

ROBIN DES BOIS

ON the TRAIL

Information and analysis bulletin on animal poaching and smuggling
n°6 / 1st July - 30th Septembre 2014

Contents

Insects and Arachnids	3
Seahorses Sea	4
Tridacna and Queen Conches	5
Sea Cucumbers	5
Fishes	6
Marine Mammals	8
Opening of a delphinium in Pattaya and a projected opening in Phuket	8
Marine Turtles	9
Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles	13
Snakes	20
Sauria	23
Crocodylians	23
Multi-Species Reptiles	24
Amphibia	25
Birds	26
The new European commissioner for the environment	32
Pangolins	35
Primates	40
Ebola	42
Felines	49
Released on bail without caution	53
Red Pandas	56
Bears	57
Illegal Stock Management	59
Rhinoceroses	60
Disbanded Justice	71
Rhinoceros exterminatis (France)	72
Elephants	73
Listen if it rains !	88
Other Mammals	98
Multi-Species	102
The ex-Falkland Islands Wolf	122
Sources	123

Introduction

Cruelty to animals is pouring and flooding on each and every one of the 134 pages of "On the Trail" n°6. Rainbows are rare. And for that are all the more beautiful.

Several recent studies suggest that violence on animals and abuse of animal's weakness show predisposition to violence against humans and that witnessing domestic violence or being submitted to parental harassment leads to a predisposition to violence against animals. Violence is a viral and vicious circle.

The FBI in the United States of America now considers that mistreatment, individual violence, organized abuse and torture against animals are crimes against society. To start in 2016, a database listing animal sadists should help - that is the purpose of the FBI's new approach - to predict criminality against humans.

Writers and great thinkers in the ancient centuries had predicted that practice or witnessing of cruelty inflicted on animals would lead to barbaric treatment towards and among humans. " After people in Rome were tamed to the spectacle of murdering animals, it came the turn of men and the gladiators." Montaigne (1533-1592). " Cruelty towards beasts is a natural propensity for cruelty towards men." Montesquieu (1689-1755).

Great naturalists concur and are well aware of such tendencies. " A child cruel to animals in his young years never becomes an honest man or a good citizen." Georges-Louis Leclerc de Buffon (1707-1788).

Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859), explorer, geographer and naturalist would measure a people's level of civilization by the way they treat animals.

According to Humboldt's scale, we are presently at a zero degree, or even below zero.

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*.

844 rhinoceros killed in South Africa, Namibia, Kenya, Nepal and India from 1st January to 30th September 2014

**On the Trail n°6
Black market horn price
from media or customs sources**

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Africa	Kenya	17 174	39

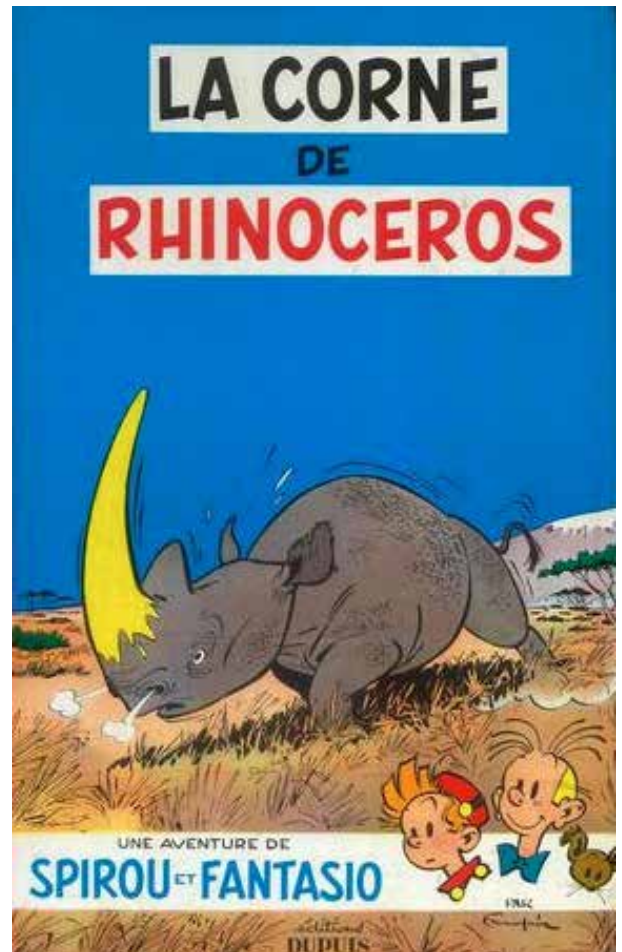
AFRICA

Arrest of a suspect for the theft of 112 pieces of rhino horn¹

Kanyamazane, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa

July 1, 2014

Regular readers of « On the Trail » can recall the outlandish theft of 80 kg of rhino horn one weekend from the vault in the Mpumalanga province Agency of the Tourism and Parks (See "On the Trail" n° 5 p.71). A 4th suspect has been arrested, M. Selby Khoze. Just like his predecessor, he claims to be an informer for the Anti-rhino-horn-trade police force. According to his statement during the bail application hearing, at least 2 police officers are involved in this trafficking. M. Selby Khoze said he organized a meeting in 2011 with a horns supplier from Mozambique. This happened in Nkoma. A policeman came with him. After 24 hours, the price is set at R30,000 (about 2800 US\$). At this stage, normal procedures would be to arrest the seller, caught red handed. But the policeman accompanying M. Khoze said that one of his colleagues had the money and they could sell the horn for extra cash. The alleged colleague, named captain Xabase, indeed came to them with the money, in cash of course. He was arrested shortly after, for M. Khoze had given all needed



information to his entitled correspondent. What is most disturbing in this case is that the cop who was accompanying in 2011 M. Khoze in the deterred red-handed catching operation is now the police superintendent who's in charge of investigating on the theft of 80kg of rhino horn from the government vault in Mbombela, Province of Mpumalanga, on April 23.

The 4 suspects in this nebulous and quite tragic case of the holdup and rhino horns part of the governmental stock held in the supposedly safe vault in Mpumalanga were let out on bail at the end of august. Christa du Plessis, the judge, followed recommendations of the public attorney. Bail was set at 20,000 R each, that is 1880 US\$. All 4 must every day present themselves to local police, turn in their passports and other legal documents that could let them go abroad and vow to in no way attempt to intrude on investigations, to not intimidate any of the witnesses and to not disturb law and order. To be continued!



**Conviction for the poaching of a white rhino²
Nelspruit, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa
July 8, 2014**



16 years in prison term for the 2 men from Mozambique. 10 for the white rhino, 4 for breaking and entry and for illegal activities, 6 for possession of a fire arm without a permit. The 10 and 4 year sentences confused. The 2 had sneaked into Kruger Park at the end of April 2013 (see "On the Trail n°1). A third one, the whole deal's big boss according to the 2 convicts, disappeared after having been let out on bail. He is called Lucky. The 2 condemned tried to call on the court's indulgence, saying that they were dragged into it by Lucky, that they have real jobs to support their families. One of them is a charcoal salesman, the other transports cattle to slaughterhouses.

**Seizure of a fake rhino horn³
Beitbridge, Matabeleland South Province, Zimbabwe
July 8, 2014**



9 years of prison for being on the verge of selling a rhino horn to a compatriot living in South Africa. The smuggling network was real, only the horn was a fake, so says the Zimbabwe national parks and wildlife management authority. What if it was a fake imitation, i.e. a real rhino horn released back into parallel circuits through counterfeit certificates. The horn smuggling world is so inventive !

**Poaching of 4 black rhinos⁴
Ol Jogi conservancy, County of Laikipia, Kenya
July 9, 2014**

The mystery is thickening in the Ol Jogi conservancy, 200 km north of Nairobi. In 7 months, 9 rhinos disappeared. That night, it was 4 rhinos' turn. They were killed by 2 different gangs. Only 3 horns out of the 8 were cut. This is the most murderous attack since 1988 when 5 white rhinos had been shot in the National Meru Park.

A regional commission was launched in charge of investigating possible accessoriness between poachers and guards from the ranch, parks and other protected areas in Lewwa, Solio, Borama, Ol Pejeta and Ol Jogi. The commission's work will be fulfilled within little delay.

Ol Jogi is home to less than 45 black rhinos and less than 20 white rhinos.

So far 22 rhinos have been poached since the beginning of the year. There would only be 1037 rhinos alive in all of Kenya.



The average price for horns is 65,000 US\$ per kg. It can raise up to 100,000 US\$ if the horns are considered to be good quality by the final buyers. In comparison, the average price of gold and platinum are 43,000 US\$ per kg and 48,500 US\$, respectively.

**Appearance before the court for the poaching of a rhino⁵
Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa
July 2014**

Bail wasn't granted for the 3 people involved in the attempted murder of a rhinoceros in Kruger Park during the month of May. The 3 suspects' resumes are worth some attention: 2 of them are policemen and the 3rd is a former Kruger Park guard (see "On the Trail" n°5).

**Poaching of 3 rhinos⁶
Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
July 2014**

After a brief ceasefire, the war is back. In 24h, 3 rhinos have been killed. A fourth one should survive. It still has its horns.

**Poaching of a rhino⁷
Ol Pejeta Conservation zone, County of Laikipia, Kenya
July 17, 2014**

Winner of the 2012 Eco-tourisme grand prize, the 360 km² sanctuary that had celebrated a month ago the birth of a baby black rhino is now in mourning. The mother was killed for its very valuable horns and the lost unprotected baby wandered into the clutches of a band of lions.

**Arrest of 6 people suspected of rhino poaching⁸
Islington village, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa
July 18, 2014**

Next to 2 firearms, an ax and ammunition, the 6 young men from Mozambique, ages 19 to 34, were in the process of dividing the money between them. The total amount was close to the equivalent of 1000 US\$ in the Mozambique and South African currencies. This is the typical poacher profile. They applied for release on bail.

**Arrest of 5 rhino poachers⁹
Phinda private reserve, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
July 19, 2014**

The youngest is only 17. When a patrol squad approached, they started shooting to clear their escape. That is the story as told by the military who shot back. One poacher was wounded. All 5 were arrested. Ammunition, the fire arm and silencer, an



ax, were gathered as evidence. At the beginning of the month of July, 558 rhinos had been killed since the beginning of the year in South Africa of which 48 in Kwa Zulu Natal.

Court hearing for charges in relation to rhino poaching, illegal hunting and fraud¹⁰

**Pretoria, Province of Gauteng, South Africa
July 21, 2014**



It's rare to see suspects in court suspects wearing neck ties, white shirts and elegant dresses. Veterinarians, helicopter pilots, professional hunters, safari hunt organizers, all got their hands dirty reaching for the rhino keratin jackpot. 1872 charges are weighing on the shoulders of 11 suspects. Procedural maneuvers led to setting back the trial for a few weeks. The cases of David Groenewald and his wife Sariette will be reviewed in a next issue of « On the Trail ».

Conviction for the poaching of 3 rhinos¹¹
**Nelspruit, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa
July 22, 2014**



The 77 year sentence is composed as follows:

- 15 years for attempted murder
 - 10 years for each rhino killed
 - 8 years for the theft of a horn
 - 15 years for illegal possession of a fire arm
 - 7 years for illegal possession of ammunition
 - 2 years for breaking and entering into Kruger Park.
- One male had been killed. A female had been mortally wounded and a baby had been hit by lost bullets. Crossfire had broken out between the rangers and the 3 poachers. One was killed on the spot, the second escaped, the third one Mandla Chauke has just been convicted.

Poaching of one rhino¹²
**Mapungubwe National Park, province of Limpopo, South Africa
July 23, 2014**

This is a first ever in the savanna of this world-heritage classified National Park. The hopes of the national park's spokesperson (SAN Parks) were not met as the heavy sentencing pronounced the day before did not entail the expected deterring effect, at least for the time being.

Discovery of 2 rhino carcasses¹³
**Etendeka, Region of Kunene, Namibia
July 17 and 27, 2014**

A hornless rhinoceros skeleton was found by Save the Rhino Trust, during an observation track conducted in the Kunene desert. Things are moving in Windhoek, the capital. A call for a demonstration against poaching, planned for the early august, has been launched.

Poaching of one rhino¹⁴
**National Kruger Park, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa
July 27, 2014**

Tourists gave the alarm. 4 shots were heard around 6 o'clock in the evening. 380 rhinos have been killed since the beginning of the year in Kruger Park.

Arrest of 3 poachers¹⁵
**National Kruger Parc, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa
July 29, 2014**



Man hunt was conducted in the savanna. 3 poachers were arrested. Shotguns, ammunition and poaching kits were found on site.



Trial postponed for a rhino horn trafficker¹⁶
**South Africa
August 2014**

Who is protecting Big Joe and who is Big Joe protecting? Big Joe Nyalungu is the caricature of a dishonest and violent guy taking advantage of a privileged position in the ranks of the police to meddle in ordinary trafficking then turn to environmental criminality that pays better and presents less risk. Nyalungu served in the Komatipoort police, south of Kruger Park, near the border to Mozambique. He quit in 2009 after having been suspected of being part of a gang of smugglers organizing trade in cigarettes and cars with Mozambique.

In 2010 he was involved in the murder of a man beaten to death in Hazyview whose weighted body was thrown into a dam reservoir.

In December 2011, Big Joe was arrested on an express way driving his Range Rover. In the back there were 3 million Rand in cash, that is 270,720 US\$. Forensic search of the vehicle revealed traces of 2 white rhinos poached in Kruger Park. He was let out on bail.

In March 2012, Big Joe was arrested in Hazyview. 4 rhino horns and a large amount of "dagga" (marijuana) were found on him. Searches of his 4 hideouts led to the seizure of knives, hunting daggers, silencers for strong caliber guns, devices for nighttime hunting and 5 million Rand in cash. In his camera there was a footage of a terrorized man, handcuffed and in the process of being tortured.

In May 2012, for the scheduled court hearing in this latest case, he was driven to the court in an armoured truck escorted by armed policemen. Investigators received death threats and an escape attempt was suspected to have been planned.



In August 2014 an unexpected turn of events occurred. As the trial opened in Middleburg -Mpumalanga province - the regional court's President announced the trial would be transferred to Thulamahashe, near Hazyview, right in Big Joe's chiefdom. The date of the hearing is still unknown. 13 people are now indicted in this complex case of trafficking of 21 rhino horns, money laundering, theft and violence, illegal possession of fire arms, corruption and complicity in illegal immigration: one of Big Joe's accomplices who also is a former policeman, a Kruger Park guard, 2 Vietnamese, and several Mozambicans. Big Joe's counsel is a former high official for South Africa's national parks administration.

This gang leader is fearless. He already beat a journalist at a past hearing. Many are surprised that his trial will take place "at home". The accused from Mozambique for long benefitted from the legal aid system for their defense but have now fired their lawyers and reached for the services of a new law firm. No one knows where their money comes from.

Poaching of a 3 year old rhino¹⁷

**Sonpark, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa
August 8, 2014**

At the heart of Big Joe's territory, a 3 year old rhino who was healing from his wounds in the Care for the Wild orphanage was found early in the morning dehorned and mutilated. Full moons are pretty useful to poachers. This is the 37th rhino to be killed since the beginning of the year in Mpumalanga province. The 3 year old rhino- an average individual has a life expectancy of 50 years- had been hit by lost bullets when his mother was killed.

OPERATION FULL MOON

**Seizure of rhino horns and arrest of 6 suspected poachers¹⁸
National Kruger Park, Province of Limpopo, South Africa**



August 9-10, 2014

6 outbreaks between rangers and poachers occurred during "operation full moon" in the midst of this beautiful August week-end in Kruger Park. 6 suspects were arrested. 2 of them have been wounded. 3 high caliber guns, a pair of horns and the full poaching equipment have been seized.

Arrest of a group of poachers¹⁹

South Africa

August 10, 2014

Somewhere in South Africa, Protrack has announced having arrested poachers. Protrack produced evidence. Protrack is an anti-poaching private institution headquartered in Hoedspruit. It employs 200 to 300 wildlife guards. Some companies protect banks; Protrack protects hunting reserves and private farms from poaching. Groups of at least 2 men are sent in full-immersion patrolling for 1 to 2 weeks. They camp in tents at night, spot and remove old traps, put themselves on stakeouts near new traps, inspect gaps useable for break ins, geolocalize every proof, and search employees and visitors. Illegal fishing and wood theft are also part of Protrack's targets. Training sessions for the use of weaponry, for survival in the wild and for anti-poaching techniques are offered. 10-week trainings cost 2580 US\$ and 6-month ones cost 3073 US\$.



© Protrack Anti-poaching unit

**Arrest of 9 suspected rhino poachers²⁰
Rankin's Pass, Limpopo Province, South Africa
August 17, 2014**

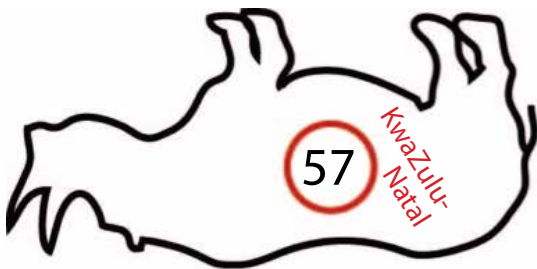
This is the "Austral-Africa Connection". The 10 suspects are from South Africa, Mozambique, Botswana, Zimbabwe. The parity is not respected: only one woman's in the package. Dishonor is safe: there is a police officer in the band. The 2 cars, stolen gun, silencer and ax are confiscated. Some landed the poachers. The latter had trespassed into the reserve to do the dirty job while others were waiting for them a few kilometers away.

**Arrest of a rhino poacher²¹
Tonga, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa
August 19, 2014**

The horn was a fake. The bag really did have a horn inside but after verification it turns out it was an imitation made of synthetic materials. Artificial keratin is a substance newly invented by chemists. The man had to pay a 1500 Rand fine before being sent back to his country, Mozambique.

**Poaching of one rhino²²
Ithala Game Reserve, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
August 20, 2014**

Rhinos in the Ithala reserve can be counted on the fingers of one's hands and feet. This is the second one poached since 2010.



Conviction and sentencing to 7 years in prison for rhino poaching²³

**Opuwo, Region of Kaokoland, Namibia
August 20, 2014**

The average monthly income of a farmer in the Namibian desert of Kunene is of about 50€ (81 US\$). The fine that this one got is deterring. It's the equivalent of 1220 US\$. More seriously, he has been sentenced to a 7-year prison term that could turn to 11 years if he doesn't pay the fine. He was arrested for poaching in December 2012. The mother and its baby had been killed. "Tourism is one of the local economy's pillars and rhinos are a first rank attraction." the court stated. "Rhinos' disappearing jeopardizes the whole region's jobs and income."



**Arrest of 3 traffickers of fake rhino horns²⁴
Masvingo Province Masvingo, Zimbabwe
August 2014**

The 3 crooks were heading towards Beitbrige, border post between Zimbabwe and South Africa, to negotiate 3 fake up rhino horns - actually cattle horns - which had been more or less faked up by a local healer.

Somewhat tipsy, they were checked by policemen who searched their vehicle and found the 3 fake horns inside.

Agreements for the privatization of 260 rhinos from Kruger Park for transfer to the Northern Cape province and cancellation of the agreements²⁵

**South Africa
August 2014**

On 12 August 12, Minister of the environment Edna Molewa announced at a press conference that 260 Kruger Park rhinos were going to be transferred to private ranches in the Northern Cape province where poachers are still rare whereas 1827 rhinos have been killed in Kruger Park since the beginning of the Year 2010. Kruger is besieged and the Northern Cape Province seems to be a good alternative. This is a full turn around in governmental doctrine that until now refused any form of reduction of their "rhino capital" in the largest South-African national park.

Except that now 260 rhinos would be taken to private hunting reserves that use for publicity pictures of hunters beside collapsed killed rhinos. The benefiteres will be Chapungu Safaris Africa, Steyn Safaris and Wintershoek Safaris. The contract is worth 80 million Rand (7,5 million US\$). It was specified during the press conference that the transaction is only in the aims of guaranteeing the species' future. The financial profits are said to play small parts.



Chapungu Safaris Africa

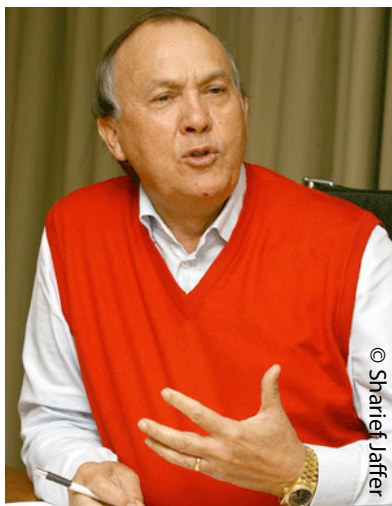


Wintershoek Safaris



Steyn Safaris

According to "Killing for Profit", an investigation book written by Julian Rademeyer and published in 2012, Steyn Safaris was involved in embezzlement of hunting licenses attributed to Vietnamese citizens who were not particularly attached to their trophies and would have sold the horns for quite a lot of money as soon as they got back home. In 2012, the South-African Minister of the environment apparently asked his Vietnamese counterpart to verify that the "hunters" coming by the dozens to shoot rhinos in South Africa were still in possession of the trophies according to requirements of the CITES Convention. Similar suspicions linger upon the flow of Polish and Czech hunters, as well as on Thai hunters (see "On the Trail" n°2 page 47). Christoffel Wiese is co-owner of Chapungu Safaris. This company notably manages the Kalahari Oryx Game Reserve that covers 728 km². Wiese is one of the wealthiest men in South Africa. His wholesale company Pepkor has branches in Australia and Europe and is well present in Africa. The other owner of Chapungu is Jacques Hartzenberg, a professional hunter.



Christo Wiese

On August 21, in reply to a parliamentary request, Edna Molewa stated that since 2010, 354 rhinoceroses had been sold by SAN Parks for a total of R 80 million i.e. US\$ 7.25 million. She refused to name the places where the rhinos were transferred to "for security reasons". She underlined the fact that the money from the sales is used in diverse projects at SAN Parks, such as extending the boundaries, social research, scientific reports and the development of activities for the benefit of local populations.

On the end of August, a new turn of events occurred, the 260-Kruger-park-Rhinos sale's contracts with the hunting industry's facilities were cancelled for vice of form.

GC Dry, member of the SAN Parks directors' board declared to the Bloomberg press agency that the agreement was an isolated initiative of one of the directors made without consulting the board. The director in question is probably Hector Magone, in charge of protecting of animals inside the SAN Parks. He had been removed from his position in June.

Trial adjournment for 3 traffickers of 14 rhino horns and a leopard skin²⁶

Namibia

August 6 and September 11, 2014

The saga of the fraudulent export attempt of 14 rhino horns from Namibia to Shanghai continues. 3 Chinese citizens have been arrested at Windhoek Airport in late March this year. Bail was denied on May 22. The trial was scheduled for September 11. It has been postponed to October 11. See "On the Trail" n°4 page 66 and "On the Trail" n°5 page 73. There was also a leopard skin in one of the 3 accuseds' suitcases.

Discovery of 5 carcasses of poached rhinos²⁷

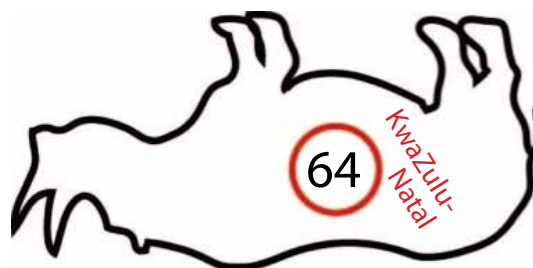
Northeast of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

September 2014

Dismay:

- 5 rhinos dead, including 1 black rhino
- 64 rhinos have been killed in KwaZulu-Natal since the beginning of the year.

A call is sent to the public. "There must be more cooperation of civil society. We must reinforce our air surveillance methods. Indeed, we need more money. Each systematic inspection winds up in the discovery of leopard and crocodile skins, traps, elephant ivory. Everything that is found or seized is destroyed."



Seizure of 2 rhino horns (4 kg) and arrest of 2 suspects²⁸

Komatipoort, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa

September 3, 2014

Komatipoort is where it all happens. It's the cornucopia or "hornucopia". 2 rangers from Kruger Park have just been arrested there with 2 nice rhino pieces for a total weight of 4 kg. They were going to sell them to a man from Mozambique who escaped. His car was seized.

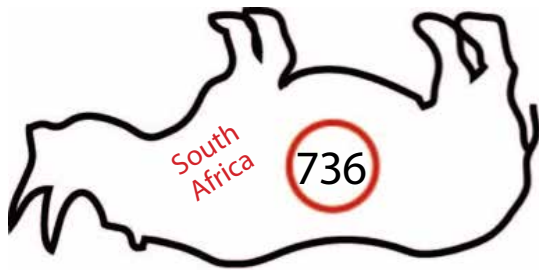
2 other rangers have been arrested shortly after. A trial is yet to come. The suspects are already pulling all strings. According to them the horns were taken from a rhino who died a perfectly natural death.

Poaching of one rhino²⁹

Glen Afric Country Lodge, North West Province, South Africa

September 8, 2014

The guys jumped over the fence. The rhino was shot twice. At the first shot it charged, at the second shot it collapsed. An accomplice came to the body and cut off the horn. All 4 ran away, each in a different direction. It was all caught on video.



**Death of 3 poachers³⁰
Chyulu National Park, County
of Makueni, Kenya
September 2014**

Violence between guards and poachers is rising. Popped tires, patrol-cars windshields smashed and worse yet, men dead on both sides are reported. This time death struck on the wildlife pirates' side. 3 died in the Park's volcanic mountains. Only poachers, not exactly moved by the pleasures of hiking, dare to go there. Axes, ammunition, machine guns were found on site. This event comes a week after the admission of 500 new rangers who had been trained for their mission by the special KWS school in Manyani.



**Arrest of 3 persons suspected of rhino poaching³¹
Klaserie Private Nature Reserve, Province of
Mpumalanga, South Africa
September 12, 2014**

A vehicle prowling in the reserve was asked to stop. The 3 passengers were questioned by police about the presence in the car of tools used for rhino poaching. The private reserve is an enclave surrounded by Kruger Park. It covers 600 km². The suspects were sentenced to 5, 10 and 15 years in jail.



Training of the specialized anti-poaching unit in the Klaserie Private Nature Reserve.

**Arrest of 3 people suspected of poaching³²
Madikwe Game Reserve, North West Province,
South Africa
September 14, 2014**

The Madikwe Game Reserve was established in 1991 on 750 km² of agricultural grounds degraded from overgrazing. African wild dogs, cheetahs, lions, white and black rhinos were introduced. The reserve is run by the State, local groups and private companies.

The suspected poachers 'trio' were found carrying an axe, ammunition and a gun. Their presumed targets were rhinos.

**Poaching of one rhino³³
National Kruger Park, South Africa
September 2014**

The peaceful Vietnamese delegation had seen this male on his favorite territory west of Pretoriuskop. He was then alive. 4 days later he was dead. The present rate is of 4 rhinos killed per day in Kruger Park. Nhung Hong, a star singer in Vietnam, is present at the autopsy. She is leading a campaign along with a few other celebrities against the use of rhino horns in her country.

Horns are really hype in Vietnam, even more so than a Rolex. At the same time, investigative journalist Hoang Do demonstrated in a television documentary that the use of horn powder by the sick is absolutely useless.



**Poaching of 2 rhinos³⁴
Kwantu Private Game Reserve, Province of
Eastern Cape, South Africa
September 16, 2014**

Both of them were drugged with dart guns and had their horns surgically removed. The Reserve is 80 km from Port Elizabeth. The 2 rhinos are now fighting for their lives.



**Arrest of 4 people suspected of rhino poaching³⁵
National Kruger Park, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
September 16, 2014**

3 women were on a walk in Kruger Park. They spot a suspicious car. They call East Coast Radio (ECR). "A car with 4 guys inside has stopped near a water hole where there was a black rhino and some lions." "They seemed interested in the rhino."

An hour later, the 3 witnesses stumble onto the car again. There were only 2 left in the car. A call to the hotline and a discrete shadowing enabled the Kruger police to get their hands on the 4 friends very strongly suspected of rhino poaching.

Hotline : 0800 205 005, 08600 10111.

Crime-Line : 32211.

**GANG
FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**Dismantling of a gang of poachers³⁶
South Africa**

September 19 2014

The 9 members of a presumed gang were simultaneously arrested in 4 different provinces of South Africa. The boss of the gang, Hugo Ras, his wife, his brother, a lawyer, a pilot, and a chief warrant officer of the crime prevention unit of Pretoria are among the accused. The dismantling of the gang began 2 weeks ago with the arrest of Abraham, a.k.a. Arno Smit.



Hugo Ras

The 10 gang members were mixed up from 2008 to 2012 in the poaching of 24 rhinoceroses of which one female and her infant on private reserve and national parks. In all, they were responsible for the contraband of 84 horns of a global value of 22 million rand or 2.06 million US\$. They appeared on the 22nd of September before one Pretoria's court for theft, malicious injury to property, attempting to defeat the ends of justice, fraud, money laundering and deceit, illegal possession of firearms and ammunitions and intimidation. The battle over the bail order has begun.

In 2004, the Kruger Park Reserve sold 4 elephants to Hugo Ras. The contract specified that the elephants could be transferred to a reserve and were not to be hunted. At least one of these elephants was killed by a wealthy man from Texas who paid to kill the animal on the private reserve of Rustenburg just a few hours after his arrival and one 400 km journey from Kruger Park.

In May 2011, Hugo's luxury apartment was searched. Found there were huge amounts of M99, the powerful anesthesia used by veterinarians and poachers to put rhinoceroses to sleep. Ras was then charged with breach on the Medicines and Related Substances Control Act. He was in this business in association with Douw Grobler, a shady veterinarian who worked with Park Kruger until 2001.

Ras has also been implicated in many nefarious acts without any direct link with wildlife trafficking, and up to now had gotten away pretty well with it.

Abraham Smit is for his part under mandate of an international arrest warrant issued by Interpol. He is the brother of Hugo Ras' wife. He is wanted in 4 states of the U.S. for financial fraud.



Poaching of a rhino and arrest of 3 employees of the South African National Parks suspected of rhino poaching³⁷

National Kruger Park, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa

September 21, 2014

The armed branch of SAN Parks and South African police arrested 3 employees... of SAN Parks who occupied the positions of ranger, gardener and guide in Kruger Park. They were caught just after the death of a rhino in their Lower Sabie sector near Crocodile Bridge with guns and ammunition hidden in their vehicle. They are in charge of protecting the heritage bestowed on to us by our ancestors, yet they are the pillagers. It's awful. That is in substance what the director of SAN Parks has declared.



Mitigation of penalty for trafficking of horns³⁸
Johannesburg, Gauteng, South Africa
September 25, 2014

A second mitigation for Lemtongthai. The trafficker from Thailand was initially sentenced to 40 years in prison, then to thirty years having benefited from an appeal to the original sentence. The Supreme Court of Appeals has now reduced his imprisonment to just 13 years. The Court judged that the previous penalty was disproportionately severe in relation to other sentences handed out for similarly serious offences.

Under the cover of rhino hunting licence assigned to 26 Thai women, Lemongthai supplied the Asian market with many rhino horns and also participated in the direct sale and dissemination of the horns, certainly contributing to the speedy rate of species decline. The Thai kingpin of fauna trafficking had acted in compliance with administrators of many private reserves in South Africa and with professional hunters who were killing rhinoceroses by setting up false hunting permits using young Thai women who officially were the false permit owners.

Mr. Lemtongthai furthermore has to settle a fine of 84.000 US\$ or an additional punishment of 3 years in prison in case of non payment.

Seizure of 2 rhino horns (6,5 kg)³⁹
County of Nyeri, Kenya
September 2014

They were arrested on the Chaka market. The horns and their motorcycle were seized. In Asia, the 2 horns can be sold for 300,000 US\$ at least. They were let out on bail of 22,000 US\$ each.

Arrest of 5 suspected of poaching rhinoceroses⁴⁰
Phalaborwa, Limpopo, South Africa
September 26, 2014

Wildlife at Risk – WAR – is fighting a battle against rhino horn hunters. 5 suspects were arrested with equipment for murdering rhinoceroses.

Rhino sale⁴¹
Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Reserve, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
September 26, 2014

The manager of a safari reserve has bought 10 rhinos. The sale of 26 rhinos has brought in close to one million US\$ to Ezemvololo! The giraffes went for 928 US\$ a piece, the nyalas for 2000 US\$ a piece, the buffalos for 4400 US\$.

The Ezemvololo board of directors says it is satisfied. "The prices are a testimony of safari managers' trust and recognition of the quality of the animals."

Escape of 2 people suspected of poaching rhinoceroses⁴²

Vaalwater, Limpopo Province, South Africa
September 2014

2 men suspected of poaching escaped from police custody at Vaalwater.

Arrest of 3 suspected of rhinoceros poaching⁴³
Sabie Game Park, Maputo Province, Mozambique
September 2014

3 men suspected of poaching rhinoceroses have been arrested. Guards in the private reserve Sabie Game Park tracked the suspects down with the assistance of an airplane. The reserve encompasses 280 km² and is adjacent to Kruger Park in South Africa. One of the 3 suspects is a notorious poacher known for many raids into Kruger Park.



© IAPF - International Anti Poaching Foundation

Seizure of a .375 caliber rifle and a silencer

Seizure of a rhinoceros horn and the arrest of 2 suspects in rhinoceros poaching⁴⁴
National Kruger Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa
September 30, 2014

The horn was fresh. The 2 armed suspects were being tracked by aerial surveillance of SAN Parks.

Theft of rhinoceros horns⁴⁵
Pretoria, Gauteng, South Africa
September 2014

The uncle of Oscar Pistorius, the champion in sprinting and in leaping judicial obstacles, works in the tourism and hunting industry and the wholesale distribution. A safe of his company Twin City was broken into in Pretoria and an unknown number of rhino horns were taken from within. The rhinos of Arnold Pistorius were de-horned to prevent them being poached.

AMERICA

Court hearing for illegal trade in black rhino horns⁴⁶

**State of Florida, United States of America
July 2, 2014**

His fall came at 76 year old. The old wildlife veteran held a famous store in Miami. Behind the windows of Art by God, one could see whale vertebrae, stuffed bears and other macabre curiosities imported or brought back by Gene Harris from his frequent travels abroad. His lawyer says he is "very remorseful" and that "this is totally out of character of what his whole life has stood for".

During the summer of 2011, Mr. Harris had used his address list and experience to put in contact the sellers in Phoenix of a black rhino trophy with a buyer living in California. A meeting took place in Phoenix attended by a fake buyer living in Arizona to whom, at the end of the reunion a fake receipt was delivered. American law allows the sale of such antique objects under 2 conditions, one being that it has a legal origin, the second being that the sale takes place between residents of a same State.

Reality is that the horns were sold to the Californian buyer, who then smuggled them to China, on the basis of 60,000 US\$ in cash. Mr. Harris received from the actual buyer a commission of about 10,000 US\$. For having in full knowledge ignored legal obligations, the director of Art by God faces up to 5 years imprisonment and 250,000 US\$ in fine.

Participation of Mr. Harris in this business was uncovered within Operation Crash that brings together the efforts of several American agencies and focuses on rhino horn trafficking. On the Asian market, one kg now reaches up to 100,000 US\$. 2 years ago, in a long article written about him in the local newspaper Biscayne Times, Mr. Harris had declared that sculptures made by nature surpassed all imagination and his gallery had an educational purpose.

This Miami case reminds one of the artwork by Mr. Enrique Gomez De Molina, another artist in Miami specialized in animal chimeras, some sorts of puzzles made of pieces and bones of cobras, pangolins, calaos, babirusas and orangutans, slow loris and birds-of-paradise. All these animals parts were illegally imported. Mr. De Molina's works are worth between 10,000 US\$ and 80,000 US\$.

Charges dropped in the case of a sale of a rhinoceros head⁴⁷

**Concord, New Hampshire, United States
September 29, 2014**

After 2 years of procedure, Ari Goldenberg left the office of US Fish and Wildlife Service with a rhinoceros mount with its 2 horns in Concord, New Hampshire, the birthplace of Henry David Thoreau, author of the famous treatises *Civil Disobedience* and *Walden*.

The trophy was seized in May 2012. Initially, Goldenberg had bought it at an antique dealer in New Hampshire for 800 US\$. A few years later he tried to sell it through a middleman of an auction house in Maine, which would have constituted a violation of the regulations. This option failed. Bought in New Hampshire, the mount could only be sold in New Hampshire.

Hence Mr. Goldenberg contacted the administration to get all the necessary information on the regulations and a copy of the law itself. He then put his rhinoceros mount for sale on Craigslist emphasizing that the buyer must reside in New Hampshire. A potential buyer contacted him with much interest, accepting the price of 35,000 US\$ and agreeing to pay in cash but specifying that he did not in fact live in New Hampshire. Mr. Goldenberg was accommodating, knowing full well the consequences of this development. Immediately after the transaction, he was arrested and his trophy seized. The buyer was in fact an agent of US Fish and Wildlife. The reasons why Mr. Goldenberg was able to get his trophy back are not clear. The Department of Justice refused to comment on the matter.



ASIA

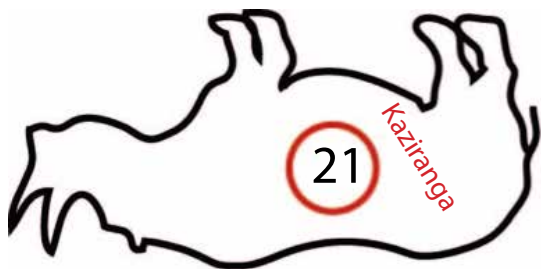
Death of a poacher⁴⁸ Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India July 2, 2014

The man was killed in the early morning. According to the rangers, he was an experienced poacher. A modified AK47, ammunition and supplies were found nearby. At least 3 other poachers escaped. The rise of the river Brahmaputra and partial flooding of the Park would have made their entry easier. Since the beginning of the year, 9 poachers have been killed in the area.



**Poaching of a rhino ⁴⁹
Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India
July 9, 2014**

Minus 21. The rhino was killed during the night. At this rate there will be twice as many victims in 2014 than in 2013 in the State of Assam in northern India.



**Poaching of a rhino ⁵⁰
Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India
July 17, 2014**

Guard found the dead adult rhino during a routine patrol. This is the 22nd killed since the beginning of the year. "The horn is missing". AK47 machine guns and makeshift handguns were used. « National Parks are considered to be the safest shelters for wild fauna and flora but Kaziranga National Park is gaining the dubious distinction of being the most sought after destination for poachers. » remarks Indileak.



**Death of 2 rhino poachers ⁵¹
Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India
July 19, 2014**

The 2 poachers were killed after a half an hour of shooting between them and guards who had been trailing them for 24h.



**Seizure of 16 rhinoceros hoofs ⁵²
Bahraich, Uttar Pradesh, India
August 1st, 2014**



New! Somewhere, the hoofs of rhinoceroses are considered aphrodisiac. The man was going to resell them to a band of Bawaria nomads moving between Rajasthan and Haryana.

The hoofs or parts of the hoofs are also said to cure cancer, stress, and tuberculosis. The hides of the 4 rhinos were already on their way to China via Nepal. The whereabouts of the horns are unknown.

**Appeal formed by the public attorney in a case of conviction for rhino horn trafficking ⁵³
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
August 2014**

Is this man sane? In 2007 he was caught at the airport in the capital city with the 2 horns estimated at the time worth 60,000 US\$. Today their value has tripled. Shortly after his arrest, the man escaped. Despite an arrest warrant, he remained at large until 2010 when he voluntarily turned himself in to police. At the end of a trial held in 2 stages separated by a period of psychiatric treatment, the man has just been sentenced to 2 years probation with regards to his medical file, a sanction deemed insufficient by the public prosecutor who has formed an appeal.



10 August: full moon



REPEATED OFFENSE

**Death of 2 poachers ⁵⁴
Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India
August 10, 2014**

One of the poachers would be Amar Bori, a veteran and expert poachers out on bail. One of the 2 criminal hikers were carrying with them back packs, ammunition, firearms, some food and 2 cell phones. At least 17 poachers and 22 rhinos have been killed in the park since the beginning of the year.



Disbanded Justice

136 poachers have been arrested for their participation in rhino horn trafficking in the Kaziranga National Park since 2009. None have been convicted. What's going wrong?

-lack of rigor in the gathering and keeping of evidence.

-lack of coordination.

-ill knowledge of wildlife laws.

Crime scenes are not sealed off. Fingerprints vanish. Poachers' footprints are not recorded. Ballistic surveys are inadequate. The rhinos' DNA is not sampled.

The different agencies in each state and between states do not share and register information on the poachers, on go-between and on mechanisms of faunic networks. When a poacher is arrested, his criminal past remains unknown. His lawyers will describe him as newcomer to wrongdoing and he will easily be granted bail.

Death of 2 poachers⁵⁵

Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India

August 28, 2014

The poachers were reported. They were surrounded by rangers.

The confrontation took place at midnight. 3 poachers managed to escape. 2 died. The target species is not known. Given the caliber of the weapon, it was big game.



Settling of scores and arrest in a case of fake rhino horn trafficking⁵⁶

Karbi Anglong district, State of Assam, India

August 28, 2014

Counterfeiting of rhino horn is growing. Rafiqul Islam has paid the price. He got hit by a bullet in the stomach while trying to sell a fake horn to 4

traffickers. Realizing the deceit, the 3 men did not take it lightly. Nagaland, a hundred miles from Kaziranga Park, seems to be a transit area for poaching products.

Seizure of 2 rhino horns (6.8 kg)⁵⁷

Pingxiang, Guangxi Province, China

August 30, 2014

At the inspection point, a white van quickly turned around to drive the opposite way. Police chased him. The Pingxiang police seized 2 rhinoceros horns weighing 6.8 kg and arrested one suspect, Zheng.



Conviction for poaching and rhino horn trafficking⁵⁸

District of Chitwan, Central Development Region, Nepal

September 2014

15 years for Khati and a 100,000 Rs fine (1030 US\$). Same for Ram Sharan BK.

Both come from the same village. Khati was specialized in horns. Bk was more into rhino feet. He would also transport Yarsagumba or cordyceps, the "miracle" mushroom gathered from the Tibetan plateau and sold all around the world for nearly 2000 US\$ a kilo.



Return home from hunting in Nepal 1930



Rhinoceros exterminatis (France)

Cannes : tusks on the red carpet



Readers of "On the Trail" will remember the suspicious ivory sales in Cannes. The investigation started in the setting of an auction led to the arrest of 3 people from the travellers community and to the seizure of 3 tusks and diverse carved ivories, including a dildo. Despite disputes and debates, the Cannes auction house had kept moving by its momentum and multiplied its calls for potential vendors of "colonial ivory." The Cannes auction associate Mr. Debussy's motto is that "millions of tons of ivory and rhinoceros horns" sleep in attics and villas of the French Riviera. This prophet claims to torpedo the global price of illegal ivory by flooding the world market with legal stocks from France. Cannes auction offers to take care of necessary administrative formalities. Robin des Bois notes that the publicity and exposition of these tusks or carved ivory objects set for sale by the Cannes auction are not or have not been systematically accompanied by the obligatory CITES certificate number. From now on, the Cannes auction will gather rhinoceros horns with the hope of auctioning them off at the next sale.

Robin des Bois has written to the Cannes Auction with a copy for the Minister of Ecology, for French Customs, and for OCLAESP (Office Central de Lutte contre les Atteintes à l'Environnement et à la Santé Publique).

http://www.robindesbois.org/dossiers/A_LA_TRACE/lettre_CannesEncheres-octobre2014.pdf

Paris get into auction

The Rossini auction house across from the Drouot auction rooms intends to place 9.96 kilograms of rhinoceros horns on sale on the 20th of December 2014. The 11 horns "benefit from the preconvention statute (sic) permitting their commercialization in national territory." This affirmation is however premature as the Rossini house and its clients were not at the end of October, prior to advertising the sale, in possession of the obligatory CITES certificates to be delivered by the competent management authority of the French State.

Robin des Bois has written to Rossini with a copy for the Minister of Ecology, for French Customs, and for OCLAESP (French only).

http://www.robindesbois.org/dossiers/A_LA_TRACE/lettre_Rossini-octobre2014.pdf

ENSEMBLE DE CORNES
DE RHINOCEROS D'AFRIQUE
VINS
(liste sur demande)
TABLEAUX
OBJETS D'ART - MOBILIER



Immediate purchase
13,000 €, 700g," CITES isn't
useful since the horn had
been worked on before
1975 "

Naturabuy continues

Naturabuy, an affiliate of the press company Mondadori, which is the editor of among others Closer, Science et Vie, and Télé Poche, persists in posting for sale on its website both raw and carved pieces of ivory along with rhinoceros horns.

The advertisements are almost never accompanied by CITES certificates. The Comments of sellers for which Naturabuy acts as an intermediary are particularly evasive on this subject. The announcement according to which "every seller of a wild animal (or parts of an animal) asserts that he has knowledge of and that he respects the enforced regulation" is null and void. The responsibility of Naturabuy as a carrier, disseminator, actor and co-beneficiary of the commercial transaction is completely committed by the fact that it offers and advertises for sale items that must be accompanied by mandatory certificates.

Robin des Bois has written to Naturabuy with a copy for the Minister of Ecology, for French Customs, and for OCLAESP (French only).

http://www.robindesbois.org/dossiers/A_LA_TRACE/lettre_Naturabuy-octobre2014.pdf