*) and spotted dove (*Streptopelia chinensis*) in a Taoyuan cemetery with Furadan-impregnated maize seeds, and attempting to market them. In his statement, the professor of veterinary pharmacology and toxicology at Nanjing Agricultural University stressed that the consumption of poisoned birds poses serious health risks to human beings. A million students and market vendors watched the live broadcast of the trial.³⁹



INDIA

**January 2, 2020
Amber, Jaipur District, State of
Rajasthan, India**

When they found themselves stranded with their car at a checkpoint, Ibrahim Khan, Jahid Khan and their accomplice tried everything for it. They drove around the roadblock and sped up. The car chase did not last long: they rolled over. Ibrahim Khan and Jahid Khan were caught but the third man escaped. They had just returned from a clandestine hunt in the vicinity with an Indian peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) and 4 grey partridges (*Perdix perdix*). They were remanded in custody for 14 days awaiting trial.⁴⁰



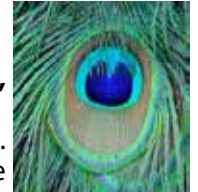
**January 2, 2020
Khinchan Desert, Jodhpur
District, State of Rajasthan, India**

The results of the analysis of the viscera of 3 demoiselle cranes (*Anthropoides virgo*, Appendix II) found dead on December 31 confirm their poisoning by seeds coated with Monocrotophos, a dreaded insecticide banned in the European Union and the United States. 37 other demoiselle cranes fell ill and were found scattered in the desert. They are being treated but some may not recover. This is the second event of this type in the region: last November 37 birds died from poisoning around a water point.⁴¹



**REPEATED OFFENSE
January 12, 2020
Vayalagam, Pudukkottai District,
State of Tamil Nadu, India**

C. Perumal, P. Moorthy, and S. Arumugam were trapped at a police roadblock. The threesome on a bike were carrying the carcasses of 3 Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) poached with an undeclared homemade rifle. Investigation revealed that they were not at their trial run. They were handed over to the Forest Department the following day. A man who allegedly supplied them with materials to make ammunition was arrested.⁴²



**January 13, 2020
Amber, Jaipur District,
State of Rajasthan, India**

Arrest of Cheetar Mal Bagaria who had killed 3 Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) by baiting them with poisonous seeds. The man was charged with three counts and was taken to court and imprisoned.⁴³



From 10 to 16 January 2020

Visakhapatnam, Visakhapatnam District, State of Andhra Pradesh, Pune, Pune District, and Nagpur, Nagpur District, State of Maharashtra, Hyderabad, Hyderabad District, State of Telangana, Jaipur, Jaipur District, State of Rajasthan, Vadodara, Vadodara District, Surat, Surat District, and Ahmedabad, Ahmedabad District, State of Gujarat, Dahisar, Bhandup, Mulund, Suburban Mumbai District, State of Maharashtra, India

The plague of the kites of the Makar Sankranti festival is not healed (see "On the Trail" n°12 p.30, n°22 p.45 and n°23 p.50). This year, among the victims of the "manja", these nylon threads coated with shards of glass and metal that whip the sky and tear off the wings, are Eurasian spoonbills (*Platalea leucorodia*, Appendix II), kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II), black-winged kites (*Elanus caeruleus*, Appendix II), northern shovelers (*Anas clypeata*), and mynas (*Acridotheres tristis*), kites and eagles, (Accipitridae family), parrots and parakeets (Psittacidae family), ibises (Threskiornithidae family), owls, one of which is a barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II), green bee-eaters (*Merops orientalis*), comb ducks (*Sarkidiornis melanotos*, Appendix II), Asian koels (*Eudynamis scolopaceus*), greylag geese (*Anser anser*), peafowls (*Pavo spp.*, Appendix II or III), passerines (Passeridae family) and pigeons (Columbidae family). The partial inventory also records 2 Indian cobras (*Naja naja*, Appendix II) and a squirrel (*Ratufa spp.*, Appendix II) and countless domestic animals. In Gujarat alone, the toll stands at 4,517 birds injured and 458 dead. When they skim the ground, nylon threads also seriously injure passers-by, mainly at the throat and neck. In Telangana, a raid on 250 shops resulted in the seizure of 118 kg of "manja".⁴⁴



January 14, 2020

Shahpur, Ahmedabad District, State of Gujarat, India

Seizure of 60 spools of "manja". They were sold in the Ronak Mobile store, conveniently deserted during the raid by the Forest Department agents. The accidental loss of these threads is already a deadly wound for birds of all sizes that become entangled in them and are deeply injured trying to free themselves, but the spools are also used by poachers. We are here near Lake Nalsarovar, listed as a bird sanctuary since 1969 and among the sites of the Ramsar Convention since 2012. The cruel technique of the poachers consists in making a row of about ten kites around the lake, and then an accomplice frightens the sleeping birds. They fly off and cut their wings in the wires. At daybreak, it's all the easier to pick them up in the bush and to finish them off if necessary. This is the third incident of poaching around Lake Nalsarovar detected by the Forest Department since the beginning of the year.⁴⁵

January 19, 2020

Rangasamy Gounden Pudur, Coimbatore District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

The rangers caught Mr. Kanagaraj in the act. He was trying to burn the carcasses of 9 Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) with dry coconut leaves. He admitted that he had poisoned the birds because they were damaging his beet seedlings. The forestry officers had been warned by an anonymous witness. Mr. Kanagaraj was remanded in custody.⁴⁶



January 24, 2020

Idukki District, Kerala State, India

Joint operation conducted by the WCCB and the Forest Department Flying Squad. Seizure report: 2 Alexandrine parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II), 1 Brahminy kite (*Haliastur indus*, Appendix II), 2 laughing doves (*Streptopelia senegalensis*), 6 Eurasian collared-doves (*Streptopelia decaocto*), 1 common myna (*Acridotheres tristis*) and 5 turtles.⁴⁷

January 25 and February 14, 2020

Surat, Surat District, State of Gujarat, India

Kirti Patel's virtual celebrity rush is causing her problems in reality. The young woman who presents herself as an independent fashion designer is an Indian social network star. While shooting a video in a farm for her YouTube channel, she thought it would be a good idea to pose with a barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II) at hand and post the images



on TikTok. Her posting provoked outcry, complaint from the Indian NGO Wildlife and Nature Welfare Trust, opening of an investigation by the Forest Department. The influencer had to pay a 25,000 rupees (349 US\$) fine on 14 February ... and posted a video to make this known. According to the Deputy Forest Conservator, after passing through Kirti's hands, the owl would have "flown away".⁴⁸

February 4, 2020

Greater Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

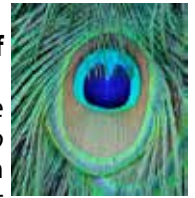
Seizure of 2 mustached parakeets (*Psittacula alexandri*, Appendix II) from bird traders. Joint operation by WCCB and the Forest Department.⁴⁹



February 5, 2020

Ellamadai, Erode District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Very suspicious death of 9 male and 5 female Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) on a village farm. Forestry Department officials took samples and buried the carcasses on site. The investigation is ongoing.⁵⁰



February 15, 2020

Uttrala, Kangra District, Himachal Pradesh State, India

Parakram, Ram Singh and Suresh Kumar had a full house during their poaching party: 7 Himalayan monals - 4 females and 3 males - (*Lophophorus impejanus*, Appendix I) filled their pouches. Forest rangers intercepted them in the woods and took them to the Baijnath police station where they were charged with violating the wildlife protection law. The Himalayan monal is a member of the Phasianidae family, some species (pheasants, Indian peafowls...) have spectacular plumages. The Himalayan monal is not to be outdone. Its resplendent feathers have consecrated it as the emblem of Nepal and the Indian state of Uttarakhand. The toques decorated with a monal crest are a sign of belonging to the high social classes in Himachal Pradesh. But they are now banned since January 2020 and their wearing is punishable by 7 years in prison. Himalayan monals, cf. "On the Trail" n°3 p.28, n°6 p.31, n°10 p.78 and n°21 p.117.⁵¹



© Travelling Slacker

Lophophorus impejanus

February 15, 2020

Bamunigaon, Kamrup District, State of Assam, India

At least 10 Indian vultures (*Gyps indicus*, Appendix II) are found dead next to the body of a cow. An investigation has been opened and officials of the Forestry Department are awaiting the results of the remains' necropsy, but poisoning is almost certain. A surviving vulture in very poor condition is being cared for by the Rani Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre.⁵²



February 17, 2020

Mithdiya, Nagaur District, State of Rajasthan, India

Another harvest of dead Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) poisoned in a field. An investigation was initiated by the Forest Department following the discovery of the bodies of 26 Indian peafowls (male and female) and 8 female pigeons. Eight other Indian peafowls were treated but 3 died a few days later. A total of 16 males and 13 females died from eating seeds covered with poison made to kill "pests".⁵³



February 26, 2020

Tiruchirappalli, District of Tiruchirappalli, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Arrest of a man in possession of 7 Alexandrine parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II) packed in a box.⁵⁴

February 29, 2020

Tiruchirappalli, District of Tiruchirappalli, State of Tamil Nadu, India

The private bus was arriving from Chennai when it was road blocked around 5:00 a.m. by federal agents from the WCCB and the local Forest Department. Ten chicks of Alexandrine parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II) were among the luggage. The driver and his assistant confessed to being in on the scam. They were transporting them to Madurai. They were charged and immediately fined 30,000 rupees (418 US\$).⁵⁵

March 1, 2020

Mohali, Mohali District, State of Punjab, India

Shikra yes, shikra no. The hawks of the species *Accipiter badius* (Appendix II) have contrasting fates when they fall into the hands of humans.

- A pigeon keeper finally captured a female shikra that had caught his 'Kalasira', a high-flying black-headed pigeon that made a lot of money in contests and betting. He decapitated the criminal with a billhook and posted the scene on Tik Tok. It is said that pigeon fanciers all over the world enjoyed it.

- An interior designer, Jeet Brar, had collected a juvenile shikra in front of his house, who had lost the use of its legs, probably due to an electrocution.

He took him to Dr. Karanbir Singh, a specialist in prostheses for handicapped humans, who made two lowerlegs and claws out of synthetic materials. The survivor will never again be able to fly and hunt at altitude. Its claws are static and cannot grasp prey, but it will be able to live in a cage and perch for as long as this complicity between it and humans lasts.

The Times of India article on the fate of these 2 shikras is entitled Love & Guillotine.⁵⁶

March 8, 2020

New Delhi, Delhi National Capital Territory, India

Six Alexandrine parakeet chicks (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II) confined in milk packages were rescued in the station by the railway brigade alerted by a passenger. They were handed over to the care of the NGO Wildlife SOS. "They will be freed into their natural habitat after they are fit for release," the NGO reassured. Alexandrine parakeets feed the bird markets of Delhi but also of Mumbai, Hyderabad, Patna, Lucknow and Kolkata.⁵⁷

INDONESIA

March 13, 2020

Aceh Tamiang Regency, Aceh Province, Indonesia

At the end of a chase, the patrol boat *BC 20010* escorted the *KM Brahma* into the port of Aceh Tamiang in the middle of the night. The *KM Brahma* was carrying chickens and 506 birds from Thailand, including greater green leafbirds (*Chloropsis sonnerati*) and melodious laughingthrushes (*Garrulax canorus*, Appendix II). According to the veterinary services, the poultry was a carrier of avian influenza and as a result all chickens and wild birds were killed and burned.⁵⁸

March 19, 2020

Tanjung Karang District, Lampung Province, Indonesia

Sentencing of Susanto Setiawan to 14 months in prison and a fine of 600 US\$ for attempting to illegally transport 1,500 songbirds from the island of Sumatra to the island of Java in November 2019 (see "On the Trail" n°. 27, p.50). 40,000 birds were seized thanks to the cooperation during 2019 of the NGO Flight, the BKSDA (Balai Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam), the port police, the GAKKUM, the agency for environmental laws enforcement, a performance never before reached in the statistics, which unfortunately corresponds to a revival in the Indonesian and international songbird sector.⁵⁹



ISRAEL

February 5, 2020

Allenby Bridge, West Bank, Israel. Border with Jordan.

Seizure of 22 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) wrapped in nets around the calves of 2 Palestinians. They had been captured in Jordan. See "On the Trail" n°27 p.52.⁶⁰

MALAYSIA

January 6 and end of January 2020

Tebedu and Kuching, Sarawak State, Malaysia. Border with Indonesia.

An Indonesian woman working in Sarawak is trying to smuggle into her country 1060 magpies (family Corvidae), white-rumped shamas (*Copsychus malabaricus*) and oriental magpie-robins (*Copsychus saularis*) with an estimated local economic value of 848,000 ringgits, or 206,500 US\$ and 195 US\$ per specimen.

Modus operandi: transport by SUV of the birds in plastic crates. Close to the border, transfer to a shed where, parcel by parcel, the birds are collected and transported by moped back and forth along various side roads.

A man of Malaysian nationality is also under judicial control. He tried to bribe the police to obtain the release of the female driver and the birds. He is subject to the Anti-Corruption Act of 2009.⁶¹

OPERATION BERSEPADU KHAZANAH

January 31, 2020

Kanowit, Sarawak State, Malaysia

Seizure of 30 oriental magpie-robin (*Copsychus saularis*) in the Indonesian poacher and farm worker's home. He intended to resell each for about 800 ringgits or 200 US\$ after smuggling them into his country.⁶²

OPERATION BERSEPADU KHAZANAH

February 5, 2020

Sematan, Sarawak State, Malaysia

Seizure of 21 birds protected under national law, lovebirds (*Agapornis* spp., Appendix II), parrots (Psittaciformes, Appendix I or II), crestless fireback (*Lophura erythrophthalma*).⁶³

February 11, 2020

Sri Aman, Sarawak State, Malaysia. Border with Indonesia.

Seizure by the 10th battalion of the GOF (General Operation Force) of 17 oriental magpie-robins (*Copsychus saularis*) and 2 hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II). Their local economic value is estimated at 3,718 US\$. They were stored in a hut near an oil palm plantation by an agricultural worker and were "awaiting export to a neighbouring country" according to the head of the operation.⁶⁴

February 26, 2020

Jalan Teluk Ramunia, State of Johor, Malaysia

Police raid on 2 suspicious cars. Seizures of 993 white-rumped shama (*Copsychus malabaricus*) and oriental magpie-robin (*Copsychus saularis*). Estimated value of 120,000 US\$, i.e. about 120 US\$ per specimen.⁶⁵

Beginning of March 2020

Sibu Airport, Sarawak State, Malaysia

Arrest at the time of boarding for Kuala Lumpur of 5 passengers aged between 19 and 31 years old and seizure of 15 boxes and 2 bundles containing thousands of birds' nests.⁶⁶

March 5, 2020

Kuching, Serawak State, Malaysia

Seizure of 46 birds of unspecified species with a global economic value estimated at 27,150 ringgits, i.e. 6,450 US\$ and an average of 140 US\$ per individual.⁶⁷

March 6, 2020

Tanjung Merak, State of Johor, Malaysia. Border with Singapore.

Seizure of 100 white-rumped shamas (*Copsychus malabaricus*) and 1780 oriental magpie-robins (*Copsychus saularis*) valued at 333,600 ringgits (79,230 US\$), or 42 US\$ per specimen.⁶⁸

MYANMAR

February 23, 2020

Yangon, Yangon Region, Myanmar

A female concave-casqued hornbill (*Buceros bicornis*, Appendix I) caused a lot of people to run before she could be secured. Firefighters, forestry officers, zoo staff and wildlife lovers have noticed her wandering the streets of the city for several days and at the end have been chasing her this Sunday. Captured twilight in the East Dagon neighbourhood, she was dragging a rope attached to a leg and had injured herself in a wing trying to free from it. Escaped from her cage at an unknown individual's home, she was unable to feed herself. Burmese regulations prohibit any detention or captivity of hornbills. The fugitive was finally welcomed at the Yangon Zoo.⁶⁹

PAKISTAN

Early January 2020

Provinces of Sindh, Balochistan and Punjab, Pakistan

The federal government grants permits to houbara bustards (*Chlamydotis undulata*, Appendix I) to several members of Abu Dhabi's elite, including Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, who took advantage of the opportunity to engage in his hobby with the support of domesticated falcons before meeting in Islamabad with Prime Minister Imran Khan. The national press recalls that the flesh of Houbara bustard is considered an aphrodisiac by some Arab hunters.⁷⁰



January 2020, Near Randburg, South Africa



Beginning of March 2020, Freitas, Venezuela



January 30, 2020, New York, United States of America



March 18, 2020, Cardamom Park, Cambodia



February 2020, Zhengzhou, China



February 5, 2020, Allenby Bridge, Israel

January 12, 2020

Islamabad, Federal Territory of Islamabad, Pakistan

Seizure on the Sunday Bazaar of 2 ring-necked parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*) for sale for 3,000 rupees or about twenty US\$. They were released in the following hours. Dawn, the morning paper, reports that they have become extremely rare around the metropolis. The last ones are caught in the cemeteries and forests of Shakarparian. The same fate befell the alexandrine parakeet (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II) whose last specimens are caught in the hills of Margalla and sold for around 75,000 rupees, or just under 500 US\$. A spokesman for the Ministry of Climate Change deplores the sale of parakeets via the Internet. "The government needs to ban and block any website that advertises illegal trade of birds and animals (...)" he said.⁷¹

January 13, 2020

Pakistan

The government authorises the export to Dubai of 150 peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) and saker falcons (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II). The elite of the Red Sea Emirate needs young specimens to rejuvenate its falcon stock to hunt houbara bustards (*Chlamydotis undulata*, Appendix I) in Asia and North Africa. Another export permit for 200 falcons is also expected to be granted to Qatar. Strictly from the point of view of international law, both permits are illegal. Falcons are listed in CITES Appendix I and, except for scientific reasons, international trade in all species is prohibited. Is hunting a science? The origin of falcons is also being questioned. They may only be the youngest and most vigorous captured in northern Pakistan by "legal" poachers during their winter migration from Central Asia to South Asia.⁷²

February 5, 2020

Karachi, Sindh Province, Pakistan

Seizure of 2 common barn owls (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II), 3 falcons (Falconidae, Appendix I or II) and 5 seagulls (family Laridae) at the Empress Market. The seller slipped away. Lalukhet, Empress Market and Lea Market are the 3 black beasts of the SWD (Sindh Wildlife Department). All species of protected birds can be found here.⁷³

March 24, 2020

Dera Ismail Khan District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan

Seizure in an ambulance speeding out of Balochistan of 65 demoiselle cranes (*Anthropoides virgo*, Appendix II). Arrest of the driver.⁷⁴

VIET NAM

Mid-February 2020

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Compassionate purchase of 2 merlins (*Falco columbarius*, Appendix II) at a market in the capital city and immediate alert of ENV. The 2 birds of prey were transferred to the Cu Chi refuge.⁷⁵

EUROPE

January-March 2020

European Union

The phobia of birds of prey



Aquila chrysaetos

In France, Spain, Italy and the United Kingdom - the list of countries is not exhaustive - birds of prey of all feathers, day and night, are victims of avenging and anonymous shootings and in every way inexcusable since in the mind of the basic hunter with a gun, a licence and good observation skills, it is impossible to confuse the flight of an eagle with that of a woodcock or the flight of a hawk with that of a starling. Bonelli's eagles (*Hieraaetus fasciatus*, Appendix II) and golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II) in south-western France, peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) in central England and north-western Spain, Eurasian eagle-owl (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II) in the north of Scotland and very close to the prestigious seaside resort of Saint-Tropez, Eurasian buzzards (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) and Eurasian sparrowhawks (*Accipiter nisus*, Appendix II) in Sardinia (Italy) and the Spanish Basque country, it is firing from everywhere. Diurnals are increasingly considered as pests that can attack homing pigeons, chickens and wood pigeons and are also caught in the nets of goldfinch thieves. Nocturnals fall prey to ancestral curses and "kill to kill". The Ligue de la Protection des Oiseaux (France), Eguski (Spain), the RSPB and the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust (United Kingdom) are taking legal action and are redoubling their preventive education.⁷⁶

SPAIN

Early January 2020

Pontecesures, Province of Pontevedra, Autonomous Community of Galicia, Spain

A steppe eagle (*Aquila nipalensis*, Appendix II) with a wingspan of 2.40 m has been robbed in a zoo specialising in birds of prey. The value of the raptor exceeds 7,000 €, or about 7,800 US\$. Several break-ins are reported. The guard dogs were anaesthetised. The establishment houses about a hundred birds. The eagle could have been ordered by a private collector, be destined for falconry or be used in a clandestine breeding operation.⁷⁷

January 2020

Gúdar-Javalambre Comarca, Province of Teruel, Autonomous Community of Aragon, Spain

Seizure by a highway patrol of 195 songbirds including European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*). They were released in favourable surroundings.⁷⁸

Mid-January 2020

Coria del Río, Province of Seville, Autonomous Community of Andalucía, Spain

Sentencing to 10 months in prison and a fine of 55,000 € (61,500 US\$) for poaching between 2016 and 2017 at least 184 protected birds including storks, eagles and coots.⁷⁹



End of January 2020

Lanzarote, Province of Las Palmas, Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands, Spain

Seizure in a restaurant of a grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I).⁸⁰

Mid March 2020

Seville, Autonomous Community of Andalucía, Spain

Sentencing of Francisco R. M. to one year in prison, a fine of 1,620 € (1,775 US\$), 47,000 € (51,530 US\$) in damages for poaching 154 protected or prohibited hunting birds and keeping them in a freezer for personal or commercial purposes: 2 azure-winged magpies (*Cyanopica cyanus*), 49 European robins (*Erithacus rubecula*), 4 black redstarts (*Phoenicurus ochruros*), 8 sardinian warblers (*Sylvia melanocephala*), one European stonechat (*Saxicola rubicola*), 30 Eurasian blackcaps (*Sylvia atricapilla*), 8 European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*), 40 European serins (*Serinus serinus*), 4 common blackbirds (*Turdus merula*) and 8 house sparrows (*Passer domesticus*).⁸¹



FRANCE

Around January 9, 2020

Montierchaume, Department of Indre, France

A caged canary thief (*Serinus canaria domestica*) had been raiding the balconies of the peaceful administrative subdivision for several months. The thief(s) showed the agility and silence of the cats to remove their prey, which were found at the end of the investigation to be 61 plus a European goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*) and a European greenfinch (*Chloris chloris*) in a former merry-go-round caravan.⁸²



February 2020

19th arrondissement, Paris, France

Seizure and rescue in the storeroom of an embroidery company of a cockatoo (*Cacatuidae*, Appendix I or II) strangled by a cymbal-shaped armour. The owner had developed this device to prevent what he seemed to consider a companion from scratching himself. He is charged with cruelty to animals. The operation was initiated by the association "Parrots in distress" and relayed by the association Stéphane Lamart. The 80-year-old 19th district embroiderer says he was betrayed by a former mistress. The cockatoo is about 20 years old.⁸³



February 20, 2020

Champigny-sur-Marne, Department of Val-de-Marne, France

Seizure in a garage of 70 birds smelling of waste oil and petrol vapours, grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I), yellow-fronted amazons (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II), burrowing parakeets (*Cyanoliseus patagonus*, Appendix II), rose-ringed parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*), Eurasian jays (*Garrulus glandarius*), turtledoves and pigeons. Overall, customers for the past 20 years were happy with it. "Some of them could even talk", a local woman marvelled. The zoo-garage attracted whole families.⁸⁴

GREECE

February 18, 2020
Missolonghi, Region of Aetolia-Acarnania, Greece

The vultures' fear is coming dangerously close to the European Union. Eleven of them are victims of a poisoning campaign. Nine are dead, 2 are in recovery. Three sheep carcasses were used as bait. The Ionian region is the second most important habitat for Eurasian griffon vultures (*Gyps fulvus*, Appendix II) in Greece, after Crete.⁸⁵



© Arno Meinjies

Necrosyrtes monachus
Cf. end of February - March 2020, Guinea-Bissau



© Ne Now News

February 15, 2020, Bamunigaon, India

ITALY

January 16, 2020

Poggio, Otricoli, Province of Terni, Region of Umbria, Italy



Here lie 12 chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*) and a hawfinch (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*).⁸⁶

January 16, 2020

La Spezia, Province of La Spezia, Region of Liguria, Italy

Seizure of a blue-throated macaw (*Ara glaucogularis*, Appendix I). The CITES document that justifies its keeping in a cage in Italy is a forgery. The species is in danger of extinction. It is believed that less than a thousand of them remain in the forests of northern Bolivia.⁸⁷

January 17, 2020

Province of Vicenza, Veneto Region, Italy

After the seizure of nearly 700 birds, all frozen, the hyperactive poacher was only fined 1,000 € or 1,120 US\$ (see "On the Trail " n°26 p.46).⁸⁸



January 28, 2020

Colle Fabbri, Spoleto, Province of Perugia, Region of Umbria, Italy

The man is caught in the forest with 4 chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*) in his shed. At his home, 170 frozen specimens are discovered waiting to be marketed in restaurants.⁸⁹

January 28, 2020

Poggioreale, Metropolitan City of Naples, Region of Campania, Italy

A joint operation by the Carabinieri and the Lipu (Italian League for the Protection of Birds) led to the seizure of dozens of European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), dozens of cages and nets.⁹⁰

February 10, 2020

Manfredonia, Province of Foggia, Region of Apulia, Italy

New dismantling of a goldfinch gang. Two arrests. Seizure of European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) which were used as decoys. They were a little wounded, a little mortified. Additional seizure of nets and trebuchets.⁹¹

February 15, 2020

Foggia, Province of Foggia, Apulia Region, Italy

During the inspection of 90 car boxes, the Carabinieri discovered one which housed an arsenal of poaching equipment (nets, tape recorders, glue, crates), European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) and other passerines held in the shade in cages and squeaking even more as their rescuers approached.⁹²

February 23, 2020

Metropolitan City of Palermo, Region of Sicily, Italy

Seizure, at a receiver's home, of European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), European serins (*Serinus serinus*), Eurasian siskin (*Spinus spinus*), Eurasian blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*) and common blackbirds (*Turdus merula*). A total of 35 birds in the alleys around the Ballaro market. The seller is known to the police for reselling burglary items. Ballaro market, cf. "On the Trail " n°16 p.36, n°17 p.39, n°18 p.12 and 36, n°20 p.49, n°22 p.48 and 124, n°23 p.58, n°25 p.49.⁹³

NETHERLANDS

January 13, 2020

Amsterdam-Schiphol International Airport, Province of North Holland, The Netherlands

Seizure of 27 songbirds: seedeaters (genus *Sporophila*) and chestnut-bellied seed finches (*Oryzoborus angolensis*).⁹⁴

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Mid-February 2020

Zandaam, Province of North Holland, The Netherlands

The prosecutor has called for one year in prison. The make-up trafficker from Zaandam gets off with a fine of 7,500 € (8,270 US\$) and 30 hours of community service. An exotic bird seller, known for his shenanigans for several years, he used to bleach the wings of red-and-green macaws (*Ara chloropterus*, Appendix II) and paint their beaks to look like scarlet macaws (*Ara macao*, Appendix I) before shipping them to a customer in Taiwan. It is possible under CITES to import red-and-green macaws listed in Appendix II into Taiwan, but it is not possible to trade macaws listed in Appendix I. The parrot painter did not care about veterinary certificates guaranteeing that his production was free from avian influenza and Newcastle disease. When customs officers at Schiphol airport spotted the frauds by cleaning the beaks with water in 2015 and again in 2016, several macaws were sick or dying and carrying psittacosis. 52 macaws bound for Taiwan were seized in 2015 and 26 in 2016.⁹⁵



**February 19, 2020
Amsterdam-Schiphol International Airport,
Province of North Holland, The Netherlands**

Seizure in a female tourist's bag from Suriname of 24 tangaras (family Thraupidae) which were undoubtedly intended for sale at the Zwolle bird fair.⁹⁶

**February 29, 2020
Zwolle, Province of Overijssel,
The Netherlands**

In the car park of the annual bird fair, the car of a Belgian dealer was searched by the police. 27 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) with fake breeding rings on their legs were removed from the boot. The Belgian ended the market at the police station. Similarly, an Austrian seller had 2 grey parrots removed and had been fined 500 € (550 US\$) on the spot.⁹⁷



UNITED KINGDOM

**March 4, 2020
Sheffield, County South
Yorkshire, England, United
Kingdom**



Robert Evans was sentenced to community service, 2 months of house arrest between 9 p.m. and 7 a.m. and to pay 350 € (380 US\$) in legal fees for poaching and detaining 10 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*). Some were injured as they tried to escape and bumped into the bars of the dirty cage hidden in a shed. However, all of them could be released back into the wild after some time of observation and care. Evans had a permit to keep birds and used a "legal" Eurasian bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*) banded to cover up his illegal activities.⁹⁸



January 13, 2020, Amsterdam-Schiphol, The Netherlands



March 4, 2020, Sheffield, United Kingdom



Mid-February 2020, Zandaam, The Netherlands

Bats

2020, year of the bat



Unbelievable but true! The first scientific explanations on the origin of the Covid-19 pandemic dump all the responsibility onto pangolins and bats, the two mammals who, thanks to their diet, are hyperactive helpers in the fight against insect pests of crops and forests and against mosquitoes that are vectors of dengue, zika and chikungunya. Pangolins escape massive retaliation. They lead a solitary life. Bats are victims of them, they are gregarious.

The nocturnal flying mammals have long been surrounded by evil rumours spread by mankind and at the same time they are victims of its appetite, especially in Asia and Africa.

While the Covid-19 pandemic does not jeopardize the future of the human species, it shortens the horizon of the 1,400 species of bats, of which at most two are deemed without evidence to have transmitted the new coronavirus to the human species. Democratic justice considers the suspect innocent as long as there is no evidence of responsibility. Rumour, on the other hand, executes without evidence. Bats in India are victims of a witch hunt since mid-March.

Services in metropolises like Bangalore are overwhelmed by calls from residents. They want the bats in the trees or on the ledges of monuments to be dislodged, and if there is no public intervention in the hours or the short days following, they do not hesitate to take action and cut down trees in the streets, such as the Singapore cherry trees, which are a feast for several species of bats. Colonies in other suburban trees that until then bothered no one are brutally exposed to popular vindictiveness. Despite calls for calm from the local authorities, fierce people come in the evening to make a fire of rubbish under the trees and bats who fall asphyxiated are killed by kicking them. In another form of harassment, deafening firecrackers are placed under bat trees, which for an animal operating exclusively on echolocation is the worst torture.

Rural bats are threatened just as much as urban bats. In Rajasthan, which is said to be the state most affected by the phobia, along with Karnataka, colonies of greater mouse-tailed bats (*Rhinopoma microphyllum*) are walled up in their crevices by plaster patches. In the Churu, Sikar, Jhunjhunu and Nagaur districts, pogroms against bats are organised at night under the light of flashlights lamps by villagers claiming to act in the name of the health protection of all and most often guided - which is the worst - by forestry agents charged in peacetime with protecting wildlife. The press reports hundreds of deaths, but some eradications are outside their knowledge or their reduced availability because of stay at home measures. Bats actually die in their thousands. In Uttar Pradesh, they are electrocuted in an unknown way. The authorities are challenged by the peak of hatred towards bats. Only two species out of 128 in India, including the Wroughton's free-tailed bat (*Otomops wroughtoni*), are protected by federal law, and the legal means are not in place to effectively sanction the culprits. In the absence of anything better, a circular has been sent to all forest services, ordering them to initiate proceedings on the basis of cruelty to animals and destruction of their habitats against anyone who engages in bat killings, and giving them language elements on why they should not give in to fear and retaliation. "Bats are very useful in the fight against insect pests that ravage crops." "The services they provide in this fight are invisible because they go on their insect patrols at night." "They also fight against mosquitoes that can carry diseases that can be transmitted to humans."

Sixty-four leading figures and academics, experts of the world of bats, teachers and researchers from the United States, India, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Germany, Nepal, the United Kingdom and Bangladesh published an appeal for calm on 24 April 2020. "The exact origin of SARS-CoV-2 or its precursor is not known." "It is premature and unfair to blame bats or any other animal for the pandemic." "Killing bats and other wild animals, or evicting them from their roosts in retaliation is counterproductive and will not solve any problems." "Bats perform vital ecosystem services. They pollinate the flowers of some mangroves, and many other commercially and culturally important plants." "Insect-eating bats are voracious eaters of pest insects in rice, corn, cotton and potentially, tea farms." "We urge people not to believe in news from unverified sources and cause harm to bats in retaliation. Likewise, we request the media to not oversimplify scientific evidence, to emphasise the role of humans in disease outbreaks and to highlight the importance of coexistence with bats in urban landscapes." "Like other specialists around the world, the signatories of the manifesto give figures that are impressive from an economic and ecological point of view. Bats prevent cocoa farmers in Indonesia and wheat farmers in the USA from spending respectively 800 million US\$ and 20 billion US\$ annually on chemical insecticides and from spreading them into the environment.

Thanks to the bridge between scientists and artists, “myth busters” posters on bats are actively circulating from Hyderabad and are available in several languages on social networks.

Europe is likely to be more insidiously affected by the wave. Manuel Ruedi, a world specialist, co-author of a book about the 65 species of the state of Meghalaya in India and curator of the mammal collection at the Geneva Natural History Museum, is concerned about the universality of the “allergy” to bats. “Not just India, this is happening in other parts of the world including in Switzerland. Even if a cat catches a bat and brings the bat to the house, people are panicking. “In China, in Shanghai, in Beijing, the police are called to dislodge those who hibernate under gutters or in the hollows of trees. In Wuhan itself, the presumed epicentre of the pandemic, Huabin Zhao, a researcher in ecology at university, is worried that the negative profile of bats is exaggerated and that their positive profile is underestimated, which could ultimately lead to their unnecessary and intentional elimination (see the Covid-19 special issue of “On the Trail”).¹

AMERICA

BRAZIL

End of March 2020

Dom Aquino, State of Mato Grosso, Brazil

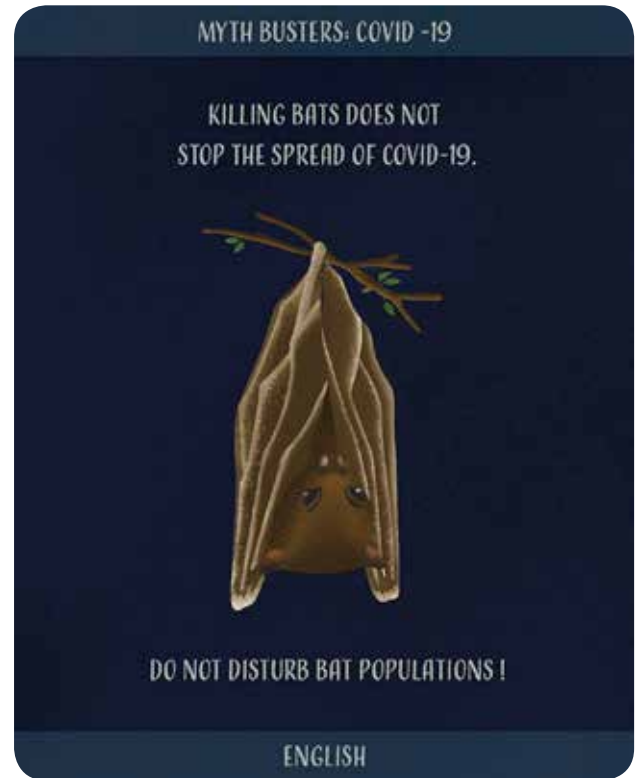
Arrest of Aldair Antônio da Silva, 46 years old. In a video shared on social networks, he eats a bat (Chiroptera order) and a cobra (Elapidae family), both raw with garlic.²

PERU

End of March 2020

Culden, Cepartment of Cajamarca, Peru

Some villagers attacked, torches in hand, a cave where a colony of 500 bats suspected of transmitting Covid-19 nested. The mammals fled and took refuge in the cavity walls of a disused nursery school nearby. The villagers then broke down the walls and burned the trapped bats. A total of 300 animals perished. The SERFOR -Servicio Nacional Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre- intervened to recover the survivors and release them in another cave away from human activities.



The SERFOR recalls that bats are useful, that they are pollinators, sowers of seeds and contribute to the control of parasites. On March 22, 2020, Peru has almost 500 cases of Covid-19 patients, including one in Culden, a town of almost 200 inhabitants.³

ASIA

LAOS

March 5, 2020

Oudomxay Province, Laos

It is a timid awakening by the authorities to counter the domestic and international trafficking of protected species. From December 2019 to February 2020, 155 kg of meat from bats, birds and monkeys were seized in the province’s fresh markets. “We like to eat wild meat” “It’s part of our way of life”, replied one villager.⁴

Pangolins

The four African pangolin species (*Manis gigantea*, *M. temminckii*, *M. tetradactyla*, *M. tricuspis*) and the four Asian species (*Manis crassicaudata*, *M. culionensis*, *M. javanica* and *M. pentadactyla*) are listed under CITES Appendix I.

**“On the Trail” n°28
Value on the black market
according to media or official sources**

Value of 1kg of pangolin scales

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Africa	Nigeria	2,980	10
	Central African Republic	2,200	13
Asia	Malaysia	2,900	41

Value of a pangolin

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref.
Africa	Uganda	8,000	11

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

February 4, 2020 Shell Ultra City N1 South, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Seizure of a subadult female Temminck in a “sting” operation such as the unexpected bee sting. It was a matter of stinging in the act a pangolin seller in the car park of a petrol station at nightfall who thought he was dealing with a shady but reliable buyer who turned out to be Professor Ray Jansen, director of the African Pangolin Working Group (APWG), who was assisted in the shadows by South African Police Service agents. The one who was the subject of the transaction was skinny as a stick (4.9 kg) and has been surnamed Corona. The man, middleman who had been negotiating for several days on WhatsApp with the undercover Ray Jansen, was arrested on the spot. He had taken his 5-year-old son with him in the car. The cops used common sense. The mother was called urgently to come and pick him up instead of handing him over to social services



and putting him into a system from which it would have been difficult to get him out. The teenage girl Corona weighed 5.38 kg when she began her release protocol in a 33,000 hectares reserve. She had regained her normal weight and recovered 480 g by refusing any food other than locally available pugnacious ants (*Anoplolepis custodiens*) and snouted harvester termites (*Trinervitermes trinervoides*) to the great relief of head carer Nicci Wright. “Another pangolin nicknamed Benz because he had been seized in an iron cage in the back of a Mercedes wanted to eat nothing but ants from Matabele, on the border with Botswana, so he had to be transferred there”. Pangolins are fine gourmets and remain unfailingly attached to the insects of the land where they were born. The Corona operation was financially supported by the Boucher Legacy.¹

**February 12, 2020
Mokopane, Limpopo Province, South Africa**
Seizure of a pangolin and arrest of 2 men travelling in a luxury car. They are 28 and 41 years old.²

**February 27, 2020
Wrenchville, Northern Cape Province, South Africa**
Thanks to the nose of the K9 canine brigade, arrest of Denzil Feris for holding a live pangolin. Feris was released on bail of 2,000 rand (135 US\$).³

COTE D’IVOIRE

**February 20, 2020
Azaguié, Lagunes District, Côte d’Ivoire**
Seizure on the Adzopé-Abidjan corridor of a vehicle transporting 9 pangolins, 57 agoutis, 28 antelopes, one warthog, a total of 206 carcasses and guts of wild animals caught in traps or killed with rifles. The bushmeat intended to supply Abidjan’s markets was buried in a pit.⁴

**March 3, 2020
Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire**
Open-air burning and irretrievable destruction under the control of Alain-Richard Donwahi, Ivorian Minister of Water and Forests, of 3 tons of pangolin scales from seizures made in the country in 2017 and 2018 by the UCT (Unité de lutte contre la Criminalité Transnationale) and intended for fraudulent shipments to Asia. The Ambassador of the United States of America and the British Ambassador congratulated the Government of Côte d’Ivoire on this initiative.⁵

GABON

Gabon has banned the marketing of pangolin meat from 31 March 2020 (see "On the Trail" Covid-19 Special Edition). In the markets of Libreville, prime cuts of the small scaled mammal are now being hidden under the paws of wild boars and the carcasses of porcupines. Pangolin meat has gone from bushmeat to scary meat since a Chinese university has saddled the scaly anteater with the responsibility of having passed on the new coronavirus to human beings. Chinese customers who once came to buy pangolin are becoming increasingly rare. But not all local bushmeat lovers are put off. "We were told that monkey meat transmits Ebola, we continue to eat it and we never caught it," a spokeswoman for the bushmeat sellers told the Agence France Presse journalist. "There is no health problem, on the contrary". "The most important thing is to eat the meat when it's fresh," added one buyer.⁶

MALAWI

20 January 2020
Lilongwe, Central Region, Malawi

Jiang Cheng sentenced to 24 months in prison for holding 403 pangolin scales in his home. The prosecutor had called for a prison sentence rather than a fine that the accused could easily have paid. The judge found indeed that a simple fine would not be sufficient to deter the accused and other traffickers from giving up wildlife trafficking.⁷



NAMIBIA

January 5 and 6, 2020
Ondangwa, Oshana Region and Otjiwarongo, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

- Arrest of 2 Namibian citizens in possession of a full armour of pangolin, i.e. the skin with scales of the eviscerated animal.

- Arrest of Eliaser Sem. He too was carrying the whole skin with scales of an eviscerated pangolin.⁸

Week of 16 to 22 March 2020
Namibia

Seizure of a pangolin armour.⁹

NIGERIA

January 19, 2020
Isheri, Lagos State, Nigeria

Seizure in a warehouse of 9.504 t of scales distributed in 147 big bags corresponding to approximately 28,500 pangolins (on the basis of 3 pangolins per 1 kilo of scales) inside two 20-foot sea containers. The shipment is estimated at 28.3 million US\$, or 2,980 US\$/kg. The Nigeria/Asia network is well identified (see seizure in Malaysia on 31 March 2020).¹⁰

UGANDA

February 18, 2020
Elegu Border Post, Northern Region, Uganda. Border with South Sudan.

Arrest of John Chol Malou Mayen and Denus Arop Ochan Lotyang, 2 South Sudanese border guards. They were trying to sell a live pangolin to their Ugandan counterparts for just over 8,000 US\$.¹¹

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Mid-February 2020
Bouboui, Prefecture of Ombella-M'Poko and Bangui, Central African Republic. Border with the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Additional information was sent to us by a reader of n°28 of "On the Trail". We would like to thank him for this.

Seizure by the police of 500 kg of pangolin scales with an economic value estimated by the services at 650 million CFA francs or 1 million euros and 2,000 €/kg (2,200 US\$/kg) and 4 rifles and ammunition. The scales came from Obo and Bangassou and were transported to Bouboui by boat on the Oubangui river (at least 500 km). Bouboui is 45 km from Bangui, the capital of the Central African Republic. According to the initial findings of the investigation, the scales were on the smuggling route to Asia via Cameroon. Nine people were arrested. "I will give instructions to the Minister of Justice so that, after investigations by our police services, these alleged perpetrators of these acts of major crime are brought to justice for trial. It is up to the Water and Forestry Services to proceed with the destruction of the pangolin scales seized," instructed Prime Minister Firmin Ngrébada.¹³

TANZANIA

January 10, 2020

Tanzania

Sentencing of Abdallah Bakari Nindi, Paul Mtambuki Mng'aro and Said Ally Mchomvu to 20 years in prison each for possession of pangolin meat and a leopard skin. A first in the country that was appreciated by wildlife NGOs.¹⁴



ZAMBIA

Early February 2020

Nakonde, Muchinga Province, Zambia. Border with Tanzania.

Sentencing of Joseph Simwinga, a farmer, and Innocent Mulwanda, a security guard, to 5 years' imprisonment with hard labour for holding a live pangolin. The offence dates back to December 2019.¹⁵



ZIMBABWE

January 24, 2020

Beitbridge, Matabeleland South Province and Bulawayo, Bulawayo Province, Zimbabwe

Seizures of 8 pangolins. Twelve arrests.¹⁶

Early February 2020

Chimanimani District, Manicaland Province, Zimbabwe. Border with Mozambique.

Protocol for the release of an adult male pangolin by the Tikki Hywood Foundation. He was first presented to the Chimanimani District Chief who performed a protection ritual and 2 days later he was released in a secret location.¹⁷

ASIA

BANGLADESH

January 9, 2020

Bhairab, Kishoreganj District, Dhaka Division, Bangladesh

Rescue of a pangolin caught in the Lawachhara Forest Reserve and on its way with the poachers to the capital city of Dhaka. The vehicle was intercepted. The local police had received information from civil society. The 2 men, Babla Sarker and Ripon Mia, were sentenced in flagrante delicto to a fine of 20,000 takas each or 235.50 US\$. The average monthly income in Bangladesh is 13,260 takas.¹⁸

March 4, 2020

Moulvibazar, Moulvibazar District, Sylhet Division, Bangladesh

They were afraid of the stranger. It was the first time they saw a pangolin. They tied him up and almost lynched him. He had ventured to a tea plantation. Alerted by a goodwill villager, the forest officers pulled him off death row at the last minute. After examination, he was released into Satchari National Park.¹⁹

CAMBODIA

February 24, 2020

Cardamom Protected Forest, Cambodia

Burnt remains of a pangolin caught in a fire near the gold digger's bivouac.²⁰

CHINA

YUNNAN PROVINCE

February 18, 2020

Kunming Changshui International Airport, Yunnan Province, China

Seizure of 4 pangolin scales (66.3 g) in the handbag of a Chinese passenger disembarking from Vientiane, Laos, on a China Eastern Airlines flight.²¹

March 4, 2020

Mengding, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Myanmar.

Seizure at the border of 530 g of scales in the toolbox of a motorcycle. The Chinese customs authorities have been tirelessly repeating the slogan "No to the smuggling of these magical animals" after the seizure of endangered animals or their parts.²²

Beginning of March 2020

Yuxi, Yunnan Province, China

Seizure of 158 pangolin scales weighing 773 g in an herbalist's shop. Immediate arrest of the trader. The action of the district forest police has a twofold objective: to preserve endangered animals and to prevent the Covid-19 epidemic from possibly spreading through wild animals or their parts. In Yunnan, pangolin scales are mostly smuggled through Myanmar.²³

GUANGXI ZHUANG AUTONOMOUS REGION AND ANHUI PROVINCE

March 9, 2020

Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and Anhui Province, China

820 kg of pangolin scales. "This seizure is the latest effort by Chinese customs and police to curb the smuggling of wildlife and wildlife parts, to fully support the fight against the new coronavirus (Covid-19) and to safeguard public health" (Official release). Nine arrests. The main suspect is accused of having organized the fraudulent introduction of the scales from a foreign country [presumably Viet Nam] by taking advantage of waterways or roads with little or no customs control. The scales were then transported by road to the provinces of Anhui (nearly 1,500 km) and Henan and sold to Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) laboratories.²⁴

PROVINCE DU GUANGDONG

March 5, 2020

Huadu District, Guangdong Province, China

Sentenced to 8 years in prison for attempting to market a pangolin.²⁵



SHANGHAI MUNICIPALITY

Mid-March 2020

Shanghai Municipality, China

Sentencing by People's Court No. 3 to 7 years in prison of a female citizen for attempting to introduce in November 2017 and again in May 2018, a total of 110.45 kg of pangolin scales. According to the official Xinhua agency, China has stepped up efforts in cracking down on illegal activities related to wildlife as researchers believe the virus "most likely" came from wild animals.²⁶



BEIJING MUNICIPALITY

February 28, 2020

Tongzhou District, Beijing Municipality, China

Sentenced to 8 months in prison for disseminating via WeChat and QQ false information about the transmission of Covid-19.²⁷



March 5, 2020

Beijing Municipality, China

The Supreme Court notes the intensification of the legal fight against wildlife trafficking. The instructions are clear. It is a matter of securing the health of the population and having a legal framework in the battle against the Covid-19 epidemic. In order to fight effectively, courts across the country have been instructed to deal first and foremost with cases of poaching and trafficking in wildlife that complicate the control of the epidemic and increase the sense of panic among the population.

The courts must deal with the easiest cases established by evidence and indisputable facts by shortening procedures. But if the facts are complex and suspects deny responsibility, courts must follow normal procedures in order to protect the legitimate rights of the population and avoid hasty convictions.²⁸

INDIA

STATE OF ODISHA

GANG

January 17 and February 4, 2020

Naraj, Cuttak District, State of Odisha, India

Naraj, has it become the new launching pad for pangolin scales in Odisha state and beyond ? The fish market serves as a cover for the sale of the scales. Successive arrests of Santosh Das and Hadibandhu Jena, of Mohammed Ali who was in possession of a dead female (7 kg) stashed in a fish tank, and then of Dilip Nayak and Tirthabasi Majhi. According to the official in charge of the investigation, the Naraj gang specializes in trafficking in scales, the small ones are sold on the local market, the large ones are transported and sold at the best price to wholesalers in Kolkata. The carrier is still wanted.²⁹

March 17, 2020

Sambalpur, Sambalpur District, State of Odisha, India

Arrest of a young man, Faizul Hassan, in possession of large numbers of scales. The police speak of a value of several hundred thousand rupees, in other words thousands of US\$. Dugging the case, investigators discover that Faizul is at the heart of a network that covers several districts of the state, extends to neighbouring Indian states, crosses the border and spills over into Myanmar with China in the offing.³⁰

ETAT DU BENGALE-OCCIDENTAL

February 24, 2020

Chawkuti, Cooch Behar District, State of West Bengal, India

Border Security Force (BSF) Jawans and forestry officers arrest Sahinur Alam, Zaheerul Islam, Dilwar Hussain and Abed Ali. They were in possession of a pangolin and about to smuggle him into Bangladesh.³¹

March 4, 2020

Nimti Domohani, Alipurduar District, State of West Bengal, India. Border with Bhutan.

Anwar Hossain stumbled upon a joint patrol by the Forest Department and the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB). A live pangolin was seized.³²

March 14, 2020

Hasimara, Alipurduar District, State of West Bengal, India. Border with Bhutan.

New seizure by the 53rd SSB Battalion. Jayanta Roy and Janak Roy were arrested in the evening at the city gas station. The 2 men were riding on motorcycles with a live pangolin.³³

STATE OF ASSAM

January 18, 2020

Dudhnoi, Goalpara District, State of Assam, India

Four arrests Saturday night on a roadside on the border between Meghalaya and Assam. The gang leader, a man named Lengra Garo, fled the scene. "Garo asked me to carry a bag to a dhaba [a roadside café]. I didn't know there was a pangolin inside," said one of the suspects.³⁴

STATE OF UTTAR PRADESH

March 6, 2020

Chitaurpur, Varanasi District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Overnight interception of an SUV. The 5 passengers were armed with a pistol and a rifle. Seizure of a pangolin in a canvas bag. The local police had been informed of the imminent passage of the traffickers by the WCCB (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) in New Delhi.³⁵

STATE OF WEST BENGAL, ASSAM, MAHARASHTRA, UTTARAKHAND AND ANDHRA PRADESH, INDIA

January 21, February 7, 8, 18 and 26 and March 13, 2020

State of West Bengal, Assam, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand and Andhra Pradesh, India

Tweets from the WCCB always with the motto "Help us save the pangolins". Seizures of 5 live pangolins, 2.9 kg of scales and 10 claws. Fourteen arrests.³⁶

STATE OF MAHARASHTRA

January 7, 2020

Panvel, Raigad District, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure of a 7 kg pangolin in a blue plastic barrel inside a SUV at the Panvel bus station where an appointment had been made between Kalpesh Jadhav the seller and an undercover policeman posing as a buyer. A tip-off was used to set up the trap.³⁷

January 9, 2020

Kalamboli, Raigad District, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure in an ambulance rushing towards Bombay of a rolled pangolin in a barrel covered with a blanket. Seven arrests. The 2 in the ambulance were the sellers, the 5 in the escort car were the buyers.³⁸

January 15, 2020

Vashi, Thane District, State of Maharashtra, India

Joint intervention by the police and the NGO Resquink Association for Wildlife Welfare (RAWW). Seizure in a car, around 2.30 a.m., of a pangolin hidden in a plastic bag. The 3 men, Krishna Padmakumar Chaugule, Nana Lakshman Waghmare and Mangesh Yashwant Waghmare aged 25, 30 and 39, had captured him in the Raigad district 150 km away. They are being held in police custody for up to 14 days. The pangolin suffers from dehydration and minor injuries. He is in the hands of the veterinarians and the RAWW team. It should be possible to release him in the coming days.³⁹

MALAYSIA

January 13, 2020

Bintulu, State of Sarawak, Malaysia

Tan Choon How and Kelvin Por Seong Wooi were sentenced to one year in prison and fined 4 million ringgits (355,500 US\$) for carrying 146 pangolins on their fishing boat (cf. "On the Trail" n°21 p. 47). Most of them were still alive at the time of the boarding. The typical scheme for these shipments is landing directly in Viet Nam or after transshipment at sea, then force-feeding on a farm and finally delivery by road to China via the Guangdong to supply restaurants.⁴⁰



March 31, 2020

Port Klang, Malaysia

Seizure of 6.16 tons of pangolin scales with an estimated value of 17.9 million US\$ or 2,900 US\$/kg. The final destination could only be China. Wildlife smuggling always goes to the country with the highest demand and the highest bidder (cf. Robin des Bois' "Atlas of the Business of Endangered Species", published by Arthaud in October 2019, in French only).

This is the largest scale seizure in Malaysia since the beginning of the year. The container was officially transporting cashew nuts. The voyage of a container ship from West Africa, e.g. Nigeria, to Malaysia takes about 2 months. So this cashew nut/pangolin shipment was organized between African traffickers and Chinese dealers in early 2020 after the outbreak of the Covid-19 epidemic in China and within the emergence of the global pandemic.

This cashew nut nexus had already been identified:

- in May 2019, in Viet Nam, with a seizure of 5.264 tons of scales distributed in 2 20-foot sea containers (151 bags were filled with scales and 63 with cashew nuts. The 2 containers had been shipped from Nigeria;
- in May 2018, in Viet Nam, with a seizure of 87 bags containing 3.3 tons of scales among bags of cashew nuts in transit to Cambodia;
- in September 2014, at Ho Chi Minh City airport in Viet Nam, with a seizure of 40 kg of raw ivory in a cashew nut package;
- in 2012, in Manila, Philippines, with a seizure of 6 rhino horns from a shipping container carrying cashew nuts from Mozambique.⁴¹

NEPAL

January 21, 2020

Hetauda, Makwanpur District, Bagmati Pradesh Province, Nepal

Seizure of 2.9 kg of scales. Three arrests at the bus station. The scales and other wildlife products seized in Nepal are destined for China via Tibet.⁴²

PHILIPPINES

January 25 – February 22, 2020

El Nido, Palawan Province, Philippines

Seizure then release of 20 pangolins into the forests. A 33-year-old man, Wilter Tenorio, held them in wooden cages and force fed them before resale. He had been under surveillance for several days by the CENRO (City Environment & Natural Resources Office).⁴³

VIET NAM

January 11, 2020

Quang Xuong District, Thanh Hoa Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of 16 live pangolins from the trunk of a taxi at dawn.⁴⁴

January 14, 2020

Huong Hoa District, Quang Tri Province, Viet Nam

Seizure at midnight in a bus connecting Laos and Viet Nam of 5 live pangolins. They were returned to the care of Save Vietnam's Wildlife. One of them died shortly afterwards.⁴⁵

January 15, 2020

Ha Tinh Province, Viet Nam

Conviction of 12 members of a pangolin traffickers' gang to 2 to 8 years jail and fines totaling 300 million dongs, or 13,000 US\$. Nguyen Thi Huong had bought 215 pangolins from a trafficker in Laos in January 2019, then recruited 11 couriers to transport them to his home in Ha Tinh province where they were forced and sold by weight to other middlemen. Most of the time, the pangolins are smuggled from Viet Nam to China via the border town of Mong Cai.⁴⁶



End of January 2020

Pu Mat National Park, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

Attempt to intercept a suspicious moped near the Khe Da Mai bridge. The 2 passengers fled into the forest, leaving a live pangolin, 8 kg of wild meat, 3 detonators and a stick of dynamite at the scene.⁴⁷

Beginning of February 2020

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Finding at a bus stop of a pangolin in a polystyrene box. Passenger fled as the police patrol approached. One more resident in the Cat Tien National Park shelter.⁴⁸

February 20, 2020

Dak Mil District, Dak Nong Province, Viet Nam

Fine equal to 13,600 US\$ for Chu Van Thi. On the way to his coffee plantation, he caught a 4 kg pangolin. He then tried to sell him in town and was caught in the act by the police.⁴⁹



EUROPE

SPAIN

Mid February 2020

Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas Airport, Spain

Seizure of 2 pangolins in a rotten state in the suitcases of a young woman coming from Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, with transit to Casablanca. She resides in Roquetas de Mar, Province of Almeria, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain. The Equatorial Guinea/Spain link is becoming clearer (see "On the Trail" n°24 p. 50).⁵⁰



January 19, 2020, Isheri, Nigeria



Mid-February 2020, Bouboui, Central African Republic



Corona
February 4, 2020, Shell Ultra City N1 South, South Africa



March 9, 2020, Guangxi and Anhui, China



March 31, 2020, Port Klang, Malaysia

Primates

AFRICA

KENYA

February 25, 2020

Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya

The baboon (genus *Papio*, Appendix II), who was described as the attacker of a tourist seriously injured by a bite, was baited with bread, taken away from the lodge where he was living in a semi-domestic state and killed.¹

REPUBLIQUE DU CONGO

Early January 2020

Department of Cuvette-Ouest, Republic of Congo

A first! We've already had the triumphant huntresses in Texas showing off a still-hot dead giraffe, or guys in Brazil brandishing jaguars as war catches, now it's the turn of proud Congolese to stage an adult gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla*, Appendix I) that they've just killed. We were spared the skinning. One day his skull will be found on the shelves of a collector in Australia or elsewhere.²



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Mid-January 2020

Itombwe National Reserve, South Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of Congo

"Primate are not pets." Working in the worst possible conditions, the reserve rangers seized a young gentle monkey (*Cercopithecus mitis*, Appendix II) in the hands of poachers. Today a cercopithecus, tomorrow a chimpanzee, or perhaps a gorilla who also populate this tormented province.³

Mid-March 2020

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

The 1,000 mountain gorillas (*Gorilla beringei beringei*, Appendix I) surviving in Congo, Uganda and Rwanda are likely to be contaminated by viruses or diseases carried by humans. The recommended physical distance in the parks between gorillas and tourists is 7 meters. This rule is violated in 98% of the human gorilla treks, according to a report by Conservation Through Public Health and Ohio University (USA). All collective "watching" exposes wildlife to the risk of disease or addiction. Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka, co-author of the study, notes that the lack of physical distancing is shared. In 60% of cases, it is due to tourists, and in 40%, to gorillas. In normal times - free from pandemic - these matters of metres are minor compared to matters of money. A permit to track gorillas is sold for 600 US\$ in Uganda and 1,000 US\$ in Rwanda.⁴

March 30, 2020

Democratic Republic of Congo

Rescue of a very young chimpanzee (*Pan spp.*, Appendix I) thanks to the police, Conserv Congo and the International Primates Protection League. He grew 1.4 kg in 15 days.⁵

AMERICA

BRAZIL

January 4, 2020

Tijucas, State of Santa Catarina, Brazil

The police discovered by chance in a house during a burglary, 2 common marmosets (*Callithrix jacchus*, Appendix II) stored in a kind of furniture that could contain 6 of them. Trafficking is suspected. The burglar has been arrested, but home users cannot be reached. White-brush marmosets are the most common monkey kept in zoos. The 2 specimens are waiting for a vacancy in the Florianopolis' CETAS (Centro de Triagem de Animais Silvestres) or in a zoo. They cannot be released into the local environment.⁶

February 11, 2020

Marabá, State of Pará, Brazil

The road check on BR-153 resulted in the rescue of a tufted capuchin (*Cebus apella*, synonymous with *Sapajus apella*, Appendix II). He was in a cage at the rear of the car. Arrest of the driver.⁷

March 9, 2020

Southwest Brazil

Mascotism always ends badly. The Capuchin (*Sapajus spp.* synonymous with *Cebus spp.*, Appendix II) was found at the bottom of a rubbish bin, in a plastic bag, half-dead. He was transported to the veterinary hospital in Brasilia. A 49-year-old man is charged with cruelty to animals.⁸

COLOMBIA

Mid-January 2020

Purificación, State of Tolima, Colombia

A baby Colombian night monkey (*Aotus lemurinus*, Appendix II) torn away from his mother while breastfeeding was for sale in the town market. A tourist bought him and gave him to the CAV (Centro de Atención y Valoración de fauna silvestre). Despite the care and attention of the staff, he did not survive the shock of separation from his family group. The Colombian night monkeys, who weigh between 0.5 and 1.3 kg as adults, are nocturnal, arboreal, frugivorous and insectivorous and monogamous. During the day, families of 2 to 5 members sleep in the hollows or vines of the trees. In announcing the premature death of the unfortunate, the CAV very appropriately recalled that “only forests can offer the warmth of a home to wildlife”.⁹

URUGUAY

February 22, 2020

Department of Montevideo, Uruguay

Seizure of a common marmoset (*Callithrix jacchus*, Appendix II) thanks to the alert of the NGO Coendú. Uruguay is not immune to mascotism. In 2019, the Dinama (Dirección nacional de medio ambiente), while acknowledging that it had insufficient means, seized 1,100 specimens of wildlife, most of which were indigenous birds, but the authorities deplore an increase in the smuggling of marmosets and howler monkeys from Brazil and Argentina.¹⁰

ASIA

CAMBODIA

Mid-February 2020

Sre Ambel, Koh Kong Province, Cambodia

Wildlife Alliance guards arrest 2 loggers, seize 12 chainsaws, dismantle a bivouac, and rescue a baby silvered langur (*Trachypithecus villosus*, Appendix II) who was on a leash.¹¹

CHINA

March 2020

Hainan Province, China

He was going home to Ledong on his motorcycle. He came from Dongfang. Along the way, he bought a rhesus monkey (*Macaca mulatta*, Appendix II) from a roadside vendor and wanted to make him into a pet. He was checked a little further on by a roadblock. He was sentenced to 8 months in prison and fined 2,000 yuan or 285 US\$. The prison sentence will possibly be applicable after 1 year of probation.¹²

INDIA

March 11, 2020

Murtuzaguda, Ranga Reddy District, State of Andhra Pradesh, India

A travelling circus exploited 2 grey langurs (*Semnopithecus entellus*, Appendix I) and 3 macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II). A witness noted that, during their training, they were beaten by 2 men and 2 women with thorny branches. The NGO Compassionate Society for Animals requested immediate intervention by the local authority. The monkeys were seized. If they regain their autonomy, they can be released in the Mrugavani National Park. In January, two monkeys were released in similar conditions and a third abandoned with a belt around its neck was found a few hours later on a roadside.¹³

March 11, 2020

Bhadrachalam, Bhadradri Kothagudem District, Telangana State, India

The executive officer of the gram panchayat (local government) engaged the services of 3 grey langurs (*Semnopithecus entellus*, Appendix I) including a lactating female to keep away from his premises the other wandering monkeys. The guards, who were chained, would have been “found” in the forest by the staff of the gram panchayat. The NGO Earth Quotient filed a complaint for detention and trafficking of a protected species. Instead of being “found”, the grey langurs were bought from poachers.¹⁴

INDONESIA - ORANGUTANS

January 10, 2020

Bohorok, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Province, Island of Sumatra, Indonesia

Rescue of 2 orphans, a young male of about 2 years old and a female less than a year old about to be sold as pets. They were handed over to the care of the SOCP (Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Programme). One day, perhaps after a long period of learning about wildlife, they will be released in a forest.¹⁵

January 13, 2020

Tanjung Pura, Ketapang Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

The fight between humans and orangutans has intensified since the forest fires of 2019. Orangutans who have not got a nasty bone in their bodies are getting closer to human communities. Rescue in the village of a mother and her 2-month-old baby who were increasingly exposed to lousy tricks. After a satisfactory health check, they were transferred on foot to Sentap Kancang' forests 5 km away.¹⁶





Mid-January 2020, Itombwe, Democratic Rep.of Congo



January 13, 2020, Tanjung Pura, Indonesia



Aotus lemurinus
Cf. mid-January 2020, Purificación, Colombia



February 26, 2020, Sibungke, Indonesia



February 2, 2020, Sungai Pelang, Indonesia

January 16, 2020

Muara Dua, Seruyan Regency, Central Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

Rescue in an oil palm plantation of a male, about 15 years old, 46 kg, tied by a rope to a wooden pole anchored in the ground.¹⁷

January 24, 2020

Sungai Pelang, Ketapang Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

The male, about 20 years old, took the liberty of entering into private gardens. This mango thief was apprehended without mercy by a local militia. Severely wounded in the hands and pilloried, he was freed by rescuers who relentlessly alleviated the bad fates inflicted on orangutans by clearing, firing and clandestine gold mining.¹⁸

January 26, 2020

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

The president of the regional council held a 3/4-month-old orangutan acquired from who knows whom 125 km away in the Batang Toru forest, the residual habitat of orangutans, in a cage in his home. Informed by the local press of this wildlife offence punishable by 5 years imprisonment and a fine of 100 million rupees, or 7,200 US\$, the BKSDA (Balai Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam) went to Nikson Nababan's home to be told that the small orangutan had been released by a servant near Batang Toru. No one knows whether this version is a fable or a reality. Either way, the orangutan's life is in danger. Fransiska Sulistyono of the NGO Orangutan Veterinary Advisory Group points out that captive baby orangutans are prone to respiratory and digestive problems and are also exposed to the risks of tuberculosis, herpes and typhoid fever. "It is highly risky to release an orangutan into the wild without understanding its health condition." "It's reckless to let it go by itself at such a young age." "For instance, it may enter a village. And this will become a new problem." All these worries and indignation do not prevent Nikson Nababan from sleeping the sleep of the just. As the first elected representative of the district, he claims to have "the right" to have a wild animal in his home. Local environmentalists have long noticed that politicians and the military suffer from the impunity syndrome in the eyes of the laws and regulations on the protection of wildlife.¹⁹

February 2, 2020

Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

According to Jefri Susianto, director of the Leuser Mountains Park, a man known by the initials I.G. is the bridgehead of international traffic. At his home, 2 baby orangutans were discovered.²⁰

February 2, 2020

Sungai Pelang, Ketapang Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

The male, female and child were fleeing the forest fire and had settled at the entrance of Sungai Pelang village.



They had been posted for 3 days in front of Mr. Purnomo's house, who had the good idea to alert the competent services. When they arrived on the spot, the mixed team of BKSDA and IAR observed the 3 climate refugees from a distance and noted that the mother was alarmingly thin and the child was about 3 years old. The mother and child were anesthetized and taken to the Sungai Awa center before being released into a living forest with real fruit and seed trees. As for the male, he is still quite strong and the rescuers think he can manage on his own for a few months. As far as possible, his behavior will be regularly monitored. The cooperation of the local population is hoped for. Since the fire season of 2019, the local forests have been devastated and the orangutans feed on dry or burnt wood bark.²¹

February 20, 2020

Arut Selatan, West Kotawaringin Regency, Central Kalimantan Province, Island of Borneo, Indonesia

Evacuation by pirogue of 2 orangutans, a mother (40 kg) and her young (6 kg). They were wandering near the community gardens and were at risk of being targeted at any time. They are under observation in the Pasir Panjang shelter.²²

February 26, 2020

Sibungke, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Rescue of an orangutan aged about 25 years. He was lost in the oil palm trees. He was resettled in the Singkil Swamp wetland, 2 km from the village.²³

March 16, 2020

Bukit Lawang, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Province, Island of Sumatra, Indonesia

The Covid-19 stay at home order did not prevent the rescuers from evacuating with all the usual precautions 2 male orangutans dived in an endless horizon of oil palm trees. Joint operation by the Leuser Park rangers, HOCRU (Human Orangutan Conflict Response Unit) and the BKSDA.²⁴

March 21, 2020

Pekanbaru, Riau Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

The Covid-19 crisis does not slow down the orangutan traffic. A "young man from the woods" a few months old was carted by bus between Medan and Pekanbaru, 700 km and 16 hours drive. In his small box, he was welcomed by law enforcement informed by an anonymous tip. Fortunately, otherwise the poor boy would continue his journey in a bus to Padang in the west of the island and 8 hours drive from Pekanbaru.²⁵



March 23, 2020, Bangkok, Thailand



January 21, 2020, Ile Saint-Denis, France



February 5, 2020, Ban Phu Nam Ron border post, Thailand



March 4, 2020, Sekoci, Indonesia



INDONESIA - EXCLUDING ORANGUTANS

March 4, 2020

Sekoci, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Province, Island of Sumatra, Indonesia

A slow loris (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I) trapped in a kitchen was rescued by forestry officers. Lorises are arboreal and nocturnal. They feed on flowers, insects, honey, eggs, and green nuts. This climber-clinger was confined to his garbage habitat for several months or years and will need a long period of re-training before possibly being returned to the forest. ²⁶

March 16, 2020

Batuteqi Protected Forest, Lampung Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Immersion in the rainforest of 13 slow loris (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I), 6 males and 7 females, after several weeks of awakening to wildlife and food autonomy. Initially, they are in a tree-covered enclosure and the capacities of each of them will be monitored, and if possible, on a case-by-case basis, they will be given a final exit voucher. Release into the wild of loris, cf. among others, "On the Trail" n°17 p.49, n°18 p.44, n°19 p.58, n°20 p.58 and 60, n°21 p.54, n°23 p.74. ²⁷

PAKISTAN

Beginning of March 2020

Clifton, Karachi, Sindh Province, Pakistan

The owner of the "pet shop" specialized in bred birds would have received as a "gift" the three olive baboons (*Papio anubis*, Appendix II), the father, the mother and the young. They will not see the savannahs of southern Africa again, will not fall under the assault of leopards or cheetahs, will not experience the horrors of animal experimentation and will end their days in the Karachi Zoo or Safari Park. The trader received no sanction other than a reprimand. No fine either. According to the director of wildlife protection in the Southern Province, the seizure of the three baboons offered for sale for 300,000 rupees (2,000 US\$) is a sufficient penalty. The authorities were pressured to act by social networks. ²⁸

THAILAND

February 5, 2020

Ban Phu Nam Ron border post, Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand. Border with Myanmar.

Seizure at the border post of 2 smoked slow loris (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I) intended for a festive meal from the stuff of a Burmese man. ²⁹

March 23, 2020

Bangkok, Thailand

The chimpanzee (*Pan spp.*, Appendix I) exported from Africa to Thailand in the 1980s narrowly missed to get life in irons. He was since locked up in a private school in Bangkok now doomed to closure by a real estate project. He is now in the WFFT (Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand)'s care. An enclosure for him alone is under construction. Its cost is 10,000 US\$. ³⁰

VIET NAM

Early January 2020

Viet Nam

Rescue thanks to ENV (Education for Nature - Viet Nam) of 3 macaques (*Macaca spp.*, Appendix I or II) exhibited and exploited by youtubers for one year. ³¹

March 2, 2020

Tuy Phong District, Binh Thuan Province, Viet Nam

Roadside rescue of a pygmy loris (*Nycticebus pygmaeus*, Appendix I). He escaped from a poacher's motorcycle. Wild and not very accommodating to mankind, he was promptly transferred to the Ta Cu reserve. ³²

March 2020

Hanoi, Viet Nam

When the Viet Nam Railway train from Binh Thuan to Hanoi arrived, the passenger with a black plastic bag was picked up by the police. He was carrying 2 black-shanked douc langurs (*Pygathrix nigripes*, Appendix I) alive. They were transferred to the Hanoi Wildlife Refuge. Live or dead, the species is used for petmania, healing, or food. ³³

EUROPE

GERMANY

January 17, 2020

Mienenbittel, State of Lower Saxony, Germany

Administrative closure of the animal torture centre in Mienenbittel (see "On the Trail" n° 27 p. 69). Two other sites of the LPT Company (Laboratory of Pharmacology and Toxicology) in Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein are in the sights of the NGO Soko Tierschutz. ³⁴

FRANCE

January 21, 2020

Ile Saint-Denis, Department of Seine-Saint-Denis, France

New rescue of a Barbary macaque (*Macaca sylvanus*, Appendix I) in the 93, in the immediate suburbs of Paris. He was attached to a radiator on the tenth floor of a building. "30 Million d'Amis" entrusted him to its partner AAP in the Netherlands. The private individual is liable to one year in prison and a 15,000 € fine, or more than 16,780 US\$, a punishment never before applied, such as 5 years in prison and 100 million rupees for a captive orangutan in Indonesia. ³⁵

Guanacos and Vicunas

AMERICA

ARGENTINA

January 27, 2020

Caleta Olivia, Province of Santa Cruz, Argentina

An urban policeman is arrested by rural policemen on patrol on National Road 3. He was transporting 18 guanaco quarters (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II). The meat was burned to ashes in a municipal dump in the presence of two local residents designated as witnesses.¹

Early February 2020

Bermejo, Department of Caucete, Province of San Juan, Argentina

Seizure of 50 kg of guanaco offal (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II) in the back of the pick-up truck at a roadblock.²

Mid-February 2020

Valcheta, Province of Río Negro, Argentina

Seizure in the back of a pick-up truck of 10 guanacos (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II) and a puna rhea (*Pterocnemia pennata*, Appendix II). Four arrests.³

March 1, 2020

On the RN26, Province of Chubut, Argentina

Seizure at kilometre 50 of road 26 in the Chevrolet's trailer of 13 adult guanacos (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II), 2 juvenile guanacos and one rhea (*Rhea*, Appendix I or II) freshly killed. Eight blood-stained, exhausted and mistreated greyhounds were also seized. Wild animals whose meat was not considered fit for human consumption or in zoos were burned and buried in a landfill.⁴

BOLIVIA

February 19, 2020

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

Seizure in a private home of 20 fresh vicuna (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix II) fleeces. One arrest. The intervention of the POFOMA (Forestry and Environmental Conservation Police) was triggered by an alert on social networks.⁵

PERU

Mid January 2020

District of Huancaraylla, Víctor Fajardo Province, Department of Ayacucho, Peru

"The ruthless poachers of vicunas have resumed their activities." More than 50 carcasses (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix II), sheared and partially dismembered, have been discovered by shepherds. On the local market, vicuna wool sells for 350-500 US\$ per kg.⁶

January-February 2020

District of Sacsamarca, Province of Huanca Sancos and District of Huancaraylla, Province of Víctor Fajardo, Region of Ayacucho, Peru

Poaching of at least 60 vicuñas (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix II) followed by the shearing of wool.⁷



March 3, 2020

Peru

Peru will conduct a new census of vicunas in 2021. The last one was done in 2012 and reports more than 200,000 specimens distributed, in descending order, in the regions of Ayacucho, Puno, Huancavelica, Junín, Cuzco, Arequipa, Apurímac and Lima on the high Andean plateaus at a minimum altitude of 3,200 m. On the occasion of World Wildlife Day, the Serfor expert cited among the threats to the species the fragmentation of habitats, mining activities and climatic disturbances "among others" without formally naming poaching.⁸

Felines

“On the Trail” n°28 The value of felines or felines parts on the black market, according to media or official sources



Animal	Part	US\$	Country	Ref.
Tiger	Skin	70,096	India, State of West Bengal	8
		6,460	Indonesia	13
		200 - 600		14
	Bones (kilo)	150		
	Canine	40 - 75		
Leopard	Skin	10,170	Namibia	5*
		28,038	India, State of Uttar Pradesh	33
		2,000	Thailand	68*
	Teeth	66	Sri Lanka	52
	Fat (per bottle)	138		
Jaguar	Penis	10,000	Mexico	64
	Canine	3,000		
Caracal	Living	1,650	France	68

* Cf. chapter Multi-species

TIGERS

Tigers (*Panthera tigris*) are listed under CITES Appendix I.

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 22, 2020

State of Oklahoma, United States of America

Sentencing of Joseph Maldonado-Passage, alias “Joe Exotic” to 22 years in prison for attempting to recruit a killer to “get rid” of Carole Baskin, operator of the Florida Animal Sanctuary and animal rights activist, and for killing 5 tigers and illegally trading in tiger cubs and other wild animals (see “On the Trail” #23 p.150). “Wildlife crime is often connected with other criminal activity such as fraud, narcotics, money-laundering and smuggling. Mr. Maldonado-Passage added murder-for-hire,” said Edward Grace, deputy director of U.S. Fish and Wildlife. Under the confusing penalties, Joseph Maldonado-Passage’s detention will not exceed 13 years. The Maldonado-Passage Zoo in Oklahoma, where the tigers were killed, now bears the Wynnewood Exotic Animal Park sign and continues to house tigers.¹



January 30, 2020

Los Angeles, State of California, United States of America

Nicholas Perkins, a professional model, was sentenced to 36 months probation, fined 3,900 US\$, ordered to pay 2,000 US\$ in damages to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife of California, ordered to attend a 4-hour educational course on animal cruelty and ordered to pay 52,000 US\$ in veterinary fees for the seizure of a diseased Bengal tiger cub from his home in November 2017 and its placement in Moorpark College Zoo.²



MEXICO

January 13, 2020

Matehuala, State of San Luis Potosí, Mexico

Seizure of a Siberian tiger cub kept on a leash by his master and regularly gone out for some fresh air in a public garden.³

February 13, 2020

Angel Albino Corzo International Airport, Tuxtla Gutierrez, State of Chiapas, Mexico

After verification, Profepa inspectors found that the packed Bengal tiger cub in the freight area had proper papers. An inspection of the “owner’s” home was to follow.⁴

INDIA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

January 5, 7, 8 and 10, 2020

Golauli, Sattari Forest, Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary, North Goa District, State of Goa, India

For some time now, cows and other livestock grazing in the forest by members of the Dhangar-gouly pastoral tribe are attacked by felines. The forest services are reported to have been informed and would have not taken any measures to reduce the conflict.

The first victim, a tigress about 4 years old, was found on Sunday on a riverbank by pilgrims on their way to a cave to pay homage to a sâdhu. Monday's post-mortem in situ did not confirm the hypothesis of poisoning. Viscera and bones were sent to laboratories in Hyderabad and Deradun to try to find out more. The only obvious finding on the decomposed body is that the claws on all four legs have been amputated. A few hours later, investigators found the disfigured carcass of a cub buried in a ravine a few metres from his mother. On Wednesday, a second tigress and a tiger cub were dragged up in the forest a few metres away from each other, dead for several days.

On Friday 10 January, after partial confessions, Vitho Pawne and Malo Pawne were placed in custody. They admit to having buried the 4 tigers and say they do not know what they died of. Bomo Pawne, Jyotiba Pawne, and Bhiro Pawne were arrested within hours. They are all from the same family. They are 22, 25, 45, 50 and 60 years old and suspected of poisoning the tigers in retaliation.

Their wives then entered the game. They detailed to the local deputy and the village council all the difficulties they faced since the arrest of the 5 suspects. One pupil was unable to attend the entrance exam for the next class. Her father, who is in detention, could not accompany her through the forest. Alone, she is afraid of being attacked by wild animals. The men in detention can no longer fetch the medicinal plants to treat an 80-year-old elder and it is not possible to transfer her to the hospital because no family member could visit her and especially the men are the only ones to provide for the financial needs and safety of the families.

The 5 members of the Pawne clan were released on bail on Friday 17 January by the local court, a bail of 15,000 rupees (205 US\$) for each of them, with the obligation to report every 10 days to the investigators' office in Maloli until the time of trial. At the same time, Vitho Pawne's family received Rs.15,000 from the Goa Prime Minister's support fund to compensate for the loss of a cow attacked by a tiger.⁵



January 6, 2020

Taluk de Koppa, Chikmagalur District, State of Karnataka, India

Vinay Guruji, a self-proclaimed but unspiritual guru, was proud of himself when he posted a picture on social networks showing him sitting at home on a tiger skin. Following the protests, the Forest Department today invited himself into his ashram and seized the skin. He claims to have a certificate of origin but needs a few days to produce it. The Forest Department is waiting for it without conviction. The man faces a sentence of 3 to 7 years in prison and a minimum 10,000 rupees fine (140 US\$).⁶

January 11, 13 and 14, 2020

Mudjha, Chandrapur District, State of Maharashtra, India

The first impression of the rangers was the right one: those responsible for the death of the tiger whose carcass had been discovered near the village were not professional poachers. The skin was intact and the head had been summarily cut off. All four legs, canines and tail were missing. The carcass of a cow found nearby had been poisoned but the feline's entrails tests could not determine with what product. A quick investigation in the village led to the initial arrest of the cow's owner, Bajirao Mashakhetri, and cowboy Rakesh Zade. They detained two paws. Two days later Yashwant Bobate fell in turn, followed by Narayan Nagpure, Bandu Pal, Dadaji Naghade, Charandas Hulke and Yashwant Chimurkar. All are inhabitants of the village. Thirteen claws and 3 canines were seized; the defendants claim to have burned 5 claws and a broken canine. The tail was not found.⁷



January 23, 2020

Kolkata, Kolkata District, State of West Bengal, India

Arrest of Aninda Mukherjee, Tarak Haldar and Ebrahim Mondol in a hotel room by the WCCB and the Forest Department. Mukherjee appears to be the leader. The 3 traffickers were seeking to trade an ancient tiger skin sewn on cloth for 5 million rupees (70,096 US\$).⁸

January 28, 2020

Kapsi, Chandrapur District, State of Maharashtra, India

Suresh Gedam, Ramesh Bhojar and Ajay Meshram had tapped an 11,000-volt line passing through the Saoli forest a month ago to stretch a poaching cable. A wild boar and a big cat had been electrocuted. Taking advantage of an intelligence tip, the forest rangers picked up the three men and placed them in pre-trial detention. Two kilos of bones and a skull were seized.⁹



TIGERS - FOLLOWED

February 22, 2020

Hyderabad, Hyderabad District, Telangana State, India

The tiger panoply is complete, and completely bogus. Shaik Mohammed Mustaq and Mohammed Abdul Kadeer made up a goat skin and then made fake fangs and claws. They were cornered by the police in the old town while searching for a naive customer.¹⁰



End of February 2020

Gundlupet, Chamarajanagar District, State of Karnataka, India

After 12 years of proceedings, Syed Aslam was sentenced for possession of a tiger skin to 3 years in prison and a fine of 10,000 rupees (139.5 US\$) with an additional 2 months in prison if not acquitted. On January 2, 2008 he was caught by rangers while carrying the skin in a bag. The feline had been poached in Nagarhole National Park by a certain Venkata armed with a homemade rifle, from whom investigators seized the animal's 18 claws. Charged with poaching, his case was separated.¹¹



March 22, 2020

Gabura, Satkhira District, Khulna Division, Bangladesh

Search in the evening at Amzad Khan's house. Police and forest rangers discover 52 bones -mainly vertebrae - of one or more mammals, a stag horn head and a tiger tooth. It is believed that he has been trading in animal parts for some years. He is strategically located on the edge of the Sundarbans, the largest mangrove forest in the world shared between Bangladesh and India, listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. An expertise of the bones is requested by the investigators. Amzad Khan faces up to 3 years in prison and a fine of 300,000 takas (3,530 US\$).¹²

INDONESIA

Early January 2020

Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Seizure of a tiger skin, skull, bones and canines. Arrest in flagrante delicto of a man who was trying to sell the skin for a sum equal to 6,460 US\$. The tiger was shot in the heart with a throwing weapon. The arrest is correlated to the tiger skin and fetuses affair of December 2019 (cf. "On the Trail" n°27 p.71).¹³

GANG

February 15, 2020

Riau Islands Province, Island of Sumatra, Indonesia

Arrest of 3 conveyors of tiger parts: a skin and a bag of bones. They were paid 2 million rupees (165 US\$) each by a certain A.T. to deliver to a certain H.N. They were driving a minibus. They had left from Muara Tebo in the province of Jambi, 350 km from Riau. A.T. and H.N. are wanted. On the market of Sumatra and Java Islands, tiger skin is sold for the equivalent of 200 to 600 US\$ depending on the size and quality, a kilo of bones for 150 US\$ and a canine for 40 to 75 US\$ depending on the length.¹⁴

February 19, 2020

Selingsingan, Seluma Regency, Bengkulu Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Death of a tigress strangled by a trap 6 km from the village. She was about 3 years old. She was about to give birth.¹⁵



March 29, 2020

Kabupaten of Dharmasraya, West Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia



This tigress of about 5 years old may never see the forest again. It's hanging by a thread. She was extracted from a trap on March 29th in the province of Riau. Her fore right leg was encircled to the bone. Fortunately, the tendons did not cut and it is not impossible that the nicknamed Corina will manage to re-educate herself in her comfortable enclosure with a small pond.¹⁶



Panthera tigris ssp. tigris



January 13, 2020, Matehuala, Mexico



January 6, 2020, Taluk de Koppa, India



January 15, 2020, Hanoi, Viet Nam

TIGERS - FOLLOWED

NEPAL

January 13, 2020

Shankhamul, Lalitpur District, Bagmati Province, Nepal

The police took hold of Mahesh Adhikari and the Bengal tiger skin he was concealing in his hotel room. The origin is being investigated.¹⁷

VIET NAM

January 15, 2020

Hanoi, Viet Nam

For Nguyen Huu Hue, the gang leader, 6 years in prison. For Phan Van Vui and Ho Anh Tu, the minions, 5 years in prison. They had been caught transporting 7 frozen tiger bodies to Hanoi in July 2019. They were buying the tigers from Laos. Each body weighed 300 kg (see "On the Trail" n°26 p.63).¹⁸



LIONS

African lions (*Panthera leo*) are listed under CITES Appendix II, Indian lions (*Panthera leo persica*) under Appendix I.

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

January 3, 2020

Rustenburg, North West Province, South Africa

Serial death on a lion farm under the name "Predators Rock Bush Lodge". Again, the poisoned chicken trick was used to bait the 8 lions, 2 males and 6 females. Two cubs died in the process. The owner assumes that they died during the night after drinking their agonizing mother's toxic milk. 32 paws were amputated by poachers and the 8 heads of the adults were cut off and taken away. A 2-day-old cub survived the slaughter. He is now bottle-fed.¹⁹



January 6 and 7, 2020

Rustenburg and Mabule, North West Province, South Africa

- Arrest of 4 people who were trying to sell lion's paws for 300,000 rand (20,400 US\$). It has not been proved that the paws came from the massacre of January 3.

- Consecutive arrest of 4 new suspects holding lion bones. The animal was allegedly poached in Botswana and his paws and bones brought back to South Africa. The teeth are missing.²⁰

KENYA

February 10, 2020

Mara Conservancy, Nakuru County, Kenya

After being attacked with a spear, the male lion accused by the shepherds of attacking the herds was located by a caretakers' team a few days later. He suffered a large wound on his left flank and 3 cracked ribs. After anaesthesia, the affected area was shaved, the wound was washed, disinfected and sutured. Antibiotics were administered. Just before being spotted and operated on, the lion was with a brother at lunch on an impala's carcass. Wounded yes, but still valiant. Favourable prognosis.²¹

February 23, 2020

Oltiasika, Chyulu Hills National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya

Strangled by the steel lace of a trap, member of a pride accused of stalking cattle, the lion was followed for 24 hours and anaesthetised around 4am. It was pitch-dark and difficult to extricate him. Favourable prognosis.²²



ZAMBIA

Early February 2020

Chongwe, Lusaka Province, Zambia

Sentencing of Clement Nyangu, 20, and David Daka, 22, to 5 years in prison with hard labour for illegal possession of a lion skin.²³



EUROPE

FRANCE

January 15, 2020

Vinça, Department of Pyrénées-Orientales, France

Seizure of a lion cub in a private home. Origin unknown.²⁴

January 29, 2020

Segré-en-Anjou Bleu, Department of Maine-et-Loire, France

Seizure in the menagerie of the Bostok circus during an extended stay in the town of a lion aged about 15 years and placement in the Tonga Terre d'Accueil refuge, about 50 km from Lyon. The director of the circus is charged with unauthorized opening of an establishment presenting non-domestic animals to the public.²⁵

LEOPARDS

Leopards (*Panthera pardus*) are listed under CITES Appendix I.

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

February 5, 2020

Burgersfort, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Arrest of an 80-year-old man in possession of the skin and the 4 paws of a leopard. He was released on parole pending trial.²⁶

BENIN

February 7, 2020

Bohicon, Department of Zou, Benin

Arrest of 2 individuals riding on motorbikes and transporting a leopard skin for sale.²⁷

CAMEROON

February 24, 2020

Between Bafoussam and Bandjoun, Western Region, Cameroon

During the inspection of a car at a petrol station, 5 leopard skins are found in the rear passenger's bag. This is a small shopkeeper attached to the fresh market of Bafoussam. He was wearing an ivory bracelet on his wrist.²⁸

KENYA

January 20, 2020

Nyeri, Laikipia County, Kenya

A female leopard that had more or less settled on the campus of Dedan Kimathi University to pursue small domestic or wild preys had attracted almost general hostility. Falling into a trap from which she had gotten free, she was lamed with one paw. Before being ambushed to death, she was captured, freed from the scrap metal and transferred to the clinic. Full release into the wild is hoped for.²⁹



ZAMBIA

Early February 2020

Kaoma, Western Province, Zambia

Enock Musole Musenge was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment with hard labour for illegal possession of a leopard skin.³⁰



AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 21, 2020

State of Nevada, United States of America

Sentencing of Robert Barkman to 60 days in prison and a one-year probation for having sold and shipped a leopard skull between January and October 2016 to Arongkron Malasukum, a resident of New York. During this period, he admitted having sold 6,000 US\$ worth of protected animal parts (cf. "On the Trail" n°19 p.74 and n°22 p.71).³¹



ASIA

INDIA

GANG

January 3, 2020

Karli, Dantewada District, Chhattisgarh State, India

It was the deputy director of the Indravati Tiger Reserve, NK Sharma, who alerted the police. He reported that a band was transporting leopard and tiger skins in the district. Two teams of police officers were deployed, one in plain clothes for arrests and another in uniform for protection. Masram Kidiyami, Shankar Poyam, Lalu, Arjun Barsa, Ladruram, Ramnath, and Tamo Deepchandra fell into the trap in the evening. They were riding with edged weapons on 4 motorcycles and were carrying 4 leopard skins. Masram Kidiyami is a deputy police officer and Shankar Poyam is a "gopniya sainik", a secretly appointed informer. All were charged.³²

FAMILY AFFAIRS / REPEATED OFFENSE

January 8, 2020

Deoband, Saharanpur District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Arrest of Amit and Abhay Tandon and Rakesh Dhiman in possession of a skin estimated at 2 million rupees on the international market (28,038 US\$). They bought it in Dehradun, capital of the neighboring state of Uttarakhand, from a certain Ashutosh Pandit who is said to be their usual supplier.³³

LEOPARD - FOLLOWED

January 9, 2020

Dillibari, Dibrugarh District, State of Assam, India

The adult leopard was suspected of having injured 5 people and devoured livestock for several months in the area. Today he reportedly attacked on a tea plantation in the village of Atal Rangdhali workers who chased him until he threw himself into the Disang River. But once he reached the other bank, people from the village of Dillibari beat him to death and then cut him into pieces and savoured him on another tea plantation. A local belief is credited leopard meat healing properties. According to Santanu Gogoi, an officer of the District Forestry Department, " The leopard was very tired after swimming across to the other side and was easily trapped by villagers."³⁴

January 11, 2020

Subhash Pally Jaigaon, Alipurduar District, State of West Bengal, India

A joint patrol of SSB paramilitaries and the Forest Department came across two Bhutanese citizens carrying a 1.35 m skin. The traffickers and the trophy were handed over to the forestry division of Kodali Basti -Jaldapara.³⁵

January 19, 2020

Udham Singh Nagar District, Uttarakhand State, India

A plastic bag discarded in a village contained a rotting male leopard of about 2 years old. For the forest administration, this was not the work of a poacher because the corpse had not been mutilated. He was the victim of reprisals after recent attacks on cattle and dogs. The cause of his death could not be precisely determined, but the forest rangers favoured electrocution or poisoning. The liver, kidneys and other viscera were sent to the Bareilly forensic laboratory to solve the mystery.³⁶

January 24, 2020

Amgaon, Gondia District, State of Maharashtra, India

An inquiry is opened to identify the person(s) responsible for the death of an adult leopard found drifting in Nand Lake today. For the rangers, the death of the cat was not natural, he would have been killed elsewhere - perhaps by electrocution - and his body thrown into the water. A necropsy was ordered.³⁷

January 30, 2020

Samuktola, Jalpaiguri District, State of West Bengal, India

Arrest of a trafficker holding a skin. The operation was led by the WCCB, Sashastra Seema Bal paramilitaries and the Forest Department.³⁸

February 4, 2020

Ghonaspur, Satara District, State of Maharashtra, India

According to Babu Rakhmaji Jangam, on January 13 a leopard had infiltrated the village and attacked one of his cows. Instead of warning the authorities, he decided to take revenge. With 3 accomplices, he spread an insecticide on a carcass or in a pond in the forest frequented by the feline. Two days later, they found him dead and buried him after pulling out his claws. Their misdeed would have gone unnoticed if an informer had not touched a word of it to the Forest Department. A raid on the Babu's house resulted in the seizure of six claws. He gave the names of his accomplices who each held 3 claws. The leopard's carcass was exhumed for necropsy. The 4 suspects were held in pre-trial detention for 5 days by the local court. One claw remains missing.³⁹



GANG

Night of February 4 to 5, 2020

Dehradun, Dehradun District, Uttarakhand State, India

Dharam Singh and Chandar Singh Chauhan are believed to be members of a gang of poachers and traffickers operating in several states. Federal Wildlife Crime Control Bureau agents assisted by local police caught them transporting a 2.4-meter-long skin with the intention of selling it in the city. They reportedly killed the leopard about a month ago near Chakrata in the same district.⁴⁰

February 6, 2020

Katni, Katni District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Seizure of a skin and 8 claws during a joint operation by the WCCB Federals, the Forest Department and the Madhya Pradesh Police Special task force. Arrest of one man.⁴¹

February 13, 2020

Jankaur, Una District, Himachal Pradesh State, India

The circumstances of his death are unclear. A 4-year-old male had made his roar heard in the morning near the village. Taking refuge on a tree he was surrounded by villagers. Alerted, the forestry division of Una dispatched a team equipped with a cage and a hypodermic syringe gun. The leopard was anaesthetized but died shortly afterwards. A snare trap made of a scooter clutch cable was wrapped around his abdomen and one of his legs was injured. He appeared malnourished. The anesthetic may have finished him off.⁴²





February 5, 2020, Burgersfort, South Africa



February 18, 2020, Halwani, India



Night of February 4 to 5, 2020, Dehradun, India



February 6, 2020, Katni, India



February 13, 2020, Jankaur, India



January 28, 2020, Abbasabad, Iran

LEOPARD - FOLLOWED

February 15, 2020 Bombade, North Goa District, State of Goa, India

Rescue of a male captured in a snare trap made with a clutch wire snare laid on private property. Supervised by forestry officer Deepak Tandel, the operation mobilized a veterinary officer, a team of anaesthetists from the Bondla Zoo and a special protection squad of the North Goa forest division. Once freed, the leopard was taken to Bondla Zoo for a few days of observation before being released back into the wild.⁴³

A Special Operations Group (SOG) unit assisted by the WCCB (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) intercepted 3 men in possession of a skin on the Lamachaur bridge.⁴⁴



January 6, 8 and 10 and February 20, 2020 Bijnor District, Moradabad District and Budaun District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

The spectre of a man-eating leopard has haunted the Bijnor district and beyond since 27 November 2019 when a woman collecting fodder was fatally attacked in Najina Dehat. The alleged serial killer in spotted livery reportedly struck again on 17 December in Premपुरi, 19 December in Alam Saray and 25 December in Mohandiya.

On 6 January, a student returning home in Bhogpur was fatally attacked around 1 p.m. on the edge of a sugar cane field. The villagers and the victim's family angrily surrounded the field. They ended up finding the male leopard, aged about 7 years, and riddled him with bullets and finished him off with sticks. To testify to his death, the leaders marched through the village dragging the body. 80 villagers who took part in the lynching were quickly identified thanks to videos broadcast on social networks. They were heard by the forestry services and are liable to be charged with poaching a protected species and cruelty to animals if it is not proven that the leopard was indeed responsible for the deaths of 6 people in Bijnor district.

On 8 January around 1 p.m., a leopard was found dead in a ravine near the village of Kaanth in Moradabad district.

On 12 January, in the village of Jarifpur Gadhiya, Budaun district, a 16-year-old boy playing near a sugar cane field and a 60-year-old man relieving himself from a natural urge in another field were attacked by a leopard without endangering their lives. About 20 villagers located the feline, cornered him in a cul-de-sac and killed him with stones and sticks. To be sure of his death, they brought a tractor and lacerated the body with a mower.

While taking into account the distress of the populations, the forestry services deplore the fact that the "leopard alert" launched at the end of November 2019 was not sufficiently listened to and that vulnerable and isolated people continued to expose themselves unnecessarily to chance encounters with leopards (see the "Plan for the Prevention and Management of Conflicts between Humans and Leopards", "On the Trail" n°15 pp.58-59).

On 20 February, it was announced that the leopard, victim of the popular vindictiveness in the village of Bhogpur on 6 January, was indeed responsible for the deaths of 6 people in the district of Bijnor. This conviction was forged by comparing fingerprints and photographic evidence from trap cameras at and around the scene of the attacks. The family of the young Prashant Kumar will receive an indemnity of 500,000 rupees (6,831 US\$) and the forestry services continue to alert the population on the gestures and postures necessary to reduce the risks of conflict with leopards and surprise attacks. They are astonished that Prashant was able to return home alone, walking along sugar cane fields in contradiction to the instructions received by all the school staff in the district while in the afternoon he had to attend courses. The sugar cane fields in Bijnor district are reportedly regularly visited by about 100 leopards.⁴⁵

February 27, 2020 Lohaghat, Champawat District, Uttarakhand State, India

Rajendra Nath is a former military man now a security guard in a bank. He is also a fearsome poacher and trafficker who often travels to Nepal. He was arrested today on his scooter in possession of 3 skins: one of 2.08 m long, another of 2.26 m, a third of 2.13 m. The leopards were between 7 and 9 years old. Rajendra Nath had poached them in the forest of Kali Kumaon with his legally registered rifle. The police are now trying to identify his contact(s) in Nepal.⁴⁶

March 4, 2020 Garhakachhaar, Chitrakoot District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

An indiscretion led the forestry officers on the trail of Bhaiyyalal, a young man from the village. He had participated on February 28 with 7 accomplices in trapping a leopard in a net connected to an electric cable. The poachers had then dismembered the animal and shared the pieces among themselves. Bhaiyyalal was questioned today and gave the names of his companions. Three of them were quickly arrested, the other four are wanted. The leopard's remains have yet to be found.⁴⁷



LEOPARD - FOLLOWED

March 11, 2020

Sirsa, Mancherial District, Telangana State, India

Kondagorla Tirupati, Sadimik Gangaram and Veladi Tulsiram arrived from neighboring Maharashtra with a skin for sale.



They had electrocuted the leopard after tracking him near the Sironcha forest, then skinned him and plucked off his claws. But the three farm workers were too talkative. Someone denounced them and a team of policemen came to apprehend them in the village where they were stopping.⁴⁸

March 30, 2020

Da Gayan Gaon, Jorhat District, State of Assam, India

The drama unfolded in full Covid-19 stay at home order. The outcome was fatal to a leopard of about 8 years old shot by a policeman. The animal is said to have broken into a house, triggering a family panic quickly fed by several thousand villagers who came out of their homes with farming tools and bamboo canes called "lathis". Police reportedly fired shots into the air in an attempt to control the crowd, only stirring up anger. A team of veterinarians from Kaziranga National Park arrived in an emergency attempt to anesthetize the feline with a hypodermic dart gun, but missed several times. According to some versions, the panicking leopard attacked and wounded 3 people, including a border guard and a policeman, who fired. According to others, the angry crowd threatened the police, who killed the cat to quell the mob. An investigation was launched, but it is unlikely to be successful.⁴⁹

IRAN

January 28, 2020

Abbasabad, Mazanderan Province, Iran

Discovery of a leopard carcass with no bullet marks and no open wounds. According to the local authorities, the feline was probably the victim of a poisoned domestic animal carcass that had been maliciously deposited on his forest path.⁵⁰



PAKISTAN

January 15, 2020

Sarbanda, Tehsil de Matta, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan

Inhabitants of the mountain village alerted by the screams of Lal Mohammad and Abdali ran up and opened fire on a leopard considered a public danger. The 2 human victims were transferred to the hospital in Saidu and the body of the animal victim is undergoing a post-mortem examination.⁵¹

SRI LANKA

February 16, 2020

Seeduwa, Western Province, Sri Lanka

Iraki Kodithuwakku launched an alert on the sale via the Internet of leopard teeth (US\$ 66 per tooth), leopard fat (US\$ 138 per bottle), claws but also worked ivories. The sellers say that the by-products and parts of the leopard come from a fight lost by the cat against a bear. At the end of their fable, they pleaded guilty and were both fined between 2 and 180,000 rupees, or nearly 1,000 US\$.⁵²



CHEETAHS

Cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus*) are listed under CITES Appendix I.

ASIA

SAUDI ARABIA

Mid-January 2020

Jizan, Jizan Province, Saudi Arabia

Seizure by a patrol near the border with Yemen of 3 guardworks threaded in rice bags. Arrest of the smugglers. The kittens would have been transferred to an appropriate reserve.⁵³

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

February 2020

Emirate of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Border with Saudi Arabia.

Seizure of 4 cheetah cubs aged around 6 weeks old and in poor health. The strongest ones were entrusted to the Al Ain zoo. Quarantined, they have been tested negative for a coronavirus which causes fatal infectious peritonitis in felines fatal in 60% of cases. They have been registered in the Zoological Information Management System and could be integrated into a legal breeding programme. The fate of the 2 other cheetah cubs has not been communicated by the authorities.⁵⁴

SNOW LEOPARDS

Snow leopards (*Panthera uncia*) are listed under CITES Appendix I.

ASIA

MONGOLIA

Early February 2020

Emeelt, Municipality of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Arrest of 2 sellers of a snow leopard skin and its frozen flesh in the suburbs of the Mongolian capital. There are less than 1000 living snow leopards in the country of 1.5 million km² and more than 3.1 million inhabitants.⁵⁵

End of March 2020

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Seizure of 4 snow leopard skins. "Several people" who were trying to sell them in the district of Songinokhairkhan were arrested.⁵

BENGAL LEOPARD CATS

Bengal leopard cats (*Prionailurus bengalensis*) are listed under CITES Appendix II, with the exception of the populations of Bangladesh, India and Thailand which are in Appendix I.

ASIA

INDIA

March 15, 2020

Wageasi, East Garo Hills District, Meghalaya State, India

The showing off has lost them. Golai Marak, Jonesh D. Shira and Jaila Marak had proudly displayed themselves on Facebook after trapping a Bengal leopard cat. The two photos posted showed the animal captured in a snare and two men carrying him with the steel wire around his necks. Alerted by netizens, the Wildlife Department sent rangers to pick up the poachers in the village. The feline's skin was seized. The 3 men had feasted on his flesh.⁵⁷



MALAYSIA

January 25, 2020

Lundu, Sarawak State, Malaysia, Border with Indonesia.

A man was keeping 2 "wild cats" in a misery pen while waiting to auction them off via the Internet. The species was not indicated by the authorities. They are probably Bengal leopard cats.⁵⁸

VIET NAM

January 14, 2020

Can Tho Municipality, Phong Dinh Province, Viet Nam

A leopard cat is for sale on the roadside. He is seized by the police and released the next day in the forest where he had been captured to end up as a main dish and waistcoat. The operation was triggered by a faithful ENV member.⁵⁹

FISHING CATS

Fishing cats (*Prionailurus viverrinus*) are listed under CITES Appendix II.

ASIA

INDIA

January 20, 2020

Konnagar, Hooghly District, State of West Bengal, India

A CCTV installed on a building had detected this morning a cat passing in front of a truck. A rumour that it was a tiger had taken over the city. Some even claimed to have heard him roar. A group of residents formed a militia and finally discovered him in the evening and beat him to death with sticks and bamboo. When Forest Department agents arrived they found the body of a fishing cat, much smaller than a tiger. He was only 70 to 85 cm long. He lives along rivers and streams in reedbeds and jungles, feeding on molluscs, crustaceans, frogs, fish and small mammals. He probably came from the Hooghly River that runs along the city. The fishing cat is one of the symbols of West Bengal.⁶⁰

February 15, 2020

Baikunthapur, Howrah District, State of West Bengal, India

Electrocuted at the edge of the village pond, a fishing cat was then skinned and his meat put on sale on the market by inhabitants who got rid of the head and skin in a canal. The Forestry Department opened a procedure. A wildlife defender, Soumyadip Santra, is urging the administration to start an awareness campaign in the villages to stop the use of electric cables around water points. He recalls that after the electrocution of several fishing cats in the village of Katapukur, such a campaign had stopped the massacre.⁶¹



JAGUARS

Jaguars (*Panthera onca*) are in CITES Appendix I.

AMERICA

BRAZIL

January 27, 2020

Perobal, State of Paraná, Brazil

Seizure of the skin of a jaguar, 2 rifles and ammunition.⁶²



February 24, 2020

Campinorte, State of Goiás, Brazil

Seizure of a jaguar skin, 5 kg of capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*) meat and a homemade gun. The poacher, at the request of the farmers, had the task of ridding the crops of "harmful" animals.⁶³

MEXICO

Early February 2020

Mexico

The jaguar goes in spare pieces to China. After the skin and the canines, the jaguar's penis is the market's next target. After Bolivia and Peru, the practice of castrating poached jaguars has been observed in Mexico since the beginning of the year. In China, according to the Mexican Alliance for the Conservation of Jaguars, the penis sells for 10,000 US\$ and a canine for 3,000 US\$.⁶⁴

March 26, 2020

Pachuca de Soto, Hidalgo State, Mexico

Seizure in a private home of an approximately one month old jaguar kitten of unknown origin. Several reports had reached the ears of the local police.⁶⁵

CARACALS

Caracals (*Caracal caracal*) are in CITES Appendix II.

EUROPE

SPAIN

Early February 2020

Torreveija, Province of Alicante, Valencian Community, Spain

He sold stuffed wild animals via the Internet and at the top of the pedestal, a caracal.⁶⁶

FRANCE

February 15, 2020

Pietrosella, Department of Corse-du-Sud, France

The subadult caracal was near a chicken coop. Public rumor had been going around for some time about a feline with pointed ears frequenting the southern Gulf of Ajaccio. He was captured alive by the firemen after an operation lasting several hours. He was the "property" of new residents on the island of Beauty. In fact, it was his master who, by calling him by his nickname, allowed him to be caged. A few days later, the animal was shipped in the hold of an Air Corsica plane for his stay at the Nogent-le-Phaye zoo, 90 km from Paris. The press speaks of a species "largely widespread" in Africa and Asia. It is in fact a very endangered species (cf. "On the Trail" n°6 p.54, n°9 p.53, n°10 p.73, n°13 p.68, 133 and 114, n°16 p.12, 34, 49 and 58, n°20 p.66, n°21 p.108, n°25 p.60 and 70).⁶⁷



February 18, 2020

Bréauté, Department of Seine-Maritime, France

The 11-month-old caracal had escaped from the enclosure where a woman kept him out of sight if not out of the storms. The young feline took advantage of a strong gale and the collapse of the palisades to set off on an adventure in a Normandy very different from the savannah where his parents and ancestors were born. He was finally caught 16 km from his cage. His mistress claims to have bought him in Germany for 1,500 € (1,650 US\$) but she has no certificate attesting to the legal origin of the animal. The caracals are hunted for meat and skin and are victims of road collisions. For some years, a controlled hybridization with the cats of Abyssinia and the introduction on the market of the "caracats" are spreading.⁶⁸

SERVALS

Serval (*Leptailurus serval*) are listed under CITES Appendix II.

EUROPE

GERMANY

January 10, 2020

Hennef, State of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany

The international traffic of serval is flourishing. This one had escaped from an unknown cage. After being reported several times by witnesses mistaking him for a lynx, his straying was stopped by specialists in the capture of dogs using a cage and meat bait.⁶⁹

BELGIUM

March 4, 2020

Brussels, Brussels-Capital Region, Belgium

After the one of the macaque and the tiger, it is the fashion of the serval in town. While searching a flat for a common law case, the police found themselves face to face with a representative of the feline species. The fire brigade called for help suffered two injuries and a capture net was completely shredded before the very large spotted cat, weighing a dozen kilos, could be definitively brought under control. He joined 5 other of the same species already housed at the Natuurhulpcentrum whose slogan "only fools take an exotic animal as a roommate" seems more and more justified.⁷⁰



LYNX

Lynx (*Lynx Lynx*) are listed under CITES Appendix II.

EUROPE

GERMANY

March 21, 2020

Near Waldleiningen, Palatinate Forest, Rhineland-Palatinate State, Germany

Release of 2 lynx in the Palatinate forest where the species had been eradicated at the beginning of the 19th century. They had been captured in the Swiss cantons of Vaud and Neuchâtel. The eldest is 9 years old and weighs 20 kg. The reintroduction programme is coming to an end. 20 lynx have been released. The Eder company, which exploits oak, robinia and chestnut trees in the forest, helped finance the operation. According to the Eder brothers, "this is a flagship project with no commercial value and a thanks to the magnificent nature that we are rediscovering and preserving". Lynx in Germany, see "On the Trail" n°24 p.62.⁷¹

FRANCE

January 16, 2020

Fellinging, Department of Haut-Rhin, France

Discovery of the body of an adult male Eurasian lynx. He was killed by a firearm.⁷²

March 17, 2020

Ivrey, Department of Jura, France

The Eurasien lynx don't receive the same tributes in eastern France as they do on the other side of the Rhine. In the German Palatinate, it is welcome speeches, here it is the speech of the rifles. The dead lynx of Ivrey is the third since the beginning of the year in the Jura.⁷³

MULTI-FELINES

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 10, 2020

New York State, United States of America

Arrest of Christopher Casacci for having between February and June 2018 imported from Africa under false names and sold in several states of the country dozens of caracals and servals under the trade name Exotic Cubs.com.⁷⁴

MEXIQUE

Early January 2020

State of Quintana Roo, Mexico

Seizure of a leopard, 2 Siberian tigers, a jaguar, an African lion and 2 monkeys. Eight people are indicted for wildlife trafficking and mistreatment.⁷⁵

Wolves

Wolves (*Canis lupus*) are listed under CITES Appendix II except the populations of Bhutan, India, Nepal and Pakistan listed under Appendix I.

EUROPE

FRANCE

February 2020

Gap, Department of Hautes-Alpes, France

The President of the Department of Hautes-Alpes offered a wolf tail to the female Prefect to celebrate her departure in a tasteless manner and a challenge to anti-hunting and trophies in the vein of the stools made from elephant feet offered by the President of Botswana to his counterparts in Southern Africa (see "On the Trail" n°25 p.86).¹

NORWAY

March 2020

Norway

Three deputies submit a bill to Parliament on the registration of the less than 100 wolves living in Norway. This digital registration would require a GPS collar to be placed on each individual and would, according to the livestock defence deputies, allow "problem wolves" to be targeted and killed without any problem, by resolutely waiting for them with a firm rifle when they come near a herd. Wolves in Norway, see "On the Trail" n°9 p.92, n°14 p.102, n°15 p.73, n°19 p.79.²



Bears and pandas

AMERICA

CANADA

March 2020

Elliot Lake, Province of Ontario, Canada

Conviction in the framework of the judicial cooperation between Canada and the United States of 2 hunting guides operating in Ontario, Canada and 8 clients from Michigan, USA to 60,000 C\$ or 44,700 US\$ of total fine and to withdrawal of hunting licences up to lifetime. Two all-terrain vehicles are permanently assigned to the Canadian Treasury. Canadian guides Russell Christensen and Keevin Beckerton and their American clients Onie Miller III, Onie Miller IV, Adam Collins, Brie Anna Miller, Andrew Geiger, Kevin Henning, Falisha Colby, William Dewitt have been convicted of hunting black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) without a licence, unlawfully transferring a black bear licence, illegally transporting a protected specimen, discarding the flesh of a black bear suitable for food, making a false statement in wildlife export documents, hunting black bears within 400 m of a dump and providing bear hunting services without a licence.¹



COLOMBIA

January 2020

Colombia

M. Chucho case - continued

(see "On the Trail" No. 26, p. 72).

After several never-ending and impassioned hearings in which all stakeholders expressed their views, including the Minister of the Environment, the Constitutional Court issued its opinion. By seven votes to two, it upheld the revocation of the Habeas corpus of Chucho, a spectacled bear (*Tremarctos ornatus*, Appendix I). In the grounding of the judgement, its president, Gloria Ortiz, explained that "the condition of freedom is not an option for creatures who cannot be aware of what that freedom represents". However, through his prostration and other clinical signs such as alopecia in his dark fur and loss of appetite, Chucho protests against the deprivation of freedom. But Ortiz does not speak bear.²



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 16, 2020

State of Montana, United States of America

Bryan Berg, 35 years old, is serving 3 years of probation and 5,000 US\$ in compensatory damages to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for poaching a grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos*) in Montana in 2007, amputating his claws and front paws and transporting the trophies to Washington State. Berg says he killed the bear in self-defense.³



January 2020

Chelan County, Washington State, United States of America

Appearances of Jon L. Markel, Erin N. McCabe and Logan M. Franklin. In August 2019, they had baited an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) with 27 kg of doughnuts and bread and killed him at point-blank range. The bear's meat was seized from a freezer at Markel's and donated to charity. The man had previously pleaded guilty to deer poaching in 2012.⁴

ASIA

CAMBODIA

Mid-January 2020

Poipet District, Banteay Meanchey Province, Cambodia. Border with Thailand.

With his 156 kg, this Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) will certainly be more comfortable in the bear shelter of the NGO Free the Bears than in a cage where he could barely turn around.⁵

CHINA

January 17, 2020

Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, China

Unprecedented seizure of 6 cans (110 g each) containing or presumed to contain Asian black bear meat (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I).⁶

February 2020

Manzhouli-Xijiao Airport, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China. Border with Russia.

Seizure in the lunch box of a Chinese passenger coming from Russia of 2 bear paws and a gall bladder of brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) or polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*, Appendix II).⁷

February 25, 2020

Xian de Mengla, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Laos.

Seizure of a bear tooth (Ursidae, Appendix I or II). 18.2 g.⁸

March 2020

Heilongjiang Province, China. Border with Russia.



This man is a poacher of Asian black bears (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I). At his home, in a freezer, 8 paws, 2 gall bladders and a bear skull were seized. In 2018, during a marauding in the forest, he discovered an adult bear caught in a trap and dying. Three days later, he returned to the scene. The bear was dead and he cut off all four paws and extracted the gall bladder. A little later, he went back up the mountain to the scene of his crime and, as he had hoped, he came across a bear cub wandering next to his mother's body. He killed him, amputated his four paws and the gall bladder. He stored the loot in the cold, waiting to find one or more buyers. In his freezer, 7 sable skins (*Martes zibellina*) were also seized and in his storerooms, traps, steel wire ropes, a whole range of poaching and cutting up equipment were also confiscated.⁹

INDIA

February 11, 2020

Pavagada, Tumkur District, State of Karnataka, India

Victim of a shoot on sight and burns on her paws, a female sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I) had attracted the compassion of some villagers with her cries. She is now in the care of the NGO Wildlife SOS in the Bannerghatta Bear Rescue Centre.¹⁰

March 16, 2020

Paraspani, Seoni District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Interpellation of 3 men, Naresh Naverti, Ramkishore alias Sultan Invati and Bahadur alias Vade, responsible for the electrocution of a sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I) whose body was found without amputation in a hole. He was burnt according to standards in the presence of the vice-director of the Pench reserve and the entire staff of the forestry services.¹¹





January 17, 2020, Suzhou, China



Mid-January 2020, Poipet District, Cambodia



February 16, 2020, Anuchinsky District, Russia



Early February 2020, Valladolid, Spain

IRAN

Mid-February 2020 Savadkuh County, Mazandaran Province, Iran

Following the stoning of a bear cub (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II), a man was sentenced to a fine equal to 480 US\$, to pay a sum equal to 12,000 US\$ in damages and to one year suspended imprisonment.¹²



MALAYSIA

January 15, 2020 Kuala Lumpur, Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Zarith Sofia Mohammad Yasin had become famous on TV screens since a Malaysian bear cub had shown his snout by opening a window in his apartment (see "On the Trail" n°25 p.74). She got away with a fine equal to 6,600 US\$ whereas the penal code provides 49,000 US\$ for the crime of captivity of Malayan sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I), an emblematic animal in Malaysia.¹³



MONGOLIA

Beginning of March 2020 Töv Province, Mongolia

Arrest of 3 men trying to sell 12 brown bear paws (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix I). They face a minimum fine of 3,630 US\$ and a prison sentence of 2 years.¹⁴

NEPAL

February 24, 2020 Budhanilkantha, Kathmandu District, Bagmati Pradesh Province, Nepal

Seizure of a red panda skin (*Ailurus fulgens*, Appendix I). Arrest of Surya Bahadur Bhujel, Suk Bahadur Lama, Yuvaraj Sapkota and Kamala Tamang.¹⁵



VIET NAM

February 28, 2020 Ba Thuoc District, Thanh Hóa Province, Viet Nam

Sentencing of Nguyen Duc Thinh to 36 months in prison for having, in August 2018, detained and attempted to sell an Asian black bear paw (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I).¹⁶

EUROPE

GERMANY

Between January 8 and 10, 2020 International Airport Frankfurt am Main, State of Hesse, Germany

Frankfurt, the hub of wildlife traffic in Germany. Seizure of a brown bear paw (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix I or II) with its claws. The man was returning from Russia.



Seizures at the international airport of Frankfurt, cf. "On the Trail" n°4 p.38, n°5 p.31 and 103, n°6 p.18, 32 and 96, n°7 p.75, n°9 p.81, n°11 p.63, n°15 p.24, n°18 p.21, n°20 p.100, n°23 p.15, 35, 92 and 134, n°24 p.14 and 72, n°26 p.43 and 96, and this issue p. 8, 34 and 115.¹⁷

SPAIN

Early February 2020 Valladolid, Province of Valladolid, Autonomous Community of Castilla y León, Spain

Seizure from a young man known by the initials R.M.S. of a brown bear cloak (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix I or II) with head offered for sale for 2,000 € via the Internet.¹⁸

RUSSIA

February 16, 2020 Anuchinsky District, Primorsky Krai, Russia

Discovery of 2 Himalayan brown bears (*Ursus arctos isabellinus*, Appendix II) frozen at the threshold of a den by rangers. According to the VladNews site, it turns out that drunken loggers had harassed the mother bear and that she had finally emerged from the den to attack the drunkards who defended themselves with a chainsaw. She was injured. Traces of blood were found on the snow and she never returned to the hollowed out tree that she used as her winter maternity home.¹⁹

OCEANIA

NEW ZEALAND

March 3, 2020 Auckland, Auckland Region, New Zealand

Conviction of Ms. Litao Xu to a fine of 7,500 NZ\$ or 4,750 US\$, and payment of legal costs, for attempting to import 12 flasks of Himalayan black bear bile purchased in China. New Zealand - like, in theory, all CITES signatory countries - prohibits the import of bear bile even if it comes from a farm considered legal.²⁰

Zebras



AFRICA

KENYA

February 19, 2020 Endana, Laikipia County, Kenya

Deep cuts by a trap and mortification of the flesh on the neck and shoulders. In the open savannah, delicate operation and last chance for the zebra (genus *Equus*). Favourable prognosis.¹



February 29, 2020 Mawingu, Mount Kenya National Park, Kenya

Traps are bastards. Impossible to treat the victim. Obligation to finish her off.²



March 11, 2020 Naboisho Conservancy, Nakuru County, Kenya

Injured on the left hind leg by the steel lace of a trap driven into the flesh, the female zebra (genus *Equus*) was put to sleep with 5 mg of etorphine. The trap was removed, the circular wound disinfected, rinsed with clear water, coated with antibiotic and iodine tincture. When she woke up, she joined her herd in the meadow.³



March 12, 2020 Naboisho Conservancy, Nakuru County, Kenya

The zebra (genus *Equus*) dragged an iron trap on its right hind leg and applied itself to walking on 3 legs. Anaesthesia, disincarceration, antidote, awakening. Standing up again. Favourable prognosis.⁴



NAMIBIA

February 21, 2020 Kamanjab, Kunene Region, Namibia

Arrest of Grecurius Skrywer for the poaching of 2 mountain zebras (*Equus zebra hartmannae*, Appendix II).⁵

Giraffes

AFRICA

KENYA

Beginning of March 2020 Ishaqbini Hirola Conservancy, Garissa County, Kenya

Poaching of a female white giraffe considered unique and her calf. When they were discovered, their bodies were in the state of skeletons. The white skin exceptionally coated by certain animals such as tigers or boas (see " On the Trail " n°3 p.12-13) is due to leucism, a deficiency of pigment cells transmissible from generation to generation. Now, in the Ishaqbini Hirola Conservancy, only one white male giraffe is present. He is the fruit of the mating of the poached white giraffe and a spotted giraffe. ¹

March 11, 2020 Mara Triangle, Nakuru County, Kenya

The adult male giraffe had been spotted with a metal trap around his neck. Anaesthesia, steel cutting, care. The wound was not deep but strangulation was in sight. Favourable prognosis. He was seen 2 days later grazing with other giraffes. ³



March 17, 2020 Nairobi-Sirikoi, Kenya

Kiko had been taken in by the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust orphanage in Nairobi. She was one week old. This was in 2015. When she grew up, she was transferred by truck to the Sirikoi Wildlife Conservancy. It was a six-hour drive, in a trailer lined with sawdust and rubber shock absorbers. At first, she was on semi-probation. At night the guards lure her to a pen to protect her from lions and hyenas. ⁴



Beginning of March 2020 Haller Park, Mombasa County, Kenya

Another giraffe lassoed by an old tyre. The removal of the rubber and metal carcass that injured the base of the neck and chest required a delicate operation. Anaesthesia dosed per milligram, roping the giraffe so that she does not collapse to the ground and break her neck, injection of the antidote immediately after the fall, holding her down during the awakening phase, removal of the tyre, disinfection of the circular wound, spraying with an antibiotic, application of green clay. That's it, get up and bye bye! The experts from the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust and the KWS have no sure explanation as to how the car waste ended up in this position. ²



Hippopotamuses

See also pages 37, 102, 107, 115 and 125.

AFRICA

KENYA

January 11, 2020

Matayos, Busia County, Kenya

The hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) was lynched with stones, axes and machetes and then butchered and distributed to the villagers. As he fled, he smashed down fences, latrines and a moped. "We called the police but saw nothing coming, so we took things into our own hands. "It was a venerable inhabitant of the village who, when she woke up in the morning, she says, found the hippopotamus on her doorstep and alerted the neighbourhood with her cries. "We killed it to teach the Kenya Wildlife Service a lesson so that they answer our distress calls promptly next time", says one resident, while another expresses himself in a more outrageous manner: " We thank God for this January gift. We pray that another one will emerge soon". "The fate of the victim's ivory teeth is not known. ¹

SENEGAL

March 8, 2020

Saré Balla, Tambacounda Region, Senegal. Border with Gambia.

Arrest of 3 individuals long wanted for criminal conspiracy, drug trafficking, possession and marketing of endangered species. In their homes were seized 98 teeth and tooth fragments, 4 hippopotamus skulls and ammunition.²



Rhinoceroses

The white rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* and black rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* ranging in Africa are listed in Appendix I, except for the white rhinoceros populations of 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: *Rhinoceros unicornis*, *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*, *Rhinoceros sondaicus*.

EASTERN AFRICA

ZAMBIA

February 25, 2020

Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park, Southern Province, Zambia. Border with Zimbabwe.

Appearance of Ashes Gumbo, lorry driver. In his mad rush through the national park and despite sound and light warnings from oncoming vehicles, he fatally hit 2 white rhinos crossing the road with his truck. Speeding or road poaching? ¹

ZIMBABWE

January 23, 2020

Bubye Valley Conservancy, Matabeleland South Province, Zimbabwe

Arrest of Nhlanhla Nkomo, police inspector in Bulawayo and 2 accomplices, Stanley Katandika, a Zambian national, and Owen Nyoni, a former ZimParks ranger. They were heavily armed and were about to poach rhinos. ²

February 9, 2020

Bubye Valley Conservancy, Southern Matabeleland Province, Zimbabwe

Thinkmore Midzi, Nqobizitha Dube and Wenzile Midzi remain in pre-trial detention. Through their lawyer, Primrose Ncube, they were seeking release on bail of 30 US\$ each. On 8 February, they had entered the reserve by climbing the fence in the evening, and the next morning, guards in charge of watching and maintaining it spotted footprints and alerted the game scouts who, reinforced by ZimParks rangers, followed the tracks, arrived at the heart of the reserve and surrounded the 3 intruders. In their bundles were a machete, an axe, knives and pesticide, and a little further on in an open field, 2 cabbages and 6 cobs of green mealie impregnated with pure pesticide and obviously intended for rhino baiting. Initially, the 3 suspects pleaded guilty before retracting. ³



SOUTH AFRICA

January 2, 7 and 9, 2020
Skukuza, Stolznekspuitdam
and Tshokwane Sections, Kruger
National Park, Mpumalanga
Province, South Africa



Successive arrests with the support of the canine brigades and the reinforcement of aerial means of 7 suspects heavily armed and equipped with the kits for poaching and dehorning rhinos. All the suspects live in villages in the vicinity of the park. Fundisile Mketeni, the director of SANParks, calls on the local population. "We urge our neighbours to help us save jobs and create opportunities through tourism because people come to the park to see these magnificent animals and if we lose them through the actions of these selfish individuals, we won't be an attraction anymore."⁴

January 14, 2020
Boitekong, North West Province, South Africa

Attempt to arrest 4 men. They are suspected by the SAPS of preparing an imminent poaching in a private reserve near Rustenburg. Three of them manage to escape at the last moment, taking advantage of the night and the dense vegetation cover. The fourth, Amukelani Nkuna, was apprehended. He is a police officer. The four men are also suspected of being involved in the poaching series in Pilanesberg Park (see "On the Trail" n°7 p.65, n°9 p.59, n°10 p.45, n°12 p.69 and 70, n°14 p.63 and 64, n°15 p.77, 78 and 81, n°16 p.68, n°18 p.70, 73 and 74, n°19 p.85, n°20 p.82, n°21 p.77, n°22 p.78 and 79, n°23 p.106, n°26 p.76 and n°27 p.87). The local press reminds us that poaching and traffic are fuelled by the myth that crushed horns can cure anything from a cold to cancer and by a snobbish desire to own the horn as a status symbol, the famous "Ferrari factor" as the unfortunate managers of Pilanesberg Park call it.⁵

January 18, 2020
Lephalale, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Discovery of 2 dehorned carcasses in the process of advanced decomposition. The investigation starts late. A call for witnesses is launched on the Crime Stop alert number 0860 010 111.⁶

February 1st, 2020
Near Khula, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Arrest of 4 men aged 22 and 24 suspected of preparing to poach rhinos in conspiracy. A firearm with silencer, an axe, binoculars, ammunition and mobile phones were seized from their vehicle.⁷

February 7, 2020
20 km from the Vioolsdrif port of entry,
Northern Cape Province, South Africa. Border
with Namibia.

Tomas Chester Francisco, Mateus Betuel Novela and David Betuel Novela are arrested 20 km from Namibia. The search of their vehicle leads to the discovery and seizure of 2 rhino horns worth an estimated 640,000 rand (44,000 US\$). Are they in charge of evacuating rhino horns poached in Namibia via South Africa or on the contrary to exfiltrate in Namibia rhino horns poached in the Northern Cape Province? Stay tuned! Operation coordinated by the Hawks and the border police of Vioolsdrif.⁸

February 13, 2020
Bloemfontein, Free State
Province, South Africa



Jimmy Mashopane is sentenced to 24 years in prison. Nine corpses of dehorned rhinos were discovered by rangers between 29 July and 15 December 2018 in the Sandveld Reserve. The patrols, after the series of disasters, had been multiplied. On 22 January 2019, Mashopane was caught in the reserve. An accomplice managed to escape. Mashopane had a gun. The decryption of his phone shows that he was near the reserve when the nine crimes were committed. The Sandveld reserve covers 37,000 hectares.⁹

End of February 2020
Gauteng Province, South Africa

Yansen Feng, who was caught red-handed holding horns, had tried to obtain his release by promising 10,000 rand (6,800 US\$) to a police officer. A search was authorised and a sum well in excess of 6,800 US\$ was found at his home. At this time Feng and 3 accomplices remain in pre-trial detention.¹⁰

End of February 2020
Mankweng, Limpopo Province,
South Africa



Sentencing of Andries Mathebula, aged 49, to 15 years in prison for poaching, 15 years in prison for plucking and holding horns and 5 years for illegal possession of a firearm and ammunition. The first two sentences are combined. Sentencing of Shadrack Zitha, 52, to 12 years in prison for poaching, 12 years for plucking and holding horns and 5 years for illegal possession of a firearm and ammunition. The first two sentences are running concurrently.

The two men were arrested in September 2015 (see "On the Trail" n°10 p.48). According to the investigation file, the traces of blood found on the axe they also had in their possession coincide with that of a rhino shot a few days earlier on a Hoedspruit ranch.¹¹

March 18, 2020

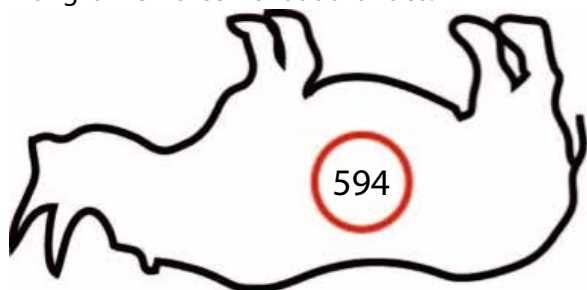
KwaMsane, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

4:30 a.m. Abandonment of a vehicle as the police came up. All the necessary equipment for poaching and rhino dehorning is discovered inside.¹²

March 18, 2020

Between Pretoriuskop and Skukuza sections, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Arrest of 4 suspects thanks to the coordinated involvement of park rangers, air assets and private reserve guards. Seizure of a firearm, ammunition and dehorning paraphernalia. Since the beginning of the year, 11 suspects have been arrested in the park. In all provinces of South Africa, the official account in 2018 was 769 rhinos poached, and 594 in 2019. The decline could be attributed to a combination of measures, including improved capabilities to react to poaching incidents and improved information collection and sharing among law enforcement authorities.¹³



March 25-26, 2020

South Africa

Under normal circumstances, the wildlife is protected by a few rangers and many visitors whose presence disturbs the poachers. Contemplation tourism and even game hunting are a deterrent. Since the month of March and the Covid-19 storm, the reserves and parks have been empty. At the end of March, some testimonies and provisional assessments already attest to an opportunistic and speculative peak of poaching on sure values such as rhino horn. Rhino 911 reports one poaching per day since the enforcement of the stay at home order (23 March) and at least 9 poaching in the North-West Province alone between 23 March and 7 April.¹⁴

BOTSWANA

January 3, 6, 14, 15 and 16, 2020

Okavango Delta, North West District, Botswana

At the end of December 2019, the official account for poaching since April was 13. But since the beginning of the year 2020 it has been rising sharply.

- Two in the first week of January.
- One white rhino on Tuesday 14th and another on Wednesday 15th.
- Discovery of 2 decomposing carcasses. One black and one white.¹⁵

March 16, 2020

Okavango Delta, North West District, Botswana

New poaching in the delta. This time, it is a black rhino.¹⁶

March 2020

Okavango Delta, North West District, Botswana

"There are several groups of Zambian poachers bivouacking on the Chiefs Islands in the delta. Two rhinos per week are reportedly shot. Most of the horns are evacuated through Zambia. The Botswana Defence Force (BDF) is not equipped to do effective anti-poaching. Intermittent patrols are done by helicopter and the guys below have a good chance to camouflage themselves before being flown over. At the rate things are going, there won't be a rhino in the delta in a few months. With the "bushmen" or trackers of the former safari companies, there is however enough to set up super efficient anti-poaching teams. When the rhinos will be "finished", the mafia will fall back on the elephants. It's a question of opportunity, for the moment the rhino is more profitable." The Bhejane Trust did not beat around the bush to urgently call for a re-shaping of anti-poaching measures in this sensitive area, which is rich in biodiversity, tourists, borders and cross interests.

These remarks are to some extent confirmed by the Deputy Director of the Wildlife Department at the Ministry of Environment Moemi Batshabang : "I can attest that 46 rhinos have been killed by highly organised poachers between April last year to date". In this period of pandemic and economic crisis, the director of Rhino Conservation fears a surge in poaching of antelopes and other animals less sought after than the Big Five. "There's going to be a lot of people out of work and falling back on nature".¹⁷

NAMIBIA

January 8 and 10, 2020

Oshivelo, Oshikoto Region, Namibia

Arrest of Diognes Nambili Shivute, Moses Ekandjo, Heimo Tweuya Namweya and Seboron Shivolo in Etosha National Park.

They were in the process of cutting the 4 horns of 2 rhinos they had just poached. Additional seizure of their vehicle, a firearm and 6 rounds of ammunition. Heimo Tweuya Namweya and Seboron Shivolo are municipal employees of the city of Oshakati. The 4 individuals are already implicated in a break-in at a hunting reserve in Omuthiya and an attempted poaching of rhinos. Two accomplices, Johannes Pinias and Samuel Afunde Matias, were arrested 2 days later.¹⁸





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February 1st, 2020, Near Khula, South Africa



© Limpopo Police

End of February 2020, Mankweng, South Africa



© SAPS

March 18, 2020, KwaMsane, South Africa



© The Sentinel

February 4, 2020, Natun Sehjang, India



© Times of India

February 8, 2020, Harmati, India



© Chinese Customs

March 15, 2020, Guangzhou, China



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© VietNamNet

March 2, 2020, Can Tho Viet Nam



© VnExpress

March 6, 2020, Tan Son Nhat Viet Nam

January 10, 2020

Katima Mulilo, Zambezi Region, Namibia. Border with Zambia.

Arrest of Lubbula Tama Hendricks and Zambwe Matengu in possession of 2 horns.¹⁹



January 10, 2020

Katima Mulilo, Zambezi Region, Namibia

Arrest of Makalo Meki, Junior Sililo, Inonox Sibela and Sheka Vitali of Zambian nationality. They were in possession of a large-calibre firearm and 11 bullets. They are suspected of being rhino poachers.²⁰

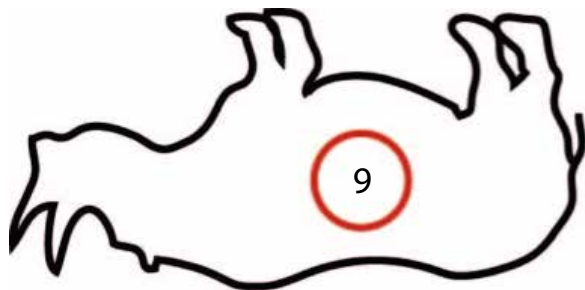


March 23-29, 2020

Oshakati, Oshana Region, Namibia

-The Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism claims that the Covid-19 pandemic does not impede the monitoring of poaching. The weekly report produced by the Ministry of the Environment and the police indicates a single event in the week of 23-29 March. It concerns the arrest of 2 nationals carrying an illegal firearm and 43 rounds of ammunition and suspected of poaching rhinos.

- The same ministry announced that since the beginning of the year (January, February, March 2020) 9 rhinos have been poached in private reserves and national parks. The official annual account is yo-yoing and remains constantly high: 95 in 2015, 60 in 2016, 36 in 2017, 72 in 2018.²¹



AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 10, 2020

State of Nevada, United States of America

Conviction of Jack Ely Buchanan, a lawyer at the Las Vegas Bar, to 25,000 US\$, 2 years probation and 40 hours of community service for trading a stuffed white rhino between Nevada and Minnesota. The transaction would have been made on the basis of 6,500 US\$, whereas according to the investigation file, the horns of the trophy had a value of 435,000 US\$ at the time of the events.²²



FAMILY AFFAIRS

End of February 2020

Orange County, State of California, United States of America

Sentencing of Ms. Nhu Mai Nguyen to 3 years of probation including one year of house arrest and a fine of 20,000 US\$ for participating in conspiracy for the fraudulent sale of horns in Viet Nam and China in 2011 and 2012. His companion, Mr. Vinh Chuong Kha, also known as Jimmy Kha, has already been sentenced to 42 months in prison and his son, Felix Kha, to 46 months. Ms. Nhu Mai Nguyen was also sentenced to hand over to the Treasury 100 gold bars and 1,000 US\$ in cash that had been seized from a safe deposit box. The horns passed through her nail shop under the name "Joline's Nails" and through her "novelties" shop, which she operated jointly with a certain Win Lee Corp. Read in "On the Trail" n°1 p.23-24: all the springs of this complex ring revealed after months of investigation by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.²³



ASIA

CHINA

February 25, 2020

Panlong District, Yunnan Province, China

Conviction of X to 2 years and 6 months in prison for having fraudulently bought 3 fragments of rhino horns "for therapeutic purposes" in August 2018, according to him. He was also fined 7,200 US\$. He had bought the fragments for the equivalent of 3,000 US\$ via WeChat and their market value is estimated at around 10,000 US\$. Instead of seeking treatment, X is said to have sought to make a big profit.²⁴



March 15, 2020

Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure by flying customs of 16 rhino horns weighing a total of 36.6 kg in the boot of 2 BMW. Four arrests. Initial evidence suggests that the horns originated in Africa and transited through Viet Nam before being smuggled into China on their way to Fujian province.²⁵

INDIA

February 4, 2020

Natun Sehjang, Karbi Anglong District, Assam State, India

Seizure of a rhino's horn, 510 g with a black market value of about 12,000 US\$. Lalkhongmang Kipgen was on a moped.²⁶

February 5, 2020

Kharikatia, Jorhat District, State of Assam, India

Seizure of a 600 g horn. Arrest of Rajesh Karmakar and Rahul Pegu.²⁷

February 8, 2020

Harmati, Nagaon District, State of Assam, India

Arrest of a poacher on the fringes of the park in the Bagori sector. He had rifles and ammunition in his hands and was waiting hidden in the thickets for one or two shooters to arrive.²⁸



February 29, 2020

Kaziranga National Park, Golaghat and Nagaon Districts, State of Assam, India

There is turmoil in and around the park. The warden's wife is accused of having used her influence to organise a photo and video safari of tigers blinded by flashing lights in the heart of the park at night. Other controversial images are circulating on social networks. She poses with a python on her shoulders and in her hands. Local residents are protesting against these liberties as new directives prevent them from harvesting dead wood or other forest products inside the park. NGOs for their part believe that the new administration is moving in the right direction by imposing strict timetables, anti-pollution controls, signposted roads and insurance on the Jeep Safari Association that transports tourists inside the park. The Jeep union is up in arms against the director and is doing everything it can to get him transferred. It is said to be on the verge of obtaining satisfaction. Ranjan Kumar Das is expected to replace him. He's dragging along several pots and pans. He is suspected of having been very tolerant towards Mumtaz Siddique, a domestic elephant trafficker, and of having favoured the export of several elephants from Assam to Gujarat. He was also relieved of his duties for a time when he was in charge of forestry services in Dijoiboi and Sonitpur. He and his younger brother are involved in trafficking river sand and woods. NGOs are alarmed : "If he [Ranjan Kumar Das] is appointed as director of Kaziranga National Park, all conservation projects is going to fail".

In the hills of Karbi Anglong, south of the park, the multiplication of illegal quarries has ended up drying up the Mori Diffalo river, which is essential to the water resources of the park's fauna and flora during the dry season. The search on Friday, February 7, by Assam's anti-corruption brigade at the home of Abhijit Rabha, a senior forest protection official, uncovered a copy of a compromising letter sent to a divisional official, urging him not to deal with the quarries and to concentrate on saving the rhinos. Abhijit Rabha is unable to justify the millions of rupees in his bank accounts. He claims to make a fortune by growing and selling broccoli, but on the farm he rents there has never been a single head of broccoli.²⁹

See also page 119 "Tourists in the park become poachers' customers".

INDONESIA

January 8, 2020

Bandar Lampung City, Lampung Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Ms. Efendi and Isranto are sentenced to 1 year and 8 months in prison each and fines of 30 and 50 million rupees (2,150 US\$ and 3,600 US\$) with an additional 3 months in prison in case of non-payment. By November 2018 they had detained and tried to sell a 202-gram horn.³⁰



VIET NAM

January 2020

Viet Nam

Sentencing of 3 horn traffickers to China to 7 years jail, 6 years jail and 3 years suspended jail.³¹



March 2, 2020

Can Tho International Airport, Viet Nam

Seizure of 11 rhino horns (28.7 kg) in the suitcase of a Vietnamese passenger, Mr. Do Thanh Son, upon arrival of a flight from South Korea. All flights from Seoul were diverted to Can Tho airport to avoid the overloading of the quarantine imposed by the Covid-19 screening in Ho Chi Minh City.³²

March 6, 2020

Tan Son Nhat International Airport, Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Arrest of a passenger known as N.A.D. from Doha, Qatar. He was carrying 6.22 kg of African rhino horns and horn sections.³³



Rhinoceroses and Elephants

AFRICA

NAMIBIA

Week of 16 to 22 March 2020

Namibia

Sixteen men suspected of poaching rhinos and elephants arrested.¹

ASIA

CHINA

March 2020

Hainan Province, China

Conviction at first instance of Ms. X to 1 year and 2 months imprisonment and a fine of 4,000 yuan or 570 US\$ for having in 2016 bought via WeChat and offered for sale in her jewellery shop by-products of protected animals in the form of necklaces, bracelets and pendants, including 110 worked ivories, 2 items made of rhino horn and 4 rhinoceros hornbill helmets (*Buceros rhinoceros*, Appendix II) jewels for a total estimated value of 24,916 yuan or 3,550 US\$. The Court of Appeal took into account X's full confession, her repentance and the fact that after 3 years of escaping judicial summons, she presented herself on her own initiative in June 2019 at a police station. The sentences were suspended.²



INDIA

January 17, 2020

Malbazar, Jalpaiguri District, State of West Bengal, India

A big section of raw ivory and a rhino horn were hidden in 2 satchels inside 2 cars that were travelling in a convoy. A third car fled with its traffickers and wildlife war treasure. Three people were arrested including one Bhutanese. The Bhutan/West Bengal traffic is active.³



Elephants

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

"On the Trail" n°28 Black market raw ivory quotation from media or official sources

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Africa	Kenya	60	2
		950	10
	Zimbabwe	232	20
	South Africa	1,800	23
1,700		25	
Asia	India, Odisha	1,270	85

EASTERN AFRICA

ETHIOPIA

Beginning of March 2020

Ethiopia

Seizure of 4 tusks.¹

KENYA

Early January 2020

Kimana, Kajiado County, Kenya

Arrest by Big Life NGO lookouts of 2 men who were trying to sell 20 kg of raw ivory for the equivalent of 1,200 US\$, or 60 US\$/kg, at around 7 a.m.²

January 6, 2020

Masai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya

An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. A man walking home at night would have had a bad encounter with a herd of elephants. He died of it in unknown circumstances. The reprisals fell on Oloropilé, a giant who, all agreed, never hurted a fly. He had been living in harmony with humanity for at least half a century. He had a wonderful nature. "He was often seen grazing with nomadic herds and in the vicinity of people," Elephant Aware's rangers testify.³

January 19, 2020

Kaluku, Tsavo Ecosystem, Kenya

A bull elephant suffered a large infected wound from a throwing weapon. The tusker is back to upright. Joint operation by the SWT (Sheldrick Wildlife Trust) and the KWS (Kenya Wildlife Service). Favourable prognosis.⁴

January 23, 2020

Busia, Busia County, Kenya. Border with Uganda.

42 kg of raw ivory and 35 kg of wildlife bones were seized from the luggage rack of a boda-boda. The driver, in good faith, believed to be transporting cassavas and was released. The owner of the fake cassavas is a Ugandan school teacher. He was arrested and his bad faith was proven. His "cassaves" came from Marachi, a Ugandan village near the border with Kenya.⁵

January 24, 2020

RKiasa, Tsavo East National Park, Kitui County, Kenya

Post-mortem examination of the carcass reveals that death was caused by a throwing weapon followed by internal bleeding and peritonitis. The search for the arrowhead was unsuccessful. The intestines were already eaten by hyenas.⁶

January 31, 2020

Irima, East Tsova National Park, Kitui County, Kenya

We don't know why, he limped with his front left leg. The little men treated the probable sprain with antibiotics and dexamethasone. On waking up the large grey mass regained its sensation and then slowly moved away without limping.⁷



February 5, 2020

Mount Elgon National Park, Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya

Tangled in her left front leg by a booby-trapped pole, the unlucky female elephant, aged about 14, had been barely moving around in the forest for a fortnight. In order to move in spite of everything, she had found a trick by holding one end of the pole in her trunk. During the anaesthesia, the metal shackle of the trap was cut. The surrounding wound was deep. It was treated with hydrogen peroxide, iodine dye, green clay. Everything is fine when waking up. She got up and walked freely into the forest.⁸



February 5, 2020

Near Kimana, Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya



Non-violent death of Tim, a legendary super tusk. Post-mortem examination reveals an intestinal obstruction. The body was transported by truck to the Natural History Museum. Tim is expected to achieve posterity through taxidermy. The autopsy was performed with minimal skin damage. The right tusk weighs 61 kg, the left weighs 73 kg. With Tim's natural death at the foot of Kilimanjaro, one of the last African super tuskers passes to the other side. Their tusks descend to the ground. Favourite targets of ivory traffickers, they are gradually disappearing as the average size of African elephants shrinks. He was "a benevolent, slow-moving preserver of the peace at Amboseli" KWS said. "He was well known and loved throughout Kenya."⁹

March 10, 2020

Narok, Narok County, Kenya

Conviction of Daniel Karanja to a fine of 1 million shillings, 10,000 US\$ or 6 years in prison. Resisting the excuses and lamentations of the accused who, released on bail after the events in 2014 (see "On the Trail" n°6 p.79), has long evaded the summons of justice, the judge, Wilbroda Juma, deplored the irreparable loss of 5 elephants and recalled that to be dissuasive, penalties for wildlife trafficking should be severe. The value of the loot seized from Mr. Karanja's home (84 kg of raw ivory) is estimated at 8 million shillings or 80,000 US\$ and 950 US\$/kg.¹⁰



March 14, 2020

Mara Conservancy, Nakuru County, Kenya

Big problem for a few days old baby elephant lying near a swamp. The umbilical cord is still wet. The nostrils are clogged with soil. He has not been suckled for a long time. On-site injection of dexamethasone and transport by helicopter to the orphanage in Nairobi for care and observation. Prognosis reserved. The fate of the mother is a mystery.¹¹

March 17, 2020

Meru National Park, Meru County, Kenya

Collapsed in the savannah, spotted by helicopter, the elephant was checked by a ground patrol. The diagnosis was bleak. An arrow had made its hole in the right knee and another in the neck. The attack had been going on for several days. The elephant ran away and fell there, to the very end. It was considered to put him upright using ropes and the 4x4 but there was nothing to do except to finish him off and remove the tusks for safety.¹²

MOZAMBIQUE

Early January 2020

Mozambique

To the rescue of a female elephant whose trunk was deeply cut by a leghold trap. The lower part of the trunk was still mobile. Anaesthetised from the DAG (Dyck Advisory Group) helicopter and treated by Doctor Joao of Saving the Survivors, she left well. Uncertain prognosis. She will be followed up regularly in the coming weeks.¹³



January 7, 2020

Mozambique

Emergency landing for Dr. Joao of Saving The Survivors to extract the rusty cable from a trap in the hind leg of a bull elephant calf.¹⁴



January 23, 2020

Maputo, Mozambique

Seizure on Kenneth Kaunda Avenue of 7 kg of raw ivory. "It was a friend who gave it to me," he says. Since the beginning of the year: 31.5 kg of ivory seized.¹⁵

UGANDA

Beginning of March 2020

Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

Kawunde Gyavira is sentenced to 9 years in prison. In December 2019 he was arrested with 61.84 kg of raw ivory. Fellow comrades are on the run.¹⁶



GANG

Mid-March 2020

Kasanda, Mubende and Kiboga Districts, Central Region and Kakumiro, Kibaale, Kikuube, Hoima, Masindi and Kyankwanzi Districts, Western Region, Uganda

A gang of poachers, traffickers in ivory and other wildlife products initially specialising in armed robbery was neutralised in turbulent circumstances by the combined forces of the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and the army. The investigation had been going on for several months. The chief's name is Samuel Kubuka. He had been in contact on several occasions with UWA agents posing as ivory traffickers. One of the people who was informing the police about the poaching had been murdered by the gang and buried in the forest. After the arrest of the 9 suspects and the seizure at their homes of nets, 11 guns and traps and after the first confessions, it was possible to locate the body.¹⁷

TANZANIA

March 4, 2020

Tanzania

Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority (TAWA) is postponing the auction of 29 hunting concessions. Most of them are in the Selous Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Zebras, elephants, rhinoceroses and giraffes are not happy with the Tanzanian government's ambition and its armed wing - TAWA - to collect 3.4 million US\$ in hunting royalties every year.

The good news for elephants and others is that the organizers of hunting safaris don't crowd at the box office. Since June 2019, only 9 out of 50 lots offered for sale have found buyers. TAWA is considering more attractive terms and conditions, including lower auction fees and extending the possession from 10 to 15 years.¹⁸

ZAMBIA

March 6, 2020

Kapiri Mposhi, Central Province, Zambia

Mr. Munkhondya was stopped on the northern highway by national park and wildlife officers. He was riding his bicycle and carrying 18 kg of raw ivory in violation of Section 130 of the national Wildlife Act.¹⁹

ZIMBABWE

January 3 and 24, 2020

Dete and Hwange, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Seizure at the home of Norman Tshuma, aged 29, wanted for thefts in Bulawayo, of 24.6 kg of raw ivory with an estimated value of 5,708 US\$, or 232 US\$/kg on the domestic market. He pleads guilty. Sentenced to 9 years in prison. He has admitted on the stand that he had poached 3 elephants in December 2019. His 19-year-old wife denies responsibility.²⁰



March 16, 2020

On the edge of Hwange National Park, Northern Matabeleland Province, Zimbabwe

On Tuesday, 4 elephants were discovered dead on a salt marsh littered with cyanide granules. Three elephants are already stripped of their tusks. On Thursday, the rangers return to the site to make various observations necessary for the investigation and they discover that the bodies have been partly dismembered. It soon became clear that a local business had set up and that butchers were selling portions of elephant meat. Calls were made by village chiefs, particularly in Kachechete, for people to avoid buying poisoned meat.²¹



March 2020 Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe will not withdraw from CITES. The Ministry of Environment and Tourism confirms this. "If we pull out of CITES we will not be able to trade [fauna] with other countries that are in CITES." Zimbabwe will move closer to other African countries to ensure that the Convention allows for the free trade of hunting trophies, a measure that its proponents say would benefit both the national economy and local communities. The report presented to parliament by the Ministry also stresses the profits from the sale of live elephants. "The resumption of elephant sales will help the Zimbabwe National Parks (ZimParks) with its conservancy goal in key national parks such as the Hwange National Park."

The report is stressing both the damage to the plant biomass caused by elephants in excess and the negative effects of drought on elephants. "In recent years, elephant populations have been depleting due to droughts, while some well-wishers like the Sino Zimbabwe Wildlife Foundation have resorted to supplementary feeding."²²

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

January 27, 2020

Point, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Things went sour for the 2 traffickers when, in the hotel car park, they unpacked their raw ivory (16.88 kg) in front of the alleged buyers who were in fact police officers.²⁴

February 10, 2020

Kempton Park, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Arrest of 2 men in flagrante delicto for selling 5 tusks weighing a total of 45 kg. They are estimated at 1.2 million rand, or more than 80,000 US\$ and 1,800 US\$/kg. The 2 men, aged 42 and 45, were trapped in a car park by fake buyers from the city police and the Hawks.²³

February 12, 2020

Taaibosch, Limpopo Province, South Africa, Border with Botswana and Zimbabwe

Two men from 2 neighbouring countries were trying to sell 2 tusks. They were stopped. Tusks are estimated at 50,000 rand, or 3,400 US\$. Between them, they both weigh less than 2 kg. They come from a baby elephant.²⁵

March 24, 2020

Krugersdorp, Gauteng Province, South Africa

A call to the Crime Stop hotline led police to search the home of a 37-year-old woman and resulted in the seizure of an undisclosed quantity of raw ivory.²⁶

NAMIBIA

January 2, 2020

Rundu, Kavango-East Region, Namibia

Arrest of Kaveto Joseph Mukoya and Ndjamba Joao Kandepwe who were carrying 4 elephant tusks and 2 hippopotamus teeth (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II). The first is a Namibian subject, the second is Angolan.²⁸

February 23, 2020

Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia

Arrest of Uaripi Sakaria in possession of 4 tusks or sections of tusks.²⁹

Week of 16 to 22 March 2020

Namibia

Seizure of 4 tusks or sections of tusks.³⁰

March 27, 2020

Namibia

Poaching of an elephant. Arrest of 2 suspects.³¹

The revenge of the older males



Elephants form a perfect society and it is unfortunate that due to an incompatibility of language they cannot express themselves as scholars and observers in the intermediate and plenary sessions of international conventions and in Councils of Ministers of the European Union.

Academics from Exeter, UK, in cooperation with Elephants for Africa, Botswana, have discovered a new gem in the conviviality of savannah elephants and their ability to transmit knowledge. Until then, the learning of the younger generation was considered to be essentially matriarchal. It is now proving to be equally patriarchal.

Older female elephants are the most effective and consistent in teaching calves and sub-adults the skills of living together and the reflex behaviour to repel natural predators. After instructing the herds on which direction to take in the day or night, they usually retreat to the back position of groups. In this position of enhanced surveillance, thanks to their chemical, seismic and acoustic sensors and simultaneous interpretation of the words and postures of all the members, they can make decisions and give the orders they deem necessary while looking behind and to the sides to ensure that lions or other natural predators of elephant calves are not on the lookout.

Between 10 and 20 years of age, sub-adult males leave the cocoon and the family nucleus. They disperse and venture out on their own on new routes. They no longer benefit from the collective protection of matriarchal herds. In the region studied by the experts, the average lifespan of elephants is currently estimated at 41 years for females and 24 years for males. This major difference can be explained in particular by the vulnerability of sub-adult males in situations of acute conflict with local human populations and by the new difficulties to which they are exposed in their search for food. It is therefore in the interest of males of different ages to assemble in opportunistic groups that they can leave or join without reprimand.

After having been mothered for one or two decades, they are then sired and the distribution of the herd changes completely. The older ones are usually at the front rank of the processions and the sub-adults in their contact enrich their abilities to navigate in unknown territories and to search patiently in all seasons for water points and fodder. They walk in single file sometimes possibly separated from each other by a hundred meters maximum in the sparsely vegetated acacias savannah habitat allowing them to have a good visual range. The paths opened in the savannah confirm that elephants are both an umbrella and a pillar species since porcupines, other herbivores and even bats subsequently frequent them.

For the young bulls, their elders are a mine of ecological information, underline the authors of this new research, who at the time of finalizing their work were overtaken by the announcement by the government of Botswana that several hundred elephants were once again going to be the target of ivory and trophy hunters. According to the authorities, only older bull elephants, considered redundant and useless for the future of the species, will be in the hunters' sights. "We argue that such selective hunting would not be sustainable, and removal of older mature bulls from the population could disrupt the wider bull society and the inter-generational flow of information concerning decades of accumulated ecological knowledge, such as effective navigation and location of critical resources." "We argue mature bulls occupy a similar role in male elephant society as old female matriarchs in breeding herds and require equal protection."²⁷

They want to turn the Okavango delta into the Texas of Southern Africa

ReconAfrica (Reconnaissance Energy Africa Ltd.) is a Canadian company based in Vancouver. It specialises in the hydraulic fracking of potential fossil resource deposits and the exploitation of shale gas. Its managers have alarming CVs. They have held key positions with oil majors. They boast the highest achievements such as having increased the production of the multinational Halliburton from 20,000 barrels per day to 100,000 in a few years or having exploited the oil field off the coast of Libya within BP. Nick Steinsberger is a pioneer in hydraulic fracking. He has been involved in the opening of over 700 shale gas drilling and commercial wells in the US and Canada.

In the strictest confidence, ReconAfrica has been granted permission to drill 25,000 km² in Namibia and 10,000 km² in Botswana and a 25-year production licence over any commercial discovery.

ReconAfrica believes, based on preliminary data it has been collecting on the ground for more than two years, that the area is promising. It compares its potential to that of the Eagle Ford Basin in Texas, which the US Energy Agency says is one of the world's largest onshore oil and gas deposits.

A drilling platform is being revamped in Houston, Texas, and would be transported to Namibia in October if the international travel restrictions are lifted. It is expected to start drilling, injecting toxic fluids and fracturing the subsoil by the end of the year.

This is disastrous news, perhaps the worst in the year 2020 which is not stingy with it. The Okavango delta and adjacent savannahs provide a cross-border migration corridor for elephants from Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Zambia and a home range for antelopes, painted wolves, rhinos, lions and zebras. Under normal, non-pandemic conditions, the region attracts tourists from all over the world and brings Botswana and Namibia 500 million US\$ a year. Local and international NGOs are caught off guard. Alliance Frack Free South Africa and Alliance Earth, academics, protected area managers are protesting against the lack of information and environmental assessment.

Already disrupted by international poaching, the reopening of legal elephant hunting, cyanobacteria and conflicts between wildlife and human activities, the Okavango delta is now threatened by the stranglehold of the North American extractive industry, water pollution and earthquakes resulting from the forced fracking up to several kilometres deep.

Behind the shale gas, industrial gold and diamond exploration is also outlining. For the past year, ReconAfrica has recruited to its board of directors Ms. Anna Tudela, former director of the Canadian company Goldcorp Inc. and Diamond Fields Resources Inc. In 2019, she was honoured with the Women in Mining Aurora award. No chance that this woman of influence pleads the cause of the Ju/'hoansi, a people native to southern Africa who refuse to pile up consumers' goods, with a nomadic tradition and today confined to the north of the Kalahari Desert in the area claimed by ReconAfrica.

Ju/'hoansi, see "On the Trail" n°27 p.97.



WESTERN AFRICA

BENIN

February 2020

Alibori Department, Benin

Conviction of 2 traffickers in raw ivory to 6 months and one year in prison (see "On the Trail" n°26 p.85).³²



March 17, 2020

Parakou, Department of Borgou, Benin

- August 2017 : in the first instance, 4 years in prison, 2 of which are suspended and 3 years in prison for 14 ivory tips (24 kg).

- February 2018 : the sentence is reduced to 6 months on appeal.

- November 2019 : the Supreme Court overturned the judgment of the Court of Appeal.

- March 2020 : the Court of Appeal sets the sentence at 12 months imprisonment.

(See "On the Trail" n°16 p.80, n°17 p.97 and n°20 p.95).³³



LIBERIA

March 1, 2020

Gbarpolu County, Liberia. Border with Sierra Leone.

Morris Sokpo alias "County" had become the kingpin of the county. He had authority over a network of poachers and diamond prospectors operating in the Gola Forest National Park. Elephant tusks and a large calibre gun were seized from his home. He was handed over to the police by Jeremiah Gontee, an ex-hunter converted into an eco-guard. With 4 colleagues, it took him only 15 days to immobilise "County" when, according to him, the regular forces of Liberia had been chasing him for years. "The government owes us 1,000 US\$" he recalls.³⁴

CENTRAL AFRICA

GABON

January 3, 2020

Oyem, Woleu-Ntem Province, Gabon

Sentencing of Roddy W. A, Christian Mbongo, Arsène Nguialebe and Joël Michel Djetola to 5 years in prison, to pay a fine of 54,500 US\$ jointly and severally and to pay the equivalent of 8,500 US\$ in damages to the Water and Forests Administration for having transported and attempted to sell more than 120 kg of ivory in November 2019 in an organised gang (see "On the Trail" n°27 p.100).³⁵



January 8, 2020

Koulamoutou and Lastoursville, Ogooué-Lolo Province, Gabon

Seizure of 60 kg of ivory, a firearm, 458 calibre ammunition. Four elephants died as a result. The mastermind of the gang, Edouard Mambenda, was a teacher. His accomplices, Constantin Miyona and Jean Blaise Makita, were arrested in flagrante delicto for transporting seven tusks sliced into rice bags. Edouard was arrested shortly afterwards.³⁶

**January 14 and February 7, 2020
Makokou, Ogooué-Ivindo
Province, Gabon**

Arrest of Boris Nzingo Satoka alias Boston, Jean Valentin Mbondazokou and Régis Betsakame by agents of the judicial police and the Water and Forestry Department, supported by lawyers from the NGO Conservation Justice.

"At around 9 a.m., information about an ivory transaction in the town of Makokou (Ogooué-Ivindo province) was given by an anonymous source. Upon arrival at the indicated location, the team deployed by first securing the perimeter. During 4 hours of observation, the agents noticed several rounds of a Toyota vehicle in the colours of the city's taxis. At 3.30 p.m., this same taxi is going to reappear and enter the courtyard of a motel. Three individuals on board got out of it with a bag of rice whose content seemed doubtful. Without delay, the officers launched the assault. They immobilized the three suspects with their luggage. Their bag contained two tips of ivory." An anonymous source told the story to a journalist from the Gabonese Press Agency. The three men are in custody in the premises of the judicial police.

"Boston" had already been arrested with the support of Conservation Justice for trafficking in raw ivory in August 2013.

On February 7, they were sentenced to 2 years in prison, one of which was suspended, a fine of 3 million CFA francs (5,044 US\$) and the same amount in damages.³⁷



February 7, 2020

Koulamoutou and Lastoursville, Ogooué-Lolo province, Gabon

Sentencing of Makita Jean Blaise, Mambenda Edouard and Miyoma Jean Constantin to 3 years imprisonment, one of which is suspended, a fine of 14 million CFA francs or 23,539 US\$, of which 12 million francs are suspended and 5 million francs or 8,407 US\$ in damages for having transported to Koula-Moutou 7 ivory tusks cut into pieces weighing 56.7 kg in total. Their arrest had been strengthened by the NGO Conservation Justice.³⁸





January 6, 2020, Masai Mara, Kenya

© Elephant Aware Masai Mara



March 14, 2020, Mara Conservancy, Kenya

© DSM-T



Early January 2020, Mozambique

© Saving The Survivors



March 17, 2020, Moanda, Gabon

© App



February 10, 2020, Kempton Park, South Africa

© SAPS



February 14 and 15, 2020, Franceville, Gabon

© Conservation Justice



March 1, 2020, Gbarpolu County, Liberia

© Liberian Observer

February 14 and 15, 2020

Franceville, Province of Haut-Ogooué, Gabon

Gregoire Mapila, a retired teacher and now an ambulance driver, carried in his backpack and in a paint pot 2 tusks cut into 10 pieces (25.643 kg). He was about to haggle over them in a restaurant. The Pan-African news agency says the transaction was broken up by the police, the NGO Conservation Justice and Water and Forests agents. An accomplice, Frédéric Mazou was arrested the next day in the province. Mapila has already "worked" with Alassane Sawadogo, a trafficker already convicted in Libreville and in detention since October 2019.³⁹

February 18, 2020

Makokou, Ogooué-Ivindo Province, Gabon

An old hand in trafficking was caught in the act. In a black bag he was carrying 2 tusks cut in 4 (5.6 kg). Mohamed Sany had been tracked for 5 years and had always managed to sneak in. His arrest was carried out by the DGR (Direction Générale des Recherches) and Waters and Forests. The NGO Conservation Justice provided support.⁴⁰

February 2020

Libreville, Estuary Province, Gabon

Sentencing of Yeno Matamba Dan and Mougala Cédric, who was a soldier, to 3 years in prison, one of which is suspended, and to pay jointly and severally 2 million CFA francs or 3,360 US\$ in damages. They had been arrested on January 17, in flagrante delicto for transporting 2 tusks.⁴¹



February 2020

Libreville, Estuary Province, Gabon

Sentencing of Innocent Djidjou of Cameroonian nationality to 5 years in prison, 2 of which were suspended and 3 million CFA francs (5,000 US\$) in damages. He was arrested on October 2, 2019 with 6 tusks (see "On the Trail" n°27 p.100).⁴²



March 17, 2020

Moanda, Haut-Ogooué Province, Gabon

Joseph Kah Puh was carrying an oddly shaped bag of rice. And with good reason, there were 6 ivory tips inside. A joint operation by the police of Franceville and Waters and Forests agents, with the support of Conservation Justice.⁴³

March 2020

Gabon

Two tusks in the hands of 3 men who are in the net of justice thanks to the gendarmerie with the reinforcement of AALF (Appui à l'Application des Lois sur la Faune et la Flore).⁴⁴

ASIA

CHINA

CHONGQING MUNICIPALITY

January 17, 2020

Chongqing International Airport, Chongqing Municipality, China

And a necklace (24 g) in the belongings of a Chinese tourist from Thailand.⁴⁵

January 26 and 30, 2020

Chongqing Municipality, China

- Seizure of one worked ivory (26 g) in a postal parcel from the United States of America.

- Seizure of 2 hippopotamus tusks (teeth) in a parcel from France (1398.3 g).⁴⁶

SHANGHAI MUNICIPALITY

January 5, 2020

Shanghai Pudong International Airport, Pudong District, Autonomous Municipality Shanghai, China

Seizure of 11 bracelets in the luggage of 2 Chinese passengers coming from Africa. "We wanted to give gifts to the family for the spring festival." 440 g.⁴⁷

FUJIAN PROVINCE

Early January 2020

Xiamen, Fujian Province, China

Seizure of a carved effigy from a raw tusk. 670 g. The parcel came from Italy.⁴⁸



GANSU PROVINCE

Early January 2020

Lanzhou Zhongchuan International Airport, Gansu Province, China

Seizure of 21 worked ivories. 775.61 g.⁴⁹

Early January 2020

Lanzhou Zhongchuan International Airport, Gansu Province, China

Seizure from a passenger coming from Bangkok of 5 ivory bracelets weighing a total of 215.5g.⁵⁰

GUANGDONG PROVINCE

January 6, 2020

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

10 worked ivories on 10 passengers disembarking from Cambodia. Total weight: 338 g.⁵¹

February 8, 2020

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure from Addis Ababa of 17 worked ivories. 482,5 g.⁵²

7 kg of bracelets, necklaces, statuettes, other worked ivories seized in China between January 1 and March 31, 2020



**February 2020
Guangzhou-Baiyun International Airport,
Guangdong Province, China**

Seizure in a passenger's luggage of a dozen worked ivories weighing a total of 235 g.⁵³

GUANGXI AUTONOMOUS REGION

**January 7, 2020
Dongxing Port, Guangxi Autonomous Region,
China. Border with Viet Nam.**

The first of the year! Seizure of 70 worked ivories crammed in plastic bags and stucked on the elephant man. His silhouette and ample coat intrigued the customs officers.⁵⁴

GUIZHOU PROVINCE

**March 19, 2020
Guiyang, Guizhou Province, China**

Seizure of 13 worked ivories. 490 g.⁵⁵

HEBEI PROVINCE

**Early January 2020
Tianjin, Hebei Province, China**

New seizure by postal customs of painting scrolls with ivory tips from Japan. 532 g. Tianjin customs seized 40 kg in 2019.⁵⁶



**Early January 2020
Tianjin Binhai International Airport, Hebei
Province, China**

Seizure in a parcel declared as containing fish oil and coming from the United States of 2 pairs of earrings and an ivory bracelet.⁵⁷

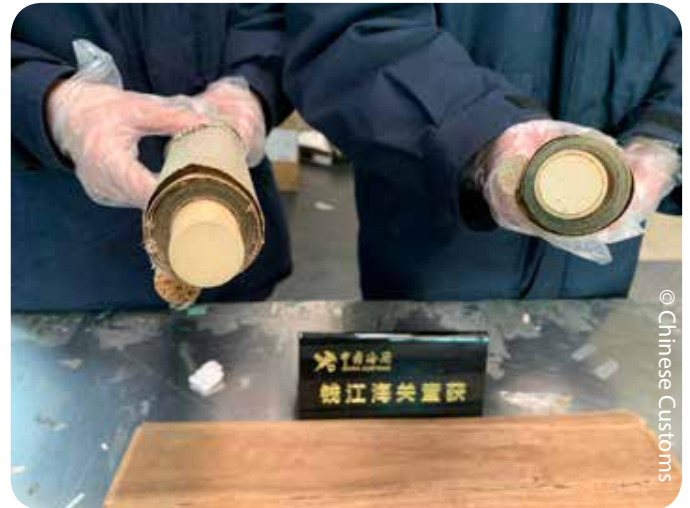
**Beginning of March 2020
Tianjin, Hebei Province, China**

Seizure in a package from the UK of 2 worked ivories declared as collectible pewter spoons.⁵⁹





Early January 2020, Tianjin, China



March 26, 2020, Hangzhou, China



January 5, 2020, Shanghai Pudong, China



February 18, 2020, Suzhou, China



March 18, 2020, Suzhou, China



January 7, 2020, Dongxing Port, China



JIANGSU PROVINCE

January 12, 2020

Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure of several worked ivories.⁶⁰

February 18, 2020

Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, China

A fan: 115 g.⁶¹

March 18, 2020

Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, China

A first! Seizure of 2 corkscrews with ivory handle decorated and engraved in a package from the United Kingdom.⁶²



LIAONING PROVINCE

January 19, 2020

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

Seizure of an ivory pearl necklace from Japan. 15 g.⁶³



SHANDONG PROVINCE

January 2, 2020

Jinan Yaoqiang International Airport, Shandong Province, China

Seizure of a 57-g worked ivory item in the possession of a passenger coming from Seoul.⁶⁴

January 15, 2020

Qingdao Liuting International Airport, Shandong Province, China

Seizure of 2 painting scrolls with ivory tips at the arrival of a flight from Tokyo. 158 g.⁶⁵



January 20, 2020

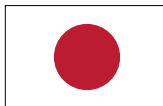
Qingdao Liuting International Airport, Shandong Province, China

Seizure from a passenger disembarking from Hong Kong of 11 worked ivories hidden in coffee cans and weighing a total of 347g.⁶⁶

January 20, 2020

Jinan Yaoqiang International Airport, Shandong Province, China

Seizures of 2 worked ivories from Thailand and Japan (19 and 18 g) and one elephant leather goods (196 g).⁶⁷



SICHUAN PROVINCE

January 3, 2020

Chengdu-Shuangliu International Airport, Sichuan Province, China

17 worked ivories in the luggage of a Chinese citizen from Ethiopia. 469 g.⁶⁸

March 23, 2020

Chengdu-Shuangliu International Airport, Sichuan Province, China

The X-rays had however clearly identified 2 round things presumed to be ivory bracelets in the suitcase of the passenger disembarking from the Ethiopian Airlines flight from Addis Ababa. When the man was asked to open it, the things were gone. At the insistence of customs officials, he admitted that he had removed them from his suitcase and carried them with him.⁶⁹

ZHEJIANG PROVINCE

January 7, 2020

Yangshan Port, Zhejiang Province, China



Seizure by the seconded Shanghai customs of 26 piano keys and worked ivories attached to 8 keys. The keys were "made of wood" according to the accompanying document. At the end of December, the same customs authorities had seized 4 worked ivories with a total weight of 3.9 kg in 4 parcels from Japan.⁷⁰

January 20, 2020

Yiwu, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of a painting scroll with ivory tips. Probably coming from Japan.⁷¹

February 28, 2020

Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, China



Yes ma'am, yes sir, these are still Japanese made painting scrolls that you have seized from a parcel post. Weight of the 8 ivory tips: 171.23 g.⁷²



February 28, 2020

Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, China



Are the recipients print lovers or ivory hungry? Another painting scroll seized in a postal parcel from Japan. 39 g.⁷³

March 26, 2020

Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of 3 painting scrolls with ivory tips.⁷⁴

INDIA

January 6, 2020

Neriyamangalam, Ernakulam District, State of Kerala, India

The male had been electrocuted and Santhosh had sawed off his tusks. The forest officers found the booty at his home. Arrest and seizure.⁷⁵



January 10, 2020

Sakleshpur, Hassan District, State of Karnataka, India

Arrest of Gangaprasad, Unil Gaur, Silass Barl, Birkumar, Babulal Singh and Sancharornng aged between 19 and 45, all farm workers. They were trying to sell the 2 tusks of an elephant killed in a tea plantation.⁷⁶

January 10, 2020

Bangalore, Urban Bangalore District, State of Karnataka, India

Seizure in a van in the middle of the afternoon of a tiger canine and 6 kg of raw ivory. Arrest of Syed Siraj, Mujbeer Rehman, Gabriel Benedict and Santosh K.M.⁷⁷



January 14, 2020

Thrippunithura, Ernakulam District, State of Kerala, India

Seizure of 2 tusks, 1,046 g and 1,226 g, in the hands of Roshan Ram Kumar, Shebin Sasi, Midhun T. M., Sanoj T. A. and Shemeer K. R. aged between 26 and 36, knives and a banknote counting machine. One of the tusks was half-worked. Roshan says he inherited it from his father. The police doubt it.⁷⁸

January 16, 2020

Thalavadi, Erode District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

The elephant was electrocuted. On Friday night she wanted to approach a field of coconut trees, or it was by chance that she passed by a field of coconut trees. 50 villages are adjacent to the forest and defend themselves from wildlife intrusion with electricity.⁷⁹



January 27, 2020

Meppadi, Wayanad District, Kerala State, India

Seizure of 2 elephant tusks (7.85 kg) from a former president of the Bisonvalley Panchayat (community council). The raw ivory is believed to come from the carcass of a 30-year-old elephant that was killed 3-4 days ago in an inter-species fight. Peer Muhammed Basha with the help of 3 accomplices had appropriated the tusks in the hope of trading them. Meanwhile, he had buried them under a tree.⁸¹

REPEATED OFFENSE / GANG

February 9, 2020

Durgaprasad, Cuttack District, State of Odisha, India

Babuli Mahalik is for a while under lock and key. His lawyers had so far managed to get this famous poacher released on bail. He takes credit for the death of about 20 elephants. He is 45 years old. His speciality is shooting. He is a purist. Automatic weapons are not his thing. He uses handmade rifles. He was betrayed by anonymous information and taken prisoner on Saturday night in his home village after a difficult shadowing. The cops were forced to disguise themselves as beggars or street vendors and are now questioning him about the beheading of 2 bull elephants in a forest near Athagarh.⁸²

February 11, 2020

Yeshwanthpur, Bangalore District, State of Karnataka, India

Sounder Pandiyan alias Selva Shivaji and his sidekick Kundan were trying to find a buyer around 8:30 this morning near the Ullas theatre. The police stopped them and found "elephant tusks" in their bag, without further details.⁸³

February 12, 2020

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

Seven pieces of ivory with a total weight of 13 kg, overestimated by customs at Rs.12,900,000 (180,068 US\$) or 13,000 US\$/kg.⁸⁴

February 13, 2020

Titia Chhak, Mayurbhanj District, State of Odisha, India

A tusk weighs 700 g and is 45 cm long. The other tusk weighs 600 g and is 38 cm long. They are respectively estimated at between 50,000 and 70,000 rupees or between 690 and 960 US\$ (1,270/kg US\$). The victim was a male aged between 8 and 9 years. Five arrests.⁸⁵

February 23, 2020

Sikar, Sikar District, State of Rajasthan, India

Arrest of 4 men aged between 30 and 50 years old. They were in possession of 2 tusks, 3.5 kg in total, and an elephant's jaw.⁸⁶

February 26, 2020

Vadodara, Vadodara District, State of Gujarat, India

Arrest of Vinayak Purohit. He was caught in the act of selling 2 tusks (2,5 kg each and 1 m long). Purohit, a truck driver by profession, claims to have inherited them from a grandfather coming back from Africa in 1964. The WCCB's sleuths and forestry officers find this hard to believe. Genetic analysis is underway.⁸⁷

February 28, 2020

Talavadi, Chamarajanagar District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Two males in their twenties fell dead against the illegal electric fence surrounding the M. Palanisamy's field. He is now on the run.⁸⁸



February 28, 2020

Karalavadi, Erode District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Two elephants are fatally electrocuted by a fence surrounding a field of sugar cane covering an area of one hectare or so, in the immediate vicinity of the tiger reserve. The 2 elephants were a 6-year-old male and a 5-year-old female. They were transported inside the reserve with the help of a building site machinery and buried. The farmer ran away. The fence was clandestine and connected to the public network. The next day, the local forestry services officer was relieved of his duties for not having organised patrols and taken sufficient measures in this sector known for conflicts between wildlife and agriculture.⁸⁹



© The Hindu

February 29, 2020

Gudiyattam, Vellore District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

S. Pichtandi had illegally installed an electric fence around his rice field to protect it from wild boars. But today it was a 25-year-old tusker who was struck. The peasant first covered the corpse with branches and dismantled the fence, then the next day mobilized Ashok Kumar, a local entrepreneur who owns a bulldozer, and a worker, Selvaraj Arjun, who came to dig a pit in the early morning and bury the pachyderm. How can anyone think to be discreet when burying an elephant with a bulldozer near a village? The threesome was given away. Dogs were sniffing for days above the grave. Agents from the Forestry Department and the Revenue Department turned up and got hold of Selvaraj Arjun, who told the whole story. His two confederates had vanished into thin air. The pit was reopened and the elephant autopsied. S. Pichtandi surrendered on 3 March. Ashok Kumar had been arrested in the meantime. They were charged with several offences under the Wildlife Protection Act and placed in custody. It cannot be ruled out that the gravediggers may have planned to recover the elephant's rotproof tusks at some point after an indefinite period.⁹⁰



March 3, 2020

Halli, Chamarajanagar District, State of Karnataka, India

A bull elephant, about 25 years old, died from electrocution in a maize field. He had ears of corn in his mouth that he had just picked. The field is 1 km from the forest. The steel wire tightened a few centimetres from the ground was directly connected to a public high-voltage line. It was a mortal danger for the fauna and for human beings.⁹¹



GANG

March 9, 2020

Sarjapur, Bangalore-Urban District, State of Karnataka, India

Another raw ivory transaction that fails near a bus stop thanks to a patrol intervening on intuition or information. Seizure of 2 tusks. Arrest of Nagaraj V. from Tamil Nadu. His accomplice, a certain Sinnaraju, is wanted.⁹²

March 18, 2020

Tangi Forest, Odisha State, India

Alerted by locals, the forestry agents rushed into the forest and could only witness the noisy agony of an elephant lying on the ground with a flabbergasted partner at his bedside. The victim is said to have eaten a poison. In the same place 3 months ago, an elephant had died for reasons that have not been officially elucidated.⁹³



INDONESIA

January 15, 2020

Aceh Jaya Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

The police investigation after the discovery of 5 elephant skeletons in an oil palm plantation revealed the presence of a fence tapped to the grid and designed to electrocute elephants considered as pests. "Several people will be prosecuted" according to Bima Nugraha Putra, the local police chief.⁹⁴



January 26, 2020

Bengkalis Regency, Riau Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Rescue of a bull elephant, about 5 years old, entangled in a trap around a forest concession of the company PT Arara Abadi, a forestry subsidiary of Asia Pulp & Paper. He had managed to escape but was dragging a skein of nylon threads with him. His fore-right leg was deeply cut. Anaesthetised at 5.45 p.m., he was released, treated and put back on his feet 3 hours later. His herd was waiting for him nearby. Joint operation by the BKSDA and specialists from the Tesso Nilo and Leuser parks.⁹⁵



February 10, 2020

Koto Pait Beringin, Bengkalis Regency, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Discovery after a tip-off of a 40-year-old elephant inside a forest concession of the Chinese conglomerate Asia Pulp & Paper. Death occurred a few days ago. It is attributed to gastroenteritis or a chronic digestive disease. The hypothesis of poisoning is not discussed. The corpse had been in secret buried on the spot with the means of PT Arara Abadi, a subsidiary of Asia Pulp & Paper (see event of January 26, 2020). The company's Arara Abadi plantations and concessions are close to Sakai, an indigenous tribe who, according to the timber and paper magnates, "live in remote areas, far from technology, modernisation and access to education". "We hope to improve their standard of living by offering them work."⁹⁶

February 14, 2020

Minas Elephant Care Centre, Siak Regency, Riau Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

It was death after 2 months of treatment for a 3 year old calf elephant that was deeply wounded in the legs after being captured by a trap in the forest in Tesso Nilo Park. He had aggravated his wounds and suffering by trying to free himself. He was disincarcerated several days later by rangers and vets. He refused to drink milk. He was being fed intravenously and with vitamins. On arrival in Minas, he weighed about 100 kg.⁹⁷



End of February 2020

Bireuen Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

An *elephas maximus sumatranus* whose front left foot was caught in a trap was disincarcerated and urgently transferred to the Saree Elephant Training Centre. His recovery is not assured. He is badly injured. He would have remained at least 15 days captive in the metal trap set by poachers.⁹⁸



MALAYSIA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

January 5 and 10, 2020

Luasong and Tawau, State of Sabah, Malaysia

Hendrikus Pale and Anastasia Daton worked in an oil palm plantation. They are of Indonesian nationality. Four pygmy elephant tusks were seized from their home. They admit that they bought them for 1,500 to 2,000 rupees, or 360 to 480 US\$, in the hope of selling them for more in their home countries. They were sentenced to 4 years in prison.¹⁰⁰



February 26, 2020

Sandakan, State of Sabah, Malaysia

Sentencing of Supriadi Juman to 18 months in prison and a fine of 12,000 US\$ for holding 2 elephant tusks in his home. An Indonesian national, he wanted to transform raw ivory into necklaces. Juman's dirty dealings were uncovered by the investigation into the poaching of an elephant in October 2019.¹⁰¹



Kinabatangan District; Sukau; Deramakot Forest Reserve and Banjaran Bagahak, State of Sabah, Malaysia

The slow extermination of the pygmy elephants (*Elephas maximus borneensis*) on the island of Borneo has been going on since the beginning of the year.

- An anonymous source informs, with photos in support, of the burying of an elephant corpse inside an oil palm plantation. The plantation management failed to report the suspicious death to the Sabah Wildlife Department for the protection of fauna and flora.

- Saturday 8 February. Discovery of a dead adult female aged around 30-35 years old in the protected Deramakot Forest. After an autopsy, the veterinarians conclude that she was acutely poisoned. Blood flowed from the mouth, ears and anus.



- Sunday 9 February (the next day). Discovery of dead adult female in an oil palm plantation in Bagahak 200 km from Deramakot. Death by poisoning is confirmed by Christina Liew, Sabah state environment minister.



The death toll (4 or 5) has inconsistencies in the number, age and sex of the victims. The last parameter is important. Only bull elephants have tusks in Asia and in some cases, behind the poisonings, ivory trafficking may be hidden. The smuggling of tusks between Malaysian Sabah and Indonesian Kalimantan proves it (see "On the Trail" n°15 p.103, n°18 p.102, n°26 p.94 and n°27 p.108).

We will therefore stick to the statement by Christina Liew, according to whom since the beginning of the year the death toll has been 2 adult females, 1 adult male, 1 calf and a 2 year old bull calf.⁹⁹

MYANMAR

January 24, 2020

Sinma Forest Reserve, Patheingyi District, Ayeyarwady Region, Myanmar



For lack of ivory, the skin is taken.

A new skinning of a poached elephant is noted in the region.

It is the first of the year. In addition, the trunk has been cut. The unfortunate 28-year-old elephant was killed by poisoned arrows. The barbarians fled when they heard the patrol approaching.¹⁰²

NEPAL

January 23, 2020

Lagankhel, Lalitpur District, Bagmati Pradesh Province, Nepal

Tarakanta Chaudhary stumbled upon a security check while carrying a tusk. Before presenting him to the Forestry Division, police questioned him to find out whether he had poached the elephant himself or bought the tusk.⁸⁰

SRI LANKA

January 20, 2020

Polonnaruwa, North Central Province, Sri Lanka

An elephant died. He was between 20 and 25 years old and lived in the Wasgamuwa reserve away from the towns, farmers and conflicts with men. But the men still came to give him a hard time. He was shot dead.¹⁰³

January 24, 2020

Kataragama, Uva Province, Sri Lanka



Death of a baby elephant near the compost bin of the preserved forest. Poisoning is suspected.¹⁰⁴



Elephas maximus borneensis

February 18, 2020
Batumulla, Central Province, Sri Lanka

Tragic death of 2 elephants, electrocuted by an agricultural fence.¹⁰⁵



VIET NAM

March 22, 2020
Dien Hong, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

Seizure around 1.30 a.m. on the A1 highway by a patrol acting on information of 225 kg of raw ivory divided into 65 sections in a truck coming from Vinh and heading towards Hanoi (300 km). The driver, Nguyen Van Hung, and his passenger, Le Huu Truong, are under lock and key.¹⁰⁶

EUROPE

GERMANY

Between 8 and 10 January 2020
Frankfurt am Main International Airport, State of Hesse, Germany

Seizure in the hand luggage of an African “tourist” of a worked elephant tusk.¹⁰⁷

SPAIN

Early January 2020
Sabadell, Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain

5,000 € (5,600 US\$) on the Internet. Seizure of a pair of raw ivory tusks mounted on a wooden base and skilfully staged. Not enough to be considered as carved tusks to be sold legally under strict conditions.¹⁰⁸

Early January 2020
Palencia, Autonomous Community of Castile and León, Spain

Seizure of 9 worked objects made of elephant ivory and one object made of hippopotamus ivory (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II). Seizure of an elephant ivory letter-opener in the shape of a crocodile. Three arrests, one woman aged 28 and 2 men aged 65 and 68. All the objects were for sale via the Internet without any document attesting to their legal origin.¹⁰⁹

End of January 2020
Avilés and Salinas, Community of Asturias, Spain

Seizures by the Guardia Civil of a chess set in elephant ivory offered for sale for 2,000 € (2,200 US\$) and 2 sculptures representing birds 20 and 25 cm high in hippopotamus ivory (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) offered for sale for 550 € (600 US\$). The 34 ivories worked were lacking certificates of origin and dating.

Last year, the Guardia Civil de Gijón arrested 8 people and seized 45 elephant ivories, 2 hippopotamus ivories, an item made of rhinoceros horn, a sea turtle shell, 8 brown bear claws and a primate skull.¹¹⁰ Gijón, see “On the Trail” n°21 p. 11.

Early February 2020
Elche and Torreveja, Province of Alicante, Valencian Community, Spain

They were 4 selling elephant ivory items via the Internet. Two statuettes, a tusk carved in the shape of a crocodile, a bracelet and a set of dominoes were seized by the Guardia Civil. Their value is estimated at 4,200 €, i.e. 4,630 US\$.¹¹¹

OPERATION DENTINA
Beginning of March 2020
Province of León, Autonomous Community of Castilla y León, Spain

Seizure at an antique shop of 113 worked ivories and 4 tusks of undetermined origin with a commercial value of 240,000 € (265,000 US\$). Carbon 14 dating on several samples revealed that the ivory is post-1947 and the items cannot be considered antiques. Therefore they cannot be commercially exploited.¹¹²

OPERATION FILDISH
Mid-March 2020
Province of Huelva, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain, and Portugal

Seizure at the shops of an antique dealer from Hueva, and in Lisbon and Porto (Portugal), of 355 worked ivories, netsukes, statuettes, dice, pens, cigarette smokers, 2 raw tusks, a large assortment of colonial relics lying around in attics or fake old things worked in today’s workshops. The cumulative value of the seizure exceeds 120,000 € (132,000 US\$). The articles without certificates of origin and date were sold via the internet and sent by courier from Portugal to a dozen Spanish provinces including Mallorca. Eight people are caught in the net in Spain and Portugal. The investigation, which began in June 2019, was completed thanks to the pooling of information between the Spanish and Portuguese services in coordination with Europol.¹¹³

ITALY

January 28, 2020
Tromello, Province of Pavia, Region of Lombardy, Italy

He was trailing towards Milan with a 156 cm tusk on the back seat of the car. The Albanian subject is unfavourably known to the police. He lives in Broni, in the province of Pavia.¹¹⁴

February 26, 2020
Pordenone, Province of Pordenone, Friuli Venezia Giulia Region, Italy

On sale on eBay for 1,900 € (2,100 US\$) of an ivory crocodile presented as dating from the 60s and coming from Sudan. It was visited by Carabinieri. Without identity papers, it was seized until further notice. Its owner is summoned to prove that it pre-dates 1947 and that it can be honoured as an antique.¹¹⁵



February 28, 2020, Talavadi, India



March 3, 2020, Halli, India



January 24, 2020, Sinma Forest Reserve, Myanmar



February 18, 2020, Batumulla, Sri Lanka



March 22, 2020, Dien Hong, Viet Nam



February 12, 2020, Jalpaiguri, India



Early February 2020, Elche and Torrevieja, Spain



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Mid-March 2020, Province of Huelva, Spain

© Guardia Civil

Other Mammals

AFRICA

NAMIBIA

Beginning of March 2020

Karibib, Erongo Region, Namibia

In the early morning, 4 men busy loading 2 carcasses of gemsboks (*Oryx gazella*) into a pick-up truck were spotted by a police patrol and the city's dog brigade. They had been poaching the gemsboks in the Albrechtshohe ranch during the night by tracking them down with dogs and finishing them off with spears. Three men ran away. The driver tried to escape by car. He was caught again and his vehicle was seized. The commercial value of the 2 gemsboks is estimated at 20,000 N\$ or 1,300 US\$.¹

AMERICA

ARGENTINA

March 17, 2020

Puerto Vilelas, Chaco province, Argentina

Arrest of Guillermo Milich. Seizure then incineration of a dead armadillo (family Dasypodidae). Charged with poaching a species protected by law, hunting with artificial light and transporting a protected species.²

BRAZIL

January 17, 2020

Pirapó River, State of Paraná, Brazil

Two poachers were at work during the night and had already killed 3 Bolivian hairy armadillos (*Chaetophractus nationi*, Appendix II) when they were surrounded by an environmental police patrol. Administrative fine of 1,500 reals for each, or 370 US\$. Trial to come.³



February 18, 2020

Querência, State of Mato Grosso, Brazil

The female owner of a cafeteria was involved in the wild meat trade. Seizure in a freezer of 4 skinned pacas (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras) and one partridge and a prohibited firearm in a larder.⁴

March 29, 2020

Irani, State of Santa Catarina, Brazil

Seizure in a Ford Ranger approaching a farm of several guns, knives, ammunition and 2 freshly killed nine-banded armadillos (*Dasypus novemcinctus*). Two arrests.⁵



CANADA

January 29, 2020

Province of Alberta, Canada

Conviction of Terrence "Terry" Scott, a hunting guide, to a fine of 25,000 Canadian dollars (19,000 US\$), for exempting clients from the United States of America from the requirement to obtain permits to hunt deer, coyotes and wolves. On his property, anti-poaching police seized the antlers and fur from 3 mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) ready to be shipped to US clients.⁶



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

February 21, 2020

El Dorado County, State of California, United States of America

Sentencing of Myron Barry Woltering to 3 years probation and a fine of 17,500 US\$. He hunted deer with a bow and arrow and baited them with grains of wheat and alfalfa and salt stones. The agents of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife had accumulated photos of his intrigues and proved that, through these schemes condemned by the law and by those who defend the "ethics" of hunting, he had acquired giant trophies of "6x4 size".⁷



Weekend of March 21-22, 2020

Pine Township, Indiana County, State of Pennsylvania, United States of America

Poaching of a piebald white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) whose chest, belly and legs are white due to a genetic fancy. He was killed near the intersection of the Nolo and Laurel Run roads. A call for witnesses was launched via the internet by the Pennsylvania game agency and hundreds of comments flowed. They generally fall into just a few categories according to www.pennlive.com:

- Killing an animal and letting it lay without making an attempt to use the venison is wrong.
- Shooting any deer, legally or illegally is wrong.
- Farms kill too many deer in their fields.
- The authorities do not react quickly enough when something suspicious is reported.
- Roadkill deer carcasses are not removed fast enough.
- Deer poaching needs a higher penalty [the fine is 1,000 US\$ per deer and the withdrawal of hunting licences can take up to 5 years].
- One woman described the deer as "our baby" that she and her family have been able to observe for 2 years in the vicinity of her house.
- Killing an albino or piebald deer brings bad luck onto the offending hunter.⁸

MEXICO

February 24, 2020

Merida, State of Yucatán, Mexico

Following a call from a citizen, the police seized a coati (*Nasua narica*, Appendix III in Honduras) at someone's home.⁹

PERU

February 10, 2020

Province of Morropón, Department of Piura, Peru

Following the alert on the Alerta Serfor application, a team proceeded to capture a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*, *Odocoileus virginianus mayensis*, Appendix III in Guatemala) locked up. A mild anaesthesia was necessary to protect him from a heart attack or fracture injury. When white-tailed deer are disturbed, they are affected by extreme agitation and the exiguity of the yard where he was confined endangered his safety. Aged 3 years old and held in captivity for a long time, he lost his feeding reflexes and was temporarily handed over to the private Cecilia Margarita Zoo. The Serfor in the department of Piura has since the beginning of the year freed from mascotism a festive amazon (*Amazona festiva*, Appendix II), a woolly monkey (*Lagothrix lagotricha*, Appendix II), 2 yellow-chevroned parakeet (*Brotogeris versicolurus*, Appendix II), a capuchin (*Cebus* spp., Appendix II), 2 young possums (*Didelphis* spp.) and 3 snakes (one Heath's tropical racer, *Mastigodryas heathii*, and 2 boas constrictor, *Boa constrictor*, Appendix II).¹⁰

Mid March 2020

Yantalo, Department of San Martin, Peru

Seizure of a silky anteater (*Cyclopes didactylus*) in the hands of a poacher who was trying to sell it. He was returned to the care of the NGO Neotropical Primate Conservation and released the next day. "We hope this little guy gets over the shock of its ordeal and continues to enjoy eating termites!"¹¹

ASIA

CAMBODIA

January 2020

Prambei Mom Forest, Kampong Speu Province, Cambodia

A forest patrol discovers the carcass of a banteng (*Bos javanicus*) about a year old, its left front leg caught in a trap. It was burned on site. In the course of its work, the patrol dismantled 237 traps.¹²



Week of January 20, 2020

Ratanakkiri Province, Cambodia

A forest patrol rescues 3 bantengs (*Bos javanicus*), 2 males and 1 female, who were trapped. On the same route, in December 2019, 2 Reeves's muntjac (*Muntiacus reevesi*) and a pangolin had been disentangled.¹³



February 17, 2020

Section of Chhay Areng, Cardamom Protected Forest, Cambodia

Dismantling of a poaching camp, discovery of the charred body of an Asiatic wild dog (or dhole, *Cuon alpinus*, Appendix II) and removal of 45 traps by rangers.¹⁴



March 2020

Tro Pang Sap, Takeo Province, Cambodia

Exactly one year after its arrival in the Wildlife Alliance Cambodia refuge in Phnom Tamao, a young common palm civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III in India) seized from a poacher's pouch was released in the forests of Cardamom Park.¹⁵



Cuon alpinus

CHINA

January 2, 2020

Menglian, Yunnan Province, China

Seizure of Reeves's muntjac (*Muntiacus reevesi*) antlers (237.3 g) and meat (973.6 g).¹⁶

Early January 2020

Lanzhou Zhongchuan International Airport, Gansu Province, China

Seizure of 10 saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II). 871 g.¹⁷

March 25, 2020

Meishan, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure in a container filled in with logs from South America of several antlers of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*, *Odocoileus virginianus mayensis*, Appendix III in Guatemala).¹⁸



INDIA

January 7, 2020

Guwahati Airport, Metropolitan Kamrup District, State of Assam, India

Tourists in the park become the poachers' customers, at least that is what happened with Swapan Kumar Dutta, a 68-year-old retired engineer living in Gurgaon in Haryana. His luggage was searched at Guwahati airport and the guards found 3 antlers of Indian hog deer (*Axis porcinus*, Appendix III). He admitted that he had bought them from a poacher inside Kaziranga Park and intended to resell them in his town. This is the first time that such direct contact between seller and buyer has been evidenced within the park. A man was sentenced to 7 years in prison in October 2019 for poaching an Indian hog deer in the park. As for the retired engineer, he is being held in police custody for 30 days.¹⁹

January 7, 2020

Jhurar Khera, Fazilka District, Punjab State, India

Poaching of a nilgai (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*, Appendix III) in the Abohar protected area surrounded by 13 villages of the Bishnoi tribe. Bishnoi are traditionally vegetarian. One of their leaders alerted the forestry services in the middle of the night. At dawn, the 7 poachers were caught cutting up the antelope. They fled. They were identified. Kernail Singh, Buta Singh, Ravinder Singh, Jagsir Singh, Kuldip Singh, Satnam Singh and Kala Singh are from Kernail Singh Basti.²⁰

January 20, 2020

Jawahar Nagar, Jaisalmer District, State of Rajasthan, India

Skin, heart, bones, head, here is all that remains of an Indian gazelle (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III) known by the vernacular name of chinkara. They were found at Narpatram's home, a poacher and seller of wild meat and organs. Four accomplices fled. Poaching of chinkaras is increasing around the Mohangarh Canal.²¹

January 21, 2020

Kovilmedu, Coimbatore District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

The WCCB is steadfast in its campaign to eradicate the use of mongoose hair (*Herpestes* spp., Appendix III) in the manufacture of fine art brushes. With the assistance of the Forest Department, WCCB officers seized 243 brushes from a city store. The owner was arrested.²²

January 30, 2020

Attari-Wagah border post, Amritsar District, Punjab State, India

Seizure of more than one hundred shahtoosh shawls made of Tibetan Antelope wool (*Pantholops hodgsonii*, Appendix I). It takes the wool of 4 adult animals to make a shawl.²³

February 5, 2020

Phulpui, Aizawl District, State of Mizoram, India

The Himalayan serow (*Capricornis thar*, Appendix I) is the state's fetish and emblematic animal. Its poaching is punishable by 3 years in prison and a minimum fine of 10,000 rupees (140 US\$). P.C. Zomuankima and Lungtiawia boasted, with proof of this broadcasted on social networks, that they had shot at close range a peaceful Himalayan serow resting behind thickets.²⁴

March 14, 2020

Singanallur, Coimbatore District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Birdwatchers around Singanallur Lake, who photograph and count black-winged stilts, little grebes and pelicans, released an Indian grey mongoose (*Herpestes edwardsi*, Appendix III) still alive caught in a metal trap. A few metres further on, it was already too late for another one. Bird lovers became mongooses lovers and, inspecting the banks and peripheries, they flushed out copper and steel coils, iron pliers and bars that are used on the spot to make traps.²⁵



March 23, 2020

Maksi, Shajapur District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Arrest of 6 persons in flagrante delicto for poaching a blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III). The carcass and a rifle were seized.²⁶

March 30, 2020

Naujalaha Nakta, Pilibhit District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Seizure of 18 kg of Indian hog deer meat (*Axis porcinus*, Appendix III in India) in a banana plantation. Eight farm workers are involved. The meat was wrapped in banana leaves.²⁷

INDONESIA

February 25, 2020

Baringin, Kabupaten of South Tapanuli, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

On the occasion of a mediation in the village to avoid conflicts between the population and the orangutans, a team from the BKSDA Sipirok reserve, assisted by the Scorpion Foundation, freed a civet (*Viverridae* family) held in captivity.²⁸

IRAN

Mid March 2020

Shushtar, Khuzestan Province, Iran

Iran Environmental Watch reports that 2 poachers of urials (*Ovis cycloceros*, Appendix II) in the Karai protected area were sentenced as a last resort to 3 years imprisonment and a fine of 6,000 US\$.²⁹



ISRAEL

January 9, 2020

Maghar, Northern District, Israel

Seizure of porcupine meat (family Hystricidae), firearms and ammunition. Two arrests. Rumour is spreading that rodent meat detoxifies the liver and increases fertility. "Porcupine feet resemble baby feet, and the noises the animal makes resemble a baby's cry and that resemblance probably led to the emergence of that superstition" says Liad Ling, head of investigations at the Nature and Parks Authority. Eleven years ago, the first arrest of a porcupine poacher resulted in a 5-month prison sentence. The price of a specimen on the black market is around 450 shekels, or 130 US\$.³⁰

PAKISTAN

January 16, 2020

Islamabad, Federal Territory of Islamabad, Pakistan

Seizure in a restaurant of a markhor trophy (*Capra falconeri*, Appendix I). It would have been left there by the previous owner. The government of the territory grants 12 hunting licenses to the Kashmiri markhor per year on the basis of Rs.10.07 million per license, or 65,259 US\$.³¹

January 23, 2020

Hunza, Gilgit-Baltistan Region, Pakistan, Border with Afghanistan and China.

Sentencing of Rehmat Khan to 8 months in prison for shooting on sight 2 young Himalayan ibex (*Capra sibirica hemalayanus*) in Khunjerab National Park. Poaching of ibexes is not exceptional in the region. Residents and even park rangers accuse border guards of sealing off entire areas within the park, poaching and taking the carcasses away in their official vehicles.³²



End of January 2020

Khunjerab National Park, Hunza, Gilgit-Baltistan Region, Pakistan

Seizure of 3 freshly killed Himalayan ibex (*Capra sibirica hemalayanus*) carcasses. The poacher was on familiar ground. He is a member of the FWO (Frontier Works Organisation).³³

Beginning of March 2020

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan

The ratings of the dead markhor (*Capra falconeri*, Appendix I) with its long spiral horns keeps increasing. The administration of the province has issued for the hunting season between November 2020 and March 2021 four licences in the districts of Chitral and Kohistan for a total sum of 502,500 US\$, i.e. 125,625 US\$ per trophy.³⁴

SRI LANKA

January 8, 2020

Akkaraipattu, Eastern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of meat from a sambar deer (*Rusa unicorn*) (12 kg) that a young man was about to sell at a seaside market. "Navy keeps vigilant eye on this type of illegal acts committed by handful of people who hunt these innocent animals which make the environment beautiful".³⁵

THAILAND

Beginning of March 2020

Ban Phu Nam Ron border crossing, Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand. Border with Myanmar.

Attempted smuggling by a man and woman of Burmese nationality of a cut-up carcass of serow (genus *Capricornis*). Their pick-up truck was also seized.³⁶

TURKEY

Early January 2020

Istanbul International Airport, Istanbul Province, Marmara Region, Turkey

Seizure in the luggage of 2 Turkish passengers coming from Entebbe, Uganda, of 77 horns of African buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*) whose value is estimated according to customs at about 310,000 liras, or 52,000 US\$ and 670 US\$ per horn.³⁷



EUROPE

UNITED KINGDOM

March 6, 2020

Bournemouth, County Dorset, England, United Kingdom

Conviction of Stuart Karl John Jones, 54 years old, to 2 months imprisonment for shooting at close range at a common otter (*Lutra lutra*, Appendix I) caught in a net at the edge of a lake and for placing otter box traps at the edge of the same lake with the aim of eradicating them. At the time of the events Stuart Karl John Jones was the manager of a recreational fishing park in Dorset. Common otters are listed in Appendix I of CITES because of the international trade in their skins for hatmaking and other comfort purposes.³⁸



RUSSIA

Beginning of March 2020

Republic of Tuva, Siberian Federal District, Russia. Border with Mongolia.

Arrest of a man carrying 20 pieces of meat and other remains of Siberian musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*, Appendix II) in a bag. The lot probably contained preputial glands.³⁹

Multi-Species

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

Saturday, March 28, 2020

Near Kuruman, Northern Cape Province, South Africa

Discovery at 11pm in the trailer of a double-cab pick-up truck of a dead gemsbok (*Oryx gazella*), a large kudu (*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*) and a wildebeest (genus *Connochaetes*) and seizure inside the vehicle of a firearm and ammunition. Arrest of 5 poachers. The economic value of the 3 bodies is 30,000 rand or 2,100 US\$.¹



BOTSWANA

March 16, 2020

Chobe National Park, North West Province, Botswana

First clash of the year in Chobe Park between a patrol of rangers and a band of poachers. No deaths or wounded on either side. The fugitives are believed to be from Namibia, Zimbabwe and Zambia.²

COTE D'IVOIRE

March 1, 2020

Man, District des Montagnes, Côte d'Ivoire

Seizure under bags of cabbage and peanuts of 2 tons of smoked bushmeat in the trailer of a truck. The cargo was incinerated on site. The Minister of Water and Forests thanked state servants for rejecting the tempting offers from the driver and his escort to release the truck and the prohibited goods. Along with the bushmeat, there were also 2 tons of sugar smuggled in from Brazil.³

MOROCCO

March 2020

Rabat-Salé-Kenitra region, Middle Atlas, Morocco

"The exceptional context of the Covid-19 pandemic is seen by some people as a great opportunity to engage in criminal activities in the forest environment," said an agent of the Department of Water and Forests, on condition of anonymity. "We respect hygiene and social distancing measures, but we keep a watch on the ground." Not all civil servants are teleworking, poachers and woodcutters can testify to this. From mid-March several convoys of cedar logs were intercepted near Chichaoua, Ifrane and Midelt. Armed poachers accompanied by sloughi dogs were arrested in the forests around Tiflet, Moulay Akoub, Taroudan, Asgarou, Tahanagout and Beni Mellal.

Kif planters who had taken over a plot of cedar trees in the process of regeneration were surprised by a patrol in Issaguen. The clash was violent. A guard was seriously injured in the hand with an axe. In most cases, poaching take place at night. The fauna of the Middle Atlas is made up of species as different as Barbary macaques, hedgehogs, porcupines, hares, servals and Berber wild boars. Poaching is also fierce on fish, several nets and pots have been seized by forestry agents in the reservoir of the Ahmed El Hansali dam.⁴

NAMIBIA

January 3, 2020

Nkurenkuru, Kavango-West Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.

Arrest of Mberema Patrick Haingura and Siremo Richard Malimbo who were carrying a leopard skin valued at 150,000 Namibian dollars (10,170 US\$), 2 crocodile skins (*Crocodylidae*, Appendix I or II) valued at 90,000 Namibian dollars (6,100 US\$) and a slender mongoose skin (*Galerella sanguinea*). The 2 individuals were released on bail equal to 542 US\$ each.⁵

End of February 2020

Etosha National Park, Namibia

The fencing of Etosha National Park is in progress. 145 km have been installed. The perimeter would be 800 km. The State and State agents are carrying out the work. The cost of 6,800 US\$ per km is suggested. It would have been 7 to 8 times higher if a private company had been hired. The priority objective of the work is to prevent the animals from leaving the park and coming into conflict with the local population. It is also about slowing down poachers' intrusions. The park covers the four regions of Oshana, Omusati, Oshikoto and Ohangwena.⁶

UGANDA

March 18, 2020

Kira, Central Region, Uganda

Police raid in an illegal workshop. Arrest of 36 Chinese citizens, men and women. They were engaged in dismantling used or stolen mobile phones and computers and trafficking in endangered species in the same premises. Seizure of pangolin scales, 6 live turtles and 223 SIM cards used for fraudulent financial transactions. After deliberation by the court, the 36 suspects were transferred to the new Kitalya prison in West Kampala where barrier gestures to reduce Covid-19 transmission are easier to implement than in other remand facilities. First appearance expected in the coming weeks.



These Chinese industrialists specialising in the recycling of stolen electronic equipment and the marketing of elephant penises, pangolin scales and turtles remain until further notice in prison.⁷

SENEGAL

Mid-March 2020

Niokolo-Koba National Park, Tambacounda Region, Senegal

Profiteers of all kinds lurk in the park on the lookout for animals and gold dust. 24 arrests since January.⁸

TANZANIA

January 10, 2020

Tanzania

Abdallah Bakari Nindi, Paul Mtambuki Mng'aro and Said Ally Mchomvu were sentenced to 20 years in prison for possession and trafficking of pangolin meat and one leopard skin.⁹



ZIMBABWE

February 2020

Nyangambe, Save Valley Conservancy, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe

Kudakwashe Mnangagwa, one of the President's sons, is reportedly regularly engaged in poaching in the Nyangambe Community Wildlife Project reserve. This game reserve is in the buffer zone of the Save Valley Conservancy. It is operated by Green Africa Safaris. The poaching charges are brought by a lawyer residing in Nyangambe and responsible for drafting the Nyangambe Wildlife Trust's statutes. Every effort is reportedly being made to remove him from this strategic position and to allow prominent members of the President's party and army staff to hijack the community project and to turn it into a hunting reserve for the elite. Philip Mafuta, one of the leaders of Green Africa Safaris, speaks of slander: "Our activities in Nyangambe are lawful according to the Parks and Wildlife Act. We are allowed to undertake hunting activities since we have a hunting license at Nyangambe. I can confirm that I used to hunt with the President's son since we are related, I am part of that family so there is nothing which can stop us from working together."¹⁰

AMERICA

ARGENTINA

Mid January 2020

Villa Elvira, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina

Joint operation by police and Ministry of Agriculture officers to neutralise wildlife traffic on the Internet. Seizure by the trafficker of 91 animals including 2 rheas (*Rhea* spp., Appendix I or II), 12 land turtles, 5 sea turtles, 17 hedgehogs and 60 birds: Northern cardinals (*Cardinalis cardinalis*), saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), hooded siskins (*Spinus magellanicus*), double-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulescens*) and ultramarine grosbeaks (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*). One arrest. The man is initially accused of mistreatment and cruelty to animals.¹¹



February 3, 2020

Dorrego, Department of Guaymallén, Province of Mendoza, Argentina

Seizure in a taxidermist poacher's home of firearms and chemicals, a puma skin and skull (*Puma concolor*, Appendix II), a stuffed pampas cat (*Leopardus colocolo*, Appendix II), a skull of an Argentine grey fox (*Lycalopex griseus*, Appendix II), half a common rhea (*Rhea americana*, Appendix II), two skins of Argentine boa constrictors (*Boa constrictor occidentalis*, Appendix I), one skin of a yellow anaconda (*Eunectes notaeus*, Appendix II), a pichi (*Zaedyus pichiy*) carapace, 11 lesser rhea feather-dusters (*Pterocnemia pennata*, Appendix II), 2 guanaco lower jaws (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II), 17 plains vizcachas (*Lagostomus maximus*), a big hairy armadillo (*Chaetophractus villosus*), a pichi (*Zaedyus pichiy*), 2 Patagonian maras (*Dolichotis patagonum*) and 3 European hares (*Lepus europaeus*) all of them eviscerated and frozen. A handful of birds still alive, including a brown-and-yellow marshbird (*Pseudoleistes virescens*), were taken in by a refuge.¹²

BOLIVIE

End of January 2020

La Paz, Department of La Paz, Bolivia

Seizure at the Alasita fair of 12 exotic passerines which were doing in front of their cages small tricks to predict the future, a monkey, a macaw (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II), an amazon (*Amazona* spp., Appendix I or II), 5 stuffed armadillos (family Dasypodidae), 15 pairs of fox paws which are worn as amulets or used in rituals.¹³

March 6-7, 2020

Cochabamba, Province of Cercado, Department of Cochabamba, Bolivia

Seizures in two days of an eagle, a macaw and a capuchin monkey (*Sapajus* spp., synonymous with *Cebus* spp., Appendix II). Joint action by the Pofoma (Policía Forestal y de Preservación del Medio Ambiente) and the City Council.¹⁴

BRAZIL

January 6, 2020

Curitiba, State of Paraná, Brazil

In a veterinary clinic, the agents of the civil police and the Environmental Institute, with the support of the city's animal protection network, seized 70 wild animals: amazons (*Amazona* spp., Appendix I or II), owls, turtles (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II), iguanas (*Iguana* spp., Appendix I or II), bearded dragons (*Pogona vitticeps*), lizards, an ara (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II), spiders. The turtles were soaking in mud, one amazon was dead. After having been heard by the court on charges of possession of wild animals and mistreatment, the veterinary couple was released pending trial.¹⁵

January 22, 2020

Belo Horizonte, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

Seizure in a pick-up truck at km 502 of BR-381 of 118 live birds, 4 dead birds and 23 turtles of the species *Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II. The 2 road users reported coming from Várzea do Poço, Bahia State, and traveling to São Vicente, São Paulo State, about 2050 km away.¹⁶

Early February 2020

Cruzeiro do Sul, State of Acre, Brazil

Seizure of a macaque (*Sapjuss* spp., synonymous with *Cebus* spp., Appendix II), a chestnut-bellied seed finch (*Oryzoborus angolensis*) and 4 true parrots (Appendix I or II) in a bar. Explanations from the owner: "I bought the birds at the roadside BR-364 near Liberdade." "The seed finch was given to me in payment of a debt." "I bought the monkey 5 months ago."¹⁷

February 3, 2020

Obidos, State of Pará, Brazil

Two o'clock in the morning. Seizure on board a boat of 5 t of meat from arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) and caimans (*Caiman* spp., Appendix I or II) bought in the Amazonas and bound for Belem. In 2018, the same boat had been intercepted with several tons of fish banned from fishing during the piracema, the freshwater fishing truce (see "On the Trail" n°27 p. 16). The seizure was distributed to charities.¹⁸

February 8, 2020

Toledo, State of Paraná, Brazil

Seizure of 7 pacas (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras) and 5 agoutis (genus *Dasyprocta*) confined in deplorable conditions. They were handed over to the Cascavel Zoo and the man was fined 37,500 reais (8,400 US\$) pending trial.¹⁹



February 13, 2020

Potim, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure of a tegu (*Tupinambis* spp., Appendix II), an iguana (*Iguana* spp., Appendix II), 7 snakes, a black-bellied slider (*Trachemys dorsibigni*), 2 toucans (family Ramphastidae), 2 double-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulescens*) and a large American possum (genus *Didelphis*) in a private home. Fine of 22,500 reais or 5,037 US\$. Trial to come for possession of wild animals and mistreatment.²⁰



February 15, 2020

Peroba Biological Reserve, Tuneiras do Oeste, State of Paraná, Brazil

Arrest of 2 poachers aged 28 and 30 in the Peroba nature reserve. This reserve is remarkable for the 30 m high trees, which give their name to the reserve. Agents from the Chico Mendes Institute intervened to protect the araçaris (genus *Pteroglossus*), the tringons (genus *Tringon*), the king vultures (*Sarcoramphus papa*, Appendix III in Honduras), the rufous-capped motmots (*Baryphthengus ruficapillus*), the rusty-margined guans (*Penelope superciliaris*), white-lipped peccaries (*Tayassu pecari*, Appendix II), Guatemalan red brockets (*Mazama temama cerasina*, Appendix III in Guatemala) and South American tapirs (*Tapirus terrestres*, Appendix II). Seizure of 2 rifles, 2 motorbikes and ammunition. The 2 men remain in custody awaiting the payment of bail.²¹

February 27, 2020

Pacaembu, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure following a denunciation of a turquoise-fronted parrot (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II) and a caica parrot (*Pionopsitta caica*, Appendix II) in a cage and a nine-banded armadillo (*Dasytus novemcinctus*) in a freezer. The birds were placed in a shelter in Assis and the armadillo was dumped in the Dracena landfill. Fine of 2,000 reais (450 US\$).²²



Beginning of March 2020

Campinas, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure in a postal parcel of 2 iguanas (*Iguana* spp., Appendix II) and, in the recipient's home, of 2 corn snakes (*Pantherophis guttatus*) and a tarantula (family Theraphosidae).²³

March 3, 2020

Guapiaçu, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure of a gray brocket (*Mazama gouazoubira*) and 2 green parrots (family Psittacidae) in a private home. 1,500 reais (335 US\$) fine.²⁴



March 4, 2020

Santo Anastácio, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure in a private home of 7 killings of deer of different species and a caiman head trophy (*Alligatoridae*, Appendix I or II). Fine of 4,000 reais (889 US\$).²⁵



COLOMBIA

Mid-January 2020

La Buitrera, Department of Valle del Cauca, Colombia

Voluntary handing over of 10 turtles, 2 snakes, an eagle chick (*Accipitridae*, Appendix I or II) and a hedgehog after the police and agents of the Corporación Autónoma Regional del Valle del Cauca have issued a formal notice.²⁶

End of January 2020

Bello, Department of Antioquia, Colombia

Seizure of a 4-month-old cotton-headed tamarin (*Saguinus oedipus*, Appendix I) and a 5-year-old ara (*Ara spp.*, Appendix I or II) on display in a restaurant.²⁷

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

From 5 to 8 February 2020

Reno, State of Nevada, United States of America

For the second year in a row, specialists from the Humane Society of the US have been visiting the Safari Club convention incognito. 870 exhibitors from 34 countries. Between 10 and 15,000 visitors in 3 days. Trump Junior and what's left of the Beach Boys were the sponsors of the convention, which is the "place to be" to buy stingray skin boots (Myliobatiformes). Selection of their discoveries and indignation.

- Promotion of a black rhino hunt in Namibia. 350,000 US\$.
- Promotion of a "Special Trump" in Southern Africa. A buffalo, an antelope, a roan antelope and a crocodile. The lot for 25,000 US\$.
- A pair of giraffe skin boots (*Giraffa camelopardalis*, Appendix II) for 1,390 US\$.
- Exhibition of a naturalized ibex (genus *Capra*) killed by Donald Trump Jr.
- A polar bear hunt in Canada. 35,000 US\$.
- Giraffe hunting licences on sale. 1,200 US\$. "A golden bargain".
- Basic advice for beginner hunters in Southern Africa: after shooting the hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) when it is in the water, wait for the gases inside to bring the carcass up and pull it on the river bank or swamp bank.
- Botswana's ambassador to the United States, as a representative of President Masisi, received the Safari Club's 2020 award for "Best International Legislator".
- The "Bears of the World Grand Slam", one of the Safari Club's official awards, will be given to anyone who has 5 bears of different species in his bag.²⁸

March 2020

United States of America

Trump and Co. are recruiting Anna Seidman, dedicated lawyer of the Safari Club International, to be the Director of International Affairs for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife. She is the latest incarnation of the president's complex, family history with the world of high-flying sport hunting. Two years ago, Steven Chancellor, a coal tycoon in Indiana, was granted permission to repatriate the heads and skins of 3 lions he had shot in Africa. Chancellor funded Trump's campaign to the amount of one million US\$. He benefited from the "case-by-case" doctrine on the importation of trophies of elephants, lions and bontebok antelopes, a subspecies of the *Damaliscus* genus.²⁹

GUATEMALA

End of January 2020

San Bartolomé Milpas Altas, Department of Sacatepéquez, Guatemala

Seizure at a bus stop on the Pan-American Highway of 13 white-faced capuchins (*Cebus capucinus*, Appendix II) including 1 dead and 3 toucans (family Ramphastidae) including 1 dead. They were all captured in the forests of Honduras or Nicaragua. They were dehydrated and distressed. They had been lugged in bags for several days with their first destination being Chiapas in Mexico before being sent to Mexico City or the United States of America, according to the statements of the spokesperson for the Conap (Consejo Nacional de areas Protegidas). Smuggling to Spain or another European Union country may also be considered.³⁰

PERU

Mid-February 2020

Llave, Province of El Collao, Department of Puno, Peru

Seizure of the heart, liver, skin and dried meat of a Molina's hog-nosed skunk (*Conepatus chinga*) and a Peru slender snake (*Tachymenis peruviana*). A vial of yellow liquid believed to come from the snake was also on the vendor's display. All of these animal by-products would be prescribed by traditional medicine.³¹



January 6, 2020, Curitiba, Brazil



Conepatus chinga, cf. mid-February 2020, Peru



End of January 2020, San Bartolomé Milpas Altas, Guatemala



March 4, 2020, Santo Anastácio, Brazil

CAMBODIA

January 2020

Koh Kong Province, Cambodia

Seizure in 3 restaurants and immediate incineration of 330 kg of meat from softshell turtles (*Trionychidae* family), wild boar (*Sus scrofa*), Indian muntjac (*Muntiacus muntjak*), monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) and porcupine (family Hystricidae). Rescue in extremis and release into the wild of 9 turtles, 1 trionyx and 8 Asian leaf turtles (*Cyclemys dentata*, Appendix II).³²

January 9, 2020

Kampong Thom Province, Cambodia

Seizure of 466 lesser whistling ducks (*Dendrocygna javanica*), 56 long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II), 3 Asian palm civets (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III in India) and 2 snakes. The macaques are too young to be released into the wild, the ducks have their wings clipped and must remain indoors for several months. The Phnom Tamao refuge is overwhelmed and is asking for support funds at the GlobalGiving site.³³

March 2019

Phnom Penh, Phnom Penh Province, Cambodia

The search by the Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team (WRRT) of a carving workshop run by a Chinese citizen resulted in the seizure of 6.58 kg of worked ivory, 5.5 kg of tiger bone, one tiger tooth, 1.03 kg of pangolin scales and 103 seahorse (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II). The Ministry of Environment has 59 souvenir shops on its blacklist (27 in Phnom Penh, 30 in Siem Reap and 2 in Sihanoukville) and requires their operators to refrain from trading in ivory, rhino horns and other protected animal products.³⁴



March 2, 2020

Samlaut District, Battambang Province, Cambodia

The patrol flushes out 4 suspects who ran into the forest as fast as they could, throwing a bag. Inside will be found 2 turtles barely hatched and a dead monkey weighing 10 kg.³⁵

March 2, 2020

Cambodia

On 2 March, the press announced the death of a ranger during an anti-poaching operation. This information was untrue. According to the NGO Wildlife Alliance and the Ministry of the Environment, wildlife and loggers mafias spread this fake news to scare rangers patrolling Cardamom National Park.³⁶

Mid March 2020

Cardamom Protected Forest, Phnum Kravanh District, Pursat Province, Cambodia



Ranger patrols from the Ministry of Environment and the Wildlife Alliance are fighting against the creeping encroachment of the national park. Seizure of 5 home-made rifles, 314 traps, bird traps, nets and batteries for electric fishing, ploughs, 3 tractors, a forestry truck, 3 t of charcoal, 75 m³ of wood, 4 motorbikes, 40 kg of sambar (*Rusa unicolor*) meat, 36 birds and 5 turtles. In the same area, the teams also discovered 13 shacks under construction. The woodcutters work at night. They vanished into thin air. Only 2 arrests.³⁷

Mid-March 2020

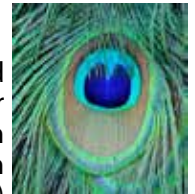
Cambodia

Cambodia is giving it all to clean up its image as a wildlife mobster. The Environment Minister announces that, during the week of 16-22 March, a bat, turtle parts, deer meat, 7 raptors (*Accipitridae*, Appendix I or II), 29 live parrots (*Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II) and a live porcupine were seized.³⁸

March 2020

Cambodia

Seizure by the WRRT (Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team) of 3 antlers of sambar deer (*Rusa unicolor*), 6 antlers of an unidentified species, 2 tails of green peafowls (*Pavo muticus*, Appendix II) and a gaur head trophy (*Bos gaurus*, Appendix I) for sale via Facebook.³⁹



End of March 2020

Pursat Province, Cambodia

Seizure on the market by a WRRT patrol and immediate burning of 24.5 kg of meat and gall bladders of porcupine (family Hystricidae), 18 kg of southern red muntjac (*Muntiacus muntjak*) meat and 1.8 kg of southern serow (*Capricornis sumatraensis*, Appendix I) meat.⁴⁰

CHINA

February 2020

Wucheng District, Zhejiang Province, China

Appearance of the manager of a preppy hotel. He held bear paws in a freezer that were sold by employees of a zoo in Anhui province who traded in the corpses of animals that had died of old age or disease before burying them in an internal dump. He also had tiger meat fraudulently sold by zoo employees in Anji and Bengbu and prime cuts of waders and raptors. He is said to have made 700,000 yuan (102,026 US\$) by serving his customers "succulent" and at the same time adulterated dishes. 15 accomplices are involved in this sordid affair.⁴¹

February 4 and early March 2020

Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure in a private home of 10 yellow-bellied weasels (*Mustela kathiah*, Appendix III in India) and 5 Pallas's squirrels (*Callosciurus erythraeus*) and conviction of the trafficker to 4 months in prison. He was trapping small mammals on the shores of Lake Thihu.⁴²



February 28, 2020

Pujiang County, Zhejiang Province, China

Appearance before the People's Court of W1 and W2 for having between July 2017 and June 2019 illegally purchased in Guangdong and Guangxi and smuggled from Viet Nam a total of 23 live pangolins, 8 frozen pangolins, 3.6 kg of pangolin scales, 4 bear paws, 1 frozen owl and for having delivered by various means the specimens or their parts to at least 23 customers who are actively sought. Payments were made via WeChat and Alipay. Proceedings to follow.⁴³

March 3, 2020

Wushan County, Chongqing, China

Seizure in the boot of a 4x4 of 3 corpses - 2 Siberian musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*, Appendix II) and a leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II)-, several bear paws and wild boar meat. The driver is said to be a seller and meat cutter of wild animals and their prime cuts.⁴⁴

March 5, 2020

Longchuan County, Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Myanmar.

Seizure in a saleswoman's market stall of elephant skin patches, bear bile, bear fat and bear teeth and porcupine stomachs, 4.2 kg in all. Customs are increasing their vigilance in this phase of health crisis.⁴⁵



March 7, 2020

Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China

The Food Surveillance Administration is launching 4 inquiries regarding the marketing of black-spotted frogs (*Pelophylax nigromaculatus*), Chinese stripe-necked turtles (*Mauremys sinensis*, Appendix III in China) and porcupines in 3 supermarkets and on a e-commerce site.⁴⁶

Mid March 2020

Southern Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, border with Viet Nam, Anhui Province, Chongqing Autonomous Municipality.

Seizure of 441 kg of pangolin scales and 14 kg of bear gall bladders from Viet Nam. Additional seizure of 1.9 million yuan, or 270,000 US\$.⁴⁷



March 2020

Shijiazhuang, Hebei Province, China

Seizure by customs in the belongings of a passenger of 4 kg of antelope horns, rhino horn fragments, bear bile and tiger bones. "The authorities are increasing their vigilance during this epidemic caused by a new coronavirus believed to be transmitted by wild animals"⁴⁸



March 25, 2020

Leizhou, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 1.16 kg of horns, horn powder and rhino skin straps, 33 kg of tiger bone (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II), bear bile (*Ursidae*, Appendix I or II), musk deer preputial gland (*Moschus* spp., Appendix II) and antlers. In his clandestine laboratory, the man who had smuggled all these animal parts from Viet Nam prepared various medicinal and quack potions which in this Covid-19 period are in peak demand.⁴⁹



March 22 and 25, 2020

Xian Autonomous Hani and Yi of Jiangcheng, Yunnan Province and Mount Baishi, Jilin Province, China

- Destruction of 460 kg of bodies and anatomical parts of wild animals seized between July and December 2019: python, black bear, turtle, stag, porcupine. They were disinfected with lime and disposed of in a landfill site, in keeping with common practices according to local authorities. The photo shows the animal remains in front of the forest service offices before shipment to the landfill by the truck. The workers are wearing surgical masks and gloves, and their arms are bare.

- 4000 km north-east of Yunnan, massive destruction in the province of Jilin of 7740 bodies and 2035 anatomical parts of wild animals seized during "the last few years". The photos show whole bears, bear paws, stag horns, wild boars, gallinaceous, mustelids, antelope horns, snakes, crocodiles.

The speakers wear disposable coveralls, cartridge masks, gloves, overshoes. The administrative authority of the province declares that the modalities of this destruction guarantee an absence of pollution. There is no trace of impregnation of the corpses with lime. Animals and parts of animals that were probably stored in bulk or in bags in cold storage rooms are sprayed with a disinfectant, placed on a conveyor belt and dumped on the edge of a forest in a pit of which the linings are of concrete. "On the Trail" has recorded 4 seizures in the province of Jilin corresponding to these remains (cf. "On the Trail" n°10 p. 44, n°18 p. 64, n°23 p. 46, n°27 p.120). Other seizures in the same province were mentioned in "On the Trail". They concern seizures of ivory, rhinoceros horns and tiger skins which are not identifiable in the buried lots. This management raises several questions: how is the dump covered? How will the runoff and percolation water be treated? What long-term monitoring will be applied and maintained? Are there residual risks of bacteriological pollution and odours due to the decomposition of the bodies? What are the methods of signalling to the public? ⁵⁰



**January to March 2020
Changsha, Hunan Province, China**

Successive discoveries of dried-up corpses of snakes, quails, frogs, donkeys, alpacas, civets and squirrels in the shed of a zoo enclosed in a shopping centre. The exotic wildpetmania has been becoming popular for several years now to attract and retain customers, with children in priority, who feed the animals with treats, pat them and showed off with them. Domestic and wild animals are mixed. Mongooses, capybaras and even penguins are reported in these commercial enclosures where natural light and fresh air never penetrate. "It's torture," says Xing Shijie, a volunteer in a wildlife protection collective. ⁵¹

Penguin in a shopping centre, see "On the Trail" n°17 p. 18

**March 27 - April 1, 2020
Shijiazhuang, Hebei Province, China**

Three rhinoceros horn cups, worked ivories, saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II), seahorses and pipefishes weighing a total of 2.3 kg and a hawksbill turtle shell (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I) were seized by customs. ⁵²



INDIA

January 20, 2020

Chennai International Airport, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of 2 common marmosets (*Callithrix jacchus*, Appendix II), 3 red-handed tamarins (*Saguinus midas*, Appendix II), 2 prevost's squirrels (*Callosciurus prevostii*), 2 eastern grey squirrels (*Sciurus carolinensis*) and 12 common green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II) in the trolley of a certain Suresh landing from Bangkok. Suresh claims to be just a delivery man. The recipient was apprehended on leaving the airport. He took the police to the mastermind's house. Three arrests in all. Three squirrels died in transit. The return of the animals to Thailand is recommended by veterinarians and quarantine services.⁵³

February 2020

Bhadravati, Chandrapur District, State of Maharashtra, India

Rama Rao, Chief Conservator of Forests, had the painful and delicate task of announcing to the press the death by electrocution of a pair of leopards (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) and a pair of sloth bears (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I) 50 m away from a forest granted to the Ministry of Defence and occupied by an ammunition factory and stocks of explosives. Rama Rao specified that the electrified cable was 253m long and at the sly connected to a line that supplies the factory and staff accommodation. The families of the workers and the military personnel had sent the alert, because their homes and accesses were filled with the smell of decomposition. The director of the factory cleared away all fears about the safety of the industrial site. On the other hand, intrusions by wildlife in the perimeter that is closed to the public seem to be common. A leopard, some time ago, broke into the factory's infirmary. But in this regard, the situation in and around the munitions factory seems less sensitive than at the town's thermal power station where tiger intrusions have been observed for the past 2 years. As the preliminary investigation and word of mouth had predicted, the leopard and bear poachers were from the village of Piparbodi. The forestry services initially took Ravi Chetti into custody. His confessions led the investigators to hear further explanations from Vinod Chetti. Mrs. Swati Maheshkar, a forestry services officer, was responsible for summoning him and bringing him back to the station for a hearing. On her return from the mission, she was assaulted by a pack of insulting and violent villagers. Despite the reinforcement of her colleagues, Mrs. Swati Maheshkar was unable to prevent the assailants from leaving with Vinod Chetti. The police raided Piparbodi as soon as possible to arrest 4 clearly identified women, but the 15 abodes occupied by the Chetti clan were empty.⁵⁴



February 18, 2020

Sonakhuli, Dhubri District, State of Assam, India

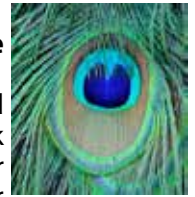
Arrest of 2 men in possession of 800 g of pangolin scales and 5 tokay geckos (*Gekko gekko*, Appendix II).⁵⁵



February 29, 2020

Dindugal, Dindigul District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

WCCB and Forest Department raid into a city store. Seizure of a junk of trophies and remains: 90 deer antlers, 4 civets (*Viverra zibetha* or *Viverricula indica*, Appendix III), 1 common jackal skin (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III), 5 shells of Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I) and flocks of Indian peafowl feathers (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan).⁵⁶



GANG / REPEATED OFFENSE

March 1, 2020

Indore, Indore District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

The gang drew on all available means: parts of tigers, leopards, deer and bears, turtles and sand boas (*Eryx spp.*, Appendix II) poached in the forests of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

Shiva alias Shiva Baba and Dhannalal Barkale were arrested in November 2018 in possession of 2 paws, 4 claws and other leopard parts (see "On the Trail" n° 23, p. 83). The other 3 (Baldev, Shakir Khan and Gaffar alias Bhayyu) had fallen into the hands of the police with antlers, porcupine quills and bones of protected species.

Mahesh Rathi, the gang's super trickster, is now held in preventive custody. He and his comrades speak in an encrypted language. For them, the two-mouthed and two-headed sand boas are "rassi" (zodiac sign).⁵⁷



March 12, 2020

Pokhran, Jaisalmer District, State of Rajasthan, India

Five bloodied or already dead Hardwick's spiny-tailed lizards (*Saara hardwickii*, Appendix II), the skin of an Indian gazelle or chinkara (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III), a club and a dagger were left on the spot by poachers who had lost their temper when approached by forestry officers.⁵⁸

March 25, 2020

Aamghat Forest, Nagpur District, State of Maharashtra, India

The 6 Ayurvedic traditional healers were in the forest in search of plants said to be curative and at the same time killed an oriental civet (*Viverricula indica*, Appendix III) and captured a Bengal monitor (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I) whose penis and blood are said to have invigorating virtues.⁵⁹

INDONESIA

Early February 2020 Tulungagung and Trenggalek Regencies, East Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia

Arrest of Feri Subangi, Ahmad Saifudin, Dadang Andri Krisbiantoro, Sahalal Marzuki and S. I. They were involved in sales and deliveries of several endangered species via the Internet. The profits of the network are estimated at 1.5 million rupees or 110,000 US\$. Seizure of pangolins, slow lorises (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I), Moluccan cockatoos (*Cacatua moluccensis*, Appendix I), rhinoceros hornbills (*Buceros rhinoceros*, Appendix II), oriental-pied hornbills (*Anthracoceros albirostris*, Appendix II), wreathed hornbills (*Rhyticeros undulatus*, Appendix II), changeable hawk-eagles (*Spizaetus cirrhatus*, Appendix II), spotted kestrels (*Falco moluccensis*, Appendix II), ebony leaf monkeys (*Trachypithecus auratus*, Appendix II), cockatoos (Cacatuidae, Appendix I or II) and binturongs (*Arctictis binturong*, Appendix III in India).⁶⁰



JAPAN

January 13, 2020 Chiba Prefecture, Japan

Arrest of a Laotian subject, Lam Ouan Khongsavanh, 27 years old. He was a guard at Fuji Safari Park in Susono, Shizuoka Prefecture. On July 4, 2019, he attempted to take 2 African elephant tusks, Asian elephant hair and bones, white rhino bones, cheetah teeth (*Acinonyx jubatus*, Appendix I) and deer antlers (family Cervidae) in his luggage. A total of 220 animal parts collected from live pachyderms or from the bodies of animals buried in the zoo cemetery. He wanted to sell them to friends or acquaintances or decorate his home in Laos with them. The business was uncovered in his suitcase by X-ray screening at Narita airport. He was going to fly to Laos via Viet Nam.⁶¹



MALAYSIA

January 8, 2020 On the border with Laos, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam.

Seizure in a bus coming from Laos, 300km from Hanoi, of 2 dead leopards, 2 lots of bear claws, 2 lots of presumed tiger and macaque bones and 840 kg of fireworks. The driver, Vo Duc Thang, says he was commissioned and paid to transport the wildlife products and pyrotechnic items by his boss, Nguyen Canh Tuan. This one admitted the facts and 3 other suspects were arrested.⁶²



Mid-March 2020

Kuala Terengganu, State of Terengganu, Malaysia

Conviction of 3 Cambodian traffickers to 12 years and 8 months in prison for having detained inside the Terengganu National Park parts of pangolin, Bornean bearded pigs (*Sus barbatus*), Malaysian civet (*Viverra zangalunga*), of Javan chevrotains (*Tragulus javanicus*), Asiatic brush-tailed porcupines (*Atherurus macrourus*), Asian giant tortoises (*Manouria emys*, Appendix II), wild boars (*Sus scrofa*) and for violating national laws for each of these species. The heaviest penalties were imposed for trafficking in pangolin, Malaysian civet, Asian giant tortoise and Bornean bearded pigs. All the sentences run concurrently and the 3 men will spend 2 years in prison.⁶³



March 30, 2020

Membakut, State of Sabah, Malaysia

Police interception of an all-terrain vehicle near a cemetery. A weapon is found on the passenger seat. The driver admitted that he has just returned from a poaching party in a nearby forest in breach of the MCO (Movement Control Order) which is imposed on everyone to fight the Covid-19 epidemic. Augustine Tuuga, Director of Wildlife Protection in Sabah State, denounces a resurgence of poaching and calls on all people of good will to counter it. Between mid-March and April 24, 10 poachers were arrested.⁶⁴

PAKISTAN

January 27, 2020

Islamabad, Federal Territory of Islamabad, Pakistan

Seizure inside the F/6 shopping centre, in 4 clothing shops, of 56 skins of fishing cats (*Prionailurus viverrinus*, Appendix II), Bengal leopard cats (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix I or II), wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix I or II), red foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*), stoat (*Mustela erminea*), European mink (*Mustela lutreola*) or American mink (*Neovison vison*) and deer (family Cervidae), toques and garments estimated by the authorities at 500,000 rupees, i.e. 3,240 US\$.⁶⁵



SRI LANKA

February 26, 2020

Horton Plains National Park, Sri Lanka

Arrest of Ignatenko Alexander, Riyabo Artem and Kilfuyan Nicolai. The 3 Russian citizens on a pillaging mission in Sri Lanka had methodically collected and tagged 550 scorpions, chameleons, lizards, frogs, spiders and snakes and an unspecified number of rare plants. When they were arrested after a shadowing in the national park, they had just captured insects and invertebrates. Most of their booty was discovered in their hotel room. Their motives and network are not yet clearly identified. They are said to have already been active in India and Uganda.⁶⁶

THAILAND

February 7, 2020

Sala Daeng, Ang Thong Province, Thailand

Intervention of the Hawks, the Wildlife Crime Unit. Seizure of 60 animals, including hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II), brahmīny kites (*Haliastur indus*, Appendix II), pig-tailed macaques (*Macaca nemestrina*, Appendix II), large-billed crows (*Corvus macrorhynchos*), white-breasted waterhen (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*) and lesser adjutant (*Leptoptilos javanicus*). It was a clandestine petshop disguised as a private zoo.⁶⁷

February 26, 2020

Wang Sombun, Wang Sombun District, Sa Kaeo Province, Thailand

Phra Somsak Chantarasaroh, the senior monk of the Noen Somboon Buddhist temple, was engaged in wildlife trade. He was unmasked thanks to an offer from an undercover policeman to buy him a leopard skin for 60,000 baht or nearly 2,000 US\$. When the alleged buyer came to take delivery, the police also seized ivory, buffalo horns, and other wildlife remains from the place of worship.⁶⁸

March 2020

Bangkok, Thailand

With his cane, Premchai Karnasuta is moving in small steps towards his absolution (see. "On the Trail" n°27 p.110). The Court of Appeal authorises him to appeal to the Supreme Court. A builder of bridges, dams and roads, he was sentenced to 3 years and 2 months in prison for having, together with his driver and his aide-de-camp, poached a black panther in a national park. He is out on bail with the obligation to wear a tracking bracelet and is forbidden to leave the country.⁶⁹



VIET NAM

Early January 2020

Da Nang, Da Nang Province, Viet Nam

Seizure in a restaurant of 45 yellow-spotted keelback water snakes (*Xenochrophis flavipunctatus*), 5 Pallas's squirrels (*Callosciurus erythraeus*), 2 Chinese softshell turtles (*Pelodiscus sinensis*) and 2 laughing doves (*Spilopelia senegalensis*).⁷⁰

March 15, 2020

Thanh Hoa, Long An Province, Viet Nam

Hectic seizures at the farmer's market of an Indian smooth-coated otter (*Lutrogale perspicillata*, Appendix I), 2 monocled cobras (*Naja kaouthia*, Appendix II), an oriental ratsnake (*Ptyas mucosa*) and several radiated rat snakes (*Elaphe radiata*), owls and other forest animals. Vendors and their families threatened police and journalists.⁷¹

EUROPE

GERMANY

From January 28 to February 2, 2020

Dortmund, North Rhine-Westphalia State, Germany

Seen at the annual hunting fair: armchairs made of bear fur (Ursidae, Appendix I or II) and springbok skin (Antidorcas marsupialis),



a seat made of zebra skin (genus *Equus*) at 1,412 €, naturalized Atlantic puffins (*Fratercula arctica*) hunted in Iceland, promotions to kill giraffes (*Giraffa camelopardalis*, Appendix II) - "They are easy to hunt because they wander near the lodges". A certain First Class Trophy based in Denmark offers an "easy and fast" app to get estimates for the naturalization of any hunting trophy.

Comment by Manon Dene of the Humane Society International: "This kind of trophy hunting fair outlines how shockingly easy it is for individuals to travel almost anywhere in the world to shoot as many iconic or endangered species as their bank account allows."

Comment by Eduardo Goncalves, spokesman for Campaign to ban trophy hunting: "At this fair Carl Knight will have sold off the lives of countless defenceless animals to people who kill for kicks. He shames our country." Carl Knight, a through and through Englishman born in the county of Surrey, now lives in South Africa and runs "Take Aim Safaris", which hunts lions, elephants, zebras, leopards and a range of lesser-known animals in southern Africa.⁷³



January 2020, Koh Kong Province, Cambodia



End of March 2020, Pursat Province, Cambodia



January 20, 2020, Chennai, India



Early February 2020, Java Island, Indonesia



February 26, 2020, Horton Plains National Park, Sri Lanka



GERMANY / FRANCE

Zoo fires

- January 1 and 2, 2020. Krefeld, North Rhine-Westphalia State, Germany

A mother and her 2 daughters hadn't found a better way to celebrate the New Year than throwing 5 flying lanterns into the sky, the use of which has been banned for 10 years in the Land. Three of the messengers of happiness and prosperity fell back in the zoo grounds, one of them on the roof of the "rainforest" where the monkeys lived. More than 30 animals were killed by flames and gas. Among the victims were 5 orangutans (*Pongo* spp., Appendix I), 2 gorillas (*Gorilla* spp., Appendix I), one chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I), 3 golden lion tamarins (*Leontopithecus rosalia*, Appendix I), one silvery marmoset (*Callithrix argentata*, Appendix II), 6 pygmy marmosets (*Callithrix pygmaea*, Appendix II) and several white-faced sakis (*Pithecia pithecia*, Appendix II).



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- January 25, 2020. Zoo de la Flèche, Department of Sarthe, France

Destruction by flames and gas of 56 Egyptian fruit bats (*Rousettus aegyptiacus*), 3 Madagascar giant day geckos (*Phelsuma grandis*, Appendix II) and an Asiatic snake. The zoo veterinarian is satisfied that the giraffes and tapirs in the cage next door are spared. The fire started in the bat "cave". An owl also died. An electrical non-compliance is suspected.⁷²



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FRANCE

January 22, 2020

Villiers-le-Bel, Department of Val-d'Oise, France

Surprise discovery by the fire brigade during a health intervention at home of a man aged 70 and more in respiratory distress of about a hundred animals, including a tarantula (suborder Mygalomorphae), a royal python (*Python regius*, Appendix II), a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II) and a African savannah monitor (*Varanus exanthematicus*, Appendix II). The 4 rooms of the flat block were packed with wildlife. The bedroom of the man of Ukrainian origin, who is presented as a painter by his close circle, was occupied by a cockroach and mouse breeding to ensure the reptiles' food supply.⁷⁴

Mid-January 2020

Nouzonville, Department of the Ardennes, France

Seizure of 3 long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) and a blue and yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix I or II) by the gendarmerie reinforced by the OFB (French Biodiversity Office) in a private residence used for clandestine breeding for commercial purposes. Belgium at hand served as an outlet or supplier. Several unsold or sick monkeys were buried in the garden. The survivors were entrusted to a refuge in the Eure et Loir department, near Chartres.⁷⁵

February 4, 2020

Lisieux, Department of Calvados, France

Conviction of a maker of edge tools to 3 months suspended imprisonment and a fine of 1500 € (1,650 US\$) for having between February 2013 and July 2017 made knives handles with wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix I or II) and American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) jaws, elephant and warthog ivory (genus *Phacochoerus*), caiman leather (Alligatoridae, Appendix I or II) and dolphin vertebrae (order Cetacea, Appendix I or II) that he allegedly recovered from a beach in Normandy near Mont Saint-Michel.⁷⁶



ITALY

Beginning of March 2020

Florence, Region of Tuscany, Italy

Seizure at a furrier's workshop of 2 leopard skins (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), 10 ocelot skins (*Leopardus pardalis*, Appendix I), about 30 Geoffroy's cat skins (*Leopardus geoffroyi*, Appendix I) and 2 wolf skins (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II).⁷⁷

SERBIA

**February 23 and 26, 2020
Novi Kneževac, Autonomous
Province of Vojvodina, Serbia**

The poisoners also fuel on carbofuran here. In 3 days the bodies of 7 golden jackals (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III in India), a fox, a common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) and a white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*, Appendix I) were collected. 80 individuals of this endangered species were poisoned between 2000 and 2017 according to the report "Poisoning, trapping, poaching, possession and trafficking of wild birds in the Republic of Serbia". Poisoning of raptors and terrestrial carnivores with toxic baits is primarily aimed at eagles, vultures and wolves. Farmers, hunters and phobiacs are directing the low manoeuvre. The Balkan anti-poisoning project brings together NGOs from Albania, Northern Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Hungary. In this case, the beatings to identify poisoning victims were carried out by a special canine brigade from Hungary, the provincial Conservation Institute and the Bird Protection and Study Society of Serbia (BPSSS).⁷⁸



Donkeys

The African wild ass *Equus africanus* is listed under CITES Appendix I. The domesticated form *Equus asinus* was excluded from this listing.

The Indian wild ass *Equus hemionus khur* and the Mongolian wild ass *Equus hemionus hemionus* are listed under CITES Appendix I. The kiang *Equus kiang* and the Asian wild ass *Equus hemionus* are listed under CITES Appendix II.

AFRICA

KENYA

End of February 2020

Kenya

Will the decision to close the 4 donkey slaughterhouses be implemented, effective and final? Will the official slaughterhouses be replaced by clandestine or cross-border slaughterhouses? John Nduhiu Kuyiki is for the moment satisfied with the government's announcement.

President of a donkey owners' association near Navasha, where one of the 4 damned slaughterhouses is located, he thanks God for not forgetting the poor people who in Kenya have nothing but donkeys. "The theft of our donkeys has changed everything from transporting our children to school to the purchase of farmland." The Chinese demand for donkey skins that can be transformed into gelatine (ejiao) for liver, anti-wrinkle creams or anything else is indefensible. Yesterday reserved for the elite and today prized by the middle classes in China and expatriates under the influence of shameless promotional campaigns, ejiao was selling for the equivalent of 30 US\$/kg in 2000 and now sells for 780 US\$/kg. Donkeys in Kenya, see "On the Trail" n°25 p.121, n°22 p.125, n°21 p.122, n°20 p.130, n°19 p.131.¹

ASIA

INDIA

January 12, 17 and 28, 2020

Wild Ass Sanctuary, Koparni, Surendranagar District, State of Gujarat, India

- Discovery of 3 Indian wild asses (*Equus hemionus khur*, Appendix I) freshly shot within a 600-m radius. 12-calibre cartridges were found nearby in the roadside. "On first approach, this is a hunt for pleasure" "This is a first in the sanctuary", the authorities said. On the quiet, the villagers are less categorical. "Poaching is practiced regularly." Indian wild asses are accused of damaging crops. From a different perspective, the crops are reducing the donkeys' journey. A forestry officer, also under cover of anonymity, tells the local press that poaching has peaked in recent months and that the meat of wild donkeys can be found in the markets. The last census reported 3,000-4,000 Indian wild asses known locally as "Gudkhar".

- Arrest of the culprit. Dhruvrajsinh Jadeja, who was wandering in the sanctuary in an SUV, had crossed and dispersed a herd of asses and shot on sight with his 12-calibre rifle on the night of 12 January.²



MAIN SOURCES

Sources are available on request by email to contact@robindesbois.org indicating the “On the Trail” issue number, section and reference of the event. For instance, for the last event of “On the Trail” n°28 : chapter Donkey, India, reference 2.

Robin des Bois especially thanks the Species Survival Network and the NGO Save the Elephants.

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Published on October 9, 2019
Written by Robin des Bois, maps by Julien Perreaut,
Editions Arthaud

152 pages - 182 x 240 mm. Colour - paperback EAN: 9782081480186 ISBN: 9782081480186
19.50€. Available in bookstores and on the Internet

