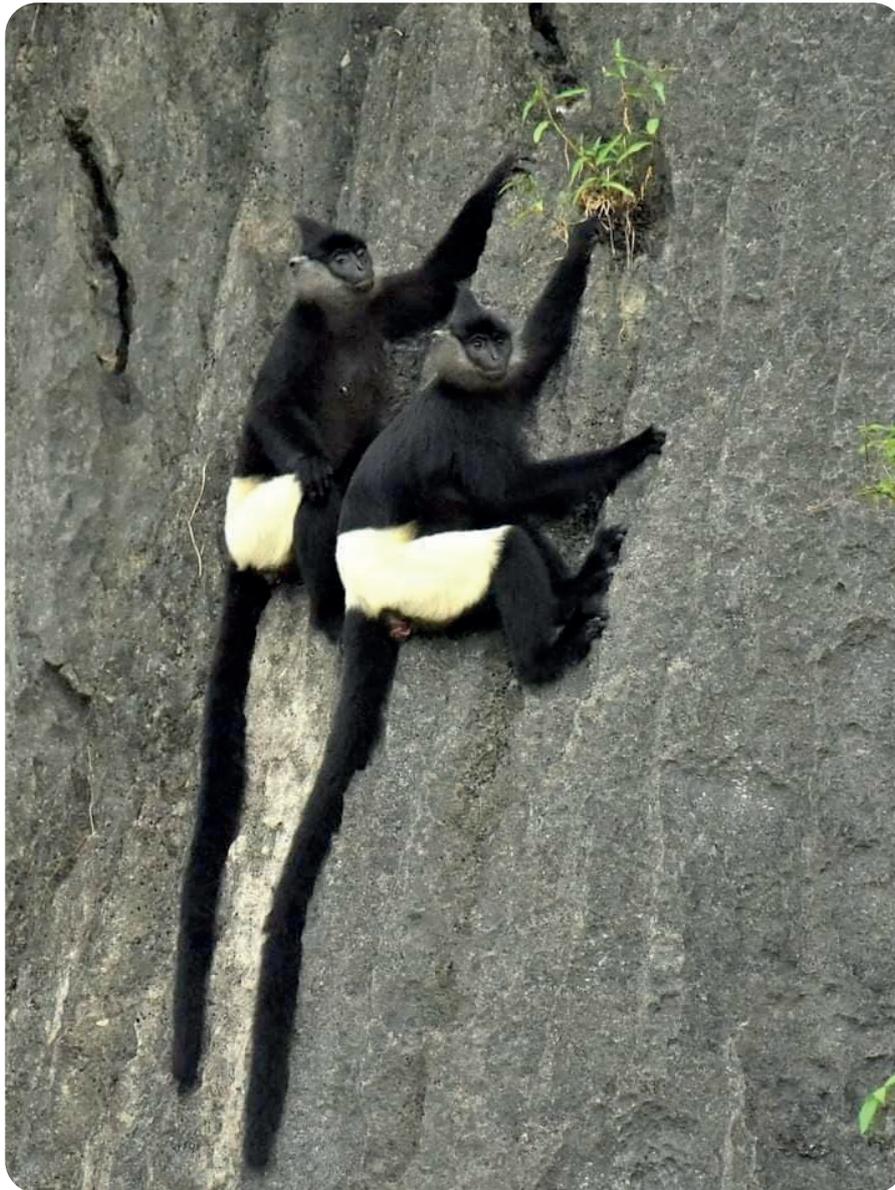
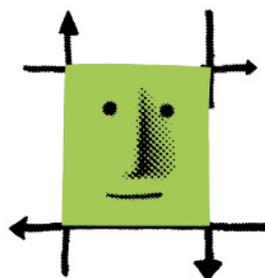


ON_{the} TRAIL

The defaunation bulletin
n°32. Events from the 1st January to the 30th April, 2021



Quarterly information and analysis report on animal poaching and smuggling
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Wildlife is the silent victim of war. Unexploded ordnance, tanks and other engines of war pollute fields, rivers and marshes with oils and fuels. Factories and hydrocarbon depots burn and toxic plumes engulf birds. Ecosystems are torn apart. Food shortages encourage poaching. Uncontrolled dumping by occupying forces or residents increases the risk of forest fires. Wars are human disasters whose effects are immediate and disasters for animals and trees whose effects are hidden and delayed.

Ukraine and border with Ukraine, in this issue see pages 195, 196, 289, 293 and 294



Black stork (*Ciconia nigra*, Appendix II), Vyshhorod, Kyiv Oblast, Ukraine



European goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), Irpin, Kyiv Oblast, Ukraine



Bog orchid (*Anacamptis palustris*, Appendix II), Konotop, Sumy Oblast, Ukraine



Brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II), Mizhhiria, Zakarpatska Oblast, Ukraine



Grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) footprints, Kharkiv Oblast, Ukraine



Common otter (*Lutra lutra*, Appendix I), Vyshhorod, Kyiv Oblast, Ukraine

NOTE AND ADVICE TO READERS

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

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

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

- Pangolins + rhinoceroses + elephants
- Elephants + rhinoceroses
- Rhinoceroses + elephants + felines
- Marine and freshwater multispecies (simultaneous seizure of several aquatic species)
- Multi-species reptiles (simultaneous seizure of several reptile species)

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

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

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

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

CITES APPENDICES

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

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

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

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

PICTOS



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



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



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



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



Full moon. Moonlight poaching

ACRONYMS

EAGLE : Eco Activists for Governance and Law Enforcement

ENV : Education for Nature – Vietnam

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

IEW : Iran Environment and Wildlife Watch

KWS : Kenya Wildlife Service

LAGA : The Last Great Ape Organization

OIC : Orangutan Information Centre

PROFEPA : Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente

SAPS : South African Police Service

SPCA : Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

SSB : Sashastra Seema Bal

SVW : Save Vietnam Wildlife

SWT : Sheldrick Wildlife Trust

USFWS : United States Fish and Wildlife Service

WCCB : Wildlife Crime Control Bureau

CONTENTS

4	NOTE AND ADVICE TO READERS
6	ON THE FRONT LINES
9	PANGOLINS
19	PANGOLINS, FELINES / ELEPHANTS / RHINOCEROSSES
20	ELEPHANTS
53	ELEPHANTS AND RHINOCEROSSES
55	CASE OF THE DISMANTLING OF AN INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF ELEPHANT IVORY AND RHINOCEROS HORN TRAFFICKERS OPERATING FROM FRANCE - PART 1
59	RHINOCEROSSES
67	FELINES, ELEPHANTS / RHINOCEROSSES
69	FELINES
94	WOLVES, HYENAS AND ARCTIC FOXES
101	BEARS
108	GAZELLES, ANTELOPES, SEROWS, IBEX, MARKHORS ...
113	GIRAFFES
115	ZEBRAS AND DONKEYS
118	BUFFALOS, BANTENGS, GAURS AND BISONS
120	CARIBOUS, MOUSE-DEER, DEER, ELKS AND RED BROCKETS
126	GUANACOS AND VICUÑAS
127	PRIMATES
144	ARMADILLOS, PACAS, CAPYBARAS, AGOUTIS AND PECCARIS
145	OTTERS
146	OTHER MAMMALS INCLUDING HIPPOPOTAMUSES AND HEDGEHOGS
149	BIRDS
197	VARIOUS REPTILE SPECIES
200	TORTOISES AND FRESHWATER TURTLES
208	SNAKES
216	GECKOS, CAMELEONS, VARANS AND IGUANAS
219	CROCODILES AND ALLIGATORS
222	FROGS AND TOADS
224	BUTTERFLIES, ANTS, BEETLES, TARANTULAS, LEECHES ...
227	MEN AT WORK, LOCALS AND ANIMALS GET THE WORST
231	MULTI-SPECIES
254	VARIOUS MARINE AND FRESHWATER SPECIES
257	CORALS
259	CRUSTACEANS
260	GIANT CLAMS, DATE MUSSELS ...
263	ABALONES
269	SEA CUCUMBERS AND SEA URCHINS
274	SEAHORSES
276	MARINE OR FRESHWATER FISH INCLUDING SHARKS AND STURGEONS
295	MARINE TURTLES
299	MARINE AND FRESHWATER MAMMALS

ON THE FRONT LINES

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

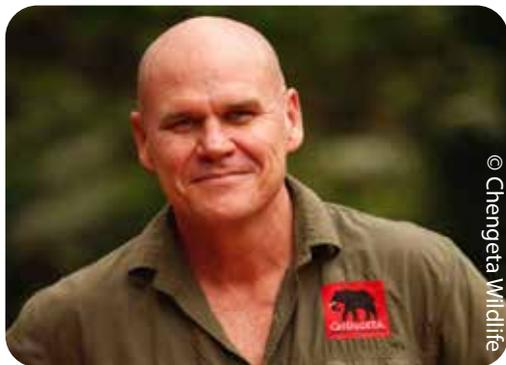
March 4, 2021
Chatsworth, KwaZulu-Natal
Province, South Africa



Cyril Hlafuna and Mr. Jabulani, rangers in the Siverglen reserve on the outskirts of Durban, were fatally shot by unknown assailants while on car patrol. Game Rangers Association of Africa, March 5, 2021; News24, March 5, 2021.¹

BURKINA FASO

April 26, 2021
Arly National Park, Tapoa Province,
Burkina Faso



Rory Young, 48, co-founder and executive director of Chengeta Wildlife, David Beriáin, 44, and Roberto Fraile, 47, Spanish reporters, were all murdered on April 26, 2021, in Arly national park in Burkina Faso.

They were participating in an anti-poaching patrol with soldiers and rangers. One Burkinabé is still missing. The Arly park is home to elephants, lions and leopards. The attackers had a turreted pick-up truck equipped with a Kalashnikov machine gun capable of firing 650 rounds per minute within a 4 km radius. In 2015, Robin des Bois praised the work of Rory Young (see "On the Trail" n°9 p.75).

Courrier international, April 27, 2021; Fasozine, April 27, 2021; France 24, April 27, 2021; NIUS, April 27, 2021; Sputnik, April 27, 2021; The Associated Press, April 27, 2021; The Journal, April 27, 2021; Chengeta Wildlife, April 28, 2021; Le Monde, April 28, 2021; Euronews (with AFP, AP), April 30, 2021; News Press, April 30, 2021; Irish Daily Mirror, May 8, 2021.²

KENYA

February 4, 2021
Nairobi, Nairobi County, Kenya

Three years after Esmond Bradley Martin was found in his Nairobi home with fatal stab wounds to the neck (see "On the Trail" n°20, p. 87), the police admit that they have made no progress in the investigation and identification of the perpetrators or the instigators of the crime. The U.S. Embassy in Nairobi and the FBI office refuse to comment on the matter. Esmond Martin was an American citizen. With an encyclopedic knowledge of the ivory markets, he was one of the best enemies of the traffickers and one of the best friends of the elephants.

Reports by Esmond Martin, see "On the Trail" n°7 p.88, n°8 p.107 and n°20 p.87. The Star, 10 February 2021.³

NIGERIA

March 8, 2021
New Bussa, Kainji National
Park, Niger State, Nigeria

The attack on a guard patrol in Kainji national park is attributed to members of the Fulani ethnic group. The body of Tanko "Tiger" Mohammed was found in the forest a few hours later. Tanko "Tiger" was well liked by his peers. "May Almighty Allah accept his short comings, give him internal rest and make jannatul Firdaus his final destination."

Naija News, March 9, 2021; Shauntv, March 9, 2021; Game Rangers Association of Africa, March 10, 2021.⁴



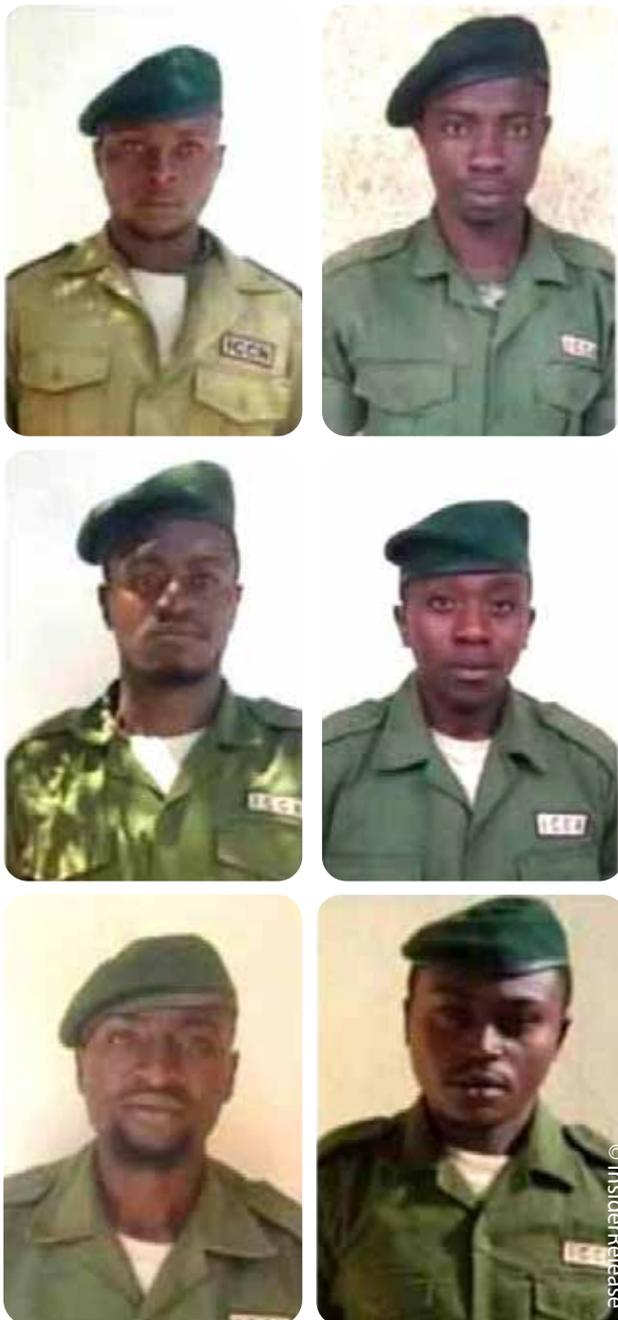
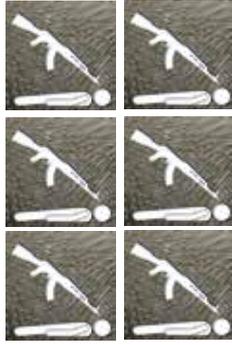
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

January 10, 2021

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

Surumwe Burhani Abdou, Alexis Kamate Mundunaenda, Reagan Maneno Kataghalirwa, Eric Kibanja Bashekere, Innocent Paluku Budoyi and Prince Nzabonimpa Ntamakiriro, 6 rangers who were patrolling on foot between Nyamilima and Niamitwitwi near the border with Rwanda, died around 7:30 a.m. on Sunday when an unidentified group ambushed them. A seventh guard was transferred to a hospital in Goma. His life would be no longer in danger.

Virunga National Park, January 10, 2021; Insider Release, January 11, 2021.⁵



© InsiderRelease

AMERICA

COLOMBIA

Mid-January, 2021
Colombia



© Fundacion Proaves

Gonzalo Cardona Molina was murdered by an unidentified gang. Gonza, as he was called by his colleagues, friends and admirers, dedicated 22 years of his life to the protection of the yellow-eared parrot (*Ognorhynchus icterotis*, Appendix I) and the Quindío wax palm (*Ceroxylon quindiuense*). He began his career as a forest ranger. For a long time, he and his teams had to deal with the war between the regular and rebel forces in order to protect the flora and fauna from poaching and looting.

He later became the coordinator of the reserva Loros Andinos and an advisor to the ProAves Foundation. Considering that the main habitats of the yellow-eared parrot are the wax palms of Quindío,

Gonza worked to stop the systematic felling and use of the leaves of this palm tree for decorative purposes on Palm Sunday. It is partly thanks to Gonza and ProAves Colombia that a corridor of over 7,000 hectares of Quindío wax palm trees has been saved and regenerated. The yellow-eared parrot nest between 25 and 30 meters high in the cavities of their trunks. Considered extinct in Colombia at the dawn of the year 2000, the population of the yellow-eared parrots according to the latest Gonza's inventory now exceeds 2,500 individuals in Colombia.

Forbes, January 18, 2021.⁶



© David Monroy R



© Dick Gilbert

ASIA

INDIA

REPEATED OFFENSE/ FAMILY AFFAIRS

February 4, 2021

Nameri National Park, Sonitpur District, State of Assam, India



The events occurred around 4:30 am. A clash between a ranger patrol and a group of 4 poachers left one of them dead. The 3 others fled but one was wounded, as evidenced by the traces of blood in the forest. The body of the dead poacher was identified by his family. It is Debeswar Pogag, 38 years old, known since 2010 for repeated acts of poaching by poisoning and firearms. 4 years later, he had admitted his involvement in elephant poaching and had even led eco-guards to the remains of one of his victims in the Namri Hills. In the first instance, he was sentenced to 7 years in prison, but the Gauhati High Court granted him bail.

Northeast Now, February 4 and 5, 2021.⁷



© Robin des Bois

IRAN

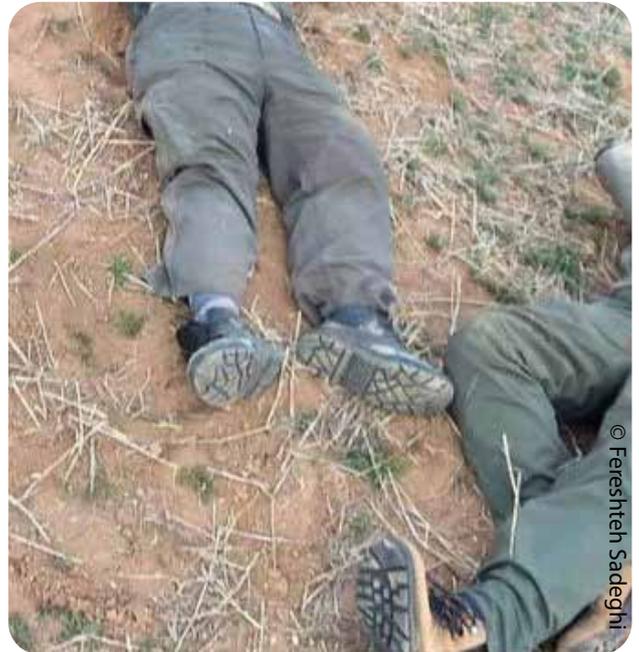
April 5, 2021

Fileh Khasseh Protected Area, Zanjan Province, Iran



Death of Mehdi Majall and Mikael Hashemi. These 2 Fileh Khasseh Protected Area guards were chasing unknown people when their car was riddled with bullets. 2 suspects, local poachers, are being questioned by the police.

Deutsche Welle, April 6, 2021; Fereshteh Sadeghi, April 6, 2021.⁸



© Fereshteh Sadeghi

PANGOLINS



Temminck's ground pangolin (*Manis temminckii*). Photo Flowcomm

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

**On the Trail n°32
Value on the black market
according to media or official sources
The values were estimated at the time of the
seizures**

Value of 1kg of pangolin scales

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref. (year)
Africa	Liberia	1-20	1 (2018)
	Cameroon	1,700	5 (2021)
America	USA	5,500	35 (2017)
Asia	China	1,220	36 (2019)
		1,000	39 (2018)
		3,000	67* (2021)
	Indonesia	110	41 (2021)
		142	67* (2021)
India	4,100	61 (2021)	

* see chapter Multi-species

Value of a pangolin

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref. (year)
Asia	Viet Nam	152	52 (2021)
	India	27,000	62 (2021)

WESTERN AFRICA

LIBERIA

February 15 and 26, March 17 and early April 2021

Libassa Wildlife Sanctuary ; Kpan, Margibi County ; River Cess County ; Ganta, Nimba County, Liberia

Four new arrivals at the Libassa Wildlife Sanctuary. A white-bellied pangolin was for sale on the street. He was tied with a shoelace and a plastic thread. A long-tailed pangolin was found in a similar situation in the hands of a child. He was trying to sell him to pay his school fees.

Another pangolin was found in the hands of a trafficker; the specimen weighted 2 kilos and was found to have 28 ticks.

A fourth juvenile female white-bellied pangolin was also found roaming near a village; she was in very poor health. It is believed that her mother may have been poached.

In central Liberia, the sale of scales has become more than a small economic sideline. For some, it is

their main source of income. "The buyers first came in 2018," says the pastor of an evangelical church on condition of anonymity, "since then they have been coming by every week". The pastor is a central figure in local trafficking. He buys the scales for between 200 and 300 Liberian dollars (about 1 US\$ and 2 US\$) per kg and sells them to wholesalers for 10 times that amount. To obtain 1 kg, between 3 and 5 pangolins need to be scaled. The easiest way to collect the scales is to scald the animals alive. The wholesalers gather the scales in Côte d'Ivoire from where they are exported to Asia or Europe. Sellers remain very discreet about the uses of the scales. They say that they are turned into African design embellishment.

For the past two years, wholesalers have not been passing through. However, while the Covid pandemic has strained the market conditions for wholesalers by disputing commercial routes, it has not stopped the hunt for pangolins. Their meat is highly prized, and even now, the bags of keratin are piling up at the pastor's and his competitors' houses until the trade resumes.

In March 2020, 400 kg of scales were seized from a taxi-bus on the road to Ganta, near the border with Guinea.

Libassa Wildlife Sanctuary, February 16 and 26, March 17 and April 9, 2021; China Dialogue, July 5, 2021.¹



NIGERIA

January 16, 2021

Kogi State, Nigeria

Rescue of a female pangolin. She was released. Pangolin Conservation Guild Nigeria, January 31, 2021.²

April 15, 2021

South-Western Nigeria



Pangolin Conservation Guild Nigeria rescues a juvenile pangolin from a restaurant kitchen in extremis. Pangolin Conservation Guild Nigeria, April 15 and 22, 2021.³

CENTRAL AFRICA

CAMEROON

March 9, 2021

Bertoua, Eastern Region, Cameroon

Seizure of 109 kg of scales, for which at least 250 pangolins had to be killed. Then, some scales were seized from the home of the trafficker, who ran an extensive illegal network of hunters and collectors. The operation was carried out by the gendarmerie, the Water and Forests Service and the NGO Last Great Ape Organisation (LAGA).

EAGLE, March 10, 2021; Actu Cameroun, March 17, 2021.⁴



End of March 2021
Gashiga Border Post, North Region, Cameroon.
Near the border with Nigeria.



Cameroon Customs officers seized around 4.4 tons of pangolin scales from a semi-trailer truck coming from the Democratic Republic of Congo via the Central African Republic and about to enter Nigeria. The truck's final destination was probably Lagos, a known smuggling port to Asia. The shipment was estimated to be worth 7.5 million US\$ or 1,700 US\$ /kg. On the customs report, the scales were initially declared as "food products".

Investir au Cameroun, March 26, 2021; Koaci, March 27, 2021; Agence Cameroun Presse, March 29, 2021.⁵

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

March 12, 2021

Empaash, Narok County, Kenya

Three members of the Kisaika family appeared in court for the possession of a live pangolin. The accused pleaded not guilty, claiming that they did not go to the savannah to get the pangolin; but that the pangolin came to them. "My clients live in an area surrounded by wild animals and it is not a wonder if they find their way into their homestead while in search of food". The Kisaika trio were released on bail. The pangolin involved in the offence was presented at court as evidence before being released into the wilderness as far away from human habitation as possible.

Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, March 16, 2021; Tuko, March 16, 2021; Mara Elephant Project, April 15, 2021.⁶

April 14, 2021

Tsavo West National Park, Kenya

Seizure of a female pangolin in the hands of a poacher. She is examined by the vets. All is well. She is released back into the wild to roam freely and "enjoy life in the Tsavo ecosystem".

SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, April 2021.⁷

April 20, 2021

Taveta, Taita-Taveta County, Kenya. Border with Tanzania.

Seven Tanzanians who were trying to sell a live pangolin were caught and arrested in a joint operation led by the Big Life Foundation and the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS).

Big Life Foundation, April 20, 2021.⁸

MALAWI

Mid-February 2021

Blantyre, Southern Region, Malawi

A female pangolin was rescued from a poaching incident and was later transferred to an intensive care unit at the Society for the Protection and Care of Animals (SPCA) shelter.

Worldwide Veterinary Service, February 20, 2021.⁹



UGANDA

February 21, 2021

Kalongo, Northern Region, Uganda

Arrest of 3 individuals who were trying to sell a live pangolin at the G&G Victoria Hotel; the specimen had been captured at the Kidepo Valley national park. Ultimately, the pangolin was transferred to a care unit at the Karuma wildlife reserve in preparation for his permanent release.

The Independent, February 23, 2021.¹⁰

March 8, 2021

Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

Joseph Kakooza and John Wamala were arrested after having been found in possession of 2 live pangolins.

Capital FM, April 1, 2021.¹¹

ZAMBIA

Beginning of March 2021

Lusaka, Lusaka Province, Zambia

Bertha Katanda and John Pende, an officer of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) and police officer respectively, were sentenced to 5 years in prison after they were caught red-handed attempting to sell a live pangolin on July 7, 2018. Two alleged accomplices were acquitted.

Diamond TV Zambia, March 2, 2021.¹²



SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

January 12, 2021

Kempton Park, Gauteng Province, South Africa



A special police operation occurred at a parking lot in Kempton Park. The police and the "Hawks" command force rescued a young male Temminck's ground pangolin and arrested 5 suspects. The animal was handed over to the care of a veterinary clinic whose location is confidential for security reasons. His health prognosis was deemed favorable.

Pangolin K9, January 12, 2021; Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital, February 18, 2021.¹³

January 13, 2021

Upington, Northern Cape Province, South Africa

A hitchhiker was arrested for attempting to travel from Upington to Olifantshoek (169 km) with a pangolin armor weighing 2.05 kg in his rucksack. The armor's estimated value was said to be 109.00 R or 7,420 US\$ and 3,620 US\$/kg.

SAPS, January 14, 2021.¹⁴

February 7, 2021

Kimberley, Northern Cape Province, South Africa



A police special forces unit intercepted an Opel Corsa suspicious of trafficking: the operation resulted in the handcuffing of all 4 passengers and the seizure of 2 pangolin armor sets, 4 vials of mercury and a diamond. SAPS, February 7, 2021.¹⁵



On the Trail n°32. Robin des Bois

March 3, 2021

Midrand, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Six arrests. Seizure of 2 vehicles and various phones. Release of a pangolin that was estimated to be 10-years-old. The specimen was transferred to a veterinary clinic in Johannesburg, but was unfortunately too sick to be saved. A week later, he has been finished off.

Pangolin K9, March 3, 2021; SAPS, March 3, 2021; Save the Beasts, March 4, 2021; The Citizen, March 31, 2021.¹⁶

March 26, 2021

Thohoyandou, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Two arrests. A juvenile pangolin was found at the bottom of a basin. Guarded prognosis.

Pangolin K9, March 26, 2021.¹⁷

April 13, 2021

Gravelotte, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Four arrests occurred at a gas station. Seizure of 2 vehicles. Release of a live pangolin. Joint operation of the African Pangolin Working Group and the dog squad. The young male was put in the care of the Provet Animal Hospital. Prognosis is favorable.

Pangolin K9, April 13, 2021; African Pangolin Working Group, April 14, 2021; Rhino Revolution, April 14, 2021; SAPS, April 17, 2021.¹⁸

April 20, 2021

Krugersdorp, Gauteng Province, South Africa



Conviction of a Zimbabwean national with no previous criminal record and a 25-year-old man previously sentenced to 7 years in prison for theft and possession of prohibited substances. They had tried to sell a pangolin. The specimen was injured during capture and transport, then was successfully treated and released. The African Pangolin Working Group points out that the recovery of a pangolin costs between 3,000 US\$ and 4,000 US\$.

Krugersdorp News, April 28, 2021.¹⁹

NAMBIA

February 2021

Namibia

Arrest of Ma Jingsao, holder of a Chinese passport found in possession of an unspecified number of pangolin scales and bones.

Namibian Broadcasting Corporation, March 5, 2021.²⁰

February 2021

Namibia

Arrest of 2 suspects in possession of a pangolin armor.

Allgemeine Zeitung, March 8, 2021.²¹

February 2021

Ruacana, Omusati Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.

Seizure of 2 pangolin armors.
Allgemeine Zeitung, March 8, 2021.²²

February 15, 2021

Opuwo, Kunene Region, Namibia

Tjihepo Tjondo was found in the possession of a pangolin armor and was fined 4,000 US\$ with 200 US\$ suspended, or in case of non-payment, condemned to 6 months in prison with 3 months suspended.

Two people fined 1,700 US\$ of which 350 US\$ was suspended or 12-month suspended prison term for possession of a pangolin armor.

Namibian Broadcasting Corporation, March 5, 2021.²³



February 21, 2021

Oshakati, Oshana Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.

Arrest of 2 suspects in possession of 2 live pangolins.
Namibian Broadcasting Corporation, March 5, 2021.²⁴

February 26, 2021

Rundu, Kavango East Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.

Joseph Mukuve was fined 200,000 Namibian dollars (13,000 US\$) or in case of non-payment, sentenced to 4 years imprisonment for illegally holding a live pangolin and 2 armor sets.

Republikein, February 26, 2021.²⁵



February 28, 2021

Rundu, Kavango East Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.

Arrest of Muronga Hamutima, found in possession of a pangolin armor.

Namibian Sun, March 10, 2021.²⁶

March 2, 2021

Omaruru, Erongo Region, Namibia

Benjamin Unanisa Kambombo and Vaapi Florin Mukandi were detained in August 2019 for attempting to smuggle a live pangolin. The offenders were sentenced to a fine of 270 US\$ of which 135 US\$ were suspended; or in case of non-payment, 12 months of imprisonment, of which 6 were suspended.

Republikein, March 11, 2021.²⁷



March 2, 2021

Rundu, Kavango East Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.

Arrest of Matheus Mbanze, found in possession of a pangolin armor.

Namibian Sun, March 10, 2021.²⁸

March 7, 2021

Outapi, Omusati Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.

Arrest of Nikodemus Kotekeni Hafeni and Simon Akwenye. Seizure of 110 scales and a pangolin armor.

Namibian Sun, March 17, 2021.²⁹

March 10, 2021

Mukwe, Kavango East Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.

Mathues Ngunda was arrested after being found in possession of a live pangolin.

Namibian Sun, March 17, 2021.³⁰

March 10, 2021

Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia

Arrest of Mendley Job and Godlieb Amalenga for the possession of 2 pangolin armor sets.

Namibian Sun, March 17, 2021.³¹

March 11, 2021

Tsumeb, Oshikoto Region, Namibia

Arrest of Patrick Mpande Haingura and Andreas Mushongo for the possession of 2 pangolin armor sets.

Namibian Sun, March 17, 2021.³²

April 11, 2021

Outapi, Omusati Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.

Seizure of a pangolin armor. Arrest of Veikko Angula, a Namibian national, and Murangi Kambwale, an Angolan national.

Republikein, April 14, 2021; Allgemeine Zeitung, April 16, 2021.³³

April 15, 2021

Grootfontein, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

Arrest of Frans Lamek Tjihinga for the possession of a pangolin armor.

Republikein, April 20, 2021; Namibian Sun, April 22, 2021.³⁴

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

REPEATED OFFENSE

April 12, 2021

Portland, State of Oregon, United States of America



Agnes Yu, who operates a shop called Wing Ming Herbs with her husband, was sentenced to 3 years of probation and fined over 5,000 US\$ for selling 30 grams of pangolin scales in November 2017 to a “customer” who was in reality an undercover US Postal Inspector.

Shipments of American ginseng to China without export certificates had drawn attention. The American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) is listed in the Appendix II of CITES. Yu’s selling price for the 30 grams of scales was 165 US\$ or 5,500 US\$/kg, a price level rarely reached in Asia.

In 2003, the Yu couple were caught at the US-Canada border smuggling 10 sea snakes (subfamily Hydrophiinae), which belong to the cobra family and are generally between one and 1.5 meters long. These venomous snakes live in the Indian and Pacific Oceans and have a flat body with a paddle-shaped tail. They need to come to the surface to breathe, which allows traffickers to capture them.

In 2018, an unspecified number of pangolin scales, crushed elephant ivory, 4 giant seahorses (*Hippocampus ingens*, Appendix II), giant devil ray parts (*Mobula mobular*, Appendix II), 14 shark fins including 4 from hammerhead sharks (family Sphyrnidae, 3 species in Appendix II), 11 penises and 15 gall bladders of red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) had been seized from Wing Ming Herbs. In 2020, Agnes Yu was put on trial for the sale of the shark fins, and was given 12 months of probation and 1,360 US\$ in fines and damages (see “On the Trail” n°27 p.19 and n°29 p.171).

KOIN 6, March 24, 2021; US Department of Justice, April 12, 2021. ³⁵

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

January 5, 2021

Wenzhou, Wenzhou Prefecture, Zhejiang Province, China



The 18 people who were caught in a raid in Wenzhou in October 2019 (see “On the Trail” n°27 p.60) have been reprimanded. Prison sentences ranged from 14, 13 and 12 years for the gang leaders to one year and 3 months for the underlings. The personal assets of the 2 main convicts were permanently seized; valuing over 4 and 3 million yuan, i.e. 613,000 US\$ and 460,000 US\$. The last delivery made by the gang was 10.645 tons of pangolin scales which travelled from Nigeria via South Korea. The gang used a ghost ship whose flag and name appear to have been spoofed. They loaded at Busan with one container full of scales and other 44 containers of frozen seafood. The ship was eventually unloaded at the mouth of the Yangtze River on October 29 at an out-of-customs terminal operated by an accomplice. On the same day, the container was transported by truck to a warehouse in Wenzhou District. It was in that warehouse that the law enforcement authorities finally intervened. In 2 years, the network had smuggled over 23 tons of scales worth 183 million yuan or 28 million US\$ or 1220 US\$ /kg.

China Daily (with Xinhua), January 5, 2021; Global Times, January 5, 2021; Zhejiang News, January 5, 2021. ³⁶

January 13, 2021

Maguan County, Wenshan Zhuang and Miao Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Viet Nam.



Seizure of a truck coming from Viet Nam containing 95.111 kg of pangolin scales and 82 bags of hair. Wenshan Zhuang and Miao Autonomous Prefecture Radio and TV Station, March 24, 2021. ³⁷

February 2021

Daibuzhen, Changzhou Prefecture, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure of a juvenile pangolin and 6 pangolin stomachs found in the freezer of a hotel restaurant. The hotel manager was also selling scales. Jiangsu Internet TV Station, February 23, 2021.³⁸

Beginning of February 2021

Yibin, Yibin Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China

A pharmacist was fined 2,000 yuan (310 US\$) for attempting to sell 100 grams of pangolin scales without a license from the health authorities. At the time of her arrest, the woman had already sold 36 grams at a price of 7 yuan/gram (1 US\$/gram). China Court, February 7, 2021.³⁹



April 21, 2021

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China

An offender was sentenced to 18 months in prison for attempting to smuggle 56 kg of pangolin scales via a freight plane from Nigeria in August 2018. Hong Kong Customs, April 21, 2021.⁴⁰



SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

INDONESIA

January 26, 2021

Sapuran, Wonosobo Regency, Central Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia

Seizure of a frozen pangolin found in one bag (4 kg) and 1.5 kg of scales found in another bag. The young man was arrested at a gas station. Local rumor has it that the scales were being used as raw material for methamphetamine-based drugs. The domestic market price is estimated at 1,500,000 rupiahs/kg or 110 US\$/kg.

Radar Tegal, January 30, 2021; iNews Jateng, January 31, 2021.⁴¹

MALAYSIA

March 9, 2021

Kuala Krai District, State of Kelantan, Malaysia

Seizure by the Perhilitan of 19 pangolin scales in the hands of 2 loggers of Cambodian nationality. Cambodian traffickers are frequently arrested in Malaysia, (see "On the Trail" n°27 p.124 and n°30 p.167).

Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia, March 11, 2021; Kosmo!, March 11, 2021.⁴²



OPERATION KHAZANAH

March 13, 2021

Royal Belum State Park, State of Perak, Malaysia

The PERHILITAN seized 6 traps and 1.9 kg of scales from a Thai national.

Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia, March 16, 2021.⁴³

Mid-March 2021

Tawau, State of Sabah, Malaysia

Rescue of a 7 kg Sunda pangolin. He was rescued by Mr. Chung in a village. He was going to be sold for his meat and scales. Mr. Chung accompanied the purchase of the pangolin with a truthful speech about the usefulness of the species and the superstitions attached to eating their meat and scales. In cooperation with the local authorities, the rescued pangolin was released into the mountains.

See Hua Daily News, March 11, 2021; Daily Express, March 13, 2021.⁴⁴



THAILAND

February 4, 2021

Padang Besar, Songkhla Province, Thailand. Border with Malaysia.



A man (shown in black attire in the photo below) attracted the attention of local authorities after posting a video on TikTok (on February 6, 2021) of him and his dogs attempting to hunt a pangolin by following his trail. The offender had just been released from jail for murder.

Bangkok Post, February 6, 2021.⁴⁵

VIET NAM

January 27, 2021

Hanoi, Viet Nam

Seizure of 3 live and 17 frozen Sunda pangolins in a restaurant. The seizure resulted in the arrest of Ngo Van Phuong and Vu Viet Phap.

Nguoi Lao Dong, January 28, 2021; ENV, January 31, 2021.⁴⁶

January 29, 2021

Dai Hue, Hung Nguyen District, Nghe An, Viet Nam

Seizure of 3 live pangolins. Total weight: 15.6 kg. Bui Dinh Quoc was arrested.
Nghe An TV, January 31, 2021.⁴⁷

February 8, 2021

Cuc Phuong National Park, Ninh Binh Province and Pu Mat National Park, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

It's Têt, it's feast time. Release of 8 trafficked pangolins including a juvenile born in captivity.
SVW, February 12, 2021.⁴⁸

March 11, 2021

Binh Duong Province, Viet Nam

Handing over of a female pangolin and a newborn pangopup to the authorities.
ENV, March 12, 2021.⁴⁹

March 29, 2021

Hanoi, Viet Nam

984 kg. It is the largest seizure of pangolin scales ever made in Viet Nam. The trafficking network was led by a woman who was sourcing the scales from China and Africa. Four arrests were made.



VietNamNet, May 20, 2021; VnExpress International, May 21, 2021.⁵⁰

April 2021

Hoa Lac, Lang Son Province, Viet Nam

Two dead pangolins were found hidden in a pineapple crate inside a vehicle. Two arrests were made.
ANTV, April 25, 2021.⁵¹

April 12, 2021

Da Lat, Lam Dong Province, Viet Nam



The young men were about to eat a Chinese pangolin when they were intercepted by an unidentified third party who bought the pangolin back for 152 US\$ and handed him over to the town's forestry officials. The pangolin is expected to be released soon.
Thanh Niên, April 12, 2021; ENV, April 13, 2021.⁵²

April 14, 2021

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

A perpetrator was sentenced to 17 months in prison for attempting to sell a live juvenile pangolin (see "On the Trail" n°30 p.13).
ENV, May 16, 2021.⁵³



April 22, 2021

Binh Dinh Province, Viet Nam



A young man reported to ENV (Education for Nature – Vietnam) that a baby pangolin (200 grams) had been abducted from the forest by one of elder of his family. The baby was located and transferred to the Cuc Phuong national park nursery.
ENV, April 22, 2021.⁵⁴

SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

January 2, 2021

Athagad, Cuttack District, State of Odisha, India

This pangolin was snatched from the hands of poachers, went around the table and was later reintroduced to the wild. In 2020, 13 pangolin poachers were arrested in Odisha. New Delhi Television (with ANI), January 3, 2021.⁵⁵



January 5, 2021

Kadamalaikundu, Theni District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

After having been reported to the authorities by one partner in crime, P. Sekar in turn betrayed his accomplices R. Munusamy, S. Latchumanan, V. Chellapandi and K. Vanaraj. 5.75 kg of pangolin scales were passed from hand to hand until they were presented to forest officials. Some methods used in the district to reduce the number of pangolins to zero are setting snarls at the mouth of their burrows, using dogs or blowing smoke into the burrows.
The Times of India, January 6, 2021; WCCB, January 7, 2021.⁵⁶

January 11, 2021

Khanapara, Kamrup Metropolitan District, State of Assam, India

Arrest of 2 traffickers and seizure of a live Chinese pangolin on National Highway 37 by the WCCB (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) and the Forest Department.

WCCB, January 12, 2021.⁵⁷

January 12, 2021

Kajalgaon, Chirang District, State of Assam, India

Acting on a tip-off from the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, paramilitaries of the 15th Battalion of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) apprehended 4 traffickers carrying a live pangolin. The border with Bhutan is close.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), January 13, 2021; Sashastra Seema Bal, January 12, 2021.⁵⁸

January 20 and 21, 2021

Matigara, Darjeeling District, State of West Bengal, India

Seizure of 4 kg of scales from Murshid Alam's school bag. Five accomplices escaped. The next day, Tuesday night, 2 were recaptured. The pangolin had been killed in Bhutan and his scales were on their way to East Asia via Sikkim.

Siliguri Times, January 22, 2021; The Telegraph India, January 22, 2021.⁵⁹

January 24, 2021

Sandrapet, Warangal Metropolitan District, State of Telangana, India



Eight individuals were involved in the selling of a big Chinese pangolin. Using the "the more expensive, the more miraculous" tactic, they demanded the equivalent of US\$ 200,000, even if it meant a 90% discount. They were sure they had hit the jackpot when they captured their lotto in the Bellampalli forest on Friday night. They had become convinced that the pangolin was the solution by watching YouTube reports on the scale business. It was "a dream come true during the Covid period". Telangana Today, January 24, 2021; The Times of India, January 25, 2021.⁶⁰

January 25, 2021

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



Abdul Rashid Halder, Kedar Maity and Atul Jana were arrested at the New Town bus stop and a freshly caught Chinese pangolin was rescued. An official says that one kilogram of scales sells for 4,100 US\$ on the grey market and that the meat sells for 410 US\$/kg.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), January 27, 2021; The Telegraph India, January 28, 2021.⁶¹

January 27, 2021

Shrimar, Korba District, State of Chhattisgarh, India

Traffickers wanted over 2 million rupees or 27,000 US\$ for a specimen. Seven arrests were made. The pangolin was still alive.

Outlook India (avec PTI), January 28, 2021.⁶²

January 28, 2021

Namkonda, Malkangiri District, State of Odisha, India

Fifteen forest officials and guards rushed into the village after being told that a large Indian pangolin was being traded there. About 30 villagers assailed them with clubs, sticks and axes. Ten officers were injured and admitted to a hospital. The fate of the pangolin is unknown.

Odisha TV, January 29, 2021; Ommcom News, January 29, 2021; The New Indian Express, January 30, 2021.⁶³

January 29, 2021

Bujbuja, Katni District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

The traffickers were travelling by motorbike. The live pangolin was in a plastic bag. Four arrests were made. Naidunia, January 29, 2021; Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), January 30, 2021.⁶⁴

February 8 and 9, 2021

National Highway 66 Mumbai-Goa, Raigad District, State of Maharashtra, India

The autorickshaw was travelling on the expressway towards Mumbai. The 3 passengers were not alone. They were hiding a pangolin.

The next day, on the same road, the police intercepted a car. The 3 passengers were hiding 2 pangolins, a mother and her baby.

The 6 suspects were from Chiplun in Ratnagiri district. Mid-Day (with PTI), February 10 and 12, 2021; The New Indian Express, February 10, 2021.⁶⁵

February 13, 2021

Sangamner, Ahmednagar District, State of Maharashtra, India

Four men were taken in custody. They ranged in age from 25 to 61 years. A pangolin was released. The Indian Express, February 14, 2021; Hindustan Times, February 15, 2021.⁶⁶

February 18, 2021

Tinsukia, Tinsukia District, State of Assam, India



Seven complete pangolin armors with scales, legs and tail, and a live pangolin were seized from a hotel room. A man and a woman from Arunachal Pradesh were placed in custody. Joint operation of the WCCB, the police and forest officials.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), February 18, 2021; News Move, February 18, 2021.⁶⁷

February 22, 2021

Umaria and Katni Districts, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Two joint operations were conducted on the same day by the WCCB, the Police Special Task Force and the Forest Department: 2 live pangolins were rescued from trafficking, there were 5 arrests.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), February 23, 2021.⁶⁸

March 2, 2021

Katangji, Jabalpur District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Anil Thakur and Kamlesh Thakur's had an eventful arrest on the Katangji-Belkhadu road. The police rescued a large Indian pangolin alive. This was an emergency joint operation by the WCCB, the Special Task Force (STF) of Jabalpur and forest officials.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), March 3, 2021; The Hitavada, March 5, 2021.⁶⁹

April 10, 2021

Kakrahwa, Siddharthnagar District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

There was a seizure of 81 pangolin scales and an arrest of one person by a joint patrol of the 59th Battalion of the Sashastra Seema Bal and the Forest Department.

Sashastra Seema Bal, April 12, 2021.⁷⁰

April 12, 2021

Gaura Padav, Nainital District, State of Uttarakhand, India

Interception of a car near the Shiva temple. Six arrests were made. Rescue of an exceptionally heavy pangolin (26 kg).



Saket Badola (Indian Forest Service), April 12, 2021; Uttarakhand City News, April 12, 2021; The Pioneer, April 13, 2021.⁷¹

April 16, 2021

Umbarwadi, Kolhapur District, State of Maharashtra, India

Rohan Bhate, a volunteer wildlife warden and animal activist, played the classic and risky role of a buyer interested in a captured pangolin. The scene turned ugly when the 2 sellers beat him up with sticks and prevented him from taking off with the pangolin wrapped up in a plastic barrel. Bhate's colleagues took charge of the case, they took him to a hospital, took the pangolin to the police station and then arrested 7 villagers, including 2 school children.

The Indian Express, April 21, 2021.⁷²

April 16, 2021

Abhimanpur, Cuttack District, State of Odisha, India

Keshab Sahoo was arrested by the Special Task Force (STF). He had taken ownership of a pangolin and was trying to sell him. In 2020, the STF in 2020 seized leopard skins, 6 elephant tusks, 2 deer skins, 3 live pangolins and 5 kg of scales in the district.

The New Indian Express, April 18, 2021.⁷³

April 17, 2021

Khanapara, Kamrup Metropolitan District, State of Assam, India

Two arrests were made and about 5 kg of scales were seized through a special operation conducted by the WCCB and the Forest Department in this municipality on the border of Assam and Meghalaya.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), April 19, 2021.⁷⁴

— PANGOLINS, FELINES / ELEPHANTS / RHINOCEROSSES —

AFRICA

NIGERIA

January 21, 2021

Port of Apapa, Lagos State, Nigeria

No Covid lockdown for traffickers. They relentlessly contribute to the extinction of species by chasing wildlife in its last refuges.

New records indicate there was a seizure of pangolin scales and elephant tusks in Nigeria. On January 21, 2021, at the Apapa terminal in the port of Lagos, a shipping container registered CSLU 2362640 was subject to customs control. The customs inspection discovered 162 bags of scales with a total weight of 5,329 kg or the equivalent of about 10,660 pangolins and 57 bags with 4,752 kg of elephant tusks, 103 kg of lion skulls (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II) and other big cats, and 5 kg of unidentified rhino horns and wild animal bones.



The total value of the seizure is estimated at 2.4 million US\$. The container was bound for the port of Haiphong in Viet Nam. It was declared to contain only furniture. The wildlife loot was roughly hidden behind logs of wood. The Nigerian consignee was arrested, however there is no guarantee that authorities will investigate his accomplices in Africa and Asia.

The Nigeria/Asia sector is well identified. On January 19, 2020, in Lagos in the Isheri district, 9,504 tons of scales in 147 bags were seized from a warehouse (see "On the Trail" Covid-19 Special Edition, p.11). Financial Business, January 26, 2021; Premium Times, January 26, 2021; SHips & Ports, January 26, 2021; The Guardian, January 28, 2021; Elephant Protection Initiative, 5 February 2021; This Day, August 16, 2021.¹

ASIA

INDIA

February 10, 13 and 14, 2021 Umariya and Jabalpur Districts, State of Madhya Pradesh, India



Joint operations by the WCCB, the State Task Force (STF) and the State Tiger Strike Force (STSF):

Seizure of one leopard skin and 9.5 kg of pangolin scales. 7 arrests.

Seizure of 2 leopard skins and 5.9 kg of pangolin scales. 16 arrests.

Seizure of one leopard skin. 2 arrests.

The leopards were killed with electric traps.



WCCB, February 11 and 16, 2021; BW Business World (with ANI), February 15, 2021; Dainik Bhaskar, February 15, 2021.²

ELEPHANTS



African savannah elephant (*Loxodonta africana*). Photo Flowcomm

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

On the Trail n°32
Black market raw ivory quotation from media or official sources
The values were estimated at the time of the seizures

Value of 1kg of raw ivory

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref. (year)
Africa	Gabon	184	18 (2021)
	Kenya	925	32 (2021)
		905	33 (2021)
		260	58 (2021)
	Malawi	1,025	69 (2021)
	Uganda	800-1,000	74 (2021)
	Zimbabwe	170	87 (2021)
		40	89 (2021)
South Africa	1,620	98 (2021)	
Namibia	109-2,150	113 (2019)	
Asia	India	557	202 (2021)

WESTERN AFRICA

BENIN

January 12, 2021

Cotonou, Littoral Department, Benin

Judgment in first instance after the seizure in October 2018 of 183 kg of raw ivory in a hotel room (see "On the Trail" n°23 p.125):

A prison sentence of 24 months and a fine of one million FCFA (i.e. 1,870 US\$).

Two suspended prison sentences of 24 months and 2 fines equal to 1,870 US\$.

The 3 people must jointly pay 80 million FCFA (i.e. 150,000 US\$) as compensation for all damages suffered by the State.

Fraternité, January 14, 2021.¹



February 15 and 30, 2021

Malanville, Alibori Department, Benin

Arrest of 2 men in flagrante delicto for transporting and attempting to sell 2 elephant tusks. A third one fled the scene.

The capture operation was supported by the program, "Appui à l'Application des Lois sur la Faune et la Flore au Bénin (AALF-Benin)", in English "Support Program for the Application of Laws on Fauna and Flora in Benin"; which is supported by the EAGLE network. The initial ruling condemned the 2 offenders to 12 months' imprisonment, a fine of 300,000 FCFA (560 US\$) and one million FCFA in damages (1,860 US\$).

EAGLE, February 16 and March 2021; Le Portail Info, February 21, 2021; EAGLE Bénin, April 19, 2021.²



March 9, 2021

Parakou, Borgou Department, Benin

After a long judicial process between the court of first instance, the court of appeal and the Supreme Court, 2 traffickers have been definitely sentenced to 48 and 40 months in prison and damages (see "On the Trail" n°18 p.94). Basile Kora and David Doko, who had been released on bail pending their final judgement, have yet to be found. An arrest warrant has been issued against them. According to a Beninese journalist, it is only if they are found that justice will be fully rendered to the "souls" of the elephants they killed in 2017.

Actubenin, March 24, 2021.³



March 11 and May 2021

Natitingou, Atakora Department, Benin

Seizure of the 2 tusks of an elephant poached in Burkina Faso; the operation was being overseen by 8 ministries and other institutions. The court's initial ruling sentences the perpetrator to 4 years in prison.

EAGLE, March 12 and May 2021; Matin Libre, March 18, 2021.⁴



March 26, 2021

Djougou, Donga Department, Benin

A trafficker was sentenced to 24 months in prison and charged over 4, 500 US\$ in fines and damages to the State for attempting to sell 3 ivory tusks on the black market. 24 Heures au Bénin, April 13, 2021.⁵



April 27, 2021

Kandi, Alibori Department, Benin

An elephant was shot dead by agents of the African Parks and Water and Forests agency. The incident occurred after the animal was accused of killing 3 people and damaging property in the town of Kandi within the WAP transnational protected area (W-Arly-Pendjari, W corresponding to the sinuosity of the Niger River), also known as the WAP complex. After the elephant was killed his tusks and tail were removed, his body was butchered and his meat distributed to the curious and impatient crowd.

Agence Bénin Presse, April 28, 2021; France 24, May 13, 2021.⁶

BURKINA FASO

April 22, and June 2, 2021

Pô, Nahouri Province, Burkina Faso. Border with Ghana.



Two traffickers were arrested while transporting the tusks of an elephant poached in the Nazinga game reserve. A third man was arrested after the confessions of the two bikers. Conservation Justice and the NGOs Guardian Angels of Nature and Nitidae assisted in the arrest, which was led by Water and Forests officers.

The trio was sentenced to 12 months in prison and was ordered to pay one million CFA francs (1, 850 US\$) in damages to the State.

EAGLE, April 23 and June 2021; Conservation Justice, April 2021; Fasozone, May 4, 2021; LeFaso.net, June 10, 2021.⁷



COTE D'IVOIRE

February 16, 2021

Koumassi, Abidjan Autonomous District, Côte d'Ivoire

Seizure of 166 worked ivories for sale in 2 adjoining shops and their outbuildings. The Transnational Crime Unit (UCT) and agents of the Ministry of Water and Forests got their hands on a pan-African network that goes far beyond the doings of the 3 craftsmen arrested at the scene and placed under arrest. The operation was conceived with the technical support of EAGLE Côte d'Ivoire.

EAGLE, February 22, 2021; EAGLE Côte d'Ivoire, March 10, 2021.⁸

February 26 and March 2021

Abengourou, Comoé District, Côte d'Ivoire



60 tusks. 114 kg. 30 elephant calves have been gunned down. The ivory black market in West Africa is at its wits end. Five traffickers (3 from Burkina Faso, 2 from Côte d'Ivoire) were collecting small bloody ivory tips. They are supposedly working with a network operating in Togo, Ghana, Burkina Faso and possibly other sub-Saharan countries. The operation led by the Transnational Crime Unit technically supported by EAGLE was full of incident. What hard work! Beware of the flights!

EAGLE, February and March 3, 2021; Koaci, February 26, 2021; Alwihda, March 3, 2021; EAGLE Côte d'Ivoire, March 10, 2021.⁹

GHANA

April 30, 2021

Kpaloo, Northern Region, Ghana

An elephant carcass was found lying on a runway. The mouth was deformed by bullet holes and the creature had been violently stripped of his tusks. Traditional leaders of the area expressed their indignation. In West Mamprusi District, poaching is said to be a contagious and incurable disease.

Dailymailgh, May 1, 2021.¹⁰

TOGO

April 14 and June 11, 2021

Lomé, Maritime Region, Togo



Arrest of 3 men, one Burkinabe, one Nigerian, one Togolese. Seizure of 3 elephant tusks from Burkina Faso, which had been cut into 6 sections. Boukari, Idriss and Tampali were sentenced to 6 months in prison, 4 of which were suspended. These are very light punishments. Article 761 of the Penal Code provides for 1 to 5 years' imprisonment and a fine of 1 to 50 million CFA francs for the possession and illegal marketing of species protected by national laws and international conventions. For this case, the magistrates opted to refer instead to the Article 796, which only provides between one to 6 months' imprisonment and/or a fine of 100,000 to 500,000 FCFA for anyone who circulates, sells, imports or brings in transit wild animals or "wildlife trophies".

EAGLE, April 20, 2021; Alwihda, April 28, 2021; La Dépêche d'Abidjan, July 23, 2021.¹¹

April 23 and November, 2021

Kara, Kara Region, Togo. Border with Benin.

Arrest of Djima Didier Yoa, Denis Yokossi, Dissirama Badjassan and Dimilina Badjassan, 2 Beninese and 2 Congolese traffickers. Seizure of 4 elephant tusks from Benin. Yoa and Yokossi were sentenced to 36 months' imprisonment, 12 of which were suspended, and a fine of 3,400 US\$. Dissirama Badjassan and Dimilina Badjassan were sentenced to 16 months in prison, 10 of which were suspended, and a fine of 1,700 US\$. The 4 accomplices must also pay 25,800 US\$ in damages.

EAGLE, April 24, 2021; Alwihda, April 28, 2021; Vert Togo, December 7, 2021.¹²

CENTRAL AFRICA

ANGOLA

End of March 2021

Dembo, Bengo Province, Angola

A 50-year-old man, farmer by profession (no further details are known about him) is arrested by the SIC (Serviço de Investigação Criminal, or the Criminal Investigation Services). He was in possession of 2 large elephant tusks. He wanted to sell them in Luanda, the capital, 180 km to the south. He claims to have worked alone through the poaching, storing, canvassing, selling and delivery of raw ivory. However, the SIC suspects he is part of a larger network. Novo Jornal, March 30, 2021.¹³

GABON

January 15 and April 2021 Port-Gentil, Ogooué-Maritime Province, Gabon



120 kg of raw ivory was seized at a Meridien Hotel suite. Sunday Chinatou, a Nigerian national, Michel Mambounda and Koumba Ogoula, Gabonese nationals, were sentenced to 2-3 years in prison, one of which was suspended. Stéphane Guigui was acquitted.

Gabon Média Time, January 23, 2021; EAGLE, January and April 2021; Conservation Justice, April 2021.¹⁴

January 15, 2021 Koulamoutou, Ogooué-Lolo Province, Gabon



Initially arrested in November 2020 with black-coated raw ivory (see "On the Trail" n°31 p. 19), Emerson Moukagna Pango was sentenced to 4 years in prison, 1 of which was suspended.

Conservation Justice, January 2021.¹⁵

January 21 and March 26, 2021 Libreville, Estuaire Province, Gabon



Jean Michel Aba Ndong was found guilty of possessing 2 tusks weighing 500 grams each. He took the calves at the cradle. He was only sentenced to 18 months in prison, 8 of which were suspended, and a fine of one million CFA francs (1,864 US\$).

Conservation Justice, January and March 2021; EAGLE, March 2021.¹⁶

January 22 and March 2021 Makokou, Ogooué-Ivindo Province, Gabon



Freddy Boubebe was found carrying 2 tusks made of raw ivory which weighted 5 kg altogether. A hunting weapon was seized from his house. He was sentenced to 2 years in prison, one of which was suspended, a fine of one million CFA francs (1,864 US\$) and 2 million CFA francs in damages.

Conservation Justice, January and March 2021; EAGLE, March 2021.¹⁷

February 10 and April 2021 Bitam and Oyem, Woleu-Ntem Province, Gabon

Two Malians were caught in the act of transporting and attempting to sell 2 tusks at a price of 100,000 FCFA/kg, i.e. 184 US\$/kg. Camara Abdoulaye, a Guinean national, was said to be the owner of the shipment. He was arrested but has not yet been tried. His accomplices, Diallo Bourama and Karime Bengali were sentenced to 2 years in prison.

EAGLE, February 11 and April 2021; 7Jours Info, February 13, 2021; Conservation Justice, February and April 2021.¹⁸

March 4, April 2 and June 4, 2021 Libreville, Estuaire Province, and Lastoursville, Ogooué-Lolo Province, Gabon



The police, with the help of "Eaux et Forêts" (the Water and Forests Service) and the support of the NGO Conservation Justice, arrested Mac Hudson Okouma Ndoulou, a taxi driver, and Hétane Menson Niabolo. The suspects were in possession of 4 elephant tusks. Four days later, Diane Bouyou, who was said to be the owner by Ndoulou and Niabolo, was arrested. In court, the 3 suspects each claimed that they did not know what was in the bags, which were passed from hand to hand and which had been entrusted to them by an unknown individual. They faced up to 10 years in prison, but were acquitted and released on April 9. The real owner of the tusks, Régis Ikengui, was arrested on April 2 in Lastoursville, and was sentenced to 2 years in prison, one of which was suspended on June 4. In his statements, the offender repeatedly referred to the active complicity of the 3 released persons. EAGLE, March, 5 and April 3, 2021; Gabonreview, March, 12 2021; Conservation Justice, March, April and July 2021; 7Jours Info, April 12, 2021.¹⁹

March 18, 23 and April 23, 2021 Moabi, Mourindi and Mocabe, Nyanga Province, and Libreville, Estuaire Province, Gabon



Sieur Karl Kombila went to the barber shop... to deposit 2 ivory tusks. They were seized thanks to the mobilization of the police and the Water and Forests Service, with the support of Conservation Justice. After his arrest, the offender denounced Sogny Nziengui and Brice Alain Bourobou as accomplices, leading to their arrest on March 23. The 3 are presumed to have poached the elephant. Karl Kombila and Sogny Nziengui were sentenced to 2 years in prison, one of which was suspended.

EAGLE, March 19 and 25, 2021; Conservation Justice, March and April 2021; Gabon Média Time, March 21, 2021; Gabonreview, March 22, 2021.²⁰

April 13, 14 and May 2021 Franceville, Haut-Ogooué Province, Gabon



Arrest of Rody Wester Okie and Jacques Samba, who were in possession of 4 raw ivory tusks.

Arrest of Régis Okanda and Garcia Mbamba Ngangou, who were in possession of 2 raw tusks.

All 4 offenders were of Gabonese nationality and were transferred to Libreville to be presented before the competent prosecutor.

Régis Okanda and Garcia Mbamba Ngangou were sentenced to 24 months in prison, 12 of which were suspended, for illegal possession of ivory.

Rody Okie and Jacques Samba were sentenced to 24 months' imprisonment, six of which were suspended, for attempting to sell ivory.

Conservation Justice, April and May 2021; EAGLE, April and May 2021.²¹

April 22, 2021

Mouila, Ngounié Province, Gabon

The police seized 2 ivory tusks from Klayne Karel Magama. They were conducting a search for aggravated theft.

Conservation Justice, April 2021.²²

April 26 and July 2021

Moanda, Haut-Ogooué Province, Gabon



Kha Puh, an illegal trafficker of 6 ivory tusks in March 2020 (see "On the Trail" n°28 p.107), was acquitted by the Franceville court on 15 July 2020. The court declared itself incompetent to review his case. He was then referred to the competent court in Libreville. After the lifting of the mobility restrictions imposed by the Covid pandemic, Kha Puh was arrested again and transferred to Libreville. He was sentenced to one year in prison. Throughout the proceedings, the NGO Conservation Justice served as legal assistant.

EAGLE, April and July 2021; Conservation Justice, April 2021.²³

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

February 24, 2021

Kamina, Haut-Lomami Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo



Lunda Ngandu Rombo, "president of a poachers' association", was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment and was charged over 25,000 US\$ in damages, to be paid to the ICCN (Institut Congolais pour la Protection de la Nature, or Congolese Institute for the Protection of Nature). His accomplice, Kamandji Ekonda Gustave, was sentenced to 10 years in prison. The brotherhood of poachers led by Rombo had been operating for nearly 10 years in the Upemba national park, using weapons of war to attack lucrative species, in particular elephants, which, perplexed by the constant intrusions and the disappearance of their own kind, ended up roaming around the villages along the river, trampling on crops, knocking down houses and causing panic and human losses in Malemba-Nkulu, Bukama, Kamina and around Kinda.

ICCN (Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature, or Congolese Institute for the Conservation of Nature), March 8, 2021; Mongabay, May 28, 2021.²⁴

April 16, 2021

Upemba National Park, Haut-Lomami Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo



Discovery by a patrol of a dead elephant. His tusks remained attached to his corpse. There were no bullet holes or other signs of violence. Poisoning is suspected.

Adams Cassinga, April 24, 2021.²⁵

April 17, 2021

N'djili International Airport, Kinshasa, Kinshasa Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Seizure of 2 suitcases about to be loaded on an Ethiopian Airlines flight. They contained 16.5 kg of raw ivory. The sender was found to be a Lebanese national based in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Adams Cassinga, April 19, 2021.²⁶

April 22, 2021

Kinshasa, Kinshasa Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo



Salomon Mpay was arrested at a hotel after being found in the possession of 35 kg of raw ivory cut into sections. The ivory was seized. Photos of a stockpile of approximately 3 tons of ivory and a stockpile of pangolin scales were found in one of his mobile phones. He was sentenced to



2 years in prison. His arrest was hailed by numerous environmental NGOs as a victory, while the weakness of his conviction was seen as a defeat. The ICCN and Conserv Congo have incited lawyers to file an appeal with the financial support by IFAW. Adams Cassinga, April 22, 2021; Mongabay, May 28, 2021.²⁷

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

January 27, 28, 31 and February 2, 2021

Pointe-Noire, Department of Pointe-Noire, Republic of the Congo



Following an aiming error, a sergeant of the Congolese army is claiming to have mistakenly shot to death an elephant instead of a dangerous criminal fugitive. After this optical error, he cut off the 2 ivory tusks off the animal and

entrusted them to a friend, a gendarme who in his spare time carves as a hobby and transforms the raw ivory into worked ivories. Both perpetrators were arrested alongside 4 civilians suspected of being members of the same trafficking network. Altogether, 100 kg of ivory were seized, according to local sources. The ivory is believed to come from the villages of Konongo in the Kouilou department, and Ngokosso in the Niari department.

EAGLE, February 2021 ; Projet d'appui à l'Application de la Loi sur la Faune sauvage (PALF), February 2021; Groupe Congo Médias, February 6, 2021.²⁸

February 22, 2021

Brazzaville, Department of Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo

29 kg of ivory were seized from a suspect who was transporting it on a motorbike. The authorities found 3 complete ivory tusks and 11 fragments. The offender was identified as Robert Manguet, a local of Mpouya in the Plateaux department, which is about 300 km away from Brazzaville. According to some sources close to the case, he was also involved in the trafficking of adulterated medicines and radioactive substances.

EAGLE, February 24, 2021; Projet d'appui à l'Application de la Loi sur la Faune sauvage (PALF), February 2021 ; Groupe Congo Médias, February 27, and July 24, 2021.²⁹



EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

January 5, 2021

Masai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya

Three tusks, weighing 30 kg in total, were seized aboard a motorbike. The operation was led by the Mara Elephant Project patrol and it culminated with 2 arrests.

Mara Elephant Project, January 20, 2021.³⁰



January 11, 2021

Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya

There are traps, there are arrows and spears and there are barbed wire fences that partition the savannah and block the elephants' pathways. Emergency treatment of an elephant that has become entangled in the fences.

SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, January 2021.³¹

January 14 and 15, 2021

Kehancha, Migori County, Kenya

Arrest on Thursday of Alex Wambura, who was found in possession of 11kg of raw ivory, valued at 1.1 million shillings or 10,200 US\$ and 925 US\$/kg. An accomplice escaped the scene. A KWS officer was slightly injured during the operation. After a court appearance on the following Friday, Wambura was released on bail for 800,000 shillings or 7,400 US\$. He applied for a reduction in bail, which the court refused.

Citizen Digital, January 15, 2021; The Star, January 15, 2021; Mara Elephant Project, January 29, 2021.³²

**January 19 and end of April, 2021
Marimanti and Kathitine, Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya**



Josephat Muthengi and Stephen Mwithi Muthengi were sentenced to 5 years imprisonment or a one million shillings fine (9,260 US\$) after having been found guilty for trafficking in 2018. On November of the said year, the offenders were detained for attempting to sell 2 ivory tusks weighing a total of 28.5kg.

After his trial, Josephat Muthengi declared he was unable to pay the fine, which led to his imprisonment in the county jail. While in prison, he worked alongside 2 accomplices who visited him frequently to try to sell the remaining ivory he was hiding and thus obtain funds to pay for his bail. The accomplices, Nicholas Kibara and Julius Musili Mutemi, used the precise location information Muthengi gave them to find 5 ivory tusks weighing a total of 28 kg, which he had buried in an enclosed location in the Imenti forest within Meru national park. Unluckily, after the underground retrieval operation, Kibara and Mutemi were intercepted aboard a boda-boda by a KWS patrol. The total value of the ivory seized is estimated at 2.8 million shillings or 25,340 US\$ and 905 US\$/kg. "The prisoner is the mastermind of the deal and the fact that he can coordinate such an activity means he still has a network.", "We will also hold talks with the prison commander with a view to establish what other links he has", said Gideon Kebati, Chief Wildlife Warden in Meru national park, who also expressed to be confident of further positive developments in the investigation.

Citizen Digital, January 20, 2021; Nation, April 29, 2021.³³

January 23, 2021

Mount Kenya National Park, Kenya

The elephant, who had a trap on his right front leg, was located and treated after being tracked for 3 days. The prognosis is favorable. The elephant is in good physical condition. Only muscles were affected and his skeleton is intact.

SWT/KWS Mount Kenya Mobile Veterinary Unit, January 2021.³⁴



January 25, 2021

Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya



The mother is in good health. The baby elephant is limping due to being caught in a trap. The mother is anesthetized, so the calf is controlled by hand by the veterinary team. His wound is treated. The case ends well.

SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, January 2021.³⁵



January 26, 2021

Mgeno Conservancy, Taita-Taveta County, Kenya

Incurable fracture of the femur. It was decided to put him out of his misery. He was reportedly chased by herders and stumbled in his escape.

SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, January 2021.³⁶

January 30, 2021

Tsavo East National Park, Kenya

The elephant died 5 to 6 days ago. Until further notice, it is considered natural. Tissue and organ samples were taken to explore the possibility of deliberate poisoning. The condition and position of the carcass does not allow us to rule out the possibility that the elephant was poached with a throwing weapon or a firearm. The tusks were removed by the KWS and secured.

SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, January 2021.³⁷

January 31 - February 1, 2021

Kabarnet, Baringo County, Kenya

Interception on Sunday night of 2 vehicles on the Barwessa-Oinobmoi road. Seizure of 51 kg of raw ivory. One passenger was a senior member of the Rift Valley Police Headquarters, another one is a senior official, the profession of the third is unknown.

On Monday, the initial court hearing was marked by a protocol violation; the 3 suspects appeared in court completely hooded. Magistrate Paul Biwott refused to hold the hearing under the given circumstances and the session was adjourned. The perpetrators, Charles Kandagor Kipkulei, Robinson Chelimo and Elijah Kemboi were said to be heading for Nakuru at the moment of their arrest, while the elephants they exploited were allegedly poached in the county or the neighbouring Turkana county. Directorate of Criminal Investigations, February 1, 2021; Citizen Digital, February 2, 2021; Nation, February 2, 2021; TV47, February 2, 2021.³⁸

February 1, 2021

Kuku Group Ranch, Kajiado County, Kenya

Another elephant was entangled in a fence and the fore left leg was wounded. Favourable prognosis.

SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, February 2021.³⁹

February 1, 2021

Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya



Throwing weapon in the belly. Favorable prognosis. SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, February 2021.⁴⁰

February 7, 2021

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

Seizure of 42.2 kg of raw ivory. A KWS officer was slightly injured by the suspect who tried to escape before being handcuffed.

Mara Elephant Project, March 4, 2021.⁴¹



February 12, 2021

Olarro Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya



A 20-year-old male is limping. A wound is found in the middle of his right hind leg. Anaesthesia, removal of the arrowhead, disinfection, green clay, antidote. Favourable prognosis.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, February 2021.⁴²

February 16, 2021

Meru National Park, Meru County, Kenya



An elephant has been trapped. He is dragging a tangled mess of steel wires on his left hind leg. Anaesthesia, extrication. Favourable prognosis.

SWT/KWS Meru Mobile Veterinary Unit, February 2021.⁴³



February 16, 2021

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

Seizure of 27 kg of raw ivory. An arrest was made in collaboration with the Mara Elephant Project (MEP) and the KWS.

Mara Elephant Project, March 4, 2021.⁴⁴

February 19, 2021

Siana Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

The wounded has taken refuge on top of a hill with clumps of trees. He is there, and he is there to stay. It was impossible for the vets to intervene. They had to wait several hours for him to come down. Anesthesia and disinfection of the open wound caused by a spear. Favourable prognosis.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, February 2021.⁴⁵

February 24, 2021

Chyulu Hills National Park, Kajiado and Makueni Counties, Kenya



The super tusker was limping. He was shot in the right front foot with a jet weapon. During surgery, the veterinary team continuously sprayed him with water to stabilize

his thermoregulation. The prognosis is good. SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, February 2021.⁴⁶

Beginning of March 2021

Biliqo-Bulesa Community Conservancy, Isiolo County, Kenya

An elephant that was approximately 15-years-old was tortured. The corpse exposed 15 wounds by projectile and a gunshot fracture on one leg. He was still alive when found by a patrol. Unfortunately, the KWS veterinarian could do nothing but end his misery.

Save the Elephants, March 7, 2021.⁴⁷

March 9, 2021

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

Seven kilos of ivory from 2 cut tusks. Two arrests. Mara Elephant Project, March 23, 2021.⁴⁸

Mid-March and March 24, 2021

Nanyuki, Laikipia County, Kenya



A barbecue gone wrong. Well-known for poisoning the atmosphere with toxic hydrocarbons and dioxins, the common practice amongst red-meat consumers in the European Union had unexpected and disastrous effects in Kenya.

The BATUK (British Army Training Unit Kenya), the British Army's permanent expeditionary force in Kenya, set fire to at least 8,000 acres (32 km²) of savannah and hills while preparing sausages which fatally burned 4 elephants.

The fire started on March 24, 2021 inside the Lollaiga military camp and spread with precipitous speed through the dry grass of the savannah and surrounding hills.

A week earlier, elite British army troops had attempted to disperse a herd of elephants by firing a flare, but quickly lost control of the fire which burnt a baby elephant alive.

Based in Nanyuki, 150 km north of Nairobi and 30 km from Mount Kenya in Laikipia County, BATUK's mission is to contribute to peacekeeping in Africa, to provide humanitarian assistance when needed and to "build the capacity of local rangers to protect elephants from poaching".

The African Centre for Corrective and Preventive Action (ACCPA) is going to court. It wants the British army to restore the destroyed ecosystems and compensate the local inhabitants, many of whom have been poisoned by the fumes. The toxicity was undoubtedly increased by the burning of the ammunition remains scattered around the maneuver area.

Daily Mail, March 25, 2021; Citizen Digital, March 26, 2021; Council of Contributors, March 26, 2021; Kenyans.co.ke, March 26, 2021; Tuko, March 27 and 31, 2021; BBC, July 26; 2021.⁴⁹

March 20 and April 12, 2021

Kuku Group Ranch, Kajiado County, Kenya

- Spear, wound on the left fore leg, anesthesia, disinfection, application of green clay. Awakened by an antidote, the large male with long tusks went back into the bush and looked at his rescuers for a long time.



- He was found dead on April 12 with no sign of a fight or violence. The post-mortem examination suggests pulmonary edema following his spearing in March.

SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, March and April 2021.⁵⁰

**April 6, 2021
Tana River County, Kenya**

The baby elephant is trapped in a rope attached to a stake.



Following anesthesia and extrication, he stood up 3 minutes after the antidote and walked straight ahead through the thicket to his waiting family.

SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, April 2021.⁵¹

**April 9, 2021
Olgulului Group Ranch, Kajiado County, Kenya**

The elephant should be able to resume normal activity. The projectile wound above the knee joint of his right front leg has been treated.

SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, April 2021.⁵²

**April 2021
Masai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya**

Seizure of 10 kg of raw ivory. One arrest. In April, the rangers of the Mara Elephant Project, who work hand in hand with the KWS, travelled almost 2,000 km on foot, 7,000 km or so in an all-terrain vehicle and almost 4,000 km by motorbike. Mara Elephant Project, April 2021.⁵³

April 14, 2021

Masai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya

Arrow wound. He was laying on his right flank 15 minutes after the injection of anaesthetic. The right flank was perfect. The wound was on his left flank. Favourable prognosis.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, April 2021.⁵⁴

April 15, 2021

Masai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya

The fresh spear wound on the left thigh is detected by the Isaaten Conservancy rangers. Favourable prognosis.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, April 2021.⁵⁵

April 16, 2021

North Imenti Forest, Meru County, Kenya



25-years-old, 2.5 tons, the heavyweight got tangled in an electric fence. Burns to trunk. Immediate death.

SWT/KWS Meru Mobile Veterinary Unit, April 2021.⁵⁶

April 16, 2021

Shimba Hills National Reserve, Kwale County, Kenya



Ten minutes after the anaesthetic (18 mg of etorphine), the elephant became completely relaxed. The steel wire that was cutting the flesh of his left fore leg was cut and removed. The wound was disinfected. Due to the severity of the wound, the prognosis is guarded.

SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, April 2021.⁵⁷

April 18, 2021

Matuga Subcounty, Kwale County, Kenya

35 kg of raw ivory. Four sliced tusks. Estimated value: one million shillings or 9,050 US\$ and 260 US\$/kg. Arrest of Joseph Mtoi Kuri, 53, an office worker in the county government. The ivory is believed to have come from a reserve in the county. Ivory seizure in Kwale County, see "On the Trail" n°2 p.63, n°3 p.58, n°6 p.79, n°9 p.73, n°16 p.75, n°19 p.92, n°21 p.83 and 113, n°26 p.80 and n°27 p.93.

Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, April 19, 2021; The Citizen, April 19, 2021; Big Life Foundation, April 28, 2021.⁵⁸

April 20, 2021

Near Nanyuki, Laikipia County, Kenya



He was poisoned by an arrow on the right front leg. Toxicological tests are underway to identify the poison.

SWT/KWS Mount Kenya Mobile Veterinary Unit, April 2021.⁵⁹



April 23, 2021

Masai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya

A dart in the mother's left ear. The baby elephant witnessed the operation up close. Favourable prognosis.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, April 2021.⁶⁰

April 24, 2021

Kitenden Conservancy, Kajiado County, Kenya. Border with Tanzania

The scene is typical of poaching. The trunk has been cut off. The tusks are missing. A deep wound has been opened by a spear or other throwing weapon. The carcass is covered with branches. The crime is 2-3 days old.

SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, April 2021.⁶¹

April 24, 2021

Tsavo East National Park, Kenya



The elephant collapsed 8 minutes after the anesthetic. It was very hot. He was continuously sprayed with water. The wound on his left shoulder caused by an arrow was disinfected and

coated with antibiotics and green clay. Five minutes after the antidote, the elephant stood up and headed for the swamp.

SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, April 2021.⁶²

April 25, 2021

North Imenti Forest, Meru County

They are after elephants in the Imenti Forest. A new 2.5 ton heavyweight is dead. He was punctured 20 cm from the spinal cord by a throwing weapon. The tusks were torn off.

SWT/KWS Meru Mobile Veterinary Unit, April 2021.⁶³

April 25, 2021

Sera Wildlife Conservancy, Samburu County, Kenya

Shafaa, an elephant whose mother was killed in 2012 by poachers, has also been poached. Aged 21, she was found dead 30 km north of the Shaba national reserve (239 km²), which was her prime habitat. Her body was riddled with bullets.



Her 2 calves, aged 5 years and 14 months, cannot be found. Their fate is of great concern, especially that of the youngest, who was still nursing. Shafaa was the head of a valiant little herd from a blended family. She was always accompanied by 2 other orphans of her generation who had become careful mothers like her. The decoding of their geolocation tags had already shown that the inseparable elephants sometimes ventured into unknown and hostile territories and had difficulty finding the accesses to their favourite habitat, perhaps because they had been deprived too soon of their mothers and their knowledge. In one week, 8 elephants were poached in northern Kenya. Iain Douglas-Hamilton, founder and president of Save the Elephants, expresses his concern and hope in these circumstances.



Iain Douglas-Hamilton, founder and president of Save the Elephants, expresses his concern and hope in these circumstances: "While we've been delighted to see elephants exploring new territories, we've also been anxious for their safety. The death of Shafaa is a harsh reminder that we urgently need an ethic of co-existence if elephants are to have a secure future. Human-elephant conflict is fast becoming the new crisis for elephants across the continent and we need to preserve wild spaces and corridors where elephants can roam freely and safely. Unless humanity cares enough for elephants, we could lose them from landscapes like this altogether."

Save the Elephants, May 12, 2021.⁶⁴

April 28, 2021

Elerai, Kajiado County, Kenya. Border with Tanzania.

Seizure of a tusk. Arrest of Papayo Ole Kesoi. The elephant had been poached a month ago in Losoi-to in Tsavo West national park. The other tusk had been smuggled into Tanzania. Kesoi has ties in both countries. Anti-smuggling cooperation between Kenya and Tanzania is being strengthened.

Tuko, April 28, 2021.⁶⁵

April 28, 2021
Lower Imenti Forest, Meru County, Kenya



Thirty years old, drowned in a watering hole. The post-mortem examination rules out anthrax. The poison option is favored.
SWT/KWS Meru Mobile Veterinary Unit, April 2021.⁶⁶

MALAWI

Beginning of January 2021
Chamara, Central Region, Malawi

35 kg of raw ivory. Soften Khomas and Josam Mayo were arrested. They were trying to sell the ivory in a shopping mall. The police received a tip and went to the scene without delay.
Malawi 24, January 7, 2021.⁶⁷

February 26, 2021
Zumba District, Northern Region, Malawi



The pastor of the Glory of Jesus Pentecostal Church and a technical man in charge of the agricultural planning in the district joined forces to traffic ivory. Noel Sakala and Ringoster Magawa were trying to sell two elephant tusks in a Zumba market when they were arrested by the police.
Nyasa Times, February 26, 2021.⁶⁸

February 28 - August 17, 2021
Mwami and Lilongwe, Central Region, Malawi

A Zambian national identified as "Malambo" was waiting in the car park of a gas station. He attracted the attention of a road patrol. He was carrying 65 kg of raw ivory cut into sections with an estimated value of 53 million kwachas or 66, 570 US\$ and 1025 US\$/kg. Before the court in Lilongwe, Malambo declared through his lawyer that he did not know what was inside the boxes that an unidentified man had asked him to transfer to Malawi.
The Atlas Malawi, August 13, 2021; Nyasa Times, August 19, 2021.⁶⁹

MOZAMBIQUE

FAMILY AFFAIRS
End of February 2021

Chimoio, Manica Province, Mozambique

Two related teachers, aged 40 and 42, were caught by the National Criminal Investigation Service (Serviço Nacional de Investigação Criminal, SERNIC) with 2 large tusks in their car. They were driving towards Chimoio. The 2 cousins presented themselves as intermediaries.
Club of Mozambique, February 27, 2021.⁷⁰

UGANDA

February 11, 2021
Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

David Kisitu finally surrendered himself to the police. In a previous incident in December 2020, after a chase with the police, he abandoned his vehicle in Kabarole (Western region) leaving behind 22 kg of raw ivory and a photocopy of his driving license. Uganda Police Force, February 24, 2021; Parrots Ug, February 25, 2021.⁷¹

February 20 and March 10, 2021
Lira, Northern Region, and Kampala, Central Region, Uganda



Arrested in February in a hotel in the company of Molly Adong and 4 large sections of tusks (41.83 kg in all), David Awili was sentenced 3 weeks later to 20 years' imprisonment or a fine of 12 million shillings (3,300 US\$).
The Independent, February 23, 2021; Africa Tembelea, March 11, 2021.⁷²



March 10, 2021

Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

Arrest of 2 Rwandans. They had 3 tusks in their car with a total weight of 14 kg. One of the seized objects was a baby elephant's tusk, which was cut at the base by a hand saw. The 2 individuals were also allegedly trafficking human skulls and gold. One was sentenced to 9 months in prison. The other paid the alternative fine and disappeared into the urban jungle.

EAGLE, March 10 and May, 2021.⁷³



March 16 and April 7, 2021

Apoloros, Kapelebyong District, Eastern Region, Uganda

Samuel Emanu alias Shaban, a police officer attached to the Kampala dog squad, and Levy Eliu, a farmer, were caught by the special wildlife crime unit in the act of possessing 43.2 kg of raw ivory. They were both sentenced to 2 years in prison or fined 8 million shillings (2,167 US\$). A kilo of raw ivory is sold on the local black market for between 800 US\$ and 1,000 US\$.

New Vision, March 31 and April 7, 2021; The Independent, March 31, 2021; Capital FM, April 1, 2021; KFM, April 7 and 9, 2021.⁷⁴

March 16, 2021

Lutaba, Central Region, Uganda

The wildlife police received confidential information and proceed to surround a hotel and arrest... 2 policemen who were carrying 28 kg of raw ivory and trying to sell it. The officers, identified as Boniface Okello and Martin Ochen, had arrested 2 traffickers a few months earlier and failed to hand over the evidence to the proper quarter.

They were charged with illegal possession of elephant trophies belonging to the government.

New Vision, March 31, 2021; The Independent, March 31, 2021; CGTN Africa (with Xinhua), April 6, 2021.⁷⁵

April 1, 2021

Kasindi Border Post, Western Region, Uganda. Border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo.



Seizure of 20 tusks and tusk sections. The smuggling route between the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda and East Africa is clearly identified (see "On the Trail" n°13 p.84, n°14 p.77, n°17 p.90, n°19 p.94 and 95 and n°30 p.26).

Conserv Congo, April 4, 2021.⁷⁶

April 13, 2021

Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

Joseph Tomusange, a local politician, fell into a trap set by agents of the Natural Resources Conservation Network (NRCN). He was trying to sell them ivory in the form of statuettes, figurines, cups, etc. Tomusange was accompanied by the Ugandan-born wife of an Italian diplomat.



On Sunday, Tomusange led NRCN agents and police on a routine search of the home of the Italian diplomat, Diego Marino Enrico, 79 years old, who had retired from official duties but still had a diplomatic passport and an address at the Italian Consulate General in San Francisco, USA. 56 pieces of ivory and a hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) tusk were seized. Marino acknowledged ownership. He claimed to have bought them a long time ago from a street vendor without being able to present an invoice or document of origin. He had been living in Kampala for more than ten years. Among the seized objects were two carved tusks. Diego Marino will be prosecuted for illegal possession and complicity in the transport and marketing of parts of protected animal species.

The Red Pepper, April 16, 2021.⁷⁷

TANZANIA

Mid-January 2021

Karatu District, Arusha Region, Tanzania



Petro Kilo alias Kinangai had appealed against his conviction, after he was sentenced to 20 years in prison or to an astronomical and unpayable fine in the court's initial ruling. He had been caught red-handed with 2 tusks weighing 17 kg each, according to the investigation file (see "On the Trail" n°14 p.78). Eight years after he committed the crime and 4 years after his conviction, the Court of Appeal ordered his immediate release. Among other procedural irregularities, the judges noted that the examination and evaluation of the disputed tusks had been entrusted to a "Wildlife Manager", whereas this function does not exist within the Wildlife Act. The court concluded that the expert report on the tusks had been produced by an unqualified person and that the tusks could no longer be considered as evidence. The court even questioned whether the tusks found in Petro Kilo's bag were the same as those exhibited by the prosecutors at the trial.

Daily News, January 18, 2021.⁷⁸

January 24, 2021

Songea, Ruvuma Region, Tanzania

Twenty kilos of raw ivory. Two elephants were poached. Three arrests.

Xinhua, January 25, 2021.⁷⁹

December 2020 - January 2021

Ruvuma Region, Tanzania

According to a statement from the Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority (TAWA), 160 homemade (yet capable of killing an elephant) firearms were confiscated in the south of the country during December 2020 and January 2021, period during which simultaneously 68 presumed poachers were prosecuted.

EnviroNews Nigeria, February 12, 2021.⁸⁰

February 28, 2021

Moyaka, Tarangire National Park, Manyara Region, Tanzania

Seizure of 13 complete tusks and sections from Benard Masalu and Yembeson Masumbuko. They were trying to sell the loot for 3.5 million shillings or around 1,530 US\$. They were caught with the elephants' remains on the edge of Tarangire national park. The Manyara region is located in northern Tanzania.

Global Publishers, March 1, 2021; The Guardian, March 2, 2021.⁸¹

March 23, 2021

Dar es Salaam, Dar es Salaam Region, Tanzania

Hussein Seif, alias Kawambwa, and Ally Mpalupalu, alias Mizumizumi, were arrested in possession of 4 tusks valued at the equivalent of 75,000 US\$. Their actions fall under the Economic and Organised Crime Control Act.

Daily News, March 29, 2021.⁸²

ZIMBABWE

January 14, 2021

Bulawayo and Nkulumane, Bulawayo Province, Zimbabwe

Three men aged between 30 and 61 years old are involved in trafficking. Leonard Murwira, Enock Mhlanga and Pius Ntini were holding and seeking to sell 50kg of raw ivory.

NewZimbabwe.com, January 18, 2021.⁸³

January 14, 2021

Guruve, Mashonaland Central Province, Zimbabwe

Four young men (21 to 34 years-old) have developed a taste for trafficking. Seizure of 15 kg of raw ivory.

Bulawayo24, January 18, 2021.⁸⁴

Beginning of February 2021

Zambezi National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe



The Victoria Falls community is scrambling to get the elephants off the hook. This time, a trap ring cut into the trunk of a young adult.

Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust, February 10, 2021.⁸⁵



February 1, 2021

Victoria Falls, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Fredrick Ndlovu, a 23-year-old, is walking around the airport with 2 tusks in a bag. He was caught and released on bail for 60 US\$ on the condition that he reported to the police station every 2 weeks, did not change his residence and did not contact the witnesses.

The Chronicle, March 26, 2021.⁸⁶

February 8, 2021

Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe

Four men in a Mercedes-Benz. 73 kg of raw ivory in the trunk and in the back seat. Two sellers, one of whom was a soldier in the regular army, and 2 buyers. The ambush cops intervened at the last moment, causing panic among the brigands. To calm things down, 4 warning shots were fired. Three men surrendered. The fourth, Joseph Mubaiwa, the soldier, was arrested a few hours later at the barracks. He was given up by his companions. The 73 kg of ivory are estimated at 12,480 US\$ or 170 US\$/kg, an artificially low price aimed at dissuading aspiring traffickers.

The Herald, February 10, 2021; NewsDay, February 11, 2021.⁸⁷

**March 3, 2021
Zimbabwe**

According to "The Elephant Pricing Scam", a new investigation by Karl Ammann, a journalist and photographer specializing in investigating the exploitation of wildlife for profit, the export of live elephants from Zimbabwe to China is marred by financial opacity. The Zimbabwean treasury is reported to have received between 14,500 US\$ and 32,000 US\$ for each elephant exported, while the importing establishments in China have reportedly paid around 120,000 US\$. More than 10 million US\$ is believed to have ended up in the pockets of Chinese brokers, and Zimbabwean intermediaries and facilitators. In addition, according to Ammann, the official record of 97 elephant calves exported between 2012 and 2017 to China and Dubai does not include the sale of 24 specimens to the Qingyan safari park, Guangdong province, in 2015. Karl Ammann, March 3, 2021; The Standard, March 14, 2021.⁸⁸

**March 7, 2021
Karoi, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe**

Two individuals, Whynos Dzotso and Knowledge Nyamukondiwa were acquitted after being found guilty of trafficking during an undercover operation. The 2 had "found" 8.63 kg tusk in the forest and were supposedly "preparing to hand it over to the authorities". They reported that the meeting they held with an undercover ZimParks agent with whom they discussed the price of 40 US\$/kg was a misunderstanding. NewZimbabwe.com, March 10 and April 22, 2021.⁸⁹

**March 9, 2021
Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe**

An employee of Saint George's College was caught red-handed. He was trying to sell raw ivory worth an estimated 2,100 US\$. Based on the official price quota of 170 US\$/kg, the tusk weighed 12 kg. The Herald, March 12, 2021.⁹⁰

**March 19, 2021
On the outskirts of Victoria Falls, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe**

A large male elephant was found with his left foot deeply cut by an iron ring, the remnant of a trap from which he escaped. He was limping. Generalized infection is looming. Veterinarians and an anti-poaching team from Victoria Falls have intervened. Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust, March 20, 2021.⁹¹



**January-March 2021
Zambezi National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe**

The circulation of ivory is increasing and so are seizures. The International Anti-Poaching Foundation (IAPF) reports 62 seizures of tusks or tusk sections in the first 3 months of 2021, compared to 90 in the whole of 2020, and the arrest of 37 ivory poachers, traffickers or peddlers. Most of the operations were reportedly carried out in the cross-border Zambezi Valley by the Akashinga Anti-Poaching Front, whose teams are exclusively female-composed.



Founded by Damien Mander, a former Naval clearance diver and special operations sniper for the Australian Defense Force, the IAPF is an Australian-based anti-poaching NGO that operates in Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa. It established the Akashinga unit in 2017, which currently employs over 170 women. Independent Online, April 26, 2021.⁹²

**April 12, 2021
Dopota, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe**

Seven raw ivories were found in the trunk of a car. The passenger flees. The driver, Delight Mayo, is caught. NewZimbabwe.com, April 19, 2021.⁹³

April 17, 2021

Zimbabwe

Between 1965 and 1988, around 50,000 elephants were killed under a then-existing strategic framework for population control.

Since 1989, elephants have seen their status elevated to be considered a top-priority species in terms of (terrestrial) animal protection and wildlife conservancy campaigns. As a consequence, mass killings like those of the 60s and early 80s are mostly perceived as a 'thing of the past' nowadays.

Under Zimbabwe's leadership, elephants in southern Africa were downlisted from CITES Appendix I to Appendix II in 1997.

For 30 years, Zimbabwean governments have argued that elephants are too numerous and devastating to water resources, plant biodiversity, agriculture and human safety. According to official figures, in 5 years 500 people and 582 livestock have been killed by elephants.

The latest iteration of this immutable argument sets a target of 500 elephants to be killed. In order not to damage the tourism industry, which is a major asset to the country's overall economy, elephants will be shot in game reserves, excluding national parks. In the reserves you pay to kill, in the parks you pay to watch. A license to kill will cost between 10,000 US\$ and 70,000 US\$ depending on the size of the animal. Zimbabwe continues to be part of a circular elephant economy. In order for people to appreciate the importance of these animals as an essential factor in economic development, the profits made from killing elephants must be converted into schools, clinics and roads, say the various levels of the political hierarchy. Zimbabwe is angry that it cannot sell its 130-ton stockpile of ivory and that it cannot sell live elephants without attracting lightning or controversy. Zimbabwe says it is the victim of a conspiracy.

Bloomberg, April 19, and May 5, 2021; The Southern Times, May 15, 2021; FairPlanet, June 9, 2021; NewsDay, July 5, 2021.⁹⁴

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

January 15, 2021

Randfontein, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Seizure of raw ivory. It was hidden in a speaker. Four arrests.

Randfontein Herald, January 18, 2021.⁹⁵



January 22, 2021

Polokwane, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Seizure of 4 tusks in a BMW. 168,000 rand or 11,460 US\$. Four arrests. Bail denied at first ruling.

Polokwane Review, January 22 and February 3, 2021; Independent Online, January 26, 2021.⁹⁶

February 10, 2021

Naboomspruit, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Seizure of 2 tusks from the belongings of 2 men aged 21 and 36.

SAPS, February 10, 2021.⁹⁷

February 18, 2021

King Shaka International Airport, Durban, Kwa-Zulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Three men were from Pretoria were detained after they were discovered trying to sell ivory. They were looking for buyers in Durban. Seizure in their car of 8.1 kg of raw ivory. Value 200,000 rand or 13,120 US\$ and 1,620 US\$ /kg.

Northglen News, February 19, 2021; SAPS, February 19, 2021.⁹⁸

Week of March 8, 2021

North West Province, South Africa

Rescue of a subadult elephant. A tire encircles his neck. His ears are immobilized. The elephant needs them for ventilation and temperature regulation. The vets of Rhino 911 removed the tire. While under anesthesia he was constantly sprayed with water.

Elephants and tires, see "On the Trail" n°16 p.84, n°27 p.95, n°30 p.28 and this issue p. 35. Rhino 911, March 13, 2021.⁹⁹

BOTSWANA

January 27 and September 16, 2021

Tonota, Central District, Botswana

A man of an unknown age was sentenced to 2 years in prison for illegal possession of 2 tusks. The crime dates back to January 2021. He introduced himself as Brian Ndlovu and made the best to clear his beloved Sibanda of any responsibility. The Zimbabwean couple had entered Botswana illegally on an unspecified date in 2019. The court was sensitive to Ndlovu's plea. Sibanda was only fined 1500 pulas or 134 US\$ for not having a residence permit in Botswana. Brian is expected to remain in prison until January 2023. Mmegi, June 22, 2021; The Voice, June 29 and September 21, 2021.¹⁰⁰



March 21, 2021

Maun, North West District, Botswana

It's a party in the village. An elephant known to be a "problem" one has been shot. He is being butchered. Everything will be cut up, including the trunk. Botswana Safari News, March 21, 2021.¹⁰¹

April 6, 2021

Botswana

Hunting season opens. Botswana allocates 287 permits to international sport hunters, 100 for the year 2021 and 187 to make up for the 2020 season which was cancelled entirely due to the Covid pandemic and the suspension of international transport. The season ends in September. Hunting is supervised by professional guides who are members of the Botswana Wildlife Producers Association. For the largest ivory carriers, the price of permits reaches 43,000 US\$.

In November 2021, the government announced that it had collected 2.7 million US\$ from the hunting sector. Hunting was also open for buffalo, crocodiles, zebra and leopard. The tourism industry, based on wildlife viewing and immersion in its ecosystems brings in around 2 billion US\$ a year.

Afrik 21, March 12, 2021; Journal of African Elephants (with Bloomberg), March 24, 2021; Taarifa, March 24, 2021; Voice of America, March 31, and November 23, 2021.¹⁰²

NAMIBIA

January 11, 2021

Walvis Bay, Erongo Region, Namibia

A woman is released on bail for 10,000 namibian dollars or 682 US\$. At her home, the police seized 2 tusks.

The Namibian, January 13, 2021.¹⁰³

End of January 2021

Ndiyonda, Kavango East Region, Namibia

Phefo Ndara was fined 50,000 namibian dollars or in default of payment, sentenced to 60 months' imprisonment for possession of 4 tusks.

Namibian Broadcasting Corporation, March 5, 2021.¹⁰⁴



February 8, 2021

Oshakati, Oshana Region, Namibia

Arrest of Olavi Kuume Kambonde in possession of 4 tusk sections.

Namibian Sun, March, 8 2021.¹⁰⁵

February 8, 2021

Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia

Arrest of Lukas Dikuwa and Augustinus Kasinda, found in possession of 2 tusks and 2 hippopotamus teeth (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II).

Namibian Broadcasting Corporation, March 5, 2021; Namibian Sun, March 8, 2021.¹⁰⁶

March 5, 2021

Onesi, Omusati Region, Namibia

Arrest of Natangwe Emmanuel Paulus. He was found in possession of a fragment of elephant skin. Namibian Sun, March 10, 2021.¹⁰⁷

March 6, 2021

Mukwe, Kavango East Region, Namibia

Phillipus Kutenda Thikuma was arrested. He was in possession of 4 elephant tusks.

Namibian Sun, March 17, 2021.¹⁰⁸

March 14, 2021

Onandjamba, Oshikoto Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.

Arrest of 2 Angolan nationals, Abraham Mwetupunga and Velema Nghitila. They were in possession of 2 tusks.

Namibian Sun, March 17, 2021.¹⁰⁹

Beginning of April 2021

Namibia

One arrest. Seizure of 2 tusks.

Namibia Press Agency, April 9, 2021.¹¹⁰

April 18, 2021

Kongola, Zambezi Region, Namibia

Arrest of Smith Kangambe. Seizure of 2 tusks. He was charged with illegal possession and attempted commercialization of protected species.

Namibian Sun, April 29, 2021.¹¹¹

April 23, 2021

Waterberg National Park, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

An elephant used to stride around the national park (405 km²) which is home to zebra, antelope, rhino and hundreds of buffalo. It is a site for photo safaris, hiking and exotic lodging. For days, the lone elephant had been trying to get into the park and in doing so was 'threatening' the integrity of the site's fences.

Locals feared that if the elephant was ever successful in destroying the park's fences completely, they would face significant economic losses; for example, if wild buffalo were able to get through the damaged fence they would put in danger the locals' domestic herds. The scenario of buffalo coming out in procession through a broken fence and "mingling" with the herders' domestic herds was enough to make the elephant the 'most wanted' of the whole area. One day, the elephant approached a farm and intruded on the crops, which spurred local agreement over his "necessary elimination". The elephant was to suffer the fate of Voortrekker (see "On the Trail" n°25 p.87). A license to kill the specimen was granted for 8,540 US\$. Later, a foreign sports hunter arrived in the area, and was escorted by a professional guide approved by the Namibian government. The unfortunate elephant is shot soon after; a tire encircled his right front leg; the abscesses were festering. Jofie Lambrecht, manager of a safari hunting company, says it would not have been possible to remove the tire without anaesthetizing the elephant and spending a lot of money on recovery treatment. Whatever one thinks of elephant management policies in South Africa and Zimbabwe, it is clear that considerable efforts have been made there to rescue elephants caught in tires. Elephants and tires, see "On the Trail" n°16 p.84, n°27 p.95, n°30 p.28 and this issue p. 34.

Big News Network (with Xinhua), April 24, 2021; The Namibian, April 24, 26 and 28, 2021.¹¹²

Week of April 26, 2021

Swakopmund, Erongo Region, Namibia

Appearance in court of Dirk Vermeulen, Edgar Clarke and Michael Lusse for illegal possession of two tusks of 33 and 31 kg. They sought to sell them for 32,000 N\$ per kg or 2,150 US\$/kg. The Ministry of Environment valued them at the time of seizure in September 2019 at 109 US\$/kg. The traffickers come from a “super tusker” (a male bull elephant with tusks) hunted some 20 years ago in the Maun region of Botswana by Mr. Hainson, a fisheries industrialist in Walvis Bay (Erongo region) and the exclusive holder of the import permit granted by Botswana. This case, which involves three countries in southern Africa, is reported in “On the Trail” n°26 p.85. The lawyers for Dirk Vermeulen, Edgar Clarke and Michael Lusse claim that their clients were in fact trying to combat poaching and smuggling by placing officially registered and stamped tusks on the market. The prosecution argues instead that the license to hold the 2 tusks was given only to Mr. Hainson, that no application for transfer of ownership was registered by the Ministry of the Environment, and that the 3 men were more trivially trying to exploit a windfall and put raw ivory on the black market at the highest price. The Namibian, April 30, 2021.¹¹³

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 30, 2021

Washington Dulles International Airport, State of Virginia, United States of America

Seizure of an ivory necklace from a passenger's belongings upon disembarking a flight from Ghana. Patch, February 19, 2021.¹¹⁴

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

BEIJING AUTONOMOUS MUNICIPALITY

January 2, 2021

Beijing Municipality, China

Seizure of 2 carved tusks off an incoming passenger. Total weight, 3,702 kg.

Beijing Daily, January 18, 2021; Chinese Customs, January 18, 2021.¹¹⁵



CHONGQING MUNICIPALITY

Early January 2021

Chongqing-Jiangbei Intl Airport, Chongqing Municipality, China

Seizure of an ivory bracelet that was carried by a traveler who was entering the country, 82 grams. Chinese Customs, January 7, 2021.¹¹⁶

SHANGHAI AUTONOMOUS MUNICIPALITY

Early February 2021

Shanghai Municipality, China



Seizure of 1.3 kg of ivory keys found on Horugel pianos (a German piano brand). Xinmin Evening News, February 10, 2021; Chinese Customs, February 15, 2021.¹¹⁷

Early March 2021

Shanghai Municipality, China

Two painting scrolls with ivory tips in a package from abroad. Chinese Customs, March 15, 2021.¹¹⁸

March 10, 2021

Wusong Port, Shanghai Municipality, China

64 carved ivory pieces were seized during the crew changeover of a foreign-flagged merchant vessel. After the seizures and initial hearings of 12 sailors, port customs required the shipping company to train their crews on the Endangered Species Act. The vessel, the *Sophia Ocean*, came from Africa. One of the sailors explained that he wanted to gain his family's respect by returning home with ivory. Xinmin Evening News, March 23, 2021; Chinese Customs, March 25, 2021.¹¹⁹



Sophia Ocean, Panama flag, Asia-Euro Ship Management Ltd, Shanghai, China

TIANJIN AUTONOMOUS MUNICIPALITY

February 20, 2021

Tianjin Municipality, China

Four semi-raw ivories, 280.2 grams.
Chinese Customs, February 23, 2021.¹²⁰

End of February 2021

Tianjin Municipality, China

Two packages from abroad. An ivory bracelet and brooch in one, 2 forks with ivory sleeves in the other. Total weight 70 grams.
Chinese Customs, March 3, 2021.¹²¹

April 2021

Tianjin Port, China

Seizure of a piano declared "ivory-free" whose 52 keys were made of ivory.
Chinese Customs, April 23, 2021.¹²²

FUJIAN PROVINCE

March 2021

Fuzhou, Fuzhou Prefecture, Fujian Province, China

Seizure of a package declared to contain a "gift" of 8 ivory jewels, bracelets, necklaces and rings.
Chinese Customs, March 17, 2021.¹²³

GUANGDONG PROVINCE

Early January 2021

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Shenzhen Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

A necklace with an ivory pendant, 40 grams.
Chinese Customs, January 13, 2021.¹²⁴

Early January 2021

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Shenzhen Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 14 ivory pieces found within the clothes and luggage of several passengers.
Chinese Customs, January 15, 2021.¹²⁵

Early January 2021

Guangzhou, Guangzhou Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 2 worked ivories that were found in a package. Total weight, 93 grams.
Chinese Customs, January 11, 2021.¹²⁶



Early January 2021

Maoming, Maoming Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China



Seizure of a package supposed to contain a "decorative vase" of an ivory fan, 62 grams.
Chinese Customs, January 18, 2021.¹²⁷

January 2021

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangzhou Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 6 bracelets, a necklace and an ivory comb. Total weight, 462 grams.
Chinese Customs, January 21, 2021.¹²⁸

End of January 2021

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangzhou Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China



Seizure of a passenger's luggage that contained 10 pearls and 3 ivory bracelets. Total weight, 243.7 grams. The pearls, wrapped in candy papers, were hidden in a box of sweets. The bracelets were hidden at the bottom of a kettle.
Chinese Customs, February 3, 2021.¹²⁹

February 3, 2021

Zhanjiang, Zhanjiang Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

After identifying the recipient of 2 ivory pendants seized from a package declared to contain "decorative ornaments", customs intercepted a second package addressed to the same recipient declared to contain "sports shoes" which actually containing an ivory necklace. Total weight, 85 grams.
Chinese Customs, February 10, 2021.¹³⁰

Early February, 2021
Shantou, Shantou Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China



Seizure in an incoming package of 2 fragments of Asian elephant skin. Total weight, 1.6 kg. Chinese Customs, February 17, 2021.¹³¹

February 2021
Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangzhou Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China



Seizure of 2 worked ivories hidden in a sports shoe inside a travel bag. Total weight, 104 grams. Chinese Customs, March 2, 2021.¹³²

February 21, 2021
Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangzhou Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

An ivory bracelet was found in the luggage of a passenger on a flight from Africa, 49.4 grams. Chinese Customs, February 24, 2021.¹³³



End of February 2021
Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Shenzhen Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Two bracelets in one piece of luggage. Total weight, 100 grams. Chinese Customs, March 2, 2021.¹³⁴



End of February 2021
Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Shenzhen Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 40 ivory beads concealed in a box of noodles in the luggage of an incoming passenger. Total weight, 40 grams. Chinese Customs, March 3, 2021.¹³⁵

March 2021
Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangzhou Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Six bracelets, 332.4 grams. Chinese Customs, March 29, 2021.¹³⁶

March 2021
Guangzhou, Guangzhou Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Four lawn bowling balls made of ebony and ivory. The game of lawn bowling originated in the United Kingdom. It resembles petanque, and is played on grass with slightly flattened spherical balls. Chinese Customs, March 29, 2021.¹³⁷



March 1, 2021
Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangzhou Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China



Arrival at the airport of a man suspected of being at the head of an ivory smuggling network from West Africa, which is the largest one according to the Chinese press and the police (see "On the Tail" n°24 p.75 and n°28 p.31). His accomplices had already been sentenced to prison terms ranging from 2 years to life. The offender, who is in his thirties, was under a search warrant issued by Interpol. He was arrested in Accra, Ghana, in December 2020 and repatriated to China by a special aircraft and under police escort. Dongguan Sunshine Network, March 4, 2021; Legal Daily, April 23, 2021.¹³⁸

Early March 2021
Guangzhou, Guangzhou Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 6 worked ivories in a postal package.
Chinese Customs, March 9, 2021.¹³⁹

5-7 March 2021
Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangzhou Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 6 ivory jewels including pendants and bracelets, found in the luggage of 4 passengers who were arriving on flights from Africa. Total weight, 300.5 grams.
Chinese Customs, March 16, 2021; Chinanews, March 23, 2021.¹⁴⁰

March 2021
Shenzhen, Shenzhen Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of an ivory sculpture from a package in transit to Indonesia which was declared to contain a "Guanyin sculpture", 538 grams.
Chinese Customs, March 19, 2021.¹⁴¹

March 2021
Maoming, Maoming Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China



Seizure in a package sent from the United States of America of an ivory pendant, 7.4 grams.
Chinese Customs, March 24, 2021; Xiaoxiang Morning Herald, March 29, 2021.¹⁴²

April 2021
Guangzhou, Guangzhou Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 4 balls made of Burma blackwood (*Dalbergia cultrata*) with ivory inlays.
Chinese Customs, May 4, 2021.¹⁴³

Early April 2021
Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangzhou Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of the luggage of a passenger on a flight from Africa, the luggage contained 2 bracelets concealed in a box of powdered milk. Total weight, 120 grams.
Chinese Customs, April 6, 2021.¹⁴⁴

April 2021
Guangzhou, Guangzhou Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of a Chinese painting scroll whose tips were made of ivory.
Chinese Customs, April 16, 2021.¹⁴⁵

April 2021
Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Shenzhen Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 440 grams of worked ivory including bracelets, pendants and pearls that were being smuggled by 4 incoming passengers.
Chinese Customs, April 23, 2021.¹⁴⁶

April 2021
Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangzhou Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China



Seizure of 17 worked ivories, pearls, bracelets, combs and tusks hidden in the bottom of a speaker and in the packaging of an electric razor and a mobile phone. The seized objects were being smuggled by a passenger on a flight from Europe. Total weight, 473.1 grams.

Chinanews, April 30, 2021; Chinese Customs, May 6, 2021.¹⁴⁷



April 2021
Guangzhou, Guangzhou Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 2 Chinese painting scrolls with ivory tips, 58 grams.
Chinese Customs, May 6, 2021.¹⁴⁸

April 2021
Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangzhou Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

One bracelet per passenger, 66 grams.
Chinese Customs, May 10, 2021.¹⁴⁹

GUANGXI ZHUANG AUTONOMOUS REGION

January 27, 2021
Laibin, Laibin Prefecture, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

Seizure of a bracelet, a pendant and a necklace of 91 pearls in a postal mail sent from Laos by a certain Feng Mou to a certain Pan Mouyan. Total weight, 69 grams. Arrest of Pan Mouyan.
People's Daily-Guangxi, March 4, 2021.¹⁵⁰

April 2021
Dongxing, Fangchenggang Prefecture, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

Seizure of an ivory bracelet found in the carry-on luggage of an incoming passenger, 15.68 grams.
Chinese Customs, May 10, 2021.¹⁵¹

HEILONGJIANG PROVINCE

February 20, 2021

Harbin, Harbin Prefecture, Heilongjiang Province, China



Two ivory bracelets were found in a package from Thailand believed to contain medicines. Two sachets had obviously been opened and closed. Total weight, 142.6 grams.

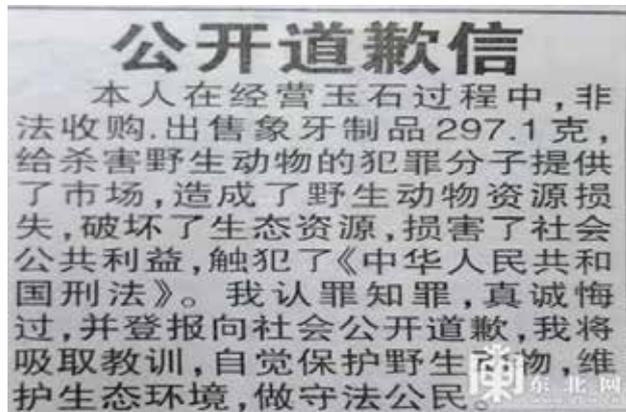
Chinese Customs, February 24, 2021; Harbin News, February 27, 2021.¹⁵²

April 1, 2021

Harbin, Harbin Prefecture, Heilongjiang Province, China

Sentencing of the owner of a jade souvenir shop to 10 months in prison with a probationary suspension of one year, a fine of 10,000 yuan (1,520 US\$), plus 12,380 yuan (1,880 US\$) in compensatory damages and a public apology in the local media for knowingly selling ivory bracelets and jewellery.

Northeast Network, April 1, 2021.¹⁵³



PUBLIC APOLOGY LETTER

I, as a shopkeeper specializing in precious stones, illegally bought and sold 297.1 grams of ivory products on the market. The products were supplied by criminals who killed wild animals. I have caused the loss of wildlife resources, destroyed ecological resources, harmed society's public interest, and violated the penal code of the P.R.C.

I plead guilty and sincerely regret all my actions. I am also publishing a public apology in the newspapers. I will learn from my mistakes and I am aware of the need to protect wildlife and maintain the ecological environment. Made according to the law of the People's Party.

HUNAN PROVINCE

March 15, 2021

Changsha, Changsha Prefecture, Hunan Province, China



Seizure of 2 painting scrolls with ivory tips, 200 grams. Each tip was about 2.5 cm in diameter and 3.5 cm in length.

Chinese Customs, March 16, 2021.¹⁵⁴



JIANGSU PROVINCE

March 16, 2021

Jiangyin, Wuxi Prefecture, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure of 12 ivory bracelets and a red coral (genus *Coralie*) necklace. Arrest of a certain Tang suspected of having bought and imported ivory bracelets and other wildlife by-products by mail since 2017 in order to sell them for profit.

Chinese Customs, March 18, 2021.¹⁵⁵

March 17, 2021

Nanjing, Nanjing Prefecture, Jiangsu Province, China



Seizure of 27 worked ivories in an incoming package: the seizure included bracelets, necklaces, painting scroll tips, an incense burner, etc. Total weight, 2.17 kg.

Chinese Customs, March 19, 2021.¹⁵⁶

SHANDONG PROVINCE

March 2021

Jinan, Jinan Prefecture, Shandong Province, China

Seizure of a necklace with an ivory pendant in a package from abroad, 145 grams.
Chinese Customs, March 17, 2021.¹⁵⁷

April 2021

Jimo, Qingdao Prefecture, Shandong Province, China

Seizure of 3 ivory bracelets found in an incoming package that was declared to contain only a pair of sports shoes. Total weight 126 grams.
Chinese Customs, April 26, 2021.¹⁵⁸

SICHUAN PROVINCE

Early January 2021

Chengdu-Shuangliu International Airport, Chengdu Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China

Seizure of 3 bracelets from 3 passengers. Total weight, 225 grams.
Chinese Customs, January 5, 2021.¹⁵⁹

February 19, 26 and 27, 2021

Chengdu-Shuangliu International Airport, Chengdu Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China

- Seizure of a piece of worked ivory found in a package that was initially declared to contain "second-hand synthetic plastic decorations", 27.7 grams.

- Seizure of 42 worked ivory pieces from a passenger of a flight from Lagos. He explained that he bought them at a local market in Nigeria and wanted to offer them to his friends. He had hidden his "gifts" in tea boxes, food packages, a wine box and a stainless-steel cup. Additional seizure of 6 worked ivories from 3 passengers on the same flight. Total weight, 1,320 grams.



- Seizure of 3 worked ivories from a passenger from Cairo, Egypt. Total weight, 70 grams.
Cover News, March 4, 2021; Financial Investment News, March 4, 2021.¹⁶⁰

March 2021

Chengdu-Shuangliu International Airport, Chengdu Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China

Seizure of 17 worked ivory pieces, including 3 bracelets from 5 passengers coming from a flight from Cairo, Egypt. Total weight, 610 g. One of the passengers explained that he brought the bracelets back to give as wedding gifts to his children.
Chinanews, March 26, 2021.¹⁶¹

YUNNAN PROVINCE

January 2021

Menglian Border Post, Pu'er Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Myanmar.

Seizure of a 30.6-gram bracelet in the luggage of an incoming passenger.
Chinese Customs, January 20, 2021.¹⁶²

Early January 2021

Kunming Changshui International Airport, Kunming Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China

An ivory bracelet and pendant in a passenger's luggage on arrival. Total weight 49.9 grams.
Chinese Customs, January 18, 2021.¹⁶³

January 10, 2021

Kunming Changshui International Airport, Kunming Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China

Seizure of 2 worked ivory pieces from a passenger. Total weight 41.4 grams.
Chinese Customs, January 11, 2021.¹⁶⁴

January 13, 2021

Kunming Changshui International Airport, Kunming Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China

Seizure of a ring and an ivory pendant from a passenger. Total weight 106.9 grams.
Chinese Customs, January 14, 2021.¹⁶⁵

Mid-February 2021

Daluo Border Crossing, Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Myanmar.

A 342-gram ivory statue hidden in a backpack.
Chinese Customs, February 19, 2021.¹⁶⁶

February 18, 2021

Kunming Changshui International Airport, Kunming Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China

Seizure of a worked ivory item from an arriving passenger, 73.8 grams.
Chinese Customs, February 20, 2021.¹⁶⁷

February 28, 2021

Kunming Changshui International Airport, Kunming Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China

Seizure of an ivory bracelet, 81.2 grams. Chinese Customs, March 1, 2021.¹⁶⁸

March 2021

Kunming Changshui International Airport, Kunming Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China

Five ivory jewels were seized from 3 passengers. Total weight 205.8 grams. Chinese Customs, March 17, 2021.¹⁶⁹

March 2021

Kunming Changshui International Airport, Kunming Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China

A pendant and an ivory necklace were seized from an incoming passenger. Total weight 49.9 grams. Chinese Customs, March 23, 2021.¹⁷⁰

Early March 2021

Kunming Changshui International Airport, Kunming Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China

An ivory pendant was found in a carry-on suitcase, 23 grams. Chinese Customs, March 9, 2021.¹⁷¹

April 14, 2021

Nansan Border Post, Lincang Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Myanmar.

An ivory necklace and a matching pendant. Total weight 70.8 grams. Chinese Customs, April 14, 2021.¹⁷²

ZHEJIANG PROVINCE

Early January 2021

Hangzhou, Hangzhou Prefecture, Zhejiang Province, China



Seizure of a package from Japan of a painting scroll with 2 ivory tips weighing 63 grams. Hangzhou Net, January 19, 2021.¹⁷³

January 25, 2021

Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport, Hangzhou Prefecture, Zhejiang Province, China

Seven ivory bracelets. Total weight 381 grams. In 2020, Hangzhou Customs seized 303 ivory items, for a total of 64.64 kg. Hangzhou Net, February 15, 2021.¹⁷⁴

March 2021

Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport, Hangzhou Prefecture, Zhejiang Province, China

A bracelet and 6 pendants in a suitcase. Total weight 264.74 grams. Chinese Customs, March 26, 2021.¹⁷⁵

April 2021

Ningbo, Ningbo Prefecture, Zhejiang Province, China

Inspection of a lot of "antique furniture". One piano has ivory keys, 179.5 grams in total. Chinese Customs, April 20, 2021.¹⁷⁶

SOUTH EASTERN ASIA

INDONESIA

March 5, 2021

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



"It was true that there was a dead elephant. The village chief couldn't believe it. He had been warned in the morning. When he approached the scene, he notices that the elephant had been dead for several days, with his left front foot almost severed by the metal wire of a trap. In 10 years, about 50 elephants have died in the province by poisoning and electrocution; in these cases, it's a sudden death. On the other hand, there is trapping and it's a drawn-out death. In the provinces of Riau and Lampung, 70% of the forests have been replaced by palm oil plantations. Forest areas now cover only 200 km² and still, they continue to be further fragmented and cleared. The last remaining elephants no longer know where to go. Serambi Indonesia Daily, March 5, 2021; Daily Mail, March 5, 2021.¹⁷



MALAYSIA

January 20, 2021

Near Kampung Imbak, State of Sabah, Malaysia

A Borneo elephant was cut into pieces. At least 4 bullets were found in his skull. His ears, a leg and his head were scattered around. His tusks remained attached to his corpse. His trunk was half skinned. To profit from an elephant, it is better to sell the skin per cm² than to sell the ivory per gram. It is speculated that the skin has become more fashionable since Covid came into play. Soups, ointments and potions are containing elephant skin as an ingredient. Therefore, it has a great economic value. The trunk also disappeared. A wave of emotion swept through the north of the island of Borneo. Some commotion over the incident also reached mainland Malaysia before the news was forgotten by the general public.

New Straits Times, January 22 and 24; The Star, January 22; The Borneo Post, January 24; The Sun Daily, February 16, 2021.¹⁷⁸

March 10, 2021
Kinabatangan, State of Sabah, Malaysia



A female elephant calf was put down after being in veterinary rehabilitation for 20 months. When she was one month old, she was transferred to the care of the Kinabatangan sanctuary as a result of an accident she suffered, about which there is not much information available. She had some leg fractures that were successfully healed, and she also received some prostheses. However; she was limping severely and suffering more and more.

Daily Express, March 12, 2021; Free Malaysia Today, March 12, 2021.¹⁷⁹

March 21, 2021
Pasir Mas, State of Kelantan, Malaysia



A former public school principal who lived well beyond his means is being investigated under the Unlawful Activities Act of 2001. His assets were seized and they totaled to 753 million ringgit or about 186,000 US\$. He is said to have made his fortune from ivory smuggling. He pleaded not guilty. Free Malaysia Today, March 21, 2021; Malay Mail, March 21, 2021; New Straits Times, March 21, 2021.¹⁸⁰

THAILAND

January 15, 2021
Khao Yai National Park, Thailand

A 35-year-old male elephant was harnessed with a geolocation collar on January 8. On Friday, January 15, he allegedly killed an 80-year-old man who was camping inside a national park under unknown circumstances. According to a local NGO, the elephant was disturbed by the collar. Activists are calling for an end to the geolocation program supported by WWF and the Wildlife Conservation Society and Kasetsart University, whose headquarters are in Bangkok. Seven elephants have already been equipped with electronic collars at another sanctuary. The aim is to map the movements of 85 elephants in Thailand's national parks.

This strategy, which may seem excessive regarding the 2,000 wild elephants that live in the country, has not been questioned. After the January 15 incident, public access to the park's campgrounds was suspended. Those who have already booked sites will be refunded. The measure seems to make sense. Elephants have become accustomed to returning to unfenced campgrounds to collect food waste and fruit from campers.



The park has an eventful and tragic daily life. Car traffic is intense. Poachers have free access to elephants, hornbills, bears and gibbons. A road was opened inside the park several years ago, which allows visitors to drive to the Waterfalls of Haew Narok (the abyss of hell). Until then, visitors had to walk up to 5 hours to reach them and picnic there. On a Saturday night in October 2019, 6 elephants drowned at the bottom of the waterfall after being panicked by an unknown hazard. Two elephant calves perched on a rock had been hauled to the top of the cliff using winches and ropes. The rescue lasted until early afternoon on Sunday.

Bangkok Post, October 5, 2019, January 15 and 22, 2021; Bangkok Tribune, January 21, 2021.¹⁸¹



THE NECKLACE CONTROVERSY

Although the practice of installing geolocation collars on elephants has been in place for about a decade, no studies have examined the long-term effects of collars on elephants' physical and mental health. In general, the selected elephants are adults aged 30 to 40 who have only fought with other elephants or wild animals, without forgetting aggressions from humans. The "collaring" begins with a helicopter flight or a ground hunt by all-terrain vehicles and anesthetic shots to the chosen specimens. This is followed by a manipulation of the elephant's head to lock a strap about 10 cm wide around his neck, which is equipped with a box enclosing a satellite transmitter, a battery and if possible, an antenna. The complete device weighs between 10 and 15 kg.



The short-term follow-up of the installation of the collars lacks consistency. It concerns only medium-sized terrestrial mammals. For several days, they try to get rid of the collar by abnormally waving their heads up and down or from right to left, running as fast as possible from one point to another, lying down and turning over on the ground. This agitation corresponds to an instinctive defense against what is perceived as a strangulation by an unknown predator. At the same time, an increase in adrenaline, the stress hormone, is seen in the feces of animals that are under constant pressure around a body part as sensitive and vulnerable as the neck. The stress hormone seems to decline as the animal gets used to it. In deer, antelopes and wild dogs, irritations, necrosis, skin inflammation and infections by microorganisms can occur after a few weeks or months which sometimes leads to death as has been observed in agoutis in Brazil. The Animal Ethics Committee, an Australian institution, recommends not using collars in tick-infested areas. Immovable collars prevent animals that wear them from being able to get rid of parasites.

With respect to elephants in particular, the risks of dermatitis and skin abrasions on the neck could be aggravated by their propensity to spray themselves with mud and frolic in swamps.

From an environmental point of view, the abandonment of these electronic devices which manufacturers claim can unlock themselves after a certain time adds WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) to the long list of products already scattered in the natural environment.

In India, the NTCA (National Tiger Conservation Authority) has been wary of cyber-poaching since, in 2013, the computer storing the location data of Panna 211, a tiger wearing a geolocation collar, was subject to a hacking attempt (see "On the Trail" n°17 p. 60).

In January 2017, an ecology expert from Carleton University in Canada issued a similar alarm call co-written by several of his colleagues. According to the authors, the data collected with geolocation collars can be hacked by the poaching networks (see "On the Trail" n°16 p.3).

Only wild animals have to bear the burden of geolocation. Some domestic animals could be fitted with it, without anesthesia. They would thus make it possible to map the wandering of herds in the habitats of wild animals.



The burden of the collar and its deployed antenna did not prevent a lynx from being shot by a poacher.

Steven J. Cooke, Vivian M. Nguyen, Steven T. Kessel, Nigel E. Hussey, Nathan Young, Adam T. Ford, "Troubling issues at the frontier of animal tracking for conservation and management", *Conservation Biology*, vol. 31, n°5, January 12, 2017; WWF, "Tracking Elephant Migrations", Summer 2017; Animal Ethics Infolink, "Radio tracking and GPS tracking", January 2020; Jared A. Stabach, Stephanie A. Cunningham, Grant Connette, Joel L. Mota, Dolores Reed, Michael Byron, Melissa Songer, Tim Wachter, Katherine Mertes, Janine L. Brown, Pierre Comizzoli, John Newby, Steven Monfort et Peter Leimgruber, "Short-term effects of GPS collars on the activity, behavior, and adrenal response of scimitar-horned oryx (*Oryx dammah*)", *PLOS ONE*, February 11, 2020.¹⁸²

**Mid-February 2021
Pattaya, Chonburi Province, Thailand**



A very old domestic elephant worn out by decades of labor was found in concerning conditions. He was malnourished and carrying 2 disproportionate tusks, and was about to die in a tourist camp that had been deserted since the beginning of Covid. The director of the camp said he could no longer afford to feed Khun Pan and his 36 other elephants. "Khun Pan is the weakest elephant because of his old age". When the vets arrived at his bedside, he was lying down and was too weak to get up. He was strapped and hoisted up with a rope attached to a tree and a winch, and then his foot wounds were treated and his skin was rehydrated. The news quickly spread around Pattaya and sacks full of pineapples and bananas were brought by enthusiastic and pitying locals. Khun Pan is doing a little better. With a chain always attached at his foot, he walks and feasts. The tusks of domestic elephants must be regularly shortened so as not to hinder their movements. In wildlife, tusks are subject to natural erosion by regular use. In India, the maintenance of domestic elephant tusks is under the control of forest officers. The product of the "pruning" of the tusks is sealed away. See on this subject "On the Trail" n°31 p.35. The fate of the tusks or tusk sections of Khun Pan is not fixed. Daily Mail, February 15, 2021.¹⁸³

**April 13, 2021
Kaeng Krachan National Park, Phetchaburi Province, Thailand**

Multiple elephant bones were discovered in a swamp. The area was later explored by the forensic police and the local veterinary unit in charge of wildlife. 55 rifles and AK-47 bullets were detected on the scene. Two skulls and dozens of elephant bones were found in the mud. A skeleton was roughly reconstructed. One of the 2 skulls was pierced by bullets. The location of the evidence shows that the poachers attacked the 2 elephants, aged about 3 years, at a time when they were physically close together; they were probably drinking or wading in the mud in the center of the pond. The ambush occurred several months ago. No tusks have been found. Kaeng Krachan park covers 3,000 km²; it is now home to around 160 elephants compared to 450 12 years ago. Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, April 15 and 19, 2021.¹⁸⁴



April 13, 2021

Huay Khom Krit Party, Kaeng Krachan National Park, Phetchaburi Province, Thailand

Sudi, a young man of Karen ethnicity, was arrested by a patrol of rangers. His 2 accomplices disappeared in the forest. Sudi had on him a homemade rifle, ammunition and in his bag, officers found a smoked boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II) which he and his 2 partners had been eating. Sudi reportedly admitted to participating in the poaching of an elephant in the Huay Khom Krit forest. The hunt was launched after the discovery of an elephant carcass that was transported to Kaeng Krachan for a post-mortem examination.

The Nation Thailand, April 15, 2021.¹⁸⁵

April 26, 2021

Sanam Chai Khet District, Chachoengsao Province, Thailand



An elephant, who was approximately 10-years-old at the time of his death, was found near a rubber plantation. Around 1,300 kg. He was a male. He still had his 2 small tusks. His mouth was entangled in a clandestine electrical cable stretched 1.5 m above the ground. The offender was a plantation owner who was determined to prevent elephant intrusions into his rubber crops. Agents at Khao Ang Rue Nai Wildlife Sanctuary are preparing to transport the elephant's body to their headquarters so that a post-mortem examination can be carried out in the best possible conditions. The Nation Thailand, April 27, 2021.¹⁸⁶



VIET NAM

REPEATED OFFENSE

March 10, 2021

Buon Ma Thuot, Dak Lak Province, Viet Nam



Appearance of Nguyen Thanh Phuong in court. 409 ivory objects of manufactured industrially were seized at his home on August 27, 2020. The seizure included rings, necklaces, and bracelets thought to have been bought in Hanoi for about 1,900 US\$ via the social network Zalo (see "On the Trail" n°31 p.31). He sold them little by little via his own smuggling networks. The offender was placed in pre-trial detention for 3 months, to give the court time to examine the sources of the trafficking. In 2018, he had already been sanctioned for trafficking ivory ornaments. ENV, March 10, 2021; Nguoi Lao Dong, March 10, 2021; Giáo dục và Thời đại, November 2021.¹⁸⁷

FAMILY AFFAIRS

January 3 and 22, 2021

Mavanallah, Nilgiris District, State of Tamil Nadu, India



"Go, go, go into the forest and die." At the same time, S. Prasath and Mr. Raymond Dean threw a flaming projectile at the elephant's head and ears. In association with Mr. Nikki Rayan who is on the run from the authorities, they were running an unlicensed

Bed and Breakfast and hosting a New Year's Eve partiers in the buffer zone of the Mudumalai tiger reserve. Known as Ronaldo or S.I. (Sub-inspector), the tusker elephant in his 50's died on January 19. He was well known between Mavanahalla and Masinagudi. He had been treated for a back injury of unknown origin for a few weeks. Bellan, his caretaker, a member of the Irula tribe, is inconsolable. "He never attacked anyone and he never chased people. He was very polite. I will never see such an elephant in my lifetime again." When S.I. was located after the vile attack on him, veterinarians sedated him and with the assistance of 4 domesticated elephants, he was loaded onto a truck bound for Theppakadu Elephant Camp. He died just one km before arriving.



DNA India, January 22, 2021; The Hindu, January 23, 2021; The Indian Express, January 23, 2021; The Times of India, January 23, 2021.¹⁸⁸

January 3, 2021

Muthappanpuzha, Kozhikode District, Vandikkadavu, Wayanad District, Karulai, Malappuram District, State of Kerala, India



Three deaths in one day.

Elephant No.1 had been at the bottom of an abandoned well for at least 2 days. It took 13 hours to pull him out by digging a sloped trench. He died a few hours after being freed.

Elephant No.2 was a baby specimen found in a stream. The post-mortem examination will be possible when his family leaves the area in a few days.

Elephant No.3 was a female, about 20 years old, who died near a banana field. Electrocuting is suspected. The post-mortem report notes superficial burns and cardiac arrest.

The Hindu, January 3, 2021.¹⁸⁹

January 5, 2021

Semmedu, Viluppuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India



Death of a male elephant, about 20 years old, electrocuted by a fence that was installed to protect a rice field from the intrusions of wild boars. The farmer fled.

The Times of India, January 6, 2021; The Hindu, January 7, 2021.¹⁹⁰

January 8, 2021

Ramkunda Forest, Mayurbhanj District, State of Odisha, India



Two park rangers and an officer were relieved from their duties just 2 days after the discovery of a dead wild elephant whose 2 tusks were amputated. Investigation ongoing. The victim was probably poisoned.

The New Indian Express, January 11, 2021.¹⁹¹

January 14, 2021

Bareipali, Sambalpur District, State of Odisha, India



Two small tusks of elephants in the possession of a man from Dipapali, Sonapur district, and Gopal Krishna Budak of Keutibahal in Sambalpur district. Sambad English, January 14, 2021.¹⁹²

January 2021

Dodamarg, Sindhudurg District, State of Maharashtra, India

Dhanesh Parashar, 36, a cashew farmer, has tried everything to avoid the incursions of elephants into his fields. Drums, shouting, firecrackers, ropes with chili, flares. All of these devices did not work.

Parashar, with the help of Yuvraj Kaginkar and Madhurita Gupta, 2 bee veterinarians from the Central Bee Research and Training Institute (CBRTI), thinks he has found a solution. It is inspired by practices implemented in East Africa. "I erected 20 honey bee boxes around my plantation in October 2019 and since then even if the elephants wandered nearby, they never breached the fence. My cashew yield has increased, and as a bonus, I've started selling honey produced by the bees." Kaginkar explains, "At first, we installed *Apis mellifera* or the European honey bees because they're large and therefore create a bigger buzz and yield 50 kg of honey in a year. Unfortunately, those bees don't survive in Maharashtra because they're easy prey for bee-eater birds. So, we replaced them with *Apis cerana indica*, a smaller subspecies of the Indian honey bee which has a lower yield of honey but is better for pollination beehive fencing." The "bee fences" effectively deter elephants from entering crops, but they are vulnerable to heat waves and monsoon months. For this reason, the Asian Elephants and Bees project recommends moving the hives to the outskirts of towns and on hillsides between May and September. The total investment for 5 swarms of bees, the hives, maintenance and honey extraction is about 50,000 rupees or 680 US\$. The CBRTI Bee Mission is providing financial support and intends to teach 500 farmers how to beekeep and coexist with elephants during 2022.

The Times of India, January 31, 2021.¹⁹³



January 23 and 26, 2021

Kallar, Thiruvananthapuram District, State of Kerala, India



On Saturday, a female elephant about 40 years old was found dead on the edge of a rubber plantation around 7 a.m. A baby elephant about a year and a half old remained prostrated for several hours at his mother's side trying to raise her by grasping her trunk. He was administered sedatives and was later transferred to a specialized clinic in Kottoor.

The following Tuesday, Rajesh, the owner of the plantation, admitted to being responsible for the electrocution of the mother and having removed the cable he had stretched at 2 meters high by hacking an electrical panel the day of the incident. He had just discovered the elephant's corpse. Rajesh was charged with "premeditated murder" under the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972.

The Hindu, January 24 and 27, 2021.¹⁹⁴

February 3, 2021

Padmapur, Chirang District, State of Assam, India

Mintu Choudhury fell into a trap after a team of foresters and police officers from Chirang presented themselves as interested buyers. Six tusks were seized.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), February 3, 2021; The Sentinel, February 4, 2021.¹⁹⁵

February 9 or 10, 2021

Kandara Forest, Dhenkanal District, State of Odisha, India

A wild elephant was riddled with bullets in the middle of the night in the forest. He was ambushed. Ballistic research showed that at least 9 rifles were used. The attackers disappeared with his tusks even before the rangers alerted by the gunfire arrived on the scene.

Down To Earth, February 11, 2021; Odisha TV, February 11, 2021.¹⁹⁶

February 12, 2021

Kabatabandha, Jajpur District, State of Odisha, India

The STF captured Pitabas Barik, Ananda Mohakud and Ambuja Pradhan near a bridge over the Brahmani River. They were looking to sell 3 large sections of ivory for 1.2 million rupees or nearly 16,500 US\$.

The Times of India, February 13, 2021.¹⁹⁷

February 15, 2021

Odlabari, Jalpaiguri District, State of West Bengal, India



A powerful smuggling gang was caught in front of a roadside restaurant with a 1,190 gram tusk. They were taken into custody for 14 days. Two accomplices managed to escape. The gang was trying to sell different parts of rhinos, elephants and even a clouded panther. If the operation had been successful, the profit would have been around 15 million rupees, more than 200,000 US\$. Ganesh Chhetri, a member of the Indian Reserve Battalion, was identified as the leader.

The Telegraph India, February 16, 2021.¹⁹⁸

February 16, 2021

Vettaikaranpudur, Coimbatore District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of 2 molars from a fabric store. The molars were allegedly "collected" from the skull of a dead elephant in the Pollachi forest. Two interpellations. Disciplinary action is being considered against forestry officers who failed to report or detect the elephant's death.

Seizure of elephant molars, see "On the Trail" n°5 p.91-92, n°12 p.95, n°13 p.94, n°21 p.82, n°27 p.100, n°30 p.34 and n°31 p.37.

The Times of India, February 17, 2021.¹⁹⁹

FAMILY AFFAIRS

February 18, 2021

Mettupalayam, Coimbatore District, State of Tamil Nadu, India



Sentence of A. Kanagaraj and his brother to 3 years in prison and a fine of 10,000 rupees or 140 US\$ for having electrocuted an elephant in October 2010. The fence that killed him was installed to protect a banana plantation from animal intrusions.

The Hindu, February 19, 2021.²⁰⁰

February 21, 2021

Laldhang, Haridwar District, State of Uttarakhand, India



From northern to southern India, electric energy is not the future of elephants. The current running through a fence a few hundred meters from the ranger station killed an elephant about 15 years old.

The Times of India, February 22, 2021.²⁰¹

February 24, 2021
Angarapada, Mayurbhanj District, State of Odisha, India



44.9 kg of ivory. The 2 poachers wanted to sell the tusks for 1.8 million rupees or about 25,000 US\$. Odisha TV, 25 February 2021; Orissa Post, February 25, 2021.²⁰²

February 28, 2021
Navi Mumbai, Thane District, State of Maharashtra, India

Arrest of Puthenkulam Shaji, owner of Kaveri Elephant park in Puthenkulam, Kerala. He had been on the run for 4 months. His family has owned elephants for 2 generations. The hunt for Mr. Shaji was launched shortly after the circulation of an interview published on YouTube in which he boasted about brokering domestic elephants and about fraudulently importing some of them from Bihar, Assam and the Andaman Islands. A search warrant on one of his properties led to the discovery of 15 elephants without any family record book or certificate of origin. The animals were placed in the custody of the Kerala Forest Department pending the progress of the investigation.

The Hindu, February 28, 2021; Indiatimes, March 2, 2021; The New Indian Express, March 2, 2021.²⁰³



March 2, 2021
Valapaddy Taluk, Salem District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Arrest of 3 men who held 2 tusks by a joint team of the WCCB and the Forest Department. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), March 5, 2021.²⁰⁴

March 3, 2021
Mushalpur, Baksa District, State of Assam, India



Sentencing of a farmer to 3 years and 3 months in prison and a fine of 10,000 rupees (137 US\$) with an additional sentence of 2 months in prison for non-payment after installing an illegal electric fence in which an elephant became entangled and suffered a cardiac arrest in 2018. The Hindu, March 5, 2021.²⁰⁵

March 10, 2021
Kolhapur District, State of Maharashtra, India

Seventeen forestry officers are proud to have caught 3 men aged 21 to 61 who were looking to sell 3 small tusks torn off in unknown places from at least 2 elephant calves. Additional seizure of a car, a motorcycle and 3 mobile phones. The Times of India, March 10, 2021.²⁰⁶

March 17 and 23, 2021
Rudrapur, Udham Singh Nagar District, State of Uttarakhand, India

The elephant's death occurred one or 2 months ago. The suspects say they have extracted the ivory from the carcass, a kind of harvesting without weapons or violence but which is still prohibited by law. In such a situation, the carcass must be accurately reported to the forest officers so that the usual investigations can be made and the tusks can be secured as unseizable property of the State. Two days later on March 19, thanks to the confessions of the suspects, the decaying carcass was located in the Terai forest. The forest officers in charge of the area were dismissed for lack of vigilance. The divisional forest officer is exasperated: "We are scanning the forests around the clock and don't want the poachers to run away with the ivory. And finally we catch them with it." Another official tempers the blame that is being unleashed on the "small" staff: "Terai Central forest division has 150 posts sanctioned for the Forest Guard. There are just about 50 guards currently amid the scare of wildlife poachers, timber mafias as well as other threats."

The Times of India, March 17, 19 and 24, 2021; WCCB, March 18, 2021; Hindustan Times, March 24, 2021.²⁰⁷

April 7, 2021
Kothamangala, Kolar District, State of Kerala, India

Seizure of 2 tusks and arrest of 4 people during a joint operation conducted by WCCB and forestry officers.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), April 9, 2021.²⁰⁸

April 11, 2021
Makum, Tinsukia District, State of Assam, India



A truck convoy carrying 2 elephants was intercepted. The truck was coming from Namsai in Arunachal Pradesh and was heading to Odisha, about 2,000 km away, by national road 38. The truck had refused to comply with a traffic stop a few dozen kilometers earlier. The convoy was immobilized in the early hours of the day. The 2 elephants were watched by a mahout. Investigations are underway to verify the authenticity of transport vouchers signed by the Chief Conservator of Forests and the Veterinary Services of Arunachal Pradesh. Pro-elephant NGOs denounce the trafficking of newly domesticated wild elephants: some forestry services are said to be in cahoots with elephant trainers. The formerly wild elephants are then bought or rented by temples or by the event sector to participate in religious processions or private festivities. Northeast Now, April 12, 2021; The Sentinel, April 12, 2021; East Mojo, April 14, 2021.²⁰⁹

April 24, 2021
Thrissur, Thrissur District, State of Kerala, India

Seizure in a private home of 2 raw tusks mounted on a mirror. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), April 26, 2021.²¹⁰



NEPAL

January 8, 2021
Amaha, Khadak Municipality, Saptari District, Province No. 2, Nepal



Electrocution of a wild elephant aged 20 to 22 on the edge of a wheat field. Because of human overpopulation and agricultural activities, elephants are undesirable everywhere. High-voltage electric fences abound. They kill at least 2 to 3 elephants per year out of a population of about 200 specimens. The elephant's body bore old traces of rifle bullets and scars from throwing weapons. The wheat field defended by the electric fence is directly on the edge of a forest. Elephants are in great danger of extinction in Nepal and are genetically isolated. The Nepalese government has installed a deterrent, non-lethal 17km electric fence powered by solar panels to prevent the migration of elephants from the forests of Bihar, the Indian State adjoining the Jhapa district.

The Kathmandu Post, January 11, 2021; Online Khabar, January 20, 2021.²¹¹

March 18, 2021
Sauraha, Chitwan District, Bagmati Province, Nepal

Since the outbreak of Covid-19 in March 2020, national parks have been empty. Domestic elephants carrying international tourists on their backs are useless but must continue to be fed and maintained.

Tokraj Khatiwada, the director of Jungle World Resort, which rented the elephant Ashakali for 80,000 rupees (nearly 700 US\$) a month to an Indian company, sent it back to India under the noses of customs officers. The majority of the 216 domestic elephants used by Nepal's tourism industry were illegally imported from India. Some are rented on a long-term basis, others bought for up to 80,000 US\$. The Nepalese NGOs "Moey" and "Wildlife Conservation Nepal" want domestic elephants to enjoy an honorable and peaceful retreat in a dedicated sanctuary and are outraged by transfers to India where they will be exploited in temples, exhibited in weddings, reduced to begging under the direction of a mahout on the side of roads or in tourist locations.

Association Moey, March 18, 2021; Nepali Times, March 19, 2021.²¹²

PAKISTAN

Beginning of January and March 30, 2021

Karachi, Sindh Province, and Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan

Experts from ZimParks came to Peshawar to inspect a zoo opened in February 2018 and the possible living conditions of 2 elephants ordered by Mohammad Hanif and Engineer Construction Pvt Ltd, a company which also aims to import exotic animals on behalf of zoos in Pakistan. Hanif has already brought in zebras and (bred) tigers from South Africa without facing administrative barriers. ZimParks experts have made a report that concluded it was favorable to proceed with the animal's exportation. The local government has given its agreement in principle as well as the CITES secretariat but the federal government refuses to import the 2 elephants based on a CITES resolution that came into force in November 2019. The said resolution prohibits the export of elephants outside their original ecosystems unless for exceptional circumstances or due to scientific motivations. *Loxodonta africana* should not be confused with *Elephas maximus*. Peshawar Zoo and Mohammad Hanif, the exotic animal broker, appealed to the Islamabad Supreme Court challenging the validity of the Ministry of Climate Change's argument and pointing out that the elephants awaiting importation had already been purchased and that food and maintenance costs were covered by Pakistani investors.

Although Peshawar Zoo has only been open to the public for 3 years, local public opinion is mobilizing to demand the improvement of housing and care of animals and the transfer of some of them to climate-appropriate places. Negligence has already resulted in the death of several animals.

At the same time, the Islamabad Zoo had to let go of their hold on the elephant Kaavan (see "On the Trail" n°30 p.173-174) as a result of an international campaign. The 4 African elephants held by the zoo and the Safari park in Karachi are reported to be suffering according to Pakistani and international lawyers and NGOs.

Samaa, 9 January, 16 and 29 and 30 March 2021; Dawn, March 31, 2021.²¹³

SRI LANKA

JAILING FOR ELEPHANTS

Lunugamvehera National Park, Uva Province, Horowpathana National Park, North Central Province, Sri Lanka

In 2006, the Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) relocated 260 elephants to Lunugamvehera national park in order to keep the left bank of the Walawe River for human activities and to reduce HEC (Human-Elephant Conflict). Lone male elephants or elephants in small groups are most often involved in these territorial problems, but 95% of the elephants concentrated in Lunugamvehera were female elephants, young-adults or even calves. Most of them died of starvation or disease. The vegetation cover was soon depleted by their vegetarian diet, and the soil along the fence lines that separated them from their usual habitats soon became impassable and unhealthy. A few months after the relocation, 75% of the farmers on the banks of the Walawe River agreed that conflict with elephants had not decreased.

In 2013, another politically motivated and electioneering initiative claimed to address the HEC problem again. A 1,000-hectare EHG (Elephant Holding Ground) was set up in Horowpathana. The location of the camp did not correspond to the feeding and physiological needs of the elephants. A double belt of electricity and steel cables fixed on concrete piles was supposed to prevent escapes and incursions. The feedback from this experiment is unclear. All that is known is that of the 60 so-called 'problem' elephants deported, 15 survived. The rest either escaped or died of starvation or other circumstances inside the enclosure.

A new military option is being considered by the government. A 35 km² enclave within the 235 km² Lunugamvehera national park would be turned into a fortified camp protected by electricity and a trench 2 meters deep and 1.2 meters wide. The World Bank had considered financing the project, but the lack of an impact study on the national park and limited information on the living conditions of the elephants placed there has deterred it for the time being.

Daily FT, January 5, 2021.²¹⁴

Beginning of January 2021

Matara, Southern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 6 presumed elephant pearls. "Elephant pearls" are drop-shaped limestone concretions that form at the base of the tusks. According to the Colombo Gazette, "Gaja Muthu" eventually appear on the tusks of elephants over the age of 60. The seller was trying to sell the lot for 15 million rupees or 80,000 US\$. Gaja Muthu, see "On the Trail" n°15 p.101, n°19 p.112, n°22 p.100, n°23 p.134 and n°24 p.79.

Colombo Gazette, January 4, 2021; The Sunday Times, January 4, 2021.²¹⁵

WESTERN ASIA

ISRAEL

January 1, 2021

Israel

The ban on domestic and international commercial trade in elephant and mammoth ivory came into force on January 1, 2021. As an exception, worked ivory part of a larger item, fully attached and not easily separable from it, representing less than 50% of the overall volume and weighing less than 200 grams, can benefit from a special permit. The permit allows items to be placed on the domestic market if they are proven to have been manufactured before 1976 in the case of African elephant ivory or 1975 in the case of Asian elephant ivory.

CITES notification n°2020/074, December 11, 2020.²²¹

WESTERN EUROPE

GERMANY

Mid-February 2021

Raubling, Bavaria State, Germany

Seizure of a necklace with fragments of ivory, found in a postal parcel from Switzerland. The recipient had purchased the necklace via the Internet on a Swiss auction site. Criminal proceedings have been initiated against the buyer.

Presseportal, February 17, 2021.²²²

FRANCE

January 1 and February 20, 2021

Euzet-les-Bains, Department of Gard, France

An Asian elephant, nicknamed "Dumba" by circus people, was trucked to an elephant village in Zieggendorf, Germany. Given the precarious and solitary living conditions and due to her health and psychological condition (degraded by a long life of captivity and work), the presence of Dumba in France had sparked controversy and spurred a legal action by the NGO One Voice. Efforts to protect the animal were mostly unsuccessful; the abuse was not recognised and the disqualification of Dumba's owner, a trainer working mainly in Spain, has not been pronounced. However, it is possible to note that Dumba's living conditions have improved. She is now in the company of peers; yet remains incapable of touching them or "sharing intimacy". She is now no longer in hell but she is not yet in heaven.

La Dépêche du Midi, January 19, 2021; France 3 Occitanie, January 30, 2021; One Voice, February 17, April 2, June 11 and December 20, 2021; France Bleu Gard Lozère, February 22, 2021.²²³

February 2, 2021

Kalamurippu Forest, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

A super tusker is found dead with his tusks removed. Soon after, Mulliyavalai police and Mulaithivu Wildlife Conservators made 2 arrests and seized 2 tusks, 122 cm long each, which matched the profile of the specimen poached in the Kalamurippu forest. Daily Mirror, February 2, 2021.²¹⁶

March 9, 2021

Kalawewa National Park, North Central Province, Sri Lanka

Revatha, an elephant that was a symbol of peace and prosperity, was found dead.

He was electrocuted in the forest by a fence that protected a corn field. What was it doing there? Revatha was 45 or 50 years old and he was the largest ivory carrier in Kalawewa.

Electric fences are made to kill. Turning the current on is the cleanest way to get rid of innocent elephants. No noise, no blood. Electroshock has more and more supporters. In Sri Lanka, during the first 3 months of the year, 21 elephants died of electrocution, plus 18 with their mouths burst by fruit stuffed with explosives, and 12 by gunshots and bullets.

News 1st, March 9, 2021; Daily News, March 11, 2021; Times Online, March 31, 2021; MENAFN, April 4, 2021; Mongabay, April 30, 2021; Daily FT, May 18, 2021.²¹⁷

April 2, 2021

Rambewa, North Central Province, Sri Lanka

An elephant of about 35 years of age is shot near a watering hole he used to visit regularly. With delay, he was rescued by the Veterinary Surgeon General Chandana Jayasinghe and a team of wildlife conservationists. The elephant is in a state of absolute emergency. Very poor prognosis.

Daily Mirror, April 3, 2021.²¹⁸

April 5, 2021

Mankadawala, North Central Province, Sri Lanka

Arrest of 5 suspects. Seizure of 2 tusks. For elephants, after the flash of electrocution sometimes comes the time of recovery.

The Nation, April 6, 2021.²¹⁹

April 25, 2021

Kottukachchiya, North West Province, Sri Lanka

A limping elephant. According to witnesses, he is about 2 years old. After a hunt lasting several days, wildlife curators and veterinary surgeon Isuru Kottegoda located, anesthetized and treated him. He had been hit by a firearm. Guarded prognostic.

The Sunday Times, April 25, 2021.²²⁰



March 16, 2021

Coutances, Department of Manche, France



Sentencing of an auctioneer to a fine of 8,000 € (or 9,780 US\$) including 5,000 € suspended for possession and sale of multiple ivory objects without proof guaranteeing an origin before 1947.

La Manche Libre, January 20, 2021; La Presse de la Manche, March 16, 2021.²²⁴

March 27, 2021

Lille, Department of Nord, France

Seizure of 8 worked ivories with an estimated value of 7,000 € or 8,220 US\$ at an auction by the French Biodiversity Agency.

French Biodiversity Agency, April 14, 2021.²²⁵

THE NETHERLANDS

Mid-March 2021

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

Seizure of 13 worked ivories of ancient inspiration and modern craftsmanship found in a package from Nigeria.

Dutch Customs, March 17, 2021.²²⁶

SOUTHERN EUROPE

SPAIN

Mid-March 2021

Valladolid, Province of Valladolid, Autonomous Community of Castile and León, Spain

Seizure of an engraved tusk that was up for sale via the Internet and without any proof tracing its origin or the date of its manufacture.

El Norte De Castilla, March 16, 2021.²²⁷

ELEPHANTS AND RHINOCEROSSES

AFRICA

NAMIBIA

REPEATED OFFENSE

February 25 to March 1, 2021

Silonga, Zambezi Region, Namibia. Border with Botswana.



The arrest of Barks Sobozzi, 44, a Zambian national, ends several months of investigation by the Wildlife Protection Services (WPS) and the Defense Forces. Sobozzi is part of a poaching gang operating in the Okavango Delta in northern Botswana. Already arrested in Botswana in 2018 for rhino poaching and released on bail, this time he was helping Zambian accomplices reach the Okavango via Namibia. The 5 men were crossing the Linyanti River on the border. After a gun battle in the night, Sobozzi was arrested and the other 4 fled. The authorities also seized enough equipment for a 3-week expedition: 2 guns, ammunition, 2 axes, hand saws, knives, torches, nomadic solar panels, a change of clothes, air mattresses, food including dried elephant meat and packets of energy tablets. The 5 air mattresses were reportedly used for sleeping under the stars as well as for carrying elephant tusks, hippo teeth (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) or rhino horns over the water on the way back.

Sobozzi's bail application was denied on March 1 by the Katima Mulilo court.

Since the beginning of the year, at least 6 rhinos and 4 elephants have been poached in the Okavango Delta.

The Botswana Gazette, March 3, 2021; The Namibian, March 3, 2021; Informanté, March 5, 2021.¹



AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

March 5, 2021

State of New York State, United States of America

Antique dealers' unions (Art and Antique Dealers League of America and National Antique and Art Dealers Association of America) have challenged the 2014 ban of the sale and display of elephant and mammoth ivory and rhinoceros horn items (see "On the Trail" n°21 p.92 and n°24 p.74). This ban is accompanied by exemptions. Antique dealers point out that the federal Endangered Species Act has no restrictions on the sale of antiques and allows the sale of modern items if they contain less than 50% ivory. Antique dealers believe that the federal law is superior to State laws. California, Hawaii, New Jersey, Oregon and Washington DC have passed laws similar to New York's.

The federal court in New York rejected the antiques dealers' appeal. They appealed the decision in August 2021. Ban on ivory trade in New York State, see "On the Trail" n°14 p.88-89 and n°18 p.96-97 Center for Biological Diversity, March 8, 2021; Antiques and The Arts Weekly, March 23, 2021; The Epoch Times, August 11, 2021.²

ASIA

CHINA

March 2021

Beijing Municipality, China

The owner of a handicraft store in Shijingshan District was sentenced to an 8-month suspended prison sentence and a fine of 775 US\$ for selling ivory and rhinoceros horn jewellery. On January 9, 2020, the police had seized 9 rings and one bracelet with ivory beads (total weight 42.4 grams, total price 251 US\$) and one bracelet with rhinoceros horn beads (33.32 grams, 1,192 US\$) from his store.

China Court, March 26, 2021.³



EUROPE

ITALY

Beginning of April, 2021

Metropolitan City of Turin, Region of Piedmont, Italy

Seizure of 17 undocumented objects at the Bolaffi auction house, including ivory items, a rhinoceros horn libation cup, and items made of sea turtle shells (Cheloniidae, Appendix I) and sandalwood (*Dalbergia* spp., Appendix I or II).



The director of Bolaffi, the sellers of the items and the buyers are under investigation. The libation cup had been sold in September 2020 to a Chinese national for approximately 53,000 US\$. It was reportedly about to be shipped upon receipt of a certificate of free circulation from the Turin Export Office for Antiques and Works of Art. According to Filippo Bolaffi, it dates from the 18th century and the authorities were informed of its sale in September. Corriere Torino, April 14, 2021; TorinoToday, April 14, 2021.⁴

PORTUGAL

April 8 to 9, 2021

Porto, District of Porto, Portugal

Five lots of rhino horns were withdrawn from the catalogue of the auction house Côte Real with an estimated value of between 4,100 and 9,500 € (4,810 and 11,150 US\$). According to the police, all the horns were accompanied by a certificate and the sale was fully legal. Three elephant tusks are still in the sale catalogue. The NGO WildAid, which had called for the removal of the rhino horns, is now calling for the removal of the elephant tusks and is encouraging its supporters to write to the auctioneer.

Público, April 9, 2021.⁵

CASE OF THE DISMANTLING OF AN INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF ELEPHANT IVORY AND RHINOCEROS HORN TRAFFICKERS OPERATING FROM FRANCE - PART 1

On September 10, 2015 at 11:30 p.m., leaving the A10 freeway which passes a few kilometers away, a BMW enters the French town of Dangé-Saint-Romain, 3,000 inhabitants. A squad of 9 customs officers accompanied by a dog handler stops the vehicle at a traffic circle. On board, Tom Greene, Edward Gammel and Richard O'Riley seem uncontrollably nervous, which is behavior considered by customs officers around the world to signal a confession. Tom, acting as the group's spokesman, declares in English that they are antique dealers coming from Bordeaux (300 km) on their way to Tours (60 km) and then to Paris (300 km). "We are touring France for our business." At 11:40 p.m., a first elephant tusk is discovered wrapped in a bathrobe. Next to it, a travel bag contains an envelope of banknotes. Then under the floor mat and under the steering wheel, 3 more tusks and additional bundles of cash are uncovered. To provide supporting legal documents, Tom presents an auction slip dated July 11, 2015 issued by the Hôtel des Ventes Cannes Enchères. But the tusks in the car do not correspond to those sold in Cannes that day.

Details of the tusks seized in the BMW:

- 1- 140 cm for 15.7 kg
- 2- 139 cm for 15.8 kg
- 3- 96 cm for 5.6 kg
- 4- 94 cm for 5.5 kg

Excerpts from the catalog of the Cannes Enchères sale of July 11, 2015 (Robin des Bois Archives)

SAMEDI 11 JUILLET 2015



Paire de défenses d'éléphant d'Afrique

L environ : 188 et 187,5 cm (courbe externe)
Poids environ : 32 et 31,5 Kg
Provenance : Tchad
CITES français pre-convention 1974
(origine OW) : FR1103101274-K et
FR1103101275-K

Expert : Jean-Yves Nathan - T : 06 16 68 15 80
10 000 / 15 000 €

Paire de défenses d'éléphant d'Afrique

L environ : 183 et 175,2 cm (courbe externe)
Poids environ : 15 et 15,6 Kg
Provenance : République Centrafricaine
CITES français pre-convention 1965
(origine OW) : FR1208300226-K et
FR1208300227-K

Expert : Jean-Yves Nathan - T : 06 16 68 15 80
5 000 / 7 000 €

Paire de défenses d'éléphant d'Afrique

L environ : 112 et 114 cm (courbe externe)
Poids environ : 9 et 9 Kg
Provenance : République Centrafricaine
CITES français pre-convention avant
1963 (origine OW) : FR1501100054-K et
FR1501100053-K

Expert : Jean-Yves Nathan - T : 06 16 68 15 80
3 000 / 4 000 €

20

Tom claims to have bought the tusks for 4,200 € at an open-air market in Bordeaux from a Turkish man's van. The overall value of the 4 tusks weighing a total of 42.6 kg is estimated by the customs officers to be 42,600 €. The trio was traveling with a total of 32,800 € in cash.

Taken to the customs office, Tom declares that he is the only one responsible for the "merchandise." Well informed but perhaps not fully awake, the deputy prosecutor authorizes, as the French regulation, alas, allows it, a customs transaction. On September 11, 2015 at 3:30 a.m., after paying 10,000 € in cash, the 3 traffickers left freely, with 22,800 € in cash, a properly stamped receipt, but without the 4 tusks that were seized. We can imagine their immense joy. 3 days later, they were caught by a traffic camera for speeding at 1:45 a.m. in the south of France, in the opposite direction of Paris where they claimed to be going.

However, the case is not yet closed. The Customs Settlement Form still lacks the signature of the Regional Director.

During the inspection in Dangé-Saint-Romain, a customs officer discovered a passport and a driver's license issued in the name of Joseph Doyle on the back seat of the BMW among other personal items. Upon questioning, Tom Greene answered that the papers belonged to one of his cousins. After the 3 men departed, the customs officers realized that the identity photograph, date and place of birth of Joseph Doyle are the same as those of Tom Greene.

Tom Greene and Joseph Doyle are the same man. The continued investigation eventually revealed that he is also Joseph O'Brien, in long form Joseph O'Brien "Cotton Eye" Junior, and that he is additionally called John Greene.

The investigations then concern the Cannes Enchères auction slip created in the name of the SAS E2AR Distribution located in Le Blanc-Mesnil in the Parisian suburbs. This company is run by David Ta, a French-Vietnamese man inspected 2 months earlier in July 2015 by the customs of Angers on the A11 highway with tusks acquired in auction rooms in Angers and Toulouse along with their certificates. At that time, trade in raw ivory was still authorized in France, but exports had been suspended since January of the same year; because of David Ta's regular trips to Viet Nam, customs officials had activated a special vigilance procedure. In the meantime, customs officials are making connections with the National Intelligence Directorate's notice issued in 2012 on the organized group of Irish criminals called the Rathkeale Rovers, who are known for their use of false identity documents and are involved in stealing and trafficking rhinoceros horns and elephant ivory, among other crimes. The Rathkeale Rovers are versatile (Rathkeale Rovers, see "On the Trail" n°1 p.22, n°2 p. 48, 49, 50 and 52, n°4 p.67 and p.69-70, n°5 p.76, n°7 p.75, n°8 p.66, n°9 p.69, n°10 p.49, n°12 p.72, n°13 p.76, n°14 p.97, n°15 p.86, n°16 p.70, n°18 p.78, n°19 p.87, n°27 p.88 and n°30 p.49). The customs transaction is not validated. 10,000 € is withheld for "penalty securities" and the preliminary investigation is entrusted to the National Judicial Customs Service (SNDJ).

Within the framework of the investigation, the specialized customs officers arrive at the campsite "Le Soleil de Crécy" in Crécy-la-Chapelle, 50 km from Paris. The Rathkeale clan are regulars here, so much so that the manager opened a binder labeled "Rathkeale" on its spine, which recorded the many appearances from February to November 2014 of the O'Briens, Culligans, Quilligans, Sheridans, Flynnns, McCarthy's, etc., names, nicknames, aliases, homonyms, and all the rest going around in high-end vehicles. They also shipped 36 mobile homes from "Le Soleil de Crécy" to camping/caravanning sites in Germany. Our 3 men, Tom Greene, Edward Gammel and Richard O'Riley, are not listed as "campers," at least not under those names. But obviously, France is a primary base for the Rathkeale gang.

Alexandre Debussy, associate director of Cannes Enchères, was called to witness on December 3, 2015. He has made a specialty of circumventing the ban on exports of raw ivory from France by transporting the tusks through Belgium under the cover of a CITES certificate authorizing the intra-European circulation of the tusks (Cannes Enchères, see "On the Trail" n°5 p.105, n°6 p.72, n°8 p.68-69). Exports are then made from Belgium to Asia where there is demand and wealthy customers. David Ta, with whom Mr. Debussy is on a first-name basis, is a loyal customer: he made 197,500 € in purchases between July 2013 and October 2015 including 24 raw tusks, 3 carved tusks, 24 objects made of ivory or with ivory inlay and one Ottoman dagger with a rhinoceros horn handle. Before the investigators, Mr. Debussy insists on the legality of this trade within the European community. It is without unnecessary questions that he met Mr. Ta's expectations by issuing auction slips for the benefit of E2AR Distribution, address: Hanoi, Viet Nam. At the request of the investigators, Alexandre Debussy explained his "special elephant and rhinoceros tax", i.e. 1% deducted in addition to the sale costs to be paid to animal protection associations preferring to remain anonymous, which we understand. "We are the only ones to have instituted this tax that Ségolène Royal was aware of." Mr. Debussy is thus trying to exploit the Minister of the Environment who banned raw ivory exports from France and who provoked a raid by inspectors at Cannes Enchères in March 2015. At the end of his hearing, the self-proclaimed ivory and horn specialist claimed to have no knowledge of ivory, elephant tusks, rhino heads or horns being stolen from private collections or national museums. He is the only one in the industry not to be aware of the surge in thefts that has been raging throughout Europe since 2011.

In December 2015, the 4 tusks seized from the Rathkeale Rovers' BMW were submitted to the expertise of the Paris Natural History Museum. The African elephant tusks are obviously relatively new, "collections made after 2000 are very likely." One of the pairs is attributed to an elephant under 10 years old and another to a young adult.

The international smuggling network is taking shape. The 2 statues of a deity in the form of an elephant framing the entrance door of the E2AR Distribution company show the investigators the way. Banking profiles from the investigation suggest that there is often confusion between the E2AR company accounts and David Ta's personal account. Textiles plus hygiene and beauty products apparently form the heart of his business. Despite numerous incoming bank movements to its account from Asia (Viet Nam, China, Thailand and Hong Kong), Europe (Great Britain, Poland, Switzerland), Canada and Panama as well as outgoing movements to Hong Kong and France, the customs database has never recorded any import or export transactions from E2AR since 2014. David Ta and E2AR also do not appear in the i-CITES database which lists all applicants for and holders of CITES permits or certificates. On May 23, 2016, the judge of liberty and detention signs "the authorization of search without the consent of the persons" on the premises of E2AR Distribution where Mr. Ta also lives.

The search at E2AR takes place on May 25, 2016 at 10:50 a.m. An expert in zoology and animal collections from the Court of Appeal of Paris was requested. Less than 4 hours later, customs left with 14 tusks found under a blanket and a pallet, 2 tusks found under a piece of furniture, a jar containing 20 seahorses, a plethora of auction slips, Intra-Community Certificates (ICC), summons for a hunting permit, accounting documents, correspondences ... The value of the 16 tusks seized (212 kg) is estimated to be 212,000 €. There is no correlation between the tusks and the certificates found at E2AR: the 16 tusks seized are undocumented while the 23 tusks with a total weight of 417.5 kg corresponding to the certificates have probably already been smuggled to Asia. Mr. Ta's passport bears the marks of his many return trips to Viet Nam and he carries a FlyingBlue Air France/KLM "Ivory" frequent flyer card and a Viet Nam Airlines "Golden Lotus Plus Silver" frequent flyer card.



Unregistered tusks at E2AR on May 25, 2015
Le Blanc-Mesnil, Seine-Saint-Denis Department

David Ta was taken into custody at 2:30 p.m. He had in his pocket a small exchange office - euros, Vietnamese dong, Singapore dollars, US dollars, Yen, and Czech crowns -, 3 credit cards, business cards from antique dealers and second hand dealers in France and Belgium, from hotels in Hong Kong and Viet Nam, a logistician and customs broker, pharmaceutical salesmen in Viet Nam, a Vietnamese woman living in the Czech Republic, a French health insurance card, a German health insurance card in the name of Davit Ta, a drouot.com card and of course Alexandre Debussy's card.

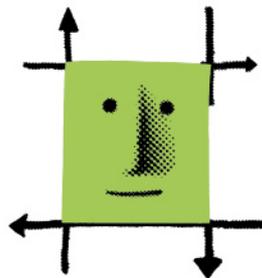
David Ta reveals that he alternates staying for one month in France, then for one month in Viet Nam to develop his cosmetic brand and has been several times to Cambodia, once to Singapore, once to Hong Kong and once to Japan "to see the market." In his absence, his partner takes care of the company. Buying and selling antiques is a recent activity for him. He began at most 3 years ago. He scours the Internet sites of auctions by professionals or private individuals plus flea markets, secondhand trades and auction houses throughout France and in Monaco. His remote purchases are sometimes picked up by acquaintances of his, such as his friend the "ex-ambassador of Belgium in Viet Nam." David Ta remembers buying 10 or so pairs of tusks and about a hundred worked ivory objects "over 50 or 60 years old." Why are the tusks seized at E2AR's premises not accompanied by CITES or CIC certificates? Because Mr. Ta is not always there to verify everything at the time of delivery. Why do these tusks bear the marks of debasement and other manipulations? "Because I wanted to change the base to a more beautiful Asian style one." For the Vietnamese customers? "No! I keep them for myself, for my collection (...) it is to show my success to the customers." A collection of pomp and circumstance, but hidden under a blanket and a pallet. Of course, Mr. Ta denies having exported the 23 missing tusks. He says he makes 100% of his sales in Viet Nam, except for the ivory he collects and with the exception of 2 pairs of tusks sold to the China Shanghai restaurant in Lucerne, Switzerland, for which an invoice from E2AR is put in front of him. And why does Mr. Ta want to obtain a hunting license? "So that I can hunt wild boar and pheasant." Another propensity for animals? "I only bought a stuffed cobra with a mongoose." And the jar of seahorses? "A Vietnamese friend gave it to me maybe 10 years ago. It comes from Viet Nam. In fact, it is based on a preparation called vodka and seahorse. In Viet Nam it is consumed as an aperitif or digestive."

David Ta affirms he doesn't know O'Brien, Greene, Gamel, or any of the Rathkeale Rovers. If the latter group possessed an auction slip from Cannes Enchères belonging to E2AR Distribution, it was because of a fortuitous meeting. "When I was at the flea market in Lille, the first week of September 2015, I was approached by a young man who said he was of Dutch origin and that his name was Eddy. He was interested in comparing ivory prices. I had sent him a picture with my camera of this auction slip. After that I had no more news. A few weeks later he offered me some red coral and a rhinoceros horn as well as some furniture and a statue. But I was not interested." Mr. Ta varied his version of events slightly the next day by claiming that he had on his person the auction slip from Cannes Enchères and that Eddy took a picture of it using his phone. "I don't know why he showed this document when he was checked in Poitiers, because it wasn't the tusks that matched. Those tusks are still in Cannes, I didn't have time to go get them." David Ta does not know that Alexandre Debussy affirmed in front of the investigators that these tusks had been taken, with a voucher for their removal by one of his friends.

During his 48-hours in custody, Mr. Ta also pretended not to know the name of an assistant auctioneer at Tessier-Sarrou with whom he conversed by e-mail, who addressed him informally with "tu," who tried to reach him "in complete confidentiality." Above all, she counted on him to go urgently to a gas station or a tobacco shop to buy 1,500 € in PCS Mastercard prepaid payment coupons and to send him the activation codes, in short, a financial transaction that occurred without any trace. The Tessier-Sarrou firm notably conducted a remarkable sale of "Asian Art" in December 2014 including 3 rhinoceros horn libation cups and various ivory objects. Neither Cannes Enchères nor Tessier-Sarrou will be worried during the rest of the proceedings.

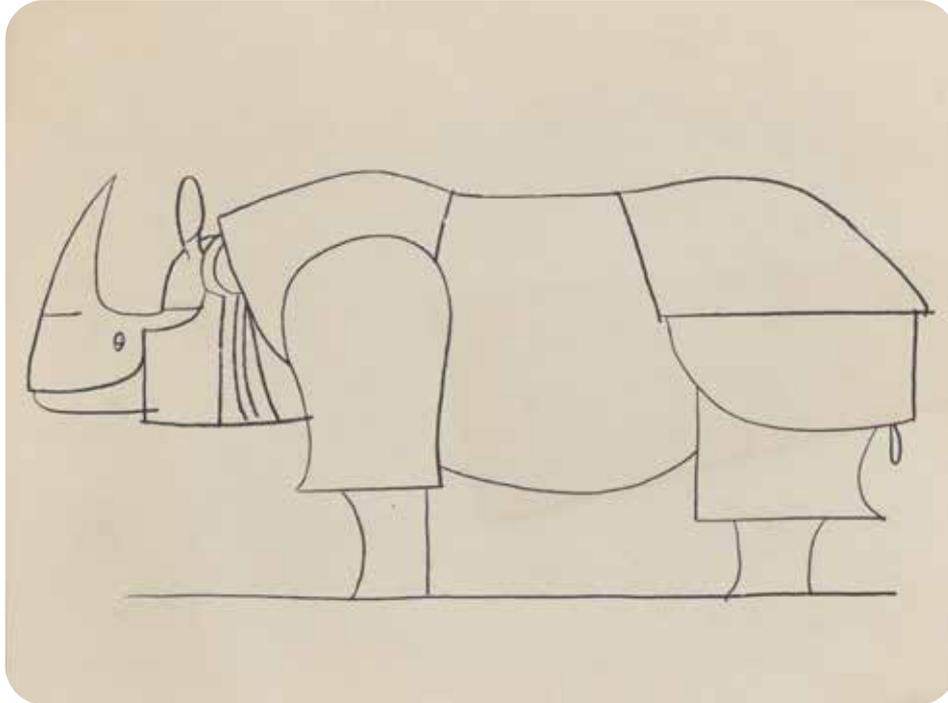
It is different for Mr. Ta, David by his French first name, Vi Dan by his Vietnamese first name, who was already convicted in 2012 for receiving property derived from an aggravated theft. He was placed in pre-trial detention and imprisoned on May 27, 2016 at 7:10 p.m. in the prison of Rennes-Vézin le Coquet for possession and trafficking of ivory as well as associating with criminals. In vain, he protests, "It was not I who killed the elephants."

Part 2 in the next issue of "On the Trail."



ROBIN DES BOIS

RHINOCEROSSES



Claude and François-Xavier Lalanne

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

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

On the Trail n°32
Black market horn quotation from media or official sources
The values were estimated at the time of the seizures

Value of 1kg of raw horn

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref. (year)
Africa	South Africa	55,200	8 (2021)
		8,600	10 (2021)

CENTRAL AFRICA

**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
OF THE CONGO/SINGAPORE**

February 2021

Kinshasa, Kinshasa Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Singapore

The parcel came from Kinshasa and was headed for Viet Nam. This upscale package was supposed to contain "traditional handicrafts" stamped by the Ministry of Culture and Arts. In Singapore, airport customs did not let it past them. Inside the cultural parcel was a 1,500-gram white rhino horn. The artist in the DRC fled. His alleged agent was arrested. Medafrica Times, February 19, 2021; RFI, February 19, 2021.¹

EASTERN AFRICA

MALAWI

Mid-March 2021

Liwonde, Southern Region, Malawi

Mapondera Mmora, 41, sentenced to 18 years in prison with hard labour for killing a rhino in Liwonde national park.

Nyasa Times, March 16, 2021; The Times Group, March 18, 2021.²



ZIMBABWE

January 13, 2021

Gokwe, Midlands Province, Zimbabwe

Arrest of 7 men posing as ZimParks rangers with fake IDs. They were trying to sell 18 fake rhino horns. ZimParks spokesperson Tinashe Farawo confirmed the arrests without giving the names of the impersonators.

New Ziana, January 14, 2021; ZimEye, January 14, 2021; Independent Online, April 26, 2021.³

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

January 1, 2021

Endangered Rhino Conservation Reserve, North West Province, South Africa



The mother and daughter were killed at dawn. The year begins very badly. All the keratin on the 2 victims was taken by the poachers but there was not much of it because the mother had been dehorned as a precaution. A Rhino 911 helicopter and 2 microlights flew over the scene to see if there were any other victims on the battlefield. Luke, the dominant male, was lucky. A bullet scraped him. He is limping badly but the doctors at Zodiac Dierkliniek make an optimistic diagnosis.

Endangered Rhino Conservation, January 8, 2021; Emma Louise Edwards, January 9, 2021; Council of Contributors, January 15, 2021.⁴

January 22 and 23, 2021

Lephalale and Gravelotte, Limpopo Province, South Africa

The death of the black rhino occurred 3 to 4 days ago. The horns are in place.

The death of the 2 black and dehorned rhinos with partially amputated ears occurred a few days ago.

Polokwane Review, January 25, 2021.⁵



February 1 and week of February 8, 2021
Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Naomi Engelbrecht, as Mpumalanga regional court president, had ordered the closure of the Skukuza court, known as the "rhino court" because of its proximity to Kruger national park. Since then, poaching hearings have been held at the Mhala court, if they could be held at all, because of case stacking and Covid restrictions.

After a series of legal hurdles, Francis Legodi, president of the provincial High court, and the national prosecutor's office overcame Ms. Engelbrecht's stunt, the secret aspects of which have not yet been unraveled. We advise our readers to refer to n°29 of "On the Trail" p. 44 to better appreciate the context of this brawl that shook the judiciary all the way up to the Constitutional Court. The Skukuza Regional Court is essentially dedicated to the indictment and trial of suspected poachers and traffickers arrested by the rangers and the SAPS (South African Police Service) in Kruger national park or its periphery. The reopening of proceedings in Skukuza is welcomed by SanParks. However, in other courts whose activities have not been suspended, the justice system is bogged down and keeps postponing the trials of prominent figures like Big Joe as well as Dawie Groenewald, his wife, his brothers, his safari hunting partners and his veterinarians, who have been charged with more than a thousand counts of rhino poaching, horn trafficking, money laundering and racketeering over the past 10 years.

The Citizen, February 4, 2021; Independent Online, February 10, 2021; Lowvelder, February 12, and April 4, 2021; Oxpeckers, February 19, 2021.⁶

Beginning of February 2021

KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Thanks to the good services of Heligistix Helicopters and African Wildlife Vets, the orphaned rhino secluded in a remote area of a reserve was transported to the orphanage. Thanks to a surrogate mother, he will learn to graze and communicate with other rhinos.

African Wildlife Vets, February 4, 2021.⁷



February 4, 2021

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

The 3 parcels bound for Malaysia are supposed to contain "printer ink cartridges." The dog didn't believe it. He signalled and alerted authorities about the packages. Inside, there were 18 horns or horn sections, weighing 63 kg, valued at 14 million US\$ or 55,200 US\$/kg.

Eyewitness News, February 4, 2021; South African Revenue Service, February 4, 2021; TimesLIVE, February 4, 2021; Independent Online, June 2, 2021; Jacaranda FM, August 14, 2021.⁸

February 5, 2021

Near Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Dangerous liaison between a member of the SAPS and 3 poachers. In the police car, the 4 night-travellers had a large-calibre firearm, the corresponding ammunition and a butcher knife. Simon Bloch, February 5, 2021.⁹

February 12, March 11 and July 15, 2021

Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

Dark Water Ops and SAPS team up and arrest 2 men, Jonathan Jeremy Perring and Keanon Terblanche, in a restaurant, who were about to deal in a 3.8 kg black rhino horn valued at 32,800 US\$ or 8,600 US\$/kg. The horn and the 2 cars were seized.



An accomplice, Christo Shaun Swartz, is arrested in March. He stole the horn from his employer and sold it to Perring and Terblanche.

The 3 men were sentenced in July to 15 months in prison or a fine of 5,200 US\$.

Dark Water Ops, February 13, 2021; SAPS, February 14 and July 19, 2021; News24, February 15, 2021.¹⁰

February 23, 2021

Bushbuckbridge, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Sentencing of Peter Mathebula to 23 years in prison and Mustard Mathebula and Artur Valoyi to 4 years in prison. They were arrested in 2018 inside the Kruger park in the Houtboschrand section with 2 pairs of horns, a large-calibre firearm and ammunition in their hands.

Wildlife at Risk, February 26, 2021; SA-People, March 17, 2021.¹¹

February 26, 2021

Pilanesberg National Park, North West Province, South Africa

The mother rhino was poached on Thursday night. During all of Friday, the park was searched by the guards and no trace of the killers or any other crime was found.



Her 6-month-old daughter, who was previously a very cheerful rhino, is in a terrible physical and psychological state. The Rhino Orphanage team went to pick her up. After an exhausting return trip for everyone involved, she initially refused any contact with the caretakers and refused to drink any milk.

Perry Steve Dell, February 27, 2021; The Rhino Orphanage, February 27 and 28, 2021.¹²

March 2021

Gauteng Province, South Africa



A pair of rhinos were going about their daily business when they were ambushed by poachers. The female died of her injuries. The male was taken into care by the vets. Favourable prognosis. But low spirits. The reserve is very well guarded and the poachers were informed by someone "from the inside."

Saving the Survivors, March 22, 2021.¹³

Beginning of March, 2021 South Africa

A pregnant female was shot at close range but the bullet got stuck in a muscle and did not reach her brain. She was able to escape. She is currently being treated. Favourable prognosis.

Saving the Survivors, March 9, 2021.¹⁴

March 1, 2021

Benoni, Gauteng Province, South Africa



The 2 White men in the luxury Mercedes were carrying a horn. One is the grandson of a former mayor of Rustenburg and the other is a familiar name in the celebrity column. Of Polish origin, his greatest claims to fame are having knocked out a sheriff who came to seize his furniture and having lived for a time with

the ex-girlfriend of Mark Fish, the Bafana Bafana legend. He just spent 2 years in London as a bodyguard. Both were released on bail of 20,000 rand which is 1,350 US\$. They have to report to the police station every Monday or Friday.

SAPS, March 2, 2021; TimesLIVE, March 2, 2021; Save the Beasts, March 8, 2021; Benoni City Times, March 17, 2021.¹⁵

March 1, 2021

Hoedspruit, Limpopo Province, South Africa

A former resident of the orphanage who arrived in 2016 in a poor physical and psychological state and was then released in 2019 was recently the victim of an attack. She died like her mother, savagely dehorned.

Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre, March 3, 2021.¹⁶

March 15, 2021

Bushbuckbridge, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa



Sentencing of Bennet Martin Lubisi and Bennet Johannes Bendane to 8 years in prison for entering the Kruger park without authorisation in 2016 in possession of an undeclared firearm and ammunition and with the intention to poach rhinos.

SA-People, March 17, 2021.¹⁷

March 19, 2021

KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Since October 2018, Eric Nzimande has been on house arrest while continuing to receive his salary equal to 7,750 US\$ per month (see "On the Trail" n°23 p.102). He is now facing 112 charges, compared to 50 at the beginning of his dismissal from the judiciary. The inspector in charge of the Nzimande case reportedly received several death threats. The computer of Sharon Marks, who succeeded him as president of the regional court, was hacked and confidential information was leaked. Nzimande is suspected of having connections with the lawyers of notorious and violent rhino horn traffickers, including Dumisani Gwala (see "On the Trail" n°12 p.71, n°14 p.63 and 66, n°18 p.72, n°19 p.86, n°20 p.81 and n°21 p.75). The Magistrates Commission of the province refuses to communicate about the new charges against him.

TimesLIVE, April 5, 2021.¹⁸

March 20 to 21, 2021

Gravelotte, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Gunshots muffled by a silencer alert the guards. Unfortunately, the bodies of a mother and an 18-month-old calf are found.

The chopper, the Tactico Security guys, the reserve guards, Marius and Andri's K9 brigade, and the blocking of all the surrounding roads resulted in the interception of a large pick-up truck on a side road. Two suspects disappeared in the bush and 2 others were immobilised. A horn was found nearby and the silencer of a firearm was located in the car.



Hope for Wildlife Helicopter Services, March 22, 2021; SanWild Wildlife Sanctuary, March 23, 2021; SAPS, March 24, 2021.¹⁹

March 22, 2021

Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa



Fatal poaching of Big Boy. "The red-billed oxpeckers will miss him." Stories abound of his patience, strength and tranquility.

Haley Dahl, March 26, 2021; Wildlife at Risk, March 29, 2021.²⁰

End of March, 2021

South Africa

Since the year 2019, 40 South African Police Service officers have been removed from their positions for contributing to the poaching of rhinos. In addition to this professional sanction, the alleged culprits are being prosecuted. To date, only one has been sentenced to 4 years in prison or a fine of 20,000 rand or 1,350 US\$. On appeal, the 4-year sentence was reduced to 2 years.

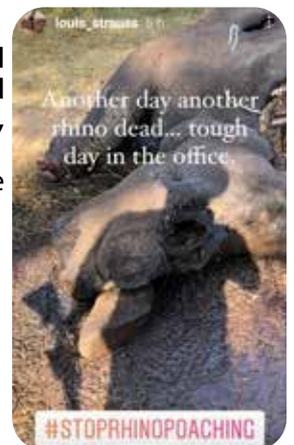
Independent Online, March 29, 2021.²¹

April 16, 2021

Kruger National Park, Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces, South Africa

Another hard blow in the Kruger national park.

Nora Abdu, April 16, 2021.²²



April 17, 2021

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

Rangers assisted by the K9 unit and air support spot a gang of 3 attempting to flee, who throw an axe and a bag of provisions in the process. One poacher is arrested. His 2 accomplices run through a herd of elephants. One of them is trampled and does not survive his injuries. The other, although injured, managed to escape.

Independent Online, April 18, 2021; SANParks, April 19, 2021.²³

April 18, 2021

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

Arrest of 3 suspected poachers. Seizure of a rifle, ammunition and other poaching paraphernalia.

SANParks, April 19, 2021; Independent Online, April 26, 2021.²⁴

April 27, 2021

Ingwavuma, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Seizure of a rhinoceros horn during a road check. The 3 men, aged between 27 and 33 years, wanted to sell it. Estimated value, 500,000 rand or 33,470 US\$. Three arrests.

SAPS, April 28, 2021.²⁵

BOTSWANA

End of February, 2021

Chitabe Camp, Chief's Island, Okavango Delta, North West District, Botswana

The female and the male were each shot with one .375 bullet, and the baby rhino was shot twice. The crime scene was discovered a few hours after the event. A gang of Zambians is suspected of having entered Botswana and the Rhino Conservation Botswana sanctuary under the cover of a full moon. The Botswana Gazette mentions other accomplices besides the moon: the geolocation collars attached to the rhinos. Some of them are running out of power because of the batteries, which have a life span of 3 years. It is suspected that the poachers considered this programmed obsolescence and reserved their attacks for rhinos whose movements were no longer known to the Botswana Defense Force and the rangers. The poachers, who seem well-informed from the inside, are literally running circles around the BDF.

Chief's Island, see "On the Trail" n°28 p.5 and 95, n°29 p.7 and 48.

Displacement and preventive dehorning of rhinos in the Okavango Delta, see "On the Trail" n°29 p.48.

The Botswana Gazette, March 5, 2021.²⁶

March 1, 2021

Okavango Delta, North West District, Botswana

Bhejane Trust is very active in the fight against Big Five poaching. Based in Zimbabwe, it is influential thanks to its transnational network. They recently announced that over 2 weeks, 12 rhinos have been poached in Botswana, including a complete family (one male, one female, one cub).

Bhejane Trust, March 1, 2021.²⁷



March 1, 2021

Okavango Delta, North West District, Botswana

Ian Khama, president of Botswana from April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2018, relays via Facebook the Bhejane Trust statement and says that in the last 18 months (September 2019-February 2021), about 120 rhinos have been slaughtered in the country. "There is no lockdown or curfew for poachers apparently. After corona there will be none left for tourists to come and see." Ian Khama has always considered Botswana's natural heritage to be a major asset to the country's economy and influence.

Seretse Khama Ian Khama, March 1, 2021.²⁸

March 2, 2021

Okavango Delta, North West District, Botswana

President Mokgweetsi Masisi's administration responded with a press release at 8:08 a.m. The Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) says the information from a "formerly highly ranking Government official" is false, risks damaging the tourism industry (the country's second largest financial resource) and is close to economic sabotage. According to DWNP, environmental crime has decreased by 70% between March 2020 and February 2021 compared to the pre-Covid period of March 2019 to February 2020. The specific case of rhino poaching is not mentioned. "The DWNP rangers and their collaborating partners from other security agencies already work tirelessly to protect the country's natural resources, mostly in very tough and uninhabitable terrain. DWNP sees no benefit whatsoever in exposing them to further danger by discussing the number and locations of the cases that the rangers are dealing with."

Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources Conservation and Tourism, March 2, 2021.²⁹

NAMIBIA

January 9 and 15, 2021

Okahandja, Otjozondjupa Region, and Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia

Poaching and dehorning of a male. Discovery of the carcass at 7:30 a.m. on Saturday January 9. On Friday 15, 2 suspects in an industrial area of Windhoek are arrested. They have 2 fresh horns in their possession. On the same day, 4 other suspects are arrested in Okahandja. They hold an unregistered weapon, ammunition, and tools required for poaching. One of the suspects is employed in the farm where the poaching took place. Jeff Makayi Nadango, Stefanus Muyenga Musore, Zekka Petrus Ithemba, Mayembe Alfeus Kamwengo, Matyayi Thomas Sivambo and Kativa Frans Musenge are between 36 and 50 years old.

Namibian Sun, January 15, 2021.³⁰

February 2021

Oshikango, Ohangwena Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.

Sentencing of Immanuel Musenge to a fine equal to 1,000 US\$, of which 400 US\$ is suspended, or to 24 months in prison, of which 8 months are suspended. See "On the Trail" n°29 p.49. Namibian Broadcasting Corporation, March 5, 2021.³¹



March 5, 2021

Otjiwarongo, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

Sentencing of Robertos Ipinge to a fine equal to 33,700 US\$ or to 2 years in prison for illegal possession and attempted commercialisation of a horn.

Republikein, March 11, 2021.³²



March 6, 2021

Otjiwarongo, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

33 and 60 years old, an Angolan and a Namibian. Joaquim Soma and Correia Matheus Gayeta were in possession of a horn inside the Erindi game reserve. Namibian Broadcasting Corporation, March 8, 2021; Namibian Sun, March 10, 2021.³³

REPEATED OFFENSE

March 26, 2021

Omuthiya, Oshikoto Region, Namibia

Seizure in the trunk of a white Volkswagen Polo of a rhinoceros horn hidden in a black bag. Three arrests: Michael Muronga, police officer, Alfons Tjukuru, pastor and Paulus Pendapala Herman. They had attempted to pass the road check at 2:15 in the morning in violation of the Covid-19 curfew. Muronga claimed he was on duty, but the police had been tipped off and were not fooled. Herman was no novice; he had already been involved in a rhino horn theft (see "On the Trail" n°30 p. 48). He was released on bail. On May 15, Herman died of unknown causes.

New Era, March 29, 2021; Republikein, March 31, 2021; Allgemeine Zeitung, April 1, 2021; The Namibian, May 3 and 19, 2021.³⁴

April 1, 2021

Okahao, Omusati Region, Namibia

Arrest of David Daniel Shilongo, Asser Ndiili Amwaama and Alex Shipingana Nampweya. They are suspected of rhino poaching. They were in possession of a firearm and 9 munitions.

Republikein, April 12, 2021.³⁵

April 2, 3 and 6, 2021

Gobabis, Omaheke Region, Namibia

A pregnant female is poached in a lodge on Friday, April 2. The car of 3 suspects is intercepted at a roadblock the next day. Their clothes and shoes are stained with blood. They are carrying a firearm. Their names are Zondundi Tjipuiko, Frederik Hamukoto and Tjimbaka Mbatiminua. On April 6, a fourth man, Hamukoto Kanana Erastus, is arrested. Blood, a gun, ammunition, suspects, but the horns remain missing.



Republikein, April 6, 12 and 13, 2021; Allgemeine Zeitung, April 7, 2021; Namibia Press Agency, April 9, 2021.³⁶

April 8, 2021

Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia

Seizure of 2 horns and a mini horn. Arrest of Salomon Erastus Nghidinwa and Lukas Nepwayu.

Republikein, April 14, 2021; Allgemeine Zeitung, April 16, 2021.³⁷



April 12, 2021

Orupembe, Kunene Region, Namibia

6 years after the crime, Haita Paulus Tjambiru is arrested. He is allegedly involved in a poaching incident in October 2015. In October 2015, the only poaching incident recorded by "On the Trail" in the region was in Puros. A rhino had been shot 5 times to death (see "On the Trail" n°11 p.65).

Republikein, April 20, 2021; Namibian Sun, April 22, 2021.³⁸

April 30, 2021

Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia



© The Namibian

Sentencing of Tangi Sheefeni Namwandi alias Mox to a fine equal to 1,350 US\$ or 4 years in prison. Definitive seizure of his Mercedes-Benz worth 40,000 US\$. He admitted that he held and transported 4 horns without authorisation. The case dates back to 2016 (see "On the Trail" n°13 p.72). The Namibian, May 3, 2021.³⁹

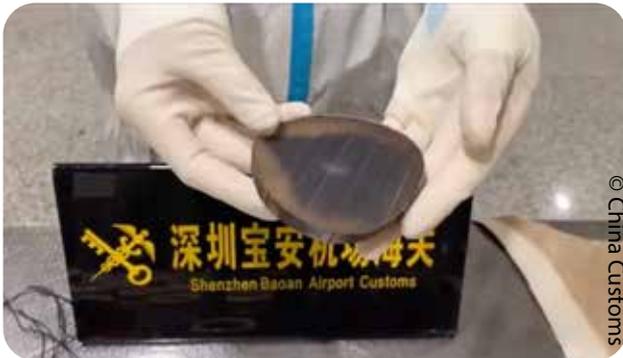


EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

Early January 2021

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Shenzhen Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China



© China Customs

Seizure of one slice of an alleged rhino horn from a passenger. Chinese Customs, January 15, 2021.⁴⁰

January 2021

Dalian, Dalian Prefecture, Liaoning Province, China

Liang, 28, had left for South Africa from Shenyang airport. A WeChat contact offered to bring back rhino horns for a fee. Liang had taken every precaution to conceal the 4 horns weighing 2.71 kg including a layer of plastic film, a layer of aluminum foil, a cookie jar full of sweets, a layer of tape, and even a laptop computer. Dalian Customs proved to be more vigilant than he had anticipated. He was sentenced to 5 years in prison and fined the equivalent of 30,700 US\$. Liaoshen Evening News, January 31, 2021.⁴¹



SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

THAILAND

March 12, 2021

Nakhon Phanom and Chaiyaphum Provinces, Thailand

The Anti-Money Laundering Office (AMLO) opened a new case against Boonchai Bach (see "On the Trail" n°20 p. 87 and n°21 p. 81) following a change in the story of the case's main witness and his acquittal in January 2019. The investigation lasted more than a year and led to several searches in the provinces of Nakhon Phanom and Chaiyaphum. In total, the AMLO seized and froze 330 million baht in assets (11 million US\$), including cash, firearms, amulets, wild animals and a hotel. According to the Freedom Foundation, which has been following Boonchai's adventures since the beginning, he has 90 days to justify the origin of these assets.

Bangkok Post, January 30, 2019 (with AFP) and March 17, 2021; The Thaiger, March 18, 2021.⁴²

VIET NAM

March 2021

Van Don International Airport, Quang Ninh Province, Viet Nam



© ENV

Seizure of about 50 kgs of rhinoceros horns and 400 teeth and claws of unidentified wild animals in the luggage of 3 passengers of a flight from Angola. ENV, May 14, 2021.⁴³

SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

Mid-January, 2021

Jhagarpar, Dhubri District, State of Assam, India

Seizure of a horn weighing approximately 2 kg. Four arrests. Nur Md. Sk, Azaharul Islam, Jiaul Hoque and Raju Sarkar were preparing to sell it. Northeast Now, January 23, 2021.⁴⁴

January 20, 2021

Dilai, Karbi Anglong District, State of Assam, India

Arif Jakaria intended to sell the piece of horn weighing about 390 grams in Dimapur (Nagaland State, 50 km away). But, he did not get the chance. Cases of rhino poaching or horn smuggling are not uncommon in the Karbi Anglong district, adjacent to Kaziranga national park (see. "On the Trail" n°5 p.79, n°6 p.71, n°8 p.64, n°9 p.72, n°14 p.69 and p.71, n°15 p.85, n°16 p.71, n°19 p.88, n°21 p.79 and p.80, n°28 p.97, n°29 p.50 and n°30 p.50 and p.51). The Sentinel, January 21, 2021.⁴⁵

February 4, 2021

Naharlagen, Papum Pare District, State of Arunachal Pradesh, India

Jobi Gadi, 40, one of the most wanted rhino poachers, has finally been arrested. The forest department, assisted by specialized investigators from the State police, had been searching for a man named "Gadi" for several years. This elusive poacher started his criminal activities in 2011 in the Kaziranga national park specifically in the Biswanath Wildlife Division. He is involved in at least 3 cases of poaching and horn smuggling. But there is no shortage of Gadis in India. It was only in 2019 that investigators established his identity with certainty. The Biswanath court issues a warrant for his arrest for rhino poaching in April 2019. Unfortunately, the Covid crisis erupted and Jobi Gadi took the opportunity to vanish, changing all his tapped phone numbers and moving from Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh) to Naharlagen, about 10 km away.

In January 2021, the authorities traced him following information about arms trafficking and poaching. The man maintains that all of his income comes from farming in the Western Siang district (Arunachal Pradesh).

According to a Kaziranga park official, it is possible that Gadi did not actually engage in poaching himself. His role could have been to supply the weapons and market the horns.

East Mojo, February 5, 2021; India Today, February 5, 2021; The Sentinel, February 6, 2021.⁴⁶

April 4 and 5, May 13, 2021

Jaldapara National Park, Alipurduar District, State of West Bengal, and State of Manipur, India

A female rhino aged about 15 years was found dead and dehorned on Sunday morning, April 4. She had been shot several times at close range about 2 days earlier. Park officials suspect poachers from another State. Officials expected the criminals would have stayed nearby in the forest of Chilapata. They immediately informed their counterparts in surrounding States.

The same evening, 2 poachers are arrested in Manipur (approximately 800 km away). A third arrest took place the next morning.

On May 13, on the indications of the 3 poachers, a final suspect, Parimal Barman, was arrested at his home in Bonchukamari, in the district of Alipurduar. Rifles, silencers and ammunition were seized. The Times of India, April 5, 2021; The Telegraph India, April 6 and May 15, 2021; The Statesman, May 15, 2021.⁴⁷

REPEATED OFFENSE

April 19, 2021

Kaziranga National Park, Nagaon District, State of West Bengal, India

Arrest of 2 rhino poachers, Anowar Hussain, 23, and Rofiqul Islam, 45, locals, and Deni Yepthomi, 27, from the neighboring State of Nagaland. Yepthomi was recruited for his shooting skills. Anowar Hussain was previously arrested in 2019 for his involvement in a rhino poaching case.

The Sentinel, April 20, 2021.⁴⁸

April 20, 2021

Kaziranga National Park, Golaghat District, State of Assam, India



Discovery of the carcass of the first poached rhino of the year in Kaziranga park. The horn was taken away by the poachers. They left behind only a munitions cartridge. India Today, April 21, 2021.⁴⁹

NEPAL

December 18, 2020 to February 10, 2021

Kathmandu and Gandaki, Bagmati and Madhesh Provinces, Nepal

Since July 2020, 4 rhinos have been killed in Chitwan national park which disrupts improving trends in recent years. This led the authorities to re-launch investigations. As a result, since December 18, 14 people have been arrested and 25 others are wanted. The Himalayan Times, February 10, 2021.⁵⁰

WESTERN EUROPE

THE NETHERLANDS

March 26, 2021

Hillegom, Province of South Holland, The Netherlands

Seizure of a suspected rhino horn from a private home.

National Police, April 14, 2021.⁵¹

FELINES, ELEPHANTS / RHINOCEROSES

AFRICA

KENYA

Beginning of January 2021

Amboseli-Tsavo-Kilimandjaro Ecosystem, Kenya

They had purchased 42 ribs, 8 canine teeth and 21 lion claws (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II), plus 2.8 kg of elephant ivory in Tanzania, all of which they intended to sell for a good profit in Kenya. The Big Life Foundation's intelligence network jumped into action and the 2 men were arrested with the help of the KWS. The foundation has noticed an increase in the trafficking of lion parts, but whether this is a growing trend or if it is due to the increasing effectiveness of anti-trafficking efforts is unknown. Big Life Foundation, January 14, 2021.¹

ASIA

CHINA

January 2021

Jiaozuo, Jiaozuo Prefecture, Henan Province, China

Zhou and Xiong spontaneously confessed their crimes. They pleaded guilty, admitted their responsibility, and voluntarily handed over the evidence they still held to the court. Zhou was sentenced to 5 years in prison and a fine of 30,000 yuan (4,600 US\$). Xiong was sentenced to 2 years in prison and a fine of 10,000 yuan (1,530 US\$). Between 2014 and 2018, Zhou bought 11 tiger teeth, 2 lion claws, 6 ivory items and one rhino horn item here and there for 170,000 yuan (26,000 US\$) and resold them to Xiong, who took a commission in the process and resold them to other people who have not yet been convicted. Jiaozuo Daily, January 29, 2021.²

Beginning of March 2021

Zhanjiang, Zhanjiang Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China



The food package contained 2 tiger bones, 2 tiger teeth and another 2 worked ivories.

Chinese Customs, March 9, 2021.³

1,204 grams

INDIA

February 7, 2021

Kendujhar, Kendujhar District, State of Odisha, India



This Sunday, 3 individuals were about to sell 2 tusks and one leopard skin. The Special Task Force prevented them from doing so and seized the items. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), February 9, 2021; The Hindu, February 9, 2021.⁴

March 19 and 20, 2021

Thirunelveli District and surroundings of Kodaikanal, Dindigul District, State of Tamil Nadu, India



Seizure of two elephant tusks, 4 claws and 4 tiger teeth. This was part of an operation carried out by federal agents of the WCCB in cooperation with State rangers.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), March 23, 2021.⁵

April 24, 2021

Raigadia, Nayagarh District, State of Odisha, India

Two arrests on the banks of the Mahanadi River near the Maa Kalapata Temple. Seizure of 2 elephant tusks and a leopard skin (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I). The New Indian Express, April 26, 2021.⁶



INDONESIA

March 23 and 24, 2021

Merangin and Sarolangun Regencies, Jambi Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

The 3 suspects are in custody in Jambi. They were buying and selling stuffed tigers (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) and raw elephant ivory in an organized gang.

Detikcom, March 30, 2021; Traffic Southeast Asia, March 31, 2021.⁷

VIET NAM

Beginning of January 2021

Cao Bang Province, Viet Nam. Border with China.

Voice of Viet Nam reports with photos that on Sunday, 32-year-old Nong Van Nhan was intercepted while driving his vehicle and was carrying 3 tiger skins, worked ivories and 2 patches of black skin of unknown origin without any documentation.

VnExpress International, January 5, 2021; ENV, January 7, 2021.⁸

March 29, 2021

Thach Thanh District, Thanh Hoa Province, Viet Nam



Nguyen Huu Thang, 51 months in prison. Nguyen Khac Hai, 48 months in prison. These are the judicial consequences of the incredible settlement of accounts that "On the Trail" reported (see n°29 p. 51) between a seller of fake tiger bones (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) (they were goat bones) and 2 buyers who, in retaliation, had beaten him up, taken him hostage and demanded a ransom of 500 million dong (21,000 US\$) in exchange for his release. The seller of fake tiger bones who had sold instead 141.7 grams of goat bones for 10.5 million dong (444 US\$) with a stump of fake rhino horn in addition escaped any prosecution.

Xa Luan, March 29, 2021.⁹



FELINES



Pallas's cat (*Otocolobus manul*). Photo Philbenstead

Animal	Part	US\$	Country/region	Ref. (year)
Tiger	Skin	15,330	Bangladesh	4 (2021)
		136,600	India	10 (2021)
		54,650		11 (2021)
		136,698		13 (2021)
	Glue	8,684 (/kg)	Viet Nam	33 (2021)
	Stuffed tiger	34,390	Slovakia	38 (2021)
Amur Tiger	Bones	1,070 (/kg)	Russia	34 (2021)
Lion	Dried heart	2,500-3,000	Uganda	51 (2021)
	Liver	2,000-2,500		51 (2021)
	Skeleton	1,500-2,000		51 (2021)
Leopard	Skin	3,900	Tanzania	68 (2021)
	Stuffed specimen	4,200	United States of America	69 (2019)
	Skins of 6 leopard cubs	6,900	India	98 (2021)
	Skin	5,445		103 (2021)
	Skin	13,000		104 (2021)
Snow leopard	Skin of 3 specimens	4,500	Kyrgyzstan	120 (2021)
Clouded leopard	Living specimen	6,880-103,210	Indonesia	121 (2021)
Jaguar	Jaguar cub	400	Nicaragua	136 (2021)

Felines, see also the chapters "Pangolins, Felines / Elephants / Rhinoceroses", "Felines, Elephants /Rhinoceroses" and "Multi-species".

AMERICA

BANGLADESH

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**Beginning of February 2021
Colombus, State of Ohio, United States
of America**



Ryan J. Gibbs, 44, pleaded guilty in August 2020 to buying a tiger skin in August 2019 (see "On the Trail" n° 30 p.67). The agreement with the court provided for one year's probation, 80 hours of community service and a fine of 100,000 US\$. The sentence has just been confirmed.

The Columbus Dispatch, February 3, 2021.¹

February 5, 2021

San Antonio, State of Texas, United States of America

Alert in San Antonio! A tiger is on the loose. He ran away from a private home. The owner had borrowed him from a friend to entertain his family. The friend in question turned out to have several tigers living with him. Tigers are allowed to be kept in Texas with a certificate of competency but this is not allowed in the city of San Antonio. The tiger jumped a wall and landed in the neighbor's yard before disappearing. Cameras captured his image but the animal squad was unable to capture him. "We have seen tiger cubs before, and they are cute. But then they go from 10 pounds to 700 or 800 pounds. Even if they are not trying to kill you, they are potentially lethal animals," says Shannon Sims, director of Animal Care Services. KABB FOX 29, February 6, 2021; United Press International, February 9, 2021.²

February 13, 2021

Bexar County, State of Texas, United States of America

Rescue of a 27 kg female tiger locked in a makeshift cabin in the middle of a cold snap. She alerted neighbors with insistent yelping. "It is not clear how the owner obtained the tiger," remarked Sheriff Javier Salazar. The tiger has been transferred to Black Beauty Ranch (Murchison, Texas). She will join other tigers escaped from captivity like Loki, who was freed from a cage in an abandoned garage in Houston 2 years ago. The tigress cub had been declawed and was wearing a harness. Her owner could be charged with animal abuse. She is already a decent size, and is reportedly bigger than the San Antonio runaway.



San Antonio Express-News, February 14, 2021; The Humane Society of the United States, February 24, 2021.³

January 19, 2021

Rajoir, Bagerhat District, Khulna Division, Bangladesh



Gaus Fakir had been under surveillance by the Sundarbans East Forest Department for several days. The Sundarbans national park, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site, is the last refuge of tigers in Bangladesh, and as if by coincidence that Gaus Fakir had a skin for sale. The forest guards arranged for him to meet a fake buyer who negotiated a price of 1,300,000 taka (15,330 US\$). When the exchange took place, the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) entered the game and seized Gaus Fakir and the skin.

Dhaka Tribune, January 20, 2021; The Daily Star, January 20, 2021.⁴

March 10, 2021

Shah Jalal International Airport, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Indian rupees, Bangladeshi taka, US dollars and 4 tiger bones: Shushang Ji, a Chinese citizen, is not an everyday tourist... He was intercepted this morning at around 11:00 a.m. before boarding a flight to his country.

Business Insider, March 11, 2021.⁵

INDIA

January 1 and 2, 2021

Umred Pauni Karhandla Wildlife Sanctuary, Nagpur District, State of Maharashtra, India



Dark beginning of the year. A tigress about 5 years old and 2 of her cubs of 5-6 months are found dead near a field where the carcass of a partially devoured cow lies. Poisoning is suspected. The next day, the corpse of the third tiger is discovered in a bush. Even before the result of the autopsy the investigation is completed: Divakar Dattuji Nagekar, who cultivates the field and grazes his cattle illegally on the outskirts of the sanctuary confesses to the crime. A can of insecticide is seized from his home. His cow had been attacked by the tigress on December 25. The man went to buy the pesticide in town and dumped it on the corpse. Tigers are known to come back to eat several times on the large preys they hunt.

Maharashtra Today, January 2, 2021; The Times of India, January 2 and 3, 2021; Maharashtra Times, January 3, 2021.⁶

TIGERS - followed

January 4, 2021

Nagpur, Nagpur District, State of Maharashtra, India



The Nagpur Chamber of the Maharashtra High Court showed firmness when judging a poacher. The offender, Rahul Pardhi (33), was given 3 sentences of 3 years in prison (of which he has already served 6 years) for poaching and selling the skins, claws, teeth and other parts of 3 tigers. Pardhi was a professional poacher affiliated with the Sansar Chand gang, and for the High Court "one does not know as to how many tigers and other scheduled wildlife in reserve forests, he might have hunted and killed." The offender filed a motion for reconsideration of his sentence, which was denied by the court because "If a habitual and compulsive wildlife offender like the petitioner is made to suffer the sentences consecutively, then it sends a message to the society that professional poachers are dealt with sternly..."

Outlook India (with PT), January 5, 2021; The Hindu, January 24, 2021.⁷

January 8, 2021

Nalfadi, Chandrapur District, State of Maharashtra, India

He thought he was clever but his ploy didn't last long. The man had told rangers that a cache containing tiger parts was in the courtyard, in front of a house whose inhabitants he wanted to incriminate. Investigators found a claw, 2 canines and a dozen whiskers hidden under a stone. But they quickly realized that they were being misled. The informant was arrested in the evening and he confessed to organizing everything. The investigation focused on the neighboring Telangana, where his supplier was located. The tiger was likely poached there a few years ago.

The Times of India, January 10, 2021.⁸

January 10 and 12 February 28, 2021
Wayanad District, Kerala State and Chikmagalur District, State of Karnataka, India



The Forestry Departments of the 2 States had been on edge for nearly 2 months, looking for a tiger injured in the neck by a collar trap. He had attacked and seriously injured a ranger in the shoulder on January 10, and then had attacked a second ranger 2 days later when he tried to shoot an anesthetic dart at him. There was a considerable deployment of troops and resources to find him: 3 teams of kumkis – elephants trained for patrols in forests with their mahout-, cages sprayed with urine of a tigress from the Mysuru zoo to attract him, camera traps installed every 500 m around an 8.5 km perimeter, and finally, 70 forest personnel divided into 7 patrols. Spotted by a drone, the feline had crossed the Kabini River to enter Karnataka. A cage lined with meat and bones finally attracted him. The specimen was found to be actually a tigress; about 9 years old. The steel collar she got trapped in had penetrated deep into her neck and the wound was infected. She was rushed to the Chamundi Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre for care.

The Hindu, January 10 and February 28, 2021; Hindustan Times, January 12, 2021; The New Indian Express, January 17 and 23, 2021.⁹

January 16, 2020

Khajrana, Indore District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Seizure of a suspected tiger skin and 2 turtles. The skin was likely tanned 20 to 25 years ago and was presumably bought by 3 individuals from a 4th contact whose whereabouts remain unknown. At first glance its value is estimated at 10 million rupees or 136,600 US\$ on the international market. The Khajrana police officers who gathered the information and arrested Prakash Sen, Sunil Prasad and Ram Chouhan received a reward of 20,000 rupees or 270 US\$ from Inspector General of Police Harinarayanachari Mishra.



The Free Press Journal, January 17, 2021; The Times of India, January 17, 2021.¹⁰

January 24, 2021

Sihawa, Dhamtari District, State of Chhattisgarh, India

Jairam Kavde would only be a receiver. The skin he was looking to sell is believed to have come from Narayanpur district, which borders Indravati national park and its Tiger reserve. The value of the skin (whose paws have been cut off) is estimated at 4 million rupees (54,650 US\$) on the international black market.

News Chant, January 24, 2021.¹¹

January 26, 2021

Tehsil of Baihar, Balaghat District, State of Madhya Pradesh State, India



Discovery of a dead 2-year-old tigress strangled by a collar trap made with a 2-wheel brake cable, in the buffer zone of the Kanha tiger reserve. The trail traced by a dog team led to the arrest of 6 suspects. The reserve housed 115 tigers at the time of the events. In the last 15 months Madhya Pradesh has lost 30 tigers and as many leopards to unnatural deaths.

The Indian Express, January 28, 2021; The Times of India, January 28, 2021.¹²

TIGERS - followed

FAMILY AFFAIRS

February 2, 2021

Vettaikaranpudur, Coimbatore District, State of Tamil Nadu, India



They were amateurs. 15 or 20 years ago, D. Mayilsamy had stolen a decades-old tiger skin from his boss and had kept it in front of his prayer altar ever since. His sons Mr. Udaykumar and Mr. Rameshkumar recently decided to sell it and talked about it in a bar. The information came back to the ears of the Forestry Department, which sent them a fake buyer to set them up. The deal ended with the marvelous sum of 10 million rupees (136,698 US\$). At the time of delivery, the 2 brothers were accompanied by their friends M. Pravin, P. Manikandan and M. Sabarisankar. Everyone ended up in police custody. The New Indian Express, February 4, 2021; The Times of India, February 4, 2021.¹³

FAMILY AFFAIRS

February 13, 2021

Belaparsuva border outpost, Lakhimpur Kheri District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India. India-Nepal border.

At only 22 and 23 years old, Vinod Pasi and Somnath Pasi are no longer choir children. The first has already been charged with kidnapping, the second for murder. They were caught in extremis by an SSB patrol and rangers as they were about to pass through Nepal with high-value skin, with no apparent injury, measuring 1.87 m and bearing 18 claws. With 3 young accomplices on the run, they had killed the animal 3 weeks ago in the most protected section of the Dudhwa tiger reserve, forbidden to the public 7 months a year. All of them come from the same village located in the buffer zone of the reserve. One of the fugitives is the son of a famous tiger poacher and according to an investigator, "This is definitely the work of an experienced poacher who must be guiding the new generations as the body was very professionally skinned." Sashastra Seema Bal, February 13, 2021; The Times of India, February 15 and 16, 2021.¹⁴

February 27, 2021

Gorakhpur Forest, Seoni District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India



After the decomposing carcass of an 8-year-old tiger was discovered in a pit, the dog team from the Pench tiger reserve conducted the investigation. The dog first detected the equipment used for the electrocution from about 50 meters away, then followed the trail which led to the arrest of 2 suspects.

The New Indian Express (with PTI), February 27, 2021; The Free Press Journal, February 28, 2021.¹⁵

February 27, 2021

Chalthi, Champawat District, State of Uttarakhand, India

Basant Bhatt and Mahendra Singh were driving to Tanakpur to sell the 1.7-meter-long skin of an approximately 7-year-old tiger. The police and forest guards intercepted them. The 2 poachers claim to have discovered and skinned the carcass in the forest some time ago.

Hindustan Times, February 28, 2021.¹⁶

February 28, 2021

Dokarpur, Lakhimpur Kheri District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India



They were trying to catch a nilgai (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), a wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) or a chital (*Axis axis*). Their trap was particularly cruel: a snare made of razor wire set down in a field. Instead, an 8-year-old male tiger got caught in it and died of haemorrhage. Vinod, Ritesh, Sandeep and Saryu are in custody. Other accomplices could still be identified. The Times of India, March 2 and 4, 2021.¹⁷



TIGERS - followed

March 12 and 13, 2021

Jagdapur, District Bastar, State of Chhattisgarh, India



The 8 men were allegedly carrying a 2.23-meter-long and 48 cm-wide skin in a minibus at 3 a.m. in order to perform a ritual at the Shivratri festival. The gang of worshippers included 5 policemen (Bhomraj Thakur, Arun Godiyam, Pavan Kumar Nakka, Rakesh Emla and Babulal Majji), 2 health professionals (Har Prasad Gavde and Surendra Kumar Dewangan) and their accomplice Anil Nakka. Investigations led the next day to the arrest of 2 other policemen, Santosh Baghel and Ramesh Aganpalli, a school headmaster, Rameshwar Sonwani, and 2 poachers from Dantewada district. The tiger, aged about 3 years, was caught in a trap. "The accused hold government post which they misused," said Judge Balram Dewangan. He rejected the traffickers' application for their release pending trial. The Free Press Journal, March 12, 2021; The New Indian Express, March 12 and 16, 2021; The Pioneer, March 15, 2021.¹⁸

March 2021

Ranthambore National Park, Sawai Madhopur District, State of Rajasthan, India

Their last appearance on one of the camera traps set up in the reserve dates back to March 2020. Since then, there has been no trace or sighting of tiger T-64, tigress T-73 and 2 of their cubs. The other 2 could be seen several times. Experts and wildlife conservationists fear that the family may have been poached, perhaps poisoned by one of the many herders grazing their cattle in the reserve. T-73 is the progeny of the famous tigress T-17, "Sundan", who also disappeared in 2013. Since 2006 the national park has mysteriously lost 30 tigers, including 11 tigresses who usually stay in their territory. The Times of India, March 19, 2021.¹⁹

March 23, 2021

Sonegaon and Sarra, Nagpur District, State of Maharashtra, India



A gloomy day in the district. First, the 4-year-old tigress T-7 was found strangled to death by a snare in a dry creek bed at around 1:00 p.m. An hour later, the carcass of an adult male with all 4 paws cut off was discovered by women collecting firewood. His death occurred about 10 days ago. The area is adjacent to the Pench tiger reserve. There is growing concern about "Walker," a famous tiger in the region who has not been seen for a long time.

The Times of India, March 24, 2021.²⁰

April 8, 2021

Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary, Lakhimpur Kheri District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India



Finally, "Thunder" is safe. An NGO campaign supported by celebrities was launched to urge the Forest Department to recover the tiger photographed in December 2020 with a nylon snare around his neck (see "On the Trail" n°31 p.54). The National Tiger Conservation Authority with the assistance of WWF-India managed to locate him on Thursday. He was anaesthetised and treated. After his release into the forest, he will be monitored for another month to ensure he is in good health.

The Times of India, April 10, 2021.²¹

April 12, 2021

Bandhavgarh National Park, Umaria District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

The ranger patrol came across the carcass lying in a bush. It is a male, about 10 years old. No apparent injuries related to a territorial fight, his death is a mystery. Toxicological tests are underway.

The Free Press Journal, April 13, 2021.²²

Mid-April 2021

Masinagudi, Nilgiris District, State of Tamil Nadu, India



Shepherd P. Kariyan had disappeared 5 months ago after a tigress was found poisoned, leaving behind 2 tiger cubs (see "On the Trail" n°31 p.54). When he returned to the village for a funeral, the forest rangers questioned him. He admitted to dropping a piece of meat soaked in a pesticide to get rid of the feline. He also named his accomplices. A. Ahmed Kabeer was arrested at the same time, S. Sadaam and Sowhath Ali are wanted. The Indian Express April, 22, 2021; The New Indian Express, April, 22, 2021.²³

TIGERS - followed

April 20, 2021

Bhiwandi, Thane District, State of Maharashtra, India



Prashant Singh, Chetan Gauda, Aryan Kadam and Aniket Kadam were on their way to Mumbai to deliver a skin and claws to a buyer in the mega city, but an informant had tipped off the police. They were arrested near the Basuri Hotel. The tiger was most likely poached in Ratnagiri district, in the south of the State.

The Free Press Journal, April, 21, 2021.²⁴

April 21 and May 2, 2021

Tipeshwar Wildlife Sanctuary, Yavatmal District, State of Maharashtra, India

Thanks to Dr Chetan Patond, a veterinarian from Nagpur, 180 km away, tigress T2-C1 was anaesthetised and the thick rope snare that was cutting deep into one of her front paws was removed. She was then treated on the spot for 12 days for the infection that had developed. She was then released. T2-C1 is 4 years old. She is a descendant of the sanctuary dominant tigress T2.

The Times of India, April, 27 and May 7, 2021.²⁵

April 23, 2021

Ghatkohka, Seoni District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Again the technique of a snare made of a throttle cable. Another strangled tiger in the buffer zone of the Pench reserve. The body is intact, and the target was actually a boar or an herbivore wanted for meat. Depressing normality.

The Free Press Journal, April, 24, 2021; The Hitavada, April, 24, 2021.²⁶

End of April, 2021

Chak Borda, Chandrapur District, State of Maharashtra, India

Caught red-handed with 4 canines, 12 claws and 15 whiskers in a bag, Ramesh Tekam, Surkiran Alam, Bharat Bawane and Lingo Bawane gave the names of their suppliers, Jiwandas Madavi and Namdev Atram. The latter 2 led the investigators to a stream where some of the tiger's bones were found. The death of the feline occurred 4 or 5 years ago.

The Times of India, April 25, 2021.²⁷

FAMILY AFFAIRS

April 25 and 30, 2021

Mangurla, Yavatmal District, State of Maharashtra, India



They had tried to smoke her out by setting fire to bamboo at the entrance to her den, and then had finished her off with sharp objects. She was already suffering from a neck wound inflicted by a snare. Ashok Atram and his son Lethu were arrested and a paw of the tigress was seized from their house. Their 3 accomplices and the missing paws are being sought. Their crime is all the more despicable as the tigress was expecting 4 cubs.

India Today, April, 26; Hindustan Times, April, 27; The Hitavada, April, 27, 2021; The Indian Express, April, 30, 2021.²⁸

INDONESIA

January 22 and 30, 2021

Gulo, Southeast Aceh Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia



Found dehydrated in a field, trapped by a wild boar snare, a young male aged between one and 1.5 years weighing 50 kg was treated for a wound on his right front paw. He was nicknamed Danau Putra and was released in Mount Leuser national park.

Antara News, January 24, 2021; New Straits Times, February 2, 2021.²⁹

February 6, 2021

Near Singkawang, West Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

2 female tigers, about 18 months old, took advantage of a landslide caused by heavy rains to escape from the Singka Zoo. In the city, the alarm is raised after a caretaker is found dead from scratches and bites near their cage, along with a cassowary (family Casuariidae), an ostrich (*Struthio camelus*) and a monkey. The city's residents are cloistered at home. The police have no mercy. One of the 2 runaways has been shot, the other is being hunted in the jungle near the town.

The Jakarta Post (with AFP), February 6, 2021.³⁰

MALAYSIA

February 22 and March 5, 2021

Felda Kerteh 3, State of Terengganu, Malaysia

Awang Rasau did not survive. Found dying in an oil palm plantation, this 160 kg male aged between 14 and 16 years old was riddled with 8 bullets. The efforts of the veterinarians



from the University of Putra Malaysia over 10 days were not enough. He was finished off by a bacterial infection and an excretory system failure.

The Star, February 24 and March 5, 2021; The Rakyat Post, March 7, 2021.³¹

THAILAND

REPEATED OFFENSE

March 9, 2021

Bang Sai Yai, Mukdahan Province, Thailand. Border with Laos.

Second one-month administrative closure for the Mukda Suan Sua (Mukda tiger park & Ffrm), already sentenced to the same measure in January. In November 2020, the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Protection (DNP) raided the zoo and among the many offences, the origin of 4 tiger cubs supposedly born on site was found to be false (see "On the Trail" n°31 p.55). This time, the pedigree of 2 others, "Khao Mao" and "Khao Pluak", is found to be tampered with. They are not the descendants of "Do Do" and "Ma Feung" imprisoned in the zoo, which DNA tests prove. The administration has charged director Somdit Thamwet with smuggling and perjury. He faces 5 years in prison. Investigators are looking into Vietnamese businessmen involved in the trafficking. The Department of National Parks is determined to close the zoo permanently and to carry out DNA tests on the 1,500 tigers held in the country's 39 breeding farms.

Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, March 9, 2021; The Nation Thailand, March 9, 2021; Bangkok Post, March 10, 2021.³²

VIET NAM

FAMILY AFFAIRS

January 19-20, 2021

Quang Diem, Ha Tinh Province, Viet Nam



Dinh Nhat Nghe and his wife Nguyen Thi Yen were about to boil the bones of a 250 kg tiger whose electrocuted corpse was lying on the floor of their house.



The purpose of the repugnant mix was to make glue, which is reputed to cure bone diseases and, of course, to increase virility. Its price reaches 20 million dong (868 US\$) per 100 grams, or 8,684 US\$/kg. They fled when the police arrived but surrendered the next day. Dinh Nhat Nghe was charged on March 9. He had bought the corpse in Nghe An province, the epicentre of tiger trafficking in the country (see "On the Trail" n°19 p.72, n°21 p.67, n°26 p.63 and n°28 p.78).

ENV, January 20, 2021; VnExpress International, January 21, 2021; VietnamPlus (with VNA), March 9, 2021; VietNamNet, March 11, 2021.³³

EUROPE

RUSSIA

REPEATED OFFENSE

January 29, 2021

Dalnerechensky District, Primorsky Krai, Russia

Announcement by the Amur Tiger Centre of the arrest of 2 men who were trying to sell 15 kg of bones for the sum of 1.2 million rubles (16,040 US\$, or 1,070 US\$/kg). The bones are believed to come from 2 tigers poached in late 2020. One of the suspects is already indicted for selling tiger bones last autumn to a Chinese citizen.

IA Krasnaya Vesna, January 30, 2021; Vsluh Ru, February 20, 2021.³⁴

March 7, 2021

Khabarovsk, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia. Near the border with China.

Arrest of the poachers of a Siberian Tiger who were trying to sell the animal's skin, head and bones. They face 8 years in prison. There were only 600 Siberian Tigers left living in the wild at the last count in October 2020.

The Siberian Times, March 10, 2021.³⁵



March 21, 2021

Ivanovo, Ivanovo Oblast, Russia

The announcement is enticing. "You will be entitled to the services of a makeup artist, a professional retouching service, and above all you will have unique photos with a tiger", all for 7,000 rubles or 95 US\$. Environmental activists have warned the police. The ad has since been removed and an investigation is underway to determine the origin of the feline. The couple of photographers will have to pay a fine.

IvanovoNews, March 22, 2021.³⁶



TIGERS - followed

April 13, 2021

Anyuy National Park, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia

Discovery of the decapitated body of a Siberian Tiger floating in the Anyuy River. The authorities put forward 2 hypotheses: either the head was removed to be sold or the poachers wanted to get rid of the evidence of poaching. An autopsy is planned to determine when the tiger was killed and how long it had been there.
RT, April 15, 2021.³⁷

SLOVAKIA

Mid-January 2021

Ziharec, Nitra Region, Slovakia



Jan K. is suspected of having fraudulently imported into Slovakia a stuffed tiger that he slaughtered in South Africa on a hunting reserve. He also used his trophy to promote hunting in South Africa. The value of the animal is estimated at 28,000 € or 34,390 US\$. The offender faces 5 years in prison. In 2015, in South Africa, there were 280 tigers on 44 breeding farms.
Police of the Slovak Republic, January 19, 2021; Zenger, January 27, 2021.³⁸

CZECHIA

April 13, 2021

Liberec, Liberec Region, Czechia

On appeal, the sentence imposed on Ludvík Berousek was reduced from 2 years to 18 months suspended and the fine of 15,000 US\$ was cancelled. Berousek, a trainer and member of a circus family, had shot and killed a tiger. Four tiger skins, claws and parts of other animals were seized from his house (see "On the Trail" n°22 p.69 and n°25 p.63).

He sold the tiger organs to a taxidermist who made wine out of them, which was exported or sold on the market in Sapa, which is the Vietnamese district of Prague. The court of appeal rejected the crime of trafficking in an organized gang.
Aktualne.cz, April 13, 2021; Česká televize, June 22, 2021.³⁹



TIGERS AND LIONS

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 15 and May 6 and 17, 2021

Thackerville, State of Oklahoma, United States of America

Following a court order, the federal government required Jeffrey and Lauren Lowe and their affiliates to hand over all legally protected big cats they claim to have in Tiger King park. In all, 46 tigers, 7 lions, 15 ligers (tiger-lion hybrids) and one jaguar were seized. The animals were previously in the hands of Joseph Maldonado-Passage, also known as Joe Exotic, who is now in prison for animal cruelty and attempted murder (see "On the Trail" n°29 p.53).

The felines were distributed to various other establishments where they were exhibited and maintained in conditions deemed acceptable and compatible with the Endangered Species Act and the Animal Welfare Act.

The NGO SHARK (SHowing Animals Respect & Kindness) is concerned about the fate of the remaining animals, wolves, monkeys, pumas, and camels, who are also subject to the Lowe's neglect and starvation. The attention that Netflix has inspired through its documentary Tiger King is not over.

Big Cat Rescue, January 17, 2021; US Department of Justice, January 19 and May 20, 2021; Thirty Mile Zone, May 6 and 17, 2021; iHeartMedia, May 7, 2021; The Oklahoman, May 13, 2021; WRAL-TV, May 25, 2021; Springfield News-Leader, May 26, 2021; KNTV, June 9, 2021; KXII, July 2, 2021; Lady Freethinker, July 9, 2021; USA Today, August 19, 2021; and NME, September 9, 2021.⁴⁰

April 6 and July 12, 2021

Charlestown, State of Indiana, United States of America



Tim Stark, founder in 1999 of Wildlife in Need, a roadside zoo in Clark County, is no longer allowed to acquire, exhibit or own exotic wildlife or species native to America. Wildlife in Need had been accused for years of abusing tigers, lions and tiger hybrids. His "Tiger Baby Playtime" program forced the premature separation of mothers and cubs and made him a lot of money, which he diverted to personal use inconsistent with the non-profit status of Wildlife in Need. Stark had gained international notoriety through his exposure in the Netflix series "Tiger King: Murder, Mayhem and Madness." His run ended in October 2020 in New York State at a bed and breakfast that had to be evacuated when Stark threatened to pull the pin on an explosive grenade.

Courier Journal, April 7 and July 16, 2021; WAVE 3, April 12, 2021; WHAS-TV, July 17, 2021; ABC 7 Chicago, July 19, 2021.⁴¹

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

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

February 25, 2021

Krugerdersp, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Arrest of 37-year-old Andries van Tonder and seizure of lion bones valued at nearly 151,000 US\$. The bones are believed to have come from at least 27 individuals. The dried bones were packed in his garage and in a clandestine laboratory, ready to be shipped to an unspecified destination. The suspect's lion bone license had expired in 2016, his export license in 2020. On March 1, he was released on bail for 340 US\$.

Intelligence Bureau SA, February 27, 2021; SAPS, February 28, 2021 ; Save the Beasts, March 2 and 3, 2021.⁴²



April 2, 2021

Balule Nature Reserve, Limpopo Province, South Africa

The lion was detected upon entering the reserve with a deep neck wound from a metal trap. His misfortune appeared to be recent. The wire was removed and the wound was disinfected.

Ian Nowak, April 2, 2021.⁴³



April 28, 2021

Love Lions Alive Sanctuary, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

Transfer to South Africa of 3 lions mistreated in Ukraine. They started their careers in the Pokrovsk zoo (Donetsk oblast), then as adults they were given to a so-called lion rehabilitation center in Vasylivka (Zaporizhia oblast) where they were kept in unsuitable cages. They arrived in South Africa on a



Qatari company's flight via Doha. After disembarking in Tambo, Johannesburg, and checking the validity of the CITES export and import certificates, veterinarians found that they were malnourished and in catastrophic condition. They were transported by road to the Love Lions Alive Sanctuary in the Eastern Cape Province, which is committed to providing them with a long and peaceful retirement. They range in age from 4 to 7 years. Any anesthesia for organ and skeletal x-rays is not possible for several months due to their precarious health. Another adult lioness and 3 cubs who were exploited as pets in Odessa were evacuated on the same flight. They were transferred to a rehabilitation center in Gqeberha (formerly Port Elizabeth). The entire operation was designed, organized, and funded by Lionel de Lange and their donor network.

Kate on Conservation, November 13, 2020; Love Lions Alive Project, November 19, 2020, April 18 and May 24, 2021; Andrew Van Ginkel, February 28, 2021; Wildlife at Risk, March 5 and 27, 2021; The South African, April 29, 2021; Zelda de Keijzer, April 30, 2021.⁴⁴

KENYA

February 17, 2021

Lake Jipe, Tsavo West National Park, Kenya

The dead lioness was probably the victim of a poisoned goat carcass.

SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, February 2021.⁴⁵



March 1, 2021

Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya

An urgent rescue of a lion accused of attacking herds and about to be killed by the Maasai. After negotiations, he was anesthetized and transferred to Tsavo East national park.

SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, March 2021.⁴⁶

LIONS - followed

March 10, 2021

Near Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya

Relocation of a lioness. Her territory is gradually being taken over by herders and farmers. Her life was in danger because she was accused of attacking livestock. Anesthetized, put in a Land Cruiser and woken up with an antidote, she was placed inside the park with hopes that she would not return to land occupied by humans.

SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, March 2021.⁴⁷

March 19, 2021

Kuku Group Ranch, Kajiado County, Kenya

Death of a lion. The body is covered with wounds from throwing weapons and maggots. The villages of Olorika and Oltiasika no longer tolerate the presence of wild animals.

SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, March 2021.⁴⁸

April 5, 2021

Olgulului Group Ranch, Kajiado County, Kenya

Lion death by poisoning. Stomach contents should confirm this possibility.

SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, April 2021.⁴⁹



April 5, 2021

Kuku Group Ranch, Kajiado County, Kenya

A lion and what may have been a hyena are found in close proximity to each other.

Poisoning is suspected.

SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Vet. Unit, April 2021.⁵⁰



UGANDA

March 20, 2021

Ishasha, Western Region, Uganda. Border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Six dead lions. The corpses are mutilated. Nine dead vultures, including 8 white-beaked vultures (*Gyps africanus*, Appendix II) and one white-headed vulture (*Trigonoceps occipitalis*, Appendix II), complete the scene. The crime was committed using Furadan. An anonymous respected connoisseur reported that a dried lion's heart sells for 2,500 to 3,000 US\$, a liver for 2,000 to 2,500 US\$, a skeleton for 1,500 to 2,000 US\$. "Look at the mushrooming housing market within the parks. Where do you think the money is coming from?" It comes partly from the Chinese community and also from national businessmen struggling because of the Covid crisis, or from politicians wanting to increase their chances of winning elections. The witch doctors guarantee their clients prosperity and success via rituals with lion organs.

NTV Uganda, March 20, 2021; The Elite AntiPoaching Units And Combat Trackers, March 20, 2021; Shift Media News, March 21, 2021; Uganda Wildlife Authority, March 23, 2021; Uganda Police Force, March 24, 2021; ChimpReports, March 29, 2021; The East African, May 17, 2021.⁵¹

On the Trail n°32. Robin des Bois

ZAMBIA

January 27, 2021

Chilanga, Lusaka Province, Zambia

One or 2 lions escape from the zoo. One lion is shot by the police.

Mwebantu, January 27, 2021; Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation, January 27, 2021.⁵²

ZIMBABWE

January 21, 2021

Dete, Hwange National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

One of the Buster Sisters died at the hands of professional hunter Raphael Ndlovu. The lioness was convicted of killing 5 of the 120 goats and other livestock that Ndlovu grazed in Hwange park.

Noma Dube, January 23, 2021.⁵³

AMERICA

MEXICO

February 19, 2021

Iztapalapa, Mexico City, Mexico

A decomposing lion carcass was found. An autopsy is to be carried out to determine the cause of death and whether it was a breeding lion or an illegal lion in captivity. If it is a breeding lion, veterinarians should be able to find a microchip indicating the identity of his owner.

México Desconocido, February 22, 2021.⁵⁴

ASIA

SAUDI ARABIA

April 15, 2021

Riyadh, Riyadh Province, Saudi Arabia

A 25-year-old man was attacked by the lion he had been illegally breeding for 2 months in his house. He had been breeding big cats for 5 years. The accident resulted in 2 victims including the man whom the authorities were unable to save, and the lion whom they shot. The National Center for Wildlife offers its condolences and reminds us that it is not only forbidden but also dangerous to breed and keep large predators, whose behavior is unpredictable.

Al Arabiya, April 16, 2021; Saudi Gazette, April 17, 2021.⁵⁵

CHINA

March 27, 2021

Xichang, Sichuan Province, China

"At first, we thought we had gone to the wrong place. But after walking around the cage, we realized this is where the lion should be housed." The sign on the cage says it's a lion, but the animal doesn't look like one. And for good reason, it is a golden retriever. A zoo employee explains that the lion has been moved and that they didn't have time to change the sign. For Tang, this is not enough. He bought a ticket to see a lion and there's no lion anywhere. "I don't know how to explain the current situation to my kid." The question of where the lion was taken remains open.

Substituting a dog for a wild animal in a zoo enclosure is not uncommon in China, but usually dogs play the role of wolves instead. This happened at Xianning's Xiangwushan Zoo in early March and at Wuhan's Jiufengshan Zoo in 2019.

South China Morning Post, April 1, 2021.⁵⁶

INDIA

REPEATED OFFENSE

February 3, 4 and 12, 2021

Khambha, Gir Somnath District, State of Gujarat, India



Four men set a dozen 8 to 10 cm wide traps in a wasteland. Members of a nomadic community from Than tehsil (Surendranagar district, 250 km away), used to hunt monitor lizards and other small animals to extract oil, which they believed to have aphrodisiac properties.

They did not expect to catch a lion cub. When the men approach, the cub's mother jumps on one of them. Rajesh Parmar, Mani Parmar and Aslam Parmar rushed Habib Samsher Parmar to Veraval hospital. With an abdominal injury, he was put on oxygen. The doctors, learning that he had been injured by a lion, alerted the forestry services. A team went to Khambha to look after the cub and remove the traps. Another team went to the hospital, but the 4 suspects fled in a hurry. They were arrested in Vadla, 80 km away. The injured man was still carrying his oxygen tank and was transferred to Junagadh hospital.

The story does not end there. The same day, 26 people were arrested in Bhavnagar district (200 km away) and 26 others near Sihor. They are suspected of being connected to the 4 poachers. The next day, 38 more people were arrested. They are suspected of having participated in setting the traps in Khambha. Finally, on February 12, 5 people were arrested in Dwarka. They are said to have provided the traps. One of them admits to having killed a lion cub a few years earlier.

The cub was only slightly injured and is recovering at the Sasan animal care center.

The Indian Express, February 4, 2021; The Times of India, February 4, 5 and 13, 2021.⁵⁷

PAKISTAN

Early March, 2021

Lahore, Province of Punjab, Pakistan

The AFZL photo studio, renowned for its wedding photos, is in the news. On Facebook, a sedated lion cub was featured in the foreground of a couple's photo. The post quickly disappeared following an avalanche of indignant reactions. According to the owners of the studio, the cub belonged to one of their friends and he was there by chance. According to the NGO JFK Animal Rescue and Shelter, the lion cub was actually owned by the studio. Whatever the case, there is little chance that his circumstance will improve. As Hammad Naqi Khan, Director General of WWF Pakistan, explains, "The lion is an exotic species and is not protected under the relevant wildlife acts. It is legal to buy and sell exotic species bred within the country and lions are one of them. Therefore, it is not difficult to get a cub for a photoshoot. It was possible to acquire a license to own a tiger or lion as a pet for just 100,000 Pakistani rupees [630 US\$]."



In Punjab province, the trade of lions and tigers for the pet market is thriving. In Lahore alone, there are reportedly 47 farms, up from 18 two years ago, not counting those operating undeclared. Social networks are the preferred sales platforms.

The Independent, March 12, 2021; The Express Tribune, April 10, 2021.⁵⁸

LIONS - followed

EUROPE

GERMANY

February 25, 2021

Börde District, Saxony-Anhalt State, Germany

Mojo, a 3.5-year-old white lion, is missing.

The story of the legal troubles of André S., 32, his owner since the end of 2018, begins in early 2020. The Börde Administrative Court ruled that the lion's detention was illegal. Mojo was transferred to the zoo in Halle (Saxony-Anhalt State), before being taken back by his owner a few months later. After several rounds of court proceedings, and without any improvement in the feline's conditions of detention, the Magdeburg Higher Administrative Court ruled in February 2021 that André S. was not entitled to keep his 'pet.' This was not his first time; in 2015, 2 lion cubs were confiscated from him.

Since March, we don't know what happened to Mojo. According to André S., he is in the Netherlands. If this is true, his movement is similar to smuggling as he is not registered there. André S. was fined.

When no news of the lion was received by January 2022, Vier Pfoten filed a complaint against André S. for animal cruelty. The NGO offers a reward of 3,000 € (3,400 US\$) to anyone who can identify Mojo's current location.

Mitteldeutsche Zeitung, February 25, 2021; Bild, April 16, 2021; Vier Pfoten, January 13, 2022.⁵⁹

Week of February 8, 2021

Moutonshoek Valley, Western Cape Province, South Africa



There are approximately 500 leopards in the Western Cape province and 400 in the Eastern Cape province. Recently, a pregnant female was rescued in the area thanks to the cooperation of a landowner. An in situ ultrasound confirmed that she is carrying 2 fetuses. Accused of attacking alpacas, she had been trapped in a cage. After anesthesia, she was released to an appropriate location.

Landmark Foundation, February 13, 2021.⁶¹



LEOPARDS - *Panthera pardus*, Appendix I

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

January 18, 2021

Lapalala Wilderness Reserve, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Rescue of a leopard strangled by a trap near a village and a fenced agricultural plot. Lapalala's rangers and vets intervened in time. Favorable prognosis.

Guides & Rangers, January 19, 2021.⁶⁰



GABON

January 2021

Gabon

Bertrand Mefe Me Ndong and Marcel Ntoutoume are sentenced to 90 days in prison, 10 of which are suspended, and to 6 months in prison, one of which is suspended, and a fine of 930 US\$. Essono Edou, a Guinean national, was sentenced to 12 months in prison, 2 of which were suspended. The 3 individuals must each pay a sum equal to 5,600 US\$ in damages. They took part in the violent death of a leopard and in the attempted sale of his parts.

Conservation Justice, February and March 2021; EAGLE, March 2021.⁶²



February 12, 2021

Oyem, Woleu-Ntem Province, Gabon

Three men. Three travel bags. Three leopard skins and some teeth. Joint operation of the Judicial Police, Water and Forests and Conservation Justice. EAGLE, February 13, 2021; 7Jours Info, February 15, 2021; Conservation Justice, February 2021.⁶³

LEOPARDS - followed NAMIBIA

April 23, 2021

Otjiwarongo, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

Arrest of Matheus Paulus. He was carrying leopard skin.

Namibian Sun, April 29, 2021.⁶⁴

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

January 4, 2021

Brazzaville, Department of Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo

Two traffickers were unmasked and handcuffed thanks to the gendarmerie, forestry officers and the PALF (Project to Support the Application of the Law on Wildlife). Seizure of a leopard skin.

EAGLE, January 5, 2021; First Médiac, January 8, 2021.⁶⁵

January 29 and July 11, 2021

Dolisie, Department of Niari, Republic of the Congo



Justice has hiccups. In mid-October 2019, Fabrice Ibonga and Jean Ghislain Ibonga were arrested for trafficking leopard skin and teeth (see "On the Trail" n°27 p.75). On October 24, they were referred to the prosecutor's office of the Dolisie court. On October 29 and November 8, 2019, they were released on bail.

On January 29, 2021, after several adjournments, the 2 Ibongas were sentenced to 2 years in prison, fined 150,000 CFA francs (280 US\$) and ordered to pay 500,000 CFA francs (940 US\$) in damages. The only problem was that they did not respond to court summonses. They were on the run. An arrest warrant was issued against them.

On July 11, the fugitive Fabrice Ibonga was arrested in Dolisie and taken by the gendarmerie to the town's prison to serve his sentence.

On October 7, he was granted a one-month leave of absence for medical reasons. His reintegration was scheduled for November 6, 2021. The other Ibonga is still at large. To be continued.

Projet d'appui à l'Application de la Loi sur la Faune sauvage (PALF), January, July and October 2021; EAGLE, July 2021.⁶⁶

SENEGAL

April 14, 2021

Kédougou, Kédougou Region, Senegal. Border with Guinea.

Two arrests. Four skins including 3 leopard skins. An entire family was wiped out and smuggled from Guinea-Conakry. Operation led by the Directorate of National Parks, the police station of Kédougou with the support of EAGLE Senegal.

EAGLE, April 15, 2021; Dakaractu, April 16, 2021.⁶⁷



TANZANIA

March 13, 2021

Temeke District, Dar es Salaam Region, Tanzania

The leopard skin, valued at 8.8 million shillings or nearly 3,900, US\$, was in the hands of Adam Mohamed and Nganya Mkanyage who were trying to sell it. The court conditioned their provisional release on a bail of 2,200 US\$. Unable to pay the bail, the 2 defendants remain in detention until further notice.

Daily News, March 29, 2021.⁶⁸

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 29, 2021

State of Ohio, United States of America



In August 2019, Michael T. Merisola posted a photo on Instagram. In the background sits a leopard trophy. An undercover agent of the US Fish and Wildlife contacts Merisola and claims to want to buy the trophy. The transaction is set at 4,200 US\$. "The buyer" goes to Buffalo to meet with Merisola. He pays a deposit and asks that the trophy be delivered to Ohio taking all precautions to avoid problems with the authorities. After receiving the balance of the payment, Merisola transferred the leopard remnant to Ohio. He pleaded guilty.

US Department of Justice, February 1, 2021.⁶⁹

ASIA

CHINA

January 14, 2021

Jincheng, Jincheng Prefecture, Shanxi Province, China

A female who is 3-4 years old struggles. She is trapped. The emergency services delivered her. The right front paw is in a precarious condition. She was immediately transferred to a veterinary clinic. The trapper was reportedly arrested.

China Global Television Network, January 22, 2021.⁷⁰

April 19, 2021

Hangzhou, Hangzhou Prefecture, Zhejiang Province, China

On April 19, 3 leopards escaped from China's largest safari park, which measures 223 hectares. The management office says nothing and is suspected of having covered up the case so as not to miss the income coming from the May holidays; 100,000 visitors are expected.

At the beginning of May, alerts multiplied. People see or think they see leopards in the mountains. The last wild leopards in China live in the center of the country, from eastern Tibet to northern Hebei and northern Henan. The leopard rumor becomes a fact when someone manages to capture a fugitive specimen in a photo. =>

LEOPARDS - followed

Considerable resources were immediately deployed to find the animal. The investigations focused on the plantations of West Lake Longjing Tea, which produces a green tea very well known in China. The mobilization troops are Chinese. 4000 trackers roam the mountains, 70 drones fly over them. 270 hunters and rescuers specialized in the capture of animals and accustomed to emergency situations are at the forefront of the operation. In the wake of the speculations in popular discourse amongst neighboring populations, and given the high strata of the administration, the safari park drops the piece, recognizes that 3 leopards escaped from a quarantine section taking advantage of gaps in the safety nets and justifies its silence by the need not to produce panic, and insists that the fugitive specimens are young and unexperienced; thus being "unlikely to cause serious and durable harm" in the area. However, locals and animal advocacy stakeholders do not agree. Eventually, safari park closed to the public until further notice.

In mid-May, 2 of the 3 escapees were recaptured. The footprints of the third have already been taken and are being followed by the tracking dogs of the Wolves Rescue Team, however the specimen remains insensitive to the deployment of the armada. He is not one to surrender.

At the end of the year, 6 employees including 2 directors of the safari park are sentenced to 2 years in prison while the third leopard remains elusive.

China Daily, May 8, 11 and 12 and November 19, 2021; People, May 10, 2021; Global Times, July 15, 2021.⁷¹

INDIA

January 4, 2021

Matiali, Jalpaiguri District, State of West Bengal, India



A leopard was found dead near a tea plantation. According to the post-mortem examination, he succumbed to a fight with another of his kind. One paw was cut clean off by someone passing by.

The Telegraph India, January 5, 2021.⁷²

January 5, 2021

Buddha Kheda, Saharanpur District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Blows of sticks, axes and triumphant selfies broadcast on "social" networks: the carcass of a leopard abandoned in a sugar cane field could not escape the Forest Department. 26 residents of the village were charged.

The Times of India, January 6, 2021.⁷³

January 5, 2021

Odour, Shopian District, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, India

Lynching of a leopard. Rumor has it that he had killed a dozen sheep.

Greater Kashmir, January 7, 2021.⁷⁴

Early January 2021

Kuruli, Pune District, State of Maharashtra, India



Another female leopard trapped in a sugar cane field. This one is about 3 years old, metal jaws have closed on her left front paw. Fortunately, the Forestry Department notified in time the NGO Wildlife SOS, which sent a team of 4 specialists based in Junnar. The team disinfects the wound and administers painkillers and anti-inflammatory medication. She is saved.

Wildlife SOS, The Times of India, January 11, 2021.⁷⁵

January 10, 2021

Bhimtari, Giridih District, State of Jharkhand, India



Controversy between the forest guards and the inhabitants of the village. The latter accuse forest guards of having neglected a leopard locked in a metal collar trap set to capture a wild boar. The feline died after many hours of suffering. The chief officer defended his men by saying that a cage had to be brought in from Hazaribagh to successfully save the animal. One suspect was arrested.

The New Indian Express, January 10; The Times of India, January 11, 2021.⁷⁶

January 19, 2021

Bhuruk, Balaghat District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

A leopard was found with a shot in the head, and with a paw, claws and tail cut off. A canine brigade led the forest guards to a house where 2 suspects were arrested.

Naidunia, January 20, 2021.⁷⁷

January 19, 2021

Gariyaband District, State of Chhattisgarh, India

Ramesh Nayak and Keshav Manjhi were looking to sell 2 skins in a village but were denounced. According to police, they are part of a poacher gang active in Kalahandi district, Odisha. In 2020, the police had already seized 7 leopard skins in villages bordering the 2 States.

Hindustan Times, January 20, 2021.⁷⁸



© Greater Kashmir

LEOPARDS - followed

January 22, 2021

Viripara, Idukki District, State of Kerala, India



For 2 weeks Kollikolavil Vinod P. K. ruminated on his revenge. A 6-year-old leopard is said to have devoured one of his goats. With his accomplices Basil Garden V. P. Kuriakose (74 years old), Chempenpurayidathil C. S. Binu, Malayil Sali Kunjappan and Vadakkumchalil Vincent they tracked the animal and set a collar trap made out of a motorcycle brake cable. The animal fell for the trap. They pulled out his claws and teeth, extracted his bones and cut his skin to sell everything at a good price. They also treated themselves to a feast with one of the thighs but did not enjoy the taste: the rest of the meat and the bowels were thrown into the river. The feline weighed 50 kg. After having been denounced, they were detained today by the forest guards who already knew them for poaching wild boars. The trophies were seized from Vinod.



The Hindu, January 23, 2021; The New Indian Express, January 23, 2021; The Times of India, January 24, 2021.⁷⁹

January 23, 2021

Rudrapur, Dehradun District, State of Uttarakhand, India



This one was luckier. Trapped by a snare placed in a mango plantation, an adult male was able to be anesthetized and released. He will be equipped with a geolocator collar and released in the forest, far from the villages. This is the fifth leopard to be trapped in 2 months in the district. A male died.

The Times of India, January 24, 2021.⁸⁰

January 24, 2021

Nagarjunsagar-Srisailem Tiger Reserve, State of Andhra Pradesh, India

Arrested thanks to intelligence from the WCCB headquarters, the 3 traffickers held a leopard skin. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), January 27, 2021.⁸¹

End of January 2021

Agarwada, Balaghat District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Discovery of the decaying corpses of a female and a male leopard 500 m apart. Their remains are intact but their death is not natural. They were poisoned or electrocuted. An investigation is opened. In December 2020, the Prime Minister of Madhya Pradesh had proudly declared "Tiger State is now a Leopard State as well," following the national census which had counted 3,421 of the 12,852 living in India. The crown is already tarnished. The Times of India, January 24, 2021.⁸²

January 27, 2021

Udanti Sitanadi Tiger Reserve, Gariaband District, State of Chhattisgarh, India

A smuggling gang whose members ages range from 17 to 60 years old were riding on 2 motorcycles at the border of Chhattisgarh and Odisha when they were intercepted. The gang was formed by Kailash, Paramanand, Yogesh, Ramprasad and Mohan Yadav. They carried 2 leopard skins, one 1.65 m long, the other 1.34 m long, poached in the reserve. An operation involving the Forest Department of the 2 States stopped them in their tracks. A local court sent them to prison.

Naidunia, January 29, 2021; The Pioneer, January 29, 2021.⁸³

January 27, 2021

Mauzampur Sadat, Bijnor District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

This time it was a 3-year-old female who was surrounded and beaten to death. She had ventured near the village and would have attacked 2 boys, Kamal and Sajan (13 and 14), who were playing. She then took refuge in a sugar cane field. Once killed by the adults of the village, her corpse was thrown into a pond. Alerted rangers recovered her and seized a video of the carnage. One suspect, "Bholu" has been identified and other villagers are expected to be charged.

The Times of India, January 29, 2021.⁸⁴

January 31, 2021

Nagudu, Ganjam District, State of Odisha, India



A 4-year-old male encased in a net against wild boars did not survive. The alerted rangers had been able to anesthetize him and were about to release him into the jungle, but he died in their custody hours later from hunger and respiratory complications. According to the rules enforced in the State, an autopsy was carried out and the remains were cremated on a funeral pyre. Six residents of Nagudu and Pankala Sahi villages were arrested.

Kalinga TV, January 29; The New Indian Express, January 29 and 30, 2021; Odisha Bytes, January 31, 2021.⁸⁵

LEOPARDS - followed

February 1, 2021

Ambagaon, Harda District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India



The carcass of the leopard was discovered this morning in the forest, near the village. The findings show that he was electrocuted by a trap. Three teams of rangers are in charge of the investigation.

East Mojo (with PTI), February 2, 2021.⁸⁶

February 3, 2021

Almora, Almora District, State of Uttarakhand, India

Virendra Singh Negi, Yashpal Singh Rawat and Govind Singh Rawat were driving to the big city of Haldwani to sell the skin of the leopard they had killed in the forest near Almora. The district police's special operations unit intercepted them thanks to a tip-off.

The Times of India, February 3, 2021.⁸⁷

February 8, 2021

Munnar, Idukki District, State of Kerala, India



Accompanied by rangers, veterinarian Rachel Nisha was able to release a 6-year-old male without damage. A snare placed in the Thalayar tea plantation had closed on his right front paw. He was released into the forest.

The Times of India, February 9, 2021.⁸⁸

February 10, 2021

Khatima, Udham Singh Nagar District, State of Uttarakhand, India



Veeru Prasad had been trafficking the skins and organs of wild animals for a while, with clients in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. The Special Task Force (STF) caught him as he came to the city to sell a skin 2.13 m long (with tail) and 1.21 m wide. The feline was reportedly captured by a snare trap and killed last year in the Chalthi forest in the nearby Champawat district.

The Times of India, February 11, 2021.⁸⁹

February 14, 2021

Thuramukh, Golaghat District, State of Assam, India

Suraj Boraik and Bitu Bhumij tried to save a goat from the clutches of a leopard that had infiltrated their village, near the Nambor Wildlife Sanctuary. The operation went wrong, they were attacked and the feline died under the blows of sticks and tools of a crowd of inhabitants who came to their rescue. The Sentinel, February 15, 2021.⁹⁰

February 15, 2021

Palaspada, Nuapada District, State of Odisha, India

Arrest by the Special Operations Force (STF) of the criminal brigade of Saburban Singh Deo and Samansingh Majhi in possession of a hide and poaching equipment.

Odisha TV, February 15, 2021.⁹¹

February 15, 2021

Kalewada, Bhandara District, State of Maharashtra, India



For veterinarian Gunwant Bhadke, everything indicates that the dead felines were poisoned. No apparent injuries or signs of electrocution, and their internal organs have lesions. The 2 males of about 5 and 8 years of age were thrown into a well 600 m from the protected forest of Adyal. Five claws are missing from each.

The Times of India, February 16, 2021.⁹²



February 15, 2021

Kauha Pani, Kabirdham District, State of Chhattisgarh, India



A dog team from the Achanakmar Wildlife Sanctuary walked up the trail from the scene of the crime in the jungle to the poacher's village. A 3-year-old female had been electrocuted. The suspect is arrested. The rangers cremated the feline's remains in the forest.

The Pioneer, February 17, 2021.⁹³

February 17, 2021

Kundli Har, Kangra District, State of Himachal Pradesh, India

After receiving information by the WCCB, the police set up a roadblock tonight in the village, on the road between Dehra and Jawalaji. At their sight a motorcycle arriving from Dehra tried to take the tangent but was caught. The 2 fugitives were



carrying 3 skins with bullet holes. Their arrest was a prelude, a local gang was targeted. Four other people were detained, 2 rifles, ammunition, snaring traps and an extra skin were seized.

The Tribune, February 18, 2021; Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), February 19, 2021.⁹⁴



LEOPARDS - followed

February 17, 2021

Rampur, Rudraprayag District, State of Uttarakhand, India



When 3 women from the village discovered the injured specimen at around 8:30 a.m. and warned the rangers, it was already too late. The leopard had tried to get out of a snare trap for much of the night and died of exhaustion in front of the rescuers. Two villagers were charged. For Vaibhav Singh, District forest officer (DFO), the suspects knew that a leopard was frequenting the area: "It was one of the thickest snare wires I have seen so far".

The Times of India, February 18, 2021.⁹⁵

February 21, 2021

Settivaripalli, Kadapa District, State of Andhra Pradesh, India



He had come to drink in the canal near the village. A farmer had connected the fence of his field to the public electricity network to avoid, he said, the incursions of wild boars. The leopard was struck by an electric shock. The Forest Department buried him on the edge of the forest.

The Times of India, February 22, 2021.⁹⁶

February 24, 2021

Pathan, Pulwana District, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, India

The feline slipped into the village, presumably in search of an easy prey - like a dog or a goat. He allegedly attacked and injured 2 people. According to forestry officer Suhail Ahmas, a "mob fury" massacred him. An investigation is opened. Greater Kashmir, February 24, 2021.⁹⁷

March 1, 2021

Seraghat, Pithoragarh District, State of Uttarakhand, India

There were 2 poachers/smugglers. The STF managed to corner one. The second one has been identified but fled in the night. Seizure of 6 skins whose total value is estimated at 500,000 rupees or nearly 6,900 US\$, 43 claws and 24 teeth. Dasila, 20, admits that the animals were electrocuted and that their parts were gradually being sold to Nepalese relays. His partner, Dobhal, is 25 years old.

The Times of India, March 3, 2021.⁹⁸

March 19, 2021

Amjhera Forest, Dhar District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

A 6-year-old male was killed by a gunshot by an unknown assailant. It was retaliation after the death in the same area of a 25-year-old man attacked by an unidentified "wild beast".

The Hitavada, March 20, 2021.⁹⁹

March 22, 2021

Barkote, Deogarh District, State of Odisha, India

Seizure by the Special Task Force of the skin of a leopard, bones and teeth. Two arrests. Somanath Patra and Rajib Lochan Patra live in the village of Salohi. They have a reputation as poachers.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), March 23, 2021; Orissa Post, March 23, 2021.¹⁰⁰

March 27, 2021

Channapura, Chikmagalur District, State of Karnataka, India



A 5 or 6-year-old leopard was caught in a trap and left dying for 42 hours in the middle of a 400-hectare coffee plantation owned by the Rebello family and operated by dozens of farm workers. No one notified the police. When help finally arrived, the leopard was still struggling and his intestines were exposed. "There was no way we could have saved him", says the Deputy Conservator. Three members of the Rebello family have been charged. An authoritative ranger in the district is calling for strict action to be taken against private property owners who abet such deaths.

The New Indian Express, March 30, 2021.¹⁰¹

April 1, 2021

Bolagarh, Khordha District, State of Odisha, India

A skin was seized. Bullet holes prove that the leopard was poached. Sudhira Behera and Subash Chandra Behera were charged with some time in prison.

The New Indian Express, April 3, 2021.¹⁰²

April 2, 2021

Nayagarh, Nayagarh District, State of Odisha, India



They wanted to sell it for 400,000 rupees (5,445 US\$). Two arrests.

Odisha TV, April 2, 2021.¹⁰³

LEOPARDS - followed

April 15, 2021

Kewati, Kondagaon District, State of Chhattisgarh, India

A skin was seized. It was 1.43 m long from the muzzle to the tip of the tail, 41 cm wide. Its value on the international black market is estimated at one million rupees or more than 13,000 US\$. Jailuram Markam and Rameshwar Markam were arrested. The Pioneer, April 16, 2021.¹⁰⁴

April 22 and 23, 2021

Wai-Bajar, Nanded District, State of Maharashtra, India

Two leopards, a male and a female, were found dead 24 hours apart. Prakash Jaglal Jayawal, the poisoner, was arrested. The Times of India, April 25, 2021.¹⁰⁵



April 28, 2021

Bandhanjhuli, Boudh District, State of Odisha, India



A poacher/trader was arrested. His name is Mahendra Bhaina.

Orissa Post, April 29, 2021.¹⁰⁶

PAKISTAN

Mid-January, 2021

Sial, Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

A leopard was killed in a village near Abbottabad (population over 200,000). The people justice found him accountable for the attack on Malik Riaz and for the injuries to his abdomen, legs and arms, which sent him to the hospital in Abbottabad. Fahad Conservationist, January 16, 2021; Gulf News, January 18, 2021.¹⁰⁷



February 22, 2021

Tharparkar District, Province of Sindh, Pakistan

Some say he infiltrated Sindh from Indian Rajasthan, others say he fled a zoo or private property in the province; a lone leopard was killed with a rifle by Hakim Bheel after being surrounded and beaten by a group of villagers. He was accused of biting four human subjects identified as Daudo, Dilip, Nihal and Gaaji Bheel. The Bheel clan through the voice of Indar Singh Bheel spread the version of a self-defense act in Sindh newsrooms by insisting that the leopard had murdered some of their goats. Eric Shehzar, a wildlife expert, is opting to remain neutral while investigating the situation. He deplores the excesses of deforestation, "When there's no forest cover or trees, they don't have space to hide." The district wildlife conservator recalls 3 basic instructions to be followed when a leopard or wild beast enters a village or approaches a house:

- Make loud noises or talk loudly

- Clap or clatter

- Create a passage for the animal to return. If you gather around him, he will get overwhelmed and attack in self-defense.

Samaa, February 23, 2021; The Express Tribune, February 23, 2021.¹⁰⁸

March 16, 2021

Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Seizure from a shoemaker of 2 pairs of men's sandals locally called "chappal" (see "On the Trail" n°25 p. 31). The shoes were made of leopard leather which comes from a shoe factory in Karachi.

UrduPoint, March 16, 2021.¹⁰⁹

End of March, 2021

Malkot, Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

A second leopard was stoned and beaten near Abbottabad. He was accused of injuring a 65-year-old man.

BBC, March 30, 2021; Samaa, March 30, 2021; The News International, March 31, 2021; Dawn, April 1, 2021.¹¹⁰

March 30, 2021

Peshawar, Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

New seizure of leopard skin sandals. The shoemaker Mohammad Tahir was fined 100 US\$. In a second phase, a warehouse of imported second-hand products was searched and exotic animal skins were seized. Niaz Ali, the owner of the warehouse, was also fined 100 US\$.

Dawn, April 1, 2021.¹¹¹



LEOPARDS - followed

SRI LANKA

Beginning of January 2021 Matale, Central Province, Sri Lanka

The deformed, skinned and toothless body of a leopard is found at the bottom of the water pond of a power plant. The post mortem concludes that there has been poisoning. Two employees are suspected. They were released on bail.

Colombo Gazette, January 12, 2021.¹¹²



March 24 and 31, 2021 Agarapathana and Randenigala, Central Province, Sri Lanka

He was about 8 years old. He died at the Randenigala Veterinary Clinic. The wounds were deep. He dragged a trap for almost a kilometer. Mr. Sooriyabandara, Director of Wildlife Conservation, notes that in this year 2021, leopard catches by traps are significantly more numerous than in the year 2020. However, he notes there is also some hope: "Nearly 3 leopards have been rescued, rehabilitated, and released back into the wild so far this year".

News 1st, March 25, 2021; Colombo Gazette, April 1, 2021.¹¹³



THAILAND

February 11, 2021 Bangkok, Thailand

Arrest of a high-flying trafficker at a gas station. Manimaran Ramsamy, an Indian national, came to deliver a leopard about a month old. He fell into the trap of undercover agents of the national parks who had been playing for several weeks the role of credible and wealthy buyers. The man had been closely followed for 5 years by the US Fish and Wildlife Administration and by Thai intelligence services. He specialized in the trafficking of felines and monkeys in East Asia. "It takes a network to defeat a network" summarizes the Wildlife Justice Commission. The Nation Thailand, February 12, 2021; Wildlife Justice Commission, February 18, 2021.¹¹⁴



YEMEN

April 4, 2021 Wadi Yari, Abyan Governorate, Yemen



There were only 200 of them. Now, there may be only 199 of them. The fate of a captured, humiliated and abused female is uncertain. In response to the circulation of some worrying images on social media, Saudi Arabia made it clear that the event occurred in Yemen and not in the Saudi Kingdom. In these times of war, the fight against the poaching of Arabian leopards (*Panthera pardus nimr*, Appendix I), lynx, and cruelty to other wild animals are not among the governorate's priorities, which is unfortunately common amongst national leaders around the world.

Al Jazeera Mubasher, April 6, 2021.¹¹⁵

CHEETAHS - *Acinonyx jubatus*, Appendix I

AFRICA

KENYA

Mid-March to mid-April, 2021 Samburu National Reserve, Samburu County, Kenya

Six losses in 25 days!

A female in all her beauty with 3 unborn cubs, dislocated by a car that mistook the reserve for a race track.

A stray cheetah, thin, thirsty and motionless, died at night a few hours after being collected by the KWS and vets.

A cheetah of unknown sex. Vultures had already found his carcass but the bullet marks remain.

One female died despite assistance from vets and KWS, too injured and exhausted from what appears to be a fight with a lion or leopard.

Mary Wykstra, April 18, 2021.¹¹⁶

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

February 9, 2021

Las Vegas, Nevada, United States of America

Seizure of a rambling serval found near Ann Road and Clayton Street. He was being held at the home of a local citizen who had reported him missing. The feline was entrusted to a refuge.

Las Vegas Review-Journal, February 10, 2021.¹¹⁷

EUROPE

ITALY

February 13, 2021

Metropolitan City of Bari, Region of Apulia, Italy

The rangers and the Carabinieri seek to capture a female serval accompanied by her young cub. At first, she was identified as a black panther. The African feline is used by the traffickers to obtain "savannahs", hybrid cats who are traded at high prices. La Repubblica, February 13 and 17, 2021; VideoAndria, April 25, 2021.¹¹⁸

UNITED KINGDOM

Week of February 8, 2021

London, England, United Kingdom

James Brown, the head of a beauty salon, was sentenced in absentia to 4,000 £, or 5,460 US\$ in fines for having detained a young female serval for about one year at his home. It is believed that she was originally from the Serengeti national park in Tanzania.

The Mirror, February 13, 2021.¹¹⁹



© Wandsworth Police

ASIA

KYRGYZSTAN

April 19, 2021

Osh, Osh Region, Kyrgyzstan

A man was arrested in the act. He was trying to sell the skins with heads of 3 snow leopards for the equivalent of 4,500 US\$. He allegedly bought them in Tajikistan.

Sputnik Kyrgyzstan, April 19, 2021.¹²⁰



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CLOUDED LEOPARDS - *Neofelis nebulosa*, Appendix I

ASIA

INDONESIA

April 3, 2021

Tarakan City, North Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

Seizure of 2 living clouded leopard. They were reportedly captured on the island of Bunyu in North Kalimantan. They had been waiting for commercialization for about a year and a half. The value of a specimen is estimated at 1.5 billion rupiahs or 100,000 US\$ and more. The holder would have bought them for 100 million rupiahs per specimen, or a little less than 7,000 US\$.

Benuanta, April 3, 2021; Traffic, April 5, 2021.¹²¹

THAILAND

Mid-February 2021

Khlong Phanom National Park, Surat Thani Province, Thailand

The clouded leopard was shot in the neck. He is alive but the prognosis is poor. The bullet was handed over to the police to help find the poacher. Pattaya Mail, February 20, 2021.¹²²



© Pattaya Mail

Mid-March 2021
Nakhon Si Thammarat, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand

Another clouded leopard arrived at the Walailak University Veterinary Clinic as a matter of urgency. He was successfully treated for a bullet wound to his right front paw and is expected to regain his freedom in the coming days. He was captured in the protected area 4 of Surat Thani province in mid-February.

Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, March 14, 2021.¹²³

FISHING CATS - *Prionailurus viverrinus*, Appendix II

ASIA

PAKISTAN

Mach 19, 2021
Rohri, Province of Sind, Pakistan

There were 2 of them, but now there is only one. Villagers set upon a fishing cat. The pair of small felines were accused of giving farmers trouble by attacking livestock.

Geo News, March 19, 2021.¹²⁴

LEOPARD CATS - *Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II except the Asian populations which are listed under CITES Appendix I

ASIA

CHINA

January 30, 2021
Lincang, Lincang Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Myanmar.



This is the third time in a few weeks that customs officers have seized leopard cats caught in Myanmar. This time, they were 2 kittens in a small iron cage hauled by a Chinese foreman employed in Myanmar in the sugar cane industry. He was returning home to the Gengma autonomous county on a regular bus.

Legal Daily (with Xinhua), February 1, 2021.¹²⁵

April 2021
Lishui, Lishui Prefecture, Zhejiang Province, China



Seizure of muntjac meat in a farmer's freezer, of wild boar traps in his sheds, and of compromising images on his cellphone, proving that a leopard cat was caught in a wild boar trap, finished off with a stick, and cooked and served at home to a dozen mates. It was a feast. 163.com, May 2, 2021.¹²⁶

INDONESIA

February 17, 2021
Palembang, South Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia



Sentencing of Giofani Mega Putri to 2 years and 6 months in prison and a fine of 100 million rupiahs, about 7,000 US\$. Aged 23, she was already specialised in wildlife trafficking. She was caught in the act of selling 4 leopard cats. Agile gibbons (*Hylobates agilis*, Appendix I) were also part of her offer.

Antara News, February 17, 2021.¹²⁷

VIET NAM

January 26, 2021
Hanoi, Viet Nam

Someone bought a leopard cat from a trafficker at a market in a pitiful state and alerted ENV, which in turn alerted the responsible services. At the end of the chain, the cat was handed over to the Hanoi Wildlife Rescue Center. ENV does not appreciate the move. Buying out of compassion enriches the traffickers. It is recommended to alert ENV or the police, which usually results in the trafficker being arrested on the spot and the animal being rescued. ENV, January 27, 2021.¹²⁸

February 23, 2021
Dong Nai Province, Viet Nam

A coffee shop displays a leopard cat in an iron cage. The manager agrees to dispose of him to avoid prosecution. The cat was found fit to be released in a suitable area without further delay. ENV, February 23, 2021.¹²⁹

February 24, 2021
Dak Nong Province, Viet Nam

A leopard cat was once more purchased from a trafficker out of compassion or to be a pet. However, faced with the aggressiveness of the leopard cat, the individual urgently called ENV to hand him over. ENV, February 25, 2021.¹³⁰



LEOPARD CATS - followed

March 22, 2021
Hanoi, Viet Nam

This is the leopard cat of the month. Handed over by his keeper to the local forest authority through ENV.

ENV, March 22, 2021.¹³¹

Beginning of April 2021
Hanoi, Viet Nam



Their mother cannot be found. A litter of leopard cats is uncovered in a private park. The owners of the premises and the gardeners put them in a safe place. The environmental police are alerted and the kittens are transferred to Cuc Phuong national park, for a period of time in semi-liberty, before hopefully being released.

SVW, April 4, 2021.¹³²

EUROPE

RUSSIA

January 7, 2021
Kedrovaya Pad Nature Reserve, Primorsky Krai, Russia



Fire in the reserve on the border of China and North Korea. According to Olga Dymnikova, a local ecologist, it was triggered by poachers. She fears that the Tsushima leopard cats (*Prionailurus bengalensis euptilurus*) and the centuries-old oak trees will be burned. Almost half of the reserve was burnt. It extended over some 40 km². The Krai prosecutor initiates an investigation. The wildlife and natural areas protection authority said, 4 days after the disaster, that no animal carcasses had been found.

The Moscow Times, January 11, 2021.¹³³



Tsushima leopard cat
(*Prionailurus bengalensis euptilurus*)

PALLAS'S CATS - *Otocolobus manul*, Appendix II

ASIA

IRAN

January 22, 2021
Semnan Province, Iran

The Pallas's cat was doing poorly. He died shortly after the rangers arrived on the scene. He was victim of a double whammy, first a collision with a vehicle, then a good beating with a stick. Manuls or Pallas's cats live in eastern and central Asia, between 440 and 5,500 meters above sea level. They reach 45 to 65 cm in length and weigh an average of 3 kg. The colors of the coat allow Pallas's cats to camouflage themselves in rocky areas.

Small Wild Cat Conservation Foundation, January 25, 2021.¹³⁴

JAGUARS - *Panthera onca*, Appendix I

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

End of January 2021
State of New Mexico, United States of America

In order to protect the interests of farmers, jaguars have lost their protected status in the State. In 2014, the US Fish and Wildlife Service had designated a 3,100 km² area between New Mexico and Arizona where jaguars would be protected by law. A federal court has just revoked this privilege. Although a few males have been making incursions into the southern United States from Mexico, the females seem to have disappeared since the 1960s and 1970s (see "On the Trail" n°21 p.68). The light of the jaguar was flickering in the southern USA. In a few months, it may die out. However, the Center of Biological Diversity is going to ask the Biden administration to set up a new smaller protection area.

High Country News, February 10, 2021.¹³⁵

JAGUARS - followed
NICARAGUA

End of January 2021
Sandy Bay Sirpy, South Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region, Nicaragua



The mother was killed. She was accused of attacking horses. Her kittens had been recovered by the poachers and offered for sale on social networks for 400 US\$ per specimen. After arduous negotiations with the director of the Managua zoo with the condition that the police not intervene, the "owners" disposed of the baby jaguars. They are now at the zoo, which does not want them for their skins. The population of wild jaguars in Nicaragua, 130,000 km², is estimated to be 300 to 400 individuals. La Prensa Latina (with EFE-EPA), January 27, 2021.¹³⁶

OCELOTS, *Leopardus pardalis*, Appendix I

AMERICA

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

January 6, 2021
George Village, Princes Town Region, Trinidad and Tobago

It was quite a commotion in the village. On the side of the main road lay the body of an ocelot, the only wild cat species in the archipelago. A witness reportedly saw a car pull up the day before and dump the body. The possibility of a collision has not been ruled out.

Trinidad and Tobago Guardian, January 7, 2021.¹³⁷

EUROPE

UNITED KINGDOM

Mid-April 2021
Chipperfield, Hertfordshire County, England, United Kingdom

An 18-year-old woman was trying to sell a 60-year-old ocelot coat via the Internet. The coat was seized. The seller is to perform community service via the Community Resolution Order.

Watford Observer, April 19, 2021.¹³⁸

PUMAS - *Puma concolor*, Appendix II, except for the populations of Costa Rica and Panama which are in Appendix I

AMERICA

ARGENTINA

January 28, 2021
Cañada de Gomez, Province of Santa Fe, Argentina



Seizure of numerous specimens from a ranch that doubled as a hunting reserve of several mountain lions and deer. The seized creatures were transferred to the Granja "La Esmeralda" Wildlife Rehabilitation and Reception Centre in Santa Fe. Rosario 3, January 29, 2021.¹³⁹

End of March 2021
La Puntilla, Province of Catamarca, Argentina
Seizure of a puma skin by the Argentine National Gendarmerie and agents of the Ministry of the Environment. El Ancasti, March 23, 2021.¹⁴⁰

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

March 22, 2021
Bannock County, State of Idaho, United States of America



Authorities describe the death of the female puma as a poaching incident because she was shot outside the hunting season. Idaho Fish and Game, April 5, 2021.¹⁴¹

PUMAS - followed

March 30, 2021

State of Colorado, United States of America

The federal judiciary is ordering that no more public money be spent on the experimental removal of 230 mountain lions from the upper Arkansas Valley. Developed by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the harvest plan is enforceable by all sorts of cruel means. It is intended to eventually restore the declining mule deer population within 9 years, the APHIS reports to the Ministry of Agriculture. Considered an experiment, the program costs 400,000 US\$ per year, 75% of which was previously paid by the federal government. Judge Marcia Krieger noted in particular that the cumulative effects on young mountain lions orphaned by the shooting of their mothers had not been sufficiently studied and asked the US Fish and Wildlife Service to conduct an in-depth review of the program within a year.

The Humane Society of the United States, March 31, 2021; Focusing on Wildlife, April 31, 2021.¹⁴²

BOBCATS and LYNX - *Lynx spp.*, Appendix II

EUROPE

GERMANY

February 28, 2021

District of Regen, Bavaria State, Germany

The corpse of a female lynx was abandoned in a forest near the REG1 road. Some analysis from the Leibniz Institute reveal the presence of small metal particles on the corpse. Conclusion: the creature was either shot or she was caught in a metal trap. The first laboratory results also prove that she died of starvation as a result of her wounds. According to the director of the Gregor Louisoder Umweltstiftung Foundation, only a dozen females capable of breeding are left in Bavaria. Tatort Natur, March 3, 2021; Jagderleben, April 16, 2021.¹⁴³

SPAIN

February 22, 2021

Doñana National Park, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain

The carcass of an Iberian lynx was shot to death in a creek at the confluence of the Caño de Guadiamar and Arroyo de La Cigüeña rivers. It had been several days since he died before the corpse was found. Poaching is the second leading cause of lynx death in the national park, the first being road collisions. El País, February 25, 2021.¹⁴⁴

FRANCE

End of March 2021

Sondernach, Department of Haut-Rhin, France

On the basis of the testimony by an anonymous hunter, the OFB (Office Français de la Biodiversité / French Biodiversity Agency) went to question Alfred Rebert, 80 years old, and searched his home. The skull of a lynx that was killed between 2014 and 2015 was seized. According to the OFB informant, Rebert "shoots everything that passes by his house" and kills deer, buzzards, wild boars and lynx indiscriminately and without respecting the hunting code.

March 1, 2022

Colmar, Department of Haut-Rhin, France



Rebert denies poaching the lynx. "Shooting a lynx is worse than shooting your mother-in-law, I am not crazy." His version of the story almost makes it seem like he was putting the lynx out of his misery. He allegedly spotted an injured lynx on the side of the road in the valley of Munster following a collision. In the interest of humanity, he decided to finish him off because of the extent of his injuries. A week later, he returned to the scene to decapitate the body and keep a souvenir of this tragic encounter with a deer-eater who was a disloyal competitor of hunters. The "wolf skin spotted like a panther" as described by the ancient Greek naturalists has disappeared from circulation. The public prosecutor brings us back down to earth, notes that the fable of the lynx in agony saved from his suffering by an almost repentant hunter is not part of the investigation file and is the result of a novel construction. She demands a fine of 3,000 € and the publication of the decision in the press. To be continued.

France Bleu Alsace, August 5, 2021 ; Actu Haut-Rhin, August 6, 2021 ; Robin des Bois Notes.¹⁴⁵

POLAND

End of January 2021

Białystok, Podlaskie Voivodeship, Poland

Seizure of a lynx skin that was found wrapped in a garbage bag in the freezer of a 47-year-old man. Experts say it is a lynx from the Knyszyn forest, a strictly protected population in Poland. Onet, March 25, 2021.¹⁴⁶

RUSSIA

Early January 2021

Charyshsky District, Altai Krai, Russia



Indictment of a man suspected of poaching a lynx between December 2020 and January 2021. The incident occurred near the village of Mashenka, 40 km from the border with the Kazakhstan reserve for lynx and sand (*Martes zibellina*). The offender had set traps in the taiga. He pleaded guilty and repaid the environmental damage estimated at 55,000 rubles or 750 US\$. He faces up to 2 years in prison. Sib.fm, June 9, 2021.¹⁴⁷

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

March 16, 2021

San Antonio, State of Texas, United States of America



© San Antonio Zoo

Tiger cases are never-ending in San Antonio, but this time it was the presence of a bobcat in a home that alarmed a neighbor. On the scene, authorities saw the 5-year-old lynx running loose. The owner told them that he was tame and would not harm them. They then saw a pair of paws that slipped under the door. They belong to a 13-week-old tiger. Jeremy Martinez, 25, already known to the law for other common crimes, was arrested and then released. The 2 felines, in poor health, were seized and handed over to the city zoo. A month later, after being perked up, the tiger joined the Downtown Aquarium in Houston (Texas) and the bobcat joined the Center for Animal Research and Education in Bridgeport (Texas).

On April 23, Jeremy Nathan Martinez and his partner Cristela Coronado, 21, were arrested and charged with animal cruelty. NBC DFW, March 16, 2021; WSB-TV, March 16, 2021; San Antonio Express-News, April 15, 2021; News 4 San Antonio, April 25, 2021.¹⁴⁸

March 31, 2021

Douglas County, State of Colorado, United States of America



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Patrick Montgomery, 48, was out on bail before his trial on July 28 for participating in the January 2021 Capitol Hill attack and assaulting at least one police officer. The conditions of his release included a ban on firearms. A hunting guide, Montgomery apparently did not have the patience to wait. Barely three months later, he shot a puma. He had poached a bobcat back in January by using a slingshot and releasing his dogs to kill him, both of which are illegal hunting methods in Colorado. He is now under house arrest and GPS surveillance. The Gazette, May 16, 2021.¹⁴⁹

ASIA

KAZAKHSTAN

January 2021
Kazakhstan



© Жәңкіш Тұрапов

Professional boxer Zhankosh Turarov poses with Kairat Zakiryanov, president of the Academy of Sport and Tourism. This picture was quickly deleted from social networks after it triggered a host of unfavorable comments. The two men are surrounded by a stuffed lion, snow leopard and lynx skins, as well as a wolf skin and two stuffed swans on the wall. Even the Ministry of Ecology has condemned this choice of decor. Newtimes.kz, January 20, 2021.¹⁵⁰

PAKISTAN

Mid-March, 2021

District of Kohat, Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Seizure by Wildlife Department officers of a tame lion and cheetahs. The cheetah cubs were being sold in the market. They were transferred to the Dera Ismail Khan Wildlife Rehabilitation Center. Dawn, March 20, 2021; Tehran Times, January 10, 2022.¹⁵¹

WOLVES, HYENAS AND ARCTIC FOXES



Grey wolf (*Canis lupus*). Photo tphl

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

March 29 and April, 17, 2021
Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa



Two brown hyenas (*Hyaena brunnea*) from the same litter escaped from Seaview predator park. After breaking through the electric fences, the male was killed by a park warden. He alleged he was attacked and reacted in self-defence.

Animal rights activists are surprised that no dart guns were available at Seaview predator park. The second hyena, a female, was run over by a car on April 17 on National Road 2. The mission of Seaview predator park is "to preserve Africa's wonderful wildlife and to ensure that every visitor to the park is educated and encouraged to conserve our wildlife for future generations." TimesLIVE, April, 7, 2021.¹

KENYA

February 15, 2021
Tsavo West National Park, Kenya

Discovery of 3 dead spotted hyenas (*Crocuta crocuta*) a few hundred meters away. Suspected poisoning.

SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, February 2021.²



March 17, 2021
Masai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya

The hyena was threatened with death by villagers who accused her of attacking livestock. Caught by the KWS, she was released in the heart of the reserve. She bore some superficial wounds after struggling in the transport cage.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, March 2021.³

CANADA

January 28, July 7, and October 27, 2021 and January 27, 2022

Province of British Columbia, Canada

The helicopter circles over the pack. An expert in “net gunning” captures a wolf in a net from above. The animal is neutralized. He is fitted with a GPS collar and released. He has become an informant. He joins the pack. Sooner or later, the pack will be overflowed again by a helicopter. This is the right moment, it is in the open. It breaks free in the snow. A helicopter comes. The pack is machine-gunned like a convoy of lost soldiers in a war. In Canada, grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) are killed from the air. 237 from January to March 2021, 472 the winter before. It’s for a good cause, says the staff of the British Columbia Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resources Operations and Rural Development, capital Vancouver. “The aerial wolf reduction program” is aimed at saving caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*). The scapegoat wolf is believed to be responsible for their impending extinction. Some herds have become ghostly, 10 to 12 individuals lost in the winter snow, 2 meters deep, rely on the lichens of the big trees to feed but there are less and less. In 30 years, the deep-snow mountain caribous (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*) have lost more than half of their representatives. The timber industry is logging to death during the summer months. This has been going on since 1975. They fell, they fence, they bar, they helipad, they snowmobile, they compact the snow and other caribou that during the sub-polar winter feed on terrestrial lichens can hardly find any food in peace amidst these calamities and the poachers. The authorities in British Columbia have found no better way to deal with the problem than by fencing in pregnant females and using heavy artillery against the wolves. In the meantime, the chainsaws are advancing and the caribou kingdom is stepping back.

“On the Trail” n°16 p.61-62 for the practice of air gunning against wolves to “save” caribou in British Columbia, and “On the Trail” n°11 p.88 for a caribou poaching in the United States of America.

Harding, L.E., Bourbonnais, M., Cook, A.T. et al. No statistical support for wolf control and maternal penning as conservation measures for endangered mountain caribou. *Biodivers Conserv* 29, 3051-3060 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10531-020-02008-3>; Canada’s National Observer, May 3, 2021; APTN National News, May 22, 2021; Daily Hive, August 20, 2021; Vancouver Sun, October 26, 2021; CBC/Radio-Canada, January 31, 2022; Vancouver Island Free Daily, February 1, 2022.⁴

January 30, 2021

Washington County, State of Idaho, United States of America

According to Idaho’s Department of Fish and Game, 2 grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) were poached near the Oregon border. One wolf was found shredded into pieces, the other was found in a creek at the foot of a hill. He was shot with a small-caliber rifle.

Wolf hunting is illegal in the State of Idaho. Idaho Statesman, February 3, 2021.⁵

**January 15 and 22 and early February 2021
Itasca, St. Louis and Becker Counties, State of Minnesota, United States of America**

Two grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) were found dead. One of them is a 2-year-old male. The other, found under the frozen Vermilion River, is a 2 or 3-year old male. A third headless wolf was found in Becker County. The grey wolf has been removed from the list of endangered species and is therefore no longer protected by law since January 4, 2021. Star Tribune, February 3, 2021; Park Rapids Enterprise, February 6, 2021.⁶

**February 9, March, April and July 2021
Union County, State of Oregon, United States of America**



A pack of 5 wolves (3 males, 2 females) was almost wiped out in the southeast of Mount Harris. Another female of the pack was found dead in March, then a male of the Five Points Pack in April and finally a female of the Clark Creek Pack Pack in July 2021. All are presumed to have been poisoned.

KATU (with AP), March 21, 2021; Wolf Conservation Center, December 2, 2021.⁷

February 19, 2021

Apache County, State of Arizona, United States of America

The carcass of a Mexican grey wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*, Appendix II) was found on the Saffel Canyon Road in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest. Authorities are looking for a suspect vehicle. The US Fish and Wildlife Service offers a reward of 37,000 US\$ for any information leading to the arrest of the culprit(s).

At least 105 Mexican grey wolves were killed illegally between 1998 and 2019.

Mexican grey wolves, see “On the Trail” n°10 p. 73, n°21 p. 70, n°23 p. 95, n°24 p. 64, n°30 p. 69 and n°31 p. 71 and 72.

AmmoLand News, March 17, 2021; Center for Biological Diversity, March 17, 2021.⁸

February 25, 2021

State of Wisconsin, United States of America

The State sold 1,547 permits to fill a quota of 119 grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) to be shot between Monday, February 22 and Sunday, February 28, or 13 hunters or trappers per wolf. By dawn on Monday, or even the day before, they were all out in full force with guns, bows, traps, pick-up trucks, food, tents and dogs, rejoicing in the snow that etched the wolves' tracks. On Monday evening, 9 deaths were declared and recorded, and on Tuesday morning the figure grew to 48. Hunting is also done at night with spotlights. The wolf hunt was suspended on Wednesday afternoon with a grace period of 24 hours. By Thursday afternoon the death toll had risen to 216 wolves, nearly double the original quota, not counting poached wolves.

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, February 25, 2021; Time (with AP), February 25, 2021; The Guardian (with AP), July 5, 2021; CBS News, September 21, 2021; Star Tribune (with AP), October 1, 2021; WDJT 58 (with AP), October 22, 2021; Wisconsin Public Radio, October 29, 2021.⁹

March 3, 2021

Beaverhead County, State of Montana, United States of America



Dalton Thomas Tamcke, 30, and Justin Samuel Peterson, 22, poached 2 grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) from a helicopter in the Big Hole Valley. They then collected the carcasses on a snowmobile. They told the authorities that they were hunting coyotes and that they had mistaken the wolves with coyotes. The wolves had been kept in a freezer. Tamcke was fined 425 US\$ and Peterson 435 US\$. No action was taken against the pilot of the helicopter.

EastIdahoNews.com (with AP), April 25, 2021.¹⁰



April 9, 2021

State of Montana, United States of America

Governor Greg Gianforte of Montana has declared war on grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II). The law he signed gives hunters a free hand. The season is extended by 4 weeks. Wolves can be baited, blinded by spotlights and strangled by traps. The brutality of the law is said to be motivated by hunters' frustration. They blame wolves for decimating elk and deer. An "enthusiast" with a combination of gun and bow hunting and trapping licenses could kill 20 wolves per year. Gianforte is himself one such enthusiast. In early 2021, he trapped and shot a grey wolf on a private ranch owned by a businessman who had financed his 2017 election campaign. At the time, Gianforte did not have a trapping permit, and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks merely issued a warning and recommended that he take the regulatory wildlife trapping course online. The governor's stance has a significant impact in the United States.

Independent Record, April 10, 2021; Montana Free Press, April 12 and September 15, 2021; Sierra, April 15, 2021; Center for Biological Diversity, May 20, 2021; KTVH, August 20 and October 28, 2021.¹¹

April 16, 2021

Lafayette, State of Louisiana, United States of America

A couple was sued by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries for holding a grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II). A local had alerted the authorities after seeing a wolf walking in front of an elementary school. Officers obtained a warrant for the search and seizure of the animal. The judge ordered that the domesticated wolf be placed in a care facility while the case is reviewed.

KATC, April 19, 2021.¹²

April 20, 2021

State of Idaho, United States of America

In Idaho neighboring Montana, things are no better for grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II). A new bill aims to reduce the wolf population from 1,500 to 150 in 3 years. The anti-wolf law meets the demands of livestock farmers. Wolves are accused of harassing cows and sheep and, as in Montana, of decimating wildlife, thereby reducing the productivity of sport hunting. As in Montana, the State will have the right to recruit service providers, which in a way restores the bonus paid in the 19th century to those who proved in Australia or the United States that they had killed Tasmanian, black or grey wolves. All methods are allowed, from trapping to hunting with a spotlight. After a few days of reflection, Brad Little, the governor, signed the law. Will hunting and extremist politicians ever encourage the assault of the packs?

KBOI (with AP), April 21, 2021; EcoWatch, April 28, 2021; Center for Biological Diversity, May 3, 2021; Western Watersheds Project, May 7, 2021.¹³

EUROPE

GERMANY

January 1, 2021

Heidekreis District, Lower Saxony State, Germany

The body of a young grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) was discovered in the hunting reserve of Eggersmühlen. He exposed gunshot wounds. The date of his death was hard to define. The corpse was transferred to the Leibniz Institute for a post-mortem examination.

Walsroder Zeitung, January 11, 2021.¹⁴

Late April 2021

Helmut-Schmidt International Airport of Hamburg, Hamburg State, Germany

A 31-year-old traveler was returning from Afghanistan with a so-called remedy for back pain: grey wolf skin (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II). The traveler was going to offer it to an acquaintance. His gift was intercepted by customs.

In 2020, 119,000 animal and plant products, weighing a total of 144 kg, were seized by customs across the country.

German Customs, May 21, 2021.¹⁵

CROATIA

April 24, 2021

Gračac, Zadar County, Croatia



A grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) who had been recently killed was hung by his front legs at the entrance sign of the city. The atmosphere was tense. 87 sheep died after a wolf attack a few days earlier in the nearby village of Štikada. The Karst Pasture Breeders Association deplored the lack of regulations protecting livestock and the insufficient amount of compensation in case of attack. Breeders dismiss the possibility that the culprit may be a rancher: "Whoever did it would not have exposed it like that in front of everyone." The Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development reminds that attacks by wolves are not increasing and that it pays concerned breeders more than 271,000 US\$ annually in damages to avoid wolf killings like this. Blic, April 27, 2021.¹⁶

SPAIN

End of January 2021

Arca, Province of A Coruña, Autonomous Community of Galicia, Spain

Identification of the killer of a grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) found on January 24, 2021 by 2 hikers. Autopsy confirmed the shooting death. The perpetrator faces a 601 to 6,000 € (740 to 7,370 US\$) fine and confiscation of his weapon.

La Voz de Galicia, 27 January 2021.¹⁷

Beginning of February, 2021

Spain

The National Commission on Natural Heritage and Biodiversity under the Ministry of Ecology has just voted to include the grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) in the list of wildlife species under special protection. This decision is welcomed by NGOs such as Ecologistas en Acción. In the autonomous communities of Castilla y León, Cantabria and Galicia, and in the Principality of Asturias, the decision has raised a front of protests. Juan Carlos, Minister of Development and Environment of Castilla y León, considers that an order banning the hunting of wolves would be an absolute attack on rural development, livestock and the general interest of northwestern Spain. He is joined in this radical position by the COIM (Association of Forest Engineers - Colegio de Ingenieros de Montes). The majority of wolves are concentrated in the northwest of the country. The population of wolves in Spain is estimated at 2,000 individuals.

Agroinformación, February 4, 2021.¹⁸

End of April 2021

In Veiga, Province of Ourense, Autonomous Community of Galicia, Spain

Seprona (Servicio de Protección de la Naturaleza) is investigating the discovery of several dead animals, including a grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) in October 2020. A baiting area, equipped with trap cameras to observe, track and kill the animals was discovered. Identification of a suspect, a 67-year-old male.

Faro de Vigo, April 28, 2021.¹⁹

FINLAND

January 11, 2021

Hämeenlinna, Region of Kanta-Häme, Finland

Start of a woman's trial. She is suspected of smuggling 4 grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) from Russia into her kennel in Loppi (Kanta-Häme region) between November 2017 and May 2018. The value of the 4 suspected wild wolves would be over 22,000 US\$. Before the inspection of her property in early 2019, she had reportedly moved the animals to other kennels in Karkkila (Uusimaa region, 30 km away) and Orimattila (Päijät-Häme region, 80 km away). However, on the January 9 incident, simultaneous searches took place in the 3 kennels. Three of the wolves have been found, a fourth disappeared under obscure circumstances. The breeder claims today that only one of the animals imported from Russia was a "pure wolf".

Thirty witnesses and 5 experts will be heard at the trial. "The definition of what a wolf is and what a wolf dog is is one of the most important issues in the trial," says the suspect's lawyer. The detention and trade of wolf dogs has been banned in Finland since June 2019. The breeder reportedly earned nearly 6,000 US\$ by selling 2 litters of wolf dogs. Yle Uutiset, January 11, 2021.²⁰

January 30, 2021

Salla, Region of Lapland, Finland

A snowmobile vandal crashed 2 grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II). Tracks in the snow suggest he chased a third. When the Finnish Border Guard arrived on the scene, one of the 2 wolves was still alive, however he was put down due to the severity of his injuries. The suspect has not been identified. Finnish Border Guard, October 26, 2021.²¹

FRANCE

Week of April 19, 2021

Department of Haute-Marne, France

One week after allowing scare shots, the prefecture is about to allow lethal shots on the grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) if it comes within 200 meters of a herd. "The shots must be defensive." The prefect rules out the prospect of a systematic hunt for the time being. Only wolfers and breeders with a hunting permit will be fitted for shooting. The wolf is therefore entitled to free passage up to 200 meters from a herd and the shooters have the right to consider the passage of the wolf as a threat to a herd. The wolf's life is hanging by a thread, especially at night. At the same time, the prefecture recommends the installation of electric fences and the Department Directorate of Territories could provide equipment for the protection of their herds in the form of a loan to breeders. To be continued. France 3 Grand Est, April 19, 2021.²²

ITALY

Mid-January 2021

Gargano National Park, Province of Foggia, Region of Apulia, Italy

Another grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) was hanged, this time by the neck, a tradition still current in some regions of Italy for foxes. A few hours earlier, the video of a man chasing wolves with his car in the Cadore (Veneto region) and trying to run them over had been posted on social media.



Il Messaggero, January 11, 2021; Agenzia Giornalistica Italia, January 12, 2021.²³

Mid-January 2021

San Martino Canavese, Metropolitan City of Turin, Region of Piedmont, Italy

The female grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) was not even a year old. She was killed by a bullet. Ente Nazionale Protezione Animali, January 22, 2021; La Sentinella del Canavese, January 22, 2021.²⁴

April 17, 2021

Civitavecchia, Metropolitan City of Rome Capital, Region of Lazio, Italy



Seizure of 23 canids in a Czech wolf-dog farm. The seized animals were wild grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) or dog-wolf crosses. Three females and 9 cubs were transferred to the Mount Amiata park (region of Tuscany). The owner was indicted. It is a common practice amongst Czech wolfdog breeders to cross domestic dogs with wolves to get "wilder" puppies that can be sold for up to 3,500 US\$. Leggo, April 17, 2021; La Rivista della Natura, April 21, 2021.²⁵

NORWAY

February 18, 2021

Egersund, Western Norway Region, Norway



Sentence of a man in his forties to 90 days in prison for shooting an Arctic fox (*Vulpes lagopus*). On March 18, 2019, he had seen from his window that the trap he had placed in his garden had a catch. He then went there with his dog and his rifle. The catch was a white fox. He then proceeded to use the fox to scent-train his dog for 20-30 minutes before shooting the animal and posting a photo of the incident on Facebook. In court, he said he was convinced it was an albino red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*). The judges accused him of negligence for not taking the time to clearly identify the specimen before shooting. Arctic foxes are classified as "critically endangered" on Norway's Red List. The country is estimated to have only about 300 adult specimens. Agder Flekkefjords Tidende, February 18, 2021.²⁶

POLAND

Early January 2021

Pisz County, Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship, Poland



A couple of residents of Cierzpięty saw a grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) trapped near the Marshes of Nietlice. They contacted the State authorities, who ignored the reports they received. Some concerned residents then decided to contact some hunters, who were not interested, and finally the association for the protection of nature "Wilk". One of the organization's members was dispatched to the site. The wolf was finally rescued. He will be released after regaining his strength in a wildlife shelter.

Gazeta Olsztynska, January 6, 2021.²⁷

January 7, 2021

Zamość, Lublin Voivodeship, Poland

This is the first time a poacher has been arrested when he has not been caught red-handed. The investigation lasted more than a year. Kosy, a 6-year-old male grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II), was shot several times on September 12, 2019 on the edge of Roztocze national park (84 km²). The wolf was the father of 3 4-month-old cubs. Their mother had died of a gunshot wound a month earlier. The orphaned cubs then starved to death.

The 42-year-old hunter from Bilgoraj County is accused of causing significant ecological damage and lying during the investigation. All his hunting rights have been suspended.

"We treat each case with the same determination. It doesn't matter if it's a human or a wolf. In both cases, we are talking about a living being," says the officer in charge of the case.

Bilgorajska, January 11, 2021; Polskie Radio Lublin, February 18, 2021; TVN24, February 27, 2021.²⁸

January 17, 2021

Kielce County, Holy Cross Voivodeship, Poland



The body of a grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) was hidden in the forest. The wolf reportedly died from a snare trap around her neck and the poacher moved the corpse to confuse the authority. Examination of the body showed that the hunter probably riddled his exhausted and hungry victim with 19 lead shots in the skull.

General Directorate of State Forests, January 19, 2021.²⁹



February 26, 2021

Młynary Forest, Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship, Poland



Following the call of a resident, 2 rangers and a veterinarian went to the rescue of a young grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) who had been caught in a trap. The wolf, who was described to have a "penetrating and confident look" was nicknamed "Jar" (gully) in reference to the topography of the place. The wolf was taken to the Napromek Wildlife Shelter (run by the Directorate of Forestry) to recover his strength before being released.

Gazeta Olsztynska, March 1, 2021.³⁰

Early March 2021

Ostróda County, Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship, Poland

Sad discovery near Wenecja. A hiker found the body of a grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II). An investigation was opened.

Wirtualna Polska, March 8, 2021.³¹

April 19, 2021

Lubliniec County, Silesian Voivodeship, Poland



This one was not discovered in time. A grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II), probably not older than one year, cruelly agonized in a trap for several days. With each of his attempts to free, the steel would sink further around his abdomen. The information was passed on to the police by the association "Wilk". In 2020, at least 6 wolves were killed by traps and 13 by firearms.

Gazeta Wyborcza, April 23, 2021.³²

RUSSIA

February 6, 2021
Kamyshglovsky Hunting Area, Sverdlovsk Oblast, Russia



Denis Khakhalov, deputy of the United Russia Party in Kurgan Oblast, hunted grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) in the Ural Mountains with 5 friends. He amused himself crushing a wolf who was reportedly still alive; he hit his head with his rifle, breaking his skull. A video of the incident was leaked. Khakhalov was quickly expelled from his party. The oblast filed a complaint against the group for illegal hunting and cruelty to animals. Khakhalov resigned in July. In October, the case was forwarded to a State office for the investigation of particularly important cases.

360, April 28, 2021; Znak, October 11, 2021.³³

SWEDEN

March 19, 2021
Västerås, Västmanland County, Sweden

Karl Hedin, owner of the "AB Karl Hedin" sawmill in Falun (Dalarna County), and 3 co-defendants were acquitted. They were accused of attempting to kill grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) on various occasions between January 1, 2013 and October 26, 2018. Karl Hedin was suspected of having hunted wolves in Virsbo on October 26, 2018 with an accomplice before an elk hunting party. Previously, he allegedly tried to poison wolves with carbofuran with the help of a couple of friends. However, the court considered that the evidence provided by the prosecution was insufficient. Supposedly, the 2 men were hunting wolves in Virsbo, but there is no evidence that their purpose was to kill them. According to the court, there is no evidence that the carbofuran could kill wolves, nor that it belonged to Karl Hedin. The prosecutor appealed.

Carbofuran, see "On the Trail" n°4 p. 30 and p. 83, n°7 p. 20, n°18 p. 32, n°20 p. 34, n°25 p. 42, n°28 p. 135, n°29 p. 118, p. 126, p. 129 and p. 131 and n°31 p. 181.

Sveriges Radio, May 18, 2021; Swedish Television, March 19, 2021.³⁴

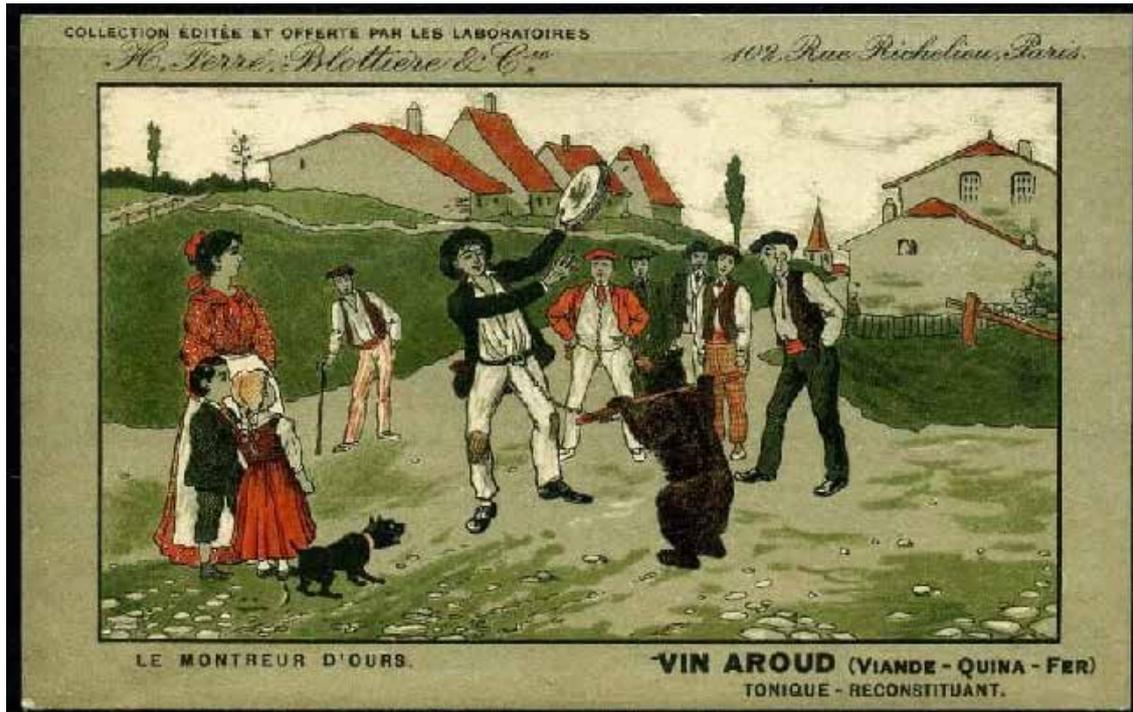


SWITZERLAND

January 23, 2021
Torgon, Canton of Valais, Switzerland

Discovery of the body of a young grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) in the valley of Savalène by a hiker. The animal died after being hit by a bullet. The association "Groupe Loup Suisse" hopes to break the silence by offering a reward of 10,000 Swiss francs (11,300 US\$) for any information that can help identify the person responsible.

Le Nouvelliste, January 25 and 27, 2021.³⁵



AMERICA

CANADA

March 1, 2021

North Bay, Province of Ontario, Canada

Return to Nunavut for 235 polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*, Appendix II) skins held at Fur Harvesters Auction. The market has changed. In the early 2000's, when they were bought from Inuit hunters, polar bear skins were expensive, between 10,000 US\$ and 16,000 US\$ for a first grade skin. Nowadays, a polar bear skin has to be at least 2.5 meters long to meet the market, and even then a 3-meter skin is worth no more than 4,000 US\$. Fur Harvesters Auction sold between 30 and 40 skins in 2020. The auction company has kept 79 skins in its possession that it hopes to sell for a good price. They ask Nunavut hunters to send only their best pelts from now on.

Polar bear skin prices, see "On the Trail" n°5 p.67, n°8 p.55, n°12 p.65, et n°19 p.80.

Nunatsiaq News, March 2, 2021; CBC/Radio-Canada, March 3, 2021.¹

March 24, 2021

Lynch Creek Forest, Province of British Columbia, Canada



Workers at a road construction site notice 2 American black bear cubs (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II), barely 2 months old, alone. They wait for 2 hours. The mother does not appear. One of the workers decides to take the cubs to his hotel for the night. He is reported to the Report All Poachers hotline. It turned out that the mother had mysteriously disappeared. The cubs were taken to the Northern Lights Wildlife Society shelter. The worker faces a fine for illegal possession of a wild animal.

Grand Forks Gazette, April 8, 2021.²

April 28, 2021
Winnipeg, Province of Manitoba, Canada



He had been reported for possession of an American black bear cub (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II). In the end, he asked the authorities to take the bear cub into their care. The cub was transferred to the Black Bear Rescue Manitoba shelter. Despite his last-minute maneuver, the man was charged with unlawful possession of a wild animal.

CTV News, May 14, 2021; Government of Manitoba, May 14, 2021.³

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Mid-February, 2021
Jay County, State of Indiana, United States of America

The US Department of Agriculture seized from one of Robert Sawmiller's properties 5 brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II), 2 American black bears (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) and a puma (*Puma concolor*, Appendix II). They were transferred to the Wild Animal Sanctuary in Colorado. Since 2010, Sawmiller, director of the Wildlife on Wheels Traveling Menagerie, had received 19 notifications of non-compliance with the Animal Welfare Act from the USDA, most of which directly related to animal health and welfare. The permits to exhibit, breed and sell wild animals were revoked following a complaint filed in March 2021 by the NGO Animal Defense Fund in the District of Columbia.

The NGO PETA found that Sawmiller sold a bear from Kodiak, Alaska, to Steve Martin, director of Working Wildlife based in Frazier park (Kern county, California). Between 1993 and 2018, the USDA found 20 non-compliances against Martin in the registration, sale and purchase, housing, veterinary supervision, feeding, sanitation and behavioral adaptation of chimpanzees, other primates, zebras, lions, mountain lions, brown bears and American black bears. He sources animals from failing roadside zoos. Notably, he bought a lion from Joe Exotic. Reporter.net, February 23, 2021 ; PETA, May 11, 2021 ; Animal Legal Defense Fund, August 5, 2021.⁴

Between March 15 and 23, 2021
Pole Bridge Campground, Fremont County, State of Idaho, United States of America

In less than 7 months, 3 brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) have been shot dead (see "On the Trail" n° 30 p.72 and n°31 p.75) in the Idaho portion of Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. This time, a female carcass was found in the Warm River, a tributary of the Henrys Fork River. There was also a collateral victim, her bear cub, a few weeks old, who died of starvation. It is illegal to kill a brown bear in Idaho, except in self-defense. A reward of 40,000 US\$ is being offered for any information useful to the investigation.

Bears in Idaho, (see "On the Trail" n° 30 p.71) KBOI, April 27, 2021; Center for Biological Diversity, April 28, 2021.⁵

End of March 2021
Great Smoky Mountains and Appalachia, State of North Carolina, United States of America



In just one and a half years, 24 American black bears (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) have lost a paw in a trap, according to the NGO Help Asheville Bears (HAB). "To see this many 3-legged bears, how many are not escaping?" "When you see a bear missing a limb, it's not that someone has cut one limb off, they escaped a trap," says Alex Williams, director of HAB. As of 11 June, the NGO has added 6 more bears to its list of 3-legged individuals.

WLOS, March 25, 2021; Watauga Democrat, June 17, 2021.⁶



**April 8, 2021
Jackson County, State of Oregon, United States
of America**



The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife intentionally killed an approximately 15-month-old American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II). The distressed bear cub had been roaming along Interstate 66 for several days. The police and the ODFW were alerted several times but did not react despite the risk of a vehicle pile-up and the death of a protected animal. The 2 institutions were likely occupied with other things.

The county's volunteer fire chief who lives nearby intervened with the situation, successfully capturing the bear cub (about 20 kg) and took him home as a transitional measure. With the help of neighbors and the local community, an orphan bear shelter near San Diego was contacted and he was about to be transferred. The police and the US Fish and Wildlife agents, who have been known to be more impulsive, did not agree. They strictly enforced the rule that any black bear captured on the public road must be immediately turned over to State veterinarians for a health and behavioral examination and an assessment of its suitability for admission to an accredited AZA (Association of Zoos and Aquarium) member shelter. Only cubs under one year of age can be accepted in a shelter. The bear cub was 15 months old, so he was therefore killed by the police, with a club, according to NGOs. Animal Wellness Action, Wildearth Guardians, Center for a Humane Economy. Several elected officials of the district, from all parties, have expressed their indignation. Two years ago, in identical circumstances, an orphaned puma had suffered the same fate. This situation revealed to the public the cruelty of the policy. To make matters worse, the unnamed firefighter who rescued the cub was charged with illegal possession of a protected animal. EIN News, April 11, 2021; KPIC, April 20, 2021.⁷

**REPEATED OFFENSE
April 13, 2021
Fallsburg, State of New York, United
States of America**



In September 2019, the poaching of an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) was reported to Environmental Conservation Officer Wood. At the scene, Wood had found bait, and his dog detected blood and fur.

In November 2019, Wood and his dog returned to the scene for another team effort. Wood questions Michael Travis, a poacher who was placing bait, and his dog guides him to Travis' partner Tasha Curry, who is hiding with her rifle. The 2 hunters, caught baiting deer, admitted to poaching a bear and taking the carcass as a trophy. Wood found the carcass at Travis' home and DNA testing proved it was the bear killed in September 2019.

After being convicted in February 2020 of hunting deer using illegal methods, Travis and Curry were fined 2,000 US\$, ordered to pay a 120 US\$ surcharge and reimburse the 450 US\$ DNA analysis expenses. New York Almanack, May 4, 2021.⁸

PERU

**January 8, 2021
Phara District, Province of Sandia, Department
of Puno, Peru**



Rescue of a 2-month-old Andean bear cub (*Tremarctos ornatus*, Appendix I). He was found on the side of the road and taken to the Serfor de Maravillas rescue station in Juliaca. He is a male weighing one kg and measuring 30 cm. This is the third Andean bear cub rescued in the

span of 4 months. "Andean bear cubs depend on their mother until they are 2 years old and learn from her how to survive in their habitat (look for food, find a shelter, protect themselves from predators, climb, etc.). When left defenceless, these animals need human care. So unfortunately they will spend the rest of their lives in captivity," says Idme Hañari of the Serfor in Puno. Serfor, February 15, 2021.⁹

ASIA

CAMBODIA

January 22, 2021

Southern Cardamom National Park, Cambodia



A male Malayan sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I) was caught in a trap. The Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team from Phnom Penh, alerted at 4 p.m. by the Chhay Areng rangers, left immediately and arrived on the spot the next day at 5 a.m. The injuries were not severe and the bear left after being freed and treated. Wildlife Alliance, January 23, 2021; Wildlife Crime Hotline, January 27, 2021.¹⁰

CHINA

March 12, 2021

Harbin, Harbin Prefecture, Heilongjiang Province, China



Opening of the Polar Bear Hotel in the heart of Harbin's Polarland park. From 290 US\$ per night, you can rent a room with a direct view of 2 polar bears (*Ursus maritimus*, Appendix II), without any danger because the 33 transparent panels are made of bulletproof and clawproof glass. For the best placed room, it costs the equivalent of 1,240 US\$. Beware, the waitlist is long.

In this hotel constructed around the bears' "house," tourists can feed the 2 prisoners themselves and observe them for 24 hours a day, including in the restaurant and from their beds. The light remains on at night for a better visibility, "but it may be turned off at night, and the bears have dens to live in," retorted an employee to critics. If you look closely, in this golden cage that is supposed to recreate Arctic conditions, the ice and snow are nothing but concrete and white paint. As for the 30 km of distance that a wild polar bear can travel every day, the hotel makes no mention of it.

Global Times, March 17, 2021; The Bund, March 24, 2021.¹¹

INDIA

April 22, 2021

Pitapali, Khordha District, State of Odisha, India



Five Asian black bear cubs (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I), aged 4 to 8 months, were found on the roadside. Alerted by locals, forest officials of the Chandaka-Dampara sanctuary transported them to the Nandankanan zoological park. How did the cubs get here? Authorities suspect a failed attempt to smuggle them from another State via the neighboring Kandhamal district or another coastal district.

The New Indian Express, April 23, 2021.¹²

KYRGYZSTAN

April 12, 2021

Kyzyl-Üngür, Jalal-Abad Region, Kyrgyzstan



The beekeeper claims that the brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) was attacking his hive. He killed him, then came down from the mountain with a bag. In it was the bear's skin. He was arrested. In the province there are 234 brown bears, now minus one.

Sputnik Kyrgyzstan, April 12, 2021.¹³

THAILAND

January 5-7, 2021

Near Pang Sida National Park, Sakaeo Province, Thailand



Shock therapy for a Malayan sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I), 7 to 8 years old, 40 kg, several days after falling into a trap and struggling to get out. Uncertain prognosis. Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, January 9, 2021.¹⁴



VIET NAM

Mid-March 2021

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam



Five Asian black bears (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) were being kept in iron cages in the sheds of a primary school. After years of complaints, the judicial authority had ordered their transfer to the sanctuary. When ENV volunteers arrived to do the job, the cages were empty. Their exploiter had transported the bears elsewhere.

ENV, March 16, 2021.¹⁵

March 23, 2021

Son La Province, Viet Nam



Hidden in a cellar under a clothes shop, away from eyes and from light, toothless from biting the bars of the cell, the female and male Asian black bears (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) had been there for 15 or 20 years. They were taken to Ninh Binh. Contrary to popular belief, bear bile farming is still active in Viet Nam.

Four Paws, March 18, 2021; Daily Mail, March 24, 2021; VnExpress International, March 25, 2021.¹⁶

April 16 and 28, 2021

Hanoi and Haiphong, Viet Nam



The bear (*Ursidae*, Appendix I or II) was kept secretly in a steel cage, 1.5 metres high, one metre per side. The gallbladder is punctured and pumped to draw out the bile which is believed to have the ability to prevent or dissolve gallstones. Chemical alternatives are available but patients prefer the natural variety. He will join 41 formerly abused

bears in a large enclosure.

ENV, April 16 and 29, 2021; Voxy, April 30, 2021.¹⁷

EUROPE

FINLAND

April 2021

Maltio Strict Nature Reserve, Region of Lapland, Finland

A brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) was chased and shot from a snowmobile. The bear fled the scene and encountered a patrol of Finnish Border Guard who felt threatened by the injured animal and shot him to death. A suspect has been identified.

Finnish Border Guards, October 26, 2021.¹⁸

ITALY

February 4, 2021

Autonomous Province of Trento, Region of Trentino-Alto Adige, Italy

The NGO OIPA (Organizzazione Internazionale per la Protezione degli Animali) has lodged a complaint against the Casteller wildlife recovery centre and is requesting the preventive seizure of the 3 brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) housed there. Included are a female who has lived there for the past 10 years, a male and a 2-year-old cub. The NGO considers that the conditions of detention are not adequate for these large mammals, who are kept in 12 m² cages from which they are only allowed to leave for one hour a day, each separately. Complaints about cases of abuse have been brought before the Italian courts and are currently being investigated. Faced with the resistance of the public authorities, the NGO alerted the European Parliament. Il Dolomiti, February 8, 2021.¹⁹

MONTENEGRO

February 18, 2021

Donja Rzanica, Municipality of Berane, Montenegro

Poaching of a female brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II). She leaves 2 orphans under the age of 2. Arrest of Milosav Ćukić and Dragutin Golubić. The cubs' chances of survival are almost zero.

Worldin, February 21, 2021; EuroNatur, February 26, 2021.²⁰

ROMANIA

Mid-February, 2021

Gheorgheni, Harghita County, Romania

The video released by the association Casa lui Patrocle showing 4 men extracting 4 brown bear cubs (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) from their den and manipulating them to determine their sex was circulating on the web. The police managed to identify them. They were forestry workers aged 35 to 51 from the Judet de Neamț. Experts explained that the mother should have intervened when she heard the cries of her young. She was probably dead before the kidnapping occurred.

Casa lui Patrocle, February 18, 2021; Adevarul, February 19, 2021.²¹

March 2021

Covasna County, Romania

Emanuel of Liechtenstein, an Austrian prince, paid 7,000 € or 8,410 US\$ for the right to kill a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II), specifically a female suspected of causing damage in the village of Oj-dula last year. In the end, it was a large 17-year-old male living far from humans in a Natura 2000 area that he shot.



According to Gabriel Paun, president of the Romanian NGO Agent Green, it is impossible for the prince to have mistaken the female for the male. "It is clear that the prince did not come to solve the problems caused by the female in the village but to kill a large male so that he could take the trophy home to put on his wall. "An investigation is underway to determine the exact circumstances of the bear's death. Paun adds that in the event of a conflict with a bear, killing is the last resort and that it is better to anaesthetise him, euthanise him and then incinerate his carcass to prevent his parts from becoming trophies. Officially, there are 6,000 bears left in Romania but NGOs put the figure at 2,000. Emerging Europe, May 5, 2021; Romania Insider, May 5, 2021; Europe Infos, May 11, 2021; Histoires Royales, May 12, 2021.²²

March 30 and April 2, 2021

Sibiu County, Romania

Fine of 10,000 lei (2,440 US\$) to the association "Prietenii Berzelor" ("Friends of the Storks") for rescuing near Biertan 2 abandoned brown bear cubs (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) and taking them to the bear shelter in Zărnești without receiving prior permission from the authorities. The association defends itself. They made the decision to take the cubs to safety because they were dehydrated and suffering from diarrhoea. The association explained that they tried to reach the authorities on several occasions without success. HotNews.ro, April 2, 2021; Balkan Insight, May 5, 2021.²³



RUSSIA

Mid-February 2021 Oktyabrsky District, Khanty-Mansi Au- tonomous District, Russia

The 36-year-old poacher who tried to trap a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) was fined 25,000 roubles or 330 US\$. Ugrapro, February 17, 2021; Znak, February 17, 2021.²⁴



Mid-March 2021 Sikhote-Alin Nature Reserve, Primorsky Krai, Russia

Admission in the rehabilitation centre in Utyos of 3 orphaned brown bear cubs (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) whose mothers were victims of poachers. Forgotten Animals, March 15, 2021.²⁵

Mid-April 2021 Beryozovsky District, Krasnoyarsk Krai, Russia

A 2-metre high brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) shut in a cage is spotted in the garden of a property. The police were called in. TVK Krasnoyarsk, April 16, 2021.²⁶

April 18, 2021 Ufimka, Chelyabinsk Oblast, Russia



A brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) is noticed in an unsanitary cage measuring 1.5 metres by 1.2 metres in which he cannot even drink. The chain he is tied to has lacerated his neck and he is extremely weak. He is unable to stand up to eat the meat that volunteer wildlife protectors brought him. The bear also has scars from dog bites. Local residents say that the owner of the property used him to train his dogs. When the volunteers returned a few days later with the aim of buying him to save him, the bear was being loaded into an SUV registered in the Republic of Bashkortostan. He had just been sold. The volunteers took photos and sent the file to the Federal Supervisory Natural Resources Management Service.

1obl, April 21, 2021; Ural Meridian, April 22, 2021.²⁷



"Bear hunt", lithograph by Victor Adam, 19th century

GAZELLES, ANTELOPES, SEROWS, IBEX, MARKHORS ...



Tibetan antelope (*Pantholops hodgsonii*). Photo Marc Faucher

AFRICA

KENYA

April 14-15, 2021

Kora National Park, Tana River County, Kenya

23 fresh carcasses, whole or decapitated and skinned or mutilated, with the legs cut off. A reserve of red meat, a kind of illegal slaughterhouse, with what might be of interest to witch doctors and traditional healers is set aside: horns, heads sometimes cut in half vertically. Whole, alive and agile, the magnificent dik-diks (genus *Madoqua*) weighed between 45 and 50 kg each.

SWT/KWS Meru Mobile Veterinary Unit, April 2021.¹

NAMIBIA

February 26, 2021

Chikuzwe, Zambezi Region, Namibia

Martin Matengu found himself stuck at a roadblock. It was difficult to hide the 5 carcasses of southern lechwe (*Kobus leche*, Appendix II) he was smuggling. These animals exceed 80 cm at the withers and weigh more than 70 kg. He was taken into custody. The Nambian, March 1 and 3, 2021.²

SUDAN

Mid-March 2021

Sudan

Photographs posted online showing “Westerners” posing with the body of a Nubian ibex (*Capra nubiana*) have angered Sudanese wildlife advocates. They asked Facebook to remove the pages of groups promoting these hunts. Abubakr Mohammad, a biodiversity researcher, has seen a recent trend aiming at attracting Western hunters, which he says could be the result of the country’s greater openness to foreigners since the end of the ruling of Omar al-Bashir, the former president of the country. The process to obtain hunting permits has also been accelerated. Recently, the Austrian-based agency “Hunt Geo” posted photos of some of its clients posing with a dead Nubian ibex (*Capra nubiana*). They have since been withdrawn. There are still photos of wildlife killers in Liberia, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Turkey, Iran, Tajikistan among other countries.

Data on Nubian ibex in their range are insufficient. They are said to be extremely rare and declining in Sudan, Eritrea and Yemen. The population has also declined in Saudi Arabia, Oman, Jordan and Egypt due to hunting pressure and reprisals from herders. They have a more stable habitat in Israel. The overall population is estimated to be less than 5,000 mature individuals, and over the past 10 years it has declined to numbers close to the “endangered” classification.

Ross, S., Elalqamy, H., Al Said, T. & Saltz, D. 2020. *Capra nubiana*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2020: e.T3796A22143385; HuntGeo, December 30, 2020; The Guardian, March 23, 2021; Naturalist from Sudan, March 25, 2021.³

facebook

ASIA

ARMENIA

Early February 2021
Eghegis, Vayots Dzor Region, Armenia



Four arrests for the poaching a wild goat (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan). One suspect was carrying the goat's meat in his bag, another was carrying a rifle. The head and leftovers were still in the snow.

Sputnik Armenia, February 9, 2021.⁴

CAMBODIA

January 28, 2021
Cardamom Protected Forest, Cambodia

Seizure of 30 kg of Chinese serow meat (*Capricornis milneedwardsii*, Appendix II); one head and 4 hooves were retrieved from a man who wanted to sell it in Pursat province.

Wildlife Alliance Cambodia · January 29, 2021;
Wildlife Alliance, February 27, 2021.⁵

CHINA

March 2021
China

Some citizens are suspected of having illegally sold shahtoosh shawls described as "vintage" and "rare" on the Internet, made from Tibetan antelope wool (*Pantholops hodgsonii*, Appendix I). Some sales were made via video conference.

The weaving of a single women's shawl requires about 300 to 400 grams of wool, or 3 wild Tibetan antelopes knocked down and then sheared. Similarly, the men's shawl model requires 5 Tibetan antelopes. Only a small amount of wool located on the neck and abdomen of the animals is used for this type of clothing.

The price of shawls can reach 100,000 yuan (15,700 US\$). According to the Chinese authorities, some criminals do not hesitate to sell cashmere shawls from Nepal and India, under the name shahtoosh.

Shahtoosh, see "On the Trail" n°3 p. 76, n°5 p. 109, n°6 p. 100, n°8 p. 93, n°11 p. 49, n°16 p. 103, n°20 p. 114, n°23 p. 140 and p. 142 and n°28 p. 119.

Global Times, March 16 and 21, 2021; The Paper, March 16, 2021.⁶

March 13-16, 2021
Urumtchi, Urumtchi Prefecture, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region ; Qingshuihe County, Hohhot Prefecture, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and Anhui Province, China



Seizure of 2,099 saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) and the dismantling of an organized gang that imported the horns from abroad. The investigation led to Bozhou, Anhui province, where law enforcement seized an additional 431 saiga antelope horns. In total, 14 individuals were arrested. The 2,530 horns are estimated to be worth more than 30 million US\$ i.e. 11,857 US\$/horn. Legal Daily, May 27, 2021; Chinese Customs, May 30, 2021.⁷

INDIA

January 16, 2021
Tehsil de Varni, Nizamabad District, State of Telangana, India

Seizure of 2 carcasses of blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Nepal and Pakistan) from 2 men who were transporting them on motorcycles. The offenders were identified as Kappari Pedda Rmulu and Kadamanchi Sailoo. They wanted to sell the meat.

Telangana Today, January 16, 2021.⁸

January 27, 2021
Chhipadohar, Latehar District, State of Jharkhand, India



Seizure of the skin and meat of a nilgau antelope (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), 2 rifles and 2 axes. Gudan Singh and Kari Lohra were arrested.

The Telegraph India, January 28, 2021.⁹

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Night of February 20 to 21, 2021

Hirava, Amreli District, State of Gujarat, India

Raju Makwana and his brother Hasmukh were arrested. They were caught cooking "bushmeat". A skull, bones, skin, an axe and a knife were found on the spot. Samples were be taken to determine whether it is indeed the meat and by-products of an Indian gazelle (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III in Pakistan).

The Indian Express, February 21, 2021.¹⁰

REPEATED OFFENSE

March 9, 2021

Hyderabad, Hyderabad District, State of Telangana, India

Arrest of 2 men, Chavan Shanker Baba and Mohammad Zubair, who were involved in the poaching of blackbucks (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Nepal and Pakistan). The Hyderabad police seized meat and a living 3-year-old female antelope that a certain Mohammad Salmanuddin who also arrested was trying to buy for 15,000 rupees (206 US\$). The animal was entrusted to the Nehru Zoo in Hyderabad.

Baba and Zubair have previous criminal records. They have been involved in 10 similar cases.

The Indian Express, March 9, 2021; The Times of India, March 10, 2021.¹¹

March 19, 2021

Dongargaon, Chandrapur District, State of Maharashtra, India



Two Nilgai (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) and 16 domestic goats died of poisoning after drinking water from a contaminated pond. Nikesh Nannaware, 37, Praneet Dhanvijay, 23, and Anna Bankar, 55, have admitted to dumping urea into the waterhole, they have been arrested. One of the antelopes has been stripped of his skin. "The matter came to light after foresters got information that some people had brought meat to the village for sale," said the Chief Conservator of Forests. Rangers are expanding the perimeter to check that other animals have not been poisoned.

Outlook India (with PTI), March 19, 2021; The Times of India, March 20, 2021.¹²

March 29, 2021

Devi Ahilya Bai Holkar International Airport, Indore District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

A pair of Indian gazelle horns (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III in Pakistan) have been seized from the luggage of a passenger, Kunal Narayan Kundu, on his way to Mumbai. He explained that he brought these horns as part of the shooting of a documentary and that they were fake. The Forestry Department verified his claims.

The Free Press Journal, March 31, 2021.¹³

KAZAKHSTAN

Early January 2021

Karaganda Region, Kazakhstan

The authorities are particularly attentive to saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II). The males, who are the only horn carriers, come out weakened at the end of the rutting period in December. They are not only victims of poachers, but also of cold snaps and collisions with vehicles. Carcasses are regularly found on the side of roads, just in the past days 5 were found in Nura district (January 8), and 14 in Karkaraly district (January 12). A 35-year-old man was arrested in possession of the horns of a saiga that he had just hit with his car.

Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, January 14, 2021.¹⁴

January 19, 2021

Karakiya District, Mangystau Region, Kazakhstan

Four suspects fled their car as the territorial inspectors of Forests and Wildlife approached them. The driver and a passenger were caught. Inside the deserted vehicle, there were 4 bags of Altai argali meat (*Ovis ammon*, Appendix II)

cut into pieces and 2 bags of hare meat. At the suspects' home, 2 skins, an argali head and legs and a rifle were found. The damage costs are estimated at 26,253,000 Kazakhstani tenge i.e. 63,000 US\$.

Tengrinews, January 21, 2021.¹⁵

February 11, 2021

Atyrau, Atyrau Region, Kazakhstan



A joint operation by the Criminal Police and the department in charge of combating fish poaching resulted in the seizure of... 364 saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) in the courtyard of a building. 200 saiga horns and an undeclared shotgun were found in one car, while the remaining 164 saiga horns and another undeclared shotgun were discovered in another car. Two arrests. Kazinform, February 11, 2021.¹⁶

**Early March 2021
Atyrau, Atyrau Region, Kazakhstan**



October 2019: 12 people were arrested and 1,118 kg of saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) were seized in Almaty, Aktobe, Atyrau. The head of the network was a 38-year-old former Chinese citizen. Born in Gulja in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, he adopted Kazakh citizenship in 2018 after the arrest of his 3 Muslim brothers who were placed in a Muslim concentration camp described by the Chinese government as “camps for transformation through education”. After trying various small businesses in China, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan without much success, he had found economic relief in smuggling. Since the summer of 2018, he had been selling saiga horns purchased directly from poachers to Chinese medicine practitioners.

Gradually, his team, initially based only in Shymkent and Almaty (Almaty Region) expanded to Oral (West Kazakhstan Region), Atyrau, Kyzylorda (Kyzylorda region), Karaganda and Jezkazgan (Karaganda Region). Poachers sent the horns by train to Almaty. They were then sent to China. The damage would be equivalent to more than 13.7 million US\$.



A year and a half after their arrest, the 12 suspects were sentenced, the leader was given 8 years in prison and his accomplices received lighter sentences. Convictions withheld upon appeal. Ak Zhaik, March 6, 2021; Liter, March 7, 2021.¹⁷

**April 9, 2021
Nur-Sultan and Karaganda Region, Kazakhstan**



Two residents of Nur-Sultan were looking for customers interested in saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) they stored at a friend's house in the Karaganda Region, Kazakhstan. On the spot, the police seized 293 horns estimated at more than one million US\$ (about 3,400 US\$/horn). Kursiv, April 10, 2021; Informburo, April 12, 2021.¹⁸

**April 10 and July 28, 2021
Bokey Arda District, West Kazakhstan Region, Kazakhstan**



Arrest of 2 27-year-old men and a 39-year-old man carrying 805 saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) in their car. They had been engaged in the “collection” of saiga horns since the fall of 2020. The value of the seizure is estimated at 3.9 million US\$. They were sentenced to 7 years and 7 and a half years in prison.

Between January and mid-April 2021, 17 cases of saiga horn trafficking were discovered by police. Informburo, April 12, 2021; Kursiv, April 12, 2021; My City, July 29, 2021.¹⁹

**April 15, 2021
Zhanaarka District, Karaganda Region, Kazakhstan**

Seizure of 274 saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) and several firearms during a traffic stop. A 34-year-old driver and his 2 28-year-old passengers were arrested. Kazinform, April 17, 2021.²⁰



April 23, 2021

Kyzylsay Natural Park, Manguistau Region, Kazakhstan

Poaching of an Altai argali (*Ovis ammon*, Appendix II) in the Manguistau Region. Four men tried to flee as the inspectors approached the scene. This time, they were all arrested. Seizure of a carcass of argali, rifles and ammunition. Two of the suspects are believed to be police officers. Lada, April 26, 2021.²¹

April 26, 2021

Sozak District, Turkistan Region, Kazakhstan



Some suspects were detained after speeding while trying to transport 8 saiga antelope carcasses (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) and 14 horns.

Joint operation of the environmental police and Okhotzoprom, the State service for the protection of wildlife. Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, April 26, 2021.²²

PAKISTAN

January 2021

Dashkin-Mushkin-Tarbuling Conservation Area, Territory of Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan

In a repeated offense (see "On the Trail" n°31 p. 83), Edward Joseph Hudson, an American, paid 61,500 US\$ for the right to hunt and kill a markhor (*Capra falconeri*, Appendix I) whose horns reach 104.14 cm.

Dawn, January 24, 2021.²³

January 25, 2021

Umerkot, Province of Sindh, Pakistan

Following a tip-off, the police arrested 3 suspects in a car. The 2 men from Hub (300 km away, in the Balochistan province) and their friend from Karachi (300 km away, in Sindh province) were taking 2 Indian gazelles (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III), barely 2 months old, to the province of Balochistan. They were tied up in jute bags. The 2 youngsters were handed over to the Sindh Wildlife Department and will be released in a national park when able to fend for themselves.

Samaa, January 25, 2021.^{23bis}



On the Trail n°32. Robin des Bois

February 10 and 13, 2020

Dera Ismail Khan, Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Bahawalpur, Province of Punjab, Pakistan

Three blackbucks (*Cervicapra antelope*, Appendix III in Pakistan and Nepal), a couple and a fawn, were stolen from a city park. The 3 specimens were located 3 days later, 350 km away in Bahawalpur. Five suspects were quickly identified: Allah Nawaz aka Nazi, Bahawal aka Bahawala, Mazhar aka Mazhari, Junaid and Naseeb Khan. Two were arrested, as they belong to an organized gang specialized in the theft of rare animals from parks. Two park wardens who were on duty at the time of the theft, have been suspended as they are suspected of negligence. After a period of quarantine, the antelope couple and the fawn were able to return to the park. Dawn, February 12 and 14, 2021; UrduPoint, February 27, 2021.²⁴

End of February 2021

Chakwal, Province of Punjab, Pakistan



A gang who had posted videos of their misdeeds on social media was finally detained. After several reports, the police intervened at their home and discovered multiple carcasses and hunting trophies of urial (*Ovis punjabiensis*, Appendix II or *Ovis aries vignei*, Appendix I). Sheikh Asghar, Anglo-Pakistani, and his 4 accomplices were arrested. Fines of 500,000 rupees or 3,100 US\$ were applied. Daily Pakistan, February 27, 2021.²⁵

March 2021

Shigar District, Territory of Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan

2021 Trophy Hunting Program:

- Zaffar Syed bought the right to kill a Siberian ibex (*Capra sibirica*, Appendix III in Pakistan) with horns 1.06 meters long for 360,000 rupees or 2,270 US\$.

- An American citizen, Richard Daniel Murphy, bought the right to kill a markhor (*Capra falconeri*, Appendix I) with 1.04 meters long horns for 65,000 US\$.

- Syed Murtaza bought the right to kill a markhor (*Capra falconeri falconeri*, Appendix I) with 1.17 meters long horns for 12,600 US\$.

Dawn, March 11 and 25, 2021.²⁶

EUROPE

RUSSIA

January 2021

Pallasovsky District, Volgograd Oblast, Russia

The police spot a pair of saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) on a classified site. The seller, who was 55-year-old, says he obtained them from a saiga that had died naturally. He is under investigation.

Obzor, June 4, 2021.²⁷

Giraffa camelopardalis, Appendix II

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

February 13 to 14, 2021
Sun City, North West Province, South Africa

Her Valentine's Day gift shocked many, but 32-year-old Merelize Van Der Merwe expected nothing less. The Limpopo Citrus Farm manager posted a photo holding the heart of the 17-year-old male giraffe she killed on Facebook to "taunt the animal rights lobby." She justifies her act in the name of species conservation ("a new bull can take over and provide new strong genetics") and the welfare of local communities ("my hunt created work for 11 people that day and a lot of meat for the locals"). Having already killed more than 500 animals, she had been waiting for years for the perfect opportunity to kill a giraffe old enough to have black spots. Her husband gave this gift to her for 2,000 US\$. To keep a souvenir, she's going to have the skin made into a carpet. The Mirror, February 20, 2021; Fox News Channel, February 24, 2021.¹



facebook

April 12, 2021
Limpopo Province, South Africa

The young-adult giraffe had been limping for 3 weeks. Her mother stayed by her side. At the time of surgery, the trap was set so deep that the veterinarian had no choice but to complete the well-begun amputation of the end of her hind leg. Fortunately for her, the reserve where she lives has no large predators. A few months later, she had learned to live with her disability.

Saving the Survivors, April 12 and November 27, 2021.²



KENYA

January 3, 2021
Chyulu Hills National Park, Kajiado and Makeni Counties, Kenya



Spotted by Big Life Foundation spotters, the giraffe is in trouble. A steel cable cuts his left hind leg above the hoof. Prognosis is relatively good.

SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, January 2021.³

January 17, 2021
Olarro Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

The rangers see a giraffe with an arrow in his left flank. They raise the alarm. A KWS team arrives without delay from Narok. The victim is anesthetized, his wound disinfected and he joins a group of giraffes nearby as soon as he wakes up. Olarro Conservancy, January 18, 2021.⁴

January 28, 2021
North of Lukenya Ranch, Machakos County, Kenya



Five giraffes (*Giraffa camelopardalis*, Appendix II) lost their lives in one day, pursued by an armada of boda bodas. Three adults were killed, and 2 youngsters managed to escape. However, they did not survive the traumatic experience, despite the care of KWS officers. Twenty-seven arrests were made. Stephen Tankard, January 29, 2021.⁵

February 6, 2021

Rukinga, Taita-Taveta County, Kenya

For the skin, for the meat, for the bones, for the tail, the KWS lists all the causes of giraffe poaching, and adds that giraffes are increasingly victims of reprisals by farmers. This one was hit by an arrow in the top of her left hind leg. The prognosis is optimistic. After anesthesia and disinfection of the wound, she got up and disappeared into the bush. SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, February 2021.⁶

February 20, 2021

Masai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya

The giraffe's left hind leg was cut and infected by a trap from which she had freed herself. She died during the operation. SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, February 2021.⁷



February 25, 2021

Chyulu Hills National Park, Kajiado and Makueni Counties, Kenya

Strangled by a metal snare, the giraffe was sedated and set free. Prognosis is favorable. SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, February 2021.⁸



NAMIBIA

March 13, 2021

Kamanjab, Kunene Region, Namibia

Four arrests for poaching and possession of products from a protected species. Karel Gaingob, Jonas Aebib, Seth Aebib and Isascar Gaingob were carrying a dead giraffe and a gun. Namibian Sun, March 17, 2021.⁹

April 13, 2021

Sheya Uushona Conservancy, Omusati Region, Namibia

Abed Joseph, aged 69, Namibian, and John Mantlamena and Victory Andreas, aged 22 and 39, Angolan, are apprehended after killing a giraffe with an estimated economic value of 1,000 US\$. Seizure of a 303 caliber rifle and 2 pistols, as well as ammunition. The 3 men are charged with hunting a protected species, illegal possession of weapons and obstruction of justice. Mantlamena and Andreas are further charged with illegal entry into Namibia. The Namibian, April 14, 2021; Republikein, April 20, 2021; Namibian Sun, April 22, 2021.¹⁰

April 26, 2021

Okahao, Omusati Region, Namibia

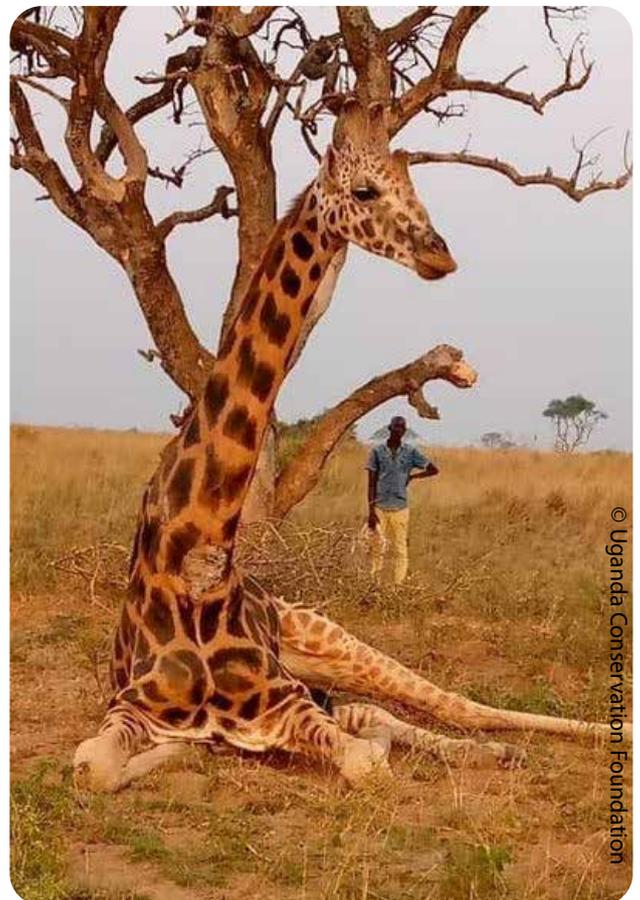
Arrest of Mavetje Turitjo, Peter Katjirumbu, Kaiko Murumbua and Marvin Turitjo in possession of a giraffe carcass. Namibian Sun, May 12, 2021.¹¹

UGANDA

Beginning of March 2021

Murchison Falls National Park, Northern and Western Regions, Uganda

No veterinarian was available, but the rangers at Semanya station worked hard and managed to free a giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*, Appendix II) from the trap that was holding her to a tree by his right hind leg. Uganda Conservation Foundation, March 8, 2021.¹²



ZEBRAS AND DONKEYS



Domestic donkeys (*Equus asinus*). Photo Santiago Martín-Bravo

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

March 8 to April 7, 2021

Mooi River, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa



About 100 donkeys were on their way to Lesotho where they were reportedly slaughtered in the wild. Their skins were awaited in China to be processed into Ejiao, a gelatin or glue made from donkey hides, which is said to have many virtues. Almost every issue of "On the Trail" since 2016 has reported on this cruel trade and the donkey thefts that it fuels in villages on the African and American continents (see in particular "China also wants the skin of the donkey," n° 15 p. 119). Alerted, the National Council of Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (NSPCA) immediately acted and mobilized its local chapter in Mooi River. The trucks were stopped in their tracks with the help of the police. Six men were arrested. The donkeys had open wounds, parasites and ear sores. Foals were in the convoy, which is a sign that there are not enough adult donkeys to meet the demand. The people and farmers of Mooi River lent their pens and fed the survivors free of charge. Thirty-six donkeys and colts were transferred to the Kloof and

Highway SPCA and the rest were transported to the Johannesburg SPCA in specialized trucks hired at unbeatable prices by New Turf Carriers. Donkey lovers and appreciators are many.

The NSPCA notes that trafficking had slowed down over the past year and a half and is calling on the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries to ban the export of donkeys and donkey skins from South Africa in line with several other African countries.

In April 2021, the 6 men were convicted of animal cruelty and illegal stay in South Africa and were fined the equivalent of 360 US\$ or, in default of payment, sentenced to 6 months in prison. They were unable to pay the fine.

The NGO Robin des Bois hopes that the investigation will continue so that the sponsors of the trade are also questioned, whether in South Africa, in Lesotho, whose role as a hub is to be underlined, or in China.

National Council of SPCAs, March 11 and 15 and April 10, 2021; Johannesburg SPCA, March 12, 2021; Highway Mail, April 13, 2021; Independent Online, May 15, 2021.¹

ETHIOPIA

February 2021 Ethiopia

The NGO Brooke is launching a petition calling on the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which includes 8 eastern African countries, to ban the trade of donkey skins. "Currently, restrictions on the donkey skin trade are inconsistent and traders are able to exploit areas where the laws and enforcement are weakest," explains a spokesperson for the NGO.

According to the Central Statistics Agency, there are 9.9 million domestic donkeys in Ethiopia. Prices are up to 126 to 150 US\$ per donkey, double last year's level, due to demand from China.

Ethiopia is one of the last countries where wild donkeys (*Equus africanus*) remain, and unlike their domestic brethren, they are listed in Appendix I of CITES.

Donkey trafficking in Ethiopia, see "On the Trail" n° 17 p. 125 and n° 18 p.121. 125 and n° 18 p.121.

The Reporter, February 6, 2021; Horse & Hound, March 1, 2021.²

KENYA

Early February 2021 Olarro Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

Dr. Limo, the Kenya Wildlife Service, David Sheldrick Mobile Vet team and Olarro Conservancy released 2 zebras (genus *Equus*) and one common eland (*Taurotragus oryx*) from snares that were cutting into their flesh. The Olarro Conservancy had never experienced trap poaching before the Covid-19 pandemic and its economic hardship.

Olarro Conservancy, February 6, 2021.³



February 6, 2021 Olarro Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

Deep wound on the left front leg. The zebra (*Equus quagga*) has been dragging the trap for 10 to 15 days. Etorphine, azaperone, anaesthesia. Favourable prognosis.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, February 2021.⁴



February 6, 2021 Olarro Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

Deep wound on the right hind leg. The zebra (*Equus quagga*) drags steel ropes. Etorphine, azaperone, anaesthesia. Relatively favourable prognosis.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, February 2021.⁵



February 9, 2021 Olarro Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

This is the third zebra (*Equus quagga*) to drag steel ropes in his wake. Favourable prognosis.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, February 2021.⁶



February 15, 2021 Masai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya

An arrow is embedded in his left rump. He is staying away from the herd. He looks exhausted. The whole zebra protocol is performed, including the blanket over the head during the operation under anaesthesia. Favourable prognosis.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, February 2021.⁷

February 21, 2021

Olarro Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya



Right front leg surrounded and cut by steel ropes. Left hind leg hindered. Favourable prognosis.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, February 2021.⁸



February 21, 2021

Olarro Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya



Same day, same Herd, same problem, same hope of recovery. The savannah is full of traps.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, February 2021.⁹

March 11, 2021

Olarro Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya



Another trap. The prognosis is favourable. One minute after the antidote, he woke up, saw other zebras a few meters away and joined them.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, March 2021.¹⁰

March 11, 2021

Olarro Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya



The prognosis is favourable. He woke up and quickly rejoined his family. The wound in the right hock attributed to a trap was treated.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, March 2021.¹¹

March 23, 2021

Olarro Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya



Watch out, it gets more complicated. The female zebra (*Equus quagga*) is dragging a trap on her left hind leg and is heavily pregnant. The anaesthesia and the operation should be as quick as possible. Favourable prognosis.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, March 2021.¹²

REPEATED OFFENSE

April 29, 2021

Nkama, Kajiado County, Kenya



Mwendo Mumba and David Musyimi were transporting at 3 a.m. a zebra (genus *Equus*, one species in Appendix I in Kenya) roughly cut into quarters with a total weight of 180 kg plus 500 grams of dikdik meat (genus *Madoqua*). An accomplice driving a moped managed to escape.

Mwendo Mumba, a notorious poacher, had so far escaped the authorities. David Musyimi was arrested in 2020 and sentenced to 5 years in prison. How did he get out so quickly? The question remains unanswered for the time being. "I want to urge members of the public to give information that will help nab these poachers who are killing our animals and threatening tourism activities in the county," said Isaac Meme, a judicial police officer. The county is surrounded by Nairobi, Amboseli and Tsavo national parks. According to Kenya News Agency, the meat is sold in local butcheries and the hunting trophies are exported to Tanzania via Namanga and Loitokitok.

The Star, April 29, 2021; Kenya News Agency, April 30, 2021.¹³

MOROCCO

Mid-February, 2021

Fez, Fez-Meknes Region, Morocco

They eventually alerted the police. From time to time over several years, they would catch their neighbor bringing donkeys and mules into his house in the middle of the night. They would then hear loud banging. They also sometimes saw him carrying heavy bags which he loaded onto a truck. When they questioned him, he replied that he was trading donkeys and mules to support himself. In fact, the animals were slaughtered in the house and processed

into khliaa, a dish traditionally made with beef confit in fat. In the slaughterhouse, the police found a miraculous surviving mule and several bags of bones, hides, saws and cloths stained with blood. The man has been detained pending investigation.

Hespress, February 19, 2021; Morocco World News, February 19, 2021.¹⁴



NIGERIA

March 31, 2021

Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria

Destruction by the Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Service of 1,500 donkey skins estimated to be worth the equivalent of 163,000 US\$ (108 US\$/skin) seized during several operations. For the authorities, the aim is to fight against the illegal exploitation of donkeys but also to promote a “sustainable trade” in skins so as not to “kill the goose that lays the golden egg.” Increasingly aggressive Chinese raiding networks are targeted.

The Sun, April 1, 2021; Vanguard, April 1, 2021.¹⁵

ZIMBABWE

January 19, 2021

Bulawayo, Bulawayo Province, Zimbabwe

Jabulani Sifelani, 62, was arrested in possession of a zebra (genus *Equus*) skin and tail.

NewZimbabwe.com, January 24, 2021.¹⁶

ASIA

IRAN

April 24, 2021

Bazargan, West Azerbaijan Province, Iran. Border with Turkey.

Safadasht Zoo in Teheran bought 2 female and one male zebras from a Bulgarian zoo. The trip revealed the incompetence and cruelty of the recipients and the negligence of the supervisory authorities. The animals were brutalized in the customs area of Bazargan during their transfer to a shipping container belonging to the Iranian Department of Environment. The director of the zoo himself was filmed holding a stick. One of the females was pushed into a gutter and cracked her hoof. The male died one day after his arrival at the zoo. The excuse of obtaining zebras for the reproduction of the species doesn't hold up. For Alireza Shahrdari, an animal protector based in Tehran, closing the zoos is not a solution. “If the government shuts them down, then the animals would need to be transferred to a suitable space, which doesn't exist right now. I believe the solution would be to ban zoos from buying new animals, especially breeding animals, and let the animals who are already living in the zoos finish their lives out. If zoos can't get new animals, that will mean they'll slowly shut their doors.”

France 24, May 13, 2021.¹⁷

BUFFALOS, BANTENGS, GAURS AND BISONS

AFRICA

KENYA

April 5, 2021

Taita Ranches, Taita Taveta County, Kenya

A buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*) is strangled by a trap and another trap cuts his right hind leg. Anesthesia, thermoregulation, extrication, disinfection, antidote. Optimistic prognosis. SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, April 2021.¹



ASIA

CAMBODIA

February 19, 2021

Preah Vihear Wildlife Sanctuary, Preah Vihear Province, Cambodia

A banteng (*Bos javanicus*) died in a trap. He was killed when his right front leg was ensnared by a moped brake cable. He weighed at least one ton. Since the beginning of the year, 400 such traps have been dismantled by the sanctuary's guards.

The Phnom Penh Post, February 21, 2021.²



March 17, 2021

Sambo, Kulen Promtep Wildlife Sanctuary, Preah Vihear Province, Cambodia

Another banteng (*Bos javanicus*) is dead. He was cut up by poachers. They left only the skeleton, skull and feet behind. The population of bantengs in Cambodia is estimated at 1,500 individuals. The species is hunted for their horns and for their meat, and demand has grown during the Covid pandemic.

WCS Cambodia, March 20, 2021; The Cambodia Daily (with Xinhua), March 21, 2021; The Star, March 21, 2021.³

March 28, 2021

Lomtong, Oddar Meanchey Province, Cambodia

A pregnant female gaur (*Bos gaurus*, Appendix I) was shot multiple times. Her body was discovered by a border patrol agent whose primary mission was to prevent Thai migrants from entering Cambodia. Villagers say that for some time a herd of about 10 gaurs had been in the area and that they had sometimes entered the rubber plantations.

The Phnom Penh Post, March 28, 2021.⁴

INDIA

January 28, 2021

Wellington, Nilgiris District, Tamil Nadu State, India



A gaur (*Bos gaurus*, Appendix I) about 10 years old fell victim to an explosive trap. These traps which primarily target wild boars are common in the district. They end up killing not only gaurs but also elephants.

The Hindu, January 30, 2021.⁵

February 22, 2021

Bhatkal, Uttara Kannada District, Karnataka State, India

The SUV was driving very fast between Honnavar and Bhatkal, refusing to stop at roadblocks. Its occupants finally abandoned it on Madina Street in Bhatkal, which they had reached on back roads, and dispersed into the crowd. In the back of the vehicle was half of a gaur (*Bos gaurus*, Appendix I) butchered.

Prajavani, February 22, 2021; The New Indian Express, February 22, 2021.⁶

April 2, 2021

Rajnagar, South Tripura District, Tripura State, India

Arrest of Akash Tripura. He was in possession of meat and skin fragments of gaur (*Bos gaurus*, Appendix I). The ruminant was poached in the Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary and it is agreed that the poaching was aided and abetted by the guards. Akash Tripura had only 4.5 kg of meat with him, while the butchering of an adult gaur normally provides much more.

Northeast Now, April 3, 2021.⁷

EUROPE

BULGARIA

End of March 2021

Cherkovna, Razgrad Province, Bulgaria

The patrol of forestry agents in the village located a female European bison (*Bison bonasus*) being butchered. The police of Razgrad quickly arrested 3 suspects. They live next door in Dyankovo, and one of them was a long-time employee of the Voden-Iri Hisar hunting reserve. "They surrounded the animal with dogs and she was pierced as in the rock carvings in the Magura cave." 15 dogs trained for poaching were seized.

News.bg, March 31, 2021.⁹

POLAND

November 2019 and March 17, 2021

Warcimino, Pomeranian Voivodeship, Poland

Remigiusz Ciunczyk, 22, faces 5 years in prison. He already has on his poaching record a 200 kg deer and a 600 kg European bison (*Bison bonasus*) which was well known in the area. The bison was a potato lover, gleaming potatoes from the fields and was nicknamed Spud. He was poached and decapitated in November 2019. Ciunczyk claims he mistook him for a boar. His trial will begin. He will be accompanied on the stand by 6 accomplices including a butcher, a veterinarian who facilitated the marketing of the meat and the supplier of the weapons. A whole stuffed bison would sell on the domestic market for around 17,000 US\$.

Głos Pomorza, November 20, 2019; Super Express, March 18, 2021; Daily Mail, March 22, 2021; Wirtualna Polska, September 3, 2021.¹⁰



CARIBOUS, MOUSE-DEER, DEER, ELKS AND RED BROCKETS



Barren-ground caribou (*Rangifer tarandus groenlandicus*). Photo C Graydon

NORTHERN AMERICA

CANADA

January 7, 2021

Birchy Lake, Province of Quebec, Canada

Three Innu men, Roger Mark, Jacques Mark and Jean-Phillipe Vollant, were fined 780 US\$ for poaching 3 caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) on October 25, 2015 in the vicinity of Birchy Lake. Weapons, meat and other by-products were seized. The 3 men had been hunting caribou since childhood in the Innu tradition. Their lawyer requested clemency, stating that "It was a very respectful manner of doing the infraction, if I may put it that way."

The Telegram, January 12, 2021.¹



January 10, 2021

North Huron, Province of Ontario, Canada

Discovery of the remains of an adult white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). The antlers were taken by the poacher.

Ontario Fish and Wildlife, January 25, 2021.²

Mid-February and end of February, 2021

Schefferville and Havre-Saint-Pierre, Province of Quebec, Canada

An investigation was launched by the Ministry of Forests, Wildlife and Parks after several hundred boreal caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*) were killed during hunting expeditions by indigenous communities. In particular, 300 caribou were killed by the Innu community of Matimekush, and 30 others by the communities of Ekuanitshit and Natashquan. The Innu, who are not signatories to the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and to the Northeastern Quebec Agreement, which gives exclusive hunting rights to indigenous communities, are not allowed to hunt caribou.

In early March, Daniel Lalo, a Natashquan, sparked outrage after posting a video on Facebook showing him finishing off a caribou with an axe, a method he says is "ancestral" but not according to the chief of his community, who called it a lack of respect for the animal.

APTN, March 23, 2021; Le Journal de Québec, March 28, 2021 ; La Presse, May 23, 2021.³



**End of February to the beginning of March, 2021
Mealy Mountains and Churchill Falls, Province
of Newfoundland and Labrador, and Northwest
Territories, Canada**

About 30 Québec hunters are suspected of having travelled to Labrador to hunt caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*). Vigilant after posts on social networks claimed that the ban on caribou hunting had been lifted, the authorities arrived on the field and denied the rumour. There was nothing to be done. Caribou carcasses were dragged in the wake of snowmobiles.

Early March, a second alert was issued. Some Quebec hunters are said to have attacked boreal caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*) from an endangered herd. The authorities are struggling to cope. Inuit are also reportedly poaching.

After Labrador, the Northwest Territories are now under attack by poachers. Barren-ground caribou (*Rangifer tarandus groenlandicus*) have been slaughtered at a record pace: 50 bodies were recovered this winter compared to 10 last year. The meat is sometimes left behind on the roadside.

Caribou populations have collapsed in Canada due to poaching, habitat destruction and climate disruption. "Caribou have sustained the Labrador Inuit and now that herds are struggling to survive, everyone has to do their part to help make sure they do," says Johannes Lampe, President of the Nunatsiavut Inuit Territory in Labrador.

VOCM, February 22 and March 6, 2021; Toronto Star, March 3, 2021; CBC/Radio-Canada, March 9 and 12, 2021.⁴

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**January 4, 2021
Cedar City, State of Utah, United States
of America**



Jeffrey Jace Hunt, 37, was sentenced to 18 months of probation and fined 8,000 US\$ for shooting at an elk (*Cervus canadensis*) with a bow and arrow in September 2019 and for keeping his skull and antlers. Hunt was exposed via the TiP (Turn in Poachers) hotline on November 28, 2019. St George News, 20 January 2021.⁵



**January 6, 2021
Erie County, State of New York, and Crawford
County, State of Pennsylvania, United States of
America**

Five young men are charged with poaching or attempting to poach 14 deer (family Cervidae) within a few months. Two firearms and 11 carcasses and trophies were seized.

Erie News Now, January 7, 2021.⁶

**November 9, 2020, January 11 and
February 4, 2021
Fort Riley, State of Kansas, United
States of America**



"They entered a prohibited area of the Army base, knowing the area was off limits, for the sole purpose of illegally taking large deer as trophies. Their behavior was not only unlawful and selfish, it was potentially dangerous to themselves and foolish." Gregory J. Frikken and James C. Nunley were sentenced to 8,500 US\$ in fines and damages and their accomplice Michael J. Smith to 5,500 US\$ in fines and damages for killing at least 8 white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), as well as a 3-year suspension of their hunting licences. Trophies, antlers and hunting equipment found at their homes were seized. The facts were spread over several years. The trio used to sneak into the military base at night through a stream running under a fence.

Topeka Capital-Journal, February 9, 2021; US Department of Justice, February 9, 2021.⁷

**End of January, 2021
Fillmore-Oak Creek, State of Utah, United States
of America**

Discovery of 2 mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) carcasses. The 2 males, shot, were stripped of their antlers and hastily hidden under a pile of wood. Gephardt Daily, February 18, 2021.⁸

**February 2, 2021
Buchanan and Linn Counties, State of
Iowa, United States of America**



A routine inspection at a taxidermist turned out to be more interesting than expected. One thing led to another, and Iowa Department of Natural Resources agents patiently followed the trail of Jason Webster, 41, and Jeremiah Pillard, 42, whose homes they had searched in January 2020. The 2 men were charged with about 20 hunting offences committed between October 2019 and January 2020, including poaching white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). Webster was sentenced to 15,550 US\$ in damages and a 5-year suspension of his hunting licence. Pillard was sentenced to 6,750 US\$ in damages, a 5-year suspended prison term, a 2-year probation and a 3-year hunting licence suspension. Their hunting privileges will not be restored until the damages are paid, and their hunting equipment has been confiscated. Homegrown Iowan, February 2, 2021.⁹

**February 3, 2021
Barnes County, State of North Dakota,
United States of America**



Autumn 2019. A gang of poachers left in their wake a dozen male white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) carcasses, at least 4 of whom were stripped of their antlers. After several months of investigation, hundreds of hours of work, searches and DNA analysis, the 7 gamekeepers mobilised on the case succeeded in identifying the 4 people at fault.

Jakob Ashline, Payne Drake, Calvin Bjornson and Ryan Rudolph received sentences ranging from a 850 US\$ fine, 80 hours of community service and a 2-year suspension of hunting privileges to a 7,900 US\$ fine, a 53-day prison term and a 10-year suspension of hunting privileges.

News Dakota, February 3 and April 12, 2021.¹⁰

**February 4, 2021
State of Oregon, United States of
America**



Adrian Wood, 44, was sentenced to a 42,500 US\$ fine and 5 years of probation. He is also banned for life from Crater Lake national park. He had been a regular visitor to the park since at least 2011, not so much to admire the deepest lake in the country, but instead to shoot large elk (*Cervus canadensis*) and deer (family Cervidae) unsuspecting of men, and occasionally American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II). After several attempts to catch him red-handed, a search at the end of 2016 based on analysis of his GPS and DNA tests established that he had killed at least 13 elk and 12 deer in the park. That's the tip of the iceberg. In September 2016, Wood boasted in a text message that he had killed 24 elk.

Statesman Journal, February 5, 2021; The Charlotte Observer, February 5, 2021.¹¹



**November 6, 2020 to February 13, 2021
Harney County, State of Oregon, United States
of America**

At least 5 mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) were shot with blow darts. Two died. The Oregon Hunters Association, concerned about the decline of the species in the State, is offering a 1,000 US\$ reward for information leading to the identification of the culprits.

For The Win, March 3, 2021.¹²

**End of February, 2021
Fremont County, State of Colorado,
United States of America**



Already sentenced in February 2020 to a 4,600 US\$ fine and a 6-month prison term, Iniki Vike Kapu, aged 28, has just learned about the life suspension of his hunting privileges in 48 States for poaching a Mexican bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*, Appendix II in Mexico) and 12 deer (family Cervidae) in Teller, Fremont and Chaffee counties. An aggravating factor is that he did not save the meat, which is a food waste offence. Colorado Parks and Wildlife, March 1, 2021; KKTU, March 2, 2021.¹³

**April 15 and 20, 2021
Kansas City, State of Missouri, United
States of America**



David Berry Jr. had been sentenced in December 2018 to an 8-month prison term and regular viewings of the Bambi movie for poaching hundreds of deer, including white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), whose heads were set up as trophies (see "On the Trail" n°23 p.138). The US Fish and Wildlife Service does not consider this the end. He acted again and was convicted for acts in Missouri and Kansas. He was fined 9,000 US\$, sentenced to a 2-month prison term and one year of probation during which his hunting privileges will be suspended in Missouri and Kansas. Cody Scott, who went with him to poach a mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) in Nebraska and transport his trophy to Missouri, was fined 7,500 US\$ and sentenced to 3 years of probation during which he will not be allowed to hunt in Missouri and Nebraska.

US Fish and Wildlife Service, May 21, 2021.¹⁴

**End of April, 2021
State of Maryland, United States of America**

Matthew David Harig, 28, was arrested by police in a case of unauthorized waste dumping. Unfortunately for him, police officers quickly made the connection between him and the man they were looking for from CCTV footage regarding a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) poaching case dating back to 2020. Antlers were seized from his home and Harig is facing several charges.

Maryland Department of Natural Resources, June 11, 2021.¹⁵

LATIN AMERICA

ECUADOR

February 17, 2021

Santa Rosa, Province of Napo, Ecuador

Seizure of 85 kg of red brocket (*Mazama americana*) in a vehicle on the road to Puerto Napo. The meat was about to be sold in Tena market, 180 km away. Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition, February 17, 2021.¹⁶

ASIA

CAMBODIA

March 19, 2021

Cardamom Protected Forest, Cambodia

Seizure of 22 saws and a decapitated muntjac carcass (genus *Muntiacus*). The antlers of the muntjac are used in traditional medicine to treat rheumatism or as a tonic. Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, March 19, 2021.¹⁷

CHINA

Beginning of January 2021

Yinchuan, Yinchuan Prefecture, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, China

Seizure of 22 packs of deer placenta tablets (family *Cervidae*). Formulations based on sika deer (*Cervus nippon*) or red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) placenta are said to have tonic properties particularly relevant for immunocompromised patients, and are believed to treat infertility. Chinese Customs, January 8, 2021.¹⁸

Beginning of February, 2021

Nanjing, Nanjing Prefecture, Jiangsu Province, China



Seizure of a deer antler (family *Cervidae*) weighing 1.4 kg in a package from abroad. Chinese Customs, February 10, 2021.¹⁹

March 2021

Autonomous Municipality of Shanghai, China

Seizure of a pair of one-meter red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) antlers each with 6 points. Chinese Customs, March 24, 2021.²⁰

March 2021

Changchun, Changchun Prefecture, Jilin Province, China

Seizure of 22 sika deer (*Cervus nippon*) or red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) tails in an imported package, 1 kg in total. In Chinese medicine, deer tails are recommended for people with joint and muscle pain. Chinese Customs, April 3, 2021.²¹



INDIA

February 21, 2021

Kurla, Mumbai Suburban District, State of Maharashtra, India

Mohammad Siraj Shaikh was caught red-handed near the railway station. He had offered a pair of swamp deer antlers (*Rucervus duvaucelii*, Appendix I) for sale online for 300,000 rupees (4,106 US\$). He had no idea that his customers were members of the NGO Spreading Awareness on Reptiles and Rehabilitation Programs (SARRP) and that they were coming along with the WCCB. The Free Press Journal, February 22, 2021.²²

March 6, 2021

Pasighat, Eastern Siang District, State of Arunachal Pradesh, India

Forest service are being extra vigilant as the Uying Aaran festival, celebrating the arrival of spring, is coming. Wildlife often pays the price. Several quarters of Indian hog deer meat (*Axis porcinus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) were confiscated by forest officers from the market stalls. They will be incinerated. East Mojo, March 6, 2021.²³

MALAYSIA

OPERATION BERSEPADU KHAZANAH

February 13, 2021

Ulu Melaka, Langkawi Archipelago, State of Kedah, Malaysia

A woman is heard by the police. She was holding 9 Java mouse-deer (*Tragulus javanicus*) in her home for an unknown use. Java mouse-deer are the smallest known ungulates, 45-55 cm long with a 5 cm long tail and a weight of 1 to 2 kg. They have no antlers but the males have long canines which are similar to tusks. They are threatened by habitat destruction and hunting for their skin. New Straits Times (with Bernama), February 14, 2021.²⁴

THAILAND

January 2021

Thasao Subdistrict and Kanchanaburi, Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand

The owner of a restaurant and a street vendor were charged with misleading advertising. They sold pork as deer (family Cervidae) and as muntjac (genus *Muntiacus*). Police officers were dispatched to the scene and bought the alleged wild meat. DNA tests revealed the deception.

Bangkok Post, January 14, 2021.²⁵

March 14, 2021

On the edge of Huai Sala Wildlife Sanctuary, Sisaket Province, Thailand

The dry season was severe. An Indian muntjac (*Muntiacus muntjak*), about 3 years old, unwisely went out of the park in search of water or food. After 700 meters, he fell into a trap. It took national park officers 20 minutes to extract him uninjured.

Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, March 14, 2021; The Nation Thailand, March 22, 2021.²⁶



EUROPE

IRELAND

January 22, 2021

County Wicklow, Ireland



Joint operation of the Food Safety Authority, the county authorities and the national police. A clandestine deer meat processing company (family Cervidae) was closed down by the authorities. All products were destroyed "to avoid any threat to public health."

Agriland, January 22, 2021.²⁷

POLAND

February 3, 2021

Ińsko Lake, West Pomeranian Voivodeship, Poland

Frightened by firecrackers, red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) took refuge on a frozen lake. The ice gave way under their weight. The poachers fled. The Szczecin fire brigade spent 2 days in rescuing the 13 panicked survivors and recovering the bodies of 19 others using ice sleds and ropes. According to a hunter who participated in the rescue, the poaching gang was only interested in the antlers. One month later, after the discovery of 7 additional bodies, the death toll rose to 26. The heads of the dead deer were all cut off by the authorities. "The deer and their antlers belong to the Treasury. The carcasses will be disposed of, and the heads with the antlers, which are very valuable, will be secured. For the time being, there is no news of the poachers, whose names and license plates have been identified.

Stargard Nasze Miasto, March 3, 2021; Cable News Network, February 4, 2021; Helsingin Sanomat, February 4, 2021.²⁸



UNITED KINGDOM

Mid-January, 2021

Castleberg, Tyrone County, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom

On January 16, 2020, 12 deer carcasses (family Cervidae) were discovered in a refrigerated storage room during a search at the home of Trevor Gannon, a 45-year-old hunter. He refused to say where they came from. At the same time, the police examined the records of Edgewater Game Foods, a Ardboe-based company. On the 27 pages describing the characteristics of the 363 deer carcasses processed by the company between September 2018 and December 2019, Gannon's name keeps appearing as a hunter-supplier. On June 12, 2020, he was questioned again. The police were only able to extract from him the confession that the carcasses had "passed through his fridge."

The court suspected that Trevor Gannon had set up an illegal business that brought him a substantial sum of money. He was fined 8,160 US\$ and ordered to pay 200 US\$ in court costs.

Belfast Telegraph, 15 January 2021.²⁹



February 14, 2021

Camelon, Falkirk Council Area, Scotland, United Kingdom

A young roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) was found right next to the cemetery. He had been bitten to death by a dog. His antlers were retrieved and not by the dog!

The Falkirk Herald, February 17, 2021.³⁰

March 10, 2021

Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire County, England, United Kingdom

Jonathon Saggerson, a 47-year-old taxidermist, was fined 2,300 US\$ for buying a swamp deer skull (*Rucervus duvaucelii*, Appendix I), making a false declaration with the intention of being delivered a certificate stating that it predated 1947, and attempting to sell it on eBay in May 2019. The high price alerted the investigators. In June, they searched his home and seized several skulls, including that of the swamp deer.

National Wildlife Crime Unit, January 28 and March 10, 2021.³¹



ebay

RUSSIA

January 20, 2021

Vladivostok, Primorsky Krai, Russia

A man was sentenced to a 3-year suspended prison term for attempting to export 98 Siberian musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*, Appendix II) preputial glands worth over 52,000 US\$ (530 US\$/gland). He had entrusted this shipment to a friend working on a reefer ship about to leave for overseas in order to sell them.

TASS Russian News Agency, January 20, 2021.³²



Beginning of April 2021

Zabaykalsk, Zabaykalsky Krai, Russia. Border with China.



Discovery of 64 Siberian musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*, Appendix II) preputial glands concealed in a freight train carrying timber to China. In 2020, customs officers in Zabaikalsk prevented bear paws and various deer byproducts from crossing the border.

Interfax Russia, April, 7, 2021.³³

LATIN AMERICA

ARGENTINA

Beginning of April 2021

Province of Chubut, Argentina

Within one hour of each other, control operations led to the arrest of 2 vehicles transporting guanaco meat (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II).

El Chubut, April 10, 2021.¹

Mid-April 2021

Province of Chubut, Argentina

The flow of poached guanaco (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II) meat on the roads of the province seems endless and sometimes reaches semi-industrial proportions. The equivalent of 50 guanacos cut into quarters and packed in unlabeled plastic bags was discovered by the Gendarmerie's 36th squad in the back of a Toyota Hilux pick-up. The final destination was Trevelin.

El Chubut, April 12, 2021.²

CHILE

End of February 2021

San Pedro de Atacama, El Loa Province, Antofagasta Region, Chile

The 4 men had stopped at the side of the road for a drink. The police found a vicuña (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix I) carcass and a rifle in the boot of their vehicle.

El Diario de Antofagasta, February 19, 2021.³

PERU

February 26, 2021

Caylloma District, Province of Caylloma, Department of Arequipa, Peru

Alerted by the inhabitants of the community of Santa Rosa, a Serfor team accompanied by police officers found 6 skinned vicuña carcasses (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix I). The circling condors strapping prompted them to continue their field investigations. A further 50 dead vicuñas were found, all skinned. Vicuña wool is a luxury product on the international market (5,200 US\$ per 200g stole). The spoils of poaching slip through the net of the controls, and seizures of clothing and accessories are rare.

Serfor, February 26, 2021.⁴

Mid-April, 2021

Cuzco Province, Department of Cuzco, Peru



Eight new vicuñas (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix I) killed and skinned. The inhabitants heard the shots and raised the alarm. The killers took advantage of the darkness to flee.

The Covid-19 pandemic suspended the chaku, which consists of surrounding the vicuñas, isolating them and pinning them to the ground to shear them. They leave alive but distraught and without the coat that protects them from the cold and wind. This year, poachers would be particularly interested in the vicuñas and their precious wool. However, when the pandemic is not present, the chaku are only supposed to take place every two years and they have never stopped the poachers' deadly raids.

Info región, April 13, 2021.⁵

End of April 2021

Alto Piñari, Cojata District, Province of Huancañé, Department of Puno, Peru

Two vicuñas (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix I) shot during Saturday night or at first light.

Pachamama Radio, April 20, 2021.⁶

NORTHERN AFRICA

ALGERIA

January 17, 2021

Bordj Bou Arreridj, Bordj Bou Arreridj Province, Algeria

Seizure during a road check of 5 juvenile Barbary macaques (*Macaca sylvanus*, Appendix I) stashed in a closed plastic basket in the back of a car driven by a man in his 30s who explains that he bought them in the Sétif province from a seller found on Facebook.

Echorouk, January 17, 2021.¹

Beginning of February 2021

Tadmaït, Tizi Ouzou Province, Algeria

2 Barbary macaques (*Macaca sylvanus*, Appendix I) are found in the trunk of a car during a routine roadside check. The duo explains that they bought them for 30,000 dinars (225 US\$) on a market in the Béjaïa province. They are seized and entrusted to the forest rangers for their release into the wild.

Algérie360, February 9, 2021.²

WESTERN AFRICA

GUINEA

March 10, 2021

National Park of Upper Niger, Faranah Region, Guinea



Arrival at the Chimpanzee Conservation Center of an injured male baby chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I). One cheek has been pierced by a bullet and his jaw is dislocated. Several teeth are pulled out. The prognosis is relatively optimistic but it will be impossible to release him into the wild.

Chimpanzee Conservation Center, March 10, 15 and 24 and April 16 and 26, 2021.³

LIBERIA

Mid-January 2021

Marshall, Margibi County, Liberia



Arrival of a new resident at the Liberia Chimpanzee Rescue & Protection sanctuary.

Liberia Chimpanzee Rescue & Protection, January 22, 2021.⁴

February 12, 2021

Marshall, Margibi County, Liberia



The veterinarians are keeping a close eye on the changes in the worrying state of health of the female chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I). Her first day at the Liberia Chimpanzee Rescue & Protection sanctuary is rather encouraging.

Liberia Chimpanzee Rescue & Protection, February 12 and 13, 2021.⁵

March 25 and 31, 2021

Kpan, Margibi County, Liberia



Handing over of a sooty mangabey (*Cercocebus atys*, Appendix II) only a few months old. The man had bought him 3 weeks earlier in Monrovia from the poacher who had killed his mother. Sooty mangabeys are among the most common pets in Liberia. Two other specimens were handed over to the Libassa Wildlife Sanctuary a few days later.

Libassa Wildlife Sanctuary, March 25 and April 1, 2021.⁶

April 10, 2021

Marshall, Margibi County, Liberia



Seizure of a female chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) who was a victim of the pet market. Liberia Chimpanzee Rescue & Protection, April 10, 2021.⁷

CENTRAL AFRICA

CAMEROON

REPEATED OFFENSE

February 27, 2021

Ambam, South Region, Cameroon

The man, a customs officer by profession, had driven about 40 kilometres to sell the mandrill (*Mandrillus sphinx*, Appendix I) whom he had been holding for a year. He was cornered at the petrol station while filling up. The mandrill was seized and entrusted to the Yaoundé Zoo. The man is anything but a beginner. Already last year, he sold another mandrill in Ambam, which is close to the border with Gabon and Equatorial Guinea.

EAGLE, February 27, 2021; Camer.be, March 12, 2021.⁸

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

January 9, 2021

Central Kongo Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo



The refuge of P-WAC, a Franco-Congolese NGO, is dedicated to teaching orphaned great apes seized in cages, cellars, in the clutches of poachers or found abandoned in the forest to live in the wild. P-WAC has just taken in 2 chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) aged about 4 and 18 months. Their health does not inspire

any particular concern, unlike that of a cercopithecine (family Cercopithecidae). "We're trying to get him back on track."

P-WAC, January 9, 2021; 30 Millions d'Amis, January 15, 2021.⁹

January 25, 2021

Garamba National Park, Haut-Uélé Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo



Rescue of a female patas monkey (*Erythrocebus patas*, Appendix II) by the rangers.

Lwiro Primates, January 25, 2021.¹⁰

February 28, 2021

Lwiro Primate Rehabilitation Centre, Bukavu, South Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Three new residents: a chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I), a De Brazza's monkey (*Cercopithecus neglectus*, Appendix II) and a greater white-nosed monkey (*Cercopithecus nictitans*, Appendix II).

Lwiro Primates, February 28, 2021.¹¹

End of January 2021

Maiko National Park, Ituri, Maniema and North Kivu Provinces, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Rescue of an injured female chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I). The rangers arrested the poachers who were abusing her and seized several kilograms of bushmeat. The chimpanzee was transferred to the Lwiro Primate Rehabilitation Centre.

Lwiro Primates, January 28 and 31, 2021.¹²

February 2, 2021

Lubumbashi, Haut-Katanga Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

They had been seized in September 2020 in Zimbabwe (see "On the Trail" n° 30 p. 92). The 25 juvenile monkeys, 12 golden-bellied mangabeys (*Cercocebus chrysogaster*, Appendix II), 2 l'Hoest's monkeys (*Cercopithecus lhoesti*, Appendix II), 2 lesulas (*Cercopithecus lomamiensis*, Appendix II), 2 grey-cheeked mangabeys (*Lophocebus albigena*, Appendix II), 5 greater white-nosed monkeys (*Cercopithecus nictitans*, Appendix II) and 2 Allen's swamp monkey (*Allenopithecus nigroviridis*, Appendix II), were repatriated to the Democratic Republic of Congo from where they had been taken. After a 38-hour journey, they reached the JACK (Jeunes Animaux Confisqués au Katanga) in Lubumbashi. Five did not survive the fatigue and stress of the transport.

According to Radio Okapi, customs officers on duty at the time of the smuggling of the monkeys were arrested and the Congolese State is reportedly taking steps to request the extradition of the 2 Congolese, the Zambian and the Malawian who were arrested and who are locked up in Zimbabwe where they were fined 6,000 US\$ or imprisoned for 6 months in default of payment.

Radio Okapi, February 4, 2021; Cision, February 9 and 20 2021; NewsdzeZimbabwe, February 14, 2021; Politico, February 14, 2021.¹³

Beginning of March 2021

Lubumbashi, Haut-Katanga Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Arrival at the sanctuary of 2 vervet monkeys (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II), a male and a female, seized by Ministry of Environment officers in a casino run by people from Asia. The owners claim to have bought them from a trafficker "out of compassion."

J.A.C.K Primate Rehabilitation Centre, March 4, 2021.¹⁴

March 1, 2021

Lwiro Primate Rehabilitation Centre, Bukavu, South Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

A 3-year-old male chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) is in the care of the Lwiro Rehabilitation Centre. An X-ray reveals that 2 bullets are lodged in his head.

Lwiro Primates, March 1 and 3, 2021.¹⁵



March 5, 2021

Lwiro Primate Rehabilitation Centre, Bukavu, South Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Attempt to rescue 2 young chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I). One of them died shortly after arriving at the refuge. All the residents of the Lwiro Primate Rehabilitation Centre are victims of poaching or the pet market. The sanctuary was created in 2002 by the Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation and the Research Center of Natural Sciences to offer orphaned primates "a place to recover both physically and physiologically from their ordeals."

Lwiro Primates, March 5 and 7, 2021.¹⁶

March 16, 2021

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



Rescue by the rangers of an orphaned chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) injured by the rope that trapped him. He is entrusted to the Lwiro Rehabilitation Centre.

Lwiro Primates, March 16, 2021; Anthony Caere, March 17, 2021.¹⁷

April 15, 2021

Nia-Nia, Ituri Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Rescue of a young chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I). He joins the rehabilitation centre in Lwiro. Another orphan did not survive the journey to the shelter.

Lwiro Primates, April 15, 2021.¹⁸

April 26, 2021

Sankuru Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Rescue of a young bonobo (*Pan paniscus*, Appendix I) whose mother was shot by poachers.

Friends of Bonobos, April 26 and 29, 2021.¹⁹

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

February 2021

Ndzele and Tchimpounga Sanctuary, Department of Kouilou, Republic of the Congo

A female chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) of about 2 years of age, allegedly bought from poachers by a father and made into a life-size doll, was after some time considered undesirable and handed over to the authorities. They agreed with the Tchimpounga sanctuary where she arrived after an interminable journey that it is a long way from northern Congo to Tchimpounga near the Atlantic Ocean, even if it is partly by air.

Jane Goodall Institute, February 15, 2021.²⁰

March 19, 2021

Dolisie, Department of Niari, Republic of the Congo

Arrest of Nzihou Arly and Moukassa Roussel who had travelled 175 km from Mossendjo to sell a mandrill (*Mandrillus sphinx*, Appendix I) aged about 8 months hidden in a cardboard box inside a black backpack. The young primate was entrusted to the Tchimpounga sanctuary for future release. Two splinters of lead were found in his head; luckily the injuries are superficial.

EAGLE, March 20, 2021; Projet d'appui à l'Application de la Loi sur la Faune sauvage (PALF) March and April 2, ²⁰²¹; Agence d'information d'Afrique centrale, October 21, 2021.²¹

March 30, 2021

Pointe-Noire, Department of Pointe-Noire, Republic of the Congo



Intervention by the Direction départementale de l'économie forestière (Departmental Directorate of Forest Economy) with the support of PALF (Projet d'appui à l'Application de la Loi sur la Faune Sauvage - Project for the Application of Law for Fauna). The officers manage to confiscate a juvenile mandrill (*Mandrillus sphinx*, Appendix I), but not without encountering

some difficulties with his owner. He claimed to be following regulations, but the permit issued to him was for the possession of a different species of Old-World monkey (family Cercopithecidae). The mandrill is now in the proper care of the Tchimpounga sanctuary.

EAGLE, March 2021; Projet d'appui à l'Application de la Loi sur la Faune sauvage (PALF), March 2021.²²

EASTERN AFRICA

ZAMBIA

March 11 and 14 and April 16 and 19, 2021
Butondo, Chiwempala, Chingola and Kitwe, Copperbelt Province, Mufurila, Muchinga Province, Zambia



In a span of 2 months, the Zambia Primate Project successfully rescued 8 illegally detained blue vervet monkeys (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II):

- a 7-year-old male held for 3 years, severely weakened after being tied to an iron stake with no free access to water.
 - a 2.5-year-old male held for one year, tied to the roof of an old unused car.
 - a 1-year-and-9-month-old female held for 8 months who had spent all that time in a lean-to in total darkness, presumably bought to be eaten.
 - a 3-year-old male blinded after being abused, a 2.5-year-old male and a 6-month-old female locked in a cage in a poultry and guinea pig farm. Another vervet monkey had died 2 months earlier during an escape attempt.
 - a 19-month-old male displayed in a restaurant.
 - a 7-or-8-year-old male locked in a cage for 5 years which he shared with a 4-year-old female yellow baboon (*Papio cynocephalus*, Appendix II).
- Zambia Primate Project, March 19 and April 26, 2021.²³

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

February 4 to March 29, 2021

Umkomaas, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa



Following an inspection on February 4, Tracy Rowles, owner of the vervet rescue center, was given 21 days to relocate her 117 vervet monkeys (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II). On March 29, agents from Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, the wildlife management agency, assisted by the SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) and CROW (Centre for Rehabilitation of Wildlife) seized about 100 vervet monkeys held in deplorable conditions: cages too small, not cleaned, presence of sharp objects, lack of light, overcrowding... Tracy Rowles is charged with keeping vervet monkeys without a permit and for refusing to comply with a request from the authorities, and she was fined the equivalent of 100 US\$.

Tracy Rowles now accuses Ezemvelo of seizing the vervet monkeys without a warrant. She claims she made several requests for permits in 2018, which went unanswered. Ezemvelo also allegedly refused to consider an alternative housing solution on March 3. Immediately after the seizure, Rowles filed an appeal with the Pietermaritzburg court to prevent the euthanasia of the vervet monkeys. However, more than 50 individuals will be put to sleep. The court ordered the suspension of all interventions until May 5. To be continued.

Independent Online, March 30 and April 4, 2021; The South African, March 31 and April 1, 2021; Wildlife Animal Protection Forum South Africa, April 6, 2021; Southlands Sun, April 13, 2021.²⁴

February 16 and 19, 2021

Ballito, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa



Poisoning of vervet monkeys (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) in a public garden, females, males, juveniles. Most died. Survivors, stricken by convulsions, are being treated at the Aloe Veterinary Clinic.

The North Coast Courier, February 24, 2021.²⁵

Late February to mid-March, 2021

Tongaat and Nzinga, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Who is after the blue vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II)? Attacks are on the rise.

- A 3-month-old baby is pierced with 3 bullets. The veterinarians were forced to finish him off.

- A female is the victim of a mad gunman. She is paralyzed. She was put out of her misery.

Carol Booth, February 26 and March 18, 2021.²⁶

April 8, 2021

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa



A male chacma baboon (*Papio ursinus*, Appendix II) was ordered to be shot by the municipality. Attracted by garbage, he had been entering homes in the Murdoch Valley suburbs since October in search of food. Attempts to deter him were reportedly ineffective and "of great concern was the fact that he could contract and spread Covid-19 from close contact with residents."

News24, April 13, 2021.²⁷

April 11 and 13, 2021

Westville and Durban, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Carol Booth of the Monkey Helpline association is calling for witnesses for 2 cases:

- A male vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) shot in the street.

- A vervet monkey found after a collision with a vehicle has multiple bullets in his body.

Carol Booth, April 11 and 13, 2021.²⁸

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 20, 2021

Parrish, State of Florida, United States of America
Jimmy Wayne Hammonds, nicknamed "The Monkey Whisperer," is charged with attempting to sell a capuchin monkey (*Sapajus* spp., synonymous of *Cebus* spp., Appendix II) to a California buyer, arranging his transfer across the country and selling cotton-headed tamarins (*Saguinus oedipus*, Appendix I) in Alabama, South Carolina and Wisconsin. He is charged with violating the Endangered Species Act and with witness tampering. He faces up to 30 years in prison. Star Tribune (with The Associated Press), January 20, 2021.²⁹

February 23, 2021

Austerlitz, State of New York, United States of America



Search of Gary M. Wood's house for weapon and drug trafficking. Seizure of 59 weapons, 17.7 grams of cocaine, 3,250 US\$ in cash and a white-faced capuchin (*Cebus capucinus*, Appendix II). According to the photo viewed by James P. Gibbs, professor

at the State University of New York, the capuchin is in good health. He does not appear to be suffering from hair loss as is often the case with stressed specimens, and his weight appears to be appropriate. The capuchin has been entrusted to a zoo. Times Union, February 26, 2021.³⁰

March 22, 2021

Owenton, State of Kentucky, United States of America



The capuchin monkey (*Sapajus* spp., synonymous with *Cebus* spp., Appendix II) coming from an unknown location, regularly visited the Lewis family. At first she was wary and kept her distance. As time went

on, she got closer and closer to them until a family member managed to catch her in a blanket and put her in a kennel. Officers of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife came to pick her up and entrusted her to the care of the Primate Rescue Center in Nicholasville. The animal is believed to be a female, approximately one year old. Authorities are trying to find out more about how she got here, especially because she was wearing a harness. They have issued an appeal for witnesses.

WKYT, March 26, 2021.³¹

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

BRAZIL

March 28, 2021

São Bernardo do Campo, State of São Paulo, Brazil



Arrest of a 20-year-old man who was selling primates for 4,000 reais, i.e. 730 US\$ per specimen, whereas on the legal market a primate is worth between 70,000 and 80,000 reais (12,835-

14,670 US\$). He was cornered by a police officer posing as a buyer. As he did not have the animals with him at the time of the transaction, he took law enforcement to his grandmother's house where 2 small monkeys, about a month old, were held captive in a small black plastic box. Band, March 29, 2021.³²

FRANCE (FRENCH GUIANA)

End of April 2021

Matoury, Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France

Seizure of a 35-year-old female red-faced black spider monkey (*Ateles paniscus*, Appendix II) held in a 1.5 metre wide cage. Her owners have no documents authorising them to keep her. She has been taken to a care centre.

French Biodiversity Agency, July 2021.³³

PERU

March 24, 2021

Department of San Martin, Peru

Transfer of 2 woolly monkeys (*Lagothrix lagotricha*, Appendix II) seized from traffickers to a rescue centre in the department of Loreto for possible future release.

Neotropical Primate Conservation, March 25, 2021.³⁴



April 9, 2021
Department of San Martin, Peru



Seizure of a juvenile black spider monkey (*Ateles chamek*, Appendix II) held captive as a pet. He should soon join a rescue centre in the department of Loreto in his range. Neotropical Primate Conservation, April 10, 2021.³⁵

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

April 15, 2021
City of Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

A white-fronted capuchin (*Cebus albifrons*, Appendix II) was dropped off before the Emperor Valley Zoo after hours. He seems to be in good physical condition and should join his zoo counterparts after a period of quarantine. According to Nirmal Biptah, curator of the zoo, it is common for animals to be handed over in this way. "Since the fines were increased, we've been having a lot of these animals released into the wild or left at the zoo. Over the last month we've had about a dozen animals left at the zoo and about a dozen more seized from owners who weren't in possession of a permit to have them." These are mainly orange-winged amazons (*Amazona amazonica*, Appendix II) and white-fronted capuchins. The orange-winged amazons can be released, but the white-fronted capuchins are not endemic to Trinidad and Tobago and must remain in the zoo. "If you wish to abandon your pet, contact the zoo at 800-4ZOO." Loop News, April 16, 2021.³⁶

SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

CAMBODIA

February, 2021
Phnom Penh, Phnom Penh Province, Cambodia
Seizure of a budeng (*Trachypithecus villosus*, Appendix II) kept as a pet. He was handed over to the Phnom Tamao rescue center for possible future release. Wildlife Crime Hotline, March 6, 2021.³⁷

February 2021
Siem Reap Province, Cambodia



Seizure of a long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II). He joins other macaques at the rescue center in Phnom Tamao. Wildlife Crime Hotline, March 11, 2021.³⁸

INDONESIA

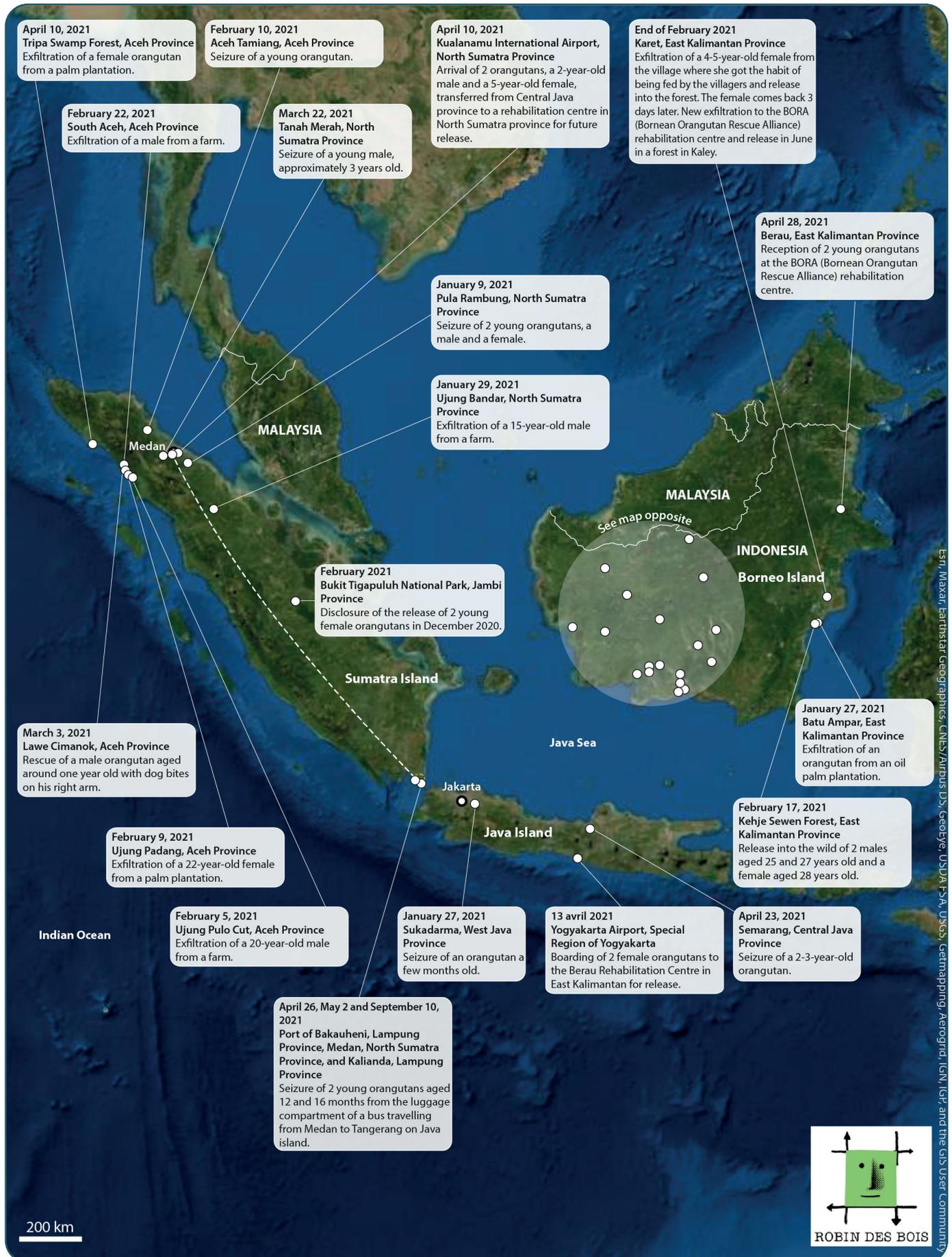
ORANGUTANS

January 27, 2021
Sukadarma, Bekasi Regency, West Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia
Arrest of Y.I. Seizure of an orangutan (*Pongo* spp., Appendix I) a few months old. The babies are sold for around 35 million rupiahs or 2,500 US\$ on the Indonesian pet market and between 10,000 and 15,000 US\$ on the international market. Y.I. also held 3 hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II) and 3 ebony leaf monkeys (*Trachypithecus auratus*, Appendix II). Y.I. was active on social networks to find suppliers and customers. He concealed his trafficking behind his legal farmed bird business in the Sukutani market in Depok. According to his initial confession, he also specialised in silvery gibbons (*Hylobates moloch*, Appendix I), yellow-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua sulphurea*, Appendix I), flat-headed cats (*Prionailurus planiceps*, Appendix I), Javan hawk-eagles (*Spizaetus bartelsi*, Appendix II) and hornbills (family Bucerotidae). GenPI, January 28, 2021; Kompas, January 28, 2021; Tempo, January 28, 2021; SINDOnews, January 29, 2021.³⁹



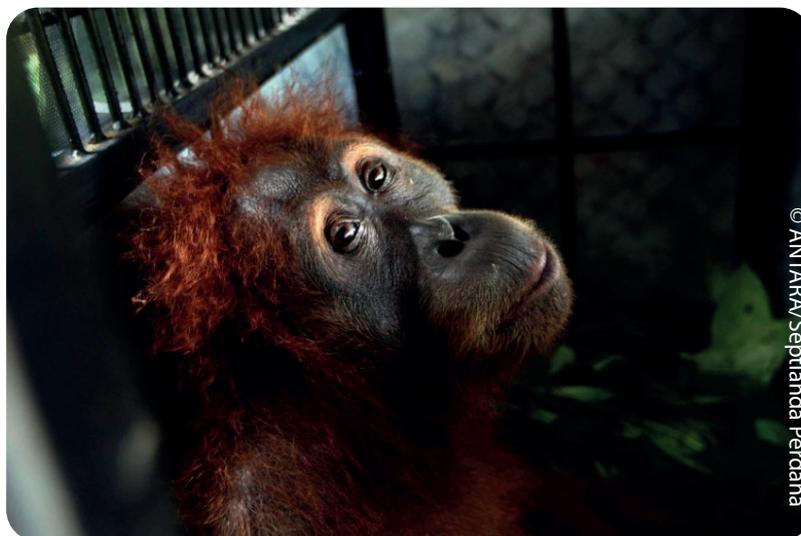
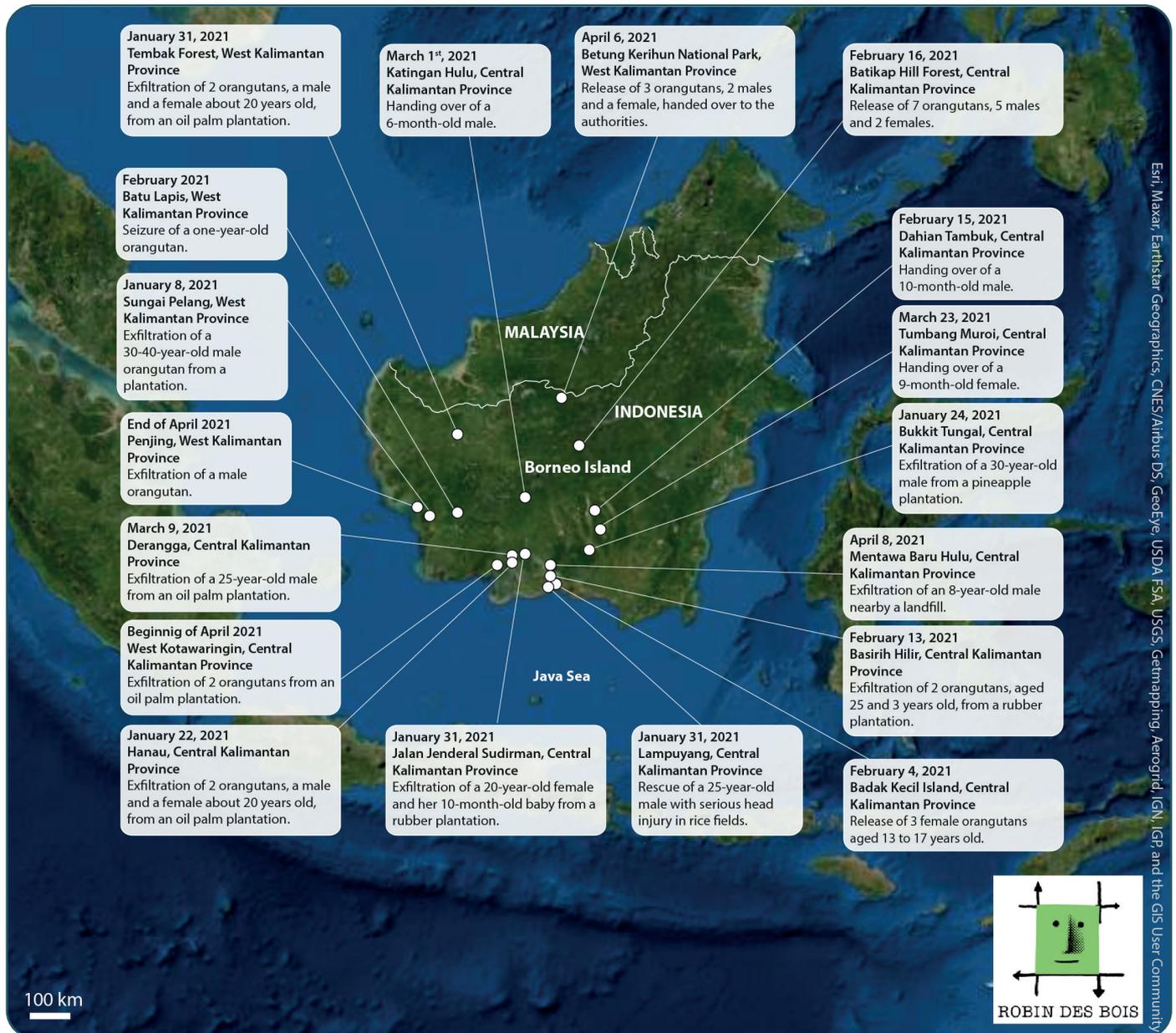
Orangutans in Indonesia

January 1 - April 30, 2022



Orangutans in Indonesia - zoom on Borneo

January 1 - April 30, 2022



Sungai Pelang, West Kalimantan Province, January 8, 2021



Katingan Hulu, Central Kalimantan, March 1st, 2021



Dahian Tambuk, Central Kalimantan, February 15, 2021



Batu Lapis, West Kalimantan, February 2021



Tumbang Muroi, Central Kalimantan, March 23, 2021



Yogyakarta International Airport, April 13, 2021



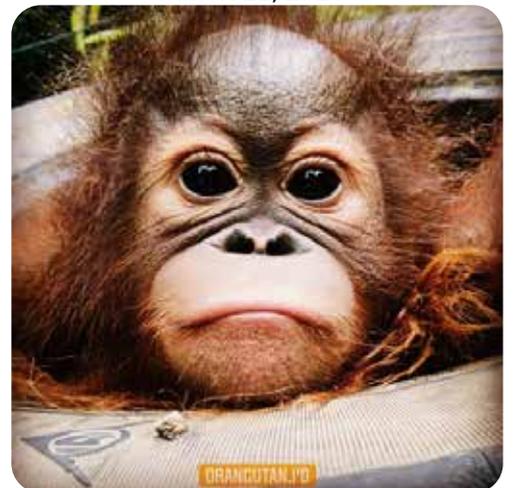
Bukkit Tungal, Central Kalimantan, January 24, 2021



Tanah Merah, North Sumatra Province, March 22, 2021



Ujung Pulo Cut, Aceh Province, February 5, 2021



Berau, East Kalimantan Province, April 28, 2021

April 26, May 2 and September 10, 2021

Bakauheni Port, South Lampung Regency, Lampung Province, Medan, North Sumatra Province, and Klian-nda, South Lampung Regency, Lampung Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia



Two baby orangutans (*Pongo* spp., Appendix I) aged approximately 12 and 16 months were discovered in the luggage compartment of a bus coming from Medan, which is 1,800 km and 36 hours away. They were concealed in fruit baskets. After crossing the Sunda Strait on a car ferry, the final destination of the bus was Tangerang on Java Island. The driver is in custody.



The 2 orangutans were reportedly captured in Lubuk Pakam, 40 km away from Medan. They were transferred to Jambi province in central Sumatra to an orphanage run by the BKSDA (Balai Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam) and the Frankfurt Zoological Society.

V.P, the 30-year-old smuggler, was arrested in a car park. A search of his home on the outskirts of Medan resulted in the seizure of 2 pythons (*Pythonidae*, Appendix I or II), 5 two-banded monitor lizards (*Varanus salvator*, Appendix II), 3 Asian giant tortoises (*Manouria emys*, Appendix II) and 20 sailfin lizards (*Hydrosaurus amboinensis*).

V.P. was sentenced to a 2-year prison term and H.P, the bus driver to a one-year prison term.

Antara News, April, 27 and May 20, 2021; Kabar Siger, April, 27, 2021; iNews Lampung, April 28, 2021; Kompas, May 2, 2021; Tempo, May 4, 2021; Republika, May 27, 2021; Centre for Orangutan Protection, September 10, 2021.⁴⁰

INDONESIA - EXCLUDING ORANGUTANS

January 26, 2021

Halimun Salak National Park, West Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia



Release of 30 Sunda slow lorises (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I) that were seized or voluntarily handed over to the BBKSDA (Balai Besar Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam). They have previously undergone a Covid test and a quarantine period.

International Animal Rescue, January 26 and 29, 2021.⁴¹

February 1, 2021

Parepare Port, South Sulawesi Province, Sulawesi Island

Seizure of 19 long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) and 5 small-clawed otters (*Aonyx cinerea*, Appendix I) during a routine check on board the ferry Prince Soya arriving from Samarinda (Borneo Island). The smugglers have not been identified. An investigation is underway.

Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), February 2021; Liputan6.com, February 1, 2021.⁴²



Prince Soya, Samarinda, December 2016

**Beginning of February, 2021
Special Capital Region of Jakarta, Java
Island, Indonesia**



Rian Mardiansyah posted videos on his YouTube channel in which he set off firecrackers next to his monkeys, sprayed them with water, mixed glue and chili peppers with their food, and encouraged them to fight over treats. To make matters worse, his subscribers would comment on these torture videos, encouraging him and suggesting new ways to torment them. Mardiansyah even went so far as to ask the subscribers to support him by making a “donation” via Paypal. The Indonesian authorities came to seize the 2 long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) and the pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca nemestrina*, Appendix II) after the Governor of Jakarta received a complaint from Action for Primates. Mardiansyah had to delete about 100 of his videos but the channel is still active. The 3 macaques, still frightened, nervous and traumatized, were taken to a quarantine center. They will then join a rehabilitation center of JAAN (Jakarta Animal Aid Network).

According to Sarah Kite, co-founder of the NGO Action for Primates, the torture of monkeys is widespread in Indonesia. They are captured as babies and sold online or in markets. They are then forced to wear ridiculous costumes, ride motorcycles, walk on stilts, or do anything else that will make money for their owners. Lady Freethinker, February 4, 2021; Daily Star, February 15, 2021.⁴³

**February 8, 2021
Kediri, Sidoarjo and Ngawi, East Java
Province, Java Island, Indonesia**



Via Facebook the young couple sells monkeys and raptors. Joint intervention of the police and the COPC (Center for Orangutan Protection). Rescue of 8 Javanese langurs (*Trachypithecus auratus*, Appendix II), a few months old, captured at a short distance. They were bruised, having fallen from the tree at the same time as their mothers were killed by bullets or throwing weapons. Only the babies are of interest to the network. The mothers are uncontrollable. Taken from the cradle, they are easily tamed and quickly become dependent. At the edge of the forest, a cercopithecus is worth 500,000 rupiahs, which is 35 US\$. At a pet shop or via the Internet they sell for little more than 100 US\$. In spite of the best care, 3 subjects died at the Javan Langur Center in Batu and 2 others in a specialized institution of the BKSDA near Yogyakarta.

Centre for Orangutan Protection, February 10 and 19, March 3 and 5, 2021 ; Antara News, February 17, 2021 ; Mongabay, March 13, 2021.⁴⁴

**Beginning of March 2021
Nahornop, Humbang Hasundutan Regency,
North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indo-
nesia**

A female southern pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca nemestrina*, Appendix II) is shot and eaten by a farmer. Her baby barely escaped. The man explains that he left him alive because he does not have enough meat on his bones. He voluntarily handed him over to the BBKSDA who entrusted him to the NGO Scorpion.

Scorpion Foundation Indonesia, March 26, 2021.⁴⁵

**April 4, 2021
Nagari Tambangan, Tanah Datar Re-
gency, West Sumatra Province, Suma-
tra Island, Indonesia**



Six self-satisfied idiots aged 15, 16, 17, 18, 32 and 45 posted a video on Instagram showing them laughing as they pulled the tail of a Sumatran surili (*Presbytis melalophos*, Appendix II) until he managed to run away. They were arrested and made a public apology. For the capture of a protected species, they face 5 years in prison and a fine of 100 million rupiahs or 6,880 US\$.

Tribun-Medan, April 5, 2021.⁴⁶

**April 12, 2021
Medan City, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra
Island, Indonesia**



Seizure by Mr. Limbong of a female silver langur (*Trachypithecus villosus*, Appendix II) tied to a tree by her waist. Initial findings by the NGO Scorpion and the BBKSDA indicate that she is in poor health and has impaired vision. Mr. Limbong explains that he picked her up from his brother's garden when she was limping and decided to keep her as a pet, unaware that this was prohibited.

Scorpion Foundation Indonesia, April 14, 2021.⁴⁷

PHILIPPINES

April 16, 2021

Bongao, Province of Tawi-Tawi, Philippines

Handing over of a slow loris (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I) held by a farmer. The police intervened after receiving anonymous information. Philippine Daily Inquirer, April 20, 2021.⁴⁸

THAILAND

January 23, 2021

Phrao District, Chiang Mai Province, Thailand



A 26-year-old man, Theeraphol Chanmo, was arrested for selling rhesus macaques (*Macaca mulatta*, Appendix II) on Facebook. He was caught by a buyer who had ordered two 2-month-old macaques for 8,000 baht or 270 US\$. The buyer was a police officer. Theeraphol explains that since the Covid crisis began, his job as a deliveryman is no longer sufficient and he had to find other sources of income. He bought the baby macaques for 1,500 baht each (50 US\$) from a poacher who is actively being sought out.

Bangkok Post, January 24, 2021.⁴⁹

Early February, 2021

Namtok Sai Khao National Park, Pattani Province, Thailand



Five monkeys trapped in cages were seized and immediately released. Further inspections of the area resulted in the seizure of 37 monkey cages which were immediately destroyed.

Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, February 3, 2021.⁵⁰

March 25, 2021

Bangkok, Thailand



"Godzilla" is a 3-year-old male long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) that Manop Aim-sawan took in when his former owner, a Bangkok market vendor, abandoned him along with 2 other macaques who have since died. One was hit by a car and the other was attacked by stray dogs. Manop would have contacted the authorities who told him that he could keep him even if he didn't have a permit. Since then, "Godzilla" has been living in the market, chained, and people passing by have been giving him food. He weighs almost 20 kg, whereas a macaque normally weighs between 8 and 10 kg. Photos of him circulated more and more on the web and the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation decided to seize him fearing for his health. He was entrusted to a conservation center in the province of Chachoengsao where he was fed with bananas, cabbage, lentils, pumpkin and sunflower seeds. A few days after his arrival at the center, he had already lost 3 kg. But social networks have taken sympathy for his owner who says he misses "Godzilla" and the web asks the authorities to return him. Rejection: macaques are wild animals that cannot be domesticated.

Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, March 30, 2021; The Thaiger, March 30, 2021; The Nation Thailand, March 31 and April 2, 2021.⁵¹

March 21 and 27, 2021

Koh Samui Island, Surat Thani Province, Thailand

Emergency rescue of a northern pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II) by a member of Samui Snake Rescue. The macaque, who was wearing a collar, was trying to enter houses. He was undoubtedly abandoned after being exploited for coconut harvesting. Perhaps he was not performing enough: macaque owners earn barely 10 US\$ cents per coconut harvested. He is now recovering at the Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand hospital.

Rescue of a second northern pig-tailed macaque, aged 12 years. Bought 6 months prior coconut harvesting, he always resisted his "owner's" attempts to train him and eventually attacked him. His collar was cutting so deep into his skin that the wound became infected.

Coconut harvesting and tourism are the 2 main activities on Koh Samui Island.

Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand, March 30 and April 1, 2021.⁵²

Week of April 5, 2021

Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand

Handing over of a northern pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II) that was reportedly found 18 months ago while clinging to his mother who had just died after being hit by a car. Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand, April 14, 2021.⁵³

April 15, 2021

Krom Luang Chumphon National Park, Chumphon Province, Thailand



Arrest of 2 suspects in the north of the park carrying 2 colobine carcasses (Colobinae, Appendix I or II) weighing 4 kg, a carcass of dusky leaf monkey (*Trachypithecus obscurus*, Appendix II) weighing 6 kg and a carcass of muntjac (genus *Muntiacus*) weighing 23 kg. Seizure of firearms and of a car. The poachers said they killed the animals in Hong Charoen subdistrict.

Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, April 16, 2021.⁵⁴

VIET NAM

Beginning of January 2021

Lam Dong and Dak Nong Provinces, Viet Nam

Seizure of 2 northern pig-tailed macaques (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II) held in churches. Animals confiscated in churches in Viet Nam, see "On the Trail" n°18 p.17 and 47, n°26 p.111 and n°30 p.138. ENV, January 15, 2021.⁵⁵

January 26, 2021

Krong Nang, Dak Lak Province, Viet Nam

He should have complied with road traffic regulations. Ma Seo Tua, 41, was stopped because he was talking on the phone while driving. Unfortunately for him, the police opened the 2 bags he was carrying. They contained the carcasses of 16 macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II), 58.5 kg in total. Ma Seo Tua had allegedly bought them for 2.5 US\$/kg in Cu San, about 100 km away, and wanted to sell them for twice that amount in Krong Nang. Thanh Niên, January 29, 2021.⁵⁶

FAMILY AFFAIRS

February 1, 2021

Hanoi, Viet Nam



Nguyen Van Nam, a 40-year-old Viet Nam Railway Company employee, is hired to transport a juvenile buff-cheeked gibbon (*Nomascus gabriellae*, Appendix I) from Binh Thuan province to a customer in Hanoi. The customer changes his mind and finally asks that the sale take place elsewhere. Nam's brother agrees to do him small favour by delivering the parcel without knowing the contents. When he is stopped, he discovers the gibbon at the same time as the police. Nam is charged with trafficking an endangered species.

ENV, February 1, 2021.⁵⁷

February 3, 2021

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

The macaque (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II) abandoned chained in the street and injured was taken to the Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Center.

ENV, February 4, 2021.⁵⁸

February 26, 2021

Hanoi, Viet Nam

Transfer of an illegally held Assam macaque (*Macaca assamensis*, Appendix II) to the Hanoi Wildlife Rescue Center. Joint operation by ENV and the Hanoi Forest Protection Department.

ENV, February 28, 2021.⁵⁹

March 16, 2021

Near Ba Kham and Ba Trang, Quang Ngai Province, Viet Nam

Arrest of Pham Van Thay, 27 years old, for shooting a grey-shanked douc langur (*Pygathrix cinerea*, Appendix I) with a homemade weapon. The species only lives in Viet Nam and in border areas of Cambodia. The population has decreased by 80% in 36 years due to deforestation, poaching for meat or traditional medicine (in particular to make monkey balm for joint and muscle pain) and capture for the pet market.

VnExpress International, March 21, 2021.⁶⁰

March 24, 2021
Thuong Trach, Quang Binh Province, Viet Nam



Sentencing of Cao Xuan Viet, aged 47, to 42 months in prison. He had been arrested in possession of 3 red-shanked douc langurs (*Pygathrix nemaeus*, Appendix I) and a Hatinh langur (*Trachypithecus hatinhensis*, Appendix II), all dried, in December 2016 in Phong Nha-Ke Bang national park. Tran Xuan Huy, aged 32, who was responsible for the poaching according to Viet, is missing.

ENV, March 24, 2021; Quang Binh, March 24, 2021.⁶¹



March 2021
Dak Lak Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of 5 macaques (*Macaca* spp, Appendix I or II) from a trafficker who was running a YouTube channel.

ENV, April 4, 2021.⁶²



March 30, 2021
Dak Lak Province, Viet Nam

Handing over of a loris (*Nycticebus* spp., Appendix I) to the forest services after a telephone exchange with ENV. He should be released shortly.

ENV, March 30, 2021.⁶³

March 31, 2021
Cat Tien National Park Rescue Center, Dong Nai Province, Viet Nam

Arrival of a gibbon (*Hylobatidae*, Appendix I) at the sanctuary after long negotiations between his keeper and ENV.

ENV, March 31, 2021.⁶⁴

April 5, 2021
Hoa Binh Province, Viet Nam

Voluntary release of 4 pygmy lorises (*Nycticebus pygmaeus*, Appendix I) to the Hoa Binh Forest Protection Department. They were released.

ENV, 5 April 2021.⁶⁵



Week of April 12, 2021
Ba Ria-Vung Tau and Lam Dong Provinces and Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

A restaurant in Ba Ria-Vung Tau province is reported to ENV teams as offering squirrel, snake, porcupine and civet meat. The Forest Protection Department seized a long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) and a northern pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II) on the spot and asked the restaurant owner to remove the wild meat from his menu.

Three other macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II) were seized in Lam Dong province and Ho Chi Minh City in the same week.

ENV, April 17, 2021.⁶⁶

April 2021
Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam



The macaque (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II) was chained in the restaurant. He was languishing while watching the customers eat. A passer-by noticed him and immediately notified ENV, which in turn contacted the Ho Chi Minh City Forest Protection Department. The macaque is now in the Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Centre.

ENV, April 23, 2021.⁶⁷

April 23, 2021
Kien Giang Province, Viet Nam



This macaque (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II) was in a coffee shop. As for the floor, it was a few bars above a pond. A few hours after he was reported to ENV, the authorities brought him to the 80 km² U Minh Thuong national park, a priority site for wetland conservation in the Mekong Delta that hosts many endangered species. ENV, April 28, 2021.⁶⁸

SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

April 8, 2021
Chirag Delhi, Delhi National Capital Region, India

Balwan Nath, 26 years old, Vikram Nath, 23 years old, and their friend Ajay used to earn their living playing music at weddings. This was no longer enough for them. Earlier this year, they catch 2 rhesus macaques (*Macaca mulatta*, Appendix II) in the forest near the ruins of the Tughlaqabad fort, south of Delhi, and train them to pretend to attack people. Using this technique, they steal mobile phones and wallets from frightened people on the street. Everything changes when the thieves make the mistake of attacking a lawyer in the Malviya Nagar locality. He does not let it go. Following his statements, the police are on the lookout. Two days later, they arrest Balwan and Vikram at a bus stop. Ajay is wanted. As for the macaques, they went to a wild-life SOS centre.

The Indian Express, April 9, 2021.⁶⁹

PAKISTAN

February 8, 2021
Parova Tehsil, Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Turbulent seizure of 9 rhesus macaques (*Macaca mulatta*, Appendix II) held in squalid conditions in a temple. They were temporarily handed over to the Dera Ismail Khan zoological park before being transferred to Peshawar Zoo. The worshippers and the keeper tried everything to deter the authorities, including threats. A month earlier, a monkey had already been seized in this temple. Dawn (with AFP), February 9, 2021.⁷⁰

WESTERN ASIA

TURKEY

February 22, 2021
Habur Border Crossing, Sirtak Province, Turkey. Border with Iraq.



S.T.'s car was carrying 4 stowaways, spider monkeys (*Ateles* spp., Appendix I or II). S.T. left without them but with a fine. The little monkeys, originally from Latin America, were entrusted to a natural park in the province. After some care, they will be handed over to the Gaziantep Zoo. Anadolu Agency, February 22, 2021; Hürriyet Daily News, February 22, 2021.⁷¹



NORTHERN EUROPE

UNITED KINGDOM

February 2021

Bradford, West Yorkshire County, England, United Kingdom



A woman bought a pair of marmosets (*Callithrix* spp., Appendix I or II) in a pet shop. Five years later, the family had expanded and the owner was completely overwhelmed. She contacted the RSPCA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) to hand

over 6 marmosets. After the males were sterilised, the whole family was transferred to an exotic animal sanctuary in Cambridgeshire.

5,000 primates are believed to be kept as pets in the country. On December 12, 2020, the Government launched a public consultation on a ban of this practice.

Bradford Telegraph and Argus, April 21, 2021; Huddersfield Daily Examiner, April 21, 2021.⁷²

WESTERN EUROPE

GERMANY

April 8, 15 and 24, 2021

Löffingen, Baden-Württemberg State, Germany

In 2 weeks, 3 Barbary macaques (*Macaca sylvanus*, Appendix I) escaped: 25, 4 and 10 macaques took advantage of maintenance work in the zoo to run away. They wandered into the forest or along the roadside. Although most of them were captured without difficulty, the police have not confirmed that they have all returned to their enclosures. The zoo is home to 20 species of wild animals, many of them exotic, including lions and tigers.

Baden.fm, April, 8, 2021; Heidelberg24, April, 12, 2021; Südtirol Online, April, 24, 2021.⁷³

FRANCE

Mid-January 2021

Boulogne-sur-Mer, Department of Pas-de-Calais, France



A man living in Calais will have to pay a fine of 5,000 € (6,140 US\$) to the association 30 Millions d'Amis for the illegal detention of a 4-year-old capuchin monkey (*Sapajus* spp., synonym of *Cebus* spp., Appendix II) and an 8-month-old baboon (*Papio* spp., Appendix II). 500 € (615 US\$) of the fine is for psychological harm and 800 € (980 US\$) is for legal fees. The capuchins were seized at his home in July 2019 (see "On the Trail" n°26 p.59). The police also found photos of many other primates at the home of the 44-year-old man, who had, among other misdeeds, provided a baboon to a family in Lens.

La Voix du Nord, January 15, 2021.⁷⁴

April 2021

Montpellier, Department of Hérault, France



One Bolivian squirrel monkey (*Saimiri boliviensis*, Appendix II) held illegally was seized by the Office Français de la Biodiversité (French Biodiversity Agency) following a report. In very poor health, he recovered at Montpellier Zoo before being transferred to Sigean Zoo. La Gazette de Montpellier, April, 16, 2021; Zoo de Montpellier, April, 16, 2021.⁷⁵

EASTERN EUROPE

RUSSIA

Beginning of March 2021

Volgograd Oblast, Russia



Interception of an undocumented macaque (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II) travelling in the luggage compartment of a bus from Moscow to Makhachkala (Republic of Dagestan), a 1,900 km long voyage. A 21-year-old traveller declared that he had bought him in Moscow via a classified ad. Smotrim, March 3, 2021.⁷⁶

ARMADILLOS, PACAS, CAPYBARAS, AGOUTIS AND PECCARIS

AMERICA

BRAZIL

January 14, 2021

Charqueada, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Fine of 500 reais (92 US\$). Seizure of an armadillo carcass (family Dasypodidae), an air rifle, ammunition and 3 "jequi" traps that were used to capture armadillos. G1, January 14, 2021.¹



Mid-January, 2021

São Miguel do Iguaçu, State of Paraná, Brazil

Seizure of 2 collared peccaries (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II) kept in a pigsty. The environmental military police also seized 2 weapons and 100 rounds of ammunition on site. The animals were released in the national park of Iguaçu. The owner of the place was fined 10,000 reais (1,830 US\$). CGN, January 12, 2021.²



January 31, 2021

Campos dos Goytacazes, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

A nine-banded armadillo (*Dasypus novemcinctus*) mortally wounded by 2 bullets is discovered by 2 hikers and entrusted to the agents of the Morro do Itaoca park. O Dia, February 1, 2021.³

February 21, 2021

Lajinha, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

Seizure of a capybara body (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*). A 45-year-old man was arrested in the early afternoon along a river with a 22-caliber rifle in his hand. He claims that he was hunting for his own consumption. Portal Caparaó, February 22, 2021.⁴

Beginning of March 2021

Gravatá, State of Pernambuco, Brazil

Wanted: the 73-year-old man would have killed the 4 capybaras (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*) found on the banks of the river Ipojuca. In his house, the police discovered 3 weapons and ammunition. Radio Jornal, March 4, 2021.⁵

March 31, 2021

Campo Grande, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil

Seizure of 52 kg of meat of 3 collared peccaries (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II, 3 kg of agouti parts (genus *Dasyprocta*), and a nine-banded armadillo (*Dasypus novemcinctus*) found in a freezer. Arrest of 2 men (20 and 55 years old) from Chapeco, State of Santa Catarina. The 55-year-old man admits to having slaughtered the animals and freezing the meat. He was fined 28,500 reais (5,225 US\$). He also handed over his rifle to the police. A second weapon was found in the 20-year-old man's caravan. He denied having participated in the hunting of these animals. ND Mais, April 1, 2021.⁶



April 11, 2021

Marliéria, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

Seizure near Rio Doce park of one paca (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras) and 3 armadillos (family Dasypodidae) found dead in a polystyrene box. The suspects fled when the police arrived but one of them was still caught. Fine of 2,958 reais or 550 US\$. G1, April 12, 2021.⁷



April 13, 2021

Paulicéia, State of São Paulo, Brazil

The environmental military police see flashlights on the banks of the Paraná river. As they approach, they find a vehicle with 2 men, 31 and 46 years old, on board. The search revealed 2 rifles, ammunition, knives, an axe, a flashlight, a car battery, an outboard motor and 140 kg of capybara meat (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*) in the pick-up's bed, corresponding to 4 specimens. The meat was destroyed and the 2 men were fined 137,000 reais or 25,570 US\$. Rápido no Ar, 13 April 2021.⁸



April 13, 2021

Cruzeiro do Sul, State of Acre, Brazil

Seizure of 4 dead white-lipped peccaries (*Tayassu pecari*, Appendix II) by a man near the Juruá River. G1, 14 April 2021.⁹

April 19, 2021

Paulicéia, State of São Paulo, Brazil

The military police inspect a vehicle while on patrol along the BR-158. In the pocket of the 30-year-old man, they discover 2 unused 20-gauge cartridges, and on the back seat a 20-gauge rifle and the carcass of an Azara's agouti (*Dasyprocta azarae*). The agouti was taken to the Dracena dump and the man was fined 5,000 reais or 1,010 US\$. G1, April 20, 2021.¹⁰



April 24, 2021

Rosário do Sul, State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

The military brigade inspects a vehicle. In the dumpster, they discover 3 dead armadillos (family Dasypodidae) who had been freshly poached. The driver is already known for poaching. At his house, they find 11 more frozen armadillos, a hunting rifle and all of the poacher's equipment. Gazeta de Rosário, April 26, 2021.¹¹

OTTERS

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

April 18, 2021

Moss Landing, State of California, United States of America

A small California sea otter (*Enhydra lutris nereis*, Appendix I) was found dead on the beach, caught in an invisible crayfish net that is only permitted in lakes and rivers. Otters eat sea urchins, which devour the algae that serves as a habitat for fish and crustaceans. Fewer otters results in too many sea urchins and not enough algae. Before 1900, sea otters numbered in the tens of thousands from northern California to Mexico. They were nearly eradicated by Russian, American and English trappers who were after their fur, which is softer than mink. Today, there may be 3,000 sea otters off the California coast despite poaching, accidental capture in nets, propeller injuries and bites from great white sharks. The Mercury News, June 4, 2021.¹



ASIA

CAMBODIA

March 2021

Kampong Thom Province, Cambodia

Release of a smooth-coated otter (*Lutrogale perspicillata*) held captive in a house. She was taken to the wildlife refuge in Phnom Tamao. Wildlife Crime Hotline, April 4, 2021.²

VIET NAM

January 25, 2021

Dien Chau District, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

First instance sentencing of Nguyen Hoai Giang to 11 years in prison for illegally detaining 15 otters (*Lutrinae*, Appendix I or II) and a juvenile long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) in November 2019 (see "On the Trail" n°7 p. 40). Ho Chi Minh City Law Journal, January 25, 2021.³



March 16, 2021

Quy Nhon, Binh Dinh Province, Viet Nam

Seizure in a private home of 2 otters (*Lutrinae*, Appendix I or II). They were transported to a specialized shelter with the objective of rehabilitating them for life in the wild. ENV, March 17, 2021.⁴

April 2021

Binh Duong Province, Viet Nam

Attempted sale of an otter via the Internet. ENV was able to identify the address of the keeper who agreed to voluntarily hand over the otter (*Lutrinae*, Appendix I or II) to the police. He thus escaped prosecution. The otter was taken into the care of Wildlife at Risk (WAR). ENV, April 27, 2021.⁵

EUROPE

CZECHIA

February 19, 2021

Hříměždice, Central Bohemian Region, Czechia

A common otter (*Lutra lutra*, Appendix I) was found dead, the cause of death is presumed to be Furadan poisoning. "We want to remind people to be careful when walking their dogs or when they go out with their children in the area. Contact the police if you find dead animals." Pribram.cz, March 4, 2021.⁶



OTHER MAMMALS INCLUDING HIPPOPOTAMUSES AND HEDGEHOGS



Hoffmann's two-fingered sloth (*Choloepus hoffmanni*). Photo casitas_tenorio

AFRICA

KENYA

April 28, 2021

Aberdare National Park, Nyandarua County, Kenya

Discovery of 3 dead hippos. No trace of anthrax. Traces of *Clostridium botulinum* but KWS does not rule out deliberate poisoning.

SWT/KWS Mount Kenya Mobile Veterinary Unit, April 2021.¹

AMERICA

BRAZIL

January 28, 2021

Cachoeirinha, State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

Seizure by the police of 12 four-toed hedgehogs (*Atelerix albiventris*), 7 adults and 5 juveniles, kept in unsanitary cages. In Brazil, the breeding of four-toed hedgehogs is only conditionally allowed. A rifle, ammunition, blank invoices with the Ibama ((Instituto brasileiro do meio ambiente e dos recursos naturais renováveis) logo and an armadillo shell (family Dasypodidae) were also seized on site. One arrest.

Correio do Povo, January 28, 2021.²

COLOMBIA

January 2021 to February 2022

Colombia

The hippos illegally imported by Pablo Escobar to his private zoo are now a major problem. There were 4 of them when Escobar died in 1993. Since then, they have proliferated and now number close to 100 individuals. Hippos have no natural predators in Colombia. According to a study conducted by experts, the population could reach 1,500 by 2034. "Relocation might have been possible 30 years ago, when there were only 4 hippos." "Castration could also have been effective if officials had provided sufficient resources for the program early on, but a cull is now the only option," commented Nataly Castelblanco-Martínez, one of the experts.

The sterilization option was finally preferred after protests from nature conservationists and locals who enjoy the attraction. About 60 individuals who comprise the main group should be treated with GonaCon by mid-December 2021 and receive a booster dose 6 months later. For the remaining, more dispersed herd, the slaughter option appears to be favored. The urine and excrement of the hippos is harmful for the local fauna such as capybaras and manatees, and also for the flora.

In early February 2022, the Colombian government declared the hippopotamus an invasive species. New York Post, January 17, 2021; Le Monde, December 12, 2021; Semana, February 14, 2022.³

ASIA

CHINA

April 8, 2021

Between Tumaco and Pasto, Department of Nariño, Colombia

A Hoffmann's two-fingered sloth (*Choloepus hoffmanni*) was seized at a checkpoint on the road between Tumaco and Pasto, at kilometre 13. The 52-year-old man wanted to sell him for 3 million pesos (820 US\$), at a market or roadside.

TuBarco, April 9, 2021.⁴

Mid-April 2021

Belleza and Cimitarra, Department of Santander, Colombia



Poaching of a female brown-throated three-toed sloth (*Bradypus variegatus*, Appendix II). The authorities manage to save her baby and entrust him to a rehabilitation center. Another sloth is rescued in Cimitarra. He underwent an operation, as one of his legs was fractured following a poaching attempt. Adrenalina Informativo Regional, April 21, 2021; Semana, April 21, 2021.⁵

PERU

January 6, 2021

Province of Jaen, Department of Cajamarca, Peru



A southern tamandua (*Tamandua tetradactyla*) is reported abandoned near a road to the agents of the ATFFS (Administración Técnica Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre). The young female is in good health. She is quickly released into the Tabaconas-Namballe national sanctuary. Serfor, January 16, 2021.⁶

April 6, 2021

Dalian International Airport, Dalian Prefecture, Liaoning Province, China

Chinese customs seize a kangaroo skin (370 grams) hidden in a passenger's suitcase. Chinese Customs, April 7, 2021.⁷

INDIA

Night of March 10 to 11, 2021

Machhakandana Forest, Mayurbhanj District, State of Odisha, India

Fire is a trap. Animals that can run away get caught in the corner of the woods. This is what happened to some Indian crested porcupines (*Hystrix indica*) that were killed by a 25-year-old man. Seizure of 7 kg of meat and a homemade rifle. No sign of the quills. In 5 days, in the district, 2 other arsonist poachers were arrested. The evidence is rudimentary, with a box of matches here and a net to capture fleeing animals there. It is not known whether the 3 young men were driven by hunger or by greed. The New Indian Express, March 12, 2021.⁸

April 25, 2021

Ving, Satara District, State of Maharashtra, India

Arrest of Baban Deshmukh, Ganesh Pawar, Balu Jadhav, Popat Deshmukh, Rahul Pawar, Sunil Deshmukh, Ajay Deshmukh, Shivaji Deshmukh, Raghunath Deshmukh and Rajaram Deshmukh, aged between 20 and 40 years, in a sugarcane plantation. They had just poached at least 2 civets (family Viverridae, Appendix III in India) with the assistance of a pack of dogs.

The Times of India, April 26, 2021.⁹

End of April 2021

Palangala, Kodagu District, State of Karnataka, India

Arrest of a poacher. Two accomplices are on the run. The skin of the Indian giant flying squirrel (*Petaurista philippensis*) is seized along with 2 daggers, a homemade firearm and a cooking pot. The meat is missing.

Deccan Herald, April 30, 2021.¹⁰

MALAYSIA

April 29, 2021

Jemaluang, State of Johor, Malaysia

Informed by villagers, 12 Perhilitan officers rescue a female tapir (*Tapirus* spp., Appendix I or II) caught in a trap. The injuries were considered superficial. The evacuation took half an hour. The victim is recovering in Endau-Rompin national park. Since the beginning of the year, 2 tapirs have died in Johor State after collisions with cars.

The Star, April 29, 2021.¹¹



VIET NAM

Mid-January 2021

Hanoi, Viet Nam

Police search a suspicious car and discover a jar of alcohol containing one head and 6 feet of binturong (*Arctictis binturong*, Appendix III in India). Two arrests were made.

ENV, January 21, 2021.¹²

Mid-April and November 23 and 30, 2021

Bac Giang Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of 100 masked palm civets (*Paguma larvata*, Appendix III in India) crammed into cages. They were bought for half a billion dong or about 21,700 US\$ from a breeder in Ha Giang near the border with China. They were supposed to end up on a buffet plate or in a restaurant. The smugglers were fined a total of 570 million VND or 25,000 US\$. The civets were taken to the rescue center in Cuc Phuong. Four died during the journey and 2 others after their arrival. After 7 months of rehabilitation, 70 of them were considered fit to be released. Save Vietnam's Wildlife, in collaboration with Cuc Phuong national park and the Bac Giang Forest Protection Department, released 30 civets on November 23 and then 32 a week later. The rest are expected to join them in December 2021.

SVW, April 17, 20, November 24 and 30, 2021.¹³



EUROPE

UNITED KINGDOM

April 10, 2021

Market Harborough, Leicestershire County, England, United Kingdom



Hedgehogs are being tortured in the UK (see "On the Trail" n° 29 p.109 and n° 31 p.111-112). A gang of kids smoked spliffs and exhaled the smoke into a bag with a European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) trapped inside then threw him into the River Jordan.

A passer-by picked up the animal who was miraculously saved, and took him to the county veterinary clinic. The small mammal, which had just come out of hibernation, is well on the road to recovery. "It's shocking and upsetting." Karl Marston, an inspector with the RSPCA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals), is outraged. He is appealing for witnesses of the attack.

Yahoo News UK, May 1, 2021.¹⁴

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

February 24, 2021

Yan Yean, State of Victoria, Australia

A swamp wallaby (*Wallabia bicolor*) was fatally shot by several arrows. His death occurred a few days after 2 cockatoos were also pierced with arrows (see page 196).

PerthNow, March 1, 2021.¹⁵

FRANCE (NEW CALEDONIA)

April 14, 2021

Koumac, North Province, Overseas Collectivity of New Caledonia, France

In this post-cyclone and Covid April, bats are in great danger. 32 flying foxes (*Pteropus ornatus* or *Pteropus tonganus*) were in the pick-up truck with its headlights on. Hunting is forbidden at night.

Nouvelle-Calédonie la 1^{ère}, April 17, 2021.¹⁶



Great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*). Photo Hannah

NORTHERN AFRICA

TUNISIA

January 5, 2021

Tozeur-Nefta International Airport, Governorate of Tozeur, Tunisia

A Qatari air armada has discharged off-road cars with thermal imaging cameras, quads and a helicopter to prepare for the arrival of dignitaries who plan to poach houbara bustards (*Chlamydotis undulata*, Appendix I). This was authorised by Ali Hafsi, a wealthy businessman and minister without portfolio of the Tunisian Government. The falcons will arrive later by special plane. Abdelmajid Dabbar sounds the alarm on behalf of Tunisie Ecologie and spoke out against "this Saharan fauna destruction machine." For their part, the Ministry of Agriculture and the General Directorate of Forestry refuse to grant hunting permits to Qatari falconers. Incursions in Tunisia for the poaching of Houbara bustards, see "On the Trail" n°3 p.22-23, n°11 p.19, n°16 p.28, n°24 p.34 and n°28 p.42.

Kapitalis, January 6, 2021; Tunisie Numérique, January 8, 2021.¹

January 14, 2021

Sahline, Governorate of Monastir, Tunisia

A photographer found 12 American flamingos (*Phoenicopterus ruber*, Appendix II) shot dead in marshes designated under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat.

Tunigate, February 23, 2021.²

February 23, 2021

Tataouine, Governorate of Tataouine, Tunisia

300 km away from the governorate of Tozeur, customs intercept 2 off-road vehicles and 7 individuals, 4 Qataris and 3 Tunisians. They were holding 3 live saker falcons (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II) and 2 dead Eurasian stone-curlews (*Burhinus oedicnemus*). The species is listed in Appendix I of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, in Appendix II of the European Union's Birds Directive and in Appendix II of the Bern Convention. According to the association Tunisie Ecologie, one of the Tunisians is the president of the falconry association of Douz, which breeds falcons and rents them to Qatari poachers. Douz is located in the governorate of Kebili.

Kapitalis, February 26, 2021.³



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WESTERN AFRICA

GUINEA-BISSAU

End of January 2021

Caio District, Cacheu Region, Guinea-Bissau



A new blow after the poisoning of 2,000 hooded vultures (*Necrosyrtes monachus*, Appendix II) in February to March 2020 (see "On the Trail" n° 28 p.41). This time, 50 specimens died of suspected poisoning. However, the authorities and members of the NGO ODZH (Organização para a Defesa e Desenvolvimento das Zonas Húmidas na Guiné-Bissau) who rushed to the scene noted that, unlike the incidents in 2020, no vultures were amputated. Two carcasses were taken to Bissau for toxicological analysis. The others were incinerated. African vultures often die from poisoning, intentional or not, according to Darcy Ogada, member of the Peregrine Fund (see "On the Trail" n° 27 p.42 and n° 31 p.114). Vulture heads are supposed to bring good luck. The species preferred by traditional doctors are white-backed vultures (*Gyps africanus*, Appendix II) and Rüppell's vultures (*Gyps rueppelli*, Appendix II). Guinea-Bissau is not the best market. It is likely that the heads of the 2,000 beheaded hooded vultures in 2020 were sold in Senegal or Nigeria, where they fetch 10-25 US\$ each. The sole suspect has managed to leave the country and the investigation has stalled.

Vulture Conservation Foundation, March 18, 2021; Audubon, April 12, 2021. ⁴

LIBERIA

March 26, 2021

Kpan, Margibi County, Liberia

Seizure of a barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II) offered for sale in the street. Its leg was injured by the rope that held it captive. It joins the Libassa Wildlife Sanctuary.

Libassa Wildlife Sanctuary, March 27, 2021. ⁵

CENTRAL AFRICA

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Beginning of April 2021

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Superstition is hard to resist. A photo of a dead owl (Strigidae, Appendix I or II) being burned at the stake is posted on social networks to prove the victory against evil. This is the third one of the year. Conserv Congo, April 7, 2021. ⁶

EASTERN AFRICA

MALAWI

April 2021

Lilongwe, Central Region, Malawi



Seizure by Malawi's Department of National Parks and Wildlife of 85 songbirds about to be sold on the roadside. They were handed over to the Lilongwe Wildlife Trust. After careful examination, the majority of them were released.

Lilongwe Wildlife Trust, April 17, 2021. ⁷

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

April 13, 2021

Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa



A family of barn owls (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II) had taken up residence in a private property. Their presence was not appreciated by everyone. A resident who was worried about their disappearance found the chicks thrown into a rubbish bin. Only one survived. It is being treated at the Johannesburg Veterinary Hospital. Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital, April 13, 2021. ⁸

ESWATINI

End of March 2021

Eswatini

As in other African countries, ostriches (*Struthio camelus*, Appendix I in 12 States), known for their visual acuity and speed when scaring off attackers, are used by farmers to guard livestock. The police received reports that some villagers were breeding them for commercial purposes. The police intervened forcefully to seize illegally held ostriches and arrest their owners. The law does not prohibit the keeping of ostriches, only the hunting of them. Anadolu Agency, March 31, 2021.⁹

NORTHERN AMERICA

CANADA

January 27, 2021

Harbour Grace, Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada

Darren English was fined 7,000 \$ (5,475 US\$) and Brent Power and Lawrence Kerrivan were fined 5,000 \$ (3,910 US\$) for poaching 98 common murres (*Uria aalge*, also known as common guillemots) off the coast of Saint Bride's. They were allegedly caught "unintentionally" in a net, according to English. Cision, January 29, 2021.¹⁰



Common murre (*Uria aalge*)

January 28, 2021

Northwest Territories, Canada

The Government of the Northwest Territories was fined 10,000 \$ (7,820 US\$) for destroying 12 bank swallows (*Riparia riparia*) and their nests at a quarry site operated by the Department of Infrastructure. The population of bank swallows in Canada has declined by 98% in 40 years.

Government of Canada, January 29, 2021.¹¹



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Beginning of January 2021

Huntersville, State of North Carolina, United States of America

Veterinarians at the Carolina Raptor Center finally had to put a red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*, Appendix II) out of its misery after it was shot and suffered wing fractures and external injuries.

A Wild Life: Center for Wildlife Rescue, Rehabilitation and Release, January 9, 2021; The Robesonian, January 22, 2021.¹²



January 5, 2021

United States of America

Two weeks prior leaving the White House, Trump, through the US Fish and Wildlife Service, mutilated the law codifying the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Oil and public work companies will no longer be prosecuted for "unintentional" deaths that occur during their work. See "On the Trail" n°29 p.111. EcoWatch, January 6, 2021.¹³

January 11, 2021

State of Indiana, United States of America

Samuel G. Graber, 24 years old, was fined 5,000 US\$ and sentenced to 6 months of probation for killing a bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II). In compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act signed by the United States and Canada in 1918, the fine will be paid to the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund. US Department of Justice, January 11, 2021.¹⁴



January 13, 2021

Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, United States of America

Carlos David Flores Ríos, Edgardo Marín Candelaria and Misael Cruz Rivera were charged with capturing, keeping, offering for sale and trading via the Internet an American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*, Appendix II) and 2 short-eared owls (*Asio flammeus*, Appendix II)

US Department of Justice, January 14, 2021.¹⁵

January 18, 2021
White Hall, State of Maryland, United States of America



INFORMATION NEEDED: EAGLE SHOOTING

On January 18, an adult bald eagle was found injured by gunshot wounds along Old York Road in White Hall. It was later euthanized due to the severity of its injury.

If you have any information about this or any eagle shooting in Maryland, please contact:

USFWS Baltimore Field Office at 410-694-9591
 or via email at fws_tips@fws.gov.

Maryland Wildlife Crime Stoppers at 443-433-4112
 or via email at mwc.dnr@maryland.gov.

You may remain anonymous. Citizens who supply information may be eligible for a cash reward.

WBBF Fox 45, January 27, 2021; Chesapeake Bay Magazine, February 1, 2021.¹⁶

February 1, 2021
State of North Dakota, United States of America



In October 2019, Larry Gene Childers attempted to smuggle from Alberta, Canada, 80 kg of waterfowl bird (order *Anseriformes*) meat from approximately 207 poached, butchered and hardly identifiable birds. He was sentenced to 2 years of probation including a 6-month ban from hunting.
 US Department of Justice, February 1, 2021.¹⁷

February 3 or 4, 2021
Washington County, State of Missouri, United States of America

A shot and injured bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) was rushed to the Valley park sanctuary; its wound was inoperable. The vet put an end to its suffering.
 KSHB 41, February 10, 2021.¹⁸

March 10 and end of March 2021
Sullivan and Vigo Counties, State of Indiana, United States of America



The Department of Natural Resources is investigating the shooting of a young bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) found fatally wounded in a tree. The Department is also investigating the death of another young bald eagle. It too was found dead in a tree. A 2,000 US\$ reward is offered to informants by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the TIP program (Turn-in-a-Poacher).
 WRTV, March 29, 2021.¹⁹

March 20, 2021
Tiptonville, State of Tennessee, United States of America

A 10,000 US\$ reward is promised to anyone who can provide information leading to the identification of the person or persons responsible for the death of a bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) on Club House Road.
 Action News 5, March 30, 2021.²⁰

March 2021
San Joaquin County, State of California, United States of America



The great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*, Appendix II) discovered during a search for drug trafficking, arms dealing and car theft, has been released.
 CBS Sacramento, May 4, 2021.²¹

CURLER NETWORK

March 28 and April 17, 2021

John F. Kennedy International Airport, New York, New York State, United States of America



Seizure of 29 finches (family Fringillidae) stuffed into hair curlers in the luggage of a 26-year-old Guyanese national arriving from Georgetown. He was travelling to New Jersey. CBP (Customs and Border Protection) agents placed him on the first plane to Guyana after fining him 300 US\$. CBP believes that this trafficking increases the risk of spreading avian flu. The birds have been placed in quarantine. Their fate is unknown.

Three weeks later, history repeated itself. Only the age of the smuggler, 36, the number of birds, 40, and the destination, New York, differ.

The smuggling of finches, such as chestnut-bellied seed finches (*Oryzoborus angolensis*) or large-bellied seed finches (*Oryzoborus crassirostris*), from Guyana is not uncommon. In 2019, 2,117 birds were seized, in 2020, several hundred despite a slowdown in traffic due to Covid restrictions. They are probably destined for people of Guyanese origin nostalgic for the singing competitions of their country. They can purchase a specimen for between 3,000 and 5,000 US\$. Hair curlers are the favourite hiding place of songbird traffickers (see "On the Trail" n°20 p.43, n°23 p.43 and n°25 p.42).

The Oxford Martin Program on Wildlife Trade, November 22, 2018; NJ.com, March 30, 2021; US Customs and Border Protection, March 30 and April 20, 2021; Daily Voice, March 31, 2021.²²

March 29, 2021

Umatilla County, State of Oregon, United States of America

A woman is walking her dog. On the way out, he stops in front of a bush. On the way back, he stops again in front of a bush. On both sides of the street lie great horned owls (*Bubo virginianus*, Appendix II). The walker identified the pair of owls she used to observe from her window. An X-ray examination at the Blue Mountain Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre proves that both were victims of a fatal shooting. NewsChannel 21, 16 April, 2021.²³

April 3 or 4, 2021

Summit County, State of Utah, United States of America

The bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) was perched close to the ground near Hennifer when it was suddenly surprised by a shot. The lead shot entered through its right wing and got stuck in its neck. It is slowly recovering after surgery at the Wildlife Center of Northern Utah. Investigation is ongoing.

Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of Northern Utah, April, 5, 2021; KSL Newsradio, April, 25, 2021.²⁴

April 5 and 28, 2021

Portland and West Linn, State of Oregon, United States of America

A bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) was shot dead.

Three weeks later, a second bald eagle was shot 30 km away. It recovered from its injuries under the care of the Portland Audubon NGO.

A reward of 1,000 US\$ is offered to identify the person or people responsible.

NewsChannel 21, June 7, 2021.²⁵

April 13, 2021

Albuquerque, State of New Mexico, United States of America



Ruth Grande Olguin, 55, was sentenced to one year of probation and fined 2,000 US\$ to be paid to the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund Account. She admitted to possessing feathers and other parts of the common caracara (*Caracara plancus*, Appendix II) on 3 occasions between April and October 2019 and, on one occasion, feathers of the sharp-shinned hawk (*Accipiter striatus*, Appendix II). Parts of falcon (*Falco* spp, Appendix I or II), bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II), American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*, Appendix II), red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*, Appendix II), Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*, Appendix II), barred owl (*Strix varia*, Appendix II), greater roadrunner (*Geococcyx californianus*), northern flicker (*Colaptes auratus*), white-winged dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) and turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*) were also seized during the search.

US Department of Justice, April, 13, 2021.²⁶

April 23, 2021

Beltrami County, State of Minnesota, United States of America

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is offering 2,500 US\$ to anyone who can provide information about the 2 bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) that were shot down near the Blackduck River.

Red Lake Nation News, May 10, 2021.²⁷

April 23, 2021

Albuquerque, State of New Mexico, United States of America

George Tom Skeet appears in court for selling or offering for sale on 2 occasions in January and February 2019 feathers of red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*, Appendix II), bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) and golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II). He faces a maximum of 2 years in prison, 3 years of probation and a 2,100 US\$ fine.

US Department of Justice, May 14, 2021.²⁸

CURLER NETWORK

April 26, 2021

John F. Kennedy International Airport, New York, State of New York, United States of America

Kevin Andre McKenzie, a Guyanese national, was arrested when he disembarked from a JetBlue flight from Georgetown, Guyana, with 35 finches hidden in hair curlers taped to his jacket and around his ankle. He explained that he was promised 2,500 US\$ to take them to New York where they were to join singing competitions in parks there. As the record states, these birds are already present in New York, but those arriving from Guyana have a better reputation for singing. "Many who attend the singing contests place bets on the birds. A finch who wins these competitions becomes valuable and can sell for more than 10,000 US\$." McKenzie was released on 25,000 US\$ bail.

Daily Mail, April 28, 2021.²⁹



LATIN AMERICA

ARGENTINA

Mid-January, 2021

Province of Santiago del Estero, Argentina



Heat wave in Santiago. The 59th Squadron spotted a car turning back on Route 34. In the back of the car were 216 blue-fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), thirsty, bought in Pampa de los Guanacos and bound for San Lorenzo, 900 km away. To prevent the gendarmes from hearing the chattering birds, the passengers had turned up the radio very loudly but it didn't work. Border Security Report, January 11, 2021.³⁰

Mid-January, 2021

Rosario, Province of Santa Fe, Argentina

El Tanque Fair. Tumultuous seizures in pick-up trucks or on bare ground of 150 wild birds, including parrots (*Amazona* spp., Appendix I or II), red-crested cardinals (*Paroaria coronata*, Appendix II) and saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*). They were handed over to the care of Mundo Aparte, a shelter and rehabilitation center for seized or abandoned animals founded in 2001 by María Esther Linaro after the closure of the Rosario Zoo. La Capital, January 11, 2021.³¹

Mid-February, 2021

Zárate, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina

A lady who regretted keeping exotic pet birds spontaneously handed over a hyacinth macaw (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*, Appendix I), a green-winged macaw (*Ara chloropterus*, Appendix II) and a blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) to the police instead of abandoning them in front of a zoo. The 3 animals handed over to Tekove Mymba ("animal life" in Guarani) will acclimate to their new habitat without having to endure the curiosity and whims of visitors. Tekove Mymba is closed to the public.

Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, February 19, 2021.³²

End of February 2021

Province of La Pampa, Argentina

They were improperly kept in cages or for sale. Seizure of more than 30 birds, among others: falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II), hooded siskins (*Spinus magellanicus*), double-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulescens*), saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*) and martineta tinamous (*Eudromia elegans*). After a health check they were released. Notife, February 23, 2021.³³

March 22, 2021

Pilar and Liniers, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina

In the cages, the living ones were next to the dead. The total of the 2 seizures in a pet shop and in an illegal breeding farm was 425 live birds, worth more than 3.5 million pesos, i.e. more than 39,000 US\$ or about 90 US\$ per specimen. Red-crested cardinals (*Paroaria coronata*, Appendix II), yellow cardinals (*Gubernatrix cristata*), saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), hooded siskins (*Spinus magellanicus*), ultramarine grosbeaks (*Cyanocopsa brissonii*), many-colored rush tyrants (*Tachuris rubrigastra*), double-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulescens*) and Gouldian finches (*Erythrura gouldiae*) were transferred to the Costanera Sur reserve. Perfil, March 23, 2021.³⁴

March 31, 2021

Salvador de Jujuy, Province of Jujuy, Argentina

Seizure in a private home of 53 cages and 24 birds including one toco toucan (*Rampastho toco*, Appendix II), 6 red-crested cardinals (*Paroaria coronata*, Appendix II), 2 true thrushes (genus *Turdus*), one golden-billed saltator (*Saltator aurantiirostris*), 5 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), one lesson's seedeater (*Sporophila bouvronides*), one mountain cacique (*Cacicus chrysonotus*), one hooded siskin (*Spinus magellanicus*) and 6 ultramarine grosbeaks (*Cyanocopsa brissonii*). They were handed over to CAFAJu (Centro de Atención de la Fauna Autóctona de Jujuy) for a health assessment. If possible, they will be released. El Tribuno Jujuy, April, 12, 2021.³⁵

Beginning of April 2021

Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina

Release in the south of the province of 19 yellow cardinals (*Gubernatrix cristata*, Appendix II) after examination of their horizontal and vertical flight abilities. They were seized from private homes or internet sellers. Weekend, April 8, 2021.³⁶



BRAZIL

FEATHERWEIGHT FIGHT

Mid-February to mid-March

Brazil



28 grams versus 30 grams, the arena is a cage, the gladiators are saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), the organizers are heavyweights, rogue breeders who have returned from cockfights or dogfights and the spectators are gamblers.

Saffron finches are territorial sparrows (my bush is my bush) who are willingly quarrelsome and do not hesitate to use their beak to expel strangers. In the wild, saffron finches engage in scuffles. But in a metal cage with sharpened beaks, claws equipped with a steel spur, 2 males overexcited by the broadcasting of a female's song or by her presence in a cage next to them, engage in acts of cruelty. For fights to the death, for exhausting singing contests, for the sad fate of a pet, saffron finches are caught by thousands by poachers who expect impunity. The fines are hefty but go unpaid. The notorious bird trafficker Valdivino Honório de Jesus was arrested 13 times between 1996 and 2016. The cumulative fines reached 9 million reais or 1.7 million US\$. He did not pay even 10% of them and when he was arrested for the 14th time under the eyes and camera of a team of journalists, he was released in less than 2 hours. Arriving on the markets of the big cities after interminable journeys in the luggage compartments of buses or in the hidden compartments of cars and trucks, the rescued saffron finches are sold for the equivalent of 10 reais or 1.8 US\$. An elite fighter is traded for up to 40,000 reais or 7,300 US\$. Yale Environment 360, February 16, 2021; O Globo, March 14, 2021.⁴¹

Early April 2021

Between Aranguren, Province of Entre Ríos and Los Polvorines, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina

Seizure of a vehicle intercepted at kilometer 115 of the National Road n°12, the vehicle transported 4 cages containing one red-crested cardinal (*Paroaria coronata*, Appendix II), 13 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), one shiny cowbird (*Molothrus bonariensis*) and one sayaca tanager (*Thraupis sayaca*).

Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, April 10, 2021.³⁷

April 2, 2021

Yuto, Province of Jujuy, Argentina. Border with Chile.

Seizure during a road check of 7 blue-fronted amazon chicks (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II). As adults, they are valued for their ability to learn a few words of the human language. At their current age, they were content to call for help from the trunk of the car.

Todo Jujuy, April, 2, 2021.³⁸

BOLIVIA

Beginning of February 2021
Department of Tarija, Bolivia



A severe blow was dealt to the bird on the country's emblem. 35 Andean condors (*Vultur gryphus*, Appendix I) were found dead. Subject to investigation, it was determined that they were poisoned by a goat carcass that had been sprayed with pesticides. "They couldn't get off the ground, the poison was searing," says Deputy Environment Minister Magin Herrera. "This is an irreparable insult to nature."

AM de Querétaro, February 8, 2021.³⁹

February 23, 2021

Choquekota, Province of Pedro Domingo Murillo, Department of La Paz, Bolivia



Two Andean condors (*Vultur gryphus*, Appendix I) have taken flight again at an altitude of 4,000 metres, spreading their 2.4 metre wings. Earlier this month they had fallen to the ground, probably from a failed poisoning, and were handed over to the Vesty Pakos zoological park where they were housed and refreshed.

The Associated Press, February 23, 2021; El Deber, February 24, 2021.⁴⁰

6,284 birds seized in Brazil between January 1 and April 30, 2021 according to official and media sources



Erfi, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, GeoEye, USDA FSA, USGS, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, and the GIS User Community

- Roraima**
 - 20 *Oryzoborus angolensis*
 - 4 *Amazona* spp., App. I or II
 - 1 Ramphastidae
 - 57 unidentified birds
- Amapá**
 - 3 *Coereba flaveola*
 - 3 *Cyanocmpsa brissonii*
 - 3 *Sporophila albogularis*
 - 3 *Xolmis cinereus*
 - 2 *Chrysomus ruficapillus*
 - 1 *Euphonia violacea*
 - 1 *Icterus jamacaii*
- Pará**
 - 2 *Pionopsitta pileata*
 - 2 Psittacidae, App. I or II
 - 1 *Ara chloropterus*, App. II
 - 1 unidentified bird
- Maranhão**
 - 20 *Paroaria dominicana*
 - 20 *Sicalis flaveola*
 - 20 *Sporophila bouvreuil*
 - 20 *Sporophila caeruleascens*
 - 20 *Sporophila nigricollis*
- Ceará**
 - 100 *Cyanocmpsa brissonii*
 - 100 *Saltator similis*
 - 100 *Sporophila lineola*
- Piauí**
 - 3 *Sporophila nigricollis*
 - 1 *Coereba flaveola*
 - 1 *Oryzoborus angolensis*
 - 1 *Thraupis sayaca*
 - 1 *Zonotrichia capensis*
 - 290 unidentified birds
- Bahia**
 - 10 *Cyanocmpsa brissonii*
 - 10 *Sporophila nigricollis*
 - 6 *Forpus passerinus*, App. II
 - 6 unidentified birds
- Minas Gerais**
 - 215 *Paroaria*
 - 106 *Sporophila caeruleascens*
 - 93 *Sicalis flaveola*
 - 75 *Zonotrichia capensis*
 - 54 *Saltator similis*
 - 52 *Sporophila nigricollis*
 - 50 *Amazona* spp., App. I or II
 - 42 *Gnorimopsar chopi*
 - 40 *Cyanocmpsa brissonii*
 - 40 *Turdus*
 - 35 *Icterus jamacaii*
 - 30 *Forpus passerinus*, App. II
 - 10 *Sporophila leucoptera*
 - 10 *Sporophila lineola*
 - 4 *Columbina talpacoti*
 - 4 *Leptotila verreauxi*
 - 3 *Patagioenas picazuro*
 - 2 *Lophospingus*
 - 2 *Melospittacus undulatus*
 - 1 *Columbina squammata*
 - 1 *Ortalis motmot*
 - 1 *Penelope*
 - 312 unidentified birds
- São Paulo**
 - 11 *Sporophila caeruleascens*
 - 2 *Icterus jamacaii*
- Mato Grosso**
 - 7 *Oryzoborus angolensis*
 - 3 *Forpus xanthopterygius*
 - 2 *Falco sparverius*
 - 2 *Pyrrhura griseipectus*, App. II
 - 2 *Sicalis flaveola*
 - 1 *Amazona* spp., App. I or II
 - 1 *Amazona brasiliensis*, App. II
 - 1 *Cacicus haemorrhous*
 - 1 *Caracara plancus*, App. II
 - 1 *Catartes aura*
 - 1 *Guarouba guarouba*, App. I
 - 1 *Ramphocelus bresilius*
 - 1 *Sporophila caeruleascens*
- Mato Grosso do Sul**
 - 8 *Sicalis flaveola*
 - 8 *Sporophila nigricollis*
 - 6 *Oryzoborus angolensis*
 - 2 *Icterus croconotus*
 - 1 *Molothrus bonariensis*
 - 1 *Paroaria*
 - 1 *Sporophila leucoptera*
 - 1 *Sporophila lineola*
- Paraná**
 - 1,170 *Sicalis flaveola*
 - 170 *Cyanocmpsa brissonii*
 - 170 *Spinus magellanicus*
 - 4 *Amazona* spp., App. I or II
 - 4 *Gnorimopsar chopi*
 - 4 *Sporophila caeruleascens*
- Santa Catarina**
 - 2 *Amazona* spp., App. I or II
 - 2 *Pionus* spp., App. II
 - 1 *Porphyrio martinicus*
- Rio Grande do Sul**
 - 4 *Aratinga leucophthalma*, App. II
 - 4 *Sicalis flaveola*
 - 4 *Sporophila nigricollis*
- Rio de Janeiro**
 - 17 *Saltator fuliginosus*
 - 1 *Pionus maximiliani*, App. II
- Distrito Federal (DFB)**
 - 47 *Sicalis flaveola*
 - 7 *Sporophila nigricollis*
 - 6 *Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II
 - 3 *Amazona* spp., Appendix I or II
 - 1 *Amazona amazonica*, Appendix II
 - 1 *Ara ararauna*, Appendix II
 - 1 *Diopsittaca nobilis*, Appendix II
 - 1 *Primolius* spp., Appendix I or II
 - 3 unidentified birds
- Alagoas (Ala)**
 - 83 *Paroaria coronata*, Appendix II
 - 70 *Saltator aurantirostris*
 - 21 *Cyanocmpsa brissonii*
 - 17 *Cygnus melancoryphus*, App. II
 - 17 *Sicalis flaveola*
 - 12 *Saltator similis*
 - 11 *Sporophila caeruleascens*
 - 11 *Zenaida auriculata*
 - 8 *Paroaria*
 - 5 *Crypturellus*
 - 5 *Serinus canaria*
 - 5 *Stephanophorus diadematus*
 - 4 *Amazona* spp., Appendix I or II
 - 4 *Spinus magellanicus*
 - 4 *Turdus rufiventris*
 - 3 *Piranga rubra*
 - 2 *Ara ararauna*, Appendix II
 - 2 *Turdus amaurochalinus*
 - 1 *Coryphospingus cucullatus*
 - 20 unidentified birds
- Esprito Santo (ES)**
 - 424 *Sicalis flaveola*
 - 222 *Gnorimopsar chopi*
 - 192 *Sporophila nigricollis*
 - 120 *Gallus gallus domesticus*
 - 113 *Saltator similis*
 - 112 *Sporophila caeruleascens*
 - 77 *Cyanocmpsa brissonii*
 - 41 *Paroaria dominicana*
 - 31 *Zonotrichia capensis*
 - 26 *Amazona aestiva*, App. II
 - 23 *Turdus*
 - 20 *Oryzoborus angolensis*
 - 20 *Tachyphonus coronatus*
 - 18 *Columbina talpacoti*
 - 16 *Turdus amaurochalinus*
 - 14 *Sporophila lineola*
 - 13 *Spinus magellanicus*
 - 9 *Ramphocelus bresilius*
 - 8 *Saltator fuliginosus*
 - 7 *Taeniopygia guttata*
 - 6 *Aratinga leucophthalma*, App. II
 - 6 *Pionus* spp., App. II
 - 4 *Coryphospingus cucullatus*
 - 3 *Amazona* spp., App. I or II
 - 3 *Ara ararauna*, App. II
 - 1 *Molothrus oryzivorus*
- Rio Grande do Norte (RG)**
 - 3 *Sporophila frontalis*
 - 3 *Sporophila plumbea*
 - 3 *Tangara*
 - 3 *Volatinia jacarina*
 - 2 *Cariama cristata*
 - 2 *Erythrura gouldiae*
 - 2 *Icterus jamacaii*
 - 2 *Ramphastidae*
 - 2 *Turdus leucmelas*
 - 1 *Agapornis fischeri*
 - 1 *Buteo magnirostris*, App. II
 - 1 *Columbina*
 - 1 *Coryphospingus pileatus*
 - 1 *Estrilda astrild*
 - 1 *Forpus* spp., App. II
 - 1 *Patagioenas picazuro*
 - 1 *Picidae*
 - 1 *Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II
 - 1 *Ramphastos toco*, App. II
 - 1 *Schistochlamys melanopsis*
 - 1 *Schistochlamys ruficapillus*
 - 1 *Sporophila albogularis*
 - 1 *Sporophila bouvreuil*
 - 1 *Sporophila leucoptera*
 - 1 *Turdus flavipes*
 - 1 *Turdus rufiventris*
 - 245 unidentified birds
- Pernambuco (Per)**
 - 56 *Saltator similis*
 - 28 *Sporophila caeruleascens*
 - 18 *Sicalis flaveola*
 - 18 *Sporophila frontalis*
 - 7 *Tangara*
 - 6 *Estrilda astrild*
 - 2 *Cyanocmpsa brissonii*
 - 2 *Rupicola rupicola*
 - 2 *Volatinia jacarina*
 - 1 *Gnorimopsar chopi*
 - 1 *Ramphastidae*
 - 1 *Saltator fuliginosus*
 - 1 *Sporophila nigricollis*
 - 1 *Zonotrichia capensis*
 - 100 unidentified birds



Parrots (*Amazona* spp., Appendix I or II), February 19, 2021, Mascote, State of Bahia, Brazil



17 black-throated grosbeaks (*Saltator fuliginosus*), February 7, 2021, Tubarão, Santa Catarina, Brazil



Red-headed cardinals (genus *Paroaria*), February 27, 2021, Poçoões, State of Bahia, Brazil



Orange-winged amazon (*Amazona amazonica*, Appendix II), February 3, 2021, Samambaia, Brazil



Toco toucan (*Ramphastos toco*, Appendix II), January 20, 2021, Rancharia, São Paulo, Brazil



Blue-fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), February 17, 2021, Rancharia, São Paulo, Brazil



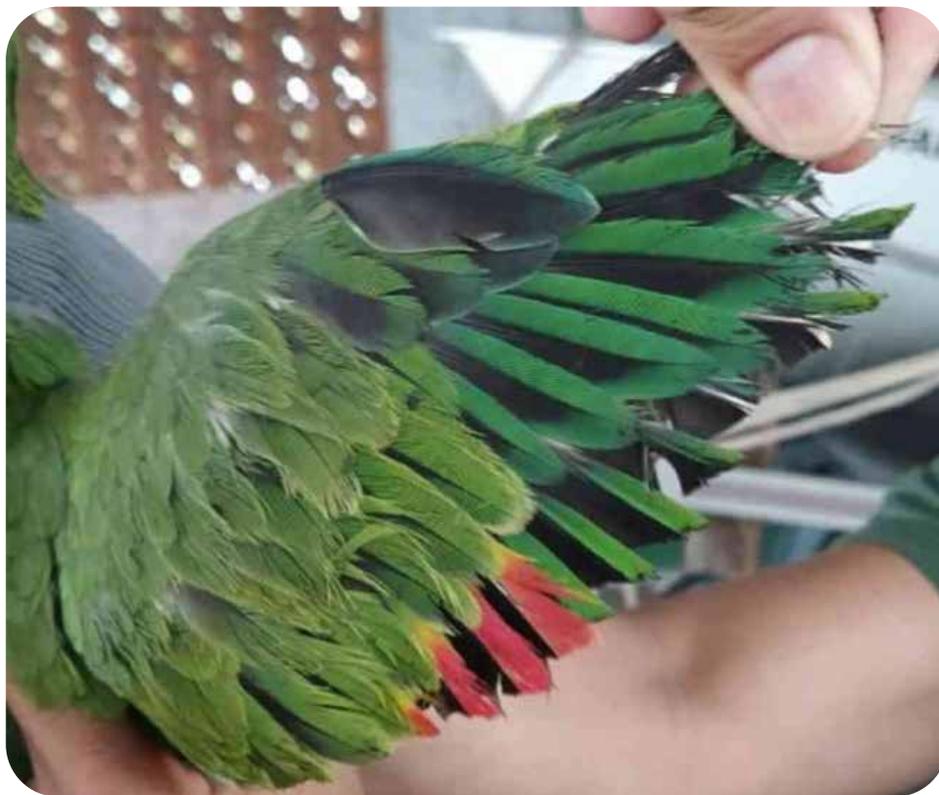
Saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*) and yellow-bellied seedeaters (*Sporophila nigricollis*), March 2, 2021, Riacho Fundo II, Federal District, Brazil



Pale-breasted thrush (*Turdus leucomelas*), March 17, 2021, Presidente Prudente, São Paulo, Brazil



Crested caracara (*Caracara plancus*, Appendix II), End of January 2021, Jaru, Rondonia, Brazil



Blue-fronted amazon (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), March 16, 2021 Caiuá, State of São Paulo, Brazil



Roadside hawk (*Buteo magnirostris*, App. II), March 5, 2021, Ferraz de Vasconcelos, São Paulo, Brazil



Blue-fronted amazon chicks (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), April 20, 2021, São Carlos, São Paulo, Brazil

March 3, 2021

Araucarias National Park, State of Santa Catarina, Brazil

The Instituto Espaço Silvestre plans to release about 50 vinaceous amazons (*Amazona vinacea*, Appendix I) by the end of the year. These are amazons that have been rescued or voluntarily released from trafficking. Since 2010, the institute has released 186 vinaceous amazons. Vanessa Tavares Kanaan, technical director, comments with hope: "during the pandemic, many people had the opportunity to feel what it is like to be isolated from other members of their species, what it is like to stay at home, what it is like not to be able to behave the way you want to, and maybe it is easier to empathize with what, maybe, the animals are going through as well."

G1, March 3, 2021.⁴²

COLOMBIA

End of February 2021

El Dorado International Airport, Bogotá, Colombia



Seizure of a package sent from the department of Putumayo and to the United States of America. In the package, there were 2 eagle claws, 93 harpy eagle feathers (*Harpia harpyja*, Appendix I) and a horn of greater kudu (*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*). An investigation is underway to process the sender and the recipient.

La FM, February 27, 2021.⁴³

Beginning of March 2021

Planeta Rica, Department of Córdoba, Colombia

Seizure from the home of a 51-year-old man of 106 birds including 3 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), 21 budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*), 10 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), 6 gray saltators (*Saltator coerulescens*), 3 mockingbirds (genus *Mimus*), 2 shiny cowbirds (*Molothrus bonariensis*), 2 yellow-backed orioles (*Icterus chrysater*), 2 pale-vented pigeons (*Patagioenas cayennensis*), a lesson's seedeater (*Sporophila bouvronides*), a rose-breasted grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*), a great kiskadee (*Pitangus sulphuratus*), a tanager (genus *Thraupis*) and dozens of cages. The birds were transferred to a rehabilitation center for future release.

Larazon.co, March 4, 2021.⁴⁴

REPEATED OFFENSE

Beginning of March 2021

Cochabamba, Department of Cochabamba, Bolivia

The repeat offender was transporting to Chile 5 blue-throated macaws (*Ara glaucogularis*, Appendix I), 5 toucans (family Ramphastidae), 3 ducks, 4 tortoises and one aquatic turtle, all juveniles and sedated so as not to attract the attention of onlookers or the police. Nelly S.A. was placed in custody in San Sebastián prison. The intervention was carried out by the forest police and the Pofoma (Policía Forestal y de Preservación del Medio Ambiente).

El Deber, March 5, 2021.⁴⁵

Beginning of March 2021

Puerto Boyacá, Department of Boyacá, Colombia



Seizure of 29 yellow-headed macaws (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I), 2 blue-and-yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) and one ara (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II), all chicks or juveniles, from the luggage compartment of a bus. Their health condition is currently being examined by the department's vets.

Semana, March 1, 2021.⁴⁶

Beginning of March 2021

Trujillo, Department of Valle del Cauca, Colombia



Rescue of a spectacled owl (*Pulsatrix perspicillata*, Appendix II) that fell from a tree for unknown reasons. It had a small wound on its neck. It was handed over by a passer-by to police officers. Eventually the owl ended up at the Buga wildlife refuge where it received first aid.

Semana, March 1, 2021.⁴⁷

End of March 2021

Cartagena, Department of Bolívar, Colombia

Seizure by the police and an environmental brigade of about 100 birds on the edge of Bazurto market: 3 owls (order Strigiformes, Appendix I or II), 3 brown-throated conures (*Aratinga pertinax*, Appendix II), 5 green parakeets (*Psittacara holochlorus*), 10 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), 5 blue-gray tanagers (*Thraupis episcopus*), one silver-beaked tanager (*Ramphocelus carbo*), 2 yellow-backed orioles (*Icterus chrysater*), 2 black-striped sparrows (*Arremonops conirostris*), 3 rosy thrush-tanagers (*Rhodinocichla rosea*), 2 cardinals (genus *Pheucticus*), 5 greyish saltators (*Saltator coerulescens*), 2 Venezuelan troupials (*Icterus icterus*), one lesson's seedeater (*Sporophila bouvronides*), one gray kingbird (*Tyrannus dominicensis*) and 54 blue-black grassquits (*Volatinia jacarina*). Since the beginning of the year, 320 birds seized and saved from captivity in Cartagena have been released. El Universal, March 23, 2021.⁴⁸

ECUADOR

February 24, 2021

Buenaventura Reserve, El Oro Province, Ecuador

Release of 20 red-masked conures (*Aratinga erythrogenys*, Appendix II) to the wild after a period of rehabilitation. They had been seized from private homes or markets.

Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition, February 24, 2021.⁴⁹

March 12, 2021

Baeza, Napo Province, Ecuador



© Freddy Burgos Gallardo/eBird

Based on information, one Isidor's eagle (*Oroaetus isidori*, Appendix II) was found dead on private property by a team of the Ministry of Environment and Aquatic Resources and the local police with the support of the Foundation for the Protection of the Andean Condor. The eagle had been shot. Isidor's Eagles live in the Andes Mountains from Venezuela to northwestern Argentina. They glide above trees or remain perched silently. They nest between 1,600 and 2,200 meters above sea level and hunts as high as 3,000 meters. Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition, March 12, 2021.⁵⁰

FRANCE (FRENCH GUIANA)

February 6 and September, 2021 Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni, Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France



Some of the 37 "picolettes" were purchased in Suriname. Known as chestnut-bellied seed finches (*Oryzoborus angolensis*), they were seized on the market. 34 were released in the following hours. 53 cages were destroyed. The species, which is renowned for its singing, had been there for a long time in plain sight among fruit, meat and fish. An individual sells for between 40 € and 400 € (48-480 US\$) depending on its talents. But it took several months for the French Biodiversity Agency and the gendarmerie to unravel the workings of the network. Four arrests and 4 sentences, a 3 to 4 month suspended prison term and a 1,000 € (1,180 US\$) fine, a one to 2 month suspended prison term and a 500€ (590 US\$) fine. France-Guyane, February 6, 2021; Guyane la 1^{ère}, February 8, 2021; French Biodiversity Agency, September 2021.⁵¹



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April 2, 2021

Saint-Georges, Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France. Border with Brazil.

Interception of an individual attempting to smuggle 2 rottweilers and 35 "picolettes" (chestnut-bellied seed finch, *Oryzoborus angolensis*) into Guiana. The dogs were handed over to the Brazilian military police in Oiapoque and the birds to the Ibama branch in Macapa, State of Amapá. French Biodiversity Agency, April 2021.⁵²

GUATEMALA

March 20, 2021

Guatemala, Department of Guatemala, Guatemala

A 20-year-old man was selling 3 red-masked conures (*Aratinga erythrogenys*, Appendix II) via the Internet. They were saved from trafficking by undercover police officers who had arranged a meeting with the traffickers in a shopping centre parking lot. Soy502, March 22, 2021.⁵³

MEXICO

February 13, 2021

Oaxaca International Airport, State of Oaxaca, Mexico

Seizure of one toucan (family Ramphastidae) and 2 aras (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II), undocumented and coming from Michoacan.

National Guard, February 13, 2021.⁵⁴

February 14, 2021

Mexico



By feeding on the nectar of flowers, the hummingbird (Trochilidae, Appendix I or II) pollinates them. Each time it pollinates a flower, pollen is deposited on its beak which it leaves behind while visiting the next flower. It does this about 100 times a day. This is how it contributes to the birth of flowers and fruits and is why it is associated with love and fertility. Every year in Mexico, on the occasion of Valentine's Day, thousands of hummingbirds are captured to participate in rituals that are supposed to help win over the beloved. Only hummingbirds are believed to be effective in these rituals. Poachers sell them on the markets for 10 to 15 US\$ each. There are 330 species of hummingbirds on the American continent. They are threatened by habitat loss, the disappearance of pollinating plants, poaching and the use of agrochemicals.

Infobae, February 14, 2021.⁵⁵



Mid-March, 2021

Tizimín, State of Yucatán, Mexico

The toucan (family Ramphastidae) was killed by a slingshot. It leaves a widow and several children.

The Yucatan Times, March 1, 2021.⁵⁶

April 17, 2021

Guadalajara, State of Jalisco, Mexico

Seizure at the market of 10 budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*), one cockatiel (*Nymphicus hollandicus*) and a poisonous snake of the genus *Micrurus*.

Infobae, April 19, 2021.⁵⁷

PERU

Beginning of January 2021

Mancora and Chulucanas, Province of Piura, Department of Piura, Peru

Seizure of one blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II).

Seizure of 12 red-masked conures (*Aratinga erythrogenys*, Appendix II).

The birds were temporarily handed over to the Cecilia Margarita Zoo in Piura.

La República, January 9, 2021.⁵⁸

January 25, 2021

Juanjuí District, Province of Mariscal Cáceres, Department of San Martín, Peru

The scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*, Appendix I) was in a hut made of tin and wire fencing. It was held illegally and visitors at the recreational centre along the Juanjuí-Tocache road were charged to see it. The macaw was handed over to the ARA (Autoridad Regional Ambiental) of the county.

Diario Ahora, January 29, 2021.⁵⁹

April 30, 2021

Piura, Province of Piura, Department of Piura, Peru

Arrest of an individual at Andrés Avelino Cáceres square. He was trying to sell a barn owl chick (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II). It was displayed in a box 25 cm high and 25 cm wide. It was first handed over to the Cecilia Margarita Zoo. The Serfor (Servicio Nacional Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre) insists that, "barn owls feed mainly on small rodents and insects and are useful in rural and urban ecosystems." Serfor, April, 30, 2021.⁶⁰



SURINAME

April 1, 2021

Bigi Pan, Nickerie District, Suriname

Arrest of a boat in the mangrove. H.A. and D.P. threw a bag overboard which the forestry officers recovered. Inside were 2 dead scarlet ibises (*Eudocimus ruber*, Appendix II). Seizure of 2 shotguns, 103 cartridges, the boat and the outboard motor. In the end they got away with a fine of 14,000 Suriname dollars (about 1,000 US\$).

Waterkant, April 4, 2021.⁶¹

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

January 12, 2021

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangzhou Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China



Seizure of 20 boxes containing 1.6 kg of swallow nests, i.e. between 115 and 530 nests, as one nest weighs between 3 and 14 grams. They were in the luggage of a 40-year-old man arriving from south-eastern Asia.

Chinese Customs, January 20, 2021; Information Times, January 23, 2021.⁶²

January 27, 2021

Kunming Changshui International Airport, Kunming Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China

Seizure of 2,980 grams of *Dendrobium* rhizomes (Appendix I or II) and 500 grams of swallow nests. Chinese Customs, January 29, 2021.⁶³

March 12, 2021

Chongqing Municipality, China

Seizure of 8 parrots (sub-family Loriinae, Appendix I or II). The first was seized from a buyer, the other 7 from a man and a woman specialised in selling parrots via the Internet, including monk parakeets (*Myiopsitta monachus*, Appendix II) and sun conures (*Aratinga solstitialis*, Appendix II). The ill-gotten gains amount to 3,500 yuan or about 550 US\$. China Central Television, March 18, 2021.⁶⁴

April 8, 2021

Zhuji, Shaoxing Prefecture, Zhejiang Province, China

Bird songs catch the attention of a policeman on patrol. He follows them to Chen's fishing gear shop. Cloth-covered cages hang on the walls. The officer thinks he recognises Class II protected birds, melodious laughingthrushes (*Garrulax canorus*, Appendix II). He immediately contacts the Wildlife Conservation Society and, after his suspicions are confirmed, takes Chen to the police station. Chen admits that he has been selling birds for the past 5 or 6 years. Following his indications, the police arrest the men who catch them in Guizhou province in order to supply them to him, and then track down Cheng, who is deaf and mute and whose main activity is trafficking melodious laughingthrushes. The 68 birds are released, the 7 men are arrested. Zhuji Police, May 12, 2021.⁶⁵

April 15, 25 and 29, 2021

Beijing Autonomous Municipality, China

Following reports, police officers go undercover to a market in Chaoyang district where wild bird sellers are allegedly operating. The approach is successful. In 3 visits, they seize 31 birds and arrest 5 people: Sun in possession of 15 Pacific parrotlets (*Forpus coelestis*, Appendix II), Jiang and Gao in possession of 6 Fischer's lovebirds (*Agapornis fischeri*, Appendix II), and the Zhang brothers in possession of 2 Pacific parrotlets, 6 Fischer's lovebirds, a red-billed leiothrix (*Leiothrix lutea*, Appendix II), and a chestnut-flanked white-eye (*Zosterops erythropleurus*). Only the red-billed leiothrix and the chestnut-flanked white-eyes can be found wild in China. Beijing TV Science and Education Channel, May 26, 2021.⁶⁶

SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

CAMBODIA

January 2021

Phnom Penh Autonomous Municipality, Cambodia

Seizure of 13 juvenile black-winged kites (*Elanus caeruleus*, Appendix II) offered for sale. They were transferred to the Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Centre for possible release.

Wildlife Crime Hotline, February 15, 2021.⁶⁷

January 2021

Cardamom Protected Forest, Cambodia



Release of a spot-bellied eagle-owl (*Bubo nipalensis*, Appendix II) that was being kept as a pet by villagers. Spot-bellied eagle-owls are the largest nocturnal raptors in the country, measuring 50-60 cm in length and weighing 1.5 kg. They even hunt young muntjacs.

Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, January 20, 2021.⁶⁸

February 2021

Rovieng District, Preah Vihear Province, Cambodia

Release of 2 hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II) during a net removal operation by Wildlife Alliance rangers.

Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, March 29, 2021.⁶⁹



Week of March 8, 2021

Phnom Penh Autonomous Municipality, Cambodia

New seizure of juvenile black-winged kites (*Elanus caeruleus*, Appendix II) sold as pets. After a few weeks of rehabilitation at the Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Centre, the 3 birds have regained their freedom.

Wildlife Crime Hotline, March 15 and April 7, 2021.⁷⁰

March 11, 2021

Cardamom Protected Forest, Cambodia



The female concave-casqued hornbill (*Buceros bicornis*, Appendix I) had some bad luck and some good luck. First, it was captured and stuffed into a bag, then the unidentified man got rid of it when a patrol approached. It was pampered and released. Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, March 11, 2021.⁷¹

Week of March 15, 2021

Dang Phlet, Cheb Wildlife Sanctuary, Preah Vihear Province, Cambodia

Discovery in a tree of the carcasses of 2 giant ibises (*Pseudibis gigantea*), victims of traps set near a watering hole. The giant ibis is Cambodia's national bird. Less than 300 individuals are thought to remain in the country. Living in wetlands, they are threatened by hunting, nest robbing and the destruction of their habitat by agriculture. WCS Cambodia, March 20, 2021; The Cambodia Daily (with Xinhua), March 21, 2021; The Star, March 21, 2021.⁷²



Mid-March 2021

Cambodia

A Wildlife Alliance ranger patrol removes 1.5 km long bird catching nets. A barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II) did not survive.

Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, March 19, 2021.⁷³

Week of April 5, 2021

Chhay Areng, Koh Kong Province, Cambodia

Arrest of 2 poachers who were planning to hunt birds with 2 homemade firearms and 120 metres of net.

Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, April 13, 2021; Wildlife Crime Hotline, April 13, 2021.⁷⁴



April 15, 2021

Cardamom Protected Forest, Cambodia

Rescue of 2 juvenile black-winged kites (*Elanus caeruleus*, Appendix II) held in a logging camp. Raptors are considered fashionable pets in Phnom Penh, but they are also sometimes bought by farmers to hunt pests or by Buddhists who release them as part of an animal liberation ritual supposed to bring good karma.

Wildlife Crime Hotline, April 15, 2021.⁷⁵



INDONESIA

January 15, 2021

Port of Bakauheni, South Lampung Regency, Lampung Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Seizure of 1,722 songbirds on their way by ferry to the island of Java. They were divided into 64 boxes, meaning 27 per box. On December 17, 21 and 27, 2020, 151, 240 and 930 songbirds were seized under similar conditions heading for the same destination.

FLIGHT - Protecting Indonesia's Birds, January 24, 2021.⁷⁶

January 22, 2021

Muaro Jambi Regency, Jambi Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Based on intel, a minibus coming from Riau province is intercepted in Jambi province. Seizure of 350 great tits (*Parus major*) and 2,575 plain prinias (*Prinia inornata*). The final destination was the island of Java via the port of Bakauheni.

Ministry of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia, January 26, 2021.⁷⁷

January 24, 2021

Bakauheni Port, Lampung Selatan Regency, Lampung Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Seizure in a truck at 5 a.m. in the port area of 1,170 Asian glossy starlings (*Aplonis panayensis*), 280 Javan mynas (*Acridotheres javanicus*), 350 prinias (genus *Prinia*), 150 typical white-eyes (genus *Zosterops*), 46 cinereous tits (*Parus cinereus*), 2 chestnut-capped laughingthrush (*Garrulax mitratus*) and 25 other birds kept in 70 plastic baskets, i.e. 29 birds in each basket. All 2,023 birds should be released into suitable habitats.

Bandar Lampung Class I Agricultural Quarantine Hall, January 24, 2021.⁷⁸

January 25, 2021

Tanjung Perak Port, Surabaya, East Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia

Seizure of 300 Horsfield's bush larks (*Mirafra javanica*), 10 flycatchers (genus *Cyornis*), 60 thrushes (family Turdidae) and 10 pied bush chats (*Saxicola caprata*) on board the Niki Sejahtera from Ende, Flores Island, East Java Province. According to veterinary inspectors at Surabaya, "the modalities are always the same, the birds are in boxes or baskets in the trailer of a truck and the wholesalers wait for the delivery outside the port area."

Antara News, January 25, 2021.⁷⁹

January 29, 2021

Makassar Port, South Sulawesi Province, Sulawesi Island, Indonesia

Seizure of 268 red lorries (*Eos rubra*, Appendix II) and coconut lorikeets (*Trichoglossus haematodus*, Appendix II) on board the KM Dorolonda from Namlea, Molucca Province. In Namlea, on the island of Buru, a lory or lorikeet sells for 25,000 rupiahs or about 1.8 US\$. Once in Makassar, it sells for 150,000 to 250,000 rupiah or about 11 to 18 US\$. The birds were stacked in 5 cages. The journey by sea took 3 days but the birds were kept in boxes for 5 days, the total duration of the expedition. On arrival in Makassar, 9 had died of suffocation and one of the survivors escaped. Aras admitted to having already received a batch of 80 birds in 2020.

IDN Times Sulsel, January 29, 2021; Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), February 2021.⁸⁰

February 1, 2021

Sidoarjo and Ngawi Regencies, East Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia

Seizure of 3 black kites (*Milvus migrans*, Appendix II) at the bus station. Three bus drivers were interviewed by the police. Bus delivery of animals sold via the Internet is a common occurrence. Additional seizure of 15 Moluccan cockatoos (*Cacatua moluccensis*, Appendix I).

Centre for Orangutan Protection, February 10, March 4 and 5, 2021; Antara News, February 17, 2021; Mongabay, March 13, 2021.⁸¹

Beginning of February to June 12, 2021

Semarang, Central Java Province, Island of Java, Indonesia



Seizure of 23 helmeted hornbills (*Rhinoplax vigil*, Appendix I) helmets when disembarking from a car ferry from Samarinda or Kumai, Central Kalimantan Province, whose "ivory" was to be transformed into bracelets, key rings, earrings and other frivolities after being transferred by sea or by air to the island of Sulawesi.

The trafficker was sentenced to 17 months in prison and fined 50 million rupiah or about 3,500 US\$.

Ayo Semarang, February 10, 2021; Dwi N. Adhiasto, June 12, 2021.⁸²



Beginning of March 2021

Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Nine birds were handed over to the BKSDA by the provincial government, including 4 brahminy kites (*Haliastur indus*, Appendix II), 3 crested hawk-eagles (*Spizaetus cirrhatus*, Appendix II) and a black eagle (*Ictinaetus malayensis*, Appendix II). They were held in the Vice-Governor's residence. There is no information on their origin or on the duration of their captivity. They will be released if their rehabilitation to live in the wild goes well. Detikcom, March 12, 2021.⁸³

March 3, 2021

Port of Tanjung Perak, Surabaya, East Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia

Smuggling "to a foreign country" is thwarted. Seizure of 600 birds, white cockatoos (*Cacatua alba*, Appendix II) and blue-streaked lorries (*Eos reticulata*, Appendix II) in the port. Surabaya is the second busiest seaport in Indonesia and the main port in East Java.

Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), March 2021.⁸⁴

March 3, 2021

Port of Bakauheni, South Lampung Regency, Lampung Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Bakauheni the zinging port. Seizure of 1,090 birds. YF was attempting to smuggle them onto the island of Java in his vehicle.

Antara News, March 4, 2021.⁸⁵

March 26, 2021

Sumatra Island, Indonesia



The 272 songbirds were lodged under the engine compartment of a bus that was boarding a car ferry to the island of Java. They were saved thanks to the alert of the dog brigade. "A dog's nose can always be trusted," says Femke Den Haas, co-founder of the Jakarta Animal Aid Network. Her students include Malinois, German Shepherds, Golden Retrievers and a newcomer, a female Cocker Spaniel who is the star of the brigade. She was trained at the ports of Lampung (Sumatra) and Tanjung Priok (Jakarta), 2 hotspots of wildlife trafficking in southeastern Asia.

Arab News, March 30, 2021.⁸⁶

April 2, 2021

Port of Bakauheni, South Lampung Regency, Lampung Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Seizure from a truck carrying reared chicks of 1,150 bulbuls (family Pycnonotidae), 125 tailorbirds (genus *Orthotomus*), 75 bar-winged prinia (*Prinia familiaris*) and 300 other sparrows. They were confined in repurposed boxes and fruit crates. They were released after a health check in the port quarantine. FLIGHT - Protecting Indonesia's Birds, May 2, 2021.⁸⁷



April 19, 2021

Hapes Baru, South Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

On a mission in the Batang Toru forest, members of the NGO Scorpion succeeded in convincing Erwin Nasution, the illegal holder of a black eagle (*Ictinaetus malayensis*, Appendix II), to hand it over to them. Scorpion Foundation Indonesia, April 20, 2021.⁸⁸

April 30, 2021
Between Lubuk Basung and Bukittinggi, Agam
Regency, West Sumatra Province, Sumatra
Island, Indonesia



They were riding a motorbike with 2 cages full of birds. Seizure of 32 Javan myenas (*Acridotheres javanicus*) captured in Agam regency in the west and destined for markets in Bukittinggi in the east where they would have been sold for just over 1 US\$ each.

FLIGHT - Protecting Indonesia's Birds (with Katasumb), May 2, 2021.⁸⁹

MALAYSIA

January 4, 2021
Pasir Gudang, State of Johor, Malaysia

Salman Saaban director of the Wildlife and National Parks Department (Perhilitan) announces the seizure of 18 exotic birds, long-tailed parakeets (*Psittacula longicauda*, Appendix II), blue-rumped parrots (*Psittinus cyanurus*, Appendix II) and black-napped orioles (*Oriolus chinensis*). He estimates the economic value of the birds on the national black market at 7,850 ringgit or 1,945 US\$.

The Star, January 5, 2021.⁹⁰

January 8, 9 and 12, 2021
Kota Tinggi District, State of Johor, Malaysia.
Border with Singapore.



The pace of seizures of white-rumped shamas (*Copsychus malabaricus*) before they are shipped by sea to Indonesia is accelerating. In 2018, 583 white-rumped shamas were seized, in 2019, 1,048, in 2020, 2,990. Their final destination is Jakarta, Java Island. Shamas are caged singers and show animals. They are said to sell for the equivalent of 370 US\$ to 5,000 US\$ according to the local press, depending on their singing skills and the length of their tails.

- 600 white-rumped shamas seized by the 3rd Infantry Division in the Sungai Rengit district on the Pengerang seafont. They were divided into 66 baskets.

- 548 white-rumped shamas in 49 baskets also seized in the Sungai Rengit area the next day.

- 228 white-rumped shamas are seized by the maritime police.

- 62 live white-rumped shamas and 35 dead due to mistreatment are seized from a repeat offender who was arrested and released for attempting to smuggle 260 birds of the same species in December 2020.

Some specimens are also shipped by road and smuggled into Singapore (see "On the Trail" n°26 p.42 and n°31 p.126).

Peninsular Malaysia Wildlife Department, January 9 and 13, 2021; Harian Metro, January 17, 2021; New Straits Times (with Bernama), January 17, 2021; The Star, January 30, 2021.⁹¹

OPERATION KHAZANAH

January 18, 2021

Between Kuching and Serian, Sarawak State, Malaysia



Seizure of 740 oriental magpie-robins (*Copsychus saularis*) in crates in the luggage compartment of a scheduled bus from Selangau to Kuching. Two arrests.

The Borneo Post, January 19, 2021.⁹²



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Since its first publications in 2013, "On the Trail" has been meeting this bird in the 4 corners of southeastern Asia. This great singer, the white-rumped shama (*Copsychus malabaricus*), deserves to be in Appendix I or II of CITES. Its trade does not appear to be global but it is certainly international. Both mainland and insular Malaysia are hubs for it. Consignments are shipped by road from Sarawak to West Kalimantan Province in Indonesia. These shipments travel from mainland Malaysia to Thailand and sometimes back again. White-rumped shamas are exported in bulk from mainland Malaysia to the island of Sumatra, Indonesia, before being transferred by air and mostly by road and boat to the island of Java. There are also back roads from Viet Nam to Singapore and from Cambodia to Viet Nam. "On the Trail" also noted in 2016 a seizure

in mainland China and in 2021 a seizure in Hong Kong of songbirds of the genus *Copsychus*. It is therefore certain that a smuggling circuit for white-rumped shamas and dayal shamas (*Copsychus saularis*) has been established between southeastern Asia and China, where clandestine breeding operations may exist.

In Indonesia, more than 120,000 specimens were in captivity in 2006 in the 6 main cities of the islands of Java and Bali. On the island of Sumatra, they have disappeared from all the forests and from all the outskirts of human communities accessible on foot. They are now thought to be confined to the most inaccessible areas of Leuser and Way Kambas national parks, several days' walk from roads and tracks. The best experts on the species suggest that the survivors have learned to remain silent in the face of the trappers' rush. White-rumped shamas are naturally very competitive and respond skillfully to electronic calls set up by trappers. Their passion for vocalizing is leading them to extinction.

Sources: "On the Trail" and J. A. Eaton, C. R. Shepherd, F. E. Rheindt, J. B. C. Harris, S. van Balen, D. S. Wilcove and N. J. Collar (2015). "Trade-driven extinctions and near-extinctions of avian taxa in Sundaic Indonesia". *Forktail*, 31, 1-12.



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January 26, 2021

Between Bintulu and Miri, State of Sarawak, Malaysia

Seizure of 8 yellow-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua sulphurea*, Appendix I). The birds have an estimated value of 36,000 Malayan ringgits which is 8,920 US\$ or 1,115 US\$ per specimen. Additional seizures included: a grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I): 8,000 ringgits or 1,980 US\$, a blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II): 11,000 ringgits or 2,725 US\$, an eclectus parrot (*Eclectus roratus*, Appendix II): 3,000 ringgits or 743 US\$, and finally, 2 scarlet macaws (*Ara macao*, Appendix I): 22,000 ringgits or 2,725 US\$ per specimen. The birds were seized from a 68-year-old and the operation was led by the naval forces and forestry officers.

Harian Metro, January 27, 2021; The Borneo Post, January 28, 2021.⁹³

OPERATION BENTENG

February 22, 2021

Pengkalan Pasir Tok Deh, State of Kelantan, Malaysia. Border with Thailand.



The 8th Battalion of the GOF (General Operations Force) is mainly dealing with drug trafficking. This time, a man is spotted from his boat unloading packages on a bank of the Kelantan River. Seizure of 11 birds including adult blue-and-yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) and chicks. The value of each specimen is estimated to be between 150 and 7,000 ringgit or 37 to 1,730 US\$ depending on its age. The smuggler fled.

New Straits Times, February 23, 2021.⁹⁴

April 13, 2021

Kota Tinggi District, State of Johor, Malaysia

Seizure by Perhilitan officers of 1,455 oriental magpie-robins (*Copsychus saularis*) and 9 white-rumped shamas (*Copsychus malabaricus*) on their way to 'a neighboring country', likely Indonesia or Singapore.

Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia, April 23, 2021.⁹⁵

April 15, 2021

Seberang Perai, State of Penang, Malaysia

Seizure from 7 construction site thieves and suspected drug traffickers of some 30 jackhammers, drills, pressure washers and 7 rare birds including grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus timneh*, Appendix I) and black-capped lorries (*Lorius lory*, Appendix II) worth approximately 3,000 US\$.

New Straits Times, April 19, 2021.⁹⁶

April 23, 2021

Kulai, State of Johor, Malaysia

Seizure of 70 white-rumped shamas (*Copsychus malabaricus*) and 1,000 oriental magpie robins (*Copsychus saularis*) with an estimated value of 150,000 ringgit or 36,000 US\$ from the car and home of a 36-year-old man.

The Star, April 26, 2021.⁹⁷

April 26, 2021

Anak Datai Island, State of Kedah, Malaysia



An unnamed boat from Thailand attempted to enter Malayan waters. It was intercepted and 40 white-rumped shamas (*Copsychus malabaricus*) and 70 fighting cocks were found on board.

Astro AWANI, April 28, 2021.⁹⁸

PHILIPPINES

April 19, 2021

Roxas, Province of West Mindoro, Philippines

Seizure in a private garden of 2 brahminy kites (*Haliastur indus*, Appendix II), 4 Eurasian collared doves (*Streptopelia decaocto*), 2 thick-billed green pigeons (*Treron curvirostra*), 2 red collared doves (*Streptopelia tranquebarica*), a whistling green pigeon (*Treron formosae*), a metallic pigeon (*Columba vitiensis*), 3 white-eared brown doves (*Phapitreron leucotis*), 2 quails and another pigeon. The seller thought he was dealing with buyers. He was actually dealing with police officers and the business contact soon turned into a search. The birds were being sold for 25,000 pesos or 510 US\$ each.

Inquirer.net, April 25, 2021.⁹⁹

THAILAND

February 5, 2021
Sai Yok National Park, Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand. Border with Myanmar.



Private Phitsanu Choeykhim is in military prison. He was caught with weapons in his hand and 7 dead hornbills (family Bucerotidae) in a bag. The Sueb Nakhasathien Foundation is calling for an exemplary judgment. The case could go higher up. His superiors are relieved of their duties for at least 7 days.

Bangkok Post, February 7, 2021. ¹⁰⁰

REPEATED OFFENSE

March 5, 2021

Min Buri District, Bangkok, Thailand

At 8 p.m., X, riding a scooter with a bag hanging on the left side of the handlebars, was stopped by the patrol. In the bag: a box. In the box: a white-crested laughingthrush (*Garrulax leucolophus*). The young man said he bought it for 400 baht and sold it on the Internet for 600 baht (20 US\$). He had already been arrested for similar reasons on August 17, 2020 (see "On the Trail" n° 30 p.115).

Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, March 6, 2021. ¹⁰¹



VIET NAM

Beginning of January 2021
Ha Nam Province, Viet Nam



An ENV supporter had succeeded in persuading his neighbours to hand over their crested serpent eagle (*Spilornis cheela*, Appendix II) to the NGO. Unfortunately, the bird, weakened by its captivity, died shortly after its arrival at the Hanoi Wildlife Rescue Center.

ENV, January 16, 2021. ¹⁰²

January 4, 2021

Kon Tum Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of a brahminy kite (*Haliastur indus*, Appendix II) by the provincial forest authorities upon information from ENV.

ENV, January 4, 2021. ¹⁰³

Mid-January, 2021

Binh Phuoc Province, Viet Nam

Seizure by ENV and forestry services of an oriental pied hornbill (*Anthracoceros albirostris*, Appendix II) displayed in a restaurant. It was released in a nearby forest.

ENV, January 19, 2021. ¹⁰⁴

**March 2021
Viet Nam**

For the past 10 years, the raptor market has been booming in Viet Nam, particularly in Ho Chi Minh City and in the provinces of Dong Nai and Binh Duong. Supply is struggling to meet demand despite an exponential number of online advertisements. The main motivations of customers are the "passion" of dressage and social prestige.

After the eggs hatch on farm in February, March is the peak of the selling season. For 3 million dong or 130 US\$, anyone can buy an eaglet (Accipitridae, Appendix I or II) as young as 2 weeks old. According to a long-time eagle "hunter", "VND3 million per eagle is cheap. The quality is going down. More and more people are investing in properties and incubators to raise eagles. These birds are weaker than the wild ones."

The price goes up depending on the species, age, color, size and sex. The most prestigious species are the imperial eagle (*Aquila heliaca*, Appendix I) and the Asian black eagle (*Ictinaetus malayensis*, Appendix II). According to the advice of the suppliers, a beginner should try his hand with a black-winged kite (*Elanus caeruleus*, Appendix II) or a falcon (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II) before considering training an eagle, and devote 1-2 hours to it each day.

For the record, the capture, breeding and sale of these birds is prohibited and this traffic threatens wild populations.

VietNamNet, March 6, 2021.¹⁰⁵



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**April 6, 2021
Tay Ninh Province, Viet Nam**

Seizure of 5 owls (*Strigidae*, Appendix I or II) and 4 eagles, including a mountain hawk-eagle (*Spizaetus nipalensis*, Appendix II), a changeable hawk-eagle (*Spizaetus cirrhatus*, Appendix II) and a spotted eagle (*Aquila clanga*, Appendix II), at the home of a trafficker who offered them for sale on Facebook and YouTube.

ENV, April 7, 2021; Natural Resources and Environment Newspaper, April 7, 2021.¹⁰⁶



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SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

**January 3, 2021
Mylapore, Royapuram and Chennai, Chennai District, State of Tamil Nadu, India**



© TOI

The 53 Alexandrine parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II), most of them 10-15 days old, were probably captured in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh to be sold in Pallavaram and Moore market (Chennai). But, this was without taking into account the watchful eyes of environmental protectors, who noticed the online advertisement. After the seizure of 11 parakeets from 2 suspects near Santhome (a locality in Mylapore), the forest services tracked down Mohammed Ramali, a 56-year-old acupuncturist living in Royapuram who had 40 specimens in his home, and 2 other people who were arrested at the Muscanchavady market (Chennai). A pair of Alexandrine parakeets sells for 50 US\$ in pet shops.

The Hindu, January 3, 2021; The Times of India, January 4, 2021.¹⁰⁷

January 3, 2021

Lawspet, Puducherry District, Union Territory of Puducherry, India



Arrest of Ravi, alias Chiranjeevi, aged 31, for the fatal poisoning of more than 30 coppermouth barbets (*Psilopogon haemacephalus indicus*) in Auroville in late December 2020. Two accomplices are wanted. They had placed peanut cakes full of insecticides in a fig tree in plain sight. Auroville, the City of Dawn, wants to be “a universal town where men and women of all countries are able to live in peace and progressive harmony above all creeds, all politics and all nationalities.” It was inaugurated on February 28, 1968 under the aegis of UNESCO. Obviously, Ravi did not include birds in this community of peace and harmony. The Hindu, January 4, 2021.¹⁰⁸

January 9, 2021

Durgapur, Paschim Bardhaman District, State of West Bengal, India

Operation of the local forest officers on the Durgapur Expressway following a tip-off from the WCCB. Three arrests and the seizure of 64 red-vented bulbuls (*Pycnonotus cafer*) from the trunk of the vehicle coming from Ashoknagar (North 24-Parganas district, 200 km away) and going to Allahabad (Uttar Pradesh, 600 km away).

The Telegraph India, January 11, 2021; WCCB, January 11, 2021.¹⁰⁹

January 11, 2021

Thane, Thane District, State of Maharashtra, India



Mahesh Kadam sees 2 men carrying a cardboard box. Judging their behaviour to be suspicious, he approached them and asked them what was inside. The 2 men immediately ran away, leaving their load. Kadam found 2 juvenile Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), which he handed over to the Forest Department. Outlook India (with PTI), January 12, 2021.¹¹⁰

January 12, 2021

Dobila Border Outpost, North 24-Parganas District, State of West Bengal, India. Border between India and Bangladesh.

Following a tip-off, a BSF (Border Security Force) patrol is on the lookout for an attempt to smuggle birds from Bangladesh. A man appears with a basket on his head. Upon hearing the call of the military officers, he runs away and leaves the basket behind. Three helmeted curassows (*Pauxi pauxi*, Appendix III in Colombia), native to South America, and 16 pigeons (genus *Columba*) are crammed inside. The birds will be handed over to the Alipore Zoological Garden.

South Bengal Frontier Border Security Force, January 13, 2021; The Telegraph India, January 13, 2021.¹¹¹

January 18, 19 and 31, 2021

Dhulijan Gaon, Tinsukia District, State of Assam, India



The villagers had poured poison into a pond not far from the Dibru-Saikhowa national park, home of 36 species of mammals and 400 species of birds. The poison targeting the fish is consumed by a cow who had come to drink, and then by oriental white-backed vultures (*Gyps bengalensis*, Appendix II), Eurasian griffon vultures (*Gyps fulvus*, Appendix II) and slender-billed vultures (*Gyps tenuirostris*, Appendix II) who came to feed on the cow's carcass. 36 die and 13 are rescued by forest officials. The sorry locals bury the dead vultures at the end of the month with a Hindu “shraddha” ritual, normally performed for ancestors to rest in peace. On the same day, the Wildlife Institute of India releases 9 survivors. The forest department also holds an awareness programme to educate villagers not to contaminate water bodies or leave carcasses of poisoned animals in the open. The Sentinel, January 20, 2021; Hindustan Times, February 2, 2021; The Indian Express, February 3, 2021.¹¹²



January 24, 2021

Ragunathpur, Purbi Champaran District, State of Bihar, India

Muslim Miyan is arrested late this afternoon with 155 plucked birds, a motorbike and 10,000 rupees (140 US\$) in cash on the banks of the Dhanauti, a tributary of the Burhi Gandak. This poacher with more than 10 years of experience fell into the trap of an undercover policeman. Helped by 100 or so accomplices, he was preying on birds from Sarottar Lake, “the migratory birds paradise,” and from other districts of the State of Bihar, then selling them at prices out of reach for modest households: 8,000 rupees (109 US\$) for a red-crested pochard (*Netta rufina*). This did not affect his success. In police custody, he received a call from Sitamarhi district to agree on the sale price of a Siberian crane (*Grus leucogeranus*, Appendix I).

Down To Earth, January 25, 2021; Hindustan Times, January 25, 2021.¹¹³

February 1, 2021

Pollachi, Coimbatore District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of 11 Alexandrine parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II) - 6 chicks and 5 adults - from 2 individuals by a team from the WCCB assisted by rangers. The birds were transferred to a rescue center in Coimbatore.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), February 3, 2021.¹¹⁴

February 7, 2021

Maharajganj District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India. India-Nepal Border.

Seizure of 8 live Psittacidae (unspecified species) by a joint patrol of SSB and the Forestry Department. They were in the process of being smuggled to Nepal.

Sashastra Seema Bal, February 7, 2021.¹¹⁵

February 7, 2021

Gormari, Tinsukia District, State of Assam, India

This time it was not for a fishing competition but to get rid of stray dogs.

The 20 vultures, including 13 Himalayan griffons (*Gyps himalayensis*, Appendix II) and 7 oriental white-backed vultures (*Gyps bengalensis*, Appendix II), died of poisoning after eating the carcass of a cow placed in a rice field. The bodies were buried on site by the authorities. An investigation is ongoing. Hindustan Times, February 9, 2021.¹¹⁶



February 9, 2021

Jangaon, Jangaon District, State of Telangana, India

Early in the morning, residents find a dead Indian peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) in a trap next to St. Mary's High School and notify the forest officials. They go on site and inspect the area thoroughly until the afternoon, but they don't find any other carcasses. A group of poachers is believed to be at work in the vicinity. The inhabitants are invited to send to the authorities any useful videos to help identify them.

The New Indian Express, February 10, 2021.¹¹⁷



February 15, 2021

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

In the peanut field belonging to Rasu, 60, and his wife Ponnammal, 55, there were hare traps and 22 dead Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), 16 females and 6 males. When the forest officials arrived, Rasu was missing. Only Ponnammal was arrested, but she was later released on bail. The authorities suspect that the couple used poison to protect their crops. Post-mortem examinations are underway to validate this hypothesis. The carcasses were buried after the samples were taken. The peafowl population is said to have substantially increased in the district in recent years, but they are often victims of accidents, electrocution and poaching. At least 40 peafowls have died in the last 2 months. The Times of India, February 17, 2021.¹¹⁸



February 24, 2021

Bijoypur, Nadia District, State of West Bengal, India. Border with Bangladesh

Acting on information, the 54th Battalion of the South Bengal Frontier BSF (Border Security Force) rescues 54 exotic birds: a grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I), 2 rosy-faced lovebirds (*Agapornis roseicollis*), 45 budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*), 2 Major Mitchell's cockatoos (*Lophochroa leadbeateri*), and 4 common ravens (*Corvus corax*). The 2 smugglers who were trying to bring them in from Bangladesh managed to disappear into the bushes, leaving the 7 cages. The starving birds were fed before being handed over to the Forest Department.

South Bengal Frontier Border Security Force, February 26, 2021; The Telegraph India, February 26, 2021.¹¹⁹

February 25, 2021

Kolkata, Kolkata District, State of West Bengal, India

In the toucan aviary of the Alipore Zoological Garden, there is now only one keel-billed toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*, Appendix II) left. Its 3 companions, 2 toco toucans (*Ramphastos toco*, Appendix II) and a keel-billed toucan, were stolen on Thursday evening. The operation was meticulous. The thieves entered with a ladder placed against the wall on the Orphangun Road side, north of the zoo. They broke in between 2 watch patrols, sawed the metal fence of the aviary and caught the 3 sick toucans isolated in cages with an improvised net, before leaving via the same path. Ironically, these toucans had been rescued from trafficking in August and December 2020 (see "On the Trail" n°30 p.116 and n°31 p.129) by the BSF. But the motivation to steal them is strong: a pair of keel-billed toucans can sell for up to one million rupees (13,690 US\$) on the black market.

Three employees have been suspended for negligence. They were within 40 metres of the aviary at the time of the robbery. Internal collusion is suspected. In 2009, 8 common marmosets (*Callithrix jacchus*, Appendix II) were stolen from the zoological garden.

Hindustan Times, February 26, 2021; The Telegraph India, February 26 and 27, 2021; The Times of India, February 26, 2021.¹²⁰

March 4, 2021

Vijapur Outpost, Nadia District, State of West Bengal, India. India-Bangladesh Border.

The market for “exotic” birds fraudulently imported from Bangladesh is thriving. This Thursday, a patrol of the 54th Battalion of the Border Security Force (BSF) seized 6 plastic bags and a cage containing 8 lovebirds (*Agapornis* spp., Appendix II, native to Africa), a helmeted guineafowl (*Numida meleagris*), 2 scarlet macaws (*Ara macao*, Appendix I, native to South America), 3 wild turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*, Central and South America) and 2 eclectus parrots (*Eclectus roratus*, Appendix II, from Papua New Guinea). The traffickers disappeared as the paramilitaries arrived in the scene. Beyond Bangladesh and Myanmar, which are important highways in the transfer of animals to Indian buyers, wholesalers are often found in Thailand.

South Bengal Frontier Border Security Force, March 5, 2021.¹²¹

March 15, 2021

Jamukhari, Koderma District, State of Jharkhand, India

The carcasses of 11 Eurasian coots (*Fulica atra*), moorhens, were found. A bottle of poison was close by. Jamukhari is located in an Important Bird Area identified by the IUCN. Several thousand birds spend the winter there. The Times of India, March 16, 2021.¹²²



March 18, 2021

Tughlakabad, South Delhi District, National Capital Territory of Delhi, India

Record seizure in the inland container depot of 2.1 million peafowl feathers weighing 2,565 kg, i.e. approximately 1,710 individuals. Their value is estimated at 52.5 million rupees (722,810 US\$ or 280 US\$/kg). The 77 boxes shipped to China by Galaxy Rider were supposed to contain “PVC pipes.” Ayaz Ahmed, the owner of Galaxy Rider (based in Seelampur, a neighbourhood in New Delhi), has been charged. It seems that under the cover of PVC pipes, its official products, the company sent consignments of peafowl batches to China on 26 occasions between September 2020 and February 2021 using the services of the transport company Logistic Curator India Pvt Ltd.

Outlook India (with PTI), March 18 and April 1, 2021; Odisha TV, March 19, 2021.¹²³



March 18, 2021

Kishanganj District, State of Bihar, India

39 kg of peafowl feathers (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) were discovered in a bus traveling to Nepal during a security check carried out by elements of the 12th battalion of the SSB. As no bearers came forward, the feathers were seized and handed over to a district forestry officer. Sashastra Seema Bal, March 18, 2021.¹²⁴



March 21, 2021

Ghojadanga, North 24 Parganas District, State of West Bengal, India. India-Bangladesh Border.



Seizure by the 153rd Battalion of the 6 white cockatoos (*Cacatua alba*, Appendix II) that the trafficker was trying to introduce into India on his scooter. South Bengal Frontier Border Security Force, March 22, 2021.¹²⁵

March 27, 2021

Damdin, Jalpaiguri District, State of West Bengal, India

A bovine carcass near the Chel River, a tributary of the Teesta River, attracted 40 Himalayan griffons (*Gyps himalayensis*, Appendix II). When the witnesses saw them collapse one after the other, they immediately notified the forest services. Assessment of the poisoning: 15 dead, 25 sick. The Telegraph India, March 29, 2021.¹²⁶



March 31, 2021

Bazarsau, Murshidabad District, State of West Bengal, India



Woab Sheikh was carrying 120 live and 12 dead greater short-toed larks (*Calandrella brachydactyla*) when he was stopped by forest officials. He had just caught them in a field. The 20-30 gram, 13-14 cm long short-toed larks are often captured to be eaten.

The Telegraph India, April 5, 2021.¹²⁷

April 9, 2021

Asansol, Paschim Bardhaman District, State of West Bengal, India

165 birds, including 110 rose-ringed parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*) and 55 estrildid finches (family Estrildidae), were shut in cages hidden under seats 55 and 56 of the Kalka-Howrah Netaji Express Special train 02312 (a distance of 1,800 km). The owner has not been identified. Their value is estimated at 1,360 US\$. They were handed over to the Forest Department.

The Times of India, April 11, 2021.¹²⁸

April 14, 2021

Nadia District, State of West Bengal, India. India-Bangladesh Border.

Rounded up by an informant, the paramilitaries of the 153rd Battalion of the BSF ambushed near the border. They got their hands on 13 plastic bags containing 7 amazons (*Amazona* spp. , Appendix I or II) and 45 pigeons (family Columbidae). A tweet posted by the BSF about the incident does not indicate whether the traffickers were caught.

South Bengal Frontier Border Security Force, April 15, 2021.¹²⁹

April 21, 2021

Jitpur, Parasi District, Province N° 5, Nepal



Sixty-seven vultures, including 33 white-rumped vultures (*Gyps bengalensis*, Appendix II), 31 Himalayan griffons (*Gyps himalayensis*, Appendix II), 2 cinereous vultures (*Aegypius monachus*, Appendix II) and one slender-billed vulture (*Gyps tenuirostris*, Appendix II), were lying next to each other, all of them dead, except for one which was still waving its wings. It has been transferred to a veterinarian.

Next to the mass grave were the corpses of poisoned stray dogs. Experts say the vultures spotted the pack of dead dogs by patrolling the skies up to 100 km from their home. "The kings of carrion" watch over herds of wild and domestic animals, hunting safaris, mass killings and battlefields and spy on the movements of hyenas and jackals, their terrestrial counterparts. Vultures are very clean animals and they often bathe. From the time they are infants, they receive spoiled meat from their parents, which they neutralize with a unique digestive immune system. They are inoculated against all pestilential diseases, but they are not resistant to man-made chemical poisons such as carbofuran, which has an immediate effect, or diclofenac, an anti-inflammatory drug widely used in veterinary medicine, whose levels are so high in the carrion of domestic animals that they poison vultures in the long term.

The Kathmandu Post, April 21 and 27, 2021.¹³⁰

January 2021

Province of Balochistan, Pakistan

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum of Dubai arrives with his hawks, the Minister of Finance and Industry, the Deputy Chief of Police, other members of the royal family and one or several captains of industry. They all went to meet the houbara bustards (*Chlamydotis undulata*, Appendix I). They were given the right to kill 700 houbara bustards by Prime Minister Imran Khan, who was once opposed to falconry. Imran Khan, see "On the Trail" n°28 p.51.

Dawn, January 12, 2021; Mumbai Tarun Bharat, January 13, 2021.¹³¹



Imran Khan releasing falcons, see "On the Trail" n°11 p.24.

January 2021

Provinces of Balochistan, Punjab and Sindh, Pakistan

Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, the Crown Princes and other members of the royal families are granted falconry and conventional hunting permits for houbara bustards (*Chlamydotis undulata*, Appendix I) in the districts of Rahim Yar Khan, Rajanpur, Chakwal, Sukkur, Ghotki, Nawabshah, Sanghar, Zhob, Khairpur, Washuk, Gwadar, Sibi and Panjgur. In Panjgur, 11 dignitaries from the United Arab Emirates arrived on January 10 by special plane. They were welcomed by the political and military elite of the district. Under close protection, they set off for their palace in Piry Jhalak. Faithful to the district for several years, they have financed health clinics and water supplies for the underprivileged inhabitants. Dawn, January 26, 2021.¹³²

January 20, 2021

Peshawar, Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Seizure of 700 common mynas (*Acridotheres tristis*) and 10 common starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) in a bus coming from Punjab province, about 500 km or 6 hours away. Arrest of one Imtiaz and Muhammad Imran. The birds were released after a brief transit in Peshawar Zoo.

UrduPoint, January 20, 2021.¹³³

January 27, 2021

Dalbandin Airport, Province of Balochistan, Pakistan

It is the turn of the governor of Tabuk, Saudi Arabia, to land by plane in Balochistan with 13 companions. He was welcomed at the airport by an honor guard, the Saudi ambassador to Pakistan, the provincial governor, his chief of staff and other senior officials. A week earlier, a plane landed with 40 falcons on board to be deployed for 3 weeks in Chagai district.

Dawn, January 28, 2021.¹³⁴

January to February 2021

Pakistan

The 74 young falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II) seized in Karachi were released in 3 sequences (see "On the Trail" n°31 p. 132). After quarantine and care by English experts, they were equipped with Chinese satellite collars that, according to the Chinese branch of the IAF (International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey), allow them to be located to within one meter. The collection of information will allow us to know their routes, breeding grounds and preferred habitats. May this information not fall into the hands of poachers!

Dunya News (with APP), January 26, 2021.¹³⁵

Beginning of February 2021

Sufi Anwer Shah Safari Park, Province of Sindh, Pakistan

Release within days of 7 falcons (Accipitridae, Appendix I or II) seized from a vehicle in Mowach Goth during December 2020. An 8th hawk had died within days of its seizure from injuries inflicted during trapping and captivity.

Dawn, June 29, 2014; The Express Tribune, February 6, 2021.¹³⁶

Mid-February 2021

Karachi, Province of Sindh, Pakistan

The 7,000 sparrows (family Passeridae) were destined for the Empress Market (see "On the Trail" n°10 p.25, n°11 p.23, n°28 p.53 and n°31 p.105). They were seized at the bus station of Saddar in a bus. One arrest.

Dunya News, February 18, 2021.¹³⁷

Beginning of March 2021

Jamshoro Toll Plaza, Province of Sindh, Pakistan

Seizure of 6,800 nightingales (*Luscinia megarhynchos*), common mynas (*Acridotheres tristis*), bulbuls (family Pycnonotidae) and other sparrows from a bus heading to Karachi. Since the beginning of the year, 19,000 birds have been seized in the province. Most of them have been released into the forests.

Samaa, March 3, 2021; ARY News, March 4, 2021.¹³⁸

Pasni, Gwadar District, Province of Balochistan, Pakistan

Haji Hanif has been hosting emirs, their guests and falconry crews for 38 years. Today, at the age of 69, he is at the peak of his career and is assisted by his 3 sons. The eldest is in charge of the 20 luxury cars and all-terrain vehicles registered in Abu Dhabi and staying in Pasni. The next son is a bodyguard who coordinates the security. The youngest son acts as a game warden and ensures that the houbara bustards (*Chlamydotis undulata*, Appendix I) are not poached by locals and sold in the markets. Some 35 local jobs are reserved for training falcons and maintaining the pigeons that serve as bait, maintaining the lemon trees reserved for Arab visitors, laundry, cooking and cleaning. Additionally, a spotter on a motorcycle or quad bike spots flocks of bustards to save Middle Eastern dignitaries from tedious scouting and unnecessary travel. Hanif received the BBC journalists in the monumental mansion that serves as his lodging and that accommodates the hunters and their entourage. A few decades ago, the royal families used to disperse in the district and set up camp on the hunting grounds, but for security reasons, it is no longer possible to cook the bustards, or even sleep, in the middle of nowhere. In the evening, all the trains return to palaces like the one in Hanif, which stand out in the middle of the district's difficult terrain. Times have changed since the early 80's and the bustards, which are becoming rarer and rarer, are mostly captured before the arrival of the emirs and then released when they approach before being chased by falcons or shot on sight like farmed pheasants. As a reminder, the flesh of bustards is considered an aphrodisiac. The judiciary in the provinces and at the highest federal level has prohibited this hunting privilege reserved for the rulers of the United Arab Emirates. For economic reasons and to consolidate the friendship between Pakistan and the wealthy holders of petrodollars, its decisions have not been closely respected. Hanif is pleased with the generosity of the Middle Eastern hunters. They have built schools and clinics in Pasni. The problem is that there are no teachers and nurses to run them. "The sheikh can only construct something. He cannot ensure the staff also get here. That's the job of the provincial government".

BBC, March 28, 2021.¹³⁹

WESTERN ASIA

AZERBAIJAN

March, 2021

Qakh District, Azerbaijan

Falconry is spreading along the shores of the Caspian Sea and Arab tourists are crossing the line by killing Red Listed birds with a smile, including demoiselle cranes (*Anthropoides virgo*, Appendix II) and little bustards (*Tetrax tetrax*, Appendix II).

JAMnews, 25 March 2021.¹⁴²



UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

March 2021

Emirate of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

Field seizure by the External Inspection Section of the Environment and Protected Areas Authority (EPAA) of 1,460 acoustic traps and electronic callers that attract birds and facilitate their capture.

Gulf News, April 22, 2021.¹⁴³



IRAQ

End of January, 2021

Iraq

Seizure by a coast guard patrol of 15 falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II) and 3 houbara bustards (*Chlamydotis* spp., Appendix I) that were taking off in a smuggler's boat.

Al Omah, January 28, 2021.¹⁴⁴

Beginning of April, 2021

Cholistan Desert, Province of Punjab, Pakistan

The shooting of 2 great Indian bustards (*Ardeotis nigriceps*, Appendix I) in the Cholistan desert and the triumphant photos of the poachers that circulated on social media have angered animal lovers. The Pakistani NGO Save the Wild has asked the Army Chief General to intervene to protect the wildlife of Cholistan. Indeed, the leader of the poachers is a retired major of the Pakistan Army. The Indian NGO Tourism & Wildlife Society of India fears that the last great Indian bustards of the Rajasthan desert and the bustards born in a pilot farm are flying over the Cholistan desert and are being poached.

The Hindu, April 16, 2021.¹⁴⁰



Beginning of April 2021

Dera Ismail Khan District, Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Seizures of 7 and 12 live demoiselle cranes (*Anthropoides virgo*, Appendix II). Illegally trafficking in these migratory birds from Siberia is flourishing in the province. A pair of demoiselle cranes is given to newlyweds by family friends or as part of the wife's or husband's dowry. This ritual is inspired by the fidelity of the cranes, which live together as a pair throughout their adult lives and are said not to be able to bear being separated. The 2 poachers were fined 54,000 rupees (350 US\$). The trafficking is said to be facilitated by the reduced number of guards or even by their complicity. "If any official was found involved in the illegal activity, he would be punished as per the law," said the district's Wildlife Deputy Director.

Dawn, March 25, 2021; UrduPoint, April 5, 2021.¹⁴¹



March 2021

Maysan Province, Iraq. Border with Iran.

Trafficking in rose gold in the Middle East. Buyers from Saudi Arabia or the United Arab Emirates come to get them but the deposit seems for the moment reserved for the local bourgeoisie. "My brother gave them to me, they embellish our garden and impress the neighbors," says Mustafa Ahmed Ali, a proud owner.

The American flamingos (*Phoenicopterus ruber*, Appendix II) are caught in the Ahwar marshes upstream of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, a vast wetland shared by Iraq and Iran.

"The hunters are using the big guns," Dr. Hamoudi, who lives in Amara, the provincial capital, told reporters from L'Orient-Le Jour. "They level the bottom of the water to form a pool 50 cm deep. They leave a net under the water and place down food that the birds love. Then they move away and wait for enough prey before suddenly lifting their nets. They can catch thousands of birds this way every year. Not just flamingos, by the way." Stubborn pets, flamingos quickly settle into their new territory and generally do not try to escape. A live bird can be bought for the equivalent of 10 to 20 US\$. Flamingo meat is no longer openly sold in markets after a local information campaign discredited the consumption of the endangered species.

Flamingos migrate mainly from southern Europe, the Camargue in France, Andalusia in Spain or Portugal to North Africa, Morocco or Tunisia, some of them then heading to West Africa. Some colonies migrate from Asia Minor to Libya and the eastern Mediterranean. They are threatened by poaching, lead poisoning and electrocution by fences and power lines.

L'Orient-Le Jour, March 23, 2021.¹⁴⁵

LEBANON

**Mid-March 2021
Lebanon**



© L'Orient le Jour

Up there, the storks pass by. Down below, people take guns. Eight white storks (*Ciconia ciconia*) fall like leaves. Others stepped in to stop the shooting. "The storks, which were on their way to Europe where they should have been breeding, were about to rest in an area of North Lebanon when criminals shot them." Roger Saad, spokesman for the Association for the Protection of Birds in Lebanon (ABCL) was also shot.

L'Orient-Le Jour, March 23, 2021; Association for Bird Conservation in Lebanon, March 24, 2021.¹⁴⁶

TURKEY

**Early April, 2021
Üçlerkayası, Afyonkarahisar Province,
Turkey**



Discovery of a mass grave near Türkmenbaba Mountain: 7 dead cinereous vultures (*Aegypius monachus*, Appendix II) next to each other, 4 females and 3 males. The scene and the postures are unambiguous indications of poisoning. There are an estimated 80 to 200 pairs of cinereous vultures in Turkey and this loss represents 2 to 9% of the remaining population. Viscera have been sent to the Veterinary Institute in Ankara for analysis.

Rare Bird Alert, April 6, 2021.¹⁴⁷



© Associate Professor Emine Hesna Kandir

NORTHERN EUROPE

IRELAND

January 14, 2021

Between Tallanstown and Ardee, County Louth, Ireland

The National Parks and Wildlife Service is investigating several cases of suspected poaching of birds of prey in the county. It calls for information about the shooting of a common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) on the R171. The bird was found by a driver. The persecution of raptors is not new in Ireland. In the early 20th century, it was so intense that common buzzards disappeared from the country. Dundalk Democrat, February 4, 2021.¹⁴⁸

NORWAY

February 2, 2021

Snasa, Central Norway Region, Norway



A farmer finds a golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II) unable to fly. It did not appear to be injured, but X-rays revealed a lead shot in each wing and one in the right leg. The eagle was handed over to Tom Roger Østerås, an ornithologist who runs a bird

care centre. In January 2019, another golden eagle was shot in Meråker, about 100 km away. NRK, February 4, 2021.¹⁴⁹

UNITED KINGDOM

Beginning of January 2021

Huddersfield and Leeds, West Yorkshire County, England, United Kingdom

The year has just started and already 3 kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II) have been shot dead.

The Yorkshire Post, January 12, 2021.¹⁵⁰

January 16 to 17, 2021

Gloucestershire County, England, United Kingdom



Several sticks coated with glue were found by the police near Dursley. They are used to trap birds, in particular European robins (*Erithacus rubecula*). This is the first time that "On the Trail" reports the glueing practice in England.

Rare Bird Alert, January 29, 2021.¹⁵¹

January 29, 2021

Horseheath, Cambridgeshire County, England, United Kingdom

"Someone has deliberately shot this bird and we urge anyone with information to contact us," denounced Alun Bradshaw of the Rural Crime Action Team (RCAT). A common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) was found dead in the woods with several lead shots in its wings and body.

Cambridge Independent, February 4, 2021; Raptor Persecution UK, February 4, 2021.¹⁵²

February 5, 2021

Bedford, Bedfordshire County, England, United Kingdom

Humerus fracture caused by an air rifle shot. The damage was so severe that it was deemed irreversible and the veterinarians decided to put an end to the common buzzard's (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) suffering.

Raptor Persecution UK, February 8, 2021.¹⁵³

February 24, 2021

Staffordshire County, England, United Kingdom



The Enville Common Road was closed to allow time to recover a Eurasian eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II) abandoned by the side of the road in a box from which it had managed to escape. The bird of prey, which shows signs of domestication, has no identification ring and a clipped wing feather, which was preventing it from flying away. "It seems someone took this majestic bird on and realised they were unable to cope with its specialist needs and simply dumped it at the side of a road" explains Vicki Taylor of the RSPCA. For information contact the RSPCA on 0300 123 8018.

Stourbridge News, March 12, 2021.¹⁵⁴

February 24, 2021

Northumberland County, England, United Kingdom

Wanted. Tarras is missing. The GPS tag of this female northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*, Appendix II) has stopped transmitting. The last signal was at a willow ptarmigan (*Lagopus lagopus scotica*) hunting ground. It is hard to consider this a coincidence. This is the 52nd northern harrier reported missing since 2018.

Raptor Persecution UK, March 16, 2021; National Wildlife Crime Unit, March 21, 2021.¹⁵⁵

February 27, 2021

Ceiriog Valley, Wrexham County Borough, Wales, United Kingdom

North Wales Police are appealing for witnesses regarding the poisoning of a red kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II) with Bendiocarb, a powerful insecticide. They believe it was an intentional act. Call 101 with reference 21000458355 or Crimestoppers at 0800 555 111.

Raptor Persecution UK, July 7, 2021.¹⁵⁶



March 2021

Belfast, Belfast County Borough, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom

Discovery of a peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) corpse in Queens Island. It had been poisoned with carbofuran and aldicarb, a pesticide and an insecticide that are both banned. On June 28, the authorities searched 2 homes within the scope of the investigation. Farming Life, July 28, 2021.¹⁵⁷



March 9, 2021

Yorkshire Dales National Park, North Yorkshire County, England, United Kingdom

Willow ptarmigan (*Lagopus lagopus scotica*) hunters see raptors as rivals to eliminate. On May 21, 2019, members of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) were on watch at a field frequented by hunters. A man arrived with a Eurasian eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II) in a crate. He tied it to a rock to attract raptors. The attempt was unsuccessful and he left. On April 27, 2020, the man and the owl returned. This time, in barely 10 minutes, 2 common buzzards (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) spotted the owl, approached to hunt it and were shot at. The man left the scene, taking one of the bodies with him. After several observations, the RSPB identified the vehicle and the address of the perpetrator. The police searched the house and found the owl in the trunk of his car. Despite the accumulation of evidence against him, the suspect was not prosecuted.

Raptor Persecution UK, March 9, 2021; The Yorkshire Post, March 9 and 11, 2021.¹⁵⁸

March 12, 2021

Gloucestershire County, England, United Kingdom

"Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty" are not spared from poaching. In the Cotswolds, a 150 km long range of hills, a red kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II) was shot near the village of Salperton. Salperton park estate is known for its partridge hunts. Raptor Persecution UK, April 15 and 19, 2021.¹⁵⁹



Willow ptarmigan (*Lagopus lagopus scotica*)

Week of March 15, 2021

Allerton Bywater, West Yorkshire County, England, United Kingdom

If you have any information about the kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II) shot at Allerton Bywater, contact the authorities at 101, reference 13210148679.

Leeds Wildlife and Rural Crime Team, March 25, 2021; Yorkshire Evening Post, March 25, 2021.¹⁶⁰

March 16, 2021

Builth Wells, Powys County, Wales, United Kingdom

The red kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II) was by the side of the A470 road when it was rescued. Despite an uncertain prognosis, it recovered from its gunshot wound at the Vale Wildlife Hospital and was released in April.

Shropshire Star, April 17, 2021.¹⁶¹

March 17, 2021

Swindon, Wiltshire County, England, United Kingdom



Two European robins (*Erithacus rubecula*) died after being trapped by panels coated with synthetic glue intended to eradicate mice and other animals considered to be pests. They were taken to an RSPCA shelter. "We managed to get them off the trap using coconut oil and butter, and tried our best to get the sticky glue off the feathers. We'd really hoped they'd survive but sadly they both died." Glue traps consist of a sheet of cardboard, plastic or wood, covered with a non-drying adhesive. They capture non-targeted species. "Our frontline rescuers and hospital staff are sickened by the horrific injuries animals suffer as they struggle to free themselves. Mice and rats are the main victims but other animals such as snakes, robins, owls and even kittens and cats are maimed or fatally injured because of these awful traps", says the head of the RSPCA.

ITV, March 21, 2021; This Is Wiltshire, June 18, 2021.¹⁶²

March 18, 2021

Dorset County, England, United Kingdom

Seizure of unidentified dead birds, prohibited pesticides and one firearm from a private home. In November 2020, a red kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II) was found poisoned in the county (see. "On the Trail" n°31 p. 135).

Dorset Echo, April 1, 2021.¹⁶³

March 19 - May 4, 2021

Invercauld Estate, Aberdeenshire Council, Scotland, United Kingdom



A golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II) died from poisoning on a sheep farm near Crathie village. A wilful act according to police officers who searched several properties on May 4. The Invercauld estate is in the heart of the Cairngorms national park. It is popular with willow ptarmigan (*Lagopus lagopus scotica*) and deer hunters and salmon fishermen.

Evening Express, May 4, 2021; The Press and Journal, May 5, 2021.¹⁶⁴

April 6, 2021

Penrhyndeudraeth, Gwynedd County, Wales, United Kingdom



Poaching of a peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I). "The poor bird was found struggling on the road in Penrhyndeudraeth - and an examination by the RSPCA revealed puncture wounds and, sadly, injuries so serious that the poor animal had to be put to sleep", explained Mike Pugh. "We appeal that if anyone has information that may assist us then please call us on 101 or via the North Wales Police online reporting form," added a local police officer. North Wales Chronicle, April 12, 2021.¹⁶⁵

April 9, 2021
Cockley Cley, Norfolk County, England, United Kingdom



A red kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II) was found dead. It was suffering wing and leg fractures. It had been shot by a poacher. Police are appealing to the community to give information to 101, reference 36/25060/21.

Eastern Daily Press, April 23, 2021; Raptor Persecution UK, April 18, 2021.¹⁶⁶

April 12, 2021
Stockton-on-Tees, Durham County, England, United Kingdom

Another female northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*, Appendix II) is missing. Yarrow's GPS transmitter has stopped giving updates.

Raptor Persecution UK, April 29, 2021.¹⁶⁷

April 19, 2021
Wigston, Leicestershire County, England, United Kingdom

Death of a peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I). Its right wing was wounded by a bullet shot from an air rifle. It was recovered in a private home after hitting a window. It did not survive its injuries.

BBC, May 8, 2021.¹⁶⁸

Between April 19 and 23, 2021
Holmbridge, West Yorkshire County, England, United Kingdom

Theft of eggs in a peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) nest. A nest contains between 2 and 5 eggs. As reported in "On the Trail" n°29 p.127, peregrine falcon egg thieves sell adult falcons for up to 25,000 US\$.

PC CJ Newsome (West Yorkshire Police), May 10, 2021.¹⁶⁹

April 20, 2021
Crowland, Lincolnshire County, England, United Kingdom



A red kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II) died from poisoning in 2020 in Crowland. Police identified 2 suspects and searched their homes. Banned pesticides and other items linked to the crime were found.

LincolnshireLive, April 21, 2021.¹⁷⁰

OPERATION SUNBEAM

April 21, 2021
Teesdale, Durham County, England, United Kingdom



Joint operation by the local police, the RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds), Natural England (a public body) and the National Wildlife Crime Unit following the pesticide poisoning of 2 common buzzards (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) in 2020. Two homes were searched for toxic substances. The investigation is ongoing.

Durham Police, April 21, 2021; The Northern Echo, April 21, 2021.¹⁷¹



April 23, 2021
Sheffield, South Yorkshire County, England, United Kingdom



Terence Potter, 64, was sentenced to a 12-week suspended prison term and is to pay 340 US\$ in court costs for stealing over 200 eggs from nests in Yorkshire and Derbyshire. 179 were taken from black-headed gulls (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*), 4 from European golden plovers (*Pluvialis apricaria*) and 3 from curlews (genus *Numenius*). The eggs, 7 of which were viable, were seized during a search of his home in April 2020. Three European golden plovers and one curlew hatched. They were subsequently released (see "On the Trail" n°29 p.127). Huddersfield Daily Examiner, February 18, 2021; South Yorkshire Police, April 24, 2021.¹⁷²



April 28, 2021
Nuneaton, Warwickshire County, England, United Kingdom

An investigation is ongoing to ascertain the cause of death of a red kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II) found in a field near the A444 road. Its wingspan was over 1.5 meters.

Coventry Telegraph, May 10, 2021; Leicestershire Mercury, May 11, 2021.¹⁷³

April 30, 2021
Llyn Brenig Reservoir, Conwy County, Wales, United Kingdom

The enemies of raptors have many tools: firearms, pesticides, traps... These ones opted for another method: the chainsaw. A pair of ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*, Appendix II) had built their nest on the edge of the 3.7 km² artificial lake managed by the company Dwr Cymru Welsh Water, which supplies drinking water and manages wastewater in most of Wales. The female had just laid its first egg on a nest platform built as part of the "Brenig Osprey" project, which is a collaboration between Welsh Water and North Wales Wildlife Trust. At around 9:45 p.m., people approached the platform and sawed off the base. The surveillance camera filmed the nest and egg disappearing into the water. A reward of 2,750 US\$ is being offered for any information leading to the culprits.

Daily Post, May 1 and 4, 2021; North Wales Police, May 1, 2021; Daily Mail, May 2, 2021; BBC, May 3, 2021.¹⁷⁴



WESTERN EUROPE

GERMANY

January 24, 2021
Straubing-Bogen District, Bavaria State, Germany



Two common buzzards (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) are dead. The talons are clenched to death around a piece of meat and the crime is attributed to carbofuran. The LBV (Landesbund für Vogelschutz in Bayern, State Association for Bird Protection in Bavaria) and the GLUS (Gregor Louisdorfer Umweltstiftung) call on children not to touch dead animals and remind the public that dogs must be kept on a leash.

Tatort Natur, January 29, 2021.¹⁷⁵

February 21, 2021
Deggendorf and Dingolfing-Landau Districts, Bavaria State, Germany



The common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) attracted by a pheasant passed away within seconds. The same fate for another common buzzard and 2 carrion crows (*Corvus corone*). The pheasant was stuffed with carbofuran. Even the local hunters are outraged. They call for the reporting of suspicious vehicles as if the enemy had to have come from the outside.

Tatort Natur, February 23, 2021.¹⁷⁶

End of February 2021
Tüschenbroicher Forest Nature Reserve, North Rhine-Westphalia State, Germany



Three common buzzards (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) and a northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II) are found dead. The scene and the positions of the victims are typical of poisoning.

Committee Against Bird Slaughter, March 2, 2021.¹⁷⁷

March 2, 2021
Schkeuditz, Saxony State, Germany

Arrival in a postal parcel from Ukraine of a 37-cm tall stuffed long-eared owl (*Asio otus*, Appendix II) described as an "interior decoration."

German Customs, March 8, 2021.¹⁷⁸

March 21-23, 2021
Straubing-Bogen District, Bavaria State, Germany

A common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) dead on Sunday, a great egret (*Ardea alba*) on Monday, and 3 common buzzards on Tuesday. The police, discreetly called to the scene,



found that the poisoned feeding site had just been renewed with bones and offal. A common buzzard thrown down an embankment had, in its final convulsion, its talons so contracted that they were full of ivy leaves.

Tatort Natur, March 24, 2021; Committee Against Bird Slaughter, December 9, 2021.¹⁷⁹

April 9, 2021

Straubing-Bogen District, Bavaria State, Germany



One more raptor has died. The autopsy is currently being conducted at the veterinary faculty in Munich.

Birds are having a hard time in Bavaria. Since 2010, 500 abuses have been recorded, including poisoning, captures, destructions of nests and egg thefts. "We assume that only 10% of the offences are reported to us," says the German branch of CABS (Committee Against Bird Slaughter). Red kites (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II), northern goshawks (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II), common buzzards (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II), Eurasian woodcocks (*Scolopax rusticola*), tufted ducks (*Aythya fuligula*), Eurasian jays (*Garrulus glandarius*), grey herons (*Ardea cinerea*) and great egrets (*Ardea alba*) are in the cross-hairs.

In addition, the Munich public prosecutor's office is investigating the trafficking of jay feathers mounted on traditional hats.

Presseportal, April 13, 2021.¹⁸⁰

April 20, 2021

Dortmund, North Rhine-Westphalia State, Germany



This Tuesday morning, a very civilised grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) landed on the windowsill of the main customs office and then landed on the shoulders of a customs officer while waiting for the firefighters to arrive.

Bild, April 21, 2021; German Customs, April 21, 2021.¹⁸¹

FRANCE

Mid-January, 2021

Toulon, Department of Var, France

A poacher was fined about 12,000 € (13,630 US\$) by the Toulon Criminal Court for hunting European robins (*Erithacus rubecula*), 3,000 € (3,685 US\$) for poaching and was ordered to pay 8,998 € (11,050 US\$) in compensation for moral, material and ecological damage. His hunting licence was suspended for 3 years and his driving licence for 3 months.



The individual was caught on the island of Porquerolles, in the Port-Cros national park, in November 2017, with 2 European robins in his pockets. He was hunting, he said, for "a family meal." 19 traps were seized. He was using aludes (flying ants) as bait.

Port-Cros National Park, (<http://www.portcros-parc-national.fr>), January 15, 2021; Nice-Matin, January 16, 2021.¹⁸²

Weekend of January 16 to 17, 2021

Marseille, Department of Bouches-du-Rhône, France

Two individuals were poaching European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) using nets and glue, a stone's throw from Saint-Charles station, rue Bugeaud, in the 3rd arrondissement. The 2 individuals, aged 30 and 32, were arrested and a caged European goldfinch was seized. La Provence, January 19, 2021.¹⁸³

January 18, 2021

Ligné, Department of Loire-Atlantique, France



A car driver took in a wounded female peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) by the side of a road. Despite 3 weeks of treatment at the Wildlife and Ecosystems Veterinary Centre in Nantes, it failed to recover from its bullet wounds. It was euthanized on February 10.

30 Millions d'Amis, January 26, 2021; Ouest-France, January 26, 2021; L'Éclairer de Châteaubriant, February 12, 2021.¹⁸⁴

REPEATED OFFENSE

February 3 and September 7, 2021

Pérois, Department of Hérault, France



The investigation into theft from mailboxes uncovered a European goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) trafficking operation. One of the suspects was being followed by the police.

Together with an accomplice, he regularly went to Pérois to capture European goldfinches with glue. At their home, 5 goldfinches were seized in a freezer, as well as one live goldfinch and one European serin (*Serinus serinus*). The theft of mail and postal workers uniforms and the sale of goldfinches (from 50 to 200 € which is 58 to 227 US\$) allowed the 2 men, aged 22 and 40, to improve their lifestyle and for the younger one to pay for drugs and prostitutes.

One of them, who had already been convicted of the same offence 2 years ago, was sentenced to an 18-month prison term, 12 months of which were suspended, while the other was fined 15 € for 300 days (5,310 US\$).

Midi Libre, February 4, 2021; Ouest-France, February 5, 2021; 20 Minutes, February 5, 2021; France 3 Occitanie, September 9, 2021.¹⁸⁵

February 9, 2021
Cissac-Médoc, Department of Gironde, France



A car burglary, a search, a seizure of undeclared hunting weapons and a seizure of European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine). Three individuals will be summoned by the Bordeaux Public Prosecutor. The goldfinch was entrusted to the League for the Protection of Birds. Actu Bordeaux, February 18, 2021.¹⁸⁶

February 11, 2021
Department of Pas-de-Calais, France

The OFB, with the help of gendarmes, carried out the seizure of around 30 birds at the home of an individual in the Arras region, including Eurasian blue tits (*Cyanistes caeruleus*), European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), common chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*), European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*), Eurasian bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*), common redpolls (*Carduelis flammea*) and black-headed gulls (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*). Numerous trapping devices were also seized as evidence.

France Bleu Nord, February 18, 2021; French Biodiversity Agency, February 19, 2021.¹⁸⁷

Mid-February, 2021
Strenquels, Department of Lot, France

The peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) was skinny and weak when it was discovered by a walker. It was suffering from a wing fracture caused by 3 lead shots and had not been able to feed for several days. Despite treatment by SOS Faune Sauvage du Limousin, it did not survive.

20 Minutes, February 23, 2021; Ouest-France, February 24, 2021.¹⁸⁸

February 16, 2021
Perpignan, Department of Pyrénées-Orientales, France

At the end of an investigation by OFB officers and the police, 6 protected birds, including 5 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) were seized. They were being held in a storage locker.

L'Indépendant, February 19, 2021.¹⁸⁹

February 22, 2021
Toulon, Department of Var, France

Nearly 2,000 traps, weapons, 75 European robins (*Erithacus rubecula*) and 12 Eurasian siskins (*Spinus spinus*) were seized from the home of a retired farmer in 2019 (see "On the Trail" n°23 p.56). He was sentenced for hunting in January 2019 in the commune of La Crau, with prohibited equipment and without a licence or insurance, to a 12-month prison term, a 450 € (545 US\$) fine and to pay the sum of 16,000 € (19,345 US\$) to the 4 plaintiffs. His hunting licence and his licence to possess a hunting weapon were suspended for 5 years. The judgement of the Toulon Magistrates' Court was posted in the La Crau Town Hall for 2 months and published in the press.

French Biodiversity Agency, February 24, 2021.¹⁹⁰

March 4, 2021
Estadens, Department of Haute-Garonne, France



Another raptor was shot and had to be euthanized. The red kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II) "tumbled out of the sky," says the man who took it to the vet. His neighbour is believed to be the shooter. He likely thought the red kite was too interested in his chickens.

La Dépêche du Midi, March 6, 2021; Ouest-France, March 8, 2021.¹⁹¹

March 9, 2021
Willerval, Department of Pas-de-Calais, France

Seizure of several European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*), European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*) and Eurasian siskins (*Carduelis spinus*) discovered during the search of a private home by the OFB and the French national gendarmerie from Vimy. The birds were released at an undisclosed location. Cages and bird traps were also seized. A goldfinch sells for about 100 € (122 US\$) on the black market.

France Bleu Nord, March 17, 2021; Le Bonhomme Picard, March 18, 2021; L'Avenir de l'Artois, March 18, 2021.¹⁹²

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Mid-March, 2021

Paris Orly Airport, Department of Val-de-Marne, France

Four chestnut-bellied seed finches (*Oryzoborus angolensis*) were flying over the heads of tourists. A scene that could be picturesque if it was not taking place on a plane travelling from Cayenne, French Guiana, to Paris, a flight of more than 8 hours. The "picolettes" managed to escape from a couple's luggage. On arrival at the airport, the birds and suspects were met by customs officers. The Paris-Petite-Couronne (PPC) OFB department opened an investigation.

For these 4 chestnut-bellied seed finches, the story has a happy ending. A captain flew them back to French Guiana where they were released.

Outre-mer la 1^{ère} (with AFP), December 3, 2020; Le Parisien, April 6, 2021.¹⁹³

March 16, 2021

Preuschdorf, Department of Bas-Rhin, France



A Eurasian eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II) was looking for food for its family. Probably attracted by bait, it dove towards the ground and its leg got stuck and was broken in a forbidden jaw-typed leghold trap. A horsewoman, amazed to see it motionless, freed it several days later and transported it to the GORNA wildlife care centre. Its fracture was irreversible. It was euthanized.

Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace, March 24, 2021.¹⁹⁴

March 22, 2021

Cahors, Department of Lot, France



Seizure of 6 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), traps and cages during a search regarding a common law case. The birds were immediately released.

La Dépêche du Midi, March 26 and 30, 2021.¹⁹⁵

March 24, 2021

Tencin, Department of Isère, France

A peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) was found collapsed by the side of a road. It was rushed to the wildlife rescue centre Le Tichodrome, but it died from injuries caused by 4 lead shots.

Le Dauphiné Libéré, March 31, 2021.¹⁹⁶

Beginning of April 2021

Lalinde, Department of Dordogne, France



A free-ranging red-fronted kakariki (*Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae*, Appendix I) was captured by walkers. The bird was wearing an identification ring, but neither the veterinarian, nor the town hall, nor the gendarmerie, nor the OFB found it on their lists of pet birds.

Sud Ouest, April 6, 2021.¹⁹⁷

April 20, 2021

Serquigny, Department of Eure, France



Following an investigation that began in 2017, the OFB and the Bernay gendarmerie arrested 6 individuals suspected of trafficking European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine). The 2 alleged leaders of the gang were charged with capture, transport, possession and sale of protected birds. They were placed under judicial supervision. About 12 goldfinches were seized at their home as well as glue, sticky branches and traps.

Paris-Normandie, April 26, 2021; L'Éveil Normand, April 27, 2021.¹⁹⁸

April 22, 2021

Vanoise National Park, Department of Savoie, France



Death of an adult lammergeier (*Gypaetus barbatus*, Appendix II) and a one-month old lammergeier chick. The other adult is still alive. The carcasses were removed from the nest after a 3-hour intervention by the high mountain gendarmerie. Tests proved they died of poisoning. Nine pairs of lammergeiers currently live in the Vanoise national park, which is more than half of the pairs living in the French Alps. Lammergeiers reach maturity at age at 7. Pairs are faithful throughout their lives and give birth to only one chick per year. France 3 Auvergne Rhône-Alpes, April 23 and October 23, 2021.¹⁹⁹

April 23, 2021

Draguignan, Department of Var, France

"Some people buy Ferraris, I take care of birds." He held 88 of them, including grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I), scarlet macaws (*Ara macao*, Appendix I), red-and-green macaws (*Ara chloropterus*, Appendix II) and blue-and-yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II). "I am following the law with all of them," says Stéphane Fatticci on the stand, except, he admits, for the macaw. He had been arrested at a roadside checkpoint near the Italian border with 2 Himalayan striped squirrels (*Tamiops mcclllandii*) on board in 2017 and he opened a zoo in Ginnasservis in 2018. But it was at his home that the birds were discovered and seized. The lawyer tempers his client's enthusiasm. "He is only guilty of having anticipated the authorizations and interpreting the texts in his own way."

May 28, 2021

The bird breeder, zookeeper and hotel operator was fined 10,000 € (12,130 US\$), half of which was suspended. 69 birds were returned to him. He must pay the foundation 30 Millions d'Amis 7,726 € (9,370 US\$) for the costs of keeping the seized birds and 2,000 € (2,420 US\$) for damages. An identical compensation is attributed to the LPO (League for the Protection of Birds).

La Provence (with AFP), April 23, 2021; 20 Minutes (with AFP), May 31, 2021.²⁰⁰



April 25, 2021

Marseille, Department of Bouches-du-Rhône, France

Seizure of 6 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) suspected at the flea market. Four arrests. Marseille is a transit port for North African fauna including Greek tortoises, macaques and goldfinches. But these songbirds are also caught with glue in the scrublands and bushes in and around Marseille.

European goldfinches in Bouches-du-Rhône, see "On the Trail " n°10 p.79, n°12 p.29, n°27 p.55, n°31 p.137 and this issue previous pages

March 4, 2022

In order to better understand the world of goldfinch sellers, Robin des Bois has filed a civil suit in this case. The hearing was above all an opportunity to discover a poorly constructed investigation file, as is sometimes the case in Africa, with blurred photos, flagrant defects, missing signatures and testimonies "on the honor," a real treat for the defendants' lawyers, who widened the gaps and took up their clients' claims that the goldfinches were in fact canaries. It is well known that the Marseille flea market is also a feather market, but the urban police, even when they are in civilian clothes to better catch the sellers, will have to learn by heart the gestures that save the procedures and take on the OFB agents or work with the customs at the disembarkation of the car ferries coming from Tunisia and Algeria. The 4 men, 2 French and 2 Algerians, were acquitted, and the representatives of the plaintiffs became frustrated. Before pronouncing a general acquittal and encouraging the police to draw up more convincing reports, the president of the sixth chamber with environmental competence addressed the defendants as follows "If I had to bet, I would say that you are goldfinch sellers, but we are not here to make bets."

France 3 Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur, September 20, 2021; La Provence, September 20, 2021; Ouest-France, September 20, 2021 ; Robin des Bois Notes.²⁰¹



April 30, 2021

Amiens, Department of Somme, France

Charles Bechara was fined the equivalent of 1,640 US\$ and ordered to pay the equivalent of 115 US\$ in damages to the ASPAS (Association for the Protection of Wild Animals). His weapons were confiscated. He had killed 13 meadow pipits (*Anthus pratensis*) and a common linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*).

ASPAS, Summer 2021.²⁰²



April 30, 2021

Amiens, Department of Somme, France

Christian Desmarest was ordered to pay 115 US\$ in damages to the ASPAS and had his hunting licence withdrawn for 2 years for poaching a common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) with a trap. His weapons were also confiscated and he was prohibited from possessing any for 2 years. ASPAS, summer 2021.²⁰³



THE NETHERLANDS

January 13, 2021

Staphorst, Province of Overijssel, The Netherlands

Seizure in the evening of a juvenile northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II) freshly captured and locked in a cage in the car of a 64-year-old man.

RTV Oost, January 14, 2021.²⁰⁴

January 26, 2021

's-Hertogenbosch, Province of North Brabant, The Netherlands

Sentence of a 33-year-old bird salesman to 240 hours of community service and a 3-year ban on selling for the illegal import of exotic birds between September 2016 and August 2017.

At his home in Udenhout, the police found blue-rumped parrots (*Psittinus cyanurus*, Appendix II), Philippine hanging-parrots (*Loriculus philippensis*, Appendix II), one red-billed leiothrix (*Leiothrix lutea*, Appendix II), black-browed barbets (*Psilopogon oorti*), black-naped orioles (*Oriolus chinensis*), little wattlebirds (*Anthochaera chrysoptera*), collared trogons (*Trogon collaris*), passerini's tanagers (*Ramphocelus passerinii*), western hooded pittas (*Pitta sordida*), flame-fronted barbets (*Megalaima armillaris*), blue-winged pittas (*Pitta moluccensis*), green broadbills (*Calyptomena viridis*), fire-tufted barbets (*Psilopogon pyrolophus*) and Cuban trogon cardinals (*Priotelus temnurus*). Two black-browed barbets were also confiscated from one of his clients in The Hague.

With the exception of the red-billed leiothrix, which was bought in the Netherlands, all the birds came from Germany. Not content with exotic birds, the culprit also plundered great crested grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) nests. The court recalls that the trade in live animals presents major health risks. "The outbreak of contagious animal diseases can have very serious consequences for other animals and even for humans. It is no longer necessary to demonstrate this in this day and age."

East Brabant District Court, January 26, 2021.²⁰⁵



March 19, 2021

Balk, Province of Friesland, The Netherlands

Seizure at home of 2 illegally held long-eared owls (*Asio otus*, Appendix II). They were transferred to a wildlife refuge prior to their possible release. Noordernieuws, March 19, 2021.²⁰⁶

March 30, 2021

Almelo, Province of Overijssel, The Netherlands

Two individuals were arrested for trafficking and possession of protected birds. The Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority and the police seized 19 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), including 2 dead ones, from the homes of 2 traffickers after receiving a tip. 7,800 € (9,160 US\$) in cash were also seized. Identification ring trafficking is suspected. The average selling price of a European goldfinch in the Netherlands is reportedly around 50 € (61 US\$). Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority, March 30, 2021; De Twentsche Courant Tubantia, March 30, 2021.²⁰⁷

SOUTHERN EUROPE

SPAIN

Beginning of January 2021

Mataró, Province of Barcelona, Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain

The man was offering one European crested tit (*Lophophanes cristatus*) for sale on the Internet for 80 €. Police officers pretending to be buyers arranged a meeting with him and seized one Eurasian blue tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*), one rock bunting (*Emberiza cia*), 2 serins (*Serinus serinus*) and 3 sardinian warblers (*Sylvia melanocephala*). All 5 species are listed in Appendix II of the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats. El Mundo, January 4, 2021.²⁰⁸

Beginning of January 2021

Moratalla, Autonomous Community of the Region of Murcia, Spain

Environmental officers were observing a Eurasian sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*, Appendix II) when it was shot in flight. It fell to the ground. They went to the area to identify the poacher, but the poacher fled on arrival, sounding an alarm to warn other poachers. The environmental officers, supported by the Seprona, went in search of the poacher and found 3 armed men whom they arrested. La Verdad, January 7, 2021.²⁰⁹

Mid-January 2021
Tobarra, Province of Albacete, Autonomous Community of Castile-La Mancha, Spain



Arrest of 2 men aged 25 and 61 for poaching European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) using glue. Seizure of 10 specimens in their vehicle with glue marks still on their plumage.

El Digital Castilla La Mancha, January 18, 2021.²¹⁰

January 27, 2021
Vitoria-Gasteiz, Province of Alava, Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, Spain

Three men aged between 29 and 49 were arrested and a cage containing 3 unbanded European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), an electronic bird call and a sticky plant substance called "liga" used to capture finches were seized from their van. The birds were handed over to the Centro de Recuperación Animal de Mártioda. El Correo, January 27, 2021.²¹¹

February 8, 2021
Antella, Province of Valencia, Valencian Community, Spain



The 76-year-old man had poisoned pigeon carcasses which he then used as bait to kill any predators that might come near his dovecote. A Eurasian eagle-owl (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II) was found fatally poisoned. In a nearby shed, Seprona staff found toxic substances similar to those found in the baits.

Las Provincias, February 8, 2021.²¹²

End of February 2021
Maçanet de la Selva, Province of Gerona, Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain

Arrest of a man for poaching finches with a mist net. This method of hunting is strictly prohibited as it is not selective. It carries fines ranging from 400 to 2,000 € (485 to 2,420 US\$). Seizure of 5 goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 5 serins (*Serinus serinus*) and 5 greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*). La Vanguardia, February 23, 2021.²¹³

Mid-March 2021
Province of Malaga, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain

Release of 303 birds including goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis* Appendix III in Ukraine), house sparrows (*Passer domesticus*), serins (*Serinus serinus*), greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*), common linnets (*Linaria cannabina*), Eurasian siskins (*Spinus spinus*) and chaffinches. They had been seized as part of an investigation into the sale of finches on the Internet. The police arrested 10 poachers in the act plus 8 other accomplices involved in the sale of the birds.

Diario de Sevilla (with Europa Press), March 17, 2021.²¹⁴

April 6, 2021
National Reserve of Boumort Hunting, Province of Lleida, Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain



Discovery of a cinereous vulture (*Aegypius monachus*, Appendix II) carcass. Post-mortem examinations confirm that it was poisoned with diclofenac. NGOs fear that other raptor species will be affected, such as the golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II) and the Iberian imperial eagle (*Aquila adalberti*, Appendix I), of which only 300 pairs remain. Diclofenac has already been banned in India, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh, where it has caused havoc.

The Guardian, April 11, 2021.²¹⁵

Mid-April 2021
Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain



For Leonard Cohen, a bird on the wire is a symbol of freedom, as the Guardian recalls. For the birds of Catalonia, this is far from the case. The Spanish electricity company, Endesa, and 6 of its senior executives are being prosecuted for the electrocution of hundreds of birds and for failing to comply with regulations aiming to protect wildlife. Between 2018 and 2020, 255 birds, storks, eagles (Accipitridae, Appendix I or II), peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) and vultures died on their power lines in Osona. In 2018, 72 white storks (*Ciconia ciconia*) were electrocuted in Sant Quirze de Besora and 93 between 2019 and 2020.

Three years ago, another electricity company was fined 149,920 € in the Autonomous Community of Castilla-La Mancha for electrocuting an Iberian imperial eagle (*Aquila adalberti*, Appendix I).

The Guardian, April 16, 2021.²¹⁶

ITALY

2,645 birds poached and seized in Italy between January 1 and April 30, 2021 according to official and media sources



GREECE

Beginning of January, 2021

Vartholomio, Region of West Greece, Greece

Rescue of one Eurasian eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II) injured by lead shots. It can no longer hold its head upright because a pellet has become lodged in its head.

ANIMA, January 8, 2021.²¹⁷

January 8, 2021

Chios, Region of North Aegean, Greece



Rescue of one northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*, Appendix II) injured by a shot. After healing its wing fracture, it was released in the outskirts of Spata.

ANIMA, February 4, 2021.²¹⁸

End of January to Beginning of February, 2021

Agios Mamas, Epanomi and Angelochori, Region of Central Macedonia, Greece

About 30 American flamingos (*Phoenicopterus ruber*, Appendix II) were found dead, poisoned by shotgun bullets they had ingested. It is not clear how many other specimens died hidden in the vegetation and streams. "Flamingos eat small stones to help their digestion. They can then ingest lead pellets, which poisons them," explains a volunteer from Action for Wildlife. Lead shooting has been banned in Greece in wetlands since 2013. Between 4,000 and 5,000 tons of lead ammunition were dumped into European wetlands every year. Zoosos.gr, February 2, 2021; Parallaxi Mag, February 25, 2021.²¹⁹



February 1, 2021

Glyfada, Region of Attica, Greece

Rescue of one adult male kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II) from glue hunting.



Birds of prey baited with glued passerines get stuck in the glue too. They usually manage to free themselves but the twigs that stick to their wings prevent them from taking off.

ANIMA, February 1, 2021.²²⁰

February 5, 2021

Euboea Island, Region of Central Greece, Greece

Rescue of one Eurasian eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II) wounded by lead shots. One of them that lodged itself in its head prevents it from holding it upright.

ANIMA, February 5, 2021.²²¹



March 29, 2021

Kifisia, Region of Attica, Greece

Rescue of one pigeon that was to be used as bait for birds of prey. The pigeon had been wrapped up with fishing line and hooks. If a bird of prey had seized it, it would have become trapped and both would have experienced a long and painful death.

ANIMA, March 29, 2021.²²²

MALTA

January 22, 2021

Malta

The Environmental Protection Unit is in the hot seat. A dozen poachers have escaped justice because they have not been summoned to court for more than 2 years, which made the facts of poaching subject to limitation. An internal investigation must determine whether this is a malicious act or a failure of administrative mismanagement. Even worse, the poachers' lawyers have filed appeals saying that the long court delays are infringing on their clients' rights. Their cases could be dismissed by the courts. Times of Malta, January 24, 2021.²²³

End of February 2021

Malta

Seizure of 10 bird carcasses in a parcel from the UK. Specialists from the Environment and Resources Authority (ERA) were mobilised to identify the species.

MaltaToday, March 1, 2021.²²⁴

Week of March 15, 2021

Malta

Thanks to information from CABS (Committee Against Bird Slaughter), the police Environmental Protection Unit dismantled 7 flap nets used for trapping songbirds such as chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*), Eurasian siskins (*Carduelis spinus*) and European serins (*Serinus serinus*). Three poachers were arrested and one escaped. He should soon be identified thanks to the CABS videos. Seizure of 20 birds used as decoys. According to the veterinarians, they may be released quickly. Times of Malta, March 19, 2021.²²⁵

March 2021

Delimara, South Eastern Region, Malta

Spring is coming and along with it bird migrations resume. On this occasion, poachers take up arms again. For example in Delimara an osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*, Appendix II) was shot on sight. Finches are not to be outdone. Since the beginning of the month, 140 of them have been seized by the Maltese police forces. BirdLife explains that finch poaching is reaching unprecedented levels this year. The association points out the responsibility of the government, which is considering reauthorising their trapping in autumn. Birds trapped in spring will be used as decoys in autumn. BirdGuides, March 23, 2021.²²⁶

March 23, 2021

Mtarfa, Northern Region, Malta

Shooting of a black kite (*Milvus migrans*, Appendix II) that was heading north to its European breeding grounds. It was handed over to veterinarians. BirdLife Malta, March 23, 2021.²²⁷

March 26, 2021

Fomm ir-Rih, Northern Region, Malta

Rescue of one marsh harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*, Appendix II). In one weekend, BirdLife Malta recovered 7 marsh harriers, one osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*, Appendix II) and one kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II) injured by shooting although the hunting season is not yet open. BirdLife Malta, 29 March, 2021.²²⁸

April 15, 2021

L-Imtaħleb, Il-Mellieħa, Northern Region ; L-Għasri, Gozo Region ; Victoria Lines, Central Region, Malta

Since the controversial opening of the hunting season (March 30, until April 20), the NGO BirdLife says it has been flooded with testimonies reporting cases of protected animals being hunted, such as European turtledoves (*Streptopelia turtur*) and common cuckoos (*Cuculus canorus*) in different parts of the country. The association is compiling the evidence to present in a report to the European Commission. Times of Malta, April 16, 2021.²²⁹

MONTENEGRO

Mid-February, 2021

Municipality of Podgorica, Montenegro

The Eurasian eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II) found near the university could not be saved. The Center for Protection and Research of Birds found that it suffered from several bullet wounds and lead poisoning. Energetski portal, February 18, 2021.²³⁰

PORTUGAL

February 23, 2021

Vila Velha de Ródão, District of Castelo Branco, Portugal



Release of one griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*, Appendix II) that was collected in November 2020 by CERAS (Centro de Estudos e Recuperação de Animais Selvagens) in Castelo Branco after it was injured by lead shots. Fortunately, none of them hit a vital organ, but the levels of lead dissolved in its body were too high. The only treatment for its lead poisoning was sodium edetate calcium (EDTA), which was not available in Portugal. It

was supplied by the Vulture Conservation Foundation.

Vulture Conservation Foundation, March 2, 2021.²³¹

March 7, 2021

Olhão, District of Faro, Portugal

Seizure of 6 goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), 6 serins (*Serinus serinus*), 5 common linnets (*Linaria cannabina*) and 4 greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*), plus cages, trap cages and one 9-meter net that the man was using for poaching in Ria Formosa natural park. Sul Informação, March 8, 2021.²³²



HUNGARY

January 11, 2021

Heves County, Hungary

After being contacted, a volunteer from the Nagyréde Bird Hospital painstakingly extracted a common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) from a leg-hold trap in the forest near Kápolna. It suffered fractures of both wings. Its recovery is expected to be long and difficult. NLC, January 12, 2021.²³³



**End of February and March 10, 2021
Tiszaalpár and Kiskunság National
Park, Bács-Kiskun County, Hungary**

The agents of the national park find a white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*, Appendix I) in poor shape. Symptoms suggest poisoning. The bird is transferred to the Szeged wildlife park before being released on March 10 in the Kiskunság national park. The population of white-tailed eagles is estimated to stabilise at around 300 pairs in the country, including 30 in Kiskunság.

Sokszínú vidék, March 12, 2021.²³⁴



Week of April 19, 2021

Hortobágy National Park, Hajdú-Bihar County, Hungary

Discovery of a dead cinereous vulture (*Aegypius monachus*, Appendix II) without the geolocation collar it had been wearing a year ago. The GPS tag was found at the edge of a ditch. Feathers and blood attest to its violent death. The bird of prey was used to brutality. In Spain it had been hit by a car, treated and reintroduced in Bulgaria as part of a European vulture reintroduction program.

Vulture Conservation Foundation, April 28, 2021.²³⁵

POLAND

February 21, 2021

Dębowiec, Subcarpathian Voivodeship, Poland

Carnage on the frozen pond. Twelve great egrets (*Ardea alba*) whiter than snow are slumped over. Post-mortem examinations showed that they were pierced by shot. In the same position, on the next pond, there was a grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*). Beskidzka24, February 24, 2021.²³⁶

February 22, 2021

Tarnowa, Greater Poland Voivodeship, Poland

Seizure of 5 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and 3 Eurasian siskins (*Carduelis spinus*, Appendix III in Ukraine) by forest rangers and police at the home of a 55-year-old resident.

Polish Police, February 24, 2021.²³⁷

REPEATED OFFENSE

Early March, 2021

Strzelce County, Opole Voivodeship, Poland

Seizure of traps and cages. Rescue of a dozen birds, including Eurasian bullfinches (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*), tits (family Paridae), common linnets (*Carduelis cannabina*), European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) and hawfinches (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*). The 35-year-old man has poaching in his blood. Polish Police, March 9, 2021.²³⁸

April 23, 2021

Ziętek, Silesian Voivodeship, Poland

The Voluntary Fire Brigade in Potepa assisted by the police, a veterinarian and forest department officers rescued one northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II) caught in a trap. A pigeon carcass was found close to the trap.



Voluntary Fire Brigade in Potepa, April 23, 2021.²³⁹

End of April 2021

Mogilno County, Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship, Poland

Removal of a trap cage meant for capturing raptors (*Accipitridae*, Appendix I or II) in a field near the forest. Two live pigeons were used as bait. The police are looking for the person responsible. Until 1975, hunting for northern goshawks (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II), Eurasian sparrowhawks (*Accipiter nisus*, Appendix II) and marsh harriers (*Circus aeruginosus*, Appendix II) was allowed in Poland.



Express Bydgoski, April 29, 2021.²⁴⁰

RUSSIA

November 2020 to January 2021

Olsky District and Magadan, Magadan Oblast, Russia



There are 3 things in the Oblast that attract tricksters: gold, sturgeons and falcons. Two men from Altai and Tyumen landed on the edge of the Sea of Okhotsk and, prowling around Takhtoyamsk, trapped with the efficiency of starry-eyed poachers 7 gyr falcons (*Falco rusticolus*, Appendix I), the heroes of Russian tales and legends from the 12th century. The falcons were then flown by helicopter - no less - to Magadan (225 km away) and would have been stored in an intermediate den if the FSB had not intercepted the two-winged gold seekers. Falcons are sold to sheikhs for starting at 50,000 US\$ and up to 1 million US\$ depending on their age, sex and vigour. All the birds were released into the wild and the 2 men are in prison awaiting trial.

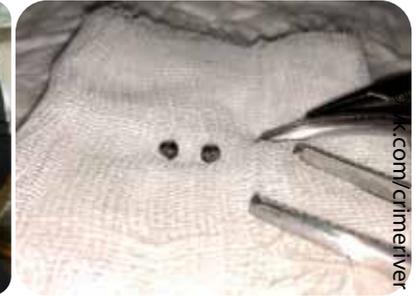
Znak, January 21, 2021; Komsomolskaya Pravda, January 22, 2021.²⁴¹

Early March 2021

Murmansk, Murmansk Oblast, Russia

The gyr falcon (*Falco rusticolus*, Appendix I) was wandering in the street. No one knows how it ended up there. Natalia and Anastasia, veterinarians who came to the scene, pulled it out of the street. There was blood on the pavement. The bleeding had been stopped with ligatures. X-rays revealed 3 bullets in the muscles. Two were removed. The third was too deep. The female gyr falcon is about 2 years old. After emergency treatment it was flown to the Barnaul falcon nursery in Altai and after a period of supervision it is to be released somewhere in the Russian Arctic.

TV-21, 11 March 2021.²⁴²



CZECHIA

February 6, 2021

Klatovy District, Plzeň Region, Czechia

The 4 white-tailed eagles (*Haliaeetus albicilla*, Appendix I) were poisoned. A "dung beetle" sprinkled the manure and the landfill of a farm with carbofuran. "The four majestic kings of the sky also play the role of health police. They used to come to the farm dump and feed on feathers, rinds and viscera. It was like they were struck by lightning."

Novinky.cz, February 7, 2021.²⁴³



**February 20 and April 19 and 20, 2021
Příbram and Kolin Districts, Central
Bohemian Region, Czechia**



Convulsions, wing spasms, clawed talons, all signs of carbofuran poisoning were present. Sixteen animals died, including a white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*, Appendix I), 2 northern goshawks (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II), 3 common buzzards (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II), 8 common ravens (*Corvus corax*), one Eurasian magpie (*Pica pica*) and a red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*). Two months later, 3 marsh harriers (*Circus aeruginosus*, Appendix II) and one raven died in the same circumstances.

Method for detecting poisonings:

- Within a radius of 300 meters, several animals die or have died, raptors, crows, magpies, foxes.
- On the dead animals, scavenging insects are dead.
- The bait (eggs, meat, offal) is purple, powdered or coated with a beige emulsion.
- Foxes and other omnivorous mammals lie on their sides, legs extended, mouth open, head thrown back.

Be careful not to touch. Carbofuran is deadly. Call the police or the Czech ornithological society (CSO, České společnosti ornitologické).

Poisonings are rampant in the Czech Republic. As elsewhere, the people are bored with the Covid pandemic and seek thrills within nature. In the first 4 months of 2021, the CSO counted 54 poisoned birds. In the whole of 2020 there were 51 cases. Klara Hlubocká, a dog handler specializing in the search for missing persons, is now working for the CSO to track down poisoned bait and animal victims. She and her dogs do a good job. From her experience, she points to 4 categories of poisoners: hunters, poultry farmers, pond owners and taxidermists.

Enviweb, February 22 and May 2, 2021; Radio Prague International, May 12, 2021.²⁴⁴



**April 15 and 21, 2021
Horní Maršov, Hradec Králové Region, and
Ostrava, Moravian-Silesian Region, Czechia**

The Krkonoše/Karkonosze transboundary biosphere reserve, a union of the Krkonoše national park (Czechia) and of the Karkonosze national park (Poland), is home to 20 pairs of black storks (*Ciconia nigra*, Appendix II) and between 4 and 6 pairs of grey herons (*Ardea cinerea*). A few days apart, 2 specimens were shot. An 18-year-old black stork survived. However, with one wing amputated, it will never regain its freedom in the wild. As for the grey heron, it died.

Deník, May 10, 2021.²⁴⁵

**April 29, 2021
Strakonice, South Bohemian Region,
Czechia**



Sentencing of a man to a suspended prison sentence of 2.5 years for poisoning 2 white-tailed eagles (*Haliaeetus albicilla*, Appendix I) and 2 common ravens (*Corvus corax*) with endrin in March 2019. The substances were found at his home in May 2019. The crime scene was inspected by the Czech Ornithological Society's dog squad, which welcomes this first conviction of a poacher. Poisoning, especially with carbofuran, is the preferred method of poachers in Czechia. Since the beginning of the year, at least 56 birds have died in 21 poaching incidents, compared to 51 birds during the whole of 2020.



Ekolist.cz, April 29, 2021.²⁴⁶

UKRAINE

**January to February 2021
Askania-Nova Nature Reserve,
Kherson Oblast, Ukraine**



185 grey cranes (*Grus grus*, Appendix II) die in 2 months in the reserve where they stop over on their long migratory journey. They roam within a 40 km radius of the reserve. They have fallen victim to poisoned seeds dispersed by wheat farmers to eradicate rodents and other creatures considered to be pests. Established as a UNESCO biosphere reserve in 1984, the Askania-Nova reserve (333 km²) is the oldest steppe reserve in the world and the largest in Europe. It is one of the 7 natural wonders of Ukraine.

UNIAN, March 4, 2021; UrduPoint, January 11, 2021.²⁴⁷

January 26, 2021

Mykolaiv, Mykolaiv Oblast, Ukraine

For years, animal showmen have been exhibiting white-tailed eagles (*Haliaeetus albicilla*, Appendix I) in cities. Before being domesticated, the eaglets are stolen from the banks of the Dnieper, the Southern Bug and the Kinburn peninsula on the Black Sea. The birds of prey are displayed on the heads of children and families. The photos are sold, the small business continues despite the protests of some inhabitants and councilors. The police claim they cannot afford to house and maintain the eagles after the seizure and pending the outcome of the trial. Prestupnosti.Net, January 27 and February 9, 2021.²⁴⁸



OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

January 25, 2021

Golden Beach, State of Victoria, Australia

Three young emus (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*) were deliberately hit by a car and left for dead. When Help for Wildlife arrived, 2 were already dead and the third had a broken leg. It had to be euthanized. Emus are a protected species and can only be shot on private property and with a license. The Australian, January 27, 2021.²⁴⁹

February 11 and 18, 2021

Paul's Range State Forest, State of Victoria, Australia

The camera set up by a community member catches a man in his early thirties with a rifle and a parrot (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), probably an Australian king parrot (*Alisterus scapularis*, Appendix II), and a powerful owl (*Ninox strenua*, Appendix II), both shot dead. A week later, the same camera caught a man in his 40s carrying a rifle and a black bag. Both poachers are wanted. The Sidney Morning Herald, April 3, 2021.²⁵⁰

February 12, 2021

Parramatta, State of New South Wales, Australia



Mohamad El-Sheikh was sentenced to 18 months in prison and 250 hours of an intensive correction order for attempting to import 21 eggs of birds, macaws (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II), white-bellied parrots (*Pionites leucogaster*, Appendix II), hawk-headed parrots (*Deroyptus accipitrinus*, Appendix II) and amazons (*Amazona* spp., Appendix I or II), all of which are native to South America. He intended to sell the birds.

In August 2019, upon his return from South Africa, customs officials at the Sydney airport found it strange that the socks in his suitcase were making a creaking noise. One of the wrapped eggs was hatching earlier than expected. Mohamad El-Sheikh also had eggs on him.

The Daily Telegraph, February 13, 2021; Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, February 15, 2021; The Canberra Times, February 17, 2021.²⁵¹



February 16, 2021

Melbourne, State of Victoria, Australia

The sulphur-crested cockatoo (*Cacatua galerita*, Appendix II) pierced in the neck by an arrow did not survive the wound. This is the second cockatoo in a week to die this way.

Vets for Compassion, February 16 and 19, 2021.²⁵²



VARIOUS REPTILE SPECIES

AFRICA

LIBERIA

Beginning of April 2021

Kpan, Margibi County, Liberia

Seizure of an African python (*Python sebae*, Appendix II) and a monitor lizard (*Varanus spp.*, Appendix I or II). Tied up and thirsty when they arrived, they were cared for, nursed back to health and released a few days later.

Libassa Wildlife Sanctuary, April 11, 2021.¹

AMERICA

BRAZIL

February 10, 2021

Itaquaquecetuba, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Anonymous information pointed the police to a suspect engaged in wildlife trafficking. The police went to his home and discovered a turtle (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II), 3 boa constrictors (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II), 2 mussuranas (*Clelia clelia*, Appendix II), 11 iguanas (*Iguana spp.*, Appendix II) and a lizard. One of the iguanas was already dead. The survivors were sent to a rehabilitation center to prepare them for possible reintroduction into their natural environment. Fine of 66,000 reais (12,100 US\$).

Olhar Animal, February 12, 2021.²

March 18, 2021

Malhada, State of Bahia, Brazil



Release of 450 turtles (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II) and 9 iguanas (*Iguana spp.*, Appendix II) seized from wildlife traffickers in the south and south-east of the country. Biologists and veterinarians will monitor their rehabilitation.

G1, March 19, 2021.³

COLOMBIA

End of March 2021

Medellín, Department of Antioquia, Colombia

Seizure of 36 boa constrictors (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix I or II) and 5 lizards from a courier company. They had been shipped in 3 plastic boxes from Magangué (Bolívar department) 560 km away. Since the beginning of the year, the Medellín Environmental Police has seized 171 snakes destined for the black market.

Alerta Paisa, March 26, 2021.⁴

COSTA RICA

April 27, 2021

Daniel Oduber Quiros International Airport, Liberia, Guanacaste Province, Costa Rica

Seizure of 7 snakes and 6 lizards found in the luggage of an American passenger nicknamed "Scott" who was trying to smuggle them out of Costa Rica. Firefighters and the Senasa (Servicio Nacional de Salud Animal) intervened to retrieve the specimens them. The suspect was arrested.

The Costa Rica News, April 27, 2021.⁵

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

February 25, 2021

State of Florida, United States of America

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission votes unanimously to ban the breeding, possession and sale of 16 species of invasive exotic reptiles starting June 2024: pythons (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), including Burmese pythons (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II), green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), and tegus (*Salvator spp.* or *Tupinambis spp.*, Appendix II). The State spends 8 million US\$ annually to counter the risks posed by free-ranging specimens: tegus, for example, eat the eggs of gopher tortoises (*Gopherus polyphemus*, Appendix II) and American alligators (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II).

However, tegu and iguana owners will be able to keep their animals until they die if they request a free permit, and specimens may still be brought into Florida for research or exhibition.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, February 25, 2021; WWSB, February 26, 2021.⁶

MEXICO

End of February 2021

Near Tlahuapan, State of Puebla, Mexico

Inspection of a bus on the highway connecting Mexico City to Puebla. Seizure of 121 iguanas (*Iguana* spp., Appendix II), a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix I or II), 59 Mexican giant musk turtles (*Staurotypus triporcatus*) and a Mexican redrump tarantula (*Brachypelma vagans*, Appendix II), they were found in 3 suitcases and a backpack. Five of the iguanas were dead. Two arrests. *Tribuna Noticias*, February 27, 2021; *Profepa*, March 3, 2021.⁷

ASIA

INDIA

February 18, 2021

Friendship Bridge, Champhai District, State of Mizoram, India. Border with Myanmar.

Arrest of a man attempting to import from Myanmar 29 leopard tortoises (*Stigmochelys pardalis*, Appendix II) from Africa, 38 red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II) from Central and South America, 17 iguanas including Galapagos land iguanas (*Conolophus subcristatus*, Appendix II) and green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), 3 albino iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II) and 3 bearded dragons (*Pogona* spp.) endemic to Australia, seeds of "exotic" plants and a large quantity of fertilizer. According to forest rangers, the Myanmar-India route through Mizoram State is new. It had already been spotted in July 2020 (see "On the Trail" n°30 p.171). "Often, smugglers change or test new routes when the old routes get identified. They usually took the route via Siliguri in West Bengal from Bangladesh and Moreh in Manipur from Myanmar, which have now become almost jammed."

New Delhi Television, February 19, 2021; *Northeast Now*, February 19, 2021.⁸

MALAYSIA

OPERATION BENTENG

April 24, 2021

Kebun, State of Kelantan, Malaysia. Border with Thailand.

Seizure at a roadside check of 92 turtles, 2 pythons (*Pythonidae*, Appendix I or II), 2 monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) and 3 squirrels (family *Sciuridae*) that the man had collected in Thailand and wanted to sell as pets. Total value, 60,000 ringgit or 14,500 US\$.

New Straits Times, April 25, 2021.⁹

PHILIPPINES

February 18, 2021

Ninoy-Aquino International Airport, Manilla, Greater Manilla Province, Philippines



Seizure of 2 cobras (genus *Naja*), 8 pit vipers (family *Viperidae*) and 15 Philippine sailfin lizards (*Hydrosaurus pustulatus*) in a DHL warehouse inside a postal parcel declared to contain souvenirs. The package was allegedly sent by a certain Adrian Lim to a certain Ryan Su domiciled in Taiwan. Total value: 300,000 Philippine pesos or 6,240 US\$.

Philippine News Agency, February 20, 2021.¹⁰

VIET NAM

March 6, 2021

Dong Nai Province, Viet Nam

A yellow-headed tortoise (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II) and 2 monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) were released from a restaurant where they were kept as an attraction.

ENV, March 6, 2021.¹¹

EUROPE

FRANCE

January 26 and February 3, 2021

Ennery and Saint-Avold, Department of Moselle, France

The reactivity and flair of the Moselle customs officers must be recognised. They discovered a suspicious parcel from China while checking a freight company. It contained a Siamese crocodile (*Crocodylus siamensis*, Appendix I) skull. Using the address, a so-called collector was easily arrested.

During the search of his home, one warhead, one semi-automatic rifle, one alligator skull, one snake skeleton, 8 turtle shells, 5 turtle skulls and 22 live red-eared sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) were seized.

France 3 Grand Est, February 16, 2021; *France Bleu Sud Lorraine*, February 16, 2021.¹²



February 22, 2021

Caen, Department of Calvados, France

A 47-year-old reptile “enthusiast” was charged with opening and operating an unauthorised breeding establishment for non-domestic and protected species and for selling protected species without holding a certificate of competence (see “On the Trail” n°27 p.39). The judicial court of Caen sentenced the individual to a 1,500€ (1,815 US\$) suspended fine. After following through with these administrative demands, he was able to get back the animals.

La Manche Libre, February 15 and March 1, 2021.¹³



April 16, 2021

Parramatta, State of New South Wales, Australia

Reece Elson, 29, sentenced to 12 months in prison and 100 hours to be served as an intensive correction order. 144 reptiles, both endemic and exotic, were seized from his house in June 2019: Australian freshwater crocodiles (*Crocodylus johnstoni*, Appendix II), turtles, lizards including Asian water dragons (*Physignathus cocincinus*) and fire belly newts (genus *Cynops*). They were kept in aquariums around the house, in a bathtub and in water features at the back of the property.

The Daily Telegraph, July 23, 2020; Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, April 19, 2021.¹⁶



OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

Mid-February, 2021

Sydney, State of New South Wales, Australia

Zheyuan Qiu and his partner Ut Lei Lei were sentenced to 5 years in prison and 2 years of community-based sentence respectively. They were arrested in January 2020 while attempting to smuggle 45 reptiles native to Australia to Hong Kong and Taiwan concealed in toys and audio equipment (see “On the Trail” n°28 p.38). 205 reptiles were found in their homes.

Australian Government, February 20, 2021; The Newcastle Herald, February 21, 2021.¹⁴



OPERATION VULCAN

Week of March 8, 2021

Sidney, State of New South Wales, Australia

Sentence of 3.5 years imprisonment, of which 2.5 years is non-compulsory, for Chek Wei Javill Chin, 26, a Malayan national in an irregular situation. Arrested in October 2019, Chin was found guilty of 9 counts including attempting to export protected native animals. The investigation linked him to 20 packages seized between December 2017 and August 2018 in Melbourne and Sydney bound for Hong Kong. They contained animals native to Australia, lace monitors (*Varanus varius*, Appendix II), Stimson’s python (*Antaresia stimsoni*, Appendix II), shingleback lizards (*Tiliqua rugosa*), blue-tongued skinks (genus *Tiliqua*), geckos (genera *Saltuarius* and *Nephrurus*) and Australian water dragons (*Intellagama lesueurii*) wrapped in tape or socks and hidden in chip boxes, toys or other objects.

Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, March 17, 2021; NCA NewsWire, March 17, 2021.¹⁵



Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment



TORTOISES AND FRESHWATER TURTLES



Radiated tortoise (*Astrochelys radiata*). Photo Janne Asp

Most important seizures of the quarter :

- 1,595 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I)
- 1,375 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I)
- More than 2,400 *Trachemys callirostris*

AFRICA

MADAGASCAR

January 21, 2021

Tolaria, Atsimo-Andrefana Region, Madagascar

Seizure at the beginning of their transfer to Antananarivo, 900 km away, of 288 juvenile radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) packed into 2 travel bags.

Malagasy News, January 22, 2021.¹



© Dredd Atsimo Andrefana

Weekend of February 13 to 14, 2021

Ranovaho, Androy Region, Madagascar

810 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) were found waiting to be exported in a house whose occupants fled prior to the search. 23 had died from dehydration, heat waves and the captivity they had been subjected to for months.

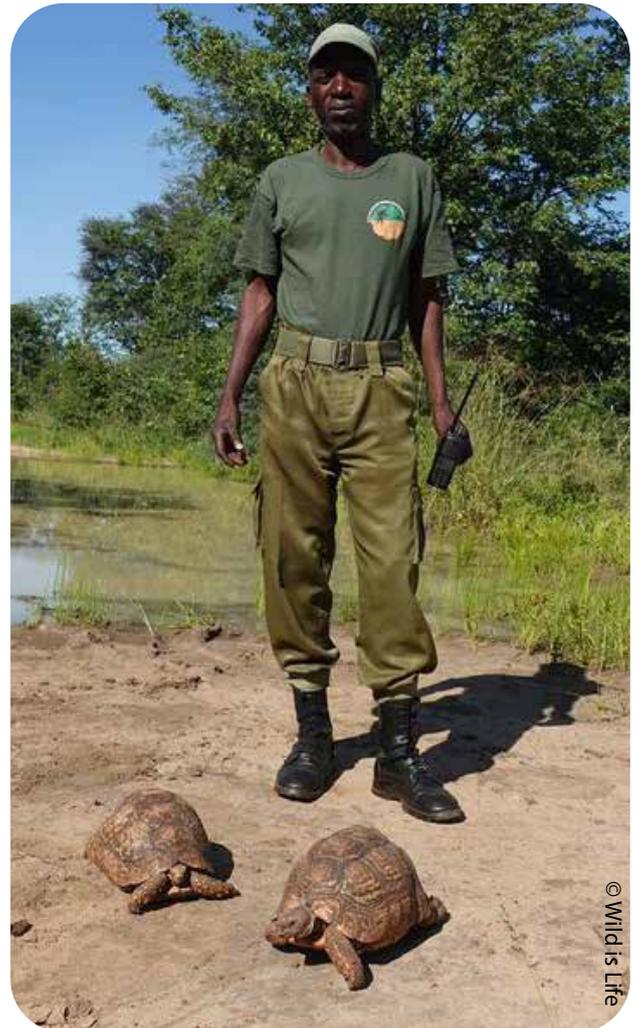
Madagascar-Tribune, February 15, 2021; Turtle Survival Alliance, February 15, 2021; Linfo.re, February 16, 2021; Animal Survival International.²



© TSA

ZIMBABWE

Beginning of March, 2021 Panda Masuie Forest Reserve, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe



After a few weeks in a large enclosure, 2 leopard tortoises (*Stigmochelys pardalis*, Appendix II) were completely released. They had been saved from wildlife trafficking and handed over in good condition to the ZEN sanctuary in Harare. Wild is Life, March 13, 2021.⁶

April 2, 2021

Anjajavy Reserve, Sofia Region, Madagascar

In the night, 30 baby Aldabra giant tortoises (*Aldabrachelys gigantea*, Appendix II) were taken from their enclosure. The thieves reportedly fled in a “tef tef”, a motorboat. The Anjajavy Lodge, which keeps several wild animals in captivity for the “education” of its guests, says it is promoting a plan to reintroduce Aldabra giant tortoises to the big island. Giant Aldabra tortoises, see “On the Trail” n°26 p.26, n°30 p.130 and p.171, and n°31 p.145 and p.152. Elsa Rakotonanahary, April 2, 2021; Newsmada, April 3, 2021.³

April 8, 2021

Tranovaho, Androy Region, Madagascar

According to Environment Minister Baomiavotse Vahinala Raharinirina, 2 gendarmes were involved in the illegal trafficking of 193 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix II) seized from a truck. 45 turtles are sick and one has died. The final death toll on arrival in northern Madagascar is reported to have been high. Between February and April, 1,057 radiated tortoises were poached.

Orange actu Madagascar, April 11, 2021; Madagascar-Tribune, April 12, 2021; Linfo.re, May 2, 2021.⁴

MOZAMBIQUE

February 7, 2021

Island of Mozambique, Nampula Province, Mozambique



Seizure of 79 adult radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix II) from a Portuguese fishing boat owner operating in the Mozambique Channel of the Indian Ocean. Radiated tortoises are sometimes smuggled towards Asia via eastern Africa, but this is the first time in “On the Trail” that radiated tortoises have been reported as “expats” in Mozambique. They have been seized and in the framework of the cooperation between Mozambique and Madagascar, which are 500 km apart, it is not impossible that they will be returned to their native land. Provided that they are released in an area protected from poachers, they could constitute a significant breeding nucleus for the preservation of the species. They have lived in captivity for 20 years, apparently in acceptable conditions in terms of food and shelter, and they will have time to relearn how to live in the wild. O País points out that the record for the longest living member of the species is 188 years.

O País, February 9, 2021; Club of Mozambique, February 10, 2021.⁵

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

March 3, 2021

Oklahoma City, State of Oklahoma, United States of America

Sentence of Joshua Taylor Lucas, former employee of the Oklahoma Zoo, to 3 years of probation, 100 hours of community service and 32,500 US\$ in damages to be paid to the Oklahoma Zoo. In April 2020, he was charged with stealing 21 juvenile Galapagos giant tortoises (*Chelonoidis niger*, Appendix I) in the line of duty. He then sold and shipped them to Nevada resident Kenneth Warren Foose, who was previously charged with trafficking Galapagos giant tortoises.

US Department of Justice, March 4, 2021.⁸



March 24 and April 2 and 20, 2021

Memphis, State of Tennessee, United States of America



Consecutive seizures of 20, 16 and 6 Mexican box turtles (*Terrapene carolina*, Appendix II). They were in packages purporting to contain "gifts," "spare parts for hydraulic pumps," or "spare parts for sewing machines," going to Asia from Mexico via FedEx. The turtles were taped down and placed in socks that were then placed in baby formula cans lined with aluminum foil. One turtle did not survive. Mexican box turtles are found only in eastern Mexico. Their export is prohibited. Each individual has an economic value of between 4,000 and 6,000 US\$. Because of the absence of information on the spot where they have been caught, it is impossible to consider a release. They will spend their lives in various institutions after being put in condition again at the Memphis Zoo.

WMC Action News 5, May 19 and 21, 2021; US Fish and Wildlife Service, May 24, 2021.⁹

LATIN AMERICA

BRAZIL

January 15, 2021

Eirunepé, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Seizure in the hold of a boat coming from Itamarati (Amazonas State) and bound for Cruzeiro do Sul (Acre State) of yellow-spotted river turtles (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II), turtles (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II) and fish. The turtles were released and the fish distributed to charity.

Manaus Alerta, January 15, 2021.¹⁰

January 22, 2021

Curitiba, State of Paraná, Brazil

While arresting a 22-year-old man involved in drug trafficking in a boarding house, the police officers notice an individual running away leaving a bucket behind. Inside was a turtle and 15 eggs.

Banda B, January 22, 2021.¹¹

February 4, 2021

Rondonópolis, State of Mato Grosso, Brazil



Seizure of a baby turtle (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II) in a postal parcel. The tortoise was tied to a sock and concealed in a small unventilated box. The parcel was mailed in Sao Paulo with a final destination of Juara in Mato Grosso, which is a total voyage of 2,220 km. It had already been on the road for 3 days at the time of seizure. Rondonópolis is 1,310 km away from Sao Paulo.

Agora MT, February 5, 2021.¹²

Beginning of February 2021

Curuá, State of Pará, Brazil

Seizure in a private home of 19 turtles, including one yellow-spotted river turtle (*podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II). They were alive and kept in bags. Arrest of the occupant of the premises, a man who confessed to capturing the turtles for profit and explained that he was unemployed and had to support his family.

G1, March 10, 2021.¹³

February 13, 2021

Río de Janeiro, State of Río de Janeiro, Brazil

Seizure of 21 turtles (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II) in the Engenho de Dentro district. Very weak, they are being treated by the veterinarians of the Chico Mendes natural park prior to a possible release.

The Rio de Janeiro City Council suggests that the public call the Environmental Patrol on 1,746 when wild animals are spotted in the city.

O Dia, February 15, 2021.¹⁴

COLOMBIA

March 10, 2021

Montería, Department of Córdoba, Colombia

"The State police have saved more than 389 turtles (*Trachemys callirostris*) from an atrocious death in one of the areas where their hunting, possession and consumption increase as Holy Week approaches. By belief and tradition these small animals are served as dishes, after they are killed in a cruel way," explains Colonel Montenegro of the Montería police. Seizure of 12 dead turtles and 5 kg of turtle meat. One arrest.

W Radio, March 10, 2021.¹⁵

End of March, 2021

Magangué, Department of Bolívar, Colombia

Seizure of several thousand turtles (*Trachemys callirostris*), most of them alive, in some 20 jute bags to be sold on the black market, in particular to restaurant owners who offer turtle meat on their menus during Holy Week.

TuBarco, March 28, 2021.¹⁶

End of March 2021

Bogotá, Colombia



Arrest of a man carrying turtle (*Trachemys callirostris*) meat and eggs in a refrigerated box.

TuBarco, March 28, 2021.¹⁷

ECUADOR

March 28, 2021

Seymour Galapagos Ecological Airport, Baltra Island, Galápagos Province, Ecuador

Seizure of 185 turtles under 3 months of age in the suitcase of an incoming passenger. Wrapped in plastic, 10 were already dead. They were bound for Guayaquil (Guayas province). A refuge was improvised inside the airport until their destination was known.

Independent en Español, March 29, 2021.¹⁸

FRANCE (FRENCH GUIANA)

April 2021

Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France

Release of 51 yellow-headed sidenecks (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II) in the La Comté River in partnership with the Degrad Tortue Guyane association. They were seized in September 2018 before they had hatched. Other operations of this type are scheduled in the coming months.

French Biodiversity Agency, April 2019 and July 2021.¹⁹

ASIA

BANGLADESH

January 28, 2021

Magura Sadar Upazila, Magura District, Khulna Division, Bangladesh

Seizure of 200 turtles in 4 bags stored in the luggage compartment of a bus on the Dhaka road. They were handed over to the Khulna District Forest Department for later release in various sanctuaries. The Independent, January 28, 2021.²⁰

CAMBODIA

End of January 2021

Phnom Penh Municipality, Cambodia

Seizure of 13 Malayan snail-eating turtles (*Malayemys macrocephala*, Appendix II) and 3 Asiatic softshell turtles (*Amyda cartilaginea*, Appendix II) in a restaurant. The owner was arrested. The turtles were quarantined pending release.

Wildlife Crime Hotline, January 29, 2021.²¹



April 12, 2021
Cambodia

Seizure and release of 6 yellow-headed tortoises (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II) and one Asian leaf turtle (*Cyclemys dentata*, Appendix II).
Wildlife Crime Hotline, April 12, 2021.²²



CHINA

March 5, 2021
Xilinhot, Xilingol League and Chifeng, Chifeng Prefecture, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region; Shenyang, Shenyang Prefecture and Anshan, Anshan Prefecture, Liaoning Province; Harbin, Harbin Prefecture, Heilongjiang Province; Zhengzhou, Zhengzhou Prefecture, Henan Province, China



Seizure of several pig-nosed turtles (*Carettochelys insculpta*, Appendix II) in a shop. The police traced back the network, conducted recordings on WeChat and other social networks, kept the suspects' bank movements under surveillance and identified the smuggling methods. After 30 days, 7 suspects were arrested.

Xilinhot Public Security Bureau, April 1, 2021.²³

March 9, 2021
Fangchenggang, Fangchenggang Prefecture, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

Appearance of 10 suspects accused of acquiring, transporting and selling endangered animals. One of them, a man named Qiu, was arrested in Nanning in June 2019 while transporting 4 parcels containing turtles. Searches of the 2 houses he was renting led to the seizure of other specimens. These were radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I), black-breasted leaf turtles (*Geoemyda spengleri*, Appendix II), African spurred tortoises (*Centrochelys sulcata*, Appendix II), Aldabra giant tortoises (*Aldabrachelys gigantea*, Appendix II), elongated tortoises (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II) and Chinese stripe-necked turtles (*Mauremys sinensis*, Appendix III in China). 10 radiated tortoises and one black-breasted leaf turtle were found dead.

Fangchenggang People's Procuratorate, March 11, 2021.²⁴

March 17, 2021
Dabeiwangzhen, Handan Prefecture, Hebei Province, China

A man named Yan is arrested for buying an African spurred tortoise (*Centrochelys sulcata*, Appendix II) on the market. It was handed over to a zoo.

Police reminder: "prior to holding pets, the general public should know whether they are wild animals protected by national laws and animals listed in CITES Appendices I and II. These lists are publicly available online and can be referred to at any time. If you are not sure, seek advice from the relevant authorities."

Love Handan, March 24, 2021.²⁵

INDIA

January 4, 2021
Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve, Chandrapur District, State of Maharashtra, India

21 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I) seized over the last 2 years have been released in the Tadoba Andhari tiger reserve. This is the first time these turtles have been released in Maharashtra. Usually, Karnataka is preferred because the habitat is more suitable. The Forest Department made the decision to release them in Chandrapur district after some specimens were spotted in the area last year. Another 49 Indian star tortoises are waiting in a transit center. They in turn will be released in the tiger reserve if the pioneers have acclimated well.

The Times of India, January 6, 2021.²⁶

January 6, 2021
Chiria More, Kolkata District; Belgharia, North 24 Parganas District, State of West Bengal, India

Seizure of 1,559 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssononia gangetica*, Appendix I) hidden under potato bags and 1,837 others in the beds of 2 trucks registered in Uttar Pradesh. 278 of them died. Police believe they were bound for Bangladesh. Four arrests.

The Telegraph India, January 7, 2021.²⁷

Beginning of January 2021
Sewri, Mumbai City District, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure of 5 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I) from Mohammad Yaseen Ramjan Momin and Azgar Ali Shaikh near Reay Road station. The 2 men were arrested. They explained that they came from Hyderabad (State of Telangana, 700 km away) to sell the tortoises. Total estimated value: 150,000 rupees or 2,050 US\$. The police believe that they are part of an inter-State wildlife smuggling network.

The Free Press Journal, January 8, 2021.²⁸

January 10, 2021

Fatehgarh, Farrukhabad District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Seizure of 7 Indian tent turtles (*Pangshura tentoria*, Appendix II) that were up for sale in a pet store. The store owner was arrested.

WCCB, January 11, 2021.²⁹

January 18, 2021

Burugupudi, East Godavari District, State of Andhra Pradesh, India

414 live Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I) were discovered in a van at the Burugupudi checkpoint. They were heading to the State of Odisha for consumption. They were released into the Godavari River. Arrest of S. Sali and Viswajeet Mandal. Already, in late 2020, 2 men had been arrested at the same checkpoint while transporting 437 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I) in their van, which was also bound for Odisha (see "On the Trail" n°31 p. 152).

The Hindu, January 18, 2021.³⁰

January 20, 2021

Kulli, Panchmahal District, State of Gujarat, India

For a fee, Mausinh Baria performed tantric rituals on turtles, which was supposed to bring wealth. An undercover agent pretending to be a monk caught Mausinh red-handed, arrested him, and seized 4 turtles of an unspecified species protected under the Wildlife Conservation Act of 1972. His accomplices, Govind Bareliya, Ranjit Baria, Pradeep Baria and Bharat Baria were arrested.

Dailyhunt, January 20, 2021; Sandesh, January 21, 2021; The Times of India, January 21, 2021.³¹

January 29, 2021

Laiching, Chandel District, State of Manipur, India. Border with Myanmar.

Seizure at 2:00 a.m. of 4 turtles including 2 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) and one juvenile Aldabra giant turtle (*Aldabrachelys gigantea*, Appendix II) hidden in 4 plastic boxes from a man on a motorbike. The turtles were believed to originate from a country in southeastern Asian such as Thailand or Singapore. The man was only responsible for transporting them from the border to Imphal, the capital of Manipur. He and the turtles were taken to the police station. The total value is estimated at 900,000 rupees or 12,297 US\$.

E-Pao!, January 31, 2021; East Mojo, February 1, 2021; The Sentinel, February 7, 2021.³²

January 31, 2021

Koderma, Koderma District, State of Jharkhand, India

The Railway Protection Force (RPF) team seized 100 Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II) hidden in 3 bags on a station platform. No one was around. The officers believe that the suspects fled the scene when they saw them. CCTV footage will be used to try and identify them. The turtles will be handed over to the Forestry Department for possible release.

The Telegraph India, January 31, 2021.³³

February 5, 2021

Gulbarga, Gulbarga District, State of Karnataka, India

Arrest of 2 individuals and seizure of an Indian star tortoise (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I) found alive in a railway station.

WCCB, February 8, 2021.³⁴

February 24, 2021

Virajpet, Kodagu District, State of Karnataka, India

Acting on a tip-off, the police intercepted a vehicle at the checkpoint and discovered 2 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I). The driver and 2 passengers, M. Ramamurthy, VK Ramesh and BN Yogesh had travelled 190 km east from Ramanagar to sell them in Virajpet. The trio was held in custody for 15 days.

The New Indian Express, February 25, 2021.³⁵

March 14, 2021

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

Joint raid of the WCCB and the Forest Department executed on the local fish market. Seizure of 29 live Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I) and 6 dead specimens, an Indian tent turtle (*Pangshura tentoria*, Appendix II) and 2 shells of an unspecified turtle species.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), March 15, 2021.³⁶

March 21, 2021

Indore, Indore District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India



Two turtles, native to Australia but the species of which was unspecified, were seized from Anil Marathi. He said he had bought them "from someone" in Bhopal a few days earlier. Marathi was walking along Khandwa Road looking for a possible buyer at the time of his arrest. The value of the turtles on the international market is estimated at 200,000 rupees or 2,750 US\$.

The Free Press Journal, March 21, 2021.³⁷

End of March, 2021

Kichha, Udham Singh Nagar District, State of Uttarakhand, India

The 2 women had taken a bus from Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh. They were searched just after boarding a rickshaw for Rudrapur. In 3 bags, there were 16 turtles of unspecified species. The 2 women were arrested while the turtles were handed over to the Forest Department.

Dainik Jagran, March 27, 2021.³⁸

April 7, 2021

Bagru, Jaipur District, State of Rajasthan, India

"Alright for 200,000 rupees [2,720 US\$]". The WCCB officers agreed with the 2 traffickers to purchase 7 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I). The meeting point was set near the highway. On arrival, the traffickers showed the goods neatly arranged in a box. Caught in the act, the officers arrested Kajod Prasad and Ramswoop. Initial investigations led to the identification of another trafficker based in Ajmer and the seizure of 4 more turtles.

Indian softshell turtles are protected under the Wildlife Protection Act at the same level as tigers, and therefore possession of a specimen can result in 3 to 7 years of imprisonment. They were used as good luck charms and the bones and shells are reputed to have medicinal properties. The main smuggling destinations are Bangladesh, Malaysia, China and Thailand.

Dainik Bhaskar, April 7, 2021; Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), April 8, 2021; The Times of India, April 8, 2021.³⁹

April 6, 2021

Viet Nam

Seizure of one 25 kg Asian giant softshell turtle (*Pelochelys cantorii*, Appendix II) offered for sale on Facebook. The seller was arrested.

ENV, April 6, 2021.⁴¹

facebook



April 21, 2021

Viet Nam

Two yellow-headed tortoises (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II) are voluntarily handed over to the authorities by a man who had just received them as gifts.

ENV, April 21, 2021.⁴²

VIET NAM

March 18, 2021

Buon Ma Thuot, Dak Lak Province, Viet Nam

Hoang Minh Tien (see "On the Trail" n°29 p. 136) was sentenced to a 10-year prison term for selling turtles via Facebook and YouTube. In May 2020, police found 127 turtles of 17 different species at his home, including Indochinese box turtles (*Cuora bourreti*, Appendix I), south Asian box turtles (*Cuora amboinensis*, Appendix II) and Asian giant tortoises (*Manouria emys*, Appendix II). They have since been moved to Cuc Phuong national park.

ENV, March 19, 2021; Thanh Niên, March 19, 2021.⁴⁰

facebook



EUROPE

SPAIN

Beginning of March 2021

Vélez-Blanco, Province of Almería, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain

Ecologistas en Acción asked the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Sustainable Development in January 2020 about the fate of the common tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II) collected by Las Almohallas CREA (Centro de Recuperación de Especies Amenazada). Between 2011 and 2020, 6,840 common tortoises were handed over. The association has only just received the following information: 3,798 were released, 390 were transferred to other centers in Huelva and Granada, 157 died from rhinitis caused by overcrowding and stress, 2,043 died for undisclosed reasons and 1,208 are still in the center. Ecologistas en Acción is calling for an investigation into what it describes as the disastrous management of the Las Almohallas CREA.

Lavozdelsur.es, March 1, 2021.⁴³

ITALY

January 14, 2021

Ancona, Province of Ancona, Region of Marche, Italy

Appearance of a 71 year old woman. In 2016, 60 turtles were found in the garden of her house. All but 10 specimens are registered: 9 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) and one marginated tortoise (*Testudo marginata*, Appendix II). She explained to the judge that she is "passionate," that she bought her first specimens in the 1950s and that they still live in her home today. Witnesses attested to this. The judge, considering that the woman acted in good faith, acquitted her! CentroPagina, January 15, 2021.⁴⁴

February 12, 2021

Port of Palermo, Metropolitan City of Palermo, Region of Sicily, Italy



Seizure of one common tortoise (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II) in a suitcase while passengers were disembarking from the ferry *Majestic* which arrived from Tunis. It was handed over to the Bosco Ficuzza nature reserve.

Alqamah, 12 February 2021; LiveSicilia, 12 February 2021; NewSicilia, 12 February 2021.⁴⁵



Majestic, 3 January 2016, Palermo

February 2021

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



The carabinieri discovered an illegal dump site in the mechanic's workshop operated by the 57-year-old man. In the garden there were 11 marginated tortoises (*Testudo marginata*, Appendix II), 26 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) and 4 pond sliders (*Trachemys scripta*). Fine of 7,000 € (8,460 US\$). Il Fatto Vesuviano, February 22, 2021.⁴⁶

February 2021

Port of Bari, Metropolitan City of Bari, Region of Apulia, Italy

Seizure of 2 live Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) in the luggage of an Albanian national travelling from Albania to Italy. Bari Today, February 23, 2021.⁴⁷

POLAND

March 12, 2021

Lodz, Lodz Voivodeship, Poland

A group of young people (20 to 30 years old) went to a pet shop. One of them managed to come out with a Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) worth 190 US\$ in his jacket pocket. The theft was noticed after the gang had left and is attested by the video recordings from the CCTV system. The pet shop posted the screenshots on social networks. A reward of 2,000 zlotys (540 US\$) was promised to anyone who could identify the suspect. The police are contesting the dissemination. The chief commissioner of Lodz stressed that a private person does not have such rights. Only the police can do so in the context of an investigation Dziennik Lodzi, March 17, 2021.⁴⁸

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

Mid-February, 2021

Wanneroo, State of Western Australia, Australia



Stephen Beatty and David Morgan, researchers at Murdoch University, were monitoring a wetland for invasive and harmful fish. They were unpleasantly surprised to discover 5 dead narrow-breasted snake-necked turtles (*Chelodina oblonga*) in illegal nets, presumably intended to catch fish or crayfish. These turtles are about 30 cm long and are only found in lakes, swamps or ponds in Western Australia. They can live 30 to 40 years. During very dry periods, they cover themselves with mud or leaves and go into estivation. Their population is decreasing due to illegal fishing, habitat degradation, collisions with cars and fences that hinder their migration to new wetlands.

PerthNow, February 15, 2021.⁴⁹

AFRICA

NAMIBIA

March 4, 2021

Omuthiya, Oshikoto Region, Namibia

Seizure of a python skin (*Python* spp., Appendix II) from the hands of an Angolan national. There are 3 python species in Namibia: the Angolan python (*Python anchietae*, Appendix II), the Southern African python (*Python natalensis*, Appendix II) and the African rock python (*Python sebae*, Appendix II). Namibian Sun, March 10, 2021.¹

April 13, 2021

Ondangwa, Oshana Region, Namibia

Seizure of 2 python skins (*Python* spp., Appendix II) from the hands of Phillipus Alpheus. Republikein, April 20, 2021; Namibian Sun, April 22, 2021.²

April 18, 2021

Rundu, Kavango East Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.

Seizure in the hands of 2 Namibians of 4 python skins (*Python* spp., Appendix II) and one small-spotted genet skin (*Genetta genetta*). Republikein, April 20, 2021; Namibian Sun, April 22, 2021; New Era, April 22, 2021.³

April 20, 2021

Rundu, Kavango East Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.

Seizure in the hands of Elias Sipengo Mbundu and Simon Kalunda Kanyanga of one dead python (*Python* spp., Appendix II). Namibian Sun, 29 April, 2021.⁴

April 25, 2021

Ndiyona, Kavango East Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.

Seizure of 5 python skins (*Python* spp., Appendix II) in the hands of John Kavindika Shihungu. Namibian Sun, April 29, 2021.⁵

**April 28 and mid-July, 2021
Nkurenkuru, Kavango West Region, Namibia**

Arrest of Ananias Mwinoma in possession of 2 python skins (*Python* spp., Appendix II).

Arrest of Daniel Sientu in possession of 2 python skins.

Arrest of Phillipus Nakare Ihemba in possession of one python skin. He was sentenced to 18 months in prison or a 6,000 N\$ fine (about 420 US\$).

Namibian Sun, May 12, 2021; The Namibian, July 22, 2021.⁶



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

January 25, 2021

Tshopo Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo



Poaching near Kisangani of an African python (*Python sebae*, Appendix II) weighing 100 kg and measuring 11 meters long. The meat was reportedly sold for 20 US\$/kg and the fat for 100 US\$/liter. Adams Cassinga, January 25, 2021.⁷

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

February 17, 2021

State of Georgia, United States of America

Poaching of an Eastern indigo snake (*Drymarchon couperi*). "Rocky" was wearing a geolocation tag. It was part of a research program on the behaviour of the species. Some adults are over 2 meters long. It is the longest snake native to the United States of America. The species, which is critically endangered, is not venomous. It feeds on small mammals and other snakes, including poisonous species. Reptiles Magazine, March 5, 2021.⁸



BRAZIL

Beginning of March 2021**Berkeley County, State of South Carolina, United States of America**

Seizure after a search warrant of one timber rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*), 8 copperhead snakes (*Agkistrodon contortrix*) and 10 corn snakes (*Pantherophis guttatus*). Other exotic snakes, venomous or non-venomous, were also seized such as one west African gaboon viper (*Bitis gabonica rhinoceros*) and one cottonmouth (*Agkistrodon piscivorus*). The intervention was carried out by the natural resources police with the assistance of a herpetologist.

West Virginia Natural Resources Police, March 14, 2021.⁹

OPERATION MIDDLEMAN REPEATED OFFENSE**March 30 and November 19, 2021****Dalzell, State of South Carolina, and Valdosta, State of Georgia, United States of America**

Ashtyn Michael Rance, 35, is well known to the justice system in Florida. He previously served 2 years in prison in 2007-2009 for beating a child and for trafficking animals on several occasions.

On February 22, 2018, he sends to Florida from his home in Valdosta, Georgia, a package containing 16 spotted turtles (*Clemmys guttata*, Appendix II) and 3 Eastern box turtles (*Terrapene carolina carolina*, Appendix II). The parcel is declared to contain "tropical fish." Rance, paid 3,300 US\$ by his client, knows that the animals will then be shipped to China. On May 10, 2018, another parcel under the same circumstances. This time it contains 15 Gaboon vipers (*Bitis gabonica*), poisonous snakes, under the label "harmless reptiles and royal pythons." On May 11, 2018, police search his home. It is full of poisonous snakes. They seize 2 illegally owned firearms.

The authorities discover that, since the beginning of the year, he has imported 220 snakes from Africa via Atlanta (Georgia) to sell them at a Reptile show. Among them were 20 cobras (family Elapidae), 15 bush vipers (genus *Atheris*), 100 Gaboon vipers and 2 forest cobras (*Naja melanoleuca*). Rance is ordered to hand them over to a shelter in Saluda county, which he allegedly fails to do.

On March 9, 2021, Rance is indicted in Georgia for illegal possession of firearms and violation of the Lacey Act, which prohibits the barter, sale, transport of illegally acquired wildlife. South Carolina police arrest him at his home in Dalzell, South Carolina, and take him into custody on March 30. However, while the possession and sale of poisonous snakes is prohibited in Georgia, they are permitted in South Carolina. Police officers are therefore not allowed to seize the reptiles. As a result, king cobras (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II), bush vipers and rhino vipers (*Bitis nasicornis*), as well as dozens of turtles and non-venomous snakes are left in the house. According to the latest information, an acquaintance of Rance's is taking care of them. On November 19, Rance pleads guilty to both charges.

US Department of Justice, April 1 and November 19, 2021; The State, April 2 and May 23, 2021; WGXA, November 19, 2021.¹⁰

**January 13, 2021****Valparaíso de Goiás, State of Goiás, Brazil**

11 exotic, non-venomous snakes, including corn snakes (*Pantherophis guttatus*) and kingsnakes (genus *Lampropeltis*) were seized from the apartment of a biology student.



The man, who explained that he was breeding them for pleasure, was taken to the police station. He did not have the proper documents justifying their origin and authorising their breeding. He was charged with environmental crime and faces a 4-year prison sentence. He was released pending trial.

Correio Braziliense, January 13, 2021 ; G1, January 13, 2021.¹¹

March 1, 2021**State of São Paulo, Brazil**

Seizure in a post office in the north of the State of São Paulo of 15 boas (Boidae, Appendix I or II), including 14 juveniles and one adult. The parcel had been sent from Belem (State of Para) to Vila Maria in São Paulo. The snakes were packed in nylon stockings.

Isto É, March 3, 2021.¹²

April 1, 2021**Paranavaí, State of Paraná, Brazil**

Seizure of one live corn snake (*Pantherophis guttatus*) found in the home of a man who did not have the mandatory permits to keep it.

The corn snake is an exotic, non-venomous species native to the United States of America. It is strictly forbidden to release them into the Brazilian habitat. The authorities have not yet decided on its fate. The man was fined 375 US\$.

Portal da Cidade Paranavaí, April 2, 2021.¹³

April 3, 2021**Dracena, State of São Paulo, Brazil**

Release of a boa (Boidae, Appendix I or II) in Rio do Peixe State park. It was kept captive by a 24-year-old man. Fine of 500 reais or 95 US\$.

PortalR3, April 7, 2021.¹⁴



FRANCE (FRENCH GUIANA)

March 2021

Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France

A garden tree boa (*Corallus hortulanus*, Appendix II) was for sale via social networks. The seller, who was identified by the OFB, is under investigation. In theory, he faces a fine of up to 150,000 € and a 3-year prison term. French Biodiversity Agency, July 2021.¹⁵



EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

Beginning of January 2021

Panyu District, Guangzhou Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of an erhu, a traditional 2-stringed instrument whose sound box is made of a python skin (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II). Chinese Customs, January 11, 2021.¹⁶

January 13, 2021

Nanjing, Nanjing Prefecture, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure of 14 rattlesnake rattles (genus *Crotalus* or *Sistrurus*) mounted as key rings. Chinese Customs, January 14, 2021.¹⁷



Beginning of February 2021

Port of Tianjin, China

Seizure from a maritime container of a sanshin, a traditional 3-stringed instrument typical of southern Japan, whose sound box is made of python skin (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II). Chinese Customs, February 19, 2021.¹⁸



February 2021

Xiamen, Xiamen Prefecture, Fujian Province, China

Three erhus, a musical instrument made with python skin (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II) in a container being sent abroad. Chinese Customs, March 2, 2021.¹⁹

February 2021

Suzhou, Suzhou Prefecture, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure of 5 python skin erhu sound boxes (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II) found in an incoming package. Chinese Customs, March 2, 2021.²⁰

Beginning of March 2021

Autonomous Municipality of Shanghai, China

Seizure of a Burmese python skin (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II) and 2 python skin erhus in an outgoing package. Chinese Customs, March 9, 2021.²¹

March 8, 2021

Shanghai Pudong International Airport, Pudong District, Autonomous Municipality of Shanghai, China

Seizure of an erhu whose sound box is partly made of Burmese python skin (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II) in an outgoing parcel. Chinese Customs, March 10, 2021.²²

March 2021

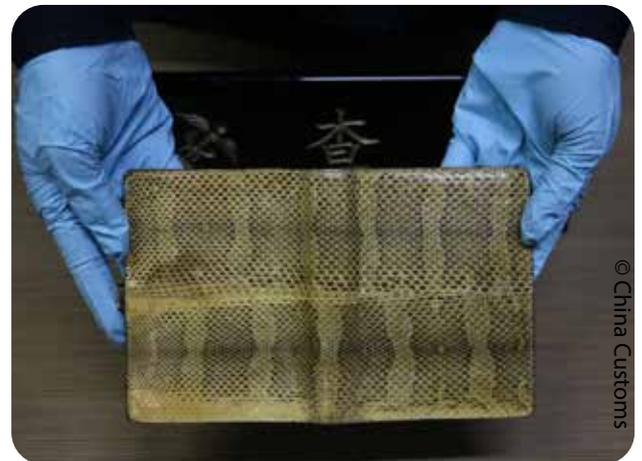
Mawei District, Fuzhou Prefecture, Fujian Province, China

2 erhus with Burmese python (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II) skin in an incoming shipment of goods. Chinese Customs, April 6, 2021.²³

April 2021

Jinan, Jinan Prefecture, Shandong Province, China

Seizure of a Burmese python skin (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II) handbag in an inbound parcel. Chinese Customs, April 19, 2021.²⁴



SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

INDONESIA

March 29, 2021

Bakauheni Port, South Lampung Regency, Lampung Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia



Eleven venomous snakes (family Viperidae) in 11 bottles on board a bus coming from Padang and approaching the ferry dock bound for Java Island. The green vipers were thought to be *Trimeresurus hageni*, *Trimeresurus albolabris* or *Trimeresurus barati*, the green, yellow and black vipers *Trimeresurus sumatranus* and the blue vipers *Trimeresurus insularis*. They have been quarantined. Their fate is unknown. There are 16 species of vipers in Indonesia. Bandar Lampung Class I Agricultural Quarantine Hall,

March 29, 2021; News Lampung Terkini, March 29, 2021.²⁵

THAILAND

February 2021
Thailand

Cobra Gold 2022 will be cruelty free. In any case, the elite American troops taking part will no longer eat raw geckos or tarantulas, nor will they drink the cold blood of cobras.

This wildlife ordeal was previously part of a 40-year-long hostile survival course for elite soldiers from Thailand and the US, joined by armed elements from Singapore, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia and Indonesia. One survivalist who knows Thailand's forests and is saddened by what is left of them says that the cobras beheaded by the soldiers arrive at the scene in Thai commissariat canteens.

Thanks to a targeted campaign by the NGO PETA and the fear of catching a Covid-21-style viral disease, the US Navy has removed all forms of wildlife cannibalism from the menu of this military reality show. There are still enough plants and fruits in the Thai forest to feed an expeditionary force for 10 days. Cobra Gold is on its way to becoming Vega Gold.

New Straits Times, February 18, 2021; PETA, August 16, 2021 and February 10, 2022; U.S. Embassy & Consulate in Thailand, August 23, 2021; Army Technology, August 25, 2021.²⁶

VIET NAM

Early January, 2021

Binh Phuoc Province, Viet Nam

The two-banded Burmese python (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II) was in captivity in a church. Places of worship in Asia and Africa are sometimes places of animal suffering.

ENV, 9 January 2021.²⁷

SOUTHERN ASIA

BANGLADESH

January 17, 2021

Fatullah Upazila, Narayanganj District, Dhaka Division, Bangladesh

Seizure of snake venom. Two arrests, two leaks.



The estimated value is staggering: 700 million taka or over 8 million US\$. These estimates are similar to the one reported in "On the Trail" n° 3 p.15 when the first smuggled king cobra venom appeared on the Indian market in 2013. A 600 ml vial was valued at 160,000 US\$ and retail doses during Divali, Valentine's Day or New Year's celebrations were reportedly sold for the equivalent of 400-500 US\$ at the same time. Tests are underway to verify the authenticity of the product. The fortune could be fake money.

On January 8, 2021, five other members of the international cobra mafia had already been arrested.

Daily Sun (Bangladesh), January 18, 2021.²⁸

January 28, 2021

Khulna, Khulna District, Khulna Division, Bangladesh

The Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) arrests Bacchu Sardar, Lutfur Rahman and Saumotra Biswas. They are in possession of several liters of suspected cobra venom. The authorities, as reported in the press, estimate the value of the seizure at 12 million US\$.

Daily Sun (Bangladesh), January 28, 2021.²⁹

INDIA

January 2, 2021

Maleagon, Nashik District, State of Maharashtra, India

A sand boa (*Eryx* spp., Appendix II) had become merchandise for 3 men aged 29 to 30 years. They were looking to sell it for 2 million rupees or about 27,000 US\$. Sand boas are used in black magic or turned into alleged miracle drugs.

Deccan, January 4, 2021; The Times of India, January 4, 2021.³⁰

January 7, 2021

Naidupeta, Nellore District, State of Andhra Pradesh, India



Arrest on Highway 16 of 7 men who were transporting a brown sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) in a convoy. They intended to sell it in Tamil Nadu for 7,500,000 rupees, i.e. a little more than 100,000 US\$.

Deccan Chronicle, January 8, 2021; WCCB, January 8, 2021; The Hans India, January 9, 2021; The Times of India, January 10, 2021.³¹

January 10, 2021

Davangere District, State of Karnataka, India

Five men aged between 21 and 34 years were trying to sell 3 brown sand boas (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II). They were tricked by 3 police officers acting as experienced buyers.

The New Indian Express, January 11, 2021.³²

January 14, 2021

Surroundings of Semra, Balrampur District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

A joint patrol of elements of the 50th battalion of the SSB and forest guards came across 3 traffickers carrying a king cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II). They were taken care of by the Bhabbar forestry post.

Sashastra Seema Bal, January 14, 2021.³³

January 20, 2021

Amboli, Palghar District, State of Maharashtra, India

Arrest of 2 men aged 30 and 40 in a hotel car park on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad expressway. They were carrying 3 brown sand boas (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) or "manduls."

Mid-Day (avec PTI), January 21 2021.³⁴

January 22, 2021

Ramnagar, Nainital District, State of Uttarakhand, India

Once again, 2 brown sand boas (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) were saved from being trafficked. In the car there was also an electronic scale. The 2 men presented themselves as simple delivery men. According to the head of operation, the selling price of these snakes depends on their weight. "A healthy snake can fetch more than 10 million rupees [136.634 US\$] on the international market." The Times of India, January 23, 2021.³⁵

January 31, 2021

Panvel, Raigad District, State of Maharashtra, India

The sand boa (*Eryx* spp., Appendix II) at the bottom of a plastic bag was 1.19 meters long and weighed 2.7 kg. 2 men, aged 33 and 38, were trying to sell it on the old expressway between Mumbai and Pune. They were arrested by a police patrol.

The Free Press Journal, February 2, 2021.³⁶

January 31, 2021

Irongmara, Cachar District, State of Assam, India

A snake charmer was displaying a short-nosed vine snake (*Ahaetulla prasina*), an ornate flying snake (*Chrysopelea ornata*), a brown-speckled whipsnake (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) and an Indian spectacled cobra (*Naja naja*, Appendix II) this Sunday morning near the university. Approached and questioned by Sumit Nath, a reptile specialist accompanied by some colleagues, the snake exploiter eventually fled, abandoning his flock. He was afraid that the scientists would summon the police. The short-nosed vine snake and the ornate flying snake, two native species, were released in the Cachar forest. The brown-speckled whipsnake, Indian spectacled cobra, and *Ahaetulla pulverulenta* snake have been transferred to Guwahati Zoo until further notice.

Barak Bulletin, February 1, 2021; The Sentinel, February 7, 2021.³⁷

End of January 2021

Nashik, Nashik District, State of Maharashtra, India

Brown sand boas (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) are a stepping stone to wealth or prison for young people. Arrest of a 25-year-old trafficker. In this long pandemic period of unemployment and various misfortunes, the double-headed boa which is supposed to bring luck is in great demand.

The Times of India, January 28, 2021.³⁸

February 3, 2021

Tehsil of Itwa, Siddharthnagar District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

An individual was carrying an Indian cobra (*Naja naja*, Appendix II). A joint patrol of the SSB and the Forestry Department intercepted him.

Sashastra Seema Bal, February 3, 2021.³⁹

February 18, 2021
Kumarganj, Dakshin Dinajpur District, State of West Bengal, India. India-Bangladesh Border.



Seizure by Border Security Force Jawans of 1.81 kg of crystallized cobra venom (*Naja* spp., Appendix II or *Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II). Tests are underway to verify that this is not a misnomer. The value is estimated at 240 million rupees, or about 3.3 million US\$. The smugglers have fled. They were trying to smuggle the 2 jars into Bangladesh. In addition to the hallucinogenic properties attributed to it when mixed with other substances, the value of cobra venom is said to have reached such heights since it is reputed in China to cure terminal cancers. Taking cobra venom is said to be a natural chemotherapy. As always, the precious substance is contained in prestigious bottles labelled "made in France"
 Hindustan Times, February 17, 2021; Anandabazar Patrika, February 18, 2021; ABP Ananda, February 19, 2021.⁴⁰



February 23, 2021
Navi Mumbai, Raigad District, State of Maharashtra, India



The large sand boa (*Eryx* spp., Appendix II) with an estimated value of 25 million rupees or about 342,000 US\$ was seized from Kishore Govind Patil, a mechanic by profession. With the profit from the sale, he wanted to buy a hotel and start a new life.
 Hindustan Times, February 25, 2021.⁴¹

February 25, 2021
Palakollu, West Godavari District, State of Andhra Pradesh, India

A 2.43-meter-long python (*Python* spp., Appendix I or II) was in custody at Gangajalam's home. According to information provided by his family, it was captured in Madhavaram, which has been a military garrison since the 17th century. Madhavaram is said to be the most patriotic city in India. The python was released near Nallajarla.
 The Hindu, February 27, 2021.⁴²

March 1, 2021
Rahatgaon, Amravati District, State of Maharashtra, India

While mating, 2 Asiatic rock pythons (*Python molurus*, Appendix II) 2.4 meters in length were beaten to death and thrown into a ditch by an unknown perpetrator. Their entangled bodies were found by Mukesh Waghmare, a sapamitra (snake lover), in a ditch full of water and bushes. An appeal for information has been issued by forest rangers in the surrounding villages, but so far there are no leads to identify the culprits.
 The Times of India, March 3, 2021.⁴³

March 19, 2021
Raipur, Raipur District, State of Chhattisgarh, India

They had bought the brown sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) for one million rupees or about 13,800 US\$ and were trying to sell it for 3 million rupees or about 41,500 US\$. 4 arrests. They are aged between 27 and 31, all natives of Kerala.
 Outlook India, March 19, 2021.⁴⁴

March 23, 2021
Shahjahanpur District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Seizure of 2 Indian cobras (*Naja naja*, Appendix II). They were caught in the buffer zone of the Dudhwa tiger reserve. The reserve managers have increased the vigilance after the poaching of 2 tigers since the beginning of the year.
 Hindustan Times, March 23, 2021.⁴⁵

March 27, 2021
Bhubaneswar, Khordha District, State of Odisha, India

Seizure of 2 bottles. They contain a total of 1.3 liters of a liquid suspected to be cobra venom with a retail value in India or internationally of almost 140,000 US\$ per liter. To collect one liter of venom, 200 to 245 cobras held in captivity would be required. According to Ashok Mishra, district director of forest services, the venom was collected from another State and Kolkata is said to be the hub of the venom with multiple destinations in Asia. Three people are in police custody.
 India Today, March 28, 2021; New Delhi Television (with ANI), March 28, 2021; Odisha TV, March 30, 2021; Ommcom News, March 30, 2021.⁴⁶



April 15, 2021
Bhubaneswar, Khordha District, State of Odisha, India



An Indian cobra (*Naja naja*, Appendix II) with its mouth sealed shut with synthetic glue had been dumped near a railway track but was spotted by witnesses who alerted the NGO Snake Helpline. The venomous snake was transferred to the veterinary department of Odisha University of Agriculture & Technology (OUAT). Professor Indramani Nath's team dipped the snake's head in lukewarm water mixed with lemon juice. This non-chemical process dissolved the glue and removed all the remnants without poisoning the victim. "We saw remarkable improvement as the Cobra immediately started flicking its tongue. We will release the snake into wild after one day observation." An x-ray confirmed that it had not suffered any fracture and was about to lay eggs. Malik, the founder of Snake Helpline, confirms that the use of the synthetic glue means the cobra was intended to be used in magical or religious rituals.

The New Indian Express, April 17, 2021.⁴⁷

PAKISTAN

Early March 2021
Gatwala, Province of Punjab, Pakistan

Seizure in a private home of a 274 cm long python (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II) that had been in custody for 12 months. It has been transferred to Lahore Zoo.

Samaa, March 4, 2021.⁴⁸

EUROPE

GERMANY

Mid-January 2021
Mendig, Rhineland-Palatinate State, Germany

They had a sheet for a shroud and a pit for a coffin. The 2 boa constrictors (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II) were discarded. The keeping of non-venomous snakes is permitted in Germany.

SWR4 Rheinland-Pfalz, January 25, 2021.⁴⁹

SPAIN

February 28, 2021
La Puebla de Montalbán and Val de Santo Domingo, Province of Toledo, Autonomous Community of Castile-La Mancha, Spain

A call to the local emergency services was made after a 31-year-old man claimed to have been bitten by a rattlesnake (genus *Crotalus*) while walking in a field in La Puebla de Montalbán. This genus is endemic of the American continent. The "victim" was taken to the hospital and searches were conducted to localise the "culprit", whose body is eventually found at the 31th kilometer of the CM-4009 road, crushed by a car. An investigation is launched to find out the origin of the rattlesnake. It led the police to the home of the thirty-year-old. The search of his house resulted in the seizure of 45 snakes, vipers, cobras including a king cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II, mambas (genus *Dendroaspis*), including 2 eastern green mambaz (*Dendroaspis angusticeps*), a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II) and 12 deadly scorpions. Most of these snakes and scorpions are venomous, sometimes deadly. The individual had set up an air conditioning system to ensure his "breeding center" was permanently set at a temperature above 20 °C.

EFE, March 8, 2021.⁵⁰

March 2021
San Isidro and Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Province of Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands, Spain

- Seizure of 1 Asiatic rock python (*Python molurus*, Appendix I or II) and arrest of a 24-year-old man who offered it for sale on a website.

- Seizure of a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix I or II) and arrest of a 23-year-old man who offered it for sale on the same website.

Diario de Avisos (with Europa Press), April 2, 2021.⁵¹

FRANCE

March 19, 2021
Gargenville, Department of Yvelines, France

In Ceramic Street, a moving plastic bag draws the attention of a cyclist. The animal rescue brigade is alerted. Inside the bag, 2 pythons (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II) measuring 1.5 metres in length are abandoned.



"We finally managed to save them by warming them up in water." However, the prognosis remains uncertain. The owner is unknown. The animals are not microchipped.

78actu, March 22, 2021; City of Gargenville, March 22, 2021.⁵²

AUSTRALIA

April 14, 2021

L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue and Bédarrides, Department of Vaucluse, France



Seizure of 8 kg of cannabis, 3 kg of resin, traces of heroin, ecstasy and cocaine, 24,000 € in cash, 37 firearms, ammunition, and 2 pythons (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), including a Burmese python (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II). Seven arrests. The band had one foot in southern France and the other in Guadeloupe. As is often the case, an investigation into drug trafficking led to wildlife trafficking. The intervention is to the credit of the research brigade of Avignon and the gendarmerie.

France Bleu Vaucluse, April 16, 2021 ; Le Dauphiné Libéré, April 16, 2021 ; Guadeloupe la 1^{ère}, April 18, 2021.⁵³

ITALY

End of February 2021

Santa Sofia, Province of Forlì-Cesena, Region of Emilia-Romagna, Italy

Abandonment of 2 corn snakes (*Pantherophis guttatus*) on the left bank of the river Bidente. The owner was found and fined for animal abandonment and mistreatment.

ForliToday, February 26, 2021.⁵⁴

January to February 2021

Griffin and Bundaberg, State of Queensland, Australia

Seizure of a 4-metre long Burmese python (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II) and 3 eastern corn snakes (*Pantherophis guttatus*). "The private possession of non-native reptiles poses a significant risk to native wildlife, the environment and, in some cases, human life and public safety." In six years, of 80 exotic animal seizures in Queensland, 27 were corn snakes from the North American continent.

Brisbane Times, February 25, 2021; Queensland Government, February 26, 2021.⁵⁵

April 22, 2021

Cairns, State of Queensland, Australia

As part of a drug search, cannabis, meth, DMT (N,N-dimethyltryptamine), laboratory equipment and an amethystine python (*Morelia amethystina*, Appendix II) were seized. The amethystine python is the largest snake in Australia. As an adult, it is 4-5 metres long. It is not venomous but its bite is formidable. Two arrests.

Tropic Now, April 23, 2021.⁵⁶

GECKOS, CAMELEONS, VARANS, IGUANAS ...

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

March 2021

Tarlton, Gauteng Province, South Africa



A flap-necked chameleon (*Chamaeleo dilepis*, Appendix II) was seized from the hands of traffickers and handed over to the Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital. It was released after a few days of treatment. Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital, March 21, 2021.¹

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

February 1, 2021

Brownville, State of Texas, United States of America. Border with Mexico.

Seizure in a vehicle of 11 dead monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) in 11 plastic jars.

US Customs and Border Protection, February 3, 2021.²



February 14, 2021

Ocean City, State of Maryland, United States of America



Seizure of 2 leopard geckos (*Eublepharis macularius*) in 2 terrariums abandoned on the sidewalk of Wesley Avenue. They were going to freeze to death if the Humane Society of Ocean City did not intervene. Their body temperature must be maintained at about 30°C. At this time of year, the outside temperature is about 1°C.

Humane Society of Ocean City, February 15, 2021; WPG Talk Radio 95.5, February 15, 2021.³

LATIN AMERICA

COLOMBIA

End of January 2021

Magangué, Department of Bolívar, Colombia



"Don't kill me, protect me".

Seizure of 5,000 eggs in a multipurpose vehicle on the road between Bongo and Magangué as part of a special operation by the Policía Ambiental y Ecológica to make the public aware of the iguana's fate (*Iguana* spp, Appendix II). Two arrests.

Colonel Tahir Rivera Suescún explains that one iguana can produce about 30 eggs. He adds, "because of the basic, rudimentary and cruel way in which iguana eggs are extracted, many females remain sterile." "Only 10% survive."

RCN Radio, January 28, 2021.⁴

Beginning of February 2021
On the road between Santa Marta and
Barranquilla, Department of Atlántico, Colombia



Seizure and destruction of 4,300 iguana eggs (*Iguana* spp., Appendix II). 3 arrests. Caracol Radio, February 1, 2021.⁵

MEXICO

January 29, 2021
Mexico

Seizure of 6 arboreal alligator lizards (*Abronio* spp. Appendix I or II), 5 juveniles and one adult, in a postal parcel containing sweets and a teddy bear. The reptiles were concealed in the black socks of the teddy bear and were to be sent to Germany. Arboreal alligator lizards, see "On the Trail" n°5 p. 31, n°7 p. 17, n°29 p. 141, n°30 p. 140 and n°31 p. 145. Profepa, January 29, 2021.⁶

January 30, 2021
Querétaro Intercontinental Airport, State of Querétaro, Mexico



The sniffer dogs spotted 2 chameleons (*Chamaeleonidae*, Appendix II) in a parcel coming from Celaya (State of Guanajuato) and bound for Monterrey (State of Nuevo León). It is perhaps a bred veiled chameleon (*Chamaeleo calyptratus*). The species is native to Yemen and Saudi Arabia. There are no chameleons native to the American continent. Mexico News Daily, February 1, 2021.⁷

ASIA

CHINA

March 12, 2021
Dandong, Dandong Prefecture, Liaoning
Province, China



Seizure of 4 veiled chameleons (*Chamaeleo calyptratus*, Appendix II) from Liu. She had bought them on the Internet, unaware that it was prohibited. Wang, the seller, was arrested 2 weeks later.

Erzanli Information Dandong, March 29, 2021.⁸

INDIA

January 12, 2021
Nagaon Chariali, Lakhimpur District, State of Assam, India

Seizure of a tokay gecko (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II). It was travelling in a bag on a motorbike. Arrest of Babusa Moshahary. The gecko was released in the Kakoi forest.

Northeast Now, January 13, 2021.⁹

April 4, 2021
Tanki Basti, Udalguri District, State of Assam, India. Border with Bhutan.



Seizure of a 30.5-cm-long tokay gecko (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II) weighing over 300 g. Northeast Now, April 4, 2021; Sashastra Seema Bal, April 4, 2021.¹⁰

PHILIPPINES

March 6, 2021

Guagua, Province of Pampanga, Philippines

Four arrests, including 2 minors aged 15 and 17, for attempting to sell a marbled water monitor (*Varanus marmoratus*, Appendix II) for 1,000 pesos (20.50 US\$) to police officers pretending to be buyers.

SunStar, March 8, 2021.¹¹

April 22, 2021

National Capital Region, Philippines

Seizure of 16 bearded dragons (genus *Pogona*) from an infant who wanted to sell them at the Cartimar market in Pasay. Estimated value on the black market is 160,000 pesos or 3,295 US\$.

CNN Philippines, April 25, 2021; BusinessMirror, April 26, 2021.¹²



EUROPE

AUSTRIA

January 20-26, 2021

Vienna-Schwechat International Airport, Vienna State, Austria

74 chameleons, including 3 dead ones, were found in the luggage of socks and food boxes of a Czech passenger travelling from Tanzania via Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The chameleons were Usambara three-horned chameleons (*Trioceros deremensis*, Appendix II), giant east Usambara blade-horned chameleons (*Kinyongia matschiei*, Appendix II), West Usambara two-horned chamaeleons (*Kinyongia multituberculata*, Appendix II), Nguru spiny pygmy chameleons (*Rhampholeon acuminatus*, Appendix II), green pigmy chameleons (*Rhampholeon viridis*, Appendix II), pigmy grass chameleons (*Rieppeleon kerstenii*, Appendix II) and spine-sided chameleons (*Trioceros laterispinis*, Appendix II). Their ecological value is priceless. Their economic value on the black market is estimated to be 37,000 € (45,500 US\$). The Czech national, who was only caught at the end of the green channel of the arrival hall, faces a 6,000 € (7,400 US\$) fine. Animal trafficking is really easy and besides, the Czech might have been holder of a pile. Indeed, most of the hostages later laid eggs in the air-conditioned room reserved for them at the Vienna Zoo. With the offspring, the trafficker would have made a fortune on the Czech market or at the Hamm big exotic fair in Germany. The Tanzanian Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism contacted Interpol and Austria to have the trafficker and the chameleons returned to Tanzania. Through CITES, a chameleon extradition agreement between the 2 countries could be signed in the near future.

Federal Ministry of Finance, January 22, 2021; Getaway, January 24, 2021; The Citizen, January 27, 2021; Africa Health & Climate Change, March 7, 2021; The Tennessee Tribune, July 2, 2021.¹³



CROCODILES AND ALLIGATORS

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

March 3, 2021

Bonnievale, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Subadult Nile crocodiles (*Crocodylus niloticus*, Appendix II) escape from a farm on Wednesday and disperse into the Breede river. On Friday, March 26, 32 live crocodiles have been caught. They were on the banks of the river. They were caught in nets. 44 crocodiles have been killed. They were swimming in the river. The anaesthetic syringes cannot pass through their skin, so they were shot in the head at close range. Other reptiles are still roaming around. People are advised to stay away from the river 5 km downstream and upstream of the farm.

Independent Online, March 8, 2021; News24, March 8 and 27, 2021.¹

BURKINA FASO

March-April 2021

Léo, Sissili Province, Burkina Faso. Border with Ghana.

A trafficker on the border between Ghana and Burkina Faso was driving on a side road and trying to smuggle 30 Nile crocodile skins (*Crocodylus niloticus*, Appendix I or II) amidst a shipment of corn flour. The seizure was carried out by the provincial directorate of the Ministry of the Environment and the NGO Les Anges Gardiens de la Nature with the support of Conservation Justice. He was sentenced to an 18-month suspended prison term and a fine of 500,000 CFA francs (approximately 1,000 US\$), also suspended. This is a piddling sanction denounced by Conservation Justice.

Conservation Justice, March and April, 2021; EAGLE, April 3, 2021; Koaci, April 10, 2021.²

KENYA

April 16, 2021

Garissa, Garissa County, Kenya

Fifteen dead crocodiles in sewage ponds. Autopsies are no longer possible. The bodies are decomposing. The deaths occurred 7 to 8 days ago. Fishermen have left traces of a temporary camp and tilapia nets are stored in a corner. The fence is ineffective. KWS asks GAWASCO (Garissa Water and Sewerage Company) to rebuild it. Poachers catch tilapia, farmers use the ponds to water their herds, people come to bathe.

SWT/KWS Meru Mobile Veterinary Unit, April 2021.³

ZAMBIA

Beginning of February 2021

Zambia

A traveling feminist hunting advocate who has exercised her talents and activism in England, the United States and Africa at the expense of deer, lions, pumas, elephants, rhinos and buffalo, is doing it again in Zambia against a Nile crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*, Appendix II) well into its fifties measuring 4.5 meters long. "Excuse me while I shop for a New Purse" she says triumphantly on Instagram while kneeling over her trophy. Larysa Switlyk, 33, a Florida resident, also says she killed the venerable Nile crocodile to save the lives of people in a village. Larysa Switlyk, February 4, 8 and 9, 2021; The Mirror, March 27, 2021.⁴



NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 15, 2021

Washington Dulles International Airport, State of Virginia, United States of America

Seizure of 2 crocodile skin bags (*Crocodylidae*, Appendix I or II) and one belt in the luggage of a traveller arriving from Ghana.

Patch, February 19, 2021.⁵

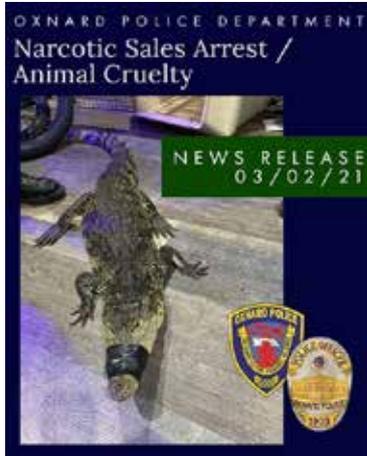


March 2, 2021

Port Hueneme, State of California, United States of America

Search of Donny Askar's house. Seizure of methamphetamine and heroin for sale, cocaine and a one-meter-long American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) immersed in a tub filled with rancid water.

Oxnard Police Department, March 3, 2021.⁶



March 26, 2021

Paducah, State of Kentucky, United States of America

Seizure in a private home of 2 alligators (*Alligator* spp., Appendix I or II). They were 1.5 meters long and were found swimming in circles in a large basin surrounded by plastic mesh. They were handed over to Slade Zoo which exhibits reptiles.

Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, March 28, 2021; The Clay City Times, April 1, 2021.⁷

April 25, 2021

Seadrift, State of Texas, United States of America

An investigation is launched into the poaching of 5 American alligators (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) in an irrigation canal.

Crossroads Today, April 29, 2021.⁸

LATIN AMERICA

MEXICO

January 30, 2021

Villaflores, State of Chiapas, Mexico

Seizure at a taxi stand of 39 live spectacled caimans (*Caiman crocodilus*, Appendix II) crammed in a polystyrene cooler. They were barely 4 or 5 months old, measuring about 30 cm long and weighing between 80 and 150 g each.

Milenio, January 30, 2021; Mexico News Daily, February 1, 2021; Profepa, February 11, 2021.⁹

ASIA

CHINA

Beginning of January 2021

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Shenzhen Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

12 crocodile skin belts (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II), 2,400 grams.

Chinese Customs, January 13, 2021.¹⁰

Beginning of March 2021

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Shenzhen Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 7 crocodile (Crocodylia, Appendix I or II) skin belts in the luggage of an incoming passenger. Chinese Customs, March 8, 2021.¹¹



April 2021

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Shenzhen Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of several crocodile skin accessories (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II) including a cap.

Chinese Customs, April 25, 2021.¹²



INDONESIA

March 24, 2021

Sultan Syarif Kasim II International Airport, Pekanbaru City, Riau Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Seizure of 22 juvenile salt-water crocodiles (*Crocodylus porosus*, Appendix II) in a postal parcel bound for Jakarta. They were divided into 8 plastic bags. Of the group, 7 were already dead. According to preliminary findings, the package was sent from Siak regency in Riau province.

Riau Natural Resources Conservation Center (BBKSDA Riau), April 1, 2021; John (Traffic Southeast Asia), April 1, 2021.¹³



MALAYSIA

April 29, 2021
Senai, State of Johor, Malaysia

Seizure in a shop of a crocodile (*Crocodylidae*, Appendix I or II) skin handbag.

Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia, May 4, 2021.¹⁴



UNITED KINGDOM

February 25, 2021
Birmingham, West Midlands County, England, United Kingdom

Seizure of 80 alligator (*Alligator spp.*, Appendix I or II) heads that were offered for sale worldwide on eBay. No arrests were made, but a 44-year-old man is questioned. The investigation is underway.

Express & Star, February 26, 2021.¹⁶



EUROPE

FRANCE

REPEATED OFFENSE

February 12, 2021

Etinehem-Méricourt, Department of Somme, France



An illegal breeding operation for Cuvier's smooth-fronted caiman (*Paleosuchus palpebrosus*, Appendix II) was discovered by OFB (French Biodiversity Office) officers at the home of a "fan" of dangerous reptiles. He was known to the authorities for similar offenses in 2016 and 2018.

In a final act of cruelty, the man rid himself of the smooth-fronted caiman by throwing it out the window during the search. It could not survive the cold. It died.

The Cuvier's smooth-fronted caiman or dwarf caiman is native to South America. It is present in Guiana and can reach 1.5 to 2 metres. Females can reproduce when they reach the age of 8 years and the size of 60 cm. They lay between 6 and 21 eggs and raise the juveniles for about 20 months. The species is mainly hunted for meat and eggs.

See "On the Trail" n°2 p.20, n°9 p.19, n°18 p.26, n°20 p.128, n°31 p.145 and n°31 p.146.

Courrier picard, March 9, 2021; Le Journal d'Abbeville, March 9, 2021; French Biodiversity Office, March 9, 2021.¹⁵

CZECHIA

March 12, 2021

Klopina, Olomouc Region, Czechia

Rescue of a Nile crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*, Appendix I or II) trapped in a burning house. Firefighters located it in a room of about 20 m² on the ground floor.

Sokszínű vidék, March 12, 2021.¹⁷

Frogs and Toads



Common frogs (*Rana temporaria*). Photo Sebastian Frank

ASIA

CHINA

Beginning of January, 2021

Shenzhen, Shenzhen Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of a 4 cm long live toad weighing 30 grams in an incoming package.

Chinese Customs, January 6, 2021.¹

January 19 and 21, 2021

Fuxizhen, Leshan Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China

Intervention on information from the forest police in a village. Huang and Shuai were arrested and 1,953 Asiatic toads (*Bufo gargarizans*), a protected species endemic to eastern Asia, were seized. Huang, officially a fisheries vendor, was involved in selling wild animals. Huang had sold the toads to Shuai on January 19. Both men admitted to the crime. The toads were released.

Extracts of Asian toad secretion are used in Chan Su, a traditional medicine for heart failure, sore throat, skin inflammation and cancer.

Shaanxi Legal Network, January 28, 2021.²

FAMILY AFFAIRS

January 22, 2021

Qingshuizhen, Dazhou Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China

There is a rumor that dried Asiatic toad (*Bufo gargarizans*) skins could sell for 2,550 US\$/kg. Zhang and Wang soon rented electric tricycles in Xin'an and set off to hunt for toads. Unfortunately for them, at around 11 p.m., their lamp caught the attention of a police patrol on a routine operation. The couple had already caught 165 toads in their nets when they were caught again. The toads are released.

Red Star News, January 25, 2021.³

January 28, 2021

Xindian, Meishan Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China

Zheng was arrested at 8 p.m. following a report of him catching Asiatic toads (*Bufo gargarizans*). There were 49 specimens in his bucket. They were all released. As for Zheng, he was released on bail for the duration of the investigation. The police point out that these 5 to 10 cm long amphibians are protected and protect humans themselves by feeding on harmful insects.

Law & Order Ya'an, March 3, 2021.⁴

March 16, 2021

Yong'anzen, Bazhong Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China

Another toad hunter was arrested in the middle of the night. Tao had captured 377 toads in the fields before his suspicious behavior was reported to the police. He was about to set off on his scooter with a loaded snakeskin bag. The toads were released and Tao was taken to the police station.

Jinzhou Police, March 19, 2021.⁵

April 2021

Jiangyang, Luzhou Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China

June 28, 2020. X, living in Zhaohuazhen, goes to Tongtanzhen, about 30 kilometers away. On this Sunday afternoon, he has a specific goal in mind. The day before, he paid a deposit of 140 US\$ via WeChat to a certain Feng Moukai. Now he intends to collect the goods, that is to say Asiatic toads (*Bufo gargarizans*), more than 500 kg in all, at a price of 825 US\$, or 1.6 US\$/kg. Since he is here, he takes the opportunity to buy 280 kg of additional toads from Feng Moujun. The deal fell through. His cargo does not go unnoticed during a road check. The 2,000 toads were released, but the duo's troubles began.

The two traffickers were sentenced to 3 and 4 month suspended sentences and fined 10,000 yuan (1,500 US\$).

Sichuan Online, April 22, 2021.⁶



April 14, 2021

Wenzhou, Wenzhou Prefecture, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of 145 live Cranwell's horned frogs (*Ceratophrys cranwelli*) in 2 packages from abroad. Also known as Pacman frogs because of their large appetite, they are particularly popular as pets. In the wild, they live in South America.

Chinese Customs, April 21, 2021.⁷



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April 21, 2021

Yongfu County, Guilin Prefecture, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

The last few days have been rainy. The frogs are out, and so are the frog hunters. Night arrests of 2 men in possession of 12 bull frogs (*Hoplobatrachus tigerinus*, Appendix II) and 3 Günther's frogs (*Sylvirana guentheri*). Bull frog, see "On the Trail" n° 3 p.11, n°4 p.103, n°5 p.32 (in China), n°6 p.114 (in China), n° 9 p.21, n° 17 p.28, n° 21 p.26 and n° 26 p.34.

In February, during the Spring Festival, 7 young people had already been arrested in possession of 52 wild frogs.

Guangxi Forest Public Security Bureau, May 3, 2021.⁸

EUROPE

SPAIN

End of January, 2021

Esteribar, Chartered Community of Navarre, Spain

The Policia Floral spotted a vehicle near ponds, a frog habitat and breeding site. They seized 52 common frogs (*Rana temporaria*) concealed in a plastic bag, and arrested the 2 passengers, aged 67 and 74. The Esteribar valley is listed as a ZEC (Zona Especial de Conservacion).

Diario de Navarra, 29 January 2021.⁹

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

March 10, 2021

Gold Coast, State of Queensland, Australia

Australia Post delivery drivers raised the alarm because they found some parcels "damp, slimy and croaking". Officers from Queensland's Environment Department paid a visit to the sender. There were 40 frogs in his home. He admitted selling them for up to 80 US\$ on Gumtree website. A further 50 frogs were found in customers' homes. The man captured them in the wild. He had a predilection for graceful tree frogs (*Litoria gracilentia*), which are green and yellow in color and no longer than 4.5 cm. The hundred or so specimens were released back into the wild. The man was fined 3500 US\$.

Since August 22, 2020, it has been possible to keep native frogs provided that a permit is obtained. Due to the demand, the black market is flourishing.

Queensland Department of Environment, March 10, 2021; Daily Mail, March 11, 2021; Brisbane Times, March 12, 2021.¹⁰



Butterflies, Ants, Beetles, Tarantulas, Leeches ...

AMERICA

COLOMBIA

January 25 2021

**Mallama, Department of Nariño, Colombia.
Border with Ecuador.**

Seizure of 9 tarantulas of different colors and sizes confined in 10 plastic boxes during a roadside check. 2 Germans, one Pole and one Venezuelan named Behamin Sebastián Benedikt Weber, Auer Hans Werner Schmitz, Lucasz Tomasz Banas and Daniel Alejandro Calacaño Sánchez were arrested. Although one of the Germans showed a collection permit issued by a German museum of natural history, the tarantulas were seized. The 4 looters were released. The Attorney General's Office of Colombia has appealed this decision. Black market value: 860 US\$ per specimen or about 7,720 US\$ altogether.

Attorney General's Office Colombia, January 28, 2021; El País, January 28, 2021; Finance Colombia, January 29, 2021.¹

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

February 12, 2021

Washington Dulles International Airport, State of Virginia, United States of America

Seizure of CITES-protected leeches from a passenger arriving from Turkey. Two species of CITES-listed leeches can be found in Turkey: the northern medicinal leech (*Hirudo medicinalis*, Appendix II) and the southern medicinal leech (*Hirudo verbana*, Appendix II).

Patch, February 19, 2021.²

ASIA

CHINA

January 10, 2021

Shenzhen, Shenzhen Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 126 butterflies in an inbound package that was declared "personal items". Chinese Customs, January 13, 2021.³



© China Customs

January 2021

Guangzhou, Guangzhou Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China



© China Customs

Seizure of 12 rhinoceros beetles (family Dynastinae) in an incoming package.

Chinese Customs, January 14, 2021.⁴

January 2021

Kunming, Kunming Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China

Seizure of a 10-cm-long *Serrognathus titanus palawanicus* from an incoming shipment.

Chinese Customs, February 7, 2021.⁵

January 2021

Chongqing Municipality, China

Seizure of 160 insects in an inbound parcel, mainly comprised of beetles ranging in length from 5 to 15 mm. Total weight, 81 g.

Chinese Customs, February 7, 2021.⁶

February 2021

Changsha, Changsha Prefecture, Hunan Province, China



© China Customs

Seizure of 3 exotic longhorn beetles (family Cerambycidae) in an inbound package.

Chinese Customs, March 4, 2021.⁷

February 2021

Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China

Seizure of 406 live ants, approximately 2 cm long, in a shipment from abroad declared to contain dental supplies. Each ant was housed in a plastic tube. Chinese Customs, February 23, 2021.⁸



March 2-11, 2021

Beijing Autonomous Municipality, China

Seizure of 30 stag beetles (family Lucanidae) of Japanese, European and Chinese origin. They were split between 4 parcels arriving from Japan which were declared to contain "indispensable articles." Chinese Customs, April 7, 2021.⁹

March 2021

Nanjing, Nanjing Prefecture, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure of 66 insects, including beetles, found in an incoming package. Chinese Customs, March 12, 2021.¹⁰

March 2021

Guiyang Longdongbao International Airport, Guiyang Prefecture, Guizhou Province, China

Seizure of a 19.5-cm-long scarab beetle in an incoming package declared to contain "grocery products." Chinese Customs, March 23, 2021.¹¹

March 2021

Shenzhen, Shenzhen Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 10 insects including longhorn beetles (family Cerambycidae) from an incoming package declared to contain collection animals. Total weight, 350 g. Chinese Customs, March 25, 2021.¹²

March 2021

Wuhan, Wuhan Prefecture, Hubei Province, China

Seizure of stag beetles (family Lucanidae) found in an incoming package. Chinese Customs, March 29, 2021.¹³



March 2021

Beijing Autonomous Municipality, China

- Seizure of 13 live beetles in 2 postal parcels declared to contain "accessories."
- Seizure of 27 insects including titan beetles (*Titanus giganteus*) in 2 postal parcels. Chinese Customs, March 31, and April 2, 2021.¹⁴



April 2021

Xi'an, Xi'an Prefecture, Shaanxi Province, China

21 longhorn beetles (family Cerambycidae) and scarab beetles (family Scarabaeidae) were quarantined. They had been seized in 2 packages declared to contain "toys." Chinese Customs, April 16, 2021.¹⁵

Beginning of April 2021

Qingdao, Qingdao Prefecture, Shandong Province, China

Seizure of 23 ants (genus *Myrmecia*) and 15 ants (genus *Camponotus*) from incoming mail. Chinese Customs, April 18, 2021.¹⁶

April 2021

Nanchang Changbei International Airport, Nanchang Prefecture, Jiangxi Province, China

Seizure of 9 stag beetles (*Lamprima adolphinae*) from an inbound parcel. Chinese Customs, April 19, 2021.¹⁷

April 2021

Xiamen, Xiamen Prefecture, Fujian Province, China

Seizure of 5 Hercules beetles (*Dynastes hercules*) from an inbound parcel. Chinese Customs, April 21, 2021.¹⁸

April 21, 2021

Nanjing, Nanjing Prefecture, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure of one 15-cm-long giant forest scorpion (*Heterometrus spinifer*) in an inbound parcel declared to contain "collection items." Chinese Customs, April 22, 2021.¹⁹

April 23, 2021
Mengla Xian, Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Laos and Myanmar.



Seizure of one 14-cm-long stuffed tarantula from an inbound package arriving from abroad. Chinese Customs, April 26, 2021.²⁰

April 2021
Zhengzhou, Zhengzhou Prefecture, Henan Province, China

Seizure of 6,000 fruit flies in egg, larvae and adult forms (*Drosophila melanogaster*) in postal parcels sent from abroad and declared to contain "corn flour." They were distributed in 57 test tubes. Chinese Customs, April 29, 2021.²¹

April 2021
Hangzhou, Hangzhou Prefecture, Zhejiang Province, China

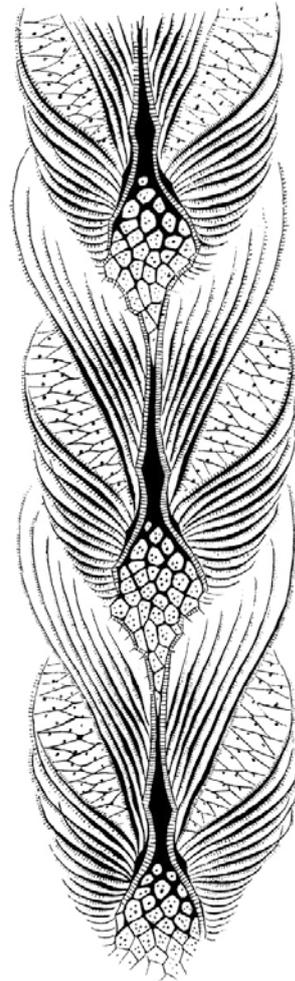
Seizure of 58 live insects including beetles (*Serrogathus titanus*) and elephant beetles (*Megasoma elephas*) from 8 incoming parcels. Chinese Customs, May 1, 2021.²²



PHILIPPINES

January 6, 2021
Ninoy-Aquino International Airport, Manila, Province of Metro Manila, Philippines

Seizure of 20 tarantulas and 8 scorpions, alive, each packed in a plastic box, inside a parcel from Samut Prakan Province in Thailand. They were declared to contain "educational materials." Philippine News Agency, January 11, 2021.²³



Men at work, locals and animals get the worst

AFRICA

ANGOLA

February 15, 2021

Kassanje, Etosha and Okavango Basins, Angola

Angola is getting into it, after Botswana and Namibia. President Joao Lourenco could not resist the temptation. He "suggested" amending the law and allowing oil and gas exploration and exploitation in parks and nature reserves. The parliament enthusiastically followed the president. The "Project for the Study of Potential Oil in the Interior Basins" was launched. The Okavango and Kassanje basins are on the front lines. The language is available. Minister of Mineral Resources Diamantino Azevedo lined them up: "The United States of America, Norway and Gabon have proven that mining can be done provided there are limitations on impacting fragile ecosystems." "Oil revenues will benefit local communities and wildlife parks themselves." Rhinos, elephants, pangolins, giraffes, zebras, leopards, hippos and African vultures can rest easy.

NewsBase, February 24, 2021; The Botswana Gazette, February 26, 2021.¹

CAMEROON

September 2020 to January 2021

Kadey Department, East Region, Cameroon



In the lagoons of abandoned gold mines, 150 people drowned between 2014 and 2020.

Prior to the construction of the Lom-Pangar dam and the impoundment of several thousand of hectares, the government had launched a program to prospect for alluvial gold.

The operators obviously left without securing the wastelands and moved their semi-industrial facilities into nearby forests.

There are now 248 unsecured mines at the end of their lives in the department, all of which are traps that threaten the inhabitants in their travels and occupations. The Metalicon SA group was fined 500,000 CFA francs (950 US\$) for failure to comply with the specifications and to pay 2 million CFA francs in damages to the family

of a 12-year-old child who on the eve of the start of the school year in 2017 drowned in a 15-meter-deep mud hole while trying to cross the Diengou River.

Between September 2020 and January 2021, at least 3 hippos (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) were trapped and they too drowned.

InfoCongo, May 10, 2021.²

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

January 28, 2021

Congo Basin, Democratic Republic of the Congo

It seems that oil is out of fashion, that it must be pointed out as the devil of the climate and that its reserves must remain in the hell of underground and underwater until the end of time. This planetary hygiene rule tolerates at least one exception: in Africa, presidents are attracted by offers from oil rentiers like Total and the Chinese CNOOC (see "On the Trail" n°30 p.153-154), by offers of old hands from Houston and Canada (see "On the Trail" n°28 p.104 and n°31 p.26). In Uganda, Zimbabwe, Angola, in the Exclusive Economic Maritime Zones of South Africa, Namibia and Mozambique, black projects are flourishing. The Democratic Republic of Congo is not left out. According to Minister Rubens Mikindo, a review of the DRC's oil and gas resources has enabled us to select a total of 19 oil blocks that will soon be the subject of a bidding war. This preparatory work for possible exploitation of fossil fuels will cause further disturbance to the habitats of elephants, chimpanzees, bonobos and gorillas. Access roads with truck and personnel traffic will encourage poaching.

Afrik 21, February 10, 2021.³

ZAMBIA

End of February, 2021

Lower Zambezi National Park, Lusaka Province, Zambia

The Australians have won. They don't have enough land resources within their 7.7 million km² to excavate and crush. They are imposing their techniques and their mining greed in Africa. Because of a procedural flaw (one of the 6 plaintiffs missed the deadline for filing an appeal), it looks like a green light for Perth-based Trek Metals and its Zambian subsidiary Mwembeshi to open an open-pit copper mine in the Lower Zambezi national park. In industrial ecosystems, predators attack the weakest, just as they do in the savannah. Zambia has flinched, even if it means harming lions, elephants, wild dogs, and kingfishers. The discharges from this industrial exploitation will affect the water quality of the Zambezi and the wetland ecosystems of Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Lusaka Times, February 28, 2021; Africa Geographic, June 23, 2021.⁴

ZIMBABWE

Mid-March, 2021

On the edge of Hwange National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Chinese investor Beifa wants to create a new open-pit coal mine. The campaign is in the exploration stage and is assessing the profitability of the deposit. The majority of the 600 inhabitants of Dinde do not agree. They fear the toxicity of the dust and the pollution will ruin the Nyantuwe River, which supplies the community's water. They are indignant about the damage to the graves of the ancestors of the Nekatambe dynasty and the threats to the Nambya ethnic group of which they are the last representatives. In convergence with humanitarian concerns, Zimbabwean NGOs are also worried about the damage inflicted on the wildlife of Hwange park and its buffer zone by this new polluting industry that could be expanded with a coal-fired power plant. Coal mine in Hwange national park, see "On the Trail" n°30 p.154. NewZimbabwe.com, March 14, 2021; NewsDay, May 5, 2021; Voice of America, July 5, 2021.⁵



AMERICA

CANADA

February 18, 2021

Cowansville, Province of Quebec, Canada

Pete Persons Terre Sable et Gravier Inc. was fined 11,650 US\$ for destroying 2 bank swallows (*Riparia riparia*) nesting sites during excavation work in June or July 2019, despite warnings from environmental authorities. The population of bank swallows has decreased by 98% in 40 years. They have been protected by the Species at Risk Act since November 2, 2017. These birds often nest in quarries or sandpits. Le Journal de Montréal, February 22, 2021; La Voix de l'Est, February 24, 2021.⁶



Bank swallows (*Riparia riparia*)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 14, 2021

Red Cliffs National Conservation Area, State of Utah, United States of America

The US Fish and Wildlife Service is giving the green light to the construction of the Northern Corridor, a 4-lane highway over 7 km long in the middle of the desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*, Appendix II) habitat. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has turned a deaf ear to the concerns of the NGO Conserve Southwest Utah that the construction of this highway violates the Endangered Species Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. The 2,000 or so desert tortoises living in the Red Cliffs reserve will be compensated with 21 additional acres of protected space.

On June 3, the NGOs Conserve Southwest Utah, Conservation Lands Foundation, Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife, Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, The Wilderness Society and WildEarth Guardians sued the US Department of the Interior and the BLM. The Red Cliffs National Conservation Area was established in 1996 to provide 25,000 protected acres for desert tortoises. Urbanization, vehicle collisions and capture for the pet market are the main threats to this species.

Deseret News, January 14, 2021; KSL-TV, January 19, 2021; Center for Biological Diversity, June 4, 2021.⁷



Desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*)

MEXICO

Beginning of February 2021

Alvarado, State of Veracruz, Mexico

Sale of a rattlesnake (genus *Crotalus*) by the workers of a clearing site prior to the building of a real estate development. The construction site was interrupted by a court decision because they lacked a permit.

La Silla Rota Veracruz, February 2, 2021.⁸



ASIA

VIET NAM

January 2021

Kim Bang Forest, Ha Nam Province, Viet Nam

"Blasting Area, Travel Limited." In the Kim Bang forest, warnings are multiplying but the Delacour's langurs (*Trachypithecus delacouri*, Appendix II) cannot read. Viet Nam is in the midst of a construction boom which requires cement and concrete. 60 km south of Hanoi, the limestone cliffs are being mined and dismantled by a growing number of quarries, which have free rein despite the appeals of the NGO Fauna & Flora International and local primatologists.

15 years ago, the Delacour's langurs were at home in the caves and ledges. The vegetation cover was still lush. There was an abundance of banyan trees and few poachers. The Delacour's langurs numbered in the thousands. In 15 years, they have been reduced to just 100. The noise of shooting and the dust of trucks is increasing despite the Prime Minister's call in 2020 for the provincial authorities to carry out an environmental impact study and to take measures to safeguard the native species of Viet Nam, whose residual populations survive in the Kim Bang Forest and in the Van Long wetland (neighboring Ninh Binh province).

VnExpress International, January 4, 2021.⁹



EUROPE

FRANCE

March 2, 2021

Versailles, Department of Yvelines, France

Before the wind turbines could be erected, the virgin soil had to be excavated and the cavities filled with concrete, and the access roads had to be opened in the garrigue. The 7 EDF subsidiaries operating the Aumelas wind farm (Department of Hérault), Plein Vent Aumelas Clitourps, La Pierre wind farm, Nipleau wind farm, Les Trois Frères wind farm, La Petite Moure wind farm, Vallée de l'Hérault wind farm and La Conque wind farm, had been sentenced on July 17, 2019 by the Nanterre High Court to pay 3,500 € (4,280 US\$) as moral damage to France Nature Environnement for the destruction of protected species.

The Versailles Court of Appeal confirmed this sentence. The 31 wind turbines in Aumelas have killed at least 85 lesser kestrels (*Falco naumanni*, Appendix II) since 2012, even though the 7 companies do not benefit from any prefectural exemption authorising the destruction of protected species. The companies have also persisted in their refusal to take measures to prevent the deaths of raptors. The largest colony of lesser kestrels in France lives near Aumelas. 220 pairs nested in the Department of Hérault in 2018, which is more than half of the French population. Court of Appeal of Versailles, March 2, 2021; Infodujour, March 8, 2021; Actu-Environnement, March 10, 2021.¹⁰



MULTI-SPECIES

Events concerning among others elephants, rhinos, felines, bears or pangolins and their by-products are indicated by these pictograms:



Cases concerning exclusively pangolins, felines, elephants, rhinoceros : see page 19, elephants and rhinoceros: see page 53, felines, elephants and rhinoceros : see page 67

NORTHERN AFRICA

ALGERIA

January 9, 2021
Algeria



Ahmed Ouyahia, former prime minister, told the court that the Presidency of the Republic received 60 gold bars between 2014 and 2018 as a bribe from the emirs of Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. In return, they were given authorisation to hunt, under escort of the gendarmerie, the houbara bustards (*Chlamydotis undulata*, Appendix I) with their falconry companies and dorcas gazelles (*Gazella dorcas*, Appendix III in Algeria) with their rifles and all-terrain vehicles. These are both species which have been banned from hunting since 1983. At the time of the alleged events, Ouyahia was Director of Cabinet at the Presidency of the Republic. ObservAlgerie, January 10, 2021; El Watan, January 11, 2021.¹

Mid-March, 2021
Algiers Province, Algeria



Seizure from several private homes and pet shops of 3 tigers (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), 5 lions (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II), 2 fennec foxes (*Vulpes zerda*, Appendix II) and 88 parrots (Psittaciformes, Appendix I or II except for *Agapornis roseicollis*, *Melopsittacus undulatus*, *Nymphicus hollandicus* and *Psittacula krameri*). They were handed over to the Hamma garden. 13 people were brought before the public prosecutor in connection with the seizure. They are suspected of conspiring to traffic internationally protected animals. Algérie eco, March 16, 2021; Elmihwar, March 16, 2021.²

WESTERN AFRICA

COTE D'IVOIRE

January-March 2021
Comoé National Park, Zanzan District, Côte d'Ivoire

55 people were arrested in a park in a 3-month period, including 11 poachers and 35 gold miners. Seizure of panning equipment, weapons and more than a hundred animals or parts of animals, which included specimens such as primates (Primates, Appendix I or II), duikers (genus *Cephalophus*), African buffaloes (*Syncerus caffer*), turacos (family Musophagidae) and hartebeests (*Alcelaphus buselaphus*). More than 90% of those arrested were reportedly fined. Abidjan.net, April 18, 2021.³

SENEGAL

January 26-28 and February 9, 2021
Niokolo-Koba National Park, Tambacounda Region, and Medina Touat, Kolda Region, Senegal



Seizure of a fresh leopard skin (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), 14 hippopotamus teeth (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II), an AK-47 and ammunition. Two arrests of two individuals were trying to sell the wildlife loot and the weapon of war. These events were followed by the seizure of a 2nd leopard skin and the arrest of a national police auxiliary servant. The 2 operations were carried out by the central police station of Tambacounda, agents of the Niokolo-Koba national park with the support of EAGLE Senegal.



A trafficker was sentenced to 6 months in prison for trafficking protected species and an additional 3 months for arms trafficking. The offender was allowed to serve his sentences concurrently. The other two criminals were sentenced to 6 months in prison, 3 of which were suspended. EAGLE, January 29, 2021; Seneweb, February 1, 2021; Senescoop, February 10, 2021.⁴

March 12, 2021

Kahone, Kaolack Region, Senegal

Mixed seizure of hunting trophies and art objects in a Mercedes truck from Mali. Officers of the Regional Water and Forest Inspectorate seized a Nile crocodile head (*Crocodylus niloticus*, Appendix I), 176 skulls of green monkeys (*Chlorocebus sabaeus*, Appendix II), patas monkeys (*Erythrocebus patas*, Appendix II) and Guinea baboons (*Papio papio*, Appendix II). Additionally, there was a confiscation of 900 horns of yellow-backed duiker (*Cephalophus silvicultor*, Appendix II), 4 heads, 4 skins and 40 legs of honey badgers (*Mellivora capensis*, Appendix III in Botswana), 5 heads of golden jackals (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III in Switzerland, India and Liechtenstein), 148 snake heads, 48 horns of bohar reedbeak (*Redunca redunca*) and legs of aardvarks (*Orycteropus afer*), as well as traditional wooden artwork depicting crocodiles and fish.

Adama Bakhayokho, the driver, and Samakho Traoré, the conveyor, were detained for a week and fined 1,680 US\$. All products are believed to have come from Mali.

Agence de Presse Sénégalaise, March 23 and 24, 2021; Dakaractu, March 24, 2021; Senego, March 25, 2021; Sud Quotidien, March 25, 2021; HomeViewSenegal, March 26, 2021.⁵



March 17 and 24, 2021

Kédougou, Kédougou Region, Senegal

Joint operation of the Directorate of National Parks and judicial authorities with the support of EAGLE Senegal. Arrest of 2 traffickers in a hotel, the suspects were holding 3 leopard skins (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), 17 hippopotamus teeth (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) and a spotted hyena skin (family Hyaenidae). One of the suspects is a taxi driver and uses his professional vehicle to transport the contraband. According to them, all the "products" come from the Niokolo-Koba national park. A week later, they were sentenced to 6 months in prison.

Since the beginning of the year, 5 leopard skins and 129 hippopotamus ivories have been seized in Senegal according to EAGLE, a level never reached before 2020, the year of entry into the Covid crisis. Dakaractu, March 18, 2021; EAGLE, March 18, 2021; Ndarinfo, March 24, 2021.⁶



EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

REPEATED OFFENSE

January 7, 2021

Between Isara and Sultan Hamud, Kajiado County, Kenya

Morris Musyoka was sentenced to one year in prison in 2019 for trafficking bushmeat and hunting trophies. He was released early in May 2020 to reduce prison density during Covid and unfortunately, he immediately resumed his activities. The Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI) is investigating him, yet this has not stopped him from pursuing illicit activities. This Thursday night, he was finally arrested on a motorcycle with 200 kg of bushmeat, some from a zebra (genus *Equus*, Grevy's zebra, *Equus grevyi*, Appendix I, is present in Kenya).

42 suspects have been arrested since 2020 in possession of bushmeat or hunting trophies. Seizures of this nature have increased by 56% since the beginning of the Covid pandemic.

Kenya News Agency, January 9, 2021; WorkingAbroad, February 5, 2021.⁷

MOZAMBIQUE

March 29, 2021

Pemba, Cabo Delgado Province, Mozambique

Andre Mariano Baridi, 31, was sentenced to 16 years in prison. He was arrested in possession of traps and hunting equipment for "large animals" in the Niassa special reserve, the largest reserve in Mozambique with an area of 42,000 km². His accomplice managed to escape. 10,000 elephants have allegedly been victims of poachers in this reserve during the past 8 years. Club of Mozambique, March 31, 2021.⁸



UGANDA

REPEATED OFFENSE

March 31, 2021

Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

Owani Pop, known as "Mulema", lost his legs during a poaching accident; yet that wasn't enough to discourage him to continue his activities. It is said that he is the head of a web of poachers stretching west to the Democratic Republic of Congo, north to South Sudan and east to Kenya. He was arrested in possession of several trophies, including rhino horns and crocodile skin (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II). New Vision, March 31, 2021.⁹



April 28 and May 17, 2021

Nkuringo and Kamwenge, Western Region, Uganda

- At a ceremony in Nkuringo, 77 poachers hand over their arrows and spears to Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) agents. Some are said to have poached in Bwindi impenetrable forest national park for more than 10 years. They would have given up this activity because of the risks of imprisonment or death during confrontations with rangers, but also because "they have nothing to show for their activities spanning over a decade apart from getting meat for their own consumption". According to the park superintendent, an awareness program on the damages of poaching would also have played a role in this change of life.

A mountain gorilla (*Gorilla beringei*, Appendix I), "Rafiki", was killed by a poacher in the Bwindi impenetrable forest national park in June 2020 (see "On the Trail" n°29 p.94).

- Almost 3 weeks later, 40 other poachers gave up their activities during a ceremony in Kamwenge and were given hives, goats and carpentry tools in exchange.

The Independent, April 29, 2021; New Vision, May 18, 2021.¹⁰



SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

February 2021

Modderfontein, Gauteng Province, South Africa

The smile is the trademark of the sport hunters as well as their staging. It takes a lot of work and small hands to pose a dead American buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*) and a 1.5 meter-long rifle with such ease. Carl Knight, 47-years-old, English subject living in Johannesburg, founder of Take Aims Safaris, 14,000 US\$ for an elephant, 20,000 US\$ for a lion, Covid special prize, can aspire to the crown of Miss Trophy with the 2 other contestants highlighted in this issue of "On the Trail". The Mirror, February 14, 2021.¹¹



March 20, 2021

Phalaborwa, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Volunteers from the Phalaborwa Natural Heritage Foundation gathered to execute a tramp removal operation. Result: 26 traps removed. Three African buffaloes (*Syncerus caffer*), a spotted hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*) and an African civet (*Civettictis civetta*) were found trapped at the moment of the operation surveillance rounds. Phalaborwa Natural Heritage Foundation NPC, March 28, 2021.¹²



NORTHERN AMERICA

CANADA

OPERATION PIE

Mid-March 2021

Chaleur Bay, Gaspé Peninsula, Province of Quebec, Canada

Dismantling of a multi-level poaching and marketing network thanks to an MFFP (Ministry of Forests, Wildlife and Parks) operation, led by about 40 agents. A hundred people were reportedly arrested after a "long and thorough" investigation. The animals coveted by the secret organization were terrestrial, and included species such as white-tailed deer and moose (*Alces alces*). There were also aerial ones such as ruffed grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*), and aquatic ones, namely, Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*), striped bass (*Morone saxatilis*), rainbow smelt (*Osmerus mordax*) and brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*).

La Presse, March 19, 2021; L'Avantage gaspésien, March 20, 2021; Radio Gaspésie, March 22, 2021.¹³

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 1, 2021

State of California, United States of America



The California Ecosystems Protection Act went into effect, banning the use of rodenticides containing brodifacoum, difethialone, diphenacoum and bromadiolone. However, these substances are still allowed in food plants and warehouses, health care facilities, pharmaceutical laboratories, slaughterhouses and around drinking water reservoirs. SGARs (Second-Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides) will also be allowed to be used in "health emergencies" but are prohibited in restaurants, grocery stores, schools, places of accommodation, and offices where despite a general ban on their sale to consumers in 2014, they were still commonly used. The 2014 ban prohibits the use of these poisons under any circumstances beyond 50 feet from any habitat or other manmade construction

For target animals like mice and rats, death is safe and slow. During their agony or afterwards, they can be captured by owls (*Strigidae*, Appendix I or II), eagles (*Accipitridae*, Appendix I or II), weasels including fishers (*Pekania pennanti*), a protected species, kit foxes (*Vulpes macrotis*), and other omnivores or scavengers. All links in the forest food chain are at risk of death, including pumas (*Puma concolor*, Appendix II) that move closer to cities and bobcats (*Lynx rufus*, Appendix II). The half-life of poisons in the organs of living or dead animals is about 100 days. "Anticoagulants kill the very wildlife that help us control rats and mice. California is taking a giant step to reduce secondary poisoning," enthuses Lisa Owens Viani, director of Raptors Are The Solution. The president of the Pest Control Operators of California (PCOC) says that fear and emotion overtook fact and science. Reckitt, the British producer of SGARs, also used his influence unnecessarily to keep the law from being implemented.

Center for Biological Diversity, March 20, 2014 and December 29, 2020; Pest Management Professional, September 29, 2020; Pest Control Technology, September 30, 2020; World Animal News, January 4, 2021.¹⁴



Fisher (*Pekania pennanti*)

Beginning of January 2021

Newark-Liberty International Airport, State of New Jersey, United States of America

Seizure in the luggage of a U.S. citizen arriving from Ghana of 4 kg of bushmeat. According to the CDC (Center for Disease Control), the meat came from African monkeys, bats and/or rodents.

US Customs and Border Protection, January 5, 2021.¹⁵

March 30, 2021

San Francisco, State of California, United States of America

Furless San Francisco: the federal court rejects the fur industry's appeal against the ban on the sale of animal fur. The scope of the ruling goes beyond San Francisco. It confirms the right of cities and States to ban the sale of fur and other animal parts if they are tainted by cruelty.

The Humane Society of the United States, March 31, 2021.¹⁶

April 28, 2021

Brighton, State of Colorado, United States of America



"Crookston posted photos and videos he took of his hunting adventures to YouTube and other social media sites. He documented every aspect of his hunts, which simplified the investigation," states M. Murdoch, the officer in charge of the case. Douglas R. Crookston, 41, was sentenced to a 41,700 US\$ fine, 2 years of probation and the suspension of his hunting, fishing and trapping privileges for poaching a bear (*Ursidae*, Appendix I or II), 2 pronghorns (*Antilocapra americana*, Appendix I for the populations of Mexico), an elk (*Cervus canadensis*) and 2 mule deers (*Odocoileus hemionus*). Crookston also fraudulently obtained a hunting license by pretending to live in Colorado while he actually resided in Georgia. He gave the address of a friend in Colorado and used a car registered in Colorado on his hunting trips. Colorado Parks & Wildlife, May 18, 2021.¹⁷



End of April 2021

Norman, State of Oklahoma, United States of America

Scandal on East Rock Creek Road.

Seizure of 354 animals including 3 including radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I), 17 lemurs (families Lemuridae, Indriidae ou Lepilemuridae, Appendix I), some geckos (infraorder Gekkota), 4 Egyptian rousettes (*Rousettus aegyptiacus*), 2 bat-eared foxes (*Otocyon megalotis*), 2 African bullfrogs (*Pyxicephalus adspersus*), and 12 camels (genus *Camelus*), 5 kangaroos (family Macropodidae). The animals were moderately deprived of water, food, shelter and veterinary care. They were all evacuated from a kind of private zoo run by a veterinarian, Aaron Stachmus, who practices in Oklahoma City. The most fragile animals had suffered from frostbite during the February cold snap.

Complete Breaking News Channel, May 11, 2021; KTUL ABC 8, May 12, 2021; KWTW News 9, May 12, 2021; The Norman Transcript, May 28, June 22, and September 13, 2021.¹⁸

LATIN AMERICA

ARGENTINA

Beginning of January 2021

Balcarce, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina

More than 300 live and dead animals were seized from a farm on National Road No. 226, namely 2 tigers (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), 10 pumas (*Puma concolor*, Appendix II), one Geoffroy's cat (*Leopardus geoffroyi*, Appendix I), 2 guanacos (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II), 14 red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), 6 axis deer (*Axis axis*), 57 European fallow deer (*Dama dama*, *Dama dama mesopotamica*, Appendix I), 12 antelopes, 150 mouflons, one buffalo, 9 wild boars (*Sus scrofa*), 2 rheas (*Rhea* spp., Appendix I or II), one blue-fronted Amazon (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), one yellow cardinal (*Gubernatrix cristata*, Appendix II), 20 peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), an ultramarine grosbeak (*Cyanoloxia brissonii*), a blue-and-yellow tanager (*Raueia bonariensis*), one goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*), a saffron finch (*Sicalis flaveola*), 3 double-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulescens*), a crested myna (*Acridotheres cristatellus*), 2 common starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*), 2 red-crested cardinals (*Paroaria coronata*), a puma skin, the skin and antlers of an axis deer, 4 stuffed axis deer, the antlers of 4 red deer, the antlers of 14 European fallow deer, a stuffed one and a stuffed blackbuck (*Antilope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Nepal and Pakistan).

The farm was a clandestine breeding. A survey must be done to determine the channels of marketing of animals.

Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, January 6, 2021.¹⁹



January 28, 2021

Bell Ville, Province of Cordoba, Argentina

Seizure of a farm by the environmental police. Amongst the retrieved specimens there were: one rhea (*Rhea* spp., Appendix I or II), 2 European fallow deer (*Dama dama*, *Dama dama mesopotamica*, Appendix I), 11 chital (*Axis axis*), 34 red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), 6 mouflons (genus *Ovis*), 6 buffaloes and 4 patagonian maras (*Dolichotis patagonum*). They were intended for enclosure hunting. No document establishes their origin.

Via País, January 31, 2021.²⁰



End of February 2021

La Carlota, Province of Cordoba, Argentina

57 animals were seized in 5 houses that were searched for wildlife trafficking. They included a blue-fronted Amazon (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), a hooded siskin (*Spinus magellanicus*), some glossy-black thrushes (*Turdus serranus*), creamy-bellied thrushes (*Turdus amaurochalinus*), saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), brushland tinamous (*Nothoprocta cinerascens*), grassland yellow finches (*Sicalis luteola*), argentine black and white tegus (*Salvator merianae*, Appendix II), white-eared opossums (*Didelphis albiventris*), skunks (family Mephitidae), South American gray foxes (*Lycalopex griseus*) and coypus (*Myocastor coypus*). All of them were taken to the Tatú Carreta Rehabilitation and Rescue Centre in Casa Grande, where they will be examined by a veterinarian before their possible release.

La Nueva Mañana, February 25, 2021.²¹

BRAZIL

Mid-January 2021

About fifty kilometers from Bonito, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil

300 kg of meat were discovered in a pick-up. Arrest of 3 men aged between 38 and 65 years holding 4 rifles and 138 rounds of ammunition of different calibers. The meat is being analyzed to confirm that it comes from wild animals.

Campo Grande News, January 15, 2021.²²

REPEATED OFFENSE

January 20, 2021

São Paulo/Guarulhos in International Airport, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure of the luggage of a Russian passenger travelling to Saint Petersburg. The luggage contained 50 lizards of 3 different species, about 50 tarantulas, 25 frogs and 100 invertebrates. The man, who arrived in Brazil in December 2020 and presented himself as a biologist, collected them in the forest areas of the States of São Paulo, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul. He had been arrested before for similar acts in May 2017 at Amsterdam-Schiphol Airport (see "On the Trail" n°17 p. 123), he was heavily monitored by the Brazilian authorities.

Portal R7, January 20, 2021.²³

February 9, 2021

Río de Janeiro, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

During a large-scale operation to combat drug trafficking, police raid a trafficker's home and discovered a tufted capuchin (*Cebus apella*, synonymous with *Sapajus apella*, Appendix II) in a cage. A toucan (family Ramphastidae), 12 birds including green winged saltators (*Saltator similis*) and common waxbills (*Estrilda astrild*). Eleven stolen cars were also seized. During this military operation, 10 suspects were arrested, 4 were killed in the exchange of fire. A skeleton was unearthed. Extra, February 9, 2021.²⁴

Mid-February 2021
Turvo State Park, Derrubadas, State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

Ten skulls of wild animals were discovered in the park. These belonged to peccaries (Tayassuidae, Appendix I or II), capuchins (*Cebus* spp., Appendix II) and pumas (*Puma concolor*, Appendix II) whose teeth have been torn off. At their side, there were ropes and used ammunition. Argentine poachers are suspected. Olhar Animal, February 13, 2021.²⁵



Mid-February 2021
São Gonçalo, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The investigation of the online newspaper RJ1 revealed that some animals were being put up for sale on a Facebook profile called "Menezes Trindade". There were green winged saltators (*Saltator similis*) sold for 150 reais per unit (28 US\$) or 280 reais per couple (52 US\$). There were also turtles (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II) sold at 70 reais per unit (13 US\$), and iguanas (*Iguana* spp., Appendix II) 180 reais per unit (33.6 US\$). Police have opened an investigation to find out who is behind the seller's profile.

Online wildlife trafficking is booming. It is difficult to contain. The police of Rio de Janeiro intervene only in case of flagrante delicto. Sanctions are not a deterrent. A wildlife trafficker on the Internet can face 6 months to a year in prison or a fine of 500 to 5,000 reais (93 US\$ to 930 US\$) per animal seized but these sentences are rarely applied.

G1, February 16, 2021.²⁶

February 22-28, 2021
State of Amapá, Brazil

A joint action carried out by the civil police and the Chico Mendes Institute for the Preservation of Biodiversity (ICM-Bio) resulted in the seizure of 131 kg of wild animal meat of paca (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras), caiman (*Caiman* spp., Appendix I or II), and curassow (genus *Crax*). Arrest of 4 armed individuals and discovery of poaching camps, illegal mines and an airstrip. The patrols ran along the Amapari and the Araguari River. G1, March 12, 2021.²⁷



OPERATION "AGUAS CLARAS" (CLEAR WATERS)

February 26, 2021

Prainha and Porto de Moz, State of Pará, Brazil



Seizure near a reserve "Verde para sempre" of 2 boats from Igarapé-Miri and Almeirim full of nearly 10 tons of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), 436 kg of tambaqui (*Colossoma macropomum*), streaked prochilod (*Prochilodus lineatus*), pacu (*Myleus pacu*), sorubim (genus *Pseudoplatystoma*), 160 kg of capybara meat (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*), 135 kg of caiman meat (*Caiman* spp. Appendix I or II) and a yellow-headed sideneck (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II). Total value of the seizure was estimated at around 365,620 reais (67,125 US\$). The fish was distributed to the communities bordering the reserve and to the inhabitants of Porto de Moz. The meat, on the other hand, has been landfilled.

The "Verde para sempre" and "Renascer" reserves cover 1.5 million hectares. They consist of large alluvial plains regularly flooded by the Amazon. They play a fundamental role in the reproduction of fish.

G1, February 28, 2021.²⁸

February 27, 2021

Mauá, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure of 56 birds, 3 primates and 4 iguanas (*Iguana* spp., Appendix II). Some dead animals were also found in garbage bags. Arrest of Bruno de Lima Ismael and João de Andrade da Silva. They have been charged with the murder of wild animals and abuse.

Repórter Diário, February 28, 2021.²⁹

March 2, 2021

Caseara, State of Tocantins, Brazil

Seizure of a jaguar (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I) and a collared peccary (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II) juveniles from a white Hilux pick-up. The operation occurred at night. The permits presented by the driver did not correspond to the animals he was transporting. He was fined 5500 reais (1,010 US\$).

Folha do Bico, March 3, 2021.³⁰



March 2, 2021

Seropédica, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Scandal surrounding Ibama. In 4 months, 600 animals died at CETAS (Centro de Triagem de Animais Silvestres) in Seropédica. The investigation shows several irregularities, for instance, cages at the center are sometimes overcrowded with over 26 parrots at a time. Additionally, the center's contract for the supply of feed has been suspended and feeding is provided solely through donations. Ibama has 10 days to regularize the reception service, the accommodation and the release of animals suitable for wildlife. G1, March 2, 2021.³¹

March 7, 2021
Atibaia, State of São Paulo, Brazil



Seizure on the Fernão Dias highway of 4 marmosets (*Callithrix* spp., Appendix I or II), 869 turtles (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II), 6 birds, 15 lizards, 6 snakes and 8 bags containing decaying goat meat. Two of the turtles were already dead. The animals were found in the trunk of a bus travelling to São Paulo (2200 km) from Petrolina in Pernambuco. Seven arrests. Olhar Animal, March 9, 2021.³²

March 23, 2021
Samambaia, Federal District, Brazil



Seizure of a marmoset (*Callithrix* spp., Appendix I or II) and a turtle (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II) from a private home. Jornal de Brasília, March 24, 2021.³³

March 27, 2021
Baião, State of Pará, Brazil

Seizure of a toucan (family Ramphastidae, 5 species in Brazil in Appendix II), amazon parrots (*Amazona* spp., Appendix I or II), chestnut-bellied seed finch (*Sporophila angolensis*) and 19 turtles (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II) held for commercial purposes. The operation occurred in a property inside the Ipaú-Anilzinho reserve and it was directed the military police and members of the Chico Mendes Institute (ICMBio). Offenders were given a fine of 35,000 reais (6,530 US\$). In the Reserva Extrativista or RESEX, the land belongs to the State and the inhabitants have the right to engage in traditional activities such as hunting, fishing and harvesting wild plants. G1, March 27, 2021.³⁴

March 27, 2021
Santana, State of Amapá, Brazil

Seizure by the military police in the port area of 135 kg of caiman meat (*Caiman* spp., Appendix I or II) and 66 kg of arapaima meat (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) found in insulated boxes. G1, March 28, 2021.³⁵

April 6, 2021
Juiz de Fora, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

Police seized 2 turtles (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II), 4 frogs, 7 spiders, 5 black-bellied sliders (*Trachemys dorbigni*) and 2 birds. The 22-year-old man had bought them through apps and social media and received them by parcel from Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo. O Tempo, April 6, 2021.³⁶

OPERATION CURUPIRA
23-29 April 2021

Murici, Flexeiras, Colonia Leopoldina, Ibatiguara, São José da Laje, União dos Palmares and Branquinha, State of Alagoas, Brazil

The cumulative amount of the fines is 141,000 reais (26,815 US\$). Results of the 13th edition of "Operation Curupira": 360 cages, 6 traps, 7 firearms, 290 birds, 7 carcasses of paca (genus *Cuniculus*), caiman (Alligatoridae, Appendix I or II), and coati (genus *Nasua*), and 32 animals of the Caatinga.



The Caatinga is a biotope in the northeast of Brazil. It is a subtropical region made up of small thorny trees, cacti and grasses that resist the semi-arid climate. More than 1,200 species live there, amphibians, fish, reptiles and birds. There are also ocelots (*Leopardus pardalis*, Appendix I), jaguarundis (*Herpailurus yagouaroundi*, Appendix I), pumas (*Puma concolor*, Appendix II), brown-throated three-toed sloths (*Bradypus variegatus*, Appendix II), giant anteaters (*Myrmecophaga tridactyla*, Appendix II), Brazilian three-banded armadillos (*Tolypeutes tricinctus*) and black-striped tufted capuchin (*Cebus libidinosus*, Appendix II). G1, May 5, 2021.³⁷

April 27, 2021

São Pedro do Turvo, State of São Paulo, Brazil



A man hid a marmoset in his house (*Callithrix* spp., Appendix I or II), he had tied the animal with a rope. Police also found 22 andean sparrow (*Zonotrichia capensis*) in a cage without water or food. Fine of 10,000 reais (1,865 US\$).

G1, April 28, 2021.³⁸

End of April 2021

Montes Claros, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

As part of the operation “Semper In Agro – Semper No Campo”, police seized 2 hooded siskins (*Spinus magellanicus*) and 3 trophies of gray brocket (*Mazama gouazoubira*). A man was questioned.

G1, April 30, 2021.³⁹

COLOMBIA

Beginning of January 2021

Bogotá, Colombia

Screening of passengers returning from end-of-year holidays at the Bogotá road terminal. Mac, the customs sniffer dog, ousted a yellow-headed amazon (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I) bound for Cali (Valle del Cauca department, 450 km), 12 kg meat from armadillo (family Dasypodidae) and capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*) that was obtained in Yopal (probably from the Casanare estuary) and was being transported to Sahagun (Cordoba department), and 40 eggs and meat from Galapagos giant tortoises (*Chelonoidis niger*, Appendix I).

Infobae, January 12, 2021.⁴⁰

End of January 2021

Bogotá, Colombia

Approval by the Bogotá Council of the regulation prohibiting the marketing of live animals in the city's markets. The sellers are furious. “It's a scandal because with this pandemic, there are a lot of people who no longer have a livelihood and with this ban, it's even worse. It is urgent that we are offered aid”, said one of them.

The ban is said to come into effect in 6 months. Reinforced controls are already planned in the vicinity of the markets.

RCN Radio, January 25, 2021.⁴¹

End of February 2021

Honda, Department of Tolima, Colombia

Seizure of 7 animals living in deplorable conditions in a house: 4 rattlesnakes (genus *Crotalus*), a yellow-headed amazon (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I), a yellow-fronted amazon (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II), a rufous-vented chachalaca (*Ortalis ruficauda*), 2 kg of meat of wild animals, 2 armadillo shells (family Dasypodidae), bones, rattlesnake cascabelles, reproductive organs of reptiles and viscera. The investigation began several months ago following neighborhood alerts reporting suspicious noise and behavior. The occupants of the house were under surveillance. An arrest occurred. The public prosecutor's office is also investigating clients.

Infobae, February 26, 2021.⁴²

Mid-March 2021

Bogotá, Colombia

The city inaugurated its new CAV (Centro de Atención y Valoración de fauna silvestre) visitor center, which can accommodate more than 2,000 wild animals seized from traffickers or private homes. The cost was 37 billion pesos or 10.27 million US\$. In Bogotá, 400 animals are seized every month.

Semana, March 19, 2021.⁴³

April 4, 2021

Bogotá, Colombia

There was a seizure during spring break at El Salitre bus station. The seized objects included 1,851 grams of turtle meat and eggs (*Trachemys callirostris*) and 2 live orange-chinned parakeets (*Brotogeris jugularis*, Appendix II). The parakeets came from Puerto Berrio (department of Antioquia) and the turtle by-products, which according to experts represent 3 specimens, came from the department of Magdalena. The 2 birds were transferred to a rehabilitation center for possible release. Two interpellations.

RCN Radio, April 5, 2021.⁴⁴

COSTA RICA

March 12, 2021

San Antonio of Belén, Heredia Province, Costa Rica

Arrest of a 56-year-old man known as Zumbado. Seizure of some grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I), macaws (*Ara* spp, Appendix I or II), cockatiels (*Nymphicus hollandicus*), pythons (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), monocled cobras (*Naja kaouthia*, Appendix II), rainbow boas (*Epicrates cenchria*, Appendix II), rattlesnakes (genus *Crotalus*), some snakes of the species *Atractus crassicaudatus*, 9 leopard turtoises (*Stigmochelys pardalis*, Appendix II) and 2 skunks. The investigation began in November 2020 following reports that several wild animals were being kept at Zumbado's. In fact, he used them for traveling shows.

Noticias Columbia, March 12, 2021.⁴⁵

Early April 2021

La Cuesta, Puntarenas Province, Costa Rica



The luxurious property of Darwin González Hernández, alias “Pancho Villa”, a big shot drug dealer, is searched, and 2 feline skins including one of puma (*Puma concolor*, Appendix I) and live white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*, *Odocoileus virginianus mayensis*, Appendix III in Guatemala) are seized.

CRHoy.com, April 6, 2021.⁴⁶

ECUADOR

March 26, 2021

Tena, Napo Province, Ecuador

Leodan C. was under arrest for a while. A chestnut-fronted macaw (*Ara severus*, Appendix II), 4 orange-winged amazons (*Amazona amazonica*, Appendix II), a white-lipped peccary (*Tayassu pecari*, Appendix II), 8 black agoutis (*Dasyprocta fuliginosa*) and a capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*) were seized and transferred to several conservation centres in Puyo, Pastaza province. Leodan has to report to the police station every week pending his trial.

Ministry of the Environment, Water and Ecological Transition, 27 March 2021.⁴⁷

FRANCE (FRENCH GUIANA)

End of February, 2021

Crossing of La Comté and Bagot rivers, Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France

The canoe was at the crossing of the Comté, a tributary of the Mahury, and the Bagot, a tributary of the St. Lawrence, when it was checked by OFB agents. On board, 2 men and 7 caimans (*Caiman* spp., Appendix I or II), 4 pacas (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras) and one toucan (family Ramphastidae). All the animals were dead. One of the 2 men was issued a fine for exceeding the quota: it is forbidden to kill more than 3 caimans per day.

French Biodiversity Agency, April 2021.⁴⁸

March 9, 2021

Vila Brasil, Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France

Seizure of 50 kg of “forest meat” poached by Brazilians and intended for the market of Guyanese communities. The seizure occurred thanks to an unprecedented (and described as “promising”) cooperation between the Brazilian and French police.

French Biodiversity Agency, April 2021.⁴⁹

MEXICO

End of February 2021

Playa Azul, State of Oaxaca, Mexico



Seizure of 7 iguanas (*Iguana* spp., Appendix II) and an armadillo (family Dasypodidae) that were found tied in a cardboard box on the beach by a patrol of the Guardia Nacional.

Quadratín, February 20, 2021; El Financiero, February 21, 2021.⁵⁰

March 9, 2021

Mexico City International Airport, Mexico City, Mexico

Seizure by Profepa (Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente) of a package bound for San Antonio, Texas in the United States of America, of 22 products and by-products of hawks (*Accipiter* spp., Appendix II), elf owls (*Micrathene whitneyi*, Appendix II), mockingbirds (genus *Mimus*), cardinals (genus *Cardinalis*), other owls, American gray foxes (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*), rattlesnakes (genus *Crotalus*), tarantulas, bats and turtles. The confiscated products were spotted by X-rays by courier company staff.

Profepa, March 9, 2021.⁵¹

Beginning of March 2021

Mexico

Since the beginning of Covid, PROFEPA, the Federal Attorney General's Office of Environmental Protection, has been overwhelmed by the Internet. Sellers and buyers of wild pets are stepping up their activity and engaging in ugly and compromising gossip that goes unpunished.

A seller of budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*) from Australia is providing tips on social media on how to raise them even though the possession of all parrots and parakeets under 10 years old has been banned in Mexico since 2008. A yellow-headed amazon (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I) is offered on Aves Todo Mexico for 338 US\$. Referred to as a "talking parrot," it is available to be picked up in Guadalajara or to be delivered. A WhatsApp user is looking to purchase a scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*, Appendix I). Spider monkeys (*Ateles spp.*, Appendix I or II) and howler monkeys (*Alouatta spp.*, Appendix I or II) trade for 400 US\$ to 800 US\$. "Living in Mexico City, I am looking to buy a Bengal tiger" (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I). The roads are more or less closed to block the circulation of the virus, but the Internet is the ultimate road to connect with wildlife. On Instagram are seen baby pumas (*Puma concolor*, Appendix II) bottle-feeding and wolf cubs (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) barking. They are crying out for foster parents. This illegal trade often ends with animals being abandoned in the street. Calls for the municipal police to intervene are common, as well as requests for PROFEPA agents who recover animals before handing them over to zoos or UMAs (Unidades de Manejo para la Conservación de la Vida Silvestre). In some cases, animals that have been discarded or abused are returned to the trafficking circuit soon afterwards. InSight Crime, March 4, 2021.⁵²

April 22, 2021

Mexico City, Mexico

Operation at the San Lázaro de la Venustiano Carranza market, a place well known for its commercialization of pets, animals, and by-products. The seizure included a parrot (*Amazona spp.*, Appendix I or II), 3 orange-fronted conures (*Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II), 43 songbirds and ornamental birds of different species and 107 other animals including: crocodiles (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II), monitor lizards (*Varanus spp.*, Appendix I or II), boa constrictors (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II), green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), turtles of 7 species, lizards (family Lacertidae), chamaeleons (family Chamaeleonidae), geckos (infraorder Gekkota) and tarantulas (genus *Lycosa*).

Profepa, April 22, 2021.⁵³



EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

Beginning of January 2021

Zhangping, Longyan Prefecture, Fujian Province, China

A trafficker was sentenced to 12 years and 8 months in prison and given a fine equal to 61,300 US\$ for having illegally acquired and sold 13 shells of sea turtle and parts of Chinese serow (*Capricornis milneedwardsii*, Appendix I) and pangolin. The incidents happened between 2018 and 2019. Chinanews (with Xinhua), January 11, 2021.⁵⁴



January 29, 2021

Qingdao, Qingdao Prefecture, Shandong Province, China

In October 2020, an offender was given a 3-year suspended sentence. His offense was serving pangolin, bear (Ursidae, Appendix I or II), and monocled cobra (*Naja kaouthia*, Appendix II) in his restaurant. As part of the "Qingdao Innovation", he was just sentenced under compensatory measures to 60 days of community service for ecological damage. He will have to promote the law on the protection of wildlife in the restaurants of the district. At the end, the court will evaluate the effectiveness of the work, reserving the possibility of prolonging it in case it has been intermittent and of poor quality.

The Paper, January 29, 2021.⁵⁵



February 2021

Kunming Changshui International Airport, Kunming Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China



Seizure of 283.6 grams of swallow nests and 137.3 grams of deer antlers in a passenger's luggage. Chinese Customs, February 23, 2021.⁵⁶

February 5, 2021

Guangdong Province, China

The province instituted a reward system to motivate people to inform the authorities with supporting evidence of wildlife transactions including on the Internet, of illegal exhibitions or wildlife farming that do not comply with the law. Rewards range from 3,000 to 10,000 yuan (465 US\$ to 1,545 US\$). The anonymity of the informants and the exact amount of the reward remain confidential.

A similar system of incitement to denunciations is in force in the United States of America through the TIP Programme ("Turn in Poachers").

Global Times, February 9, 2021.⁵⁷

February 6, 9 and March 11, 2021

Conghua, Aotou, and Guangzhou, Guangzhou Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 19 Chinese hwamei (*Garrulax canorus*, Appendix II), songbirds, 19 yellow pond turtles (*Mauremys mutica*, Appendix II), freshwater turtles, and 3 Reeves' turtles (*Mauremys reevesii*, Appendix III in China), land turtles. The offenders were 4 individuals who worked in a network that collected animals from fields and ponds to sale via the Internet.

Chinanews, March 17, 2021.⁵⁸

March 3, 2021

Paitan, Guangzhou Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China



Seizure of leopard cats (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II) and king cobras (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II) that were butchered after being captured in cages and traps. It is unclear if the offender traded his prey for profit or if he reserved them for personal and family consumption.

Guangzhou Daily, May 4, 2021.⁵⁹



March 29, 2021

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Guangdong Province, China



Seizure of 6 worked ivories (734 grams) and about forty dried seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II) (77 grams). China Customs, March 30, 2021.⁶⁰

March-September 2021

Leling, Shandong Province and Beijing Autonomous Municipality, China



Thirty arrests in 23 provinces. Seizure of a good thousand teeth from sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) and seals (family Phocidea). Additional confiscations included worked ivories and taxidermy mounts of hawksbill turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I). The investigation began in March 2021 in Leling with the seizure of raw, semi-raw and worked ivories. It continued in Beijing in a cutting and carving workshop that used smuggled ivory from Viet Nam. The items were offered for sale on the Internet. The total value of the seizures is estimated at 3 million yuan or 465,000 US\$. The most expensive piece is a rhino horn cup seized in Leling. Lightning News, November 8, 2021.⁶¹



April 2021

Qingdao, Qingdao Prefecture, Shandong Province, China



Seizures of 4 worked ivories, painting scrolls with ivory tips, 5 jewelry pieces containing hawksbill turtle scales (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I), of an erhu with a python skin resonance box (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II) and 7 small rosewood furniture pieces. Chinese Customs, May 7, 2021.⁶²

April 25, 2021

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Shenzhen Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China



Seizures of crocodile skin accessories (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II), jewellery made of giant clam shells (Tridacnidae, Appendix II), and ivory. Chinese Customs, April 26, 2021.⁶³

SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

CAMBODIA

Mid-February 2021

Sihanoukville Province, Cambodia

Joint operation of the rangers and the special wildlife unit. Seizure of 3 live box turtles (*Cuora* spp., Appendix I or II), one Asian leaf turtle (*Cycllemys dentata*, Appendix II). In addition, over 70 kg of meat coming from two-banded monitor lizard (*Varanus salvator*, Appendix II), green peafowls (*Pavo muticus*, Appendix II), small Indian civet (*Viverricula indica*, Appendix III in India) and Indian muntjac (*Muntiacus muntjak*) was seized from 5 roadside restaurants and 2 markets.

Wildlife Crime Hotline, February 18, 2021.⁶⁴



April 2021

Cardamom Protected Forest, Cambodia

Seizure of 565 traps, homemade rifles, an Asian leaf turtle (*Cycllemys dentata*, Appendix II) and 5 kg of hog badger (*Arctonyx collaris*) meat. The confiscation occurred in a bivouac camp of woodcutters and poachers.

Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, March 14, 2021.⁶⁵



INDONESIA

January 8, 2021

Kedungbanteng Sub-District, Banyumas Regency, Central Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia

Seizure of 8 Sunda porcupines (*Hystrix javanica*) that were for sale on the Internet for 500,000 to one million rupiah per specimen or 35 to 70 US\$. Additionally, a pangolin and 4 firearms were confiscated. The offender is also a presumed dealer of raptors.

Tribunnews.com, January 9-10, 2021; Mongabay, January 11, 2021.⁶⁶



January 24, 2021

Nagari Alahan Panjang, Solok Regency, West Sumatra Province, Indonesia

Seizure of 4.7 kg of pangolin scales, 2 agile gibbons (*Hylobates agilis*, Appendix I), 32 greater green leafbird (*Chloropsis sonnerati*), one blue-winged leafbird (*Chloropsis cochinchinensis*) and one blue-masked leafbird (*Chloropsis venusta*) at the home of the operator of a bird shop. The value of one kilogram of pangolin scales in Jakarta is as high as 2 million rupiah or 142 US\$ and 42 million rupiah or 3,000 US\$ in China according to the provincial director of criminal investigation.

Antara News, January 25, 2021; iNews Sumbar, January 26, 2021.⁶⁷



February 17 and 19, 2021

Jambi, Jambi Province and Dharmasraya Regency, West Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Dismantling of a wildlife crime syndicate. Seizure of 133 kg of pangolin scales and a Malayan sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I).

iNews, February 25, 2021; Fajar Online, February 26, 2021.⁶⁸



March 2, 2021

Surabaya City, East Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia

285 south Asian box turtles (*Cuora amboinensis*, Appendix II), 6 white cockatoos (*Cacatua alba*, Appendix II), 19 violet-necked lorries (*Eos squamata*, Appendix II), 313 grosbeak starlings (*Scissirostrum dubium*) and 10 white-faced doves (*Turacoena manadensis*) are being observed in the Surabaya quarantine center. The birds and turtles were brought to the island of Java by car ferry from Makassar (South Sulawesi Province). The journey took at least 30 hours. They were seized upon arrival in the port of Surabaya. The violet-necked lorry lives in mangroves and mountains up to 1,000 meters above sea level. It feeds mainly on pollen, nectar and fruits. It lives in couples or in families of 10 individuals. It flies from island to island based on food opportunities.

Tribun Jatim, March 2, 2021; Jawa Pos, March 3, 2021.⁶⁹



**Beginning of March 2021
Blangkejeren and Pining Districts,
Gayo Lues Regency, Aceh Province,
Sumatra Island, Indonesia**



Arrest of 2 accomplices in wildlife trafficking: 78 claws and 35 teeth of Malayan sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I), a fragment of tiger skin (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), 31 great argus feathers (*Argusianus argus*, Appendix II) and 4 serow horns (genus *Capricornis*) were confiscated. The Sumatran serow (*Capricornis sumatraensis*) is listed in Appendix I. Kumparan, March 3, 2021.⁷⁰



**March 31, and November 2, 2021
North Padang Lawas Regency, North
Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island,
Indonesia**



WALHI (Indonesian Environmental Forum) and the Medan Legal Aid Institute (LBH Medan Ismail Lubis) accuse the ecotourism company Nuansa Alam Nusantara (NAN) of commercially housing without authorization an orangutan (*Pongo spp*, Appendix I), at least one Komodo monitor (*Varanus komodoensis*, Appendix I), elephants, cockatoos (Cacatuidae, Appendix I or II), birds of paradise (Paradisaeidae, Appendix II) and cassowaries (family Casuariidae) without permission and for commercial purposes. The plaintiffs are demanding the equivalent of 70,000 US\$ to help restore the orangutans' natural habitats, they request a public apology in the media, and they want NAN to organize traveling exhibits about wildlife trafficking. The strategy is unprecedented in Indonesia. It aims to have the courts take into consideration the ecological damage and to oblige the alleged zoo operator to contribute to the public interest instead of demanding a criminal penalty, which in this case would not exceed 49 million rupiah or 3,500 US\$. The trial had some unexpected developments. NAN's lawyers demonstrated that the orangutan in captivity had been temporarily entrusted to NAN by BKSDA (Balai Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam), the State wildlife protection agency. According to the testimony of a BKSDA official, the juvenile orangutan, when he was seized from the traffickers, was in very poor health. His life was in danger. Transporting him by road to a veterinary clinic in Medan would have taken at least 12 hours and would have put the orangutan at risk of death. He was entrusted to NAN who took care of him at its own expense. WALHI's and LBH's lawyers have been dismissed and NAN's director, Sony Setiawan, has pledged that when the refuge opens to the public, he will provide educational activities for visitors. He also believes that this attraction will contribute to the economic development of the regency (220,000 inhabitants). This is all well and good, but Sony Setiawan does not plan to release the animals currently in his care after a period of rehabilitation.

Tribun-Medan, April 6, 2021; Walhi Sumatera Utara, April 13, 2021; The Conversation, June 3, 2021; Berita Terkini Demokrasi Republik, September 28, 2021; MedanBisnisDaily, November 3, 2021.⁷¹

**April 14, 2021
Pasaman, Pasaman Regency, West
Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island,
Indonesia**



Seizure of 35 kg of pangolin scale and 3 helmeted hornbill helmets (*Rhinoplax vigil*, Appendix I). Arrest of Joni Asmadi (44) and Repison Anwar (59).

FLIGHT – Protecting Indonesia's Birds, April 17, 2021; IJN.CO.ID, April 20, 2021; iNews Sumbar, April 21, 2021.⁷²



MALAYSIA

**March 9, 2021
Batu Berendam, State of Malacca,
Malaysia**



A restaurant-zoo had the necessary permits for the legal possession of raccoons (*Procyon lotor*), prairie dogs (genus *Cynomys*), meerkats (*Suricata suricatta*), sugar gliders (*Petaurus breviceps*), hedgehogs (family Erinaceidae), flying squirrels (family Sciuridae), lizards, hamsters, rabbits and chinchillas. Nevertheless, the chief of operations of the establishment received a warning and a reminder of the requirements to legally compel to these permits after some videos were posted on Facebook proving that customers could pet the animals in the restaurant. This kind of "speed dating" with wild and some exotic animals is part of the traffickers' marketing.

The Star, March 10, 2021.⁷³

**March 25, 2021
Tawau, State of Sabah, Malaysia**



The MACC (Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission) arrested a man who had deposited 5,000 ringgit or 1,240 US\$ in the car of an investigator. The corruptor's aim was to lighten the charges against a friend (or accomplice?) suspected of possessing and trading Malayan sun bears (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I), crocodiles (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II), pythons (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), birds including eagles (Accipitridae, Appendix I or II), pigeons (family Columbidae), hill myna (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II) and hedgehogs (family Erinaceidae).

New Straits Times, March 26, 2021; The Star, March 26-27, 2021; Daily Express, March 27, 2021.⁷⁴

SINGAPORE

March 17, 2021

Ang Mo Kio, North-East Region, Singapore

Muhammad Irfan Khairudin was fined 2,275 US\$ for using his apartment as a clandestine pet store. He sold fighting fish (*Betta splendens*), fish from the tropical fresh waters of Southeast Asia at 15 US\$ per unit, and also commercialized Central bearded dragons (*Pogona vitticeps*) from Australia, the last were smuggled from Johor Bahru in Malaysia. Additional charges include damage costs for up to 15,000 S\$, or 11,400 US\$ and/or 6 months in prison. Channel News Asia, March 17, 2021.⁷⁵



THAILAND

January 2021

Pak Tho District, Ratchaburi Province, Thailand

Arrest of Thanasit Sripatchim. He held in a storage room, among other wildlife by-products, skins and fragments of tiger skin (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) and leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensi*, Appendix II), barking deer (genus *Muntiacus*), 189 quills of Malayan porcupine (*Hystrix brachyura*). The total value of the seizure is estimated at 124,620 baht or 4,160 US\$. Bangkok Post, January 22, 2021.⁷⁶



February 3, 2021

Ban Pom Subdistrict, Khiri Mat District, Sukhothai Province, Thailand

Following several offers published on a Facebook page, there was a seizure of some slow loris (*Nycticebus* spp., Appendix I), 2 barn owls (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II), Alexandrine parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II), changeable hawk-eagle (*Spizaetus cirrhatus*, Appendix II), brown tortoises (*Manouria emys*, Appendix II) and a Southeast Asian box turtle (*Cuora amboinensis*, Appendix II). Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, February 5, 2021.⁷⁷

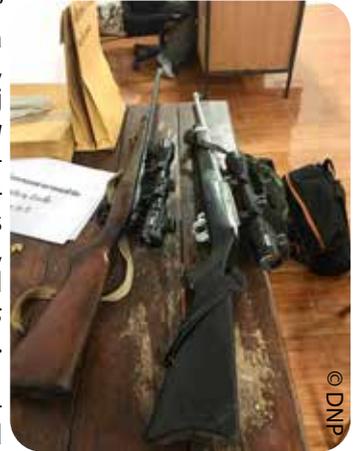


February 5-6, 2021

Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary, Uthai Thani and Tak Provinces, Thailand

Seizure at a poachers' bivouac of a hill myna (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II), a Kalij pheasant (*Lophura leucomelanos*, Appendix III in Pakistan), 4 blue-throated barbets (*Megalaima asiatica*), 10 dead gray-bellied squirrels (*Callosciurus caniceps*) and firearms. Two arrests.

Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, February 7, 2021.⁷⁸



February 19, 2021

Rom Mueang Sub-District, Phatthalung Province, Thailand. Border with Malaysia.

Seizure at a private home of great argus feathers (*Argusianus argus*, Appendix II) and parts of some leopard (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), clouded leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*, Appendix I), Asian golden cat (*Catopuma temminckii*, Appendix I), tiger (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I), Malayan sun bears (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I), Sunda pangolin (*Manis javanica*, Appendix I), elephant, crocodile (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II) and hornbill (family Bucerotidae). This seizure followed the arrest of Thanasit Sripatchim (see above). The Nation Thailand, February 20, 2021.⁷⁹



February 22, 2021

Bang Kloi, Kaeng Krachan National Park, Phetchaburi Province, Thailand

Tensions rise in the Kaeng Krachan park created in 1981 (2915 km²). Elephants, tigers, leopards, clouded leopards, Asiatic wild dogs (*Cuon alpinus*, Appendix II), bantengs (*Bos javanicus*), Siamese crocodiles (*Crocodylus siamensis*, Appendix I), yellow-headed tortoises (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II) and Asian giant tortoises (*Manouria emys*, Appendix II) live there, and Karen people used to live there. They were theoretically expelled from the park but are returning, setting up temporary camps and carrying out activities incompatible with the park's purpose. In a single day, on January 23, 34 rai or 54,400 m² of forest were burnt to make way for shifting cultivation and a month later 4 Karen people were arrested. When they entered the park, they were carrying gunpowder and lead bullets. They are suspected of fueling poaching. The arrest took place a few days after the start of a consultation aimed at resolving the use disputes in the park and after a peaceful demonstration in front of the Bangkok Arts and Culture Centre.

Kaeng Krachan national park, see "On the Trail" n°1 p.27, n°10 p.63, n°16 p.87, n°17 p.50, n°25 p.58, n°27 p.62 and Covid-19 Special Edition p.22.

Bangkok Post, February 22, 2021.⁸⁰

March 1, 2021

Pang Toi, Sri Lanna National Park, Chiang Mai Province, Thailand



Seizure at a poachers' shelter of 3 motorcycles, a firearm, ammunition, 3 knives, flashlights, methamphetamine and heroin. Only the remains of wild animals were missing. Five arrests. Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, March 2, 2021.⁸¹



April 16, 2021

Ton Nga Chang Wildlife Sanctuary, Songkhla Province, Thailand. Border with Malaysia.

Night seizure of a dusky leaf monkey (*Trachypithecus obscurus*, Appendix II), a black giant squirrel (*Ratufa bicolor*, Appendix II) and a cream-coloured giant squirrel (*Ratufa affinis*, Appendix II)



that were being transported on a motorcycle. Arrest of Somnuk Phan Nuan.

Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, April 17, 2021.⁸²

April 26, 2021

Ban Pak Huai, Loei Province, Thailand. Border with Laos.



Arrest of a woman. She carried 8 Bengal monitor lizards (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I) and 6 shrew-faced squirrels (*Rhinosciurus laticaudatus*) in 3 bags.

Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, April 27, 2021.⁸³

VIET NAM

**Beginning of January 2021
Nghê An Province, Viet Nam**

Seizure of 4 pangolins and 4 bear paws (Ursidae, Appendix I or II). A young man was arrested, he would regularly go to Laos to collect the "goods".

Nghê An TV, January 8, 2021; ENV, January 11, 2021.⁸⁴



**January 23, 2021
Hanoi, Viet Nam**

Seizure of a jar of alcohol impregnated with 4 bear paws (Ursidae, Appendix I or II) and pangolin organs. N.Q.H. Luyen said that he received 1.2 million dong (52 US\$) from Nguyen Tien Dat to transport the jar from Ninh Binh to Hanoi, some 100 km away. Dat said he bought the wildlife alcohol on social media and sold it to an unidentified correspondent in Hanoi for VND17 million or 740 US\$.

Trung tam Con nguoi va Thien nhien, 19 May 2021.⁸⁵



**Beginning of February 2021
Thanh Hoa Province, Viet Nam**

Search of a private home results in the seizure of 64 dead animals including a monitor lizard (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II), leopard cats (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II) and flying squirrels (tribe Pteromyini). ENV, February 9, 2021.⁸⁶



**February 2, 2021
Nha Trang, Khanh Hoa Province, Viet Nam**

Rescue of 2 lorises (*Nycticebus* spp., Appendix I) and a python (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II) used as a customer catcher at a restaurant door. ENV, February 2, 2021.⁸⁷

**March 8, 2021
Lam Dong Province, Viet Nam**

Sentence to 12 months in prison for possession of a live pangolin and 21.5 kg of alleged monkey feet found at a home (see "On the Trail" n°30 p. 170). ENV, March 9, 2021.⁸⁸



SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

**January 3 and 4, 2021
Tilli and Mohgaon, Gondia District,
State of Maharashtra, India**

A carcass was found floating in a well. It was leopard, 2 of his paws had been amputated. Next to it, there was the skull of a nilgai (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) whose 4 legs were also removed and left on the side of the boides.

A decapitated leopard with 2 paws amputated was also found.

The 3 animals were reportedly electrocuted on the estate of Deochand Sonwane by a farmer. The 2 villages are in the buffer zone of the Navegaon-Nagzira tiger reserve. While the zone was officially registered in September 2016, it is still not under the guardianship of wildlife conservators; this is a violation of the National Tiger Conservation Authority guidelines. Honorary wildlife warden in Gondia district, Sawan Bahekar, laments the lack of dialogue between villagers and forest officials. "Farmers keep electric fence active during the night to save their crops from wild boars", "Maharashtra and MP top the chart in deaths due to electrocution." The Times of India, January 4 and 5, 2021.⁸⁹



**January 8, 2021
Samapali, Deogarh District, State of
Odisha, India**



An off-duty forest ranger was fatally electrocuted when he touched an electric fence that was supposed to kill wild animals and protect crops when approaching a vegetable garden run by his brother. The accident occurred on Friday. The electrical deterrent had been installed on Thursday without the ranger Pradeep Pradhan's knowledge. The Pioneer, January 10, 2021.⁹⁰

**January 22, 2021
Vairengte, Kolasib District, State of Mizoram,
India**

During a road check, a Tata Sumo car was searched. Its search culminated in the seizure of 30 "exotic" birds and a red-eared Guenon (*Cercopithecus erythrotis*, Appendix II), a small monkey native to Central Africa. The monkey's range covers Nigeria, Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea. Lawyers for the two suspects, while acknowledging that the animals are listed in the Appendices of the CITES Convention, immediately pointed out that the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 does not apply to exogenous animals. They were allegedly brought onto Indian soil through the border with Myanmar. East Mojo, January 27, 2021.⁹¹



**January 23, 2021
Hisar, Fatehabad, Sirsa and Bhiwani
Districts, State of Haryana, India**



411 blackbucks (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Nepal and Pakistan), 68 Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), 35 chinkaras (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III in Pakistan), 74 monkeys (species unspecified), 2,005 nilgais (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), and 89 other animals were poached between January 1, 2016, and December 31, 2020, in 4 districts that cover 14. 200 km² and have a population of about 6,400,000 people or a density of 450 people per km². The situation is critical for the Indian gazelles or chinkaras which are resisting poaching thanks to the vigilance of the Bishnoi around the villages of Lilas and Sainivas in the Bhiwani district. The Times of India, January 23, 2021.⁹²

**January 27, 2021
Rodasinga, Angul District, State of
Odisha, India**



He had left on Wednesday evening to go poaching with a battery and cables. Worried that he had not returned to the village, family members went looking for him on Thursday morning and discovered his body. The Pioneer, a local media outlet, says he electrocuted himself. The Pioneer, January 29, 2021.⁹³

January 30, 2021

Vadodara, Vadodara District, State of Gujarat, India

Seizure of 9 parakeets and one monkey (species unspecified) held by an individual. A joint team from the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau and the District Forestry Division was involved.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), February 1, 2021.⁹⁴

January 30, 2021

Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve, Erode District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Elephant tusks; deer antlers; teeth, claws and jaws from a leopard (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) skin; tiger (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) teeth and claws had all been removed from the carcasses of the slaughtered animals after autopsies to prevent looting of the remains. The removed parts were burnt in the presence of tiger reserve managers, NGO representatives and local communities. A fake tiger skin was also thrown into the pyre.

The Hindu, January 30, 2021.⁹⁵

January 30, 2021

Shirpora, Anantnag District; Manwal, Udhampur District, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, India

Eight leopard skins (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I); 4 preputial glands of Himalayan musk deer (*Moschus leucogaster*, Appendix I), and 38 bear gall bladders (Ursidae, Appendix I or II) believed to be 8 years old were seized from the house of Gul Mohammad Ganaie.

Five skins, 7 claws, 8 canines, 2 molars, 2 skulls, 4 jawbones, 140 leopard bones and one tooth of Himalayan musk deer were seized from the house of Kushal Hussain.

Greater Kashmir, January 30, 2021; Kashmir Reader, January 30, 2021; Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), January 30, 2021; Rising Kashmir, January 31, 2021; The Northlines, January 31, 2021.⁹⁶



Beginning of March 2021

Guna, Guna District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India



Trafficking of wild animal organs in a grocery store. The court refused the release on bail of the 2 offenders and sent them to prison as they await their trial. In the middle of the vegetables and spices section, they sold elephant molars and anatomical parts of other wild animals. The Free Press Journal, March 14, 2021.⁹⁷

March 4, 2021

Varca, South Goa District, State of Goa, India

One white-bellied sea-eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*, Appendix II), one Indian giant squirrel (*Ratufa indica*, Appendix II), one black kite (*Milvus migrans*, Appendix II), 7 plum-headed parakeets (*Psittacula cyanocephala*, Appendix II), a vernal hanging-parrot (*Loriculus vernalis*, Appendix II), 12 black-headed munias (*Lonchura atricapilla*), and 6 rose-ringed parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*) were on display at an outdoor amusement park. They were seized and released back into the wild. Animal trainers Bruno Fernandes and Blevia Fernandes were released on bail with a bond of 50,000 rupees each or 690 US\$. Goemkarponn, March 6, 2021; The Times of India, 7 and 15 March 2021.⁹⁸

March 16, 2021

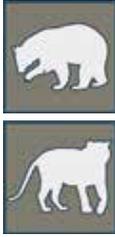
Ghiladhari, Golaghat District, State of Assam, India

The Amazon surfaces in Assam, north-eastern India. Seizure of a pair of hyacinth macaws (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*, Appendix I), 4 silver marmosets (*Callithrix argentata*, Appendix II) and a pair of golden-headed lion tamarins (*Leontopithecus chrysomelas*, Appendix I). All these animals are from the State of Bahia (Brazil).

On 19 February, the Assam Rifles seized 80 reptiles smuggled from Myanmar in the State of Mizoram (see page 198). The demand for exotic species is growing rapidly. This is evidenced by the "Smuggling in India Report 2019-2020". The report cites, "there is an unfortunate and increasing trend in smuggling of endangered and exotic fauna from different parts of the world in India. Since there is a complete ban on trade in Indian species, interest of the smugglers has shifted to exotic species, which has led to disastrous global environmental consequences. The long international border and air routes are used to source consignments from Bangkok, Malaysia and other tourist destinations in Southeast Asia as well as from Europe, from where they are sent to major cities like Kolkata, Chennai, Hyderabad, Delhi, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Kochi, etc." Exogenous species in India, see "On the Trail" n°4 p.47, n°9 p.42, n°14 p.22, n°16 p.34, n°19 p.22, n°20 p.24 and 124, n°23 p.28, n°25 p.113, n°26 p.40 and 55, n°27 p.122, n°29 p.124 and 125, n°30 p.97, 116 and 171, n°31 p.128, 129 and 130 Northeast Now, March 16, 2021; Mongabay, April 20, 2021.⁹⁹

March 16, 2021

Sangti, West Kameng District, State of Arunachal Pradesh, India



Sangti is a village at 1,500 meters of altitude. The last census 10 years ago spoke of 630 inhabitants and 155 households. Among them was a taxidermist. In his house were seized skins of Himalayan black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) and a leopard skin (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I). On his cell phone, the police found pictures of skins of clouded leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*, Appendix I), red panda (*Ailurus fulgens*, Appendix I) and otter (*Lutra* spp., Appendix I or *Aonyx cinerea*, Appendix I). Is the taxidermist also a poacher? Or is he acting downstream of an active network in the mountains? The fur market is flourishing in Itanagar, the State capital, and in the Sangti Valley, which flows into the Dirang.

Northeast Now, March 18, 2021.¹⁰⁰

April 4, 2021

Indore District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India



Arrest after a long investigation of Ramcharan, Vishnu, Ramesh and Rajendra, and seizure of a "rare" turtle, 6 boar jaws, 2 guns, 3 swords, 2 knives, ammunition, and bloody clothes. The detainees are suspected of poaching a leopard (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) in July 2020. The leopard's head was riddled with 46 bullets. The Free Press Journal, April 4, 2021; The Hitavada, April 4, 2021.¹⁰¹

April 13, 2021

Nagpur, Nagpur District, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure of 2 Indian roofed turtle (*Pangshura tecta*, Appendix I) and 7 plum-headed parakeets (*Psittacula cyanocephala*, Appendix II). Arrest of 3 young people.

The Times of India, April 15, 2021.¹⁰²

April 18, 2021

Patha Savli, Nirmal District, State of Telangana, India

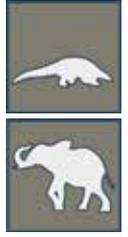


Poachers were waiting for wild animals near a waterhole. They killed a peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) and 2 spotted deer (*Axis axis*). Two arrests. Three accomplices fled.

Telangana Today, April 18, 2021.¹⁰³

April 19 and 20, 2021

Khlieh Umstem and Nongpoh, Ri Bhoi District, State of Meghalaya, India



Seizure at the home of an Assam Rifles jawan of 4 live Chinese pangolins (*Manis pentadactyla*, Appendix I), one of which, seriously injured, died a few hours later; 44.28 kg of scales; and 43 dead Tokay geckos (*Gekko gekko*, Appendix II). This was followed by the seizure of 2 sections of elephant tusk of 3.3 kg. Ten arrests.

The network's usual smuggling routes were blocked by the Covid lockdown. The Wildlife Trust of India has spotted a spike in offers on social media. The WCCB continued the investigation. Undercover buyers set up traps to confuse the suspects. They met them in isolated houses outside Shillong, the State capital.

East Mojo, April 23, 2021; Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), April 23, 2021; The Times of India, 23 April 2021; Time8, April 24, 2021; Deccan Herald, May 25, 2021.¹⁰⁴



To be noticed among the seized tools, the pan that could have been used to descale pangolins.

April 28, 2021

Saligramam, Chennai District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure by the WCCB of 56 grams of "gorochan" (or "bezoar", a compact accumulation in the digestive system of plant fibers or undigested hair) from gaur or Indian bison (*Bos gaurus*, Appendix I), 13 grams of preputial gland from Himalayan musk deer (*Moschus leucogaster*, Appendix I), 2 grams of "punugu" (anal gland secretion of civet, family Viverridae) and 2 grams of ambergris (intestinal concretion of the sperm whale, *Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I), all these 4 substances are used in perfumery.

The Times of India, April 29, 2021; Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), May 4, 2021.¹⁰⁵

PAKISTAN

March 5, 2021

Rawalpindi, Province of Punjab, Pakistan



Search at a taxidermist domicile. Seizure of 4 leopard skins (*anthera pardus*, Appendix I), a tiger skin (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), a lion skin (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II), a Punjab urial skin (*Ovis punjabiensis*, Appendix II), an Indian gazelle skin (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III in Pakistan), a nilgai skin (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), a markhor (*Capra falconeri*, Appendix I), a Himalayan ibex (*Capra sibirica*, Appendix III in Pakistan) and a stuffed Indian peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan). Dawn, March 6, 2021; Samaa, March 6, 2021.¹⁰⁶



SRI LANKA

January 12, 2021

Near Lunugamwehera National Park, Uva Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 58 kg of fresh bushmeat and 2.5 kg of smoked bushmeat. Arrest of a sergeant and 2 soldiers.

Ceylon Today, January 13, 2021.¹⁰⁷

WESTERN ASIA

SAUDI ARABIA

February 16, 2021

Saudi Arabia

Reinforcement of poaching sanctions. 400,000 riyals (106,700 US\$) for an Arabian leopard (*Panthera pardus nimr*, Appendix I – see felines chapter), 3,000 riyals (800 US\$) for a gecko or spiny-tailed lizard (*Uromastyx* spp., Appendix II), 1000 riyals (270 US\$) for an African olive pigeon (*Columba arquatrix*). Saudi Gazette, February 16, 2021.¹⁰⁸

TURKEY

March 18, 2021

Ankara Esenboğa International Airport, Ankara Province, Turkey



Seizure in the luggage of a passenger coming from abroad of 195 beaver skins and 55 fox skins. RayHaber, March 18, 2021.¹⁰⁹

End of March 2021

Turkey

Reinforcement of fines for the poaching of protected species: 267,000 Turkish liras (33,600 US\$) for an urial (*Ovis aries*), 60,000 liras (7,565 US\$) for a wild goat (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), 35,000 liras (4,410 US\$) for an Anatolian red deer (*Cervus elaphus anatolica*), 30,000 liras (3,780 US\$) for a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II), 26,500 liras (33,40 US\$) for a striped hyena (*Hyaena hyaena*, Appendix III in Pakistan), 13,200 liras (1,665 US\$) for a wild cat (*Felis silvestris*, Appendix II), 8,500 to 16,000 liras (i.e. between 1,070 and 2,000 US\$) for a viper (family Viperidae), 15,000 liras (i.e. 1,890 US\$) for an Eurasian sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*, Appendix II), 10,500 liras (i.e. 1,320 US\$) for a bald ibis (*Geronticus eremita*, Appendix I), 6,600 liras (i.e. 830 US\$) for a crane (Gruidae, Appendix I or II), 16,000 liras (i.e. 2,000 US\$) for a Mediterranean monk seal (*Monachus monachus*, Appendix I). Hürriyet Daily News, March 26, 2021.¹¹⁰

NORTHERN EUROPE

UNITED KINGDOM

Beginning of March 2021

Sussex County, England, United Kingdom

Seizure as part of an investigation by the National Wildlife Crime Unit of a stuffed crocodile (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II), a crocodile skull, a marine turtle shell (Appendix I) and a sawfish rostrum (Pristidae, Appendix I).

Sussex Police Rural Crime Team, March 9, 2021.¹¹¹



WESTERN EUROPE

AUSTRIA

April 27, 2021

Gmunden District, Upper Austria State, Austria

A 66-year-old fisherman was accused of poaching European otters (*Lutra lutra*, Appendix I), black storks (*Ciconia nigra*, Appendix II), common mergansers (*Mergus merganser*) and grey herons (*Ardea cinerea*) between 2017 and 2021. When confronted about his actions, the offender said he just wanted to protect the fish in his pond from natural predators. He was denounced.

ORF, 27 April 2021; Kurier, April 27, 2021.¹¹²

FRANCE

January 19, 2021

Charleville-Mezieres, Department of Ardennes, France

In 2020, two men in their sixties were detained after being found guilty of the possession of some exotic bird species. Their seized collection included 3 long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) that weighted between 4 and 5 kilograms, and also one blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II). The specimens were found inside cramped cages and they were all tied by their legs to prevent them from escaping (see "On the Trail" n°28 p.134). This January, the two offenders finally received their sentence, they face a 3-month suspended prison sentence for animal abuse, and are obliged to pay a fine of 900 € (1,105 US\$), and to pay 2,155 € (2646 US\$) to the association "Les Amis de la Tanière" to reimburse the transportation and quarantine costs of the animals that were seized from them in 2020. Sanctions also include 1 € (1.2 US\$) for moral damage. The duo is forbidden to keep an animal for 5 years or to exercise a profession related to the keeping of wild animals.

France Bleu Champagne-Ardenne, January 19, 2021.¹¹³

February 27, 2021

Bourges, Department of Cher, France

Search in the apartment of a couple in their thirties. In their property, OFB agents and the police discovered royal pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II), monitor lizards (*Varanus spp.*, Appendix I or II), poison frogs (family Dendrobatidae) and mossy frogs (*Theloderma corticale*). The duo is suspected of illegal trade in protected or regulated species, they risk a maximum of 3 years in prison and a fine of €150,000, or 181,370 US \$. Le Berry Républicain, March 5, 2021; Ouest-France, March 8, 2021.¹¹⁴



Mossy frog (*Theloderma corticale*)

REPEATED OFFENSE

March 11, 2021

Saint-Ouen-en-Brie, Department of Seine-et-Marne, France

The co-managers of an event organizing company were placed in police custody and then released, following the seizure of more than 200 animals from their address. The operation was carried out by gendarmes, agents of the Departmental Directorate for the Protection of Populations (DDPP) and the OFB. The animals seized included: including 4 boas (Boidae, Appendix I or II), a python (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), 3 iguanas (*Iguana spp.*, Appendix II), bay-winged hawk (*Parabuteo unicinctus*, Appendix II), turtles of the genus *Pelusios*, bearded dragons (genus *Pogona*), geckos (family Gekkonidae), a tarantula, an *Arctosa togona* spider, frogs, dogs, horses, ponies, sheep, rams, lambs, rabbits, pigs and camels. "The animals were everywhere, even in the freezers." 129 animals were seized because they were neglected and lacked any ownership permits. They have been entrusted to a number of institutions, in particular the Brigitte Bardot Foundation. The company "IDS Animations Events" was founded in 2007 and known to feature animal performances. The couple who ran the business had obtained a one-year permit to be able to carry out these activities, however, they never renewed the permit after it expired. This was a repeated offense for a 63-year-old man who had been arrested in 2016 for similar crimes.

Le Parisien, March 12, 2021; Gendarmerie of Seine-et-Marne, March 13, 2021; La République de Seine-et-Marne, March 15, 2021.¹¹⁵



March 30, 2021

Marigny, Department of Deux-Sevres, France



Lion (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II) roars had become as common as the ringing of church bells. The OFB and the gendarmerie ended up intervening. Mr. and Mrs. Vignaud had "rescued" a lion from a circus 4 years ago. He was in the circus to replace a previously deceased tiger - nothing is said about the fate of this tiger's body, skin and teeth. The obese lion was transferred to the zoo of Saint-Martin-la-Plaine in the Massif Central, and then to the refuge of the Arche in Mayenne department, in the West. The said to be "wild animal enthusiasts" that held him also possessed 2 macaws (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II), 12 rheas (*Rhea americana*, Appendix II, or *Pterocnemia pennata*, Appendix II), and 4 wallabies (subfamily Macropodinae) without a permit. They were given a deadline to comply with the Environmental code. Gendarmerie des Deux-Sèvres, March 30, 2021; La Nouvelle République, March 30 and 31, 2021; Ouest-France, March 30, 2021; Tonga Terre d'Accueil, March 31 and July 12, 2021; Refuge de l'Arche, August 19, 2021.¹¹⁶



© Gendarmerie départementale des Deux-Sèvres

April 1, 2021

Amiens, Department of Somme, France



Customs handed over to the Amiens Zoo a series of seized animal by-products, including: sea turtle shells and a stuffed turtle, a rostrum of sawfish (Pristidae, Appendix I), feline hats or poufs, shreds of boa skin (Boidae, Appendix I or II) and a crocodile skin and a skull (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II). All objects were seized either during roadside checks or at the Beauvais Airport. An educational exhibition is on the works to be launched by 2024 if the trophies do not disappear by then from the zoo's premises.

Courrier Picard, April 2, 2021; Le Journal d'Abbeville, April 5, 2021; French Customs, April 6, 2021; France Bleu Picardie, May 16, 2021.¹¹⁷



© Douanes françaises

April 12, 2021

Brest, Department of Finistère, France



A 41-year-old man was accused of possession of a piece of elephant trunk and tail and a shell of a Polynesian turtle. He explained that he used them for spiritual ceremonies originating in Gabon, that they were gifts and that he was unaware that they were illegal. He was given a suspended fine of 2,000 € (2,348 US\$). His lawyer has declared: "Sarkozy never went to criminal court for his elephant tail hair bracelet!". The man is now in probation and has started intensive lorry license training.

Le Télégramme, April 12, 2021.¹¹⁸



April 20 and July 5, 2021

Thionville, Department of Moselle, France



Arrest of Farid Mekki, who called himself "the King of the Jungle 57". He sold lemurs (Lemuroidea, Appendix I), marmosets (*Callithrix* spp., Appendix I or II), lion cubs (*Panthera leo*, Appendix I or II), peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) and servals (*Leptailurus serval*, Appendix II). He made servals look like savannah cats. Two litters of serval kittens would have earned him 19,000 euros (22,590 US\$). One of his male servals escaped and was run over on the A4 motorway. Mekki was sentenced to 10 months in prison and a fine of 15,000 euros (17,830 US\$).

Lorraine actu, April 21, 2021; Le Républicain Lorrain, July 6, 2021.¹¹⁹



© Le Républicain Lorrain

April 24, 2021

Marseille, Department of Bouches-du-Rhône, France



Lyes Belhadj arrived to Marseille on February 24, 2020, aboard the El Djazair II ferry. When he got off the ship, he got behind the wheel of his car and was checked by customs officers. He claimed to have nothing to report. However, officers uncovered a grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I), and European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine) in 2 cages, as well as common tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II) in shoe boxes. The total value of the seizure is 2575 € (3,023 US\$). He was given a 3-month suspended prison sentence.

La Provence, April 24, 2021; Algérie360, April 27, 2021.¹²⁰



El Djazair II in Marseille, February 20, 2019

THE NETHERLANDS

Beginning of February 2021

Province of North Brabant, The Netherlands

Seizure from a trader of 4 giraffe taxidermy mounts (*Giraffa camelopardalis*, Appendix II), 17 skulls, 23 femurs and 16 cervical vertebrae of giraffes, 6 Nile crocodile skulls (*Crocodylus niloticus*, Appendix I or II), 9 skins and 4 skulls of blesbok (*Damaliscus pygargus phillipsi*). The man had obtained his supplies from a Belgian trader who had imported them without a licence.



Algemeen Dagblad, February 5, 2021; Nederlandse Voedsel- en Warenautoriteit, February 5, 2021.¹²¹

March 22, 2021

Province of North Brabant, The Netherlands



Jaguar hats (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I), ocelot beanies (*Leopardus pardalis*, Appendix I), Geoffroy's cat bags (*Leopardus geoffroyi*, Appendix I), otter jackets (*Lutrinae*, Appendix I or II), motorcycle jackets in reticulated python (*Python reticulatus*, Appendix II), belts in Asiatic rock python (*Python molurus*, Appendix II), saddlebags in Seba python (*Python sebae*, Appendix II). A leather craftsman had a select and wealthy clientele. In 2 years, 2015-2016, the man fraudulently imported from Indonesia 720 meters of python skin (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II) corresponding to 200-300 specimens. In his workshops, the police found 27 monitor lizard skins (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II), 61 iguana skins (*Iguana* spp., Appendix II), and 2 boa constrictor skins (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II). The man appeared at his court hearing presenting himself as "an animal enthusiast" converted into the transformation of synthetic furs and skins. His workshops in Rotterdam and Eindhoven were full, yet his criminal record was empty. The court, disregarding the numerous boxes of morphine tablets that he also had in his possession, only sentenced him to 200 hours of community service and 3 months of suspended prison sentence for trafficking of endangered species.

De Telegraaf, March 22, 2021; East Brabant District Court, March 22, 2021.¹²²

SOUTHERN EUROPE

SPAIN

End of February 2021

Burujón, Province of Toledo, Autonomous Community of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain



Seizure from a 59-year-old man of a brown bear taxidermy mount (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix I), a wolf head (*Canis lupus*, Appendix I) and mounted skulls. No document justifies their origin. ECOticias, February 25, 2021.¹²³



ITALY

January 17, 2021

Piaggio di Valmara, Province of Verbano-Cusio-Ossola, Region of Piedmont, Italy. Border with Switzerland.



A man from Switzerland was transporting in his car a royal python (*Python regius*, Appendix II) and a Brazilian black tarantula (*Grammostola pulchra*). Quotidiano Piemontese, January 17, 2021.¹²⁴

January 21, 2021

Molochio, Province of Reggio Calabria, Region of Calabria, Italy

Arrest of a 63-year-old man. 72 carcasses of fat dormice (*Glis glis*) and 6 chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*) were found in his freezer. Six wooden traps and 4 fine-mesh nets were also on site.

ReggioToday, January 21, 2021.¹²⁵



April 15, 2021

Catania, Metropolitan City of Catania, Region of Sicily, Italy

Seizure from a 55-year-old woman of a common tortoise (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II), a common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) and an European goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine).

95047.it, April 15, 2021.¹²⁶

OPERATION DEMETRA

Mid-April 2021

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

Security check points have increased in recent months. Summary of seizures: a loggerhead sea turtle shell (*Caretta caretta*, Appendix I), python skins (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), a stuffed Nile crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*, Appendix I or II), Siberian sturgeon caviar (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II), a 13 kg stony coral (Scleractinia, Appendix II), giraffe skins (*Giraffa camelopardalis*, Appendix II), Rio rosewood furniture (*Dalbergia nigra*, Appendix I) and 800 perfume bottles obtained from horned orchid (*Anacamptis morio*, Appendix II). Overall fines of 600,000 € (704,500 US\$) and 6 arrests.

Riviera24, April 16, 2021; Genova24, April 19, 2021.¹²⁷



April 22, 2021

Genoa Harbour, Region of Liguria, Italy



Seizure from Tunisians landing from car ferries of 43 common tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II) and 96 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II) including blue-and-yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) and scarlet macaws (*Ara macao*, Appendix I). The turtles were entrusted to the ENPA (Ente Nazionale per la Protezione degli Animali) pending their hypothetical return to Tunisia and the parrots were entrusted to an animal park.

IVG, April 22, 2021.¹²⁸

PORTUGAL

February 18, 2021

Casal do Pardo, District of Leiria, Portugal



Search of the home and vehicle of 2 women aged 58 and 85 as part of an investigation into drug trafficking networks conducted since November 2020. Seizure of 13 plants and 300 cannabis tablets, 12 cartridges, 3 shotguns, hunting gear, a paintball gun, dried cannabis, drug packaging and cutting equipment, and dismantling of 4 cannabis production and drying greenhouses. The police also seized on the spot 2 stuffed hawksbill turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I), a piece of 2 kg of coral and 1.6 kg of worked ivory including jewellery.

Mais Oeste, February 20, 2021.¹²⁹

EASTERN EUROPE

POLAND

Mid-March 2021

Krakov Airport, Lesser Poland Voivodeship, Poland



Seizure in the luggage of a Krakow man arriving from Colombia of a parrot feather fan (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), feline teeth necklaces, certainly from jaguars (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I), and tobacco accessories mounted with a claw.

Gazeta Wyborcza, March 15, 2021.¹³⁰



VARIOUS MARINE AND FRESHWATER SPECIES

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

February 11, 2021

South Africa

By order of the court, Jacob Hlatshwayo will no longer benefit from the financial advantages guaranteed to all State officials by the Government Employees Pension Fund until the end of the investigations and trials concerning him. He is suspected of having signed for personal interest a fraudulent contract for masks and other anti-Covid protection, and of having been involved before in the trafficking of abalones and shark fins in conspiracy. He was removed from his position as Chief Financial Officer of the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development in October 2020.

SA Government News Agency, 11 January 2021; Daily Dispatch, February 13, 2021.¹

AMERICA

CUBA

Mid-April 2021

Ignacio Agramonte International Airport, Camagüey, Province of Camagüey, Cuba

Seizure of a seahorse, 11 corals and 34 sea snails subsequently donated to museums and institutions dedicated to scientific research.

Juventud Rebelde, April 16, 2021.²

ASIA

CHINA

January 2021

Shenyang Taoxian International Airport, Shenyang Prefecture, Liaoning Province, China

Seizure in the luggage of an incoming passenger of shark fins, sea cucumbers and cabinda bark. Cabinda tree bark (*Corynanthe macroceras*) is considered an aphrodisiac. The tree is native to West Africa.

Chinese Customs, January 22, 2021.³

Beginning of January 2021

Nanning Wuxu International Airport, Nanning Prefecture, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

Seizure of jewellery made of red coral (genus *Corallium*), 75 grams, and of giant clam shell (Tridacnidae, Appendix II), 358 grams.

Chinese Customs, January 6, 2021.⁴

January 7, 2021

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China



Seizure of a ton of shark fins on the seafront, Nim Wan road northeast of Hong Kong. The police had been on the lookout since the day before. It takes less than 3 minutes for a speedboat to reach mainland China from Nim Wan. The value of the merchandise exceeded 750,000 Hong Kong dollars or 96,740 US\$ and 97 US\$/kg. The cargo came from the Philippines. It included seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II) by the thousands, bottles of wine, electronic gadgets and painkiller bandages. It was destined for Shekou, Guangdong Province. According to the police, these "goods" were expected for the Lunar New Year festivities. Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department, January 8, 2021; South China Morning Post, January 8, 2021.⁵

January 11, 2021

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China



Sentencing of 3 passengers from Manila, Philippines, to 18 months in prison. In August 2019 (see "On the Trail n°26 p.19), they tried to introduce 48, 63 and 72 kg of dried silky shark fins (*Carcharhinus falciformis*, Appendix II) into Hong Kong. In one of the bags, the customs officers had also discovered 560 grams of dried seahorse (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II). The Standard, January 11, 2021.⁶

January 12, 2021

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangzhou Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure in the luggage of a Chinese passenger coming from Southeast Asia of 106 brightly colored odds and ends made of giant clam shells (*Tridacna* spp., Appendix II), a stony coral (Scleractinia, Appendix II) as large as a volleyball, a juvenile tiger cowry (*Cypraea tigris*) and other corals. "When the luggage was opened, a strong smell of the sea immediately permeated the scene." Guangzhou Daily, February 3, 2021.⁷

March 3, 2021

Haikou, Haikou Prefecture, Hainan Province, China

A fisherman is going to have problems. On board, the maritime police seized 19 seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II), and a great hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna mokarran*, Appendix II). Under the new provisions of the Penal Code which came into force on March 1, 2021, the fisherman is guilty of a crime against valuable and endangered wild animals. The fisherman will have to pay for the ecological damage and work on educational training for his colleagues and restaurateurs. Hainan Online, March 14, 2021.⁸

April 2, 2021

Offshore of Hong Kong International Airport, China

At 2 a.m., a wooden fishing boat was alongside a speedboat with several outboard motors in the offshore construction site of the new 3800-meter long runway at Hong Kong airport. With all lights off, packages were being transferred to the speedboat. As an anti-smuggling boat patrol approached, it zigzagged between the 100 or so dredgers and platforms building the artificial airport island and disappeared in a matter of minutes in the direction of the Chinese mainland. On board the fishing boat were seized sea cucumbers, shark fins, swim bladders with an estimated total value of 16 million HK\$ or 2 million US\$. Also seized were smartphones, electronic gadgets, spirits and cosmetics valued at 15 million HK\$. At this stage, the variety and value of the contraband already on board the speedboat is not known. The skipper of the fishing boat has been arrested.



The Customs Department notes that compared to the first quarter of 2020, the first quarter of 2021 is marked by an increase in smuggling by sea between Hong Kong and mainland China. Twenty-two seizures were made in 2021 compared to 13 in 2020. In the same period, the overall value of seizures is 120 million HK\$ or more than 15 million US\$ in 2021. It was 60 million HK\$ in 2020.

The doubling of smuggling by sea corresponds to the isolation of Hong Kong and the restrictions on access to Shenzhen during the Covid pandemic. "People across the border have huge demand for high-value products such as expensive food," says an official.

Hong Kong Customs, April 3, 2021; South China Morning Post, April 3, 2021.⁹

Beginning of April 2021

Nanning Wuxu International Airport, Nanning Prefecture, Guangxi Province, China

Seizure 8 giant clam (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix II) and red coral (*genus Corallium*) jewels, found in the luggage of a Chinese passenger disembarking from a flight from Jakarta, Indonesia. Chinese Customs, April 19, 2021.¹⁰

April 21, 2021

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Shenzhen Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure in a passenger's luggage of 9 hawksbill turtle scale bracelets (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I) and a giant clam shell necklace (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix II). Chinese Customs, April 23, 2021.¹¹

April 29, 2021

Changsha Huanghua International Airport, Changsha Prefecture, Hunan Province, China

Seizure in the luggage of several incoming passengers of dried seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II) (172 grams), giant clam shells (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix II) (742 grams), sea cucumbers (4300 grams), sandalwood (5400 grams), and dried pipefish (53 grams). Red Net, May 7, 2021.¹²

TAIWAN

March 15-18, 2021

Taichung, Tainan, Taipei, Kaohsiung and Taoyuan, Taiwan



The investigation had started after a report of a sawfish rostrum sale on the Internet. It lasted 4 months and resulted in the seizure of 170 sawfish (*Pristidae*, Appendix I) rostrums, 2 narwhal (*Monodon monoceros*, Appendix II) tusks and ivory items. Sixteen people were arrested, including the owner of an art shop. One of the narwhal tusks measures 229 cm and was on sale for the equivalent of 35,500 US\$.

China Times, April 21, 2021; UDN.com, April 21 and 22, 2021.¹³

EUROPE

ITALY

End of January 2021

Naples, Region of Campania, Italy

Seizure of giant clam (*Tridacna gigas*, Appendix II) and queen conch (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II) shells, white corals (*Acropora* spp., Appendix II) and red corals (*Tubipora musica*, Appendix II). The operation occurred at Via Caracciolo on the stand of a street vendor.

Il Mattino, February 1, 2021.¹⁴

End of March 2021

Olbia, Province of Sassari, Autonomous Region of Sardinia, Italy

Seizure at the port entrance in a refrigerated truck of 17 kg of sea urchin pulp (class Echinoidea), 26 common spiny lobsters (*Palinurus elephas*), 110 kg of common octopus (*Octopus vulgaris*) and various fish. The exporter was fined 3,000 € or 3,670 US\$. The sea urchin pulp from around 14,000 specimens was destroyed, the lobsters were returned to the sea in the protected area of Tavolara-Punta Coda Cavallo. After veterinary examination, the fish were donated to 3 charities.

Gallura Oggi, March 30, 2021.¹⁵



April 13, 2021

Venice Marco Polo Airport, Metropolitan City of Venice, Region of Veneto, Italy

Seizure in the luggage of a passenger coming from French Polynesia of stony coral (*Scleractinia*, Appendix II) and giant clam shells (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix II).

Radio Venezia, April 13, 2021.¹⁶

RUSSIA

April 13, 2021

Novoterechnoye, Republic of Dagestan, Russia

Coast guard boarding of a "baida", a motor fishing boat commonly used by sturgeon poachers in the Caspian Sea. After some resistance, the border guards found 3 skins of Caspian seal (*Pusa caspica*) and more than 130 kg of Russian sturgeon (*Acipenser guldenstaedtii*, Appendix II) as well as 400 meters of nets. Two arrests. The damage is estimated at more than 5 million rubles or 65,800 US\$.

Nur, April 14, 2021.¹⁷



Caspian seals (*Pusa caspica*)

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

February 22, 2021

Puerto Rico, United States of America

Aristides Sanchez, owner of the Wonders of the Reef aquarium store (see "On the Trail" n°18 p.4-5), was sentenced to one year and one day in prison for trafficking corals of the (genus *Ricordea*) between 2013 and 2016. Upon his release from prison, Sanchez will be put under surveillance for 2 years and will have to perform 120 hours of community service. He is definitely prohibited from carrying out scuba diving activities, and from keeping and transporting marine animals and plants.

US Department of Justice, February 22, 2021.¹

ASIA

CHINA

January 18, 2021

Zhuhai, Zhuhai Prefecture and Jiangmen, Jiangmen Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Macau.

Joint operation of Guangdong and Macau customs involving about 100 police officers. Dismantling of a gang specialized in smuggling red coral (genus *Corallium*) purchased abroad via Macao. 12 arrests and seizure of 18.61 kg of red coral with a reported value of 1.4 million US\$ or 75,230 US\$/kg. China National Radio, January 29, 2021.²

January 22, 2021

Jiuzhou, Zhuhai Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Six pairs of red coral earrings (genus *Corallium*) were seized from a package from Japan. Guangzhou Daily, February 1, 2021.³

**Beginning of February 2021
Guangdong Province, China**

After various seizures, customs officials transferred 3,163.5 grams of stony coral (Scleractinia, Appendix II) raw and worked (including a ring) to the Guangdong Department of Agriculture. Chinese Customs, February 5, 2021.⁴



February 24, 2021

Hangzhou, Hangzhou Prefecture, Zhejiang Province, China



66 soft coral jewels (order Gorgonacea) were found in a postal package from abroad. Chinese Customs, February 25 and 28, 2021.⁵

February 28, 2021

Near Beihai, Beihai Prefecture, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China



Routine check of a road linking Qinzhou in Guangxi to Guangzhou in Guangdong (600 km). Ten polystyrene crates intrigued the police. Seizure of 513 corals of the species *Catalaphyllia jardinei* (Appendix II) and *Euphyllia ancora* (Appendix II), and stony corals (Scleractinia, Appendix II) with an estimated value of 300,000 yuan or more than 46,000 US\$. China National Radio, March 4, 2021.⁶



March 2021

Jinan, Jinan Prefecture, Shandong Province, China

A red coral necklace (genus *Corallium*) was found in a postal package from abroad. Chinese Customs, April 2, 2021.⁷

March 2021

Jinan, Jinan Prefecture, Shandong Province, China

A red coral necklace (genus *Corallium*) (40 grams) was found in a postal package from abroad. Chinese Customs, March 23, 2021.⁸

March 30, 2021

Dalian, Dalian Prefecture, Liaoning Province, China

Three pieces of red coral (genus *Corallium*) jewellery (93 grams) were found in a postal package declared to contain sculpted ornaments. Chinese Customs, March 30 and April 2, 2021.⁹

April 2021

Chongqing-Jiangbei International Airport, Chongqing Municipality, China

Seizure in the luggage of a passenger of 15 bracelets and earrings made of red coral (genus *Corallium*). Chinese Customs, May 8, 2021.¹⁰

Early April 2021

Qingdao, Qingdao Prefecture, Shandong Province, China

Seizure of 92 red coral jewels (genus *Corallium*); bracelets, necklaces, pendants and earrings. Chinese Customs, April 9 and 12, 2021.¹¹

April 12, 2021

Danzhou, Danzhou Prefecture, Hainan Province, China



Seizure in the freezer of a fishing boat of 28 whole corals and several fragments weighing a total of 39.35 kg. The crew is being interrogated. The origin is currently unknown.

China Central Television, April 14, 2021; KNews, April 14, 2021.¹²

April 19, 2021

Wenjindu Checkpoint, Shenzhen, Shenzhen Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 1,235 stony corals (*Scleractinia*, Appendix II) in trucks registered in Macao and Guangdong coming from Hong Kong.

Shenzhen Customs, May 28, 2021.¹³

INDIA

April 20, 2021

Shivamogga, Shimoga District, State of Karnataka, India

After receiving information by the headquarters of the WCCB, the mobile forest brigade swooped down on an individual on the possession of 90 gorgonians (order Gorgonacea) and arrested him. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), April 26, 2021.¹⁴

EUROPE

GERMANY

April 30, 2021

Munich, Bavaria State, Germany



Seizure of 7 kg of dead coral (class Anthozoa) in the luggage of a large family returning from the Caribbean. They would have been picked up on the beach.

German Customs, April 30, 2021.¹⁵

ITALY

April 27, 2021

Verona Airport, Province of Verona, Region of Veneto, Italy

A passenger coming from Moscow had a fragment of stony coral (*Pocillopora* spp., Appendix II) in his luggage. He was sentenced to a fine of 5,000 euros or 5,870 US\$.

Verona Oggi, April 27, 2021.¹⁶



POLAND

January 20, 2021

Warsaw Chopin International Airport, Masovian Voivodeship, Poland

Seizure of 27 coral skeletons carried by a Czech passenger returning from the Maldives. The remains of coral reef weighed 1.55 kg. They would have been picked up by the passenger's children on the beach.

National Revenue Administration, January 20, 2021.¹⁷

Beginning of April 2021
Warsaw Chopin International Airport, Masovian Voivodeship, Poland



Seizure of 2 corals in the luggage of a Polish traveler returning from the Maldives, approximately 1 kg. National Revenue Administration, April 8, 2021.¹⁸

April 30, 2021
Katowice-Pyrzowice Airport, Silesian Voivodeship, Poland



Seizure by customs of a branch of coral (class Anthozoa) weighing nearly 2.5 kg from a traveler returning from the Dominican Republic. He said he bought the specimen on the beach.

Seizure of several fossilized corals, approximately 4 kg, from a tourist returning from Mexico. He claims to have "found" them on the beach.

National Revenue Administration, April 30, 2021.¹⁹

CRUSTACEANS

ASIA

KAZAKHSTAN

Beginning of January 2021

Almaty, Almaty Region, Kazakhstan

Sentencing of 4 Kazakh and Chinese citizens to prison terms ranging from 8 to 10 years. They had been arrested with 400 tons of brine shrimp (*Artemia salina*) for a value of 1.13 million US\$ or 2.8 US\$/kg. The investigation revealed that they are part of an organized gang that exported brine shrimp from Kazakhstan to China. Artemia are crustaceans. They live in salt lakes, lagoons and salt marshes. They measure about ten millimeters. Due to their high nutritional value, brine shrimps are used as food in fish farming. The main consumers are China, Ecuador, Viet Nam, India and Thailand, where millions of tons of shrimps, crabs, sturgeons or other aquaculture species are farmed. As for the eggs, they are increasingly used in pharmacy, perfumery and oriental medicine. On the black market, a kilo of eggs can reach 100 US\$. Moskovsky Komsomolets Kazakhstan, January 27, 2021.¹



EUROPE

RUSSIA

January 12, 2021

Olkhovka Border Post, Omsk Oblast, Russia. Border with Kazakhstan.

A truck heading to Kazakhstan is intercepted at the border post. According to the documents accompanying the shipment, it consists of artemia (genus *Artemia*) from a farm in the city of Astrakhan. Laboratory research has shown that they are artemia of natural origin. They were collected from the Ebeyty salt lake, Omsk oblast. The overall value of the seizure (20 tons) is estimated at 13 million rubles or 173,760 US\$ and 8,5 US\$/kg.

Rossiyskaya Gazeta, January 12, 2021.²



Brine shrimps (*Artemia salina*)

GIANT CLAMS, DATE MUSSELS ...

AFRICA

FRANCE

Mid-March 2021

Saint-Pierre, Department of Reunion, France

The Citizen's Association of Saint-Pierre is outraged! Recent photos of the local lagoon show the wild poaching of clams (*Tridacna* spp., Appendix II), which are torn from the corals. The association calls for exemplary sanctions.

Two species of clams are present in Reunion: *Tridacna maxima* and *Tridacna squamosa*. Imaz Press Réunion, March 18, 2021.¹

ASIA

CHINA

January 2021

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangzhou Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

There were 2 boxes of powdered milk in a suitcase. One contained 186 giant clam (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix II) items, including a shell and pearls. Chinese Customs, January 26, 2021.²

Beginning of January 2021

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Shenzhen Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

23 jewels made with giant clam shell (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix II), 2,600 grams. Chinese Customs, January 13, 2021.³

January 4, 2021

Hangzhou, Hangzhou Prefecture, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of 44 items made with giant clam shell (*Tridacna* spp., Appendix II), found in the luggage of 2 passengers getting off a plane. One had hidden 2 bracelets in a plastic bag, the other had hidden 26 beads and 16 necklaces and pendants in a thermos. Total weight: 1,832.82 grams.

Chinese Customs, January 7, 2021; Zhejiang News, January 8, 2021.⁴



January 8, 2021
Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangzhou Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 3 bracelets made with giant clam shell (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix II).

Chinese Customs, January 12, 2021.⁵



February 2021

Suzhou, Suzhou Prefecture, Jiangsu Province, China



Seizure of "go" game pieces (or stones) made with giant clam shell (*Tridacna* spp., Appendix II). Total weight: 12.28 kg.

Chinese Customs, February 20, 2021.⁶

End of February 2021

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Shenzhen Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 5 bracelets made with giant clam shells (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix II), 262 grams in all. Chinese Customs, March 3, 2021.⁷

March 5 and 18, 2021

Ningbo Lishe International Airport, Ningbo Prefecture, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of a giant clam shell (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix I or II), a triton's trumpet shell (*Charonia tritonis*) and 10 other shells in packages. Triton's trumpet shells are traditionally used as a musical instrument in some islands of Oceania or Polynesia. They can measure up to 50 cm long.

Chinese Customs, March 29, 2021.⁸

Beginning of April 2021

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Shenzhen Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

A bracelet made with giant clam shell (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix II), 238 grams.

Chinese Customs, April 8, 2021.⁹

PHILIPPINES

February 12, 2021

Bayawan, Province of Negros Occidental, Philippines

Seizure of 10 tons of giant clam shells (*Tridacna gigas*, Appendix II) from Ricardo Santiana Dela Cruz in Pagatban. He was trying to sell a ton of "taklobo" for 5 million pesos to an undercover police officer when he was arrested. The 10 tons were to be sold for 50 million pesos, which is about 1 million US\$ or 100 US\$/kg. On the international market, according to the authorities, this lot would be worth 19 US\$ million or 1900 US\$/kg. The shells belong to Yan Hu Liang alias Sunny. He is actively wanted.¹⁰ GMA Network, February 14, 2021.

March 3, 2021

Roxas, Johnson Island, Province of Palawan, Philippines

Seizure of 324 giant clam shells (*Tridacna gigas*, Appendix II), weighing 80 tons, from several houses in the village. This is the largest seizure of clam shells ever made in Palawan... yet. The overall value would be 3.3 million US\$ or 40 US\$/kg.

One coast guard estimates that it took between 6 months and one year for the villagers to amass such a stock. The village chief is under investigation for poaching.

According to John Vincent Fabello, responsible for the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development, giant clam shell traffickers have taken advantage of the poverty created by the Covid crisis to recruit fishermen who are unaware of the legal and ecological consequences of poaching. The local price of "taklobos" doubled during the crisis, reaching the equivalent of 40 US\$/kg.

In the last 6 months, at least 150 tons of giant clam shells have been seized in Palawan (see "On the Trail" n°31 p.195).

Daily Tribune, March 5, 2021; France 24 (with AFP), March 5, 2021; Philippine Daily Inquirer, March 6, 2021; M o n g a b a y, March 29, 2021.¹¹



April 13, 2021

Narra, Province of Palawan, Philippines

This time, 177 giant clam shells (*Tridacna gigas*, Appendix II), weighing 16.5 tons, were confiscated from Jonjie Moreño's house, in the neighborhood of Panacan. They were hidden in a tent. According to Moreño, they actually belonged to a certain Rolando Eleazar. The lot was transferred to the premises of the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development. It is estimated to be worth 57 million pesos which is nearly 1.2 million US\$ or 71 US\$/kg. Daily Tribune, April 14, 2021; Manila Bulletin, April 14, 2021; Philippine Coast Guard, April 14, 2021.¹²



April 16, 2021

Roxas, Province of Palawan, Philippines

Record broken. Seizure on Sitio Green Island of 200 tons of fossilized giant clam shells (*Tridacna gigas*, Appendix II), estimated at 1.2 billion pesos which is 25 million US\$, or 125 US\$/kg. Arrest of Rey Cuyos, Rodolfo Rabesa, Julius Molejoa and Erwin Miagao. Clam shells are sought after in Asia as a substitute for ivory.

BBC, April 17, 2021; Rappler, April 17, 2021; ABS-CBN, April 19, 2021.¹³



EUROPE

ITALY

March 23, 2021

Metropolitan City of Naples, Region of Campania, Italy

Dismantling of 2 organized gangs specializing in poaching and smuggling date mussels (*Lithophaga lithophaga*, Appendix II). The investigation lasted more than 3 years and identified a hundred customers, i.e. restaurants, fish shops or moneyed classes as affiliated members with the camorra. Demand for mussels exploded at Christmas and Easter when the kilo could reach 200 € or 245 US\$. Six suspects are in pre-trial detention, 6 others are under house arrest. Four of them must report to the police station daily. Seizure of 3 commercial premises in Naples and Castellammare where date mussels were stored, profits from traffic, 2 boats and poaching equipment.

Sputnik Italia, March 23, 2021; StabiaChannel.it, March 23, 2021.¹⁴

April 30, 2021

Port of Trani, Province of Barletta-Andria-Trani, Region of Apulia, Italy

Seizure of 5 kg of date mussels (*Lithophaga lithophaga*, Appendix II), 2 ice axes, 2 pliers, a screwdriver and scuba tanks.

La Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno, May 1, 2021; TraniLive.it, May 2, 2021.¹⁵

POLAND

Beginning of February 2021

Warsaw Chopin International Airport, Masovian Voivodeship, Poland

Seizure of 56 giant clam shells (Tridacnidae, Appendix II) with a total weight of 2.1 kg found in the luggage of a Polish citizen. She explains having "collected" them during a family trip to the Maldives.

National Revenue Administration, February 12, 2021.¹⁶



ABALONES

Haliotis spp.

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

January 3, 2021

Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

The police of the Cape Recife area were called at midnight as abalone poachers were said to be at work. After a chase on Beach Road at 6 a.m., 3 suspects aged between 18 and 26 were arrested in the suburb of Summerstrand. They had time to throw 2 bags out the window before being arrested but they were found. Seizure of 1,952 abalones estimated at 49,000 US\$ and the suspects' vehicle. Algoa FM, January 3, 2021; SAPS, 3 January 2021.¹



January 9, 2021

Humansdorp, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

Early in the morning, a white Audi transported 43.6 kg of abalone from Plettenberg Bay to Port Elizabeth, 230 km away. The car was intercepted on the N2. Four men were arrested. The 194 abalones are estimated at 1,780 US\$ or 40 US\$/kg. SAPS, January 9, 2021.²

January 14, 2021

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Joint operation of TMNP Marine Rangers and the City of Cape Town Environmental Crime Unit. Three poachers-divers arrested, an inflatable boat confiscated. SANParks, January 14, 2021.³

January 26, 2021

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Leon Titus, 51 years old, a heavyweight of abalone trafficking suspected of also being a police informer, undoubtedly had bad blood against him and united sworn enemies. This Tuesday evening, his Toyota GT6 pick-up truck was parked at the side of a road when a limousine stopped for just long enough to fire 13 bullets. Titus and his passenger died instantly. TimesLIVE, January 27, 2021.⁴



January 29, 2021

Kommetjie, Western Cape Province, South Africa

The TMNP Marine Rangers and the City of Cape Town Environmental Crime Unit arrested 5 poachers and confiscated 18 shelled abalones, a whole abalone, 3 Cape rock lobsters (*Jasus lalandii*) and a lobster tail. SANParks, January 31, 2021.⁵

January 31, 2021

Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

A couple was traveling from Port Alfred to Korsten, 150 km away. Everything could have gone smoothly if they hadn't had a car accident. The police officers who came to inspect the damage also noted the presence of 809 abalones in the trunk. SAPS, February 1, 2021.⁶



REPEATED OFFENSE

February 23, 2021

Gansbaai, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Arrest of Shane Ferreira, a scuba diving guide accused of being linked to a group of around twenty abalone poachers. He appeared in court in early April. He was released on bail with a ban on entering the Overberg district. He had already been arrested in March 2020 during an anti-poaching operation in Gansbaai.

Community Against Abalone Poaching (CAAP), April 12, 2021.⁷



February 5, 2021

Between Knysna and Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Police officers picked a shady car out in the suburb of Kwanokuthula after receiving some calls informing about its presence. They chased the vehicle for 25 km, until they manage to stop it at the entrance to Knysna. Seven abalone bags were inside. Three men, aged 31 to 34, were taken into custody. Their vehicle was seized too.

SAPS, February 6, 2021.⁸

February 6, 2021

Grahamstown, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

It was barely 8 a.m. when the police stopped a car on the highway heading for King William's Town. The driver and a passenger vanished, the third occupant, aged around twenty, was caught. In the car, there were a diving suit, oxygen cylinders and bags containing the equivalent of 4,600 US\$ in abalones.

SAPS, February 7, 2021.⁹

February 10, 2021

Stellenbosch, Western Cape Province, South Africa

A gas explosion created panic during the night. The police rushed to the Paradyskloof neighborhood. They discovered a clandestine workshop for the preparation of abalones. Inside, there were abalones estimated at 59,000 US\$, drying equipment valued at 3,900 US\$ and two Zimbabweans aged 23 and 26, who were immediately arrested. The official leaseholder is a Chinese man. He is wanted.

SAPS, February 10, 2021; Daily Dispatch, February 10, 2021.¹⁰



On the Trail n°32. Robin des Bois

February 12, 2021

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa



Solomon Sauls was once again found guilty of trafficking. He was sentenced to 7 years in prison in November 2020 (see "On the Trail" n°30 p.84), when he was already serving a 14-year prison sentence, he will ultimately remain behind bars for 18 years.

Sauls faced 42 charges related to abalone trafficking, corruption of officials and money laundering (see "On the Trail" n°20 p.9). If the sentences were not to run concurrently, the total of this new conviction would amount to 244 years in prison.

SAPS, February 12, 2021; The South African, 16 February 2021.¹¹

February 17, 2021

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa



New operation of TMNP Marine Rangers and the City of Cape Town Environmental Crime Unit, this time at Pointe du Cap. Ten men arrested, 28 abalones seized.

SANParks, February 19, 2021.¹²

February 19, 2021

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa



Sentencing of Preston Paul Julies, 52 years old, to 5 years in prison, all sentences running concurrently, for racketeering, corruption and abalone trafficking. Like Solomon Sauls (see February 12 above), he was arrested in March 2018 in a case where 9 agents from the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) and at least 8 poachers colluded to traffic fish. Seized abalone at the scene (see "On the Trail" n°20 p.9).

SAPS, February 20, 2021.¹³

February 19, 2021

Caledon, Western Cape Province, South Africa

7,429 abalones were found inside a BMW driving towards Cape Town, 120 km away. An arrest. In one week, 10,000 abalones were seized around Overstrand.

Lourens Theron, February 19, 2021.¹⁴

February 21, 2021

Between Onrusrivier and Sandbaai, and Pearly Beach, Western Cape Province, South Africa

The Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, the Western Cape Nature Conservation Board and the Overstrand police arrested 2 groups of poachers in quick succession. The former were in full action between Onrusrivier and Sandbaai, the latter were victims of a car accident as they fled. Total seizure of 2,636 abalones.

Community Against Abalone Poaching (CAAP), February 21, 2021.¹⁵

February 22, 2021

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa



Dismantling of an abalone drying sweatshop in the Brackenfell district. 15,837 dried abalones, weighing 376.3 kg, were spread out on the ground next to fans. The seizure is estimated at more than 1.7 million US\$ or 470 US\$/kg. Two suspects aged 26 and 36 were arrested.

SAPS, February 23, 2021.¹⁶

February 23, 2021

Plettenberg Bay, Western Cape Province, South Africa

A suspicious Volkswagen was spotted by SANParks rangers not far from The Craggs, the “Eden” of the Western Cape where there are both wildlife sanctuaries and recreational facilities. The car was spotted again at 9:15 p.m. As the authorities approached, its occupants disappeared into the bushes. Five bags containing 565 abalones estimated at 6,600 US\$ were found. A 32-year-old suspect was arrested.

SAPS, February 25, 2021.¹⁷

February 23, 2021

Gansbaai, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Seizure of 4,689 abalones, diving equipment and 2 vehicles. Three arrests, including a law enforcement officer from a nearby town.

Community Against Abalone Poaching (CAAP), February 24, 2021; Overstrand Municipality, February 24, 2021.¹⁸

February 27, 2021

Between Kei Mouth and Morgan’s Bay, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

It was still night. Divers waited for a vehicle to pick them up with bags of abalones. The information was transmitted to the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) and then to the police. A patrol immediately went to the scene and chased a vehicle on regional road 349. The 4 occupants threw things out of the windows, but it was not enough. When they were all stopped, diving equipment was found inside. A second vehicle was stopped in stride. It carried the loot, 477 abalones, and 4 accomplices.

Intelligence Bureau SA, February 27, 2021; SAPS, February 27, 2021.¹⁹

March 8, 2021

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa



The trial lasted almost 6 years. Graeme Klein, 42, was eventually sentenced to 5 years in prison for violations of the Prevention of the Organized Crime Act and 3 years in prison for 20 violations of the Living Marine Resources Act with a probationary suspension of 5 years. He was arrested in 2008 with 13 accomplices in Riviersonderend for abalone trafficking. Among his previously convicted co-defendants are Solomon Sauls (see February 12 above) and Rashied Jacobs, sentenced to 24 years in prison. The main suspect in this case, Russel Anthony Jacobs, was shot and killed outside his body shop in 2017.

SAPS, March 10, 2021.²⁰

March 11, 2021

Table Mountain National Park, Western Cape Province, South Africa

65 overnight arrests in a joint operation by park rangers, several units of Cape Town police and law enforcement. Since the beginning of the year, 88 abalone poachers have been arrested in Table Mountain park.

SANParks, March 12, 2021.²¹

March 12, 2021

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa



Muhammed Abdikadur Hussein, 28, and Yue Zuang Chen, 29, were arrested in a Land Rover in possession of a quantity of abalones estimated at more than 87,700 US\$. The court considered their confessions. The first received a fine of 6,750 US\$ and a one-year suspended prison sentence, the second 18 months in prison, 9 of which were suspended for abalone trafficking, and 6 months in prison for illegal immigration (sentences running concurrently). The Land Rover was confiscated.

TimesLIVE, March 13, 2021.²²

March 25, 2021

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa



Yet another accomplice of Solomon Sauls (see February 12 above) going through court. Eugene Jason Heradien, aged 48, lost more than 148,800 US\$ from the goods State troops confiscated from him at the time of his arrest in March 2018. This was part of the dismantling of a network involving 9 DAFF agents (see "On the Trail" n°20 p.9).

SAPS, March 25, 2021.²³

April 1, 2021

Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

A night patrol from the police flying squad and an anti-poaching unit caught 2 suspects carrying 151 abalones. Their diving equipment was found nearby. The value of abalones and equipment is estimated to be 6,700 US\$.

SAPS, April 1, 2021.²⁴

April 13, 2021

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

An abalone drying plant is said to be located in Bishop Lavis, the industrial area of Cape Town International Airport. The local Tactical Response Team searches the place, which results in two Zimbabwean nationals arrested, two vehicles confiscated, and the seizure of fresh and dried abalone and diving equipment estimated at more than 200,000 US\$.

Since December 29, 2020 and the moving to Covid Level 3 lockdown, beach access has been allowed again and abalone poaching has skyrocketed, despite returning to Level 1 on March 1.

SAPS, April 14, 2021; Independent Online, April 15, 2021.²⁵

April 14, 2021

Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa



The city's K9 unit and Dark Water Ops security team joined forces to follow a tip. A suspicious car was said to be transporting abalones. The suspect was arrested in the Marine Drive area at 10 p.m., but investigators found nothing and let him go. However, at 5:30 a.m., the Toyota was stopped again as it headed for Schoenmakerskop. This time, 5 bags containing 512 abalones, estimated at 20,000 US\$, were found in the trunk. Two suspects aged 21 and 34 were arrested.

SAPS, April 14, 2021; Algoa FM, April 14, 2021; Dark Water Ops, April 14, 2021.²⁶

April 14, 2021

East London, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

Patrolling police spotted 5 suspicious people in a residential area of Amalinda. They fled in a Kombi and a Volkswagen Polo, but were quickly surrounded. This resulted in the seizure of 781 abalones weighing 56 kg, estimated at 2, 250 US\$ or 40 US\$/kg.

SAPS, April 16, 2021.²⁷

April 16, 2021

Pearly Beach, Western Cape Province, South Africa



A group of divers-poachers was surprised by about fifteen policemen. They were trapped, but the situation suddenly turned round. Three vans arrived. About fifty people armed with machetes and stones came out and attacked the police to prevent any seizure and arrest. Police fired rubber bullets to defend themselves and only left with a few diving accessories. There were no serious injuries, yet impunity prevailed. A member of the police, on condition of anonymity, deplored the lack of resources: "Some of us work day and night, but we cannot do without help. The DFFE [Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment] has only 4 members in Gansbaai. How can they do anything against poachers? Sometimes there are more than 150 at the same time." Leo van Dijk, spokesperson for the NGO Communities Against Abalone Poaching, calls for an equivalent of the Skukuza court (dedicated to trafficking rhino horns) for abalone poachers. He denounces the indulgence shown by certain magistrates on this subject.

Pearly Beach Conservation, April 15, 2021; Community Against Abalone Poaching (CAAP), April 17, 2021.²⁸

April 19, 2021

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa



Sentencing of the 6 members of an abalone gang to 2 years in prison with probationary suspension of 5 years. Jeremia Abrahams, Romania Curtis Hans, Frederick Myburgh, Angelo Charles, Albert Van Niekerk and Ashley Cloete, ages 26 to 49, pleaded guilty. They had been arrested in February 2020. Their gang was spreading its ramifications in the Western Cape and Gauteng provinces. They too were linked to Solomon Sauls (see above, February 12).

Eyewitness News, April 20, 2021; SAPS, April 20, 2021; Independent Online, April 21, 2021.²⁹

April 24, 2021

R45 Simondium Road, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Interception of a car following an anonymous tip. The driver managed to escape, leaving behind him 734 abalones estimated at 66,330 US\$, or 90 US\$/abalone.

SAPS, April 25, 2021.³⁰

April 25, 2021

Schoemakerskop, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

It's 4:25 a.m. An alarm goes off. The police immediately head to the scene. But, on the way, their attention is drawn to a car parked in the brush. As soon as they pretend to approach, the 4 occupants disperse. Large bags containing 1,039 abalones are in the trunk. The seizure is estimated at 38,800 US\$ (37 US\$/abalone). Cylo, the sniffer dog, and a private anti-poaching unit come to the rescue. The first finds the trace of 2 suspects, the second apprehends a third who still has his diving equipment.

SAPS, April 25, 2021.³¹

April 26, 2021

Riviersonderend, Western Cape Province, South Africa

A policeman on patrol followed a suspicious car on National 2. He stopped it at the "Padloper" restaurant. Inside the car there were 9 bags, each containing a hundred shelled abalones, estimated at nearly 47,000 US\$. Two arrests, seizure of the vehicle.

SAPS, April 26, 2021.³²

April 30, 2021

Harding, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

A Mazer Farm Watch safety officer is on patrol near Guy Pain's Sawmill. He reports a suspicious vehicle to the police station. The police arrest the 2 occupants, aged 45 and 56, and seize 2 large bags of freshly shelled abalone estimated at 12,400 US\$. The suspects try to bribe the Hawks with the sum of 500 US\$, but only win an additional indictment for attempted corruption.

SAPS, May 3, 2021.³³

OPERATION CORONA

End of April 2021

Hawston, Western Cape Province, South Africa

The South African National Defense Force (SANDF), in conjunction with the local authorities, the Maritime Reaction Squadron and the DFFE, is launching "Operation Corona" on May 6 to combat poaching in the Overstrand. Land, sea and air patrols are planned, even a submarine from the South African Navy is in the game. Pre-deployment operations have already resulted in the discovery of a bag of 29 shelled abalones and a bag of abalone shells hidden in brush. A similar operation was carried out in November 2020 (see "On the Trail" n°31 p.197). Before Covid-19, a ton of abalones were poached every day. The price could reach 120 US\$/kg on the black market.

DefenceWeb, May 10, 2021.³⁴

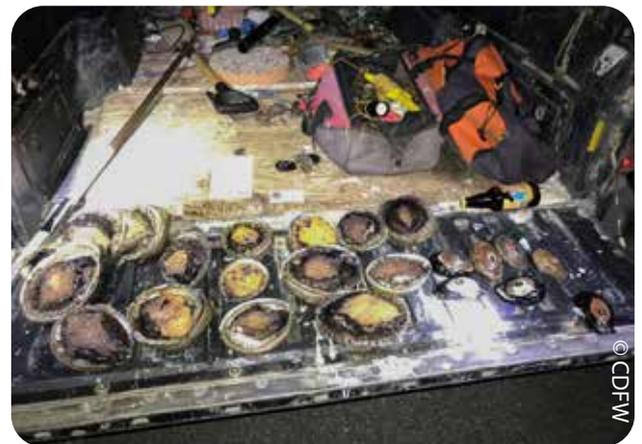


AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 30, 2021

Long Beach, State of California, United States of America



Nocturnal operation on the rocky shore to capture 2 poachers in possession of 16 green abalones (*Haliotis fulgens*) and pink abalones (*Haliotis corrugata*). The abalones, still alive, were returned to the water. The operation was carried out by an agent from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, a maritime team and a Long Beach Police Department (LBPD) and the support of the Los Angeles Port.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife News, February 3, 2021.³⁵

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

January 19, 2021

Between Mornington and Tyabb, State of Victoria, Australia

Abalone fishing is only permitted on weekends and holidays between November 16 and April 30. January 19 was a Tuesday. At 2:50 p.m., 2 men were arrested with 20 kg of abalone while unloading their boat. At 8 p.m., 5 others were surprised with 30 kg of abalones on a roadside check. All the suspects came from the suburbs of Melbourne, about forty kilometers away.

Southern Peninsula News, January 25, 2021.³⁶



REPEATED OFFENSE

March 11, 2021

State of New South Wales, Australia

An offender was arrested in November 2017 with an accomplice in possession of abalones in Mimosa Rocks national park. The 262 abalones were already shelled and their shells hidden under rocks. He was sentenced for trafficking and shelling of abalones to 9 months in prison, which he may spend on parole under strict conditions. He was also given a 5,300 US\$ fine. Fishing World, May 20, 2021.³⁷



April 2021

Yorke Peninsula, State of South Australia, Australia

Recapture of Kevin Everitt Newchurch, 39, Trent Darby Wanganeen, 26, and Ian Albie Harradine, 57. They had been arrested on December 12, 2017 for keeping 907 greenlip abalones (*Haliotis laevis*) weighing 86 kg, in 2 coolers. The seizure's value was estimated at 7,820 US\$ or 90 US\$/kg and 8.6 US\$/abalone. They risk a fine equal to 39,900 US\$. The Advertiser, March 5, 2021.³⁸



SEA CUCUMBERS AND SEA URCHINS

Holothuria fuscogilva, *Holothuria nobilis* and *Holothuria whitmaei* (teatfish): Appendix II.
Isostichopus fuscus: Appendix III in Ecuador.



Thelenota ananas. Photo Damien Brouste

AMERICA

ECUADOR

End of March 2021

Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz Island, Galapagos Province, Ecuador

Seizure of 769 sea cucumbers ready for export. They were probably *Isostichopus fuscus*, listed in CITES Appendix III in the country since 2003. Overexploited in the Galápagos in the early 2000s, the population collapsed leading to a fishing ban in 2016.

Policia Ecuador, March 31, 2021; Teleamazonas, March 31, 2021.¹

MEXICO

Mid-January 2021

Hermosillo, State of Sonora, Mexico

On an inspection tour of the warehouse of a courier company, the National Guard spotted a package lacking the required documents. Seizure of 300 kg of sea cucumbers.

La Jornada, January 16, 2021.²

Mid-April 2021

Cancun International Airport, State of Quintana Roo, Mexico

Seizure of 2.1 tons of dried sea cucumbers in boxes in the customs clearance area. They were ready to leave the Caribbean to fly to Asia.

Riviera Maya News, April 7, 2021.³

ASIA

CHINA

February 2021

Nanjing, Nanjing Prefecture, Jiangsu Province, China

In China, 520 grams of sea cucumbers were being sent by post in plastic bags. They were declared as "chocolate candies". As stated by customs, animals, plants and their byproducts are prohibited from being sent by post, except with express authorization and a quarantine certificate.

Chinese Customs, March 2, 2021.⁴

March 2021
Tianjin Binhai International Airport, Tianjin Autonomous Municipality, China



Seizure of 2 small bags of dried sea cucumbers weighing a total of 908 grams. Chinese Customs, March 23, 2021.⁵

April 18, 2021
Tianjin Binhai International Airport, Tianjin Autonomous Municipality, China



Seizure of 2 small plastic bags containing 1 kg of sea cucumbers. They were spotted on x-rays. Chinese Customs, April 19, 2021.⁶

INDIA

January 4, 2021
Lourthammalpuram, Thoothukudi District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

A tuk-tuk was parked in front of a warehouse. The police found 8 bags of cement inside that had been refilled with fresh sea cucumbers. Seizure of 800 kg. The Hindu, 5 January 2021; The Times of India, January 5, 2021.⁷



February 11, 2021
Off Perumal Par, Union Territory of Lakshadweep, India



The Lakshadweep Marine Wildlife Protection Force Watchers and reinforcements of the Forest Department were deployed on the uninhabited islands of the archipelago struck for a special operation. Despite the dark night and challenging rough sea condition, they proceeded to arrest 7 poachers, seize 2 boats and 486 sea cucumbers with an estimated value of 54,500,000 rupees (750,346 US\$). The poachers were not all from the area. Some were from New Delhi or West Bengal, at the other end of the country. Lakshadweep, see in particular "On the Trail" n°31 p.199, n°30 p.185 and n°28 p.14. The Times of India, March 11 and 13, 2021; Information Fusion Center – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), March 2021; Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), March 12, 2021.⁸

March 4, 2021
Vedalai, Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India



After receiving information, the Mandapam police raided Allah Pichai's coconut grove and seized 258 kg of dried sea cucumbers in 7 gunny bags, and 694 kg semi-prepared specimens stored in drums, i.e. 952 kg in total valued at 27,200 US\$ (28.6 US\$/kg). The shipment, probably to Sri Lanka, was to be done as usual by ship. The Times of India, March 5, 2021; The New Indian Express, March 6, 2021.⁹



REPEATED OFFENSE

April 11 – September 1, 2021

Rameswaram and Vedalai, Ramanathapuram District, Tamil Nadu State, India

The police received information on suspicious movement of some goods in the Villayutham coconut grove. The police seized 2.8 tons of sea cucumbers with a total value estimated at 20 million rupees (272,242 US\$ or 97 US\$/kg):

- 12 bags each containing 40 kg of sea cucumbers and a 20 kg bag found in a white color Maruti Omni van.

- 20 bags each containing 50 kg in a Bolero Maxi Truck Mahindra Plus

- 25 kg and 26 kg on two two wheelers.

- 565 kg of preserved sea cucumber and 689 kg of fresh sea cucumber awaiting shipment.

Villayutham is a repeat offender. He already has 13 previous cases to his credit, for violating the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act. In 2017, 300 kg of sea cucumbers had already been seized at his coconut plantation. At around the same time; the prevalence of poaching and smuggling networks to Sri Lanka had prompted local authorities to carry out awareness-raising operations with local fishermen. We can now understand why the authorities' efforts did not bear fruit: Villayutham, who is a traffic boss, is also the secretary of the fishing branch of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), the ruling party in Tamil Nadu.

On August 9, 2021, a new raid took place this time in his office, his residences, his hotel and his fish workshop. Sale bills, cash register receipts, checkbooks and other important documents were seized. They demonstrate the inconsistency between Villayutham's official income and his assets, which are valued at the equivalent of 670,000 US\$.

Placed in pre-trial detention, Villayutham requested his release on bail, arguing that sea cucumbers are bycatch in fishing operations. The court did not believe it for a moment. The magistrates recalled that the overexploitation of sea cucumbers has impacts on the health of ecosystems, biodiversity, the recycling of nutrients, and the transfer of organic matter from detritus to higher trophic levels. "One should not forget that over-exploitation of sea cucumbers not only damages the marine ecosystem, but the human ecosystem, as well, more particularly, the fishermen, as both are inter-dependent." His release was refused in September 2021. The judges also deplored that the police had not yet transferred all the documents necessary for the proper conduct of the procedure; release on bail could take place, which would allow him to come out on statutory bail for non-filing of chargesheet. The case is to be followed closely. Impunity seems to be well anchored in Villayutham's business plan. The Times of India, July 11, 2017 and September 4, 2021; The Hindu, April 11, 2021 and August 9, 2021; The News Minute, August 13, 2021; LawyerServices, September 1, 2021.¹⁰

JAPAN

March 1, 2021

Hokkaido Prefecture, Japan

Arrest of 10 divers-poachers who are presumed to belong to the Asahikawa branch of the Yamaguchi-gumi yakuza family. Japanese mafia has been involved in the sea cucumber trade for several years as it is an industry known for its big profits and reduced risks.

SoraNews24, March 2, 2021.¹¹

February - April 2021

Hokkaido Prefecture, Japan



Five divers-poachers were spotted on 2 occasions in the coastal waters off Hakodate. They are suspected of having poached 390 kg of "namako", sea cucumbers. One of the divers is a member of the Kodo-kai, a branch of the Yamaguchi-gumi yakuza. The sea cucumbers were then sold for 1 million yen (9000 US\$ or 23 US\$/kg) to Park Yong-h you, president of the Sannomiya Foods seafood company. Park is believed to have been collaborating with the mafia for a long time. A semi-rigid inflatable boat and various diving equipment were seized and the 6 men were arrested. In accordance with the Fisheries Act they risk 3 years in prison and a fine of 30 million yen (27,000 US\$). Tokyo Reporter, April 13, 2021.¹²

MALAYSIA

March 15, 2021

Kluang, State of Johor, Malaysia

Two Vietnamese sea cucumber poachers tried to bribe the maritime police forces with 3000 ringgits (743 US\$). They ended up in the hands of the Kluang Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission.

The Star, March 15, 2021; Malay Mail, March 15, 2021.¹³

April 9, 2021

100 km off Tok Bali, State of Kelantan, Malaysia

A green fishing boat fled as the patrol approached. After a 30-minute chase, officers from the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency ended the chase. 40 kg of “gamat” (sea cucumbers) worth 4,000 ringgits (960 US\$), the boat and fishing gear estimated at 72,000 US\$ were seized. Three foreign nationals without identity documents were apprehended. They risk a fine of 1 million ringgits (240,000 US\$) and a minimum of 2 years in prison for having fished in the Malaysian EEZ without a permit. Information Fusion Center – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), April 2021; New Straits Times, April 10, 2021.¹⁴

SRI LANKA

March 9, 2021

Off Talaimannar, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

The North-Central Naval Command checked 2 dinghies and seized 189.83 kg of dried sea cucumbers distributed in 24 bags and estimated at 26 million Sri Lankan rupees (134,695 US\$ or 113 US\$/kg). The boats were also seized. The 4 arrested men were placed in Covid-19 quarantine. Sri Lanka Navy, 10 March 2021.¹⁵

March 15-31, 2021

Eastern, Northern, North-Western and North-Central Provinces, Sri Lanka

A two-week operation made it possible to seize 10,219 sea cucumbers plundered at night. 75 poachers were apprehended, 18 dinghies and diving equipment were seized.



Sri Lankan waters are home to 24 species of sea cucumbers. Sri Lanka is also a regional traffic hub. Neighboring India has banned the fishing of the 200 species present in its waters and poachers smuggle their contraband by sea to Sri Lanka before re-export to Hong Kong, Singapore and China. These include the species *Holothuria fuscogilva*, *H. nobilis*, and *Thelenota ananas* plundered from the waters of the Lakshadweep Islands (see India above). Sri Lanka Navy, 31 March 2021; Teale Phelps Bondaroff, Sea cucumber crime in India and Sri Lanka during the period 2015–2020. SPC Beche-de-mer Information Bulletin #41 – March 2021, pp 55-65.¹⁶

TURKEY

Early March 2021

Izmir Province, Turkey

Seizure of 60 kg of sea cucumbers in a car stopped at a checkpoint. Hurriyet.com.tr, March 10, 2021.¹⁷

EUROPE

SPAIN

April 5, 2021

Community of Madrid, Spain

The Chinese restaurant in question had 5 stars in the guide to the worst restaurants in the world. No business license, severe hygiene and sanitation deficiencies; 343 dried sea cucumbers on the shelves and 15 boxes labeled in Mandarin containing 290 allegedly anti-Covid pills. Everything was seized and the closure of the place was required by the local administration. Europa Press, 12 April 2021.¹⁸

ITALY

March 6, 2021

Mattinata, Province of Foggia, Region of Apulia, Italy

Traffic police inspect a red Citroën with 3 people on board after receiving reports of sea urchin poachers in action in Mattinata. In the trunk, there were 1,000 purple sea urchins (*Paracentrotus lividus*) and diving equipment. The suspects received a fine of 2,000 € or 2,445 US\$. The trio were going to sell their “goods” in Bari. Gargano TV, March 9, 2021; Manfredonia News, March 9, 2021.¹⁹



April 14, 2021

Alghero, Province of Sassari, Autonomous Region of Sardinia, Italy

During a patrol along the coast of the Capo Caccia – Isola Piana marine protected area, the coast guards got their hands on 3 sea urchin poachers in possession of 1,000 specimens. Seizure of sea urchins and fishing equipment and fines of 4,600 € or 5,400 \$ US. Alguer.it, April 14, 2021.²⁰



RUSSIA

February 22, 2021

Pogranichny, Primorsky Krai, Russia. Border with China.

Seizure of 78 kg of dried sea cucumbers in the garage of a village resident. It is highly likely they were being exported to China. Primorye 24, February 22, 2021.²¹

February 27, 2021

Nakhodka Bay, Primorsky Krai, Russia

A 34-year-old was arrested on his boat with 183 fresh sea cucumbers and scuba gear. The water temperature of Nakhodka Bay in February is close to zero, that is that the game is worth the candle. He was sentenced to a fine of 130,000 rubles (1,700 US\$) and will have to serve 200 hours of compulsory labor. News VL, February 27, 2021.²²



Beginning of March 2021

Pogranichny, Primorsky Krai, Russia



Some dried sea cucumbers were divided into 10 tightly taped bundles and placed in a hidden compartment of a train, drug trafficking style. Guards at the railway checkpoint stopped the attempt of smuggling to China. The value of the cargo is estimated at 1.7 million rubles or 23,000 US\$ (1,000 US\$/kg). Fishnews, March 5, 2021.²³

Mid-March 2021

Kraskino, Primorsky Krai, Russia

Seizure by customs of 705 kg of dried sea cucumbers with an estimated value of 5 million rubles or 67,650 US\$ (96 US\$/kg). The shipment was on its way to China accompanied by false documents. A man described as a "businessman" has been taken into custody. TASS Russian News Agency, March 16, 2021.²⁴

March 24, 2021

Kraskino Checkpoint, Primorsky Krai, Russia. Border with China.



Seizure of 30 tightly packed bundles of dried sea cucumbers of 2 kg each, cylindrical in shape and wrapped in yellow tape. The train was heading to China; the packages were in a hidden compartment. Estimated value: 3.5 million rubles or 47,350 US\$ (789 US\$/kg). Fishnews, March 24, 2021.²⁵



March 2021

Far Eastern Federal District, Russia



Seizure of 751 kg of dried sea cucumbers with an estimated value of 21 million rubles (289,000 US\$ or 384 US\$/kg) probably bound for China. Argoumenty i Fakty (AIF), July 15, 2021.²⁶

April 21, 2021

Primorsky Krai, Russia

A trafficker was prosecuted for having organized the fishing, preparation and storage of more than 16,500 sea cucumbers. The military prosecutor demanded 7.9 million rubles (104,000 US\$) in damages and a fine of 1.9 million rubles (25,000 US\$). The court accepted his requests. The far eastern seas of Russia are the habitat of 92 species of sea cucumbers. Japanese sea cucumber (*Apostichopus japonicus*) which lives between 0 and 150 m depth is one of the most sought-after species. Chief Military Prosecutor's Office, April 21, 2021.²⁷



SEAHORSES

Hippocampus spp., Appendix II

AFRICA

MOZAMBIQUE

January 19 and September 2021 Vilankulo District, Inhambane Province, Mozambique

Liu Rong Wu, 41, was reported by his neighbors. 8.4 kg of dried seahorses ready to be sent to China were seized at his home: 2,800 specimens if we take an average weight of 3 grams/seahorse. He would have bought them from local fishermen for the ridiculous price of 30 to 50 meticaïs per kilo (0.4 to 0.65 US\$/kg). The Bazaruto Archipelago national park was undoubtedly the scene of this plundering of the last seahorses inhabiting the waters of Mozambique.



Liu was sentenced to 14 years in prison and a fine equivalent to 18,300 US\$, plus 12,600 US\$ in damages and compensation to the State. The court estimated that he could have sold the seahorses for 1800 US\$/kg on the Chinese market. The district administrator finds the sentence lenient. "It's worth noting that we have Mozambicans jailed in China, and there they do not play around." Liu appealed to the court and remains out on bail.

Vilankulo District Government, January 22, 2021; Club of Mozambique, 25 January 2021; Agência de Informação de Moçambique, September 21, 2021.¹



ASIA

CHINA

January 2021

Municipality of Chongqing, China

Seizure by customs of 26 dried seahorses from an incoming package.

Chinese Customs, January 29, 2021.²

February 20, 2021

Chengdu-Shuangliu International Airport, Chengdu Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China



Seizure in the luggage of a passenger coming from Cairo, Egypt, of 20 dried seahorses weighing a total of 190 grams, or 9.5 grams per specimen. They were wrapped in aluminum foil and placed in an iron box.

Chinanews (with Xinhua), February 24, 2021; Chinese Customs, February 24, 2021.³

February 2021

Shantou, Shantou Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure in an incoming package of 58 dried seahorses of 15 to 20 cm each and with a total weight of 474 grams, or just over 8 grams/specimen. Chinese Customs, February 25, 2021.⁴

February 2021

Zhengzhou Xinzheng International Airport, Zhengzhou Prefecture, Henan Province, China

Seizure in the luggage of an incoming passenger of 20 dried seahorses with a total weight of 180 grams, or 9 grams/specimen.

Chinese Customs, March 2, 2021.⁵

VIET NAM

March 3, 2021

Sunan Shuofang International Airport, Wuxi Prefecture, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure of 85 dried seahorses, 477 grams, or 5.6 grams/specimen, in the baggage of an inbound passenger.

Chinese Customs, February 4 and March 5, 2021.⁶

April 2021

Friendship Pass Border Post, Chongzuo Prefecture, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China. Border with Viet Nam.

A man was capture after attempting to enter China with a 20-gram seahorse in his bag.

Chinese Customs, April 21, 2021.⁷

March 3, 2021

Lang Son, Lang Son Province, Viet Nam

An individual arrested in September 2020 while transporting 129 kg of dried seahorses was sentenced to 4 years in prison.

Bao Dien Tu Tai Nguyen Va Moi Truong, April 7, 2021.⁹

PHILIPPINES

March 26, 2021

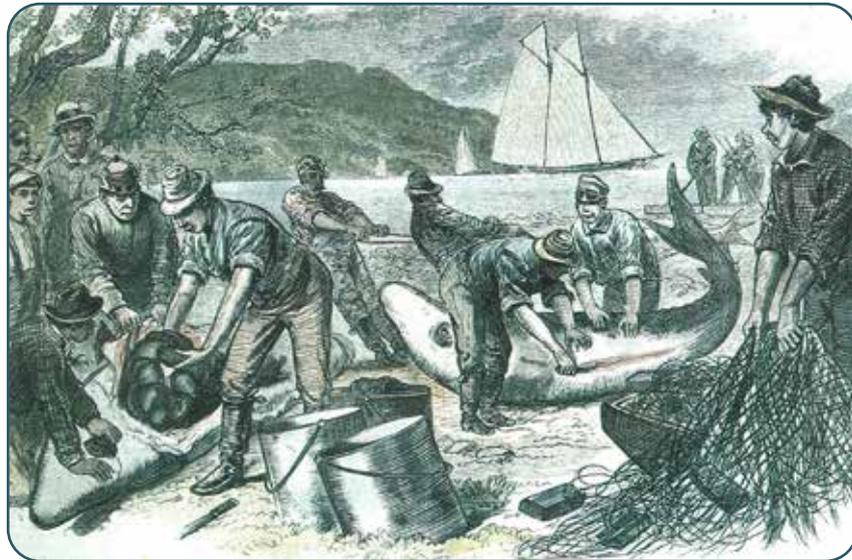
Bacolod Port, Province of Negros Occidental, Philippines

During an inspection on the *MV FastCat M3*, the Philippine Coast Guard and the Philippine National Police - Maritime Group seized 15.25 kg of dried seahorses: 5 kg of small size. The loot was valued at 100,000 Philippine pesos (2,055 US\$ or 411 US\$/kg), 10 kg medium size estimated at 200,000 Philippine pesos (4,110 US\$ or 411 US\$/kg) and 250 grams of large size valued at 160,000 Philippine pesos (3,288 US\$ or 13,152 US\$/kg). The cargo was shipped by Renante Panaguiton and was declared to contain "dried fish". It was destined for Iloilo, on the other side of the Guimaras Strait.

Philippine News Agency, March 26, 2021.⁸



MARINE OR FRESHWATER FISH INCLUDING SHARKS AND STURGEONS



Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, August 3, 1878.
Sturgeon fishing on the Hudson River and caviar production

WESTERN AFRICA

BENIN

April 22, 2021

Cotonou, Littoral Department, Benin

Seizure of 450 shark fins.

AIRCOP, 22 April 2021.¹

CENTRAL AFRICA

CAMEROON

April 21, 2021

Limbe, South West Region Cameroon

Accidentally caught, intentionally killed. The young 8-meter whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*, Appendix II) was brought to the beach alive, and then was finished off and butchered. The African Marine Mammal Conservation Organization notes that 12 shark and ray species threatened with extinction living in Cameroonian waters have no legal protection at the national level.

African Marine Mammal Conservation Organization, April 21, 2021.²



April 11, 2021

Tanadelta Subcounty, Tana River County, Kenya

The trawler *MV Roberto* belonging to an Italian shipowner was seized along with its cargo of sharks, juvenile fish, a halavi guitarfish (*Glaucostegus halavi*, Appendix II) and fishing gear lacking the mandatory Turtle Excluder Device (TED). The vessel is accused of bottom trawling in shallow waters (less than 15 meters), in violation of the country's fisheries regulations. Salim Kolombo Tawfiq, the captain, was heard by justice. In February 2022, the vessel was still in the port of Mombasa.



Local fishermen have been protesting against the intrusion of foreign trawlers into coastal waters since the 1980's. They blame them for destroying juvenile fish and coral and contributing to the collapse of resources. There are reportedly 5 boats engaged in bottom trawling near the coast of the Kipini community.

In 2018 and 2019, we recorded 21 cases of fishing or trading without a license, 8 cases of fishing in a prohibited area, and 26 cases of non-compliance with regulations. The parallel with the results of the anti-poaching operation on land is cruel. Does this joint initiative by the Kenya Wildlife Service and the Kenya Fisheries Service signal the end of impunity at sea?

People Daily, April 14, 2021; WildlifeDirect, April 15, 2021.⁴

EASTERN AFRICA

FRANCE (REUNION)

Night of January 14 to 15, 2021

Off Saint-Gilles les Bains and Saint-Leu, Department of Reunion, France

Capture by trap lines of 5 tiger sharks (*Galeocerdo cuvier*). This is not fishing, it is not poaching, it is preventive killing to allow surfers to enjoy themselves in relative safety.

Each time a tiger or bull shark (*Carcharhinus leucas*) bites the bait, the fisherman employed by the Shark Safety Center receives an SMS on his cell phone. The preventive hunt benefits from a public budget of 800,000 € or more than 980,000 US\$. What happens to the meat?

Linfo.re, January 15 and 17, 2021.³

MOZAMBIQUE

January 8, 2021

Mozambique

Previous issues of "On the Trail" reported 2 seizures in Hong Kong ("On the Trail" n°11 p.7) and in the United Kingdom ("On the Trail" n°23 p.17) of shark fins exported from Mozambique. They also referred to the seizure in the holds of the Antillas Reefer operated by Spain and Namibia of 4 tons of shark fins, 11.3 tons of liver oil and 20 tons of shark oil ("On the Trail" n°12 p.7). The waters under the jurisdiction of Mozambique are a vast field of plunder open to foreign fleets. A new fishing law that came into effect at the start of 2021 attempts to prevent fraud and cruelty off the 2,700 km long Mozambican coastline. Landing in Mozambican ports with skinned or finless sharks is now prohibited. Oceanographic, January 11, 2021.⁵

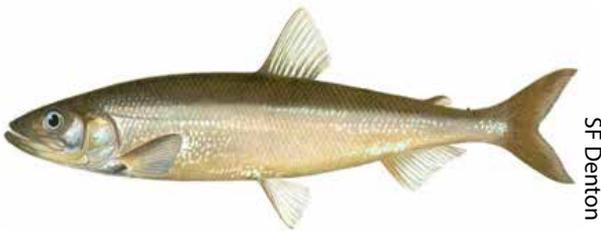
NORTHERN AMERICA

CANADA

February 2021

Saguenay, Province of Quebec, Canada

Continuation of Operation Rising Tide. 27 men and 6 women were convicted of illegally buying or selling rainbow smelt (*Osmerus mordax*) and fined between 240 and 16,425 Canadian dollars (170 to 12,759 US\$). Their names were published by the Ministry of Forests, Wildlife and Parks. The operation was initiated in response to information received from citizens. It also led to the arrest of a white-tailed deer poacher. To report any act of poaching or behaviour against wildlife heritage or wildlife habitats: SOS Poaching at 1 800 463-2191 or on the Internet at mffp.gouv.qc.ca/faune/sos-braconnage/



SF Denton

Two populations of rainbow smelt live in Lake Utopia: the small-bodied population and the large-bodied (maximum 30 cm long) population. Morphologically, ecologically and genetically different, the 2 species co-exist as a sympatric (which does not hybridize) interdependent pair. They are both listed as threatened under the Species at Risk Act.

Lake Utopia rainbow smelt (*Osmerus mordax*): 2020 Action plan, Canada, Department of Fisheries and Oceans; Ministry of Forests, Wildlife and Parks, February 2, 2021.⁶

OPERATION VITRUM

March 3, 2021

Vancouver, Province of British Columbia, Canada

Between October 2017 and May 2018, Pacific Gateway Holding Inc imported from the port of Xiamen in China 7 containers weighing 21 tons each declared to contain exclusively American eel, *Anguilla rostrata*, which is not listed in CITES. In fact, DNA analysis proved that 5 of the containers were filled with European eel fillets (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) in proportions ranging from 6.5 to 47.8%. This well-known tactic of smugglers who exploit the resemblances between protected species and non-protected species to fool customs officers can only be thwarted with costly genetic analysis which is therefore rarely implemented. However, Canada has done this. After the results, Pacific Gateway Holding Inc. was fined 163,776 Canadian dollars (131,230 US\$). The money will go to the government's Environmental Damages Fund. The export of European glass eels



and adult eels has been banned by the European Union since 2011. Nevertheless, Chinese farms have been supplied with glass eels poached in European estuaries and rivers and then fattened for a few months or years in China before being re-exported to Canada.

Government of Canada, 4 March 2021; Atlas of the Business of Endangered Species, Robin des Bois, Editions Arthaud, 2019.⁷

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

November 2013 to 2021

Santa Catalina Island, State of California, United States of America

The Hornbaker case has dragged on. Other than that, it is exemplary and demonstrates once again that the aquarium industry, which sells pretty fish to be used in shows, is also sourcing from poachers and polluters.

Hornbaker was arrested underwater in November 2013 while spraying rocks with an opaque, cloudy substance to draw out gobies. His strategy was to catch them while they were dazed then trap them in a plastic container, which was the antechamber to the aquarium that awaited them. In southeastern Asia, Hornbaker would probably have gone unnoticed. In California, there are agents of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) who stick their necks out to track down poachers. Officer Rob Rojas spotted the bubbles Hornbaker produced on the surface and dove in to observe the scene. He announced himself with a slate and his badge at a depth of 9 meters. In his ascent, Hornbaker abandoned his squirt bottles like a drug dealer throws his bundles out the go-fast window. Agent Rojas quickly went to get them. It turned out that they contained quinaldine or 2-methylquinoline, an anesthetic used to transport fish which is banned from use in California waters. Underneath Hornbaker's boat, Gilbert, Rojas' colleague, spotted another container lying on the bottom. He dove down and discovered that it contained dozens of bluehanded gobies (*Lythrypnus dalli*) and zebra gobies (*Lythrypnus zebra*). A total of 172 gobies with an estimated value of 5,000 US\$ were seized and released.

Hornbaker, who had already received a warning 9 months earlier, claimed not to be aware that collecting aquarium fish is prohibited around Catalina Island, nor that it is also unlawful to use a chemical liquid substance to collect marine aquaria anywhere in the United States. After the goby case, he was cited again for other fishing violations.

In 2014, he was fined 115 US\$ for his aquarium plundering and then 500 US\$ for the other offenses. In December 2020, all of Hornbaker's fishing licenses were finally revoked (commercial fishing license, marine aquaria collector's permit and tidal invertebrate permit). CDFW announced in April, 2021 that Hornbaker has been permanently prohibited from collecting aquarium fish.

SFGATE, 23 April, 2021.⁸



Bluehanded gobie (*Lythrypnus dalli*) . Photo old-bean-adams

**February 6 or 7, 2021
Cape Floral, State of Florida, United States of America**

The carcass of an arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) was lying on the banks of the Caloosahatchee River. Native to the Amazon basin, it is quite unlikely that it has made its way here to die on its own. An aquarist overwhelmed by the increasing size of his prisoner probably cowardly abandoned it. An adult arapaima measures up to 4.5 metres and weighs 200 kg. According to the CITES trade database, the United States imported 100 live arapaimas declared to be farmed from Colombia in 2020.



NBC2, February 12, 2021; Mongabay, April 9, 2021.⁹

**February 11 and 26, June 11 and July 19, 2021
Winnebago, Calumet, and Fond du Lac Counties, State of Wisconsin, United States of America**



Ryan Koenigs, a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) sturgeon biologist and supervisor of the sturgeon fishing season, is at the heart of a caviar trafficking case. Under the guise of a sturgeon fertility study, his team was collecting the carcasses of harpooned sturgeons in Lake Winnebago. The eggs were then passed through the hands of various caviar processors, before being packed in jars.

Following a 2017 joint DNR and US Fish and Wildlife Service investigation, Koenigs and others were interviewed in January 2020. Despite his denials, there is evidence that DNR agents collected that proves he has close ties with caviar processors.

In June 2020, investigators searched Koenigs' home. They then discovered that he erased the history of his work phone in April, without having asked for prior authorization. At least one exchange with a caviar processor was listed there in January.

In February 2021, Koenigs admitted that he had been dealing the eggs of 5-6 sturgeons per year - transferring them to a processor who gives him 20-30 jars of caviar in return. He would offer them to a dozen members of his team for their personal consumption. His small gifts would actually represent the equivalent of 100,000 US\$ in caviar. Koenigs was placed on administrative leave and charged with obstructing the investigation.

Caviar producers Victor Schneider, 88, Mary Schneider, 87, and Shawn Wendt, 51, were also charged with preparing caviar using sturgeon eggs provided by the DNR and accepting some of the caviar as payment for their services. They will negotiate a sentencing arrangement with the court on February 26.

On June 11, 2021, Koenigs was fined 50 US\$ by Winnebago County Court for lying to an investigator. On July 19, he was fined 500 US\$ by Calumet County for obstructing the investigation. He resigned the same day.

Two species of sturgeon live in Wisconsin waters: the shovelnose sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus platorynchus*, Appendix II) and the lake sturgeon (*Acipenser fulvescens*, Appendix II).

ABC News (with AP), February 11, 2021; Oshkosh Northwestern, June 14 and July 23, 2021.¹⁰

March 17, 2021

LaGrange, State of New York, United States of America

Joshua Seguine, 40 years old, was fined 5,000 US\$ and sentenced to a conditional discharge. He was arrested in July 2017 in Georgia for driving without a licence. The police had discovered 5 sharks in a tank in the back of his truck. Investigations led to the seizure of 7 live sandbar sharks (*Carcharhinus plumbeus*) in the basement of his house, as well as 2 dead leopard sharks (*Triakis semifasciata*), a hammerhead shark (family Sphyrnidae, 3 species in Appendix II), and a smalltooth sawfish rostrum (*Pristis pectinata*, Appendix I) (see "On the trail" n°18 p.10). Seguine ran Aquatic Apex Life LLC and sold sharks on MonsterFishKeepers.com. New York State Attorney General, March 17, 2021.¹¹

REPEATED OFFENSE

April 7 and December 15, 2021

John F. Kennedy International Airport, State of New York and Hartford, State of Connecticut, United States of America



King Sheung Chan, known as "Nelson", was jointly working for Asia Aquatic Company Ltd. based in Hong Kong and for Laknock Trading based in Canada. He acted as a collector of North American and European glass eels destined for Chinese farms. He was caught on April 7, 2021 with 19.3 kg kilos of glass eels estimated to be worth 86,000 US\$ (4,456 US\$/kg). He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 8 months in prison.

American eels (*Anguilla rostrata*) are not listed under CITES but are nonetheless protected by US State laws. On the Atlantic coast, glass eel fishing is only permitted in Maine with strict quotas and in South Carolina. Chan was caught when he bought a batch of glass eels for 29,500 US\$ from a US Fish and Wildlife Service officer posing as a poacher operating in Virginia, Maryland and Massachusetts. That same afternoon, and while transporting his new acquisition, Chan made his way to meet the broker in charge of another batch of glass eels shipped by Laknock Trading from Canada near the John F. Kennedy Airport. Most of the glass eels died during the Canada-USA trip, so Chan replaced them with the live specimens purchased a few hours earlier from the USFWS officer. The broker took back the 10 restocked boxes, which made their way to the cargo area. The contraband did not have time to fly to Hong Kong. Chan was arrested, the glass eels were seized and those that were still alive were released into the wild.

Chan is a repeat offender. He admitted to having illegally exported 103 kg of glass eels with an estimated value of 3,301 US\$/kg in 2017.

US Department of Justice, July 1, 2021 and December 15, 2021.¹²

April 22, 2021

State of Maryland, United States of America



The investigation began in Brazil when the federal police discovered that killifish eggs (family Cyprinodontidae), an ornamental fish, were sent to the United States of America by mail.

Seizure of 200 dead killifish and hundreds of eggs. The joint operation of the Brazilian federal police and the American police also extends to the State of Iowa and to Los Angeles, State of California. A global network involving 84 suspects in 24 countries was identified.

Government of Brazil, 22 April 2021; G1, April 22, 2021.¹³



Cyprinodon salinus ssp. salinus

April 30, 2021

Lake of the Ozarks, State of Missouri, United States of America

The chase lasted 13 hours. It started late at night. In a boat, there were the 3 men of Russian origin, including a minor, who were transporting 5 disemboweled paddlefish (*Polyodon spathula*, Appendix II) and 34 kg of eggs. Paddlefish caviar is a known substitute for sturgeon caviar. Both species have existed since the time of the dinosaurs. One ounce (28.35 grams) of paddlefish caviar sells for around 70 US\$ on the black market. The value of the seizure is estimated at 84,000 US\$ or 2,470 US\$/kg.



Missouri Department of Conservation, July 7, 2021; Springfield News-Leader, July 14, 2021.¹⁴

BRAZIL

January 3, 2021

Port of Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Seizure of 3 tons of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) and 2 kg of marijuana during a routine inspection. Eight people were investigated and 4 were arrested. Three of them were released on bail. The fish were given to the Mesa Brasil program, a national food bank network against hunger and food waste.

G1, January 4, 2021.¹⁵

January 28, 2021

Coari, State of Amazonas, Brazil



Seizure on a fishing boat sailing on the Rio Solimões of 55 kg of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), 30 kg of tambaqui (*Colossoma macropomum*) and 46 kg of fish of the genus *Brycon*. Arrest of the 59-year-old captain.

G1, January 29, 2021.¹⁶

February 3, 2021

Coari, State of Amazonas, Brazil

8,900 kg of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) dried in the hold of a ship coming from Tefé and bound for Manaus. Arrest of a 17-year-old boy. The value of the seizure was 356,000 reais (65,360 US\$). A Crítica, February 4, 2021.¹⁷

February 11, 2021

Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Surveillance operation at Panair market. Seizure at night on a wooden boat of 16 polystyrene boxes containing 420 kg of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), 500 kg of fish from the family Osteoglossidae, 150 kg of redtail catfish (*Phractocephalus hemiliopterus*), 150 kg of barred catfish (*Pseudoplatystoma fasciatum*) and 50 kg of tambaqui (*Colossoma macropomum*). Total value: 150,000 reais (27,540 US\$). The fish were donated to charities.

Em Tempo, February 12, 2021.¹⁸

February 16, 2021

Santarem, State of Pará, Brazil

Seizure by the health surveillance service on Avenida Tapajos near the fish market, on stalls and carts, of 40 kg of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), tambaqui (*Colossoma macropomum*) and Brazilian mojarra (*Diapterus brasiliensis*). The fish were kept at room temperature without any hygiene measures. After being designated unfit for consumption, they were discarded. The stalls and carts were seized.

G1, February 16, 2021.¹⁹

March 1, 2021

Óbidos, State of Pará, Brazil

Seizure of 35 arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) each measuring more than 2 meters in length on board the *Thaiane Mirella* fishing boat in the State of Amazonas. Two men were needed to extract each of the specimens from the ship. They were donated to neighborhood institutions in Bela Vista, Perpétuo Socorro and São Francisco.

G1, March 3, 2021.²⁰



March 13, 2021

Iranduba, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Traffic control on the AM-070 highway. The driver of a tractor trailer could not present the official documents of his cargo, namely 4.5 tons of arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) whose value is estimated at 280,000 reais or 51,350 US\$. Seizure of the goods and arrest of the driver. A Crítica, March 14, 2021.²¹

March 14, 2021

Cascavel, State of Ceará, Brazil

Arrest of 6 people identified from videos posted on social media as the executioners of a female bull shark (*Carcharhinus leucas*). It was caught, brought ashore on Balbino beach and pulled with a rope by a dune buggy. Fine of 4,300 reais or 790 US\$ for mistreatment. They also risk 3 months to a year in prison for the death of the animal plus an additional fine. A witness who wishes to remain anonymous adds that the carcass was recovered by fishermen to consume the meat. Diário do Nordeste, March 15, 2021; G1, March 16, 2021.²²



March 17, 2021

Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Seizure at the port of São Raimundo of 7,300 ornamental fish of 15 different species, in particular cardinal tetra (*Paracheirodon axelrodi*) and pencil fish (genus *Nannostomus*) caught in the rivers of the State of Amazonas. They were distributed on a boat in about 50 plastic containers. Value of the seizure: 200,000 reais or 36,000 US\$. The owner of the vessel was fined an undisclosed amount. InsightCrime, March 29, 2021.²³



March 18, 2021

Utinga Camillo Vianna State Park, Belém, State of Pará, Brazil

Seizure of 95 arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), a knife, a canoe and a fishing net. Two arrests. G1, March 18, 2021.²⁴

April 4, 2021

Coari, State of Amazonas, Brazil



Seizure on the Rio Solimões, a tributary of the Amazon, of 200 kg of arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) on a first vessel and 320 kg on a second. Value estimated at 12,700 reais or 2,415 US\$. Two arrests. G1, April 5, 2021.²⁵

April 8, 2021

Port of Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Seizure of 10 tons of arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) in a boat at the quay. Two arrests. The boat was also seized. G1, April 8, 2021.²⁶



April 25, 2021

Abadia de Goiás, State of Goiás, Brazil

Seizure of one ton of fish, including arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), butterfly peacock bass (*Cichla ocellaris*), barred sorubim (*Pseudoplatystoma fasciatum*) and gilded catfish (*zungaro zungaro*) in 9 polystyrene boxes found in an interstate bus on the BR-060 highway. No accompanying documentation identified owner or origin. Diário do Estado, April 26, 2021.²⁷

FRANCE (FRENCH GUIANA)

March 2021

Off the Amana Nature Reserve, Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France

The Coast Guard boarded 2 Surinamese "tapouilles" fishing in French territorial waters. These wooden boats, usually manned by a crew of 5 sailors, were deploying nets in territorial waters under French jurisdiction and were catching sharks, snooks (*Centropomus undecimalis*), catfish (genus *Sciades*), and importantly, acoupa weakfish (*Cynoscion acoupa*), whose swim bladders were extracted and sold at around 500 € per kg, i.e. 590 US\$/kg. The prices keep rising as the totoaba swim bladders disappear. Seizure of 1,500 kg of fish and 16 kg of swim bladders. French Biodiversity Agency, April 2021.²⁸

March 17, 2021

Off Kourou, Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France



Boarding by the French Navy patrol boat *La Confiance* of the *PSI-15*, 19 meters long, flying the flag of Guyana, 65 nautical miles off the coast of French Guiana. The *PSI-15* was diverted to Kourou. Three tons of fish were seized as well as fishing gear. After veterinary examination, the fish, given its state of freshness, was transferred to the Regional Interest Market and will be sold at auction. France-Guyane, March 20, 2021; Cols bleus, March 26, 2021.²⁹

REPEATED OFFENSE

April 29, 2021

Off Cayenne, Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France



Boarding and rerouting of the *Luiza*, an 8.8-meter-long Brazilian fishing boat caught illegally fishing for the second time in 2 years in French territorial waters. The crew was taken back to the border with Brazil, the captain was taken into custody. The boat will be destroyed.

France-Guyane, May 3, 2021; Guyane la 1^{ère}, May 3, 2021.³⁰

CENTRAL ASIA

KAZAKHSTAN

OPERATION BEKIRE

April 2 and 12, 2021

Zhanaozen, Aktau and Fort Shevchenko, Mangystau Region, Kazakhstan

More than 286 kg of “bekires” seized during 3 roadside checks: 19 kg for one, 148 kg for the other and 119 kg (35 carcasses, i.e. 3.4 kg per specimen) for the last. “Bekire” means Russian sturgeon (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Appendix II) in Kazakh. inAktau, April 20 and 21, 2021; Lada, April 20, 2021.³¹

April 2 and Beginning of August 2021
Aktau, Mangystau Region, Kazakhstan

A. had sold heroin for 500 US\$ to “S.” During the search of his home, in addition to drugs and illegal firearms, the police found a sturgeon (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) in the freezer.

Charged with illicit possession of firearms, drug trade and possession of a protected species, he was sentenced to 10 years in prison.

inAktau, August 6, 2021.³²

OPERATION BEKIRE 2021

April 13, 2021

Akzhaik District, West Kazakhstan Region, Kazakhstan

Seizure of 51 kg of sturgeon (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) and 2.5 tonnes of bream (*Abramis brama*) from a van driven by a 46-year-old man. My City, April 13, 2021.³³

April 15, 2021

Atyrau Region, Kazakhstan



Seizure of 247 sturgeons (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II), 812 kg in total, or an average of 3 kg per specimen, at the home of a 25-year-old man. Ikrainfo, April 15, 2021.³⁴

April 26, 2021

Fort Shevchenko, Mangystau Region, Kazakhstan



Joint operation of border guards and police. Discovery in a private home of 633 sturgeon carcasses (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) in 7 freezers: 2.7 tons in all, or 4 kg per specimen on average. The seizure was handed over to the Kazakh company Osetr LLP, which specializes in the production of sturgeon products.

Ikrainfo, April 27, 2021; Khabar 24, April 28, 2021; inAktau, April 28, 2021.³⁵

Spring 2021

Damba, Atyrau Region, Kazakhstan

Arrest of 2 fishing wardens. They captured sturgeons (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) in the Ural delta and resold them on the black market instead of transferring them to a State-approved hatchery. They let poachers go about their business and informed them of the planned maritime surveillance patrols in exchange for monetary compensation.

Ak Zhaik, September 6, 2021.³⁶

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

March 5, 2021

Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China

Seizure of 4,290 beauty masks made with extracts of sturgeon caviar (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II), camellia, ginger, grapefruit, coconut and avocado manufactured under the Vprove brand in South Korea.

Chinese Customs, March 8, 2021.³⁸

March 9, 2021

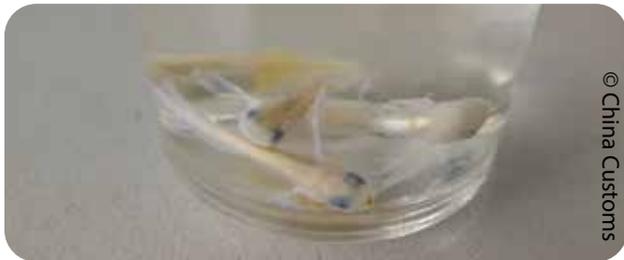
Qidong, Nantong Prefecture, Jiangsu Province, China

Arrest in the Yangtze estuary of 2 poachers. Seizure of 30 kg of Chinese sturgeon meat (*Acipenser sinensis*, Appendix II).

China Water Transport News Agency, March 30, 2021.³⁹

March 2021

Jinan, Jinan Prefecture, Shandong Province, China



Seizure in a postal parcel of 30 juvenile medakas (*Oryzias latipes*) coming from abroad.

Chinese Customs, April 1, 2021.⁴⁰

March 2021

Xi'an, Xi'an Prefecture, Shaanxi Province, China



Seizure by postal customs of 12 goldfish (*Carassius auratus*) and medaka fish (*Oryzias latipes*) in a package from abroad.

Chinese Customs, April 2, 2021.⁴²

March 2021

Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China

Seizure of 2 medakas (*Oryzias latipes*) that were being smuggled into China under the description of "shampoo".

Chinese Customs, March 29, 2021; KNews, April 9, 2021.⁴³

MEDAKA

The species lives mainly in the fresh and brackish waters of the Japanese archipelago. It is tolerant to saline coastal waters. It is subject to rapid population decline due to pollution, the proliferation of voracious invasive species and the very strong global demand for aquarium fish. For 20 years, luminescent and fluorescent specimens described as "Frankenfish" by the American press have been marketed by the hundreds of thousands after the introduction into eggs and embryos of genes producing multicolored proteins extracted from the genomes of jellyfish and red coral. The medakas (*Oryzias latipes*) became the first genetically modified pets. Their trade is prohibited in California, Canada, Japan and the European Union. In 2006, the Netherlands spotted 400 genetically modified medakas in several aquarium shops. The purchase price of a fluorescent medaka is around 20 US\$ compared to 2 US\$ for a natural medaka. Further genetic altering has resulted in the release of medakas under the commercial names of "Sunburst orange", "Cosmic blue" or "Galactic purple". The lifespan of a fluorescent or natural medaka does not exceed a few months.



Les Echos, November 24, 2004; Nguyen Thanh Vu, Young Sun Cho, Sang Yoon Lee, Dong Soo Kim and Yoon Kwon Nam, "A Cyan Fluorescent Protein Gene (cfp)-Transgenic Marine Medaka *Oryzias dancena* with Potential Ornamental Applications", Fisheries and aquatic sciences, vol. 17, No. 4, December 30, 2014; Kanao, S., Taniguchi, Y. and Watanabe, K., "Oryzias latipes". The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2019; Ayse Cebeci, Ilhan Aydin and Anthony Goddard, "Bigger, stronger, better: Fish transgenesis applications and methods", Biotech Studies, vol.29, n°2, December 29, 2020; National Institute for Environmental Studies (Japan), "Oryzias latipes"⁴¹

March 25, 2021

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China

A boat registered in mainland China was fishing in Hong Kong waters opposite the Tuen Mun Thermal Power Station, known as Black Point. The 2 crew members were sentenced in flagrante delicto to 4 weeks in prison. Fish and fishing gear were seized. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, April 12, 2021.⁴⁴

April 2021

Nanjing, Nanjing Prefecture, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure of “migratory fish” as stated by customs press - the collected specimens were in reality 7 medakas (*Oryzias latipes*) held in a bag of water inside a package from abroad. Chinese Customs, May 1, 2021.⁴⁵

April 2021

Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China

Seizure of a package from abroad containing 39 ornamental juvenile fish. Chinese Customs, May 6, 2021.⁴⁶



**Beginning of April 2021
Changsha, Changsha Prefecture, Hunan Province, China**



Seizure of 21 ornamental fish in a postal package from abroad. Chinese Customs, April 9, 2021.⁴⁷

April 6, 2021

Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China

Seizure by postal customs of 8 medakas (*Oryzias latipes*) held in a plastic bag. It is forbidden to ship live animals to the People’s Republic of China with the exception of dogs and cats that have been vaccinated and are accompanied by a quarantine certificate. Shanghai Customs, April 14, 2021.⁴⁸

April 7, 2021

Suzhou, Suzhou Prefecture, Jiangsu Province, China

Opening of 7 postal parcels supposed to contain “shampoos”. Each actually contained a plastic bag filled with water and 2-3 ornamental juvenile fish. Chinese Customs, April 8, 2021.⁴⁹

April 9, 2021

Miyun Reservoir, Beijing Autonomous Municipality, China



Two people arrested for practicing electrofishing in the Miyun Reservoir, where the Bai River and the Chao River flow. The reservoir is located 16 km north of Beijing. It is the only source of drinking water for 11 million inhabitants of the megalopolis. Aquaculture Network, April 29, 2021.⁵⁰

TAIWAN

Beginning of February 2021

Lanyu Island (Orchid Island), Taiwan



A “king” of coral reefs is said to have washed up dead on a beach on Orchid Island. Known in France as “Napoleon”, the giant humphead wrasse (*Cheilinus undulatus*, Appendix II) was in fact captured by 2 members of a local ethnic group. According to marine wildlife experts, only 30 giant humphead wrasses frequented Taiwan’s waters in 2014. Orchid Island is located about 100 km southwest of Taiwan. Without having consulted the inhabitants and in particular the Tao, a nuclear waste storage center was installed there in 1982.

“On the Trail” n°29, p. 172; Taiwan News, February 10, 2021; Central News Agency, February 17, 2021.⁵¹

SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

MALAYSIA

January 22, 2021

Pangkor Island, State of Perak, Malaysia

The carcass of a whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*, Appendix II) drifts offshore. It is towed up onto the beach. 5.7 meters long, 1.5 tons. About 5 years old. At least one fin has been cut off. In the stomach there is detritus, twigs and plastic instead of shrimp and anchovies which are among the favorite prey of whale sharks. The carcass was buried at the top of the beach. New Straits Times (with Bernama), January 24, 2021.⁵²

February 23 and 26, 2021
Sibu Airport, State of Sarawak, Malaysia



There was an attempted fraudulent shipment to mainland Asia of 6 kg of dried swim bladders believed to be “fish cakes”. One arrest.

There was also a second attempt to export 9 kg of swim bladders supposed to be “fish cakes”. One arrest.

The value of the loot is estimated at 360,000 ringgits or nearly 15,000 US\$/kg for the first seizure and at 225,000 ringgits or nearly 6,200 US\$/kg for the second.

The Star, February 26 and March 5, 2021.⁵³

PHILIPPINES

April 18, 2021
Off Labason, Province of Zamboanga del Norte, Philippines

315 kg of manta rays (*Mobula spp.*, Appendix II) were being butchered on board the *F/B Lionel James* and the *F/B Ron-Ron* boats before they were seized by a nautical patrol. As the patrol approached, the crew tried to throw evidence of the crime into the sea. The manta rays were donated to Liloy Prison.

SunStar, April 25, 2021; Inquirer.net, April 26, 2021.⁵⁴

SOUTHERN ASIA

REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES

January 3, 2021
Male Velana International Airport, Republic of Maldives

Seizure of 429 kg of dried shark fins declared to be “salted fish”. The Maldives has banned the fishing of all shark species since March 2010. The fins were packed in cartons from Ensis Fisheries, the leading processor, preserver and exporter of all forms of tuna from the Maldives. Ensis has a sales office in Germany. The company has denied any involvement in shark fin trafficking and plans to file a complaint for damage to its image.

Maldives Customs Service, 3 January 2021; The Edition, January 4, 2021.⁵⁵

March 22, 2021
Mandhoo Island, Medhu-Uthuru Province, Republic of Maldives

Seizure of fins, flesh, salted meat and butchered sharks. Four arrests.

Information Fusion Center – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), March 2021.⁵⁶

SRI LANKA

February 16, 26 and 27, 2021
Colombo, Western Province, Sri Lanka



On February 16, 60 kg of dried giant Manta ray gills (*Manta birostris*, Appendix II) and 30 kg of dried sicklefin devil ray fins (*Mobula tarapacana*, Appendix II) were seized.

On February 26, there was a seizure of 160 kg of dried spinetail mobula gills (*Mobula japonica*, Appendix II).

On February 27, there was a seizure of 292 kg of dried whitetip shark fins (*Carchahinus longimanus*, Appendix II), 2 kg of dried hammerhead shark fins (*Sphyrna lewini*, *Sphyrna mokarran* and *Sphyrna zygaena*, Appendix II) and 13 kg of dried bowmouth guitarfish fins (*Rhina ancylostoma*, Appendix II).

All containers were bound for Hong Kong.

Daily Mirror, March 3, 2021; Sri Lanka Customs, March 5, 2021.⁵⁷

March 10, 2021
Bandaranaike International Airport, Colombo, Western Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 76 tomato hinds (*Cephalopholis sonnerati*) from a batch of fish being boarded on a Sri Lanka Airlines flight to the United Kingdom. Locally known as “thambuwas”, these fish are endangered under Sri Lanka’s jurisdiction. Their fishing, their transport, and their marketing have been prohibited since April, 2017. The exporter had concealed them under the false name of red hind.

Sri Lanka Customs, March 16, 2021.⁵⁸



NORTHERN EUROPE

NORWAY

April 13, 2021

Oslo, Eastern Norway Region, Norway

European eels, *Anguilla anguilla*, have been listed in Appendix II of CITES since 2009, yet 3 professional importers of seafood products said they were not “well informed” about this status. They were sentenced to fines totaling 630,000 Norwegian kroner (73,500 US\$) and the confiscation of 168,000 Norwegian kroner (19,550 US\$) in profits. The contraband involved 4690 kg of European eel imported from Denmark between January 1, 2016 and September 1, 2018. National Authority for Investigation and Prosecution of Economic and Environmental Crime, April 13, 2021.⁶³



UNITED KINGDOM

Mid-March 2021
United Kingdom

Caviar kingpin calls CITES a “toothless tiger”. Cyrus Tabrizi has filed a complaint with the British Advertising Standards Agency (ASA). He denounces false names and deceptions. He says that Kaluga caviar (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II) from China is sold as beluga caviar (*Huso huso*, Appendix II) from Russia. Tabrizi adds that the Spanish farmed sturgeon industry uses the same schemes. According to CITES requirements, the origin, species, place and date of production and canning must be written on the lid. Tins of caviar sold in London have mostly incomplete inscriptions on the bottom of the tin. “The entire European market lacks transparency”, concludes the caviar specialist in his appeal to SeafoodSource. SeafoodSource, April 15, 2021.⁶⁴

WESTERN EUROPE

FRANCE

January 9, 2021

Capbreton, Department of Landes Department, France

Sale “upon landing” of a thresher shark (*Alopias* spp., Appendix II), 18 €/kg (22 US\$/kg). By-catch could be good cash and the fisherman, if he is not afraid of receiving jeers or tomatoes, can sell it as hake, 10 €/kg, cuttlefish, 16 €/kg, brown sole, 24 €/kg and brill, 18 €/kg. Sud Ouest, January 20, 2021.⁶⁵

Mid-March 2021

Colombo, Western Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 250 kg of shortfin mako (*Isurus oxyrinchus*, Appendix II) and hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna lewini*, *Sphyrna mokarran* and *Sphyrna zygaena*, Appendix II) in a 20 ft container bound for Hong Kong. The overall value of the seizure is estimated at 2 million Sri Lankan rupees, which is just over 10,000 US\$ or 40 US\$/kg. 250 to 300 sharks were caught and had their fins amputated before being brought ashore or thrown back into the sea. News 1st, March 23, 2021.⁵⁹

WESTERN ASIA

AZERBAIJAN

Beginning of January 2021

Turist, Khachmaz District, Azerbaijan



Nine arrests. Seizure of 64 sturgeons (Acipenseridae, Appendix I or II) and 2 salmon (family Salmonidae) freshly poached in the Caspian Sea. Sputnik Azerbaijan, January 8, 2021.⁶⁰

January 13, 2021

Khachmaz District, Azerbaijan

Police search of a taxi. In the trunk, officers discovered 2 sturgeons (Acipenseridae, Appendix I or II), several trouts (family Salmonidae), other small fish and nets. The passenger, Farrukh Agayev, owner of the lot, was taken into custody. Sputnik Azerbaijan, January 13, 2021.⁶¹

End of January 2021

Mehdiabad, Absheron District, Azerbaijan



Arrest of Ali Mammadov by the maritime police. He sold sturgeons (Acipenseridae, Appendix I or II), including juveniles, in his fish shop. Sputnik Azerbaijan, January 29, 2021.⁶²

REPEATED OFFENSE

February 5, 2021

Bordeaux, Department of Gironde, France



Guohong L., Fenghuang C. and Yang Z, nationals from the same Chinese city, were poaching and touring around Europe when they were inspected by police on March 16, 2019, after midnight, in Tarascon-sur-Ariège in southern France, about 30 kilometers from Spain. They were carrying 3,000 € in cash (3,627 US\$) and 4 suitcases containing 23 plastic bags filled with water and 50 kg of glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) valued at 1,000/kg € (1,209 US\$).

They have been placed in custody for the duration of the investigation, which has been entrusted to the Specialized Interregional Jurisdiction (JIRS) of Bordeaux in collaboration with the Central Office for the Fight against Environmental and Public Health Violations (OCLAESP) proceeded with an investigation. The eel organized crime network has been unveiled. It is unfortunately classic: collection of glass eels from poachers and corrupt professional fishmongers in France and Spain, regrouping in clandestine fish tanks installed in houses or apartments, notably in Portugal, Switzerland and Germany, and organization of the smuggling to Asia by air. Guohong L., presented as the coordinator of the network for Europe, had already been arrested at Lisbon airport in Portugal in January 2019, in the company of 2 Malaysians carrying glass eels in their suitcases. He was the subject of a Europol search warrant. His 2 accomplices had already made several round trips from Spain to China before being arrested in France.

Guohong L. and Fenghuang C. were sentenced to 5 years in prison, 3 of which were suspended, and fined 20,000 € (24,182 US\$). The 3 men had been released and placed under judicial supervision in February 2020 because of Covid-19. They took advantage of the pandemic to get away. Two arrest warrants were issued and the driver served his sentence in pre-trial detention.

France 3 Occitanie, February 5, 2021; Sud Ouest, February 5, 2021; Actu Bordeaux, February 15, 2021.⁶⁶

March 4-5, 2021

Cayeux-sur-Mer, Department of Somme, France

Joint operation by customs and the French Office for Biodiversity. About 20 agents were mobilized. In the port of Le Hourdel, a fishing boat returning with 7 kg of undeclared glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) was caught. The eels were returned to the water. Several other violations were noted according to the customs press release.

French Customs, March 11, 2021.⁶⁷

March 10-11, 2021

Department of Vendée and Department of Loire-Atlantique, France

35 agents from the North Atlantic-West Channel Interregional Sea Department (DIRM NAMO) mobilized overnight in fishing areas, landing ports and communication routes: 11 professional fishermen were checked, 2 of them were fined and 9.5 kg of glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) were seized. The eels were returned to the water. The fisher-poachers will appear in court and will also be subject to administrative sanctions which may include the suspension of their fishing license. France 3 Pays de la Loire, March 16, 2021; Ouest-France, March 16, 2021.⁶⁸

March 25, 2021

Bordeaux, Department of Gironde, France



The pitts saga. Two professional fishermen had set up pitts in the Prés-Salés d'Arès national nature reserve. The pitts are artificial pontoons built for glass eel fishing. The goal was to fish for glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II). At court, the 2 men were acquitted during their first hearing but the Sepanso association had challenged this judgment. The Court of Appeal has just sentenced the 2 fishermen to a fine of 1,500 € each (1,834 US\$). They were also given the obligation to restore the space they worked at to its original state, as well as to pay Sepanso 1,500 € in damages and interests. From an administrative point of view, the 2 fishermen have already lost: their requests for regularization having been unanimously refused by the 4 authorities consulted, including the Ministry of Ecology. This refusal was then confirmed by the administrative court and then by the administrative court of appeal.

Sud Ouest, March 31, 2021.⁶⁹

March 25-26, 2021

La-Faute-sur-Mer, Department of Vendée, France

At night, with the rising tide, a man was getting ready to fish for glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) on the Lay with a sieve while 2 accomplices kept watch. The maritime gendarmes arrested the trio which will have to appear in court. The fishing gear was seized.

Ouest-France, March 27, 2021.⁷⁰

SOUTHERN EUROPE

GREECE

April 24, 2021

Naxos, Region of South Aegean, Greece

A controversial photo of a 75 kg shark on a fishmonger's stall circulated in the media. According to the MECO Project, it was a great white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*, Appendix II), however the fishmonger argues that it is a school shark (*Galeorhinus galeus*). Naxos Press, April 24, 2021; The MECO Project, April 25, 2021.⁷¹

ITALY

April 13, 2021

Viareggio, Province of Lucca, Region of Tuscany, Italy

At night, on the pier, about 10 men poached glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II). The authorities intervened. Their loot was seized. Confiscation of fishing gear. Sentencing of each of the poachers to a fine of 2,000 € (2,350 US\$) for illegal fishing plus 20 € per glass eel (23 US\$). The total fines amount to 24,000 € (28,200 US\$). Guido Minciotti, April 13, 2021.⁷²



April 25, 2021

Pescara, Province of Pescara, Region of Abruzzo, Italy

Seizure by the coast guards of 14 bluefin tunas (*Thunnus thynnus*), i.e. 560 kg and 40 kg per specimen on board a fishing boat. Fine of 8,900 € or 10,450 US\$ for the fisherman. The fish were donated to charity.

Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata, April 26, 2021; Rete8, April 26, 2021.⁷³



April 27, 2021

Verona Airport, Province of Verona, Region of Veneto, Italy

Seizure of:

- Six jars containing 450 grams of sterlet sturgeon caviar (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II) in the luggage of a passenger returning from Moldova.

- Three jars containing 250 grams of sturgeon caviar (*Acipenseriformes*, Appendix I or II) in the luggage of a passenger returning from Russia.

Two fines of 5,000 € or 5,870 US\$.

Verona Oggi, April 27, 2021; Prima Verona, April 28, 2021.⁷⁴

MALTA

Beginning of April 2021

Mellieha, Northern Region, Malta

Two shark heads of the genus *Hexanchus* were discovered in a field. Their heads were thrown away so that the meat could be sold under another name, such as swordfish, for example.

Two shark species of the genus *Hexanchus* live in Maltese waters: the bluntnose sixgill shark (*Hexanchus griseus*) and the bigeyed sixgill shark (*Hexanchus nakamurai*).

Lovin Malta, April 8, 2021.⁷⁵

PORTUGAL

January 6, 2021

Fishing Port of Sesimbra, District of Setúbal, Portugal

Surveillance of a vessel fishing for swordfish. Seizure of 83 shark fins and 21 kg of gutted fish. According to the Guarda Nacional Republicana, the European Union is one of the biggest exporters of shark fins and is an important transit hub for international traffic. The captain and the owner risk a fine of up to 25,000 € (30,700 US\$).

Observador, January 6, 2021.⁷⁶

EASTERN EUROPE

MOLDOVA

March 15, 2021

Anenii Noi District, Moldova

Interception of a foreign-registered car on a highway. In the trunk, there were 500 boxes of 40 grams of sturgeon caviar (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II), i.e. a total of 20 kg. Estimated value of the seizure: 20,000 € (1 € per gram), i.e. 24,450 US\$ and 1,220 US\$/kg.

Orhei TV, March 15, 2021.⁷⁷

ROMANIA

March 4, 2021

Grindu, Tulcea County, Romania. Border with Modavia and Ukraine.

A beluga (*Huso huso*, Appendix II) was seized after the border police checked 2 men, aged 41 and 61, and discovered a 2.5-meter-long, 140 kg specimen in their cart.



The suspects say they caught the specimen in the Danube and intended to sell it. It was still alive and was immediately released.

Belugas are the largest freshwater fish. The largest known specimen was over 7 meters long and 1,500 kg. They can live for 100 years. Females reach sexual maturity only at 15 years of age.

Strile PRO TV, March 6, 2021.⁷⁸

March 5, 2021

Romania

Good news for the Danube and Black Sea sturgeons in Romania. The Minister of the Environment signed the indefinite extension of the total ban on fishing and the sale of products made from all wild specimens present in the country's waters: common sturgeon (*Acipenser sturio*, Appendix I), sterlet sturgeon (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II), fringebarbel sturgeon (*Acipenser nudiventris*, Appendix II), belugas (*Huso huso*, Appendix II), Russian sturgeons (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Appendix II) and starry sturgeon (*Acipenser stellatus*, Appendix II). This ban was put in place for a period of 5 years in 2016. Fishermen have an obligation to report any sturgeon caught as by-catch and release them immediately.

Universul.net, March 5, 2021; Life for Danube Sturgeons, April 26, 2021.⁷⁹

March 20, 2021

Tulcea, Crisian and Galati Counties, Romania

Searches led to the seizure of 63 kg of poached fish, including 7 kg of sturgeon (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II), and 17.3 kg of fish eggs including 1 kg of black caviar.

WWF, March 30, 2021.⁸⁰

April 2021

Tulcea County, Romania

New operation by the authorities against illegal fishing. This time, 1,216 kg of poached fish, including 21 kg of sturgeon (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II), as well as 172 fishing accessories, were seized during searches and field operations.

Radio Romania Actualitati, April 23, 2021.⁸¹

RUSSIA

January 2021

Barnaul, Altai Krai, Russia

Arrest of a 25-year-old man. He was selling a Siberian sturgeon (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) in a market. Two other specimens were found in the freezer at his home.

Moskovsky Komsomolets Altai, November 10, 2021.⁸²

January 18, 2021

Kaspiysk, Republic of Dagestan, Russia

Arrest of 2 individuals. They fished for sturgeons in the Caspian Sea on board a specially equipped boat. One ton of belugas (*Huso huso*, Appendix II) and Russian sturgeons (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Appendix II) were seized in December 2019. The ecological damage is estimated to be 53.6 million rubles, or around 716,000 US\$.

RIA Dagestan, January 18, 2021.⁸³

January 20, 2021

Sakhalin Oblast and Khabarovsk, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia

Following the publication of a video showing the poaching of a Huso sturgeon (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II) on September 2014 in the Gulf of Sakhalin, Dmitry Pashov, a deputy of the Duma of Sakhalin and several accomplices are facing justice. Pashov was arrested a week later in connection with another case. He is suspected of being in cahoots with Oleg Khan, the "Crab King". The Moneron crab fishing company, supposedly owned by Pashov, was actually headed by Khan. The latter has been under an international arrest warrant since 2018. He is accused of smuggling crab products and the murder of Valery Pkhidenko, a competitor, in 2010. Pashov is in preventive detention.

RT, March 1, 2021; Sakhalin.info, 5 March 2021; Rusbankrot, May 28, 2021.⁸⁴

January 22, 2021

Oktyabrsky District, Primorsky Krai, Russia



In April 2016, the chief customs inspector of Ussuriysk turned a blind eye to the smuggling of 150 kg of sturgeon caviar (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) farmed in China, in exchange for 670 US\$. She was given a 3-year suspended prison sentence, a fine equal to 26,700 US\$ and was not allowed to work in the public service sector for 3 years.

Regnum, January 22, 2021.⁸⁵

January 22, 2021

Surgutsky District, Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District, Russia

Indictment of 2 fishermen who caught a sterlet sturgeon (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II) and a Siberian sturgeon (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) on July 15, 2020 in a tributary of the Ob River.

Kommersant, 22 January 2021; Ugra-News, January 22, 2021.⁸⁶

January 25, 2021

Parabelsky District, Tomsk Oblast, Russia



A 36-year-old man was sentenced to 6 months of suspended work in a penal colony and one year of probation for capturing 4 Ob siberian sturgeon (*Acipenser baerii baerii*, Appendix II) in June 2020. He must also pay damages of 540 US\$ to the State.

Tomsk Time, January 25, 2021.⁸⁷

**January 27, 2021
Ulchsky District, Khabarovsk Krai,
Russia**



The leader of a network of sturgeon poachers and traffickers, native of Krasnodar Krai, was sentenced to one year and 6 months in prison and to pay damages exceeding 1.1 million US\$. He had recruited 2 residents of Krasnodar Krai and 2 residents of Khabarovsk Krai, at opposite ends of Russia (more than 8,000 km apart). Between September and October 2019, poachers captured at least 19 Amur sturgeon (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II) and Huso sturgeon (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II) in Ulchsky district. They stored caviar and smoked fish in a house in Tire (Khabarovsk Krai). 390 kg of caviar was seized at the time of their arrest. Argoumenty i Fakty, January 27, 2021.⁸⁸

**End of January 2021
Dudinka, Krasnoyarsk Krai, Russia**



In August 2020, a 39-year-old man was arrested. In the trunk of his vehicle there were 7 whole sturgeons (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) and 4 pieces of 2 other sturgeons, the whole loot being estimated at 20,000 US\$.

A 53-year-old man is now charged. He is accused of poaching. He claims to have caught the sturgeons for his personal consumption. Zapad24, January 27, 2021.⁸⁹

**February 2021
Makhachkala, Republic of Dagestan, Russia**

Indictment of 6 people, 5 Dagestani and one Muscovite, for trafficking in sturgeon caviar (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) between January and March 2019. They bought the goods in the Russian Far East and transported them by bus to Dagestan, at the other end of the country, via Moscow. The smuggling would have earned them 39,200 US\$.

Fishnews, February 8, 2021.⁹⁰

**February 3, 2021
Priuralsky District, Yamal-Nenets Autonomous
District, Russia**



Joint operation of fishery guards and police on the Bolshaya, an arm of the Ob. A poacher was caught with Siberian sturgeon (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) and 2 sterlet sturgeons (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II) in his nets. Vesti Yamal, February 3, 2021.⁹¹

FAMILY AFFAIRS

February 4, 2021

Marfino, Moscow Oblast, Russia

Road check 50 km from Moscow. Four people are arrested, all unemployed, including a mother and her son. More than 100 kg of caviar was seized in the car and at their home. Experts identified Amur sturgeon (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II), Russian sturgeon (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Appendix II), beluga (*Huso huso*, Appendix II), Huso sturgeon (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II) and starry sturgeon (*Acipenser stellatus*, Appendix II). The caviar was kept in poor sanitary conditions, but the highly competitive price attracted a large customer base through the internet and word of mouth since at least 2018. Additional seizures are being made from buyers. Complicit fishermen are being sought. Star Boulevard, February 4, 2021.⁹²

February 9, 2021

Volgograd, Volgograd Oblast, Russia

Two men pleaded guilty to acquiring, storing and transporting products made from species listed in the Red Book of



Russia. In October 2019, they bought a 350 kg beluga (*Huso huso*, Appendix II) carcass. After cutting it into 7 pieces, they extracted 95 kg of caviar. The authorities had discovered the frozen pieces and jars of caviar ready to be sold on the facilities of a sports association. The damage is estimated at more than 180,000 US\$.

Riac34, February 8, 2021; Vysota 102, February 8, 2021; V1.ru, February 9, 2021.⁹³

February 10, 2021
Moscow Oblast, Russia



Discovery in a warehouse of more than 1.35 tons of black caviar extracted from wild sturgeons (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II). The seizure, estimated at nearly 262,000 US\$ or 195 US\$/kg, was handed over to the Federal Fisheries Agency. Those involved are being sought. They supplied Moscow and its surrounding areas.
Gazeta.ru, February 10, 2021.⁹⁴

Mid-February 2021
Volgograd, Volgograd Oblast, Russia

Five traffickers stored Russian sturgeons (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Appendix II), belugas (*Huso huso*, Appendix II), starry sturgeons (*Acipenser stellatus*, Appendix II) and Amur sturgeons (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II) in a city warehouse. The fish were bought in Astrakhan, 420 km away. During their arrest in March 2019, 130 carcasses and more than 20 kg of caviar estimated at 262,000 US\$ had been seized. They received sentences ranging from 3.5 years of suspended imprisonment to 4 years of imprisonment in a penal colony. Four of them must also pay a fine of 2,000 US\$. An accomplice who was recruited to transport contraband on one occasion and who was paid with a sturgeon carcass was also sentenced to 6 months of community service and a 10% deduction of his income.
Ikrainfo, February 19, 2021; V1.ru, February 22, 2021.⁹⁵



March 5, 2021
Sulak, Republic of Dagestan, Russia

Arrest of a 54-year-old woman in a taxi coming from Makhachkala, 40 km away. She had 18 kg of sturgeon (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) in her luggage.
Ministry of Internal Affairs, March 5, 2021.⁹⁶

March 12, 2021
Namsky District, Republic of Sakha, Russia



Three arrests. There were 21 Siberian sturgeons (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) in the trunk of a vehicle. The specimens were caught in the Aldan, a tributary of the Lena. Value of the seizure: 46,000 US\$.
SakhaNews, March 12, 2021.⁹⁷

Mid-March 2021
Moscow Federal City, Russia



Seizure of more than 30 kg of sturgeon caviar (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) valued at 13,500 US\$ or 450 US\$/kg and 450,000 rubles or 6,000 US\$ in cash. A 47-year-old man was arrested.
Ikrainfo, March 16, 2021.⁹⁸

FAMILY AFFAIRS
April 8, 2021
Moscow Federal City, Russia

Conviction of the Gavrichenko brothers to a 5-year suspended prison sentence, together with a fine of 6,500 US\$ for one of them. They had been arrested on December 23, 2019 at their home, in possession of 42.65 kg of Amur sturgeon caviar (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II) and Huso sturgeon (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II) distributed in jars of 500 grams, 250 grams and 100 grams. Police also found a carcass. They bought the caviar from a "friend" and resold it.
Ikrainfo, March 19, 2021; BezFormata, April 13, 2021.⁹⁹



March 24, 2021
Pulkovo International Airport, Saint Petersburg Federal City, Russia

A man was travelling to Cyprus carrying some snacks for his trip. 24 kg of sturgeon caviar (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) and trout caviar (family *Salmonidae*) was detected by X-rays.
Moika78, March 24, 2021.¹⁰⁰

April 1, 2021

Anapa, Krasnodar Krai, Russia

Search of a warehouse by the authorities and inspectors of Rospotrebnadzor (Federal Service for Surveillance on Consumer Rights Protection and Human Wellbeing). Seizure of 167 kg of fish products, including 21 kg of Siberian sturgeon (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) and 5.5 kg of red caviar. Following this discovery, officers inspected a nearby business. They confiscated more than 390 kg of unlabeled sturgeon (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) and trout (family *Salmonidae*). Yasno, April 1, 2021.¹⁰¹

April 7, 2021

Nekhoteyevka, Belgorod Oblast, Russia. Border with Ukraine.

A Ukrainian national was about to return home with some undeclared souvenirs: 12 boxes of 500 grams of sturgeon caviar (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) and sterlet sturgeon (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II), without any labels. Estimated value: 2,640 US\$ or 440 US\$/kg. Go31.ru, April 7, 2021.¹⁰²

REPEATED OFFENSE

April 13, 2021

Kama River, Udmurt Republic, Russia

Arrest of 2 poachers aboard an inflatable dinghy in the Kama, a tributary of the Volga, not far from Izhevsk, capital of the Republic of Udmurtia. They spearfished sterlet sturgeons (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II) using a diving suit, a thermal camera and an echo sounder. 111 dead sterlets were found in their car. Damages are estimated at more than 6,500 US\$ (i.e. 58.5 US\$ per specimen on average).

In 2019, the 2 suspects were each sentenced to a fine of 400 US\$ and joint reimbursement of damages for the extraction of 11 kg of black caviar estimated at 8,560 US\$ (i.e. 780 US\$/kg).

Ministry of Internal Affairs, April 12, 2021; Susassin News, April 13, 2021.¹⁰³



April 13, 2021

Krasnodar, Krasnodar Krai, Russia

Seizure of 30 kg of sturgeon caviar (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) and more than 430 kg of salmon caviar in an underground store. Argoumenty i Fakty (AIF), April 13, 2021.¹⁰⁴

April 13, 2021

Komsomolsk-on-Amur, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia

Sentencing of 2 caviar traffickers, one to 7 years in a penal colony and a fine of one million rubles (13,200 US\$), the other to 4 years in a penal colony and a fine of 500,000 rubles (6,600 US\$).

The 2 men were arrested in 2018. They were storing a boat, 11 kg of Amur sturgeon (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II), Sakhalin sturgeon (*Acipenser mikadoi*, Appendix II), Huso sturgeon (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II), and significantly, more than 800 kg of canned caviar ready to be shipped to the west of the country, perhaps to Krasnodar, their city of origin (9,000 kilometres away). The head of the network offered the police a bribe of 5 million rubles (66,000 US\$) without success.

Argoumenty i Fakty (AIF), April 13, 2021; Krasnodarskie Izvestia, April 13, 2021; DV Novosti, April 21, 2021.¹⁰⁵



April 14, 2021

Volodarsky District, Astrakhan Oblast, Russia

Sentencing on appeal of 2 men to 2 and a half years in a penal colony. They had been arrested on May 27, 2020 when they bought 69.5 kg of sturgeon (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) and were sentenced to 5 years in prison, suspended, during their first court hearing.

KaspyInfo, April 14, 2021.¹⁰⁶

UKRAINE

April 16, 2021

Krasnodar, Krasnodar Krai, Russia

Seizure of 12 kg of sturgeon caviar (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) and more than 500 kg of salmon caviar without any labels in the facilities of a seafood retailer. Estimated value: 26,400 US\$.
Bloknot Krasnodar, April 16, 2021.¹⁰⁷

April 17, 2021

Nizhnevartovsk, Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District, Russia

Indictment of 2 fishermen arrested in August 2020, when they captured in their nets 2 Siberian sturgeons (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) and 8 other fish including sterlet sturgeons (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II) in a tributary of the Ob river.
Ugra-News, April 17, 2021; JustMedia, April 19, 2021.¹⁰⁸

April 20, 2021

Moscow Federal City, Russia

Surprise inspection in a workshop by the Federal Agency for Fishery. The agents left with 946 kg of frozen and smoked sturgeon (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) and 16 kg of unlabelled black caviar. The fish are said to have been poached in the Russian Far East.
IkralInfo, April 23, 2021.¹⁰⁹

April 21, 2021

Karaul, Krasnoyarsk Krai, Russia

Summer 2020. A 39-year-old fisherman caught 17 sturgeons (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II). His boat was inspected by police. The crew handed over the illicit cargo to the authorities on its own initiative.

Spring 2021. The poacher was sentenced to 340 hours of community service and a fine of 35,500 US\$.

Zapolyarnaya Pravda, April 21, 2021.¹¹⁰



End of April 2021

Borissoglebsk, Voronezh Oblast, Russia

Indictment of a caviar trafficker. On April 26, 2019, the man from the Penza region, then 60 years old, had bought 20 kg of sturgeon caviar (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) for 290,000 rubles (4,450 US\$ or 220 US\$/kg) in Moscow. The next day, he exchanged 5 kg for 1.25 kg of starry sturgeon caviar (*Acipenser stellatus*, Appendix II), the equivalent to 1,100 US\$ or 880 US\$/kg. However; his circuit ended abruptly in a car accident in the Voronezh region, after a little less than 3,000 km on the road. The police who came to help him had discovered 17 kg of caviar in 35 containers in his car.

MOË! Online, April 28, 2021.¹¹¹

January 12, 2021

Sofiivska Borschahivka, Kyiv Oblast, Ukraine

A woman who was selling 2.5 kg of sterlet sturgeon (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II), 5 kg of "bester", a hybrid of beluga (*Huso huso*, Appendix II) and sterlet (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II) and 4 kg of Russian sturgeon (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Appendix II) on the market was surprised by a patrol of the State Agency of Fisheries. The inspector recalls: "You have the right to ask the seller for documents on the legality of the origin of aquatic bioresources. If they are not present, please notify the Region Fish Protection Patrol hotline immediately."

Poglyad TV, January 13, 2021.¹¹²

Beginning of February, 2021

Dzharylhak National Nature Park, Kherson Oblast, Ukraine

The 2 poachers aged 21 and 31 were surprised as they unloaded their catch. They had caught 8 belugas (*Huso huso*, Appendix II), a starry sturgeon (*Acipenser stellatus*, Appendix II), 4 Russian sturgeons (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Appendix II) as well as a dozen crabs and other fish. The damages are estimated at 57,700 US\$.

Depo, February 4, 2021.¹¹³

March 21, 2021

Dzharylhak Bay, Kherson Oblast, Ukraine

Two arrests. On their boat the offenders had 3 belugas (*Huso huso*, Appendix II), a Russian sturgeon (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Appendix II), 14 stone crabs and 3 turbot (*Scophthalmus maximus*). Only the crabs were still alive. A fine of 12,600 US\$ and criminal proceedings to come.

WWF, March 30, 2021.¹¹⁴



April 1, 2021

Mykolaiv District, Mykolaiv Oblast, Ukraine

Two arrests. One offender had caught the equivalent of 1,860 US\$ in sturgeons (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) and flatfish (*Pleuronectes platessa*), the other a sturgeon estimated at 1,820 US\$.

NikVesti, April 1, 2021.¹¹⁵

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

Early March, 2021

Albany, State of Western Australia, Australia

Tyrone Leigh Harding, a professional seaman, was sentenced to 12,500 Australian dollars, or nearly 10,000 US\$, in fines. His professional fishing license was suspended for one year. After having hauled up two great white sharks (*Carcharodon carcharias*, Appendix II) in a 3.5 km long gillnet, he posed with his catch before butchering them. The 2 jaws of one of the sharks were seized at his home. The trial of the vessel's captain is pending.

PerthNow, March 9, 2021.¹¹⁶



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*).

EASTERN AFRICA

FRANCE (MAYOTTE)

January-March, 2021
Department of Mayotte, France



The Naturalists of Mayotte, the Intercommunal Environment Police of the south of Mayotte, the guards of the Departmental Council, the agents of the Marine natural park, the Oulanga Na Nyamba association, the departmental service of the French Biodiversity Agency and the maritime gendarmerie multiplied their patrols during the second Covid confinement. 225 daytime and nighttime surveillance patrols are carried out under the coordination of REMMAT (Réseau Echouage Mahorais des MAMmifères marins et Tortues marines) on the hundred or so beaches where marine turtles lay their eggs. The operations have been successful: 3 poachers were arrested, 3 turtles were saved in extremis, including a 150 kg turtle which was lying on its back waiting to be butchered by the poachers (who did not return to the scene because of the presence of patrols of volunteers or sworn agents). Nevertheless, 23 fatal poaching incidents were still recorded. However, if the turtle poaching gangs had not been under threat from turtle defenders, many more turtles would have been killed. "The poachers are starting to get scared," says Oulanga Na Nyamba cautiously. *L'Express de Madagascar*, January 19, 2021; *Le Journal de Mayotte*, January 21, February 18, March 2 and 25, May 6, 2021; Oulanga Na Nyamba Association, February 18 and 20, 2021; *Mayotte Hebdo*, May 7, 2021.¹

April 29, 2021

Bouéni, Department of Mayotte, France

A green turtle was poached at around 2 a.m. by several individuals. The specimen was kept on site until the arrival of a veterinarian. Unfortunately, the severity of the injuries forced the medical staff to finish it off. A complaint was filed at the gendarmerie of Mzouazia to fight the capture and mutilation of protected species. The poachers were interrupted in their sinister task by the presence of a volunteer from the NGO World Ocean Protection and the arrival on the beach of some villagers. *Le Journal de Mayotte*, May 5, 2021.²

MADAGASCAR

March 15, 2021

Vatomandry, Atsinanana Region, Madagascar

New poisoning by ingestion of turtle flesh. During the warm season, sea turtles feed on plankton that are harmless to them but toxic to humans. 34 people were hospitalized. 10 died and 9 children died in their homes. Intoxication with turtle meat in Madagascar, see "On the Trail" n°19 p.16, n°25 p.21 and n°31 p.217.

Linfo.re, March 17, 2021; *VOA Afrique* (with AFP), March 18, 2021.³

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

March 11, 2021

Miami, State of Florida, United States of America



Sentencing of Bruce Wayne Bivins and Carl Lawrence Cobb to 7 months in prison for poaching eggs from federally-protected turtles. The 2 defendants were arrested on May 24, 2020 (see "On the Trail" n°29 p.177) by Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission investigators. They were digging up loggerhead turtle eggs. *US Department of Justice*, March 11, 2021.⁴

LATIN AMERICA

FRANCE (FRENCH GUIANA)

March 2021

Awala-Yalimapo, Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France

OFB agents arrested a poacher on Yalimapo beach in the Amana nature reserve.

He was probing the sand with a stick to locate the eggs, and had already extracted 10 of them.

French Biodiversity Agency, April 2021.⁵

MEXICO

Mid-January 2021

Acapulco de Juárez, State of Guerrero, Mexico

Fernando N. was arrested after trying to flee. He had 519 sea turtle eggs, 319 of which he was carrying in a cooler and another 200 in a plastic bag.

Milenio, January 20, 2021.⁶

Beginning of February 2021

San Miguel del Puerto, State of Oaxaca, Mexico

During a traffic search, the National Guard intercepted a vehicle driving with all headlights off on the road linking Pinotepa Nacional and Salina Cruz.



The driver tried to escape, taking a carton full of eggs. In all, the officers seized 1,250 eggs stored in 7 plastic bags.

Infobae, February 8, 2021.⁷

8 février 2021

Benito Juárez, State of Guerrero, Mexico

Jorge Luis N. is walking along the road between Hacienda de Cabañas and Llano Real. He is spotted by a police patrol. He runs off with a plastic bag and threatens the patrol with a machete. He is finally arrested. In the bag the police discover 170 eggs.



El Sol de Acapulco, February 8, 2021.⁸

Mid-February 2021

Boca del Cielo, State of Chiapas, Mexico

At 1 a.m., some restaurant owners who hadn't yet closed their doors reported Ridley turtle egg raiders armed with sticks, nylon bags and buckets to the police.

NVI Noticias, February 19, 2021.⁹

SURINAME

REPEATED OFFENSE

April 23 and July 21, 2021

Braamspunt, Commewijne District, Suriname



Two men poached nests of green turtle and leatherback turtle on the beach of Braamspunt. They were caught in flagrante delicto with 1,219 eggs. Their boat was also seized.

Gilliano K. alias Bakru and Kamlesh D., were sentenced to 12 months in prison, 6 of which were suspended, as well as fines of 190 US\$ and 145 US\$. Gilliano K. was not unknown to the police as he had already been arrested 3 times for the same offences. Because of the poaching of turtles, the authorities and local fishermen are concerned about the increase of jellyfish in the fishing areas.

Ministry of Spatial Planning, Land and Forest Management, April 23, 2021; Starnieuws, July 22, 2021.¹⁰

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

April 2021

Guangzhou, Guangzhou Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of a hawksbill sea turtle shell and 2 jewellery items made from scales.

Chinese Customs, April 23, 2021.¹¹

JAPAN

February 25, 2021

Tokyo, Kanto Region, Japan

Hideaki Saito, 61, and Hisashi Yanase, 82, are suspected by Customs of smuggling hawksbill turtle scales. They allegedly imported 7 kg of turtle scale shavings, marking the product as "treated cow horns" by international mail from Haiti. The scales undergo a multi-step process: they are introduced into boiling water to remove their fat, soaked in a warm bath of soda ash, and compressed between wooden wedges, before being made into glasses frames and combs.

"Bekko" industry (sea turtle shell) in Japan, see "On the Trail" n°27 p. 26.

The Asahi Shimbun, February 25, 2021.¹²



INDONESIA

March 14, 2021

Birahbirahan Island, South Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

The Indian Navy publishes a monthly bulletin on smuggling in the Indian Ocean. In the March issue, it was noted that there is an increase in the smuggling of khat and narcotics, weapons, cigarettes, spices from Sri Lanka, and wood. Indian Navy analysts observed a shift from container ships and other cargo vessels to small, modest fishing vessels. For example, the Indian Navy seized 5 AK47s and 300 kg of heroin from 3 fishing boats off the Lakshadweep archipelago. The Indonesian Navy boarded a fishing boat. There were 903 turtle eggs on board, including 275 hawksbill turtle eggs and 628 freshwater turtle eggs. This increase in smuggling is attributed to the easing of Covid restriction measures. The paralysis of maritime and port logistics is prompting the fishing industry to recruit more fishing boats than usual.

Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), March 14, 2021; Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, May 12, 2021.¹³

MALAYSIA

February 2021

Beluran District, State of Sabah, Malaysia

The turtle egg dinner has become a big deal. To celebrate the Chinese New Year, the family of a well-known MP served turtle eggs and posted a photo of the table on social media. Jafry Ariffin, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Environment, ordered an investigation. He wants to know the origin and supply chain of the eggs.

Daily Express, February 18, 2021.¹⁴

April 17, 2021

Off Pulau Nunuyan Darat Island, Sandakan, State of Sabah, Malaysia

At 8:30 p.m. a Filipino sailor's boat was boarded by the Coast Guard. 3,000 eggs distributed in 6 bags were seized on board. The



offender took advantage of the Ramadan period of the Tarawih prayer to smuggle the eggs from the island of Taganak in the south of the Philippines to Sandakan.

The Star, April 18, 2021; Daily Express, April 19, 2021.¹⁵

VIET NAM

January 2021

Ca Mau Province, Viet Nam

A green sea turtle was reported to ENV after being listed for sale on Facebook. An ambush was set up by the authorities, which allowed the turtle to be confiscated and then released into the ocean. ENV, January 29, 2021.¹⁶



Beginning of February 2021

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

A green turtle kept as a pet in a store was reported to ENV. Binh Tan Ecopolice transferred the turtle to Ho Chi Minh City Fisheries Services for release.

ENV, February 3, 2021.¹⁷



Beginning of March 2021

Ben Tre Province, Viet Nam

ENV was informed about a Facebook profile that offered a live green turtle for sale. After an unsuccessful search of a suspected private home, the turtle was voluntarily handed over to the police and then released into the sea. ENV, March 2, 2021.¹⁸

Week of April 5, 2021

Quang Binh Province, Viet Nam

A 9 kg turtle was returned to the sea after a citizen saved it from the hands of a fisherman. ENV, April 9, 2021.¹⁹

April 22, 2021

Ngoc Hien District, Ca Mau Province, Viet Nam

The owner of a boat and the master were respectively sentenced on appeal to 8 and 10 years in prison. These would be the longest prison sentences ever handed down in Viet Nam against sea turtle traffickers. At their first court hearing in 2020, they were sentenced to 3 years in prison following the seizure of 12 frozen green turtles.

ENV, May 4, 2021.²⁰



SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

End of January, 2021
Nagapattinam District, State of Tamil Nadu, India



The beaches of the district are turning into a graveyard. 31 dead Ridley sea turtles, most of them females, have washed up in 3 weeks. Shells are cracked as if they have been plowed by boat propellers. Turtles are intact as if they have died from asphyxiation and drowning. The nets of shrimp and squid fishermen are suspected. Sea turtles can hold their breath for 45 to 50 minutes but beyond that, they die. The carcasses are brought up to the top of the beach and buried by the agents of the forestry services. The only solution often evoked but never applied would be to ban fishing on the open sea over 20 km for 7 months beginning at the time of spawning. There are Turtle Excluder Devices but the investment is significant and fishermen have never heard of them or do not want to hear about them. "We are planning to install a device in one boat and plan to expand the program if it is successful," says the local fisheries administration. In the next 2 months, it is feared that an additional 100 dead sea turtles will wash up. Sea turtles stranded in India, see "On the Trail" n°8 p.10-11, n°19 p.17, n°24 p.20 and n°28 p.26.

The New Indian Express, 26 January 2021.²¹

WESTERN ASIA

TURKEY

April 2021
Güzelbahçe District, Izmir Province, Turkey

Rescue of a hawksbill turtle by 3 navy divers. Its drifting at sea had been reported by a resident. The x-ray report revealed that its left fin was torn 8 cm and that it had a head injury. Its shell was also fractured. The specimen was to be transferred to the Sea Turtle Search, Rescue and Rehabilitation Center (Dekamer) in Ortaca district, Muğla Province.



Hürriyet Daily News, April 27, 2021.²²

OCEANIA

FRANCE

January 28-Beginning of February 2021
Bora Bora, Faratea and Raiatea, Overseas Collectivity of French Polynesia, France

Two turtles were found in the lagoon of Bora Bora pierced by 1.5 meter long arrows. A few days later, another turtle was skinned on the beach at Opoa in Raiatea. Scales were found scattered around. Tahiti Nui



Télévision, February 8, 2021; Polynésie la 1^{ère}, February 1, 8 and 16, 2021.²³

April 6, 2021
Moorea Island, Overseas Collectivity of French Polynesia, France

"Vaihaunui", a green sea turtle, was taken to the Moorea Sea Turtle Care Center to receive treatment for an arrow wound on its neck. Tahiti Infos, April 6, 2021.²⁴



MARINE AND FRESHWATER MAMMALS



Caption on picture reads "Dolphin hunting in Douarnenez Bay" (France).
Le Petit Parisien, illustrated literature supplement. Sunday 30th August 1903. Robin des Bois Archives

NORTHERN AMERICA

CANADA

April 8, 2021

Newfoundland Island, Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada

Killing harp seals (*Pagophilus groenlandicus*) with clubs on the ice or by shooting them from boats is still legal in Canada. The country is ignoring international protests, the closure of the European market, the global drop in demand and poor ice conditions, which are causing the high mortality of harp seals. 440 animals were killed in Newfoundland during the 2020 hunting season, which was curbed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Canada wants to resuscitate the industry by setting the 2021 quota at 400,000 specimens while remaining cautious. "We advise sealers to contact their buyers before they go hunting to confirm that there is a market for the seals they will have hunted."

Fisheries and Oceans Canada, April 6, 2021; IFAW, April 8, 2021.¹

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 10, 2021

Homosassa River, Citrus County, State of Florida, United States of America

A peaceful North American manatee (*Trichechus manatus*, Appendix I) was slaughtered by an individual or individuals who wrote "Trump" on his back. In the English language, this can mean a "trump" in a card game or in slang a "fart". However, this is most likely a reference to Donald Trump. The inscription appears to have been made by scraping weeds on the back of the manatee.

Manatees are protected by the US Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Under both federal laws, it is illegal to harass, wound, or annoy manatees.

By 1967, North American manatees had dwindled to only a few hundred. After 50 years of effort, the population has grown back to 6,000 individuals. They gather in the warm waters of Florida during the winter. Manatees are now threatened by ship strikes, propeller shredding, habitat degradation and toxic algae blooms. Political activists face up to one year in prison and/or a 50,000 US\$ fine under the Endangered Species Act and one year in prison and/or a 100,000 US\$ fine under the Marine Mammal Protection Act. They have not yet been found.

CBS4 Miami, January 12, 2021; Smithsonian magazine, January 13, 2021; Animal Legal Defense Fund, April 20, 2021.²

March 10, 2021

Anchorage, State of Alaska, United States of America



Continuation of the Lee Screnock case (see "On the Trail" n°24 p.16). Screnock grew up in a South Korean orphanage before being adopted by an American family. He opened his store "Arctic Treasures" in the 2000s. He came to prominence in 2015 when a Fish and Wildlife Service agent posing as a regular customer bought a polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*, Appendix II) skull from him. In 2017, he sold another agent crafts signed by "Savuk", a purported Point Hope artist who is none other than Screnock himself. In 2018, he was charged with violation of the Marine Mammal Protection Act and "Misrepresentation of Indian Produced Goods and Products" under the Indian Arts and Crafts Act, which was created to protect Alaska Native and American Indian artisans from having customary artwork copied and sold as authentic by non-Native people or companies. 450 objects mostly made from walrus ivory (*Odobenus rosmarus*, Appendix III in Canada) valued at 125,000 US\$ were seized from his store.

Screnock was sentenced to pay 2,500 US\$ in restitution to the Indian Arts and Crafts Board (IACB), to perform 100 hours of community service and to serve 5 years of probation, during which time he may not work with any wildlife products. At 60 years old, he sold his store in 2018 to an Inuit artist who is indeed from Point Hope.

Anchorage Daily News, March 10, 2021; US Department of the Interior, March 22, 2021.³

April 12, 2021

State of California, United States of America



Jordan Gerbich was sentenced to 3 months in prison, 3 months of house arrest and a year of supervised probation, plus 120 hours of community service and a 1,000 US\$ fine. In 2019, on a beach near San Simeon, he shot a Northern elephant seal (*Mirounga angustirostris*) protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Courthouse News Service, April 12, 2021.⁴



Hawaiian monk seal at rest

April 27, 2021

Molokai Island, State of Hawaii, United States of America

Discovery of 2 Hawaiian monk seals (*Monachus schauinslandi*, Appendix I) dead as a result of human-inflicted trauma.

Two days earlier, another 3-year-old Hawaiian monk seal corpse was discovered on the island of Kauai.

The population of this native species of Hawaii is estimated at 1,400 strictly protected individuals. Females reach 2.25 m with an average weight of 203 kg. The males are smaller (2.1 m and 169 kg). Sexual maturity is reached between 5 and 10 years old for females. Hawaiian monk seals live for 25 to 30 years. They avoid their main predator, the shark, by nesting on beaches protected by exposed reefs and by feeding and resting in underwater reef caves. Hawaiian monk seals are intolerant of human incursion on beaches and pup mortality is higher at disturbed beaches. The population began to decline in the late 1800s under hunting pressure. Today, it is threatened by overfishing and entanglements in active or ghost fishing gear.

U.S. News (with AP), May 27, 2021; Neubauer, D. 2011. "Monachus schauinslandi" (On-line), Animal Diversity Web. Accessed February 02, 2022.⁵

GREENLAND (KINGDOM OF DENMARK)

March 3, 2021

Nuuk, Sermersooq Municipality, Greenland (Denmark)

The tourist economy is going to the rescue of whales. Sermersooq, the largest municipality on the island, banned the hunting of humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*, Appendix I) in the Nuuk fjord where hunting had resumed in 2010. Before the introduction of the ban, there had been inevitably fewer and fewer humpback whales to consider there. It was a former operator of a whale watching charter boat and the former member of the capital municipal council who introduced the ban because "the whales are worth much more as tourism objects than meat."

Since the entry into force of the 1985 International Whaling Commission (IWC) moratorium on commercial whaling, 120 humpback whales have been killed worldwide (and reported to the IWC), including 93 in Greenland, under Aboriginal hunting. Outside the Nuuk Fjord, humpback whale hunting is still permitted, as is whale hunting. This includes Minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*, Appendix I – 5567 killed in Greenland since 1985), Fin whales (*Balaenoptera physalus*, Appendix I – 404 killed in Greenland since 1985) as well as Sei whales (*Balaenoptera borealis*, Appendix I) and Greenland whales (*Balaena mysticetus*, Appendix I). Polar Journal, March 3, 2021; Hakai Magazine, May 20, 2021; International Whaling Commission, Aboriginal subsistence whaling catches since 1985 and List of catches since the moratorium came into place (in the 1985/6 Antarctic Season), accessed February 2, 2022.⁶

LATIN AMERICA

MEXICO

February 27, 2021

Gulf of California, Mexico

The Mexican government is further facilitating the extinction of the last vaquitas (*Phocoena sinus*, Appendix I, also known as Gulf of California porpoises). The State is considering reducing the protection zone in the Sea of Cortés, where gill netting is theoretically prohibited. The vaquita is caught in the nets of poachers who target another threatened species, the totoaba (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) whose swim bladder is worth up to 60,000 US\$/kg in China. There were 600 vaquitas 20 years ago, 30 of them 5 years ago and there are only about 10 today.

Vaquita, see. "On the Trail" n°26 p. 15, n°19 p. 15, n°16 p. 16, n°17 p. 10-11.

Puerto Vallarta Daily News, February 27, 2021.⁷

CENTRAL ASIA

KAZAKHSTAN

March 2021

Karazhanbas, Mangystau Region, Kazakhstan

Caspian seals (*Pusa caspica*) are collateral victims of Covid. Rumors are spreading saying that the fat and meat of the *Pusa caspica* could prevent and cure pneumonia. Before the pandemic, sturgeon poachers threw the seals back into the sea. Since last year, they have been bringing them back to land dead. 18 seal skins and barrels of fat were seized in the first months of 2021 from a cache in Karazhanbas. The seal furs are used as linings for sleeping bags. According to a senior official of the provincial coast guard, poaching in the Caspian Sea is taking a military turn. The pirates' anthem is circulating on the Internet, claiming that "there are plenty of fish for everyone. More and more, their boats are speed boats, over-equipped with echo sounders, satellite phones and VHF radios. Incursions into Kazakhstan's waters by poachers from the Russian republic of Dagestan are not uncommon. On the other hand, poachers from Kalmykia are for the time being kept under control thanks to increased cooperation between Russian and Kazakh border guards.

365 Info, March 9, 2021; Lada, March 10, 2021.⁸

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

February 1, 2021

Jinjiang, Quanzhou Prefecture, Fujian Province, China

Five Risso's dolphins (*Grampus griseus*, Appendix I) were killed. Their jaws were cut out and their teeth pulled out. Then the carcasses were thrown back into the sea. The captain of the fishing boat admitted his responsibility. The trial was broadcasted live in fishing ports. The experts assessed the ecological damages at 375,000 yuan or 58,000 US\$. The captain paid and apologized. The court expects more eagerness and means from the city of Jinjiang on fighting against the "bad habits" of fishermen around Kinmen Island.

Justice Web, October 9, 2021.⁹

JAPAN

April 3, 2021

Ishinomaki, Miyagi Prefecture, and Hachinohe, Aomori Prefecture, Japan

The whaling industry in Japan is in trouble. The crews are aging and young people are not eager to embark for several months on boats at their wit's end. The *Nisshin Maru*, once proudly designated as the flagship of the whaling fleet, is now dilapidated (see "On the Trail" n°4 p.12 and 14, n°9 p.6, n°11 p.10, n°17 p.15, n°20 p.19, n°21 p.15, n°22 p.15 and n°23 p. 20). For a long time, there was talk of replacing her with a modern unit built in Japan, and then there were plans to convert a large trawler into a whaling factory ship, but the project was constantly postponed. It is the same for the whale catchers in charge of killing and towing the whales to the *Nisshin Maru*.

The new blow is that the government has stopped subsidizing the industry, and is content to instead grant repayable loans. Kyodo Senpaku, the shipowner, says that its prospecting area, limited to the Japanese Exclusive Economic Zone, is too small to be profitable. Nostalgia for Antarctica is reigning in Aomori Prefecture. The worst thing is that the Japanese do not enjoy eating whale. In the aftermath of World War II it was a necessity, in the 80s and 90s it was a frivolity, and today it is a chore. Japan's withdrawal from the International Whaling Commission in 2018 has often been interpreted as a signal of the rebound of whaling and its apology. The opposite is happening. The hunt is stalling. On June 10 and 11, the fleet, in scattered and reduced order, left the ports of Shimonoseki and Innoshima with the objective of harpooning and processing 187 Bryde's whales (*Balaenoptera edeni*, Appendix I) and 25 Sei whales (*Balaenoptera borealis*, Appendix I).

The Japan Times, April 3, 2021; Whale and Dolphin Conservation, June 14 2021; Japan Forward, June 29 2021.¹⁰

CAMBODIA

February 2021

Mekong River, Kratie Province, Cambodia

Irrawaddy dolphins (*Orcaella brevirostris*, Appendix I) are said to have dwindled to a few hundred in the Mekong River. WWF Cambodia reported a decline in annual mortality between 2015 and 2017. The Kratie Province Fisheries Administration reports that this number has increased again: 5 individuals in 2018, 9 in 2020 and 2 individuals just for January 2021. Unintentional capture in illegal fishing nets is the most concerning direct threat to the future of this population. The Irrawaddy dolphins are also victims of electrofishing and poaching (see "On the Trail" n°29 p. 155 and 181 and below).

The Phnom Penh Post, February 4, 2021.¹¹

MYANMAR

January 8 and 9, 2021

Madaya Municipality and Hinthabo, Sint Ku Municipality, Pyin oo Lwin District, Mandalay Division, Myanmar

The Irrawaddy dolphins (*Orcaella brevirostris*, Appendix I) are said to be down to a few dozen in the Irrawaddy River (Ayeyarwady). Five poacher-fishermen have just been arrested for electrofishing in the protected area of the species. Five fishing boats, their gear, a battery and a bottle of poison were seized.



The Myanmar Times, January 21, 2021.¹²

THAILAND

February 23, 2021

Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand

Siriporn Niamrin, 49 years old, makes an inspection of the beach. She lives next door. After storms, she usually goes there. You never know. The sea sometimes rejects treasures or tools. She stumbled upon some presumed "whale vomit," in other words, sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) ambergris. The block weighs 6.8 kg. Experts are expected to verify the authenticity of the by-product on site.

India Today, March 5, 2021.¹³



Irrawaddy dolphins (*Orcaella brevirostris*). Photo Vatcharavee Sriprasertsil

WESTERN ASIA

YEMEN

February 13, 2021

Off the coast of Al-Tawahi, Aden Governorate, Yemen

In Yemen, there is civil war on land and gold at sea. In the south, in the Gulf of Aden, 7 fishermen on a wooden boat spotted in mid-February a sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) dead and drifting. They called all their colleagues in the area to tow the carcass to the beach of Doufana, village of Al Khaisah. They then extracted a block of ambergris from the labyrinthine of intestines inside the beast. Ambergris is a kind of stone formed around the indigestible beaks of squid, which are the favorite prey of sperm whales. It is the holy grail of perfumers around the world. The value of the block (127 kg) is at least 1.5 million US\$. But 2 obstacles are in the way of a quick transaction. On the one hand, international measures to protect sperm whales require in theory that only blocks of ambergris which have washed up naturally are sold. On the other hand, the sperm whale was brought ashore thanks to the cooperation of some 40 fishermen and soon after the cries of joy, the quarrels began about how the money from a possible sale would be distributed. The inventors forgot to mention that they had cut out the sperm whale's teeth, which are traded on the black market as ivory for around 3,600 US\$/kg.



Offers from the Gulf States are pouring in. Abdulrahman (name changed), one of the fishermen from the Red Sea who came to work in the Gulf of Aden because of the invasion of Yemen by Saudi Arabian troops, is partly responsible for the find. It was he who identified the drifting sperm whale. "We had passed by that same dead fish more than once, and we didn't give it any attention as the sea is full of dead fish." While waiting for the authentication of the gift of the sea and for the sale, the whale's body is besieged by the curious and protected by dozens of guards. "We want to strike a deal to sell it as soon as possible, because the longer it stays the more challenging the situation will become," summarizes the spokesman for the fishermen's collective.

In early April, the ambergris block was sold to a broker in the United Arab Emirates for 1.3 billion rials, or 1.5 million US\$. The average monthly income of Yemen's 30 million people is 20,000 rials or 35 US\$ and many have struggled to make ends meet since the war began. All the families in Al Khaisah village received a share in proportion to their state of need. The fishermen who participated in the towing of the Leviathan and the butchering received up to 30 million rials (51,500 US\$) and each watchman received 250,000 rials (430 US\$). The manna of the sperm whale brought a flash of justice to the battered country.

Everyone went back to the sea and to fishing. When it is good, it sells for a thousand rials minus the fuel and the physical and financial investments. Everyone wonders why a kg of fish is sold for a handful of rials and a kg of intestinal waste for 11,800 US\$.

Al-Watan Al-Adenia, February 14, 2021; The National, February 15, 2021; Middle East Eye, April 6, 2021.¹⁴

NORTHERN EUROPE

NORWAY

February – September 2021

Norway

During the year 2021, the Norwegian whaling quota was 1,278 minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*, Appendix I with Norway's reservation). In total, 575 whales were killed by the crews of 14 whalers. This number is increasing: 503 whales killed in 2020, 429 in 2019. The Norwegian government, which has issued a reservation to the moratorium on commercial whaling decided by the IWC, is not sparing its public expenditures on marketing campaigns. Some of the harpooned whales end up as dog food.

More than a hundred whales killed this year suffered the worst from the moment they were hit by the grenade harpoon to the moment they were delivered to their deaths. The government has allowed the hunters to leave without passing rifle qualification tests. "Each year, dozens of whales who are shot by grenade-tipped harpoons do not die instantly; they must be shot by rifles to end their suffering," explains AWI's Kate O'Connell.

Animal Welfare Institute, February 23 and September 27, 2021.¹⁵

FRANCE

March – July 2021

Vestvagoy, Lofoten Archipelago, Northern Norway Region, Norway

Mattilsynet, the the Norwegian Food Safety Authority, outraged the international scientific community and animal protection NGOs by allowing the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment to conduct experiments on minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*, Appendix I), with financial support from the US Navy and the US oil and gas industry. Twelve juvenile minke whales were to be confined in enclosures of the Norwegian Defense Research Establishment, fitted with electrodes and subjected to noises of different frequencies in order to study the response of their brains. If the whales who are used to ocean voyages, refused to remain calm in their kennels, they were injected with a sedative or stunned. But the 8-metre, 7-ton whales are not salmon. One of the targeted whales escaped from the pen, another was too big and a third was the wrong species. For the moment the program is suspended.

Animal Welfare Institute, April 5 and 12, 2021; NOAH, April 12, 2021; Whale and Dolphin Conservation, May 21, 2021; The Guardian, 8 June 2021; Wildlife at Risk, June 22, 2021; Deeper Blue, July 6, 2021.¹⁶

UNITED KINGDOM

February 2021

Scotland, United Kingdom

The Scottish Salmon Watch (now Scamon Scotland) collective has asked the government for information on the poaching of seals (family Phocidae) by salmon farmers. The police and the National Wildlife Crime Unit have been informed on 6 occasions since 2018 of shootings of seals on sight but no prosecutions have ever been carried out. As of February 1, 2021, to meet US market requirements, it is prohibited to shoot seals attracted by the abundance of captive prey.

The Ferret, April 26, 2021.¹⁷

January - February 2021 / December 2020 - April 2021**Department of Vendée, France**

Two dolphin corpses butchered by poachers with sharp knives were found, one drifting at sea, the other washed up on a beach. Dolphin steak still has some demand in France.

The results of the monitoring of incidental catches of small cetaceans during the “at risk” period (December 1, 2020 - April 30, 2021) carried out by the French authorities show that 447 common dolphins (*Delphinus delphis*, Appendix II) were ‘beached’. The investigation counted 251 dolphins of unidentified species, 23 harbour porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*, Appendix II), 18 bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*, Appendix II), 10 striped dolphins (*Stenella coeruleoalba*, Appendix II) and 7 other species of cetaceans, for a total of 756 strandings on the Atlantic coasts alone, of which 249 were in the Vendée department. “The preliminary analysis of the data leads to a first estimate of around 3,900 common dolphins captured accidentally in the Bay of Biscay. Over the same period, only 116 incidental captures were declared. These declarations have been mandatory since January 1, 2019. The balance sheet of the French government does not say how many of these “incidental catches” bore traces of butchering for food purpose.

French Government, “Suivi de la période à risque pour les captures accidentelles de petits cétacés en Atlantique [Monitoring of the risk period for incidental captures of small cetaceans in the Atlantic]”, bulletin n°12; Sea Shepherd, January 8 and February 4, 2021.¹⁸

FRANCE

January – November 2021**France**

A law issued on November 30, 2021 aims at “fighting against animal abuse and strengthening the bond between animals and humans” and prohibits shows with cetaceans in France. This ban will come into effect on December 1, 2026. It is also forbidden within the same time frame to hold cetaceans in captivity or to breed them in captivity, except in a refuge or sanctuary or in scientific programs.

Currently, there are 3 establishments that hold cetaceans in captivity on French territory: Parc Astérix (Oise department), Planète Sauvage (Loire-Atlantique) and Marineland d’Antibes (Alpes-Maritimes), the only establishment with orcas. Parc Astérix has taken the lead by closing its dolphinarium in January 2021. However, the dolphins have not returned to freedom or semi-liberty. Seven of the 8 captives were transferred to parks in Sweden (Kölmarden Djurpark) and Spain (Mundomar and Océanografic). The health condition of the eighth dolphin, a female, was considered incompatible with a transfer. She was killed. “Dolphins, whose nervous system is highly developed, are extremely sensitive to the shock and stress resulting from capture and the often-long transport to the captivity tank. This often leads to a psychological and physical collapse of the animal, which then becomes vulnerable to diseases such as pneumonia and skin infections”, as stated in the article “Robin des Bois vs. Asterix” published in the newspaper “La Flèche” (The Arrow) in February 1989.

Le Monde, January 25, 2021; Parc Astérix, January 2021; Loi du 30 novembre 2021 visant à lutter contre la maltraitance animale et conforter le lien entre les animaux et les hommes [Law of November 30, 2021 aimed at combating animal abuse and strengthening the link between animals and humans].¹⁹

THE NETHERLANDS

April 19, 2021

Harderwijk, Province of Gelderland, The Netherlands

“Discover, Experience and Protect” is the slogan of the dolphinarium. The report of the Ministry of Agriculture concludes that their shows are far from educational as the operators claim, and that the living conditions of the animals do not comply with welfare standards. In the same sense, the Advertising Code Committee referred by the NGO House of Animals concludes that the slogan is misleading and gives the impression that by buying an entrance ticket visitors make a direct contribution to the protection of animals.

In response, the dolphinarium has committed to removing some of the circus tricks that the dolphins performed from its shows, and it has modified some lines on its website. In order to reduce the overpopulation, the park, owned by the Spanish group Aspro, should also sell to the Hainan Ocean Paradise in China 8 bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*, Appendix II), 2 walruses (*Odobenus rosmarus*, Appendix III) and 2 Steller sea lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*) (Chinese cetacean industry in captivity, see in particular “On the Trail” n°16 p.13). About 20 bottlenose dolphins and 5 porpoises will remain on site.

The Harderwijk dolphinarium was already reprimanded in 2016 for its dubious practices of sexual stimulation of male dolphins to obtain the semen necessary for artificial inseminations. In 2010 the establishment had recovered a sick orca rescued in the Wadden Sea. After treatment, she was to be released. In fact, she was transferred to another dolphinarium in Tenerife, in the Canary Islands (Spain). There she gave birth to a calf that lived only 2 years. He died last year. In the wild, female killer whales live up to 90 years and males 60 years.

Government of the Netherlands, October 12, 2011; Algemeen Dagblad, April 19, 2021; DucthNews, April 20, and May 6, 2021; NL Times, October 21, 2021.²⁰

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

February 26, 2021

State of New South Wales, Australia

Adoption of the law prohibiting the importation and reproduction of dolphins in captivity. Animal Justice Party MP Emma Hurst welcomed the end of “dolphin ‘abuse-ment’ parks.” Only one facility is still in operation in the State of New South Wales, the Dolphin marine conservation park in Coffs Harbour, which holds 3 Indian Ocean bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops aduncus*, Appendix II). The neighboring State of Queensland is still lagging behind for the moment. The last Australian dolphinarium (with the one of Coffs Harbour) is located there and the prohibition of the dolphin’s reproduction is not a present-day problem. The Sea World of Gold Coast has 30 dolphins in captivity.

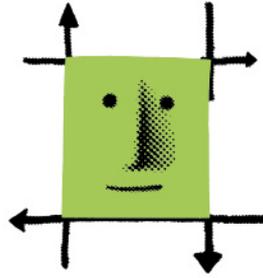
World Animal Protection, February 26, 2021; Euro Weekly News, March 2, 2021.²¹

March 7, 2021

Phillip Island, State of Victoria, Australia

The sperm whale gang (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) has struck again. The body washed up on the beach was vandalized. It was not protected. The lower jaw was sawed off. It has about 30 ivory teeth which are sought after all over the world. Chinese Customs are seizing more and more sperm whale teeth. Does Australia have a short memory? In the neighboring State of New South Wales, the same desecration took place in 2020, and in 2019 it occurred in New Zealand (see “On the Trail” n°25 p.20 and n°30 p.200).

The Age, March 12, 2021.²²



ROBIN DES BOIS



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