

ROBIN DES BOIS

ON the TRAIL

The defaunation bulletin
Quarterly information and analysis report on animal poaching and smuggling
n°24. Events from the 1st February 2019 to the 31 of March 2019
Published on November 13, 2019

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.

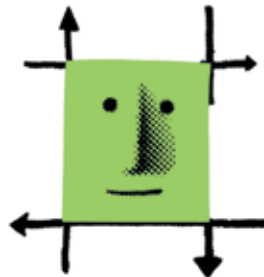
“On the Trail” highlights the new weapons of plunderers, the new modus operandi of smugglers, rumours intended to attract humans consumers of animals and their by-products. “On the Trail” gathers and disseminates feedback from institutions, individuals and NGOs that fight against poaching and smuggling. 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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Banknotes “Bank of Extinction” on the cover and in this issue:

Julien Perreaut, extracts from the “Atlas du Business des Espèces Menacées” written by Robin des Bois and published on 9 October 2019 by Editions Arthaud.

Rhinoceroses



The white rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* and black rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* ranging in Africa are listed in Appendix I, except for the white rhinoceros populations of Eswatini 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°24
The value of horn on the black market, according to media or official sources

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Asia	Hong Kong (China)	27,500	7
	Turkey	6,470	12

EASTERN AFRICA

ZIMBABWE

February 28, 2019
Hwange, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

The court refuses to drop the charges against 7 Chinese traffickers, as requested by their lawyer (cf. “On the Trail” n°23 p. 101). A search of their home found 20 kg of horns hidden in boxes and plastic bags under a mattress.¹

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

Early February 2019

Phalaborwa, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Preventive intervention in the hideout of a gang of suspected poachers. Seizure of a Toyota, a VW Polo, a rifle, a silencer, 9 cartridges and 3 knives. Arrest of 2 individuals 30 and 37 years old. Two accomplices fled in a Toyota Hilux found abandoned later.²

February 16, 19, 21 and 25, 2019

Kruger National Park, Limpopo or Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Arrest of 12 alleged poachers in less than 2 weeks:

- Phillip Gumede, a park employee, Solly Silaule, Oddis Maluleke and Sam Khoza in possession of several freshly cut rhino horns, a rifle and ammunition. Seizure of the loot and 2 vehicles with the assistance of a helicopter landing across a runway to cut off the fugitives' route.



- Phillip Mzimba and Difference Mahlaule charged with illegal possession of a firearm and breaking and entering in the park. Their application for bail is under consideration.

- Arrest and indictment of 3 suspects for trespassing in the park and carrying prohibited weapons. They were also in possession of ammunition and an axe.
- Arrest and indictment of 3 young men for trespassing in the park and illegal possession of a .458 rifle with silencer and ammunition.³

March 9, 2019
Randburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa
Seizure of 5 rhino horns. Three arrests.⁴

March 27, 2019
Durban, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Funokwakhe Khoza (51), Ayanda Buthelezi (40) and Mduduzi Xulu (51) were sentenced to 14, 10 and 10 years in prison. Buthelezi and Xulu got away with a previous 5-year probation period. They had been arrested 10 years ago in possession of 2 rhino horns, 2 axes and a rifle .303 They had managed to evade justice for 10 years thanks to their lawyers.⁵



March 29, 2019
South Africa

Veterinary treatment for 2 female rhinos attacked during the night. The youngest was shot in the chest. Her prognosis is reserved. The poachers fled with the nasal horn of the elder one. She succumbed to her wounds.⁶



ASIA

CHINA

February 14, 2019
Hong Kong International Airport, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China

Seizure in cardboard boxes of 24 suspected rhino horns, weighing a total of 40 kg. Estimated value of 8 million HK\$, or 1.1 million US\$ and 27,500 US\$/kg. The traffickers, 2 men aged 28 and 33, were arriving from Johannesburg, South Africa. They were in transit before leaving for Ho Chi Minh City, Viet-Nam. Hong Kong Customs has insisted on the tougher sanctions implemented since May 1, 2018. They cite the case of 2 travellers sentenced to 16 months' imprisonment for trying to import 24 and 17 kg of agarwood into their luggage.⁷



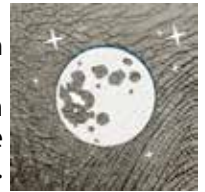
February 15, 2019
Dalian International Airport, Liaoning Province, China

Seizure of rhino horns and coral jewels (genus *Corallium*).⁸

INDIA

February 16 and 17, 2019
Kaziranga National Park, Assam State, India

Poaching of a male rhino. The horn was ripped off. This is the first case of poaching in the park this year. Five arrests.⁹



REPEATED OFFENSE

February 25, 2019
Bejimari, Darrang District, Assam State, India
Arrest in the middle of the night and on the edge of the Rajiv Gandhi Orang National park of Sola Guite, 30 years old, a well-known poacher in the region. Two partners in crime fled in the dark. Guite had tried to poach a rhino in Kaziranga park a few days earlier. Seizure of a .303 pistol, ammunition and a hostile environment survival kit.¹⁰

March 6, 2019
Mayang, Morigaon District, State of Assam, India

Akbar Ali is on the run. He made off this night while police and the Forestry Department searched his house. They were well informed: they discovered 2



.303 rifles, 10 cartridges, and diverse other weapons in his house. Akbar Ali is involved in several rhino-poaching cases.¹¹

TURKEY

February 8, 2019
Atatürk International Airport, Istanbul, Yeşilköy District, Turkey

- Seizure, in the luggage of 2 passengers in transit, of 21 rhino horns, several horn fragments and 7 sachets with wild animal claws. Total estimated value of 2.8 million US\$. The traffickers were coming from South Africa and intended to travel to Viet-Nam.

- Seizure in the luggage of a Vietnamese national of 34 kg of horns. Total estimated value of 2.2 million US\$ (6,470 US\$/kg). He was in transit on a Mozambique-Viet-Nam trip.¹²

Elephants



EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

**February 1, 3, 6, 9, 10, 16, 17, and 18, 2019
Tsavo East and Tsavo West National Parks, Kenya**

- A male elephant badly injured by an arrow in its front right foot. Swollen and infected wound. The prognosis is reserved.

- A male elephant badly injured. The head of an arrow was removed. The prognosis is positive.



- A male elephant badly injured by an arrow in his left abdominal side. Infected wound, but the prognosis is positive.



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°24
Black market raw ivory quotation
from media or official sources**

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Africa	Kenya	1,150	6
		2,000	7
	Uganda	474	16
		495	17
Gabon	40/ 190	38	
Asia	India State of Assam	1,052	98
	India State of Karnataka	420	99
	India State of Goa	2,109	102

- The body of a male elephant killed by a poisoned arrow. The tusks were intact. The arrowhead was covered in a black product, probably ouabain, a kind of tonicardiac extracted from seeds from a tropical plant (*Strophantus gratus*). A strong dose is poisonous.



- A male elephant badly injured by an arrow. Presence of pus, but the prognosis is favorable.
- An elephant injured by a trap on its front left foot. Shallow wound. The prognosis is favorable.
- The body of an elephant killed by a poisoned arrow for about a week. The tusks are intact. They were removed according to applicable protocol.
- An elephant calf injured by an arrow in its right shoulder. Probably a conflict with men. Presence of pus. The mother was anesthetized at the same time as the child so as not to separate them, but she did not care of him when she awoke. He was brought to an orphanage.
- Near a village, report of the death of an elephant who fell in a non-enclosed septic pit.



-A male elephant injured by an arrow in the left hip. Infected wound, but a favorable prognosis. ¹

**February 19, 23, and 24, 2019
Tsavo West and Chyulu Hills Natural Parks,
Kenya-**

- Four male elephants treated for arrow wounds.
- 1. In the stomach. The wound had closed but pus had accumulated. The prognosis is uncertain.
 - 2. In the stomach. The wound was continuing to bleed. The prognosis is positive.
 - 3. In the back left foot. The prognosis is positive.
 - 4. A wound in the right front foot. It is infected but the prognosis is positive.²



**February 12 and 25, 2019
Masai Mara Natural Reserve,
Narok County, Kenya**



- One young, still accompanied by his mother, injured on his trunk by a trap. The trunk was crushed by the cable for a week. The prognosis is positive.
- An elephant injured by a poisoned and barbed arrow. He died before the arrival of vets. The tusks were removed according to applicable protocol. ³

**February 2019
Kilifi County, Kenya**



Silvia Romano is missing. The mystery is not cleared up. A commando of armed men kidnapped the 23-year-old Italian humanitarian worker on 21 November 2018 in Chakama. She worked for an NGO in Malindi, then as a representative in Kilifi for Africa Milele Onlus, an Italian NGO dedicated to helping children in difficulty. Several rumors exist about her disappearance, including:

- Her abductors intended to hand her over to Al-Shabaab, who then would have negotiated a large ransom with the Italian authorities; the two clans were reportedly unable to agree on the price of the hostage who was killed in gunfire.
- Ms. Romano was reportedly killed in a scuffle between her abductors and shebabs amid ivory trafficking.
- The hostage and her abductors are still, as of February 2019, in the Tana River County forests.
- Ms. Romano has already been forcibly brought to Somalia.

What is certain is that Silvia Romano is nowhere to be found. Two Spanish aid workers kidnapped at the end of 2011 in northern Kenya and transferred to Somalia were released almost two years later. All hope is not lost⁴

**FAMILY AFFAIRS
February 2019
Nairobi, Nairobi County, Kenya**

The Assets Recovery Agency (ARA) requests authorization to seize 10.6 million shillings (105,000 US\$) on 6 bank accounts under the name of Joseph Wanjohi and his wife. The ARA also requests to seize their luxury cars and their properties in Nairobi. The couple's earnings are presumed to have come from selling heroine, spirits, and raw ivory (cf. "On the Trail" n°22 p. 86).⁵

**February 26, 2019
Nairobi, Nairobi County, Kenya**

Seizure of 23 kg of ivory. Value estimated at 1.5 million shillings, which is 15,000 US\$ (1,150 US\$/kg). Arrest of Moses Leshinga, 24 years old, Frankline Lekashina, 26 years old, and Raymon Wanbui, 32 years old.⁶



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**March 5, 2019
Nakuru, Nakuru County, Kenya**

Seizure of 8 kg of elephant tusks in bags that were supposedly filled with wood at Hotel Bondana. Value estimated to be 1.6 million shillings, which is 16,000 US\$ (2,000 US\$/kg). Arrest of 3 businessmen, James Yegon, Amos Lumet and Jacob Rono. While waiting for their trials, they will be released under a warrant equal to 20,000 US\$ each or a bail equal to 10,000 US\$ in cash.⁷



**March 10 and 16, 2019
Olarro Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya**

-An arrow wound in the back left foot. The elephant is known to regularly go in farmers' fields. He wears a geolocation collar in order to facilitate his removal in cases of intrusion. The collar is defective. It was replaced during the surgical operation.



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-A trap around the trunk for one and a spear wound in the hindquarters for the other. The prognosis is positive for both.⁸



**March 18, 2019
Kimana Sanctuary, Kajiado County, Kenya**

An elephant body is discovered. Killed by a spear. The tusks were still present.⁹

**March 24, 25, and 28, 2019
East Tsavo and West Tsavo National Parks, Kenya**

- A male elephant injured in the front right leg by a spear. Infection in the knee joint. Reserved prognosis.



-A male elephant died of an internal hemorrhage caused by a spear. The angle of the wound shows that the weapon was thrown from an elevated platform. Tusks untouched and removed according to applicable protocol.



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-A male elephant injured by an arrow in his front right foot. Swollen and infected wound. Positive prognosis. After the intervention, the elephant charged the veterinarians for 200 m.

-An elephant injured by a spear in the left hindquarters. Deep and infected wound. Reserved prognosis.¹⁰

**March 2019
Kenya**

A joint initiative of China and Kenya aims at informing people living permanently or temporarily in Kenya of the sanctions entailed for illegal trade in endangered species and ivory. Poachers and traffickers now face up to life imprisonment and a fine of 20 million shillings (200,000 US\$).

The many cases of ivory trafficking involving Chinese citizens in Africa raise concerns at the highest level of the People's Republic of China. This rampant traffic is damaging the country's image. It is likely to harm its economic expansion and the settlement of its workforce on the African continent.¹¹

MALAWI

**February 5, 2019
Nkhotakota, Central Region, Malawi**

Sentencing of Master Banda (47 years old) and Philmon Banda (23 years old) for possession and trade of 4 raw ivory weighing 28.5 kg. Master Banda was sentenced to 14 years in prison, 2 of which will include penal labor. Philmon Banda was sentenced to 11.5 years in prison, 18 months of which will include penal labor. Both sentences are concurrent. They are both members of the Mphonde Traditional Authority (TA), a kind of council, looking after respect of local customs and tax collection. They had been arrested on January 24 while they were trying to sell ivory for 35,000 kwachas per kilogram, which is 50 US\$/kg (cf. "On the Trail" n°23 p. 118).¹²



**February 23, 2019
Mvera, Central Region, Malawi**

Seizure of 2 raw ivories, with a total weight of 4.2 kg. Arrest of Enock Chakalamba, 33 years old. A stooge fled.¹³

MOZAMBIQUE

February 15, 2019

Lichinga, Niassa Province, Mozambique

Sentencing of 2 members of SERNIC (Serviço Nacional de Investigação Criminal) to 2 years in prison or a 154,760 meticaís fine (2,500 US\$) for the theft of 20 tusks that were put in safety under their watch in 2016. The tusks had thereafter been found in Cambodia (cf. "On the Trail" n°14 p. 89).

Other similar cases are still being investigated.

-In 2015, 11 people had been heard after the theft of 66 ivory tips coming from a seizure and placed in the custody of the police. No sentences to date. Among the suspects, there is Calisto, police investigator, Faustino Artur, head police investigator, Victor Luis Arone, assistant investigator, Tadeu Gaspar, sergeant, and Elias Matusse, officer of the Land, Environment, and Rural Development Department of Maputo Province, and two civilians: Zefanias Aurelio and John Chauque.

- The vanishing without breaking in of 4 ivory tips that were guarded by the forest department in 2017 has not been resolved.¹⁴



Late March 2019

Mozambique

Operation for a female elephant injured by a trap on her back right foot. Positive prognosis.¹⁵



UGANDA

February 7, 2019

Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

Seizure of 9.7 kg of ivory, estimated at 17 million shillings (4,600 US\$, 474 US\$/kg). Arrest of Kiiza Charles, boda boda driver. Accomplices fled. He claims that the owner of the ivory is a certain Champion Joël, who he had met the day before. He admits to having hosted Champion and keeping the ivory while waiting for the latter, who was living in Mukono, an hour drive from Kampala, to find a buyer.¹⁶

February 9, 2019

Kinyamenge, Kasese District, Western Region, Uganda

Arrest of 27-year-old farmer Aaron Asimwe, in possession of 2.14 kg of ivory worth an estimated 3.9 million shillings (1,060 US\$, 495 US\$/kg). Aaron claims to have been appointed by a certain Julius to deliver ivory to a man named Charles Kizza. He says he never met Charles Kizza. Kizza or Kiiza, spelling variants or homonyms? Is the Kizza Charles named here the same as the Kiiza Charles arrested 2 days earlier at 400 km from Kasese District?¹⁷

March 2, 2019

Entebbe International Airport, Central Region, Uganda

Arrest of 2 Vietnamese immigrants who were about to board a Qatar Airways flight. Nguyen Van Thanh and Dinh Van Chung were trying to flee Uganda. They were some of the 18 individuals wanted for having trafficked ivory and pangolin scales after the seizure of over 3 t of elephant tusks and over 400 kg of pangolin scales at the Elugu border post between Uganda and South Sudan (cf. "On the Trail" n°23, p.68). The other 16 suspects are still on the run.¹⁸

March 7, 2019

Elegu, Amuru District, Northern Region, Uganda

New seizure at the control point of the border with South Sudan: a 30 kg tusk. Arrest of Muzamil Hamuza (31 years old), Ali Magidu (32 years old), and Govile Nuru (44 years old). Elegu is located next to an elephant migration corridor which connects Murchison Falls national park and South Sudan. According to the UWA, (Uganda Wildlife Authority), Uganda serves as a transit route for ivory poached in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the South Sudan where political conflicts facilitate wildlife trafficking.¹⁹

TANZANIA

February 19, 2019

Dar es Salaam, Dar es Salaam Region, Tanzania

Sentencing of Yang Feng Clan, age 69, known as "Queen of Ivory" (cf. "On the Trail" n°11 p.71, n°13 p. 80, n°15 p. 90, n°17 p. 92), to 15 years in prison, 2 additional years in prison if she does not pay a fine of 3.7 million US\$ and the confiscation by the State of an agricultural property in the Tanga region. Her 2 accomplices, Manase Philemon and Salvius Matembo, were given the same sentences. The trio is found guilty for having organized the smuggling of at least 800 tusks during an unknown time period.

A good connoisseur in Swahili, she served as an interpreter to facilitate the construction of the railroad lines between Tanzania and Zambia, which was financed by China as of 1970. In 1975, she returned to China to work in her government's foreign trade services. Returning to Tanzania in 1998, she opened a Chinese restaurant in Dar es Salaam, which she said facilitating meetings between the Chinese and Tanzanian business communities. The restaurant is overlooked by the "Beijing Great Wall Investment". In 2012, she became the Secretary General of the Sino-Tanzanian chamber of commerce. The 3 convicts immediately appealed.²⁰

February 22, 2019

Morogoro Region, Tanzania

Seizure of 9 tusks. Value estimated at 90,000 US\$. Seven arrests.

The number of poached elephants in the country allegedly fell from 194 in 2017 to 23 in 2018.²¹



ZAMBIA

February 6, 2019 Lundazi, Eastern Province, Zambia

-Sentencing of Lubinda Lay (43 years old) to 6 years in prison with hard labor for the illegal ownership of 6 tusks.

-Sentencing of Moses Nyrongo, 36 years old, to 6 months of prison with hard labor for the illegal ownership of a weapon. He is suspected to be an elephant's poacher.²²



Mid-February 2019 Solwezi, North-Western Province, Zambia

Sentencing of Esther Malata (age 38) to 5 years in prison with hard labor for the illegal possession of 17 kg of ivory.²³



ZIMBABWE

REPEATED OFFENSE

February 15, 2019 Between Mabele and Hwange, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Seizure from 2 cars of 96 kg or 76.7 kg of ivory, depending of the sources. Arrest of Aloius Savanhu (38 years old), Ndaba Ncube (27 years old), Inosencia Siwela (42 years old), and Fanuel Luphahla (34 years old), a deserter. Fanuel had already been involved in an elephant poisoning affair in 2013 (cf. "On the Trail" n°2 p. 2).

Family drama, Aloius Savanhu's spouse, Christine Mathe (38 years old), committed suicide by hanging after having been interrogated by the police. She admitted to having removed a poaching weapon from the family car and to have handed it over to her neighbor, Claude Shoko, just after her husband's arrest. Requested by text message, she had acted upon his instructions. She had broken the back window of the Honda to have access to the weapon and pretended that the children were responsible for the broken glass. She was denounced to the police by a witness. The weapon was found hidden near her mother-in-law's grave in the communal cemetery.²⁴

March 7, 2019 Near Gonarezhou National Park, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe

A super tusker shot during a legal hunt party. The elephant was clearly identified by all of the good field experts and he was wearing a geolocation collar set by scientists from the Frankfurt zoological society. According to tacit rules, hunters are supposed to avoid hunting elephants under observation "for ethical reasons." The hunting guide, Martin Pieters, ex-president of the National Professional Hunting Association, assures that he had not recognized the animal. Yet, despite the bushes of the savannah, the exceptional tusks of the venerable male were visible. They now reside in the living room of his client, a Russian magnate.²⁵

March 7, 2019

Victoria Falls, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Seizure of 11 ivory tusks weighing 120 kg from the home of the former city mayor, Sifiso Mpofu (42 years old). Arrest of Milton Sibindi (47 years old), Phatiso Sibinda (49 years old) and Mpofu. While waiting for their trial, they were released on bail of 500 US\$. Sifiso Mpofu is from the same family as Obert Mpofu, the ex- Minister of Interior Affairs for Zimbabwe.²⁶

March 22, 2019

Gwanda, Matabeleland South Province, Zimbabwe

Appearance of Norman Dlamini, Vusa Lunga, Christopher Mishoni and Laurence Edward. Thanks to the duplication of the safe key, they had stolen 36 tusks and pieces of tusks from a West Nicholson hunter's home between October 2016 and March 2017 (the exact date is unknown). Three of them had been arrested by the police on January 30, 2018 with 26 tusks and pieces of tusks in their car (cf. "On the Trail" n°20 p. 93). The trio led the police to the fourth accomplice, who would be the instigator and the "owner" of the ivory.²⁷

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

February 2019

Balule Nature Reserve, Limpopo Province, South Africa

On November 23, 2018, 4 tourists perched on an observation tower near a lodge testified their indignation after having been witnesses to the shooting on sight of a young male elephant and to the relentlessness of a group of hunters. Sharon Haussmann, manager of the Balule nature reserve, had then qualified the event as "completely unethical", "inconsiderate" and "a huge embarrassment for Balule".

The 3 hunters, including a guide, were in a car. The victim was 100 m away. He was grazing under a tree. From the first shot, he cried out and fled but was then riddled with 12 additional bullets until he fell in a ditch.

In February, Haussmann completely changed opinions. The conclusive report produced by the direction of the reserve estimates that aside from the location of the hunt, the shooters could not have been blamed for anything. The Balule Reserve was allocated a license to hunt 22 elephants in the 2019/2020 season by the MPTA (Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency). Balule (cf. "On the Trail" n°10 p. 45, p. 56, n°14 p. 65) is part of the Associated Private Nature Reserves (APNR), which is adjacent to Kruger park (cf. "On the Trail" n°21 p. 61). Arguments arise about APNR and its double game and double profit, which consist of selling vision tourism services and hunting services at the same time. In 2018, 53 elephants were legally hunted within APNR and 71 elephants were poached within Kruger park.²⁸

March 15, 2019

Between Louis Trichardt and Thohoyandou, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Seizure of 2 elephant tusks in a black sports bag. Arrest of Keswane Simango (28 years old) and Florence Baloyi (35 years old) along route R524. Arrest of Philemon Baloyi later on the same day. All 3 are Zimbabwean nationals. The police suspect that they illegally migrated to South Africa. The authenticity of the ivory has not yet been proven.²⁹

FAMILY AFFAIRS

March 31, 2019

Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Seizure of a meter long elephant tusk from a garbage bag at the back of a Golf. Value estimated at 400,000 rand, which is 28,900 US\$. Arrest of a couple: Altaaf Dawood (28 years old) and Alia Dawood (27 years old). Alia was released on bail of 1,000 rand, which is 72 US\$. Altaaf will stay in prison. He is also sued for the murder of a 17-year-old homeless person.³⁰

BOTSWANA

Early February 2019

Nata Bird Sanctuary, Central District, Botswana

Seizure of 2 elephant tusks. Arrest of a Zimbabwean national (age 36) without a residence permit. He claims to have found the tusks hidden in a bush. He admitted that he was about to sell them.³¹

NAMIBIA

Late February 2019

Katima Mulilo, Zambezi Region, Namibia

Sentencing of Risco Chasunda (age 43) to a 50,000 N\$ fine (3,700 US\$) or to 5 years in prison. He had been arrested on September 15, 2018 (cf. "On the Trail" n°22 p. 93) with 10 tusks weighing a total of 62.34 kg in the back of his pick-up truck. Value estimated at 73,850 N\$, which is 5,400 US\$ and 87 US\$/kg.³²



REPEATED OFFENSE

March 24, 2019

Kongola, Zambezi Region, Namibia

The international gang - 3 Angolans, 2 Zambians, one Namibian - was caught in possession of 4 tusks, 2 elephant tails and a piece of zebra skin. Bail was denied.³³

COTE D'IVOIRE

March 16, 2019

Cocody, Abidjan Department, Ivory Coast

Arrest of Djibril Gueye, 30-year-old Senegalese national, for the possession and sale of ivory. He is specialized in the sale of ivory crafts in the San Pedro region 350 km away from Cocody.³⁴

LIBERIA

March 2019

Sapo National Park, Sinoe County, Liberia

Arrest by rangers of Saturday Jarwee, 60 years old, accused of having killed and extracted the tusks of 4 elephants. He denies all allegations but villagers report that he has been poaching wild animals in the Jleepo forest, inside the park, for 30 years.³⁵

SENEGAL

REPEATED OFFENSE

March 5 and 9, 2019

Blaise Diagne International Airport and Soumbedjone market, Thiès Region and Dakar, Dakar Region, Senegal

-Seizure of 6 ivory statues, 2 ivory bracelets, and an ivory pendant, weighing a total of 350 g, from packets of powdered milk. Value estimated at 450,000 Francs CFA, which is 780 US\$ or 2,230 US\$/kg. Arrest of 2 Chinese nationals, a woman and a man. The woman is a storekeeper in Dakar. She was about to take a flight to China.

-Seizure during 3 raids of 391 pieces of carved ivory, weighing 5.5 kg. Arrest of the 3 traffickers who had sold the ivory to the Chinese national. One of them had already been sentenced in 2017 to 3 months in prison for trafficking ivory.³⁶



TOGO

March 7, 2019

Lomé, Maritime Region, Togo

Seizure of 2 9-kg ivory tips. Arrest of A. Razak, the seller, and O. Idrissou, the supplier. The 2 stooges have ties with gangs in Benin and Burkina Faso. They seem to be also be connected with gold trafficking.³⁷

GABON

**REPEATED OFFENSE and FAMILY AFFAIRS
February 23, 2019****Moanda, Haut-Ogooué Province, Gabon**

Seizure of 2 ivory tips with a total weight of 23 kg broken into 8 pieces in a bag of rice in the back of an Izuzu. Arrest of 3 Senegalese brothers. Diack Abou (age 38), Diao Mamadou (age 50) and Sow Babali Amadou (age 61). They say they bought the ivory for 500,000 francs CFA (870 US\$, 40 US\$/kg) and were planning to resell it for 110,000 francs/kg (190 US\$/kg). According to some sources, they were part of a gang acting in the South-East of the country. The client is still being investigated.³⁸

FAMILY AFFAIRS**March 24, 2019****Makokou, Ogooué-Ivindo Province, Gabon**

Seizure of 3 ivory tips in a motel. Arrest in flagrante delicto of Pambou, then of Lydia Amba. She drove her brother-in-law to the motel and transported the ivory in a black travel bag.³⁹

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

February 5, 2019**Etoumbi, Cuvette-Ouest Department, Republic of the Congo**

Seizure of 41 tusks weighing a total of 90 kg, which is an average weight of 2.2 kg per tusk. 21 young elephants were victims of poaching! The 6 suspected traffickers are members of a gang that works with the Gabonese.⁴⁰

REPEATED OFFENSE**Mid-February 2019****Ouesso, Sangha Department, Republic of the Congo**

Sentencing of Jouanin Andoula and Michel Anoumzock to 3 years in prison and to a fine of 2 million francs CFA (3,480 US\$) each. Jouanin Andoula admitted to poaching for several years. Backers like Anoumzock regularly hire his services. Anoumzock provided the AK47. An elephant's trunk, tail, and ammunition were seized from his house. He had already been sentenced several times for poaching.⁴¹

**February 17 and 28, 2019****Oyo, Cuvette Department, Republic of the Congo**

Seizure of 4 ivory tips. Arrest of Mefouta Blandain. He used to supply ammunition and provisions to Sangha Department poachers and he was driving back to Oyo, over a 200 km drive, while concealing his loot in a small suitcase. Sentencing to 5 years in prison and to a 10 million francs CFA (6,130 US\$) fine and damages.⁴²

**Mid-March, 2019****Ouesso, Sangha Department, Republic of the Congo**

Seizure of 5 pieces of ivory weighing a total of 23.5 kg. Arrest of Amadou Tidiane Sall, a 28-year-old Senegalese trader. His accomplices fled.⁴³



AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

February 2019**United States of America****-San Diego, California State.**

Sentencing of the owner of Carlton Gallery, Victor Hyman Cohen, and of an employee, Sheldon Miles Kupersmith, to respectively 75,000 US\$ and 60,000 US\$ fines, to 200 hours of community service at the San Diego zoo and to 3 years of probation for trafficking ivory. Sentencing of the gallery as a company to a 75,000 US\$ fine. Estimated value of the trafficking: 1.3 million US\$. The Carlton Gallery is set up in La Jolla. During the raid, officers seized 338 decorative objects containing ivory (cf. "On the Trail" n°23, p. 150).⁴⁴



-New York City, New York State. Rejection of the appeal of 2 antique dealers. They were requesting the invalidation of the law that prohibits the sale of ivory in the State of New York (cf. "On the Trail" n°21 p.92), regardless of its dating. They claimed that this law is unconstitutional in regards to the federal law that authorizes the sale of ivory that is at least 100 years old. The judge found that in the current state of the file the antique dealers did not prove that the law directly affected them. However, he authorizes them to lodge another appeal in the event that they succeed in gathering evidence of the damage.⁴⁵

-Montana State. A bill proposes the prohibition of the sale and purchase of elephant ivory, rhinoceros horns, and their bi-products within the State of Montana. This does not apply to elk ivory, nor to objects that are known to have been produced over 100 years ago, nor to ivory in musical instruments from before 1975. Knives and weapons will be exempt. It will not be forbidden to possess or to give ivory if the acquisition of the items has been done before the proclamation of the law. Contraveners risk fines that are double the value of the ivory sold. The senator Mike Philipp, who filed the project, claims that the trafficking of ivory is at the highest level ever recorded and that it finances terrorist groups.⁴⁶

-Connecticut State. The HB-5394 bill provides for the prohibition of trading ivory and rhinoceros horns, with the exception of historical items. Amendments have been tabled to remove this exemption. Professional antique dealers encourage the Connecticut State Environmental Committee to oppose these amendments.⁴⁷

CAMBODIA

February 25, 2019

Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary, Keo Seima Region, Mondulkiri Province, Cambodia

Autopsy of an adult male elephant. The death goes back about 10 days in a cashew plantation. His tail and his tusks are gone. The cashews that he ate are currently being analyzed. Voluntary poisoning is not out of the question. A bullet wound was also discovered. The last census conducted in 2010 reported 120-170 wild elephants in the province's protected areas.⁴⁸

CHINA

GANG

March 30, 2019

Fenghua District, Zhejiang Province; Huangpu District, Shanghai Autonomous Municipality; Hefei, Anhui Province, Nanjing, Jiangsu Province; Pékin, Pekin Autonomous Municipality, and Qingdao, Shandong Province, China

The biggest seizure of ivory in the last few years: 2,748 tusks and pieces of tusks with a total weight of 7.48 t, 20 arrests. An international network has been dismantled. The ivory was primarily bought from Africa, notably Nigeria. Then, it was transported in wood shipments to China, where it was hidden in a waste recycling factory. It took 2 months of work and 238 police officers to complete the operation.⁴⁹

CHONGQING

March 14, 2019

Municipality of Chongqing, China

Seizure by postal customs of 40 ivory pendants.⁵⁰

March 2019

Chongqing-Jiangbei International Airport, Chongqing Municipality, China

Seizure of ivory bracelets from the purse of a Vietnamese passenger arriving from Ho Chi Minh. Total weight: 53 g.⁵¹

FUJIAN

March 2019

Zhangzhou, Fujian Province, China

Seizure from packages coming from the United States of America of several ivory crafts or objects containing ivory, including 165 knives, 119 forks, 8 bullets, 8 fans, 4 boxes of jewelry, 5 makeup brushes, and one pair of binoculars. Total weight : 14.9 kg.⁵²



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GUANGDONG

February 2019

Huanggang Control Post, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

- Seizure of a necklace with 108 ivory pearls, weighing 120 g, from a woman's luggage.⁵³

March 2019

Gongbei Border Post, Zhuhai, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Macau.

- Seizure of 5 worked ivories weighing a total of 350 g from the luggage of a passenger coming from Angola.⁵⁴

Luohu District, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China.

- Seizure of a 66.4 g ivory necklace from the luggage of an entering passenger.⁵⁵

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Guangdong Province, China.

- Seizure of worked ivories with a total weight of 120 g.⁵⁶

Huanggang Control post, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China.

- Seizure of ivory bracelets with a total weight of 56.85 g, from a vehicle.⁵⁷

GUANGXI

February 2019

Nanning, Guangxi Region, China

- Seizure of 8 ivory bracelets, with a total weight of 577.1 g, from the luggage of a foreign passenger. They were hidden in 4 coffee packets.⁵⁸

- Seizure from 2 packages coming from Cambodia and New Caledonia of 4 worked ivories weighing a total of 209 g.⁵⁹

March 2019

Dongxing Border Post, Guangdong Province, China

- Seizure of a 35.91 g ivory brooch from a passenger's luggage.⁶⁰

Nanning Wuxu International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

- Seizure of 4 10-g ivory pendants and of a 20-g ivory bracelet from the luggage of 3 women. They were arriving from Bangkok on Nok Air and New Gen Airways flights and from Macau by an Air Macau flight.



© Chinese Customs

- Seizure of a 26.4-g ivory bracelet from the luggage of a British woman arriving from Kuala Lumpur by an Air Asia flight.⁶¹

From 1 January to 6 March, 44 worked ivories weighing a total of 28.698 kg were seized in the Nanning district.⁶²

HENAN

March 2019

Zhengzhou Xinzheng International Airport, Henan Province, China

- Seizure of a small 6.7 g carved ivory from the luggage of a passenger arriving from Nha Trang, Viet-Nam.

- Seizure of 2 pieces of 73.7-g ivory jewelry from the luggage of a passenger arriving from Bangkok.⁶³

Zhengzhou, Henan Province, China

- Seizure of 47 small ivory cylinders with a total weight of 101 g from a package coming from Japan.⁶⁴

JIANGSU

February 2019

Nanjing, Jiangsu Province

- Seizure of 300 kg of raw ivory and ivory crafts. Value estimated at 11.3 million yuan (which is 1.6 million US\$ and 5,334 US\$/kg). Three arrests. The smuggling from Viet-Nam would have involved more than 560 kg of ivory.⁶⁵

Nanjing International Airport, Jiangsu Province

- Seizure of ivory necklaces and bracelets, weighing a total of 192 g.⁶⁶

JIANGXI

March 5 and 7, 2019

Pingxiang, Jiangxi Province, China

Seizure of 2 postal parcels containing 10 worked ivories (700 g) and a sea turtle shell (60 g).⁶⁷

LIAONING

March 2019

Shenyang, Liaoning Province, China

- Seizure of 4 ivory crafts, with a total weight of 310 g, from a package entering the country.⁶⁸

- Seizure of 2 painted ivories from a package entering the country. It is the 11th seizure of ivory this year by Shenyang customs.⁶⁹

Dalian, Liaoning Province, China

- Seizure of a penholder and of a decorated ivory, with a total weight of 590 g, from a package coming from the United Kingdom. The package should have contained a "plastic pen holder".⁷⁰



Dalian International Airport, Liaoning Province, China

- Seizure of a 61 g ivory bracelet, worn by a passenger arriving from Tokyo, Japan. He claimed that it was a "souvenir" bought in South Africa and it "was not of high value".⁷¹

SHANDONG

February 2019

Weihai, Shandong Province, China

FAMILY AFFAIRS - Seizure of an ivory necklace and of a ring, with a total weight of 143 g, from a package. Arrest of the woman coming to receive the package. Her mother, Lin Wei, had bought the ivory on an foreign website selling second-hand items in the month of January and had designated her as the recipient.⁷²

Qingdao International Airport, Shandong Province, China

- Seizure of 24 worked ivories, among which were bracelets, pendants and other jewelry, with a total weight of 790 g. The jewelry was wrapped in aluminum foil. It was coming from Africa.⁷³

Jinan, Shandong Province, China

- Seizure of forks and knives with ivory handles from a package coming from the United Kingdom.⁷⁴



Qingdao International Airport, Shandong Province, China

- Seizure of 9 ivory crafts, weighing a total of 300 g. Three arrests.⁷⁵

March 2019

Qingdao International Airport, Shandong Province, China

- Seizure of 630 g of ivory.⁷⁶

SHANGHAI

February 2019

Shanghai Pudong International Airport, Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China

- Seizure of 7 ivory bracelets and pendants, weighing a total of 176 g, from a woman's luggage.⁷⁷

- Seizure of 2 ivory crafts from a package coming from Greece. Total weight: 274 g.

- Seizure of 2 ivory rolls from a package coming from Japan.⁷⁸



March 2019

Shanghai Pudong International Airport, Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China

- Seizure of an entire carved elephant's tusk from a passenger's luggage.⁷⁹



Shanghai Pudong International Airport, Shanghai Autonomous Municipality, China

- Seizure of 2 ivory pearl bracelets with a total weight of 123 g from the luggage of a passenger arriving from Ethiopia.⁸⁰

SICHUAN

March 26, 2019

Chengdu-Shuangliu International Airport, Sichuan Province, China.

- Seizure of 18 ivory crafts, for a total weight of over 1.7 kg, from the luggage of a passenger.⁸¹

TIANJIN

February 2019

Tianjin municipality, China

Seizure of elephant ivory and narwhal (*Monodon monoceros*, Appendix II) ivory from 2 packages.⁸²



YUNNAN

February 2019

Hekou Border Post, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Viet-Nam.



- Seizure of an ivory bracelet, necklace, and earrings, with a total weight of 80.3 g. The jewelry was worn by a Vietnamese passenger.⁸³

- Seizure of a 23-g ivory bracelet from the luggage of a Vietnamese woman.⁸⁴

Mengla County, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Laos.

- Seizure of 7 ivory objects, for a total weight of 230 g, from 2 packages.

- Seizure of a 40-g ivory bracelet worn by a passenger.

- Seizure of 3 ivory pendants and a bracelet, a total weight of 90 g.

- Seizure of an ivory bracelet and pendant, weighing a total of 54 g, from the luggage of 2 passengers.⁸⁵

Kunming, Yunnan Province, China

- Seizure of a 24.5-g ivory bracelet from the book bag of a Vietnamese woman.

- Seizure of a 90-g ivory necklace worn by a man.⁸⁶

March 2019

Ruili Border Post, Yunnan Province, China. Border with Myanmar.

- Seizure of several ivory bracelets and necklaces, weighing a total of 189.7 g, from the luggages of 5 passengers.⁸⁷

Kunming Changshui International Airport, Yunnan Province, China.

- Seizure of 4 ivory crafts, weighing a total of 117.9 g, from the luggages of 4 passengers arriving from Vientiane, Laos and from Chiang Mai, Thailand.⁸⁸

- Seizure of a 50-g ivory bracelet and a 60-g ivory pendant worn by a woman arriving from Laos.⁸⁹

- Seizure of 4 ivory bracelets, weighing 315.4 g, from the luggage of 3 passengers arriving from Laos.⁹⁰

ZHEJIANG

March 2019

Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport, Zhejiang Province, China

- Seizure of 3 ivory bracelets from the luggage of a passenger entering the province.⁹¹

- Seizure of 3 bracelets, pearls, and 2 cubes, weighing a total of 464 g, from the luggage of a passenger.⁹²

INDIA

February 3, 2019

Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary, Mandya Districts, Chamarajanagar and Ramanagara, State of Karnataka, India

An elephant body with at least 15 bullet wounds was found. About 25 years old, he had been shot about 15 or 20 days before. To facilitate the tusk extraction, the elephant's skin and head flesh were sprayed with sulfuric acid. The poachers took advantage of the Chikkalur holiday to carry out the crime. During this holiday, 100,000 people cross the forest. The "sanctuary" covers 1,000 km². 45 more or less active anti-poaching camps are supposed to be on the watch. Several hundred artisanal weapons are still in the hands of the neighboring villagers. Poaching is a part of local tradition. Predators also come to Tami Nadu.⁹³

February 6, 2019

Banaswadi, Bangalore District, State of Karnataka, India

Seizure of 2 tusks. Arrest of Muruganadam D (age 35) and Balu K (age 60). They were coming from Tamil Nadu. They were responsible, according to their claims, for delivering the tusks to a recipient whose face or identity they do not know.⁹⁴

February 8, 2019

Gadapalasiun, Dhenkanal District, State of Odisha, India

Veterinarians from OUAT (Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology) urgently care for a male injured by bullets who managed to escape the ambush of ivory thieves.⁹⁵

February 26, 2019

Karuvarakundu, Malappuram District, State of Kerala, India

Two elephants, a 26-year-old male and a 20-year-old female, found dead within 400 m of each other in the buffer zone of the Silent Valley national park, near a banana plantation. The corpse of the male elephant was in a very advanced state of decomposition and was missing its 2 tusks. Arrest of Jafeer (age 35), Biju Mon (age 26), Sundaran (age 48) and Kuliyan (age 48). The first 2 are suspected of having shot, killed, and extracted the tusks after having burned the head of their victim, the last 2 would have made the firearm and supplied the ammunition.⁹⁶

March 3, 2019

Alipurduar District, State of West Bengal, India

An SSB (Sashastra Seema Bal) patrol came across Babu Phangcho and Chandra Engti who were transporting 4 pieces of ivory and 4 cell phones. They were handed over to the Hemilton Ganj Forestry Station.⁹⁷

FAMILY AFFAIRS

March 9, 2019

Khatkhati, Karbi Anglong District, State of Assam, India

Arrest upon information of Ninoka and Jeremi Zhimo in the border zone between the 2 States. They were arriving from Nagaland with 2 30-cm-long tusks, weighing a total of 3 kg, which they were intending to sell for 225,000 rupees (3,156 US\$) in Assam.⁹⁸

March 10, 2019

Shivamogga, Shivamogga District, State of Karnataka, India

The Crime Investigation Department (CID) of the Forestry Administration started up an operation to trick 2 ivory poachers with a respectable cover. One, Poonasha, is employed in writing for a coffee plantation, the other, K. M. Ganesh, is a jeweller. The 2 partners in crime possessed a 2.5 kg tusk estimated at 75,000 rupees (1,050 US\$). Pretending to be buyers, the CID detectives seized their loot. The 2 men were presented in front of a judge and put in temporary custody.⁹⁹

FAMILY AFFAIRS/ GANG

March 11, 12 and 28, 2019

Calcutta, Kolkata District, Murshidabad, Murshidabad District, State of West Bengal, and Thiruvananthapuram, State of Kerala, India

Nice catch made by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) and Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCI). The investigation lasted for 4 years. In June 2015, following revelations from a Kerala forest ranger who was also employed as a cook by a gang of poachers (cf. "On the Trail" n° 9, p. 87), the "Shikkar Operation" was launched, concluding in the seizure of 464 kg of ivory and the arrest of 73 people. But one of the heads of the network, Sindhu alias "Calcutta Thankachi" (57 years old), was able to flee with her husband Sudheesh Chandra Babu (67 years old), their daughter Amitha (37 years old), and their son Ajeesh. Installed in Calcutta, they had re-launched their trade. They were continuing to supply themselves in ivory from Kerala and elsewhere, having it worked by craftsmen in their Calcutta home and then exporting the finished products by road to Nepal via the Siliguri passageway. But a tip-off finally reached the ears of the investigators: Monday, March 11 Amitha had to pick up his father at the train station. They intercepted them on their way back and, in his suitcase, Sudheesh Chandra Babu was carrying 2 tusks. The raid of their home enabled the seizure of 10 finished statues, 9 in the progress of being finished, jewelry, a comb, and 2

other tusks. The value of the lot is estimated to be 1 million rupees (140,000 US\$). The interrogation of the 2 suspects opened new trails and the next day, one of their suppliers, Gautam Bhaskar, fell in Murshidabad in West Bengal with statues and raw tusks estimated at 420,000 rupees (59,000 US\$). But "Calcutta Thankachi" and Ajeesh remained uncatchable. On March 28, finally, the investigators located and arrested her in Calcutta while her son was caught from a 5-star hotel in Thiruvananthapuram. One of their associates in Mumbai, a certain "Pi Mundi" is still sought for.¹⁰⁰



March 12, 2019

Mettupalayam, Coimbatore District, State of Tamil Nadu, India

Singam, Kubendran, Siva and Sentrayan had slaughtered an elephant in 2011 to seize its tusks. They were sentenced to 3 and a half years in prison and a 10,500 (147 US\$) rupees fine each.¹⁰¹



March 19, 2019

Verna, South Goa District, State of Goa, India

Shrikant Kanekar (42 years old) and Vignesh Karapurkar (29 years old) were waiting for a buyer in their car at a crossroads of the city. They were hoping to collect 2 million rupees (28,058 US\$) from the 2 tusks that they had brought with a total weight of 13.3 kg (which is 2,109 US\$/kg). But the police were at the meeting. Vehicle and ivory were seized. Two days later, the 2 traffickers were released on bail by the court of Margao, with the order to appear every 10 days at the police station.¹⁰²



March 19, 2019

Kundkere, Chikmagalur District, State of Karnataka, India

A 20-year-old male elephant was found dead against a fence that had illegally been connected to an electric line. A complaint was lodged by the Forestry Department against the owner-on the run-of the agricultural plot for the death of the pachyderm and against the Chamundeshwari Electrical Supply Corporation for failing to monitor and repress the illegal electricity connections.¹⁰³



March 26, 2019

Khajurguda, Kalahandi District, State of Odisha, India

Arrest of Digambar Sahu, Surendra Ghadai and Naka Patra, 3 poachers who had electrocuted a male young elephant in the Luma forest while installing a drop cable on a 11,000-voltage line. The cadaver had been discovered 2 days before by villagers. The culprits had cut each 1.542 kg tusk and concealed them in the forest.¹⁰⁴



INDONESIA

February 19, 2019

Gabus and Wedarijaksa, Pati Regency, Central Java Province, Island of Java, Indonesia

Seizure of 2 tusks and 14 cigarette holders. One arrest.¹⁰⁵

SRI LANKA

Early February 2019

Kaluwella, Southern Province, Sri Lanka

Seizure of 7 precious rocks, a Gaja Muthu pearl, and 2 ivory crocodile figurines. Arrest of a 34-year-old man. As a reminder, Gaja Muthu are concretions that sometimes form at the base of tusks. (cf. "On the Trail" n°15 p. 101, n°19 p. 112, n°22 p. 100, n°23 p. 134).¹⁰⁶

March 14, 2019

Kalawewa National Park, North Central Province, Sri Lanka

One elephants killed by bullets in the heart of the park. He was around one year old.¹⁰⁷

THAILAND

March 6, 2019

Thon Hong, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand

Neighborhood conflict between Somchai Yoothongkham, owner of a young domesticated male elephant in musth period, and Khanit Khunlok, local chef. Somchai had chained up the elephant near a sand pit belonging to Khanit. When Khanit asked him to relocate the elephant, Somchai promised to do it the next day because he had to buy a new chain. The next day, the elephant had 5 bullet wounds in his 2 front legs, on his trunk, and near his mouth. Khanit admitted to the crime. He claims that the elephant had charged his mechanic digger. The elephant survived thanks to veterinary care that had rushed to him, a hectic intervention, as the elephant was agitated and unsettled. He will probably no longer be able to work. Somchai requested 2 million bahts (63,713 US\$) as compensation from Khanit, so that he could buy a new elephant.¹⁰⁸



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VIET NAM

March 26, 2019

Tien Sa Port, Da Nang City, Viet Nam

Seizure of 9.12 t of raw ivory hidden in containers loaded with wood coming from Congo Brazzaville et going to Quang Nam Province. Since 2009, Vietnam has seized



© VnExpress/H.N

56 t of ivory, a frightening number considering that alike Interpol, only 10 to 15% of smuggled goods are caught by customs.¹⁰⁹

EUROPE

GERMANY

February 14, 2019

Bergisch Gladbach, North Rhine-Westphalia State, Germany

Seizure of an elephant foot converted into a stool from the home of a 53-year-old man. He put it up for sale on the Internet.¹¹⁰



© Zoll

SPAIN

Late February 2019

Cuenca, Autonomous community of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain

Seizure of 4 ivory figurines. The man had put them up for sale on a website for second hand articles.¹¹¹

OPERATION LOXODONTA

Early March 2019

Madrid, Autonomous Community of Madrid, Autonomous Community of Navarre, and Lleida, Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain

Second phase of the operation (cf. "On the Trail" n°20 p. 128).

Dismantling of a no border network within Spain: Madrid, Navarre, Catalonia, Balearic Islands. The "salesperson" was based in Madrid. He claims to have "donated" naturalized animals. According to him, his approach is not venal, it is educational. 20 stuffed animals and an elephant were seized. He is, one could say, a hybrid pachyderm; the skin is authentic, the tusks are made of resin and the ears of fibreglass.¹¹²



© Guardia Civil

ITALY

February 19, 2019

Genoa International Airport, Metropolitan city of Genoa, Region of Liguria, Italy

Seizure in an acoustic speaker of 13 baby elephant tusks and 4 worked ivories in the luggage of an Indonesian passenger returning from Africa.¹¹³



CITES COP18 – Geneva

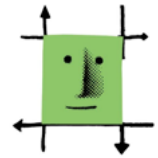
Elephants - Communication of 22 August 2019

- Rejection of the proposal presented by Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe that aimed at permitting the international trade of raw ivory, skins and hair, traditional worked ivories and non-commercial hunting trophy transactions with CITES States Parties after checking by the CITES Secretariat that they have sufficient national legislation and internal trade control measures in place to ensure that ivory will not be re-exported. This proposal concerned the elephant populations of Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe and also of South Africa. 101 votes against, 23 in favour and 18 abstentions.

- Rejection of the proposal of Zambia to delisting “its” elephants from Appendix I to Appendix II. The elephant population in Zambia declined sharply between 1981 and 2015. It has decreased from 200,000 to 20,000 individuals. Zambia had in view to undertake international trade of raw ivory with partners approved by CITES along with the trade in elephant skins, leather items and non-commercial transactions in hunting trophies. 102 votes against and 22 in favour.

It should be noted that if these proposals had been accepted, the southern African States would have met difficulties to find buyers because all domestic ivory markets are gradually closing, except in Japan.

- Rejection of the proposal by Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Gabon, Kenya, Liberia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic and Togo to include all African elephant populations in CITES Appendix I, including the populations of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. A vote in favour would have ended the split between elephants from southern Africa and elephants from central, eastern, western and south-Saharan Africa. International trade in African ivory would have been banned. The European Union voted against this proposal (only France and Luxembourg were in favour). China voted in favour, showing great consistency with the closure of the domestic ivory market. 67 against, 51 in favour and 22 abstentions.



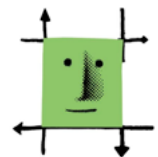
ROBIN DES BOIS

CITES COP18 - Geneva

Press release n°6, 28 August 2019 - Excerpts Positive!

Mammoth

In response to the grousing of the majority of States Parties, Israel withdrew its revolutionary proposal to list woolly mammoth in CITES Appendix II, and took advantage of the plenary session to call for a study on the trade in mammoth ivory and its consequences on the illegal elephant ivory market. This proposal was accepted. However, the Russian delegation pushed on the brakes. At the same time, the Governor of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia, Russia) is concerned about the expansion of mammoth tusks digging and smuggling. This business would bring into the mammoth mafias annual benefits equal to 100 million US\$ or more. Mammoth bones and tusks are illegally trafficked to China.



ROBIN DES BOIS

Elephants and Mammoths

ASIA

CHINA

March 24 and 25, 2019

Haifeng County, Guangdong Province, China

-Seizure of ivory necklaces with a total weight of 4.3 kg from 2 packages. One arrest and house raid. Seizure of an additional 7.9 kg of elephant and mammoth ivory.

- Seizure from another package addressed to the same address of 2,820 g of ivory and 1,900 grams of ivory crafts.

The man was supplying ivory via the internet.¹

Mammoths

EUROPE

RUSSIA

March 27, 2019

Yakutsk, Far Eastern Federal District, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), Russia

Yakutia is said to hold 85 to 90% of mammoth tusks. The annual legal production is about 100 t and would yield 50 million US\$ (500US\$/kg). The unofficial market would be twice as important. Russian federal law does not provide local revenues for Yakutia. The majority of mammoth bones and tusks are exported to China. Prime Minister Vladimir Solodov notes that China is buying more and more mammoth tusks because of the ban on the sale of elephant ivory in the country. The Government of the Republic of Yakutia is showing its determination. "The law should contain a notion of tusk as an object for commercial activities without damage to the environment." "We all are aware of barbarian methods of producing tusks, when the hunters wash off the coast lines, or dig huge caves, thus causing degradation of the nature, of the permafrost, which must be stopped."¹

Other Mammals

AFRICA

KENYA

February 10 and 24, 2019

Masai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya

- Release of a spotted hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*) injured by a trap around her neck. After waking up, she got up and took shelter in a shaded area. Favourable prognosis.

- A female zebra had been carrying the wire of a trap around her neck for a few days. The vets spotted her on the way back from another rescue operation. They anaesthetized her. She fell asleep after four minutes. They removed the iron necklace. She was immediately awakened with an antidote. After a minute, she got up and joined the other zebras nearby. Favourable prognosis.¹



March 13, 2019

Tsavo West National Park, Kenya

A young eland (*Taurotragus oryx*) released from a tire that gripped his rib cage. He had been observed the day before by a park warden. He was easily found in the shade of a tree. When the veterinarians arrived, he tried to escape. A second hypodermic syringe finally put him to sleep after 5 minutes. The tire was cut with a saw. The bruises were sprayed with tincture of iodine and antibiotics. The prognosis is favourable.²



SENEGAL

March 31, 2019

Kédougou, Kédougou Region, Senegal

A hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) wandered around the city and caused panic. He was shot dead by a gamekeeper on the governor's orders. "This final solution could have been avoided if the Water and Forestry services had used a hypodermic gun to put the animal to sleep and then back into the waters of the Gambia River," protested Mustapha Diakhate, the head of the President's cabinet with a minister rank.³