

ROBIN DES BOIS

# ON<sub>the</sub> TRAIL

Information and analysis bulletin on animal poaching and smuggling

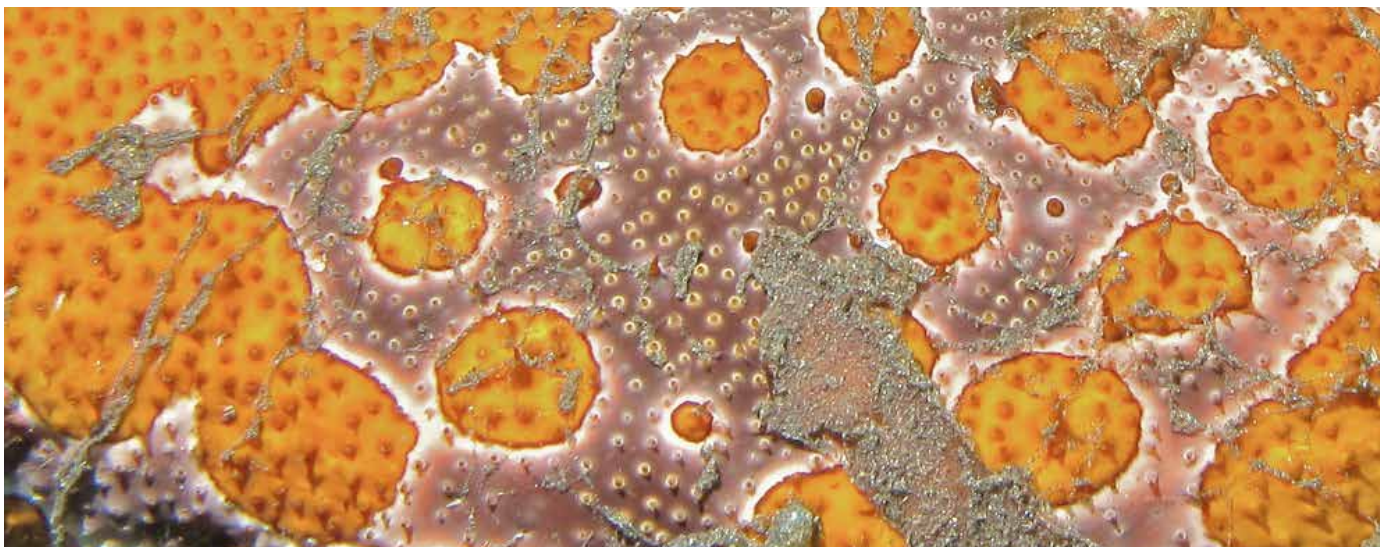
n°14 / 1<sup>st</sup> July - 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016

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# Hippopotamuses

Hippopotamuses (*Hippopotamus amphibius*), are listed under CITES Appendix II.



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## AFRICA

### UGANDA



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#### REPEATED OFFENSE End of July 2016 Uganda

Three traffickers. 57 hippopotamus teeth. One of the 3 criminals had apparently been arrested in the past for the same reason. It is said that he was released after paying an "exit pass" of several hundreds of US dollars.<sup>1</sup>



© EAGLE Uganda

#### Mid September, 2016 West of Uganda

13 kilos of hippopotamus teeth. One arrest. The man was making his way between Uganda and Tanzania.<sup>2</sup>

### TOGO

#### September 23, 2016 Lome, Maritime Region, Togo

Seizure of 12 teeth, 4 skulls and 15 bones of hippopotamus. Two arrests. Mono river, a border between Togo and Benin, still hosts a few dozens of hippopotamus. In the Koumbeloti dam's reservoir, some individuals are observed.<sup>3</sup>

# Rhinoceroses

The white rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* and black rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* ranging in Africa are listed in Appendix I, except for the white rhinoceros populations of Swaziland and South Africa which are listed in Appendix II for trade of live animals and hunting trophies. The 3 Asian rhinoceros species are in Appendix I: *Rhinoceros unicornis*, *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*, *Rhinoceros sondaicus*.

## "On the Trail" n°14 The value of horn on the black market, according to media or official sources

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Réf.
Africa	South Africa	5,215	27
Asia	Cambodia	About 100,000 on the Chinese market according to NGO	53

## EASTERN AFRICA

### KENYA

#### August 29, 2016 Chyulu Hills National Park, Makueni County, Kenya

Crossfire with men from the Kenya Wildlife Service took place at night. The victim's is unknown. His body has not been identified. He's now resting at the morgue in the Makueni hospital until his family possibly comes to identify him. Another poacher is on the run. He is thought to be wounded.<sup>1</sup>



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## MOZAMBIQUE

July 13, 2016

### Tete, Tete Province, Mozambique

In the province, 208 poachers have been arrested between 2014 and the first quarter of 2016. Poison, ammunition and hundreds of handcrafted guns were seized. The favorite target is elephant. As for rhino horns seized in the country, they surely come from South Africa. Rhinos are considered extinct in Mozambique.<sup>2</sup>

## ZIMBABWE

July 19, 2016

### Masvingo, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe

Chisango, 57, a Zambian citizen was sentenced to 10 years in prison. It is a comrade of Mashona already sentenced to 35 years in prison (see "On the Trail" n°11 p 57). The trial of Mugwira, Secret Service agent, has not yet taken place. All 3 plus a certain "Anywhere Mahzongwe" are involved in poaching of 2 or 4 rhinos depending on sources. Found with assault rifles, a Mauser rifle with a silencing device and telescope, the accused and especially Chisango claim they were only chasing zebras. Noting that the arsenal seized at the scene was ultra-powerful, that the band was tracking pachyderm prints and that dead and chopped rhinos were found in their hunting area, the Court did not believe them.<sup>3</sup>



July 26, 2016

### Save Valley Conservancy, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe

Woe to the passing or grazing rhino! The 4 men aged 32 to 45 were roaming in the protected area armed with guns, silencers and cutlasses. They wore shoes without marks on the sole or socks over the shoes. We are dealing with discretion pros.<sup>4</sup>

End of September 2016

### Zimbabwe

#### Operation to dehorn and register rhinos<sup>5</sup>

There would be 700 rhinos in the country. One hundred in national parks, 600 in private ranches. The government claims that preventive dehorning experiments carried out from 1992 to deter poachers had promising outcomes. Rhinos who endured this procedure had 30% higher chance of survival than those who were intact. Young rhinos' horns grow 6 cm per year. Up to age 5, they must be trimmed every 2 years. The government gave mandate to Aware Trust to spread this procedure to half of the National Parks in the country. Removing one horn costs about \$ 1200 US. This campaign is financed by an Australian NGO (see "On the Trail" n°12 p. 74).



Each dehorning is both a military and surgical operation. An airborne team flies over the Park, locates a group and informs a helicopter team with a vet ready to act with his hypodermic gun. The targeted victim is then aimed at with the syringe. The rhino first starts to run then collapses. Once lethargy sets in, the rhino's ears are plugged and his eyes covered with a cloth to protect them from the sun and dust. During anesthesia, blood tests are done on every individual and pregnancy tests for all mature females. Oxygen is pumped into the nose to increase chances the animal will wake up at the end. After the horns are sawed off with the chain saw, vets inject an antidote to the sedative. Normally the rhino wakes up one to two minutes later. It takes about ten assistants to help him get up. In the mean time the young are roughly paint with a number like a license plate or registration card big enough to be read from an airplane. All the horns and clippings are gathered, wrapped up, managed and supervised by Zimbabwe Parks with the support of Traffic, one of the branches of the WWF multinational complex. A gram of ground up horn is sold in Beijing between 60 and 100 dollars.

Horns don't just happen by luck to grow on rhinos noses. They divide the skyline. They help organize social hierarchy among males and enable all to defend themselves against felines or intimidate them. Can we still talk of wild animals when they are mutilated, diminished, handled, medicated every 2 years and smeared in toxic paint?



## SOUTHERN AFRICA

### SOUTH AFRICA

#### KRUGER and around

**July 11, 2016**

#### **Kabokweni, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

Arrest of 2 men including a Mozambican citizen suspected of poaching, seizure of 7 guns, 3 pistols, ammunition, silencers, knives and other equipment.<sup>6</sup>



**12-25 July 2016**

#### **Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

- Feeling pressure from poaching increase in the area, the team from the orphanage dedicated to the rescue of young and very young rhino found haggard and hungry after the poaching of their mothers, decided to proceed to horns shortening for safety



purpose. The procedure requires the injection of sleeping drugs. "It has become an unfortunate necessity in the fight against poaching."

- A baby rhino to whom the nickname Zac was given arrived at the center by helicopter. He was found next to the corpse of his mother south of Kruger Park. Healthy, no open wounds. Demands a bottle day and night.

- Konica Minolta financially assists Care For Wild Rhino. Sanctuary Veterans for Wildlife, a British NGO, has deployed one of its experts to reinforce the culture of the local rangers in the fields of surveillance, poachers tracking and conservation of evidence.<sup>7</sup>

**July 13, 2016**

#### **Nelspruit, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**



The former soldier and the herbalist named in "On the Trail" n°12, p. 69 and "On the Trail" n°10, p. 48 have failed to convince the Court of their good faith. The fable of the night search of medicinal herbs and 2 lost cows in the Park did not charm the judges. Mashego, 56 and Sithole, 53, were sentenced to 26 years in prison each. "It was a premeditated operation with weapons and ammunition" stressed Isabet Erwee, prosecutor. Mashego on the scene of the crime was in military uniform. The horns were transported in army bags.<sup>8</sup>

**July 22, 2016**

#### **Kruger National Park, South Africa**

MILKOR (South African manufacturer of grenades launchers) donates to the park rangers a non-lethal grenade launcher model, deafening, with tear gas and rubber chips, to use according to the direction of SANParks to force out and catch poachers hiding in the bushes.

The UBGL (40 mm Under Barrel Grenade Launcher) can also be equipped with lethal grenades, which is not the choice of SANParks. The UBGL can also launch smoke grenades, which facilitates locating a "hot spot" by helicopter. The UBGL attach to assault rifles used by rangers. The number of UBGL given by MILKOR was not disclosed.<sup>9</sup>

## KRUGER and around - followed

July 22, 2016

Kruger National Park, South Africa



Mortal poaching of a mother and her baby.<sup>10</sup>

July 27, 2016

Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Bad luck! A ranger celebrated for his competence and merits is caught in poaching action along with a veterinary under the Animal Health Park management authority.

Rodney Landela has been a ranger for 15 years. He is a member of the executive committee of the association of rangers. His wife operates a residential camp in the Park. The 2 men were chased by a patrol after the echoes of 3 detonations near Satara camp in the center of the Kruger Park. They were wearing green and khaki uniforms.

In their escape attempt, they threw the 2 horns and a gun of large caliber overboard which were found by rangers. In their car were found shoes covered with blood. The executive director of SANParks expressed his sorrow and satisfaction that field rangers had the courage to arrest their superiors.<sup>11</sup>



Rodney Landela

July 28 and October 19, 2016  
Province of Mpumalanga,  
South Africa



Escape of a man convicted for attempted poaching in Kruger Park. He had just been admitted to a penitentiary hospital. He had 22 years to serve. He escaped 4 months after sentencing.<sup>12</sup>



End July 2016

Skukuza, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa



Three men sentenced to 12, 15 and 21 years in prison for trespassing in the Kruger Park and premeditation of poaching.<sup>13</sup>

Province of Limpopo, South Africa

Court hearing for conspiracy to commit rhino poaching.

**August 13, 2016. Hoedspruit.** They were 3. Seizure of a .416 rifle, ammunition, an ax and knives.

**August 15, 2016. Klaserie.** They were 2. Seizure of a hunting gun and ammunition.<sup>14</sup>

August 17, 2016

Louis Trichardt, Province of Limpopo, South Africa



A very expensive nap. The 2 suspects defend themselves with whatever they can. They say they were there to "try out" a new weapon on small animals. Kubai is a repeated offender in matters of poaching. In 2008 he was involved in 11 court cases. He got away by pretending to repent, by turning himself in on his own to justice and by accepting to be used as bait to lure a Chinese buyer and catch him red handed. "Therefore, he was granted an opportunity to change his destructive behavior, yet, he himself chose once again the wrong route six years later by becoming an illegal hunter himself" regrets the public attorney. The judge shared his opinion that a simple fine would not be a sufficient deterrent and both of them, Kubai and Chauke, who were resting under a tree when they were found and arrested, were sentenced to a 11-year prison time.<sup>15</sup>

August 16, 2016

Kruger National Park, South Africa



He was suspected of having, with 4 other scoundrels, killed and dehorned Sabi, a baby rhino right inside a Care For Wild Africa orphanage in August 2014 (see "On the Trail" n°6 p. 63). Russel Mokoena was since then freed on bail. On August 16, 2016 he was killed in crossfire during a new attempted poaching

## KRUGER and around - followed

this time inside Kruger Park. His ex-accomplices had just been presented before the Nelspruit Court. Investigations showed that the little rhino didn't even try to escape the night he was circled and killed, it is because 2 of Russel Mokoena's accomplices worked for Care For Wild Africa at the time of the trap. "It was like shooting a dog that had been eating from your hand." Sabi's little horns were sold to a Chinese expat for 3400 rand i.e. \$ 2465 US.<sup>16</sup>

### August 23, 2016 Hoedspruit, Province of Limpopo and Nelspruit, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa

One arrest followed by 3 others. Seizure of a gun with a silencer and ammunition. Two releases under bail for 5000 rand (\$ 362 US).<sup>17</sup>



Large caliber guns to break through the rhinos armour.

### Beginning of September 2016 Phalaborwa, Province of Limpopo, South Africa

Four convictions to 5 years prison or 5000 rand fine (\$ 362 US) for preparing rhino poaching as an organized group and possession of firearms and ammunition without a license.<sup>18</sup>



### September 20, 2016 Gravelotte, Province of Limpopo, South Africa

Five arrests including a Mozambican. Seizure of a .375 caliber rifle with a silencer and ammunition, a .357 revolver and its ammunition, an ax, 9 cell phones and a car licensed in the Province of Gauteng. They will be heard by a judge for attempted rhino poaching committed as part of an organized gang.<sup>19</sup>

### September 27, 2016 Nelspruit, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa

The herbalist claims he entered Kruger Park to stock up on plants. Before the Court, his mother and a traditional healer confirm his testimony. According to the accusation, his gathering was of a different sort, that of horns (see "On the Trail" n°13 p. 71).<sup>20</sup>

## Rhinos South Africa, except Kruger and around

### July 11, 2016 and September Durban, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Anything goes when it comes to pulling strings to postpone a Court hearing, tangle up justice and render procedures fragile. Miss Linda, the new lawyer for the kingpin "Gwala" (see "On the Trail" n°12 p. 71) arrived 30 minutes late which prevented her from hearing and possibly questioning the reading of the facts. On September 5<sup>th</sup>, the same Miss Mpumelelo Linda claimed she had lost her cell phone and therefore having been unable to meet or communicate with her new client until 2 days before trial. The case was rescheduled once again. It is now set for October 21. In the meantime the Public Treasury has permanently seized 110.000 rand (\$ 7348 US) in cash and 2 luxury cars found in Dumisami "Gwala's" houses and garages.<sup>21</sup>

### July 17, 2016 Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

The shots tore up the night. It was 2:30 am. The rangers and a tracking dog were able to locate the 4 poachers. Two were arrested, 2 horns and an ax are used as evidence.<sup>22</sup>

### OPERATION RHINO Province of Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa

-July 20, 2016. Arrest of 2 Mozambicans and 3 South Africans for trespassing, and unlawful possession of weapons and ammunition.



### - Week of July 25, 2016. Dukuduku.

Preventive arrest of 3 suspects without any horn but with a large gun and silencer, cartridges, an ax and 7 cell phones. They were in the first stages.<sup>23</sup>

### July 20, 2016 Pilanesberg National Park, North Western Province, South Africa

Health care given to 2 seriously wounded. The head of the largest was x-rayed to locate the bullets. The wounds have been treated. The smallest is in a bad state, the prognosis is reserved.<sup>24</sup>



**Weekend of July 23, 2016  
Pilanesberg National Park, North Western Province, South Africa**

Poaching of mother leaves a one year old orphan. For safety reasons, he was transferred to another location. The corpse of the mother was hornless, ears and tail had been eaten by hyenas.<sup>25</sup>



Search for bullets with a metal detector to find out ballistic evidence.

**July 27, 2016  
Pretoria, Province of Gauteng, South Africa**

Hugo Ras' trial (see "On the Trail" n°6 p. 67, n°7 p. 71, n°10 p. 47, n°13 p.77) and 9 of his co-accused is rescheduled to 15 February 2017. Hugo Ras will remain in jail. His most recent request for bail has been rejected. The Court deemed that his pretrial detention didn't prevent him from having regular contact with his defense team. He was caught red handed in his cell using several cell phones. His wife, who is out on bail, runs a business for promoting hunting safaris. The 9 indicted in what is the most important open case in South Africa in matters of trafficking in adulterated rhino hunting permits and horns are faced with 318 charges including extortion of funds and money laundering.<sup>26</sup>

**July 29, 2016  
Wynberg, Cape Town, Province of the Western Cape, South Africa**

The man was arrested in the neighborhood of Lotus River (cf. "On the Trail" n°12, p.69). Six months later he was sentenced to 4 years suspended or a 200,000 rand (\$ 13,913 US) fine. The 2 kg horn is estimated on the local market to 150,000 R or \$ 10,430 US.<sup>27</sup>



**Beginning of August, 2016  
Polokwane, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

Six men were appearing before the Court. They had poached and chopped 3. They remain in jail pending the trial (see "On the trail" n°13, p. 72).<sup>28</sup>

**August 10, 2016  
Equestria, Pretoria, Province of Gauteng, South Africa**

Three steps seizure of 113 horns on and at the home of Pieter Van Zyl, 63 years old, rhino breeder and hunting organizer. With his 2 accomplices, Marco Swanepoel, 35 years old, and Stephan Mylie, 30 years old, he convinced the judges to let him out on bail for 10,000 rand, that is \$ 725 US.<sup>29</sup>

**August 10, 2016  
Hluhluwe, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

Following the footprints of a hyena, a ranger discovered a poached white rhino who had been dehorned in the Thanda Mduna Reserve. The body was covered in wounds. The head of the Reserve had noticed one of his protégés was missing for some days.<sup>30</sup>

**August 12, 2016  
Bela-Bela, Province of Limpopo, South Africa**

Sentencing of a Mozambican man to 12 years in jail for poaching and dehorning a rhino in March 2015.<sup>31</sup>



**August 13, 2016  
Dwaalboom, Province of Limpopo, South Africa**

Court hearing for conspiracy to commit rhino poaching. They were 3. Seizure of a .416 rifle, ammunition and an ax.



**OPERATION RHINO  
Mid August 2016  
Mtubatuba, Province of Kwazulu-Natal, Phalaborwa, Province of Limpopo and Skukuza, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa**

Arrests, Court hearings and requests for bail. Eight suspects aged 19 to 40 had all the traits known to rhino trackers. They had 7 firearms, a proportionate amount of ammunition, long knives and axes. Some were riding in a stolen car and were hiding horns in their belongings.<sup>32</sup>

**August 18, 2016  
Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Reserve,  
Province of KwaZulu-Natal,  
South Africa**

The full moon means bad news for rhinos. The moon is a poacher's accomplice. They use the darkness to sneak into reserves and the moonlight to find the rhinos. Four dead black rhinos in a 300 m radius, a 5<sup>th</sup> one a bit further.<sup>33</sup>



Under the full moon, the rhino skin shines

**August 18, 2016  
Oliver Reginald Tambo International Airport,  
Johannesburg, Province of Gauteng, South Africa**

Seizure of 10 horns, 84 decoration objects and 41 bracelets made of horn. Arrest of a 48-year-old Chinese citizen coming from Maputo, Mozambique, on his way to Hong Kong.<sup>34</sup>

**September 3, 2016  
Rooiberg, Province of Limpopo, South Africa**

Discovery of 2 white rhinos:  
- One is dead and dehorned.  
- The other dying and not dehorned was put down. A man hunt is on to get hands on the 5 suspects.<sup>35</sup>



**September 6, 2016  
Pietermaritzburg, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

Mitigation. The High Court lowered to 12 the 20-year prison sentence pronounced against Sbu Ntuli in a first instance judgment. He had killed on Christmas night 2 rhinos in Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park.<sup>36</sup>



**6 septembre 2016  
Krugersdorp Correctional Center Hospital,  
Province of Gauteng, South Africa**

Death at the Krugersdorp prison hospital of Zhiqing Miao. His trial hearing was scheduled for November 25, 2016.<sup>37</sup>

**September 9, 2016  
Bela-bela, Province of Limpopo, South Africa**

Self defense. The 2 rhinos hit by non-lethal shots charged the attackers. With the impact a firearm came apart. The threesome in the end was arrested.<sup>38</sup>



**Mid September 2016  
Balule Private Reserve,  
Province of Limpopo, South Africa**

Poaching under a full moon of 2 female rhinos one of whom was pregnant. The Black Mambas (see "On the Trail" n°10 p.56, n°12 p.84) are in mourning. They had never before lost a rhino since they have been in charge of supervising the Balule Game Reserve at the edge of Kruger Park.

The anti poaching unit Black Mambas has been on the job since 2013. It is composed of 36 women rangers. Their weapons are their courage, patrols on foot, education and gathering information. "It feels really bad, it is as if it was our fault." Collet Ngobeni, 32, who has been part of the team since the beginning expresses her upset and adds "Three rhinos is a lot". The Black Mambas were prized in 2015 by UNEP (United Nations Environment Program). Life isn't always easy for them. They are paid 3000 to 3500 rand per month (220 to 225 US\$). They work 21 days followed by 10 days off to go see their parents and sometimes their children. Their camp base is made up of huts where they live by groups of 3 or 4. The Black Mambas have much prestige but little financial resources to ameliorate their living conditions and effectiveness of their work.<sup>39</sup>



September 27, 2016, Johannesburg, South Africa. Benlida Mzimba and Mathebula Qualile, Black Mambas members, came to present their work to the CITES delegates. Here with Charlotte Nithart, Robin Hood.

**Help for the Black Mambas !**

Like Lisa Boonzaier, leader of a citizens collective in Kamieskroon, a small town in Namaqua-

land, Province of Northern Cape, collect funds for the Black Mambas.  
<http://www.blackmambas.org/donations.html>



**September 21, 2016**  
**Vanderbijlpark, Province of Gauteng, South Africa**



The trial of the 3 white men assisted by white lawyers accused of trafficking 18 horns and released on bail has been rescheduled to end of October. <sup>40</sup>

**September 22, 2016**  
**Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa**

The Rhino Day brings misfortune. KwaZulu-Natal rangers are mourning. On September 22, the day of global celebration of rhinos, they found 6 dehorned carcasses in 3 different locations. KwaZulu-Natal suffers a big poaching fever - 20 since the beginning of the month - 113 since the beginning of the year. Bandits would seek easier targets since the anti-poaching measures have been strengthened in the Kruger Park. After several delays, the trial of the suspected horn big shot Dumisani Gwala (see "On the Trail" n°12 p. 71) is scheduled for October 21 in Empangeni. <sup>41</sup>



**September 23, 2016**  
**International Airport Oliver Reginald Tambo, Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

This Chinese citizen was carrying 9.4 kg of rhino horns in his luggage. He says he bought them in Swaziland. The discovery took place a few hours before the opening of the 17<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties of CITES. <sup>42</sup>

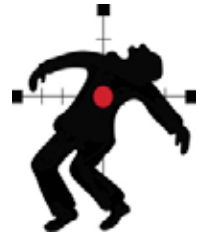
**September 23, 2016**  
**Private Farm, North Western Province, South Africa**

Poaching of 5 rhinos. The survivor, 8 years old, critically injured, was transported by helicopter to a specialized facility in Gauteng. The vets are pessimistic. <sup>43</sup>

**September 26, 2016**  
**Evander, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa**  
 A horn wrapped in plastic was found by accident. Visual and genetic analysis are underway to confirm or infirm rhino origin. <sup>44</sup>

**September 28, 2016**  
**Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Reserve, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

Right there where 6 rhinos had been killed and dehorned on 22 September, a fight between rangers and presumed poachers left 3 dead on the latter's side. As a reminder, from the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2013 to the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2016, "On the Trail" counted 263 deaths among wildlife guards and poachers on the African continent and India. <sup>45</sup>

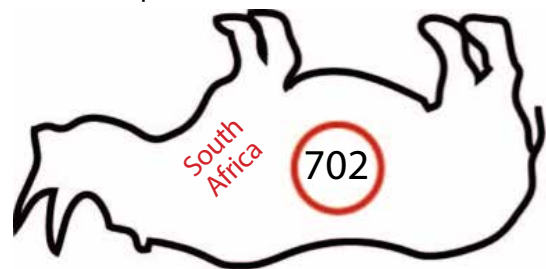


**September 29, 2016**  
**Rustenburg, North Western Province, South Africa**

Appearance of a suspected poacher. A gun, a silencer and ammunition used to kill rhinos and elephants, an ax, a butcher foil were discovered in his car. He was heading toward Bloemhof. The man is known in Gauteng province for other misdeeds. His bail application will be considered within a week. <sup>46</sup>

**South African Report**

September 11, 2016:  
 Since the beginning of the year, 702 rhinoceroses have been poached, 458 of them in Kruger Park. Compared to 2015, poaching has risen in the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, and the Northern Cape.



414 alleged poachers have been interrogated. 177 were in Kruger Park, and 237 were in the rest of the country. <sup>47</sup>

## NAMIBIA

### The Mystery around Bail

A demonstration gathering ordinary citizens and reserve managers was held end of August 2016 in front of the Omaruru Court. The one slogan was enough with bail for rhino killers and horn smugglers. M. Shifeta, the Minister for elephants and rhinos could have been part of the rally. He too is sick of it. He repeats declarations and discussions with the general attorney on this issue. He wishes that at least when suspects are



set free that they be on house arrest and must confirm their presence 3 times at day at the local police station.

Pohamba Shifeta in front of a rhino carcass in the Etosha National Park

**July 15, 2016**

#### Otavi, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

Seizure of 3 fresh-cut horns in the north. Three arrested during a roadside check at 21h. Five men were aboard a double cabin Toyota pick-up. Two managed to flee into the bush. A third one threw a bag in the ditch. It contained the 3 horns, 2 large ones and one small one. Inside the vehicle, a tent, blankets, water, canned food, ammunition, a caliber .303, a loaded pistol. In short the perfect equipment for week-end poachers in conspiracy. The prosecutor refused release on bail on the grounds that 2 accomplices were on the run. Two suspects have accepted State funded lawyers, the third one asks for a private attorney.

The Deputy Minister of the Environment has had enough. Rightfully, he rails against releases on bail granted to rhino horn traffickers. "We do not want excuses of 'you being the breadwinner or that your girlfriend or wife is pregnant.' Did she only get pregnant after you poached? You should have thought about those things before deciding to go poaching."

Last year, the minister himself, Pohamba Shifeta, criticized prosecutors who neglected the achievements of the police and pursuance of investigations and agreed to negotiate with indicted individuals and offer them releases on bail.

Ministerial common sense is not heard. Justice turns a deaf ear. It just released on bail a "Bling King", local name for a guy wearing fancy clothes entertaining beautiful girls and driving a Mercedes. The problem is that in his Mercedes on June 14 this year, the cops found 4 horns which circular bases

suggesting they were taken from black rhinos. Admittedly Namwandi better known as Mox - he thus promotes the brand of his shoes - is not free in his movements. However, he may meet other traffic actors and develop alibi scenarii. He can also discourage witnesses to speak.



Mox would have been "betrayed" by interested informants. If case of big catch, the rewards can reach the equivalent of \$ 4,200 US. The Deputy Minister says that the paid information are a good tactic and lead to more arrests, including those of poachers old style who roam the desert on horseback to track down rhinos.

Traffickers lawyers know that these arrests on denunciation or sting operations are controversial. A deft defense like "this is a personal vendetta," "the horns were put there without my knowledge" can open an exit door to Mox whose real name is Namwandi. The man also has in his wallet shares of 2 mines south of the Kunene desert, where the last black rhinos are concentrated. Their horns reach peak levels on the Chinese market.

Mox's main accomplice lives north of the country. He also had to surrender his passport. As a resident of the northern region, he can go to Angola with a simple certificate of an dizzy or complacent local administrator.<sup>48</sup>

**September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016**

#### Rundu, Kavango East Region, Namibia

The Cuca Tops Club Bar was the scene of 2 spectacular arrests. The search squad was on the heels of pangolins traffickers, she came across two horns dealers. One is a former police officer now employed by Namibia Wildlife Resort which operates 23 touristic sites, the other is a resident of Rundu. Two horns were found in their car. The region has launched 3 campaigns to facilitate communication on crimes between the public and the police, House to House campaign, Women and Men Network and Turn Back Crime. The aim is to warn and spot law offenders and traffickers. Rundu in Namibia is separated from Angola by the Okavango river.<sup>49</sup>



**September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016**

**Erindi Private Reserve, Erongo Region, Namibia**

Weak consolation for the Omaruru vigilance committee (see "On the Trail" » n°12 p .72). Those guilty of slaughtering a black rhino with heavy weaponry were arrested on the road to Ojiwarongo and a horn was found in a shack. The Congolese man who lived there is on the run. The mastermind behind the crime is a professional hunter from Zambia, David Chihinga Kalwisi assisted by recruits from Angola and Namibia. The Namibian accomplice is a former policeman, another scoundrel who will be let out on bail. Met by an investigation journalist working for Oxpeckers, the general attorney for the Omusati region, one of the elephant poaching focal points, admits frankly she is overwhelmed. On top of the violence, theft of money and cyanide, family fighting, crimes for gold and diamonds, she is responsible for 29 cases of poaching. She agrees that 22 suspects are out of sight since they paid bail worth 5000 to 10,000 rand in cash (360 à 720 US\$). At the police station next to the general attorney's office, the register of bail deposits lays in a drawer. Everything is written by hand, by many different hands. One wonders if there isn't in Namibia just as in other African countries a solidarity fund fueled who knows by who that comes up with the money to give poachers their freedom.<sup>50</sup>

**September 30, 2016**

**Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia**

The time of the verdict has finally come for the 4 Chinese citizens (see "On the Trail" n°11, p.65).



Three were arrested at Windhoek airport on March 24, 2014 with 14 rhino horns and one leopard skin. The fourth was arrested in May 2015. They were sentenced to 14 years in prison each, with 28 months to 5 years probation.<sup>51</sup>

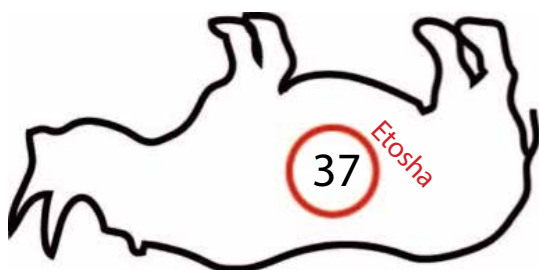
**Namibian Report**

August 11, 2016: Since the beginning of the year, 37 rhinoceroses have been poached in Etosha Park and its surroundings.

162 rhinoceroses have been poached since January 1, 2015. The number of elephants poached is also on the rise.

Minister Shifeta has not been able to hire a commander-in-chief for the fight against poaching.

"When I looked at those CVs it made me wonder if they would even be able to spend a week camping in the field."



**AMERICA**

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**September 8, 2016**

**San Diego Zoo Safari Park, State of California, United States of America**

Incineration of one million dollars in the San Diego zoo. The horns and manufactured objects came from seizures. The rhinos living in the zoo applaud the measure. California has just promoted a ban on trade and sale of ivory and rhino horn.<sup>52</sup>



**ASIA**

**CAMBODIA**

**August 14, 2016**

**Phnom Penh International Airport, Cambodia**

This time, it's a Chinese citizen after transiting through Doha who is caught landing at Phnom Penh with more than 4 kg of horns equivalent to \$ 400,000 US in his suitcase. Cambodia Daily underlines that only 10 to 20% of contraband is discovered. Weng came from Namibia. Chinese traders are very active in southern Africa. Namibia-China network is identified and continues despite spectacular failures. On the same flight, a Romanian was caught with 5 kg of cocaine equivalent to \$ 500.000 US.<sup>53</sup>

**INDIA**

**ASSAM**

**July 3, 2016**

**District Biswanath Charali, Assam, India**

He attacked cars, knocked people over, destroyed homes and ravaged fields. After a week of vain tries, veterinarians managed to anesthetize him with a product specially shipped from South Africa. Probably the M99 (see "On the Trail" n°2 p. 45). On examination, a gunshot wound was found on one leg of the rabid. The problematic rhinoceros would have been the victim of a failed poaching attempt during the floods that submerged the Park.<sup>54</sup>

**July 17, 2016**

**Districts of Karbi Anglong and Morigaon, Assam, India**

- We had never heard of him. Yet this is one of the famous poachers in Assam and he has finally been arrested. He worked in the Park Pobitora. With the floods, he was out of the woods in search of stray rhinoceros.

- Three more were arrested near the Kaziranga. They had no horn on them but 2 guns of large caliber, 2 silencers and a large number of ammunition.<sup>55</sup>



**July 22, 2016**

**Golaghat District, Assam, India**

Seizure of a horn and a pistol. Two arrests. Local press claims that the city of Dimapur, 385,000 inhabitants, 95 km from Golaghat, is a "safe haven" for horn traffickers.<sup>56</sup>

**July 24, 2016**

**District Biswanath, Assam, India**

Four men were trying to sell the horn at high price, leaning on the current exchange rate for a kilo in China and Viet Nam. In the district of Biswanath only, 25 poachers were arrested in the last 2 months. The wanderings of wild animals chased away from nature parks by the floods get poachers out of their dens.<sup>57</sup>

**July 27, 2016**

**Nalbari town, Darrang District, Assam, India**

Suite of the poaching in June 2016 (see "On the Trail" n°13, p. 75). Ikmadul Hussain, 30, was arrested at dawn in his village.<sup>58</sup>

## Flood

**End of July 2016**

**Kaziranga National Park, Assam, India**

The guards, NGOs and people who struggle with their means against the poachers must also fight against the raging elements. This is the season of monsoon rains. The Park is experiencing its worst floods since 1998. From the 178 anti-poaching camps, 108 are under water. Patrols save rhino babies adrift. Despite the speed restrictions, dozens of deer have died in collisions when crossing the road beyond which they could have reached the un-submerged hills of Karbi. 22 rhinos drowned including 8 babies and 4 mothers. Six aged one month to one year were recovered in a critical state, sometime too late. A baby rhino weighs 50 kg at birth. Hog deers (*Axis porcinus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), swamp deers (*Rucervus duvaucelii*, Appendix I), wild water buffalos (*Bubalus arnee*, Appendix III in Nepal), Sambar deer (*Cervus unicolor*), a python (*Pythonidae* spp. Appendix I or II), hog badgers (*Arctonyx collaris*) were washed away.

Worries about the lack of milk for orphaned rhinos have been erased. Nursing lasts one year minimum. Thanks to the mobilization and support of the State government, the milk will not be missing.

Floods are not only calamities. They leave on meadows and forests grounds silts that act as fertilizers.

A total of 2 million inhabitants of Assam have been threatened by the rising waters. The provisional toll of human victims is 31 dead. The mortality of wildlife amounts to 471. During the flood, 107 animals were rescued, 64 returned to the wild immediately and 15 under care. Even an owl was rescued from the water and a python is in recovery.

**In the Manas National Park (Assam, India)**, the flooding also hit "Mainao" a female rhino transferred in 2006 from the remote Kaziranga Park 300 km away; she was found dead. It is not known what became of the horn. The banks of 2 rivers, the Manas and the Beki, going through the Park, have been washed away by the flood along with a bridge and 7 gateways.<sup>59</sup>



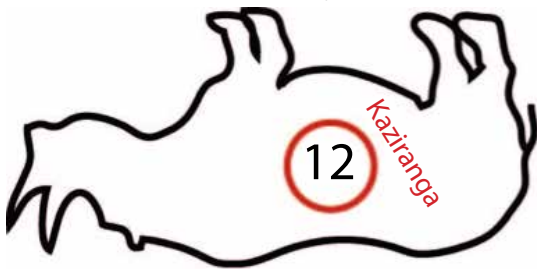
## A New Mess in Kaziranga

To try to prevent a rhinoceros from leaving the Park and from going toward the village of Mihimukh, a novice ranger fired a warning shot. The bullet hit a 7-year-old child who was hanging around there.

**August 3, 2016**

### Kaziranga National Park, Assam, India

Mother and baby were found dead inside the Park. Mother's horn was missing. Twelve rhinos have been killed there since the beginning of the year. Two poachers, Makbool and Noor were arrested by the united forces of Assam and Tamil Nadu. The 2 guys involved in the killing of a female rhino and her baby would be from Bangladesh. They claim involvement of the body-guard of former Minister, Nurjamal Sarkar. They would have received 30,000 rupee, i.e. \$ 448 US in exchange for the horns.<sup>60</sup>



**August 8, 2016**

### Assam, India

Some poachers stay in hotels, lodges and recreation centers around the Kaziranga Park. They pose as tourists. Poaching spreads.

In Nepal, the situation is less worrisome. Almost no poaching in 2014 and 2015. Ms. Pramila Rani Brahma, the new Minister of Forestry of Assam, wants to understand why the fight against poaching works in Nepal and not in India. Assam means to copy Nepalese methods for monitoring and investigation. "The Government of Assam can not solve this problem alone." A delegation will meet in the near future experts from the Himalayan nation.<sup>61</sup>

## A Deadly and Criminal Toll

### From May to August 11, 2016 State of Assam, India

49 rhinos dead since the beginning of the month of May and the arrival of the new government. 22 died drowned because of flooding, 6 were poached. 21 are considered natural deaths. Out of the 49, only 19 still had their horns when the carcasses were found by forest services in the Kaziranga, Manas, Orang and de Pobitora Parks and surroundings.<sup>62</sup>

## Horns in Stock

**August 11, 2016**

### Assam, India

Examination of the horns stocks has uncovered 2 tricks as "On the Trail" had been noting in Tanzania (see n°6 p. 71, n°11 p. 63). The "treasures" of horns of the State are split in 12 places held more or less secret. The most important are in Nagaon, Tezpur and Guwahati.

Twelve experts and qualified persons are proceeding to the inspection. The composition of the panel is severely criticized by groups of citizens. The fact of having given the direction to a retired Chief Conservator of forests who is believed to have let poaching rage when in functions is not appreciated.

The forum of journalists of Assam has long called for clear information on the number of horns in stock whether from poaching and seizures or collected from naturally dead rhinos or in the waters of the rivers during the flood.

Control of all inventories is made at the request of the new Minister of Forestry (see "On the Trail" n°13 p. 73). According to preliminary information, there are 1195 horns in 39 boxes in Golaghat. The Nagaon stock includes a horn of over 3 kg, 45 cm long with a basic circumference of 60 cm. It comes from a rhino dead "in unknown circumstances" in 1982 in Kaziranga Park. This record for an Indian rhino is only beaten by a horn in the British Museum in London.

The bad surprise comes from Tezpur. Among 56 horns, 5 are false and 5 were severely shortened.<sup>63</sup>



**August 23, 27, 28, 2016**

**Manas National Park and Guwahati City, State of Assam, India**

- **August 23, 2016.** Monul Haq had given the horn to Babul Ali for him to sell it. He was in negotiations with Tafikur Rahman, Zehirul Ali and Muzammil Ali. The horn was seized. The 5 men are being held in custody. The horn very probably comes from the Manas National Park 95 km from Guwahati. The city is a back office for the whole horn mafia of Assam.

- **August 27, 2016.** Faruk Ahmed is stopped at the Raha pay-point in a bus headed for Guwahati. He is an official informant for the anti-poaching forces and as such has worked for years in and around Assam parks. His career has evolved and he has become a poacher and an informer to poachers.



- **August 28, 2016.** A rotting dehorned rhino is discovered by a patrol. The death dates back several weeks. This is the 10<sup>th</sup> rhino to fall under the twisted blows of poaching since the Manas Park was founded 5 years ago. The rhino population is under permanent enhancement thanks to transfers from Kaziranga and Pobitora. The presence of rangers day and night in the 950 km<sup>2</sup> of the Park is insufficient. Some areas harder to reach would harbor rebels from the NDFB (National Democratic Front of Bodoland).<sup>64</sup>

**September 4, 2016**

**Orang National Park, State of Assam, India**

The 5 poachers were hiding in a village of the buffer zone waiting to enter "little Kaziranga" with an ax, 22 cartridges, a large caliber gun with a silencer and food.<sup>65</sup>

**Evacuation in the Kaziranga Park Buffer Zone**

**September 19, 2016**

**Bandardubi and Deusur Chang, State of Assam, India**

The government has announced that before 40 days, families native to Assam State and only them will receive compensation. The colony is badly located. It blocks an access to a water spot vital for mammals in Kaziranga Park. Illegal occupation of the land has been increasing over the years. 300 homes are concerned. The squatters met with stones the authorities sent there to apply a judgment from the High Court. The toll is a heavy one, 40 wounded and 2 dead among civilians, 10 wounded among policemen. Bulldozers and rangers on elephant-back all together destroyed the camp. Colonization of a strategic area for wildlife was exhausting the Parks natural resources and fueling poaching.<sup>67</sup>

**A New Distribution of the Anti-poaching Forces**

Kaziranga Park will be split into 2 administrative divisions. There will be a wildlife wing in the north, and another one in the south. There is a plan to extend the buffer zone where the development of human activities is restricted. The idea is to protect the area of Bandardubi, where squatters have just been forcefully evicted.

**September 12, 2016**

**District of Karbi Anglong, State of Assam, India**

Arrest near the Kaziranga Park of Sabar Inglang, age 35. He would have put 20 rhinos on his hunting wall in 4 years.<sup>66</sup>

**India Report**

July 19, 2016: 102 rhinoceroses poached between 2013 and 2016. 94 in Assam, 8 in West Bengal.

Statements by Mrs. Brahma, the Assam Forest Minister:

"In Assam, a horn is sold for Rs 1.5 lakh and above. In Myanmar, it is Rs two crore and it is Rs three crore in China."

"The morale of forest staff is very low. "There is no proper basic amenities. Transit camps are in dilapidated conditions and there are no facilities of drinking water. "department had employed casual staff, but unfortunately their pays are not regular."

"We need to modernise the equipment. We need to provide good transit camps, uniforms, shoes and all other facilities."

"The government, she said, is currently working on short-term goal of modernising the arms and equipment with an allocation of Rs 25 crore under non-Plan section. "

"A video-monitored counting will be initiated soon on each treasury across the State to evaluate how many horns are stored and if those are real or made of bamboo."

## NEPAL

**July 8, 2016**

### **Kathmandu, Central Development Region, Nepal**

He had been on the run for ages. Arrest of Lakshi Thapa, sentenced to 6 years of prison and a fine of 100,000 rupees (\$ 935 US) for rhinoceros poaching. He was taken to Bardiya prison.<sup>68</sup>

**July 11 to mid-September, 2016**

### **Nepal**

The Nepalese government agrees to gift 4 rhinoceroses to a Chinese zoo. The gift was to be officially made during the upcoming visit of the Chinese President Xi Jinping (cf. "On the Trail" n° 12 p. 73) China started modern panda diplomacy in 1950. It is used less and less. As early as 2005, India prohibited giving animal gifts to official foreign visitors. The 4 rhinoceroses will be captured in Chitwan Park. They will probably be dehorned before Mr. Jinping takes them away in his suitcases.

But it turns out that the latest diplomatic developments will delay the gift and the ceremony. The Chinese president is postponing his visit to Nepal. The cold seems to be due to Nepal's lack of interest in working together to modernize Route n°1, on the border of the 2 countries. China considers this is an essential project for developing trade links with the Indian subcontinent. Apparently China also frowned upon the 3-day visit of the new Nepalese prime minister in India in mid-September.<sup>69</sup>

**August 8, 2016**

### **Chitwan District, Central Development Region, Nepal**

She was electrocuted. An electrical cable was deliberately plunged into the marsh. She died recently. The horn and hooves are still there. The judicial administration of Chitwan National Park placed the employees of a neighboring lodge run by Indian interests in custody. The director was one of them. The district judge ordered their release on bail. They could face between 5 and 15 years of prison and/or a fine of 50,000 to 100,000 rupees, or \$ 750 US and \$ 1,500 US. The 2 suspects of Indian origin are from Uttarakhand and Kerala.<sup>70</sup>



**August 20, 2016**

### **Chandranigahapur, Rautahat District, Central Development Region, Nepal**

Mushroom pickers found it covered with 6 bullets on August 20. It died on 6 September. The carers thought that they would pull through. It was on perfusion for 2 or 3 days. Every 2 or 3 hours, they fed it on apples, bananas, and cabbages. They regularly disinfected the wounds near its right eye, and on its neck, forehead, and flanks. It still had its horn and hooves. An army detachment camped on the side to prevent a potential repeated poaching offense. "We took care of it as if it was a kid ... we're all very sad", concluded the president of the residents' committee in the Mrigna Kunja buffer zone around Chitwan National Park.<sup>71</sup>

**September 5, 2016**

### **Kanchanpur District, Far-Western Development Region, Nepal**

Arrest. Rana was on the run. He was sentenced in absentia to 10 years of prison for a repeated rhinoceros poaching and horn smuggling offense.<sup>72</sup>



## VIET NAM

**July 31, 2016**

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

The 42-year-old Vietnamese man had carefully piled up the sections of the 4 horns in cans of powdered milk. His flight came in from Doha. The original country of departure was not stated. On the black market, the seizure is worth \$ 200,000 US.<sup>73</sup>



Momo is a brand of powdered milk sold in Africa.

# Rhinos and elephants

ASIA

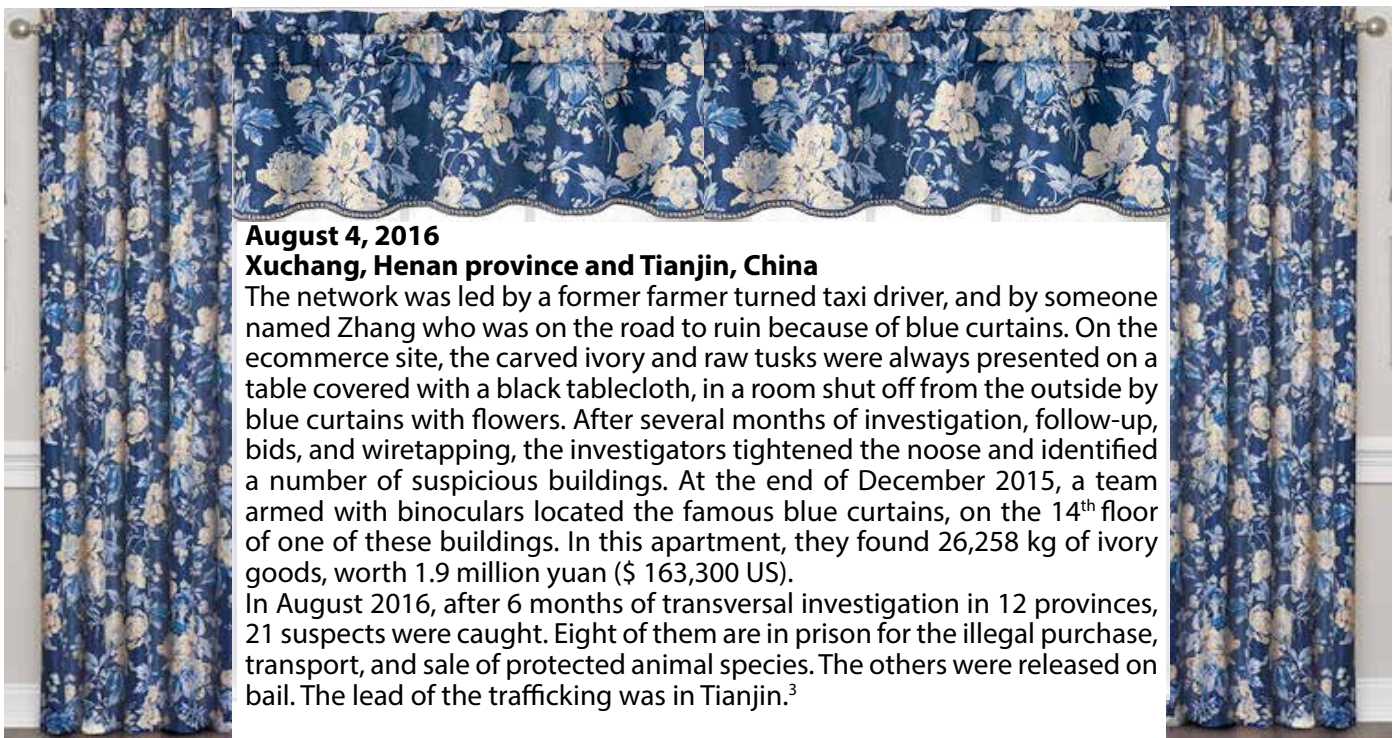
## CHINA

### July 7, 2016 Beijing, China

6 men appeared in Court for the purchase, sale, and trafficking of 9 rhinoceros horns, 3 horn sections, 883 g of crushed horn, 500 kg of ivory, ivory bracelets, 35 bear paws, red coral, narwhal tusks, and a few pangolin scales which are worth a total of 16 million yuan, or \$ 2.4 million US. The Teng gang leader was officially specialized in the sale of beeswax and Tibetan religious art (Thangka).<sup>1</sup>

### Beginning of August 2016 Chang'an District, Shaanxi Province, China

A man was sentenced to 6 years and 3 months of prison, and 10,000 yuan (\$ 1,500 US) in fines for the sale and purchase of ivory items and fragments of rhinoceros horn, estimated to be worth 189,168 yuan (\$ 28,330 US).<sup>2</sup>



### August 4, 2016 Xuchang, Henan province and Tianjin, China

The network was led by a former farmer turned taxi driver, and by someone named Zhang who was on the road to ruin because of blue curtains. On the ecommerce site, the carved ivory and raw tusks were always presented on a table covered with a black tablecloth, in a room shut off from the outside by blue curtains with flowers. After several months of investigation, follow-up, bids, and wiretapping, the investigators tightened the noose and identified a number of suspicious buildings. At the end of December 2015, a team armed with binoculars located the famous blue curtains, on the 14<sup>th</sup> floor of one of these buildings. In this apartment, they found 26,258 kg of ivory goods, worth 1.9 million yuan (\$ 163,300 US). In August 2016, after 6 months of transversal investigation in 12 provinces, 21 suspects were caught. Eight of them are in prison for the illegal purchase, transport, and sale of protected animal species. The others were released on bail. The lead of the trafficking was in Tianjin.<sup>3</sup>

**RATHKEALE ROVERS: see page 97**