

ROBIN DES BOIS

ON the TRAIL

Information and analysis bulletin on animal poaching and smuggling
n°9 / 1st April - 30st June 2015

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Introduction

In Africa and Asia, thefts, “dissipations” and substitutions are multiplying in vaults and Courts where illegal ivory and other animal by-products are kept.

In Europe, official inventories of seized ivory lack transparency and trustworthiness and most certainly hide losses or misappropriation.

Complete destruction of illegal stockpiles is not only a symbolic gesture and a declaration of war addressed to traffickers. It mainly is the way to put out at the heart of States and their servants any blaze of corruption. The fruits of the valiant work carried out by rangers, police, customs will no longer be reaped by networks awaiting the right moment to serve themselves and take back what was removed from them at the cost of courage, honesty and sometimes blood.

ORIGINAL VERSION IN FRENCH

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*.

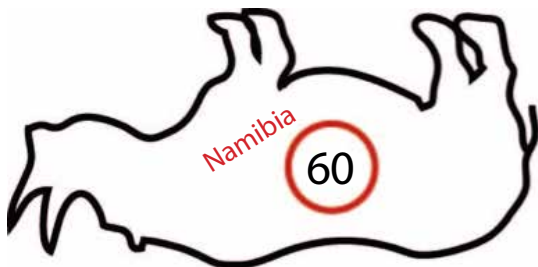
AFRICA

Rhinocrisis in Namibia¹ Kunene Region, Namibia April 2015

31 carcasses in a week in Etosha National Park. Namibia hosts several hundreds of black rhinos. This is the last core of the species. 2 presumed responsible factors are evoked:

1 - The fence, torn, dilapidated, cut down by poachers who want to enter or the comings and goings of elephants. The 824 km fence should be rebuilt. At best, 10 years are needed.

2 - The mood of the park staff is also implicated. More by rumors than facts although several carcasses were found near the guards houses. "They are either negligent or sleeping" said the dismayed Minister of Environment Pohamba Shifeta. "Everything will be investigated and no stone will be left unturned". Namibia lost 23 rhinos because of poaching last year. The counter is at 60 for the first 4 months of 2015. Same acceleration for elephants: 78 in 2014, 28 since the beginning of the year.



Preventive dehorning operations continue with caution. The minister does not rule out the possibility that private volunteers offering their skills and services are actually connected to horn smuggling networks. 57 rhinos were preventively dehorned since last November. The horns were conveyed in Windhoek where they are kept under increased surveillance and held in secret locations. The Director General of Police, Sebastian Ndeitunga, gathered all police chiefs and inspectors of the regions of Omusati, Oshana, Oshikoto in the headquarters of the Etosha Park. According to witnesses, the atmosphere was tense. The lieutenant general expressed his surprise to his subordinates that no arrest of a poacher or suspect had been conducted since the beginning of the year. He wants searches and surprise checks to be carried out inside the park, on airports and border areas.

Coming back to the Etosha case, the senior official lamented about the widespread inertia. "No tracks, no arrests of suspects." He compares the blockage to widespread cancer. So widespread that 5 new carcasses were discovered in early April near Etendenka in southern Kunene desert a hundred kilometers of Etosha.

One year ago, 3 Chinese returning home were caught at the Windhoek International Airport with 14 horns in their luggage. Their trial is scheduled for June.

Poaching of a rhino² South Africa April 7, 2015

The bullet hit him in the head and ricocheted off his left front leg. The vet called by "Saving the Survivors" was forced to finish off the unfortunate.



Rhino poaching attempt³ South Africa April 2015

This time, the rhino was saved by Pro Vet. Wounded in the neck. No vital organ affected. Poachers did not have the possibility to extract the horns.



Arrest of 21 suspected poachers and convictions⁴

Gravelotte, Limpopo Province, South Africa

April 11, 2015

21 suspected poachers arrested since March 1. In almost all cases, they were arrested and rendered harmless before they could do any harm. The tailing of their vehicles on the reserve's stone tracks and the presence on board of large caliber guns, ammunition, knives and axes are overwhelming.

2 men have just been sentenced to 11 years in prison. They had been stopped in February in similar circumstances.

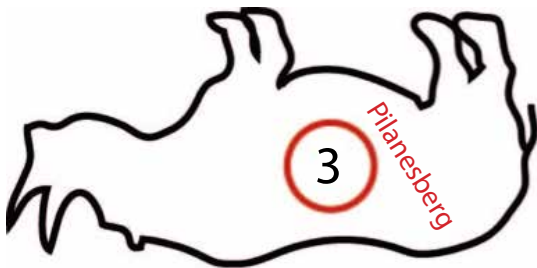


Poaching of a rhino⁵

Pilanesberg National Park, North-West Province, South Africa

April 11, 2015

Nothing could be done. Nageng is an orphan. He was found near his mother killed by a bullet and dehorned. The little did not want to get caught. It took an anaesthetic to take him to the orphanage. A good sign, he grazed the lush grass in the prairie and wallowed in the mud. His mother is the 3rd rhino slaughtered in the National Park since the beginning of the year.



Conviction for fraud⁶

South Africa

April 2015

The real policeman was selling a fake horn. The case dates back to 2003. The Court of Appeal was not sensitive to the condemner's sweet talk. It confirmed the first instance judgment: 6 years in prison for fraud. If the horn was authentic, the sentence would have been less severe.



Seizure of 3.8 kg and 1.8 kg of horn and arrest of 3 Vietnamese men and one woman⁷

Maputo International Airport, Mozambique

April 13 and 18, 2015

Conviction for the theft of 2 rhino horns⁸

Stutterheim, Province of Eastern Cape, South Africa

April 21, 2015

The farm worker has been convicted for stealing 2 horns from Tony Cotterel, a rich business man from London (United Kingdom) also owner of a private ranch in South Africa. The trial did not enable to find out where the stolen horns were hidden or what became of them. They had been taken from the body of a rhino who died of a natural death. An accomplice is awaiting trial to take place in July.

Up to now the Eastern Cape had been spared by horn bandits. It is now in trouble. Poaching is on the rise. Over the first 3 months of this year, 7 rhinos have died for their horns. Guarding of horn stockpiles taken from dead animals or live ones as a preventive measure is causing security issues.



Conviction for attempted rhino poaching⁹

Nelspruit, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

April 22, 2015

28, 26, 31, 29 years old, all from the same village, all buddies, were sentenced to 15 years in prison. The court is concerned about the number of "Rhinoceros" cases it has to deal with. The prosecutor noted 34 cases of poaching in July 2014, 75 in August, 60 in September, 27 in November, 66 in December, 49 in January 2015 and 22 in February. "53 firearms, 228 ammunition, 42 axes, 9 cars and 20 rhino horns were seized at the same time". A 5th sidekick, Bongi Mliba, was killed during the chase with the rangers inside Kruger Park, 2-3 km away from the fence. The convicted claimed to have gone fishing. This would be a misunderstanding. They were all equipped with guns and had in common the axe to tear horns.



**Seizure of 4 rhino horns and arrest¹⁰
National Kruger Park, Province of Limpopo,
South Africa
April 2015**

The Minister of the Environment of South Africa recently declared that her services had better things to do than keep a daily count of the rhinos killed in National Parks. "No rules oblige us to make public such figures". On the other hand, SAN Parks is going to great means to make known the number of poachers arrested in Kruger Park: 28 in the month of April alone, 62 since the beginning of the year. The number of deaths, if there are any, and wounded is not being communicated, nor is the number of horns seized or bodies of dead rhinos discovered. SAN Parks congratulates itself for the efficiency of the joint efforts of Kruger rangers, the canine brigade and 2 anti-poaching helicopters donated by the Howard Buffet Foundation and stationed in Kruger Park.

**Arrest at the border between
South Africa and Botswana of
2 Zimbabwe nationals for horn
and diamond trafficking¹¹
Groblersbrug, Province of
Limpopo, South Africa
April 2015**



**Seizure of 4.6 kg of rhino horn, arrest and release
on bail of 2 North-Korean diplomats¹²
Maputo, Mozambique
May 3, 2015**

One car. Inside it, \$ 93,500 US, 4 men and 4.6 kg of horn. 2 of the men are North-Korean. One is a diplomat from the North-Korean embassy in South Africa, the other is Kim Jong Su, black belt 8th dan and delegate for the international taekwondo federation in the African continent. This combat sport's ambassador travels under such title in all of Africa and supervises training and evaluation events. He was in Madagascar in March. The 2 North-Korean were released on bail for \$ 30,000 US and they immediately returned to South Africa by car with diplomatic license plates. They knew this road well. To pay the bills of the embassy in Pretoria, North-Korean diplomats would regularly practice rhino horn smuggling. They would buy the horns in Mozambique, horns that came from poaching in Kruger Park, then sell them to Chinese interests in South Africa. The 2 other persons arrested present themselves as sculptors. They claim they know nothing about any rhinos. "I don't know these guys". "I was selling them one of my creations." swears one of them.

**Poaching of one rhino¹³
Matobo National Park,
Matabeleland South
Province, Zimbabwe
May 3, 2015**

Maybe 200 white rhinos, 300 black, in any case Zimbabwe has one less since yesterday.

A fence was set up. 52 km long, it is intended to prevent rhinos from leaving and domesticated herds from entering. Poachers enter the Matopos claiming they are looking for lost cattle. The 7 year-old rhino was killed and dehorned near the road leading from the Park to Bulawayo.



© African Wanderer Safaris

**Poaching of a female rhino 9 months pregnant¹⁴
Private reserve, Province of Limpopo, South
Africa
May 2015**

**Arrest and hospitalization of 2 persons
suspected of rhino poaching¹⁵
National Kruger Park, Province of Mpumalanga,
South Africa
May 5, 2015**

Both fights broke out at night. The human death toll is clear. The rhino death toll is still in the dark.

**Seizure of a rhino horn and
arrest of 4 police men on
corruption charges¹⁶
Middelburg, Province of
Mpumalanga, South Africa
May 6, 2015**

This now makes 8 policemen indicted in horn cases since the beginning of the year. The mobile brigade intercepted a vehicle and found inside a horn and money in cash. The horn was "seized" and the suspects set free with a bribe. The most surprising in this case is that the traffickers went to the police station to tell their tail. The horn was finally really seized at the home of one officer and the 5 suspected poachers have pledged to testify at the 4 policemen's trial.



Poaching of 3 rhinos¹⁷
Lombardini Game Farm, Province of Eastern Cape, South Africa
April 29 and May 9, 2015

This night of the 29th of April it was raining, it was windy.

The mother and her baby were killed by professionals. One bullet in the heart and one in the lungs.

All the horns from adult rhinos in the Lombardini Game Farm were cut off 3 years ago, for their safety. The poachers therefore retrieved just some horn crumbs. Yet the value of this loot is not negligible since prices of a kilo of horn have reach the heights (\$ 50 to 100,000 US). The game farm has the reputation of offering hunters- not poachers- the most magnificent experience in the province of Eastern Cape. The director is a member of the association of South African hunters.

According to him, anyone against the project of re-opening the legal horn trade is an accomplice to poachers.

Repeat over the week-end of May 9, a young rhino was killed and dehorned. He was about 400m from the road at the edge of the Game Farm. The fence was cut open. On the week-end, poachers wander on tiptoe and determined.

Poaching of 2 rhinos¹⁸
Province of Limpopo, South Africa
May 2015

They will probably survive despite the 8 bullets lodged in their head and neck. The poachers were interrupted in the middle of their "work". They had begun to saw the horns.



Sentencing of 2 poachers to 30 years in prison¹⁹
Nelspruit, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa
May 14, 2015



At 19 and 33 years old, they were going out to make a fortune in the Kruger National Park. There they found hell, 30 years in prison each, for having shot a baby rhinoceros of 10 days with a horn 2 to 3 cm long that they did not hesitate to cut off with a hatchet. The small orphan miraculously got out of it. Its mother did not survive the attack. The case was adjourned at the beginning of April. The spokesperson of SanParks refused to comment on this new report while the poaching had taken place in October of last year. The discretion of the

spokesperson is in line with the new directives on the communication of the South-African Rhinoceros Ministry. "We have to do better than talking about the rhinoceros deaths."

Seizure of 7 rhino horns, of rhino tails and lion teeth (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II) and arrest²⁰
Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, County of Nairobi, Kenya
May 15, 2015

Vietnamese citizens in Africa have a worrying tendency to practice wild animal trafficking. This one, a 47 year-old, was coming from Maputo (Mozambique) and was on his way to Hanoi. Crossing through Nairobi, his mission "to evaluate relics of African biological heritage", specifically from Mozambique where lions in the Niassa Park fall into many traps (see "On the Trail" n°7 p.45), was interrupted. The horns for their part are the corrupt loot from mercenary poaching activities fulfilled by Mozambique nationals operating in the South African Kruger Park. The seizure is estimated worth \$ 123,000 US on the Kenyan black market. This value raises 5 to 10 fold in Vietnam and in China.



Discovery of 2 dehorned rhinoceros bodies²¹
Okamahoro, Region of Otjozondjupa, Namibia
May 16, 2015

Hit in the head by a .30-06 caliber gun with a telescopic sight and a silencer. The .30-06 caliber was developed in 1906 by the Americans. It had also been used during the 2 world wars. Today the multi-usage of the .30-06 allows some to be still used by hunters of large or very large game.



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**Suspension of transfer of 20 Eastern black rhinoceroses (*Diceros bicornis michaeli*)²²
Sera Community Conservancy, Samburu County, Kenya
May 2015**

Relocation of black rhinoceroses came to a sudden end due to drama. There were 20 rhinoceroses who were to be transferred for a more sure life and to expand the distribution area from the National Parks of Nairobi, of Lewa and Nakuru up to a Samburu county sanctuary at 100 to 200 km distance. A delicate operation run altogether by the county government, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the San Diego Zoo, the zoo of Saint-Louis and the zoo of Zurich. Captures, partial anesthesia, boarding in a container, and rustic transport by truck, the subjects chosen were 6 to 20 years old. The full transport should have lasted 10 days. The local police had received special information about the surveillance and about the knowledge of the behavior of the newcomers who were awaited with honor and worthy benevolence in the sanctuary of Sera, 3450 km² with a hard-core 120 km² special enclosure. The rhinos to be transferred had in addition suffered a preventive dehorning and fitting of microchips to facilitate tracking and to dissuade poachers. Unfortunately 3 rhinos died at Samburu in the days that followed the transfer, 2 due to intestinal complications and the 3rd to anesthesia related complications. 11 are in observation and seem to have withstood the trip. The operation is suspended. 6 rhinoceroses are staying until a new order from the National Park of Nairobi.



**Poaching and dehorning of a female rhinoceros and rescue of an orphan²³
Province of Limpopo, South Africa
May 17, 2015**



**Poaching of a female rhino who survived²⁴
Province of Western Cape, South Africa
May 18, 2015**

They named her Hope. They could have chosen Miracle. After having been savagely amputated of her horns, she survived and was cared for by a 1st rank vet team working under Saving the Survivors. At her 17th day of convalescence, she can move, she can eat alfalfa and doesn't turn away from the fresh prairie grass. All good signs! Hope will not be included in the poaching statistics as she is not dead.



17th day

**Backup for 3 Chinese horn smugglers²⁵
Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia
May 18, 2015**

A Chinese man arrested at the Windhoek Country Club casino should be at the trial bar with his 3 fellow citizens caught at the airport in the act of transporting 14 big horns and a leopard skin in March 2014.

Wang Huii, owner of the Happy Life Import Export Company, is a regular in back and forth trips between Africa and China. Li Xiaoliang, Li Zhibing and Pu Xuexin, the 3 already charged with horn trafficking have repeatedly called for their release on bail ensuring that, in that event, they would be housed permanently at Huii's pending trial. In fact, they are waiting for him in jail. The Chinese ambassador in Namibia speaks in favor of a strict enforcement of the Namibian law to his fellow citizens.



The rhino saga²⁶

Namibia

May 18, 2015

How was Knowlton, this 36 year-old runt from Dallas, able to raise \$ 350,000 US to have the luxury of shooting dead one of the last black rhinos in Africa?

The hunting permit was delivered by the Namibian Ministry of the Environment and Tourism. In fact, it is the Dallas Safari Club that coughed up the money. The reporting video from CNN shows the hero after a year and a half of preparation scanning the horizon and the desert savanna with sunglasses and powerful binoculars that he seems to be holding by the right side.



He leads a team of Dutch guides armed up to their bush hats and recruited by the Namibian government and points a firm finger, as Genghis Khan or Napoleon, in the right direction. Thus he follows the massive footprints made by the lonely pachyderm, appointed and geo-located several weeks before his arrival, that have been identified in the sand with great difficulty through the ancestral culture of local color trackers. We see him also engaging in the thorny bush, menacing and dense, his Nitro Express over the shoulder, like others would carry a pitchfork, wearing a t-shirt and bare arms in search of further clues that he only would be able to find and understand.

After 5 days of breathless stalking comforted by video surveillance cameras hanging close to the water pits and revealing the size and fierceness of the specimen coming peacefully to quench his thirst just before sun rise- images that we in normal times hope would never fall under the eyes of poachers- it's triumph and bliss. He is there, we do not know where, nearby, like a ghost in the bush. The guides shudder. "Beware, he's angry" they say and Knowlton already has his fingers on the trigger. In 30 minutes, the job is done. "A tracker climbed up a tree and saw the rhino out in the open a hundred meters away." "Knowlton put himself in position and fired the final shots" recounted the journalist from CNN "this story was an incredibly moving experience." "It's like this each time that we take the life of an animal" responding in echo Knowlton knelt close to the victim.

The next day, Texas Hunting announced that the IUCN- International Union for the Conservation of Nature- referent to CITES had admitted among its members the Dallas Safari Club.

Discovery of a rhinoceros body 3 weeks after poaching²⁷

Private ranch, Northwest Province, South Africa

May 24, 2015

Arrest and indictment of 2 suspected poachers²⁸

Nyongane, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa

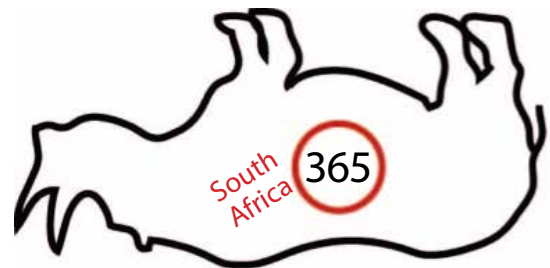
May 26, 2015

Discovery of 6 rhinoceros bodies²⁹

Province of kwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

From May 23 to 27, 2015

Three to four rhinos were poached each day. The last unofficial census by OSCAP mentioned 365 deaths by poaching since the beginning of the year of which 270 were in Kruger National Park.



Arrest of a man suspected of rhino poaching and death of a police officer³⁰

Hazyview, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa

May 27, 2015

Mthobisi Lennox Ngwenyama was arrested in the abandoned



house of one of his cousins in Hazyview in the early morning of May 27.

The 33 year-old man who fled on May 13 from the Court of Nelspruit just before his Court appearance for rhino poaching is suspected to have killed a police inspector, Joseph Baloyi, who worked on his case. He was killed by a bullet while he entered the home on the night of May 20. With his profile of a hyper-

violent villain, the individual is subject to increased surveillance. His first Court appearance was to take place on May 29.



Arrest of 2 suspected poachers³¹
Hazyview, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa
May 27, 2015

«They are in custody. They will be presented before court shortly.» Hazyview, home land of Big Joe still smells of fresh rhino blood. The 2 suspects indicted for illegal possession of firearms and ammunition were off to go poaching at dawn.

Transfer of 10 black rhinoceroses³²
May-June 2015
South Africa-Botswana

Special and a bit sleepy tourists passed through the Kruger International Airport. After being treated with sedatives, five black rhinos, 2 females, one male and two children, were loaded into a Hercules C130 Botswana plane. They were transferred from a private reserve in Limpopo to the Moreni Game Reserve run by Wilderness Safaris in Okavango Delta. The total delivery will be 18 rhinos. We know that this type of transfer exposes rhinos to risks other than poaching.



Zimbabwe-Botswana

The agreement dates back to 2011. Zimbabwe committed to "giving" 20 black rhinos to Botswana. The first 5 individuals arrived also in the Moreni Reserve. The relocated specimens were captured in the Gonarezhou National Park in the south east of the country from a herd belonging to black rhino line imported in 1998 from KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Since then, the crash has grown. There is a risk of overgrazing, competition for food and ecosystem degradation. According rhino experts from Zimbabwe, it is not at the moment possible to install a new group black rhinos in the country and this for 2 reasons:

- The protection of pachyderms is becoming more and more expensive, public authorities and private institutions do not have sufficient means to curb poaching.
- There could be slight genetic variations between South Africa and Zimbabwe rhinos and until this issue is resolved, experts advise not to mix the two populations. This hybridization may erase the specific adaptations to Zimbabwe habitats.

Poaching of a rhinoceros³³
Polokwane, Province of Limpopo, South Africa
June 2, 2015



Dawie Groenewald weeping crocodile tears. It's the first time that Dawie Groenewald cried about a rhinoceros, he who killed hundreds with his own hands or through his clients (cf. "On the Trail" n°6 p. 62, n°7 p. 71-72, 75 and n°8 p. 65). He broke down in tears," when he realized that bandits of his kind had killed and dehorned a handsome animal, the biggest of his hunting reserve. "The poachers took two horns, one of 71 cm, the other of 25 cm. They weigh between 10 and 11 kg." Groenewald can't swallow this horrid economical catastrophe. He decided to move "his" rhinos to a secret refuge.

Non Court appearance in Court of a Chinese man released on bail of 20,000 N\$ (\$1650 US)³⁴
Opuwo, Kunene Region, Namibia
June 3, 2015

The businessman had sent the court a medical certificate of unavailability. Dejin operates a wildlife products and hunting trophies business in Oshakati. Well informed, the police had nabbed him with 2 rhino horns weighing 6.8 kg.

Seizure of a rhino horn and arrests³⁵
Ekurhuleni, Gauteng Province, South Africa
June 2015

The Chinese man and the local lad had stayed in the vicinity of the hotel for 2 days. The transaction was going to be carried out in the parking lot.



The scheming of policemen and poacher³⁶
Massingir, Gaza Province, Mozambique
June 7, 2015

5 men of Massingir district police had made an arrangement with a poacher in possession of a horn. They part took in the sale for 920,000 meticaís (\$ 26,285 US) to an unidentified man. 50% of the money went to the poacher. The other half was distributed among the 5 policemen. The corrupt police patrol had arrested the poacher as he was returning, so he claimed, from a day of poaching in the South African Kruger Park. The day after the transaction, a denunciation was received at the police headquarters.

South Sudan: dismay of fauna and rhinos³⁷
Juba Airport, State of Central Equatoria, South Sudan

June 8, 2015

This young country is ravaged by conflict. 2 men are fighting for power. The people are starving. Wildlife is the other victim. "There were around 1,000 rhinos before the crisis", "The rhinos are finished", "Teams failed to find any, only footprints" says, bitterly, the director general of the country's wildlife service Philip Chol Majak.

Between January and March of this year 2015, 15 cases of wildlife trafficking involving members of the army are known. On June 8, 2 South Sudanese nationals were caught at Juba airport with rhino horns in their belongings. They were about to fly to Asia.

Indictment of 5 persons suspected of poaching and released on bail³⁸

Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa

June 2015

2 men from South Africa aged 30 and 32 and 2 men from Mozambique were arrested at their homes for illegal possession of firearms and ammunition. A woman was arrested after her home was searched where an axe stained with blood, ammunition and a large sum of unexplained money was found.

These preventive arrests are testimony of the police forces' efforts around and in Kruger Park to deter poachers from acting by confiscating all equipment and aiming for convictions on the basis of illegal possession of prohibited weapons.

New charges held against 2 Vietnamese citizens arrested in possession of 41 kg of rhino horn³⁹

Kempton Park, Province of Gauteng, South Africa

June 2015

The Mozambique, South Africa, Vietnam triangle. The flight from Maputo to Qatar was searched in Johannesburg because of the 2 Vietnamese men (see "On the Trail" n° 7 p. 67) and their big package of horns they were travelling with. The 2 men who left Mozambique would be involved in rhino poaching in South Africa.



Poaching of a black rhinoceros, seizure of a horn and arrest⁴⁰

Region of Kunene, Namibia

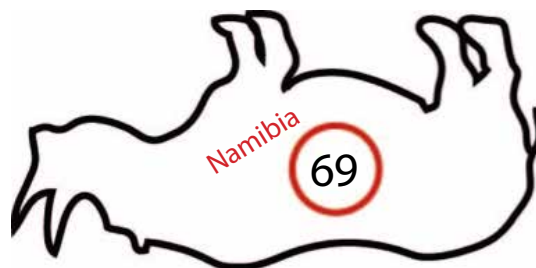
June 13, 2015

On the road between Sesfontein and Opuwo, the car was blocked by a sanitary traffic check to slow down the spread of foot and mouth disease. The car had a flat tire but the 5 passengers aged 22, 28, 30, 31, and 34 years did not care to



change it. As a result the intrigued police officers detected a horn in the spare wheel and a gun on the back seat. After the questioning the poachers drove the police to the poaching and dehorning place. The mother was dead. She had a baby. It has not been found yet. This is the 5th mourning of a rhino in Omatendeka within a few months.

- 69 in Namibia since the beginning of this year.



REPEATED OFFENSE

Arrest of 5 alleged poachers⁴¹

Mfekayi, Province of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa

June 13, 2015

Do these 5 young people aged 23, 24, 27, 30 and 32 years arrested along the Umfolozi reserve with a large caliber rifle and a silencer, appropriate ammunition, an axe and some other specialized accessories may have had other intentions than rhino poaching? Three of them were released on bail. Two more that are considered repeated offenders remain in prison pending trial.

3 deaths in one month⁴²

Private farm in Okamahoro, Region of Otjozondjupa, Namibia

June 18, 2015

This is the third to be put down in a month in this private hunting reserve 150 km from Windhoek, the capital of the country. The female was riddled with 10 bullets. No suspect has been arrested.

Sentencing of a Mozambican poacher to 7.5 years in prison⁴³

Skukuza, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa

June 25, 2015



New postponing of the trial of rhino horn traffickers⁴⁴

Thulamahashe, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa

June 28, 2015

Big Joe has yet another trial postponement. The big man from Hazyview is at the center of a horn trafficking with Vietnam and a net of violence (c.f. "On the Trail" n° 6 p. 62).

At the opening of the long awaited trial so many times postponed, Big Joe's 5 accomplices had missed the call from the prosecutor. The police in charge of transporting defendants had forgotten to take the 5 from the remote Mbombela prison 150 km away.



AMERICA

OPERATION CRASH

Court hearing for trafficking in 2 black rhino horns⁴⁵

State of Iowa, United States of America

May 13, 2015

Another case of a trafficking taxidermist. James Hess, 39 years old, admitted having ripped off the horns from the trophy and having received a substantial commission (at least \$ 15,000 US) knowing full well that this vandalism would lead to illegal export of the 2 horns towards Asia with the help of 2 handy men working in California.

James Hess, founder and director of the Wildlife Pride Taxidermy and Decor faces a 5-year prison sentence. He is pleading guilty.

Project to import 1000 rhinos to the United States⁴⁶

State of Texas, United States of America

May 2015

Will a special rhino-ship soon be crossing the Atlantic Ocean to transport 1000 horned pachyderms from South Africa to Texas? That's the project carried by the Exotic Wildlife Association (EWA) that believes animal species' conservation must be promoted through international trade and that works as partners with the Dallas Safari Club, the Houston Safari Club and the no-borders hunters from the International Professional Hunters Association.

EWA has brought to Texas ranches African gazelles, addaxes (*Addax nasomaculatus*, Appendix I), scimitar-horned oryxes (*Oryx dammah*, Appendix I), dama gazelles (*Nanger dama*, Appendix I). Under this listing they are protected by CITES and United States law since 2005. Indeed, after 7 years of judicial warfare, Texas ranches were allowed to hunt gazelles so far as they would pay a \$ 100 US tax fee per individual killed. A good bargain for Ranches who demand \$ 5000 US per gazelle head from hunters. Charly Seale, director of the EWA says that the rhinos transplanted and raised in the United States will not be hunted. So here we have true rhino body guards willing to give up part of their land and capital to save a species from poaching in southern Africa.

Those who know some about Texas don't believe this. The project would more so be in the line of expectation of a legal rhino horn trade that South Africa and its neighbors are calling for and plan to propose at the next plenary conference of CITES in autumn 2016. The rhinos in their entrenched camp deep in Texas would become a money well. The horns would be regularly cut and sold to the cartel and the rhinos would be submitted to "green hunting", this supposedly ecological hunt in which the target animals are shot with anesthetic syringes, a method deemed non lethal that enables wealthy hunters to have their picture taken in from of large animals collapsed and laying as if dead. Green hunting is vividly criticized. The animals are put to sleep and woken several times which implies delayed risks and immediate ones when they fall lethargic into positions incompatible with their physiology. On this subject see "On the Trail" n°6 p. 105, a "green hunting" story in a United States ranch and the import of 4 rhinos to a United States ranch ("On the Trail" n°8 p. 59).

ASIA

Conviction before the Court of Appeals for illegal transport of 7 pieces of rhino horn (2114g) and sentencing to 5 to 10 years prison term and 18,000 yuans (\$ 2900 US) and 30,000 yuans (\$ 4830 US) in fine. Confirmation of the 1st Instance judgment⁴⁷



Seizure of a rhino horn⁴⁸
Tinsukia, Assam State, India
April 7, 2015

The police has seized what looks very much like a rhino horn. Habibul Hussein assures the trophy had been in the family home for a long time. He was trying to sell the memento for just under \$ 5000 US.

Conviction for rhino horn trafficking to 2 years prison term suspended sentence and to a 80,000 yuans (\$ 12.886 US) fine⁴⁹



**Liuzhou, Province of Guangxi, China
April 13, 2015**

Wang, the antique dealer, sold powder. 370 g here, 218 g there, then another 15 g. Specialized labs confirmed that it truly was ground up horn.

Poaching of 2 rhinos and death of 2 suspects⁵⁰

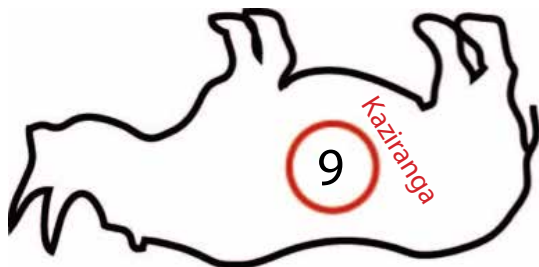
Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India

From 10 to 16 April 2015

The corpses accumulate in Kaziranga. 9 rhinos and 9 poachers killed since the beginning of the year. The Student Union of Assam has blocked the road NH-37 that runs along the Park for an hour. Slogan : protesting against poaching.



© COPAL



Seizure of a rhino horn and arrest of 9 suspected poachers including a police inspector⁵¹

**Gohpur and Bandardewa, State of Assam, India
May 1, 2015**



© Bui Tho

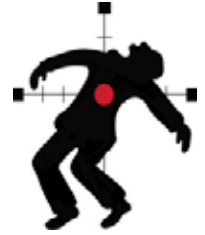
**Seizure of 31 rhino horns (37 kg) and arrest⁵²
Cho Sy, Province of Nghe An, Vietnam
May 8, 2015**

Two young men were followed by the Bureau of Investigation of Economic Crimes. They were immobilized at 11:40 pm near the gate of Nghe An. Crossing South-North of Vietnam, 25 hours on train. Leaving from Ho Chi Minh City. Three travel bags full of horns. One of the couriers declared to have received 40 million dong or \$ 1850 US for transporting the goods. He would have recruited an accomplice to accompany him. The two individuals live in North Vietnam.

Seizure of 2 rhino horns, arrest of 3 suspects and death of one poaching suspect⁵³

**Jorhat, State of Assam, India
May 13, 2015**

The 3 men have started to talk. They were arrested in Jorhat, 115 km from Kaziranga Park. 3 days after shootings occurred with guards inside the Park, a poacher had been killed on the spot. According to the suspects at whose home the 2 horns were found, those giving orders are in Dimapur, almost 200 km from Kaziranga, on the other side of the Brahmapoutre, and are in contact with correspondents in Myanmar obviously in turn in contact with Chinese recipients.



Seizure of 9.4 kg of rhino horn and arrest⁵⁴

**Tan Ha, Province of Tay Ninh, Vietnam
May 27, 2015**

He believed, he says, to transport clothes from

Cambodia to Vietnam at the request of a certain Ha. The value of these so-called clothes exceeds \$ 500,000 US. The 20 year-old man was arrested at the border. The spokesperson of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime reminds that in 2007 a dozen rhinos had been poached in South Africa compared to 1,215 in 2014.



© Baomoi



**Seizure of an 800 g of horn and arrest of 5 traffickers⁵⁵
District of Jalpaiguri, State of East Bengal, India
May 2015**

They sold the horn in Mumbai for 5 million Rs (\$ 78,300 US) i.e. \$ 98,000 US per kilo.

Seizure of a horn and custody of 3 persons⁵⁶
Sonitpur District, State of Assam, India
June 2, 2015

Arrest of a suspected poacher (52 years old)
active in the Chitwan National Park⁵⁷
Kathmandu, Central Development Region,
Nepal
June 3, 2015

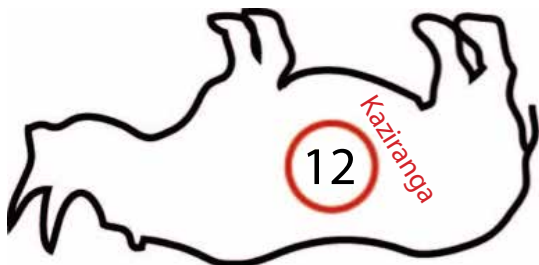
Despite enormous difficulties following the earthquake, anti-environmental crime forces are still at work in Nepal.

Seizure of a rhino horn and arrest of a 50-year-old man⁵⁸
Dhangadhi, Far West Development Region,
Nepal, bordering Uttar Pradesh, India
June 9, 2015

Seizure of 3.65 Kg of presumed rhino skin and
arrest of 2 men and a woman ages 17, 40 and
41⁵⁹
Kathmandu, Central Development Region,
Nepal
June 16, 2015

Discovery of a dead rhino with 2 bullet holes
and dehorned near a river on the edge of the
Orang National Park⁶⁰
District of Sonitpur, State of Assam, India
June 23, 2015

Discovery of a rhino carcass⁶¹
Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India
June 29, 2015
- 12 since the beginning of the year



Arrest of Padam Bahadur Bholan, rhino poacher
who had been wanted
for 16 years⁶²
District of Chitwan,
Central Development
Region, Nepal
June 30, 2015

56 years. Sentenced to 7 years in prison and 50,000 Rs (\$ 731 US) fine in 1999.



EUROPE

Court decision regarding a request to sell a pre-CITES rhino horn⁶³
Karlsruhe, Bade-Wurtemberg Lander, Germany
April 2015

Wishing to part with a rhino trophy brought back from Africa by her grand father in 1903, a woman saw her request to auction it turned down by the Karlsruhe Administrative Tribunal.

Expert estimates say she could have gotten 17,000 € out of this inheritance.

The request to market the item made in 2013 having been refused, she formed an appeal against the Karlsruhe Administrative Tribunal's decision asserting that a 19th century horn didn't enter into the present day inventory of endangered animals and that exemptions are possible.

In appeal the judges confirmed the ban, but this decision is not yet a final one.

Sentencing of 3 Vietnamese for
the illegal export of rhino horn
to 3 to 5 years prison (see "On
the Trail" 3 p. 55)⁶⁴
Prague, Central Bohemian
Region, Czech Republic
June 2015



An investigation is underway on the involvement in the trafficking by 16 other members of the Vietnamese community.

Rhinoceros at the foothills of the Mount Kilimanjaro



The Rhino Connexion

John Flynn, under the alias of John Slattery, was questioned when he got off a ferry coming from Ireland. This was in the French port of Cherbourg, on April 6, 2015. The U.S. intelligence services had notified the border police of his imminent arrival. The 25-year-old man was born in the county of Limerick in Ireland. John is a pure product of the obscure Rathkeale Rovers, a group that is more stateless than Irish. John has been an antiques expert ever since he was 18.

He went to the United States for the antiques business, with his brother Michael Slattery Jr., and Patrick Sheridan as well. In September 2010, the trio arrived in Houston, Texas. Michael immediately opened an account at Bank of America. Money was wired in from abroad. Via cash withdrawals, they bought for \$ 18,000 US 2 rhino horns from an Austin taxidermist, through a man who was used as a cover and has passed away. The Irish trio paid this man \$ 500 US to claim that he was the buyer and that he lived in Texas. U.S. regulations prohibit the transfer of rhino horns outside of the State of origin.



The Austin store

The horns were then sawed off the stuffed rhino head, weighed, photographed and put in storage in Texas. In November, the photos were sent to a "collector" in the State of New York who was in contact with an antique dealer of Chinese descent. The 2 horns turned into 4 horns. It is not known where the 2 new horns came from. At the beginning of the negotiation, the Slattery brothers wanted to make \$ 65,000 US out of them. The deal was sealed with \$ 50,000 US, paid in 3 checks—a \$ 25,000 US check for Sheridan, a \$ 12,500 US check for Michael and a check in the same amount for John.

In September 2013, Michael was arrested at the airport in Newark, New Jersey. He was about to take off for London. In January 2014, he was sentenced to 14 months in prison without remission, for premeditating and plotting to illegally trade in a protected animal species, in violation of the Lacey Act, and to use forgery. When the horns were dispatched to the Chinese antique collector, they came with a fake stamp of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In January 2015, Patrick Sheridan was arrested as he was leaving a car ferry in Wales. He too is awaiting extradition to the United States.

John Slattery, using the alias John Flynn, was under an international arrest warrant since May 2014. In December of the same year, he used his mother's maiden name for his wedding. He thus has two identities. According to the extradition request that the United States sent to the French Foreign Affairs Ministry, John Slattery became John Flynn to flee trial. The Slattery/Flynn family has several places of residence. One of them is on a campground near Paris. The Caen Appeals Court responded favorably to the extradition request. According to John, he embarked on his trip to France for a pilgrimage to Lourdes. He said he was in search of a miracle cure to save him from a serious nervous breakdown. He did acknowledge the facts and admitted to playing a minor role in the misdemeanors committed in the United States. Upon the request of the judge, he refused to be extradited to the United States, highlighting his psychological condition and financial situation, at odds with such an undertaking. His family stands behind him and is vindictive, with Michael in the lead. Michael has just returned from his prison stay in the United States and shares in John's plight. His mother fainted at the end of the hearing. He remains on probation. Until the end of the procedure, will he still be available for the French judicial authorities?

This is the 1st time that the U.S.-French extradition treaty is invoked regarding wildlife traffic.

Peter Pueschel
1956-2015

He fought for life and animals with lucidity and diplomacy. He was filled with wonder. He designed solid strategies. He brought people together. He took action. Peter knew how to say no, and how to say thank you. It was a pleasure to work with him during his Greenpeace years, and then his IFAW years.



Peter Pueschel setting down a rhino horn to be burnt in the Czech Republic in September 2014.

Rhinos and Elephants

AFRICA

Endless surprises in Maputo

Seizure of 340 elephant tusks (1126 kg), 65 rhino horns (124 kg), arrest of 2 suspects ; theft of 12 rhino horns and arrest of 6 suspects¹
Matola, Province of Maputo, Mozambique
May 2, 2015

"When I got home that night there were about 10 police cars around my house. I live in the house next door to the Chinese man. I asked the police on the scene and one said there was rhino horns inside. I moved around the house and peeped through the window and I could not believe my eyes, I think hundred and more tusks and horns lined up next to each other! They should give this man the death penalty! I am still in shock!"

The Chinese man lived in this suburb in the south of Maputo for approximately 3 months. Officially, he worked in the can recycling business. He was arrested on the spot. His name was not disclosed. In the corners of the house, the carved ivory was alongside the blood-stained raw tusks.

A few days later a second Chinese man was caught. A good connoisseur of what is commonly done in Maputo until now Maputo, the man presented himself as a member of the Chinese embassy in Mozambique as he walked inside the police station, where his fellow countryman was in custody, and put on the table the equivalent of \$34,000 US in exchange for his freedom. He also was arrested. Carlos Severa, defender of wildlife in Mozambique, had immediately reclaimed the horns and tusks to be burnt. "It would avoid the risk that the ivory and



the horns would fall into the wrong hands. If they were just left in warehouses, the risk that they will be stolen is very high."

Thefts and other embezzlements are often brought up by "On the Trail" to justify the need for destruction of illegal ivory, rhinos horn and other faunistic materials.

In the early morning of May 22, at least 12 rhino horns were stolen from a warehouse where all or some of the extraordinary seizure had been "put in security". The genuine stolen horns were replaced by 12 fake ones. The warehouse was sealed with 3 padlocks. The official press release of the police cut short to the various versions reported by the press or other sources according to which the 65 horns seized from the Chinese and the 120 other pieces coming from previous seizures have disappeared. The spokesperson of the police of Maputo believes it is premature to declare that the 6 people arrested are police agents. "Anyhow, they are people who were entrusted with guarding the horns and had access to the place from which the horns have disappeared."

The 6 suspects are Mozambican nationals. The new president of Mozambique, Filipe Nyusi, declared: "This business keeps me from sleeping." The President's insomnia must have gotten worst for a few

days later, 5 new suspects were arrested and the public attorney of the Maputo Province delivered information that among the suspects would be 4 police inspectors, a high official from the Bureau of Territory and Environment as well as the 2 rhino horn counterfeiters. In the same communication, the general attorney informed that the break in and theft of the 12 horns occurred within one of the Criminal Police buildings.

The rhino horns seized in Mozambique come from poaching in Kruger Park that, over 300 km, marks off the border between South Africa and Mozambique.

The wildlife of Mozambique and its national parks are pillaged by intra-African poachers and gold miners. Chinese expatriates, in connection with the national officials and accomplices in the ports and supply chain, organize the export by sea. Up to now the port of Pemba is the preferred port of exit. The Vietnamese expats also play an important role in the trafficking of ivory, horns, and lion teeth that flow from Mozambique and Southern Africa.

Already in February 2012, 266 tusks and tusk cuttings had been stolen from the main governmental storage right in the heart of the capital, inside the Ministry of Agriculture. The ivory vanished. No suspect has been arrested. The experts recall the famous case of that Vietnamese citizen who, 2 years ago, had been caught at Maputo boarding a Kenya Airways flight to Nairobi with 7 rhino horns and only a few days later was caught again at the Bangkok Airport getting off a Kenya Airways flight coming from Nairobi with 7 rhino horns.

AMERICA

Indictment of a woman for smuggling ivory, rhino horn and coral and custody for an accomplice²

Concord, State of New Hampshire, United States of America

May 4, 2015

According to her response to the Boston Business Journal, Carla Marsh, director of a UPS office in Concord, has nothing to do with Carla Marsh citizen of Concord and charged with traffic. This Carla Marsh shipped for at least \$ 700,000 US of precious animal materials to Hong Kong. «The items were repackaged and shipped with false values on the customs documents.»

"I'll send the Ivory to the address in Hong Kong..." "if we send it express mail through the post office, its only somewhat trackable and if it gets lost, its almost impossible to track. However, its less expensive than UPS and does not get scrutinized quite as much as customs and packages do going through UPS... have a safe journey back to China. I hope all the items arrive safely" she wrote in a mail. Marsh had at least one accomplice. Jin Jie Yang sent a mail to an auction house in Texas : "Maybe you don't need to say its ivory, just say its wooden carving or some other material. Then we don't need the paper."

OPERATION CRASH

Sentencing to 3 years in prison and 2 years of probation for the director of an auction house³

West Palm Beach, State of Florida, United States of America

May 20, 2015

He hoped for a simple slap on the wrist. He was sentenced to 3 years in prison in spite of the numerous testimonies from his friends, neighbors, and parents.

Hayes, director of Elite Decoration Arts, an auction house in Boynton Beach, Florida admitted to having voluntarily contributed to the export of rhino horns to China thanks to a privileged relationship with



a Chinese resident in Texas, a key link in the horn smuggling network. Hayes also admitted to having falsified some documents and resorted to some middlemen to facilitate the export of ivory and coral items.

Despite his repentance, the Court judge proved his determination to deliver an exemplary and dissuasive sentence. For several years, the police of the United States of America and the US Fish and Wildlife Service have been leading a merciless fight against horn traffickers. Operation Crash resulted in the arrest and indictment of 20 something people in the States of New York, New Jersey, Texas, and California. "Each illegal sale of rhinoceros horns or elephant tusks involves poaching, corruption, smuggling, and is part of organized crime" the prosecutor's case stressed. "The single motivation was money."



OPERATION CRASH

Conviction for the smuggling of rhino horns and antiques made of ivory and rhino horn⁴

Beaumont, State of Texas, United States of America

May 22, 2015

Ning Qiu, 43, an appraiser in Asian art, resident of Frisco, Texas was sentenced to 25 months prison followed by 3 years of parole. A fine of \$ 150,000 US was also imposed upon him. It will serve the Lacey Act Reward Fund which allows the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to "reward" its informants and to pay the cost of the management of the plants, fish and wildlife specimens held as evidence.

Qiu admitted to having worked for the account of Zhifei Li of which the bad and ingenious accomplishments are related in "On the Trail" n°3 p. 53 and n°5 p. 76. Li was sentenced to 70 months in prison at the end of May 2014.

Qiu knew Li for 6 years. Qiu, under the orders of Li, searched the sale catalogues at auctions and bought ivory and horns at the best price. Again under Li's advice, the exported objects were smuggled into Hong Kong under false descriptions. Qiu's bank accounts in the United States and in China were regularly fed by Li. Qiu bought particularly from the Elite Decorative Arts in Boynton Beach, Florida (see above). Between 2009 and 2013, Qiu exported at



least 5 rhino horns at a minimum weight of 20 kg. 1kg is sold on the black market in Asia for 50,000 to \$ 100,000 US.

An antique dealer in New York, Quiang Wang also known as Jeffrey Wang, took part in the plot. For his part, he was sentenced to 37 months in prison ("On the Trail" n°3 p. 52.)

ASIA

**Court hearing of a 41 years old man for attempted import of 11 rhino horn sections and elephant tusks through Pudong Airport. Value: 2.15 million yuan (\$ 346,336 US)⁵
Shanghai, China
April 2, 2015**

**Seizure of 18 raw and carved tusks (60.56 kg) and 3 rhino horns (4.86 kg)⁶
Noi Bai Airport, Hanoi, Vietnam
April 16, 2015**

The commercial value of the horn is estimated on the local market at \$ 133 US per gram, that of the ivory at \$ 2.1 US per kilo. Despite the numerous governmental communications and the informational campaigns of NGOs and partner artists, the rhino horns benefits from considerable prestige in Vietnam where the rumor persists that the horn can cure cancer.

The packages were transported by air. The raw and carved ivory are from African origin according to experts. The company used was Vietnam Airlines. The messenger service was EMS, Express Mail Service. The shipper is said to reside in Paris on rue Albert. At 19-19 bis rue Albert, in the heart of the first Asian neighborhood of Paris, the Franco-Vietnamese cultural center can be found.



**Sentencing for smuggling of 2 accomplices to 10 years and 6 years in prison and a 200,000 (\$32,250 US) and 120,000 yuan fine (\$ 19,350 US) following the November 8, 2013 seizure of 4.445 kg of horns and fragments of horn, of 30 raw and carved ivory of a total weight 3.405 kg⁷
Beijing, China
May 2015**



The most heavily sentenced man stepped off a plane from Cairo. Wu Fang, and a woman who worked at the airport and had already facilitated the fraudulent import of ivory before this new attempt. She had in return received 3 pieces of ivory jewelry and a few hundred dollars. The detailed confession of the pair led to the relative leniency of judges.

**Arrest of 4 poachers⁸
State of Assam, India
May 19, 2015**

-The two pachyderm killers alternatively attack the elephants and rhinos. They are also suspected of being involved in the death of a Kaziranga Park guard. They were arrested close to the Pobitora Reserve.

-The bivouac shelter of two other poachers was uncovered in the hills of the districts of Nagaon and Karbi Anglong Districts. There was food, solar heating plates and of course guns and ammunition.

REPEATED OFFENSE

**China: appraisal of ivory seized in Hangzhou, Province of Zhejiang and destruction of ivory in Beijing⁹
May 18 and 29, 2015**

The Hangzhou customs made a count of one year's seizures of ivory (270 kg) and rhino horn (9 kg). They have illustrated their exhibition by citing the example of a woman, called Wang, who was taken in in September 2014 about to pass 8.6 kg of ivory amongst boxes of chocolate and bottles of wine. Her computer revealed that over several trips she has fraudulently imported 220 kg of ivory and 9 kg of horns into the country.

In Beijing, on Friday May 29, 2015, 662 kg of seized ivory was destroyed by order of the government.

