

specimens were contained in crates labelled as “stones”; the address of the recipient was found to be false.

On 26 August 2017, officials in Sungai Siput, Perak, seized 200 wildlife items from a car being driven by a Vietnamese national, including 188 Sun Bear *Helarctos malayanus* (CITES I) claws, 21 Sun Bear (CITES I) teeth, 17 Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) claws, eight Tiger teeth, one Sambar Deer *Rusa unicorn* horn, and parts of other unidentified wildlife.

Hindustan Times: <http://bit.ly/2ppLiYy>, 11 May 2017; *TRAFFIC*: <http://bit.ly/2zKqyMU>, 23 May 2017; *Gulf News*: <http://bit.ly/2ylJj4E>, 16 May 2017; *TRAFFIC*: <http://bit.ly/2y0pLW8>, 11 September 2017

PHILIPPINES: On 6 July 2017, authorities intercepted a boat carrying 70 dead Hawksbill Turtles *Eretmochelys imbricata* (CITES I) off the coast of Dumaratan town in northern Palawan. The vessel was reportedly bound for Balabac, an island town in southern Palawan. The animals had been collected from Barangay Mayteged, Taytay, in northern mainland Palawan.

Rappler: <http://bit.ly/2tyxHNv>, 7 July 2017

RHINOCEROS

All species of Rhinocerotidae are listed in CITES Appendix I except the South African and Swaziland populations of *Ceratotherium simum*, which are listed in Appendix II.

MALAYSIA: On 7 April 2017, authorities at Kuala Lumpur International Airport seized 18 rhinoceros horns (51 kg) packed in wooden crates. The items had been shipped from Mozambique via Qatar using false documents and declared as “obra de arte” [works of art].

Reuters: <http://reut.rs/2it5bLU>, 10 April 2017

SOUTH AFRICA: Rhinoceros horn seizures at O.R. Tambo Airport, Johannesburg: On 17 May 2017, Customs officers seized a foil parcel containing eight pieces (7 kg) of rhinoceros horn concealed among packets of confectionery destined for Hong Kong via Qatar. The consignment was declared as “tea bags”.

On 22 May 2017, officials intercepted a parcel containing nine rhinoceros horns (13 kg) destined for Hong Kong.

On 11 June 2017, 10 rhinoceros horns (25 kg) were found in two bags bound for Turkey; their final destination was believed to be Hong Kong. The couriers, two Chinese nationals who had already boarded the flight, were removed from the aircraft and arrested.

On 14 June 2017, Customs officials seized 28.7 kg of rhinoceros horn from the luggage of a Vietnamese national. The five horns had been coated in hard wax and wrapped in newspaper. The suspect was arrested.

On 25 July 2017, a Chinese national, Shuangshuang Xue, arriving from Lusaka, Zambia, bound for Hong Kong, was arrested after 14 (20 kg) pieces of rhinoceros horn were found in her luggage. On 12 October 2017, at Kempton Park Regional Court, she was sentenced to four years in gaol. Following genetic profiling it was discovered that the horns derived from the White Rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum*, and from five different animals (four males and one female). None of the 14 pieces could be linked to any poaching incidents or registered stockpile.

On 8 September 2017, a man bound for Hong Kong was arrested after five rhinoceros horns (12 kg) wrapped in foil were found in his luggage.

SARS media releases: <http://bit.ly/219UnmU>, 19 May; <http://bit.ly/2ylMbNu>, 23 May 2017; www.saps.gov.za/newsroom/selnewsdetails.php?nid=12603, 11 September 2017; *ENCA*: <http://bit.ly/2gyHzrV>, 13 June 2017; *News 24*: <http://bit.ly/2i073rA>, 14 June 2017; *News 24*: <http://bit.ly/2xZGMo2>, 15 June 2017; <http://bit.ly/2yHCqjC>, 26 July 2017; *ENCA*: <http://bit.ly/2zw5ecV>, 26 July 2017; *Department of Environmental Affairs media release*: <http://bit.ly/2lctL4K>, 18 October 2017; *IOL*: <http://bit.ly/2v1xTbs>, 27 July 2017

On 5 June 2017, police in Hoedspruit, Limpopo, arrested three members of a suspected cross-border rhinoceros poaching syndicate linked to two cases of rhinoceros poaching in the Hoedspruit area. It is reported that the suspects were found in possession of a firearm which connected them to more than 60 cases of rhinoceros poaching countrywide, two in Hoedspruit.

On 19 August 2017, a farm manager was arrested at Sandringham Game Reserve, Hoedspruit, Limpopo, after authorities discovered 10 rhinoceros horns (and two ivory tusks and a huge arsenal of weapons and ammunition). The suspect, a member of the Professional Hunters Association of South Africa, was remanded in custody.

In September 2017, over the course of a week, 18 suspects were arrested in Skukuza, Hluhluwe, Barberton, KwaMsane, Nongoma and Gluckstadt, for offences relating to rhinoceros poaching and possession of rhinoceros horns.

Most suspects have appeared in court, with five receiving a collective 30-year gaol term. On 7 September 2017, at Skukuza Regional Court, Mapoyisa Mahluli was sentenced to an effective 20 years in gaol after he was found guilty of rhinoceros poaching. He was arrested in March 2016 in the Satara section of Kruger National Park (KNP) after rangers, alerted to gunshots, discovered a Southern White Rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum simum* that had been shot dead and the horns sawn off; the suspects were picked up by their tracks. During a shootout, Mahluli was arrested while his accomplice escaped. Arms, ammunition, an axe and a fresh set of rhinoceros horns were recovered from the scene.

Mahluli's sentence includes two years in gaol for trespassing in KNP, 10 years for the illegal hunting of a rhinoceros, eight years for the possession of a firearm with intent to commit a crime, and three years for possession of an unlicensed firearm.

Algoa.fm: <http://bit.ly/2yMkRQk>, 7 June 2017; *News 24*: <http://bit.ly/2uSkWBb>, 19 August 2017; *Herald Live*: <http://bit.ly/2gDal7z>, 22 September 2017; *South African Police Service media statement*: <http://bit.ly/2yJhZU9>, 11 September 2017

VIET NAM: see other/multi-seizures

ZAMBIA: On 13 July 2017, authorities arrested three Chinese nationals and two locals found carrying 25 pieces (32 kg) of rhinoceros horn at the Chanida border post with Mozambique. The origin of the horns could not be immediately confirmed.

ENCA: <http://bit.ly/2zw5ecV>, 30 July 2017

OTHER / MULTI-SEIZURES

CHINA: On 31 July 2017, police in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, announced that they had seized over 10 000 wild animals, along with almost one tonne of animal products since they began cracking down on the illegal online animal trade in April. Police investigated reports that animals were being traded through WeChat social media site; subsequently Weibo, WeChat and QQ, and a number of live streaming sites were reportedly being closely monitored by authorities. A total of 5380 messages relating to the illegal sale and distribution of animals was uncovered and traced back to perpetrators in the province. In one incident alone, authorities seized over 1000 animals from a vehicle at a market in the capital.

That's mags: <http://bit.ly/2zlw5RU>, 27 July 2017

INDIA: On 21 August 2017, in what is believed to be one of the largest seizures of its kind in the country, authorities seized 32 985 mongoose hair painting brushes from the wholesale market in Kolkata's Burrabazar area. Four shopkeepers were arrested.

Mongoose *Herpestidae* are protected species under the *Wildlife Protection Act, 1972*. It is reported that several hundred animals would have been killed to make these brushes. The arrests revealed an inter-State network of the illegal wildlife trade of mongoose hair, with a village in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas, 50 km from Kolkata, serving as the centre for the manufacture of the brushes.

On 9 October 2017, officials in Gujarat arrested a suspect wanted in connection with Lion *Panthera leo* (CITES II) poaching cases dating back to 2007. During that year, 10 Lions were poached from Babariya range in Amreli and Junagadh. Some 32 suspects arrested at the time were sentenced to three years in gaol but two people, including the latest suspect arrested, absconded. He is accused of selling Lion bones and teeth as Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) parts.