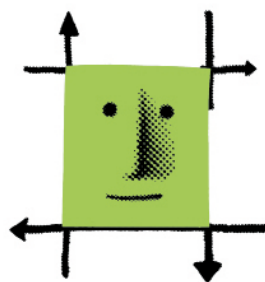


ON_{the} TRAIL

The defaunation bulletin
n°31. Events from the 1st October to the 31th December, 2020



Quarterly information and analysis report on animal poaching and smuggling
Published on December 22, 2021
Original version in French



ROBIN DES BOIS

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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
- Marine and freshwater multispecies (simultaneous seizure of several aquatic species)
- Multi-species reptiles (simultaneous seizure of several reptile species)

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

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

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

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

CITES APPENDICES

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

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

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

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

PICTOS



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



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



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



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



Full moon. Moonlight poaching

ACRONYMS

EAGLE : Eco Activists for Governance and Law Enforcement

ENV : Education for Nature – Vietnam

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

IEW : Iran Environment and Wildlife Watch

KWS : Kenya Wildlife Service

LAGA : The Last Great Ape Organization

OIC : Orangutan Information Centre

PROFEPA : Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente

SAPS : South African Police Service

SPCA : Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

SSB : Sashastra Seema Bal

SVW : Save Vietnam Wildlife

SWT : Sheldrick Wildlife Trust

USFWS : United States Fish and Wildlife Service

WCCB : Wildlife Crime Control Bureau

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AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

October 22, 2020

Somkhele, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

"She did not compromise her ethics. Ever. I will miss her truth, her fire and courage. She did not deserve to die. We are devastated by her loss " says Kirsten Youens, her lawyer. Fikile Ntshangase, 65, was murdered by four unidentified men in her home around 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 22. She was an incorruptible and outspoken opponent to the expansion of an open-pit coal mine in Somkhele, near Hluhluwe-Imfolozi park. The way is clear for Tende Coal Ltd. The Guardian, Oct. 23, 2020 ; News24, Oct. 23, 2020.¹



November 17, 2020

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



Checkers Mashego, 51, disappeared. Patrolling along the River Nsikazi, he was not at the rendezvous planned with his team. Field searches at night and using a helicopter in the morning gave no results. When he disappeared, he was in uniform and carried a rifle, a cell phone

and a radio. A fresh search of the area in which he was thought to have disappeared led to the discovery of human remains and various equipment thought to have been carried by Checkers Mashego. His family was informed immediately and a call made for witnesses. The Minister of the Environment and the Chief Executive of SANParks expressed their concern: "We can assure the public that we will do everything in our power to support the South African Police Services in their investigation to try and understand what has transpired, and to assist the Mashego family to get closure."

Poaching in Stolsnek section "On the Trail" n°5 p. 69 and n° 16 p. 66.

SANParks, November 19 and December 18, 2020 ; The Citizen, November 28 and December 18, 2020 ; SABC News, December 7, 2020.²

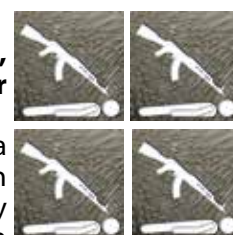
BOTSWANA

November 5, 2020

Sedudu Island, Chobe District, Botswana. Near the border with Namibia

11:30 p.m. Death of Wamunyima Nchindo, 36 years old, Martin Nchindo, 40 years old, Tommy Nchindo, 48 years old, Namibian nationals, and Sinvula Munyeme, 44 years old, a Zambian national. They were approaching Sedudu Island on the Chobe River, a tributary of the Zambezi. The Botswana forces shot at the dugout. A "shoot to kill" that hit the alleged poachers. Namibia deplores the "murder" of 4 humble fishermen who had gone astray. The natural inhabitants of Sedudu Island are crocodiles and hippos. Sedudu for Botswana, Kasikili for Namibia, the territorial conflict has been raging since 1984. The International Court of Justice ruled in favor of Botswana in 1999. Botswana covers 582,000 km² and Namibia 824,268 km² but the 5 km² of the Sedudu/Kasikili island is a major sovereignty issue for the two member countries of the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area.

Botswana Government, November 9, 2020 ; The Namibian, November 7 and 19, 2020 ; Bush 24, November 9, 2020 ; Journal du Cameroun, November 11, 2020 ; New Era, November 10, 2020 ; Mmegi, November 13, 2020 ; The Southern Times, November 11, 2020.³



KENYA

November 7, 2020

Kasigau, Taita-Taveta County, Kenya



Death of ranger Joseph Ngeti. He was charged by an elephant. He had worked in the fauna and flora department of Wildlife Works for 15 years after being a ranger at the Kenya Wildlife Service. He leaves a widow and three children. Wildlife Works, November 10, 2020 and February 1, 2021.⁴

Early December 2020

Rukinga, Taita-Taveta County, Kenya



© Wildlife Works
Jess Njeri died on duty. She was on patrol in a Land Cruiser when a terrible collision with an elephant occurred. She will be missed by the 250,000 hectares of Kasigau Dry Forest whose wildlife and landscapes she was responsible for observing and protecting from poaching, charcoal production and other looting. She and her colleagues at Wildlife Works identified anomalies and violations and reported the information to the KWS (Kenya Wildlife Service). Born in the remote village of Kisimenyi, she was 31 years old.

Opera News, December 9, 2020 ; Wildlife Works, March 31, 2020 and February 1, 2021.⁵

NAMIBIA

November 30, 2020

Okakarara, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

The event took place during the night of Sunday to Monday. It is alleged that Claudius Hameva and 3 other suspects entered the private Hamakari reserve, armed with lances and knives and accompanied by hunting dogs. A guard told them to leave. Verbal exchanges led to an altercation. The guard fired in the direction of the intruders. Hameva was hit in the chest by a bullet and died on the spot. The guard was charged with homicide and the 3 accomplices ran away, accompanied by their dogs.

Namibian Broadcasting Corporation, November 30, 2020.⁶



NIGER

December 4, 2020

La Tapoa, Tillabéri Region, Niger

Mahamane Ousmane Tagama and Saley Garba died after a nocturnal attack at La Tapoa station attributed to about 100 jihadist rebels.

Africanews, December 4, 2020 ; Mondafrigue, December 5, 2020 ; Sergio Lopez, December 5, 2020 ; Wildlife Angel, December 15, 2020.



Mahamane Ousmane Tagama and Saley Garba

UGANDA

November 15, 2020

Lapono, Nwoya District, Northern Region, Uganda



© UWA
A ranger has died. Sergeant Guma Scot was charged by an elephant when he and his patrol were trying to push back a group of elephants that had escaped from Murchison Falls national park ("On the trail" n°30 p. 153-154) and was pilfering community crops. He died

of his injuries during transfer to Anaka hospital. Trenches are now being dug and electric fences installed around the park. The project will take several years to finish. A low-voltage generating station is to be installed according to the Communication Manager at UWA (Uganda Wildlife Authority).

New Vision, November 16, 2020.⁸

December 5, 2020

Kibale National Park, Kyejono District, Western Region, Uganda

Emmanuel Matsipa died in an ambush after 23 years of excellent service at the

Uganda Wildlife Authority. He started his career in the protection of fauna in Semliki wildlife reserve as a tourist guide. He was on patrol. A poacher was killed in the shooting. His identity is not mentioned in the UWA press release. Uganda Wildlife Authority, December 7, 2020.⁹



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

October 10, 2020

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



Death in an ambush of ranger Bagurubumwe Chuhoze Deogene at 47. He had worked for the Congolese Institute for the Conservation of Nature since 1996 and leaves a widow and three children.

Virunga National Park, October 11, 2020.¹⁰



AMERICA

COLOMBIA

October 28, 2020

Nuquí, Department of Chocó, Colombia

Juana Perea, 50 years old : ecotourism operator and scuba diving instructor, she was fiercely opposed to the proposed mega commercial port in the Gulf of Tribugá. She was shot in the head on Nuquí beach on October 28, 2020. "If it was for the opposition to the port of Tribugá, they should kill us all," say the residents of the Chocó jungle.

Mongabay, October 31 and December 28, 2020.¹¹



December 3, 2020

La Macarena, Department of Meta, Colombia

Javier Francisco Parra Cubillos, coordinator for sustainable development in the Special Management Area of La Macarena (Cormacarena), which includes 19 municipalities and covers 7,590 km², was fatally shot in the city of La Macarena by 2 individuals on a motorcycle who fled. The flora and fauna within the Cormacarena are exceptional for their diversity but they are threatened on all sides by deforestation and illegal land appropriation. Mongabay, December 4 and 28, 2020.¹²



Javier Francisco Parra Cubillos in a burned out forest in Caño Cristales, February 2020



PANGOLINS



Sunda pangolin (*Manis javanica*). Photo Bert Harris

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°31

Value on the black market

according to media or official sources

The values were estimated at the time of the seizures

Value of 1kg of pangolin scales

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref. (year)
Africa	Kenya	9,125	4 (2020)
Asia	China	1,520	22 (2020)
	Indonesia	130	24 (2020)
		228	25 (2020)
	India	13,565	37 (2020)

Value of a pangolin

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref. (year)
Africa	Malawi	4,670	5 (2020)
	Zimbabwe	5,000	8 (2020)
	South Africa	20,610	11 (2020)
Asia	Viet Nam	103	35 (2020)
	India	4,030	44 (2020)
		6,750	48 (2020)
	Pakistan	260	50 (2020)

CENTRAL AFRICA

CAMEROON

December 3, 2020

Cameroon

70 kilograms of scales. This is all that was left of about 200 pangolins. Three people were arrested, including a former soldier.

Eagle, December 2020.¹



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

October 2020

Luaba Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

According to a video that was quickly removed from social networks, Chinese employees of the copper and cobalt mine operated by Huagang Mining, whose main shareholders are said to be China Railway and China Power Construction Group, eat pangolins in their regular diet and, in order to protect against Covid swallow pills supposedly containing grinded pangolins scales
The Epoch Times, October 19, 2020.²

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

October 25, 2020

Tsavo East National Park, Kenya



The pangolin who had just been seized from a poacher was examined by the vets to ensure that he was not suffering any injury or other trauma. All was well, he was released.

SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2020.³

December 27 and 28, 2020 – March 18, 2021

Nairobi, Nairobi County, Kenya

- Seizure in a vehicle belonging to a consignee working at Nairobi International Airport and heading towards the port of Mombasa of 157 kg of scales with an estimated value of 157 million shillings, that is to say 9,125 US\$ per kg. Six arrests.
- Freeing of the 6 suspects with a bond of 5 million shillings, i.e. 45,600 US\$, each.

Kenya Wildlife Service, December 27, 2020 ; Nation, March 18, 2021.⁴

MALAWI

October 28, 2020

Lilongwe, Central Region, Malawi

Two men arrested for trying to sell a dead pangolin for 3.5 million kwachas, that is to say 4,670 US\$.
Malawi 24, October 28, 2020.⁵

December 24, 2020

Lilongwe, Central Region, Malawi

In 2019 there were 25 arrests for poaching or selling pangolins. In 2020 there were 83 cases, most of which led to imprisonment for 1 year and 5 months to 10 years. Pangolins have been much sought-after during the Covid period. In 2020, the Lilongwe Wildlife Trust released 17 saved specimens in secret places far from the frontiers with Mozambique and Zambia to prevent them from falling into smugglers' hands again.

According to the Department of Wildlife and National Parks, 251 cases of wildlife and plant trafficking were reported in 2020 and 225 were sanctioned by courts. The amount of the fines has been increased. If offenders do not pay them or do not commit to a timeframe, they face an alternative prison sentence.

Lilongwe Wildlife Trust, February 18, 2021; Malawi 24, April 14, 2021.⁶

ZAMBIA

Early December 2020

Kazungula, Southern Province, Zambia. Border with Botswana and Zimbabwe.

The freeing of a live pangolin by Ranger Willy Shazzy. He was in the hands of smugglers. The official press release states that seeing a pangolin brings good luck, that its organs are used in magic rituals (jiu-jiu) and that pangolin soup is appreciated in the country. The saved specimen was released in a protected habitat.

The Elite AntiPoaching Units And Combat Trackers, December 10, 2020.⁷

ZIMBABWE

October 10, 2020

Dangamvura, Mutare, Manicaland Province, Zimbabwe

Arrest of Kelvin Nyamapfeni and Cuthbert Makotore, a soldier in the regular army. They were seeking to sell 2 live pangolins for 10,000 US\$.

New Zimbabwe, November 18, 2020.⁸

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

October 14, 2020

Centurion, Gauteng Province, South Africa

The police freed a female pangolin in a box in the back of a car. Three men were arrested.

Pangolin K9, October 15, 2020.⁹

October 20, 2020

Northam, Limpopo Province, South Africa

The police freed a 15.4-kg male pangolin. He was in excellent condition. His tongue and stomach were full of ants - proof if any were needed that pangolins are natural controllers of insects. He was handed over to the Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital and will be released soon. Four men aged 19 to 40 were arrested.

Pangolin K9, October 21, 2020 ; African Pangolin Working Group, October 21, 2020 ; Review Online, October 21, 2020.¹⁰

October 21, 2020

Pretoria, Gauteng Province, South Africa



A pangolin was seized in an underground carpark. Two people attempting to sell him for 350,000 rand (20,610 US\$) were arrested. The animal in the boot of the car was in transit between Johannesburg and Pretoria.

Pangolin K9, October 22, 2020 ; Independent Online, October 22, 2020 ; Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital, January 6, 2021.¹¹

October 25, 2020 and February 16, 2021

Boksburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa



- Arrest of Mashoko Manhondo, Joseph Masava, Jeffrey Ruzvidzo and Hebert Dzingai who wanted to sell the pangolin in the Flamingo shopping centre.

- Each was sentenced to 8 years in prison. Gauteng Newspaper, October 26, 2020 ; SAPS, February 18, 2021.¹²

November 8, 2020

Dingleton, Northern Cape Province, South Africa

Freeing of a male pangolin imprisoned in a dilapidated caravan.

SAPS, November 8, 2020 ; Getaway, November 10, 2020.¹³

December 4, 2020

Giyani, Limpopo Province, South Africa



A young man was sentenced to 4 years in prison, including a 2-year suspended sentence, and a fine of 20,000 rand (1305 US\$) for having been in possession of and transporting a pangolin on October 1, 2019.

Review Online, December 6, 2020.¹⁴

December 24, 2020

Phinda Private Game Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa



Exceptional birth of a Temminck's pangolin. A beautiful Christmas present. The bad news is that the Covid pandemic has not slowed illegal dealing in spite of lock-downs and the paralysis of transport. In 2020, 38

dead or living pangolins were seized in comparison with 36 in 2019.

Independent Online, December 30, 2020 ; African Pangolin Working Group, December 27, 2020.¹⁵

NAMIBIA

October 13, 2020

Opuwo, Kunene Region, Namibia

Seizure of a pangolin held by Uaninazo Muheke and Mavetumbuavi Mutambo.

Namibian Sun, October 21, 2020.¹⁶

December 10, 2020

Tsumeb, Oshikoto Region, Namibia

Arrest of Maseka Paulus and Paulus Ndjamba Augustinus. They were in a petrol station attempting to sell pangolin scales estimated to be 50,000 N\$, that is to say 3,260 US\$ and 7 presumed uncut diamonds.

The Namibian, December 11, 2020.¹⁷

December 31, 2020

Okahao, Omusati Region, Namibia

Man arrested while carrying pangolin scales.

The Namibian, January 4, 2021.¹⁸

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

From October 12 to November 25, 2020

Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

Seizure of 125 live or frozen pangolins and 125 kg of scales. Eighteen suspects arrested. They transported their haul from Viet Nam to Guangdong and Guangxi in small cars, with a route of side tracks with no fixed customs points.

Chinese Customs, January 21, 2021.¹⁹



OPERATION HURRICANE 212

November 15, 2020

Guangdong Province, China

Dismantling of an organised gang specialised in pangolin scales. The enquiry started on Qi'ao Island when 200 kg of scales were seized. It finished on November 15 with the arrest of 16 suspects. The gang made its purchases in Malaysia and Indonesia. The contraband travelled via Hong Kong before transfer to continental China, in particular via Shenzhen and Dongguan and transport to the province of Anhui. The network is thought to have been responsible for the contraband and sale of 8 tonnes of scales. On the basis of 500 g per animal this represents at least 16,000 pangolins.

Yangcheng Evening News, December 18, 2020.²⁰

December 17, 2020 and May 11, 2021

Beijing Municipality, China

Seven managers and employees of a company specialised in traditional pharmacy appeared in court. It is suspected that from 2016 to 2018 they had purchased 9,890 kg of pangolin scales, 960 kg of antelope horn and then used falsified declarations to obtain the official authorisation to sell the material in the form of pills prepared after grinding and mixing with medicinal herbs. Totals of 1,105 kg pills prepared with scales and 968 kg pills prepared with antelope horn were seized.



On May 11, 2021, the company was condemned to pay a 2 million yuan fine (309,000 US\$) and 7 managers and staff were sentenced to prison terms of 2 to 12 years and fines of 20,000 to 120,000 yuans, that is to say 3,090 to 18,550 US\$.

Beijing Daily, December 17, 2020 ; Haiwai Net, May 12, 2021.²¹

December 2020

Xinjing, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China. Border with Viet Nam

Seizure in a van of three dustbin bags containing 20 kg of scales. A preliminary estimate of the value of the batch is 200,000 yuans, that is to say 30,400 US\$ and 1,520 US\$ per kg. Three men are in jail.

China Central Television, December 28, 2020.²²

SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

INDONESIA

October 1st, 2020

Banjarmasin City, South Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

Arrest of N.O. He was attempting to sell a live pangolin in Lambung Mangkurat University campus. He possessed others awaiting sale. He faces a prison sentence of up to 5 years or a 100 million rupiah fine, the equivalent of 6,720 US\$.

Banjarmasin Post, October 3, 2020 ; Pers Bhayangkara, October 3, 2020 ; Detak.co, October 5, 2020.²³

October 10, 2020

Suka Merindu, Bengkulu City, Bengkulu Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Arrest of R.T., seller, and of L.F., purchaser. The transaction concerned 142 g of scales at the price of 275,000 rupiahs, i.e. 18,5 US\$ and 130 US\$ per kg. Merdeka, October 13, 2020.²⁴

October 16, 2020

Medan City, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

S. sold 24.5 kg of scales via the Internet. His price was 3,4 million rupiahs per kg, i.e. 228 US\$ per kg. He poached in Sarolangun Regency in Jambi Province, selling or eating the meat and then dealing in scales.

Detik, October 16, 2020.²⁵

November 11, 2020

Gudang, South Bangka Regency, Bangka Belitung Islands Province, Indonesia

Freeing of 2 pangolins taken from a village several days earlier. Combined operation by BKSDA (Balai Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam), the Pusat Penyelamatan Satwa Alobi Foundation and scouts of Bangka Belitung (Babel).

iNews, November 12, 2020 ; Tribunnews.com, November 12, 2020.²⁶

MALAYSIA

December 17, 2020

Kibanalau City, State of Sabah, Malaysia

Sentencing of Rodzlan Madtaah, a self-styled "businessman" to a 1-year prison sentence and a fine of 74,000 ringgits (18,180 US\$) with a further 4 months of imprisonment in case of non-payment for having held a pangolin in his car in January 2018. Police caught him in a service station.

Daily Express, December 18, 2020.²⁷



SINGAPORE

November 4, 2020

Singapore

In October 2020, Chong Soo Yong got hold of a pangolin with the help of a man named Tony. They put him in a bag after catching him by the tail under the eyes of a witness who asked them to put him back. A little further on, the two kidnappers followed closely by the witness freed their hostage. In court, Chong repeated that he had wanted to save the pangolin from the ants' attacks and did not give any more explanations about his action and Tony's identity. The court was not very receptive to Chong's arguments, especially since ants are the pangolin's favorite prey, and fined him 5,000 S\$ (3,660 US\$). The facts occurred on the outskirts of Singapore central catchment nature reserve.

Channel News Asia, November 4, 2020.²⁸



VIET NAM

October 12, 2020

Vinh, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

Sentencing of Phan Trong Duc, 54, to a 10-year prison sentence for having in May transported and attempted to sell 9 dead young pangolins weighing a total of 30.2 kg. ENV, October 22, 2020.²⁹



October 18, 2020

Quang Ninh Province, Viet Nam

Hoang Van Giang gave himself up to the police after 2 years on the run. All his accomplices were sentenced in 2019 to from 5 to 13 years of imprisonment for having operated a centre near Mong Cai for the transit of pangolins destined for restaurants in China ("On the Trail" n°22 p. 54 and n°27 p. 62).

ENV, October 20, 2020 ; Bao ve phap luat, October 19, 2020.³⁰

November 4, 2020

Nghi Loc District, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

Two pangolins, one of which was seriously injured, were seized in L.H.T's car.

SVW, November 6, 2020 ; Thanh Nien, March 17, 2021.³¹



Week of November 9, 2020

Viet Nam

Return to total liberty of 7 pangolins saved from trafficking. Thanks to excellent care administered by the NGO Save Vietnam's Wildlife, they were kept in semi-captivity for 6 months so that they could regain their health. One of them had a leg amputated, another had a damaged leg and a third had a closed wound on his neck. The NGO is confident. The animals are in fine form and will survive in their new suitable and confidential habitat.

SVW, November 12, 2020.³²

December 6, 2020

Ninh Binh, Ninh Binh Province, Viet Nam

Seizure in the baggage hold of a motor coach running between Dak Lak and Hanoi (1,200 km) of 6 pangolins in poor condition, stinking meat in polystyrene boxes and 4,000 packets of contraband cigarettes. The driver, Hac Ngoc Ha, is being investigated.

SVW, December 6, 2020 ; Bao Tai Nguyen & Moi Truong, December 8, 2020.³³

December 22, 2020

Bim Son, Thanh Hoa Province, Viet Nam

Seizure in a coach approaching Hanoi and Giap Bat coach station of 3 pangolins whose state of health was not disturbing. The driver said that he had loaded them in Huong Thuy in Thua Thien Hue province at the request of a man whose identity he did not know.

SVW, December 22, 2020.³⁴

December 30, 2020

Vinh Cuu District, Dong Nai Province, Viet Nam

Questioning of a woman taking to his death a small pangolin weighing 2.1 kg. Thi Kim Mo said that she had bought the animal for 2.4 million dongs (103 US\$) in order to resell it.

Tienphong News, January 14, 2021.³⁵

December 30, 2020

Cam Lo District, Quang Tri Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of a pangolin and 3 Asian palm civets (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III, in India) one of which was dead.

SVW, January 9, 2021.³⁶



SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

October 2, 2020

Malkapur, Buldhana District, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure of 100 scales weighing a total of 2 kg, i.e. 20 g per scale. They were on sale for 2 million rupees, that is to say 27,130 US\$ and 271 US\$ per scale. A forest guard in civilian clothes introduced himself as a buyer. Bargaining lasted for 2



days. When they suspected that they were being ambushed, the 3 sellers ran away. They were caught with the help of the local police. Kartik Hodge, Gaurav Wankhede and Zetarsingh Babar Burha are from Madhya Pradesh. The operation was organised by the WCCB (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) and the Maharashtra forest services.

The Times of India, October 3, 2020.³⁷

October 5, 2020

Kothigaon, Gariaband District, State of Chhattisgarh, India

Arrest of Bhoj Singh Bhnujia, Santosh Bhunjia and Nand Kumar Bhunjia from the Nuapada district of Odisha. They were carrying a live pangolin in a bag. Daily Pioneer, October 6, 2020.³⁸

October 11 and 12, 2020

Chinchwan, Panvel District, State of Maharashtra, India

Double seizure of 12 kg of scales: first 9 kg held by 3 men on bicycles and then 3 kg carried by 2 accomplices

The Times of India, October 14, 2020.³⁹

October 17, 2020

Subarnapur District, State of Odisha, India

Seizure of a live pangolin and 5 kg of scales, poaching equipment and cell phones likely to hold evidence. Arrest of Somanath Bag and Marsalan Bhengera.

The New Indian Express, October 19, 2020 ; Prameya News, October 18, 2020.⁴⁰

October 31, 2020

Dhanpuji, Bastar District, State of Chhattisgarh, India

A certain Damru Bhatra was caught redhanded with a live pangolin thanks to the joint action of 3 WCCB inspectors and forestry officials at the State boundary between Chhattisgarh and Odisha.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, November 6, 2020 ; The Hitavada, November 1, 2020.⁴¹

November 22, 2020

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



Seizure of a live pangolin by the 34th battalion of the SSB and the Western Bengal forestry services. An attempt at a contraband transfer to Myanmar and then China was suspected. A man was questioned and his motorcycle was confiscated.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, November 23, 2020 ; The Tribune, November 23, 2020.⁴²

November 23, 2020

Boragaon, Kamrup District, State of Assam, India



A pangolin was seized and 4 traffickers. They seem to have bought him in Krishnai for resale in Guwahati, 120 km away.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, November 25, 2020 ; The Sentinel, November 26, 2020.⁴³

November 26, 2020

Mankidi, Koraput District, State of Odisha, India

Seizure of a pangolin: 4.5 kg, 73.6 cm long, about 5 years old. A man was arrested who wanted to sell him for 300,000 rupees, the equivalent of 4,030 US\$. He was captured in the forest near Onkadeli some 30 kilometres from Mankidi.

The Times of India, November 27, 2020.⁴⁴

November 29, 2020

Jaisinghnagar, Shahdol District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Arrest of 5 persons transporting a live pangolin in a car.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, December 1, 2020.⁴⁵

December 1st, 2020

Kapilash, Dhenkanal District, State of Odisha, India

Kapilash is a centre for stealing animals. While 2 men poaching wild boar with nets and initially freed by a village riot and 8 others were arrested here and there with bows and arrows, ammunition and deer antlers, Ghanashyam Behera and Jitendra Pradhan were caught redhanded in possession of a 15 kg pangolin, a rarity.

The New Indian Express, December 2, 2020 ; Odisha TV, December 3, 2020.⁴⁶



December 18, 2020

Sarra, Balaghat District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Seizure by officers of the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau and of the Forestry Department of a live pangolin held in a village house.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, December 21, 2020.⁴⁷

December 22, 2020

Kandarpur, Cuttack District, State of Odisha, India

A pangolin weighing over 10 kg whose value is estimated at 500,000 rupees (6,750 US\$) is in the hands of Santosh Kumar Dalai near a canal. Thanks to confidential information, he was freed by the police and has the bad luck of now being in the zoo. The Times of India, December 24, 2020 ; Lokmat Times, December 23, 2020.⁴⁸

December 30, 2020

Waraseoni, Balaghat District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Seven kilograms of scales. Two arrests.

The Hitavada, January 2, 2021 ; Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, December 31, 2020.⁴⁹

PAKISTAN

November 14, 2020

Fateh Jang, Punjab Province, Pakistan

An endangered species in the province but still appearing on the Internet. After the August pangolin ("On the Trail" n° 30 p. 15), now the November pangolin. Using the role of henchman of a Chinese employer, an officer of the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board feigned to pay 42,000 rupees (260 US\$) for him. "Students" came to make the delivery. He was freed in a secret place. A few days later the IWMB received threats of reprisals via a telephone number in Greece! In Pakistan, the best-known use of pangolin scales is the manufacture of bulletproof vests.

Dawn, November 15, 2020.⁵⁰

■ PANGOLINS, FELINES / ELEPHANTS / RHINOCEROSES ■

AFRICA

NAMIBIA

Year 2020

Namibia

The year 2020 toll (cf. "On the Trail" n°30 p.15 for the report on events as of July 2020) is less severe than the one of the year 2019, with only two exceptions : the number of suspects arrested for rhinoceros poaching and the number of seized horns, that is - 64 suspects arrested (127 in 2019 and 67 in 2018) for elephants poaching or ivory trafficking and 3 sentences. The Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MET) counts 11 poached elephants (13 in 2019 and 27 in 2018) and 62 seized tusks (115 in 2019 and 97 in 2018).

- 145 suspects arrested for poaching including 46 for poaching conspiracy (134 in 2019 and 75 in 2018) or rhinoceros horns trafficking and 2 sentences. The MET counts 31 poached rhinoceros (52 in 2019 and 81 in 2018) and 21 seized horns (8 in 2019 and 13 in 2018). 216 rhinoceros were dehorned (310 in 2019 and 139 in 2018).

- 103 suspects arrested (175 in 2019 and 122 in 2018) for poaching or pangolins trafficking and 12 sentences. The MET counts 74 seized pangolins (129 in 2019 and 90 in 2018) including 8 survivors and 66 skins or carcasses.

91% of the arrested suspects are Namibians. The other ones are Angolans, Zambians and Botswanans.

Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, "Combatting Wildlife Crime in Namibia - Annual Report 2020", March 2021.¹

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

October 7, 2020 and March 24, 2021
Ouesso, Sangha Department, Republic of the Congo



Gentlemen Merlin Thibault Onguele, Genèse Mobula, Pie Antounga Mani, Adam Djamal, Don Engoko Matoubou and Bovic Bolia Mbemba appealed against their sentences of imprisonment and fines for trafficking in raw ivory, pangolin scale and leopard skin (see "On the Trail" n°24 p.50 and n°26 p.102). The Ouesso court of appeal is now hearing the prosecutor's speech. The verdicts were delivered on March 24, 2021. The convictions and sentences were upheld. Eighteen-month imprisonment and a fine of one million CFA francs (1,800 US\$) and damages for some, a fine of 600,000 CFA francs (1,110 US\$) and damages for others.

Vox Congo, October 2, 2020 ; Congo Medias Group, March 16 and April 2, 2021.²

October 27, 2020

Yangandou, Sangha Department, Republic of the Congo. Border with Cameroon.

176.5 g of scales and 10 kg of raw ivory. Four arrests—a Congolese and 3 Cameroonians on the road from Souanké to Ntam. The traffickers were about to meet the purchaser in Cabosse.

Agence d'information d'Afrique centrale, November 10, 2020.³

ASIA

CHINA

October 21, 2020

Fangchenggang, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

Eight prison sentences of from 5 to 11 years. The head of the gang was sentenced to 15 years and a fine of 2 million yuans, that is to say 306,500 US\$. They had organised the export of 3 containers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo containing tonnes of ivory and pangolin scales. Thanks to unusual customs cooperation between China and Singapore the containers were seized in 2019 in the port of Pasir Pajang ("On the Trail" n° 26 p. 52).

CCTV, October 24, 2020.⁴



November 24, 2020

Rizhao, Shandong Province, and Dongxing, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

The investigation started in March 2019 in Rizhao when a man was arrested in possession of several worked ivories. One thing leading to another, from shadowing surveillance to static observations, the police tracked down the network to the south of Dongxing, near the border of Viet Nam, at 2,300 km of Rizhao. Two men were arrested in possession of ivories, rhinoceros horns, and lion bones. The investigation has then been expanded to 12 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions with seizures of several tiger skins and pangolins scales. 25 suspects are in the meshes. Next step : the trial.

Luwang, November 24, 2020.⁵



Early December 2020

Changsha, Hunan Province, China

A Chinese citizen received a suspended 3-year prison sentence and a 20,000 yuan fine, that is to say 3,000 US\$ for having attempted to import 16 pangolin scales and 8 tiger bone sections in 2019 ("On the Trail" n°2 p.112). Xioxiang Morning Herald, December 7, 2020.⁶



INDIA

October 17, 2020

Adhav, Amravati District, State of Maharashtra, India

Seven persons were involved in contraband tiger claws and canines, skins of Bengal monitors (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I) and pangolin scales.

The Times of India, October 21, 2020.⁷

December 17, 2020

Seoni District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Arrest in the south of the district by the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau and the Forest Department of a trafficker in possession of tiger claws, bones and a tiger skin in pieces together with some 1kg of pangolin scales. WCCB, December 18, 2020.⁸



ELEPHANTS



African forest elephant (*Loxodonta cyclotis*). Photo Mattluizza

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

On the Trail n°31
Black market raw ivory quotation from media or official sources
The values were estimated at the time of the seizures

Value of 1kg of raw ivory

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref. (year)
Africa	Burkina Faso	613	4 (2020)
	Kenya	925	27 (2020)
		913	48 (2020)
	Zambia	1,923	55 (2020)
Asia	India	268	119 (2020)
		12,100	122 (2020)

NORTHERN AFRICA

ALGERIA

Year 2020

Wilaya of Médéa, Algeria

The time has come for annual reports. The gendarmerie of the Wilaya announces without detailing that raw rubies, ivory tusks and a pharaonic style bust have been seized in the context of the fight against organized trafficking. Unlike Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt, Algeria has been very discreet about wildlife seizures in recent years. The Wilaya of Médéa is a mountainous region in the north of the country, in the Tellian Atlas, 88 km west of Algiers.

Algérie Presse Service, January 25, 2021.¹

WESTERN AFRICA

BENIN

End of November 2020

Kandi, Alibori Department, Benin

Sentencing of 4 criminals to 12 months of prison, a fine of 300,000 CFA francs Jambi Province and a million CFA francs damages, that is to say 535 and 1,784 US\$. They were arrested in October 2020. They were trying to sell 4 elephant tusks. In the field the night before the arrests, the director of AALF-Bénin (Appui à l'Application des Lois sur la Faune et la Flore au Bénin) had a serious car accident. This did not prevent the team from assisting the sovereign forces to succeed the operation.

Eagle, October 17, 2020 ; Actu Bénin, November 25, 2020.²

December 9, 2020

N'Dali, Borgou Department, Benin

"Elephants are in critical danger of extinction. In spite of this, the network of traffickers is still after these wild animals in order to sell the tusks illegally". The Republican Police arrested 2 traffickers. A baby elephant had been killed. The two tusks were tiny.

Eagle, December 10, 2020 ; Matin Libre, December 15, 2020 ; Actu Bénin, January 27, 2021.³

BURKINA FASO

October 16, 2020

Ouagadougou, Centre Region, Burkina Faso

Eleven tusks and a piece of tusk, 32 kg. Where? In a hotel. The value? 613 US\$/kg. Two arrests: Maiga Saïdou and Maiga Alassane. A third man, Derme Ibrahim, was summoned.

Eagle, October 17, 2020 ; Koaci, October 23, 2020 ; L'express du Faso, October 26, 2020 ; Conservation Justice, October 2020.⁴

December 9 and 15, 2020 and February 15, 2021

PONASI (Pô-Nazinga-Sissili) ecological complex, Centre Sud and Centre-Ouest Regions and Bieha, Centre-Ouest Region, Burkina Faso

"While the trafficker in question was attempting to sell 4 elephant tusks, he was questioned by officials in charge of the protection of fauna." He was sentenced to 6 months of prison at an external hearing of the Court of Leo, plus an 18-month suspended sentence, a fine of 100,000 CFA francs and a million CFA francs in damages, that is to say 184 and 1,840 US\$.

Minute.bf, December 16, 2020 ; Conservation Justice, December 2020 ; Faso Actu, February 18, 2021.⁵

COTE D'IVOIRE

October 15, 2020

Attécoubé, Abidjan District, Côte d'Ivoire

He travelled from Bouaké to Abidjan to negotiate the sale of 3 statuettes and 9 bracelets. Ivory is one of the only raw materials in West Africa to be subjected to processing before sale.

Eagle, October 2020 ; Koaci, October 26, 2020.⁶



TOGO

October 13, 2020 and January 14, 2021
Lomé, Maritime Region, Togo



- Arrest of Daglo Kossi who described himself as a great fetish specialist, Bouyo Essozimna, Gagnon Kodjo, Assih Manèyassouwé and Zodogadji Grégoire. Their job was that of transferring elephant tusks from Benin to Togo before they were forwarded to Asia. Seizure of 3 large forest elephant tusks.

- The sentences for all were 6 months with 2 to 3-month suspended sentences. Fines were 200,000 CFA francs, that is to say 374 US\$. The fetish man was released.

Eagle, October 2020 and January 2021 ; Afrik 21, October 20, 2020 ; Viv Afrik, October 16, 2020 ; La Dépêche d'Abidjan, January 19, 2021.⁷

CENTRAL AFRICA

CAMEROON

October 22, 2020

Ambam, South Region, Cameroon



The lorry came from Gabon. The ivory was well hidden in a false compartment but the customs focused. Seizure of 118 tusks with a total weight of 626 kg and an average weight of 5 kg per tusk. 59 sub-adult elephants had been killed. Mohamadou Ibrahim was on his way to Yaoundé.

News Ghana (with Xinhua), October 22, 2020 ; Cameroon-Info.Net, October 22, 2020 ; Traffic, October 26 2020 ; Gabon Review, October 29, 2020 ; Eagle, October 2020 ; Camer.be, November 7, 2020.⁸

November 26, 2020

Douala, Littoral Region, Cameroon

Lydie Makembe and Théophile Tchiekou were sentenced to one year suspended sentences and Samuel Joël Manyombe to one year of imprisonment. Each of the 3 was fined the equivalent of 364 US\$. They had been caught redhanded with 26 kg of raw ivory in the Littoral region in May 2020 ("On the Trail" n°29 p.22). The booty was heavy and the punishment was light.

Alwihda Info, November 19, 2020 ; Actu Cameroun, December 2, 2020 ; Camer.be, December 2, 2020.⁹

REPEATED OFFENSE

December 2-3, 2020

Bertoua and Yokadouma, East Region, Cameroon



It's like seeing a mother and daughter walking in a forest being killed. The international network has business links with Nigeria to the north. Six suspects are in preventive custody. One of them is a Nigerian national and another an arrant repeated offender who has already spent time in prison. The operation was coordinated by the forestry forces of Lom and Djerem

with assistance from the NGO LAGA.

Eagle, December 2020 ; Camer.be, December 9, 2020.¹⁰

GABON

August 28, 2020

Franceville, Haut-Ogooué Province, Gabon



Sentencing of Mambelo Francis ("On the Trail" n°27 p. 100) to a 2-year prison sentence, a fine of a million CFA francs and 500,000 CFA francs in damages (i.e. 1,790 and 895 US\$). Conservation Justice, August 2020.¹¹

October 3, 2020

Lopé, Ogooué-Ivindo Province, Gabon

Charging of Allini Mikoto Neslon, Hygiene Sécurité Environment referent at Segas Rails, a railway works company, who was in possession of a piece of tusk. Release on bail while awaiting the case. Conservation Justice, October 2020.¹²

REPEATED OFFENSE

October 9-November 20, 2020

Tchibanga, Nyanga Province, Gabon



Seizure of 4 tusks at the exit from a taxi. Total weight 19 kg. Arrest of Jean Mouvoubi Moussavou and Ange Mougou. Seizure from Mouvoubi Moussavou of a 375 special big five. Already sentenced in 2016 to 6 months in prison for illicit dealing in ivory, he was sentenced to 3 years in prison, including a 1-year suspended sentence, a fine of the equivalent of 2,676 US\$ and 3,570 US\$ in damages. He risked a 10-year jail sentence. Mougou was discharged.

Gabon Review, October 12, 2020 ; Agence gabonaise de presse, October 11, 2020 ; Conservation Justice, October 2020 ; Eagle, October 2020.¹³

October 15- December 4, 2020
Mouila, Ngounié Province, Gabon

Four tusks, 21 kg. Arrest of Arnaud Ulrich Mounanga who played the role of sales agent and then of Nzigou Ndinga, 25 years old, studying in the town, and of Jean Luc Nzissila, retired gendarme, considered to be the 'joint owners' of the ivory.

Nzissila: sentenced to 24 months of prison including an 18-month suspended sentence. Fine equal to 9,542 US\$.

Mounanga and Ndinga: 24 months of prison of which 12 months were suspended sentences. Fine equal to 9,542 US\$ and 5,452 US\$ damages to be paid by each of them.

Joint operation handled by the local police and the Water and Forestry authorities with assistance from Conservation Justice.

Eagle, October and December 2020 ; Gabon Review, October 16, 2020 ; Conservation Justice, October and December 2020.¹⁴



November 2, 2020 and January 15, 2021

Libreville, Estuaire Province, Gabon

Diakité Oumar, a scrap metal dealer native of Mali, was arrested red-handed with, in his bag, 15 sections of tusk purchased from a poacher near Gamba for the modest sum of 1.6 million CFA francs, i.e. 2855 US\$. 'I got a good deal' he told himself when going to the capital to make a profit. He was sentenced 4 years in prison including 1 year as a suspended sentence, a fine of 13 million CFA francs and 5 million CFA francs damages, that is to say 24,340 US\$ and 9,360 US\$.

Eagle, November 2020 ; Gabon Média Time, November 11, 2020 ; Conservation Justice, November 2020 and January 2021.¹⁵



November 12, 2020
Koulamoutou, Ogooué-Lolo Province, Gabon



In a bag, the colour of black magic, Emerson Necker Moukagna Pango carried 6 tusks in 16 sections coated in black. The colour code did not work. He was arrested by the police and Water and Forestry officers. Conservation Justice participated in the operation. He was a hyperactive person. Just over 20 years old, he said that he had killed the elephants. A firearm was seized at his home.

7 Jours Info, November 13, 2020 ; Eagle, November 2020 ; Conservation Justice, November 2020.¹⁶

December 11 and 13, 2020
Ndendé, Ngounié Province, Gabon

Fabrice Ngueba and Elino Nzie Boussougou, farmers, transported in a clandestine taxi-bus 4 whole tusks and 3 others cut into 8 sections. They said that they were just transporters and commercial agents for a poacher who lived alone in an unknown place in the forest where there was no telephone network. Fabrice Mangui was arrested 2 days later. Joint operation by the local police, the Water and Forestry authorities and Conservation Justice.

Eagle, December 2020 ; 7 Jours Info, December 14, 2020 ; Conservation Justice, December 2020.¹⁷



December 15, 2020-August 2021
Mouila, Ngounié Province, Gabon

"Large eaters of fruits elephants spread seeds in their dung that help the forest to continue. They make clearings that are good for large animals (buffaloes, leopards, large apes and many other mammals, including antelopes). Their disappearance will have repercussions for the whole forest—from the tiniest insect to the large mammals." The on-line site "La Pratique du Gabon" is very clear and contains no embellishments. It is in the future tense. François de Salle Sandaogo, from Burkina Faso and a builder's labourer, and Oumar Kourouma, a Guinean mechanic, contributed to the disappearance of the "big greys". Arrested on December 15, 2020 for the transport and trafficking of 10 kg raw ivory, they were both sentenced on appeal to 7 months and 12 days in prison and ordered to pay jointly the sum of 500,000 francs CFA (905 US\$) in damages to the Water and Forests Administration.

Eagle, December 2020 and March 2021 ; 7 Jours Info, December 16, 2020 ; Conservation Justice, December 2020, February and August 2021.¹⁸

December 28, 2020
Gabon

You cannot stop progress. Will there be a wave of electrocutions in Gabon as has happened in India? The Minister of the Environment wants a denser network of electric fences to halt conflicts between elephants and men in the fields. A thousand million CFA francs (1.81 million US\$) have been earmarked for this in the 2021 budget. Let us hope that Lee White will run the right current in the wires. Discouraging the elephants is enough. There is no point in burning them and damaging their hearts with high voltages.

Gabon Review, December 31, 2020.¹⁹

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

September 20-October 5, 2020

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

- Upemba national park (11,730 km²): killing of a young elephant with the complicity of the local population.

- Arrest of Kyayo and Ntungule.

Politico, October 9, 2020.²⁰

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

December 12, 2020

Nkayi, Bouenza Department, Republic of the Congo



The two strong lads transported without any problem a 1 kg tusk stolen from a young elephant. He was reported to have been purchased in Sibiti. They wanted to resell it 130 km away in Nkayi. The successful operation was organised

by the gendarmerie and the Water and Forestry administration with support from the PALF (Projet d'Application de la Loi Faunique).

Eagle, December 2020 ; Vox Congo, December 21, 2020.²¹

December 16, 2020

Owando, Cuvette Department, Republic of the Congo



They had 90 kg of raw ivory in their bags. The seizures and arrests ("On the Trail" n°24 p. 74) were the result of cooperation between the gendarmerie, the guards at Odzala Kokoua park and the PALF. Akouango Roméo, Aboro Rusel, Ompaba Mbori Organ Renève, Makagna Drenny and Atoumba Hoxel were sentenced to 2 years in prison and fine of 500.000 CFA francs, i.e. 892 US\$.

Madaka Ibanza Darny received a suspended 2-year sentence and a fine of the same amount. The 6 men were sentenced to the joint payment of a fine of 5 million CFA francs, that is to say nearly 9,000 US\$.

Groupe Congo Médias, December 18, 2020.²²

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

October 1st, 2020

Kimana Sanctuary, Kajiado County, Kenya

The elephant was suffering of an injury on the rump, probably caused by a spear throw.

The prognosis is positive.

SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2020.²³

October 10, 2020

Oloisukut Conservancy, Kenya

The elephant is limping. He was injured by an arrow on the back left leg, under the knee joint. The vets find him hiding under a tree. Anesthesia. Care. Antidote. The prognosis is positive.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2020.²⁴



October 12, 2020

Tsavo East National Park, Kenya

Arrow wound on the abdomen. Emergency treatments. The prognosis is positive.

SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2020.²⁵

October 15, 2020

Oloisukut Conservancy, Kenya



A 20 elephant herd walk throw Mara river. One of the elephants is limping. The herd is nervous. The injured elephant is anesthetized from a helicopter. An arrow has caused the injury. The prognosis is positive. He has joined his herd.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2020.²⁶

October 23, 2020
Kitale, Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya



48 kg of raw ivory. The local value is 4.8 million Kenyan shillings, i.e. 925 US\$/kg. The tusks are fresh. Edwin Nabiswa Wanyonyi, Godfrey Ngura Tugongora and Solomon Churia Pokot, age 23 to 37, are in prison. Joint operation by the police and the KWS, without forgetting the members of the public who provided useful information. The Standard, October 23, 2020; Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, October 24 and 26, 2020.²⁷

October 27, 2020
Rukinga Ranch, Taita-Taveta County, Kenya

Arrow injuries to elephants are increasing during the September and October 2020 months. The elephant is limping and he is exhausted. He has been anesthetized from a helicopter and then has been copiously sprayed with water during the care to his left front leg, to enforce the thermoregulation. The prognosis is very uncertain. SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2020.²⁸

November 6, 2020
Kimana, Kajiado County, Kenya



An injured elephant is located by the rangers. The vets arrived by helicopter. The victim has spear wounds near the head and on the front left leg. The prognosis is positive. SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2020.²⁹

November 8, 2020
Kasigau, Taita-Taveta County, Kenya



A female is located by the rangers. She is in the company of an injured baby elephant. The mother is removed from the scene so as to examine the baby elephant. When the vets are finally able to approach him, they unfortunately stated his death. He has been mutilated by a trap and could no longer feed.

SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, Nov. 2020.³⁰



However, in the beginning of October in Tsavo East national park, a baby elephant who had ventured in a water hole to spray himself with mud was saved from drowning by the vets who pulled him out of the mud by wrapping him in ropes and pulling him out with the help of a land cruiser. His eyes have been carefully sprayed with water so as to avoid mud infection. He then joined his family who was waiting for him. SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2020.³¹



November 10, 2020
Naboisho Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

The young female elephant is walking with difficulties. She has a purulent wound on the front left leg caused by a spear. The prognosis is positive. SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2020.³²

November 10, 2020
Oi Malo Conservancy, Laikipia County, Kenya

The adult male elephant has been injured on his right side by a spear. It is twisted, the elephant probably rubbed against a tree so as to try to get free. After an etorphine anesthesia, the elephant has undergone an emergency treatment. The prognosis is positive. SWT/KWS Mount Kenya Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2020.³³

November 10, 2020

Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya

A young elephant female is injured by the steel wire of a trap or a fence. Anesthesia, care, wake-up. The prognosis is positive. SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2020.³⁴



November 10, 2020

Oinobmoi, Baringo County, Kenya

"I don't feel very well at the moment and I would like bail." In the middle of the Covid crisis, the request of Mathew Kiptis Nyomboi, caught red-handed carrying 3 tusks on a motorcycle at night on the road from Oinobmoi to Barwessa, was granted. In exchange for bail and a bond of 5,700 US\$, he was freed while awaiting trial.

Kenya News Agency, November 16, 2020.³⁵

November 13, 2020 and end of January 2021

Namanga, Kajiado County, Kenya. Border with Tanzania

Christopher Watia was sentenced to 10 years in prison, with no possibility of a replacement fine, for having transported and attempted to sell 3 sections of tusk. His accomplice Suyanga Merin pleaded not guilty and his trial was postponed. Kenya News Agency, January 29, 2021.³⁶



November 14, 2020

Kuku Group Ranch, Kajiado County, Kenya

Post-mortem examination. The day before, as a precaution, the tusks had been removed by the rangers. A spear injury is suspected.

SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2020.³⁷

November 14 2020

Kuku Group Ranch, Kajiado County, Kenya

The elephant body is located in a river bed. Spear poisoning injury is suspected. SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2020.³⁸



November 19, 2020

Rukinga, Taita-Taveta County, Kenya

Wildlife Works ranger patrol spotted a limping male elephant. He has been anesthetized from a helicopter. He had already been treated for the same spear injury but had not totally recovered. The prognosis is very uncertain.

SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2020.³⁹

November 23, 2020

Kenya

A member of parliament, member of the ODM (Orange Democratic Movement) and a jurist by profession has come to the help of a boda boda driver in his constituency. The man is in prison. Babu Owino paid a million shillings (i.e. 9,095 US\$) in exchange for the release of M. Zakayo who was making a trip for a client and was caught red-handed while transporting raw ivory. He says that he did not know that there was ivory in the package that he was transporting. Babu Owino's generosity is a subject of discussion.

Tuko, November 24, 2020.⁴⁰

Early December 2020

Isiolo, Isiolo County, and Laisamis, Marsabit County, Kenya

- Two tusks, 7.1 kg. Mutungi and Gitonga were on a motorcycle. They plead not guilty. They can be released on 3 million shillings, i.e. 27,380 US\$, bail and bond.

- Six tusks, 51.5 kg. James Legalorah and Lesarin Leejer arrested. KWS officers, operating anonymously, played the role of purchasers.

The Star, December 3, 2020 ; Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, December 3, 2020.⁴¹

December 3, 2020

Nanyuki, Laikipia County, Kenya

Seizure of 10 tusks. Total weight 31.6 kg. Five sub-adult elephants were poached. Arrest of Alphonse Otieno and Kangai Alpham. Operation organised by the KWS in collaboration with the police of the counties of Isiolo, Meru and Laikipia.

The Star, December 5, 2020.⁴²

December 3, 2020

Mugie Ranch, Laikipia County, Kenya

An elephant was unable to walk and feed. He had been injured by the poachers' bullets. The rangers called the vets. Anesthesia. Treatment of several front and back leg wounds. Despite the emergency treatments, the ultimate option was to finish off the victim.

SWT/KWS Mount Kenya Mobile Veterinary Unit, December 2020.⁴³

December 6, 2020

Ol Jogi Conservancy, Laikipia County, Kenya

The metal wires of the trap encircled the 2 back legs. After anesthesia, they were removed with a pair of wire cutters.

SWT/KWS Mount Kenya Mobile Veterinary Unit, December 2020.⁴⁴



December 10, 2020

Lemek Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

The adult elephant had a large wound on his right side caused by a large spear. The vets found him in a dense thicket. He was refusing to move. He was finally brought to open ground, anaesthetized and treated. The peritoneum and the liver were hit by the spear. The prognosis was very uncertain. After 18 hours, he succumbed. According to protocol, the tusks were removed and put in a safe place.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, December 2020.⁴⁵

December 10, 2020

Olarro Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

The big male is 40 to 45 years old. He is deeply injured on his right side by a spear and an arrow. He is one in a herd of 100 elephants. Anesthesia, treatments, antidote. The prognosis is positive.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, December 2020.⁴⁶

December 11, 2020

Oi Kinyei Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

The elephant suffers from an abscess on the abdomen caused by an arrow throw. He is going along with 7 other elephants. It is a beautiful male herd, on its defensive and in great shape. When the vets arrived, they all went away to a wooded hill. However, the injured one has been isolated. The abscess has been drained and treated. The prognosis is positive.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, December 2020.⁴⁷

December 12, 2020

Migori County, Kenya. Border with Tanzania

54 kg of raw ivory. Local value: 54 million shillings, i.e. 49,277 US\$ and 913 US\$/kg. Arrest of Joseph Matoiga in an SUV on the road between Narok county and Migori county near the frontier with Tanzania.

Capital FM, December 13, 2020 ; The Standard, December 13, 2020 ; Stop Crime Kenya, December 16, 2020.⁴⁸

MOZAMBIQUE

November 24, 2020

Mozambique

Desperate attempt by Saving the Survivors to save an elephant about 5 years old whose left foreleg had been caught in a trap. "The only humane course of action was to end the young bull's suffering."

Saving the Survivors, November 24 and 25, 2020.⁴⁹



TANZANIA

September to November 2020

Tanzania

A new wave of false information spread by the poaching sector has caused damage. "Elephant liver can treat liver cancer, cancer of the uterus and ulcers." Allan Kijazi of Tanapa (Tanzania National Parks Authority) is sounding the alarm. Twelve elephants have been poached in 3 months.

Xinhua, December 10, 2020.⁵⁰

October 13, 2020

Dar es Salaam, Dar es Salaam Region, Tanzania

The trial of 22 persons suspected of having organised the assassination of Wayne Lotter ("On the Trail" n°18 p. 87, n°27 p. 4) or of contributed or participated has been postponed for the requirements of the investigation. They include bank staff, business men and women and two persons from Burundi.

Tanzania Daily News, October 15, 2020.⁵¹

November 26, 2020

Rombo District, Kilimanjaro Region, Tanzania. Border with Kenya

Ten tusks or portions of tusk, 23 kg, near the frontier with Kenya. Two arrests.

Pouvoirs d'Afrique, November 29, 2020 ; China Internet Information Center (with Xinhua), November 28, 2020.⁵²

December 24, 2020

Mpwapwa District, Dodoma Region, Tanzania

First instance sentencing of Parson Sekandi Mkombola, an Anglican pastor, to 20 years in prison. He was arrested in October 2019 in possession of 2 large elephant tusks with an estimated value of 69.15 million shillings, that is to say 30,152 US\$. The priest has 30 days to make an appeal.

The Citizen, December 26, 2020.⁵³



ZAMBIA

October 23, 2020

South Luangwa National Park, Eastern Province, Zambia

Death of a female baby elephant whose mother had been poached. With a back injury and incapable of feeding, she approached a village. People tied her up while awaiting the arrival of a vet and a carer from Lilayi orphanage. Unfortunately, she was too weak to be saved.

Forever Trunks, October 24, 2020.⁵⁴

Early November 2020

Zambia

Zambia is profiting from the Covid sanitary and economic catastrophe to request various UNO authorities for the right to sell on the international market all or part of the 52 t of ivory collected following seizures or natural deaths. It estimates that its stock is worth 100 million US\$, that is to say 1,923 US\$/kg.

The Southern Times, November 6, 2020.⁵⁵

November 15, 2020 and January 19, 2021

Chama District, Eastern Province, Zambia



Condemnation of Jurious Sakala to 7 years in prison combined with forced labour for having illegally owned 2 tusks weighing a total of 9.5 kg. He was arrested on November 15, 2020.

Lusaka Times, January 19, 2021 ; 5fm Radio Zambia, January 18, 2021.⁵⁶

ZIMBABWE

Early November 2020

Musango Island Safari Camp, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe



Saving of a female elephant injured by a trap. Her left foreleg was seriously injured. The diagnosis is relatively optimistic. Her baby elephant returned valiantly to watch the surgical operation closely. Removed forcefully, he watched from a distance. He is at the breast-feeding stage. Saving was coordinated by the Musango Island Safari Camp and the Bumi Hills Foundation.



Sarah Silverstone, November 2, 2020 ; LADbible, December 3, 2020.⁵⁷

Mid-November, 2020

Hwange National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe



The mother and baby were anaesthetised. The young animal was then released from a metal trap that cut into a hind leg. Diagnosis favourable. The surgery was directed by Paul de Montille.

Hwange Conservation Society, November 14, 2020.⁵⁸

December 2020

Sengwe, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe



Apopo, the Belgian NGO specialized in mine-clearing operations on battlefields, is at work in the Sengwe wildlife migration corridor between Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Along 37 km, the corridor was mined by the British Rhodesian regular army to prevent liberation fighters from entering what is now Zimbabwe. 50 years later, 1,500 landmines remain in the area, threatening to blow up elephants, cattle and anyone who ventures into this "corridor of death". Work has started with funds awarded by the U.S. and Swiss ambassadors in Harare. Completion is expected by the end of 2025, provided that new funding is made available. NewsDay, December 24, 2020 ; Swiss Confederation, December 17, 2020.⁵⁹

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

November 16, 2020

East London, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa



The Hawks caught Chukuwuebuka Kingsley Izuagwu, a dealer of crystal meth, also known as Tik in South Africa. They purchased Tik undercover 3 times for an overall 16,000 rand, the equivalent of 1,000 US\$. During the search of his home, 260 g of Tik worth 4,000 US\$, 3,000 US\$ in cash and an elephant tusk were seized. SAPS, November 18, 2020.⁶⁰

BOTSWANA

November 2020
Botswana

Wars generate flows of migrants, not only of men, women and children. During the decades of civil war, thousands of elephants fled Angola to take refuge in Botswana. The two governments plan to open corridors between the two countries and remove the fences. The director of the Kavango-Zambezi Trans-frontier Conservation Area (KAZA) agrees with this. "The long-term survival of elephants hinges on ensuring that we secure and reconnect wildlife corridors on a trans-boundary scale."

"Before implementing a project that all defenders of elephants dream of Angola must remove mines from its frontier with Botswana and the areas used by elephants." Voice of America, November 28, 2020.⁶¹

NAMIBIA

November 19, 2020
Namibia

Namibia wishes to sell 70+ tonnes of ivory collected in seizures and from increasingly rare natural deaths. It estimates that its stock is worth about 8 million US\$, that is to say 114 US\$/kg, and annual storage costs total 75,000 US\$. The problem is that no country wants it, even if it were given. Ivory and other fauna sub-products are the only goods to be kept after seizure by the authorities. When will we see auction sales of cocaine and fake clothes, Vuitton bags, whisky and Messi tee-shirts?

The Namibian, November 19 and December 15, 2020 and March 17, 2021.⁶²

December 2020-March 2021

Omatjete, Erongo Region, Kamanjab, Kunene Region, and Grootfontein, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

In December 2020, Namibia announced its intention to auction off 170 wild elephants to national and foreign entrepreneurs. The government hopes to win at least one million US\$ from this operation, i.e. 5,880 US\$ per elephant. All capture, quarantine and transport costs will be borne by the buyers. This massive harvest is said to be justified by water shortage due to global warming and the need to share the aquatic resource between wildlife and agricultural needs.

In August 2021, Namibia announced that it had sold 57 elephants, including 42 destined for export, for 400,000 US\$, or 7,000 US\$ per elephant. Since then, Namibia has refused to communicate on the countries of destination, while assuring that the first captures are imminent.

The KEPA (Kunene Environmental Protection Association) had immediately attacked the initiative, expressing indignation that some 30 elephants from the Kunene desert and the Ugab basin, known for their temperance and adaptation to aridity, were among the elephants put out to tender. Internationally, the protests had quickly gathered tens of thousands of signatures, built in particular upon the resolution of the 18th CITES Conference of the Parties (Geneva, August 2019, 87 countries for, 25 against) according to which "appropriate and acceptable destinations" for elephants captured in the wild are applying to in situ conservation programmes within the species' natural and historical range.

It seems that this double wave of internal and external protests has dampened the enthusiasm of foreign investors anxious to avoid global controversy and harm to their reputation. There are assumptions that the most credible buyers include zoos in the United Arab Emirates. An attempt by Dubai to buy elephants aged between 4 and 8 years old captured in the Otjozondjupa region had failed miserably in 2017 ("On the Trail" n°17 p.97 and n°19 p.100).

Namibia is merciless with desert elephants. In 2014, despite strong protests, 7 hunting permits were granted. Males with large tusks were the victims ("On the Trail" n°6 .74-75). In June 2019, Voortrekker (Pioneer), Namibia's most famous elephant, aged about 40 years, was killed by a sport hunter who had been issued a licence for 8,000 US\$. Voortrekker and his small family were accused of drinking too much water in the Ugab ("On the Trail" n°25 p.87).

Firstpost (with Reuters), December 3, 2020 ; Kunene Environmental Protection Association, December 29, 2020 and August 11, 2021; Afrik 21, December 27, 2020 ; Namibian Sun, January 22, March 3, May 14, June 7, September 10, October 1st and November 17, 2021 ; Mongabay, January 29, 2021 ; Business Daily, February 26, 2021; Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, February 1st, 2021 ; New Era, August 12, 2021 ; The Canary, August 15, 2021 ; Fondation Franz Weber, September 11, 2021 ; CITES, September 17, 2021 ; Journal of African Elephants, September 23, 2021 ; Pro Elephant Network, September 21 and October 27, 2021.⁶⁴

December 21, 2020
Kawe, Kavango East Region, Namibia

THE TEXAS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA CHAPTER 2

"On the Trail" was among the first to sound the alarm about oil and gas exploration and exploitation in the Okavango Delta (see "On the Trail" n°28 p.104). According to the Canadian trust ReconAfrica and the governments of Botswana and Namibia, derricks, oil spills, flares and truck processions can coexist with elephants and native populations. Oil revenues can be added to tourism and agricultural revenues. Elephants are often seen as problem animals but not the machines drilling which will blend into the landscape and social fabric. The *Yellowstone* coming from Houston, Texas, unloaded in Walvis Bay in early December 2020, the drilling rig, hundreds of metres of pipe, tractor trailers and seismic exploration systems. ...



Yellowstone (ex-Cielo di Monfalcone). IMO 9225251. General cargo ship. Length 185.5 m, deadweight 37,548 tonnes. Marshall Islands flag. Classification society Registro Italiano Navale. Built in 2002 in Shanghai (China) by Shanghai Shipyard. Detained in 2012 in San Francisco (California, United States of America). Owned by Silverfjord Schifffahrts (Germany) c/o Fort Canning Lighthouse Pte Ltd (Singapore). Chartered by Maritime Carrier Shipping GmbH & Co (MACS) based in Hamburg (Germany).

... The earth is going to shake around the Okavango Delta and the technicians from North America have benefited from a safe conduct during this period of travel restrictions imposed by the Covid. In one week, the oil procession crossed Namibia and the Kunene Desert. The first exploratory platform began drilling in the Omatako riverbed, a tributary of the Okavango Delta, on January 11, 2021.



According to ReconAfrica, the exploratory drilling is encouraging. To implement a large-scale seismic investigation programme, ReconAfrica is looking for partners. Seismic exploration operations aim to locate deep hydrocarbon deposits. They provoke vibrations whose dispersal and velocity will be amplified in the sandy and alluvial substrates of the Okavango Delta.

In addition to their acoustic communication, the elephant herds geolocate themselves by analysing the telluric infrasound emitted by the intensity of their movements and vocalisations. Industrial vibrations from ReconAfrica may trigger elephant panic and erratic collective movements. Territorial conflicts with human activities will also increase.

The NGO SOUL (Saving Okavango's Unique Life), a group of associations, collectives, animal rights activists and legal experts, is trying to stop the rush for black gold. Namibia and Botswana resort to arms over 5 km² of marshland on a Chobe island (see p.5), but they are thick as thieves to welcome with open arms the oil industry, for whom Africa is one of the last suitable refuges. Total and the Chinese CNOOC (China National Offshore Oil Corporation) are weaving their web of pipes from Uganda to Tanzania (see "On the trail" n°30 p.153). It would please them to carry on in southern Africa. While waiting for reinforcements, Reconnaissance Africa (Recon) is available to fight poaching and in this regard has recruited... one ranger. The propaganda is underway.

Daily Maverick, December 15, 2020; ReconAfrica, March 26, 2021; Windhoek Observer, May 14, 2021; Reuters, November 9, 2021.⁶³

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

October 8, 2020

State of Arizona, United States of America

facebook

The Wild Things Initiative had already pointed out the sham in June. Safari Club International and Shikar-Safari Club International were spreading fabricated messages in favour of sport and trophy hunting via Facebook under the banner of the Inclusive Conservation Group (ICG). The Let Africa Live and Proud American Hunter misinformation campaigns claimed tens of millions of followers. The link between ICG and Masisi, the president of Botswana, was clear. Masisi shared ICG's content and ICG repeatedly expressed gratitude to Masisi, the glorious leader who lifted the ban on elephant hunting. Four months after the Wild Things Initiative alert, Facebook removed all the nonsense invented by the trophy business that played on solidarity. One of the imposters' slogans sparked off enthusiasm among readers: "An Attack on One Hunter is an Attack on All Hunters".

The Humane Society of the United States, October 13, 2020.⁶⁵

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

CHONGQING MUNICIPALITY

November 15, 2020

Chongqing Municipality, China

Seizure of 24 knives and forks with ivory handles, total weight 914.2 g.

Chongqing, November 15, 2020.⁶⁶

TIANJIN MUNICIPALITY

December 2020

Tianjin Municipality, China



The parcel was supposed to contain "a painting". In fact, it was containing a painting scroll with solid ivory tips (total weight : 414.3 grams). The origin is not indicated. Painting scrolls usually come from Japan.



Chinese Customs, December 28, 2020.⁷⁹

7.8 kg of bracelets, necklaces, statuettes, other worked ivories seized in China between October 1 and December 31, 2020



GUANGDONG PROVINCE

From October 1 to 14, 2020

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 30 bracelets, pearls and chopsticks. Total weight 1,159 g.

Chinese Customs, October 14, 2020.⁶⁷

Early December 2020

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure from a passenger going to South-East Asia of two ivory necklaces, 165.4 g.

Chinese Customs, December 2, 2020.⁶⁸

December 18, 2020

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China



Seizure from passengers on a flight from Africa of 11 ivory articles (bracelets, necklaces and a comb) weighing a total of 637 g.

Chinese Customs, December 24, 2020.⁶⁹

December 27, 2020

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seized in 4 pieces of luggage on the arrival of a Rwandair flight from Kigali of 71 worked ivories (bracelets, pearls, pendants, Buddha effigies) total weight of 1,906 g.

Chinese Customs, January 6, 2021 ; Sohu (with Xinhua), January 8, 2021.⁷⁰

December 29, 2020

Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Life sentences for Chen Chengzong and Lin Zhiyong and 15 accomplices given prison sentences of from 2 to 15 years for having participated in what is termed the largest raw ivory contraband operation in modern China. Chen used false passports to cross frontiers 21 times. The ivory came mainly from Nigeria via Singapore and South Korea. The network is accused of having imported a total of 20 tonnes of ivory with an estimated worth of a thousand million yuan, that is to say 156 million US\$ and 7,800 US\$/kg. 20 tonnes of tusk on the basis of 10 kg per tusk corresponds to 1,000 elephants. Macau Business (with AFP), December 31, 2020 ; China Daily (with Xinhua), December 31, 2020.⁷¹



December 29, 2020

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China



Seizure from the luggage of a passenger travelling from Africa of 11 worked ivories hidden in packets of instant noodles that were in turn placed in the pockets of work clothes. Total weight 330 g.

Chinese Customs, January 12, 2021 ; China News, January 13, 2021.⁷²

HENAN PROVINCE

Early December 2020

Zhengzhou Xingzheng International Airport, Henan Province, China

A bracelet and an effigy of Buddha made of ivory, 101.7 g.

Chinese Customs, December 15, 2020.⁷³



JIANGSU PROVINCE

Early December 2020

Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, China

Ivory jewellery seized from a package sent from abroad, 51.5 g.

Chinese Customs, December 11, 2020.⁷⁴

LIAONING PROVINCE

October 21, 2020

Dalian International Airport, Liaoning Province, China

Seizure of a bracelet, 62.63 g.

Chinese Customs, October 21, 2020.⁷⁵

November 2, 2020

Dalian International Airport, Liaoning Province, China

Seizure of a necklace and 2 bracelets.

Chinese Customs, November 2, 2020.⁷⁶

December 3, 2020

Dalian International Airport, Liaoning Province, China

Seizure of a painting scroll with ivory tips in the luggage of a passenger.

Chinese customs, December 3, 2020 ; General Administration of Customs, People's Republic of China, December 7, 2020.⁷⁷

December 8, 2020

Dalian, Liaoning Province, China

One painting scroll with ivory tips. Total weight : 64 grams. Some tips are in solid ivory, some others in hollow ivory.

Chinese Customs, December 8, 2020.⁷⁸

SHANDONG PROVINCE

November 1st, 2020

Jinan Yaoqiang International Airport, Shandong Province, China

Seizure of 3 bracelets and a necklace. Total weight 176 g.

Chinese Customs, November 4, 2020.⁸⁰

Mid-November, 2020

Yantai, Shandong Province, China

Liu sentenced to 8 months in prison and Zhu and Sun to 6 months. Fines equivalent to 300 and 150 US\$. They were found guilty of having purchased and sold ivory jewellery and beauty accessories from April to October via WeChat for a total amount of 2,960 yuans, i.e. 440 US\$.

Procuratorial Daily, November 12, 2020; Guangming Daily, November 15, 2020.⁸¹



Early December 2020

Qingdao Liuting International Airport, Shandong Province, China

Seizure of a bracelet, 32 g.

Chinese Customs, December 4, 2020.⁸²

FAMILY AFFAIRS

December 14, 2020

Zhifu District, Shandong Province, China

Sentencing of a person to 6 months probation and a 6-month suspended prison sentence for having sold in the shop run by his wife a necklace weighing 54.76 g and an ivory pen-holder weighing 69.41 g. Overall value estimated at 3,000 yuans, that is to say nearly 450 US\$. Fine of 2,000 yuans, i.e. 300 US\$ compensatory damages of 5173 yuans, i.e. 790 US\$. The convict must also - at his own expense - publish circumstantial excuses in the provincial medias.

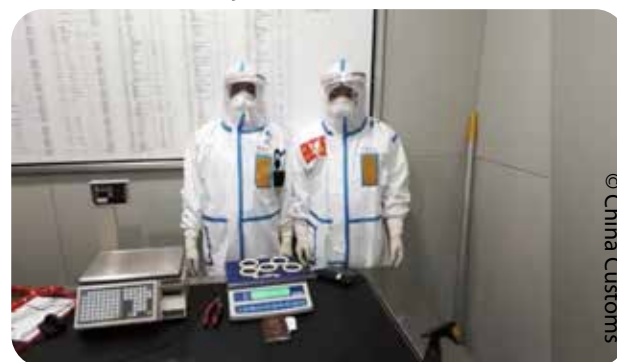
Qilu Evening News, December 14, 2020.⁸³



SICHUAN PROVINCE

December 2020

Chengdu Shuangliu International Airport, Sichuan Province, China



Seizure of 8 items by 2 customs officials in full anti-Covid dress, 224 g.

Chinese Customs, December 29, 2020.⁸⁴

YUNNAN PROVINCE

Early December 2020

Kunming Changshui International Airport, Yunnan Province, China

A necklace, 78.7 g.

Chinese Customs, December 16, 2020.⁸⁵

Early December 2020

Mengla County, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Laos and Myanmar

Seizure of 4 items in ivory, 34.7 g.

Chinese Customs, December 18, 2020.⁸⁶

December 2020

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

The "cream-coloured" bracelet was indeed made of ivory, 49.1 g.

Chinese Customs, December 31, 2020.⁸⁷

ZHEJIANG PROVINCE

Early November 2020

Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of 12 ivory trinkets. Total weight 308.52 g.

Chinese Customs, November 3, 2020.⁸⁸

Early December 2020
Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China



Seizure of 8 painting scrolls in a parcel from abroad.
 164 ivory grams in the tips.
 Chinese Customs, December 17, 2020.⁸⁹

December 2020
Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure in cans of powdered milk, gloves and shoes of 34 items made of ivory, total weight 451.58 g.
 Chinese Customs, December 24, 2020.⁹⁰

INNER MONGALIA AUTONOMOUS REGION

Early November 2020
Baotou and Hohhot, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China

Seizure of an ivory chess set for sale on WeChat and questioning of the seller.
 Baotou Evening News, November 6, 2020.⁹¹



SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

INDONESIA

2020
Balai Raja Wildlife Reserve, Bengkalis Regency, Riau Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

The number of elephants is dwindling seriously. There were 25 in 2014 in the 180 km² reserve and 7 in 2019. Corruption, roads, oil palm and unrestrained development are the reasons for this.



Mongabay, October 26, 2020.⁹²

11, 2020
Jake, Kuantan Singingi Regency, Riau Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Seizure of 2 tusks 80 cm long. Three arrests: a teacher who was the seller, a man 'working in the private sector' who was the intermediary and a farmer who was the buyer.
 The Jakarta Post, November 13, 2020.⁹³

November

MALAYSIA

October 10, 2020
Jeli, State of Kelantan, Malaysia



A "Good Samaritan" sent an alert by phoning 1800-88-5151. A team from the Perhilitan moved in and succeeded in locating the elephant and giving him treatment. His right foreleg was swollen and purulent after being caught in a trap.

The Star, October 16, 2020.⁹⁴

October 26, 2020
Kampung Chebong, State of Pahang, Malaysia

A female elephant was foraging in a an oil palm plantation. She was under threat of reprisals. It required 4 hours for 22 rescuers and, for Abot and Rambai, 2 elephants acting as lures to attract the female to the removal truck before releasing her in a forest. The operation was coordinated by the Perhilitan and the elephantology experts at the Kuala Gandah National Elephant Conservation Centre in Temerloh.

The Star, October 27, 2020.⁹⁵

November 22, 2020
Kinabatangan, State of Sabah, Malaysia



Finding of a female elephant about 20 years old some 24 hours after her death. Poisoning is suspected. She was lying in an oil palm plantation referred to as Ladang Leepang 3. Blood was flowing from her mouth.

Malay Mail, November 29, 2020 ; Free Malaysia Today, November 28, 2020.⁹⁶

End of November 2020
Near Telupid, State of Sabah, Borneo Island, Malaysia

The roads and the logistic networks that cross wild-life migration corridors are universal problems. The present case is the 4-line highway known as the Pan



Borneo Highway (PBH). The existing sections between Ranau and Sandakan and Keningau

cross the Ulu Payau and Sungai Sumagas forest reserves and Malayan civets (*Viverra zibetha*), snakes and the white-breasted waterhen (*Amurornis phoenicurus*) are killed regularly. The project for the extension of the PBH around Telupid runs through the forest habitat of pygmy elephants and experts fear collisions that are fatal for elephants and road users.

Daily Express, November 26, 2020 ; New Straits Times, November 23, 2020.⁹⁷

December 13, 2020

Kampung Bahagia, Kuala Krai District, State of Kelantan, Malaysia

A farming couple is under arrest. They are suspected of having shot at least 2 elephants attempting to enter their rubber plantation. An AK-47 assault rifle and 142 rounds of ammunition were seized at their home. The rounds were sold to them for 15 ringgits (4 US\$) by an arms dealer who is being sought actively.

The Kelantan forests are pillaged by illegal woodcutters and nibbled by small farms. The movement and quest for food by some 200 elephants that are still in the remaining forest are disturbed. 31 km of electric fences have been placed to attempt to reduce conflict with human activities.

New Straits Times, December 10 and 15, 2020 ; The Sun Daily, December 9 and 15, 2020.⁹⁸

MYANMAR

Early December 2020

Tanintharyi Region, Myanmar

The tusks were sawn off by the poachers. The elephant was ambushed at the edge of the trees and next to water. He was about 30 years old and the 4th victim since the beginning of the year.

YC News, December 9, 2020.⁹⁹

THAILAND

October 29 – November 6, 2020

Rayong Province, Thailand



An elephant is dead. He was buried with respect of administrative and religious procedures. The vets found 15 gunshot wounds in the body. The final destination of the tusks is not known.

The Nation Thailand, November 9, 2020.¹⁰⁰

December 10, 2020

Tha Wang Hin, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, Thailand



An elephant is dead. Vets used a metal detector to site 40 rounds of ammunition of all calibres below the eyes, through the trunk and in bones. A ritual funeral was held before he was buried.



Bangkok Post, January 11, 2021 ; Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, January 10, 2021.¹⁰¹

VIET NAM

October 21, 2020

Hanoi, Viet Nam

Le Minh Phuong of Ho Chi Minh City and Nguyen Tai Phuong of Hanoi were charged for having organised in April 2019 the illegal import of a batch of statuettes and for having used the services of a female mule for this ("On the Trail" n°25 p. 97).

Zing News, October 21, 2020.¹⁰²

BANGLADESH

November 6, 16 and 17, 2020

Khutakhali ; Jowarianala Forest ; Mithakhal, Cox's Bazar District, Chittagong Division, Bangladesh

Totalling some 200 to 250, elephants in Bangladesh risk eradication. Two-thirds of them live in the Cox's Bazar district ("On the Trail" n°18 p. 102, n°29 pp. 36 and 37) and in the neighbouring districts of Khagrachari, Rangamati and Bandarban. The last resistants continue to suffer the assaults of humans. A young elephant about 3 years old died in spite of care intervention - he had been hit by 8 bullets. A female about 30 years old was hit by several bullets and another victim died after being shot and electrocuted. Nothing seems to be able to halt the massacre and conflicts between humans and elephants in a district tangled up by railway lines and Rohingya refugee camps, the galloping spread of agriculture and other improvised practices.

Dhaka Tribune, November 25, 2020 ; The Asian Age, November 19, 2020.¹⁰³

November 23, 2020

Borohatiya Union, Chittagong District, Chittagong Division, Bangladesh

Elephants are firmly considered to be harmful around Chittagong. Observations show that their incursions are sporadic and seasonal in fields and cause less damage than wild boar and rodents. But elephants are a focus for hatred and considered to be Public Enemy No 1. The new victim is about 35 years old. He is a male that was electrocuted and then finished off by shooting. What happened to the tusks is not known.

Dhaka Tribune, November 23, 2020.¹⁰⁴

December 20, 2020

Eidgaon Union Parishad, Cox's Bazar District, Chittagong Division, Bangladesh

A female elephant who was close to a pepper plantation was killed by a bullet in the head. She was about 35 years old.

The Business Standard, December 22, 2020 ; The Daily Star, December 21, 2020 ; Dhaka Tribune, December 22, 2020.¹⁰⁵



INDIA

October 1st and 4, 2020**Angul and Balangir Districts, State of Odisha, India**

- The body of a male elephant—with the tusks removed— was found in Angul district. He was about 8 years old and had been electrocuted. Eight suspects are being questioned by the police.

- A dead elephant was found at the edge of Ratakhandi, a village in Balangir district. The New Indian Express, October 7, 2020 ; Hindustan Times, October 1, 2020.¹⁰⁶

October 3, 2020

Kodihalli, near Bannerghatta National Park, Ramanagara District, State of Karnataka, India

Two dead electrocuted elephants lie near a water point. The scene of the crime is in the buffer zone of the park and referred to as an ESZ (Eco Sensitive Zone). The ESZ of the park is regularly losing ground, decreasing from 268 km² in 2016 to 168 km² in 2019. The official argument is that the reduction of ESZ allows the continuation of exploitation of the quarries that were originally set up illegally. Bannerghatta park covers 260.51 km². It was created in 1970 and gained national park status in 1974.

The Hindu, October 3, 2020.¹⁰⁷

October 5, 2020

Oodlabari, Jalpaiguri District, State of West Bengal, India

Arrest of a woman caught in possession of a 800 g tusk in an hotel carpark. Hemanti Gurung was found through information that reached the ears of the Forest Services.

Siliguri Times, October 5, 2020.¹⁰⁸

October 6, 2020

Kotekere, Chamarajanagar District, State of Karnataka, India

He was about 10 years old. The medium voltage electric fence was therefore to prevent (definitively) deer and wild boar from entering a cotton field and a tomato plantation. This type of fencing is not designed to halt wild animals. It is aimed at killing and elephants, peoples and children are sometimes the victims.

The Times of India, October 7, 2020.¹⁰⁹

October 6, 2020
Kurubarahundi, Chamarajanagar
District, State of Karnataka, India



Being electrocuted by approaching a field of tomatoes was the fate of this elephant who was about 16 years old. The farmer ran away.
 Deccan Herald, October 6, 2020.¹¹⁰

October 18, 2020
Kolkata, Kolkata District, State of West Bengal, India

Seizure of 2 tusks 45 cm and weighing 3 kg. Authentication of the ivory is in progress. Seven arrests.
 The Telegraph India, October 19, 2020.¹¹¹

October 19, 2020
Chinna Coonor, Nilgiris District, State of Tamil Nadu, India



This elephant with fine tusks was electrocuted when he approached a field of potatoes. The 3 potato growers then managed to bury their 2-tonne kill before coming back a few months later to dig up the tusks.
 The New Indian Express, October 20, 2020 ; The Hindu, October 19, 2020.¹¹²

October 30, 2020
Bamandanga, Jalpaiguri District, State of West Bengal, India



Tea is also a motive for electrocution. An elephant ran up against this. A circular was sent to all planters, instructing them to take measures against electrocution.
 In Eastern Bengal 7 elephants were electrocuted and died during a period of a few months.
 Outlook India, October 31, 2020.¹¹³

October 30, 2020
Bangalore, Bangalore Urban District, State of Karnataka, India

Lokesh and his friend who works in a dhaba near Magadi were instructed by Krishna to sell 3 sections of raw ivory. They were arrested when they left their hotel.
 The Times of India, November 2, 2020.¹¹⁴

October 30, 2020
Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport, Kolkata, State of West Bengal, India

Two carved tusks in the possession of a female passenger were seized when she landed in a flight from Delhi.
 Ei Samay, November 1, 2020.¹¹⁵

October 31, 2020
Gulikeri, Giridih District, State of Jharkhand, India



The body of an elephant was buried after the removal of his tusks and after locals had scattered flowers on his grey skin. He had been solitary for a short time and moved around between Giridih and Dhanbad. Apparently, he had damaged a few huts. He was caught in a boar trapping system. When they arrived, forestry official say that his trunk was torn. The elephant died of suffocation. The village was alerted by his cries of distress.
 Outlook India, November 3, 2020 ; The Telegraph India, November 1, 2020.¹¹⁶



November 3, 2020
Tuticorin, Thoothukudi District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Nocturnal interception of two men on motorcycles and the seizure of 4 tusks 25 to 34 cm long. Rajavel and Muniyasami said that they were fish merchants and had bought the raw ivory for 3,000 rupees (40 US\$) from nomads in transit in Kulasekarapattinam.
 The Times of India, November 3, 2020 ; The Hindu, November 3, 2020.¹¹⁷

November 3, 2020

Sonari, Charaideo District, State of Assam, India



An elephant was poisoned near a tea plantation. It is said to be “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” reprisal after a farm labourer was charged by an elephant from a herd of several tens accused of having trampled rice fields and damaged homes.

The Times of India, November 4, 2020.¹¹⁸

REPEATED OFFENSE

Early November 2020

Mysuru, Mysuru District, State of Karnataka, India



Four persons, including 2 from Kerala, were encircled by the mobile forestry brigade near the rail station when they were trying to sell 8 tusks, 6 of which were old and 2 were fresh. 25 kg of raw ivory was seized. The sellers wanted 20,000 rupees (268 US\$) per kg.

Star of Mysore, November 3, 2020.¹¹⁹

November 4, 2020

Sennamalam, Krishnagiri District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

A female elephant 8 to 10 years old was found dead in a trench aimed at preventing wild animals from entering cultivated land. A post-mortem examination revealed several fragments of bullets in her head. A farmer is under arrest.

The Times of India, November 5, 2020.¹²⁰

Early November 2020

Puthenkulam, Kollam District, State of Kerala, India

Suspicion of the trafficking of domestic elephants between the States of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Kerala. Certificates of domesticity were forged. A figure of 200 elephants is mentioned. Two elephants named Prasad and Modi were seized in Kollam district. Two traffickers were arrested and are being questioned by the police. Five others are sought after.

Domestic elephants in India, “On the Trail” n°7 p. 93, 8 p. 85, n°12 p. 93, n°13 p. 93, n°14 p. 91, n°17 p. 101 and n°19 p. 106.

The Hindu, November 6, 2020.¹²¹

November 6, 2020

Bangalore, Bangalore Urban District, State of Karnataka, India



Seizure in Food Street of 2 tusks offered at 900,000 rupees per kg (12,100 US\$). Arrest of 5 men all younger than 30.

Deccan Herald, November 8, 2020.¹²²

November 12, 2020

Koila Moila, Chirang District, State of Assam, India



Seizure of four tusks of a total weight of 16.16 or 17.85 kg depending on the source. The SSB and the federal police had received confidential information according to which 10 raw tusks (27 kg) were in the hands of 6 traffickers in Aamguri Nangalbhang forest. The gang was intercepted. The arrest finished in a fight and 3 men succeeded in escaping with 6 tusks. The 4 other tusks were seized and the 3 men imprisoned except for one who was taken to hospital. Indian officials are in contact with their colleagues in Bhutan. The escapers are suspected of transporting the tusks to Tibet, the autonomous region under Chinese control.

News Move, November 13, 2020 ; Time 8, November 13, 2020 ; WCCB, November 13, 2020 ; Sashastra Seema Bal, November 12, 2020.¹²³

November 15, 2020

Kavipuram, Krishnagiri District, State of Tamil Nadu, India



An elephant was electrocuted mortally at the edge of a forest. A farmer has been questioned and his accomplice fled.

The Hindu, November 16, 2020.¹²⁴

November 15, 2020

Vaveli, Ernakulam District, State of Kerala, India



The elephant was electrocuted and died when he approached a field of cassava. The farmer has run away.

The New Indian Express, November 16, 2020.¹²⁵

November 16, 2020
Hebbal, Bangalore Urban District, State of Karnataka, India



Three young unemployed farm-workers were caught red-handed with 4 tusks that they wanted to sell in Guddadahalli in the north

metropolitan area. Lokesh, the leader, explained to the police that he had lost his job during the Covid shut-down and borrowed money from several persons who now wanted to be paid back. He said that another person had promised him a commission of 50,000 rupees (672 US\$) if he succeeded in selling the 4 tusks. In a press release, Karnataka forest officials said officially that the raw ivory did not come from the Seshachalam reserve in Chittoor district or from the Koundinya sanctuary. "After a four days investigation, we got clarification on Thursday that the tusks were from Tamil Nadu."

The Hindu, November 21, 2020 ; The Times of India, November 18, 2020 ; Deccan Herald, November 18, 2020.¹²⁶

November 18, 2020
Puthukkadu, Coimbatore District, State of Tamil Nadu, India



A 30-year-old elephant died electrocuted when he approached a banana plantation. The high voltage was connected illegally from irrigation pumps on a farm. K. Mohanraj, a local animal activist, condemned the negligence of the administration and the Tangedco (Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation). "The death could have been averted if the officials had inspected the area to check for illegal electric fences." "The Madras High Court has already ordered the removal of illegal fences near the Bhavanisagar Dam. It is the forest department's duty to watch out for violators and curb such deaths in the future."

The farm where the tragic event took place was supplied with free electricity for irrigation. The NGO Osai was of the same opinion as Mohanraj. "Tangedco has a greater role to intervene as illegal electric fencing is also a misuse of free electricity given by the government to farmers." The local populations do not share this opinion. When the farmer responsible for the death of the elephant was taken for questioning in the forest range office, the locals did not agree. A group of people halted the convoy and released the suspect using force. The situation became calmer after mediation by the village headman and intervention by the Sirumugai urban police. Murugesan, the man who triggered the scandal unexpectedly said only one thing: "I erected the fencing to protect the crop from wild boars."

The Times of India, November 19, 2020 ; The New Indian Express, November 19, 2020 ; The Hindu, November 18, 2020.¹²⁷

November 20, 2020
Malayinkeezhu, Thiruvananthapuram District, State of Kerala, India

Elephants are good at causing arguments. On the one hand the Sree Vallabhan's mahout says that he can no longer reach the coconut leaves that he loves because of the length of his tusks. On the other, the Board of the Kerala administration for animal well-being said that the shortening of tusks requested by the mahout was only an aesthetic question and asked innocently how wild elephants managed without tools for shortening their tusks. The caretakers of captive elephants claim that elephants in forests have natural options for trimming tusks during their routine activities in the forests. In turn, the Kerala forestry administration made a reminder that it was the only body with legal empowerment for "shortening" the tusks of domestic elephants and stated that this was performed each year on about 15 elephants and that the tips were kept in security in an appropriate place. Sree Vallabhan has links with the Malayinkeezhu Sree Krishna temple, participating in processions and other ritual events. He is 20 years old.

Deccan Herald, November 19, 2020.¹²⁸

November 27, 30 and December 4, 2020

Mohas, Jabalpur District ; Parsatola, Balaghat District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India



The expedition of Ram and Balaram is over. Starting from Odisha in February 2019, the 2 brothers—20 and 18 years old— entered Chhattisgarh via Mahasamund district. They continued to Kanker and Bastar, where the inhabitants had not seen an elephant for a very long time. In April, they were reported in the Kawardha and then Rajnandgaon districts before crossing the frontier with Madhya Pradesh and staying in the forest of Seoni and Balaghat for several months. After a pause in Madhya Pradesh, they went into Maharashtra and were a sensation in the Gadchiroli district. They were seen in August 2020 in the Kanha tiger reserve where they were thought to have brawled with 4 domestic elephants belonging to the forest guards and were then in neighbouring forests where they kept quiet for a few months.

In November, Ram and Balaram set off towards Jabalpur (population 1.47 million). On Friday, November 27, one of the adventurers was stopped. He was electrocuted when going to drink in the reservoir of Bargi dam. The 2 brothers looked the same, dead or alive. Profilers consider that the victim is Balaram. He touched the wire with his trunk. He looked burned alive and died immediately. Ram was located on Thursday, December 3, in the Kanha district and since then the noose was tightening ...

... Prints were seen on the Friday in Parsatola forest. The final chase was led by 6 mahouts riding elephants. Ram was sighted in the morning and in the afternoon was injected with a large dose of tranquilliser and his legs were chained before he woke up. Ram the wild, who has travelled for more than 2,000 km across India is now heading for domestication.

The Times of India, November 28 and December 8, 2020 ; NewsIndia24Live.com, December 6, 2020 ; The Indian Express, November 30, 2020 ; Outlook India, November 28, 2020.¹²⁹

November 30, 2020

Chandil Forest, Seraikela-Kharsawan District, State of Jharkhand, India

"We are not very clear about who killed the tusker. We still need to ascertain if he was killed by poachers or villagers. But some people with a criminal bent of mind certainly cut off his tusks, in the most unprofessional way. We have put the forest guards on alert so that no tusker may fall victim to such cruelty," says the head of the State Administration. Poisoning is suspected. There are a few rice fields along the natural migration corridor of elephants and so the animals are considered as pests.

The Telegraph India, December 1, 2020.¹³⁰

December 1st and 4, 2020

Kadala, Dhenkanal District ; Jadu Loisingha, Sambalpur District, State of Odisha, India



- Death of a makhna – a male elephant with no tusks – and of a wild boar who touched an 11,000-volt electrical line.

- An elephant about 12 years old ended in the same way. Three persons described as "poachers" were arrested. The fate of the tusks is not known in this case.

From the beginning of April to the beginning of December 40 elephants died in Odisha as a result of electrocution, poaching and by collisions with trains and lorries. The death of 64 persons and the injuring of 71 others are attributed to elephants in conflict with human activities.

Hindustan Times, December 1, 2020 ; Odisha TV, December 4, 2020.¹³¹

December 4 and 18, 2020

Banarhat, Jalpaiguri District, State of West Bengal, India



The investigation performed after the death by electrocution of an elephant in a tea plantation proved that the electricity was taken illegally from a transformer and bare cables were laid out in the plantation, with a risk of killing wild animals, employees or the families of employees. The director of the plantation is on the run. His assistant has been placed in custody for at least 5 days. The plantation staff and their families are blocking traffic on a dual carriageway to ask for him to be freed. "If nothing happens, we'll block the railway lines as well" said one of the demonstrators.

The Telegraph India, December 5 and 19, 2020.¹³²

FAMILY AFFAIRS

December 11, 2020

Malaiyadi, Tirunelveli District, State of Tamil Nadu, India



The autopsy showed that the victim died of a massive haemorrhage when she touched the electrical cable with her trunk. This female elephant about 40 years old was said to be part of a herd of 6 to 8 animals who had damaged 25 coconut palms and a few mango trees two days before. Other sources said that she was a solitary animal and had come out of the forest very early in the morning. A father and his son had defended a rice field by diverting the electricity supplied to them free of charge to feed an irrigation well. The father is being questioned by justice officials and the son has run away.

The Times of India, December 11, 2020.¹³³

December 15, 2020

Jiling Sereng, Ranchi District, State of Jharkhand, India

The herd of 35 elephants was reported to be moving in the forests in the district. During the night, one of them fell into a dry well 6 m deep. As per the villagers, the first to come to help him were the elephants. "The elephants carried water by filling it into their trunks from a nearby pond and poured it into the well. The jumbos might have thought that their fellow may come out of the well if they filled it with water. Since the well was deep, they could only fill it partially," this said with a point of admiration by a local forest administration official. But seeing the number of villagers arriving out of curiosity, the elephants left the scene in the morning leaving the official aid services to operate and save the unfortunate animal by digging an exit trench using excavation machines.

Hindustan Times, December 17, 2020.¹³⁴

December 16, 2020

Bhikipur, Jajpur District, State of Odisha, India

Seizure of 4 kg of elephant molars (i.e. 2 adult elephant molars), a live Indian chameleon (*Chamaeleo zeylanicus*, Appendix II) that was released in the forest immediately and 5 deer horns (*Axis axis*). Arrest during the night of Sidharth Raj, 23, and Dibyalochan Sahoo, 22. Two accomplices ran off. Release on bail was refused and the two remain in detention. The value of the seizure is estimated at 13,500 US\$.

Seizure of elephants molars, "On the Trail" n°5 p.91-92, n°12 p.95, n°13 p.94, n°21 p.82, n°27 p.100, n°30 p.34. Down To Earth, December 17, 2020 ; The New Indian Express, December 17, 2020 ; Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, December 16, 2020.¹³⁵

December 16, 2020

Sikajhora, Chirang District, State of Assam, India

She is the 6th elephant killed by electrocution in the Chirang district since August. This time it was a pregnant female. Practically all of these cruel deaths are the result of theft of electricity from the public network. After discussions with the forestry division, APDCL (Assam Power Distribution Company Limited) disconnect 29 transformers from where electricity was diverted to facilitate illegal agricultural colonisation.

The Sentinel Assam, December 18, 2020.¹³⁶



December 19, 2020

Jeerahalli, Erode District, State of Tamil Nadu, India



Mortal electric shock for a young tusker 8 years old. V. Kalaiyaa is being questioned by the police. "He hadn't obtained any permission from the forest department for erecting the electrical fence." The official removed the tusks before burying the body in the nearby Sathyamangalam tiger reserve. The Times of India, December 20, 2020.¹³⁷

December 22, 2020

Pollachi, Coimbatore District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Great disturbance in official services! The 2 tusks for sale in an animal shop were obtained via the schemes of an anti-poaching watchman and a polyvalent official at the Aanamalai tiger reserve. Samiyappan and Kathavarayan had apparently succeeded in pulling off the two tusks without using an axe. The theft was made easier by the state of decomposition of the body of the elephant whose presence had been reported to them by accomplices. They succeeded in taking the tusks out of the forest by tying them to their legs and hiding them under their dhotis, long aprons worn by Hindus and resembling ample trousers stopping at the knee. Seven people are now compromised in this painful affair.

The New Indian Express, December 24 and 25, 2020 ; The Times of India, December 23 and 24, 2020 ; Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, December 24, 2020.¹³⁸

December 24, 2020

Naidu Nagar, Mysuru District, State of Karnataka, India

Seizure of 3 carved tusks. Manohar, Sumanth and Shivadas arrested by a flying squad. The 3 men were in their car looking for a potential buyer. An investigation has started to know who made such a skilful carving of Krishna playing the flute on a wooden base and to question him about the origin of the ivory.

Star of Mysore, December 25, 2020.¹³⁹



December 27, 2020

Dighal Doriali, Sivasagar District, State of Assam, India



Death of 2 female elephants. They touched a line in the Pani Dihing bird sanctuary where locals have illegally appropriated areas of prairie.

The Times of India, December 28, 2020 ; Outlook India, December 27, 2020.¹⁴⁰

NEPAL

November 22, 2020

Paremara, Saptari District, Province n°2, Nepal

In Nepal too an elephant is found at dawn next to a rice field, struck down by an electrical pole. The road from Kanchanpur to Fattepur was closed. A crowd arrived from everywhere to see the event. The Himalayan Times, November 22, 2020.¹⁴¹

SRI LANKA

October 1st, 2020

Oluvil, Eastern Province, Sri Lanka

Elephants and carrion-eating birds are present with enthusiasm at the rubbish tip supplied by 7 sub-districts: Sammanthurai, Kalmunai, Karaitheevu, Ninthavur, Addalachchenai, Akkaraipattu and Alaiyadi Vembu. Polystyrene spheres and fragments of plastic sheet were found in the dung of 25 to 30 elephants. The tip started about 10 years ago in the middle of an elephant movement corridor.



It is next to the forest. A fence used to prevent access, but such a long time ago that one wonders if it ever existed. Elephants are therefore exposed to long-term health risks or poisoning. Grouped at the tip, they are an easy target for poachers. This feeding option changes their behaviour and leads them to approaching other human activities in search of new splendours. They expose themselves to violent deaths triggered by a desire for revenge. "The wild elephants that come to the landfill hang around here day and night," said the responsible of a collective farming. "Then they go into neighbouring villages and harm the villagers, their property and agricultural land. The end result is that the human-elephant conflict gets worse and we lose elephants that are a national asset."

Elephants and rubbish, "On the Trail" n°10 p. 61, n° p. 85, n°16 p. 84, n° 18 p. 100, n°19 p. 113, n°20 p. 104, n° 23 p. 130, p. 134.

Daily Mail, October 1st 2020 ; Channel News Asia, November 25, 2020 ; Daily Sabah (with Reuters), November 25, 2020.¹⁴²

Early October 2020

Thabbowa Wildlife Sanctuary, North Western Province, Sri Lanka

Two people were questioned concerning the illegal extraction of sand and one for carrying bangers to keep away elephants.

News First, October 3, 2020.¹⁴³

November 7, 2020

Nimalawa Sanctuary, Southern Province, Sri Lanka



Electrocution of an elephant at the edge of the reserve. It houses 2 small groups but the males tend to leave the reserve in search of new trails. According to Sumith Pilapitiya, an expert on Asian elephants and former Director of the Wildlife Conservation Department, the people responsible for this electrocution should be punished as severely as the law permits, that is to say a 150,000 rupees (805 US\$) fine or 5 years in prison. "Because this will then serve as a deterrent for future actions such as this." Pilapitiya deplores the fact that housing estates and farming have been allowed at the edge of reserves and sanctuaries. He says that where there is inevitable proximity between elephants and farming activities village communities should cooperate and organise themselves to build fences in the right places and maintain them. Fences have been erected by community networks in the districts of Kurunegala Anuradhapura, the Trincomalee and Hambanthota with the technical aid of the CCR (Centre for Conservation and Research) for 8 years. They are giving satisfactory results. With some bitterness, the specialist notes that politicians and bureaucrats have never visited these pilot sites while experts have come from Malaysia, India, Myanmar and 13 African countries to draw inspiration from them. The SLIC (Sri Lanka Inventors Commission) is also racking its brains about the subject. The main idea is to make batteries or generators that produce dissuasive but not lethal charges. It should be noted that in India this measure is recommended for use with electricity generated by solar panels. The other major idea of the SLIC is to use the capacity of elephants to broadcast alerts by analysing soil vibrations and to develop bio-acoustic sounds that would discourage the animals from entering fields. Cf. page 26 (The Texas of Southern Africa – chapter 2). Leopcon Sri Lanka, November 7, 2020 ; Daily Mirror, November 17, 2020.¹⁴⁴

December 27, 2020
Kilinochchi, Northern Province, Sri Lanka



It's raining. A 17-year-old elephant has died, entangled in electrical cables. A suspect is being questioned.

Sunday Times, December 28, 2020.¹⁴⁵

AMERICA - EUROPE

November - December 2020 Elephants in isolation cell

News of the prisoners.

- **The United States.** Happy, the lone elephant in the zoo in the Bronx, lives in small quarters, especially in winter when the zoo is closed. The NGO Nonhuman Rights Project (NhRP) is asking the courts for a transfer to a sanctuary in Tennessee and above all requests habeas corpus of Happy. According to the NGO, she is the first elephant to have passed successfully the mirror self recognition test that assesses the ability of an animal to recognize its reflection in a mirror. While it recognises Happy's great intellectual qualities the Bronx Supreme Court has refused to consider her as a person and has refused to hold that her lodging in the Bronx is illegal.

Habeas corpus, "On the Trail" n°28 p. 87.

- **The Netherlands.** Buba, 45 years old and retired from a circus, is to stay with her family of employers. The decision was taken by the Ministry of Agriculture. The NGOs Animal Rights and Bite Back and a section of public opinion are requesting her transfer to a sanctuary in the South of France that is not yet operational.

- **The United Kingdom.** Action for Elephants UK (AFEUK) would like an elephant imported from Sri Lanka to be settled in the EHEES (Elephant Haven European Elephant Sanctuary) at Bussière Galant in south-west France. When she was small, she was used by one circus after another before reaching Longleat Safari and Adventure park where she has lived with 3 goats in recent years. Nothing has been settled for the moment, especially as the French paradise for elephants is having difficulty in opening officially.

Dutch News, November 27 and December 2, 2020 ; The Canary, December 17, 2020 ; United Press International, November 19, 2020 ; Spectrum News NY1, December 17, 2020 ; Nonhuman Rights Project, January 27, 2021 ; Law & Crime, May 4, 2021 ; Court of Appeals of the State of New York, May 4, 2021.¹⁴⁶

NORTHERN EUROPE

UNITED KINGDOM

Between June and November 2020 United Kingdom

The NGO Space for Giants deplores the late entry into force of the Ivory Act celebrated by politicians and ecologists as the most persuasive of the laws against trade in ivory. The Ivory Act is getting stuck in the Brexit and Covid crises. During this latent period salerooms are making a lot of money. It were as if owners of colonial ivory were profiting from the respite to clear their stock and make profits.

The Independent, December 27, 2020.¹⁴⁷

November 24, 2020

Harrow, England, United Kingdom

Sentencing of Rajtharan Mahalingam, a luxury jeweller, to a suspended 6 and a half-month prison sentence, 200 hours of community service, a 200 £ fine (259 US\$), 2,500 £ (3,235 US\$) costs and 140 £ (181 US\$) tax for having offered for sale at his shop in Wembley rings, bracelets and other jewellery in gold mixed with African and Asian elephant hair. All this fashionable booty has been confiscated definitively. This is somewhat uncomfortable for the jeweller who lives in comfort on the Isle of Wight.

Brent and Kilburn Times, November 25, 2020 ; Daily Mail, November 25, 2020.¹⁴⁸



WESTERN EUROPE

GERMANY

October 29, 2020

Cottbus, Brandenburg State, Germany

Sentencing to a 20-month suspended prison sentence for having in 2016 attempted to export fraudulently 625 kg of raw and carved ivory and for storing in a workshop 570 kg raw ivory intended for carving ("On the Trail" n°13 p. 96 and n°14 p. 97) with the aid of an accomplice who is now nowhere to be found. In contrast with what one might believe, the story did not take place in certain countries where the more serious the offenses concerning animals, the lighter the sentences. This judgement was made in Germany and concerned a person of Vietnamese origin who has speculated on elephants all his life and who had the nerve to open in Germany in the 2010s—more than 20 years after the forbidding of international trade in ivory—a clandestine workshop with a view to making statuettes using raw tusks bought at flea-markets and auction sales and to sending them to Viet Nam to distributors under various cheap labels.

Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg, October 29, 2020 ; Wetterauer Zeitung, November 6, 2020 ; Nürnberger Blatt (with AFP), November 12, 2020.¹⁴⁹



November 19, 2020
Leipzig/Halle International Airport, Saxony
State, Germany



Seizure of 210 ivory rosaries in a parcel sent from Congo to the Lebanon. Total weight 20 kg. German customs, November 23, 2020.¹⁵⁰

FRANCE

October 2020
Department of Nord, France

Seizure of 32 worked ivories in an auction room. Value : between 20,000 and 26,000 € or 23,480 and 30,530 US\$.

Biodiversity French Office, April 14, 2021.¹⁵¹

SOUTHERN EUROPE

ITALY

Mid-October, 2020
Parma, Province of Parma, Region of Emilia-Romagna, Italy

Seizure of a pair of tusks by the Carabinieri CITES at an antiques fair.

Parma Repubblica, October 13, 2020.¹⁵²

December 1st, 2020
Metropolitan City of Turin, Provinces of Novara, Verbano-Cusio-Ossola and Vercelli, Region of Piedmont, Italy

Seizure from antique dealers, sellers on the Internet and at auction rooms of 258 pieces of carved and worked ivories or raw tusks with an estimated total value of 150,000 €. 27 persons were questioned by legal authorities.

Torino Today, December 8, 2020 ; Novara Today, December 9, 2020.¹⁵³

MAMMOTHS

EASTERN EUROPE

RUSSIA

November 24, 2020
Vladivostok Port, Primorsky Krai, Russia



Seizure of 4.6 tonnes of mammoth tusks in a container leaving for a "foreign country". Estimated value 62 million roubles, that is to say 780,000 US\$ and 170 US\$/kg. 90% of legal and contraband business in mammoth ivory is destined for China. Two people questioned. Fourteen tusks were listed in view of their width and their "cultural heritage" state. The traffickers live in Yakutsk in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) in Siberia.

Pillage of the permafrost started in Siberia about 100 years ago. Tusks are dug up or exposed by high-pressure jets. Rivers and marshes are polluted by the mud. The use of mammoth ivory is a debatable matter. Quality A is sold in Siberia to Chinese buyers or their intermediaries at from 20,000 to 25,000 roubles per kg, that is to say 260 to 330 US\$/kg. Elephant ivory is sold in Asia at 2000 to 2500 US\$ on the black market. ...

... An average buyer can be sold a bauble or a statuette in mammoth ivory under the name of elephant ivory for the greatest possible profit of forgers and sellers. A plan for a mention in Appendix of the CITES was presented and then withdrawn at the last plenary session in Geneva in August 2019. A new working document should be available at the next session in Panama in November 2022.



Since the beginning of 2021, entire tusks weighing more than 100 kg and tusks of exceptional quality with no cracks are considered by the government of Yakoutia as non-exportable cultural treasures. These meritorious measures can be got round easily by cutting up the tusks. This trick has also been used by Yakutsk traffickers. A draft law that would consider the extraction of mammoth tusks the equivalent of mineral resources is being examined by the Russian parliament. Today, the legal export market is based on documents tracing the precise origin and the procedure for road or air transport. It takes about 2 months to ship a batch from Siberia to Hong Kong.

Illegal operations are considered to be worth 1.5 to 3 billion roubles per year, that is to say 19.5 to 39 million US\$, and the latest fashion in both Russia and Hong Kong is to have USB keys in mammoth ivory.

EastRussia, November 24, 2020 ; Yakutia Daily, November 24, 2020 ; The Tokyo Shimbun, November 26, 2020 ; China Dialogue, June 1, 2021 ; RIA FAN, December 11, 2020.¹

IVOIRY AND IVOIRIES



Colt Revolver, model Lighting 6 shots. Caliber .38

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

October 8, 2020

State of Vermont, United States of America

Vermont casts a wide net. Elephant, hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II), mammoth and mastodon ivories are covered by Act 169, as are gorillas (*Gorilla* spp., Appendix I), bonobos (*Pan paniscus*, Appendix I), orangutans (*Pongo* spp, Appendix I), gibbons (*Hylobatidae*, Appendix I) and chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I), as well as rhinoceroses and big cats, as well as marine turtles, endangered rays and sharks. Act 169 comes into force from January 2022 onward. Furniture and other items that are more than 100 years old and contain no more than 200 grams of animal by-products covered by the law will be eligible for an exemption. Musical instruments, knives (for the handles), firearms (for the butts) containing less than 200 grams of ivory will also be eligible for derogation on condition that the origin of the ivory is legal.

VTDigger, October 14, 2020.¹

ASIA

CHINA

October 16, 2020

Dalian, Liaoning Province, China

Seizure in a parcel from Japan and declared to contain "PVC and sculpture materials" of sliced sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) and hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) teeth (203 and 53 grams) and black coral (order Antipatharia, Appendix II. 149 grams).

Chinese Customs, October 16, 2020.²



October 30, 2020

Xining, Qinghai Province, China

Two shopkeepers are sentenced to 5 and 6 year-prison terms and fines equal to 1,490 and 4,470 US\$. They used to sell elephant and hornbill (*Rhinoplax vigil*, Appendix I) ivory junk, rhinoceros horn slices and deer antlers in their shop.

Chinanews, November 17, 2020.³



EUROPE

UNITED KINGDOM

December 24, 2020

United Kingdom

- eBay is happy. Its director sent a self-satisfactory message for the Christmas and New Year celebrations: 257,000 animal trafficking ads were removed in 2020. Cooperation of the group with the WWF, Traffic and IFAW is considered to be fruitful. These institutions do everything that they can to educate the personnel at eBay.

- On the same date, explorers of Internet sites published a report on ivory and eBay. Their work was focused on the Japanese tradition of netsukes. Of the 512 netsukes that sellers said were made of bone from cows, oxen, water buffaloes and deer horn, a minority (218) were authenticated after examination of photos and other documents available. But the majority (294) were in elephant, mammoth, sperm whale and walrus ivory. A month later, the researchers returned to eBay UK. Practically all the netsukes had been sold or were still for sale. The authors give eBay a simple warning: beware of cow bones.

Venturini S, Roberts DL. Disguising Elephant Ivory as Other Materials in the Online Trade. Tropical Conservation Science, 2020 ; WWF, June 1, 2021.⁴



ELEPHANTS AND RHINOCEROSES

AFRICA

KENYA

7 octobre 2020

Nakuru, Comté de Nakuru, Kenya



Mansour Mohamed Surur alias Mansour has lost a battle. On December 18, 2020, after 6 months of requests for liberation on bail and of denials of his participation in an international traffic in ivory, rhinoceros horns, heroin and "money laundering", his extradition to the United States was definitively considered to be legal by Kenyan justice. Mansour left Nairobi on a specially chartered aircraft and after a filling stop in Dakar, Senegal, landed in the County of Westchester, New York, 16 hours later. Mansour is now in the hands of US justice. Many people wondered why he returned to Kenya by the end of July. He had paid 600 US\$ to board a Skyward Express flight from the Yemen, whose nationality he also has and where he benefited from immunity with regard to the warrant for his arrest issued by the United States, as there is no extradition treaty between the two countries. Nostalgia for his home country, Yemen war, a friendly 61st birthday celebration, fear of Covid and of reprisals in the Yemen or had he received adequate assurance of anonymity on his return to Kenya?

The day after his arrival in the State of New York, Mansour was charged with conspiracy with a view to trafficking wild animals, and conspiracy to sell heroin. He risks 45 years of prison. A new battle is starting for Mansour.

See "On the Trail" n°25 p. 81 and n°30 pp. 41-42 Nation, September 29 and 30, 2020 ; Kenyans.co.ke, December 19, 2020 ; U.S. Department of Justice, January 25, 2021 ; Citizen Tv, January 26, 2021 ; International Policy Digest, February 16, 2021.¹

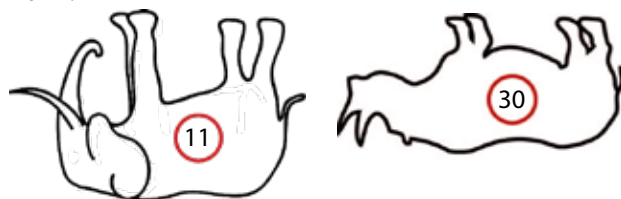
NAMIBIA

Year 2020

Namibia

30 rhinos poached in 2020. 50 in 2019. 11 elephants in 2020. 13 in 2019. Environment Minister Romeo Muyunda attributes the decrease in poaching to increased patrols, sanctions and cooperation between intelligence services and civil society. Muyunda does not cite the stay-at-home order and the difficulties for poachers to move around undetected as causes of the lull.

MENAFIN, November 26, 2020 ; Reuters, January 7, 2021.²



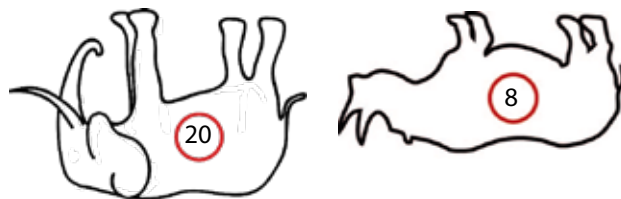
ZIMBABWE

January - December 2020

Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe has drawn up the statistics for the year. Twenty elephants, 8 rhinoceros and 4 lions were poached. There is a downward trend for these three famous species. In contrast, antelopes and buffaloes are paying a serious tribute to Covid. The closing of markets and the shortage of food have increased demand for bush meat. As in many countries around the world, wild meat has been sought by the poor in state of necessity and by the rich in state of idleness. The international distribution networks of rhino horn and elephant tusks have been obstructed by the suspension of national and international logistics imposed by Covid, and the local bushmeat networks have multiplied. Application of the shoot-to-kill policy has cost 5 presumed poachers their lives.

The Sunday Mail, December 13, 2020 ; ZimNews, January 23, 2021 ; Innovation and Technology Center, March 4, 2021.³



ASIA

CHINA

November 24, 2020

Tianyuan District, Hunan Province, China



The man had purchased on WeChat for resale an article in rhinoceros horn with a cash value of 13.000 yuans, that is to say nearly 2000 US\$, in July 2018 and 3 carved ivories in February 2019.

Zhuzhou Daily, November 27, 2020.⁴

RHINOCEROSSES



White rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum*). Photo Max Sang

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

Value of 1kg of raw horn

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref. (year)
Asia	Viet Nam	18,563	35 (2020)

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

October 30, 2020

Tsavo West National Park, Kenya

The black rhinoceros body is spotted by a patrol. He has been eaten up by scavengers. Only some bones, the skull and the 2 horns can be found. The horns examination enables to identify "Ekirapa", an around 7 year old male. The cause of death is unknown.

SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2020.¹



MOZAMBIQUE

Year 2020

Mozambique

183 Mozambican nationals imprisoned in South Africa took advantage of the Covid crisis. They have been released and deported. The South African government deemed necessary to de-densify the prison population to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus. This is good news for them, but at least a third of those Covid-pardoned were convicted of poaching in the Kruger park, and that is not good news for rhinos and elephants.

Oxpeckers, March 16, 2021 ; Correio da Manhã, July 14, 2020.²

ZIMBABWE

October 14, 2020

Bubye Valley Conservancy, Matabeleland South Province, Zimbabwe

The release of a female rhinoceros about 19 months old. She had been saved, treated and fed by a Lowveld Rhino Trust team after the poaching of her mother in July in the Bubye Valley Conservancy. People, October 14, 2020.³

REPEATED OFFENSE

Early December 2020

Beitbridge, Matabeleland South Province, Zimbabwe

Sentencing of Ignatius Maiga to 22 years in prison for poaching 2 rhinoceros in the Bubye Valley Conservancy and of his accomplice Fanuel Mukucha to 18 years in prison. The 2 men had entered the reserve on August 11, 2020. After an exchange of shots they were encircled by the Zimparks rangers and the watchmen of the reserve. Ballistic analyses proved that the arms used by the men in 2020 were the same as those used for poaching a rhinoceros in the same place in April 2019.

Daily News, December 8, 2020.⁴



SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

October 2, 2020

Pietermaritzburg, uMgungundlovu District, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Seizure of a BMW worth nearly 60,000 US\$ and a rhinoceros horn worth 70,700 US\$. Arrest of Wade van Staden, 30 years old. His release on bail was rejected.

SAPS, October 4, 2020 ; SA People, October 4, 2020 ; Eyethu News, October 2, 2020 ; South Coast Herald, October 8, 2020.⁵



© South African Police Service

October 2, 2020, Pietermaritzburg

Early October 2020

SanWild Wildlife Sanctuary, Gravelotte, Limpopo Province, South Africa



© EMS Foundation

Mortal poaching of a young male. The poachers did not have time to cut off the horn. EMS Foundation, October 9, 2020.⁶

October 13, 21 and 30, 2020

Kruger National Park and Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary, Barberton Nature Reserve, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

- The young male 7- or 8-months old wandering in the park was flown by helicopter to the Care for the Wild orphanage. He recovered his assurance after a few days of treatment and bottle-feeding.

- Arrival by helicopter of another saved animal 4 years old who had survived the killing of his mother in the Kruger. He joins the other 5 inmates.

- Arrival by helicopter at the Care for the Wild orphanage of a thin and frightened baby rhinoceros hardly 4 months old found in Kruger park on October 30, 48 hours after the killing of his mother. He has joined the other orphans. The team welcomed him with a verse by Bob Marley: "You never know how strong you are until being strong is the only choice you have."

Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary, October 13 and 19 and November 3, 2020 ; Gateway, October 21, 2020.⁷



© Care for Wild

October 20 and 29, 2020**Hazyview, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

BMW is the favourite car of poachers. Three employees at Kruger were arrested after a car chase. Two horns were seized. The management of the park was consternated by release of the 3 on bail of 5000 rand, that is to say 300 US\$. The value of a single horn has at least 2 more zeros.

SANParks, October 23, 2020 ; News 24, October 23, 2020 ; Lowvelder, October 30 and November 3, 2020.⁸

November 11, 2020**Centurion, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

Two shots were heard the previous night. Discovery of a female that had been killed and her "small horn" amputated. She had had preventive corn removal the previous year.

Krugerdersdorp News, November 13, 2020.⁹

Friday, November 13, 2020**Lephalale, Waterberg District, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

Not a lucky day! A worker at the game reserve found a dead rhinoceros whose horn had just been removed.

Review Online, November 14, 2020 ; Dispatch Live, November 14, 2020.¹⁰

November 16, 2020**Phalaborwa, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

The ending of lock-down is a disaster for rhinoceros. Two deaths in one night. Nine in the country during the week of 4 to 10 November. Most had had been preventively dehorned. "The poaching syndicates are making up for lost time and are desperate for horn."

News 24, November 16 and 17, 2020.¹¹

November 16, 17, 21, 22, 23, 2020**Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

Nightmare in the HiP. Seven white rhino carcasses are discovered by the lookouts. High tech is powerless to stop poaching. 18,000 images were captured day and night by 85 cameras in November and viewed on a control post. The fences do not appear to have been broken into. "It's hard to swallow but we are not about to give up," says the HiP spokesman. "Poachers can enter the park as a paying guest," he said, adding that poachers have been moving easily from province to province since the anti-Covid restrictions were lifted.

A spokesman for the Democratic Alliance, an opposition political party, suspects complicity with the poaching ring among HiP staff.

Independent Online, November 25 and 26, 2020 ; News24, November 27, 2020 ; SA-People, November 29, 2020 ; Save the Beasts, November 16, 2020.¹²

November 19, 2020**Vaalwater, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

On March 10, 2020, a poacher was killed in a private reserve in Dorset around 3 a.m. On the crime scene, 2 dead and dehorned rhinos were also found, along with a gun, an axe and ammunition (see "On the Trail" n°28 p.4).

On November 19, the two anti-poaching guards of the reserve, Bethuel Ndubani and Ebony Mokoena, were arrested. At their home and in a car, two firearms, ammunition, an axe, and a hunting knife were seized. A suspected accomplice, Moria Shongane, is also under investigation. All three are suspected of murder and rhino poaching in conspiracy. According to the investigators, the pact between the guards of the reserve and the poachers would have turned bad.

Mogol Pos, November 30, 2020.¹³

November 22, 2020**Kruger National Park, Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces, South Africa**

Action stations to find a female rhinoceros filmed with a trap around one of her legs.

When they reached the site, the vets found that she had freed herself unaided, suffering only slight wounds.

PaintedDog TV, February 6, 2021.¹⁴

November 25, 2020**Mtubatuba, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa**

There is no doubt about the involvement of Dumisani Gwala in the horn trafficking. On 5 occasions, he bought horns from undercover secret service agents (cf. "On the Trail" n°12 p. 71, n°14 p. 63 and 66, n°18 p. 72, n°19 p. 86, n°20 p. 81 and n°21 p. 75). Since the end of 2014, he has remained free under bail, waiting for his trial. Due to procedural shenanigans, including successive changes of lawyers, the last of whom never have time to get to know the case, Gwala has had at least her 30th trial postponement. The late November hearing has been once again postponed, this time because of Covid complications.

Zululand Observer, November 30, 2020 ; Saving the Wild, April 3, 2021.¹⁵

November 30, 2020**Grahamstown, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**

It was a classic. The healer who had been on bail (50,000 rand 3,040 US\$) for 3 years did not have the time to appoint a lawyer. Trial postponed. Meanwhile the 4 accomplices from Mozambique remained in preventive custody. They had been arrested in the possession of 2 horns on December 30, 2018 ("On the Trail" n°23 p. 106).

Ayesha Cantor, November 29, 2020.¹⁶

November 2020

Pilanesberg National Park, North West Province, South Africa

And 2 more ! The chain of sinister disasters continues in the park—in spite of preventive horn removal.

("On the trail" n°9 p. 59, n°10 p. 45, n°12 p. 69, p. 70, n°14 p. 63, p. 64, n°16 p. 68, p. 70, n°18 p. 73, p. 74, n°19 p. 85, n°20 p. 82, n°21 p. 76, n°22 p. 78, p. 80, n°23 p. 106, n° 26 p. 76, n°27 p. 87, n°28 p. 94). "They still killed the Rhinos for what was left of their horn." Pilanesberg National Park & Wildlife Trust, December 2, 2020.¹⁷

Early December 2020

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

Immediately after 2 rhinos were found dead and with their horns removed, the rangers—helped by airwing—intercepted the 2 poachers as night fell. Seizure of poaching equipment and a large bore firearm. The horns are missing. Lowvelder, December 3, 2020.¹⁸

Early December 2020

Enoch Mgijima, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

The town (population 250,000 habitants) manages the Lawrence de Lange Nature reserve. It is a public reserve. It has exchange 3 rhinoceros—a 2-year-old male and 2 females aged 2 and 6—for 10 buffaloes (2 males and 8 females) from a private owner whose identity has not been revealed. The agreement was in 2018. The rhinoceros have left and 2 years on the buffaloes have not arrived. The municipality justifies their absence on grounds of security. The fencing is in poor condition. The buffaloes might escape. The fence must be replaced. This has been planned for several years. If we understand correctly, it is an open gateway for the animals of the reserve ... and for poachers. The Democratic Alliance wishes to clarify this situation.

The Lawrence de Lange nature reserve ("On the Trail" n°19 p. 86) houses in particular zebras, rhinoceroses, giraffes, buffaloes, oryx, steenboks and 166 species of birds.

The Rep, December 3, 2020.¹⁹

December 3, 2020

SanWild Wildlife Sanctuary, Gravelotte, Limpopo Province, South Africa



Effervescence in the 2500-ha sanctuary.

There was an exchange of shots between an unknown number of intruders and coalition of the guards and the whole neighbourhood that came to help. A helicopter was included. SanWild ("On the Trail" n°21 p. 78) was protected by men and dogs, high-tech optical facilities and faultless fencing. The horns of the rhinoceros had been removed to discourage pillage but the poachers tried nonetheless to take tiny horns. After the Covid respite, tension has been strong around rhinoceros for 2 months. The rangers patrol in all directions to see if there have been deaths but both elephants and lions are upright and in good health.

SanWild Wildlife Sanctuary, December 3, 2020.²⁰

December 14, 2020-January 19, 2021

OR Tambo International Airport, Kempton Park and Benoni, Gauteng Province, South Africa

They had to look for them. The Hawks, informed by the customs and intelligence services, searched a suspect package leaving for Malaysia and supposedly containing just chicken-feed. A large hot water tank was opened and the chicken-feed emptied. They hid 17 nasal and frontal horns wrapped in aluminium foil. On January 19, the search of a private dwelling led to the seizure of a million rand in cash (70,200 US\$) suspected to be the product of dealing the horns with Asian middlemen. Arrest of Kelvin Chigwede.

SAPS, December 15, 2020 and January 19, 2021 ; Times Live, January 19, 2021.²¹



December 18, 2020

Klaserie Private Nature Reserve, Limpopo Province, South Africa

A rhinoceros was hit by a large bullet. He ran away.



The poachers did not have the time to find him and remove his horn. The diagnosis of Provet Animal Hospital, a team of vets dedicated to 'the health and safety' of the fauna in the Hoedspruit region for more than 20 years, is relatively optimistic. The animal is still alive a month after the ambush. The presumed poachers have been arrested and their arms seized.



Klaserie private nature reserve covers 600 km². Created in 1969, it is part of the Greater Kruger national park. No fencing separates it from Kruger national park. It houses the big five, impalas, giraffes, zebras, hippopotamuses, hyenas, greater kudus and 264 species of birds.

Hope for Wildlife Helicopter Services, January 16, 2021.²²

December 28, 2020

Lephalale, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Two dead rhinoceros found—a female and a male. The horns have been removed. No arrest.

SAPS, December 30, 2020.²³



BOTSWANA

October-November 2020

Okavango Delta, Botswana

It is the killing game for the rhinoceros in the Okavango delta. They are shot as if it were a fair, in spite of preventive horn removal. With a selling price of 18 US\$ per g delivered in Viet Nam, horn fever is not likely to abate.

The Star (with Xinhua), December 11, 2020 ; Botswana Safari News, December 15, 2020.²⁴

NAMIBIA

October 1st, 2020

Oshivelo, Oshitoko Region, Namibia

Warrant for the arrest of Pekaha Solizo Vetumunaije who, after being involved in 3 poaching attacks on rhinoceros in 2018 has not replied to summons from the justice authorities after his release on bail. Republikein, October 8, 2020.²⁵

October 2, 2020

Mururani, Kavango West Region, Namibia

Indictment of Wakudomo Kudumo and Ludik Lourens. They are suspected of conspiracy with a view to poaching a rhinoceros. This is covered by the Riotous Assemblies Act.

Namibian Sun, October 21, 2020.²⁶

October 11, 2020

Grootfontein, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

Indictment of Raimo Kakongo. He is suspected of having plotted to poach a rhinoceros in August.

Namibian Sun, October 21, 2020.²⁷

November 20, 2020

Near Gobabis, Omaheke Region, Namibia

The body of the suckling rhinoceros was found thanks to the vultures seen circling in the sky. Kinneer, father and son, who are running the ranch, remove the horns from all their adult rhinoceros each year. This costs them 18,000 N\$ or 1,060 US\$ per animal "The poachers are cruel enough to kill a baby rhino for her horn bud," says the son Kinneer.

Namibian Sun, October 28, 2020.²⁸

November 26, 2020

Grootfontein, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

Arrest of Elliot Notako Damaseb in relation to 1 or 2 poaching operations carried out in August.

Namibian Sun, December 3, 2020.²⁹

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

December 2, 2020 and July 2, 2021

Madison, State of Wisconsin, United States of America

- Indictment of Chang Xiong, 47 years old, residing in Oakdale, Minnesota, for the illegal import of 4 feet of black and white rhinoceros between July 2016 and December 2018. The items seized at his home also included a fragment of horn, 5 rhinoceros nails, a carved elephant tusk, a statuette, 2 bracelets and an ivory ring. Xiong bought the rhinoceros feet at auction rooms abroad- especially in the United Kingdom - for the equivalent of 1,100 to 1,600 US\$ and sold them, or tried to sell them, with a mark-up of 800 to 2,000 US\$.



- He was sentenced to pay a 40,000 US\$ fine. He risks a year in prison. He escaped this thanks to the exemplarity of his professional and family life and his cooperation during the investigation. The judge warned him that prison would be practically inevitable in case of a further offense.

US Department of Justice, October 22, 2020 and January 2021 ; Hudson Star Observer, July 6, 2021.³⁰



EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

October 13, 2020

Beijing Municipality, China

Sentenced to 9 months in prison for having traded on WeChat horn goblets during the Chinese New Year in February 2020 and having made 18,000 yuans (2,640 US\$) in illegal profits, Mrs Zhang could not keep her tears back at the bar in the court. The judge made a reminder that products based on rhinoceros horn were reserved for scientific and medical research.

Justice Network, October 13, 2020.³¹



SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

THAILAND

October 8, 2020

Songkhla, Songkhla Province, Thailand

Things are going wild in zoos. The Director-general of the ZPOT (Zoological Park Organisation of Thailand) was killed by about 20 shots fired by Phuwadol Suwanna, the vet at Songkhla zoo. An hour later, Phuwadol committed suicide in the residential part of the zoo. He was being investigated about an albino Indian muntjac born in the zoo in December 2019 and that disappeared in February 2020. The explanation by the management of the zoo that the young deer had been swallowed by a python that had entered the compound maliciously did not convince either the Minister of Natural Resources or the Minister of Agriculture.

The affair gained a political dimension. "Snow", the name given to the missing animal, was a descendant of a deer given in homage to the Queen Mother of Thailand. Its economic value exceeded the usual level. All albino wild animals - from boas in Brazil to giraffes in Africa - change hands at very high prices and generally go to private collectors. Thailand does not escape the rule as albino elephants are venerated there.

Phuwadol was one of the four senior persons at the zoo targeted by investigators. He was about to be transferred as a protective measure. He had long been a friend of the director of the ZPOT. Both were from the southern provinces. Other animals are said to have disappeared from Songkhla Zoo without leaving any trace in the registers and accounts.

Songkhla has not finished with the complications of the zoo that until now had been its pride. Five days after the drama, a warrant was issued for the arrest of Kosin Rattanawibun former manager of the zoo. Rattanawibun gave himself on the day after the issuing of the warrant. He is suspected of having on March 21, 2013 used falsified documents to obtain the return of the two horns of a white rhinoceros that had died in February 2012 and entrusted to Prince of Songkhla University. The trick was discovered in June 2018 when the zoo said that it wished to recover the horns 'for educational reasons' without knowing that Rattanawibun had already recovered them. One of his accomplices was dismissed immediately. The nasal horn was found in his possession. The fate of the frontal horn is still unknown.

Given the scale of the scandal at Songkhla Zoo, it was decided at the highest level of the provincial police to awaken this 'cold case'. The ZPOT, doubly affected by the impact on its image and by the death of its director-general, launched with independent experts an enquiry on the possible trafficking of animals in the zoos of Chiang Mai (Chiang Mai Province), Nakhon Ratchasima (Nakhon Ratchasima Province), Khon Kaen (province of Khon Kaen), Ubon Ratchathani (province of Ubon Ratchathani) and Chonburi (province of Chonburi) without forgetting Songkhla. The Nation Thailand, October 9, 2020 ; Al Jazeera, October 3, 2020 ; Bangkok Post, October 4, 2020 ; The Thaiger, October 7, 2020.³²



VIET NAM

November 20, 2020

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Sentencing of Nguyen Anh Duong, 49, to 6 years of prison for having transported from Mozambique 6 kg of horns and sections of horns ("On the Trail" n°28 p. 98). He is said to have been given a little less than 350 US\$ from a Chinese citizen to carry "rare goods" whose precise nature he claimed not to have known. VnExpress, November 21, 2020 ; Ho Chi Minh City Law Journal, November 20, 2020.³³



December 12, 2020

Van Don International Airport, Quang Ninh Province, Viet Nam

Seizure in the luggage of Tran Trong Manh at the arrival of a flight from Angola of 5 fragments of horn weighing a total of 7.8 kg. Báo giao thông, January 19, 2021.³⁴

December 22, 2020

Tan Son Nhat International Airport, Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam



A search performed in a warehouse in the freight zone of the airport led to the seizure of 94 kg of rhinoceros horns divided into 2 shipments from Manila in the Philippines and transported on a Singapore Airlines flight and a Cathay Pacific Airlines flight. Total value is estimated to be 40 billion dongs, that is to say 1.73 million US\$ and 18,563 US\$ per kg. The horns were from Africa and destined for Cambodia.

ENV, December 23, 2020 ; TuoiTre Online, December 22, 2020 ; VN Express, December 23, 2020 ; Nguoi Viet, December 23, 2020 ; Bao Ve Phap Luat, December 24, 2020.³⁵

December 29, 2020

Can Tho Municipality, Viet Nam

Sentencing of Do Thanh Son to 12 and a half years in prison for having attempted to import into Viet Nam 28.7 kg of horns ("On the Trail" n°28 p. 98). He says that he was paid a bonus of 1,000 US\$ by his employer, a restaurateur in Mozambique, to handle transport to Viet Nam. The air ticket was also reported to have been funded by his employer, a certain "Domingos". Nguoi Lao Dong, December 29, 2020 ; VN Express, December 30, 2020.³⁶



SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

October 7, 2020

Bokakhat, Golaghat District, State of Assam, India

Uruka Pegu and Konkoni Pegu, husband and wife, are compromised in a poaching affair. Sashi Doley, a forest warden, had entrusted them with a horn while waiting to find a buyer. The husband says that he was not there when the horn was brought and his wife says that she did not know that the bag handed over by Doley contained a rhinoceros horn. Bokakhat is 23 km from Kaziranga national park. The Sentinel Assam, October 7 and 8, 2020.³⁷

November 6, 2020

Duliajan, Dibrugarh District, State of Assam, India

A presumed rhinoceros horn was found in the courtyard of a house inhabited by Nijan Dutta, Dibya Das and Rumi Devi Bhagawati. Thanu Gogoi, the owner, was also questioned. Expert appraisal is being carried out to verify the authenticity of the horn.

The Sentinel Assam, November 7, 2020.³⁸

FAMILY AFFAIRS

December 13, 2020

Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India

Mohammad and Sambu Narzary were arrested at about midnight. Seizure of a firearm, ammunition and a machete. Two accomplices fled, profiting from fog and the night.

The Times of India, December 16, 2020.³⁹

NEPAL

November 3, 2020

Chitwan National Park, Bagmati Province, Nepal

Poaching of a female rhinoceros 20 to 25 years old and her 3-year-old son. The bodies were rotting. The attack was about 2 months ago. The poachers also took the horn of the young rhinoceros. Both animals were shot in the head.

The Kathmandu Post, November 6, 2020 ; Online Khabar, November 5, 2020.⁴⁰

December 3, 2020

Khurkhure, Chitwan District, Bagmati Province, Nepal

Arrest of Suraj Chaudhary, 36 years old. A deserter from the Nepalese army, he had been sentenced in absentia in 2008 to 15 years in prison and a fine of 100,000 rupees (2,350 US\$) for having poached a rhinoceros in 2005. He had been recruited by a gang of traffickers. On the run, Chaudhary had returned from Qatar a year previously.

The Himalayan Times, December 4, 2020 ; DC Nepal, December 4, 2020.⁴¹

December 6, 2020

Butwal, Rupandehi District, Lumbini Province, Nepal

Seizure of a presumed horn at the Kalash Hotel. Arrest of Bhakta Bahadur Thapa and Karna Bahadur Raut. According to an official press release, a 3rd man - Birendra Bahadur Singh - seized a policeman's gun and fired. In the confusion, a 4th suspect suffered serious facial injuries. He was taken to hospital. Birendra ran away.

Butwal, the leading town for the trafficking of fauna and transit to China, "On the Trail" n°30 p.15.

The Kathmandu Post, December 16, 2020 ; The Himalayan Times, December 7, 2020.⁴²

December 10, 2020

Kathmandu, Kathmandu District, Bagmati Province, Nepal

Questioning of 5 people 22 to 41 years old, including a woman, in possession of a presumed rhinoceros horn. It might be a fake.

Republica, December 11, 2020.⁴³



FELINES, ELEPHANTS / RHINOCEROSES

AFRICA

KENYA

Early December 2020

Kajiado County, Kenya

Arrest of 2 men aged 23 and 24 in possession of lion canines, claws and ribs and fragments of ivory. Upon interrogation, they revealed the animal parts were being taken to Tanzania to be sold for witchcraft purpose.

Nairobi News, December 3, 2020.¹



MOZAMBIQUE

November 9, 2020

Maputo International Airport, Maputo Province, Mozambique

A Vietnamese who had been living for one year in Mozambique was caught in flagrante delicto. Her luggage have been searched. Hidden among her clothes and chocolate, candy and mushroom boxes, there were 36 teeth and 127 lions claws and 4.3 kg of rhinoceros horns. Sasa, a 6 year old German shepherd dog had spotted a suspicious smell. The seizure comes from at least 10 lions and 4 rhinoceros. The investigation is ongoing so as to confirm the poaching in Kruger park, in South Africa. The mule was about to leave Maputo by a Qatar Airways flight. Her destination was Hô Chi Minh-City.

Noticias ao Minuto, November 11, 2020 ; The Times, November 12, 2020 ; Peace Parks Foundation, November 13, 2020 ; Lowvelder, November 27, 2020.²

December 5-6, 2020

Muanza and Dondo, Sofala Province, Mozambique

Two teachers and 5 accomplices including a farmer and a technical agent with the administration have been arrested during an attempt to sell a leopard skin for 20,000 meticaïs, 270 US\$) and two elephant tusks for 24.000 meticaïs, 323 US\$.

The farmer who was the head of the gang said that he had 'found' the items in a stream. They had travelled from Muanza to Dondo by train and were met at the station by a middleman who was to put them in contact with a buyer. They were found thanks to a phone call to the police.

Club of Mozambique, December 7, 2020.³

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Near November 13, 2020

Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo

Seizure of 62 kg of raw ivory and a leopard skin. Arrest of 4 traffickers including a member of the regular army. The 'owner' of the skin said that it had been left to him by a friend and that he had associated with holders of ivory to sell it all in Brazzaville. The 'owner' of the tusks said that he had bought them in Zanaga (Lékoumou department) and had associated with his brother-in-law to go and sell it. 'We used the army man as cover'. The Director-general of the Agence Congolaise de la faune et des aires protégées (Congolese Agency for Fauna and Protected Areas), Frédéric Lambert Bockandza-Paco, reminds that another soldier had been sentenced in 2019 to 3 years in prison for traffic in ivory ("On the Trail" n°23 p.128). The operation was coordinated by the Interpol office in Brazzaville.

Vox Congo, November 13, 2020.⁴

ASIA

CHINA

October 20-21 and November 14, 2020

Puning, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 8 horns and 16 fragments of horns of rhinoceros and fragments of rhinoceros skins, 2 elephant tusks, 21 fragments of elephant skin and two tiger bones. Arrest of a 59-year-old 'dealer' and a 28-year-old pharmacist.

Xiaoxiang Morning Herald, December 20, 2020.⁶



MALAYSIA

December 30, 2020

Tanah Merah, State of Kelantan, Malaysia



Search, seizure and arrest. The police did a fine job. Having received information, they entered a house at dawn and found in a freezer the eviscerated carcasses of a black panther and a tiger and then found 10 elephants tusks in an outbuilding. The financial value of the tiger is estimated at 300,000 ringgits, that is to say nearly 74,000 US\$ and that of a panther at 100,000 ringgits or nearly 25,000 US\$. A 25-year-old man was arrested and held in preventive custody. There would seem to be a gang handling traps and AK-47s to neutralise big cats, elephants and Malayan sun bears (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I) that they sold in various form. Some 10 suspects have been identified but cannot be found for the moment. They have left their homes. The police consider it is obvious that the gang had contacts with foreign countries. The Star, December 30, 2020 ; New Straits Times, December 30 and 31, 2020 and January 1 and 8, 2021.⁷

TIGERS, LIONS, LEOPARDS, CHEETAHS, CARACALS, CLOUDED LEOPARDS, LEOPARD CATS, FISHING CATS, JAGUARUNDIS, SERVALS ...

On the Trail n°31

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/region	Ref. (year)
Amur tiger	Canines of 2 specimens	3,800	Russia	26 (2020)
	Fur, teeth, claws and bones of 2 specimens	9,000		
Tiger	Tiger cub	860	Viet Nam	23 (2020)
		360	Colombia	41 (2020)**
	Dead tiger	50,000	Malaysia	20 (2020)
	Eviscerated carcass of a frozen tiger	74,000		7 (2020)*
Lion	Heads and paws of 2 specimens	4,000	South Africa	28 (2016)
	Lion cub	1,000	Japan	40 (2020)
Leopard	Skin	13,000	India	52 (2020)
		7,000		61 (2020)
		70,000		68 (2020)
		270	Mozambique	3 (2020)*
Cheetah	Cheetah cub	75-100	Somalia	87 (2020)
		3,000-10,000	Saudi Arabia	
Bobcat	1 bobcat	1,000	United States of America	104 (2020)

* chapter Felines, Elephants / Rhinoceroses

** chapter Multi-species

Felines, see also the chapters "Pangolins, Felines / Elephants / Rhinoceroses" on page 14, "Felines, Elephants / Rhinoceroses" on page 50 and "Multi-species" page 167.

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

November 12, 2020

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

A man in the Queens was fined 500 US\$ for having tried to sell a tiger's tooth on Craigslist.

Queens Daily Eagle, November 12, 2020.¹



ASIA

CHINA

October 2020

Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of a parcel sent by post from abroad and containing 3 tiger teeth.

Chinese Customs, October 27, 2020.²

Mid-December 2020

Qinhuangdao, Hebei Province, China

The wildlife refuge set up by the China Wildlife Conservation Association (CWCA) is accused of selling lion and orangutan skins for years, taxidermizing and selling wild animals at high prices, concocting tiger wine from the bones of Amur tigers (*Panthera tigris altaica*, Appendix I) and selling tiger skin bedside rugs.

The whistleblower, who remains anonymous but has an extensive knowledge of the hidden practices of the refuge and the use of fraudulent funds derived from trafficking, lays it on thick with references to banquets where tiger meat, discreetly described as "cat meat", was served on skewers, as well as smuggled bear paws. Photos of the hole-and-corner dealings from the report circulated briefly on social networks. The Qinhuangdao Forestry Department was the main recipient of the alert. The police investigate to establish the reality of the events, which are said to have lasted for at least 20 years and stopped or slowed down 3 to 4 years ago.

New Tang Dynasty Television, December 19, 2020 ; Sound of Hope, December 19, 2020 ; Environmental Investigation Agency, December 21, 2020.³

INDIA

October 11, 2020

Mandya, Mandya District, State of Karnataka, India

Seizure of a tiger skin, 10 claws and motorcycles. Four persons were arrested. They were selling pieces of tiger skin at the edge of the Bhadra tiger reserve.

The New Indian Express, October 15, 2020.⁴

October 17, 2020

Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve, Umaria District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Tigress T-42 was 10 years old. She died of poisoning. One of her 4 babies died with her - the body was found 200 m from his mother. Patrols mounted on elephants are looking for the 3 little survivors.

The Times of India, October 17, 2020.⁵

October 21, 2020

Birla, Karbi Anglong District, State of Assam, India

Seizure of 16 tiger teeth. Four arrests.

Deccan Herald, October 21, 2020 ; Northeast Now, October 21, 2020.⁶



November 3, 2020

Ratnapur, Buldhana District, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure of 2 canines and 10 claws from 2 villagers. Their confessions led to finding the body of a decapitated, amputated body of a subadult tiger in a waterhole at the edge of the river. He was probably electrocuted in April 2020.

The Times of India, November 5, 2020.⁷



November 15 and 22, 2020

Jamunia, Panna District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

The fleshless body of a tiger buried in the sand was found by a forest patrol. Yet another electrocution is suspected. The erection of high-voltage fencing by farmers to protect crops from herbivores was condemned once again. At least 300 villages are concerned in the Madhya Pradesh. Most of the time, electricity is from an illegal connection to the network. Six men are being questioned by the police. They sell the meat by the kilo. They buried the body far from their area to confuse investigations and compromise other gangs of poachers. Madhya Pradesh, 'the Tiger State' has lost 24 tigers in 11 months. There are about 500 left. Three days previously, a tiger was run over by a lorry on the motorway at Panna.

The Times of India, November 17 and 23, 2020.⁸



TIGERS - followed

November 15 and 25, 2020

Lodhitola, Gondiya District, State of Maharashtra, India



The remains of a tiger 2 to 3 years old are scattered in rice fields several hundred metres round about. The German shepherd Peter helped to find them. The head, one paw, the claws and the tail of the tiger have not been found. A few days after the first discovery, 3 men were arrested and placed in preventive detention. They admitted to having killed the tiger by electrocution.

The Times of India, November 17 and 28, 2020 ; The Hindustan Times, November 17, 2020.⁹

**November 20 and December 17, 2020
Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, Nilgiris District, State of Tamil Nadu, India**



- A tigress is dead, lying on her back. Her breasts are swollen—she was lactating. Two baby tigers were found in a bush. They were taken to the Theppakadu animal dispensary and are being fed with goat's milk. It is unlikely that they will be free again.

- Three weeks later, the first results for stomach samples from the victim show that she was poisoned by the body of a sambar deer.

The Times of India, November 22 and December 17, 2020.¹⁰

December 5, 2020

Pune, Pune District, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure of a skin subsequently verified as a real tiger skin. Arrest of Shakiljaan Mohammed Shaikh.

The Times of India, December 7, 2020.¹¹

December 6, 2020

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



The trap photo of a tiger with barbed wire dragging from his neck resulted in anger at local NGOs, starting with Tiger Watch. T-108 fell into trap and managed to get out. The administration reacted by cancelling the holidays of forest guards and sending them to all the State parks to hunt for traps and poachers.



T-108 was anaesthetised and freed from the wire. Tapeswar Singh Bhati, a wild animal activist said that the real scandal was that of the 150 guards necessary for protecting the park only 70 were present and lacked motivation.

The Times of India, December 6, 2020.¹²

December 8, 2020

Nallasopara, Palghar District, State of Maharashtra, India

Arrest of 2 persons with a tiger's claw by agents of the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau and the Mumbai Forest Department after an enquiry on the Internet. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, December 9, 2020.¹³

December 14, 15 and 19, 2020

Batrangi and Bhandra, Jabalpur District - Savreeth, Seoni District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India



On Monday, a farmer was electrocuted at dawn on contact with a trap for wild animals.

On Tuesday, under the same circumstances, a farmer who went to irrigate his rice fields in the middle of the night was electrocuted near his home. In both cases, the trap setters are not yet identified.

Only 3 years in the world. The life expectancy of a Bengal tiger is 15 to 18 years. On Saturday, this one was electrocuted. One arrest.

The Times of India, December 16 and 19, 2020.¹⁴

December 23, 2020

Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary, Lakhimpur Kheri District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India



The trap cameras are showing a tiger strangled by a nylon cord. The week before, Khushiram was arrested with 3 traps. He told the police that he intended to catch a wild boar and that another animal had been taken and had succeeded in escaping. It is the third time in a few months that a tiger was found with the circle of a trap around his neck. The first 2 cases finished badly. The 2 victims died of strangulation and hunger. Emergency stations this time! The rangers camped in the reserve to try to find the victim, anaesthetise him and release him.

The Times of India, December 23, 2020.¹⁵

December 23, 2020

Balele, Kodagu District, State of Karnataka, India



Saving of a tigress caught in a slip knot.

Hearing her growls, people called the forest staff for help. The rangers approached the tigress on an elephant's back in order to anaesthetise her. But Abhimanyu the elephant became frightened and ran off, trumpeting his distress. Vasanth, his mahout, managed to regain control. Two hours after the start of operations, the tigress was 'tranquillised' in the presence of a small crowd that had rushed from the village to watch the event. The 8-year-old tigress was taken to a veterinary clinic in Mysore. The prognosis is reserved.

Deccan Herald, December 24, 2020.¹⁶

INDONESIA

October 18, 2020

Gayo Lues Regency, Aceh Province, Indonesia

The 3-year-old tigress was found stuck in a trap. She was released. Slightly injured, she should be all right in 3-4 days and set free. Xinhua, October 19, 2020.¹⁷



End of October 2020

North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

The Food Estate programme announced by President Joko Widodo is aimed at converting thousands of km² into cropped land, of which the State would have a monopoly, and would delegate management to the agri-food sector. On the island of Sumatra, the 600 km² to be designated for this pre-empt 39% of the habitat of tigers and 8% of that of orangutans. In order to create a shock and tetanise village communities, the Minister of Agriculture and officials of Humbang Hasundutan Regency have ploughed wild land and posed at the steering wheels of tractors.

Mongabay, January 6, 2021.¹⁸



© Antara/kemertan

December 20, 2020

Riau Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

The tigress had been freed from a nylon trap in an industrial "paper paste" plantation as is shortened by Netral News Desk. She had been trapped for at least 3 days and had a deep cut in the right forepaw. After 9 months of convalescence at the Dharmasraya tiger refuge, she was freed in a forest chosen by experts and whose location is confidential.

Netral News, December 20, 2020.¹⁹



MALAYSIA

August-October 2020

State of Johor, Malaysia

34 'exotic' restaurants are in the sights of the police and the government. A bowl of tiger or bear soup (Ursidae, Appendix I or II) is sold at 200 to 300 ringgits, that is to say 48 to 72 US\$, and tigers can be bought at clandestine slaughterhouses for around 50,000 US\$.

Tigers in the State of Johor, "On the Trail" n°22 p.121, n°27 p.124, Special Issue—Covid-19 p.20 and n°30 p.167.

Malay Mail, November 4, 2020.²⁰

THAILAND

October 7, 2020

Khlong Nueng, Pathum Thani Province, Thailand

© Wassayo Ngamkham

He had been sought after for 6 years ("On the Trail" n°11 p. 49). Yusup Sae Ma had bought the tigress for 80,000 bahts and is thought to have sold her on for 700,000 bahts, a nice profit equivalent to 18,000 US\$. The transporters had been stopped on the road to Bangkok when they were going to deliver the entire animal to a foreign buyer. The man who claimed to be a rice dealer says that he only served as an interpreter in this transaction. Bangkok Post, October 7, 2020.²¹

November 30, 2020

Bang Sai Ya, Mukdahan Province, Thailand. Border with Laos

Seizure of 5 young tigers in the zoo. Their genealogical records stated that they had been issued in the zoo from parents in captivity. Genetic analyses proved that this was not so. A tiger's head was found in an outbuilding. The owner of the zoo had already had problems with the police on the subject of 44 animals of doubtful provenance including red pandas imported illegally from Myanmar and doucs imported from Laos and Viet Nam. In Thailand, there are officially 1511 tigers in captivity while the population of wild tigers totals 2000 to 3000, of which 220 are in Thailand and Myanmar.

Traffic, November 30, 2020 ; Bangkok Post, December 1 2020 ; Chiang Rai Times, December 1 2020 ; EIA, December 3, 2020.²²

VIET NAM

Early November 2020

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Ly Hai Tho, aged 28, had in his possession a 7-kg baby tiger preserved in alcohol, a tiger's head, a bear's head and several firearms. Tho had bought the baby tiger for the equivalent of 860 US\$. Tiger wine is good for health and for the pocket. Daily Sabah (with DPA), November 9, 2020.²³

EUROPE

FRANCE

October 6, 2020

Rouen and Le Havre, Department of Seine-Maritime, France

In September 2018, a couple from Le Havre went to the police with a 3-month-old tiger. They said they had bought him a week earlier for 6,000 € (7,000 US\$) believing they were getting a savannah cat (cross between a serval and a domestic cat). Two years later, 9 people involved in this traffic were placed in police custody, including the 2 buyers. 76 Actu, October 7, 2020 ; France Bleu Normandie, October 7, 2020.²⁴

December 16, 2020

Blacourt, Department of Oise, France



Seizure of 10 tigers housed in a trailer in a disused factory. They were placed in the Tonga Terre d'Accueil refuge after an 11-hour road trip. The seizure followed a complaint by the French NGO One Voice for the mistreating of animals. The OFB agents who organised the seizure stated that "the accused reared and sold wild animals without respecting the legislation." The white tigers under the instructions of Mario Masson were exhibited in an amusement park in the region from time to time, at circus shows and in advertising clips. They were to be transferred later to a "sanctuary" in Italy. Ouest France (with AFP), December 16, 2020 ; One Voice, December 16, 2020 ; Le Parisien, December 23, 2020 ; Tonga Terre d'Accueil, December 21, 2020 ; Vanity Fair, May 26, 2021.²⁵

RUSSIA

September-November 2020

Dalneretchensk, Primorsky Krai, Russia



The 2 traffickers were caught red-handed by FSB agents. They had just sold to "a foreigner" the fur, teeth, claws and bones of two Amur tigers and collected 700,000 rubles, which is about 9,000 US\$. The transaction took place in an abandoned factory. The canines were reportedly sold earlier for 300,000 rubles or 3800 US\$. The tiger was shot dead in October in a forest in Pozharsky district. The Siberian Times, November 4, 2020 ; Vestiprim.ru, October 31, 2020 ; VI.ru, January 13, 2021.²⁶

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

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

November 20, 2020

South Africa

The Minister of Agriculture wishes to amend the "Meat Safety Act" and authorise the sale of lion meat. This would allow farmers to sell other sub-products such as bones and improve the business plan of this absurd industry. The Minister of the Environment is opposed.

The South African, November 20, 2020.²⁷

LIONS - followed

December 4, 2020

Mokopane (Potgietersrus), Limpopo Province, South Africa

Sentencing of Jeremias Macheque, Hendriques Manganye and Carlito Ngobeni to 4 and a half years and 3 years in prison for having on May 28, 2016 poisoned 2 lions in a lodge, skinned them, sold the meat and attempted to sell the heads and paws for 50,000 rand (4,000 US\$). Review Online, December 6, 2020 ; SAPS, December 6, 2020.²⁸



KENYA

October 5, 2020

Masai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya

Three lions have fallen into the traps, a true trapfield similar to a minefield in the buffer zone in the Ol Choro conservation area, with a view on the Mara river. The felines have been attracted by an eland (*Taurotragus oryx*) carcass. Four hyenas (family Hyaenidae) are also among the victims.

Mara Predator Conservation Program, October 5, 2020 ; Nation, October 8, 2020.²⁹

October 6, 2020

Kambanga Ranch, Taita-Taveta County, Kenya



The lioness body was lying near a water source. Blood was visible on the mouth and anus. Poisoning is suspected. The body has been buried.

SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2020.³⁰

October 12, 2020

Olgulului, Kajiado County, Kenya

Death of a lion cub. Strong poisoning suspicion.

SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2020.³¹



Early December 2020

Tsavo and Amboseli National Parks, Kenya



Three lions had been taken in traps so long before that the corpses could no longer be identified. Age and gender were not known. What is certain is that the teeth had disappeared. Thanks to clandestine information, 20 claws and 4 canines were seized from 2 men. The trophies of the two other lions are being sought actively.

Big Life Foundation, December 3, 2020.³²



NIGERIA

Early November 2020

Kaduna, Kaduna State, Nigeria



A king of the jungle was practically a skeleton. A visitor to Gamji Gate Zoo sounded the alarm. The NGO Wildat Life e.V took over this critical, terminal case. It funded extreme emergency care.

Daily Mail, November 10, 2020 ; WildatLife e.V, November 23, 2020.³³

LIONS - followed

SENEGAL

October 8, 2020
Dakar, Dakar Region, Senegal



Seizure of 48 lion claws. Arrest of an Indian national whose passport showed numerous trips to West Africa and of a person from Niger or Nigeria, according to the sources. The operation was handled by the urban security authorities, the management of national parks and Eagle Sénégal. Eagle, October 12, 2020 ; Archyde, October 12, 2020 ; Le Quotidien, October 12, 2020.³⁴



ZAMBIA

November 2020
Kafue National Park, Southern Province, Zambia

Then the pandemic arrived. "It was like an open tap." Rangers picked up 25 traps from May to August. From May to August 2020 they picked up 136. Two lionesses were killed in the heart of the park—an exceptional event. Seizures of bush meat rocketed.

BioGraphic, November 17, 2020 ; David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation, January 14, 2021.³⁵



ZIMBABWE

November 27, 2020
Near Hwange National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Five lions were decapitated, claws removed and skinned in the ranch of Obert Mpofu, a politician born in 1951 and a member of the Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front and elected governor of southern Matabeleland from 2000 to 2005. Mugabe then appointed him Minister of Industry and International Trade from 2005 to 2009. During his term of office, Mpofu encouraged trade between Zimbabwe and China. From 2009 to 2018, he headed 5 other ministries including the Ministry of Home Affairs. Mpofu was awarded this ranch within the framework of land redistribution. Noma Dube, November 27, 2020.³⁶

AMERICA

ARGENTINA

Early November 2020

Lujan, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina

Closing of the zoo. The animals were drugged so that they could be handled by visitors.

La Verdad, November 3, 2020.³⁷



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

October 8, 2020

State of Virginia, United States of America

There's a fuss going on in the clique of people exhibiting felines. The family of Bhagavan "Doc" Antle, who played minor roles in the *Tiger King* by Netflix, has been charged with wild animal trafficking, violation in a gang of the endangered species act and cruelty to animals. Antle who, with his daughters, runs Myrtle Beach Safari in South Carolina, is involved in trafficking lions with le Wilson's Wild Animal park in Virginia where 119 animals being mistreated were seized in November 2019. The exploits of the Antle family swimming with tigers or playing with chimpanzees are followed by millions of fans on Tik Tok and Instagram.

WildLeaks, October 12, 2020 ; National Geographic, October 9, 2020 ; The New York Times, November 20, 2020 ; Fox News, September 21, 2020.³⁸

ASIA

SAUDI ARABIA

December 16, 2020

Makkah, Mecca Province, Saudi Arabia

Alerted by neighbours who had heard roaring for 2 or 3 days, the competent authorities circled an unoccupied house and captured a lioness that was taken to a special pound.

Gulf Today, December 17, 2020.³⁹

JAPAN

November 11, 2020 / April 1, 2014-March 31, 2019

Hiroshima, Chūgoku Region, Japan

The birth of lion cubs in a zoo always hits the headlines. They are pretty and touching and cost little in food because they are breast-fed. They attract adults and their children. Lion cubs have a catalytic effect on takings. They are no longer profitable after 2-3 years when they have become lions, with a tendency to fight and eat gluttonously. At Hiroshima, as in other zoos in Japan, they are sold to animal dealers for a quarter of the price of cats with a pedigree in animal shops (100,000 yen, the equivalent of 1,000 US\$, in comparison with 400,000 yen 4,000 US\$).

With plunging incomes, zoos—more than 200 of which are private—use exchanges to renew their stock: one white rhinoceros in exchange for 20 gentoo penguins (*Pygoscelis papua*), a zebra in return for a Burmese python (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II), a red-necked wallaby (*Macropus rufogriseus*) in exchange for 2 Asian small-clawed otters (*Aonyx cinereus*, Appendix I). Red Japan, the firm specialised in buying and selling wild animals, is maintaining sales figures by exporting unwanted animals to Chinese zoos which are booming.

Asahi, November 11, 2020 ; Deutsche Welle, November 25, 2020.⁴⁰

PAKISTAN

December 2020

Lahore, Punjab Province, Pakistan

Seizure of a lion. He was about to be exhibited in a support operation for the Pakistan Democratic Movement. He was taken to the zoo in Lahore. His owner and 4 accomplices were fined 500 US\$.
Samaa, December 13, 2020.⁴¹



PALESTINE

November 10, 2020

Khan Younis, Gaza Strip, Palestine

A baker is rearing 2 lion cubs on the roof of his house that are an attraction for the children of the district. He said that he had got them from the zoo. The Ministry of Agriculture's veterinary services are starting an inquiry. "Palestinian law forbids the presence of wild animals in private dwellings." But the neighbours are not against it. "I'm not frightened. On the contrary, we are proud to have lions in our district" said one of them. What will happen when the cubs grow into lions?

Zoo in the Gaza Strip, "On the Trail" n°24 p. 57.

Asia One (with Reuters), November 12, 2020.⁴²

EUROPE

ROMANIA

November 26, 2020

Județ of Dâmbovița, Romania

Seven (on ten) of the lions owned by the Romanian singer and playboy Dani Mocanu have been transported by trucks in a transit center in the Netherlands. In some time, they will fly to South Africa to be hosted by a kind of retirement home for lions exiled around the world. In the video of the song Stop Romania, a lion appears who is too friendly and familiar not to be drugged according to animal rights NGOs and many viewers. Mocanu still holds captive 3 lions that he seeks to give away, deers and camels.

Redactia, November 22, 2020 ; Stirile PRO TV, November 27, 2020 ; Antena 3, October 6, 2021.⁴³



RUSSIA

End of November 2020

Chelyabinsk, Chelyabinsk Oblast, Russia



The transfer of Simba, the lion cub used by a person showing animals and who touted tourists on the beaches of Sochi to sell souvenir photos is taking shape ("On the Trail" n°30 p. 58). The Russian Copper Company, attentive to public dismay and to the compassion of Mr Putin, is financing the transfer of Simba to the Moshi refuge in Tanzania, considered to be an ideal place for rehabilitating lions. "Simba will be watched over 24 hours a day and will have a fine large area in which she can prowl" says the press release from the Russian Copper Company. Founded in 2004, Russian Copper Company is one of the largest copper producers in Russia.
Russian Copper Company, November 20, 2020.⁴⁴

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

Mid-December 2020
Marloth Park, Mpumalanga Province,
South Africa



A leopard was limping. He had succeeded in cutting the trap with his teeth but was suffering and over-exposed to attacks by the other animals. Four carers and vets treated him. Prognostic good. He was seen a few days later catching a warthog. The Epoch Times (with Caters News Agency), March 27, 2021.⁴⁵

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

October 29, 2020
Sankuru Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Four leopards have been killed in 3 months. "What saddens me most is that we make children believe that our natural heritage is their enemy." Adams Cassinga, October 29, 2020.⁴⁶

ASIA

INDIA

October 1, 2020
Siliguri Subdivision, Darjeeling District, State of West Bengal, India

Patrolling in the frontier zone close to Nepal, Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) paramilitaries intercepted a person carrying a leopard skin. The trafficker and his booty were handed over to the Forest Department office in Naxalbari. Sashastra Seema Bal, October 1, 2020.⁴⁷

October 11, 2020

Van Vihar National Park, Bhopal District and Indore, Indore District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India



It was said that he was the victim of a fight with another member of his species. Inspection using a scanner revealed numerous bullets in his skull. His visual acuity is definitively impaired. He is housed at Indore zoo. The Hitavada, October 12, 2020.⁴⁸

October 13, 2020

Sonepur, Subarnapur District, State of Odisha, India

Seizure of the skin of an adult leopard and questioning of Ashok Chhatria. Orissa Post, October 13, 2020.⁴⁹

October 20, 2020

Katas, Mayurbhanj District, State of Odisha, India

Seizure of a skin 1.67 long and 1.37 m wide and arrest of 5 men aged 21, 25 and 42. The New Indian Express, October 21, 2020 ; Outlook India, October 20, 2020.⁵⁰

October 22, 2020

Nagrakata, Jalpaiguri District, State of West Bengal, India

Seizure of 2 skins in a tea plantation. A man has been arrested. Accomplices are sought. Outlook India, October 23, 2020.⁵¹

October 23, 2020

Thane, Thane District, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure of a skin worth a little more than 13,000 US\$. Sachin Bhosale and Shahji Dande, 33 and 30, were arrested at a bus stop. The Times of India, October 28, 2020.⁵²

LEOPARDS - followed

October 27, 2020

Athimanagar, Nilgiris District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

The weapon was found in a bush near the bungalow of the director of the tea plantation a week after a seriously scarred leopard was found. He was 5 years old. He was incinerated in a forest after the autopsy. The Times of India, October 29 and November 5, 2020.⁵³



October 28, 2020

Bihpukhuri, Biswanath District, State of Assam, India



Yudhisthir Tanti, Bullet Munda alias Babu and Subhash Mirdha admitted to have killed the leopard at the frontier with Arunachal Pradesh. They were caught transporting skin, teeth and bones. At first sight it is difficult to know about the bones whether they were from a leopard or a tiger. India Today, October 29, 2020 ; Northeast Now, October 29, 2020 ; Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, October 29, 2020.⁵⁴

October 28, 2020

Patratoli, Jashpur District, State of Chhattisgarh, India

Their names are Gokul Sai Sidar, Chandan Sai Sidar, Hemsagar Sidar and Keshar. They caught a leopard in an electrical trap. They removed the teeth and claws and hid the body in a cave. The tail, 2 claws and the canines were found by the police. The Times of India, October 28, 2020.⁵⁵



FAMILY AFFAIRS

October 29, 2020

Gunduguda, Mancherial District, State of Telangana, India

Gangu contacted Vamshi who contacted his cousin Murali at Hyderabad for him to take possession of the leopard skin that Shankar had poached 2 weeks earlier. Murali asked his friends Prasad, Raju, Jameel, Wajid and Krishna to go and examine the skin hidden in the forest near the village of Gunduguda. They were all arrested provisionally by the police with the exception of Shankar, the killer who started it all, Murali and Raju, his friend and expert in leopard skins. The skin, a motorcycle and a rickshaw were seized. Superintendent Satyanarayana congratulated the 13 police inspectors and officers who identified the gang. Telangana Today, October 29, 2020.⁵⁶

Early November 2020

Birsinghpur Forest, Umaria District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India



Discover of the body of a leopard that had been electrocuted 3-4 days before. "Prima facie it seems that the leopard got electrocuted elsewhere and later the body was shifted to the forest area." An inquiry is in progress. The Free Press Journal, November 8 and December 9, 2020.⁵⁷

November 6, 2020

Kallundi, Hassan District, State of Karnataka, India

Suspicious death of 2 leopards. Two vets sent to the site are to perform post-mortem examinations. Deccan Herald, November 7, 2020.⁵⁸

November 7, 2020

Selas, Nilgiris District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

The arrests of Murugan and Selvan followed the discovery of a 5-year-old female leopard. The Hindu, November 8, 2020.⁵⁹

FAMILY AFFAIRS

November 9, 2020

Tollygunge, South 24 Parganas District, State of West Bengal, India

The WCCB and forestry officers combined efforts to arrest the Mahato brothers aged 29 and 32 and to seize a fresh leopard skin and 2 motorcycles. Hindustan Times, November 10, 2020 ; WCCB, November 10, 2020.⁶⁰



LEOPARDS - followed

November 17, 2020

Bhubaneswar, Khordha District, State of Odisha, India

The skin is worth 500,000 rupees, nearly 7,000 US\$. It measures 124.5 cm from muzzle to anus and the tail is 78.7 cm long. The poacher has been arrested. He is a driver at a private university and 33 years old. The poaching and skinning of leopard is passed on from generation to generation.

The Times of India, November 18, 2020.⁶¹

November 17, 2020

Barela, Panchkula District, State of Haryana, India

Caught in a metal trap and approached during the night by a team of vets which did not dare intervene before sunrise, the leopard succeeded in freeing himself, leaving a claw at the scene. His age and sex are not known.

The Times of India, November 19, 2020.⁶²



November 18, 2020

Bhiwakhidki, Gondia District, State of Maharashtra, India

On Wednesday, during the night, the police arrested 3 persons who attempted to sell the skin of the leopard to another policeman playing the role of interested trafficker. The claws and other parts of the mutilated body were also seized.

The Times of India, November 19, 2020.⁶³

November 21, 2020

Jaitpur, Shahdol District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Seizure of 2 skins and a motorcycle. Arrest of Mahavir Singh Gaud and Surya Pratap Singh Gaud.

Outlook India, November 21, 2020.⁶⁴

November 26, 2020

Tanakpur, Champawat District, State of Uttarakhand, India. Border with Nepal.

The victim is some 3 years old. Her skin is 1.52 m long. It was in the hands of Balraj Sarki, a Nepalese who came from the district of Kanchanpur, State of Nepal, had crossed the frontier with no problem and was going to Tanakpur to deliver the skin to an Indian correspondent.

The Times of India, November 26, 2020.⁶⁵

November 28, 2020

Kotbharri, Dhamtari District, State of Chhattisgarh, India

The skin was in the saddlebag of the motorcycle. Lal Netam is being interviewed by the police.

Outlook India, November 29, 2020.⁶⁶

December 8, 2020

Fatehpur, Kangra District, State of Himachal Pradesh, India

The leopard hanging from a tree by a slipknot was saved at the last possible moment and taken to Gopalpur Zoo for emergency care. 'We see 10 to 12 cases like that each year' says Anil, the local head of forestry services.

Hindustan Times, December 9, 2020.⁶⁷



December 9, 2020

Barwaha, Khargone District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

The 2 servants at a middle class house tried to sell the complete skin of an adult leopard with paws and tail for 5 million rupees, that is to say nearly 70,000 US\$. Nyoooz, December 11, 2020; The Free Press Journal, December 10, 2020.⁶⁸

December 9, 2020

Dadargaon, Dindori District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India



Questioning of Kul Singh Kushram and Dasrath Pandram who are thought to be responsible for the electrocution of a female leopard.

The Free Press Journal, December 9, 2020.⁶⁹

December 16, 2020

Rajabhat Tea Garden, Jalpaiguri District, State of West Bengal, India

A mutilated dead leopard with the tail removed has been found in an irrigation canal.

Azad Hind News, December 16, 2020.⁷⁰

December 16, 2020

Panvel, Raigad District, State of Maharashtra, India

Arrest of Ganpat Palku Lobhi and Ganpat Raghu Wagh. They live in the hills close to the Moirbe dam reservoir. They claim to have "found" a dead leopard. They took him to their house and skinned him with a knife. They put the skin, the claws and the jaws on one side before cutting up and cooking him. The skin and the claws were seized.

Outlook India, December 16, 2020; United News of India, December 16, 2020.⁷¹

December 18, 2020

Panitanki, Darjeeling District, State of West Bengal, India. Border with Nepal

Arrest by SSB paramilitary of a person with a leopard skin. The skin and the prisoner were handed over to the Bagdogra Forestry Department.

Sashastra Seema Bal, December 18, 2020.⁷²

December 20, 2020

Chheeni Goth, Champawat District, State of Uttarakhand, India



The leopard has paws and stomach injuries. Stuck in a metal trap, from which he was freed after "chemical immobilisation" by a forestry squad.

The Times of India, December 21, 2020.⁷³

December 22, 2020

Bhembali, Mahendri Forest, Amravati District, State of Maharashtra, India

The tongue of the victim was black, a sign of poisoning. The autopsy will give more details. The forest was classified as a fauna reserve at the beginning of the month.

The Times of India, December 23, 2020.⁷⁴

LEOPARDS - followed

December 27, 2020

Gohani, Satna District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India



This Sunday morning, the leopard was found by a passer-by. He is covered in scratches. He was dragged there to cover the tracks. The autopsy revealed that he died of electrocution. Two farmers are being questioned by the police. The Times of India, December 29, 2020.⁷⁵

December 27, 2020

Nagrakata, Jalpaiguri District, State of West Bengal, India

A leopard was found dead in a tea plantation. According to the post-mortem he had died in a fight without leopard. One or more opportunists took one of his paws. Telegraph India, January 5, 2021.⁷⁶

December 29, 2020

Ajhuli Forest, Shahdol District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India



In the early evening they were surprised by villagers while they were skinning a leopard about 3 years old. The 3 poachers were followed trailing flashes of their torch. The pursuit in the forest lasted for several hours and the rangers finally arrested them. The Times of India, December 30, 2020.⁷⁷

INDONESIA

October 20, 2020

Ciwidey Forest, Bandung Regency, West Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia

The Javan leopard (*Panthera pardus melas*) had been caught in a trap at least 5 days previously. She died in spite of the care, attention, competence and tenderness of the teams. The Jakarta Post, October 27, 2020.⁷⁸

NEPAL

December 25, 2020

Attariya, Kailali District, Sudurpaschim Province, Nepal



Seizure of a skin and bones. Three arrests. The NGO Wild Tiger reports a renewed increase in seizures in the Dang district at the frontier with the Indian State of Uttar Pradesh. Wild Tiger, December 2020.⁷⁹

PAKISTAN

November 22, 2020

Balakot, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan

The police had been after them for several months. The 2 men came down from the mountains and supplied large towns with leopard by-products. Four skins were seized. The inquiry had started in October 2019 ("On the Trail" n°27 p. 81). Daily Pakistan, November 23, 2020 ; Urdu Point, November 23, 2020.⁸⁰

SRI LANKA

November 9, 2020

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

He was trapped in the park. The people with the skin in their possession were arrested. Leopocon Sri Lanka, November 9, 2020.⁸¹

Early November 2020

Eluvankulam, North Western Province, Sri Lanka

The bag containing a dismantled artisanal firearm and a leopard skin was found at the bottom of a trench that prevents elephants from entering cultivated fields. One arrest. Daily News, November 12, 2020.⁸²

November 29, 2020

Matale, Central Province, Sri Lanka

It is officially the 12th to die in a trap since the beginning of the year. Naturalists grieve for the leopards of Sri Lanka. News 1st, November 29, 2020.⁸³



EUROPE

GERMANY

Early December 2020

Lower Saxony, Germany



ebay

Seizure of a leopard skull offered for sale on e-Bay. The man said that he had bought it in 1992 at a flea market.

International trade in live leopards and parts of leopards has been forbidden since 1975. Hamburger Morgenpost, December 10, 2020.⁸⁴

LATVIA

December 23, 2020

Riga, Riga Region, Latvia

After the black panther of Armentières, France, here comes the black panther of Riga who lived neutered and cloistered in an apartment. "Thank God! She still has her teeth," says the director of the zoo, who has taken charge of her for the time being. But he deplores that the claws were torn off. The 2 "owners" of the feline have been sentenced to a 41,000 US\$ fine for one and to 420 hours of community service and one year of probation for the other. As for the claw cutter, he was fined 24,000 US\$.

Public broadcasting of Latvia, February 24 and December 29, 2020.⁸⁵

CHEETAHS - *Acinonyx jubatus*, Appendix I

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

Early October 2020

North West Province, South Africa.
Near border with Botswana

Freeing of a male cheetah caught in a jaw trap. Peter Caldwell of the Old Chapel veterinary clinic reconstructed ligaments and blood vessels in cooperation with Ashia Cheetah Conservation.



Ashia Cheetah Conservation, October 13, 2020 ;
Getaway, October 14, 2020.⁸⁶

SOMALIA / SOMALILAND

October 18, 2020 and November 2020
Hargeisa, Maroodi Jex Region, Somalia
/ Somaliland

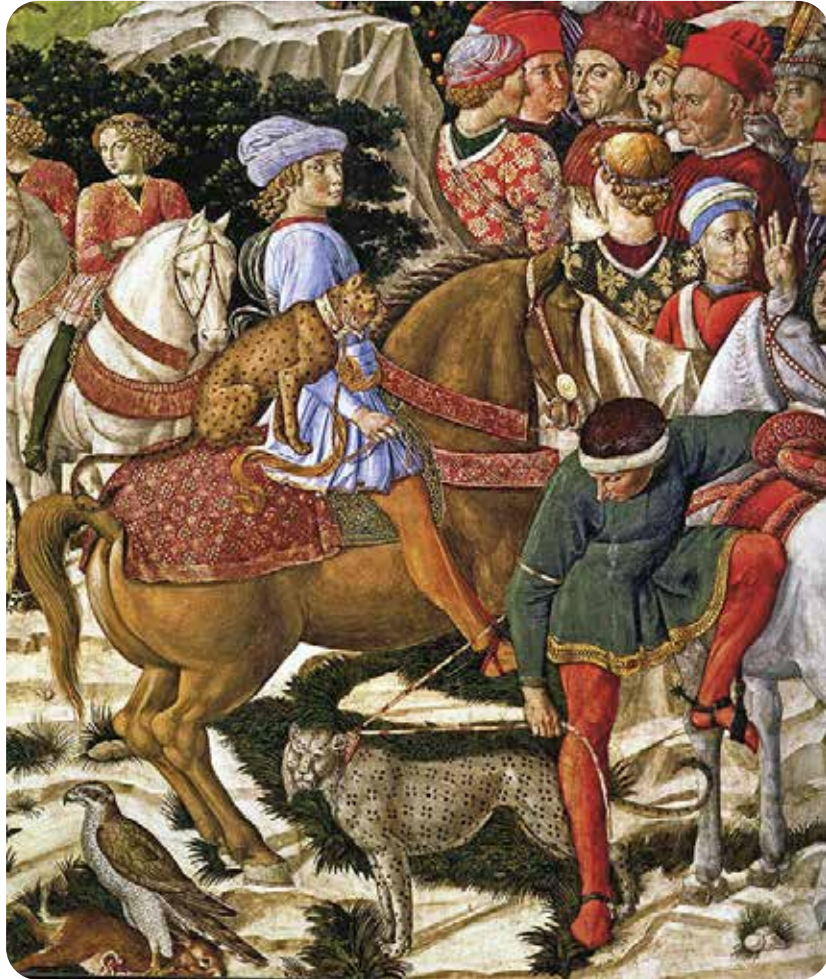
The CCF (Cheetah Conservation Fund) reports that 29 cheetahs have been saved from captivity since the beginning of the year. Three of them died after being released. Their population in the Horn of Africa is estimated at between 300 and 500 specimens. No slowing of traffic to the Middle East has been observed during the Covid period. Although the possession of wild animals is forbidden there, Saudi Arabia is the main importing country. A poacher in Somalia receives 75 to 100 US\$ per cheetah, the smuggler between Somalia and the Yemen gets 300 to 800 US\$. On the final market a cheetah sells for between 3,000 and 10,000 US\$.

In November, Cabdiraxmaan Yusuf Mahdi aka Cabdi Xayawaan and Maxamed Cali Guuleed were sentenced to 4 years in prison for holding 10 cheetahs and attempting to export them to the petromonarchies of the Arabian Peninsula via Yemen. A female cheetah seized from Guuleed in October 2020 is now comfortable and healthy in one of CCF's refuges in Hargeisa. Like her 59 congeners seized from cars, baskets, boats, poachers' hideouts, she is too dependent on human activities to be released back into the savannah.

Cheetahs are known for attacking farmers' goats and sheep. A few shouts or other warning sounds would be enough to make them go away. The farmers say that they capture and domesticate young cheetahs so that they do not become predators when they are adult. The kittens are very easy to soothe and can be fed on very little—a small piece of goat's meat and a dribble of camel milk. When they remain in captivity for several years their skeletons become deformed for lack of calcium.

Cheetahs have this in common with falcons that they have been used by hunters for at least a thousand years. Marco Polo mentions the thousand cheetahs trained for hunting by a Mongolian emperor. Like the falcons, they had their heads covered with a hood before setting off in the pursuit of gazelles. Normandy was the scene of stag-hunting with cheetahs imported from the Middle East after the Crusades. Freed from their cages and with their eyes wide open, they galloped after the deer and knocked them down with their paws. They would then wait for the arrival of the hunters and receive the entrails in exchange for their speed and docility. Hunting with cheetahs was widespread in Western Europe until the end of the 16th century.

"Grands félins et guépards", Le Monde animal en 13 volumes, tome XII, pp. 327-332, 2019, edited by Grzimek B. and Fontaine M. Éditions Stauffacher, 1974 ; Larousse du XX^{ème} siècle en six volumes, tome deuxième, p. 163, 1929. Thierry Buquet, "Cheetah and lynx hunting in Syria and Iraq in the Middle Ages," Les Carnets de l'Ifpo (Institut français du Proche-Orient), February 7, 2012. Cheetah Conservation Fund, October 19, 2020; Mongabay, October 7, 2020; Margot Raggett, October 7, 2020 ; National Geographic, August 17, 2021.⁸⁷



Benozzo Gozzoli, Procession of the Magus (detail), 1459, Florence, Palazzo Medici-Riccardi, Cappella Medici

ZAMBIA

December 18, 2020

Bangweulu Wetlands, Northern Province, Zambia

An attempt at reintroducing cheetahs in Zambia where they were eradicated more than a century ago. Three specimens imported from South Africa were released, with the agreement of the local communities. Bangweulu, which means 'where water meets the sky', is one of the largest wetlands in Africa. It covers 6,000 km². 50,000 people live there and exploit the natural resources sustainably. Bangweulu is a Ramsar site and has varied flora and fauna, including in particular elephants, buffaloes, lechwe, shoebills (*Balaeniceps rex* - picture) and more than 433 species of birds.

Department of National Parks & Wildlife, December 18, 2020 ; African Parks, December 18, 2020.⁸⁸



CARACALS - *Caracal caracal*, Appendix II except the Asian populations which are listed under CITES Appendix I

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

**January-Early December 2020
Fish Hoek, Kommetjie and Noordhoek
Wetlands, Cape Town, Western Cape
Province, South Africa**



Caracals are in trouble. Poachers burn vegetation. Two weeks later, the regrowth attracts the grysboks that are their favourite prey. After the fire come traps in metal, nylon and fishing line. Other poachers hunt caracals with packs of dogs. The NGO Urban Caracal Project is fiercely against the persecution of these discreet nocturnal animals which live quiet lives without harming human activities. Common before, there are now only a few dozen in the residential sector near the sea. People go for caracals for their meat, their skin and by a taste for ferocity.

Network for Animals, December 4, 2020.⁸⁹

CARACALS - followed

EUROPE

NETHERLANDS

Week of November 13, 2020
Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, North Holland
Province, The Netherlands



Seizure of a tamed caracal attacking a gysbok.
Dutch Customs, November 13, 2020.⁹⁰

SERVALS - *Leptailurus serval*, Appendix II

AFRICA

ZIMBABWE

December 23, 2020
Hwange, Matabeleland North
Province, Zimbabwe



In front of the judges, you always have to try your luck and Mabulo Mathias Nyathi did so with an argument that went beyond the usual "I have a family to feed", "the bag full of lion bones at the bus stop wasn't mine, someone dropped it off", "the tiger stuff wasn't for trade, it was for my own personal consumption" or "my father is very sick, I wanted to treat him with scales". To justify the presence in her room of a serval skin (*Leptailurus serval*, Appendix II) and an African buffalo tail (*Syncerus caffer*), not to mention the 60 grams of marijuana found under a sofa, Nyathi claims he had a vision and heard the voice of a medium who strongly recommended that he should have some wildlife attributes in his home to improve his lot and that of his family.

The court, apparently sympathetic to the plea, initially ordered a 12-month prison sentence for wildlife trafficking and then reduced it to a 4-month suspended prison term while the remaining 8 months were converted to 280 hours of community service at Madumabisa police station. As for the 6-month prison sentence for possession of dagga, it was suspended on condition that Nyathi behaves in an exemplary manner for 5 years.

NewZimbabwe.com, December 31, 2020.⁹¹

EUROPE

FRANCE

November 26, 2020
Saint-Martin-la-Plaine, Department of Loire,
France



After a seizure in the suburbs of Paris, a female serval about 2 years old was settled in the Tonga Refuge.

Tonga Terre d'Accueil, December 8, 2020.⁹²

CLOUDED LEOPARDS - *Neofelis nebulosa*, Appendix I

ASIA

INDIA

October 17, 2020
Bishnupur District, State of Manipur, India

We will not get any further details: a patrol of the 15th SSB battalion stopped a person in possession of the skin of a clouded leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*, Appendix I). They were handed over to the Bishnupur Forest Office.

Sashastra Seema Bal, October 17, 2020.⁹³

LEOPARD CATS *Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II except the Asian populations which are listed under CITES Appendix I

ASIA

VIET NAM

October 14, 2020
Con Cuong District, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam.
Border with Laos.

In the rear of the pick-up, there were 2 leopard cats (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix I or II), 2 porcupines (family Hystricidae) and 4 civets, all dead. Arrest of Nguyen Canh Hieu.

ENV, October 18, 2020 ; Nghe An TV, October 15, 2020.⁹⁴

Early November 2020
Krong Nang District, Dak Lak Province, Viet Nam

They carried a bag containing 8 dead leopard cubs with them on their motorcycle. They were given only 2 fines of 25 million dong, that is to say 10,800 US\$. ENV, November 4, 2020.⁹⁵



November 10, 2020
Thai Nguyen Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of a live leopard cat. He had just been caught by a group of hunters. ENV, November 11, 2020.⁹⁶



December 14, 2020
Luong Son District, Hoa Binh Province, Viet Nam

Christmas is coming. Presents of all kinds are being prepared. A leopard cat escaped a dining table or a cage. He was seized by the police from a man who claimed that his chickens were in danger. Joint operation by Cuc Phuong national park and Save Vietnam's Wildlife. Save Vietnam's Wildlife, December 16, 2020.⁹⁷

FISHING CATS - *Prionailurus viverrinus*, Appendix II

ASIA

INDIA

November 26, 2020
Aima, Howrah District, State of West Bengal, India

Lynching of an adult fishing cat suspected of having killed a few chickens. The Covid-19 crisis has worsened relationships between fishing cats and human activities. The death rate of these small cats with average weight of 15 kg is increasing. They are often confused with leopard or tiger cubs. The Telegraph, November 28, 2020.⁹⁸



JAGUARUNDIS - *Herpailurus yagouaroundi*, Appendix II, except for the Central and North American populations which are listed in Appendix I

AMERICA

FRANCE (FRENCH GUIANA)

December 18, 2020
Kourou, Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France

Saving of a jaguarundi cub that had taken refuge in a classroom. He had a collar and trailed a lead. He had escaped from a domestic prison and has been entrusted to a specialised institution whose address is kept confidential. Several of these refuges have been held up in the past in order to steal wild animals and then sell them. France-Guyane, December 18, 2020.⁹⁹

OCELOTS, *Leopardus pardalis*, Appendix I

AMERICA

COLOMBIA

End of December 2020
Yacopí, Department of Cundinamarca, Colombia

Two ocelots:

- One succeeded in escaping from a pack of hounds. He took refuge in the courtyard of a house and was placed in a CAV (Centro de atención y valoración de la fauna silvestre) for observation.
- The other is dead. He did not escape from the hounds.

Sostenibilidad Semana, October 26, 2020.¹⁰⁰

PERU

Early December 2020
Moyobamba, Province of San Martín, Peru

Release of an ocelot kitten from a cage and transfer to the RAREC (Rainforest Awareness Rescue Education Center) in Iquitos. Neotropical Primate Conservation, December 4, 2020.¹⁰¹

PUMAS - *Puma concolor*, Appendix II, except for the populations of Costa Rica and Panama which are in Appendix I

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

December 22, 2020
Los Angeles County, State of California, United States of America

No to building in the habitat of pumas. The latter frequent Grasshopper Creek, a tributary of the river Santa Clara. The creek would be buried for a distance of 5 km by the residences of the Northlake project. The area is also classified as very high fire hazard. The Center for Biological Diversity is taking the developers to court. CBS Los Angeles, December 22, 2020.¹⁰²



Puma crossing the migration corridor that would be eliminated by the Northlake project

PUMAS- followed

December 30, 2020

Santa Cruz, State of California, United States of America

A puma, imposing from nearby but seemingly starved from close up, wandered among the residential buildings. He was caught and placed under attentive care. The prognosis is reserved. The Director of the fauna emergency brigade thinks that he had been poisoned by a rodenticide used by people in towns to eliminate rats,



mice and squirrels. "Predators even dogs and cats get a dose when they eat a rodent mortally poisoned." "The rodent is dead but the poison is

not gone." This summer, 4 pumas on the campus and in the mountains around Santa Cruz were found in agony and the 4 had, in one way or another, ingested anticoagulant rodenticides.

Since January 2021, Law 1788 forbids the domestic use in California of second generation rodenticides which, as laid out in the whereas clauses of the law, remain active in the livers of the poisoned animals for 100 days. Urban areas are increasingly being used by mountain lions, bobcats and birds of prey and the public enjoys seeing them and values these animals and the ecosystem services they provide.

The fauna emergency brigade only takes action in cases of clear disturbance of public order.

If you should happen to be in more or less close contact with a puma, here is some useful advice given by the experts at the animal refuge in the county pg Santa Cruz:

1- Anyone who comes across a mountain lion sleeping or relaxing should remain calm and leave the area. If the animal does not see you, walk away. Do not run, Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter Programs and Development Manager Erika Anderson said.

2- If the mountain lion is being aggressive or approaching you, the animal shelter suggests making yourself appear bigger by putting your arms over your head.

3- "If worse comes to worse, you want to throw things," Anderson said. "You don't want to run because that may initiate a chase on the lion's half. Be confident stand up very tall and try to scare them away."

4- Anyone in a dangerous situation should call 911 and make their own safety priority No. 1. Worry about getting to a safe situation before reporting the mountain lion sighting.

5- If anyone wishes to walk or ride a bike at night, the animal shelter suggests bringing a friend and not going alone. Walkers should remain alert and aware of their surroundings.

6- "Another way people can be extra cautious if they can listen out for birdsong," "They'll make a warning call. That can expand the way you can observe."

7- Lastly, it is suggested that pet owners bring their pets in at night.

Santa Cruz Sentinel, December 31, 2020.¹⁰³

BOBCATS and LYNX - *Lynx* spp., Appendix II

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

November 25, 2020

Harris County, State of Texas, United States of America



Arrest and charging of Jovidon Sorbon, a kick-boxing champion, after capturing and mistreating a bobcat and attempting to sell him for 1,000 US\$ on Craigslist.

Houston Chronicle, December 9, 2020.¹⁰⁴

EUROPE

FRANCE AND SWITZERLAND

October 25 and December 30, 2020

Le Bémont, District of Franches-Montagnes, Canton of Jura, Switzerland and Canton of Quingey, Department of Doubs, France

- The female had been shot with about 20 bullets. It is the first lynx to have been shot for 20 years in the Swiss Jura mountains where there is a population of about 100.

- About 100 kilometres from there, a hiker found the body of a lynx that had also been shot. This is the third shooting since the beginning of the year. In France, the lynx population is only about 100 spread between the Jura, Alpes and Vosges departments. According to Gilles Moyne, of the Centre Athénas, a wild animal protection centre in Jura, the increase in the finding of young orphan lynxes is disturbing. "When entire family of young lynxes appears and searches for food near houses, in cat dishes, there's a problem. This is related to poaching. The mother has been killed."

France 3 Bourgogne-Franche-Comté, November 3, 2020 and January 1 and 5, 2021 ; 24 heures, October 30, 2020.¹⁰⁵

EUROPE

FRANCE

End of November 2020

Beaumont-Aubertans, Department of Haute-Saône, France

Last-minute saving of a wild cat (*Felis silvestris*, Appendix II) caught in a snare for several days. He had been found by a hiker. After several weeks of care and healing at the Athénas centre he will be released. "They eat voles and are an ally for farmers".

L'Est Républicain, December 25, 2020.¹⁰⁶



MULTI-FELINES

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

December 3, 2020

United States of America

The Big Cat Public Safety Act has started its legislative career. It has just been put to the vote in the House of Representatives (272 for; 114 against). It must now be examined by the Senate. Introduced by senators Richard Blumenthal, Susan Collins, Tom Carper and Richard Burr, it will forbid private persons from owning lions, tigers, leopards, cheetahs, jaguars and pumas and all hybrids of these species.

Since 1990, more than 400 accidents involving large captive felines have been recorded in 46 States and in the District of Columbia. 26 persons have been killed, including 5 children, and hundreds have been seriously injured and sometimes amputated. In most cases, the first people on the scene had no techniques or technical means for neutralising the animals and only had the option of shooting them. When the "kittens" are too big for the taking of family or paid selfies they are sold to zoos along the road or to so-called "sanctuaries" and kept in awful conditions. Everything leads to believing that felines at the end of their lives supply the demand for traditional medicine by Asian communities in the USA. The keeping of large felines as pets is already forbidden in 35 countries. Only a federal law would beat the "Tiger Kings" and their thousands of emulators.

Humane Society, December 3, 2020 ; One Green Planet, January 13, 2021 ; Animal Welfare Institute, April 19, 2021.¹⁰⁷

FRANCE (FRENCH GUIANA)

December 2020

Cayenne Island, Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France,

Seizure by the Office français de la biodiversité (OFB) at 3 jewellers' shops on the island of Cayenne of 49 feline teeth, 2 jaguar claws, 6 peccary teeth (*Tayassuidae*, Appendix I or II), one Black caiman tooth (*Melanosuchus niger*, Appendix I) and a South American tapir tooth (*Tapirus terrestris*, Appendix II). French Biodiversity Office, May 20, 2021.¹⁰⁸

ASIA

INDIA

December 20, 2020

Chennai International Airport, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Three teeth attributed on the first examination to a lion, a jaguar and a tiger or a leopard, together with animal ash, were discovered by customs officers in balls of paper hidden in a passenger. The aircraft, arriving from Dubai, was searched by the customs. Information received stated that Flight EK-544 from the Emirates was carrying gold and fauna items. The Times of India, December 20, 2020.¹⁰⁹

THAILAND

December 23, 2020

Bangkok, Thailand

Hotel Cabochon welcomes you to its restaurant and café corner. Seizure of 3 clouded leopard skins, 2 leopard skins and a skull and 2 Bengal tiger skins.



Mrs Raweewan, the director, fled after seeing the search warrant and after telling the police that the Taiwanese owner was absent.

Bangkok Post, December 24 and 25, 2020 ; Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, December 24, 2020.¹¹⁰

EUROPE

FRANCE

November 24, 2020

Arelaune-en-Seine, Department of Seine-Maritime, France

Impounding of 14 'big cats' including 2 lion cubs and a tiger cub. "Caresse de tigre" that looks like a roadside zoo in the USA is accused of bad treatment by the French NGO Aves (Agir pour le Vivant et les Espèces Sauvages) and of profit-making based on felines of obscure origin. The people running it, Brigitte Klimond and Pesut Zdravko, said that they recovered animals from bankrupt circuses. Visitors pay 50€ to "interact" with feline cubs by bottle-feeding them and with adults by giving them Normandy Camembert or, worse still, Munster from Alsace. "The more it stinks, the more they like it" said the director. Cuddling has been stopped while awaiting the results of the inquiry. Sequestration has been coordinated by the OFB.

76 Actu, November 27, 2020 ; Daily Mail, December 2, 2020.¹¹¹

MALTA

6 décembre 2020

December 6, 2020

Siggiewi, Southern Region, Malta

A Maltese "Tiger King" answers back. He denies administering sedatives to tiger cubs that are cuddled by visitors. A video triggered on Tik Tok protests by defenders of wildlife and by political personalities. Appointed a month ago as commissioner for the well-being of animals by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Agriculture, Alison Bezzina reacted by saying that wild animals had no business being in cages, whatever their size and state of health. The reply of Anton Rea Cutajar, Director of the L-Arka' ta' Noe ("On the Trail" n°12 p. 61) that also houses zebras and lamas was cutting: "I will tell you face to face if you insist, I will send letters to the appropriate persons so that you are removed from your post." The government subsequently revised its strategy for wildlife in captivity and said that it was now ready to accept the touching of animals by clients.

Lovin Malta, December 6, 2020 ; Times of Malta, December 8, 2020.¹¹²



WOLVES, ASIATIC WILD DOGS, HYENAS AND GOLDEN JACKALS

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

October 29, 2020

Sabie Park entry, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Extrication of a female spotted hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*) strangled by the cable of a trap.

South African National Parks, October 30, 2020.¹



AMERICA

ECUADOR

October 22, 2020

Pedro Moncayo Township, Pichincha Province, Ecuador



Liberation of a "wolf of the Andes". She is in fact colpeo fox (*Lycalopex culpaeus*, Appendix II). She had been seized in the early 2020 by the environment policy in a private home. She was on the chain like a domestic dog. After 8 months of care and wildlife learning in Ilitío, she was released in Mojanda wetland. Colpeo foxes live in the Andes Mountains, from North Colombia to the South of the continent. Until the 1990's, they were killed for their fur. They are also persecuted by breeders. Ministerio del Ambiente, Agua y Transición Ecológica, October 26, 2020.²



Striped hyaena , *Hyaena hyaena*. Photo S.More

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

October 29, 2020

United States of America

Just before the referendum on the reintroduction of the wolf in Colorado, the Trump administration officially removed the grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) from the list of endangered species. Pro-wolf NGOs are protesting against this decision. They point out that the 6,000 wolves now counted on the territory of the United States after 45 years of protection are concentrated in only 20% of their distribution area prior to the eradication campaign launched at the beginning of the 20th century by the livestock unions. On the North American continent, wolves were present from Canada to New Mexico and from Maine to California. Viable packs are now confined to the State of Washington, Oregon, California, Minnesota and the Great Lakes region thanks to the infusion of Canadian packs. The withdrawal from the list of endangered species does not concern Mexican wolves (*Canis lupus baileyi*) and the red wolves (*Canis rufus*). National Geographic, October 29, 2020 ; Heidi. news, December 29, 2020 ; Earthjustice, January 14, 2021.³

November 5, 2020

State of Colorado, United States of America



It has been confirmed that the majority of inhabitants favours the reintroduction of grey wolves. The vote was overwhelming. Three million people voted. The "Yes" vote had a narrow win against the "No" vote. As usual in such initiatives, urban people voted for and rural people voted against. In the southern Rocky Mountains, the howling of the wolves will soon be heard, the big chill. Wolves are natural regulators of ecosystems. They save hunters from the effort of picking up a gun and from bothering to kill deer, moose or coyotes. The remains of the wolves' meals feed eagles, wolverines and bears. Wolves are habitat and landscape conservationists. By controlling herbivore populations, they prevent overcrowding in hills and grasslands and control erosion and mudslides.

National Geographic, November 5, 2020.⁴

September-December 2020

State of Arizona, United States of America

The Mexican wolves (*Canis lupus baileyi*, Appendix II) are put to rout and no educational or regulatory effort seems to be able to oppose their extinction. In the last 3 months of 2020, 11 specimens died in traps or under circumstances that according to the conventional expression of the Arizona Game and Fish Department "are under investigations." The refugee pack in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest whose repopulation capacities were admired by State agents and NGOs was struck to the heart. Its valiant mother, who agreed to educate and adopt orphans in addition to her natural offspring, was found dead in circumstances that are also "under investigations". The dominant male who fell into a trap, managed to extract himself by amputating a leg but did not have the strength to rejoin his beloved pack. He was finished off by the guards. Today, less than 150 Mexican wolves are alive in Arizona and New Mexico.

Mexican wolf, have a look at "On the Trail" n°21 p.70, n°23 p.95, n°24 p.64 and n°30 p.69.

Wolf Conservation Center, January 30, 2021.⁵

SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

October 19, 2020

Satyagala, Mysore District, Karnataka State, India

An agricultural bomb tore apart a golden jackal (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III in India) in the middle of the night. Two poachers with explosives are questioned by the police.

Tamil Nadu Chronicle, October 19, 2020.⁶



October 21, 2020

Chatra District, Jharkhand State, India

The striped hyena (*Hyaena hyaena*, Appendix III in Pakistan) was killed for pleasure or to eliminate a competitor in deer hunting. Deer meat is trafficked for profit. Hyena meat is not honored of being served in restaurants.

The Telegraph India, October 22, 2020.⁷

November 4, 2020

Kalana, Ahmedabad District, Gujarat State, India

The teenagers had a great time on Wednesday night. They lynched a striped hyena (*Hyaena hyaena*, Appendix III in Pakistan) after beating her with a club and in the end they doused her with gasoline to burn her.

The Times of India, November 11, 2020 ; The Indian Express, November 6, 2020.⁸

December 4, 2020

Bokkapuram, Nilgiris District, Tamil Nadu State, India

Five Asian dholes (*Cuon alpinus*, Appendix II) were found dead and clustered together in September 2020 in the buffer zone of the Mudumalai Tiger reserve (see "On the Trail" n°30 p.70). The autopsy proved poisoning by the consumption of a deer carcass impregnated with pesticides. Three suspects, D. Sivan, M. Ramesh and M. Madevan have just been arrested. They are said to have admitted the facts.

The Hindu, December 7, 2020 ; The Times of India, December 5, 2020.⁹



December 5, 2020

Purulia District, West Bengal State, India

After the lynched, hanged and burned leopard in June 2015 (cf. "On the Trail" n°9 p.51), Purulia District did it again with a Golden jackal (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III in India). The victim fell in an open dry pipe and was burned alive despite pleas for calm from a group of hiking children.

The Times of India, December 9, 2020.¹⁰

December 29, 2020

Gobra, Jaunpur District, Uttar Pradesh State, India



A stripped Hyena (*Hyaena hyaena*, Appendix III in Pakistan) accused of attacking no less than 4 innocents bystanders has been beaten to death. The wave of violence against hyaenas is unprecedented in "On the Trail".

Orissa Post, December 30, 2020.¹¹

EUROPE

ESTONIA

December 1, 2020

Estonia

Estonia goes all out. "It is important to cultivate the natural distrust of wolves towards humans." To that end, Estonian wolfers have a busy winter ahead. They have 140 wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) to shoot in their schedule, half the population. Estonia has an area of 45,339 km². In 2019, wolves were accused of killing 477 sheep, 15 cattle and 12 dogs.

Natürlich Jagd, December 1, 2020.¹²

FRANCE

December 8, 2020, March 12 and November 16, 2021

Gap, Department of Hautes-Alpes, France

The wolf's tail affair went through the whole year 2020 and ended in court on November 16, 2021. On February 21, 2020, the president of the Hautes-Alpes departmental council, Mr Jean-Marie Bernard, gave a wolf's tail wrapped in a gift package to Mrs. the prefect, who was celebrating her departure (cf. "On the Trail" n° 28 p. 87). This was certainly not a commercial transaction, but the gift of a part of a protected species was enough to trigger complaints from 3 NGOs for possession, transport and cession of the emblematic tail. On December 8, 2020, Mr Bernard appeared before the Gap criminal court. On February 15, 2021, the public prosecutor requested a 2-month suspended prison sentence and a 3,500 € fine. On March 12, Mr. Bernard was sentenced to a fine of 10,000 € or 11,600 US\$, of which 5,000 € was suspended. On March 17, he appealed. On November 16, he was definitively sentenced by the Grenoble court of appeal to a 10,000 € suspended fine. The first instance sentence was therefore reduced. As a result, the head of the department refrained from bringing a case before the Court of cassation.

DI!CI TV, December 6 and 8, 2020 and February 15, 2021 ; Ouest-France, February 14, 2021 ; Orange, March 12, 2021 ; France 3 Provence-Alpes-Côtes d'Azur, March 12, 2021 ; Info Loup, March 23, 2021 ; Ferus, November 16, 2021 ; La Provence, November 20, 2021.¹³

December 20, 2020

Geay, Department of Charente-Maritime, France



In Charente-Maritime, hunters are obsessed with wolves. Farmed wolves, wild wolves, wolf-like, whatever. On Sunday patrol,

they attacked a Czech wolfdog on a private property, a cross between a German shepherd dog and a wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) from Europe or the North American continent (see "On the Trail" n°16 p.63). She was shot at close range.

France 3 Nouvelle Aquitaine, December 23, 2020.¹⁴

Wolves in France, see also "The misfortunes of captive wolves" page 74.

ITALY

October 6, 2020

Province of Catanzaro, Region of Calabria, Italy

Irretrievably smothered in the snare of a trap, the grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) crawled away to a road where she was run over by an unidentified vehicle.

Il Messaggero, October 6, 2020.¹⁶



SWEDEN

End of October 2020

Värmland County, Sweden

According to County Legislator Marlene Lund Kopparklint, there are too many wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II). People are worried about their children and pets. Hunters are losing game. Dogs are at risk of being killed. Permits to shoot wolves are mostly refused by the administration, which refers to outdated criteria. In 2013 the minimum viability threshold for wolves in Sweden was set at 170 and pursuant to the European directive it was increased to 300 in 2015. The safety of human populations should be the priority. It is appropriate to return to the figure of 170 wolves for the whole of Sweden. The MP asks the government to explain this in a written question.

Answer by Jennie Nilsson, Minister for Rural Affairs. In 2013, the government effectively submitted a bill to the parliament setting the number of wolves in a range of 170 to 270 specimens. The European Commission reminded Sweden, in accordance with the Habitat Directive, that the reference value had to be precise and could not fall between a high and a low "range". On the other hand, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, on the basis of new analyses and biological information requested by the same directive, considered that in order to fight against the inbreeding of the wolf population in Sweden, the threshold of 300 specimens was relevant and that the genetic contribution of wolves coming from Finland and Russia or circulating freely between the 3 countries was necessary. The assessment reports must be renewed every 6 years and sent to the European Commission. It was therefore decided to set the number of wolves present in Sweden at 300 from 2019 onward in order to guarantee a favorable conservation status for the population. Regarding defensive shootings, the minister recalls that according to the directive, they can only be authorized if 3 conditions are met: the damage is serious, no other solution is available, the wolf population must maintain its viability under all circumstances. The minister remains open to dialogue on this complex issue, but finds it unacceptable that public officials investigating possible poaching are harassed and threatened. Such behavior is also a threat to the rule of law. The law applies to everyone, she concluded.

Swedish Parliament, October 21 and November 3, 2020.¹⁷

The misfortunes of captive wolves



"Wolfists" can buy wolves on a wolf market, an exchange platform reserved for members of the EAZA (European Association of Zoos and Aquaria).

Cyril Vaccaro, 15 years of zoological experience, buys in 3 clicks, 2 mails and a transfer of funds, 6 wolves from the zoo of Riga, Latvia. The 6 migrants will be used to attract customers to the new Ecozonía park, a wolfhouse in the south of France. They move from the icy Riga to the scrubland of Perpignan after 2,900 km on the road and a trip that lasts 4-5 days in 80 cm high boxes. For interzoos transfers of wolves, fewer precautions are taken than for the delivery of a photocopier.

When, on January 25, 2021, the Riga wolves were released into Ecozonía, they were at their wits' end and one of them rushed towards the fence. Behind the fence there was freedom, but before freedom there was an electric wire, and the 6 wolves, enraged by the shock, managed to bump the barbed wire off in front of

the stunned staff. Two wolves were anaesthetised the next day. They were subsequently sent to an undisclosed French zoo. In a few days the matter was settled thanks to the deployment of armed forces and some poacher accomplices. Three carcasses were recovered, a fourth was missing. The high authorities of the department recommended strengthening the prison fences and the killing protocol in case of need. They were replaced by 3 new prisoners who came by road from Slovakia (2,000 km). "They are in a 4-metre high enclosure with 2-metre high electric fences. So there will be no more problems." Ecozonía opened its doors to the public in May 2021 with a three-month delay. In October, the attraction claimed over 35,000 visitors.

On October 2, 2020, 8 white Arctic and black Canadian wolves arrived, after God knows what haulages, at the Alpha park in Saint-Martin-Vésubie in a flood-prone zone 70 km from Nice. They were forced into freedom when the fences collapsed during the floods and the storm. They have no alternative but to run away. Five died from poaching or engulfed in mudslides. Two are missing. Three were captured after anaesthesia and transferred in the Deux-Sèvres department, western France, to the "wolf sanctuary" of Mrs. Gérardot where, with the approval of the prefecture, wolves from parks in bankruptcy, in excess or at the end of their operational life, are accumulating. On November 13, 2020, three grey wolves escape by slipping under a fence. On November 17, one of them is fatally hit by a car in Charente-Maritime, and on December 11, another one is shot in Courçon, 25 km from the wolf sanctuary. On December 17, the third is captured alive by the "sanctuary"s caretaker, but suffering from a fracture, there was no other solution than to finish him off.

As for the Alpha Park, considered as an economic lung of the Alpes-Maritimes department by Eric Ciotti, deputy of the first constituency, president of the departmental council, quaestor of the National Assembly and fighter of wild wolves, it temporarily resumed its activities in July 2021 after one million euros of work and the arrival of 5 wolves from the Muchedent park in Seine-Maritime, Normandy, which was previously home to 31 wolves and which is in great financial difficulty. The Alpha park has been closed again on September 5, 2021 and in the soaked ground, excavators are digging to reconfigure the enclosures and erect a fence around the 9 hectares that is impassable to the wolves but still vulnerable to the flooding of the Vésubie, a tributary of the Var. The total budget for securing and reorganising is 4 million euros. "When the exchange markets reopen in January 2022, we will welcome an additional pack and it will be exclusively European wolves," says its director.

The official report published in July 2020 (see "On the Trail" n°29 p.72) on the control of wolves held in captivity estimates that the risk of captive wolves escaping is extremely low. Between October 2020 and January 2021, 17 captive wolves officially escaped, and others may have escaped without the keepers reporting it to the authorities for fear of losing their licence and to feed polemics all around.

France 3 Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, December 4, 2020 ; 20 Minutes, February 9, May 17 and 19, 2021 ; Ouest-France, May 18, 2021 ; BFMTV (with AFP), July 14, 2021 ; France Bleu, May 3, July 14 and September 14, 2021 ; Actu Nice, September 5, 2021 ; Nice-Matin, October 3, 2021 ; Sud Ouest, November 16 and December 17, 2020 ; La Nouvelle République, February 19, 2021 ; InfoLoup n°35, March 2021 ; Toulouse Infos, January 26, 2021 ; Midi Libre, January 26 and May 4, 2021 ; L'Indépendant, January 30 and February 4, 2021 ; Ecozonía, March 1st, 2021 ; La Semaine du Roussillon, March 4, 2021 ; France 3 Occitanie, May 3, 2021.¹⁵

AMERICA

CANADA

October 1st, 2020

Gallichan, Province of Quebec, Canada

Call for witnesses to shed light on the mystery of the American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) found in a plastic bag in Chemin de la Source. SOS Poaching: 1 800 463-2191. Radio Canada, October 8, 2020.¹

October 20, 2020

Province of Alberta, Canada

Sentencing of Jeffrey Edison Hambrook and Gary Edgar Gilson to a 1-year suspended prison sentence, a 3-year suspension of shooting licences and fines of 12,000 and 10,000 CA\$ (8,970 and 7,500 US\$) for having poached a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix) in November 2018 and for having physically attacked and threatened to kill a witness. Lethbridge Herald, October 20, 2020 ; Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (with The Canadian Press), November 24, 2020.²



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Mid-October 2020

Wawarsing, State of New York, United States of America

Sweet items, wheat and sardines were clearly visible, offered to a bear 150 metres from the hunter's house on the first day of hunting. The American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) was caught in the trap. The police were informed. The bearskin was found with a local taxidermist. The hunter who had baited the animal admitted to the facts. Mid Hudson News, October 17, 2020.³

October 19, 2020

Foresthills, State of California, United States of America

She was walking in the forest with her children to get closer to nature. They came across an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) that had been decapitated and the four paws amputated. CBS Sacramento, October 19, 2020.⁴

November 2020

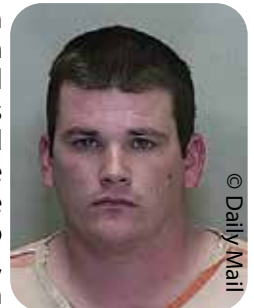
State of Idaho, United States of America

The sale of hunting licences is in fashion. People seek to leave lockdowns within being exposed Covid-19 and risking fines. They want to change their ideas. The forest guards observe that the new hunters confuse moose deer, brown bears and black bears. Poaching is increasing strongly in the north of the State. AP, November 23, 2020.⁵

November 5, 2020

State of Florida, United States of America

The 9 sadists attracted American black bears (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) with fritters and other pastries in clearings in the heart of Ocala national forest. They then released a pack of dogs that attacked and bit the bears. Some of the latter took refuge in trees but were attacked several hours later when they came down again. Instagram photos of bears hanging in trees celebrated these cruel pursuits. One of the members of the gang cooperated with prosecutors and made it possible to identify the henchmen that were hitherto anonymous. Haley Reddish, aged 27, benefited from favourable treatment as a witness for the prosecution. Her prison sentence at the end of the trial will be reduced. In return it is forbidden for her to hunt and own and rear dogs. The US Fish and Wildlife investigation started in 2016. The gang was dismantled in 2018. 53 dogs were seized. Reddish was filmed by investigators while she was stealing "date past" fritters from a supermarket dustbin. To be continued... Ocala Star-Banner, November 8, 2020 ; Daily Mail, May 19, 2021.⁶



November 8, 2020

Near Cold Springs Road, State of Idaho, United States of America

A young male brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) was discovered at the edge of Cold Springs Road. Hunting brown bears is forbidden in all seasons in the State. A police call for witnesses on the hotline is being set up "Citizens Against Poaching." Callers may remain anonymous and a reward is being offered for information that leads to a citation. Local News 8, November 18, 2020.⁷

November 9 and 20, 2020

Near Bigfork and Yaak, State of Montana, United States of America

A female bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) and her cub were found dead along Bear Creek Road. Any useful information is sought. If the information provided leads to an arrest, callers could be eligible for a cash reward. Another dead bear was found in the River Yaak.

Daily Inter Lake, November 13, 2020 ; Ground News, December 2, 2020.⁸

November 13, 2020

Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, State of Alaska, United States of America

Federal justice is maintaining the Obama era "Kenai doctrine" that forbids hunting in a section of the refuge and limits baiting that attracts bears and makes it possible to shoot them at point blank range. The Safari Club International appealed against this decision in January 2021. The Kenai National Wildlife Refuge covers 9,000 km². It is under the responsibility of the US Department of the Interior. KDLL, November 16, 2020 ; Alaska Public Media, January 12, 2021.⁹



November 17, 2020

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

Seizure in 3 dens in Chinatown of several products prepared using bear bile. A new rumour says that it treats Covid-19. The retailers had to pay fines of 4,500 to 5,000 US\$ and have undertaken in writing to no longer sell products based on bear bile or that claim to be such. The police were put on the track by the NGO World Animal Protection. Patch, November 17, 2020.¹⁰



December 11, 2020

State of Missouri, United States of America

A death sentence for bears in Missouri. In spite of a great majority of people in favour of peace with bears, Missouri has declared war on them. Hunters can go back to the good old time of trophies. Lost baby bears can be shot on sight. 400 to 500 hunting permits will be awarded while the black bear population in Missouri is 540 to 840. The game of massacre will be suspended when the 40th bear has been killed officially with a traditional rifle, automatic weapons or arrows. The war against bears in Missouri is planned for October 18 to 27, 2021.

Humane Society, December 11, 2020 ; One Green Planet, March 29, 2021.¹¹

The death of bears!

The autumn 2020 hunting season was good for lazy people and those in trouble during the Covid-19 period. Records are being broken in New Hampshire, Maine and Massachusetts and this is just official hunting. 1,083 in New Hampshire, 3,853 in Maine, 325 in Massachusetts. West Virginia made the high score of 3,541 black bears (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) killed by sinister imitators of Robin Hood or people addicted to shooting.

"It was an extremely dry year, and a poor natural food year, so we had a better response [by bears coming] to bait." "It was probably a combination of a pandemic effect - people going out and spending more time - and we had a couple of press releases telling people that if they'd never bear hunted, this would be a good year to try it."

This is how Jennifer Vashon, a black bear specialist at the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, explains the boom in bear hunting. Outdoor Life, March 15, 2021.¹²

December 24, 2020

Grady County, State of Georgia, United States of America

On Christmas Eve, a man from Florida shot a black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) in Grady County in Georgia where hunting bear is forbidden. The facts were reported to the authorities immediately. The poacher was located. The meat and skin were seized.

Wgxa TV, January 5, 2021.¹³

ASIA

CHINA

November 26, 2020

Pu'an County, Guizhou Province, China

Nine sentences of 1 to 10 years in prison and fines of 5,000 to 200,000 yuans (745 to 29,800 US\$). They followed the seizure in March 2019 of 31 Asian black bear paws (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) valued at 256,000 yuans or 38,200 US\$ (1,230 US\$ per paw) and a gall-bladder estimated at 20,000 yuans that is to say 300 US\$. A vehicle worth 9,500 US\$ was definitively confiscated. After the verdict, the public and judiciary authorities destroyed the bear paws and the gall-bladder as required by the law.

Xingyi Micro News, December 4, 2020.¹⁴

INDIA

October 11, 2020

Kapkot, Bageshwar District, State of Uttarakhand, India

Seizure of 2 bear gallbladders weighing a total of 230 g and the preputial gland of a musk deer (genus *Moschus*) weighing 23 g. The total value on the international market is estimated at 1.5 million rupees (20,345 US\$). Four arrests.

Hindustan Times, October 11, 2020.¹⁵

PAKISTAN

December 16, 2020

Islamabad, Federal Territory of Islamabad, Pakistan

The closure of Islamabad Zoo ordered by the legal authorities has been approved. The last 2 inmates, 2 bears 17 years old, should be shipped to a sanctuary in Jordan thanks to the intervention of the NGO Four Paws.

Islamabad Zoo, "On the trail" n°24 p. 64, n°30 p. 73-74. Dawn, December 16, 2020 ; Gulf News, December 10, 2020.¹⁶

TAIWAN

Early October 2020

Taiwan



Capture of an Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) by a farmer's wild boar trap. The recovery of bears with injured paws or mouths is generally satisfactory when they are released from the steel cable in time. Nevertheless, the public authorities concentrate on promoting electric fences.

Liberty Times Net, October 4, 2020.¹⁷

VIET NAM

October 13, 15, 29 and November 3, 2020

Hai Duong, Hanoi and Phu Tho Provinces, Viet Nam

Freeing of 6 Asian black bears (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) from a cage and transfer to appropriate refuges.

ENV, October 21, 23, 30 and November 3, 2020.¹⁸

November 13, 2020

Binh Duong Province, Viet Nam

Seven bears retired from the bile trade were taken out of their cages and transferred to the Ninh Binh Sanctuary.

ENV, November 13, 2020 ; Nhan Dan, November 14, 2020.¹⁹

December 2020

Tra Vinh Province, Viet Nam

An Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*, Appendix I) held by a family for about 15 years was transferred to the Hon Me sanctuary in Kien Giang province.

ENV, January 28, 2021.²⁰

EUROPE

SPAIN

End of November 2020

Valle de Bardají, Province of Huesca, Autonomous Community of Aragon, Spain

A wild boar beat in Bardají valley got out of control. A female brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) of Slovenian origin introduced into France in 2006 and settled since 2010 on the southern slopes of the Pyrenees was killed by 3 shots. The shooter has been identified. He claims to have acted in self-defense. Wild boar would seem to be a good excuse all over the world. In India, boar traps are used to get rid of leopards and in Spain and France wild boar beats are used to kill bears.

Heraldo de Aragón, November 29, 2020.²¹

December 12, 2020

Les, Province of Lleida, Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain

The Spanish hunting guild continues to track brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II)—they killed their 8th in 15 years—and are innovating in the variety of arms used. The body of the bear was found on April 9, 2020 by anonymous persons and a member of the NGO IPCENA (Institució de Ponent per a la Conservació i l'Estudi de l'Entorn Natural) in a wood right next to the village of Les and the French frontier. The autopsy report stated that he had been poisoned by ethylene glycol used in antifreeze for vehicles and the inquiry is implicating 6 suspects including a local political figure, 2 environment officials appointed by the Aran Council, a "bear protection guard" funded by the European Union and also the son of a former mayor of Les. The Aran Council first intimated that the bear had has a mortal fall after a fighting with another bear.

El Diario, December 12, 2020.²²



CZECH REPUBLIC

October 24, 2020

Czech Republic

A university study was published by the European Journal of Wildlife Research. From January 2005 to February 2020, 248 bottles of bile, 35 suppositories containing bile, 27 tubes of bile-based cream, a bottle of vodka containing bile and 2 gallbladders were seized. The first known exporting countries are continental China, Russia, Viet Nam, Hong Kong and Canada. The origin of 187 bottles of bile is not known. Researchers attribute part of this contraband bear bile to the Vietnamese community installed in the Czech Republic which remains faithful to the prescriptions of traditional Asian medicine.

Vodka and bear bile, "On the Trail" n°11 p. 53.

Shepherd, C.R., Kufnerová, J., Cajthaml, T. et al. Bear trade in the Czech Republic: an analysis of legal and illegal international trade from 2005 to 2020. Eur J Wildl Res 66, 92 (2020).²³

RUSSIA

October 20, 2020

Kazan Airport, Republic of Tatarstan, Russia

Seizure of a bear skin (Ursidae, Appendix I or II) with head and paws in a bag carried by a passenger travelling to Antalya, Turkey.

Business Online, October 20, 2020.²⁴

November 16, 2020

Kuragino, Kuraginsky District, Krasnoyarsk Krai, Russia

Seizure of the body, teeth and paws of a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) in a car. In early November, a bear cub walking on 3 paws as reported in the village of Shalobolino, 30 km from Kuragino. The right fore-paw had been amputated after some kind of mistreatment.

Siberian News Agency, November 14, 2020 ; Chance, November 16, 2020.²⁵



Brown bear (*Ursus arctos*). Photo Garint63

GAZELLES, ANTELOPES, IMPALAS, KUDUS, ORYX, SABLE ANTELOPES, BIGHORN SHEEP, MARKHORS ...



Blue sheep (*Pseudois nayaaur*), Nubra Valley, India. Photo Shivaprakash

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

October 14 and 18, 2020
Bisley Valley Nature Reserve,
Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal
Province, South Africa



- The Bisley Valley nature reserve is under poaching fire. Within a few years, its population of impalas (*Aepyceros melampus*) went from 150 to 20 individuals. On this Wednesday morning, a new victim is to be mourned. Last Thursday and Sunday, 2 zebras had been gently extracted from traps.

- The call for volunteers has been successful. The number of traps uncovered on this beautiful Sunday was relatively modest but several wire coils, blankets and survival kits and tools were discovered.

"With the two caches of knives and live ammunition we found on Sunday, I'm convinced we are facing organised bush meat poachers," says Peter West, reserve manager. "I believe that the snares are set and then a follow-up is conducted at night. ...

... The bullets are then used to finish off a still living snared animal and the knives are used to butcher it. There must be a fairly large group of poachers as there are between five and seven knives in each cache."

An old man who had been living in the reserve for a long time was intercepted. He admitted to be a poacher by necessity. After some discussion it was decided not to hand him over to the authorities. At his request, he was taken to the cab station and brought back all expenses paid to his family's home in Bulwer, 100 km away. It is not excluded that the hermit served as an information desk for organized poachers. The anti-trapping patrol included Msunduzi councillors, SAPS police officers, reserve police officers, members of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, which co-owns the reserve, and a German shepherd dog who is experienced in tracking down suspicious leads and whose anonymity, like that of his master, has been preserved for security reasons.

Thanks to his nose, the carcass of a trapped blue wildebeest (*Connochaetes taurinus*) was also found. The macabre discovery reinforced the common will to fight against the proliferation of traps.

News 24, October 15 and October 19, 2020.¹

December 22, 2020
Near Marloth, Nkozami, Mpumalanga
Province, South Africa



The female greater kudu (*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*) had a trap around her neck. A Wildlife Vets team administered a dose of opiate with a hypodermic rifle. Eight minutes later, she lay down in the bush and the team, using a pocket lamp, released her and treated her before the injection of an antidote and her galloping departure as if nothing had ever happened. Marloth Park Honorary Rangers, December 23, 2020 ; The Info Centre - Marloth Park and Surroundings, December 22, 2020.²

KENYA

June-December 2020
Eburu Forest, Nakuru County, and
Mawingu Bongo Sanctuary, Laikipia
County, Kenya



In the forest, illegal activities are swarming. There are charcoal kilns, marijuana plantations, manufacture of poles for the small building industry and poaching. The main species are African cherry (*Prunus africana*, Appendix II), real yellowwood (*Podocarpus latifolius*), East African cedar (*Juniperus procera*), cedar (genus *Cedrus*) and olea (*Olea europaea*). Each month, the rangers' beats neutralize about ten traps in the dense and reputedly impenetrable forest.

In the forest, wild animals are not swarming. They are on the defensive. There are leopards (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I), lions (*Panthera leo*, Appendix I), pythons (*Python* spp, Appendix I or II), Hartlaub's touracos (*Tauraco hartlaubi*, Appendix II), crowned eagles (*Stephanoaetus coronatus*, Appendix II), Eastern black-and-white colobus (*Colobus guereza*, Appendix II), blue monkey (*Cercopithecus mitis*, Appendix II), hyenas (family Hyaenidae), bushbuck (*Tragelaphus scriptus*) and some mountain bongos (*Tragelaphus eurycerus isaaci*). The subspecies nestles in the highlands, up to 4000 meters of altitude. It has been on borrowed time for decades. A few hundred individuals survive in scattered nuclei in the forests of Eburu, Mount Kenya, Mau and the Aberdares. They are all well below the viability thresholds. In the mountains adjacent to Uganda, bongo antelopes have been eradicated. Whether they come from plains or mountains, they are beautiful and sought after for their brown coats and the 12-14 fine white stripes and spiral horns that together with the skulls serve as trophies in dining rooms. ...



Mountain bongo (*Tragelaphus eurycerus isaaci*)

...Kenya has set itself a remarkable goal that is easier said than done. From 75 today, it wants to host 750 bongos in the local mountains by 2050. In 2004, the American Association of Zoos transferred to Kenya 18 bongos born and raised in the United States whose ancestors had been captured in the mountains of East Africa. They were parked in Nanyuki, Laikipia County (elevation about 1900 meters). When they returned to their original ecosystem, they needed a very long acclimatization period and a few generations to breed without this being an exceptional event.

"In the last five years, we had more than 70 births including 12 in 2020" said Philippe Cauviere, one of the directors of the Mountain Bongo Project. For the moment, the mountain bongos of Nanyuki are fed mainly on "bongo cubes", food supplements in granules responsible, according to the veterinarians of the KWS and the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, for the deterioration of the health of several specimens (cf. "On the Trail" n°29 p.78). It is precisely to facilitate the return to nature, to grass, leaves and fruits that 25 bongos will be transferred from Nanyuki to the Mawingu Bongo sanctuary, a 300 hectare enclosure on the slopes of Mount Kenya where the zoo bongos should "rewild" and become the reservoir of the mythical Bongo plan.

Rhino Ark, November 30, 2020 ; The Star, December 1, 2020 ; MENAFN, January 19, 2021 ; The Standard, January 21, 2021.³

NAMIBIA

Week from November 8 to 15, 2020

Katima Mulilo, Zambezi Region, Namibia

Arrest of a Namibian in possession of 2 Southern lechwe carcasses (*Kobus leche*, Appendix II). Seizure of a firearm.

Namibian Sun, November 19, 2020.⁴

November 27, 2020

Karibib District, Erongo Region, Namibia

The bucket is filled with dried meat. It comes from 8 oryx (*Oryx gazella*). Two of the poacher-butchers were arrested. Three fled. In their bivouac, 58 traps were seized. In an 80 km area around Karibib, Oryx poaching and sheep and goat theft are chronic with a high peak-plateau in the Covid period.

Namibian Sun, December 2020 ; The Namibian, December 1, 2020.⁵



ZAMBIA

Mid-November 2020

Kafue National Park, Central, Southern and North-Western Provinces, Zambia

Two horns nearly 1.3 m long are all that remain of a sable antelope (*Hippotragus niger*, Appendix I) killed by a poacher.

Zambeze Delta Conservation and Anti-Poaching, November 16, 2020.⁶

ZIMBABWE

October 16, 2020

Victoria Falls, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

An anti-poaching vigil and a friend "discovered" by chance a dead greater kudu (*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*). Keeping this supposed find secret, they dismembered him. They cured the meat and Oscar Ndlovu went to sell slices at the National Railways of Zimbabwe railwaymen's estate. Police found 17 kg of meat at the home of Lovemore Mwakataye, the hunter of poachers. Both men were sentenced to 4 months in prison including a 2-month suspended sentence.

The Chronicle, May 5, 2021.⁷



AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

October 20, 2020

Hailey, State of Idaho, United States of America



Sentencing of Matthew DeWit, 27, to a fine of 4,000 US\$ and the suspension of all hunting and fishing activities in 48 States for poaching a Mexican bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*, Appendix II in Mexico) and transporting the carcass from Montana to Idaho.

MTN News, November 5, 2020.⁸



Mexican bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*)

November 2020

Canyon County, State of Idaho, United States of America

The Willmorth couple shared a passion for bighorn sheep trophies. The husband Joe, has been sentenced to a 100,000 US\$ fine and to a revocation from all hunting and trapping privileges for 7 years in the 48 member States of the Wildlife Violator Compact with a ban on accompanying anyone in wildlife predator activities. Failing that, Joe would spend six months in the county jail. With his Susan who was not prosecuted, he had illegally decorated his home with the skin of a bighorn sheep and the horns of another bighorn sheep. The bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*, Appendix II in Mexico) is one of two species living in the Americas. The horns are carried by both males and females but males carry the largest ones, up to one meter long and weighing about ten kilos. The main predator of the bighorn sheep is the puma, but newborns left unprotected fall often prey to the golden eagle.

KiviTV, January 22, 2021.⁹



ASIA

CHINA

November 2020
Huadian, Jilin Province, China



In July 2019, the police raided the warehouse of a pharmaceutical group in Linjiang. They found 5041 saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II), or 1005.76 kg. A suspect was quickly arrested. He confessed to buying and illegally transporting the horns from Suihua, Heilongjiang Province. He was convicted but available sources do not reveal the details of his conviction. It should be noted that in Hong Kong, in June 2020, a man was sentenced to 20 months in prison for transporting 224 saiga antelope horns (see "On the Trail" n°29 p. 79) and that in Hunan, in September 2020, 17 people were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 6 months to 10 years for smuggling 993 saiga antelope horns, worked ivory, rhinoceros horn libations bowls and other wildlife products (see "On the Trail" n°30 p. 164).

Legal Daily, November 20, 2020.¹⁰

December 2020

Manzhouli, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China. Border with Russia and Mongolia
Seizure of 179 saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II). Over a 3-year period, Manzhouli customs have seized 400 by-products of bears, wolves, Siberian musk deer, elephants and saiga antelopes.

Chinese Customs, December 28, 2020.¹¹

December 18, 2020

Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong, China

The Court of Appeal upheld the 20-month prison sentence imposed on Shao Rong Qiang (see "On the Trail" n° 29, p. 79) for attempting to import 224 saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) with a value estimated by the customs authorities at between 700,000 HK\$ and 1,200,000 HK\$, or between 90,100 US\$ and 154,800 US\$. Qiang and his lawyers considered that the sentence imposed at first instance was "excessive". ...



... In its findings, the court recalled that the saiga antelope is threatened with extinction, that in mainland China a similar sentence for similar acts was imposed on a trafficker, that the judgments in mainland China are not intended to be reproduced in Hong Kong but that at the same time, trafficking in endangered species must be punished by dissuasive sentences. The court recalled that according to the Hong Kong Penal Code, offenses of this kind are liable to a 7-year prison term and that therefore the 20-month prison sentence cannot be considered "excessive".

In the expert report presented to the judge, it is emphasized that the collapse of saiga antelope populations is one of the most spectacular among large mammal species. They have gone from about one million to about 160,000 in 30 years. In mainland China, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, the demand for antelope horns remains strong in the para-pharmaceutical market. The horns are processed into herbal teas, pills and chips. The main range countries of the species are Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia.

Hong Kong Animal Law and Protection Organisation, February 1, 2021.¹²

INDIA

October 14, 2020

Mumbai, Mumbai City District, State of Maharashtra, India

This is a first in "On the Trail" to note the attempted sale of a leaping blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Nepal and Pakistan) turned with her horns and ears into a floor mat or wall hanging. John Sundarrao Yesamala, who was caught at the Ghatkopar bus station, wanted to sell it for one million rupees, or 13,500 US\$.

Hindustan Times, October 16, 2020.¹³

FAMILY AFFAIRS

October 29, 2020

Khari, Barmer District, State of Rajasthan, India

Three female and one male hunter were caught red-handed during the mortal poaching of a chinkara (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III) in Pakistan. Kamla, Nauli, Dhari Devi and Kamla's husband were placed in custody.

The Times of India, October 29, 2020.¹⁴

November 12, 2020

Domingarh, Gorakhpur District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

The vehicle contained a rifle, 22 ammunition and a dead nilgai (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*, Appendix III) in Pakistan. Meraj Hashmi and Shakhqib Masood are being prosecuted for cruelty to animals and contravening the Arms Act and the Wildlife Protection Act.

Outlook India, November 12, 2020.¹⁵

December 4, 2020

Bhadkha, Barmer District, State of Rajasthan, India

This is not good for chinkara in the district. Fortunately, the Bishnoi ("On the Trail" n°9 p.91, n°19 p.117, n°21 p.106, n°28 p.119, n°29 p.80, n°29 p.81) are on the eye. A young man was caught in the act. He had time to kill an Indian gazelle (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III in Pakistan) around midnight.

The Times of India, December 5, 2020.¹⁶

December 15, 2020

Khaldung La Mountain Pass, Leh District, Union Territory of Ladakh, India

A blue sheep (*Pseudois nayaur*, Appendix III in Pakistan) was killed. Another seriously wound one was transferred to a veterinary clinic. A man has been arrested and certain sources say that a police inspector might be his accomplice. The Ladakh Buddhist Association condemns these acts, asks for dissuasive punishment and says that it is mortified by the repeated cruelty to blue sheep.

Daily Excelsior, December 17, 2020.¹⁷

KAZAKHSTAN

End of November 2020

West Kazakhstan Region, Kazakhstan

Seizure of 86 saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II), 9 firearms, 7 four-wheel drive vehicles and 2 snowmobiles. Eleven summons.

Nur, November 28, 2020.¹⁸



Year 2020

Kazakhstan

The saiga antelope statistics (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) for 2020 as presented by the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources: seizure of 9,743 horns, discovery of 727 carcasses, questioning of 71 poachers. 5.7 million US\$ in economic losses. Covid-fuelled demand and/or the intensification of poaching control patrols? However that may be, the number of horns seized has been multiplied by 34 since 2019. Saiga live in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kirghizstan, Turkmenistan, Russia and Mongolia. Saiga horns are used in Chinese medicine. They are described as "goat horns" by traffickers.

Kursiv, February 13, 2021.¹⁹

PAKISTAN

Mid-December 2020

Toshi Shasha Game Reserve, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan



Americans are welcome in Pakistan when they pay 82,000 US\$ for the privilege of killing a markhor (*Capra falconeri*, Appendix I). With the help of at least 12 guides, one of them shot one almost at point blank with a bow, a world first it seems. It is after 8 days of tracking in the mountain and without the help of drones that the feat was accomplished. Dawn, December 20, 2020.²⁰

December 25, 2020

Astore District, Gilgit-Baltistan Territory, Pakistan

Masood Sifat, a reserve officer, killed a Siberian ibex (*Capra sibirica*, Appendix III) after 14h of tracking in the snow. He is so happy. He paid for this pleasure by buying the permit for 200,000 rupees (1,255 US\$) and paying 50,000 rupees (315 US\$) to the local community representatives. For the 2020-2021 winter season, the Astore district has auctioned off 172 killing permits, including 4 markhors (*Capra falconeri falconeri*, Appendix I), 18 blue sheep (*Pseudois nayaur*, Appendix III) and 150 Siberian ibex.

Dawn, December 26, 2020.²¹

TURKEY

December 2020

Görümlü, Sirnak Province, Turkey

New clash near the border with Iraq and Syria. A wild goat (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) was killed. The poacher was fined the equivalent of 4,000 US\$. National Parks Branch Office for Nature Conservation, December 20, 2020.²²



EUROPE

RUSSIA

October 26, 2020

Severnoy, Belgorod Oblast, Russia

Seizure at the border with Ukraine in a vehicle occupied by 3 foreign citizens of 495 saiga antelope horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II). Border service of the FSB, October 26, 2020.²³

Mid-November 2020

Ussuriysk, Primorsky Krai, Russia

Seizure in premises rented by "foreigners" of 451 saiga horns (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II) to be sent to China.

UssurMedia, November 17, 2020 ; New QQ, November 17, 2020.²⁴

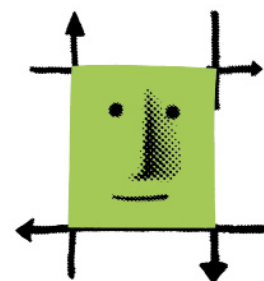


November 16, 2020

Saylyugemsky National Park, Argut Wild Area, Altai Republic, Russia

Arrest of a Moscow businessman, an organizer of sport hunting and the director of the ecological fund "Argut". They say that they came in the Sayliouguem's national park to hunt Himalayan ibex (*Capra sibirica*, Appendix III in Pakistan), whereas they are not included in the park's wildlife heritage. However, the 3 men were arrested at shooting distance of the Altai argali (*Ovis ammon*, Appendix II). According to judicial authorities, "the behavior of hunters and law enforcement officials in the park will be inspected".

Znak, November 19, 2020.²⁵



ROBIN DES BOIS



Giraffa camelopardalis, Appendix II

AFRICA

KENYA

October 24, 2020

Olarro Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

The male was seen by the rangers with a spear stuck in his left hip for 24 hours. After anesthesia, treatment and antidote, he got up and joined the other giraffes very quickly. The prognosis is positive. SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2020.¹

October 30, 2020

Meru National Park, Meru County, Kenya



Giraffe salvage whose back left leg was notched by 2 wires of traps. Anesthesia. Emergency treatments. The prognosis is positive. SWT/KWS Meru Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2020.²

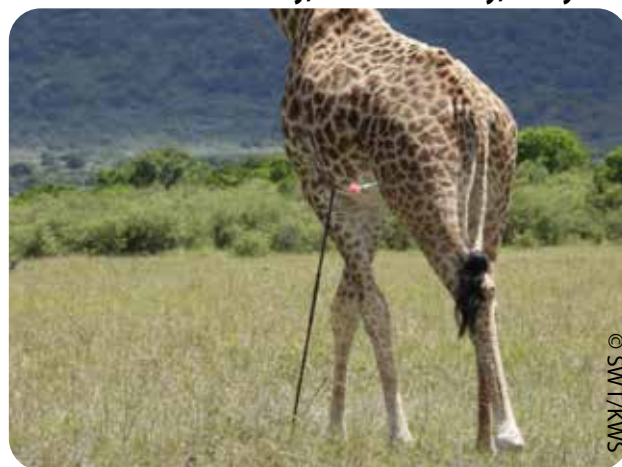
November 17, 2020

Olare Orok Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

The giraffe was wearing an arrowhead on the right side of her neck. She was anesthetized, treated, awakened and got up to join the members of her troop. The prognosis is positive. SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2020.³

November 23, 2020

Ol Chorro Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya



Guests at a lodge spotted a giraffe with a firmly engaged spear on her left flank. After anesthesia, the spear was removed but the giraffe, who was gravid, did not survive. SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2020.⁴

December 12, 2020

Olarro Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

An arrowhead was visible on the ankle of the right hind leg. The arrow was poisoned. The prognosis is positive. SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, December 2020.⁵

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

November 26, 2020

Sankura Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

According to a message on Twitter from Adams Cassinga, founder of Conserv Congo, a suspect has been arrested with an okapi skin (*Okapia johnstoni*). He would be protected by local notables. Before trying to sell the skin, he sold the meat with the help of his network. Adams Cassinga, November 26, 2020.⁶

DONKEYS AND ZEBRAS

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

October 20 and 22, 2020

Humewood and Summerstrand, Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa



Remnants of illegally slaughtered zebras (genus *Equus*) are spreading out in urban areas. Two of the three species of zebra found in South Africa are in Appendix II (*Equus grevyi* and *Equus zebra*). A female jogger and her daughter taking a breath of fresh air on the waterfront came across a half-opened garbage bag covered in flies and containing a zebra head, offal and skin fragments.

Times Live, October 23, 2020.¹

KENYA

October 4, 2020

Kipini Conservancy, Lamu and Tana River Counties, Kenya



Trap poaching is spreading across the continent. Populations of endangered species are declining because of this scourge. The zebra was anesthetized and treated for a wound on his right front leg. The prognosis is positive. Kenya is home to Grevy's zebra (*Equus grevyi*, Appendix II) and plains zebra (*Equus quagga*).

SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2020.²

October 24, 2020

Kipini Conservancy, Lamu County, Kenya



Rescue and treatment of a zebra caught in a trap. The prognosis is positive.

SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, October 2020.³

December 2020

Kenya

The Ministry of Agriculture decree banning the export of donkey skins is being fought in court by the operators of slaughterhouses. The High Court, without ruling on the merits, invalidated the decision that had given so much hope to donkey protectors and users. The judges consider that the rights of the Chinese operators have not been taken into account. The slaughterhouses remain inactive or are operating in clandestine or slow mode thanks to an administrative parray of the Ministry of Agriculture which has suspended veterinary inspections of donkey skin exports.



The Turkana slaughterhouse is reportedly still in operation. Its managers claim that the production of meat and other by-products is reserved for the Chinese community in Kenya.



Goldox Kenya Limited, the Chinese firm that operates the largest of Kenya's four donkey slaughterhouses in Baringo, is complaining through its lawyers that it was not heard by the Ministry of Agriculture before it made its drastic decision. Goldox believes that the one month deadline as prescribed to convert to beef is unrealistic. China's official press continues to support the ejiao (boiled donkey skin gelatin) industry concentrated in Shandong province. China continues its dead-end fight. Donkeys are resistant to industrial breeding. Their reproductive cycle is slow and the annual quota of 5 million donkey skins needed by the Chinese industry is not sustainable. According to the Kalro (Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation) projections, donkeys could be extinct in Kenya before the end of the decade 2020-2030.

Ejiao, cf. "On the Trail" n°15 p. 119

The Standard, December 8, 2020.⁴

December 16, 2020
Naboisho Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya



The young zebra's abdomen is encircled by a metal wire, the remnant of a trap from which he escaped. He is wounded. After anesthesia and before the antidote, the wire was removed and the wound treated. The prognosis is positive.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, Dec. 2020.⁵

December 21, 2020
Mount Kenya National Park, Meru County, Kenya

An adult zebra is limping. A nylon trap is wrapped around a leg. Anesthesia. The zebra falls after 7 minutes. Removal of the trap. The prognosis is positive.

SWT/KWS Mount Kenya Mobile Veterinary Unit, December 2020.⁶

NAMIBIA

Mid-November 2020
Karibib District, Erongo Region, Namibia



No, it's not laundry drying, it's zebra meat. ...

... Fall 2020 is terrible. "Covid must have contributed to the sharp increase. People have lost their jobs and are hungry, so there is a demand for it. The festive season is also around the corner, so this also contributes to an increase" says Butzi Kühne, the boss of the SAPU (Kühne Security and Anti-Poaching Unit). The traps are everywhere, made of brake cables and barrel lids. Nylon nooses decorate the trees. There are so many traps that they are forgotten or lost by trappers. They are found during trap drives with zebra carcasses hanging from the trees or decomposing on the ground. Itinerant butchers leave skulls and bones in the savannah. It is the great wave of bushmeat. Omajova, November 18, 2020.⁷



NIGERIA

Year 2020
Harcourt Port, Rivers State, Nigeria

The Harcourt Port's customs claim the seizure during the year 2020 of 35 bales of used shoes, 3,047 bales of used clothing, 1,400 tyres for import and 3,440 donkey skins for export.

The Nation, January 15, 2021.⁸

HIPPOPOTAMUSES

AFRICA

MOZAMBIQUE

October 26, 2020
Maputo Special Reserve, Maputo Province, Mozambique

The hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) had been trapped in the marsh for a fortnight. His chest was encircled by a wire cable, at the end of which was attached a big log. The poachers' idea was to slow him down until he was exhausted and to kill him silently at the end. Saving the Survivors' vets, alerted by the rangers, saved him. Saving the Survivors, October 26, 2020.¹



ASIA

CHINA

December 1st, 2020
Qingdao Liuting International Airport, Shandong Province, China

Seizure of a tooth, 600 grams, and a hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) worked ivory. Qingdao airport is connected to Johannesburg (South Africa), Maputo (Mozambique) and Entebbe (Uganda). Chinese Customs, December 8, 2020.²



AFRICA

KENYA

December 27, 2020

Manda Bay, Lamu County, Kenya

Rescue of a buffalo whose left front leg was caught in a vestige of trap. The prognosis is positive. SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, December 2020.¹

MOZAMBIQUE

October 21, 2020

Niassa Reserve, Niassa and Cabo Delgado Provinces, Mozambique

An African buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*) would be prisoner of a trap. A Saving the Survivors team of rangers and two veterinarians arrives on the scene. The buffalo cannot be found. However, a double trap system is uncovered. A wire fence is hidden in an alignment of trees. It is completed by a series of trap pits. The fence was dismantled and the pits were filled in by the rescuers. Clear space for the wildlife. Saving the Survivors, October 21, 2020.²



OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

Early November, 2020

Mount Catt, Northern Territory, Australia

At least 3 unidentified barbarians invaded lands belonging to the Aborigines. Horses and donkeys were killed and 9 buffaloes decapitated. The stuffed heads are used to supply the black market for trophies. The president of the NLC (Northern Land Council) is outraged. "Enough is enough. This shameful disregard for aboriginal and non-aboriginal laws must stop as soon as possible. "Sanctions must be strengthened." Illegal entry onto Aboriginal land are liable to a maximum fine of 2,220 AU\$, or 1,600 US\$ and the same offense on sacred sites are liable to a maximum penalty of one year in prison. During 2020, two men were convicted: one for organizing a hunting safari on Manyallaluk Aboriginal land and another for trespassing on Ngukurr Aboriginal land without a permit (420 US\$ fine).

According to NLC, everyone was informed as early as March 2019 that during Covid crisis, all hunting activities were suspended and that the access were forbidden to strangers in isolated communities. But stakeholders agree that the anti-poaching and looting patrols deployed by the Northern Territory administration are insufficient. The State covers an area of 1.3 million square kilometers.

ABC, November 5, 2020.³



Cape buffaloes (*Syncerus caffer ssp. caffer*). Photo Lemoncul

MUSK DEER, DEER, ELKS AND MOOSE

AMERICA

CANADA

October 22, 2020

Nanaimo, Vancouver Island, Province of British Columbia, Canada

Discovery of 2 Roosevelt elk (*Cervus canadensis roosevelti*), a male and a female, shot dead. A call for witnesses has been launched.

CHEK, October 26, 2020.¹

Week of October 26, 2020

Sudbury District, Province of Ontario, Canada

A poacher shot a white moose (*Alces alces*). The emotion is great in the north of the province. The traditional population considers that bison (*Bison bison*), crows (*Corvus corax*), brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II) and white elans are sacred. A common elan was also killed. A reward of 8,000 dollars (5,980 US\$) is offered to the person who makes it possible to arrest the poacher.

CTV News, November 5, 2020 ; The Guardian, November 15, 2020.²

November 27, 2020

Division No. 12, Province of Manitoba, Canada

A 17-year-old poacher tracked deer with the headlights of a GMC truck in the Mars Hills. He was intercepted by a patrol at midnight. The truck, 2 firearms, ammunition and the trophy of a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) were seized. The minor was handed back to his parents. There will be a trial.

Manitoba has forbidden hunting at night since 10 October. In 2 weeks and a bit, 45 persons have been taken in for questioning and 9 vehicles and 18 firearms seized. The Wildlife Amendment Act (Safe Hunting and Shared Management) is also establishing a no-hunting zone of at least 3 km around inhabited areas and provincial roads.

Global News, November 28, 2020.³

December 6, 2020

Lake Cowichan, Vancouver Island, Province of British Columbia, Canada

Discovery of 3 elk carcasses (*Cervus canadensis*). One is whole and the 2 others have been half dismembered by the poachers. In 6 months, 10 elk have been poached near the town.

Alberni Valley News, December 14, 2020.⁴

December 21, 2020

West Kelowna, Province of British Columbia, Canada



Sentencing of Richard Fischer to a 4,900 dollar fine, that is to say 3,833 US\$ for having poached on 11 November, Remembrance Day, a sub-adult moose (*Alces alces*). The animal was decapitated and hidden under an ATV in the trailer of his pick-up.

Castanet, January 15, 2021 ; Kelowna Capital News, January 15, 2021.⁵

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

October 2, 2020

Jackson County, State of Oregon, United States of America



He had killed the red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) that was resting under a tree near his house. He put the corpse in his pick-up and threw it out at the edge of a road. A trace of blood led police to a bush next to his house. Dustin McGrorty was sentenced to a 5-year suspension of all hunting and fishing, 80 hours of work in the public interest, 8,420 US\$ in damages and 2 years probation including the forbidding of giving advice to hunters and helping them.

KTVL, October 3, 2020.⁶

Between October 10 and 18, 2020

Valley and Boise Counties, State of Idaho, United States of America



Poaching of 5 moose (*Alces alces*), 2 of which had been confused with elk (*Cervus canadensis*) by the hunters. Deer poaching in Idaho, see "On the Trail" n°29 p.88.

KBOI, October 19 and 26, 2020.⁷

Mid-October 2020

Caliente, State of Nevada, United States of America



Sentencing of Brayden Norton, 22, to 200 hours of work of public interest and 15,000 US\$ fine for having in 2016, when he was 17, poached a mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) and removed the antlers. He left the carcass where it was. This is considered by the law to be the wasting of food resources.

Reno Gazette Journal, October 16, 2020.⁸

Between October 15 and 17, 2020

Beaver County, State of Utah, United States of America

A Roosevelt elk (*Cervus canadensis*) and a male deer (*Cervidae*) were found decapitated and skinned, with the meat exposed. Food wastage is added to the poaching offense.

Game & Fish, December 11, 2020.⁹

Between October 28 and November 1, 2020

Deschutes County, State of Oregon, United States of America

Oregon State Police press release. A mature male Roosevelt elk (*Cervus canadensis*) was decapitated with his antlers and the chest amputated. About 40 metres away, a 1-year old elk and his mother were found shot and left where they were.

NewsChannel 21, December 1, 2020.¹⁰

Mid-October 2020

Sand Hills, State of Nebraska, United States of America



This pair of clowns from Ohio is famous for its archery skills, alleged fitness training and Internet videos. The spotlight is on Josh and Sarah Bowmar for less trivial and less glorious reasons. The party is over. They were charged with poaching white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) in 2016 and 2017 and were among HHO's fraudulent clients (see below). Also in 2016, Josh Bowmar killed a black bear with a spear equipped with a GoPro camera. The images broadcasted on the Internet stirred international outrage and forced the State of Alberta, Canada, to ban the use of spears in mammal hunting.

Omaha News, October 23, 2020; Rochester Sentinel, October 18, 2020; GearJunkie, November 2, 2020.¹¹

FAMILY AFFAIRS

October 28 and November 18, 2020 and March 5, 2021



Omaha, State of Nebraska, United States of America

Next episode of the Hidden Hills Outfitters (HHO) scandal described on "On the Trail" n°30 p.158.

Conrad Hueftle, 28 years old, Broken Bow resident, is sentenced to 2 years of probation during which he will be prohibited from hunting, carrying hunting weapons, guiding hunters, or assisting and accompanying persons engaged in any hunting-related activity, and 7,500 US\$ in fines and damages. He had in November 2016 hunted a mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) using the special permit of a Hidden Hills Outfitters (HHO) customer living in Nebraska and then transferred with the complicity of another HHO customer the head and antlers to a taxidermist in Watertown, Wisconsin, for the purpose of converting the trophy parts into a European-style head mount.

Kevan Hueftle, 35 years old, Eustis resident, is sentenced to 3 years of probation in the same conditions than Conrad and to 15,000 US\$ fine and damages for helping by repeated and illegal methods a client, who only had licence for hunting with a bow, to kill a magnificent white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) in November 2016, transporting the head and antlers to a taxidermist and having the trophy delivered to New York. At the time of the shooting, Hueftle and his client knew that they were at a bait site, that hunting was forbidden there and that it is forbidden for an archer to use a firearm in Nebraska.

After his son and nephew, Nolan Hueftle, 60 years old, was sentenced to five years of probation and 30,000 US\$ in fines and damages for encouraging clients to kill deer in violation of several sections of Nebraska's hunting code. His probation comes with the same constraints as Conrad and Nolan. In addition, he is prohibited from trading in deer feed supplements.

34 employees, accomplices and HHO clients were sentenced to pay nearly 600,000 US\$ in fines.

Sandhills Express, October 28, 2020; US Department of Justice, November 18, 2020; The Washington Times, March 11, 2021; Omaha News, April 29, 2021; Kearney Hub, March 3, 2021; KHGI Nebraska TV, March 5, 2021.¹²

October 31, 2020

Malheur County, State of Oregon, United States of America

Sentencing of Garrett Harris, 22, for poaching a mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), the forbidding of any hunting activities for 2 years, the confiscation of his bow and a 1,100-US\$ fine, of which 1,000 US\$ will be remitted to the rewards fund of the TIP (Turn In Poachers). Garrett Harris must give 48 hours of educational discussion to explain the dangers of poaching to people learning to hunt.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, November 23, 2020.¹³



November 2, 2020

Rutland, State of Vermont, United States of America

Sentencing of Robert Verrastro, 47, to 30 days of prison for having poached in Starksboro, Addison County, a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). He was also sentenced for holding a counterfeit licence to transport long guns in his vehicle. The fines total 441 US\$. Sun Community News, January 20, 2021.¹⁴



November 4, 2020

Barber County, State of Kansas, United States of America

Sentencing of John Blick to 14 months of prison followed by 12 months probation for having poached 60 white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) and mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*). All the trophies seized after an investigation lasting several years and carried out by the gamekeepers Jason Harrold and Scott Stoughton in cooperation with the canine brigade of the Kansas fauna services are to be destroyed. Blick is paying a high price for his addiction to deer heads. He must pay more than 300,000 US\$ in damages to the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism. Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks, January 14, 2021.¹⁵



November 10, 2020

Cass County, State of Texas, United States of America

Arrest of Randy Phillips, 48. Gamekeepers stopped him during the night in the company of Donna Mays, 43. Deer blood and hair, 15 grammes of marijuana, a 22 rifle and methamphetamine were found in the truck. A search was performed immediately at Phillips' home and freshly poached white-tailed deer antlers (*Odocoileus virginianus*), torches and other accessories for hunting at night were seized.

TXK Today, November 11, 2020.¹⁶

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Early December 2020

Upshur County, State of Texas, United States of America

Poaching by the son and an attempt at concealing this by the father. The police solved their denials and found on their land the burned remains of an adult deer (family Cervidae) and the half butchered remains of another in the bushes.

Game & Fish, December 11, 2020.¹⁸

Early December 2020

State of Texas, United States of America

The Facebook of the Texas gamekeepers reports the arrest of a driver and hunter under the influence of alcohol. After episodes of erratic driving he stopped at the edge of prairie and observed through his open window, ready to use his AR-15 rifle. He admitted to hunting deer (family Cervidae) and wild boar for pleasure.

Game & Fish, December 11, 2020.¹⁹

Early December 2020

Clark County, State of Wisconsin, United States of America

Groups of teenagers dazzled deer (family Cervidae) at night, shooting them with firearms and leaving them to rot where they were. The score of the young poachers was about 40 deer. There were 6 to 8 leaders.

Game & Fish, December 11, 2020.²⁰

Mid-December 2020

State of New York, United States of America

A hunter had killed a male deer (family Cervidae) in the State of Connecticut. He reported all the details on social media. The police were to his home to seize the carcass. Because of the chronic wasting disease regulations (a degenerative disease of the central nervous system of the same family as mad cow disease), it was not permitted cross the boundaries of the 2 States with the body.

Game & Fish, December 11, 2020.²¹

December 20, 2020

Clinton County, State of Ohio, United States of America

Kevin Behr, an agent with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), is investigating undercover about deer poaching (family Cervidae) on a private property. He was standing next to a deer decoy when he was shot several times, which the press says were accidental. A man named Brian Liming is in custody. He was on the scene at the time of the accident. His rifle was loaded. He was prohibited from carrying a gun because of a domestic violence conviction. Kevin Behr is slowly recovering from his injuries.

Cleveland.com, December 20, 2020 ; WCPO 9, March 11, 2021; Local 12 WKRC-TV, April 17, 2021 ; FOX 19 NOW, April 15, 2021.²²



ASIA

BHUTAN

REPEATED OFFENSE

October 6, 2020

Jakar, Bumthang District, Bhutan

Sentencing of 2 men for then poaching of a Himalayan musk deer (*Moschus leucogaster*, Appendix I) and the detention of its preputial gland to 3 years and 3 months in prison and to 4 years, 11 months and 29 days in prison. The first is 30 years old and the second 38. He is a repeat offender and was sentenced in absentia. He ran away when he was at liberty on bail. A warrant for his arrest has been issued. The 2 were arrested a year ago when leaving the Wangchuck Centennial national park. They had just set traps there.

Bhutan Broadcasting Service, October 7, 2020.²³



CHINA

Early October 2020

Dalian International Airport, Liaoning Province, China

Seizure of a sika deer (*Cervus nippon*) antler weighing 570 grammes wrapped in aluminium foil in the luggage of a passenger arriving from Japan. The man said that he had 'picked it up in the mountains.

Chinese Customs, October 15, 2020.²⁴

November 16, 2020

Baiyin, Gansu Province, China

Seizure in a pharmacy of 10 deer antlers (family Cervidae) and at an antique shop of two horns of wild (genus *Capra*). The 2 traders were left in liberty while awaiting their trials.

Xioxiang Morning Herald, November 18, 2020.²⁵

End of November 2020

Tianjin Port, Tianjin Municipality, China

Seizure of an elk trophy (*Alces alces*) from North America.

Chinese Customs, November 25, 2020.²⁶

Early December 2020

Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure in a parcel arriving from abroad by post of 5 kg of penis and testicles of sika deer (*Cervus nippon*) or red deer (*Cervus elaphus*). In traditional Chinese medicine, the genitals of male deer must be cleaned immediately after the kill, fixed on wooden boards and dried in the air. They can also be blanched in boiling water and cooked. They are supposed to heal kidney failure, tinnitus and impotence. These prescriptions date back for several centuries and concern only the by-products of deer living in China. The parcel was probably sent from Japan. The press release issued by the customs does not give any details on this point.

Chinese Customs, December 17, 2020.²⁷

INDIA

December 6, 2020

Nanda Devi National Park, Chamoli District, State of Uttarakhand, India

Preventive detention for 5 men, including 4 Nepalese. Forest guards seized 4 Himalayan musk deer teeth (*Moschus leucogaster*, Appendix I) and 2 legs of Himalayan tahr (*Hemitragus jemlahicus*) in their bivouac in the Unesco world heritage listed national park.

Hindustan Times, December 8, 2020.²⁸

NEPAL

December 7, 2020

Devdaha, Rupandehi District, Lumbini Province, Nepal



Seizure of a preputial gland of a Himalayan musk deer (*Moschus leucogaster*, Appendix I).

The Kathmandu Post, December 16, 2020.²⁹

EUROPE

SPAIN

End of October 2020

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

Questioning of 2 men targeting red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) during the mating season. Seizure of a firearm, a knife and a pair of binoculars.

ECoticias, October 23, 2020.³⁰

ITALY

November 19, 2020

Regional Nature Park of Gutturu Mannu and Capoterra, Metropolitan City of Cagliari, Sardinia Region, Italy

Questioning of 2 poachers, including the president of a large game hunting society. Searches of their vehicles and homes led to the seizure of 2 dead Corsican red deer (*Cervus elaphus corsicanus*), the emblematic animal of the park where hunting is forbidden throughout the year and for all species.

Sardegna Live, November 20, 2020 ; L'Unione Sarda, November 20, 2020.³¹

OPERATION PILLOLE D'ORIENTE

December 27, 2020

Lombardy, Emilia-Romagna, Tuscany and Lazio Regions, Italy

Creams, roots, herbs and pills made using plant and animal species that are threatened with extinction and sold by Chinese shopkeepers under the general term of food supplements were seized by the carabinieri CITES. The seizures included in particular preparations based of preputial glands of Siberian musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*, Appendix II) and Indian costus or kuth (*Saussurea costus*, Appendix I), the Himalayan plant reputed to heal gastric problems and other affections nsuch as migraine, rheumatism, infertility and cancer. A Chinese herborist was charged with the illegal exercise of pharmacy. In his shop, he sold supposedly antiallergic and contraceptive products and psychotropes without an authorisation to sell them. Other Asian retailers contravene EU regulations (1169/2011) concerning the informing of consumers about foodstuffs. Several labels describing the composition of products sold are incomprehensible for Italian and European buyers. TG24.info, December 27, 2020.³²

UNITED KINGDOM

October 15, 2020

Bicknoller, Somerset County, England, United Kingdom

Like elephants with their large tusks in Africa, deer with large antlers are the victims of hunters and traffickers in Europe. A red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) described as 'imperial' with regard to his antlers was killed. It is the 3rd since August. The NGO Somerset Wildlife Crime holds that rural police forces do not use sufficient determination to fight the "Quantock Staghounds", the local hunting association that goes after deer with packs of dogs, a practice that has been forbidden since 2004.

BBC, October 22, 2020.³³

RUSSIA

December 23, 2020

Vladivostok International Airport, Primorsky Krai, Russia

Seized in the luggage of a "foreign" traveller: deer antlers (*Cervidae*) cut into discs, a preputial gland of a musk deer (*Moschus* spp., Appendix I or II) and of chaga mushroom (*Inonotus obliquus*). This mushroom is said to prevent heart and digestive problems and have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory virtues according to traditional Chinese and Russian medicine. The Khanty, an ethnic group in northern Russi, considers it as sacred and uses it to prepare fortifying tea.

OTV-Prim, December 23, 2020.³⁴



Saussurea costus. Photo Dinesh Valke

GUANACOS AND VICUNAS



Guanacos (*Lama guanicoe*). Photo Floyd E. Hayes

AMERICA

ARGENTINA

October 25, 2020

El Tordillo, Escalante Department, Province of Chubut, Argentina

On national road 26, seizure in the backs of 2 Ford Rangers of 8 guanacos (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II), cut up, 10 knives and 6 greyhounds. Seven arrests.

El Patagónico, October 26, 2020.¹

End of October 2020

Trelew, Rawson Department, Province of Chubut, Argentina



Seizure of 1,150 kg of guanaco meat (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II). This would represent at least 50 guanacos. The 2 men in the cabin of the pick-up were questioned. They were going to make

deliveries to butchers in the town, where the meat would be sold under a false name.

Diario Jornada, October 31, 2020.²

November 17, 2020

Abra Pampa, Cochinoca Department, Province of Jujuy, Argentina

Marge motorcycles were seen on the desert roads of the high plateaux. A few days later, 4 vicunas (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix II) were found shot dead and with their wool removed.

El Tribuno Jujuy, November 26, 2020.³

Mid-December 2020

Fiambala, Tinogasta Department, Province of Catamarca, Argentina



Men shot from a Toyota 4WD at vicuna (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix II). After a chase, the vehicle was stopped in the Juan Manuel Salas district. It smelled like a morgue inside. There were 9 vicunas including a teke (baby vicuna), 3 guanacos (*Lama guanicoe*, Appendix II) including a chulengo (baby guanaco), 1 darwin's rhea (*Pterocnemia pennata*, Appendix II) and 1 andean hairy armadillo (*Chaetophractus nationi*). Arrest of Vaquinsay (43), Hernández (45) and Hernández (55).

El Ancasti, December 21, 2020.⁴

PERU

Mid-December 2020

Lari, Province of Caylloma, Department of Arequipa, Peru

Alerted by the approach of a Serfor patrol, the poachers ran off leaving 14 vicuna skins (*Vicugna vicugna*, Appendix II), food, clothing and drugs.

Agencia Peruana de Noticias, December 18, 2020.⁵

ORANGUTANS, CHIMPANZEES, MACAQUES, GIBBONS, LORISES, MARMOSETS AND OTHER PRIMATES

WESTERN AFRICA

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

October 2, 2020

Agboville, Lagunes District, Côte d'Ivoire

Seizure of a female baby chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) from a cacao planter 2 h north of Abidjan by road and transfer to the Akatia sanctuary in the protected forest of Yapo-Abbe. His mother was doubtless killed, considered as a crop pest by the grower. The first veterinary care was the removal of the bullet and splinters that had wounded his throat.

Akatia, October 1 and 2, 2020.¹

December 9, 2020

Côte d'Ivoire

Arrival of a new chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) in the Akatia sanctuary. He had a fair number of health problems and a damaged left hand—all sequels of his captivity.

Akatia, December 18, 2020.²

December 10, 2020

Côte d'Ivoire



Arrest of a seller of monkeys and one of his suppliers, a Guinean. Release of a chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) about 2 years old and transfer to the new Akatia sanctuary that benefits from support from the government of Côte d'Ivoire. Akatia, December 11 and 16, 2020 and January 2, 2021 ; Eagle, December 2020.³

GUINEA

October 2020

Sigui, Kankan Region and National Park of Upper Niger, Guinea

This young fellow of the woods (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) was in the hands of a monkey merchant and managed to escape. He was transferred to the Chimpanzee Conservation Center.

Chimpanzee Conservation Center, October 5, 2020.⁴

Mid-October 2020

Guinea



Escorted by his caretakers, the young chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) is having a good time enjoying a banana in the bush at the sanctuary of the CCC, Chimpanzee Conservation Center, where he was taken in a week ago after being seized from traffickers by the wildlife crime squad.

Chimpanzee Conservation Center, October 21, 2020.⁵

LIBERIA

November 9, 2020

Liberia

Arrival by plane of a very small orphaned chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) 2 weeks old and transfer by road to the sanctuary of LCRP (Liberia Chimpanzee Rescue & Protection). She has a severe facial injury. She fell when her mother was shot to end up as bushmeat and ritual decoration or ceremonial objects.

Liberia Chimpanzee Rescue & Protection, November 9 and 12, 2020.⁶

December 17, 2020

Marshall, Margibi County, Liberia

A new month-old orphaned chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) is hosted at the Liberia Chimpanzee Rescue and Protection refuge, some days after the death of a small resident who arrived in early September 2020 and was nicknamed Lily. Despite constant care and ups and downs that gave hope for a recovery, the outcome of pneumonia was fatal.

Liberia Chimpanzee Rescue & Protection, December 17, 2020.⁷

TRIBUTE

Jenny and Jimmy Desmond are the founders of Liberia Chimpanzee Rescue and Protection (LCRP). He is a veterinarian and she is the head caregiver of a team dedicated to the care of orphaned and abused chimpanzees ranging in age from a few months to ten years. Among them, their Princess plays the amazing role of a watchdog and animal entertainer, creating social links and shared emotions in this community of traumatized great apes who keep deep indecipherable secrets and immutable nostalgia.



The Desmond trio landed in Liberia in 2015 to save from starvation chimpanzees undergoing experimental research under the direction of the New York Blood Center to develop a hepatitis B vaccine and abandoned on prison islands for several years. Before arriving in Liberia on an emergency basis at the request of the Humane Society of the United States, the Desmonds had already accumulated practical knowledge about simian societies and the sometimes necessary art of living alongside them. In 1998, the Sepilok orangutans refuge on the island of Borneo bewitched them and it was Matooke, an orphaned chimpanzee of about 2 years of age, in Uganda, who help them for good get a foot on the ladder. This was in the year 2000. They took care of this little jungle refugee for several months, giving him back his confidence and helping him to climb the first steps of the forest life with patience and affinity.

Today, the LCRP welcomes 45 residents, some of whom may be able to accede the great freedom, provided that in the eaten-away forests, it will be sure men will leave them in peace.
www.liberiachimpanzeerescue.org

CENTRAL AFRICA

CAMEROON

Early November 2020

Yaoundé, Centre Region, Cameroon



Ape Action Africa saved this baby chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) whose chest was already bruised by a strap that kept him captive in a crate. His vocalisation and postures show that in spite of his youth he had learned about

family life. He was an orphan or separated from his group for several days or weeks. Nobody knows exactly how he arrived in the suburbs of Yaoundé. Ape Action Africa, November 7, 2020.⁸

December 10, 2020

Cameroon

A young mandrill (*Mandrillus sphinx*, Appendix I) was being delivered from the boot of the car belonging to a trafficker in wild live animals intercepted in the south of the country thanks to cooperation between the Last Great Ape Organization and the police.

Eagle, December 2020.⁹

GABON

Mid-December 2020

Omboué, Ogooue-Maritime Province, Gabon

The NGO Save Gabon's Primates took in a juvenile white-collared mangabey (*Cercocebus torquatus*, Appendix II). He was in the custody of a private individual who had inherited him under unknown circumstances. The monkey is under observation at the Center of Primatology (COP), before being released if possible. The COP is the headquarters of Save Gabon's Primates and a research department of the Interdisciplinary Center for Medical Research of Franceville (ICMRF).

Save Gabon's Primates, October 28, 2020.¹⁰

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

October 30, 2020

Lola ya Bonobo Sanctuary, Kinshasa Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Arrival of 2 bonobos (*Pan paniscus*, Appendix I) who were together staggered in their cell.

Friends of Bonobos/Lola ya Bonobo, October 30, 2020.¹¹

Mid-December 2020
Kisimba-Ikobo Primate Reserve, North-Kivu
Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo



Thin, weak and silent, she was taken from the traffickers inside the Kisimba-Ikobo reserve thanks to the action of the guards and BaCoPriRe (Bakumbule Community Primate reserve). On the local market, a chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) of this size is traded for around 3,000 US\$. Internationally, 10 times more. BaCoPriRe works hand in hand with Conserv Congo. The little one was welcomed with open arms by the Lwiro refuge in Bukavu, South Kivu province.

Lwiro Primates, December 29 and 30, 2020; Conserv Congo, December 29 and 30, 2020.¹²

EASTERN AFRICA

MADAGASCAR

Year 2020

Alaotra-Mangoro Region, Tamatave Province, Menabe Region, Tuléar Province, Madagascar

After the lockdown announcement, many people from the city left Tananarive for the countryside, for adventure or to stay with relatives. There were long lines of crowded cars. It was the urban exodus. People were getting back to their roots and wanted to grow rice, peanuts, corn. To grow something to eat something and to escape the mass shortage in the capital (1,3 million inhabitants). At the end of March, the fumes began to rise. The Covid neo-rurals were attacking the common good, the last of the forests that are normally protected by a few wobbly signs, easy to miss. Ancient trees were falling to grow seasonal vegetables. Every neo-rural covidian cuts down 6 trees in 2 days and captures lemurs and other small arboreal mammals to eat them in emergency. From February to September, at least 564 lemurs were found dead and wasted in rustic traps. Woodcutters also produce charcoal to sell at high prices in towns under curfew. The time of "lemur watching" that made the small fortune of guides and peasant families is suspended. ...



Berthe's mouse lemur (*Microcebus berthae*)

The year 2020 was horrible for the 107 species of lemurs on the island of Madagascar. From the largest, the indris (*Indri indri*, Appendix I) weighing between 7 and 10 kg, to the smallest, Berthe's mouse lemur (*Microcebus berthae*, Appendix I) weighing an average of 30 g, by way of the red ruffed lemurs (*Varecia rubra*, Appendix I), Northern sportive lemur (*Lepilemur septentrionalis*, Appendix I) and white-fronted lemurs (*Eulemur albifrons*, Appendix I). Endangered lemurs are the collateral victims of Covid. "People working in conservation are trying their best."



Streaked tenrec
(*Hemicentetes semispinosus*)

"It is a mess" laments Tiana Andriamanana, who heads the NGO Fanamby. For its part, Bao-miavotse Vahinala Raharinirina, the Minister of the Environment, says there are fewer fires than in previous years. "People

feel that there are more because we communicate about this issue on a daily basis". She criticises the NGOs that manage the protected areas and would waste foreign funding. But for her, the main culprit is charcoal. "The annual consumption is 450,000 tonnes and it takes 100 kg of wood to produce 10 kg of charcoal." "This is a real disaster and explains the increase in deforestation over the last 30 years."

In Manombo special reserve, fires have consumed around 100 hectares and charred populations of snails that live exclusively on the island. Malagasy land tortoises, which are on the verge of extinction due to poaching and smuggling, are also victims of the fires.

In the north of the island, Tsaratanana reserve is subject to clearing by marijuana planters. Its only defence is its inaccessibility. For traffickers, this is rather an advantage. Tsaratanana is home to 4 species of frogs (*Rhombophryne guentherpetersi*, *Rhombophryne ornata*, *Rhombophryne tany* and *Cophyla alticola*), 15 species of tenrecs (family Tenrecidae), small typically Malagasy mammals, some of which are similar to hedgehogs and others to shrews, and 4 genera of bamboo (*Hickelia*, *Oldeania*, *Sokinochloa* and *Nastus*).

National Geographic, December 14, 2020; Mongabay, December 23, 2020 and February 2, 2021.¹³

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

Mid-November 2020

Groot Marico, North West Province, South Africa



Saving of 2 juvenile vervet monkeys (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II), one of which was by a road and the other "adopted" after the stoning of his mother. They are being cared for at the Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital.

Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital, November 18, 2020 ; December 15, 2020 ; The Vervet Forest, November 28, 2020.¹⁴

November 18, 2020

Nigel, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Sentencing of Alfreda Alberts to paying a fine of 10,750 rand, that is to say 654 US\$ or a 7-month suspended prison sentence. The vet received a weak sentence after an 8-year legal battle carried out by the NSPCA. After receiving information, its inspectors seized a vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) at her home. He had been tortured and lacked care. He crawled, disabled, in a metal cage in the vet's bedroom. After transfer to Johannesburg zoo and observation of the critical condition of the animal it was decided to put him down. After her condemnation for cruelty to animals, rebelling against NSPCA agents who had search warrants and the detention of a wild animal without a permit, Alberts continued to practice her profession. She has not been excluded from the national order of veterinary surgeons.

Daily Maverick, November 14, 2020. National Council of Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (NSPCA), February 5, 2021.¹⁵

December 23, 2020

Tweespruit, Free State Province, South Africa

Seen on the Internet in wire packaging, the vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*, Appendix II) was up for grabs at 5000 rand, that is to say 326 US\$. He was seized by SPCA agents. A 21-year-old man was holding him. After trying to unload him on a tradipractitioner he switched to Facebook.

Times Live, December 23, 2020.¹⁶

facebook

NORTHERN AMERICA

CANADA

February 2021

Canada

In 2020, Animal Alliance of Canada and Animal Justice protest against the import of 1,056 long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) from Cambodia. During a normal sanitary period, Canada imports 2,500 monkeys per year via the Province of Quebec. According to the spokesmen of 2 NGOs the exceptional order made to breeder-poachers in Cambodia resulted from research on anti-Covid treatment and vaccines. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) refuses to comment. For reasons of the protection of private interests and confidentiality, the CFIA is not allowed to share information about importers with the public.

One Voice, December 17, 2020 ; Action for Primates, January 17, 2021 ; National Post, February 25, 2021.¹⁷

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

October 13-14, 2020

San Francisco, State of California, United States of America



- Tuesday October 13: night theft of a ring-tailed lemur (*Lemur catta*, Appendix I) in San Francisco Zoo. The lemur enclosure had been forced. The police call for witnesses. The victim of the theft is 21-22 years old.

- At midday on Thursday, "Maki" was seen in the courtyard of a church in Daly City, 10 km from the zoo.

Later, Cory McGilloway is arrested in a stolen waste truck. The police in San Rafael north of San Francisco discovered photos of a lemur on his mobile phone. It turned out to be Maki. McGilloway risks a maximum of a year in prison and a 50,000 US\$ fine.

In July 2018, Aquinas Kasbar, another common law offender, had stolen a ring-tailed lemur in Santa Ana Zoo ("On the Trail" n°26 p. 54). He was sentenced to 90 days in prison and 8,486 US\$ of damages for the zoo.

National Broadcasting Company (NBC), October 15 and 16, 2020 ; U.S. Department of Justice, June 21, 2021.¹⁸

**December 17, 2020 and January 14, 2021
O'Hare International Airport, Chicago, State of Illinois, United States of America**

Experiments on animals are going strong during this long Covid period. Two arrivals of long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) arrived in Chicago on a large Russian AirBridgeCargo plane in 2020 and January 2021. The company is used to transporting monkeys for animal experiments. The international flight itself, without counting transport to and from the airports, is more than 15,000 km and takes at least 25h. The shipments of macaques take off from Phnom Penh in Cambodia and transit via Moscow. The NGOs Action for Primates and One Voice USA use confidential sources to inform the public about "live laboratory material". Populations of long-tailed macaques are declining in the Indochinese peninsula. One Voice, December 17, 2020 ; Action for Primates, January 17, 2021 ; National Post, February 25, 2021.¹⁹

LATIN AMERICA

ARGENTINA

**End of November 2020
Villa María, Province of Córdoba, Argentina**



Seizure in a private dwelling of a black howler monkey (*Alouatta caraya*, Appendix II) about 14 years old. He was transferred to the Tatú Carreta sanctuary in Casa Grande. Carlos Paz Vivo, November 25, 2020.²⁰

BOLIVIA

**Mid-November 2020
Santa Cruz Department, Bolivia**

Rescue of one common squirrel monkey (*Saimiri sciureus*, Appendix II). He had escaped from the house where he had been under house arrest for an undetermined time. He strayed to a neighbor who called the police. He was transferred to the CAD (Centro de Atención y Derivación de fauna silvestre) for health and behavioral examination. El Deber, November 13, 2020.²¹

BRAZIL

**December 8, 2020
Sorocaba, State of São Paulo, Brazil**

Seizure by the environmental police of a black-tufted-ear marmoset (*Callithrix penicillata*, Appendix II) in a private home. Fine equal to 93 US\$ for the "owner". G1, December 8, 2020.²²



COLOMBIA

October 14, 2020

Le Victoria, Department of Valle del Cauca, Colombia

Two Colombian night monkeys (*Aotus lemurinus*, Appendix II), a mother and her young, were handed over voluntarily by the owners to the authorities. The first observations indicate that they are both in good health. They were transferred to the San Emigdio Centro de Atención y Valoración de Fauna Silvestre at Palmira. Corporación Autónoma Regional del Valle del Cauca, October 14, 2020.²³

Early November 2020

Antioquia Department, Colombia

Five white-footed tamarins (*Saguinus leucopus*, Appendix I) rescued from trafficking and captivity in 2018 and 2019 were returned to the forest by Corantioquia (Corporación Autónoma Regional del Centro de Antioquia) and the Metropolitan Services of Medellín. During the learning period, they recovered enough climbing, jumping, dodging and feeding abilities to be immersed in a natural habitat. Telemedellin, November 5, 2020.²⁴

Early December, 2020

Santa Catalina Island, San Andres Department, Providencia and Santa Catalina, Colombia



At the margin of operation Cangrejo Negro (Black Crab) aiming at restoring the ecological balance of the islands San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina damaged by hurricane Lota, the Geoffroy's spider monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*, Appendix II) locked up for 6 years in a resident's

house was released. The archipelago is about 650 km away from the Colombian coast in the Atlantic Ocean. The spider monkey was transferred by plane to the CAVF (Centro de Atención y Valoración para Fauna Silvestre) of San Andrés for health examination. Arrived on Santa Catalina Island because of the trafficking of wild animals for pets, he will not be able to regain his freedom.

The preliminary expertise of the Humboldt Institute after the passage of Lota concludes that 90% of the tropical dry forests and 70% of the mangroves have been degraded. "If all goes well, the initial state will not be restored for about 30 years." "Mammals, birds and reptiles have suffered heavy losses but it is too early to quantify them." "The proliferation of rodents and other invasive species may well be a second catastrophe for local flora and fauna." Too many rodents are the bane of reptile and bird eggs. Semana, December 6, 2020 ; RCN Radio, December 14, 2020.²⁵

FRANCE (FRENCH GUIANA)

November 10, 2020

Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France

SOS Faune Sauvage, under the direction of Solène Lefort, veterinary doctor, and with the help of the keepers from the French Guiana Zoo, released in their natural environment 3 tufted capuchins (*Cebus apella*, Appendix II) seized from private individuals 2 years ago for the male and one year ago for the 2 females. When their cages were opened, they came out spontaneously and climbed trees under the guidance of the male. SOS Faune Sauvage, after a time and a protocol of "de-impregnation", has already achieved during the year the releases of a caiman, a hawk, a squirrel monkey, an anaconda, a pian and a scorpion mud turtle.

Guyane la 1^{ère}, December 10, 2020.²⁶

PERU

Early November, 2020

Tocache, Tocache Province, San Martin Department, Peru

A black spider monkey (*Ateles chamek*, Appendix II), better known as a spider monkey because of his long limbs and tail, and a yellow-tailed woolly monkey (*Oreonax flavicauda*, Appendix I) were languishing in a bird cage. Another solitary black spider monkey was locked in a wire cell. The 3 trapped ones were initially transferred to a refuge for health and behavioral assessment. Joint operation of Neotropical Primate Conservation and the departmental environmental authority.

Neotropical Primate Conservation, November 3, 2020.²⁷

EASTERN ASIA

CAMBODIA

October 2020

Preah Vihear Province, Cambodia

Saving of 2 capped gibbons (*Hylobates pileatus*, Appendix I) shut in a garden shed. Wildlife Alliance Cambodia considers that they cannot be set free. They will spend the rest of their lives in the Phnom Tamao orphanage.

Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, December 7, 2020.²⁸

INDONESIA ORANGUTANS

October 2020

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

Rescue of an orangutan aged around 5 years. He was living in the middle of a wooden house, tied to a pole in a family environment. He was fed with noodles, rice. He drank coffee and was eventually allowed some fruit. He was "found" in the forest. He bears the scars of old wounds on his neck and ankles.



International Animal Rescue admitted him in its refuge. Initially, he was quarantined to check that he was not a carrier of contagious diseases. Karnele L. Sanchez, director of the NGO in Indonesia, is inspired by the "One Health" doctrine, which is the subject of several international scientific projects. It consists in encompassing the health of human societies, animal societies and the environment in the same perspective. Karnele Sanchez notes that the Covid period has worsen the intrusions into the forest of poachers, gold and other metal diggers and woodcutters. The good news is that the nicknamed Kukur showed during his quarantine some ability to build a nest in the tops of trees and was subsequently admitted to the refugee forest school. He may one day be able to return to freedom.

International Animal Rescue, December 9, 2020, February 8 and 26, 2021 ; Red Apes.²⁹

Mid-October 2020

Perkebunan Pulau Tiga, Aceh Tamiang Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Anesthesia and exfiltration by a team of the NGO HOCRU (Human-Orangutan Conflict Resolution Unit) of a lady orangutan aged about 12 years who, 13 km away from her forest habitat, had got lost and temporarily settled in a plantation. She was returned to her forest at sunset thanks to the walking porters of the OIC (Orangutan Information Centre).



During the year 2020, HOCRU rescued 24 orangutans in the provinces of Aceh and North Sumatra. Eight were in captivity, 16 were removed from plantations where they were at the mercy of deadly reprisals. Orangutan Information Center, October 20, 2020 and January 2, 2021; The Orangutan Project, October 23, 2020.³⁰

Early November 2020

Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park, Sintang Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia

Release of 2 females and 3 males after several years in Ketapang Forest School. All these orangutans were in the care of International Animal Rescue for 11, 10, 7, 6 and 4 years, all orphaned, separated from their mothers in violent circumstances and sold as pets before being rescued by BKSDA and IAR teams. In the forest, the orangutans babies remain dependent on their mothers for 7 to 8 years. All these survivors will be observed for 3 months, the time to verify that they are autonomous with regard feeding.

Tagar, November 13, 2020 ; International Animal Rescue, December 17, 2020.³¹

November 3, 2020

East Kutai Regency, East Kalimantan Province, Borneo Island, Indonesia



"He is about one year old," says the local BKSDA branch. The baby orangutan was recovered in the forest by local people. Before the arrival of the carers, he was fed for 3 days with honey, mother's milk like and warmed in a blanket. He was then transferred to a specialized refuge in Samboja. The prognosis is reserved. The mother disappeared.

Merdeka.com, November 5, 2020 ; Suara Kaltim, November 5, 2020 ; Kil Samarinda, December 4, 2020.³²

November 23, 2020

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

The Tapanuli orangutan (*Pongo tapanuliensis*, Appendix I), about 35 years old and weighing 63 kg, was in good health. For the past 4 days, he has been hanging out too close from the village outskirts and some inhabitants raised the alarm before the cohabitation became tense. He was anaesthetized by the teams of the BKSDA and NGOs and released in the reserve of Dolok Sipirok.

Merdeka.com, November 24, 2020.³³

MEETINGS FOR 11 ORANGUTANS

December 17, 2020

Kuala Lumpur International Airport, Malaysia

Return to Indonesia by air of 9 orangutans of the sub-species *Pongo abelli*.

Three had been seized near Kuala Lumpur airport in July 2018.

Two had been seized in a boat in the company of crocodiles and of parrots in September 2018.

Two others were seized in a small boat in the company of gibbons.

Following these seizures, 6 Malayan and Indonesian freebooters were sentenced to fines of 12,500 US\$ or 4-year prison terms.

The last 2 orangutans had been handed over voluntarily to the Perhilitan by the "owners" in 2018 who had repented. While awaiting their repatriation, the 2 juvenile orangutans were cared for by the National Wildlife Rescue Centre at Sungkai, Perak State.

Antara, December 16, 2020 ; New Straits Times (with AFP), December 18, 2020 ; Tempo, December 18, 2020 ; Traffic, December 18, 2020.³⁴

December 17, 2020

Suvarnabhumi International Airport, Bangkok, Thailand

One should always keep hoping. They were a few months old when they were intercepted by Thai Customs in the boot of a car. They were about 3 years old when they boarded a Garuda Indonesia flight to Sumatra, Indonesia. This return proves that Thai vets know how to care for orangutans and that the two countries cooperate in the safeguard of endangered species.

Bangkok Post, December 17, 2020 ; Reuters, December 17, 2020 ; Tempo, December 18, 2020 ; Traffic, December 18, 2020 ; Kompas, February 3, 2021.³⁵

All these repatriated orphans will spend time in schools for teaching about life in the forest, with prospect of finally being released.

INDONESIA - EXCLUDING ORANGUTANS

October 16, 2020

Lau Damak, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

The pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca nemestrina*, Appendix II) was in the torture chain for 10 years. Anaesthesia and saving by BKSDA and the NGO Scorpion.

Scorpion, October 18, 2020.³⁶

November 11, 2020

Gudang, South Bangka Regency, Bangka Belitung Islands Province, Indonesia



Back to liberty for 2 Sunda slow lorises (*Nycticebus coucang*, Appendix I) after 5 months in the forest. They seem to be in good condition. Joint operation by BKSDA, the Fondation Pusat Penyelamatan Satwa Alobi Foundation and the Bangka Belitung scouts (Babel).

iNews, November 12, 2020 ; Tribunnews.com, November 12, 2020.³⁷

December 6, 2020

North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Ismail carried a long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) to Medan in a bag of rice with a chain wound to his chest. He had also been beaten by people in a village. Treated by Anhar Lubis, one of the best veterinarians in Sumatra, in the Scorpion office in Medan, he was then transferred to a specialized shelter in Stabat, 40 km from Medan.

Scorpion Foundation Indonesia, December 11, 2020.³⁸

December 6, 2020

North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

A pigtail macaque (*Macaca nemestrina*, Appendix II) collected by Scorpion died on the operating table. He was worn out and covered with wounds. The veterinarians suspect a case of torture.

Scorpion Foundation Indonesia, December 15, 2020.³⁹

MALAYSIA

Early December 2020

Tabin and Kulamba Reserves, State of Sabah, Malaysia

The idea is a fine one. It wraps us in a dream and we lose contact with reality. The Rhino and Forest Fund (RFF), Borneo Orangutan Survival (BOS), Sabah Forestry Department (SFD) and the Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research (Leibniz-IZW) are trying to regreen 65 hectares by performing a reconversion of land sacrificed to oil palms into tropical forest. 8000 fertile trees forming the pillars of virgin forest have been planted. When the trees have become big and when the canopy has closed again, a radically green corridor will allow the movement of animals between the reserves of Tabin and Kulamba, given that there will be no more poachers on the look-out at that time. The grandiose scenario of the promoters of hope is to apply their magic wand to 200,000 hectares of oil palm, that is to say 2000 km² with the approval of industrialists and to create in the Sabah (successively denatured by deforestation and oil palms) a network devoted exclusively orangutans, pygmy elephants, calaos and tarantulas.

Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research, December 8, 2020.⁴⁰



Pig-tailed macaques (*Macaca nemestrina*)

December 29-31, 2020

Raub, State of Pahang, Malaysia

Six gibbons are at the center of a controversy. Mariani Ramli was a ranger from 2007 to 2016 within the Perhilitan, the government wildlife management body. A few months before her dismissal, the Perhilitan had given her the responsibility of preparing the release of 6 sub-adult gibbons seized from traffickers back into the jungle. After her dismissal, she continued to care for them at the Gibbon Rehabilitation Project. GREP is run by the Gibbon Conservation Society. It is located in Raub, 110 km north of Kuala Lumpur. At the end of December 2020, 18 agents of the Perhilitan intervened at the GREP to take possession of the 6 gibbons and transfer them by truck to the National Wildlife Rescue Center in Sungkai, 130 km away. According to witnesses, the transfer was rough. Blood stains were reportedly spotted in the cage of one of the gibbons. A week later, the Perhilitan stated in a press release that no gibbon, contrary to rumors, had been injured, killed or lost during the operation, that the trace of blood were leeches and that the use of anesthetics had been unnecessary.

The Perhilitan questions the quality of GREP's work. It says that stereotypical behaviors of Ramli's protégés have been observed as well as a dependence on humans that is incompatible with any prospect of release. In conclusion of a video aiming to demonstrate the good physical condition of the 6 gibbons at the heart of a controversy that is growing locally and internationally, the Perhilitan says that in Malaysia no individual or NGO is authorized to operate on its own initiative wildlife learning centers for endangered animals. GREP and Ramli are supported by the IUCN. The controversy began with a legal challenge with regard a dismissal that Ramli considered unfair. It continued on the validity of a contract binding the 2 parties now in conflict and above all illustrates the sometimes difficult cohabitation between institutional bodies and private initiatives which have in common the vocation of guarding animals threatened with extinction while preparing them to return to the wild.

Malay Mail, December 30, 31, 2020, and January 7, 14, 2021.⁴¹

THAILAND

Early November 2020

Mueang Chumphon District, Chumphon Province and Tha Yang District, Phetchaburi Province, Thailand

Found in the Mueang Chumphon district, dragging a rope and displaying a wound. The Northern big-tailed macaque (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II) was amputated before his transfer to a WFFT (Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand) clinic-sanctuary. Driven by the instinct for survival of the species he recovered. He is familiar with humans and had doubtless escaped or had been discarded after coconut picking.

WFFT, November 8, 2020.⁴²



VIET NAM

BEING A MACAQUE IN VIET NAM

There are 6 species of macaque in Viet Nam: Assamese macaques (*Macaca assamensis*, Appendix II), Northern pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II), stump-tailed macaque (*Macaca arctoides*, Appendix II), rhesus macaques (*Macaca mulatta*, Appendix II), long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II) and the *Macaca fascicularis condorensis* that live in the Con Dao islands. The law forbids their possession in private homes and in the commercial sector. Nevertheless, the possession of macaques is still common in spite of the efforts made by NGO, the environmental police and the national parks. Captive macaques are not strictly speaking the pets of human primates. They are in the 2nd circle. They are generally left in a garage, cellars, huts and cages. At best they are intermittent objects of curiosity. They are forsaken and only have social contacts with those who bring them food—generally any old thing. Others are opposite hotels and restaurants or in courtyards. They serve as a sign, an attraction and a magic item. They all have mental and obsessive-compulsive disorder and may sometimes be aggressive, leading at best to their placing voluntarily at institutions, or at the worst to abandoning them in forests or at the roadside. The refuges are saturated. Arrivals are compared to a conveyor belt system: the teams free 22 and 23 arrive the next day. The urgent requirements involve increasing the housing capacities of the refuges and the design of strict protocols for release. An optical illusion caused by the gangs of macaques searching the edges of towns for food wastes makes public opinion think there are huge numbers of them. This is trompe-l'œil. Because of the fragmentation of their natural habitats, woodcutters, poaching, food shortage and an innate sense of opportunism, macaques are performing a forest exodus and their total populations - all species combined - are decreasing rapidly. Although there are macaques in towns, hardly any remain in the forests.

Aldrich, B.C.; Neale, D. Pet Macaques in Vietnam: An NGO's Perspective. *Animals* 2021, 11, 60.⁴³



November 5, 2020

Vinh, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

Handing over voluntarily to ENV 2 (Education for Nature – Vietnam) Northern pig-tailed macaques (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II) that were in residence in a hotel.

ENV, November 6, 2020.⁴⁴

Mid-November 2020

Hoang Mai District, Hanoi, Viet Nam

A very young Northern pig-tailed macaque

(*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II), 265 g: 43 to 86 US\$.

A very young long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II), around 200 g: 86 to 129 US\$.

A very young rhesus macaque (*Macaca mulatta*, Appendix II), around 200 g: 431 US\$.

The importing country is the forest. An account of 50% is required when ordering. Sellers and buyers on Facebook avoid the use keywords that are easy to pinpoint for censors or animal's enthusiasts. Clever traffickers do not sell but in contrast "need to find new parents for the offspring of their dear pets". When a dialogue is established between the seller and the buyer, a few details are mentioned like as many admissions of illegality. "It comes from the forest and I have no papers." "Our products are chosen one by one." "The quality is guaranteed." After these exchanges it is sometimes possible to see "the goods". A bus station or a petrol station is often given as the first link. You then have to follow the instructions to finally reach the site of the transaction where a comely woman with gift of the gab welcomes you and shows the latest arrivals of that morning. They are fresh and still smell of the forest. "Take advantage of this, we don't have them every day, take this big one if you are a beginner. He's obedient and doesn't bite. If you are not satisfied with it, I would sell you another, offering to give you something back for the first one."

Lao Dong, November 20, 2020.⁴⁵

November 17, 2020

Cao Bang, Cao Bang Province, Viet Nam

A Bengal slow loris (*Nycticebus bengalensis*, Appendix I) was for sale on the market at Cao Bang near the Chinese frontier. He was purchased by a tender-hearted person who then remitted this 1.5 kg of exciting forest to ENV. ENV makes a reminder that "purchasing wildlife from a trafficker means putting money in his pocket while avoiding legal problems." "It is better to call our hotline 1-800-1522," continued the NGO. After the call, ENV send ENV staff with support from the environmental police.

ENV, November 18, 2020.⁴⁶



facebook

December 2-3, 2020

Viet Nam

There is a waltz of captured pygmy lorises that are put in cages, handed over to the authorities or bought on markets by tender-hearted friends of animals. In 24h the Cat Tien sanctuary of the national park welcomed 3 new inmates (*Nycticebus pygmaeus*, Appendix I).

ENV, December 4, 2020.⁴⁷

Week of December 7, 2020

Quynh Luu District and Vinh, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

Voluntary handing over to NGO Save Vietnam's Wildlife of 2 macaques including a Northern pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II) and the release of 8 macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II) in partnership with the Pu Mat national park. These former prisoners followed classes for their reconnection with wildlife before being left to fend for themselves.

Save Vietnam's Wildlife, December 9, 2020.⁴⁸

December 27, 2020

Bac Giang Province, Viet Nam

Alert concerning the sale of live goods on the web. Seizure of a Bengal slow loris from the seller (*Nycticebus bengalensis*, Appendix I), a Northern pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca leonina*, Appendix II) and Pallas's squirrel (*Callosciurus erythraeus*).

ENV, December 27, 2020.⁴⁹

SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

November 17, 2020

Medhikuchi, Kamrup District, State of Assam, India



An army terrorist unit ran into 2 poachers "by chance." 5 heads and 12 kg of monkey meat, two rifles and ammunition were seized in their shelter in the middle of the rice fields. Lienhming Thang Hmar and Sona Viphe were arrested.

East Mojo, November 20, 2020 ; The Sentinel Assam, November 19, 2020, The Times of India, November 18, 2020.⁵⁰

November 17, 2020

Shanigapuram, Mahabubabad District, State of Telangana, India

Bags dumped on a hill contained more than 30 rotting bodies of adult monkeys. The authorities suspect mass poisoning. Deccan Herald (with PTI), November 18, 2020.⁵¹



December 7, 2020

Thane, Thane District, State of Maharashtra, India

On Monday, the Regional Disaster Management Cell received a call about 2 grey langurs (*Semnopithecus entellus*, Appendix I) that seemed to have been electrocuted. When they arrived, the emergency service located the place where the 2 victims had been buried. The post-mortem proved that they had been struck on the head, the back and the hands until they died.

The Times of India, December 9, 2020.⁵²

PAKISTAN

December 18, 2020

Karachi, Sindh Province, Pakistan

Seizure at the Empress Market of 4 baby macaques (*Macaca* spp., Appendix I or II) in iron cages.

The Empress Market was built from 1884 to 1889 and named in homage to Queen Victoria, Empress of India. It is now one of the most popular markets in Karachi. Everything is sold there: condiments, fruit, vegetables, meat, stationery, textiles and also animals.

ARY News, December 18, 2020.⁵³



Empress Market

EUROPE

FRANCE

October 14, 2020

Department of Indre, France

After the seizure from a private individual whose home had been searched in relation to a common law offense, the female marmoset (*Callithrix* spp., Appendix II) weighing not more than 100 g was entrusted to the La Tanière sanctuary in Eure-et-Loir.

L'Echo Républicain, October 15, 2020.⁵⁴

November 15-16, 2020

Le Mesnil-Aubry, Department of Val-d'Oise, France



Stolen with silent effraction from the discreet premises of the Conservatoire des Animaux en Voie d'Extinction (Cavex) in the northern suburbs of Paris, 15 golden lion tamarins (*Leontopithecus rosalia*, Appendix I), whose ecological value is inestimable and whose black-market price ranges from 5,000 to 20,000 € each were dispersed in the urban jungle. The tamarins appeared on Snapchat on the following days. They are used as bathroom clowns and curiosities in basement ghettos in Paris near Buttes-Chaumont park. An anonymous spectator tipped off the Brigitte Bardot Foundation. One was found by chance in a school playground in Marseilles nearly a year after they had disappeared. He probably escaped from a neighbouring flea market where there are illegal sales of goldfinches and other protected species. He is 6 years old and shows all the signs of domesticity. Several inquiries have been launched.

But the most mysterious feature of the story is that of knowing why monkeys from tropical forests in South America were in the hands of the Cavex, whose sole aim is the conservation of biodiversity by ensuring the reproduction in captivity of species that are becoming extinct and reintroducing in a natural environment. Several of the stolen monkeys are reported to have been entrusted to the Cavex by the authorities in New Caledonia following unknown administrative procedures and sequences. The Cavex was founded in 1999 by Henri Quinque, a surgeon. Talking in terms of the reintroduction in nature of animals that are generally born in captivity is at best a language mistake and at the worst a cheat. The introduction in natural environments of wild animals depending entirely on human beings results very quickly in death by accident, exhaustion through lack of nourishment or predation. Is the Cavex an emulator of The Association for the Conservation of Threatened Parrots directed by Martin Guth, who claims to reintroduce Southern American parrots in premises that cannot be visited in the suburbs of Berlin ("On the Trail" n°23 p. 54 and p.142 in this issue).

In 2015, 7 golden lion tamarins (*Leontopithecus rosalia*, Appendix I) and 10 silvery marmosets (*Callithrix argentata*, Appendix II) were stolen from Beauval Zoo at Saint-Aignan in the Loir-et-Cher department ("On the Trail" n°9 p. 42). In 2016, 2 emperor tamarins (*Saguinus imperator*, Appendix II) - a male and a female - were stolen in the The Jardin Exotique de Folembay in the Aisne department ("On the Trail" n°14 p. 45). Finally, an 11-year-old Goeldi's tamarin (*Callimico goeldii*, Appendix I) was stolen from Natur'zoo in Mervent en Vendée in 2018 ("On the Trail" n°22 p. 61).

Le Parisien, December 5, 2020 ; Ouest France, December 23, 2020 ; La Provence, September 2, 2021.⁵⁵

December 2, 2020

Hauconcourt, Department of Moselle, France

Seizure of dogs, cats, raccoons (*Procyon lotor*) and 6 common marmosets (*Callithrix jacchus*, Appendix II). The origin of the tiny monkeys is uncertain. They have been transferred provisionally to a zoo. The operation was carried out jointly by the OCLAESP and the OFB.

Le Républicain Lorrain, December 2, 2020.⁵⁶

NETHERLANDS

September 1 - November 10, 2020

The Netherlands

Seizure of a common marmoset (*Callithrix jacchus*, Appendix II) for sale via the internet.

Government of the Netherlands, December 21, 2020.⁵⁷

November 3, 2020

Amersfoort, Province of Utrecht, The Netherlands

Two adult chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I) escaped from their enclosure that had been poorly closed by an employee. Visitors were kept in the zoo's restaurant. They were shot after a few minutes. The management considered that the agitated state of the 2 escapees justified immediate neutralisation and that the use of an anaesthetic would have left them the time to perform vandalism inside the zoo or to cross the walls of the prison and create panic outside.

NL Times, November 3, 2020 ; Algemeen Dagblad, November 3, 2020.⁵⁸



Common marmosets (*Callithrix jacchus*). Photo Frederico Acaz Sonntag

ARMADILLOS, PACAS, CAPYBARAS, AGOUTIS AND PECCARIS

AMERICA

BRAZIL

October 9, 2020

Rio Pardo, State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

He was coming out of the woods with a rifle and the capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*) still warm. Gaz, October 9, 2020.¹

Early November 2020

Cachoeira do Sul, State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

In the vehicle there were 2 firearms, 2 fishing nets, ammunition, a capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*), an American opossum (genus *Didelphis*) and 2 poachers.

Agora No Vale, November 8, 2020.²

Salmourão, State of São Paulo, Brazil

November 11, 2020

In the vehicle there was a dead collared peccary (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II) and 2 poachers. In the trailer there were 9 hunting dogs. The peccary has been buried in a landfill.

G1, November 12, 2020.³



December 2, 2020

Rondonópolis, State of Mato Grosso, Brazil

In the private home there was a freezer. In the freezer, there were skinned collared peccaries (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II), pacas (genus *Cuniculus*) and armadillos (family Dasypodidae). Elsewhere, there were several firearms, fishing nets and walkie-talkies. The master of the house was reported and arrested.

G1, December 4, 2020.⁴

December 13, 2020

Araçatuba, State of São Paulo, Brazil

On the banks of the Tietê River and the Tijoá dam reservoir, a hidden car drew the attention of the patrol. Seizure of a stabbed capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*) and 2 hunting dogs. Fine of 500 reais (93 US\$). Criminal conviction pending. Folha da Região, December 16, 2020.⁵

December 15, 2020

Rosário do Sul, State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

Three dead capybaras (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*). Two firearms, daggers, ammunition. One arrest following denunciation.

Gazeta de Rosário, December 15, 2020.⁶

FRANCE (FRENCH GUIANA)

September-October 2020

Iracoubo and Régina, Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France

Roadblocks. Checks on about 100 vehicles. In one of them, there was white-lipped peccary (*Tayassu pecari*, Appendix II) and collared peccary (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II) meat. Two police reports. French Biodiversity Office, December 2020.⁷

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

November 3, 2020

Rio Claro, Rio Claro-Mayaro Region, Trinidad and Tobago

Seizure in the family freezer of 3 agoutis (genus *Dasyprocta*), one armadillo (family Dasypodidae) and one firearm. The couple, aged 64 and 65, were questioned at the police station.

Trinidad and Tobago Guardian, November 4, 2020.⁸

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Week-end of November 7-8, 2020

Rio Claro, Mayaro-Rio Claro Region, Trinidad and Tobago

Seizure of 285 grams of cannabis, 19,500 TT\$ in cash (2,785 US\$) and two nine-banded armadillos (*Dasyus novemcinctus*). Indictment of Jakim Sydney and Julie Alexis.

Loop News, November 9, 2020.⁹

ASIA

INDONESIA

December 2020

Sulawesi Island, Indonesia

The rumor that Covid has been transmitted to mankind through bats and the fact that the 1000 species of flying mammals on all continents are in constant decline or threatened with extinction, did not prevent the resumption of their consumption at a frantic rhythm after a slowdown of a few weeks or months. In the wet market in Langowan (Minahasa regency, North Sulawesi province), the meat of black flying fox (*Pteropus alecto*) and Sulawesi fruit bat (*Acerodon celebensis*) with a wingspan of more than one meter sells for the equivalent of 3/kg US\$. They are netted in the mangroves. The Langowan market is well known for its abundance of snakes, reptiles and small rodents ready to be cooked. Bats are displayed with their wings cut off, fur flayed, ready to be cooked or roasted on the barbecue. Bat curry is a "must" at family feasts and during vacations. The sale in markets or butcher shops is not prohibited. The authorities fears that this measure will only create underground trading channels. Insider, December 13, 2020.¹



Black flying foxes (*Pteropus alecto*)



Sulawesi fruit bats (*Acerodon celebensis*)

EUROPE

UNITED-KINGDOM

December 8, 2020

London, England, United-Kingdom

Notice to builders, wind turbine constructors and judges of the European Union! The developer Bellway has been fined 600,000 £ (800,000 US\$) for having, in full knowledge of the regulations imposing an impact study and compensatory measures, carried out a housing project without taking into account that the site, before being sold as apartments, was the habitat of a colony of soprano pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*). Bellway must also pay 20,000 £ (26,700 US\$) in legal costs and 20,000 £ to the Bat Conservation Trust.

The Guardian, December 11, 2020; News Shopper, December 11, 2020.²



SWITZERLAND

December 11, 2020

Geneva International Airport, Canton of Geneva, Switzerland



Interception of 4 dried bats and 1.3 kg of dead caterpillars in the luggage of an Angolan traveller coming from Congo. He was fined 200 US\$. The "merchandise" was destroyed.

The Federal Customs Administration recalls that in February 2020, an African traveller attempted to import pangolin meat and expressed his deep dissatisfaction at the time of the seizure.

Le Messenger, December 18, 2020.³



OTHER MAMMALS INCLUDING SQUIRRELS, HEDGEHOGS AND PORCUPINES



Indian palm squirrels (*Funambulus palmarum*)
Photo Petri 'Kössi' Kuhno

AMERICA

BOLIVIA

Early November 2020
Sacaba, Province of Chapare, Department of Cochabamba, Bolivia



The anteater (suborder Vermilingua) had a close call. He was near the cemetery in the hands of a healer who was about to slit his throat and cut his claws to make lucky charms.
Los Tiempos, November 10, 2020.²

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

October 19, 2020
State of Florida, United States of America



Five men were engaged in the capture of southern flying squirrel (*Glaucomys volans*), which are highly sought-after on the international pet market. In three years, they captured 3,600 of them in Florida and Georgia and shipped them to Asia. The network was organised. Each trapper was unaware of the identity of the others. At the top of the scam was Rodney Knox, who was licensed as a squirrel breeder's and under this cover gathered all the poached victims. South Korean buyers would come directly to his place in Bushnell to negotiate the batches. Parcels of flying squirrels were then sent to Chicago and shipped by air without any special administrative or customs formalities.



Southern flying squirrels are not listed in the CITES Appendices. Southern flying squirrels are small North American tree squirrels weighing between 50 and 70 grams that feed on nuts, eggs and insects. They are threatened by habitat loss, traps and domestic cats. This roundup of flying squirrels has put a strain on forest food chains. Flying squirrels are among the favourite prey of owls and genus *Elaphe* rat snakes.
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, October 19, 2020; National Geographic, September 15, 2020; Global News, October 20, 2020; Click Lancashire, October 24, 2020; KIRO 7, October 20, 2020.³

ASIA

CAMBODIA

Week of December 7, 2020

Cambodia

Seizure of a caged Burmese ferret-badger (*Melogale personata*).

Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, December 16, 2020.⁴

CHINA

November 2020

Shimian County, Sichuan Province, China

Conviction to a 3-year probation and a 2-year suspended imprisonment, to a 51,000 yuan fine for ecological loss and damages for selling a red panda (*Ailurus fulgens*, Appendix I) caught in a tree.

NetEase, November 23, 2020.⁵



November 2020

Qujing, Yunnan Province, China

On July 18, 2019, Yuan Moushu was caught selling 107 porcupine quills (family Hystricidae or Erethizontidae) and 10 pangolin scales. Sixteen months later, he was sentenced to 10 months in prison and fined 2,500 yuan (370 US\$).

Qujing of Procuratorate, November 18, 2020.⁶



INDIA

October 21, 2020

Chauparan, Hazaribagh District, State of Jharkhand, India



© Vishwendu Jaipurkar

Capture and handing over to forestry officers of a ratel (*Mellivora capensis*, Appendix III in Botswana), called bijju in the local language. It had entered a house. It has a reputation for digging underground tunnels and eating the dead in their graves. In fact, it feeds on small rodents, birds, berries, fruits and insects.

Its name of honey badger is misleading. It is not interested in honey, but in bee larvae.

The Telegraph India, October 22, 2020.⁷

December 23, 2020

Puducherry, Puducherry District, Union Territory of Puducherry, India



Alerted by the neighborhood, the police burst into the home of L. Charles, 54 years old, professional driver. They found 49 dead Indian palm squirrels (*Funambulus palmarum*) in his yard. He admitted that he had poisoned them with Furadan granules mixed with rice. He placed the bait in spots with squirrels. The species is emblematic in the Union Territory of Puducherry (formerly Pondicherry). Furadan is a carbamate-based insecticide. The serial killer claims that his victims were for his own consumption. A trade is not excluded. He was fined 5,000 rupees (67.5 US\$) and released. The Times of India, December 23, 2020.⁸

PHILIPPINES

Early November 2020

Santa Maria, Province of Bulacan, Philippines

Seizure in a furniture factory of 418 planks of a prohibited wood and an Asian palm civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III in India). Civet coffee, or kopi luwak, which comes from the transit of coffee beans in the digestive tract and their recovery in the droppings, is sold at prices beyond comprehension (from 100 US\$/kg for coffee from captive civet droppings to 1,300 US\$/kg when it comes from free civets, between 35 and 100 US\$ per cup). See "On the Trail" n°1 p.41 and n°16 p.92.

SunStar, November 10, 2020; Eleven Coffees.⁹

THAILAND

October 28, 2020

Pho Sadet, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand



Seizure of 8 small-clawed otters (*Aonyx cinerea*, Appendix I) and arrest of Natnaree Dasavej, a Facebook seller who was fooled by a cyber-investigator. What about a one-month-old otter stolen from who knows where and given a cute little nickname for 3,500 baht (110 US\$)?

Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, October 28, 2020.¹⁰

VIET NAM

October 19, 2020

Sa Pa, Lao Cai Province, Viet Nam

Release of a masked palm civet (*Paguma larvata*, Appendix III in India) thanks to the intervention of ENV and to the action of Hoang Lien National park staff.

ENV, October 25, 2020.¹¹

December 3, 2020
Phu Nhuan District, Ho Chi Minh City,
Viet Nam

facebook



The Facebook bid was posted on December 2. The seizure of the 6 baby small-clawed otters (*Aonyx cinerea*, Appendix I) was carried out the next day thanks to the vigilance of ENV and the intervention of the police.
 ENV, December 3, 2020.¹²

December 15, 2020
Bac Tu Liem District, Hanoi, Viet Nam



It's Christmas gift time. People are busy buying, wrapping and selling. One man speculated on 2 Owston's palm civets (*Chrotogale owstoni*), he caught them, cleaned them and fed them at home for a few days. Then he left for Hanoi to sell them at a good price. He was caught on the road.
 SVW, December 16, 2020.¹³

December 22, 2020
Tân Phú District, Hồ Chí Minh City, Viet Nam

The Christmas market is in full swing. Seizure of 2 baby small-clawed otters (*Aonyx cinereus*, App. I).
 ENV, December 25, 2020.¹⁴

December 31, 2020
Ninh Binh Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of 5 Finlayson's squirrels (*Callosciurus finlaysonii*). Being slow on the uptake, the IUCN relies on work carried out in 2008 to claim that the species is not threatened.
 ENV, December 31, 2020.¹⁵

EUROPE

FRANCE

December 16, 2020
Cessey-sur-Tille, Department of Côte-d'Or, France



The European hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*) are getting into trouble. Sick from agricultural poisons, suffocated by discarded cans, run over by cars, sabotaged by idiots and eaten by Gypsies, they are dropped by the magistrates. Three individuals caught by the gendarmes skinning 3 hedgehogs along a river in October 2019 were given a simple reminder of the law. The torment and extinction of the hedgehogs has been given special attention by "On the Trail" (hedgehogs in France, see "On the Trail" n°11 p.51, n°16 p.94, n°19 p.119, n°21 p.107, n°22 p.106, n°23 p.142 and n°29 p.109).

30 Millions d'Amis, December 23, 2020; Le Bien Public, October 4, 2019.¹⁶

UNITED KINGDOM



Mid-October 2020
Scunthorpe, Lincolnshire County, England, United Kingdom

More idiotic teens who kicked the European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) as if he was a tin can. Even the veterinarian at the clinic dedicated to hedgehogs and other small mammals was sick of seeing him in such a sorry state. He was finished off.
 Grimsby Telegraph, October 15, 2020.¹⁷

End of October 2020
Ipswich, Suffolk County, England, United Kingdom



Seizure of 2 meerkats (*Suricata suricatta*) in very poor condition and handing over to the care of Suffolk Rural College, a college offering courses in agriculture and animal care. East Anglian Daily Times, November 9, 2020.¹⁸

End of October 2020
Swanwick, Hampshire County, England, United Kingdom

A property developer was fined 1185 £ (1286 US\$) and ordered to pay legal costs for knowingly devastating a common dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) habitat. This is still a good deal for him. By his deliberate sacking he avoided spending 68,000 £ (87,480 US\$) on an environmental study and compensatory measures imposed by regulation. BBC, October 27, 2020.¹⁹



November 3, 2020
Blackwood, Gwent County, Wales, United Kingdom

It's not only idiotic teens who torture the European hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*). A 54-year-old homeless man was sentenced to 6 months in prison. In his tent, police had seized in August 2019 scissors, candles, a kitchen knife, cables, and discovered a dying hedgehog with his legs cut off and his head and eyes covered with melted wax. BBC, November 3, 2020.²⁰



OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

November 2020 - January 2021
Southern Downs Region, State of Queensland, Australia



Seizure of 3 short-beaked echidnas (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*) during a search for common law offenses. One adult female after being treated at the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals clinic was released. The 2 juveniles did not survive the abuse they suffered at the perpetrators' home. Queensland Government/Department of Environment and Science, February 3, 2021.²¹

NORTHERN AFRICA

TUNISIA

End of October 2020

Jendouba, Jendouba Governorate, Tunisia

Seizure of Golden pheasants (*Chrysolophus pictus*) alive in a rental car that was about to enter Algeria. Webdo, October 30, 2020.¹

WESTERN AFRICA

GAMBIA

October 13, 2020

Gunjur, West Coast Division, Gambia

At least 35 hooded vultures (*Necrosyrtes monachus*, Appendix II) were found decapitated near the city's slaughterhouse. The police was alerted by local residents who were panicked by the sight and bothered by the smell of decay.

The Standard Newspaper, October 14, 2020; Vulture Conservation Foundation, October 16, 2020.²



Hooded Vulture

GUINEE-BISSAU

Mid-October 2020

Guinea-Bissau

More than 200 hooded vultures have been poisoned since late 2019. Superstitions around vultures have redoubled since Covid-19 came into play. Consuming vulture by-products or wearing parts of them would prevent or cure infectious diseases. The vulture would be a sort of vaccine. After the great massacres of Bafatá, Bambadinca, Gabu and Quebo in February-March 2020 (see "On the Trail" n°28 p.41), dead and decapitated vultures were collected by the shovelful and were burned by the hygiene services in the east of the country and in the Bijagos archipelago in the west.

Vulture Conservation Foundation, October 16, 2020; BBC December 10, 2020.³



NIGERIA

End of December 2020

Nigeria

Nigeria is known to be a hub for trafficking in pangolin scales and raw or worked ivory. But another wildlife trade has remained in the shadows until now. The Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF) is launching the "Save Vulture" campaign with the help of spokespersons such as musician Tito Da Fire, alias Uduak Peters, and television star Mariam Longe. Seven vulture species can still be found in Nigeria, the Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*, Appendix II), the hooded vulture (*Necrosyrtes monachus*, Appendix II), the white-backed vulture (*Gyps africanus*, Appendix II), the white-headed vulture (*Trigonoceps occipitalis*, Appendix II), the Rüppell's vulture (*Gyps rueppellii*, Appendix II), the vulturine fish-eagle (*Gypohierax angolensis*, Appendix II) and the lapped-faced vulture (*Torgos tracheliotus*, Appendix II). They are all declining, not to say free falling, especially the hooded vulture. Vulturine fish-eagles are essentially vegetarians.



Vulturine fish-eagle

A living vulture sells for 85-140 US\$ and a dead vulture for around 60 US\$. Vulture parts are used by healers and other traditional medicine practitioners. The vulture market has been expanding since the advent of Covid. Other factors of mortality are the internal accu-

mulation of dewormers and anti-inflammatories concentrated in the carcasses of domestic livestock, the collection of eggs by poachers, and the ancestral persecution of day and night raptors, although in the time of the high Egyptian civilization, vultures were celebrated as symbols of parents' love for their children and messengers of immortality. The United States of America has recently elevated Nigeria's status from "focus country" to "country of particular concern".

US Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, "2020 END Wildlife Trafficking Report", October 26, 2020; The Guardian, December 28, 2020; Maurice Fontaine & Bernhard Grzimek (dir.). *Le Monde animal en 13 volumes, Tome VII : Oiseaux 1*, 1972.⁴

SENEGAL

Week of October 12, 2020

Thiaroye, Dakar Region, Senegal

Profession: commercial agent in parrots from all over the world. He sold multicolored birds of South American, Australian and African origin via the Internet. At his home, grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) and a blue-and-gold macaw (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) were seized by agents of the Dakar Urban Security thanks to the investigation of EAGLE Senegal.

EAGLE, October 16, 2020; Senego, October 13, 2020.⁵



CENTRAL AFRICA

CAMEROON

October 9, 2020

Yaoundé, Center Region, Cameroon

Profession: roadside parrot seller. He was arrested by policemen and then released pursuant to bargaining and bribery. The fate of the 3 grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) and 6 Rose-ringed parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*) he had in his hands is unknown.

Profession: parrot supplier. He was also momentarily arrested and then released. This was probably not the case for the 2 grey parrots and the Rose-ringed parakeet he was holding at home.

A few weeks later, after restoration of judicial order, the two rascals were located and arrested for good despite an attempted escape. The more active and influential of the two in bird trafficking ended up in a river.

EAGLE, October 9 and November 2020 and annual report 2020; Camer.be, October 11, 2020.⁶

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

November 2020

Kahuzi-Biega National Park, South-Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Release of 39 grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) into the sky of the Democratic Republic of Congo extracted from the hands of traffickers in South Kivu and Maniema and given to the good care of the Lwiro multi-species refuge.

Lwiro Primates, November 6, 2020; Africa Geographic, November 30, 2020.⁷

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

End of November 2020

Bomassa, Sangha Department, Republic of the Congo

Three grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) have returned to the sky and trees of the Congo after being rescued from the hands of traffickers and cared for at the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) grey parrot sanctuary. Six still need time to get back in shape before being released.

WCS Congo, November 27, 2020.⁸

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

Mid-October 2020

Laikipia and Samburu Counties, Kenya

The Peregrine Fund, an NGO based in Idaho, USA, is working to convince pastoral communities of the usefulness of vultures as public comfort and hygiene agents, as guardians of the savannah who eat pestilential and infectious carrion to the bone and are well off. This rational and indisputable argument unfortunately risks being hijacked by charlatans who claim that amulets made of vulture feathers, beaks or toes have the power to ward off disease and epidemics, when in fact the immunity of vultures comes from the diversity of their digestive juices. Peregrine Fund is also working with shepherds and their families to develop nightly bomas (enclosures) and effective guarding methods against intrusion by lions and other carnivores. To learn more about the work of Peregrine Fund, see "On the Trail" n°27 p.42. In Eastern Africa, the population of hooded vultures (*Necrosyrtes monachus*, Appendix II) has declined by 10% in 50 years. In Kenya, shepherds spray the carcasses of dead cattle with pesticides in the hope that the lion will come and eat them, but more often than not the vultures arrive first and die by the dozen or are disabled for the rest of their lives. National Post, October 14, 2020.⁹



November 2, 2020

Mutara Ranch, Laikipia County, Kenya

Four African white-backed vultures (*Gyps africanus*, Appendix II) die poisoned by a camel carcass.

SWT/KWS Mount Kenya Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2020.¹⁰



November 13, 2020

OI Kinyei Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

Three white-backed vultures (*Gyps africanus*, Appendix II) and lapped-faced vulture (*Torgos tracheliotus*, Appendix II) died from poisoning. Two survived and are undergoing a favourable treatment in an enclosure. This is the 2nd poisoning in the same place in less than a year (cf. "On the Trail" n°27 p. 42).

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, November 2020.¹¹



December 31, 2020

Magadi Lake, Kajiado County, Kenya

A flock of flamingos (Phoenicopteridae, Appendix II) collided with a 110,000 volt power line. At least 60 of them died from wing and sternum fractures and electrocution. Kenya Power is asked to install devices that allow the birds to identify the danger during flight.

SWT/KWS Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit, December 2020.¹²



MALAWI

Early November 2020

Mzuzu, North Region, Malawi



The spotted eagle-owl (*Bubo africanus*, Appendix II) has been stoned and injured. He was rescued by a team from Lilongwe Wildlife Trust and is being treated for eye and head injuries. Stones are often thrown on the "kadzidzi". They are still viewed as a bad omen, often associated with death.

Lilongwe Wildlife Trust, November 9, 2020.¹³

SOUTH AFRICA

October 26, 2020

Durban, KwaZulu Natal Province, South Africa

The stolen car was chased by a police car. In front of the BP gas pump, the vehicle turned over and the 2 passengers were recovered unharmed. This was not the case for a blue peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) which was found upside down in the car trunk. It was transferred to the good care of a veterinary clinic.

Independant Online, October 26, 2020.¹⁴

November 30, 2020

Skeerpoort, North-West Province, South Africa

Around Pretoria, capturing vultures is a trend. A man was walking down the central street holding a Cape griffon (*Gyps coprotheres*, Appendix II) in his arms. Thanks to the intervention of another passer-by, the bird was handed over to the NGO VulPro.

VulPro, November 30, 2020.¹⁵

December 2020

Winburg, Free-State Province, South Africa

Release of a juvenile female lesser kestrel (*Falco naumanni*, Appendix II). She was for sale on Facebook. The seller was divested of her. She was taken to the veterinary clinic in Johannesburg. She lacked appetite. After gaining 50 grams, she was released into the bush by Thea Smit's team.

Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital, January 16, 2021.¹⁶

facebook

December 24, 2020

Hartbeespoort, North-West Province, South Africa

Rescue by the NSRI (National Sea Rescue Institute) from the Hartbeespoort water dam of a white-backed vulture (*Gyps africanus*, Appendix II), about 4 months old, entangled in a field of water



hyacinths, exhausted and unable to fly away again. It was entrusted to the NGO VulPro.

National Sea Rescue Institute, December 24, 2020.¹⁷

End of December 2020
Mkuze, KwaZulu Natal Province, South Africa



The remains of a poisoned white-backed vulture (*Gyps africanus*, Appendix II) are discovered. The ground around it was littered with feathers. Wildlife ACT emergency responders rushed to clean up the scene and believe that other vultures have been picked up before they arrived. Beaks, legs, eyes, brains are sold on the black market. Vultures are victims of many superstitions. During the end-of-year festivities, the demand is amplified. Poisonings, power lines and other overhead equipment, habitat transformation and decreasing food resources, all conspire against vultures. All those who are sensitive to their beauty and usefulness fear their eradication in spite of all the physical and educational field efforts towards rural communities.

SA-People, January 5, 2020.¹⁸

BOTSWANA

October 24, 2020
Rakops, Central District, Botswana



After the hecatomb of June 2019 (see "On the Trail" n°25 p.86), a new mass poisoning has struck the natural knackers of the savannah and marshes. At least 55 white-backed vultures (*Gyps africanus*, Appendix II) were found dead near the Makgadikgadi wetlands. They were buried in pits. According to vulture experts in Botswana, the situation is getting worse. Pesticides or veterinary drugs are being diverted from their intended uses to kill wildlife.



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Wildlife at Risk, October 24, 2020; Eyewitness News, October 25, 2020; Sciences et Avenir (with AFP), October 28, 2020.¹⁹

NORTHERN AMERICA

CANADA

December 1st, 2020
Vancouver International Airport, Province of British Columbia, Canada

We don't know in what condition the green aracari (*Pteroglossus viridis*, Appendix II), the black-necked aracari (*Pteroglossus aracari*, Appendix II) and the toucans (family Ramphastidae) arrived from Guyana with transit to Vancouver. We only know that in the middle of winter, they must have been freezing in the cargo holds and on the tarmac and that in Vancouver, 5 veterinarians and caretakers were required to give them food and water. One young toucan was already dead in the bottom of a crate and another was not far from it. In spite of all these warning signs, the parcels resumed their air journey towards Japanese pet shops where they were expected for the end-of-year holidays. The exporter was a certain Tropical Flora and Fauna which boasts 20 years of experience in the management and export of birds and reptiles. "All animals are exported under strict CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) regulations and control".

CTV News, January 7, 2021.²⁰



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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DAKOTA FLYER OPERATION

October 6, 2020

Rapid City, State of South Dakota, United States of America



Troy Fairbanks is sentenced to 5 years of probation and 16,000 US\$ in damages to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Federal Crime Victims Fund for having with his sons in the context of Buffalo Dreamers, a folkloric business based on native dances, bought, sold, traded, and bartered hundreds of golden eagle feathers, wings, heads, and talons (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II), bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) and falcons (Falconidae, Appendix I or II) between July 2014 and February 2016. To date, Operation Dakota Flyer has resulted in 29 convictions totaling more than 250,000 US\$ in damages and restitutions (cf. "On the Trail" n°22 p.42).

Buffalo Dreamers, cf. "On the Trail" n°17 p.32.

KEVN Black Hills FOX TV, October 7, 2020; STL.News, October 16, 2020.²¹

October 14, 2020 and August 23, 2021
State of South Dakota, United States of America



Richard Michael Grohs, 68, was charged and then sentenced to 3 years of probation and ordered to pay 10,000 US\$ in restitution to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for capturing and killing a golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II) between April and May 2018.²² US Department of Justice, November 4, 2020 and August 26, 2021.

FAMILY AFFAIRS

October 30, 2020

Rogers, State of Ohio, United States of America



FBI searches of two Lutton couple homes in Ohio and Pennsylvania resulted in the seizure of 27 firearms, a homemade explosive, a dead white-headed eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) and a dead red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*, Appendix II). Theodore Lutton was prohibited from possessing firearms following previous convictions for possession and sale of marijuana.

US Department of Justice, February 19, 2021.²³

November 2020 and end of January 2021

Clallam County, State of Washington, United States of America



A talon of the white-headed eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) was engaged in a trap. It was released by a Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Police officer. NCO Rosenberger cannot believe it. "This was a rare poaching incident where the poached animal was still alive and able to be released back into the wild immediately on-site. It was a once-in-a-career event watching the eagle take flight on a crisp sunny day with the surrounding hills colored by fall leaves".



The search of the meadow uncovered a number of other traps. One suspect was arrested. His favourite target was coyotes. The initial alarm was raised by the owner of a dog that had become entangled in a trap and was also released with little more than a good scare and a little pain.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, February 2, 2021; The Bellingham Herald, February 2, 2021.²⁴

November 6, 2020 and September 30, 2021

Tulsa, State of Oklahoma, United States of America



Carl Gene Ortner, 56 years old, from Quapaw, is charged with rape of underage girls and unlawful possession of the feathers, talons and heads of 7 white-headed eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II) and 7 golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II).

Presenting himself as a spiritual advisor to the native populations and as a healer, Ortner used to offer eagle feathers to his potential victims and their families. White-headed eagles and golden eagles are considered sacred by the tribes and the feathers are used in their cultural and religious rituals (see "On the Trail" n°17 p.32). The deputy prosecutor of the federal court called Ortner a wolf in sheep's clothing. "He disguised himself as a caring Native American elder to get close to the victims. Then when the time was right, Ortner attacked".

On September 30, 2021, Ortner was sentenced to life imprisonment and a fine of 100,000 US\$.

US Department of Justice, November 6, 2020, May 19 and September 30, 2021.²⁵

November 12, 2020

Woodbury, State of Minnesota, United States of America

The US Fish and Wildlife promised a 2,500 US\$ reward to anyone making it possible to identify the person or persons responsible for the butchering of 8 raptors including 4 bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Appendix II). The talons were torn off by the vandals. The 16 feet of raptors were dumped on the verge of the pedestrian path between Cherry Lane West and Lake Road. Turn in Poachers line : 1-800-652-9093.

Red Lake Nation News, November 16, 2020.²⁶

November 29, 2020

Fresno, State of California, United States of America

Birdnapping at the zoo! It happened on Sunday morning around 4:30 a.m. A surveillance camera filmed a human figure breaking the locks of the Australian aviary, grabbing 2 birds and running away with a travel bag. The 2 victims are a Nicobar pigeon (*Caloenas nicobarica*, Appendix I) and a yellow-crested cockatoo (*Cacatua sulphurea*, Appendix I), long-time residents of the zoo. The black market value of a yellow-crested cockatoo is approximately 500 US\$.

USA Today, November 30, 2020.²⁷



December 15, 2020

State of Vermont, United States of America

Jafet Rodriguez, known to the police for common law offenses including drug trafficking, was filmed on December 30, 2019, carrying a camping bag and walking from a car parked in Quebec (Canada) to a Pennsylvania-registered car parked in Vermont (USA). Inside were 4 yellow-headed parrots (*Amazona oratrix*, Appendix I) and 2 white-bellied parrots (*Pionites leucogaster*, Appendix II) with a total trade value of about 10,000 US\$. Rodriguez, caught red-handed, claimed that the birds were holiday gifts for his sister and mother. The judges did not believe in the selfless management of these endangered specimens. Rodriguez was sentenced to 2 years of probation and ordered to pay nearly 2,000 US\$ to cover quarantine costs at the Rock Tavern Animal Pound, State of New York. The birds were then transferred to a zoo in North Carolina.

US Department of Justice, December 15, 2020.²⁸



September 2019 - December 15, 2020

Ventura Harbor, Marina Del Rey, State of California, United States of America



Rebecca Duerr, chief veterinarian for International Bird Rescue, is the best advocate for pelicans that can be. "Smart, long-lived, prehistoric, cool birds that are super fun to watch" she says. So she has been dismayed since September 2019 as she sees several of her beloved pelicans arriving with razor-cut gashes running from the bag to the neck. It takes at least 3 months to repair the seriously wounded ones, when possible.

"Even if you plunge-dove on a straight-up machete," Dr. Duerr said, "it wouldn't cause this kind of damage".

Rebecca believes this is retaliation against piscivores or maniacal cruelty by someone or a gang on the Ventura and Santa Barbara side. The California Fish and Wildlife officers remind that brown pelicans (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) are protected by law and that it is forbidden to capture, harass and injure them and fear the multiplication of these worst cases until now geographically isolated.

The New York Times, December 30, 2020; Ventura County Star, December 24, 2020.²⁹



LATIN AMERICA

ARGENTINA

Early December 2020

San Salvador of Jujuy, Jujuy Province, Argentina



Seizure of one toucan (family Ramphastidae) with mutilated wings. Along with toucans, yellow cardinal (*Gubernatrix cristata*), red-crested cardinal (*Paroaria coronata*), ultramarine grosbeak (*Cyanoloxia brissonii*), blue-fronted amazon (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II), and brown-and-yellow marshbird (*Pseudoleistes virescens*) are poaching and smuggling favorites in Argentina. Nine out of 10 birds die before they are purchased according to the NGO Aves Argentinas. And the survivor is sometimes amputated of half its wings by the buyer to prevent it from escaping.

Todo Jujuy, December 3, 2020; Primera Edición, November 29, 2020.³⁰

December 22, 2020

Bella Vista, Tucumán Province, Argentina

Seizure in the context of an investigation for grand theft of 17 birds including saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), ultramarine grosbeaks (*Cyanoloxia brissonii*), creamy-bellied thrushes (*Turdus amaurochalinus*), southern lapwings (*Vanellus chilensis*), cardinals (genus *Cardinalis*) and ducks (genus *Anas*).

El Tucumano, December 23, 2020.³¹

End of December, 2020

Rosario, Santa Fe Province, Argentina

The traffic of wild birds is flourishing at the end of the year. Three searches in the western neighbourhoods of Rosario resulted in the seizure of 120 birds, true thrushes (genus *Turdus*), cardinals (genus *Cardinalis*), great kiskadees (*Pitangus sulphuratus*), common wood pigeons (*Columba palumbus*), picazuro pigeons (*Patagioenas picazuro*), rufous-bellied thrushes (*Turdus rufiventris*), creamy-bellied thrushes (*Turdus amaurochalinus*), chopi blackbirds (*Gnorimopsar chopi*), dark-throated seedeaters (*Sporophila ruficollis*), and bobolinks (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*), as well as the seizure of 65 trap cages, 34 transport boxes, and 12 knives.

La Capital, December 23, 2020.³²



BOLIVIA

November 2020

Santa Cruz Department, Bolivia

Toucans are pilloried in Bolivia.

In Santa Cruz de la Sierra, a toucan (family Ramphastidae) was found hanged on a lamp post. In October, a toucan with a nailed beak and broken wings was found in the street. It had to be finished off. Jerjes Suárez, a veterinarian in Roboré, denounces in the digital newspaper El Deber the persecution of toucans. "Some time ago, in my office, a young man wanted to take the beak of a toucan that had just died, because according to him, there are people who turn the beak into powder, they say it works like an anticoagulant." "I recently rescued a toucan that had been attacked by a hound of dogs; after emergency treatment, he was stolen from our premises and sold to a travel agency." Since August, at least 20 toucans have been killed in the municipalities of Roboré, El Carmen and Puerto Suárez. The toucans are driven out of their forests by chainsaws and crop growing. Hunger and curiosity drive them to the cities. People have fun shooting them with mud balls and slingshots. Some want to get rid of them, others seduced by their colors want to make them pets.

Toucans persecution, cf. "On the Trail" n°14 p.17.

El Deber, November 16, 2020; Página Siete, November 3, 2020.³³

BRAZIL

OPERATION BIOMA

November 23, 2020

Itajaí, Itapema, Penha, Biguaçu, Antônio Carlos, Tijucas, Balneário Camboriú, Joinville, Timbó, Guabiruba and Blumenau, State of Santa Catarina, Arroio Grande and Rio Grande, State of Rio Grande do Sul and Osasco and São Paulo, State of São Paulo, Brazil



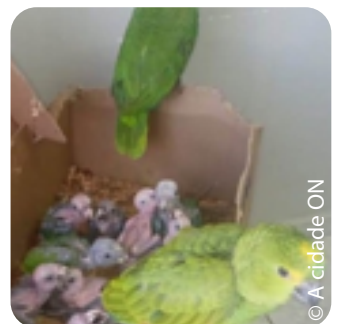
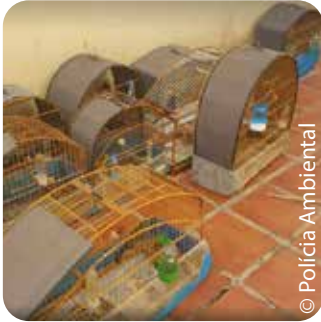
Dismantling of a wildlife trafficking network with an estimated annual turnover of 1.5 million US\$. Seizure of parrots, hyacinth macaws (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*, App. I), scarlet macaws (*Ara macao*, App. I), blue-and-yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, App. II), toucans (family Ramphastidae).

The operation targets hunters, intermediaries, sellers and ring and certificate forgers. 25 search warrants, 4 arrest warrants. The animals were sold via applications like WhatsApp and Facebook.

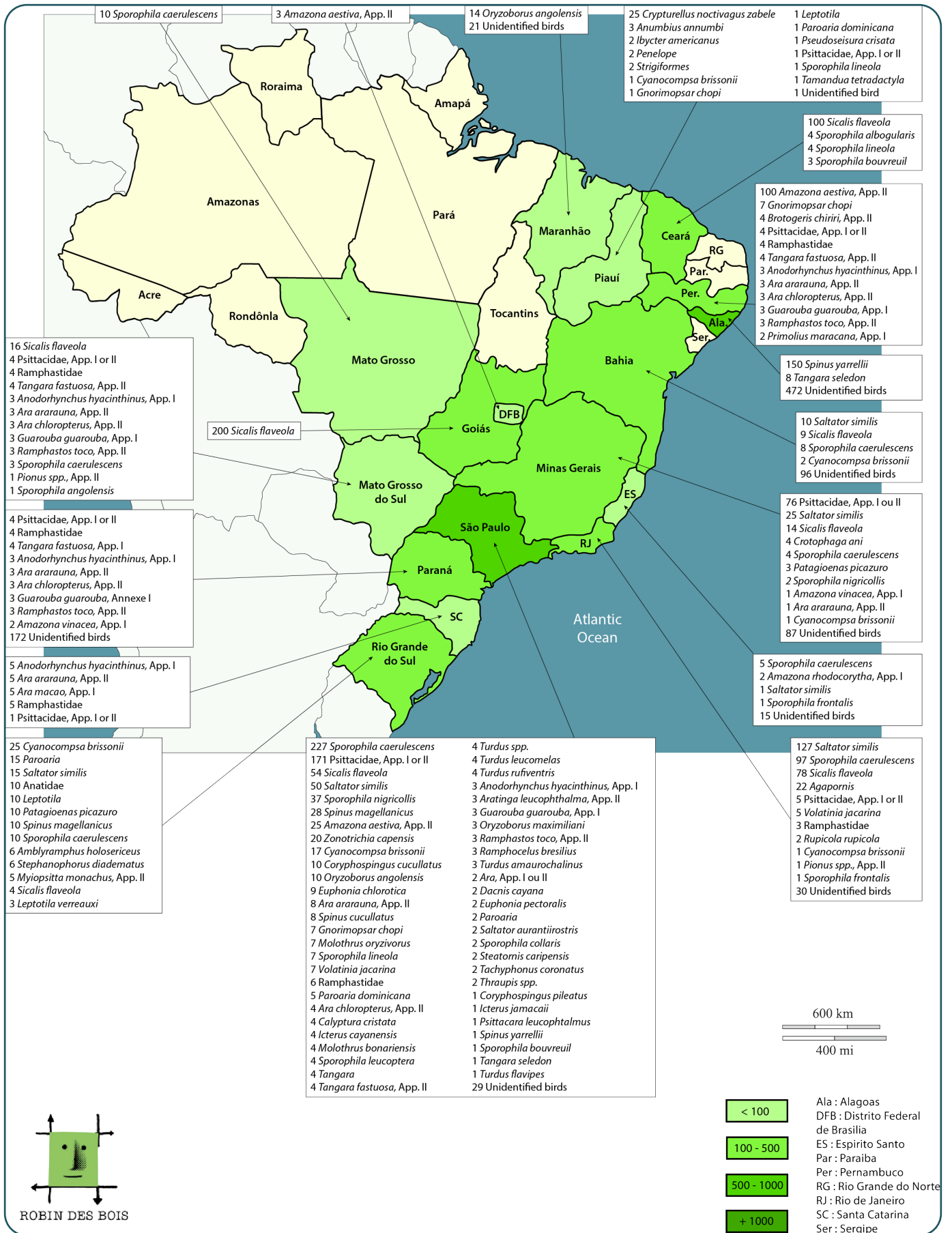
In Brazil, wildlife trafficking is largely organised on WhatsApp. According to Dener Giovanini, founder of the NGO RENTAS (Rede Nacional de Combate ao Tráfico de Animais Silvestres), the police monitor 800 WhatsApp groups. With Covid-19, the physical markets are closed and newly unemployed have tried their luck as wildlife traffickers. This phenomenon is also seen in Ecuador and Colombia.

G1, November 23, 2020; Civil Police of Santa Catarina, November 23, 2020.³⁴





3,138 birds seized in Brazil between September 1 and December 31, 2020 according to official and media sources



COLOMBIA

Early October 2020

Barranquilla, Atlantico Department, Colombia



Seizure of 17 saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), 2 blue-black grassquits (*Volatinia jacarina*), 2 black-striped sparrows (*Arremonops conirostris*), one ruddy-breasted seedeater (*Sporophila minuta*), 2 grey seedeaters (*Sporophila intermedia*), 4 northern mockingbirds (*Mimus polyglottos*), one rose-breasted grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*), one budgerigar (*Melopsittacus undulatus*) and 4 unspecified birds. Two questionings. The freshly captured birds were released. El Herlado, October 2, 2020.³⁵

End of October 2020

Barrancabermeja District, Santander Department, Colombia



Police officers rescued 29 birds including saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*). Seizure of 50 cages and dismantling of a cage-manufacturing workshop. An expertise is underway to confirm that the birds are releasable. Semana, October 26, 2020.³⁶

Mid-November, 2020

Honda, Tolima Department, Colombia

The check of the bus from Valledupar to Cali (1150 km) resulted in the seizure in the luggage compartment and the release of 4 orange-winged amazons (*Amazona amazonica*, Appendix II), one yellow-crowned amazon (*Amazona ochrocephala*, Appendix II) and 5 orange-chinned parakeets (*Brotogeris jugularis*, Appendix II). Semana, November 18, 2020.³⁷

November 18, 2020

Biopark La Reserva, Cota, Cundinamarca Department, Colombia



Two toucans (family Ramphastidae), one pic (family Picidae), two true thrushes (genus *Turdus*) and one shiny cowbird (*Molothrus bonariensis*) seized in a private home have been transferred to the Biopark. They will finish their days there. They have definitely lost their ability to live in the wild. Infobae, November 18, 2020.³⁸

ECUADOR

October 21, 2020

Laipuna Natural Reserve, Loja Province, Ecuador

53 red-masked conures (*Aratinga erythrogenys*, Appendix II) were seized in a private home. One man was arrested and placed under judicial supervision. 15 have just been released in the natural reserve of Laipuna. The others died from the consequences of their capture after having been housed and cared for in the zoo of Orillas del Zamora.

Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition, October 21, 2020.³⁹

FRANCE (FRENCH GUIANA)

December 2020

Trois Rois Creek, Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France

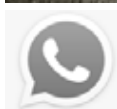


OFB officers were inspecting creeks and pripris (marshes) when they caught a young man who could not identify himself and who had just killed a red-and-green macaw (*Ara chloropterus*, Appendix II). A jaguar tooth was seized at his home. French Biodiversity Office, December 2020.⁴⁰

End of December 2020 and June 7, 2021

Cayenne, Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France

The peregrine falcon was for sale on WhatsApp in late December. What a great Christmas present! OFB officers managed to localize the bird. He was trapped on a balcony, without water. The Cayenne trader has been sentenced to a 1,000 € (1,215 US\$) fine, of which 400 € (485 US\$) was suspended. French Biodiversity Office, June 14, 2021; Guyane la 1^{ère}, June 14, 2021.⁴¹



MEXICO

November 26, 2020

Gómez Palacio, Durango State, Mexico

70 orange-fronted conures (*Aratinga canicularis*, Appendix II) with cut wings are seized in a private home. They are covered with parasites and suffer thirst and malnutrition. As a transitional measure, they were placed in an UMA (Unidades de Manejo para la Conservación de la Vida Silvestre).

"In Mexico alone, more than 78,000 parrots are illegally captured each year. The vast majority of illegal parrots are intended for the domestic pet trade and several species could become extinct if demand is not reduced," said Juan Carlos Cantú, director of Defenders of Wildlife in México. Profepa, November 26, 2020.⁴²



PERU

End of November 2020

Nueva Cajamarca, Rioja Province, San Martín Department, Peru

Seizure of 7 parrots and parakeets (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II) on the market. They were transported with the help of the NGO Neotropical Primate Conservation to the Tarapoto refuge. Neotropical Primate Conservation, November 22, 2020.⁴³

December 2, 2020

Puerto Santa Gema, Alto Amazonas Province, Loreto Department, Peru

Seizure of 500 canary-winged parakeets (*Brotogeris versicolurus*) aboard a boat on the Huallaga River, a sub-tributary of the Amazon. Serfor, December 2, 2020.⁴⁴

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

November 2020

Shaowu, Fujian Province, China

A poacher was sentenced to a 5-month suspended prison term and a fine equal to 150 US\$ for having captured at the beginning of the year, one Asian barred owl (*Glaucidium cuculoides*, Appendix II), spotted doves (*Spilopelia chinensis*) and pin-tailed snipes (*Gallinago stenura*) in a net stretched across a field. Xiaoxiang Morning Herald, November 13, 2020.⁴⁵



Asian barred owl (*Glaucidium cuculoides*)

From November 6 to 21, 2020

Lanzhou and Linxia, Gansu Province, Chongqing Autonomous Municipality, Fushun, Liaoning Province, Zunyi and Guiyang, Guizhou Province, China

The cyber-police have been working hard to neutralize a gang of poachers who were selling birds caught in their nets via the Internet. Seven common kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II), one Eurasian goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II), 2 monk parakeets (*Myiopsitta monachus*, Appendix II) and 5 Chinese bamboo partridges (*Bambusicola thoracicus*) were seized and 5 people were arrested. Gansu Daily, November 24, 2020.⁴⁶

End of November 2020

Tianjin Autonomous Municipality, China

Oriental white storks (*Ciconia boyciana*, Appendix I) are hated by shrimp and fish farmers. In November, at the beginning of the month, 3 were electrocuted by high voltage lines. They were frightened by firecrackers when they were heading to the Qilihai wetland. In mid-November, 25 were found on the ground, without a breath of life and without injuries. Poisoning is more than suspected. In the memory of oriental white storks, Tianjin is an obligatory stopover during the winter migration. In Russia and China, the trend is for natural wetlands to dry up and the storks, risking their lives, fall back on the ponds of fish farmers to feed.

Global Times, November 24, 2020.⁴⁷



TAIWAN

September 25 - November 24, 2020

Taiwan

Dismantling of a network of sellers and buyers. Seizure in 37 private homes of 64 rare birds: yellow-naped amazons (*Amazona auropalliata*, Appendix I), peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I), bali mynas (*Leucopsar rothschildi*, Appendix I), crested goshawks (*Accipiter trivirgatus*, Appendix II), fairy pittas (*Pitta nympha*, Appendix II), crested honey buzzards (*Pernis ptilorhynchus*, Appendix II), Taiwan hwameis (*Garrulax taewanus*, Appendix II), black kites (*Milvus migrans*, Appendix II), mountain scops owls (*Otus spilocephalus*, Appendix II), collared scops owls (*Otus lettia*), Taiwan blue magpies (*Urocissa caerulea*), russet sparrows (*Passer rutilans*), and plumbeous water redstarts (*Phoenicurus fuliginosus*). Additional seizure of 5 Madagascar radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I). Two persons were arrested. 29 will be questioned by the investigators. Taipei Times, November 21, 2020.⁴⁸

SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

CAMBODIA

October 2020

Cardamom National Park, Cambodia

Interception of a lone poacher. He had with him dozens of dead birds discreetly captured in nets and traps.

Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, October 27, 2020.⁴⁹



November 2020

Battambang Province, Cambodia

Seizure from street vendor stands of 200 brown prinias (*Prinia polychroa*), 3 Asian openbills (*Anastomus oscitans*), 60 watercocks (*Gallicrex cinerea*), 4 lesser whistling ducks (*Dendrocygna javanica*), 82 Baillon's crakes (*Zapornia pusilla*), and one Asian leaf turtle (*Cyclemys dentata*, Appendix II). Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, December 8, 2020.⁵⁰

Early November, 2020

Battambang Province, Cambodia

The Wildlife Alliance Cambodia is striving. 268 dead birds are seized in a restaurant. Ready to be cooked, they are no longer identifiable.

Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, December 14, 2020.⁵¹

December 2020

Cardamom National Park, Cambodia



Wildlife Alliance rangers removed 200 traps and nets with a cumulative length of 2 km. Rescue of 16 birds, watercocks (*Gallicrex cinerea*), cinnamon bitterns (*Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*) and ruddy-breasted crakes (*Porzana fusca*). The rangers are off-road. They hide, they spot, they dismantle and they swim to bring back the evidence to the station.

The United States of America has recently elevated Cambodia's status from "focus country" to "country of particular concern".

US Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, "2020 END Wildlife Trafficking Report", October 26, 2020; Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, December 23, 2020.⁵²



INDONESIA

October 9, 2020

Tanjung Perak Port, Surabaya City, East Java Province, Java Island, Indonesia

Seizure during offloading of the *Dharma Kencana VII* of 220 birds housed in a truck, nocturnal birds of prey (Strigiformes, Appendix I or II), red and green large eclectus parrots (*Eclectus roratus*, Appendix II), azure-rumped parrot (*Tanygnathus sumatranus*, Appendix II), white cockatoos (*Cacatua alba*, Appendix II), red lorries (*Eos rubra*, Appendix II), Chinese orioles (*Oriolus chinensis*), passerines (family Nectariniidae), pied bush chats (*Saxicola caprata*), flycatchers (genus *Cyornis*), Asian koels (*Eudynamis scolopaceus*) and grosbeak starlings (*Scissirostrum dubium*).

The quarantine area of the port is full. It is somehow between the pound and the cemetery. Since the beginning of the year, it has received 3000 birds, 73 newts and 4 snakes. The illegal arrivals departed from the ports of Makassar, Labuan Bajo and Balikpapan. If the birds are carriers of avian flu, they get killed and destroyed.

Antara News, October 9, 2020.⁵³

October 22, 2020

Medan, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Seizure from a chicken seller of a common hill myna (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II). It was handed over to the Sibolangit refuge.

Scorpion Foundation Indonesia, October 26, 2020.⁵⁴

November 3, 2020

Central Aceh Regency, Aceh Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Seizure of 71 helmeted hornbill (*Rhinoplax vigil*, Appendix I) casques, 28 kg of pangolin scales and the skin and bones of a Bengal tiger. A.D. is in prison. He is the holder of all these remains, whose value is estimated by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry at 6.3 billion Rs or 426,000 US\$. The driver of the vehicle known as L.H. said he did not know what he was carrying. He was intercepted on the road between Bireuën and Takengon.

Traffic, November 11, 2020; Detikcom, November 10, 2020; Kumparan, November 11, 2020.⁵⁵



Mid- November, 2020

Jayapura Port, Papua Province, New Guinea Island, Indonesia

Seizure of 200 songbirds without health and origin certificates. The port of Jayapura is connected by car ferry to Manokwari, Nabire and Sorong. Among the birds smuggled out of the province are yellow-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua sulphurea*, Appendix I), white cockatoos (*Cacatua alba*, Appendix II), palm cockatoos (*Probosciger aterrimus*, Appendix I), parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II) and birds of paradise (Paradisaeidae, Appendix II).

Antara News, November 26, 2021.⁵⁶

November 16, 2020

Kalangan, Central Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra Island, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Release of a brahminy kite (*Haliastur indus*, Appendix II) seized 3 months earlier from a private home. The seizure, rehabilitation to the wild and release was carried out by Scorpion and BKSDA.

Scorpion Foundation Indonesia, November 19, 2020.⁵⁷

November 19, 2020

Fakfak Port, Fakfak Regency, West Papua Province, Indonesia



Storage in plastic bottles is a classic (see "On the Trail" n°9 p.26, n°13 p.24 and p.30, n°25 p.37, n°26 p.35, n°29 p.132 and n°30 p. 136 and p.137). Seizure in the port of Fakfak on board of the *KM. Nggapulu* of 74 black-capped lorries (*Lorius lory*, Appendix II), 64 alive and 10 dead. The ship came from Papua New Guinea. The crew gave the alarm when they heard strange noises coming out of a crate.

Kumparan, November 19, 2020; The New Indian Express, November 20, 2020; Daily Express, November 21, 2020; Channel News Asia, November 20, 2020; BBC, November 20, 2020.⁵⁸

December 1st, 2020

Medan City, North Sumatra Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Seizure of a crested serpent eagle (*Spilornis cheela*, Appendix II) and transfer to Sibolangit refuge. It will be released as soon as possible.

Scorpion Foundation Indonesia, December 6, 2020.⁵⁹

December 10, 2021

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

Seizure of 87 birds in a vehicle heading to the car ferries that connect Sumatra to Java, hanging parrots (*Loriculus spp.*, Appendix II), bar-winged prinias (*Prinia familiaris*), cinereous tits (*Parus cinereus*), Asian glossy starlings (*Aplonis panayensis*), Javan mynas (*Acridotheres javanicus*), blue-winged leafbirds (*Chloropsis cochinchinensis*), greater green leafbirds (*Chloropsis sonnerati*), Sunda bulbuls (*Ixos virescens*), yellow-vented bulbuls (*Pycnonotus goiavier*) and passerines.

Antara, December 10, 2020.⁶⁰

MALAYSIA

December 9, 2020

Pengerang, Johor State, Malaysia. Border with Singapore

Police seized 260 white-rumped shamas (*Copsychus malabaricus*) from a vehicle on its way to Singapore. Air Times, December 10, 2020.⁶¹

PHILIPPINES

December 17, 2020

Candaba, Central Luzon Region, Philippines

Two great egrets (*Ardea alba*) were poached in the marshes, which cover 320,000 hectares (3200 km²) and are home to 2,000 migratory birds in winter. Hunting is forbidden there. "We will not tolerate this incident even during this pandemic" says the authorities of the region.

Philippines Lifestyle News, December 18, 2020; Manila Standard, December 17, 2020.⁶²

THAILAND

October 9, 2020

Riang, Narathiwat Province, Thailand

Seizure at Nuseela Kama's, 26 years old, of about 30 cages and about 50 rare birds, along with a pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca nemestrina*, Appendix II). The woman acknowledges that she has been involved in wildlife trafficking via the Internet for the past 2 years.

Bangkok Post, October 10, 2020.⁶³

facebook

VIET NAM

End of October 2020

Krong Pak District, Dak Lak Province, Viet Nam

Two lesser adjutants (*Leptoptilos javanicus*) captive for a year are voluntarily handed over to the authorities. They would have been released in the forest.

ENV, November 5, 2020.⁶⁴

November 18, 2020

Ta Ca, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam



Seizure of 80 living red-whiskered bulbuls (*Pycnonotus jocosus*) packed in pouches. The 25-year-old street vendor was using his motorcycle as a storefront. The songbirds were released. They had been purchased in the district, near the border with Laos.

Báo Nghệ An, November 29, 2020.⁶⁵

November 26, 2020

Hanoi, Viet Nam

Transfer of 2 oriental-pied hornbills (*Anthracoceros albirostris*, Appendix II) that lived on dead branches behind a wire net canopy to the Hanoi rescue center.

ENV, November 28, 2020.⁶⁶

December 16, 2020
Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam



Seizure in a garage of an Asian crested goshawk (*Accipiter trivirgatus*, Appendix II) and an owl (*Strigidae*, Appendix I or II).
ENV, December 16, 2020.⁶⁷

December 2020
Cat Ba Island, Hai Phong Municipality, Viet Nam
The island of dead and alive birds and blindfolded forest rangers.

Cat Ba, about 30 kilometres from Hai Phong, is wholly a bird trap and the diabolical game has been going on for years without anyone coming to stop it, not even the UNESCO inspectors (if there are any) who, 17 years ago, declared Cat Ba a World Heritage site. Cat Ba is rather the heritage site of the net installers. A 100-metre long net can be bought for 50 US\$ and during the migration season from September to December, it brings in 50 US\$ per night by catching ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*, Appendix II), black kites (*Milvus migrans*, Appendix II), barn owls (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II), hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II), white-breasted waterhens (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*), snipes (family Scolopacidae), lesser whistling ducks (*Dendrocygna javanica*), common pigeons (*Columba livia*), grey herons (*Ardea cinerea*), red-whiskered bulbuls (*Pycnonotus jocosus*), oriental magpie-robins (*Copsychus saularis*), white-rumped shamas (*Copsychus malabaricus*), ...

... Mister Vien, one of the island's wholesalers, stocks at the peak of the season 400 birds in his freezers, which can be delivered within 24 hours to Hai Phong, Ninh Binh, Vinh or Da Nang (between 100 and 550 km from Cat Ba). Mister Vien is a peerless logistician. He knows by heart the network of motorbikes, coaches and refrigerated trucks able to meet the customers' requirements. He sells dead birds, but also live ones that will remain in cages as long as they are not turned into skewers. White-breasted waterhens are sold for about 3 US\$ each and pigeons for 8 US\$. One of Mister Vien's suppliers is Mister Thuan who manages a 30-net fleet around the national park. He maintains the best relations with the forest rangers who, in exchange for donations in kind or in cash, inform him in time of the rounds and other inspections, which allows him to remove and put back his traps made of nylon threads stretched between 2 bamboo stakes at the right time. Nguyen Quang Thanh, head of the island's anti-poaching forces, says that trafficking is difficult to control because the birds are not sold on the markets and are caught at night.
VietNamNet, December 11, 2020.⁶⁸



White-breasted waterhen (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*)

SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

October 19, 2020

Navi Mumbai, Thane District, State of Maharashtra, India

WCCB federals and Forest Division officers came to seize 3 Alexandrine parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II) kept in a cage in a school barracks.

WCCB, October 22, 2020.⁶⁹

October 20, 2020

Shah Para, North 24 Parganas District, State of West Bengal, India. Border India-Bangladesh.

The paramilitary forces patrolling the border with Bangladesh came across human shadows in the middle of the night who fled into the bamboo forests, leaving 2 metal cages containing 13 red-and-blue lorries (*Eos histrio*, Appendix I), 11 chattering lorries (*Lorius garrulus*, Appendix II), 8 black-capped lorries (*Lorius lory*, Appendix II), 8 violet-necked lorries (*Eos squamata*, Appendix II), 8 black lorries (*Chalcopsitta atra*, Appendix II) and 6 Duyvenbode's lorries (*Chalcopsitta duivenbodei*, Appendix II). They were transferred to the transit centre of Alipore Zoo.

Outlook India, October 22, 2020; The Telegraph India, October 22, 2020; WCCB, October 22, 2020.⁷⁰

October 21, 2020

Khamarmath Border Outspot, North 24 Parganas District, State of West Bengal, India

The BSF (Border Security Force) patrol surrounded by a gang of poachers used a PAG (Pump Action Gun) to disperse the scuffle. The gang left two cages with 15 sulphur-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua galerita*, Appendix II) endemic to Papua New Guinea and six white cockatoos (*Cacatua alba*, Appendix II) native to Indonesia.

The Times of India, October 23, 2020.⁷¹

October 29, 2020

Pipli, North 24 Parganas District, State of West Bengal, India. Border between India and Bangladesh

Smuggling between Bangladesh and West Bengal is raging. This time, white cockatoos (*Cacatua alba*, Appendix II) are paying the price. About 15 of them were carried on the back of a man in 2 wooden boxes. The smugglers ran off into the forest as the BSF patrol approached. After emergency care - quick, water and fruits - they were transferred to the quarantine area of the zoo of Alipore.

The Telegraph India, October 30, 2020.⁷²



REPEATED OFFENSE

November 1st, 2020

Motibagh, Nagpur District, State of Maharashtra, India

Since the dissolution of the urban anti-poaching brigade, wildlife trafficking has contaminated Nagpur (population over 2.5 million). Seizure of 60 birds including 30 lovebirds (*Agapornis spp.*, Appendix II), 22 rose-ringed parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*) and 8 pigeons (family Columbidae) in the slum of Motibagh along the railroad. The main suspect is an experienced trafficker. Sheikh Abid Nasir Khan, 26, has a history of conflicts with the police regarding bird thefts and open sales in the bazaars of Lakadganj, Mangalwari and Cotton Market. Despite the wrong notes on his resume, the court did not find it necessary to keep him in custody beyond two days.

The Times of India, November 2, 2020.⁷³

November 3, 2020

Rangiapota, Nadia District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India. Border with Bangladesh

Seizure of 21 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II). Smugglers fled in the night.

The Hawk, November 3, 2020.⁷⁴

November 9, 2020

Chilika Wildlife Sanctuary, State of Odisha, India

Fakir Rout and Guru Kumar Rout are not contemplative. They prefer dead fulvous whistling-ducks (*Dendrocygna bicolor*, Appendix III in Honduras). There were 12 of them in their bags. The sanctuary is the great gathering of birds from the Caspian Sea, Eastern Europe and Siberia. Already, more than 16,000 are here, ambassadors of 30 species. Another 130 delegations are expected. They are exposed to the risks of hostage-taking. Twenty temporary camps have been set up by the forestry services to capture the poachers.

The New Indian Express, November 2020.⁷⁵

November 9, 2020

Chikodi, Belgaum District, State of Karnataka, India

The Eurasian eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II) escaped the torture of black magic. He was of good stature and was about to be sold for 3 million rupees (40,300 US\$) to a satanic buyer who, in fact, was an undercover forestry officer. The 5 sellers were arrested. They had captured the venerable Eurasian eagle owl in trees near Gokak and wanted to sell it on the occasion of the Deepavali celebrations. The bird would then have been sacrificed to honor and satisfy the deities.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, November 11, 2020; Bangalore Mirror, November 11, 2020.⁷⁶

November 12, 2020

Around Rangiapota, Nadia District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India. Border between India and Bangladesh

Tensions at the border. The BSF (Border Security Force) patrol operates to restore public order. A fight and shouting shake a village. In the midst of the furor was Azmat Musarif, a guy from Chaudanga, Bangladesh. His friends, Dolu and Rabiul, had managed to get back to their homeland before they were torn apart by the angry Indians. Azmat has at his feet 3 boxes with 10 brown-headed parrots (*Poicephalus cryptoxanthus*, Appendix II), 2 toucans and 5 aracarís (family Ramphastidae) alive inside. He told the soldiers that he was just a small-time frontier runner who had received 5,000 rupees (670 US\$) for delivering the birds to a certain Gopal Baag in Bhimpur. The birds are said to belong to Dolu who is no longer around to say otherwise. The Times of India, November 14, 2020.⁷⁷

November 22, 2020

Ashta, Sehore District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Bargaining between traffickers and undercover buyers is a classic. This time, 28 plum-headed parakeets (*Psittacula cyanocephala*, Appendix II) were the beneficiaries. They were for sale for 500,000 rupees (6,719 US\$) wholesale or 50,000 rupees per pair. And the victims were Wajid Sabir, Shawan Razzaq and Nazir Arif. According to them, the 28 parakeets were netted, and as a proof that their work deserves a salary, they say that it took them 7 days to get there. A little longer and they would put forward the hardship of their mission. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, November 23, 2020; News Track, November 25, 2020.⁷⁸

November 23, 2020

Cuttack, Cuttack District, State of Odisha, India

10 lovebirds (*Agapornis* spp., Appendix II), 478 budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*), 11 cockatiels (*Nymphicus hollandicus*), 7 finches (family Fringillidae, unspecified species), 14 guinea pigs (*Cavia porcellus*) and 68 white rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus domesticus*) were stashed at the back of a coach coming from Kolkata. During the search, some passengers ran away. The driver and the ticket inspector are in custody. The New Indian Express, November 24, 2020.⁷⁹

November 24, 2020

Tentulberia, Nadia District, State of West Bengal, India. Border with Bangladesh

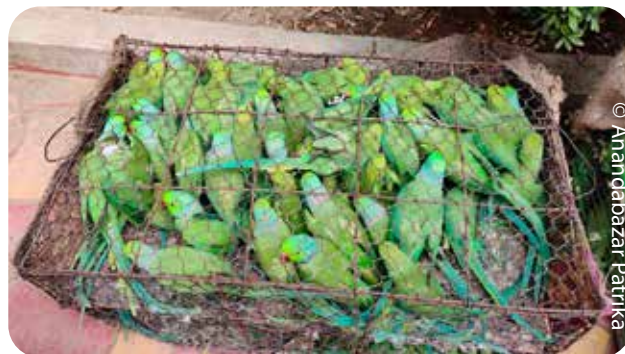
Forces of the 158th Battalion of the BSF acting on a tip approached a small group from Bangladesh at dusk but the miscreants managed to disperse into the bamboo forest leaving 6 Scarlet macaws (*Ara macao*, Appendix I) and 2 blue and yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) in 3 cages. Kolkatatoday.com, November 25, 2020; News Sense, November 26, 2020.⁸⁰

December 1st, 2020

Durgapur, Paschim Bardhaman District, State of West Bengal, India

Arrest of Sonu Tiwari and Ranjan Mishra, bus driver and ticket inspector. On the RN2, the bus coming from Patna in Bihar and bound for Kolkata is searched and 15 hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*, Appendix II) and 300 rose-ringed parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*) are found in crates, piled up like vegetables. "They shall have wings and Sky to fly", says the message from the authorities.

Debashish Sharma, December 1st, 2020; Anandabazar Patrika, December 1st, 2020.⁸¹



December 3, 2020

Kharamath advanced border post, North 24 Parganas District, State of West Bengal, India. Border between India and Bangladesh

Four toco toucans (*Ramphastos toco*, Appendix II), with a trade value of 50,000 US\$ on the black market were once again released by elements of the 158th Battalion and once again the smugglers fled into the bamboo and into the night. The other bad news is that the toco toucans are native from South America and cannot be released.

The Telegraph India, December 4, 2020; Dainik Jagran, December 4, 2020.⁸²

December 6 and 13, 2020

Kolkata, Kolkata District, State of West Bengal, India

Operation Double Edge Blade Razor at the Sunday Galiff Street Pet Market conducted by the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau and the Directorate of Forest. First seizure of 13 birds, plum-headed parakeets (*Psittacula cyanocephala*, Appendix II) and rose-ringed parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*) on December 6. The following Sunday another 14, again the same species.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, December 14, 2020.⁸³

December 7, 2020
Pipli, North 24 Parganas District, State of West Bengal, India. Border between India and Bangladesh



Definitely, birds of all colors can say thank you to the 158th. New seizure in Pipli. The Times of India, December 9, 2020; South Bengal Frontier Border Security Force, December 8, 2020.⁸⁴

December 9, 2020
Thane, Thane District, State of Maharashtra, India

The truck was being followed step by step. It was stopped at 6 a.m. on the Eastern Express Highway, after a 2-hour break in a café. In the back were piled up 12 plum-headed parakeets (*Psittacula cyanocephala*, Appendix II), 62 rose-ringed parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*), 7 Indian palm squirrels (*Funambulus palmarum*) and 13 albino rabbits (genus *Oryctolagus*) in cages and crates. It was on its way to Crawford Market in Mumbai. The operation was conducted by forest officials in partnership with the NGO Wildlife Welfare Association. The driver was taken into custody and later released on bail by a Thane court. In June 2017, the Mumbai High Court ordered the Maharashtra government to shut down the Crawford "black market". After a lull, trafficking resumed in 2020. Hindustan Times, December 9, 2020.⁸⁵

December 10, 2020
Pilibhit Tiger Reserve, Pilibhit District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

He killed him to eat him. And maybe also to make money with a few bundles of feathers. Seizure of an ex-peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan). The Times of India, December 11, 2020.⁸⁶



December 14, 2020
Molakulam, Tiruchirappalli District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

The 7 peafowls (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in India), including 6 males and a female of about 2 years old, died from electrocution or poison and were buried on site. The Times of India, December 16, 2020.⁸⁷



December 16, 2020
Nanded, Nanded District, State of Maharashtra, India

One Alexandrine parakeet (*Psittacula eupatria*, App. II) adult and 15 chicks plus one plum-headed parakeet (*Psittacula cyanocephala*, App. II) seized by the WCCB and the Forest Division. One arrest. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, December 18, 2020.⁸⁸



December 17, 2020
Kolkata, Kolkata District, State of West Bengal, India

You can find everything in the Chandni Chowk market, including protected species. On Thursday, the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau came to seize one black-winged kite (*Elanus caeruleus*, Appendix II), 33 Psittacidae (plum-headed parakeets, *Psittacula cyanocephala*, Appendix II, and rose-ringed parakeets, *Psittacula krameri*), 13 munias (genus *Lonchura*), 2 Brahminy starlings (*Sturnia pagodarum*), 2 bulbuls (family Pycnonotidae). Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, December 22, 2020.⁸⁹

December 18, 2020
Tentulberia Border Outpost, North 24 Parganas District, State of West Bengal, India. Border India-Bangladesh

Seizure by a patrol of the 158th corps of the Border Security Force (BSF) of 11 "exotic birds" crammed into 2 wire mesh boxes, smuggled from Bangladesh. The photos show 2 blue-and-yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II) and a scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*, Appendix I). South Bengal Frontier Border Security Force, December 19, 2020.⁹⁰



December 19, 2020

Lodhwa, Gir Somnath District, State of Gujarat, India



The wild ride of 2 men on a motorcycle has scared the people of Lodhwa. Ismile Dhoki and Imran Radesha were intercepted. They had just poached 4 common cranes (*Grus grus*, Appendix II). They gave the names of 4 accomplices. The 6 were each fined 25,000 rupees (340 US\$). The Indian Express, December 21, 2020.⁹¹

December 20, 2020

Bhandup, Mumbai Suburban District, State of Maharashtra, India



This plum-headed parakeet (*Psittacula cyanocephala*, Appendix II) predicted future by the side of a road. The traveling astrologer who exploited it had clipped its wings. It was taken out of its cage by the police. The NGOs are looking for a good soul who could take care of it.

The Times of India, December 20, 2020.⁹²

December 22, 2020

Falaknuma, Hyderabad District, State of Telangana, India

Fifteen barn owls (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II) captured in the front of high-rise buildings were exfiltrated in time from the dwelling of a 22-year-old man who was about to sell them for between 10,000 and 100,000 rupees (135 to 1,350 US\$) depending on the size. The blood, eyes and talons of owls are highly valued in black magic rituals. They were given to the Hyderabad Zoo for testing their ability to fly again.

The Times of India, December 24, 2020; The New Indian Express, December 24, 2020.⁹³

PAKISTAN

September 15, 2020

Pakistan

It's a time of coming and going for falcons. Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashed Al Maktoum, Vice President of the United Arab Emirates, has obtained a permit from the Pakistani Ministry of Foreign Affairs to import 150 peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) and saker falcons (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II) for his personal use. The Sheikh and his entourage needed to renew their aging falcon flock.

Dawn, November 24, 2020.⁹⁴

Early October 2020

Rahim Yar Khan, Punjab Province, Pakistan

The Lahore-Karachi express had an unexpected stop at the station. The railwaymen and the experts had to free 4 boxes embedded under the frame of a car and containing tens of parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II).

Samaa, October 6, 2020.⁹⁵

Early October 2020

Cholistan Desert, Punjab Province, Pakistan

In the name of falconry, the United Arab Emirates and Pakistan have a friendly relationship and are undertaking the restoration and repopulation of the Cholistan desert. For the past 20 years, the Pakistani airforce has been dispersing desert plant seeds over Cholistan and this October, 1,700 houbara bustards (*Chlamydotis undulata*, Appendix I) bred in captivity in the United Arab Emirates by the International Fund for Houbara Conservation (IFHC) were released into the desert. They arrived in Pakistan by special plane under the supervision of Philippe Gerard Martial, French citizen and representative of IFHC.

Dawn, October 13, 2020.⁹⁶

Mid-October 2020

Balochistan, Punjab and Sindh Provinces, Pakistan

The Minister of Foreign Affairs grants hunting permits for houbara bustards (*Chlamydotis undulata*, Appendix I) to 3 other Saudi Arabian dignitaries, including the governor of Tabuk province who had distinguished himself by killing 2,100 bustards with hawks as a weapon. This was in 2014 and the permit that had been granted to him imposed a maximum quota of 100 bustards (see "On the Trail" n°4 p.35 and n°8 p.24).

The entire male elite of the Persian Gulf is coming to Pakistan. The Sultan of Bahrain and members of his family have obtained a permit from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to falcon each 100 bustards in 10 days. The Sultan's uncle, the Sultan's cousin and Minister of the Interior, the Commander-in-Chief of the military forces, the Sultan's military advisor and 2 other cousins whose functions are not known are going to hunt in the districts of Jamshoro, Sujawal, Naushahro Feroze, Musakhel, Hyderabad, Malir and Tando Muhammad Khan. All hunters and crews are provided with enhanced police protection.

Cf. "The Falconry" in "On the Trail" n°3 p.22.

Dawn, December 2 and 22, 2020.⁹⁷

In the night from October 14 to 15, 2020
South of Karachi, Sindh Province, Pakistan

Seizure in the south of Karachi of 75 peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I), Barbary falcons (*Falco pelegrinoides*, Appendix I), laggar falcons (*Falco jugger*, Appendix I), and saker falcons (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II) poached in northern Pakistan, on the borders of Afghanistan, with a total value of one million US\$. Two men are in custody. They were trying to sell them to falconry enthusiasts. Important seizures of falcons in Pakistan, see for example "On the Trail" n°3 p.23, n°11 p.22, 23 and 25 and n°30 p.117.

Gulf News (with AFP), October 17, 2020; Forest Research Association, October 25, 2020; Business Recorder, October 18, 2020; Jinfeng Zhou, January 7, 2021.⁹⁸

FAMILY AFFAIRS

October 16, 2020

Balochistan, Punjab and Sindh Provinces, Pakistan

Qataris have a passion for soccer in Paris and falconry in Pakistan. Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani and 14 members of his dynasty including his father and brother have obtained within days permits to deploy their hunting company and falcons in the districts of Musakhel, Jacobabad, Loralai, Killa Saifullah, Barkhan, Kalat, Kech, Dadu, Nasirabad and Dera Bugti.

Dawn, December 16, 2020.⁹⁹

October 25, 2020

Wanda Banochi Check Post, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan

Seizure in a car of 2 falcons (*Falco spp.*, Appendix I or II). They have been released.

The Nation, December 16, 2020.¹⁰⁰

November 7, 2020

Daraban, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan

Arrest of Amjad Hussain. He was carrying a falcon (*Falco spp.*, Appendix I or II).

Arrest of Akbar. He was holding a falcon. He was fined 3,380 US\$.

Dawn, November 8, 2020.¹⁰¹

November 7, 2020

Daraban, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan

Seizure of 8 common cranes (*Grus grus*, Appendix II) in Wahab Khan's car.

The Nation, November 8, 2020.¹⁰²



November 13 and 28, 2020
Punjab Province, Pakistan

- Opening of the hunting for black partridges (*Melanoperdix niger*) and sisi (*Ammoperdix griseogularis*) between November and February and only on Sundays. Black partridges are threatened with extinction. According to Badar Munir, the honorary director of the provincial hunting office, the black partridge is rare and resistant to breeding.

- Two hunters decorate their jeep with 70 dead partridges. The installation takes place at Chakwal in the Salt Range, prime black partridge habitat. The killing took place on a weekday. The 2 exhibitionists were identified and fined. They had to pay a fine equal to 920 US\$.

On the black market, a dead black partridge sells for an average of 5,000 to 35,000 rupees (30 to 215 US\$). The deputy director of wildlife preservation has been suspended from his post. He is said to be complicit in this war on partridges.

Daily Pakistan, November 28, 2020; The News International, November 29, 2020; The Express Tribune, November 13, 2020.¹⁰³



Mid-November 2020

Quetta International Airport, Balochistan Province, Pakistan



Seizure of 2 saker falcons (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II) in 2 luggage accompanied by a man named Lal Shah. The trafficker was disembarking from a flight from Dubai.

Samma, November 18, 2020.¹⁰⁴

November 20, 2020

Gwadar, Balochistan Province, Pakistan

Seizure of 3 falcons (*Falco spp.*, Appendix I or II), illegally imported from Iran by road.

Samma, November 21, 2020.¹⁰⁵

December 12, 2020
Rahim Yaar Khan,
Punjab Province,
Pakistan

Release of a cinereous vulture (*Aegypius monachus*, Appendix II). It was struggling in a private home. It is unlikely that it will ever be able to fulfill its mission as a natural knacker again. Human Planet, December 12, 2020.¹⁰⁶



December 15, 2020
Islamabad, Islamabad Capital Territory, Pakistan

Falcons at the courtroom. Anisur Rehman, former chairman of the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB), is taking his case to the High Court of Justice. He is contesting the export of 150 peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) and saker falcons (*Falco cherrug*, Appendix II) to Dubai ("On the Trail" n°28 p.53). The High Court agreed to consider the referral, heard the plea of the plaintiff's counsel, and relied in part on the High Court's earlier judgment ordering the release of the falcons seized from the poachers' hands. The High Court recognized the government's responsibility to save endangered species. The 2 parties note that the import and export have been prohibited by law since 2012. The High Court observes that prima facie, the law was not complied with and should have been amended to allow the export of the falcons to Dubai. The High Court requests an explanation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs within a week. Deputy Attorney General Syed Mohammad Tayyab informed the High Court that "the UAE government had sent a written request for falcons and Pakistani government gifted it to the friendly country in order to strengthen brotherly relations and in the larger national interest". The deputy attorney general emphasized that it was not a commercial activity. The hawks are doing diplomacy.

In the meantime, several hundred poachers have set up bivouacs from Badin to the islands in front of Karachi to capture birds, especially falcons. A few days ago, Abdullah Mallah captured one with the help of 14 accomplices on Bhandar Island. "We have already sold it and the taking was shared between us all. This year, we will only trap falcons. This is the season to earn some money" he says enthusiastically.

Dawn, December 16, 2020 and January 23, 2021; The Express Tribune, October 20, 2020.¹⁰⁷

December 20, 2020
Dalbandin Airport, Balochistan Province,
Pakistan

Members of the United Arab Emirates royal family led by the Sultan landed with their weapons and their winged allies, falcons (*Falco spp.*, Appendix I or II). Houbara bustards (*Chlamydotis undulata*, Appendix I), most of which are farmed, will suffer.

Dawn, December 21, 2020.¹⁰⁸



SRI LANKA

December 2020
Near Eluwankulama, North-West
Province, Sri Lanka

Poisoning of about 500 birds including black-throated munias (*Lonchura kelaarti*) and scaly-breasted munias (*Lonchura punctulata*) around Wilpattu forest. "We immediately started to remove the carcasses from the fields, as scavengers were already pecking at the dead birds. We also came across a few birds that were yet alive but lay helpless on the ground unable to take flight" says the district wildlife officer. All corpses were buried to prevent the spread of poisoning. The Island, January, 4, 2021.¹⁰⁹



WESTERN ASIA

CYPRUS

October 26, 2020
Republic of Cyprus

Poisoned bait just killed an Eurasian griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*, Appendix II). There are only 20 left according to BirdLife. The practice of poisoning is common, although it is prohibited in the Republic of Cyprus and in all EU countries. In addition to dogs and cats, vultures and crested porcupines (*Hystrix cristata*) are victims of it. As in Asia and Africa, the main poison used is from the carbamate family, which is banned in the European Union. The government is sitting on its hands. It even shows a certain understanding with breeders who want to get rid of foxes and stray dogs. Settlements of scores and reprisals between neighbors, between hunters and poachers, between hunters and herders often end in the sudden death of pets, sheep dogs or hunting dogs. If the last vultures play their role of natural knacker on these carcasses, they die. Cyprus Mail, October 26, 2020.¹¹⁰



LEBANON

October 26, 2020

South of Tyre, South Governorate Lebanon, Lebanon

It is dangerous to fly over Lebanon. Sailing common cranes (*Grus grus*, Appendix II) heading to Africa for the winter were lured ashore by decoys and shot with weapons of war. The exact number of losses is unknown.

Committee Against Bird Slaughter, October 27, 2020.¹¹¹



September 2018 - December 2020 Lebanon

The Lebanese Wildlife refuge received 56 owls, barn owls (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II), tawny owls (*Strix aluco*, Appendix II), scopes owls (*Otus spp*, Appendix II), long-eared owls (*Asio otus*, Appendix II), little owls (*Athene noctua*, Appendix II), eagle owls (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II) and short-eared owls (*Asio flammeus*, Appendix II). 18 were pet birds, 13 were injured, 10 were orphaned and 15 were dead. Lebanese Wildlife, April 8, 2020.¹¹²

NORTHERN EUROPE

IRELAND

December 5, 2020

Emo, Laois County, Ireland

Perched in a tree, it was watching what was happening on the R422. The common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) has been killed by a road user. The NPWS (National Parks and Wildlife Service) report published at the end of October shows that Ireland is not exempt from the persecution of raptors. Between 2007 and 2019, 301 raptors were shot or poisoned: 36 peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I), 18 white-tailed eagles (*Haliaeetus albicilla*, Appendix I), 100 common buzzards, 46 red kites (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II), 45 barn owls (*Tyto alba*, Appendix II), 17 hen harriers (*Circus cyaneus*, Appendix II), 16 European sparrowhawks (*Accipiter nisus*, Appendix II), 11 kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II), 8 long-eared owls (*Asio otus*, Appendix II), 2 golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II), one short-eared owl (*Asio flammeus*, Appendix II) and one merlin (*Falco columbarius*, Appendix II).

Laois SPCA, December 5, 2020; Raptor Persecution UK, December 10, 2020.¹¹⁴

UNITED-KINGDOM

REPEATED OFFENSE

October 16, 2020

Preston, Lancashire County, England, United-Kingdom

Bradley Tomes has already been featured in "On the Trail" (see n°26 p.112). He had been sentenced in July 2019 to a 20 week suspended prison term for operating a kind of concentration camp for animals in Lancashire County.

This time, Tomes got 32 months for stealing from a zoo where he had been employed at, 12 roseate spoonbills (*Platalea ajaja*) which allegedly died after the abduction and had a trade value of 19,400 £ or 25,000 US\$ and 2,080 US\$ per individual, 3 macaws (*Ara spp*, Appendix I or II) sold for 500 £ each or 643 US\$ and 2 Humboldt penguins (*Spheniscus humboldti*, Appendix I) which he had managed to sell for 9,000 £ or 11,600 US\$ per pair to a Mr. Reece living near Nottingham and a collector of exotic birds. Mr. Reece notified the police when, upon delivery and completion of the transaction, he discovered that the penguins were in poor health and without proper documentation of origin.

Lancashire Evening Post, September 28 and October 30, 2020; The Mail, October 31, 2020.¹¹⁵



November 7, 2020

Peak District National Park, England, United-Kingdom

He used to steal the eggs of peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, Appendix I) from their nests. John Fenton, 60 years old, has been charged. In Great Britain, a young female sells for 10,000 US\$ or so. At least 3 nests were vandalized and the parents abandoned them.

Raptor Persecution UK, November 7, 2020; Matlock Mercury, November 19, 2020.¹¹⁶

Early December 2020

Norfolk County, England, United-Kingdom

One common kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II) was held captive without respect for the law on animal welfare. It was released by the police and handed over to the RSPCA "school" in the hope that it will one day fly again on its own.

Greatest Hits Radio, December 4, 2020.¹¹⁷

December 23, 2020

Newport, Wales, United-Kingdom

One man is out on bail. Dewi James Price killed a European badger (*Meles meles*), captured a red kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II) and harassed another kite near the nest as it spent time feeding its chicks. South Wales Argus, December 13, 2020.¹¹⁸

October - November - December 2020

9 Poached raptors in the United Kingdom

2 Peregrine falcons	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	App. I
3 Common buzzards	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	App. II
2 Red Kites	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	App. II
1 Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>	App. II
1 Long-eared Owl	<i>Asio otus</i>	App. II



WESTERN EUROPE

FRANCE

October 11, 2020

Fraissinet-de-Fourques, Department of Lozère, France

Vultures are poisoned in Africa and India. In France, they are riddled with bullets. The bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*, Appendix II), a young male, was shot 15 times in the legs and belly. There are a few who have a grudge against the bearded vultures that soar above the Grands Causses. As mentioned in "On the Trail" n°6 p.32, the rumor of vultures attacking sheep (soon vultures will attack babies in their strollers) is spreading. According to the president of the Aveyron's young farmers, "the prefecture and the Departmental Direction of the Territories are working on the creation of an area where vultures could be scared off". The gray area could extend to the neighboring departments of Lozère and Cantal. After the scaring shots, the defense shots will follow, as for wolves.

Vulture Conservation Foundation, October 14, 2020; France Bleu Gard Lozère, November 20, 2020; Midi Libre, October 17, 2021.¹¹⁹

October 15, 2020

Tilloy-lès-Mofflaines, Pas-de-Calais Department, France



One common kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II). Six bullets. He fell near the apiaries of an agricultural high school.

La Voix du Nord, October 27, 2020; L'Avenir de l'Artois, October 26, 2020.¹²⁰

October 20, 2020

Tarbes, Department of Hautes-Pyrenees, France

Fine of 3,000 € or 3,510 US\$ suspended for the poisoner of a red kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II) and a common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II).

30 Millions d'Amis, November 5, 2020.¹²¹



October 12 and 13, 2020

Saint-Thibéry and Vailhauquès, Department of Hérault, France

A red kite (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II) riddled with bullets. He was flying over France. He was going to spend the winter in Spain.

Ten lead shots.

Hérault Birds Protection League, October 17 and 23, 2020.¹²²

October 17, 2020

Tilques, Department of Pas-de-Calais, France



One lead shot in the wing. The osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*, Appendix II) was found by the riverside. He was coming to look for fish. He fell on a hunter. The fracture was reduced by Dr. Françoise Joly, veterinary clinic of La Coupole in Wizernes. The prognosis is reserved. If he survives the stress, he will be released in winter. If there is a cold snap, he will not be able to fish in frozen waters. Normally he spends the winter in Spain or North Africa.

La Voix du Nord, October 20, 2020.¹²³

FAMILY AFFAIRS

End of October 2020

Bourges, Department of Cher, France

The mother and daughter were "passionate" about breeding parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), a passion that earned them 100,000 € (119,000 US\$) in revenue. They used short channels to sell their offspring. The buyers were mostly in the Cher or neighboring departments. A specimen found in Morbihan attracted the suspicions of the OFB. 80 parrots were seized in their home in 2018. They are due to appear in the criminal court in September 2021.

Le Berry Républicain, December 20, 2020.¹²⁴

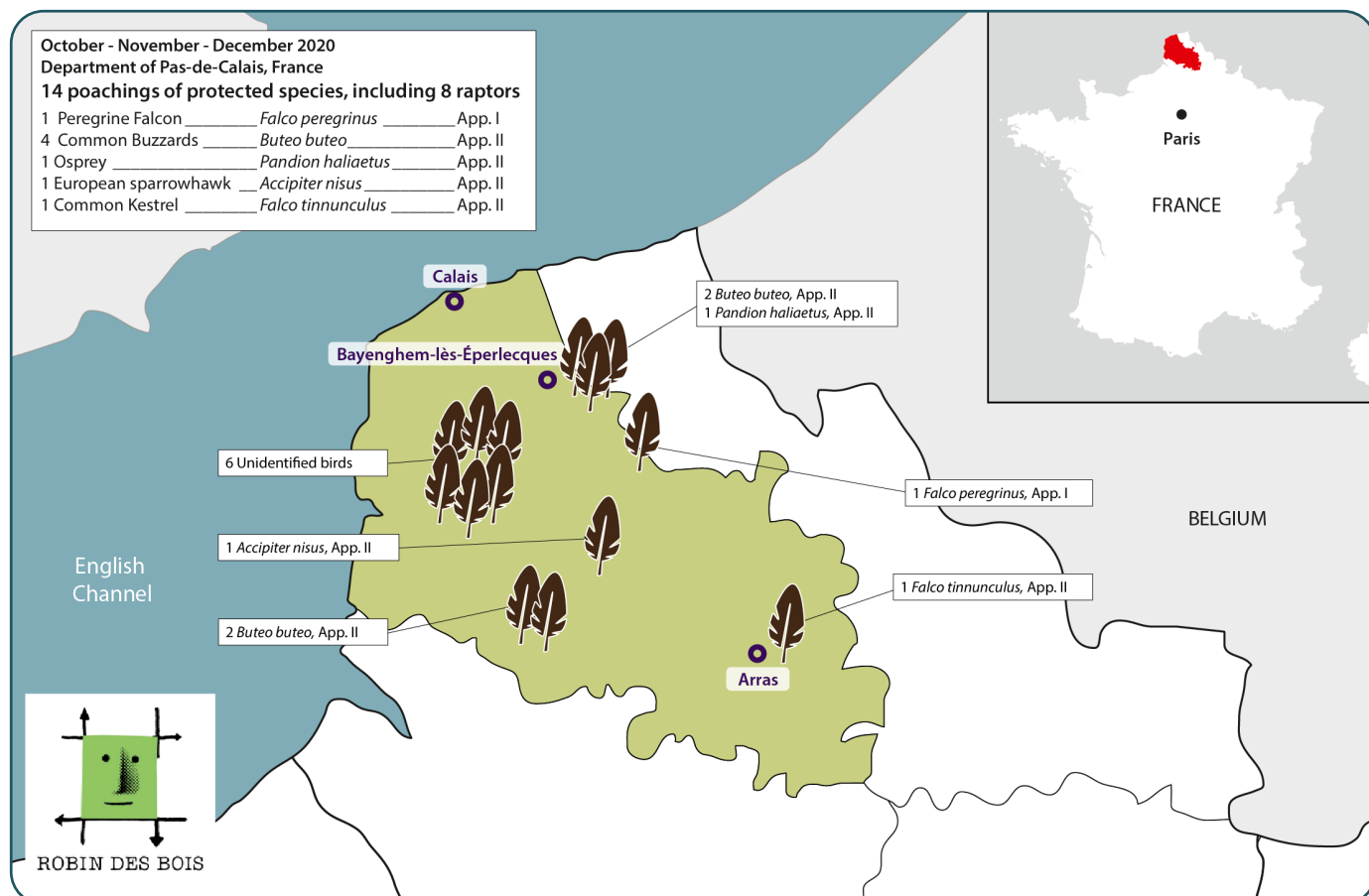
Early November 2020

Department of Cher, France

Coming out of a "ball-trap", 6 agricultural high school students, shot at everything that passed in the sky above a pond using lead bullets which are forbidden in wetlands. The toll is heavy : 15 swallows (family Hirundinidae) without counting those that drowned in the pond, a white egret (*Ardea alba*) or little egret (*Egretta garzetta*), Eurasian collared doves (*Streptopelia decaocto*) and common wood pigeons (*Columba palumbus*). It was in August 2019. The 6 vandals were on vacation with their guns. Despite the heartbreaking testimony of the OFB, "the chicks were in their nest. Some must have died for lack of seeing their mothers again", and the prosecutor's indictment demanding 2 months of suspended prison, the 6 enemies of birds were only fined 1000 € (1,170 US\$). All swallows are protected in France since 1976. Harming them, their nests or their broods is liable to a 3-year prison term and a fine of 150,000 €.

Le Berry Républicain, November 13, 2020.¹²⁵





Willy Schraen is a municipal councillor in Bayenghem-lès-Eperlecques in the Pas-de-Calais department. He is also the president of the National Federation of Hunters.

November 3, 2020

Aix-en-Provence, Department of Bouches-du-Rhône, France

City police rescue European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), one decoy-bird and 3 others trapped by glue. The goldfinch trader fled as the police vehicle approached.

La Provence, November 3, 2020.¹²⁶



November 4, 2020

Les Mauges, Department of Maine-et-Loire, France

Pillaging in the gardens allows, despite the Covid lockdowns, to go and meet nature. A lady from the village placed traps for small passerines in the hedges. The harvest was good and ready to be cooked in skewers. Eight dead house sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) were seized by the OFB.

Ouest-France, December 9, 2020.¹²⁷



November 6, 2020

Roinville-sous-Auneau, Department of Eure-et-Loir, France

The search of a wanderers' camp by the police resulted plot after plot and caravan after caravan in the seizure of several rifles, handguns, 4 cannabis plants, 21 grams of resin, 3 European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) and 2 house sparrows (*Passer domesticus*).

L'Echo Républicain, November 8, 2020.¹²⁸



November 6, 8 and 11, 2020

Department of Herault, France

One northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II) at Ferrals-les-Montagnes and 2 common buzzards (*Buteo buteo*, Appendix II) were riddled with bullets. France 3 Occitania, November 18, 2020; Herault Birds Protection League, November 18, 2020.¹²⁹

November 10, 2020

Lisieux, Department of Calvados, France



Sentence of 2 confirmed poachers. In their hides, the wildlife wardens found in the middle of an October night 2 shelducks (*Tadorna tadorna*) and 2 speckled teals (*Anas flavirostris*) which were illegally used as decoys. They were fined 705 € (825 US\$) each and 650 € (760 US\$) in damages, had their hunting license withdrawn for 18 months and were prohibited from holding a weapon for one year.

Chasse Passion, November 16, 2020.¹³⁰

December 15, 2020

Vendoire and Champagne-et-Fontaine, Department of Dordogne, France

Three searches in the two villages. A 77-year-old man and a 20-year-old man, a good example of intergenerational transmission of contentious know-how. A thousand birds including an owl (Strigidae, Appendix I or II), lovebirds (*Agapornis* spp., Appendix II except *Agapornis roseicollis*) and zebra finches (*Taeniopygia guttata*) were as a first step counted up and photographed inside the aviaries. The computers were seized along with other documents that might be useful to the investigation. The main questions are about the origin of the birds, the existence of a commercial traffic and the capacities of the owners to take care of the menagerie. A Belgian is said to be involved in the transport of the birds between southwest France and Belgium.

Sud Ouest, December 20, 2020.¹³¹

SOUTHERN EUROPE

SPAIN

October 1st, 2020

Onteniente, Province of Valencia, Valencian Community, Spain

Seizure of 26 birds, chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*), European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*), European greenfinches (*Chloris chloris*), European serins (*Serinus serinus*) and common linnets (*Linaria cannabina*), traps, nets and a stuffed genet at the home of a man who had retired from active life and who is now an active poacher.

ABC, October 1st, 2020.¹³²



End of October 2020

Autonomous Community of the Region of Murcia, Spain

During September 2020, 12 grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I) were stolen in Totana and 2 scarlet macaws (*Ara macao*, Appendix I) in Molina de Segura. The 2 macaws have just been seized in a pet shop in Ceutí. They were returned to their owner, whose legitimacy does not seem to be questioned. In Ceutí again, the Guardia Civil got hold of 4 of the stolen grey parrots. Molina de Segura, Ceutí and Totana are 60 km apart. The traffic, as it is uncovered, is a local ring. The value of the 14 birds is estimated at 26,000 €.

20 Minutos, October 23, 2020.¹³³

End of October 2020

A Coruna, Province of A Coruna, Autonomous Community of Galicia, Spain

A stuffed and staged northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II) and tawny owl (*Strix aluco*, Appendix II) were seized at the last moment by the Guardia Civil just before flying off via the Internet.

La Voz de Galicia, October 31, 2020.¹³⁴

REPEATED OFFENSE

Early November and December 19, 2020

Castellón de la Plana, Province of Castellón, Valencian Community, and Zaragoza, Province of Zaragoza, Autonomous Community of Aragon, Spain

The "liga", a sticky substance based on esparto and other plant hairs, corresponds in Spain to the glues used by poachers in France. The species targeted in Spain are the same. Spanish ornithologists estimate that 100,000 to 200,000 small birds such as European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) and robins are trapped each year. They land on a branch or a piece of wood and cannot get off.

- Fifteen poachers are under investigation. They are suspected of catching European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) and other songbirds with the "liga" or Japanese "invisible" net.

- A 64-year-old man was caught in December coating branches with "liga" and placing a cage with a male goldfinch as a caller near the tree. He had already been fined for poaching with "liga" in August on the banks of the Ebro.

Las Provincias, November 10, 2020; Heraldo de Aragón (with EFE), December 20, 2020.¹³⁵

Early December 2020
Cordoba, Province of Cordoba,
Autonomous Community of Andalusia,
Spain



Two specialists in songbirds and insectivores are suspected of using old-fashioned tricks to capture them dead or alive, on the one hand "costillas", traps baited with winged ants, and on the other hand "losetas", stones supported by sticks crashing on the birds when they come to nibble sunflower seeds used as bait. Eurasian blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*), whitethroats (*Sylvia melanocephala*), European robins (*Erithacus rubecula*), black redstarts (*Phoenicurus ochrurus*) and common blackbirds (*Turdus merula*) are the victims of these silent poachers.

Diario Córdoba, December 7, 2020.¹³⁶

End of December 2020
Autonomous Community of Castilla y León, Spain



The private hunting area is deprived of hunting for 5 years, the time for the fenced ecosystem to get a new lease of life and some fresh air. The Guardia Civil discovered slaughtered hunting dogs, foxes and birds of prey in a well-concealed common grave, including 4 Iberian imperial eagles (*Aquila adalberti*, Appendix I), a black vulture (*Aegypius monachus*, Appendix II) and 2 red kites (*Milvus milvus*, Appendix II). Post mortem examinations confirmed that the animals were shot or poisoned. The estate is in a Natura 2000 area.

Vulture Conservation Foundation, Dec. 23, 2020.¹³⁷



ITALY



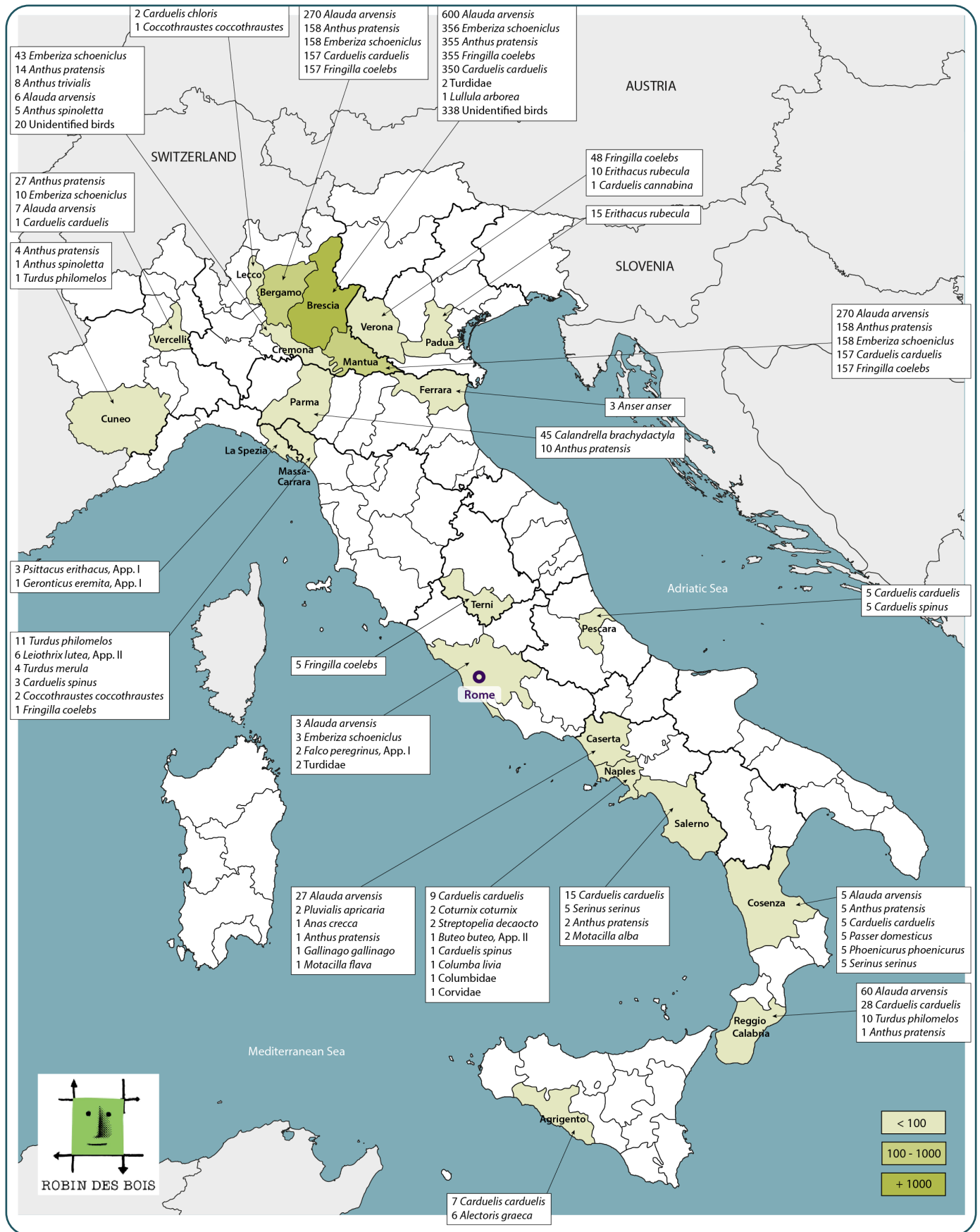
GREECE

December 2, 2020
Frangokastello, Crete Region, Greece



Rescue by 2 veterinarians of the NGO ANIMA - Wildlife Care of a young griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*, Appendix II) victim of shooting and immobilized by several fractures. The operation lasted 3 hours. The prognosis is relatively favorable. The survivor could be released in a few weeks in the sky of Crete. Vulture Conservation Foundation, December 9, 2020.¹³⁸

7,712 birds poached and seized in Italy between September 1 and December 31, 2020
according to official and media sources



MALTA

Mid-October 2020

Malta

Seizure in a postal parcel of 84 stuffed birds. In March 2020, 16 Maltese poachers had been repatriated from Egypt during the Covid-19 lockdown thanks to the intervention of their embassy. They were accused of having poached 700 birds in Egypt and Sudan and then sent their remains to Malta for taxidermy and decoration : eagles and vultures (Accipitridae, Appendix I or II), falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II), flamingos (*Phoenicopterus* spp., Appendix II), storks (family Ciconiidae), ibises (family Threskiornithidae), egrets (family Ardeidae) and spoonbills (genus *Platalea*). The Egyptian customs are regularly seizing parcels for Malta containing dead birds (see "On the Trail" n°28 p.41).

Times of Malta, October 17, 2020.¹³⁹

November 30, 2020

Żurriq and Has-Saptan, South Region, Fomm ir-Riĥ and Żebbuġ, North Region, Qala, Ta' Ċenċ and Kerċem, Gozo Region, Malta



The police, alerted by the NGO CABS (Committee Against Bird Slaughter), seized 42 birds, Eurasian siskins (*Carduelis spinus*), hawfinches (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*), chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*), common linnets (*Carduelis cannabina*), European greenfinches (*Carduelis chloris*) and 11 traps. Ten men claiming to be conducting a governmental study of tree finches and other passerines are charged with poaching. CABS accuses the government of being accomplice in massive and historic poaching and of doing nothing on its own initiative to protect sedentary birds and migratory birds that stop over in the archipelago in winter.

Times of Malta, November 30, 2020.¹⁴⁰

Early December 2020

Malta

The European Commission is taking legal action against Malta for infringement of the Bird Directive by allowing common quail (*Coturnix coturnix*) spring hunting since 2011 and European golden plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) and song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*) autumn capture since 2012. The new derogation that allows poachers claiming to be scientists to capture alive chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*), European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) and other fringillids, is also criticized by the European Commission.

Times of Malta, December 3, 2020 and March 18, 2021.¹⁴¹

Year 2020

Malta

The Covid year is deadly for the birds. The confined are deconfining and the unemployed are killing time by shooting birds. Shopping in the wild embellishes the ordinary. Freezers and taxidermists' offices are filling up. During 2020, BirdLife caregivers collected 210 birds injured by pellets - double the number of 2019 and 2018 combined. This is the tip of the pyramid and the tomb of the birds. At the base lie thousands of mortally wounded birds whose wings and hearts have stopped beating after a few seconds of resistance. The main victims that take shelter in the refuges are wing spanned birds, marsh harriers (*Circus aeruginosus*, Appendix II), honey buzzards (*Pernis apivorus*, Appendix II) lesser kestrels (*Falco naumanni*, Appendix II), common kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*, Appendix II), short-toed eagles (*Circaetus gallicus*, Appendix II) and Eurasian collared doves (*Streptopelia decaocto*).

MaltaToday, February 1, 2021.¹⁴²

PORTUGAL

November 3, 2020

Mirandela, Bragança District, Portugal



Two men aged 55 and 56 years old were sentenced for poaching European goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) to fines of 500 € (585 US\$) or 100 hours of community service. They were accompanied in their plundering by a 15 year old young man.

Mensagem de Bragança, November 4, 2020.¹⁴³

EASTERN EUROPE

RUSSIA

End of October 2020

Altai Krai, Russia



For attempting to enter Kazakhstan with 6 peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*, App. I), 3 men were sentenced to 1 year and 5 months of penal colony, 3 years and 5 months suspended and 2 years and 2 months suspended (cf. "On the Trail" n°29 p.131).

Russian Legal Information Agency, October 27, 2020.¹⁴⁴

AUSTRALIA

December 3, 2020**Australia**

At the request of the government, the audit firm KPMG carried out a report on the conditions under which endemic birds with high ecological and economic value were exported on 6 occasions between July 2015 and November 2018 to Berlin, Germany, on behalf of the ACTP (Association for the Conservation of Threatened Parrots) run by Martin Guth and suspected of engaging in the selling of the imported specimens. The report, which was completed on December 3, 2020, was published in February 2021. It points out the complexity of the architecture of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999), its abstruse and unrealistic verbiage that opens the door to multiple interpretations and misunderstandings. For example, the report cites the mystery of "zoo" and "private zoo" for which no explanation is given in the text. KPMG considers that the examination of export files is informal, based on oral exchanges between services and people considered competent, and that the hierarchical level of the signatories is insufficient to directly engage the responsibility of the Ministry of the Environment. The written memorization of procedures is insufficient. The services responsible for issuing export permits do not do enough research into the accommodation capacities of the animals at the recipients' premises. The risks of diversion of educational and scientific programmes professed by importers are generally underestimated even when several birds of an endangered species are subject to an export permit.

KPMG recommends the implementation of a new case review protocol, writing and conserving progress reports prior to the final decision, DNA testing of the exported birds so as to facilitate the traceability of any future offspring, and broadening the approach to other species to ensure that the shortcomings observed in the export of birds are not replicated for other animals. Sussan Ley, Minister for the Environment, has undertaken to meet KPMG's recommendations. "I ordered this report to ensure adequate protections were in place to thwart dodgy dealers and exporters seeking to profit from trade in native species both in Australia and overseas."

Articles in The Guardian Australia (December 2018 and February 2019) and in "On the Trail" n°23 p.54 (August 2019) drew the Australian government's attention to the ACTP's actions in Germany and strengthened KPMG's documentation during the preparation of the report.

The Guardian Australia, February 22, 2021; The Daily Telegraph, February 22, 2021; Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, "Regulation of the export of native and exotic birds".¹⁴⁵

Mid-December 2020**Gold Coast, State of Queensland, Australia**

Death of an Australian magpie (*Cracticus tibicen*). There was no other solution than to finish it off after it was removed from a home where it had been caged for several months, chained to a lead pipe and undernourished.

Daily Mail, December 23, 2020.¹⁴⁶

Mid-December 2020**Western Tiers Reserve, State of Tasmania, Australia**

The Tasmanian virgin forests are disasters. The corpses of *Eucalyptus ovata*, *Atherosperma moschatum* and *Phyllocladus aspleniifolius* are down on the ground. The habitat of Tasmanian devils (*Sarcophilus harrisii*) and wedge-tailed eagles (*Aquila audax fleayi*, Appendix II) is razed. Swift parrots (*Lathamus discolor*, Appendix II) that migrate annually between the east coast of Australia and Tasmania are the most threatened by industrial deforestation. The export of wood pellets and chips is the main economic resource of the island (68,400 km² 540,000 inhabitants). The less than 300 swift parrots do not measure up, especially since they are victims of the silent poaching of a marsupialiform, the sugar glider (*Petaurus breviceps*), native of continental Australia and recently introduced in Tasmania. There is a legal battle between the Sustainable Timber Tasmania (STT) and the Bob Brown Foundation. Bob Brown, director of the foundation and former leader of the Australian Greens, does not hesitate over going into the field. He is the subject of several complaints for trespassing. Mr. Brown remains confident. "All native forests will one day be conserved in Australia. It's just a matter of when". Let us hope that this blessed day will not come too late, when everything will be shaved off. In the State of Victoria in continental Australia, it has been decided to stop the exploitation of virgin forests... starting from 2030.

The Canberra Times, December 23, 2020; The West Australian (with AAP), January 8, 2021; Mongabay, April 5, 2021.¹⁴⁷

NEW ZEALAND

September-December 2020**Ashley Rakahuri Regional Park, Canterbury Region, New Zealand**

Black-billed gulls (*Chroicocephalus bulleri*), an endemic seabird species, are victims of 4x4 off-road motocross rodeos that drive into the Ashley-Rakahuri riverbed, smash nests, hit birds as they fly away and crush nests and chicks. In each episode, black-billed gulls and other victims are found dead or with broken limbs by the Ashley-Rakahuri Rivercare Group. This road brutality is increasing. The flow of the river has been at its lowest in recent years and its bed has been converted into a playground.

Otago Daily Times, January, 19, 2021.¹⁴⁸

THE ROCK PTARMIGAN



France - Switzerland

This snowflake weighs 400 grams. Its wingspan is half a metre. White in winter, stone and lichen in summer, the rock ptarmigan (*Lagopus muta*) is a virtuoso of passive defence. It flies, it nests at an altitude of between 2,000 and 5,000 metres in the mountains of the northern hemisphere. It digs tunnels into the snow to feed on dry grass, twigs and leaf buds in winter.

As early as 1976, the French Ministry of "Quality of Life" recommended the suspension of rock ptarmigan hunting for 3 to 4 years.

As early as 1978, the Delachaux et Niestlé guide beautifully written by Paul Geroudet noted about the rock ptarmigans that unfavourable circumstances such as the lack of snow in winter suppressed the advantage of camouflage and turned it into a disadvantage. In other words, the snow-white plumage becomes an unmistakable landmark for eagles, wolves, hunters and poachers when there is no snow, an episode that is expected to become increasingly frequent due to climatic oscillations.

Almost half a century after these warnings, the French Ministry of Ecological Transition has not yet banned ptarmigan hunting. In the Alps and the Pyrenees, it is subject to MACs (Maximum Authorised Cullings) calculated on the basis of spring and summer counts carried out by "volunteer and specially trained" hunters. These non-gun beats, accompanied by dogs, allow a GPS recording of all the roosting sites and, from September onwards, make it easier for well-documented hunters and possibly well-informed poachers to shoot ptarmigan on sight. However, it would be unfair to put the sole responsibility for the ongoing eradication of the ptarmigan on the shoulders of hunting. The over-frequentation of the mountains, the helicopter overflights, the pollutions of lakes, the teleferic lines, the expansion of ski areas and the fireworks also target the ptarmigans. The Franz Weber Foundation reports that in Switzerland, the droppings of rock ptarmigan whose territories are disturbed by human affluence contain abnormally high levels of the stress hormone cortisol. Between 2005 and 2015, the ptarmigan population in the Swiss Alps melted by 30%.

Laurent Yeatman, Ministère de la Qualité de la Vie, *Atlas des oiseaux nicheurs de France de 1970 à 1975*. Paris : Société ornithologique de France, 1976 ; Paul Geroudet, *Grands échassiers, gallinacés, rôles d'Europe*. Neuchâtel-Lausanne-Paris : Delachaux et Niestlé, 1978 ; BirdLife International. 2016. *Lagopus muta* (errata version published in 2017). The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2016, accessed on 21 December 2021 ; Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux, October 22, November 19, 2020 and June 3, 2021 ; France Bleu Pays de Savoie, November 24, 2020 ; France 3 Occitanie, October 14, 2021 ; Ariège Ecological Committee.¹

VARIOUS REPTILE SPECIES

AFRICA

MOROCCO

December 8, 2020

Agadir Al-Massira Airport, Souss-Massa Region, Morocco

Arrest of a Swedish tourist about to embark for Sweden in possession of 1,600 lizards and snakes that he had collected around Tiznit and that he planned to resell from his country. The species are not specified but the Moroccan press reports that a single specimen can be sold for up to 400 US\$ on the international market. The reptiles were hidden in pottery.

H24Info, December 10, 2020; Hespress, December 8, 2020.¹

AMERICA

BRAZIL

December 28, 2020

São José do Rio Preto, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure of pythons (*Pythonidae*, App. I or II), boas (*Boa* spp., Appendix I or II), central bearded dragons (*Pogona vitticeps*) and black-bellied sliders (*Trachemys dorbigni*) in a private home. The individual was fined 4,300 reais, or 800 US\$, prior he was released.

G1, December 29, 2020.²



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

December 4, 2020

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



The SUV was traveling on the McAllen-Hidalgo-Reynosa Bridge towards Mexico. As the vehicle approached the border, the vehicle and its driver, a U.S.

citizen, were inspected by Customs and Border Protection. 23 snakes, 10 toads, 23 chameleons and 16 geckos were discovered. They were hidden in plastic boxes and bags. They were seized and taken to the Gladys Porter Zoo in Brownsville for identification.

US Customs and Border Protection, December 7, 2020.³

ASIA

CAMBODIA

November 2020

Banteay Mean Chey Province, Cambodia



Seizure of 9 alive two-banded monitors (*Varanus salvator*, App. II) and 3 alive monocled cobras (*Naja kaouthia*, App. II). They were

released.

Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, December 8, 2020.⁴

INDIA

October 10, 2020

Lachit Nagar, Kamrup District, State of Assam, India

Discovery and seizure of carcasses of snakes and lizards, bones and skins of Burmese pythons (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II) and lizards and some live specimens including an Indian krait (*Bungarus caeruleus*). The search at the home of the leading herpetologist, Dr. Jayaditya Purkayastha, lasted from midnight to noon. The investigation had speeded up after the arrest at the Guhawati airport of a man carrying reptiles (it is not known if they were dead or alive).

Purkayastha says that bones, skins, other remains and live reptiles are the object of his research. The hypothesis of trafficking is not excluded. The animals and the carcasses would come from Guwahati zoo and botanical garden whose director is a friend of Purkayastha.



Until then, he was honored for having identified a new species of snake of the genus *Hebius* in the northeast of India, recognizable by a black mark under the eyes. The sensational *Hebius lacrima* was

the subject of a publication in the scientific journal *Zootaxa* written in collaboration with Patrick David, another expert of the genus *Hebius* attached to the Museum of Natural History in Paris. Jayaditya Purkayastha is director of the NGO Help Earth.

The Sentinel, October 15, 2020; Northeast Now, October 14, 2020.⁵

EUROPE

GERMANY

October 30 and November 8, 2020

Cologne-Bonn Airport, North Rhine-Westphalia State, Germany

Seizure in 2 parcels from Mexico of 26 reptiles hidden in candy boxes or in disemboweled and stitched dolls. Ten were dead by suffocation. These were alligator lizards of the genus *Abronia* (*Abronia* spp., Appendix I or II), box turtles (*Terrapene* spp., Appendix I or II) and horned lizards (genus *Phrynosoma*).

German Customs, December 2, 2020.⁶



Phrynosoma orbiculare

SPAIN

November 2020

Spain

Dismantling of a criminal group involved in wildlife trafficking, document forgery, smuggling and money laundering. The Guardia Civil and Europol investigation led to 21 arrests in Spain and the United Kingdom and the seizure of 355 reptiles imported from Australia, Brazil, Mexico, South Africa and the Middle East. They had crossed the border in the form of eggs concealed under clothing in passengers' suitcases. They were then artificially incubated. After hatching, the juveniles were supposed to reach the "legal" market thanks to forged CITES documents. Veterinarians are involved in the network.

Diario de Sevilla (with EFE), November 12, 2020; Guardia Civil, November 12, 2020 ; Europol, November 12, 2020.⁷

EULER OPERATION

Sant Vicenç of Montalt, Barcelona Province, Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain

Seizure on a farm of 3 Siamese crocodiles (*Crocodylus siamensis*, Appendix I), one veiled chameleon (*Chamaeleo calyptratus*, Appendix II), 2 Ramsay's pythons (*Aspidites ramsayi*, Appendix II), 2 African spurred tortoises (*Centrochelys sulcata*, Appendix II) and 19 pond sliders (*Trachemys scripta*), a large number of terrariums, light bulbs and a cold room that stored chickens for feeding. The farm was used as a transit point before resale. Three people were arrested.

The search follows the arrest in early 2019 of a Spanish citizen returning from the Seychelles controlled on arrival at Barcelona airport. In his luggage were 76 juvenile Aldabra giant tortoises (*Aldabrachelys gigantea*, Appendix II).

Guardia Civil, December 2, 2020.⁸

FRANCE

October 1st, 2020

Ouroux-sur-Saône, Department of Saône-et-Loire, France

The gendarmes, in cooperation with the OFB, seized a 4-metre long Asiatic rock python (*Python molurus*, Appendix II), a 70-cm long Cuvier's smooth-fronted caiman (*Paleosuchus palpebrosus*, Appendix II), an African spurred tortoise (*Centrochelys sulcata*, Appendix II) and a Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) in a private home. They were entrusted to the TouroParc animal park in Romanèche-Thorins.

Le Bien Public, October 3, 2020.⁹

November 30, 2020

Calais, Department of Pas-de-Calais, France

Seizure of monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) and cascabel rattlesnakes (*Crotalus durissus*, Appendix III in Honduras) in the van driven by a Slovakian national when disembarking from a car ferry from Dover, UK. They were handed over to "a specialist". The driver was fined by Customs and resumed his voyage.

French Customs, November 30, 2020; Actu Pas-de-Calais, December 1st, 2020.¹⁰



December 14, 2020, and February 8, 2021

Amiens, Department of Somme, France



Sentencing of Mickaël Dehodeng, Jean Edouard Vershueren, Jean Treguesser and Catherine Richard, respectively pet shop salesman, landscaper, helicopter operator, employee at Décathlon, to fines of 1,000 € (2,400 US\$) for complicity in operating an establishment holding non-domesticated species without a certificate of competence and without authorization.

Sentence of Dimitri Ferre, company manager, for successively operating between March 2016 and February 2018 in Feuquières, Grandvilliers and in Beauvais (department of Oise) without a certificate of competence and without authorization of establishments holding animals of non-domestic species and operating an exhibition-sale on November 4, 2017 in Grandvilliers without a certificate of competence and without authorization to 6 months imprisonment with probationary suspension for 2 years, to a fine of 10,000 € (12,000 US\$) and to 10,000 € in damages to the association Picardie Nature. All the convicts were members of France Formation Reptiles Arthropodes, frequented the reptile markets of Arras and were involved in the association "Empire of the reptiles" chaired by Dimitri Ferre. They engaged in the exchange, transit, acquisition, recovery, breeding and sale of, among other species, royal pythons (*Python regius*, Appendix II), boa constrictors (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II), Cuvier's smooth-fronted caimans (*Paleosuchus palpebrosus*, Appendix II), golden poison frogs (*Phyllobates terribilis*, Appendix II), dendrobates (family Dendrobatidae), rat snakes (genus *Elaphe*), bearded dragons (*Pogona vitticeps*), panther chameleons (*Furcifer pardalis*) and mygales. They were buying from France, particularly the Pyrenees, from "collectors" who had neither authorization nor competence, or French Guiana through an illegal network. They also bought animals at the Ferme Tropicale in Paris, at ABC Animalerie in Breny in the Aisne and at Animalerie 2000 in Belgium. Some animals classified as dangerous were in terrariums that were not hermetically sealed. It appears from the judgment of the Court of Appeal of Amiens that the prefecture of the department of Oise did not show at the time of the facts an exemplary thoroughness in the examination and the follow-up of the request files for authorization of detention of wild species. Today, Dimitri Ferre operates Dundee Shop in Beauvais, as the Court of Appeal did not follow the prosecutor's request to ban him from exercising a profession related to the offenses committed.

Courrier picard, December 21, 2020; Cour d'appel d'Amiens, February 8, 2021.¹¹

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

REPEATED OFFENSE

December 11, 2020

Penrith, State of New-South Wales, Australia



"On the Trail" n°25 p.35 previously wrote about this guy from whom shingleback lizards (*Tiliqua rugosa*) were seized by Strike Force Raptor in 2019. He is an early repeat offender involved in trafficking 147 reptiles including a common death adder (*Acanthophis antarcticus*) as early as 2017. At the age of 25, he had already built a reptile export network to China. Buddy Pogmore has just been sentenced to 3 years in prison, of which 18 months mandatory.

Yahoo Australia, December 11, 2020; Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, December 11 and 14, 2020.¹²



Shingleback lizard (*Tiliqua rugosa*)

TORTOISES AND FRESHWATER TURTLES



The marginated tortoise (*Testudo marginata*) and the flower. Photo christinakontaxi

Most important seizures of the quarter :

15,000 eggs of Magdalena river turtle (*Podocnemis lewyana*, Appendix II)

1,301 pig-nosed turtles (*Carettochelys insculpta*, Appendix II)

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

October 9-13, 2020

Philippi, Capetown, Western Cape Province, South Africa



The century-old leopard tortoise (*Stigmochelys pardalis*, Appendix II) was chained by a hole drilled in the back of her shell. It was tethered on the bare,

open ground at the edge of the electric fence surrounding a warehouse. The rescue was carried out by the AWS, which had been warned by a phone call. The date of its arrival and its origin are unknown. It is being treated at the AWF clinic. Four days after the rescue of the venerable and media reports, a man voluntarily handed over a second leopard tortoise that he had been holding captive in his bedroom. Allan Perrins, Director of AWS, concludes on a hopeful note: "Both tortoises will need extensive de-domestication and de-habituation before their release back into the veld".
News24, October 20, 2021.¹

MADAGASCAR

March-early October 2020

On the N7 road, Madagascar

Seizure of 42 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I). They are sought-after by Asians. The Minister of the Environment is wielding the zero-tolerance towards all those involved in catching, transporting and smuggling. She recalls that an Italian trafficker has been in prison for 18 months for his involvement in an attempt to smuggle radiated tortoises.

Midi Madagasikara, October 13, 2020.²



Radiated tortoise (*Astrochelys radiata*)

**November 11, 26, and December 2020
Ampanihy District, Atsimo-Andrefana
Region, and Fianarantsoa, Haute
Matsiatra Region, Madagascar**



- They were trying to bring 77 tortoises out of the Ampanihy district. The 6 fled leaving their booty behind them when they saw the forces of order.
- Seizure of 32 tortoises hidden in a cave by a mixed group of budding teenage traffickers.
- A vehicle from Toliara is inspected. Inside, 19 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I). The 4 passengers were sentenced to 6 months in prison and 4 million ariary in damages (1,050 US\$). Madagascar-Tribune, November 30 and December 19, 2020; Agence Afrique, December 1st, 2020.³

**Mid-December 2020
Mahajanga, Boeny Region, Madagascar**



Sentencing of the 2 French and Italian nationals suspected of poaching and attempting to sell 27 radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) arrested in August 2020 (see "On the Trail" n°30 p. 129). They received sentences of 4 months and one month imprisonment respectively and will have to pay 4 million ariary in damages, i.e. 1,050 US\$. The Alliance Voahary Gasy considers this sentence too light and points out that the facts are punishable by a minimum sentence of 6 months' imprisonment and fine of 10 to 50 million ariary (2,620 to 13,100 US\$).

Madagascar-Tribune, December 19, 2020.⁴

TANZANIA

**Early October 2020
Zanzibar Archipelago, Tanzania**

About 100 live radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*, Appendix I) looted in the south of Madagascar were seized on the Zanzibar archipelago in Tanzania. Thanks to the cooperation between the two countries, they are being repatriated to the Big Island.

Midi Madagasikara, October 13, 2020.⁵

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

October 5, 2020

State of Massachusetts, United States of America



Sentencing of Nathan Boss to 2 years of probation. During the first 6 months he will be under house arrest. In 2017, he had attempted to import 4 black-breasted leaf turtles (*Geoemyda spengleri*, Appendix II). The parcel from Hong Kong was intercepted by the federal police. Boss, 27 years old, had also imported salamanders, whose entry into the United States is prohibited because they carry fungal diseases (see "On the Trail" n°29 p.150). Boss was also engaged in the fraudulent export of protected species in the United States.

Poaching and trafficking of turtles or turtle eggs is a well-known problem for the Massachusetts authorities. The most endangered, the bog turtles (*Glyptemys muhlenbergii*, Appendix I), are the smallest turtles in North America, barely 10 cm long. They are only found in swamps and bogs in the United States. They do not bury their eggs in the ground but build nests in grass tussocks. In 2019, a former biology professor was charged with possession and sale of 17 bog turtles and other turtles.

This Week in Worcester, October 5, 2020; The Boston Globe, October 10, 2020.⁶

October 21, 2020

State of South Carolina, United States of America



Act 177 entered into force. South Carolina protects its common box turtles (*Terrapene carolina*, Appendix II), spotted turtles (*Clemmys guttata*, Appendix II) and diamondback terrapins (*Malaclemys terrapin*, Appendix II). It is now prohibited to hold, transfer, sell, barter, transport reptiles and amphibians captured in their natural habitats, and release non-native species such as black-and-white tegu (*Salvator merianae*, Appendix II). In private homes, the maximum number of turtles in captivity is set at 10, with a maximum of 2 for common box turtles and diamondback terrapins. All captive turtles must originate from certified farms.

Households with more than 10 turtles have 90 days to report them to the State Department of Natural Resources and receive whenever possible a provisional permit under a "grandfather" clause. Summerville Journal Scene, October 21, 2020.⁷

December 1st, 2020

State of Georgia, United States of America



Sentencing of “Kenny” Cheng to one year’s probation and 10,000 US\$ in damages for receiving between October 2018 and January 2019 under pseudonyms 28 parcels declared as toys from Hong Kong containing at least 150 turtles, including spotted pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I) and tricarinate hill turtles (*Melanochelys tricarinata*, Appendix I), and subsequently taking advantage (40,000 US\$) from the smuggling by delivering them to collectors.

US Department of Justice, December 1st, 2020.⁸

December 9, 2020 and October 6, 2021

Camden, State of New Jersey, United States of America



Kang Juntao, 24 years old, Chinese passport, was extradited from Malaysia to the United States of America. He had been arrested at Kuala Lumpur International Airport in January 2019 on an international warrant issued by the American judiciary. So young and already so experienced, Juntao built up a circular economy of turtles on a global scale. From Asia, he bought in the USA common box turtles (*Terrapene carolina*, Appendix II), spotted turtles (*Clemmys guttata*, Appendix II) and wood turtles (*Glyptemys insculpta*, Appendix II) via PayPal through social networks and Reptilia sites. Suppliers delivered the turtles to Chinese middlemen exiled in the United States under the guise of academic studies. The turtles were then shipped to Hong Kong tied with adhesive tape and put in socks under misleading descriptions.

In October 2021, Juntao was sentenced to 38 months’ imprisonment, one year’s probation and a fine of 10,000 US\$.

US Department of Justice, December 10, 2020 and October 6, 2021.⁹

December 10, 2020

State of Georgia, United States of America

Indictment of Nathan Horton by the federal court. He is suspected of having netted thousands of freshwater turtles between July 2015 and July 2017 and having sold them in California on the pet market. Georgia prohibits the capture of turtles for commercial purposes. Among the species targeted by Horton, the prosecutor cites common musk turtle (*Sternotherus odoratus*), eastern mud turtles (*Kinosternon subrubrum*), loggerhead musk turtles (*Sternotherus minor*) and stripe-necked musk turtles (*Sternotherus minor peltifer*).

US Department of Justice, December 15, 2020.¹⁰

FAMILY AFFAIRS

December 30, 2020 and October 26, 2021



New Orleans, State of Louisiana, United States of America

The case began in July 2017. Vincent Felix Rivere and Megan Lynn Shoemaker had arranged a meeting at an Office Depot car park in Covington to deliver 29 common box turtles (*Terrapene carolina*, Appendix II) to a trusted buyer who was in fact an undercover agent from the Department of Homeland Security Investigations.

The turtles were exchanged for 680 US\$ or 23 US\$ per individual. A few kilometres further, the traffickers’ car was intercepted and the 680 US\$ recovered.

On October 26, 2021, Riviere and his wife were sentenced to one year of probation.

US Department of Justice, January 6, July 28 and October 26, 2021.¹¹

CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN AMERICA

BOLIVIA

Mid-November 2020

Department of Beni, Bolivia

The Bolivian Navy seized 15,000 eggs of Magdalena river turtle (*Podocnemis lewyana*, Appendix II) on the Mamoré River, a tributary of the Río Grande, in 21 jute bags on board 2 boats.

El Deber, December 9, 2020.¹²

BRAZIL

December 14, 2020

Franca, State of São Paulo, Brazil



A turtle (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II) is found in a postal parcel, imprisoned in adhesive tape and stuck in sawdust. The recipient admits to having purchased it via the Internet for 150 reais (28 US\$) on ordering, with a surcharge of 100 reais (18 US\$) after the delivery. He was fined 3,500 reais (650 US\$). He could subsequently face charges for trafficking in wild animals and abuse.

Olhar Animal, December 16, 2020.¹³

FRANCE (FRENCH GUIANA)

November 11, 2020

Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni, Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France

Seizure by the river gendarmerie of 5 live red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II) on board a canoe and handing over to the association SOS faune sauvage.

French Biodiversity Office, December 5, 2020.¹⁴

MEXICO

October 24, 2020

Centla, State of Tabasco, Mexico

Seizure of 42 freshwater turtles by the side of the road between Villahermosa and Tabasco: 5 Mexican giant musk turtles (*Staurotypus triporcatus*), 26 white-lipped mud turtles (*Kinosternon leucostomum*) and 11 pond sliders (*Trachemys scripta*). Some still had a hook in their throat. They were handed over to an UMA. Poachers escaped after a fight with Profepa and Guardia Nacional officers. Profepa, October 24, 2020.¹⁵

SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

CAMBODIA

Mid-December 2020

Cardamom Protected Forest, Cambodia

Eleven Asian leaf turtles (*Cyclemys dentata*, Appendix II) were removed from poachers by rangers and released.

Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, December 22, 2020.¹⁶

December 2020

Sihanoukville Province, Cambodia

Seizure of 2 yellow-headed temple turtles (*Heosemys annandalii*, Appendix II), 2 yellow-headed tortoises (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II) and 3 Asian leaf turtles (*Cyclemys dentata*, Appendix II). All 7 turtles were put back in water in January 2021 by the Wildlife Alliance Cambodia.

Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, January 15, 2021.¹⁷

End of December 2020

Cardamom Protected Forest, Cambodia

A patrol dismantles 3 woodcutters' bivouacs. They seize 6 chainsaws and find a live Asiatic softshell turtle (*Amyda cartilaginea*, Appendix II). For the other one, it was too late. It had been butchered and only the shell remained.

Wildlife Alliance Cambodia, December 30, 2020.¹⁸

INDONESIA

October 21, 2020

Kendari, Southeast Sulawesi Province, Sulawesi Island, Indonesia

Seizure of 1301 pig-nosed turtles (*Carettochelys insculpta*, Appendix II), 32 of which were dead, at the home of L. A. who was placed in preventive custody for 20 days. According to the initial findings of the investigation, the freshwater turtles were caught in Papua.

KabarRiau.com, October 21, 2020.¹⁹

THAILAND

December 23, 2020

Bangkok, Thailand

Welcome to the Cabochon Hotel - once again. Seizure in the rooms and staircase of 3 shells of yellow-headed temple turtles (*Heosemys annandalii*, Appendix II), 11 shells of Malayan snail-eating turtles (*Malayemys macrocephala*, Appendix II), one shell of an impressed tortoise (*Manouria impressa*, Appendix II) and one shell of a South Asian box turtle (*Cuora amboinensis*, Appendix II). Mrs Raweewan, the director, fled after learning of the search warrant and telling the police that the Taiwanese owner was absent.

Bangkok Post, December 24 and 25, 2020; Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, December 24, 2020.²⁰

VIET NAM

October 22, 2020

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Handing over of a Chinese stripe-necked turtle (*Mauremys sinensis*, Appendix III in China) to the Ho Chi Minh City wildlife rescue center.

ENV, October 24, 2020.²¹

End of October 2020

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

A man says he received a yellow-headed tortoise (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II) and a freshwater Asian leaf turtle (*Cyclemys dentata*, Appendix II) as a gift. He gets in touch with ENV. He wants the turtles to be released. As a first step, they are housed in a shelter.

ENV, October 28, 2020.²²

November 2, 2020

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

On the streets of the former Saigon, turtles are being sold by the shovelful. Thanks to an alert on the ENV hotline, 2 turtles were delivered.

ENV, November 2, 2020.²³

November 14, 2020

Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

The street peddler fled. The 5 ricefield turtles (*Malayemys subtrijuga*, Appendix II) will be released.

ENV, November 14, 2020.²⁴



November 17, 2020
Cam Pha, Quang Ninh Province, Viet Nam



The 10-seater minibus from Mong Cai near the border with China to Cam Pha in the south was carrying 207 exotic turtles, including common sliders (*Trachemys scripta*). ENV, November 25, 2020.²⁵

December 4, 2020
Binh Thanh District, Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam
The street vendor fled and left 2 turtles in the street on the approach of the Ecopolice alerted by ENV. ENV, December 7, 2020.²⁶

December 15, 2020
Da Nang Municipality, Viet Nam
Seizure at a market of 21 turtles, Indochinese box turtles (*Cuora galbinifrons*, Appendix II), Malayan snail-eating turtles (*Malayemys macrocephala*, Appendix II), impressed tortoises (*Manouria impressa*, Appendix II) and Eastern black-bridged leaf turtles (*Cyclemys pulchristriata*, Appendix II). They were released. ENV, December 15, 2020.²⁷

December 23, 2020
Binh Duong Province, Viet Nam



The yellow-headed temple turtle (*Heosemys annandalii*, Appendix II) was for sale on the street as early as 8.30 a.m. An hour later, it was in good hands thanks to a passer-by's alert. ENV, December 23, 2020.²⁸

SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

October 10, 2020
Rudrapur, Udham Singh Nagar District, State of Uttarakhand, India
4.6 kg of meat and 8 shells of Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II). Four men charged with poaching. Hindustan Times, October 11, 2020.²⁹

October 11, 2020
Sangareddy District, State of Telangana, India
The bus connects Hyderabad and Mumbai. The police understands that there is trafficking on board. After being intercepted, the bus is searched. Jackpot! 426 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I) are packed in boxes in the baggage compartment. Time is running out. They are sedated. The experts from Tirupati zoo are examining and restoring them. They will soon be free again. The Times of India, October 16, 2020; The New Indian Express, October 16, 2020.³⁰

October 13, 2020
Talakasipur, Dhenkanal District, State of Odisha, India
Seizure in a yard of an Indian narrow-headed softshell turtle (*Chitra indica*, Appendix II). It weighs 30 kg. It was released in the Brahmani. Indian narrow-headed softshell turtles are rare. The species is sought after for the calipee, a gelatinous deposit that surrounds the bottom of the shell and is considered both a delicacy in Asian gastronomy and an aphrodisiac in traditional Chinese medicine. The natural enemies of the species are jackals and monitor lizards that dig up the eggs buried in the sand on the banks of rivers after the monsoon season. Its artificial enemies are dam releases, conversion of marshes and riverbanks in the Ganges and Brahmaputra basins into agricultural activities, and the channelling of rivers which gradually destroys the riverbeds where they bury themselves, the shallows where they ambush for food, the egg-laying sites along the banks, and the low-level turbidity gravel pits where newborns learn to swim. Orissa Post (with PNN), October 13, 2020; Ommcom News, October 13, 2020; French-speaking Federation for the Breeding and Protection of Turtles, Journal Chéloniens n°18, June 2021.³¹

November 4, 2020
Nagaria Colony, Pilibhit District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India
Four Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I) caught in the marshes and moved in barrels full of water while waiting to be sold were released by the forest subdivision into the Mala River. The 3 poachers reportedly provided useful information on the organisation of their network. The Times of India, November 6, 2020.³²

November 12, 2020

Vadanemmeli, Kancheepuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

One of the 4 Aldabra giant tortoises (*Aldabrachelys gigantea*, App. II) disappeared. The caretakers noticed it in the early morning. The thieves jumped over the walls of the Madras Crocodile Bank, a reptilium founded 44 years ago in the south of Chennai, and left with the giant turtle, which weighs between 80 and 100 kg. There are 3 Aldabras left in the Croc' Bank. They originate from a barter with the Prague Zoo in the Czech Republic. I give you 7 gharials, you give me 4 Aldabras.

Aldabrachelys gigantea, see "On the Trail" n°26 p. 26, n°30 p. 130 and p.171.

The Hindu, December 26, 2020, The Times of India, December 25, 2020.³³

November 15, 2020

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

437 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, App. I) alive in a van in the early hours of this Sunday were spotted at a road toll booth. They will be released into the Godavari. Ray and Bolachu are being held in police custody.

The Hindu, November 15, 2020.³⁴

November 20, 2020

Pune, Pune District, State of Maharashtra, India

20 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, App. I) and 10 spotted pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, App. I) were in the hands of 2 traffickers. The former are released, the latter are handcuffed.

Business World (with ANI), November 20, 2020.³⁵

November 21, 2020

Gonikoppal, Kodagu District, State of Karnataka, India

Lakshman, Lakhshminarayana, Thimmappa and Nagesh have been remanded in judicial custody for 15 days. Their car and their prisoner, an Indian star tortoise (*Geochelone elegans*, App. I), were seized.

Deccan Herald, November 21, 2020.³⁶

November 27, 2020

Dumila, Etawah District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Wildlife trafficking for food thrives during the Covid disruption period. 2,583 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, App. I) and Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, App. II) were removed from a truck and a van by law enforcement officers. The convoy was intercepted in the middle of the night. Five men were arrested. A driver fled in the night. In addition to the Indian flapshell turtles and Indian softshell turtles, 30 kg of calipee were seized. "Every year, the turtle smugglers become active once the level of waterbodies goes low. They then trap the turtles from ponds and rivers," says Rajiv Chauhan, a member of the Society for Conservation of Nature who was involved in the operation and in the counting of the survivors. This is also the time when freshwater turtles come to lay eggs in the dry banks. The turtles and the calipee are valued at 10 million rupees, or about 135,000 US\$.

The Times of India, November 29, 2020; Magzter, November 29, 2020.³⁷

On the Trail n°31. Robin des Bois

November 30, 2020

Silchar, Cachar District, State of Assam, India

Ms Sarbani Giri, head of the Life Sciences Department at the State university was shopping at the fish market when she saw on a stall an Indian peacock softshell turtle (*Nilssonina hurum*, App. I) live but ready to be butchered and sold in servings. She bought it whole and handed it over to the forest officials who thanked her warmly and released the Indian peacock softshell turtle.

Hindustan Times, November 30, 2020; Cachar Forest Division, November 29, 2020.³⁸



December 9, 2020

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



The big pick-up was full to breaking point. Six passengers, bags of onions, 17 Indian peacock softshell turtles (*Nilssonina hurum*, Appendix I) and 1,483 Indian flapshell turtles (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II) of which 188 were dead. The convoy came from Sultanpur and was heading towards Bongaon (about 150 km) with the prospect of smuggling the cargo dead or alive to Bangladesh. At least that is the scenario mentioned by the authorities. Softshell turtles are also being sold in West Bengal markets.

The Telegraph India, December 10, 2020; Siliguri Times, December 9, 2020; Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, December 9, 2020.³⁹

December 11, 2020

Siddharthnagar District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India. Border with Nepal

A trafficker is arrested by a Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) patrol on his way to Nepal with a turtle of unknown species.

Sashastra Seema Bal, December 11, 2020.⁴⁰

December 28, 2020

Andheri, Mumbai Suburban District, State of Maharashtra, India

Two arrests near the railway station by the WCCB and the Mumbai Forest Department. Seizure of 2 Indian star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*, Appendix I) and an Indian softshell turtle (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I). The traffickers had been spotted on the Internet.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, December 30, 2020.⁴¹



FAMILY AFFAIRS

December 29, 2020

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



After receiving reliable information, the WCCB and the forest department turned up at a fish wholesaler and found 637 Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I), several of which were dead. They were destined for markets of the region. They had been caught in Uttar Pradesh. The son of the fishmonger is in custody.

The Telegraph India, December 30, 2020; Anandabazar Patrika, December 29, 2020.⁴²

December 30, 2020

Agra, Agra District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Police, Forest Department and federal Wildlife Crime Control Bureau officers joined forces to arrest 2 traffickers who were holding 5 live Indian softshell turtles (*Nilssonina gangetica*, Appendix I).

WCCB, January 5, 2021.⁴³

EUROPE

SPAIN

Mid-October 2020

Girona, Province of Girona, Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain

The information was right. The suspect had 2 Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) in his home.

La Vanguardia, October 22, 2020.⁴⁴

FRANCE

November 26, 2020

Ajaccio, Department of Corse-du-Sud, France

Property developers are snatching building permits to torture the landscape and destroy protected and endangered species such as bats and Quimper snails (*Elona quimperiana*) or their habitats. In Corsica, Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) are asphyxiated by fires. They are also crushed by excavators and bulldozers and the estate massacre would be hushed up on the Island of Beauty by the French Biodiversity Office according to the NGO Global Earth Keeper.

France 3 Corse Viastella, January 6, 2021.⁴⁵

ITALY

Early October, 2020

Morro d'Oro, Province of Teramo, and Montesilvano, Province of Pescara, Region of Abruzzo, Italy

A discreet breeding farm of Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) and marginated tortoises (*Testudo marginata*, Appendix II) was dismantled by the Carabinieri CITES at the home of a retiree. The investigation had started a few days before when a Hermann's tortoise was collected on a roadside. It was wandering and injured. The 2 Hermann's tortoises and the 7 marginated tortoises were handed over to the Safari park. Marginated tortoises are native to southern Europe, particularly Greece and Italy. They weigh between 2.5 and 5 kg. Il Messaggero, October 8, 2020; Il Centro, October 8, 2020.⁴⁶

Mid- December, 2020

Port of Palermo, Metropolitan City of Palermo, Region of Sicily, Italy

Seizure of 12 Greek tortoises (*Testudo graeca*, Appendix II) hidden in the car of an Italian citizen at the landing of a car ferry from Tunisia.

Palermo Today, December 18, 2020; Customs and Monopolies Agency, December 18, 2020.⁴⁷



End of December 2020

Vallefoglia, Province of Pesaro and Urbino, Region of Marche, Italy

The birds, song thrushes (*Turdus philomelos*), redwings (*Turdus iliacus*), starlings (family Sturnidae), common blackbirds (*Turdus merula*), European robins (*Erithacus rubecula*), and chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*), were the man's business. The Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*, Appendix II) were the woman's business. The man faces a fine of 774 € (US\$920) and the woman 15,000 € (17,880 US\$).

Occhio alla Notizia, December 27, 2020.⁴⁸

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

Mid-October 2020

Bendigo, State of Victoria, Australia

Thanks to the Crime Stoppers 1800-333-000 hotline, police had discovered 21 Murray river turtles (*Emydura macquarii*) at a resident's house in May 2019. The man had captured 10 turtles in Boort and unearthed 10 eggs in Mandurang. He is allegedly involved in breeding for commercial purposes. He has just been sanctioned with a 12-month good behaviour bond. And then, could he do it again? Murray river turtles on the pet market are sold for several hundred dollars. The trafficker was punishable by a fine of 40,000 AU\$, or about 28,000 US\$, and a prison sentence of up to 2 years.

Riverine Herald, October 30, 2020; Bendigo Advertiser, October 16, 2020.⁴⁹



AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

November 4, 2020

Boksburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Seizure at the home of a SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) volunteer of a 4-metre long yellow anaconda (*Eunectes notaeus*, Appendix II) that had been rotting for a long time in a tank full of excrement at the back of a garden shed. Also seized were 20 rabbits whose sole purpose was to feed the anaconda. Feeding a captive predator with live prey is illegal, according to the SPCA statement. "The terror that the small animals suffer when they are thrown into the snake's enclosure with no possibility to escape is cruel and unnecessary." The rescue of the large snake and small rodents was carried out in the presence of police forces who were called in as back-up. The owner of the premises was violent. Boksburg SPCA, November 5, 2020.¹



CAMEROON

December 4, 2020

Douala International Airport, Littoral Region, Cameroon

Seizure of 80 cobras (family Elapidae) and vipers (family Viperidae). Arrest of one Cameroonian national and one Angolan. They were about to travel to London on an Air France flight via Paris. They were holding forged export certificates to justify the amazing content of the 2 wooden boxes. The snakes were stuffed into holed bottles or plastic bags. The boxes were marked with the handwritten inscription "Venomous".

Le Bled Parle, December 4, 2020; Newsweek, December 8, 2020.²



KENYA

December 14, 2020

Meru National Park, Meru County, Kenya

A young 30 cm-long African rock python (*Python sebae*, Appendix II) had taken refuge in a cupboard in the offices of the Chief Warden of Meru National park. Thanks to the intervention of the vets, it was grabbed with all the usual precautions and transported several kilometres away from the rangers' residential area. SWT/KWS Meru Mobile Veterinary Unit, December 2020.³



NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

November 2020

Springville, State of Utah, United States of America

A family man is charged with capture, transport and trade in protected species. In his home were seized a sidewinder (*Crotalus cerastes*), a western diamond-backed rattlesnake (*Crotalus atrox*) and a black-tailed rattlesnake (*Crotalus molossus*). The specimens were poached in Arizona. Private possession of venomous snakes is prohibited in Utah.

Deseret News, December 30, 2020.⁴

December 13, 2020

Lehigh Acres, State of Florida, United States of America

Seizure in town of a straying boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor imperator*, Appendix II), one of those abandoned or runaway pets. Three meter-long, 27 kg, capable of swallowing a bobcat, the species is exotic. It barely avoided death penalty. It was handed over to a local zoo.

WINK News, December 16, 2020.⁵

LATIN AMERICA

BRAZIL

December 1st, 2020

Marília, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure under search warrant of an approximately 10 year-old albino python (*Pythonidae*, Appendix I or II) of Asian origin. Fine of 2,200 reais or 410 US\$.

G1, December 1st, 2020.⁶



December 7, 2020

Sobradinho, Federal District, Brazil

The Krambeck case has left its mark (see "On the Trail" n°30 p. 135). Two corn snakes (*Pantherophis guttatus*), considered as an invasive species in Brazil, were seized from a student. She said she had bought them via Facebook for 250 reais each (45 US\$). They were allegedly delivered by mail. The young woman claims to be a shaman and that the snakes are her "power animals". Frozen rats and hashish were also seized from the university accommodation. G1, 7 December 2020; Olhar Animal, December 11, 2020.⁷

facebook

November 23, 2020

Lavrinhas, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Invasive snails too



Seizure of 800 giant African land snails (*Lissachatina fulica*), a hyper-invasive species whose breeding and marketing are prohibited by the Ibama (Instituto brasileiro do meio ambiente e dos recursos naturais renováveis). The driver said he bought them in Santo André, State of São Paulo. He wanted to deliver them to Rio de Janeiro where, according to him, they would have been used in healing rituals inspired by African practices. He was fined 2,000 reais (345 US\$) plus 200 reais per snail, i.e. 162,000 reais and 28,000 US\$, pending trial. He left free after signing a payment plan. In the Caribbean, particularly in Guadeloupe and Martinique, giant African land snails are considered as vectors of a nematode responsible for meningoencephalitis. G1, November 24, 2020.⁸

COLOMBIA

Early November 2020

Medellín, Department of Antioquia, Colombia

The 3 boas constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix I or II) were declared as "spare parts for motorbikes". They were awaiting their next adventure in a crate from the Department of Bolivar. They were to be delivered to a warehouse. Their release brings to 54 the number of boas seized in and around Medellín. Noticias Telemedellín, November 9, 2020.⁹

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

Early October 2020

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of an erhu from Taiwan. The skin of the sound box is python skin (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II).

Erhu, cf. "On the Trail" n°10 p. 18, n°12 p. 23, n°24 p. 25, n°25 p. 29 and p. 112. Chinese Customs, October 13, 2020.¹⁰

October 23, 2020

Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China



Seizure of 148 python skins (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II) in several parcels. Chinese Customs, October 23, 2020.¹¹

December 2020

Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China



Seizure of 3 erhus, with python skin (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II). Chinese Customs, December 26, 2020.¹²

SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

PHILIPPINES

Early October 2020

Ninoy-Aquino International Airport, Manila, National Capital Region, Philippines

Seizure of a live reticulated python (*Python reticulatus*, Appendix II) declared as a "wicker basket". Indeed, when the customs officers opened the parcel, the python was locked in the basket. It was about to fly to New York. Manila Bulletin, October 11, 2020.¹³

On the Trail n°31. Robin des Bois

VIET NAM

December 26, 2020

Dong Nai Province, Viet Nam

The 31-year-old man was delivering a 21-kg king cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II) to Vinh Tan market and had received 200,000 dong or 9 US\$ to travel 15 km.

TienphongNews, January 14, 2021.¹⁴

SOUTHERN ASIA

BANGLADESH

November 25, 2020

Kaliakoir, Gazipur District, Dhaka Division, Bangladesh



Seizure of 6 jars of presumed cobra venom from Mamun Talukder and Md Mamun. Kaliakoir is 170 km away from the border with the Indian West Bengal. The value of the seizure is estimated to be around 1 million US\$ if the cobra origin is confirmed. The jars are marked "Snake poison of France" and look like the jars of presumed cobra venom seized in India. In the same district, presumed cobra venom was seized on November 17.

The Daily Star, November 27, 2020.¹⁵

December 24, 2020

Dakshinkhan, Dhaka District, Dhaka Division, Bangladesh



Seizure of 8.96 liters of presumed snake venom. The 4 men and 2 women, aged 24 to 57 years, intercepted by the Rapid Action Battalion say "that they used to collect the venom from different areas to supply to a specific ring".

The Daily Star, December 25, 2020; Daily Sun (Bangladesh), December 25, 2020, The Independent, December 25, 2020.¹⁶

INDIA

October 1st, 2020

Aurangabad, Aurangabad District, State of Maharashtra, India

Seizure of a sand boa (*Eryx* spp., Appendix II) and arrest of the 2 holders aged 30 and 36.

The Times of India, October 2, 2020.¹⁷

October 1st, 2020

Kotrepalle, Chittoor District, State of Andhra Pradesh, India

A 3.35 m long Indian python (*Python molurus molurus*, Appendix I) was stoned to death by shepherds alerted by hissing noises in the thicket. The victim was suspected of approaching a herd of goats.

The Hindu, October 1st, 2020.¹⁸

October 11, 2020

Hiwarkhed, Amravati District, State of Maharashtra, India

There were 9 dealing the two-headed snake (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II). Seven fled in the dark. Two are in police custody. They are aged between 22 and 28. Three motorbikes were seized. List of rumours and uses besetting sand boas: they bring good luck, they guarantee financial prosperity, they are tortured in black magic practices, they secrete an anti-ageing substance, they are used in the composition of cosmetics and medicines.

The Times of India, October 12, 2020.¹⁹

October 19, 2020

Ambernath, Thane District, State of Maharashtra, India

Capture of an Indian sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) weighing 2.2 kg for a length of 1.21 m in a housing estate. In the middle of the night, frightened residents called a specialist rescuer. Prakash Gohil said that it was the first time in his career that he had captured an individual of this species. It was handed over to forest officials.

Hindustan Times, October 21, 2020.²⁰

October 21, 2020

Tirumalagiri, Krishna District, State of Andhra Pradesh, India

A 3 m long Indian python (*Python molurus molurus*, Appendix I) was decapitated by local people. It had just swallowed a kid. The lynch mob then cut open the python's stomach to release the kid. In the end, both animals died. In a short period of time, the services received 9 calls about Indian pythons. In this period of rain and floods, they were washed down the Krishna River.

The Times of India, October 22, 2020.²¹

October 27, 2020

Katraj, Pune District, State of Maharashtra, India

A 28-year-old man was carrying in a bag an Indian sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) worth 1,500,000 rupees on the black market or about 20,000 US\$. He said he had “found” it in the wild.

The Indian Express, October 28, 2020.²²

October 28, 2020

Siddalingapura, Mysore District, State of Karnataka, India

The gang of five was arrested on the highway in a rented car coming from Bangalore by a flying squad. They were carrying a 0.91 m long sand boa (*Eryx* spp., Appendix II), known as a two-headed boa - the tail looks like the head - worth one million rupees or about 13,500 US\$. They said they “found” it crossing the road in the countryside.

The Times of India, October 31, 2020; Deccan Herald, October 29, 2020.²³

October 28, 2020

Pune, Pune District, State of Maharashtra, India

The 2 “manduls” (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) were in Vikas Fadtare’s bag. He was about to sell them. Police officers, who have a good knowledge about sand boa trafficking, said that real estate businessmen, astrologers, traders and celebrities purchase these snakes as they believe that it brings good luck.

Mid-Day, October 30, 2020.²⁴

November 4, 2020

Dakhin Shibpur, North 24 Parganas District, State of West Bengal, India

Seizure of 31 live monocled cobras (*Naja kaouthia*, Appendix II) by the local forest department. Arrest of the seller Nirapada Mondal and the buyer Chattu Chitrakar. The cobras were captured in the Sundarbans. Poached cobras feed the illegal venom trade which is active in India and spreading to Bangladesh.

Outlook India, November 4, 2020.²⁵

November 6, 2020

Basti, Basti District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

At 10.15 a.m., forest officers and the WCCB acting on a tip broke into a hotel room, seized a 2.6 kg Indian sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) and arrested the 2 traffickers. Investigators say sand boas are being smuggled into China and Malaysia

WCCB, November 10, 2020; Dainik Jagran, November 6, 2020.²⁶

November 13, 2020

Balrampur District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

At around 11.50 p.m. paramilitaries of the 9th Battalion of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) came across 2 individuals trying to enter Nepal with an Indian sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II). They were handed over with the reptile to the Tulsipur forest post.

Sashastra Seema Bal, November 13, 2020.²⁷

December 3, 2020

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



Seizure of snake venom crystals (real or fake) in a jar of the famous and mysterious Red Dragon Company that always boasts about the “Made in France” on its chaotically spelled labels (see “On the Trail” n°3 p.15-16, n°4 p.23, n°5 p. 22, n°9 p.17, n°10 p.19, n°14 p.22, n°18 p.23, n°19 p.26 and n°24 p.25 and 26). This time, it was in a new town specializing in digital technologies, in the Kolkata Metropolitan Area, that the WCCB federals and West Bengal police carried out the catch. Three arrests. The psychotropic crystals were intended for the city’s trendy and wealthy youth.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, December 7, 2020.²⁸

December 7, 2020

Rampur Dhobiahaar, Bahraich District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India

It is truly endangered but is not dangerous. Seizure of an Indian sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II). Three arrests.

Outlook India, December 8, 2020.²⁹

December 20, 2020

Dhankawadi, Pune District, State of Maharashtra, India

Following a confidential tip, the motorbike of Saurabh Jadhav (21 years old) was intercepted at around 10 p.m. In a bag, there was a 0.9 m long sand boa (*Eryx* spp., Appendix II) weighing 2 kg. He intended to sell it for 900,000 rupees or about 12,000 US\$. Chavan, an accomplice, was later arrested after Jadhav confessed.

Hindustan Times, December 24, 2020.³⁰

December 24, 2020

Srirampura, Mysuru District, State of Karnataka, India

Seizure of a sand boa (*Eryx* spp., Appendix II). Four arrests.

Deccan Herald, December 24, 2020.³¹

SRI LANKA

October 24, 2020

Dutuwewa, North Central Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of a 3.30m long albino Asiatic rock python (*Python molurus*, Appendix II) from the hands of a villager who had caught it on an agricultural slash-and-burn site and was trying to sell it. "This is the first



time that an albino python has been found in Sri Lanka," said Dr Tharaka Prasad, Chief Veterinary Officer at the Sri Lanka Department of Wildlife. "There is a high demand for rare animals like this python," he adds. White with honey-coloured spots, the snake bore some superficial wounds. It was put under observation. Everything is fine after some treatment. The plan was to hand it over to the Dehiwala zoo near Colombo, but the All Ceylon Wildlife Officers' Association opposed this option. In 2016, 300 animals died there due to lack of care, and several were missing from the official inventory. Housing the python on the Department of Wildlife's premises any longer was out of the question. After a week of discussions, it was released in the "best possible environment". The location is kept secret. TeamWildFreaks, October 24, 2020; Daily Mirror, October 25, 2020; Zenger, November 6, 2020.³²

EUROPE

SPAIN

November 23, 2020

Madrid, Community of Madrid, Spain

Rescue of a boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II) by the specialised unit of the municipal police. The boa had got away through a window of the house where it was kept. The Madrid City Council reminds us that the possession of a boa is subject to authorisation and that the terrariums must be of "considerable" height, given that the species is arboreal.

La Vanguardia, November 23, 2020.³³

ITALY

December 21, 2020

Catania, Metropolitan City of Catania, Region of Sicily, Italy

In the historic heart of the city, a spectacular snake is trying to get out of a manhole cover behind which it was trapped. The extraction is not easy despite the joint response of the CITES carabinieri, the fire brigade, the sanitary agency vets and the naturalists of the Pro Natura federation. It was a 1.5-metre long royal python (*Python regius*, Appendix II), used to human handling, abandoned or escaped.

Corriere Etneo, December 21, 2020.³⁴

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

November 12, 2020

Ballarat, State of Victoria, Australia



Under a search warrant, a 2.75-metre-long Burmese python (*Python bivittatus*, Appendix II) was removed from a house where it was held captive and transferred to a veterinary surgery where it was killed. The species is exotic and banned from Australia. The unfortunate animal had been smuggled in from Asia.

9News, November 13, 2020.³⁵

GECKOS, CAMELEONS, SKINKS AND VARANS

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

October 2020

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure in a passenger's luggage of dried tokay geckos (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II), 585 g in 12 bags. Chinese Customs, October 26, 2020.¹

October 30, 2020

Weishan Yi and Hui Autonomous County, Yunnan Province, China

An advertisement on Baidu Post offering veiled chameleons (*Chamaeleo calyptratus*, Appendix II) is detected by the police, who intervene at the home of a certain Fang and discovers 35 specimens. Fang explains that he bought a pair online in July 2019 for 100 US\$. The seizure is believed to be from their offspring.

Weishan Attorney, March 29, 2021.²

SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

INDONESIA

October 25, 2020

Rinca Island, West Mangarrai Regency, Province of the Lesser Sunda Islands, Indonesia

Described as a "Jurassic Park" by its private promoters and a "flagship of ecotourism" by the government, the project to park some sixty Komodo monitors (*Varanus komodoensis*, Appendix I) in a 500-hectare enclosure has raised protests from NGOs in the province and from the Indonesian Forum for the Environment. UNESCO is also concerned about the environmental threats that the project could pose to the Komodo National park, a World Heritage Site. The island covers 200 km². In the absence of an impact study with regard the clearing and leveling work, we have to be satisfied with the official description according to which a lookout will allow thousands of international visitors to contemplate the Komodo dragons every day without getting close to them. Next to the lookout, the guard checkpoint, an information center, hotels, restaurants and stores would be built. The island is currently home to about 1,300 specimens, according to the province's spokesman. A few years ago, brochures from the tourist office mentioned a population of 2,000 individuals. If Komodo monitors are decreasing, the human population is on the contrary galloping: 250 in 1930, more than 1,000 today. ...

... On hikes, Indonesia-Tourism recommends not to bring snacks and other foods that can be easily detected by the reptiles. They also have a talent for identifying the smell of blood from a distance and it is also strongly recommended that women during their menstrual period do not frequent the routes of giant monitor lizards. This measure aims to avoid the fright of visitors and the habituation of Komodo monitor to human presence. In fact, the species that has long been called a land crocodile is not dangerous. In zoos, it would show a surprising docility towards the guards and the spectators. The Komodo monitor is one of the top-of-the-range pets (see "On the Trail" n°4 p.47, n°11 p.17, n°15 p.24, n°22 p.33, n°24 p.90 and n°26 p.109). The Indonesian Minister of Environment and Forestry uses the pretext of this peaceful cohabitation between the human species and the Komodo lizards to affirm that the park of Komodos will not be destructive. On the 60 and some land dragons that will be confined, about 15 already regularly come into contact with the guards and their living quarters.

In fact, the "Jurassic Park" is similar to a zoo for Komodo monitors. The captives will be entirely dependent on the caretakers for their food. In his natural habitat, his favorite preys are marcas and deer.

The construction work continues to progress. According to official sources, the completion of the "Jurassic Park" before the year 2023 could be an additional argument for Indonesia to host the Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit and the G20 summit.

As a reminder, a Komodo monitor was stolen in France from a reptile farm in 2015 (see "On the Trail" n°11 p.17). His price on the black market is 10,000 to 20,000 € or 12,000 to 24,000 US\$.

The Jakarta Post, October 27, 28 and 29, 2020; Reuters, August 5, 2021.³



The construction work is progressing. The concrete reinforcing bars arrive. The truck gets stuck. The workers are not reassured. The Komodo monitor, 2 meters long and weighing 70 kg on average, passes by.

VIET NAM

Binh Thuan Province, Viet Nam

Seizure in a restaurant of a jar of tokay gecko wine (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II). ENV, November 29, 2020.⁴



Illustration photo

SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

October 19, 2020

Mahamayhat, Dhubri District, State of Assam, India

Arrest of 2 individuals holding 2 live tokay geckos (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II). Forest Department and Police operation led by WCCB. WCCB, October 21, 2020.⁵

October 30, 2020

Jashodanga, Alipurduar District, State of West Bengal, India

Seizure by the police of 2 tokay geckos (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II) in the village bazaar. Outlook India, October 31, 2020.⁶

November 5, 2020

Tenkibasti, Udalguri District, State of Assam, India

Seizure by the 37th Battalion of the SSB of a tokay gecko (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II), 36 cm long, 500 grams. The local press recalls that the rumour that gecko-based food preparations cure or prevent AIDS is unfounded. Northeast Now, November 7, 2020.⁷

November 18, 2020

Paharpur, Baksa District, State of Assam, India

Seizure of 2 tokay geckos (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II) by a joint patrol of the Forest Department and the 64th Battalion of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB). Sashastra Seema Bal, November 18, 2020.⁸

December 19, 2020

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

A person is apprehended in possession of a tokay gecko (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II) by an SSB patrol in the border area with Bhutan. The individual and the animal were handed over to the Forest Department. Sashastra Seema Bal, December 19, 2020.⁹

December 25, 2020

Kultali, South 24 Parganas District, State of West Bengal, India

Seizure of 10 tokay geckos (*Gekko gecko*, Appendix II), 9 alive and one dead. Four men aged between 30 and 35 were trading in them. "They were going to sell the dead one, too," said a forest official. The Telegraph India, December 26, 2020.¹⁰

EUROPE

FRANCE

End of November 2020

Boulogne-sur-Mer, Department of Pas-de-Calais, France



Justice in France continues to blink at wildlife trafficking. One day it sees, the next it does not. An "enthusiast" was breeding 31 geckos without a competency certificate.

He was acquitted despite the negative testimony of an agent of the French Office of Biodiversity. The hypothesis of commercial trafficking was not evoked. In India, Bangladesh and Viet Nam, the police and the courts are tougher when it comes to geckos.

La Voix du Nord, November 27, 2020.¹¹

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

October 5, 2020

Melbourne, State of Victoria, Australia

Appearance of Sai Kit Cheng, resident in Melbourne.



During the search of his home and car in March 2019, 500,000 AU\$ or 356,000 US\$ in cash was seized. According to the investigation file, Cheng during 2018 shipped 13 blue-tongued skinks (genus *Tiliqua*) including shingleback lizards (*Tiliqua rugosa*) caught in New South Wales and shipped in socks, cereal and crisp boxes to

Hong Kong. Cheng, 34, had secured the complicity of Gideon Luong, 23, to prepare and ship his precious and cruel wildlife parcels.

PerthNow, October 5, 2020; The Australian, January 12, 2021; Herald Sun, August 12, 2020; Crime Watch Victoria, September 21, 2020.¹²

CROCODILES AND ALLIGATORS

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

December 6, 2020

Roedtan, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Seizure during a road check of 21 eggs and 3 complete skins of Nile crocodiles (*Crocodylus niloticus*, Appendix II).

SAPS, December 7, 2020.¹

UGANDA

End of December 2020

Buvuma Islands Archipelago, North of Lake Victoria, Central Region, Uganda

A sordid trafficking operation was uncovered. Two "foreigners" whose identity has not been disclosed for the purposes of the investigation were buying the genitals of Nile crocodiles (*Crocodylus niloticus*, Appendix II in Uganda) from local communities for between 1,000 and 1,350 US\$ (depending on size). They are used as a sex booster. The Criminal Investigations Directorate has been investigating this testicle trade since May. Leaders of the archipelago are believed to be involved.

Unconfirmed reports say that these "foreigners" work at the Mukono steel mill. This steel mill is a subsidiary of the Chinese steel group Tian Tang Group.

New Vision, December 29, 2020.²

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

End of October 2020

Lake Télé Community Reserve, Department of Likouala, Republic of the Congo



Seizure of 30 African dwarf crocodiles (*Osteolaemus tetraspis*, Appendix I) in bags, legs and snouts tied with vines, on the rear of 2 motorbikes heading to Impfondo. The ecoguards of Lake Télé released them. The species is subject to a high intensity trade. Purchased for around 2 US\$ from a poacher, an individual is resold for around

30 US\$ on the markets of Ouessou, Pokola or Brazzaville. Swamp crocodiles are easy to catch because of their small size, 1.5 metre long, by imitating the call of a juvenile or by dazzling them if poaching is done at night. Around 600 specimens are believed to be captured alive each month. Transporting them is all the more easier as they can survive out of the water without eating before being killed and butchered on the wet market.

WCS Congo, December 4, 2020.³

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Early October 2020

Avoyelles Parish, State of Louisiana, United States of America

Four men aged between 21 and 73 years old poached 6 American alligators (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) in the Great Lake Rod. They were sentenced to damages ranging from 375 to 1,127 US\$.

KALB News Channel 5, October 9, 2020.⁴



LATIN AMERICA

BRAZIL

Early November 2020

Três Lagoas, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil

Two men aged 20 and 27 are fined 10,000 reais (1700 US\$) for skinning a broad-nosed caiman (*Caiman latirostris*, Appendix I) and tanning its skin. They claim to have run over it on the M30 road and, while they were at it, to have picked up the body to keep its skin as a souvenir.

RCN 67, November 5, 2020.⁵



COLOMBIA

Mid-October 2020

Bogotá, Department of Cundinamarca, Colombia

Seizure in the popular and commercial neighbourhood of Restrepo of 390 wildlife items, wallets, boots, belts, most of which from American crocodiles (*Crocodylus acutus*, Appendix II).

Noticias Caracol, October 16, 2020.⁶

ASIA

CHINA

November 2020

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

There were indeed 2 pairs of leather shoes as stated in the accompanying document in the postal parcel from Hong Kong but it was crocodile leather (*Crocodylus* spp., Appendix I or II). The 2 pairs were seized.

Chinanews, November 20, 2020.⁷



Marsh Crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*)

INDIA

November 24, 2020

Satkosia Gorge Sanctuary, Angul District, State of Odisha, India



The dead mugger crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*, Appendix I) was extracted with the greatest efforts from the gorge in the Mahanadi River. It is a collateral victim of blast fishing. The sanctuary hosts about 100 crocodiles and 8 gharials. Since the macabre discovery, surveillance patrols have been strengthened.

The Pioneer, November 24, 2020.⁸



MALAYSIA

November 10 and 14, 2020

Limbang, State of Sarawak, Malaysia

The 5 metre long, 500 kg salt-water "croc" (*Crocodylus porosus*, Appendix II in Malaysia) was crawling through an open sewer at midnight. It had a gunshot wound to the head and was dying. It was finished off, picked up by a forklift and buried in a nature sanctuary near the village of Kubong. A man, 2 days after the sinister event, handed himself in to the police station. He said he shot it in self-defence.

The Star, November 12 and 14, 2020.⁹

EUROPE

GERMANY

October 19, 2020

Speyer, Rhineland-Palatinate State, Germany

Seizure of an anti-Covid mask made of crocodile skin (*Crocodylidae*, Appendix I or II) in a parcel from the United States going to Berlin. The species is being identified. Brian Wood, director of All American Gator Products in Dania Beach, Florida, and of an invasive reptile eradication company, ...

... began as early as April 2020 designing, manufacturing and marketing anti-Covid masks made from python ("a 3-metre long snake could potentially yield as many as 10 masks"), iguana and alligator skin (120 US\$), "the diamond of leathers". Prices range from 90 to 120 US\$. It was inevitable, as "On the Trail" said in n°29 p.132, that these masks would cross the Atlantic and find buyers among fans of Hermès, Gucci and Prada.

German Customs, October 19, 2020; FOX 10, April 21, 2020; NBC 6 South Florida, April 19, 2020; CBS4 Miami, April 20, 2020; The News Tribune, April 9, 2020.¹⁰

NORWAY

OPERATION THUNDER

**Between September 14 and October 11, 2020
Oslo-Gardermoen Airport, Østlandet Region, Norway**

Seizure of 26 crocodile skin belts (*Crocodylidae*, Appendix I or II).

TV 2, December 17, 2020.¹¹

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

November 2020

Lambells Lagoon, Northern Territory, Australia

In association with the French brand Hermès, Mick Burns, a pioneer in crocodile farming, bought the Sweet Life farm, which specialises in the industrial cultivation of melons and bananas, for 5 million US\$. The developers want to replace the cultivation of fruit by a salt-water crocodile farm (*Crocodylus porosus*, Appendix II). The business plan speaks of 4,000 crocodiles after 2 years of operation and 50,000 after 5 years. The Sweet Life farm, croco era, would be co-supplied with energy by a solar farm equipped with an egg incubator upstream, consisting of grower and finishing pens and cold rooms for the crocodile feed and for the crocodile meat after slaughter. The investment required would amount to 40 million AU\$ or 28 million US\$. ABC News, November 9, 2020.¹²

FROGS AND NEWTS



Cynops ensicauda ssp. Popei

AMERICA

CANADA

October and November 2020
Longueuil and La Prairie, Province of
Quebec, Canada



Frogs croak and brushcutters cough up. Débroussaillage Québec and Forestière des Amériques Inc. were each fined 20,000 CA\$ (15,000 US\$) for clearing without authorization habitat for the western chorus frog (*Pseudacris triseriata*), a species whose historical range has been reduced by 90 % between 1993 and today. The Ministry of the Environment is preparing to file a complaint against promoter-developer Shathony for partially filling in a heritage wetland in the City of Longueuil. The City of Longueuil has already fined Shathony 2,500 CA\$ and required that the land owned by Shathony, which was home to western chorus frogs, be restored to its original state.



Western chorus frog
(Pseudacris triseriata)

FM 103,3, December 3, 2020; Le Journal de Montréal, December 24, 2020; Le Droit, November 3, 2020.¹

ASIA

CHINA

December 1st, 2020
Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of 50 “horned” frogs (genus *Ceratophrys*) in postal parcels “from abroad”. Chinese Customs, December 3, 2020.²



JAPAN

November 2020
Japan

The Internet is a vast aquarium. On Yafuoku (Yahoo! Auction), 100 Japanese fire belly newts (*Cynops pyrrhogaster*) were sold each year in 2014 and 2015. In 2019, 5,000 were sold, and with Covida there is no reason for the market to collapse, on the contrary. On the basis of 10,000 yens or 95 US\$ per specimen, the annual business is 475,000 US\$. The Japanese fire belly newt is among the endangered species in Chiba Prefecture. Of the 20,000 specimens sold from Yafuoku between 2011 and 2019, 2,423 came from Chiba. Sword-tailed newts (*Cynops ensicauda*) are subject to the same surge in sales and theft from ponds. They are threatened with extinction throughout Japan. Salamander and amphibian specialist Shigeharu Terui has just published the results of his dive in the Yafuoku site in the scientific journal Caudata. The Asahi Shimbun, November 3, 2020.³

BUTTERFLIES, ANTS, BEETLES, PRAYING MANTISES, TARANTULAS...

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Week of November 16, 2020

Port of Cincinnati, State of Ohio, United States of America

The parcel came from Barcelona. The “toys” were indeed toys, but inside were plastic cases full of praying mantises (order Mantodea). Their international trafficking is on the rise. Eggs and larvae hidden in Xbox controllers and gaming mice were recently seized in Louisville, Kentucky, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Cincinnati Enquirer, November 25, 2020.¹

ASIA

CHINA

October 29, 2020

Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China



Seizure of 50 live spiders in a postal parcel “sent from abroad” and declared as containing “test tubes”. Chinese Customs, November 5, 2020.²

Early November 2020

Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 18 Hercules beetles (*Dynastes hercules*) in 5 imported parcels and declared as containing “plastic toys”. The Hercules beetle is endemic to Central and South America.

Chinese Customs, November 4, 2020.³

November 2020

Yuhuatai District, Jiangsu Province, China

Appearance of Kai in court for tarantula trafficking. Kai became interested in tarantulas at a very young age. He had bought a dozen of them, Gooty ornamental tarantulas (*Poecilotheria metallica*, Appendix II), Indian ornamental tarantulas (*Poecilotheria regalis*, Appendix II) and orange baboon tarantulas (*Pterinochilus murinus*) on websites like Idle Fish and Taobao. He had little experience in breeding and lost specimens. Kai progresses and soon becomes a pro at breeding tarantulas. He resells the surviving specimens and bought new ones. At the peak of his business, Kai has 40-50 tarantulas of 20-30 different species in his possession. At the end of 2019, he learns that tarantulas are protected animals and that he is not allowed to buy or sell them. At that time, he still has 6 species of tarantulas in his hands. In April 2020, sensing a change in the wind, he sells 2 Gooty ornamental tarantulas and a Mexican flameknee tarantula (*Brachypelma auratum*, Appendix II). On June 22, 2020, the police raid his home and 3 tarantulas, including 2 Indian ornamental tarantulas, were seized.

Yangtze Evening Post, November 12, 2020.⁴

November 17, 2020

Fuzhou, Fujian Province, China

Appearance of Lin for offering a juvenile Gooty ornamental tarantula (*Poecilotheria metallica*, Appendix II) for sale on the Internet. In addition to the acknowledgement of his criminal liability, the public prosecutor is requiring a public apology in the national media and community work in environmental protection. Lin pleads guilty.

Gulou Attorney, November 25, 2020.⁵

November 23, 2020

Taiyuan, Shanxi Province, China

Sentencing of Li to 8 months in prison and a fine of 300 US\$ for buying 20 Mexican fireleg tarantulas (*Brachypelma boehmei*, Appendix II) in June 2019 via WeChat for 0.58 US\$ each and reselling 10 of them via the Internet 4 months later for 5 US\$ each. His biggest customer was a pet shop. At Li’s home, the investigators found 14 Mexican redknee tarantulas (*Brachypelma smithi*, Appendix II) and 4 golden red rump tarantulas (*Aphonopelma albiceps*, Appendix II).

Taiyuan Daily, November 25, 2020.⁶



November-December 2020

Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province and Changsha, Hunan Province, China

- Seizure of 67 beetles in an inbound postal parcel.



- Seizure of a live Hercules beetle (*Dynastes hercules*) in an inbound postal parcel.



- Seizure of 5 beetle larvae in a parcel from abroad declared as containing "pyjamas".



- Seizure of 4 stag beetles (2 *Dorcus grandis* and 2 genus *Prosopocoilus*, one male and one female respectively) in postal parcels from abroad.



Chinese Customs, November 10 and 28, December 1st and 30, 2020.⁷

November-December 2020

Shanghai Pudong International Airport, Pudong District, Shanghai Autonomous Municipality; Changsha, Hunan Province; Wuhan, Hubei Province; Zhengzhou and Zhengzhou Xinzheng International Airport, Henan Province and Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

- Seizure of 5 test tubes containing ant eggs and a 20 mm long live black ant in parcels from abroad.

- Seizure in a parcel from Turkey of 8 test tubes each containing a queen and nearly 100 ants.



- Seizure of a tambourine for kids containing 204 tubes, each hosting a live ant of approximately one centimetre long, in a parcel from abroad declared as containing "hand cream".



- Seizure of 400 plastic tubes, each containing a live ant about one centimetre long, in a parcel from abroad declared as containing "decorations".



- Seizure of 7 live ants in 4 test tubes in a parcel from abroad.

- Seizure of 70,000 live ants.

Chinese Customs, November 13, 17, 26, December 3, 21 and 30, 2020; Xinhua, November 19, 2020.⁸

December 17, 2020

Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure of 7 butterflies including *Morpho menelaus nestira*, *Morpho helena* and *Morpho menelaus* in parcels from abroad.

Chinese Customs, December 19, 2020.⁹



PHILIPPINES

October 28, 2020

Ninoy-Aquino International Airport,
Manila, National Capital Region,
Philippines



The Polish network has struck again. A certain Michal Krolicki shipped 119 live tarantulas threaded in plastic cases and stuffed into a pair of rubber shoes via DHL. The recipient lives in General Trias, about 30 km from Manila. The suspicious package was opened by customs at the DHL warehouse. BusinessMirror, October 30, 2020; CNN Philippines, October 30, 2020.¹⁰

November 20, 2020

Pasay, National Capital Region,
Philippines



"On the Trail" had recounted his apprehension which dates back to April 2019 (see "On the Trail" n°25 p.37). Camaro was the recipient of 757 Thailand black tarantulas (*Cyriopagopus minax*) shipped from Poland in ludicrous and cruel conditions. Jesse Camaro is sentenced to 6 months in prison and fined 30,000 pesos. The Philippines is setting an example for the European Union. If we are not mistaken, there is no judicial news of Wojciech Pakasz, the shipper and breeder of tarantulas in Poland. Tempo, December 10, 2020.¹¹

SINGAPORE

December 2, 2020

Singapore



Sentencing of Wong See Keong to 13,400 SG\$ or 10,000 US\$. On the night of March 5, 2020, 3 tarantulas, including a Mexican fireleg tarantula (*Brachypelma boehmei*, Appendix II), had been seized in his car at Woodlands checkpoint. He had bought them in Malaysia. The search of his flat a few hours later had resulted in the seizure of 2 green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*, Appendix II) and 7 other tarantulas: an Indian ornamental tarantula (*Poecilotheria regalis*, Appendix II), a Chaco golden knee tarantula (*Grammostola pulchripes*), an ornamental baboon tarantula (*Heteroscodra maculata*), 2 Costa Rican tiger rump tarantulas (*Davus fasciatus*), 2 tarantulas of unspecified species. Channel News Asia, December 2, 2020.¹²



Costa Rican tiger rump tarantula
(*Davus fasciatus*)

EUROPE

FRANCE

November 5, 2020

Grillon, Department of Vaucluse, France

Panic in Grillon. A couple is locked-down home by Covid at the same time and place as a Spanish funnel-web spider (*Macrothele calpeiana*) of 8 to 9 cm in length. It was living in a corridor and no service claims to be qualified or available to come and capture it. It would have been imported from Andalusia in an olive tree by a nursery gardener. The species is protected. It is forbidden to kill it. After a pursuit of several hours, the mygale would have been "knocked out" and put in a plastic box with a lid.

Midi Libre, November 6, 2020; France Bleu Vaucluse, November 5, 2020.¹³

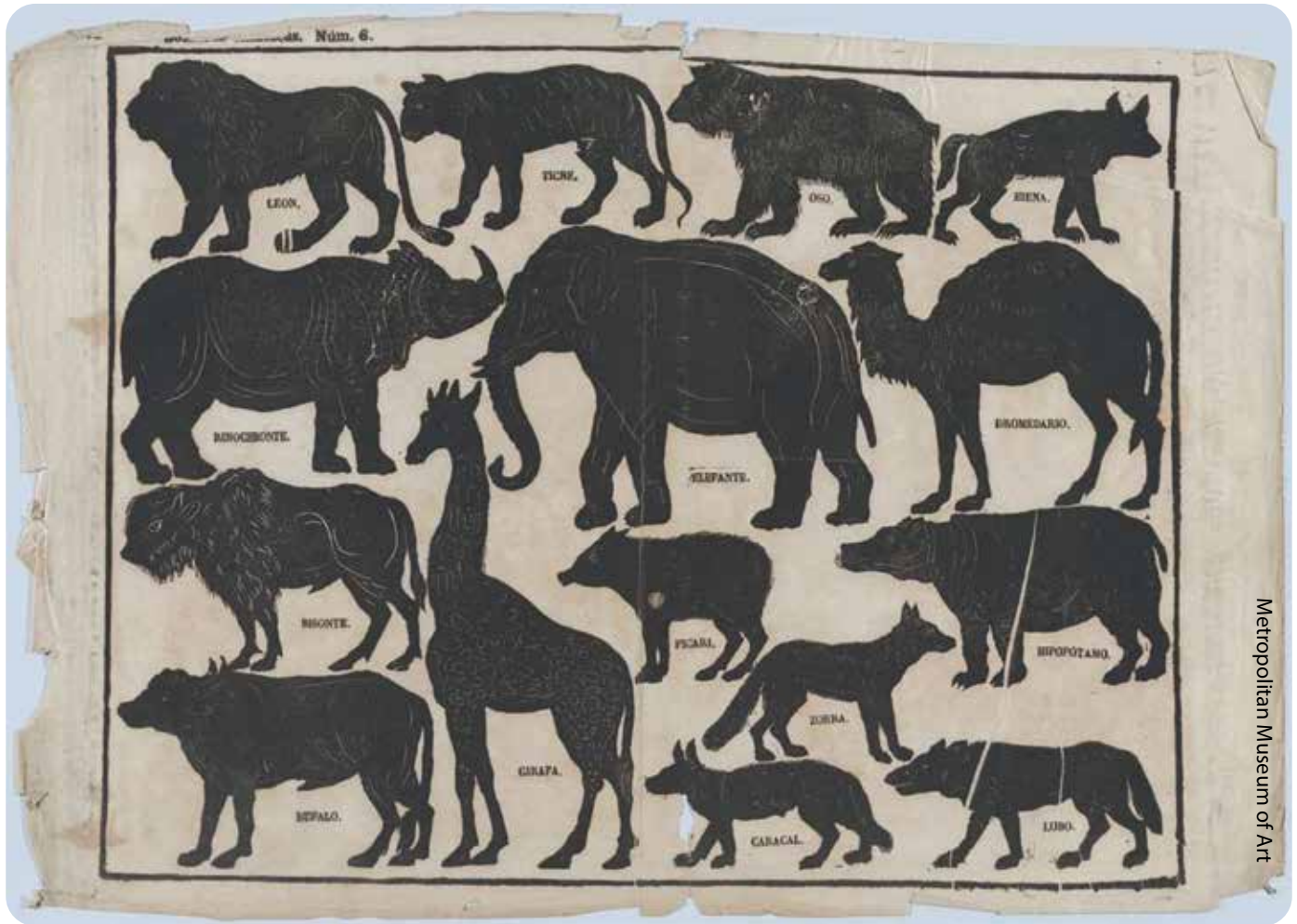
December 9, 2020

Agon-Coutainville, Department of Manche,
France



Seizure at a "passionate", a young person completely free of legal obligations, of 60 mygales belonging to 30 species and a matoutou cliff caribena, in vernacular language or Antilles pinktoe tarantula (*Avicularia versicolor*).

France Bleu Cotentin, January 6, 2021.¹⁴



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, felines, elephants, rhinoceros : see page 14
- elephants and rhinoceros: see page 42
- felines, elephants, rhinoceros : see page 50

WESTERN AFRICA

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

November 12, 2020

Taï National Park, Bas-Sassandra District, Côte d'Ivoire. Border with Guinea and Liberia

Taï National park covers 5360 km² of rainforest. It is subject to constant and increasing pressure from gold diggers, duiker (genus *Cephalophus*) and other monkeys poachers and illegal cocoa planters, according to the analysis of Lieutenant Colonel Abdoulaye Diarrassouba, director of the south-west zone of the Ivorian Office of Parks and Reserves. Abidjan.net, November 15, 2020.¹



GUINEA

December 15, 2020

N'Déré, Nzérékoré Region, Guinea. Near the border with Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia

Three Ivorians were hunting on a hide in the Guinean sector of the Nimba Range, where forests are subject to intense poaching on both the Ivorian and Guinean sides. The Nimba Range is home to everything from the smallest, the Nimba otter shrew (*Micropotamogale lamottei*), a semi-aquatic insectivore, to the largest one, the chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*, Appendix I). The 3 Ivorian poachers were carrying 2 guns and ammunition. As a sign of trust and cooperation in the reserve shared management, the Guinean authorities handed over the weapons to their Ivorian counterparts in a ceremony at the sub-prefecture of Bouan-Houye. The 3 poachers will be extradited in accordance with the treaty between the 2 countries and judged in Côte d'Ivoire.

GuinéeNews, December 24 and 28, 2020.²

Early October 2020

Coutada 11, Sofala Province, Mozambique

Confidentially tipped off, the Zambeze Delta Conservation and Anti-Poaching squad found and rendered harmless a dozen leghold traps.

Zambeze Delta Conservation and Anti-Poaching, October 5, 2020.⁴



EASTERN AFRICA

MOZAMBIQUE

October 2, 2020

Chimanimani National Park, Manica Province, Mozambique

Official opening of the new Chimanimani National park. It covers 2,300 km² and consists of a number of rivers with 164 species of fish and a wide variety of birds and butterflies along their banks. Elephants roamed the Chimanimani Mountains, dominated by Mount Binga, the highest mountain in Mozambique at 2436 metres. Chimanimani is part of the country's cultural heritage. Rock engravings are scattered throughout the mountain range. CGTN Africa, October 2, 2020.³



Early October 2020

Mecula District, Niassa Province, Mozambique

A Tanzanian national is in custody. He was detaining an AK47 and 40 pieces of ammunition. Seven accomplices fled. They left behind 3 bicycles, 2 mobile phones, food and cooking pots. Club of Mozambique, October 15, 2020.⁵

October 5, 2020

Niassa National Reserve, Niassa Province, Mozambique

Detection and seizure in one week of 427 traps, 207 for the Big five and 220 for antelopes and other medium-sized mammals, between Chamba and Milepa in the heart of the reserve. Sixty studded boards, also part of the arsenal, were seized.

Club of Mozambique, October 15, 2020; Reserva Especial do Niassa, October 6, 2020.⁶



TANZANIA

December 20, 2020

Dodoma, Dodoma Region, Tanzania

Meat from African buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*), gazelle (genus *Gazella*), zebra (genus *Equus*), antelope (Antilopinae) and common ostrich (*Struthio camelus*, Appendix I in Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Sudan) is available for 2 US\$/kg at Tanzania's first bushmeat butchery. It is well-situated. Tanzania's president, John Magufuli †, wanted his people to be able to benefit from the country's natural resources. The initiatives of the Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority (Tawa) aim to replace poaching with legal hunting. Tawa wants to help investors to set up their own private zoo with wild animals and later sell the meat. Tawa confuses zoo with breeding. "We are ready to supply you with mitamba [young animals] to start the ranches," Semfuko told guests at the opening of the butchery, the first in a chain that wants to expand throughout the country. Tawa wants to supervise the entire chain, from the bush to the stall. Slaughterhouses and butcherries should be monitored on a daily basis by veterinary and hygiene services and by experts in wildlife management. The director of Tawa says that the meat will come from licensed hunters, private zoos and the "leftovers" of sport hunting. A whole bushmeat economy is getting in order of battle. ...

... The skulls and skins of the animals might be retained by suppliers on condition that they have a license allowing them to hold trophies. President Magufuli † intended to bring the underground wild meat economy to the surface. 2,000 tonnes of bushmeat are seized each year across the country. Butchers will have to issue a ticket to each customer and be able to demonstrate the traceability of the meat at any time. Will these new-style butcher shops sell elephant, giraffe, hippo or rhinoceros meat some day?

Daily News, December 21, 2020; The East African, December 30, 2020.⁷

ZIMBABWE

November 9, 2020

Hwange, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe



Four poachers were sentenced to an 18-month prison term for killing 5 African buffaloes (*Syncerus caffer*) and 2 greater kudus (*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*). They are jointly and severally liable to pay 52,500 US\$ in damages to ZimParks. They were tracked on 28 km from their base camp to their village by a team from Bhejane Trust and Painted Dog Conservation. Pindula, November 9, 2020.⁸

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

October 1st, 2020

Beaufort West, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Search of a suspicious pick-up truck. Ammunition and then a rifle were found under the vehicle chassis. It was examined by ballistics experts to check whether it has not already been used in poaching cases. The driver was arrested, so were three accomplices in another car. They were charged with attempted poaching in conspiracy. The driver of the pick-up was also charged with active corruption. He tried to buy his release.

SAPS, October 1st, 2021.⁹



October 10-11, and December 6-7, 2020

Phalaborwa, Limpopo Province, South Africa



Removal of 172 traps from the ground or from the trees and discovery of several carcasses of waterbucks (*Kobus ellipsiprymnus*), impalas (*Aepyceros melampus*), steenboks (*Raphicerus campestris*), black-backed jackal (*Canis mesomelas*), African buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*) and zebra (genus *Equus*) during joint operations coordinated by the Phalaborwa Natural Heritage Foundation.

Phalaborwa Natural Heritage Foundation, October 12 and 19, and December 7, 2020.¹⁰



November 14, 2020

Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Rescue of a boa (Boidae, Appendix I or II), parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), a red-eared slider turtle (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) and hundreds of hamsters, chinchillas and guinea pigs from a house haunted by stench and unsanitary conditions. The survivors were transferred to the SPCA shelter in Randburg.

SPCA Randburg, November 16, 2020.¹¹

December 19 and 20, 2020

Hoedspruit, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Crime is on the rise in all directions as it always is in December in the approach of the end-of-year festivities. In the midst of sex crimes, blood crimes, hostage-taking, armed robberies and hit-and-runs between 17 and 20 December, 6 individuals were caught at the entrance gate or inside hunting reserves with weapons in their hands, silencers, binoculars, knives, ammunition and food in bags.

SAPS, December 21, 2020.¹²

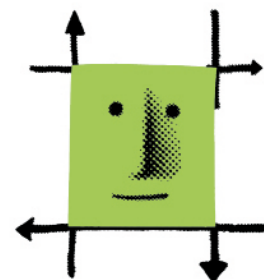
NAMIBIA

November 8 and 12, 2020

Near Kalkfeld, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia



Joel Oxurub, an employee of NamPower, was responsible for checking the condition of the power lines, but he had an additional job and an additional source of income. In the back of his executive pick-up truck, a police patrol discovered the carcasses of an impala (*Aepyceros melampus*) and 2 common warthogs (*Phacochoerus africanus*). This was on November 8, and on November 12 he was sentenced to a fine equal to 365 US\$ or in case of non-payment, 5 months in prison. The Namibian, November 13, 2020; Namibian Sun, November 19, 2020.¹³



ROBIN DES BOIS



FONDATION
**FRANZ
WEBER**

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

October 13, 2020

Lane County, State of Oregon, United States of America

Since Covida, there has been a poaching frenzy in the county. An American black bear (*Ursus americanus*, Appendix II) has been decapitated, red (*Cervus elaphus*) and white-tailed deers (*Odocoileus virginianus*), elks, have been shot and left behind. A public appeal for witnesses has been issued. Informants can use the hotline 1-800-452-7888 and the email address TIP@state.or.us. Kval, November 13, 2020.¹⁵



White-tailed deers (*Odocoileus virginianus*)

November 2020

Green River, Cody and Jackson Hole, State of Wyoming, United States of America



"The most important tool that helps solve poaching crimes in Wyoming are the eyes of residents," Sheridan Media summarises. Guards cannot be everywhere. Thanks to the 1-877-WGFD-TIP hotline, poachers of a puma (*Puma concolor*, Appendix I), a mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*, Appendix III in Guatemala), a moose (*Alces alces*), a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*, Appendix III in Guatemala) were identified and punished this fall. Sheridan Media, November 16, 2020.¹⁶

FAMILY AFFAIRS

November 12, 2020

State of Texas, United States of America

The Alfaro couple live an extravagant life thanks to extra-legal earnings. Brian Alfaro has already been sentenced to a 10-year prison term for selling at expensive price oil and gas stocks that were not worth much. The sentence has a possibility of adjustment. The Texas State Securities Board is now ordering the couple to immediately stop luring investors into a fraudulent wildlife breeding and marketing scheme. ARCA Wildlife Development and Conservation LLC says to have leased 300 ha in Zavala County on a long-term basis, recruited a world-class team including a biologist with an experience of 20 years and raised 100 million US\$ to start. ARCA promises investors a 100% payback in the first year of operation. The couple's two children are named as the managers of ARCA. By the time the Texas State Securities Board blew the whistle, a number of investors had already responded to the attractive offer. They are over 70 years old. The Texas State Securities Board knows the score. The warning statement begins with "As Sly would say, its a family affair", a reference to the 1971 hit by Sly and the Family Stone "It's a Family Affair".

Midland Reporter-Telegram, November 12, 2020; ARCA Wildlife Development and Conservation LLC, July 15, 2020.¹⁷

Mid-november 2020

Claremont, State of California, United States of America

A woman in a chic area near Los Angeles was housing an American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*, Appendix II) and an opossum (family Didelphidae). She was dispossessed of them by US Fish and Wildlife emergency workers.

CBS Boston, November 17, 2020.¹⁸

November 19, 2020
Midvale, State of Utah, United States of America



Jean-Michel Arrigona and his company "Natur" are charged with wildlife trafficking. Between 2015 and 2020, he fraudulently imported flying foxes (genus *Pteropus*) and monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) and a number of insects, frogs, rodents, starfish, butterflies and spiders as skeletons or stuffed specimens. He used to sell them in his shop, framed or showcased in decorative compositions. Arrigona specialised in the import of dead "material".

Shore News Network, November 19, 2020; Deseret News, November 19, 2020; US Department of Justice, November 18, 2020 and May 27, 2021.¹⁹

LATIN AMERICA

ARGENTINA

Early October 2020

Concordia, Entre Rios Province, Argentina

The surprise control of the Concordia zoo leaves puzzled. The Brigada de Control Ambiental de la Nación counts 7 tigers (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), 2 jaguars (*Panthera onca*, Appendix I) and 2 bears (Ursidae, Appendix I or II) that have literally disappeared from the complex. Authorities also found 5 tiger skins and one jaguar skin. The investigation continues. Other irregularities were found in particular in the documentation proving the legal origin of the animals and in the autopsy certificates of the dead animals.

Revista Qué, October 16, 2020; La Nación, October 9, 2020.²⁰



BRAZIL

LUA CHEIA OPERATION (FULL MOON)

October 5, 2020

Jauru, State of Mato Grosso, Brazil

35 police officers conducted 14 searches under a prosecutor warrant. The aim of "Full Moon" is to eradicate the wave of wild meat trafficking that has been overwhelming the cities and countryside since the beginning of the Covid pandemic. Twenty firearms were seized along with caimans (*Caiman* spp., Appendix I or II), pacas (genus *Cuniculus*), capybaras (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*), deers, armadillos and undulated tinamous (*Crypturellus undulatus*). Eight individuals were fined. The trial for illegal possession of a firearms and wildlife crime is forthcoming.

PBN Online, October 6, 2020.²¹

October 7, 2020

Muriae, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil



The BR-116 road between the States of Ceará and Rio Grande do Sul confirms its reputation as a wildlife highway. Seizure at a checkpoint of 76 parrot chicks (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II) in danger of death as they are all the more fragile after being stolen from their nests and 119 turtles (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II). The car was stolen. The 2 passengers were heading to Resende, State of Rio de Janeiro. The hatchlings were distributed between the CETAS in Juiz de Fora and the Ibama headquarters in Belo Horizonte. G1, October 8, 2020.²²



October 13, 2020

Recife, Paulista and Jaboatão dos Guararapes, State of Pernambuco, Brazil

Abandonments of wild animals held in captivity are increasing: a snake in a public school in Macaxeira, a tamandua (genus *Tamandua*) in Paulista, a snake on the BR-101 road in Jaboatão dos Guararapes. The animals were picked up by CIPOMA (Companhia Independente de Policiamento do Meio Ambiente) and transferred to CETAS in Tangará.

Folha PE, October 13, 2020.²³

October 13, 2020

Santa Luzia, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

Another clandestine slaughterhouse was shut down. The meat of wild and domestic animals smelled rotten. The search took place in the middle of the night. The military police and the veterinary services also seized 2 armadillos (family *Dasypodidae*), 13 snakes, 4 smooth-billed anis (*Crotophaga ani*), 7 tarantulas *Oligoxystre diamantinensis* and 4 frogs. Administrative fine of 35,000 reais or 6,200 US\$. The trial is forthcoming.

G1, October 14, 2020.²⁴



October 16, 2020

Barra do Ribeiro, State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

Seizure of 6 rifles of 12, 32, 36, 38 and 357 calibres, a telescopic sight, a laser sight, a trap camera, ammunition of all kinds, one stuffed oncilla (*Leopardus tigrinus*, Appendix I), stuffed armadillos (family *Dasypodidae*), boar (*Sus scrofa*), pacas (genus *Cuniculus*), whistling ducks and butchered and frozen picazuro pigeons (*Patagioenas picazuro*). At the time of the search by the DEMA (Delegacia do Meio Ambiente), the farm manager was elsewhere.

Correio do Pavo, October 16, 2020.²⁵



October 18, 2020

Duque de Caxias, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Under the table, behind the fruit and vegetables, the Sunday market stalls offer for sale snakes, wrigglers (infant turtles), double-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulescens*), lovebirds (*Agapornis* spp., Appendix II) and parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II). Nine sellers were reported.

G1, October 19, 2020.²⁶

October 23, 2020

São José dos Campos, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure of snakes, lizards, one hedgehog (genus *Erinaceus*), turtles (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II) and 9 eggs being artificially incubated from a man who was fined R\$13,200 reais or 2,280 US\$.

G1, October 23, 2020.²⁷

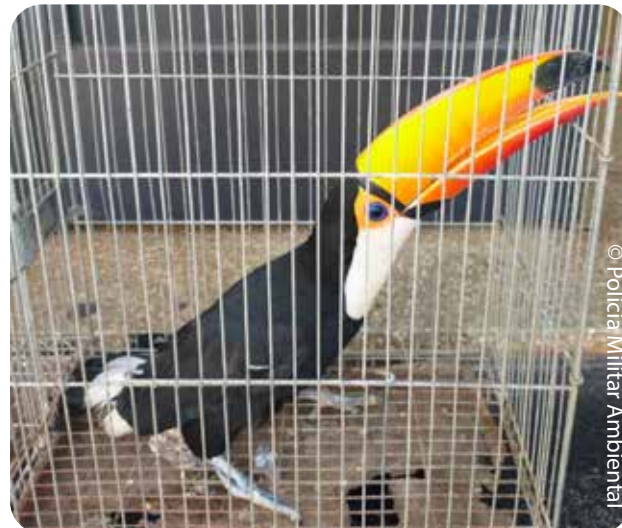


November 8, 2020

Sarapuí, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure of one turtle (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II), one blue-fronted amazon (*Amazona aestiva*, Appendix II) and one toucan (family *Ramphastidae*). A woman has to pay a fine of 1,500 reais or 260 US\$.

G1, November 9, 2020.²⁸



© Polícia Militar Ambiental

November 10, 2020

Tenente Portela and Vista Gaúcha, State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

Seizure of monk parakeets (*Myiopsitta monachus*, Appendix II), double-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulescens*), hooded siskins (*Spinus magellanicus*), ultramarine grosbeaks (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*), doves (genus *Leptotila*), 33 fighting cocks, armadillo (family *Dasypodidae*), white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*, *Odocoileus virginianus mayensis*, Appendix III in Guatemala), coati (genus *Nasua*), capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*) meat and traps, trap cages, 4 guns, a silencer, a stopwatch, a timer, drugs and spurs used in cockfights. Three arrests.

Cockfighting in Brazil, cf. "On the Trail" n°18 p. 32 and n°29 p. 111.

G1, November 10, 2020.²⁹



November 11, 2020

Cabo Frio, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

With the Covid-19 pandemic, one witnesses an additional wave of poaching, slaughterhouses and clandestine channels of wild meat, namely lizard and capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*). Seizure of weapons, knives, hooks, cages and camouflage clothing. One arrest.

Clique Diário, November 11, 2020.³⁰

Mid-November 2020

Paraíba Valley, State of São Paulo, Brazil



Seizure of one golden-bellied capuchin (*Sapajus xanthosternos*) captured in the State of Bahia, 2 macaws (*Ara* spp, Appendix I or II) and one toucan (family Ramphastidae). The man was fined 13 reais (about 2.5 US\$) and is expected to appear at a later date for trial.

Jovem Pan, November 20; 2020.³¹

Mid-November and early December 2020

Carmópolis de Minas, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil



In the car inspected at kilometre 597 on the BR-381 road, police seized yellow-bellied seedeaters (*Sporophila nigricollis*), double-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulescens*), green-winged saltators (*Saltator similis*), one turtle (*Chelonoidis carbonarius* or *Chelonoidis denticulatus*, Appendix II) and cocaine. The driver stated that the cocaine was for his personal consumption and that the animals were his pets. He was issued a violation ticket and released pending trial.

Some of the trans-Brazilian roads are wildlife roads, with pick-ups, buses, trucks or modest cars full of feathers, carcasses and live monkeys. The Kauana project won third place at the Zoohackathon Brazil 2020. Kauana, led by 6 students in veterinary medicine and ecology, aims to develop an application that would centralise all wildlife offenses by road, smoothen exchanges between the police of all States and target the sections of the road network most used by traffickers.

G1, December 3, 2020; Paranashop, November 18, 2020.³²

December 4, 2020

Mongaguá, State of São Paulo, Brazil



One tegu (*Tupinambis* spp., Appendix II), green-winged saltators (*Saltator similis*), Brazilian tanagers (*Ramphocelus bresilius*), saffron finches (*Sicalis flaveola*), hooded siskins (*Spinus magellanicus*), shiny cowbirds (*Molothrus bonariensis*), blue-black grassquits (*Volatinia jacarina*), tanagers (genus *Tangara*), golden-billed saltators (*Saltator aurantiirostris*), turquoise honeycreepers (*Dacnis cayana*), chestnut-bellied euphonias (*Euphonia pectoralis*), oilbirds (*Steatornis caripensis*), creamy-bellied thrushes (*Turdus amaurochalinus*), double-collared seedeaters (*Sporophila caerulescens*) were seized from a couple and handed over to Cemacas (Centro de Manejo e Conservação de Animais Silvestres) and its care. They are in great need of it. Cages, traps, 1135 empty milk-powder boxes used to transport birds were also seized.

Agora São Paulo, December 5, 2020.³³

OPERATION "URUTAU" 2

December 4, 2020

States of São Paulo, Mato Grosso do Sul, Paraná and Pernambuco, Brazil

The Ibama and the Federal Police launch an operation against a wildlife trafficking ring and seize 200 animals, parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), golden conures (*Guarouba guarouba*, Appendix I), hyacinth macaws (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*, Appendix I), blue-and-yellow macaws (*Ara ararauna*, Appendix II), red-and-green macaws (*Ara chloropterus*, Appendix II), toucans (family Ramphastidae), seven-colored tanagers (*Tangara fastuosa*), red-footed tortoises (*Chelonoidis carbonarius*, Appendix II), alligators (Alligatoridae, Appendix I or II), tufted capuchin (*Cebus apella*, synonymous with *Sapajus apella*, Appendix II), marmosets (*Callithrix* spp., Appendix I or II) and hedgehogs. Eleven people arrested, including Roberto Augusto Martinez Filho, nicknamed "Zé do Bode", a big shot in wildlife trafficking who had already been arrested in August 2020 when he was about to sell 2 tufted capuchins (see "On the Trail" n°30 p. 93).

The "Urutau" that gave their name to this operation, pootos in English, are nocturnal birds well known for their camouflage abilities.

G1, December 4, 2020; Europa Press, December 4, 2020.³⁴

December 7, 2020

Urubu, Rio de Janeiro, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The military police conducted searches north of Rio de Janeiro. The tension was high. Barricades were set up by the inhabitants and dismantled by the military staff. Drugs, one tufted capuchin (*Cebus apella*, synonym of *Sapajus apella*, Appendix II) and 2 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II) were seized. G1, December 7, 2020.³⁵

December 10, 2020

Tupã, State of São Paulo, Brazil

Seizure of 600 kg wild meat in an illegal slaughterhouse operated since the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis. The meat was dumped in a pit at the municipal landfill.

G1, December 11, 2020.³⁶

December 18, 2020

Orindiúva, State of São Paulo, Brazil



The police seized armadillo meat (family Dasypodidae), deer meat, antlers, and skull in a private home. One arrest.

G1, December 18, 2020.³⁷

End of December 2020

Murici, Messias, Branquinha, União dos Palmares, São José da Laje, Flexeiras, Joaquim Gomes and Ibateguara, State of Alagoas, Brazil



Seizure of 14 armadillos (family Dasypodidae), pacas (*Cuniculus paca*, Appendix III in Honduras), tegus (genus *Tupinambis*, Appendix II) and 180 birds. The operation was coordinated by the Chico Mendes Institute and the Environmental Police. Most of the birds were released. In Ibateguara, a clandestine factory that transformed protected trees into furniture was dismantled and its managers fined 13,000 reais or 2,400 US\$.

G1, January 5, 2021.³⁸

BOLIVIA

End of December 2020

Cochabamba, Province of Cercado, Department of Cochabamba, Bolivia



Seizure of 4 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), 15 bronzed cowbirds (*Molothrus aeneus*), 75 common sliders (*Trachemys scripta*) and 22 frogs on La Pampa market (cf. "On the Trail"

n°6 p. 108 and n°12 p. 104).

Red Uno de Bolivia, December 31, 2020.³⁹

COLOMBIA

Mid-October 2020

Bogotá, Colombia

Boxes, bags, belts, wallets, cushions, hats, cases, shoes, head and atlers, a total of 391 items from falcon (Falconiformes, Appendix I or II), eagle, boa (Boidae, Appendix I or II), python (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), red-footed tortoise (*Chelonoidis carbonaria*, Appendix II), American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*, Appendix II), red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) and ostriches (*Struthio camelus*) were seized in a shop in the Restrepo area, the epicentre of wildlife trafficking.

Mayor's Office of Bogotá, October 16, 2020.⁴⁰

Early December 2020

Colombia



Under the names Faunatic and Exotic Colombia, the gang sold spectacled caimans (*Caiman crocodilus*, Appendix II) for 100,000 pesos or 27 US\$, macaws (*Ara* spp., Appendix II) for 700,000 pesos or 190 US\$, marmosets (*Callithrix* spp. A I or II) for 900,000 pesos or 250 US\$, and tiger cubs (A I) for 1.3 million pesos or 360 US\$ via the Internet. It also accepted exceptional orders for oncillas (*Leopardus tigrinus*, Appendix I), ocelots (*Leopardus pardalis*, Appendix I), and red deer (*Cervus elaphus*). The dealers were linked to poachers who captured the animals, always chicks or juveniles, in the departments of Bolivar, Cesar, Cordoba, Magdalena and Sucre. The main people involved were Rafael Cruz Romero, known as "Ojitos" or "Emmanuel", Sebastián Bastos Peñaranda, known as "Sebas" or "Andrés", Alfonso Mauricio Triana, known as "Miguel" and Jeisson Humberto Triana, known as "Ángela".

Infobae, December 10, 2020.⁴¹

December 17, 2020

Tocaima, Department of Cundinamarca, Colombia

54 macaws (*Ara* spp., Appendix I or II), parrots (*Amazona* spp., Appendix I or II) and turtles (order Testudines) seized from traffickers and in private homes are to be transferred from Tocaima, where they will enter the Wildlife re-learning school, to Yopal (450 km away). After a few days of adaptation to this new ecosystem and final tests in semi-freedom, they will be returned to the forest.

Explica, December 18, 2020.⁴²

ECUADOR

End of December 2020

Quito, Pichincha Province, Ecuador

Diego Cisneros-Heredia, director of the only veterinary clinic where wildlife can be quarantined, diagnosed and can undergo surgery, notes that in 2020, the first year of the Covid pandemic, his center received 40% more wildlife than in 2019, 1000 compared to 600. This increase is attributed to poaching in rural areas by farmers deprived of income after the closure of markets and requested by pet shops with stock shortage. Most of the animals come from seizures during roadside or bus station checks.



Oncillas (*Leopardus tigrinus*, Appendix I), falcons (*Falco* spp., Appendix I or II), owls (Strigiformes, Appendix I or II), parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), macaws (*Ara* spp, Appendix I or II), hummingbirds (family Trochilidae), herons (family Ardeidae), boas (Boidae, Appendix I or II), snakes, tortoises (order Testudines), coatis (genus *Nasua*), porcupines (family Erethizontidae), armadillos (family Dasypodidae), opossums (genus *Didelphis*) and sloths (suborder Folivora) arrive dehydrated, fractured, mistreated and malnourished. The clinic also had to treat Andean condors (*Vultur gryphus*, Appendix I) that had been shot.

El Universo, December 27, 2020.⁴³

MEXICO

End of November 2020

Catazajá, State of Chiapas, Mexico

Seizure of 50 white-fronted amazons (*Amazona albifrons*, Appendix II) and 2 margays (*Leopardus wiedii*, Appendix I) in a bus. The passenger had no permit to justify their possession.

Milenio, November 21, 2020.⁴⁴



2020

Mexico City, Mexico

The Profepa (Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente) is concerned about the increase in trafficking during 2020. About 30,000 animals were seized compared to 5,000 animals in 2019. This dramatic increase is said to be due to Covid-19. "Communities situated near national parks and reserves are facing a more difficult economic climate. Tourism is decimated by travel restrictions, so more people who depend on it for their livelihoods may be driven to poaching and wildlife trade as a way to earn a living," says Ernesto Zazueta, president of AZCAM (Asociación de Zoólogos, Criaderos y Acuarios de México).

El Universal (Mexico), December 2, 2020; Milenio, December 28, 2020; Profepa, November 29, 2020; Forbes Mexico (with EFE), November 26, 2020.⁴⁵

THE CARIBBEAN

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

October 21, 2020

Penal, Penal-Debe Region, Trinidad and Tobago

Seizure of marijuana, 2 capuchin monkeys (*Cebus* spp., Appendix II), 3 adult toucans and 3 chicks (family Ramphastidae). The TTPS (Trinidad and Tobago Police Service), the CID (Penal Criminal Investigations Department) and the dog squad took part in the operation.

Loop TT, October 22, 2020.⁴⁶

EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

October 16, 2020

Ningbo Port, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of 18 containers in a vessel touching Ningbo port, 3rd in the world port ranking. The flag and name of the vessel remain unknown. In the waiting area of Ningbo, she had switched off her AIS (Automatic Identification System). Port customs were informed by a phone call in the early evening or by e-mail. In the containers, 58 tonnes of shark fins, deer antlers and sea cucumbers, 20 tonnes of famous brand name perfumes, 230 tonnes of laptops and tablets, pianos, animal medicines, several tonnes of antiques, famous brand luggage and jewellery, and 8 cars were found in a jumble, as further evidence that wildlife trafficking is closely linked to organised crime. The port authorities had quickly deployed computer surveillance of the adjacent sea and sought to identify the dock where the ghost ship might berth at night. At least 7 seamen were arrested. The value of the seizures has not yet been assessed. Most of the goods are believed to be stolen.

Ningbo Municipal Bureau of Justice, November 26, 2020.⁴⁷

Mid-October 2020

Beijing Municipality, China

The former wildlife director was sentenced to a 13-year prison term. He did not appeal. In his position, he was able to help pharmaceutical laboratories and traders in wildlife by-products to buy and “launder” illegal stocks of pangolin scales (*Manis* spp., Appendix I), musk from young Siberian musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*, Appendix II) and saiga antelope horn (*Saiga tatarica*, Appendix II). In return, he is said to have received over 19 years more than 8 million yuan, i.e. more than 1 million US\$, and 50 million yuan in “kind”, i.e. more than 7 million US\$. China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation, October 18, 2020.⁴⁸



October 2020 - China

BREEDING. THE POST-COVID REVOLUTION

China has decided to ban the breeding of 45 species of wild animals for food purposes from the end of 2020 onward. The radical nature of this decision is tempered by the possibility of “keeping” specimens “in moderate quantities” for pet shops or captive display, provided that the business plan of the breeder-entrepreneurs is demonstrated and validated.

The measure is variously appreciated in the herding community as long as they are formally informed about it. In Guangxi, 15 villages whose main economy was based on bamboo rat breeding are turning to Chinese francolin breeding (*Francolinus pintadeanus*), an avian species that is not on the list of the 27 birds banned from breeding farms. “A farm that produces 5,000 bamboo rats could produce 8,000 Chinese francolins on the same land area,” according to reports from converted farmers. The selling price of a francolin for slaughter is 2.5 to 6 yuan or 0,37 to 0,89 US\$. Despite reports that “a small-scale francolin farmer could have an annual income of 20,000 to 30,000 yuan,” concern prevails, especially since the banned flocks were to be eliminated by December 31, 2020. The Hunan Cuisine Industry Promotion Committee expresses its concern about the future of the farms, even though local authorities are talking about new business opportunities and compensatory measures here and there.

The 45 species concerned are, for the birds, the baikal teal (*Anas formosa*, Appendix II), the taiga bean goose (*Anser fabalis*), the greylag goose (*Anser anser*), the chukar partridge (*Alectoris chukar*), the king quail (*Coturnix chinensis*), the Oriental turtle dove (*Streptopelia orientalis*), the Eurasian collared dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*), the bar-headed goose (*Anser indicus*), the swan goose (*Anser cygnoides*), the Indian spot-billed duck (*Anas poecilorhyncha*), the black-crowned night heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), the ruddy shelduck (*Tadorna ferruginea*), the common shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*), the northern pintail (*Anas acuta*), the Eurasian teal (*Anas crecca*), the falcated duck (*Anas falcata*), the gadwall (*Anas strepera*), the Eurasian wigeon (*Anas penelope*), the summer teal (*Anas querquedula*), the grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*), ...

... the red-crowned night heron (*Netta rufina*), the common pochard (*Aythya ferina*), the ferruginous duck (*Aythya nyroca*), the greater scaup (*Aythya marila*), the Chinese bamboo partridge (*Bambusicola thoracicus*), the common moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*), the Eurasian coot (*Fulica atra*).

For terrestrial mammals, the masked palm civet (*Paguma larvata*, Appendix III in India), the Indian muntjac (*Muntiacus muntjak*), the Reeves's muntjac (*Muntiacus reevesi*), the roe deer, the bamboo rat (subfamily *Rhizomyinae*), the Cape hare (*Lepus capensis*), the Manchurian hare (*Lepus mandshuricus*), the Tolai hare (*Lepus tolai tolai*), the spiny Taiwan niverter (*Niviventer coninga*), porcupine.

For reptiles and amphibians, the Taiwan stink elaphe (*Elaphe carinata*), the red-banded snake (*Lycodon rufozonatus*), the Korean rat snake (*Elaphe anomala*), the Chinese leopard snake (*Elaphe bimaculata*), the banded krait (*Bungarus fasciatus*), the short-tailed mamushi (*Gloydius brevicaudus*), the Chinese pit viper (*Trimeresurus stejnegeri*) and the frog *Rana hanluica*. Unfortunately, it is likely that the disappearance of some species from wet market stalls will lead to an increase of poaching in natural environments.

The breeding for food purposes of 19 other species, 5 of which are listed in Appendix II of CITES, is also prohibited from the end of 2020 onward, but breeding under administrative supervision will continue to be allowed for medicinal purposes, scientific research and pet trade. The species concerned are the Indian peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), the Asian leaf turtle (*Cyclemys dentata*, Appendix II), the keel-backed turtle (*Cuora mouhotii*, Appendix II), the yellow-headed tortoise (*Indotestudo elongata*, Appendix II), the oriental rat snake (*Ptyas mucosus*, Appendix II), the king cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II), the big-eyed ratsnake (*Ptyas dhumnades*), the beauty ratsnake (*Elaphe taeniura*), the many-banded krait (*Bungarus multicinctus*), the hundred-pace viper (*Deinagkistrodon acutus*), the Indo-Chinese rat snake (*Ptyas korros*), the cobra (genus *Naja*), the Asiatic toad (*Bufo gargarizans*), the Southeast Asian toad (*Duttaphrynus melanostictus*), the hedgehog, the hog badger (*Arctonyx collaris*), the European badger (*Meles meles*), the Guinea pig (*Cavia porcellus*) and the coypu (*Myocastor coypus*). China Daily Hong Kong, October 12, 2020; Chinese Government, September 30, 2020.⁴⁹

Early November, 2020

Liubei District, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

A so-called antique dealer has been given a 3-year suspended prison sentence and a fine equal to 15,000 US\$ for, between the years 2008 and 2019, having bought, possessed and offered for sale a sea turtle shell, tiger claws, elephant worked ivories, jewellery made of helmeted hornbill (*Rhinoplax vigil*) red ivory, all species in Appendix I. For 5 years, the man is prohibited from exercising a trade related to wildlife. Tangshan Evening News, November 3, 2020.⁵⁰



November 2020
Yuanling County, Hunan Province, China

A man was sentenced to 10 years and 6 months in prison and fined the equivalent of 26,800 US\$ for buying in Baojing County, keeping at home and selling Chinese spiny frogs (*Quasipaa spinosa*) and bamboo rats (subfamily Rhizomyinae) between 2015 and 2019. The search of his home also resulted in the seizure of an Elliot's pheasant (*Syrnaticus ellioti*, Appendix I), a leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II), 2 small Indian civets (*Viverricula indica*, Appendix III in India), 2 masked palm civets (*Paguma larvata*, Appendix III in India), 2 golden pheasants (*Chrysolophus pictus*), 60 Chinese bamboo partridges (*Bambusicola thoracicus*) and 66 other birds, 6 greater hogbadgers (*Arctonyx collaris*), a Chinese ferret-badger (*Melogale moschata*) and 57 other mammals, Chinese moccasins (*Deinagkistrodon acutus*), Taiwan stink snakes (*Elaphe carinata*) and other snakes including big-eyed ratsnakes (*Ptyas dhumnades*). His right-hand man was sentenced to a 3-year suspended prison term and a fine equal to 745 US\$.

People's Court Daily, November 16, 2020.⁵¹



Chinese spiny frog (*Quasipaa spinosa*)

November 18, 2020
Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure in biscuit cans of 140 grams of Sunda pangolin (*Manis javanica*, Appendix I) scales, 225 grams of dried seahorse (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II), 70 grams of two-banded monitor (*Varanus salvator*, Appendix II) bile in the luggage of a Chinese passenger who presumably considered it necessary to come home with anti-Covid "medicine".

Southern Metropolis Daily, November 18, 2020.⁵²

Early December 2020
Jiangmen, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of bird's nests (1,182 grams) and dried sea cucumbers (467 grams) in a postal parcel. Chinese Customs, December 14, 2020.⁵³

December 1st, 2020
Wuhan, Hubei Province, China

Seizure by Customs since the beginning of the year of 1,565 grams of hawksbill turtle scales (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Appendix I), 462 grams of worked ivory, 3.5 kg of lion (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II) organs, 356.2 grams of giant clam (Tridacnidae, Appendix II) shell items, and 79 grams of crocodile (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II) skin items. Sina Hubei, December 17, 2020.⁵⁴

December 3, 2020

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China

This would be the biggest multi-product bust in 12 years! Seizure of hundreds of iPhone 12S, thousands of abalone and bird's nests, 550 kg of red coral (genus *Corallium*), cosmetics, electronics and hard drives during the loading of a speedboat bound for Shenzhen (mainland China). The truck/speedboat transfer was carried out near the Shun Lung Street cyclone shelter in Sha Tau Kok. The total value of this jackpot is estimated at 80 million HK\$ or 10.3 million US\$. The traffickers fled in the speedboat. Twelve hours later, 3 Hong Kongers were arrested. They were the owners of the 3 vans that were transporting the concealed goods. The Hong Kong Customs Bureau points out that seizures at sea or on the beaches increased by 230% in 2020 compared to 2019. The paralysis of multimodal logistics due to Covid-19 has forced traffickers to shift to sea. South China Morning Post, December 4, 2020.⁵⁵

JAPAN

December 2020

Japan

Academics Sharne McMillan and Brett Scheffers looked at the pet café trend in Asia. Via the Internet, they counted 406 establishments offering customers the chance to drink with birds, reptiles and non-human mammals, 252 species in all, 234 of which are threatened with extinction. Exotic animal cafés are a relatively recent phenomenon. The first appeared in 2011. Today, about 60 wildlife cafés attract customers with caged animals which can be fondled for free or for a small supplement. These zoo cafés are spreading throughout Asia. In Thailand they have prairie dogs (genus *Cynomys*) as clowns and in South Korea grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*, Appendix I). At the moment, the fashion is for small-clawed otters (*Aonyx cinerea*, Appendix I). They will be sold off or abandoned when they are out of fashion or disfigured by captivity. This work confirms the investigations of "On the Trail" (animals in captivity in coffee shops, see "On the Trail" n°3 p.29 and p.37, n°5 p.56 and p.121, n°6 p.44, p.47 and p.114, n°7 p.41, n°8 p.39, n°12 p.103, n°14 p.44, n°15 p.36, n°17 p.51 and p.123, n°18 p.47 and p.65, n°19 p.46 and p.59, n°20 p.61 and p.127, n°21 p.24, n°22 p.122, n°23 p.159 and p.162, n°25 p.24 and p.31, n°26 p.57, n°27 p.68, n°29 p.155, p.158 and p.178 and n°30 p.175).

Scientific American, December 30, 2020; Nature World News, December 31, 2020.⁵⁶

EASTERN ASIA

MALAYSIA

October 5, 2020

Tanjung Kidurong, State of Sarawak, Malaysia



The restaurant served bear (Ursidae, Appendix I or II), monitor lizard (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II), squirrel (family Sciuridae) and porcupine (family Hystricidae). 32 kg of meat were seized from the freezer and 3 women are being grilled by the police. The value of the loot is estimated at 5,000 ringgit or 1,200 US\$ and 37.5 US\$/kg.

The Borneo Post, October 7, 2020.⁵⁷

October 12, 2020

Temerloh, State of Pahang, Malaysia



Thai national sentenced to 10 months in prison. At his home, police had seized a gaur (*Bos gaurus*, Appendix I) horn, 2 changeable hawk-eagles (*Spizaetus cirrhatus*, Appendix II), 2 white-rumped shamas (*Copsychus malabaricus*), a deer antler and an air rifle.

Alhady, October 22, 2020.⁵⁸

OPERATION KHAZANAH

October 21 and 25, 2020

Pekan Nanas, Kulai, Paloh and Kluang, State of Johor, Malaysia



In two shakes of a lamb's tail, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) seized tiger claws, 2 monkeys (Primates, Appendix I or II), 4 parrots (Psittaciformes, Appendix I or II), 2 Asian palm civets (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III in India), 2 budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*), meat and a head of muntjac (genus *Muntiacus*), a meat shredder, an electric saw, 23 bullets, 3 of which are suspected to be impregnated with a sedative, 2 machetes, a dozen firearms and air guns and arrested 6 individuals.

In the same press conference, Datuk Ayob Khan said that since the beginning of the year, 823 firearm licences had been revoked in Johor. "They are only allowed to shoot animals to protect their plantation but instead, they used them to hunt exotic animals." New Straits Times, November 4, 2020; Malay Mail, November 4, 2020; The Star, November 5, 2020.⁵⁹

November 4, 2020

Niah, State of Sarawak, Malaysia



The Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC) raid in a restaurant was fruitful. One sawfish (Pristidae, Appendix I) rostrum, 5 monkeys (Primates, Appendix I or II) and carnivore skulls, the fur of a leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*, Appendix II), 3 turtle shells were seized. One arrest.

The Borneo Post, November 5, 2020; Sarawak Forestry Corporation, November 5, 2020.⁶⁰

November 4, 2020

Simpang Renggam, State of Johor, Malaysia

Seizure at the home of a Vietnamese farm worker of monitor lizard (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) and snake skins, porcupine (family Hystricidae) quills and wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) meat and tusks. The man says that these foodstuffs and organs are exclusively intended for his personal use, but the Perhilitan director believes that he is also involved in trade.

The Star, November 4, 2020.⁶¹

November 25, 2020

Kapit, State of Sarawak, Malaysia

The successive arrests of 2 men with 40 kg of deer organs and meat, one man with 7 kg of porcupine (family Hystricidae) meat and a 4th man with 37 kg of wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) meat prove that in this long covidian period, there is no lack of buyers for wild meat. The Dayak ethnic group, whose way of life, like that of the Penan people, has been disrupted by the deforestation of Sarawak, is demanding the temporary right to sell wild boar meat to sustain its needs. The Sarawak Forestry Corporation opposes this. "The law does not permit the sale of wildlife, including non-protected species." "Native people permitted to hunt for their own consumption but not for trade or sale."

The Star, November 25 and 26 and December 1st, 2020.⁶²

December 28, 2020

Mount Kanthan, State of Perak, Malaysia

Who will win? Cement or Buddha ?

Associated Pan Malaysia Cement, which is taking over from Lafarge Holcim in the operation of a limestone quarry, wants to expropriate the monks and the faithful of the troglodyte monastery of Dhamma Sakyamuni and overcome Mount Kanthan, which has been granted the status of geological park by the sultan of Perak for 2 years. Sectors A and B have already been exploited. C and D remain. On December 28, a delegation from APMC accompanied by a bailiff came at the bottom of the valley at the doors of the temple to notify the monks, described as "squatters", of their eviction. The discontent rumbling rises in Malaysia and around the world. The NGO Robin des Bois, publisher of "On the Trail", signed a petition against the extension of the quarry. ...



... Several plant and animal species typical of these hills bristled of limestone stalagmites are threatened with eradication. The archaeologists and the naturalists associate themselves with the protests. Rock carvings are regularly uncovered in the caves. They represent human and animal figures or the sun. The clarity is complicated in some cases by the layering of graffiti engraved with charcoal or hematite. Carbon-14 dating has not yet been carried out. On initial examination, they date from the Neolithic era. The NGO Sahabat Alam Malaysia believes that the extension of the quarry would be a fatal blow to the local populations of snow-white paphiopedilum orchids (*Paphiopedilum niveum*- photo), Sumatran serows (*Capricornis sumatraensis*), Kanthan cave trapdoor spiders (*Liphistius kanthan*), a “prehistoric” spider, and *Meiogyne kanthanensis*, a tree of the order Magnoliales.



According to most recent information, the situation is deadlocked. In November 2021, the High Court of Ipoh, the capital of Perak, called on both parties to reach an amicable agreement. The court dodges the issue. Monastery spokesman Leong Cheok Keng said after the hearing that financial compensation was not on the agenda. “Several other limestone hills, where quarry activities are taking place, contain caves that house prehistoric findings, and unique biodiversity values that should be preserved instead of destroyed by quarrying activities.” To be continued.

Mongabay, June 30, 2021; New Straits Times, September 4, 2021; The Star, July 14, September 4 and 15 and November 10, 2021.⁶³

THAILAND

November 23, 2020

Chumpon Province, Thailand



It is not clear whether the high-ranked monk of the Buddhist temple is charged. Under his orders, parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), boa constrictors (*Boa constrictor*, Appendix II), Asian palm civets (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Appendix III in India) and hornbills (family Bucerotidae) were being confined and illicitly traded. The raid by Department of National Parks officers was preceded by a discreet but conclusive investigation.

Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand, November 27, 2020.⁶⁴



October 27, 2020

Huai Sala Wildlife Sanctuary, Phu Sing District, Sisaket Province, Thailand, border with Cambodia

A mixed patrol of soldiers and rangers came upon 4 Cambodian nationals woodcutters. As the patrol approached, 2 land clearers fired several shots and 3 others disappeared into the forest. One arrest. An AK47, 6 rounds of ammunition, an electric chainsaw and a log were seized.

Bangkok Post, October 30, 2020.⁶⁵

November 6, 2020

Preah Vihear Province, Cambodia

Two-banded monitors (*Varanus salvator*, Appendix II), slender-billed vultures (*Gyps tenuirostris*, Appendix II), episcopal storks (*Ciconia episcopus*), large-spotted civets (*Viverra zibetha*), red-billed blue magpies (*Urocissa erythroryncha*) golden-fronted leafbirds (*Chloropsis aurifrons*), plaintive cuckoos (*Cacomantis merulinus*), ibises, fish and frogs, people, livestock, and dogs are victim of deadly pesticides, primarily Carbofuran, dispersed in water bodies to trap wildlife. Silent poaching was denounced more than 20 years ago around the Tonle Sap Lake by the CEDAC (Center for Study and Development in Agriculture of Cambodia) and it continues today to wreak havoc. Cambodia would have become a dump for banned or outdated pesticides from the Indochinese peninsula. In the stores and markets, people buy a kilogram of "blue", "red" or "purple" poison at a cheap price without bothering with international trade names and instructions for use, even if, unlikely, they are written in ETRU (Easy To Read and Understand).



The sociological investigations carried out in the province reveal what lies behind toxic poaching. It is practiced from father to son. It started with DDT, it continues with carbamates and methyl-parathion. Young boys practice it alone or as companions from 11-12 years old. The ratio of time spent/effectiveness is considered profitable. This type of poaching does not require special skills. In a way it is fair because it is cheap. It is more efficient than guns and slingshots. Only 1% of those spoken with on condition of anonymity admit to pesticide poaching, and village chiefs and other people with a good knowledge of community life, when they agree to lift the veil, estimate that 10-70% of the population go for it. Those who are caught are given a mild reminder of the law in the form of a written undertaking not to do it again. There is a kind of consensus that removing the viscera and head of the poisoned animal avoids health problems. ...

... However, some interviewees recognize that the consumption of poisoned animals, especially birds, can be followed by diarrhea, vomiting and mobility problems. The death of dogs and livestock after ingesting contaminated water is attested to by several people interviewed. After noteworthy incidents, public meetings were held, but despite calls to order, the practice continued, taking advantage of the widely shared secrecy. As other surveys in other continents have noted, the poisoning of wildlife can go beyond the need for food or local markets and become a form of protest against environmental regulations and the appropriation of land by extra-community interests. One village chief mentions the poisoning of a waterhole right next to the lodges of an ecotourism property.

The Phnom Penh Post, May 14, 1999 and December 7, 2020; De Lange, E., Milner-Gulland, E., Yim, V., Leng, C., Phann, S., & Keane, A. (2021). Using mixed methods to understand sensitive wildlife poisoning behaviours in northern Cambodia. *Oryx*, 55(6), 889-902. doi:10.1017/S0030605319001492; Wildlife Conservation Society (2016), Carbofuran Poisoning at the Interface Between Wildlife, Livestock, and Humans, Wildlife Conservation Society Cambodia, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.⁶⁶

VIET NAM

October 7, 2020

Anh Son District, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

The man was carrying 3 frozen monkeys. His home was searched and 5 monkeys, wild meat and gall bladders were seized in the freezer. Three impressed tortoises (*Manouria impressa*, Appendix II) and a two-banded monitor (*Varanus salvator*, Appendix II) were rescued from imminent death and handed over to Save Vietnam's Wildlife.

SVW, October 7, 2020.⁶⁷



October 8, 2020

Bao Loc, Lam Dong Province, Viet Nam

A minibus was carrying 2 live pangolins (*Manis* spp., Appendix I) weighing 4 and 6 kg, a python (*Python* spp., Appendix I or II) weighing 10.5 kg and 3 bamboo rats. The driver, Nguyen The Hoc, is questioned by the police. ENV, October 9, 2020; Thanh Niên, October 8, 2020.⁶⁸



October 14, 2020

Ninh Thuan Province, Viet Nam

Seizure on a farm of a crested serpent-eagle (*Spilornis cheela*, Appendix II) and 2 rhesus macaques (*Macaca mulatta*, Appendix II). ENV, October 14, 2020.⁶⁹

November 11, 2020

Que Phong District, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam



He was carrying 8 civets (family Viverridae) and a muntjac (genus *Muntiacus*). He had bought them from a wholesaler for the equivalent of 323 US\$. He was going to deliver them for a wedding feast. ENV, November 20, 2020.⁷⁰

November 23, 2020

Ea H'leo District, Dak Lak Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of 2 live pangolins and a civet (family Viverridae), alive, and 4 porcupines (family Hystricidae) and 9 civets, all dead, in a bus heading to Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City). The driver, living in Kon Tum, 11 hours drive from Saigon, is questioned by the police.

ENV, December 13, 2020; Kiến Thức, November 24, 2020.⁷¹



November 25, 2020

Thuận An, Binh Duong Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of 18 kg of worked ivories, 3 kg of pangolin scales, a tiger skin and claws, leopard (Appendix I) and bear (Ursidae, Appendix I or II) teeth and a stuffed sea turtle in a shop. Arrest of Ngo Hong Phuong.

ENV, December 6, 2020; Tuyên Quang Online, November 25, 2020.⁷²



December 1st, 2020

Viet Nam

Farming wild animals is the laundering of wildlife trafficking and on the scale of Viet Nam, it is an environmental disaster. The farms are being restocked with specimens caught in their remaining habitats. The most affected are Siamese crocodiles (*Crocodylus siamensis*, Appendix I), pythons (*Python* spp., Appendix I or II), long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*, Appendix II), sika deer (*Cervus nippon*), and cobras (family Elapidae). 14,000 farms are operating. Viet Nam produces around 600,000 crocodile skins and 200,000 python skins per year. Farms of long-tailed macaque sold for the pet market or for the animal testing market have a production capacity of 10,000 specimens per year. The main buyers are Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom Russia, Japan, China and the United States of America. VietNamNet, December 1st, 2020.⁷³



SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

October 21, 2020

Dulapally, Medchal District, State of Telangana, India

Seizure in a shop of a whole display: 100 sea fans (genus *Gorgonia*), 9 "Hatha Jodi" (hemipenis of Bengal monitor - *Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I) and 3 top shells.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, October 21, 2020.⁷⁴

October 29, 2020

Rupaidiha and Manvariya, Bahraich District, State of Uttar Pradesh, India. Border India-Nepal

160 bags, containing bone powder from animals hunted in Nepal according to the young man carrying them, were seized by the SSB. A bone powder storage was later discovered in Manvariya. Analyses are underway to determine the species involved.

The Times of India, October 31, 2020.⁷⁵

October 30, 2020

Lalbaug, Mumbai City District, State of Maharashtra, India

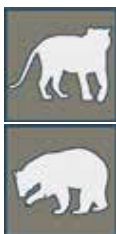
After the arrest of 2 men carrying 3 Alexandrine parakeets (*Psittacula eupatria*, Appendix II) out on the street, the police discovered in a cellar 24 spotted pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Appendix I), 16 Indian tent turtles (*Pangshura tentoria*, Appendix II), 8 plum-headed parakeets (*Psittacula cyanocephala*, Appendix II), 27 rose-ringed parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*) and 10 Indian palm squirrels (*Funambulus palmarum*).

Hindustan Times, October 31, 2020.⁷⁶

November 25, 2020

Bargarh, Bargarh District, State of Odisha, India

Seizure of the skin, 195 cm from the snout to the tip of the tail, and 4 teeth of a leopard (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) about 3 years old, and of 11 claws of sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I). Arrest of Satyaban Sahu, Sauki Thetua and Maita Bhue. The value of the skins and claws is estimated at 700,000 rupees or 9,410 US\$. Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (India), November 27, 2020; The New Indian Express, November 26, 2020; Orissa Post, November 25, 2020.⁷⁷



November 28, 2020

Bangalore, Bangalore Urban District, State of Karnataka, India

400 leopard (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) claws - or 23 individuals -, 6 tiger (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) claws, 3 sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I) claws, 7 pangolin (*Manis spp.*, Appendix I) claws, 2 jungle cat (*Felis chaus*, Appendix II) paws, one blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Nepal and Pakistan) skin and one golden jackal (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III in India) skin were the booty of Prashant Kumar, Karthik, Pramila Reddy and Sai Kumar when they were arrested by the police.

The Times of India, November 29, 2020.⁷⁸



December 2, 2020

Guwahati, Kamrup Metropolitan District, State of Assam, India

Seizure of 50 kg of gorgonians (genus *Gorgonia*), 1.5 kg of quills of Indian crested porcupine (*Hystrix indica*), 14 preputial glands and 2 kg of gland fragments of musk deer (*Moschus spp.*, Appendix I or II), 43 hemipenis of Bengal monitor lizard (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I), , shells and various other unidentified animal parts in the commercial gallery of the Kamakhya Temple, immersed in the Hindu



mythology. The various wildlife objects are used by spiritual guides in ritual ceremonies. ...



Common sea fan (*Gorgonia ventalina*)

... The gorgonians are protected under the Indian Wildlife Protection Act. They are referred to as soft corals. They look like fans or sea bushes. They are threatened by trawling, bottom-set nets, discharging of waste waters into coastal waters, dumping of dredging spoil and natural disasters like tsunamis. The threat from religious practices is rarely mentioned in the literature. This is the second time that "On the Trail" has noted sales of gorgonians in or near a temple. The first was in the State of Karnataka (see "On the Trail" n°30 p.172), a State bordering the Indian Ocean. But this is the first time that "On the Trail" has noted a traffic in gorgonians in a temple so far from the ocean. Gorgonians are said to bring happiness, prosperity and fertility. In Greek mythology, they are considered legendary monsters. Their name comes from the word "gorgos", scary.

The Indian Express, December 4, 2020; The Sentinel, December 3, 2020; Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, December 3, 2020; Hindustan Times, December 3, 2020.⁷⁹

FAMILY AFFAIRS

December 6, 2020

Kapilash Wildlife Sanctuary, Dhenkanal District, State of Odisha, India

Arrest of Naba Balmuchi (21 years old), Budu Balmuchi (27 years old), Ratna Balmuchi (30 years old), Kurupa Baipi (28 years old) and Sanatan Dehury (33 years old) and seizure of 4 homemade rifles, 100 snare traps, 2 spotted deer (*Axis axis*) antlers and 3 pangolin scales.

Odisha TV, December 6, 2020.⁸⁰



December 7, 2020

Kapilash Wildlife Sanctuary; Kalasipur, Dhenkanal District, State of Odisha, India

Seizure of 2 leopard (*Panthera pardus*, App. I) skins and 8 teeth, 9 sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I) claws, one raw ivory weighing 140 grams, 2 turtle shells, 2 spotted deer (*Axis axis*) antlers, one wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) tooth, a chopper, a knife, a bow and arrows. Narendra Kumar Digi, a school teacher in Cuttack, was in cahoots with Ananta Murmu and Laxman Murmu of Kalasipur.

The New Indian Express, December 8, 2020.⁸¹



December 12 and 13, 2020

States of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand, India

A leopard (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) skin, an Himalayan musk deer (*Moschus leucogaster*, Appendix I) gland, 5.5 kg of pangolin scales (*Manis* spp., Appendix I) as well as one Indian flapshell turtle (*Lissemys punctata*, Appendix II) and one Indian sand boa (*Eryx johnii*, Appendix II) were trafficked across the border between the 3 States. Four people were taken into custody. The operation, which lasted 36 hours, was conducted by the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) and the Bihar Police.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, December 14, 2020.⁸²



Mid-December 2020

Bharatpur District, State of Rajasthan, India

Seizure in a rickshaw of 3 Bengal monitor lizards (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I), 2 jungle cats (*Felis chaus*, Appendix II), 2 golden jackals (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III in India) and a domestic cat (*Felis catus*) dead and 20 leg-hold traps. The 2 passengers are in custody. Poaching is booming. Perhaps something never seen for 10 years. In Bikaner district, another poacher of Indian gazelles (or chinkaras, *Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III in Pakistan) was arrested thanks to the alert of a Bishnoi community.

Two nilgails (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*, Appendix III in Pakistan) were electrocuted in Udaipur district. A man was caught selling chinkara meat in a village market.

Times Rajasthan, December 19, 2020; Fahad Conservationist, December 18, 2020.⁸³



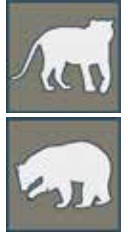
FAMILY AFFAIRS

December 24, 2020

Gwalior, Gwalior District, State of Madhya Pradesh, India

Eleven Bengal monitor lizard (*Varanus bengalensis*, Appendix I) hemipenises, 12 tiger (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) teeth, leopard (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) and sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*, Appendix I) claws, Himalayan musk deer (*Moschus leucogaster*, Appendix I) horns, 11 owl (Strigidae, Appendix I or II) feet, a golden jackal (*Canis aureus*, Appendix III in India) skull, 14 Indian gazelle (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III in Pakistan) and spotted deer (*Axis axis*) genital organs and other unidentified animal parts are seized in a grocery shop that has been operated for 150 years in Murar area. The wild animal remains are believed to be from the Himalayan basin. They are used in black magic rituals. Ramesh Khandelwal, Vrindavan Singh and OP Aggarwal are arrested. The shop has been placed under seal.

Dainik Bhaskar, December 24, 2020; Naidunia, December 24 and 26, 2020.⁸⁴



December 29, 2020

Daporijo, Upper Subansiri District, State of Arunachal Pradesh, India

Seizure of a large Indian civet (*Viverra zibetha*, Appendix III in 14 Asian countries), an Indian hog deer (*Axis porcinus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), 2 Indian giant flying squirrels (*Petaurista philippensis*) and 2 red junglefowls (*Gallus gallus*) at the daily market. The seller fled. The carcasses were burnt on-the-spot on a tyre.

Northeast Now, December 30, 2020.⁸⁵

WESTERN ASIA

LEBANON

December 19, 2020

Beirut, Beirut Governorate, Lebanon

Following information, the Al-Bastah platoon seized 2 lion cubs and a crocodile

(Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II) with a selling price of 900 US\$ by setting up a non-violent ambush on 2 individuals of Lebanese and Syrian nationalities aged 23 and 26 years. Further information led to the seizure by other security forces of 4 sharks, 2 iguanas, a mongoose and about 10 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II) in 3 pet shops. The animals were entrusted to the NGO Animals Lebanon.

L'Orient-Le Jour, December 19, 2020; Lebanese Internal Security Forces, December 19, 2020; The 961, December 20, 2020.⁸⁶



NORTHERN EUROPE

UNITED KINGDOM

OPERATION THUNDER

September 14 - October 11, 2020
United Kingdom



In one month of implementation of the international Thunder operation under the authority of Interpol, British customs seized elephant tusks and worked ivories, furniture made from Brazilian rosewood (*Dalbergia nigra*, Appendix I), star cacti (*Astrophytum asterias*, Appendix I), beauty products made from cacti, orchids and crocodile blood (Crocodylidae, Appendix I or II), agarwood items (*Aquilaria* spp., Appendix II), live corals, stuffed butterflies and other underground goods such as 174,000 sildenafil tablets from India, 2.5 kg of heroin from Kenya to the Netherlands, 500 grams of cocaine from Nigeria to India, 500 grams of cocaine from Ghana to Australia, 8 kg of khat from Kenya to Sweden.

Why is it not every day Operation Thunder? Because there are not enough customs officers.
UK Government, November 10, 2020.⁸⁷

November 11, 2020

Scotland, United Kingdom

Seizure in Asian shops of dried seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp., Appendix II) and various quackery products based on by-products of rhinoceros, tiger, turtle and bear (Ursidae, Appendix I or II) or pretending to be so. The police remind that 30,000 plant and animal species are internationally protected and that selling or buying medicine made from one of these species is illegal and likely to result in a conviction.

Daily Record, November 12, 2020.⁸⁸



OPERATION WINGSPAN

October-Early December 2020

Scotland, United Kingdom



300 shops selling antiques, retro and vintage clothing and animals were visited by the competent services to inform the operators of the violations of the CITES Convention they may commit. Several dozen worked ivories, fur coats, handbags and other fashion accessories made from reptile skins were seized.

Wingspan 2nd phase will focus on freshwater pearl mussels (*Margaritifera margaritifera*) and fish poaching, deer poaching, bat habitat vandalism, raptor persecution and hare coursing. Special attention will be paid to badger persecution. The charity Scottish Badgers will help the police to identify badger habitats and already recalls that badgers and their sets are provided protection by law. Happy badgers in Scotland, unhappy badgers in France!

It's a spate of good news from Scotland: Finn's Law, named after the sniffer dog which was seriously injured on duty, strenghtens the deterrent powers of the judge: 5 years in prison for repeat offenders or serious cases of animal cruelty. Organisers of animal fights are in the radar, as are serial smugglers and fanatic raptor shooters. The fines are commensurate.

The Scotsman, December 16, 2020; Edinburg Evening News, December 5, 2020.⁸⁹

December 1st, 2020

Wales, United Kingdom

Entry into force of the ban on the use of wild animals in travelling circuses.

South Wales Argus, December 1st, 2020.⁹⁰

December 10, 2020

Telford, Shropshire County, England, United Kingdom

Hundreds of live animals, including snakes, spiders, lizards and tortoises, most of them fraudulently imported, are seized in all four corners of the city of more than 155,000 inhabitants. The survivors were taken in by the RSPCA. A man and a woman aged 32 are in pretrial detention. They are suspected of trading in exotic animals.

Shropshire Live, December 11, 2020; BBC, December 12, 2020.⁹¹

SWEDEN

October 27, 2020

Alingsås Municipality, Västra Götaland County, Sweden

An man whose identity is not disclosed is sentenced at first instance to 16 months in prison for possessing and attempting to sell bear (*Ursidae*, Appendix I or II) claws, python (*Pythonidae*, Appendix I or II) skin, golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, Appendix II) feathers, wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) skins and other parts of animals protected by the CITES Convention through the Facebook group Norwegian Indian & Trapper Association.

National Wildlife Crime Unit, December 7, 2020.⁹²



WESTERN EUROPE

BELGIUM

OPERATION THUNDER

October 2020

Brussels Airport, Province of Flemish Brabant, Flemish Region, Belgium

During 4 days, customs officers searched the luggage of passengers coming from Central and West Africa and travelling to Asia. One monkey (order Primates, Appendix I or II), 3 kg of crocodile (*Crocodylidae*, Appendix I or II) meat and 3 dead porcupines (family *Hystriidae*) were seized. The "bushmeat" toll is significant in these times of Covid when the number of flights and passengers is reduced.

Bruxelles City News, November 9, 2020.⁹³

November 10, 2020

Forest, Brussels-Capital Region, Belgium

The educational farm at the Koranic school El Hikam (Wisdom) was not educational at all, except to show the worst. Eurasian eagle owls (*Bubo bubo*, Appendix II), rheas (*Pterocnemia pennata*, Appendix I or II, or *Rhea americana*, Appendix II), alpacas (*Vicugna pacos*), ostriches (genus *Struthio*), Patagonian maras (*Dolichotis patagonum*) and ponies were wading in urine and excrement-smelling mud. "Even in the worst circuses, which were still allowed in Belgium a few years ago, I have never seen such pitiful keeping conditions for exotic animals," says the head of Animals in Peril, one of the associations that took charge of the mud cast away.

RTBF, November 11, 2020.⁹⁴

THE NETHERLANDS

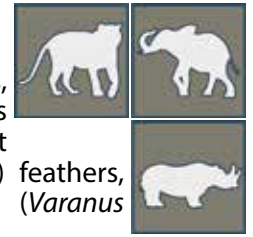
September-October 2020

The Netherlands

Seizures of leopard skins, ivory fragments, a rhinoceros horn, monkey skulls, parrot (*Psittacidae*, Appendix I or II) feathers, monitor lizard skin bags (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II) and a common marmoset (*Callithrix jacchus*, Appendix II) for sale via the Internet, a live northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*, Appendix II), coral, 30,000 cacti from Guatemala and 4,000 packs or tubes of alternative "medicines" made from extracts of protected cacti and orchids.

Since the opening by the Ministry of Agriculture in cooperation with Ifaw and WWF of a return desk for wildlife products, the marketing of which is prohibited except on possession of authentic documents of origin, 19 ivory tusks, 350 worked ivories, sea turtle shells, corals and animal furs have been voluntarily handed over by citizens who can remain anonymous under these circumstances. The wildlife by-products are then destroyed or used for educational purposes.

Government of the Netherlands, December 21, 2020; Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, December 23, 2020; Dutch customs, December 28, 2020; Overheid, January 13, 2021.⁹⁵



November 10, 2020

Oss, Province of North Brabant, The Netherlands

Hans Timmers, operator of Timmers Gems, was sentenced to one year in prison, six months of which were suspended, and fined 20,000 € (23,400 US\$). His accomplice Erick Roer was sentenced 2 years ago in Indonesia to 2 years in prison and a fine of 3,560 US\$. Roer bought sawfish rostra (*Pristidae*, Appendix I), monitor lizard skins (*Varanus* spp., Appendix I or II), coral branches and other parts of endangered species in Indonesia and shipped them by sea container to Rotterdam via China (see "On the Trail" n°14 p.109 and n°27 p.124).

Omroep Brabant, October 12, 2020; Algemeen Dagblad, November 20, 2020.⁹⁶



SOUTHERN EUROPE

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

October 22, 2020

Ulog, Kalinovik Municipality, Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina

In the name of the so-called renewable energy, the Neretva Gorge is threatened to become a 30 km long series of dams, pipes, turbines and plants thanks to the expertise of engineers from Sinohydro, a specialist in dam construction in China. The NGOs Center for Environment, Aarhus Center Sarajevo, Riverwatch, EuroNatur, ClientEarth and CEE Bankwatch Network have filed a lawsuit against the destruction permit issued by the Ministry of Land-Use Planning and bring the dispute to the attention of the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats. The environmental impact assessment was a rush job. The Bosnian Institute for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage has expressed its opposition to the project. The clearing of land, the blasting of rock walls, the opening of work site roads, the flooding of the upper valley by the main dam reservoir will expel otters (*Lutrinae* spp., Appendix I or II), brown bears (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II), grey wolves (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II), white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) and Adriatic trout (*Salmo obtusirostris*).



According to the Save the Blue Heart of Europe campaign, there are 3,000 hydroelectric dam projects in the Balkans (Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Northern Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia). All these projects in remote areas expose local biodiversity to habitat destruction and poaching.

Save the Blue Heart of Europe, October 22, 2020; Emerging Europe, October 22, 2020.⁹⁷

ITALY

OPERATION THUNDER

September 14 - October 11, 2020

Italy

Operation Thunder claims responsibility for the seizure of 3 parrots (Psittacidae, Appendix I or II), a python (Pythonidae, Appendix I or II), 23 turtles (order Testudines), 828 passerines (order Passeriformes) and 2 red-necked wallabies (*Macropus rufogriseus*). The overall value of the animals seized is estimated at 71,000 € or 83,000 US\$.

Ambient&Ambienti, November 10, 2020.⁹⁸

December 22, 2020

Montignoso, Province of Massa-Carrara, Region of Tuscany, Italy



Six red-billed leiothrix (*Leiothrix lutea*, Appendix II), 2 hawfinches (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*), 3 Eurasian siskins (*Spinus spinus*), one chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*), 10 common blackbirds (*Turdus merula*), 36 true thrushes (genus *Turdus*), 20 tortoises, one freshwater turtle (red-eared slider, *Trachemys scripta elegans*), 4 kg of marijuana, one hand grenade, 801 ammunitions of various calibres including 7 for anti-aircraft guns, 5 firearms, 3 kg of gunpowder, and stuffed animals. The man at whose home the bestiary and the mess were found and seized was placed under house arrest with the obligation to wear an electronic tagging device pending trial.

Eco Della Lunigiana, December 23, 2020.⁹⁹

December 26, 2020

Palermo, Metropolitan City of Palermo, Region of Sicily, Italy

Sequestration of 2 tigers (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I), 4 lions (*Panthera leo*, Appendix I), a tigon and a hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) exploited without authorisation by a circus.

ViViCentro, December 26, 2020.¹⁰⁰



PORTUGAL

December 17, 2020

Azambuja, District of Lisbon, Portugal

Slaughter of 540 deer (genus *Cervus*) and wild boars (*Sus scrofa*) in a private hunting reserve. About 15 Spanish hunters paid 8,000 € for the pleasure of shooting on sight the mammals surrounded by fences. Environment Minister Joao Pedro Matos Fernandes called the killing "a vile and hateful act". The safari operator's hunting licence has been suspended. The Portuguese press hypothesizes that this mass predation was organised to facilitate the operation of a solar power plant on the site.

Observador, December 21, 2020; Daily Sabah, December 25, 2020.¹⁰¹

EASTERN EUROPE

RUSSIA

Early October 2020

Birilyusky District, Krasnoyarsk Krai, Russia

Seizure in a dacha of 2 bear (*Ursidae*, Appendix I or II) paws, 2 sturgeons (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II), a western capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*) and a hazel grouse (*Tetrastes bonasia*), meat of elk (*Alces alces*) and beaver (genus *Castor*). According to TVK Krasnoyarsk, the damage to wildlife is equal to 10,000 US\$.

Komsomolskaïa Pravda, October 2, 2020.¹⁰²

OCEANIA

NEW ZEALAND

OPERATION THUNDER

September 14 - October 11, 2020

New Zealand

Seizures in parcels from abroad of a monkey (Appendix I) skull, canned whale (Cetacea, Appendix I or II) meat, sperm whale teeth, a knife with a crocodile (*Crocodylidae*, Schedule I or II) skin sheath, giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*, Appendix II) bones and several traditional Chinese medicine products made from endangered animals, which are believed to flow into New Zealand to boost the recipients' immunity during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Radio New Zealand, November 13, 2020; Stuff, November 13, 2020.¹⁰³

VARIOUS MARINE AND FRESHWATER SPECIES

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

19 October 2020

Sir Lowry's Pass, Western Cape Province, South Africa

The car was being chased on suspicion of abalone trafficking. At 6.40 a.m. it was finally stopped. On board were 68 abalones, 235 live crayfish and 2 crayfish tails.

SAPS, October 19 2020.¹

SENEGAL

OPERATION THUNDER

October 4, 2020

Dakar Airport, Dakar Region, Senegal

Arrest of 2 Chinese nationals about to return home. 16 sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) teeth in the form of pendants, 34 kg of a bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*) swim bladders and 4.6 kg of fins were seized from their luggage. Customs officials seized 40.7 kg of shark fins the same night.

Dakaractu, October 6, 2020; Le Quotidien, October 8, 2020; EnQuête+, October 8, 2020; L'As, October 8, 2020; EAGLE, October 2020.²



AMERICA

BRAZIL

OPERATION POSEIDON

FAMILY AFFAIRS

October 7, 2020

Cabo Frio and São Pedro da Aldeia, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The investigation led by the Cabo Frio prosecutor began 3 months ago. It led to the search of 2 warehouses used as storage place by a gang of wildlife smugglers, one in Cabo Frio and the other in São Pedro da Aldeia, right next to it. Sharks, rays, seahorses, corals and starfish were caught off Marataízes in the State of Espírito Santo, transported through Cabo Frio before being sold throughout the country. José Ricardo de Oliveira Melo and Ricardo Castro de Oliveira Melo, father and son, are being questioned by the police. They are suspected of being at the head of the network. They are also the owners of "Centropyge", an aquarium shop in Cabo Frio. A second establishment, "Mundo dos Peixes", located 50 metres away, was reportedly closed by Ibama after a negative assessment. The survivors were handed over to AquaRio.

Brasil123, October 7, 2020; Tribuna de Petrópolis, October 7, 2020.³

COLOMBIA

End of October 2020

Serrana Bank, San Andrés, Departments of Providencia and Santa Catalina, Colombia

Seizure by the Colombian Navy of 8 tonnes of crustaceans and parrotfishes (family Scaridae) on board 2 Jamaican vessels while fishing. The San Andrés archipelago is about 650 km off mainland Colombia. Its surface area is 52.5 km². It allows Colombia to have an Exclusive Economic Zone in the Caribbean Sea. On November 10, 2000, the archipelago was declared a biosphere reserve by UNESCO under the name Seaflower.

Semana, October 23, 2020.⁴

PERU

Mid-November 2020

Province of Sullana, Department of Piura, Peru

Seizure of 1,939 kg of shark fins equivalent to about 2,000 sharks. The value is estimated at 256,000 sols or 71,100 US\$ and 37 US\$/kg. It is in the interest of the traffickers to fraudulently export fins to Peru. The commercialization of fins is prohibited in Ecuador. Once in Peru, the fins cut somewhere between Manta and Guayaquil can be mixed up with the flow of "legal" Peruvian fins or with the network that is smuggling the undeclared fins towards the Chinese fishing fleet operating in the EEZ of Peru. One of the porbeagle fin seizures in the port of Callao prevented a smuggling to Portugal. However, the introduction of finned shark carcasses into Peru has no economic justification. Yet many sharks travel the road between Ecuador and Peru. Approximately 28 tons of beheaded and finned bodies were seized during 2020, mainly shortfin makos (*Isurus oxyrinchus*, Appendix II), hammerhead sharks (genus *Sphyrna*, 3 species in Appendix II), smalltooth thresher sharks (*Alopias pelagicus*, Appendix II), bigeye thresher sharks (*Alopias superciliosus*, Appendix II), and blacktip reef sharks (*Carcharhinus melanopterus*). Some disgruntled people who remember the extravagances of the traffickers think that there is coke in dead sharks.

Perú21, November 24, 2020; Oceana, October 28, 2020.⁵

ASIA

CAMBODIA

December 7, 2020

Kep, Kep Province, Cambodia



The port city is fighting against illegal fishing. Seized electric batteries, diving equipment and nets are destroyed. The offenders are not brought to justice. They acknowledge their offenses in writing and after a reminder of the law, they commit not to do it again. In the provinces of Koh Kong and Kampot, illegal fishing is also targeted by the authorities. It is said to be declining. But the fisheries committee of Koh Traeuy near Kampot is less optimistic than the official reports. Electric fishing continues to wreak havoc.

The Phnom Penh Post, December 7, 2020.⁶

CHINA

November 4, 2020

Yangtze River, China

From the Tibetan plateaus to the China Sea, the Yangtze River, after decades of overfishing, pollution and obstructions to freedom of movement, the best known and most dangerous of which is the Three Gorges Dam, is empty of fish and Yangtze river dolphins, the baijis (*Lipotes vexillifer*, Appendix I). According to the Ministry of Rural Affairs and Agriculture, the Yangtze River once provided Chinese populations with 60 percent of its freshwater fish, and today its contribution is no more than 0,2 percent. In China, statistics hit like a ton of bricks and trigger authoritarian decisions. From January 1, 2021, the revolution will be underway. Commercial fishing will be suspended on the river with an extension to the tributaries and the large adjoining lakes. The embargo will last 10 years. By July 2020, 8,000 fishing boats and 100,000 registered fishermen would have ceased their activities. ...



111,000 fishing boats to be scrapped

... Most fishermen have no other skills. There is a question of helping them in their reconversion in factories or public works. The most pragmatic idea is to enlist some of them in the nautical or land patrols that will monitor the application of the fishing ban between 2021 and 2031. As of November 2, 2020, more than 100,000 boats have been removed from the waters of the Yangtze and destroyed. The perverse effects of this measure, which affects the income and culture of more than 200,000 fishermen and their families, remain to be detected. It is to be feared that freshwater fishermen will be enrolled in the Chinese oceanic fishing fleet and that the already rampant poaching on the Yangtze River will partly replace the reported fishing. China Daily, November 4 and 5, 2020.⁷

KAZAKHSTAN

October 5-November 5, 2020
Caspian Sea, Kazakhstan/ Russia

In anticipation of the peak consumption of black and red caviar during the festive season, Russian and Kazakh naval forces are cooperating in the northern Caspian Sea to track down poachers. "If the Russian border guards arrest Kazakhs, they transfer them to us, if we arrest Russians, we transfer them to them," says Commander Farkhad Mirmanov. The 2 countries exchange nautical information. 5,000 fish were removed alive from nets in one month, as were 19 Caspian seals (*Pusa caspica*). On November 4 and 5 alone, the Kazakh naval police released 58 sturgeons (Acipenseridae, Appendix I or II) and 5 seals off Manguistau. During this month of combating illegal fishing, approximately 190 km of nets were seized and 85 poachers arrested on the Kazakh side. The Kazakh transboundary navy carried out 66 sea trips in the framework of this cooperation. Khabar 24, November 5, 2020.⁸



SRI LANKA

October 21-23, 2020

Off the coast of Kallady and Wakare, Eastern Province, Mannar, Mannar Island, Northern Island, and Kalpitiya, NorthWest Province, Sri Lanka

- Boarding of a trawler. Seizure of shark fins. Arrest of 19 fishermen.
- Seizure of 70,6 kg of dried sea cucumbers in the trailer of a tuk-tuk.
- Seizure of 28 bags of shark fins in a truck. Two arrests.

Sri Lanka Navy, October 28, 2020.⁹

EUROPE

RUSSIA

June 1-October 15, 2020

Korsakov Krai, Sakhalin Oblast, Russia

In four and a half months, the FSB and police seized 15,532 dried and 1,373 fresh sea cucumbers, 846 kg of red caviar, 606 crabs, 2 sturgeons (Acipenseridae, Appendix I or II) including one *Huso sturgeon* (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II), 17,000 fish of other species, crabs, plus 1,000 fishing gears and 47 road vehicles. 14 traffickers were arrested. The fines imposed amounted to 17 million roubles or about 200,000 US\$. The "Putin 2020" operation aimed at curbing poaching of aquatic resources off the 72,000 km² island of 500,000 inhabitants. Komsomolskaya Pravda draws a pessimistic conclusion from this inventory. "The number of poachers per inhabitant in Sakhalin Oblast is not decreasing."

Komsomolskaia Pravda, November 25 2020.¹⁰



October 22, 2020

Krasnodar, Krasnodar Krai, Russia

Three men are sentenced to one year in prison labour. In summer 2019, they transported 43 kg of sturgeon caviar (Acipenseridae spp., Appendix I or II). In a warehouse, police and Rosselkhozadzor (Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance) officers then seized 200 kg of salmon caviar (family Salmonidae) and 166 kg of live crayfish. KubNews, October 22, 2020; Yasno, October 22, 2020; Arguments and Facts, October 22, 2020.¹¹



AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

November 9, December 8, 2020 and May 2021

San Sebastian, Porto Rico, United States of America



Vargas pleads guilty (see "On the Trail" n°29 p.163). Between 2014 and 2016, he operated Caribbean Reefers (sic), a marine aquarium business. Vargas' main activity was, along with his associate Raymond Torres, to dive on reefs and pull out with chisel corals of the genus *Ricordea* and other species restricted to reefs, such as sea anemones. He sold them via eBay under the name "Redragon1975" with misleading names of inanimate objects. The *Ricordea* were still alive and attached to reef fragments. They were shipped by international courier to North America and other continents. Vargas is said to have earned around 100,000 US\$ from this traffic. He was sentenced to 2 months in prison, a supervised release term of 3 years and 300 hours of community service. He had to surrender his fishing permit and pay a fine of 10,000 US\$ and 15,000 US\$ in damages. Torres, his partner, was sentenced to 5 years of probation, 300 hours of community service and a fine of 35,000 US\$.

US Department of Justice, November 9, 2020 and May 18, 2021.¹

ASIA

CHINA

October 2, 2020

Jinan, Shandong Province, China

Seizure of a red coral (genus *Corallium*) bracelet in a parcel from Germany, 25 grams.

Chinese Customs, October 10, 2020.²

October 2020

Off Ningde, Fujian Province, China

1am. The fishing boat is all lights off. When the coast guards approach, she flees. After a chase, the boat is boarded. Seizure of 110 kg of red coral (genus *Corallium*) on board. Five arrests.

Dahe News, October 11, 2020.³

October 2020

Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 11 pieces of red coral (genus *Corallium*) jewellery in a parcel from abroad, rings, necklaces, pendants. Total weight: 59.5 grams.

Chinese Customs, October 26, 2020.⁴

October 13, 2020

Nanning Wuxu International Airport, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China



Seizure of red coral (genus *Corallium*) jewellery. 87 grams.

Chinese Customs, October 20, 2020.⁵

October 27, 2020

Nanning Wuxu International Airport, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

Seizure from an inbound passenger of red coral (genus *Corallium*) bracelets and necklaces, 272 g.

Chinese Customs, November 4, 2020.⁶

October 28, 2020

Gongbei, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Macao



Seizure from a female passenger of 2 kg of red coral (genus *Corallium*) packed in 2 small black plastic bags closed with adhesive tape. On the same day, additional seizures of 15 kg of red coral from 8 passengers.

Chinese Customs, November 12, 2020.⁷

October 29, 2020
Huanggang Border Post, Shenzhen, Guangdong
Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.



Seizure of a sculpture suspected to be made of red coral (genus *Corallium*), 1.6 kg.
Chinese Customs, November 2, 2020.⁸

November 5, 2020
Yining, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region,
China

Seizure of a red coral (genus *Corallium*) pendant, 2.49 grams, in a parcel from abroad declared as "necklace without gemstone".
Chinese Customs, November 13, 2020.⁹

End of November 2020
Dalian, Liaoning Province, China



Successive seizures of a red coral (genus *Corallium*) necklace and a red coral branch.
Chinese Customs, November 26, 2020.¹⁰

INDIA

October 22, 2020
Vadodara, Vadodara District, State of Gujarat,
India

Seizure of 230 kg of coral of an unspecified genus at Ashutosh Gaekwad's home.
The Times of India, October 27, 2020.¹¹

EUROPE

ITALY

November 24, 2020
Bologna-Guglielmo Marconi International
Airport, Metropolitan City of Bologna, Region
of Emilia Romagna, Italy

Seizure of 2 stony corals (Scleractinia order, App. II) in 2 parcels. Total weight: 1.1 kg. One of the recipients was a Russian woman living in Italy. The parcel came from China. It was supposed to contain "plastic decorations" worth 13 € or 16 US\$. She will be fined a minimum of 3,000 € and a maximum of 15,000 € or 3,510 to 17,560 US\$.
Bologna 2000, November 24, 2020.¹²



Caryophyllia inornata (Scleractinia)

CRUSTACEANS



White-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*). Photo Sébastien Sant

ASIA

CHINA

November 4, 2020
Dalian, Liaoning Province, China



Seizure of 10 "ornamental" crustaceans, Brazos dwarf crayfish (*Cambarellus texnanus*) and Argentinean anomurans (*Aegla platensis*), a first in Dalian. Brazos dwarf crayfish are between 2 and 3 cm long. They have only been observed in shallow waters. The Argentinean anomurans are small crustaceans from South America. They rarely exceed 5 cm in length. These 2 freshwater species are still not widely available in the aquarium trade. Chinese Customs, November 5, 2020.¹

EUROPE

IRELAND

December 16, 2020
Dundalk, County Louth, Ireland

Scaletchi Dumitru and Veaceslav Verdes are ordered to make a charitable donation of 1,000 € or 1,190 US\$ to the NGOs Red Door Project and Turas, specialised in the fight against addictions and the improvement of working conditions. In June 2019, they had poached white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*). The authorities found 345 live and 5 dead specimens with them. The species is protected by the Irish Wildlife Act. It is beneficial for ecosystems. It grazes on aquatic plants and prevents their proliferation. It is on the otter's menu. TheJournal.ie, December 17, 2020.²



Argentinean anomuran (*Aegla platensis*)

CLAMS, CONCHES, DATE MUSSELS...

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

July - December 2020

Central Coast and San Luis Obispo County, State of California, United States of America



Recreational fishing does not amuse the pismo clams (*Tivela stultorum*), nor does it amuse the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) agents. A “clammer” wades knee-deep in the Pacific Ocean or digs in the sand with a shovel or stirs up the sand with his feet “like he’s doing the twist or the Chubby Checker,” says a CDFW spokesperson. “We sit back and watch to confirm that the person is picking up clams and carrying them back up the beach.” It takes 10 years for pismos to reach sexual maturity and release the gametes that will save the species from extinction. The minimum diameter required for harvesting is 11 cm. The maximum quantity is 10 specimens per fisherman. All fishermen must have a licence. Since July, more than 30,000 undersized pismos have been seized from scavengers’ looters. 250 offenses have been recorded.

The Mercury News, January 7, 2021.¹

FRANCE

October 5, 2020

Fort-de-France, Department of Martinique, France

The *Glorious*, a fishing vessel from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, was inspected by Customs and Maritime Affairs. 250 kg of queen conch (*Strombus gigas*, Appendix II) meat was seized. The captain claimed that the cargo was destined for Sint Maarten, the Dutch part of the island of Saint Martin, a worthless argument since queen conches are in Appendix II and the Netherlands, like France, is a signatory to the CITES Convention. France-Antilles, October 8, 2020.²

ASIA

CHINA

October 2020

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure of 5 giant clam (*Tridacna gigas*, Appendix II) shells. Total weight: 1.2 kg.

Chinese Customs, October 25, 2020.³

October 13, 2020

Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of 15 bracelets, necklaces and other jewellery made of giant clam (*Tridacna gigas*, Appendix II) shell beads. Total weight: 916 grams.

Chinese Customs, October 21, 2020.⁴

November 2020

Hekou Yao Autonomous County, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Viet Nam.



Seizure by customs of giant clam (*Tridacna* spp., Appendix II) shell jewellery. 302 grams in all.

Chinese Customs, November 30, 2020.⁵

Early November 2020

Jiujiang, Jiangxi Province, China

Seizure of 11 tonnes of black silver pearl oyster (*Pinctada maxima*) shells in a sea container. The declared value is 650,000 US\$. The mother-of-pearl from the shells is generally used to make buttons and other ornaments.

Chinese Customs, November 18, 2020.⁶

December 28-29, 2020

Shanghai Municipality, China

Seizure in 5 parcels from abroad of a bit over 7 kg of buttons, beads and other accessories made of giant clam (*Tridacnidae*, Appendix II) shells.

Chinese Customs, December 30, 2020.⁷

PHILIPPINES

November 23, 2020

Buliluyan, Province of Palawan, Philippines

Seizure of 25 tonnes of giant clam (*Tridacna* spp., Appendix II) shells, known locally as "taklobos", with an estimated value of 25 million pesos or 516,000 US\$. Junie Ocampo is said to be at the centre of the traffic, with dozens of collectors upstream and one or more buyers downstream who have not yet been identified.

Palawan News, November 24, 2020.⁸

EUROPE

SPAIN

October 17, 2020

Pájara and Betancuria, Fuerteventura Island, Province of Las Palmas, Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands, Spain

Seizure in the trunk of 2 cars of 2,000 brown mussels (*Perna perna*) whose catch is prohibited since July 2004. The species is threatened by the plundering in the rocks at low tide by recreational and profit-making fishermen. The animals that were still alive were released. Three poachers were heard by the police. They face a maximum fine of 60,000 €.

Crónicas de Lanzarote, October 23, 2020.⁹

ITALY

November 20, 2020

Gallipoli, Province of Lecce, Region of Apulia, Italy

When the coast guards approached, the poacher left his booty, 3 kg of date mussels (*Lithophaga lithophaga*, Appendix II), and his piolet on site.

Quotidiano Di Puglia, November 20, 2020.¹⁰

December 1st, 2020

Piombino, Province of Livorno, Region of Tuscany, Italy



Seizure by the coastguards of 3.5 kg of date mussels (*Lithophaga lithophaga*, Appendix II). Pulling them out of rock crevices puts both the species and its habitat at risk.

Il Giunco, December 2, 2020.¹¹

ABALONES

Haliotis spp.

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

October 5, 2020

Kleinmond, Western Cape Province, South Africa



Violent riots broke out after the arrest of 5 abalone poachers, including a Senegalese who is believed to be the mastermind of the group, and the seizure of their diving equipment. The abalone mafia blocked the roads by

burning tyres and stoning the police. One protester was arrested and several witnesses were injured, including a Daily Maverick reporter whose jaw was broken by a brick thrown through his car window. Kleinmond is an abalone poaching hot spot.

Daily Maverick, October 6, 2020; GroundUp, October 8, 2020.¹

October 6, 2020

Betty's Bay, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Seizure of 300 abalones and a dozen undersized crayfish worth 3,830 US\$. Four arrests.

SAPS, October 7, 2020.²

October 7, 2020

Wolseley, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Seizure of fresh and dried abalones worth an estimated 57,130 US\$, drying equipment, an illegally held firearm and ammunition at a farm. Two arrests.

Independent Online, October 8, 2020; Eyewitness News, October 8, 2020.³

October 8, 2020

Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

Joint operation by the forces of order and the security company Dark Water Ops following a tip-off. A house was searched and 1,453 fresh and dried abalones with an estimated value of 18,850 US\$ were found. Four arrests.

SAPS, October 14, 2020; Dark Water Ops, October 14, 2020.⁴

October 14, 2020

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa



The search of a clandestine drying facility led to the seizure of abalones valued at 94,240 US\$, ready for delivery, and the arrest of 2 suspects aged 31 and 41.

Yihang Li and Jan Jacobs pleaded guilty. They were sentenced to 5 years imprisonment suspended for 5 years, a fine of R200,000 (13,210 US\$) or in case of non-payment to 2 years imprisonment suspended for 5 years. In addition, each of them must pay a total of R100,000 (6,600 US\$) to the Criminal Asset Recovery Account.

SAPS, October 15, 2020.⁵

October 20, 2020

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Another search and seizure of 40 bags of dried abalones worth over 470,000 US\$. No suspects were at the site.

SAPS, October 21, 2020.⁶



October 21, 2020

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa



At 2 p.m., the police went to the basement of a building in the suburbs where abalones were allegedly stored. They arrived just in time to intercept 2 suspects, aged 29 and 45, loading 23,000 abalones valued at 412,300 US\$ into 3 vehicles.

SAPS, October 22, 2020.⁷

November 11, 2020

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Seizure of 966 kg of dried abalones and 88.6 kg of fresh abalones, with a total value of 83,150 US\$, during a search in the Montague Gardens industrial area. Arrest of a 44-year-old suspect.

SAPS, November 11, 2020; TimesLIVE, November 12, 2020.⁸

November 11, 2020

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

In the Paarden Eiland area, a truck is carrying 437 boxes of abalones intended for overseas export under the New Moon brand. Three men seize the vehicle. The police find the truck in Bloekombos, in front of a braai (barbecue) restaurant. The suspects flee. 200 boxes are found. The value of the abalones is estimated at 60,850 US\$. The couple of owners is charged with possession of stolen property.

SAPS, November 12, 2020.⁹



November 13, 2020

Jeffreys Bay, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

Ten men aged between 29 and 42 were diving for abalone in the middle of the night. They had time to bring 9 abalones to the surface before being arrested by the police.

SAPS, November 14, 2020; Cat White Media, November 14, 2020; Algoa FM, November 14, 2020.¹⁰

November 16, 2020

Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Abalone illegal facility are mushrooming in Cape Town, even in the residential suburb of Edgemoor. Over 8,776 dried and 26 chucked abalone worth 115,000 US\$ were seized and 2 suspects arrested. The abalone were in potato bags.

SAPS, November 16, 2020; Eyewitness News, November 16, 2020; Cape Town Etc, November 17, 2020.¹¹



November 19, 20 and 21, 2020

Kommetjie, Hout Bay and Platboom Beach, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Three localities, 3 days, 3 interventions. SANParks report: 13 poachers arrested, 137 abalones and 10 rock lobsters seized.

SABC News Western Cape, November 24, 2020; Independent Online, November 24, 2020.¹²



November 20, 2020

Boksburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Gang war in the street. At 8 a.m., 2 men get out of a Ford Ranger, riddle Ernie "Lastig" Solomon's BMW with bullets and abscond. The leader of the "Terrible Josters" dies at the wheel of his car. The exchange of fire left another man dead and 3 people wounded. Solomon had previously survived murder attempts and

had unsuccessfully ordered the elimination of his nephew, Horatio "Voudie" Solomon, and Ralph Stanfield, the leader of the "28s".



Ernie "Lastig" Solomon was one of the major figures of organised crime in South Africa. Drugs, cigarettes, alcohol, he was involved in every traffic. Although he did not specialise in abalone trafficking himself, he had a stranglehold on the Overberg and taxed the abalone and crayfish conveyors with an iron fist. This financial manna was of interest to many. TimesLIVE, November 20, 2020; Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, December 2020-January 2021.¹³

November 29, 2020

Eluxolweni, Buffeljagsbaai and Bloubaai, Western Cape Province, South Africa

A spectacular joint operation by the authorities and the security company Bidvest Protea Coin resulted in the seizure of 6,417 abalones, the confiscation of 2 semi-rigid boats and 2 vehicles and the arrest of 5 poachers.

SAPS, December 2, 2020; DefenceWeb, December 4, 2020.¹⁴



**December 1st and 2, 2020
Jeffreys Bay, Eastern Cape
Province, South Africa**

Six suspects are spotted during the night. At their feet, the investigators find diving gear paraphernalia. Max the German shepherd starts acting and finds 4 bags containing 429 abalones hidden in the bushes and 2 other suspects who thought they could escape him.
SAPS, December 2, 2020.¹⁵



**December 10, 2020
Thornhill, Eastern Cape
Province, South Africa**

Alerted by an informant, the police head for Gamtoos River where a boat filled with abalone bags is anchored. Two men are unloading. When he sees the police, the one on board flees on the river. The other is arrested with 12 bags containing 2,343 abalones without their shells and 25 whole abalones.

This last arrest concludes a less intense year than the previous ones. According to Barbara Creecy, Minister of Environmental Affairs, 13 tonnes were seized by the authorities in 2020, compared to 66 in 2018. Covid restrictions allegedly hampered poachers' mobility.

SAPS, December 11, 2020; DefenceWeb, April 9, 2021; Eyewitness News, May 10, 2021.¹⁶

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

REPEATED OFFENSE

**Early November 2020
Elizabeth, State of South Australia,
Australia**

Nicolas Karagiannis, aged 70, is fined the equivalent of 7,700 US\$ and banned from fishing for 10 years. He was arrested on August 29, 2018 off St Peter Island in possession of all the tools to fish abalone and 3 undersized abalones. This was not his first try. In 1998, he was sentenced to 14 months in prison for fishing abalone for commercial purposes, and in November 2014, to 20 months in prison and a 10-year ban on fishing abalone.

The Advertiser, November 7, 2020.¹⁷



**December 12 and 13, 2020
Bunurong Marine National Park, State
of Victoria, Australia**

The 13 FISH hotline for reporting illegal fishing allowed 2 interventions this weekend:

- Arrest of 4 fishermen in possession of 37 abalones, 20 of which were undersized. They were fined nearly 1,000 US\$ each.
- Arrest of 2 fishermen in possession of 44 abalones, 28 of which were undersized. They were fined 1,380 US\$ each.

The abalones were returned to the water.

Victorian Fisheries Authority, January 11, 2021; Herald Sun, January 12, 2021.¹⁸



FAMILY AFFAIRS

**November 20, 2020 - July 2, 2021
Launceston, State of Tasmania,
Australia**

The first trial in November was interrupted after several jurors tested positive for Covid. It has been postponed until July 2021.

Sentencing of Shayne Michael Murphy, 69, a former Labor Party senator, and his wife Ruahua Liu to fines totaling 75,000 AU\$ (47,400 US\$) for attempting in December 2015 to deliver without proof of origin 186 abalones, 37 kg in all, or 200 grams per abalone, to Robert Zhang, a partner in Ash Brothers Seafood in Melbourne. The couple claimed that the abalones were residual stock from their Tasmania Seafood Market, which went out of business in mid-2013. For a number of reasons, including the unsanitary condition of the abalones, the couple's explanation was unconvincing, especially since 2 ex-employees of Tasmania Seafood Market stated that there were no abalones on the shelves at the time of the winding up. The value of the disputed abalones is estimated at 34,000 AU\$ or 26,100 US\$. The Examiner, December 3, 2020 and June 24, 2021; The Mercury, July 2, 2021.¹⁹



SEA CUCUMBERS

Holothuria fuscogilva, *Holothuria nobilis* and *Holothuria whitmaei* (teatfish): Appendix II.
Isostichopus fuscus: Appendix III in Ecuador.

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

December 14, 2020

State of Californie, United States of America. Border with Mexico

Sentencing of John Jaimes Torres residing in Tijuana to 6 months in prison for smuggling brown sea cucumbers (*Isostichopus fuscus*, Appendix III in Ecuador) with a total value of 60,000 US\$ into California between July and November 2019. Torres was a multi-product smuggler. In addition to sea cucumbers, he added alcohol, medications and cigarettes. He must also make restitution of 10,000 US\$ in damages to the government of Mexico.

US Department of Justice, December 14, 2020.¹



ASIA

CHINA

Mid-October 2020

Manzhouli, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China. Border with Russia

Seizure of 405 kg of dried sea cucumbers, 92 kg of jade and 175 cartons of electronic cigarettes under the false floor of a Russian truck.

Chinese Customs, October 18, 2020.²

INDIA

October 5, 2020

Agatti Island, Lakshadweep District, Lakshadweep Union Territory, India

Seizure of 22 dried sea cucumbers. The value is estimated at 2 million rupees or 27,000 US\$ and more than 1,000 US\$ per individual. The high-value species fished around the archipelago are white teatfish (*Holothuria fuscogilva*, Appendix II), black teatfish (*Holothuria nobilis*, Appendix II) and pineapple sea cucumbers (*Thelenota ananas*). The dream of the "no-fishing zone" as mentioned in "On the Trail" n°19 p.17 and n°24 p.20 is difficult to achieve. "We have completed the recruitment of 200 personnel for the Lakshadweep Marine Wildlife Protection Force which will be deployed across anti-poaching camps across uninhabited islands by November 1".

The Hindu, October 7, 2020; Hindustan Times, October 7, 2020; SPC Beche-de-mer Information Bulletin #41, March 2021.³

October 9, 2020

Agatti Island, Lakshadweep District, Union Territory of Lakshadweep, India

Seizure of 220 sea cucumbers. Total weight 155 kg. Value equal to 211,592 US\$, that is 1,360 US\$/kg. They were ready to be shipped on a dock of the island. They would have been poached off uninhabited islands, the islands of Bitra and Perumalpar. Since the beginning of the year 2020, nearly 1,700 kg of sea cucumbers have been seized. The authorities of the archipelago recognize that the seizures on the main island are derisory compared to the smuggling being afoot every day or so through transshipments at sea. "Due to inclement weather conditions, inadequate manpower and non-availability of patrolling vessels to move our central flying squad with adequate forces, the department is facing difficulties in preventing such large scale poaching, and needs immediate support" says Damodhar AT, chief wildlife warden of the archipelago.

Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change, October 11, 2020; Hindustan Times, October 11, 2020.⁴

November 3, 2020

Vethalai, Ramanathapuram District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seizure of 3 tonnes of dried sea cucumbers presumably destined to Sri Lanka by sea. The local value is estimated at 10 million rupees or 134,400 US\$ and 45 US\$/kg. The catching of sea cucumbers is prohibited in all seasons and for all species in India. In Sri Lanka, it is still allowed for some fishermen who benefit from a grandfather clause. Once in Sri Lanka, sea cucumbers poached in southern India are "cleared" and exported to China.

Outlook India, November 3, 2020.⁵



November 7, 2020

Off the coast of Rutland Island, Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, India



Thanks to a coordinated action of air assets and the patrol boat *Rajkiran*, a Burmese fishing boat was boarded in the south of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. There were 60 kg of sea cucumbers on board and 12 fishermen working in appalling conditions at least 500 km from their home port. Indian Coast Guard, November 7, 2020.⁶

December 15, 2020

Vembar, Thoothukudi District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Early morning seizure of 955 kg of dried sea cucumbers in a truck 55 km from Tuticorin. One man is arrested, 5 accomplices ran away. The Times of India, December 17, 2020.⁷

SRI LANKA

September 30 - October 14, 2020

Talaimannar, Mannar Island and off the coast of Guru Nagar, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of about 150 sea cucumbers. Arrest of 5 fishermen. Seizure of a boat and diving equipment. The most commercially sought-after species off Sri Lanka are brown sandfish (*Holothuria spinifera*) and giant bêche-de-mer (*Thelenota anax*). Sri Lanka, October 15, 2020.⁸

October 31 - November 5, 2020

Mannar Island, Thunukkai and Arippe, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

- Seizure of 1,544 sea cucumbers in 5 boats. 21 fishermen were arrested. Boats, diving equipment and other fishing gear were also seized.
- Seizure of 63 boiled sea cucumbers in a private property.
- Seizure of 642 sea cucumbers, 4 boats, diving and fishing equipment on the beach. Arrest of 19 poachers.

Sri Lanka Navy, November 6, 2020.⁹

EUROPE

ITALY

October 26, 2020

Taranto, Province of Taranto, Region of Apulia, Italy

The coastguards found 80 kg of sea cucumbers in 2 buckets stashed in the San Vito mussel farms. They were returned to the sea. Sea cucumbers have been prohibited from fishing in Italy since February 27, 2018. The Ministry of Fisheries considers that sea cucumbers play an essential role in the productivity of the marine ecosystem and its ecological balance. Sea cucumbers in Italy, see "On the Trail" n°17 p. 8, n°20 p.13, n°23 p.10, n°25 p.12 and n°27 p.14. TarantoBuonaSera.it, October 27, 2020.¹⁰

RUSSIA

October-November 2020

Slavyanka, Nakhodka, Sukhodol Bay, Vladivostok, Primorye Krai, Russia

- More than 6,000 sea cucumbers in a vehicle. They had just been fished. They were returned to the sea. Arrest of a resident of Slavyanka.

- Seizure in Nakhodka in a workshop occupied by a foreigner of 15,700 sea cucumbers in the process of drying on racks or distributed in bags and ready to be delivered to an unknown destination. Presumably China.

- Seizure near Sukhodol Bay of 3,500 sea cucumbers, total weight 200 kg.



- Seizure of 20,400 boiled and 4,000 fresh sea cucumbers in the industrial port area of Vladivostok. GTRK Vladivostok, October 27, 2020; Fishnews, November 3, 2020.¹¹

October 2020

Khasansky District, Primorsky Krai, Russia

The two poachers were caught transporting 473 sea cucumbers valued at more than 300,000 roubles or a bit over 3,780 US\$ and 8 US\$ per specimen. The "trepang" poaching season begins in September in Peter the Great gulf. Izvestia, November 16, 2020.¹²

Mid-November 2020

Ussuriysk and Slavyanka, Primorsky Krai, Russia

- Seizure in premises rented by "foreigners" of 450 kg of dried sea cucumbers bound for China.
- Seizure of 26 kg of sea cucumbers.

UssurMedia, November 17, 2020; Observer Network, November 17, 2020.¹³

OCEANIA

PALAU

Mid-December 2020

Helen Reef, Hatohobei State, Palau

Sea cucumbers take part in politics. A Chinese fishing boat is boarded by a naval patrol in the territorial waters of the archipelago and diverted to Koror. There were 225 kg of sea cucumbers on board. The 28 Chinese crew members and the 19 sailors of the patrol boat were quarantined to prevent the introduction of Covid-19 into the archipelago. Palau comprises 500 islands. It is one of Taiwan's last allies in the Pacific Ocean. ...

... China has been encouraging a tourist boycott of the archipelago for 3 years. The patrol boat that intercepted the Chinese vessel had just been delivered by Australia. President Tommy Remengesau wants the United States of America to establish a military base on the archipelago. The Chinese fishermen are from Hainan province, more than 1,700 miles away. The Guardian, December 15, 2020; Channel News Asia, December 15, 2020.¹⁴



PAPUA NEW GUINEA

November 20, 2020

Lorengau, Manus Island, Manus Province, Papua New Guinea

A Vietnamese and an Indonesian were trafficking in sea cucumbers. They were both fined the equivalent of 2,900 US\$. Post-Courier, November 25, 2020.¹⁵



Black sea cucumber (*Holothuria leucospilota*). Photo Kelptaylor

SEAHORSES AND PIPEFISH



Spiny seahorse (*Hippocampus guttulatus*). Photo Stefan Pav

Hippocampus spp., Appendix II

AMERICA

Mid-November 2020

Province of Sullana, Department of Piura, Peru

Seizure of 118 kg of dried seahorses. The value is estimated at 19,440 sols or 5,400 US\$ and 46 US\$/kg. Perú21, November 14, 2020.¹

ASIA

CHINA

October 29, 2020

Yantian, Guangdong Province, China



Seizure in a postal parcel from abroad of 10 dried seahorses with a total weight of 66 g. Average weight of each individual is 6.6 g. Chinese Customs, November 4, 2020.²

October 30, 2020

Fangchenggang, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

Seizure of 13,991 dried seahorses with a total weight of 17 kg, i.e. 1.2 g per individual, on a bus heading for Guangzhou. The trafficker had bought them for 20,000 yuan or 3,000 US\$ in Dongxing near the border with Viet Nam. His plan was to sell them in Guangzhou.

Xinhua, November 8, 2020.³

November 8, 2020

Maluzhen, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China. Border with Viet Nam

Seizure by a flying squad of 14,160 seahorses. The total weight is 23 kg or 1.62 g per individual. The 2 passengers of the vehicle are held in pre-trial custody.

Guangxi Border Inspection Station, November 19, 2020.⁴



November 2020

Jiangyin, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure of 10 dried seahorses by the customs, with a total weight of 50 g, i.e. 5 g per individual. Chinese Customs, November 30, 2020.⁵

November 25-26, 2020

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China



Seizure of 75 kg of seahorse with an estimated value of one million HK\$ i.e. 129,000 US\$ and 1,720 US\$/kg. The shipment came from Indonesia via Shenzhen. On the theoretical basis of 4 g, the seizure represents 18,750 seahorses. Hong Kong Customs, December 1st, 2020.⁶

December 28, 2020

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China



Seizure of 45 dried seahorses with a total weight of 145 g, i.e. 3.2 g per individual, in the luggage of a passenger from South-East Asia. Chinese Customs, January 13, 2021.⁷

VIET NAM

End of October 2020

Cao Bang Province, Viet Nam



Destruction by fire of 50 kg of dried seahorses and 12 kg of dried alligator pipefish (*Syngnathoides biaculeatus*) under surveillance of the authority in charge of seizure and evidence management. Haiquan Online, October 27, 2020.⁸

EUROPE

SPAIN

End of November 2020

Mar Menor, Region of Murcia, Spain

The latest census by the NGO Hippocampus is appalling. Due to the overexploitation of the lagoon and the proliferation of invasive and predatory species such as the blue crab (*Callinectes sapidus*), the population of “caballitos del mar” has collapsed. From 48,000 individuals in 2017-2018, it has dropped down to 1,350 in 2020. Hippocampus hopes that this warning will lead the highest authorities to react and that the spiny seahorse (*Hippocampus guttulatus*, Appendix II) will be included in the national list of endangered species as soon as possible.

Mar Menor is a 135 km² salt lagoon separated from the Mediterranean by a 22 km long sandy bank home to pink flamingoes, seahorses and giant nares. It is a fragile ecosystem that is threatened by large-scale nitrate discharges from agriculture and livestock farming.

La Opinión de Murcia, November 30, 2020.⁹

MARINE OR FRESHWATER FISH INCLUDING SHARKS AND STURGEONS



Blackstripe coris (*Coris pictoides*). Photo Craigjhowe

NORTHERN AMERICA

TUNISIA

November 8, 2020

Téboulba, Governorate of Monastir, Tunisia



A 4-metre long female great white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*, Appendix II) is cut into steaks in a fish store. A part of the public opinion is outraged.

Réalités, November 11, 2020; Webdo, November 13, 2020.¹

WESTERN AFRICA

COTE D'IVOIRE

October 17 and 21, 2020

Félix Houphouët-Boigny International Airport of Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire



Seizure of 116.4 kg of shark fins from Pointe-Noire, Republic of Congo.

Seizure of 350 kg of fins followed by the seizure of a large quantity of sea bream viscera in Lome, Togo, thanks to the cooperation between the customs forces of the airports in West and Central Africa.

Both shipments were bound for Asia. They were organized by a Guinean national. He was sentenced to 2 months in prison.

AIRCOP, October 22, 2020; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, November 10, 2020; Born Free USA, March 3, 2021; EAGLE, annual report 2020.²

GAMBIA

November 4, 2020

Port of Banjul, Greater Banjul Area, Gambia

Military staff aboard a Sea Shepherd vessel arrested and diverted four Chinese-flagged trawlers caught red-handed while fishing illegally in Gambian waters. The *Gorde 105*, *Gorde 106*, *Gorde 107* and *Xing Xi Wang 1* were escorted to Banjul. The trawlers have remained under armed guard pending the financial settlement of the dispute. The masters have received a document asking them whether they would prefer to go to court or come to an amicable agreement with the Ministry of Fisheries. The law promulgated under President Yahya Jammeh provides for a minimum fine of 5 million dalasis or 77,800 US\$ for any illegal fishing operations in waters under the authority of the Gambia, but the entourage of his successor Adama Barrow believes that the law in force has no common sense and is at risk of negatively affecting the entire fishing industry.

Since 2016, Sea Shepherd has been working with the governments and armed forces of Gabon, Liberia, São Tomé and Príncipe, Tanzania, Benin, Namibia and Gambia to oppose the illegal practices of foreign fishing vessels.

Sea Shepherd, November 16, 2020; Foroyaa, November 30, 2020.³

In June 2021, the *Gorde 105*, *Gorde 106* and *Gorde 107* were spotted in the Malagasy waters.



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Gorde 105 and *Gorde 106*, August 21, 2019, Atlantic Ocean, Senegal, Dakar



© A K - Fleetphoto

Gorde 107, August 21, 2019, Atlantic Ocean, Senegal, Dakar

EASTERN AFRICA

FRANCE (REUNION)

End of November 2020

Saint-Etienne River, Department of Réunion, France

"Poaching is a curse and it affects all rivers", denounces the federation of fishing and protection of aquatic environments. The Galets River, the Saint-Etienne River, Bras de Cilaos, the whole of Reunion Island is concerned. The fishery officers are doing their best to loosen the grip. 500 fish *Cotylopus acutipinnis*, eel and nets have been seized. Four species of eel are present on the island, Indonesian shortfin eel (*Anguilla bicolor bicolor*), mottled eel (*Anguilla nebulosa*), African longfin eel (*Anguilla mossambica*) and giant mottled eel (*Anguilla marmorata*). It is time to list all eel species in Appendix II of CITES.

Clicanoo, December 12, 2020.⁴

NORTHERN AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

October 1st, 2020

State of Florida, United States of America

Entry into force of the law banning the import of shark fins. Under supervision, export remains possible.

Florida Politics, September 19, 2020.⁵

October 9, 2020

State of Hawaii, United States of America

Hamada Suisan Co. Ltd., the Japanese company that operated the *M.V. Kyoshin Maru No. 20* is sentenced to a 126,000 US\$ fine and a forfeiture of 119,000 US\$ representing the value of the longliner that is no more its property. The 10 Indonesian sailors from the *M.V. Kyoshin Maru No. 20* had cut off the fins of about 100 whitetip sharks (*Carcharhinus longimanus*, Appendix II), silky sharks (*Carcharhinus falciformis*, Appendix II) and bigeye thresher sharks (*Alopias superciliosus*, Appendix II) and dumped the live and amputated bodies at sea. The Japanese master, master fisherman and chief engineer were aware of the practice, while the instructions were to leave, if any, the sharks on the deck, remove the hooks and throw the whole animals back into the sea. The fins were seized at Honolulu airport when the crew, after a year of tuna fishing in the South Pacific, was about to return to Indonesia (see "On the Trail" n°23 p.12 and n°30 p. 188).

US Department of Justice, October 9, 2020.⁶



October 22, 2020

Everglades City, State of Florida, United States of America

The 7 smalltooth sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*, Appendix I) are scraggy and had their rostra cut. They were dumped like plastic waste on the side of the seaway between Everglades and Chokoloskee. Two small bonnethead sharks (*Sphyrna tiburo*) lie on the ground like waste paper. Over the past century, the smalltooth sawfish have been losing significant ground at sea. Their last viable population is precisely south of Florida. NOAA is offering 20,000 US\$ to anyone who could help to arrest the culprit(s).

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, October 22, 2020.⁷

November 27, 2020

State of Hawaii, United States of America

According to the environmental court, the State Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) is violating the state law by continuing to allow the catching of aquarium fish without requiring an environmental and cultural impact assessment. After an initial Hawaii Supreme Court decision in 2017, the DLNR did no more than ban fine-meshed "invisible" nets and gave free rein to the aquarium industry that plunders ornamental fish on coral reefs with other stratagems than nets. In 3 years, more than 500,000 fish including blackstripe coris (*Coris pictoides*), multiband butterflyfish (*Chaetodon multicinctus*) and yellow tangs (*Zebrasoma flavescens*) have been caught. These fish are herbivorous and regulate algae that are harmful to coral growth. Aquarium fish in Hawaii, see "On the Trail" n°29 p.170 and n°30 p.189.

Earthjustice, November 30, 2020; Hawaii Tribune-Herald, December 1st, 2020.⁸

November 16, 2020

Pittsburgh, State of Pennsylvania, United States of America

Anthony Nguyen, aka JoJo Nguyen or Jackie Lee, had been smuggling Asian bonytongues (*Scleropages formosus*, Appendix I) between 2016 and 2019 under-coverage of his shop Ichiban Tropical Fish. He was also engaged in trafficking snakeheads (family Channidae), an invasive freshwater species, also native to Asia.

He was sentenced to 5 years of probation including 180 days of house arrest and 225 hours of community service.

Pittsburgh Post Gazette, November 16, 2020; U.S. Department of Justice, November 16, 2020 and July 20, 2021.⁹



November 23, 2020

State of Oregon, United States of America

Thomas R. Campbell is sentenced to a 5-year probationary period including a nationwide fishing ban, to pay 6,000 US\$ to the Lacey Act fund, and to 300 hours of community service for repeatedly fishing for bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), an iconic species respected by native populations and protected by federal and Oregon law, in 2017-2018. Bull trout can be fished exclusively in the Metolius River on the condition that they are immediately returned to the water. The species has lost more than half its population in 20 years due to overfishing and pollution. The Metolius serves as a breeding ground for the repopulation effort in other rivers. Campbell focused all his poaching efforts on bull trout and without the slightest concern for the No Kill doctrine, he shared photos of his carnage on social networks.

U.S. Department of Justice, November 23, 2020.¹⁰



LATIN AMERICA

BRAZIL

October 4, 2020

Port of Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil

Seizure in the fishing port during the piracema of 1,500 kg of fresh arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) and 500 kg of tambaqui (*Colossoma macropomum*) on board a boat coming from Coari, 350 km upstream from Manaus. For the record, piracema is the period closed for fishing, which is supposed to guarantee the sustainable development of freshwater fish.

A Crítica, October 5, 2020.¹¹

October 24, 2020

Macapá, State of Amapá, Brazil

Seizure of pacus (*Myleus pacu*), butterfly peacock bass (*Cichla ocellaris*), streaked prochilods (*Prochilodus lineatus*) and catfish (50 tonnes) caught during the piracema. In good sanitary condition, they were handed over to charity.

Portal Amazônia, October 25, 2020.¹²

November 17, 2020

Belo Horizonte, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil

The 2 men who were in possession of 5 freshwater stingrays (genus *Potamotrygon*, 25 species listed in Appendix III in several South American countries) were fined 5,900 reais, i.e. 1,020 US\$. Victims of international trafficking, they are seized all around of the world (see "On the Trail" n°8 p. 4, n°16 p. 8, n°17 p. 9, n°19 p. 10-11, n°28 p. 21, n°29 p. 171, n°30 p. 190).

Itatiaia, November 17, 2020.¹³



November 18, 2020

Coari, State of Amazonas, Brazil

The ship was heading for Manaus. She was arrested on the Rio Solimões, a tributary of the Amazon. In the cold storage room, there were 116 arapaimas (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II). They were seized and handed over to schools and charities. BNC Amazonas, November 18, 2020.¹⁴

December 3, 2020

Nova Canaã do Norte, State of Mato Grosso, Brazil

Seizure of 18 pacus (*Myleus pacu*), one payara (*Hydrolycus scomberoides*), 2 golden dorados (*Salminus brasiliensis*) and 29 *Brycon cephalus* during the piracema season from October 2020 to late January 2021. The 2 poachers were tracking fish and terrestrial animals. In their vehicle, 4 dead pacas, 2 firearms were seized along with the fish and fishing gear.

O Documento, December 4, 2020.¹⁵



Golden dorado (*Salminus brasiliensis*)

December 22, 2020

Altamira Airport, Altamira, State of Pará, Brazil

A lady was about to fly to Manaus via Belem. In her luggage, there were water bags containing 164 ornamental fish including zebra plecos (*Hypancistrus zebra*, Appendix III, Brazil), small fish whose capture is prohibited in Brazil and that are appreciated in aquariums all over the world. Already a month before, the luggage of 3 passengers were searched by the federal police and the endangered zebra plecos were swimming in plastic water bubbles. A female mule had escaped.

G1, December 22 2020.¹⁶



December 27, 2020

Port of Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil



Seizure on board the A. Nunes of 1,530 kg of arapaima fillets (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II) and 300 kg of pacu (*Colossoma macropomum*) with an estimated trade value of 27,000 reais or 5,030 US\$. The fish were caught during the season closed for fishing.

Portal do Holanda, December 27, 2020.¹⁷

COLOMBIA

Early October 2020

Leticia, Department of Amazonas, Colombia

Seizure on board a wooden boat of 5,090 kg of arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*, Appendix II), the freshwater giant fish in the upper Amazon basin. The AUNAP (Autoridad Nacional de Acuicultura y Pesca) prohibits the fishing of the species.

Diario La Libertad, October 9, 2020.¹⁸

End of November 2020

Colombia

Colombia is about to prohibit shark fishing with no exception. President Iván Duque plans to compensate artisanal fishermen in the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean. The details are not yet known. They concern at least 550 families of fishermen. 76 shark species out of the 500 of the order of selachians can be found in the waters off Colombia.

13.cl, November 27, 2020.¹⁹

FRANCE (FRENCH GUIANA)

November 2020

Amana Nature Reserve, Territorial Collectivity of Guiana, France

Seizure of 3 kg of acoupa weakfish (*Cynoscion acoupa*) swim bladders on 2 "tapouilles". The same principle goes for grey snappers as for sharks. The acoupa weakfish are caught, deprived of their swim bladder and dumped in the sea bin. "On the Trail" has highlighted the downward slide of the acoupa weakfish swim bladders market in Guiana's fishing ports and the development of a smuggling business towards Asia (see n°19 p.12, n°21 p.12, n°23 p.15, n°26 p.15). The situation is getting worse.



In 2014, fresh bladders were worth 40-45 € per kg, today they are 170-180 €/kg. A kilo of dried bladders reaches 1,000 €/kg. The acoupa weakfish swim bladders are progressively replacing those of the Gulf of Mexico totoabas. They are the second choice of Chinese consumers. The days are gone when they were in the "the fisherman's cut", good for the poor and for cats. It is a "rush", according to Nicolas Abchéé, a Guianese shipowner, "but the market has to benefit to Guianese" and not to foreign competition, he says. "The Americans consider swim bladder trafficking the same as drug trafficking, so we have to be careful in Guiana." "We should not cut off the head of the goose that lays the golden eggs," according to Michel Nalovic, a fishery engineer at the Guiana Fisheries Committee. "The situation for acoupa weakfish is alarming, with a 27% drop in fish landings. "We are really heading towards a risk of collapse of the resource and an inclusion to the appendices of the Washington Convention," according to Bruno Morin, deputy director of the Sea Directorate in Cayenne. In June 2019, 12 kg of swim bladders were seized from a Brazilian "tapouille".

French Biodiversity Office, December 2020; Guyane la 1^{ère}, August 7, 2019.²⁰

MEXIQUE

October 22, 2020

Mexico International Airport, Mexico

A Venezuelan national has been indicted. He was about to fly to South Korea with 187 totoaba (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) swim bladders. The value of the seizure is estimated at 1.96 million US\$ i.e. 10.480 US\$ each. Profepa, October 26, 2020.²¹

End of November 2020

Mexico, Mexico

6 smugglers were charged with international trafficking of totoaba swim bladders (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) in conspiracy. They remain in pre-trial detention. Mexico City Attorney General has given police officers two months to complete the investigation.

Office of the Attorney General of the Republic, November 20, 2020.²²

THE CARIBBEAN

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Early December 2020

Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic

Seizure of 500 parrotfishes (family Scaridae) in a pick-up truck near the fire station. These herbivorous fish play a key-role in the survival of coral reefs.

Diario Libre, December 10, 2020.²³



Red-banded parrotfish (*Sparisoma aurofrenatum*)

CENTRAL ASIA

KAZAKHSTAN

OPERATION "STURGEON"

September 10 - October 31, 2020

Atyrau Region, Kazakhstan

Seizure of 2 tonnes of fish, most of which are sturgeons (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II), 2 kg of sturgeon caviar and 162 fishing gears. Nur.kz, November 11, 2020²⁴



October 14, 2020

Damba, Atyrau Region, Kazakhstan

North of the Caspian Sea, the Atyrau region is a sturgeon (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) trading spot. Despite a ban on trade, scientific or educational capture and transport, poachers use powerful motorboats and quad on the sea ice to capture them. Sturgeons are sold on the market at 2,500 tenge/kg or 6/kg US\$. People grumble but buy them. In the buses leaving the city, talks are related to the famous beluga (*Huso huso*, Appendix II) and sevruga (*Acipenser stellatus*, Appendix II). "I bought 10 kg of them, the fish is fresh, I'm going to cook beshbarmak" (literally "five fingers", a traditional Central Asian dish usually made of meat that is eaten with the fingers). Polisnews reports that 238 sturgeons weighing a total of 625 kg were seized from a boat on a tributary of the Ural River. A 31-year-old fisherman was put on remand. Azattyq Ruhu, October 15, 2020; Caravan, October 17, 2020.²⁵



REPEATED OFFENSE

October 15, 2020

Munaily District, Mangystau Region, Kazakhstan

Conviction to one year and one month in prison. The sturgeon (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) repeat offender was carrying 7 of them in his car. inAktau, October 15, 2020.²⁶



October 15, 2020

Janaozen, Mangystau Region, Kazakhstan

Seizure in a freezer of 7 sturgeons (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II). Total weight : 20 kg. inAktau, October 19, 2020.²⁷



October 21 and 25, 2020

Aktau, Mangystau Region, Kazakhstan

In the Lada car intercepted at 7.30 a.m., the police found 65 sturgeon fillets (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) with a total weight of 196 kg. Four days later, in another Lada car intercepted at 11.30 p.m., there were 23 sturgeon fillets with a total weight of 65 kg. Khabar 24, October 27, 2020; inAktau, November 13, 2020.²⁸



November 4, 2020

Tupkaragan Mangystau Region, Kazakhstan

District, Region,



Seizure of 52 kg of sturgeon (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) in a private home. The police handed them over to a company licensed for sturgeon trade. Lada, November 4 2020.²⁹

November 9, 2020

Isatai District, Atyrau Region, Kazakhstan

Seizure of 41 sturgeons (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) with a total weight of 136.7 kg from a 27 year-old man. Atyrau City, November 9, 2020.³⁰



November 28, 2020

Atyrau International Airport, Atyrau Region, Kazakhstan

The passenger was about to fly to Moscow with 9 kg of smoked sturgeon (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) in his luggage. He was sentenced to "a restriction of freedom" for one year and six months. From January 2020 to November, 260 kg of sturgeon and 9 kg of caviar were seized at the airport. Inbusiness, November 28, 2020.³¹



EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

October 2020

Xiamen, Fujian Province, China



1,979 kg of bigeye thresher (*Alopias superciliosus*, Appendix II) cartilage and bones concealed in a batch of fish bones and skeletons were seized from a shipment bound for Shanghai. A parapharmaceutical company wanted to extract chondroitin for food supplements from them. Sohu, October 20, 2020.³²

October 25, 2020

Hong Kong International Airport, China

Seizure of 330 kg of mobula ray gills (*Mobula* spp., Appendix II) with an estimated trade value of 900,000 HK\$, i.e. 116,000 US\$ and 351 US\$/kg, in an airfreight parcel from Sri Lanka. Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department, October 25, 2020.³³

October 27, 2020

Hong Kong International Airport, China

The frozen squid from Mexico were not alone. They were mixed with 114 kg of totoaba (*Totoaba macdonaldi*, Appendix I) swim bladders worth 2.3 million US\$ or just over 20,000 US\$/kg. After the seizure, a warehouse was searched and one man arrested.

Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department, October 31, 2020.³⁴

November 9, 2020

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China

Seizure of 2 tonnes of fins from sharks of protected species in a container from Indonesia. Value: 187,000 US\$ or 100 US\$/kg.

South China Morning Post, November 10, 2020.³⁵

REPEATED OFFENSE

November 24, 2020

Tianyuan District, Hunan Province, China



A man was sentenced for electric fishing in a protected section of the Xiang River. After receiving a warning in January, he re-offended in February using the same methods, i.e. an on-board battery and an electrified net. He was sentenced to one year of probation, a six-month suspended prison term and ordered to repopulate the river with 5,760 fry of silver carp (*Hypophthalmichthys molitrix*) and bighead carp (*Hypophthalmichthys nobilis*). Zhuzhou Daily, November 27, 2020.³⁶

SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

INDONESIA

November 8 and 10 and December 6, 2020

Malacca Strait, off Sumatra Island, Indonesia

The Indonesian Navy boarded and diverted 5 Malayan-registered ships engaged in illegal fishing in the Malacca Strait. The crewmen were Burmese, Thai and Indonesian nationals.

The Jakarta Post, November 12, 2020; Xinhua, December 7, 2020.³⁷

PHILIPPINES

November 25, 2020

Mactan-Cebu International Airport, Central Visayas Region, Philippines



Seizure of angelfish (genus *Pterophyllum*) and guppies (*Poecilia reticulata*) in parcels from Taiwan via Hong Kong. Both species are well known to aquarists. Angelfish are native to the cold tropical waters of South America, guppies to Caribbean freshwaters. The parcels were customs declaration-exempt and were not declared to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR). Thousands of specimens were held captive in water bags. UNTV, December 7 2020.³⁸

SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

October 28, 2020

Chennai International Airport, State of Tamil Nadu, India



Seizure of 23.5 kg of dried shark fins with an estimated value of 1.65 million rupees, i.e. 22,380 US\$ and 950 US\$ /kg, in the luggage of 2 Indian citizens flying to Dubai. This is the first seizure of fins during the Covid period.

Zee News, October 29, 2020; Outlook India, October 28, 2020; DNA, October 28, 2020.³⁹

WESTERN EUROPE

FRANCE

October 17, 2020

La Cotinière, Department of la Charente-Maritime, France

During the week, Eric Renaud is the director of the "Organisation de Producteurs de poissons de l'île d'Oléron". The OP, whose offices are located at the island's fish market, brings together a few hundred professional fishermen. At weekends, he goes for recreational fishing with his rigid inflatable boat. Returning from his fishing trip with two other friends on Saturday 17, October, he was greeted by the water brigade of the gendarmerie and agents from the DDTM (Direction Départementale des Territoires et de la Mer). The search of the boat revealed an offense. There were 41 kg of Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) fillets in a cooler. Eric Renaud did not hold a bluefin tuna catching permit, which can be issued conditionally by the Direction Interrégionale de la Mer to recreational fishing clubs and individuals. Moreover, it is forbidden to cut up tuna on board in order to be able to present the fish as a whole in case of an inspection. "My hat as director of the PO is always in my office at the weekends. On Saturdays and Sundays, I am a pleasure sailor. I know the regulations with regard professional fishing, I don't know those for recreational fishing", Eric Renaud told emphatically. The plea was heard by the Board of Directors of the PO, who unanimously decided to maintain Mr Renaud in his position as director, even though all the professional fishermen of the Atlantic coast legitimately protest against the plundering of fish stocks by recreational fishermen. Sud Ouest, October 20 and November 23, 2020; OP de la Cotinière, November 9, 2020.⁴⁰

REPEATED OFFENSE

From November 13 to 15, 2020

Sèvre Niortaise River and Gironde Estuary, Department of Charente-Maritime, France

On the occasion of the autumn tide, the police and the OFB were deployed in the marshes of the Gironde estuary and near the locks of the Sèvre niortaise. 5.5 kg of European glass eel (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II) were seized and 7 poachers will be brought before the courts.

Sud Ouest, November 18, 2020.⁴¹

Mid-December 2020

Martigues, Department of Bouches-du-Rhône, France

The water brigade seized 246 kg of European eels (*Anguilla anguilla*, Appendix II). The proceeds of the sale will be transferred to the Treasury.

Maritima Médias, December 17, 2020.⁴²

THE NETHERLANDS

September 14, 2020

Port of Rotterdam, Province of South Holland, The Netherlands

Seizure of 26,220 kg of shortfin mako shark (*Isurus oxyrinchus*, Appendix II) meat with a commercial value of 52,440 € or 62,500 US\$ and 2.5 US\$/kg in a container from Namibia and bound for Spain.

Government of the Netherlands, December 21, 2020; Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, December 23, 2020; Dutch Customs, December 28, 2020; Overheid, January 13, 2021.⁴³



SOUTHERN EUROPE

SPAIN

End of October 2020

Port of Tarifa, Cadix Province, Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain



Seizure of 11 Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) on the *Nuevo Bamby*. The crew had hidden them under the boat when they learned that she would be inspected at berth. Guardia Civil divers foiled the ploy. The tuna were tied up and towed in midwater.

El Estrecho Digital, October 27, 2020.⁴⁴

ITALY

October 29, 2020

Gaeta, Province of Latina, Region of Lazio, Italy



A pleasure boat was carrying 4 large Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*), which are prohibited at this time of year in the holds, on the decks, on the wharfs and in the fish shops. The captain, who was in his fifties, was fined 5,850 US\$. The Coast Guard handed over the tuna to Caritas.

Temporeale Quotidiano, October 29, 2020.⁴⁵

Mid- November, 2020

Province of Reggio Calabria, Region of Calabria, Italy

Seizure of 26 km of longlines and 118 juvenile swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*), 60 of which were immediately returned to the sea. They were still alive. The operation was carried out by the Coast Guard. The dead swordfish were handed over to charity.

LaC News 24, November 13, 2020.⁴⁶

Mid- November, 2020

Milan-Malpensa Airport, Province of Varese, Region of Lombardia, Italy



A Greek passenger travelling from Moscow had 500 g of Siberian sturgeon caviar (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) in his luggage. 375 g were seized to comply with the derogation allowing the import of 125 g. He was fined 5,000 € or 5,850 US\$.

VareseNews, November 13, 2020.⁴⁷



EASTERN EUROPE

BELARUS

December 24, 2020

Kotlovka, Hrodna Voblasts, Belarus. Border with Lithuania



Seizure of 400 kg of sturgeon caviar (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) shared out in 500 g jars and worth 238,440 US\$ i.e. 596 US\$/kg or 500 €/kg from a truck travelling from Lithuania. The Russian driver was charged with smuggling.

Minsk-News, December 24, 2020.⁴⁸

RUSSIA

Early October 2020

Volodarsky District, Astrakhan Oblast, Russia



Border guards remove nets set by poachers in the Volga Delta and rescue a Caspian seal (*Pusa caspica*) and 50 beluga (*Huso huso*, Appendix II).

Arbuztoday, October 8, 2020.⁴⁹

October 14, 2020

Strejevoï, Tomsk Oblast, Russia



Seizure of 8 Siberian sturgeons (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) in a private home.

GTRK Tomsk, October 14, 2020.⁵⁰

October 16 and 27, 2020

Krugloye and Taganrog, Rostov Oblast, Russia



In the Don delta, which flows into the Sea of Azov, the FSB seized two boats fishing with their lights off at around 1 a.m. The 6 poachers tried to flee. On board were 2 tonnes of scabbard fish, pike and Russian sturgeon (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Appendix II). The ecological damage is estimated at 4 million roubles or 50,790 US\$.

In the Gulf of Taganrog, north-east in the Sea of Azov, 2 poachers on board a boat were netting starry sturgeon (*Acipenser stellatus*, Appendix II). The ecological damage amounts to 800,000 roubles or 10,160 US\$.

Volgodonskaya Pravda, October 16, 2020; Tsargrad TV, October 27, 2020.⁵¹

October 23, 2020

Lenine District, Republic of Crimea, Russia

A fine and a 9 month hard labour sentence for a resident of the village of Chistopolye who was fishing for sturgeon (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) and other fish in the Karalarskiy Nature park in December 2019. Another poacher is waiting for a verdict. In May 2020, he was caught red-handed netting starry sturgeon (*Acipenser stellatus*, Appendix II).

Crimea News, October 23, 2020.⁵²



October 29, 2020

Moscow Oblast, Russia

Seizure of 377 sturgeons (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) in the hidden compartment of a truck travelling from Dagestan. Russian Public Television (OTR), October 29, 2020; Border Service of the FSB, October 29, 2020.⁵³



Early November 2020

Amur Oblast, Russia

A sturgeon farm is engaged in fraudulent practices common to many wild animal farms. In 2020, it produced 4,300 kg of caviar and 19,000 kg of sturgeon fillets, a level of production incompatible with the volume of stocks as declared to the federal control system. The management is suspected of enriching its basins with poached sturgeon or with hybrid sturgeon imported from China. Amurskaya Pravda, November 1st, 2020.⁵⁴



Early November 2020

Tobolsk, Tyumen Oblast, Russia

Appearance of a man caught red-handed poaching Siberian sturgeon (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) in the Irtysh River. He faces up to 4 years in prison. Tumen Today, November 9, 2020.⁵⁵



Mid-November 2020

Krasnoïark, Krasnoyark Krai, Russia

Seizure of 513 sterlet sturgeons (*Acipenser ruthenus*, Appendix II), 19 Siberian sturgeons (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) and 7 kg of caviar in the refrigerated hold of a ship sailing up the Yenisei River. The illegal cargo is estimated to be worth 5.7 million roubles or 71,700 US\$. Our Krasnoyarsk Territory, November 16, 2020.⁵⁶



November 24, 2020

Sliudianka, Irkutsk Oblast, Russia

Seizure of 16 kg of sturgeon caviar (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) in unmarked plastic boxes with no identified origin from a truck travelling from Khabarovsk (3000 km) and heading for Moscow (5000 km away). In 3 months, the police seized 660 kg of sturgeon caviar and 1,158 kg of salmon caviar from 10 trucks. Altair, November 25, 2020.⁵⁷



November 26, 2020

Snezhnogorsk, Krasnoyarsk Krai, Russia

Seizure in the Khantaika River, a tributary of the Yenisei, of a rope to which 24 poached Siberian sturgeons (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) were tied up prior to slaughtering in December when prices for flesh and caviar are at their highest. The fish were released. The poacher was sentenced to 200 hours of compulsory work. MVD Media, November 26 2020.⁵⁸



End of November 2020

Krasnogorsk, Moscow Oblast, Russia

Seizure from a vehicle of 254 Russian sturgeons or osetr (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Appendix II) with a total weight of 824 kg. The trafficker had bought them for 130,000 roubles (1,760 US\$) in the Republic of Dagestan and intended to sell them for a good price in Moscow. IkralInfo, May 5, 2021.⁵⁹



December 10, 2020

Makhatchkala, Republic of Dagestan, Russia

A 53-year-old woman was sentenced to a 3-year suspended prison term and 120 hours of compulsory work for trading in 25 kg of illegally caught sturgeon (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) in April 2020.

RIA Dagestan, December 10, 2020.⁶⁰



December 12, 2020
Dudinka, Krasnoyarsk Krai, Russia

Seizure of 5 sturgeons (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) from the sled of a snowmobile at a roadside check. The driver says they are for his own consumption. He faces a 3-year prison term. The value of the 5 fish is estimated at 800,000 roubles or 10,500 US\$.
 NGS24, December 12, 2020.⁶¹



December 14, 2020
Moscow Federal City, Russia

The FSB seized 10 tonnes of frozen Caspian Sea sturgeon (*Acipenseridae*, Appendix I or II) from a warehouse. In turn, the FSB found a workshop where the sturgeons were being prepared and smoked for the Christmas festivities.
 Lenta.ru, December 14, 2020.⁶²



December 22, 2020
Novosibirsk, Novosibirsk Oblast, Russia

Two suspended prison sentences of 2 and 2.5 years for holding and attempting to sell, between January 2016 and December 2019, 59 Siberian sturgeon (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) and 231 grams of Amur sturgeon caviar (*Acipenser schrenckii*, Appendix II)
 NSK TV, December 22, 2020.⁶³



December 22, 2020
Kobyaysky District, Republic of Sakha, Russia

A 61-year-old man receives a 2 year probation sentence for poaching 19 Siberian sturgeons (*Acipenser baerii*, Appendix II) in the Lena River.
 News.Ykt.Ru, December 22, 2020.⁶⁴



December 24, 2020
Russia

Roskachestvo, Rosselkhoznadzor and Rosrybolovstvo, bodies in charge of the food quality, the detection of pesticides and drugs in food, and the control of fishery products, screened 16 brands of caviar sold in shops or via the Internet, including 14 brands produced in the Russian Federation, one in Belarus and one in Armenia.

Three samples were contaminated with germs and bacteria. Five contain sodium tetraborate, a prohibited preservative. Nine do not notified the use of the preservatives sorbic acid and benzoic acid on the labels. Six do not identify the species of sturgeon from which the eggs are extracted. One is coloured with a prohibited dye and three contain residues of antibiotics administered to the sturgeon during farming that are above the permitted levels. The investigation was launched at the request of Russian sturgeon farmers and caviar producers after caviar was found on the market with Russian origin labels and certificates while it actually originated from China and Uruguay.

IA Krasnaya Vesna, December 24, 2020; Life, December 24, 2020.⁶⁵



December 29, 2020
Khabarovsk Krai, Russia

Sentence of 18 months in prison. Between 2017 and 2019, the man living in Komsomolsk on the Amur was at the head of a small network well equipped with speedboats, nets, means of communication and road transport. Under Article 258-1 of the Penal Code, he was found guilty in conspiracy of capture, possession and transport of aquatic biological resources belonging to species listed in the red book of the Russian Federation and protected by international conventions to which the Federation is a signatory. The priority target of the organisation was the Huso sturgeon (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II). The ecological damage is estimated at 84 million roubles or 1.1 million US\$. At the beginning of the investigation, the police seized 400 kg of sturgeon caviar and 4 tonnes of sturgeon fillets from a processing plant in the Ulchsky district. Property, vehicles and other assets of the convicted person and his accomplices were seized worth up to 17 million roubles or US\$ 222,000.

DV Novosti, December 29, 2020.⁶⁶



**End of December 2020
Primorsko-Akhtarsky
and Kalininsky Districts,
Krasnodar Krai, Russia**

Seizure of 20 kg of sturgeon (Acipenseridae, Appendix I or II), common pike (*Esox lucius*), crucian carp (genus *Carassius*) and salmon (family Salmonidae) caviar and 3 tonnes of poached freshwater fish in cold stores and 500 metres of nets.

KubNews, December 29, 2020.⁶⁷



**End of December 2020
Simferopol-Feodosia
Highway, Republic of
Crimea, Russia**

A man travelling from Khabarovsk was transporting in the back of his car Huso sturgeon (*Huso dauricus*, Appendix II) weighing a total of 18 kg and 35 kg of caviar in 75 unmarked jars, just like grandma's jam. A few end-of-year banquets will not have the dishonour of participating in the extinction of a species.

Kerch FM, December 31 2020.⁶⁸



**Year 2020
Republics of Kalmykia and Dagestan and
Astrakhan Oblast, Russia. Border with
Kazakhstan**

In 2020, the joint forces of Dagestan, Kalmykia and of the Astrakhan Oblast in cooperation with the Kazakhstan border service have seized 4,048 sturgeons (Acipenseridae, Appendix I or II) and 485 km of nets and issued violation tickets to 199 boats poaching in the Caspian Sea.

Border Service of the FSB, January 13, 2021.⁶⁹

UKRAINE

**December 2020
Kharkiv Oblast, Ukraine.
Border with Russia**

In a vehicle that had fallen into a ravine and been set on fire by its vanished passengers, border guards found apparently genuine sturgeon caviar cans (Acipenseridae, Appendix I or II). The truck had come from Russia. In September, the same border guards around Kharkiv seized 600 kg of salmon caviar. Ukrayinska Pravda, December 12, 2020; Strana, December 12, 2020.⁷⁰



OCEANIA

FRANCE

October 2020

Papeete, Tahiti Islands, French Polynesian Overseas Collectivity, France

Seizure on board a Spanish fishing vessel of 2,500 shark teeth (26 kg), 20 kg of shark fins and 200 grams of shark vertebrae. According to the master, sharks are not a priority target, but when they are caught they are kept on board and the seamen extract the most valuable parts. Sharks have several sets of teeth. The teeth arming the jaws wear out over time, fall out and are replaced by waiting teeth. Some species have small dermal teeth on their skin, the tips of which are made of dentin and covered with enamel. The teeth were intended for craftsmen in Tahiti and elsewhere who would have transformed them into pendants and other jewellery.



The teeth and dried fins were handed over by Customs to the Directorate for the Environment (Diren), which will be in charge of identify the species and takethem into safe custody to prevent theft and other diversions. The Diren also inherited 3 sea turtle shells, 3 whale (Cetacea, Appendix I or II) vertebrae, 2 stuffed caimans (Alligatoridae, Appendix I or II) and pink sand illegally taken from Ahe atoll in the Tuamotu archipelago.

Direction générale des douanes et droits indirects, October 23, 2020; Tahiti Infos, October 21 and 27, 2020; La Dépêche de Tahiti, October 28, 2020; Maurice Fontaine & Bernhard Grzimek (dir.). *Le Monde animal en 13 volumes, Tome IV : Poissons 1*, 1975.⁷²

NEW ZEALAND

Year 2020

New Zealand

Blue sharks (*Prionace glauca*) have 2 dorsal fins, a caudal fin, an anal fin, a ventral fin and a pectoral fin. Thanks to them, the blue shark can swim at over 100 km/h. This does not prevent him from ending up in soups. New Zealand exports 13 tonnes of shark fins per year. The sharks are caught "incidentally", brought ashore, stripped of their fins and sliced. The fins are exported. Singapore is the largest importer. "Green" parliamentarians and a few prominent people, such as a former Minister for Natural Resources Protection, want to put an end to this export, which encourages the worldwide consumption of shark fins.

The New Zealand Herald, June 14, 2021.⁷³

ANTARCTICA

October 26-30, 2020

Antarctica



On January 19, the Russian-flagged *FV Palmer* was photographed while fishing by a New Zealand surveillance aircraft in a no-fishing zone in the Antarctic Ocean, 800 km away from where she was supposed to be according to her VMS (Vessel Monitoring System). This satellite anomaly or VMS falsification, which could only have been committed by hacking experts, was exposed at the plenary meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR). The Russians counter-attacked by saying that the "so-called" New Zealand air patrol was not in compliance with the surveillance procedures in the Austral waters, that the photo was not consolidated with the metadata necessary to a clarified interpretation and that a post inspection of the *FV Palmer's* VMS had revealed nothing faulty or suspicious. The USA said that the story was "egregious" and reflected part of a pattern of illegal activity by this vessel. The United Kingdom underlined the casual way in which Russia had handled the event. The European Union said little.

The *Palmer* has not been included in the pirate ship list. The tolerance afforded to the *FV Palmer* may encourage other fishing vessels and flags other than the Russian flag to cheat in the Antarctic Ocean in order to catch Antarctic toothfish (*Dissostichus mawsoni*) or other lucrative species. Stuff, January 9, 2021.⁷⁴

MARINE TURTLES

Marine turtles (families Cheloniidae and Dermochelyidae) are listed under CITES Appendix I, including Ridley sea turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*), Hawksbill sea turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), Kemp's Ridley turtles (*Lepidochelys kempii*), loggerhead sea turtles (*Caretta caretta*) and leatherback turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*).

EASTERN AFRICA

FRANCE (MAYOTTE)

OPERATION NYAMBA 4

Between October 15 and 28, 2020

Papani, Charifou and Moya, Department of Mayotte, France

The hunt for marine turtles by night poachers continues, moonlight or not. Sea Shepherd reproaches the 15 beach guards recruited by the Mayotte departmental council and paid 2,000 € per month with loafing around, hiding evidence and eventually facilitating the dark jobs of looters.

Sea Shepherd, October 15, 16, 23 and 28 and November 6, 2020.¹

November 27, 2020

Department of Mayotte, France

The driver and the passenger pretended they did not know each other. The former allegedly gave the latter a lift without knowing what was in his belongings. However, decoding of their phones revealed 500 calls between the two men. The passenger quickly admitted he had killed a "small turtle". The average weight of marine turtles coming to lay their eggs is 150 to 200 kg, and the 10 kg of frozen turtle meat seized from the passenger's luggage rather prove trafficking in conspiracy. The police at the time of the search of the vehicle and the seizure would have heard the passenger say to the driver "tell them that it is beef or goat meat". The passenger, a Comorian national, was sentenced to an 18-month prison term with a detention order. The driver, a Frenchman and professional electrician, was sentenced to a 12-month prison term with a possibility of adjustment for having transported the meat. He was acquitted of the drunk driving offense that had triggered the police intervention because of a procedural defect in the breathalyser test.

Le Journal de Mayotte, November 30 2020.²



MADAGASCAR

Early October 2020

Fenerive-Est District (Fenoarivo Atsinanana), Analanjirofo Region, Madagascar

Turtle kills. A green turtle, a "fano" in the local language, a *Chelonia mydas* in the scientific language, had remained trapped in an underwater net for several days after its capture by a fisherman and before its sale already dead to several families in the village. The very next day, around 40 people suffered diarrhoea and 2 days later, 3 babies aged 4, 9 and 12 months died. The Ministry of Fisheries, while expressing sadness, recalled that the consumption of "fano" during the hot season exposed the population to food poisoning. Between October and April, toxic micro-algae flourish and green turtles feed on them.

L'Express de Madagascar, October 7, 2020; Zinfos974, October 9, 2020; Linfo.re, October 9, 2020.³

LATIN AMERICA

EL SALVADOR

End of October 2020

Usulután, Departement of Usulután, El Salvador

Seizure on the local market of 336 eggs of marine turtles distributed by dozens in 28 bags. They were transferred to a hatchery just in case... in which case the babies will be returned to the Pacific Ocean coastline.

La Prensa Gráfica, October 29, 2020.⁴

MEXICO

October 8, 2020

San Pedro Huamelula, State of Oaxaca, Mexico

- A man was arrested at 10.15 p.m. He was driving in a van with all lights off on the coastal highway. He was carrying 30,000 olive Ridley turtle eggs.

- Seizure of 30,000 marine turtle eggs plundered from beaches and arrest of 3 individuals. Collecting eggs laid on the beaches by sea turtles has been regulated in Mexico since 1927. It was banned in 1990.

Milenio, October 9, 2020; El Democrata, October 27, 2020.⁵

REPEATED OFFENSE

End of October 2020

Juchitán de Zaragoza, State of Oaxaca, Mexico



Marie-Madeleine T.L. was carrying 6,400 sea turtle eggs on a bus. This is not the first time she has been caught red-handed.

Publimetro México, October 22, 2020.⁶

Early December 2020

Lázaro Cárdenas, State of Michoacán, Mexico

He was walking along El Jardin beach with a bucket. He was filmed by a CCTV camera. He was arrested. He had already de-buried 125 eggs of marine turtles. El Sol de Zamora, 10 December 2020.⁷

December 3, 2020

Puerto Arista Beach, Tonalá, State of Chiapas, Mexico

A man and a woman were "picking" olive Ridley turtle eggs on the beach. They were reprimanded by a tourist but continued with their game. The woman was arrested with the loot as she was leaving the upper beach in her vehicle. On the black market, the eggs are sold individually for around 250 pesos or 12 US\$. They are reputed to be an aphrodisiac.

Cultura Colectiva, December 4, 2020.⁸



December 14, 2020

Mocambo Beach, Veracruz, State of Veracruz, Mexico

A loggerhead turtle has laid eggs on the upper beach, along Miguel Alemán boulevard Valdés at the crossroad with Barco Viejo street in the district of Playa de Oro. A patrol discovered the clutch of 114 eggs late at night. The eggs were taken to the Veracruz aquarium and artificially incubated. Two hours later, the eggs would have been looted by the crowd.

Vanguardia de Veracruz, December 14, 2020.⁹

Mid-December 2020

San Pedro Huamelula, State of Oaxaca, Mexico

New seizure, this time on Piedras Blancas Beach. The 5 looters left behind the 1,200 olive Ridley turtle eggs on the spot when the patrol of the Navy and Profepa agents got close. The eggs were destroyed. Profepa deemed them no longer viable under artificial incubation.

RIOaxaca, December 22, 2020.¹⁰

SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

THAILAND

December 23, 2020

Bangkok, Thailand

Welcome to the Cabochon Hotel - again and again. Seizure in the corridors and rooms of the 2nd and 4th floors of 4 stuffed Hawksbill sea turtles, 2 Ridley sea turtle shells and 2 green turtle shells. Mrs Raweewan, the director, fled after learning of the search warrant and telling the police that the Taiwanese owner was absent.

Bangkok Post, December 24 and 25, 2020; Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, December 24, 2020.¹¹

VIET NAM

December 23, 2020

Hiep Thanh, Tay Ninh Province, Viet Nam

Search of Mrs N.T.P.'s house. 39 adult hawksbill turtles were found. The network operates in closed loop: capture, storage, slaughter, butchering, trading of meat and shells. 100 km away from the coast, the transit workshop was hidden where it was not expected.

ENV, December 24, 2020; Soha, December 24, 2020.¹²



OCEANIA

FRANCE

December 2, 2020

Off Motu One, Overseas Collectivity of French Polynesia, France

300 km off Bora-Bora, her homeport, the "poti marara" (polynesian fishing boat) was exclusively fishing for sea turtles. Spotted near Motu One atoll by a French Navy Falcon, the four fishermen were met on their return to Bora-Bora wharfs by the gendarmerie. They admitted catching 17 adult sea turtles near Motu One, each weighing around 100 kg, and throwing them back into the sea after they were flying over and filmed by the Falcon.

Tahiti Nui Télévision, December 17, 2020.¹³

Week of December 7, 2020

Rangiroa Atoll, Overseas Collectivity of French Polynesia, France

The lost phone had been brought back to the atoll gendarmerie. Trying to find the owner, the officers scrolled the images and one of them - a couple posing next to a poached sea turtle - caught their attention. The 2 poachers were arrested, then a 3rd one and finally the buyer of the meat. The latter was sentenced to a suspended fine of 4,000 US\$. Two boats were seized and should be auctioned off. The 4 offenders have to pay 2,000 US\$ in damages to the Polynesian Treasury. Tahiti Nui Télévision, December 11, 2020.¹⁴



GANGES RIVER DOLPHINS, PORPOISES, SPERM WHALES, WHALES ...

SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

THAILAND

November 2020
Nakhon Si Thammarat, Nakhon Si Thammarat
Province, Thailand



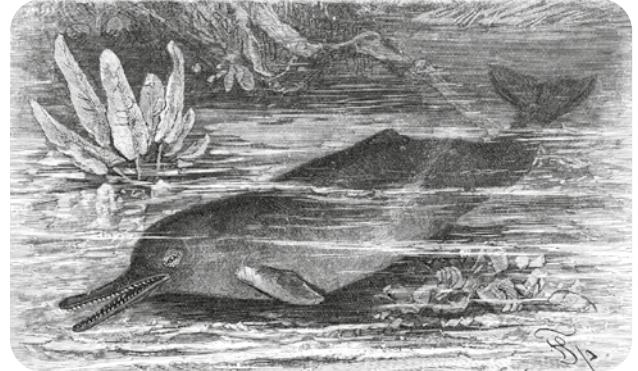
The fisherman found several blocks of sperm whale ambergris (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I) on the foreshore, weighing presumably 100 kg. With the help of cousins, he took them home and reported his discovery to the police station. In the following days, he was contacted by several experts who made fabulous offers. Naris Suwannasang is afraid of being robbed or taken hostage. He asks for special protection. Problems are beginning. Ambergris in Thailand, see On the Trail" n°27 p.23. Daily Mail, November 30, 2020.¹

SOUTHERN ASIA

BANGLADESH

October 13, 2020
Raozan Upazila, Chittagong District, Chittagong
Division, Bangladesh

A Ganges river dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*, Appendix I), locally known as Shushuk, was found dead on the bank of the Halda River. This is the 27th in 5 years. A wound on the tail was apparently caused by a harpoon strike. Dhaka Tribune, October 13, 2020.²



Ganges river dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*)

December 5, 2020
Ghior Upazila, Manikganj District,
Dhaka Division, Bangladesh



Three men are fined 10,000 taka or 118 US\$ for catching a Ganges river dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*, Appendix I) in the Jamuna River. The average monthly income in Bangladesh is about 162 US\$. The victim was 20 kg. He was a few months old. The 3 poachers had put him in a bag and were waiting for a bus when they were arrested by the police.

The Business Standard, December 5, 2020.³

INDIA

October 9 and 13, 2020
Narora and Ramghat, Bulandshahr District,
State of Uttar Pradesh, India

Two Ganges river dolphins (*Platanista gangetica*, Appendix I), blind from birth like all Ganges river dolphins, were found dead on the waters of the Ganges. They move by echolocation. The nylon nets used by fishermen do not reflect echoes. For Ganges River Dolphin, they are undetectable. Their population in the upper Ganges basin is less than 50 individuals. The section of the Ganges river where the corpses were drifting is a wetland of international importance (Ramsar site). Fishing is prohibited there.

Hindustan Times, October 14, 2020.⁴

November 23, 2020

**Kaikula, Kendrapara District,
State of Odisha, India**

Death of a Ganges river dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*, Appendix I) prisoner of a net in the Gobari also locally known as “the hidden Ganges”. His skeleton will be exhibited in a museum. Prime minister Narendra Modi considers saving the species to be a national issue. The New Indian Express, November 24, 2020.⁵



December 31, 2020

**Kothariya, Pratapgarh District,
State of Uttar Pradesh, India**



Lynching of a Ganges river dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*, Appendix I) by a gang of brutes. The police reportedly caught the 3 leaders. The Times of India, January 16, 2021; India Today, January 8, 2021; The Hindu, January 8, 2021; East Mojo, January 8, 2021.⁶

NORTHERN EUROPE

DENMARK

September and November 2020

Kerteminde, Fionie Island, Denmark

Capture of 2 harbour porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*, Appendix II) about one year old, and transfer to the Fjord&Bælt dolphinarium. The managers say that the 2 new prisoners will serve science.

World Animal Protection, November 26, 2020.⁷

IRELAND

November 2020

**Banna Beach, Ballyheigue Bay, County Kerry,
Ireland**

Stranding of several decapitated seals on the beach. The Irish Seal Rescue (ISR) makes 3 assumptions. Entanglement in a fishing net and decapitation by fishermen to get rid of them. Decapitation by propellers. Death for an unknown cause and after some time of decomposition, fall of the head to the bottom of the water. “It does look like it has been done by a surgeon.” Not forgetting that seal (family Phocidae) skulls are sometimes traded and displayed in homes, as it happened in France and the United Kingdom with other marine mammal species.

TheJournal.ie, November 24, 2020.⁸

NORWAY

October 27, 2020

Norway



Deprived of travelling abroad by the Covid-19 effects, the population has headed north to the Lofoten Islands and developed a taste for local cuisine. Return to the homeland has led to an increase in the consumption of whale meat. By the end of October 2020, 503 minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*, Appendix I with reservation from Iceland, Norway and Japan) had been harpooned to meet demand, 74 more than in the whole of 2019.

Whale and Dolphin Conservation, 27 October 2020; Ocean Research and Conservation Association (ORCA) Ireland, December 21, 2020.⁹

December 30, 2020
Norway



The fishing fleet catches between 2,000 and 4,000 harbour porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*, Appendix II) in its nets every year. André Moan, a PhD student at the Institute of Marine Research (IMR), uses a heavy sense of humour: “porpoises die of asphyxiation”. “In a way, the porpoises are poisoned from within, and that can take some time. We don’t know how this feels for porpoises, or how long it takes, but it can’t be a pleasant way to die”. The natural life expectancy of a porpoise is up to 24-25 years. Their current average life expectancy is halved by fishing nets in Norwegian coastal waters. The Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) in force in the United States of America has just been amended. From 2023 onwards, the United States could impose new restrictions on imports of seafood products from countries where marine mammal by-catch is too high and exceeds sustainability thresholds. Scienzenorway, December 30, 2020.¹⁰

UNITED KINGDOM

**Between October 19 and 22, 2020
Cocklawburn Beach, Northumberland County,
England, United Kingdom**

The northern bottlenose whale (*Hyperoodon ampullatus*, Appendix I) is an odontocete, or to say it simply a toothed whale. He is up to 10 metres long at mature age. He lives in Arctic waters and comes down to less cold waters in winter in groups of 4 to 10 individuals. The carcass of one of them ran aground in 2018 in the north of Scotland. It was decided to transfer him to a remote beach, study the decomposition phase, and hand over the skull to the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh. The skull, weighing about 65 kg, was stolen. The Edinburgh Reporter, December 19, 2020; BBC, December 18, 2020; Belfast Telegraph, December 18, 2020; Police Scotland, December 18, 2020.¹¹

WESTERN EUROPE

FRANCE

**October 12 and November 26, 2020
Quimper, Department of Finistère,
France**

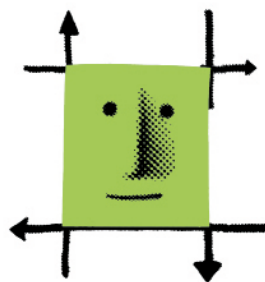


A fisherman and his boss are being tried. The former is charged with decapitating 2 grey seals (*Halichoerus grypus*) in the spring of 2019 in order to mount their heads and the latter of allowing the mutilation or letting it go on (see “On the Trail” n°24 p.18). The fisherman is liable to a fine of 150,000 € or 175,330 US\$.

After deliberation, he and his boss were fined 1,500, which is 100 times less than the maximum fine prescribed by the Environmental Code. Were the seals dead or alive at the time of the decapitation? The judges decided in favour of the first option. Côte Quimper, October 11, 2020; France 3 Bretagne, Oct. 12, 2020; Le Télégramme, Nov. 26, 2020.¹²



Northern bottlenose whale (*Hyperoodon ampullatus*, Appendix I)



ROBIN DES BOIS



FONDATION
**FRANZ
WEBER**