

ON_{the} TRAIL

The defaunation bulletin
Quarterly information and analysis report on animal poaching and smuggling
n°27. Events from the 1st October to the 31th December, 2019
Published on July 7, 2020

Original version in French





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

"On the Trail" highlights the new weapons of plunderers, the new modus operandi of smugglers, rumours intended to attract humans consumers of animals and their by-products. "On the Trail" gathers and disseminates feedback from institutions, individuals and NGOs that fight against poaching and smuggling. End to end, the "On the Trail" are the biological, social, ethnological, police, customs, legal and financial chronicle of poaching and other conflicts between humanity and animality.

Previous issues in English

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

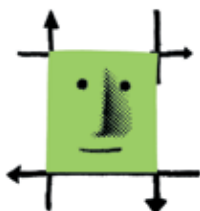
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Covid-19 Special Edition

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Judgment and sanction

Condemnation, acquittal, fine...



Human death

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



Poisoning

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



Trapping

Poaching by jaw trap, snare ...



Full moon

Moonlight poaching

CITES Appendices

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

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

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

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

On the Front Lines

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

November 10, 2019

Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

"Being arrested for rhino poaching is like a perpetual debt trap for poachers. These criminals find themselves indebted to their syndicate bosses, and upon bail and release, they are forced to immediately go out and kill more rhinos for horns. It literally becomes a vicious cycle for poachers who owe their bosses for bail amounts, attorney fees, as well as the losses of confiscated vehicles and confiscated weapons." That is how a well-informed source familiar with what happens behind the poaching scene described the situation, under the condition that he remains anonymous.

Rangers in South Africa and other southern African countries feel betrayed when poachers are released on bail. The case of Sipiwe Shezi, 38 years old, provides new arguments for those who criticize the principle. He was arrested with 5 accomplices at the end of May 2019 on the road from Melmoth to Vryheid. In their 2 vehicles, the police found 4 rhinoceros horns. They appeared before the Vryheid court immediately and were placed in remand for 2 months before being released on bail. On November 10, 2019, Sipiwe Shezi was poaching once again, this time in the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Reserve with 2 accomplices. Around 6:30 in the morning, the trio came across a ranger patrol. The 2 camps exchanged fire. The poachers refused to comply with the rangers' demands. Shezi was killed. One of his assistants tried to attack a ranger with a knife. He was also killed. Sipiwe Shezi had been subpoenaed to appear in court on December 5 to be tried for the May 2019 horns trafficking. If he had remained alive, he may not have answered the summons.¹



December 12, 2019

Pretoriuskop, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

The rangers in the Pretoriuskop sector were on a routine patrol around midnight when they came across a group of at least 3 suspects who could not be mistaken for tourists. The skirmish led to the death of 2 poachers. A 3rd man managed to flee. On the scene, the rangers found a loaded large-caliber rifle, ammunition and all of the paraphernalia necessary for removing horns; the items were collected as evidence. The night before, around dusk, the Pretoriuskop rangers had managed to handcuff a suspect without using their weapons, while at least 2 other men disappeared into the bush. The identity of the outlaws is unknown for the moment and the SAPS do not know whether the 2 incidents are related.²



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

During the night of November 13 to 14, 2019

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

Night ambush laid by an unknown outlaws band on national road 2. Death of eco-guard Kambale Kasuki Jean Aimé. "He was escorting a civilian food supply convoy." "He had just been trained for support missions in dangerous terrain," according to the official statement issued by the park's management.

The driver of the escort vehicle was also murdered. The park has been reopened since February 2019, after in series deaths of 9 guards and a reassuring reassessment of the safety conditions.³



TANZANIA

October 2019

Tanzania

18 people (11 are presented as businessmen and businesswomen, 3 have a Burundi passport, one a Somali passport) are suspected of having participated directly or indirectly in the ambush in which Wayne Lotter, co-founder and director of PAMS (Protected Area Management Solutions) lost his life. It was on August 16, 2017 at the exit of the Dar es Salaam airport (see "On the Trail" n°18 p. 87).⁴

ASIA

CAMBODIA

October 9, 2019

Phnom Penh, Phnom Penh Province, Cambodia

The convictions of Phal Penh, Kert Vaha and Chheang Vannith to prison sentences (cf. "On the Trail" n°26 p. 4) are accompanied by a fine of 40 million riels or about 10,000 US\$ to be paid to each shot to death ranger's family.⁵



Mother and daughter of Tern Soknai

EUROPE

ROMANIA

October 16, 2019

Maramures County, Transylvania Region, Romania

The body of Liviu Pop, a forest ranger, is found by his colleagues in a ravine in the middle of the night. The day before, he had been tipped off about the intrusion of illegal loggers. His wife and 3 children survive him. Forest ranger murdered in Romania, also see "On the Trail" n°26 p. 5.⁶



Seahorses and Pipefishes

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

AMERICA

MEXICO

Early November 2019

Mexico City, Mexico

Seizure by the Guardia Nacional on a courier platform of a parcel bound for California, United States of America. It contained 541 seahorses.¹

PERU

October 2, 2019

Port of Callao, Province of Callao, Peru

Seizure in the hold of the fishing boat *Adonay*, of 55 cardboard boxes containing dried seahorses (1,043 kg). The *Adonay* was boarded and searched by the *Río Cañete*, 197 miles off the coast. She was then escorted to the military base adjacent to the nearest Peruvian fishing harbor.

Seahorses are caught by divers or caught from the shore. Given the position of the *Adonay* when she was intercepted, there was clearly going to be a transshipment at sea, like in narcotics trafficking. The Chinese high-water fishing fleet has now infiltrated Peru and seizures of shark fins and seahorses are frequent. The Chinese love to eat seahorses. They believe it fights against hair loss and reduced sexual activity. Three Peruvian fishermen and one Venezuelan were arrested. The bad news is that the Ministry of Commerce decided to divide the load of seahorses, estimated to be worth 6 million US\$, and send them to research centers and universities, rather than burning them. The official statement and articles in available press talk about 12 million seahorses. Since the total weight of the seizure was 1,043 kg and the average weight of a dried seahorse is 3 g, the estimate of 12 million specimens seems exaggerated.²

CHINA

November 8, 2019

Mangshi Dehong International Airport, Yunnan Province, ChinaSeizure of 884 dried seahorses weighing 510 g, i.e. approximately 0.58 g per individual.³

December 19, 2019

Huanggang border-control, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.Seizure of 20 dried seahorses, averaging 4 g per specimen.⁴

December 2019

Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.Seizure of 57 frozen seahorses declared as "wild seafood" by the passenger.⁵

October 2, 2019, Port of Callao, Peru



November 4, 2019, Kottaiappattinam, India



December 19, 2019, Huanggang, China



December 2019, Vadakku Ammapattinam, India

INDIA

November 4, 2019

Kottaiappattinam, Pudukkottai District, State of Tamil Nadu, IndiaSeizure by the CSG (Coastal Security Group) at the home of N. Haji Ali of 18,000 dried pipefishes. "We believe that the preserved sea lizards were about to be shipped to Sri Lanka in a boat via sea, and from there to China" the investigators said. The shipment is estimated at 500,000 rupees or 7,050 US\$. Ali turned tail.⁶

REPEATED OFFENSE

First week of December 2019

Vadakku Ammapattinam, Pudukkottai District, State of Tamil Nadu, IndiaSeizure of 174 kg of pipefish and 1.5 kg of seahorses in the coastal village. Jagubar Sadik, already known to the judicial records, managed to escape.⁷

December 11, 2019

Pasipattinam, Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, IndiaSeizure of 107 dried pipefishes and 13 dried seahorses and the SUV transporting them. Arrest of A. Sardar and S. Sakthivel.⁸

Corals

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

JUNGLE BOOK OPERATION

November 21, 2019

Los Angeles, State of California, United States of America

Jose Torres, director of the Gardena-based company Orca International, has been charged. On the night of Thursday 31 January 2013, he had shipped 474 live stony corals (order Scleractinia, Appendix II) to a Mexican customer without first obtaining an export permit. The shipment, divided into 40 boxes, was spotted by US Fish and Wildlife agents at Los Angeles International Airport just before it flew to Mexico City on an Aero Mexico flight. Trial to be followed.¹

ASIA

CHINA

November 17, 2019

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of stony corals (order Scleractinia, Appendix II).²

REPEATED OFFENSE

November 30, 2019

Futian border post, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

Seizure of 13 live corals (class Anthozoa) weighing 800 g in the belongings of a passenger who appears to be a professional coral "smuggler" on the basis of preliminary investigations.³



INDIA

November 17, 2019

Mumbai Metropolitan Region, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure of 900 black coral branches (*Antipatharia* spp., Appendix II) with a local value of 50,000 rupees (705 US\$). Arrest of Sanjay Jugraji Duggad and Sanjay Vishnu Nikalaje and seizure of their vehicle. The ring's origin is in Kanyakumari district, Tamil Nadu, at 1,315 km from Mumbai. The Maharashtra police does not want to say everything. They are preparing in cooperation with the WCCB (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) and the Tamil Nadu police a coordinated operation that should enable to dismantle this hitherto unknown network.⁴

Abalones

Haliotis spp.

SOUTH AFRICA

Johan Brand, police mediator in the Overstrand sector, organized public meetings. He listened to the grievances of the public and their representatives concerning public safety and police efficiency. The cities concerned are Pearly Beach, Gansbaai, Masikhane, Stanford, Kleinmond, Mt Pleasant and Betty's Bay. They have a population of at least 25,000 people.

His report is clear, impartial and alarming. The abalone traffic is perceived as a major challenge for both quality of life and protection of the marine environment. The authorities do not consider poaching control in coastal waters and on beaches to be a priority. The abalone does not have the same protection status as rhinoceros horns. In Gansbaai, both day and night, there are sometimes 300 divers poaching at the same time, way too many for the ludicrously few local police officers to effectively intervene. Although the delinquents' license plate numbers are sent to the local police department real time, no one is ever prosecuted and the offenders continue to move around freely. The longtime residents feel that they have been expropriated by the abalone mafia, and the leaders and their assistants who set up shop on site. Minors drop out of school to be lookouts or liaison agents in exchange for fashionable clothes or narcotics.

When arrests do take place, sometimes the poachers and other players in the ring demonstrate, blocking the coastal roads, vandalizing public or private property and imposing their law over the local police who are overwhelmed, demoralized and more and more overcome by fear, corruption and absenteeism. Backup forces come from Paarl, one hundred kilometers away, and take several hours to arrive. The poachers take advantage of that time to organize riots. In the recent past, they have destroyed the canine brigade buildings in Hawston, a police station in Hermanus and even an anti-poaching patroller at sea. Social fabric in the region is disintegrating, families divided by quarreling [like what can be observed in local communities around Kruger National Park, consumed by inequalities in revenue between rhino's horn traffickers and legal workers].

The rights advocate then tried to meet with the highest level provincial authorities in charge of staff and equipment allocation and in charge of defining directives and local police objectives, but he did not receive any official answers. The tendency, he says, is to minimize the scale of the crimes. "They [the police] are not looking at this from an organized crime perspective,"

"I must commend the communities of Overstrand. It doesn't matter which region, it doesn't matter which race or gender they're from. It really is an eye-opener to interview those communities."¹

October 3, 2019

Table View, Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Seizure in a 1973 BMW XS of abalones worth 100,000 US\$. One arrest.²

October 4, 2019

Strandfontein, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Police raid in a shelling, cooking, drying and packaging workshop. Seizure of an abalone batch estimated at 120,000 rand (7,960 US\$), 5 mobile phones, a scale, a Chevrolet LDV and cooking equipment. Arrest of 5 men.³

October 5, 2019

Gordons Bay, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Following a call from a local resident, seizure in the bush at the top of Bikini Beach of a bag containing 57 peeled abalones.⁴

End of October 2019

Cape Town and Durbanville, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Seizure in 2 apartments of abalones, fans, burners, shelves and pots by Crime Intelligence and DAFF (Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) officers. The abalone's inventory is ongoing. Three arrests.⁵

November 12, 2019

Kogel Bay, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Arrest of 9 divers returning from a poaching campaign. Seizure of 193 abalones and diving equipments.⁶

November 13, 2019

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

A lawyer for fishermen and poachers, Broadway was accused of having received over 5.5 million rand (approximately 700,000 US\$) between 2010 and 2019 through 2 assistance funds for professionals in the abalone sector. According to the case file, the money came from the illegal activities of the Chinese company Wah Hin. The lawyer had 51 charges on him, including money laundering, racketing and storage of abalones without a permit. In the end, he was acquitted. Right before the trial, two key witnesses, Michael Norman and David Bannister, who had already been sentenced in the case (see "On the Trail" n°23 p. 8), withdrew their testimony. They said that they and their families had been threatened and intimidated, specifically by gunshots.⁷



November 18 and 19, 2019

Hekpoort, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Immobilization of a suspect truck coming from Cape Town by a flying squad. It was full of abalones and was heading towards a remote farm. On the spot, police discovered a factory that was working 24/24 drying and packing the abalones. The value of the seizure was estimated at 4 million rand or 268,246 US\$. Two neighbouring houses were searched. Four men, the Cape Town big boss who is Chinese, 3 Mozambicans and a local woman were arrested. Seizure of two weapons (one stolen and the other with the number erased) and a sum in cash of which the amount was not published. The network is starting from the coastal waters off Cape Town, goes up on the Pretoria side more than 1,500 km, extends to the ports of Mozambique and then projects itself into China by container ships.⁸

November 20, 2019

Robben Island, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Robben Island is famous all over the world for another reason than its abalones. On Tuesday, November 19, 2019, SAPS and DAFF on-board officers surrounded a number of boats that turned their tails and vanished, leaving their divers at the bottom of the water. The next day, the same police force picked up from the rocks of Robben Island a dozen divers in working clothes who were waiting to be pulled out by their mother ships.⁹

November 20, 2019

Miller's Point, Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

After the cat and mouse play in the early hours of the day, seizure by the police of 601 abalones, several diving equipments and arrest of 10 suspects on the beach.¹⁰

November 25, 2019

Muizenberg, Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

They jumped the lights to get away from the cops following them from Beach Road. Some kind of viscous juice was continuously pouring out of the back of their car. Eventually they parked in a "run for your life" way and ran off. Both men were caught up. Seizure of 622 abalones.¹¹

December 4, 2019

Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

Civil servants are tough. A female deputy director of the DAFF (Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries) dismissed after being implicated in the hijacking of an abalone shipment estimated at more than 450,000 US\$ has just been appointed director of rural development and land reform.¹³



October 3, 2019, Table View



November 18 and 19, 2019, Hekpoort



November 25, 2019, Muizenberg

December 18, 2019, Hermanus



December 10, 2019, Bellville

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Early December 2019

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

The court of appeal has convicted Christo Groenewald, priest at the Church of Christ, Christo Groenewald Junior, Hendrik Kriel, Willem Kriel and Bernard Geldenhuys, to prison terms from 3 to 6 years. They all live in Gansbaai. The facts date back to the beginning of the 2000s, and the initial ruling dates from 2010. Since that time, the 5 traffickers had been free on bail. At the head of their gang was Elizette Marx, a sort of Al Capone of the abalone scene, so to speak, who is now 50 years old. Groenewald, a clergyman, was her henchman. He recruited the divers, planned the dives and delivered the abalones by batches of 600 kg. His son, Christo, and Geldenhuys were regular divers and supervisors. The Kriels had started out as divers and, through hard work, had become the owners of several boats, each employing 17 divers who brought up an average of 60 kg of abalones per dive.

Elizette Marx was arrested for the first time in 2002 with 29 other people, during a raid by the Scorpions, an elite police unit, in Gansbaai. She was quickly released on bail, but fell into a police dragnet again in 2003 as she was about to carry out an abalone hold-up in a warehouse in Worcester. The warehouse belonged to a certain Jian Bin Liu, who owed her 34,000 US\$ in payment for a large delivery. Jian Bin Liu had not paid the "invoice" because the shipment had been seized by the police, he said. Everything was ready for the attack – trucks, weapons, hideout and henchmen. The only problem was that among them was an undercover Scorpion agent. He brought the whole plan down and Elizette Marx had no other option than to plead guilty to attempted theft in conspiracy and violation of the Marine Living Resources Act for abalone poaching. She was sentenced to 3 years in prison and, for a time, forced to leave her Gansbaai villa, which is half fortress, half Californian palace. After she was arrested, dozens of her divers were sentenced to prison terms. During their trials, they discovered that the crime syndicate was directed exclusively by women. Elizette Marx was assisted by Janelle Theart, Merinda Potgieter, Sharon Swanepoel and Ronelle Ferreira.¹²

December 5, 2019

Northern Cape, Eastern Cape and Western Cape Provinces, South Africa

Road checks at the common borders of the three provinces. All services are on the deck, including K9. Seizure of mandrax, meth, dagga, stolen cars, adulterated liquor, copper scrap and of 96 abalone crates.¹⁴



December 10, 2019

Bellville, Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

The K9 squad and a Crime Intelligence team made a dramatic entrance into a Bellville apartment full of bursting of gas bottles, cookers, fans, racks and of plastic barrels full of drying or fresh abalone. Arrest of a 28-year-old male.¹⁵

December 13, 2019

Black Rock, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

Friday the 13th definitely brought bad luck to one individual. Agents from the Department of Fisheries spotted him from the coast as he was diving in Half Moon Bay around a reef that is well-known for its fish, lobsters and... abalones. During the day, he came back to the shore with his hands in his pockets, looking innocent. Nothing to report, nothing to seize. But that night, he went back to the reef, and recovered his booty and his diving equipment. He was careless and used a powerful flashlight, and so was seen. He ended up being picked up near Beach Road with 47 abalones in his car, twice as many as the family consumption allowance, including 37 that were undersized. He fled on foot, but then turned himself in. In addition to the abalones, his equipment and vehicle were seized, and he is now being charged with rebellion, as well as various violations of fishing regulations. "To report suspicious or illegal fishing activity call 13FISH (13-3474) anytime. You can remain anonymous. Make the call and make the difference."¹⁶

December 14, 2019

Monte Vista, Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Seizure of a fine lot estimated at 474,600 rand (32,181 US\$) in a residence. Arrest of a 27-year-old man.¹⁷

December 18, 2019

Hermanus, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Arrest by newly recruited police officers of a 31-year-old woman in possession of 87 lobster tails worth an estimated 50,500 rand (3,554 US\$) and 95 abalones. The assessment of the value is still going on.¹⁸

December 26, 2019

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Seizure of a wetsuit and of 42 abalones from the sea bottom around Robben Island. The poacher had been left behind by his mother ship which, for unknown reasons, did not return to pick him up. He swam back to Clifton's 1st beach with his loot in a basket and was picked up by enforcement officers.¹⁹

Conches, Clams, Chanks and Nautilus

AMERICA

FRANCE (FRENCH WEST INDIES)

LAMBIS OPERATION

September 28 to October 17, 2019

French West Indies, France

Results: 11 court proceedings and seizure of 877 kg of queen conch (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II) fresh or cooked. Most of the catch came from a speed-boat that regularly shuttled between the micro-island State of Saint Lucia and Martinique (approximately 80 km). The 2 traffickers were given suspended prison sentences of 3 and 6 months and have to pay a 17,000 € (18,590 US\$) customs fine.¹



November 26, 2019

Department of Martinique, France

Interception at quay of 1,375 kg of queen conch (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II). Seizure of a speed-boat from St. Vincent les Grenadines, 2 pick-up trucks, a loaded pump-action shotgun and of a mobile phones' jammer. Four arrests.²

December 26, 2019

Fort-de-France, Martinique Department, France

Positioned on the Tourelles Dock, the customs officers quickly spotted these 2 tourists returning from the islands of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines with 3 imposing iceboxes. Seizure of 130 kg of queen conch flesh (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II).³

ASIA

CHINA

Early October 2019

Yangzhou Taizhou International Airport, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure of a bracelet made of giant clam pearls (*Tridacnidae* spp., Appendix II). 130 g.⁴

October 21, 2019

Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge Border Control, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of a giant clam (*Tridacnidae* spp., Appendix II) weighing 7.729 kg.⁵

November 9, 2019

Mangshi Dehong International Airport, Yunnan Province, China

Seizure of a giant clam shell (*Tridacnidae* spp., Appendix II). 1,051 g.⁶

November 11, 2019

Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of a necklace made of giant clam pearls (*Tridacnidae* spp., Appendix II). 81.43 g.⁷

November 13, 2019

Huanggang border-control, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

Seizure of 2 giant clams (*Tridacnidae* spp., Appendix II).⁸

November 20, 2019

Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of 2 bracelets made of giant clam pearls (*Tridacnidae* spp., Appendix II). 20.61 g each.⁹

November 2019

Port of Jiuzhou, Guangdong Province, China. Near Macau and Hong Kong.

At least 5 bracelets made of giant clam pearls (*Tridacnidae* spp., Appendix II). 40 to 50 g per bracelet.¹⁰

December 11, 2019

Qianjiang, Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China

Two necklaces made of giant clams pearls (*Tridacnidae* spp., Appendix II) in a parcel from Japan.¹¹

December 21, 2019

Hong Kong-West Kowloon Station, Hong Kong, China

A carved giant clam shell (*Tridacnidae* spp., Appendix II).¹²

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

A carved giant clam shell (*Tridacnidae* spp., Appendix II) in the belongings of a passenger arriving from Jakarta. 38 cm long, 3.88 kg.¹³

PHILIPPINES

October 29, 2019

Barangay Bawing, General Santos, South Cotabato Province, Philippines

Seizure of 120 t of giant clams (*Tridacna gigas*, Appendix II) weighing an average of 30 kg, i.e. approximately 4,000 clams. They originate from the provinces of Cagayan, Zamboanga and East Davao. The clams' hill was walked over by goats!¹⁴

SRI LANKA

October 1st, 2019

Kalpitiya, North Western Province, and Urumale, Talaimannar, Isle of Mannar, Northern Province, Sri Lanka.

- Seizure in a taxicab of 226 conch shells (genus *Strombus*).
- Seizure by the Navy of 658 giant clam shells (*Tridacnidae* spp., Appendix II). One apprehension.¹⁵

October 10, 2019

Nintavur, Eastern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 6 chank shells (*Turbinella pyrum*) known as shank or chank. One of the shells is phenomenal. Its spirals are directed towards the left unlike all the shanks and other univalve shells except the lighting whelks (*Busycon sinistrum*). This inexplicable originality is often attributed to the will of Lakshmi, goddess of fortune, prosperity, wealth and abundance in the Hindu religion. Sinistral shanks are considered supernatural and their shells are considered sacred. They are sold for 1,000 to 3,000 rupees per gram or 14 to 40 US\$. The weight of the few specimens kept in temples or museums is 60 to 120 g. On the local market, the average value of a sinistral shank is 2,000 US\$ and that of a sinistral-right shank is 2 US\$.



The origin of this Lakshmi shank is unknown for the moment. The seizure was carried out by the Navy in cooperation with the local police. The 2 men arrested are aged 43 and 52 years old.¹⁶

October 11, 2019

Jaffna, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

An avalanche of conches (genus *Strombus*) was about to break on the beach thanks to a landing dinghy. Three arrests.¹⁷

October 18, 2019

Arripu, Silavathurai, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 148 conches (genus *Strombus*) below the prescribed minimum size (70 mm in length) at the upper beach in the hands of a man aged 30.¹⁸

November 6, 2019

Erukalampidy, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure by a marine patrol of 2,432 conch shells undersized (genus *Strombus*).¹⁹

Decembre 16, 2019

Serunuwara, Eastern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure in a guest house of 3 Valampuri conch shells (*Turbinella pyrum*). They are sought after by collectors and the jewelry industry who transform them into bracelets and other junk. Specimens exceeding 20 cm in height are sold under the name "Turbinella pyrum sea snail" between 175 and 375 € (190 and 407 US\$) on eBay in the European Union, shipped from Germany.²⁰

EUROPE

GERMANY

October 2, 2019

Heidelberg, Baden-Württemberg State, Germany

Seizure in a postal parcel of a nautilus (*Nautilus* spp., Appendix II) from the United States of America purchased via the Internet. The shell was confiscated and will be permanently seized if the couple of recipients do not produce a proper CITES import certificate within one month.²¹

November 20, 2019

Pforzheim, Land Baden-Württemberg, Germany

Stolen by a German tourist from the sea bottom, sent by post without further formality, the giant clam (*Tridacnidae* spp., Appendix II) stripped of its flesh arrived in the Land after being shipped from Thailand. The postal package was scanned by customs officials.²²

SPAIN

October 29, 2019

Fuerteventura, Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands, Spain

Seizure of a giant clam (*Tridacna gigas*, Appendix II) at a business kept by a foreign resident with a criminal record.²³

ITALY

October 14, 2019

Florence - Peretola International Airport, Metropolitan City of Florence, Tuscany Region, Italy

Seizure of 2 giant clams (*Tridacna gigas*, Appendix II), 50 kg each, bound for the Dominican Republic in the Caribbean Sea.²⁴



Early October 2019, Yangzhou Taizhou, China



November 2019, Port of Jiuzhou, China



December 21, 2019, Hong Kong-West Kowloon Station, China



October 29, 2019, Barangay Bawing, Philippines



October 2, 2019, Heidelberg, Germany



October 11, 2019, Jaffna, Sri Lanka



Sea Cucumbers

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

AMERICA

MEXICO

End of December 2019

Mexico City, Mexico

Seizure inside a parcel delivery service of 2 packages leaving for Hong Kong by air and containing 698 and 1,358 dried sea cucumbers.¹

NICARAGUA

October 29, 2019

Puerto Cabezas, North Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region, Nicaragua

Seizure on board the *Mis Tiffany* at 21 nautical miles northeast of Puerto Cabezas of 132 kg of sea cucumbers, including 113 kg of "Pikachu", Florida sea cucumbers (*Holothuria floridana*). No room on board for divers, the diving gear or the trawls. The *Mis Tiffany* is undoubtedly a "mother ship" in charge of collecting sea cucumbers caught by fishing boats in the Miskito Keys area.²

ASIA

INDIA

October 4, 2019

Tiruchirappalli International Airport (Trichy), State of Tamil Nadu, India

A first at the airport! Asaph Ahmed, a resident of Ramanathapuram, was attempting to smuggle 201 dried sea cucumbers to Kuala Lumpur on a Malindo Airlines flight. They were hidden in food packaging.³

October 13, 2019

Off Mandapam coast, Ramanathapuram District, Tamil Nadu State, India

Seizure at daybreak of 3.2 t of dead sea cucumbers. The boarded vessel would have been used to collect the catches of other vessels fishing beyond territorial waters. It is therefore a network. They were intended for cooking and drying before being smuggled to mainland Asia via Sri Lanka by sea or by air from Trichy and Chennai. The seizure should be destroyed in the presence of a magistrate. The two sailors, S. Sahul Hameed and M. Karuppaiah, have been taken into custody for the purposes of the investigation. This is the largest seizure ever made in the last 5 years in Tamil Nadu.⁴

October 18, 2019

Rameswaram, Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of 150 kg of dried sea cucumbers. Arrest of Murugesan, Sakthivel and Murugaiah. They were about to smuggle them by sea to Sri Lanka. The Tamil Nadu-Northern province of Sri Lanka network is very active. The shipment will be destroyed after the green light from the public prosecutor's office.⁵

SRI LANKA

October 2, 2019

Chundikulam, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

550 sea cucumbers, 4 conches (genus *Strombus*) and diving equipment seized by the Navy from a motorboat. Arrest of the skipper and the 2 crew members.⁶

October 4, 2019

Mannar, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 4 kg of sea cucumbers and 3 conches (genus *Strombus*), a motorboat and catching gear. Seven suspects are currently under interrogation.⁷

October 12 to December 21, 2019

Northern Province, Sri Lanka

The Navy and its various task forces are using 2 measurement units to describe the seizures during 11 interventions.

Seizures of 5,969 fresh sea cucumbers to which are added 267.86 kg of sea cucumbers fresh too (that is 892 more specimens on the basis of 300 g per specimen). 51 men arrested, aged 20 to 53. Seizures of 19 boats, 18 outboard motors and diving equipment.⁸

October 21, 2019

Trincomalee, Eastern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 300 kg of fresh sea cucumbers, of 3 outboard motors and scuba diving equipment.⁹

December 3, 2019

Kalpitiya, North Western Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 165 sea cucumbers. Confiscation of 3 boats, 3 outboard motors and fishing nets. Nine people are taken in for questioning.¹⁰

EUROPE

ITALY

October 1st, 2019

Fasano, Province of Brindisi, Apulia Region, Italy

Seizure of 4 t of sea cucumbers in 228 buckets from a lorry making for the port of Brindisi to embark on a car ferry bound for Greece. Still alive, they were returned to sea. Catching of sea cucumbers is prohibited in all Italian waters by a ministerial decree in effect since 27 February 2018 (see "On the Trail" n°17 p. 8, n°20 p. 13, n°23 p. 10 and n°25 p. 12).¹¹



October 4, 2019, Mannar, Sri Lanka



October 12 to December 21, 2019, Sri Lanka



Holothuria floridana



October 18, 2019, Rameswaram, India



October 1st, 2019, Fasano, Italy

Marine and Freshwater Fish

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

December 15, 2019

Strandfontein, Western Cape Province, South Africa

200 young sharks beheaded, gutted, with their fins and tails amputated are stacked up on the beach.¹

TUNISIA

October 20, 2019

Off the coast of Monastir, Monastir Governorate, Tunisia

Seizure on board a fishing vessel under unknown flag of 26 t of bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*).²

AMERICA

BRAZIL

October 7 and 17, 2019

Porto Alegre do Norte, Confresa and Pontes e Lacerda, State of Mato Grosso, Brazil

Seizure of 108 kg of fish, arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), butterfly peacock bass (*Cichla ocellaris*), piranhas (family Characidae), South American silver croaker (*Plagioscion squamosissimus*), fish of the genus *Brycon*, anostomids (family Anostomidae) and tambaquis (*Colossoma macropomum*), 11 nets, 60 buoys and 2 freezers. Commercial fishing is prohibited from October 1st to 21 January in the Amazon, Paraguay and Araguaia-Tocantins basins. Subsistence fishing by riparian populations and indigenous tribes remains authorized up to a limit of 3 kg per day. The fish have been donated to charity. The offenders were fined a total of 6,100 reais (1,466 US\$).

Seizure in the baggage hold of coach of 300 kg fish including tiger surubí (*Pseudoplatystoma corruscans*), arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), butterfly peacock bass (*Cichla ocellaris*), *Brycon amazonicus* and barred sorubim (*Pseudoplatystoma fasciatum*). The shipment departed from Humaitá on the Rio Madeira and was expected in São Luís de Montes Belos (state of Goiás).³

October 22, 2019

Manaus, Amazonas State, Brazil

A strong smell of rotten meat was coming out of his workshop. The police were informed. The man was salting 500 kg of arapaima filets (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), not fresh. It is not known whether he was charged with attempted poisoning. The meat was not donated to charity.⁴



October 31, 2019

Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Seizure on the Amazon of one tonne of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) and tambaqui (*Colossoma macropomum*) on board a boat coming from Codajás 300 km upstream from Manaus.⁵

The “piracema law” (fisheries in the Tupi Indian dialect) dates back to November 23, 1988. It was meant to protect freshwater fish from human predation during the spawning season. It is applicable to all native species. Exotic species, like tilapias and African catfish, are excluded except in Goiás and in Tocantins.

During piracema, all fishing activity is forbidden less than 500 m from river confluences or mouths, in canals, lagoons and at wastewater pipe outlets, and less than 1500 m upstream and downstream from hydroelectric dams. The species that are typically forbidden to fish in the Amazonian Basin, which covers an area of 3.2 million km² include pacus, highwaterman catfish, two-spot Astyanax, arowanas, red-tailed Bryons, tiger catfish and sorubims. Arapaimas come under year-round national protection regulations and are listed in CITES Appendix II. They are not directly covered by the piracema law.

During piracema, professional fishermen who make their living selling the most highly sought-after species receive a monthly compensation that is equivalent to minimum wage, 998 reais (240 US\$).

Fishing for personal consumption remains authorized under the condition that quotas defined by each state or by municipalities are respected. Violations are sanctioned with fines that can vary between 700 and 100,000 reais (170 to 24,000 US\$), plus 20 reais (5 US\$) per kilo poached.

Under the best circumstances, the application of the piracema law is said to guarantee the survival or the repopulation of freshwater fish who are victims of overfishing, pollution, degradation of their habitats and increasingly numerous dams that cut off their migration routes.

November 1st, 2019

Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Seizure of 1,350 kg of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) and tambaqui (*Colossoma macropomum*) which are prohibited to be fished between October 1st 2019 and March 15, 2020.⁶

November 6, 2019

Oriximiná, State of Pará, Brazil

Seizure on board 2 boats of which one was a stolen of a rifle with the number erased, a revolver, 2 butcher's knives, 8 arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) and 4 yellow-headed sideneck turtles (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II). Three arrests.⁷

November 8, 2019

Marabá, State of Pará, Brazil

Seizure on the Rio Tocantins of 30 kg of arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II). They were donated to charity and 750 m of nets were destroyed.⁸

Mid-November 2019

Rio Solimões, Tabatinga, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Seizure of 550 kg of arapaima meat (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) and a firearm on board a vessel at berth. Two arrests.⁹

November 13, 2019

Jacundá, State of Pará, Brazil

Seizure during the piracema of 80 kg of fish, including juvenile arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) caught in the artificial lake of Tucuruí. The fish were donated to the Maria Cecília de Oliveira Hospital and to 2 charities. The artificial lake of Tucuruí is in fact the reservoir of a hydroelectric dam built in 1982 across the Rio Tocantins in the municipality of Tucuruí.¹⁰



November 27, 2019

Santana, State of Amapá, Brazil

Seizure during the "piracema" of 429 kg of fish, including arapaima fillets (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II). The city's charities should benefit if the products of this illegal fishing are still edible.¹¹

November 28, 2019

Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil

At around 9:00 p.m., seizure by the veterinary police of 173 arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) from a truck for a total weight of 9 t, i.e. an average weight of 52 kg per specimen, whereas the weight of a sexually mature adult is 200 kg.¹²

November 28, 2019

Icoaraci, District of Belém, State of Pará, Brazil

Seizure in a lorry, by Ibama (Instituto brasileiro do meio ambiente e dos recursos naturais renováveis) and the traffic police, of more than 25 t of smallscale weakfish (*Cynoscion microlepidotus*), the origin of which is unknown. They are appreciated for their flesh and for making glue. Beware of the separate and lucrative traffic of swim bladders! The status of the species is unknown. The shipment was bound for Rio de Janeiro. Fine equal to 118,000 US\$.¹³



November 30, 2019

Ilha Comprida, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Triumphant capture of a bull shark (*Carcharias taurus*) by 3 recreational fishermen. Fine of 8,400 reais for each one, i.e. 2,090 US\$.¹⁴



December 1st, 2019

Belém, State of Pará, Brazil

Seizures on the Terra Firme market of cachama (*Colossoma macropomum*), browm hoplo (*Hoplosternum littorale*), aimara (*Hoplerthrinus unitaeniatus*), Hoplias, butterfly peacock bass (*Cichla ocellaris*) and highwaterman catfish (*Hypophthalmus edentatus*), 200 kg in total. The sellers have fled.¹⁵

December 1st, 2019

Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) and silver arowanas (*Osteoglossum bicirrhosum*) seized at the Panair market this Sunday morning, one tonne in all. The sellers have fled.¹⁶

December 4, 2019

Port of Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Seizure of 1 tonne of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) and 3 turtles.^{16bis}

OPERATION MAREADOS 3

December 6, 2019

State of Amapá, Brazil

Seizures on boats operating in the Amazon basin of cachamas (*Colossoma macropomum*), Brycon amazonicus, dorados (*Salminus brasiliensis*), surubis (*Pseudoplatystoma corruscans*), pirapitingas (*Piaractus brachipomus*), catfishes (*Hypostomus affinis*), cascudos (*Hoplosternum littorale*) and goliath catfishes (*Brachyplatystoma filamentosum*), prohibited during the freshwater fish spawning season (15 November-15 March), 5 t in all. Additional seizure on board vessels of pacas (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras) and armadillos (family Dasypodidae), butchered, and a live *Podocnemis* turtle. Since mid-November, Ibama has also seized 15 km of nets.¹⁷



December 15, 2019, Strandfontein, South Africa



Nov. 30, 2019, Ilha Comprida, Brazil



Carcharhinus falciformis



Dec. 3, 2019, Kudawa and Ammathottam, Sri Lanka



Nov. 22, 2019, Ruperroux-le-Coquet, France

December 8, 2019

Santana, State of Amapá, Brazil

It is the fishing truce in the rivers but the traffic continues. Seizure of *Hoplias* and sábalo (*Prochilodus lineatus*), 250 kg in total. The next day, after veterinary inspection, they were donated to charity. No arrests were made.¹⁸

December 9, 2019

Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Seizure on the floating market of arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) and spotted sorubim (*Pseudoplatystoma corruscans*), over 2 t, hidden under a layer of "jaraquis", carnivorous and predatory fish whose fishing is not regulated. They too were seized as part of the fraud.¹⁹

OPERATIO RIOS FEDERAIS

December 13, 2019

Óbidos, State of Pará, Brazil

Seizure on board a docked ferry of arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) and cachamas (*Colossoma macropomum*) caught in the Amazon, 2 t in all. Fine of 59,000 reais, i.e. 10,000 US\$.²⁰



December 19, 2019

Poxoreo, State of Mato Grosso, Brazil

Seizure of barred catfish (*Pseudoplatystoma fasciatum*), spotted sorubim (*Pseudoplatystoma corruscans*), gilded catfish (*Zungaro zungaro*) and pacu (family Serrasalminidae), 139.5 kg in total, caught in a sub-tributary of Paraguay, a dead armadillo (family Dasypodidae) and the boat. The flesh of the armadillo has been appreciated for a long time and at the end of the feast its shell is transformed into a basket, a cup or a stringed instrument.²¹

December 26, 2019

Ivinhema River, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil

Arrest of a man who, under the cover of the subsistence fishing allowed during the "piracema", was engaged in commercial fishing.

Seizure of pacus (family Serrasalminidae), duckbill catfish (*Sorubim lima*) and streaked prochilod (*Prochilodus lineatus*), 38 kg in total, nets and other catching gear. Live fish (25 kg) were released into the river.²²



COLOMBIA

October 25, 2019

Colombia

The Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries authorizes the catching of 125 t of silky sharks (*Carcharhinus falciformis*, Appendix II) and the marketing of 5.2 t of their fins on the condition that the sharks be caught exclusively by the small scale fishing flotilla and that the fins be cut off after the vessels return at berth. The NGO Malpelo immediately reacted by describing this decision as "unacceptable". The average weight of a silky shark is 150 kg. More than 800 sharks are therefore allowed to be caught.²³

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Mid-October 2019

Portland, State of Oregon, United States of America

Agnes Yu charged with marketing dried shark fins. Their possession and marketing have been banned in the state since 2011.²⁴

December 19, 2019

Saint John County, State of Florida, United States of America

Chad Ponce has been indicted for having used a power saw to cut off the rostrum of a smalltooth sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*, Appendix I) on his shrimp trawler the *Triton II*, and having then thrown the live fish back in the sea to certain death. Sawfish use their rostrums to locate and catch their prey. Of the 5 sawfish species still surviving in the world's oceans, the smalltooth sawfish is the only still observed in the territorial waters of the United States. Previously relatively frequent in the coastal waters from North Carolina to Texas, it is now limited to the southern Florida. The incident was reported to the FWC (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission) and to the sheriff of Saint John County by witnesses on a fishing boat that was fishing near the *Triton II*.

Sawfish rostrum is the subject of an international black market (cf. "On the Trail" n°3 p.8, n°5 p. 104 and 126, n°6 p. 117-118, n°7 p. 8, n°13 p.15, n°14 p.10 and 109, n°17 p.123, n°21 p.25 and 92, n°23 p.150, n°24 p. 87, n°25 p. 120 and n°26 p. 15).²⁵

MEXICO

14 and 25 October 2019

Off Ensenada and San Felipe (Sea of Cortés), State of Baja California, Mexico

- Seizure and destruction of a 1100-m-long gillnet with wide 25 cm mesh capable of catching totoabas (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I). The boat was outside of sanctuary limits, but in breach of a regulation dating from June 2017 defining the length of nets and mesh size that can be used in the northern part of the gulf.

- Agents from Profepa and Semar (Secretaría de Marina) patrol the totoabas and vaquitas protection area, to identify illegal fishing boats. They have seized a 500-m longline, two 30-m longlines and 3 gillnets with lengths of 300 and 400 m, from which 3 live totoabas were freed and put back in the water.²⁶

November 19, 2019

Upper Gulf of California and Colorado River Delta Biosphere Reserve, Mexico

In order to demonstrate its determination to protect totoabas (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) and vaquitas (*Phocoena sinus*, Appendix I) in the upper part of the Gulf of Cortés, where illegal fishing for totoabas results in the capture of vaquitas, Profepa wishes to report that between December 2018 and November 2019, 127 totoaba's swim bladders, 277 totoabas, 25 t of other marine species, and more than 22 km of nets were seized.²⁷

December 23, 2019

El Centinela, State of Baja California, Mexico

Interception of a vehicle on the Tecate-Mexicali road along the border with the United States. Seizure of 56 totoaba swim bladders (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I). What is the difference between a small-scale cocaine trafficker and a large-scale totoaba trafficker? The former goes to jail and the latter is released pending trial with the obligation to go once a month to the police station to attest his presence.²⁸

ASIA

BANGLADESH

November 27, 2019

Ilisha Ferry Ghat, Bhola District, Barisal Division, Bangladesh

Seizure of small sharks, 1,600 kg, with an estimated value of 480,000 takas or 5,700 US\$ in a truck heading towards Chattogram (formerly Chittagong). They were buried in a pit. Arrest of Md Anis, 20 years old. Small sharks are sold on local markets, the flesh is eaten in spicy fried food and the bones are chewed.²⁹

CHINA

October 14, 2019

Hong Kong International Airport, China

Seizure of 27 kg of dried shark fins from the luggage of a passenger travelling from Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, via Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Value estimated by customs at 27,000 HK\$, i.e. 3,444 US\$ and 127.5 US\$/kg.³⁰

Early December 2019

Sunan Shuofang International Airport, Suzhou and Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure of shark fins. 2,041 g in all.³¹

Early December 2019

Zhengzhou, Henan Province, China

Seizure in a postal parcel from Japan of 3 stuffed pufferfish (Tetraodontinae).³²

December 4, 2019

Tung Chung, Hong Kong, China

Seizure at the time of the unloading from 2 SUVs to a speed boat of approximately one tonne of dried shark fins valued at one million HK\$, i.e. 127,538 US\$ and 116 US\$/kg.³³

December 23, 2019

Tsing Yi Island, Hong Kong, China

Seizure of 200 kg of shark fins in a container from Sri Lanka. Estimated value of 120,000 HK\$, i.e. 15,331 US\$ and 77 US\$ /kg.³⁴

INDIA

November 14, 2019

Malpe, Udupi Kannada District, State of Karnataka, India

A new 4.25 m long whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*, Appendix II) was reportedly caught by mistake or by ignorance of the regulations. The boat would be from Malpe fishing harbour. The local coastline would be clearly identifiable on the video that was being circulated. Some decoders claim, without convincing, that this is an old catch off the coast of Andhra Pradesh.³⁵ *Rhincodon typus*, see "On the Trail" n°4 p. 7, n°6 p. 6, p. 7, n°7 p. 7, n°10 p. 8, n°11 p. 7, n°13 p. 11, n°19 p. 13, n°23 p. 14, n°24 p. 14, n°25 p. 17, n°26 p. 16.

November 25, 2019

Chennai International Airport, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seized in a large box spotted by customs officials of 14 kg of dried shark fins. Dharbar Latheef, 60, was about to fly to Singapore on an Air India flight. The "seafood products" are valued at 800,000 rupees or 11,300 US\$ and 800 US\$/kg.³⁶

December 9, 2019

Chennai International Airport, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of 8 kg of dried shark fins from Basheer Ahamed that was about to fly to Singapore on an Indigo Airlines flight. The value is estimated to be at least 450,000 rupees (approximately 6,350 US\$ and 790 US\$/kg).³⁷

SRI LANKA

December 3, 2019

Kudawa and Ammathottam, North West Province, Sri Lanka

The tarpaulin-covered truck was stopped on the coast road by a Navy patrol. It was carrying 15 bags of shark fins. The crew's initial confessions led to the seizure of an additional 15 bags from an outhouse that was being used as a drying shed and gang headquarters. A total of 1649 kg of fins were seized. Six men were heard by police and 3 dinghies were confiscated.³⁸ Cf. above, China, December 23, 2019, Tsing Yi Island, Hong Kong.

EUROPE

OPERATION LAKE & OPERATION FAME

November 6, 2019

Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Macedonia, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland.

Europol's overall assessment of the operations that took place from October 2018 to April 2019 (see "On the Trail" n°23 p.15-16, n°24 p.14-15, n°25 p.18). Seizure of 5,789 kg of glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II), i.e. approximately 19 millions specimens. Global value: 11.6 million €. Value per kilo: 2,000 € (2,170 US\$). Ten countries are involved.³⁹

FRANCE

October 8, 2019

Le Grau-du-Roi, Department of Gard, France

Questioning of an amateur fisherman holding a bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) without tail or head and cut in half, a coarse and prohibited manoeuvre to conceal the species and the weight of the offence. Seizure of the boat and both halves of the fish. Fishing for bluefin tuna has been prohibited since 5 October in French waters.⁴⁰

October 30, 2019

Roissy International Airport, Department of Val-d'Oise and Bobigny, Department of Seine-Saint-Denis, France

- Seizure in 2 suitcases in the possession of a woman (20 years old) and a man (44 years old): 30+30 kg of glass eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II), estimated at 200,000 specimens based on an average weight of 0.3 g per specimen. They were coming from Toulouse and on their way to China. They received a 10-month suspended sentence and a customs fine of over 7,000 € (7,654 US\$) each.

An additional seizure of 2 suitcases: 30+30 kg of glass eels. The owner was not identified.

The market value of live glass eels varies between 1,000 € and 7,000 € in Asia, equivalent to 1,090 to 7,650 US\$. It is 150 € to 800 € in Europe, or 160 to 870 US\$, according to the *Atlas du Business des Espèces Menacées*, published in October 2019 by the NGO Robin des Bois.⁴¹

November 9, 2019

Cagnes-sur-Mer, Department of Alpes-Maritimes, France

During an inspection at sea, 6 bluefin tunas (*Thunnus thynnus*) weighing approximately 1.5 kg each were seized on board 2 recreational fishing vessels. The 2 fishermen were fined 22,500 € (24,600 US\$) and the 2 boats were seized. The DDTM (Direction Départementale des Territoires et de la Mer) reminds that in order to guarantee the survival of the species, it is forbidden to fish tuna weighing less than 30 kg.⁴²

November 22, 2019

Rouperroux-le-Coquet, Department of Sarthe, France

Sooner or later, it was destined to happen. The top jerk this quarter is French. His name is Eric Damenet; he is head chef at an inn called the "Petit Campagnard". Every year, he organizes a special seafood dinner. For 2019, he ordered a thresher shark (*Alopias* spp., Appendix II) from a fishmonger in the Finistère subdivision in Brittany. The shark was 3.54 m long and was cut into filets seasoned with the ever-present Espelette chili pepper. It was served for a week to his guests who were party of the shame. What was not eaten fresh was put in the freezer to be made into thresher shark and rum terrines. The legality of selling and of eating the shark is questionable. The species is subject to an import permit and the exact origin of the magnificent beast is unknown.⁴³

ITALY

October 23, 2019

Gaeta, Province of Latina, Region of Lazio, Italy

Seizure of about 20 bluefin tunas (*Thunnus thynnus*) tied to a buoy, about 40 cm long when the legal size during permitted fishing periods is at least 115 cm. The quota allocated to Italy for 2019 has been reached since August and all fishing for bluefin tuna has since been banned. They have been donated to charity.⁴⁴

November 4, 2019

Metropolitan City of Messina, Region of Sicily, Italy

Seizure by the Coast Guard of 30 kg of cut up bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) in a lorry leaving the port. In the absence of any certificate proving the legal origin and sanitary quality, tuna was destroyed. The offender was fined 2,600 € (2,900 US\$).⁴⁵



November 27, 2019

Osimo, Province of Ancona, Marche Region, Italy

Seizure by the Carabinieri before the Christmas holidays of 5.18 kg of caviar from sturgeon (*Acipenser* spp. Appendix I or II) in 342 small cans of approximately 15 g packed in Poland and smuggled from Latvia. Total value: 8,000 € or 1,544 €/kg (1,715 US\$/kg).⁴⁶



November 2019

Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Macedonia, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland



Anguilla anguilla



October 30, 2019, Roissy International Airport, France

Marine Mammals

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Early December 2019

Anahola, Kauai Island, State of Hawaii, United States of America

Seizure at the Anahola Farmers Market from the stand of Vivian Satow, 73 years old, of raw and worked ivory from sperm whale or killer whale. Fined 250 US\$.¹



MEXICO

October 26, 2019

Upper Gulf of Cortés and Colorado River Delta Biosphere Reserve, Sonora and Baja California States, Mexico

Buoys are set from the *Narval*, the boat of the Whale Museum of La Paz, to mark the very last refuge area for the vaquitas.²

November 21, 2019

Benito Juárez, Mexico City, Mexico

Seizure of 2 California sea lions (*Zalophus californianus*) from a vehicle en route to Mexico City. They were in 2 wooden crates. They were transferred to the Chapultepec Zoo. Two arrests. There are a few pinniped collectors in the country, private individuals and zoos. The 2 sea lions are between 3 and 6 months old. They weigh 11 and 19 kg. If they survive, they will weigh around 100 kg as adults. The species is very agile at the sea/land interface and spectacular in its food hunting. Sea lions have become the number one entertainers in circuses and aquatic zoos. Poaching of California sea lions, see "On the Trail" n°24 p.17.³

ASIA

CHINA

November 16, 2019

Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Two narwhal tusk sections (*Monodon monoceros*, Appendix II) 20 cm high with a combined weight of 1,287 g in a package from Japan.⁴

JAPAN

October 4, 2019

Japan

The season is over for Japanese whalers. At the end of their first campaign after Japan's withdrawal from the International Whaling Commission, they caught 187 Bryde's whales (*Balaenoptera edeni*, Appendix I), 25 minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*, Appendix I) and 11 sei whales (*Balaenoptera borealis*, Appendix I) and butchered 1,430 tonnes of meat.⁵

THAILAND



October 24, 2019

Koh Samui, Surat Thani Province, Thailand

Dead sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) "vomit" their ambergris and bless Thai fishermen in the drought. This one, watching the sea from a beach, fell on a 6.35 kg block with a theoretical value of 320,000 US\$, i.e. 50,400 US\$/kg. Jumrus Thiachot earned about ten US\$ per day by on-foot fishing and collecting rubbish. He made a fortune if middlemen did not confuse him.⁶



November 10, 2019

Ko Tarutao Island, Satun Province, Thailand

New discovery on a beach by a trash and rag collector of a 2.3 kg block of ambergris released from the decomposition of a sperm whale body (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I). This posthumous production of the sperm whale has a value equal to more than 100,000 US\$. It could enable Somsak Boonrith, whose boat was destroyed by a cyclone, to buy a new one and more.⁷



TURKEY

December 20, 2019

Mediterranean Region, Municipality of Mersin, Mediterranean Region, Turkey

Customs seizure of 5 lumps of ambergris with a total weight of 44 kg. The overall value is estimated at the equivalent of 455,560 US\$, i.e. slightly more than 10,000 US\$/kg.⁸



Various Marine and Freshwater Species

ASIA

CHINA

Early December 2019

Zhangjiagang Port, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure on board a fishing vessel of 5 hawksbill turtle shell bracelets (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I), a clam (Tridacnidae, Appendix II), 2 giant helmets (*Cassia cornuta*) and 2 corals (Anthozoa class). On returning from international seas, the 4 crew members had failed to declare them to customs.²

December 16, 2019

Wenjindu border post, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

Seizure in the luggage of a passenger leaving mainland China of a necklace of red coral (*Corallium rubrum*) and 2 necklaces of clam beads (Tridacnidae, Appendix II).³

INDONESIA

November 27, 2019

Medan City, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Conviction of Mr. Sukandar, fishing master, to 15 months in prison and a fine of 100 million rupees (7,000 US\$) for attempting to export to Thailand 7,000 xiphosura of the species *Tachypleus gigas*, *Tachypleus tridentatus* and *Carcinoscorpius rotundicauda* and 5 t of giant mud crab (*Scylla serrata*). Xiphosura are better known as horseshoe crabs. These underwater arachnids live in the sand or under the mud. To plough the bottom and to seize worms and molluscs with their chelicerae, they use their front part, the prosoma, as a spade, butting up against the caudal spur that extends their rear part, the opisthosoma. They can be up to 60 cm long. Indonesian law protects them. The NGO Forum Investigator Zoo Indonesia estimates that at least 10,000 horseshoe crabs are smuggled every week to China, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.⁴



MALAYSIA

November 26, 2019

Off Berhala Island, State of Sabah, Malaysia

Discovery on board a car ferry of 584 sea turtle eggs (Appendix I) and 455 kg of sea cucumbers. The vessel was diverted to Sandakan for investigation.⁵

EUROPE

SPAIN

Mid-November 2019

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

Seizure in the windows and shelves of a marine curiosity shop of 462 giant clam shells (*Tridacna gigas*, Appendix II), 446 coral pieces (Anthozoa class), 21 sawfish rostrums (order Pristiformes) and 17 hawksbill turtle shell bracelets (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I).⁶

ITALY

October 17, 2019

Naples International Airport - Capodichino, Metropolitan City of Naples, Region of Campania, Italy

Seizure in the luggage of a passenger coming from Polynesia via Monaco and in the luggage of a passenger coming from the Maldives via Rome of 6 stony corals of the genus *Acropora* (Appendix II) and *Pocillopora* (Appendix II) and a giant clam (*Tridacna gigas*, Appendix II). The 2 Italian travellers were each fined 5,000 € (5,470 US\$).⁷



Tachypleus tridentatus

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*).

AFRICA

SENEGAL

October 24, 2019

Dakar, Dakar Region, Senegal

Seizure of 13 loggerhead, green and olive Ridley turtle shells and penises. The illegal trade involves meat, shells and sexual organs. Buyers are discreet. They are said to be wealthy local people and the Asian community. The fishermen would apply themselves to "accidentally" catch sea turtles. The seizure carried out with the participation of the NGO EAGLE is estimated on the local black market at 3.5 million CFA francs or 5,830 US\$.¹

AMERICA

CUBA

End of November 2019

Province of Cienfuegos, Cuba

Seizure of 60 kg of loggerhead turtle meat and 6 kg of barracuda (family Sphyraenidae) from a scuba diver poaching in the Bufeedero area near the never completed construction site of the Juragua nuclear power plant. Confiscation of all equipment and a fine of 6,000 pesos or 240 US\$.²



Juragua Nuclear Power Plant

MEXICO

Early October 2019

State of Oaxaca, Mexico

A natural disaster worse than poaching: storm Narda with its high winds and heavy rains excavated the nests where olive Ridley's turtle eggs were incubating. CONANP (Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas) estimates that more than 8 million eggs were unearthed, scattered and broken, sometimes revealing the nearly newborn that were about to hatch. Wherever possible, waste was collected and buried at the upper beach.³

End of November 2019

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

Seized from a truckload of 17,640 eggs. They were distributed in 36 bags each containing 490 eggs. The standardised packaging proves the existence of a grouping workshop behind beaches and a meticulous commercial and logistic organisation.⁴

End of November 2019

Chilpancingo de los Bravo, State of Guerrero, Mexico

What is the job of Edson "N", América "N", Isabel "N" and Bárbara "N"? They're dealers in turtle eggs, marijuana and amphetamines.⁵

December 31, 2019

San Pedro Huamelula and Morro Ayuta, State of Oaxaca, Mexico

Discovery of 4 bags. They were hiding 6,500 Ridley's turtle eggs. This is the seventh seasonal arribada of olive Ridley's turtles on Morro Ayuta beach. On this occasion, night and day patrols are reinforced to disrupt the incursions of egg poachers or the skimmers of adult mothers. Surviving eggs from the omelets were patiently reburied in the sand in a nesting-free area in the hope that the incubation cycle would be resumed.⁶

ASIA

CHINA

Early November 2019

Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 55 hawksbill turtle scales declared as "plastic samples" and coming by postal parcel from the Dominican Republic.⁷

November 20, 2019

Autonomous Municipality of Shanghai, China

Seizure of 2 young stuffed turtles declared as "decorative items" in a postal parcel.⁸

End of November 2019

Jinan, Shandong Province, China

Five pieces of jewelry made of turtle scale were stacked together in a package from Japan.⁹

The bekko (or sea turtle scale) industry began to flourish in the early 1900s when bekko it was used to make cigarette cases and miniature battleship models, further developing the tradition of using turtle shells to make combs and other hair accessories. In the 1700s, crafts made of bekko were reserved for the wives of feudal lords and for opulent prostitutes. Nowadays, the clientele has greatly diversified, as has the range of products. Glasses frames made of bekko are in demand as far away as France, even though sea turtles are endangered species, threatened by various dangers and multiple appetites. Their scales are between 1 and 3 mm thick. Abdominal scales are the most highly appreciated because of their amber color. Multiple layers of scales are stuck together through successive processes involving mechanical pressure, as well as hydraulic and thermal pressure, which extracts a gelatinous substance. That substance works like glue. Between 1970 and 1986, the Japanese bekko industry officially imported over 641 tonnes of hawksbill turtle shells, corresponding to approximately 1.4 million specimens.

Legal imports stopped in 1994 when Japan finally recognized that all marine turtles were listed in Appendix I, following a CITES vote in 1981. But according to a meeting among international experts gathered in Bonn, Germany, in 2014, illegal imports from Indonesia and Papua New Guinea quietly took over up until 2004. The smuggling apparently continues to this day, with parcel post packages sent to Japan with false customs declarations. Domestic demand is dropping. However, Nagasaki, Okinawa and Tokyo remain major markets. Exterior demand, particularly from the Chinese market, is increasing. It is possible that these days Japanese manufacturing mostly uses precautionary stockpiles that were imported into Japan just before the ban in 1994.

Early December 2019

Nanjing Lukou International Airport, Jiangsu Province, China

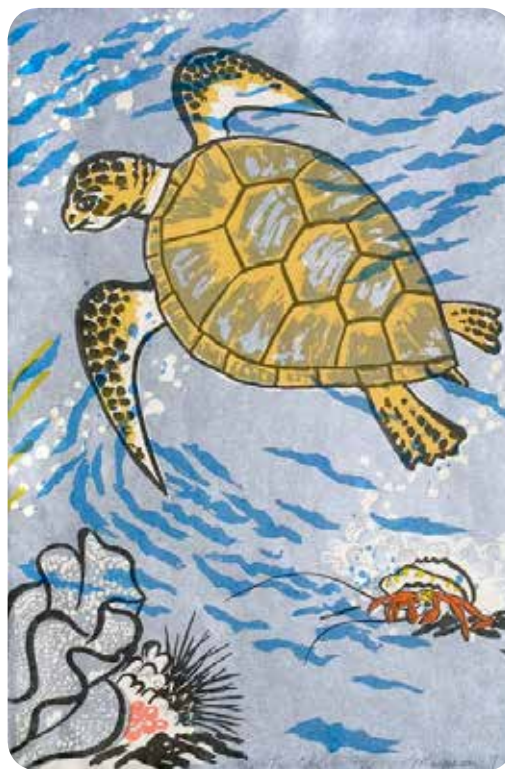
14 bracelets and 2 ornamental paintings made of hawksbill turtle scales.¹⁰

INDONESIA

December 30, 2019

Sosorgadong District, Regency of Central Tapanuli, North Sumatra Province, Island of Sumatra, Indonesia

Massacre and skinning of a leatherback turtle weighing more than 200 kg and 2 m long, which came to lay her eggs under the beach by a former mayor of the village who then sold the meat to his fellow citizens for 25,000 rupees/kg, or 1,8 US\$.¹¹



Painting by Mayumi Oda, 1989. Mayumioda.net

MALAYSIA

October 29, 2019

Sandakan, State of Sabah, Malaysia

Seizure at 3am of 1,000 turtle eggs on board a boat from the Philippines. The pilot escaped by jumping overboard.¹²

SRI LANKA

October 7 and 9, 2019

Ilavalai and Delft Island, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

- The Navy seized 16.1 kg of turtle meat. Four suspects aged 24, 57, 60 and 66 are heard by the police.

- The Navy seized 38.8 kg of turtle meat from a house. The housewife is heard by the police.¹³

November 20, 2019

Mannar, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

The 2 individuals were caught on a beach next to their boat with 14.5 kg of turtle meat.¹⁴

November 24, 2019

Mannar, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Release by Navy divers of 32 sea turtles trapped in a shrimp farm.¹⁵

December 10, 2019

Pallikuda, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 6 kg of sea turtle meat. Three arrests. Since the beginning of 2019, the Navy has seized 188 kg of sea turtle meat. Ridley or olive Ridley turtles and green turtles are present off the coast of Sri Lanka.¹⁶

Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles

Cumulative quarterly seizures: examples

712 Indian star tortoises
(*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I)
190 radiated tortoises
(*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I)
130 Indian softshell turtles
(*Nilssonia gangetica*, Appendix I)

AFRICA

EGYPT

December 3, 2019

Egypt. Border with Sudan.

Seizure of 40 African spurred tortoises (*Centrochelys sulcata*, Appendix II) that were destined for the Asian market. They are in good health and it is planned to release them in a secret and appropriate habitat. Two arrests.¹

MADAGASCAR

October 2, 2019

Mangily, Majunga Province, Madagascar

Imminent release of 500 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) from the 2 big seizures of April and October 2018 (see "On the Trail" n°21 p.19 and n°23 p.25). Sexual parity was observed. They are equipped with a microchip that will enable their movements to be tracked and new poaching attempts to be detected. Habitats suitable for this initiative were selected in cooperation with the Malagasy authorities, the Turtle Village team and tortoises experts from the south of France.²

December 11, 2019

Jafaro, Ambovombe District, Androy Region, Madagascar

Seizure of 190 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) being on the point to be sent by road to Tananarive and smuggled by air to the Asian market. Sixteen poachers fled upon arrival of the policemen and 6 were get caught.³

AMERICA

BRAZIL

December 11, 2019

Pracuúba, State of Amapá, Brazil

Seizure of 43 turtles, yellow-spotted river turtle (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II) and *Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus* (Appendix II). The responsible for poaching in the Ponta Baixa Reserve is believed to be a 16-year-old youth.⁴

December 17, 2019

Óbidos, State of Pará, Brazil

At about 5:00 p.m., the military police gets a call. "There's a turtle traffic on Felipe Patroni street in a house at such an address." After checking, a search is launched. Seizure of 15 live tortoises and catching devices. Fine of 70,000 reais, or 16,500 US\$. Identity of the offender not revealed.⁵



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

October 10, 2019

Harrisburg, State of Pennsylvania, United States of America

Chinese student Haixi Sheng sentenced to one year in prison. "He was in this country to study." He didn't have to break the law," said the judge. "He was a small time gambler," said his lawyer. Small, maybe, but decisive. During 2017, Sheng shipped 5 packages to China containing 79 box turtles (*Terrapene* spp., Appendix I or II) with a total value of 200,000 US\$, or about 2,531 US\$ per turtle. After a few months in federal prison, he intends to resume his studies in Australia. A word to the wise is enough!⁶



October 9, 2019

Fort Myers, State of Florida, United States of America

Follow-up on the seizure in Charlotte County, Florida, of 41 turtles (see "On the Trail" n°25 p.35). Michael Boesenberg, 39 years old, led a gang of poachers who combed the county. Short of turtles to meet demand, they broadened their hunting perimeter to other counties. Over 4000 turtles were captured and sold in 6 months: Kemp's ridleys (*Lepidochelys kempii*, Appendix I), Florida box turtles (*Terrapene carolina bauri*, Appendix II), Eastern box turtles (*Terrapene carolina carolina*, Appendix II), spotted turtles (*Clemmys guttata*, Appendix II), diamondback terrapins (*Malaclemys terrapin*, Appendix II), Florida softshell turtles (*Apalone ferox*, Appendix III), striped mud turtles (*Kinosternon baurii*), Florida mud turtles (*Kinosternon steindachneri*), chicken turtles (*Deirochelys reticularia*) and Gulf Coast spiny softshell turtles (*Apalone spinifera aspera*). The profit from 6 months of poaching and selling was over 350,000 US\$. The turtles were sold for an average of 300 US\$ each, and some were sold for the equivalent of 10,000 US\$ in Asia. The gang took payments in cash, and in some cases in marijuana. Bears' paws were also seized from Michael Boesenberg's home. A second Fort Myers resident, 23 years old, is now in custody. The gang also dealt in marine turtles. The skull and shell of a Ridley sat in the middle of thousands of live freshwater turtles sorted by species in basins and tanks. 600 were released in rivers and marshes by agents from the FWC (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission).⁷

October 22, 2019

Flowing Wells, State of Arizona, United States of America

Seizure of an alligator snapping turtle (*Macrochelys temminckii*, Appendix III).⁸

Macrochelys temminckii, cf. "On the Trail" n°7 p. 107, n°10 p. 14, n°16 p. 107, n°17 p. 20, n°18 p. 19 and p. 26, n°19 p. 21 and p. 31, n°20 p. 31-32, n°22 p. 22.

November 26, 2019

Eugene, State of Oregon, United States of America

Xiao Dong Qin shipped Eastern box turtles (*Terrapene carolina carolina*) to China via US Mail or commercial flights. Between May 2017 and June 2018, he engaged a strawman who lived in Eugene to buy the turtles in pet shops in Alabama, California, Florida, Kentucky, Michigan, New Jersey, Nevada, North Carolina and South Carolina. Qin is still awaiting trial, but has already accepted to pay 8,000 US\$ in compensatory damages to Turtle Conservancy near Los Angeles and other institutions near Chicago and San Antonio specialized in caring for injured or seized turtles. Qin was arrested in February at the Los Angeles airport as he was getting off a flight from Shanghai.⁹



December 16, 2019

Lee County, State of Florida, United States of America

Michael P. Ellard is sentenced to 15 months in prison. In March and May 2016, he had poached 140 wood turtles (*Glyptemys insculpta*, Appendix II) in West Virginia and smuggled them to Florida for trade. To catch wood turtle is prohibited in West Virginia. Once introduced into Florida, they were dispatched against hard cash in several states. Seventeen turtles were seized in late May 2016 when the US Fish and Wildlife searched his home.¹⁰



ASIA

BANGLADESH

December 14, 2019

Hajidanga, Upazila de Dumuria, Khulna Division, Bangladesh

Seizure by the 6th RAB (Rapid Action Battalion) of 44 turtles, 6 SIM cards and 2,500 takas (29 US\$). The 2 suspects are under the Forest Act of 1927.¹¹

CHINA

Early October 2019

Nanning Zoo, Guangxi Province, China

The unfortunate African spurred tortoise (*Centrochelys sulcata*, Appendix II) begs with a basket glued to its shell to incite zoo visitors to throw coins supposed to bring them luck. She flies the Chinese flag.¹²



INDIA

October 11, 2019

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

Seizure of 90 Indian softshell turtle (*Nilssonia gangetica*, Appendix I) from a bazaar and arrest of 60-year-old Prabash Biswas.¹³

GANG

October 13, 2019

Korukallu, Krishna District, State of Andhra Pradesh, India

When it was intercepted on Sunday morning, the convoy of the 2 autorickshaws was heading towards the Godavari district 390 km away. There, the 500 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I) with a local economic value of 5 million rupees (709,430 US\$), or about 1,418 US\$ per specimen, were to be handed over to another middleman. The final destination was Bangladesh. They were in packs of 12 in rag-covered bags.¹⁴

October 14, 2019

Vasant Vihar, Thane District, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure in an aquarium shop of 4 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I) stored in a plastic bucket and to be sold secretly. They were given to experts to determine their sex, age and possible fate.¹⁵

October 26, 2019

Fatehabad, Fatehabad District, Haryana State, India

Seizure of 80 turtles, including Indian flapshell turtle (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II) in an SUV. Their value is estimated at 1.8 million rupees, or 23,400 US\$. They were caught in the Yamuna and Chambal rivers.¹⁶

November 8, 2019

Madiwala, Bangalore Urban District, State of Karnataka, India

Sundaraju, 28, was caught transporting 32 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I) as he got off a bus near the police station at 1am. Poached star turtles have 3 ways out: the shell is turned into a good luck charm, blood is drunk to supposedly cure of a lot of ailments or the precarious life of a pet.¹⁷

November 13, 2019

Gummidipoondi, Thiruvallur District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

The Narcotic Intelligence Bureau (NIB) was reportedly expecting to find ganja in the baggage compartment of the bus from Andhra Pradesh. In fact, they found a suitcase full of Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I) which were handed over to the forest services for inventory and investigation.¹⁸

November 23, 2019

Rajupeta, Bhadradi Kothagudem District, Telangana State, India

Dozens of Indian softshell turtle (*Nilssonia gangetica*, Appendix I) were found on the roadside between Pogallapalli and Timmampeta. 26 live animals were released into a dam reservoir. 14 dead were in ice boxes. The traffickers got rid of their loot after learning from an escort vehicle that a police roadblock was positioned a few kilometres away. Local residents, alerted by social networks, reportedly used the discarded turtle's batch before the police rushed at the spot.¹⁹

November 28, 2019

Kaloor, Emakulam District, Kerala State, India

Arrest of 7 people at Gate 11 of the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Kaloor. They were about to sell an Indian star tortoise (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I). They claim that on the international black market, a single specimen sells for 4 million rupees, or about 56,750 US\$. Three buyers arriving in a Maruti Swift fled when they picked out the forest officers' patrol.²⁰

December 5, 2019

Velangi, East Godavari District, State of Andhra Pradesh, India

Seizure of 4 t of freshwater turtles, 150 bags of 25 to 30 kg in the truck brought to a stop by the police at dawn. Bought at 30 rupees per kilo (0.41 US\$), they would have been sold for 3 to 4 times more in the Odisha. The most heavily poached freshwater turtles in Andhra Pradesh are the Indian softshell turtle (*Nilssonia gangetica*, Appendix I).²¹

VIET NAM

October 31, 2019

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

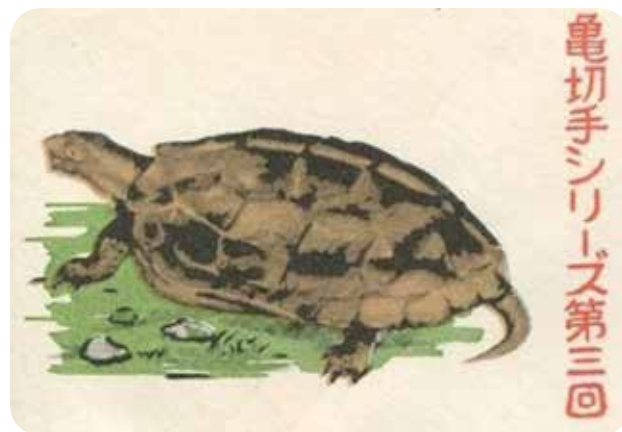
That street vendor had a narrow escape. She had left her 4 yellow headed tortoises (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II) in a basket while she went to the toilet at a gas station. From her lair, she saw a police patrol arrive near her stall. She fled without delay. This is what emerges from the reconstruction of the facts and the testimony of a pump attendant.²²

JAPAN

November 7, 2019

Okinawa, Okinawa Prefecture, Japan

Theft from the zoo of 15 Ryukyu black-breasted leaf turtles (*Geoemyda japonica*, Appendix II) and 49 Chinese box turtles (*Cuora flavomarginata*, Appendix II). The black market price for a specimen of the Ryukyu black-breasted leaf turtle ranges from 1,000 US\$ to 5,000 US\$. The species lives exclusively on three islands in Okinawa Prefecture. It has been designated a "natural monument" since 1975.



In Hong Kong in May 2019, a smuggler named Naoki Hiraguchi was sentenced to one year in prison for attempting in October 2018 to import 60 black-breasted leaf turtles from Ryukyu. He had been arrested by customs officials at the international Hong Kong airport.²³

SRI LANKA

December 21, 2019

Madawakkulama, North Western Province, Sri Lanka

80 star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I), 6 adults, 40 subadults and 34 juveniles were recently seized from a private residence. They were smuggled from Tamil Nadu in southern India to northern Sri Lanka by sea. They were going to be sold to a dealer in Colombo. In the capital, the average selling price is 3,000 rupees for adults. They can reach 50,000 rupees or 276 US\$ if bought by foreign dealers who smuggle them into China or neighbouring countries.²⁴



December 3, 2019, Egypt



December 11, 2019, Pracuúba, Brazil



October 9, 2019, Fort Myers, United States of America



Oct. 22, 2019, Flowing Wells, United States of America



December 21, 2019, Madawakkulama, Sri Lanka



December 17, 2019, Bangkok, Thailand



December 14, 2019, Naples, Italy

THAILAND

December 17, 2019

Don Mueang International Airport, Bangkok, Thailand

Failed export of 95 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I) native to the Indian subcontinent by a Taiwanese couple about to embark for Taipei. X-rays revealed the traffic and placed Lai Tsung-Yung and his wife under the Wildlife Protection Act and the Customs Act.²⁵

VIET NAM

October 2019

Pu Mat National Park, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of 2 impressed tortoises (*Manouria impressa*, Appendix II) in the bivouac of poachers at work in the Pu Mat forest.²⁶

October 6, 2019

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Seizure by the police of 2 turtles, an yellow-headed temple turtle (*Heosemys annandalii*, Appendix II) and a yellow-headed tortoise (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II) from the pavement. The street vendor and a buyer left like hares.²⁷

October 19, 2019

Binh Tanh District, Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

These turtles are also on the sidewalk. They're in the clutches of a street vendor. Seizure of 9 ricefield turtles (*Malayemys subtrijuga*, Appendix II) and one yellow-headed temple turtle (*Heosemys annandalii*, Appendix II).²⁸

EUROPE

FRANCE

October 12, 2019

Méricourt, Department of Pas-de-Calais, France

The man already known to the police for other trafficking is also said to be trading in Greek tortoise (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II). To verify this, an investigation was launched. It leads to a search. The police and ONCFS agents found three Greek tortoises in his car and compromising documents in his home.²⁹

ITALY

October 7, 2019

Ciro Marina, Province of Crotona, Region of Calabria, Italy

Seizure of a Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) locked up in a wooden box in an attic. The species is the victim of unrestrained "harvesting" in its natural habitats in the Mediterranean basin and of international trafficking.³⁰

December 14, 2019

Naples International Airport - Capodichino, Metropolitan City of Naples, Region of Campania, Italy

The citizen of Côte d'Ivoire coming from Accra, Ghana, via Milan, was caught by airport customs officials just before introducing 2 marginated tortoises (*Testudo marginata*, Appendix II) into Naples and Campania.³¹

December 15, 2019

Rocca di Neto, Province of Crotona, Region of Calabria, Italy

Seizure of 4 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) in a pad that had been raided on suspicion of trafficking in arms and ammunition.³²

UNITED KINGDOM

November 2019

Dartford, County Kent, England, United Kingdom

Seizure at home of 3 African spurred tortoises (*Centrochelys sulcata*, Appendix II) 5-7 cm long and weighing about 30 grams. After years, they measure more than 50 cm long and weigh nearly 80 kg.³³



Snakes

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

November 1st, 2019

Oxford, Indiana State, United States of America

Pets are dangerous. Laura Hurst, 36 years old, was found dead at her home, asphyxiated by a 2.4 m long reticulated python (*Python reticulatus*, Appendix II) wrapped around her neck.¹

ASIA

CHINA

October 25, 2019

Chongqing International Airport, Chongqing Municipality, China

Seizure of 21 snakes, corn snakes (*Pantherophis guttatus*) and kingsnakes (*Lampropeltis getula*) packed in boxes or plastic bags in the suitcase of a passenger coming from abroad.²

INDIA

October 7, 2019

Pune, Pune District, State of Maharashtra, India

Arrest of a 17-year-old minor who was carrying an Indian sand boa in his gym bag (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II). He came from the rural confines of Pune District or Satara District. Recruitment of minors to transport and deliver the poached animals is common place. The reptile was entrusted to the Rajiv Gandhi Zoo in Katraj.³

October 10, 2019

Shil, Junagadh District, State of Gujarat, India

Questioning of 3 female dancers, the show's organizer, Nilesh Joshi, and the 65-year-old snake trapper after ritual dances featuring a cobra (genus *Naja*) and 2 non-venomous snakes during the Navratri festival. The fangs of the exhibited cobra were pulled out.⁴

October 18, 2019

Bodal, Banaskantha District, Gujarat State, India

Four villagers found nothing better to show off on social networks than to pose with a python (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II) and then burn him alive. Their video shocked internet users and triggered an investigation by the Forest Department. The 4 executioners were identified and wanted. According to Bindu Patel, Forest Assistant Conservator, other people witnessed the crime. Three species of pythons occur in India: the Burmese python (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II), the Asiatic rock python (*Python molurus*, Appendix II) and the reticulated python (*Python reticulatus*, Appendix II).⁵

October 21, 2019

Patharpratima, South 24-Parganas District, State of West Bengal, India

Police raid on Monday night and seizure of 5 monocled cobras (*Naja kaouthia*, Appendix II) trapped in the Sunderbans marshes. Pincers, knives, glass jars and all the tools used to remove the cobras' fangs and harvest the venom were also seized. Venom is more expensive than cocaine. When diluted, it is in vogue among wealthy young people in the megalopolises.⁶

Venoms of snakes in India, cf. " On the Trail " n°3 p.13, p.15, p.16, n°4 p. 23, n°5 p. 22, n°9 p. 17, n°10 p. 19, n°14 p. 22, p. 92, n°15 p. 23, n°18 p. 22, p. 23, n°19 p. 26, n°23 p. 31, p. 32, n°24 p. 25, p. 26, p. 30, n°25 p. 30, n°26 p. 27.

FAMILY AFFAIRS

October 28, 2019

Pimpri-Chinchwad, Pune District, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure overnight of an Indian sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II), Mandul in Marathi dialect, and a motorcycle. The father and son, Walmik Bhatu Sutar and Siddhant, are carvers. They specialized in representations of deities and were about to sell the boa to the city on behalf of poachers.⁷

November 3, 2019

Panvel, Raigad District, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure at the Panvel animal fair near Mumbai of an Indian sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) to be sold for 5 million rupees (70,500 US\$). 90 cm long and weighing 500 g, the snake that is supposed to bring prosperity to the suckers is said to have been "found" by 20-year-old Prasad Jadhav near his home in Mangaon, 100 km from the state capital city.⁸

November 20, 2019

Saharanpur, Saharanpur District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

The band had sold an Indian sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) to a businessman for 7.2 million rupees (101,500 US\$). With his so-called two heads and the smooth talk of the sellers, the Indian sand boa has become the target of those who want to make a fortune. The salesmen's trick is simple: the more they sell him, the more magical powers he has. With an Indian sand boa around, a lakh (100,000 rupees) would quickly turn into a crore (a million rupees). Recently, a new sales talk has appeared in the mouths of dealers. The Indian sand boas are said to carry large quantities of iridium, a rare earth that is sold at a high price on the international market for new technologies. Four arrests. They were in the process of dividing up some of the dough.⁹

November 30, 2019

Mumbai, District of Mumbai City, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure of a one-meter-long Indian sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II). Arrest of Ismail Lakhi, Imtiyaz Bhatia, Praful Parmar and Agdar Ali, aged between 40 and 58 years. They were trying to sell him for 6 million rupees (84,595 US\$). They were released on bail of 15,000 rupees each (211 US\$).¹⁰

December 16, 2019

Sahaspur, Dehradun District, Uttarakhand State, India

Seizure of an Indian sand boa (*Eryx Johnii*, Appendix II) and arrest of Sahzaan, Jahagir and Salim near Hathiwala Forest.¹¹

December 16, 2019

Valvod, Anand District, State of Gujarat, India

Lynching with sticks and sharp projectiles and open burning of a python (*Python* spp., Appendix I or II). Arrest of Mukesh Makwana, Jitu Makwana and Girish Makwana from the same village. Four accomplices are on the run.¹²

December 18, 2019

Valiv, Thane District, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure of a sand boa (*Eryx* spp., Appendix II) in the hands of Atik Shakil Qureshi. He wanted to sell him at the astronomical price of 10 million rupees (139,640 US\$).¹³

December 29, 2019

Narsinghgarh, Rajgarh District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Seizure of an Indian sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) with a potential black market value of Rs. 12.5 million (175,000 US\$). Custody of 5 persons, including 3 minors. The transaction was to take place near a gas station.¹⁴

EUROPE

GERMANY

Early October 2019

Plattling, Bavaria State, Germany

What's better than slippers made of reticulated python skin (*Python reticulatus*, Appendix II) to drink a beer by the fire? The package came from Morocco. It was intercepted by customs officials.¹⁵



SPAIN

End of December 2019

Madrid, Community of Madrid, Spain

Seizure in a garbage room of a corn snake (*Pantherophis guttatus*) victim of exotic pet mania. The species is considered invasive in Spain.¹⁶

FRANCE

November 14, 2019

Colmar, Department of Haut-Rhin, France

Capture by firefighters and seizure in a flat of a 3 m long python (*Pythonidae* spp., Appendix I or II) on the 3rd floor of a building.¹⁷

ITALY

Early October 2019

Ancona, Province of Ancona, Marche Region, Italy

Customs officers on disembarking a car ferry from Greece were surprised to discover a cargo of 138 pythons (*Pythonidae* spp., Appendix I or II) of various sizes and species in one vehicle. They were destined for the reptile fair in Verona to be held on 6 October 2019. After examination of the alleged certificates of origin, the customs officers, assisted by experts from the CITES Unit, proceeded to seize the reptiles and entrusted them to a specialized establishment in Umbria. Their fraudulent marketing in Verona would have brought the trafficker approximately 35,000 € or 254 € (280 US\$) per specimen.¹⁸

December 18, 2019

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

After the discovery of a dead python (*Pythonidae* spp., Appendix I or II) in a building rubbish bin, the Carabinieri were determined to find out his origin and searched at the end a clandestine breeding farm in an apartment. Seizure of 119 pythons. One arrest.¹⁹



UNITED KINGDOM

December 2, 2019

Purfleet, County Essex, England, United Kingdom

Seizure of an Indian gamma snake *Boiga trigonata* snake in a truck trailer. The 30 cm long snake native to India is considered "moderately poisonous". It survived a 7,600 km journey by air, sea and road despite the lack of water and food and the stress of the cold. He was returned to the care of the RSPCA Reptile Shelter in Brighton.²⁰

Sauria

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

REPEATED OFFENSE

November 21, 2019

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Two Japanese nationals, Yusuke Imanishi and Shintaro Okada, have been convicted and sentenced to 6 and 4 years in prison. They were arrested in September 2019 in possession of armadillo girdled lizards (*Ouroborus cataphractus*, Appendix II).

Imanishi is a repeat offender. In October 2018, he was sentenced to 8 months in prison in Indonesia for attempted export of pythons and monitor lizards. He was arrested again at the end of May 2019 at the Perth airport in Australia as he was about to fly to Japan with 13 bobtail lizards (*Tiliqua rugosa*) in his luggage; he was sentenced to 5 months in prison. Freed after 2 months and deported from Australia on August 5, 2019, Imanishi, the globe-trotting trafficker landed in South Africa on August 19 and was nabbed in September with the armadillo girdled lizards in his baggage.¹



AMERICA

BRAZIL

October 1st, 2019

Limeira, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure at the home of a 19-year-old wildlife trafficker of 10 green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), 2 of which were dead. The police intervened just after the delivery of a suspicious postal parcel from Jundiaí, state of Sao Paulo, some 100 km from Limeira. Fines of 10,000 reais (2,400 US\$) for illegal possession of wild animals and 5,000 reais for mistreatment, plus a fine of 500 reais for illegal possession of a bird.²



PERU

October 26, 2019

Moyobamba, Province of Moyobamba, Department of San Martín, Peru

Seizure by the ARA (Autoridad Regional Ambiental) of 2 false monitors (*Callopiastes flavipunctatus*) originating from the dry forest in the west of Peru and considered threatened by national law. One of them died shortly afterwards as a result of internal bleeding caused by violence at the catching time by poachers.³

ASIA

CAMBODIA

November 20, 2019

Veal Pi, Koh Kong Province, Cambodia

Immediate release of 8 water monitors (*Varanus salvator*, Appendix II) that had just been seized in bags from the mopeds of 2 traffickers.⁴

CHINA

Early December 2019

Hebei and Taiyuan Province, Shanxi Province, China

Report of the seizure in September of 48 magnificent green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II) in 2 EMS parcels coming by post from Taiwan. They were all dead. The transit had been too long for them. There are no direct lines between Taiwan and Shanxi (1730 km as the crow flies). The investigation led to the arrest of 2 men in the neighboring province of Hebei and search warrants were issued for their homes. 173 live green iguanas were seized. According to the veterinary expertise that was done at the time of the Covid-19 pandemic opening, they were all carrying parasites that could transmit among others West Nile fever, salmonella, tick-borne encephalitis, hemorrhagic fever or Lyme disease, to people and animals who came in contact with them.⁵



INDIA

October 16, 2019

Hulimangala, Bangalore Urban District, State of Karnataka, India

Chandrashekar K Bhajantri was going to sell 4 live bengal monitor lizards (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I). He refused to designate the buyer restaurant. The meat, they eat it, the skin, they make bags of it, the oil and fat, they make ayurvedic medicines so-called painkillers. Further seizure of an antler of a sambar deer (*Rusa unicolor*).⁶

October 30, 2019

Belapur, Thane District, State of Maharashtra, India

Arrest of Subhash Rathod. Suspected of stabbing a monitor lizard (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II). The video of the crime was sent to the forestry officers by the NGO Punarvasu. Two accomplices are on the run. Monitor lizard meat in India, see "On the Trail" n°. 12 p. 24.⁷



October 1st, 2019, Limeira, Brazil



November 20, 2019, Veal Pi, Cambodia



September 2019 (announcement in December 2019), Hebei and Shanxi Provinces

November 23 and December 10, 2019
Krishnarajapuram, Bangalore District and
Koramangala, Urban Bangalore District, State
of Karnataka, India

Would you like some monitor lizard blood punch?
It's good for fucking!

Seizure of a live monitor lizard (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II). Arrest of Chinna, 29 years old, member of the Hakki Pikki tribe by the Forest Vigilance Squad.

Seizure in luggage of 5 men of 10 live spiny-tailed lizards (*Uromastix* spp., Appendix II) captured in the desert of Rajasthan. The leader, Ramesh, is on the run.

It's big business. The Bangalore Valley bourgeoisie making their fortune in IT combines modern technology with traditional rumours. On weekends in the countryside, they drink from a cup, raw or mixed with rum, the blood of the lizards slaughtered on the spot by nomadic tribes. It has the reputation of being an aphrodisiac (see "On the Trail" n°15 p. 24).⁸

December 23, 2019
Dimdima, Jalpaiguri District, State of West
Bengal, India

Joint patrol of Jaldapra Wildlife Division guards and SSB (Sashastra Seema Bal) near National Road 31 C. Three men carrying 3 geckos tokay (*Gecko gecko*, Appendix II since 26 November 2019) were apprehended.⁹

JAPAN

November 26, 2019
Tokyo, Kanto Region, Japan

Six suspects tangled up in smuggling and selling 2 parenties (*Varanus giganteus*, Appendix II). One of them, 36 years old, works through an online boutique called "Jewel" that sells reptiles and other wild animals. He fraudulently imported one specimen from Hong Kong in January 2017. Another 35-year-old suspect is director of a wild animal brokerage company called "Maple." He did the same thing in March 2018.

One of the parenties was purchased by a pet vendor who then sold it to a "young artist" whose identity is not known. The other specimen went from one person to the next, moving between receivers and sellers of decorative and dazzling wild animals. In the end, the 2 monitor lizards were seized and one of them was photographed while in custody at the Marunouchi police station.



In Japan, parenties are considered the most spectacular of monitor lizards. Their scaly robes and tail make them domestic "dragons," and worth a pretty penny, too. An adult sells for between 6 and 8 million yen, or 55,000 to 73,000 US\$. The giant monitor lizard has adapted to life in arid regions and rocky deserts. It lives exclusively in Australia. Adults are an average of 1.8 m long. They feed on snakes, small mammals, rodents and wallabies. They climb trees to get birds' eggs. They live in burrows that they dig in the sand or in crevices in the rocks. Aborigines believe that their fat has medicinal powers. Most of the specimens that are found on pet markets come from breeding. People are their only natural predators, but they are also victims of fires that destroy prairies and dry forests.¹⁰

EUROPE

GERMANY

December 2, 2019
Speyer, Rhineland-Palatinate State, Germany
Seizure by customs of 39 *Gallotia* lizards in a postal parcel from Tenerife addressed as "souvenirs" to a woman living in North Rhine-Westphalia. The reptiles were stuffed into cloth bags. Despite cruel transport conditions, they survived and were placed under observation.¹¹

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

November 15, 2019
State of New South Wales, Australia
Sentencing of Mr. King Chuen Chong, Chinese passport, to 15 months' imprisonment for attempting to ship to Hong Kong 11 packages containing lizards including shingleback lizard (*Tiliqua rugosa*) and gidgee skink (*Egernia stokesii*) as well as common blue-tongued lizards (*Tiliqua scincoides*) and geckos (Gekkonidae family) in boxes of sweets or toys.¹²



Crocodilians

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Early October 2019

Palm City, State of Florida, United States of America

Two young males are filmed by a female friend feeding beer to an alligator (*Alligator spp.*, Appendix I or II) that they had illegally captured. All around the world, cruelty to wild animals is displayed on social networks.¹

VENEZUELA

Early December 2019

Metropolis of Caracas, Venezuela

Seizure by the Libertador police of a spectacled caiman (*Caiman crocodilus*, Appendix II) in the bag of José Jeremías Yajure Montilla while he was walking along the busy Sabana Grande Boulevard.²

ASIA

CHINA

Early October 2019

Yangzhou Taizhou International Airport, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure of 4 crocodile skin bags (*Crocodylidae*, Appendix I or II).³

November 26, 2019

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

Seizure of 8 crocodile skins (*Crocodylidae*, Appendix I or II) in the things of a Vietnamese citizen.⁴

Early December 2019

Nanning Wuxu International Airport, Guangxi Province, China

Seizure in the cabin baggage of a Chinese passenger arriving from Ho Chi Minh City of 2 Siamese crocodiles (*Crocodylus siamensis*, Appendix I) weighing 140 g each.⁵

December 21, 2019

Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

Seizure by postal customs of 2 skins of Siamese crocodiles (*Crocodylus siamensis*, Appendix I). It is planned to burn them.⁶



INDIA

October 7, 2019

Nijlaguri, Chirang District, State of Assam, India

Stoning by villagers of a 1.55 m long female gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*, Appendix I) found at the foot of a sluice gate. The species has been considered extinct for some 40 years in the rivers of Assam. The specimen that was slaughtered is believed to have escaped from a commercial or scientific breeding operation based on the Ai, a transboundary river with Bhutan.⁷

Release of gharials, cf. "On the Trail" n°5 p. 29, n°8 p. 18, n°12 p. 25.

EUROPE

FRANCE

October 29, 2019

Fonbeauzard, Department of Haute-Garonne, France

Capture of a Schneider's smooth-fronted caiman (*Paleosuchus trigonatus*, Appendix II) thrown away by an ex-exotic animal lover on the banks of the river Hers in front of the water treatment plant. The intervention was carried out by the veterinarian of the SDIS (Service Départemental d'Incendie et de Secours) and the fire brigade. At first, it was entrusted to the veterinary school of Toulouse.⁸

18, 26 and 30 October 2019

Chippenham, County Wiltshire, England, Leamington Spa, County Warwickshire, England and Machynlleth, County Powys, Wales, United Kingdom

Mysterious addiction to crocodile skulls (*Crocodylidae*, Appendix I or II) in the United Kingdom.

- Seizure of a skull of a Siamese crocodile (*Crocodylus siamensis*, Appendix I). The young man had bought it on eBay for 30 £, or 34 €.

- Seizure of a Siamese crocodile skull at a young woman's home. She highlighted an isolated purchase based on a lack of prior regulatory information. She gave the police information about the terms of her purchase via the Internet and got away with a simple reprimand.

- Seizure of several skulls fraudulently imported from China.⁹



Various Reptile Species

AMERICA

COLOMBIA

Early November 2019

Avestruz Park Nature Reserve, Colombia

It's the wild time for 257 reptiles, 12 birds and an amphibian: rainbow boas (*Epicrates cenchria*, Appendix II), false tomodon snake (*Pseudotomodon trigonatus*), wood tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II), yellow-headed sideneck (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II), llanos sideneck turtles (*Podocnemis vogli*, Appendix II), matamatas (*Chelus fimbriata*), brown-throated conure (*Aratinga pertinax*, Appendix II), Venezuelan troupial (*Icterus icterus*) and a cane toad (*Rhinella marina*). They were released in the Avestruz Park Nature Reserve after being seized in the bus stations of El Salitre (see "On the Trail" n°. 22 p. 26 and n° 25 p. 108) and del Sur in Bogota and after checking their feeding and defence skills against predators, except poachers.¹

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

December 8, 2019

Memphis, State of Tennessee, United States of America

Roberto Collins, 36 years old, has been charged with domestic violence against his partner and their 6-year-old daughter. The police arrived immediately. Collins was armed. He was neutralized and taken into custody. The detectives searched the premises and found 2 dead dogs in the courtyard, and 4 live dogs circling around them. Inside the house, they came across 2 alligators (*Alligator* spp., Appendix I or II), a Gila monster (*Heloderma suspectum*, Appendix II), an iguana (*Iguana* spp., Appendix II) and a rattlesnake (genera *Crotalus* and *Sistrurus*) on a floor covered with excrements, in a house swarming with insects.²

ASIA

CAMBODIA

October 17, 2019

Cambodia

Coordinated seizures on food markets of 214 turtles (order Testudines), 16 Bengal lizards (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I), 5 snakes (genus *Enhydryis*) all alive and 16 Bengal lizards and birds dead. The dead were burned and the live ones released.³

October 22, 2019

Phnom Penh, Phnom Penh Province, Cambodia

Seizure at a restaurant of 3 live monocled cobras (*Naja kaouthia*, Appendix II), 29 live Malayan snail-eating turtles (*Malayemys macrocephala*, Appendix II), 11 kg of dead Asian water dragon (*Physignathus cocincinus*), 5 dead Indian muntjac (*Muntiacus muntjak*), 200 carapaces (49 kg) and 428 plastrons (47.5 kg) of emydy turtles. The dead were buried, the living were released, and the female manager was fined (amount unknown).⁴



CHINA

November 2019

Xiamen, Fujian Province, China

Seizure in a package from abroad of 15 African savanna monitors (*Varanus exanthematicus*, Appendix II), declared as "gifts". Initial evidence gathered from the recipient lights up a well-oiled network. 300 lizards, green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II) and Burmese pythons (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II) have suffered from it.⁵

INDIA

October 10, 2019

Chennai International Airport, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Interception and pre-trial detention of Mohammad Parvez and Mohammad Akbar upon their arrival from Kuala Lumpur on Batik Airways flight 6018. In their 2 bags, hidden under gifts and boxes of chocolate, customs officers found 2 plastic toys inside which were wrapped in cloth a green tree python (*Morelia viridis*, Appendix II), an amethystine python (*Morelia amethystina*, Appendix II) originating from Australia, 2 black tree monitor (*Varanus beccarii*, Appendix II), 5 emerald monitors (*Varanus prasinus*, Appendix II), 2 blue speckled tree monitors (*Varanus macraei*, Appendix II), 1 Reisinger's tree monitor (*Varanus reisingeri*, Appendix II) and 4 dragon lizards (genus *Hydrosaurus* of which 4 species are in Appendix II) originating in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines. Customs officials have noted that the monitoring of arrivals from Bangkok, Thailand, is causing the networks to change their tack and that export from Malaysia is now favoured.⁶



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EUROPE

FRANCE

December 3, 2019

Cahagnes, Department of Calvados, France

Seizure in the home of a “reptile fan” of 168 specimens, including 2 Burmese pythons (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II) and a Brazilian rainbow boa (*Epicrates cenchria cenchria*, Appendix II). The “fan” did not have the official authorization to open a

breeding operation, nor did he have a professional competency certificate or the documents attesting to the legal origins of his boarders. He sold the animals. “I sold the babies,” admitted the undeclared breeder who was offended to have been picked up at 7:00 in the morning, like a common criminal. The seizure was carried out by ONCFS inspectors, assisted by several policemen. The animals were sent to various authorized establishments.⁷

Amphibians

AMERICA

BRAZIL

November 9, 2019

State of Santa Catarina, Brazil

Seizure of “kambo”, extract of blue-and-yellow frog (*Phyllomedusa bicolor*), and arrest of a conference-speaker and traditional practitioner, Abid Ysmirua, who was offering kambo applications to conference-goers for 75 reais (20 US\$). A complete treatment requires several applications. Ysmirua presents himself as a descendant of an indigenous tribe in Acre and claims to have obtained the privilege of sharing the virtues of the “frog vaccine” with exogenous populations. The blue-and-yellow frog is a nocturnal frog that lives in trees at least 2 meters above a pond or a marsh in the forests of the Amazon Basin. Its range stretches from Peru and Bolivia to Guyana, French Guyana and Venezuela. It is also present in the Brazilian Cerrado. Its skin is used by Indian tribes in traditional hunting techniques. Used in association with certain tree barks, it paralyzes targeted animals. Its neurological powers are also now used by traditional healers and gurus throughout the world to “treat” depression and alcohol addiction through ceremonies that mix recordings of the Amazonian forest sounds, superficial burns, ritual mumbling and payment. In Brazil, using substances extracted from blue-and-yellow frog skin for therapeutic purposes is forbidden, and the “treatment” sessions have been considered dissemination of false information since a ruling was made by the ANVISA, the National Agency for Health Surveillance, in 2004. Another seizure of “kambo” occurred earlier this year in Florianópolis (Santa Catarina). Brazil has recorded at least one case of death related to the application of “kambo”. It was in 2008, in the state of Sao Paulo. In Europe, a “kambo” application session costs around 70 €.¹



Otters

ASIA

JAPAN

REPEATED OFFENSE

November 27, 2019

Sakai, Osaka Prefecture, Kansai Region, Japan

Hiroyuki Matsui tried to introduce on Japanese territory 2 small-clawed otters (*Aonyx cinerea*, Appendix I) a few weeks old bought in Thailand for about a hundred US\$. An adult sells for between 500,000 and one million yen in Japan, i.e. 5,000 to 10,000 US\$. The species is highly sought after by public aquariums and private individuals. This 54-year-old "self-employed" was not on his first business trip. But this time, a customs officer with a keen ear heard baby cries coming out of his suitcase.¹



THAILAND

October 19, 2019

Tha Mai Ruak, Phetchaburi Province, Thailand

Voluntary handing over to WFFT (Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand) of several obese small-clawed otters (*Aonyx cinerea*, Appendix II, Appendix I since November 2019) that have been fed with rice, pasta and other unsuitable foods and no longer have the ability to move. Such is the fate of wild otters re-routed into pet otters. Caretakers will regulate the diet of the new residents for several months before they can consider introducing them to the agile otter pools. For them, the horizon of release is very distant, not to say inaccessible.²



Pet otter



Wild otter

VIET NAM

November 20, 2019

Dien Chau District, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

A joint team from Save Vietnam's Wildlife (SVW) and Pu Mat National Park seized and rescued from trafficking 15 very young small-clawed otters (*Aonyx cinerea*, Appendix II), most of which had not yet opened their eyes to the world. The baby otters must be breastfed for 2.5 months.³



Butterflies and Arachnids

AMERICA

COSTA RICA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Mid-November 2019

Guápiles and Uvita, Province of Puntarenas, Costa Rica

Police raids at the request of the prosecutor in 4 private homes and in the butterfly farm “Diamante Azul” (blue diamond). Behind the screen of an approved butterfly farm, a consistent traffic of butterflies, beetles and wild spiders by parcel post to Germany, France and the Netherlands is allegedly concealed. Some specimens shipped live or stuffed would have a value of 1,000 US\$. Four members of the Brenes family are heard by the police.¹



ASIA

PHILIPPINES

October 9, 2019

Barangay Tumana, Marikina, Greater Manila, Philippines

Rommel De la Cruz sold his tarantulas (*Aphonopelma albiceps*, Appendix II) and royal pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II) to finance his move to Canada to practise his computer skills. “On the Trail” recommends that Canadian authorities monitor the activities of this tarantula enthusiast, which could find support in their country and feed an international network of arachnophiles.²

Birds

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

November 30, 2019

Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa

A truck was highjacked. It was transporting 124 grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I), 7 blue-fronted Amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II) and a medium sulphur-crested cockatoo (*Cacatua galerita leonora*, Appendix II) supposedly from a breeding farm and on their way to be exported to the United Arab Emirates by plane through the Johannesburg international airport. The driver was kicked out of the cab and left standing in the middle of Soweto. The cargo belonged to an import-export company based in Welkom (in the province of Free State) and managed by Piet and Tiekie. They say that they are worried about what will happen to the birds and mentioned the case of the grey parrots from Gabon who are nearly all young chicks that need to be fed regularly. The two exporters estimate the cargo to be worth over 40,000 US\$. The potential retail value for the receiving parties in the United Arab Emirates was 5 to 10 times higher.¹

December 23, 2019

Rolling Valley Ranch, KwaZulu Natal Province, South Africa

Another case of massive destruction of vultures by voluntary poisoning. The victims were fifteen white-backed vultures (*Gyps africanus*, Appendix II) and a lappet-faced vulture (*Torgos tracheliotos*, Appendix II). Thirteen of the carcasses were decapitated and amputated. The heads and feet are sold to charlatans. Near the scene of the crime, rangers found an impala carcass impregnated with pesticides. The reserve rangers burned the carcass on site.

Vulture brains are dried, crushed and smoked by sports gamblers and students to increase their chances of success; vulture eyes are eaten to maintain and increase visual acuity; the feet are used to consolidate fractures or to increase running speed; and the beaks are worn as protective amulets (see “On the Trail” n°3 p. 34-35, n°4 p. 30, n°11 p. 75, n°12 p. 102, n°20 p. 91, n°25 p. 38).²



ALGERIA

Mid-November 2019

Aïn Lahdjar, Wilaya of Sétif, Algeria

Seizure of 700 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) in 3 boxes. Another new arrival from Morocco. Two arrests.³



GUINEA

October 26, 2019

Conakry, Conakry Region, Guinea

Seizure of 20 Senegal parrots (*Poicephalus senegalus*, Appendix II) known locally as Senegalese youyous thanks to a joint intervention by Water and Forestry officers, Interpol and the NGO GALF (Guinée Application de la Loi Faunique). The small parrots, 20 cm high, are in poor condition. Their eventual release is not for tomorrow. The trafficker, Moussa Soumah, is under arrest warrant at Conakry's central prison.⁴

KENYA

November 13, 2019

Oi Kinyei Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

A pesticide trap has struck again: a cattle carcass attracted scavengers. It had been sprayed with agricultural poison. A hyena (*Hyaenidae* family), 3 Rüppell's vultures (*Gyps rueppelli*, Appendix II) and 2 lappet-faced vultures (*Torgos tracheliotos*, Appendix II) died on the spot after a few minutes of agony. Three Rüppell's vultures and a lappet-faced vulture were still alive when help arrived. After receiving care and having their stomachs washed out, they flew away later that evening. But their long-term survival is not guaranteed and they may be forever victims to neurological disorders and loss of mobility. Four surviving Rüppell's vultures and one lappet-faced vulture were "picked up" by Valérie Nasoita, an expert from the Peregrine Fund, with the help of 2 rangers from the conservancy. They received treatment for 2 weeks under the care of Dr. Limo of the KWS and Shiv Kapila from the Kenya Bird of Prey Trust. They were finally released in good condition. In order to avoid a hecatomb, the site was cleaned and the poisoned carcass was eliminated.⁵



MOROCCO

October 3, 2019

Casablanca Mohammed V International Airport, Casablanca-Settat Region, Morocco

Customs thwarted an attempt to smuggle 26 live falcons (*Falconidae*, Appendix I or II) hidden in crates carried by a foreign national awaiting departure on a private flight to Doha, Qatar.⁶



November 13, 2019

Oujda, Prefecture of Oujda-Angad, Morocco. Border with Algeria.

Seizure at 4 a.m. on the RN6 of 1,680 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) distributed like fruits in 28 wooden boxes. Picking in hedges, public gardens and the forests of "al-Muqnin" or "Stila", their

common names in Morocco, is in full swing. Once abundant in the forest of Maâmora in the Kenitra belt, the goldfinches have practically disappeared in these days. Soon, the last two Maâmora's goldfinches, which for their misfortune sing, nest and gather within reach, will be a legend.⁷

REPUBLIC OF CONGO

November 30, 2019

Owando, Département de la Cuvette, Republic of Congo

Sentencing of 3 individuals to 18 months in prison with a fine of 170 US\$ and a fourth to 12 months suspended. In addition, they must jointly pay a sum equal to 6,000 US\$ in damages. They are from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Congo. At the time of their arrest, they were in possession of 61 heads and 400 feathers of grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I), 2 live parrots and 3 cans of glue.⁸



ARGENTINA

Early November 2019

Paraná, Province of Entre Ríos, Argentina

Seizure from a private home of 37 ultramarine grosbeaks (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*), a southern lapwing (*Vanellus chilensis*), 3 turtles, 3 guns, accounting documents and 47,000 pesos in cash, i.e. 783 US\$.⁹

Mid-November 2019

Berazategui, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina

Release in Pereyra Park of 600 small birds, saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), northern cardinals (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) and double-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulea*) under the watchful eye of several primary school classes. Pereyra Park is within the perimeter of ECAS, the wildlife rehabilitation centre.¹⁰

Mid-November 2019

Provinces of Buenos Aires and Santa Fe, Argentina

The network had been phone tapped for some time and the federal police were well informed about the role of everyone, poachers, transporters, wholesalers and retailers. Simultaneous searches were carried out in 9 private homes. 602 birds were seized and dozens of cages were destroyed.¹¹

Mid November 2019

Buenos Aires, Argentina

It's not looking good for the ex-mayor of Warnes. After Mario Cronenbold was arrested for illicit enrichment and possession of undeclared weapons, his home and outbuildings were searched. A white-faced capuchin (*Cebus capucinus*, Appendix II), a red-fronted macaw (*Ara rubrogenys*, Appendix I), a blue-and-gold macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II), 10 Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III, Pakistan), 10 Brazilian ducks (*Amazonetta brasiliensis*) and a golden pheasant (*Chrysolophus pictus*) were found and saved from death by starvation and dehydration. In addition, a deer skeleton, eviscerated animal carcasses and bones were found in a pit. Investigators believe the animals were not pets. Their meat was consumed by the Cronenbold family.¹²



BRAZIL

End of November 2019

Brazil

Eduardo Bim, director of the Ibama, ruled that Mrs. Roberta Marques could keep a blue-fronted Amazon (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II) that she says she received as a gift from a friend of her father when she lived in Recife, in the state of Pernambuco. She now lives in Brasilia. That ruling was criticized within the Ibama. Beyond Mrs. Marques' case, it means that anyone who has had a parrot for over 8 years can keep it permanently, as long as the bird is not victim of any apparent mistreatment. On the field, the Ibama inspectors say that in most cases, it is impossible to determine whether an adult parrot has been in a cage for 5 years, 6 years or over 8 years. They believe that the exemption from the law is equivalent to an amnesty that will encourage the trafficking of adult parrots, and by extension, other wild animals, as well. The risk is not negligible. Why would what was accorded to Mrs. Marques not be applicable to other bird- and/or animal-lovers? Mrs. Marques is not just anyone. She is the wife of Geraldo Og Fernandes, Minister of Justice (Ministro do Superior Tribunal de Justiça). The newspaper Folha de S. Paulo revealed the case to the public.¹³

Map of bird seizures in Brazil next page.

COLOMBIA

October 20, 2019

Alfonso Bonilla Aragon de Palmira International Airport, Department of Valle del Cauca, Colombia

Detection in a trunk thanks to the police dog's nose of 2 seedeaters (genus *Sporophila*) hidden in a mobile phone package and of a tanager (genus *Thraupis*) already dead in a cosmetic product package.¹⁴



Mid-December 2019

Cali, Department of Valle del Cauca, Colombia

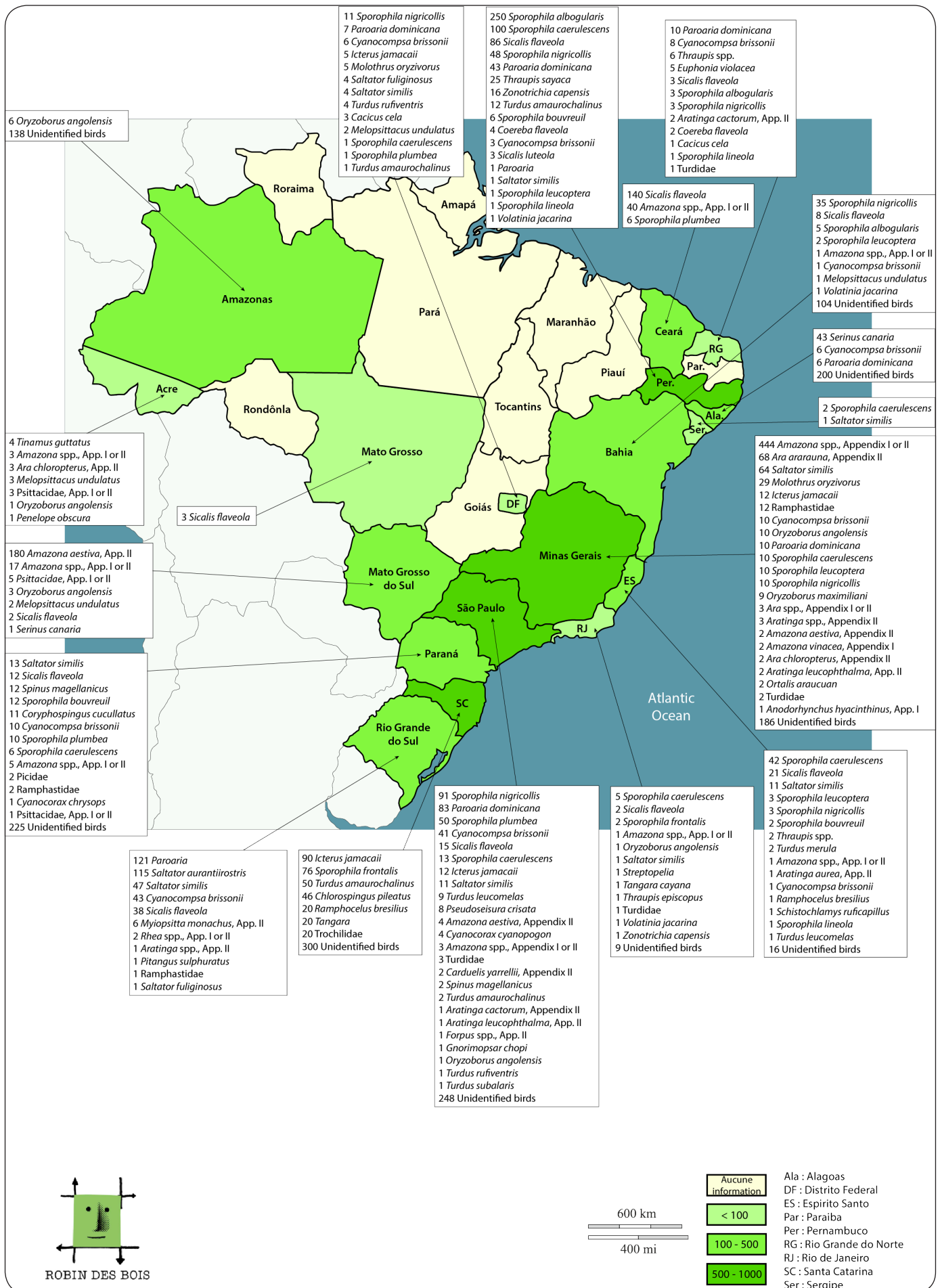
Seizure of 2 rheas (*Pterocnemia pennata*, Appendix I or II or *Rhea americana*, Appendix II) in the bus station. One apprehension. The man is charged with wildlife trafficking and mistreatment.¹⁵

Mid-December 2019

Bogotá, Colombia

Seizure on confidential information of 4 orange-winged parrots (*Amazona amazonica*, Appendix II), 2 blue-and-gold macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II), 2 Venezuelan troupials (*Icterus icterus*, picture page 46) and a seedeater (genus *Sporophila*) in a private residence. It is not certain that they will ever be able to regain freedom.¹⁶

4,644 birds seized in Brazil from the 1st October to the 31th December, 2019 according to official sources and the media







Icterus icterus

ECUADOR

16 and 24 December 2019

Llanganates and Latacunga National Park, Cotopaxi Province, Ecuador

Discovery of a young female Andean condor (*Vultur gryphus*, Appendix I) riddled with bullets. Transferred to the veterinary clinic in Latacunga, the emblematic bird of prey died a few days later. The species is persecuted (see "On the Trail" n°1 p. 4, n°4 p. 32, n°5 p. 117, n°8 p. 99, n°17 p. 118, n°20 p. 34, n°21 p. 36, n°22 p. 42, n°23 p. 42, n°23 p. 43, n°23 p. 152).¹⁷

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

October 10, 2019

Near Philadelphia International Airport, State of Pennsylvania, United States of America

Seizure in a package from the Netherlands of a stuffed red siskin (*Spinus cucullatus*, Appendix I). The species is threatened with imminent extinction. Its range covers mainly Venezuela, Colombia and Guyana. The recipient was a resident of Atlanta.¹⁸

November 7, 2019

Cow Creek, State of Oregon, United States of America

A 2,500 US\$ reward will be given to anyone who can provide information that will lead to the arrest of the poacher responsible for the death of a bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) whose body was found near Cow Creek. The species is protected by a specific law, the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and by the Treaty on migratory

birds signed by the United States of America and Canada. The rewards are funded by the TIP (Turn in Poachers) program which also offers rewards for informers who identify poachers of Mexican bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*, Appendix II), Rocky Mountain goats (*Oreamnos americanus*), moose, wapitis, deer, antelopes, bears, pumas and wolves.¹⁹

MEXICO

End of October 2019

Merida, Yucatán State, Mexico

Illegal possession of a blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II). Arrest of David S. Released with obligation to report regularly to the police station and banned from leaving Yucatán and Mexico.²⁰

November 1st, 2019

Tenango de Doria, State of Hidalgo, Mexico

Seizure of 2 Northern caracaras (*Caracara cheriway*, Appendix II) in a private home following a tip-off.²¹

November 1st, 2019

Veracruz, State of Veracruz, Mexico

Theft at the zoo of a military macaw (*Ara militaris*, Appendix I). The shed where under care birds are isolated was padlocked. There was no break-in. The black market price of such a specimen is 15,000 to 50,000 pesos (780 to 2,600 US\$) according to Profepa. The macaw was not wearing a microchip. The absence of this marking and tracking process would be a violation of the regulations. The theft was recorded at 7 a.m.²²

November 28, 2019

Chalco, State of Mexico, Mexico

Seizure in 2 trucks loaded with food products of 335 wild orchids and 4 birds, 3 solitaires (genus *Myadestes*) and an American robin (*Turdus migratorius*).²³

December 26, 2019

Cienegas del Lerma Flora and Fauna Protection Area, State of Mexico City, Mexico

Several poachers were arrested in flagrante delicto following the alert of local residents. Seizure of 13 dead birds and 5 guns.²⁴

PANAMA

November 12, 2019

Valle de Aguas Arriba, Province of Bocas del Toro, Panama

Seizure of 2 toucans (Ramphastidae family) and release. An interpellation.²⁵

PARAGUAY

Early December 2019

Caacupé, Department of Cordillera, Paraguay

Seizure of 9 blue-fronted amazons (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), 4 monk parakeets (*Myiopsitta monachus*, Appendix II), 18 nanday conures (*Nandayus nenday*, Appendix II) and a ferruginous pygmy-owl (*Glaucidium brasilianum*, Appendix II). They were displayed for sale in boxes on the Basilica square.²⁶

ASIA

CHINA

October 6, 2019

Luohu border post, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

Seven biscuit boxes pierced with small holes were hiding 77 yellow-fronted canaries from Mozambique (*Serinus mozambicus*). The "Smart Travel" customs screening system had identified the suspect as a passenger at risk.²⁷

INDIA

October 3, 2019

Tiruchirappalli, Tiruchirappalli District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of 316 psittacidae including rose-ringed parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*) and plum-headed parakeets (*Psittacula cyanocephala*, Appendix II). Arrest of Mohammed Riaz and Mohammed Arif. Vetri, the master of the house, is on the run. Controversy follows the seizure. 24 hours later, the birds transferred to a farm were still not being fed or watered. 70 died of starvation. Seizure is not enough. Afterwards, the animals must be cared for and their wild life skills must be reanimated, experts and NGOs summarize.²⁸

October 15, 2019

Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi National Capital Region, India

Anvarjon Rakhmatjonov was about to board an Uzbekistan Airways flight to Tashkent when he was intercepted by customs officials. X-rays detected bird silhouettes in his luggage. Indeed, 13 live rose-ringed parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*) were hidden in 6 shoeboxes. He would have bought them in the old city of Delhi. He was remanded in custody for 14 days pending the outcome of the investigation. The birds were taken to the Okhla Bird Sanctuary.²⁹

REPEATED OFFENSE

October 20, 2019

Manapparai, Tiruchirappalli District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Following a denunciation, forest rangers searched the home of A Thangaraj, a former military officer. They found a double-barrelled rifle and 2 dead Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan). He was remanded in custody. "This is for my personal consumption", he claims. The sale of the meat and feathers is not excluded.³⁰



October 22, 2019

Vaishali District, Bihar State, India

Road patrol intercepts Sumit Kumar and Pradeep Kumar. In a bucket in the back of the vehicle, there were 5 owls (Strigidae family, Appendix II) still alive that the 2 thugs were about to hand over to a shaman who in turn would have sacrificed them at a good price during the Diwali celebrations on 27 October. Naive people are ready to believe that the ritual cutting up of living owls brings luck and prosperity. The owls' talons and bones also serve as good luck charms. The 5 small birds of prey have been entrusted to the Forest Department.³¹ Cf. below, November 17, 2019, Dungripura, Vadodara District, state of Gujarat, India.

WILDNET OPERATION

November 3, 2019

Behala and Rajpur, South 24-Parganas District, West Bengal State, India

Seizures through the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau's Internet Wildlife Crime Section of 24 psittacidae including green parakeets (*Aratinga holochlora*, Appendix II) and blue parakeets (*Melopsittacus undulatus*) in 3 private homes.³²

1-7 November 2019

Khichan, Jodhpur District, State of Rajasthan, India

Hecatombs of demoiselle cranes (*Anthropoides virgo*, Appendix II). They migrate in noisy V-shaped flocks from their habitats in northern Eurasia to their winter quarters in the west of India. 37 “kujans”, their name in the local dialect, were found dead with no trace of violence in Khichan, 15 in Vijay Sagar, 16 in Ratari Nadi and 6 in Lordia. Other demoiselle cranes were found alive but incapable of moving. According to ornithologists, there are 35,000 of these waders in temporary residency in the districts of Jodhpur, Bikaner and Nagaur, including 7,000 in Khichan. According to the initial conclusions of observers and investigators, demoiselle cranes can be intoxicated when they eat pesticide-coated grains. The farmers sow the toxic seeds at the time of year when migratory birds are arriving. Demoiselle cranes are elegant. They are the only cranes to have a tuft of white feathers on either side of their heads.³³



November 17, 2019

Dungripura, Vadodara District, State of Gujarat, India

Ramesh Yavat, a member of Wildlife SOS, heard that 4 guys from the village were looking to sell an Indian eagle owl (*Bubo bengalensis*, Appendix II). The market for supposedly-magical nocturnal raptors is at its peak during the festive and votive Diwali celebration. Yavat set up a meeting. The sale price for the bird was agreed upon at 400,000 rupees, or 5,640 US\$. Yavat pulled out a wad of bills from a children's board game. Given the current monetary confusion, the traffickers took the bait and delivered the eagle owl to the “counterfeiter.” Forests agents who had been hiding in the bushes came out and arrested Parvatsinh Parmar, Bharat Parmar and Kamlesh Jadav. An accomplice managed to flee. There are 2 prime periods for the nocturnal raptor black market in India:

- Diwali. According to legend, Lakshmi, goddess of prosperity, is accompanied by her faithful owl. She even would have an owl as a celestial charger. Lakshmi is honored during the Diwali festival. Charm vendors take advantage of people's gullibility and organize rituals for a fee. The beaks, claws and eyes of a raptor supposedly lead to hidden treasures.

- Elections. In district and state elections, tens of thousands of candidates are mobilized. Their campaign teams use animals for black magic. Raptor blood is believed to curse an opponent or to attract good fortune in politics.

The coalition of charlatans who use viral marketing to consolidate their influence, also use violence.



Anthropoides virgo

In August 2013, Mr. Narendra Dabholkar was murdered in the street, in Pune, in the state of Maharashtra (see “On the Trail” n°3 p. 34-35). For 18 years, he had been defending a draft law on the prevention and eradication of human and animal sacrifices, known as the “anti-black magic law.” The law was adopted in the fall of 2013 by the Maharashtra parliament, and by now doesn't seem to have been duplicated in another state.

There are 30 species of nocturnal raptors present in India. Fifteen of them are the object of intensive trafficking. The most endangered of them are the Indian eagle owl (*Bubo bengalensis*, Appendix II), the brown fish owl (*Ketupa zeylonensis*, Appendix II), the dusky eagle owl (*Bubo coromandus*, Appendix II), the Indian scops owl (*Otus bakkamoena*, Appendix II) and mottled wood owl (*Strix ocellata*, Appendix II). The superstitions that haunt owls resist the calls to reason in all Indian states.³⁴

REPEATED OFFENSE

November 19, 2019

Vasai-Virar, Thane District, State of Maharashtra, India

A bunch of teenagers put a pigeon in a cage trap. It was used as bait for daytime raptors. A black kite (*Milvus migrans*, Appendix II) was caught. The district animal welfare officer came to the rescue of the pigeon and the kite. The band is used to the tactics. Eagles have been captured in this way on the outskirts of town using live bait. Stuffed into jute sacks, tied up and nailed beaks, they are then sacrificed for the needs of black magic or eaten.³⁵



November 23, 2019

Bagidod, Panchmahal District, State of Gujarat, India

Munavvar Daat and Salman Kadva were surrounded, molested by villagers and taken to the police station. They had been caught catching peafowls in fields and burying them in plastic bags. They were charged with poaching protected wildlife. In return, Daat and Kadva lodged a complaint for assault and wrongful confinement.³⁶

November 28, 2019

Vanod, Surendranagar District, State of Gujarat, India

Empty Shaktimaan brand cartridges used by city hunters and traces of bird carnage are spotted by forestry officers around Lake Vanod. Poachers are observed from a distance. Local police are called to the rescue. The main targets are demoiselle cranes (*Anthropoides virgo*, Appendix II), flamingos (*Phoenicopteridae* spp., Appendix II), greylag geese (*Anser anser*) and common cranes (*Grus grus*, Appendix II). "Many people come here in big cars"; "They kill birds and go", say the "maldharis", the shepherds who graze their flocks around the water bodies. The same scenes are repeated around Erwada, Detroj, Dasada and Malvan. It was an investigation by the Indian Express that loosened the tongues and triggered investigations.³⁷

December 9, 2019

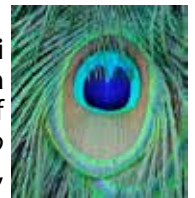
Hyderabad, Hyderabad District, Telangana State, India

When the Times of India team visited the Murgi Chowk market in the old town, it was telling. Despite the police raids, the wildlife market is flourishing. Videos that go viral on social networks dope up the trafficking, according to the NGO Animal Warriors India. "People buy large birds like eagles and owls for 5,000 or 6,000 rupees each [70 to 83 US\$] just to take a selfie and then leave them, or bring them back to us. Customers who buy these birds to keep them as pets do not know how to handle them. In case they come to return the bird or the animal because they are not able to handle it, we buy them back for half the price, and then sell the bird or animal again to some other customer." That is the explanation that an anonymous bird vendor gave. One might even call him a bird renter. Pradeep Nair, spokesperson for Animal Warriors India, very familiar with the nooks and crannies of the market, regrets that owls and ravens in grimy cages are also purchased for black magic practices. Another vendor claims that any special order for an animal not visible on the market can be met within 3 hours. The purchaser pays a down payment at the time of the order and pays the rest at delivery. Telangana high-level officials maintained that they do not remain passive. "Our anti-poaching teams have been conducting regular raids in the market to curb poaching and illegal sales. (...) Shopkeepers usually play smart by not keeping any protected species on display (...) To tackle that issue, we are planning to conduct surprise checks soon. Action will be taken if there are birds or animals found that are listed in the 1972 Wildlife Protection Act."³⁸

14 and 22 December 2019

Manapparai, Tiruchirappalli District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Arrest in the early hours of the day of 3 hunters of Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), one of whom was a woman. Five dead peafowls were used as evidence, along with feathers, knives, firearms and kitchen utensils. Five other persons, including a temple priest who is believed to be the leader of the band, are wanted.³⁹



December 23, 2019

Seruna, Bikaner District, State of Rajasthan, India

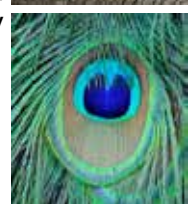
Suspected poisoning of 23 Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan). According to local sources, farmers soak seeds in a pesticide solution after ploughing to eliminate rodents and granivorous birds. This kind of chemical scarecrow does not go into detail and kills both rodents described as common and peafowls. Partridges also lay on the ground.⁴⁰



December 30, 2019

Mudunal, Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

A dozen Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan). They were buried nearby by forestry officers.⁴¹



INDONESIA

Early October 2019

Golokan and Gresik, Gresik Regency, East Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia

- Seizure at Dani Agus Saputro's home of 5 green peafowls (*Pavo muticus*, Appendix II) trapped on the island of Sumatra and imported to the island of Java by 2 paid for middlemen. Due to poaching for use as decorative pets, the green peafowls population is less than 800 individuals on the island of Sumatra. The average selling price is 25 million rupees or 1765 US\$.

- Seizure of 6 fire-tufted barbets (*Psilopogon pyrolophus*) and of 2 fire-tufted barbets (*Dendrocitta occipitalis*). They sell respectively around 100 and 70 US\$ per individual.⁴²



October 22, 2019

Balikpapan City, East Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

Seizure of yellow-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua sulphurea*, Appendix I), hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II), red lorries (*Eos rubra*, Appendix II), greater green leafbirds (*Chloropsis sonnerati*) and Sumatran laughingthrushes (*Garrulax bicolor*), a total of 97 birds from 2 individuals claiming to be "collectors" of wild birds. In fact, they were trading them.⁴³

November 9, 2019

Bakauheni Port, South Lampung Regency, Lampung Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

At the end of the year, the police are faced with a real deportation of birds from the island of Sumatra to the island of Java. The birds are considered as Christmas presents in the same way as video games. A minibus coming from Pekanbaru and waiting to board a car ferry bound for the island of Java and the city of Bogor was spotted and intercepted. There were 3,092 birds inside, hanging parrots (*Loriculus* spp, Appendix II), *Prinia*, *Padda*, Javan mynas (*Acridotheres javanicus*), sunbirds (family Nectariniidae), *Zosterops*, greater green leafbird (*Chloropsis sonnerati*), blue-winged leafbirds (*Chloropsis cochinchinensis*) and bar-winged prinias (*Prinia familiaris*). They were distributed in 78 plastic crates and 37 cardboard boxes, crowding conditions conducive to pecking and mortality throughout a 1000 km journey.⁴⁴

November 9, 2019

Kotabumi, North Lampung Regency, Lampung Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Seizure in a coach heading towards Lampung of 1500 birds, blue-topped hanging-parrots (*Loriculus galgulus*, Appendix II), *Prinia*, sunbirds (family Nectariniidae), cinereous tits (*Parus cinereus*), woodpeckers (family Picidae), grey-cheeked bulbuls (*Alophoixus bres*), Sunda laughingthrushes (*Garrulax palliatus*), Asian glossy starling (*Aplonis panayensis*), blue-winged leafbird (*Chloropsis cochinchinensis*) and lesser green leafbirds (*Chloropsis cyanopogon*) for the caged bird market in Jakarta, Java island.⁴⁵

November 10, 2019

Port of Merak, Cilegon City, Banten Province, Java Island, Indonesia

The bus was picked up by port security at Merak. 1,118 birds were concealed in the baggage hold, silver-eared mesias (*Leiothrix argentea*, Appendix II), typical white-eyes (genus *Zosterops*), olive-winged bulbuls (*Pycnonotus plumosus*), *Prinia* and sparrow (genus *Padda*). They have been quarantined. Before their possible release into suitable habitats, the veterinary services must check that they do not carry avian influenza.⁴⁶

November 12, 2019

Port of Sorong, West Papua Province, Island of New West Guinea, Indonesia

This time, the captured birds left by car ferry from the port of Sorong to reach the island of Java after a perilous journey through the Indonesian archipelago. High mortality was assured for stowaways, yellow-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua sulphurea*, Appendix I), palm cockatoos (*Probosciger aterrimus*, Appendix I), birds of paradise (*Paradisaea* spp., Appendix II), black-capped lorries (*Lorius lory*, Appendix II), the 2 eclectus parrots (*Eclectus roratus*, Appendix II), lorises (*Loriidae*, Appendix I or II), silvery pigeons (*Columba argentina*) and pied imperial pigeons (*Ducula bicolor*).⁴⁷

November 16, 2019

Merjosari District, Kota de Malang, East Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia

Seizure at a mobile phone thief's home of a brahminy kite (*Haliastur indus*, Appendix II).⁴⁸

November 17, 2019

Port of Samarinda, East Kalimantan Province, Island of Borneo, Indonesia

Seizure on board the *KM Tanjung Manis* bound for Parepare of 8 plastic crates containing 45 birds, including hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II), greater green leafbirds (*Chloropsis sonnerati*) and purple-throated sunbirds (*Leptocoma sperata*). The Director of the BKSDA (Balai Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam) is concerned about the increase in trafficking. "In the car ferries to Sulawesi and Java, there is a risk of fraudulent shipments. There is currently a high demand for songbirds."⁴⁹

November 23, 2019

Bakauheni Port, South Lampung Regency, Lampung Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Seizure in 5 buses awaiting boarding on a car ferry bound for the island of Java of one thousand birds, greater green leafbirds (*Chloropsis sonnerati*), typical white-eyes (genus *Zosterops*), oriental magpie-robins (*Copsychus saularis*), olive-winged bulbuls (*Pycnonotus plumosus*), flycatchers (genus *Cyornis*), blue-winged leafbirds (*Chloropsis cochinchinensis*) and sunbirds (family Nectariniidae) for selling at markets and pet shops in Jakarta. In addition, hundreds of turtles were hidden in a luggage compartment.⁵⁰

November 24, 2019

Cilegon City, Banten Province, Java Island, Indonesia

Seizure in a car of 481 birds, 155 prinias (genus *Prinia*), 167 zebra doves (*Geopelia striata*), 126 yellow-vented bulbuls (*Pycnonotus goiavier*), 29 spotted doves (*Spilopelia chinensis*) and 4 black-headed bulbuls (*Pycnonotus atriceps*). They were immediately released into the Tukung Gede Nature Reserve.⁵¹



November 28, 2019, Port of Merak, Indonesia

© Bahtiar Rivai



December 23, 2019, Bakauheni Port, Indonesia

© Henk Widi



Chloropsis cochinchinensis

© Lip Kee



November 17, 2019, Port of Samarinda, Indonesia. On the right, the KM Tanjung Manis

© Pro Kaltim



November 28, 2019

Port of Merak, Kota of Cilegon, Banten Province, Java Island, Indonesia

Seizure in a vehicle on the Merak viaduct after the landing of a car ferry from the island of Sumatra of 1,812 birds including blue-winged leafbirds (*Chloropsis cochinchinensis*) and cinereous tits (*Parus cinereus*). Survivors of trapping and travelling by road and sea should have been sold in Jakarta and other major cities on the island of Java. After being quarantined for avian influenza, most of them should be released into the marshes.⁵²

December 14, 2019

Bakauheni Port, South Lampung Regency, Lampung Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Seizure prior to boarding a car ferry of 1,187 birds, hanging parrots (*Loriculus* spp., appendix II), purple-throated sunbirds (*Leptocoma sperata*), black-naped orioles (*Oriolus chinensis*), greater green leafbirds (*Chloropsis sonnerati*), black-throated laughingthrushes (*Garrulax chinensis*), sparrow (genus *Padda*), blue-masked leafbirds (*Chloropsis venusta*) and other birds.

The driver, a 35-year-old Yonrizal, says he bought the birds around Jambi from poachers who are trapping in the forests and marshes. Jambi is 500 km north of the port of Bakauheni. This is the fourth time Yonrizal has been involved in the grouping of wild birds and their delivery to the island of Java. He is in contact with retailers in the Pramuka market in Jakarta. "It's profitable" he simply told the police (see "On the Trail" n°11 p.24, n°12 p.26 and 31).⁵³

December 23, 2019

Bakauheni Port, South Lampung Regency, Lampung Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Seizure in 2 trucks of 3,553 birds in 111 plastic crates stacked one on top of the other and pierced on all sides. The residents below received droppings from those above. Zebra doves (*Geopelia striata*), black-throated laughingthrushes (*Garrulax chinensis*), shrikes (genus *Lanius*), black-winged kites (*Elanus caeruleus*, Appendix II) and owls (order Strigiformes, Appendix I or II) were about to embark on a car ferry to cross the sound and be sold on the markets of the island of Java for the peak of the Christmas and New Year's sales. Two arrests. One of the drivers, Edi Pranoto, has a good knowledge of the job. The round trip between Lampung province on the island of Sumatra and the cities of North Java Island takes him 4 days and he is paid 1.4 million rupees per rotation, or about a hundred US\$.⁵⁴

IRAN

November 26, 2019

Shiraz Shahid Dastgheib International Airport, Shiraz, Fars Province, Iran

Arrest of 2 foreign hunters flying to a country of the Persian Gulf with in their luggage 5 dead houbara bustards (*Chlamydotis undulata*, Appendix I). They risk a fine of nearly 5,000 US\$ for each bird poached.⁵⁵

ISRAEL



December 3, 2019

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

Seizure under the trousers of a Palestinian citizen of 14 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) bought in Jordan and tied around each leg. He wanted to sell them in Hebron.⁵⁶

LIBAN

October 11, 2019

Beirut International Airport - Rafik Hariri, Governorate of Beirut, Lebanon

Spotting by the NGO CABS (Committee Against Bird Slaughter) in one of the refrigerated shelves of a duty-free delicatessen of 540 Eurasian blackcaps (*Sylvia atricapilla*) sold in packs of 30 for 36 US\$, or 1.2 US\$ per bird. The Eurasian blackcap's nesting range extends from the Maghreb to northern Iran through Asia Minor and the Middle East.⁵⁷



MALAYSIA

December 5, 2019

**Rantau Panjang, Kelantan State, Malaysia.
Border with Thailand.**

5:00 a.m. Interception of a Proton Wira. In the back, there were 21 baskets filled with 210 white-rumped shamas (*Copsychus malabaricus*). According to Nor Azizan Yusof, officer of the 9th Battalion in charge of road control, the birds were brought into Malaysia from Thailand via short cut.⁵⁸

December 23, 2019

Jalan Tali Api and Jalan Bunga, Perak State, Malaysia

- Seizure of 24 blue-topped hanging-parrots (*Loriculus galgulus*, Appendix II), 11 blue-naped parrots (*Tanygnathus lucionensis*, Appendix II) and one long-tailed parakeets (*Psittacula longicauda*, Appendix II).

- Seizure of 19 rainbow lorikeets (*Trichoglossus moluccanus*) and 6 blue-naped parrots (*Tanygnathus lucionensis*, Appendix II). Two arrests. Both men were released on bail.

Both operations were carried out thanks to "tips" from civil society.⁵⁹

PAKISTAN

October 13, 2019

**Dera Ismail Khan
and Kohat, Khyber
Pakhtunkhwa Province,
Pakistan**

Seizure of 7 falcons (Falconidae, Appendix I or II) with an individual value of approximately 6,000 US\$ and a large number of kestrels (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II) from 2 traffickers whose plan was to smuggle them to China and Afghanistan.⁶⁰



October 22, 2019

Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan

Seizure of 4 crates of 2 peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) and 2 saker falcons (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II) from an airliner bound for Karachi.⁶¹

December 9, 2019

Nushki District, Balochistan Province, Pakistan

Arrest of 7 Qatari nationals for poaching houbara bustards (*Chlamydotis undulata*, Appendix I) on the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. They did not hold a hunting license. In the province, a permit to hunt a bustard costs 157,000 Pakistani rupees, or 1,000 US\$. A member of the royal family of Qatar spent the equivalent of 100,000 US\$ to be allowed to hunt 100 bustards. The species is on the verge of extinction (see "On the Trail" n°15 p.35, n°16 p.28, n°19 p.44, n°20 p.46, 47, n°22 p. 48, n°23 p.49, 52, n°24 p.84).⁶²

December 16, 2019

Moach Goth, Karachi, Sindh Province, Pakistan

Seizure by customs at the Moach Goth checkpoint of 11 houbara bustards (*Chlamydotis undulata*, Appendix I) poached in the province of Balochistan. The global value of the 11 waders is estimated on the local market at 11 million rupees or 7,075 US\$ and about 643 US\$ per individual.⁶³

THAILAND

October 22, 2019

Ban Mo, Phetchaburi Province, Thailand

Seizure at Wichai Teerungruengsuk's home of a hill myna (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II), 11 scarlet-backed flowerpeckers (*Dicaeum cruentatum*), 10 golden-fronted leafbirds (*Chloropsis aurifrons*), 7 white-rumped shamas (*Copsychus malabaricus*), 3 blue-winged pittas (*Pitta moluccensis*), 2 warbling white-eyes (*Zosterops japonicus*), 2 Abbott's babbblers (*Malacocincla abbotti*), 2 common ioras (*Aegithina tiphia*), 2 purple sunbirds (*Cinnyris asiaticus*), 1 olive-backed sunbirds (*Cinnyris jugularis*), 1 black-naped oriole (*Oriolus chinensis*) and 1 Tickell's blue flycatcher (*Cyornis tickelliae*). The individual had reported himself to the attention of the State services through ads on Facebook. He is a professional trapper. He also maintained a network of villagers who poached on his behalf.⁶⁴

facebook

December 2, 2019

Salaya, Nakhon Pathom Province, Thailand

Mr. Anupong Munpianjit was selling birds via Facebook under the "Nectar" banner. He was caught in the act of delivering a greater necklaced laughingthrush (*Pterorhinus pectoralis*) and a lesser necklaced laughingthrush (*Garrulax monileger*) to undercover buyers from an elite anti-trafficking brigade, the Falcon Dong. Seizure of the birds, a mobile phone and the trafficker's motorcycle.⁶⁵

facebook

December 10, 2019

Khlong Luang District, Pathum Thani Province, Thailand

Search of a villa. Interpellation of Thanakrit Feuangkaew. Seizure of 13 red-whiskered bulbuls (*Pycnonotus jocosus*) and 39 empty cages suggesting the individual is a large-scale trafficker. He was selling via Facebook.⁶⁶

December 10, 2019

Hat Yai, Songkhla Province, Thailand

Seizure at the bus station aboard a coach linking Hat Yai to Bangkok of 205 red-whiskered bulbul (*Pycnonotus jocosus*). The driver and the ticket inspector are heard by the police.⁶⁷



November 1st, 2019, Tenango de Doria, Mexico



Oct. 10, 2019, Near Philadelphia, United States of America



October 6, 2019, Luohu border post, China



December 2, 2019, Salaya, Thailand



Dec. 30, 2019, Mudunal, India



October 31, 2019, Verone, Italy



End of nov. 2019, Novallas, Spain



November 15, 2019, Walsall, United Kingdom



October 2, 2019, Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône, France

TURKEY

October 3, 2019

Altinozu, Hatay Province, Turkey. Border with Syria.

Seizure by customs of 2,000 live European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) captured in Syria in the vehicle of a Turkish citizen. They were taken in charge by the national park service of the province.⁶⁸



VIET NAM

October 29, 2019

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Rescue of a crested serpent-eagle (*Spilornis cheela*, Appendix II) with one leg tied down. He was taken to the Cu Chi refuge.⁶⁹

November 18, 2019

Hoang Mai District, Hanoi, Viet Nam

Rescue of a black kite (*Milvus migrans*, Appendix II) held captive in front of a restaurant.⁷⁰

EUROPE

CROATIA

October 29, 2019

Bajakovo border post, Lipovac, Municipality of Nijemci, Vukovar-Syrmie County, Croatia. Border with Serbia.

Seizure of 311 Eurasian skylarks (*Alauda arvensis*) in the game bags of 2 Italian hunters and 50 kg of lures and other trapping accessories. Global fines of 4,000 € (4,375 US\$).⁷¹

SPAIN

End of October 2019

Province of Cadiz, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain

Seizure of 187 traps and 45 dead birds, pipits (genus *Anthus*), song thrushes (*Turdus philomelos*), European robins (*Erithacus rubecula*) and stonechats (genus *Saxicola*). The poachers went all out to be infallible: next to the traps, they made electronic birds sing. At a rate of 2.5 kg of insects per year, each of these 45 victims naturally contributed to the protection of crops and human populations.⁷²



End of November 2019

Novallas, Province of Zaragoza, Autonomous Community of Aragon, Spain

The 64-year-old man caught by Seprona's agents was hiding in the undergrowth. He was "managing" in the forest a number of 18 home-made traps, and already had 2 European robins (*Erithacus rubecula*) on his today hunting board which, he said, he intended to eat.⁷³

End of December 2019

La Lastrilla, Province of Segovia, Autonomous Community of Castile and León, Spain

Seizure of cages, pots of glue, 4 dead elegant goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) which served as visual decoys, 3 living elegant goldfinches which had just been captured, a mobile phone broadcasting goldfinch songs which served as acoustic decoys. Two arrests. This is the fifth such operation since the beginning of the year in the province.⁷⁴

FRANCE

October 2, 2019

Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône, Department of Bouches-du-Rhône, France

The ONCFS seizes bird traps in a private garden and 14 very elegant European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) which are subject to a health examination before being released.⁷⁵

November 9, 2019

Wissous, Department of Essonne, France

Arrest of a 62-year-old man who was trapping with glue-coated sticks European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) in the hedgerows of the Wissous commercial area on the outskirts of Paris. Three accomplices fled. "This type of poaching is a real scourge in the Ile-de-France region, but this is the first time it has happened in our town," according to Philippe Steens, head of the municipal police called to the scene by local residents. Eleven goldfinches were recovered alive and handed over to the ONCFS. Two others died shortly after capture.⁷⁶

November 19, 2019

Marseille, Department of Bouches-du-Rhône, France

On the eve of the bird fair in Reggio Emilia, Italy (see page 56), dealers in European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), who are often also dealers in cannabis and other narcotic products, are stepping up their activities and ONCFS agents are carrying out checks on coaches and cars travelling to Italy. "We are seeing more and more kids doing the "chouf" [the lookout for cannabis dealers] making an extra 50 € by catching a goldfinch in a wasteland," says Fabrice Gayet, a customs officer who is an expert in the protection of fauna and flora. An ONCFS expert, Jean-Yves Bichaton, adds that "with a pot of glue and some twigs you can catch 10 specimens in one morning". That's at least 500 € to 1,000 € in net profit by plundering biodiversity. Stupefying!⁷⁷

December 19, 2019

Department of Landes, France

Anything to please! The 68-year-old man who lives with his mother admits to having poached 10,000 passerines, including robins, since 2011. He needed money to attend bullfights in Spain. Thanks to his meticulous order books, the investigation was able to identify several of his usual buyers, including a former international player of the Dax rugby team. The profits from his traffic in the form of frozen skewers amounted to at least 50,000 €.

ITALY

October 2, 2019

Siracusa, Province of Siracusa, Region of Sicily, Italy

Seizure in a villa of 41 Eurasian collared doves (*Streptopelia decaocto*) and a kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II) captured in its nest when it had just hatched and now trapped on a perch with a tied leg. The suspect was also in possession of several unused rings and CITES certificates. The Carabinieri specialized in the control of international wildlife trafficking believe that he was using these administrative and technical devices to "regularize" poached birds.⁷⁸

Early October 2019

Costa Valle Imagna, Province of Bergamo, Region of Lombardy, Italy

In the garage of a 67-year-old poacher, rescue of 30 red crossbills (*Loxia curvirostra*), a species strictly protected by national law and the Bern Convention. Seizure by the Carabinieri of glue-covered sticks and other trapping accessories.⁷⁹

OPERATION PETTIROSSO

October 15, 2019

Cavriana and Volta Mantovana, Province of Mantua, Region of Lombardy, Italy

More than 40 hawfinches (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*), great spotted woodpeckers (*Dendrocopos major*) and song thrushes (*Turdus philomelos*) killed by 4 hunters aged between 60 and 75 years old and intended for personal consumption or for sale to small "chic" restaurants have been seized in freezers.⁸⁰

October 16, 2019

Villa San Giovanni, Province of Reggio Calabria, Region of Calabria, Italy

Rescue of 41 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) living in a shed next to a house ravaged by arson.⁸¹

October 31, 2019

Province of Verona, Veneto Region, Italy

351 red-billed leiothrix (*Leiothrix lutea*, Appendix II), Eurasian blackcaps (*Sylvia atricapilla*), European robins (*Erithacus rubecula*) and great tits (*Parus major*) in a freezer.⁸²

November 8, 2019

San Valentino Torio, Province of Salerno, Region of Campania, Italy

The Carabinieri are all ears. They were alerted by melodious and mixed songs coming from a backyard. When they arrived on the scene, they discovered 12 cages and 25 birds, common quails (*Coturnix coturnix*), hawfinches (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*), Eurasian skylarks (*Alauda arvensis*), chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*) and European serins (*Serinus serinus*). Imposing silence on the entire colony, they located another choir in a nearby farm and released 14 other instrumentalists including great tits (*Parus major*) and European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*).⁸³

November 22-24, 2019

Reggio Emilia, Province of Reggio Emilia, Emilia-Romagna Region, Italy

Raid of the Carabinieri at the 80th edition of the city's bird fair. Seizure of veterinary medicines and 485 birds with a commercial value of more than 20,000 € (21,700 US\$), European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), bramblings (*Fringilla montifringilla*), Eurasian siskins (*Spinus spinus*), chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*), tree pipits (*Anthus trivialis*), dunnocks (*Prunella modularis*), European robins (*Erithacus rubecula*) and common redstarts (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*). Thirteen arrests.⁸⁴



Phoenicurus phoenicurus

© Stephen Moores

OPERATION LIBERTA

December 20, 2019

Campo Calabro, Province of Reggio Calabria, Region of Calabria, Italy

An individual was caught red-handed. Hidden behind a thicket, he was folding up a nylon net used to catch his victims, attracted by the songs of 4 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), 2 European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*) and a goldfinch-canary hybrid that were all in cages. A meticulous search of the poacher's home led to the seizure of another goldfinch-canary hybrid, 17 European goldfinches, 9 canaries (*Serinus canaria domestica*), 11 European greenfinches, 19 European serins (*Serinus serinus*). The birds were sent to the specialized sanctuary in the Strait of Messina, where they are being kept under observation before they are released. Some of those who were used as call-bird were mistreated and suffer from lesions on their feet and sternum. The poacher was prosecuted for aggravated theft of wildlife considered an inalienable State asset and for animal abuse. The intervention was organized and directed by the provincial command of the Calabria Reggio Guardia di Finanza, with assistance from the anti-poaching NGO CABS.⁸⁵

December 26, 2019

Assago, Metropolitan City of Milan, Region of Lombardy, Italy

Seizure by the Carabinieri alerted by WWF volunteers of about twenty European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) and about twenty Eurasian siskin (*Spinus spinus*) at the home of the 60-year-old poacher.⁸⁶

MALTA

November 2, 2019

To Siggiewi, Rabat and Girgenti, Northern Region, Malta

The flight of 15 short-toed eagles (*Circaetus gallicus*, Appendix II) landed at dusk this Saturday. On Sunday morning at around 6.30 am, only one of them resumed his migratory course according to observers from Birdlife Malta. On the archipelago of Malta, a member State of the European Union, hunters like to shoot at easy and endangered targets (see "On the Trail" n°6 p. 32, n°9 p. 28, n°10 p. 26, n°11 p. 27, n°12 p. 34, n°15 p. 39, n°21 p. 42-43). By November 2016, 60 booted eagles (*Hieraaetus pennatus*, Appendix II) and short-toed eagles had already fallen victim to this disease.⁸⁷

UNITED KINGDOM

November 15, 2019

Walsall, West Midlands County, England, United Kingdom

Conviction of a trafficker of common barn owls (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II) to 12 months community service and 270 £ (347 US\$) in legal costs. He sold each owl for 50 €. Most died within a few days of delivery. He escaped from prison thanks to the clemency of the judge, who was favourably impressed by his cooperative behaviour and his propensity to care for children in trouble.⁸⁸



OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

November 15, 2019

Perth, State of Western Australia, Australia

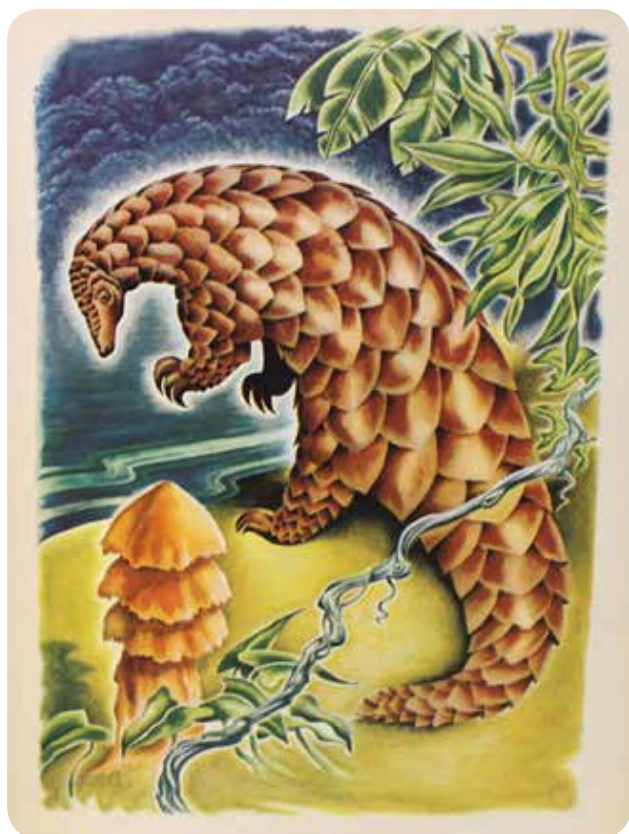
Fine of 2,500 A\$ or 1,700 US\$ for the owner of a pub. In front of the customers, especially children, he decapitated a kookaburra (genus *Dacelo*) who had taken the habit of coming to pick up crumbs from a sandwich.⁸⁹



Circaetus gallicus

© Apellizcos

Pangolins



"On the Trail" n°27
Value on the black market
according to media or official sources

Value of 1kg of pangolin scales

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Asia	China (Yunnan)	8,000	19
	Myanmar	80	20
	Indonesia	71	38
	Viet Nam	86-108	48

Value of a pangolin

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref.
Africa	Namibia	3,280	7
	Zimbabwe	3,000	2*
Asia	India (Odisha)	7,050	29
	India (West Bengal)	8,460	35
	India (Assam)	1,700	36

* Cf. chapter "Pangolins and Elephants"

The four African pangolin species (*Manis gigantea*, *M. temminckii*, *M. tetradactyla*, *M. tricuspis*) and the four Asian species (*Manis crassicaudata*, *M. culionensis*, *M. javanica* and *M. pentadactyla*) are listed under CITES Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

October 25, 2019

Musina, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Interception of a suspicious vehicle on the road between Alldays and Musina. Police were acting on confidential information. Inside, 3 men were arrested and a pangolin released.¹

October 29, 2019

Mmabatho, North West Province, South Africa

Zehao Zehong was released on bail of 3000 rand, or 200 US\$, although counterfeit slot machines, pangolin armours and python skins (*Python* spp., Appendix I or II) were found in his home and workshops.²

October 30, 2019

Temba, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Seizure on confidential information of 2 live pangolins, a firearm and 2 vehicles. Five arrests.³

December 12, 2019

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Interception of a vehicle by a flying patrol. After being towed to the Bellville police station, the vehicle was searched and scales and other parts of pangolins worth 4,440 US\$ were seized. Four men aged 42, 47 and 57 were arrested.⁴

CAMEROON

OPERATION HALCOMI (Stop Illegal Trade)

On the night of December 23rd to 24th, 2019

Douala, Littoral Region, Cameroon

Seizure of 600 kg of pangolin scales, cf. chapter Multi-Species page 116.⁵

KENYA

December 24, 2019

Amboseli, Kajiado County, Kenya

Seizure of 200 pangolin scales. Four arrests.⁶

NAMIBIA

October 4, 2019

Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia

A 37-year-old man is arrested. He was carrying a dead pangolin. Value: 3,280 US\$. In the same week, 5 more pangolins were seized.⁷

October 24, 2019

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

Sentencing of Mukoya Katombera to a fine of 2,660 US\$ or 3 years in prison for the illegal detention of a live pangolin. He had been arrested on 9 September.⁸



October 29, 2019

Outapi, Omusati Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.

Arrest of Muhenhe Tchimbanda, an Angolan national, in possession of the full armour of a pangolin.⁹

November 21, 2019

Oshikango, Ohangwena Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.

Arrest of a 46-year-old man. The suspect had entrusted 2 bags to a young woman. Many young people make a little money at the border crossing by helping those with cumbersome luggage to cross the border. The man stood at a distance, busy presenting his papers to the police. Realizing that his bags were being searched, he tried to escape and was caught. The carrier was released. She did not know that the 2 bundles contained 2 pangolins.¹⁰

November 24, 2019

Outapi, Omusati Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.

Arrest of 2 Namibian subjects. Festus Katambo and Beteul Katjinda were carrying a live pangolin.¹¹

December 1st, 2019

Tsumeb, Oshikoto Region, Namibia

Raymond Shihepo and Augustinus Sikukutu arrested. They were in possession of 2 live pangolins.¹²

NIGER

October 27 and 28, 2019

Diori Hamani International Airport and Niamey, Niger

- Seizure of 600 kg of scales bound for Malaysia.
- Following seizure of 150 kg after the search of a private residence.¹³

ZIMBABWE

October 22, 2019

Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Sentencing of Jerry Mwembe to 4 years' imprisonment for keeping 2 pangolins skinned on the seat of his car and 2 python skins (*Python* spp., Appendix I or II) in his room. The offences date back to 4 April 2019.¹⁴



November 12, 2019

Guruve, Mashonaland Central Province, Zimbabwe

Sentencing of Santo Kamu, aged 38, and Lazarus Chihowa, aged 32, to 9 years and 3 years in prison and a fine of 200 US\$ for attempting to sell raw ivory and a live pangolin. On 18 September, they were caught in the act by police officers posing as buyers in the Mushumbi area.¹⁵



WESTERN ASIA

TURKEY

November 15, 2019

International Airport of Istanbul, Istanbul Province, Marmara Region, Turkey

Seizure of 1,200 kg of scales in a container supposed to transport wooden furniture. The shipment originated in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo, via Kinshasa. Its destination was the European Union, specifically Romania. The sender was a certain Station Jambo Safari, claiming to be acting on behalf of a Romanian diplomat.¹⁶

ASIA

CAMBODIA

November 22, 2019

Phnom Penh, Phnom Penh Province, Cambodia

Rescue in a private garden of a female pangolin and her newborn baby escaped from an unknown ordeal. They were taken to the Koh Kong shelter before being set free.¹⁷



CHINA

YUNNAN PROVINCE

October 19, 2019

Menglian County, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Myanmar.

Seizure of 218.1 g of scales in a plastic bag. Arrest of a Chinese national.¹⁸

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Beginning of December 2019 Yuanjiang County, Yunnan Province, China

Sentencing of a man and his wife to 4 years imprisonment and 3 years suspended sentence. They had been caught by the police selling pangolin scales at a food market. They had in their possession 1.905 kg of scales that experts in Yunnan estimated at 106,240 yuan or 15,100 US\$ i.e. 8,000 US\$ per kg. The lot would have been bought 10 times cheaper from a middleman. The 2 individuals had to make a public apology through the official video of the trial and must pay 106,240 yuan (15,100 US\$) for the environmental damages.¹⁹



Beginning of December 2019 Ninglang County, Yunnan Province, China

1.000 g of scales in the motorcycle bag. The man had reportedly bought them in Myanmar for 80 US\$ and was about to sell them for 300 US\$ to a friend in need of "medicine".²⁰

PROVINCE DU JIANGXI

November 9, 2019 Pingxiang Border Post, Jiangxi Province, China. Border with Viet Nam.

The white Mercedes was driving towards Nanning when at 10.40 pm it was stopped. Faced with the frightened looking of the driver and a rancid smell, the police searched the vehicle thoroughly and found in the back 3 bags of 25 kg containing more than 26,500 scales.²¹

ZHEJIANG PROVINCE

End of October 2019 Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, China

Huge catch. Seizure of 23 t of scales corresponding to at least 50,000 pangolins. Once again, sea containers were used as vectors. Lagos (Nigeria), Busan (South Korea), Shanghai (China), this was the sea route. The containers then were trucked to Wenzhou, about 500 km away. The big-bags of scales were mixed with big-bags of ginger. The investigation had been underway for a year and started off again in September 2019 when scales dealers were caught on the act in Wenzhou. Eighteen arrests.²²

Pangolin scales in Zhejiang, see "On the Trail" n°4 p. 42, n°15 p. 43, n°16 p. 39, n°20 p. 52.

BEIJING MUNICIPALITY

December 18, 2019 Beijing Municipality, China

Conviction of an ex-employee of a clinic to 4 years in prison and a fine of 40,000 yuan (5,700 US\$) for attempting to import 26.2 kg of scales in April 2019 from Equatorial Guinea.²³



INDIA

STATE OF ODISHA

October 21, 2019 Balichatra and Bundagadi, Mayurbhanj District, State of Odisha, India

Seizure of scales from 3 pangolins. Arrest of 6 persons aged between 20 and 43 identified as Nishikant Jena, Sudama Khandeai, Sukul Tudu and Guru Charan Bindhani, Rabi Patra, and Prasant Kumar Mishra.²⁴

October 28 and 29, 2019 Putana Reserve Forest, Boudh District and Kuliana, Mayurbhanj District, State of Odisha, India

- Seizure of a pangolin (12 kg) in the Putana Forest Reserve. He was in a cage, hidden in the forest waiting to be smuggled to Bangladesh.

- Seizure of 2 motorcycles and an Indian pangolin (*Manis crassicaudata*) weighing 18 kg. Probably a pregnant female. Arrest of Pradeep Kumar Mahakur, Sanat Kumar Mohanta, Krushna Chandra Hansda and Premkhel Murmu.²⁵

November 4, 2019 Pithabata, Mayurbhanj District, State of Odisha, India

A female pangolin "escapes" from the forest service pen after her newborn baby dies, possibly the 18 kg specimen seized in the above-mentioned event.²⁶

November 18, 2019 Patmud, Malkangiri District, State of Odisha, India

Seizure in the village of Patmud of a pangolin. About six years old, 10 kg, 105 cm long from snout to tip of tail. Arrest of Santosh Mahakud, Kailsah Naik, Gananath Naik and Ramesh Munda by Pallahara forestry officers. An accomplice escaped.²⁷

November 29, 2019 Athagarh Forest, Cuttak District, State of Odisha, India

Seizure of scales and arrest of Akash Behera, Satia Behera, Raju Dehury and Prasant Sathy. They were prowling around the Sunimuha Forest Reserve. According to their first testimonies, the network to which they claim to belong extends as far as Kolkata. Their mobile phones have been seized and should make it possible to find out more about their stooges.²⁸

November 29, 2019 Nabarangpur District, State of Odisha, India

Seizure of a pangolin. 1.10 m long. 12.6 kg. Arrest of Santiraj Ganda, 42, Babula Pattanaik, 20 and Ashok Majhi, 25. They were about to sell their loot for 500,000 rupees (7,050 US\$) to a client in Raipur, West Bengal state. Raipur is about 20 kilometers from Kolkata.²⁹

December 10, 2019

Dhenkanal District, State of Odisha, India

Arrest of Biswajit Samal, Asutosh Sahoo and Ratikant Behera. They were in possession of pangolin scales and a deer antler (*Axis axis*). According to their confessions, all members of the network form a group on WhatsApp and use codes to facilitate transactions and to inform their customers of the weight of the pangolins, the locations and dates of capture. To date, 11 individuals have been heard in court in this sprawling case.³⁰

December 13, 2019

Paikasahi, Cuttak District, State of Odisha, India

Arrest of Subash Nayak and Rajkishore Behera. Seizure of pangolin scales, wild boar teeth and mobile phones.³¹

December 13, 2019

Athgarh, Cuttak District, State of Odisha, India

The Athgarh court authorizes the interrogation and confrontation of 10 alleged traffickers who are in police custody. Two officers from the WCCB (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) are coming in as backup. Their mission is to shed light on the possible extension of trafficking in other Indian states and foreign countries. They managed to crack the traffickers' code: to indicate the weight of the pangolins and the date of capture, they used banknotes of different values and the length of the videos loaded on WhatsApp.³²

December 15, 2019

Cuttak District, State of Odisha, India

Two more arrests of suspected traffickers. In 15 days, 14 people have been arrested.³³

December 16, 2019

Athgarh, Cuttak District, State of Odisha, India

Sasmita Lenka, the head of the forestry division, announced that rewards of 10,000 rupees or 140 US\$ will be given to anyone who provides information about the racketeering and trafficking of pangolins. "The list and profiles of 30 people involved in trafficking inside and outside Odisha state will be sent to all police stations and posted in the public square for easy identification."³⁴

STATE OF WEST BENGAL

November 22, 2019

Siliguri, Darjeeling District, State of West Bengal, India

The vehicle was registered in Bhutan and was heading towards Bangladesh. The 5 passengers, all with Bhutanese passports, were taken into custody. They were carrying a pangolin with an estimated economic value of 600,000 rupees (8,460 US\$).³⁵

STATE OF ASSAM

October 12, 2019

Golakganj, Dhubri District, State of Assam, India

Seizure of a pangolin. Police arrest of Jiaul Haque and Moinal Haque. The duo would not be at its first try. They say they bought him for 120,000 rupees (1,700 US\$) in the state of Meghalaya a fortnight ago and intended to resell him in West Bengal. He is injured. During the captivity, he was tied by a rope. He received emergency treatment and will be taken to the Soraikhola rehabilitation centre. Between 2009 and 2017, 6,000 pangolins are believed to have been poached in India.³⁶

STATE OF MAHARASHTRA

October 13, 2019

Kharadi, Pune District, State of Maharashtra, India

It is the 3rd pangolin case since the beginning of the year around Pune. This one is about 3 years old. He was in the hands of Jitendra Mohite, Yogesh Patil and Kumar Savant. As a reminder, in January 2019, seizure of 4.5 kg of scales at 1,500 US\$/kg.³⁷

INDONESIA

Enf of October 2019

Pontianak City, West Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

Seizure of 18 kg of scales. Local price: 71 US\$/kg. According to the police, crushed scales are also used in the composition of narcotics. Three arrests.³⁸

December 4, 2019

Banda Aceh City, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Sentencing of 3 men to 6 and 8 months in prison for transporting and attempting to market 6 kg of pangolin's scales and to a further 1 month in prison in case of failing to pay a fine of 1 million rupees (71 US\$).³⁹



December 24, 2019

Sintang, Sintang Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

52 kg of scales. Four arrests at Popeye Gim cafe. The provincial administration claims to have seized 18 live pangolins, 1840 dead pangolins and nearly 100 kg of scales between early 2015 and late 2019.⁴⁰

THAILAND

October 5, 2019

Kaeng Krachan National Park, Phetchaburi Province, Thailand

Rescue thanks to a village chief of a rambling pangolin. Bad condition, covered with ants, lethargic. He appears to have been discarded by a trafficker.⁴¹

VIET NAM

October 5, 2019

Sop Cop District, Son La Province, Viet Nam

Rescue of a pangolin in the baggage compartment of a bus. In the same bag, there was a fox already dead.⁴²

7 octobre 2019

Between Tan Lien and Khe Sanh, Huong Hoa Province, Viet Nam

Seizure aboard a motorcycle of 5 live pangolins, average weight 6.5 kg. The couriers were reportedly given 5 US\$ to cover the 11 km between the Tan Lien village and the town of The Sanh.⁴³

October 8, 2019

Huong Hoa, Quang Tri Province, Viet Nam

The 5 living pangolins were cramped in wire baskets. Four are on the way of recovery in the Cuc Phuong refuge. The fifth is dead.⁴⁴

October 14, 2019

Hung Nguyen District, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

Sentencing of 2 men aged 28 and 39 to 5 years and 5 years and 6 months in prison for trafficking in 7 pangolin bodies for catering (cf. "On the Trail" n°25 p.52). Strict application of article 244 of the Penal Code dating from 2015 and amended in 2017.⁴⁵



October 19, 2019

Dai Loc, Quang Nam Province, Viet Nam

Three pangolins are recovering. During the intervention of the NGO SVW (Save Vietnam's Wildlife) and the police at the trafficker's home, a mother gave birth. Suffering from skin lesions and dehydration, she did not survive and the newborn died too. One arrest.⁴⁶

GANG

November 25, 2019

Quang Ninh Province, Viet Nam

Sentencing to 13 years in prison for the head of a transit spot where 145 poached pangolins destined to restaurants in China were forced. Ten accomplices were sentenced to 5 and 8 years in prison.⁴⁷



December 2, 2019

Hoa Thuan, Long An Province, Viet Nam

Seizure in a bus between Binh Duong and Thanh Hoa of 20 kg of scales hidden in a polystyrene box. Mr. Ngan Ba Hai, 43, attempted to flee. Caught by the patrol, he claimed to have bought the lot for the equivalent of 1,720 US\$, or 86 US\$/kg in Ben Cat district and to be able to resell them in Cao Bang, about 1290 km away, for 2,160 US\$, or 108 US\$/kg.⁴⁸

GANG

December 17, 2019

Hanoi, Viet Nam

Do Huu Hoi on his Honda Dream motorcycle was carrying a bag of pineapples. Under the pineapples, there were 4 live pangolins weighing a total of 19.2 kg or 4.8 kg per individual. They were handed over to the Cuc Phuong refuge.⁴⁹

GANG

December 17, 2019

Hanoi, Viet Nam

Nguyen Van Luu in his minibus carried 4 live pangolins weighing a total of 8.1 kg, or about 2 kg per individual. They were handed over to the Cuc Phuong refuge.⁵⁰

GANG

December 17, 2019

Hanoi, Viet Nam

Rescue of 13 pangolins. They were in the hands of a network under surveillance by ENV (Education For Nature - Vietnam) for years.⁵¹

December 17 or 18, 2019

Cam Lo, Quang Tri Province, Viet Nam

Police seized 9 live pangolins packed in bags. After first aid and an 11-hour drive, they were entrusted to the Cuc Phuong shelter by SVW (Save Vietnam's Wildlife) paramedics.⁵²

December 20 or 21, 2019

Dien Hong, Dien Chau District, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

Seizure in a car on National Road 1A of 8 live pangolins distributed in 2 cardboard boxes sealed with adhesive tape. Two arrests.⁵³

Pangolins and Elephants



AFRICA

ZIMBABWE

October 1st, 2019

Hwange, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Danmore Chinjonjo sentenced to 9 months in prison. He came from Harare and was approaching Hwange Park. In his travel bag, there were 2.5 kg of cyanide and 3 pangolin scales. He wanted, he said, to give the poison and as a bonus the 3 scales to a certain Bheki, unknown to all, in exchange for a few elephant tails. Cyanide is used to kill elephants.¹



October 17, 2019

Mount Darwin, Mashonaland Central Province, Zimbabwe

Arrest of Mr. Marunga and Mr. Ruwizha who were trying to sell a live pangolin for 3,000 US\$ and had 3 pairs of tusks at home.²

ASIA

CHINA

November 21, 2019

Menglian border post, Pu'er, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Myanmar.

Seizure in the trunk of a rickshaw of 34.9 g of pangolin scales and 100.4 g of elephant skin. Arrest of the Burmese driver.³

December 5, 2019

Guangzhou-Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 27.5 g of pangolin scales and 3 worked ivories with a total weight of 99.8 g in the trolley suitcase of a passenger arriving from Addis Ababa.⁴

VIET NAM

COFFIN NETWORK

December 10, 2019

Hai Phong Port, Viet Nam

Seizure in 3 containers from Nigeria of 1,700 kg of pangolin scales and 330 kg of raw ivory concealed in logs. The shipper and consignee are identified in the bills of lading as Mercury Resources Ltd and Pama Northern Trading Import Export Company Limited allegedly based in Hanoi.⁵



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Primates

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

October 3, 2019

Virginia, Free State Province, South Africa

Chained to an old car engine, they were wallowing in the parking lot of a collective residence. Vervet monkeys (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) were released by the SPCA and are perking up at the Riverside Wildlife Centre's specialized shelter.¹

October 10, 2019

Zorzor District, Lofa County, Liberia

Seizure of 2 young chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) from Mrs Korpo Kollie and Lorpu Lormount. The arrest follows a bushmeat seizure. They have been fined 100 US\$. Liberia's anti-poaching law is perhaps the weakest in the world. Let's hope that not all poachers register under the Liberian flag!²



REPUBLIC OF CONGO

November 28, 2019

Ouesso, Department of Sangha, Republic of Congo

Interpellation of a Congolese armed forces' member. For 2 years he has detained a mandrill (*Mandrillus sphinx*, Appendix I) in the city centre. Mandrills feed on wild fruits and insects. He was entrusted by the PALF (Projet d'Application de la Loi Faunique) to professionals from the Tchimpounga reserve.³

December 21, 2019

Enyellé, Department of Likouala, Republic of Congo

Aware of the seriousness, absurdity and criminal risks involved in his action, a man who had been holding a female orphan chimpanzee for several weeks turned him over to the authorities. The great ape was sent to the Tchimpounga chimps rescue center run by the Jane Goodall Institute in the Kouilou department.

Congomedia gives a general introduction to chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I):

"Chimpanzee are omnivorous. They eat fruits, leaves, bark, twigs, insects, termites, birds, eggs and baby birds, sometimes even other small monkeys (galagos). They use tools, like wooden sticks that they adjust to fit into a termite mound. Chimpanzees look for food in the mornings and evenings. During the day, everyone rests. At night, chimpanzees settle into their nests of leafy branches perched in the trees. They live in rain forests, and in mountain and plain forests.

They can cross rivers if necessary as they move.

"Chimpanzees form social communities of 15 to 20 individuals (sometimes up to 80 individuals). Both males and females defend the community, although it is more often the males. Only foreign females are allowed to cross the boundaries into their territory. They can live up to 60 years. Their language is diversified, with over 30 different sounds and a wide variety of mimics and postures, with a level of subtlety similar to humans. To express their emotions, they can also use pieces of wood to energetically bang on the ground or tree trunks.

"In the Republic of Congo, chimpanzees are a completely protected species, according to Decree n°6075/MDDEF / CAB dating from April 9, 2011 defining which animal species are partially or completely protected. Article 27 of law n° 37/2008 on wildlife and conservation zones, dating from November 28, 2008 stipulates that: "importing, exporting, possession and transporting completely protected species or their trophies on national territory are strictly forbidden." Penalties for breaking those rules include prison sentences of up to 5 years and fines up from 100,000 FCFA to 5 million FCFA, or 168 to 8,388 US\$."

The small female arrived at the rescue centre in a deplorable condition, was in intensive care for three weeks and now appears to be alright.⁴

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

October 7 and 14, 2019

Lwiro Primate Rehabilitation Centre, Bukavu, South Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Their families were decimated to supply bushmeat markets or pet shops. The 2 chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) who were taken hostage by their "host families" were seized by ICCN rangers (Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature) near the Epulu reserve. They were taken to safekeeping thanks to cooperation between the Virunga National Park, the Okapi Conservation Project and the Lwiro refuge. One of them had lost the use of his right eye, and the brown fur on his body reveals permanent malnutrition and severe dehydration. As time goes by and the two receive intensive, attentive care, they are learning to enjoy life once again; they play together. But there is no guarantee that the little "Felix", as he is now known, will recover full use of his eye. As for the little "Mara," the bags under her eyes are signs of mistreatment and suffering. They will eventually fade away, over just a few days time she became less and less shy with her indispensable substitute mothers.⁵



October 3, 2019, Virginia, South Africa



December 21, 2019, Enyellé, Congo
Below, 3 weeks later



October 2019, Lwiro Primate Rehabilitation Centre,
Bukavu, Democratic Republic of the Congo

December 19, 2019

Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo

It's a party! Spend New Year's Eve with a smoked baby chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) on your plate. The Beatrice Hotel and its park are in the suburbs of Kinshasa. The NGO Conserv Congo has lodged a complaint. The operator of the lodge is allegedly a regular customer of poachers' bushmeat.⁶

AMERICA

COLOMBIA

Mid-November 2019

Alcalá, Department of Valle del Cauca, Colombia

- What a relief for a white-fronted capuchin (*Cebus albifrons*, Appendix II) that has been caged for 10 years and fed with food scraps. He was transferred to the CAV (Centro de Atención y Valoración de Fauna Silvestre) in Palmira.

- Voluntary handover of a 6-month-old kinkajou (*Potos flavus*, Appendix III in Honduras) covered with wounds, collected by a peasant family who took care of him with the means at hand. He was also transferred to the Palmira CAV after treatment in a veterinary clinic.

These 2 rescues were carried out thanks to the vigilance and mediation of agents of the CVC (Corporación Autónoma Regional del Valle del Cauca).⁷

PERU

Mid-October 2019

District of Uchiza, Province of Tocache, Department of San Martín, Peru

There were 2 black spider monkeys (*Ateles chamek*, Appendix II) tied-up to the benches of a dingy roadside café. The male and female are now under observation at the Rainforest Awareness Rescue Education Center (RAREC) in Loreto.⁸

ASIA

CAMBODIA

November 1st, 2019

Sihanoukville, Sihanoukville Province, Cambodia

He was in captivity in the heart of the city! The young silvered langur (*Trachypithecus villosus*, Appendix II) has been transferred to the Phnom Tamao refuge where his aptitude for total release will be assessed.⁹

November 7, 2019

Oddar Meanchey Province, Cambodia

Release of a female pileated gibbon (*Hylobates pileatus*, Appendix I) chained by the neck and located by her vocalizations. She was taken to the Phnom Tamao Wildlife Refuge. Another positive and at the same time frustrating action as it is not sure that the captive will ever regain her survival instincts in her native forest. But she will now be cared for, watched over by vets, spared from abuse, fed according to her natural requirements and in the company of her like.¹⁰



INDIA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

October 5, 2019

Jhinjana, Shamli District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Tension in the village. A gang of rascals, Asif, Hafiz and Anees, fired at point-blank range at a harmless monkey with one of the family's weapons.¹¹

INDONESIA - ORANGUTANS

October 3, 2019

Air Pinang, South Aceh Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Exfiltration of a male orangutan aged approximately 23 years. He was isolated in plantations less than 2 km from the forest. In good physical condition, he should be released soon.¹²

October 10, 2019

Tempurukan, Ketapang Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

Evacuation of a mother aged about 20 years and her baby aged about 8 months. They were wandering in a forest plot devastated by a fire. After being examined by an International Animal Rescue (IAR) team and receiving some emergency care, they were taken to a fire-safe forest and released.¹³





November 21, 2019, Kampong Teungoh, Indonesia



December 29, 2019, Rundeng, Indonesia



December 19, 2019, Naca, Indonesia

November 5, 2019

Krueng Batee, South Aceh Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Evacuation from an oil palm plantation by firefighters, BKSDA agents and an ICO (Orangutan Information Centre) team of a 60 kg male orangutan aged about 20 years and immediate release in Mount Leuser.¹⁴



November 10, 2019

Mayak, Muara Pawan, Ketapang Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Island of Borneo, Indonesia

Transfer of an adult male orangutan that was entrenched in an oil palm plantation after the fire in his native forest and was at risk to be targeted by farm workers at any time. He was at once released into the Sentap Kancang forest where, according to the IAR and BKSDA, "Weight" (the nickname given to him in reference to his 80 kg) will find food, shelter in the treetops and a peaceful solo life. His distress had been reported to rescuers by villagers from the Orangutan Protection Unit (OPU).¹⁵

November 21, 2019

Kampung Teungoh, South Aceh Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Evacuation after a light sedation of an orangutan aged about 25. Shot in the eyes by air rifle bullets, he appears to have lost some or all of his sight. A thorough medical examination will tell more. He was roaming on the plantation's ground.¹⁶

December 9, 2019

Kumai, West Kotawaringin Regency, Central Kalimantan Province, Island of Borneo, Indonesia

Rescue in extremis of a male orangutan who has taken refuge on top of an oil palm tree in an industrial plantation. He suffers from several open lesions undoubtedly due to conflicts with humans.¹⁷

December 13, 2019

Perkebunan Marike, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Province, Island of Sumatra, Indonesia

Exfiltration of a young male locked up in a luxurious residence.¹⁸

December 19, 2019

Naca, South Aceh Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Another orangutan, a 30-year-old male, entrenched in a plantation 7 km from his forest habitat. He was perched on top of a palm tree. After anesthesia, he was examined by vets. In good form, he has been walked back to his forest thanks to the OIC, BKSDA and villagers.¹⁹

December 29, 2019

Rundeng, Subulussalam City, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Extreme emergency rescue of a female baby orangutan less than a week old whose mother is missing.²⁰

INDONESIA – EXCLUDING ORANGUTANS

October 23, 2019

Halaban, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Seizure at a villager's home of a slow loris (*Nycticebus* spp., Appendix I) which was entrusted to the Sibolangit Wildlife Refuge.²¹

MALAYSIA

October 3, 2019

Bukit Jalil, Kuala Lumpur, Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Rescue of 2 siamangs (*Symphalangus syndactylus*, Appendix I) in captivity for 3 to 4 years on the 2nd floor of a house. One of the two was wearing a diaper. As an extension of the cage, a terrace with one or two dummy trees served as a playground for the prisoners. It is a video sent by a witness who decided the Perhillitan, the Federal Territory Department of Wildlife and National Parks, to intervene. The master of the premises was out. Only his daughter and a servant were present.²²

VIET NAM

October 18, 2019

Dong Nai Province, Viet Nam

Three macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II) that were enticing onlookers and future customers are freed from the clutches of an itinerant dealer.²³

October 26, 2019

Thanh Khe District, Da Nang Municipality, Viet Nam

Seizure of 2 macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II) chained on a fake mountain in a restaurant room.²⁴

November 8, 2019

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

After 14 years in jail, a yellow-cheeked crested gibbon (*Nomascus gabriellae*, Appendix I) was voluntarily surrendered by his "owner" to the forestry officers. He will be able to live the last years of his life among his like in the Cu Chi refuge. ENV acted as mediator.²⁵

End of December 2019

Binh Duong Province, Viet Nam

The yellow-cheeked gibbon (*Nomascus gabriellae*, Appendix I) was used as an attraction in a coffee shop. He was seized and taken to a shelter. Animals that are dumped for several years among human beings never return to their natural surroundings. These numerous rescues are not entirely satisfactory. But they do act as a deterrent to the market for wild pets and alleviate the animals' discomfort.²⁶

EUROPE GERMANY

October 14, 2019
Mienenbittel, Lower Saxony State, Germany

Horror and amazement in an animal testing laboratory in Mienenbittel near Hamburg. The NGOs Soko Tierschutz and Cruelty Free International reveal the hurtful and humiliating postures to which macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II) and other residents are subjected. Beagles, when not in the clutches of the torturers, bleed on the tiles of their kennels with bars. Animal experiments, see "On the Trail" n° 26, pages 54 and 59.²⁷



FRANCE

October 20, 2019
Les Adrets-de-l'Estérel, Department of Var, France

Capture by the fire brigade, who demonstrated agility and composure in the Maures forest, of an adult barbary macaque (*Macaca sylvanus*, Appendix I) who had been reported for several months by hikers. It is planned to transfer him to the Fréjus Zoo. Either he was abandoned by his owner or he escaped. No one has come forward to report his loss.²⁸

Saiga Antelopes

ASIA

CHINA

October 25, 2019
Shenzhen, Border with Hong Kong, Guangdong Province.

Seizure of a saiga antelope horn (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II). 154 g.¹

October 30, 2019
Erenhot border post, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China. Border with Mongolia.

Seizure of 15 saiga antelope's horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) taped to the abdomen of the Chinese traveller.²

November 29, 2019
Hong Kong International Airport, China

This is the largest seizure of saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) horns in Hong Kong in the last 5 years, amounting to 50 kg with an estimated value of 50,000 HK\$ or 64,000 US\$ and approximately 1,000 US\$/kg. One saiga horn weighs on average 100 g, so the seizure represents approximately 250 poached male saiga. The traveller was from Moscow.³



Guanacos and Vicunas

AMERICA

ARGENTINA

Mid-October 2019
RP4 and RP61, Province of Chubut, Argentina

Seizure of skinned guanaco (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II).¹

Early December 2019
Province of Chubut, Argentina

Dismantling of a guanaco meat gang (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II). Interception of a pick-up truck that at daybreak had long been making the war of nerves with the local police. Seizure in the back of several quarters of guanaco followed by several seizures in butcher shops and restaurants in Trelew. All the pieces of meat put end to end correspond to the poaching of about 40 guanacos. The carcasses were cut up on a farm near José de San Martín, 425 km from Trelew.²

BOLIVIA

Early October 2019
Near Colcha K, Province of Nor Lípez, Department of Potosí, Bolivia

Village rebellion. Citizen arrest of 2 poachers and handing over to the police. Firing of their motorcycles. In the looters' bags were knives and 10 vicuña woolly hides (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix II). An accomplice was arrested during the night by a police patrol.³

PERU

Mid-November 2019
Province of Candarave, Department of Tacna, Peru

Belated discovery of 6 rounded up skeletons of vicuñas (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix II). They were encircled by individuals on motorcycles, shot and stripped of their fleeces. Vicuña wool sells for between 350 € and 900 € per kilo, or between 380 US\$ and 1,000 US\$ on the international market.⁴

Felines

"On the Trail" n°27 The value of felines or felines parts on the black market, according to media or official sources

Tigers	p.70
Lions	p.73
Leopards	p.75
Cheetahs	p.77
Clouded leopards	p.77
Leopard cats	p.78
Jungle cats	p.78
Jaguars	p.78
Jaguarundis	p.78
Oncillas	p.78
Ocelots	p.79
Margays	p.79
Pumas	p.79
Servals	p.79
Lynx	p.81
Multi-felines	p.81

Continent	Country	Animal/part	US\$	Ref.
Africa	South Africa	Whole skeleton of a lion	1,313	13
		A live cheetah cub and lion bones	27,000	41
Asia	India (West Bengal)	110 bones, the skin and the skull of a tiger	45,400	2
	India (Himachal Pradesh)	Leopard skin	3,525	31
	India (Maharashtra)	Leopard skin	14,100	35
	Indonesia	Tiger canines and bones	1,213 (US\$/kg)	4
	Pakistan	Leopard hide	500	61
	Viet Nam	Whole skeleton of a lion	65,000	13

TIGERS

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

ASIA

INDIA

October 10, 2019

Nagpur, Nagpur District, State of Maharashtra, India

Hope. "Sahebrao", a 9-year-old male tiger was caught in a trap in 2012, near Chandrapur, when he was still just a cub. He has been convalescing ever since at the Gorewada Zoo. In 2013, there was no other option but to amputate part of his front left paw. Sahebrao suffers and cries out every time he takes a step. In case of success, he will be the first tiger in the world to get an artificial paw. Veterinary and orthopedic experts in India and at the University of Leeds, in the UK, are leading the project. Sahebrao was anesthetized for x-rays. Measurements were taken with millimetric accuracy in order to adjust the artificial paw which should reduce 99% of the pain that afflicts him when he walks. The main question is whether he will accept his new paw. Tigers are known for their intolerance for foreign bodies. They try to get rid of the tiniest of them, such as ticks.

Failure. The carbon fiber artificial paw weighed 1.8 kg and was attached on January 18, 2020. Before he was even completely awake, Sahebrao began instinctively contracting his muscles as if he were again trying to get out of a trap, like in 2012, and the false paw quickly detached.¹



October 15, 2019

Hasimara, Alipurduar District, State of West Bengal, India

110 bones, the skin and the skull. That is all that is left of the tiger who disappeared in the Manas National Park.

They were seized from the homes of 2 representatives of the Bhutanese mafia. The cops were on their trail. In June 2019, they intercepted an ambulance in Srirampur (see "On the Trail," n°25 p. 62). There was no patient in the emergency vehicle, but on the phones of the 4 passengers and the driver, WCCB investigators found photos of the tiger skin and the bones. According to the "ambulance drivers," the skin and bones were hidden in the Chirang district (in the state of Assam). After that, the net began to tighten around the criminals. The 2 Bhutanese citizens were arrested in Hasimara, 180 km west of Chirang. They had planned to pass the loot on to another middleman based in Katmandu, in Nepal. The smuggling operation was to take place soon. According to the duo's initial confession, the transaction including the skull, was worth 3.2 million rupees, or around 45,400 US\$. Ambulances, and sometimes even hearses, are often used by emergency wildlife trafficking services.²

Tigers and Manas National Park, see "On the Trail," n°12 p. 58, n°15 p. 60, n°18 p. 53, n°25 p. 62.



October 15, 2019, Hasimara, India. A truly Royal tiger, from his head to the tip of his tail, he was 4.3 m long.



December 7, 2019, Teluk Binjai, Indonesia

December 5, 2019
Kanha Tiger Reserve, Mandla District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

On Tuesday morning, a forestry officers' patrol was alerted by the bad smell. They quickly tracked down the carcass of a tiger. Six villagers from Manori and Bhamori are in custody. They were setting traps in the reserve to catch deer or wild boar. They regularly survey them. Last week, they found a dead tiger in one of them. They dismantled the electrical wires and stashed the batteries and then they threw the tiger a little further out on the edge of the reserve.³



INDONESIA

December 7, 2019
Teluk Binjai, Dumai City, Riau Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Seizure of a tiger skin and 4 fetuses in plastic jars. Three arrests, MY, 49 years old; his wife, SS, 42 years old; an accomplice, S, 44 years old. MY was in contact with the poachers. SS was the gang's financier and the one who found the middlemen and the final buyers. The fetuses were cut from a tigress poached on the Muda peninsula, across from the regency of Indragiri Hilir and of Pelalawan. The canines and bones were sold in the regency of Solok for 17 million rupees, or 1,213 US\$/kg. Two accomplices were arrested in the Pangkalan Lesung sub-district. They were in possession of a fragment of skin. An investigation is underway. The gang was uncovered through confidential information. There may be international extensions.⁴

MALAYSIA

OPERATION BERSEPADU KHAZANAH
November 2, 2019

Kampung Bunut, Kelantan State, Malaysia

Seizure at midnight at a senior official's house of 3 skins and 2 tiger claws.⁵

VIET NAM

November 18, 2019

Near the Cau Treo border post, Ha Tinh Province, Viet Nam. Border with Laos.

Instead of stopping at the roadside checkpoint on the A8 national road, the 2 men on a moped fled and threw a package into the roadside. Inside, there were 2 tiger cubs, a little stunned but not injured. They were rushed to Save Vietnam's Wildlife.⁶

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

REPEATED OFFENSE

November 13, 2019
Franklin Township, State of New Jersey, United States of America

Conviction of Loren Varga, aged 62, to one day in prison and a 1,500 US\$ fine. Living in Franklin Township, New Jersey, he had purchased a tiger rug in Pennsylvania and smuggled it into New Jersey in violation of the Endangered Species Act and the Lacey Act. In 2018, Varga had failed in a first attempt and received a warning from the US Fish and Wildlife Service. There are wild hide addicts like that.⁷



EUROPE

POLAND

From 24 November 2019

Koroszczyń, Lublin Region, Poland. Border with Belarus.

The horse truck was impeccable (see photo), decorated with an Italian flag. From the outside, it looked like it was taking well-groomed virtuoso horses to an elegant horse show accompanied by their professional stablemen.

Inside the truck, as they hit the road, the distress and tension were already palpable: 10 tigers in cages, with just a few kilos of rotting meat and a bucket of water as travel provisions. On October 22, 2019, the convoy left Latina, a town 70 km south of Rome renowned for its annual circus festival. The final destination was the Republic of Dagestan in Russia, over 5000 km away. The harmless-looking special convoy crossed the borders into Austria, the Czech Republic and Poland, undisturbed. On Saturday, October 26, they were stopped by Belarussian customs officers, near Brest. The customs officers were suspicious about the CITES certificates presented by the 2 Italian drivers, Marco A. and Alessio D. The documents supposedly guaranteed that authorization had been granted to export the 10 tigers to a zoo in Dagestan. It was not a commercial transaction, the 10 tigers were "a gift." The truck and its cargo were sent back to Poland. The poor tigers were caught in a political and administrative mess. When the caretakers from the Poznań Zoo arrived, they discovered a nightmare in the trailer. "The tigers were thirsty, covered with excrements, burned by their own urine, their eyes expressionless." Nine of them appeared lifeless. The tenth was dead. Seven of the survivors were taken to the Poznań Zoo. They arrived during the night on Thursday, October 31. The other 2 were sent to the Czulchow Zoo in northern Poland.

An in-depth report by the Polish television station TVN24 revealed that in Dagestan, there is no zoo. The Derbent zoo, on the Caspian Sea was closed because of illegal trafficking and animal abuse. The TVN24 team met and filmed a certain G. Montico who calls himself a broker in circus and zoo animals, with connections in Italy, Spain and France. He claims that the Dagestan tiger shipment had been permitted by veterinarians. The vets have refused to comment. During their investigation, the journalists suggested the possibility that the tigers were in fact destined to be killed in Dagestan in a secret slaughterhouse and then smuggled to China as skin, teeth and bones.

The 10 tigers' journey toward death, crossing the entire European Union all the way to Russia, reveals the shady, cruel and uncertain fate of animals from bankrupt circuses and zoos.⁸

Tigers Russia-China, see "On the Trail" n°2 p. 39, n°3 p. 41, n°4 p. 53, n°7 p. 56, n°8 p. 52, n°11 p. 50, n°19 p. 130, n°20 p. 129, n°26 p. 71.



LIONS

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

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

October 1st, 2019

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

Seizure of 12 boxes containing 342 kg of lion bones bound for Malaysia. An arrest thanks to HAWKS, Green Scorpions and Crime Intelligence, 3 elite units rarely brought together.⁹

October 25, 2019

Rietvlei Nature Reserve, Gauteng Province, South Africa

This is the second massacre on the reserve. The paws and jaws of both male and female lions were cut off. It's easier to rip off the jaws than it is to rip off the fangs. The brute beasts knew the place well. Three of the victims belonged to the zoo of Pretoria (cf. "On the Trail" n°19 p.65).¹⁰



November 5, 2019

Cullinan, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Arrest of Yin Li for possession of lion bones.¹¹

November 8, 2019

Hartbeespoort, North West Province, South Africa

Poisoning of 4 white lions at Chameleon Village Lion Park. Dogs in the neighborhood barked and woke up the managers. The crazy muti men had time to kill, they didn't have time to maim. A traditional Limpopo tradipractor repeats anonymously that lion organs are used in the composition of powerful "mutis", potions that keep enemies away and protect from bad spells.¹²



November 17, 2019

Brits, North West Province, South Africa

A male and 4 beheaded lionesses with their paws amputated. The whole skeleton of a lion would sell for 1,313 US\$ on the black market in South Africa and 50 times more in Viet Nam. Teeth and bones are the most sought after in Asia. The genitals, heads, jaws and claws are sought after by witchcraft and quackery known and rooted in South Africa as muti.¹³



November 26, 2019

Thabazimbi, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Brief arrest of Thomas Anders, German passport and operator of the Makuto Hunting Ranch. Seizure of 4 firearms, hundreds of rounds of ammunition, a couple of breeding lions and 2 lion cubs. Anders sells hunting licenses on his ranch. The lions are shot on shelves like at the fun fair. He also engages in wildlife events, a rapidly developing industry in South Africa and around the world. It was he who sold to a Cape Town party organizer the Simba lion cub that had landed at a private home to celebrate a little girl's birthday and who, at the end of his 6-month life, had been poisoned by a CapeNature veterinarian (see "On the Trail" n° 26 p. 64).¹⁴

NIGERIA

November 15 and 18, 2019

Lagos, Nigeria

Seizure in front of a school and a nursery at the home of an Indian expatriate at 229 Muri Okunola Street of a lion cub aged about 2 years and employed as a security guard. After anesthesia, he was taken to the Lekki Zoo.¹⁵

ZIMBABWE

November 23, 2019

Victoria Falls, Northern Matabeleland Province, Zimbabwe

A wildlife warden, nurses, a police officer and a soldier are among the suspects. The gang had killed or organized the killing of a lion and his beheading in a reserve exclusively open to photographic safaris. Three weeks later, they tried to sell the stuffed lion's head and skin to a tourist who was used as bait. Behind the scenes, the police were on the lookout.¹⁶

AMERICA

MEXICO

End of November 2019

Tijuana, State of Baja California, Mexico

Release of a lion cub. He was locked up in a wooden box with a few air holes in it. He was spotted thanks to the vigilance of sniffer dogs from a logistic platform. He was taken to the Ensenada Zoo to await further investigation. He had been shipped from the state of Guanajuato more than 2,000 km away.¹⁷

December 13, 2019

Santiago, State of Nuevo León, Mexico

Rescue by Profepa and Protección Civil agents of a lion cub forgotten in a cardboard box inside a car and brought to the attention of the police by several passers-by. He was transferred to a veterinary clinic where he was found to be unwounded and without external signs of disease. His fangs and claws were not torn off by the owner, who tried to retrieve him without producing any documents on his origin. The lion cub was returned to the Pastora Zoological Park in Guadalupe.¹⁸



October 1st, 2019, OR Tambo International Airport, South Africa



November 8, 2019, Hartbeespoort, South Africa



December 2019, Phnom Penh Int. Airport, Cambodia



End of November 2019, Tijuana, Mexico



December 31, 2019, Trets, France



November 4, 2019, Marseille, France



Nov. 4, 2019, Lyon-Saint Exupéry Int. Airport, France

LIONS - FOLLOWED

ASIA

CAMBODIA

December 2019

Phnom Penh International Airport, Phnom Penh Province, Cambodia

Seizure of 281 kg of bones from South Africa. Pre-trial custody of 2 Vietnamese citizens.¹⁹

INDIA

October 18, 2019

Chalala and Mithapur, Amreli District, State of Gujarat, India

Death by strangulation in a trap of a subadult male lion in the buffer zone of the Gir sanctuary created in 1965 (cf. "On the Trail" n°4 p.57, n°13 p.63, n°15 p.66, n°23 p.84, n°25 p.64). Two farmers, Vijay Agrodiya and Jagu Waghela, are heard by the police. The population of Asian lions was estimated at 523 in 2015. The next inventory is expected within a few months. In 2018, at least 24 lions died from an epidemic of canine distemper virus.²⁰



EUROPE

FRANCE

November 4, 2019

Marseille, Department of Bouches-du-Rhône, France

Conviction of a motor mechanic who in October 2018 held a lion cub aged 3 weeks to one year in prison and a customs fine of 3,000 € (3,280 US\$). He is known to the justice for theft, violence and parental abduction. The little lioness today [in November 2019], 11 months old, is now in Africa where dark clouds are also gathering over her like.²¹



November 4, 2019

Lyon-Saint Exupéry International Airport, Rhône Department, France

Transfer by plane to Port-Elizabeth, South Africa, of 4 lion cubs seized in October and November 2018 in an apartment in the Paris region, in a car on the Champs Elysées, in a garage in Marseille and abandoned by his owner at the gates of the Amnéville zoo in eastern France (see "On the Trail" n°12 p.56, n°19 p.67 and n°23 p.8). Initially collected by the French Foundation 30 Million d'Amis and the zoo of Saint-Martin-en-Plaine, they will join the Shamwari reserve in South Africa under the supervision of the English NGO Born Free.²²

December 31, 2019

Trets, Department of Bouches-du-Rhône, France

Abandonment of 2 cubs in cat cages in front of the gates of an animal park. They are 4 and 5 months old, one male and one female. They were entrusted to Tonga Terre d'Accueil in Saint-Martin-la-Plaine in the Loire, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region. They can never be returned to nature. They are too impregnated by the humanity. At best, they will end their life in South Africa in an enclosure. American rappers and other entertainers are responsible for this fashion, which consists of sheltering tigers and lion cubs or feeding them in amusement parks in Thailand.²³

KOSOVO

November 20, 2019

Zegra, Municipality of Gjilan, Gjilan District, Kosovo

A caged lion in front of a restaurant has been rescued. No national administration, not even the customs bureau, has received an application for importation or ownership of a lion since Kosovo became independent in February 2008. The district mayor and other institutional representatives were present for the restaurant inauguration, and were not alarmed in the slightest by the big cat's presence. According to the Animals Rights Foundation, the restaurant exhibits chimpanzees and other wild animals temporarily. Food and domesticated wild animals go together in the Kosovo. In 2016, the government decided to tackle the problem, and the army seized 20 "restaurant bears" who were used to attract customers. They were all suffering from physical and mental illness, and would definitely not be capable of surviving if they were released in the woods. In the spring of 2014, Four Paws opened an 8 hectares sanctuary for them (see "On the Trail" n°4 p. 61 and n°25 p. 74).²⁴

LEOPARDS

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

AFRICA

REPUBLIC OF CONGO

16-17 October 2019

Dolisie, Department of Niari, Republic of Congo

Seizure of a leopard skin and teeth in the hands of a smuggler.

Arrest of the big shot. He used to provide with skins in Gabon. The 2 men are of Congolese nationality. The operation was carried out with the support of PALF (Project for the Application of Law for Fauna).²⁵

SENEGAL

December 24, 2019

Kédougou, Kédougou Region, Senegal

Arrest of a man in possession of a leopard cub skin. Kédougou is known to be the hub for transboundary wildlife trafficking between Senegal (Niokolo Koba National Park is nearby), southern Mali and northern Guinea.²⁶

ASIA

INDIA

October 1st, 2019**Nagothane, Raigad District, State of Maharashtra, India**

Seizure of an adult leopard skin in the hands of 6 men led by Ramchandra Hirwe.²⁷

October 12, 2019

Mandleshwar, Dewas District, Madhya Pradesh State, India

Acting on tip-off, forestry officers questioned Gunnu alias Azaad, a farm worker in an ashram, about the alleged case of an electrocuted leopard. Azaad came forward. He first gave the names of 2 fences, one of which, Chhotu Banjara, was immediately arrested. He took the investigators to the place where the body of the leopard had been buried 3 weeks before. Bones and skin fragments awaiting commercialization have been recovered.²⁸



FAMILY AFFAIRS

November 4 and 5, 2019

Golaghat, Golaghat District, and Tezpur, Sonitpur District, State of Assam, India

Seizure of meat in a freezer and offal in a pond close by Emin Dhanowar and Subhit Tetey's home aged 28 and 30 and the skin of a leopard at Jiten Kerketa's home, aged 23, a family member.²⁹

November 13, 2019

Usgao, North Goa District, Goa State, India

"It's becoming more and more common." Foresters are concerned about the proliferation of traps. This time, they managed to rescue a female leopard that had become entangled in a moped brake cable stretched between 2 ruined stone walls behind a house.³⁰



November 16, 2019

Hapirpur District, Himachal Pradesh State, India

A leopard skin was seized. Two arrests. They reportedly "found" it in the forest of Balarha. They wanted to sell it for 250,000 rupees (3,525 US\$).³¹

November 17, 2019

Kinhi, Chandrapur District, State of Maharashtra, India

By chance finding by a patrol of a fatally wounded leopard in a trap. Information gathering led to the arrest of 5 people, 2 of whom are day labourers working occasionally for the local divisional forestry officers. They are in the habit of setting traps for herbivores and claim to have inadvertently captured the carnivore. As a precautionary measure and sensing the search was looming, they had thrown all their traps into a pond.³²



November 19, 2019

Giddalur, Prakasam District, State of Andhra Pradesh, India

Seizure of a skin and 3 leopard claws. He was about a year old. Nine arrests including one police officer, Srinivas Rao, who denies any responsibility but investigators maintain that he acted as an intermediary. "Some are shepherds, some are goatherders. One among them even studied hotel management in Malaysia" said the forestry officer in charge of the case.³³

November 22, 2019

Kannerimukku, Nilgiri District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Agony and death of a female leopard about 4 years old caught in a strangler trap. She was burned on the spot by the forest officers.³⁴



November 23, 2019

Jogeshwari, Suburban Mumbai District, State of Maharashtra, India

He lives in Devgad. He used to come to Mumbai to sell leopard skin. After more than 300 km by bus and on foot, he got caught in the suburbs of the megacity. The value of the skin is estimated at one million rupees (14,100 US\$). The man is in custody for 7 days.³⁵

December 11, 2019

Umarda, Adilabad District, Telangana State, India

Arrests of Chavan Namdev, Chavan Krishna, Sidam Nago Rao and P. Nagender. Flight of 2 accomplices. They had laid medium-voltage power lines on the edge of a sorghum field to, they say, prevent incursions by herbivores. A leopard was fatally electrocuted. To stay out of trouble, the suspects burned his body after pulling out 9 claws and 7 vibrissae. They were found at Namdev's house. As a reminder, only low voltages are allowed from solar panels, the goal being to repel wild animals without killing them.³⁶



LEOPARD - FOLLOWED

December 13, 2019
Waghdhar, Wharda District,
State of Maharashtra, India

Discovery of a decapitated and pawless leopard on the Wardha-Mandwa road. Autopsy shows he was electrocuted. Long-line burns were found on his trunk by the forensic veterinarian and there was no evidence of bullet impact. The investigation quickly traced the case back to 4 villagers. They had captured the cat in the Navegaon-Nagzira tiger reserve and had thrown the body on the road side to drive away suspicions.³⁷



December 27, 2019
Khandap, Barmer District, State of Rajasthan,
India

Talking big and selfies caused their downfall. A band of 4 poachers was tracking down a leopard that had been reported for several months by villagers but never observed by rangers. They spotted him a dozen days ago, shot him to death and began to tear off his claws, teeth and skin by taking pictures of each other. As proud as Lucifer, they even spread the pictures on social networks... and were pinpointed by the locals. One of them was arrested today by the police. The three others are on the run but well identified.³⁸

NEPAL

October 26, 2019
Musikot, Rukum District, Province No. 5, Nepal
Chhaya BK alias Arjun, 21, and Ganesh Nepali, 19, were walking along the Mid-Hill Highway. The police decided to conduct an identity check. In their white plastic bag was a leopard skin.³⁹

EUROPE

FRANCE

November 14 and 19, 2019
Armentières, Département du Nord, France
The black panther walking on the roofs and gutters of the Rue de l'Avenir is nowhere to be found (see "On the Trail" n°26, p.68). Captured gently by the firemen and hosted in the zoo of Maubeuge where he was stolen, he belonged to Nordine Barka. A lover of exotic animals, he had already been involved in the illegal possession of a golden-bellied capuchin (*Sapajus xanthosternos*, Appendix II) that had escaped from his mother's home and was perched in a tree. He had been sentenced in absentia in this case to three years' imprisonment. The local press investigated the matter and found that Nordine Barka had a criminal record for violence and armed robbery. Possession of exotic animals, drug trafficking and delinquency often go hand in hand all over the world.⁴⁰

CHEETAHS

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

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

December 4, 2019
Kuruman, Northern Cape Province, South Africa
Appearance of a 42-year-old man, a Botswana's national, who was trying to sell a live cheetah cub and lion bones, the cumulative value of the loot is estimated by the South African police at 400,000 rand, or just over 27,000 US\$.⁴¹

SOMALIA

4 and 18-20 October 2019
Somaliland, Somalia
- There were 12 cheetah cubs around 2 months old in a starving condition on board a vessel intercepted by the Navy off Somaliland. Four died a few hours after being brought ashore and 6 others a few days later. The 2 survivors are in the care of the Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF). The cheetahs have to be breastfed for 3 months. The prognosis is reserved. On board the boat which was heading towards the Middle East, 4 men were arrested.
- Seizure of 11 cheetah cubs by officers of the Department of the Environment and Rural Development. They were turned over to the CCF. The prognosis is favourable.⁴²

CLOUDED LEOPARDS

ASIA

INDONESIA

October 2, 2019
Garot, Aceh Besar Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia
He was trying to sell 2 clouded leopard kittens (*Neofelis diardi*, Appendix I) for next to nothing (600 rupees or 42 US\$ to be precise). The deal was closed. The 2 marvels were in a big package for instant noodles. The buyer was an undercover cop. The man only known as HR is under lock and key. He stole the kittens from their mother, whose fate in the Babhrot region is unknown.⁴³

BENGAL LEOPARD CATS

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

ASIA

VIET NAM

Early December 2019

Vinh Long, Vinh Long Province, Viet Nam

Rescue thanks to 2 tips of a leopard cat that had just been trapped and caged up. Intervention of the local officials and release into the wild in the following hours.⁴⁴

End of December 2019

Binh Duong Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of 2 leopard cats jailed in the middle of potted plants.⁴⁵

JUNGLE CATS

ASIA

INDIA

November 23, 2019

Gocharan, South 24-Parganas District, West Bengal State, India

Lynching of an adult jungle cat (*Felis chaus*, Appendix II).

Jungle cats are 60 to 75 cm long, plus 25 to 35 cm tail. They feed on small rodents and frogs. They are said to be fond of peafowls. They trot in reedbeds and on the banks of rivers and marshes, in grain fields and weeds.⁴⁶

JAGUARS

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

AMERICA

BRAZIL

Mid-November 2019

Cocalinho, State of Mato Grosso, Brazil

The remains of the 3 jaguars, a mother and 2 cubs, appeared on social networks. The video was shot by a woman congratulating the poacher, smiling, called by his nickname Carrapicho. The crime scene has been located. It's a farmhouse that's difficult to access. Hunting dogs were probably involved. The jaguars were resting in a tree. All 3 suspects are on the run.⁴⁷

PERU

November 29, 2019

District of Perené, Province of Chanchamayo, Department of Junín, Peru

Rescue of 2 baby jaguars less than 2 weeks old in a shed. They had been captured in the forest by the son of the family. No news of the mother. The adult jaguars are being poached at the request of some representatives of the Chinese community. Tooth and bone trafficking is developing between Peru and other countries in South America and Asia. The 2 victims are under permanent observation and milkfeeding at the zoo of La Inmaculada in Lima. Jaguar teeth, cf. "On the Trail" n°13 p.58, n°20 p.117.⁴⁸

JAGUARUNDIS

AMERICA

MEXICO

October 30, 2019

Santa María Huazolotitlán, State of Oaxaca, Mexico

Two jaguarundis (*Herpailurus yagouaroundi*, Appendix I) were taking refuge under a tree. They have been spotted by a farmer. They are about 4 months old. They were transferred by Profepa agents to the Pachuca de Soto shelter, Hidalgo. The mother has vanished.

Jaguarundis live on the edge of the forests. Before the Spanish conquest, the Indians tamed them to hunt rodents. They feed on rabbits, frogs and fish. They're good swimmers. In size and shape, they look like martens.⁴⁹

ONCILLAS

COLOMBIA

AMERICA

Early November 2019

Floridablanca, Department of Santander, Colombia

Rescue of an oncilla (*Leopardus tigrinus*, Appendix I) aged about 6 months roving into a residential complex. Discarded by his "masters" who were lovers of decorative pets, the "tigrillo" was examined by the veterinarian of the CDMB (Corporación Autónoma Regional para la Defensa de la Meseta de Bucaramanga). He is underweight but in good general health. It is envisaged to release him in a natural habitat after a period of re-training in the wild. The lower Rionegro is favoured by experts.⁵⁰

OCELOTS

Ocelots (*Leopardus pardalis*) are listed under CITES Appendix I.

AMERICA

COLOMBIA

November 12, 2019

Anchicayá National Protected Forest Reserve, Department of Valle del Cauca, Colombia

An ocelot caught in a particularly vicious trap hung upside down in the branches of a tree in the reserve. He was rescued in time by agents of the CVC (Corporación Autónoma Regional del Valle del Cauca). Relatively favourable prognosis despite a fracture and infection of the left hind paw.⁵¹



BELIZE

Mid-November 2019

Toledo District, Belize

A decapitated ocelot was found this morning in the city's rubbish dump: trafficking of teeth to Asia. A jaguar in August had already been found dead on the roadside between Georgetown and San Roman. His head was toothless: canine teeth trafficking to Asia.⁵²

MARGAYS

ASIA

CHINA

November 18, 2019

Shanghai Pudong International Airport, Pudong District, Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China

Seizure of 6 calibrated furs of 120 cm x 60 cm in a package supposed to transport rabbit skins. On examination and after expert appraisal, the "rabbit skins" sewn together were from 12 skins (30 cm x 20 cm) of margay (*Leopardus wiedii*, Appendix I).

Margay, cf. "On the Trail" n°5 p. 117, n°7 p. 46, n°8 p. 98, n°13 p. 106, n°19 p. 75 and 122, n°21 p. 68, n°22 p. 69 and 115, n°23 p. 151-152, n°24 p. 86, n°25 p. 69, n°26 p. 71.⁵³

PUMAS

Pumas (*Puma concolor*) are listed under CITES Appendix II, with the exception of the subspecies *Puma concolor costaricensis* which is listed under Appendix I.

AMERICA

ARGENTINA

October 4, 2019

Mataderos, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Rescuing a puma cub about 6 months old in the process of "mascotting". He had been "gathered" near Santiago del Estero. The new pets of the pampas are becoming more and more fashionable in Buenos Aires. The fate of the mother is unknown. Behind the young pets is the spectre of the poached parents.⁵⁴

BRAZIL

December 19, 2019

Jacobina, Bahia State, Brazil

It was not possible to save from death a young puma wounded by bullets and in emergency transported to a vet clinic by the rescue team.⁵⁵

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

October 3, 2019

Ventura County, State of California, United States of America

He's 60 years old. He is sentenced to 30 days in prison and 240 hours of community service in an animal shelter. He shot and killed with a bullet to the head an 8-year-old adult mountain lion, resident of the Santa Susana mountains northwest of Los Angeles, known by experts as code name P-38. P-38 is credited with the co-production of four litters.⁵⁶



SERVALS

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

October 13, 2019

Fairfield County, State of Ohio, United States of America

Escape of a serval (*Leptailurus serval*, Appendix II) unknown from county records. He has broken free the home of the Ezekiel family whose son, Elliott, is the running back of the Dallas Cowboys. The feline was shot by the sheriff.⁵⁷



October 4, 2019, Somaliland, Somalia



October 4, 2019, Mataderos, Argentina



Leopardus wiedii



December 4, 2019, Kuruman, South Africa



Nov. 18, 2019, Shanghai Pudong, China

LYNX

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

EUROPE

SPAIN

Early October and November 2019

Province of Toledo, Autonomous Community of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain

The reintroduction of lynx into the province, where hunting, its pomp and its income are part of history and culture, is perilous. Ecologistas en Acción counts 4 lynxes dead by bullets or traps since the beginning of the year. The same increase in lynx poaching is also observed in Andalusia and Extremadura.⁵⁸

End of November 2019

Toledo, Autonomous Community of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain

Discovery in a hunting reserve of a female lynx wounded to death by bullets and 4 days later of one of her 4 kittens. The 3 other orphans are being actively sought. Guardia Civil officers fear the worst. A hunter has been arrested. He claims to have mistaken the lynx for a fox.⁵⁹

MULTI-FELINES

AFRICA

BURKINA FASO

December 18, 2019

Fada N'Gourma, Gourma Province, Eastern Region, Burkina Faso

Sentencing of 2 traffickers whose names have not yet been provided (see "On the Trail" n° 23 p.93) to 12 months' suspended prison, to one million CFA francs each or 839 US\$ in damages to the State of Burkina Faso, and to 3,250,000 CFA francs or 54,32 US\$ to the Judicial Treasury Agency for the wildlife protection funds. They had been caught in flagrante delicto while attempting to market 3 leopard skins and 2 lion skins. Local NGOs consider the convictions to be ridiculous.⁶⁰



ASIA

PAKISTAN

Mid-October 2019

Islamabad, Federal Territory of Islamabad, Pakistan

M. Hassan, 31 years old, is not just anybody. He has an IT degree from the University of Rawalpindi. As such, this father of two little girls applied for a job with the anti-cybercrime brigade at the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). While he waited for a reply, he sold leopard skins on line. Spotted by his possible future colleagues, he was taken for a ride. He lured two supposed buyers to his hideaway in the mountains where they negotiated the purchase of a leopard hide for 80,000 rupees, or 500 US\$. He received a 15,000 rupees down-payment and they agreed to a delivery point in Islamabad. Saadul Hassan was then arrested red-handed transporting and selling a specimen threatened with extinction. Hanging in his clandestine fur shop, there were about ten leopard (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) and leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix I or II) skins.⁶¹

Wolves and Jackals

ASIA

CAMBODIA

December 16, 2019

Phnom Penh, Phnom Penh Province, Cambodia

Seizure after anaesthesia of a caged up golden jackal (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III in India) in a Buddhist temple exposed to the curiosities and humiliations of the faithful. He was transported to the Phnom Tmao Wildlife Refuge.¹



OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

Early November 2019

Perth, State of Western Australia, Australia

Seizure of a northwestern wolf (*Canis lupus occidentalis*) pelt with snout and paws purchased from a taxidermist by a Perth resident while on vacation in Canada and shipped by parcel post.²

Bears

AMERICA

CANADA

October 19, 2019

Havre-Saint-Pierre, Province of Quebec, Canada

An American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) wounded to death by poacher's gunfire managed to escape before slumping to the ground and being discovered as a carcass by Hydro-Québec workers. SOS Poaching, 1 800 463-2191.¹

November 5, 2019

Parry Sound, Province of Ontario, Canada

Jung He and Bong each held a gall bladder from an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) poached in the forests in their medicine boxes. The woman and the man were fined 4,584 US\$.²



November 7, 2019

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada

Conviction of Justin Elias to one year of probation, a fine equal to 1,131 US\$ and 15 days of community service for having deliberately killed a polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*, Appendix II) on an Arctic island in June 2019 without being in self-defence (cf. "On the Trail" n°25 p.72), whereas with a comparse his initial project was to hunt white whales with a rifle. The bear's skin had been seized from his home. He had not yet sold it. On the black market, a stuffed polar bear sells for 40 to 50,000 US\$.³



November 20, 2019

Saskatoon, Province of Saskatchewan, Canada

Lianhua Chi, 55 years old, has been sentenced to pay a fine of 29,120 CA\$, or 22,000 US\$, for having purchased from poachers and sold in Toronto and in China gallbladders and other body parts from American black bears (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II). She used her restaurant, Jeju Korean BBQ, as a cover. She bought gallbladders for around 300 CA\$, or 229 US\$ each, and bears' paws for around 25 CA\$, or 19 US\$, from poachers and licensed hunters. With her sister's help, she dried and ground up the gallbladders in her kitchen, and sent them to Toronto by parcel post, or hid them in her luggage when she travelled to China. The investigation began in 2016 when a black bear was found eviscerated in a dump in Sandy Bay, north of Saskatchewan. The cadaver still had



its pelt, which did not correspond to local poachers' usual practices. The police soon learned that the bear's gallbladder had landed in a restaurant run by a certain Li Gen Han and his wife Li Luanshuan. Presenting themselves as bear hunters, the police began to patronize the restaurant and ask for used cooking oil to use as bears' bait in the forest. After that introduction and once cordial relations had been established, Li Gen Han asked the so-called bear hunters if there was any way to get, or to buy, the paws and gallbladders of their trophies. One thing led to another, and the police ended up on the trail of Lianhua Chi, Li Gen Han's aunt. In their case, Li Gen Han and his wife were also sentenced to pay a fine of 30,000 CA\$, or 23,000 US\$.⁴

ASIA

INDONESIA

20, 25 November and 17 January 2020

Sungai Nanjung and Kendawangan, Ketapang Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia



A Malayan sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I) has been freed. Although one paw was amputated, the experts at IAR (International Animal Rescue) believe that his vital energy and capacity to adapt should enable him to survive. A villager claimed that he was hounded by bears who came and stole his honey, so he set up a trap in a garden shed. The visiting bear got his paw caught in a nylon snare and tried for several hours to get free, digging the wound deeper as he struggled. Neighbors alerted the BKSDA, who arrived on the scene with backup from IAR. The victim was anesthetized with a blowgun. He was then transferred to an IAR clinic. There was no other solution but to amputate the crushed paw. After a month and a half of convalescence and behavioral observation for the crippled bear, the staff decided to release him in a relatively safe forest in Kendawangan, about sixty kilometers from Sungai Nanjung, where he had undergone his ordeal. "The real issue is the low level of public awareness and understanding of protected wildlife, as well as the conversion of the forest into plantations and settlements," explained Karmele L. Sanchez, IAR director. "Forests are increasingly shrinking and so the habitat of wild animals like "Nanjung" (as the IAR caretakers named him) is being squeezed, leaving them with no option other than to seek food in villages and gardens." The Malayan sun bears are essentially frugivores and in their natural habitats, they are extremely agile at climbing trees. It is possible that despite his handicap, Nanjung will be able to find food.⁵

MALAYSIA

November 1st, 2019

Kota Kinabalu, State of Sabah, Malaysia

Sentencing on appeal of Tijelo Jacquinn Kuin, Malayan sun bear poacher (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I), to 4 years in prison instead of 2 in the first instance (see "On the Trail" n°14 p.56). The fine is maintained at the equivalent of 12,000 US\$. In default of payment, the additional penalty will be 24 months in prison instead of 12 months in the first instance. To justify his decision, Judge Christopher Chin Soo Yin made comments that should be part of the ABCD of all judges worldwide. Excerpts: "Even the discarding of a single plastic bottle into the sea damages the future for you and me and for our children (...) Our mindset must change to view the slaughter of endangered wildlife for profit as not just stealing from the forest but also stealing from us. The counsel for the accused argued before me that it is the culture and tradition of the accused as a Murut to hunt and, therefore, he is innocent of this crime. I cannot accept this argument. If I did, then I would have to accept the previous practice of head hunting as a complete defence to murder. Our society would then descend into bloodshed and chaos."⁶



VIET NAM

December 11, 2019

Ha Tinh, Ha Tinh Province, Viet Nam

Happy seizure in the trunk of a taxidermist's car of a 100 kg live adult Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) en route to a tragic destination.⁷

EUROPE

RUSSIA

October 11, 2019

Bodaybo, Irkutsk Oblast, Russia

A travelling circus has sparked controversy in the mining and gold town. The bear was tied up to the railings of a clinic near the site of the upcoming show. The town's cultural assistant did not share the protests from all over Russia. According to her, the Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) was "singing" and according to the circus director, he was "talking".⁸

November 12, 2019

Kraskino border post, Primorskaya Krai, Russia. Border with China and North Korea.

Seizure of 44 bear paws (Ursidae, Appendix I or II) and 2 Siberian tiger paws (*Panthera tigris altaica*, Appendix I) followed by the seizure in a garage of 198 bear paws and 2 mammoth tusks. Siberian Times reports that the last emperor of the Shang Dynasty (1570 to 1045 BC) was a great lover of bear paw dishes, that such dishes can be sold nowadays for around 1,000 US\$ and that mammoth ivory is crushed in Chinese workshops and used in parapharmacy and cosmetics.⁹



© FS8 Border Control

December 20, 2019

Blagoveshchensk-Heihe border post, Amur Oblast, Russia

Seizure under the clothing of a Chinese citizen posing as a tourist returning to her country of a mammoth tusk (4 kg) and a bear paw (Ursidae, Appendix I or II) (1.5 kg). In the course of 2019, customs officers at the same border post seized bear claws, salmon caviar and other sections of mammoth tusks from Russian and foreign travellers.¹⁰



© Ysia

Giraffes

AFRICA

KENYA

October 9, 2019

Tsavo East National Park, Kenya

The male giraffe was entangled in a metal trap. Freeing after anaesthesia.

Favourable prognosis.¹



October 9, 2019

Kimana Shrine, Kenya

How does a tire is able to wrap around the neck of a giraffe? Two options are discussed, a treetop trap or a children's playground that thought they were at fun fair. Anaesthesia. The giraffe collapsed after 10 minutes. An antidote was injected immediately. During the awakening phase, she was held down, the tire was extracted, and antibiotics were administered. Favourable prognosis.²

October 10, 2019

Tsavo West National Park, Kenya

Intervention of the AMVU (Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit). Extraction of a metallic trap wrapped around the neck. No visible deep wounds. Treatment with antibiotics. Favourable prognosis.³



October 17, 2019

Mombasa County, Kenya

The female giraffe was spotted with a tire around her neck. Haller Park is a private reserve. It covers an old limestone quarry. The tire was embedded in the superficial muscles. After it was removed, the wound was treated with hydrogen peroxide, iodine tincture, an antibiotic and green clay. Favourable prognosis.⁴

November 15, 2019

Near Tsavo East National Park, Kenya

Aerial spotting of a male giraffe with a metal trap strangling him. Anaesthesia, freeing, treatment, favourable prognosis.⁵



November 19, 2019

Olare Motorogi Conservancy, Kenya

Who targets giraffe necks? Below the arrow was the deep gash of a spear. Reported by a routine patrol. Anaesthesia, removal of the arrowhead. Hydrogen peroxide. Rinsing the wounds with clear water. Disinfection with iodine tincture. Antibiotics and anti-inflammatories. Favourable prognosis. She left to join her group.⁶

December 24, 2019

Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya

The Big Life Foundation rangers, well informed, were waiting for them around the bush. The 2 poachers fled. 200 kg of giraffe meat was seized on their moped. A little further on, the giraffe was lying. Only the skin was left.⁷

NAMIBIA

October 26, 2019

Wanaheda, Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia

Arrest of Immanuel David Angula. He was in possession of a giraffe skin.⁸

UGANDA

October 22, 2019

Nwoya, Northern Region, Uganda

These 5 men were sentenced at first instance to 5 years imprisonment each for poaching a Rothschild's giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis rothschildi*) in the Murchison Falls National Park. The park is home to the only viable population of this subspecies of giraffe. It is now estimated by the UWA (Uganda Wildlife Authority) at 1,500 individuals.⁹



October 28, 2019

Pian Upe Wildlife Reserve, Northern Region, Uganda

Truck transfers of 15 Rothschild giraffes (*Giraffa camelopardalis rothschildi*) - 5 males and 10 females- from Murchison Falls National Park to the Pian Upe Reserve 275 km away.

The local Rothschild giraffe population had been extinct for years due to poaching and civil war. Panta Kasoma, on behalf of the UWA Board of Directors, hopes that this prestigious arrival will increase vision tourism in the reserve and increase the income of the local communities. The operation was coordinated and funded by UWEC (Uganda Wildlife Conservation Education Centre), Chayenne Zoo, Colorado, USA, the Giraffe Conservation Foundation and Makerere University. It was carried out in consultation with the villagers.¹⁰



October 17, 2019, Mombasa County, Kenya



Giraffa camelopardalis



November 15, 2019, Near Tsavo East, Kenya



October 28, 2019, Pian Upe, Uganda

Rhinoceroses

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

The 3 Asian rhinoceros species are in Appendix I: *Rhinoceros unicornis*, *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*, *Rhinoceros sondaicus*.

"On the Trail" n°27
The value of horn on the black market,
according to media or official sources

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref.
Asia	China	25,500	24 and 26

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

December 6, 2019

Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, Meru County, Kenya

They were brothers. They died just a few feet from each other. The anterior horns were cut off by poachers. The posterior horns were in place with a few cuts at the base. They tried to pull them out. The older one was shot three times in the head, the younger one in the aorta and another in the heart. The protected area covers more than 100,000 ha. For 6 years, it wasn't harassed by poaching and has even had a high birth rate. The peace has been broken off.¹

MALAWI

November 12, 2019

Liwonde National Park, Southern Region, Malawi

After an adjustment period in a pen, the 17 black rhinoceroses transferred from South Africa to Malawi were set free in the Liwonde National Park. They had been captured in the Imfolozi Park, quarantined for 6 months and transported by plane from Durban to Lilongwe. From the capital of Malawi, they were then transferred by truck (200 km) to Liwonde. At the same time, 2 rhinoceroses from the Liwonde park were transferred to the Majete park and one rhinoceros travelled the other direction, from Majete to Liwonde. All of this shifting about was organized by African Parks and designed to increase the rhinoceros population in Malawi (which nearly disappeared completely in 1985) and to contribute to genetic mixing essential to the long-term viability of the reintroduction that is underway. The black rhinoceroses from KwaZulu Natal traveled north 1,800 km. African Parks signed a cooperative agreement with the Malawi national parks administration, and has observed that in the past 2 and a half years, no rhinoceroses or elephants have been poached in Liwonde or Majete.²



MOZAMBIQUE

November 8, 2019

Sabie Game Park, Maputo Province, Mozambique

Attempted poaching of a female white rhino. The bullet passed through the neck without reaching the spinal cord or arteries. Emergency care and preventive dehorning. The animal was saved thanks to helicopter pilot James Schuen, the team of Carlos Lopes Pereira, veterinary doctor, and the rangers who set up a safety perimeter to avoid harassment from the curious.³

TANZANIA

End of November 2019

Serengeti National Park, Tanzania

After being transferred in September 2019 from South Africa to Tanzania, 9 adult eastern black rhino (2 males, 5 females and 2 pups) are now at large after being kept in a transit enclosure. They are under increased surveillance and are constantly geolocated to detect poaching attempts and possible wanderings outside Serengeti Nature Park and the adjacent Singita Grumeti Protected Area. The operation is coordinated by TANAPA (Tanzania National Parks) and the Frankfurt Zoological Society.⁴

SOUTH AFRICA

October 3 and 7, 2019

South Africa

The bullet probably hit the spinal cord. The male white rhino isn't dead but he's unable to stand up. His horns have been ripped off by poachers. Injections of anti-inflammatory drugs and cortisone are given by the veterinarians at his bedside. After 24 hours, it was no more possible not to yield to the facts and vets had to finish him off.⁵

October 4, 2019

Ngwelezane, KwaZulu Natal Province, South Africa

Aged between 29 and 52, they had been wanted for over a year and were suspected of involvement in the poaching and dehorning of several rhinos on the Ntambanana and Esikhaleni side. They were all arrested thanks to search warrants and simultaneous interventions by the police forces. Two rifles were seized from the homes of the 5 suspects. They were allegedly used to kill rhinos.⁶

October 10, 2019

South Africa

Appearance of Johannes Viljoen and Johannes Davies aged 55 and 65. They were caught transporting 2 horns and 5 sections of horns worth 1.9 million rand (126,000 US\$) and in possession of an undeclared firearm.⁷

November 2, 2019

South Africa



The big "patapouf" was in bad shape after being attacked and an attempt to extract his anterior



horn.

Thanks to the care of Saving The Survivors, he's recovering.

November 5, 2019

Germiston, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Arrest for possession of rhino horns.⁸

November 6, 2019

South Africa

Use by Saving The Survivors of a South American buffalo leather as a dressing and protection of the frontal wound of a rhino left for dead after having undergone poaching and dehorning.⁹

Elephant skin dressing on a rhinoceros, see "On the Trail" n°26, p.76.

November 10, 2019

Pilanesberg National Park, North West Province, South Africa

Another loss of a white rhino to the benefit of the transnational horn mafia. This time the assassination took place near Bakubung.¹⁰

November 14, 2019

Rietvlei Nature Reserve, Pretoria, Gauteng Province, South Africa



Electrocution of a female rhinoceros, her calf and 2 zebras (genus *Equus*) after the fall in the middle of the night of a Eskom's wooden pylon. The cables that continued to convey electric current were 1m50 high. The other pylons are currently being inspected. The corpses were discovered Saturday morning by a patrol. Dana Wannenburg on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture and Environment deplored "this tragic accident" and asked Eskom to "find the causes of the collapse and to implement measures to prevent the recurrence of such events".¹¹

November 15, 2019

Modimolle, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Arrest at a gas station of a 25 year old young man in possession of 2 horns wrapped in a plastic bag inside a backpack. The police was tipped-off.¹²

November 15, 2019

South Africa

Discovery of the decomposed and dehorned carcass of a black rhinoceros.¹³

November 23, 2019

Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Truth: poaching of 3 rhinos in the Malelane section. Two of the carcasses are found under a pile of grass and small branches.

Truth or cartoon: a single ranger manages to immobilize 5 suspects holding 5 horns. They were near the crime scene in a minibus. The hero acted in cold blood by subduing the driver and handcuffing 3 passengers, by finding a fourth hidden in a secret compartment, by miraculously escaping a deadly shotgun blast, the trigger of a fifth accomplice having refused to go off, and finally by calling for backup.¹⁴

Early December 2019

Kruger National Park, Crocodile Bridge Section, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Two rangers back to work in the Kruger Park. They're suspected of poaching or conspiracy to poach rhinos. They're out on bail. Their case hasn't gone to trial yet. What is even more strange is that one of the conditions of bail is that they have no direct contact with their colleagues. The same ambiguity applies to rangers Hendrik Silinda and Musa Mlambo, who were also involved in poaching in February 2019 and were released on bail (see "On the Trail" n°23 p.106).¹⁵

December 7, 2019

Limpopo Province, South Africa

On the spot rescue of a rhinoceros calf, about 5 months old, orphaned after the poaching of his mother, attacked by hyenas, his right hind leg open to the bone. After his transfer by pick-up to the orphanage, he gradually recovers, covered with a large blanket, treated with antibiotics and local application of ointment and watched over by Hunter, the guard dog.¹⁶

BOTSWANA

December 2, 2019

Okavango Delta, North West District, Botswana

A new rhino, a white one, has passed away. This is the 17th killing since early April 2019 in the delta.¹⁷



December 23, 2019

Botswana

The government is seeing an upsurge in poaching. From October to December 2019, 13 rhinos were killed by poachers. Since October 2018, 31 have been poached of which 23 were white rhinos and 8 were black. There are less than 400 rhinos in the country.¹⁸

NAMIBIA

27 and 28 October 2019

Werda, Kunene Region, Namibia

Arrest of Johannes Petrus, Ngavepue Tijuana, Kavenamuruke Tjihange and Tjizo Tjiposa for attempting to poach a rhino in Etosha National Park. Seizure of a hunting rifle.¹⁹

November 22, 2019

Werda, Kunene Region, Namibia

Arrest of Noa Tuhafeni Timoteus, Eliaser Revo Amadhila and Paulus Ashingola. They were in very incriminating possession of 2 AK47s and 2 rhino horns.²⁰

November 25, 2019

Otjiwarongo, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

Chrissy Mukena Mukena's arrest in the Kunene Desert. He is charged with prohibited possession of a firearm and is suspected of planning poaching due to his behaviour and the place where he was arrested.²¹

December 30, 2020

Okahandja, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

Kandje Max Ngumi, Kunouwa Seven Tjambiru and Lubasi Mufaya thought the best time to attack rhinos were the New Year's nights. They were arrested with their high-calibre weapons and no less than 31 bullets. On 30 December, they had gone off hunting, on the 31st they were in jail.²²

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

October 1st, 2019

Miami, State of Florida, United States of America

Richard Sheridan was sentenced to 14 months in prison and 2 years probation for having bought in conspiracy a libation cup at auction in North Carolina and fraudulently exporting it to Europe in 2012. Sheridan was extradited from Britain at the end of August 2019. He was subject to an international arrest warrant. His accomplice Michael Hegarty, also a member of Rathkeale Rovers, has been already sentenced to 18 months in prison (see "On the Trail" n°19 p. 87).²³





October 10, 2019, South Africa



November 6, 2019, South Africa



December 7, 2019, Limpopo Province, South Africa



October 24, 2019, Futian, China



November 7, 2019, Shanghai Pudong, China



CHINA

October 19, 2019

Hong Kong International Airport, China

Seizure from the luggage of a 33-year-old woman coming from Johannesburg and en route to Viet Nam of 16 kg of horn sections estimated by customs at approximately 408,000 US\$, or 25,500 US\$/kg.²⁴

October 24, 2019

Futian border post, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

Seizure of the anterior and posterior horns of an African rhinoceros. Together they weigh 2.6 kg.²⁵

November 7, 2019

Shanghai Pudong International Airport, Pudong District, Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China

Seizure in a package said to contain plastic trinkets of 7 fragments showing all the characteristics of rhino horn. Total weight: 975.4 g. Value equal to approximately 25,000 US\$.²⁶

INDIA

October 31, 2019

Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India

Arrest of 2 alleged poachers. "The rhinos when wallow in the grass gets their skin covered with mud. When moonlight beams on its skin, it dazzles and becomes visible to poachers very easily. So we take extra care during full moon nights." With Ayub Nabi and Imran Ali aged 22 and 45, 7 suspected poachers were intercepted in the park in 4 days. "They use the Biswanath division the most as they can use country boats to cross the Brahmaputra and enter the park" added Ritu P Borah, one of the park's conservation officers.²⁷



MALAYSIA

November 23, 2019

Tabin Wildlife Reserve, State of Sabah, Borneo Island, Malaysia

"Iman," a female Sumatran rhinoceros (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*), around 25 years old, has died. A few years ago, the veterinarians and caregivers had diagnosed her with uterine cancer aggravated by hemorrhaging. The guardians of the Borneo Rhino Alliance are thus mourning the extinction of the species in Malaysia. They had long hoped that Iman would mate with "Tam," the last male representative of the species in Malaysia, and there would be one or two happy events. When Tam died in May 2019, and then Iman in November, their bubble burst. The wild population of Sumatran rhinoceroses is now reduced to the last few dozen individuals on the island of Sumatra, Indonesia, living separated from each other in habitats that continue to be eroded by human encroachment. The distances between the individuals condemn them to unhealthy consanguinity and infertility. In 2016, it was said that there was still a very small population of Sumatran rhinoceroses living in East Kalimantan, the Indonesian part of the island of Borneo. Naturalists had hoped that a protocol would be defined between Indonesia and Malaysia to guarantee the survival of the *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*, and that it would be implemented and considered by both countries to be a unifying, high priority political objective. For the moment, negotiations are at a standstill.²⁸

VIET NAM

October 23, 2019

Hanoi, Viet Nam

Sentencing of Melvin Van Zyl, 28, a South African national, to 10 years in prison for attempting to import 14.6 kg of horns in April 2019.²⁹



Rhinoceroses and Elephants

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

October 1st to 17, 2019

Kruger National Park, Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces, South Africa

Arrest before acting of 6 alleged poachers in 3 different operations. Seizure of 3 large-calibre weapons. SANParks attributes these successes to the vigilance of the rangers and the coordinated engagement of the dog brigades and aerial survey and is pleased that since the beginning of the month no elephant poaching has been recorded in the park. However, SANParks is concerned about the involvement of local communities in the setting of traps for bushmeat trafficking.¹

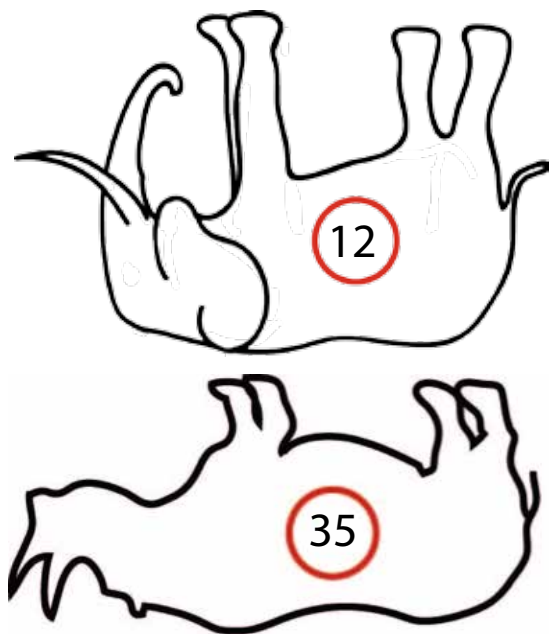
NAMIBIA

October 18, 2019

Namibia

Poaching since the beginning of the year: 35 rhinos and 12 elephants and 150 poachers arrested.

In 2018, the record was 72 rhinos, 27 elephants and 134 poachers arrested for the whole year.²



ASIA

CHINA

Mid-October 2019

Chengdu-Shuangliu International Airport, Sichuan Province, China

Seizures on landing of 4 flights from Africa of 21 pieces of rhino horn, 4 pieces of raw ivory and a bracelet, 4 springbok skins (*Antidorcas marsupialis*) and 2 common warthog teeth (*Phacochoerus africanus*).³

TURKEY

October 23, 2019

Kagithane District, Istanbul, Istanbul Province, Marmara Region, Turkey

Seizure in an apartment in the Kagithane district of 2 elephant tusks, a rhino horn and 265 rosaries and other worked ivories, a 4.6 m long python skin (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), with a cumulative value of 1.5 million Turkish pounds, or 261,000 US\$. The suspect originates from Azerbaijan.⁴



Elephants

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

"On the Trail" n°27 Black market raw ivory quotation from media or official sources

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Africa	Kenya	1,000	7
		735	8
	Malawi	832	11
	Zimbabwe	250	25
	Senegal	2,747	41
	Gabon	250	44

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

October 15, 2019

Nairobi Jomo-Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi County, Kenya

Seizure of a bracelet from a cigarette packet in the luggage of a Chinese man coming from Bangui, Central African Republic, and heading towards China. Caught in the act, the individual attempted to bribe customs officials. It is accepted in the Chinese diaspora that in Africa the silence of the authorities can be bought.¹

October 23, 2019

Nairobi Jomo-Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi County, Kenya

Seizure of a bracelet (100 g). Kabanje Liseli MWananguku had it on her arm. She was in transit to Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania.²

October 18 and November 6, 2019

Tsavo West National Park and Siana Conservancy, Kenya

- The autopsy shows that death was caused by a rifle bullet. He had managed to escape the poachers but he did not escape internal bleeding. The tusks were secured by the KWS.

- Removal of a metal trap that had been deeply cutting into the left front leg for several weeks. The family (7 members) and first of all the mother, who was protective and cumbersome, had to be moved aside. Prognosis reserved. Joint operation by the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust and KWS.³



Paul Jouve, Elephant, 1930.

Early November 2019

Eldoret, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya

Sentencing of John Panyako, Evans Chelulei and Jonathan Kiptanui to one million shillings fine each or 9,700 US\$. In June 2016, they had been caught transporting 2 tusks weighing 5 kg each. They were waiting for a contact at a gas station in Eldoret.⁴



November 12, 2019

Narok County, Kenya

Sentence relief for Moge Malit and Metian Rakatian. They had been sentenced in January 2018 to 2 million shillings (19,000 US\$) fines or in default of payment to 5 years jail for having in January 2016 carried and attempted to sell 2 elephant tusks of 2 kg each. On appeal, they were fined 220,000 shillings (2,130 US\$) or 15 months jail in case of non-payment. While reaffirming the seriousness of the offence, the judge took into consideration that the 2 men were first-time offenders, that they had been in pre-trial detention for more than a year, that Rakatian's state of health was not compatible with prison, that Malit had expressed remorse and that both were the only means of subsistence for large families.⁵

November 19 and December 9, 2019

Nanyuki, Laikipia County, Kenya

Kenneth Muthaura Mbaabu is suspected of having participated in the lynching of an elephant filmed on video and shared on social networks. He has been identified by profilers from the Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI). The public prosecutor's office is opposed to his release on cash bail. He is asking for a guarantee on his own property. Ten other people appearing on the video are identified and wanted. The victim was part of a herd that villagers or alleged villagers wanted to keep away. As he fled, he fell into a rut from which he was unable to extricate himself before being joined by the excited ones. He was targeted with machetes, axes and projectiles. This anti-fauna riot dates back to June 2018, the images started circulating a year later.⁶

December 12, 2019

Samburu, Kwale County, Kenya

Arrest of Charles Mweni and Tabitha Mueni in possession of 10 pieces of raw ivory with an estimated value of 7.3 million shillings, i.e. 73,000 US\$ and 1,000 US\$ /kg.⁷

12 and 20 December 2019

Embu County, Kenya

Arrest of Rutere Njeru and Ephantus Njagai in possession of a 4 kg tusk with an estimated value of 300,000 shillings or 2,939 US\$ (735 US\$/kg). Sentencing of Rutere Njeru to a one million shillings fine, equivalent to 9,796 US\$ or, in default of payment, to 5 years' imprisonment. Unable to pay, he began serving his sentence in Embu prison. He has 14 days to appeal. He had pleaded guilty. Ephantus Njagai has rejected all responsibility in this case. He was released on bail of 300,000 shillings, equivalent to 2,939 US\$ and the estimated value of the tusk.⁸



MALAWI

October 3, 2019

Kasungu, Central Region, Malawi

Sentencing of Nickson Nthukwa Banda and Assani Phiri to 6.5 years and 4 years in prison for killing an elephant in Kasungu National Park, uprooting tusks and and cutting up meat pieces for the purpose of marketing them, and for possession of prohibited firearms. Banda and Phiri pleaded guilty and asked for the court's leniency. " We have families and parents to take care of."⁹



October 18, 2019

Mangochi, Southern Region, Malawi

Sentencing to 2 years imprisonment with hard labour of a man who tried to sell 4 sections of raw ivory with an estimated local value of 987,000 kwachas (1,340 US\$). Useni Wali, Malawi's wildlife protection officer, believes that the increased penalties due to the recent amendment of the penal code will act as a deterrent to those who are beginners into poaching.¹⁰



December 10, 2019

Mugando, Nkhosakota District, Central Region, Malawi

Arrest of Samuel Kaliati. According to his confession, he had spotted in August 2019 an elephant in the Nkhosakota reserve, placed a poisoned bait, finished off the elephant 3 days later a few meters from the toxic trap, cut the tusks and transported its booty home. At the beginning of October, undercover PWA (Parks and Wildlife Assistants) agents informed by villagers made an offer to purchase the 2 tusks weighing a total of 31 kg and with an estimated value of 19 million kwachas, i.e. 25,781 US\$ and 832 US\$/kg. But Kaliati realized the trap during the transaction and ran away. He was caught 2 months later when he returned to his village.¹¹



MOZAMBIQUE

October 2019

Vanduzi District, Manica Province, Mozambique

- Seizure of 7 stolen tusks from the Gorongosa National Park vault where seizures or tusks from naturally dead elephants are stored. Vanduzi is 10 km from Gorongosa National Park and the road leads straight to Beira, the port of export to China. Three arrests.

- Seizure of 11 stolen tusks from the Gorongosa National Park vault. Three arrests.¹²

UGANDA

October 21, 2019

Koch-Goma, Northern Region, Uganda

Arrest of Francis Ojok, boda boda driver. He was attempting to sell 6 tusks weighing a total of 42 kg. They were "taken to safety" at the Nwoya police station.¹³

November 20, 2019

Kisero District, Western Region, Uganda

A 30-year-old man, Munyaribanje Richard, has just been arrested after a tip-off. He was in possession of 43 kg of raw ivory of unknown origin.¹⁴



© Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust

October 6, 2019, Matetsi Reserve, Zimbabwe



© Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust



© Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust



© Chris Holcroft

November 22, 2019, Buffalo Kloof, South Africa



© CSL

October 14, 2019, South Luangwa, Zambia

December 16, 2019

Murchison Falls National Park, Northern Region, Uganda

Seizure of 6 pairs of tusks with a total value of 20,500 US\$. Three arrests including Mr. Oluyi, a member of the special police of former President Milton Obote. Oluyi, now retired, was pursuing a career in poaching. He had made the police suspicious by buying a car that far exceeded his monthly income. According to a spokesman for the Criminal Investigations Directorate (CID), one of the gang's comrades, Jimmy Etuku, was executed in the middle of a poaching campaign following a settling of scores. The murder weapon has been recovered. During the year 2018, 648 poachers or traffickers were arrested. 447 were brought to trial, 269 were convicted, 8 were acquitted, 26 dismissed and 144 are awaiting trial.¹⁵

TANZANIA

December 13, 2019

Kisutu, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Conviction after a negotiated sentence of Liang Hu, a Chinese national, to a fine of 300,000 shillings or 131 US\$ or 5 months imprisonment in case of non-payment and 50 million shillings or 21,900 US\$ in compensatory damages. Liang Hu was found to be co-responsible for a massive poaching of elephants in Selous National Park between January and November 2013. One of Hu's partner, Mr. Xion Shaodani, was fined 300,000 shillings and 100 million shillings or 43,800 US\$ in compensatory damages. Both men pleaded guilty to poaching 511 elephants. This is the figure published by the Citizen. A third man pleads not guilty. He will be tried later.¹⁶



December 13, 2019

Kisutu, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Sentencing of a woman known as Haika Mgao, aged 28 and presented as a businesswoman, to 20 years in prison for illegally possessing 4 elephant tusks, to 20 years in prison for illegally possessing 2 hippopotamus teeth and to 20 years in prison for attempting to commercialize these 6 trophies belonging to the inalienable heritage of the government and the State. The three sentences run concurrently.¹⁷



December 21, 2019

Mbeya, Mbeya Region, Tanzania

Seizure in a shop of 11 pieces of raw ivory with an estimated value of 137.9 million shillings or 60,000 US\$. Arrest of Abdulmark Upete, Mohamed Omary, Ayoub Kindumba and Lawi Kalonga.¹⁸

ZAMBIA

October 14, 2019

South Luangwa National Park, Northern Province, Zambia

In order to extract an elephant calf from a trap in a calm and professional manner, it was necessary to urgently dispatch logistical and veterinary backup and to anaesthetise 4 adult elephants that did not want to leave the scene.¹⁹



ZIMBABWE

October 6, 2019

Matetsi Reserve, Northern Matabeleland Province, Zimbabwe

Discarded tires are poisoning the world, including near Victoria Falls. Under unknown circumstances and for unknown times, an elephant found himself with a tire carcass around his neck threatening to strangle him. The anaesthesia took place in the middle of the night. The patient collapsed on his back. The rescue team turned him over so he could breathe more or less normally. Thanks to two local volunteers, a generator and an electric grinder were brought to the scene. The most delicate point was to cut the tire without cutting into the neck of the big grey. Congratulations to the team of vets and mechanics!²⁰

Tyres and wildlife, see "On the Trail" n°15 p. 69, n°16 p. 84, n°24 p. 81 and his issue page 84.

October 17, 2019

Manyumwa, Nyanga District, Manicaland Province, Zimbabwe

Seizure of 7 pieces of raw ivory. Arrest of Tobias Zuze and Peter Kofi, nationals of Mozambique and Elmore Danhamba. The latter was released on bail of 20 US\$.²¹

November 12, 2019

Mushumbi, Mashonaland Central Province, Zimbabwe

Karemba Posani and Ronal Benjamin from Mozambique had harmfully entered Zimbabwe through the village of Chidodo and mistakenly approached ZimParks agents in Mushumbi and offered to buy 10 kg of raw ivory at a good price. They are being held in pre-trial detention.²³

Early December 2019

Hwange National Park, Northern Matabeleland Province, Zimbabwe

Confirmation by NFA (Network For Animals) investigators of the export of 2 elephant calves to the zoo in Lahore, Pakistan. They were awaiting delivery together with those destined for China in the boma (enclosure) of Mtshibi Camp in Hwange National Park. The ZimParks spokesperson refused to comment on the matter. David Barritt, executive director of NFA, recalls that at the last plenary session of CITES [in August in Geneva], international trafficking in elephants was banned [except exceptional circumstances]. "The Zimbabwe government went ahead with the sordid transaction anyway. It is an utter disgrace."²⁴

October 24, 2019

Victoria Falls International Airport, Northern Matabeleland Province, Zimbabwe

Robin des Bois Press Release of October 25, 2019,

“Elephant calves trade : forcing through before the market closes”

Yesterday, 32 elephant calves were exfiltrated by a Saudia Airlines cargo plane from the Victoria Falls airport in Zimbabwe to China. The plane made a night stopover in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

The calves' final destination is business classified. It is probable that one of the beneficiaries of the calves used as attractive product is the Guangzhou safari park, where uninformed visitors can already admire elephants suffering from PTSD (Posttraumatic stress disorder) due to their violent capture, the separation with their family and captivity.

107 African elephants have been imported to China since 2012 and 11 are already dead. This new export takes place even though the plea before the Harare high court made by the Zimbabwean NGO People and Earth Solidarity Law Network (1), opposed to the privatization of wildlife, hasn't been ruled on. In August 2019, CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) adopted by 87 votes in favour and 29 against a resolution banning the exports of live elephants outside Africa, except under exceptional circumstances not met here (2). This resolution will come into effect on November 26, 2019. Zimbabwe and China sped up to send the calves captured a year ago now and kept in a pen in the Hwange park.

According to our information, 5 calves in too bad a shape to travel stayed in Zimbabwe. We can only hope they will not be chopped.

Update 3:30 p.m.: after a 13-hour flight, the 32 calves arrived in Shanghai in an unknown condition. Temperature on boarding: 38°C. Temperature on arrival: 19°C.²²

(1) Now Advocates4Earth

(2) See “Vers la fin du commerce international d'éléphants vivants” (only in French), August 27, 2019.



Secret boarding at Victoria Falls,
October 24, 2019

December 17, 2019

Guruve, Guruve District, Zimbabwe

He pleads not guilty and yet at Last Chaatama's home, a public servant, 4.8 kg of ivory were seized by a team of ZimParks and police. He remains in police custody for 7 days. The 2 tusks are valued at 1,200 US\$, or 250 US\$/kg.²⁵

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

October 11, 2019

Pretoriuskop, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

In response to a social network alert about unexplained gunfire near the camp of the rangers in charge of surveillance and anti-poaching in the Pretoriuskop area, SANParks announced that a young bull elephant in musth's period was deliberately shot. According to the official statement, his aggressive intrusion endangered the lives of the rangers and their families.²⁶

November 8, 2019

Midrand, Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Immediate appearance of 6 big guys caught in the act of transporting and delivering 3 big tusks, 58 kg in all.²⁷

November 22, 2019

Buffalo Kloof Private Game Reserve, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

Rescue of 11 elephants by the Aspinall Foundation, the Wild911 and Camdeboo Private Reserve. They were confined to a fenced and overgrazed plot of land, without water, in the midst of a drought in Blaauwbosch. They were anaesthetized and transferred by truck to the Buffalo Kloof Private Game Reserve where their lives are obviously much more lush and joyful. The fate of these lucky ones had been revealed by the SPCA.²⁸

December 2, 2019

Nelspruit, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Seizure of 6 elephant tusks and 5 undeclared firearms hidden in a trailer. Arrest of Johan Cox and Hendrick Bernardus Elvis.²⁹

December 10, 2019

Alexandra, Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Conviction of a Malawian citizen to 2 years imprisonment for trading raw ivory and lack of residence permit.³⁰

BOTSWANA

November 24 and December 6, 2019

Dobe and Nkaneng, North-West District, Botswana

- An elephant calf was stoned and after that mortally bitten by raging dogs. The lynching was fomented by 3 villagers. Was the human bestiality unleashed by President Masisi's recent decision to lift the ban on elephant hunting which had been established by his predecessor and heralded at the time by southern African and international NGOs?

- There is contagion in the district. In addition to lynchings by locals, there are the shootings by the rich. The 5 elephants killed during a hunting party revived controversy and raised concern among indigenous populations. The hunters were accompanied by 2 professional guides, Michael Lee Potter and Kevin Sharp.

"There's no benefit to the community from the hunting of elephants and there are dangers... The Ju/'hoansi do not eat elephants, because elephants behave like human beings," said Dahem Xixae, a member of the tribe. "The 5 elephants hunted were not transients but local ones." "This will make the others more aggressive and if any were wounded they would be very dangerous to the local community." "In the olden years people respected animals and animals respected them too." When the Ju/'hoansi decide that it is necessary to get rid of an elephant, they use poisoned arrows. They believe that the uproar of hunting, the open wounds and blood modify the surviving elephants' moods and behavior.

After the butchery, the pro-hunting camp became divided. One of the elephants was an exceptional male that was monitored by university researchers and the NGO Elephants Without Borders. He wore an identification collar and a geolocation tag. Collars are visible from the front and from the side to the naked eye. "In my opinion, anyone shooting a collared elephant and saying he did not see the collar can only be shooting after dark, which is illegal," said Adrian Read, a professional guide and member of Zimbabwe Wildlife Trust.

On the other hand, those who promote hunting in Botswana are at it louder than ever. "For those of you who just want to experience a real elephant hunt without breaking the bank, this is it!" trumpets the Discount African Hunts website. "The herd in this large area needs to be thinned down, so you will be providing a valuable conservation service to the locals while achieving your goal of hunting a Botswanan elephant at an excellent price! 4,775 \$ will be refunded in the unlikely event that you do not shoot an elephant. A bigger elephant is possible if the game scout directs you to shoot him."

The "Masisi" license authorizes 158 elephants to be shot on sight during the season, 72 of which are reserved for the local bourgeoisie and expats. Citizens and dual-citizens just have to buy tickets for a specially designed lottery. The winners are selected at random. As luck would have it, Mrs. Pearl Markus, the wife of the Minister of Agriculture who schemed in 2018 to get the ban on elephant hunting lifted, won the right to kill one. According to the rules, once she has accomplished her feat, she must keep the tusks or the stuffed ears in the dining room and not hand them over to an Asian acquaintance who could be tempted to export them.

Potter's hunting license was permanently revoked, and Sharp's license was suspended for 3 years.³¹



Concerning the impact of the Covid-19 health crisis on elephant trophy hunting in Botswana, see "On the Trail – Covid19 Special Issue" published on April 30, 2020, page 6.

The Ju/'hoansi

The renewal of elephant hunting was justified by the need to resolve human/elephant conflicts. The 5 elephants who were killed had cohabitated with the Ju/'hoansi for a long time. The Ju/'hoansi have anti-capitalism in the genes. They are semi-nomads and live by hunting and gathering, travelling through the northern part of the Kalahari Desert with the seasons and depending on water resources. Over the past 50 years, they have modified their lifestyle, in response to pressure and hassle from successive governments who have tried to restrain their movements and get them to settle on state-owned lands, giving them no way of avoiding interference or the activities and pressure of majority populations. The Ju/'hoansi are among the southern African native peoples characterized by seasonal nomadism, non-accumulation of property and who speak at least 3 different languages, khoe, kx'a and tuu. Grouped under the common name San or bushmen, these native peoples include fewer than 100,000 individuals scattered between Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Anglola and Zimbabwe, where there are fewer than 1000. Each of them places great importance on their social organization and their rites, and they do not appreciate the generic term San, which tends to homogenize them and erase their ethnic particularities.



Ju/'hoansi playing '1-2-3' after they have finished their work. Photo by James Suzman, from his book "Affluence Without Abundance, The Disappearing World of the Bushmen" (Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2017)

NAMIBIA

October 9, 2019

Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia

Seizure of a hundred raw ivory “chips”. They come from a clandestine workshop where tusks or sections of tusks are transformed into junk.³²

November 1st, 2019

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

Four men arrested. Seizure of 2 tusks and their vehicle. Joint operation of the Blue Rhino Task Team and the Protected Resources Unit.³³

November 21, 2019

Grootfontein, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

Conviction of 2 French tourists, Benoit Fabien and Marine Petit, to 8 months in prison or a fine of 1,695 US\$ for having been in possession of 2 fragments of ivory in their pick-up truck at the time of a veterinary control against the spread of anthrax disease on the rural road between Grootfontein and Tsumkwe.³⁴



November 26 and 27, 2019

Omega, Kavango-East Region, Namibia

One shot at a time! Seizures of 4 then 2 tusks and arrests of Uwanga Shikambo and Kapinga Timoteus Ndjamba then Matheus Shinkanda Kanyanga and Amos Muhepa.³⁵

December 3, 2019

Namibia

Arrest of Alfred Namayabona for illegal detention of 4 tusks. During November, 50 wildlife trafficking suspects were heard in court and 120 animals or animal parts were seized.³⁶

December 4, 2019

Namibia

Fine equal to 6,800 US\$ or in case of non-payment 4 years jail for Bangorogile Motsokwe who, on October 28, 2018, was arrested in Divundu with 4 elephant tusks.³⁷



WESTERN AFRICA

BENIN

October 10, 2019 and November 20, 2020

Djougou, Department of Donga, Benin

- 14 kg of raw ivory, 4 tusks. Three arrests. According to articles 154 and 156 of the law of 18 October 2004, the trio is liable to 6 months to 5 years in prison. Le Matin Libre expresses the wish “that no tolerance be granted to these arrested individuals”.

- Conviction at first instance of 2 traffickers to 36 months in prison and 500,000 CFA francs (845 US\$) fines.³⁸



COTE D'IVOIRE

October 11, 2019

Koumassi, District of Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

Seizure of 4 sections of tusks in an evangelical church. Raw ivory had crossed freely the border between Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire aboard a bus. Three arrests including one Burkinabe. The operation was carried out with the support of the NGO EAGLE. They face a prison sentence ranging from 2 to 12 months and a fine of 30,000 to 300,000 francs CFA (50 to 500 US\$). A bill provides for a prison sentence of 10 to 20 years and a 10 million to 100 million CFA francs (16,700 to 167,000 US\$) fine for similar acts.³⁹

LIBERIA

GANG

October 10, 2019

Salayea District, Lofa County, Liberia

Conviction of John Z. David who claims to be a serial killer of elephants and poaching “coach” to one year in prison and a fine of 2,500 US\$.⁴⁰

SENEGAL

November 29, 2019

Kédougou, Dakar, Kédougou Region, Senegal

The apprentice who carried the suitcases and punched the tickets on the bus from Mali had a lot of nerve. He had 2 tusks (11.5 kg) in his bag with an estimated value of 18.83 million CFA francs or 31,591 US\$ (2,747 US\$/kg). They were seized by customs on patrol on the back lines of the border. According to the official communiqué, “a controlled delivery operation was successfully carried out” and the consignee was arrested in the capital “thanks to perfect coordination and pooling of the Kédougou customs Subdivision, the Criminal Investigation and Narcotics Bureau of the Directorate of Intelligence and Customs Investigations under the supervision of the Kédougou Public Prosecutor’s Office”. The tusks coming down from Mali to get close to a smuggling port are doubly appalling. Sahelian elephants are facing war (see “On the Trail” n° 1 p. 32, n°8 p. 71, n°9 p. 73, n°10 p. 54, n°11 p. 78, n°12 p. 87, n°13 p. 89, n°20 p. 114).⁴¹





November 8, 2019, Midrand, Johannesburg, South Africa



December 2, 2019, Nelspruit, South Africa



December 10, 2019, Malawi



October 10, 2019, Salayea, Liberia



October 2, 2019, Libreville, Gabon



Nov. 20, 2019, Uganda



November 20 and 21, 2019, Lalara, Gabon



October 7, 2019, Sibiti, Congo

TOGO

December 16, 2019

Lomé, Maritime Region, Togo

Sentencing of Alassani Razak and Ouro-Boutchou Idrissou to 12 months in prison, 3 of which were suspended, and 10 million CFA francs, or 16,800 US\$, in damages to the Ministry of the Environment for attempting to sell a 9 kg tusk (see "On the Trail" n° 24 p. 73).⁴²



CENTRAL AFRICA

CAMEROON

REPEATED OFFENSE

GANG

November 13, 2019

Kenzo, Eastern Region, Cameroon. Border with the Central African Republic.

Seizure of 2 tusks with a total weight of 20 kg. Two arrests. The town is used as a transit point for ivory poached in the Central African Republic. One of the 2 individuals is a repeat offender. He always gets away with it. He has already been arrested with raw ivory in Gamboula, Eastern Region, and was reportedly arrested with 262 kg of raw ivory by the gendarmerie in March 2019. The fate of these tusks is unknown and the individual in question had not been prosecuted according to the NGO EAGLE.⁴³

GABON

October 2, 2019

Libreville, Estuary Province, Gabon

The guy was caught in the hotel room with the 6 tusks (25 kg in total) spread out on the floor, ready to be examined by the potential buyer whose identity is not yet known. Innocent Djidjou had his haggling plan. He wanted to sell them in a single lot for the equivalent of 6,250 US\$ or 250 US\$/kg. According to law n°042/2018, which came into force in July 2019, he is liable to a prison sentence of up to 10 years. The operation was carried out with the support of Conservation Justice.⁴⁴

October 22, 2019

Franceville, Province of Haut-Ogooué, Gabon

Francis Mambelo and Mack Donald Kedy had driven from Koulamoutou to Franceville, 240 km away, to hide in a motel in the Potos district and sell 4 tusks cut into 8 sections. Mambelo acknowledges the facts while Kedy claims to have carried the suitcase without knowing what was inside. A joint operation by the judicial police, the provincial directorate of Water and Forests and the NGO Conservation Justice.⁴⁵

October 28, 2019

Estuaire Province, Gabon

New coordinated action. Arrest in quick succession of 4 traffickers from Burkina Faso and Gabon.

- Seizure of 4 tusks and a large calibre rifle.
- Seizure of 2 tusks. One of the suspects is the village chief.⁴⁶

End of October 2019

Makokou, Ogooué-Ivindo Province, Gabon

Another seizure of raw ivory, 2 tusks, in a hotel room as trading place. Arrest of François Moukambi Moubey, Jean Marie Pilima and Mohamed Backo.⁴⁷

November 20 and 21, 2019

Lalara, Woleu-Ntem Province, Gabon

- A total of 128 kg of tusks were seized, of which about 10 kg were from calves. Robert Ayafor, a Cameroonian national and Arsène Nguialebe, a Gabonese national, were arrested after a chase. In their blue pick-up truck, 2 bags of rice were searched. They were full of raw ivory. In a second white pick-up intercepted a few kilometres further on, there were also 2 bags of rice full of raw ivory. It was the turn of Joël Michel Djetola, Gabonese passport, to be arrested.

- Arrest of Christian Mbongo, a Gabonese associate.⁴⁸ Conservation Justice was on their trail.

REPUBLIC OF CONGO

October 7, 2019

Sibiti, Department of Lékoumou, Republic of Congo

Seizure of 3 tails and 1 molar of elephant and 1 skin of African python (*Python sebae*, Appendix II). One arrest. Action coordinated by the gendarmerie, Water and Forests agents and the NGO PALF (Projet d'Appui à l'Application de la Loi sur la Faune Sauvage). Suppliers are believed to be poachers from Mokassi or Lefoutou.⁴⁹

October 24, 2019

Owando, Cuvette Department, Republic of Congo

Sentencing to 12 months in prison of Godefroy Boyanga, chief clerk of the Owando Court of Appeal. He had sold to the Kanga brothers and Léandre Ngassai 6 tusks seized and stored in his custody as evidence (cf. "On the Trail" n°18 p. 96, n°19 p. 103). He also admits having sold the motorbike of a poacher, also under seal. The misappropriation of evidence and the return of the ivory to the black market is not exceptional.⁵⁰



November 6, 2019

Brazzaville, Republic of Congo

Arrest of X in possession of 2 tusks. He buys the ivory in the Likouala department and brings it back to Brazzaville, 750 km away by the Alima River, a tributary of the Congo, and the RN2. The tusks travel under smoked fish. Operation conducted with the PALF.⁵¹

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

November 14, 2019
Snohomish County and King County, Washington State, United States of America

- Continued from "On the Trail" n°25 p. 89: Donald Rooney, 72 years old, was sentenced to 15 days in prison followed by one month of house arrest and 14,000 US\$ in fines for selling ivory netsukes via Craigslist. The seizure of the 1,500 worked ivories he was stockpiling on his shelves at his home on Mukilteo Speedway is in pursuance of the Washington Animal Trafficking Act, which came into effect in 2016.

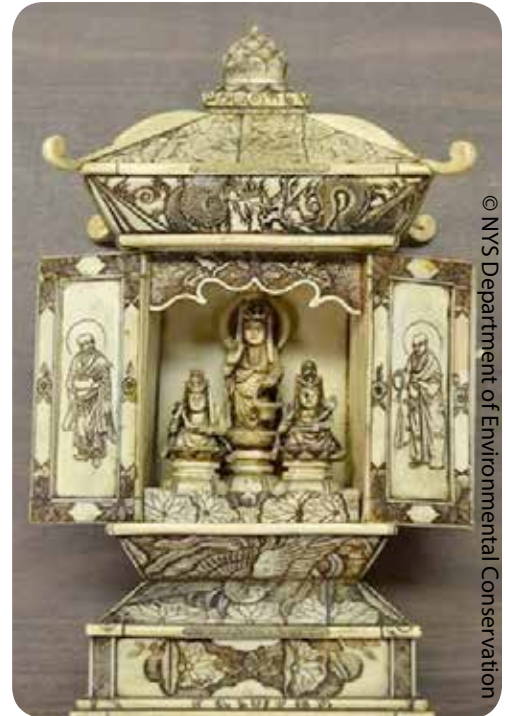
- Upcoming trial for Yunhua Chen. He is accused of attempting to sell on eBay an ivory statuette with an estimated value of 1,300 US\$.⁵²



© Washington Dep. of Fish & Wildlife

December 19, 2019
Monroe County, State of New York, United States of America

Seizure of 13 worked ivories including a reliquary. Doris Ellen Eber pleads guilty and admits that she wanted to market them. Since 2014, the sale of objects made of elephant and mammoth ivory and rhino horn has been banned in the state.⁵⁴



© NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

December 4, 2019
Pittsburgh, State of Pennsylvania, United States of America

The zoos in Pittsburgh, Kansas City, Memphis, Maryland and Natural Bridge have decided not to import 28 elephant calves from Zimbabwe. Two males and 11 females would have been stuck in Pittsburgh. Nine females would have been distributed between the zoos in Kansas City, Memphis and Maryland. Six specimens would have landed at the Natural Bridge Zoo in Virginia. The import request was withdrawn a few days after the entry into force of a resolution passed in a CITES plenary session in Geneva in August 2019 banning, except exceptional circumstances, the translocation of wild elephants out of their countries or regions of origin. Through the Freedom of Information Act, invoked by the NGO PETA, and the administration's rapid response, we have learned that a company called Conservation Logistics LLC, based in Kansas, was the third party, paid by the Pittsburgh Zoo, in charge of organizing the capture and shipment of the 28 elephant calves. There are approximately 300 captive elephants in the United States of America in the 62 zoos that are members of the AZA (Association of Zoos and Aquariums). Since 1999, 22 zoos have renounced housing and exploiting elephants, including the zoos in Detroit, Seattle and the Bronx, in New York. Dan Ashe, the president of AZA advises his members against importing elephants from Zimbabwe. He has doubts on the origins of the elephants, the conditions of their capture and competency of the receiving parties in previous transactions between Zimbabwe and Asia. Ashe has blacklisted Zimbabwe and now prefers to work with the Kingdom of Eswatini, formerly Swaziland. The director of AZA has added that there are no current requests for elephant imports from the members of the association, but he also commented that the new CITES resolution was not an irremediable obstacle to future possible imports. For him, the San Diego Zoo is exemplary in its elephant management, and he underlined that the National Zoo in Washington DC continues to house elephants, although they have renounced giraffes and hippopotamuses.⁵³

CHINA



Chinese customs declared that it had seized 1,237.5 t of animal and plant products and by-products in the first 10 months of the year, including 9.16 t of ivory, and that it had thwarted 444 smuggling attempts at the same time.⁵⁵

HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION

November 14, 2019

Hong Kong-West Kowloon Station, Hong Kong, China

Seizure of necklaces, rings, bracelets, earrings.⁵⁶

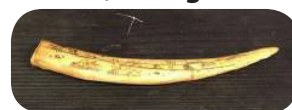


517 g

SHANGHAI MUNICIPALITY

October 22, 2019

Shanghai Pudong International Airport, Pudong District, Shanghai Municipality, China



1,351 g. One arrest.⁵⁷

December 5, 2019

Shanghai Municipality, China

Seizures of 4 painting scrolls in 2 postal parcels [presumed origin: Japan].⁵⁸



Ivory tips: 1,637 g



Ivory tips: 419 g

December 13-30, 2019

Municipality of Shanghai, China

Seizure of 4 ivory items with a total weight of 3,911 g and an estimated value of 163,000 yuan (22,785 US\$) in 4 postal parcels from Japan.⁵⁹



December 24, 2019

Shanghai Pudong International Airport, Pudong District, Shanghai Municipality, China

Seizures of 42 worked ivories with a total weight of 1,613 g from 2 Chinese passengers from Africa.⁶⁰



930 g



583 g

December 31, 2019

Shanghai Municipality, China

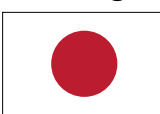
Seizure in a postal mail of a figurine. 150 g.⁶¹

GUANGDONG PROVINCE

Early October 2019

Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure in a postal parcel of at least 9 painting scrolls with ivory tips, 53 g of ivory each. From Japan.⁶²



Early October 2019

Guangzhou-Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 42 ivories in a suitcase or taped to the torso of one of the 2 travellers from Doha, Qatar.⁶³

October 21, 2019

Guangzhou-Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

316.6 g in the form of bracelets from Addis Ababa. One arrest.⁶⁴

October 24, 2019

Guangzhou-Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Bracelets and pendants: 273.5 g from Addis Ababa. One arrest.⁶⁵

October 27, 2019

Guangzhou-Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

504 g. Two arrests.⁶⁶

October 29, 2019

Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Shipped from France, the ivory statuette weighs 313.5 g.⁶⁷



November 4, 2019

Guangzhou-Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China



Seizure of 7 worked ivories and 2 tips of tusks in the suitcase of the passenger arriving from Addis Ababa.⁶⁸

575 g

November 15, 2019

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

An ivory necklace. 55.49 g.⁶⁹

November 16, 2019

Guangzhou-Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure in the trolley case of a passenger coming from Addis Ababa of 5 ivory jewels. 293 g.⁷⁰

November 24, 2019

Guangzhou-Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

13 carved ivories in the luggage of a female passenger coming from Addis Ababa. 441 g.⁷¹

December 8, 2019

Guangzhou-Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China



301.16 g.⁷²

December 13, 2019

Guangzhou-Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 19 ivory junk in the trolley case of a traveller from Cairo, Egypt. 569.2 g.⁷³

December 13, 2019

Guangzhou-Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China



Cairo / Guangzhou. Small seizures bleed African elephants and signal the presence on African soil of an active transformation of raw ivory into carved ivory.⁷⁴

206 g

December 14, 2019

**Guangzhou-Baiyun International Airport,
Guangdong Province, China**

The passenger had nothing to declare. Ionizing waves said otherwise. 212 g.⁷⁵

December 20, 2019

**Guangzhou-Baiyun International Airport,
Guangdong Province, China**



Another flight from
Cairo!⁷⁶

213 g

December 22, 2019

**Guangzhou-Baiyun International Airport,
Guangdong Province, China**

The "pre-inspection" detected 4 ivory bracelets in a trolley case. When the female passenger from Addis Ababa came to pick it up on the turnstile, she was stopped and told to open it. 173.5 g.⁷⁷

December 23, 2019

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

A necklace from a passenger coming from Tehran, Iran. 36 g.⁷⁸

December 24, 2019

**Guangzhou-Baiyun International Airport,
Guangdong Province, China**

Three bracelets from a passenger arriving from Doha, Qatar. 144,1 g.⁷⁹

December 27, 2019

**Guangzhou-Baiyun International Airport,
Guangdong Province, China**

Four pendants from a traveller disembarking from Cairo. The Cairo / Guangzhou road becomes established. 37.3 g.⁸⁰

December 30, 2019

**Guangzhou-Baiyun International Airport,
Guangdong Province, China**

From the side of a passenger arriving from Cairo, Egypt : 154.8 g.⁸¹

December 2019

**Guangzhou-Baiyun International Airport,
Guangdong Province, China**

Seizure from Addis Ababa. 165.9 g.⁸²

GUANGXI AUTONOMOUS REGION

December 24, 2019

**Dongxing, Guangxi Autonomous Region, China.
Border with Viet Nam.**

Seizure of 21 worked ivories, necklaces and effigies taped to the chest, arms and ankles of a female passenger whose, according to the customs communiqué published on Weibo, "several parts of the body were abnormally swollen". 868.89 g.⁸³

HEILONGJIANG PROVINCE

Early October 2019

Harbin, Heilongjiang Province, China



Three worked ivories including a fan in a parcel post from Spain. 1,146 g.



Necklace with carved ivory pendant in the shape of a rose, 22 g, in a postal parcel from Germany.⁸⁴



Early November 2019

Harbin, Heilongjiang Province, China

Seizure in a postal parcel from Spain of a worked ivory, 778 g. Since the beginning of 2019, Harbin Postal customs has seized 2944.2 g of worked ivory.⁸⁵



HENAN PROVINCE

November 4, 2019

Zhengzhou, Henan Province, China

Seizure in a mail from Italy of 5 worked ivories. 383 g.⁸⁶



November 29, 2019

Zhengzhou International Airport, Henan Province, China

- A necklace from a Chinese passenger disembarking from a flight from Macau: 71g.

- A bracelet from a passenger disembarking from a Taiwan flight : 28 g.⁸⁷



JIANGSU PROVINCE

End of October 2019

Sunan Shuofang International Airport, Suzhou and Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure of 12 pearls and an ivory pendant and 7 agarwood necklaces.⁸⁸

Early December 2019

Jinling, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure in 2 packages from a foreign country of 4 jars with ivory lids and one worked ivory [probable origin: Japan]. 108.13 g.⁸⁹



December 2019

Sunan Shuofang International Airport, Suzhou and Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure of 8 painting scrolls and a Buddha effigy about 300 g from Japan.⁹⁰



LIAONING PROVINCE

October 6, 2019

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

A bracelet seized by the railway brigade. One arrest.⁹¹

November 25, 2019

Dalian International Airport, Liaoning Province, China

A bracelet. 26 g.⁹²

SHANDONG PROVINCE

November 23, 2019

Jinan Yaoqiang International Airport, Shandong Province, China

An ivory Buddha pendant. 65 g.⁹³

November 27, 2019

Qingdao Liuting International Airport, Shandong Province, China

Back from Bangkok. Seizure on 2 passengers of 7 necklaces and 2 bracelets. 280 g.⁹⁴

December 3, 2019

Jinan Yaoqiang International Airport, Shandong Province, China

Seizure of a bracelet from a passenger arriving from Helsinki, Finland. 68 g.⁹⁵



December 27, 2019

Jinan Yaoqiang International Airport, Shandong Province, China

Six items made of suspected elephant leather. Weight: 1,398 g.⁹⁶

SICHUAN PROVINCE

November 1st, 2019

Chengdu-Shuangliu International Airport, Sichuan Province, China

Five bracelets in 3 cans of powdered milk. The passenger was coming from Addis Ababa.⁹⁷



433 g

December 6, 2019

Chengdu-Shuangliu International Airport, Sichuan Province, China



Seizure in the belongings of a passenger coming from Addis Ababa of 11 ivory items. Most of them were threaded through a thermos flask.⁹⁸

377 g.

YUNNAN PROVINCE

December 9, 2019

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

Seizure by the river customs of the Nanxi river of 2 bracelets hidden in a packet of coffee beans in the luggage of a Vietnamese national. 132.8 g.⁹⁹



ZHEJIANG PROVINCE

October 14, 2019

Yiwu, Zhejiang Province, China

210.57 g. One arrest.¹⁰⁰

November 10, 2019

Longemont Paradise, South of Lake Taihu, Zhejiang Province, China

The 32 elephant calves flown from Zimbabwe (cf. page 96) are in quarantine, 137 km from Shanghai, at the Longemont Paradise, a huge amusement park that includes hotels, shopping centers and zoo attractions. It is expected to exploit 11,500 animals of 425 different species. The elephant calves are 11,000 km from their savanna, in cages that measure around 6 m high by 5 m long and 3 m wide, with green fodder and a water trough. The elephant calves are very agitated; they have sunken temporal areas and dry skin, all signs, according to an expert from Zimbabwe who spoke under condition to remain anonymous, that the elephants are having trouble adapting to captivity and the local climate. Longemont Paradise is scheduled to open to the public some time in 2020.

At the beginning of November, ZimParks released information on revenue from the sale of elephant calves since 2016, and how the revenue was used. The sale of 101 elephant calves brought in 3.2 million US\$, or 31,000 US\$ per specimen for ZimParks. The money was used to purchase equipment for the rangers: Toyota Land Cruisers, anti-poaching dogs, defensive weapons and ammunition. The statement should be taken with a grain of salt. The results do not take into account the bonuses disbursed to politicians, military and various intermediaries who were paid off to facilitate the traffic. Among the mediators in the elephant and other wildlife traffic between Zimbabwe and China, is the persistently present name of Li Song, a business woman who has been awarded Zimbabwean citizenship, is chair of the China Trade Association and manager of the Eagle Tannery, which exports crocodile hides and supplies leather to equipment manufacturers for the army, the police, the air force and the penitentiary services, to be used to make boots and other accessories (see "On the Trail" n°15 p. 92-93). Eagle Tannery now seems to be dormant.¹⁰¹

INDIA

October 8, 2019

Bholatar, Udalguri District, State of Assam, India



"Laden" was terrorizing the border between Bhutan and India. The public rumour attributes to him in 5 to 6 years the death of 10 people by trampling. "We on several occasions have to venture in the night and Laden was a terror for us as we were not sure as to when he would attack." The terrorist, who is said to be a male with no tusks, would have finally died from an electrocution skillfully devised by anti-Laden militias. His body was blessed, he wasn't dumped at sea.¹⁰²

October 14, 2019

Konagorapalli, Chittoor District, State of Andhra Pradesh, India

P. Subramanyam, P. Lokanadham and Gurumurthy Reddy, farmer, truck driver and foreman, have all been arrested. The two first



individuals had set up electric lines to protect the fields from animal intrusions, the third used an earthmover to bury the 2 elephants who died of electrocution. Worried that they might have trouble with the forest authorities, the two farmers chose the solution hoping no one would be the wiser. Except that after a few days, a smell of rotting flesh invaded the neighborhood and dogs barking over the grave finally alerted the villagers and the authorities. The grave was reopened, and the whole became clear. The 4 tusks of the 2 subadult males were still in place, which is no guarantee of the 3 undertakers' honesty since ivory, contrary to carcasses, does not rot and can easily be recovered years after having been buried. Veterinarians did post-mortem tests on site, and then the 2 elephants were taken out of the pit and burned, after their tusks had been put in safe keeping.¹⁰³

October 27, 2019

Bagharatola Forest, Sundargarh District, Odisha State, India

A female elephant was mortally electrocuted Sunday night. She was buried on site. Elephants are surrounding the rice fields, so the farmers build electric fences. In the past 10 years, 114 elephants have died electrocuted in Odisha. The villagers in the districts of Koenjhar and Sundargarh have installed huts at the tops of trees to watch out for approaching elephants.

Biswajit Mohanty, who is familiar with the case, defended the elephants, explaining that they are disoriented and limited in their freedom of movement and access to their migratory paths because of irrigation canals, railroad lines, quarries and mining activities. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests in Odisha (155,782 km²) pointed out that elephants and other wild animals are also at risk for another reason: the planned displacement and consolidation of electric power lines that crisscross the parks and other protected areas is far from completion. There are still 6,300 electric poles to be renovated. For the time being, many of them are sagging and the live power lines are at trunk-level for the elephants.¹⁰⁴



November 1st, 2019

Sessa Nagaon, Dibrugarh District, State of Assam, India

100 metres from each other, they lay in the mud near a rice field. The Dehing-Medela Forest herd has lost 2 mothers.¹⁰⁵



November 4, 2019

Cochin, Emakulam District, Kerala State, India

Seizure of 2 tusks with a total weight of 5 kg. Arrest of R. Karthikumar, M. Veerabathiran alias "Chinnabonda", M. Eswaran and N. Damodaran alias "Maan".¹⁰⁶

REPEATED OFFENSE

November 5, 2019

Dharapuram, Tirupur District, Coimbatore, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Babu Jose, P. Singam and P. Kubendran have been arrested. They are at the central prison. Their confrontation has been authorized by the court. The forest police want to know more about their role in the trafficking of 300 kg of ivory that troubled Tamil Nadu between 2010 and 2015, as well as their involvement in more recent affairs. P. Singam et P. Kubendran are the underlings. They work in the forests. They have good memories and are remarkably cooperative. After they were arrested, they took investigators into the dense Nilgiris forest to show them where they had poached 2 elephants in 2011. The skeletons have been taken in as

evidence. Now it remains to be verified whether the 2 poachers delivered approximately 100 kg of ivory to Babu Jose, who then allegedly sold the ivory to Aji Bright, a trafficker in Kerala. Babu Jose lives in the Idukki district, in the state of Kerala; P. Singam and P. Kubendran in the districts of Andipatti and Theni, in the state of Tamil Nadu. The networks are found of that kind of mix-up. The police in the different states do not spontaneously cooperate.¹⁰⁷

November 10, 2019

Begusarai District, Bihar State, India

Death of a tame elephant. Suspicion of poisoning for a money feud between selling mahouts Mohammad Gayas and Mohammad Shamsad and buying mahout Mohammad Nishad. Autopsy in progress. The victim will then be buried.¹⁰⁸



Sunday 10 November, Monday

11 November 2019

Thalavadi, Erode District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Shock on shock! Electric fences erected by Indian farmers on the edge of forests and nature reserves are not designed to keep out wildlife. They are made to kill. The fences connected to the grid are electric chairs. An elephant about 40 years old has just been caught. The next day, Madeswamy, the farmer's son who installed the high voltage bomb was put in custody.¹⁰⁹



December 13, 2019

Andhiyur Forest, Erode District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

"There were three men in the forest. When we approached them, they ran away. We managed to catch up with two of them." And these two confessed to hiding a pair of tusks and a gun in the forest. The three pieces of evidence were indeed found. K. Lakshmanan and S. Mani are in custody. The third man, Mathan, is wanted.¹¹⁰



FAMILY AFFAIRS

December 14, 2019

Kulathur, Coimbatore District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Death by electrocution of an elephant aged about 40. He came into contact, near a wheat field, with a medium-voltage electric fence connected to the public grid. Thangavel's son and father were charged.¹¹¹



December 19, 2019

Manchukondapalli, Dharmapuri District, and Bilikal Forest Reserve, Krishnagiri District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

An elephant would have been poached in the forest and his 2 tusks cut. He would have been buried in the forest without a song and dance. The cops got wind of the dirty trick. By dint of groping and stitching up bits and pieces of information, they found and uncovered the body. This is the third tusker to disappear in the Hosur forests in 2 months. The females will have more and more difficulty to mate and procreate future generations.¹¹²

December 30, 2019

Deogarh District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

In the forest, Dukhabandhu Sahu got rid of a baby elephant for unknown reasons by shooting him in the liver.¹¹³

December 31, 2019

Gudiyatham, Vellore District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Death by electrocution of a magnificent bull, about 30 years old, after touching medium-voltage power lines used by farmers to "harvest" deer and other ungulates and trade their meat. He was returning to the forest by crossing a state-owned agricultural plot.¹¹⁴



INDONESIA

October 15, 2019

Bengkalis Regency, Riau Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Discovery by a logger of a decapitated bull elephant in an eucalyptus plantation of the PT Arara Abadi company. The death occurred several days ago. Post-mortem examination did not give any clues as to the cause of death. The victim was about 40 years old. The tusks have disappeared. The trunk was found in the bushes a few meters from the body. This is the second death of an elephant in the Arara Abadi forest concession in 2 months.¹¹⁵



November 21, 2019

East Aceh Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Discovery of the body of an elephant in an oil palm plantation. The initial findings of the veterinarians support a poisoning. The provincial government has announced that from the year 2020, poachers attacking endangered species will be liable to 100 lashes in accordance with Islamic law.¹¹⁶



December 9, 2019

Tunon Taka Port, Nunukan Regency, North Kalimantan Province, Island of Borneo, Indonesia. Border with Malaysia.

Seizure at 2:30 am of 4 tusks of pygmy elephants (*Elephas maximus borneensis*) in the luggage of Cristans Mikhael who came from Tawau in the state of Sabah, Malaysia. A new emergency meeting was held between the different services of Sabah to try to identify the "holes in the net" at the border with the Indonesian province.¹¹⁷

MALAYSIA

19, 20 and 25 October 2019

Beluran District, State of Sabah, Island of Borneo, Malaysia

Discovery on Saturday of a dead pygmy bull elephant (*Elephas maximus borneensis*), about 25 years old, in an industrial plantation. Tusks are missing. The autopsy reveals healed wounds from bullet impacts. They are not the cause of death.

On Sunday night, a security guard at the plantation was heard by the police and the register of entries and exits to the plantation was confiscated.

The following Friday, the 2 carefully cut tusks were found in the ferns near the crime scene.¹¹⁸

Pygmy elephants in Malaysia, see "On the Trail" n°6 p. 93, n°18 p. 102 and 104, n°19 p.111-112, n°21 p. 98, n°22 p. 100 and below.

November 3, 2019

Kinabatangan District, State of Sabah, Island of Borneo, Malaysia

Not much remains of the pygmy elephant whose body was found on Sunday. He was decapitated, his hind legs and both feet of his front legs were amputated. "30% of its body was intact," the director of the Sabah Wildlife Department said with a touch of fright. The autopsy does not make it possible to know if the unfortunate man was mutilated by poachers or by "collectors" of skin and organs that accidentally fell on his body.¹¹⁹

OPERATION BERSEPADU KHAZANAH

November 12, 2019

Gua Musang, Kelantan State, Malaysia

People in the village hear gunshots in the forest and are giving the alarm to the Perhilitan's agents. The body of an elephant, stripped of his tusks and legs, is discovered at the end of the day. The home of a 51-year-old poacher is searched. A pair of tusks, a rifle, ammunition and a chainsaw are seized. The suspect is arrested.¹²⁰





19, 20 and 25 October 2019, Beluran, Malaysia



December 31, 2019, Kalmunai, Sri Lanka



Elephas maximus borneensis



November 2, 2019, Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam



November 13, 2019, Hanoi, Viet Nam

November 16, 2019

Kinabatangan District, State of Sabah, Island of Borneo, Malaysia

An ill wind is blowing on the district. The body of a pygmy elephant has been found. Several monitor lizards were going at the carrion. Her name was "Girang" and she was part of an elephant monitoring and protection program directed by Dr. Benoit Goossens, professor at the University of Cardiff who does research on wildlife in the Kinabatangan sanctuary. "On Sunday, November 13, she was doing fine. She had travelled 2 km." Girang wore a geolocation tag and was part of a herd that had been moving through palm oil plantations on either side of the Kinabatangan river for the past 3 or 4 months. She was undoubtedly poisoned.¹²¹



December 7, 2019

Lahad Datu, State of Sabah, Island of Borneo, Malaysia

Like a repeat occurrence of "Girang's" death! The adult elephant was found dead in a palm oil plantation, with no external injuries, just blood flowing out of her ears, navel and mouth. There is a suspicion of poison. The Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Environment, Christina Liew, has lashed out again, reminding everyone that the 2020-2030 elephant management program makes both workers and managers responsible for any elephant that is injured or killed on or around a plantation. Ms Liew is also counting on the commitment of the elite troops of the GOF (General Operations Force) and its Tiger Platoons to backup local teams and fight against poaching and poisoning.¹²²



SRI LANKA

October 8, 2019

Akkaraipattu, Eastern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 3 "elephant pearls" supposed to bring happiness and prosperity (cf. "On the Trail" n°15 p.101, n°19 p.112). Three arrests.¹²³

December 31, 2019

Kalmunai, Eastern Province, Sri Lanka

Arrest on New Year's Eve of 7 men aged between 24 and 39 who were about to deliver 5 "elephant pearls" to an unidentified recipient.¹²⁴

THAILAND

October 1st, 2019

Bangkok, Thailand

Finally an acquittal for Premchai Karnasuta, well-known to the writers and readers of "On the Trail" (see "On the Trail" n°20 p. 126-127, n°23 p. 134, n°24 p. 90, n°25 p. 118, n°26 p. 111 and this issue page 125). After his poaching exploit in February 2018, a search was carried out in his home and 2 long pairs of tusks said to be of African origin were seized. Premchai and his wife were indicted for illegal detention, smuggling and concealment. Premchai had forgotten to declare and justify the trophies in 2015 when the national park wildlife conservation Department drew up an inventory of the tusks in the possession of Thai citizens. However, his wife had made the declaration in her own name. In court, a certain Wandee Somphum, 71 years old, testified that the 4 tusks came from a family inheritance and from domestic elephants. The tusks were returned to the happy heirs. Premchai Karnasuta arrived in court walking with a cane. When the couple's home was searched, the authorities also seized around 40 firearms, 10 telescopic sights and ammunition. The account does not specify whether those objects were also returned.¹²⁵



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VIET NAM

October 15, 2019

Thanh Khe District, Da Nang Municipality, Viet Nam

Seizure of 4 pairs of tusks with a total weight of 17.6 kg, i.e. 2.2 kg per tusk.¹²⁶

November 2, 2019

Nam Tu Liem District, Hanoi Province, Viet Nam

Le Cuong and Huynh Chien Thang sentenced to 24 and 18 months in prison. The former supplied the carved ivories, the latter sought to sell them on the Internet (see "On the Trail" n°25 p. 98). The court ordered the destruction of the objects.¹²⁷



November 2, 2019

Tan Son Nhat International Airport, Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Seizure in the suitcase of a Vietnamese passenger arriving from Bangkok on a VietJet Air flight of a 1.8 kg tusk and 22.5 kg of aloe wood.¹²⁸

November 13, 2019

Noi Bai International Airport, Hanoi, Viet Nam

Seized in the hands of a young man of 24 years old who came from Japan where he is a student of 7 ivory statuettes. The 7 little dwarves did not bring him luck.¹²⁹



November 13, 2019

Hanoi, Viet Nam

Nguyen Xuan The sentenced to 10 years in prison. He was arrested in November 2018 with 181 kg of ivory.¹³⁰



November 25, 2019

Tu Son, Bac Ninh Province, Viet Nam

The city of Tu Son is both the capital of white gold and the capital of fake. Of the 6 kg of ivory seized in Mrs LTT's shop in Thuong next to Tu Son (see "On the Trail" n°25 p.98), 0.76 kg were genuine. She sold the 6 kg, certifying that it was ivory. The Penal Code provides for 1 to 15 years in prison and fines of at least 20,000 US\$ and no more than 80,000 US\$ for ivory trafficking over 2 kg. Ms. LTT would therefore only risk a minor offence without a criminal record.¹³¹

EUROPE

FRANCE

November 9 and 10, 2019

La Rochelle, Department of Charente-Maritime, France

Nice catch for the ivory hunters! Seizure on an antique dealer's show of 205 worked ivories offered for sale without any certificate of expertise. The total value is 20.000 € (21,870 US\$). The cane was for sale 880 €. If they are sold without certificates proving the dating and origin, the ivories are presumed stolen, from recent poaching or any spoliation after 1947. Antique dealers and day-traders at the all-purpose fairs have to memorize it.¹³²

ITALY

October 12, 2019

Parma, Province of Parma, Region of Emilia-Romagna, Italy

Seized by the Carabinieri of an "elegant" elephant tusk in an antique shop. The seller was unable to present a certificate guaranteeing its legal origin.¹³³

December 15, 2019

Palermo, Metropolitan City of Palermo, Region of Sicily, Italy

Seizure by the Carabinieri in an antique market of 7 ivory items from Africa and Asia.¹³⁴

PORTUGAL

November 27, 2019

Porto, Portugal

Seizure in an auction room operated by a 61-year-old woman of several ivory objects with a total price tag of 40,000 € (43,740 US\$).¹³⁵

December 7, 2019

Figueira da Foz, District of Coimbra, Portugal

Seizure of 5 sections of elephant tusks for sale 1,500 € (1,640 US\$) via the Internet.¹³⁶

UNITED KINGDOM

REPEATED OFFENSE

October 17, 2019

Lincoln, County Lincolnshire, England, United Kingdom

Slawomir Kazmierczak has been sentenced to 9 months in prison for offences which began in February 2017. At that time, he sent 2 packages to continental China and to Hong Kong. The packages officially contained "jewelry," which was indeed true, but the jewelry was made of ivory (a necklace, a pendant and a bracelet). Despite having been warned, he was caught again in April 2017 when packages officially containing wooden sculptures were opened by customs officers who found 20 pieces of carved ivory. Before sending those 2 packages, Kazmierczak had received 1000 £ (1240 US\$) from the addressees. In May, officials searched his home and discovered raw ivory tusks and 3 pieces of carved ivory for which carbon-14 dating revealed that they were made from the tusks of elephants killed after 1955 and 1960, subsequent to the key date of 1947. International trade can be authorized under certain conditions for ivory dating from before 1947. After 1947, all ivory is considered modern, and international trade is illegal. In his initial plea, Kazmierczak, speaking through a Polish interpreter, said that he believed that all of the objects, including the tusk he had purchased on eBay, were made of bone.¹³⁷



Mammoths

Cf. page 83 (November 12, 2019, Kraskino border post, Primorskaya Krai, Russia and December 20, 2019, Blagoveshchensk-Heihe border post, Amur Oblast, Russia) and page 129 (October 15, 2019, Cardiff, County South Glamorgan, Wales, United Kingdom).

Other Mammals

AFRICA

KENYA

End of October 2019
Nyahururu, Laikipia County, Kenya

A fine of one million shillings (9,580 US\$) or 5 years imprisonment for poaching a zebra (genus *Equus*) with the intention of selling its meat and other parts.¹



December 8, 2019
Soysambu Conservancy, Kenya

Removal of a metal trap encircling the left hind leg of a zebra (genus *Equus*) for about a week. Application of antiseptics to the wound and spraying of antibiotics. Favourable prognosis. Sheldrick Wildlife Trust operation.²



December 24, 2019
South Kenya

On the eve of the Christmas celebrations, arrest of 5 poachers in possession of 10 carcasses of dik-dik (genus *Madoqua*) that they were about to sell on the bushmeat markets.³

Dik-dik under pressure, see "On the Trail" n°19 p. 114, n°21 p. 83, n°26 p. 97.

NAMIBIA

November 30, 2019
Ngoma, Caprivi Region, Namibia

Three Namibians and one Zambian arrested. They were transporting 5 carcasses of impala (*Aepyceros melampus*) in the back of a pick-up.⁴

CHAD

November 25, 2019
Chad

The antelopes of the Sahara are in grave danger of extinction, threatened by poaching aggravated by the effectiveness of modern weapons and intrusions by off-road vehicles. Fifteen addaxes (*Addax nasomaculatus*, Appendix I) were just transferred by plane to Chad from the United Arab Emirates. They came from the Al Ain nature reserve, and after spending an adaptation period in a pen, they will be released in the Ouadi Rime-Ouadi Achim Fauna Reserve. This attempt at reintroducing addaxes in their biological distribution range follows what is considered a promising reintroduction of scimitar-horned oryx (*Oryx dammah*, Appendix I) in the Chadian reserve.⁵ *Addax nasomaculatus*, see "On the Trail" n°6 p. 105, n°9 p. 66, n°19 p. 129, n°24 p. 90, n°25 p. 109.



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AMERICA

ARGENTINA

November 2, 2019
Colonia Ensanche Sauce, Department of Federación, Province of Entre Rios, Argentina

In the back of a Ford Ranger, there were 5 carcasses of capybaras (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*). They were seized and destroyed. Two arrests and seizure of several daggers and knives.⁶

BRAZIL

October 9, 2019
Cruzeiro do Sul, State of Acre, Brazil

Arrest in flagrante delicto by the Federal Police of 2 poachers in the indigenous reserve of Campinas Katukina. Seizure of 3 guns, 6 traps and 6 kg of paca meat (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras).⁷



December 2, 2019
Álvares Machado, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure of 2 rifles, 6 rounds of 22-calibre ammunition, 3 knives, 2 machetes and a capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*). Simple fine of 500 reais (117 US\$) for the 2 poachers. Burial of the carcass in a pit.⁸



FAMILY AFFAIRS
December 3, 2019
Mamonas, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

Foxes are the mascot of the Cruzeiro football team. By taming 3 specimens of the crab-eating fox (*Cerdocyon thous*, Appendix II), the relentless supporter hoped to bring her luck and protect her from relegation to the lower division, a disaster that has never happened before. Fines of 4,870 reais or 1,200 US\$ in total and 400 US\$ per fox. Additional seizure of 7 rare birds belonging to his brother. Fine of 9800 reais or 5,870 US\$.⁹





December 10, 2019, Río de Janeiro, Brazil



December 2, 2019, Álvares Machado, Brazil



Potos flavus



November 24, 2019, Natore, Bangladesh



October 12, 2019, Huanggang, China

December 10, 2019

Río de Janeiro, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

A nine-banded armadillo (*Dasypus novemcinctus*) was seized from a young man by the military police. He is "showing no signs of abuse" according to the local media, as if holding an "armadillo" in a noisy and polluted city, was not in itself abuse. In the wild, a nine-banded armadillo travels a kilometer in an hour in search of buried insects and worms. He was handed over to the care of Ibama.¹⁰

COLOMBIA

October 16, 2019

Guacarí, Department of Valle del Cauca, Colombia

Rescue of a kinkajou (*Potos flavus*, Appendix III in Honduras) trapped in a tree near the stadium, harassed by kids and threatened by stray dogs. After a week of observation at the Palmira refuge, he was released in a reserve and witnesses attest to the fact that back home, the animal demonstrated its happiness by climbing quickly up a tree. He passed out of sight in the branches.¹¹

ASIA

BANGLADESH

November 24, 2019

Natore, Natore District, Rajshahi Division, Bangladesh

Conviction by a mobile court of Amal Sarder for capturing and killing 159 bats and an owl. He was transporting the mammals and the bird of prey with the intention of selling them at Jessore, 200 km south of Natore. He was selling one bat at the food markets for 20 to 25 takas, or 0.23 US\$ to 0.29 US\$.¹²



CHINA

October 12, 2019

Huanggang border post, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

The foxes (*Vulpes* spp., 3 subspecies in Appendix III) were not red as in the Novel and exotic furriers made 22 vests out of them. A nice winter gift for the bourgeois. Value of the whole: 200,000 yuan (28,050 US\$) or 1,275 US\$ per piece.¹³

October 24, 2019

Meixian International Airport, Meizhou, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure in the luggage of an incoming passenger of 2 horns of Javan rusa (*Rusa timorensis*), 6 tails and 51 hooves, with a total weight of 4.09 kg.¹⁴

November 4, 2019

Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

Seizure of 32,690 kg of raw and semi-raw hippopotamus ivory in postal parcels declared as containing "personal belongings".¹⁵



© Chinese Customs

December 3, 2019

Gansu Province, China

Sentencing of 2 men to 10 years in prison for trapping 6 Alpine musk deer (*Moschus chrysogaster*, Appendix II), a 10,000 yuan (1,420 US\$) fine each and 180,000 yuan (23,000 US\$) to compensate for the damage to the national wildlife heritage. The two men did not appeal.¹⁶



INDIA

October 9, 2019

Bibvewadi, Pune District, State of Maharashtra, India

Ajinkya Shitole, 19 years old, was arrested in possession of 2 horns of blackbucks (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Pakistan and Nepal) that he wanted to sell on the local market for Rs. 10,000 (140 US\$). On the international black market, the pair of horns sells for at least ten times as much. *Antelope cervicapra*, cf. "On the Trail" n°2 p.33, n°4 p.92 and 106, n°5 p.108, n°7 p.101, n°8 p.92 and 98, n°9 p.91, n°10 p.70 and 73, n°11 p.89, n°12 p.99-100, n°14 p.101, n°15 p.47, n°17 p.110 and 121, n°18 p.110, n°19 p.117-118, n°20 p.112, 116 and 123-124, n°21 p.106, n°22 p.105 and 119, n°25 p.109, and 112-113.¹⁷

October 10, 2019

Jamnagar, Jamnagar District, State of Gujarat, India

Four days in police custody for 8 persons suspected of poaching a blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Pakistan and Nepal), skinning it and trying to sell its hide for black magic purposes.¹⁸

October 24, 2019

Rampur, Warangal District, Telangana State, India

Another blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Pakistan and Nepal) barbecue. Two arrests.¹⁹

OPERATION " CLEAN ART "

October 24 and 25, 2019

States of Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan, India

Seizure of a total of 54,352 brushes made of Indian grey mongoose hair (*Herpestes edwardsi*, Appendix III in India and in Pakistan). Each brush is made with 2 to 3 g of hairs, and one mongoose has around 16 g of hair.

Seizure of 113 kg of hair and 24,060 brushes in Bijnor, in Uttar Pradesh where most brush-manufacturers are located. 26 workshop managers and workers were arrested and taken to the district prison until their trials. 113 kg of hair represents at least 7000 poached mongooses.

Seizure of 29,168 brushes in 21 art supply stores, hardware stores and paper shops in Mumbai, Pune, Sawantwadi, Aurangabad in Maharashtra and 15 arrests.

"We have been conducting a survey since January to track down the sellers," said Aditya Patil, chair of the NGO WWA (Wildlife Welfare Association) which participated in the operation, in cooperation with the WCCB (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau).

The mongoose trade is in the hands of poachers in southern India (Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra), followed by the traditional manufacturers in Uttar Pradesh in the north and resellers in all of the major India metropolises, as well as the European Union and the United States. In France, a brush made of mongoose hair sells for between 4 € and 30 € (4.40 to 32.50 US\$), depending on the size. "If the slaughter of these animals continues, there is a chance they could become extinct," said Jitendra Ramgaokar, deputy conservator of forests in Maharashtra. The mongoose hair business is resistant and does not want to become extinct. In 2018, 145 kg of hair and 10,000 brushes were seized and destroyed in Bijnor. "We arrested several people, but after they were released, they went back to the same work," observed the WCCB director in the Northern region. Mongoose watercolors provide livelihood for thousand of people in India and pastimes for million in the world.²⁰

Mongoose, see "On the Trail" n°1 p.12 and p. 39, n°3 p. 29 and p. 78, n°4 p. 91 and p. 106, n°5 p. 54, n°6 p. 101, n°7 p. 100, n°8 p. 92, n°9 p. 91, n°11 p.34, n°14 p.101, n°17 p. 24, n°18 p. 110, n°19 p. 108, n°23 p. 157.



Young mongooses

November 26, 2019

Hyderabad, Hyderabad District, Telangana State, India

A narrow escape for a young blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Pakistan and Nepal), aged approximately 10 months. She had been captured by Chapala Siddaiah, who led a double-life, both fishing and poaching along the Krishna River in the Wanaparthy district. He sold his catches to Mohammed Anwar Ali, who has been a bird vendor for 40 years at the Murgi Chowk market and works with Mohammed Javed, specialized in rabbits and other wild rodents. "A blackbuck? Why not?" The two Murgi Chowk vendors were not picky when offered the antelope. They tried to sell it alive or dead, for 3000 rupees, around 43 US\$/kg of meat. Witnesses informed the police, who saved the animal and turned her over to forest officers. The 3 men have been charged with violating the 1972 Wildlife Protection Act.²¹

EUROPE

GERMANY

October 2, 2019

Ticino and Thelkow, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Germany

A "fearsome" zebra (genus *Equus*) escaped from a circus and was shot by the police in a field.²²



Multi-Species

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

November 24, 2019

Klerksdorp and Hartbeesfontein, North West Province, South Africa

- Arrest of a 23-year-old man on a farm and seizure of 4 firearms, empty cartridges and ammunition.
- Arrest in connection with the first of 2 men aged 34 and 43 on a nearby farm. Seizure of several firearms, about 100 rhino horns or fragments, 4 tiger carcasses in freezers and 1,000 US\$ in cash.

Both operations were conducted by the Hawks, one of the elite forces of the South African Police Service.¹



December 28, 2019

Kuruman, Northern Cape Province, South Africa
In the bag of a 50-year-old hitchhiker, police found 9 juvenile live tortoises, a lizard skin and springbok (*Antidorcas marsupialis*) horns. He said he was on his way to Lesotho, about 575 km from Kuruman. He is in police custody.²

CAMEROON

OPERATION HALCOMI (Stop Illegal Trade)

On the night of December 23rd to 24th, 2019

Douala, Littoral Region, Cameroon

A said to be "record" seizure: 600 kg of pangolin scales, 200 live grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I), 3 elephant tusks, 122 boxes of liquor and 96 boxes of wine and spirits from 2 motorized pirogues that had just run aground in a creek.³



KENYA

December 16, 2019

Isiolo County, Kenya

Members of the county parliament are calling for an investigation into the cruel fate they say KWS officers inflicted on poachers. They claim that at least 12 bodies would not have been returned to the families and suspect that KWS left them with scavenging animals after gunfire.⁴

ZIMBABWE

November 10, 2019

Victoria Falls and Katombora National Park, Northern Matabeleland Province, Zimbabwe. Border with Zambia.

Three arrests in flagrante delicto for selling the head and skin of a lion (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II) followed by the arrest of 2 accomplices and the seizure of horns and skin of an impala (*Aepyceros melampus*), kudu horns (genus *Tragelaphus*) and warthog teeth (*Phacochoerus africanus*).⁵

AMERICA

ARGENTINA

Early November 2019

Gualectuaychú, Province of Entre Ríos, Roque Pérez and Villarino, Province of Buenos Aires, Provinces of Salta, Santiago del Estero and Tucumán, Argentina



Simultaneous searches in 35 private locations. Seizures of 2,810 animals including snakes, 2,400 birds and 82 turtles, 360 cages and traps, 5 vehicles, 185,000 pesos (3,100 US\$) and 1,300 US\$ in cash from wildlife sales. The federal police did not knock on the doors by chance. For months, they had been accumulating information on the poachers, wholesalers, truckers and dealers' ring.⁶

BOLIVIA

End of December 2019

Department of Santa Cruz, Bolivia

Seizure of a jaguar (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I), a wild cat (*Felis silvestris*, Appendix II) and a douroucoulis sometimes called an owl monkey (*Aotus* spp., Appendix II). They were taken to the Senda Verde Refuge in the Yungas Forest Valley.⁷

BRAZIL

6-12 October 2019

Itaberaba, Milagres, Itatim, Iaçú, Ruy Barbosa, Itaeté, Boa Vista do Tupim, Marcionílio Souza and Amargosa, State of Bahia, Brazil

Coordinated operation of the Regional Council of Veterinary Medicine, Ibama and the Federal Highway Police in the Rio Paraguaçu basin. Seizure of around 100 birds and 100 turtles.⁸

October 14 2019

Araraquara, Américo Brasiliense, Matão, São Carlos, Gavião Peixoto and Ibaté, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Major operation against the illegal keeping of wild animals in approved breeding farms and against trafficking in markets and via the Internet. 26 searches. 102,000 reais in fines totalling approximately 24,500 US\$. Trials will follow. Seizure of 67 animals. 38 birds and 7 red-footed or yellow-footed turtle tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II) were immediately released into wild.⁹

October 15 2019

Rio Branco, State of Acre, Brazil

At home, he had a howler monkey (*Alouatta* spp., Appendix I or II), green-winged macaws (*Ara chloropterus*, Appendix II), budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*), cobras (family Elapidae), amazons (*Amazona* spp., Appendix I or II), an agouti (genus *Dasyprocta*) and a yellow-headed sideneck (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II). They were seized and taken to CETAS (Centro de Triagem de Animais Silvestres). The man was released. He is expected to answer several charges.¹⁰

October 15, 2019

Loanda, State of Paraná, Brazil

Two poachers arrested. Fine of 2,000 reais for each (500 US\$). Seizure in a freezer of 5.5 kg of armadillo meat (family Dasypodidae), 10 kg of paca meat (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras). Additional seizure of 7 weapons of various calibres.¹¹



October 22, 2019

Maricá, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

After photos have been sent to "Disque Denúncia", seizure of 9 birds and 5 turtles. Anonymity is guaranteed for the informants.¹²

October 31, 2019

Cantá, State of Roraima, Brazil

The 2 men and the woman were in the car at kilometre 210 of the BR-432 with a rifle, 4 38-calibre weapons, 25 kg of armadillo meat (family Dasypodidae) and paca (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras) and a chainsaw.¹³

November 11, 2019

Adolfo, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Anti-poaching campaign. Seizure of 2 armadillos (family Dasypodidae), 2 amazons (*Amazona* spp., Appendix I or II) and a hooded siskin (*Spinus magellanicus*), 35 kg of capybara meat (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*), 300 rounds of ammunition and 11 firearms. Nine arrests.¹⁴

November 15, 2019

Pedro de Toledo, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure of 73 wild birds, 2 large American possums (genus *Didelphis*) and 1 caiman frozen and dozens of traps. 62 birds were immediately released into a nearby reserve. Eleven are under observation in Cubatão. One arrest and a fine of 349,000 reais or about 86,880 US\$.¹⁵



November 22, 2019

Uruaçu, State of Goiás, Brazil

Seizure of armadillo meat (family Dasypodidae), caiman and dead birds in a Toyota Hilux intercepted on the BR-153 linking Porangatu to Brasília. Two arrests. The couple aged 43 and 57 refused to say where and by whom the animals were killed.¹⁶

November 27, 2019

Santana and Macapá, Amapá State, Brazil

- Seizure of 384 kg of arapaima meat (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) on board a vessel at quayside. Donated to 6 charities.

- Seizure at the port of 40 kg of armadillo meat (family Dasypodidae), 30 kg of paca meat (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras) and 8 kg of capybara meat (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*). Unfit for human consumption, the seizure could be directed at the Macapá Zoo.¹⁷

OPERATION BLOQUEIO

Early December 2019

São Mateus, Nova Venécia, State of Espírito Santo, Brazil

Seizure by the environmental military police of 1.7 kg of crocodile meat (*Alligator* spp., Appendix II) and 1.5 kg of paca meat (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras), 16 birds, 8 cages, lead shot and 2 firearms.¹⁸

December 13, 2019

Presidente Figueiredo, Amazonas State, Brazil

The CPAmb (Comando de Policiamento Ambiental) and the BPAMB (Batalhão de Polícia Ambiental) released 11 capuchins (*Sapajus* spp., synonymous with *Cebus* spp., Appendix II) and one bird of prey about 100 km from Manaus. The lucky ones had been seized at roadside checks or handed over to the authorities by repentant or burdened owners.¹⁹

December 19, 2019

Recife, State of Pernambuco, Brazil

Return to the country for 22 green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II) and 296 birds: one cactus conure (*Aratinga cactorum*, Appendix II), 91 yellow-bellied seedeaters (*Sporophila nigricollis*), 78 red-cowled cardinals (*Paroaria dominicana*), 48 plumbeous seedeaters (*Sporophila plumbea*), 41 ultramarine grosbeaks (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*), 12 campo troupials (*Icterus jamacaii*), 9 pale-breasted thrushes (*Turdus leucomelas*), 8 caatinga cacholoteas (*Pseudoseisura cristata*), 4 white-naped jays (*Cyanocorax cyanopogon*) and 2 yellow-faced siskins (*Carduelis yarrellii*, Appendix II). The release will have to be delayed for a while. They are in transit in the CETAS Tangara. Most of them had been seized on buses heading to Sao Paulo, its pet shops and illegal wildlife markets. The road is long between the state of Pernambuco and the state of Sao Paulo, 2,390 km, more than 30 hours. The return trip was made by plane, a 3-hour flight, in suitable crates with food and drink, which did not prevent the iguanas from arriving "stressed" according to the bulletin issued by the local vets.²⁰

End of December 2019

Cruzeiro do Sul, State of Acre, Brazil

Seizure of 4 white-throated tinamous (*Tinamus guttatus*), 3 parakeets (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), a dusky-legged guan (*Penelope obscura*), a chestnut-bellied seed finch (*Oryzoborus angolensis*), 10 red-footed or yellow-footed turtle tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II), 7 pacas (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras), 2 deer, 2 armadillos (family Dasypodidae), 2 collared peccaries (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II) and one tapir (*Tapirus* spp., Appendix I or II), a dozen cages and of 15 guns. Turtles and birds were released. Cumulative fines of 722,000 reais, i.e. 170,000 US\$.²¹



Early November 2019

Department of Cesar, Colombia

Seizure on farms and other rural properties of 3 mantled howlers (*Alouatta palliata*, Appendix I), 6 macaws (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II), 2 amazons (*Amazona* spp, Appendix I or II), 2 orange-chinned parakeets (*Brotogeris jugularis*, Appendix II), 1 monk parakeet (*Myiopsitta monachus*, Appendix II), 1 little owl (*Athene noctua*, Appendix II), 17 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), 3 Northern mockingbirds (*Mimus polyglottos*), 2 glossy-black thrushes (*Turdus serranus*), 2 seed finches (genus *Sporophila*), 5 agoutis (*Dasyprocta punctata*, Appendix III in Honduras) and 2 squirrels. Only one arrest.²³

COSTA RICA

End of November 2019

Orotina, Alajuela Province, Costa Rica

The small Panamanian white-faced capuchin (*Cebus imitator*, Appendix II) was on the leash. He was removed from a store by the agents of Sinac (Sistema Nacional de Áreas de Conservación) with 2 green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II) and a orange-fronted conure (*Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II). Veterinary and behavioural evaluation has started to assess a possible release into the wild. The mother of the mini-primate was probably killed at the time of kidnapping by poachers.²⁴

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

October 12, 2019

State of California, United States of America

Signature by the Governor of the state of the law prohibiting the sale of leather goods, decorative objects and any article from caimans (subfamily Caimaninae), lizards (order Squamata) and hippopotamuses.²⁵

COLOMBIA

Early October 2019

Buenavista, Department of Córdoba, Colombia

It's a feast for 107 red-footed tortoise (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II), one Colombian rainbow boa (*Epicrates maurus*, Appendix II), 46 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), 12 grey seedeaters (*Sporophila intermedia*), 10 ruddy-breasted seedeaters (*Sporophila minuta*), 5 black-striped sparrows (*Arremonops conirostris*), 5 boas constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II), 4 rose-breasted grosbeaks (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*), 3 yellow-bellied seedeaters (*Sporophila nigricollis*), 3 greyish saltators (*Salatator coerulescens*), 2 lesson's seedeaters (*Sporophila bouvronides*), 2 crimson-backed tanagers (*Ramphocelus dimidiatus*), 1 blue-gray tanagers (*Thraupis episcopus*) and 2 ocelots (*Leopardus pardalis*, Appendix I).

They were released in the Aica Betancí Forest Reserve. They had been seized from private homes, markets, roadside stalls and coaches. They were all examined by veterinarians and their suitability for wildlife was assessed by the CVS (Autonomous Regional Corporation of the Sinú and San Jorge Valleys) and the Omacha Foundation.²²

December 11, 2019

Houston, State of Texas, United States of America

Rescue of more than 33 animals left behind after house move: 2 chinchillas (*Chinchilla* spp., Appendix I), a tokay gecko (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II), a corn snake (*Pantherophis guttatus*), 3 hedgehogs (family Erinaceidae or Tenrecinae) and 26 fish were still alive. They were taken to a shelter where they will be cared of. For 5 sugar gliders (*Petaurus breviceps*), a chameleon (family Chamaeleonidae) and a ferret (*Mustela putorius furo*), it was too late, they were already dead.²⁶

FRANCE (FRENCH GUIANA)

REPEATED OFFENSE

October 5, 2019

Cayenne, French Guiana and Departments of Bouches-du-Rhône and Vaucluse, France

Arrest of 2 passengers.

- One was carrying 2 tarantulas and a cocoon. He admits to the infractions. He will be prosecuted in metropolitan France.

- The other hid in his luggage a tattooed snake with *Imantodes cenchoa*. As repeated offender, he was sentenced in an immediate appearance to a fine of 1500 € (1,640 US\$) and a fine of 150 € (164 US\$). Several snakes of Guyanese origin were seized from his homes in southern France.

The investigation led to the seizure of a farm in French Guiana and the seizure of 11 snakes, including a neotropical rattlesnake (*Crotalus durissus*, Appendix III in Honduras) and a put viper (*Lachesis muta*).²⁷



MEXICO

October 15, 2019

Mexicali, State of Baja California, Mexico

Seizure at a nightclub of cocaine, amphetamines, weapons, ammunition, 2 African lions (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II), a python (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II) and an eagle. Three arrests.²⁸



November 11, 2019

Ocosingo, State of Chiapas, Mexico

Police raid on the El Najchajca ranch at the behest of the prosecutor and seizure of bags of cocaine, a jaguar (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I), an oncilla (*Leopardus tigrinus*, Appendix I), five peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) and three dwarf pigs. Two arrests. The action was triggered after alerts from the neighbourhood worried by gunfire.²⁹



November 19, 2019

Tepehuacán de Guerrero, State of Hidalgo, Mexico

Seizure in one individual's home of a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) and a central American red brocket (*Mazama temama*). They were transferred to the CIVS (Centro de Investigación y Conservación de la Vida Silvestre) of Los Reyes la Paz in the state of Mexico for observation and possible subsequent release.³⁰

November 21, 2019

State of Nuevo Leon, Mexico

Good news from our prisoners!

An American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) and her 3 cubs which had been seized from a private home and entrusted to a UMA (Unidades de Manejo para la Conservación de la Vida Silvestre) under veterinary supervision were released into their natural habitat near Salinas Victoria.

Concerning 2 great horned owls (*Bubo virginianus*, Appendix II) seized from people several months ago, one was released in a suitable natural habitat near Santa Catarina and the other taken to the Zoo de la Pastora in Guadalupe to be cared for pending further release.

A Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*, Appendix II) was released on the Huasteca side.

A peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) is still in care at WBU "El Diente" in Monterrey awaiting further release.

A barn owl (*Tito alba*, Appendix II) voluntarily surrendered by a private individual to the authorities was released near the Río Pesqueria.

An left over baby Geoffroy's spider monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*, Appendix II) in the town of Garcia is still under observation at the Zoo de la Pastora in Guadalupe.

All of these animals were victims of "mascotry".³¹

Early December 2019

Holbox, State of Quintana Roo, Mexico

Seizure at Darwin N. and José Mauricio N.'s home of one spider monkey (*Ateles spp.*, Appendix I or II), 2 amazons (*Amazona spp.*, Appendix I or II), of marijuana and cocaine.³²



Early December 2019

Mexico City, Mexico

Road check. Suspicious sounds coming from a box and 2 bags. Seizure of 2 toucans (Ramphastidae family) and a howling monkey (*Alouatta spp.*, Appendix I or II). Two arrests.³³

PARAGUAY

November 22, 2019

Department of Presidente Hayes, Paraguay

Seizure of 3 caimans (*Caiman* spp., Appendix I or II), 1 red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), 1 capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*), 10 chacos chachalaca (*Ortalis canicollis*) and 5 dead doves on board a vehicle. There is no question of cutting up and donating them to charity. The rotting carcasses were buried in a pit dug on site.³⁴

Mid-December 2019

Asunción, Paraguay

Bis repetita at Mercado 4 (cf. "On the Trail" n°7 p.23 and n°13 p.106).

Police seized 32 turtles, 8 blue-fronted parrots (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), 10 monk parakeets (*Myiopsitta monachus*, Appendix II), 5 ferruginous pygmy-owl (*Glaucidium brasilianum*, Appendix II), 2 guirás (*Guira guira*), 2 song thrushes (*Turdus philomelos*) and a blue-headed parrot (*Pionus menstruus*, Appendix II) from 2 poultry traders. They have been entrusted to the zoo to assess their ability to regain freedom.³⁵

PERU

End of December 2019

Arequipa, Province of Arequipa, Peru

The SERFOR (Servicio Nacional Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre) officers went for a watch on Christmas and New Year's Eve in the stands of the Melgar stadium, where a market of good luck charms and decorative objects is still held at that time. They seized a fox tail (*Vulpes vulpes*, Appendix III), 2 puna rhea feathers (*Pterocnemia pennata*, Appendix II) and a stuffed Andean hairy armadillo (*Chaetophractus nationi*, Appendix II).³⁶

ASIA

BANGLADESH

FAMILY AFFAIRS

October 21, 2019

Paribagh, Dhaka District, Dhaka Division, Bangladesh

Seizure in the Craft Corne shop of 288 wild animal skins, including 222 skins of monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II), one of monkey, 2 of loris (*Nycticebus* spp., Appendix I), one leopard (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), of one jungle cat (*Prionailurus viverrinus*, Appendix II) and of one wild cat (*Felis silvestris*, Appendix II), 21 snakeskin bags and 2 purses and 32 deerskin bags, 1 antler and 3 corals. Sentencing of Hamuyun Kabir and Mominul Islam who present themselves as antique dealers to one year jail and a fine of 50,000 takas (590 US\$) each and an additional month's imprisonment for non-payment. The main buyers of the "souvenirs" were guests of the nearby Intercontinental Hotel.³⁷



CHINA

Early October 2019

Sunan Shuofang International Airport, Suzhou and Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure in the luggage of 2 passengers of an alleged ivory pendant and a bracelet, a feline tooth, a wolf tooth (*Canis lupus*, Appendix I or II) and an agarwood necklace.³⁸



October 2019

Manzhouli, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China. Border with Russia and close to Mongolia.

Customs seizures of bear teeth (Ursidae, Appendix I or II), wolf jaws (*Canis lupus*, Appendix I or II), bear claws and other endangered animal parts, 17 in all, hidden in luggage or behind false walls in vehicles.³⁹

November 11, 2019

Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of 500 wild animals or parts, raw and worked ivory, antlers of sika deer (*Cervus nippon*) and seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II).⁴⁰



November 20, 2019

Jilin Province, China. Border with North Korea.

Seizure of 232 live animals and 149 dead, including lorises (Lorisidae, Appendix I or II), pythons (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), turtles (order Testudines) and ostriches (genus *Struthio*). Trafficking dates back to 2016 and evidence shows that 490 transactions brought 840,000 yuan or 120,000 US\$ to the gang leader and his accomplices, 7 of whom have already been sentenced to 3 to 5 years in prison and 3,000 to 60,000 yuan fines (or 425 to 8,500 US\$). The animals were sold in 30 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities. The investigation is continuing to find out the origin of the animals and the identity of the buyers.⁴¹



December 11, 2019

Suifenhe, Heilongjiang Province, China. Border with North Korea.

Seizure in 5 different locations of 212 brown bear paws (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix I or II) and 10 bear gall bladders (Ursidae, Appendix I or II), 26 alleged tiger bones (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), 19 teeth from unidentified animals, 213 kg of sea cucumbers (class Holothuroidea), 4 antelope horns (family Bovidae) and velvet deer antler (family Cervidae).⁴²



December 27, 2019

Jinan Yaoqiang International Airport, Shandong Province, China

Nine belts made of suspected crocodile skin (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II) (2085 g) from Bangkok. Six belts made of alleged elephant skin from Bangkok.⁴³



INDIA

October 1st, 2019

Narasipura, Bangalore Rural District, State of Karnataka, India

The Forest Department got hold of 1.025 kg of pangolin's scales, 1 kg of Indian softshell turtle (*Nilssoniana gangetica*, Appendix I) shells and 7 kg of Indian black turtle (*Melanochelys trijuga*, Appendix II) shells in the bags of 4 farm workers at a bus stop. They were on their way to Bangalore. Talking as they often do, the traffickers recounted that the scales are used to make bulletproof vests and that Ayurvedic pharmacies use the shells to prepare cancer drugs and aphrodisiacs.⁴⁴



GANG

October 21, 2019

Vadodara District, State of Gujarat, India

Yarlen, alias Luzalen, alias Jasrat Madavi, was arrested in shanty on the edge of the Vadodara-Gujarat expressway, after 5 years on the run. His arrest was a priority for the Madhya Pradesh STF (Special Task Force) after the carcasses of several sloth bears (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I) were found with genitals and gallbladders missing in the districts of Mandla, Chhindwara, Betul and Burhanpur. Yarlen quickly started coughing up information, admitting that, on commission from several businessmen, he traded in sloth bear penises, and ate them himself, as well. Some wackos believe that penises are the best sexual stimulants on the wildlife market. Yarlen also sold gallbladders. Perfectly willing to tell his stories, he said that in the past 15 years, he had poached hundreds of peafowl and several tigers, including the famous T13, poached in the Pench reserve (in the states of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra). Four pelts, including T13's skin, as well as 7 bags of tiger bones were seized in Nepal in March 2013. T13 had disappeared from the camera traps since the end of 2012. In the last available photos, she was with 2 tiger cubs.



When police examined his cell phone after he was arrested for the first time in 2014, they found contacts with Mamru and Chika, tiger hunters in Melghat reserve (in the state of Maharashtra); with Sarju, a middleman in tiger products, based

in Delhi; with Ranjeet Bawaria and with a certain Tashi Tshering who is apparently a major player in the transfer of skins and bones to Tibet, China and western countries. Yarlen is a member of the Baheliya tribe. He was born in a social environment where peddling and wildlife trapping and trading are part of life, learned from a young age. He began poaching when he was 15 years old. He is an expert at flight and release on bail. He was arrested for the first time in 2014 in Madhya Pradesh, with one of his uncles, Kashish, alias Barsul Madavi, after a long police search. By speaking only in the Pardhi dialect, he managed to trick the investigators into thinking he was a certain Luzalen, by showing them a phony voter ID card. Yarlen, who changes his name as fast as he changes his shirt, also changes trafficking activity when he wants to be forgotten. He gives up on wild animals when he has to, and moves on to trees, especially sandalwood (genus *Santalum*) in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Rajasthan.⁴⁵

FAMILY AFFAIRS

November 16, 2019

Chandrayangutta, Hyderabad District, Telangana State, India

The 2 brothers ran an apothecary shop and just got by. They decided discreetly to also trade in wild animals. Seizure of slow lorises (*Nycticebus* spp., Appendix I), an Indian star tortoise (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I) and a softshell turtle (family Trionychidae).⁴⁶

FAMILY AFFAIRS

December 5 and 8, 2019

Sultanpura, Jhunjhunu District, State of Rajasthan, India

Small packages sometimes reveal large crimes. The one that Piyush Joshi, in the village of Bhanduri, received and opened in front of the police, who worked hand-in-hand with the mailman, was one of those. It contained a handful of claws, presumably lions' claws. The DNA is being verified by a specialized laboratory. A search warrant was quickly issued for the sender's home in Sultanpura. Singh Father and Son, are apparently just letterboxes. They gave the wholesaler's address, a certain Kanhaiyalal Agarwal, in whose home police seized 908 claws (presumably lions'), 818 corals (Alcyonacea order) and 1255 body parts from monitor lizards, bears and leopards. He made vague claims about getting his supplies from nomad tribes. Investigators believe the corals come from Gujarat (Gujarat and Rajasthan are over 600 km away) and the monitor lizard parts from Uttar Pradesh. Certain observers say that the "goods" could be "phony". Fake or not? Either way, this trafficking feeds into the myths about good luck charms and black magic. To be continued!⁴⁷

December 6, 2019

Nachiyarpettai, Ariyalur District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

K. Annadurai, M. Karthick, N. Alexpandian and R. Subramanian have been arrested. Two motorcycles, a camera, a computer, 4 cell phones, a net and a cage have been seized. K. Annadurai is a professional photographer and videographer. He launched a YouTube channel called "Village Hunters" on which he posted videos of poaching sessions, cooking and meals of monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II), Indian hares, civets, doves, boars and partridges. His channel had 559,000 subscribers. One of the videos was viewed 10 million times. K. Annadurai had recruited 3 men from his village. They were actors in the videos. Their voices and their faces were not identifiable, their clothes and the places were unmarked and undistinguishable, except that in one of the scenes, investigators noted a chili powder package with Tamil writing on it. Up until that time, the WCCB (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) had not thought the videos came from Tamil Nadu. They were concentrating their search on the center states of India. Based on the local manufactured chili powder, the search began to close in on the Ariyalur district. The reality TV channel brought in 1.5 million rupees (or 20,945 US\$) in advertising revenue in less than one year for the 4 village buddies.⁴⁸

December 22, 2019

Chennai International Airport, State of Tamil Nadu, India

In Mohammed Mohideen's trolley full of surprises that he was pulling through the airport, coming off a Thai Airways flight from Bangkok, there were colorful little plastic cages containing 5 Grand Cayman blue iguanas (*Cyclura lewisi*, Appendix I), 12 banner-tailed kangaroo rats (*Dipodomys spectabilis*), a squirrel (genus *Sciurus*) and 3 prairie dogs (*Cynomys ludovicianus*), all exotic animals from far-off countries and continents, like so many tangy wildlife candies that would surely have sold well in this holiday season. Except for the blue iguanas, none of the specimens flushed out by the customs department is protected by CITES and their trafficking is not covered by national wildlife protection regulations, including the Wildlife Protection Act passed in 1972. The traffickers know that and they go through the markets in Bangkok and Jakarta looking for cute, easy-to-handle, inexpensive specimens that are basically "in the public domain." If Mohideen had not made the mistake of bringing the blue iguanas back to Chennai, he would have avoided being taken into custody and would have just gotten an administrative fine of 150,000 rupees (2100 US\$) for having violated the Customs Act and the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act. For one Mohideen intercepted, how many Mohideens slip through the nets with their little warm-blooded articles that, from a distance, look like fluffy little toys? The Indian customs service wants the government to include exotic species in the framework of the law. Their trade would then be recognized as a crime.⁵¹

This is the sixth time that prairie dogs have been mentioned in issues of "On the Trail" (see "On the Trail" n°4 p. 47, n°6 p. 99, n°9 p. 97, n°10 p. 73 and n°26 p. 112). Prairie dogs are rodents whose body size, silhouette and original habitat range are similar to those of the rock squirrel (*Otospermophilus variegatus*). Their name comes from their alert signal which sounds like a small dog's bark. They were at home in the prairies and foothills of the North American continent. There were several million living in the underground housing developments that served as family homes, nighttime refuge and hibernation area between October and March. They would come out during the day to eat grass, keep a lookout for natural predators and "chitchat" with their neighbors. Today, they are considered pests by farmers, livestock breeders and administrations in their original habitats, and are therefore reduced to living in zoos and in natural parks in some states (Arizona, Colorado, Kansas, Nevada, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, Wyoming, Saskatchewan in Canada and the northern parts of Mexico). In the past 150 years of urban and agricultural colonization, their population has been reduced by 99%. They were nearly extinct. The miniaturization of their colonies has modified their friendly, sociable lives, and eliminated their productive ecosystems. Consequently, through a biological domino effect, populations of rattle snakes (Crotalinae), western burrowing owls (*Athene cunicularia hypugaea*, Appendix II), swift foxes (*Vulpes velox*), mountain plovers (*Charadrius montanus*), ferruginous hawks (*Buteo regalis*, Appendix II), black-footed ferrets (*Mustela nigripes*, Appendix I), great plains toads (*Anaxyrus cognatus*) and many other species of birds, reptiles and insects are regressing. Few other animals deserve to this point the qualification of umbrella species. In recent years, the international pet market has become interested in the prairie dog and several thousand have been exported to Asia, all the more easily since they are not legally protected in the United States or in their other host countries.

December 11, 2019

Melur, Tiruchirappalli District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Chandran and Ramesh are in Trichy Central Prison. Four of their accomplices are wanted. They were engaged in poaching and trading in lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II), palm civets and mongooses in Anaicut Forest Reserve. Monitor lizards regulate peafowl populations by eating their eggs.⁴⁹

December 10 and 11, 2019

Thane, Thane District, State of Maharashtra, and Bangalore, Bangalore Urban District, State of Karnataka, India

Seizure at the train station of 4 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I), 3 falcons, a black-winged kite (*Elanus caeruleus*, Appendix II) and an Eurasian eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II). Arrest of a man from Bangalore, 850 km away. At home, he was holding 4 spotted owls (*Strix occidentalis*, Appendix II) and 2 spotted doves (*Spilopelia chinensis*) secretly. He gave the names of his outfitters. From their shops in Bangalore, one rose-ringed parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*), 7 house sparrows (*Passer domesticus*), 2 Indian silverbills (*Euodice malabarica*), 3 scaly breasted munias (*Lonchura punctulata*), 3 monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) and one red avadavat (*Amandava amandava*) were seized.⁵⁰



November 24, 2019, Klerksdorp and Hartbeesfontein, South Africa



October 5, 2019, Cayenne, France



Prairie dog (*Cynomys ludovicianus*)



End of November 2019, Orotina, Costa Rica



December 5 and 8, 2019, Sultanpura, India

INDONESIA

November 13, 2019

Denpasar City, Province of Bali, Bali Island, Indonesia

Erick Roer, a Dutch passport holder, has been sentenced to 2 years in prison and a fine of 50 million rupees, 3,560 US\$. Since 2014, he had been using to any means possible to purchase animal parts of endangered species and to meet orders from Hans Timmers, another Dutch citizen who owns a precious stones business called Timmers Gems, in the Netherlands. Roer sent Timmers photos to help him choose his products, and used a transportation service called PT Praba Surya International to ship them to the Netherlands by sea. The smuggling operation was discovered when customs officers opened a container in the Rotterdam harbor. The products, from Indonesian poachers, taxidermists and tanners, were labelled "crafts" on the accompanying documents. The evidence gathered, which suggests organized trafficking, does not entirely reflect the scale of the trafficking. However, 10 ape skulls (Primates, Appendix I or II), 74 monitor lizard skins (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II), 40 cobra skins (genus *Naja*, 2 Indonesian species listed in Appendix II), 12 python skins (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), the rostrums of 11 largetooth sawfish (*Pristis microdon*, Appendix I), 4 sea turtles skulls (*Cheloniidae* spp., Appendix I), 2 crocodile skulls (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II), 1 babirusa skull (*Babryrousa* spp., Appendix I) and 206 kg of corals (class Anthozoa) were seized.⁵²



December 14, 2019

Rupat Island, Bengkalis Regency, Riau Province, Indonesia

Seizure of 4 lion cubs, a leopard, and 58 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I) transported by sea from Peninsular Malaysia. Arrest of the 2 traffickers.⁵³

MALAYSIA

October 5, 2019

Kapit, State of Sarawak, Malaysia

Seizure of 16 scales of pangolin, 148 casques and 152 feathers from helmeted hornbill (*Rhinoplax vigil*, Appendix I), 183 gall bladders and a bear skull (Ursidae, Appendix I or II), 192 peacock's feathers (Phasianidae family), 96 porcupine quills (Hystricidae family), 9 antlers and skulls of deer (Cervidae family), 35kg of Malayan softshell turtle meat and 1 live turtle (*Dogania subplana*, Appendix II).⁵⁴



Mid-October 2019

Sibu, Sarawak State, Malaysia

Seizure in a clandestine menagerie on the outskirts of Sibu of 24 wild animals awaiting marketing: a macaque (*Macaca* spp, Appendix I or II), a Malayan sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I), Bali mynas (*Leucopsar rothschildi*, Appendix I), crocodiles (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II), oriental-pied hornbills (*Anthracoceros albirostris*, Appendix II), eagles (Accipitridae, Appendix I or II), a binturong (*Arctictis binturong*, Appendix III in India), freshwater and land tortoises (Testudinidae, Appendix I or II), porcupines (family Hystricidae) and hedgehogs (family Erinaceidae).⁵⁵

OPERATION BERSEPADU KHAZANAH

October 10 to 20, 2019

Perumahan Sungai Temau, Kuala Lipis, State of Pahang, Kampung Padang Kunyit, Gerik, State of Perak, Endau-Rompin National Park, State of Johor and Hutan Simpan Tembat, State of Terengganu, Malaysia

- October 10: Seizure of fragments of tiger skin and pangolin scales. One arrest.

- October 11: Seizure of agarwood (25 kg) and 5 birds. Two arrests.

- October 16: Seizure of 1 kg of agarwood, wild boar meat (*Sus scrofa*), 162 nets, 5 axes, machetes in a camp for poachers and tree cutters in Endau-Rompin National Park. Arrest of a national of Cambodia.

- October 20: Seizure of an elephant trunk, big cat's canines and a turtle shell (order Testudines). Arrest of 6 Cambodian nationals.⁵⁶



OPERATION BERSEPADU KHAZANAH

October 26, 2019

Tumpat and Pasir Mas, State of Kelantan, Malaysia

Seizure of 48 parts of endangered animals including 8 elephant tusks or sections of tusks, one deer hide and antlers, one bear skin (Ursidae, Appendix I or II), eclectus parrot feathers (*Eclectus roratus*, Appendix II) and 2 keris (edged weapons with ivory scabbards). Two arrests. Three telephones and an account book were also seized.⁵⁷



November 4, 2019

Telok Melano, State of Sarawak, Malaysia

Seizure on a farm used as a warehouse of 34 wild animals, including slow lorises (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I), hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II), 6 parrots (Psittaciformes, Appendix I or II), 4 white-rumped shamas (*Copsychus malabaricus*), binturongs (*Arctictis binturong*, Appendix III in India) and porcupines (family Hystricidae). According to Zolkipli Mohamad Aton, Director of the Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC), this and previous seizures are being facilitated by better coordination between the four agencies in Sarawak involved in wildlife control.⁵⁸

OPERATION BERSEPADU

KHAZANAH

November 10, 2019

Gua Musang, Endau-Rompin National Park, State of Kelantan, Malaysia

Arrest of 2 Indonesians in possession of tiger claws and canines, deer skins (family Cervidae), testicles and elephant sperm supposed to be aphrodisiac or with magical powers. Arrest of a Cambodian agarwood cutter and poacher with 20 nylon traps.⁵⁹



OPERATION BERSEPADU

KHAZANAH

GANG

November 19, 2019

Sungai Petani, State of Kedah and Pasir Mas, State of Kelantan, Malaysia

Seizure of elephant tusks, deer antlers, skins of various species with a total value of nearly 60,000 US\$ and 5 luxury cars. The 4 poachers had been well established in the traffic for 5 to 6 years. They were supplying a big shot whose identity is not known at the time. Thirteen bank accounts are frozen by the anti-money laundering services. Deposits have reached the equivalent of 380,000 US\$.⁶⁰



OPERATION BERSEPADU KHAZANAH

November 22, 2019

Kampung Air Tawar, Terengganu State, Malaysia

Dismantling by a Navy Police Force patrol of a wildlife export network to Viet Nam. 473 turtles and tortoises (Testudinidae, Appendix I or II), 100 Malaysian civets (family Viverridae) and 26 lizards (order Squamata) were seized. Transport by rail and sea was in individual cages for foxes and collective cages for turtles and lizards. Four arrests. Operation Bersepadu Khazanah resulted in 47 looters' arrests.⁶¹

NEPAL

December 26, 2019

Budhinanda, Bajura District, Sudurpashchim Pradesh Province, Nepal

Seizure of 5 wild animal skins including Himalayan ghorals (*Naemorhedus goral*, Appendix I) and Indian muntjac (*Muntiacus muntjak*). Arrest of Aaita Bohara, Bal Bahadur Bohara, Mani Chandra Bohara, Kabindra Bohara, Dal Kami and Prithvi Bohara aged from 19 to 59.⁶²

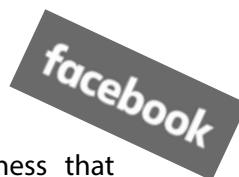
PHILIPPINES

FAMILY AFFAIRS

December 10, 2019

Gloria, Eastern Mindoro Province, Philippines

Seizure in a clandestine business that collected wild animals and sold them on Facebook: 4 green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II), 2 red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II), parakeets and conures (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), diamond doves (*Geopelia cuneata*) and cockatiels (*Nymphicus hollandicus*), 56 specimens in all. Surveillance had started at the beginning of November. Agents from the DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) presented themselves as powerline inspectors and repairmen after Hurricane Kammuri. They were able to inspect the premises and at last pretended to want to buy a ring-necked parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*) for 2000 pesos, or 35 US\$. The sellers pointed out that they had others "in stock," and that they had been taken to safety before the hurricane came through. Zam Angelo and Jessie Dacutan, caretaker, were taken in, while the owner, Fernando Zamoranos, Angelo's father, has slipped through the nets, for the moment. The iguanas were fraudulently imported from the United States of America or from Mexico, and certain birds from Africa. The overall value of the seizure is estimated at 300,000 pesos, or a little under 6000 US\$. According to the DENR, Gloria's clandestine bird selling is also a transit center for wild animals that are captured and transported from island to island in small boats that are officially out fishing.⁶³



THAILAND

October 4, 2019

Bangkok, Thailand

The elite wildlife crime unit seized 2 binturongs (*Arctictis binturong*, Appendix III in India), a porcupine (family Hystricidae) and 4 red-whiskered bulbuls (*Pycnonotus jocosus*) from a house occupied by several people who claim to be neither owners nor tenants. In short, no one is responsible for the confinement of the animals and the owner is the one who is currently elusive.⁶⁴

October 5, 2019

Chao Zhou Shi Kong Shrine, Bangkok, Thailand

Seizure in front of the Buddhist temple of Chao Zhou Shi Kong of 31 yellow-headed temple turtles (*Heosemys annandalii*, Appendix II), 25 eggs of south Asian box turtle (*Cuora amboinensis*, Appendix II), 7 t black marsh turtles (*Siebenrockiella crassicolis*, Appendix II), 151 turtles of the genus *Malayemys*, soft-shelled turtles (family Trionychidae), 641 scaly-breasted munias (*Lonchura punctulata*), 15 red avadavats (*Amandava amandava*) and 76 weavers (genus *Ploceus*). The purchase of animal offerings is supposed to clear the lucky purchasers of their sins. All the sellers vanished, leaving animals, cages, basins and baskets on the spot.⁶⁵

November 15, 2019

Ratchaburi Province, Thailand

Seizure of 2 Asian tortoises (*Manouria emys*, Appendix II) and 11 birds: 2 coppersmith barbets (*Psilopogon haemacephalus*), a greater racket-tailed drongo (*Dicrurus paradiseus*), 6 black-crested bulbuls (*Pycnonotus flaviventris*) and 2 oriental magpie-robins (*Copsychus saularis*).⁶⁶

REPEATED OFFENSE

November 20, 2019

Sa Kaeo Province, Thailand. Border with Cambodia.

Phisanupong "Nook" Soonthornrot conveyed the goods between Chachoengsao and Aranyaprathet. The cargo consisted of 43 bags of tortoises (Testudinidae, Appendix I or II) including trionyx, 180 crates full of snakes and monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II). This is the fourth time he was used as a carrier. He was paid 7000 baht per trip or 231 US\$. The cargo was intended for the fine food in Cambodia.⁶⁷

12 et 13 décembre 2019

District de Thong Pha Phum, Province de Kanchanaburi, Thaïlande

Follow-up on the Premchai Karnasuta case (see "On the Trail" n°26 p. 111). The construction industry magnate got caught in February 2018 in the middle of a poaching trip in the Thung Yai Naresuan wildlife sanctuary with the carcass of a black panther (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) at his feet, among other dead animals, and 3 friends at his side. After his appeal, Karnasuta got 3 years and 2 months of prison, instead of 16 months at the first ruling. His driver got a year and 8 months, instead of 11 months at the first hearing; his servant got a suspended sentence of year and 8 months, instead of 4 months at the first hearing; and the panther-killer, Thanee Thummat, got 4 years and 5 months

in prison instead of 3 years and 9 months at the first hearing. Their lawyers have announced that they will take the case to the supreme court. The 3 who received non-suspended sentences have only spent one night in jail. Karnasuta suffers from diabetes and was monitored by a nurse. Their release was authorized the next day. Their sentences have been suspended until the supreme court makes its ruling. In the meantime, the three poachers are required to wear electronic bracelets and are forbidden from leaving Thailand.⁶⁸

Premchai Karnasuta, see this issue page 110.

VIET NAM

December 4, 2019

Dien Bien Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of 8 big-headed turtles (*Platysternon megacephalum*, Appendix I) and one pangolin, all of them dehydrated.⁶⁹



EUROPE

GERMANY

October 1st, 2019

Düsseldorf International Airport, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany

A 57-year-old guy living in Warendorf had just returned from a pleasure trip to Thailand with 82 sexual stimulation tablets (composition not provided), a worked ivory and 4 hideous leather goods made of reticulated python (*Python reticulatus*, Appendix II) in his luggage.⁷⁰



BELGIUM

November 14, 2019

Quaregnon, Province of Hainaut, Walloon Region, Belgium

Seizure in a private home of a saimiri (*Saimiri* spp., Appendix I or II), a potos (*Potos flavus*, Appendix III in Honduras), a raccoon (genus *Procyon*), a coati (family Procyonidae) and a lemur following an anonymous report. The owner is demanding their return. She says she saved them by retrieving them from a garbage can or from people who wanted to get rid of them. "In my house, the only dead animals died of old age." According to her, the potos and saimiri had been saved from distress in private homes in Spain and France.⁷¹

SPAIN

End of October 2019

Jerez de la Frontera, Province of Cadiz, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain

A wildlife market with everything a poacher could need! Ecologistas en Acción has informed the government of the Sunday market scandal in the historic Alameda Vieja Park. Traps for poaching birds and small mammals are on sale, alongside of sea turtle shells (Appendix I), giant clams (*Tridacna gigas*, Appendix II), stuffed birds of prey and monitor lizards, deer antlers, fox pelts, Iberian ibex skulls (*Capra pyrenaica*). In the middle of this macabre fauna hodgepodge, onlookers can also find European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) and serins (*Serinus serinus*). The NGO has confronted the mayor of the town and demanded that he assumes his responsibility. "If you do not have the qualified personnel necessary to control the market, we suggest that you ask for advice from the Nature Protection Department of the Guardia Civil."⁷²

Mid November 2019

Burgos, Autonomous Community of Castilla y León, Spain

Seizure by agents of the Seprona (Servicio de Protección de la Naturaleza) at a place of sale of hunting equipment of 31 trap cages prohibited for sale and likely to catch birds or small mammals protected by national law and CITES.⁷³



OPERATION ESKAR 19

End of November 2019

Bilbao, Province of Bizkaia, Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, Spain

Seizure in 3 auction rooms of a sea turtle shell and 18 pieces of worked ivory allegedly coming from Asian elephants, narwhals, sperm whales, killer whales or walrus according to the Guardia Civil. The sellers were unable to produce certificates of origin and dating. Eight people were heard by CITES specialists from the Guardia Civil. Auctions were also conducted via the Internet.⁷⁴



Mid-December 2019

Torrijos, Province of Toledo, Autonomous Community of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain

Administrative closure of a pet shop. Seizure of several thousand animals including poisonous scorpions, tarantulas, protected or invasive turtles, monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) and a crocodile (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II). The investigation began in September 2019 when scorpions were seized from an apartment in Madrid. The insects, spiders and other animals were shipped by parcel post or courier without the sanitary and administrative measures prescribed by national and international regulations.⁷⁵

End of December 2019

Minorca, Autonomous Community of the Balearic Islands, Spain

Seizure of a barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II), an Eastern rosella (*Platycercus eximius*, Appendix II), a white-fronted parrot (*Amazona albifrons*, Appendix II), a northern gannet (*Morus bassanus*), a hammer-headed bat (*Hypsignathus monstrosus*), a New Zealand parakeet (*Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae*, Appendix I), a red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*), a *Lexias dirtea* butterfly, a common tiger butterfly (*Danaus genutia*), beetles (genus *Eudicella* and *Chrysochroa*) and a mottled owl (*Strix virgata*, Appendix II). 86 animals all stuffed. Hypsignaths are bats. All these curios are estimated at 12,500 € (13,700 US\$).⁷⁶

FRANCE

October 7, 2019

Villepinte, Department of Seine-Saint-Denis, France

Spotting of a suburban house near Paris after an anonymous phone call from Marseille, southern France. Seizure of a buzzard (Accipitridae, Appendix I or II) hanging with a rope from its leg on the balcony and 5 golden-headed lion tamarins (*Leontopithecus chrysomelas*, Appendix I). They were handed over to the Foundation 30 Million d'Amis by order of the public prosecutor's office. The monkeys will undoubtedly be transferred to a specialised shelter in the Netherlands in a second stage. In May 2015, golden-headed lion tamarins were stolen from Beauval Zoo along with silvery marmosets (*Callithrix argentata*, Appendix II), see "On the Trail" n°9 p.42.⁷⁷

Between 26 and 28 October 2019

Paris, Department of Île-de-France, France

Theft during the weekend in the fur shop under the name of Sophie L., 25 rue faubourg Poissonnière, 75009 Paris, of coats, waistcoats and other clothing made of fox fur (genus *Vulpes*), chinchilla (*Chinchilla* spp., Appendix I) and European mink (*Mustela lutreola*).⁷⁸

November 19, 2019

Bellême, Department of Orne, France

Seizure in a house whose occupants are under investigation for drug trafficking of a Barbary macaque (*Macaca sylvanus*, Appendix I), an Asian rock python (*Python molurus*, Appendix II), a royal python (*Python regius*, Appendix II), a black-and-white tegu (*Salvator merianae*, Appendix II), a Bennett's wallaby (*Macropus rufogriseus rufogriseus*), a Mediterranean tree frog (*Hyla meridionalis*), a corn snake (*Pantherophis guttatus*) and a mayna (genus *Gracula*). The animals were taken care of and quarantined by the Arche refuge in the Mayenne department, except for the frog and the lizard which were taken to a facility in the Manche department.⁷⁹



© Jakob Fahr

Hypsignathus monstrosus



© DNP

October 4, 2019, Bangkok, Thailand



© Crown Prosecution Service

October 15, 2019, Cardiff, United Kingdom

ITALY

November 6, 2019

Vulcano, Metropolitan City of Messina, Region of Sicily, Italy

Seizure in a jewellery shop of 142 feline claws (Felidae, Appendix I or II), 5 pendants and bracelets with tiger claws (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), a crocodile skull (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II), 4 sawfish rostrums (Pristidae, Appendix I), a sea turtle shell (Cheloniidae spp, Appendix I), 3 great white shark teeth (*Carcharodon carcharias*, Appendix II), 16 nautilus (*Nautilus* spp., Appendix II), 2 giant clams (*Tridacna gigas*, Appendix II) weighing 120 and 40 kg, 15 coral collars (*Madrepora* spp., Appendix II) and 4 blue coral collars (*Heliopora coerulea*, Appendix II).⁸⁰



UNITED KINGDOM

October 13, 2019

United Kingdom

The Government is considering supplementing the Ivory Act prohibiting trade in elephant ivory with a ban on the sale of narwhal (*Monodon monoceros*, Appendix II), walrus (*Odobenus rosmarus*, Appendix III in Canada), warthog (genus *Phacochoerus*) and hippopotamus (family Hippopotamidae) ivory.⁸¹

October 15, 2019

Cardiff, County South Glamorgan, Wales, United Kingdom

Michael Tang, eBay seller and buyer of gorilla skulls (*Gorilla* spp., Appendix I), chimpanzee skulls (*Pan* spp., Appendix I), orangutan skulls (*Pongo* spp., Appendix I), a North Sulawesi babirusa skull (*Babyrusa celebensis*, Appendix I) and a La Plata river dolphin skull (*Pontoporia blainvillei*, Appendix II) and also a mammoth tusk, of a rhinoceros head, turtle shells (order Testudines) and an armadillo shell (genus *Dasypus* or family Chlamyphoridae) is sentenced 24 times to 12 weeks in prison or 5 and a half years in prison. But the sentences are running concurrently up and Tang will only spend 12 weeks behind bars. And yet ! The application of this sentence is suspended for one year. He is also sentenced to 120 hours of community service (unpaid) and to pay 1,200 £, or about 1,480 US\$ in legal fees. The skulls of great apes are pierced by poachers' bullets. On other shelves, Tang was storing human skulls that are being freely trafficked worldwide. Human skull, see "On the Trail" n°7 p. 80, n°10 p. 72 and n°14 p.38.⁸²

ebay



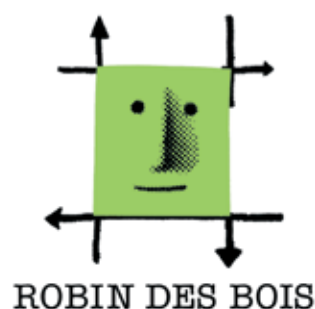
OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

October 18, 2019

Sydney, State of New South Wales, Australia

Martin Kennedy's is sentenced on appeal from the public prosecutor to a four-year jail term with a non-parole period of two years and six months for smuggling and international trafficking of fish, dinner-plate turtles (*Chelodina steindachneri*), shingleback lizards (*Tiliqua rugosa*) and 15 veiled chameleons (*Chamaeleo calyptrotus*, Appendix II) protected by CITES and national law (see "On the Trail" n°16 p.107, n°20 p.129). Kennedy, a former rugby player of international renown, was initially sentenced to 500 hours of community service and a 3-year obligation of good behaviour.⁸³



MAIN SOURCES

Sources are available on request by email to contact@robindesbois.org indicating the "On the Trail" issue number, section and reference of the event. For instance, for the last event of "On the Trail" n°27 : chapter Multi-Species, Australia, reference 83.

Robin des Bois especially thanks the Species Survival Network and the NGO Save the Elephants.

Institutions

Agence Nationale des Parcs Nationaux du Gabon (ANPN), Arizona Game & Fish Department, Australian Border Force, Australian Department of the Environment and Energy, Balai Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam (BKSDA - Indonesia), Chinese Customs, CITES, Crown Prosecution Service (UK), Cvc ambiental (Colombia), Department of Environmental Affairs (South Africa), Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation of Thailand, Department of Wildlife and National Parks - Perhilitan (Malaysia), Douanes françaises (French Customs), Europe Latin America Technical Assistance Programme against Transnational Organized Crime (EL PAcCTO), European Commission, Europol, Gendarmerie Nationale française, German Customs, Government of Botswana, Government of Ontario, Hong Kong Customs, Hong Kong Government, Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e dos recursos naturais renováveis (IBAMA), Interpol, Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), Landespolizei Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Germany), Lusaka Agreement Task Force, Ministère de la Transition écologique et solidaire (France), Ministerio Público de Costa Rica, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries (USA), National Wildlife Crime Unit (UK), Office Central de Lutte contre les Atteintes à l'Environnement et à la Santé Publique (OCLAESP - France), Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage (ONCFS - France), Oregon State Police, Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente (PROFEPA - Mexico), Russian Federal Research Institute of Fisheries and Oceanography (Vniro), Sashasthra Seema Bal (SSB - India), Service Départemental d'Incendie et de Secours de Haute-Garonne (France), Servicio Nacional Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre (SERFOR - Peru), South African National Parks, South African Police Service, Sri Lanka Navy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Uganda Police Force, UNESCO, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, United States Department of Justice, Ventura County District Attorney, Victorian Fisheries Authority, Warwickshire Rural Crime Team, Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB - India).

Non Governmental Organizations

30 Millions d'Amis, African Parks Network, Alliance Nationale des Consommateurs et de l'Environnement (ANCE-Togo), Big Life Foundation, Born Free Foundation, Cape of Good Hope SPCA, Catalogue of Life (Species 2000 ITIS), Cheetah Conservation Fund, Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS), Community Against Abalone Poaching (CAAP - South Africa), Conservation South Luangwa, David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust (The), EAGLE Network, Education For Nature - Vietnam (ENV), Encyclopedia of Life (EOL), Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), Fondation Franz Weber, Guinée Application de la Loi Faunique (GALF), Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP-UNEP), Grumeti Fund, International Animal Rescue (IAR), International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), Iran Environment and Wildlife Watch, Last Great Ape organization (LAGA), Lwiro Primates, Marine Anti-Poaching Unit, Neotropical Primate Conservation (NPC), Network for Animals, Orangutan Information Centre (OIC), Outraged SA Citizens Against Poaching (OSCAP), Pams Foundation Tanzania, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), Peregrine Fund (The), Pilanesberg National Park & Wildlife Trust, Projet d'appui à l'Application de la Loi sur la Faune sauvage (PALF), Rhino 911, Rhino Orphanage (The), Robin des Bois, Save the Elephants, Save Vietnam's Wildlife, Saving the Survivors, Sea Shepherd, Species Survival Network, Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust, WARA, Whale and Dolphin Conservation, Wildlife Alliance, Wildlife At Risk (WAR), Wildlife Crime Hotline, Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand (WFFT), Wildlife SOS, Wildlife Trust of India. (...)

Medias

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