

ON_{the} TRAIL

ROBIN DES BOIS

Information and analysis bulletin on animal poaching and smuggling

n°17 / Events from the 1st April to the 30 of June 2017

Published on July 31, 2017

Original version in French

Contents

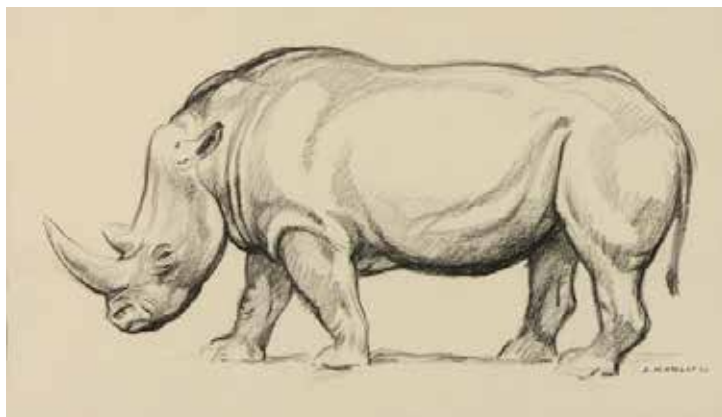
Seahorses	4	Pangolins	40
Corals	4	Pangolins and Elephants	43
Abalones, Queen Conches, Horse's Hoof Clams and Trochus	4	Primates	44
Sea Cucumbers	6	Guanacos and Vicuñas	53
Fishes	8	Felines	54
Requiem for the Vaquitas	11	Leopards and Elephants	67
Marine Mammals	13	Wolves	69
Marine Turtles	16	Bears	70
Various Marine Species	18	Hippopotamuses	71
		Hippopotamuses and Elephants	71
		Rhinoceroses	72
Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles	19	Laikipia County, Kenya	85
Snakes	23	Rhinos and Elephants	87
Sauria	24	Elephants	88
Crocodylians	25	It's moving	106
Various Reptile Species	27	Elephants and Mammoths	108
Amphibians	28	Other Mammals	108
Insects and Arachnids	28	Multi-Species	112
Birds	29	Donkeys	124



Rhinoceroses

Seven human losses, 6 poachers and 1 ranger. From southern Africa to Nepal, rhinoceros fall by dozens. KwaZulu Natal is named the «Rhinos Ground Zero». Seizures are streaming in from every direction. They account for only 10 to 15% of the horn traffic. The two new and feared events are the removal of the moratorium on horn trade inside South Africa and the horn auctions planned in August and September by the largest rhino breeder.

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*.



André Margat (1903-1997). Rhinocéros.

“On the Trail” n°17
The value of horn on the black market,
according to media or official sources

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Africa	South Africa	15,240	44
		16,000	47
	Swaziland	83,400	62
Asia	China (Hong Kong)	25,000	65
		25,714	66
	India (Assam)	34,000	71
	Malaysia	59,800	82
	Viet Nam	52,800	85
88,000		89	

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

May 8, 2017
Solio Ranch, Nyeri County, Central Province, Kenya

An operation by the Kenyan Wildlife Service, KWS, took place Monday to lay hands on several poachers who trespassed on Solio Ranch, slaughtered a female and cut her horns off, and left a distraught young rhino near the dead body of its mother. According to Paul Gathitu, spokesman for KWS, a second carcass was discovered following aerial patrols launched to find the poachers. The rhino was killed and the horns taken approximately 3 weeks ago.¹

June 21, 2017
Near Solio Ranch, Nyeri County, Kenya

Since the beginning of the year, rhino poaching has been splattering blood throughout the Solio Reserve said Solio Ranch. In the last episode, a female had her horns amputated while she was still alive. She was still alive several hours after when she was discovered by rangers.

The families of 2 men who were implicated in this eruption of poaching in Solio are worried. One week ago, their empty car was found, near Solio. Since, James Wanjohi, 47, and Issac Mungai Kihato, 25, had not given any sign of life or death. It is a total mystery. Meanwhile, the Director of Criminal Investigations identified a Solio Ranch guard who was a key link in the poaching, and the two missing men would have been mixed in a recent ivory traffic that went bad. The two men could have been silenced by the incriminated guard or those close to him or by other partners in trafficking, unsatisfied with the uneven distribution of profits. To follow. The truth is perhaps somewhere else.²

Cf. “On the Trail” n°1 p. 25, n°3 p. 51, n°4 p. 64, n°6 p. 61, n°7 p. 64, p. 66, n° 10 p. 46, n°12 p.74.

End of June 2017
Solio Ranch, Nyeri County, Kenya

Arrest of Gichobi Mwai and Gerald Nderitu. According to the ballistic investigations, the weapon they had on them was used to poach a rhino in Solio Ranch on 19 May.³

MOZAMBIQUE

April 15, 2017
Maputo International Airport, Mozambique

The police and customs of the Maputo airport found out 10.5 kg of horns in an aluminum case during passenger check-in. The owner ran away. The destination of the horns and the airline company have not been revealed by the police. The horns might belong to South African rhinos.⁴

ZIMBABWE

Weekend of April 22 and 23, and April 26, 2017 Beitbridge, Matabeleland South Province, Zimbabwe

Deadly weekend in Nottingham. Saturday and Sunday, Bino Ndou set his traps. Sunday, he went to collect them, and when 3 rangers approached, he shot on sight. One ranger was killed. He is at the Beitbridge morgue awaiting a post-mortem exam. Wednesday April 26, Ndou was arrested.⁵



May 17, 2017

Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe

\$ 200 US bail for the disappearance of \$ 3 million US of rhino horns. What is disconcerting in Zimbabwe and neighboring countries is that the more valuable the theft, the smaller the bail required for release. In other terms, we might also say that the higher the rank of the accused, the lower the bail. That was the case with Edson Chidziya, former manager of the State "horns of war" stock, nearly 4,500 horns. A ZimParks audit states that 56 horns are missing, corresponding to \$ 3 million US. Chidziya was released on \$ 200 US bail.⁶

Cf. ivory theft in Mozambique, page 90, ref. 17.

June 2017

Savuli Ranch, Province of Masvingo, Zimbabwe

Two carcasses of dehorned black rhinos exhumed in the Savuli Ranch rented by the Province's Minister of Interior Affairs. Shuvai Mahofa remains undaunted. She claims she is victim of a plot set up by the neighboring white farmers.

In 2012, News Day, a private media, had related that Mrs. Mahofa was suspected of poaching or complicity of such. Three buffalo carcasses and other wild animals' meat had been found in the butcher shop she ran in Gutu before becoming Minister.

At the beginning of the month, another rhino body with a bullet in his head had been found by a Zimparks patrol in the Savuli ranch that covers 5000 hectares.⁷

GANG

Mid-june 2017

Masvingo, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe

Munashe Mudenge Murwira, a secret agent, was discharged for lack of evidence. He was introduced as the supplier in weapons and cars for the poachings in Savé Valley Conservancy between 2014 and 2015. Munashe Mudenge Murwira had a preferential treatment. His partners in crime were sentenced from 10 to 35 years in prison (cf. "On the Trail" n°11 p. 57 and n°14 p. 60).⁸



SOUTHERN AFRICA

Capital punishment for rhinoceros

April 5, 2017

Pretoria, Gauteng Province, South Africa

The Constitutional Court definitively validated the lifting of the moratorium on domestic trade of rhino horns, body parts and by-products. The Minister of Environmental Affairs immediately issued a press release with a reminder that international trade remains banned by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

The analyses of NGOs are completely contradictory. Conservation Trust summarizes their position "This is a slap in the face for the overwhelming majority of countries that voted against the trade in horn at the CITES CoP17 meeting in Johannesburg last year and a huge victory for the very few, extremely wealthy, rhino farmers and potential traders who have been lobbying Molewa for years." For the rhinoceroses, the devil is in the details, and particularly in Article III of the CITES Convention, which authorizes the export for non-commercial purposes (i.e. for personal purposes) of animal parts, if an export/import permit has been obtained, even if the animals are listed in Appendix I, or in Appendix II with a zero quota annotation. The criterion "of personal purposes" theoretically excludes any intention on the part of the possessor to sell or carry out any other kind of commercial transaction. It is the responsibility of the import country to verify in the long-term that the horns remain the property of the possessor, as a souvenir or decorative object. Given the value per kilo of rhino horns - Swaziland estimates it at \$ 30,000 US "wholesale price" - side-stepping and other risks on this slippery slope are to be feared. The government is trying to put measures in place to limit abuse. To sell a horn, to export it, to give it or receive it as a gift, to transport it in a car, by plane or by helicopter, the sender and the receiver must both fill out a photographic file with numerical details, proving that the horn is of legal origin and that it was not poached or obtained from any hidden source. Under the same conditions and under the vague description of "personal effects", foreigners can leave South Africa with a maximum of one or two horns, within an unspecified period. Without being too pessimistic, this renewed opening of the domestic market could be interpreted as an introduction to the reopening of international commercial trade, that South Africa could present at the plenary meeting of CITES, in 2019 in Sri Lanka.

.../...

Capital punishment for rhinoceros - Followed

Confirmed poachers and traffickers like the Deventer brothers (see "On the Trail" n°16, p 65, and p. 77 of this issue) will leap straight through these half-opened doors. Instead of killing the demand for horns, the Constitutional Court's decision will stimulate it.

It is extremely discouraging to note that one of the most influential countries in Africa relies on the questionable and charlatan trafficking of horns, lion bones, donkey gelatin to consolidate its economy and the gains of a select few.⁹

In 2015, John Hume joined with Johan Kruger to sue the 2009 decision by the environmental Ministry to forbid the national trade of horns. With the support of the Private Rhino Owners Association, he has just won following the judgment of the Constitutional Court in Pretoria and he is now planning to organized from August 21 to 24 an online sale by auction and on 19 September a physical auction.

John Hume looses and makes money out of anything, big budget movies like *Zulu Dawn* with Peter O'Toole and Burt Lancaster, the hotel business, supermarkets, taxis and since 1996 rhinos. "It was a project for my retirement" he says, portraying himself as responsible grandfather in front of Julian Rademayer author of *Killing for Profit* published in 2012.

Now he would own more than 1500 rhinos and 6 tonnes of horn. Based on the value of a horn on the black market he is the richest man in South Africa as long as he is able to sell them in Asia. Hume's point of view is to consider rhinos as farm animals that can produce revenue by collecting each year a kilo of horn from their nose. For the moment, products of his preventive dehornings are stockpiled in bank vaults. For him as for all his colleagues horn is a renewable resource.¹⁰

John Hume, cf. "On the Trail" n°1 p. 25 et n°11 p.57.

May 27, 2017

Namibia

Namibia does not plan to reopen the horn-trading industry within the country. For the moment, South Africa's position has not yet created a snowball effect.

In 2016, 222 rhino horn and elephant tusk traffickers were arrested. The spokesperson for the Ministry of the Environment and of Tourism believes that the trend is positive. "So far in 2017, we only have about 8 rhinos and 4 elephants poached, which is significantly low compared to the same time last year."¹¹

SOUTH AFRICA

April 3, 2017

Bela Bela, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Confiscation from 2 suspects of an unregistered 375 caliber weapon, a cutlass and a Toyota.¹²



April 4, 2017

Winterveldt, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Four men, between 26 and 46 years old, suspected of rhinos poaching were stopped at Winterveldt, 50 kilometers north of Pretoria. On March 29th, they had poached one in the Madikwe Game Reserve. Rapidly informed, the police arrived on the scene just in time to see them flee. According to Sergeant Sabata Mokgwabone of the Northwest police, "The suspects allegedly saw the police, then abandoned their vehicle and fled on foot to evade arrest. Upon searching the suspects' vehicle, the police found a rifle, knives and two rhino horns inside. As part of the investigation, leads were followed and that led to the arrest."

The suspects will appear before the Zeerust court to answer to charges of conspiracy to commit rhinoceros poaching, as well as possession of firearms and of rhinoceros horns.¹³

GANG

April 12, 2017

Mahamba, Gert Sibande District, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa. Border of Swaziland.

Four traffickers were brought before the Mahamba court for the possession of two horns. They were apprehended the day before at 8 a.m. at the Mahamba border post. Driving a silver Mercedes, they were spotted by members of the police and South African army. When they were asked to open the front hood of the car, the driver said that it did not open... After the police insisted, he consented to open it and revealed 2 rhinoceros horns. He tried to escape but was caught.

The police confiscated the horns and the vehicle. The 4 suspects, Steven Stolz, Clarence Ngomane, Keletso Makwakwa, and Bathabile Lubisi are now being maintained in detention on suspicion.¹⁴



**April 19, 2017
Kempton Park, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

Ye Zhiwei, 28, carrier of 15 black rhinoceros horns and 3 white rhinoceros horns was arrested at the Johannesburg airport, on November 23, 2016, as he was in transit between Namibia and Hong Kong (see "On the Trail" n°15 p 80) and was sentenced to a fine of \$ 91,200 US or to 6 years in prison. If, as he claims, he accepted the job of being a mule offered by a Chinese compatriot named Zang Fei to help with serious financial problems, then he will go to prison. The mysterious Zang Fei is still on the run.¹⁵



**April 19, 2017
Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

Three Chinese citizens, Zhiaiang Wany, Jianghoa Zang, and Mei Li, were sentenced to 2 years in prison and a fine of 100,000 rand (\$ 7606 US) for having been in possession of rhinos horn and ivory. They were arrested on March 16, 2016.¹⁶



**April 19, 2017
Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa**

Installation of a regional court specialized in rhino horn poaching and trafficking. According to the Minister of the Environment, this "rhino" court is going to speed up procedures and shorten delays between arrests and judgments.¹⁷

**April 26, 2017
South Africa**

Difficult rescue by the veterinarian Dr. William Fowlds of a female black rhino shot in the head near the right eye.¹⁸

**April 28, 2017
Bloemfontein, Free State Province, South Africa**

De-horning of 2 white rhinoceroses in the zoo, without having informed the local council. The horns have disappeared. Two zoo agents have been suspended from their duties. That's all, and yet it is a theft that has been exposed by the SAPS (South African Police Service).¹⁹

GANG

**April 30, 2017
East London, Amathole district, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**

As they were driving in a multi-passenger vehicle towards the Inkwenkwezi Private Game Reserve, near East London, 5 men were arrested in possession of a .308 hunting rifle equipped with a home-made silencer, 15 chargers, a hatchet, a machete and a metal saw. They had been



given away. The suspects, aged 26 to 46, have been incarcerated at the Gonubie police station as they await their trial in the East London Court for the possession of firearms and ammunition and organized murder attempt. For Graham Stanton, one of the owners of the Reserve, "It is a relief for the wildlife on the coast."²⁰

GANG

**May 1st, 2017
Ekland Game Farm, Makhado, Vhembe District Municipality, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

The Makhado police set a trap for poachers who were preparing to enter the Ekland Game Farm. Seeing themselves surrounded, the 2 men triggered an exchange of gunfire with the law enforcement officers. One of the bandits was hurt. The second surrendered. A gun, 10 cartridges for very large game, 3 hunting knives, and a Ford Ranger were confiscated. The suspects were charged with poaching and attempted murder of police officers.²¹



**May 2, 2017
Empangeni, Kwazulu-Natal Province, South Africa**

The Thula Thula orphanage is closing its doors. The NGO Lawrence Anthony Earth threw in the towel. A risk assessment showed that watch guards had to be present 24 hours a day. The costs involved are impossible to bear. The personnel and volunteers are still in shock from the raid, and the violence to which both they and the rhinoceros orphans were subjected. The orphans were taken to other establishments that will benefit from funds that were collected but not yet used by Thula Thula (see "On the Trail" n°3 p. 49, p. 50 and n°16 p. 67).²²

**May 5, 6, and 7, 2017
Mokopong, North West Province, South Africa, near the border with Botswana**

A nasty weekend for the Mercedes Benz gang. After the poaching on Friday, the Vryburg Public Order Policing and Dog Unit hunted down the killers. Shots were fired. The bandits supposedly shot first. One of them was hurt. Two accomplices ran into the wild. The first was arrested the next Saturday in Mokopong, the second on the Sunday night in Morokweng. One or 2 horns (depending on the sources), a stolen firearm, and a very recent luxury car were seized. The injured man is under safe watch at the hospital. His life is not in danger. An immigrant from Mozambique is actively being searched. He is one of the henchmen of the gang.²³



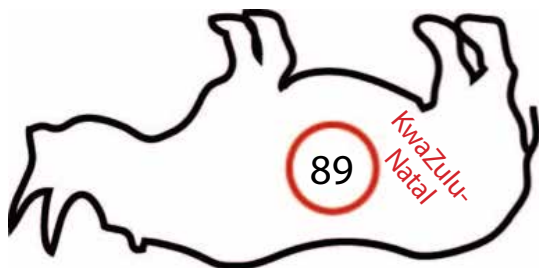
**May 10, 2017
Albert Falls, UMgungundlovu district, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa**

Two carcasses were discovered in the night, very probably poached in the Msinsi Game Reserve near Albert Falls. Vishnu Naidoo, spokesman for the police declared, "This was reported to us on Wednesday night and our crime scene technicians are busy processing the scene."²⁴



**10-11 May, 2017
Hluhluwe-iMfolozi, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa**

Full moon for poachers or full-moon poachers. The first 2 weeks of May were tragic. No less than 23 rhinos were poached in the Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Reserve alone. Only 2 suspects were apprehended in Mpumalanga. All the victims were de-horned. Several gangs had coordinated efforts. 89 rhinoceros have died for their horns since the beginning of the year in Kwazulu Natal. Nearly 50% more than in 2016. Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park is becoming the "Ground Zero" of rhinos, deplors News 24.com.²⁵



**May 14, 2017
Punda Maria, Kruger National Park, Province of Limpopo, South Africa**

Deadly outbreak between rangers and poachers in the north of the Park in the middle of the night. One man was found dead. He would be part of the Mercedes-Benz gang responsible for the death of a rhino near the border to Botswana, a week ago (see p. 75). He would be a former Kruger Park ranger. On site, 2 fire arms, ammunition, bags full of axes, machetes and knives were found. Three suspects vanished into the bush.²⁶



**May 2017
Modimolle, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

Aged 36 and 64, Sakkie Marutle Malaza and Manabeng Michael Makua have been sentenced to 18 years in prison. The affaire began in February 2013 when, in the Bela Bela district, a patrol caught sight of the 2 men sneaking into the Mabalingwe Reserve. Malaza had been immediately immobilized, dropping a hatchet and firearm on the spot. Makua was arrested a little later and 62 rhino or elephant cartridges were taken from his house.²⁷



**May 2017
South Africa**

Innovative medical treatment for a young white female rhino who had an infected horn after a poaching attempt 8 months ago. The initial diagnosis shows encouraging signs. Her recovery is being monitored by Saving the Survivors.²⁸



**May 21, 2017
South Africa**

The Hawks deny that the wife of the Minister of Public Security was implicated in trafficking. Mahlobo, the Minister, was a regular at a hair salon, massage and brothel kept by Guan Jiang Guang, an expert in prostitution, corruption, and scams (see "On the Trail" n°15, p79). Guang is off the radars.²⁹

**May 17 and 22, 2017
Oliver Reginald Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

- As cargo destined for Hong Kong, via Qatar, Doha, passed through the X-ray scanner, customs officers at the Reginald Tambo airport spotted rhinoceros horns. Once opened, the package in question, which was labeled as containing "tea bags," revealed 8 pieces of horn weighing a total of 7.035 kg. They were wrapped in aluminum foil and mixed in among packets of candy and chocolates.³⁰



-Seizure of 13.2 kg of horn cut in pieces. The reconstructed puzzle formed 9 small horns. The victims were young. The flight was destined for Hong Kong.³¹

May 23, 2017
Ofcolaco, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Arrest of 3 men suspected of poaching, thanks to a canine brigade.³²



May 25, 2017
Polokwane Game Reserve, Limpopo Province, South Africa

After preventative de-horning, now there is preventative relocation. The herd of rhinoceros, the main attraction at the Reserve, has been transferred to an unidentified place.

(See "On the Trail" n°2 p. 43, n° 9 p. 64, n°13 p. 72, n°14 p. 64).³³

May 26, 2017
Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Reserve, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Another killing of a female and her baby in the early morning. Four armed poachers overpowered the 2 guards, tied them up, shot the animals and sawed their horns. The guards managed to free themselves and give the alert but the poachers are on the run with their loot.³⁵

GANG

May 20 and 31, June 21, 2017
Grahamstown, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

The Ndlovu Gang is lucky and has good lawyers

Since they were arrested, there have been no more rhinoceroses assassinated with M99. Forty rhinoceroses have been poached using M99 in the province since 2009. The 3 poachers are doing everything they can to be freed on bail. Jabulani Ndlovu, Forget Ndlovu, and Sikhumbuzo Ndlovu are supposedly not related. Two are from Zimbabwe and the third claims to be South African. They were surprised last year near Grahamstown with a fresh horn 72 cm long, a dart gun, and M99, a powerful anesthetic. Sophisticated equipment that, according to the investigation in process, implies their affiliation with a well-organized and skilled team (see "On the Trail" n°13 p.72).

According to their lawyer, Terry Price, they are willing to provide 35,000 rand (\$ 2662 US) in joint bail to be let out on interim release. Terry Price underlines that they have no criminal record and that they are ready to accept all the restrictive clauses, like the confiscation of identification papers or being required to report regularly to the police station near their place of residence. "There was no evidence before court that the men were a flight risk."

The first request to be released on bail was refused last year.

On May 20th, the High Court accepted to free the trio as they await trial. Protests from the rhino-owners and from NGOs were immediate and intense. "They deserve 15 years in prison and we are not likely to see them again in court".

Mai 31st, the threesome were arrested again. New charges are against them and an arrest warrant was delivered by Hoedspruit Court, Limpopo province. They are linked to two other poachings in the district. Surprisingly, they were freed again on the 21th June on a 5000 rand bail, \$ 380 US, even before the investigators could present their new clues at the Bar. The police officers and the rhino owners are appalled.³⁶

FAMILY AFFAIRS

April and June 2017

Louis Trichardt, Limpopo Province, South Africa

The two terrible brothers, Gideon and Niklaas van Deventer, (see "On the Trail" n°16 p. 65) are looking to leave prison on bail. They say that the horn thrown in the ditch from their all-terrain pick-up truck belongs to a certain Ruben. They consider themselves to be police informers, and their lawyer believes that as such, they can be freed on bail.

After a marathon of 5 months during which the brothers hoped to be granted interim release, the judge said no. The tips on the mysterious Ruben, supposed owner of the horn, are not substantial enough for the Deventers to be considered informants. Their long history as repeat poachers does not work in their favor, either. Their accomplice, Onward Muchagowa, could join his family in Zimbabwe without awaiting trial if he was granted early release. He will also remain in prison.

January to May 2017

South Africa

Progress report: 50 arrests in 2 months and seizure of 13 rhinoceros horns, 2 elephant tusks and 19 hunting rifles.³⁸

Since the beginning of the year, 477 rhinos have been poached, including 119 in KwaZulu-Natal.

June 3, 2017

Near Roedtan, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Minus 2 rhinoceros, the horns are gone.³⁹

June 5, 2017

Grahamstown, Province of Eastern Cape, South Africa

Arrest of 3 suspects. They would be involved in 2 poaching acts. A rifle they had in their possession would have been involved in 60 poaching acts.⁴⁰

June 7, 2017

Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Warning: full moon! Minus one rhinoceros at dawn near Satara.⁴¹



June 8, 2017

Gravelotte, Limpopo Province, Afrique du Sud

Warning: full moon! Minus one rhinoceros in Gravelotte.⁴²



June 12, 2017

KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

JP Van Zyl-Roux after 30 years in the anti-poaching field, including the last 10 years in the elite corps of the HAWKS, rewarded with a certificate of merit from CITES is downgraded to an office desk sorting papers. He is confusedly accused of having stocked private weapons in a service room or of having taken part in an attempted murder in conspiracy, in fact crossfire with poachers.

His lawyer, before the final dismissal procedure, speaks of non sense and just as the Elephant Action League does, he believes the gang of poachers is linked to an eminent member of the ANC (African National Congress). "Saving soldier Van Zyl-Roux is a duty if one wants to save the rhinos in Zululand" proclaims Jamie Joseph, spokesperson for Saving the Wild.⁴³

June 11 and 13, 2017

O.R. Tambo International Airport and Kempton Park, Province of Gauteng, South Africa

Arrest and court hearing for Yong, 57 years old, and Sun, 35 years old, after a second inspection of their luggage in the hold of the flight for Istanbul revealed 10 horns for a total weight of 24.96 kg. Value: 5 million Rand, that is \$ 380,300 US and \$ 15,240 US per kilo.⁴⁴



June 12 and 13, 2017

Nkangala and Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Given away by locals, 2 men with clothes covered in blood were arrested in the early morning by the anti poaching unit in KwaZulu-Natal, 2 km outside the Park. They admitted to having killed a rhino and led the agents to the spot where they hid the horn. The canine unit is in search of the gun and axe.⁴⁵

FAMILY AFFAIRS

June 13 and 23, 2017

Pretoria, Gauteng Province, South Africa

There are 1800 charges against Groenewald and company. The lift of the moratorium on the domestic trade of rhino horns (see pages 73-74) could lead to many of his charges being dropped. This legal flip-flop will have retroactive effects. Consequently, the High Court of Pretoria has again postponed the trials of Dawie Groenewald, his spouse and of his partners in crime.

The trial of Hugo Ras, another kingpin of the rhino mafia, has been postponed for the same reasons.

The Groenewald brothers are bailed out for 50.000 rands (\$ 3850 US) for Danie and 10,000 (\$ 770 US) for Janneman.

Both their passports are in the hands of national police and Interpol (cf. next page).⁴⁶

June 14, 2017

OR Tambo International Airport, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Seizure of \$ 456,000 US in the form of 28.7 kg of horns, representing \$ 16,000 per kg. They were covered in wax to throw off the canine unit. A Vietnamese citizen was arrested.⁴⁷

June 14-15, 2017

Thula Thula Private Game Reserve and iSimangaliso Wetland Park, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

-**Thula Thula** - Dehorning by chainsaw. The 2 resident-rhinoceroses, 8 years old, were first anesthetized. The poachers around Thula Thula are extremely violent and will do anything for a couple of grams (see "On the Trail" n°16 p 67.) Horns regrow. To be a deterrent, dehorning must be repeated every year.

-**iSimangaliso**. Identical operation for 2 resident-rhinoceroses. The horns were safely tucked away in an unknown place.⁴⁸

June 16, 2017

Great Fish Nature Reserve, Western Cape Province, South Africa

By tracking in the early morning suspicious tracks in the Great Fish Nature Reserve, rangers fell upon a team of poachers who were on the lookout, ready to slaughter a rhino. They uncovered it by following his dropping. Refusing to turn it in and to respond to warnings, they engaged in a shooting with the rangers. One of the poachers was hurt in the leg and in the arm in response. Sydney Malose, Mozambican citizen, was arrested in possession of a .375 caliber firearm with a silencer, although his

two accomplices were able to escape. Brought to the emergency room at the Frere Hospital of East London, handcuffed to his bed and theoretically watched by a police officer, he succeeded in escaping on the 23rd of June. Only a bolt cutter was found. According to Pelham Jones, chairperson of the Private Rhino Owners' Association, "[...] it is totally demoralizing to those dedicated policemen and women, and anti-poaching members fighting the bloodiest poaching crisis this country has ever seen."⁴⁹



June 18, 2017
Gravelotte, Province of Limpopo, South Africa

Men with the full behaviour and outfit of poachers were caught inside Gravelotte Ranch. Guards called out the usual summons and the suspects fired back. Two were seriously wounded by the aftershots. The 3rd disappeared into the bush. Police say he has been identified. A .375 caliber rifle, a silencer, a 9 mm gun, ammunition and 4 cell phones were found on site.⁵⁰

June 19, 2017
GANG
Wychwood, Province of Gauteng, South Africa

A workshop for cutting and polishing horns was closed down in Robinia and 3 suspects arrested. A horn worth an estimated 500,000 rand (\$ 38,000 US) was seized, along with a skull and bones supposed to belong to a lion. A 48-year-old woman and 2 men aged 30 and 40, all from China, also had a stolen Kia car and 47 7.65mm calibre bullets. Two other vehicles were seized and also some drugs.⁵¹



June 20, 2017
Camperdown, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Maxine, an 11 year-old female, orphan raised by Natal Lion Park agents, was found dead and dehorned, killed with a bullet to the head during her sleep. The killer or killers acted at dawn. Maxine, a white rhino, was a Park icon.⁵²



FAMILY AFFAIRS
June 20, 2017
Polokwane, Province of Limpopo, South Africa

The Groenewald brothers (see "On the Trail" n°6 p. 61, n°7 p. 71-72) are entangled in Interpol's nets. The United States wants to question them. Their arrest comes one week after the Dawie trial has been postponed for the n-th time. He is accused along with his ex-wife and 9 other people of hundreds of breaches of the law regarding rhino hunting and international trafficking in their horns. Twenty six rhino corpses dehorned were exhumed from the grounds of their ranch in Musina.

The United States accuse him and his brother Janneman of having directly sold in dedicated salons like the Great American Outdoor Show in Harrisburg 11 illegal hunting permits for \$ 15,000 US each and having swindled the hunters by for example depriving them of the right to keep the trophies and claiming the rhinos were problem-rhinos, that is to say they were threatening the safety of the ranch personnel and neighbouring populations. The Minister of Justice of the United States also accuses the Groenewald brothers of money laundering and bank fraud on the American soil or from the American soil. Even if the Hawks' spokesman says that crime has no borders, lawyer's brothers, Henni Erwee would be filing an urgent application in the North Gauteng High Court in Pretoria to rescind the Interpol international arrest warrants. "It makes sense to finalize pending cases here before proceeding with any applications for extradition."⁵³

June 20, 2017

Nelspruit, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa

Conviction of a torturer, sentenced to 16 years in prison. The bullet forensics proved that the rifle seized from Makhubele's hands fired the mortal shot that killed a Kruger Park rhino on 31 March 2013. Then the head of the victim still alive was taken to with an ax, ridden of its eyes, nose and jaws. Before being terminated, the martyr roamed in the savannah like a ghost letting out dismal screams.⁵⁴



June 22, 2017

Near Lephalale, Waterberg District, Limpopo Province, South Africa

A flock of vultures triggered the manhunt. Three corpses, with their horns amputated, were found. The poachers remain impossible to find.⁵⁵

REPEATED OFFENSE

June 26, 2017

Madikwe Game Reserve, North West Province, South Africa

The mystery is solved. Three men are being interrogated. An ex-agent from the SAPS (South African Police Service) could soon join them. He served as a driver for the poachers and brought them food during their campaign.

The chase began on Saturday 24 June during the night. That night, poachers are suspected to have killed 3 rhinos. The Madikwe anti poaching unit neutralized 2 suspects on Sunday. With help from K9, a .303 calibre rifle with a silencer, a machete and a set of cell phones were found.

One of the men, Malema, 43, has already been convicted in 2014 for the same crime and sentenced to 8 years in prison, but he had been released on parole in 2016. Another who said to be named Balate would be from Mozambique and the 3rd is one of the Madikwe Game Reserve guards. He is strongly suspected of having provided very useful information to the 2 killers on the rhinos' location and the hours at which the patrols do their round. They will appear in first instance court during July and as usual will request bail.⁵⁶

June 27, 2017

Pongola, Zululand District, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

At sunrise, the Sedan was lurking in the Pongola protected area known for its rhinos. It was stopped in its way by the SAPS.

Inside there were a firearm with a silencer, ammunition, axes, knives and 2 suspected poachers including a police officer. After consulting the files, it turns out the rifle had been stolen in Pretoria in November 1996.⁵⁷

NAMIBIA

Mid-April 2017

Namibia

A very sad week. Petrus Amaalwa was found hanging from the ceiling in his hut. Joseph Tomas was found hanging from a tree, in a green fishing net. The lieutenant Petrus Mutako Damaseb and soldier Isak Steven Omeb were intercepted at a gas station, with 2 horns in their possession, freshly cut and wrapped in aluminum foil.⁵⁸

June 2, 3, 5, 7, 2017

Khorixas, Kunene Region, Namibia

Arrest and release under bail refused for 4 men indicted for rhinoceros poaching and for 3 of them, attempted murder, carrying prohibited weapons, and illegally hunting a protected species.

In the early hours of Saturday June 3, the car was stopped by a roadblock. Three passengers ran and after a warning shot, fired back. The exchange of shots did not cause any deaths or injuries to the poachers or police officers. A gemsbok (*Oryx gazella*) body was found in the trunk of the car. The last two fugitives were flushed out of the brush before sunset. The 4 men had the intention to poach 2 black rhinos and were dissuaded by the flyover of an anti-poaching unit helicopter. Monday, the first hearing for their release was refused because of the absence of an Oshiwambo interpreter. A part of Namibia speaks Oshiwambo.

The anti poaching news is loaded around Khorixas. Three men ages 24 to 60 were tried on Friday June 2 for poaching a zebra. The 12 of June they were set free under a bail of 1500 Namibian dollar each (\$ 115 US).⁵⁹

June 21, 2017

Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia

At the homes of Lu and Chen, there were 5.5 kg of horns (see "On the Trail" n°16 p. 69). They had both been freed on bail of 330,000 Namibian dollar (\$ 25,100 US) after 2 and a half months of detention on suspicion. Only Lu came to the court hearing to testify as a part of the investigation. Chen is now the object of an arrest warrant and his bail will be permanently attributed to the State if he does not reappear by July 5. Lu has lived in Namibia for 16 years. Chen had a tourist visa.⁶⁰

June 23-25-30, 2017

Etosha National Park, Kunene Region, Namibia

-Airbound surveillance leaves no doubt. Eight rhino carcasses were spotted between 23 and 25 June in and around the Etosha National Park. Sixteen rhinos since the beginning of the year and 16 elephants.

-Poaching of a pregnant female estimated by the ranch owner worth 600,000 Namibian dollar (\$ 462,000 US).⁶¹



Minus 17 rhinos since the beginning of the year.

SWAZILAND

Mbabane, Swaziland

No release on bail for Chen Beisun and Hasiao Chen Hao, 2 Taiwanese caught red-handed smuggling 24 or 31 pieces of rhino horn (depending on the sources) at the King Mswati III Airport (see "On the Trail" n°16, p. 70"). The total weight of the load was 26.37 kg. The retail price value is estimated by the Swaziland media to be \$ 2.2 million US (\$ 83,400 US/ kg).

The victims in Swaziland generally have their horns cut off very cleanly. No losses. Expert work (see "On the Trail" n°16, p. 65).

The two Taiwanese suspects are in cahoots with Mawillis Shiba (alias Dragon or Drago) and Dan Nkosi, two "wanted men," who have escaped to the big neighboring country, South Africa.⁶²

June 10, 2017

Hlane Royal National Park, Swaziland

A dramatic shooting between poachers and the royal Swaziland police helped by rangers from the Big Game Park ended in the death of 3 suspects. The authorities benefited from a tip which said that a team of rhino poachers was preparing to operate in the Hlane Royal National Park. They were discovered by a patrol inside the Park. Intense exchange of shots followed. Two poachers are supposedly from South Africa but no identities have been revealed. "A high powered hunting rifle, axes, a saw, and other items known to be used in poaching rhinos were recovered on the scene," explained Police Chief Information and Communications Officer Khulani Mamba.⁶³



AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

April 27, 2017

University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont, United States of America

The director of the University of Vermont announced reward of \$ 3000 US for any information relating to a horn stolen at the end of April. The horn has been the University's property since the beginning of the 20th century and has been on exhibit for decades in a closed room. The thief used a drill to open the lock. The horn is that of a black rhinoceros, but the documents that accompanied it disappeared in the 50s.⁶⁴



ASIA

CHINA

June 9, 2017

Hong Kong International Airport, China

The 46-year-old man came from South Africa. He was carrying inside tin foil 2,5 kg of horn estimated by customs worth \$ 500,000 HK i.e. \$ 200,000 HK per kilo (\$ 25,000 US). Tests are underway to assure the horns are authentic.⁶⁵



June 10, 2017

Hong Kong International Airport

The 23-year-old man came from Indonesia. He was carrying, in a black bag, 10.5 kg of horns estimated to be worth \$ 2.1 million HK (\$ 270,000 US and \$ 25,714 US/kg). Analyses are currently underway to check that they are genuine.⁶⁶



INDIA

April 17, 2017

Orang National Park, State of Assam, India

Deathly skirmish around midnight. Two poachers killed. Two days later, the investigation leads to a neighboring village at Sanjit Basumatary home where a .303 caliber rifle, a silencer, ammunition and an ax were seized. Sanjit is on the run. A member of his family was arrested.⁶⁷



April 20, 2017

Gorumara National Park, West Bengal, India

Two de-horned rhinos unearthed. We all remember the car accident that took place on March 14, 2017. Three deaths and a rhino horn in the smashed remains of the car (see "On the Trail" n°16, p. 71). According to the information initially reported by "On the Trail," the rhino had been killed in the Kaziranga Park. New clues, and even confessions, lead to another National Park, Gorumara. A survivor of the accident, known as Jacob, has admitted to having poached the rhinoceros in the West Bengal Park. According to the police, the car was heading towards the States of Manipur and Nagaland, and the horn would have been exported to Viet Nam or China, via Burma. Before the poaching, Jacob stayed in a lodge near the Park. The owner and 4 to 5 others were questioned by the police. The Minister of State Forests, Binoy Krishna Burman, was astonished that rhinos could be buried secretly inside the Park. The 2 corpses, one male and one female, had been shot numerous times and then de-horned. One horn was found in the accident, but the second is missing and the suspicions weigh on the collusion with one or more of the Gorumara Park guards. At the very least, the efficiency of surveillance patrols is challenged. The worries are even greater because the most famous rhino in the Park, "Khara Sringa," "he who has the longest horn," has not been seen in several weeks. The Gorumara Park covers 79 km². Rumor has it that since shootings on sight are not forbidden in the Assam parks, poachers will be retreating towards West Bengal.⁶⁸

In Assam State, there is not, strictly speaking, a regulatory incentive for sight shooting on poachers. The order signed by the Secretary of State for Environment and Forest Department on 14 July 2010 specifies that those charged with maintenance of public order related to forest and wildlife protection, conservation and management, may be prosecuted or arrested in case they used their firearms only if the magistrates of the locality come to the conclusion that such use was unnecessary, unwarranted and excessive and such report has been examined and accepted by the government.

April 2017

Churachandpur, Manipur State, India

Good deals for poachers. Churachandpur, in the State of Manipur, replaces Dimapur in the State of Nagaland. The city profits from the aging of the horn mafia in Dimapur. A new generation of poachers and traffickers has set up shop in Churachandpur, considered safer and situated only 20 km from Myanmar. The smuggling road between Dimapur and China that goes through Nepal and the Himalayas is more and more risky, and is going forsaken in favor of the Manipur-Myanmar-China route.⁶⁹

April 23-25, 2017

Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India

Discovery of a body, horn cut off. An empty .303 caliber cartridge was found next to it.

It is the 3rd to be poached since the beginning of the year in the Park, classified as a UNESCO world heritage site (see February 14 and March 14, "On the Trail" n°16, p.17).

Two days later, 6 inhabitants of the neighboring village of Bohikhuwa were arrested and ten .303 cartridges were seized. The ballistics investigation is currently underway.⁷⁰

April 29, 2017

Nagaon District, State of Assam, India

Seven days later, on a cross road, in a small restaurant, the Nagaon Police acted on a tip from WCCB (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) and arrested 6 men, seized 2 motorcycles, cellphones, drugs, and a horn weighing about a kilo. Arun Saikia and Ranjan Jyoti Saikia were to meet with clients or intermediaries. The horn is estimated at 2.2 million rupee (\$ 34,000 US).⁷¹

Sunday April 30, 2017

Modajir Tapu, Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India

Another de-horned rhino has been found, a male, in the north of the Park.⁷²

April 30, 2017

Nagaon District, State of Assam, India

Arrest by Nagaon police of Rahimuddin, Iman Ali and Abdul Rashid, rhino poachers.⁷³

May 16, 2017

Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India

The Minister of the environment of Assam wants all anti-poaching initiatives taken by the government to be known by the public. Sanctions are re-enforced, but that's not all. 423 additional forest rangers are being deployed. In the conclusion of his answer to the People's Chamber (Lok Sabha), he said that only one case of rhino poaching has occurred so far this year in the Kaziranga Park, compared to 18 during 2016, and that 10 poachers have been arrested so far, compared to 59 in 2016. He pointed out that special Courts have been created.⁷⁴

In March, the NGO Survival, that defends the rights of tribal peoples, called on 131 travel agencies in 10 countries, asking that they boycott Kaziranga, the other large State Park in Assam, as long as shootings on poachers on sight remained authorized. This appeal is based on a BBC documentary according to which the guards are authorized to shoot without orders and without being in a situation of legitimate self-defense. The Park director, Satyendra Singh, debunked the accusations of the BBC, "There is no shoot-on-sight policy, only legal immunity for poor forest guards who do a very difficult job." Between 2005 and 2015, 127 rhinos and 67 poachers were killed in the State of Assam.⁷⁵
See also previous page, ref. 68.

May 19, 2017
Jhakkhalabanda, Nagaon District, State of Assam, India

Ali, Sattar, Ali, Haque, Ali and Ainul were furtively approaching the Park in 4 cars with a firearm used for very large prey and the cartridges to go with it.⁷⁶

May 21, 2017
Rupahihat, Nagaon District, State of Assam, India

Rafiqul Islam is again behind bars (see "On the Trail" n°6 p 70, n°7 p 14). Fifteen .303 rifle silencing cartridges were found buried in his hideout.⁷⁷

June 2, 2017
Golaghat District, State of Assam, India

Kutumb was involved in a memorable case of rhino killing, 2 of them, in the Agratoli sector of the Park. That was in 2013. He had managed to escape. Police caught him near Gogamukh on 8 September 2016. He admits he killed 2 rhinos. He has just been sentenced to 7 years prison time by the Golaghat court, one of the 10 specialized tribunals for poaching offenses. The other anti-poaching tribunals are installed in the Jorhat, Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Nagaon, Sonitpur, Barpeta, Cachar, Darrang and Udalguri Districts.⁷⁸



June 19, 2017
Jorhat, Jorhat District, State of Assam, India

Arrest of Jadav Saikia Kutum, who has been wanted for a year due to his presumed involvement in several cases of poaching in the Kaziranga Park. He was in a hotel room. He had several cartridges on him.⁷⁹

June 19-20, 2017
Darrang District, State of Assam, India

In a turn of events that the local press deemed "sensational," but that actually is not, an anti-poaching operation led to the arrest of an agent of the Assam Forest Protection Force. Soleman Ali was assigned to the protection of the Orang National Park. In the same village adjacent to the Park, 2 accomplices were intercepted. Cartridges and a gun were taken. The three suspects admitted that

they were organizing to bring in sharpshooters from Nagaland to take advantage of the rainy season and flooding that push the rhinoceroses to leave the Park and take refuge in the hills.⁸⁰

June 22, 2017
Orang National Park, State of Assam, India

One rhino killed and dehorned near the guards station post in Gaspara, 6 km from the main camp.⁸¹

MALAYSIA

April 7, 2017
Kuala Lumpur international Airport, Sepang, State of Selangor, Malaysia

Acting on a tip, customs officers of the airport, intercepted a package in the free-trade zone, coming from Mozambique via Doha, Qatar, containing 18 horns for a total weight of 51.44 kg. The total was declared as "Obra de Arte", or "Works of Art" in Portuguese. The initial investigation showed that the address of the destination, in the city of Nilai, in the Sembilan Negeri State, was false. One or several accomplices should have intervened in the transportation chain between the airport and Nilai, to redirect the horns to the right place. The value of the seizure is estimated to be 13.6 ringgit (\$ 3,076,000 US, or \$ 59,800 US per kg).⁸²



May 2017
Tabin Wildlife Reserve, State of Sabah, Malaysia

She was in pain. She was 25. She was a victim of skin cancer. She has been finished off. Puntung was incurable. She had been living in captivity for 6 years, in an enclosure on the Reserve. The last 2 Sumatra rhinoceroses are still living, but they are also captive in Tabin. They are past the age of fertility. Once again, a program for reproduction in captivity and saving a species or sub-species collapses.⁸³

NEPAL

April 8, 2017

Chitwan National Park, Chitwan District, Nepal

Poaching of a 14-year-old male. The first in 1071 days (see "On the Trail" n°5, p. 78). Struck in the temple by a bullet. The guards did not hear the shot. The sharpshooter chose the right night. The wind was whistling in the storm. The police were busy with local elections. The employees of the Park and the army were occupied with the transfer of rhinos from Chitwan Park to Shuklaphanta Park. The horn was cut off with a hatchet. The handle broke in two and was found at the scene.⁸⁴

VIET NAM

April 16, 2017

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

A 34-year-old woman and a 21-year-old man arrived on a flight from Africa and were arrested by customs for carrying of 7 fragments of horns (about 5 kg) hidden in their bags amidst electrical appliances and speakers. The seized objects are worth about 6 billion dong (about \$ 264,000 US, i.e. \$ 52,800 US/kg).⁸⁵



April 25, 2017

Noi Bai International Airport, Viet Nam

A 28-year-old woman coming from Yangon in Myanmar was betrayed by the X-rays. In the belongings of Dong Thi Tra, there were 8 pieces of horn, weighing in total 3 kg.⁸⁶

May 8, 2017

Ho-Chi-Minh-City International Airport

Seized in the bags of a 20-year-old Vietnamese man were 1.5 kg of horns hidden in toy boxes. The flight came from Africa. The last wild rhinoceros in Viet Nam was poached in the Cat Tien National Park in 2010.⁸⁷

May 26, 2017

Hoang Mai District, Hanoi, Viet Nam

The horns are real. Nguyen Anh Son says that in the afternoon around 1 p.m. he was approached by 2 unknown persons who followed him home, gave him 2 boxes containing, according to them, buffalo and cow horns, and asked him to keep them at his house until someone came for them. To conclude, they promised to give him 5 million dong (\$ 220 US) for his services. When night fell and

the police came to the door to raid his house on Dinh Cong street, he attempted to escape from the second floor, taking the 2 famous boxes with him. Wasted effort. The police took in 18 horns weighing 13 kg. The operation was successful thanks to the Wildlife Commission of the Ministry of Justice, the environmental police, and the NGO Education for Nature Viet Nam.⁸⁸

June 14, 2017

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

Arrest of a woman, 32, and of a man, 36, of Vietnamese nationality, and seizure of a 4-kg horn, cut into slices, wrapped in aluminum and placed in a ceramic pot, tin cans and a box of cosmetic products. The value of the materials confiscated is estimated to be \$ 352,000 US, or \$ 88,000 US/kg.⁸⁹

EUROPE

GERMANY

April 30, 2017

Straelen, State of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. Border to the Netherlands.

During a routine road check on the A40 Highway, border police discovered a rhino horn in the car of a traveller from Berlin. He claims he bought it for € 5 in a flea market in Belgium. It had been stuffed into a sock. It is worth at least € 17,500.⁹⁰



BELGIUM

Pairi Daiza Park, Brugelette, Hainaut Province, Belgium

April 7, 2017

Preventative de-horning in Belgium. The horns of three rhinoceroses were shortened. The 10 kg of horns were burned in the boiler of one of the steam locomotives that go through the zoo. The de-horning and burning were not monitored by the Belgian authorities. "The de-horning is a unilateral initiative of the zoo," confirms the director Eric Domb.⁹¹

NETHERLANDS

Week of June 12 to 18, 2017

Amsterdam-Schiphol Airport, Province of North Holland, The Netherlands

The wooden statuettes hid 6 kg cut in slices, some of which are stamped. The parcel came from South Africa and was addressed to Laos.⁹²

Laikipia County, Kenya

Cf. "On the Trail" n°16, p.89 "Other news from the front line".

April 23, 2017

Ol Ari Nyiro Reserve, Laikipia County

Kuki Gallmann has been the target of unidentified shooters. Accompanied by KWS agents, she was on an inspection mission after the arson that destroyed two lodges the night before. Kuki Gallmann operates a Reserve of 98,000 acres (39,660 hectares) that has been subject to raids and plunders for several years (cf. "On the Trail" n°6 p. 79, n°7 p. 76, p. 82, n°9 p. 73). First extracted from the ambush sector by helicopter, she was then evacuated by plane to the Aga Khan Hospital in Nairobi. She is now out of danger. Seventy-four years old, Kuki Gallmann is viscerally attached to the Kenyan culture and nature. Living in Kenya since 1972, she is originally Italian and her fanciful life was adapted for film. Ensuring the transition, her daughter Sveva says that 2 guards came from being fired at by 2 trespassers. John Emuria and Joseph Echwa have worked in the Reserve for 3 years. In 3 years, John has been a target 5 times. Once again, the 2 guards are coming off. ¹



June 2 and 19, 2017. Sosian, Northern Laikipia County

Sosian is deciding to suspend hosting tourist. Beginning in March, 3 lodges have been burned by shepherds and a guide was fired to death when he was visiting the ruins on horseback. Since the beginning of the year, 15 elephants have been poached and all of the tusks have disappeared. The hole-ridden and roughly cut up bodies of Grevy zebras (*Equus grevyi*, Appendix I), impalas (*Aepyceros melampus*), hartebeests (*Alcelaphus buselaphus*), are widely dispersed and are giving evidence of hard times and misery that are spreading in Laikipia county and are at risk to spread beyond. In the Sosian Reserve, ivory is cut from elephants but sandalwood is also cut (*Brachyleana hutchinsiisur*). The poached wood is bought by a dealer in Somalia and is routed by truck to Baringo 350 km away without the least incident with the police. Some people say that sandalwood is exchanged for arms and ammunition. ²



.../...



Equus grevyi



Aepyceros melampus



Alcelaphus buselaphus

May 29, 2017

Ol Pejeta, Laikipia County, Kenya

In quick succession, the Ol Pejeta private Reserve lost 2 black rhinoceroses. The horns had been cut off. A poacher was killed by security forces. Ol Pejeta extends over an area of 360 km². The Reserve harbors leopards, elephants, buffalos, lions, black and white rhinoceroses. Until 2004, Ol Pejeta was a livestock breeding ranch inherited from the English colonization. The ranch was then bought by an organization based in the United Kingdom, Fauna and Flora International, with the financial support of the ARCUS Foundation. The model of ecological, economic, and social development of this protected area until 2020 is supported by the admission fees of national and international tourists, the sharing of land with local breeders, the development related to the local economy and the improvement of the standard of living in rural communities. Ol Pejeta is managed in cooperation with the State and KWS, whose common objective is to maintain plant and animal biodiversity, to safeguard the future of endangered species, and to make Kenya and its resources sound prosperous so that it becomes a hub for tourists, naturalists, and scientists. In a sense, Ol Pejeta can be considered as a social and environmental experiment.



"There is a need to ensure there is a more productive use of these lands" said Raila Odinga, the leader of the opposition on the eve of the general elections, August 8, 2017. He would have promised to dismantle all of the private ranches operated by the whites.

On the local radio Seria FM in the Massai language, the very influential district representative for Northern Laikipia, Mathew Lempurkel, representing the nomad breeders of the Samburu tribe, incited them to register to vote by finishing his speech with "As long as I am a representative, nobody will go short of grass in Laikipia North. Here there is no private land."

Ol Pejeta, which the press said a couple months ago is as well protected as a nuclear plant is nonetheless worried for the chimpanzee sanctuary which, after the defection of that in Burundi, takes in orphans from central Africa and in zoos individuals within war zones, the last known being the famous rescued of Duhok in Iraq ("On the Trail" n°15, p 49).³

The last 3 Northern white rhinoceroses face poaching and sterilization.

The fate of 2 females and a male transferred to Ol Pejeta in 2009 from the Czech zoo Dvur Kralové (cf. "On the Trail" n°16 p 59) is not reassuring. They are not radically protected from poaching attempts and the prospect of having progeny is compromised if not impossible. Sudan 42 years, originally from Sudan no longer has enough sperm. Najin, 26 years, Sudan's daughter, is hurt on her paws and cannot support pregnancy, and Fatu the daughter of Najin and the grand daughter of Sudan has a malformed uterus that has rendered futile all attempts based on Medically Assisted Reproduction out of frozen sperm from 11 white rhinoceroses who are now dead. The pretense to save animal species from hunting, the greed and shortsightedness of humans translates today to a new scientific fad. A certain Thomas Hildebrandt, from the Research Institute for Zoos and Wildlife in Berlin wishes to take ovum from Fatu and Najin and the frozen sperm from their anonymous counterparts to develop embryos in test tubes and implant them in the uteruses of some Southern white rhinoceros surrogate mothers.⁴



Ceratotherium simum

Rhinos and Elephants

AFRICA

MALAWI

April 2017

Kamuzu International Airport, Lilongwe, Malawi

Upset at KIA. Eight people arrested. Two of them are policemen. Six work for airport logistics.

- 29 January 2017, 39 kg of rhino horns were seized in China at the Pudong airport. The contraband had been loaded at KIA on a South African Airways flight.

- 13 March, 119 kg of rhino horns were seized in Viet Nam at the Hanoi airport. The loot had been loaded at KIA on a Kenya Airways flight.

- 7 March, 330 kg of raw ivory were seized at the Bangkok International Airport. The contraband had been loaded at KIA.

Malawi would be the latest find in trafficking to export fraudulently towards Asia. "Proof is, says the Government, We have less than 10 rhinos here."¹



ASIA

CHINA

May 22, 2017

Lianyungang, Province of Jiangsu, China

Four sentences for sale and purchase of made in ivory and rhino horn items to one year and 8 months prison and 6 months prison time, and fines worth 60,000 yuan (\$ 8850 US), 35,000 yuan (\$ 5200 US) and, 5000 yuan (\$ 740 US).²



VIET NAM

REPEATED OFFENSE

FAMILY AFFAIRS

April 27-28, 2017

Hanoi - Xuan Tin, Province of Thanh Hóa, Viet Nam

Trafficking big boss, Nguyen Mau Chien, arrested. In his house, the police found raw ivory, rhino horns, several frozen baby tigers, carved ivory and other remains of protected animal species. He was arrested in 2007, in Tanzania, and condemned for transporting and attempted smuggling of



wildlife products. He is originally from the Thanh Hoa province where he raised tigers. He began his business by selling fake tiger bones and got rich by buying young tigers of illegal origin. In the last 5 years, he redirected his efforts towards Africa, concentrating on rhino horns and ivory, as well as pangolin scales. Multiple seizures in the ports of Hai Phong, Da Nang, and Ho-Chi-Minh-City in 2015 and 2016, appear to be related to Chien's network. He was arrested immediately after 2 of his accomplices were arrested in the Hanoi train station. They were carrying more than 30 kilos of horns.³

Bad spell for Mau Chien. At the end of May, a 13-year-old boy was seriously injured by one of his farm tigers on a year-end school trip. The 2 tiger cubs found in a freezer at his home in Hanoi came from the same breeding farm. It is not exactly to this type of conservation that the authorities of the province of Thanh Hóa refer to issue the license for tiger breeding. Mau Chien embezzlements give animal protectors a new opportunity to demand the closure or recovery of tiger farms suspected as a whole of fueling the traffic of bones and meat. (See "On the Trail" n°11 p. 49, n°13 p. 60, n°15, p. 64 and n°16 p. 54). In 2007, there were 7 tiger farms throughout the country; there are 13 today.

EUROPE

UNITED KINGDOM

April 5, 2017

Watford, Hertfordshire County, United Kingdom

Allawi Abbas was charged with making sales proposals in September 2016 for 3 rhinoceros horns, 2 elephant tusks, and 4 hippopotamus tusks.⁴

Elephants

Tuskers and supertuskers disappear one after the other. The genetic heritage of the African species impoverishes and tusks on equal age will shorten according to the experts.

Ivory price trend on the Asian market is going downward. It is too early to say whether this is a long term or temporary decrease.

Despite the strengthening of sanctions in almost all countries of the pachyderm's natural range, poaching and connected cruelties don't diminish. In the Kruger Park it is increasing.

The survey during this quarter shows two new examples of tricks in ivory traffic. An official UNICEF car was used for smuggling between Kenya and Uganda, and a Chinese "tourist" used central processing units to pass 61 kg of ivory.

The African elephant, *Loxodonta africana*, is listed in CITES Appendix I, except populations from South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe which are in Appendix II. The Asian elephant, *Elephas maximus*, is listed in Appendix I.

"On the Trail" n°17
Black market raw ivory quotation
from media or official sources

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Africa	Kenya	965	4
		972	11
	Malawi	1777	12
		2000	14
	Uganda	107	23
	Tanzania	3347	31
Zambia	2500	38	
Asia	China (Hong Kong)	1886	76
		2570	80
	India (Assam)	635	86
	Indonesia	1876	95
	Viet Nam	612	109

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

April 28, 2017

Tseikuru, Kitui County, Eastern Province, Kenya

Two arrests and seizure of 117 kg of raw ivory. The men in question, George Njeru Mutithi and Abdi Ibrahim Arow would be supplied by a certain Osman Abbas, a shepherd whose herd grazes in the Meru National Park. The ivory had recently been "harvested".¹

From April 24 to 30, 2017

Counties of Meru, Kitui and Makueni, and Runyenjes, Embu County, and Nairobi, Kenya

For a week, the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) coordinated anti-poaching operations. Seizure of 24 elephant tusks weighing a total of 191 kg, 33 kg of bush meat, flashlights, and rustic arms. 18 interrogations.²

May 5, 2017

Kenya

A tusker hit in the leg by a lance was saved by the veterinarian Njoroge, who arrived in the area by helicopter, and took the projectile out. By chance, it had gone in just above the knee joint. Antibiotics were administered to the victim. Green clay was applied on the wound. The prognosis is favorable.³

May 9, 2017

Eldoret, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya

Seizure of 30 kg of ivory: 3 million shilling or \$ 28,995 US (i.e. \$ 965 US/kg). Three arrests.⁴

May 13 – May 25, 2017

Meru National Park and Bisanadi National Reserve, Meru and Isiolo Counties, Kenya

Thanks to the cooperation of the chiefs of villages and venerable elders in local communities, the tusks were returned to KWS a few days after some shepherds had discovered poached elephants. The delinquents are known. They are on the run.⁵

Week of May 29, 2017

Kenya

Homage by Save the Elephants: "It is with sadness that we report the death of the young male elephant we treated for a gun shot injury to his leg on May 11. He was a 9-year-old son of Cheyenne, the current matriarch of the family named after the Native Americans. He was treated for his injuries but unfortunately his front leg had been broken."⁶

End of May- Beginning of June, 2017

Kenya

Six arrests and 2 seizures thanks to the cooperation of Big Life and KWS.

-Four tusks, weighing a total of 67 kg, one arrest.

-25 kg of raw ivory, 5 arrests.⁷



June 5, 2017

Mariakani, Kaloleni and Kinango Districts, Coast Province, Kenya

The hidden bags contained 3 large tusks for a total weight of 70 kg. Genetic tests will be made to determine their origin. Three suspects will appear before court. The Mombasa port is 35 km away.⁸

June 17, 2017

Makindu, Makueni County, Kenya

Four indictments for illegal possession of 2 tusks worth \$ 15,440 US. They had been arrested a day earlier in Kibwezi.⁹



**April 24, May 5 and 27, June 2017
Mombasa, Mombasa and Malaba County, Busia County (border to Uganda), Kenya**

Following the seizure in Singapore in March 2014 of one ton of raw ivory coming from the Democratic Republic of Congo, via Uganda and Kenya, the investigation coordinated by the Lusaka Agreement Task Force has led to several decisive arrests:

- James Njagi, Inspector for the KRA (Kenya Revenue Authority). As such, he inspected the container before departure from the Mombasa Port and didn't signal any defect in the supposed "coffee cargo".

- James Orech. A commissioner in charge of the customs formalities within the Patana company.

- Sila Ndolo Kinen, a Patana employee.

The 3 men were released on bail paid in cash of \$ 1900 US coupled with a surety bond of the same amount.

- Jumbah Maheno Gaylor. He schemed to avoid that the container seized in Singapore be put through the scanner in Mombasa port.

- Justin Wesenga. He took part in placing the ivory in the container in Kampala, Uganda, before driving to Mombasa.¹⁰

The Lusaka Agreement on Cooperative Enforcement Operations Directed at Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora federates 7 Eastern and Southern African Countries.

June 27, 2017

Nairobi, Nairobi County, Kenya

Abdinur Ibrahim deemed the gang leader and his 5 companions have been arrested. At their home, 216 kg of raw ivory estimated at \$ 972 US/ kg were cut and wrapped ready to depart for Hong Kong. The buyer would have already paid 50% of the price as an advance before delivery. In a latter phase a certain Ahmed Mohamud Salah alias Gedi, a Somalia citizen, was arrested at the Namanga border control. He would be the middleman between the ivory sellers and the buyers in Asia. The investigation is in progress, the ivory would be from the Democratic Republic of Congo.¹¹

MALAWI

April 14, 2017

Mchinji, Malawi

He is 24 years old. He wanted to sell a tusk weighing 1 kilo, taken from a baby elephant, at the price of 1,290,000 kwacha (\$ 1777 US).¹²



April 28, 2017

Chigwirizano, Lilongwe, Central Region, Malawi

Arrest of Banda, 29 years old, and Mbewe, 60 years old, and seizure of a pair of tusks.¹³

May 10, 2017

Mchinji, Mchinji District, Central Region, Malawi

Arrest of a young man 15 km from the dividing line between Zambia and Malawi. The trafficker was uncovered by the Wildlife Crimes Investigation Unit (WCIU).¹⁴

26 years old, 9 tusk sections, 27 kg in total, \$ 2000 US/kg. He was denounced by a person with "good intentions". Experts confirm it is ivory.



June 28, 2017

Lilongwe International Airport, Central Region, Malawi

Arrest of Mady Conteh, a 34-year-old Gambian, for having meddled in contraband of 330 kg of ivory in Thailand during the month of March. See "On the Trail" n°16 p. 87.

The 330 kg of sliced tusks correspond to 200 elephants. Conteh worked in logistics for KIA (Kamuzu International Airport). Malawi wants to get rid itself of its bad fame of being an ivory and other wildlife products hub. From 2010 to 2015, there was less than one smuggler arrested per month and sentences, when there were any, usually summed up to about a \$ 40 US fine. In 2016, arrests have increased and sentences average around 4 years prison time without any possibility of an alternative fine.¹⁵

MOZAMBIQUE

April 20, 2017

Nampula, Province of Nampula, Mozambique

Seizure of 3 raw tusk sections in a bus line linking the Sofala central province to Nampula. Four suspects, 3 of whom work for the transport company - the 4th from Guinea is considered the "brain" of the gang- are being questioned by the town police's 1st squadron.¹⁶

May 3, 2017

Mozambique

Since April 2016, 763 kg of ivory has been stolen from protected stocks. In the last incident, the thieves got in through the roof. These misappropriations of seized ivory were disclosed by the Criminal Investigations Services and the National Administration of Conservation Areas.¹⁷ Cf. theft of rhino horns in Zimbabwe, page 73, ref. 6.

Saturday 20 and Sunday 21, May 2017

Chicalaquala, Province of Gaza, Mozambique. Border to Zimbabwe.

Poisoning of at least 94 African white-backed vultures (*Gyps africanus*, Appendix II). In the mass grave 3 were still alive. Only one finally survived. This massacre comes at the worst time for this endangered species. It is nesting and hatching season. This new episode of cyanide or pesticide poisoning is in ricochet killing, fledglings by the dozen. The spot is in the process of being decontaminated.

Poachers consider the vultures as snitches. They fly in circles above elephant corpses and attract the attention of forest rangers and other wildlife surveillance agents. Vultures grouping in the air and on ground are in the way of the killers' teams on the loot in the area. Better exterminate them. Vultures fulfill a useful task. Natural knackers and immune to viruses and bacteria, they are fighting in the wild against bacterial pollution and rabies or anthrax seats.¹⁸

See "On the Trail" n°2 p.59



UGANDA

April 6, 2017

Kampala, Center Region, Uganda

Two traffickers and 20 kg of ivory.¹⁹



GANG

April 28, 2017

Lira, Northern Region, Uganda

The police arrested 7 habitants of Jinja Camp, in the suburbs of Lira. They are suspected of being poachers. Solomon Okello, Favio Ocen, Maxwell Omara, Dennis Epila, Susan Aber, David Omonya, and Jasper Oweka were found in possession of more than 50 kg of tusks ready to be marketed. Their accomplices are on the run.²⁰

Uganda

April 25, 26 and May 13, 2017

Fusion avec 207-042017, 172-042017 & 56-052017

The NGO EAGLE Uganda announces by laconic communiqués the arrest of 5 traffickers with 6 tusks, 4 traffickers with a pair of tusks weighing 70 kg total, the arrest of 3 traffickers with 3 tusks and the arrest of a muezzin and a mosque guard with a pair of tusks. Most of the arrests happen in the north of the country.²¹

May 2017

Murchison Falls National Park, Gulu and Masindi Districts, Uganda

Rescue of a twenty-year-old female elephant. She was limping near a swamp. The Park abounds with traps. Rangers armed with branches lit small fires, working for several hours to force her to move back to the dry savannah. Once out in the open, she was anesthetized. Her front leg was freed from steel wires that had dug into her flesh and the vermin that were living off the wound.²²



May 29, 2017

Bweera, Kasese District, Uganda. Border to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Uganda continues to serve as a transit country for by-products of poaching in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Bwabale Kalambi, 32 years old and Moses Mumbere, 35 years old, were arrested with 27.8 kg of raw ivory worth a local value of \$ 2650 US, i.e. \$ 107 US per kg. They are being held in custody in the Kasese police station.²³



June 2017

Amudat District, Eastern Region, Uganda

"On the Trail" already knows the hearse (n°11 p. 8, n°12 p. 81), the ambulances (n°3 p. 31, n°6 p. 53), the trunks of UN troops (n°4 p. 30), the fake military trucks (n°2 p. 9), but the poachers in Uganda found better: a double cabin UNICEF pick-up given to the government for the promotion of youth sports in the north-eastern province of Karamoja. On the inside, there was no sporting equipment to give to children, but instead 49 kg of ivory in the form of 10 tusks and 2 passengers pretending to be a shepherd and an agricultural worker, and at least one was of Kenyan nationality. The regular driver of the humanitarian vehicle tried to escape at the time of checking. The vehicle had been loaned for the occasion by Joshua Lokapel's health and education advisor. According to the 2 suspects, Lokapel was aware of the contraband.



UNICEF's car was used to transport ivory in secret across the Kenya-Uganda Border. For several months, information had been circling about an ivory traffic between Kenya and the Amudat district in Uganda but this is the first time that facts have been established. This spectacular arrest shows the complicity of high Ugandan government officials and the creativity of traffickers.²⁴



REPEATED OFFENSE

June 21, 2017

Kampala, Kampala District, Uganda

Yekoyada Nuwagaba is a two faced man playing a double game. He has been an advisor to President Museveni for over 10 years. Today the protocol rank places him 42nd on the list. For this he earns 2,370,000 shilling a month (\$ 672 US). At the same time Nuwagaba is a crook and a merciless trafficker. -In 2006, Maku a big pangolin killer (see "On the Trail" n°8 p. 42, n°9 p. 31) and crooked exporter of scales and turtles names him as an accomplice. -In 2008, Navina Exports for which he is the CEO sends 300 monkeys for animal testing to the Chumakov Institute in Moscow with an expired permit.

-In February 2017, UWA agents suddenly in possession of solid information went as potential buyers to negotiate a stock of illegal ivory at Nuwagaba's house in the Makindye neighbourhood. When they reached a deal, \$ 227,000 US, the UWA guys showed their badges.

Compromizing documents were later seized in another of President Museveni's advisor's homes. The case hasn't received much publicity and Nuwagaba was let out on bail after the first auditions under the excuse weak health and old age, with nevertheless obligation to present himself weekly to the police station. Since then he cannot be found, hasn't returned to any of his usual homes and has cut all his known cell phones lines. His cupidity and talents in fraud have made him reappear in an unexpected manner. The husband of the traditional practitioner Mama Fina was assassinated in broad daylight in Kampala in November 2016, killed at short range in his car, next to his personal driver. There is strong upset in the capital. Mama Fina's powers are acknowledged by all the healers in the country. Two months later, Nuwagaba contacts her, tells her he knows who her husband's assassins are, claims she is also under threat and asks her as a faithful old friend to give him 2 million shilling (\$ 570 US) to garanty her safety. After receiving the ransom, Nuwagaba gave no more sign of life nor did he tell Mama Fina what steps had been taken at the highest level to arrest her husband's murderers and prevent her in turn from falling victim. At the end Mama Fina finally told of Nuwagaba's dealings to her friend Mzee, otherwise known as the President Muzeweni. Nuwagaba was arrested at 7 p.m. coming out of a work meeting with the Prime Minister.²⁵

End of June 2017

Kampala, Kampala District, Uganda

Forgers and traffickers share a common cause. Seizure of 6 tusks and blank sheets to print fake bill.²⁶



TANZANIA

April 7, 2017

Dar es Salaam region, Tanzania "Queen of Ivory"

Mrs. Yang Feng Clan, an interpreter and business woman who is well-integrated in Tanzanian high society, is still in prison. She is accused of organizing a massive tusk contraband destined for China (see "On the Trail" n°15, p 90).

One of her presumed accomplices claims to have been tortured in April 2014 during the interrogation and was admitted to a hospital for urgent care. He is pressing charges. The 2 police officers deny any violence. The confessions were spontaneous, they say. The hearing lasted about one hour and 30 minutes.²⁷

April 11, 2017

Kimara Temboni district, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

During the full-scale raids in different neighborhoods of Dar es Salaam, the police arrested 2 men in possession of 2 pieces of ivory. The suspects were identified as Faith Muzo, 55, and Hassan Abdallah, 32, residents of the capital. They have been put into detention as they await their trial.²⁸

April 12-18, 2017

Tunduru District, Ruvuma Region, Tanzania

-Around midnight, a poacher who was well-known in the sector was arrested with 2 tusks and an elephant tail, in a village near Ruvuma.

-A man suspected of poaching was taken to the Songea Police Station. He had 2 firearms on him.

-The Tunduru district suffers from poaching and firearms trading; the two activities feed off one another. Mozambique is just around the corner. The PAMS foundation (Protected Area Management Solutions) has given local authorities 2 patrol planes to monitor the movements of the poachers. The territorial conflicts between men and elephants seems to be worsening in the area. The coordinator of PAMS advises residents to plant chillies around their houses. "It is the safest way to intimidate elephants," says Mr. Maximilian James.

-Two men arrested and 3 tusks seized near the border with Mozambique.

-Conviction of Talika Saidi and Mkwepu Izulu to 7 years in prison for the possession of 4 tusks.

-Arrest of 4 men. According to the preliminary investigation, they killed 2 elephants on April 18th in the Selous Reserve, 3 times bigger than Kruger Park. The tusks have disappeared and no one knows where.²⁹



May 3, 2017

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

His name is Samwel Bwandu and he is 38 years old. He has been sentenced to 20 years in prison for having, between the 1st of January and the end of June 2015, possessed and transported 8 elephant tusks, estimated at a local value of 60 million shilling (\$ 30,000 US). His presumed partner in the business, Kidamisi Kidanami, alias Hamis Mang'ati, was acquitted. According to the new penal code, Bwandu could avoid prison if he manages to pay a fine 10 times higher than the value of the trophies he illegally possessed, the equivalent of \$ 300,000 US. The investigation file shows that the traffic went on between 2012 and 2015, and is suspected of involving about 60 tusks or tusk parts, with a global value of \$ 450,000 US.³⁰



May 28, 2017

Sesenga, Region of Morogoro, Tanzania

Regional police is looking out for squalls.

After the seizure in a car of 5 bags of cannabis and 60 litres of adulterated beer in another, police arrested M. Linganga Kalinga for possession of 4 tusks for a total weight of 9 kg and total value locally of \$ 30,124 US i.e. \$ 3347 US per kg.³¹

End of May 2017

Tanzania

Okoa Tempo Na Tanzania and Save the Elephants are in favor of the irretrievable destruction of the 118t of ivory most of which comes from seizures in ports, inland borders and on the roads of the country. The Ministry for Natural Resources has just rejected this option. "Our position is clear, that, we are keeping them for scientific research."

Unfortunately such a statement is surely good news for the trafficking diaspora. Thefts and embezzlement from inside the governmental and courtroom vaults by dishonest civil servants or ivory robbers from the outside are common in Africa and in Tanzania. The seized ivory stockpile is supposedly under safe guard in Dar es Salaam. Save the Elephants says it costs \$ 75,000 US per year.³² See "On the Trail" n°5, p. 87, n°6 p. 59

June 14, 2017

Singida, Singida Region, Tanzania

Sentencing of a 46-year-old man to pay the equivalent of \$ 283,000 US or a prison sentence of 20 years for having illegally possessed on the 11 of February, 2017, 3 elephant tusks valuing \$ 283,000 US in the guesthouse "Friends B" in Singida.

For his defense, James Kalenzoe, also known by the name Saidi, insisted on the fact that he was a first time offender and that he had a large family to feed.³³



June 29, 2017

Tanzania

The watchword is to seize and to be honest!

Within the framework of a workshop for public prosecutors and other magistrates to promote awareness on anti-wildlife trafficking issues, Jumanne Maghembe, Minister of Tourism and Natural Resources showed his optimism. "We can win", he says underlining that heavy sentences will await traffickers when caught. Tanzania's Vice-President, Samia Suluhu, urged the honourable assistance to stay away from all attempted corruption schemes and hold high the values of the magistracy. After the meeting, a special operation aiming to confiscate all weapons and poaching equipment was announced.³⁴

ZAMBIA

April 9, 2017

Near Livingstone City, Southern Province, Zambia

A taxi driver in possession of 17 pieces of ivory was intercepted by a roadblock set up by the Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA), in cooperation with the Zimbabwe Parks administration (ZimParks). The vehicle was from the village of Mandiya, 35 kilometers west of Livingstone City, on the Upper Zambezi. Mandiya is a popular place for poachers, supplying porters and canoes under the nonchalant eyes of the local authorities. The inquiry revealed that the tusks were poached during an expedition in Botswana and Zimbabwe. The taxi driver was sentenced to 4 years in prison. This is the first time that the Zambian authorities have taken action against ivory poaching in that region. Following this experience, ZAWA and ZimParks have agreed to carry out joint patrols along the riverbanks of the countries' border, to reduce infiltrations and illegal activities.³⁵



April 13, 2017

Southern Zambezi region, Zambia

The first successful achievement of the new canine brigade. Seizure of 4 sections of raw ivory.³⁶



May 4, 2017

Mumbwa, District of Mumbwa, Central Province, Zambia

Conviction of Mr. Orden Mafuta Nabombwe, sentenced to 5 years prison time. On 27 March 2017, he had been found in possession of 8 kg of raw ivory and 2 large calibre cartridges. He's a former lookout for the Chona village. In 1960 there were 250,000 elephants in Zambia. Now there are a bit more or a bit less than 20,000.³⁷



May 8, 2017

Zambia

Sell or burn, that is the question.

The government stock of ivory is over 52 tons, unless undetected thefts have taken place in the last couple of years. 27.2 tons is considered legal ivory, and 26 tons is illegal ivory. This represents a shortfall of \$ 100 million US, according to government calculations based on the rate of \$ 750 US per kg before the ban on international trade, and on the current price of \$ 2,500 US per kg on the local black market. Mr. Banda Minister of Tourism and Arts does not exclude the possibility of burning the stock.³⁸

Mai 23, 2017

Chingola, Province of Copperbelt, Zambia

Fabricas Chowilupwishi, 27 years old, Congolese nationality, was hiding 83 tusks at home. Chingola is 20 km from the border to the Democratic Republic of Congo. Two escaped.³⁹

ZIMBABWE

April 6, 2017

Zimbabwe

Two ivory sellers arrested. In exchange for illegal ivory, they had asked for a large sum of money from a member of the Matusadona Anti-Poaching Project (MAPP), who reported them to the police. The two men claimed that they could provide more ivory after the first transaction, as well as other wildlife products.⁴⁰

May 2017

Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe

The Constitutional Court postponed the case for procedural defect. The 2 female complainants and their lawyer Tawanda Zhuwarara think it's their right to know the identity of the person who on condition of anonymity denounced them for having 25,9 kg of ivory in the trunk of their car in December 2015. If the Constitutional Court agreed, the investigators will have less chance to catch smugglers.⁴¹

May 10, 2017

Gokwe North District, Gokwe Region, Midlands Province, Zimbabwe



The same weapon was used to kill a female elephant a month earlier. One man was arrested. Two assistants are on the run. Between 2 operations, the poachers often bury their weapons. ⁴²

May 11, 2017

Gokwe district, Midlands Province, Zimbabwe

-Good catch for the Matusadona anti-poaching team: 3 large .303 calibers, a .22 caliber rifle, cartridges, ammunitions and a small amount of ivory. Poachers in the Matusadona National Park have the habit of renting their arsenal from weapon dealers... or from police officers.

- Zengeni Chitekete, police officer, hid clandestine weapons in the police station armory and in his home and rented them to poachers. He also supplied munitions. The origine of this arsenal is unknown. According to rumors, at least a few of Chitekete's colleagues knew of his parallel activities.

In the poaching channel, the armoury link is essential. Not all poachers have a large caliber firearm and ammunition. Weapons are leased or lent in exchange for ivory or other payments in kind. ⁴³



May 16, 2017

Gache Gache, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe

He had been on the run for 2 years. Bruce John, alias Keda, was formally implicated in elephant poaching and in a shooting with rangers. He is suspected to being involved in other types of trafficking, especially stealing weapons. ⁴⁴

Beginning of June 201

Tsholotsho District, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

How do 50 elephants finance the construction of a soccer stadium?

By dying under fire of hunters having paid for hunting permits at Lodzi Hunters thanks to the mediation of Jonathan Moyo, representative for the district and Minister of Education and of Saviour Kasukuwere, ex-Minister of Water, Climate and the Environment. Cf. "On the Trail" n°7 p. 105, n°9 p. 80, n°15 p. 92). ⁴⁵

June 2, 2017

Gonarezhou National Park, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe

The government has handed over management of the Park to the Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) until 2020. The partnership began in 2007. Gonarezhou covers 14,651 km². The Park is home to a viable number of black rhinos.

Since 2011, FZS has given \$ 19 million US to fight against poaching. Surveillance vehicles have been purchased. The fencing was redone. The local communities say that they have been excluded from Park management and its economic advantages. They are not represented in the new Board of Directors, which is composed of 3 FZS members and 3 members of Zimparks. Gonarezhou is accused of being a fortress. "The enclosure is so well sealed that not even a hare could escape." Hares cannot escape but the poachers can enter. In 2016, 11 elephants were shot and killed, and 9 died from cyanide poisoning (see "On the Trail" n°2 p. 2, n°9 p. 64, n°10 p. 55, n°15 p. 92, n°16 p. 96). Hugo Van der Westhuitzen, the project manager from FZS, recognizes the frustrations of the neighboring 30,000 inhabitants of Chiredzi, and claims that parallel to the objectives pertaining to conservation of wildlife, there is a wish to explore different possible options so that local populations can profit from this groundbreaking agreement. FZS is an international conservation organization founded in 1858. FZS focuses on maintaining biodiversity and the conservation of fauna and ecosystems in protected zones and exceptional wildlife areas. ⁴⁶

June 22 and End of June, 2017

Hwange National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

A ranger from ZimParks, Fungai Sibanda, is accused of having hidden in the accommodation provided by his job a rifle and 31 AK47 ammunition. He claims this arsenal was given to him by a colleague, Lameck Sankarwe, arrested on 22 June for having poached an elephant and chopped off the 2 tusks. ⁴⁷

June 28, 2017

Hwange National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Christopher Mutindi is accused of poaching 2 elephants with a .416 rifle. Four accomplices are on the run. After crossfire with rangers, he was thought dead and in waiting for the body to be taken to the morgue they spread to gather fire wood. At their return, Mutindi had vanished but 4 days later he turned himself in and asked to be taken to hospital. He is being kept in pre-trial detention. ⁴⁸

**May 31 and June 5-11, 2017
Hwange National Park,
Matabeleland North Province,
Zimbabwe**

New cyanide attack. Three suspects have been taken in for questioning. They were aged 21, 23 and 27. One of them, Dyker Ncube, succeeded in escaping. At his home, 2 kg of raw Ivory, 100 g of cyanide, a kilo of dagga and bootleg African "gin," known as "thothotho," were discovered under a bed. Eight elephant bodies were identified by helicopter in the Liasha sector. The mortal spots were decontaminated. Buckets of water with cyanide granules, buckets of salt and of sodium cyanide were placed on the elephant's paths. The elephants were lying 100 m from the bait. The tusks had been taken from 3 or 4 of the bodies, according to sources. Most of the bodies were located before the poachers could retrieve their tusks. According to the latest reports, which are unfortunately not final, new poisoning killed 9 adult elephants and a young elephant. Several vultures were intoxicated as well. The tally has not yet been finalized. In addition to cyanide, Paraquat banned in the European Union was used.⁵⁴



**June 29, 2017
Hwange National Park,
Matabeleland North Province,
Zimbabwe**

Shooting on sight at 4 men in the process of ripping off an elephant's tusks. One is dead, another wounded ran away with the 2 others unharmed. Gun shots had been echoing in the main camp area since the early hours of the day until about 4:30 pm. The guards patrol was at their wits end. Four tusks, a .416 calibre rifle and 2 empty cartridges were found on the scene of the tragedy. According to first information yet to be confirmed, the dead poacher was a repeated offender convicted in October and released on bail in waiting for his new trial in appeal.⁴⁹



© Bhejane Trust

SOUTHERN AFRICA

**April 19, 2017
Southern Africa**

1736! The number of CITES permits is published for the year 2017 : 1736 hunting trophies are granted
-1000 to Zimbabwe
-300 in South Africa
-200 in Tanzania
-180 in Namibia
-56 in Mozambique
Viva Botswana!

SOUTH AFRICA

**April – May 2017
Mpumalanga Province, South Africa
The fall of the Tusker Dynasty**

See "On the Trail" n°1 p. 32, n°4 p.79, n°5 p. 91, n°6 p.77, n°13 p.83, n°15 p.101, n°16, p.74.

Timbavati is a private Reserve adjacent to the Kruger National Park. There is no fence in between the two. Timbavati organizes photographic safaris and hunting safaris. Through the Associated Private Nature Reserves, Timbavati just applied to the South African National Parks administration to obtain 11 hunting permits to hunt male elephants, including a specimen whose tusks are of "unlimited weight." The term "tusker" is reserved for elephants that have tusks weighing about 45 kg. There are only a few masters who are privileged by that title (see "On the Trail" n°16, p 74). The "super tuskers," with tusks weighing more than 50 kg, are exceptional. SAN Parks have apparently responded positively to Timbavati's request, but protests are coming from all sides. Experts say that older males are sexually active until the end of their lives. "In nature, matriarchs prefer males over 45 years old to procreate with," says Marion Garai, president of the Elephant Specialist Advisory Group. Another member of this group of experts, Lucy Bates, adds that hunting is not compatible with eco-tourism and that many tourists would be appalled to learn that some of the animals they photographed were shot later to raise revenue. The famous veterinarian Johan Marais, author of 2 books on "tuskers," says that, "They need to be protected at all costs!" "I don't care whether you are talking about Kruger, Kenya, Zimbabwe, or Timbavati - you just cannot issue a permit for a 100 pounder, finish and klaar." The "tuskers" of today are the "super tuskers" of tomorrow. They are indispensable for the future of the species. "If they disappear, the general size of tusks will diminish and the genetic heritage of the species will be modified," says Marion Garai. The rifleless visitors to Timbavati and to the 3 other reserves west of Kruger Park are more than worried, if we judge by their reactions on social media. They are outraged.

At the latest news, the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency refuses permission to shoot the tuskers.⁵¹

May 12, 2017

Malamulele, Province of Limpopo, South Africa

Ivory stolen from an elephant who was wandering out of the Park. He was roaming near Malamulele and rangers decide to shoot him down. Too many people and fields around. In unexplained circumstances, a man then managed to saw the tusks off before the dead elephant was buried, cut up or moved. He was questioned by police and the ivory seized.⁵²

End of May 2017

South Africa

Conservation Action Trust is criticizing the lack of transparency and communication of official figures regarding elephant poaching in Kruger Park, in neighboring parks and in the whole country. The NGO believes that withholding this information prevents public opinion from realizing the ongoing surge of elephant poaching especially in the north of Kruger Park. Official South African statistics count 24 elephants poached in 2015, 46 in 2016 and 11 over the first 3 months of 2017.

Michelle Henley, national director of the research group on living elephants and member of the Elephant Specialist Advisory Group to the government and competent services has sounded the alarm. "We need to take care that elephant poaching does not spiral out of control in much the same way that rhino poaching did a few years back."⁵³

See elephant poaching and Kruger Park "On the Trail" n°5 p. 86, n°6 p. 78, n°10 p. 56, n°11 p. 74

June 22, 2017

Acornhoek, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa

Arrest of Andries Munyai, the tusk was hidden in a wardrobe.⁵⁵



BOTSWANA

April 2017

Shadows and light in Botswana

Botswana, despite having been honoured by Oxford University's Wildlife Conservation Research Unit for being the first country in the world to protect large fauna, is not spared by wildlife corruption. Three agents of Botswana's Directorate of Intelligence and Security (DIS) have just been arrested at a roadblock with inside a travelling bag 2 elephant tusks cut into sections. For their defense, the suspects claim that these tusks are the Service's property used for special missions to infiltrate networks. According to Ira Larivers, anti-poaching specialist in South Africa, it is improbable that "real" ivory be used to lure and trick traffickers and "fake" ivory provided by taxidermists is prepared for such purpose. Usually, the anonymous vehicles used by Intelligence agents are not searched. They only have to prove their identity for the vehicles to be released.

In the present case, the DIS agents, according to the Sunday Star, had been under surveillance for some time. They might be involved in ivory and diamond contraband between Botswana and Zambia. The international network then would export the goods to Tanzania where out of the Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar ports they would be then sent to Asia. A Pilatus PC-12 belonging to the DIS would have several times made a suspicious trip between Botswana and Lusaka, the Zambian capital.

Yet the 3 suspects have been released a few hours later after the incident under the supposed pressure from high up people in Gaborone, the country's capital. Tshekedi Khama, Minister of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism who is the line ministry for the services that made the arrest declared there are no "sacred cows" in the frontline for the protection of the country's natural resources. In other words, no one is above suspicion, arrest or conviction.

The DIS agents are not the only one to be in trouble because of ivory. Colonel Tebo Kilo, director of protocol and public affairs of the armed Forces confirms that 2 soldiers members of an anti-poaching unit have been recently indicted for illegal possession of animal trophies and received disciplinary sanctions.

One can also remember that 3 rhino horns had been stolen from a vault room in Maun (see "On the Trail" n°11 p. 60) and that Gilbert Monnawalesole had been arrested. He worked as an administrative agent in the State warehouse where the trophies were stored. One of his accomplices was a policeman. After the suspects' first court hearing in November 2015, nothing in the judiciary reports can explain what happened next. The judicial inquiry vanished into thin air. Monnawalesole is neither indicted nor discharged. One can only notice that such a smoke screen covers all other similar cases, whether concerning elephant tusks or rhino horns in Southern Africa, Eastern Africa or Western Africa.⁵⁶

NAMIBIA

May 2017

Grootfotein District, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

The Eden Game Farm covers 30,000 hectares. It raises rare and endangered species, and sells wild animals at auctions. The establishment, situated near Etosha Park, received authorization to export 5 elephants, aged 4 to 8, to a zoo in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

The elephants must be first taken from their herds, put in observation in an enclosure and undergo several months of domestication. The social and health damages to the elephant families and the specimens who are subjected to this separation and exile are tackled in "On the Trail," about young elephants that were captured in Zimbabwe and exported, when they survive this ordeal, to China (see "On the Trail" n°15, p.92). The CITES offices in Namibia and the UAE issued CITES export and import permits. The elephants in Namibia are registered under Appendix II of CITES. However, Michèle Pickover, author of the best-selling book "The Rights of Animals in South Africa," underlined that it is illegal to export living elephants for commercial purposes if there is no conservation programme and if the well-being of the animal could be damaged. The director of Eden Game Farm, a Swedish industrialist who is in serious financial difficulty, is under pressure from 35 national and international NGOs led by Humane Society International.⁵⁷

May 24, 2017

Salambala Conservancy, Zambezi Region, Namibia

Seizure of tusks, a blue wildebeest skin (*Connochaetes taurinus*) and his paws. Three arrests, an agent of the Ministry of agriculture and 2 high school students aged 18 and 19. The wildebeest's remains were hidden in the bush. Morgan Sai-Sai regional director of the rangers states that even in winter the services are on 24 hour alert.

"Poaching activities peak during winter because the meat does not spoil quickly, and poachers believe they will not be caught because of the weather."⁵⁸



June 9, 2017

Namibia

Reinforcement of legal measures against poaching and illegal trade of elephant ivory and rhino horns. The maximum fines for poachers have been increased from 200,000 to 10 million Namibian dollar (\$ 65,000 US), and prison sentences from 5 to 10 years. All foreigners, after having expunged their prison sentences for these crimes, will be expelled and banned entering Namibian territory. This new law goes into effect immediately. The announcement was made during the 2nd workshop on wildlife trafficking, organized by the Chinese embassy in Namibia (see "On the Trail" n°16 p69). Chinese businesses based in Namibia have contributed to a fund to fight trafficking. The fund currently has 100,000 Namibian dollar (\$ 7,600 US). The money is destined to help the Namibian government fight against wildlife crime. In 2016, 135 elephant tusks and 36 rhinoceros horns were seized in Namibia, according to official statistics. Most of the suspects arrested in airports or at land borders are of Asian origin.⁵⁹

WESTERN AFRICA

BENIN

March 28, 2017

Parakou, Borgou Department, Benin

The Parakou court of first instance has sentenced 4 traffickers (see "On the Trail" n°16, p 80) to 12 months in prison, a fine of 300,000 CFA Franc (\$ 510 US) each and 15,500,000 CFA Franc (\$ 26,400 US) in damages and interests to pay together. "The application of the law is indispensable to make public opinion sensitive to repression the heightened awareness of sanctions," highlights la Nouvelle Tribune.⁶⁰



COTE D'IVOIRE

May 4, 2017

Near Ferkessédougou, Savanes District, Côte d'Ivoire

Warned of the presence of elephants near the villages Fourouh, Yebelé and Poulo, Water and Forest department agents stumbled on the remains of a feast, braised bones and smoked meat. The baby elephant's head was close by with his little tusks. A man admitted to the killing. The baby elephant would have destroyed his mango orchard. Visit to the orchard totally contradicts the hunter's version. Three accomplices are also referred to the Kokrogo court.⁶¹

CAMEROON

May 23, 2017

Yaoundé, Centre Region, Mfoundi Department, Cameroon

The car was searched in the Bastos quarter. It was coming from Kribi. In a sack of undergarments, the police found 2 sculptures. The driver, age 37, initially claimed that the objects were made of bone. The authorities say it is ivory, after having carefully examined the Schreger lines (see "On the Trail" n°8 p. 82). The trafficker's final destination was Meiganga, in the north of the country, a city of more than 40,000 inhabitants that is becoming a "wildlife flea market" that provides for traffickers of various stripes.⁶²

**GANG
REPEATED OFFENSE**

May 24, 2017

Bertoua, Region of East Cameroon

Thunderous conviction of Aboubacar Hibrahim and Zakary Daouda for trafficking of 160 tusks (see "On the Trail" n°16 p. 80), sentenced to 253 million CFA Franc that is \$ 431,000 US in damages, 3 to 4 months prison time and 5 extra years time if the damages are not paid. Daouda is a repeated offender. He had been sentenced to 6 months prison suspended sentence by the Djoum tribunal for trafficking of 18 tusks.⁶³



GABON

April 21, 2017

Lambarene, Province of Moyen-Ogooué, Gabon

Joint operation led by authorities and the NGO Conservation Justice. The offender is from Mali.⁶⁴

May 10, 2017

Ogooué Ivindo Province, Gabon

Arrest of 11 people, 7 of which were Chinese, following a CAF (Contrôle d'Aménagement Forestier) mission aided by the NGO Conservation Justice. Thousands of m³ of wood were illegally chopped in protected areas. The CAF project is financed by the French Agency of Development in the framework of debt conversion between France and Gabon. Possibly too fruitful in its investigations, the mission of CAF was prematurely suspended. The Gabonese government just signed a commercial agreement with 27 Chinese forestry companies. The exportation of okoumé (*Aucoumea klaineana*) is conceded to Chinese interests. Cf. "On the Trail" n°2 p. 68.

Linked to the mission of CAF, a night roadblock run by the National Agency of National Parks at the entrance of Makokou permitted the intercepting of a truck loaded with a container of mineral water between Franceville and Libreville, the capital. The 2

drivers, Bah Alassane and Kiakité Abddourahmane, from Guinea and Chad, had agreed to bring 60 kg of ivory in the midst of the packs of water as a favor for one of their old acquaintances, Abdarhmane Hamid. The three men were driven to the Makokou prison.⁶⁵

June 7, 2017

Léon Mba International Airport, Libreville, Estuary Province, Gabon

Two nights under watch and compromise fines for 3 Chinese citizens caught in the act of trying to illegally trade chopsticks, combs, and baubles in ivory.⁶⁶

June 2017

Libreville, Estuaire Province, Gabon

He is from Côte d'Ivoire. Seizure of 2 tusks of unknown origin.⁶⁷



REPEATED OFFENSE

June 17, 2017

Makokou, Province of Ogooué-Ivindo, Gabon

20 kg of raw ivory in the hands of this trafficker well known for escaping justice by means of corruption when arrested. His hunting ground is particular. It is the Courts' under seal evidence safe rooms. One accomplice was arrested.⁶⁸



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

GANG

April 14, 2017

Kinshasa, Kinshasa Province, Democratic Republic of Congo

The Congolese Institute for the Conservation of Nature (ICCN), supported by the police, arrested four traffickers and confiscated a dozen kilograms of ivory in a jewelry and trinket workshop. The investigators had been watching the team for several days, and plans to go after the rest of the network.⁶⁹

April 21, 2017

Garamba National Park, Eastern Province, Democratic Republic of Congo

Two rangers died in service. The patrol approached a common and tragic scene of life in the Park. Poachers were busy butchering a poached elephant. A violent shootout occurred. Joël Meriko Ari and Bolimola Afokao leave behind 11 orphans.⁷⁰



REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

REPEATED OFFENSE

GANG

April 4, 2017

Makoua, Cuvette Department, Republic of Congo

A former conservation officer and an accomplice were arrested in possession of 3 ivory tips, weighing a total of 20 kg. Others are on the run. The former conservation officer was fired in 2016 for possession of endangered species and is suspected of being in the trafficking business since 2006. He operated around Etoumbi and Mbomo (in the West Cuvette Department), near the border with Gabon and the Odzala-Kokoua Congolese National Park. A man carrying the “products” and showing them to the clients helped him. They risk five years of prison time.⁷¹

April 6, 2017

Ouesso, Sangha Department, Republic of Congo

Four traffickers, surprised on the February 15, 2017 with 36 kg of ivory, sentenced to 5 years in prison (see “On the Trail” n°16, p. 80).⁷²



REPEATED OFFENSE

Beginning June, 2017

Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of Congo

Sentencing to 5 years prison and a \$ 5000 US fine of Daring Dissaka. “The Daring gang” is directly involved in the case of the 70 kg of ivory seized at the beginning of the year near Pokola, the loggers’ town.



Daring Dissaka, 39, have a lot of experience. As early as 2005, he began harassing elephants and making trafficking connections with Chadians. He

already had been sentenced to prison in 2011 and 2013. Each time he benefited from early release. His preferred terrain is the Nouabale Ndoki Park that covers 4200 km². Wildlife Crime Unit (WCU) has recently been set up to tackle regional trafficking. It is thanks to this new unit that Daring Dissaka was arrested, once again. The WCU is supported by Elephant Crisis Fund, The Wildcat Foundation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.⁷³

CHAD

April 22, 2017

Chari-Baguirmi Region, Chad

South African veterinarian Mike Toft and founder of Zimbabwe Elephant Nursery, Roxy Danckwerts, arrive on site to care the elephants fallen in a poaching ambush at the end of March 2017 (see “On the Traile” n 16, p.81). The elephant herd has become fearful and even aggressive. 11 members of the family died. Four cubs are orphans and 5 elephants including one young are wounded. The rescue operations were funded or accompanied by the Franz Weber Foundation and WAR (Wildlife At Risk). SOS Elephants Chad, which triggered this rescue and took care of the injured animals for several weeks, is supported by the Brigitte Bardot Foundation.

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

June 2017

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

Indictment of Robert Rogal, director of the Royal Gallery and of Jaime Villamarin for having displayed for sale and sold to infiltrated US Fish and Wildlife Service agents 2 ivory sculptures worth \$ 2612 US and having offered another statuette worth \$ 3600 US. “It is ivory, I believe but we cannot write it because they don’t allow sale”, said Royal to the interested party.

Search of the prestigious gallery enabled to retrieve “art works” made of elephant ivory, sperm whale ivory and crocodile skin.⁷⁴

ASIA

CAMBODIA

May 5, 2017

Province of Sihanoukville, Cambodia

The case dates back to 2014. 3008 kg of ivory had been discovered in a container in the Sihanoukville port. Having left Mombasa, in Kenya, the container had transited through Malaysia and Viet Nam (see “On the Trail” n°5 p. 99).

Khan Sinith, director of the import-export company (see “On the Trail” n°12 p. 91) denies any responsibility. Sentenced to 3 years in prison, he has formed an appeal. He has been let out on bail.⁷⁵

CHINA

April 21, 2017

Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong, China

The customs officers at the Lok Ma Chau check post, near the border between the Hong Kong special administrative region and the special economic zone of Shenzhen, have seized 9 tusks, weighing a total of about 75 kg, onboard a truck that claimed to contain "general cargo." The ivory is estimated to be worth \$ 1.1 million HK (\$ 141,500 US, or \$ 1,886 US / kg) on the black market.⁷⁶



April 21, 2017

Beijing International Airport, China

Arrest of a Chinese expatriate worker. He was returning from South Africa. He had hidden in the back of his bag raw ivory and worked ivory. In his defense, he said like many others do that he did not know transporting ivory is illegal.

Against him, the police and customs say that his behavior upon arrival was very nervous that he was going to hide for a while in the bathrooms and that an examination of his computer showed that he is regularly a part of wildlife trafficking.

From October 2016 to April 2017, Beijing Customs seized 520 tusk cuttings and worked ivories.⁷⁷

Beginning of May 2017

Qujing, Province of Yunnan, China

Sentencing to one year on probation and 6 months suspended prison of X and Y for having sold via social networks 28 carved ivories and having thus earned 33,000 yuan, that is \$ 4820 US between July 2015 and September 2016. At the time of their arrest, they were in possession of 7 carved ivories for total value of 3700 yuan/\$ 540 US. X and Y have received each a 1000 yuan/\$ 145 US fine. It was reminded that in China only approved shops have the right to sell ivory and such a capacity should disappear in December 2017 at latest.⁷⁸



COMPUTER NETWORK

May 31, 2017

Hong Kong International Airport, China

Seizure of raw ivory. 61 kg cut in such a way that the digital tablets and the sections could fit inside 4 computer tower cases. The passenger was arrested. He is 27 years old.⁷⁹



TAILOR NETWORK

June 14, 2017

Hong Kong International Airport, China

Seizure of 57.6 kg of semi raw ivory for a total value of 1.15 million dollar/\$ 148,000 US i.e. \$ 2570 US/kg. The ivory rods were carefully slipped inside 3 suit coats specially cut and packed in 3 suitcases coming from Zimbabwe that ended up uncalled for.⁸⁰

June 26, 2017

Beijing, Direct-controlled Municipality of Beijing, China

Sentencing of a certain Liu to 4 years prison term and 40,000 yuan (\$ 5900 US) in fine for attempted contraband of 16 carved ivories from Africa for a total of 88 kg.

Despite the precautions measures to hide the proof, wrapped in plastic and tin foil and fake compartment in his suitcase, Liu was arrested by customs at the airport.⁸¹



INDIA

Beginning of April 2017

Similipal National Park, Mayurbhanj District, Odisha State, India

Anthrax or Misinformation

Contrary to information published by the Similipal Tiger Reserve administration, the elephants that died 2 and a half years ago were not the victims of an anthrax epizootic. The appeal to the Right to Information Act submitted by the Wildlife Society of Odisha revealed that only 5 elephants were carriers of the anthrax virus when they died, and that the other 11 could have been poached by trap or poisoning.⁸²

April 8-13, 2017

Thrissur, State of Kerala, India

Local press speaks of 2 pairs of tusks coming from 2 dead elephants stolen about 20 years ago in the premises of the temple dedicated to Sankarankulangara in the Kanattukara neighbourhood. Humane Society International India offers a 100,000 rupee (\$ 1500 US) reward to whoever will enable to identify, arrest and help to the conviction of those responsible for the theft.⁸³

April 17, 2017

Dhanupali, Sambalpur District, State of Odisha, India

Prakash Biswal is behind bars. This white collar representative of the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) was arrested right in the middle of a family wedding. He is involved in an ivory seizure in February in the Kansar village (see "On the Trail" n°16 p. 85).⁸⁴

April 22, 2017

Guwahati, Metropolitan Kamrup District, State of Assam, India

New information on elephant trafficking.

Forests around Namsai have become a sanctuary for those whose profession is to capture wild elephants. Over there they are called "fandis" and there are many in the Tinsukia District. "Fandis" capture wild elephants with "kunkis", local name for domestic elephants. To catch wild elephants is forbidden in India since 1977. After being caught, the elephants are submitted to a 4 months long domestication program deep in the forest, no doubt with the complacent accord of some authorities. The dewilded elephants are then sold around 500,000 rupee (\$ 7700 US) per individual to a middleman, then transported by road to Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Kerala. They are given fake certificates stating their domestic origin. Elephant traffickers are often meddling in coal, wood or car trafficking. The young elephants ripped away from their natural habitat are destined to be exploited in entertainment, local festivals, religious ceremonies, marriages, circuses and zoos, and other amusement parks. Between 2011 and 2015 at least 40 domestic elephants registered as such in Assam escaped the administrations surveillance. No one knows where they are. The most pessimistic say they are dead and that the tails, ears, genitals, trunks were sold and consumed locally or used for black magic and that the males' tusks were exported.⁸⁵

April 26, 2017

Borgang, Sonitpur District, State of Assam, India

Nocturnal seizure by the Kaziranga Park guards of a 8.5 kg tusk estimated worth 350,000 rupee or \$ 5400 US (\$ 635 US/kg).⁸⁶

May 1st, 2017

Nagarhole National Park, State of Karnataka, India

Conflict between pro elephant activists and authorities.

On one side, the director of Wildlife First says that the 40 to 50 year old male was poached and that one of his tusks over a meter long was stolen. On the other side the director of the Reserve founding his position on 2 autopsy reports says the elephant had lost one of his 2 tusks before his death, presumed to be a natural one. "Services are trying to silence the case. This is not the first poaching in Nagarhole. Last time an elephant and several deer were killed by poisoning. We gave them all the information and they just sat on it", insists Wildlife First.

See "On the Trail" n°3 p.44, n°8 p.50, n°9 p.51, n°13 p.94.⁸⁷

May 1st, 2017

Ahutoli (Near Kaziranga Park), Nagaon District, State of Assam, India

The old elephant's body was found in a water hole. The post-mortem report says he died following an attack. He was targeted with arrows and his trunk over 2 meters long was cut off. For the past ten years, the food demand for trunks is developing thanks to marketing from local tribes who descend onto the weekly market places and offer different forms of elephant meat. The trunk is the preferred piece. The vet from Wildlife Trust confirms that within 5 years he has noted several trunk amputations on dead elephants and a few cases of elephant poaching for the purpose of food use have been reported to him in the neighboring State of Arunachal Pradesh. In Central Asia, only male elephants have tusks. The species is extinct in Pakistan. They still survive in India, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Thailand, peninsular Malaysia, Laos, Cambodia, Viet Nam and China.⁸⁸

May 7, 2017

Parjang, Dhenkanal District, State of Odisha, India

Discovery of a pair of tusks, 2.4 kg and 2.3 kg, at the Naik family home. See "On the Trail" n°5 p. 99.⁸⁹

June 1st, 2017

Melur, State of Tamil Nadu, India

The 3 tusks had been bought in Krishnagiri by K.Prabhu 26 years old. For lack of an immediate buyer, Prabhu hid the tusks at his home. His accomplice is being searched for.⁹⁰



June 2017

Attappady, Palakkad District, State of Kerala, India

Controversy in Kerala

The border with Tamil Nadu is a hot spot for poaching. A 45-year-old elephant knows something about it. He was the victim of poaching and a bullet was lodged in his forehead without killing him, says the NGO Heritage Animal Task Force (HATF) based in Thrissur. He was also the target of air-pressured gun.

The elephant was captured as it wandered in suffering in the borders of Attappady, 30,000 inhabitants, and driven to a camp for domestic elephants in Kodanad, 100 km away. HATF criticized forest services for not caring for the refugee starting with the extraction of the bullets.

The forest services say that the elephant was examined by a veterinarian and that no bullet was found on his forehead and that they did all they could do to avoid a general infection.⁹¹

June 13, 2017

Kochi, State of Kerala India

The high State Court put an end to the rebounding prosecution against Mohanlal, a Bollywood star. Several elephant tusks of an unidentified origin were found at his home during a tax audit in 2011. After the event, he provided documents saying it was an inheritance. See "On the Trail" n°12 p. 3, n°15 p. 100.⁹²

June 22, 2017

Kochi, State of Kerala, India

At Manish Kumar Gupta's home, who was absent during the search, the WCCB (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) found 50 bottles of counterfeit alcohol, deer antlers, sandalwood and ivory. The 2 tusks would be from a domestic elephant who died some time ago.

After verification, Gutha the "bizman", or businessman, doesn't have the least trace in his archives that could justify presence of these illegal items at his home.⁹³

June 2017

State of Karnataka, India

The Ranga Saga

To avoid poaching or conflicts with human activities, Ranga the majestic solitary tusker who for years would come to the Bengaluru and Magadi suburbs to find food and water, was captured and subjected to domestication behind a fence in the Bannerghatta National Park.

Despite a petition campaign on the Internet, he will not return to the forest. In some days or weeks at latest, Ranga will be removed to a domestic elephant camp in Dubare or Doddaharave.

If domestication is fully carried out, Ranga will be affected later to the celebration of the end of the monsoon in Mysore. He'll carry then on his back a golden palanquin displaying the statue of the Goddess Chamundeshwari (750 kg) and parade over 4 km.⁹⁴

INDONESIA

April 19, 2017

Jambi, Province of Jambi, Indonesia

32, 55 and 61 years old, the trio surely seems to be experienced in ivory trafficking. They sold in Jakarta. Three tusks were seized in 2 different places. The chief of police in Jambi says the price on the local black market is \$ 1876 US per kilo.⁹⁵

ISRAEL

June 28, 2017

Israel

The Knesset rejects the proposed law banning the domestic trade of ivory. The Minister of Immigration and Integration claims that there is no need to double the law of 1955 and its amendments.

In September 2016, the Tiroche auction house in Herzliya 15 km north of Tel Aviv caused protests by putting several ivory objects in its sale catalog. The NGO Israel Nature and the director of National Parks demanded that Tiroche suspends the sale if CITES documentation is not available.⁹⁶

JAPAN

May 26, 2017

Japan

Reinforcement of the ivory legislation.

Any commerce selling ivory or items using ivory will have to be registered. Illegal transactions operated by merchants of individuals will entail a fine worth 5000 and \$ 9000 US maximum.

See "On the Trail" n°11 p. 66.⁹⁷

June 23, 2017

Japan

Havoc in ivory in Tokyo.

A respectable antiques company in the Japanese capital city is mixed up in a case of ivory fraud. 18 tusks were seized. They had been bought from private individuals even though the certificates of origin lacked clarity. The JWRC (Japan Wildlife Research Center) commissioned by the Ministry of the Environment to register all ivory transactions, in collusion with the antique dealers, approved commercialization of the litigious tusks. The company admitted to having bought 400 tusks over the last 5 years without requiring proof they had been legally imported into Japan. 27 people including the director, employees and suppliers are indicted for breach of the law on protection of endangered species and illegal trade in ivory.

EIA (Environmental Investigation Agency) denounced in 2015 oversights in the control of legality of the Japanese domestic ivory market, 2nd largest consumer after China. See "On the Trail" n°11 p. 66.

"On the Trail" has several times reported aborted ivory smugglings between Japan and China and noticed that seizures happen in China thanks to the scrutiny of postal customs and never happen in Japan (see "On the Trail" n° 8 p. 87, n°9 p. 84 et 85, n°11 p. 66).⁹⁸



MYANMAR

May 2017

Chaung Sauk, Region of Bago, Myanmar

Drifting remains of elephant carcasses without tusks and skin in rivers are an exception but will stay engraved in the memories of the Chaung Sauk villagers.

The region and the country are faced with several problems:

- Poaching is increasing. Corruption rules. Surveillance agents and local elected officials accept bribes to keep their eyes closed. Poachers shelter in huts made of bamboo. They begin by collecting turtle eggs, then move on to ivory.

- The town Mong La, in the Shan Region, has escaped all government control or that of its services. It is a major route for poached ivory destined to China. Contraband is also well embedded towards Thailand leaving from Tachileik, Shan Region, or from Myawaddy, Karen Region.

- Wild male elephants, the only ones to be tusked are increasingly rare. 5 to 6000 domestic elephants serve for the Myanmar Timber Enterprise that controls the national forest industry. Joint effects of reduction and suspension of logging create a big problem regarding repurposing of this historical labor force that finds more protection under the CITES Convention than under labor laws.

- Industrial plantation endlessly prey on forests and hills and conflicts between agribusiness, its employees and the elephants become more frequent and sharper.⁹⁹

Elephants in Bago Region, see "On the Trail" n°16, p. 86.

May, 3, 6 and 10, 2017

Pyin Oo Lwin District, Mandalay Region, Myanmar

Three poaching acts in a week.

Two elephants were shot dead. One was a female, the other probably a male. He was decapitated and chopped up. Another would be in healing. He received a poisoned arrow. There would be about 20 elephants in the surrounding forests.¹⁰⁰

May 2017

Wingabaw Elephant Camp, Bago, Bago Region, Myanmar



Four tragic orphans receive 400 visitors a week; the visitors pay an entrance fee of 5000 Kyat (\$ 3.60 US) for locals and 4 times more for foreigners.¹⁰¹

SRI LANKA

April 2017

Sri Lanka

Thirty-five elephants were seized by the State. Their owners did not have birth certificates or other documents to prove that their very large prestigious pets were of domestic lineage. In fact, through collusion with the ministries, notables and high-ranking monks from Buddhist temples acquired baby elephants from organized gangs who capture them in the forest (see "On the Trail" n°5 p 97, n°7 p 91, n°8 p 85, n°10 p 64 and 65). The trickery was denounced by M. Ambewela (see "On the Trail" n°6 p 91). The government, in an attempt to end the controversy, ordered that the overabundance of young elephants in the Pinnawala orphanage could be used by Buddhist temples for ceremonies and parades, and that the 35 confiscated elephants could be returned to their "owners" in exchange for a payment to the State of 10 million rupee (\$ 65,000 US). The State, in turn, would abandon legal charges. Icing on the cake for religious and social officials: all those who had been issued permits for domestic elephants and who did not yet have one due to the diverse supply difficulties, can now buy one in the flesh at the Pinnawala State orphanage. The elephant suppliers, those who capture them in the forest literally exploding entire families, are sentenced to short stays in prison that can be avoided by paying a fine of 100,000 or 200,000 rupee (\$ 655 or 1310 US). .../...

These arrangements that put at ease political, judicial, and religious spheres where captive elephants turn in circles until their death are adversely criticised by national and international environmental communities.

Elephants definitely do not have the good life in Sri Lanka. A disputed inventory mentions 6000 individuals on 65,610 km². For the recent years, the elephant annual losses due to accidents, conflicts with humans, or cruelties like the one reported below, amount to 250. The Hambantota forest is falling under the blades of chainsaws, and the Maduru Oya forest is already the next in line to become harvested for the industrial wood. They are among the last elephant habitats in Sri Lanka.¹⁰²

April 2017

Omanthai, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

The backhoe opens a trench so the elephant can leave the water hole where they were trapped. Out of danger, one of the elephants hits the articulating arm of the backhoe. A man shoots from a window and kills the 2 survivors. The shooter is a forest guard. He claims he was acting in self defense. Three separate investigations are opened by police, Wildlife Conservation Department and the Ministry of Sustainable Development.¹⁰⁴

April 12, 2017

Galmamuna, Kurunegala District, North West Province, Sri Lanka

One male shot dead. A hunter, an attempted capture of a baby elephant that went wrong or an attempted but aborted poaching for ivory trafficking?¹⁰³

THAILAND

June 30, 2017

Province of Chanthaburi, Thailand

Arrest inside a hotel room of Mory Sacko, a citizen from Equatorial Guinea. The 315 kg of ivory seized on 27 March 2016 in Bangkok (see.

"On the Trail" n°12 p. 96) were intended for him. On the run, there was an arrest warrant against him.¹⁰⁶



April 26, 2017

Thailand

The osteology laboratory of the Chiangmai University has developed a new process using fluorescent x-rays to detect at a 72 to 95% accuracy rate real ivory from fake. The official and black market for ivory are indeed flooded with counterfeits. The counterfeiters are also very active on the rhino horn black market. Scientifics in Thailand have used the fluorescent X-ray technique on fake elephant ivory made from bones, teeth, horns, wood, synthetic resin or minerals. The process is accurate for counterfeits made of bone. Accuracy reaches 95% except if the material is actually elephant bone in which case the rate lowers to 72%. The process is more volatile regarding ivory counterfeits made from a wood or mineral base. Performance rates average then between 25 and 85%. Researches find at least 3 advantages to their technique. It is non destructive, inexpensive and fast, it enables to make a first selection before proceeding to genetic analysis that is long and prohibitively costly.¹⁰⁵

VIET NAM

April 19, 2017

Pleiku, Gia Lai Province, Viet Nam

Arrest of a man in possession of 1,633 objects and pieces of jewelry made of ivory at the Café Gia Le, 97 Le Loi Street, in Pleiku. Nguyen Ba Tung was under surveillance by the Forest Management Department and the Economic Police Department, following a tip from those who live in the province. Wednesday night, around 9 p.m., police officers saw him arrive in Le Loi Street by motorcycle with a blue bag and then go inside to a table in café Gia Le. Apparently, he was waiting for one or more clients. Without waiting, the police officers intervened, seizing the bag and arresting the man. In the police station, Nguyen Ba Tung admitted to having bought all the necklaces, bracelets, pendants, beads, rings and statues of Buddha for 100 million dong (\$ 4,000 US). In the absence of any legal documents, all of it was confiscated by the police.¹⁰⁷



May 4, 2017

Hanoi, Viet Nam

Sentencing to 12 months prison time for Pham Van Luat. On 12 August 2015, he was stopped at the Hanoi Airport coming from Angola with more than 50 kg of ivory in his luggage. He had escaped but turned himself into police in December 2016.

Following orders from a certain Quang he met in Angola, he had made several trips between Luanda and Hanoi earning each time \$ 200 US for illegally transporting a few kilos of ivory.¹⁰⁸



EUROPE

UNITED KINGDOM

April 4, 2017

London, United Kingdom

Fiscal Court

Returning from an antique fair in Hong Kong, a tea set from the Qing dynasty (19th century) contained, in the handles and lid, a few grams of ivory in addition to several kilos of silver.

The tea set contained less than 1% ivory but, according to CITES regulations and English law, must be accompanied by a export or import permit each time it crosses the borders of the Kingdom. The director of the Mayfair gallery recognizes the error, but has asked the justice to order the restitution of the 6 pieces, which “are a part of the cultural history of China.” The judge remained unmoved by this argument and pointed out that the gallery was responsible for the completion of all regulatory import formalities. The Mayfair director, while affirming to the court that “the last thing we want to see is these animals become extinct,” recognized a logistical error and is considering appealing.¹¹¹

May 2017

Derby, Derbyshire County, United Kingdom

A 30-year-old man has been charged. Several packages destined for the Middle East were opened by customs. They contained worked ivories. A raid at the suspect’s house revealed additional ivory and other suspicious materials.¹¹²

Beginning of June 2017

Hanoi, Viet Nam

Mrs. Thanh trading in craft objects agreed in to meet a certain Mr. Hung who wanted to sell her some ivory, in June 2016. Upon examining the pieces, Mrs. Thanh decided to buy 49 kg at 4.5 million dong per kg (\$ 198 US), and 6 kg at 12.6 million dong/ kg (\$ 555 US). She hid them all in her Nhi Khe shop, known for its beads, bracelets, necklaces made of wood and other materials, that attracted flocks of Chinese tourists. It is here that Kieu Thi Nuan, local Mandarin interpreter, met a potential buyer and introduced him to Mrs. Thanh. The deal ended with 50 kg of ivory sold for 13.9 million dong per kg (\$ 612 US). It was when Mrs. Thanh’s nephew and one of his friends was going to deliver the merchandise to the Chinese buyer in the Thanh Tri district, that Mrs. Thanh was taken in by the Division of Economic Crimes. The 5 Vietnamese, aged 25 to 38, appeared before the People’s Court of Hanoi, and are awaiting trial. The ivory was of African origin.¹⁰⁹

July 1st, 2017

European Union

Good News. The European Commission’s recommendation to its 28 member States to suspend the export of raw ivory has entered into force. “Suspending the re-export of raw ivory from the EU will ensure that tusks of legal origin are not mixed with illegal ivory and help destination countries implement their actions to reduce the demand for ivory, which constitute an important step in addressing illegal trade in ivory and the current elephant poaching surge.”* France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, Sweden, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic and Slovakia have already stopped issuing permits to export raw ivory. Other countries, like Belgium, are oppose. See “On the Trail” n°5, p. 105 (Ivory from the Past), n°8 p.68 (All together for the elephants) and n°14, p.96 (Surging European Union Pre-CITES Convention Ivory Exports to Hong Kong, a Cause for Concern).

Patience. Robin des Bois and numerous other NGOs are pushing for intra-European trade in both raw and worked in ivory, and exports from the European Union of worked ivory also be illegal, or at least exceptional. The European Commission is thinking about it. Numerous cases of illegal trade in Europe and of ivory seizures outside of Europe of ivory bought on the European Market are presented in “On the Trail.”¹¹⁰

* Commission Notice - Guidance Document. EU regime governing intra-EU trade and re-export of ivory. (2017/C 154/06).

It's moving

AFRICA

South Africa - Botswana

April 2, 2017

Twelve rhinos left South Africa for Botswana. 15 hours of travel by truck, plane, and helicopter.

"It is genetic insurance against extinction," enthusiastically declares Les Carlisle, the leader of the project "Rhinos Without Borders".

The poaching statistics in Botswana are the lowest in Africa. The transfer cost \$ 45, 000 US a head.¹



© Botswana Govt

Early May 2017

Tiémélékro, Moronou Region, Côte d'Ivoire

The reactions are mixed. In Frondobo -Télébo, for the widow whose husband is said to have been "crushed" by the pachyderm, his capture and move are considered a relief, even a blessing.

In Djamalabo, his departure is almost considered a curse and several residents testify to their attachment and even their compassion for the old rhinoceros trucked under the supervision of South African specialists.

The animal, showing great placidity in the pictures of the event, is now in N'zi River Lodge, 42 km from Bouaké.

As a preventive measure, the horns were sawn off. The nasal one was more than a horn, it was a tree. What has become of it? It was probably over 10 kg, worth some \$ 300,000 US referring to the quotation of Swaziland.²



© AIP

South Africa - United States of America

May 2017

Western Global Airlines has transferred 11 white rhinoceros on an MD-11 cargo plane from Johannesburg, South Africa, to a park in the eastern United States which location has not been revealed.

Western Global Airlines is pleased to have transferred in collaboration with Animal Defenders International 33 ill-treated lions in South America to a refuge center in South Africa. The operation Spirit of Freedom Flight took place in April 2016. Cf. p. 62 of this issue.³

June 2017

Malawi

Resumption of resettlement led by African Parks (see "On the Trail" n°14, pp. 75-76) to the Nkhotakota Reserve on the shores of Lake Malawi

- 50 elephants from Liwonde.

- 150 from Majete.



© CNN

A few days after his arrival, one of the elephants died under blurry circumstances. He was either killed by local residents in the buffer zone of the Reserve or got stuck in the sludge because a lack of ground's knowledge.⁴

.../...

It's moving - followed

June 7, 2017

South Africa to Akagera National Park, Rwanda

Transfer by truck and airplane of 18 black rhinos from South Africa to the Akagera National Park in Rwanda. They were sedated and dehorned on departure to avoid wounds during the trip and lower the risk of poaching on arrival. The management of the outgoing horns is not subjected to official protocol. During the civil war, the Park was invaded by refugees. The government has not made them leave. The Park area has been divided in half. It covers now only 1200km². Wildlife though has been divided by 10. All the rhinos were hunted and eaten during the civil war. The Park is managed by African Parks. "A canine anti poaching unit generously offered by the Howard G. Buffet foundation will contribute to protection of the transferred rhinos" proclaims African Parks.

A Hungarian member of the reintroduction team, Krisztián Gyöngyi, was killed by one of the rhinos in unspecified circumstances.⁵

June

Zimbabwe-Mozambique

The trucks carried their wildlife cargoes on 600 km of chaotic and dusty roads.

Elephants, giraffes, buffaloes and zebras change countries and functions.

In Zimbabwe, in the Sango Wildlife Conservancy run by German businessman Wilfried Pabst, the animals were the target of international hunters. In Mozambique, they will repopulate the Zinave National Park deserted by the civil war of the decade 1980-90. The relocated will not have to undergo the mortal blows of super armed and guided hunters, they will have to thwart the traps of the lonely and tenacious poachers.

Pabst says it is by means of hunting license money that he can afford to manage his estate in Zimbabwe and give surplus wildlife to Mozambique. Pabst asserts that if hunting permits were suddenly banned in Zimbabwe, his domain that stretches over 600 km² and forms an (almost military) base for the Big Five in southern Africa, would become bankrupted in a few months and that most of the 200,000 wild animals would be poached in a year. The cost of the "Rewilding Caravan" is estimated at more than \$ 2 million US. It is covered by the Peace Parks Foundation based in South Africa. The plan is to transfer 75,000 mammals in 3 years. Pabst's donation is dubbed by the government of Zimbabwe (cf. "On the Trail" n°16, p.97).⁶

The doctrine of Pabst is opportunely taken up by Celso Correia, Minister of Environment and Rural Development of Mozambique. He wants to revive sports hunting in the country. Sport hunting is one of the country's major conservation vectors, Correia said.

The species donation from Zimbabwe to Mozambique will later serve to attract hunters from around the world. In 2016, hunting permits have brought the country a little over \$ 600,000 US. Promising but insufficient according to Correia.⁷

ASIA

April 3, 4, and 5, 2017

Nepal

Transfer begun for 5 rhinos from the Chitwan Park, going to the Shuklaphanta National Park, 450 km away. 30 elephants, 30 elephant riders, 30 assistants, and 10 park administrators and soldiers are standing at the ready. The first day, only one male could be located, anesthetized, and loaded on a truck. The goal is to move 5 rhinos, 1 male and 4 females. The first rhino reproduction in Shuklaphanta Park was in 2001. It seems to have bore its fruits. The population has more than doubled in 16 years. Today there are 9 individuals.⁸



April 2017

Nepal-China

After several difficulties, the terms and conditions are nearly worked out to donate 4 rhinoceros - 2 males and 2 females - to the Chinese government, as a sign of cooperation and friendship between the 2 countries. Five Chinese experts visited Chitwan Park in January 2017. After Nepalese experts visited China, the Chitwan Park director has decided that the Shanghai Safari Park and the Guangzhou "Research Center" are suitable habitats (see "On the Trail" n°12, p. 73).⁹

Elephants and Mammoths

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

April 2017

State of Nevada, United States of America

Why is Nevada envisaging to ban trade in raw and carved ivory from mammoths disappeared from North America 15,000 years ago and from Siberia 9000 years ago?

First because mammoth ivory can be sold under the label elephant ivory, that is what happens in Hong Kong (see "On the Trail" n°7 p. 88) and second because elephant ivory can be sold under the label mammoth ivory, that is what happened in New York (see "On the Trail" n°14 p. 88).

Law n°194 was voted by the State Senate. It must now be voted by Congress. It bans with very few derogations, purchase, sale or possession with the purpose to sale items made from, or in part from, lions, elephants, rhinos, tigers, leopards, cheetahs, jaguars, pangolins, marine turtles, manta rays, mammoths, narwhals, walruses and hippos. Senator James Settlemeyer doesn't understand that the mammoth, who according to him disappeared around 1200 AD, be listed in among the animals concerned by this trade ban. Also, he is worried about what will happen to firearms that contain ivory. He and his republican colleagues voted against the act.¹

EUROPE

RUSSIA

June 2017

Zabaykalsky, Zabaykalsky Krai, Russia. Border to China.

The freight train was about to exit Russia and enter China when the Leo, border control dog, froze in front of one of the wagons. Near the axels 34 kg of fossilised mammoth tusks were found. In Yakutia, mammoth tusk extraction is conditioned to archaeological permits delivered by the Russian authority. Evidently, pillaging of mammoth tusks has been developing since the years 90-2000 when international trade in elephant ivory came under ban or restrictions.²

Other Mammals

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

June 10, 2017

Kei River, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

Four men chased by a drone were arrested in a State ranch with 2 dead blue duikers (*Philantomba monticola*, Appendix II) and 5 firearms.



Robert, Steven, Jonathan Armstrong and Dane Smith appeared before the Komga court. They were informed of their right to appoint a lawyer of their choice, to benefit from juridical aid or to defend themselves by their own means.¹

ZAMBIA

June 8, 2017

Zambia

The Government has suspended Lechwe antelope (*Kobus leche*, Appendix II) hunting. They were about 250,000 of them in 1930. Today, they are 10 times less numerous and mostly clustered in the Lochinvar National Park (428 km²). Through poaching and hunting, 1000 Lechwe are killed every year. The species is endemic in the Kafue Basin, a tributary of the Zambezi. Lechwe are in danger of becoming extinct.²

