

ROBIN DES BOIS

ON_{the} TRAIL

Information and analysis bulletin on animal poaching and smuggling

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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°13

The value of horn on the black market, according to media or official sources

Continent	Country	\$US/kg	Réf.
AFRICA	South Africa	14,000	15
ASIA	Hong Kong (China)	25,781	39
	China	300,000 (sales per gram)	5*

* See chapter Rhinoceroses and elephants

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

April 16, 2016

Oi Pejeta Wildlife Conservancy, Laikipia County, Kenya

Poaching during the night of a 7 year old female black rhinoceros. Its horns were stolen. Oi Pejeta lost 5 black rhinos in 6 months.¹

MOZAMBIQUE

May 2, 2016

Maputo International Airport, Maputo, Mozambique

Flight Q870 to Nairobi was unknowingly on the way to transport a war chest. The Vietnamese citizen was caught in the act. This is the 2nd large seizure in Maputo Airport this year (see “On the Trail” n°12 p. 66): 11 white rhinoceros horns weighing 19.5 kg, 376 horn slices (2.8 kg) and 907 shavings from the horn slices cutting (1 kg).²



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ZAMBIA

May 13, 2016

Lusaka, Lusaka Province, Zambia

Two air force members and one Namibian were arrested in a shopping center. Seizure of 2 horns (3.9 kg). The operation was commended in Zimbabwe where public and private anti-poaching forces are concerned about the growth of transborder wildlife trafficking in the Zambezi river basin.

About 10 days later, the pair of horns vanished from the vault where evidence is kept. The trial had been scheduled for June 27. An intelligence agent from the Zambia Wildlife Authority is suspected of having stolen them to destroy evidence and render impossible conviction of the suspects. This agent was released under bail for 100,000 kwachas (\$ 10,600 US).³

ZIMBABWE

April 11, 2016

Monts Matobo National Park, South Matabeleland Province, Zimbabwe

One 8-year-old female rhinoceros was put to death after a week of suffering. She had been discovered dying several days after the gunfire. She was hit in the paws. She was one of the central characters of a TV series in 2010. Her calf of 13 months has disappeared.⁴

June 11, 2016

Mazowe, Mashonaland Central Province, Zimbabwe

Poaching of a 37 year old female rhinoceros in a private reserve near Harare. She was killed by a single bullet to the heart during Saturday night. Her horns would not have been uprooted.⁵

June 28, 2016

Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe

220 kg of rhinoceros horn disappeared from government stocks. The weevils are not to blame (see “On the Trail” n°7, p.62). The director of National Parks, Edson Chidziya, was put on leave from his office for 60 days and is prohibited to interfere with the ongoing investigation. He was appointed in 2013.⁶



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SOUTH AFRICA

April 1, 2016**Great Fish River Reserve, Grahamstown, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**

Poaching of 3 rhinoceroses. Two died. The 3rd was injured. Poaching has intensified in the province. They were killed by bullets. Anesthetized arrows are used more so in the region.⁷

April 3, 2016**Bloemfontein Zoo, Free State Province, South Africa**

- 2 white rhinoceroses killed in the dead of night. Poachers shot 6 times and stole their horns.⁸

April 6, 2016**Carolina, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

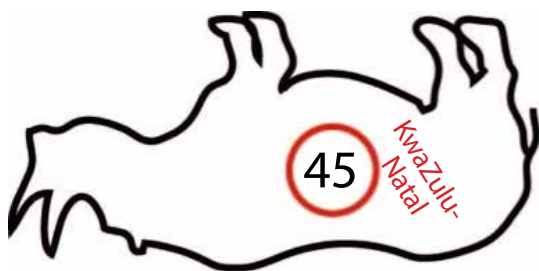
Five suspects, between the ages of 26 and 42, are appearing in court for the possession of rhinoceros horn. An undercover agent in the Hawks met with the suspects who showed him the horn. With a value of 60,000 rands (\$ 4,172 US), it was seized as well as one car.⁹

April 8, 2016**Kimberley, Northern Cape Province, South Africa**

Fruitless poaching of a white rhino. The horns were still on the rotting carcass. Death occurred one week beforehand.¹⁰

April 20, 2016**Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa**

Poaching of 3 white rhinoceroses. -45 in KwaZulu-Natal since the beginning of the year.¹¹

**April 21, 2016****Mkhuhlu, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

Two vehicles were along the road side. They were heading towards Kruger National Park. In the first was a firearm wrapped in clothing along with a silencer, ammunition, a knife, and an ax. In the second, which belongs to a soldier, was his service weapon.

The 4 suspects were arrested. Three, including the soldier, were released on bail. The 4th was already involved in a similar case and will remain in prison until trial.¹²

**April 21, 2016****Thabazimbi, Province of Limpopo, South Africa**

Auctions open. Shopping time. The Thaba Tholo ranch covers 360 km². The Thaba Tholo livestock made up of rhinos, caracals, lions, hyenas, selected leopards, bred and genetically enhanced by translocated specimens. Rhino auctioning took place this year.

Prices:

1 female white rhino pregnant and followed by a young one = 750,000 rands (\$ 50,100 US).

1 female rhino pregnant and with a 68.6 cm horn = 670,000 rands (\$ 44,800 US)

Average price of a pregnant female rhino = 535,000 rands (\$ 35,700 US)

Average price of a young male = 112,500 rands (\$ 7500 US)

Next sale on 15 and 16 September.¹³

April 22, 2016**Tam Safaris Game Reserve, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**

Poaching of a female white rhinoceros. She was dehorned. Her female calf, 3 months and 141 kg, was found alive next to its mother. This is the 2nd orphan found in one month. 400,000 rands (\$ 25,363US) for any key information.¹⁴

**April 25, 2016****Vanderbijlpark, Province of Gauteng, South Africa**

The suspects aged 27 to 32 were caught red handed with 25 kg of horn in a sports bag. Value on the local market, \$ 14,000 US/kg. Two of them were released under a modest bail of \$ 335 US each.¹⁵



April 26, 2016

Sabie Game Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa



Seizure of a hunting rifle, ammunition and one car without a license plate. Two arrested. The International Anti-Poaching Foundation (IAPF)/Sabie Game Park and Kruger

National Park have worked together to follow and apprehend 2 criminals. Jurg, a tracking dog helped with the hunt. The two men are accused of poaching, illegal border crossing (Mozambique/South Africa) with the intention to commit a crime, and illegal possession of a firearm and ammunitions.¹⁶

May 1, 2016

Tshukudu Private Game Reserve, Limpopo Province, South Africa

It is the first tragedy for the reserve, its hosts, leaders and guardians. The rhino suffered from a moonless night and was not recovered before the following morning. He had previously and voluntarily been dehorned. The poacher's persevered in cutting the stumps.¹⁷

May 3, 2016

Madadeni, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa



For their first patrol, two novice military officers have been very lucky. They identified and followed 2 suspicious looking armed men and found 2 horns in their bag. The 2 suspects might also have been involved in the theft of horns seized from the inside of a strong room near Ladysmith.¹⁸

May 5, 2016

Stilfontein, North-West Province, South Africa

Arrest of 5 poachers suspected of killing 2 rhinoceroses in April in a reserve in Hartbeesfontein.¹⁹

May 7, 2016

Wintershoek Game Reserve, Northern Cape Province, South Africa

Poaching of a male rhinoceros and theft of his horns. They were chopped off with a knife.²⁰

- 6 in the province in 2 months

"For the past 3 years that rhino poaching has been occurring in the province, no arrests have taken place," said the owner of the Reserve.



May 10, 2016

Klaserie Nature Reserve, Hoedspruit, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Guided by echoes of gunfire, park rangers quickly arrived on the crime scene in the middle of the afternoon on Tuesday, and got a hold of the binational trio, including one South African and 2 Mozambicans, their rounds of ammunition, one undeclared fire arm and one horn.²¹



May 5, 2016

Bushbuckridge, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

21 years and six months in prison for 2 men. Six months for trespassing in Kruger Park, 10 years for illegal possession of a weapon, 1 year for the illegal possession of ammunition and 10 for the possession of a weapon with the intent to commit a crime. Sentences run concurrently.²²



May 21, 2016

Marakele National Park, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Is it possible that with a .458 caliber gun, a silencer, 8 rounds of ammunition, 2 knives and 8 cellphones, the 5 suspects arrested in the night between Saturday to Sunday aboard 2 vehicles heading to the National Park could have had any project other than to poach rhinoceroses?²³



May 25, 2016

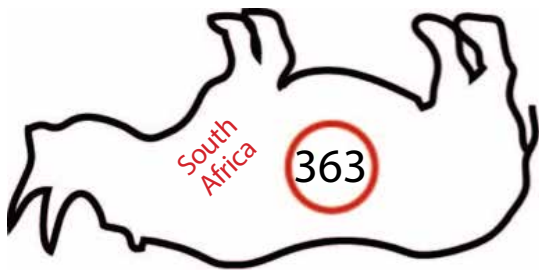
Kruger National Park, South Africa

Escalating violence has been confirmed. Helicopters have proven to be the best defense for rhinoceroses. In this case, it succeeds to land smoothly. The team was safe. The engine was in the poachers' line of sight. Four of them were arrested. Seizure of 3 firearms, ammunition and poaching equipment. At the beginning of the year in Tanzania, Roger Gower lost his life while in these same circumstances (see "On the Trail" n°12 p. 80).²⁴

May 26, 2016

Rietvlei Nature Reserve, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Two rhinoceroses poached, including one pregnant female. -363 rhinoceros from January to April 2016 in South Africa, versus -404 in 2015 in the same period. The environmental minister calls that "progress". There is only one known rhinoceros left near Pretoria. The preventative removal of its horn has just been announced loud and clear. The reserve management has nicely stated that "in one night, we therefore lost three rhino, whereas only two rhino will be sent off to be statistics in this horrible war."²⁵



June 2, 2016

Pongola, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Sentencing of Musa Sibiyi, 36 years old, to 10 years in prison for possession of a firearm and ammunition without a permit, and to 2 years for violation of property. The sentences will be served concurrently. His arrest dates back to October 2015. He had binoculars, an ax, and a hacksaw, all equipment typical of a black and white rhinoceros killer.²⁶



REPEATED OFFENSE

June 4, 2016

Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

The traffic agent from Mkhuhlu was released on bail for poaching in Kruger National Park in October 2015. His freedom is conditional. He doesn't have the right to enter any wildlife reserve or any part of Kruger Park, yet he was arrested at an outpost of the Park. He was let in with an access card lent by a ranger also suspected of poaching.

Appearing before the same Court in Skukuza for identity fraud and conspiracy to commit a crime, his request for release on bail has been refused this time.²⁷

June 6, 2016

Hoedspruit, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Severely injured in the lung. The prognosis isn't good.²⁸



June 7, 2016

Nelspruit, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

No no! He went to the edge of the Kruger Park to pick medicinal herbs to heal the children. Not finding anything good, he scaled the fence to continue his search inside of the Park. When night fell, he went to sleep in safety at a treetop. The next day, he climbed back down and all of a sudden was targeted by Park rangers. "I wasn't carrying a weapon," "I only have a small pickaxe to uproot plants." With that, the 33-year-old man pled not guilty for rhinoceros poaching and illegal possession of a firearm and ammunition.²⁹

June 9, 2016

Rustenburg, North West Province, South Africa

A police agent released on a bail of 1000 rands (\$ 67 US) after being arrested for attempting to sell a rhinoceros horn. His 5 accomplices released on bail of 2000 rands (\$ 126 US).³⁰

June 16, 2016

Bela-Bela Private Reserve, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Violence gets worse and worse. The Protrack Anti-poaching team (see "On the Trail" n°6 p. 63), which was patrolling in the buffer zone of the Bela-Bela Reserve, was ambushed at midnight. Seven poachers drew on one of the rangers, seriously injuring him in the leg. They tied up the 2 others with metal wires. Two suspects stayed behind to guard them. The others left to hunt rhinoceroses. They killed one 2 km away from the first crime scene. The injured ranger died at the scene. The 2 others succeeded in freeing themselves in the early morning. This is the first time that Protrack has lost a man. He was 20 years old. No one has been arrested.³¹



Grahamstown, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

June 17, 2016

When they were arrested at 10 pm in a motel, they were in possession of a 72 cm horn, a hypodermic rifle, sedative drugs, rations and other camping equipment, several cell phones and 2 rental cars. Everybody has reason to believe that it was them who, several hours beforehand, had killed a venerable and peaceful rhinoceros, and left it to die in a pool of blood in Buckland's Private Reserve. The 3 suspects, one South African and 2 Zimbabweans, were 37, 38 and 40 years old. A spokesperson for the police of the province is not excluding the possibility that they are involved in at least 10 other poaching cases in Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal and Mpumalanga provinces.³²

June 21, 2016

Polokwane Game Reserve, Limpopo Province, South Africa

One mother and her son poached to the death and dehorned. What's more, the mother was butchered with a part of her intestines and eyes removed. The tail of the infant was cut and skin patches were taken. Police are investigating but not making much headway. To counter rumors, the president of the traditional healers of Limpopo has condemned poaching and mutilation. "Doctor" Sylvester Hlati said that traditional healers do not use parts that were removed in such a brutal way. "We have an agreement and arrangement with the Department of Environmental Affairs, as well as the Kruger National Park that when we do need things for our practice such as skin or bones, we get permission from authorities, which allows us to get what we need from animals that are already dead."³³



June 22, 2016

Rhino and Lion Nature Reserve Krugersdorp, Gauteng Province, South Africa

They have caught him when off his guard. The young orphan of 18 months was adopted by the Reserve 16 months ago when its mother was poached to death. He was comfortable with humans and grateful, so to speak. In the early morning, poachers called from the other side of the closure. He came to them. They started shooting and left with his horns.³⁴

June 2016

Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Kruger Park personnel are prey to suspicion and treason.

- June 8. Suspension of 2 rangers attached to a special operations unit.

- June 8. Ranger arrested in Satara.

- June 9. Technical services director arrested.



- June 18. Two rangers arrested. Interrogation at the police station in Skukuza. They were in possession of 4 horns worth \$127,000 US. The poaching would have happened 2 days earlier.

- June 21. Loyal rangers are chasing 3 poaching rangers. One of the latter was injured. Another drowned in the Nsikazi River. The 3rd escaped.³⁵



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NAMIBIA

June 6, 2016

Namibia

Here we go again! The Ministry of Environment and Tourism has published invitations to tender for the hunting of 3 black rhinos. These males are too old to reproduce. These individuals, coming of age, became territorially aggressive and represent a physical threat for young males, according to the president of the Namibia Professional Hunting Association. The director of the Namibia Nature Foundation adds: "hunting the 3 males is justified from an economic and ecological sense." The Duke of Cambridge does not say better. The funds are financing conservation actions of wildlife and its habitats. Poaching, explains the defenders of the practice, puts tremendous pressure on the department and there is a growing need for financial resources to combat it.

Written bids are expected until the end of June.

Last year, an American hunter, Cory Knowlton had acquired the right to hunt a black rhino for \$ 350,000 US with the help of several trackers and professional hunters recruited by safari operators duly licensed by the Ministry (see " On the Trail " n°9 p. 63).³⁶

June 15, 2016

Windhoek, Region of Khomas, Namibia

Seizure of 4 horns. Two Namibians arrested. Released on a bail of \$ 50,000 Namibians (\$ 3,170 US) for each of the numerous conditions.



They have to surrender their passports, promising not to ask for new ones until the end of the trial and they have to demonstrate their presence at the police station 3 times week. Additionally, Namwandi, 32, known under the name of Mox, has been asked not to leave Windhoek District. Shaalukeni, 32, has been asked not to leave Kunene, Omusati, Oshana, and Ohangwena Regions without advising police.³⁷

From March to June, 2016

Etosha National Park, Kunene Region, Namibia

Minus 81 rhinos since the beginning of the year, most of them lost in Etosha or around there. Eight suspects have been arrested. In Zambia, genetic analysis on one horn seizure proves that the rhino came from Etosha Park.

Despite corporatist protest, park personnel and certain services of the Ministry of the Environment and Tourism were subject to imposed transfer. The Mister call this a reshuffle.³⁸



ASIA

CHINA

May 14, 2016

Hong Kong International Airport, Hong Kong, China

Seizure of 10 kg of horn declared as “resin crafts”, worth 2 million HK\$ (\$ 257,811 US, or \$ 25,781 US/kg). One 61-year-old man arrested. In waiting for the results of the investigation, he was released on bail for which the value has not been released.³⁹

June 19, 2016

Beijing, China

Beijing Airport employee sentenced in appeal to 6 years in prison and a fine of 60,000 yuans (\$ 9,114 US) for attempting to fraudulently smuggle a rhinoceros horn into China. The suitcase that contained the offending material in question departed from the airport by the circuit reserved for employees. The owners of the suitcase, a so-called businesswoman from China but staying in Johannesburg and her associate were sentenced to 11 and 6.5 years in prison, with fines of 110,000 yuans (\$ 16,500 US) and 60,000 yuans (\$ 9,114 US).⁴⁰



INDIA

April 10, 2016

Brahmaputra Chapari, State of Assam, India

Eight poachers arrested between the ages of 21 and 37.⁴²

April 10, 2016

Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India

Poaching shooting of a female 2 days before the visit of Kate and William, the princely couple of the United Kingdom. She was dying and unrecoverable. The horn was cut and skull fractured. It takes a minute or less. The experienced forensic veterinarian said that most of the time, when the horn is cut, there is a skull fracture. “This means that the rhino’s final hours are spent in such excruciating pain that you and I cannot even begin to comprehend.”⁴¹



April 13, 2016

Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India

Hours after the visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, a rhinoceros reached by 105 bullets of the type Kalashnikov had been found dead. The Duke of Cambridge, close to the WWF said recently that, “If an endangered animal was old or infertile it was acceptable to kill it for cash as long as the fee went back into conservation work.”⁴³

April 16, 2016

Jorhat District, State of Assam, India

Arrest of 3 poachers, including one Railway Protection Force agent, on the road between Mariani and Jorhat. Seizure of a one-kilogram horn from a car and 3 cell phones.⁴⁴

May 2, 2016

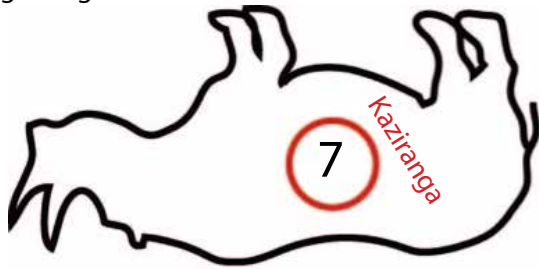
Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India

Forest guards and poachers hand in hand. The guards didn’t report a rhinoceros poaching in November 2015 and buried the carcass 100 meters from their camp. As proof, the carcass –without its horn- is being exhumed. Seven arrested: 4 forest guards and 3 villagers. Among the rangers, Mahat Chandra Talukdar was in charge of Agoratoli and Bagori, 2 important sections of the Park from 1989 to 1993. During this period, 184 rhinoceroses were poached in both sections.⁴⁵

May 2, 2016

Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India

Poaching of one male. He was dehorned. It was in a buffer zone around the Park. Seven rhinoceroses have been killed in and around Kaziranga since the beginning of 2016. A total of 16 were killed in 2015.⁴⁶



May 6, 2016

Manas National Park, State of Assam, India

Let us be pessimistic: this is the 9th poaching in the Park since 2011. Let us be optimistic: it is the 1st poaching in the Park in the past 2 years. Manas is home to around 30 rhinoceroses. The population in the National Park is in danger of going extinct there within the next 15 to 30 years. The rhinoceros was shot in the neighborhood of the main ranger's camp. The first local extinction due to an increase in poaching happened in 1992. The rhinoceroses then rose from the ashes thanks to the transfer of several individuals from Kaziranga. Horn smuggling is suspected to fund activities of rebel groups.⁴⁷

May 8, 2016

Lakhimpur District, State of Assam, India

Arrest at daybreak of 4 poachers. They were being pursued for having killed a rhinoceros in 2015. Seizure of a hunting rifle and a silencer.⁴⁸

May 22, 2016

Burachapori Wildlife Sanctuary, State of Assam, India

One female is dead. Her horn is still attached. Cause of death unknown. She just came with her baby to undergo a translocation from Kaziranga National Park. Change of air, new diet, poisoning, an aborted horn theft attempt, all are viable hypotheses. Rhino Vision 2020, the translocation program, is under the authority of the WWF. Kaziranga National Park is considered as a reservoir, which can replenish rhinoceros populations in other parks in Assam. According to the IUCN, this shouldn't pose any problems as long as the population in Kaziranga keeps increasing, and as long as no more than 30 to 30 animals are transferred out each year. It remains that the rhinos often support badly these displacements that furthermore are likely to create new hotbeds for poaching. Burachapori and Kaziranga are 60 km apart.⁴⁹

May 28, 2016

Kaziranga National Park, Assam State, India

Shooting death of a poacher. Seizure of one .303 rifle and ammunition. Two other poachers escaped.⁵⁰



Mrs Minister ensnared

Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India

June 2016

June 7, 2016. The horns of naturally dead rhinos according to the forensic veterinarians must be carefully stored in vaults. Noticing that some of these horns are missing, the new Assam's Forest Minister states that an inquiry will soon be launched. This may risk putting into question the practical sense of storage or even the honesty of some forest agents⁵¹

The same day, Mrs Brahma, Minister for the Forests for now a week, in company of the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Water Resources and the chiefs of police from the 4 districts surrounding the park made an official visit. The Minister at the head of the popular Front of Bodoland is part of a governmental coalition led by the BJP (Bhatatiya Janata Parti) that has made ending rhino poaching in the State of Assam a major electoral issue. On the same day as this visit, a rhino was poached around 3:30 pm somewhere in the 430 km² of the Park. Later it was known to have happened in the Agoratoli sector. Villagers heard the gunshots but rangers did everything they could all afternoon and night to hush up the case and hide the body by burying it after covering it with salt and also, it is said, chemicals. Informed via separate channels of the poaching, the 9th this year, the minister demanded to be taken to the crime scene while the de-horned carcass was still visible. "I don't know why the incident was not reported to me. The forest officials should have told me. As it was still daytime (the time of the incident), I could have activated NGOs and community people and we could have tried to nab the poachers."

The next day, June 8, Mrs Minister could only promise what had already been promised by her predecessors such as to provide quality weapons and extra ammunition to the forest guards in the Park.

On June 14, one of the alleged poachers, Megha Bora, is arrested at night at one of his parents' home where he was hiding. He had with him 2 large caliber weapons.

On June 16, Mrs Brahma announces that Mister Muffaker Ali, the Park director, is suspended from office. This decision was made with the support of the Prime Minister of the State of Assam.

On June 20, Mrs Brahma takes a step back from initial electoral promises and admits "It is impossible end poaching completely because their network is very big".⁵²

June 10, 2016

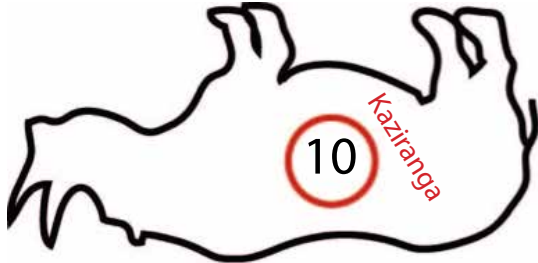
Jakhalabandha, State of Assam, India

Arrest of 2 women, 45 and 50 years old, who were accomplices to a fugitive poacher, Hemsing Kramsa. They got off a bus, they had large caliber ammunition on them and the equivalent of \$ 37,000 US in their clothes.⁵³

June 18, 2016

Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India

Poaching of a female, theft of its horn -10 since the beginning of the year.⁵⁴



June 27, 2016

Orang National Park, State of Assam, India

A first for the year in "mini-Kaziranga" park. Guards heard the sound of a rifle muffled by a silencer. The body was found 3 days later. Three arrests. Among them, the brother of one Park employee. A fourth one is wanted. One horn, weapons and ammunition have been seized. The last instance of rhinoceros poaching was in 2014. Orang is on the northern shore of Brahmapoutre, 150 km from Kaziranga.⁵⁵

June 29, 2016

Border of India and Nepal

Seizure of a rhinoceros horn. Estimated value: \$ 27,000 US. One man arrested. He said that he came from West Bengal. He was headed to Nepal.⁵⁶

INDONESIA

April 6, 2016

West Kutai Regency, East Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

Death of a Sumatran rhinoceros (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*, Appendix I). There is still a dozen or so in the province and on the entire island of Borneo. The cause of death is not clear. Perhaps an infection after having been caught in a snare.⁵⁷

MALAYSIA

April 10, 2016

Johor Bahru, State of Johor, Malaysia

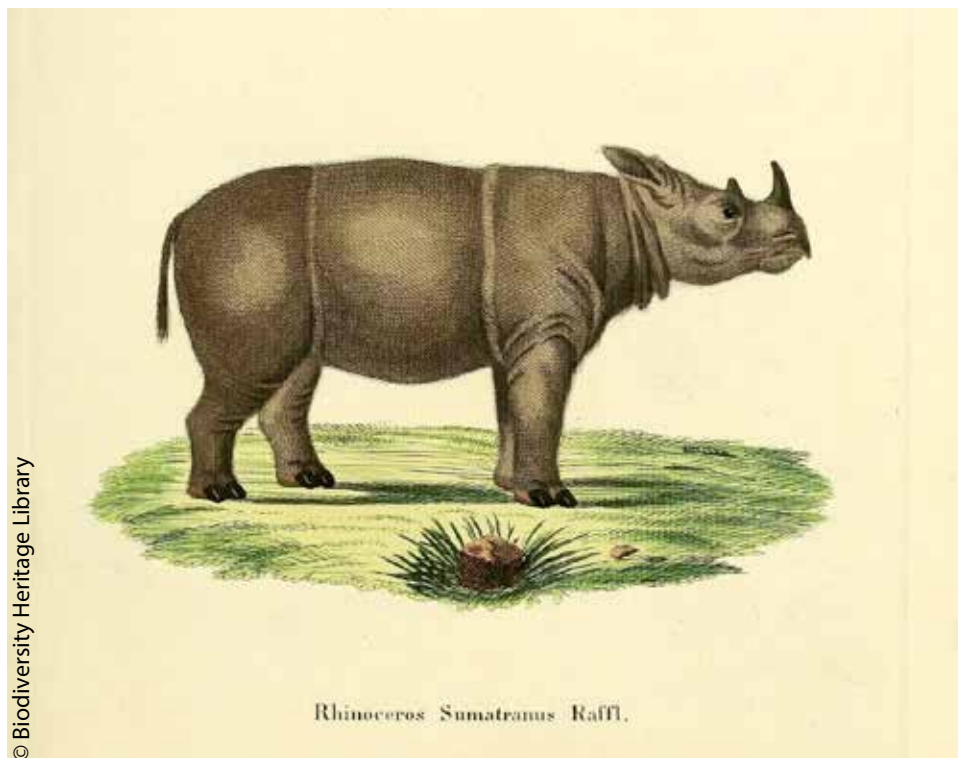
The former director of the Department of Wildlife and National Parks was accused stealing a rhinoceros horn in the Royal Museum (see "On the Trail" n°11, p.63). Prosecutors have now withdrawn their charges. The fine, equivalent to \$ 1,214 US, has been refunded. "In this case, it had been my job to move the horn and put it elsewhere." "There was a misunderstanding," explained Yusoff Shariff, who has now been transferred to Kuala Lumpur.⁵⁸

NEPAL

April 24, 2016

Kailali District, Far-Western Development Region, Nepal

It's a big one; 48.26 cm long and 33cm diameter at its base. It came from India. The Far Western regional investigation team worked with the Wildlife Animals Protection Society of India.⁵⁹



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Rhinoceros Sumatranus Raffl.

June 28, 2016
Chitwan District, Central Development Region, Nepal

Sentencing of Rajkumar Chepang already mentioned twice in "On the Trail" (n° 3, p. 50 et n° 8, p. 64) to 15 years in prison.⁶⁰



EUROPE

April 4 and 5, 2016
Birmingham, England, UK

Sentence of imprisonment for theft and attempted theft in organised group of rhino horns and Chinese antiques in UK museums and auction houses for 13 members of an Irish gang called the Rathkeale Rovers (see "On the Trail" n°12 p. 72) after the



name of a town in Limerick County. The Rathkeale Rovers are composed of fathers, sons, cousins, men and women without fixed abodes, with multiple homonyms family names like Slattery, Hegarty, Flynn, O'Brien or Sheridan. At least 3 members of the gang have already been convicted in the US for rhino horn trafficking. The Rathkeale are also strongly suspected of stealing horns in several European museums. After the arrests and during the trial, they often put forward depression problems incompatible with jail with the support of united and bereaved families. One member of the Rathkeale Rovers, Robert Gilbert-Smith, has already been sentenced April 27, 2015 to 15 months' imprisonment. A Chinese accomplice helping to smuggle objects acquired by fraudulent means has also been sentenced to jail.



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Top from left to right : Paul Pammen (5 years and 6 months), Donald Chi Chong Wong (5 years and 6 months), Richard Sheridan (5 years and 6 months), Robert-Gilbert Smith (15 month), Ashley Dad (5 years and 3 months), John "Kerry" O'Brien (6 years and 6 months), Terrence McNamara (4 years).
Bottom from left to right : Richard «Kerry» O'Brien (5 years and 6 months), Patrick Clarke (5 years and 6 months), - Daniel «Turkey» O'Brien (6 years 8 months), Danny Flynn (4 years), John «Cash» O'Brien (5 years and 3 month), Michael Hegarty (6 years and 6 months), Alan Clarke (5 years and 6 months).



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Rhinos and elephants

AFRICA

ZIMBABWE – SOUTH AFRICA

Two disturbing jurisprudences !

Zimbabwe, April 21, 2016

Two women had been arrested in December 2015. In the trunk of the car, police, who intervened thanks to anonymous information, found 25.9 kg of ivory. The lawyer referred the High Court and called for the investigation to be suspended on the grounds that the informant's identity was not revealed, despite repeated requests, and that the client's right to information under article 62 of the Constitution was not respected. Pending the decision of the High Court, the trial of the 2 defendants has been suspended. To be continued!¹



South Africa, June 28, 2016.

Two of the defendants in the Hugo Ras scandal, who are charged with the illegal hunting of 24 rhinos in organized gang, or to have partaken in such and held, transported and sold the horns, have presented on the day before the collective trial a request before the Constitutional Court. The 2 plaintiffs consider that out of the 300 charges of their indictment, 103 are unconstitutional, since the moratorium on transport and sale of horns has been judged illegal by the Supreme Court of Appeals in May 2016. The Minister of the Environment for her part has also seized the Constitutional court and requested the Court of Appeals decision be overturned. According to the Minister, the moratorium stays in force until the Constitutional court has not rendered its decision, which could not be before several months. This judicial mix-up is going to postpone the trial of the Ras gang and could lead to him being let out on bail. Hugo Ras is the only one of the 10 accused to remain in detention since the arrest in 2014 of this white collar gang made up of ranch owners, their wives, a veterinarian, a lawyer and a pilot, who by their collusion, their relations and connections with hunters around the world and buyers in Asia were able to profit with cynicism, cruelty, inventiveness and cupidity of this crazy horn business. OSCAP (Outraged South African Citizens Against Poaching) points out that this procedure may have strong implications on all prosecutions for rhino poaching.² See "On the Trail" n° 6 p 67, n°7 p 71, n°10 p. 47.



AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

May 9, 2016

Minneapolis, State of Minnesota, United States of America

The well respected university professor at Saint Cloud University, now ex-professor, who purchased an antique cup made from a rhino horn at Christie's in Paris and is an international trafficker selling via the Internet, otherwise also a specialist of the French writer Jean-Paul Sartre (see "On the trail" n°8 p. 66) was sentenced to a \$ 500,000 US fine, 3 years parole and 150 hours of community work. Zheng, 43 years old, illegally imported to the US and exported over one million US\$ worth of ivory and rhino horn antiques.³



June 22, 2016

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

Sentencing of Joseph Chait, aged 38, prestigious auctioneer of Beverly Hills, to one year and a day in prison and a fine of \$ 10,000 US for having organized the trafficking of ivory, coral and rhino horn objects, declared as bone, wood and plastic, to China (see "On the Trail" n°12 p. 90). At his release from prison, he will be on probation for 3 years.⁴



ASIA

CHINA

April 8, 2016

Guangzhou, Province of Guangdong, China

Seizure in 2 shops in the Hualin International palace of elephant ivory, mammoth ivory and fake ivory, 6 pieces of rhino horns and hornbills helmets (*Rhinoplax vigil*, Appendix I). DNA analysis is in progress for the rhino horns. They could be fake. One arrest.⁵

Destructions

AFRICA

April 19, 2016

Yaoundé, Central Region, Cameroon

Destruction of 2000 tusks (3510 kg), and 1753 pieces of carved ivory (2613 kg) that had been seized from poachers and traffickers. Samantha Power, the United States Ambassador to the United Nations was present for the incineration ordered by the President of the Cameroon Republic.

"This event along with the presence of international dignitaries shows the willingness of the international community to make a common effort with Cameroon to fight against poaching" according to the presidency.

After these open air burnings it is necessary that the residues and unburned materials be carefully gathered by the competent services and subjected to definite disposal to avoid the recovery, processing and marketing of what is left behind.¹



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April 30, 2016

Kenya

105 t of ivory and 1.35 t of rhino horns incinerated. The presence of Chinese officials was saluted with a certain amount of mockery. 90% of arrests for trafficking in ivory at the Nairobi airport are carried out on Chinese citizens. Kenya has lost 466 elephants in 2 years to the poaching battle fields according to official statistics. Tusks weighing more than 50 kg were removed from the brazier to be exhibited in a future museum. Regarding theft and corruption, the safety conditions of these 7 tons inherited from a closed era has not been specified. Nowadays the average tusks put on the black market weigh less than 5 kg.

Several tusks were spontaneously turned over to the KWS by the Finland Embassy and some other anonymous holders. Local value of the burned ivory is of \$ 150 million US, that is \$ 1428 US/kg. Skins and sandalwood were used at the base of the fire under the ivory. Several m³ of kerosene and fuel were needed to start the fire and keep it blazing. Ivory is not a natural combustibile. Fragments and residues, retrievable and proper for sale, polluted the heaps of ashes.²



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June 12, 2016

South Sudan

Destruction by incineration of more than 5 tons of ivory and rhinoceros horns following a governmental order. It is the first operation of this kind in the country.⁴

April 14, 2016

Port Dickson, State of Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

Destruction by crushing and industrial incineration of 9.5 tons of illegal ivory. Value: 20.05 million US\$, i.e. \$ 2110 US/kg. Genetic tests prove that the tusks seized in ports and airports came from Gabon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Tanzania, Mozambique, Zambia, Uganda, Kenya and South Sudan, in other words from the whole African continent.⁵

May 23, 2016

Banda Aceh, Province of Aceh, Indonesia

The tigers are burning. They were stuffed. In the bonfire there were skins, ivory, pieces of leopard and sun bears. Dirty money and distasteful luxuries gone up in smoke.⁶



June 13, 2016

Tuas, Singapore

Destruction by crushing and industrial burning of 7900 kg ivory seized by State services in 2014 and 2015. This is composed mainly of 2700 tusks or tusk sections. Price per kilo: \$ 1215 US/kg. The sum of the destroyed ivory comes from 4 major seizures coming from Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of the Congo and destined to Laos and Vietnam. Each of the 4 freight forwarders were sentenced to pay a 5000 Singapore dollar fine (\$ 3700 US) for failure to exercise due diligence to ensure shipment does not contain contraband.⁷



June 29, 2016

Tsing Yi, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China Incineration.

The chemical waste incinerator has accomplished its 20th and last batch of destruction of illegal ivory. Since May 2014, 28 tons have been destroyed. The advantage of this radical solution is that the residues of the combustion are not recoverable, identifiable or sortable. The Minister of Agriculture, Fishing and the Protection of the Environment is pleased: in 2015 only 1.6 tons of ivory was seized, versus 8 tons in 2013.⁸



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• **April 30, 2016. Nairobi, Kenya** Press release from the Minister of the Environment, Energy and the Sea Ségolène Royal announces the prohibition of any ivory trade in the French territory

• Saturday April 30th in Nairobi, Ségolène Royal participates in the greatest ceremony of ivory destruction organized by the President of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, in the presence of the Presidents of Gabon and Uganda.

• At this occasion, responding to the requests of African States who are struggling against elephant poaching, Ségolène Royal announces that she intends to ban all ivory trading on French territory, unless exceptional derogations, and that she will bring this measure to the European level.

• This measure complements the plans already put in place by Ségolène Royal in the fight against poaching and trafficking of endangered species:

- - Immediate suspension of certificates issued for the export of raw ivory in France.
- - Calling to the other member states of the European Union to in turn, prohibit the exports of raw ivory, as has already been done in Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom.
- - Enhanced cooperation between the services of the Environmental Ministry and Customs, and relaunching of the interministerial cooperation plan, to improve the synergy between services and to fight against fraud more effectively, particularly on borders.

• Finally, the Law for the recovery of biodiversity, nature and landscapes strengthens the sanctions provided for cases of protected species trafficking (elephants, rhinoceroses, tigers, varieties of tropical wood, etc...): fines incurred in the case of a simple offense will be increased tenfold and rise from 15,000 to 150,000 euros. They will be multiplied by five in cases of organized gang trafficking, increasing from 150,000 to 750,000 euros.³

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