

ROBIN DES BOIS

# ON<sub>the</sub> TRAIL

Information and analysis bulletin on animal poaching and smuggling

n°15 / 1<sup>st</sup> October - 31<sup>th</sup> December 2016

Published on January 31, 2017

Original version in French

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# Hippopotamuses

**Hippopotamuses (*Hippopotamus amphibius*), are listed under CITES Appendix II.**



AFRICA

## UGANDA

**- October 22, 2016, Katunguru, Western Region, Uganda.** Seizure of 32 teeth. One arrest.



**- October 23 and November 30, 2016, Uganda**  
Seizure of 15 kg of hippopotamus teeth, pangolin scales, and snake skins. Arrest of a businessman. The teeth are said be from the Democratic Republic of Congo, just next door.<sup>1</sup>

**November 8, 2016  
Wanseko, Buliisa District, Western Region, Uganda**

There is a very fine line between the wholesale animal feed trade and trafficking in wildlife products. Moses Oketch and Fred Byenkya crossed this line and became rich quick. They are 35 and 37 years old. In the middle of nowhere, near Wansek, they drew admiration, jealousy, and disdain. They had just been caught in the act of trailing 234 hippopotamus teeth, or 100 kg, to sell 70,000 Sh/kg (\$ 20 US/kg). They were supplied by some awful poacher dentist. According to the latest information from the investigation, he was a fishmonger. The 2 men were sentenced to 2 years in prison.<sup>2</sup>



Hippopotamus teeth trafficking has been prohibited in the country since 2014. From January to November 2016, nearly 500 kg of teeth were seized by the police and customs. The main destination of the legal and smuggled exports is the special administrative region of Hong Kong of the People's Republic of China. Year in and year out, Hong Kong imports 1 to 3 tons of hippopotamus teeth with CITES certificates. Until 2014, Uganda was the main exporter. The main exporting countries now are Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Malawi. In workshops in Hong Kong, the molar teeth are converted into statuettes, miniatures, everyday accessories such as razor handles. Hippopotamus ivory is increasingly common on the global ivory market, with elephant ivory and mammoth ivory. Just like elephant tusks, long 20 cm canines are carved, decorated and mounted. It is said that part of the hippopotamus ivory seized in Uganda is from the Democratic Republic of Congo. For poachers, hippos bring in a lot of business, with their meat, leather, and teeth.

# Hippopotamuses and Rhinoceroses

AFRICA

## UGANDA

**December 22, 2016  
West of Uganda**

Seizure of 135 kg of hippopotamus teeth and 2 elephant tusks. Two arrests.<sup>3</sup>



EUROPE

## PORTUGAL

**October 18, 2016  
District of Lisbon, Portugal**

Seizure of 41 ivory objects, 3 turtles remains and 2 hippopotamus teeth in a commercial area.<sup>4</sup>

# Rhinoceroses

The white rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* and black rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* ranging in Africa are listed in Appendix I, except for the white rhinoceros populations of Swaziland and South Africa which are listed in Appendix II for trade of live animals and hunting trophies.

The 3 Asian rhinoceros species are in Appendix I: *Rhinoceros unicornis*, *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*, *Rhinoceros sondaicus*.

## “On the Trail” n°15

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

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Africa	South Africa	11,000	33
Asia	Cambodia	114,000 - 200,000	56
	China	27,000	26
	India Assam	44,910	62
	India Assam	916	69
	Viet Nam	44,450	73

## EASTERN AFRICA

### KENYA

October 8, 2016

#### Oi Pejeta Conservancy, Laikipia County, Kenya

Rangers and poachers exchanged gunfire in the middle of the night. Dogs were following fugitives. It appears that one of them was wounded. Oi Pejeta is known for its 100 black rhinoceroses and its 3 northern white.<sup>1bis</sup>

- December 20-22, 2016.

There is always an additional upsurge in poaching during the Christmas and New Year holidays. The end of 2016 was no exception.

- Four poachers intruded into Ruma National Park and shot a female rhinoceros and her little 3-month-old son. KWS (Kenya Wildlife Service) reacts, which led to the arrest of a suspect.

At his home, a metal trap and a rhinoceros hoof were found. They were presented as incriminating evidence.



- December 31, 2016. 5:15 AM. Shots in Ngulia Sanctuary in Tsavo National Park. A mother rhinoceros and her little one were located. They were lying down and motionless. The foot patrol confirmed that they had died 33 m from one another.<sup>1</sup>

### MALAWI

November 23, 2016. Zomba, Southern Region, Malawi.

Haiwa has been sentenced to 8 years in prison without remission. No alternative fine. He had sold the horn of a rhinoceros shot dead in Liwonde Park.<sup>12</sup>



### MOZAMBIQUE

October 17, 2016

#### Greater Lebombo Conservancy, Maputo Province, Mozambique

Traffic imposes its law. The anti-poaching patrol was assaulted by dozens of people as it was taking 2 suspects of rhinoceros poaching to a police station. The riot took place when the patrol was going through a “township” corrupted by “horn syndicates”. When the crowd formed, policemen in uniform ran off. The 3 rangers were saved by the intervention of a policeman who was not on duty. They were transferred to the hospital by helicopter. One of them was scarified with a shard bottle. The area is on the road of the horns looted in the Kruger Park in South Africa and brought back to Mozambique through the savanna. The information was first disclosed by the International Anti-Poaching Foundation (IAPF).<sup>2</sup>



October 30, 2016

#### Maputo International Airport, Mozambique

When the border police took an interest in his suitcase around 10 PM, the Vietnamese smuggler managed to escape - before they discovered 8.8 kg of horns divided into 8 horns or horn sections.<sup>3</sup>



## ZIMBABWE

**December 25, 2016**  
**Beitbridge District, Matabeleland South Province, Zimbabwe**

43-year-old Godknows Mashame poached a rhinoceros on Christmas Day and forgot his mobile phone on the scene afterwards. He was arrested in his home on New Year's Day. Seizure of 2 greater kudu horns (*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*) and an arms cache, three .303 caliber rifles, one 12 mm revolver, one rifle, 71 sticks of Emex (nitroglycerin), a GPS system, special hunting flashlights, and munitions of all calibers.<sup>4</sup>



## SOUTHERN AFRICA

### SOUTH AFRICA

**October 6, 2016**  
**Lovemore Heights, Port Elizabeth, et Motherwell, Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**

Seizure of a Golf GTI in the home of Jabulani Ndlovu, a poacher holding a passport from Zimbabwe. An Audi is also wanted. Money in cash and in a bank account was seized. The Justice and Treasury Departments consider that the vehicles and funds are from poaching and trafficking. Cf. "On the Trail" n°13 p. 72.<sup>6</sup>



*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*

## SOUTH AFRICA - TANZANIA

### The Animals of National Parks are Going Down the Drain<sup>5</sup>

#### - End of November 2016 North West Province, South Africa

Suspicion of a shady deal between the national parks administration of the province and a company that was created out of nothing by Matthew Wolmarans, the former mayor of Rustenburg, and Mike de Kock, his technical director and one public works company, who had obtained public roads contracts for the city in the amount of 1.4 billion rands (\$ 108 million US). The SARGBA (Southern Africa Rare Game Breeders Association) received an exceptional gift from the parks administration: 50 giant sable antelopes (*Hippotragus niger*, Appendix I), 10 buffaloes, 32 nyalas (*Tragelaphus angasii*), and 50 white rhinoceroses caught in national parks with a total value of 100 million rand (\$ 7.2 million US).

As of now, only 31 giant sable antelopes, 29 nyalas, and 25 buffaloes have actually been transferred. The other animals are in quarantine. The donation is said to be part of a special program aimed at allowing black farmers to gain entry to the game breeding industry. Matthew Wolmarans was the local coordinator of the ANC (African National Congress) in last year's elections. A parliamentary investigation is underway.

#### - December 7, 2016. Ngorongoro Conservation Area, region of Arusha, Tanzania

What has become of John Superman Black Rhino?

He was the stud of the line of black rhinoceroses of the Ngorongoro Crater reserve. He has at least 26 descendants there. It is said that in a secret transaction, "John" was sold by 2 executives and an "environmentalist" from Serengeti and Mkomazi National Parks, to the private Singita Sasakwa Lodge, 100 km away. It is believed that the transaction involved Sh 200,000 or \$ 100,000 US. Ngorongoro Reserve officials would have also received \$ 150,000 US in commissions. The Minister of Natural Resources did not express an opinion on the conditions in which 'John' was transferred, but did consider that it had to be moved to avoid inbreeding within the Ngorongoro Reserve. 2 horns weighing 3.6 and 2.3 kg were presented to Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa as belonging to what was Mister "John". He died on August 18, 2016. It is said that he was buried in Sasakwa. The plot thickens. The last veterinary reports show that "John" was in very good health. He is part of the national heritage, safeguarding the black rhinoceros species in Tanzania. Illegal animal trafficking between the national Parks and the private sector is more and more suspected.

**October 10, 2016**

**Great Fish River Nature Reserve, Grahamstown, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**

A black female rhinoceros was poached.

A very common sight in the early morning. A dead mother lying on the ground and a little one standing by her, dazed. She was 18 years old. After she was hit in her thorax, she fled with her little one who was one and a half years old. The horns were still there.

This is the 19<sup>th</sup> incident of the year in the province.<sup>8</sup>



**October 9 and 11, 2016**

**Melkrivier, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

3 in 2 days, 1 km apart. The first one was dehorned with a chainsaw, and the 2 other ones with an ax. The footprints stop on a gravel path. The bandits fled by car there.<sup>9</sup>



**October 12, 2016**

**Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Game Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa<sup>10</sup>**



One of the 2 victims, with the eyes wide open.

**October 13, 2016**

**Mkuze, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa**

News in brief:

- A man killed his partner with a knife.<sup>11</sup>
- A man was carrying a rhinoceros horn in his black and yellow bag. The police had every reason to suspect this. The man will ask to be released on bail.<sup>12</sup>

**October 14, 2016**

**Nelspruit, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

The former soldier Boet Mashego and the herbalist Michael Sithole are appealing their sentences of 26 years in prison each. They requested legal aid from the government. Cf. "On the Trail" n° 14 p. 61<sup>13</sup>

**Mid October 2016**

**Madikwe, North West Province, South Africa<sup>14</sup>**



© Plianesberg Nat. Park & Wildlife Trust

Rescue of a shot rhinoceros, by the Bell 407 helicopter of Rhino 911, an emergency call service for rhinoceros.

**Mid October 2016**

**South Africa**

A bullet in the hind quarters, right through the pelvic area of the 8-week-old orphan. It screams at night in its emergency enclosure. The NGOs Boots on the Ground and Wild Vet took care of it. Her life is in the balance.<sup>15</sup>



© Wild Vet



**Mid October 2016  
South Africa**

"We've killed a rhinoceros." Wild Vet made at the end the decision to finish off a baby rhinoceros with a rifle. 2 poachers had riddled him with bullets.<sup>16</sup>

**October 19-25, 2016  
Kruger National Park, South Africa**

Arrest of 14 poaching suspects in 7 days by the K9, the anti-poacher canine unit.<sup>17</sup>

**October 25, 2016  
Mafikeng Game Reserve, North West Province, South Africa**

Capture of a one-year-old orphan. Mother killed in one poaching incident. She was placed in a specialized orphanage. She was wasting away in the veld. The operation was made possible by Flying for Freedom, Rhino Orphanage, OSCAP, Wilderness Leadership School, and Pilanesberg Wildlife Trust.<sup>18</sup>

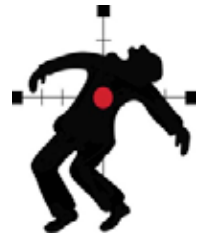


© Pilanesberg Wildlife Trust

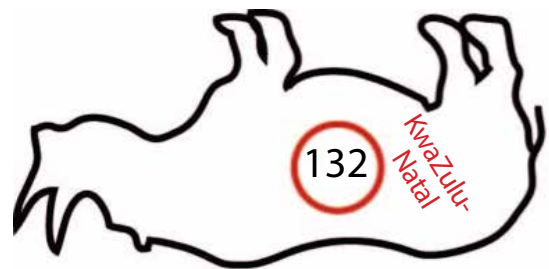
**November 1, 2016  
Kempton Park, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

The most famous trafficker from September appeared in court. Lingyun Sheng had the nerve to make his attempt on the opening day of the plenary conference on the international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora (CITES), in Johannesburg. He was caught in the act at the international airport, when he was about to fly off to China ("On the Trail", n° 14 p. 66). In October, his request to be released on bail was rejected. His presence in South Africa is illegal. His visa had expired a long time ago. According to Activists for Animals Africa (AAA), the 23 kg of horns came from 3 adult females that were killed in mid-September in Hluhluwe Umfolozi Reserve in KwaZulu-Natal. It seems that the horns came into Swaziland via border post n°6, which is not constantly monitored. Mr. Sheng said that before returning to China, he visited a friend in Swaziland, a so called Mr. Chen. When they were about to leave each other, he put the horns and 20,000 rand (\$ 1,500 US) in his hands in return for the favor. Mr. Sheng could face 10 years in prison. Mr. Chen is nowhere to be found. A common trick was used to wrap up the horns. They were hidden by three layers of carbon paper, aluminum sheets, and wrapping paper.<sup>19</sup>

**November 3, 2016  
iSimangaliso Wetland Park, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa**



The rangers were nearby when 2 strangers approached 4 rhinoceroses and shot them. The rangers retaliated. One poacher was killed. The rhinoceroses seemed safe and sound. They didn't spread blood around when they fled. There is an outburst of poaching in the province. -132 since the beginning of the year - According to a University of Pretoria study, the crisis is starting to hit the tourism sector. Visitors are worried, and even nervous. Visitors do not feel comfortable with the general atmosphere, with long lines at park entrances due to the searches, and the helicopter patrols flying over. Tourists understand that poaching is war.<sup>20</sup>



**November 5, 2016  
South Africa**

Saving The Survivors mainly works in Mpumalanga, Limpopo, and the Northern Cape. This time around, the veterinarians Johan Marais and Mélani Kuhler saved a mother who was shot in the head. None of her vital organs was affected. After awakening, she got up, and trotted along to her little 8-month-old.<sup>21</sup>



© Saving The Survivors

**November 4-10, 2016  
Kruger National Park, South Africa**

It was full moon. That turns poachers into insomniacs. In the Park, the police is on the qui-vive. 18 arrests in one week, 10 weapons seized.<sup>22</sup>



Alert n°: 013 735 0197, 076 801 96 79.

**November 9, 2016**

**Gauteng Province, South Africa**

On the N3 connecting Johannesburg and Durban, 2 Chinese drivers fell into a trap, one big road inspection for the police operation "Blitz on crime". The horn may have been bought near Rustenburg.<sup>23</sup>



**12 novembre 2016**

**Jock Concession, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

Rescue of a young female 6-month-old wandering in the reserve after her mother was poached. Her body had not been found yet. The calf weighs 200 kg. She was bottle-fed for the first time 5 hours after her arrival at the orphanage. If she had not been swiftly evacuated, she would have died from the cold, or would have been attacked by a lion or a hyena after a night or 2 or 3.<sup>24</sup>



**November 13, 2016**

**Limpopo Province, South Africa**

Death of "Hope" (cf. "On the Trail" n°9 p. 62, n°10 p. 46).

Is animal testing the dark face of the "Hope" operation that the media all over the world has relayed? In April 2015, it was a victim of an appalling poaching operation. Its horns were ripped out. The Ethics Committee of the Veterinary Science Faculty of Pretoria considers this young female 7-year-old rhinoceros as a "research project". This animal suffered 18 operations in 18 months of agony. The question is whether "Hope" was also a victim of an advertising operation liable to the South African law that punishes animal cruelty.<sup>25</sup>

**Mid November 2016**

**Pretoria, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

An Al Jazeera report showed that David Mahlobo, Minister of State Security had regular and friendly relations with the manager of a massage parlor and spa. The minister was also on good terms with one of the masseuses of the beauty salon. On Facebook, the young Chinese woman nicknamed Chelsea speaks of Mr. Mahlobo as her father.



In the report of the Doha-based TV channel, the spa manager, Guan Jiang Guang, reveals some unsettling secrets: "My employees are illegal immigrants. I settle the deal by giving about \$ 70 US to 2 guys of immigration services." "Regarding an illegal gambling room, he reveals that the affair was promptly settled with a small bribe for the justice ministry officials." And to go back to the main subject of "On the Trail", the same man revealed information and recommendations on rhinoceros horn trafficking to the news journalist - but he didn't know that he was a journalist. "If you buy the horn from a black person, he tells the police and during the delivery, you lose the horn. And you come out with a fine of a million rand [\$ 72,000 US]." Guan Jiang Guang thus kindly advised the person to be careful. It's better to deal with Chinese people, and if possible, in China. Guan then gave the infiltrated buyer an "untouchable" contact who works at the Beijing international airport. A few weeks afterwards, the Al Jazeera investigator met the man in question in a car, on the edge of a road in the province of Fujian. He did not come empty-handed. He offered a 2.5 kg rhinoceros horn for \$ 27,000 US per kg, or nearly 900,000 rand (\$ 65,000 US). On the ivory side, the documentary tells the same spiel. Several guides and cooks say that in Johannesburg, during the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in December 2015, they were bombarded with ivory orders for bracelets, stamps, pen cases, and chopsticks. There were so many orders that in 2 days, all the suppliers were sold out. All this ivory left South Africa in the diplomatic bags of the President Xi Jinping's entourage. "On the Trail" reported several cases of ivory or rhinoceros horn smuggling or attempts to do so by diplomats and members of foreign delegations stationed in or visiting Africa. Cf. "On the Trail" n°7 p. 89, n°9 p. 60, n°11 p. 60, and n° 13 p. 84.<sup>26</sup>



**Mid November 2016**

**Limpopo Province, South Africa**

A young 6-month-old female rhinoceros was admitted to the orphanage under the name Thula. A bullet that went straight through and killed her mother went on to reach her in her shoulders. Although she suffered severe wounds, the general prognosis is positive. However, shrapnel hit her left eye, and the veterinarians and ophthalmologists are pessimistic about the full recovery of her vision. The Limpopo rhinoceros orphanage was founded in 2012 by par Arrie van Deventer. Its mission is to “fix up” orphans and release them back in the wild, without involving any kind of commercial transaction.<sup>27</sup>

**November 17, 2016**

**South Africa**

Nothing could be done. Poached the night before. Wounded on the left shoulder. Humerus fracture. Cannot be straightened or set.<sup>28</sup>



- **From mid- to end October 2016.** 6 rhinos poached in 2 weeks. 2 black rhinos and 4 white ones<sup>29</sup>

- **November 18, 2016.** New message from Limpopo Rhino Security Group. “Sadly . . . We have lost another 2 rhinos in our group. The onslaught is rising and the infiltration attempts are skyrocketing. We wish all our rangers good luck.”<sup>30</sup>

**November 19, 2016**

**Ngodwana, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

Secret agreement between 2 rotten cops and 4 poachers. During the night, one police car picked up the poachers to safely evacuate them from the zone. Clean police officers chased them down, and brought the 6 swine to a standstill 5 km further down. There were 2 pieces of horn and a loaded gun in the back of the car (see page 82 for more details).<sup>31</sup>

**November 21, 2016**

**KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa**

7 carcasses found. 2 orphans. A young 2-year-old female had been shot during a savage attempt to remove its horns. After 2 weeks of suffering and treatment, she died.<sup>32</sup>

**November 23- 28 and December 13, 2016**

**O. R. Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg, South Africa**

**Namibia**

- Near Era, a major pressmedia wonders how the Namibian services could let the suitcase of a Chinese passenger full of 18 horns weighing 43 kg go by. The same services identify and have no qualms about seizing shampoo models and toothpaste tubes. The Chinese passenger, Ye Zhiwei, was arrested in Johannesburg International Airport (cf. page 83). He was in transit on his way from Windhoek and was about to fly off to Hong Kong. The carelessness of the Windhoek airport border police is all the more astounding as rhinoceroses are dying in mass in the north of the country.

- Arrest and release on bail of Pendapala Abraham litula, a police officer on duty at Hosea Kutako Airport in Windhoek.

- For the Chinese trafficker, release on bail rejected.<sup>33</sup>





**November 25, 2016**  
**Madikwe Game Reserve, North West Province, South Africa**<sup>34</sup>



A collapsed rhinoceros. A dismayed Belgian Shepherd Malinois.

The horns are still there.

**November 28, 2016**  
**Florida, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

Nothing was found in the house search. At the last minute, the suspect had thrown the horns into the backyard.<sup>35</sup>



**December 2, 2016**  
**Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

A bullet's crater on its right flank. The young 8 month-old rhinoceros was found alive in the thickets 8 days after the savage poaching of her mother. The slashing rain wiped out its footprints, which meant that those looking for him by land and air took more time to find him. She is slowly recovering from her pain and fright, in the good hands of the Care for Wild Africa Rhino Sanctuary.<sup>36</sup>

**December 3, 2016**  
**Mahikeng, North West Province, South Africa**  
 Poaching and mutilation of the mother, rescue of the little one.

The 3-month-old had survived for at least one week. She tried in vain to be adopted by another female with her calf. A Rhino 911 helicopter transported her. She was cared for by Dr. Gerhardus Scheepers. She's doing well. Fortunately, she did not eat too much sand during those days of distress and solitude.<sup>37</sup>

**December 5, 2016**  
**Magudu, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa**



A poacher's basic arsenal.<sup>38</sup>

**December 5, 2016**  
**Boksburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

News in brief. The trio in the stolen car was transporting drugs, a falsified weapon, and a horn that was initially considered to be from a rhinoceros, and after verification, from a buffalo. 3 arrests. A 20-year-old black woman, a white man, and a 41-year-old Nigerian national.<sup>39</sup>



**December 7, 2016**  
**Roedtan, Limpopo Province, South Africa**<sup>40</sup>



Poached

Poacher

**December 12, 2016**  
**Mbombela, Nelspruit, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

Police war in Mbombela (see page 80).<sup>41</sup> Two officers from Hawks, an anti-poaching task force, were prevented from taking the fingerprints of 2 officials from the SAPS (South Africa Police Service) during custody. Simanga Mnisi and Manguni Nyalunga, are accused of assisting 4 men in a poaching incident on Waterval Boven Farm near Ngodwana. In particular, they are blamed for using a police vehicle in which slices of horn, the tail, and the ears, knives and a hunting rifle with its silencer and ammunition were found. According to their accounts, the 4 presumed poachers hitch-hiked and asked the policemen to take them to Mbombela. During the bail hearing, the Hawks said that some of the suspects had legal records that were quite hefty, especially for intrusion into Kruger Park. Mnisi, one of the 2 cops, was already involved in 2 burglaries and had illegally detained a weapon. In his defense, one poacher said that it was initially just a wild pig hunting party that went bad. When they saw a rhinoceros, they instinctively aimed at its head. After contacting an 'Inyanga', a traditional healer, they cut its ears and tail, as the healer instructed them to do.

**December 13, 2016**  
**Pretoria, Gauteng Province, South Africa**  
 Hugo Ras is still in prison (cf. "On the Trail" n° 14 p. 64). His lawyers keep trying every 6 months.<sup>42</sup>

**December 16, 2016**  
**Tonga, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**  
 The police received a tip off. The police dashed to the suspect's home in Block C in the neighborhood of KaSiboshwa. They seized a horn in the bag of the man who was trying to flee via a sugarcane field.<sup>43</sup>

**Vendredi 18 décembre 2016**  
**Potchefstroom, North West Province, South Africa**

Search of a car reported. Firearms. Pigsticker. Ax. Ammunition. 2 arrests. A deadly weekend for rhinoceroses averted.<sup>44</sup>



**December 19, 2016**  
**Askari Game Lodge, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

Two poached. One of them was pregnant. The 3<sup>rd</sup> one is missing. Informants can contact 08600 10111 and may remain anonymous if they prefer.<sup>45</sup>

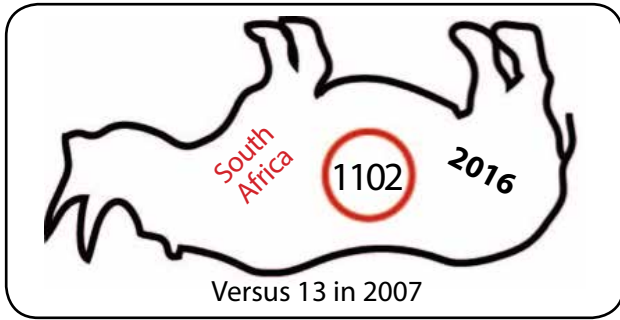


**December 22, 2016**  
**Crocodile Bridge Gate, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

Death of 2 poachers. No horn or carcass on the scene of the clash with the rangers. Seizure of 2 firearms.<sup>46</sup>







**December 24-25<sup>th</sup> 2016  
Madikwe Game Reserve and  
Klerksdorp, North West Province,  
South Africa**

Four rhinos poached, three females and one male, a few meters from each other near the northern fence of the park. Five rhinos poached. According to OSCAP (Outraged South African Citizens Against Poaching), they were in a boma waiting for export to Viet Nam. "Normally we have a peak at the beginning of December then it goes down. But apparently the poachers are not going home for Christmas, they are staying here and are busy poaching our rhinos to extinction". OSCAP draws up a black picture of this end of the year.<sup>47</sup>



**December 29, 2016  
Polokwane Game Reserve,  
Limpopo Province, South  
Africa**

One of the last rhinoceroses of the reserve was the victim of poaching at the end of the year! For peanuts, just a horn stump! The animal had been dehorned 5 months beforehand as a precaution. According to people who are familiar with it, the Reserve resembles a free-for-all inn. Booze, blasting music, random searches!<sup>48</sup>



**Limpopo, end of December**

Breaking into a veterinary office. Massive theft of anaesthetic drugs. The hypodermic syringe rifles are going to be fashionable in the beginning of 2017.

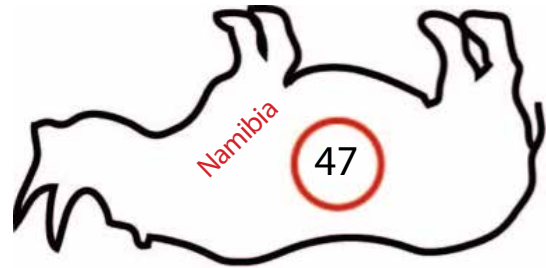
**BOTSWANA**

**Mid November 2016  
Okavango Delta, North-West District, Botswana**

A rhinoceros was poached. The poachers did not have time to remove the horns. With the passing of time, the Delta has earned the reputation of being a haven of peace for rhinoceroses, which have been translocated from South Africa. The last poaching incident was 3 years ago, in Xaraga. It seems that Partson Tapera Gatora, a Zimbabwean native, was involved in exporting the horns.<sup>49</sup>

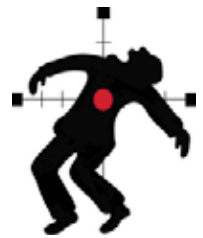
**NAMIBIA**

**November 2016  
Etosha National Park, Kunene Region, Namibia**  
In November alone, 7 new carcasses were counted.  
- 47 since January 1, 2016<sup>50</sup>  
Elephant poaching is also on the rise in the country:  
- 78 in 2014  
- 91 in 2015  
- 76 between January 1 and October 30, 2016.



**October 30 and beginning of  
December 2016  
Etosha National Park, Kunene  
Region, Namibia**

Death of 4 poachers after gunfire was exchanged with the rangers. 3 poachers then died of hunger and thirst in the desert.



Among the families of the victims, the rumor is going around that there is something suspicious about the affair, and that it has something to do with the export of 18 rhinoceros horns by Ye Zhiwei via the Windhoek international airport, with the supposed complicity of a security guard. Namright, the Namibian human rights League, is looking into the fate of the poachers who died in the desert.<sup>51</sup>

**December 11, 2016  
Etosha National Park, Kunene Region, Namibia**

The AZ editorial staff (Allgemeine Zeitung, a Namibian newspaper in German) confirms that one of its readers witnessed Etosha Park officials near their Namutoni base camp taking a dead rhinoceros from the bushes, near the waterhole in small Namutoni, on Saturday December 10. The animal was dehorned, and some of it was skinned.<sup>52</sup>



## REPEATED OFFENSE

**December 22 and 29, 2016**  
**Near Gobabis, Omaheke Region, Namibia**

- Two rhinoceroses dehorned. The female was pregnant, she had a stillbirth after she had been shot. Two others were severely wounded. The poachers are on the run and did not leave any clues behind. The poachers' weapon had a silencer.

- Three people arrested. One of them was Kandjii, the former doctor for the Namibian football team, the Brave Warriors. The trio was freed on bail after the murder of a farmer in February 2015. Kandjii was also involved in rhinoceros poaching in Etosha National Park in 2014.<sup>53</sup>



## AMERICA

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

#### OPERATION CRASH

**November 8, 2016**  
**St. Louis, State of Missouri, United States of America**

46-year-old Robert Wesley Newman was sentenced to 2 years of probation, 40 hours of community service, and a \$ 170,000 US Community Service Payment to the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), for trafficking 4 black rhinoceros horns and 2 white rhinoceros horns between Tennessee and Illinois. In exchange for 6 horns, Newman had received \$ 170,000 US in cash in a brown paper bag. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service had him on close watch. This service monitors horn trafficking within the United States and trafficking for export. As part of the CRASH operation, the US Courts have sentenced several national and international traffickers to suspended sentences or prison sentences without remission, and to fines or compensation amounting to \$ 7,600,000 US in all. Cf. "On the Trail" n°1 p. 24, n°2 p. 49, n°3 p. 52, n°5 p. 76, n°6 p. 69 and 107, n°7 p. 72, n°8 p. 66, n°9 p. 66 and 71, n°11 p. 60, n°12 p. 90.<sup>54</sup>

The NFWF is devoted to maintaining and restoring wildlife and natural habitats for "current and future generations."



#### OPERATION CRASH

**November 29, 2016**  
**New York, State of New York, United States of America**

Zhou pleaded guilty. This Asian art expert admits that he bought 5 raw horns from a colleague from the State of New York who is also an Asian art expert, knowing that these horns had been illegally transported from Texas to the eastern coast of the United States. Shortly afterwards, they were sold for \$ 130,000 US to a partner responsible for exporting them to the People's Republic of China.<sup>55</sup>

## ASIA

### CAMBODIA

**November 1, 2016**

**Phnom Penh International Airport, Cambodia**

Seizure of 35 kg of horns. Arrest of a passenger holding a Chinese passport coming from Johannesburg via Singapore. Cf. "On the Trail" n°14 p.68.<sup>56</sup>



Between \$ 4 to \$ 7 million US according to the Wildlife Alliance NGO.

## INDIA

**Beginning of October 2016**

**Mon District, State of Nagaland, India**

Arrest of 60-year-old Roizuddin, a poacher, arms trafficker, and organized crime chief wanted for 15 years. Nagaland is a transit point for horns heading for China. Naga tribe members poach in Kaziranga National Park.<sup>57</sup>



**October 18, 2016**

**Jaldapara National Park, Alipurduar District, State of West Bengal, India**



Seizure of a horn, an assault rifle, and 46 cartridges. 4 arrests in a village inside the Park. This is the first time that an AK47 was found in a poacher's home. It was under a cushion. It seems to be from Assam.<sup>58</sup>

**October 21, 2016**

**Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India**

Discovery of a tiger carcass. This is the 16<sup>th</sup> poaching in the park since the beginning of the year.<sup>59</sup>

**October 25, 2016**

**Karbi Anglong District, State of Assam, India**

Near Kaziranga National Park, midnight arrest of 3 people in possession of a .303 caliber rifle, a silencer, ammunition, an ax, and a flashlight.<sup>60</sup>



**October 26, 2016**

**Burachapori Wildlife Sanctuary, State of Assam, India**

After the death of her mother (cf. "On the Trail" n° 13, p. 74), it was the daughter's turn to die. She was 3 years old. She was infested with intestinal parasites, anemic, and was not responding favorably to the treatment. The program to translocate rhinoceroses from Kaziranga National Park to other parks in Assam is harshly criticized. Several NGOs (Early Birds, Aranya Suraksha Samity, Green Guard, The Green Society and Centre for Conservation, Education and Research) and student trade unions are demanding its immediate suspension. In addition to the health hazards for the pachyderms, the opponents of the program are in fear of poaching in parks that are not protected enough. Speaking anonymously, an Assam forestry services officer revealed that the female rhinoceros dead in May suffered many traumas during her capture and during the waiting period in the 'boma', the enclosure where she was confined. "It was a terrible sight". "When waken up the mother rhino wounded herself with multiple injuries each time she stumbled on the thorny barrier in the effort to free herself." "Further, the mother suffered a grave cut in the ear that turned septic and the animal died a slow and

painful death." The 2020 Indian RhinoVision program has support from the Assam Department of Forests, the Bodoland Territorial Council, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It is said to be responsible for the death of 13 rhinoceroses during the transfer and afterwards.<sup>61</sup>

**October 26, 2016**

**Silbari, Baksa District, State of Assam, India**

Seizure of a rhinoceros horn (500 g). 3 arrests. The examination revealed that the horn came from Bhutan and that it was to be sold in Baghmara for 1.5 million rupee (\$ 22,455 US).<sup>62</sup>

**26 octobre 2016**

**Sonitpur District, State of Assam, India**

Arrest of Omar Farukh, wanted for many rhinoceros poachings in Orang National Park.<sup>63</sup>

**November 15, 2016**

**Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India  
Gangrene**

Five officers responsible for monitoring Kaziranga National Park have been caught by the justice system. They would have sold the horn of the rhinoceros that had been poached in Bagori to traffickers from the district of Karbi Anglong for Rs. 40 lakh (\$ 60,000 US).<sup>64</sup>

**November 16, 2016**

**Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India**

This is the 16th one in Kaziranga National Park. This one was shot 32 times in 2 seconds. That's what you get with an AK47. The immediate action of the rangers prevented the attackers from getting a hold of the horn. They fled into the hills via Rong Bong.<sup>65</sup>

**December 14, 2016**

**Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India**

A carcass riddled with AK46 bullets of the young adult who was about 9 years old. The dehorned carcass was found early in the morning, one km from the express route that runs through the park. This is the 17<sup>th</sup> incident since the beginning of the year.<sup>66</sup>



**December 17, 2016**

**Karbi Anglong District, State of Assam, India**

At night, seizure of a horn and 3 firearms in a bivouac of rebels who fled.<sup>67</sup>

**December 22, 2016**

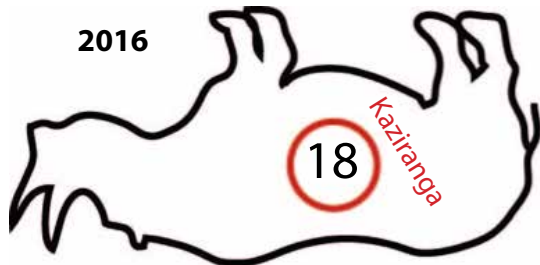
**Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India**

The bullets shot him around 6:30 near a backwater of Diphlu River. He was a young subadult male, about 10 years old. He fell into the water after



the shooting. The poachers dehorned him after he drowned. It is said that the rescuers couldn't see anything at the time because of the dense fog. The carcass was found later. 3 Park rangers were suspended for their lack of vigilance.

This is the 18<sup>th</sup> rhinoceros that has been poached since the beginning of the year. The gruesome count will be higher than in 2015 (17 poaching incidents), but will be lower than in 2014 (27 poaching incidents).<sup>68</sup>



**End of December 2016  
State of Assam, India**

With the 2 individuals, the undercover police officers agreed on the price of 75,000 rupee (\$ 1,100 US) for the purchase of the 1.2 kg horn. The 2 sellers were arrested, caught in the act.<sup>69</sup>

**December 29, 2016  
State of Assam, India**

The Rhino Horn Verification Committee appointed by the Assam government continues to scan the Tezpur inventory, where the disturbing presence of 5 fake horns has been reported (cf. "On the Trail" n°14 p. 70). The available archives reveal that they were recorded as "fake horns".

Experts are intrigued by the reliability and validity of this procedure, which has not been identified in the 5 other official horn's safes.<sup>70</sup>

**NEPAL**

**Pink Notebook**

**December 24, 2016  
Bardia National Park, Bardiya District,  
Mid-Western Development Region, Nepal**

While 5 rhinoceroses were getting ready to be transferred from Chitwan National Park to Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve, Bardia National Park management announced a happy event, of unknown sex. There are now 7 rhinoceroses in the Park.<sup>71</sup>

**VIET NAM**

**October 12, 2016  
Mong Cai, Quang Ninh Province, Viet Nam**

Seizure in a car of a 900 g horn that seems to be from a rhinoceros. 2 arrests. The 2 men said that a Chinese partner paid them 3 million dong (\$ 134 US) to transport it all the way to Hanoi. The horn was passed from China to Viet Nam. Demand stays high in Viet Nam.<sup>72</sup>

**November 18, 2016**

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

Seizure of a rhinoceros horn and scraps. Provoc : On the same day in the Vietnamese capital, there was an international conference on strengthening the fight against wildlife trafficking. The value of the seizure is estimated or underestimated at 4 billion dong (\$ 177,800 US), or \$ 44,450 US/kg. The average annual revenue of a Vietnamese citizen is \$ 2,100 US, according to World Bank calculations.<sup>73</sup>



The horn came from the north, near China. The man had taken a domestic flight. His goal was to sell it in Ho Chi Minh City.

**December 29, 2016**

**Noi Bai International Airport, Hanoi, Viet Nam**

A record seizure of 50 kg of horn in an anonymous suitcase. The Kenya Airways flight was coming in from Kenya.<sup>74</sup>

**EUROPE**

**IRLANDE**

**December 14, 2016  
Rathkeale, County Limerick, Ireland**

Seizure at 7 homes and 4 sheds used by the Rathkeale Rovers (cf. "On the Trail" n° 12 p. 72, n°13 p. 76, n°14 p. 97) of a supposed libation cup made of horn, a significant amount of cash, and 3 very expensive watches. The raid of 50 'gardai' (Irish police) happened at the same time as the return of several members of the clan who came back to the family nest from all over the world for the holidays.

The garda raid was conducted with the Irish Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB), in the presence of its profilers.

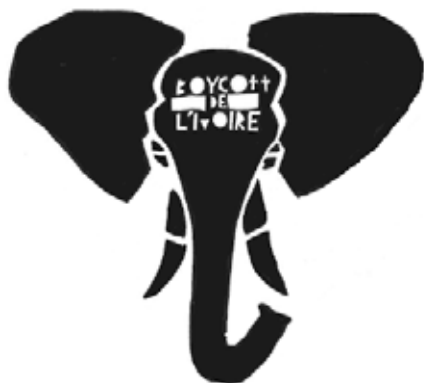
Two 20- and 40-year-old men who slowed down the search by physically blocking it were arrested for a minor breach of the peace. They were released with bail under strict probation.<sup>75</sup>



## Pierre Pfeffer 1927-2016 Life and Death of a Giant

On the spot in Corsica to discover the moufflons, in Malaysia to discover the lizards, in Africa to discover the elephants and other large herbivores.

Behind the scenes of governments and CITES to defend elephants, to the end. "Do not let go," he said from Paris to all African delegates meeting in favour of Appendix I in Johannesburg in October 2016. It looked like he was live from the savannah.



Pierre Pfeffer with the masked elephants of Robin des Bois during the destruction of 3 tons of illegal ivory in Paris in February 2014.



## Rhinos and Elephants

### AMERICA

#### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**Mid-December 2016**

##### **State of California, United States of America**

The California law prohibiting the sale of rhinoceros horns and ivory has been in effect since July 1st, 2016. It concerns ivories of elephant, mammoth, mastodon, walrus, warthog, hippopotamus, sperm whale and narwhal.

Mastodons (*Mammuth americanum*) lived exclusively in North America. They were slightly smaller than mammoths. The tusks were not curved like those of the mammoths. The species died about 10,000 years ago.

- **San Francisco.** Seizure in 2 shops of a rhinoceros horn bracelet, 18 ivory statuettes from 38 to 66 cm high and 37 ivory miniatures from 1.2 cm to 15.2 cm, a whale tooth, 2 ivory chess boards and 2 engraved tusks presented as mammoth ivory. The items seized globally exceed the value of \$ 500,000 US.

- **Los Angeles International Airport.** Seizure of 377 jewels containing ivory from Indonesia.<sup>1</sup>

### ASIA

#### CHINA

**November 8, 2016**

##### **Beijing, China**

A Tibetan religious art dealer (cf. "On the Trail" n°14 p.73) was sentenced to 14 years in prison without remission and a fine of 60,000 yuan (\$ 8,850 US) for involvement in several cases of wildlife trafficking, above all in ivory and rhinoceros horns. 4 accomplices were sentenced to 3 and 13 years in prison.<sup>2</sup>



#### VIET NAM

**October 25, 2016**

##### **Hanoi, Viet Nam**

Sentenced to 9 months in prison. Vu Thanh Hung was working in Angola, more or less. Actually less. One of his acquaintances suggested that he return to the home country with 50 kg of ivory and rhinoceros horns in his belongings, in exchange for the tidy sum of \$ 1,300 US. Upon arrival in 2015, the suitcases were rightly diagnosed as being suspicious. 31-year-old Hung fled when he sensed this would not turn out nicely. He lived in the district of Ha Thin. He went into hiding for one year, under threat of an arrest warrant.<sup>3</sup>



**November 27, 2016**

##### **Mong Cai, Quang Ninh Province, Viet Nam**

The customs motorcycle brigade brought a car to a standstill a few kilometers away from the Chinese border. Result: 27 rhinoceros horn slices, 1,075 g of rhinoceros skin pieces. 11 bracelets, 10 necklaces, 4 ivory pendants weighing 1,181 g in all. A couple was arrested. An investigation has been launched.<sup>4</sup>