

ROBIN DES BOIS

ON_{the} TRAIL

The defaunation bulletin
Quarterly information and analysis report on animal poaching and smuggling
n°21. Events from the 1th April to the 30 of June 2018
Published on July 31, 2018

Original version in French





“On the Trail”, the defaunation magazine, aims to get out of the drip of daily news to draw up every three months an organized and analyzed survey of poaching, smuggling and worldwide market of animal species protected by national laws and international conventions.

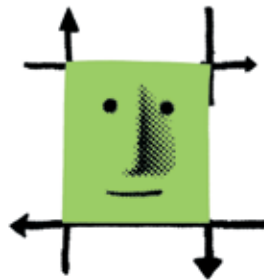
“On the Trail” highlights the new weapons of plunderers, the new modus operandi of smugglers, rumours intended to attract humans consumers of animals and their by-products. “On the Trail” gathers and disseminates feedback from institutions, individuals and NGOs that fight against poaching and smuggling. End to end, the “On the Trail” are the biological, social, ethnological, police, customs, legal and financial chronicle of poaching and other conflicts between humanity and animality.

Previous issues in English

<http://www.robindesbois.org/en/a-la-trace-bulletin-dinformation-et-danalyses-sur-le-braconnage-et-la-contrebande/>

Previous issues in French

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ROBIN DES BOIS

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Judgment and sanction

Condemnation, acquittal, fine...



Human death

Guard, ranger, policeman, poacher... by firearm or other means.



Poisoning

By chemicals, pesticides and medicines: cyanide, Carbofuran, Diclofenac, M99 ...



Trapping

Poaching by jaw trap, snare ...



Full moon

Moonlight poaching

CITES Appendices

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. 182 Member States

Appendix I : species threatened with extinction. Trade in specimens of these species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances and under import and export permits.

Appendix II : export permit required in order to avoid utilization incompatible with the species survival. Import permit if required by national law.

Appendix III : species that are protected in at least one country, which has asked other CITES Parties for assistance in controlling the trade. In the case of trade from a State that included the species in Appendix III, an export permit of that State is required.

Rhinoceroses

Poaching statistics in Kruger Park are under embargo by order of the South African Ministry of Environment. The trials of the poaching bosses are postponed from year to year. Collusion between poachers, rangers and other law enforcement agencies persists.



Chinese and Vietnamese nationals play a major role in horn conveying.

After a break, poaching resumes in Kaziranga Park, India.

In Viet Nam, two leading specialists in Asiatic traditional medicine knocked out the alleged healing properties of the horns.

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°21

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

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Asia	China	25,500	46

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

May 2 and 12, 2018

Meru National Park, County of Meru, Kenya

- Poaching of three rhinos, two adults and one youth. The three carcasses discovered early in the morning were dehorned. A search undertaken the night before after gunshots rang out in the park was unsuccessful. Neither the attacked rhinoceroses nor the poachers had been found.

- Four KWS agents are permanently removed from their job. Two of them are subject to prosecution. On the occasion of the edition of a memory stamp with white rhinos from northern Africa, the Ministry of Tourism Najib Balala said that the corrupt KWS agents are from now on crossed out and not just suspended or transferred to other services.¹

MOZAMBIQUE

April 15, 2018

Maputo International Airport, Mozambique

Classic scheme: Qatar Airways flight bound for Doha with Hong Kong as final destination. Four horns in the suitcase of a Chinese passenger. Less classic: the horns were pre-cut and no longer resembled horns.²



© Club of Mozambique

May 4, 2018

Sabie Game Reserve, Province of Maputo, Mozambique

Poaching of a rhinoceros Saturday April 28, discovery of the body Friday May 4.³



SOUTH SUDAN

Mid-April 2018

Rumbek, Lakes State, South Sudan

The Ministry of Fauna, Flora, and Tourism is accusing the population and NGOs of poaching and trafficking. Ms. Kumba cites as an example one foreign NGO member who had hid a horn cut into slices in a walking pole to escape customs control. President Kiir forbade last year all selling of ivory or rhinoceros horns on the domestic market.⁴

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

April 2, 2018

Between Malelane and Komatipoort, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa. Border with Mozambique.

Seizure of a horn on the N4 in the back of a Mazda. Arrest of four Mozambicans aged 22 to 35 years old.⁵



April 11, 2018

Mahamba Port of Entry, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa. Border with Swaziland.

The Mercedes gang did not say its last word. At a routine inspection, the limousine was stopped. The driver springs the well-known verse of "hood that doesn't open." Four large horns were found next to the carburetor. The driver took flight into the bush. He was caught again. Four arrests. They are between 24 and 32 years old.⁶



© SAPS

Mid-April 2018

Tala Manzi Game Farm, North West Province, South Africa

Three bullets in the body. Horns and tail cut off.⁷

April 16, 2018

Weenen Game Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Poaching of two white rhinoceroses. However, as a precaution, their horns had been shortened. The bandits took possession of the fresh growth.⁸

April 20, 2018

Pretoria, Gauteng Province, South Africa

The trial of Dawie Groenewald released on bail and his 7 co-accused is planned ... in 2021. In South Africa, the bigger one is in the horns' trafficking, the more one saves time. The lawyer of a sidekick who waits in prison for his sentence cries foul (cf. "On the Trail" n°20 p. 80).⁹

**Weekend of 20-22 April 2018
Skukuza Section, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

- Friday, April 20, arrest of three suspects including a man wearing a commander of Frelimo (Frente de Libertação Moçambique)'s uniform. They are in possession of a large calibre, ammunition, poaching kit and a pair of horns.

- Saturday, April 21, arrest by the rangers with the help of the canine unit of three poachers. On the same day, fighting between rangers and poachers; two arrests and one death among poachers.

- Sunday April 22, clash. One dead and one injured among the poachers. Two horns found at the spot.

The same day, another clash between the rangers and a group of three poachers. One of them is fatally wounded, the other two manage to escape. A firearm, ammunition and a poaching kit were found on site. Also on Sunday, arrest of a police officer stationed in Skukuza for his alleged involvement in poaching rhinos in the park.¹⁰



April 23, 2018

Somkhanda Game Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Poaching of an adult female. The horns were removed. Her calf, a male, survived the massacre. He was preemptively dehorned and placed in an orphanage.¹¹

End of April 2018

Montagu Mountain Local Nature Reserve, Western Cape Province, South Africa

As the full moon approaches, it's the second poaching. "The fuckers must still be on reserve because they didn't even have time to remove horns."¹²



© WAR

May 2018
Mahikeng, North West Province, South Africa

Sentencing of three poachers, Ndlovu, Khoza, Maseve, to penalties of 15 to 28 years in prison. After a high-speed chase, the three men fled the VW polo. Inside, two fresh horns and a little further down in the fugitives' wake, a .375 rifle, a silencer, 20 ammunitions and three knives. An accomplice, Mothopa, owner of the car, got 5 years jail.¹³



May 7, 2018
Lephalale, Limpopo Province, South Africa

At the home of Tony Freitas, in February 2017, the police discovered in a cold bedroom six legs, seven carcasses, two rhinoceros heads, two buried skins and bones, and a carcass in the process of decomposition. The horns were nowhere to be found. Freitas was sentenced to 10 years in prison or to a fine of 1 million rand, or \$81,000 US.¹⁴ Cf. "On the Trail" n°16, p.67.



May 13, 2018
Mokopong, North West Province, South Africa. Border with Botswana.

Six people suspected of attempted poaching in an organized gang are in custody, five men and one woman. In one of their vehicles, a two-cabin bakkie, a high-caliber rifle, a silencer, and knives were seized. The woman was released on bail for medical reasons.¹⁵

Mid-May 2018
Zeerust, North West Province, South Africa

Conviction of four men to a collective sentence of 90 years prison term for killing and dehorning a rhino in the Madikwe reserve. See "On the Trail" n°17, p.74.¹⁶



May 17, 2018
Mtubatuba, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Dumisami Gwala trial for horn trafficking and attempted murder of a police officer is postponed one more time. The accused took the stand alone and requested an additional two months to collect the money needed to secure a new attorney's collaboration. The prosecutor stands up by pointing out that Gwala had used the same scheme on several occasions before the Ngwelezane court. The judges "to guarantee him a fair trial" granted him a period of one month. If Gwala appears without assistance on June 18, he will have to defend himself by his own means throughout the trial, the date of which has not yet been set. The new lawyer will request a further delay of several weeks or months to review the voluminous file. See "On the Trail" n°20 p. 81, n°19 p. 86, n°18 p. 75, n°14 p. 63 and 66, n°12 p. 71.¹⁷

May 20, 2018
National Kruger Park, Skukuza Section, Province of Mpumalanga, South Africa

Gun shots fire. A poached and dehorned female is found. By her side, a one-month-old baby with serious machete wounds on his back and front paws. The spinal cord could be damaged. The vet doctor Nolene du Plessis called by Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary rushed to provide the first aid. Despite the gravity of his wounds, the little survivor proving to have an unfailing energy is making daily progress and enjoys his milk bottles. Prognosis is optimistic.¹⁸



May 21, 2018
Kruger National Park, South Africa

On Monday, four men in possession of an A.303 rifle, appropriate ammunition and an axe were surprised by park rangers near the entry point to Lebombo. They claimed to be waiting for someone to go further into the park. A little while later, a vehicle arrived at the meeting point: behind the wheel, a police officer in charge of entry control. The police officer with his crew were arrested for conspiracy to commit a crime. This new collusion between the SAPS (South African Police Service) and poachers comes just after General Mondli Zuma promised that all corrupt agents would be excluded from SAPS.¹⁹

OPERATION FIELA II
May 18 and 28, 2018
Phalaborwa, Province of Limpopo, South Africa

Release on bail denied on May 28 for three men, Khosa, Baloyi, and Nkuna. Two of the individuals were already on bail after attempted murder, burglary and a rhinoceros poaching in Kruger Park. A roadblock intercepted the three individuals on Friday, May 18. In their vehicle, there were 200,000 rand, or \$16,000 US, in cash, one of the ears, the nose and the tail of a white rhinoceros.²⁰



May 22 and 30, 2018
Port Alfred, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

Poaching of a 4 year old rhino in Fort D'Acree Reserve and poaching and dehorning of a female and her young in the private reserve Oceana Beach and Wildlife. A third rhinoceros is missing. Nine confirmed poaches in the province since the beginning of the year.²¹



May 30 and June 5, 2018
Benoni, Province of Gauteng, South Africa

Arrest by HAWKS of two men known for being trafficking experts after 2 years of investigation and almost immediate release on bail of \$4,000 US for each of them. The 2 suspects based in Johannesburg had bought 4 horns from poaching in Kruger Park and organized their exfiltration to the central province of Gauteng. SANParks management expressed its satisfaction and determination. "Come 2019, we want to see the number of rhino killed annually reduced to under 400." It has surpassed one thousand since 2013. Mandla Mashele and Kelvin Malapane were released on bail of 50,000 rand each (\$ 3600 US). The value of the four horns is estimated at 1.5 million rand (\$108,000 US).²²

May 30, 2018
Hekpoort, Province of Gauteng, South Africa

Poaching of an adult male in the Askari game Lodge. He was found lying on his side, mortally hit by bullet. The shooters did not have the time to take the horn.²³



GANG
May 31, 2018
Cape Town, Western Cape Province, South Africa

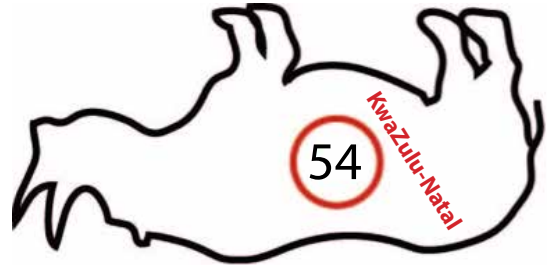
Sentencing of Alexandre Dias Shintlhangu to 5 years in prison. End of August of last year, he had broken into the Karoo National Park before tracking down rhino footprints. After discovering the hole in the fence, a ranger in turn followed the intruder's trail before even being joined by his colleagues. Shintlhangu was arrested, his two companions vanished. On site, all the equipment necessary for rhino poaching was seized. The offense is all the more serious that Shintlhangu was prepared to attack black rhinos in conspiracy, the only ones harbored in Karoo park. More so, he already was on parole for poaching at the time of his relapse. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 5 years for break and entry and unauthorized hunting activities, 5 years for unlawful possession of weapons, 3 years for unlawful possession of ammunition. The sentences are concurrent.²⁴



End of May 2018
Saint Lucia, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

An investigation from rural communities ended in the arrest of four suspected poachers in the wetlands of Isimangaliso Park bordering the Indian Ocean.

Since the beginning of the year, 54 rhinoceroses were poached in the province.²⁵



Early June 2018
Mkuze Game Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Five armed men, equipped for a rhino raid, are arrested. They were getting near the reserve.²⁶



Beginning of June 2018
Near Lephalale, Province of Limpopo, South Africa

The mother is dead, a black rhino. Rescue of the baby after a two-day search. He is exhausted and thirsty. He has a machete wound. He was taken to an orphanage.²⁷



**Beginning of June, 2018
Pilanesberg National Park, North-West Province,
South Africa**

Rescue of a young female. Her bullet wound was not critical. She will come through. She was not dehorned.²⁸

**June 5, 2018
Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**

The Ndlovu trio with the unforgettable Forget pleads not guilty (cf "On the Trail" n°13, p.72). According to the investigation file, they were in possession of Etorfine (M99) and Thiafentanil, a syringe gun, about 10 kg of horns but they deny it all.²⁹

**14 June 2018
Hazyview, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

The big fish does everything to get out of the trap. At the first bail hearing, the over crowded room was evacuated after someone threatened to fire shots. At the second, a procession of ladies and other supporters came to greet Mr Big and thank him with handshakes and effusivenesses.



Mr. Big is a local businessman whose benefits inspire gratitude and loyalty from the rural communities. His lawyer did not fail to point out that Mr Big was "a job creator". Jobs that are not always very clean and honest. Petrus Sydney Mabuza, 49, has been involved in trafficking for at least 13 years, according to the investigation file. The thread of several cases including that of the six horns found in a cooler in Hazyview goes back to him (see "On the Trail" n°16, p. 66). Two undercover Hawks agents finally caught him in the act by selling him two horns for 280,000 rand (\$22,300 US). The horns had been deposited in the white BMW of one of his subordinates, Moshe Thobela, and had been recovered from the spare wheel compartment by an emergency road police roadblock. Mr. Big's bail battle goes from hearing to hearing. The public prosecutor's office is openly opposed to it despite the intimidation of which he is the victim. "He [Mr. Big] does not get his hands dirty, but pays others to do the work for him" says senior state advocate Nemaroani. Mr. Coetzee tries to coax the judges by saying that his client may pay bail of 50,000 rand (\$3600 US) or more, going so far as to suggest that Mr. Big be placed under house arrest pending trial. The prosecutor replies that this measure would not be sufficient to ensure that Mabuza does not continue his criminal activities. Note from the editor of On the Trail: Mr Big and Big Joe should not be confused (cf. "On the Trail" n°12, p.69), Big Joe is another trafficker whose trial is long overdue. Both men reside in or near Hazyview.³⁰

**Mid-June 2018
Kruger National Park, Provinces of Limpopo and
Mpumalanga, South Africa**

Three arrests. Seizure of a large caliber rifle, ammunition and a fresh pair of horns. The executive director of SANParks, Fundisile Mketeni, an ex-ranger, took part in the tracking. The helicopter in which he had embarked to observe the interface between "village communities/western edge of the park" was summoned to follow the poachers' progression in the bush and lead the rangers and canine brigade on ground.³¹

**June 18, 2018
Kruger National Park, Province of Mpumalanga,
South Africa**

Two rangers affected to the Houtboschrand section are suspected of poaching and amputating the horns of a white rhino.³²

**June 21, 2018
Kempton Park, Gauteng Province, South Africa**

You should have thought of that. The Chinese cover for rhino trafficking was... a blanket factory. Acting on intelligence, the police landed in the workshop and found in the nooks and crannies a good stock of skins and other parts of rhinos valued at 3 million rand, or \$240,000 US. Interpellation of two Chinese bosses and 12 workers from Malawi.³⁴

**June 21, 2018
Kirkwood, Province of Eastern Cape, South
Africa**

Eight rhinos less in the province since the beginning of the year.³⁵



**June 27, 2018
Kruger National Park, Crocodile
Bridge Section, Mpumalanga
Province, South Africa**

Clash between a patrol of rangers and a gang of suspected poachers. One dead among the latter. He threatened the patrol with a .375 caliber, exactly what it takes to kill a rhino.³⁶



End of June 2018

SanWild Wildlife Sanctuary, Leydsdorp, Province of Limpopo, South Africa

Three poachings, including that of a baby whose horn was cut off. The director is at his wits end. The 32 km of fencing is constantly being reinforced. At same time, the poachers are relentlessly searching for the least breach. An underground optic fiber for seismic monitoring capable of distinguishing human intrusions from animal intrusions was presented as a flawless defense mechanism. The problem is that it costs \$40,000 US/km.³⁷

End June 2018

Kragga Kamma Game Park, Nelson Mandela Bay, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa



2008. Bella in good company.



2018. Bella after a bad encounter.³⁸

BOTSWANA

End June 2018

Francistown, North East District, Botswana

All that fuss for this. An Interpol search warrant, an arrest in Zimbabwe, extradition to Botswana and bail of \$100 US with a requirement to return "his" passport (see "On the Trail" n°20 p. 83). The problem is that he has two, one from Zimbabwe, one from Zambia. In the wildlife mafia, Dumisani Moyo's popularity will increase even more. Since the beginning of the decade, he has been wanted for horn trafficking in several southern African countries, including Botswana.³⁹

NAMIBIA

April 1, 2018

Near Steinhausen, Omaheke Region, Namibia

Three suspects said they got lost in the savannah Easter Sunday. Their behavior had alerted agricultural workers on a neighboring farm. Near the place where they were stopped, an old gun of Soviet manufacturing, ammunition, a hatchet, and a swab were hidden in the undergrowth. According to the first official reports, they had set an appointment with an employee of a neighboring reserve to poach a rhinoceros. This accomplice was also questioned. The public authorities worry about the movement of the poaching towards the East of the country.⁴⁰

April 2018

Fransfontein, Kunene Region, Namibia

Alert. Three to five Chinese walk the land to open a mine near a rhino territory. Their Namibian partners have already installed huts. The Chinese have promised to give 10% of the profits to the Swartbooi Traditional Authority and 5% to the Huab Conservancy dedicated to the protection of rhinos. The metal and the expected profits are unknown.⁴¹

Mid-May 2018

Namibia

Attempted rescue of a young male. One knee was cracked by a bullet. The prognosis is uncertain. He is limping and weighs 1.8 tons.⁴²



CENTRAL AFRICA

CHAD

May 2018

Zakouma National Park, Guerat and Salamat Regions, Chad

Six black rhinos were transported from South Africa to Chad in a 4800 km long airborne convoy. This species vanished 50 years ago from Chad and Central Africa. The six were welcomed to the Zakouma National Park, 3000 km², a prized target for wildlife rings. Within 10 years – 2000/2010 – the elephant population went from 4000 to 450! Now Zakouma is under supervision of the Chad government and African Parks, a partnership that would gain in efficiency if it had the support of local communities.⁴³

CHINA

April 2, 2018

Shenzhen Bay Port, Guangdong Province, China

Two boxes of chocolates containing 5.32 kg of rhinoceros horns cut into slices and stained with blood.⁴⁴



© China Customs

May 7, 2018

Tengchong, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Myanmar.

Seizure of a 757-grams horn.⁴⁵

June 17, 2018

Hong Kong International Airport, China

Seizure in a bag belonging to a 21-year-old man, 3.1 kg of rhinoceros horn cut into various shapes. The estimated value: \$79,000 US, or nearly \$25,500 US/kg. The Vietnamese individual was coming from Beira, Mozambique, via Johannesburg, South Africa and Doha, Qatar.⁴⁶



© Hong Kong customs

INDIA

April 2, 2018

West Bengal State, India

Arrest at 6:10pm while he tried to smuggle into India from Nepal a 100g horn – or 300g depending on sources -, Abhijeet Devdas – or Abhijit Debdas - had delivered to the Forest office in Gorumara North. A Jaipalguri wildlife warden had received the tip and had transmitted it to officers in the 17th battalion of SSB (Sashastra Seema Bal).⁴⁷

REPEATED OFFENSE

April 2, 2018

Pisolamukh, Assam State, India

Arrest of Lakhya Pegu, a regular in Kaziranga Park. During an interrogation considered a "marathon" by the local press, he admitted a poaching and a horn theft in February.⁴⁸

April 5-6, 2018

Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India

Death of a poacher Friday during the night. At the scene of the incident, investigators collected evidence: 1 AK-56, ammunition, and magazines. Two or three accomplices vanished in the jungle.⁴⁹



REPEATED OFFENSE

May 3, 2018

Natun Danga, Nagaon District, Assam State, India

Parci Ronfar, 45 years old, was in possession of a high-caliber rifle and ammunition. He is said to be at the head of the poaching in the Karbi Anglong sector on the north boarder of Kaziranga Park. He had already been arrested twice and released on bail.⁵⁰



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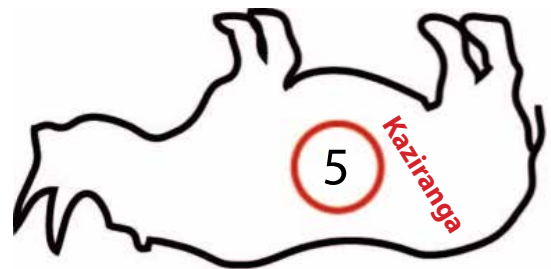
May 11, 2018

Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India

The truce in the park is over. The poachers have adapted to the new surveillance system.

1 down in January, 1 down in February, 1 down in March, 1 down at the beginning of May, 1 down on May 11.

5 killed since the beginning of the year, compared to 6 for all of last year.⁵¹



May 19, 2018

Nagaon, State of Assam, India

Late Saturday night, three men arrested in a bus bound for Churachandpur, Manipur State. A fourth man was arrested in a suburb of the city. He claims to be a retired soldier.

The gang of four confesses to having buried weapons and ammunition in a forest in Karbi Anglong district next to Kaziranga Park and its rhinos.

On Sunday, the police take them to the scene and dig in the right place. Exhumation of two AK47s and 200 rounds of ammunition. Police Commissioner Shankar Barata Raimedhi said poachers were returning home as the monsoon approached and were planning to return in winter. They admit having killed a rhinoceros and stolen the horn at the beginning of May in a place difficult to reach.⁵²

May 26, 2018

Jakhalabandha, Nagaon District, State of Assam, India

Ram Nath Tanti and Badhna Mura have been arrested. They have been charged with supplying information, supplies and camouflage uniforms to poachers from Manipur who came to hunt rhinoceroses in the Kaziranga Park.⁵³

REPEATED OFFENSE / GANG

May 30, 2018

Furkating Railway Station, Golaghat District, State of Assam, India

N. Thangbai and Sarat Saikia have been arrested. They admitted to planning a poaching campaign in the Kaziranga Park. A .303 caliber rifle and accompanying ammunition were seized at Saikia's house. He apparently already has several rhinoceroses on his poaching record.⁵⁴



June 7, 2018

Biswanath District, State of Assam, India

Two days in police custody for two men entering the park clearly inspired by motives other than wildlife contemplation. They carried a rhinoceros-calibre rifle, ammunition and other poaching gear.⁵⁵

May 29 and June 8, 2018

Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India

Discovery of a dead rhinoceros on the way to putrefaction. According to the guards, he was killed on the night of May 29. They had heard six shots without being able to locate the crime scene. The body has bullet holes in the forehead. This is the sixth since the beginning of the year. The horn was stolen.⁵⁶



June 11, 2018

Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India

A poacher killed in a gunfight with the guards on Monday night.

On the scene, a rhino horn, a rifle, cartridges.

At least four accomplices are still hiding in the Park. Already seven rhinos less since the beginning of the year to seven for the whole last year.⁵⁷



June 27, 2018

Golaghat, Golaghat District, State of Assam, India

Manik Das was sentenced to seven years in prison and fined 10,000 rupees (\$150 US) for gang poaching and maiming a rhino in Kaziranga Park in January 2015. He'd play a double game, informant to the rangers by day, informant to the poachers by night. His accomplice, Sukdev Das, died during the trial.⁵⁸



June 29, 2018

State of Assam, India

Kasim Ali arrested. Seizure at his home of a .303 caliber, 31 rounds, the equivalent of \$3,000 US in cash and a dinghy. Kasim wanted to use it, when monsoon comes, to cross the Brahmaputra and target the rhinos isolated by the floods. Poachers use rubber dinghies. Once on the scene, they can deflate and hide them.⁵⁹

NEPAL

End of April 2018

Chitwan National Park, Province No. 3, Nepal

The first of four "diplomatic" rhinoceroses – two males and two females – that the Chinese government kindly called upon to certify the good relations between the two countries - have been caught in the Park. 70 guards, specialists, veterinarians, and four elephants participated in the detection and capture. The unlucky chosen one is a male; he is around 2 years old. He will remain several months in a boma awaiting the capture of the other specimen.

At the same time, the park is strengthening surveillance. He wants to keep his reputation as an almost inviolable fortress. Patrols criss-cross it by bike, motorbike, off-road vehicles, boat and elephant with occasional reinforcements from February to June, the poachers' favourite season. Cf. "On the Trail" n°17 p. 107.⁶⁰

May 1, 2018

Kathmandu, Province No. 3, Nepal

Arrests. Four men attempting to sell a rhinoceros horn for \$140,700 US to an undercover police officer.⁶¹

THAILAND

GANG

Early May 2018

Samut Prakan, Samut Prakan Province, Thailand

Sentencing of Boonchai Bach, 41 years old, to 2-and-a-half years in prison for horn trafficking. The Bach clan used Bangkok International Airport as their hub. The person responsible for quarantine at the airport was manipulated by the Bachs. Boonchai Bach would be the treasurer of the gang.⁶² Cf. "On the Trail" n° 20 p. 87



VIET NAM

April 2018

Viet Nam

Three medical authorities demystify the power of rhinoceros horn.

- Dr Nguyen Chan Hung, chair of the Viet Nam Cancer Association stated that, "Patients should follow modern remedies prescribed by physicians instead of relying on rhino horns. If you blindly use rhino horns to treat cancer, you will miss the best opportunities to treat cancer effectively with modern methods,"

- Truong Thi Ngoc Lan from the Ho Chi Minh City Traditional Medicine Institute said that in "Oriental Medicine rhino horn is listed in the group of medicines with detoxification effects. However, the effect can also be found in other simple medicines which have lower costs and better results."

- Le Hung, chair of the HCM City Oriental Medicine Association, has recommended "taking rhino horn off the list of drugs in order to prevent misconceptions about the alleged effects."⁶³

May 24, 2018

Lao Cai, Lao Cai Province, Viet Nam

Over 20 kg of presumed-rhinoceros horns found in four wooden vases in the back seat of a car near the Chinese border. Three arrests.⁶⁴



June 2018

Hanoi, Viet Nam



One good point for the Hanoi police. Seizure of a horn weighing 1.1 kg. Four arrests.⁶⁵

EUROPE

NETHERLANDS

April 6, 2018

Amsterdam, North Holland Province, Netherlands

One year in prison for the Chinese traveller. He was transporting five horns (cf. "On the Trail" n°19 p. 89).⁶⁶



Rhinos and Elephants

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

April 2018

Kruger National Park, Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces, South Africa

Less poached rhinos, more elephants. Kruger National Park head ranger Ken Maggs says no more, he has no right to be specific.¹

ASIA

CHINA

June 6, 2018

Hong-Kong International Airport, China

Seizure of 5.9 kg of horns and 410 g presumed-ivory in three food wrappers inside a suitcase belonging to a 40-year-old coming from Johannesburg.²



Elephants



The rumour of the quarter once again demonstrates the nose for business of the wildlife mafias. They spread the news that elephants' molars can make hair grow back! Baldness, rheumatism, sexual impotence, menopausal disorders, AIDS, cancer, crooks are casting the net far and wide. They are not interested in rare diseases. In this sense, wildlife mafias have the same strategy as pharmaceutical laboratories. In Asia, the trend is to exploit by-products other than ivory. The skin is sold by the kg or the cm². This new outlet puts at risk the females who have no tusk.

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°21
Black market raw ivory quotation
from media or official sources**

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Africa	Kenya	1,000	3
		260	12
	Zimbabwe	100	28
		170	29
	Gabon	180	55

KENYA

- **April 12, Daphne Sheldrick**, 83 years old, died from breast cancer. She founded the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust (DSWT) named after her late husband David in 1977. With David, she had been a part of the implementation of Tsavo Park. She is the first to have raised orphaned elephants on the bottle. "It's an irreplaceable loss for elephants around the world," says Vivek Menon, president of the Wildlife Trust of India. "On the Trail" regularly recognizes the achievements of DSWT (see for example "On the Trail" n°7 p. 80, n°8 p. 77, n°18 p. 83, n°19 p. 66).



- **April 12 – 15, 2018. Olarro Conservancy, County of Narok, Kenya**

Rescue of a young male and an adult male injured by pole weapons. Anesthetized by Etorphine, treatment of injuries with hydrogen peroxide, iodine tincture, antibiotic spray, and woken up with Diprenorphine. The prognoses are favorable. The DSWT, the KWS, and its famous doctor Limo participated in both operations.¹



**April 19, 2018
Malindi, Kilifi County, Kenya**

Meanwhile, Mohamed Feisal is still in prison. Convicted to 20 years' jail by the county court, he said that the case in court of appeal is delayed because of the deliberate scrapping of documents in the case. A commission is tasked with shedding light on Feisal's accusations. His lawyer would be victim of intimidations. Feisal was convicted for trafficking three tons of raw ivory (cf. "On the Trail" n°15, p. 88).²

April 22, 2018

Migori, Migori County, Kenya

Arrested today at a gas station while they tried to sell 8 pieces of elephant tusk weighing 15 kg to an undercover officer. Mary Owino Likowa and George Ochieng are not abashed. Several days later, they pleaded not guilty in front of judge Edwin Nyagah. Their lawyer asked for their release on bail and got it. The value of the ivory is estimated at 1.5 million shillings (\$15,000 US or \$1000 US/kg).³

April 25, 2018

Msambweni, Kwale County, Kenya

An investigation is underway to identify the seller and the buyer of two elephant tusk tips discovered thanks to a source. They weigh a total of 8 kg and they appear to be very old. The police remain discrete regarding where the seizure took place, but the press is talking about a building at the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (Icipe). The Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) investigation department is on the case.⁴



Mid-may 2018

Maua, Meru County, and Voi, Taita-Taveta County, Kenya

- Joseph Kimanzi Musyoki, Samwel Githonga and Peter Kimathi have been sentenced to a fine equivalent to \$9900 US, or 5 years in prison if they fail to pay, for having illegally transported four tusks or tusk sections.



- Another man was sentenced to a fine equivalent to \$400 US, or six months in prison if he fails to pay, for illegally transporting dik-dik antelopes (*Madoqua kirkii*) meat.⁵

Mid-May 2018

Emali, Makueni County, Kenya

Arrest of two men transporting two large tusks with a value equal to \$33,000 US.⁶

Mid-may 2018

Voi, Taita-Taveta County, Kenya

One arrest. 12 kg.⁷



Mid-may and 26-27 May, 2018

Olarro Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

- Docteur Limo intervened to treat an abscess caused by a arrow wound.



- Limo, the well-known DSWT veterinarian, treated Limo, a majestic tusker with bullet wounds in the front right leg and the chest. The prognosis is positive.

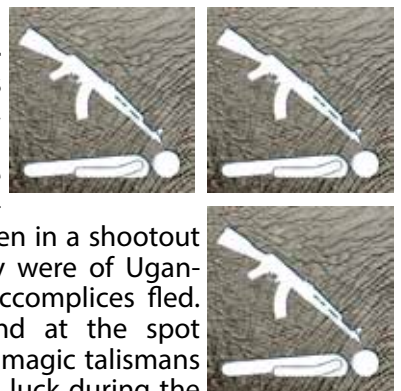


The DSWT team remained in the area to monitor Limo's convalescence, with support from the KWS. As they observed the herd, they identified another male elephant with a spear injury, as well as a female elephant with a calf who had a spear wound. The two new victims were also treated.⁸

May 31, 2018

Mount Elgon National Park, Trans Nzoia County, Kenya

Death of three poachers presumed to have been in a shootout with rangers. They were of Ugandan origin. Two accomplices fled. AK-47s were found at the spot with several black magic talismans supposed to bring luck during the poaching campaign.⁹



Early June 2018

Chyulu Hills National Park, Makueni County, Kenya

Wounded, five times wounded. The origin of the five injuries is a mystery. The most urgent problem for the team from the DSWT and the KWS was to get the 3-ton male back on his feet. Lying on his side is as deadly as bullets for an elephant.¹⁰

**June 9, 2018
Mombasa, Mombasa County, Kenya**

Seizure from a car thanks to the canine unit's nose of eight tusks or sections hidden here and there.¹¹



REPEATED OFFENSE

**June 9, 2018
Mombasa, Mombasa County, Kenya**

Interception of Abdikheir Ibrahim and Abdullahi Adan on the Malindi-Mombasa road. Seizure of 137 kg of raw ivory estimated at \$36,000 US, or \$260 US per kilo. Ibrahim is unfavourably known to the law. He dipped at the end of October 2016 in an ivory trade (Narok County, 4.5 kg). His bail is currently denied.¹²

**Mid-June 2018
Mombasa, Mombasa County, Kenya**

Morris Mulimu sentenced to eight years in prison for illegally detaining and transporting 28 kg of raw ivory to Mombasa in April 2017.¹³



**June 25, 2018
Thigaa, Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya**

The feast. An elephant accused of wounding two men aged 61 and 95 is shot dead by the KWS. The inhabitants converge on the spot by hundreds with machetes, knives and firm intention to cut up the beast to the bone. "It was a unique blessing for the village and that the poor and the rich will feed on the meat." The fate of the elephant's precious parts, tusks, tail, ears and other organs tied up with superstitions, is not known. KWS cars whose agents tried to save the "problem" elephant before they decided to kill him received stones.¹⁴



MALAWI

**Mid-April 2018
Blantyre, Southern Region, Malawi**

Justice strikes harder and harder on traffickers of wild species. But those who have the means can still escape prison. Sanjay Vashan, citizen of Malawi, Indian origin, was convicted today to 10 years of hard labor or to pay 10 million kwachas (\$13,800 US). He had been arrested on denunciation April 11, 2017. The investigators had seized from his house 14.8 kg of ivory and \$14,000 US. The value of the ivory is estimated at 22.8 million kwachas (\$31,000 US, or \$2,115 US/kg). A second punishment had been made against the trafficker for illegal possession of currency: 2 and a half years of prison or 150,000 kwachas in amends (\$206 US). The money and the ivory seized were allocated to the State.¹⁵



**April 16, 2018
Kaombe Police Checkpoint, Mchinji, Central Region, Malawi**

Two men, Phiri and Daka, were arrested thanks to the cooperation of the wild fauna protection Services of Mozambique, Zambia, and Malawi. They had entered Malawi by unmarked trails. Seizure of 16.5 kg of raw ivory. The two men are originally from the Chipata and Katete districts in Zambia.¹⁶



**May 9, 2018
Mkanda, Central Region, Malawi**

Arrest of a DRC national, seizure of eight tusks or sections with a total weight of 23.6 kg.¹⁷



MOZAMBIQUE

RECYCLING CHANNEL

April 12, 2018

Port Maputo, Mozambique



The Mozambique-Cambodia channel again (cf. "On the Trail" n°19, p. 19). This time the container had 867 tusks – or 3.5 t of ivory – camouflaged in the middle of empty plastic bottles. Always the so-called "recycling." The port transporters' association was indignant at the arrest of the truck driver in charge of the container, arguing that he was not supposed to know its contents. The newspaper O Pais sought to know more about the Chinese society Newlite, cited as the owner of the shipment. The reporter who went to the indicated address in the industrial zone of Beluluane, 20 km from the port, found only a closed gate surrounded by high walls, no person present nor a distinctive marker. The developers of the industrial zone praise its strategical location in the Maputo Development Corridor, linking Mozambique to South Africa and Swaziland via the N4 national road. In Mozambique, most of the tusks came from thefts from ivory stocks seized in Niassa province and elephants poached in the Niassa reserve. Environment Minister Celso Correia regrets the slowness of justice. According to him, ivory trafficking and smuggling can only be controlled in the country through working with Tanzania. Correia also complains about the slowness of the law in the repression of illegal logging. "Operation Trunk was a success, the logs were seized but no one is being prosecuted."¹⁸



April 15-30, 2018

Cabo Delgado Province, Mozambique

Seizures in two stages of 21 tusks, eleven in the port of Pemba, ten in the district of Montepuez. As exhibits, they are in the custody of the public prosecutor's office.¹⁹

May 14, 2018

Beira, Sofala Province, Mozambique



These three teachers and wildlife guards had been arrested in flag in the buffer zone of Gorongosa Park with ivory, precious stones and mercury bottles useful for gold mining (cf. "On the Trail" n°18, p.85). At the time of the arrest, they had tried to corrupt the guards. The six had been bailed (40 to 50,000 Meticaís or \$670 US to \$840 US). Their trial begins in Beira in their absence. No doubt they are too busy with some wildlife or chemical traffic to respond to court summonses.²⁰

GANG

Mid May 2018

Gorongosa National Park, Sofala Province, Mozambique

Three men were cruising in the park. One man fled when the rangers and the police surrounded them. A suitcase was found at the site with two AKM-type automatic rifles, four traditional firearms, magazines and 92 ammunitions.

One of the suspects said to be a healer. He was looking in the forest for medicinal herbs to care for his two associates. He claims to be unaware that the suitcase contained weapons. In fact the threesome is suspected of carrying out poaching campaigns in Niassa, Zambezia and Sofala provinces.²¹



**May 15, 2018
Niassa National Reserve, Niassa Province,
Mozambique**

He had escaped through the toilets of the Mecula police station (cf. "On the Trail" n°7, p.81). He's just been arrested, heavily armed by a Luwirre Safaris Camp patrol.²²



**May 20, 2018
Maputo Reserve, Province of
Maputo, Mozambique**

Critical rescue of an elephant whose left hind leg was hampered by a metal trap. During the operation the veterinary team had to keep its 2-week old elephant baby and other members of the herd at a distance. Aerial and ground intervention was facilitated by the financial support of Moz Parks Foundation and Travel Channel.²³



© Peace Parks Foundation

**End of May 2018
Niassa Province, Mozambique**

A forest and wildlife administration officer and three officers of the National Criminal Investigation Service (SERNIC) are charged. According to the investigation file, they are guilty of the theft from the province's vault that they were supposed to guard of 105 tusks during 2016 and 2017. Part of this tusks were found and identified in Cambodia after the opening of a doubtful container thanks to the official and indelible marks of the Mozambican administration (see for example "On the Trail" n°15, p.98). Thefts of raw ivory from seized ivory stocks are not exceptional in the country.

In 2015, four high-ranking police officers and an officer from the Environment and Rural Development Department of Maputo Province, were arrested for the same reasons (see "On the Trail" n°9, p. 70). For 3 years, the government has remained very discreet about the progress of the inquiry and the opening of a trial.²⁴

UGANDA

**June 24, 2018
Kampala, Central Region,
Uganda**



Abel Immanuel was sentenced to 2 years in prison for having attempted to sell four tusks or tusk sections on the parking lot of the Uganda Manufacturers' Association, with the help of an accomplice. Immanuel was a member of the Flying Squad Unit, a police service that has been disbanded. The FSU reputation was sullied by numerous accusations of corruption and torture of suspects. Immanuel pleaded guilty, but requested a lenient sentence, arguing that he had family responsibilities.²⁵

TANZANIA

**June 21, 2018
Kyela District, Mbeya Region, Tanzania**

Police ambush. Two suspects escaped and discarded nine sections of raw ivory.²⁶

ZAMBIA

**April 18 – May 30, 2018
Chipata District, Eastern Province, Zambia**

Arrest of a 27-year-old police officer in the act of unauthorized transport of 12 kg of raw ivory. Released on bail, Owen Hakalima should be tried this summer. A person who was with him at the time of the incident fled.²⁷

ZIMBABWE

Early April 2018

Gokwe, Midlands Province, Zimbabwe

The punishment is now common: 9 years of prison for illegal business in ivory. Cuthbert Sibanda pleaded guilty. He had been arrested on March 23 by police and Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZimParks) agents with whom he tried to trade the ivory for around \$100 US/kg. The quantity at play is not specified. After an agreement on the price, Sibanda drove the agents to his hiding place where they only passed him the handcuffs.²⁸



April 2, 2018

Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe

Benhilda Chidumo (34 years old) and Hubby Mahau (47 years old) were arrested Monday for trying to sell to an infiltrated police officer a pair of tusks weighing an estimated total of 6.9 kg at \$1,173 US (or \$170 US/kg). They went before the Harare Magistrates Court for the first time on April 6.²⁹

April 12, 2018

Near Gonarezhou National Park, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe

New killing by a super-tusker hunter in the buffer zone of the Park. The hunters are poachers who can pay a \$30 to \$50,000 US permit to kill. The tusks were seized and a ranger suspended during the administrative inquiry. The victim was classified as outstanding and was wearing an identification collar.³⁰

Early May 2018

Guruve, Mashonaland Central Province, Zimbabwe

Sentencing of a 43-year old man to 9 years and 1 month in prison for illegal possession of a pair of tusks weighing 31 kg and carrying of prohibited ammunition.³¹



May 2, 2018

Bumi Hills Area, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe

Scouting of four sites spread with cyanide mixed with salt. A lactating elephant was poisoned. The carcass was guarded during the night to avoid the theft of tusks, then the next morning after salvaging the tusks, burned and buried at the spot. As much as possible, the contaminated soil was cleaned and burned to avoid a cascade of deaths of wild fauna. A reward of at least \$2,000 US is promised to whomever can give conclusive information on the identity of the poisoners. The young elephant has vanished.³²



May 14, 2018

Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe

Adrian Steirn is an excellent Australian photographer, author of magnificent photo-reports on the wild animals of Africa (cf. n°15 p. 42). As he was photographing the wildlife of the lower Zambezi, he met a certain Leonard Makunine, an agent for elephant poachers. Adrian Steirn led him to believe that he was interested in purchasing ivory. Makunine introduced him to Faricken Madzinga, who confirmed that he could sell him tusks. Once the rendezvous was set for the transaction, Steirn went to the police and revealed the case.

Last February 15, Steirn went to the meeting place at the Harare Holiday Inn, as planned. Police inspectors were discretely following him. Faricken Madzinga arrived, accompanied by his chauffeur. The three men left in a car for the Highfield neighborhood where 6 tusks, worth \$23,000 US, were hidden in the trunk of a parked car. The police moved in.

Madzinga and his driver appeared in court. Through dilatory maneuvering, which demanded that the visa and work permit authorizing Adrian Steirn to work as a photojournalist in the country be presented in court, the lawyers succeeded in postponing the trial until May 31.

The case smells of rotten eggs: the court record has revealed that Faricken Madzinga has been in touch with Tsitsi, the daughter of the new president, Emmerson Mnangagwa.³³

May 25, 2018

Hwange National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

New dispute between poachers and rangers. The first succeeded in fleeing. The second collected on-site evidence: a firearm, tusks, survival rations, and personal belongings.³⁴

End of May 2018

Panda Masuie Forest, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Transfer and possible release of six baby elephants all direct or indirect victims of poaching, and collected by the orphanage Zimbabwe Elephant Nursery (ZEN) near Harare. After being sedated and transported 900 km by truck for 16 hours, they were set in a boma for several weeks before rejoining the other elephants in a 34,000 ha forest part of Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area – KAZA (see "On the "Trail" n°12 p. 82, n°13 p.67 and 89, n°14 p. 83), Angola transfrontier park, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The project is co-managed by NGOs Wild is Life, IFAW, and ZimParks.³⁵

Early June 2018**Hwange District, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe**

Five men arrested in a car. They live in the villages around the Hwange Park and were transporting 10 tusks sections.³⁶

GANG**June 11, 2018****Phundundu Wildlife Reserve, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe**

Seizure of raw ivory. Two arrests. The names have not been released. One of them is a former ranger, converted to poaching. In 2009, he escaped an encounter with his former colleagues. The other also escaped an exchange of gunfire with rangers in 2016, in the Matusadona National Park. The ivory came from a cyanide poisoning.³⁷

June 16, 2018**Nyanga National Park, Manicaland Province, Zimbabwe**

A man suspected of poaching is dead. The man who was with him fled into the bush after an exchange of gunfire with rangers. On the site, next to their weapons, bags of oranges were found. They are considered evidence and have been sent to a laboratory. Investigators are convinced that they are full of poison.³⁸

**June 16, 2018****Hwange National Park, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe**

A fresh and tuskless carcass has been found.³⁹

June 29, 2018**Matetsi, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe**

The gang was back to Zambia after a poaching campaign in Chobe Park in Botswana. It was skirmished by police and rangers. A man is dead. Five porters have fled. Fifteen tusks were found at the scene.⁴⁰

**SOUTH AFRICA****Early May 2018****South Africa**

Denunciation by the NGO PETA of the use of domestic elephants in the television series *Westworld* produced by the American television channel HBO. The episode stages British colonization in India and hunters on the backs of elephants leaving to track down tigers. Tai, one of the elephants, takes part in the company *Have Trunk Will Travel*. Videos show him subjected to brutality during his training. The elephants of *Have Trunk Will Travel* are chained up 12 hours per day. Three elephants out of four born in the company's enclosures die before the age of 4. *Have Trunk Will Travel* also exploits bears in TV shows, feature films, or commercials.

By contrast, PETA congratulates HBO for having, in the same controversial episode "*Virtu e Fortuna*", entrusted a major and remarkable role to a CGI tiger.⁴¹

May 20, 2018**Motswedi, North West Province, South Africa**

Arrest at a frontier post with Zimbabwe and court appearance of Life Ndhlovu, 23 years old. He was carrying in a backpack three tusks, the local value of which is estimated at 15,000 rand (\$1,200 US).⁴²

June 11, 2018**Itsoseng, North West Province, South Africa**

A very confidential tip. A search warrant. Seizure of six tusks and 91 boxes of anti-retrovirals, the drug used to treat AIDS. Six people arrested.⁴³

BOTSWANA**June 3, 2018****Near Nata, Central District, Botswana**

A Mercedes registered in Zambia is in line at the veterinary gate in Ngwasha. It is chosen to be searched. The driver gets out to supposedly help the police open the trunk and runs off into the wilderness where lions and leopards roam in search for food. Inside the trunk, 13 tusks and sections of tusks.⁴⁴

NAMIBIA

GANG

April 14, 2018

Bwabwata National Park, Zambezi Region, Namibia

One poacher and four elephants are dead. This Saturday, a police patrol was circulating on the B8 road which crosses the national park from side to side. On Mashambo's side, the agents spotted an individual with suspicious behavior. In its pursuit, the police fell on six tusks and the traces of a camp: pots, blankets, knives... The anti-poaching Unit was called in reinforcement and the tracking ended fatally for a poacher at the end of a shooting between the two camps. His identity is currently unknown.⁴⁵



June 15, 2018

Zambezi Region, Namibia

Night roadblock. Search of the car. Snatching of severed tusks, two saws and other poaching equipment. Flight of the four passengers. The driver under arrest.⁴⁶

WESTERN AFRICA

BENIN

May 22, 2018

Djougou, Donga Department, Benin

Sentencing of 5 to 12 months in prison and 100,000 CFA francs in fines for each one, or \$180 US. No damages. Not expensive for the death of a baby elephant.⁴⁷ Cf. "On the Trail" n°19, p.100



June 11, 2018

Cotonou, Littoral Department, Benin

Seizure of four elephant calf tusks, 6 kg total weight. Six arrests. The transaction was underway near police headquarters.⁴⁸

June 13, 2018

Parakou, Borgou Department, Benin

Law enforcement agencies are combing the country to find raw ivory. Five suspects were arrested in a motel in possession of two tusks and a piece of ivory.⁴⁹



GHANA

April 26, 2018

Larbanga, Mole National Park, Northern Region, Ghana

A serious incident on the edge of the national park. Four elephants went out to graze in the farmlands around the village of Larbanga. As they were going back to the park at the end of the day, four young men ambushed them and killed two of them. Four forest rangers on motorcycles intervened, but in the meantime, villagers who had arrived with machetes and knives to cut up the meat, became furious. They attacked and wounded the rangers, then took them hostage for several hours. They stole an AK47. The police arrived on the scene and were finally able to free the rangers, but did not find the machine gun. Powerless, the law enforcement officers watched as the meat was cut up. However, the tusks and skulls of the two elephants were seized.⁵⁰

CENTRAL AFRICA

ANGOLA

April 19, 2018

Cambache, Cuanza Norte Province, Angola

An elephant that had been near the Cambambe dam for 3 or 4 days was considered a hazard for the hydroelectric equipment that supplies the capital city of Luanda. After consultation and an on-site visit from the provincial governor, the intruder was shot to death by security agents with authorization from the Ministry of the Environment. The killers then divided up the meat, the hide, the bones and the elephant's two tusks. Angolan students involved in research on biodiversity and sponsored by the National Geographic, anonymously spoke to Vpnews, outraged that a country that spends 300 million dollars to send a satellite into space was incapable of buying anesthetics to put an elephant to sleep and move it to safety. They wondered what will happen to other elephants that could come near the Cambambe dam.⁵¹



June 4, 2018

Quatro de Fevereiro International Airport, Luanda, Luanda Province, Angola

Seizure of a ton of ivory. Seven interpellations. The traffickers intended to sell it off in the United Arab Emirates.⁵²

CAMEROON

May 3, 2018

Near the city of Djoum, South Region, Cameroon

Seizure of 106 tusks for a total weight of 200 kg. Many elephant calves among them. The two suspects have allegedly been released on bail, even though one of them was already involved in a similar case.⁵³



GABON

April 11, 2018

Mitzic, Woleu-Ntem Province, Gabon

Police officers had, for some time, caught wind that an ivory transaction had taken place in the town. According to the informant, the deal was supposed to be concluded the same day. A team of police officers and Water and Forest agents accompanied by members of the Conservation Justice thus set out on patrol in the town. They noticed vehicle car poorly parked in front of a building with three men inside. The trio is international: Sissoko Birame is Malian, Cissé Momadou is Ivorian and Seidou Aba is Gabonese. They were preparing to unload 4 tusks. Driven to the post office they brought the police officers to their supplier. Serge Nzamba, of Gabonese nationality, was arrested with 2 new tusks. The four traffickers were presented in front of the prosecutor of the Republic. They are liable for no more than six months jail.⁵⁴



GANG

May 3 and 7, 2018

Tchibanga, Nyanga Province, Gabon

- Seizure of 27 kg of raw ivory for sale at 100,000 CFA francs per kg, or \$180 US.

Arrest of Vincent Chinédou, Sunday Pama, Nick Dibia and Ogou Bertrand, all Nigeria nationals according to Gabonese press.

- Breaking news. Jerry Barcelo Retouano, officer of the river brigade in Gamba, is suspected of having supplied hardened ammunition, 458 high-caliber, to local poacher Donatien Malonda, who is also a civil servant. Malonda, with an accomplice, delivered the ivory to the Nigerian gang in charge of commercialization.⁵⁵

May 8, 2018

Gamba, Ogooué-Maritime Province, Gabon

The poacher was supplied with ammunition by two local gendarmes. Three arrests. Ivory poachers do not necessarily need to go far into the hostile forest to hunt.⁵⁶



Round of an elephant in the Shell storage of Gamba

May 17, 2018

Lastoursville, Ogooué-Lolo Province, Gabon

Arrest of Prince Ongotho. This employee of the Société des Bois de Lastourville (SBL) returned from work with a pair of tusks in his bag.⁵⁷

May 25, 2018

Franceville and Okondja, Haut-Ogooué Province, Gabon

Arrest of Kokari Adamou of Nigerian nationality. He was in possession of two tusks cut into four pieces and was trying to sell them in a hotel for the price of 120,000 CFA francs/ kg, or \$215 US. Adamou immediately gave the name and address of a Gabonese who would be the "owner" of the ivory. Nkono Hugues was arrested immediately after in Okondja. A 3rd man is in the hot seat. Called Ismaël Mohamed, he took Adamou at 5:00 in the morning to the home of Nkono in Okondja to drive him to Franceville. Mohamed said he did not know that his friend Adamou was transporting ivory in his bag.⁵⁸

May 29, 2018

Makokou, Ogooué – Ivindo Province, Gabon

Four arrests. They are named Kombé, Maganga, Vata and Akinboboye. This last one would be from Nigeria. Seizure of three small tusks.⁵⁹

June 5, 2018

Mitzi, Woleu-Ntem Province, Gabon

Jean-François Ekazama has been arrested. He was taken by surprise as he laid his ivory odds-and-ends out on the ground for inventory: four tusks and two segments. Ekazama was coming from Mbomao, 70 km away. The press was surprised that he made it through so many control posts without difficulty.⁶⁰



June 12, 2018

Makokou, Ogooué-Ivindo Province, Gabon

He admitted to having killed an elephant near the village of Akana, 75 km from Makokou, but did not have the courage to specify that it was a calf. In his home, a rifle and some ammunition were seized.⁶¹

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

April 7, 2018

Ouesso, Sangha Department, Republic of the Congo

Arrest of a woman carrying 4 tusks concealed in a mattress wrapped in a sheet. She arrived at a locality situated in the Pokola sub-prefecture and was about to deliver to a client in town. The tusks are said to come from a trafficker well-known in the area. The client remains unknown. The woman will appear before the Ouesso court.⁶²

FUFU NETWORK GANG

April 9, 2018

Oyo, Cuvette Department, Republic of the Congo

Dunel Germain Okiele Doke, Droxy Koumou and Guyvenchy Paya – all three Congolese nationals – were part of a gang in which the job was well shared: poacher, ivory carrier, door-to-door sales rep ... these three were the conveyors, in charge of bringing 8 young elephant tusks from Mossaka to Oyo with a pirogue. They were not on their first try. Their technique is to hide the ivory in sacs of fufu, a pasta with a starchy base (plantains, manioc, taro, igname ...) commonly consumed in central Africa. Their last trip was interrupted by agents from the Water and Forests departmental headquarters and police officers tipped off by the PALF (Projet d'Appui à l'Application de la Loi sur la Faune sauvage). At the end of April, the three traffickers were sentenced to 2 to 3 years in prison with fines of 250,000 to 500,000 CFA francs (460 to \$ 920 US) and damages of 1 to 2 million CFA francs (1840 to \$ 3480 US)⁶³



GANG

May 17, 2018

Ouesso, Department of Sangha, Republic of the Congo

Sentencing of Josué Louhakou Tsimba, Fils Biambi and Asco Elenga to 3 years jail time, a fine equal to \$900 US, and damages of \$8,900 US for having transported and attempted to sell 15 tusks.⁶⁴ Cf. "On the Trail" n°20, p. 98.



May 17, 2018

Ouesso, Department of Sangha, Republic of the Congo

Sentencing of Tonga and Mougabio to 1-year jail time, a fine equal to \$540 US and damages equal to \$8,900 US, for the illegal detention of two pairs of tusks, those of a mother and her young.⁶⁵ Cf. "On the Trail" n°20, p.99.



May 31, 2018

Ouesso, Sangha Department, Republic of the Congo

Lack Delphin was sentenced to 5 years in prison, and a fine of 500,000 FCFA (\$300 US) and 1 million FCFA in damages, for having killed an elephant. Delphin had already been sentenced to two years in prison in January 2016, for having killed a gorilla.

The WWF and the forest administration have been called upon to reinforce their cooperation and their effectiveness in the protection of endangered species in Espace Tridom Interzone Congo (ETIC).⁶⁶ Tridom, see "On the Trail" n°20 p.98, n°18 p.95, n°16 p.80 and n°13 p.102.



REPEATED OFFENSE

May 31, 2018

Ouesso, Sangha Department, Republic of the Congo

Two poaching die-hards sentenced (see "On the Trail" n°13 p.91).

– Fulgence Mboka, multiple repeat offender, to three years in prison and a fine of 300,000 FCFA (\$185 US) and 1 million FCFA (\$600 US) in damages for illegal possession of a firearm.

– Francis Zokaba, multiple repeat offender, to identical penalties for illegal possession of a firearm and poaching an elephant near the village of Egniabi.⁶⁷



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

June 2, 2018

N'Djili International Airport, Province of Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo

Seizure of 62 kg of ivory bound for Malaysia and sent by Tanzanians.⁶⁸

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

April 3, 2018

Los Angeles, State of California, United States of America

Oleg N. Chakov (48 years old) sentenced to serve 10 days in the county prison or pay a \$5000 US fine, 3 years on probation and 30 days of community service. In March 2017, agents from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife spotted his ad on Craigslist. He was selling nine ivory statuettes (see "On the Trail" n°18, p.96). Contacted by the agents, he sold two of the statuettes to them for \$800 US. The entire batch was seized.⁶⁹



April 23, 2018

New York State, United States of America

The Art and Antique Dealers League of America and the National Art and Antique Dealers Association of America, filed a plea against New York State. They are contesting the State law from 2014, more restrictive than the federal law.

The federal law forbids the selling of ivory with the exception of antiques more than 100 years old, while New York State forbids putting on the market all worked ivories without age limit. "This lawsuit is about preserving the trade of antique ivory crafted more than 100 years ago when the species was not threatened and the craft had historical, social, and artistic value."⁷⁰

May 2018

Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, State of Washington, United States of America

Seattle, a haven for smugglers?

Seizure in a beat-up cardboard box of nearly three dozen carved

tusks, daggers made of ivory presumed to be from elephants, hippopotamuses and warthogs. This is the first major ivory seizure at the Seattle-Tacoma airport in years.

The couple were passengers on a flight from the Philippines and claimed to be bringing back mango preserves. Strangely, the local prosecutor did not pursue them immediately, but let them go. They received a simple \$500 US fine. A spokesperson for the customs authority stated that they would remain on the radar for a long time.⁷¹



GANG

Denver, State of Colorado, United States of America

24 April 2018 - Paul Ross Jackson (63), former vice chairman of the Dallas Safari Club, has done everything to import into the United States the tusks of the elephant he shot down during an illegal safari in spring 2015 inside Gonarezhou National Park, Zimbabwe. Jackson has surrounded himself with the advice and skills of hunting safari organizers, a New York freight forwarder and "mediators" in Zimbabwe. In particular, he invented a false address in South Africa. At the end, he also managed to attract the wrath of the US Fish and Wildlife and the justice system which suspects him of having intended to sell ivory (27 kg) on the black market. He was fined \$ 25,000 US. He pledged under oath not to hunt any more endangered or threatened with extinction species for the next four years.

April 26, 2018 - His name has disappeared from all Dallas Safari Club records.⁷²

May 21, 2018 - Hanno Van Rensburg, accomplice of Paul Ross Jackson and a professional South African hunter, living in the United States, was caught by the justice after taking advantage of the liberalities of the ancient Zimbabwe regime. He is under two main charges:

- Poaching of several elephants inside and on the border of Gonarezhou National Park thanks to active bribery of Zimbabwe authorities up to \$8000 US.

- Falsification of documents in preparation of facilitating, in support of his American clients, the export of trophies.

An undercover agent from the US Fish and Wildlife Service caught Van Rensburg. He confided that "corruption is the rule in Africa," adding that with \$8000 - \$9000 US more, it is possible to hunt elephants trouble-free inside the Park, and was going so far as to tell the details of his last illegal campaign.⁷³

June 26, 2018

Hudson, New York State, United States of America

Four antique dealers aged 65 to 77 were charged. In their stores and warehouses, 100 elephant ivory objects, a crocodile head, a sawfish rostrum, a sea turtle shell were seized. Since 2014, the sale of elephant and mammoth ivory in New York State is prohibited with the exception of antiques over 100 years old if they contain less than 20% ivory.⁷⁴

ASIA

CHINA

Early April 2018

Shanghai Pudong International Airport, China

Searching of a Chinese passenger returning to the country. Seizure of six worked ivories: two tusks, one statuette and three seals.⁷⁵

Early April 2018

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure from the baggage of a Chinese passenger returning home of worked ivories ingeniously concealed in a box of Nestle Nido milk powder or covered in melted chocolate in the paper wrapping of a bottle of sweet wine. 1.4 kg ivory in all.⁷⁶



April 15, 16, and 25, 2018

Kunming Changshui International Airport, Yunnan Province, China

The thefts came from Vientiane, Laos.

- Seizure of two bracelets, 79.3 g.
- Seizure of a pendant, 19 g.
- Seizure of a bracelet, 68.1 g.

These three seizures corresponding "to personal souvenirs" or to a smuggling in conspiracy hold by a ring confirm the fear of NGOs about Laos becoming the ivory supermarket of Chinese bourgeoisie.⁷⁷

April 24, 2018

Jiangsu Province, China

Customs gave back to the Province forest administration 33 worked ivories with an added weight of 12 kg originating from recent seizures from postal packages and the bags of air passengers and crewmembers. These seizures prove one more time the importance of small carriers in the diffuse bringing in of illegal ivory to continental China.⁷⁸

End of April 2018

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure from the baggage of a passenger of three worked ivories (120 g total) hidden under the lid of a tin of ground coffee.⁷⁹



May 4, 2018

Dongxing Port of Entry, Guangxi Autonomous Region, China. Border with Viet Nam.

A 13-year-old girl was caught by customs while trying to enter China with a batch of ivory jewellery. It was the lack of naturalness of her gait and her schoolgirl outfit with long sleeves under the heat that attracted the attention of customs officers. She wore 30 necklaces and 19 rings tied around her waist. She said that "someone" should reward her once she crossed the border. Given his young age, he is not sure whether the Chinese authorities will take legal action.⁸⁰



May 14, 2018

Canton (Guangzhou), Province of Guangdong, China

Seizure of 740 worked ivories in express packages sent from Dongxing.⁸¹

End May 2018

Gongbei Port of Entry, Zhuhai, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Macau.

Seizure of five bracelets, several necklaces and other trinkets, presumed to be made of ivory, in a female passenger's suitcase.⁸²

End May 2018

Xiaoshan District, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of three bracelets, presumably made of ivory (126 g).⁸³

Early June 2018

Zhongshan, Guangdong Province, China

Two individuals were intercepted when they arrived at the port passenger terminal. One was carrying a pearl necklace with an ivory pendant, the other had a horned helmet (*Cassis cornuta*) shell.⁸⁴

June 9, 2018

Nanning Customs, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

Seizure on a Vietnamese traveler of 33 balls, 20 chopsticks and six bracelets presumably made of ivory, 1.56 kg in all.⁸⁵

June 13, 2018

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

32 ivory chips, 240 g in all, seized from the cigarette box of the Chinese passenger coming from Ethiopia. As the Dragon Boat Festival and a spike in travel to China are going closer, Customs remind that it is forbidden to transport endangered animal parts, including ivory, rhino horns and pangolin scales.⁸⁶

INDIA

2015 - State of Kerala

2018 - West Bengal State

After the Shikar operation (cf. "On the Trail" n°12, p. 93) and the seizure of nearly 500kg of raw and worked ivory and the kick in the network of clandestine craftsmen specialized in the transformation of wood, camel bones and ivory into statuettes, kitchen accessories and decorative objects in Thiruvananthapuram, it turns out that the network was reconstituted under the leadership of a woman known as "Kolkata Thankachi" and her associate from Mumbai known as "Pi Mundi". The craftsmen and their tools have been transferred and are back at work in Kolkata. Pending the launch of Shikar 2, West Bengal elephants likely to become the ivory reservoir of the ring are under enhanced protection.⁸⁷

April 1, 2018

State of Jharkhand, India

Hamar Haathi, Hamar Saathi (My Elephant, My Friend)



Radio Dhoom FM issues a 3-minute information bulletin twice every day, at 8:30 a.m. and at 4:30 p.m. giving details on elephant displacements. Examples:

"People, be aware. A herd of 18 elephants is moving around Tundi, in the Dhanbad district, and could stay in the area for a few more days."

"Another herd of 12 elephants was spotted in Kutingya village, in the Simdega district."

The joint initiative by Radio Dhoom and the forest authority is meant to reduce conflict between human activities and elephant activities. Radio Dhoom has a large audience in Jharkhand, particularly in isolated villages.⁸⁸

Lone elephants are accused of seriously damaging coffee production in Karnataka.

Early April 2018

State of Karnataka, India

Elephants are to coffee plantations in India what orangutans are to palm oil plantations in Indonesia: pests.

- On its knees in the middle of coffee trees, a male in its thirties received bursts of bullets. A small group of troublemakers would be responsible, very riled up about elephant incursions and demanding the increase of financial compensation. They are identified. The police are protecting their anonymity.

- The baby elephant, 3 years old, was also victim of coffee planters. Another group fired at him. Transported to Dubare in a care center for injured elephants, he has just been released into a forest.⁸⁹



April 3, 2018

Kochi, District of Ernakulam, State of Kerala, India

The Kerala High Court suspended the investigation into the torture of Aji Bright, suspected of poaching, by Divisional Forestry Officer T. Uma, in charge of Thiruvananthapuram headquarters. The plaintiff accuses T. Uma and two of his colleagues for having deliberately injured him during his interrogation (cf. "On the Trail" n°19, p.110). He was arrested during Operation Shikar against a network of elephant poachers, ivory traffickers and carvers in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Delhi and Kolkata (cf. "On the Trail" n°12 p.93). According to the Indian Forest Service, industrialists and "high-ranking" people are suspected of belonging to the network. Aji Bright is suspected of trying to derail the investigation.⁹⁰

April 9, 2018

Jiyapota, Haridwar District, Uttarakhand State, India

A farmer is being searched after a 15-year old male died from an illegal electric fence. Haridwar divisional forest officer, Akash Verma, said, "We have collected several evidence from the spot but we are awaiting post mortem report to initiate action against the land owner who is absconding after the incident."

Monday proved macabre for the pachyderms in the region. A patrol of park rangers came upon the body of another 15-year-old male near Jhilmil lake reserve in the early hours of the day. He was caught in a pit. He had died from his injuries following an alleged fight with another elephant. After the autopsy, they buried it on the spot.⁹¹

April 16, 2018

Odisha State, India

Four elephants dead: one male elephant, two females, a baby. The train was going at 100 km/hr through a forest frequented by elephants. After the collision, the train did not stop. Between 2010 and 2017, 120 elephants have been killed on the railway tracks. 140 Indian NGOs wrote to the Railway Ministry and to the Indian Federation of Railway Companies. The signatories formulated 10 recommendations. We cite two: "Educate passengers about not throwing food from train windows onto the tracks as it tends to attract animals onto the tracks."

"New railway lines must not be constructed or existing ones widened on crucial elephant corridors."⁹²

April 16, 2018

Chennai, Tamil Nadu State, India

The High Court answered yes to the request of the Indian Centre for Animal Rights and Education NGO. Rajeswari, the elephant suffering from cuts in the left forefoot followed by widespread complications, can be put down for ethical reasons. For several weeks, he's been lying down on the ground. The NGO estimates that life support for Rajeswari would be in violation of the law on the prevention of cruelty towards animals in place for nearly 60 years.⁹³

April 22, 2018

Sheikh ul-Alam International Airport, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir State, India

The cook of the regular army is involved in ivory trafficking. He was arrested with two tusks. His destination was not revealed.⁹⁴



April 24, 2018

Sathyamangalam, Erode District, Tamil Nadu State, India

The affair goes back to the year 2000. Some stooges of the famous wood bandit Veerappan have been arrested in possession of 12 tusks, a home-made gun, and hand-made grenades. After being put in prison for 2 months, they were released on bail. The tribunal of first instance has just acquitted them. "The file is not convincing."⁹⁵



May 5, 2018

Sathyamangalam, Erode District, Tamil Nadu State, India

New electrocution of an elephant, a 10-year-old male, on the edge of a corn field which is next to the forest. He was buried there. The farmer is heard by the police. After the first electrocution in the district, the forestry services had demanded the removal of all the illegal fences.⁹⁶



Mid-May 2018

District of Chikmagalur, State of Karnataka, India

Electrocution of a 20-year-old male by an illegal fence designed to protect a plot of ginger growing in the protected forest of Kamenahalli.⁹⁷



OPERATION JUMBO

May 26, 2018

Near Guwahati Railway Station, Kamrup Metropolitan District, State of Assam, India

A railway worker, Kumar Das, inspector in the Kolkata-Guwahati express, is involved in trafficking. Das received nearly 6 kg of raw ivory from the hands of Badrul Hussain at the train station exit in Guwahati. Das was about to send the goods to a trafficker who would export them to Nepal via the city of Siliguri. According to experts, the ivory came from 5 adults and youth poached in Kaziranga Park. The Kaziranga-Nepal channel is confirmed. Das was arrested thanks to leaks after the seizure of nearly 13 kg of raw ivory on February 13, 2018 (cf. "On the Trail" n°20, p.104). After verification, it turned out that this batch of ivory also came from Kaziranga Park.⁹⁸



May 26, 2018

Idukki Wildlife Sanctuary, Kerala State, India

A new rumour is coming over the elephants. Their crushed teeth would be good for growing hair back. The market of bald is casting the net wide like that of rheumatics disorders, to be treated with bear's gallbladders. An undercover agent posing as an Ayurvedic medical practitioner approached a band of active trappers in the protected forest of Idukki. They are reputed to have teeth to sell. After a few weeks of talks, 13kg of elephant teeth were seized, bloody teeth smelling like fresh disaster. Just over a year ago 10 kg of elephant teeth were seized in the Anchal forest, 140 km from the Idukki forest. The rumor and the traffic have been swelling for two years.⁹⁹

May 28, 2018

Ajmer, Ajmer District, Rajasthan State, India

The elephant Suman had been bought from a liquidating circus in Maharashtra and tossed from owner to owner until it failed under sway of a certain Rajendra Kumar Sharma. Suman has been subjected to the "grinding" of domestication whose main stages are physical abuse, food shortage and chaining, a quasi penitentiary regime that continues throughout the exploitation with minimal or no veterinary care.



Suman's ordeal was discovered in May in Ajmer and denounced by the NGOs Humane Society International (HSI) and People For Animals (PFA) to the authorities.

Shortly afterwards, Sharma and his entourage drove Suman to Jaipur, 150 km, to operate him during the day as a tourist transporter - two to three per walk and bareback - and lodge him at night in the Hathi Gaon camp, the "elephant village". Suman's transfer had not been permitted by the competent services. On May 23, HSI and PFA lodged a complaint with the Ajmer court.

On May 25, pursuant to the judgement, the forestry services removed Suman from Sharma's control and placed him under protection in the Mathura rehabilitation centre, Uttar Pradesh.

HSI and PFA welcome the court decision and its immediate implementation by the forestry services. "Elephants like Suman have been illegally brought into the State and in almost every case the person holding them captive has no ownership certificate." All elephants' friends hope that the Ajmer court's decision will set an important precedent for the thousands of domesticated and abused elephants throughout the country.¹⁰⁰

REPEATED OFFENCE

May 30, 2018

State of Karnataka, India

Seizure of two tusks, one arrest. The affair would have played out in the following manner. A male elephant approaches a watering hole. He gets a paw stuck between rocks and cannot get free. After an unspecified amount of time, he dies. Sannaputta, 50 years old, passes by while looking for a medicinal plant. He saws off the tusks and brings them home. The same day a little while later, a patrol discovers the elephant carcass and sends out a search for the missing tusks. Sannaputta had already been interrogated in the past about possession of weapons and illegal activities in local forests.¹⁰¹

End may 2018

Meshangpen, Sanis Whoka District, State of Nagaland, India

One arrest. The man is a poacher. At his home, a .303 caliber rifle, five cartridges, but no ivory.¹⁰²

GANG

June 2, 2018

Ajmer, District of Ajmer, State of Rajasthan, India

Seizure of an alleged ivory antique that belonged to the royal family of Singapore that a gang of six, betrayed by eavesdropping and secrets, tried to sell for close to \$200,000 US. Analyses are ongoing to verify the age of the object. The gang also traded feline skins. A turtle was found in one of the homes of these experts in antique ivory or counterfeits.¹⁰³

June 4, 2018

Similipatna, Dhenkanal District, State of Odisha, India

One female dead. She was undoubtedly pregnant. The electrocution killed two.¹⁰⁴



June 13, 2018

Kotagiri, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Seven years after the crime, three poachers were sentenced to three years in prison and a fine of Rs. 10,500 (\$153 US). K. Annadurai, M. Premkumar and B. Sankar, living in the Erode district, had hidden the elephant's tusks in a cave.¹⁰⁵



June 13, 2018

Cherambadi forest range, Tamil Nadu State, India

The elephant, about twelve years old, died from a mysterious fracture of the lower jaw. The whole mouth was out of order. He died of hunger and oral cavity infection. Services attribute his death to a fight with a congener, NGOs to the explosion of a grenade or an improvised explosive device.¹⁰⁶

June 21, 2018

Madras, Tamil Nadu State, India

The Madras High Court orders the removal of electric fences powered by solar panels that block elephants and other wildlife access to the Bhavanisagar Dam water reservoir. The fences were laid without permission by a thousand farmers who, according to the court, have no right to restrict wildlife movements in this protected forest and officially designated as an elephant corridor.



The PWD (Public Work Department) and forestry services are accused to do nothing facing with this "environmental and ecological disaster." The High Court had been approached by Mr. Murugavel, an English teacher opposed to the encroachment of the reserve by human activities.¹⁰⁷

June 24, 2018

Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal State, India

Two poachers were arrested in an attempt to sell 3.6 kg of raw ivory.¹⁰⁸

26 June 2018

Hemgiri Forest Range, Odisha State, India

Suspicious death of an elephant in a controversial context. A herd of elephants has been roaming the rice fields for several weeks and the villagers are protesting against the degradation and destruction of two housings. Forest rangers try to keep the herd away with firecrackers during the day and flashlights at night.¹⁰⁹

GANG

June 27, 2018

Krishnagiri and Dharmapuri Districts, Tamil Nadu State, India

Dismantling of a gang of poachers and traffickers led by Basha, member of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam party. Seizure of twelve tusks cut into six sections. Basha's arrest was eventful. His supporters were protecting his house and threatening to attack the police. Back-ups have been called in urgently. The gang raked the forests in Krishnagiri and Hosur districts. The police are looking for a place or a hole in the forests where the other loots of the gang would be hidden.¹¹⁰

April 30, 2018

India

- Some trains between Siliguri, West Bengal and East Assam will be delayed from 30 minutes to two hours.

- Limit speed to 30 or 50 km/h on 207 km of tracks crossed by 62 elephant corridors

- WhatsApp sharing between forestry services and train drivers.

- Special signposts to warn of the corridors. Indian Railways is taking further steps to reduce the risk of locomotive/elephant collisions.

Cf. plan "bee" in "On the Trail" n°19 p. 109.¹¹¹



INDONESIA

April 30, 2018

Pidie District, Aceh Province, Indonesia

The three-month-old elephant calf seriously injured its paw trying to get out of a nylon trap net. The little victim was treated at the specialized veterinary center in Saree, 150 km from the site.



In 2017, the BKS-DA documented the deaths of 11 elephants in traps, shot or poisoned. The regional BKSDA director has stated that conflicts between elephants and humans often occurred because human settlements were too close to the elephants' routes. The spokesperson for the NGO Indonesian Forum for the Environment (Walhi) says that the law is weak, especially in regards to companies that become perpetrators of the destruction of wildlife habitats and human living spaces.¹¹²

June 10, 2018

Bunin, East Aceh Regency, Aceh Province, Indonesia

Poisoning a male domestic elephant. He ate mangoes and bananas coated with pesticides. A tusk is missing. Bunta, 27, was a member with two fellow members of the Conservation Response Unit. CRU's mission is to keep wild elephants out of cultivated plots.

At the end of the month, two suspects were arrested. In their home, a tusk 1.2 m long was found.¹¹³



June 30, 2018

Mukomuko Regency, Bengkulu Province, Indonesia

Veterinarians and BKSDA officers examine the decomposing remains of an elephant about 20 years old inside an oil palm plantation. Elephants in the province are threatened with extinction. The victim allegedly destroyed two huts in the plantation a few days ago.¹¹⁴

JAPAN

June 1, 2018

Japan

Japan is strengthening its ivory corpus. The new obligations on ivory transactions and movements within the country (see "On the Trail" n°17, p. 102) are applicable as from today. Vigilance on export controls is strengthened. Sellers are obliged to inform foreign buyers of all legal procedures. Cooperation with Chinese customs and the Chinese CITES office is also being strengthened. The staff of the Ministry of the Environment dedicated to monitoring transactions of endangered fauna and flora species including ivory will increase from 22 to 26.¹¹⁵

JORDAN

9-11 avril 2018

April 9-11, 2018

Amman, Amman Governorate, Jordan

- Seizure of three tusks introduced illegally into the country.

- Seizure in the showroom of a hotel of 23 worked ivories.¹¹⁶

MALAYSIA

May 2018

Sabah State, Malaysia

In one month, six pygmy elephants died here and there in Sabah State inside oil palm plantations or on the edge. The latest event has left its mark. The body of a one-year-old elephant was found adrift in a river. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal orders an investigation into the series of disasters. He wants to know the exact causes and preventive measures to be taken. "Perhaps, the previous government did not have the political will to push through more drastic actions that would affect big logging companies and plantations."¹¹⁷

MYANMAR

April 2, 2018

Rakhine Yoma Elephant Sanctuary, Rakhine State, Myanmar

Up until now, the 40,000 km² park, which is difficult to access, was considered a paradise for around one hundred wild elephants, disturbed only very rarely by a few poachers from hell. But things tend to be getting worse and the incursions are becoming more frequent. Over 100 kg of smoked meat, a trunk and a hide – that is all that is left of an elephant carcass that was discovered recently. The police are interrogating four people, including one member of a rural community that coexisted peacefully with the elephants up until now.¹¹⁸

April 22, 2018

Chaungtha Forest Reserve, Irrawaddy Region, Myanmar

Two poachers arrested, two others wanted. Seizure of two firearms, arrows, bottles of poison, skin and elephant meat. Between 2011 and 2017, 40 wild elephants were poached around Pathein, Ngapudaw and Thabaung.¹¹⁹

Early May 2018

Thabeikkyin, Pyin Oo Lwin District, Mandalay Region, Myanmar

Discovery after a villager report of an elephant skinned on the right flank and amputated of its tail and a few teeth.¹²⁰

May 27, 2018

Mindon, Magwe Region, Myanmar

Two arrests. One poached elephant. The context is very unfavourable to elephants. The forests are encroached by the farmers' front. Poachers are well organized. They most often come from the cities. They ride motorcycles to dribble the police. They say they are local people when, in the jungle, patrols ask them for papers. The guards have trouble distinguishing between poachers and hunters.

A police officer from Ngapudaw, a good connoisseur of the case, tells how poachers shoot with rifles handmade from pipes, which they load with powder, chemical and vegetable poisons, after having made the mixture in the jungle.¹²¹

End of May 2018

Daik-U, Bago Region, Myanmar

Three arrests. The price of poachers for a customer in Rangoon is 30,000 Kyat per skin viss (unit weight corresponding to 1.6 kg) or \$13 US per kg.¹²²

May 28, 2018

Regions of Ayeyarwady and Yangon, Myanmar

They raked the forests around Okkan. Three arrests. They have to their credit at least three elephants including one female between January 2017 and March 2018. They sold the skins by viss at Aung. They and others have a code of conduct to kill, cut the trunk and skin.¹²³



SRI LANKA

May 2, 2018

Palagala, District of Anuradhapura, North Central Province, Sri Lanka

A new victim of hakka patas, these fruits-lures containing house-made explosives (cf. "On the Trail" n°18 p.105). On top of that, her body would be riddled with bullets.¹²⁴

11 June 2018

Kala Wewa National Park, North Central Province, Sri Lanka

The venerable Deega Danthu I, who disappeared 3 weeks ago after being shot in the left front paw and treated by vets, has been located in a remote area of Kala Wewa National Park. He looks fine and doesn't limp.¹²⁵



THAILAND

April 15, 2018

Pluang Thong, Province of Chonburi, Thailand

A 30-year old male, well-known, well-liked in the sector and recognizable for his unique tusks and his short tail was found dead, his trunk burned from contact with electric barbed wire installed there to protect a pineapple field. A high-intensity voltage had struck down the 4 t elephant 100 m away from where a female had fallen not too long ago. The pineapple plantation is adjacent to the forest. The guardian had been put in custody then released on bail after the first electrocution. The police are searching him again.¹²⁶



VIET NAM

Early May 2018

Ho-Chi Minh, Viet Nam

Two Internet traders were caught with their hands on the keyboard. Seizure of raw ivory, sculpt ivory and a tiger skin fragment.¹²⁷



June 2018

Dak Lak Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of 6 kg of ivory charms produced in an underground workshop.¹²⁸

EUROPE

European Union

End June 2018

An investigation by Elephant Action League and Avaaz shows once again that intra-European rules on ivory marketing are not respected.

Of the 109 ivories purchased and radiodated with carbon 14, 81 were made of ivory well after 1947 and at the time of sale should have been accompanied by an intra-EU certificate issued by the competent national authorities. Of these 81 items, 17 were made from ivory from 1990 to 2010 and were theoretically banned from sale.

1947 and 1990 are two of the key dates in European regulation. 1947 corresponds to the year below which ivories fall into the "antiques" category, the problem being that this market is free and that so-called antiques said to be ante 1947 are in fact counterfeits or trivial and recent productions. 1990 corresponds to the year of entry into force of the listing of African elephants in Appendix I of CITES. Carbon-14 dating is a nuclear technique. Thanks to the detection of the radionuclide resulting from atmospheric atomic tests (1945-1965) and taking into account its decrease, the date of formation of a vegetal or animal material such as ivory can be determined with an accuracy in the order of 2 to 3 years. France introduced a provision in the Order of August 16 2016 on the prohibition of trade in elephant ivory requiring that the age of ivory be established by any means of expertise and if necessary by radio-dating.

For the purposes of the Elephant Action League and Avaaz survey, ivories were purchased in Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom from antique dealers, flea markets or the Internet. In France, they were bought on Naturabuy, a shameful digital wildlife reserve managed by the Mondadori press group (see "On the Trail" n°5, p. 104). Despite reminders to order and reports to the authorities, Naturabuy still sells naturalized animals or parts of colonial inspiration and of a bad taste which borders on perfection. On this day, ivory statuettes representing elephants, without mention of the compulsory intra-EU certificate and without certainty on the dating of the ivory are freely on sale on Naturabuy.¹²⁹

SPAIN

April 2, 2018

Pozo Cañada, Province of Albacete, Autonomous Community of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain

Road accident. One elephant dead and two wounded. The truck driver apparently wanted to pass a slow moving vehicle on the highway. The trailer heeled over. There were five chained elephants inside. "We do not stop to be called sons of bitches, and murderers," says Ronny Gottani, acrobat and spokesman for the circus. In a few days a petition gathered more than 200,000 signatures. It calls for the Gottani circus to be banned from exploiting animals and for a decent accommodation for the surviving elephants.¹³⁰



End of April 2018

Province of A Coruña, Autonomous community of Galicia, Spain

Seizure of nine worked ivories of African origin that were on sale for €10,000 on the Internet.¹³¹

FRANCE

1st April 13, 2018

Sames Toll gate, Pyrénées-Atlantiques Department, France

Seizure by customs on the A64 highway in the direction of Bayonne-Toulouse of four elephant tusks (16 kg total). The driver pretended to be moving.¹³²

Cf. for other important seizures in the southwest of France "On the Trail" n°3 p. 68 and n°4 p. 70.



April 28, 2018

Foix, Department of Ariège, Southwestern France

Seizure by the ONCFS of 28 worked ivories, a hippopotamus tooth, a bear claw, and a feline claw at a garage sale.¹³³



OPERATION JE DONNE MON IVOIRE

(I give my ivory)

April 24 and May 30, 2018

Reims, Champagne-Ardenne Department, and Nice, Alpes-Maritimes Department, France

Following the call of IFAW, destruction of 100 kg and of 600 kg of ivory under bailiff's control. The ivory dated back to the colonial heritage and had haunted drawers and attics for years. In Nice, ONCFS seizures were added to the personally owned ivories.¹³⁴



ITALY

April 2018

Casamassima and Triggiano, Apulia Region, Italy

Seizure in two auction rooms, for lack of available documentation proving their age, of 200 worked ivories weighing a total of 150 kg and worth €250,000. It is possible that all objects are fake antiques.¹³⁵

April 30, 2018

Palermo, Region of Sicily, Italy

Seizure at the Piazza Marina market of 12 worked ivories – figurines and jewelry. Two sellers in custody. Analyses are in progress to determine the Asian or African origin of the items.¹³⁶

NETHERLANDS

April 24, 2018

Netherlands

Seizure of an elephant calf tusk in the suitcase of a passenger heading towards Turkey.¹³⁷



UNITED KINGDOM

May 23, 2018

United Kingdom

The ivory trade ban bill is progressing slowly. It enters the House of Commons. The question is how it'll get out. As it stands, exceptions are nibbling at the ban:

- furniture or other ornaments containing less than 10% ivory;
- musical instruments containing less than 20% ivory and made before 1975;
- miniature portraits made on ivory plates made more than 100 years ago;
- objects of outstanding artistic interest, cultural interest or historical interest;
- sales to museums or between museums.

Public opinion is generally in favour of the draft, but there are differences on the excessive number of derogations and the complexity of interpretations. Others believe that it would be simpler to rigorously apply the existing law and antique dealers complain. According to the government, the new law would be the most stringent and protective of elephants in Europe.¹³⁸

SWITZERLAND

End of June 2018

Chiasso border checkpoint, Canton of Ticino, Switzerland. Border with Italy

Seizure in a vehicle registered in Switzerland and driven by an Italian of eleven netsukes each of which could be worth several thousand Swiss francs, unless they are fake.¹³⁹

Mammoths

EUROPE

RUSSIA

Early June 2018 Blagoveshchensk, Amur Oblast, Russia. Border with China

A Chinese "tourist" tried to cross the border without informing customs. There are always surprises in the Amur Oblast. Seizure of 173 fragments of presumed mammoth ivory in various geometric forms and weighing a total of 8 kg. In March, 75 kg of mammoth ivory were seized from a resident of Blagoveshchensk, 500m from China. The value of the lot was estimated at 2.2 million Rubles, or \$ 34,860 US (\$ 460 US/kg).¹



© Blagoveshchensk customs

Other Mammals

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

Mid-June 2018 South Africa

This quarter's dumbest animal. Tess Thompson Talley, citizen of the United States of America, poses triumphantly in front of the giraffe she just killed.¹



© Africland

June 28-July 1, 2018 Northern Cape Province, South Africa

A fine of 1500 rand (\$110 US) for the illegal detention of a stuffed gemsbok (*Oryx gazella*).²

KENYA

Mid-may 2018 Nairobi, Nairobi County, Kenya

One arrest. He was transporting two zebra carcasses (*Equus zebra*) in the back of a bloody Toyota.³



© KWS

MOZAMBIQUE

June 2018 Gorongosa National Park, Sofala Province, Mozambique

Attempt to reintroduce the African wild dogs (*Lycaon pictus*) in Mozambique. The initiative led by an American sponsor, Gregg Carr, aims to repair the wildlife losses caused by the civil war between 1975 and 1992, which claimed nearly a million human lives. Elephants and giraffes had lost 90% of their population. The dogs had completely disappeared. The pack of eight males and six females were transported from South Africa by air. The Park comes alive again. It is said to number today 500 elephants and 60 lions.⁴



© Charlessharp

UGANDA

Early May 2018 Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

A 12 months prison sentence for possession of an okapi skin (*Okapia johnstoni*). Jules Unega, from the Democratic Republic of Congo, sought the indulgence of the court. "I have learnt a lesson from this time on remand and once freed, I will go back to my village to enlighten the masses on the dangers of poaching."⁵



Early June 2018

Mbirizi, Lwengo District, Central Region, Uganda

Seizure of 500 kg of common eland (*Taurotragus oryx*) meat. The four individuals were driving toward Kampala. They ran out of luck when they broke down and, after a while, a pool of blood spread along the road at the back of their car. The antelopes were poached in the Lake Mburo Game Park, where an agent who preferred to remain anonymous said that elands, zebras, impalas, waterbucks and reedbucks are the most often poached. Ronald Naduli, Joseph Mugerwa, Abdul Nyanzi and Ben Sseremba claim that they were merely transporters.⁶

TUNISIA

April 21, 2018

Senghar-Jabess National Park, Tataouine Governorate, Tunisia

The poachers entered the reserve in a 4x4, 200 km from Tataouine. They chased and shot an Arabian oryx (*Oryx leucoryx*, Appendix I), then disappeared into the desert, carrying off the remains, and leaving behind nothing but empty cartridges and a knife. The large Tataouine region is home to 38 of these gazelles. One month ago, naturalists and reserve rangers were overjoyed by the birth of two fawns. The Arabian oryx have developed a strategy to adapt to the arid plains and deserts of the Mediterranean basin. They dig den-like hollows in the sand and the gravel under bushes and thickets, and rest there, protecting themselves from the heat. They come out and are active at dusk. They can detect distant rain episodes and travel tens of kilometers to feed on sprouting vegetation. When water becomes scarce, they survive by eating the bulbs of succulents. They are sought after for their meat, their leather, their supposed medicinal virtues and mostly their spectacular horns and trophies. Female trophies are preferred because their horns are longer and thinner.⁷



AMERICA

ARGENTINA

End of June 2018

San Jose Control Post, San Juan Province, Argentina

Seizure of eight southern three-banded armadillos (*Tolypeutes matacus*) from a vehicle on highway 40.⁸

COLOMBIA

Mid-April 2018

Between Balsillas and Neiva, Department of Huila, Colombia

Seizure of an injured armadillo in a bag on board a van.⁹

COSTA RICA

Mid April 2018

La Cruz, Province of Guanacaste, Costa Rica. Border with Nicaragua

Seizure of a collared peccary (*Pecari tajacu*, Appendix II) from a car on the Interamerican highway.¹⁰



ECUADOR

April 25, 2018

Sangolquí, Province of Pichincha, Ecuador

Sentencing of two poachers of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*, *Odocoileus virginianus mayensis*, Appendix III in Guatemala) in the Antisana Ecological Reserve to 4 years in prison, a fine equal to \$3,750 US, \$2,000 US in damages, and to make an apology in a national media. The events go back to April 8. Surprised by a night patrol, the two men had thrown the deer bodies over a bridge before fleeing.¹¹



May 16, 2018

Esmeraldas, Esmeraldas Province, Ecuador

Seizure from a joiner's workshop of a tamandua (*Tamandua mexicana*, Appendix III in Guatemala). "It is in good health, we will release it in the Mache Chindul reserve."¹²



May 29, 2018

Tulcan, Carchi Province, Ecuador

One year in prison and a fine of \$3860 US for the seller of 10 colpeo fox (*Lycalopex culpaeus* or *Pseudalopex culpaeus*, Appendix II) tails. The principal threats to the colpeo fox are hunting and trapping for their fur, and killing or poisoning by sheep and poultry farmers.¹³



HONDURAS

OPERATION CYCLONE IV

May 10, 2018

Department of Comayagua, Honduras

Release from a hacienda of 19 white-tailed deers (*Odocoileus virginianus*, *Odocoileus virginianus mayensis*, Appendix III in Guatemala). They were not declared at the Instituto de Conservación Forestal. The white-tailed deer is the iconic mammal of Honduras. In the same department of Comayagua, 37 illegal deer had been removed from multiple haciendas in February this year.¹⁴

MEXICO

Mid-April 2018

Veracruz, State of Veracruz, Mexico



Seizure of a baby coyote (*Canis latrans*) on sale for 2,000 pesos or \$180 US on Facebook.¹⁵

April 24, 2018

Jonuta, State of Tabasco, Mexico

Rescue of two long-tailed otters (*Lontra longicaudis annectens*, Appendix I) about 20 days old, taken out of the Usumacinta River by fishermen. Babies open their eyes after 40 to 50 days. The species is part of the dietary regimes of anacondas, jaguars, and caimans. The major predator of the species is man. The fur that covers the babies since birth has for a long time served as lining for the collars of jackets and hats. In the 1970s and 1980s, long-tailed otters were hunted every year by the tens of thousands in Peru, Colombia, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil... Even today, many specimens are captured in nets set up by fishermen.¹⁶

June 9, 2018

Actopan, Actopan Municipality, State of Hidalgo, Mexico

Seizure of 5 Central American red brockets trophies (*Mazama temama*, Appendix III in Guatemala) from a display of agricultural products and ornamental plants. The Central American red brocket is the smallest deer in Mexico. It is still found in 11 country states.¹⁷



ASIA

BANGLADESH

May 9, 2018

Sharsha Upazila, Jessore District, Bangladesh. Border with West Bengal, India

Rescue of nine young zebras (*Equus zebra*) who would have been exported to Africa and were awaiting export to India. The owner of the stable was not on the premises at the moment of the seizure. The police acted on information. One of the zebras died in the hours that followed.¹⁸



CHINA

April 16, 2018

Dongxing Border Post, Autonomous Region of Guangxi, China. Border with Viet Nam.

The Vietnamese tourist was wearing two deer horns wrapped in plastic, taped around her stomach. She wore a padded jacket on top of it. The ruse did not escape the vigilance of the Chinese profilers.¹⁹



May 15, 2018

Gongshan Autonomous County, Yunnan Province, China

Two peasants sentenced to three years in prison and a fine of 4,000 Yuan (\$623 US) each for shooting down a Mishmi takin (*Budorcas taxicolor*, Appendix II) in August 2017. The two men had fled but the authorities later found meat from the animal in their makeshift accommodation.



The takin is a goat of which there are four subspecies living mainly between 2000 and 3500 m in the east of the Himalayan range. They feed on herbaceous plants, bamboo shoots, bush leaves and trees, which they savour in the early morning and late afternoon. The takins regularly visit salt marshes where they lick mineral nutrients. Poachers are often watching out for them there. In China the subspecies *Budorcas taxicolor taxicolor* occurs in Tibet and in the Gaoligongshan mountain ranges in Yunnan Province on the border with Myanmar. No serious census of its population was carried out but a study dating from 1998 estimated it at 3500 individuals. The takin is threatened by poaching for its meat and by the deforestation.²⁰

INDIA

April 3, 2018

Pench Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh State, India

Poisoning of a pack of Indian wild dogs (*Cuon alpinus*, Appendix II), seven dead out of thirteen. Urgently, the guards dispersed chicken meat around the territory of the pack to keep wild dogs from eating the poisoned carcasses left here and there by the poachers.



The "red dogs" as they are called in English language have 75% disappeared from their original range. The residual populations are isolated from each other, confronted with the shortage of food and the inescapable expansion of human activities. Hunters, poachers, and trappers starve the "red dogs," by depriving them of their preferred and necessary prey: rodents, deer, wild boar, peacocks, langurs, junglefowl. In Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, the packs have shrunk dramatically, and recent observations when available are coming down to individuals who are lonesome and often immature. In the North, they disappeared from Russia, the high Asian plateaux, and south of Singapore.

Like wolves and African wild dogs, Indian wild dogs prepare their dens before giving birth, change dens in case of danger, give food to the puppies by regurgitating it from their stomachs, cooperate to take care of the pups, escort them on their first hunt.

Young Indian wild puppies leave their den at the end of three weeks like *lycaon* puppies and wolf cubs. Nursing for the three species and sub-species lasts around eight weeks. Mating lasts around seven minutes for Indian wild dogs, six minutes for *lycaons*, fifteen to twenty minutes for wolves, and gestation lasts around 60 to 63 days for the Indian wild dogs and wolves, and 69 to 72 days for *lycaons*. The last common point among the wild canines of Asia, Africa, Europe, and North America is that humans perceive them negatively.²¹



April 5, 2018
Jodhpur, Jodhpur District,
Rajasthan State, India



During the night on October 1st and 2nd 1998, Salman Khan, Bollywood star, poached two blackbuck antelopes (*Antilope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Nepal and Pakistan) in Kankani on the side of a filmshoot. Members of the vegetarian community in Bishnoi filed a complaint. Khan did it again April 10th in Mathania. Khan was convicted at the end of a judicial marathon – 1998-2018 – to five years imprisonment. Cf. “On the Trail” n°18 p. 110.

Actually, Khan spent 24 hrs. in prison. He was released on bail of 5000 rupees (\$770 US). Sentence adjustments in India are the hidden face of the alleged firmness of the justice and governments around wildlife criminals. In India, a poacher can exchange five years in prison for \$770 US.

In Madhya Pradesh, the conviction of Salman Khan is, however, appreciated by the Wildlife Administration. “Sport” hunting in a Jeep is part of the hobbies of people who have dough. They follow blackbucks in the forests and the plains with their all-terrain engines equipped in the back with a net for bringing carcasses back to the town. Salman Khan inspired others.

Around the infamous town of Bhopal, five cases of blackbuck antelope poaching were recorded in less than two months.²²

Early April 2018
Halsur, Bidar District, Karnataka State, India

The armed trio haunted the district on board a camouflaged all-terrain vehicle. Among them, a doctor and the son of a soldier. Khan, Raza, and Yakoob poached blackbuck antelopes (*Antilope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Nepal and in Pakistan) as well as deers. One or two local guys guided them on their tracking.

From thousands in the district 10 years ago, blackbucks have been reduced to hundreds today. They fall one after the other, electrocuted by agricultural fences powered by solar panels or under the bullets of poachers, many of whom come for entertainment from Hyderabad (7 million inhabitants in 2011...)²³

April 13, 2018
Thane, Thane District, Maharashtra State, India

One arrest. Bamne is an agricultural day laborer. He had already sold the meat and skin of sambar deers (*Rusa unicolor*). Skulls and antlers remain. He was caught in a hotel on Friday night.²⁴



Value \$15,400 US

Mid-April 2018
Madhya Pradesh State, India

Interrogation and suspension of three park rangers and a wildlife guard. They were accused of having let poachers of blackbuck antelopes (*Antilope cervicapra*, Appendix III in Nepal and Pakistan) pilfering in exchange for money. They were 50 to 53 years old. Five of their colleagues made off. The black sheep also used to allow some of the poachers to leave after an interrogation and used to take hold of their firearms for personal means.²⁵

April 16, 2018
Birpur, Supaul District, Bihar State, India. Border with Nepal.

Seizure of 4 deer horns at 3:35 in the morning by the 45th SSB battalion. No arrests, the trophies are now at the Forest Bureau in Birpur.²⁶

May 6, 2018
Mitiyala Wildlife Reserve, State of Gujarat, India

A hot chase through the night last Saturday. One hundred rangers tried to intercept three poachers who were shooting Indian gazelles (*Gazella bennettii*, Appendix III in Pakistan) in the Mitiyala Wildlife Sanctuary. Only one man was arrested. One gazelle was killed and the case has made waves among the rangers. One hundred of them showed up from all across the district, but the nearest outpost was not mobilized. Several attempts were made to call, but no one ever answered. The staff has been accused of negligence.²⁷

June 23, 2018
Taluk of Bangarpet, Kolar District, State of Karnataka, India

The team of poachers was wearing the military camouflage worn by forest department agents. Prarthan Gunashekar (19 years old) and Samanth Jayaram (25 years old) were accompanying Krishnappa Kadinappa (61 years old), who was teaching them his hunting techniques. They were arrested in the night by a ranger patrol as they transported a pair of deer (*Cervus spp.*) antlers. Machetes and cartridges were also seized, which did not stop the three men from claiming that they were simply responsible for transport. The investigation continues to try to identify their accomplices, if any. Ecologists and representatives of local populations are pushing the Department of Forests to make the forest zones around Kamasamudra protected forest or deer sanctuary.²⁸

IRAN

Early April 2018

Bamou National Park, Fars Province, Iran

One poacher questioned. First he says he's in the park picking medicinal plants. Then when the patrol finds a bloody knife on the scene, he admits having killed a gazelle with the help of a friend on the run, cut off the head and planned to leave with the carcass. Tracked by the rangers, the duo had abandoned her on the spot.

There are three species of gazelles in Iran: the goitered gazelle (*Gazella subgutturosa*), the chinkara gazelle (*Gazella bennetti*, Appendix III in Pakistan) and the mountain gazelle (*Gazella gazella*).²⁹



April 21, 2018

Muteh, Isfahan Province, Iran

The poacher escaped during the night. He abandoned his motorcycle after a high-speed chase with a patrol of reserve guards. A pregnant gazelle was lying near the wreck as well as a firearm.³⁰

May 27, 2018

Nehbandan, South Khorasan Province, Iran

Coaches are zoos on the move. This time, it's the spotted dress of a red deer fawn (*Cervus elaphus*) which drew attention. One arrest. As usual, rangers bottle-feed (see "On the Trail" n°14, p. 54).³¹



May 27, 2018

Yasuj, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, Iran

Confirmation by the Court of Appeal of the three-year jail sentence for a poacher of wild goats (*Capra hircus aegagrus*, Appendix III in Pakistan), a fine of 100 million rials (\$ 2300 US) and publication of the sentence in a national media.³²



NEPAL

June 24, 2018

Kathmandu, Province No. 3, Nepal

Seizure of a red panda skin (*Ailurus fulgens*, Appendix I), three arrests.³³

EUROPE

FRANCE

April 2018

Bourges, Department of Cher, France

The ONCFS was on their trail for several nights. Interception of two hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) captors. They claimed to have picked them up from the road to keep them from getting ran over. To carry out their good deeds, a dog accompanied them. Two violations are held against them: capture of undomesticated animals and transport of a protected species.³⁴

UNITED KINGDOM

April 20, 2018

Maidstone District, Kent County, England, United Kingdom

Knightspur Homes, property developer, was convicted of a total of 20,321 £ (\$28,800 US) in fines for the destruction of three colonies of common pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), around \$9,600 US per colony.³⁵



April 24, 2018

Kidderminster, Worcestershire County, England, United Kingdom

Another court, another punishment. Conviction of Stephen David Yoxhall of a fine of 300 £ (\$424 US) for having destroyed in full knowledge of the cause a colony of common pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) on the occasion of real estate work. The sum of the fine did not fly very high. It is considered by bat defendants as an incitement to get over regulatory prescriptions of the Bat Conservation Trust. Kent County and Worcestershire County are 150 km apart.

The bat is worth 22 times more in south London than in the north.³⁶

