

ROBIN DES BOIS

# ON the TRAIL

Information and analysis bulletin on animal poaching and smuggling  
n°7 / 1<sup>st</sup> October - 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014

## Contents

Sea Cucumbers and Seahorses	3
Corals	3
Fishes	4
Marine Mammals	6
Various Marine Species	7
Marine Turtles	9
Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles	13
Snakes	16
Sauria	17
Crocodylians	18
Various Reptile Species	18
Arachnids	19
Birds	20
Falcons and Houbara Bustards	29
Pangolins	32
Primates	36
<b>Celebrities are boring</b>	<b>44</b>
Felines	45
<b>Leopards and Men</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Zoomania</b>	<b>57</b>
Bears	58
Rhinoceroses	62
Elephants	76
<b>France is listening to the elephants</b>	<b>95</b>
Other Mammals	96
<b>Nobel Prize helps to better know the panda</b>	<b>98</b>
Multi-Species	102
<b>Portrait of Malayan colugo</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>The ex-Hawai'i Mamo</b>	<b>118</b>
Sources	120

## Introduction

In the nuclear industry, the cliff edge effect corresponds to the critical and hopeless phase where operators and authorities realize that all is going wrong and full loss of control is imminent, despite that indicators to that point had been overall reassuring and led them to believe that a crisis situation was on the verge to be managed.

The cliff edge effect is applicable to the worldwide crisis that faces land and sea biodiversity. For far too long, it was believed that international treaties of which the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) are at the forefront would be able to protect non-human animal species. Yet, all the dials are red.

Sea cucumbers, pangolins, African and Asian monkeys, elephants, vultures – they are all sacrificed at the altar for the unquenchable space and comfort want of mankind.

South Africa is a victim of the cliff edge effect. Rhinos are spiraling down in a panic stage for the profit of speculators and fools around the world.

194 countries and governments, 7.3 billion men and women are unable of joining hands to stop 20,000 rhinos from meeting their doom.

At the end of their rope, South Africa is fidgeting and once again it's the rhinos that get the short end of the stick. They are anesthetized, tossed around from Natural Park to private reserve, auctioned off, preventively mutilated and harassed. The fewer there are, the more they are mistreated and poached.

# 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*.

**1383 rhinoceros killed in South Africa, Namibia, Kenya, Botswana, Mozambique, India and Nepal in 2014**

**On the Trail n°7**  
**The value of horn on the black market, according to media or customs sources**

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Africa	South Africa	10 065	22
Asia	Vietnam	31 350	62
		26 885	65
		47 000	65*

\* cf. chapter Multi-Species.

**Long live weevil !<sup>1</sup>**  
 Geoffreys Matipano, director of Parks and Wildlife in Zimbabwe, told journalists that the government is in possession of 5 t of horns in Harare. This "national heritage" is exposed to the risk of theft and to an invasion of weevil that chew up the keratin from the inside. "The horns are rapidly losing mass," laments Matipano.



## AFRICA

### Seizure of a rhino horn<sup>2</sup>

#### Swaziland

#### October 2014

The horn was wrapped in adhesive tape and stuffed into a package for Hong Kong. The recipient did not come and get it. The Hong Kong postal service sent the package back to the Mbabane post office after consolidating it.

The SPTC - Swaziland Posts and Telecommunications Corporation – confirms that, "Yes, it's the non requested package service that uncovered the horn." "Everything is being done to fine the sender." The horn is at the police station. Let's hope it won't be stolen.

### Seizure of a rhino hoof and arrest<sup>4</sup>

#### Magude District, Province of Maputo, Mozambique

#### October 5, 2014

The hoof had been in the fridge for a week. It was waiting for its buyer, a South African man who claims he was framed. "I met some young people on Saturday night." "They told me of a good deal." "I didn't know what it was." "I wanted to see for myself in my car."

The 5 suspected Mozambique sellers of the rhino limb probably took it while poaching in the South African Kruger Park.

Police in Maputo believe they are dealing with a well-organized network. Among the sellers, there is a traditional healer.



### Conviction for rhino horn trafficking<sup>5</sup>

#### Nelspruit, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa

#### October 6, 2014

The Vietnamese citizen had been arrested with 13 other people in May 2013. Ngoc Cuong Pham was the instigator. He had been sentenced to a fine of 1 million R, or 88,444 US\$ with a penalty of 5 years imprisonment.

Pham was in possession of 10 horns, 4 million R in cash, or 353,000 US\$, and an elephant tusk. 2 of the horns had been sold to the sinister Nyalungu, known as Big Joe (see "On the Trail" n°6 p. 62).



### Sale and relocation of 500 rhinos<sup>3</sup>

**South Africa  
October 2014**

500 rhinos were auctioned off in Kruger Park. The plan is to spread out around the country rhinos that are persecuted by poaching in Kruger Park. The principle of precaution is called upon in the face of a failed situation: State authorities, represented on the terrain by rangers and elite forces, are unable to prevent mass poaching in the Park.

All candidates must pledge to buy a minimum of 20 rhinos and include with their offer a safety plan and a description of the rhino's future habitat. Cost and liability for transport will rest upon the buyer. Bids must be posted by letter. The auctioning is open from October 5 to 15.

3.3% of the nationalized rhinos will be sold to the private sector. Yes, but the head of the Private Rhino Owners Association is skeptical. "Our members have already spent 270 million Rands this year (25 million US\$) to protect properties and their 5,000 rhinos." "They are asking us to put down a lot of money for a very risky enterprise."

One analyst notes that from 2011 to 2013, the mean price in an auction for a white rhino has gone down from 277,351 R to 180,247 R (or 25,434 US\$ to 16,529 US\$). Over the same period, the price of cape buffalos has gone from 118,000 R to 502,000 R, or 10,821\$ to 46,036 US\$.

The displacement of 500 animals difficult to handle, weighing 1 to 3 tons, involves a series of medication, maneuvers, manipulations and transport that they don't always come out of unharmed. The first step is to fly over them by helicopter and to inject them with tranquillisers dart gun. The previous sale that concerned only 260 rhinos had been cancelled because of flaws (see "On the Trail" n°6). This was a bad amicable arrangement between South African Parks and some other parties that aren't particularly well known for their ethics and concern for animals well being. Ms. Molewa, Minister of environment speaks of a "mammoth task." "We are considering," she says, "capturing 5 to 6 rhinos per day over the winter." This project concerns only the white rhinos.



### Death of an eco warrior<sup>6</sup>

**Sesfontein, Kunene Region, Namibia  
October 7, 2014**

Trouble at Save the Rhino Trust (SRT): The NGO, founded 30 years ago, is facing rumors and press articles. Its faithful and effective poachers and rhino carcasses scout was found victim of sudden death. Christmas Day of 2012, after 20 years of poaching truce, a black rhino was found dead near Mb kondja. Boxer, aka Daniel Alfeus Hawaxab, was participating in the identification and detention of a suspect, an ex-soldier turned livestock guardian paid by a certain Efraim Mwanyangapo. For 2 years, the discoveries of dead rhino are multiplying. Killed by an invisible gang, they are identified, without horns and withered, by wandering farmers or Boxer camel back patrols. Boxer died a week after returning from his last ride in the Kunene desert. The death certificate says that the cause is unknown. Yet all the clinical signs point to bacteriological poisoning. Anthrax haunts the stone desert and mountains. In 1992, an epidemic struck the village of OrupemBe close to Skeleton Coast Park during an extreme drought. The consumption of an infected animal had triggered the epidemic. A veteran vet of Kunene desert and Etosha National Park confirmed that anthrax commonly affects livestock and wild animals, but very rarely humans. Favorable periods in the development of the disease are at the end of the dry season or wet season. In January 2013, there were 2 dead in Oshikoto, in the same region. Recovery is possible if the disease is quickly diagnosed and specific drugs are readily available. The anthracis Bacillus can survive for decades and are resistant to heat, drought, and ultra violet rays. In

## INVITATION TO BID

South African NATIONAL PARKS

In terms of Section 55(2) (b) of the PAA, Act 57 of 2003 as amended, South African National Parks, in managing national parks, is mandated to sell, exchange or donate any animal, plant or other organism occurring in a park, or purchase, exchange or otherwise acquire any indigenous species which it may consider desirable to reintroduce in a specific park.

Towards the implementation of SANParks' Rhino Management Strategy, the following are offered for sale on the Best Price Principle:

Bid documents can be downloaded for FREE from SANParks' website from 05 October 2014: <http://www.sanparks.org/jr/groups/tenders/>

Bid No.	Bid Description	Bid Submission Address	Compulsory Briefing Session	Closing Date & Time
SWR-001-2014	SANParks invite prospective bidders to submit offer for the sale of white rhinoceros ( <i>Ceratotherium simum</i> ) – best price principle	South African National Park, 643 Leyds Street, Muckleneuk, Pretoria, 0002	No clarification session	15 October 2014 at 11H00

Potential buyers who wish to become a strategic rhino management stakeholder with SANParks are encouraged to make a written offer to purchase white rhinos in batches of 20 or more.

Animals will be sold from bomas or directly from the veld to the prospective buyers, subject to buyers' adherence to the sale requirements. All bids will be additionally assessed for functionality, including habitat suitability and security assessment. The sale will be subject to a Memorandum of Agreement and Rhino Management Plan.

**TERMS:**

- o Prospective buyers for the rhino must comply with the provisions of the:
  - National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act No. 10 of 2004 ("the NEMBA")
  - Threatened or Protected Species Regulations promulgated under the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act No. 10 of 2004 ("the TOPS Regulations")
  - SANParks own requirements.
- o Prospective buyers will be responsible for their own transport and transport costs, or negotiate with SANParks at a nominal fee.
- o Completed sealed bid documents, clearly marked with the specific bid number must be submitted at the above-mentioned addresses, no later than the closing date as stipulated above.
- o For more information, please contact - Dr Howard Hendricks (083 640 5296) [howard.hendricks@sanparks.org](mailto:howard.hendricks@sanparks.org)

Income generated from this sale will be used for the Park Development Fund for the purpose of conservation management, including development of national parks system.

[www.sanparks.org](http://www.sanparks.org)

the desert, it is rumored that a black magic expert is able to handle and disperse them in the right place at the right time. Far from black magic and Namibia, the bacilli are now regarded as a possible vector of biological terrorism. Boxer's entourage is convinced that his death is related to his determination to fight against rhino poaching. He would have mortal enemies, maybe even inside SRT. The Ganaseb brothers, two other SRT trackers, served as guides to a South African hunter, Peter Thormählin, known for bad practices and rejected by his peers in South Africa and Namibia. The Ganaseb brothers had been questioned by police for 12 hours a month before the death of Boxer about the brutal increase of rhino poaching in an area they know by heart. The Namibian press does not hesitate to link the eruption of poaching to the case, which is still pending, of the attempt to smuggle 14 horns by 3 Chinese citizens arrested at Windhoek airport ("On the trail No. 4 p.66, No. 5 p. 73 and No. 6 p.65). The Ganaseb brothers are regulars of a local bar operated by Efraim Mwanyangapo with a Chinese partner. One thing that is certain and that reflects a difficulty communicating on the subject in the Board of Directors of SRT is that the tribute paid by the chairman to Boxer, super tracker called "supreme eco-warrior," was published on December 11th, more than 2 months after the tragedy.



Daniel Alfeus Hawaxab alias Boxer

**Poaching of a black rhino<sup>7</sup>  
Solio Ranch, County of Nyeri, Kenya  
October 7, 2014**

They got in through an electrical fence. They hacked off the 2 horns and left with them. Guards heard the shot but were not able to catch them.

**Arrest of 6 poachers<sup>8</sup>  
National Kruger Park, Province of Mpumalanga,  
South Africa  
October 7, 2014**

The arrest took place in 2 stages.  
1- 3 suspects were followed by helicopter. They were armed with a .458 caliber gun, ammunition and an ax.  
2- Another trio was also followed by helicopter and was armed with a .375 gun, ammunition and an ax.  
- 500 rhinos in the Kruger Park since the beginning of the year.



**Conviction for illegal possession  
of a firearm and ammunition<sup>9</sup>  
White River, Province of Mpumalanga,  
South Africa  
October 8, 2014**



The man from Mozambique was arrested in April. His accomplice escaped. Sifundza was sentenced to 8 years in prison. When he gets out, his gun, ammunition, ax and trekking clothes won't be given back to him.

**Poaching of a white rhino and a black rhino<sup>10</sup>  
National Kruger Park, Province of Mpumalanga,  
South Africa  
October 2014**



Never seen before! The poachers not only killed the 2 rhinos, but they also ripped out the black one's eyes. The park's spokesperson speaks of a superstition according to which the poachers would become invisible and uncatchable by authorities if the victim's eyes were removed. Another practice used by poachers is to cut the front hoofs beforehand so that the victims cannot escape if they were to ever wake up after being poisoned and before the horns were removed.  
- 533 in the Kruger Park



### Poaching of 6 rhinos<sup>11</sup>

**KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa  
Between October 11 and 15, 2014**

2 in iSimangaliso Park by the side of the Indian Ocean: One was caught in a trap; the other was found in an advanced stage of decomposition.

+ Another body – the death must have occurred 2 days earlier – was found hornless near the Phinda Private Game Reserve.

+ A white rhino was also found dead and de-horned in the Double H private reserve.

+ 2 more white rhinos were found in Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park. The horns were gone.

### Postponing of the trial for 4 people accused of the theft of 112 pieces of rhino horn<sup>12</sup>

**Mpumalanga Province, South Africa  
October 15, 2014**

Follow-ups of the theft of 112 horns from the governmental vaults are weak (See "On the Trail" n°6 p. 71). The second court hearing for the 4 suspects is postponed. The general attorney is sick. The 4 men are out under bail for the modest amount of 20,000 R or 1,768 US\$. The value of the 112 horns is at least 10 million US\$.

### Discovery of 2 rhino carcasses<sup>13</sup>

**North West Province, South Africa**

**October 14 and 16, 2014**

She was poached while she was giving birth. The newborn was also killed.

The male was found dead the next day. All 3 were killed on a full moon night.

According to the owner, the value of a pregnant female is about 70,000 US\$; the value of a male is about 53,000 US\$.



### Death of one of the last 7 northern white rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum cottoni*, Appendix I)<sup>14</sup>

**OI Pejeta Conservancy, Laikipia County, Kenya  
October 17, 2014**

The Ultimate Chance operation failed. The only viable male of the subspecies *Ceratotherium simum cottoni* died at 34 years old. The early death was termed natural. The average life expectancy of a rhinoceros is 45 years.

Suni had been transferred to the reserve in central Kenya from a Czech zoo in Dvur Kralove in 2009, along with another male and 2 females.

The scientific hypothesis assumed that the sex hormones levels of the females would rise in the climate of their African homeland and that mating could become possible. It did not happen, and the surviving male is now 41, too old to breed. The northern white rhinoceros is doomed to extinction. One male and 2 females are sterile in Kenya. A female is at the zoo in Dvur Kralove and an old retired male is boarded at the San Diego zoo.

### Poaching of 2 rhinos<sup>15</sup>

**Mankwe Wildlife Reserve, North West Province, South Africa**

**October 2014**



She had escaped a first attempt just barely 20 years ago. Charlie is now an orphan.



Winnie was 6. In 2 months she would have given birth to her first baby.

### Request for bail from 3 employees of the South African National Parks suspected of rhino poaching<sup>16</sup>

**White River, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa  
October 2014**

The 3 suspects worked inside Kruger Park (see "On the Trail" n°6 p.77). They have made a request for bail. 2 of them came to the courtroom staggering. They then collapsed into their chairs, holding their heads in their hands. They say that the security forces were beating them up at the time of their arrest. The 5 members of the intervention team deny these acts of violence. They were proceeding to the usual required observations around the carcass they had just discovered when they heard a distant shot. Helicopter surveillance enabled them to locate a second carcass, yet it did not locate the poachers. That's when Killer came into action. That is the cute name chosen for one of the ranger's German shepherd, also a dog handler. In no time, he tracked down 2 men in the bushes who had been interrupted in the middle of their "work" by the helicopter hovering above. They had with them an A.458 and corresponding ammunition. The ax used to de-horn was found near the dead rhino.

The suspects' lawyer, Hettie Groenewald, demanded that a certified doctor examine them for traces of the beating. Despite the absence of any apparent trauma or wounds, the court accepted the request and postponed the hearing until a medical certificate can be provided.

In the end, bail was rejected for André Mabunda and Shakes Baloyi and accepted for Lawrence Baloyi. He had provided the firearm and had brought the 2 poachers close to the target in a vehicle belonging to the park.



© Low Veldier

### Arrest of 11 presumed poachers<sup>17</sup>

**National Kruger Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa  
October 17-18, 2014**

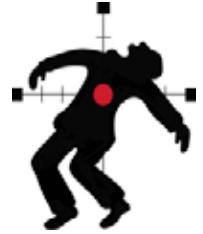
5 poachers were arrested. It happened near the Skukuza section of Kruger Park, one of the most visited areas of the park: administrative center, museums, library, golf course, pic-nicks and rhinos. Skukuza comes from the Zulu word Sikhukhuza, which means broom, in honor of James Stevenson Hamilton, Paul Kruger's assistant who at the beginning of the 20th century had "cleaned" away poachers from the park. Since January 2014, 113 of their heirs have been arrested in the park. That afternoon, 3 more suspects were caught in the Madelane section.

The next day, in the Punda Maria section, shortly after sundown, a fight broke out between security forces assisted by a helicopter and a gang that wasn't there to peacefully observe the pachyderms. 2 poachers got hit. One died from his wounds. All the poaching equipment was found on site. The third turned himself in. They were wearing a military uniform from Mozambique and 2 park rangers' uniforms. The high command of the park responded with a somewhat lyrical statement in order to congratulate Kruger's fair staff: "I will be eternally grateful to these men and women who thanks to their devotion and solidarity face enormous challenges everyday."



### Death of a presumed poacher<sup>18</sup> Solio ranch, Nyeri County, Kenya October 22, 2014

Knives, axes, a flashlight and clothing were found on site. One poacher was killed. His 3 accomplices disappeared.



### Discovery of a black rhino carcass<sup>19</sup> Etosha National Park, Kunene Region, Namibia October 28, 2014

The black rhino had been struck with 11 bullet wounds. "It's a very sad story," said the Minister of the Environment somberly. A 30,000 N\$ reward (2,751 US\$) is promised to anyone who will enable the arrest and trial of those responsible. This year alone, the death toll is 15 while between 2005 and 2013 the death toll was, all told, 10. For the elephants, it's even worse. 40 have been killed since the beginning of this year.



© Eva Zlatfedora

White elephants in the Etosha Park saline desert

### Discovery of 3 rhino carcasses<sup>20</sup> KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa October 2014

2 more rhinos were killed in the Double H private reserve.

Another one was killed in the Mduna Royal game reserve.

- 9 were killed in October. 2014 will be the worst year for the slaughtering of rhinoceroses in KwaZulu-Natal.

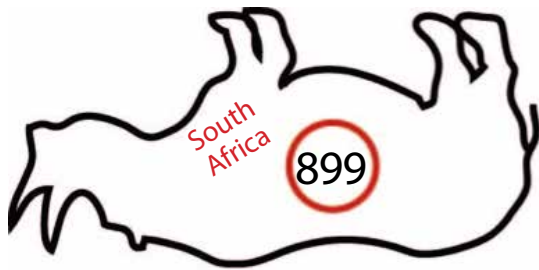
### Fighting between rangers and poachers in Kruger Park<sup>21</sup> National Kruger Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa October 2014

1 - In the Crocodile Bridge section, 2 poachers were mortally wounded and the third escaped to Mozambique.

2 - The chase past the western boundaries of the park led to the seizure of 2 cars, ammunition and a firearm.

54 poachers have been arrested in the Park around and during the month of October.  
- 581 in the Kruger Park.





**Seizure of 41 kg of rhinoceros horn<sup>22</sup>  
Oliver Reginald Tambo International Airport in  
Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa  
October 31, 2014**

The 2 Vietnamese citizens, aged 25 and 26, were flying to Hanoi via Johannesburg and Doha on board a Qatar Airways plane. The one-hour stop in Johannesburg did not go as planned. The passengers were all asked to get off the plane for baggage checks. Mimmo, a dog sniffer, braced himself in front of 2 bags containing 20.8 and 20.6 kg of horns. The 2 traffickers were apparently given help from an accomplice in the Maputo Airport that enabled their luggage, and especially their contents, to remain unchecked. A Qatar Airways agent in Maputo spoke of his suspicions to the South African airport police: a real-time reaction that is worth mentioning. SAPS (South African Police Service) Crime Stop: 08600 10 111.



**Discovery of 2 rhino carcasses<sup>23</sup>  
Mozambique  
November 2014**

The 2 females were dehorned and had their front paws cut off. They were found in the buffer zone of Kruger Park. One had her stomach ripped open. It seems a fetus was removed.

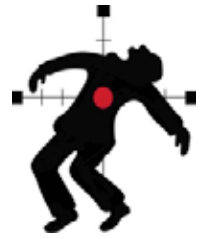
**Arrest of 3 persons suspected of rhino poaching<sup>24</sup>  
Phinda Game Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal Province,  
South Africa  
November 3, 2014**

Another incident in the reserve: The poachers apparently shot at the guards, who then shot back. One suspect was wounded in his arms and legs. He was escorted under close surveillance to hospital. The 3 gang members aged from 31 to 55 are charged with unlawful possession of firearms and ammunition and illegal hunting. A fourth man is said to have escaped.

**Death of 2 persons suspected of attempted rhino poaching<sup>25</sup>  
uMkhuze Game Reserve, Kwa-Zulu-Natal Province, South Africa**

**November 2014**

A new incident in the KZN: The guards patrolling on foot came upon 2 suspects. Believing themselves to be in a state of self-defense, they fired. The 2 poachers died. They were carrying on them a .458 caliber gun. The director of Ezemvelo ("related to nature" in Zulu), the provincial establishment in charge of wildlife management, is not in favor of shooting to kill, "but in some cases, there's no other choice."



**Arrest of 2 persons suspected of rhino poaching<sup>26</sup>  
Sabie Game Park, Province of Gaza, Mozambique**

**November 2014**

The anti-poaching unit in the game reserve neighboring Kruger Park intercepted 2 poachers. A third one escaped with a bag in which maybe the horns were held. The 2 individuals had their CZ 375 taken.



© Damien Mander

**Arrest of 3 persons suspected of rhino poaching<sup>27</sup>  
Phalaborwa, Limpopo Province, South Africa  
November 8, 2014**

The chase lasted all night. The 4 suspects were spotted at dawn climbing into a pick-up truck. They were armed. One of the two escaped. Had they just killed or were they just about to? It's all quite unclear. Analysis of the bullets will be carried out to determine if the gun that was seized was used previously in the park. The 3 men will be charged with at the least unlawful possession of a firearm. They were also carrying an ax and ammunition. One of them, Joshua Sithole, 46 years old, doesn't have a very good reputation. A famous pastor in the region, he was already implicated in 2011 in a similar case but had not been indicted at the end of the investigations.

**Poaching of a rhino<sup>28</sup>  
Mount Camdeboo Private Reserve, Western  
Cape Province, South Africa  
November 8, 2014**



She was known under the name "Split horn." She was hit with a poisoned arrow. The dose was very strong. She died. She had already given birth to and raised 3 young. The fourth witnessed the crime. He found protection with a sub adult male. Already in May, a male had been killed in this supposedly safe province.

**Arrest of 3 presumed poachers, 32, 38 and 41 years old<sup>29</sup>  
Acornhoek, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa  
November 8, 2014**

The ax and the car are kept as evidence.

**Discovery of 3 black rhino carcasses<sup>30</sup>  
Anabeb conservancy, Region of Kunene, Namibia  
November 2014**

The official death toll is 18 rhinos in the country since the beginning of the year: 15 black and 3 white. The Ministry of the Environment takes a stand for the reinforcement of sanctions. "Everyone must act as policemen and soldiers when faced with poaching," the minister said. Hotline : 55555. Poachers are active in the semi-desert region of Kunene. Namibia is home to 1,800 black rhinos. A preventive dehorning campaign has mixed results.

**Court hearing for 3 persons suspected of poaching a rhino<sup>31</sup>  
Nelspruit, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa  
November 12, 2014**

The case opened in October. The 3 citizens of Mozambique are suspected to have killed him in Kruger Park, in the Lower Sabie section. In the middle of gunfire exchange with the rangers, one of the poachers was killed. The public attorney requested that the hearing be postponed. The case is not yet complete; the 2 suspects need more time to pay the lawyer fees. The case is adjourned to January 27, 2015.



**Appearance of 3 police officers and a ranger suspected of rhino poaching<sup>32</sup>  
Nelspruit, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa  
November 12, 2014**

The 4 men responsible for the prevention of poaching in the Kruger Park are compromised in an attempt to poaching. They remain in custody. The trial is scheduled for late January.

**Seizure of 3 rhino horns, poaching of 2 rhinos and arrest<sup>33</sup>  
Private reserve, Hoedspruit, Limpopo Province, South Africa  
November 14, 2014**

They were arrested by police after having shot at, killed, and taken the horns of 2 rhinos. 2 bags. 3 horns. An ax. 3 knives. 2 telephones. The firearm with a silencer. Ages 20, 20 and 22, and merciless. A 60 kg calf- an adult weighs 1.5 t - was roaming near his mother when she was savagely mutilated. He was admitted to an orphanage, the shelter for endangered species in Hoedspruit, the Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre.



**Discovery of 2 black rhino carcasses<sup>34</sup>  
Etosha National Park, Region of Kunene, Namibia  
November 12 and 16, 2014**

2 more individuals dead in Etosha Park: They have been for some time. The correct word is no longer decomposition. More like mummification. The poaching goes back to July-August for one, February-March for the other. One eland has just been killed in the park. He was cut into pieces. A gang would be active and settled in the area. The general commissioner of the region call upon the suspects at a distance: "The suspects at large are requested to surrender themselves to the police and not to waste government resources, as there is no room for them to survive or to escape the rule of law."



**Appeal from a judgment<sup>35</sup>  
Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal Province,  
South Africa  
November 20, 2014**

The taxi driver and rhino killer on Christmas Eve in 2010 had admitted to the facts before being sentenced to 20 years in prison, a sentence that took into account his resisting at the time of arrest. Ngemfu Khoza had been wounded during the crossfire with the rangers. The date for the new hearing has not yet been set.

**Seizure of 2 rhino horns, death of 2 persons suspected of rhino poaching and arrest of 4 others<sup>36</sup>**

**Kruger National Park, Crocodile Bridge and Malelane gate sections, South Africa  
November 20, 2014**

Crocodile Bridge, maybe the most deadly section of Kruger Park: Rangers and poachers meet. 2 dead. A pair of horns, a firearm, and a full rhino-killing kit lay on the ground.

It's the same scene in Malelane, contiguous to Crocodile Bridge, but the poachers' incursion wasn't deadly. They were arrested. The firearm and equipment were seized.



**Arrest of 4 persons suspected of rhino poaching<sup>37</sup>**

**Lephalale Private Reserve, Province of Limpopo, South Africa  
November 2014**

**Seizure of 2 rhino horns and arrest<sup>38</sup>  
Solwezi, North-Western Province, Zambia  
November 24, 2014**

It happened at 10:30 p.m. They were negotiating to sell the horns in a hostel with buyers. A woman, Violent Mwizyamba, 43 years old, was part of the gang. The first question is whether the horns were real keratin or fake. The potential clients were police officers.

**Discovery of 3 rhino carcasses<sup>39</sup>  
iSimangaliso wetland Park and Mkuze Private Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa  
November 25 and 26, 2014**

The 2 bodies were there, at the edge of the wetlands for 3 or 4 weeks, the third in the Mkuze game reserve 15 km from the first. The time is very bad for the KZN rhinos.

**Arrest of 2 men suspected of rhino poaching<sup>40</sup>  
Mahlabathini, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa  
November 27, 2014**

Police, in cooperation with the Ulundi Tactical Response Team, stopped them in the middle of the night. They were in possession of accessories that told the whole story on their own. The ax has disappeared.



© Zululand Observer

**Arrest of 3 people suspected of attempted rhino poaching<sup>41</sup>**

**Marken, Limpopo Province, South Africa  
November 30, 2014**

A new poaching event was avoided. The driver of the vehicle and the 2 guys who had just gotten out with firearms, a silencer, ammunition and an ax, the minimal toolbox for the average poacher, were arrested after being shadowed for several hours.

**A man suspected of poaching of rhinoceroses escapes extradition to Swaziland<sup>41 bis</sup>**

**Ermelo, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa  
November 2014**

According to an "incontestable" report, the Times of Swaziland Website revealed that Dan Wilson Nkosi was released in South Africa in November 2014 after having appeared before the Ermelo court for theft of livestock. Sentenced to either prison time or the payment of a fine, the livestock thief was acquitted of the fine and was released in spite of the extradition request submitted in June 2014 to South Africa by Swaziland, which accuses the former of trafficking in rhinoceros horns and of being an associate of Bhekumusa Mawillis Shiba wanted by Infra-Terra after Interpol called for his arrest in October 2014.

**3 men convicted of rhino poaching<sup>42</sup>**

**Skukuza, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa  
December 3, 2014**

10 years in prison each. They had 2 horns in their possession in October 2014. 2 were from Mozambique, and one was Zimbabwean. - 672 in the Kruger Park.



344 suspects arrested

## FAMILY BUSINESS

### Conviction for the poaching of a white rhino<sup>43</sup>

Nelspruit, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

December 4, 2014

51 and 22, father and son on the same boat, in the same prison for the same amount of time: 10 years. With one voice they pleaded guilty. The judge appreciated and ordered the sentences to run concurrently. Otherwise, it would have been 20 years and 9 months. The sponsor had provided arms and ammunition and had promised money after the deed was done. As if talking to him, the judge informed the court that China had announced that all its nationals caught with illegally sourced rhino horns shall be punished with life imprisonment.



### Poaching of 2 rhinos<sup>44</sup>

Graaf Reinet, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

December 6, 2014

The sanctuary province is becoming unsafe.



### Poaching of 2 rhinos<sup>45</sup>

Brits area, North-West Province, South Africa

December 10, 2014

- 2

### Death of 3 suspected rhino poachers<sup>46</sup>

Kruger National Park, South Africa

December 8, 10 and 11, 2014

Day, night, dawn, at all times poachers are trying their luck in the Kruger. Some are killed. Some flee. Others are arrested.



### Rhino poaching and death of several rhino poaching suspects<sup>47</sup>

Linyanti, North Western Province, Botswana

December 2014

"There are more and more people from Zimbabwe and Namibia that come to Botswana to poach rhinos." The average number of rhinoceroses killed is 7 per month, according to the Minister of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism. The number of poachers killed in the clash with rangers is not specified.



### Rhinos for sale<sup>48</sup>

Kruger National Park, South Africa

December 2014

OSCAP (Outraged South African Citizens Against Rhino Poaching), citing a reliable source, reports that 20 rhinos captured in Kruger Park were transported to the Oryx Kalahari game reserve, Northern Cape province, from Kruger Park. 1000 km of road. Kalahari Oryx is a game reserve owned by the fourth largest fortune in South Africa, Christo Wiese (See "On the trail" n°6 p.65).

### Discovery of 2 rhinos carcasses<sup>49</sup>

Barab Plamwag Concession, Kunene Region, Namibia

December 21, 2014

Save the Rhino Trust resumes its work. One of the ONG patrols discovered in the desert of the Kunene 2 black rhinos, dead 3 to 4 days before. The female and her young were killed by bullets. The mother had been deliberately dehorned a month earlier but poachers worked hard on the horn stump and the little horns of the baby.

The dehorning campaign was launched in October to counter the resurgence of poaching.

The Governor of the Kunene Region has "declared war" on poachers and asked for additional forces to protect for the wildlife.

Namibia and South Africa wish to install a horn cartel in imitation of the diamond cartel that would be responsible for legal marketing of rhino keratin, which would have the effect of virtually eliminating poaching.



### Arrest of 3 rangers accused of the murder of a person suspected of attempted poaching<sup>50</sup>

Jozini, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

December 25, 2014

The 3 rangers were on duty Christmas day. They spotted 3 persons carrying with them a firearm and an ax. Shots broke out. One suspect was killed. The others escaped. Police came to the site to investigate and arrested the rangers. According to police, the suspect was unarmed and had surrendered when he was killed and the rangers could not legitimately say that they had acted in self-defense. Apparently the suspect only had on him a knife. Ezemvolu, the administrator of the institution of the Parks and Private Reserves in KwaZulu-Natal is furious, as is the director of the iSimangaliso National Park, inside which the fighting occurred.

"Our rangers act strictly according to law, apply established procedures and are agents under oath."

Charged with murder, the 3 rangers were released on bail for 1000 R (86 US\$). Their court hearing is scheduled for February 25, 2015. There seems to be an internal war between different anti-poaching services.

### Discovery of 2 black rhino carcasses<sup>51</sup>

Zululand Rhino reserve, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

December 25, 2014

The mother was killed and de-horned. Her orphan had died by her side. According to the press, the cause of death was "natural."

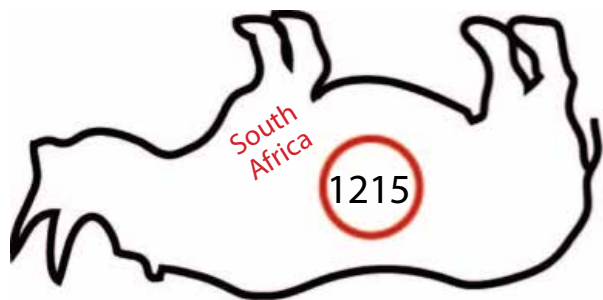
## Release on bail for 6 members of a gang of rhino horn poachers and smugglers<sup>52</sup>

South Africa

December 2014

Good end of the year celebrations for Ras[apopoulos] gang - in memory of the evil enemy of Tintin.

Ras' wife, a lawyer, a pilot, an officer from the Hawks, South African elite troop, and 2 other accomplices were released on bail despite the concealment of the prosecutor and the demonstration organized by OSCAP NGO in front of the Pretoria courthouse. Meanwhile Hugo Ras has not been bailed. He is known to have already tampered with the M99 10 years ago. He is involved in the mutilation of 24 rhinos and the illegal sale of 84 horns. The gang would have derived 20 million rand profit (1.17 million US\$) from its crimes (see "On the Trail" n°6, p.67).



## AMERICA

### Conviction for illegal trafficking of black rhino horn<sup>53</sup>

Miami, State of Florida, USA

October 1, 2014

Gene Harris, 76 years old, has been sentenced to 3 years in jail with a suspended sentence, 6 months on home arrest under electronic surveillance and a 10,000 US\$ fine. In 2011, he was a go-between in an unlawful sale of rhinoceros trophies. For his role in this deal, he received a commission of 10,000 US\$, and he knew that the rhino horns would be exported to China. During the trial, a second illegal transaction dating back to 2011 was uncovered. The self-learned specialist in fossils, founder of the Art By God stores in Miami and Laredo (Texas), has built a fortune by selling pre-historical and stuffed specimens of extinct species. Just before his Miami-based curiosity shop was closed down and he had pleaded guilty to charges of rhino horn trafficking, he had sold a mammoth tusk for 20,000 US\$ and a Barbary lion for 28,000\$ US (see "On the Trail" n°6 p.69).

Why the name Art By God? Because Gene Harris, in 1982, after having worked for a long time in South America, opened his first commercial natural history museum in California. A lawyer who just bought a beautiful ammonite asked him where the artist's signature was. Harris answered that God had forgotten to sign it. That is how the stores in Miami and Laredo were born. The money from the horn swindle and the unknown others did not go to God but instead in Gene Harris' pocket.



## Indictment for sale of products from illegal hunting and horn trafficking<sup>54</sup>

United State of America

October 23, 2014

The Groenewald brothers aren't twins but get along like peanut butter and jelly. Dawie was born in 1968; Janneman in 1970. They come from a hard-working and broken Afrikaner family. The father was a worker in the public domain; the mother was a hairdresser.

20 years later, both joined the police forces and worked for the narcotic bureau and would hunt down marijuana traffickers.

In 1993, they left civil service, more or less implicated in a stolen cars trafficking business towards Zimbabwe.

That's when Janneman, the younger of the two, went to the USA and Dawie started selling bananas in the waiting lines for bus and taxis. One day, he went to see a farmer, bought an antelope, cut it up into pieces and sold them for a small price in the streets. That's where it all started, and since then Dawie Groenewald has never stopped being a hunter, butcher and grocer of large game animals.

In 1997, he started building a small hunting company that rapidly grew into the prestigious and ravaging Out of Africa Adventurous Safari. He then crossed the Atlantic and discovered with marvel the Convention of the Safari Club International that draws every year many thousand selected hunters and trophy collectors to the United States. Every reputable safari organizer holds a stand at the SCI. Dawie, accompanied by his wife Sariette, hit on the clients lingering in the allies, offering them hunting parties in South Africa on bits of land rented from an associate. 3 years later, clients of Out of Africa would also hunt in Zimbabwe near the Hwange Park in ranches deserted by the white farmers now occupied by blacks in accordance with the farm land reform promised by President Mugabe, he also a fervent advocate of marketing elephants and wildlife. Groenewald and Mugabe, same game!



Out of Africa flourished. In 2002, the company bought 2,500 ha in Prachtig, in the province of Limpopo. The hunting reserve is home to sable antelope (*Hippotragus niger*) and slowly but surely to rhinos bought in auctions in San Park. The poor animals are not there to be simply contemplated. Promotional images for Out of Africa are full of hunters towering over felines, buffalos, hippopotamuses,

elephants and rhinos killed by guns or by arrows and even smiling children.

"At that time, I would buy a live rhino for 18,000 US\$ and would sell him dead for 35,000 US\$," says Dawie, during an account to the investigative journalist Julian Rademeyer. Dawie Groenewald is now caught between the South African and American justice systems, and yet is still free. In South Africa, he is charged with 1,736 various offenses, ranging from fraud to illegal sale of rhino horns (384), since 2010. The trial is dragging on. His wife is co-accused.

In the United States, the Groenewald brothers have just been accused of fraud, money laundering and breach of the law on wildlife. Out of Africa would sell to American clients fake permits for rhino hunting. Sure, the hunters couldn't return home with the horns and other trophies, but they could track down, shoot, look mighty on pictures next to a dead rhino, measure the horn and possibly be listed in the yearly hunting registers or make record book entries. These cheap rhinos were classified "problem" specimens, a generic name used for any of the "big five" said to potentially cause conflict inside the game reserves and national parks. The permits given out in the USA were not notified to the competent services in South Africa. After the killing, the horns were cut up with a chain saw or a knife and sold on the Asian market, mainly in Vietnam. The dead bodies were then burnt or buried into pits somewhere on the 4,300 ha of the Prachtig reserve and its extensions. Benefits of these operations were in part deposited in bank accounts in Alabama and managed by Janneman.

Investigations and indictment of the 2 brothers by the attorney general of the State of Alabama is to be put on the credit of the Operation Crash of which the events and details have been spoken of in "On the Trail" since its first issue. The American justice is going to request extradition of the 2 individuals who presently should be in South Africa. This is a new chance for Dawie to now get to know Alabama's prison cells. In January 2010, as he was about to return to South Africa, he was arrested by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Accused of having sold to an American hunter a fake permit for leopard hunting and of having produced an ante-dated export certificate for the skin, he then spent 8 days in jail and 2 and a half months on home arrest at his brother's house for contraband and breach of the Lacey Act. "The United States is really not the right place to go to jail in." "For a damned leopard, they treated me there like a serial killer."



Out of Africa Adventurous Safari

## OPERATION CRASH

### Court hearing for trafficking of 2 rhino horns<sup>55</sup> Manhattan, State of New York, USA November 25, 2014

Tony Guan pleaded guilty (see "On the Trail" n°6 p.107). "I smuggled into Canada 400,000 US\$ worth of rhino horns and decorative objects made from coral and elephant ivory." He faces 10 years of prison time. Sentencing will take place next spring.

### Poaching of 3 rhinos<sup>56</sup> Magudu and Makhasa private reserves, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa December 7-15, 2014

### Dismantling of a rhino poaching gang<sup>57</sup> Manguzi, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa December 18, 2014

The arrest was hectic. 3 traffickers are behind bars. One of them is injured. The house of the big chief is luxurious: 10 rooms, luxury everywhere, 6 luxury cars in the garage including a Mercedes and 2 BMW, cash everywhere according to well informed people. It's a *nouveau riche* traffic man.

The investigation lasted 8 months. The gang was infiltrated by anti-poaching cops who had 5 rhino horns lent to them by Ezemvolvo KZN Wildlife to deceive the criminals and appear professional. "They will not be released on bail." "The case is well put together," hope those responsible for the operation. "In 2014, there were more than 1,100 rhinos killed in the country and nearly 100 in our province," almost 30% more than in 2013.

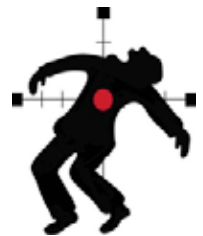
## ASIA

### Death of a presumed poacher<sup>58</sup> Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India October 4, 2014

Breaking and entry of at least 4 poachers was expected that night. The rangers were posted in strategic places. At first contact, shooting broke out from each side. One man died.

### Arrest of 4 people suspected of poaching<sup>59</sup> District of Sonitpur, State of Assam, India October 8, 2014

The 4 poachers, including one 24-year-old woman, were arrested on the north shore of the Brahmapoutre. 3 firearms were seized.



**Appearance for illegal acquisition of rhino horn objects (2,635 g) and corruption<sup>60</sup>**  
**Shantou, Guangdong Province, China**  
**October 14, 2014**

Zhu Jiadong, former director of Rural Planning Bureau in Shantou, is brought before the Intermediate People's Court of Guangzhou. He is accused of illegal acquisition of 17 items in rhino horn valued at 658,750 yuans ( 107,070 US\$) and for accepting bribes (1.11 million yuans in cash and 440,000 HK dollars from more than 10 real estate companies, a total of about 235,000 US\$). The objects were acquired between 2000 and 2008 on the Beijing, Shanghai, Yuyuan and Zhengzhou antique markets.

**Poaching of one rhino<sup>61</sup>**  
**Gorumara National Park, State of West Bengal, India**  
**October 17, 2014**

Investigators made the link between the methods used by the butchers of 2 rhinos killed in August in Jaldapara Park. In this park, 70 rhinos have been poached since 1951. Many still remember that in 2009 a rhino trying to escape the harassment of poachers was lynched by a mob of villagers.

**Seizure of 6 kg of rhino horn and arrest<sup>62</sup>**  
**Noi Bai Airport in Hanoi, Vietnam**  
**October 27, 2014**

The flight was coming in from Bangkok. The Vietnamese woman of 29 was paid to transport the goods estimated by customs to be worth 31,350 US\$ per kilo.

**Arrest of a rhino horn trafficker<sup>63</sup>**  
**Nepal**  
**October 2014**

This old timer in the horn business was convicted in his absence 3 times and had in total been given 41 years of prison time. The Chitwan National Park is home to one of the last rhino populations in Nepal. There are only a few hundred of them.

**Discovery of a rhino carcass<sup>64</sup>**  
**Manas National Park, State of Assam, India**  
**October 31, 2014**

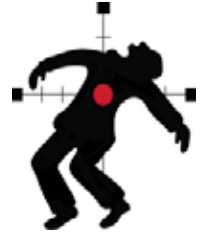
Guards found the mutilated carcass of a male. This finding has occurred just after the theft in the neighboring district of Kokrajhar of 7 firearms from a special armed force in charge of countering trafficking, the Army's Eco Task Force. Autonomists from the National Democratic Front of Boroland could have committed the crime. In the last 3 years, 8 rhinos have been killed in the Manas.

**Seizure of 7 kg of rhino horns<sup>65</sup>**  
**Noi Bai Airport in Hanoi, Vietnam**  
**November 1, 2014**

Searches carried out on the persons of 3 Vietnamese travellers: 188,000 US\$. This is the second finding of horns in one week.

**Death of 2 people suspected of poaching<sup>66</sup>**  
**Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India**  
**November 10, 2014**

14 poachers have died since the beginning of the year. While the picture is not completely clear, an ax and a horn appear to be in the background to the left.



**Seizure of a rhino horn (1 kg), arrest of 3 people and seizure of a firearm<sup>67</sup>**  
**Balipara, State of Assam, India**  
**November 12 2014**

**Seizure of a rhinoceros horn and an arrest<sup>68</sup>**  
**District de Jalpaiguri, West Bengal, India**  
**November 12, 2014**

After the poaching of a rhinoceros on October 17, the police visited a suspect's house found a horn. It was subjected to genetic analysis.

**Poaching of one rhino<sup>69</sup>**  
**Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, State of Assam, India**  
**November 15, 2014**

This is the second since January 1, 2014 (see " On the trail " n°4 p.69). He was shot toward the end of the night in the Hahsora Forest. Pobitora covers 38 km2, of which half is a natural habitat for unicorn rhinos.



**Poaching of one rhino<sup>70</sup>  
Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India  
November 19, 2014**

The young adult was found wounded by guards in a very remote edge of the park. The victim could not be treated on site. She died several hours later, at dawn. The horn was not stolen.



**Rhino breeding<sup>71</sup>  
Sun River National Park, Yunnan Province, China  
November 2014**

China observes very closely 7 white African rhinoceroses (*Ceratotherium simum*). "The horns of a female grew 7 cm in 1 year and a half." "In view of the currently identified hormone levels, they could begin to reproduce within 2 years." This rhino breeding test presented as a reintroduction program is experienced in the Sun River National Park in Pu'er. The last China rhino (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) is said to have been hunted back in 1957.



**Death of a man suspected of rhino poaching<sup>72</sup>  
Petuli Bari, State of Assam, India  
December 2, 2014**

The presumed poacher was killed in the night. He left behind a gun, ammunition and a motorcycle.



**Poaching of 3 rhinos<sup>73</sup>  
State of Assam, India  
December 2014**

1 in the National Park Rajiv Gandhi Orang. The post of Divisional Forest Officer has been vacant for several months. The victim is an adult female.  
2 in Kaziranga a hundred km from Orang.  
At the same time, the Indian Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change answers the question of Shri Ajay Sancheti, a member of the Indian Council of States:

- Special support is given to the State of Assam so that monitoring is ensured 24h / 24 in the state national parks.
  - A Rhino Task Force is operational.
  - Penalties are now more severe for offenders.
  - Rangers are now allowed to shoot if they deem necessary. Their immunity is guaranteed.
  - The flow of information between different departments and at all levels is strengthened.
  - 7 cases of rhino poaching were sent to the Central Bureau of Investigation.
- The Minister also provided a summary of rhino poaching since 2011 in the Park of Kaziranga.

2011	2012	2013	2014 (15.12.2014)
3	11	27	26

**Seizure of a rhino horn (650 g) and arrest<sup>74</sup>  
Bokajan, State of Assam, India  
December 12, 2014**

650 g were in his pocket. He was caught near the fish market. He told a fib that did not convince anyone, the first stone of an argument which might cast doubt on his trial. "I was going to visit my sick father. A stranger gave me a small package. He asked me to stick around and said he would return in a moment but did not come back."



**Seizure of a horn and arrest of a suspect<sup>75</sup>  
Hanoi, Vietnam  
December 17, 2014**

**Conviction for illegal trafficking of 7 rhino horns (13.431 kg)<sup>76</sup>  
Zhanjiang, Guangdong Province, China  
December 2014**



The passengers were returning from Africa. One of them assures that he brings back seafood in his luggage in memory of his trip. In fact, the contents are the profits of crime. He is sentenced to 13 years in prison.



## Poaching of a rhino and death of a ranger <sup>77</sup>

Orang National Park, State of Assam, India

December 31, 2014

Rapidly, the investigation led to the arrest of one of the victim's colleagues. His conflicting versions of the event, his presence at the scene, his scheming to delay the arrival of rescue officials and the work of a tracking dog pose serious suspicions about Giasuddin Ahmed and an accomplice who disappeared.



## EUROPE

### The inseizable Rathkeale Rovers. <sup>78</sup>

In January 2010, Michael O'Brien and his brother Jeremiah O'Brien had been arrested at the Shannon airport with 8 horns worth 500.000 €, antiques. In March 2013, they pleaded guilty and left free the Ennis Court room (County of Clare, Ireland) with only upon them a 500 € fine each for import of antiques to the United Kingdom without their original certificates. According to their lawyer, the O'Brien brothers had brought to the United Kingdom the rhino horns that had been given to them by a Portuguese antique dealer, a certain M. Hernandez, for an in-depth expertise. After having accomplished this part of their mission, their intention was to send them back by the appropriate means to their rightful owner.

On the October 1, 2014, according to the Irish newspaper Herald, Michael O'Brien, 29 years old, was stopped at the Frankfurt Airport along with 2 Chinese citizens with whom he was negotiating the sale of an unknown number of horns. Irish police, warned by Interpol, was not able to immediately confirm the exact identity of the Irish citizen arrested in the lobby of a hotel near the Frankfurt airport – and with reason. Business Week, in a long report published in January 2014, reported that the Rathkeale Rovers had several O'Brien clans, the Kerry O'Briens, the Turkey O'Briens, the Pa Turkey O'Briens, the Bishop O'Briens. Homonyms are plenty inside the Rathkeale Rovers nebula from that fathers, sons, and cousins carry the same names. Michael and Jeremiah O'Brien are from the Bishop O'Brien clan.

On December 1, 2014, 13 members of the Rathkeal Rovers who had been arrested in September 2013 in many different areas in the United Kingdom within the course of a coordinated operation were charged with theft of antique including rhino horns in museums and auction rooms for a total value of 15 million pounds, or 24 million US\$. Right after, the Birmingham Court let out 11 suspects on bail. The trial, which will last 8 weeks, is scheduled for the end of April 2015.

On December 29, 2014, a certain Richard O'Brien filed a complaint for defamation against Business Week and Adam Higginbotham, author of the

report on the Rathkeale Rovers. The complainant is in the article called the "King of Rathkeale Rovers." He claims that Business Week made a mistake in saying that 4 rhino horns were found by British police in his caravan. According to him, it was in his nephew's caravan that the horns were found. Richard Kerry O'Brien notes that his reputation as an expert in antiques has been ruined and demands \$20 million US in damages from Bloomberg Business Week. Richard Kerry O'Brien's son is named Richard Kerry O'Brien. He was arrested in November 2010 in the United States for rhino horn trafficking and put in jail for 6 months.

"On the Trail" recounts the Rathkeale Rovers' International career in issues 1, 2, 3 and 4.

### Indictment of 16 people for rhino horns trafficking <sup>79</sup>

Prague, Bohemia Province, Czech Republic  
December 2014

*Business Day* reveals that 16 Czech citizens are charged in a poaching international conspiracy involving Dawie Groenewald in South Africa and Vietnamese rhino horns buyers (see p.71 and "On the trail" n° 6 p.62). The European citizens were only nominees to fool CITES and its national offices. Instead of a hunt with its stalking and rites, instead of regular trophies brought back by hunters and set out in their funeral homes, only the horns were shipped with a certificate issued by Out of Africa Adventures, South Africa. A clumsy reference to a final destination in Vietnam attracted the attention of Czech customs. In truth, the rhinos were victims of summary executions by fake Czech hunters and local professionals in the Groenewald couple reserve in Prachtig. In South Africa, the trial of Groenewald is scheduled for August 2015.

#### From the crime scene to the courtroom <sup>80</sup>

The International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) publishes guidelines on methods and procedures for ivory sampling and laboratory analysis.

These specifications on precautions to take and analyses to realize in order to collect and preserve evidence, fingerprints and ballistic data, identify the origin of seizures and facilitate the identification of ivory trafficking suspects may be used for other animal materials.

The arrest of suspects marks a decisive advance in the course of an investigation. However, the courts often consider that the investigative elements are not totally conclusive and the suspects' lawyers have a good chance to step into the judges doubts. In the worst case, at the end of the investigation, the file seems too weak to the police and to the judge and thus the complaint is not investigated further.