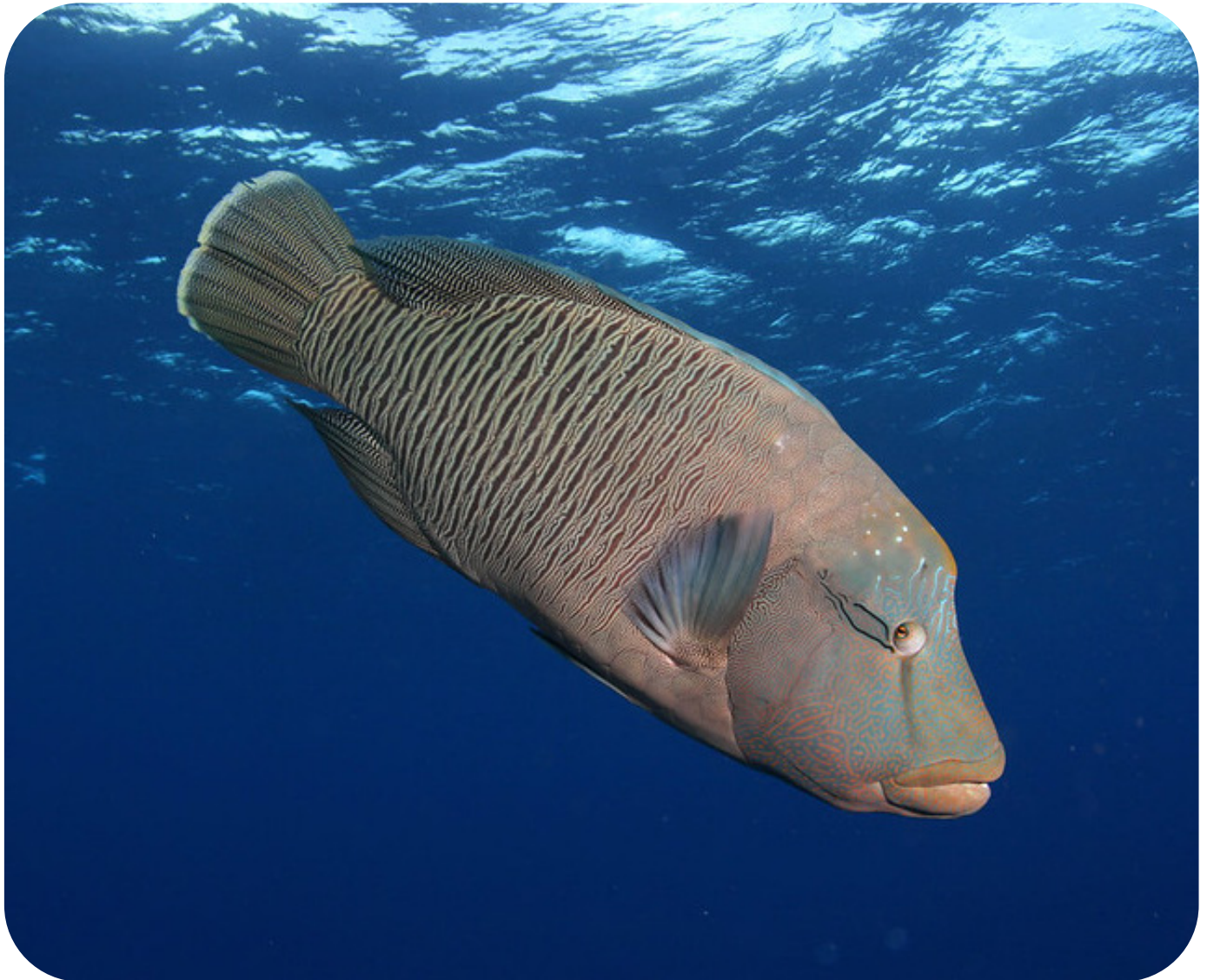
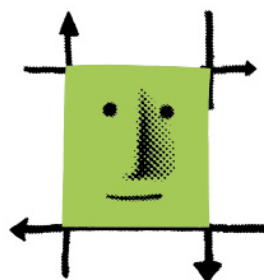


ON_{the} TRAIL

The defaunaion bulletin
n°29. Events from the 1st April to the 30th June, 2020



Quarterly information and analysis report on animal poaching and smuggling
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NOTE AND ADVICE TO READERS

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

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

- A single event may refer to several species (e.g. simultaneous seizure of ivory, bear bile and snake skins); it is then analysed in the "Multi-species" chapter, with the exception of events that bring together the following species and which have their own chapter:
 - Pangolins + rhinoceroses + elephants
 - Elephants + rhinoceroses
 - Rhinoceroses + elephants + felines
 - Multi-species reptiles (simultaneous seizure of several reptile species)
 - Marine and freshwater multispecies (simultaneous seizure of several aquatic species)
- Geographic regions at the continental scale are based on the UN classification.
- The main sources are indicated at the end of each event. Each event reported and/or analysed is from a recension of one or more articles or press releases. This critical review eliminates inconsistencies in date, price and quantity if necessary, and if possible mistakes or looseness about the description of the species. The original source(s) are sometimes enriched by cross-checking and additional information from previous issues of "On the Trail", by Robin des Bois' investigations and archives, and by international bibliography and iconography. Robin des Bois thanks the Species Survival Network, the NGO Save the Elephants and the Eagle Network for their alerts which enrich the daily monitoring carried out by the "On the Trail" team.
- When a species is CITES-listed, the Appendix is specified after its scientific name.

CITES APPENDICES

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

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

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

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

PICTOS



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



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



Trapping. Poaching by jaw trap, snare ...



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



Full moon. Moonlight poaching

ACRONYMS

EAGLE : Eco Activists for Governance and Law Enforcement

ENV : Education for Nature – Vietnam

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

IEW : Iran Environment and Wildlife Watch

KWS : Kenya Wildlife Service

LAGA : Last Great Ape Organization

OIC : Orangutan Information Centre

PROFEPA : Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente

SAPS : South African Police Service

SPCA : Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

SSB : Sashastra Seema Bal

SVW : Save Vietnam Wildlife

SWT : Sheldrick Wildlife Trust

USFWS : United States Fish and Wildlife Service

WCCB : Wildlife Crime Control Bureau

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Follow up of the "Preliminary report on the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on terrestrial and marine wildlife" cf. "On the Trail Covid-19 Special Edition", published on April 30, 2020.
https://robindesbois.org/wp-content/uploads/ON_THE_TRAIL_COVID19.pdf

"ON THE TRAIL 29" reflects the smuggling and poaching that affected the world between April, May and June 2020. This edition is impregnated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Smugglers and customs officers are masked. More than a hundred events analysed and reported by Robin des Bois bear the Covid-19 mark, including some bravadoes such as the "lockdown festival" (and poaching festival) in Nagaland, a bigwig snapping his fingers at Covid-19 in Brazil while he is parading in a video cooking an armadillo in one hand with a glass in the other, or even in Argentina the ride to "experience an adventure with nature" and break the lockdown in the company of children, rifles and 8 hunting dogs (result : 6 poached guanacos).

THE EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC ON POACHING AND SMUGGLING ARE MULTIPLE.

THE LONG SMUGGLING SUPPLY CHAINS by air and sea have begun to suffer the backlash from the global logistical paralysis. The networks have broken down due to a lack of vehicles. Planners are postponing deliveries and only smuggling containers that left in March 2020 before the imposition of global immobility and the disruption of trade between wildlife resource exporting countries and consuming countries have tried their luck. A few have probably reached their destination and are still stashed in port areas if they contain non-perishable wildlife goods such as deer antlers, elephant tusks, feline bones. Destocking will come when business and bustle start again. Others easily identifiable by dog squads or even human nose have been picked up by customs.

In vast countries where north and south, east and west, are separated by thousands of kilometres connected by a complex network of rails, roads and waterways, and blocked by internal borders, the traffic in live animals or their parts has also slowed down. It is impossible to transport thousands of turtles by train or bus when trains and buses no longer run. It is likely that for a number of species that are easy to handle and transport in bags and crates, the Covid-19 can be considered as a reprieve, except that in some parts of the world such as south-eastern Asia, "stay at home order" and the inability to move and be in contact with what remains of the wild have encouraged the purchase at any cost of urban wildlife pets, first and foremost songbirds and colourful birds.

THE SHORT SMUGGLING SUPPLY CHAINS within a distance of 100 to 1,000 km have rebounded as soon as commercial and industrial activities were suspended or mothballed in March/April 2020. Crowds of people left the cities to seek refuge in the countryside. In normal times, the trend is towards rural exodus, in Covid times, the turn was brutal and on all continents, human overdensity exerted unprecedented pressure on the social fabric of rural communities and natural areas. If in Paris we witnessed the flight of hundreds of thousands of well-off inhabitants whose cars were full of supplies, in Madhya Pradesh, for example, millions of workers, cousins, siblings or children, driven out of the megalopolises by unemployment and fear, showed up with empty pockets for most of them. These influxes of people on the long term have caused food shortages and the fear of being out of food. The Covid-19 has undoubtedly caused an increase in diffuse poaching for personal consumption or local commercial traffic. Traps of all kinds, including electrical and toxic ones, have proliferated. All wildlife suffers from it first and then dies, from the herbivores to the carnivores, from the deer to the tiger, from the giraffe to the banteng, from the moose to the bear. All markets are closed by security barriers except the black market for bushmeat and sea meat, including of sea birds. In these Covid times, when rural areas become havens for urban expatriates, intolerance towards wildlife is exacerbated. The lynching of leopards had reached an intolerable level of sophistication and frequency in just a few years, and it has risen a few more rungs in this quarter of the year 2020. Similarly, in Europe, the fear of the Covid-19 has not erased the obsession of wolves and bears. Hikes and other outdoor activities have been prohibited in France and other countries, but wolves, bears and birds of prey fell under the bullets of some anonymous "vigilantes".

=>

COVID-19 - FOLLOWED

THE CLOSURE OF THE TRIBUNALS and the respect of barrier gestures allow many poachers around the world to escape from pre-trial detention and be sent home until court cases resume. Health outweighs justice, with the exception of China, where trials without public but broadcast live are going ahead.

Of course, as with other animal substances, there have been timely **RUMOURS** that powdered rhino horn could prevent or cure Covid-19, and rhino poaching has been on the rise again in India and southern Africa apart from South Africa.

Poaching activity in parks and other protected areas is facilitated by the **ABSENCE OF TOURISTS** who are normally somehow auxiliaries to the rangers, reporting suspicious presences or hidden corpses of large mammals to them.

As Professor Darimont, a conservation expert from the University of Victoria in British Columbia, Canada, summarizes: "In times of uncertainty, people are more likely to engage in illegal hunting and fishing. In fact, during economic downturns, notably during the Depression [of the 1930s], there was a lot of **ILLEGAL HUNTING**."

Robin des Bois' high-performance masks allowed us to prepare this issue of "On the Trail" with complete peace of mind.



© Robin des Bois

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

April 19, 2020

Severn, Northern Cape Province, South Africa

The pursuit by helicopter and land patrol of 4 men suspected of poaching ended in bloodshed. One South African-born man was killed. Two Botswana-born accomplices were injured and taken to Kuruman hospital. A third man, also from Botswana, was taken into custody. Two guns, ammunition and mobile phones were seized as evidence. An exchange of fire took place between the helicopter belonging to the forces of law and the band that was fleeing on the ground. The alert had been given by a guard from a private reserve. Before launching the operation, the police in Severn and Van Zylsrus and the anti-poaching unit in Tswalu found that the intruders had broken into the reserve by digging a hole under the fence. SAPS, April 19, 2020, April 21, 2020 ; Getaway, April 21, 2020.¹



April 26, 2020

Near Lephalale, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Arrested by Nature Conservation lookouts, the 3 poachers who were carrying a butchered oryx (*Oryx gazella*) in their bags managed to escape. One of them was chased by an employee of the reserve and shot dead. The 32-year-old shooter was referred to tribunal and released on bail of 5000 rand (280 US\$) pending trial.

Review Online, April 28, 2020.²



BENIN

May 31, 2020

W National Park, Alibori Departement, Benin

A 24-year-old ranger was seriously injured around midnight by unknown assailants. He and the other members of his patrol were resting in a rigged-up camp. He was transferred to the emergency section of the Saint Jean de Dieu hospital in Tanguéta. "His health is stable" according to Frissons radio. Frissons radio and Banouto, June 2, 2020.³

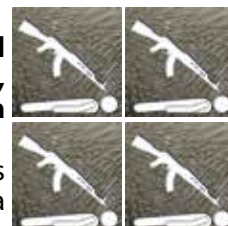
BOTSWANA

April 2, 2020

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

Four suspected poachers were killed by the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) following an exchange of fire. "The poachers used weapons of war, hunting rifles and other tools of their trade in both incidents. "As a professional, prompt and decisive force, the BDF will continue to execute its mission" (BDF statement).

Botswana Press Agency, April 2, 2020.⁴

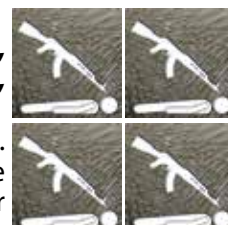


Week of 22 to 29 June 2020

Linyanti, Okavango Delta, North West Province, Botswana

It rained and rained again. The delta is overflowing. The backs of the rhinos shimmer under the moonlight. Poachers abound. Some come from Angola or Zambia. After 3 clashes with the BDF, there are 4 dead in their ranks at Mombo on Chiefs Island, at Kurunxaraga and at Selina. "Our army is there to defend the country. "Any invader is an enemy," said the new BDF statement.

Voice of America, June 27, 2020 ; Botswana Defence Force, June 26, 2020 ; Mmegi, July 2, 2020.⁵



GHANA

Mid-April 2020

Mole National Park, Ghana

Saaka Karim, 28 years old, is considered to be an elephant killer since 2018. He is suspected of having shot a park ranger while he was poaching. The ranger is in critical condition. Karim was chased by the patrol, arrested and handed over to the police. Nkligi FM, April 23, 2020.⁶

KENYA

May 17, 2020

Kinna, Isiolo County, Kenya

A KWS convoy intercepts a motorbike 35 km away from Meru Park and the Bisanadi Reserve and searches the vehicle.

A second motorbike refuses to stop. An exchange of fire takes place. The driver is fatally wounded. A man flees. At the scene of the event, the KWS said it had discovered an AK47, ammunition and bhang. Local officials speak of a blunder. They call for an inquiry into the "murder" of the young man and accuse the KWS to engage in a poacher hunt. The bodies of some of them are said to have been burnt and abandoned in the jungle. The rumours referred to in issue No. 27 (p. 116) of "On the Trail" are coming to the surface again.

Nation Africa, May 18, 2020.⁷

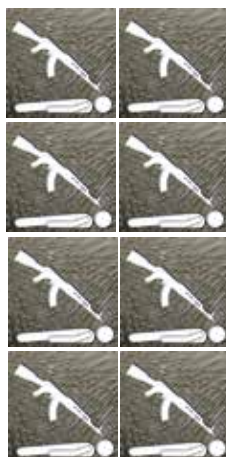


DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

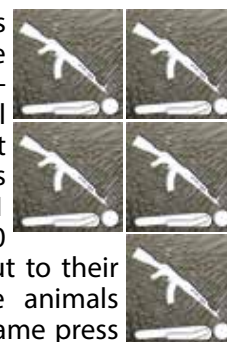
April 24, 2020

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

According to the testimonies of the first rescue teams and the photos, the ambush was of incredible and unprecedented violence in the park. It is attributed to an armed group for the liberation of Rwanda. The border between Rwanda and the Virunga Park is more than porous, it is intangible. The FDLR - FOCA (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of



Rwanda - Forces Combattantes Abacunguzi) are said to finance themselves through an inter-African traffic of "extra" charcoal from the pyrolysis of the best trees in the park. The 12 rangers killed were between 23 and 31 years old and the driver was 40 years old. "Our thoughts go out to their families and friends and the animals they were protecting." In the same press



release, the ICCN (Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature) reveals their identity: Abedi Iyalu Kadhafi, Anuari Bihira Lumumba, Badi Mukandama Djamali, Fazili Justin Junior, Kambale Mutsomani Jean-Louis, Kambale Teremuka Jules, Kasole Janvier Joseph, Mugisho Kulondwa Augustin, Muhindo Isevhango Jeannot, Muhindo Katembo Jacques, Ndagijimana Ndahobari Hértier, Paluku Kalondero Moise and Masumbuko Malekani Ruphin.

Along with the 4 other civilian victims, including a woman, they were taken by surprise and for several minutes were subjected to heavy fire from several dozen rebels who had infiltrated the park, which has been closed to tourists since May 2018 due to insecurity. The photos show their heroic and desperate efforts to survive this attack.

Congolese Institute for the Conservation of Nature; Mongabay, April 25, 2020 ; France 24 (with AFP), April 25, 2020.⁸

Aid fund for the widows and families of Virunga Park rangers killed in the line of duty: <https://virunga.org/fr/support-us/donate/fallen-rangers-fund/>



Following this savage killing, 31 national or regional organisations active in the Democratic Republic of the Congo issued the following statement and recommendations.

DECLARATION BY CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS FOLLOWING THE CRIME IN VIRUNGA NATIONAL PARK ON 24 APRIL 2020

PREAMBLE

We, members and representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs) composed of national and international non-governmental organizations, peasant organizations, women's organizations, youth organizations, indigenous peoples, human rights movements and environmental conservation;

We note with dismay the repeated atrocities and killings committed by ambushes set up by armed groups against eco-guards and convoys of civilians inside Virunga National Park (VINP). That of April 24, 2020 at 11:00 a.m. caught our attention;

Let us denounce vehemently and condemn these horrible acts and this violence carried out in the southern sector of the Virunga park, near Virunga headquarters in Rumangabo, and which resulted in the death of 12 park eco-guards, their driver and 4 civilians including a woman;

We offer our deepest condolences to the families affected, to the staff and leaders of Virunga National Park and the Virunga Foundation, to colleagues and activists who work in the conservation, sustainable management of natural sites and to the Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation (ICCN) ;

While recognizing that Virunga Park is among the oldest and most prestigious parks in Africa and on the planet, these organizations point out that this park is a UNESCO World Heritage site and Ramsar site. It is known for its richness in biodiversity including rare and endangered species including mountain gorillas which are the pride and international reputation of the Democratic Republic of Congo;

For almost 20 years, following rampant armed attacks, 188 eco-guards have fallen in the line of duty protecting this nature reserve. The number of orphans and widows of rangers has only been increasing. Virunga National Park inaugurated in 1925 remains one of the most unstable environments in the region of the great African lakes, because it is the refuge of a party of nearly 70 (seventy) armed groups which rage in the Province of North Kivu.

Considering that the current context of Virunga National Park that is marked by insecurity which has reached its peak, this situation requires a lasting response, both urgent political and judicial measures.

In fact, the ongoing efforts of the Congolese Institute for the Conservation of Nature (ICCN) no longer seem to be the size of the challenges facing the park, namely: charcoal production, poaching of large mammals including the hippopotamus, illegal fishing and the destruction of the ecological corridor on the West Coast of Lake Edward, the presence of armed groups and the invasion by illegal miners and illegal farmers;

It should be recalled that this situation was the basis for the suspension of tourist activities during the period from May 2018 to January 2019 following the kidnapping of two British nationals and the death of a female ranger of twenty-five years old. It was in February 2019 that the park reopened to tourists, before closing again on March 19, 2020 following the coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19).

FROM THE FOREGOING, THESE ORGANIZATIONS RECOMMEND THE FOLLOWING:

To the Central Government of the DRC

- Conduct an independent investigation in the region to elucidate national, regional and international opinion on the origins of the repeated attacks suffered by Virunga National Park and its surroundings in order to identify the perpetrators of the various crimes, the latest being that of April 24 (of 24th of June);
- Strengthen security measures in Virunga National Park and refer the perpetrators to the competent judicial authorities and apply various laws in force for the protection and safeguard of its ecosystems;
- Organize a national dialogue on the issue of governance and pacification of protected areas including Virunga and strengthen the stability and security measures around the Park and particularly in the territories of Masisi, Nyiragongo, Rutshuru, Lubero and Beni;
- Strengthen regional cooperation with a view to encourage cross-border control, combat the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons in order to reduce the negative effects on the ecosystems of Virunga National Park.
- Pool the efforts favorable to strengthening security within the Park, to the sustainable management of the park's ecosystems and to strengthening peaceful coexistence between the park and the neighboring communities and indigenous peoples.

To the Provincial Government of North Kivu

- Collaborate closely with the central government to find suitable solutions for the restoration, maintenance and sustainable management of Virunga National Park;
- Provide political support for law enforcement efforts on the responsible management and governance of flora and fauna in Virunga National Park ;
- Take ownership of efforts to conserve and protect the ecosystems of Virunga National Park;
- Provide political support to the investigation process to determine the responsibilities relating to the damage to the ecosystem of the Albertine Rift in the context of Virunga National Park and in the process of participatory demarcation of its limits which is a source of conflicts with communities and peoples indigenous people living in certain places;
- Support mobilization efforts for the benefit of strengthening community dialogue between the populations living near the Park and ICCN with a view to finding sustainable solutions in the integrated management of natural resources in the region, namely the fishery resources of Lake Edouard and the rivers of Virunga landscape.

To the National Parliament of the DRC

- Conduct a global reflection through an open debate on community conflicts; political responsibilities, the commitments of the Republic and armed conflicts, the consequences of which manifest themselves through the degree of embrittlement and progressive destruction of Virunga National Park;
- Support efforts aimed at the prevention and resolution of armed conflicts in the Virunga Landscape and invite all deputies to take responsibility in their political communications in the face of the need to preserve the climate balance, the rights of local communities and indigenous peoples, social peace and the stability of the environment.

To the Provincial Assembly of North Kivu

- Carry out awareness-raising and advocacy actions to discourage actors within armed groups and actors hostile to the preservation of the park's ecosystems and dissuade certain deputies whose support or support would go in the direction of encouraging hostilities against the park and in addition to the basis of the maintenance of insecurity in the park and its surroundings.
- Support initiatives aimed at and / or promoting the preservation of a balanced climate, nature conservation, sustainable management of the park's biodiversity, peaceful coexistence between the park and the neighboring communities and indigenous peoples, social peace and stability of the area.

To the Congolese Institute for the Conservation of Nature (ICCN)

- Continue the ongoing efforts relating to the preservation of PNVI ecosystems, with a particular emphasis on strengthening dialogue between local communities and indigenous peoples by capitalizing on participatory approaches to community conservation in the implementation of various laws relating to protection of nature.
- Strengthen the security capacities of Virunga staff in order to effectively prevent possible armed confrontations between the rangers and the armed groups.

To local communities around PNVI (Rutshuru, Lubero and Beni)

- Collaborate with the Park to peacefully and beneficially manage the multifaceted conflicts and demographic pressures on the park's ecosystems and resources.

To civil society organizations

- Ensure the capacity building of local communities and indigenous peoples in conflict resolution, awareness and support of stakeholders around the sustainable management of natural resources in the province including PNVI;
- Ensure advocacy at the level of various administrative and judicial authorities for the organization of investigations around the destruction and attacks against the Virunga National Park.

To the international community

- Support ongoing efforts in the Democratic Republic of Congo to maintain the integrity of National Parks and to work for the eradication of internal and regional armed groups that are weakening the Albertine Rift ecosystem in Virunga National Park.
- Support local organizations in the protection of nature, protected areas and the rich Congolese biodiversity and in the fight against poverty of local communities and indigenous peoples.

Signatory organisations:

1. FESO (Femmes Solidaires), National
2. International Rivers Africa Program Office
3. SOFFLECO (Solidarité des Femmes sur le Fleuve Congo), Kinshasa
4. CFLEDD (Collectif des Femmes Leaders pour le Développement Durable), Kinshasa
5. Réseau CREF (Réseau pour la Conservation et la Réhabilitation des Ecosystèmes Forestiers), North Kivu
6. LUCHA (Lutte pour le Changement), National
7. OEARS, (Organisation Ecologique pour l'Environnement et les Ressources Naturelles) Katanga
8. CONSERV CONGO, North Kivu
9. IL EST TEMPS, National
10. SYDHE (Synergie des Organisations de la Société civile pour la Promotion des Droits Humains de l'Environnement), South Kivu
11. IDEL (Initiative pour le Développement Local), Kongo Central
12. RRN (Réseau pour les Ressources Naturelles), National
13. REPALF (Réseau des Populations Autochtones et Locales pour la gestion durable des Ecosystèmes Forestiers)
14. DYGED (Dynamique des Jeunes pour le Développement Durable)
15. CEPF (Centre d'Encadrement pour la Promotion de la Femme)
16. CTIDD (Centre des Technologies Innovatrices pour le Développement Durable)
17. FC (Forum Citoyen) National
18. GTCRR (Groupe de Travail Climat REDD Rénové), National
19. CORAP (Coalition des Organisations de la Société Civile pour le suivi des Réformes), Kinshasa
20. CASC (Collectif d'Actions de la Société Civile) National
21. MICHEE RDC, North Kivu and Kinshasa
22. RND Asbl (Ressources Naturelles pour le Développement) Kivu
23. RCEN (Réseau des Communicateurs de l'Environnement), Katanga
24. PRESS CLUB - RDC, National
25. TOUCHE PAS A MON COBALT (Kolwezi)
26. MINING NEWS MAGAZINE (Katanga)
27. Mouvement Citoyen EKOKI (Kinshasa)
28. CODED (Centre Congolais pour le Développement Durable), Kinshasa
29. CENADEP (Centre National d'Appui pour la Participation Populaire), National
30. FDD (Femmes pour le Développement Durable), Kinshasa
31. ACEDH (Alerte Congolaise pour l'Environnement et le Développement Durable) - North Kivu
32. CEPED (Centre d'Education pour la Protection de l'Environnement et Développement durable)

June 24, 2020

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

In a new ambush by an unknown armed group, 5 ICCN rangers were seriously injured. Four of them were transferred to the hospital in Goma. ICCN rangers are State agents whose sole mission is to protect the wildlife and other natural resources of the park which covers 7900 km² in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Virunga extends into Volcanoes National Park in Rwanda and Rwenzori Mountains National Park and Queen Elizabeth National Park in Uganda.

Ms. Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO, expressed her compassion and deep concern on June 26. "As it has already done after the 24 April attack, notably through its Rapid Response Facility (RRF), UNESCO will continue to support the efforts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to build the capacity of staff responsible for the protection of its natural sites." The Virunga Park is part of the World Heritage List since 1979. The Rapid Response Facility is notably supported by the Norwegian government and the Franz Weber Foundation.

Save Virunga, June 29, 2020; UNESCO, May 14 and June 26, 2020.⁹

ZIMBABWE

Early April 2020

Bubye Valley Conservancy, Matabeleland South Province, Zimbabwe

They had just killed a young male lion and were about to shoot a black rhino. One of the 2 poachers was killed in turn in an exchange of fire with the reserve guards. His accomplice fled. Pindula, April 9, 2020.¹⁰



April 25, 2020

Gundre Firest, Chikmagalur District, State of Karnataka, India



After an alert of illegal fishing in the reservoir of the Kabini River dam, a patrol is making a reconnaissance in the early hours of the day. It is partly made up of temporary workers. On the spot, they notice no one, only the nets they are desperately trying to haul. Nylon traps regularly caused casualties here, and not only among fish: in 2009, a tangled elephant narrowly escaped drowning. Suddenly, from the opposite bank, a dozen coracles, small boats, swoop on them. The understaffed guards withdrew in a hurry. One of their overloaded boats capsizes and two guards drown. An exchange of shots would have brought the panic of the guards and the capsizing. This is the official version. Behind the scenes, it is said that the senior officials of the Bandipur reserve had asked the auxiliary guards to go into the dam reservoir and bring back fish to improve their daily lot. A few suspects are heard by the police. The families of the two deceased receive compensation of one million rupees or 13,214 US\$. Times of India, April 26 and 28, 2020 ; The Hindu, April 25 and 26, 2020.¹¹

May 4, 2020

Mohna Forest, Gwalior District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India



Dipu Rana (24 years old) was on patrol with 2 fellow forest rangers. They were looking for bamboo cutters. A poacher on the lookout for a nilgai gave him no chance. Dipu Rana was shot in the heart. The shooter is said to belong to the traditional hunting Mongia tribe. He was identified but not caught up.

The Times of India, May 4, 2020.¹²



May 28, 2020

Raghogarh, Guna District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Shooting at around 2am when a forest ranger patrol ordered a set of poachers to surrender. They opened fire and wounded 7 members of the patrol. The Times of India, May 30, 2020.¹³

IRAN

April 14, 2020

Gotvand, Khuzestan Province, Iran

Seyyed Amin Hadipour stands guard in a reserve near the Karun River. He withstands an attack by poachers. He is riddled with bullets in his right leg. Hadipour is urgently transferred to the Pars hospital in Tehran. He has been amputated. The culprits have not been arrested. IEW, April 14, 2020.¹⁴



SRI LANKA

April 22, 2020

Gal Oya National Park, Uva and Eastern Provinces, Sri Lanka

Senadeera Pradeep Bandara, 25 years old, was killed by a gunshot to the heart. He was leading a patrol of 8 rangers. After catching two fishermen at nightfall plundering the dam reservoir, they had taken up a strategic lookout position. When a band of poachers signalled by torch flashes through the jungle approached, the men deployed ready to intercept them. But it didn't go well. Pradeep Bandara was killed at close range by a gun for killing deers and wild boars. Four poachers were arrested. They were carrying the murder weapon. Two others fled. Pradeep Bandara had joined the rangers seven months ago. He liked the living wildlife.

The best season to visit the park is from March to July. You can see elephants swimming from one island to another. Leopards, langurs and deers are more discreet.

Sunday Times (Sri Lanka), April 23 and 26, 2020 ; Mongabay, May 30, 2020.¹⁵



May 3 and 6, 2020

Sap Langka Wildlife Sanctuary, Lopburi Province, Thailand



Karn (or Khuan) Chaiprasert, 37-year-old chief forest protection officer, patrolled with 2 rangers. He was killed by a gunshot while trying to arrest 3 poachers. Sap Langka is home to bears, fishing cats, leopards and slow lorises. Chaiprasert had joined the sanctuary a year ago, after 10 years of loyal service to Thap Lan National Park.

The Prime Minister, the National Police chief and the the Department of National Parks offer their condolences to the family, praising the guard's courage and sacrifices.

Thes Netsangsri, Boonlue Saikhun, Warawut Thuasanit and Boonlome Jullanak were arrested 3 days later near the sanctuary. They aren't disputing the facts.

Bangkok Post, May 5, 6 and 7, 2020 ; DNP Wildhawk, May 5, 2020.¹⁶



Senadeera Pradeep Bandara

Early June 2020

Rawalpindi, Punjab Province, Pakistan

This is the saddest story of this quarter and perhaps of all quarters since the first issue of "On the Trail" in May 2013. Zohra Shah, 7 or 8 years old depending on the sources, was beaten to death in an upscale Rawalpindi area by Hassan Siddiqui, a property developer on occasion and exotic bird trader by profession, and by his wife. The child let parrots escape. She had, among other domestic duties, to feed them. We will never know whether she did it voluntarily or involuntarily. Zohra was born in Muzaffargarh, 600 km from Rawalpindi. Four months ago, she was sold by her father or aunt to the notables in Rawalpindi for 50,000 rupees (315 US\$), with Zohra being responsible for taking care of the couple's one-year-old baby, cleaning, washing and feeding the parrots. Rashida Qureshi, a child rights advocate in Pakistan, notes that during the Covid-19 period, poor rural children placed with urban bourgeois are even more vulnerable than as usual. "They were not sent back home during lockdown, nor were they allowed to see any outsiders or parents". "We all know how the Covid-19 lockdown has resulted in domestic violence even towards vulnerable people of a family". "These employed children are not even part of the family". It is estimated that there are more than 250,000 children exploited in this way in "foster families". In January 2020, the report published by the Hari Welfare Association (HWA), the Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (PILER) and the Institute for Social Justice (ISJ) recalled that between 2010 and 2019, 140 cases of torture, rape and abuse had been mentioned in the press. The report stresses that this is only a partial picture. Most of the sexual abuse suffered by children remains confidential by the willingness of natural parents and "adoptive parents".

The Wire, June 12, 2020 ; The National, June 10, 2020.¹⁷



Etude, le perroquet
Julia Beatrice How (1867–1932)

PANGOLINS



© Tikki Hywood Trust

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

"On the Trail" n°29
Value on the black market
according to media or official sources
The values were estimated at the time of the
seizures

Value of 1kg of pangolin scales

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref. (year)
Asia	China	516	17 (2019)
	India	396	30 (2020)

Value of a pangolin

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref. (year)
Africa	Uganda	2,664	13 (2020)
	Zimbabwe	268	15 (2020)
Asia	China	2,250	16 (2019)
		781	20 (2019)
	India	6,609	26 (2020)

As of February 7, 2020, the South China Agricultural University threw out the pangolin as the likely vector of the Covid-19 pandemic. This hypothesis, which has been unravelling over the months, has been taken up in unison by the world's press, which has made it an established fact, or almost. As if to make amends for the blunder and to avoid reprisals against the pangolins struck by the curse, the Chinese press has since done repentance. Articles are multiplying on the touching rescues of stray pangolins by farmers, school teachers, motorists or forces of law, on the wonders of the witnesses and the affectionate releases of the survivors.

New QQ, August 21, 2020 ; Fujian Daily, August 21, 2020 ; People's Daily Online, July 12, 2020 ; Taihai Net, May 8, 2020.¹



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AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

May 13, 2020

Musina, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Arrest of a 38-year-old man. He was trying to sell a dead pangolin.

The George Herald, May 14, 2020.^{1bis}

May 15, 2020

Kuruman, Northern Cape Province, South Africa

John Henry Rautenbach (25) is doing well. Arrested in August 2019 at his home by the Hawks, he was sentenced today to 6 years in prison for possession of a gun and 5 years for possession of a pangolin skin with scales. But he obtained that both sentences run concurrently and above all that they are suspended for 5 years. He therefore went out free.

The Daily Dispatch, May 15, 2020.²



June 12 - August 26, 2020

Swartwater, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Arrest of a man about ten kilometres from the border with Botswana following information gathered by the police Endangered Species Unit. The trafficker was transporting a Temminck pangolin caught in a snare trap still deeply embedded in its flesh. Suffering from necrosis, multiple abscesses and two broken ribs, the animal had benefited from leading-edge care techniques. On August 26, the Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital announced its imminent release. SAPS, June 13, 2020 ; Johannesburg Wildlife Vet, July 2, 2020 ; The Midrand Reporter, August 26, 2020.³



CAMEROON

GANG / REPEATED OFFENSE

April 9, 2020

Dimako, Eastern Region, Cameroon

Arrested in possession of 2 bags full of scales (50 kg in all), the trafficker resisted by showing "a certain degree of strength and disrespectful language" according to Alwihda Info. She thought she would get out of it thanks to a support from the local barracks, but this time the NGO The Last Great Ape Organization (LAGA) and the forest rangers were accompanied by police from Abong Mbang. In connection with a network of traffickers operating throughout the region, the woman had already been arrested and released several times without a hitch.

Alwihda Info, April 25, 2020 ; EAGLE, April 2020.⁴

GANG

June 7, 2020

Yaoundé, Centre Region, Cameroon

Nice catch in the capital thanks to the collaboration between the authorities and LAGA: 380 kg of scales in a van driven by 2 soldiers, including a member of the presidential guard. Their status served as a cover for the traffic. A few hours later, the search of a female partner in crime's home led to the seizure of several animal carcasses, including pangolins. The woman is a well-known bushmeat seller at the "snake market" in Nkolindongo. She has been mixed up in shady business for at least 2 years.

Ofir Drori, June 11, 2020 ; LAGA, Report June 2020.⁵

LIBERIA

Early April 2020

Saclepea, Nimba County, Liberia

Lamene Kamara tried to make it look like he was carrying 4 sacks of flour in his taxi when he was checked at the checkpoint by officers of the newly created Wildlife Crime Task Force. He was on his way to Zwedru, capital of Grand Gedeh county bordering Côte d'Ivoire. When the search revealed that they were pangolin scales, Lamene Kamara preferred to flee.

Liberian Observer, April 6, 2020.⁶

NAMIBIA

Week of May 4, 2020

Grootfontein, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

Release on bail of 10,000 N\$ (596 US\$) for 3 traffickers arrested in possession of 2 pangolin skins with scales. An accomplice is on the run.

The Namibian, May 13, 2020.⁷

June 7, 2020

Katima Mulilo, Zambezi Region, Namibia

Again in the north near the delta and at the junction of Angola and Zimbabwe, Obert Sakutuka is caught in the act of transporting a pangolin skin with scales.

The Namibian Sun, June 11, 2020.⁸

June 26, 2020

Mukwe, Kavango East Region, Namibia

Two men, Steven Ghuwanga Kahengutji and Matheus Muyota, are charged with violation of the wildlife law. They were carrying a full skin of pangolin with scales.

The Namibian Sun, July 1st, 2020.⁹

UGANDA

Early April 2020

Masindi District, Western Region, Uganda

Yasin Muyiga, Pascal Luyiga, James Munguuchi, James Frank and Patrick Alyon are likely to stay in jail for a time. They were arrested by the Criminal Investigations Department in possession of 3 live pangolins. The police seek to establish whether they are also connected to a money laundering network.

The Independent, April 9, 2020.¹

May 24, 2020

Kibimbya-Kyakende, Western Region, Uganda

Emmanuel Ndibarema Sunday, Robert Asiimwe and Gordon Ochan had been given away by local residents. They were arrested with 21 kg of scales during a joint operation by the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and the NGO Natural Resources Conservation Network.

The PML Daily, May 25, 2020.¹¹



End of May 2020

Arua, Northern Region, Uganda

Seizure of 200 kg of scales in town, a few kilometres from the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A Congolese citizen and an Ugandan were arrested. According to investigators, the lot would only be a portion of a stock hidden on the other side of the border.

Jornal de Noticias, May 22, 2020.¹²

June 7, 2020

Kibaale District, Western Region, Uganda

Officers from Kampala Central Police Station came to arrest Mukasa Bosco and Kyakwahuwre Simon, whose wildlife business had been reported by locals to the Uganda Wildlife Authority. The 2 men were busted with a live pangolin they were trying to sell for 10 million Ugandan shillings (2,664 US\$). Mukasa Bosco, 34-year-old, is the chairman of the Kiganda Village Local Council. The NGO Natural Resources Conservation Network contributed to the investigation.

Uganda Police Force, June 9, 2020.¹³

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

FAMILY AFFAIRS / GANG

April 24, 2020

Kinshasa, Kinshasa Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Five men of the same family fell into the trap set by the NGO Conserv Congo and the authorities. A fake buyer made them unpack 500 kg of scales. These traffickers are said to be connected to networks exporting to West Africa and then China. They have been transferred to the Gombe court pending indictment.

Conserv Congo, April 24, 2020.¹⁴

ZIMBABWE

FAMILY AFFAIRS

April 26 and 28, 2020

Headlands, Manicaland Province, Zimbabwe

Today the two brothers Fungai and Wimbisayi Tsikwa thought they had found buyers for a live pangolin which they were offering at 7,000 Zimbabwean dollars (268 US\$). But their buyers were agents of the Criminal Investigation Department. Brought before the Rusepe court, they were released on bail equal to 114 US\$ pending trial. Will we see them take the stand again?

The Zimbabwe Daily, April 30, 2020.¹⁵

ASIA

CHINA

May 2020

Dianbai District, Guangdong Province, China

Li and his wife Qin run a restaurant and mix up in a juicy business of pangolin and cooking. For example, they buy a frozen pangolin (4.6 kg), cook it with rice drizzled with fake pangolin blood - it was duck blood - and deliver the dishes at home via WeChat. Li and Qin also sell pangolins for business banquets. The average price of a 4 kg pangolin was 15,500 yuan (2,250 US\$). In addition to the meat, Li and Qin also sold the scales. The facts date back to summer 2019. Li and Qin and 4 suppliers and customers were sentenced from 6 to 16 months in prison and fined from 2,000 to 5,000 yuan (700 to 280 US\$).

East Money, June 1st, 2020.¹⁶



Early May 2020

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China



Arrested at the airport on July 17, 2019, with 2 suitcases each, filled with scales for a total of 100 kg (see "On the Trail" n°26 p. 49), Zhang Guozhu and Ding Wei were sentenced respectively to 21 and 27 months in prison, the heaviest sentences handed down in Hong Kong for this type of traffic. Zhang was arriving from Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of the Congo), where he said he had worked as a gold trader, with the scales and had an appointment with Ding who was coming from Xiamen (Fujian province). They both presented themselves as "mules": one would have received 12,000 yuan (1,695 US\$) for the international transport, the other 1,000 yuan (141 US\$) for the transport inland. The value of the consignment is estimated at 400,000 Hong Kong dollars (51,610 US\$).

The South China Morning Post, May 13, 2020.¹⁷

May 18, 2020

Zhaian border post, Guangxi Province, China. Border with Viet Nam

Arriving around midnight in an SUV from Viet Nam, Wei Mou seemed troubled as he answered questions from the border police. A search of the vehicle was decided. Wei Mou was carrying 87 scales with a total weight of 1.77 kg.

People's Daily – Guanxi Channel, May 20, 2020.¹⁸

May 26, 2020

Qingdao, Shandong Province, China



Song was sentenced by the People's Court under the supervision of the president of the city's lawyers' association and an official responsible for urban road to a fine of 160,000 yuan or 226,000 US\$ for selling frozen pangolins (1,400 yuan per kilo) to Qu and Zhou. Qu and Zhou were sentenced for cooking and serving them in their restaurant. The facts occurred in 2018 and 2019. Qu and Zhou must within a maximum of 15 days express public apologies at their own expense in national media. Song, Qu and Zhou were initially given suspended prison sentences before the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Qdxin, May 27, 2020.¹⁹

GANG

End of June 2020

Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China



Confirmation by the Court of appeal of the sentence handed down by the Huadu District People's Court against Chen, found guilty with his accomplice Yang of buying more than 80 dead pangolins (747 kg) on March 2, 2019, from traffickers Xue, Wu, Gao and Cai. The transaction was settled for 417,500 yuan (62,488 US\$). Chen was sentenced to 8 years in prison and a fine of 50,000 yuan (7,000 US\$).

New Express News, June 23, 2020.²⁰

INDIA

April 12, 2020

Hiregadde, Chikmagalur District, State of Karnataka, India

Dinesh and Shivappa fell into the hands of the police with a 12 kg pangolin in their hands. Their accomplices Ramesh and Ravi broke out and are now at large.

Deccan Herald, April 12, 2020.²¹

April 23, 2020

Subasi Forest Reserve, Cuttack District, State of Odisha, India

Bagun Laguri, Mangal Digi and Lalmohan Chattar had an appointment in the reserve with buyers interested in 19 scales. They were also in possession of 2 loaded rifles. The forest rangers captured them. The New Indian Express, April 24, 2020.²²

May 10, 2020

Karanjali, Ratnagiri District, State of Maharashtra, India

Kalpesh Tukaram Balgude was reported. In his house, forest officers found 22 kg of scales and pangolin's claw, a turtle shell and an Indian hare (*Lepus nigricollis*). It would not be his first wrongdoing.

Mid-day, May 10, 2020.²³

May 19, 2020

Kirangisarra, Nagpur District, State of Maharashtra, India

Radheshyam Odgu Aahake and Kawdu Udaram Dhurve were quietly boiling a pangolin in a pot on the doorstep when a forest ranger patrol spotted them. They had caught up the animal in the Pench Tiger Reserve and wanted to remove the scales. Someone denounced them. Dhurve is the president of the village's Eco-Development Committee, set up to involve local people in the management of the reserve...

The Hindustan Times, May 20, 2020 ; The Hitavada, May 20, 2020 ; The Times of India, May 21, 2020.²⁴

May 21, 2020

Shahdol, Shahdol District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, assisted by the Madhya Pradesh Special Task Force, arrested 3 men near a bus stop. They were carrying 16 kg of scales in 2 plastic bags.

WCCB, June 3, 2020.²⁵



GANG

May 19 and June 30, 2020

Choudwar, Cuttak District, State of Odisha, India

Arriving by scooter from Rajkanika (Kendrapara district), Chandramani Jena was about to cross the Nuapatana bridge over the Mahanadi river to continue towards the Sikharpur district, where he was to deliver a very young live pangolin weighing 4 kg on this May 19. The transaction was set at 500,000 rupees (6,609 US\$). Well tipped off, the Forest Department intercepted him and persuaded him to call the buyer with his mobile phone. Manoj Dalei was caught in turn. During their interrogation, the 2 suspects revealed that 12 pangolins - including the mother of the young one - were being held by traffickers in the towns of Redhakhol, Koraput, Balugaon, Deogarh, and in the Kalahandi district. They were incarcerated in Choudwar prison.



The network then falls mesh by mesh. In Angul and Dhenkanal, 5 people were arrested. In the district of Sambalpur, 2.6 kg of scales are seized and 7 people are arrested including Jadumani Patra, an apparently respectable local elected official. Sambalpur is 250 km from Choudwar near the border with Madhya Pradesh. The pangolin traffic crosses the state of Odisha from one side to the other. The head of the gang could only be a high brow. With the support of the cyber police brigade, Shyamsundar Behera, principal of an elementary school near Choudwar, a major consumer of SIM cards and a major transmitter of encrypted messages, was arrested at the end of June.

The New Indian Express, May 22, 2020 ; The Pioneer, May 23, 2020 ; The Orissa Post, July 2, 2020.^{26, 27 and 28}

June 3, 2020

Tamulpur Subdivision, Baksa District, State of Assam, India

Rescue of a live pangolin from the hands of a trafficker during a joint operation by the 64th "Barama" battalion of the SSB and the Kumarikata Forest Department. SSB, June 3, 2020.²⁹

FAMILY AFFAIRS

June 12 and 13, 2020

Yellandu and Jinnelagudem, Bhadrachalam District, State of Telangana, India

The Forest Divisional Officer of Kinnerasani himself completed the transaction. Playing the buyer, he deceived the so called Ashok and convinced him to deliver him 1 kg of scales for 30,000 rupees (396 US\$). Ashok preferred to send two men, Manikanta and Shabbir. They showed up with a plastic bag containing half a kilo of scales. When questioned, they revealed where Ashok lived. The next day, the forest officers came to pick Ashok at dawn in the village of Jinnelagudem. His mother said she bought the scales for 3,000 rupees (39.6 US\$) from a neighbour who had poached a pangolin, removed the scales and eaten the meat. The Hindu, June 13, 2020; The New Indian Express, June 14, 2020.³⁰

June 20, 2020

Ming Mang, Dhemaji District, State of Assam, India

A pangolin had ventured into the village and had fallen into the hands of inhabitants who were about to put it to death. A forest ranger patrol rescued it in extremis and released him into the Subansari Reserve Forest.

Northeast Now, June 22, 2020.³¹

REPEATED OFFENSE

June 23, 2020

Mantadari, Jalpaiguri District, State of West Bengal, India

Information reaching the ears of the Forest Division's Special Task Force led to the arrest of Fajnu Mohammad who was about to transport a pangolin to Siliguri, to hand it over to a middleman before the final jump towards trafficking routes to Nepal or Bhutan and then to China.

The Hindustan Times, June 24, 2020.³²

GANG

June 24, 2020

Biloli, Nanded District, State of Maharashtra, India

They offered pangolins for sale on YouTube. The gang was brought down thanks to a fake buyer from the Forest Department. A female and her cub detained in a poultry farm were released into the wild. Seven members of the gang are behind bars but their leader - a former army officer - is on the run.

The Times of India, June 28, 2020.³³



June 27, 2020

Shivpuri, Shivpuri District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Sher Singh Dhakad had also simply posted a video on YouTube in which he offered scales and gave his mobile number. The Forest Department's Special Task Force identified him and put him in touch with a fake buyer. Arrested at the meeting point with 2.7 kg of scales and his accomplice Vaqil alias Pappu, Sher Singh Dhakad denounced him as the poacher. They were put under remand.

The Times of India, June 30, 2020 ; The Free Press Journal, July 1st, 2020.³⁴

June 27, 2020

Kulhadighat, Raipur District, State of Chhattisgarh, India

Arrest near the village of a person waiting for customers interested in a pangolin. The mammal was entrusted by the police to the Forest Department.

The Times of India, June 27, 2020; The Hindustan Times, June 28, 2020.³⁵

June 28, 2020

Kulhadighat, Gariaband District, State of Chhattisgarh, India

The young Pitambar Kata was caught in the act in a village in Chhattisgarh with a bag containing a pangolin. He was arriving from Ghuchaguda in Odisha. Police in both states are now looking for more information about his network.

Sambad English, June 27, 2020; The Orissa Post, June 28, 2020.³⁶

INDONESIA

April 24, 2020

Lhok Pawoh, South Aceh Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Release in the forest of a pangolin. Informed by the Indonesian Scorpion Foundation, the BKSDA (Balai Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam) came to seize the animal looked up in a villager's home but considered unnecessary to prosecute the "owner" for a single pangolin.

Scorpion, April 28, 2020.³⁷

June 10, 2020

Pekanbaru, Riau Province, Indonesia

M.D. and Z.U. arrived at the wheel of a black Daihatsu Xenia carrying 14 kg of scales in 2 boxes. Well informed, the police caught them. They confessed that they were acting on behalf of I.S., who was stationed a little further on a crossroad in a Toyota Avanza with his liaison officer D.A. The 3 men and the woman were arrested and their vehicles seized. I.S. reportedly paid a deposit of 5 million rupees (340 US\$) for the lot of scales to a trafficker in Solok, West Sumatra province.

Katakabar, June 12, 2020; Tribun Pekanbaru, June 23, 2020.³⁸

June 27, 2020

Genjahan, Special Region of Yogyakarta, Java Island, Indonesia

The man was in the middle of a phone transaction when officers from the GAKKUM (General Directorate of Environmental and Forestry Law Enforcement), police and the Centre for Orangutan Protection's team surrounded him. He had in his possession the 2.5 kg of scales from about 10 pangolins he had poached in the vicinity of Gunung Kidul. Centre for Orangutan Protection, June 28 and July 3, 2020.³⁹

MALAYSIA

June 29, 2020

Kota Kinabalu, Sabah State, Malaysia

This is a historic seizure: 8058.5 kg of scales in 2 containers bound for China intercepted on July 13, 2017 in the port of Sepanggar. The presumed exporter, Chai Kok Hiong, a seafood trader, was released on bail of 80,000 ringgits (19,000 US\$) in October 2018 (see "On the Trail" n°18 p. 38 & n°23 p. 67). He is now saved by a Bench miracle. He came out of his trial free despite the 27 prosecution witnesses against only one for the defense. Judge Elsie Primus found that Chai Kok Hiong's guilt was not proven beyond a reasonable doubt. Prosecutor Nadia Isa intends to appeal. Chai Kok Hiong, if convicted, is liable to 3 years imprisonment and/or a fine 10 times the value of the seizure estimated at the time of the fact at 100 million ringgits or 23.3 million US\$.

It should be noted that in February 2019, about 30 kilometers from the port of Sepanggar, police acting on confidential information seized 372 frozen pangolins, nearly 3 tons of frozen pangolin meat and 361 kg of scales from a warehouse. The clandestine slaughterhouse had been in operation for more than 5 years (see "On the Trail" n°24 p. 48).

Daily Express, June 30, 2020.⁴⁰

VIET NAM

May 2020

Quang Tri Province, Viet Nam

Conviction of the 2 traffickers of 9 live pangolins from Laos to 6 and a half years in prison (see "On the Trail" n°27 p. 62). ENV, December 17, 2020.⁴¹

May 13, 2020

Cà Mau, Cà Mau Province, Viet Nam

The provincial people's court convicted those responsible for the trafficking of 114 live Sunda pangolins (*Manis javanica*) and 300 kg of scales seized in 2018 on board a boat coming from the island of Hòn Khoai (see "On the Trail" n°20, p. 55). Tran Quy, director of Hai Dang Co, Ltd, a fake ecotourism company used as a cover for trafficking, was sentenced to 13 years in prison and a fine of 100 million dong (4,265 US\$), Nguyen Hai Nam was sentenced to 12 years in prison and a fine of 50 million dong (2,132 US\$), Le Viet Linh to 10 years in prison and Ngo Vu Lam (a failed forest ranger involved in the scam) to 2 years in prison. ENV, May 14, 2020.⁴²

End of May 2020

Binh Phuoc Province, Viet Nam

Thinking he was doing the right thing, he had bought a live male pangolin from a street vendor and then contacted ENV. The NGO recalls that this should never been done this way, because the purchase feeds the traffic and prevents the trafficker from being arrested. The mammal was transferred to the Cat Tien National Park. ENV, May 30, 2020.⁴³

June 24, 2020

Bac Kan Province, Viet Nam

Five years in prison for Nguyen Van Ba (26), arrested in December 2019 in a bus with a suitcase containing 6 frozen pangolins with a total weight of 17.8 kg. He was arriving from the province of Nghệ An, south of Hanoi, and was on his way to Cao Bang near the Chinese border.

VnExpress International, June 25, 2020.⁴⁴



June 25, 2020

Vinh City, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

Rescue of 3 pangolins from the clutches of traffickers. No further information. SVW, June 25, 2020.⁴⁵

End of June 2020

Viet Nam

ENV cyber-investigators identified a Facebook account offering scales and persuaded the trafficker to meet them for a transaction. The local police sealed the deal. ENV, June 26, 2020.⁴⁶



PANGOLINS, RHINOCEROSES AND ELEPHANTS

AFRICA

MALAWI

FAMILY AFFAIRS/GANG

End of June 2020

Lilongwe, Central Region, Malawi

"On the Trail" n°25 p. 104 and "On the Trail" n°26 p. 101 mentioned the misdeeds of a Sino-Malawian gang specialised in poaching and international trafficking of sliced rhino horns, worked ivory, pangolin scales and hippopotamus teeth. After the sentencing in September 2019 of 2 Malawian accomplices to 3 years in prison, the convictions of the big Chinese fish caught in the nets have just come :

- 11 years in prison for Zhang, Lin's wife.
- 11 years in prison for Li Hao Yuan, Mrs Zhang's brother-in-law.
- 7 years in prison for Yanwu Zhuo.
- 7 years in prison for Ya Shen Zhuo.
- 5 years in prison for Jinfu Zeng.
- 3 years in prison for Guozhong Zhang.
- 3 years in prison for Guohua Zhang.
- 18 months in prison for Cosmas Sakugwa, a Malawian accomplice.
- 18 months in prison for Steven Daza, a Malawian accomplice.

Nyasa Times, June 21, 2020 ; Malawi 24, July 5, 2020 ; AFP, July 22, 2020 ; Environmental Investigation Agency, July 20, 2020.¹



UGANDA

May 11, 2020

Uganda

The 37 Chinese citizens did not comply with the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions. Neighbours had alerted the police. On March 28, 2020, miscellaneous goods ranging from 10 elephant penises to 2,703 mobile phones said to be later on recycled were seized at their workplace (see "On the Trail" n°28 p. 122). Bail was denied to those who applied for it in June 2020. They were all sentenced to fines of over 200 million shillings or 53,000 US\$ or to prison terms of 1 to 5 years in case of non-payment. Seven of them whose residence permits in Uganda had expired at the time of arrest will be expelled at their own expense to China as soon as air links are re-established.

The Observer, May 12, 2020; Africa Sustainable Conservation News, June 3, 2020; New Vision, July 19, 2020.²



ASIA

CHINA

May 11, 2020

Wulian County, Shandong Province, China

Sentencing of Zheng Mou to 2 months suspended imprisonment and a fine of 3,000 yuan (424 US\$) for fraudulently buying and attempting to sell 2 worked ivories, powdered pangolin scales and the horns of a Tibetan antelope (*Pantholops hodgsonii*, Appendix I). Fjshuchi, May 14, 2020.³



ELEPHANTS



African elephants (*Loxodonta africana*), Okavango, Namibia. Photo Andrea Schieber.

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°29
Black market raw ivory quotation from media or official sources
The values were estimated at the time of the seizures

Value of 1kg of raw ivory

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref. (year)
Africa	Kenya	616	23 (2020)
	Tanzania	2,570	37 (2014)
		5,000	38 (2017)
	Zimbabwe	176	42 (2020)

WESTERN AFRICA

BENIN

End of May 2020

Cotonou, Benin

Arrest in a restaurant of 4 traffickers, including a retired professional soldier, and seizure of a 16 kg tusk by the criminal brigade and the forestry administration with the support of the Project for the Application of Law for Fauna in Benin (AALF-Benin).

EAGLE, May 20, 2020.¹

June 26 - July 21, 2020

Parakou, Department of Borgou, Benin

Arrest by the police and the Borgou forest inspection with the support of AALF-Benin of a Burkinabe man. Seizure of 7 tusks with a total weight of less than 20 kg and pulled out from 4 elephant calves. Conviction of the trafficker to 36 months in prison, a fine of 50,000 CFA francs (89.5 US\$) and 100,000 CFA francs in damages.

EAGLE, June 27, 2020.²



GHANA

Early June 2020

Gbele Game Production Reserve, Upper West Region, Ghana

There was a forest between Burkina Faso and Ghana that allowed elephants without borders to enjoy a fruitful habitat. The human population grew and so did agriculture and deforestation. Today, the forest is in tatters and there are always people in it. The elephants who used to share their search for food between Ghana and Burkina Faso are now, as they move from one to the other, targets of insults and sometimes armed assaults. This is what happened to one of their members, a sub-adult - we don't even know whether he was a male or a female -, who was killed and vandalised (the tusks) and then butchered (the meat). Homes were searched, a dozen people were heard, the elephant's tail and other parts of his body were found. Four men suspected of the poaching were arrested. The police wish to point out that their families have not been prosecuted and deplore the connivance of part of the population with the poachers. The tusks, 10 kg in all, have been recovered. The poachers or their accomplices had buried them near a police station. Graphic Online, June 4, 2020 ; Ghana News Agency, June 9, 2020.³

CENTRAL AFRICA

ANGOLA

June 16, 2020

Lubango, Huila Province, Angola

Arrest in the street of 2 men in the act of transporting 28 kg of raw ivory.

Ivory in Angola, cf. "On the Trail" n°2 p. 63, n°4 p. 87, n°5 p. 101, n°9 p. 85, n°11 p. 82, p. 86, n°12 p. 95, n°12 p. 96, n°13 p. 97, n°16 p. 88, n°17 p. 43, p. 105, n°20 p. 95, n°21 p. 90, n°22 p. 84, p. 85 and n°24 p. 63 and p. 75. Xinhua, June 16, 2020.⁴

CAMEROON

Early May 2020

Douala, Littoral Region, Cameroon

Seizure in the trunk of the car of a pair of elephant tusks (26 kg) and arrest of 3 people. The operation was carried out by the Douala Forestry and Wildlife Service and the police with the technical support of the NGO LAGA.

EAGLE, May 8, 2020 ; Afrik 21, May 20, 2020.⁵



End of May 2020

Waza National Park, Far North Region, Cameroon

The park, empty of tourists and patrols, is in a crisis. Poaching benefits from it. An elephant slaughtered. L'Œil du Sahel, May 31, 2020.⁶

Early June 2020

Bertoua, Eastern Region, Cameroon

Arrest of 2 men caught in the act of transporting 6 tusk sections, 3.7 kg in all. They would be linked to networks in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. One of them is a former accountant who operates a money transfer agency in Kentzou. He would also be engaged in

gold trafficking. The raw ivory was transported in an army bag. The operation was carried out by the province's wildlife protection services, the gendarmerie and with the support of the NGO LAGA.

EAGLE, June 3, 2020 ; Camer.be, June 10, 2020 ; Alwihda Info, June 10, 2020.⁷



GABON

June 6, 2020

Franceville, Haut-Ogooué Province, Gabon

Sentencing of Guiamoussangou Ignace and Lemi Judicaël to 2 years in prison with one year suspended, a fine of 1,585,000 CFA francs (2,662 US\$) and 1 million CFA francs in damages for holding and transporting 2 tusks in October 2019 in the Haut-Ogooué province.

Ginews Express, July 9, 2020.⁸



June 16, 2020

Franceville, Haut-Ogooué Province, Gabon

Sentencing of Mapila Grégoire and Mazou Frédéric to 3 years in prison, one of them suspended, a fine of 12,500,000 CFA francs (21,000 US\$) and 3 million CFA francs (5,038 US\$) in damages for holding and attempting to market 2 elephant tusks or 25,643 kg of raw ivory (see "On the Trail" n°28 p.107).

Conservation Justice, June 2020.⁹



June 16, 2020

Libreville, Estuaire Province, Gabon

Sentencing of Engone Jean and Etoughe Filbert to one year in prison, with 4 months suspended, for "illegal hunting" and ivory trafficking and to a fine of 1 million CFA francs (1,680 US\$). The State has not brought a civil suit and the 2 swindlers have not had to pay damages and will be released in a few months.

Conservation Justice, June 2020.¹⁰



June 16, 2020

Makokou, Ogooué-Ivindo Province, Gabon

Conviction of Sany Mohamed, an "illegal hunter", to 3 years in prison, one of which is suspended, and a fine of 3,456,000 CFA francs (756 US\$) and 3 million CFA francs in damages. At the time of his arrest in February 2020, he had been wanted for more than 5 years and the NGO Conservation Justice bitterly notes that he will be released in early 2022. See "On the Trail" n°28 p. 107.

Conservation Justice, June 2020.¹¹



June 19, 2020

Sindara, Ngounié Province, Gabon

Conviction of Sylla Demba to 2 years in prison and 1 million CFA francs in damages for his involvement in the transport of and attempt to market 3 tusks (see "On the Trail" n°26 p. 86). The prosecutor had requested 6 years in prison and the Gabonese State lawyer 10 million CFA francs in damages.

Conservation Justice, June 2020.¹²



June 26, 2020

Makokou, Ogooué-Ivindo Province, Gabon

Sentencing of Moukambi Moubeyi François, Bako Mohamed and Pilama Jean-Marie to 2 years in prison, one of which suspended, a fine of 2 million CFA francs (3,360 US\$) and 1 million CFA francs in damages for having detained, transported and attempted to market 2 tusks (see "On the Trail" n°27, p. 100). The prosecutor had requested 4 years in prison.

Conservation Justice, June 2020.¹³

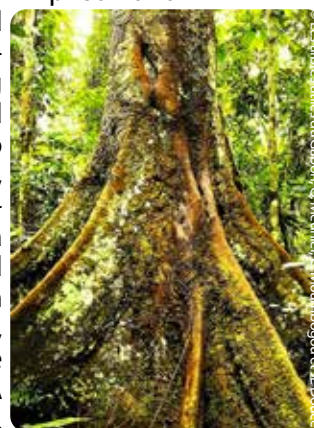


June 26, 2020

Gabon

Sentencing of Huan Renren and Zhou Shengion to one year in prison and 4

months suspended for having, as employees of a logging company, traded kevazingo logs (also known as bubinga, *Guibourtia tessmannii*, Appendix II), a species prohibited from exploitation in Gabon. In addition, they must pay a fine of 100 million CFA francs (172,000 US\$). Conservation Justice, July 2020.¹²⁶



REPUBLIC OF CONGO

April 26, 2020

North West of the Republic of Congo

Arrest of 3 poachers in possession of a baby elephant's tail and two small tusks of 1 kg each. There are still patrols in this border area with Gabon and Cameroon thanks to the determination of the guards and the understanding of the Ministry of Forest Economy which authorises their mobility despite the Covid-19 lockdown.

Vox Congo, May 9, 2020.¹⁴

June 21, 2020

Oyo, Cuvette Department, Republic of Congo

Arrest of a republican guard stationed in Brazzaville and his accomplice, a fisherman in troubled and fresh waters. They were transporting and trying to sell 2 cut tusks weighing 20 kg each, which they had allegedly obtained from "illegal hunters" in the protected areas of La Cuvette. PALF (Projet d'appui à l'application de la loi sur la faune sauvage - Project to Support the Implementation of Law on Wild Fauna) is providing legal support for the follow-up of the procedure.

Vox Congo, June 25, July 20 and August 8, 2020.¹⁵

CHAD

June 14, 2020

Bouso, Loug-Chari Department, Chari Baguirmi Region, Chad

Seizure of 5 tusks and a firearm. Three arrests. Obviously, one of the baby elephant's tusks is missing.

Ministry of Environment and Water Chad, June 22, 2020.¹⁶



EASTERN AFRICA

ETHIOPIA

Between May 25 and June 1st, 2020

Mago National Park, Ethiopia

At least 6 elephants poached in a single day. They had gone out of the park to drink water from the Omo River. "The poachers then removed all the tusks. It was a mass killing. We haven't seen anything like this before," says Ganabul Bulmi, the park's chief warden. 30 stray bullets were found at the scene of the carnage. In 2019, 10 elephants had died from poaching in the country.

Afriq 21, June 4, 2020 ; Getaway, June 3, 2020 ; The Guardian, June 2, 2020.¹⁷



KENYA

April 9, 2020

Mpala Ranch, Laikipia County, Kenya

The female baby elephant, about one year old, suffered a deep wound to the right front leg caused by a rifle bullet. The prognosis is optimistic. The mother had to be anaesthetised in order to be able to intervene safely and effectively. Favourable prognosis.

SWT/KWS, April 2020.¹⁸

April 11, 2020

Gambela, Meru County, Kenya

The elephant, aged around 15 years old, was killed by a high-calibre bullet in the head. The tusks were cut off with an electric saw by the poachers. Death occurred 48 hours ago.

SWT/KWS, April 2020.¹⁹

April 22, 2020

Naboisho Conservancy, Nakuru County, Kenya

The large male was the victim of several projectile weapons. The wounds are multiple. He left courageously and slowly after the veterinary intervention. Reserved prognosis.

SWT/KWS, April 2020.²⁰

April 28, 2020

Ol Pejeta, Laikipia County, Kenya

Entanglement of a young elephant in trap cables. He was part of a family of about ten other elephants. The mother and the matriarch refused to leave the scene. They too had to be anaesthetised while the young elephant was being extricated.

SWT/KWS, April 2020.²¹



April 29, 2020

Mutuovare, Embu County, Kenya

Two arrests. The 2 men were carrying 2 tusks estimated at one million shillings (9,603 US\$). According to the police, they belonged to an elephant killed 2 years earlier in the Mwea National Reserve.

The Standard, May 12, 2020 ; KBC Channel 1, April 30, 2020.²²



May 9 and 16, 2020

Marina, Laikipia County, Kenya

- David Mwara, Peter Ndiritu and Taracisio Mukere are arrested. They were trying to sell 9 sections of tusks weighing a total of 50 kg to police officers posing as buyers. The value of the seizure is estimated at 3.3 million shillings (30,800 US\$ or 616 US\$/kg). The tusks are not believed to come from recently killed elephants.

- Thanks to a tip-off, Kipkemoi Minito and Alfred Njogu are arrested in the west of the county. They were carrying 3 sections of tusks with a total weight of 38.6 kg. The ivory is believed to come from an elephant killed in the Mugie Conservancy in the north of the county.

The Nation, May 13, 2020 ; KBC Channel 1, May 18, 2020.²³



May 21, 2020

Nyahururu, Laikipia County, Kenya

Sentencing of Hillary Biwot Lagat, 26 years old, to 5 years in prison. He was arrested on October 19, 2018, between Sipili and Kinamba. He was in possession of a tusk estimated at 400,000 shillings (3,760 US\$). He had emphasised that he is the sole breadwinner of his family, that this is his first offence and he had claimed to have been beaten and injured during the time of his arrest. He had therefore applied for leniency from the court. He has 14 days to appeal his conviction.

The Nation, May 21, 2020 ; Tuko, May 28, 2020.²⁴



June 7, 2020

Meru County, Kenya

Electrocution of an adult male following an illegal connection to the Kenya Power and Lightning Company network in a village on the edge of Imenti forest.

SWT/KWS, June 2020.²⁵



June 11, 12 and 23, 2020

Tsavo East, Tsavo West and Amboseli National Parks, Kenya

Three elephants struck by arrows and a rifle bullet were treated. Two prognoses are optimistic. The third is reserved because of an infection of the left foreleg joint. SWT/KWS, June 2020.²⁶

June 15, 2020

Oi Choro Oiroua Conservancy, Kenya

Human/wildlife conflicts are worsening. Rains are scarce. Water points are emptying. Vegetation is dry. The elephant used to cross the Mara River and approach the crops, which provoked fierce reprisals. When the vets intervened, he was bearing 4 arrows, one on each side of the rump, one in the left cheek, one on the back and a deep wound on the left flank due to a large spear. The prognosis was relatively favourable. But 10 days after the treatment, after having travelled a great distance, he died.

SWT/KWS, June 2020.²⁷



June 16, 2020

Imenti Forest, Meru County, Kenya

The elephant's lameness had been reported by the rangers. After a day's track by 4x4 and on foot, he was located. After anaesthesia, a 50 cm long and 10 cm wide spear was extracted from his right front leg. After the treatment and the antidote, he woke up and before walking away inspected his wound with his trunk for a long time. Favourable prognosis. SWT/KWS, June 2020.²⁸



June 25, 2020

Loisaba Conservancy, Laikipia County, Kenya

The adult male was limping. He was away from his herd. Treatment of the left front leg. A rifle bullet shattered the carpal bones. Very reserved prognosis.

SWT/KWS, June 2020.²⁹

June 26, 2020

Masai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya

The lance had thrust to a depth of 18 cm and had reached the knee joint without irreparable damage. The attack occurred about 2 days ago. Favourable prognosis.

SWT/KWS, June 2020.³⁰

MALAWI

April 25, 2020

Kasungu District, Central Region, Malawi

Three men were trying to sell 8 sections of tusks weighing a total of 32 kg. National park officials posed as buyers. When they sniffed the trap, 2 suspects were able to escape. Saidi Phiri, aged 38, was arrested. According to him, his 2 accomplices had brought back the ivory from Zambia.

Malawi 24, April 30, 2020.³¹

May 30, 2020

Chisemphere, Central Region, Malawi

Oscar Moses Banda, aged 70, wanted to sell 6 sections of tusks. An agent of the Criminal Investigation Department posed as a buyer. "Banda was very happy that a customer he was looking for was finally at his door step." They agreed on a place and date for the sale. Banda is arrested and taken into custody.

Malawi 24, June 3, 2020.³²

June 14, 2020

Lekaleka, Northern Region, Malawi

Arrest thanks to a tip-off of Jacob Ndhlovu and Dany Makina Gama. They were in possession of 3 sections of tusks with a total weight of 19 kg.

Malawi 24, June 18, 2020.³³

MOZAMBIQUE

FAMILY AFFAIRS

May 14, 2020

Manica Province, Mozambique

Four arrests. Seizure of 2 large tusks. They would come from the district of Zumbo, in the province of Tete.

Moçambique Media Online, May 14, 2020.³⁴

UGANDA

Early June 2020

Kira, Central Region, Uganda

The NGO Natural Resources Conservation Network is informed that 3 people are selling ivory. It notifies the police. Akello Agnes Ojok, Derrick Ssejombwe and Ssegawa Sulaiman are arrested with a tusk estimated at 30 million shillings (7,975 US\$).

The PML Daily, June 5, 2020.³⁵

TANZANIA

Early April 2020

Manyoni, Singida Region, Tanzania

Jumanne Kwangulija, alias Shija Masanja, and Charles Makunga, alias Jumanne, were sentenced twice to a 20-year prison term for possession and attempted commercialisation of 14 sections of tusks. Both sentences run concurrently. The value of the ivory is estimated at 15,000 US\$. The facts date back to November 2017. Kulwa Subila, alias Ngeleja, was sentenced twice to a 20-year prison term for possession and attempted commercialisation of 2 tusks. Both sentences run concurrently. The value of the ivory is also estimated at 15,000 US\$. The facts date back to September 2018.

Daily News, April 6, 2020.³⁶

Early June 2020

Tanzania

Anania Betela appealed. He was sentenced in 2016 to 20 years in prison and a fine of 1,980 million shillings (863,129 US\$). His prison term remains unchanged, but the fine has been waived.

In May 2014, he was working as a driver for a nurse in Kilosa (Morogoro region). On May 22, he disappeared with the vehicle. The next day he had an accident in Vigwaza (Pwani region), more than 200 km away. When the police arrived, he tried unsuccessfully to escape. In the trunk was a bag with 28 sections of tusks weighing 33.6 kg and estimated at 198 million shillings (86,313 US\$ or 2,570 US\$/kg). He was on his way to Dar es Salaam, the port of smuggling. Tanzania Daily News, June 2, 2020.³⁷

End of June 2020

Manyoni District, Singida Region, Tanzania

Appeal dismissed for Saganda Kasanzu, sentenced on September 15, 2017, to 25 years in prison or a fine now equivalent to 350,000 US\$ for illegal possession of trophies (see "On the Trail" n°18 p.88). He was trying to sell 4 tusks of 6 kg estimated at 30,000 US\$ (5,000 US\$/kg). The buyers were in fact undercover wildlife wardens.

Tanzania Daily News, June 30, 2020.³⁸

End of June 2020

Manyoni District, Singida Region, Tanzania

On September 15, 2017, in Kipili (Tabora region), Juma Ramadhan, alias Kibangula, was arrested. He was in possession of 2 firearms and a tusk estimated at 15,000 US\$. He had also shot a sable antelope (*Hippotragus niger*, Appendix I) and a greater kudu (*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*).

Kibangula faced 2 charges of unlawful possession of firearms, 3 charges of unlawful possession of weapons in aggravating circumstances and 3 charges of trafficking in government trophies. He was sentenced to 160 years in prison, 20 years for each of the 8 charges. The sentences run concurrently.

Tanzania Daily News, June 28, 2020.³⁹

ZAMBIA

May 26-Mid-June 2020

Chama, Muchinga Province, Zambia

Lovemore Nkhowani, aged 60, is a former wildlife police officer. He has turned to poaching elephants under the nickname Mbanje. Agents of the Department of National Parks arrested him in possession of 10 kg of ivory. The elephant was reportedly poached in the Musalangu Reserve in the Eastern Province. He was sentenced to 7 years in prison. The court did not fail to remind him that his duty was to protect wildlife and not to poach.

Lusaka Times, June 17, 2020 ; Zambia reports, June 17, 2020.⁴⁰



ZIMBABWE

Early May 2020

Victoria Falls, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

An elephant had entered a suburb of Victoria Falls. His presence first contributed to compliance with the Covid-19 lockdown. Then he would have started to spread panic. Several attempts to put him to flight failed. Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Authority (Zimparks) officers decided to slaughter him and distribute his meat. The only requirement for receiving meat was to respect the rules of social distancing.

Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, May 4, 2020.⁴¹

From May 11 to May 13, 2020

Sedze, Midlands Province, Zimbabwe

Sentencing of Alan Pagan'a to 9 years imprisonment. The police contacted him following a tip. He led the fake buyers to a pit where he had buried a pair of tusks weighing 9.5 kg. The value of the ivory is estimated at 1,673 US\$ or 176 US\$/kg.

Bulawayo 24 News, May 14, 2020.⁴²



May 24, 2020

Hwange, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Arrest of Craven Banda, a 35-year-old well known former local football player in the Hwange club. He was sitting at a bus stop with a blue bag. Eight sections of raw ivory weighing 9,405 kg were inside. According to him, the bag was abandoned by people who ran away when they saw the police. The Chronicle, September 23, 2020.⁴³

May 29, 2020

Gwayi, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Another nasty story of cyanide and ivory. A man and an elephant lost their lives.

The police and ZimParks rangers were on the trail of Brighton Munkombwe, 30 years old, working in a gold mine near Bulawayo. He had got in bed with villagers living along the border of Hwange Park. He supplied them with cyanide, and the poisoners of salt ponds, elephants and vultures supplied him with ivory. At midnight, the gang was ambushed on the Lusulu-Gwayi road. The 4 rangers and 2 policemen arrested Munkombwe but the 4 accomplices managed to escape in the dark. They abandoned two tusks on the spot which were found in the thickets. Munkombwe was in possession of a satchel full of 3 kg of cyanide granulates. He collapsed at the entrance to the Dete police station. He died shortly afterwards. He is reported to have committed suicide by swallowing cyanide.

New Zimbabwe, June 4, 2020 ; Bhejane Trust, June 21, 2020.⁴⁴



June 3, 2020

Fuller Forest, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

A patrol of forest officers discovered a plastic bag hanging in a mususu (local name for *Terminalia sericea*, a small tree endemic to southern Africa). Inside, all the paraphernalia of the elephant poisoner: oranges, cucumbers and marula fruits poisoned with cyanide. No arrest. The Herald, June 11, 2020.⁴⁵



June 11 - July 1st, 2020

Zimbabwe

Hearings begin in the case between the NGO Advocates4Earth (formerly People and Earth Solidarity Law Network) and ZimParks. The NGO lodged a complaint in 2019 against ZimParks and the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Tourism and Hospitality Industry. It alleges that the capture, export and trade of elephants are violating environmental rights and public access to information. ZimParks' lawyers argue that the NGO has no interest in acting. The Supreme Court ruled on July 1st that Advocates4Earth has the right to take legal action against ZimParks. It will later consider the case on its merits.

Between 2012 and 2019, Zimbabwe exported 140 young elephants to China. 22 died. 35 elephant calves were exported by air on October 24, 2019.

See "On the Trail" n°27 p.96.

Advocates4Earth, June 12 and July 2, 2020.⁴⁶



June 26, 2020

Bulawayo Province, Zimbabwe

Langton Masunda, a sport hunter on the edge of Hwange Park, had sold in June 2018 for 58,000 US\$ 4 sub-adult elephants deliverable at the latest by July 31, 2018, to a South African businessman, Elkse Burger, director of Parrklip Trading. Failing this, the contract was terminated and Masunda was required to repay Burger. Tired of dunning Masunda and unable to recover the amount of money already paid into a blocked account pending completion of the contract, Burger seized the High Court of Bulawayo. Judge Moyo ordered Masunda and his associates to reimburse Burger within 7 working days.

In a message sent to Wildlife at Risk, Sharon Pincott, an Australian writer and photographer and an advocate for African wildlife, particularly elephants, gives her insightful testimony on the case. She lived for 13 years in Dete next to the main entrance to Hwange Park and in the area of influence of the sport hunting concessions operated by Langton Masunda and others. "There are no fences around Hwange National Park. And there are no fences around these hunting concessions. Elephants move unhindered from the park to the concessions. They constantly go back and forth". Sharon Pincott believes that elephant calves exported from Zimbabwe to China and other countries are occasionally captured, contrary to ZimParks claims, outside the park. She thinks that the deal between Masunda and Burger failed because of a vast movement of protest inside Zimbabwe and around the world against the abuse of elephant calves or sub-adult elephants before their export, during their export and after their arrival in their country of exile. "First of all, one has to wonder why on earth a legitimate South African businessman would want to purchase elephants from Zimbabwe, when South African authorities are continually telling everyone who will listen that they have an over-abundance of wild elephants in their country".

Center For Innovation and Technology, June 26, 2020 ; Wildlife at Risk, June 30, 2020 ; www.sharonpincott.com/sharon-pincott.html ; Sharon Pincott, Elephant Dawn : The inspirational story of thirteen years living with elephants in the African Wilderness, 2016.⁴⁷



SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

May 4, 2020

15 km away of Hluhluwe Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

An elephant that had left the reserve was shot by the rangers. "If the chopper they have on contract was scrambled on time, they could have tried to chase the elephant back into the park. By the time they got the chopper up in the air it was already past 5pm and it was starting to get dark and the elephant was apparently posing a danger to surrounding communities," according to an anonymous source.

Independent Online, May 5, 2020.⁴⁸

Around May 20, 2020

KwaMsane, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Arrest thanks to a tip of a man in possession of a tusk estimated at 150.000 rand (8,138 US\$).

The Witness, May 26, 2020.⁴⁹

End of May 2020

Khula, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Arrest of Dumisa Madletshe and Ndabenhle Dubazane. They were walking along route 618. In their big black bag they were carrying 2 tusks. They were released on bail of 1,000 rand (57 US\$).

Zululand Observer, May 29, 2020.⁵⁰

End of June 2020

Kruger National Park, Limpopo Province, South Africa

An elephant had a metal trap deeply embedded in a hind leg. He was treated by the park's veterinarians. According to them, "it is the type of trap set for bush-meat trade, or subsistence poaching".

The Mirror, June 30, 2020 ; SANParks, June 30, 2020.⁵¹



FOCUS ON THE SUDDEN DEATH OF ELEPHANTS IN BOTSWANA

FROM JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2018, the NGO Elephants without Borders is carrying out flyovers in north-eastern Botswana around the Okavango Delta. The last aerial observations of elephants in this area were in **2014**. About ten elephant carcasses were spotted then.

AUGUST 2018, the NGO reports its preliminary findings and expresses alarm at the discovery of around 100 carcasses. Overflights at low altitude coupled with ground reconnaissances show that most of them had been stripped of their tusks. The Western press goes wild. The New York Times called it "poaching frenzy". The government replies that most of the cases are "natural mortality" and sometimes a conflict between human and elephant activities, without giving any explanation for the scalping of the elephant skulls and the disappearance of the tusks.

JULY 2019, Elephants without Borders publishes the full report on the summer 2018 campaign in Current Biology. In 5 areas around the Okavango Delta stretching over 20,000 km², 156 observations of elephants poached for ivory are executed and documented. In front of the headless carcasses, the ears are like giant dead leaves. It is the fall of the elephants. The skulls have been cut off, the tusks have vanished and 120 carcasses are covered with branches in order to confuse the aerial observations. Decapitation and tusk removal are carried out primarily on males between 30 and 60 years of age. In an upsurge of caution, the authors say they do not claim that poaching is exclusively responsible for the increase in the total number of carcasses.



However, Elephants without Borders concludes that a wave of poaching, with hundreds of elephants killed each year for their tusks, is hitting northeast Botswana. "We estimate that a minimum of 385 elephants were poached in Botswana in 2017–2018". The poaching hotspots are the administrative division NG 35 near Maun, the trafficking town (see "On the Trail" n°8 p.76 and 78, 11 p.60 and 78, 14 p.27, 16 p.79, 18 p.92, 19 p.100), the NG 42, 3280 km², adjacent to the Chobe National Park, the NG 15 and CH3 near the Linyanti swamps and the Moremi Game Reserve and the NG 11, approximately 8000 km² near the border with Namibia.

AS EARLY AS MARCH 2020, 4 months earlier than Elephants without Borders in 2018, aerial reconnaissance initiated by the Botswana government and on-ground witnesses see the emergence of an abnormal mortality in the delta, 15 in March, 22 by mid-May. The Ministry of the Environment urges local people to be cautious. "Members of the public are urged to desist from ingesting meat from such carcasses since the animals are dying of unknown causes and this could be hazardous to their health."

Maeze Maeze, 'chief' of Seronga (about 5,000 inhabitants) gives contradictory interviews that reflect the complexity of the situation and the perplexity of all stakeholders. On May 22, he told Mmegi Online: There are many elephants here and they have destroyed the vegetation. Our goats and small wild animals are under threat because there is not enough grass for eating and hiding' and straight afterwards, he told Botswana Safari News: 'I was recently at my cattle post at Kakobee where I counted about 13 young elephants in a herd and only two adults. This is an example that we are beginning to have lot of elephant orphans. Our livelihoods are dependent on tourism if deaths continue unabated that would pose a threat to us as our tourism is dependent on elephants."

ON JUNE 1ST, 2020, 110 elephant carcasses were counted by the government. All the tusks are intact. "We have started removing the tusks in the dead elephants, and we have started burning the carcasses. We have started with those which are close to the villages, and those that are lying in the water. The idea is to burn as many carcasses as possible. However, we have a challenge since some of the carcasses are in areas which are difficult to reach."

ON JUNE 15, 2020, the death toll reaches 154 individuals. The Botswana Defence Force (BDF) conducts patrols within a 40km radius around Seronga, Gunotsoga and Eretsha in the NG 11 and 12. Its mission is to locate carcasses with the help of local people and to repel ivory looters.

ON JUNE 30, 2020, a spokesperson for the NGO British National Park Rescue, commissioned by the Botswana government, stated that following 2 3-hour overflights of the Okavango deltas and surrounding areas, 356 carcasses had been counted and located. The Ministry of the Environment states that 275 of them have been formally identified. "Located close to rural communities, they are being destroyed after the removal of the tusks."

=>

AT THE SAME TIME, BETWEEN APRIL AND JUNE, the BDF runs into sharp conflict with poachers in the delta, with 8 dead amongst the later (see "On the Front Lines" p.7). Robin des Bois believes that the international poachers who have been abounding in the delta spotted since March 1997 the numerous carcasses of elephants who have died "naturally" and mysteriously and have been persisting in recovering the heaviest of the tusks. The poaching denounced by Elephants without Borders could therefore in fact be post-mortem poaching. From the 156 decapitated carcasses as recorded by the NGO between July and September 2018 and on the basis of 30 kg per elephant, a stockpile of 468 kg of ivory has been built up. The question arises as to in whose hands it is concentrated or dispersed.

For the sake of completeness, it should be recalled that in July 2018, a controversy broke out after the discovery of a stockpile of raw ivory in a DISS (Directorate of Intelligence and Security Service) warehouse near Nata in northern Botswana. The exact amount of ivory has not been disclosed. The tusks are believed to come mainly from elephants died of natural causes. The DISS said that "sometimes elephants just die" without providing any information on the geographical origin of the stock and on the reasons why the usual procedure of declaration to the Ministry of the Environment had not been applied (cf. "On the Trail" n°22 p. 92) and by focusing the questions of the press towards the ex-director removed from his position in May.

TO EXPLAIN THE EARLY CARNAGES IN 2020, the Botswana government, drawing on the conclusions of laboratories called in neighbouring countries and in North America, ruled out the hypotheses of anthrax or poisoning by cyanide or agricultural poison and favoured the option of cyanobacteria. This explanation was met with scepticism by experts and NGOs, but it is plausible and supported by the worldwide scientific literature.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) warns about cyanobacterial toxins in unequivocal terms. "Humans are affected with a range of symptoms including skin irritation, stomach cramps, vomiting, nausea, diarrhoea, fever, sore throat, headache, muscle and joint pain, blisters of the mouth and liver damage. Swimmers in water containing cyanobacterial toxins may suffer allergic reactions, such as asthma, eye irritation, rashes, and blisters around the mouth and nose. Animals, birds, and fish can also be poisoned by high levels of toxin-producing cyanobacteria. "In addition to hepatotoxins, which affect the liver, the WHO mentions dermatotoxins, which affect the skin, and neurotoxins, which affect the nervous system and cause erratic behaviour. Several testimonies in the early weeks of the epizootic closely observed from March 2020 onwards, reported that elephants were staggering, going in circles, losing their sense of direction before collapsing on their front legs. These behaviours were frequently observed near waterholes.

In the UK, France, Canada and Switzerland, cyanobacteria are identified as the cause of the violent deaths of dogs, birds and livestock and health authorities ban swimming in lakes, ponds, backwaters, dam reservoirs and other stagnant waters when toxic cyanobacteria exceed alert levels.

Better known as blue-green algae, cyanobacteria proliferate and exceed safety thresholds when too much sewage, fertiliser and manure residues, dung, droppings and other faeces pollute waterholes and swamps. Cyanobacteria are causing or increasing eutrophication. While dry seasons enhance the proliferation of toxic cyanobacteria through the partial dewatering of pans and other waterholes, wet seasons also enhance them by discharging nitrates and phosphorus through channels, ditches and leaching of soils. For example, in the NG 11, several thousand elephants and several thousand goats and bovines have been cohabitating for some years. Because of this pollution cocktail, the mass death of elephants due to excessive cyanobacteria cannot be described as "natural".



Adult elephants who drink 100 to 200 litres of water per day wallow in the mud and spray themselves with their trunks. They are particularly exposed to the deadly risks of cyanobacteria through ingestion or prolonged external contact. Contrary to generally accepted ideas, cyanobacteria poison waterholes in their entirety. It is even likely that some benthic species, which are among the most toxic, are concentrated in low levels, where the water column is deepest and where elephants go to drink.

BBC, September 3, 2018 ; CNN, September 4, 2018 ; New York Times, September 4, 2018 ; Botswana Government, September 4, 2018 ; China.org, May 16, 2020 ; Minister of Environment, Natural Resources, Conservation and Tourism, July 2, 2020 ; UPI, July 1st, 2020 ; Mmegi, May 22 and June 12, 2020 ; Botswana Daily News, May 17, 2020 ; Botswana Safari News, June 16, 2020 ; National Geographic, July 14, 2020 ; The Guardian, September 21, 2020. Schlossberg S, Chase MJ, Sutcliffe R. Evidence of a Growing Elephant Poaching Problem in Botswana. Current Biology : CB. 2019 Jul;29(13):2222-2228.e4. DOI: 10.1016/j.cub.2019.05.061.

NAMIBIA

April 26, 2020

Chinchimani, Zambezi Region, Namibia

Arrest of a Botswanan and a Zambian in possession of 6 tusks. They are said to have entered the country illegally.

The Namibian, April 27, 2020. ⁵²

April-May 2020

Kavango West, Omusati and Otjozondjupa Regions, Namibia

The authorities shot 10 “problem” elephants. The tusks were added to the state’s ivory stockpile. The carcasses were given as compensation to the local population.

Eyewitness News, May 27, 2020 ; Dispatch Live, May 27, 2020. ⁵³

Early May 2020

Kavango East Region, Namibia

Arrest of 2 Angolans and seizure of 6 elephant tusks and 112 porcupine quills.

Xinhua, May 12, 2020. ⁵⁴

May 5, 2020

Ndonga Linena, Kavango East Region, Namibia

The carcass of an elephant was discovered in a field. A bullet impact mark was visible above his right eye. The police took out his tusks. They left the meat to the inhabitants.

The Namibian, May 14, 2020. ⁵⁵

May 23, 2020

Rundu, Kavango East Region, Namibia

Arrest of Kundangu Makuse Kandjimi and Mparo Josia Katembo. Seizure of 2 tusks.

The Namibian, June 4, 2020 ; The Namibian Sun, June 8, 2020. ⁵⁶

May 25-28, 2020

Between Ondangwa and Ongwediva, Oshana Region, Namibia

Villagers are fishing in a water canal near the road. They step on something hard in the water. It is a bag. It contains 4 tusks. They notify the police. The tusks are taken to the police station. According to a rumour denied by the police, a bus coming from Rundu would have broken down and the driver hid the bag so that he can come and get it later. The origin of the tusks remains unknown. Some inhabitants find that the anti-poaching unit has become less effective since the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis. According to them, the poaching of elephants and rhinos is on the increase.

New Era, May 29, 2020. ⁵⁷

June 7, 2020

Opuwo, Kunene Region, Namibia

Arrest of Rikengenena Kurooro and Kariejeja Tjavara. Seizure of 2 tusks.

The Namibian, June 11, 2020. ⁵⁸

June 26, 2020

Katima Mulilo, Zambezi Region, Namibia

Arrest of Humphry Lusepani Simasiku. Seizure of 5 tusks.

The Namibian Sun, July 1st, 2020. ⁵⁹

June 30, 2020

Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia

Arrest of Alfred Renatius Haipos Langendorf and Gotrieb Ndikwetepo Shishitwomunhu. Seizure of 2 tusks.

The Namibian, July 9, 2020 ; Republikein, July 8, 2020. ⁶⁰

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

CHONGQING MUNICIPALITY

June 8, 2020

Chongqing Autonomous Municipality, China

Seizure by postal customs of an object “yellowish in colour and light in texture” suspected of being made of ivory and declared as a gift. 119,1 g.

Chinese Customs, June 12, 2020. ⁶¹

SHANGHAI MUNICIPALITY

April 21, 2020

Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China

Conviction to 2 years in prison and a fine of 20,000 yuan (2,800 US\$) for selling worked ivories in his shop.

Xinmin.cn, April 22, 2020. ⁶²



Early May 2020

Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China

Import per sea containers of 33 old upright and grand pianos from Japan by an import-export company. According to customs documents, the keys are made of wood and plastic. After examination, it was found that at least one of the pianos has keys covered with ivory, 235 g in all.

Xinmin.cn, May 11, 2020. ⁶³



May 12 and 14, 2020

Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China



- Seizure of letter opener made in ivory in a parcel post from Germany.

- Seizure of an ivory brooch in a parcel post from France.

Total weight of the 2 seizures: 40 g.

Chinese Customs, May 19, 2020.⁶⁴

May 17, 2020

Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China

Seizure in 2 parcels from abroad, from the same sender, of 13 miniatures of animals and Buddha in a material described as "white and yellow, soft to the touch and with a natural texture", designated as "second-hand decorations", and which the Shanghai Centre of Expertise for Wild Plants and Animals authenticated a few days later as being ivory.

Chinese Customs, June 3, 2020.⁶⁵

ANHUI PROVINCE

June 19, 2020

Hefei, Anhui Province, China

Seizure in a package from abroad of 2 necklaces, a cigarette holder and an ivory pendant, 58.8 g.

Chinese Customs, June 23, 2020.⁶⁶

FUJIAN PROVINCE

June 5, 2020

Fuzhou Changle Airport, Fujian Province, China

The passenger, Chinese passport, flying to Tokyo was carrying an ivory necklace and 4 pearls, 25 g. Chinese Customs, June 20, 2020.⁶⁷

GANSU PROVINCE

April 2020

Lanzhou, Gansu Province, China

Conviction to 6 months suspended imprisonment and a fine of 2,000 yuan (280 US\$) for buying via WeChat and putting on sale in his barnum beads, bracelets and other trinkets made of ivory worth 470 US\$. The man was also selling mammoth ivory charms.

Kaixian.tv, April 29, 2020.⁶⁸



4 kg of bracelets, necklaces, statuettes, other worked ivories seized in China between April 1 and June 30, 2020



GUANGDONG PROVINCE

May 11, 2020

Guangzhou-Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of a painting scroll with ivory tips, 50 g.
Chinese Customs, June 3, 2020.⁶⁹



June 22, 2020

Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure in 2 parcels from a foreign country of several bracelets, necklaces, pendants in ivory.
Chinese Customs, July 17, 2020.⁷⁰

June 30, 2020

Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure in 4 postal parcels from abroad of 18 worked ivories including necklaces and earrings, 120.3 g, in the middle of metal jewellery that was the subject of the official declaration.

China News, August 17, 2020.⁷¹



GUIZHOU PROVINCE

April 17, 2020

Guiyang, Guizhou Province, China

Seizure of 4 worked ivories, 500 g.
Chinese Customs, April 21, 2020.⁷²

HEILONGJIANG PROVINCE

April 7, 2020

Harbin, Heilongjiang Province, China

Seizure of painting scroll tips in a package from Japan, 64.9 g.
Chinese Customs, May 20, 2020.⁷³



May 18, 2020

Haicheng, Heilongjiang Province, China

Seizure in a parcel from Japan of 2 presumed ivory figurines, 45 g. "According to the verification conducted by the competent services, the 2 items were made from upper incisors of African or Asian elephants".

Xinhua, May 19, 2020.⁷⁴



HENAN PROVINCE

May 9, 2020

Zhengzhou-Xinzheng International Airport, Henan Province, China

Seizure of 4 ivory billiard balls. Total weight : 565 g.
Chinese Customs, May 11, 2020.⁷⁵



LIAONING PROVINCE

May-June 2020

Benxi, Liaoning Province, China

The items made of "white plastic from Africa" for sale in May via the Internet were made of ivory. In June, police identified and questioned the seller. He was in cahoots with a family underground workshop that processed small pieces of raw ivory into Buddha pendants and kept the clippings and manufacturing scraps.

Litchi News, June 18, 2020.⁷⁶



QINGHAI PROVINCE

June 17, 2020

Haidong, Qinghai Province, China

Seizure of 5 painting scrolls with ivory tips in a package from Japan with the bonus of a red coral necklace (genus *Corallium*). Chinese Customs, June 29, 2020.⁷⁷



SHANDONG PROVINCE

April 15, 2020

Jinan, Shandong Province, China

Seizure in a package from the Netherlands of 255 g of worked ivories hidden in a porcelain vase.

Chinese Customs, May 3, 2020.⁷⁸



June 15, 2020

Qingdao Liuting Airport, Shandong Province, China

Seizure in a package coming from abroad of a painting scroll with both tips made of ivory and covered with paint in order to thwart the control devices and the eye of the customs officers.

Chinese Customs, June 20, 2020.⁷⁹

SICHUAN PROVINCE

June 23, 2020

Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China

Seizure in a package from the United Kingdom of a worked tusk section, 1.327 kg. China News, June 29, 2020.⁸⁰



XINJIANG UYGHUR AUTONOMOUS REGION

June 5, 2020

Ürümqi, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China

Appearance for having purchased via WeChat in March 2019 worked ivory worth 600 US\$ from a seller residing in Fujian province. The man was released on bail in May 2019 and will be tried at a later date. 010lf, June 12, 2020.⁸¹



ZHEJIANG PROVINCE

April 2020

Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure by customs at the postal sorting centre of a parcel from Japan containing 2 worked ivories, 60 g.

Hangzhou.com, April 16, 2020.⁸²



April 21, 2020

Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure in 3 parcels coming from abroad, without doubt from Japan which is the historical producer, of ivory tips of painting scrolls. Total weight: 121 g.

Chinese Customs, April 22, 2020.⁸³



© Chinese Customs

June 2020

Lishui, Zhejiang Province, China

Sentencing of Mrs. Lu to 4 years and 6 months in prison for purchasing worked ivories and African elephant tusks from a Fujian trafficker and a Vietnamese trafficker and for making a profit of 141,000 yuan or 19,700 US\$. She operated a craft shop with her husband and traded ivory via the Internet and by parcel post. Dong, one of her clients, grinded raw ivory. The powder was then, according to him, consumed by his family to prevent or cure all kinds of diseases. Ms. Lu was also fined 50,000 yuan or nearly 7,000 US\$.

Lishui Intermediate People's Court, June 22, 2020 ; The Paper, June 22, 2020.⁸⁴



SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

INDONESIA, THAILAND, VIET NAM

June July 2016 and July 2019

Indonesia, Thailand, Viet Nam

- Social networks were monitored for 25 discontinuous days between June and July 2016. 8,508 ivory items were then for sale online on 1559 Facebook or Instagram posts. Viet Nam was the country with the highest number of items for sale (4,949) and the lowest number of sellers (86).

- The 2019 update (5 days in July) found 2,489 ivory items for sale on 545 Facebook or Instagram posts. The same groups as in 2016 were monitored: 69 were still active. Thailand is now at the highest with 1,904 items for sale.

"A snapshot of the online ivory trade in Indonesia, Thailand and Viet Nam with an update in 2019", Traffic, July 7, 2020.⁸⁵



INDONESIA

Early April -April 15, 2020

Kerung Baung and Ranto Peureulak, East Aceh Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

- Discovery of the decomposing carcass of an elephant of a year and a half old in a forestry concession. He is believed to have been dead for a month. The cause of death is unknown.

- Discovery of the carcass of an elephant aged 4 to 5 years in an oil palm plantation.

The Jakarta Post, April 18 and 22, 2020. ⁸⁶

April 15, 2020

Kelayang, Indragiri Hulu Regency, Riau Province, Indonesia

The carcass of an elephant was found. The tusks were in place. He had damaged palm and rubber plantations on several occasions. The BKSDA had tried to drive him back into the forest 4 times since May 2019 without success. Police are searching for the culprits.

The Jakarta Post, April 16, 2020. ⁸⁷

MALAYSIA

April 11, 2020

Near Lahad Datu, Sabah State, Malaysia

A Borneo elephant aged between 5 and 10 years old was found dead near the Malua Forest Reserve. She bore no signs of injury. According to the post-mortem examination, it is possible that she has been poisoned. Analyses are underway.

The New Straits Times, April 11, 2020. ⁸⁸



Early June 2020

Kampung Jagung, Merotai Besar Tawau, Sabah State, Malaysia

More than 200 villagers are requesting the authorities to intervene. Three elephants regularly come to feed in their crops. Baharun Indarsaya, aged 68, fears that the situation could deteriorate. "What happened in Sungai Udin, Dumpas, where an elephant was shot dead would happen again. "See "On the Trail" n°26 p.94.

Daily Express, June 4, 2020. ⁸⁹

April - August 12, 2020

Lahad Datu, Sabah State, Malaysia

A 2-year-old pygmy elephant (*Elephas maximus borneensis*) was wandering in a plantation. He was suffering from a serious eye infection that might have resulted in blindness. After treatment at the Lok Kawi Wildlife Park, more than 500 km away, he regained his freedom on World Elephant Day.

Daily Express, July 11, 2020 ; The New Straits Times, August 12, 2020. ⁹⁰



MYANMAR

May 13, 2020

Alaungdaw Kathapa National Park, Sagaing Region, Myanmar

A villager finds the gutted carcass of an elephant near a river. The authorities go to the scene. The elephant is said to be 20 years old, 3.4 m long and 3 m high. His tusks and nails were torn off. The poachers fired 4 shots, including in the head. Death is said to have occurred 2 weeks ago. Alaungdaw Kathapa National Park is the largest forest in the country. It is home to elephants, leopards and bantengs. It is also a place of pilgrimage for Buddhists.

The Irrawaddy, May 15, 2020. ⁹¹

THAILAND

May 29, 2020

Near Kui Buri National Park, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, Thailand

Pushed by hunger, a 5-year-old elephant came out of the park. He is believed to have entered a jackfruit plantation. He was then fired at least 5 times. The veterinarians observed injuries to the shoulder, hip, leg and abdomen. A bullet perforated his large intestine. Despite dressings and antibiotics, he died 2 days later. The culprit is wanted.

Daily Mail, June 2, 2020. ⁹²



June 27, 2020

Kui Buri National Park, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, Thailand

Rangers prepare to drive a 15 to 20-year-old elephant weighing between 1.5 and 2 t out a rubber plantation. They hear a gunshot. When they arrive on the scene, they find the elephant dead in a ditch. Narong Arapakdi, aged 49, is arrested nearby. He says he killed the elephant in self-defence. He is accused of killing a protected animal and illegal possession of a weapon. This elephant is the fourth in the park to die from electrocution or shooting during the month of July.

The New Straits Times, June 29, 2020 ; Bangkok Post, June 28, 2020. ⁹³

End of June 2020

Chanthaburi Province, Thailand

Two elephant calves aged about 2 years old died electrocuted. They tried to enter an orchard. The owner had put an electric fence around it. One stepped on a wire, the other touched it with his trunk. The owner is questioned by the police.

Chiang Rai Times, June 21, 2020.⁹⁴



VIET NAM

April 29, 2020

Dak Lak Province, Viet Nam

Cu Sut, an 11-year-old elephant weighing 1.3 t, will no longer be able to live in the wild. His trunk and one of his legs were seriously injured by a trap. He was first treated and then released. But his condition worsened and he was unable to reintegrate into his herd. The director of the Dak Lak Elephant Conservation Centre plans to have him treated by South African and Dutch specialists. But their arrival is complicated by Covid-19 movement restrictions. Cu Sut had already been injured by a trap in May 2013.

VietNamNet, May 2, 2020.⁹⁵



May 25-End of July 2020

Rach Gia, Kien Giang Province, Viet Nam

The 151 ivory bracelets and 20 ivory pendants of Thanh Trung Gold and Silver and Lam Phat Gold and Silver Company Limited are seized (total weight 2.23 kg). The Covid-19 lockdown slowed down the investigations which have started some months ago after a report from ENV.

The 2 owners were fined 666 million dong (28,732 US\$) and 425 million dong (18,334 US\$). ENV, May 26, 2020 ; Báo Hải Quan Online, May 27, 2020.⁹⁶



SOUTHERN ASIA

BANGLADESH

June 12, 2020

Khonda Kata, Cox's Bazar District, Chittagong Division, Bangladesh

Hundreds of people came to the site to take a look at the bull elephant. He had just been electrocuted by touching a fence with his trunk. The Daily Star, June 15, 2020.⁹⁷



June 13, 2020

Fasiakhali Union, Bandarban District, Chittagong Division, Bangladesh

An elephant around 10 years old was found dead in the bed of a stream. A fence killed again. The first hypothesis of the forest services is that the victim was injured by becoming entangled in barbed wire. A local elected official favours electrocution. Fences fragment the landscape and kill blindly. In the same area, Abdur Rahim, 21 years old, who had gone to a hill to take a close look at his cow at dusk did not return home. In the morning, villagers found his body. Abdur was electrocuted when he touched an electrified elephant trap. The Daily Star, June 15, 2020.⁹⁸



June 14, 2020

Banshkhali Upazila, Chittagong District, Bangladesh

The smell was floating above the village. The rotting carcass of the 20-year-old elephant had been slyly buried under an earth's layer. But this cover did not withstand yesterday's floods and the carcass ended up uncovered. An autopsy, if it is possible, will take time. The presence of a wire fence protecting an orange garden opens the door wide to the option of electrocution. "This fence could easily have been connected to power," says Abu Naser Md Yeasin Neyaz, forestry officer of the Chittagong Forest Circle. The Daily Star, June 15, 2020.⁹⁹



June 28, 2020

Chittagong Forest Circle, Bangladesh

Discovery of a dead baby elephant on the edge of a tea plantation protected by an electrified fence. Electrocution is not officially confirmed. Controversy divides academic and naturalist circles and official services. "The forest department tries to avoid hassle by not going after the elephant killers," says Kamal Hossen, professor at the University of Chittagong. The services in charge of protecting wildlife reply that for every elephant death, an investigation is launched to find out the cause. However, trials for elephant poaching or electrocution can be counted on the fingers of one hand for the past 20 years.

The statistics show that 106 elephants died between 2000 and 2019, 32 from accidents, 29 from disease, 22 from complications due to old age, 15 by electrocution and 8 by rifle bullets in the Chittagong Forest Circle. This ecosystem and administrative designation includes the periphery of the capital Chittagong, Cox's Bazaar, part of the districts of Bandarban and Rangamati and the upazila (administrative subdivision) of Banshkali. The Daily Star, August 23, 2020.¹⁰⁰



INDIA

April 30, 2020

Pollibetta, Kodagu District, State of Karnataka, India

Electrocution of a marauding tusker at around 7.30 am in the coffee plantation belonging to Kuppanda Aruna.

The Times of India, May 2, 2020.¹⁰¹



April 30, 2020

Chennayyakote, Uttara Kannada District, State of Karnataka, India

A 8 to 10 year old male struck last night by a stripped electric cable laid in the tea plantation of a certain Arun.

Deccan Herald, May 1st, 2020.¹⁰²



May 4, June 16, July 21, 22 and 27, and August 28, 2020

Takimari, Khoardanga, Banarhat, Bamandanga and Nagrakata, Jalpaiguri District, and Birpara, Alipurduar District, State of West Bengal, India

- A "makna" (male without tusks) died electrocuted near a rice field. Seven people, including 3 women, were arrested. Four other suspects are wanted. Farmers say they are infuriated by elephant incursions.

- Another "makna" died of electrocution near Buxa national park. Arrest of Rabindranath Rai, the owner of the field.

- Discovery of the body of a 15-year-old elephant electrocuted near a tea plantation.

- Discovery of another electrocuted elephant in a tea plantation.

- Suspicious death of a pachyderm in the Hila tea plantation. He was part of a herd that had come out of the Jaldhaka forest at night and had entered the plantation. In the early morning, villagers discovered the carcass and notified the Khuniya Forest Department, which took charge of it.

- Discovery of the body of an elephant. Electrocution is suspected. Those responsible will be sought.

The Telegraph India, May 5, June 17 and August 29, 2020 ; Siliguri Times, July 22 and 27, 2020.¹⁰³



April-July 2020

Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary, Dibrugarh and Tinsukia Districts, State of Assam, India

"Save Amazon Of East from Coal Mafias". The campaign is flourishing on the Internet and is fuelling the controversy over the extension of an open-cast coal mine that began operating in 1973. Coal India Limited is at the helm in the Brahmaputra basin amidst a mosaic of subtropical forests watered by the Dihing, a tributary of the Brahmaputra, a cracked and vandalised mosaic that is home to elephants, gibbons, pangolins, leopards and butterflies and therefore attracts hordes of poachers. Until then Coal India Limited had been operating freely but it has been caught up by the environmentalist patrol since May 2020 and then by the political and judicial powers, who till now turned a blind eye. They must now face the facts and recognise that the original concession of 1973 was thirty years old and that since 2003 Coal India Limited has been extracting coal and razing and blackening trees completely outlaw. It has now been fined 5 million US\$. Coal India Limited has suspended its work until an agreement is reached with the National Board for Wild Life (NBWL), a mediation body that is directly placed under the authority of India's Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MOEFCC).

First Post, May 5, 2020 ; The Hindustan Times, July 18, 2020 ; The Hindu, May 30 and June 6, 2020 ; The Sentinel, April 25 and May 3, 2020.¹²⁸



FAMILY AFFAIRS

May 27, 2020

Ambalappara, Palakkad District, State of Kerala, India



A 15-year-old pregnant elephant died. She would have eaten a fruit filled with explosives (ottukai or avittukai, local name). She had taken refuge in the Velliya River to relieve the infected wounds to her mouth and tongue. Unable to eat, she collapsed from exhaustion when the forest officers tried to get her out with the help of 2 domestic elephants. The event raised a wave of emotion and protest.



Wilson, a worker in a rubber plantation was arrested on June 5. He had allegedly placed a coconut filled with explosives to kill wild boars. The owner of the domain, Abdul Kareem, and his son Riyazuddin are heard by the police.

Since 2015, 24 elephants have died of unnatural causes in the state of Kerala, including 10 in 2019: electrocution, shooting, explosives or collision with vehicles.

The Times of India, June 4, 5 and 8, 2020 ; The Indian Express, June 6, 2020 ; The Hindu, May 18 and June 4, 5 and 6, 2020 ; The New Indian Express, June 2 and 5, 2020. ¹⁰⁴

May 28, 2020

Baljori, West Garo Hills District, State of Meghalaya, India

Search at Rason D. Sangma. The police find 2 tusks, one 91 cm long and the other 76 cm long. He is arrested. The tusks are believed to come from an elephant killed on April 19 in West Garo Hills.

The Sentinel, May 30, 2020. ¹⁰⁵

June 9, 10 and 11, 2020

Pratappur Forest, Surajpur District, and Rajpur Forest, Balrampur District, State of Chhattisgarh, India



A foul smell alerted some villagers. The carcass of a female elephant was the source. In the following days, 2 other females were found dead. One was pregnant. Poisoning is suspected. Four forest agents are suspended. They are charged with negligence.

In India, from September 2009 to September 2019, at least 1,025 elephants died, including 640 electrocuted, 153 poached and 62 poisoned.

The Indian Express, June 11 and 14 and August 14, 2020 ; The Hindustan Times, June 11, 2020. ¹⁰⁶

April 9-June 10, 2020

Karavoor, Kollam District, State of Kerala, India



On April 9, an elephant aged 8 to 10 years is the victim of an explosive pineapple. Unable to eat or drink, she died 2 days later despite treatment. The forest officers were reportedly slow to notify the veterinarians.

The death of another elephant on May 27 in Palakkad in similar circumstances (see above) speeds up the investigation process. The police arrest Renjith, Animon and Sharath. At Animon's home, they find pineapples, explosive substances, python oil (*Python* spp., Appendix I or II), bones, deer meat, and a handmade firearm. Three accomplices are sought. The suspects are known to hunt wild boar, sambar deers or pythons and sell the meat. They are held in police custody.

The News Minute, June 11, 2020 ; The Hindu, June 11, 2020 ; The Times of India, June 6, 2020. ¹⁰⁷

June 14 and 19, 2020

Gurubeda Reserve Forest, Keonjhar District, State of Odisha, India



Struck carcasses of a 20-year-old female elephant and a 22-year-old bull were found. The male's tusks have disappeared.

Arrest of Shridhar Munda, Bindrai Munda and Matlu Munda. They claim to have placed electric cables to hunt wild boars.

Since 2010, 114 elephants have died from poaching in Odisha, 79 of them because of electric cables.

Prameya News, June 19, 2020 ; The Hindustan Times, June 14, 2020 ; The Pioneer, June 17, 2020. ¹⁰⁸

June 15, 2020

Saptur, Madurai District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Twelve suspects, including 9 forest officers, are being questioned. Four of the officers are suspended. They are said to have discreetly burnt the carcass of an elephant in early May in the heart of the forest. The remains were found. They are suspected of having tried to hide information about the causes of death.

The Hindu, June 17, 2020 ; The New Indian Express, July 8, 2020. ¹⁰⁹

June 18, 2020

Mundeswar Reserve Forest, Boudh District, State of Odisha, India

Village women are picking mushrooms when they sight the body of an elephant. They notify the forest officers. The 1.2 m long tusks are extracted and taken to the police station. A veterinarian conducts a post-mortem examination before the carcass is buried. This 3-year-old bull was reportedly shot 10 to 12 times by poachers in the Kusang reserve. The elephant is said to have taken refuge in the Mundeswar reserve and died a few metres from the village of Dakapadar. The culprits are believed not to have succeeded in tearing off the tusks.

The Times of India, June 20, 2020 ; The Orissa Post, June 18, 2020 ; The Hindustan Times, June 18, 2020. ¹¹⁰

June 23, 2020

Kanhangad, Kasaragod District, State of Kerala, India

Seizure of an ivory Ganesh statuette with an estimated value of Rs. 3 million (39,595 US\$). Arrest of Jomon Joy, Binoj Kumar and M. Prabin. Forest officers contacted the trio posing as buyers. Jomon Joy works in a NGO for the protection of tribal people. They say they had got hold of the statuette 2 weeks earlier in Thiruvananthapuram, the state capital, more than 500 km away. The Hindu, June 23, 2020. ¹¹¹

June 23, 2020

State of Kerala, India

Follow up of the case against the actor Mohanlal (see "On the Trail" n°12 p.95 and n°15 p.100). Tusks had been discovered and seized at his home in July 2011 during a tax inspection. Four years later, he had obtained certificates from the Chief Wildlife Warden (CWW) documenting the legitimate ownership of the tusks. They were returned to him. New twist : the certificates are allegedly fake. No thorough investigation had been carried out to verify the origin of the tusks. According to the new CWW Surendrakuma, "it is evident that V. Mohanlal was not in lawful possession of the tusks when the certificate of ownership was issued to him". However, the prosecutor is calling for the charges to be dropped. He does not want to revert from his promises and considers that going further in fact finding would be a waste of precious time. The Hindu, June 23, 2020. ¹¹²

June 25, 2020

Sana Dalakudar, Sundergarh District, State of Odisha, India

Rupu Barla is arrested and his weapons seized. He is accused of having killed a baby elephant on the night of June 11 with accomplices. Villagers found the carcass in a pond near the Rutukupedi reserve. There were cut marks on the neck. Police are looking for other suspects.

The Pioneer, June 27, 2020 ; Republic World, June 26, 2020. ¹¹³

SRI LANKA

Early May 2020

Udawalawe National Park, Sabaragamuwa and Uva Provinces, Sri Lanka

A baby elephant has been shot to death. Since the beginning of the Covid-19 restrictions, poaching has been on the rise. There are no more tourists to interfere with illegal hunting, and unemployment has increased. 600 wild animals including birds are reportedly killed by poachers every day in the country according to environmentalist Nayanaka Ranwellla.

Outlook India, May 15, 2020. ¹¹⁴

May 18, 2020

Katharagama, Uva Province, Sri Lanka

Police and Sri Lanka navy search a home. They discovered a 76 cm long tusk. A 29-year-old man is arrested.

Sri Lanka Navy, May 18, 2020. ¹¹⁵

May 22, 2020

Udawalawe National Park, Sabaragamuwa and Uva Provinces, Sri Lanka

Arrest of 3 men. Seizure of a firearm and powder for rifle. These owners of an illicit brewery had hidden "goda", a semi-brewed liquor, in the forest. On May 2, they had seen a baby elephant drinking it. They shot him down.

Daily Mirror, May 23, 2020. ¹¹⁶

June 24, 2020

Near the Inginimitiya Reservoir, North Western Province, Sri Lanka

A tusker aged about 40 years was found dead. Post-mortem examination revealed that he had been shot in the head. The shooter was undoubtedly in a high-vantage spot. He is believed to have used an automatic weapon. The tusks, which are over 45 cm long, were still there.

News First, June 29, 2020. ¹¹⁷



End of June 2020

Katharagama, Uva Province, Sri Lanka

Arrest of a priest in possession of 2 tusks. He was also holding fraudulent papers to justify their ownership.

Hiru News, June 28, 2020. ¹¹⁸

EUROPE

SPAIN

June 16-28, 2020

Pilar de la Horadada, Almoradí and Torrevieja, Province of Alicante, Spain

SEPRONA agents trapped 6 Costa Blanca residents who were selling ivory items on a second-hand online store. They seized an 18 cm silver crucifix with an ivory Christ on sale for 385 € (434 US\$), 3 ivory necklaces of 23 cm long each on sale for 70 € (79 US\$) and 2 brushes of 12 cm long each on sale for 200 € (226 US\$). The items did not have documents certifying their legal origin. They were handed over to Alicante customs. Analyses are underway to check whether it is ivory. If so, the sellers will be charged with illegal ivory trade. If not, they will be charged with fraud.

The Olive Press, June 30, 2020 ; Vegabajadigital, June 29, 2020. ¹¹⁹

ITALY

End of May 2020

Torre del Greco, Region of Campania, Italy

Seizure by the Carabinieri in a shop of 15 ivory sculptures, including crucifixes.

Metropolis, May 27, 2020. ¹²⁰



OPERATION GOLDEN TUSK

January 1st-End of June 2020

Italy

The Carabinieri controlled 200 antique dealers, auction houses, jewellers and online sellers. They seized 460 ivory products: tusks, statuettes, crucifixes, cutlery, jewellery... The total value is estimated at 400,000 € (451.360 US\$).

Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Tutela del Territorio e del Mare, June 25, 2020. ¹²¹



UNITED KINGDOM

May 18 and August 17, 2020

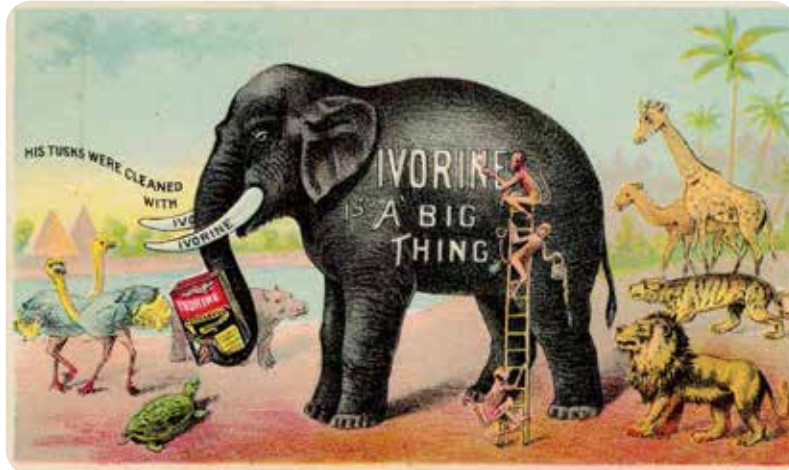
United Kingdom

Rejection of the appeal of Friends of Antique Cultural Treasures (FACT) Ltd against the Ivory Act 2018 which totally bans the ivory trade with some exemptions (pre-1947 objects in which ivory makes up less than 10 percent of the total volume, pre-1918 portrait miniatures, pre-1975 musical instruments containing less than 20% ivory, pre-1918 cultural objects of value). According to antique dealers, there is no link between the trade in antiques and current poaching. The FACT took the matter before the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court dismissed FACT's appeal.

Antiques Trade Gazette, May 18, 2020 ; Environmental Investigation Agency, August 17, 2020. ¹²²



IVORY AND IVORIES



Advertising for the soap "Ivory", 1870-1900. Source Boston Public Library

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

April 27, 2020

Washington, Columbia District, United States of America

Prohibition in the political capital of the United States of America on the sale by any means of worked or raw ivory of elephant, hippopotamus, mammoth, mastodon, narwhal, whale and other cetaceans. A few exceptions amputate the law without disfiguring it. Objects proven to be more than 100 years old and containing less than 20 % of ivory may be sold in antique shops or by auction. Washington D.C. joins New York.

Ivory in Washington D.C., see "On the Trail" n°4 p. 84, n°18 p. 96, n°26 p. 87.

Planet Forward, June 16, 2020 ; Antiques and The Arts, April 14, 2020.¹²³

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

Early April 2020

Tianjin, Hebei Province, China



Seizure in 2 EMS courier parcels from Japan of 8 ivory necklaces and 2 sperm whale tooth slices. The recipients were fined 11,000 yuan or 1,550 US\$.

Chinese Customs, April 17, 2020.¹²⁴

End of June 2020

Qinghai Province, China

Dismantling of a purchasing, transport and sales network of ornaments and jewellery made of rhino horn, white elephant ivory and red hornbill helmet ivory, more than 3,000 items with a value exceeding 800,000 yuan or 112,000 US\$. 22 suspects were arrested in 14 provinces and in Beijing. The investigation was conducted by the Qinghai police.

China News, June 23, 2020.¹²⁵

WESTERN ASIA

TURKEY

Mid-April 2020

Ankara, Ankara Province, Central Anatolia Region, Turkey

Seizure in a sweatshop of 124 rosaries made of elephant, mammoth, sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) and rhino horn ivory.

CNN Türk Haber, April 16, 2020.¹²⁶

AFRICA

TANZANIA

April, May, August 2020

Morogoro Region, Enguserosambu, Ngorongoro District, Arusha Region and Serengeti District, Mara Region, Tanzania



- Eight anti-poaching officers including TANAPA (Tanzania National Parks Authority) rangers are under arrest. They accepted more than 2 million shillings (900 US\$) from poachers in Mikumi National Park and let them go.

- Arrest in the middle of the night of 4 suspected poachers in possession of an AK47. Two Tanzanians were handcuffed but their 2 Kenyan accomplices managed to escape. They were about to break into a reserve in the Ngorongoro district (see "On the Trail" n°12 p. 80, n°14 p. 78, n°15 p. 76, n°19 p. 121, n°25 p. 80). The police and NGOs fear that the ivory and rhino horn syndicates benefit from the Covid-19 chaos.

- Sentencing of 9 poachers to 20 years in prison each and 4 others to one year in prison for repeated poaching in 2018 and 2019 inside the Serengeti National Park and the Ikorongo Forest Reserve. Among the species living in these protected areas are gazelles, zebras, giraffes, elephants and black rhinos.

Xinhuanet, April 29, 2020 ; The Citizen, August 20, 2020 ; The Guardian, May 13, 2020.¹

ZIMBABWE

April-May 2020

Zimbabwe

The CNRG (Centre for Natural Resource Governance) points out that since the implementation of the anti-Covid measures, poaching has rebounded. "In January and February, 3 elephants were killed by poachers, in March and April, at least 7 elephants have been lost". "Two white rhinos were killed in April and their deaths were not reported publicly." Lions and buffaloes are also indirect victims of the Covid according to the CNRG. The Justice for Wildlife Commission notes that poachers are taking advantage of the reduction of ground patrols and the focusing of the forces of law on the application of anti-Covid measures. "For the poachers, these are ideal opportunities for exploitation." The absence of tourists, who normally act as auxiliary guards, is an additional advantage for poachers.

New Zimbabwe, May 25, 2020.²

AFRICA-AMERICA

SENEGAL-UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

GANG

April 2-3 and July 1st 2020

Dakar, Dakar Region, Senegal - State of New Jersey and New York, United States of America

Extradition to the United States of America of the Guinean citizen Amara Chérif alias Bamba Issiaka. As detailed in "On the Trail" n°25 p. 81, he joined a Liberian citizen Moazu Kroma arrested in Uganda in June 2019 and immediately extradited to the United States of America. The 2 men are involved in a massive traffic of rhino horns and elephant tusks between Africa and the United States of America and Africa and Asia via the United States of America. Amara Chérif, 54, was heard the same day he arrived in New York City by a Judge of the Southern District. He crossed the Atlantic on a plane chartered by the American justice system. He appeared before the same judge by video conference on July 1st because of the Covid-19 lockdown and was charged with trafficking in protected species of wild fauna and money laundering. Two other gang members, Mansur Mohamed Surur alias Mansour and Abdi Hussein Ahmed alias Abu Khadi, are on the run. The DEA (US Drug Enforcement Administration) suspects them in addition of heroin trafficking. Dakaractu, July 2, 2020.³

ASIA

CHINA

April 17 and 23 and June 12, 2020

Jiangmen, Guangdong Province, China

Guangdong Customs, with the assistance of police in Jiangmen, Guangzhou, Foshan and Shenzhen, searched vein after vein a mine of ivory and rhino horns and seized 413 kg of white gold and 28 kg of brown gold (keratin). The apotheosis was undoubtedly this search in a luxurious residence where 23 raw tusks, sections of worked tusks, statuettes, thousands of pearls in necklaces, bracelets or rosaries were meticulously gathered by masked and gloved police and customs officers. The nicknamed Li Moushen seems to be the conductor. The ivories and rhinoceros horns or horn objects came, with few exceptions, from South Africa by sea. The investigation continues. Computers, accounting books and other incriminating evidence have been seized. Chinese Customs, June 23, 2020.⁴



RHINOCEROSES



White rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum*), South Africa. Picture Bernard Dupont

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

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

"On the Trail" n°29

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

Value of 1kg of raw horn

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref. (year)
Africa	South Africa	30,000	8 (2019)
	Eswatini	68,300	25 (2017)
Asia	China	34,950	29 (2020)

EASTERN AFRICA

MOZAMBIQUE

End of May 2020

Mozambique

A young female white rhinoceros has recovered from a poaching attempt. She had been shot 2 months earlier and suffered a fracture. Saving the Survivors, May 29, 2020.¹



ZIMBABWE

End of May 2020

Bubye Valley Conservancy, Matabeleland South Province, Zimbabwe

They had killed and dehorned a rhinoceros on May 4, 2019. They were arrested on January 23, 2020 (see "On the Trail" n°28 p. 93). Nhlanhla Nkomo, a former police inspector, Owen Nyoni, a former ZimParks ranger, and Stanley Katandiza, a Zambian, were sentenced to 9 years in prison. They have to pay 120,000 US\$ to the State to compensate for the rhino's economic loss. The Herald, May 20, 2020.²



SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

April 2020

South Africa

In South Africa, the Covid-19 lockdown is said to have slowed rhino poaching. In the Kruger Park, 5 poaching incidents were recorded in April 2020 compared to 46 in April 2019. "We believe that the closure of our borders and the complete shutdown of international air travel removed the key-way that syndicates used to supply horn to transit and consumer countries," says Barbara Creecy, Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries. Independent Online, August 21, 2020.³

April 22, 2020

Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

On April 28, 2019, Naomi Engelbrecht, president of the regional courts in the province, ordered the closure of the Skukuza court and the transfer of all its existing caseload to the Mhala court. According to her, the Skukuza Regional Court has no legal basis. Its establishment had been announced by Mrs Edna Molewa†, then South Africa's Minister of Environment, and was never challenged by the Department of Justice (see "On the Trail" n°17, p. 75). The Skukuza "rhino" court had, until it ceased to operate, proved remarkably effective, a fact which was hailed by the rangers, the management of the Kruger Park and wildlife conservationists. Between 4 and 8 poacher trials were opened each month. Thanks to the immediate proximity of this new regional court, the rangers who had taken part in the arrests were systematically present, the investigation files were supported by incriminating evidence and the hearings were consolidated by the contradictory statements of the presumed culprits and the rangers. The transfer of documents and evidence at the Mhala regional court 60 km from the Kruger Park are increasing the risks of loss or misappropriation and are making easier the work of the poachers' lawyers, whose main strategy is to play for time and have hearings postponed while their clients are granted bail.

Many observers see the closure of the Skukuza court as a new manoeuvre by the traffickers and their affiliates to undermine the efforts of rangers and investigators, less brutally than the murder of Lieutenant Colonel Leroy Brewer ("On the Trail" n°28, p.4) but just as effective. All methods to prevent justice to deliver quickly and quietly deterrent sentences against the poachers and principles. Suzy Ellis, on behalf of the International Rhino Foundation based in the United States of America, denounces "a laissez-faire atmosphere". When on February 24, 2020, the High Court of the province wanted to hear Mrs Engelbrecht and assess the validity of her arguments, she did not appear in person, letting Kgama Shai, a lawyer specialising in poachers' defence, develop her main argument before the three judges. The Skukuza court would be an operetta chamber created ex nihilo and with no legal basis. On April 22, convened in special session under the chairmanship of the senior North Gauteng judge, the High Court of the province ruled that the establishment of the Skukuza court was consistent with the Magistrates Court Act of 1944, supplemented by Government Decisions 219 and 492 dated January 2004 and April 2016 as published in the government Gazette. Naomi Engelbrecht appealed the decision to the Supreme Court.

Lowvelder, September 21, 2019; News 24, April 22, 2020; Stop Rhino Poaching, April 22, 2020; National Geographic, August 18, 2020; The Citizen, August 20, 2020.⁴



April 24, 2020

Piensaar, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Arrest of Martin Prince Lekhuleni, Sipho Alfred Nyundu, and his companion Banele Georgina Nyalunga. During a search, police found 6 rhino horns estimated at 6 million rand (335,500 US\$) in outdoor toilets, hunting knives in a car and a large sum of money in the house. Banele is not being prosecuted because she would only have been visiting her companion. On April 29, the 2 men were released on bail of 8,000 rand (450 US\$). They are suspected of having links with the Mabuza-Nyalunga-Mnisi gang. See "On the Trail" n°6 p.62, n°7 p.62, n°9 p.66, n°12 p.69, n°15 p.82, n°21 p.77 n°22 p.79 and 81, n°23 p.104.

SAPS, April 26, 2020 ; Wildlife at Risk, April 29, 2020.⁵



May 2020

South Africa

Rhino 911 in agreement with the government proceeded in a fortnight to the express dehorning of 400 rhinos in 3 private reserves of which the names are kept secret. The initiative, which is the culmination of a practice prevailing for about ten years, was triggered by the desertion of tourists from the animal parks. Under normal circumstances, 60 % of animal protection would be provided by visitors to the parks and 40 % by the guards. The eyes and ears of visitors are weapons feared by poachers. They can notify rangers of any suspicious behaviour. But the Covid-19 pandemic has emptied the parks. Poachers are on their own. The time is right for them. They are redundant and the rangers affected by the illness or tied up by lockdown measures are outnumbered.

However, dehorning exposes the rhinos to the medical risks of anaesthesia and antidote waking up, human control and amputation of two multi-purpose organs. Dehorning 400 rhinos in a fortnight implies a lot of helicopter flights, hypodermic guns, M99 anaesthetics and electric saws. Will they some day come to organise preventive campaigns to deantler deer, unscrew the canines of tigers and paint polar bears black? (...)

(...) Notification n°625 published in the Government Gazette on June 3 under the signature of Barbara Dallas Creecy, Minister for the Environment, Forests and Fisheries, prohibits powdering or chipping rhino horns, cutting them into thin slices, drilling them to extract fragments, filing them down or inviting a third party to do so.

However, these prohibitions do not apply to debris resulting from preventive dehorning or any intervention related to security, management, veterinary or autopsy purposes, or to debris resulting from the insertion of microchips into the horn.

Given that one gram of rhino horn sells for around 25 US\$ in Asia, it is not impossible that a traffic from the dehorning or chipping of rhino horns could emerge. The rhino horn powder is sold in China and countries around China as a preventive and curative agent for a whole bunch of ailments and diseases. With Covid-19, it is experiencing a rebound in popularity.

The Liberty Times, June 5, 2020 ; Nederlandse Omroep Stichting, June 5, 2020 ; Robin des Bois.⁶



May 16, 2020

Citrusdal, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Arrest of 4 men, aged between 23 and 46, in possession of a rhino horn and protected plants. News 24, May 17, 2020.⁷



June 5, 2020

Brits, North West Province, South Africa

John Hume is followed step by step by "On the Trail".
N°1, July 2013 issue: 3 of his preventively dehorned rhinoceros are victims of poachers who were taking over the regrowth of the 6 horns. John Hume is said to have operated 800 rhinoceros at that time and to have held 500 kg of horns.

N°11, March 2016 issue: John Hume contests the government's decision of February 2009 to ban the trade in horns within South Africa in court and the judges ruled in his favour. It is feared that this reopening of the domestic market will be an opportunity for the illegal horn export sector in crushed or raw form. Edna Molewa, Minister of the Environment, appeals the judgement.

N°17, July 2017 issue: John Hume and the PROA (Private Rhino Owners Association) definitely win the battle. Intra-South African trade in horns is authorised and John Hume announces an auction of horns in August. At this time, he is reputed to be operating 1,500 rhinos and to hold 5 to 6 t of horns in vaults. This stock would come from the preventive dehorning of his livestock.

N°18, November 2017 issue: Save the Rhino is concerned about the upsurge in poaching and attributes it to the snowball effect of the auction organised by John Hume. At the same time, John Hume deplores the insufficient number of bidders and attributes the relative failure of the auction to legal harassment by the Department of Environment which allegedly prevented or dissuaded interested people from participating.

N°25, January 2020 issue: seizure in April 2019 of 167 horns near Hartbeespoort dam. The value of the lot is estimated at 300 million rand, i.e. around 100 kilos on a 30,000 US\$/kg basis. The 2 suspects are released on bail of 1,360 US\$ and 6,800 US\$. Their names are Petrus Steyn and Clive Melville. They had been caught by the Hawks, the elite South African police force, inside a bungalow unpacking 181 horns or pieces of horns, weighing them and sorting them into packs of 3 and 5.

This issue : This issue: Petrus Steyn was sentenced to 25,000 rand (1,435 US\$) fine or 18 months in prison in case of non-payment and 18 months suspended imprisonment. Clive Melville was fined 50,000 rand (2,870 US\$) or in case of non-payment 18 months imprisonment for illegal horn transport and 3 years and 6 months suspended imprisonment for forgery of a horn transport permit. The 2 horn deliverers, whose declared incomes as a seller of used cars and spare parts for one and as a handyman in a mechanical plant hire company for the other are obviously modest, were defended by a big shot in Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape province, counsel of the Ndlovu trio who were poaching rhinos with M99, of Marnus Steyl who issued rhino hunting licences to Thai prostitutes and Morne Blignault who with his wife and his crew of mercenaries engaged in mass poaching and abalone trafficking.



Melville and Steyn

Clive Melville is related through marriage to John Hume. John Hume is entangled in this nasty business. The stock belonged to him and came from the Bidvest Protea Coin based in Centurion, Gauteng Province. The Bidvest is one of the fortresses where John Hume stores the horns from his rhino farm in the North West Province. John Hume is believed to now own 1,806 rhinos, about one tenth of South Africa's rhino population. Through his counsel, John Hume denies any wrongdoing in this case. Steyn and Melville are alleged to have acted as conveyors of the horns on behalf of a certain Rossouw who held a permit to transport the horns from Centurion to the Knox Titanium vault in Johannesburg, Gauteng Province. When they were caught by the Hawks sorting out the horns, Steyn and Melville were nevertheless heading away from Johannesburg and venturing into the North West Province, whose administration had not been informed of the transit of 181 horns. Through his private secretariat, John Hume says that he never met Allan Rossouw and that, in insisting upon a legal sale in urgency, he took the risk of losing control of the horns by entrusting them to a middleman he had never worked with before.

At last some truth in a shady file. John Hume's financial problems are common knowledge. He needs dough to avoid bankruptcy. He confirms this in an interview with the Daily Maverick in August 2019: "skyrocketing security and food costs have put my project in danger of collapse in the coming months". The tricky sale of about 100 kg horns was Hume's way to get out of the bankruptcy. Yet he claims not to have received a penny from Rossouw when the value of the batch is estimated at the very least at 3 million US\$. Through his lawyer, Hume says he was to be paid after Mr Rossouw sold the horns. Allan Rossouw would therefore only be a link in the chain and declines to comment. The Hawks believe the shipment was actually destined for Asia. "I want my horns back!", now claims John Hume, banging his fist on the table and warning that if necessary he will go to court. To be continued in n°30.

Daily Maverick, June 14, 2020 ; Department of Environmental Affairs of South Africa, June 10, 2020 ; IOL, June 23, 2020; Save the Beasts, 5 June 5, 2020 ; News24, August 22, 2017.⁸



Julien Perreaut, extracts from the "Atlas du Business des Espèces Menacées" written by Robin des Bois (2019 Editions Arthaud).

June 15, 2020 - South Africa

Conservation Letters publishes a study on the strategies of rhino keepers faced with the pressure of poaching. Work was conducted between 2015 and 2018 and therefore does not take into account the immediate and delayed effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In South Africa, 7,000 rhinos are in the hands of private owners. They are bred like productive livestock with veterinary supervision, medication and feed supplements and assured watering even in long periods of drought. The members of the PROA (Private Rhino Owners Association) were questioned by e-mail in 2015 with a follow-up in 2018. 339 members were contacted. 171 responded.

- 28 % of private rhino owners tackled the poaching epidemic by selling a large number of their animals, sometimes up to 2/3 of the herd. Described by the study as "disinvestors", most of them have at the same time increased and even more than doubled the costs of the fight against poaching. The "disinvestors" hold 30 % of the global herd. Their main income comes from the sale of live rhinos. They are financially weakened by the 75 % drop in selling prices.

- 57 % of private rhino owners have maintained their numbers despite the poaching epidemic, without any clear-cut trend to buy and sell or to preventively move their animals. Described by the study as "business-as-usual", this category has not significantly increased its anti-poaching costs. Many "business-as-usual" people derive their main income from ecotourism. The density of their herds is low. For the "business as usual" category, the rhino turn over is lesser than for the hunting safari operators or live rhino salers.

- 15 % of the owners are the bulk of the market. They own 45 % of the total private livestock. They tend to move their herds to places considered safer within South Africa or exceptionally to neighbouring countries. They are described by the study as "investors". They have not reduced the size of their herds because of the poaching epidemic. On the contrary, they have bought more rhinos by taking advantage of lower prices in auctions or private sales. "The investors" are all in favour of the legalisation of the international trade in horns. They have "deep pockets", are supported until now by the banking sector but their financial resistance is challenged by the increasingly distant prospects of total or partial resumption of legal international trade.

Clements HS, Knight M, Jones P, Balfour D. Private rhino conservation: Diverse strategies adopted in response to the poaching crisis. *Conservation Letters*. 2020;e12741.⁹

June 28, 2020

Madikwe, North West Province, South Africa

Discovery of a rhino carcass amputated of her 2 horns. A 4-year-old orphan was wandering by her side.

Save the Beats, June 28, 2020. ¹⁰

BOTSWANA

May 2020

Okavango Delta, North-West District, Botswana

The delta is in flood, poaching too. As a precaution, black rhinos are being moved. It is apparently easier to anaesthetise rhinos than poachers. However, the poachers will not let themselves lulled and will relocate their targets by following the tracks of the trucks. "The destination of the rhinos remains confidential." "All I can say is we are taking all the necessary precautions," says Cyril Taolo on behalf of the Department of Wildlife and National Parks. Among these precautions, a new preventive dehorning is likely.

The operation is being carried out thanks to the logistical means of Rhinos Without Borders, which had transferred to Botswana about 20 black rhinos threatened by poaching in South Africa. National Geographic, May 4, 2020.¹²

Early June 2020

Moremi Game Reserve, Okavango Delta, Botswana

On June 3, discovery of a rhino carcass. A few days later, the poachers shot 2 dehorned white rhinos and took the horn stubs that had grown back. Botswana Safari News, June 6, 2020.¹³

June 27, 2020

Chief's Island, Okavango Delta, Botswana

Further proof that rhinoceros dehorning is not enough to discourage poachers. Discovery of a dead rhinoceros; the poachers have torn off the horns that were just beginning to grow back. INK Centre for Investigative Journalism, June 28, 2020.¹⁴

NAMIBIA

April 13, 2020

Purros, Kunene Region, Namibia

Discovery of 2 rhinos who have been dead for 1 to 2 weeks. No arrests. However, according to the Ministry of the Environment, wildlife crime is decreasing thanks to the arrests of some gang leaders. The Covid-19 stay at home order is also believed to be contributing to the decline in poaching.

The Namibian, April 29, 2020.¹⁵

April 27, 2020

Oshivelo, Oshikoto Region, Namibia

Arrest of Samuel Kamonde and Sodomu Lazarus, accused of preparing in conspiracy the poaching of a rhino.

The Namibian, May 8, 2020.¹⁶

Week of May 25, 2020

Okahandja, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia



Four rhino poachers sentenced.

Sentencing of 3 rhino poachers:

- Fine of 80,000 N\$ (4,590 US\$) of which 40,000 N\$ (2,295 US\$) suspended, or in case of non-payment a prison sentence of 12 and a half years of which 7 years and 3 months suspended for Kandje Ngumbi.
- Fine of 58,000 N\$ (3,328 US\$) of which 29,000 N\$ (1,664 US\$) suspended, or in case of non-payment a prison sentence of 9 years of which 5.5 years suspended for Kunouwa Tjambiru and Lubasi Mufaya.

Africa Sustainable Conservation News, June 4, 2020.¹⁷

Week of May 25, 2020

Okahandja, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia



The investigation proved that Riatoorora Ndiaombe and Uapenduka Tjatjiruaije Ndiaombe had planned the poaching of a rhino in conspiracy. They are sentenced to a fine of 100,000 N\$ (5,738 US\$), of which 50,000 N\$ (2,869 US\$) are suspended, or in case of non-payment to 12 years in prison, 8 of which are suspended. Their accomplice Uatenguainja Ngumbi is sentenced to a fine of 55,000 N\$ (3,156 US\$), of which 27,500 N\$ (1,578 US\$) are suspended or, in case of non-payment, to 4 years in prison, of which 2 are suspended.

Africa Sustainable Conservation News, June 4, 2020.¹⁸

May-June 2020

Namibia

Arrests of Jackson Babi, Frizans Naululu Dumeni, Ananias Ananias, Elias Nashivela, Onesmus Haufiku, Vaaruka Musuta, Alberto Mbwale and Joseph Matheus for poaching 2 rhinos in the Gobabis district, attempting to sell 2 fresh horns in Otjiwarongo, possession of the other 2 horns in Kleine Kuppe near Windhoek, the capital city of Namibia.

Jackson Babi is the founder of the evangelical group House of Joy. He is also accused of attempting to bribe an exculpatory testimony from one of the officers responsible for investigating with 13,000 namibian dollars (745 US\$) in order to get out on bail. His lawyer is accusing the press of damaging his client's image by distributing photos and other documents relating to the investigation file. The self-proclaimed prophet's release on bail was denied. His followers filled the courtroom during the hearing. One of his accomplices was, at the time, attached to VIPP (Very Important Persons Protection). Babi had opposed the search of his home and place of worship for several hours. War-weary, he had finally given in, going upstairs on his own and downstairs again to give the policeman a plastic bag containing 2 horns straight out of a fridge.

SA People, May 31, 2020 ; The Namibian, June 10, 2020 ; New Era, June 30, 2020.¹⁹

COSTA RICA

June 4, 2020**Costa Rica**

"I don't think there are many Costa Ricans going to Africa and hunting rhinos, but there must be a few." This is how Deputy José María Villalta justified the passing of a law prohibiting Costa Rican citizens from importing and marketing trophies from sport hunting. "Most importantly, our country sends a strong signal to the world against sport hunting," noted Paola Vega, President of the Parliament's Environment Committee. The President of the Neotrópica Foundation has forced the issue: "Sport hunting has been banned in Costa Rica since 2012 and our country vigorously regulates the arms trade"; "In Costa Rica there is no economic pressure, unlike in the United States of America, where the arms trade is a constitutional right"; "This law consolidates Costa Rica's leadership role in this area."

Amelia Rueda, June 5, 2020.²⁷



FONDATION
**FRANZ
WEBER**

Early June 2020**Omaruru, Erongo Region, Namibia**

Arrest of Albert Nangolo. He is suspected of poaching a rhino in February 2020. The Namibian Sun, June 11, 2020.²⁰

June 3, 2020**Sesfontein, Kunene Region, Namibia**

Arrest of Murujani Hevita and Andani Heputi for a poaching incident in April 2020. The Namibian Sun, June 11, 2020.²¹

June 3, 2020**Orupembe, Kunene Region, Namibia**

Andani Hepute arrested for poaching a rhino in October 2015. The Namibian, June 11, 2020.²²

June 3-5-6, 2020**Outjo, Kunene Region, Namibia**

Six arrests for poaching a rhino: Jan Haodom, Kamati Tchipito Mutenha, Thomas Eino and Josef Homateni on June 3, Michael Ntsambo Jonas on June 5, and Alfred Horaseb on June 6. Seizure of a rhino horn and a vehicle.

The Namibian Sun, June 11, 2020.²³

June 26, 2020**Oshikango, Ohangwena Region, Namibia**

Arrest of Immanuel Musenge, Natnael Jonas Frans, Immanuel Shigweda and Jeremia Mukuve. Seizure of one rhino horn and a vehicle.

Between December 2018 and May 2020, 1,790 alleged poachers were arrested. Environment Minister Pohamba Shifeta attributes these good official statistics to the joint action of the Anti Poaching Unit, the NAMPOL (Namibian Police Force) and the Namibia Central Intelligent Service. Namibian Economist, June 13, 2020 ; The Namibian Sun, July 1st 2020.²⁴

ESWATINI

Around May 24, 2020**Eswatini**

After attempting to export from King Mswati III Airport 35.14 kg of horns worth an estimated 2.4 million US\$ at the time of the facts (February 2017), two Taiwanese nationals were sentenced to 11 years in prison (November 2017), see "On the Trail" n°16 p. 70 and n°19 p. 87. Hsiao Jen-se and Chen Pei-hsun, by virtue of an agreement between Eswatini and Taiwan are to be transferred to Taiwan and should receive a substantial mitigating of punishment. The offences of illegal detention, transport and attempting to smuggle horns in Taiwan are to the highest liable to 5 years in jail. Liberty Times Net, May 24, 2020.²⁵

ASIA

CHINA

April 8, 2020

Hong Kong, China

Sentencing of 2 traffickers to 26 months in prison. Customs officers found 24 rhino horns weighing 40 kg in their luggage on February 14, 2019. They were arriving from Johannesburg, South Africa. This is the harshest sentence to date for smuggling endangered species. See "On the Trail" n°24 p. 67. Government of Hong Kong, April 8, 2020.²⁸



End of April 2020

Nanchang, Jiangxi Province, China

Arrest of X. A parcel intended for him contained a rhino horn hidden in a bag of sweets. At his home, the police found 1.75 kg of pieces of rhino horn, estimated at 437,500 yuan (61.158 US\$). Chinese Customs, April 30, 2020.²⁹



INDIA

April 6, 2020

Lohore Chapori, Golaghat District, State of Assam, India

Inhabitants surprise suspicious movements. They notify the police and the forest officers. With the help of the villagers, they arrest Gagam Iko, aged 35. He was carrying 2 rifles, 30 rounds of ammunition, a dagger, a slingshot, a silencer and medicines. Two accomplices are on the run. The 3 men were planning to poach a rhino who had been out of Kaziranga National Park since February 24. The Sentinel, April 8, 2020 ; The Telegraph, April 8, 2020.³⁰

From April 7 to 14, 2020

Kaziranga National Park, Golaghat, Karbi Anglong and Nagaon Districts, State of Assam, India

Carried by the winds, the rumour settled on the hills and on the opposite bank opposite of the Brahmaputra. The Chinese think that the horn would be effective against the Covid. The poachers plot, weigh the pros, reject the cons, wait for the full moon, are wary of the full moon. All scenarios are considered. Beginners are taking up poaching. All the roads are deserted. The curious and the snitches are cooped up. The rangers are also victims of illness.

On April 11, gunfire broke the curfew. It came from Biswanath side. A guy from the Special Rhino Protect Force was hit. Two days later, 6 rascals were flushed out. They said they wanted to store horn and make a great deal of money when traffic and business recovered. Horn makes still dream.

The management of the park says that in one week 6 attempts of incursions were foiled. Not a rhino in the park (more than 400 km²) has been poached for one year.

The Hindu, April 14, 2020 ; The Times of India, April 7, 2020.³¹

GANG / REPEATED OFFENSE

May 9-June 2, 2020

Kaziranga National Park, Golaghat, Karbi Anglong and Nagaon Districts, State of Assam, India

- These ones chose the full moon. They were not armed with patched guns. Bullets from AK47s were found on the spot. The rhinoceros was discovered in the late afternoon. He had been dead for 2-3 days. His unique horn was cut short. Poachers did not lose a crumb. A manhunt is underway.



- On May 28, an attempted arrest ends badly. Mangboi Paite was shot by the police a few kilometres from Kaziranga.



- On June 2, Thapa, Lakra and Siama do not resist the police ambush. Fortunately! They were in possession of a Chinese-made hand grenade, 3 state-of-the-art firearms and 400 rounds of ammunition.

Autonomist and maoist-inspired insurgent groups are believed to be partly financing their activities with the rhino horn trade.

The Hindu, June 3, 2020 ; The Indian Express, May 10, 2020 ; The Hindustan Times, May 10, 2020.³²

SINGAPORE

April 8, 2020

Changi Airport, Singapore

In October 2019, Thurman Shiraazudin Aiden Matthews, a 44-year-old South African, met in Johannesburg a Chinese citizen who offered him to earn a little bit of money by transporting rhino horns or lion bones to Viet Nam. Recently released from prison for theft, Matthews accepts. Two Chinese women give him instructions on how to proceed. He starts by travelling from South Africa to Viet Nam via Singapore 3 times to train.

On January 4, he takes off with 2 locked suitcases and cash to buy return tickets. The suitcases contain 11 pieces of rhino horn weighing 22 kg. An accomplice had to pick them up at Ho Chi Minh airport before the X-ray screening. Matthews was to receive 20,000 rand (1,118 US\$ or 51 US\$/kg) for this service. On January 5, Singapore customs officials suspect the presence of horns in the suitcases. After assessment, it turns out that the horns come from 5 white rhinoceroses.

Turman Matthews is sentenced to 17 months in prison. This is the most severe conviction ever handed down for smuggling wildlife products.

Channel News Asia, April 8, 2020.³³



VIET NAM

June 1st, 2020

Hanoi, Viet Nam

Sentencing of Nguyen Van Pho, A Vietnamese national and expatriate construction worker in Angola, to 5 years in prison. He was arrested on November 7, 2019, at Noi Bai International Airport. His luggage contained 2 black rhino horns, weighing 1.9 kg in total, wrapped in aluminium foil. His boss, a man named Anh, is said to have asked him to transport the horns in exchange for 1.2 million dong (52 US\$).

VnExpress, June 2, 2020.³⁴



RHINOS, ELEPHANTS AND FELINES

ASIA

CHINA

June 3, 2020

Pingxiang, Jiangxi Province, China

Seizure in a shop of 10 ivory bracelets and 2 alleged tiger bones.

Chinese Customs, June 15, 2020.¹

INDIA

REPEATED OFFENSE

April 9, 2020

Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve, Erode District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

B. Sennanjan is a multi-recidivist, animal killer and arsonist. He was spotted on April 7 by a forest ranger patrol in the Gumtapuram forest area and managed to fly away. He was setting traps to capture deers or wild boars and also intended to pour poison into a water point. A special task force came to capture him today in his hiding place. A native of Chamrajanagar district in Karnataka, B. Sennanjan has a plethora of cases on his back: charged with poaching tigers and elephants in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, he is also allegedly responsible for several forest fires on the border between the two states.

The Hindu, April 11, 2020.²



VIET NAM

Early April 2020

Thach Thanh District, Thanh Hoa Province, Viet Nam

Settling of accounts between mobsters. On April 8, Thang buys 56.7 g of tiger bones for 453 US\$. On the 9th, Thang and a comrade realize that the bones are not tiger bones. On the 10th, Thang's gang lures the seller into an ambush by ordering 141.7 g of tiger bones and a piece of rhino horn. They pretend to be pleased with the merchandise. They want more and make an appointment in a motel in the country that Thang is believed to have the full enjoyment of. The salesman, accompanied by a trusted friend, arrives at Thang's place by motorbike with the new order and is caught cold by surprise by a severe beating. He admits that the tiger bones are goat bones and that the alleged fragment of rhino horn is of the same stripe. The seller is held hostage and his father agrees to go to the bank to withdraw an enormous ransom, but before reaching the bank, he tells the cops. The police storm room 304 and subdue both the fake's deliverymen and the 4 hostage-takers, 2 of whom are under the influence of hard drugs at the time of the events.

Soha.vn, April 11, 2020.³



TIGERS, LIONS, LEOPARDS, CHEETAHS, ASIAN GOLDEN CATS, LEOPARD CATS, FISHING CATS, JAGUARS, OCELOTS, PUMAS AND SERVALS



Etude of lionesses (c. 1930), Jacqueline Suzor de Panafieu (1903-1981)

"On the Trail" n°29

The value of felines or felines parts on the black market, according to media or official sources
The values were estimated at the time of the seizures

Animal	Part	US\$	Country	Ref. (year)
Amur tiger	Skin and almost complete skeleton	170,000	China (Jiangsu)	4 (2020)
Lion	Skeleton	1,700 - 2,870	South Africa	21 (2020)
	Skin	4,500	Tanzania	31 (2017)
Leopard	Skin	9,240	India (Odisha)	57 (2020)
		2,640 - 3,960	India (Odisha)	59 (2020)
		1,320	India (Chhattisgarh)	60 (2020)

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

End of April 2020

Brownsville, State of Texas, United States of America. Border with Mexico.

Seizure by a border patrol in the bag of 3 illegal immigrants from Mexico of a dehydrated and feverish Bengal tiger (42°C / 107.6°F). Aged 3 to 4 months, "he was on death's doorstep" according to the veterinarian at Brownsville Zoo where he was urgently transferred. A few weeks later, he had doubled in weight and his survival (in captivity) is assured.

Nation and State, May 1st 2020.¹



FAMILY AFFAIRS

June 2020

State of Oklahoma, United States of America

The saga of "Tiger King" alias "Joe Exotic", whose real name is Maldonado-Passage, star of Netflix during the first Covid lockdown, is not finished (cf. "On the Trail" n°28 p. 74). Justice orders him to transfer ownership of his zoo, the Greater Wynnewood Exotic Animal Park, and all its utilities except for the animals to Carole Baskin, director of the Big Cat Rescue Center in Florida. Maldonado is now in prison for hiring a hitman whose mission was to kill Carole Baskin. In 2013, the Florida courts ordered Maldonado-Passage to pay 1 million US\$ to Baskin for usurping the logo and other communication visuals of the Big Cat Rescue Center. (...)



(...) "Joe Exotic", who was not yet Netflix's "Tiger King", had prior to the judgment organized his insolvency by transferring his zoo to his mother. The new ruling orders Jeff Lowe, acting manager of the Greater Wynnewood Exotic Animal Park, to vacate the zoo's 7 hectares and empty the cages of all animals within 120 days. Maldonado-Passage is 57 years old. Taking into account his "exemplary" behavior in prison and the sentences for animal trafficking, animal cruelty and attempted murder which are running concurrently, he is expected to be released around 2030 and perhaps have the time and fighting spirit to write a new chapter in the Netflix series watched by 64 million viewers in April 2019.

DPA, June 2, 2020 ; AFP, June 3, 2020 ; Daily Mirror, June 27, 2020.²

MEXICO

May 20, 2020

San Pedro Tlaquepaque, State of Jalisco, Mexico

The status of 2 small Bengal tiger cubs aged 10 months and 2 years and a few months is examined by the Profepa (Procuraduria Federal de Protección al Ambiente). They do not show any obvious signs of mistreatment. The "owner" does not have the capacity to care for the felines, nor the regulatory management plan to guarantee their safety and public safety.

Profepa, May 20, 2020.³

ASIA

CHINA

April 14, 2020

Danyang, Jiangsu Province, China

Six armed policemen protected by bullet-proof vests arrested at 6am in the carpark of a hotel 2 men who were arriving from Haicheng, 1500 km to the north, after driving all night. Inside the car there was a tiger skin and his almost complete skeleton. Yang and Wang wanted to sell the whole thing for 1.2 million yuan, or 170,000 US\$. They say that the skin and bones of the Amur tiger were bought 8 years ago in Russia for the equivalent of 6,500 US\$. Sina, June 24, 2020.⁴



INDIA

April 11, 2020

Burhanpur, Burhanpur District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

T 23 was the victim of poaching. He had settled in the Ambabarva sanctuary which is now part of the Melghat Tiger Reserve. The forest police arrested a guard, Diwakar Sharma, and got their hands on several paws of T23. "We are also looking into others who set afire the carcass."

In Akot, Maharashtra, the managers of the Melghat Tiger Reserve, sing a different tune. "Rupchand alias Bondriya Buddha from Pangari, and Jyoti alias Gutali Barela from Dantpahadi have been arrested." "Tiger body parts including nails, teeth and canines, tail, part of vertebra etc have been seized from Buddha".

The Times of India, April 16, 2020.⁵



April 13, 2020

Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary, Wayanad District, State of Kerala, India

Her death was initially described by the forest services as "natural". In fact, the death of the 5-6 year old tigress was the fruit of human violence. Her territory straddled the Bandipur Tiger Reserve in Karnataka and the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary in Kerala. From December 2019 to March 2020, she was photographed 13 times by a camera-trap in the Bandipur reserve. An early March shot shows a severe infection around her neck. This is proof of her strangulation by a metal or nylon trap and her iron will to extricate herself from it. The analysis of the photographs was performed by experts from the NTCA (National Tiger Conservation Authority). She died a month later in the Wayanad sanctuary. Traps are a running sore. Humans' incessant poaching breaks the food chains of large predators and throw them into famine. For the tigers, it's a double punishment, they have nothing to eat and through travelling more kilometres than before in their quest for food, they fall into traps. "On the Trail" notes that the 5 to 10 years-old generation is the most affected by this calamity, which will inevitably reduce the reproduction rate of the endangered species in the coming decades.

New Indian Express, April 22, 2020 ; The Hindu, April 13, 2020.⁶



© Express

April 8, 15 and 23, 2020

Anamalai Tiger Reserve, Coimbatore District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Arrest of P. Rasu, C. Karuppasamy, D. Vellingiri and M. Murugan after the poisoning of 2 tigers, a male and a female both aged about 10 years old. They had half devoured the carcass of a wild boar soaked with pesticides. The tigress was found in the bed of a river. The tiger a little further downstream. The teeth, claws and paws were intact. The 4 farm workers say they acted in retaliation after a tiger deadly attacked a calf in December 2019. After the autopsies, the bodies were burnt in the presence of the Chief Conservator of Coimbatore Forests and NGO representatives. The death of the 2 tigers is a hard blow for the reserve which covers almost 1000 km². Two guards and a watcher were suspended for negligence.

The Hindu, April 9, 2020 ; The Times of India, April 10, 18, 21 and 24, 2020.⁷

**GANG**

End of April 2020

Corbett and Rajaji Tiger Reserves, State of Uttarakhand, Pilibhit and Dudhwa Tiger Reserves, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Look out for everyone who is in charge with the tiger's protection ! Several Bawaria clans specialising in traditional poaching, tanning and marketing of tiger skins and other tiger products have left their settlements in Haryana and Punjab and resumed an itinerant life since the end of March and the establishment of the Covid-19 lockdown. The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) warned the managers of Jim Corbett and Rajaji tiger reserves and habitats. The WCCB staff deplores the fact that in these circumstances, the collection of information and intelligence is paralysed.

Another factor complicates the monitoring : migrants working in the towns return to the villages by their own means via the forest paths and poachers can quietly mingle with them. The recommended distancing measures between members of all communities give suspects a perfect excuse not to be checked or searched. During the distribution of masks, gloves and other anti-Covid devices, members of the nomadic Van Gujjar tribe were informed of the obligation to report to the forest service any arrival of relative or guest in their circles.

The Times of India, May 1st 2020.⁸

May 3, 2020

Jari, Amroha District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

The 5-year-old tiger crossed the boundaries of the reserve. He was accused of attacking 3 bystanders or farmers. His presence froze all activity along the banks of the canal and in the village. He fell into an ambush. He was beaten with iron bars. The ribs, one after the other, were fractured. Internal bleeding followed. He was senseless when the veterinarians who rushed to the scene anaesthetised him 3 or 4 times with a syringe gun. He died 15 minutes later and Kaushalendra Singh, a wildlife activist based in Lucknow, says the tiger was killed with an overdose of tranquilizers. The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) appointed a representative to attend the autopsy. There are less than 3,000 tigers left in India. The country extends over 3.287 million km² and is home to more than 1.3 billion people.

The Times of India, May 4, 5 and 10, 2020.⁹

May 14, 2020

Ranthambore National Park, Sawai Madhopur District, State of Rajasthan, India

T47 has been reported missing for 4 months. T42 as well. In their territories, hidden cameras have captured photos of poachers. For Dharmendra Khandal, biologist and animal advocate, such late reports of disappearance only serve to save the face of the authorities. "The forest administration should carry out serious and active patrolling to trace these missing tigers."

Since 2009, the park has mysteriously lost 30 tigers including 23 subadults. Eleven of them were tigresses. They are not in the habit of coming out of their forest to try to establish a new territory for themselves. The edges of the park are fertile and colonised without a management and land use plan by human activities.

The Times of India, May 14, 2020.¹⁰

June 4, 2020

Kurai, Seoni District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Seizure by the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau of a canine, 2 claws and 8 whiskers and arrest of 3 people who were using them for black magic purposes.

WCCB, June 9, 2020.¹¹

June 10, 14 and 16, 2020

Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve, Chandrapur District, State of Maharashtra, India



It was the discovery of the carcass of a tigress near a roadway in the buffer zone of the reserve that first alerted the forest rangers. The animal did not bear any traces of wounds. The patrols have located later two of her cubs, aged around one year old, also dead, as well as two monkeys, common langurs (*Semnopithecus entellus*, Appendix I). The third tiger cub could not be found. The investigation then focused on the possibility of poisoning, and following interrogations in the surrounding villages, it led to the arrest on June 16 of Suryabhan Thakre, Shrawan Madavi and Narendra Dadmal from Kondegaon village. The 3 men confessed to having set up a clandestine mahua flower distillery (*Madhuca longifolia*, see "On the Trail", Covid-19 Special Edition, page 5) in the forest. They feared the attacks of the tigress who prowled nearby. For the safety of their business, they poured an insecticide, Thimet, on molasses of mahua flowers. A wild boar and 2 common langurs were poisoned. The distillers cut up the boar's carcass and scattered pieces of meat soaked with Thimet. The trap closed around the tiger's family attracted by the meat. The 3 men were charged and taken into custody. The administration of the reserve is also on the grill for not having detected anything about their clandestine activities.

The Times of India, June 11, 15, 17, 18 and 19 ; The Indian Express, June 18, 2020.¹²

GANG

June 26, 2020

Khatima, Udham Singh Nagar District, State of Uttarakhand, India

Arrest of Mohammad Shahid alias Shahida. He is accused of poaching a tiger in the Pilibhit Tiger Reserve in 2014 with the help of 4 members of the Bawaria tribe he had met during his time at Haldwani prison owing to a shady distillery business. He was about to flee to Nepal with his buddy Shaqir when he was arrested by a forest brigade.

The Times of India, June 28, 2020.¹³

TIGERS - followed

INDONESIA

May 18, 2020

Siak Regency, Riau Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

The Sumatran tiger, about 2 years old, died of thirst after a week of agony. A front paw was crushed in a jaw trap. A pig carcass tied to the trap lured the tiger into the risk area near an oil palm plantation.

The Jakarta Post, May 19, 2020.¹⁴



June 29, 2020

Kapa Seusak, South Aceh Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Death of a 2 to 3 year old female in an industrial plantation. Poisoning is suspected. "Parts of the tongue turned purplish, presumably due to insecticide poisoning" according to the Unsyiah Faculty of Veterinary Medicine.

The Jakarta Post, July 1st, 2020.¹⁵



End of June 2020

Batang Gadis National Park, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Exhumation following confidential information of one tiger's body. Some of the pelt has been scrapped off and other parts have been amputated. A village chief says that the poisoning was orchestrated by cattle breeders in retaliation for an attack on livestock.

AFP, June 29, 2020.¹⁶



A Sumatran tiger was born in the Wroclaw Zoo in Poland of a mother aged 7 and a father aged 11. According to the Indonesian Ministry of Environment and Forestry, there are 402 Sumatran tigers declared in captivity worldwide, 130 in Indonesia and the rest in Europe, Australia, the United States of America and Japan. The wild Sumatran tiger population in Indonesia is said to be of the same order. The Jakarta Post, July 29, 2020.¹⁷

VIET NAM

March 2019 - July 2020

Viet Nam

Within 18 months, seizures of 720 of tiger teeth, skins, claws, bones, skulls and tails, as well as 17 frozen tiger cubs and 3 live tigers.

ENV, July 29, 2020.¹⁸

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

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

May 1st, 2020

Hartebeesfontein, North West Province, South Africa

Search of a house. Seizure of mandrax tablets, dagga packets and 3 lion skins.

SAPS, May 3, 2020.¹⁹



Mid-May 2020

Alldays, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Slippers, 72 years old, is not a newcomer to the press and the SPCA. About ten years ago, he tried to buy 2 white rhinos to organise fake hunts for Vietnamese people whose only interest would have been to take the 4 horns back home. In 2015, 2016, 2018 and 2020, images of his skinny lions were displayed on the networks. His breeding farm is put into winding-up. The lions escape through the open fences. There are two left. Slippers allegedly feeds them a giraffe every 3 weeks. The NSPCA is drafting a complaint against him for violation of the APA (Animal Protection Act, 1972). "In the absence of national norms and standards for the captive keeping and breeding of big cats for commercial purposes, sadly animal cruelty and issues of neglect are rife in this industry." "Considering there are at least 8,000 lions in captivity in South Africa, but probably many more, the scale of such welfare issues is of huge concern," says Dr Louise de Waal, spokesperson for the NGO Blood Lions. Despite the facts and protests, the Limpopo administration has so far renewed the breeding licence of Slippers. The dismal dollar windfall from the international bone trade is on the sky-line.

Blood Lions, May 13, 2020.²⁰

"Volunteers pay to feed and cuddle these cubs under the pretext that they are contributing towards predator rehabilitation and future release back into the wild. The volunteer programmes that feed revenue and free labour into many of these lion farms 'entice people, often young students who believe they are making a worthy conservation contribution.' A volunteer in a breeding farm has to pay between 400 and 600 US\$ per week to help feed the cubs and maintain the facilities. Dr Ross Harvey's study on battery farming of lions in South Africa throws a harsh light on the exploiters of public credulity that members of the South African Predator Association (SAPA) are.

The cubs are presented as orphans and visitors pay a minimum of 5 US\$ to give them a bottle and a maximum of 170 US\$ during the 6 hours of a business day to bottle-feed them or have other emotional and tactile interactions with the felines. They believe they are saving them, they are preparing their early death. When the time of bottle-feeding is over at around 6 months, the cubs are walked on a leash by tourists or so-called educational volunteers. When they are armed with their fangs and claws and the relics of their aggressiveness and survival instinct, they are transferred to hunting enclosures and shot to death by expatriate hunters who will take back home the Grail of the intrepid lion hunter, a trophy with a mane, a skin or at least a tail, or they are slaughtered for the benefit of the bone sector. The skeleton of a lion sells for between 30,000 and 50,000 rand (1,700-2,870 US\$) at the farm exit.

There are an estimated 8,000 lions in captivity in South Africa spread throughout 366 establishments. These figures could be higher. There has never been a detailed inventory of the captive lion industry.

Ross Graeme Harvey, Towards a cost-benefit analysis of South Africa's captive predator breeding industry, Global Ecology and Conservation, Volume 23, 2020, e01157.²¹

May 17, 2020

Dundee, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Lions are said to have escaped from an enclosure through a breach opened by "saboteurs". Seven were recovered. Another became the pet peeve around Dundee and Nquthu. The Minister of Economic Development and Tourism of KwaZulu-Natal granted a licence to kill after a few months. The case was settled today by a farmer who witnessed a lion on the run attacking one of his cows. Dispatch Live, May 19, 2020.²²

Early June 2020

Timbavati Private Nature Reserve, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Rescue just in the nick of time of a lioness caught in a trap for several days and cruelly scarred.

Provet Animal Hospital, June 4, 2020.²³



KENYA

April 12 and 19, 2020

Ol Kinyei Conservancy and Masai Mara National Reserve, Kenya

Hot and cold for the lions. A large male was freed from the iron collar that was strangling him (favourable prognosis) and another was found dead with his spinal cord pierced by a spear. He was not forgiven by his killers for having gone 800 m beyond the administrative limits of the park. SWT/KWS, April 2020.²⁴

LIONS - followed

April 13, 2020

Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya

A dead lioness was brought for autopsy by the Big Life Foundation rangers to the KWS station: she was deeply wounded by a projectile weapon in her rib cage. She died from internal bleeding.
SWT/KWS, April 2020.²⁵

May 9, 2020

Masai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya

A patrol spotted a lion cub at the top of a tree and watched by hyenas lying in wait. It is decided to do nothing in the hope that the mother will return. After 2 days, he comes down on his own. He is chased by hyenas. He has no chance of escape. The rangers intervene and anaesthetise him before transferring him to the orphanage in Nairobi.
SWT/KWS, May 2020.²⁶

May 9, 2020

Oltiasika, on the edge of Chyulu Hills National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya

The lion died from 10 deep wounds inflicted by the spears of 2 Masai poachers. The tail and paws were amputated. They were found in the village.
SWT/KWS, May 2020.²⁷

May 11, 2020

Tsavo West National Park, Kenya

Discovery of a dead lioness. According to the post-mortem examination, poisoning is likely.
SWT/KWS, May 2020.²⁸



June 23, 2020

Kiboko, Makueni County, Kenya

A lion was accused of attacking domestic herds near Masimba township along the Nairobi-Mombasa expressway. He was anaesthetised from a helicopter and transported 250 km further into the western part of Tsavo National Park.
SWT/KWS, June 2020.²⁹

June 15-Early July 2020

Solio Game Reserve, Nyeri County, Meru National Park, Meru County, Kenya

- Translocation after anaesthesia of 30 lions and lion cubs from the Solio Conservancy to Meru and Tsavo National Parks in order to reduce conflicts with pastoral activities.

- The translocation of 17 lions to Meru is problematic. A female trying to identify her new territory attacked a goat near Kinnah. Surrounded, she bit a shepherd in the face. A KWS team hastened to the scene to capture her, relocate her and free her. The villagers were evacuated from the area. She was chased for 2 hours and just as she was about to be anaesthetised with a hypodermic gun, she jumped on a ranger. He was forced to shoot at the very moment. Self-defence was no longer in doubt. She died instantly.

SWT/KWS, June and July 2020.³⁰

TANZANIA

End of June 2020

Manyoni District, Singida Region, Tanzania



In the night of October 2, 2017, on the road between Bahi and Dodoma, Thadei Antony, alias Ndahani, was arrested in possession of a lion skin estimated at 4,500 US\$ and a ratel (*Mellivora capensis*, Appendix III in Botswana) skin estimated at 300 US\$. Thadei was facing two charges with illegal possession of government trophies and two charges with trophy trafficking. He was sentenced to 20 years in prison on each of the 4 charges. The sentences run concurrently.
Daily News, June 28, 2020.³¹

ZAMBIA

Mid-June - Mid-August 2020

Nsumbu National Park, Northern Province, Zambia



Respite for the lions thanks to 14 men who, for 2 months, combed almost 1,500 hectares of the Itigi forest and removed 128 traps.
Lion Recovery Fund, August 15, 2020.³²



ASIA

PAKISTAN

May 4, 2020

Khushalgarh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan

Seizure on Monday night of a caged lion cub near the oil refinery. The owner Raheel Sheikh is claiming that he has received him as a gift from an unknown people.

Dawn, May 6, 2020.³³

EUROPE

FRANCE

June-July 2020

Vironvay, Department of Eure, France

- Seizure in the trucks of the Cirque de Paris of a starved, ageless lion, claws cut off, with shaven teeth, a kind of bony plush without battery and hairless. From behind, he looks like a zebu entering the slaughterhouse in a war torn country, and from the front he looks like a broken mechanical toy.



But, taken in charge by the Tonga Terre d'Accueil shelter, he has gained 20 kg in 2 weeks. He looks more and more like a lion. The seizure was carried out by the OFB (French Biodiversity Office) accompanied by the gendarmerie forces and at the request of the public prosecutor and the prefect of the department. Damning documents on the condition of Jon had been gathered over the past two years by the French and Nantes-based association One Voice. Carers from the Natuurhulpcentrum based in Belgium assisted One Voice in the first days of his liberation. Jon's future has not yet been agreed upon. One of the options would be to transfer him under the responsibility of the NGO Born Free to a secure enclosure in South Africa. The forthcoming trial for illegal possession of a wild animal, mistreatment and cruelty to animals will hopefully allow to reconstruct the tragic downward spiral that turned Jon from the lion cub he was into the scarred lion he is.

- At the start of July, the circus convoy was stopped near the border with Belgium and the last 4 lions of the Cirque de Paris were seized, rescued from a fatal roaming and placed under the responsibility of One Voice in the shelter where Jon is gradually perking up.



La Dépêche de Louviers, June 5, 2020 ; One Voice, June 10 and 23, 2020 ; Tonga Terre d'Accueil, June 11, 2020 ; The Sun, July 8, 2020.³⁴

RUSSIA

Early June 2020

Chapurniky, Volgograd Oblast, Russia

Discovery in the baggage compartment of a bus connecting Makhachkala on the shore of the Caspian Sea in Dagestan to Moscow (1,800 km and 23 hours drive) of a lion cub aged about 1 month and a half shut in a wooden box pierced with a few holes. The driver and passengers deny any responsibility. In the unsanitary conditions he was in, he would not have made it to Moscow unless someone had given him a bottle of milk during some stops. He was adopted by a circus that halted in Volgograd. The press is delighted that he could become a star thanks to the good care and training of the Dovgalyuk family.

V1RU, June 4, 2020.³⁵



LEOPARDS - *Panthera pardus*, Appendix I

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

End of June 2020

Pretoria, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Pastor Gerhard Steyn does not hesitate to inoculate children with the sin of pride and cruelty towards the creatures of his God.

Revolution Rov International, June 28, 2020.³⁶



CAMEROON

April 3 and 4, 2020

Kyé-Ossi, South Region, Cameroon. Border with Equatorial Guinea and Gabon.

The four traffickers have been arrested. The international leopard skin transaction failed thanks to the Ntem Valley Forest Police and Ambam law enforcement officials with technical assistance from the NGO LAGA.

Ofir Drori, April 5, 2020 ; Camer.be, April 15, 2020.³⁷

NAMIBIA

April 27, 2020

Katutura, Khomas Region, Namibia

Seizure of a leopard skin in the hands of Isaacs Tony Albertus.

The Namibian Sun, May 8, 2020.³⁸

April 29, 2020

Okahandja, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

Seizure of a leopard skin, bones and the vehicle.

Arrest of Fulgentius Musimba Kandjimi.

The Namibian Sun, May 8, 2020.³⁹

Week of May 4, 2020

Oshakati, Oshana Region, Namibia

Seizure of a leopard skin. The man was released on bail of 600 US\$. Upcoming trial.

The Namibian, May 3, 2020.⁴⁰

SENEGAL

Early June 2020

Tambacounda, Tambacounda Region, Senegal

Arrest in a restaurant by local police and National Park officers of 2 men in possession of 4 leopard skins, including one of a leopard cub under one year of age and in addition of 2 crocodile skins (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II). All 6 animals were reportedly poached in the Niokolo Koba park. EAGLE Senegal was supporting the operation.

EAGLE, June 12, 2020 ; Dakaractu, June 12, 2020.⁴¹



ZIMBABWE

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Week of June 22, 2020

Hwange District, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe



Sentencing of Amos Moyo to 12 months imprisonment suspended for 5 years on probation for trapping and killing a leopard. Amos claims to have acted in retaliation after suffering the loss of a goat and identifying nearby the feline's tracks. The capture almost ended badly for the "vigilante". As he leaned over the victim to finish him off with an axe, the leopard, in a last gasp, scratched him in the face. To justify the relatively lenient verdict, the court highlighted the poacher's advanced age. His 20-year-old nephew Perfect Ndimande then helped him carry the body home. He was sentenced to a 2-month suspended prison sentence and a fine of 1,200 US\$ or a 4-month prison sentence if not paid by July 31. Two other members of the family were spared from being charged on the grounds that they had only had an auxiliary role in the final skinning of the leopard and in the preparation of the skin.

The Chronicle, June 26, 2020.⁴²

June 25, 2020

Victoria Falls National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe



A patrol spotted a leopard with reduced mobility. And for good reason : her chest was compressed to the point of asphyxiation by the hoop of a trap. A cage with meat bait was placed nearby. The female entered it a few days later. She was straight afterwards freed from her stranglehold and treated by a dozen rescuers mobilised by the Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust before being released.

Victoria Falls Anti Poaching Unit, June 26, 2020.⁴³

ASIA

INDIA

April 2, 2020

Khud Hanjipora, Kulgam District, Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir, India

The leopard is accused of attacking 7 people around the village. He was surrounded, cornered and beaten to death with sticks and partially skinned. According to a local belief, flaps of leopard skin placed under the pillows of newborns keep evil forces away. It is also believed to cure insomnia.

Deccan Herald, April 3, 2020; Greater Kashmir, April 5, 2020; The Tribune, April 4, 2020.⁴⁴



April 11, 2020

Madhupuri, Moradabad District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

A leopard was spotted by villagers. He was adrift on the Kaukhal River. The forest services brought him back to shore. The body had its legs bound by a rope. The autopsy revealed open wounds and fractures. A bullet was also found in the flesh. The leopard was probably lynched. He is the 7th leopard in this month to meet a violent death in the district. The Times of India, April 13, 2020.⁴⁵

FAMILY AFFAIRS

April 15, 18 and 20, 2020

Kinwat Tehsil, Nanded District, State of Maharashtra, India



Poisoning in quick succession of 2 leopards, a male and a female aged about 2 and 3 years. Arrest of Ramaji Namdev Barge, 30 years old, Govardhan Roopsinh Rathod, 50 years old, and his son Pradeep, 23 years old. The first two were released on bail, the third, who stole teak from the farm where he was a day labourer, remains in custody. On April 12, another leopard was poisoned in the neighbouring district of Aurangabad. Wildlife experts and regional NGOs express their indignation. According to Kishor Pathak, "it is outrageous. Three young leopards lost their lives within a week and all three deaths have been attributed to human atrocities. Nobody should be spared".

The Times of India, April 19 and 21, 2020.⁴⁶

April 18 and 23, 2020

Ahomgaon, Golaghat District, State of Assam, India



Photos of a dead leopard posted on WhatsApp led the police to the village where the poachers were supposed to be. The inhabitants were not very cooperative, but the officers were able to follow footsteps and find the carcass buried in a pit the day before. The feline's two hind legs, skin, tail, claws and fangs had been cut off and taken away. A few days later, Junmon Gogoi, Raktim Gogoi, Thagiram Gogoi and Nitya Nand Saikia were arrested and charged.

The Hindustan Times, April 19 and 25, 2020.⁴⁷

April 23, 2020

Majra and Dhaniyabeli, Bahraich District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Nine people are heard by the police after the lynching of 2 leopards. Sanjay Pathak, director of the Dudhwa reserve, believes that the 2 barbaric acts were completely unfounded. The 3-year-old female, besieged and beaten with spears and other edged weapons, wounded an assailant in self-defence, and the leopard cub under one year of age killed with stick blows was clearly incapable of having attacked 3 people as claimed by the villagers. "The killings have taken place during the Covid-19 lockdown. Many villagers living outside have returned to their villages. They may be intolerant to the wildlife," said a forest official. The Times of India, April 23, 24 and 25, 2020.⁴⁸

GANG

April 25, 2020

Khairi, Amravati District, State of Maharashtra, India



The discovery in a field near the village of a male leopard of about 3 years old with his right hind leg caught in a jaw trap was taken very seriously by the forest administration, which deployed its investigators. This type of trap is used by poaching gangs to capture tigers. A few days later, Pradeep Pawar, Shridhar Bhosale, Sunil Pawar, Sudhakar Pawar, Dildas alias Champu Bhosale, and Atmaram Bhosale (all inhabitants of the village and members of the Pardhi tribe known to be skilled in hunting) were arrested by the forest guards. During the searches, two live quails (family Phasianidae), one Indian peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) leg and a Bengal monitor lizard (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I) skin were seized. The Times of India, April 25 and 30, 2020.⁴⁹

May 7, 9 and 12, 2020

Tikri, Panchkula District, State of Haryana, India

The monkeys' alarm calls resonated all night long and in the early morning, in the restored silence, the villagers panicked when hearing a feline snarling coming closer. One leopard was finally spotted at the bottom of a dry water tank. After the anaesthesia, the rescuers descended via bamboo ladders and brought him to the surface. It was then discovered that he had an amputated paw after being caught by a jaw trap and breaking out of it in desperation a few days before. Taken to Pipli Zoo, he died 48 hours later.

The gram panchayats (village councils) in the district have been instructed to once again inform the villagers that setting kuduki (traps in the local dialect) is prohibited and punished.

The Hindustan Times, May 7, 2020 ; The Indian Express, May 9 and 12, 2020.⁵⁰

LEOPARDS - followed

May 11, 2020

Jahanabad, Bijnor District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Release of a 3-month-old leopard cub. He had fallen into a trap near a cemetery next to the village and near the Ganges River. The forest police were informed by someone in the village. When they arrived on the spot, there was a large crowd around the scene. "We have released it into jungle area so that it can go back to its mother who seems to be around the spot where cub was trapped". "We have appealed to villagers not to harm the big cat family".

The Times of India, May 12, 2020.⁵¹



May 12, 2020

Jeolikote, Nainital District, State of Uttarakhand, India

The leopard trail is well known to the trapper(s). This is the 3rd time in 2 years that a leopard has been fooled in the same place. This time, the body is in too poor condition to assess its age and sex. The death is thought to go back to more than a month. It is also difficult to know whether the claws, paws, whiskers or other organs have been taken by men for trade. The first dwelling is 300 m from the macabre and stinking discovery.

The Times of India, May 13, 2020.⁵²



May 20, 2020

Nanjarayapatna, Kodagu District, State of Karnataka, India

The male leopard, believed to be 6 years old, was found dead in a tea plantation. His efforts to get out of a trap for wild boars only precipitated his pain and death.

The Times of India, May 21, 2020.⁵³



May 24, 2020

Gehunwada, Dungarpur District, State of Rajasthan, India

Some villagers heard this morning the growls of a male captured by a snare trap. They informed the Punali and Mandav forest officers, but by the time they reached the site the leopard had already lost too much blood trying to free himself. He died on the spot.

The Times of India, May 25, 2020.⁵⁴



FAMILY AFFAIRS

June 4, 2020

Chhota Udepur, Chhota Udepur District, State of Gujarat, India

Arrest of Dayabhai Vankar and his nephew Jayantibhai Vankar. They had a leopard skin in their home which they used to organise rites upon the request of their customers. Sitting on the skin and mumbling magic formulas, they were supposed to make banknotes fall from the sky. Superstition is still lying around in the countryside. It was particularly active before, during and after the demonetising campaign in 2016, which had caused panic. The 2 builders of false hopes and false currency say they acquired the skin in Madhya Pradesh.

The Indian Express, June 5, 2020.⁵⁵

June 7, 2020

Guwahati, Kamrup Metropolitan District, State of Assam, India

Lynching, pulling teeth, parade through the village, cheers and applause. According to the forest services' findings, the tortured victim had done absolutely nothing wrong. No material or physical damage was attributed to him. There is a French saying which goes : "when you want to kill your dog, you accuse him of having rabies". In India, when you want to kill the leopard, you accuse him of being mad. Weakened by a diet according to the first post-mortem results, he had moved closer to the urban outskirts, tangled up in a rope's trap and returned to his forest. He was tortured to death in his home.

The Indian Express, June 8, 2020.⁵⁶



June 8, 2020

Giripuja Forest, Nayagarh District, State of Odisha, India

Pratap Kumar Nayak and Kishore Chandra Dehury (art school teacher) had an appointment in the forest with the buyer of 2 leopard skins and 2 chital skins (*Axis axis*). They hoped to get 700,000 rupees (9,240 US\$) for each leopard skin and 100,000 rupees (1,320 US\$) for each chital skin. The buyer wanted to decorate his house. It was the special task force of Crime branch that actually showed up after hearing about the transaction. The 2 traffickers claim to have bought the skins from a poacher for a few thousand rupees. Investigators detected bullet impacts on one of the leopard skins while the second bore the scars of a snare trap.

The Times of India, June 8, 2020.⁵⁷



June 10, 2020

Shirshi Forest, Chandrapur District, State of Maharashtra, India

A leopard caught in a net tried to extricate himself with his vital force. In the end and before rescuers arrived, he died of suffocation. The net, according to the forest guards' report, had been set by an unknown poacher to capture a herbivore, either a wild boar or a sambar deer.

The Times of India, June 11, 2020.⁵⁸



LEOPARDS - followed

June 12 and 17, 2020

Jamuganda, Nayagarh District, State of Odisha, India

Laxmidhar Nayak is under lock and key. He was in possession of 2 skins that he was trying to sell for 200,000 and 300,000 rupees, or 2,640 and 3,960 US\$. About 30 bones were also seized from his home. It looks bad for an elected member of the local panchayat. A 50-year-old accomplice placed in solitary confinement in the Covid-19 quarantine centre in Baunsagada was arrested 5 days later. He lives in the same village as the main defendant. The Hindu, June 13, 2020 ; Outlook India, June 14, 2020 ; The New Indian Express, June 17, 2020.⁵⁹

June 17, 2020

Barula, Raipur District, State of Chhattisgarh, India

Ramnath Netam killed the leopard by poisoning his water hole. Then he teared the skin with a machete, sprinkled the skin with salt, crushed and burnt the leopard's teeth, claws and all other remains. He placed the skin to dry under a small tree and then hid it under a rock while waiting to sell it. He had decided on the price: 100,000 rupees (1,320 US\$). It is 1.16 m long, without the tail, and 33 cm wide. He was arrested by plainclothes forest officers. The Times of India, June 18, 2020.⁶⁰



June 19, 2020

Neri, Shimla District, State of Himachal Pradesh, India

Sometimes inclined to listen to fibs, the forest officers had stopped at the hypothesis of a fight between individuals of the same or different species to explain the discovery of a dead leopard, aged about 2 to 3 years, near an access road to the village. People claimed too they heard groans and roars for hours, which testified to a life-and-death fight between 2 wild animals. The post-mortem revealed that the victim bore traces of gunpowder on his body, in particular on a wound on his neck. A search of the alleged crime scene may enable to find stray bullets and cartridges. The Indian Express, June 19, 2020.⁶¹

June 26, 2020

Chalti, Champawat District, State of Uttarakhand, India

Ajay Tamta and Kushal Mehra were leaving on the road from Champawat district to Udham Singh Nagar district. Seizure of 2 skins measuring 2.5m and 2.25m long.

The Times of India, June 27, 2020.⁶²

June 30, 2020

Shuklabhata, Raipur District, State of Chhattisgarh, India

New poisoning of a leopard. This is the second time in 10 days that the police have intervened in the city to seize a skin and arrest its holder. The skin is 2.08 m long from head to tail. Buduram Gond says he poisoned the waterhole where the leopard used to water.

The Hindustan Times, July 1st, 2020.⁶³



Leopard mother with her two cubs in the Masai Mara reserve, Kenya. Picture Martha de Jong-Lantink.

May, June and July 2020**Sri Lanka**

- A black leopard died from his neck injuries in the Udawalawa Veterinary Clinic, 3 days after being extracted from a noose of trap in a tea plantation. His black coat due to a genetic abnormality had been reported by a hidden camera shot in October 2019 and aroused the enthusiasm of naturalists and wildlife protectors. Today, his death is arousing consternation and anger. A suspect who set the trap was arrested and released on bail. The NGO Justice for Animals and Nature has filed a civil suit "to ensure that the voices of both the dead animal and animal lovers are heard and that people responsible for the death of the black leopard are brought to justice."



The DWC (Department of Wildlife Conservation) is said to have at its disposal information on the trafficking of leopard parts supported by the Chinese community for the needs of traditional medicine. Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa is asking his services to take all necessary measures to protect wildlife. Leopards in Sri Lanka are believed to belong to the subspecies *Panthera pardus kotiya*.

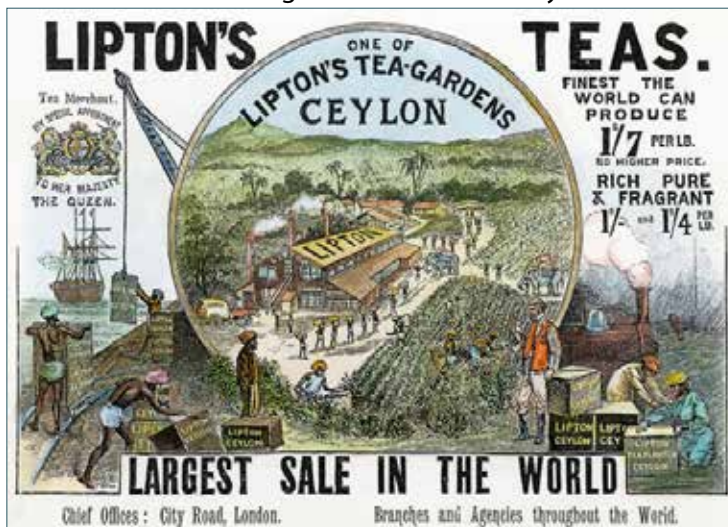
- June 2, 2020. Discovery of a leopard strangled in a trap inside a cashew plantation on the edge of Neluwa Forest Reserve, Galle District, Southern Province.

- On June 23, 2020 in Pussellawa, Central Province, a female leopard died after a few hours of desperate efforts to extricate herself from a trap in a tea plantation. Her cub who survived the ambush was released back into the wild by order of the Nawalapitiya court. The DWC assures that the area where he was released will be continually monitored by its agents.

- July 22, 2020, a female leopard was found hanging from a tree by a new trap bastard. She was about 7 years old.



The leopard curse dates back to the last century when the hills in the centre of the island were cleared and converted into tea plantations. The paths of the felines and other wild animals were fragmented and reduced to narrow corridors quickly identified by poachers and infested with traps. Leopards are caught at night and die within the following hours before unlikely rescuers come to release them.



According to data from the Wilderness and Wildlife Conservation Trust (WWCT), 47 leopards have been caught in traps in the last 10 years and 42 have died. Setting traps is prohibited by Sri Lanka's Flora and Fauna Protection Ordinance, but there is a derogation for wild boar, who are considered enemies of the crops, and poachers take advantage of this in the secret hope of "harvesting" sambar deers (*Rusa unicolor*) or high-value-added animals such as leopards whose skin and organs can bring in a lot of money, much more than the paltry fines they are liable to pay.

The Covid-19 pandemic exacerbates the trap "epidemic". Rural people, to improve their everyday meal, are growing improvised vegetable gardens by clearing corridors and

encroaching on the remaining wildlife paths. The use of traps is said to have become widespread both to protect fruit and vegetables from intrusion by herbivorous wildlife and to obtain meat.

Sunday Times (Sri Lanka), May 26, 2020; Middle East North Africa Financial Network, May 29, 2020; The Jakarta Post, June 3, 2020; Mongabay, June 5, 2020; News First, June 24, 2020; Colombo Gazette, July 20 and 21, 2020; Daily News Sri Lanka, July 22, 2020; Sri Lanka Mirror, July 22, 2020; Justice for Animals & Nature, July 23, 2020.⁶⁴

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

May 17, 2020

South Africa

There are between 600 and 1,000 cheetahs in captivity in about a hundred breeding farms, tourist establishments or private homes. The owners treat them like pets and use anti-fleas for dogs to rid them of parasites. Cheetahs are very sensitive to chemicals and the misuse of insecticides can poison them. To prevent cheetahs from being hyperactive in enclosures that are incompatible with the mobility and tone of the species, owners give them in excess sedatives from a very young age, which are at the root of serious kidney disorders or irreversible obesity. In adulthood, they are mostly fed with chicken carcasses unfit for human consumption and contaminated with salmonella and E.Coli. In addition to possible intoxications, the lack of dietary diversity leads to rickets, irreversible neurological disorders and skeletal fragility. Veterinary doctor Peter Caldwell sums up the disasters that come upon cheetahs in captivity in this way and adds "I examined cheetah cubs who, because of dietary deficiencies, suffered more than ten bone fractures". For Dr. Caldwell, the worst may be the declawing. This mutilation is painful and a likely source of infections, arthritis, permanent lameness in middle age and old age if it comes. Cheetahs are deprived of their instinctive and favourite behaviour of using their claws to climb, mark their territory, practice lacerating. The declawing of felines has other disadvantages and they are major. An individual without claws loses very quickly his rank in the hierarchy of a group if he lives with or if he faced other cheetahs in full possession of their means. In this case, do not rely on the solidarity in the captive herd. In fact, the opposite is true. The weak one will be rejected or attacked by the strong. Declawing is the downfall of cheetahs, especially as it is most often accompanied by the extraction of the canine teeth, two mutilations allowing the owners, their families or customers to fiddle with the cubs and turn their backs on the cheetahs to make amazing selfies. It is perfectly clear that cheetahs who have born the burden of captivity under these conditions cannot be released into their natural habitats. Just the youngest and most slender of them may be able to be exported from South Africa to China, the United States of America and the United Arab Emirates and the skins of the dead to be turned into bed side rugs or toques. As for the bones, it is not impossible that they will join the flow of feline bones which, according to traditional doctors, can cure or prevent various ailments. Tigers, lions, leopards and jaguars are passed through this mill. Why not cheetahs?

M-Net, May 17, 2020 ; Blood Lions ; May 18, 2020 ; The Cheetah: A Fastidious Cat – Guest blog for Carte Blanche by Dr Peter Caldwell; Old Chapel Veterinary Clinic.⁶⁵

SOMALIA

April 2020

Sool, Somaliland Autonomous Region, Somalia

A joint team from the Ministry of the Environment and the Cheetah Conservation Fund travelled 500 km southeast of Hargeisa to provide emergency care to 2 cheetah cubs seized by the military at a nomad camp. One of them, 2-3 months old, died on his return to Hargeisa event before the realisation of a thorough diagnosis.

Africa Geographic, July 30, 2020.⁶⁶

ASIAN GOLDEN CATS - *Catopuma temminckii*, Appendix I

ASIA

INDONESIA

End of June 2020

Kamang Mudiak, West Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Rescue by the BKSDA local section of an Asian golden cat aged about 4 years trapped for at least 2 days in a plantation. *Catopuma temminckii*, see "On the Trail" n°4 p. 100, n°20 p. 67, n°21 p. 64, n°24 p. 63, n°25 p. 117, n°25 p. 118, n°26 p. 69.

The Jakarta Post, June 19, 2020.⁶⁷

LEOPARD CATS - *Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II, except the populations of Bangladesh, India and Thailand which are listed under CITES Appendix I.

ASIA

THAILAND

End of May 2020

Tha Yang District, Phetchaburi Province, Thailand

Arrest of Mr. Wongrit who attacked leopard cats with an air rifle.

TalknewsOnline, May 27, 2020.⁶⁸



LEOPARD CATS - followed

VIET NAM

May 23-24, Mid-July and August 22-23, 2020
Lai Chau, Son La and Tien Giang Provinces, Viet Nam

- Knowing that the forest rangers were on his heels, the poacher abandoned his prey. He was handed over to the attentive care of Save Vietnam's Wildlife. The 3 to 4-month-old leopard kitten is stuck by the sudden loss of his mother. In the best case scenario, he will be released after a long learning period.



- The guy on his moped often supplied wildlife restaurants. He was caught by the police with a leopard cat in his satchel. The miraculous one was without delay released back into the wild.



- Poaching of a leopard cat and posting of photos on social networks.
SVW, May 25, 2020; ENV, July 15, 2020, August 28, 2020.⁶⁹

FISHING CATS - *Prionailurus viverrinus*, Appendix II

ASIA

INDIA

June 10, 2020

Renjura, Paschim Medinipur District, State of West Bengal, India



A fishing cat was caught in a trap, killed, skinned, butchered and eaten. He had been spotted alive early in the morning in a cage near a tea bar. The witness immediately alerted the local authorities and the NGO HEAL (Human and Environment Alliance League). The police arrived too late. A suspect was arrested. The "baghrol" (in Bengali) are threatened by the disappearance of wetlands. They are increasingly led to feed in fish farms.

Prionailurus viverrinus, see "On the Trail" n°10 p. 42, p. 78, n°11 p. 23, n°13 p. 112, n°20 p. 127, n°21 p. 115, n°26 p. 69, n°27 p. 120, n°28 p. 84, p. 131. The Telegraph India, June 10, 2020.⁷⁰

June 11, 2020

Udang, Howrah District, State of West Bengal, India



A fishing cat is fatally injured in the head near a waterhole. According to several witnesses from the village, the female was pregnant. "If the cat was pregnant then at least three more cats were killed, along with the mother", says Tiasa Adhya, spokesperson for HEAL. The Telegraph India, June 27, 2020.⁷¹

JAGUARS - *Panthera onca*, Appendix I

AMERICA

BRAZIL

Early April 2020

Cumaru do Norte, State of Pará, Brazil

Rescue in extremis of 2 jaguar cubs between 3 and 4 months of age in a farm in the Amazon basin. "In the conditions of housing and nourishment in which they were found, they would not have made it through more than a week" but "it will be difficult to release them into the wild", says with satisfaction and sadness in the same time Manoel Ananis who participates in the rescue.

G1, April 7, 2020.⁷²

JAGUARS - followed

End of April 2020

Northwest of the State of Paraná, Brazil

Seizure of a jaguar skin. Arrest of 36 poachers. Seizure of 49 firearms and 475 rounds of ammunition by the 3rd company of the environmental police. To inform Força Verde: denunciaambiental@pm.pr.gov.br. Grupo Maringa de Comunicação Online, April 24, 2020.⁷³



GUATEMALA

Early June 2020

Boca del Monte, Department of Petén, Guatemala

The Diprona (Dirección de Protección a la Naturaleza) and the Conap (Consejo Nacional de Áreas Protegidas) joined forces to carry out the investigation and seize a jaguar head. At the head cutter's, there were also 2 antlers of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*, Appendix III, Guatemala). República, June 2, 2020.⁷⁴

MEXICO

April 3, 2020

Mascota, Jalisco State, Mexico

Discovery of a jaguar about a year old. 20 m from the decomposing body, a 16-calibre cartridge was found.

Profepa, April 3, 2020.⁷⁵

OCELOTS - *Leopardus pardalis*, Appendix I

AMERICA

COLOMBIA

Mid-April 2020

El Danubio, Department of Valle del Cauca, Colombia

The solitary and nocturnal big cat had fallen into a trap in the forest of Anchicayá. Wounded in his left hind leg and stung by bees on his back, he was treated by the vets of the CAV (Centro de Atención y Valoración de Fauna Silvestre). After long sessions of rerehabilitation and negative tests for toxoplasmosis and leptospirosis, the ocelot was released in the heart of the forest by the villagers who had rescued him from the trap in November 2019.

Corporación Autónoma Regional del Valle del Cauca, April 14, 2020.⁷⁶



MEXICO

April 1st, 2020

Huatulco, State of Oaxaca, Mexico

Seizure of an ocelot barely weaned. The beach photographer used him as an accessory to sell photos to foolish tourists. In his bag of tricks, he also had 3 orange-fronted parakeet chicks (*Eupsittula canicularis*, Appendix II) and a chachalaca (genus *Ortalis*) with one wing cut.

Profepa, April 1st, 2020.⁷⁷

PUMAS - *Puma concolor*, Appendix II, except the populations of Costa Rica and Panama which are listed under Appendix I.

AMERICA

ARGENTINA

End of April 2020

Near Machagai, Province of Chaco, Argentina

Seizure of a puma in a cage, a turtle in a basin and a dead bird on the floor.

Diario Norte, April 24, 2020.⁷⁸

COLOMBIA

Early April 2020

Montería, Department of Córdoba, Colombia

Violent death of a puma. Investigation ongoing. El Heraldo, April 6, 2020.⁷⁹

PUMAS - followed

MEXICO

April 24, 2020

Near Tixkokob and Cacalchén, State of Yucatán, Mexico

The photo of the decapitated puma with all four legs amputated and partially skinned had been circulating for several days on social networks. The perpetrators have not yet been identified but the investigation conducted by Profepa allowed to recover the victim's body at the bottom of a raffia bag by the side of a small road. After the usual findings, it was buried on the spot. Profepa, April 24, 2020.⁸⁰

SERVALS - *Leptailurus serval*, Appendix II

AFRICA

MALAWI

May 2020

Lilongwe, Central Region, Malawi

Two serval cubs about 6 weeks old were taken in in May 2020 by a family when some kids from the village were trying to sell them as pets. Keepers of the Lilongwe Wildlife Centre picked them up in northern Malawi at Nkhata Bay to avoid the insecurity of a bus conveying.



They joined another cub of about 4 weeks old (550 g) who was wandering in a maize field and had been taken in by a family who thought he was a domestic cat. After 3 days, they realized they had been mistaken.

Another resident, a female of about 5 weeks old, arrived at the shelter in July 2019 after being rescued in a field by the Blantyre Society for the Protection and Care of Animals. The cubs should be released in good shape and self-sufficient for food within the next 2 years. Serval are considered in Africa as chicken thieves, a golden alibi to engage in capturing adults for their skins and cubs for the international pet cat market.

Lilongwe Wildlife Trust, August 17, 2020.⁸¹

MULTI-FELINES

AFRICA

KENYA

April 14, 2020

Kuku Community Conservancy, Kajiado County, Kenya



Poisoning of a lion, a leopard and a jackal in the Kuku Community Conservancy by a cow carcass sprayed with pesticide. Burning of the bodies on site to prevent killing in series. SWT/KWS, April 2020.⁸²

AMERICA

BRAZIL

FAMILY AFFAIRS

June 17, 2020

Chandless State Park, State of Acre, Brazil

Incidental arrest of a poacher-butcher. Seizure in his rowboat of 150 kg of tapir meat (*Tapirus* spp., Appendix I or II), one dead deer and one dead spider monkey (*Ateles* spp., Appendix I or II), 4 live turtles (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II) and 3 rifles. Meat is sold for around 2 US\$/kg in the town of Manoel Urbano. The highlight of the show was on display at his home: 2 jaguar (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I) skins and one puma (*Puma concolor*, Appendix I) skin drying in the sun, sheltered from rain, with a view to sell 3 sumptuous bed side rugs in autumn. At 45 years old, the man has already passed on his knowledge and his son is assisting him. G1, June 19, 2020.⁸³

ASIA

NEPAL

June 25, 2020

Kathmandu, Kathmandu District, Bagmati Pradesh Province, Nepal

Kunjok Tshering Tamang (50), alias Kunjok Lama, had been wanted since 2005 by the Nepalese police and Interpol. He was saddled with a 15-year prison sentence for a consignment of 5 tiger skins, 36 leopard skins, 238 wild goat skins and 113 kg of tiger bones seized in Langtang National Park. The traffickers arrested at the time had denounced him as their leader. He had since disappeared like his accomplices Dandup Lama and Nitup Lama, and he had been reported in India, China and the USA, again and again associated with other wildlife traffickers. He fell today into the hands of the Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) while he was in the capital city.

The Himalayan Times, June 28, 2020.⁸⁴

WOLVES, ASIATIC WILD DOGS, JACKALS, AFRICAN WILD DOGS AND HYENAS



Asiatic wild dogs or dholes (*Cuon alpinus*). Picture David V Raju.

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

Early June 2020

Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa

A black-backed jackal (*Canis mesomelas*) was seized by the SPCA at an ill-famed zoo. He was entrusted to the wildlife clinic and rehydrated. The scabies on his coat are healing. It is not excluded that after a wildlife learning period, he may regain the wild.

Johannesburg Wildlife Vet, June 8, 2020.¹



KENYA

April 14, 2020

Meru National Park, Meru County, Kenya

Rescue of a male striped hyaena (*Hyaena hyaena*, Appendix III in Pakistan) by PAC (Problem Animal Control). He was attacking goats along the park boundary. He was the victim of reprisals. Without intervention, the conflict had no other outcome than the death of the hyena. He was lured by a kid goat in a trap cage. After anaesthesia, his severe neck wound from a metal trap was cleaned, rinsed with tincture of iodine and sprayed with an antibiotic. He was released in good shape, far away from the goats, inside the park. SWT/KWS, April 2020.²



June 28, 2020

Tsavo East National Park, Kenya

Park visitors report a pack of about 20 African wild dogs (*Lycaon pictus*). One of them has a snare around his neck and was at risk to be strangled or to have his throat cut. A team was dispatched to the area and adopted a softly-softly approach towards the pack, which took refuge under a tree. In fact, 2 wild dogs were in danger of death. The first one was able to be freed. The windpipe of the second was cut. There was no other option than to finish him off. SWT/KWS, June 2020.³



MOZAMBIQUE

Early June 2020

Niassa Province, Mozambique

Rescue by the veterinary doctor of Saving the Survivors of an adult male African wild dog (*Lycaon pictus*) wounded in the neck by a trap. Several hours of chase were necessary to find the pack of about 20 wild dogs and the injured one in the midst. After anaesthesia, the wound was cleaned, smeared with honey and fly repellent. An antibiotic was administered by injection. Favourable prognosis. Saving the Survivors, June 2, 2020.⁴



AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

April 2020

Tucson, State of Arizona, United States of America

In March, state-hired hunters killed 4 wolves in New Mexico. One wolf was fatally trapped in April, and since the beginning of the year, the official death toll in Arizona and New Mexico has been 12, not including victims of hidden poaching. The NGO Western Watersheds Project has dissected administrative inquiries after alleged attacks on domestic herds by wolves. In two-thirds of the cases, the responsibility of the wolves was confirmed more on the basis of hunches, inferences and convictions than on unequivocal evidence. The NGO cites the example of a cow skin burnt out by the sun at the bottom of a canyon and soaked by the investigators for weeks in a basin of water, enabling them to identify the marks of a bite and to conclude that the cow was 4 years old and that it was killed by a wolf (the investigators did not provide the age of the wolf). In order to be compensated after the death of a cow or a calf and to keep hatred, the signature of the wolf must be authenticated and an attack by another wild or domestic predator, coyote, cougar or hound dog must be excluded (...).



(...) Western Watersheds Project considers that wolves inside forests and other public spaces should not be shot on sight. In fact, "it's really the livestock operators that are the problem for wolves, not the other way around". In New Mexico, the best habitat for wolves and their natural prey is the Gila National Forest, where domestic herds graze throughout the year. The United States of America has in common with Africa and India that it allows herbivorous herds to feed in the habitats of the last wild carnivores. In New Mexico and Arizona, there are between 150 and 200 wolves. In 1980, they were near extinction after decades of hunting at any price, trapping and poisoning.

AP, May 31, 2020 ; Santiago-Ávila, F.J., Chappell, R.J. & Treves, A. Liberalizing the killing of endangered wolves was associated with more disappearances of collared individuals in Wisconsin, USA. Sci Rep 10, 13881 (2020).⁵

May 2020

Near the border with the State of Colorado, State of Wyoming, United States of America

The fate of the grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) hangs by borderline. In Colorado, they are appreciated by the population and, according to a recent sample survey, a future plan to restore their population is favourably received. In Wyoming, on the northern border of Colorado, anti-wolves make the rules and since 2017, the removal of the wolf from the list of protected species has triggered the implementation of a management protocol under the supervision of the US Fish and Wildlife. In 85% of the state's surface area, i.e. 215,346 km² out of 253,348 km², wolves can be killed without a licence. This is self-service under the seal of confidentiality. The killing of a wolf must be reported within 10 days to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and the registry of wolves killed is a state secret. But an anonymous tip in a letter to a "pro-wolf" senator in Montana, north of Wyoming, gave substance to the rumor that 3 wolves from Colorado had been killed in Wyoming, without fanfare but with a rifle. A small pack of 6 individuals accompanied by one or 2 cubs, as figured out, sighted or even heard in winter 2019 on the northern border by Colorado Parks and Wildlife experts. If it sets foot in Wyoming, it is at risk of an anonymous death. As long as it remains in Colorado, a potential shooter will be considered a poacher and is liable to a year in prison and a 100,000 US\$ fine.

According to a University of Wisconsin study published in August 2020, legalizing hunting for wolves is likely to stimulate the predatory impulses of poachers. They feel justified in their illegal behaviour. They boast in their circles of having anticipated the new official posture and consider themselves associated with the prevention campaign.

Colorado Public Radio, September 9, 2020.⁶

May 2020

Chippewa County, State of Michigan, United States of America

He is the biggest wolf killer of modern times in Michigan. In Pickford (1,500 inhabitants), it doesn't give rise to more emotions than that. Here, killing a wolf is no bigger deal than getting behind the wheel of a pick-up after drinking a glass (too many). "It's like with drunken driving. You don't shun someone from the community because they get a DUI (Driving under the influence)." However, Kurt Duncan was denounced. His tricks and cruelty were uncovered by investigators from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Duncan possesses about 20 hectares of land at the edge of a marsh, a cabin hidden in the woods with a lynx skull and 2 wolf skulls as a welcome at the entrance and an American flag at the back. On a shelf in a glass box shine wolf teeth. His wife makes them into necklaces, 100 US\$ each, and with the skins she makes mittens. "Wolves are riff-raff," is Duncan's slogan. They were attracted by meat bait and the 150 traps were arranged in 5 rows. His domain was a minefield. Duncan was expending his skills beyond his lair. He called himself a "hired gun" enlisted by farmers to get rid of wolves. He has fatally trapped at least 18 of them in the last 18 months. He has just been charged and released after paying a bail of 500 US\$ pending trial in October. MLive.com, June 5, 2020 ; Detroit News, June 16, 2020.⁷

SOUTH AND SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

INDIA

May 3, 2020

Solapur District, State of Maharashtra, India

Return to the savannah for a young male striped hyaena (*Hyaena hyaena*, Appendix III in Pakistan) treated for 2 months by the RESQ Charitable Trust in Pune. Villagers had noticed him as he had been dragging a leghold trap closed around one of his legs for several days. They captured him and notified the Forest Department of Solapur. Thanks to the Foundation's veterinarians, he has regained his agility. The Times of India, May 3, 2020.⁸



May 12, 2020

Mandawar, Gurugram District, State of Haryana, India

Major surgery for a 5-year-old male striped hyaena (*Hyaena hyaena*, Appendix III in Pakistan) found with his mouth tied with a snare trap near the village. Veterinarians of the NGO Wildlife Rescue SOS had to treat deep lacerations to the tongue and jaw and stop the bleeding. He remains under observation with antibiotics and analgesics. Mandawar village is on a corridor used by wildlife. In 2016 the inhabitants had beaten a leopard to death. The Hindustan Times, May 16, 2020.⁹



June 8, 2020

Mekkudi, Tiruchirappalli District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

When he saw them arriving at a tea shop with the corpse of a golden jackal (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III in India), a police officer did not hesitate to arrest the 12 men aged between 21 and 78 and take them to the police station. K. Ramaraj, I. Saravanan, R. Yesudas, R. Sarath Kumar, S. Devadass, R. Pandian, S. Vijay Kumar, A. Sathyamurthy, V. Sarath Kumar, P. Raju, M. Pattampillai and P. Rajamanickam had manufactured a trap with a home-made bomb coated with an animal grease and set it in the forest of Jeeyapuram. The carnivore bit into it. He died instantly.

The Times of India, June 8, 2020.¹⁰

THAILAND

May 12, 2020

Phrae District, Phrae Province, Thailand



Thailand is a happy land for golden jackal (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III in India). Two of them who had been caught in a forest were freed from their metal cages. They were for sale for 150 US\$ each via Facebook for unspecified use(s). Following a lengthy investigation, the holder was located. DNP Wildhawk, May 13, 2020.¹¹



VIET NAM

April 27, 2020

Thanh Hoa Province, Viet Nam

Release of an Asiatic wild dog (or dhole, *Cuon alpinus*, Appendix II) and a golden jackal (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III in India) held in captivity in cruel conditions. They are in a poor state of health. The prognoses are very unfavourable. SVW, April 28, 2020.¹²

WESTERN ASIA

LEBANON

Mid-April 2020

Baalbek-Hermel Governorate, Lebanon

A man is under arrest. He was showing off on social networks with a dead striped hyaena (*Hyaena hyaena*, Appendix III in Pakistan) at the end of his rifle under the halo of a flashlight. The species is endangered in Lebanon. He was ordered to pay 2 fines, one for killing an animal protected by law, the other for breaching the Covid-19 curfew.

Libnanews, April 17, 2020 ; Forces de sécurité intérieure libanaise, April 17, 2020.¹³

EUROPE

FRANCE

March 25 - April 9, 2020

Departments of Alpes-Maritimes, Isère and Drôme, France

On March 16, 2020, in the face of the Covid epidemic, a state of emergency was declared by the government. Lockdown is the rule. Hiking and other outdoor activities are prohibited. The OFB (French Biodiversity Office) brigades are teleworking. However, wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) driven beats remain a priority. Hunters appointed by a farmer on a wolf (male or female) regulation operation can be mobilised in groups to carry out TDS (Tirs de Défense Simple - Single Defence Shots) and wolfcatchers appointed by prefects can carry out TDR (Tirs de Défense Renforcée - Strengthened Defence Shots), including at night. They are recommended to fulfill their lethal mission in uniforms, just to make sure they are not confused with poachers, as if the poachers were unable to tailor wolfcatcher uniforms or to steal them. It should be noted that hunters and wolfcatchers should wash their hands before and after operations. The recommendation is pointless. Before Covid, during Covid and after, wolf killers always wash their hands of it. From March 28 to April 9, 2020, 2 male wolves and 3 female wolves were killed. The NGO Ferus, which protects wolves and bears, completes the official communiqué by specifying that 2 of the female wolves were pregnant.

The wolf attracts paying visitors and investors. The increase in captive livestock in metropolitan France between 2016 and 2020 is impressive: more than 65%. In September 2016, they were 596 in 59 establishments in 40 departments. In December 2017, they were 661 in 65 establishments in 48 departments. At the end of April 2020, they were 989 in 67 establishments in 48 departments. The term "establishment" means wolf parks, zoos or private properties holding certificates of competency and an authorisation (...).

(...) 90% of captive wolves are *Canis lupus*, *Canis lupus arctos*, *Canis lupus occidentalis*. The minority of the 10% is composed of *Canis lycaon*, *Canis lupus nubilus*, *Canis lupus tundrarum*, dingos, painted dogs or African wild dogs (*Lycaon pictus*) and maned wolves (*Chrysocyon brachyurus*).

The report published in July 2020 on the control of wolves held in captivity finds that out of the 67 establishments controlled, 44 are in accordance with the parameters relating to the prevention of the risk of wolves escaping in natural environments. It has to be noted that all the establishments had been informed beforehand of the inspection carried out by the services of each prefecture and the OFB's departmental service. The most significant non-compliances were defective fences or boundary walls with cracks or gaps at the base, and the introduction into France of wolves without an intra-Community certificate. The intra-European circulation of wolves between holding establishments is secretive.

While concluding that the risk of captive wolves escaping is "extremely low", the report notes that reading the individual device that each wolf must carry to indicate his exact position (radio frequency transponder) was impossible in 42 establishments given the size of the enclosures and the difficulty of approaching wolves. The report therefore recommends the use of GPS transponders, which would make it possible to have real-time information about the movements of the wolves and to be informed of any escape. Captive wolves are imprinted by human being. They have lost their food autonomy. If they escape, they are inclined to go close to human activities and domestic herds and feed on them.

Prefect of the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region, Coordinator Prefect of the wolf, April 2020 ; Ferus ; Prefecture of the Region of Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes – Water Hydroelectricity Nature Department– Wolf Unit, " Contrôle des loups détenus en captivité (Control of wolves held in captivity)", July 15, 2020 ; " EcoZonia ", c'est la zone - Ecozonias is the zone, Robin des Bois press release, January 27, 2021, www.robindesbois.org/ecozonia-cest-la-zone/.¹⁴

AMERICA

CANADA

June 9, 2020

Farrell Creek, Province of British Columbia, Canada

The gendarmes had come to arrest him for dangerous driving and theft. At his home, in addition to stolen objects, stolen vehicles and firearms, they found an American black bear cub (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) in a cage. Justin Thibault, 25 years old, is held pending his appearance in court. A 29-year-old woman was arrested and released. She too will be prosecuted. As for the bear cub, he has joined the Northern Lights Wildlife Society shelter. He should be released next year.

Alaska Highway News, June 15, 2020 ; Dawson Creek Mirror, July 22, 2020.²



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Week of May 25, 2020

Rocky Mountain Front, west of Great Falls, State of Montana, United States of America

Two brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II), one male and one female, were killed by hunters. The authorities recall that all hunters must be able to differentiate a brown bear from an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II), which may be hunted until May 31 or June 15, depending on the zone.

KRTV, June 4, 2020.³

June 2020

State of Florida, United States of America

Discovery of the body of a young American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II). Nicknamed Bailey, he was very popular with locals who saw him regularly. The poacher, an experienced hunter, was arrested and indicted.

Naples Daily News, 15 juillet 2020; The Humane Society of the United States, July 22, 2020.⁴



June 15, 2020

State of Alaska, United States of America

In May 2018, James L. Connolly goes to the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, where hunting is prohibited. He shot an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) near Skilak Lake. He brags about it. Witnesses repeat his words and make a report to the authorities. Before returning to Florida, Connolly entrusts the hide to a taxidermist in California. It was shipped to his home, where it has been at the end seized. He is sentenced to 2 years probation with a ban on hunting and a fine of 8,000 US\$. KTVA, June 16, 2020.⁵



June 25, 2020

Washington, Beaufort County, State of North Carolina, United States of America

Wildlife officers had clearly said that he did not pose any threat. An American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) was shot on the outskirts of the city. The circumstances remain unclear. He may have been hiding in a tree to escape the curiosity of local residents, or he may have been asleep at the foot of the tree, sources vary. Nine-millimetre cartridges were found at the scene.

The Humane Society of the United States, July 22, 2020.⁶

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

Early April 2020

Weixi, Yunnan Province, China

Sentencing of 2 men to 10 months in prison and 6 months in prison for buying from Myanmar, smuggling into China and attempting to sell 4 Asian black bear paws (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I). They are both fined 2,000 yuan (292 US\$).

Sina, April 9, 2020.⁷



April 29, 2020

Mohan border post, Mengla County, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Laos.

Seizure in the luggage of a Chinese passenger coming from abroad of 4 boxes each containing 3 vials of Asian black bear bile powder (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I), 85.9g in total.

Chinese Customs, May 6, 2020.⁸



End of June 2020

Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, China

Sentencing of Yang to 2 years and 6 months suspended imprisonment for poaching in August 2018 an Asian black bear with the assistance of a dog, amputating his paws and gallbladder. Yang, Tang and Li were sentenced to one year suspended prison for selling the paws and bile.

xw.qq.com, June 27, 2020.⁹



TAIWAN

May 7, 2020

Hsinchu County, Taiwan

When they brought down a gang of illegal timber cutters operating in Guanwu National Forest Park, police officers raided He Nancai's home and came upon the fur and bones of an Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I). According to his statements, he set snares to catch small animals for food, but the plantigrade was trapped. He reportedly shot it with a home-made rifle out of fear of his reaction if he released him. He didn't forget to take pictures of his trophy with his mobile phone, then he and his accomplices sustained themselves with his paws and abdomen and skinned him. He faces a sentence of 5 years in prison and a fine of 200,000 to 1 million Taiwanese dollars (6,672 to 33,361 US\$).

Liberty Times Net, August 13, 2020.¹⁰



SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

VIET NAM

April 2020

Tam Dao, Vinh Phuc Province, Viet Nam

Arrival of 3 Asian black bears (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) at the Asia Animal Sanctuary. They are the survivors of a "bear farm" in the province of Nam Dinh which detained 6 bears, 4 of them illegally, to extract their bile. Education for Nature - Viet Nam succeeded in convincing the operator to part with them. Unfortunately, a fourth one died a few days before the transfer to Education for Nature - Vietnam.

ENV, April 21, 2020.¹¹

May 12, 2020

Vinh Yen, Vinh Phuc Province, Viet Nam

Two female Asian black bears (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) start a new life after about 20 years behind bars. A farmer bought them in 2000 in the province of Nghe An, near the border with Laos. They weighed only 8 kg and were probably smuggled into the country. In 2017, he stopped extracting their bile, pretending to be no more capable to make them suffer. He has just handed them over to the Animals Asia foundation, whose sanctuary is 14 km from his home. They suffer from health problems, but their lives are not threatened.



The foundation has rescued 216 bears since 2007 and is currently hosting 188 of them. It signed an agreement with the government to have no more caged bears by 2022. Viet Nam banned bile extraction in 2005, while allowing owners to keep bears already in their possession. 600 bears are reportedly still in farms.

VnExpress, May 13, 2020.¹²

End of May 2020

Son La Province, Viet Nam

Rescue of a female Asian black bear cub (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) weighing barely 2 kg, bought by an animal lover from a trafficker and entrusted to Education for Nature - Vietnam. While appreciating the generous action, the NGO recalls that this compassionate practice encourages trafficking and prevents traffickers from being arrested. The bear cub is now cared for at the Ninh Binh sanctuary.

ENV, May 24 and 29, 2020.¹³



June 2020

Ha Tinh Province, Viet Nam

Tran Van Toan is sentenced to one year in prison.



On the night of December 10, 2019, as Viet Nam's football team has just won the 30th South East Asian Games (SEA Games) and the whole country is in festive mood, police stop a suspicious taxi in a residential area of Thien Loc. It is registered in Nghe An province. In the trunk, the police discover a 140 kg Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I), anaesthetised, in a trunk. The taxi driver, Tran Van Toan, says that a man asked him to pick someone up in Thien Loc and drive him to Nghe An. Once on site, he discovers that the passenger in question is a bear. His clients assure him that everything is in order. Tran Van Toan needs money and finally accepts.

ENV, August 8, 2020 ; Báo Hà Tĩnh, December 11, 2019.¹⁴

June 25, 2020

Ha Tinh Province, Viet Nam

Confiscation of a bottle of Asian black bear bile (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I).

ENV, June 25, 2020.¹⁵

SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

April 18, 2020

Anni Tehsil, Kullu District, State of Himachal Pradesh, India

When the police got the place where poachers had just shot an Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) near a river, they were welcomed with a barrage of stones. The officers were able to seize the body and entrusted it to the Forest Department. The veterinarian responsible for the post-mortem examination identified several bullet impacts. The Hindustan Times, April 21, 2020.¹⁶

May 4, 2020

Mawpyrthuh, East Khasi Hills District, State of Meghalaya, India

They accused her of destroying hives placed in the forest to enjoy the honey. Ten villagers first trapped her and then did not hesitate to skin a pregnant Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) alive. And since we are in the 21st century, they photographed the scene and upload the images on social networks. The scandal come to the attention of the State Home Minister, who is also the Forest Minister. The village was surrounded by forest guards and the thugs were arrested. Some remains of the bear were found.

The Indian Express, May 6, 2020 ; Northeast Now, May 6, 2020 ; The Times of India, May 7, 2020.¹⁷

June 11, 2020

Ambabarwa Wildlife Sanctuary, Buldhana District, State of Maharashtra, India

Ashok Motiram Gavte and Mana Bandu Gavte had gone deep into the forest to poach inside the sanctuary. They flushed out 2 6-month-old sloth bear cubs (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I) and killed them with an axe. The mother was not far away. She has flown into such a rage that the 2 defaced bodies of the poachers were found 15 m away from the cubs.

The Times of India, June 12, 2020.¹⁸

IRAN

April 14-28, 2020

Marvdasht, Fars Province, Iran

A family of brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix I), a female bear and her 3 cubs, lives near Marvdasht. The tale started well. Unfortunately, misinformed animal lovers approach the 3 cubs. They feed them and play with them. When they return, they notify



the municipal environment service. The agents recommend that they keep their distance.

Two weeks later, there is no longer any trace of the mother. She was frightened by the human disturbances and left, or she has been poached. The environmental officers come to the rescue of the orphaned cubs. Two of them were very weak and brought back by the officers. The 3rd one is probably dead.

IEW, May 1st, 2020.¹⁹

WESTERN ASIA

ARMENIA

Early May 2020

Ashtarak, Aragatsotn Province, Armenia

What a petition signed by 100,000 people and shared by singer Serj Tankian could not do, Covid-19 did. For a year, the NGO International Animal Rescue had been asking the owner of the "Ashtarak Dzor" restaurant to hand over his 3 brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II), a 20-year-old female and her 2 5-year-old sons. He systematically refused. But after the restaurant was closed due to health restrictions, he changed his mind and was very happy to see them leave. They were no longer of any use to him in attracting tourists and were too expensive to feed. The rescue was carried out in relation with the FWPC (Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets), the National Police and the Ministry of Environment. All restaurant owners must commit not to acquire any additional bears. The era of caged bears is coming to an end in the country. International Animal Rescue, May 6, 2020.²⁰

ALBANIA

End of June 2020

Albania

It was already known that there were bears in restaurants to attract tourists. It is now known that some of them offer their customers "seasonal" bear meat, such as this restaurant next to the National Park of Drilon (Korçë county). According to the NGO Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA), this indication is totally false: there is a hunting moratorium throughout the whole country, passed in 2014 and until March 2021.

Apart from the fact that hunting is illegal, there are health risks associated with the consumption of bear meat. According to James Wood, a veterinarian and infectiologist at the University of Cambridge, it could transmit viruses.

The Independent, June 16, 2020.²¹

FRANCE

June 9, 2020

Ustou, Department of Ariège, France

Elisabeth Borne, then Minister of the Ecological and Solidarity Transition, announces: "A bear was discovered today in Ariège, shot dead. The bear is a protected species, this act is illegal and deeply reprehensible. The Prefect has come over there. The State is going to lodge a complaint."

Agents from the French Biodiversity Office came to report the predation of a sheep. They found a 4-year-old brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) weighing 100 kg dead near the ski resort of Guzet. Twenty-one associations lodged a complaint. Despite a reward of 45,000 € (55,265 US\$) promised by Sea Shepherd for any information relevant to the investigation. The gendarmes collided with the silence barrier. Christine Téqui, president of the Departmental Council, retorts that "the Ariègeois are not for sale" and a sheep breeder goes wrong by outbidding: "This reward is a manoeuvre worthy of the Nazis, it's pathetic".

France TV Info, June 10, 2020 ; Le Journal du Dimanche, June 19, 2020 ; France 3, June 24 and 25, 2020 ; La Croix, June 24, 2020 ; L'Indépendant, June 24, 2020 ; Blogs Mediapart, July 8, 2020.²²

GREECE

June 4, 2020

Roditis, Region of Kozani, Greece

Rescue in the middle of the night of a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) by the Arcturos organisation, assisted by the regional forest service, the gendarmerie and veterinary services. Residents saw him in a stream. He was desperately trying to free himself from an illegal boar trap. His neck and leg injuries were treated while he was under anaesthesia. A few hours later it might have been too late. The forest service filed a complaint against X.

Arcturos, June 5, 2020.²³



SLOVENIA

End of April 2020

Slovenia

The Constitutional Court rules against the emergency law authorising the culling of brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) and wolves. Overriding the unfavourable opinions of the Administrative Court, Parliament had voted in favour of the shooting on sight of 175 bears and 11 wolves between September 2019 and September 2020. An amendment was in the pipeline to authorise the culling of 55 more bears and 19 more wolves until April and January 2021. On behalf of the pool of Slovenian NGOs, Adria Green, while deploring that most of the bears had already been killed, welcomed the opinion of the Constitutional Court which should prompt the government to abandon the amendment and to be more attentive with the wolves and bears in the coming years. Unless there is a splash and coup d'état in favour of the hunters! As a reminder, Slovenian bears are captured in the mountains, transported to France and then borne by helicopter to the Pyrenees to try to reconstitute the ursine population there. Some of these Slovenian emigrants are then shot dead by French poachers.

Total Slovenia News, April 20, 2020.²⁴

GAZELLES, ANTELOPES, SEROWS, BUSHBUCKS AND MARKHORS



Harnessed bushbuck (*Tragelaphus scriptus*). Picture Bernard Dupont

NORTHERN AFRICA

ALGERIA

May 10, 2020

El Oued Province, Algeria

The massacre of dorcas gazelles (*Gazella dorcas*, Appendix III in Algeria and Tunisia) was celebrated by its author via Facebook. Abdelmajid Dabbar, president of the association Tunisie Ecologie, the tireless slayer of poaching in the Maghreb, encouraged the Algerian authorities to file a complaint. Mr. Dabbar was immediately subjected to a stream of insults and intimidations from the poacher and his entourage. Gazelles know no frontiers. They are part of the common heritage of Algeria and Tunisia. Kapitalis, May 7, 2020.¹



MOROCCO

March-May 2020

Tiznit Province, Souss-Massa Region, Morocco

Three individuals caught in flagrante delicto of transporting 2 Cuvier's gazelles (*Gazella cuvieri*, Appendix I) poached during the night of May 4-5 were sentenced to one year in prison and a fine of 100,000 dirhams (10,200 US\$). Their vehicle was seized and their hunting permits permanently withdrawn. Since the introduction of Covid-19 lockdown measures in Morocco, the Minister of Agriculture has noted an upsurge in poaching in several regions. Between March 31 and May 9, 10 offences were detected and prosecuted and 16 firearms were seized for hunting with prohibited means, hunting at night, hunting in reserves and hunting of protected species.

Médias 24, May 20, 2020 ; Moroccan Birds, May 29, 2020.²



WESTERN AFRICA

BENIN

May 28 and August 10, 2020

Bohicon, Zou Department, Benin

- The Republican police and the Zou forest inspectorate, with technical support from AALF-Benin, get their hands on an individual who was carrying 15 skins and 2 horns of harnessed bushbuck (*Tragelaphus scriptus*).

- The man was given a suspended sentence of 24 months in prison, a fine of 500,000 CFA francs (895 US\$) and twice as much for the damages.

EAGLE, May 28 and August 26, 2020 ; Matin Libre, June 15, 2020.³



COTE D'IVOIRE

April 29, 2020

Bouna, Bounkani Region, Zanzan District, Côte d'Ivoire

Conditional sentence of 6 months imprisonment. He claims to have only carried the gazelle and to have been abandoned by the poacher in the Comoé park. Usually working in the field of transport, he says he is unemployed because of the Covid-19.

Agence Ivoirienne de Presse, April 30, 2020.⁴



EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

Early April 2020

Rombo, Kajiado County, Kenya. Border with Tanzania.

The 2 Tanzanian poachers who were returning home country with a carcass of impala (*Aepyceros melampus*) decapitated and amputated of its 4 legs on board their motorbike were intercepted by Big Life Foundation rangers. The remains were seized and the 2 poachers left soon after thanks to the Covid-19. Cross-border poaching is on the rise and bushmeat collectors have had it easy since the pandemic has paralysed the judicial services. "Minor delinquents" are subjected to a report at the police station and immediately released to avoid congestion in courtrooms and prisons.

Big Life Foundation, April 2, 2020.⁵

Mid-June 2020

Mount Kenya National Park, Kenya

Several bongos (*Tragelaphus eurycerus*) required various veterinary care due because of gastrointestinal parasites and malnutrition. The health status of the species has been deteriorating over the last 3 years. The KWS (Kenya Wildlife Service) and the SWT (Sheldrick Wildlife Trust) recommend stopping the food supplements distributed by the reserve managers. They are believed not to be adapted to the antelopes' digestive system. "The animals should feed more on natural browse and less of pellets and commercial concentrates".

SWT/KWS, May and June 2020.⁶

On the Trail n°29. Robin des Bois

ZIMBABWE

Early June 2020

Zimbabwe

Painted Dog Conservation (Lycaon Conservation) watchmen free 2 harnessed bushbucks (*Tragelaphus scriptus*).

They were caught in 2 traps. The traps break the meccano of the bush. This herbivorous harnessed bushbuck is one of the prey of the carnivorous African wild dogs.

Painted Dog Conservation, June 9, 2020.⁷



SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

April 18, 2020

North West Province, South Africa

Arrest of 5 poachers armed with spears, nets and hunting dogs. Seizure of several carcasses of kudus (genus *Tragelaphus*) and warthogs (*Phacochoerus africanus*). The nocturnal hunting of the band extended until the following morning. According to Barbara Creecy, Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, poaching of rhinos and elephants has been declining since the start of the Covid-19 lockdown in the Kruger Park. Demand is said to be dropping due to the paralysis of international air and sea transport and poachers being deterred by vigilant rangers and increased penalties. According to the same source, the plundering of marine resources is also on the decline. On the other hand, the poaching of other species for bushmeat traffic is on the rise.

Sunday Times, April 20, 2020.⁸

May 21, 2020

Fort Pearson, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa



Four bodies of Natal duikers (*Cephalophus natalensis*), 2 porcupines, firearms and edged weapons in the pick-up truck stopped on the R102. Four men were arrested.

SAPS, May 22, 2020 ; Dispatch Live, May 22, 2020.⁹

May 2020

Hofmeyr District, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

Arrest of 16 men aged 23 to 48. They were poaching antelopes on private property (see "On the Trail" n°21 p. 108). Twelve carcasses were found. Thirty dogs were handed over to the good care of the SPCA.

Cameroon Magazine, May 25, 2020.¹⁰

NAMIBIA

May 1st, 2020

Helmeringhausen, ||Karas Region, Namibia

A pick-up is abandoned. Inside are discovered by the police 4 carcasses of gemsboks (*Oryx gazella*), 2 rifles, knives and an axe.

The Namibian Sun, May 8, 2020.¹¹

GANG

May 1-3, 2020

Omaheke and Otjozondjupa Regions, Namibia

- It is like a western movie in the Omaheke region being colonised by cattle ranching on state-owned land. Herds of cows and goats are weakened by drought and stolen or butchered by cattle rustlers who at the same time poach gemsboks (*Oryx gazella*) and warthogs (*Phacochoerus africanus*).

- Police in Okahandja, Otjozondjupa region, got their hands on a NamWater employee who was using a government farm near the Swakoppoort dam reservoir as a base to market the bushmeat. The trickster of NamWater, the administration that manages water dams and other water resources, was also selling and shipping illegally dried fish caught upstream from the Swakoppoort and Von Bach dams to residential areas of Namibia's major cities.

Informante, May 5, 2020.¹²

May 8, 2020

Dordabis, Khomas Region, Namibia

Arrest of 5 men armed with spears and hunting dogs and seizure of a skinned gemsbok (*Oryx gazella*).

The Namibian Sun, May 8, 2020.¹³

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

April 22, 2020

Near Collbran, State of Colorado, United States of America

Colorado Parks and Wildlife officers are searching for the poacher of a bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*, Appendix II for the Mexican populations). The vehicle involved is believed to be an old red double cabin pick-up truck. A reward of 1,000 US\$ is promised to those who will contribute to establish the truth. The bighorn sheep population in Colorado, 270,000 km², is about 7,000 individuals. Out There Colorado, April 24, 2020.¹⁴

Week of May 25, 2020

Cinder Butte Road, Elmore County, State of Idaho, United States of America

A poacher is wanted. Information can be addressed 24 hours a day to the Citizens Against Poaching hotline. A Mexican pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana*, Appendix I in Mexico) was killed at the intersection of 2 rural roads. A calf of a few hours or days old was found alive nearby. "The doe pronghorn recently gave birth to a calf, just one reason there is no spring hunt for pronghorn", said the officer in charge of the investigation.

MSN News, June 4, 2020.¹⁵

LATIN AMERICA

MEXICO

June 6, 2020

Mexico City, Mexico

Seizure at the bus station north of Mexico City of 4 antlers, 2 skulls and 2 skins of blackbucks (*Antilope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Nepal and Pakistan).

Profepa, June 8, 2020.¹⁶

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

Early April 2020

Shangri-La, Yunnan Province, China

Sentencing of Liu to 4 months in prison and a fine of 729 US\$ for attempting to sell via WeChat the 2 horns of a Tibetan gazelle (*Procapra picticaudata*). The seizure in Liu's shop dates back to May 2019.

Higher People's Court of Yunnan Province, April 9, 2020.¹⁷



GANG

Early May 2020

Gerze County, Ngari Prefecture, Tibet Autonomous Region, China

The discovery by locals of several remains triggered a police investigation and led to the arrest of a gang of 8 poachers. At their homes, 89 whole skins or fragments of skins of Tibetan antelopes (*Pantholops hodgsonii*, Appendix I) were seized.

Xinhua, May 8, 2020.¹⁸

June 3, 2020

Hong Kong, China

Sentencing of a man who had got off a plane from Moscow in November 2019 with 224 saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) in his suitcase (see "On the Trail" n°27 p.69) to 20 months' imprisonment.

The Standard, June 3, 2020.¹⁹



© The Standard

SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

MALAYSIA

April 16, 2020

Genting Highlands, State of Pahang, Malaysia

Two Vietnamese working on a construction site were doing extra hours and setting traps in the forest. In their mobile home, the cops seized pieces of one or more southern serows (*Capricornis sumatraensis*, Appendix I), whose consumption cures several diseases, boosts self-confidence, facilitates social and love relationships... Crushed horns or hooves are the little things that guarantee victory even when you seem to fight a losing battle! The Star, April 29, 2020.²⁰

VIET NAM

April 10, 2020

Hai Van Forest, Thua Thiên-Hue Province, Viet Nam

A patrol came upon 2 poachers. They ran away, leaving a live Chinese serow (*Capricornis milneedwardsii*, Appendix I) on the spot. After some emergency treatment, he should be released. ENV, April 13, 2020.²¹

SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

April 3, 2020

Mava, Jaisalmer District, State of Rajasthan, India

Radheyshyam Pemani does not like poachers. When he learned that 3 chinkaras (or Indian gazelles, *Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III in Pakistan) had been killed during the night near the village in the Pokhran field firing range, he alerted the Forest Department. A patrol came to search Karnaram Bheel's house and found the meat and carcasses. His accomplices Manohar alias Mania and Moola Ram are sought, as well as the rifle. The Times of India, April 4, 2020.²²

April 23, 2020

Pingori, Pune District, State of Maharashtra, India

The Covid-19 is a boon to poachers: forest officers are mobilised to enforce the lockdown measures in the villages, or they themselves are victims of the disease, herders and peasants stay at home, roads are deserted. This Thursday an Indian gazelle (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III in Pakistan) ready to give birth was rescued from a snare trap by members of the Ela Foundation. She had a broken hind leg and had to be put on drip and antibiotics and her leg put in a plaster cast. On the same day, ELA veterinarians operated on an owl also caught in a snare trap, which had injured one leg in an attempt to free herself.

The Times of India, April 27, 2020.²³



April 24, 2020

Gwalior, Gwalior District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Arrest by forest officers of Sahid Khan, Amir Khan, Arif Khan and Basir Khan for poaching a nilgai (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*, Appendix III), an Indian gazelle (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III) and an Indian peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) for about a month.

Seizure of a muzzle loading rifle, a flashlight, a knife and wild meat. A young live Indian gazelle was rescued.

The Times of India, May 4, 2020.²⁴



April 25 and 26, 2020

Olwada, Sawai Madhopur District, Gudda Bhagwan and Bhundel, Nagaur District, State of Rajasthan, India

Increase in poaching of Indian gazelles (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III in Pakistan) in the region during lockdown. The Bishnois are on the lookout. On the 25th in Olwada, villagers manage to surround 4 poachers on 2 motorbikes, but the thugs are armed and shoot in the air to break free. Someone manages to take a photo showing a chinkara carcass attached to one of the motorbikes. The Forest Department opened an investigation. On the 26th, two incidents were recorded: in Gudda Bhagwan at about 8.30 am, villagers managed to capture a poacher while 2 accomplices fled. The forest rangers rushed on the spot and seized a motorbike, a flashlight, a stick, the skin and parts of a chinkara. In Bhundel around 11.30 am, some inhabitants discover a freshly shot chinkara. Forest ranger Hemendra Sirodia explains that chinkaras are easy to kill at night. Dazzled by a lamp, they freeze on the spot and only have to be killed with sticks or guns.

The Times of India, April 28, 2020.²⁵

April 27, 2020

Napawas, Pali District, State of Rajasthan, India

Interception by conservationists assisted by a teacher, Pradeep Bishnoi, of a poacher who had just killed a blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Nepal and Pakistan).

The Hindu, April 28, 2020.²⁶



April 27, 2020

Ramgarh, Jaisalmer District, State of Rajasthan, India

Informed by a local resident that poachers were about to cook chinkara meat (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III in Pakistan), rangers rushed towards Babu Ram's home and found him preparing the meat with his accomplices Ajeetaram Gawaria, Sanwara Ram Bheel and Hameera Ram Bheel. The head, skin and horns of a gazelle were at their side. They were arrested and brought to justice.

The Times of India, April 29, 2020.²⁷

April 29 and May 2, 2020

Rohtas District, State of Bihar, India

A policeman, Niraj Kumar Dubey, was arrested by villagers who accuse him of being part of a group of 3 poachers who killed a young blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Nepal and Pakistan) in the evening and cut off his horns. The 2 others are said to have fled. The animal's carcass was found by the forest officers thanks to the indications of the policeman, who nevertheless denies the facts. On May 2 one of the 2 horns was found. The investigation continues.

The Times of India, May 1st and 3, 2020.²⁸

May 10, 2020

Bhalu Rajwa, Jodhpur District, State of Rajasthan, India

He is the hero of the quarter. Mukesh Bishnoi, 17, is one of those who patrol at night to deter poachers from attacking the Indian gazelles (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III in Pakistan). Normally he is on guard 2 nights a week. In Covid times, he is on patrol every night and, on that night, shots rang out. Mukesh, together with his partner Pukhraj, managed to get near the poachers. They were 4 and they were carrying an Indian gazelle on their shoulders like a big dark scarf. He tried to stop them with his bare hands with the help of Pukhraj but their opponents outnumbered them and were armed. The best weapon Mukesh had at his disposal that night was WhatsApp. Tumbled to the bottom of a dune in the fight, Mukesh sent a message and within 10 minutes there were a hundred members of his clan around him and on the trail of the poachers and the gazelle who was losing blood. They followed the trail to Chamu, a village 7 km from the place of poaching and skirmish. Two poachers were identified. Their houses were searched. Only a "topidar", a traditional muzzle-loading rifle, was seized. The 2 poachers are on the run.

The Bishnoi community lives in Rajasthan in the Thar Desert. They consider wild animals and trees as members of their families. Women sometimes breastfeed orphaned fawns and several men died protecting Indian gazelles from poachers' assaults. They dedicate part of the rainwater collected in tanks to peafowls and other birds. They scrape off dead firewood to prevent insects from being burnt, they avoid clothes dyed in blue from indigo plants and also have among their rules of life the avoidance of unnecessary and unproductive controversies and slanders. There are less than a million of them and "On the Trail" regularly recounts their acts of bravery and poacher hunts (cf. "On the Trail" n°9 p. 91, n°19 p. 117, n°21 p. 106 n°28 p. 119). Their most famous catch is Salman Khan, a Bollywood star who, off a film shooting in 1998, was relaxing at night hunting blackbucks with the headlights of a big 4x4 with friends. The wild escapade of Khan and others was interrupted by a demonstration by the Bishnoi. The French photo-reporter Franck Vogel recalls that the rodeo took place near the historical sanctuary of Khejari where 363 Bishnoi gave their lives in 1730 to save the trees from the axes of a maharaja. A film is said to be in preparation in Bollywood on the conflict between Salman Khan and the Bishnoi. This may be an opportunity to do justice and pay tribute to this community. At the outcome of a judicial marathon (cf. "On the Trail" n°21 p. 106), Salman Khan was sentenced in 2018 to 5 years in prison and released after one night in jail, the time for an appeal court to review the judgement and to offer him bail, a bail equal to 770 US\$. Salman Khan's twists and turns with the legal system and the Bishnoi's lawyers have sprinkled "On the Trail" since 2013.

The Hindustan Times, May 13, 2020 ; Franck Vogel, <http://www.franckvogel.com/francais/projet-bishnois.html>.³²

FAMILY AFFAIRS / REPEATED OFFENSE

May 2, 2020

Bihta, Patna District, State of Bihar, India

Just for once, a live female blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Nepal and Pakistan) was seized in an SUV, transported by Md Salim and Kapil Kumar. The vehicle is registered in the name of Arshad Khan, brother of Farid Khan alias Guddu Khan, vice-chairman of the "parishad" - a local political assembly -, already charged with killing a nilgai (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*, Appendix III in Pakistan). Md Salim and Kapil Kumar have been remanded in custody. Their accomplices are sought. The Times of India, May 4, 2020.²⁹

May 2, 2020

Lavan, Jaisalmer District, State of Rajasthan, India

Hearing a gunshot, villagers confined to their houses came out and put poachers who had just killed an Indian gazelle (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III in Pakistan) to flight. This is the sixth one killed in 2 weeks in the area where the famous poacher Babulal lives, closely watched by the Forest Department.

The Times of India, May 5, 2020.³⁰



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FAMILY AFFAIRS

May 6 and 8, 2020

Bhumaswada, Chhota Udepur District, State of Gujarat, India

Kamsing Rathwa and his son Ishwar did not hesitate. They ratted on everyone when forest officers arrested them for poaching a nilgai (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) on April 21. Their 8 accomplices were apprehended 2 days later. They had driven the wild bovid with sticks, bows and arrows, and the father-son duo had put 2 bullets through the skin.

The Times of India, May 9, 2020.³¹

May 18, 2020

Santalpur, Patan District, State of Gujarat, India

Habib Hingroja and Nasir Khan Malek were riding at night on a motorbike during the Covid lockdown on the edge of the forest reserve. They bumped into Zilubha Vaghela, a forest officer on patrol, who chased them. While trying to leave him behind, they lost their balance, fell and fled, abandoning all their stuff, including an Indian gazelle (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III in Pakistan) and 3 Indian hares (*Lepus nigricollis*) shot to death. As the motorbike was registered in the name of Malek's cousin, the 2 poachers were quickly identified. Tested for the Covid-19, they were to be formally arrested after the results of the tests.

The Indian Express, May 22, 2020.³³

IRAN

May 2020

Mahdishahr, Semnan Province, Iran

Conviction of the poacher of 2 urials (*Ovis aries*, Appendix II) to a total fine of 580 million rials (13,900 US\$).

IEW, May 8, 2020.³⁴



PAKISTAN

May 20, 2020

Umerkot District, Sindh Province, Pakistan

Seizure in a truck heading towards Hyderabad of 18 live Indian gazelles (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III). They had been caught with nets in the Chinkara Wildlife Sanctuary and were intended for clandestine butchers for cutting up and delivery to hotels restaurants. "They will be released in a forest".

The Express Tribune, May 20, 2020.³⁵



Early June 2020

Chitral National Park, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan

The 23 watchmen from 11 villages who were tasked with monitoring suspicious comings and goings in the national park are on strike. They have not been paid since the beginning of the year. The Fund for Protected Areas (FPA) managed by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change is no longer responding to their calls. This FPA is said to be in a muddle and the money available to be reserved in priority for a bunch of directors who are out of touch with the reality of the field. There is no lack of money from the field, however, since markhors (*Capra falconeri*, Appendix I) hunting licenses are allocated for 125,625 US\$ (see "On the Trail" No. 28, p. 120). Chitral National Park, see "On the Trail" n°4 p. 92, n°23 p. 142.

Dawn, June 11, 2020.³⁶



AFRICA

CAMEROON

April 27, 2020

Waza National Park, Far North Region, Cameroon

"The Tall One", the miss whose beauty shone on the 170,000 hectare park, was killed. Cameroon-Info, April 27, 2020.¹

KENYA

GANG

May 25, 2020

Ijara, Garissa County, Kenya

Covid-19: "Rising demand for giraffe meat by affluent people from major towns has fuelled poaching of the species, making it a booming and lucrative business" says Paul Jinaro of the KWS. Two arrests. Both men are suspected of running the giraffe cartel in the county. The Star, May 26, 2020.²



GANG

June 13, 2020

O'Hara, Garissa County, Kenya

Residents of the Ishaqbini-Hirola Community Conservancy contributed to the arrest of 3 men and the seizure of a 150 kg load of giraffe meat. Ishaqbini-Hirola Community Conservancy, June 13, 2020; The Star, June 14, 2020.³



June 15, 2020

Taita Ranch, Taita-Taveta County, Kenya

The Taita Ranch (see "On the Trail" n°8 p. 78, n°10 p. 57) was fenced off 4 months ago. The carcasses of 4 zebras and a giraffe were spotted by aerial surveillance. All 5 of them died of thirst. The vets call for the other animals to be removed from the fenced area and are surprised that nothing has been provided for watering the wildlife before putting up the fence. SWT/KWS, June 2020.⁴

End of June 2020

Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya

Poachers' modus operandi: in the night, dazzle the giraffe with a flash-light and quickly terrorise her with an acoustic flash - hooting will do. The giraffe is petrified. Another man comes up from behind and cuts off the bottom of one leg with a machete. The giraffe slumps down. She is doomed. The next day or a few days later, the rangers or their dogs will spot a brown and white mosaic in the savannah, like a piece of discarded cloth, sometimes a head, and always the earth watered with blood.

Three giraffes poached in one week. In Eselengei, however, the patrol managed to get their hands on a poacher and 400 kg of meat. It is the dry season and the never ending Covid-19 season. The villages are full of city dwellers, the markets are closed, with the exception of the bushmeat black market. Big Life Foundation, June 15 and 19, 2020.⁵



NAMIBIA

Week of May 25, 2020

Kamanjab, Kunene Region, Namibia

Seizure of a giraffe carcass and arrest of 2 men. The Namibian, June 4, 2020.⁶

ZEBRAS AND DONKEYS

The Grevy's **zebras** (*Equus grevyi*) are listed under Appendix I.

The Hartmann's mountain zebras (*Equus zebra hartmannae*) and Cape mountain zebras (*Equus zebra zebra*) are listed under Appendix II.

The plains zebra, *Equus quagga*, is not listed under a CITES Appendix.

The African wild **ass** *Equus africanus* is listed under CITES Appendix I. The domesticated form *Equus asinus* was excluded from this listing.

The Indian wild ass *Equus hemionus khur* and the Mongolian wild ass *Equus hemionus hemionus* are listed under Appendix I.

The other Asian wild ass *Equus hemionus* are listed under Appendix II as the kiang *Equus kiang*.

AFRICA

KENYA

April 14, 2020

Tsavo East National Park, Kenya

Rescuing a zebra near the Kaluku airstrip. An arrow in the neck. Anaesthesia. Disinfection with tincture of iodine. Antibiotic. Green clay. Antidote. Favourable prognosis.

SWT/KWS, April 2020.¹

April 16, 2020

Olarro Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

After being anaesthetised, this wonderful "little thing" was released from a wire snare that was imprisoning his left front leg. Standing straight, he went back to his herd in her hooves. Favourable prognosis.

SWT/KWS, April 2020.²



End of May 2020

Nairobi Mombasa Highway, Voi, Taita Taveta County, Kenya

A convoy of motorbikes and boda-bodas was converging towards the food markets of Mombasa. Zebras were on the menu. 4 poachers arrested. Conservation Alliance Kenya, May 31, 2020.³

June 14, 2020

Tsavo East National Park, Kenya

Rescue of a zebra strangled by a wire snare and dragging a shrub that was used as a support for the trap. Favourable prognosis. SWT/KWS, June 2020.⁴



NIGERIA

June 26, 2020

Yauri, Kebbi State, Nigeria

Seizure of 1,600 donkey skins worth 50 million naira (129,950 US\$ or about 81 US\$ per skin) in a tannery. According to the Dried Meat Preservers Traders Association of Nigeria, donkey skin sellers are reported to be victims of bullying and racketeering. Presumed agents of the Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Services (NAQS) allegedly come to confiscate the skins and extort money (between 520 and 2,079 US\$) at workplaces or during road checks, but they refuse to reveal their identity and posting. In response to these innuendoes and protests, the government confirmed that the slaughter of donkeys and the trafficking of their skins were banned in the country. "The aim is to prevent the extinction of the animal."

See "On the Trail" n°26 p. 113, n°25 p.121, n°20 p.130, n°18 p.122 and n°16 p.112.

Vanguard News Nigeria, July 16, 23 and 30, 2020.⁵

ASIA

CHINA

April 9 and 15, 2020

Port of Hong Kong, China

In just a week, customs made 2 similar and unusual seizures: a mix of donkey skins and sea cucumbers from Egypt. In both cases, the shipment was declared as table salt.

- Seizure of 16 t of donkey skins and 500 kg of sea cucumbers. The value of the shipment is estimated at 190,000 US\$.

- Record seizure of 17 t of donkey skins, 520 kg of sea cucumbers and 2 kg of fish swim bladders. The shipment is estimated at 260,000 US\$.

In total these 2 seizures represent about 5,000 donkeys killed.

Donkey skins in Egypt, see "On the Trail" n°16 p.111, n°17 p.125, n°23 p.162.

Hong Kong Customs, April 11 and 16, 2020.⁶



BUFFALOS, BANTENG AND GAURS

AFRICA

UGANDA

Mid-June 2020

Queen Elizabeth National Park, Western Region, Uganda

Arrest of 4 poachers, 3 men and a woman. They had just killed by throwing a spear an African buffalo calf (*Syncerus caffer*) aged about a month in the Ishasha sector. The rangers rushed to the scene of the crime after being alerted by the mother's cries. The network of traps and nets was dismantled. Poaching for bushmeat is virulent in the park during the Covid-19 lockdown.

93.3 KFM, June 15, 2020.¹

ASIA

CAMBODIA

Mid-May 2020

Pou Chrei and Sre Preah, Mondulokiri Province, Cambodia

- The Department of Environment is mobilised to track down the poachers of 2 bantengs (*Bos javanicus*) killed inside a logging concession belonging to the Lim Royal Company. An AK-47 bullet was found in situ.

- In Sre Preah, a gaur (*Bos gaurus*, Appendix I), whose remains were lying in a rice field, was shot dead.

The Phnom Penh Post, May 17, 2020.²



Mid-May 2020

Prey Preah Roka Wildlife Sanctuary, Morokot, Preah Vihear Province, Cambodia

The remains of a beheaded gaur (*Bos gaurus*, Appendix I) whose meat was cut up were discovered by a ranger patrol of the Ministry of the Environment. According to the director of the sanctuary, the gaur was killed several days earlier, preferably at night to avoid the patrols.

The Phnom Penh Post, May 25, 2020.³

June 20, 2020

Song Rukhavorn Wildlife Sanctuary, Oddar Meanchey Province, Cambodia

The examination of the corpse of a male banteng (*Bos javanicus*) by a commission led by the Venerable Bun Saluth, chief monk of the province and head of the Song Rukhavorn forest community, concluded that the animal had two broken ribs and bore a bullet hit. He is said to have suffered for about ten days before dying. This is the sixth banteng poached in 6 months in the sanctuary. A Buddhist service was held in his honour the next day, the same day that another banteng who died of exhaustion in a trap on May 24 was buried. The Venerable Bun Saluth laments that despite efforts to increase the awareness of local populations about the protection of natural resources, some people continue to cut down trees illegally, set fires and poach in the forests.

The Phnom Penh Post, June 21, 2020.⁴

June 23, 2020

Chhay Louk, Pursat Province, Cambodia

A joint patrol of rangers from the South Cardamom Mountains National Park and Wildlife Alliance came upon the remains of a gaur (*Bos gaurus*, Appendix I) killed in a snare trap made from a bicycle brake cable. The poacher or poachers had cut a large piece of meat and the horns.

The Phnom Penh Post, June 24, 2020.⁵



MUSC DEER, MUNTJACS, DEER, ELKS AND MOOSE



The moose (*Alces alces*) is shedding the velvet from his antlers before the rutting period. Picture Gregory "Slobirdr" Smith

NORTHERN AMERICA

CANADA

April 2020

Cowichan and Skeena Valleys, and Burns Lake and Smithers, Province of British Columbia, Canada

Wildlife protection officers lay the blame for the upsurge in poaching on the Covid, on the idleness of people forced into inactivity and the need for some to find food or improve the daily lot.

- Six moose (*Alces alces*) were killed in April in the Skeena river valley. Most were females about to give birth and in the pile of offal and viscera, well-formed fetuses were found.

Fifteen carcasses of elks (*Cervus canadensis*) known as Roosevelt elks were counted in the Cowichan Valley on Vancouver Island. The discoveries are probably only a fraction of reality. "It's very frustrating for us seeing this. What's most despicable is a certain percentage of them, the ones harvested, people don't even take the meat. They shoot the animal, they get scared off or they decide it's too hard to process it." And they leave. They often do this as a family. Vancouver Island is home to about 3,000 Roosevelt elks. They are in decline.

- In early May, 4 moose were found near Burns Lake and Smithers.

"People are more likely to engage in illegal hunting and fishing [in times of uncertainty]. In fact, in other economic downturns, notably during the Depression, there was a lot of illegal hunting," says Chris Darimont, professor at the University of Victoria and scientific advisor of the Raincoast Conservation Foundation.

- Poaching of a moose (*Alces alces*) on the territory of the Wet'suwet'en, a tribe native to British Columbia. "The most disturbing thing," says Chief Na'Moks, "is that it was a female. "We need them for the next generation." "It's one of our food source and it's a limited food source." The body of the victim was left by the side of a forest road. The meat was distributed to the elders. The Wet'suwet'en oppose the passing of the Coastal Gaslink, the 670 km gas pipeline that runs through western Canada to the Pacific coast.

The Tyee, May 19, 2020.¹

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

April 2020

John Day, Grant County, State of Oregon, United States of America

Search of Austin Catron's home, 18 years old, for suspicion of burglary. Discovery of 7 deer skulls, including one red deer skull (*Cervus elaphus*) and one pronghorn skull (*Antilocapra americana*). Arrest of an accomplice, Jonas Waite, 19 years old. The investigation proved that the 2 young men had been poaching for 2 years and that Waite had already completed his game bag with a golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II). They were only interested in the skulls of deer and pronghorns and left the carcasses to rot on the spot, which, in the eyes of the federal law, is wastage and dumping of waste.

KTVZ, May 5, 2020.²

Mid-April 2020

Union Pass and East Fork Roads, State of Wyoming, United States of America

Kelly J. Grove was sentenced to one year in prison, 3 years probation, a 6,365 US\$ fine, and an 18-year fishing and hunting ban in Wyoming and 44 other states for poaching a female mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) and a female elk (*Cervus canadensis*). His accomplice and henchman Spencer Carrico was sentenced to a 90-day suspended sentence, a year probation, a 4-year fishing and hunting ban in Wyoming and 44 other states.

The court had a heavy hand on Grove for his involvement in the poaching of a brown bear in 2015 (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II). He was sentenced 3 years later to a 7,000 US\$ fine and a worldwide hunting ban for 5 years. His Remington 700-300 Ultra Mag was confiscated and returned to him 2 months before he poached the mule deer and the red deer. This time, the formidable firearm was permanently withdrawn from him.

Oil City News, April 13, 2020.³

April 25-30, 2020

Southwest of Dunseith, State of North Dakota, United States of America

Poaching of 2 male moose (*Alces alces*) and 3 females, one of which was about to give birth to triplets. The authorities appealed to the population to find the murderer(s). Moose are in decline in North Dakota, other northern states and Canada.

Outdoor News, May 14, 2020.⁴

REPEATED OFFENSE

June 2020

Jackson, State of Wyoming, United States of America



A Jackson resident, a repeat offender, is sentenced to 20 days in prison and fined 1,110 US\$ for collecting antlers of elks (*Cervus canadensis*) in a public forest on March 31. Since 2009, the collection, search, locating, stockpiling, possession and transport of shed antlers has been prohibited between January 1st and April 31. In most forests in the west of the state, this ban is supplemented by restrictions on the movement of persons and vehicles. The aim is to minimise the harassment of deer and other animals in winter and early spring when they are short of food and forced to travel long distances exposed. From collecting shed antlers to poaching adult deer, there is only one step and the guards increase their vigilance in winter, especially since collecting shed antlers has been increasing steadily for the past few years. Another collector, a resident of Star Valley Ranch, was fined 435 US\$. He was caught concealing antlers in the morning of May 1st, when "gathering" is allowed from noon onwards. The antlers were seized. "It doesn't pay to start early," said a local media.

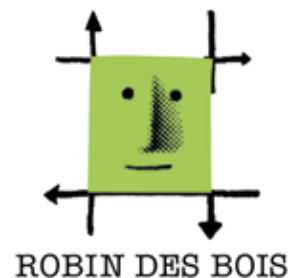
Wyoming Game & Fish Department, Einpresswire, June 15, 2020.⁵

June 11, 2020

Whitman County, Etat de Washington, United States of America

End of the investigation for the indictment of 9 men for poaching 3 elks (*Cervus canadensis*) in October 2019. The gang used to chase a herd by pick-up truck, and shoot from the open windows and the dump of the pick-up. Numerous reports had reached the county sheriff and so far it had not been possible to intervene, as elk rodeos were held on private ranches.

Big Country News Connection, June 12, 2020.⁶



June 23, 2020

Sandoval County, State of New Mexico, United States of America



Cody W. Davis is going to have a high price to pay. His deer poaching dates back to December 2015. On that day, Sergeant Benjamin Otero got a message that someone had killed and decapitated a mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*). Another anonymous phone call 3 months later made it possible to locate the crime scene and to discover near Lindrith, New Mexico, the remains of a headless deer body and the head without the antlers lying in a nearby copse. Stubborn investigators left everything on the spot and put in a 24-hour surveillance of the scene. In July, they saw a man approaching and picking up the head. They followed him for 180 km and saw him throw the head over a bridge on the Rio Grande, a foolproof way to get rid of an embarrassing piece of evidence. What he did not calculate was that divers combed the river bottom square by square and finally found the head after 2 weeks. The car had been tracked by investigators from New Mexico to its final destination in Dickinson, North Dakota. After obtaining a search warrant, they searched Cody W. Davis' home and the antlers of the super mule deer were seized. They enter the Top 4 deer trophies of this species. Had they been legal, they would have been honoured by the Safari Club.



With this information in dribs and drabs, surveillance over several months, concordant DNA analyses, the cooperation of all the wildlife protection services, the distance of 1,800 km between the starting point of the investigation and its point of arrival, and also the search of the Rio Grande, the investigation into the mule deer poached in New Mexico is similar to a major criminal investigation. Judge James A. Noel sentenced Cody W. Davis to 77,000 US\$ in fines and damages, broken down down as follows: 20,000 US\$ for killing the mule deer without a permit and out of season, 54,000 US\$ for reimbursement of the investigation costs and travel allowances, 3,000 US\$ for the New Mexico Operation Game Thief (OGT) Fund, which rewards citizens who help to confound poachers. "Davis may appeal, but we have a strong argument in support of the final order of the District Court." Deer & Deer Hunting Magazine, August 13, 2020. ⁷

End of June 2020

Franklin, State of Idaho, United States of America



Conviction of Reeder and Porter to 30 days in prison and an additional 2 years in prison if, within the next 20 years, they do not comply with the conditions of their felony supervised probation, including a ban on possessing a firearm.

Conviction of Earl to 15 days in prison and to an additional 2 years in prison if within the next 5 years he does not comply with the conditions of his felony supervised probation, including a 5-year hunting license revocation.

It was proven and acknowledged by the 3 men that they had, inside a ranch, shot 16 elks (*Cervus canadensis*) and 3 mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) and left most of the carcasses on site after cutting the antlers and turning them into trophies. On a few carcasses they cut up meat and traded it to buy new firearms. "It seemed as though they just couldn't stop killing" summarised one of the pillars of the investigation. During the search, the police also got their hands on narcotic or hallucinogenic substances.

Cache Valley Daily, July 2, 2020.⁸

End of June 2020

State of Tennessee, United States of America



After a month's investigation, the poacher of a female elk (*Cervus canadensis*) is arrested. Thirty days in prison and a fine of 350 US\$. Chris R Shepherd, June 30, 2020.⁹

LATIN AMERICA

ECUADOR

April 28, 2020

Tarqui, Cuenca Canton, Azuay Province, Ecuador
Poaching of 3 white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*, *Odocoileus virginianus mayensis*, Appendix III in Guatemala). The author is on the run. He faces 3 years in prison.

Ministry of Environment and Water, April 28, 2020.¹⁰

MEXICO

April 24, 2020

Othón P. Blanco, State of Quintana Roo, Mexico

Poachers set fire to the forests to drive out deer and other galopors and shoot them with their rifles in their flight or capture them in nets. In March, 7 "fire traps" were counted.

Profepa, April 24, 2020.¹¹

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

April 1st, 2020

Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure in a postal parcel from Japan of sika deer antlers (*Cervus nippon*).

Chinese Customs, April 2, 2020.¹²



Early April 2020

Deqin and Shangri-La, Yunnan Province and Markam, Tibet Autonomous Region, China

Notices of judgment published on April 9, 2020 :

- Sentencing of Zha to 2 years and 4 months in prison, a fine of 3,000 yuan (440 US\$) and 16,000 yuan (2,300 US\$) in damages for illegal possession of firearms and poaching of a sambar deer (*Cervus unicolor*) and 2 wild boars. The man also had to make public apologies. His trial was broadcast live by provincial media.
 - Sentencing of Li to 3 months in prison and a fine of 5,000 yuan (730 US\$) for illegally holding in his shop and offering for sale 3 legs of Indian muntjac (*Muntiacus muntjak*) and 2 horns of Japanese serow (*Capricornis crispus*).
 - Conviction to 13 years in prison and 2 fines of 15,000 yuan or a total of 4,400 US\$ for illegal possession of firearms, ammunition, homemade explosives, 3 carcasses of Chinese forest musk deer (*Moschus berezovskii*, Appendix II), 3 carcasses of Himalayan ghorals (*Naemorhedus goral*, Appendix I) and several parts of wild animals.
 - Conviction of Si to 6 months imprisonment and a fine of 875 US\$ for buying from a poacher and transporting for sale 2 carcasses of Chinese forest musk deer (*Moschus berezovskii*, Appendix II), 2 legs of Thorold's deer (*Przewalskium albirostre*) and 10 carcasses of wild boars (*Sus scrofa*).
- Sina, April 9, 2020.¹³



April 11, 2020

Nansan, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Myanmar.

Seizure in the cab of a truck registered in China of 2 antlers of muntjac (*Muntiacus crinifrons* or *Muntiacus vuquanghensis*, Appendix I), 47.40g.

Chinese Customs, April 14, 2020.¹⁴

April 14, 2020

Wandingzhen, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Myanmar.

Seizure of 5 muntjac bones (*Muntiacus crinifrons* or *Muntiacus vuquanghensis*, Appendix I), 84,33 g, from a Chinese traveller.

Chinese Customs, April 15, 2020.¹⁵

SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

CAMBODIA

Early April 2020

Thmor Rong, Cardamom Protected Forest, Kaoh Kong Province, Cambodia

Discovery by rangers of a southern red muntjac (*Muntiacus muntjak*) fatally caught in a trap and seizure of 69 traps, 8 chainsaws, a wagon carrying logs and a firearm.

Phnom Penh Post, April 7, 2020.¹⁶



MALAYSIA

April 23, 2020

Tongod and Tawau, State of Sabah, Malaysia

- Seizure of a deer carcass. Two arrests.
 - Seizure of 5 skinned deer. Three arrests.
- Trafficking in wild meat is on the rise during Covid-19 stay at home order. Daily Express, April 24, 2020.¹⁷

May 27, 2020

Kampung Sira Panas, Gerik, State of Perak, Malaysia

Police raid: deer meat and other wild meat, a magpie in a cage, so many knives you don't know what to cut with, broken or working firearms. Clearly, the man who made a profession as a rubber tapper did not only bleed the trees.

Pusat Maklumat Rakyat Hulu Perak, May 27, 2020.¹⁸

May 6, 2020

Ulu Kalumpang Forest Reserve, State of Sabah, Malaysia

Seizure of 2 motorbikes, 2 rifles, a "bakakuk" rifle, 12 deer-calibre bullets, 2 daggers, a knife, a pair of walkie-talkies, a torch and a mobile phone. The 2 poachers exited the Sabah Softwoods Berhad plantation in the middle of the night during Covid-19 lockdown and entered the forest reserve. Daily Express, May 8, 2020.¹⁹

INDIA

May 1st, 2020**Nayagaon Rampur, West Champaran District, State of Bihar, India**

The carcass of an Indian hog deer (*Axis porcinus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) was lying in a pool of blood in a field next to the village. Informed by a witness, the rangers found that 3 legs and the head had been cut off. A complaint was lodged against persons unknown. The village is in the Valmiki Tiger Reserve.

The Hindustan Times, May 2, 2020.²⁰

IRAN

April 1st, 2020**Alborz Province, Iran**

In a truck searched by the police at the exit of the forest, there were 2 decapitated western roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*), one male and one female, ammunition, a firearm, an infrared camera. Two arrests.

IEW, April 2, 2020.²¹

GANG

April 17-Early May 2020

Sagarmatha National Park ; Ponche and Panchboche, Solukhumbu District, Province N°1, Nepal

It is at the bottom of a ravine that the crime was committed. The prestige of the national park dominated by Mount Everest and listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1979 has been eroded. Its administration is strongly criticised by the Sherpa people. On April 27,

6 Himalayan musk deer (*Moschus leucogaster*, Appendix I) were discovered dead in traps, one female, 2 males and 3 corpses in a state of decomposition too advanced to determine their sex. The poachers are believed not to have had time to extract the preputial gland from all the males. This is the worst known poaching of this species in 10 years. The remains were buried in the presence of notables, park administrators, members of the police and the army. The investigation carried out by the Sherpa association "Pema Chosang Sherpa" led to the arrest by the police a few days later of 9 people, including Bishnu Rai and Ramesh Rai. Bishnu Rai had bought the musk for 50,000 Nepalese rupees (419 US\$), before reselling it for 70,000 rupees (587 US\$). Musk is used in the manufacture of perfumes and traditional medicines in China and South Korea, where its price can reach thousands of US\$ per kilo.

The Nepali Times, April 27 and May 2, 2020 ; My República, April 28, 2020.²²



Everest from Namche in Sagarmatha National Park. Picture Guillaume Baviere

NORTHERN, WESTERN AND SOUTHERN EUROPE

GERMANY

April 17, 2020

Frankfurt Airport, State of Hesse, Germany

Seizure after opening a postal parcel from China of 360 tablets. The customs spokeswoman points out that the preputial glands of musk deer (*Moschus* spp., Appendix I or II) secrete an odoriferous substance and indicates that 400 specialties of traditional Chinese medicine contain it. The extract from the glands is believed to be invigorating and aphrodisiac. In second position, the powder of musk deer antler is supposed to have the same properties.

German Customs, May 8, 2020.²³

SPAIN

Early May 2020

Andújar, Province of Jaén, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain

Seizure in a van of 127 kg of red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) and 25 kg of fallow deer (*Dama dama*) antlers. The driver declines to comment on their origin and destination.

Europa Press, May 5, 2020.²⁴

FRANCE

June 9, 2020

Brioude, Department of Haute-Loire, France

Sentencing of 4 red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) poachers to 12 months and 8 months suspended imprisonment with the withdrawal of a 4-year hunting licence. All 4 individuals are between 30 and 50 years old. They were charged with illegal hunting in gang at night with the use of a vehicle and carrying a weapon and with endangering the lives of others. They had been touring the forest roads for several years and deer mass graves were discovered here and there around Brioude. They were ultimately arrested by the gendarmerie and ONCFS (Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage - National Agency for Hunting and Wildlife) agents in March 2019. Apparently they were not involved in meat trafficking. Their appetite and that of their dogs did not justify a butchery of this magnitude. It was for "sport", for "fun". It's the same as for Salman Khan, the Bollywood star who hunted the blackbucks with his big 4x4 at night after the film shooting. 30 Millions d'Amis, June 8, 2020; l'Eveil de la Haute-Loire, June 9, 2020.²⁵



UNITED KINGDOM

Mid-June 2020

Llandegfedd Lake, Gwent County, Wales, United Kingdom

The "Optical Nightwatch patrol" with its infrared equipment spotted a red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) poaching. Three arrests.

Gwent Police - Rural Crime Team, June 13, 2020.²⁶

SWITZERLAND

Early May 2020

Val d'Entremont, Val Ferret and Gueuroz, Canton of Valais, Switzerland

Six red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) - including one fawn, 2 does and one young - 11 European roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) and 6 chamois (*Rupicapra rupicapra*) poached, reduced to frozen meat and displayed as trophies at a dozen poachers' homes. The youngest is 14 years old.

Radio Chablais, May 6, 2020 ; Cantonal police of Valais, May 6, 2020.²⁷



EASTERN EUROPE

RUSSIA

Mid-April 2020

Tourotchak, Altai Republic, Russia

Indictment of 2 villagers caught red-handed in attempted poaching of Siberian musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*, Appendix II) in the Altai nature reserve.

Новости Горного Алтая, April 14, 2020.²⁸

End of May 2020

Chelyabinsk Oblast, Russia

The environmental prosecutor of the region is claiming 240,000 rouble damages (3,432 US\$) from the poacher of 3 Siberian roe deer (*Capreolus pygargus*). His guilt was previously admitted by the Bredinsky district Court.

Znak.com, May 20, 2020.²⁹

GUANACOS AND VICUNAS

Guanacos, *Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II.
Vicunas, *Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix I except the populations of Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and some populations of Argentina and Chile which are included in Appendix I.

LATIN AMERICA

ARGENTINA

April 7, 2020

Albardón Department, Province of San Juan, Argentina

A van is stopped on a track around 3 a.m. by the province's environmental protection officers. On board the vehicle Juan Rivero and Rubén Berrido are carrying 4 stripped guanacos. They have been brought to justice, charged with poaching and breaking the lockdown currently in force.

Servicio informativo Gobierno de San Juan, April 7, 2020.¹

May 10, 2020

Comodoro Rivadavia, Province of Chubut, Argentina

Six poachers in a pick-up truck on Provincial Road 1. The police check them and find guanaco meat and 3 Spanish greyhounds. The men confess that they are returning from hunting. Three minors were released, the 3 adults charged and the vehicle seized.

abcDiario, May 10, 2020.²

May 19, 2020

Camaronés, Florentino Ameghino Department, Province of Chubut, Argentina

Caught butchering a guanaco and loading the meat into a pick-up truck, a man was arrested. The rifle and ammunition were also seized.

El Chubut, May 19, 2020.³



May 19, 2020

Don Carmelo Reserve, Ullum Department, Province of San Juan, Argentina

Four dead. Three guanacos and a puna rhea (*Pterocnemia pennata*, Appendix II). Eight arrests including Cristian Javier Riveros, wildlife warden in Ambiente, the administration in charge of the fight against poaching in the 16 reserves of the province. Agencia de Informaciones Mercosur, May 22, 2020.⁴

Early June 2020

Sarmiento, Province of Chubut, Argentina

Two vehicles are stopped on a side road. Seizure of 2 young guanacos and 4 butchered adults. Arrest of 7 poachers including 2 minors aged 13 and 16. They say in the middle of the Covid-19 lockdown that they wanted to "experience an adventure with nature". They were armed with rifles and 8 greyhounds.

Diario Crónica, June 2, 2020.⁵

June 7, 2020

Province of Chubut, Argentina

A Toyota Hilux was stopped on the national road n°26. On board were 3 men aged between 38 and 66, 180 kg of guanaco meat, a rifle with telescopic sight, 18 bullets and a butcher's saw.

Diario Crónica, June 9, 2020.⁶

June 14, 2020

Perito Moreno, Lago Buenos Aires Department, Province of Santa Cruz, Argentina

The dump of the Toyota Hilux was loaded with 4 guanaco corpses and the cabin with 4 men armed with 2 rifles.

La Opinión Austral, June 16, 2020.⁷



PERU

May 2020

Department of Ayacucho, Peru

Rural communities denounce the poaching of about 200 vicuñas (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix II). Most of the carcasses have been stripped of their wool. The villages most affected are Pichccachuri, Sol de los Andes, Cabana Sur, Taqracocha, Totorá and Illapatas. Predators are said to have taken advantage of the relaxation of vigilance. The farmer spokesperson regrets the fact that the PNP (Policía Nacional del Perú) has refused to open an investigation on the grounds that all its services are focused on enforcing compliance with the Covid-19 state of emergency in urban areas. According to official statistics, between 2015 and 2019, 964 vicuñas were poached in the department. Actualidad Ambiental, May 21, 2020.⁸

GORILLAS, ORANGUTANS, CHIMPANZEES, MACAQUES, GIBBONS, DOUC LANGURS, LORISES AND OTHER PRIMATES



Gibbon (Hylobatidae), End of June 2020, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Picture Wildlife Alliance Cambodia

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

Week-end of June 27-28, 2020
Alberton, Gauteng Province, South Africa



The chacma baboon (*Papio ursinus*, Appendix II) wore the mask of the scapegoat. He was for sale on the Internet. Rescue thanks to a whistleblower and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA).
Johannesburg Wildlife Vet, June 20 and August 4, 2020.¹

End of June 2020

Bloemfontein, Free State Province, South Africa

In March, the teenager exchanges a mobile phone for a male Mohol galago (*Galago moholi*, Appendix II). In June, she tries to exchange the galago (a female) with big eyes and small grams (155 g) for a new



model of mobile. The tiny one was lodged in a biscuit tin and ate salted crackers and artificially flavoured fruit yoghurts. She was taken in charge by the SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals).
SPCA, June 25, 2020.²

CAMEROON

End of April 2020

Yaoundé, Centre Region and Lolodorf, South Region, Cameroon

Two successive seizures of mandrills (*Mandrillus sphinx*, Appendix I) carried out in collaboration between the Forestry and Wildlife Administration, the gendarmerie and the NGO The Last Great Ape Organization (LAGA). In Nkoabang, in the suburbs of Yaoundé, a man was arrested while trying to sell a mandrill.

A few days later in Lolodorf, 2 traffickers on a motorcycle were caught when they arrived in town from Bipindi. Driving at night, they had had an accident and the mandrill with a rope around his waist was wounded.

EAGLE, April 17, 2020 ; Alwihda Info, May 7, 2020.³



LIBERIA

April 8, 2020

Liberia

Interception by the FDA (Forestry Development Authority) of a shipment of bushmeat including a chimpanzee head (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I), and monkey, pangolin and duiker meat. The whole was burnt on the field in the presence of some of the inhabitants of the village.

Humane Society International, April 8, 2020.⁴



Week of May 25, 2020

Sapo National Park, Sinoe County, Liberia

Rescue by rangers of a female chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I). The poachers managed to escape. She was handed over to Liberia Chimpanzee Rescue & Protection.

Liberia Chimpanzee Rescue & Protection, June 10, 2020.⁵

June 27, 2020

Liberia

Wildlife at Risk relays the information from Liberia Chimpanzee Rescue & Protection: a female chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) detained for years has been released upon the approach of a team of LCRP and rangers put on the spot by anonymous information. She is being actively sought in the nearby forest. Two other chimpanzees were fatally poisoned by the same jailers when they had grown big and difficult to contain in their chicken cage. One man was arrested. Two accomplices are on the run.

Wildlife at Risk, June 28, 2020.⁶

UGANDA

June 1st - July 30, 2020

Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Kisoro District, Western Region, Uganda

Byamukama Felix says he killed Rafiki in self-defence. With 3 accomplices who were also arrested, they were struggling with ropes, wire snares and spears to capture duikers and wild pigs when the approximately 25-year-old mountain gorilla (*Gorilla beringei*, Appendix I), leading a group of 17 gorillas, appeared in front at a turn of a path. Rafiki is said to have made threatening gestures towards the poachers. He was killed on June 1st with a spear in his abdomen. His body was discovered on June 2.



Byamukama and his accomplices were arrested on June 4 and 7. On July 30, Byamukama was sentenced to 11 years in prison for killing Rafiki and poaching in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site. The testimonies of veterinarians, rangers and others familiar with the case and Rafiki are unanimous in guaranteeing that he was peaceful. Perhaps he was also too trusting towards men because he was watched from afar (or too closely) by tourists (see "On the Trail" n°28 p.67) or he was disturbed by the noisy intrusion of a gang who felt at home.

Uganda Wildlife Authority, June 12 and July 30, 2020 ; BBC, July 12 and 30, 2020.⁷

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

April 26, 2020

Lifanga, Tshuapa Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

An investigator from Conserv Congo is informed of the detention of a baby bonobo (*Pan paniscus*, Appendix I) in the village of Lifanga. The testimony is confused. It is strengthened by a photo. Arrived at the scene, the Conserv Congo team learns that a certain Libandi has turned himself in to the police station with an injured little bonobo. He claims that during a hunting party, his dogs suddenly became agitated and that one of them brought the little monkey stuck in his jaws back to him. Libandi frees him and says he waited there for a long time in the hope that a member of the bonobo family would come and pick up his offspring. Seeing nothing coming, he took him home before informing the police and handing them over the little survivor. Is Libandi a swindler who felt the patrol catching up with him or a friend of the bonobos? His evidence has been taken and he walked out of the police station free. The baby bonobo, a female about a year old, was entrusted to Conserv Congo in Mondombe. She received emergency care there before being transferred near Kinshasa, the only bonobo sanctuary in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which is the only country in Africa to house bonobos.

Sometimes referred to as pygmy chimpanzees, there are 10,000 or 20,000 of them. No one knows. They are under the shadow of deforestation, food poaching, the international pet market and witchcraft. A bonobo's head sells for 500 to 1,500 US\$, a hand for 20 to 50 US\$, a kilo of smoked meat for 20 to 40 US\$. Alive, they are sold between 1,000 and 5,000 US\$. For meat, the main transfer route to Kinshasa the capital is the Congo River, on board ferries or other crafts, in big bags full of fish. For the living, domestic flights are used. Bonobos caught in the forest end up in cages in China or Thailand. To exfiltrate them out of the DRC, the smuggling chains use private jets or airliners. The bonobos are then dressed up as human babies in baby-baskets or hidden in accompanied luggage.

Adams Cassinga, founder and director of Conserv Congo, has dedicated his life to the rescue of bonobos and the defence of forest fauna, elephants, pangolins, felines and parrots.

See "On the Trail" n°9 p.36, n°10 p.31 and 33, n°13 p.44, n°21 p.108, n°26 p.53.

Conserv Congo, April 28, 2020 ; Mongabay, April 23, 2020.⁸



End of May 2020

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Discovery of the carcass of a red colobus (*Piliocolobus* spp., Appendix II) for sale in a bushmeat market. Conserv Congo, May 30, 2020.⁹

Early June 2020

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The female olive baboon (*Papio anubis*, Appendix II) was in captivity with an African diplomat who had received her 5 years ago as a gift from some unknown acquaintance in military circles. Liberation by national parks and ICCN (Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature - Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation) teams and fine imposed on the diplomat.

Conserv Congo, June 13, 2020.¹⁰



NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

June 23, 2020

Hidalgo, State of Texas, United States of America. Border with Mexico



The Geoffroy's spider monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*, Appendix II) that a 23-year-old Texas guy attempted to import from Mexico was found in the dashboard of the pick-up truck. Initially transferred to Dallas, he will reach by special plane the Melbourne Zoo near Orlando as soon as

possible, in the hope that Hurricane Sally will not paralyse air traffic for some time. The Melbourne Zoo is known for its capacities to receive trafficked spider monkeys and to study the complexity of their social behaviour. The plan is to entrust the newcomer, aged about 7 months, to a dominant 27-year-old female who is already mothering one of her natural children. "We think that's possible". "Shelley has always been a really good mom". "If she has his back, then we don't think any of the other monkeys would be aggressive toward him," says Darby Proctor, Professor of Psychology at the Florida Institute of Technology and co-responsible for the Melbourne Zoo's Spider Monkeys programme. A bit like humans, they are characterised by a social structure called a fission-fusion structure, in other words, they sometimes get angry and reconcile a few weeks later with a wealth of calls, screeches, barks, and other sounds and coded postures. Florida Today, September 15, 2020.¹¹

LATIN AMERICA

COLOMBIA

June 18, 2020

Santiago de Cali, Department of Valle del Cauca, Colombia

Rescue after 48 hours of patience and vain attempts to capture a tufted capuchin (*Cebus apella*, syn. *Sapajus apella*, Appendix II) who, with a piece of chain around his neck, was wandering in the Buitrera district. The fire brigade, the police and the zoologists of the CVC (Corporation of Valle del Cauca) were waiting for the reinforcement of experts from the CAV (Centro de Atención y Valoración de Fauna Silvestre) to stage a complex operation when the wandering capuchin had the good idea to enter a house. He was caught smoothly. The species is unknown in Colombia. Typical case of exotic petmania.

Corporación Autónoma Regional del Valle del Cauca, June 18, 2020.¹²

PANAMA

Mid-June 2020

Boquete District, Province of Chiriquí, Panama

Rescue of a red-backed squirrel monkey (*Saimiri oerstedii*, Appendix I) by Ministry of Environment (MiAmbiente) staff. He was in captivity. His poor health status and his possible dependence on the human species make it impossible for the time being to envisage his release into the wild.

Telemetro, June 10, 2020.¹³

SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

CAMBODIA

June 12, 2020

Svay Rieng, Stung Treng Province, Cambodia

Na Yun, a 35-year-old farmer, shot a grey-shanked douc langur (*Pygathrix cinerea*, Appendix I). He is arrested. Seizure of his rifle. The carcass is burnt and buried.

The Phnom Penh Post, June 14, 2020 ; Cambodia Expats Online, June 14, 2020.¹⁴

End of June 2020

Phnom Penh, Phnom Penh Province, Cambodia

Rescue of a young gibbon (Hylobatidae, Appendix I) by the NGO Wildlife Alliance following a call on its hotline.

Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, June 23, 2020.¹⁵



End of June 2020

Forest near Angkor Wat, Siem Reap Province, Cambodia

Reintroduction into the natural environment of 2 pileated gibbons (*Hylobates pileatus*, Appendix I) as part of a wildlife restoration project undertaken by APSARA (Angkor Park Management Authority), the Forestry Administration and Wildlife Alliance. This is the 3rd time since the start of the project in 2013 that pileated gibbons have been released. According to Nick Max, managing director of Wildlife Alliance, they will benefit from a better level of protection here than in the majority of the country's forests. The adult pileated gibbons are sought after for their meat and the juveniles as pets. Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, June 26, 2020 ; Media Time Asia, July 2, 2020.¹⁶

INDONESIA

ORANGUTANS

April 6, 2020

Bukit Ma, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

It is lockdown on the island but not for orangutans. A female of about 18 years old ventured into a rubber and oil palm plantation more than 7 km from her forest. Captured by the Human Orangutan Conflict Response Unit (HOCRU), the BKSDA and villagers, she was released back into the forest the same day. But Maria had not said her last word (see June 18 - July 4, 2020 below).

OIC, April 8, 2020.¹⁷



April 8, 2020

Jambo Papeun, South Aceh Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

She is a weak and under-nourished female about 10 months old. According to the plantation owner, her mother has vanished. Nicknamed Sisca she was taken in by the Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Programme (SOCP) to get her back in condition. A release into the wild in the forest might be feasible in the medium term. OIC, April 9, 2020.¹⁸



April 11, 2020

Pulo Tiga, Aceh Tamiang Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Evacuation of a male about 25 years old from the battlefield of the plantations. Nicknamed Bangun, he is undernourished and wounded by an air rifle bullet in his right foot. He joined the Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Programme (SOCP) rehabilitation centre for treatment and quarantine. In the context of the Covid-19 lockdown, HOCRU teams continue to criss-cross the tracks and deplore the fact that their vehicle is no longer in good working condition. OIC, April 14, 2020.¹⁹

April 17, 2020

Batu Lapis, Ketapang Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

Once again, somebody is claiming to have found a very young orangutan supposedly abandoned by his mother, this time on the edge of a forest 3 months ago. Bumeng grabbed him and confined him at home in a 80x80x50 cm cage, malnourished and wading through rubbish. The little male, about 6 months old, was finally recovered by International Animal Rescue and transported to its shelter in Sungai Awanv.

International Animal Rescue, April 2020.²⁰



April 21, 2020

Kapa Seusak, South Aceh Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

One more intervention before the tone escalates. A female attracted by fruits in an oil palm plantation 8 km from her forest could be put to sleep by HOCRU assisted by BKSDA agents and local residents. In good health, she was released the same day. She was nicknamed Kartini, after Raden Ayu Kartini, a national heroine and pioneer of Indonesian women's rights.

OIC, April 22, 2020.²¹



May 20, 2020

Indonesia

A government decree allows the release of wild animals by wildlife rescue and rehabilitation centres. These operations had been prohibited since the beginning of the Covid-19 health crisis to limit the spread of the virus. An authorisation must be requested before each release into the wild and a strict protocol will be followed. The orangutan rescue teams welcomed the news with relief. They have more and more residents. However, they do not project any immediate release into the wild. "We do not want to send a 'time bomb' into the forest population. (...) We need to be completely sure that we are not creating a path for transmission by sending an infected orangutan or staff member to the release sites," says Jamartin Sihite, executive director of the Bornean Orangutan Survival Foundation. Other experts recommend Covid-19 testing of orangutans before release. Once in the wild, they would have low risk to be contaminated because of their solitary way of living.

Mongabay, June 22, 2020.²²

May 29, 2020

Bontang Lestari, Bontang District, East Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

Evacuation of a 15-year-old male orangutan weighing between 70 and 80 kg. He had been wandering in a community garden for a week. Capture and anaesthesia lasted more than an hour. After a veterinary screening, he will be released in the Kutai National Park.

Korankaltim, May 30, 2020 ; Tempo, May 30, 2020.²³

Early June 2020

Miau Baru, Kabupaten de Kutai Timur, Province de Kalimantan oriental, Indonesia

Rescue of a baby orangutan (*Pongo pygmaeus*, Appendix I) aged between one and 2 years. He had been for 5 months living in a wooden cage measuring 1.5 m by 1 m with hens. The sadness can be seen in his eyes. His left index, middle and ring fingers and his right middle and ring fingers have been amputated. He is taken to the shelter of the COP. "Aman" is placed in quarantine there. Only one caregiver can approach him because of the Covid-19 health restrictions. Tests will be performed to assess his state of health before he comes into contact with other young orangutans.

Centre for Orangutan Protection, June 2, 3, 4, 9 and 16 and July 16, 2020.²⁴



June 29, 2020

Sampit, East Kotawaringin Regency, Central Kalimantan Regency, Indonesia

A man reports seeing an orangutan eating pineapples in his garden. He fears that he might attack his family. The 25-year-old male weighing 66 kg is evacuated. He is expected to be released in Tanjung Puting National Park. The presence of another orangutan, a female, is also reported. She has not been found yet.

Antara News, June 29, 2020.²⁶

June 30, 2020

Batu Satal, South Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

An orangutan is said to enter the village plantation. Members of the NGO Scorpion inspect the site and the nearby forest with 2 villagers. The orangutan is not found. The team recommends to the inhabitants not to capture him.

Scorpion, July 1st, 2020.²⁷

June 18 - July 4, 2020

Bukit Mas, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Maria, 13 years old, is rescued for the 5th time (see April 6, 2020 above). According to the BKSDA, she keeps returning to live in close proximity to man. After some care, she is released in the Mount Leuser National Park. The agents bring her deeper into the forest than before.

Maria is the first orangutan since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic to be released into the wild. Before, she underwent PCR nasopharyngeal testing. The result was negative. All the officers accompanying her were also tested and found to be negative.

The Jakarta Post, July 7, 2020.²⁸

INDONESIA - EXCLUDING ORANGUTANS

April 2, 2020

Bandar Baru, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Release of an adult male pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca nemestrina*, Appendix II) seized 2 weeks earlier in the village of Tandam Hilir II thanks to the intervention of the BKSDA and the Scorpion Foundation. The prisoner was chained by the neck to a tree around which he had been desperately turning for 3 years, occasionally fed and watered by his jailers.

Scorpion, April 3, 2020.²⁹

May 18, 2020

Pandang Lancat, South Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

A long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) tied since his youth to a wooden pole in front of the house of a certain Supriman was released today by the Scorpion Foundation. The man had frightened the mother in order to capture the little one.

Scorpion, May 20, 2020.³⁰



June 10 and 17, 2020

Wek I Batang Toru, South Tapanuli Regency, and Medan Tembung, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

- The Scorpion NGO investigator discovers 2 illegally detained long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II). They are shut in cages and chained, without water in free access. The inhabitants believe that these macaques protect their chickens from diseases. A total of 6 detained monkeys have been identified by Scorpion in the province.

- New discovery of a long-tailed macaque being held in similar conditions. He appears to be in poor health. Scorpion, June 16 and 19, 2020.³¹

June 25, 2020

Bireuen, Bireuen Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Arrest of 4 men aged 16 to 19. They were in possession of a siamang (*Symphalangus syndactylus*, Appendix I) in a makeshift cage made of rattan and petrol cans. They say they caught him in an oil palm plantation, about 20 kilometres away. The siamang may be able to regain his freedom after a veterinary examination.

Scorpion, June 28, 2020.³²

MALAYSIA

April 20, 2020

Taman Astaka, State of Pahang, Malaysia

Arrest of a persecutor aged about 40 who was filmed firing a shot at a caged monkey and then covering him with paint using a spray can. Following a complaint lodged by an animal protection NGO, the Pahang Wildlife and National Parks Department (Perhilitan) came to seize the mentally ill man.

The New Straits Times, April 20, 2020.³³

THAILAND

April 15, 2020

Pata Pinklao Department Store, Bangkok Province, Thailand

A short circuit and a fire breaking out that was quickly brought under control reignited the campaign for the transfer of "Bua Noi" (Little Lotus) to a location other than the 7th floor of a department store. "Bua Noi" is 33 years old. She is a female gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla*, Appendix I) imported from Germany when she was one year old. She is also known as "Pata King Kong". King Kong, everyone has heard about him, Pata is the name of the department store. The fire started in the middle of the Covid lockdown period. The department store was empty. The smoke is said not to have reached the gorilla and the other animals in the concrete zoo. "Bua Noi" lives in a 200 square metre apartment with air conditioning that could have conveyed the smoke of the fire into her home. The walls are made of thick glass. Although she is away from any noise, "Bua Noi" is not away from eyes. Customers look at her while she swings and watches TV or sits patiently in front of the (...)

(...)armoured door before twice a day bellmen come to bring her 3 kg of fruit and sterilised milk. Cleaning men come twice a day to remove crumbs and feces. According to Pata's management and some veterinarians, it would be dangerous to transfer "Bua Noi" to the Chiang Mai zoo. She would have to be placed under general anaesthesia and would risk getting bacterial and viral infections from contact with the dirt floor and other animals in the zoo. "No one can guarantee that she would be safe in an open-air zoo," says Benchapol Lorsunyaluck, director of a veterinary clinic and an expert on the case. However, the argument that "Bua Noi" should be evacuated quickly in the event of fire or other imperative needs is a strong one. In 15 minutes, it seems difficult to anaesthetise "Bua Noi" and evacuate her by stairways to some safe place. Here in Bangkok, the fire at the Krefeld zoo in Germany in January 2020 (see "On the Trail" n°28 p. 134) and the death of several orangutans had already rekindled the flame of the campaign of the local NGO Free Gorilla. The breaking out fire on April 15 placed "Bua Noi" at the centre of the fire safety issues of an old building open to the public during working hours and to a gorilla 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Bangkok Post, April 25 and February 3, 2020.³⁴

VIET NAM

Early May 2020

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Discovery in a cemetery of a long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) tied to a tree under a sheet metal plate, without water or food at his disposal. Education for Nature - Vietnam was notified and it mobilized the Forest Protection Department and the police who transferred the lonely monkey to the Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station. ENV, May 16, 2020.³⁵

May 17, 2020

Dak Lak Province, Viet Nam



It took a lot of perseverance to save this yellow-cheeked crested gibbon (*Nomascus gabriellae*, Appendix I). As a newborn, he was captured by 2 Rade people, an ethnic group living on the southern highlands of Viet Nam. They probably killed his family. A human family bought him. After 3 years of captivity, a team from the Endangered Primate Rescue Center (EPRC) went to the captive's home. The family hesitates. They hoped to sell him. They take him elsewhere so that he will not be seized in the following days by the police. After much talking and paperwork, the young primate can finally start a new life at the Cuc Phuong National Park rescue centre. ENV, May 28, 2020 ; Endangered Primate Rescue Center, May 25, 2020.³⁶

End of May 2020

Dak Lak Province, Viet Nam

Full of remorse after discovering his endangered status, the buyer of a pygmy loris (*Nycticebus pygmaeus*, Appendix I) contacted Education for Nature - Vietnam. The small primate was entrusted to the Provincial Forest Protection Department. ENV, May 25, 2020.³⁷

June 1st, 2020

Bac Tra My District, Quang Nam Province, Viet Nam

Mrs Duong sees 2 people ready to kill a baby monkey to eat him. She buys him to save him. In the course of her research, she discovers that he is a protected red-shanked douc langur (*Pygathrix nemaeus*, Appendix I). She gets in touch with Education for Nature - Vietnam. One month later, on the occasion of the International Children's Day, little Luom arrived in a shelter after a 16 h trip. Despite Mrs Duong's good will, his diet and physical activity were not adapted to his needs.

ENV, June 2, 2020 ; Endangered Primate Rescue Center, June 1st and 10, 2020.³⁸



Early June 2020

Viet Nam

Following a tip and several days of investigation, the NGO Education for Nature - Vietnam locates a trafficker who sells wild animals on Facebook. The environmental police arrest him and seize 2 pygmy lorises (*Nycticebus pygmaeus*, Appendix I) at his home. The pygmy lorises are handed over to the care of the Dau Tieng rescue centre.

ENV, June 5, 2020.³⁹

June 2, 2020

Hanoi Province, Viet Nam

A woman contacts Education for Nature - Vietnam. Her sister has been keeping a macaque (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II) in a cage for 10 years. She agrees to let him go. He now lives at the Hanoi Wildlife Rescue Centre.

ENV, June 6, 2020.⁴⁰

Mid-June 2020

Viet Nam

Rescue of a pygmy loris (*Nycticebus pygmaeus*, Appendix I). He is taken to the Hanoi Wildlife Rescue Centre.

ENV, June 17, 2020.⁴¹

June 22, 2020

Ba Ria Vung Tau Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of a pygmy loris (*Nycticebus pygmaeus*, Appendix I) by officers of the Forest Protection Department in a restaurant following a report. He is handed over to the Cat Tien National Park rescue centre.

ENV, June 23, 2020.⁴²

End of June 2020

Cát Tiên National Park, Viet Nam

Someone buys a red-shanked douc langur (*Pygathrix nemaeus*, Appendix I) from a trafficker to save him. He contacts the NGO Education for Nature - Vietnam (ENV). The langur will be taken to Cat Tien National Park. ENV reminds that it is better to report an illegally sold animal than to buy it.

ENV, June 18, 2020.⁴³



SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

June 11, 2020

Dhalewadi, Pune District, State of Maharashtra, India

Arrest of Eknath Gopal Aswale, aged 29, and Ganpat Shimge Hiram, aged 40. 25 days earlier, they had hunted a grey langur (*Semnopithecus entellus*, Appendix I) with a slingshot. They then shared the carcass to eat the meat. They were held in pretrial detention. The other suspects are sought for.

The Indian Express, June 12, 2020.⁴⁴

EUROPE

SPAIN

April 7, 2020

Calpe, Province of Alicante, Valencian Community, Spain

A white-lipped tamarin (*Saguinus labiatus*, Appendix I or II) originating from South America was wandering through the streets of the seaside town. A local resident reported him to the Guardia Civil. The Environmental Protection Service (Seprona) captured the little monkey and considered him to be in good health. He joined the Primadomus primate refuge. The Guardia Civil suspects his "owners" of having abandoned him for fear of Covid-19!

El Periodico de Villena, April 13, 2020.⁴⁵

May 14 - Early June 2020

Fuente el Saz de Jarama, Autonomous Community of Madrid, Spain

Theft of 2 female lesser spot-nosed guenons (*Cercopithecus petaurista*, Appendix II), Marta and Eider, from Rainfer's primate rescue centre. They have been living there for 21 years after being rescued from illegal trafficking. The thieves climbed over the fence and forced the gate of the enclosure. Three days later, Marta and Eider were found alone at a bus stop on the road to Torrelaguna, about 20 kilometres away. They were taken back to Rainfer's centre.

After conducting an investigation, Seprona agents arrested a 23-year-old Romanian man. He denies being the author of the theft and presents himself as a mere intermediary. He was released on bail. Two Romanian accomplices, a man and a woman, are also charged.

Moncloa, June 4, 2020.⁴⁶



ARMADILLOS, COATIS, PACAS, AGOUTIS, CAPYBARAS AND PECCARIES

LATIN AMERICA

ARGENTINA

May 4, 2020

Goya, Province of Corrientes, Argentina

A patrol navigates the Paraná River and spots 2 small overloaded boats coming from the islands and heading towards the port of Goya. Interception and arrest of the 4 poachers, including a 17-year-old young man, and seizure of machetes, a knife, the 2 boats and about 10 cut-up capybaras (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*).

Vía País, May 4, 2020.¹

June 6, 2020

Las Lajitas, Department of Anta, Province of Salta, Argentina

Interception of a van on route 52. On board were the driver and 4 passengers, 7 lifeless armadillos (family Dasypodidae), 5 peccaries (Tayassuidae, Appendix I or II), rifles, cartridges, and 4 live armadillos who were quickly released. Argentina is home to hairy armadillos (*Chaetophractus nationi*, Appendix II) and giant armadillos (*Priodontes maximus*, Appendix I).

El Tribuno Salta, June 7, 2020.²

BRAZIL

Early April 2020

São Lourenço do Piauí, State of Piauí, Brazil

The former mayor of the town (5,000 inhabitants) broadcasts a video on Portal SRN in which he cooks an armadillo (family Dasypodidae), glass in hand, and snapping his fingers at Covid-19. Manoel Idelmar Cruz known as Mazim and father of the current mayor was briefly arrested by the environmental police. An administrative procedure was initiated against him by the Ibama (Instituto brasileiro do meio ambiente e dos recursos naturais renováveis).

Olhar Animal, April 10, 2020.³

April 2, 2020

Brejo do Piauí, State of Piauí, Brazil

It is not good to be an armadillo in the state of Piauí. Seizure of 8 armadillos (family Dasypodidae) including nine-banded armadillos (*Dasypus novemcinctus*), 6 freshly killed and 2 frozen, armadillo spears, a firearm and arrest of 4 poachers. They are plundering the Serra da Capivara National Park.

Meio Norte, April 2, 2020.⁴



Capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*). Picture Bernard Dupont

April 5, 2020

Cruzeiro do Sul, State of Acre, Brazil

The livestock vehicle carried 110 kg of prohibited river fish and 125 kg of meat of white-lipped peccary (*Tayassu pecari*, Appendix II), paca (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras) and armadillo (family Dasypodidae) and enough to make tataupa tinamou skewers (*Crypturellus tataupa*).

G1, April 6, 2020.⁵

Mid-April 2020

São Miguel do Iguaçu, State of Paraná, Brazil

The 5th Environmental Police Company is chasing a suspicious motorbike and car in Iguaçu National Park. The driver of the car manages to escape by abandoning his vehicle. Seizure of a coati (genus *Nasua*) and an armadillo (family Dasypodidae), both dead, a 22-calibre rifle, 15 rounds of ammunition and 2 radio transmitters. The biker was arrested. He had with him a 20-calibre rifle, 10 rounds of ammunition and 2 other radio transmitters.

Central Gazeta de Notícias, April 12, 2020.⁶

April 18, 2020

Serra do Itajaí National Park, State of Santa Catarina, Brazil

Seven men in the national park were drinking beer and eating armadillo (family Dasypodidae) with boiled rice and manioc when an environmental patrol came upon them. With dignity, the guards did not sit down at table with them. They seized 3 other dead armadillos in the party's Range Rover, 2 firearms, ammunition, knives, machetes, flashlights, a trap, 2 walkie-talkies. The poachers spent 24 hours in police custody before being released on bail. They must, until further notice, wear electronic bracelets and are forbidden to enter the park. They face fines of 1,000 to 3,000 reais (195 to 585 US\$). The park is under the supervision of ICMBio (Chico Mendes Institute for the Conservation of Biodiversity).

ND Mais - Notícias do Dia, April 20, 2020.⁷

FAMILY AFFAIRS

April 18, 2020

Near Aruanã, State of Goiás, Brazil

Sebastião Pereira de Souza, municipal councillor for Aruanã, and his son are caught in the act of transporting 10 kg of paca meat (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras) and 61 kg of fish in a hidden compartment of their SUV. The car and the outboard motorboat in tow were stopped by Sergeant Domingues Ortiz and his men. After being heard at the police station, they were released on bail.

Jornal Opção, April 18, 2020.⁸

April 20, 2020

Ilha Solteira, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Consecutive seizures by the police of 2 collared peccaries (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II) a few months old (the holders were fined 1,000 reais or 195 US\$) and 15 logs of wood cut without a permit (the holders were fined 2,500 reais or 490 US\$).

SBT Interior, April 20, 2020.⁹



Early May 2020

São Sebastião, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure of a dead nine-banded armadillo (*Dasypus novemcinctus*) in the backpack of a man whose identity has not been disclosed. According to the Ibama, the nine-banded armadillos are among the top-ten most poached mammals.

Nova Imprensa, May 4, 2020.¹⁰

May 8, 2020

Campo Mourão, State of Paraná, Brazil

Seizure in the game-bags of a hunter of 45.65 kg of wild boar meat. The wild boar is the only wild animal whose hunting is permitted in Brazil. Under the wild boar meat, there were 2 nine-banded armadillos (*Dasypus novemcinctus*). Fine of 1,500 reais (274 US\$) and confiscation of 3 firearms and their ammunition. The man did not have a hunting licence.

Grupo Maringa de Comunicação Online, May 9, 2020.¹¹

May 9, 2020

Juranda, State of Paraná, Brazil

Five rifles, ammunition, paca meat (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras). Two arrests.

Tribuna do interior, May 11, 2020.¹²

Mid-May 2020

Caarapó, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil

The white-lipped peccary (*Tayassu pecari*, Appendix II) was raised like a pig. The police are convinced that he was intended for consumption. Fine of 500 reais (91 US\$). He was transferred to the CRAS (Centro de Reabilitação de Animais Silvestres) in Campo Grande. Campo Grande News, May 16, 2020.¹³



May 25, 2020

Cidade Gaucha, State of Paraná, Brazil

The man on the motorcycle came from the Ivaí River. He was carrying 4 capybaras (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*), 56 kg in total, a rifle, 30 cartridges and nets. Fine of 2,000 reais (365 US\$).

Portal da Cidade Umuarama, May 26, 2020.¹⁴



June 2, 2020

Eunápolis, State of Bahia, Brazil

The man was busy setting traps and checking others. Seizure of a machete, a cutlass, a rifle, a coati (genus *Nasua*) and a paca (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras), both dead.

Jornal Correio, June 3, 2020.¹⁵



June 3, 2020

Senandes, State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

Seizure of a butchered capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*), 3 firearms, 46 rounds of ammunition, 22 g of marijuana packaged for sale and a precision scale. The holder was transferred to the Rio Grande prison.

Acústica FM, June 3, 2020.¹⁶



June 8, 2020

Tuneiras do Oeste, State of Paraná, Brazil

The 2 men were caught in the act of poaching. They were coming out of a forest reserve with 2 pacas (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras) still warm and 2 rifles. Fine of 10,000 reais (1,846 US\$).

CBN Maringá, June 9, 2020.¹⁷



June 9, 2020

Buritizinho, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

The weapons were hidden in the false compartment of a doghouse and the meat of agouti (genus *Dasyprocta*), armadillo (family Dasypodidae) and deer was for sale. The poacher-butcher advertised on social networks.

G1, June 10, 2020.¹⁸



June 10, 2020

Unaí, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

In their car in the centre of the town, there were 35 kg of capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*) and 3.5 kg of caiman (*Caiman* spp., Appendix I or II) meat. At their home, 15 km away in the countryside, there were ammunition, a firearm and a capybara waiting to be cut up.

G1, June 10, 2020.¹⁹

June 21, 2020

Port of Ceasa, Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Fishing boats on the Amazon and those carrying cargo and people bring to Manaus the products of poaching which infiltrate the markets immediately afterwards, in polystyrene boxes. Early morning seizure on a stall of 2 pacas (genus *Cuniculus*), an armadillo (family Dasypodidae) and a freshwater turtle ready to be cut up.

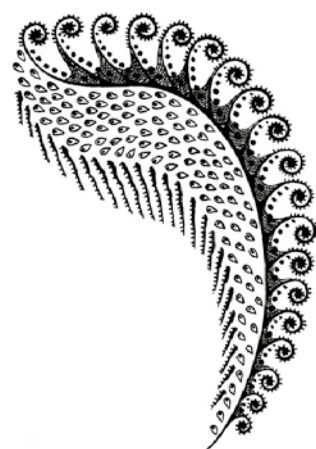
D24am, June 23, 2020.²⁰

June 22, 2020

Arealva, State of São Paulo, Brazil

The capybara meat (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*) seized at the suspect's home, as well as 2 rifles, was burnt in a landfill. Fine of 1,000 reais (184 US\$).

G1, June 22, 2020.²¹



ASIA

CAMBODIA

Early May 2020

Chi-Phat, Cardamom Protected Forest, Koh Kong Province, Cambodia

Release of a young black giant squirrel (*Ratufa bicolor*, Appendix II). This operation gave the Wildlife Alliance guard patrol an opportunity to seize 2 chainsaws, 3 mini-tractors and 0.5 m³ of illegally logged timber.

Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, May 2, 2020.¹



INDIA

April 11, 2020

Kunkeri, Sindhudurg District, State of Maharashtra, India

While surfing on the Net, Rohan Bhate came across a photo of a man posing with a double-barrelled shotgun near the corpses of 2 Indian giant squirrels (*Ratufa indica*, Appendix II). A former forest ranger, Rohan Bhate immediately lodged a complaint with the Forest Department, which was able to identify the individual, a soldier named Liladhar Minanath Varadkar. He was arrested and remanded in custody. The Times of India, April 12 and 14, 2020.²

April 23, 2020

Kattikulam, Wayanad District, State of Kerala, India

Arrest of A. Sasi, P. Suresh, P. Babu, N. Aneesh, K. Kariyan, and C. Mani who had broken into the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary on April 21 under the pretext of "honey collection" and had in fact poached an Indian giant squirrel (*Ratufa indica*, Appendix II), an Indian giant flying squirrel (*Petaurista philippensis*), an Indian crested porcupine (*Hystrix indica*) and a mouse deer (family Tragulidae). At the same time, they had entered the neighbouring state of Karnataka and destroyed a surveillance camera in the Nagarhole tiger reserve. The forest rangers seized remains of carcasses as well as a bow and 4 arrows. The Hindu, April 23, 2020.³



Indian giant squirrel (*Ratufa indica*)

April 30, 2020

Aathur, Salem District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Santhosh and his buddies Martin, Deenadayalan, Siddharth, Manikandan, Veerakumar and Ajith - aged between 21 and 27 - had gone poaching with dogs in the Manmangalam forest. Their booty consisted of squirrels (*Ratufa* spp., Appendix II), Indian hares (*Lepus nigricollis*) and quails (family Phasianidae). They then feasted on the hares and quails and gave the squirrels to the dogs. But their triumph would not have been complete without some selfies generously shared with their Facebook and WhatsApp contacts. The Forest Department got wind of this and approached the district's cyber crime unit. The 7 youths were arrested today. They were presented to the Karur court and were granted bail pending trial in view of the current lockdown. The New Indian Express, April 30, 2020.⁴

facebook



GANG

June 11, 2020

Muthappanpuzha, Kozhikode District, State of Kerala, India

Arrest of the so-called Junaiz, Satheesh, Prakashan, Rajesh, Sunil and Tomy by a unit of the Forest Department after several weeks of investigation. The remains of Indian giant squirrels (*Ratufa indica*, Appendix II), a home-made rifle and a car were seized. The gang had specialised in poaching inside the Malabar Wildlife Sanctuary after the extension of Covid-19 lockdown, which led to increased demand for bushmeat, and rising prices. The Hindu, June 12, 2020.⁵



Straw-colored fruit bat (*Eidolon helvum*). Picture James Agyei-Ohemeng



Bats, see "On the Trail Covid-19 Special Edition" p. 5.

AFRICA

COTE D'IVOIRE

May 28, 2020

Niakaramandougou, Hambol Region, Vallée du Bandama District, Côte d'Ivoire

Seizure in a bus connecting Tortiya and Katiola of 200 smoked bats (order Chiroptera). "This ownerless game was carefully concealed in bags containing smoked beef," explains Lieutenant Guy-Roger Liadé, second in command of the Niakara forest service. The driver claimed to be "transporting a package belonging to unknown persons". The bats and meat of monkey and great

cane rats (*Thryonomys swinderianus*) were burnt on the spot in the presence of the secretary general of the prefecture, the mayor of the town and the local health authorities. There are 87 species of bats in Côte d'Ivoire. The best known is the straw-colored fruit bat (*Eidolon helvum*).

Agence Ivoirienne de Presse, May 29, 2020.¹



OTHER MAMMALS INCLUDING HEDGEHOGS



European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*), Wales, May 2020. Picture Denbighshire Police.

AFRICA

COTE D'IVOIRE

May 6, 2020

Man, Montagnes District, Côte d'Ivoire

Lieutenant-Colonel Djan Yapo Evariste is infuriated by "the tricks of bushmeat traffickers who defy the hunting ban in place since 1974 and the anti-Covid-19 barrier measures". His team discovered 1,500 kg of warthog meat (*Phacochoerus africanus*) hidden under smoked beef. The shipment came from Biankouma in the north and was heading towards Soubré in the south. This is the 4th seizure of this kind in a few weeks. The meat was incinerated on the site.

7info, May 7, 2020.¹

KENYA

End of May 2020

Kenya

The advantage of a camel (genus *Camelus*) strolling in the savannah is that, more or less used to domestication, he does not struggle like a madman to get out of a trap strangling himself to death. He patiently waits for liberators from the Big Life Foundation to pass by or to be alerted.

Big Life Foundation, May 29, 2020.²



© Big Life Foundation

June 5, 2020

Nyumba, Masai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya

Two arrests. After killing a hippopotamus, the 2 butcher poachers were drying the meat with peace of mind but a patrol spotted them. Poachers are taking advantage of the Covid-19 pandemic. They know that there are no more tourists and that inside the park activities are reduced. The meat and their gear were burnt on the spot.

Mara Triangle, June 6, 2020.³

LATIN AMERICA

BRAZIL

June 14, 2020

Between Manaus and Boa Vista, State of Amazonas, Brazil

On the BR-174 between Boa Vista and Manaus, the police checked a vehicle and discovered a tapir head (*Tapirus* spp., Appendix I or II) and a live turtle, handmade firearms and their ammunition and more than 4,000 reais (753 US\$) in cash. Four arrests. The questions arise as to what has happened to the body of the tapir and where are the trees that were cut down by the chainsaw also seized in the vehicle. Portal do Holanda, June 16, 2020.⁵

SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

CAMBODIA

June 2020

Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Centre, Phnom Penh Province, Cambodia

Rescue of 2 smooth-coated otters (*Lutrogale perspicillata*, Appendix II) from the hands of traffickers by Wildlife Alliance guards. They are in quarantine under the care of the Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Centre.

Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, June 28, 2020.⁶

THAILAND

June 19, 2020

Surasak, Chonburi Province, Thailand

Seizure of a small Indian mongoose (*Herpestes javanicus*) for sale via Facebook. This animal, who can walk for miles in one day, was stuck in a wooden box. Through a hole, he could pass his head and see the wire mesh that constituted his 2nd containment barrier while waiting for the transaction. No possibility of escape.

DNP Wildhawk, June 22, 2020.⁷

facebook

VIET NAM

April 2020

Viet Nam

The customer of a restaurant finds a stew of spotted linsang (*Prionodon pardicolor*, Appendix I) on the menu card. Education for Nature informs the restaurant owner that he or she is in breach of the law. Police arrive and seize a survivor. Spotted linsangs are small nocturnal arboreal mammals. They are so inconspicuous that it is not known exactly how many are left. The flesh, coat and tail are appreciated for cooking, and for hats and other fashion and decoration requisites.

ENV, April 3, 2020.⁸



April 15, 2020

Nghi Loc District, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

"We received three, now we get five." A claw torn off for one, a claw half torn off for another one. The masked palm civets (*Paguma larvata*, Appendix III in India) were held captive before being rescued and left by the police in the care of Save Vietnam's Wildlife. Since their arrival, one females has pupped. SVW, May 29, 2020.⁹



April 28, 2020

Cuc Phuong National Park, Ninh Binh Province, Viet Nam

Escape of 2 poachers and abandonment in place of 2 Chinese ferret badgers (*Melogale moschata*), one with a leg amputated, the other with a knee wound, and a crab-eating mongoose (*Herpestes urva*, Appendix III in India). They were handed over to the care of Save Vietnam's Wildlife. SVW, May 3 and June 17, 2020.¹⁰



SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

April 27, 2020

Malambi Reserve Forest, Kodagu District, State of Karnataka, India

H. S. Lohith and H. S. Suresh were coming out of the reserve that night when a forest ranger patrol intercepted them. They had just killed a 6-month-old Malabar large spotted civet (*Viverra civettina*, Appendix III in India) with a double-barrelled rifle to eat the meat according to their own words. The weapon, their motorbike and a flashlight were seized, and both men were charged. No more than 300 to 400 Malabar large spotted civets are believed to remain in India.

The Times of India, May 1st, 2020.¹¹

End of June 2020

Kharagpur Division, Paschim Medinipur District, State of West Bengal, India

The video on social networks shows the killing of 4 Asian palm civets (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III) in a village. An investigation has been initiated to determine whether this is a ritual slaughter, an aggravating circumstance in the state whose High Court issued an order in April 2019 on the prevention of atrocities committed against wild animals in view of black magic.

The Times of India, June 27, 2020.¹²

EUROPE

FRANCE-UNITED KINGDOM

April-May 2020

France and United Kingdom

European hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*) see all sorts of colours.

- In Eprenon, about a hundred kilometres from Paris, a hedgehog was saved by the gendarmes on April 23, 10 years to the day after the species was listed as a protected species. A house search for a common law offence led to the seizure of the hedgehog. The animal was in a cage and was about to be tossed into a pot (cf. "On the Trail" n°19 p. 119). By decision of the prosecutor, he was released.

- In the county of Devon in England, Fenn traps (snap traps) continue to kill hedgehogs outright. The infernal trap was lying in wait near a pheasant farm.

- A gang of vandals who broke into a quarry in Llanarmon yn Ial in Wales killed and painted a hedgehog red. "The paint was 'industrial' and will be hard to remove off hands and clothes." The local police are calling for witnesses.

L'Action Républicaine, April 27, 2020 ; Devon County Hunt Saboteurs, May 11, 2020 ; Moorland Monitors, May 12, 2020 ; North.Wales, May 31, 2020.¹³



European hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*)



Red-legged cormorants (*Phalacrocorax gaimardi*). Picture Gunnar Engblom

NORTHERN AFRICA

MOROCCO

May 9, 2020

Zemrane, Région de Marrakech-Safi, Morocco

Intervention of the Water and Forestry agents. Release of European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) and seizure of the traps.

Médias 24, May 20, 2020 ; Moroccan Birds, May 29, 2020.¹

SOUTHERN, MIDDLE AND EASTERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

June 24 and July-August 2020

Manyoni Private Game Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

- Three white-backed vultures (*Gyps africanus*, Appendix II) have regained their freedom (for a while). They are the survivors of a poisoning attempt in November 2019 that left two dead, one white-backed vulture and one lappet-faced vulture (*Torgos tracheliotus*, Appendix II).



They were treated at the Raptor Rescue centre in Pietermaritzburg and equipped with a GPS backpack.

In 2019, at least 56 vultures died from poisoning in the province. 70% of the breeding pairs have disappeared since 2001.

- Ten white-backed vultures (*Gyps africanus*, Appendix II) were found dead, including 2 shot dead on a communal land. Two victims were part of the trio released on June 24. The villagers were supposedly unaware of the protected status of the species. They say it is not unusual to shoot vultures. Vultures in KwaZulu-Natal Province see "On the Trail" n°3 p.35, n°11 p.75, n°19 p.33, n°25 p.38 and n°27 p.41.

SA People, July 1st and August 21, 2020.²



CAMEROON

End of June 2020

Cameroon

Seizure of 2 grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) hidden in a car.

Limbe Wildlife Centre, June 27, 2020.³



KENYA

April 21-May 12, 2020

Rumuruti, Laikipia County, Kenya

18 vultures, of which 7 Rüppell's vultures (*Gyps rueppellii*, Appendix II), 11 tawny eagles (*Aquila rapax*, Appendix II) and a black-backed jackal (*Canis mesomelas*) died from poisoning. A hooded vulture (*Necrosyrtes monachus*, Appendix II) and another jackal were found the following days. They were victims of a poisoned camel carcass. The poisoner was arrested 3 weeks later. The remains were burnt on the spot to avoid poisoning in series.

KWS, April 23, 2020 ; Standard Media, April 24, 2020; The Nation, May 13, 2020.⁴



May 28, 2020

Garissa County, Kenya

The month was wet in its first half before getting dry and windy at the end. Vegetation was lush and streams at the highest. Human/wildlife conflicts were rare if not non-existent. A mass die-off of laughing doves (*Spilopelia senegalensis*) has been observed in the water bodies around Garissa, which also provides water to domestic animals such as goats, camels and donkeys. Rescuers and veterinarians from the county and the region found that only laughing doves were affected. They fall nose-down and can no longer roost. They are in a state of severe dehydration. The epizootic disease is attributed to the Paramyxovirus that causes Newcastle disease.

SWT/KWS, May 2020.⁵



NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Early June 2020

United States of America

It is one of the last low blows from Trump. He wants to mutilate the Migratory Bird Treaty Act signed in 1918. The manoeuvre consists of striking out the clause according to which industrialists, planners or property developers are criminally liable when birds fall victim to hecatomb under foreseeable circumstances. Trump and his administration want migratory birds drowned in lagoons of oil residues, poisoned in mine tailings reservoirs, decapitated by wind turbines, crashed on electricity or telecommunications pylons, to be considered unintended victims. It would be just bad luck for them. Bird conservationists would no longer be able to prosecute those responsible even if they had wiped themselves with the preventive recommendations issued by the federal services. It was on the basis of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act that judges ordered BP to pay 100 million US\$ in compensatory damages after 100,000 birds died in the Gulf of Mexico oil spill in 2010.

AP, June 5, 2020.⁶

June 26, 2020

State of Arizona, United States of America

Dennis Raymond McPherron, 74 years-old, is charged with illegally importing 220 feathers from 4 military macaws (*Ara militaris*, Appendix I), a blue-and-gold macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II), a scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*, Appendix I), a cockatoo (*Cacatuidae*, Appendix I or II), a bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II), a golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II), a northern crested caracara (*Caracara cheriway*, Appendix II), 8 northern flickers (*Colaptes auratus*), a greater roadrunner (*Geococcyx californianus*) and a toucan (family *Ramphastidae*). He had been arrested at the Mexican border in Nogales on February 15, 2017.

US Department of Justice, June 26, 2020 ; US Fish and Wildlife Service, February 23, 2017.⁷

ARGENTINA

Early April 2020

Guanacache, Province of San Juan, Argentina

Seizure of 4 great kiskadees (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) and 2 trap cages.

Si San Juan, April 6, 2020.⁸



End of April 2020

Pueblo General Belgrano, Province of Entre Ríos, Argentina

Seizure of a yellow cardinal (*Gubernatrix cristata*, Appendix II) and its cage during a roadside check. It was released. The driver and the passenger were taken to the police station.

Maxima Online, April 24, 2020.⁹

April 25 and 26, 2020

Belén, Province of Catamarca, Argentina

Seizure of songbirds including ultramarine grosbeaks (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*), hooded siskins (*Spinus magellanicus*) and saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*) during an inspection operation.

El Esquiú, April 27, 2020.¹⁰

Mid-May 2020

Exaltación de la Cruz, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina

Bringing out in the open of an illegal pet shop following a tip-off. The 60 animals, including ostriches (*Struthio camelus*, Appendix I), emus (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*) and cockatoos (*Cacatuidae*, Appendix I or II), but also common elands (*Taurotragus oryx*), were placed in shelters.



El Diario de Carlos Paz, May 15, 2020.¹¹

BRAZIL

FAMILY AFFAIRS

June 15, 2020

São Miguel do Araguaia, State of Goiás, Brazil

Alerted by gunshots and an infuriated owner, the police arrived on the scene and caught 2 brothers coming out of the woods brandishing a weapon and a bare-faced curassow (*Crax fasciolata*). At their home, a sort of fighting cocks boarding facility was discovered. The best ones trade for around 5,000 reais or 930 US\$. Carefully separated to avoid unnecessary fights, they are waiting to enter the ring and to trigger the shouts and the bets by eating grains and food supplements.

G1, June 16, 2020.¹²



June 17, 2020

São Carlos Ecological Park, São Carlos, State of São Paulo, Brazil

After she was stolen from the park, the golden conure (*Guarouba guarouba*, Appendix I) is sold on the street for 200 reais (38 US\$). Her buyer quickly notices a wanted notice on social networks and in the online press. She contacts the police. The bird whose wings have been cut off has been placed in an aviary in São Carlos.

Golden conures are endemic to Brazil, particularly to the states of Maranhão and Pará. Threatened by deforestation and pet trade, they are sought after for the beauty of their feathers.

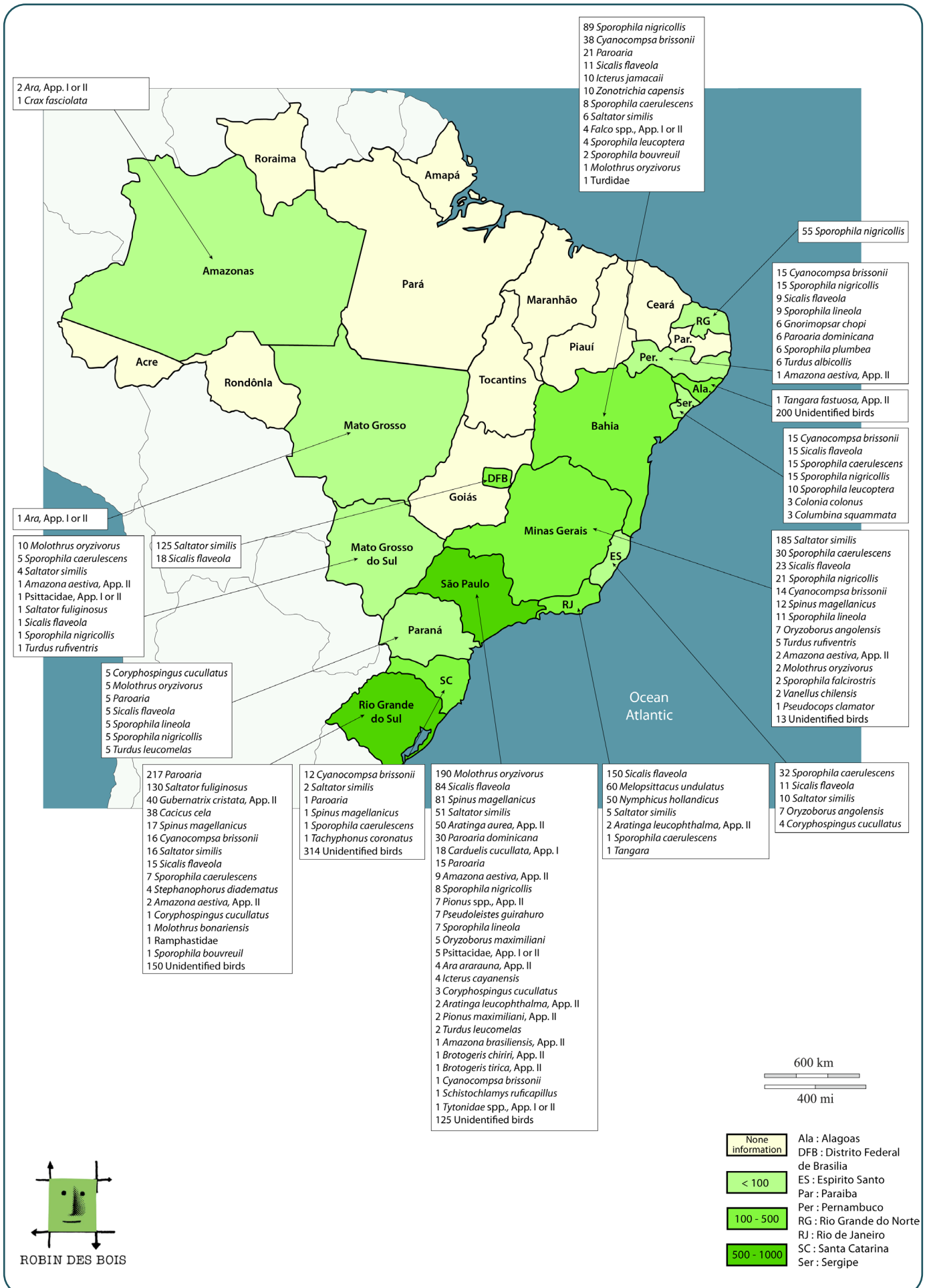
São Carlos Agora, June 19, 2020 ; G1, June 19, 2020.¹³

3,183 birds seized in Brazil between 1 April and 30 June 2020. Map on next page.



April 30, 2020, Pelotas, State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

3,183 birds seized in Brazil between April 1 and June 30, 2020 according to official and media sources



COLOMBIA

April 24, 2020

Bogotá, Colombia

Seizure of 3 parrots (family Psittacidae), 2 toucans (family Ramphastidae), one New World oriole (genus *Icterus*) and one brown-throated conure (*Aratinga pertinax*, Appendix II) kept as pets.

Secretaría de Ambiente, April 24, 2020.¹⁴

End of April 2020

Villavicencio, Department of Meta, Colombia

Arrest of a young man aged 20. An accomplice fled through a swamp. Seizure of a roadside hawk (*Buteo magnirostris*, Appendix II), 2 American kestrels (*Falco sparverius*, Appendix II) and a tropical screech-owl (*Otus choliba*, Appendix II). An amphibian considered exotic, an axolotl (*Ambystoma mexicanum*, Appendix II), was also seized.

Minuto 30, April 22, 2020.¹⁵

Early May 2020

Bogotá, Colombia

Seizure in the Arborizadora Alta area of a mealy parrot (*Amazona farinosa*, Appendix II) kept as a pet and abused.

Conexion Capital, May 7, 2020.¹⁶

Early June 2020

Bogotá, Colombia

Trafficking in Bogotá is protean. More than 2,000 animals have been seized, rescued by the services of the Colombian capital and sometimes their story seems like a fairy tale. Two owls were freed after spending more than 10 months in a veterinary shelter and wildlife learning centre. The first was injured in the right eye as a result of who knows what abuse. The second was almost a chick when she arrived and needed to learn preying. She had been placed in a pen occupied by an old owl for this purpose.

Semana Sostenible, June 7, 2020.¹⁷

June 8, 2020

Envigado, Department of Antioquia, Colombia

Seizure of 3 yellow-backed orioles (*Icterus chrysater*), a northern mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*), 2 blue-necked tanagers (*Tangara cyanicollis*) and 2 seedeaters (genus *Sporophila*). Their economic is allegedly 50 million pesos or 13,218 US\$. Arrest and release of 2 men aged 41 and 46. They are charged with trafficking in wild animals. A hunting rifle and 5 English pointers were confiscated from them.

Noticias Tele Medellin, June 8, 2020.¹⁸



Mid-June 2020

Cartagena, Department of Bolívar, Colombia

Seizure of a Smith & Wesson, 72 birds including 13 blue-black grassquits (*Volatinia jacarina*), 10 greyish saltators (*Saltator coerulescens*), 7 bluebirds (genus *Sialia*), 9 New World orioles (genus *Icterus*) and saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), a porcupine and toads. In 2 weeks' time, 182 birds were seized in the department. Three arrests.

Diario La Libertad, June 16, 2020.¹⁹

June 24, 2020

Corozal, Department of Sucre, Colombia

Mileydis Aldana H., 21 years-old, posted a video on Facebook in which she decapitates a barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II) with a big smile. It sparked outrage. The video was removed and the young woman was arrested for animal abuse.

El Comercio, June 24, 2020.²⁰



COSTA RICA

Mid-May 2020

Santa María de Dota, Province of San José, Costa Rica

Seizure in 2 homes of 7 black-faced solitaires (*Myadestes melanops*), 5 lesser goldfinches (*Spinus psaltria*), a yellow-faced grassquit (*Tiaris olivaceus*) and their cages. They have been entrusted to the care of the Rescate Wildlife Rescue Center in La Garita, in the province of Alajuela. Neighbours had sounded the alarm.

Teletica, May 19, 2020.²¹

GUATEMALA

May 12, 2020

Department of Petén, Guatemala

Discovery in a box on the roadside of more than 15 adult and juvenile parrots, including red-lored amazons (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II) and mealy amazons (*Amazona farinosa*, Appendix II). Only a few chicks survived. The Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Association (ARCAS) took them to a shelter.

Perspectiva, May 12, 2020.²²

Early June 2020

Boca del Monte, Department of Petén, Guatemala

The Diprona (Dirección de Protección a la Naturaleza) and the Conap (Consejo Nacional de Áreas Protegidas) joined forces to carry out the investigation and seize 3 white-fronted parrots (*Amazona albifrons*, Appendix II), 2 red-lored amazons (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II) and one yellow-fronted amazon (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II).

República, June 2, 2020.²³

MEXICO

Early April 2020

Iguala, State of Guerrero, Mexico

Arrest of Andrés N., aged 42, José Luis N., aged 33, Octavio C., aged 26, Nery Tomas N., aged 22, Gregorio N., aged 43, Silvia Esmeralda N., aged 40, and a 15-year-old teenager. Two macaws (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II), 5 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), 3 Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), and 3 turtles are seized with 6 firearms and ammunition, 3 motorbikes and 6 vehicles (one Audi, one Volkswagen, one Chevrolet, 2 Ford, one Jeep) and 9,000 pesos in cash (378 US\$).

El Sol de Acapulco, April 6, 2020.²⁴



Early April 2020

Puebla, State of Puebla, Mexico

Arrest of Agustina N., aged 53, María del Carmen N., aged 41, and María Isabel N., aged 22, in the market of La Acocota. Seizure of 250 birds, including protected species, 4 slot machines and a bottle containing a psychotropic substance.

24 Horas, April 8, 2020.²⁵

April 17, 2020

Ciudad Juárez International Airport, State of Chihuahua, Mexico

The National Guard detects a suspicious package coming from Mexico City. They contact Profepa. Discovery of 16 fingers and a full claw of red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*, Appendix II).

Profepa, April 21, 2020.²⁶

April 20, 2020

State of Aguascalientes and State of San Luis Potosí, Mexico

- Seizure of a juvenile great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*, Appendix II) in a private home. He will be entrusted to a wildlife conservation management unit (UMA).

- Seizure of an olive-throated conure (*Aratinga nana*, Appendix II) in a private home. She did not benefit from appropriate living conditions. She was temporarily entrusted to the care of specialists.

Profepa, April 29, 2020.²⁷

April 27, 2020

Tehuantepec, State of Oaxaca, Mexico

Seizure of 7 orange-fronted conures (*Eupsittula canicularis*, Appendix II) and 5 amazons (*Amazona* spp., Appendix I or II). They do not have enough feathers. They are too vulnerable to be released.

Profepa, April 27, 2020.²⁸

May 1st and 4, 2020

Tulacingo and Mineral de la Reforma, State of Hidalgo, Mexico

- An arrest on the Mexico-Tuxpan highway. The suspect was trying to sell 2 red-lored amazon chicks (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II).

- Another arrest in the car park of a shopping centre. The suspect was trying to sell 2 yellow headed parrot chicks (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I) and one white-fronted parrot chick (*Amazona albifrons*, Appendix II).

Profepa lodges a complaint against the 2 suspects. Profepa, May 9, 2020.²⁹

May 3 and 8, 2020

Mérida, State of Yucatán, Mexico

Profepa files a complaint about the death of a keel-billed toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*, Appendix II). Wounded by 2 gunshots, he died at the veterinary clinic. The person who dropped him off at the clinic tells the inspectors the address of the person who gave him the bird. He is a manufacturer of cages for trapping birds ("bocatrapas"), who is claiming that the bird was injured when he found him.

Profepa, May 8, 2020.³⁰

May 5, 2020

El Capulín, State of Michoacán, Mexico

Seizure of 4 white-tailed kite chicks (*Elanus leucurus*, Appendix II). They were shut in a cage and appeared to be in good physical health. They will be entrusted to a PIMVS (Predio o Instalación que Maneja Vida Silvestre).

Profepa, May 5, 2020.³¹

June 6, 2020

Escuinapa, State of Sinaloa, Mexico

Road check. 18 yellow-headed amazon chicks (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I) are flushed out in the baggage compartment of a bus bound for Nogales, 1,250 km away in the state of Sonora. Two were already dead.

Profepa, June 17, 2020.³²

June 8, 2020

Tizimin, State of Yucatán, Mexico

During the inspection of a home, agents discovered 18 illegally kept birds: one white-fronted parrot (*Amazona albifrons*, Appendix II), 6 painted buntings (*Passerina ciris*), 8 lesser goldfinches (*Spinus psaltria*) and 3 white-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila torqueola*). They were handed over to the Animaya Zoological Park in Merida.

Profepa, June 16, 2020.³³

Mid-June 2020

Mérida International Airport, State of Yucatan, Mexico

Seizure of 2 black swans (*Cygnus atratus*) in the freight area. They were in wooden crates bound for Mexico City. No legal document accompanied them. Black swans are appreciated as ornamental animals.

Infobae, June 14, 2020.³⁴

PANAMA

Mid-May 2020

San Félix, Province of Chiriquí, Panamá

Seizure in a private home of a red-lored amazon (*Amazona autumnalis*, Appendix II) and a keel-billed toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*, Appendix II). Telemetro, May 8, 2020.³⁵



PERU

April 2020

Culebras, Province of Huarney, Department of Ancash, Peru

Within 2 days, in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic, 71 red-legged cormorants (*Phalacrocorax gaimardi*), locally known as "chuita", and 381 guanay cormorants (*Leucocarbo bougainvillii*) called "patillo" were found dead on the beach of Abrigadito. On the first day, the birds found were plucked, eviscerated and cut up. On the second day, 8 pyrotechnic strings were next to the corpses. Suspects swam away when a patrol approached. Cormorants are used in local dishes such as the "picante de chuita". Serfor, May 9, 2020.³⁶



TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

June 1st, 2020

Cedros, Island of Trinidad, Trinidad and Tobago

As the coastguard approached, 3 men hurriedly threw cardboard boxes overboard. 20 red-shouldered macaws (*Diopsittaca nobilis*, Appendix II), 22 parrots (*Pionites* spp., Appendix II), 5 orange-winged parrots (*Amazona amazónica*, Appendix II) and Eurasian bullfinches (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*) drowned. They were reportedly captured in Venezuela. All 3 suspects are arrested. They intended to sell the birds on the island of Trinidad. Until a Covid-19 test has been conducted, they are released. La Razón, June 3, 2020.³⁷

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

April 2020

Chaoyang District, Beijing Municipality, China

Arrest of Liu and Wang. Seizure at their home of more than 40 wild birds, including a cockatoo (*Cacatuidae*, Appendix I or II) and a grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I). China Daily, May 5, 2020.³⁸

April 20, 2020

Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure of a box of "swallow nests" in incoming mail. Their importation is prohibited in order to limit the risk of introduction of viruses such as avian influenza.

Chinese Customs, April 20, 2020.³⁹



April 29, 2020

Meisha District, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure by customs in a sea container of 459 kg of ostrich feathers (*Struthio camelus*, Appendix I in Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Sudan) divided into 9 packages. They come from South Africa. After inspection and in view of their state of putrefaction, it was decided to return them to the sender.

Chinese Customs, May 12, 2020.⁴⁰

May 4, 2020

Kunming Wildlife Park, Yunnan Province, China

An Indian peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) is a victim of tourists. A woman brutally grabbed him by the head to be photographed with it. In February 2016, an Indian peafowl died in similar circumstances. The South China Morning Post, May 15, 2020.⁴¹



ABOUT ADDICTION TO SWALLOW NESTS :

EDWARD-JOHN TRELAWNY, *ADVENTURES OF A YOUNGER SON* (1831). RICHARD BENTLEY EDITOR, 1835.



"Nothing particular occurred during my run to Java except the capture, or rather recapture (for she had been previously taken by an English man-of-war) of a small Spanish vessel, belonging to merchants at the Philippine Islands, loaded with camphor, and the celebrated edible birds' nests. There were only six English sailors and a midshipman in charge of her, although so valuable a prize; consequently she could attempt no resistance.

A short time before this, an English man-of-war brig had captured, off the Philippine Islands, a Spanish vessel, containing a cargo of this sea-slug. On the English officer's boarding her, and asking what she was loaded with, the Spaniards truly answered, "Birds' nests". John Bull, whose ship had recently entered the Chinese seas, with gaping wonder exclaimed, "Birds' nests ! What, you rascals, do you take me for a spoony greenhorn ? Birds' nests ! I'll birds'-nest you, you lubberly liars ! Off with the hatchways !"

Accordingly the hold of the vessel was searched, and the English sailors were dumbfounded at discovering nothing but sacks of stinking, dirty, muddy-looking swallows' nests, such as they had seen sticking under the eaves of houses. They still thought this slimy compost was merely placed as a skreen

or cover, to shelter something more valuable, and threw a great portion of it overboard, in order to arrive at the treasure below - chuckling, and treating the Spaniards with derision, the Jack-tars cutting many witticisms on Spanish sailors going a birds'-nesting. They cleared down to her keelson, and searched into every nook in vain. Their officer, on his return to the brig, gave the commander an account of what the Spaniards had told him, and that he had verified it with his own eyes; upon which there was a general laugh throughout the ship. "However", quoth the greenhorn commander, "the vessel is Spanish, and we must keep her. Though she is but in ballast, her hull is worth something. They must have been hard up for shingle, where they come from, to put sludge in her, - and in bags !"

He then gave orders that a midshipman, and three or four of his worst men, should take charge of her, and run her into the nearest port. One rational thing he did was to remove the Spanish prisoners to his own brig, or they would have soon retaken her. Thus he left her, and it was not till he himself put into a Chinese port, and accidentally mentioned this occurrence, as a joke against the Spaniards, that he learnt the value of the prize. The edible birds' nests were at that time selling in the Chinese market at thirty-two Spanish dollars a kattie; so that, on a computation of the quantity in the vessel, she was worth from eighty to ninety thousand pounds; and he, poor devil that had served twenty years without clearing twenty pounds prize-money, would have made a fortune. He raged, and stormed, and went to sea again to look after her. He offered up prayers, for the first time in his life, for her safe arrival in port.

But it was otherwise decreed; the few lubberly fellows he had put on board of her were not sufficient to work her, and she was wrecked on the coast of China. A galleon of gold-dust would not have been such a windfall to the Chinese as was this cargo of sea-slug. The news spread like wildfire through the country that a vessel had stranded on their coast containing incalculable wealth. The timid Chinese forgot their fears, and, regardless of winds and seas, rushed through the foaming surf, trampled the strong over the weak, brother over brother, all hurrying on board the wreck; which was so effectually pillaged, that she was left floating like an empty tea-chest, not a grain of her cargo being left sticking to her ribs. During the scramble in the water, and on the wreck - for every handful was fought for - many lives were lost; and the coast, for several miles round, was in anarchy and confusion for a long time after.

(...) They have a proverb there [in China], which says that if the spirit of life were departing from the nostrils and the odour of this soup were to salute them, the spirit would reanimate the clay, knowing there is no luxury in paradise to compare with it."



Portrait of Edward-John Trelawny by Stephen Makepeace Wiens (1871-1956). Worthing Museum and Art Gallery.

OPERATION FIGHT 09 GANG

May 8, 2020

Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Early in the morning, customs officers arrest 2 suspects carrying 100 kg of “swallow” nests in 2 cars. At the same time, a warehouse is searched. An employee plays for time but the officers discover 239 kg of nests in the cold room and in a drying room.

Arrest of 13 suspects and seizure of 339 kg of nests. In all, the gang is believed to have smuggled 19 t of nests, i.e. between 1.3 million and 6 million nests. Their economic value is estimated at 133 million yuan or 18.5 million US\$ (973 US\$/kg). Each nest weighs between 3 and 14 g and can be sold for up to 2,000 US\$/kg.

Sun and Zhuang bought nests in Malaysia. They brought them to Hong Kong by boat via the Pearl River Delta. They then shipped them to Guangzhou, Foshan, Shantou, or Liaoning by express courier.

See “On the Trail” n°6 p. 116-117 (gang on the Pearl River), n°22 p.44, n°23 p.46 and 52, n°24 p.88 and 90, n°26 p.40.

Chinese Customs, May 13 and 22, 2020. ⁴²



SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

CAMBODIA

Early April 2020

Phnom Penh, Phnom Penh Province, Cambodia

Seizure of 47 birds in 2 illegal pet shops. They were entrusted to the Phnom Tamao wildlife rescue center.

Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, April 11, 2020. ⁴³



April 9, 2020

Chhep Wildlife Sanctuary, Preah Vihear Province, Cambodia

Poachers poured liquid Carbofuran into a dried-up water hole. Three giant ibis (*Pseudibis gigantea*) died from it. The sale of Carbofuran is prohibited in Europe and the United States. In Cambodia it is easily accessible and cheap. Poachers then took the meat. They ate it or sold it. The Wildlife Conservation Society points out the risk of food poisoning for consumers. The giant ibis is Cambodia's national bird. There would be only about 300 of them in the country.

Mongabay, April 21, 2020 ; Phnom Penh Post, April 21, 2020. ⁴⁴



Mid-April 2020

Cardamom Protected Forest, Cambodia

Rescue of 2 wreathed hornbill chicks (*Rhyticeros undulatus*, Appendix II). They were probably going to be sold as pets. The helmets and feathers of hornbills are also appreciated in traditional medicine or decoration.

Wildlife Alliance, April 20, 2020. ⁴⁵

April-May 2020

Phnom Penh, Phnom Penh Province, Cambodia

During the breeding period, poachers harvest the eggs and chicks from the nests. Flood of seized chicks at the Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Center, including Indian rollers (*Coracias benghalensis*).

Wildlife Alliance, May 9, 2020. ⁴⁶



**May 2020
Cambodia**

Seizure of 4 mustached parakeets (*Psittacula alexandri*, Appendix II), a hill myna (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II) and a tupai (order Scandentia). Wildlife Alliance, May 3, 2020.⁴⁷

**May 10, 2020
Kampot's Preah Monivong Bokor National Park, Kampot Province, Cambodia**

Kruy Chamrouen killed a concave-casqued hornbill (*Buceros bicornis*, Appendix I) with his home-made rifle. He photographed himself with the bird in his hand and posted the photo on social networks. The Ministry of Environment heard about it. Chamrouen is summoned. He signs a solemn pledge not to do it again.

Phnom Penh Post, May 13, 2020.⁴⁸



**Early June 2020
Thmor ROUNG, Koh Kong Province, Cambodia**
Seizure of 8 oriental-pied hornbills (*Anthracoceros albirostris*, Appendix II). They should be released. Wildlife Alliance, June 11, 2020.⁴⁹

**June 13, 2020
Kampong Chhnang Province, Cambodia**
Two arrests. The suspects had trapped 5 storks (family Ciconiidae). They signed a solemn pledge not to trap any more rare animals and they left free. Phnom Penh Post, June 14, 2020.⁵⁰

**End of June 2020
National Road 5, Province de Kampong Chhnang, Cambodia**
Survey of roadside vendors by WRRT (Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team). Seizure of 365 dead weaver birds (family Ploceidae) and 31 doves (family Columbidae), of which 22 are alive and 9 are dead. Wildlife Alliance, June 30, 2020.⁵¹

**End of June 2020
Chhay Areng, Koh Kong Province, Cambodia**
Seizure of 2 thick-billed green pigeons (*Treron curvirostra*) and 2 Asian fairy-bluebirds (*Irena puella*). A poacher was transporting them by motorbike. Three of them died. The survivor was released. Wildlife Alliance, June 27, 2020.⁵²



Treron curvirostra

INDONESIA

**REPEATED OFFENSE
April 4, 2020
Gemuruh, West Tanjung Jabung Regency, Jambi Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia**
Norman Widodo, aged 32, is driving his Toyota Avanza on the Trans-Sumatran road. He is transporting 1,218 birds from the province of Riau to the province of Jambi. The police stop him at kilometre 140. They discover oriental magpie-robins (*Copsychus saularis*), greater green leafbirds (*Chloropsis sonnerati*), black-naped orioles (*Oriolus chinensis*), bar-winged prinias (*Prinia familiaris*), Java sparrows (*Lonchura oryzivora*) and hummingbirds (family Trochilidae). His client allegedly resides in Mendalo. It is not Widodo's first delivery. The Jakarta Post, April 6, 2020.⁵³

**May 6 and 23, 2020
Aek Nabara, Padang Lawas Regency, and Aek Latong, South Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia**
Seizure following a report of a Blyth's hawk-eagle (*Spizaetus alboniger*, Appendix II) by the BKSDA (Balai Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam). Sopyan Hutagalung caught it with a bat net. The eagle was released near the Dolok Sipirok Nature Reserve. Scorpion, May 13 and 27, 2020.⁵⁴

May 7 and 8, 2020

Medan and Sibolangit Nature Tourism Park, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Following a confidential report, the so-called Leopard unit searches every vehicle arriving at the Medan bus station. Birds are reportedly being transported from the province of Aceh. The Leopard squad discovers 1,266 Indian white-eyes (*Zosterops palpebrosus*) in a car. Two men are arrested. The "pleci" (local name) are all seized and released the next day. They are believed to have been captured in the Gunung Leuser National Park to be sold at the Medan bird market. 556 of them died during the journey. The operation was carried out with the support of the NGOs Scorpion and Flight.

The Jakarta Post, May 9, 2020 ; Scorpion, May 12 and 14, 2020.⁵⁵



May 18, 2020

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

Sentencing of Budi and Eryadi to 4 months in prison and a fine of 3 million rupees (196 US\$). They had tried to smuggle thousands of songbirds through the port of Bakauheni.

Flight: Protecting Indonesia's Birds, May 19, 2020.⁵⁶



January-June 2020

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

Seizure of more than 29,000 birds, including oriental magpie-robins (*Copsychus saularis*), greater green leafbirds (*Chloropsis sonnerati*), sooty-headed bulbuls (*Pycnonotus aurigaster*), bar-winged prinias (*Prinia familiaris*) and zebra doves (*Geopelia striata*). At least 43 smuggling attempts have been thwarted. The majority is destined for the Pramuka bird market in Jakarta. All seized birds were handed over to the BKSDA in Lampung to be released.

The Jakarta Post, June 29, 2020.⁵⁷

June 11, 12 and 15, 2020

Sumatra and Java Islands, Indonesia

- Contentious shipment of about 7,000 songbirds by air from Medan on the island of Sumatra to Jakarta and Yogyakarta on the island of Java. Procedural obstacles delayed the police search of the warehouses at Jakarta airport and the recipient had time to take delivery of the birds in plastic crates. In Yogyakarta, the police managed to get their hands on part of the consignment. The NGO Flight suspects connivance from staffmen in the airports and even within the BKSDA teams.

- Interception at Medan airport of 1,700 bar-winged prinias (*Prinia familiaris*) and 600 great tits (*Parus major*) destined to the island of Java, 516 prinias and 300 tits were already dead. The survivors were released in a protected area. According to Flight, there is also an agreement and financial arrangement between accredited bird breeders and the poaching sectors in the North of the island of Sumatra to deliver freshly caught wild birds to markets in Jakarta and other Java Island metropolises under the cover of bred birds.

Wild birds are considered to be better singers than bred ones and are sold at a higher price to collectors and to amateur and professional song competitors. The example comes from above. Joko Widodo, the President of the Republic of Indonesia, is said to have put 137,000 US\$ on the table to afford the services of a tenor bird.

Mongabay, July 3, 2020.⁵⁸

June 21, 2020

Port of Pangkal Balam, Pangkal Pinang, Bangka Belitung Islands Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Seizure in the *KM Sawita* bound for Jakarta of 419 ruby-cheeked sunbirds (*Chalcoparia singalensis*), 8 purple-throated sunbirds (*Leptocoma sperata*) and 3 crimson sunbirds (*Aethopyga siparaja*). They were shut in plastic crates. They will be released in the forest of Pelang Namang. The sender is not identified.

Bangka Pos, June 22, 2020 ; Detik News, June 22, 2020.⁵⁹

June 27, 2020

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

Seizure of 400 oriental magpie-robins (*Copsychus saularis*) in a vehicle. The driver came from the province of Jambi more than 600 km away. He had none of the mandatory documents for the transport of the birds.

The Jakarta Post, June 29, 2020.⁶⁰

MALAYSIA

May 14, 2020

Gua Musang, Kelantan State, Malaysia

Seizure in a private home of white-rumped shamas (*Copsychus malabaricus*), blue-rumped parrots (*Psittinus cyanurus*, Appendix II) and blue-winged leafbirds (*Chloropsis cochinchinensis*, Appendix III). Jabatan Perhilitan, May 21, 2020.⁶¹

June 27, 2020

Malacca State, Malaysia

Boarding of 2 boats at 1.45 am. The maritime police found on board 3,304 oriental magpie-robins (*Copsychus saularis*) in 188 cages. Their value is estimated at the equivalent of 115,000 US\$ i.e. 34 US\$ per bird. Arrest of 4 suspects aged between 43 and 66, including 3 Indonesians. They were taking the birds to the island of Rupert, Indonesia. Seizure of 2 boats and 3 engines estimated at 31,455 US\$. Astro Awani, June 27, 2020.⁶²



PHILIPPINES

REPEATED OFFENSE

June 6, 2020

Sampaloc, Manila, Province of Metro Manila, Philippines

Arrest of Sharon Jonjon Lim following the online sale of 2 brahmyn kites (*Haliastur indus*, Appendix II). On the first floor of his home, the police seize a white-bellied sea eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*, Appendix II) and a changeable hawk-eagle (*Spizaetus cirrhatus*, Appendix II) in the middle of his dog farm. Since the start of the Covid-19 lockdown, 7 suspects have been arrested and "items" with a total value of 37 million pesos (753,252 US\$) have been seized in connection with the illegal wildlife trade.

Sharon Jonjon Lim had been arrested on August 23, 2019, in possession of 3 peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I), 2 eclectus parrots (*Eclectus roratus polychloros*, Appendix II), 6 African spurred tortoises (*Centrochelys sulcata*, Appendix II) and 2 iguanas (see "On the Trail" n°26 p.111). On September 3, 2019, he was sentenced to a fine of 800 US\$ and 2 years imprisonment. Lim paid the fine and was released pending the court's decision regarding the adjustment of penalty.

Manila Bulletin, July 19, 2020 ; Traffic, June 17, 2020.⁶³

THAILAND

May 1st, 2020

Phra Nakhon, Ayutthaya Province, Thailand

facebook

Arrest of Duangchai Poomwat in possession of a black-winged kite chick (*Elanus caeruleus*, Appendix II) in a cardboard box near the road from Ayutthaya to Ang Thong.



During the search of her home, the police seize a white-crested laughingthrush (*Garrulax leucolophus*) and a white-vented myna (*Acridotheres grandis*) in cages. The trafficker was about to sell the black-winged kite to Phensri Chimchaw, a wildlife seller known by the pseudonym "Squirrel Dee" on Facebook. The value of the seizures is estimated at 3,410 baht (1,067 US\$).



DNP Wildhawk, May 5, 2020.⁶⁴

May 13, 2020

Rattana Thani Village, Samut Prakan Province, Thailand

Seizure of a caged rhinoceros hornbill (*Buceros rhinoceros*, Appendix II) from Surin Surinwilai, aged 29. According to him, it belonged to his late sister. Its economic value is estimated at 20,000 baht (627 US\$). He presents a certificate of possession, which is shown to be a false. Surinwilai is taken into custody.

DNP Wildhawk, May 13, 2020.⁶⁵

Mid-May 2020

Arun Amarin Subdistrict, Bangkok Noi District, Bangkok Province, Thailand

Arrest of Ms. Narisara following the online sale of hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II). At her home, 15 hill mynas, including chicks, were seized. Forest Protecting Operation Center, May 19, 2020.⁶⁶

May 20, 2020

Chaiphum Province, Thailand

PiyanatwassellingonFacebookAsianbarret owlets (*Glaucidium cuculoides*, Appendix II), spotted owlets (*Athene brama*, Appendix II), hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II), Asian crested goshawks (*Accipiter trivirgatus*, Appendix II), lined barbets (*Psilopogon lineatus*), white-rumped shamas (*Copsychus malabaricus*) and red-whiskered bulbuls (*Pycnonotus jocosus*). He fell into the trap of buyers who were in fact agents of the Department of National Parks. He was carrying 8 birds at the time of his arrest.

The Nation Thailand, May 21, 2020.⁶⁷



VIET NAM

Early May 2020

Da Nang Province, Viet Nam

Twelve falcons (Falconidae, Appendix I or II), including 10 chicks, were rescued from illegal trade. The investigation started in August 2018.

ENV, May 7, 2020.⁶⁸



**Early May
Viet Nam**

Seizure of a changeable hawk-eagle (*Spizaetus cirrhatus*, Appendix II). Shut in a cage for several years, he cannot be released. He now lives at the Hanoi Wildlife Rescue Centre.

ENV, June 3, 2020.⁶⁹

May 3, 2020

Thanh Hóa Province, Viet Nam

After a call to the Education for Nature - Vietnam hotline, forest agents seized more than 100 Chinese pond herons (*Ardeola bacchus*) dead and 9 still alive. The suspect was selling them on Facebook. The survivors had their eyes sewn shut. They could not be released for now. ENV, May 3, 2020.⁷⁰

April 15 - May 6, 2020

Tuyen Lam Lake, Da Lat, Lam Dong Province, Viet Nam

Three men kill a couple of hoopoes (*Upupa epops*) with slingshots. At this time of the year, the birds were feeding their young. Animal photographers witness their actions. One of them posts a photo on Facebook.

Police officers rescue the chicks. They identify the car used by the wrongdoers. Mai Son, aged 32, is arrested and fined 10 million dong (426 US\$).

Tiên Phong, May 6, 2020.⁷¹



**June 2020
Viet Nam**

Seizure of 34 falcons (Falconidae, Appendix I or II) during the month.

ENV, July 14, 2020.⁷²

Early June 2020 Viet Nam

After a call on its hotline in May, the NGO Education for Nature is investigating a Facebook animal seller. It informs the environmental police. Seizure of 33 South American and African parrots, including grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I), scarlet macaws (*Ara macao*, Appendix I) and yellow-fronted amazons (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II). They are handed over to the Hanoi Wildlife Rescue Centre. ENV, June 11, 2020.⁷³



June 1st, 2020

Bac Kan Province, Viet Nam

Following an alert, ENV informs the police of the sale of raptors (Accipitridae or Falconidae, Appendix I or II) on Facebook. Seizure of 20 birds. ENV, June 3, 2020.⁷⁴

facebook

SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

April 3, 2020

Morzar, Amreli District, State of Gujarat, India

Death by poisoning of 4 Indian peahens and 4 Indian peacocks (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), including 1 adult and 7 sub-adults. The Times of India, April 4, 2020.⁷⁵



April 13 and 14, 2020

Kalliyoore, Thiruvananthapuram District, State of Kerala, India

Poachers take advantage of the Covid-19 lockdown. Villagers saw individuals capturing parrots (*Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II) and purple moorhen (*Porphyrio porphyrio*) with nets. Parrots are sold as pets. Purple moorhens are intended for food consumption. The Hindu, April 26, 2020.⁷⁶

April 21, 2020

Lepaigaon Pathar, Sibsagar District, State of Assam, India

Death of 17 slender-billed vultures (*Gyps tenuirostris*, Appendix II) and 2 oriental white-backed vultures (*Gyps bengalensis*, Appendix II). They were victims of a poisoned carcass. The carcass was allegedly placed to kill dogs or wolves. Thirteen other vultures were evacuated to the Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation (CWRC) in Kaziranga National Park. Two did not survive. Seven Himalayan griffons (*Gyps himalayensis*, Appendix II), 3 slender-billed vultures and one oriental white-backed vulture were treated and released. The Hindustan Times, April 24 and 27, 2020.⁷⁷



April 27, 2020

Lohiya, Bikaner District, State of Rajasthan, India

Poisoned grains killed 22 Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) and 15 grey francolins (*Francolinus pondicerianus*). The Hindu, April 28, 2020.⁷⁸



April 28, 2020

Utchani, Pudukkottai District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

At least 7 Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) died from poisoning. Following a report, forest officers go near a farm. They find only a few feathers, bones and a decayed carcass. Stray dogs had probably been there before. Arrest of M. Arumugam, 62 years old, P. Palanivel, 50 years old, and P. Rajamani, 65 years old, farm workers at P. Dhanapal's farm. They say they gave the birds poisoned rice grains and peanuts upon request of their boss. He didn't want the Indian peafowls to damage the crops. Dhapanal, a former government official, is nowhere to be found. The Times of India, April 29, 2020 ; The Hindu, April 27, 2020.⁷⁹



April 29, 2020

Theerthandathanam, Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of 6 shikras (*Accipiter badius*, Appendix II), 3 white ibises (*Eudocimus albus*) and 5 grey francolins (*Francolinus pondicerianus*), cages, traps and nets at the home of K. Veeraiyan. He had caught them in their nests when they were chicks. He used them to hunt starlings. He was fined 25,000 rupees (330 US\$). According to the local forest officer, hunting birds became a common activity during the Covid-19 pandemic, whether it be for pleasure or for food. The Times of India, April 29, 2020.⁸⁰



April 30, 2020

Erode, Erode District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Arrest by WCCB and Forest Department officials of a man in possession of 2 Alexandrine parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II) in a cage. WCCB, May 2, 2020.⁸¹

May 24, 2020

Arimalam, Pudukkottai District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Arrest of K. Kasinathan. He had spilled a toxic substance along the dikes and irrigation canals of his farm. He said he had done it to protect his crops from rats. Thirteen Indian peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) died from it. Kasinathan was taken into custody. The Hindu, May 29, 2020.⁸²



May 24, 2020

Agartala, West Tripura District, State of Tripura, India

The Covid-19 morbidity offers looters a new opportunity. Timber cutters are heavy-handed around Amarpur, Khowai, Kalyanpur and Ambassa, and python and monkey choppers do no beat around the bush in the district. Fortunately, volunteers from the NGO Pawsome are not reducing the pressure. For several months now, they have infiltrated a suspicious pet shop and have been diligently frequenting its surroundings. When they saw a young man arriving carrying 2 cages full of 12 juvenile rose-ringed parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*) and 3 hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II), they kindly pumped him and learned before calling the forest officers that Ratnadip Das was trying to sell each parakeet for 750 rupees (9.90 US\$) and each hill myna for 1,150 rupees (15.2 US\$). "There is a racket behind this whole operation and they are selling the birds across the state," says Rigved Dutta, a spokesman for Pawsome. The birds are caught in Khowai district. They pass from hand to hand while passing from the chick to pet bird status, and along the way many die. The Telegraph India, May 25, 2020 ; Sentinel Assam, May 25, 2020.⁸³

May 28, 2020

Sevilimalai Reserve Forest, Pudukkottai District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Arrest of a 29-year-old poacher in possession of 2 Indian peahen carcasses during a night patrol. Seizure of the birds and the weapon. The Hindu, May 29, 2020.⁸⁴



End of May 2020

Sandoha, Bathinda District ; Gharuan, Mohali District ; Lahora, Ludhiana District, State of Punjab, India

Two articles written in Wildbuzz in April 2018 and May 2020 mentioned the broadcasting of videos showing the killing of birds of prey by pigeon fanciers: peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I), shikras (*Accipiter badius*, Appendix II) or Eurasian sparrowhawks (*Accipiter nisus*, Appendix II). The author of the articles had provided the authorities with videos.

- Arrest of Gurprit Singh Mand and Nirmal Singh Billa, identified in 2 videos from 2018. They had trapped a hawk and handed it over to an accomplice. In more recent videos, the suspects show themselves on TikTok, YouTube and WhatsApp killing falcons trapped with bird lime or shooting birds of prey in flight. In one of them, with a background of Punjabi songs, they were beheading the birds that, according to them, were guilty of attacking their "bachhas" (pigeons).

- Unwinding the thread, the agents manage to find Gurvinder Singh, one of their accomplices. He had posted a video in which he was wrenching off the head of a hawk.

On several occasions, "On the Trail" mentioned the persecution of birds of prey by pigeon fanciers, cf. n°15 p.31, n°18 p.36, n°28 p.50.

The Hindustan Times, May 9 and 31, 2020 ; Tribune India, May 31, 2020.⁸⁵



June 8, 2020

Gobichettipalayam, Erode District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Discovery of the carcasses of 2 Indian peahens (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) on an agricultural land. They were buried on site. The forest officers had been alerted by local people. The Times of India, June 8, 2020.⁸⁶



June 8, 2020

Jadura, Kutch District, State of Gujarat, India

Anwar Kasam Lohar, aged 29, and Akram Azim Kheba, aged 23, hunted an Indian peahen (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) at nightfall. They were arrested in their car near the Nagori railway crossing with the carcass plucked and decapitated. They say they killed it for meat. The Times of India, June 10, 2020.⁸⁷

June 9, 2020

India-Bangladesh Border, State of West Bengal, India

Seizure of 8 helmeted curassows (*Pauxi pauxi*, Appendix III in Colombia and Venezuela). The suspects fled when they saw a patrol. They left 2 wooden boxes behind them. Inside, the officers found the 8 curassows. They are entrusted to the Alipore Zoological Garden in Kolkata. These birds from South America are introduced in Asia to be sold as pets.

The Hindustan Times, June 9, 2020.⁸⁸



June 20, 2020

Prayagraj, Prayagraj District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Seizure in a car of 600 Alexandrine parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II) pressed against each other in 10 metal cages. Arrest of the 4 traffickers.

WCCB, June 23, 2020.⁸⁹

GANG

June 21 and 27, 2020

Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport, Kolkata, State of West Bengal, India

Seizure during disembarkation of an Air India flight of 22 parrots native of South America, 11 red-shouldered macaws (*Diopsittaca nobilis*, Appendix II), 9 severe macaws (*Ara severus*, Appendix II), one hyacinth macaw (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*, Appendix I) and one Pesquet's parrot (*Psittichas fulgidus*, Appendix II). Their cages were covered with white clothing. They came from Bangladesh via Bongaon and were on their way to Bangalore, in the state of Karnataka. Kamalesh and Savan are arrested. The authorities suspect an order by a wealthy buyer. A couple of hyacinth macaws cost nearly 53,000 US\$. A Pesquet's parrot is estimated at 13,000 US\$. The birds were handed over to the Alipore Zoological Garden in Kolkata. The hyacinth macaw died on June 27.

Teegraph India, June 23 and 26, 2020 ; The Hindu, June 22, 2020 ; The Times of India, June 25 and 28, 2020.⁹⁰



PAKISTAN

April 8, 2020

Chachran Sharif, Province of Punjab, Pakistan

Arrest of poachers who were hunting great egrets (*Ardea alba*) and little grebes (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) in a tributary of the Indus. They used callers imitating the call of grey herons (*Ardea cinerea*) and walked in the water with herons' masks as hats! According to them, little grebe meat is delicious and great egret fat relieves joint and muscle pain.

Dawn, April 9, 2020.⁹¹

Mid-April 2020

District of Dera Ismail Khan, Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Muhammad Sajid posted the photos of 965 passerines poached between Kulachi and Panyala. He is arrested. He would be unaware of the ban on bird hunting. He is fined 115,000 rupees (643 US\$) or 0.66 US\$ per bird.

The Nation, April 20, 2020.⁹²



WESTERN ASIA

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

April 2020

Emirate of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

Seizure of 1,265 electronic bird callers imitating curlew (genus *Numenius*) songs. They are used for poaching. Offenders will have to pay a fine equivalent to 2,725 US\$.

Gulf Today, May 11, 2020.⁹³



TURKEY

May 2020

Kilis, Kilis Province, Southeastern Anatolia Region, Turkey. Border with Syria.

Seizure of 200 lovebirds (*Agapornis* spp., Appendix II except *Agapornis roseicollis*) in a vehicle coming from Syria. The birds were handed over to the General Directorate of National Parks and then to Gaziantep Zoo in the Southeastern Anatolia region. They are being treated for various diseases.

Daily Sabah, June 1st, 2020.⁹⁴

NORTHERN AND WESTERN EUROPE

FRANCE

March 17 - April 9, 2020

Departments of Charente, Gard, Haute-Savoie, Hérault and Var, France

The Covid-19 crisis did not prevent the poachers from leaving their homes. Three weeks after the beginning of the lockdown, the French Bird Protection League has already identified several shooting victims:

- 1 common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) seriously wounded by 2 pellets.
- 1 Eurasian sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*, Appendix II) and a common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) dead of their wounds at the Cévennes-Garrigues Wildlife Hospital.
- 2 grey herons (*Ardea cinerea*).
- 1 female peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) injured by several bullets. It is released after 3 weeks of care.
- 2 gulls (genus *Larus*).

Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux, April 9, 2020 ; Sud Ouest, April 11, 2020.⁹⁵

April 1st, 2020

Near Vervins, Department of Aisne, France

Discovery of a red kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II), probably poisoned to death.

Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux, April 9, 2020 ; L'Aisne Nouvelle, April 13, 2020.⁹⁶

Mid-April 2020

Lunel, Department of Hérault, France

Seizure at a 36-year-old man's home of 2 caged European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*). Appearance of the owner to come.

Midi Libre, April 19, 2020.⁹⁷

April 24, 2020

Nègrepelisse, Department of Tarn-et-Garonne, France

Seizure in a private home of a European goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*) and 5 hybrid goldfinches by the gendarmerie assisted by the French Biodiversity Agency. The suspects will be tried by the criminal court of Montauban.

France 3, April 27, 2020.⁹⁸

June 11, 2020

Vineuil, Department of Loir-et-Cher, France

Walkers report about fifty carcasses of common terns (*Sterna hirundo*), seagulls (family Laridae) and swifts (family Apodidae) near the Departmental Road 72. Some of them are decaying. They are surrounded by about a hundred cartridge cases. The perpetrators of the carnage are sought.

Police of Loir-et-Cher, June 12, 2020 ; La Nouvelle République, June 15, 2020.⁹⁹



June 17, 2020

Lyon, Department of Rhône, France

Police come for domestic violence. On the spot, a policeman notices a cage. He thought he recognised a European goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*). The French Biodiversity Agency confirms the identification. The bird is entrusted to the animal care centre in Saint-Forgeux. As for the owner, he has to respond to both the domestic violence and the illegal possession of the goldfinch.

Le Progrès, June 20, 2020.¹⁰⁰

June 22, 2020

Bannalec, Department of Finistère, France

A hunter contacts the French Bird Protection League. He discovered a kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II) shot and injured. X-rays show a 3 mm pellet. It will be handed over to the Volée de Piafs shelter, in Morbihan.

Ouest France, June 24, 2020.¹⁰¹

IRELAND

May 2020

Kealkill, County Cork, Ireland

Discovery by walkers of a dead buzzard (Accipitridae, Appendix I or II). National Parks & Wildlife Service guards get their hands on plastic basins filled with poisoned meat near a path frequented by families and their dogs. In January, 23 buzzards had been poisoned with carbofuran and since then, the services have been on the lookout, but the investigation has remained at a standstill.

The Southern Star, June 2, 2020.¹⁰²

End of June 2020

Ballymount Park, Leinster Province, Ireland

Discovery by a walker of a trap cage. A captive European goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*) was released.

Ian Stevenson, June 30, 2020.¹⁰³



NETHERLANDS

FAMILY AFFAIRS

April 29, 2020

The Netherlands

Partial reduction of the sentence due to the excessively long delay between indictment and judgment. Dennis J., a bird dealer, was shipping to Taiwan scarlet macaws (*Ara macao*, Appendix I) disguised as red-and-green macaws (*Ara chloropterus*, Appendix II) and yellow-headed amazons (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I) disguised as yellow-fronted amazons (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II). Dennis thus got through the CITES protected species ban. The subterfuge was discovered when customs at Amsterdam airport put the birds' beaks and feathers under water. The facts date back to the years 2010-2015. Dennis J. was sentenced to 4 months suspended imprisonment instead of 12 months, 4 of which were suspended (see "On the Trail" n°28 p. 56) and the fine imposed on the aviary he runs with his father was reduced to 40,000 € compared to 80,000 €. On the other hand, he has to do 240 hours of community service as opposed to 30 hours originally. His 70-year-old father is proud to have sold in former days a grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) to Queen Beatrix.

Nu.nl, April 29, 2020 ; de Rechtspraak, April 29, 2020.¹⁰⁴



UNITED KINGDOM

Spring 2020

Peak District National Park, England, United Kingdom

During the cessation of volunteer patrols due to the Covid-19 lockdown, peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix II) egg thieves went from a nest to another. Eggs disappeared in at least 3 locations. According to the authorities, the thieves will hatch them before selling them. An adult peregrine falcon is valued at up to 25,000 US\$. Falcons are particularly sought after in the Middle East. "Some Arab sheiks are willing to pay 400,000 US\$ for a single white gyrfalcon" according to Joshua Hammer, the author of "The Falcon Thief: A True Tale of Adventure, Treachery, and the Hunt for the Perfect Bird".

Cf. "Falconry", in "On the Trail" n°3 p.22.

Science Times, June 16, 2020 ; BBC, June 16, 2020.¹⁰⁵

April 15, 2020

United Kingdom

Three falconers are allowed to take 6 peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) chicks from the wild. Only one chick, the weakest, may be taken from nests where there are at least 3 chicks present. According to experts from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, this will have no impact on the population: the chick would not have survived in the wild. The aim would be to support "responsible falconry" practices.

Natural England, April 16, 2020.¹⁰⁶

April 30, 2020

Huddersfield, Wet Yorkshire County, England, United Kingdom

A 63-year-old man is reported to have stolen eggs from nests at various locations in Yorkshire and Derbyshire. He is arrested. More than



200 eggs, equipment, books and taxidermy items are seized from his home. One of the incubators contains 7 viable eggs. The officer wraps them in tea towels and cotton. They are handed over to the Smiths Nursery in Thorngumbald. Four will hatch. On August 4, the 3 European golden plovers (*Pluvialis apricaria*) and the curlew (genus *Numenius*) are released.

Yorkshire Live, August 7, 2020.¹⁰⁷

REPEATED OFFENSE

End of June 2020

London, England, United Kingdom

Denial of bail for Jeffrey Lendrum, aged 59. He had been sentenced to 3 years in prison on January 10, 2019, for attempting to bring back 19 raptor eggs from South Africa (see "On the Trail" n°21 p.43 and n°23 p.62). The "Pablo Escobar of the egg trade" is facing 4 and a half years in prison in Brazil for having transported eggs from Sao Paulo to Johannesburg. Brazilian prosecutors are seeking his extradition. He has already been convicted in Canada and Zimbabwe.

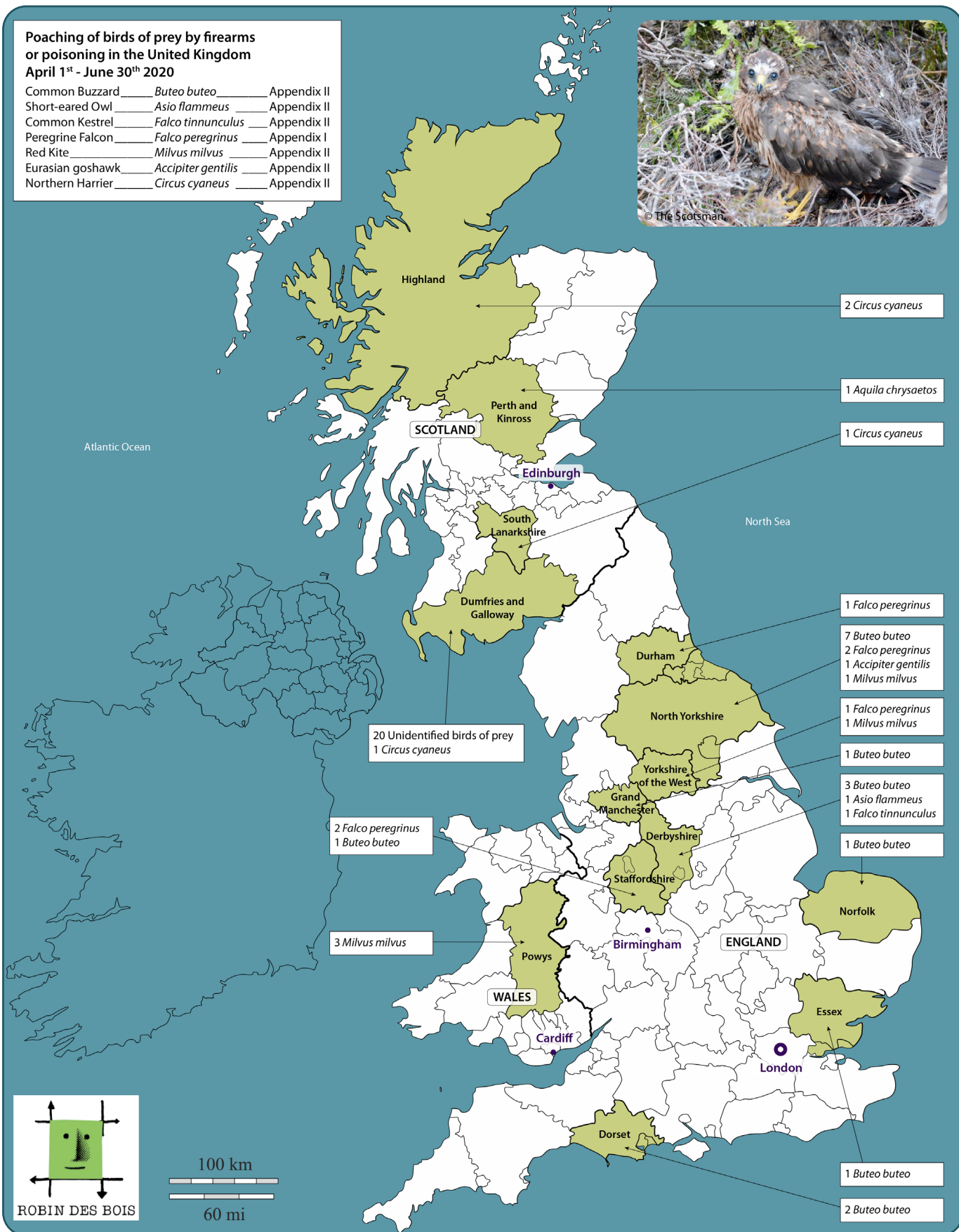
The Middle East National, June 22, 2020.¹⁰⁸



Common buzzard, (*Buteo buteo*). Picture Anis.

**Poaching of birds of prey by firearms
or poisoning in the United Kingdom**
April 1st - June 30th 2020

Common Buzzard _____ *Buteo buteo* _____ Appendix II
Short-eared Owl _____ *Asio flammeus* _____ Appendix II
Common Kestrel _____ *Falco tinnunculus* _____ Appendix II
Peregrine Falcon _____ *Falco peregrinus* _____ Appendix I
Red Kite _____ *Milvus milvus* _____ Appendix II
Eurasian goshawk _____ *Accipiter gentilis* _____ Appendix II
Northern Harrier _____ *Circus cyaneus* _____ Appendix II



SOUTHERN EUROPE

SPAIN

Mid-April 2020

Segovia, Autonomous Community of Castile and León, Spain

Agents of the Territorial Environmental Service saw 2 cages on a window sill and immediately identified 2 red crossbills (*Loxia curvirostra*). Seizure of the birds.

El Adelantado, April 14, 2020.¹⁰⁹

April 26, 2020

Fuerteventura Island, Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands, Spain



Carbofuran poisoning of at least 6 Egyptian vultures (*Neophron percnopterus*, Appendix II), including 2 chicks. Only one survived. He was treated and released. A cat, 5 ravens, 4 gulls and a pigeon also died. This is believed to be the most important poisoning in the Canary Islands in the last 20 years.

Vulture Conservation Foundation, June 24, 2020.¹¹⁰



End of April 2020

Arrecife, Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands, Spain



Rejection of the appeal of González Berriel, Andrés Curbelo and 8 others. They had been arrested in September 2015 for cooking Scopoli's shearwaters (*Calonectris diomedea*) on the island of Alegranza. They were sentenced in May 2019 to a fine of 12 € per day for 2 years, i.e. a fine of 8,640 € (9,533 US\$).

Diario de Lanzarote, April 20, 2020.¹¹¹

May 13, 2020

Cinca Medio, Province of Huesca, Autonomous Community of Aragon, Spain

Arrest of a man suspected of poaching. He apparently used 4 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) as bait to lure others. When the officers arrived, the cages were empty. The suspect's family states that they were "pet goldfinches".

Heraldo, May 24 and 26, 2020.¹¹²

Mid-May 2020

Seville, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain



Conviction of a 74-year-old man to 1 year and 3 months in prison and a fine of 1,620 € (1,756 US\$). In January 2013, Seprona agents discovered in his freezer the carcasses of 49 European robins (*Erithacus rubecula*), 40 European serins (*Serinus serinus*) and 38 warblers (genus *Sylvia*), 8 European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*), 8 house sparrows (*Passer domesticus*), 4 redstarts (genus *Phoenicurus*), 4 common blackbirds (*Turdus merula*), 2 magpies (genus *Cyanopica*) and one European stonechat (*Saxicola rubicola*). The man was also in possession of 3 firearms and prohibited hunting equipment (traps, nets, baits).

Europa Press, May 15, 2020.¹¹³

Mid-May 2020

Tierra del Vino, Province of Zamora, Autonomous Community of Castile and León, Spain

- Report of a blue-and-gold macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) detained without any certificate. It has been sequestered under the responsibility of its owner.

- Seizure at home of 2 calandra larks (*Melanocorypha calandra*) and one European serin (*Serinus serinus*). They were entrusted to the Castilla and León Bird Recovery Centre.

La Vanguardia, May 16, 2020.¹¹⁴

Mid-May 2020

Province of Alicante, Valencian Community, Spain

A woman is pictured destroying about fifty barn swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) nests with brooms. A witness says he saw remains of eggs and dead chicks on the ground. An investigation is under way.

Clun de Caza, May 19, 2020.¹¹⁵

June 11, 2020

El Viso del Alcor, Province of Seville, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain

Two arrests. The young suspects had offered 2 juvenile kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II) for sale on the Internet. The falcons were handed over to the Centro de Recuperación de Especies Amenazadas (CREA) in Seville before their reintroduction into the wild.

La Razón, June 19, 2020.¹¹⁶

ITALY

REPEATED OFFENSE

Early April 2020

Farra di Soligo, Province of Treviso, Veneto Region, Italy

Arrest following a report of a retiree in possession of about thirty birds, some of protected species, and of nets and traps. He was already known to police for similar offenses.

Oggi Treviso, April 2, 2020.¹¹⁷

Mid-May 2020

Pontecorvo, Province of Frosinone, Lazio Region, Italy

Seizure during a search of 11 cannabis plants and 22 “protected” birds. They were in cages hidden under sheets in the garage. The suspect, aged 42, was left free.

L’Inchiesta Quotidiano, May 22, 2020.¹¹⁸

May 2020

San Lorenzo del Vallo, Province of Cosenza, Calabria Region, Italy

During the search of a farm, the carabinieri and the veterinarians discover 6 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) and a pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) in 2 cages. Seizure of the birds. After examination, they were released near a river. The owner was charged.

La C News 24, May 27, 2020.¹¹⁹

OPERATION ADORNO 2020

May-June 2020

Province of Reggio Calabria, Region of Calabria, Italy

- Falcons are in the sky. A patrol hears gunshots. Two suspects flee. Seizure of a weapon, cartridges and a white stork (*Ciconia ciconia*) carcass.

- Arrest of a suspect already known to the police for poaching and illegal possession of a small calibre rifle.

- Seizure of illegally captured European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*). The “breeders” used false identification rings.

- Seizure of a male peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) kept with fraudulent papers.

The Strait of Messina is an important bird migration corridor in the Mediterranean. It is also a poaching hot spot.

Stampalibera, June 12, 2020.¹²⁰

REPEATED OFFENSE

June 1st, 2020

Catania, Region of Sicily, Italy

Arrest of Pietro Gangemi, aged 35. He was squatting on a private property. He is accused of tapping the electricity from the national grid and illegal collection of hazardous waste. All the waste was dumped on the ground. The police also seized 35 6.35 calibre bullets, bird nets, cages and protected birds including European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*). They were released.

Pietro Gangemi is already known to the police, in particular for his involvement in a hold-up in March 2010.

Catania News, June 3, 2020.¹²¹

Early June 2020

Travagliato, Province of Brescia, Region of Lombardy, Italy

Arrest of a man of Moroccan origin. He offered a kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II) for sale for 700 € (771 US\$). Seizure of the falcon.

Prima Brescia, June 12, 2020.¹²²

Early June 2020

Palermo, Province of Palermo, Region of Sicily, Italy

Seizure in a private home of peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I), lanner falcons (*Falco biarmicus*, Appendix II), red kites (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II), northern goshawks (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II), European sparrowhawks (*Accipiter nisus*, Appendix II), common buzzards (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II), common barn owls (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II), little owls (*Athene noctua*, Appendix II) and long-eared owls (*Asio otus*, Appendix II), all stuffed. A loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*, Appendix I) shell completed the funeral legacy of the deceased collector. The Museum of Zoology P. Doderlein Zoological Museum has shown its interest.

Sicilia Reporter, August 6, 2020.¹²³



June 15, 2020

Torre Pellice, Metropolitan City of Turin, Region of Piedmont, Italy

Following a report, the Carabinieri discovered a Eurasian griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*, Appendix II) with a gunshot wound to the left wing. He had reportedly remained on the ground since the shooting, unable to feed himself. He was handed over to the Centro Animali Non Convenzionali (CANC). After a few days of intensive care, he is able to stand on its feet again.

Vulture Conservation Foundation, June 19, 2020.¹²⁴



MALTA

Mid-May 2020

Il-Qala, Island of Gozo, Malta

Poachers fell carob trees to install a 5 m high and 8 m long bird-catching net in a park. The NGO Committee Against Bird Slaughter notifies the police. The net is dismantled. It was too late. Three wood warblers (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*), a spotted flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*) and a Spanish sparrow (*Passer hispaniolensis*) were already dead.

Times of Malta, May 18, 2020.¹²⁵



EASTERN EUROPE

BULGARIA

June 22, 2020

Near Madzharovo, Haskovo Province/ Oblast, Bulgaria

Discovery of an Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*, Appendix II) carcass in the Eastern Rhodope Mountains. It is the female of one of the oldest and most productive pairs of this species. The Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds team inspects the nest. Both chicks are dead. Pictures from the hidden camera indicate that the parents have not been back since June 19. They have probably been poisoned in one of the 4 villages in the area.

Vulture Conservation Foundation, June 30, 2020.¹²⁶



HUNGARY

January-April 2020

Hungary

The Hungarian Ornithological Society counts 77 poisoned raptors, including a white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*, Appendix I) and an imperial eagle (*Aquila heliaca*, Appendix I). This is twice as many as in the previous 4 years. According to Márton Árvay, the spokesman for the Society, the police were perhaps too busy during the Covid-19 health crisis to keep an eye on poachers.

Budapest Business Journal, July 1st, 2020.¹²⁷

RUSSIA

April 22, 2020

Altai Krai, Russia. Border with Kazakhstan.

Beginning of the trial of 4 traffickers. In October 2019, they had tried to export 6 peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) to Kazakhstan. The economic value of the loss of this national heritage would have been 3.5 million rubles (more than 45,000 US\$).

Rapsi News, April 22, 2020.¹²⁸

CZECH REPUBLIC

March-April 2020

Klatovy District, Plzeň Region, Kolín District, Central Bohemian Region, Břeclav District, South Moravian Region and Jičín District, Hradec Králové Region, Czech Republic

Poisoning of 3 white-tailed eagles (*Haliaeetus albicilla*, Appendix I): one male, one female and one chick. Poisoning of 6 red kites (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II) in 2 months, more than in the whole of 2019. Only one survived. During the Covid-19 lockdown, the number of victims of carbofuran skyrocketed. Since the beginning of the year, at least 25 protected birds have died after being shot or poisoned.

Seznama Zpravy, April 30, 2020.¹²⁹



VARIOUS REPTILE SPECIES



Alert

Since April 2020, "On the Trail" has been informed that Covid-19 masks are made in Florida from the skins of pythons, alligators, iguanas and other reptiles. The United States probably does not have the exclusivity of this practice. The news is that these masks are arriving in Europe. The n°31 of "On the Trail" will tell you especially about the seizure in Speyer in Germany of a crocodile skin mask. The postal parcel came from the United States of America. At least those ones will not be found on the sidewalks!

AMERICA

MEXICO

May 27, 2020

San Luis Potosi International Airport, State of San Luis Potosi, Mexico

A royal python (*Python regius*, Appendix II) and a common leopard gecko (*Eublepharis macularius*) shared accommodation in a package bound for international.

Profepa, May 27, 2020.¹

June 24, 2020

Mexico, Mexico



Seizure in Miguel Hidalgo's municipality of 4 common leopard geckos (*Eublepharis macularius*), 4 northern rough green snakes (*Opheodrys aestivus*),

3 royal pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II), a veiled chameleon (*Chamaeleo calytratus*, Appendix II), 10 Nile monitors (*Varanus niloticus*, Appendix II) and 10 African savannah monitors (*Varanus exanthematicus*, Appendix II). They were dehydrated and lethargic. An investigation is ongoing to determine their origin and destination. Profepa, June 24, 2020.²

ASIA

INDIA

May 31, 2020

Gorabani Forest, Yamunanagar District, State of Haryana, India

The poaching team was just coming out of the forest when the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau's sleuths and rangers fell on them. The 4 men were carrying 3 Bengal monitor lizards (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I), 6 Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II) and a mongoose (*Herpestes spp.*, Appendix III).

WCCB, June 3, 2020.³

INDONESIA

May 31, 2020

Depati Amir Airport, Bangka Belitung Islands Province, Bangka Island, Indonesia

The bottles departing for Yogyakarta (800 km) contained 8 young lizards and 2 snakes caught in the island's forests and destined for the crowded city markets.

Kumparan, May 31, 2020.⁴

VIET NAM

Mid-May 2020

Viet Nam



Pham Thi Thuan was sentenced on appeal to 5 years in prison for having, under the guise of a licensed crocodile farm, offered for sale 13 king cobras (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II) and nearly 300 turtles, including 18 big-headed turtles (*Platysternon megacephalum*, Appendix I). At first instance, he had been sentenced to 2 years imprisonment.

ENV, May 13, 2020.⁵

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

OPERATION SHEFFIELD

End of April 2020

Melbourne, State of Victoria, Australia

Two men were charged with attempting to export 7 reptiles and cruelty to animals. They live in Clayton and Narre Warren South. They have been released on bail pending trial.

Mirage News, April 30, 2020.⁶

May 8, 2020

Perth, State of Western Australia, Australia



A 35-year-old woman, Malaysian passport, is sentenced to 12 months in prison without any possibility to be freed on parole for 4 months. Between April and May 2018, she attempted to send 4 postal parcels to Hong Kong. They contained 21 reptiles including shingleback lizards (*Tiliqua rugosa*) and blue-tongued skinks (genus *Tiliqua*). She faced up to 10 years in prison. *Tiliqua rugosa* in Australia, see "On the Trail" n°16 p. 107, n°17 p. 25, n°18 p. 25, n°22 p. 30, p. 33, n°23 p. 34, n°24 p. 28, n° 25 p. 33, p. 34, p. 35, n° 26 p. 30, n°27 p. 36, p. 129. Mirage News, May 7 and 8, 2020.⁷

GANG

End of June 2020

Sydney, State of New South Wales, Australia

- Six searches in Sydney.

- Two arrests. One man was put in prison. He's the leader of the gang. His illegal profits are estimated to be close to 1 million AU\$ or 660,000 US\$. (...)

(...) His assistant was released on bail and under judicial supervision. They were importing Burmese pythons (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II), yellow-headed sidenecks (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II) and green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II) and exporting death adders (genus *Acanthophis*), red-bellied black snakes (*Pseudechis porphyriacus*), blue-tongued skinks (genus *Tiliqua*), shingleback lizards (*Tiliqua rugosa*) and Australian magpies (*Gymnorhina tibicen*). The investigation began in 2019 (cf. "On the Trail" n°25 p. 35). They had customers or suppliers in Australia, Canada and the United States of America. The animals were received or sent by parcel post or courier. Animals awaiting orders were stored in unspeakable conditions. Others that did not find a buyer died due to lack of care and food.

Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, June 24, 2020 ; 9News, June 24, 2020.⁸

TORTOISES AND FRESHWATER TURTLES

Cumulative quarterly seizures: Example

180 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I)

AFRICA

MADAGASCAR

April 7, 2020

Tsimanampetsotsa National Park, Atsimo-Andrefana Region, Madagascar

A trafficker arrested with 20 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) and smoked turtle meat was placed under a detention order. The seizure was carried out thanks to the collaboration between park agents, villagers and local authorities. "Who are the main brains? This is the question that arises every time someone is seized for stealing turtles. Because it is never the billionaire who pulled the strings who ends up behind bars," denounces the Express de Madagascar. "Severe sanctions are highly expected, especially when the brains of the traffic are never known or are known but 'not to be revealed'". As an illustration of this "system rotten by corruption", a member of Parlement cites another seizure of 10 turtles for which a bribe of 1,300 US\$ would have been paid in exchange for the closure of the case.

L'Express de Madagascar, April 10, 2020.¹

June 19, 2020

Beheloke, Atsimo-Andrefana Region, Madagascar

Chase of 2 boats heading north with their wildlife looting. The poachers had been spotted earlier in the day by villagers. One of the crafts managed to escape. The other was stopped after 3 hours of hunting with 144 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I), including 16 juveniles, on board. The juveniles are sought for the pet market, the adults for their meat. June is marked by a peak in poaching for Independence Day meals. The economic crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic raises fears of increased poaching for food. Three men were arrested. The turtles have been handed over to the Lavavolo centre run by the Turtle Survival Alliance, which already hosts 14,000 specimens seized in 2018. Releases into the wild are currently not practicable.

Madagascar Tribune, June 23, 2020 ; Mongabay, July 9, 2020.²

MOZAMBIQUE

Mid-June 2020

Maputo, Mozambique

Seizure of 4 leopard tortoises (*Stigmochelys pardalis*, Appendix II) and release into the wild in the Karingani Game Reserve bordering the South African Kruger Park.

Saving the Survivors, June 16, 2020.³

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Mid-May 2020

State of South Carolina, United States of America

Specialists from Savannah River University have said they would do everything possible to return the 200 common box turtles (*Terrapene carolina*, Appendix II) seized in August 2019 to their natural habitat (see "On the Trail" n°26 p.23). It is now done. Aiken Standard, September 13, 2020.⁴

LATIN AMERICA

BRAZIL

OPERATION GREEN BRAZIL 2

May 30, 2020

Mâncio Lima, State of Acre, Brazil

The army announces that it has arrested 3 persons in possession of 4 "jabutis" turtles (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II) and 120 kg wild meat, in accordance with the prerogatives granted to it by federal decree of Jair Bolsonaro.

G1, June 1st, 2020.⁵

COLOMBIA

Early May 2020

Bogotá, Colombia

Seizure in the Castile sector of a yellow-headed sideneck turtle (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II) kept as a pet and abused.

Conexion Capital, May 7, 2020.⁶



Radiated tortoise (*Astrochelys radiata*). © Photo Bernard Dupont.

June 8, 2020

Zarzal, Department of Valle del Cauca, Colombia

The 12 Colombian sliders (*Trachemys callirostris*), 6 just hatched and 6 juveniles, were wading through plates waiting to be sold on the Internet. They are endemic to Venezuela and Colombia where the species is classified as vulnerable. It is targeted by traffickers at all stages: its eggs and adults are eaten, its juveniles are pets.

Corporación Autónoma Regional del Valle del Cauca, June 8, 2020.⁷



MEXICO

May 10, 2020

International Airport of Mexico City, Mexico

Seizure in 158 wooden boxes of 15,053 freshwater turtles, white-lipped mud turtles (*Kinosternon leucostomum*), mexican giant musk turtle (*Staurotypus triporcatus*), narrow-bridged musk turtle (*Claudius angustatus*) and turtles of the genus *Trachemys*, all classified as nationally threatened or endangered. They were destined for export to China. The pandemic does not curb trafficking; it facilitates the work of poachers by reducing surveillance missions in the field. 260 turtles were already dead. By the end of May, 5,167 more turtles had died as a result of mistreatment. The survivors were transferred to management units in the states of Quintana Roo and Yucatán.

Profepa, May 12 and 30, 2020 ; InSight Crime, June 24, 2020.⁸

ASIA

BANGLADESH

May 14, 2020

Tamlai, Thakurgaon District, Rangpur Division, Bangladesh

The villagers tried to save the 100-year-old, 30 kg black softshell turtle (*Nilssonia nigricans*, Appendix I). Poison had been spilled into its pond by poisoners-fishermen. She died the day after her transfer to the Ramsagar National Park.

The Daily Star, May 16, 2020.⁹

CAMBODIA

End of May 2020

Koh Kong Province, Cambodia

Seizure in a restaurant of 10 Asian leaf turtles (*Cyclemys dentata* or *C. enigmatica*, Appendix II), 50 kg of turtle carapaces and plastrons and 71 kg of bushmeat.

Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, May 26, 2020.¹⁰

CHINA

April 1st, 2020

Hong Kong, China

Sentencing of a foreign national to 2 years imprisonment. Coming from the Comoros archipelago, via Addis Ababa in Ethiopia, he had been caught red-handed in the act of smuggling 57 turtles including 55 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) worth an estimated 340,000 HK\$ or 48,000 US\$ on September 19, 2019 (see "On the Trail" n°26 p.24). The South China Morning Post, April 2, 2020.¹¹



Mid-April 2020

Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure of 14 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) and arrest of 14 people.

Xinhua, May 21, 2020.¹²

Mid-May 2020

Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 34 yellow pond turtles (*Mauremys mutica*, Appendix II) in the crew living area of a small vessel. Chinese Customs, May 21, 2020.¹³

INDIA

June 6, 2020

Kashipur, Udham Singh Nagar District, Uttarakhand State, India

Seizure of an Indian flapshell turtle (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II).

The Hindustan Times, June 8, 2020.¹⁴

GANG

June 11, 2020

Malkangiri Village MV-96 and Malkangiri Poteru Village MPV-65, Malkangiri District, State of Odisha, India

Seizure of 43 live Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonia gangetica*, Appendix I) destined for local markets and hotel restaurants at a selling price of 7 US\$/kg. Arrests of 4 people. The gang was active in several states. The leader was not arrested.

The New Indian Express, June 12, 2020 ; The Hindu, June 13, 2020.¹⁵

June 13, 2020

Mirzapur District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Seizure by a joint patrol of the 66th SSB battalion and officers from the Laxmipur forest post of 10 live turtles and arrest of 2 traffickers preparing to smuggle them into Nepal.

SSB, June 13, 2020.¹⁶

June 26, 2020

Vadodara, Vadodara District, State of Gujarat, India

The 36 Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II) were floating dead in a corner of the lake. They bear marks of burns. Blast fishing or a chemical spill are suspected.

The Times of India, June 27, 2020.¹⁷

PAKISTAN

June 2, 2020

Islamabad, Federal Territory of Islamabad, Pakistan

Seizure of 7 spotted pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I), 3 Indian roofed turtles (*Pangshura tecta*, Appendix I) and one brown river turtle (*Pangshura smithii*, Appendix II). All juvenile and alive, they should be released into the wild downstream from the Taunsa Barrage on the Indus River.

Dawn, June 3, 2020.¹⁸

VIET NAM

End of April or Early May 2020

Viet Nam

Conviction of a trafficker to 3 years in prison for illegally transporting protected reptiles including 379 kg of yellow-headed tortoises (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II).

ENV, May 2, 2020.¹⁹



May 8, 2020

Buon Ma Thuot, Dak Lak Province, Viet Nam

The police find 127 turtles at Hoang Minh Trien: Indochinese box turtles (*Cuora bourreti*, Appendix I), south Asian box turtles (*Cuora amboinensis*, Appendix II), Asian giant tortoises (*Manouria emys*, Appendix II). He is in possession of documents certifying the origin of 68 turtles. The 59 others are believed to be their offspring. Tri-an breed turtles since 2015. The turtles are seized pending verification of their species and origin.

Asian Turtle Program, May 9, 2020 ; Tiên Phong, May 9, 2020.²⁰



May 31, 2020

Nghen, Can Loc District, Ha Tinh Province, Viet Nam

Seizure in a car on Highway 1A of 27 Indochine box turtles (18 *Cuora bourreti*, Appendix I, and 9 *Cuora galbinifrons*, Appendix II). Two indictments.

Lao Dong, June 16, 2020.²¹

EUROPE

SPAIN

Early May 2020

Cuevas del Almanzora, Province of Almería, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain

The 2 dealers did not respect the lockdown rules. Seizure of 73 g of hashish and 6 common tortoises, including 2 juveniles (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II). Almeria 360, May 5, 2020.²²

May 30, 2020

Natura Park, Balearic Islands, Spain

Theft of 2 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) and 2 three keel-backed turtles (*Cuora mouhotii*, Appendix II) from Natura Park. They are worth several thousands of Euros each on the black market. The thief was identified within a few hours and the turtles were recovered.

Cronica Balear, June 3, 2020.²³



FRANCE

April 17, 2020

Castillon-la-Bataille, Department of Gironde, France

The "perfume" package was damaged. The delivery man took a look inside and saw some life. He had the reflex to go to the gendarmerie. Two Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) suffering from dehydration were inside.

Gironde Gendarmerie, April 21, 2020.²⁴

April 28, May 4 and 26, 2020

Vaugrenier Park, Department of Alpes-Maritimes et Ramonville-Saint-Agne, Department of Haute-Garonne, France

Lockdown was known to have caused divorces. It has also led to an increase in the abandonment of “domestic” animals. An adult alligator snapping turtle (*Macrochelys temminckii*, Appendix III in the United States of America) was recovered with difficulty from a park on the riviera while near the Canal du Midi 3 juvenile alligator snapping turtles and a snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*, Appendix III in the United States of America) were captured. The gendarmerie calls for vigilance against the risk of bites.

Nice Matin, April 30, 2020 ; France 3 Occitanie, May 28, 2020 ; La Dépêche, May 29, 2020.²⁵



June 26 and September 25, 2020

Draguignan, Department of Var, France

We will not drink Château Lauzade wine. Pierre Sénéclauze had carried out deforestation to expand his wine estate on the edge of the Maures plain national nature reserve, one of the last habitats of Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II). During an inspection visit in 2016, agents from the French Biodiversity Office could do no more than observe the destruction in the area classified as red, the theoretically maximum level of protection. The trial was held at the end of June. The operator tried to blame everything on his manager and then dared to say “cleaning the forest allows the turtle to have a good living place”. At the end of September, he was found guilty of unauthorised destruction of the habitat of a non-domestic protected animal. He will have to pay a fine of 65,000 € (55,000 US\$) and the company that carried out the work 40,000 € (34,000 US\$).

La Revue du Vin de France, July 24, 2020 ; Var Matin (with AFP), September 25, 2020.²⁶



ITALY

Mid-May 2020

Bari, Apulia Region, Italy

Intervention of the Carabinieri in 2 properties. On one, illegal operation of a hazardous waste landfill and animal husbandry on the ashes of open burning; on the other, 11 turtles of CITES listed species, probably Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II).

Il Quotidiano Italiano, May 21, 2020.²⁷

Early June 2020

Vazzano, Province of Vibo Valentia, Calabria Region, Italy

Seizure of 2 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) at a highway crossroad. The couple of sellers had been identified through their classified selling ads on the Internet.

Zoom 24, June 12, 2020.²⁸

Early June 2020

San Marcello Pistoiese, Province of Pistoia, Tuscany Region, Italy

Illegal sale of Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) on the Internet. Seizure of 8 specimens.

Go News, June 3, 2020.²⁹

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

April 1st, 2020

Australia

Thanks to his eagle eye, the wildlife officer spotted that the turtle featured on the photo accompanying a classified ad on a social network was not a saw-shelled turtle (*Myuchelys latisternum*), as mentioned, but a white-throated snapping turtle (*Elseya albagula*), a critically endangered species. Checks at the seller's premises, a professional wildlife carer, led to the seizure of the specimen and a Kreffts River Turtle (*Emydura krefftii*).

The white-throated snapping turtle was recognised as a separate species in 2006. It lives in only 4 rivers in the Wide Bay area of Queensland. It eats aquatic plants, fruit and occasionally insects and molluscs. It can stay underwater for up to 3 hours. The survivor has successfully passed the veterinary examination, has been marked with a microchip and released into the wild.

Queensland Department of Environment and Science, April 20, 2020.³⁰



AFRICA

KENYA

April 23, 2020

Rhino Gate Camp, Meru County, Kenya

The python had spread panic by killing two domestic dogs and swallowing a third. It was beaten with sticks by villagers and took refuge in the vegetation cover. The David Sheldrick Trust and the Kenyan Wildlife Service team captured it, taking it by the tail and the head. In the open, it regurgitated its third prey. It was treated. The wounds are superficial. The prognosis is favourable. SWT/KWS, April 2020.¹



GANG

**End of June 2020
Kenya**

The Covid-19 pandemic did not curb the trafficking of two viper species endemic to Kenya: the ground Kenya horned viper (*Bitis worthingtoni*, Appendix II) and the tree ashe's bush viper (*Atheris desaixi*, Appendix II). John Kamau, of the DCI (Directorate of Criminal Investigations), explains that a network of about 200 poacher-traffickers operates on all continents: "zoos, hotels for meat, scientific institutions for research. It is a network that has been operating for years." Its techniques are refining: the vipers are being caught increasingly younger, so that their small size goes unnoticed during the expedition.

The vipers are sold for 200-250 US\$ as pets and seven times more expensive to research institutions. More than 450 vipers have officially been victims of such trafficking. Paula Kahumbu, executive director of the NGO Wildlife Direct, confirms that the majority of cases go undetected. According to her, vipers should be transferred to Appendix I of CITES. The traffickers themselves acknowledge that ashe's bush vipers in particular are increasingly difficult to find. Earth Journalism Network, July 2, 2020.²

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Mid-April 2020

State of Vermont, United States of America

Seizure of 2 reticulated pythons (*Python reticulatus*, Appendix II) and a Burmese python (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II). They were for sale on Craigslist. Their possession is illegal in the State of Vermont. WCAX-TV, April 23, 2020.³

June 16-17, 2020

Bonita Springs, State of Florida, United States of America

The Everglades Wonder Gardens was the victim of a break-in during the night of Tuesday to Wednesday. An albino boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix I or II) and a royal python (*Python regius*, Appendix II) were targeted by the traffickers and, as a bonus, 2 Horsfield's tortoises (*Testudo horsfieldii*, Appendix II). Miami Herald, June 18, 2020.⁴

LATIN AMERICA

BRAZIL

June 4, 2020

Floreial, State of São Paulo, Brazil

One farm was suspected of hosting illegal hunts. It was searched. The police found an anaconda skin (*Eunectes spp.*, Appendix II) in a freezer. Two arrests. Seizure of rifles and ammunition. G1, June 4, 2020.⁵



COLOMBIA

End of April 2020

Sabaneta, Department of Antioquia, Colombia

Despite the Covid-19 lockdown, the lady was carrying 6 boas constrictors (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II) in the Entre Amigos neighbourhood. She was taken into custody and the snakes were seized.

Alerta Paisa, April 23, 2020.⁶

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Mid-May 2020

Mampiripán, Department of Meta, Colombia

Emotion among Internet users. A family claiming to be threatened by the approach of a 5 m long anaconda (*Eunectes murinus*, Appendix II), attacked it and ended up killing it. The family posted the images on social networks. An investigation is under way to locate the culprits.

Blu radio, May 19, 2020.⁷

MEXICO

April 2, 2020

San Luis, State of San Luis Potosí, Mexico

Seizure of 3 Mojave rattlesnakes (*Crotalus scutulatus*). The bearer had no certificate to prove their legal origin. Mojave rattlesnakes are considered an "endangered" species in Mexico. They are mainly threatened by the destruction of their habitats, and by their false reputation as pests. If their health condition permits, they will be released at the end of the procedure.

Profepa, April 2, 2020.⁸

April 16, 2020

Ciudad Juárez International Airport, State of Chihuahua, Mexico

A juvenile 30 cm long, apparently healthy, California kingsnake (*Lampropeltis californiae*) was discovered in a package at Ciudad Juárez International Airport. The package was obviously inappropriate for transport and there was no documentation accompanying it. Profepa will carry out an inspection visit to the sender and the recipient.

Profepa, April 20, 2020.⁹

June 22, 2020

Monterrey International Airport, Apodaca, State of Nuevo León, Mexico

Employees of a logistics platform detect the presence of a snake inside a package from the United States. Customs are alerted. Profepa officers arrive on the scene and identify a juvenile emerald tree boa (*Corallus caninus*, Appendix II). It is weakened by lack of water and food. It was taken care of by the public body Parques y Vida Silvestre de Nuevo León.

Profepa, June 22, 2020.¹⁰

ASIA

BANGLADESH

June 9, 2020

Kashimpur, Gazipur District, Dhaka Division, Bangladesh

Ikbal Hossain was riding his motorbike on the road from Noakhali to Feni when he was arrested. He was carrying about 900 g of snake venom worth an estimated 160 million takas (1,883,461 US\$) on retail, if its authenticity is confirmed. An accomplice managed to escape. Hossain is suspected of being part of an international snake venom smuggling network.

Dhaka Tribune, June 9, 2020.¹¹



CHINA

June 5, 2020

Guangzhou-Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Discovery of 4 red-tailed green ratsnakes (*Gonyosoma oxycephalum*) in a package containing men's shoes. When the package was opened, an 80 cm long snake escaped from a shoe. Three other snakes were found in socks inside the shoes, which had been plugged with damp cloth. Red-tailed green ratsnakes are tree snakes that live in Southeast Asia, from Myanmar to the Philippines. They are particularly sought after as pets, but they are also captured for their skin or meat.

Chinese Customs, June 24, 2020.¹²

INDIA

April 17, 2020

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

A king cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II) over 3 m long was killed by villagers. On social networks, videos show a man parading with the body, then three men preparing to cut it up on banana leaves for cooking. They have been identified. One of them explains in the video that they were out of rice: "Because of the lockdown I felt like eating meat and went to the jungle... I was hungry".

The Hindustan Times, April 19, 2020 ; Northeast Now, April 18, 2020.¹³

April 23, 2020

Bangalore, Urban Bangalore District, State of Karnataka, India

Arrest following an anonymous denunciation of Mohammad Rizwan and Azar Khan. They were trying to sell a sand boa (*Eryx* spp., Appendix II) for 5 million rupees (66,072 US\$). Since the government had authorised the delivery of basic necessities during the Covid-19 lockdown, they wanted to take this opportunity to transport the sand boa in a bag of Dunzo, which specialises in the delivery of food products. Rizwan works for Dunzo.

The Times of India, April 23, 2020 ; The Hindu, April 23, 2020. ¹⁴

GANG

June 1st and 9, 2020

Sattegaon and Yeola, Nashik District, State of Maharashtra, India

Seventeen arrests in a case involving the smuggling of Indian sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II). Two police officers are compromised. On June 1st, Deepak Dhakebar abandons his post, claiming to go to visit a relative who has suffered a heart attack. He was arrested the same day in Sattegaon along with the main suspect, Somnath Pawar, and the Indian sand boa that was seized. Their testimonies led to the arrest of 15 other people, including Assistant Inspector Vishwas Chavanke.

The Times of India, June 12, 2020. ¹⁵

June 23, 2020

Melghat Tiger Reserve, Amravati District, State of Maharashtra, India

Arrest of Liladhar Ingle (28 years old), Akshay Panchang (25 years old) and Bhanudas Kokate (50 years old) in flagrante delicto of selling a 2 kg sand boa (*Eryx* spp., Appendix II).

The Times of India, June 25, 2020. ¹⁶

EUROPE

FRANCE

Early June 2020

Malacène, Department of Vaucluse, France

The 25-year-old woman, a former employee of a veterinary office, was engaged in undeclared petsitting. Her home was searched after the Covid-19 lockdown following a complaint from a dissatisfied customer. Agents of the French Biodiversity Agency, the Departmental Directorate for the Protection of Populations and the Gendarmerie discovered stolen veterinary medicines and 4 pythons (*Pythonidae*, Appendix I or II).

Le Dauphiné Libéré, June 12, 2020. ¹⁷

ITALY

Early June 2020

Villa di Piteccio, Province of Pistoia, Tuscany Region, Italy

New abandonment of a snake: a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II) has been deposited in its cage next to a rubbish bin. Alerted, the carabinieri had it transported to Pistoia Zoo. It appeared to be malnourished.

L'Arno, June 8, 2020. ¹⁸

OCEANIA

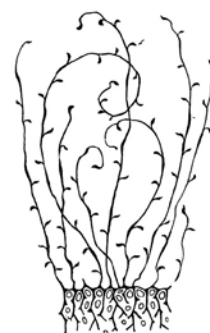
AUSTRALIA

June 2020

Tuan, State of Queensland, Australia

Mysterious discovery in the bush of a box where 15 just hatched Centralian carpet pythons (*Morelia bredli*, Appendix II) have been packed. The forest worker couldn't believe it but he alerted a Wildlife Service officer. The Centralian carpet pythons are native to the Northern Territories and are not venomous. In Queensland they are unknown. According to the first intuitions of the investigators, it would be an inter-regional traffic and a link between two intermediaries which has malfunctioned. "Native animals are often sold on the Internet without the necessary permits." "When people buy native animals from online marketing websites like Gumtree, eBay or Facebook Marketplace, they don't know if the seller has the correct permits." After being caught, many reptiles die or become ill during inter-Australian or international transfers. These 15 are going to be fine. They have been closely watched by veterinarians and initially entrusted to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA).

Fraser Coast Chronicle, December 18, 2020. ¹⁹



IGUANAS, MONITOR LIZARDS, GECKOS AND LIZARDS

AMERICA

MEXICO

April 13, 2020

Matías Romero Avendaño, State of Oaxaca, Mexico

Seizure in a coach of 13 cardboard boxes each containing 10 adult green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II) on Federal Highway 510 from Coatzacoalcos to Salina Cruz. No passenger claimed ownership. The 24 males and 106 females, measuring 0.7 to 1.3 m long, were released into a suitable habitat.

Profepa, April 13, 2020.¹

May 6, 2020

San Luis Potosi International Airport, Stat of San Luis Potosi, Mexico

Three packages containing live animals are detected in the freight sector. They are bound for Aguascalientes, 160 km away, and the State of Mexico, 370 km away. The National Guard contacts Profepa. Seizure of 10 common leopard geckos (*Eublepharis macularius*). They are appreciated as pets. Their range covers the semi-desert regions of Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan and India.

Profepa, May 6, 2020.²

May 15, 2020

San Luis Potosi International Airport, Stat of San Luis Potosi, Mexico

Many animals pass through the airport's courier service. There was still life in it: rescue of 4 "dragoncitos", better known internationally as Mexican alligator lizards (*Abronia graminea*, Appendix II).

Profepa, May 21, 2020.³

ASIA

CAMBODIA

Week of May 24, 2020

Cambodia

Dismantling of 7 poaching camps and seizure of 38 traps, 3 handmade firearms, a turtle net and one dead monitor lizard (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II).

Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, May 24, 2020.⁴



CHINA

Early June 2020

Xiamen, Fujian Province, China

In September 2019, 15 African savanna monitors (*Varanus exanthematicus*, Appendix II), 20 cm long, were seized in a postal parcel from Taiwan (see "On the Trail" n°26 p.29). Customs seized 10 green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II) used as pets at the receiver Li Ming.

Chinese Customs, June 11, 2020.⁵

Mid-June 2020

Taiyuan, Shanxi Province, China

Sentencing of Mr. Cao to 16 years in prison for smuggling 108 protected animals. 75 died during the shipments. In September 2019, 48 green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II) and 10 monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II), all dead, had been seized from two postal parcels destined for him. He had protested against the Taiwanese sender and requested a replacement shipment. As a precaution, he had given the address of an accomplice. Another 50 green iguanas were sent to Mr Lu, 17 of which died during the journey. Upon receipt, Lu kept 2 of them, sent 7 to clients and transmitted 24 to Cao. See "On the Trail" n°27 p. 34.

Chinese Customs, June 12, 2020.⁶



INDIA

April 23, 2020

Salaiammapatti, Tiruchirappalli District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

The Forest Department came to arrest a gang of 6 youth people of the village who had flushed out a Bengal monitor lizard (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I) in the Valanadu Blackbuck Sanctuary, tied it up and killed it while filming themselves with a mobile phone. After which they started dancing. They then cooked and ate its meat and after that posted their misdeeds on TikTok.

They were arrested and taken into custody. The Hindu, April 23, 2020 ; The New Indian Express, April 24, 2020 ; The Times of India, April 24, 2020.⁷



May 3, 2020

Gopinatham Forest, Chamarajanagar District, State of Karnataka, India

Arrest by a patrol of Kumar, aged 36, and Selvan, aged 51. They were in possession of 2 monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II). They had entered the wildlife sanctuary claiming to be grazing their sheep. But they left their sheep unattended and went hunting with their dogs in the forest. They were taken into custody.

The Times of India, May 6, 2020.⁸

May 7, 2020

Kathanviduthi, Pudukkottai District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Prabu, aged 23, Ramesh, aged 28, and Suri, aged 22, posted a video on social networks in which they displayed themselves with two dead monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) as “a display of bravery”, according to Mr. Anand Kumar, the local forestry officer. They then cooked them. The success of the video triggered police action. The culprits were traced through their contact numbers. They were sentenced to 15 days in prison. The Times of India, May 9, 2020. ⁹

GANG

May 19, 2020

Karuthapillayur, Tenkasi District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Denounced by a competitor specialising in the capture of wild boar, 4 men accused of having poached more than 250 monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) in the last 3 years were arrested: G. John Vincent, a 41-year-old mason, stated that he had been hunting them for more than 17 years. The other members of the gang are K. Suresh, another mason aged 22, J. Anton Ravi, 22, and M. Immanuel, a 19-year-old student. Two to three other members of the gang are wanted. They were hunting with dogs and they claim to have shared the meat with friends or villagers. The myth persists that the varan is transmitting his robustness to the consumer. The Times of India, May 21, 2020. ¹⁰

May 31, 2020

Maniyankurichi, Tiruchirappalli District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Arrest of V. Periyasamy, aged 29, astrologer, accused of killing a monitor lizard (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) and using parts of it for commercial purposes. He stated on YouTube that he was preparing Kohl (or Kajal), a make-up product that underlines the eyes. According to him, his cosmetic preparations would be useful for black magic and business people would have every interest to buy it from him to neutralize their rivals or to make their business prosper.

The Times of India, June 4, 2020 ; The Hindu, June 3, 2020. ¹¹

June 2, 2020

Matangapar, Baksa District, State of Assam, India

Seizure by a joint patrol by the SSB and rangers of 3 tokay geckos (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II), 2 adults and 1 juvenile. SSB, June 2, 2020. ¹²

June 10, 2020

Nalbari District, State of Assam, India

A patrol of the 24th paramilitary battalion of the SSB came across a tokay gecko (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II) abandoned by a trafficker who had probably fled on their arrival. The reptile was handed over to the forest rangers of the Kumarikata office. The border with Bhutan is close by. SSB, June 10, 2020. ¹³

June 12, 2020

Tembhode, Palghar District, State of Maharashtra, India

Vaishali Chauhan, an animal rights activist, learns that a Bengal monitor lizard (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I) has been killed. He reports it to the forestry officers. Mahendra Balwant Shinwari, aged 28, is arrested. His accomplice is on the run. They wanted to eat its meat, extract its oil for its aphrodisiac virtues, use its tongue and liver to cure skin infections, and practice black magic. The “ghorpad” (local name of the Bengal monitor lizard), 2 years old, was once again the victim of its legend. The Hindustan Times, June 12, 2020. ¹⁴

GANG

June 16, 2020

Khara, Amreli District, State of Gujarat, India

Thanks to a tip-off, forestry officers caught a group hunting Bengal monitor lizards (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I). Only one poacher, Raju Vaghela, aged 20, is arrested with a wounded specimen. He is detained in custody for 14 days. His fellow poachers fled. As for the victim, it was handed over to the Sakkarbagu zoo for treatment. According to the chief conservator of forests, Bengal monitor lizard oil is also known to relieve rheumatism.

The Indian Express, June 20, 2020. ¹⁵

EUROPE

ITALY

Early May 2020

Caserta, Province of Caserta, Campania Region, Italy

Some Carabinieri captured a black-and-white tegu (*Salvator merianae*, Appendix II) abandoned in a parking place in a private residence. Sick and wounded, it was entrusted to specialists. The range of black-and-white tegus includes Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay and Argentina. They can grow up to 140 cm long and weigh up to 10 kg. Occhio di Caserta, May 4, 2020. ¹⁶

CROCODILES, ALLIGATORS AND GHARIALS

AFRICA

KENYA

June 18, 2020

On the edge of the Meru National Park, Meru County, Kenya

A crocodile is reported in a marsh in close proximity to a village. Lurking under the muddy water and algae, it was invisible and untraceable. It was necessary to make sure that it was a crocodile and not a monitor lizard. The 3 members of the response team rummaged through the mud with long sticks. After 5 minutes, one of them stepped on the reptile which sprang up like a spring. It was indeed a crocodile of at least one metre long. It camouflaged itself again. It was caught with a net. Its jaws were tied with a rope. It was then transported swaddled in the net and held by its tail inside the park alongside a river. It was freed from the net, its jaws were untied with every possible precaution and it was thrown into the water. It moved away full steam.

SWT/KWS, June 2020. ¹

GUINEA

June 30, 2020

Siafata, Macenta Prefecture, Nzérékoré Region, Guinea

Who is really Koï-Koï?

Koï-Koï Kalivogui holds 18 crocodiles (*Crocodylidae*, Appendix I or II) in a pond. Questioned by the police, he claims to have saved them from the hands of traffickers. The crocodiles were seized. Koï-Koï is not believed. He is taken into custody.

Reversal: Koï-Koï is warmly thanked by the prefect. The crocodiles are released in the Haut Niger National Park.

The species present in Guinea are the African slender-snouted crocodile (*Mecistops cataphractus*), the African dwarf crocodile (*Osteolaemus tetraspis*, Appendix I), the African sharp-nosed crocodile (*Crocodylus cataphractus*, Appendix I) and the Nile crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*, Appendix I).

In 3 months, around thirty freshwater turtles and twenty other crocodiles were released into the park by the Wildlife and Plant Crime Unit.

Ma Guinée infos, June 30, 2020 ; Guinée Matin, July 1st, 2020. ²

NAMIBIA

June 4, 2020

Rundu, Kavango-East Region, Namibia

Arrest of Romanus Ndumba in possession of a crocodile skin (*Crocodylidae*, Appendix I or II). He is charged with breaking the Controlled and Wildlife Products and Trade Act.

The Namibian, June 11, 2020. ³

AMERICA

BRAZIL

April 2, 2020

Salto Grande, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Following several reports of wild animal carcasses, the police are strengthening their surveillance. At 3.30 am, they arrest 3 men on the Paranapanema river. On board their boat, they found firearms and 2 live caimans (*Caiman* spp., Appendix I or II), one in a bag and the other in the fish hold. The suspects probably intended to shoot them. They will be released by the environmental police.

G1, April 2, 2020. ⁴

MEXICO

April 30, 2020

San Luis Potosi International Airport, State of San Luis Potosi, Mexico

The National Guard detects 2 suspicious parcels in the freight sector. They were coming from La Esperanza Emiliano Zapata, in the state of Tabasco, 1300 km away, and from Tepatitlán de Morelos, in the state of Jalisco, 270 km away. Profepa arrives on the scene. Opening of the parcels and seizure of 42.42 kg of Morelet's crocodile skins (*Crocodylus moreletii*, Appendix I), totem pole cactus (*Pachycereus schottii monstrosus*, Appendix II), and 3 peyote cacti (*Lophophora williamsii*, Appendix II). Profepa, April 30, 2020. ⁵

May 5, 2020

Tiquicheo de Nicolás Romero, State of Michoacán, Mexico

Arrest of a person in possession of an American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*, Appendix II) in a bus on the road from Zitácuaro to Tiquicheo. The 90 cm long juvenile crocodile was weakened and injured on its paws. It was entrusted to a PIMVS (Predio o Instalación que Maneja Vida Silvestre).

Profepa, May 5, 2020. ⁶

May 15, 2020

San Luis Potosi International Airport, State of San Luis Potosi, Mexico

Many animals pass through the airport's courier service. In this one there was only death: 34 skins and half-skins of crocodile (*Crocodylidae*, Appendix I or II). The main species in Mexico is the Morelet's crocodile (*Crocodylus moreletii*, Appendix II). Profepa, May 21, 2020.⁷

ASIA

CAMBODIA

April 24, 2020

Kaoh Kong Province, Cambodia

Seizure of 2 crocodiles. They are certainly Siamese crocodiles (*Crocodylus siamensis*, Appendix I). They had been captured in the Areng River more than 20 years ago and were being used in an illegal and unhealthy breeding farm. DNA testing will be made to verify that they are not hybrids before considering their release.

Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, April 24, 2020.⁸

End of June 2020

Cambodia

Crocodile breeders are on the verge of bankruptcy. Females lay between 20 and 60 eggs from February to March. The eggs hatch between April and July. Newborns sell for around 2 US\$ per unit compared to 7 to 10 US\$ last year. The Siem Reap Breeders' Association waves the red flag. "The price had been in steady decline over the last three years, but this year's slump had been on another level." "Sales revenue this year amounted to just enough to purchase three months worth of feed for large crocodiles." The crocodiles are in danger of having the munchies. Their value is falling but the price of the fish they eat (0.50 US\$/kg) is not. The slump also affects adult females. A few years ago, they were sold individually for between 500 and 600 US\$. Today, they are worth no more than 150 US\$. Herders are calling for help from the government, which does not seem to be willing to launch a crocodile recovery plan. According to Veng Sakhon, the Minister of Agriculture, the real problem is that there is no longer sufficient demand for crocodile leather goods. "With this method of breeding, our crocodile skins are completely incapable of meeting their [buyers'] standards".

Phnom Penh Post, June 29, 2020.⁹

CHINA

April 6, 2020

Yunnan Province, China. Border with Viet Nam

In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, 2 suspects are arrested in possession of 1,213 Chinese alligator skins (*Alligator sinensis*, Appendix I). They were transporting them in a truck. In the bags supposed to contain watermelons, customs officers found skins of 5 colours: black, brown, white, red and orange. The largest was 1.7 m long and 0.5 m wide. The customs officers covered an entire basketball court with the skins during unloading.

InterNewsCast, April 7, 2020.¹⁰



INDONESIA

June 20, 2020

Way Kambas National Park, Lampung Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Since March, the release of wild animals seized from poachers or from illegal holders was prohibited. The aim was to prevent the spread of Covid-19 into the wild. A decree of the Ministry of the Environment dated May has deleted this provision on condition that the staff responsible for the release was reduced to a minimum. Six salt-water crocodiles (*Crocodylus porosus*, Appendix II) were the first to benefit from this opportunity. They were released into the marshes of the national park. They will be followed on a case-by-case basis by orangutans who were exfiltrated from plantations or burnt-out forests. On the other hand, orangutans that were kept in cages or shelters in private homes will not be released until it is certified by veterinarians that they are free from contamination through human contact.

Mongabay, June 22, 2020.¹¹

NEPAL

April 4, 2020

Chitwan National Park, Bagmati Province, Nepal

Lockdown began 10 days ago and 3 gharials (*Gavialis gangeticus*, Appendix I) have already died from poaching. The range of this critically endangered species covers Bangladesh, India and Nepal. According to Bishnu Prasad, spokesman for the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, intensified poaching was expected, despite an increasing number of patrols. Daily Sabah, May 1st, 2020. ¹²

THAILAND

June 4, 2020

Suan Phueng District, Ratchaburi Province, Thailand

Search of a breeding farm that encroaches on a forest reserve. The stench was sickening. Thousands of crocodiles (*Crocodylidae*, Appendix I or II) lived in 50 ponds, amidst hundreds of thousands of cow carcasses and bones. It is not yet known whether this farm has authorisation for slaughter. The carcasses and bones pose public health problems. In addition to the plundering of wildlife and agricultural livestock, there may also be plundering of trees. Indeed, the police discovered a sawmill on the spot. The owner is the father of Ms. Parina Kraikupt, MP for Ratchaburi.

Thailand is home to 3 species of crocodiles. The breeding farm specialises in the Siamese crocodile (*Crocodylus siamensis*, Appendix I).

Thailand Animal Rights Alliance, June 5, 2020. ¹³

EUROPE

SPAIN

Mid-June 2020

Cambrils, Province of Tarragona, Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain

A stuffed Cuban crocodile (*Crocodylus rhombifer*, Appendix I) is discovered in the Samà Park by the Seprona. It was exhibited, hanging on a wall, in the cafeteria of the botanical garden. The management could not provide any documents on the origin of the animal. Pending the outcome of the investigation, the crocodile remained on site but is no longer on display to the public. The range of the Cuban crocodile is reduced to two confetti on the island of Cuba. They are hunted for their meat. El Caso, June 10, 2020. ¹⁴

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

May 4-9, 2020

Crocodylus, Park Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia

Theft of 59 juvenile crocodiles, probably salt-water crocodiles (*Crocodylus porosus*, Appendix II in Australia), measuring 40-50cm long. Grahame Webb, the owner, is breeding them for a "research project". According to him, the theft was spread over several visits. This is not the first time crocodiles have been stolen from this park. Hundreds have already disappeared. Even children break into the enclosures and try to take some with them in their backpacks.

ABC News, June 22, 2020. ¹⁵



Gharials (*Gavialis gangeticus*), Bharatpur & Chambal. Picture Mike Prince

DENDROBATES AND OTHER AMPHIBIANS

AMERICA

COLOMBIA

Early June 2020 Bogotá, Colombia

Seizure of 5 poison-dart frogs: 2 *Oophaga histrionica* (harlequin poison frog, Appendix II) and 3 *Oophaga sylvatica* (little devil poison frog, Appendix II) native of Valle del Cauca and Ecuador. They were going to be sold in pet shops. They were released back to their natural habitat after a brief examination by the Centro de Atención de Fauna. *Semana Sostenible*, June 7, 2020.¹



June 23, 2020

Department of Valle del Cauca, Colombia

Release into the wild of 79 Lehmann's poison frogs (*Oophaga lehmanni*, Appendix II) that had been seized in the hands of traffickers and spared from a long and often deadly journey and eternal captivity abroad.

Corporación Autónoma Regional del Valle del Cauca, June 23, 2020.²

EUROPE

SPAIN

April 22, 2020

Barcelona, Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain

The banal fire in an empty flat in the Gràcia district gave the fire brigade the opportunity to discover that it was not quite empty. 200 terraria on racks confined hundreds of amphibians, many of which were asphyxiated. Among the dead and the rescued were Montseny newts (*Calotriton arnoldi*) and Pyrenean newts (*Calotriton asper*).

ABC, April 23, 2020.³

ANTS, BEETLES, BUTTERFLIES, TARANTULAS AND SCORPIONS

AMERICA

COLOMBIA

Mid-May 2020 Bogotá, Colombia

They were inserted into test tubes and syringes. They had been shipped from Pereira in the east of the country and were due to fly to New York. The shipment receipt mentioned handicrafts. The 23 forest ants (family Formicidae) belonging to 3 different genera were destined for scientific research or for collectors. *El Democrata*, May 16, 2020.¹

MEXICO

June 8, 2020

San Luis Potosi International Airport, State of San Luis de Potosí, Mexico

It is no longer an airport. It's a jungle. Seizure by the Guardia Nacional of a Mexican redrump tarantula (*Brachypelma vagans*, Appendix II). In 5 years, 256 tarantulas have been seized in Mexico prior to export, mostly by air. *Profepa*, June 8, 2020.²



ASIA

CHINA

April 27, 2020

Mohan border post, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Laos.

Seizure from Laos in the secret compartments of a truck of 166 kg of dried scorpions worth an estimated 110,000 yuan (15,500 US\$).

Chinese Customs, April 29, 2020.³

May 25, 2020

Zhengzhou, Henan Province, China

The shipment receipt for the parcel post mentioned "samples". The 200 ants (family Formicidae) including 6 queens (2 cm long) came from Germany. They were in plastic boxes with soil and crushed leaves. The boxes were "drowned" in metal shot. The aim was to hide the living beings from the eyes of X-rays.

Chinese Customs, June 12, 2020.⁴

June 16, 2020

Dalian, Liaoning Province, China

The "plastic dolls" were living or stuffed insects, *Mesotopus tarandus*, *Yumikoi makii*, and some *Prosopocoilus* beetles. Most of the species are exogenous. This is the third time in a year that the customs at the postal sorting centre has intercepted the invaders. "Once abandoned or escaped into the natural environment, they may cause alien species to invade and harm our ecological environment and agricultural and forestry production." "After the investigation, the whole batch will be destroyed".

Chinese Customs, June 19 and 22, 2020.⁵



June 16, 2020

Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure by postal customs of 2 stuffed butterflies including one *Morpho helena*. The parcel will be sent back to the sender and a report will be sent to the recipient.

Chinese Customs, June 28, 2020.⁶

June 22, 2020

Zhengzhou, Henan Province, China

The harvester ants were 11 with an average length of 1.5 cm, each inserted into a small plastic tube with a substance that looks like a food portion in a package from France declared as "Lego pieces".

Chinese Customs, June 29, 2020.⁷



June 30, 2020

Zhengzhou, Henan Province, China

Chinese customs officers are concerned about the "arrival of ants" that attempt to invade the country. There were 262 of them, each 1.5 cm long, inserted into a plastic test tube. The receipt for the express parcel from Poland mentioned "plastic models".

Chinese Customs, July 2, 2020.⁸

June 30, 2020

Qingdao, Shandong Province, China

Seizure by postal customs in a parcel coming from abroad of 31 stuffed beetles between 0.6 cm and 9 cm long and of 7 different species.

Chinese Customs, July 6, 2020.⁹

EUROPE

FRANCE

Mid-June 2020

Albertville, Department of Savoie, France

The former president of the Natural History Society of Savoie held 1,237 butterflies at home, some of which had been captured for decades, sometimes in natural parks, then stuffed. His ambition was to build up an entomothèque of butterflies from Savoy and the Alpine massif. He was denounced by a treasurer of the learned society. "I broke the law, but not anyhow," he says. "My samples were small enough not to endanger the species," he also said, forgetting that the species he was targeting are precisely those recognised as being in danger of extinction. 6,000 € (7,150 US\$) fine, half of which is suspended. France Bleu Pays de Savoie, June 17, 2020.¹⁰





Orpheus charming the animals (1600-1615). The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Events concerning among others elephants, rhinos, felines, bears or pangolins and their by-products are indicated by these pictograms:



Cases concerning exclusively

- pangolins, rhinos and elephants: see page 20
- elephants and rhinos: see page 42
- rhinos, elephants and felines: see page 51

NORTHERN AFRICA

TUNISIA

April 16, 2020

Sfax, Governorate of Sfax, Tunisia

"I only have my eyes to cry and a throat to shout and moan in great bitterness." The tireless Abdelmajid Dabbar, president of the NGO Tunisie Ecologie, control tower of poaching and plundering of fauna, from the jerboa (family Dipodidae), common mergansers (*Mergus merganser*), European turtle doves (*Streptopelia turtur*) to Barbary sheep (*Ammotragus lervia*, Appendix II) and dorcas gazelles (*Gazella dorcas*, Appendix III in Algeria and Tunisia), observes by himself and thanks to the testimonies of his network that, during the Covid-19 lockdown and the unavailability of the gamekeeper brigadier Kamel Gosrani wounded by enemy fire, poachers with 4x4s, quads, motorbikes, tents and other bivouacs are rampant day and night in the regions of Chareb, Om-Echieh, Daher, Oued Zmerten, in Kebili and Gabès.

Abdelmajid Dabbar, cf. "On the Trail" n°3 p.22 and n°16 p.28 and this number page 77.

Kapitalis, April 16, 2020.¹

WESTERN, MIDDLE AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

COTE D'IVOIRE

May 18, 2020

Azagué, Agnèby-Tiassa Region, Lagunes District, Côte d'Ivoire

Seizure of a large lot of smoked bushmeat. The Ivorian Press Agency recounts the scene as follows: "In addition to foodstuffs and some passengers, including school students leaving for Abidjan, which were the visible face of its contents, the vehicle was also carrying three hidden bags of wild game that the officers have detected at the end of a sustained routine check". These were a pangolin, 27 greater cane rats (*Thryonomys swinderianus*), 30 striped ground squirrels (*Xerus erythropus*), 5 hedgehogs, 2 mongooses and a partridge. The vehicle was impounded. The seizure will be incinerated, emphasizes Lieutenant Tiéoulé Joëline, chief of the Water and Forest station. She adds: "The driver will have to answer for his acts before the courts".

Agence Ivoirienne de Presse, May 19, 2020.²



GABON

April 30, 2020

Libreville, Estuaire Province, Gabon

Arrest by the judicial police of Mrs Flore Blanga and Mrs Falone Glaisse for possession, transport and marketing of meat of pangolins (Appendix I), blue duikers (*Philantomba monticola*, Appendix II) and African brush-tailed porcupines (*Atherurus africanus*). Conservation Justice, April 2020.³



NAMIBIA

May 2020

N/a'an ku sê Wildlife Sanctuary, Khomas Region, Namibia

Controversy between the Minister of Environment and the N/a'an ku sê Foundation run by Rudie and Marlice van Vuuren and supported by Angelina Jolie. The foundation's shelter, located 40 km from Windhoek the capital city, houses among its 217 animals 3 leopards, 8 cheetahs and 10 African wild dogs (*Lycaon pictus*) whose origins are unknown. The N/a'an ku sê Foundation's vocation is to take in wounded or "problem" orphaned animals which are part of the "State's property" and some blame it for appropriating them permanently or even breeding them. Mr van Vuuren points out that the case, to which he did not have access, had been under investigation since 2016 and that no charges have been brought against him to date. He denies that his sanctuary was used as a transit point for the export of 6 elephants to Europe and denounces the incompetence of the Ministry of Environment. The foundation has brought an action before the High Court against the Ministries of Environment and Justice who would like all animals, leopards, cheetahs, African wild dogs, baboons (*Papio* spp., Appendix II), lions, caracals, meerkats (*Suricata suricatta*), turtles, vervet monkeys (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) and brown hyenas (*Hyaena brunnea*) to be released or killed.

The Namibian Investigative Unit, October 13, 2020.⁴



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Early May 2020

Kinshasa, Kinshasa Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Seizure in a hotel of 9 grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) and a baboon (*Papio* spp., Appendix II).

Conserv Congo, May 7, 2020.⁵

CHAD

June 30, 2020

Ouaddaï Region, Chad



Arrest of 2 men on horses armed with Kalashnikovs and 5 others on foot armed with nets and traps.



They were engaging in poaching and butchering species protected by national regulations. They were brought before the court of Abéché. Alwihda Info, July 2, 2020.⁶

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

April 2020

State of Oregon, United States of America

Charges laid against William Hollings, Nicholas Lisenby and Eric Hamilton. The Oregon police have gathered evidence of their poaching in Benton, Lane, Linn, Lincoln, Polk and Tillamook counties after receiving convincing information from an anonymous informant. They are accused of poaching 27 wild animals including male deer (family Cervidae), male elk (*Cervus elaphus canadensis*), American black bears (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II), bobcats (*Lynx rufus*, Appendix II) and pumas (*Puma concolor*, Appendix II). In addition to the fines and permanent revocation of their hunting licenses, they risk being sentenced to pay 160,000 US\$ to the State of Oregon.

For suspected violations of the Hunting and Fishing Code and the integrity of protected wildlife habitats, Turn in Poachers (TIP) numbers and the online police address are available 24 hours a day: 800-452-7888 and TIP@state.or.us.

KEZI 9 News, May 18, 2020 ; KCBY, May 19, 2020.⁷



Early June 2020

State of Massachusetts, United States of America

Nathan Boss pleads guilty. Between 2017 and 2019, he fraudulently imported black-breasted leaf turtles (*Geoemyda spengleri*, Appendix II) by parcel post from Hong Kong and exported to Hong Kong and Sweden protected species. Moreover, his smuggling bag was including salamanders that are potentially vectors of fungal diseases and are prohibited from importation into the United States of America.

US Department of Justice, June 9, 2020.⁸

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

ARGENTINA

Early April 2020

San Rafael, Province of Mendoza, Argentina

He is 29 years old, he was brisk on the Internet but the Covid-19 period is freezing sales. The police took advantage of the situation to seize a 2 m long python (*Pythonidae*, Appendix I or II), 6 tarantulas (family Theraphosidae) and a gecko (family Gekkonidae) at his home.

Los Andes, April 6, 2020.⁹

May 27, 2020

Valle Cretácico Protected Area, El Cuy Department, Rio Negro Province, Argentina

Seizure at a farm of 2 firearms of 22 and 44 calibre, ammunition, telescopic sights and binoculars. Remains of 10 guanacos (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II), 5 puna rheas (*Pterocnemia pennata*, Appendix II), a big hairy armadillo (*Chaetophractus villosus*) and other armadillos (family Dasypodidae) are evidence of the poaching.

Rio Negro, May 28, 2020.¹⁰

End of June 2020

Pilar, Buenos Aires Province, Argentina

The inhabitants are battling fiercely with white-eared opossums (*Didelphis albiventris*), southern mountain cavies (*Microcavia australis*) and Pampas foxes (*Lycalopex gymnocercus*). They are considered pests and are trapped in large numbers. A local company is illegally eradicating them. The NGO Animales de la Tierra requires public authorities to act. Its members come to visit the inhabitants to inform them. The NGO calls for "seeing indigenous animals as allies", and not forgetting that "we are the invaders".

Que Pasa Web, June 23, 2020.¹¹

BRAZIL

April 11, 2020

Tabatinga, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Ten men were hunting in the Javari valley. The gang stored their catch in the freezers of a house on the banks of the Quixito River, a tributary of the Javari. Two canoes were nearby. At the time of their arrest, police officers and agents of the FUNAI (Fundação Nacional do Índio) seized 300 kg of fish and meat from deer, pacas (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras), caimans (*Caiman* spp., Appendix I or II) and monkeys. A tufted capuchin (*Cebus apella*, synonymous with *Sapajus apella*, Appendix II), a paca (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras) and a yellow-headed sideneck turtle (*Podocnemis unifilis*, Appendix II) were released. Four rifles and 70 rounds of 16-calibre ammunition were confiscated. D24am, April 13, 2020.¹²

May 4, 2020

Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Interception of 3 parcels at the post office, avenue Raimundo Parente :

- a rainbow boa (*Epicrates cenchria*, Appendix II) from Bahia.
- 4 fighting fish (*Betta* spp.) coming from Para.
- various ants (genus *Atta*) bound for Boa Vista (State of Roraima).

The animals will go to an Ibama shelter or the "Jungle War Instruction Center" (Centro de Instrução de Guerra na Selva - CIGS), where they are supposed to live in peace.

Em Tempo, May 4, 2020.¹³

May 5, 2020

Garibaldi, State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

Seizure with the support of the NGO ARPA (Associação Riograndense de Proteção aos Animais) of 3 coatis (genus *Nasua*), a hundred caged birds and 13 firearms.

Jornal Semanário, May 5, 2020.¹⁴

May 15, 2020

Ipatinga, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

Seizure at home of 3 turtles (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II), 2 southern lapwings (*Vanellus chilensis*), a tegu (*Tupinambis* spp., Appendix II) and a striped owl (*Pseudoscops clamator*, Appendix II). They have joined the "Parque das Aves", a 16-hectare park that is home to more than 1,300 birds in the state of Paraná.

H2FOZ, May 18, 2020.¹⁵

May 30, 2020

Between Ubatã and Ibirataia, State of Bahia, Brazil

Seizure of the carcasses of 3 armadillos (family Dasypodidae), a tufted capuchin (*Cebus apella*, synonymous with *Sapajus apella*, Appendix II) and a collared peccary (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II) in a house. The owner of the house cannot be found.

G1, June 1st, 2020.¹⁶

June 13, 2020

Ji-Paraná Microregion, State of Rondônia, Brazil

The convoy of 2 pick-ups attracted the curiosity of the military environmental patrol. The PMA (Polícia Militar Ambiental) is a Brazilian speciality. Six firearms of various calibres and at least one caiman (*Caiman* spp., Appendix I or II), one bare-faced curassow (*Crax fasciolata*) and one paca (genus *Cuniculus*) freshly deceased were seized.

Diário da Amazonia, June 15, 2020.¹⁷



June 16, 2020

Santo André, State of São Paulo, Brazil

An inhabitant is engaged in wildlife trafficking. She is denounced by neighbours. At her home, the police seize marmosets (*Callithrix* spp., Appendix I or II) and blue-and-yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II). She claims to be only an intermediary. Notícias do ABC, June 16, 2020.¹⁸

OPERATION HORUS

June 28, 2020

Caapiranga and Tefé, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Two shady boats are checked on the Rio Negro, a tributary of the Amazon River. In the first, the police seize a 12-calibre rifle and 12 various cartridges.

In the second, 3 suspects are transporting the carcasses of a bare-faced curassow (*Crax fasciolata*), 2 macaws (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II) and 70 kg of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II). Four indictments.

G1, June 29, 2020.¹⁹

COLOMBIA

OPERATION TEMIS

June 5, 2020

Colombia

In 20 cities, coordinated interventions of police and services resulted in the seizure of 502 wild animals, 38 plants, 51 m³ of wood and 50 arrests. Macaws (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II), amazons (*Amazona* spp., Appendix I or II), orange-chinned parakeets (*Brotogeris jugularis*, Appendix II), saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II), matamata turtles (*Chelus fimbriata*), Colombian sliders (*Trachemys callirostris*), iguanas (*Iguana* spp., Appendix II) and opossums are at the forefront of the trafficking.

El Comercio, June 5, 2020.²⁰

End of June 2020

Cocorná, El Retiro, El Carmen de Viboral and Puerto Triunfo, Department of Antioquia, Colombia

Forests are victims of illegal logging: chainsaws were seized in large numbers. Monkeys and birds are victims of the pet market. One white-faced Capuchin (*Cebus capucinus*, Appendix II), 4 Northern mockingbirds (*Mimus polyglottos*), one macaw (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II), 2 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II) and one Venezuelan troupial (*Icterus icterus*) were seized. During the Covid-19 state of emergency, the Cornare (Corporación Autónoma Regional de las Cuencas de los Ríos Negro y Nare) has not remained idle. Several common opossums (*Didelphis marsupialis*) were rescued. The only marsupials in the Americas, they are protected by Colombian law and at the same time hunted by dogs, run over by cars, poached for their fur and converted into pets. As adults they reach 80 cm in length. "This animal is at home as much as you are!" proclaims the Cornare.

Sostenibilidad Semana,
June 22, 2020.²¹



COSTA RICA

Mid-April 2020

Costa Rica

It is the other side of Easter Holy Week. Family celebrations and processions trigger an all round poaching frenzy. Seizure of 5 mammals, 2 reptiles, 51 birds, 597 fish, 100 turtle eggs, 43 fishing nets, 23 firearms and a thousand decorations from palm trees. 116 questionings. CRHoy, April 17, 2020.²²

ECUADOR

April 1st, 2020

Manglares Churute Ecological Reserve, Guayas Province, Ecuador

Return to mangroves of a gray-headed kite (*Leptodon cayanensis*, Appendix II), a laughing falcon (*Herpetotheres cachinnans*, Appendix II), a striped owl (*Pseudoscops clamator*, Appendix II), a black parrot (*Coracopsis nigra*, Appendix II), 2 blue-headed parrots (*Pionus menstruus*, Appendix II), a Virginia opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*), a boa (*Boa* spp., Appendix I or II) and a scorpion mud turtle (*Kinosternon scorpioides*) after a stay of 2 to 4 months in the Mansión Mascota Veterinary Clinic. Most of them were victims of trafficking. They were taken out of it by the environmental police of the province and the state police. Others were found injured and abandoned.

Ministerio del Ambiente y Agua, April 1st, 2020.²³

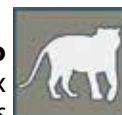
MEXICO

Early May 2020

San Pablo Etla, State of Oaxaca, Mexico

A Bengal tiger (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) and an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) were seized from a travelling circus by the PFM (Policía Federal Ministerial). The circus management and the trainer were unable to prove their legal origin. They were handed over to the UMA (Unidad de Manejo para la Conservación de la Vida Silvestre) of Tecali de Herrera.

Siete24.mx, 5 May 5, 2020.²⁴



End of June 2020

Ecatepec de Morelos, State of Mexico, Mexico

The town is known by "On the Trail". In 2014 (n°7 p. 106), a flock of wild animals ranging from a Mexican redknee tarantula for the smallest to an African lion for the largest to a Burmese python for the longest had been placed under sequestration in a private home. The individual claimed to operate a UMA.

This time it is the turn of the pet shop Acuario Ámbar to be in the spotlight. It is forced to close. It offered knob-scaled lizard (*Xenosaurus grandis*) for sale. These lizards live in cracks in rocks. They are diurnal and insectivorous. Solitary and territorial, they cannot bear that a fellow lizard comes and visits their den. As an adult, they are about ten centimetres long. The pet shop also offered tropical gars (*Atractosteus tropicus*). These fish are one metre long as adults. Their favourite habitats are rivers and floodable marshes. They cannot live in an aquarium for long.

Excelsior, June 27, 2020.²⁵



PANAMA

End of May 2020

Chepo District, Province of Panama, Panama

Three poachers disguised as police officers are arrested by the FRICONT (Fuerza de Reacción Inmediata Contra el Narcoterrorismo). They are in possession of a live parrot (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), a dead iguana (*Iguana* spp., Appendix II), a firearm, ammunition for small and large game and a chainsaw.

En Segundos, May 25, 2020.²⁶

April 4, 2020

Santa Flora, Siparia Region, Trinidad and Tobago

Seizure during a roadside check. Inside a vehicle were hidden 40 yellow-fronted amazons (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II), 4 giant Brazilian otters (*Pteronura brasiliensis*, Appendix I) and 2 capuchin monkeys (*Sapajus* spp., synonymous with *Cebus* spp., Appendix II). Exhausted by the uprooting from their natural habitats and by the rough transboundary journey, only 23 birds and 2 capuchins were still alive. They were handed over to a zoo. Two residents of Diego Martin are under lock and key.

Loop News, April 5, 2020 ; Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries, April 5, 2020.²⁷

Mid-June 2020

South Oropouche, Siparia Region, Trinidad and Tobago

Seizure from a Venezuelan illegal immigrant of 17 yellow-headed amazons (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I), a parrot (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II) and 14 capuchin monkeys (*Sapajus* spp. synonymous with *Cebus* spp., Appendix II). The Covid-19 pandemic and the stay at home order do not slow down illegal immigration and people from elsewhere do not always come empty-handed. Trinidad Express, June 19, 2020.²⁸

June 19, 2020

Fyzabad, Siparia Region, Trinidad and Tobago

Seizure in a house of 14 small monkeys, including one dead, 17 yellow-headed amazons (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I) and one ara (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II). A Venezuelan national will be interviewed with the assistance of an interpreter. The head of the game wardens, Steve Seepersad, notes that trafficking from Venezuela is increasing. Earlier in June, 3 men on board a boat were apprehended after throwing baskets full of birds overboard as a Trinidad and Tobago coastguard patrol approached (see page 116).

Stabroek News, June 20, 2020.²⁹



© Stabroek News

CHINA

February, May and July 2020

Suifenhe, Heilongjiang Province (border with Primorsky Krai, Russia) and Haikou, Hainan Province, China



The investigation had begun in early February. It was slowed down by the Covid-19 lockdown.

- Seizure in a hangar of 200 saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II), 2 tiger skulls and 209 alleged tiger bones and one arrest.

- Five other individuals co-organizing the smuggling are arrested, 2 of them in Haikou, southern China, more than 4,000 km from Suifenhe.

If the authenticity of the tiger bones is attested, the value of the seizure would be 18 million yuan or 2.5 million US\$.

Tiger and saiga in Heilongjiang province, see "On the Trail" n°3 p. 42, n°4 p 103, n°21 p. 116, n°23 p. 87, n°25 p. 101 and n°27 p. 120.

Teller Report, July 12, 2020 ; China News, July 9, 2020.³⁰

April 2020

Baishi Mountain, Jilin Province, China



At the end of an investigation started in December 2019 when the carcass of a wild boar was seized from a vehicle travelling through Baishishan Forest, 13,000 wild animal carcasses were found in a cold storage facility.



© Mp.weixin.qq.com

Most of them were riddled with pellets and 500 traps and slingshots were seized in the sheds of the so-called Liu who seems to be the conductor of this mass poaching. 26 providers suspected of fuelling the traffic were also arrested. Among the victims were sables (*Martes zibellina*), owls (order Strigiformes) and hazel grouses (*Tetrastes bonasia*). Mp.weixin.qq.com, April 14, 2020.³¹



April 9, 2020

Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China

Dismantling of a pet sales network. Searches were carried out at the homes of 10 sellers and 44 buyers. 35 people are held in police custody. 180 animals including Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I), leopard tortoises (*Stigmochelys pardalis*, Appendix II) and yellow-headed amazons (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I) were seized. Transactions were made via the Internet after exchanges of photos.

Shine, April 13, 2020 ; Global Times, April 14, 2020. ³²



Mid-April 2020

Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China

The clandestine restaurant served its customers scales and meat of a mysterious animal called "river pig" to eat in or to take away. It was in fact a Sunda pangolin. Three specimens were seized during the search in April 2019 along with 4 Asian black bear paws (*Ursus thibetanus formosanus*, Appendix I). The seller of the "river pig" was given an 18-month suspended prison sentence and a fine of 5,830 US\$. The information was published on April 14, 2020.

Sina, April 14, 2020. ³³



June 10, 2020

Yuexiu District, Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Conviction of a shopkeeper to 3 years imprisonment, a fine of 10,000 yuan (1,400 US\$) and to pay to the Treasury 50,200 yuan (7,000 US\$) for purchasing and selling in her shop, from June to September 2018, 2 saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) valued at 40,000 yuan (5,600 US\$) and 15 worked ivories weighing 245 grams in total.

Sina, June 10, 2020. ³⁴



SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

CAMBODIA

May 2020

Kaoh Kong Province, Cambodia

Seizure of 7 live monkeys, 16 turtles, a bird and monkey meat.

Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, May 18, 2020. ³⁵

May 8, 2020

Kaoh Kong Province, Cambodia

Seizure in the freezers of 2 restaurants of 5 kg of Bengal monitor lizard (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I), 296 watercocks (*Gallicrex cinerea*), 7 kg of wild boar meat (*Sus scrofa*), 25 birds including 6 green pigeons (genus *Treron*) and in addition, in the sheds, seizure of live turtles and turtle shells. Fines for the 2 cooks of 9 million riels or 2,200 US\$.

The Phnom Penh Post, May 17, 2020. ³⁶



End of May 2020

Kampong Speu Province, Cambodia

Seizure in a restaurant of various meats: Bengal monitor lizard (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I), Indian muntjac (*Muntiacus muntjak*), civet (family Viverridae) and mouse-deer (genus *Tragulus*).

Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, May 29, 2020. ³⁷

Mid-June 2020

Kandieng District, Pursat Province, Cambodia

Supervised release into the wild of 5 smooth-coated otters (*Lutrogale perspicillata*, Appendix II), 6 monkeys and 250 lesser whistling ducks (*Dendrocygna javanica*). They had been seized in March. The lesser whistling ducks were chicks. They had no feathers. After a stay in the Phnom Tamao zoo, they all returned to nature near Kaoh Ka'ek, a nature presumed to be protected through cooperation between fishermen and the local police. "We will continue to monitor their survival for some time to observe whether they can hunt on their own." "If they can't find food or live with them, we will take them back to Phnom Tamao, but if they can survive, we will leave them there," says the Provincial Fisheries Administration director.

The Phnom Penh Post, June 18, 2020. ³⁸

INDONESIA

End of June 2020

Lhoknibong, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Arrest of 4 individuals known by the initials MR, A, MD and SD in the car park of a petrol station and seizure of the skin of a Sumatran tiger and the teeth and bones of a Malayan sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I). The 4 gangsters wanted to sell the whole thing for 100 million rupees or 6,800 US\$. They claim to be newcomers in poaching and tiger trafficking. They allegedly captured him in a metal trap until he died. The investigators believe, on the contrary, that they are dealing with experts. A fifth man is wanted, he could be in possession of the tiger's meat and bones.

Channel News Asia, June 22, 2020 ; Aceh Antaranews, June 22, 2020. ³⁹



MALAYSIA

May 2020

State of Sarawak, Malaysia

Poachers take advantage of the Covid-19 lockdown and exhibit their exploits on social networks, a dead macaque (*Macaca* spp., Appendix II) on the shoulders, a row of bats (order Chiroptera) on the carpet. In the background, pick-up trucks, weapons and traps. Porcupines (family Hystricidae) and deer (family Cervidae) are part of the loot. The carcass of a Malayan sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I) can be guessed from the pictures. The Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Center raised the alert. The Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC) investigation shows that the poachers are rich middle-class people from continental Malaysia and Sabah. The SFC recalls that hunting is prohibited in Sarawak except to protect crops and for native people. Covid-19 poachers abused these 2 exemptions to engage in looting and vainglory.

The Star, May 16, 2020 ; Dayak Daily, May 16, 2020.⁴⁰



June 24, 2020

State of Sarawak, Malaysia

- Conviction of Uweng Ding to a fine of 1,415 US\$ or 6 months imprisonment in case of non-payment for illegal possession of 47 great Argus feathers (*Argusianus argus*, Appendix II) on the Teresang market on October 5, 2019.

- Conviction of Robin Njuk to a fine of 3,066 US\$ or 17 months imprisonment in case of non-payment for illegal possession of 22 great Argus feathers (*Argusianus argus*, Appendix II), one bear skull, 7 antlers of sambar deer (*Rusa unicolor*) and 3 antlers of muntjac (genus *Muntiacus*), on the same day and in the same place.

The seizures were made by the SFC (Sarawak Forestry Corporation) and the MACC (Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission).

The Star, June 24, 2020.⁴¹



MYANMAR

June 2020

Myanmar

The announcement took completely off guard. The Forest Department discreetly published a list of 90 animal species that can now be bred in private zoos. Some keystone species are concerned: elephant, tiger, pangolin (who cannot bear breeding), Irrawaddy dolphins (*Orcaella brevirostris*, Appendix I) of whom no more than 20 specimens remain in the Irrawaddy river and its basin. Trade, marketing or a desperate attempt to save local species from extinction?

Manila Bulletin, July 11, 2020.⁴²



PHILIPPINES

Early May 2020

Antipolo, Rizal Province, Philippines

Seizure at the Perez' home of 4 exotic animals, 2 servals (*Leptailurus serval*, Appendix II), a broad-crested corella (*Cacatua ducorpsii*, Appendix II) and a blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II), nothing but great names coming in God knows what conditions from northern Africa, South America and Oceania. The Perez used them as an attraction in their café in Quezon City a little earlier. The government wishes to make it known that despite Covid-19 lockdown and transport restrictions, its services maintain constant vigilance to counter wildlife trafficking. The fate of the 4 illegal immigrants is not yet known. Servals, small felines weighing around 15 kilos when they reach adulthood, badly bear being in captivity and are dangerous in private households.

BusinessMirror, May 8, 2020.⁴³



June 5, 2020

Bacolod, Negros Occidental Province, Philippines

facebook

Three suspects who were engaged in the wildlife trade via Facebook were shadowed. They fell into the trap of an undercover buyer belonging to the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) who had just paid them 150,000 Philippine pesos, or 2,960 US\$ in boodle money. In their hands and at their homes, 300 wild animals were seized, including Philippine tangerines (*Orphnaecus philippinus*), Philippine sailfin lizards (*Hydrosaurus pustulatus*), Negros forest dragons (*Gonocephalus sophiae*) and North Philippine temple pitvipers (*Tropidolaemus subannulatus*). All are believed to have been captured in Mount Kanlaon Natural Park. Some had already died, including an Asian palm civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III in India), a Philippine sailfin lizard (*Hydrosaurus pustulatus*) and 3 Negros forest dragons (*Gonocephalus sophiae*). The 3 suspects were released on bail after 12 hours of hearing and the surviving animals were released in the Northern Negros Natural Park.

Philippine News Agency, June 8, 2020 ; CNN Philippines, June 10, 2020.⁴⁴



Orphnaecus philippinus

SINGAPORE

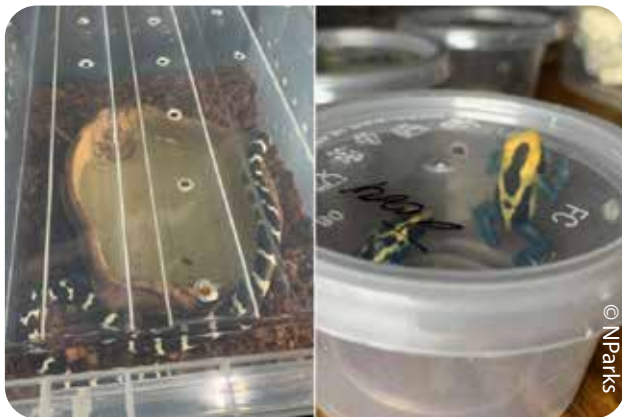
June 4, 2020

Singapore

On November 10, 2019, Mitchell Edberg Li Heyi attempted to smuggle into Singapore 18 poisonous frogs, a sugar slider (*Petaurus breviceps*), two leopard geckos (*Goniurosaurus* spp., Appendix II) and a black-and-white tegu (*Salvator merianae*, Appendix II) hidden in cereal flakes boxes. These packages looked new and were stored in the trunk of the car, but the Woodlands Checkpoint customs officers at the border post with Malaysia did not fall for it and took a very close interest in this travelling grocery shop. Li was sentenced to 2 months in prison, fined 9,600 S\$ or 6,770 US\$ and ordered to pay 10,900 S\$ or 7,700 US\$ to the National Park Board to offset the costs of housing the seized surviving animals. The poisonous frogs could not endure the journey and perished shortly after the seizure. If Li does not pay all sums owed, he will have to serve an additional 6 weeks in prison. During the search of his home, a 23rd animal was seized, a California king snake (*Lampropeltis californiae*). Li is associated with the operation of a pet shop in Johor Bahru, across the border in Malaysia.

Jonathan Wong Kai Kit, who ordered 6 of the poisonous frogs from Li, was fined 6,000 S\$ (4,230 US\$).

Yahoo News Singapore, June 5, 2020. ⁴⁵



THAILAND

Mid-April 2020

Bang Kung, Suphanburi Province, Thailand

Seizure in an alleged ashram and adjacent housings of an Asian black bear skin, 6 worked ivories, 258 scales and a pangolin carcass, a stuffed small-clawed otter (*Aonyx cinerea*, Appendix I), a trionyx shell, 733 fangs of reticulated pythons (*Python reticulatus*, Appendix II), a yellow-headed temple turtle shell (*Heosemys annandalii*, Appendix II), deer carcasses including muntjacs (genus *Muntiacus*) and sambar deer (*Rusa unicolor*). The victims include also felines: 808 leopard parts including skins, skin fragments, paws, tails, skin accessories and 72 skins and skin fragments of Asian golden cat (*Catopuma temminckii*, Appendix I). It was a real supermarket of miscellaneous items placed in gondolas, spread out on ceremonial tables, labelled and for sale on Facebook. The origin of the fauna mess is not yet known. Only 2 people were arrested.

DNP Wildhawk, April 17, 2020. ⁴⁶

facebook



May 8, 2020

Salak Phra Wildlife Sanctuary, Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand

Arrest of 4 poachers and collectors of forest products in flagrante delicto. Seizure of one kilo of wild honey, one dead serow (*Capricornis* spp., Appendix I) and one dead monitor lizard (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) and a knife. The Bangkok Post does not beat around the bush: "Salak Phra Wildlife Sanctuary is now badly damaged"; "local people and outsiders exploit it for free"; "Once a symbol of Thai pride, it is now a symbol of shame". Salak Phra is bordered by the prestigious river Kwai. About a hundred elephants are at the mercy of poaching. Chiang Rai Times, April 10, 2020 ; Bangkok Post, April 10, 2020. ⁴⁷

May 13, 2020

Thong Pha Phum National Park, Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand

Two Burmese, aged 47 and 23, were leaving the park on their motorbikes. They were transporting 3 corpses, an Asiatic brush-tailed porcupine (*Atherurus macrourus*) weighing 3 kg, a rough-necked monitor (*Varanus rudicollis*, Appendix II) weighing 1.5 kg and a Sunda flying lemur (*Galeopterus variegatus*) weighing 2 kg. They were about to sell them, or for lack of buyers to cook them. Seizure of the motorbike, guns and ex-animals.

The Nation Thailand, May 14, 2020.⁴⁸

End of May 2020

Bang Bua Thong District, Nonthaburi Province, Thailand

Seizure in 2 cages on the porch of a house of a shikra (*Accipiter badius*, Appendix II) and a baby macaque (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II). Arrest of the lady of the house.

DNP Wildhawk, May 25, 2020.⁴⁹



May 27, 2020

Yaring District, Pattani Province, Thailand

Seizure of a concave-casqued hornbill (*Buceros bicornis*, Appendix I), a macaque (*Macaca* spp., Appendix II I or II), a great argus (*Argusianus argus*, Appendix II), a hill myna (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II), a white-rumped shama (*Copsychus malabaricus*), a straw-headed bulbul (*Pycnonotus zeylanicus*), an Asian red-eyed bulbul (*Pycnonotus brunneus*) and a hairy-nosed otter (*Lutra sumatrana*), all alive, and 2 guns. One arrest.

DNP Wildhawk, May 27, 2020.⁵⁰



VIET NAM

January–Mid-June 2020

Son Tra Peninsula, Da Nang Municipality, Viet Nam

Seizure since the beginning of the year of 1,370 traps. The forest of Son Tra is home to deers, squirrels and red-shanked douc langurs. See "On the Trail" n°9 p.40 and n°17 p.51 and 52. ENV, June 19, 2020.⁵¹



April 20, 2020

Nhon Tan and Suoi Da, Binh Dinh Province, Viet Nam

Handing over to the forest services of a 3-4 month-old red-shanked douc langur (*Pygathrix nemaeus*, Appendix I) who was allegedly given to Chuan by a farm worker and a 4-5 month-old Sunda pangolin (*Manis javanica*, Appendix I) whom Huynh Nhat Trinh supposedly bought from a poacher for the sole purpose of handing him over to the authorities without further delay. The 2 survivors were entrusted to the Save Vietnam's Wildlife shelter.

VietNamNet, April 26 and 23, 2020.⁵²



Early May 2020

Quang Binh Province, Viet Nam

Police seizure of 10 gall bladders supposed to be from pythons (*Pythonidae*, Appendix I or II) and monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II), pangolin scales and Asian black bear paws (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I). The "items" were for sale on Facebook. The man was uncovered thanks to the vigilance of ENV. "It was too late for these wild animals to survive the wildlife trade, but not too late to catch a wildlife criminal", says ENV. ENV, May 7, 2020.⁵³



Early May 2020

Da Nang Municipality, Viet Nam

Seizure in a café of an Asian palm civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III in India), 4 squirrels and 2 yellow-headed tortoises (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II). Fine of 430 US\$ for the owner.

ENV, May 8, 2020.⁵⁴

June 23, 2020

Chau Binh, Nghe An, Viet Nam. Border with Laos.

Vi Van Vuong was carrying on his motorbike 2 southern serows (*Capricornis sumatraensis*), 11 bamboo rats (genus *Rhizomys*) and 4 mustelids, all dead.

VietNamNet, June 25, 2020.⁵⁵

June 2020

Viet Nam

Other seizures for June as reported by ENV:

One bear skull, one bear fur, one presumed bear gall bladder, 2 presumed tiger patellas, 7 fake tiger canines, 4 fake tiger claws, one presumed leopard skin, 2 stuffed sea turtles, 200 grams of pangolin scales and one skull from an unknown animal.

ENV, July 12, 2020.⁵⁶



SOUTHERN ASIA

BANGLADESH

May 29, 2020

Balipara, Sylhet District, Sylhet Division, Bangladesh

After heavy rains, a flash flood had invaded the forest bordering the village and animals had taken refuge on a hill. A few days later, using as an excuse an incursion of hungry "foxes" who had come to pinch ducks and chickens, young people of the village organized a punitive expedition. When they arrived on the hill, they beat to death 6 golden jackals (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III), 2 large Indian civets (*Viverra zibetha*, Appendix III) and a small Indian mongoose (*Herpestes javanicus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) whose remains they proudly brought back. Pictures of the hunt appeared on Facebook.

The Sylhet Forest Division investigated. Abdul Halim (25 years old) and Md Shahriar Ahmed (22 years old) were recognised in the pictures but cannot be found. They have been charged.

The Daily Star, May 29 and 30, 2020 ; The Business Standard, May 30, 2020.⁵⁷



INDIA

April 19, 2020

Intanki National Park, Peren District, State of Nagaland, India

The youth gang had pitched the tents in the forest with the intention of staying there for a week to celebrate a "lockdown festival". Mobile phones and selfies were of course part of the picnic, as well as videos transmitted on social networks. They could be seen roasting meat and fish next to the dead animals poached in the national park, including an Indian muntjac (*Muntiacus muntjak*) and a large Indian civet (*Viverra zibetha*, Appendix III). The video went viral, the Forest Department became interested in it and identified several participants. Imchainba, Osungkum N. Jamir, Yanger Jamir and Opangtemsuh handed themselves in today.

The New Indian Express, April 21, 2020 ; The Times of India, April 22, 2020.⁵⁸

April 26, 2020

Allapalli, Gadchiroli District, State of Maharashtra, India

The poachers had fled before the patrol arrived, abandoning all their equipment. The rangers confiscated 50 kg of spotted deer or chital (*Axis axis*), nilgai (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*, Appendix III) and wild boar (*Sus scrofa cristatus*) meat being smoked, as well as bows, arrows, knives, rope, various utensils, empty rice bags for packing the meat, 3 mobile phones and... 29 bicycles. The group had settled in sector 71 of the forest reserve. For the deputy forest conservator, this is a case of traditional community hunting.

The Times of India, April 28, 2020.⁵⁹

May 4, 2020

Uttarwadhona, Yavatmal District, State of Maharashtra, India

Arrested with an adult leopard skin (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) and a blackbuck horn (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Nepal and Pakistan), Gajanan Kunkar confessed to having poached the spotted beast and the horned one.

The Times of India, May 8, 2020.⁶⁰



May 7, 2020

Tipeshwar Wildlife Sanctuary, Pandharkawda District, State of Maharashtra, India

RK Wankhede, the Yavatmal Circle Forest chief warden, was on the lookout with his camera on a "machan" (a platform built in a tree) near a water point. He was taking part in a wildlife census. Around 7am he saw 3 poachers and their 2 dogs approaching, and he photographed them. He transmitted the images to the Pandharkawda forest station. The investigation was quickly completed. Suresh Tekam, Potu Tekam and Dilip Tekam were arrested in the village of Wadwat. The search at Suresh's home uncovered spotted deer antlers (*Axis axis*), Indian peafowl feathers (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), knives, a spear and nets. They were remanded in custody.

The Times of India, May 9, 2020.⁶¹

GANG

June 30, 2020

Lalpur, Sabarkantha District ; Kalol, Panchmahals District ; Santrapur, Mahisagar District ; Idar, Sabarkantha District, State of Gujarat, India

For charlatans the Covid-19 is of course a windfall. Running out of means and supposedly desperate due to lockdown, Anil Makwana, Sunil Maliwad and Khema Taviyad were seeking to sacrifice animals to attract fortune. They were arrested in Lalpur in possession of a Eurasian eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II), a turtle (of which the species is unknown) and an Indian hedgehog (*Paraechinus micropus*) which they had obtained from a network at work in four districts. Dalpat Bhambhi, Chandu Bhavangadh, Arvind Prajapati, Jagdish Patel, Hareesh Patel, Kesha Thakor and Susangji Thakor, middlemen or experts in black magic, fell too in the police trap. Videos of animal captures were found in their phones. They were tested for Covid-19 and left at liberty pending the results.

The Indian Express, 2 July 2, 2020 ; The Times of India, July 2, 2020.⁶²

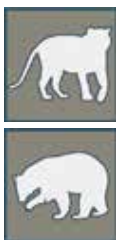
NEPAL

June 23, 2020

Triveni, Bajura District, Sudurpashchim Pradesh Province, Nepal

The search targeted the house of Lal Bahadur Buda but the man was not there. Anyway, the police discovered his stock: 2 skins and bones of leopards, a bear gall bladder and other skins and parts of unknown species.

The Himalayan Times, June 23, 2020.⁶³



WESTERN ASIA

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

April 1st, 2020

Emirate of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

Seizure's toll of wildlife in captivity in private homes in January, February and March 2020: 16 animals including a wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II), an Arabian Oryx (*Oryx leucoryx*, Appendix I) and monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II).

2019, full year: 379.

2018, full year: 142.

2017, full year: 422.

The domestic keeping of wild animals including birds is prohibited in the Emirate since 2016. Violations are liable to a 100,000 dirhams or 27,300 US\$ fine. This measure was taken to protect endangered species and to avoid neighbourhood disturbances.

The National, June 2, 2020.⁶⁴

WESTERN AND SOUTHERN EUROPE

SPAIN

Mid-May 2020

Seville, Province of Seville, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain

José F.M.A. and Juan A.V.B., living in Aznalcóllar, are charged. They are suspected of having killed and beheaded 4 fallow deer (*Dama dama*, Appendix I) and a scimitar-horned oryx (*Oryx dammah*, Appendix I) in the Castillo de las Guardas animal reserve, and amputated their legs to turn them into trophies. Their hunting list also includes a Cuvier's gazelle (*Gazella cuvieri*, Appendix I) who was the subject of a scientific ungulate conservation programme. His economic value is estimated at 20,000 € (21,684 US\$). F.M.A. and A.V.B. did not have a weapon carrying licence and several photos of the carnage, which dates from December 2019, were discovered by the investigators on their mobile phones. A 3rd man is wanted.

Faro de Vigo, May 17, 2020.⁶⁵

FRANCE

May 6, 2020

Department of Somme, France

Seizure by the French Biodiversity Office from an auctioneer of 32 ivory items and 17 butterflies of protected species, including a Corsican swallowtail (*Papilio hospiton*, Appendix II). The Corsican swallowtail lives in maquis, garrigues, rocky ridges and pastures in Corsica and Sardinia. In addition to poaching, it is a victim of fires.

Le Journal d'Abbeville, May 20, 2020.⁶⁶



ITALY

April 2020

Catania, Province of Catania, Sicily Region, Italy



An habitual offender under house arrest for drug trafficking was trading animals in a block of flats with the complicity of a neighbour. 14 live Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) looted in the forests and a marginated tortoise (*Testudo marginata*, Appendix II) were found in 2 crates next to a bear (Ursidae, Appendix I or II) with a stuffed head, who had as a companion a stuffed northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*, Appendix II). It must be said that there was a friendly understanding in the block in question, since during the search of the rogue naturalist's home, the police discovered that all the tenants were illegally connected to the electrical grid.

WebLive Tv, April 22, 2020 ; La Sicilia Multimedia, April 22, 2020.⁶⁷

End of April 2020

Catania, Province of Catania, Sicily Region, Italy

The barbary macaque (*Macaca sylvanus*, Appendix I) has been handed over to the care of the Centro di Recupero Animali Selvatici ed Esotici (CRASE) in Semproniano and the Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) will be released into the wild. This small world from Maghreb and pine forests had been seized in a working-class neighbourhood. Sicilia Report, April 29, 2020.⁶⁸

Early June 2020

Province of Catania, Sicily Region, Italy

Seizure of 18 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), 4 kg of marijuana, a 1.5 m high cannabis plant, a gun in the elevator shaft, 2 benches stolen out of a park, a diamond detector, 6 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) and a Lorenzotti shotgun with its ammunition. The town is trying to clean up the mess. 60 Carabinieri strengthened by the dog squad searched the corridors and social housing in via Adone. Corriere Etneo, June 9, 2020.⁶⁹

End of June 2020

Genoa, Liguria Region, Italy



The vintage shop offered for sale 2 ocelot jackets (*Leopardus pardalis*, Appendix I) and a python bag (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II) for the meagre sum of 7,000 € (7,711 US\$). The Carabinieri left with them. Teleradiopace TV, June 26, 2020.⁷⁰

EASTERN EUROPE

RUSSIA

May 7, 2020

Near Reshetnikova, Sverdlovsk Oblast, Russia

Seizure in a semi-rigid canoe of carcasses of Siberian roe deer (*Capreolus pygargus*) and beavers. The 23-year-old man claims to have acted in need. He braved both the Covid-19 lockdown and the hunting ban.

Znak.com, May 13, 2020.⁷¹

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

June 1st, 2020

State of Victoria, Australia



Sentencing of 4 poachers to 4 fines of 6,000 AU\$ (4,000 US\$) and one year probation for having at night, in April 2019, using spotlights, a thermal imaging camera, torches, 5 firearms, killed 2 Australian king parrots (*Alisterus scapularis*, Appendix II) and 6 mountain brushtail possums (*Trichosurus cunninghami*). The game was in the pick-up truck's back. The 2 parrots and 2 marsupials were already roasted.

Herald Sun, June 1st, 2020.⁷²



VARIOUS MARINE AND FRESHWATER SPECIES

ASIA

CHINA

Early April 2020

Qingdao, Shandong Province, China

Seizure in 2 packages of 24 dried seahorses, 20 bracelets and 4 fans made of hawksbill turtle shell (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I) concealed between rock crystals, the only ones present on the customs declaration. Indictment of the 2 recipients. Xinhua, April 7, 2020.¹

SOUTH KOREA

See next page.

EUROPE

ITALY

May-June 2020

Regions of Sicily and Campania, Italy

Coastguard operations in the southern Tyrrhenian Sea :

- Seizure at sea of a 7.5 km long drifting gillnet and another "several kilometres long" one.

- In front of the port of Sant'Agata Militello, 6 big bags attached to a buoy at the exit of the port, out of sight of the harbour master's office, were lifted up by a nautical patrol. They contained 5 km of drift nets. The fishermen intended to recover the big bags and deploy the nets in the open sea.

In Campania, 10.3 km of nets were seized, including a 700 m net in the marine protected area "Kingdom of Neptune" and 6 km in the Gulf of Policastro.

Once the money from the conversion premiums has been spent, some fishermen go back to sea, to target tuna and swordfish with the forbidden nets. The Calabrian mafia is said to be in it.

TusciaWeb, May 25, 2020 ; Livesicilia, June 2, 2020 ; Il Mattino, June 13, 2020 ; La Repubblica, June 24, 2020.²

UNITED KINGDOM

May-June 2020

Blyth, Northumberland County ; Lynmouth, Devon County ; Skinningrove, North Yorkshire County, England ; East Linton, Dunbar and Musselburgh, East Lothian County, Scotland. United Kingdom

In England, neutralisation of a 100 m gillnet on the River Lyn, a 40 m net on the Skinningrove Beck, 2 gillnets of 75 m and 15 m long on the Blyth estuary. John Crowl, Enforcement Team Leader for the Environment Agency, said: "Even during the current unprecedented times created by Covid-19, we are still actively patrolling the rivers and coastline and responding quickly to any reports of illegal fishing." In Scotland, neutralisation of a net on the River Tyne and another on Biel Water.

The targeted species are salmon and sea trout but all species are trapped and even dogs risk getting their legs entangled and drowning.

Environment Agency (UK), June 3, 2020; Edinburgh Live, June 17, 2020.³

June 15, 2020

Pembroke, Pembrokeshire County, Wales, United Kingdom

Interception of a ship by the Border Force. Seizure of 4 kg of sea turtle shells (Appendix I), 7.5 kg of queen conch (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II), corals, an imitation firearm, pepper spray and a machete. Arrest of a 57 year old man and transmission of the case file to the National Crime Agency.

Western Telegraph, June 18, 2020 ; BBC, June 18, 2020.⁴

SOUTH KOREA

April 26, 2020
Busan, South Korea



The *Longxing 629*, a tuna boat under the Chinese flag, set out to sea off the Samoan Islands for a 13-month mission between March 2019 and April 2020 with Chinese sailors and 22 Indonesians on board. Back ashore and while they are in quarantine in the framework of the anti-Covid-19 directives, 7 Indonesians testify to the Korean association Advocates for Public Interest Law: they had to work 18 hours a day or even 48 hours without stopping, they ate mainly rice and fish which served as bait or lure, at least 5 of them were victims of physical violence in addition to the daily verbal abuse, their passports were confiscated upon their arrival on the boat, wages did not correspond to what was expected, if they were paid, they had to wash themselves on deck. Four sailors fell ill, 3 died on board after the captain refused to stop in Samoa to let them see a doctor. Their bodies have been dumped at sea. The fourth died in the hospital in Busan.



The Indonesian sailors continue their revelations: the *Longxing 629* did not only fish tuna. Between September and February, they only fished shark, the shortfin mako shark (*Isurus oxyrinchus*, Appendix II), the hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna lewini*, Appendix II) and the great white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*, Appendix II) for example. When they left the vessel, there were about 720 kg of fins in the holds. They also sometimes caught other endangered species such as false killer whales (*Pseudorca crassidens*, Appendix II). In this case, Chinese sailors collected, among other things, teeth as souvenirs and brains and genitals for their evening meal. Sister ships such as the *Longxing 806*, the *Longxing 805*, the *Longxing 630*, the *Longxing 802*, the *Longxing 605*, the *Longxing 607*, the *Longxing 608* and the *Tian Yu 8* were also involved in this looting.

Mongabay, May 13, 2020 ; Environmental Justice Foundation, May 6, 2020.²⁴

A Briefing on *Longxing 629* : A case of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities and related human rights abuses on a tuna longliner, July 17, 2020.



Scalloped hammerhead shark
(*Sphyrna lewini*, Appendix II)



False killer whale
(*Pseudorca crassidens*, Appendix II)

AMERICA

PUERTO RICO

OPERATIONS ROCK BOTTOM & BORINQUEN CHISEL

June and July 2020

Puerto Rico, United States of America

Coral reefs in Puerto Rico are plundered to supply aquariums. Two cases are pending in court.

- Raymond Michael Torres Ramos, co-owner of the company Caribbean Reefers (sic), pleaded guilty to export smuggling and felony violations of the Lacey Act for collecting, falsely labeling, and shipping protected marine invertebrate species. He was selling in particular on eBay. Between January 2014 and March 2016, 100 postal packages were shipped to the US and abroad. The full economic value is estimated at 400,000 US\$.

- Juan Pablo Castro-Torres, alias Paoly, pleaded guilty to felony violations of the Lacey Act for collecting, falsely labeling, and shipping protected marine invertebrate species. He supplied the Wonders of the Reef shop in Arecibo (Puerto Rico). In both cases, corals of the genus *Ricordeidae*, such as the *Florida Ricordea*, were the most prized. Very colourful, they "glow" under the UV lamps of the aquariums. The specimens were labelled as "inanimate objects".

"Just as these species were hammered and chiseled from their natural reef environment, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and partner agencies [including NOAA] will continue to hammer and chisel away at those who traffic and profit from such unlawful activities," said David Pharo, USFWS officer.

US Department of Justice, June 9 and July 24, 2020.¹

eBay

ASIA

CHINA

May 23, 2020

Heshan, Guangdong Province, China

The 848 g "crystal ball" seized from a package and sent to the Wildlife Identification Centre is a branch of stony coral (order Scleractinia, Appendix II). Chinese Customs, June 5, 2020.²

June 22, 2020

Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure in 2 parcels coming from abroad of 4 red coral (*Corallium* spp.) jewels.

Chinese Customs, July 17, 2020.³

June 28, 2020

Jinan, Shandong Province, China

In a package from Indonesia, customs got their hands on 24 necklaces and bracelets made of red coral (genus *Corallium*) with a total weight of 290 g and 2 necklaces made of shells "listed in Appendix II of CITES" according to the official statement.

Chinese Customs, July 2, 2020.⁴

CONCHES, CLAMS, GOOSENECK BARNACLES...

AMERICA

CUBA

May 9, 2020

Isla de la Juventud, Cuba

Arrest during the Covid-19 lockdown of 4 poachers in possession of 1.5 t of Caribbean spiny lobsters (*Panulirus argus*). They tried to bribe the authorities with 1,000 US\$.

CiberCuba, May 9, 2020.¹

MEXICO

Mid-April 2020

Cozumel, State of Quintana Roo, Mexico

Queen conches (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II) and spiny lobsters (family Palinuridae) are sold illegally on social networks and traffic continues despite the Covid-19 state of emergency. The island of Cozumel (80,000 inhabitants) is home to more than 1,000 marine species, including protected species such as the hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I).

Palco Noticias, April 12, 2020.²

Mid-May 2020

Mahahual, State of Quintana Roo, Mexico

Sanitary checkpoint. Covid-19 obliges. A driver tries to pass by offering a policeman a bribe. The truck emits a strong sea smell. The trailer is finally searched. Inside, 300 kg of queen conches (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II) are divided into 6 bags. "This is for my personal consumption", says the driver. That doesn't convince anyone. The cargo is seized, the driver is arrested and a police officer is investigated on suspicion of passive corruption.

La Verdad, May 16, 2020.³

ASIA

CHINA

April 5, 2020

Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of a scaly clam (*Tridacna squamosa*, Appendix II) weighing 8.125 kg in the luggage of a Chinese passenger.

Chinese Customs, April 7, 2020.⁴



April 26, 2020

Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of 3 necklaces made of giant clams (*Tridacnidae* spp., Appendix II) beads with a total weight of 191 g.

Chinese Customs, April 26, 2020.⁵

April 27, 2020

Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure in the luggage of a Chinese passenger coming from Amsterdam of jewellery made of giant clams (*Tridacnidae* spp., Appendix II) beads and rosewood (*Dalbergia* spp., Appendix I or II) with a total weight of 153 g.

Chinese Customs, April 27, 2020.⁶

April 28, 2020

Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure by customs of 6 jewels made of giant clams (*Tridacnidae* spp., Appendix II) beads and shells weighing 260 g each from a passenger arriving from Macao.

Chinese Customs, April 28, 2020.⁷



Mid-May 2020

Chengdu Shuangliu International Airport, Sichuan Province, China

Seizure of 2 giant clams (*Tridacna gigas*, Appendix II) weighing 1,47 kg.

Chinese Customs, May 26, 2020.⁸

May 30, 2020

Nansha District, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 24.4 tons of shellfish in a marine shipping container, distributed in white big bags in poor condition. They were still covered with algae and sand. They gave off a tidal odour. Customs, given their condition and the health risks, treated them as waste. Most of the shipment was declared as *Spondylus barbatus*. The importing companies declared that they wanted to use them to make buttons for clothing.

Chinese Customs, June 15, 2020.⁹

SRI LANKA

April 16, 2020

Karisalpadu, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Arrest of a 40-year-old suspect in possession of 460 conches (genus *Strombus*) that he had hidden in a fishing hut.

Sri Lanka Navy, April 17, 2020.¹⁰



EUROPE

FRANCE

REPEATED OFFENSE

June 8, 2020

Vannes, Department of Morbihan, France

The 3 Spanish multi-recidivist poachers arrested in August 2019 in Saint-Gildas-de-Rhuys with 103 kg of gooseneck barnacles (*Pollicipes pollicipes*, cf. "On the Trail" n°26 p.12) were each fined 10,000 € (11,700 US\$) and ordered to pay 800 € to the regional and departmental fisheries committees and the association Bretagne Vivante. Le Télégramme, June 8, 2020.¹¹



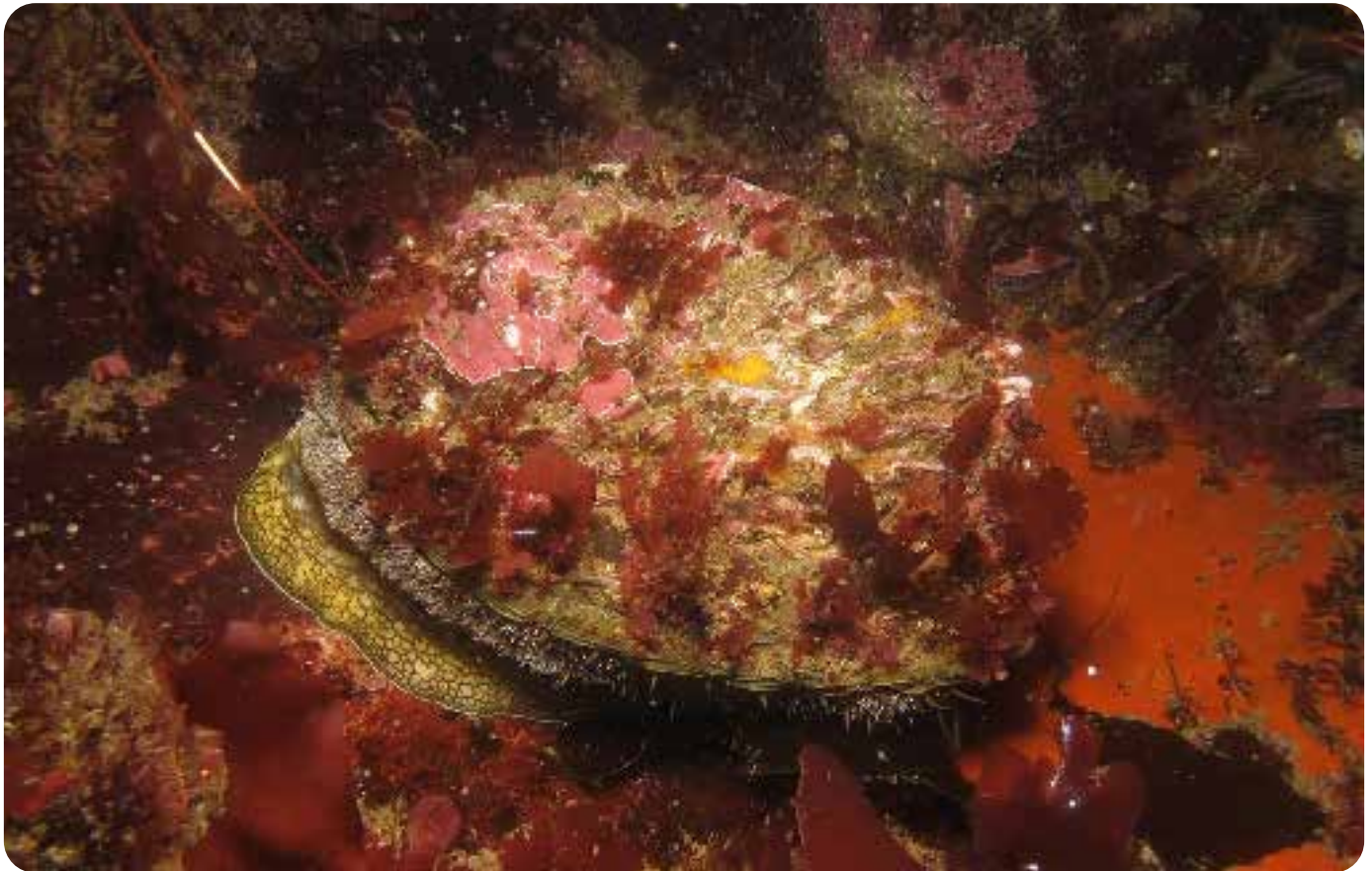
ITALY

June 27, 2020

Vieste, Province of Foggia, Apulia Region, Italy

Seizure and discard into the sea of 21 kg of live date mussels (*Lithophaga lithophaga*, Appendix II). Seizure of the equipment of the two poaching divers.

Stato Quotidiano, June 27, 2020.¹²



Haliotis midae, Cap Town. Picture Derek Keats

Haliotis spp.

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

May 12, 2020

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Joint operation conducted by the Hawks, the Criminal Intelligence Services and the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environmental Affairs (FDFA). Seizure of freshly cooked and dried abalone worth 52,700 US\$, kitchen and communication equipment, a computer and a car. Arrest and indictment of 3 men.

SAPS, May 15, 2020.¹

May 18, 2020

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

New dismantling of an illegal abalone preparation workshop. Seizure of 1,000 specimens worth 81,000 US\$ and 2 vehicles. Arrest and indictment of 2 people.

SAPS, May 19, 2020.²



June 2, 2020

Paarl, Western Cape Province, South Africa

The Land Rover was suspect. When the police approached, the 2 occupants jumped out and ran away. Chen Zhuang and Mohammed Hussein were caught up. 8,250 abalones were seized in the car and even more at their home turned into a clandestine cooking and drying workshop. The total value of the seizure is estimated at 75,500 US\$. SAPS, June 3 and 8, 2020 ; The South African, June 8, 2020.³

June 5, 2020

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa



Sentencing of Zukisa Sibango to 42 years in prison: 7 years for attempted murder, 3 years for a second attempted murder, 20 years for robbery with aggravating circumstances, 5 years for kidnapping, 5 years for unlawful possession of a firearm and 2 years for unlawful possession of ammunition. The sentences run concurrently. On April 11, 2017, with an accomplice who died before his arrest, he attacked a truck transporting legally raised abalone for export to the international airport. The driver of the escorting security vehicle was shot and injured in the attack and the driver of the truck was forced to head for the Du Noon neighbourhood. There, he had been locked in the boot of a car and the cargo unloaded. The driver was later released.

The South African, June 8, 2020.⁴

June 6, 2020

Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

On the coastline along the Marine Drive, 3 men coming out of the water with a bag containing in particular 15 abalones were apprehended at 10.45 a.m. while at 7.30 p.m., the occupants of a suspicious blue Polo Classic threw a bag containing 269 abalones out of the window and fled.

SAPS, June 7, 2020.⁵

June 9, 2020

KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

On information, targeted control of a vehicle on the R617. Seizure of 144.5 kg of abalones with an estimated value of 18,100 US\$.

SAPS, June 12, 2020.⁶

June 19, 2020

Overberg, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Police officers from Paarl's unit are on the road when they are stopped by a vehicle. The driver informs them that an Opel Corsa is carrying poached abalones in the opposite direction. U-turn. The car is overtaken. Seizure of 5,576 abalones. An arrest.

SAPS, June 19, 2020.⁷

Week-end of June 20-21, 2020

Western Cape Province, South Africa

Seizure of 11,650 abalones worth 330,000 US\$ at a police roadblock. Arrest of 2 men.

Algoa FM, June 24, 2020.⁸

June 23 and August 31, 2020

Paarl, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Mathew Phiri and Patrick Kanyembo were ratted on. The Tata truck in which they were transporting 14,855 dried abalones worth an estimated 330,000 US\$ was stopped by Hawks, Crime Intelligence, K9 and Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) near the Huguenot tunnel on the N1 national road. The wildlife booty was behind sacks of onions and potatoes.

At the end of August, they were convicted of money laundering, possession and transportation of illegal abalone. Taking into account the sentences running concurrently and the suspended sentences, they are expected to remain behind bars for 5 years.

Community Against Abalone Poaching, June 24, 2020 ; SAPS, September 1st, 2020 ; The Times Live, September 3, 2020.⁹



June 25, 2020

Grabouw, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Arrest of Samuel Edward Haydricks and an alleged accomplice who was later cleared. Samuel operated a clandestine abalone preparation workshop. The stocks worth 314,000 US\$ were seized.

SAPS, June 27, 2020 ; Save the Beasts, July 1st, 2020.¹⁰



June 26, 2020

Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

Around Marine Drive again. Three suspects spotted. Two arrested. Seizure of 3 garbage bags containing 10,000 US\$ worth of abalone.

SAPS, June 28, 2020.¹¹

June 30, 2020

Hermanus, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Zhengiang Wu and David Jonas were sentenced to 2.5 years in prison. More than 255,000 US\$ worth of abalones had been seized in August 2019 in their clandestine workshop (see "On the Trail" n°26 p.8).

Save the Beasts, July 1st, 2020.¹²



End of June 2020

Khayelitsha, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Lin Liuyi and Yang GuiKang, 2 Chinese nationals, were at the head of a clandestine abalone preparation workshop dismantled in August 2019 (see "On the Trail" n°26 p.8). Their requests for bail had been denied. Suspended sentence taken into account, they will have to remain behind bars for 6 months. Abalones worth 125,000 US\$ were confiscated as well as a Mercedes Benz. In addition, they were convicted of violating immigration law and will be deported to China after serving their sentence, with prohibition from re-entering South Africa.

SAPS, June 25, 2020.¹³



SEA CUCUMBERS

Holothuria fuscogilva, *Holothuria nobilis* and *Holothuria whitmaei* (teatfish): Appendix II.
Isostichopus fuscus: Appendix III in Ecuador.

NORTHERN AMERICA

CANADA

May 1st, 2020

Sechelt Inlet, Province of British Columbia, Canada

3,000 US\$ fine for Zi Yin Liu. He had been caught fishing in the inlet north of Vancouver. A "recreational" fisherman, he collected as many sea cucumbers, oysters and whelks as a professional fisherman.
Coast Reporter, June 10, 2020.¹



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

June 9, 2020

San Diego, State of California, United States of America

Sentencing of Claudia Castillo to 8 months in prison and to pay 12,000 US\$ in compensation to the Mexican government for importing sea cucumbers or organizing their importation from Mexico to the US border town of San Ysidro in 2018 and 2019.
AP, June 9, 2020.²



LATIN AMERICA

COSTA RICA

May 28, 2020

Nicoya District, Guanacaste Province, Costa Rica

Morales has so far been unable to answer the court summons because he is in Covid-19 quarantine. In his warehouse were seized 22 kg of sea cucumbers and 700 frozen eastern Pacific giant conches (*Titanostrombus galeatus*) for which fishing is prohibited.

La Teja, June 5, 2020.³

MEXICO

End of May 2020

La Paz, State of Baja California Sur, Mexico

The coastguards boarded 5 boats in the bay of La Paz. The 17 sailors had plundered about 380 kg of sea cucumbers in an area closed to fishing.
Agencia de Noticias Organización Editorial Mexicana-Informex, May 29, 2020.⁴

NICARAGUA

April 1st, 2020

Miskitos Cays Archipelago, North Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region, Nicaragua

Boarding of *Miss Yudelki* and her 5 sailors aged between 19 and 55. Seizure of 154.68 kg of donkey dung sea cucumbers *Holothuria mexicana*.

Naval Force of the Nicaraguan Army, April 3, 2020.⁵



ASIA

CHINA

Cf. p. 84, chapter "Donkeys and Zebras", April 9 and 15, 2020, Port of Hong Kong, China.

SRI LANKA

April 12, 2020

Trincomalee, Eastern Province, Sri Lanka

The naval patrol off Elizabeth Island got their hands on 6 dinghies with 124 sea cucumbers, 376 kg of poached fish, diving and fishing equipment on board. 18 divers aged 28 to 55 were arrested.
Sri Lanka Navy, April 13, 2020.⁶

April 14, 2020

Padaithurai, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 5 dinghies, 114 sea cucumbers, 30 kg of fish and fishing gear. Arrest of 17 men aged between 20 and 56 years old.
Sri Lanka Navy, April 15, 2020.⁷

June 1st, 2020

Off the coast of Kumburuppidi, Eastern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of one dinghy, 1.5 kg of sea cucumbers, 18 kg of fish and equipment. Arrest of 4 divers-fishermen-poachers.
Sri Lanka Navy, June 3, 2020.⁸

June 13, 2020

Off the coast of Kumburuppidi, Eastern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of one dinghy, 94 sea cucumbers and 15 kg of fish.
Sri Lanka Navy, June 15, 2020.⁹

Hippocampus spp., Appendix II

ASIA

CHINA

May 23, 2020

Lanzhou, Gansu Province, China

Customs raid in the market specialised in traditional pharmacopoeia. Seizure of 10.7 kg of dried seahorses, 4,300 specimens. Three arrests.

Xinhua, May 24, 2020.¹

May 18, 2020

Changshu, Jiangsu Province, China

Customs took advantage of a crew changeover in a ship from Hong Kong to check luggage. Seizure of 4 dried seahorses. They would have been bought in Indonesia.

Chinese Customs, May 19, 2020.²

May 30, 2020

Laizhou, Shandong Province, China

The sailor had been able to disembark after his Covid-19 test was negative. The inspection of his luggage by customs was positive. Seizure of 2 dried seahorses.

Chinese Customs, May 30, 2020.³

June 16, 2020

Hefei, Anhui Province, China

X-ray control of a package, opening by customs officers and seizure of 32.8 g of dried seahorses, 10 specimens.

Chinese Customs, June 22, 2020.⁴

June 17, 2020

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 5.52 kg of dried seahorses.

Chinese Customs, June 18, 2020.⁵

June 27, 2020

Chengdu-Shuangliu International Airport, Sichuan Province, China

The luggage was classified as suspect after an inspection by scanner. It was opened and 1.17 kg of dried seahorses, 240 specimens, have been seized. The passenger was arriving from Cairo, Egypt.

Chinese Customs, June 29, 2020.⁶



June 27, 2020, Chengdu-Shuangliu airport, China

MARINE OR FRESHWATER FISH INCLUDING SHARKS AND EELS



Manta, Ecuador, 2012. © Picture Jan Sochor

AFRICA

FRANCE (REUNION)

End of June 2020

**Natural Marine Reserve of Reunion Island,
Department of Reunion, France**

Fishing in the marine reserve is prohibited. Arrest of 3 poachers and seizure of 53 kg of fish and crustaceans including greasy grouper (*Epinephelus tauvina*), locally known as "grande gueule" (big mouth).

La 1^{ère}, June 29, 2020. ¹

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

May 4, 2020

**Tortugas Ecological Reserve, State of Florida,
United States of America**

In the middle of the afternoon, Michael Conrad, Michael Hilliard and Caleb Greenwood are caught in the act in the Tortugas Ecological Reserve where fishing, diving or anchoring is prohibited. The trio would have stayed there for 13 hours. The police seize the 330 kg of coral fish in their boat.

FL Keys News, May 8, 2020. ²

June 2, 2020

Waimea, State of Hawaii, United States of America

It all began on February 20, 2020, when the *Masako* was inspected at the port of Kawaihae. On board were 472 yellow tangs (*Zebrasoma flavescens*), 37 goldring surgeonfishes (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*), 26 orange-spine unicornfishes (*Naso lituratus*), 5 orangespot surgeonfishes (*Acanthurus olivaceus*), 5 moorish idols (*Zanclus cornutus*), a saddle wrasse (*Thalassoma duperrey*), a goldrim surgeonfish (*Acanthurus nigricans*), a Hawaiian dascyllus (*Dascyllus albisella*), a long-nosed butterflyfish (*Forcipiger flavissimus*) and a blacklip butterflyfish (*Chaetodon kleinii*). Neither the captain of the ship, Tyron Terazono, nor the 2 passengers, Wayne Newman and Kacie Terazono, held a licence for fishing aquarium fish. The fish were released back into the water. (...)



(...) Wayne is now fined 200 US\$, or 36 cents per fish, a ridiculously low fine in view of the profit that would have been generated from the marketing of these 550 specimens estimated at over 37,000 US\$. Department of Land and Natural Resources of the State of Hawai'i, May 22, 2020 ; Maui Now, June 3, 2020 ; West Hawaii Today, September 8, 2020.³



Acanthurus olivaceus



Thalassoma duperrey male above and female below



Zanclus cornutus



Zebrasoma flavescens



Naso lituratus

June 4, 2020

Portland, State of Oregon, United States of America



Agnes Jinhong Yu is sentenced to one year probation, a 1,000 US\$ fine and 360 US\$ in compensation for selling dried shark fins in her grocery store "Wing Ming Herbs". The State of Oregon has banned the possession and sale of shark fins since 2011 (see "On the Trail" n°27 p. 19). DNA tests revealed that 5 species were sold at Yu: the blue shark (*Prionace glauca*), the black-nose shark (*Carcharhinus acronotus*), the Caribbean sharpnose shark (*Rhizoprionodon porosus*), the small tail shark (*Carcharhinus porosus*) and the small eye hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna tudes*). KTVZ, June 23, 2020 ; Pamplin Media, June 23, 2020. ⁴

June 10, 2020

State of Tennessee, United States of America

Seizure of 28 bags of cut-up yellow pikeperches (*Sander vitreus*) at a poacher's home. He was back from a fishing trip in Lake Erie, Ohio. "Cutting" the fish is a common ruse to prevent control services from clearly identifying the number and size of specimens being poached. Daily fishing in the lake shall not exceed 6 individuals per day and the minimum size is set at 38 cm. Port Clinton News Herald, June 25, 2020. ⁵

LATIN AMERICA

BRAZIL

REPEATED OFFENSE

April 16, 2020

Barão de Melgaço, State of Mato Grosso, Brazil

In the Ford Fiesta, agents of the Secretaria Estadual de Meio Ambiente (SEMA) discovered 261 kg of fish, spotted sorubim (*Pseudoplatystoma corruscans*), barred sorubim (*Pseudoplatystoma fasciatum*) and gilded catfish (*Zungaro zungaro*) decapitated and stored in plastic bags. The 57-year-old man is anything but a beginner; this is the eleventh time he has been caught. He is fined 55,000 reais (10,740 US\$).

G1, April 16, 2020 ; Agora MT, April 16, 2020. ⁶

April 21, 2020

Rosana, State of São Paulo, Brazil



Roadside check of a pick-up truck registered in Franca, State of São Paulo. Seizure of 335 kg of fish, including 67.40 kg of spotted sorubim (*Pseudoplatystoma corruscans*), characin (*Leporinus obtusidens*), dorado (*Salminus brasiliensis*) and gilded catfish (*Zungaro zungaro*), of 3 diving masks and diving suits, 3 pairs of flippers and 3 underwater crossbows. Three men confirm having fished in the Paraná River. They intended to sell the fish on the market. They were fined 400 US\$ each. Following a veterinary inspection, the seizure was donated to charity. G1, April 21, 2020. ⁷

May 1st, 2020

On the GO-454 between Mozarlândia and Nova Crixás, State of Goiás, Brazil

Seizure in a pick-up truck registered in Brasília of 600 kg of arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) that were allegedly purchased in Cocalinho in Mato Grosso for 10 reais/kg or 2.8 US\$ for resale in bars, fishmongers and restaurants in São Miguel do Araguaia in the state of Goiás 200 km away. The 2 traffickers hoped to make a 200% profit. Mais Goiás, May 2, 2020. ⁸

May 3, 2020

Paranaíta, State of Mato Grosso, Brazil

After receiving information about illegal fishing in the Rio Teles Pires, the military police put up a roadblock on MT-206 road and stopped a suspicious vehicle. Inside, prohibited fishing equipment and an isothermal box containing fish were found. The man explained that he had been fishing with friends. A second vehicle is stopped in turn. In all, the military police seized 78 kg of fish, meagre (*Argyrosomus regius*) and butterfly peacock bass (*Cichla ocellaris*).

Só Notícias, May 4, 2020. ⁹

Early May 2020

Porto Velho, State of Rondônia, Brazil

The man was caught red-handed on the Rio Madeira. At home, in his freezers, 77 fillets of freshly cut arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), weighing 200 kg, were discovered, seized and handed over to charity.

G1, May 3, 2020. ¹⁰

May 7, 2020

Taguatinga, Federal District, Brazil

Seizure in 2 tanks at Vicente Pires' house of 17 Amazonian freshwater stingrays (family *Potamotrygonidae*, Appendix III) and in addition 2 turtles (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II).

Pelo Mundo DF, May 7, 2020. ¹¹

May 18-19, 2020

Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Inspection at the Feira Da Panair in Manaus between 7pm and 1.45am. In a first boat, 250 kg of arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) are discovered. In a second, 1,365 kg of arapaimas and 144 kg of meat and in a third 122 kg of meat.

Arapaima fishing is prohibited throughout the year. Only specimens from management zones can be sold with the Ibama's authorisation.

G1, May 19, 2020. ¹²

May 25, 2020

Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Two ships are inspected in the early morning. 2.4 tons of fish and meat were seized, including arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II). Arrest of the 2 fishermen aged 28 and 60 years old.

Fato Amazônico, May 26, 2020. ¹³

May 27, 2020

Irlanduba, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Interception of 2 boats coming from Tefé and Codajás and heading towards Manaus and seizure of nearly 3.5 t of arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) that were unbanded and not coming from management areas. Three arrests. G1, May 27, 2020.¹⁴

May 28, 2020

Eirunepé, State of Amazonas, Brazil

The Polícia Civil is notified that illegal products are being sold on the stalls of the Eirunepé market. When they arrive on the scene, 2 traders are nabbed. They offer for sale meat from wild animals and arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II). Fato Amazônico, May 29, 2020.¹⁵

June 12, 2020

Port of São Raimundo, Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil

More than a ton of arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), 15 kg of wild animal meat, a turtle and 7 m³ of wood were seized from the holds of 2 boats coming from Tapauá. The captains do not present any certificate of origin, neither for the fish nor for the wood. Five arrests. The fish is given to charity. A Critica, June 13, 2020.¹⁶

June 17, 2020

Tefé, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Five tons of arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II)! The 2 boats were heading towards Manaus. Arrest of Alexandre Vieira de Souza, 51 years old, who allegedly produced fake Ibama certificates proving the legal origin of the fish. The sponsor, a certain "Tuchaua" cannot be found. The fish is distributed to the city's hospitals and schools. Amazonas Atual, June 18, 2020.¹⁷

MEXICO

April 23, 2020

Mazatlán, State of Sinaloa, Mexico

66 swim bladders of totoabas (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) found in 2 suitcases abandoned by the roadside at a highway checkpoint. Profepa, April 27, 2020.¹⁸

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

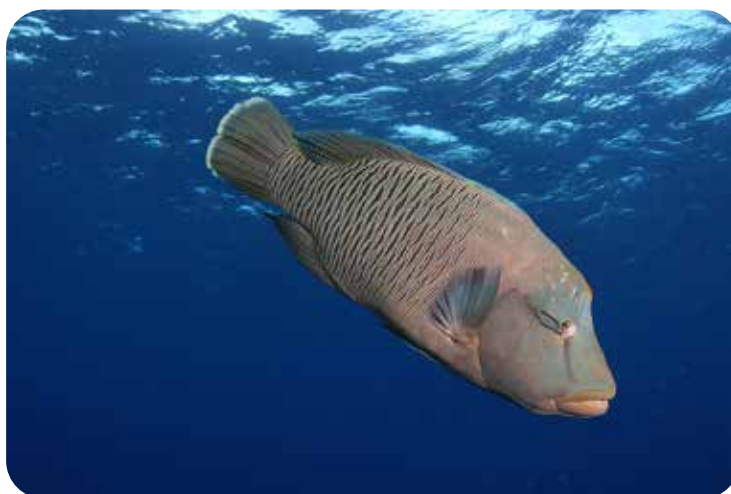
Early April 2020

Zhangjiagang Port, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure in the luggage of a certain Mr Xie of a giant humphead wrasse (*Cheilinus undulatus*, Appendix II) with an estimated value of 25,000 yuan (3,520 US\$). The giant humphead wrasse can be up to 2.3 m long and weigh up to 190 kg. Scales can reach 10 cm in diameter. It feeds on molluscs, sea urchins and starfish. Due to overfishing, the giant humphead wrasse is a species that is not very common or even rare in its geographical range, which extends from the Red Sea to the Indo-Pacific region. Its lips are considered an aphrodisiac in Asia and its jaws can sell for up to 40,000 € (49,000 US\$). In Hong Kong, giant humphead wrasse is a luxury dish in restaurants. It sells for 100 US\$/kg on the retail market.

Chinese Customs, April 12, 2020.¹⁹

Huet Sylvie, Ader Denis in: DORIS, 25/12/2019: *Cheilinus undulatus* Rüppell, 1835, <https://doris.ffessm.fr/ref/specie/975>



Giant humphead wrasse (*Cheilinus undulatus*). Picture Klaus Stiefel

April 15, 2020
Hong Kong Port, China

Seizure of a ton of shark fins. Origin Sri Lanka. In the container, there were fins of both protected and non-protected shark species.

Hong Kong Customs, April 16, 2020.²⁰

April 28 and May 4, 2020
Hong Kong, China

Both containers were declared as containing dried fish. They had arrived at the port of Hong Kong in January. On opening, customs officials came upon 26 tons of shark fins, mainly thresher shark (*Alopias vulpinus*, Appendix II) and silky shark (*Carcharhinus falciformis*, Appendix II). Total value is estimated at 1.1 million US\$. The “goods” were loaded by the same shipper in Ecuador and were destined for a logistics company based in Hong Kong whose manager was arrested and then released pending further investigation. The Ecuadorian attorney general informs that he is contacting the Chinese Embassy for more information on the case.

Hong Kong Customs, May 6, 2020 ; The South China Morning Post, May 6, 2020.²¹



June 3, 2020
Municipality of Shanghai, China

Conviction of a certain Xing to one year in prison, a 704 US\$ fine and 5,600 US\$ in compensation for poaching a Chinese sturgeon (*Acipenser sinensis*, Appendix II) of 60 cm long and 935 g.

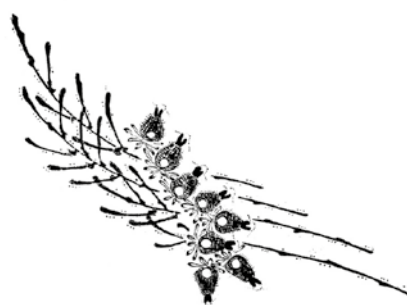
The Supreme People's Court of the People's Republic of China, June 5, 2020.²²



June 4, 2020
Hong Kong International Airport, China

The shipment arrived from the United States of America and was declared to contain fresh fish. Upon inspection, the insulated boxes proved to have come from Mexico. Customs officials found in 15 of them 160 kg of swim bladders of totoabas (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) mixed with frozen fish fillets. Market value: 3.2 million US\$ or 20,000 US\$/kg. Five men are arrested and then released pending further investigations.

Hong Kong Customs, June 8, 2020.²³



SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

MALAYSIA

June 6, 7, 20 and 21, 2020

Mantanani Island, State of Sabah, Malaysia

There has been a flurry of activity around the island since the Covid-19 lockdown was partially lifted. Underwater bomblets made of kerosene, ammonium nitrate and homemade firecrackers are coming out of the sheds. It sells for 15 rupees each. No need to tell that blast fishing to get future aquarium fish out of the coral reefs is still a common practice, although prohibited. Recreational divers are worried. The bomblet blast can kill within a radius of 15 metres.

Daily Express, June 25, 2020.²⁵

SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

April 16, 2020

Baga, North Goa District, State of Goa, India

A young whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*, Appendix II) stranded on the beach. In the night, wicked people come to cut off its pectoral, dorsal and caudal fins. A week later, a video leaks on the Internet.

The Times of India, April 28, 2020 ; Sanctuary Nature Foundation, April 2020.²⁶

IRAN

April 7, 2020

Shushtar, Khuzestan Province, Iran

They whipped the river Karoun with electric shocks. Short-circuited fish would come to the surface and the poachers would throw them into their traps. Fishery guards alerted by witnesses intervened and took 2 looters to the police station. The others disappeared in the night before returning with a supporting group to demand the release of their comrades, the return of the seizure equipment and of the booty. The matter ended into a riot. The head of the municipal police was seriously injured.

IEW, April 9, 2020.²⁷



EUROPE

OPERATION LAKE

October 2019 – April 2020

Albania, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Northern Macedonia, Portugal, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden and United Kingdom.

Action against trafficking of glass eels and eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) coordinated by specialised services and Europol in 19 countries.

- Italy: seizure of 550 kg of eels.

- Portugal: 400 kg of glass eels in Porto, Braga and Aveiro. Value: 2.05 million €.

- Sweden: seizure of 10 kg of smoked eels (*Anguilla japonica*) on the way to Norway.

- Spain: seizure of 722 kg of eels with an estimated market value of 1.5 million € (2,080 €/kg). The Guadalquivir River in Andalusia received special attention, 54 clandestine fishing platforms were dismantled. On the wharves of Los Urrutias, Murcia region, 200 kg of freshly landed eels were spotted by the Guardia Civil. On the N-630 road, in the province of León, 16 kg of frozen eels were seized from a vehicle registered in Portugal. In Catalonia, at Barcelona airport 6 passengers wanted to take off with suitcases full of glass eels or eels. The survivors were released in the Ebro Delta Natural Park.

The final balance of the seizures amounts to 2,000 kg of eels and glass eels worth 6.35 million euros. 108 poachers and traffickers are retained in the justice system.

Fifteen European Union countries did not participate in Operation Lake: Austria, Luxembourg, Cyprus, Malta, Croatia, Denmark, Poland, Estonia, Romania, Finland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Greece, Hungary and Ireland.

Europol, June 4, 2020 ; The Spain Journal, April 30, 2020.²⁸

WESTERN AND SOUTHERN EUROPE

SPAIN

May 6, 2020

Port of Arenys de Mar, Province of Barcelona, Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain

The 82.4 kg bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) would have been caught accidentally, according to fishermen. They had nevertheless taken the trouble to eviscerate it, which leaves no doubt about their intention to trade its flesh. The tuna carcass was transferred to the CRAM (Centro de recuperación de animales marinos) in El Prat de Llobregat to feed other fish.

La Vanguardia, May 15, 2020.²⁹

Mid-May 2020

Seville, Province of Seville, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain

Inspection operation in MERCASEVILLA, Mercados Centrales de Abastecimientos de Sevilla. Nearly 500 kg of big-eyed tuna (*Thunnus obesus*) are discovered inside a small truck ready to unload without documentation justifying their legal origin. A little further on, Seprona agents got their hands on 100 kg of undersized European hake (*Merluccius merluccius*). The tunas and hakes were seized and after veterinary control distributed to charities. La Vanguardia, May 10, 2020.³⁰

End of May 2020

Estepona, Province of Malaga, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain

Seizure of 103 kg of bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) on the fishing port. La Voz de Galicia, May 31, 2020.³¹

FRANCE

May-July 2020

Bon-Encontre, Department of Lot-et-Garonne, Gex, Department of Ain, Grand-Fort-Philippe, Department of Nord and Concarneau, Department of Finistère, France

- A thresher shark (*Alopias vulpinus*, Appendix II) offered for sale on the stalls of the Intermarché in Bon-Encontre.
- A shark for sale at the Intermarché in Gex.
- The fish wholesaler Jean Deroy has a well-oiled communication plan. He posts photos of the day's landings on social networks to attract customers. Between May and June, 3 so-called bycatches, including a thresher shark, are on display.
- A new thresher shark landed at Concarneau. The marketing of the thresher shark is authorised in case of bycatches. This loophole in the regulations leaves the door open to abuse. Cf. "On the Trail" n°27 p.21. Sea Shepherd, May 15 and 31, June 4 and July 17, 2020.³²

June 21, 2020

Cerbère-Banyuls Natural Marine Reserve, Department of Pyrénées-Orientales, France

Early morning arrest by the gendarmes and agents of the reserve of 3 men in the middle of underwater fishing. They had come to hunt white seabreams (*Diplodus sargus*) and gilthead seabreams (*Sparus aurata*), they leave with a fine of 1,500 €. Every year, nearly 200 offences of this kind are reported. L'Indépendant, June 26, 2020.³³

ITALY

May 23-27, 2020

Catania, Province of Catania, Region of Sicily, Italy

New bycatch said to be non intentional! A few days after the body of a female shortfin mako shark (*Isurus oxyrinchus*, Appendix II) weighing 700 kg and more than 4 m long was brought back to the port of Ognina, the carcass of a shortfin mako shark without head nor dorsal fin was discovered by the Carabinieri in the cold room of a wholesaler of the Mercati Agro-Alimentari Sicilia in Catania. The shark has the same characteristics as the Ognina shark that was supposed to be handed to the Natural History Museum in Comiso (Sicily). The investigation will reveal that the museum had in fact only received the head of the shark. Ognina is located 70 km from Catania. Live Sicilia, May 28, 2020.³⁴

In the night of May 30 to 31, 2020

Marsala, Province of Trapani, Region of Sicily, Italy

The coastguards board a fishing boat. In her holds there are 15 bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*). After veterinary control, they were donated to charity. Sicilia Oggi Notizie, June 1st, 2020.³⁵

Early June 2020

Port of Bagnara Calabra, Province of Reggio Calabria, Region of Calabria, Italy

Coast Guard inspection in the early morning. Seizure of 2 swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) and a Mediterranean spearfish (*Tetrapturus belone*). Additional seizure of a prohibited drift net. Fine of 2,670 € for the ship owner and the captain of the vessel. Stretto Web, June 11, 2020.³⁶

EASTERN EUROPE

RUSSIA

Early May, 2020

Irkutsk Oblast, Russia

Seizure in a pick-up truck of 10 kg of frozen black caviar (Acipenseridae, Appendix I or II) and red caviar (family Salmonidae), 6 frozen sturgeons and 200 kg of frozen Arctic cisco (*Coregonus migratorius*). Three arrests. ФедералПресс, May 13, 2020.³⁷

May 2020

Astrakhan Oblast, Russia

Joint control operation by police, FSB and National Guard in 20 seafood processing establishments. Seizure of 106 kg of sturgeon (Acipenseridae, Appendix I or II), 12 t of frozen fish, 10 t of dried fish, 40 kg of red king crab (*Paralithodes camtschaticus*) and 31 kg of red caviar (family Salmonidae). A man is detained in custody for falsification of documents, labelling with foreign counterfeit brands and failure to comply with health standards. Tass, June 1^{er}, 2020.³⁸

End of May 2020

Khabarovsk, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia

Conviction of a Muscovite to 9 years of corrective labor colony with forced labour and a fine of 85,800 US\$ for having, in 2016, attempted to buy 400 kg of sturgeon caviar (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) from an undercover FSB agent for 14,300 US\$ in 2016.

Moskovski Komsomolets, May 25, 2020. ³⁹



June 2020

Dagestan, North Caucasian Federal District and Moscow, Central Federal District, Russia

- Dismantling of a black caviar (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) smuggling network in multiple regions of the country and in particular in Moscow. Several arrests.

- Seizure of more than 400 kg of black caviar with a value of approximately 2.1 million US\$, i.e. 5,250 US\$/kg in a private residence.

MoscowBaku, June 19, 2020; Riadagestan.ru, June 20, 2020. ⁴⁰

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*).

NORTHERN AFRICA

TUNISIA

April 25, 2020

Sfax, Sfax Governorate, Tunisia

Report of a sea turtle meat business in front of a private residence near the bus station of Bouhamed. Traditional medicine would still use certain parts of sea turtles, particularly in the Kerkennah Islands. Logger head sea turtles, green turtles and leatherback turtles still frequent the Gabès Gulf although it is a no-go zone because of pollution, maritime traffic and uncontrolled fishing.

Tunis Afrique Presse Agency, April 26, 2020. ¹

EASTERN AND WESTERN AFRICA

FRANCE (MAYOTTE)

Mid-April-Mid-July 2020

Department of Mayotte, France

It stinks on Moya's beach. 28 large sea turtles of at least 30 years old were killed between March 17 and April 17.

The archipelago of Mayotte has been chosen since time immemorial by the green turtles of the Indian Ocean as an ideal breeding place for its warm sand and deserted beaches. Today things have changed. The sand is full of plastics and users. It is said that there are 5,000 green turtles dragging through the sand to lay "tortillons" (local name), small green turtles so small that they can be held in a child's hand. Dozens of poachers are waiting for them at night with knives, ropes and dugout canoes, with the lure of gain and cruelty. The meat sells for between 20 and 50 € per kilo depending on the cuts and freshness. A green turtle provides 80 kg of meat.

"That was a few years ago. I was on the beach with friends when a turtle came along. We turned it over and pulled it into a quiet corner. A turtle weighs several hundred kilos and causes damage when

it struggles. We couldn't control it so a guy pulled out a machete and sliced off its flipper. Blood was spurting everywhere with a lot of pressure. It was horrible. It was still resisting and we had to shorten its suffering. So I took the machete and cut off his head. Cutting off a turtle is always violent even when you are used to it. Someone who is able to do it regularly without feeling emotion is not only dangerous for animals, he is also dangerous for humans." So says a former poacher.

The tortoise is eaten between men around a "voulé", a festive and aphrodisiac barbecue according to the rumour running from one side of the Indian Ocean to the other.

Mayotte naturalists, the Oulanga Na Nyamba association, the 5 guards of the environmental police of the south of Mayotte are trying to stem the slaughter. The Covid-19 period constrains the deployment of observation and intervention patrols. The maritime gendarmerie reported the emergence of a traffic of turtle meat between Mayotte and the Comoros. In the Mayotte archipelago, 300 green turtles are reportedly killed each year. The fins, heads, offal and shells are buried in bushes or in the sand or thrown into the sea.

Two poachers caught in the act of transporting 60 kg of turtle meat between Petite-Terre and Grande-Terre were sentenced on appeal to 2 years in prison and 1,000 € in damages. They were sentenced in absentia. They disappeared. At first instance, they had been released for an alleged procedural defect.

Mayotte 1^{ère}, April 27 and June 4, 2020 ; Le Journal de Mayotte, May 12 and July 19, 2020 ; Reporterre, June 20, 2020 ; Outre-mer la 1^{ère} with AFP, July 9, 2020. ²



SENEGAL

May 24, 2020

Pink Lake Beach, Dakar Region, Senegal

Poachers on this Sunday when the Ramadan fast was broken were on the lookout behind the bushes watching for the arrival of female loggerhead sea turtles. Once they lay their eggs, the mothers were attacked and butchered. To meat trafficking must be added eggs trafficking: after the bloodshed, they were retrieved and sold on the roadsides or in the markets of Dakar.

Dakaractu, May 26, 2020.³

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

May 24, 2020

West Palm Beach, State of Florida, United States of America

Carl Lawrence Cobb and Bruce Wayne Bivins age 63 charged with theft and attempted marketing of 93 eggs.

Click Orlando, July 14, 2020.⁴

End of May 2020

Loiza, Puerto Rico, United States of America

The 2 turtles had just laid their eggs. The eggs of "tinglares", as they are known locally, were looted by one or more individuals who risked a fine of up to 2,000 US\$.

Metro Puerto Rico, May 28, 2020.⁵

LATIN AMERICA

COSTA RICA

Mid-May 2020

Matina, Province of Limón, Costa Rica

Pillage of 83 leatherback turtle eggs on the beaches at the height of the egg-laying season. Two arrests.

Diario Extra, May 11, 2020.⁶

June 6 and August 18, 2020

Ostional National Wildlife Refuge, Province of Guanacaste, Costa Rica

- Pillage of 152 Kemp Ridley turtle eggs. The eggs have been re-buried in the sand but incubation is unlikely. One arrest.

- Seizure of 536 eggs.

Every month there are arrests. Almost every night there are acts of looting. The local communities have a legal and supervised permit to take eggs for personal and food purposes. Before the arribadas of the Pacific Ocean Ridley sea turtles, local people clean the beaches to remove hazardous or bulky waste in which the turtles get entangled. Illegal predation occurs at night. It is carried out by gangs who line their pockets by trading eggs inside Costa Rica and Nicaragua.

Teletica, June 7, 2020 ; Amelia Rueda, August 21, 2020.⁷

MEXICO

Mid-April and Mid-July 2020

Tapanatepec, State of Oaxaca, Mexico

- Seizure in the baggage hold of a bus from Tapanatepec to Talismán of a hundred eggs. From the end of November 2019 to date, 32,445 eggs have been seized.

- Seizure in the baggage hold of a bus from Tapanatepec to Arriaga of 2,850 eggs in 3 cardboard boxes.

Matutino Grafico, April 16, 2020 ; Chiapasparalelo, July 21, 2020.⁸

April 26, 2020

Oaxaca, State of Oaxaca, Mexico

New seizure in a bus. 474 eggs. A backpack in the baggage hold gave off a "sea smell" according to the national gendarmerie.

Diario Presente, April 26, 2020.⁹



Early June 2020

Playa del Carmen, State of Quintana Roo, Mexico

There were 2 to take advantage of the Covid-19 lockdown period to plunder the beach without fear of being denounced by walkers or bathers. But a quad-brigade swooped on them. Seizure of 110 eggs.

La Verdad Noticias, June 7, 2020.¹⁰



EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

April 2020

Municipality of Shanghai, China

Seizure in a postal parcel of 9 items made of hawksbill turtle shell.

Chinese Customs, April 22, 2020. ¹¹

May 2020

Zhoushan, Zhejiang Province, China

The date of the convictions is not precisely known. The judgments were announced by official communiqué on Tuesday, May 19, with the aim of deterring all those tempted by wildlife trafficking.

Conviction of a certain Shen to 12 years and 7 months in prison. On October 18, 2018, a refrigerated truck belonging to him was spotted in the woods on the side of a road by the Zhoushan police. 107 frozen turtles were inside. Their overall value is estimated by the local authority at over 3 million yuan, or about 350,000 US\$ and 3270 US\$ per specimen. Shen also has to pay a fine of 17,000 US\$. One of Shen's suppliers, known as Jiang, was sentenced to 5 years and 8 months in prison and fined 4,600 US\$. Jiang was purchasing sea turtles in a port near Zhoushan from a man named Liu who was sentenced to 1 year and 2 months in prison and fined 2,300 US\$. Daily Mail, May 22, 2020. ¹²



SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

INDONESIA

June 24, 2020

Kuta, Badung Regency, Bali Province, Bali Island, Indonesia

During the Covid-19 lockdown, he was stealthily selling green turtle meat into his restaurant. In his kitchen and sheds, the police seized 12 live turtles, 7 butchered turtles and meat ready for roasting.

The Star, June 27, 2020. ¹³

End of June 2020

Malamber Island, Balabalan Islands, Mamuju Regency, West Sulawesi Province, Indonesia

It is the story of a 1.4 hectare island with 2 inhabitants on board which was sold for 140,000 US\$ to a local mogul who would like to turn it into a camp for rich and idle tourists. And the worst thing is that the beaches of Malamber, the paradise doomed to hell, have been designated for years as the core of marine turtle conservation by the provincial government.

The Jakarta Post, June 22, 2020. ¹⁴

MALAYSIA

May 13 and 22, 2020

State of Terengganu, Malaysia

Shopee, the online grocery shop, was promoting "real Terengganu turtle eggs", 7.90 rupees a piece or 1.8 US\$. The seller had already sold 129 of them when the ad was withdrawn on the orders of Shopee management alerted by the Turtle Conservation Society. A few days later, the State announced that the stopping of the egg trade. The ban took effect at the end of 2020. Eggs are embedded in the food culture of this mainland Malaysian State and are reputed to have aphrodisiac effects.

Daily Express, May 15 and 23, 2020. ¹⁵

June 24, 2020

Kota Kinabalu, State of Sabah, Malaysia

Conviction of Mrs Bahira Juwah to 4 weeks in prison and a fine of 800 rupees or 192 US\$ for attempting to sell 27 green turtle eggs in October 2017. Alexander Yee, President of FOSTER (Friends of Sea Turtles Education and Research), denounces an upsurge in the sale of eggs on confidential social networks.

The Borneo Post, June 24, 2020 ; Daily Express, June 26, 2020. ¹⁶



VIET NAM

May 24, Mid-June and early August 2020

Kien Giang Province, Viet Nam

- Release of 2 green and one Hawksbill. They had been used for 6 months as an attraction in a café. ENV, the local fishermen and the provincial police took them in hand and put them back at sea.

- The beautiful Hawksbill was held in a net under a floating house. It was put back into the sea by the police. ENV had heard about her ordeal.

- Four stuffed Hawksbill adorned the lobby of a hotel. They were taken down and given to a museum.

ENV, June 12 and 13, August 9, 2020. ¹⁷

SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

GANG / REPEATED OFFENSE

May 24, 2020

Vellapatti and Tharuvaikulam, Thoothukudi District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

After a veterinary examination and the repair of some sores, 4 olive Ridley turtles were released into the Indian Ocean by a team of tough guys. Each of them weighed 200 to 250 kg.

The Times of India, May 25, 2020. ¹⁸

June 19 and 22, 2020

Benaulim and Galgibaga, South Goa District, State of Goa, India

Rescue on the beach of 5 olive Ridley turtles by 4 fishermen. They freed them from the nets where they were entangled. Another fisherman approached and offered to repurchase each of the victims for 6,000 rupees (80 US\$). Pele Fernandes, the leader of the chivalrous initiative, refused the bargain. Four olive Ridley turtles were released immediately and headed out to sea. The fifth was washed ashore by the waves. Injured in the flippers, it was transferred to the Cotigao sanctuary. Its wounds were sutured, its mobility was restored and the vets decided to release it back into open water 3 days later from Galgibaga beach.

The Hindustan Times, June 24, 2020 ; The Times of India, June 20, 21 and 23, 2020. ¹⁹

SRI LANKA

June 18, 2020

Madithaweli, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Roadblock; seizure of 15 kg of sea turtle flesh. An interpellation.

Sri Lanka Navy, June 18, 2020. ²⁰

WESTERN ASIA

YEMEN

June 9, 2020

Socotra Island, Socotra Governorate, Yemen

Poaching of a turtle about 100 years old. The Saudi and United Arab Emirates forces occupying the island are allegedly accomplices. The soldiers are said to be offering to sell the sea turtles to the local population for about 70,000 Yemeni rials or 280 US\$. The island of Socotra has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2008. According to the Socotra Post, the local authorities of the wildlife protection services have been dormant for the past 3 years and the beginning of the conflict between Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

Middle East Monitor, June 11, 2020 ; Socotra Post. ²¹

EUROPE

SPAIN

Mid-June 2020

Menorca, Autonomous Community of the Balearic Islands, Spain

To prevent them from being looted or destructed by beach users, experts have transferred 132 eggs laid by a loggerhead turtle on the beach of Punta Prima to a less frequented beach.

Estrella Digital, June 20, 2020. ²²

MANATEES, GANGES RIVER DOLPHINS, DOLPHINS, SPERM WHALES, WHALES, WALRUSES AND SEA LIONS

See also "Ivory and Ivories" p.41

AFRICA

GHANA

June 6, 2020

Nketepa, Eastern Region, Ghana

Capture of an African manatee (*Trichechus senegalensis*, Appendix I) in the Afram River. Fishermen killed him and shared the meat with the other villagers. "They know; they are aware that they don't have to kill these species but they don't want to come back empty-handed," says Mr. Oppong, spokesperson for the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission. In 2017, three African manatees had suffered the same fate in the same river.

Ghana Web, June 15, 2020. ¹

SENEGAL

June 24, 2020

Port of Joal-Fadiouth, Thiès Region, Senegal

They say they caught a bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*, Appendix II) without meaning to do so. Fishermen and villagers wanted to eat him. Following a report by Ibrahima Ndong of the African Aquatic Conservation Fund, the carcass was seized and burnt.

African Aquatic, June 25, 2020. ²



AMERICA

CANADA

From March 20 to June 10, 2020

Vancouver, Province of British Columbia, Canada

At least 5 beheaded steller sea lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*) ran aground on the beaches. The skulls sell for 1,000 US\$ on the black market. In 2013, 4 beheaded sea lions were found in the same place. Smart News, July 6, 2020 ; Radio Canada, June 29, 2020.³

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

April 23, 2020

Anchorage, State of Alaska, United States of America

Walter Earl (75 years old), owner of The Antique Gallery, is charged for violation of the Lacey Act. He allegedly purchased over 50 walrus tusks (*Odobenus rosmarus*, Appendix III in Canada) and sold walrus trophies with ivory tusks on three occasions. Walrus skeletons, tusks and vertebrae were seized from his gallery in November 2017. 570 News, April 25, 2020.⁴

ASIA

BANGLADESH

May 8 and 24, 2020

Urkirchar Union and Urirchar, Chittagong District, Chittagong Division, Bangladesh

- A 157 cm long and 52 kg Ganges river dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*, Appendix I) is found dead, incised from the rostrum to the tail, in the Halda River, a tributary of the Borgang. Layers of fat have been removed, probably to extract oil. He has allegedly been trapped in a net. Another Ganges river dolphin had been found on March 21, 2020 in the same condition and in the same river.

- A new Ganges river dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*, Appendix I), nearly 2.15 m long and weighing 80 kg, is found dead on a bank of the Halda river. His rostrum was caught in an illegal net. He is the 25th and the largest, to be killed in the Halda since September 2017.

Dhaka Tribune, May 9, 12 and 24, 2020 ; Channel News Asia, May 11, 2020 ; The Daily Star, May 24, 2020.⁵



CHINA

April 23, 2020

Qingdao, Shandong Province, China

Seizure by customs in a package of 3 sperm whale teeth (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I), 10-15 cm long and 798 g in total. They had been ordered online from an online sales site for collectors and art lovers, and were declared as "decoration". Chinese Customs, May 6 and 22, 2020.⁶



May 19, 2020

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 2 sperm whale teeth (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) of 325 and 304 g, hidden in ceramic cups and in a vase inside a package.

Chinese Customs, June 3, 2020.⁷

INDIA

Early May 2020

Hooghly River, surroundings of Kolkata, West Bengal State, India

A Ganges river dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*, Appendix I) who was a few weeks old was tortured

by a group of young men, including one named Rafiku Saikh, who posted the video online. They put him back into the water completely bloody. The NGO Nature Environment & Wildlife Society (NEWS) lodged a complaint and an investigation is underway.

According to the NGO Human and Environment Alliance League (HEAL), 50 Ganges river dolphins, including juveniles, are poached every year in Murshidabad and Malda districts. Their oil is used as bait by fishermen and is reputed to heal pain and wounds. The species is at risk. There are thought to be less than 2,500 specimens in India, Bangladesh and Nepal. Ganges river dolphins, see "On the Trail" n°2 p.5-6, n°8 p.7 and n°28 p.63.

The Times of India, May 11 and 16, 2020.⁸



INDONESIA

Week of June 15, 2020

Lembeng beach, Ketewel, Gianyar Regency, Bali Province, Bali Island, Indonesia

A dwarf sperm whale (*Kogia sima*, Appendix II) cut into pieces was discovered. The oil was extracted. The villagers stated that they did not know that the species was protected and wrote a letter of apology, promising it will not happen again.

The New Straits Times, June 22, 2020 ; The Jakarta Post, June 20, 2020.⁹

MYANMAR

May 7 and June 27, 2020

Aye Kyun and Sein Pan Gone, Pyin Oo Lwin District, Mandalay Region, Myanmar



- Electrocution of a female Irrawaddy dolphin (*Orcaella brevirostris*, Appendix I) measuring approximately 2.2 m long and aged around 40 years.

- Another female Irrawaddy dolphin is found dead from an electric shock. She was approximately one month old and nearly 1.1 m long. The day before, an inhabitant saw 4 boats engaged in electric fishing. Living in coastal waters and in some rivers of South and South-East Asia, Irrawaddy dolphins are particularly threatened by the destruction of their habitat and their capture in gillnets. Their oil is also said to be used to treat rheumatism in India.

See "On the Trail" n°23 p.21.

Myanmar Times, May 14 and June 30, 2020.¹⁰

EUROPE

ICELAND

April 2020

Iceland

Hvalur hf., specialised in whaling, gives up for the second consecutive year: the harpoon vessels stay alongside the quay. Japan no longer needs the meat of North Atlantic fin whales (*Balaenoptera physalus*, Appendix I with reservations from Iceland and Japan) since it withdrew from the International Whaling Commission and Japanese fishermen are hunting Sei whales (*Balaenoptera borealis*, Appendix I with reservations from Iceland and Japan) in Japanese territorial waters. (...)

(...) "Whaling in Japanese waters is subsidized by the Japanese government, making competition tough," says Kristján Loftsson, adding that the Japanese have stricter requirements in terms of health certification for imported whale meat. In recent years there has been controversy over the levels of chemical residues in whale meat imported from Iceland. Hvalur hf. also mentions the additional difficulties imposed by compliance with the anti-Covid-19 barrier gestures on board ships and in flensing and packaging plants. However, Hvalur hf. is not giving up whaling for good and is betting on the success of research into marketing whale protein-based dietary supplements. Another smaller Icelandic whaling company, IP-Útgerdehf, has definitively renounced harpoons. The recent ban on the hunting of minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*, Appendix I with Iceland's reservation) in coastal waters has made the hunting effort too dangerous for its small boats and, above all, too expensive in terms of propulsion fuel. Iceland Monitor, April 24, 2020 ; AFP.¹¹

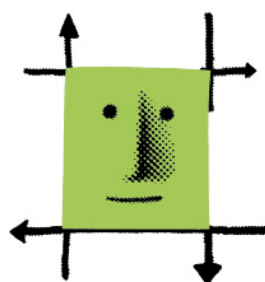
NORWAY

April 1st, 2020

Norway

No, it is no April Fool. It is the launch of whaling in Norway at the gates of the European Union and the Arctic Ocean. Norway, inventor of the explosive harpoon, opens its umbrella wide to protect its whalers. 1,300 minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*, Appendix I with a Norwegian reservation) may be brought ashore this year. It is unlikely that the 12 whaling vessels will be able to accomplish this bloody achievement, but Norway wishes to make known loudly and clearly that in its waters it remains free to pump out oil and whale oil. Ocean Research & Conservation Ireland, March 29, 2020.¹²

END
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ROBIN DES BOIS



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