

ROBIN DES BOIS

ON_{the} TRAIL

The defaunation bulletin
Quarterly information and analysis report on animal poaching and smuggling
n°25. Events from the 1st April 2019 to the 30 of June 2019
Published on January 9, 2020

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.

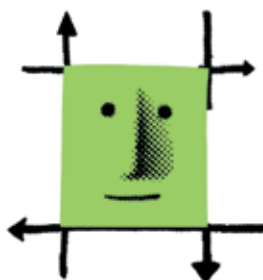
“On the Trail” highlights the new weapons of plunderers, the new modus operandi of smugglers, rumours intended to attract humans consumers of animals and their by-products. “On the Trail” gathers and disseminates feedback from institutions, individuals and NGOs that fight against poaching and smuggling.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

Non Governmental Organization for the Protection of Man and the Environment
Since 1985

14 rue de l'Atlas 75019 Paris, France
tel : 33 (1) 48.04.09.36 - fax : 33 (1) 48.04.56.41
www.robindesbois.org
contact@robindesbois.org

Publication Director : Jacky Bonnemains

Editor-in-Chief: Charlotte Nithart

Art Directors : Charlotte Nithart and Jacky Bonnemains

Coordination : Elodie Crépeau

Writing: Jacky Bonnemains, Jean-Pierre Edin and Camille Habe.

Research and assistant editor:

Elodie Crépeau, Léna Mons, Irene Torres Márquez and Dylan Bandel.

Cover : Emil Nolde « Liegende Löwin » - 1923-1924.

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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.

Giraffes

Giraffes (*Giraffa camelopardalis*) are listed under CITES Appendix II since 26 November 2019.

AFRICA

KENYA

June 2019

Kajiado County, South of Kenya

Interception at night of 3 motorcyclists carrying 300 kg of giraffe meat. She had been captured by a trap. Two of the poachers were sentenced to a fine of 2,000 US\$ or, failing payment, 2 years in prison. The third individual pleads not guilty and his trial has been postponed.¹



June 3, 2019

Bour-Algi Giraffe Sanctuary, Garissa County, Kenya

She had been dragging it around for 3 months. The steel wire of a trap was wrapped tightly around her back right leg. Prognosis is good. The Bour-Algi Sanctuary (125 km²) is polluted with traps. The KWS had recommended the managers that the park be cleaned up permanently.²



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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°25

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

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Africa	Zimbabwe	41,000	6
	South Africa	30,000	10
		65,000	15
Asia	China	25,425	23

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

April 4, 2019

Oi Jogi Ranch, Laikipia County, Kenya

With a snare wrapped around his right leg and cutting to the bone, the rhinoceros was doomed. Put to sleep in 7 minutes with a dose of 4 mg of Etorphine, he lay down and the steel cable was removed. The wound was treated with an antibiotic ointment and covered with green clay. He was awakened with Betamox. The entire operation lasted 20 minutes.¹



June 30, 2019

Lake Nakuru National Park, Nakuru County, Kenya

A white rhinoceros was poached during the night and his horns amputated. Gunshots were heard in the four corners of the park. The poachers' strategy was meant to disperse the rangers. Internal collusion is suspected. The park is one of the most actively monitored in Kenya. It is home to 6 black rhinoceroses and 14 white rhinoceroses. One year ago, a male black rhinoceros was poached.²

RWANDA

June 24, 2019

Akagera National Park, Eastern Province, Rwanda

Five black rhinoceroses were transferred by plane and truck from zoos in Dvůr Králové Safari Park (Czech Republic), Flamingo Land (United Kingdom) and Ree (Denmark). They are 2 to 8 years old, and – after going through the various stages of a one-year acclimation program – are meant to enhance the genetic diversity of the species in the park. African Parks and the EAZA (European Association of Zoos and Aquaria) promoted this new translocation. In June 2017, 17 black rhinoceroses were transferred by truck from South Africa and an animal keeper was killed during the operation (see “On the Trail” n°17 p. 107).³

ZIMBABWE

May 2019

Chipinge, Manicaland Province, Zimbabwe

Already in prison for poaching a rhinoceros in Beitbridge in December 2017 (see “On the Trail” n° 20 p. 80), Godknows Mashame has received an additional 10 years for poaching a black rhinoceros in 2011, near the Chipinge lodge.⁴



June 9, 2019

Zimbabwe

A new project, “Now Rhinos Speak,” has been launched by the French Sigfox foundation. The purpose is to collect and manage data on nature. In Zimbabwe, 49 rhinoceroses were - after anesthesia - equipped with sensors that send their GPS coordinates to the ranger station 3 times a day. Electronic tracking is meant to protect the rhinoceroses. The problem is that it could also be used by poachers.⁵

REPEATED OFFENSE

June 2019

Zimbabwe

Arrest and hearing for Brent Johan Lunt, a South African national, and his Zimbabwean accomplices for possession and transport of 4 rhinoceros horns. The total weight of the seizure is 6 kg. The estimated value is 250,000 US\$, or 41,000 US\$ per kilo.⁶



SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

Beginning of April 2019

National Park Kruger, KaMhlushwa and Komatipoort, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Things ended poorly for one of the poachers who broke into the Kruger Park on foot at dawn on April 2. He was trampled by an elephant, according to the elusive information his accomplices gave. The rangers from the Crocodile Bridge section searched on the ground, while an air search was carried out by park aircraft. They finally found the unlucky man's skull and pants – a lion and other scavengers undoubtedly ate his body.⁷

April 1, 2019

Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa

News briefs from Gauteng

- Fuel and batteries were stolen from a power generator.

- Seizure of 2 rhinoceros horns in a car heading toward the international airport. Value estimated at 34,000 US\$.⁸

GANG

April 3, 2019

Grahamstown, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

Jabulani Ndlovu, Forget Ndlovu, and Sikhumbuzo Ndlovu were sentenced to 25 years inside each for poaching at least 13 rhinoceroses in 4 years. They anesthetized their victims to death with a hypodermic rifle and doses of M99, better known as Etorphine or Thiafentanil (see “On the Trail” n° 21 p.77, n° 19 p. 85, n° 18 p. 70, n° 17 p. 77).⁹



April 13 and 27, 2019

Near Hartebeespoort Dam, North West Province, South Africa

Seizure of 167 horns in a pick-up truck on the road from Centurion to Skeerpoort. Value estimated at 300 million rand, or 30,000 US\$/kg. Petrus Steyn and Clive Melville are residents of Port Elizabeth. They were released on bail for 1,360 US\$ and 6,800 US\$. The NGO Save the Rhino points out that at least 8,300 rhinoceroses have been poached in the past 10 years.¹⁰



Mid April 2019
Near Bedfordview, Gauteng Province, South Africa

A 55-year-old woman has been arrested. She was transporting 2 horns in her car.¹¹

FAMILY AFFAIRS

April 18, 2019
Near Belfast and Komatipoort, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

- Court hearing for 2 men and a woman whose car was stopped at a road block in Komatipoort near the border with Mozambique. They were transporting a pair of horns, an illegal weapon and 5 rounds of ammunition.
- Court hearing for a father and his son. Arrested by the Middelburg flying squad, they were carrying a pair of horns. They are allegedly from Mozambique.¹²



April 21, 2019
Matiko Xikaya, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Storming in of the cops in the hideout of 3 men between the ages of 30 and 43. Seizure of a large-calibre firearm, silencer, ammunition, axe and pick-up truck. The canine brigade has not detected any rhino horns but remains on the alert.¹³

April 30, 2019
Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Musa Khoza, 23 years old, was sentenced to 22 years in prison for rhinoceros poaching, rebellion and possession of an illegal weapon. The SAPS (South African Police Service) are tracking an accomplice. In September 2016 yet, another of his associates was killed in a clash with rangers.¹⁴



May 3, 2019
Kempton Park, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Seizure in a warehouse of a stock of rhinoceros horns worth an estimated 38 million rand (2.6 million US\$). The total weight of the seizure is nearly 40 kg. The cargo was destined for Malaysia.¹⁵



May 9, 2019
Near Hoedspruit, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Colleagues found a guard at a rhinoceros ranch covered in cuts and lying in a pool of blood. He was doing rounds after having received an alert regarding an attempted poaching on the territory.¹⁶

May 21, 2019
Johannesburg O. R. Tambo International Airport, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Court hearing for a passenger who was about to take off for the United Arab Emirates with 25 horns, weighing a total of 30 kg.¹⁷



June 3, 2019
Hoedspruit, Limpopo Province, South Africa

The pastor went mad. Well-known in the parishes of Pretoria, Nicolus Mgiba, along with 2 faithful accomplices were the object of a police chase on R40. Rather than complying with, he shot at the SAPS car from his Land Cruiser before ending up in a ditch. The police seized 4 rounds of large-caliber ammunition for big game, a rifle with a silencer, an axe and a knife, unquestionably typical poaching equipment. The 3 men are accused of attempted murder and premeditating to poach in conspiracy.¹⁸



June 27, 2019
Kruger National Park, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Two hiking guides grab the horns of a rhino, the death of which was without apparent violence, right in front of 7 Argentine and South African tourists. After sawing the horns, they had put them in a backpack, pretending to hand them over to their superiors for registration and safekeeping in the park vault, protected from poachers. But they had deviated from the protocol to the point of preparing to sell them for their own profit. Pending trial, Nkuna and Mathebula were released on bail of 1,400 US\$.¹⁹

June 29, 2019
Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

New arrival of an orphan, aged 6 to 8 months.²⁰



End of June 2019

South Africa

Private companies dedicated to the fight against poaching are opposed to the draft regulation amendments that would make it illegal for their guards to carry semi-automatic weapons or wear camouflage uniforms.²¹

NAMIBIA

April 12, 2019

Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia

Li, Li, Pu and Wang, sentenced originally to 11½ years and to 9 years in prison, were sentenced by the appeals court to 20 years in prison. The 4 Chinese citizens had tried to work as an organized gang to smuggle 14 rhinoceros horns and a leopard skin through the Windhoek airport on March 24, 2014 (see "On the Trail" n° 4 p. 66, n° 5 p. 73, n° 6 p. 65, n° 9 p. 62, n°10 p.47.²²



ASIA

CHINA

April 5, 2019

Hong Kong International Airport, China

Seizure of 82.5 kg of rhinoceros horns in a package from South Africa, on its way to its final destination in Malaysia. The overall value is estimated at 2.1 million US\$, or 25,425 US\$/kg.²³



May 2019

Shanghai Hongqiao International Airport, China

Seizure in a passenger's baggage of a rhinoceros horn weighing 2.88 kg.²⁴



May 13, 2019

Futian Port of Entry, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

Seizure of a supposed rhinoceros horn and slices, for a total weight of 1.7 kg.²⁵



June 14, 2019

Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

Seizure of a presumed rhinoceros horn and fragments. Total weight: 6.5 kg.²⁶



INDIA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

April 1 and 14, 2019

Kaziranga National Park, Golaghat and Nagaon Districts, and Gohpur, Biswanath District, Assam State, India

He is the second rhino struck down since the beginning of the year in the national park. The forest rangers discovered the hornless carcass and 5 .303-caliber cartridge cases nearby. Two weeks later, investigators arrest 3 suspects in Gohpur: Ratnakanta Pegu, Dimbeswar Pegu and Mukheswar Kaman.²⁷

April 22, 2019

Fatapukur, Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal State, India

The 3 men were transporting a horn weighing over 800 g in a schoolbag when the Forest Department Special Intervention Squad picked them up. One of the traffickers managed to flee, but Bharat Roy (24 years old) and Prasanta Sarkar (24 years old), alias Rasidul Islam – he had identification papers with both names – were arrested. They were on National Highway 31 C, going toward the Siliguri corridor, on the border between Nepal, China and Bhutan. Forest agents estimate that the horn is worth 300,000 rupees (4,330 US\$).²⁸

GANG

FAMILY AFFAIRS

May 16, 2019

Silbori, Darrang District, Assam State, India

According to the authorities, Shamsheer and Moruz Ali are part of an "organized, armed gang of poachers." They were captured as they were about to enter the Orang National Park with a sharpshooter that they had recruited to kill rhinos. The sharpshooter, Sagar Singha, is a deserter from the 12th battalion of the Assam Rifles, who had come from Arunachal Pradesh. A .303-caliber rifle, a silencer, 11 bullets and a large knife constituted their "work tools."²⁹



REPEATED OFFENSE

June 5, 2019

Jakhalabandha, Nagaon District, Assam State, India

Akhter Ali is no longer on the run. Arrested last May 9 in the Kaziranga National Park, the young man is suspected of having poached a rhino on December 15, 2018; it is also suspected that it was not his first. Taken into custody and held in the rundown facility of the Bagari Forest Division, he escaped on May 13 by pretending that he wanted to go to the toilet. The police picked him up again that night.³⁰

June 10, 2019

Itanagar, Papum Pare District, Arunachal Pradesh State, India

Rijen Pegu has been arrested, accused of poaching a rhino in the Kaziranga National Park (state of Assam). He allegedly sold the horn for 3 million rupees (43,100 US\$). Several cell phones and incriminating documents were seized at his home. The man was discreetly transferred to Assam because the forest administration was afraid that his accomplices would try to free him along the way.³¹

June 14, 2019

Gingia, Biswanath District, Assam State, India

When the police and forest rangers posted at a road block on National Highway 15 ordered them to stop, Hanif Ali and Abdul Sohid abandoned their motorcycle and the bag, and took off running. They were caught a little later in a rice field. Their bag contained two .303-caliber rifles and 2 chargers.³²

June 20, 2019

Orang National Park, Darran District, Assam State, India

Suren Hamaran was arrested near the national park in possession of a .303-caliber rifle and 11 rounds of ammunition, classic rhino-poacher's weapon. His accomplice managed to escape.³³

June 24, 2019

Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary, Nagaon District, Assam State, India

In 2017, a female rhino strayed away from the Orang National Park and set up on the Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary on the outskirts of the park. She was seen until September 24, 2018, and then vanished. The forest rangers claimed that she had gone back into the Orang park and they set aside requests for investigation made by wildlife protection advocates. Their hierarchy backed them, all the way up to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests. The discovery made this morning has shaken the Assam Forest Department. A team of specialists from the Kaziranga National Park has unearthed the carcass of a rhino with her horn cut off near the Palashtoli lookout post, inside the Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary. The officer in charge at the time, Jitender Kumar, is in an uncomfortable position. But his circle is working in his favor. He apparently has connections with the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and the Prime Minister of Assam.³⁴

GANG

REPEATED OFFENSE

June 26, 2019

Kamar Gaon, Golaghat District, Assam State, India

There is tension in the air among a gang of rhino poachers. Suspected of being an informer for the police, Dhan Bora, alias Manjit Bora, was killed by the boss, Pallab Basumatary. His accomplices apparently threw the corpse – which has not been found – into the Dhansiri River. Basumatary and Harekrishna Doley were arrested at the scene of the crime, but Gautam Doley fled. In his home, police found two .303 rifles, a silencer and 14 rounds of live ammunition. Harekrishna Doley and Gautam Doley have been arrested several times in the past. Gautam Doley's mother is serving a prison sentence for collusion in rhino poaching.³⁵



INDONESIA

April 23, 2019

Bandar Lampung City, Lampung Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

A. Manap has been sentenced to 2 years in prison and a fine equivalent to 3,521 US\$ for having organized the illegal sale of a Sumatra rhinoceros horn weighing 202 g (see "On the Trail" n° 23 p. 109).³⁶



MALAYSIA

May 27, 2019

Tabin Wildlife Resort, Sabah State, Malaysia

The last male representative of the species on the island of Borneo. He lived in semi-captivity. His name was Tam, and he was about 30 years old. He never managed to impregnate Iman, who also lives in captivity and is now the very last representative of the Sumatra rhinoceroses (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*, Appendix I) in Sabah and Sarawak states. There are fewer than 80 specimens left in Indonesia, in Thailand and on the Malaysian peninsula. The species is doomed to extinction.³⁷



NEPAL

May 13, 2019

Chitwan District, Province No. 3, Nepal

For wildlife defense activists, the announcement did not go over well: the Chitwan prison district has selected 36 prisoners doing time for rhino poaching or smuggling animal parts; they plan to grant the prisoners pardons. Those charges are not listed among the “unpardonable crimes” according to the new criminal and civil code. A Nepalese ecologist pointed out that previously pardoned poachers had gone back to their dirty business: “Buddhi Praja, who was released after receiving amnesty, went on to kill 13 rhinos after he was released. Ramsharan BK also returned to rhino poaching.”

In May 2019, there were 645 rhinos in Nepal, including 605 in the Chitwan National Park. The law stipulates that sanctions for the poaching or trading of rhinoceroses or their parts are 5 to 15 years in prison and a fine of up to 1 million rupees (8837 US\$).³⁸

June 26, 2019

Kathmandu, Province No. 3, Nepal

Following a tip, Asta Bahadur Thing and Govinda Prasad Moktan were arrested in a room at the Lal Bahadur Gurung Hotel. They were about to sell a horn for 5.5 million Nepalese rupees (49,445 US\$). The police are trying to determine whether they are also responsible for the poaching.³⁹



VIET NAM

April 9, 2019

Noi Bai International Airport, Hanoi, Viet Nam

Seizure in a package coming from South Africa of 15 kg of rhinoceros horns cut into pieces and hidden in boxes of biscuits, toothpaste, coffee and powdered milk.⁴⁰



June 14, 2019

Mong Cai, Quang Ninh Province, Viet Nam. Border with China.

Search of Pham Thi Bich's home. Seizure of 2 horns, 50 cm long, 16 cm diameter at the base, 25 cm long, 14 cm diameter at the base.⁴¹



Rhinoceroses and Elephants

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

May 1 and 2, 2019

Kruger National Park and near Malelane, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

- A former ranger, dismissed in 2014 for undisclosed reasons, has been arrested. Along with an accomplice, he had infiltrated the park with a large-caliber firearm and ammunition, along with survival and poaching equipment.

- Two suspected poachers were arrested thanks to the canine brigade and park aircraft patrol.¹

NAMIBIA

May 13, 2019

Namibia

18 elephants and rhinoceroses poached since the beginning of the year.²

TANZANIA

Beginning of June 2019

Ngorongoro District, Arusha Region, Tanzania

Seizure of an AK-47 in the home of Solomon Letato, a teacher suspected of supplying weapons to poachers and helping them sell rhinoceros horns and elephant tusks.³

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

GANG

June 13, 2019

Manhattan, New York, State of New York, United States of America

Charges brought by the New York State Prosecutor (Southern District) and the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) against Moazu Kromah, alias Ayoub, alias Ayuba, alias Kampala Man, Amara Cherif, alias Bamba Issiaka, Mansur Mohamed Surur, alias Mansour and Abdi Hussein Ahmed, alias Abu Khadi, for trafficking horns worth 3.4 million US\$ corresponding to the poaching of about 35 rhinos and for trafficking of elephant tusks worth 4 million US\$ corresponding to the poaching of about 100 elephants. The suspects were exporting or planning to export the horns and tusks hidden in packages officially containing pieces of primitive African art. They were paid by their buyers outside Africa in cash or by international transfer. One of the banks was based in Manhattan. On several occasions, they were foiled by an undercover agent of the American special services only known in the investigation file as C1. On several occasions, C1 has communicated physically with the suspects or by telephone or e-mail to decide on the weight, price, species for rhino horns and shipping and payment terms. The traffickers were able to deliver 7 kg horns. In March 2018, investigators intercepted in the United States of America a parcel containing a black rhino horn and in July 2018, a parcel containing 2 white rhino horns.

In addition, Surur and Ahmed had arranged with C1 for a delivery of 10 kg of heroin. These two Kenyan nationals are on the run. Kromah, a Liberian national, was arrested in Uganda on 12 June 2019 and immediately extradited to the United States of America. Cherif, a Guinean national, was arrested in Senegal on 7 June. His extradition procedure is being examined by the Senegalese courts.⁴



ASIA

CHINA

GANG

May 22, 2019

Fangchenggang and Nanning, Guangxi Province, Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, Fuzhou, Fujian Province, China

Interception of a convoy coming from Viet Nam. Seizure of 350 kg of raw ivory. A network in Viet Nam was collaborating with a Chinese network which sent the ivory and also rhinoceros horns to the Fujian province through the Guangxi and Guangdong provinces (1,700 km). Since the beginning of the year, customs in Nanning seized 900 kg of raw and worked ivory.⁵

Elephants

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°25 Black market raw ivory quotation from media or official sources

Continent	Country	US\$/kg	Ref.
Africa	Mozambique	38	23
	Uganda	730	25
		733	26
	Tanzania	3,500	27
Zimbabwe	250	32	
Asia	Singapore	500	6*
Europe	France	670	165

* Cf. chapter « Pangolins and Elephants »

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

April 10 and 19, 2019

Mwea National Reserve, Embu County and Lol Daiga Wildlife Conservancy, Laikipia County, Kenya

- The elephant had decided to permanently stay in the lake to relieve the pain. His left hind leg had been strangled by the steel wire of a trap for several days. After being lured to the shoreline, he was anaesthetized, freed from the wire, treated and monitored. Favourable prognosis.
- Attempt to rescue an elephant hit by a rifle bullet in the left front thigh to the femur. Favourable prognosis.¹



April 10, 2019
Tsavo West National Park, Kenya

Spotting of an elephant carcass by aerial reconnaissance. A ground team was dispatched on-site. The body was covered with branches, attacked by scavengers and rotting. Metal detectors were deployed to detect possible bullet marks. It is poaching. The tusks have disappeared.²



**April 15 and 17, May 7, 8, 14 and 15, 2019
Samburu and Laikipia Counties, Kenya**

- Shot by a throwing weapon at the bottom of the right front leg. The wound is 4 cm wide and 8 cm deep. Favourable prognosis.



- He was limping. He was anesthetized from a helicopter. He was shot in the right front leg. Wound cleaning. Application of antibiotics, anti-inflammatories and painkillers. Favourable prognosis.
 - Wounded in the forehead by a throwing weapon. The tip of the arrow has sunk to a depth of 50 cm. Anaesthesia. Extraction of the weapon. Treatment with hydrogen peroxide and iodine solution. Injection and application of antibiotics and clay. The surgery lasted 30 minutes. Favourable prognosis.
 - Anaesthesia from the helicopter. Penetration of the spear up to 30 cm deep near the neck. The weapon was 2 m long. Without the alert from the rangers and the emergency intervention of the vets, the elephant was doomed. Favourable prognosis.
 - Extraction of a throwing weapon. Treatment of the deep wound. Favourable prognosis.³

**April 25, 2019
Mombasa, Mombasa County, Kenya**

Ephantus Mbare Gitonga was the only one charged in the attempt to smuggle 1,097 kg of raw ivory from more than 75 elephants poached in Central Africa and ripped off the Burundi's government stocks. Ephantus, who is a clearing agent, is a fan of the hollowed out timber network (see "On the Trail" n°15 p. 98). Neither the carriers, nor the customs officers at the port of Mombasa, nor the consignees, nor the shipper have been charged and the court has just decided to acquit Ephantus on the grounds that "the prosecution could not prove beyond reasonable doubt that the accused perpetrated the offence". The investigation was interrupted for more than 2 years because of the alleged unavailability of witnesses, lawyers and even judges. This new failure of the police and justice system in Kenya follows the acquittals of Nicholas Maweu John (see "On the Trail" n°2 p. 53), Feisal Mohamed Ali and his accomplices (see "On the Trail" n°15 p. 88, n°21 p. 82, no. 22, p. 86) and Sammy Ndiririgi Maina, suspected of being involved in the attempted smuggling from the port of Mombasa of a container officially loaded with plastic waste and actually containing 1.5 tonnes of ivory. All these "I acquit" are signs of encouragement and green lights to the bigwigs of trans-African wildlife traffic.⁴



**April 29, 2019
Kibera, Nairobi County, Kenya**

Charging of 4 elite police officers arrested at the end of February 2016 in possession of one 5 kg elephant tusk (see "On the Trail" n°12 p. 77).⁵

**Early May 2019
Nairobi, Nairobi County, Kenya**

Rejection by the High Court of the Wanjohi couple's request to lift the seizure of a Range Rover, a Mercedes Benz, real estate assets and bank accounts (107,500 US\$). The Wanjohi couple are involved in ivory and heroin trafficking (see "On the Trail" n°22 p. 86, n°24 p. 69).⁶



**May 10, 14, 20 and 21, 2019
Tsavo East National Park, Kenya**

- Wide Satao, a majestic male elephant was shot by an arrow. The wound had to be widened to remove the tip. Rapid intervention. Favourable prognosis.
 - Spotting near a water point of a male elephant calf injured by an arrow on the right flank. Anaesthesia. Widening of the wound to extract the tip. Complete treatment with covering of the wound with green clay at the end. Favourable prognosis.
 - Three male elephants from the same herd are injured by throwing weapons. They are deeply embedded in the muscles. They are no longer visible. After anaesthesia, the wounds were widened and the projectiles extracted with forceps. After the usual treatments, the 3 victims were awakened by antidote and calmly stood up a few minutes later. Favourable prognoses.
 - Deep injury and infection at the bottom of the left front leg by a multi-strand steel rope used on cranes or winches in cross-country vehicles. It took a hacksaw and 30 minutes to cut it. The rangers' Land Rovers were used to "turn over" the elephant on his left flank and heal 5 throwing weapons open wounds. A new injection of anaesthetics was required. After the wake-up antidote, the survivor stood up and quietly disappeared into the bush. Favourable prognosis.⁷



**May 15 and 16, 2019
Kilifi and Mombasa Counties, Mombasa County, Kenya**

- Arrest of 2 suspects, Ibrahim Ali and Japhet Bakari, in the act of transporting raw ivory weighing a total of 8.9 kg hidden in maize bags.
- Arrest of 2 suspects, Kazungu Nzae and Chago Katana, in the act of transporting raw ivory weighing a total of 8.5 kg hidden in charcoal bags.⁸



**May 20 and 28, 2019
Lemek Conservancy, Nakuru County, Kenya**

Following a throwing weapon wound to the right front leg, the young male limped. Successful surgery. When he woke up, he headed for his family waiting for him nearby.⁹

**May 24, 2019
Naibunga Conservancy, Laikipia County, Kenya**
Clear fracture of the humerus following a gunshot wound. Total inability to walk. No choice but to finish off this female elephant.¹⁰

**May 28, 2019
Tsavo West National Park, Kenya**
Discovery of a male elephant carcass. Dead for about a week. The trunk was found a few meters from the body. The tusks have disappeared. Two open wounds were found on his left flank.¹¹



**June 5, 2019
Tsavo West National Park, Kenya**
The male elephant was put to sleep by an anaesthetic syringe from the helicopter. He fell after 7 minutes. The trunk was cleared to facilitate breathing and ears sprayed with water throughout the surgery. The wound by throwing weapon on the left flank was treated as usual. Favourable prognosis.¹²



**FAMILY AFFAIRS
June 6, 2019
Nakuru, Nakuru County, Kenya**

Arrest of a father and his son. They were weighing the tusks in the outskirts of Nakuru before handing them over to a correspondent whose job was to deliver them to Nairobi before the big leap to Asia. The convoy came from Eldoret near the border with Uganda. Nakuru would be a relay city for the east-west networks and many homes are rented to allow tusk groupings and intermediate deliveries.¹³



**June 9, 2019
Maasai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya**

The herd of 10 elephants had been attacked a week earlier by throwing weapons after crossing the Mara River. They were approaching community cultures. A subadult female elephant had to be anesthetized. The surgery had to be delayed because of the matriarch's insistence on staying with the sleeping beauty. Finally, she was pushed aside by Land Rover manoeuvres and the arrows could be extracted from the left thigh and right rump. Upon awakening, the elephant joined the herd waiting nearby. Favourable prognosis.¹⁴



**June 13, 2019
Meru, Meru County, Kenya**
Sentencing of Francis Muriithi to 10 years in prison or a fine of 3 million shillings, or 29,630 US\$ for unlawful possession of a 6.5 kg tusk. Muriithi already has a previous conviction for charcoal trafficking and according to the investigation file, he is the leader of a gang of 5 chaps linked to poaching and ivory trafficking. He has 14 days to appeal.¹⁵



June 25, 2019

Voi, Taita-Taveta County, Kenya

Clinton Warunga was sentenced to 5 years in prison for transporting 13.7 kg of raw ivory in October 2018. He says he runs a boda-boda motorcycle business and fell into a trap set by a close friend. To obtain the court's leniency, he pointed out that his family, of which he is the only breadwinner, is in difficulty, if only because every day when he is free, he travels 50 km to fetch the necessary water for the home.¹⁶



June 28, 2019

Near Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County, Kenya

Removal of a spear stuck into the head of a nursing female. Favourable prognosis.¹⁷



June 30, 2019

Tsavo East and Tsavo West National Parks, Kenya

The adult male elephant was shot at the base of his trunk and hind legs by 5 throwing weapons. The wounds were cleaned, treated with antibiotics and clay. The vets' prognosis is reasonably optimistic.¹⁸



MALAWI

June 20, 2019

Zomba, Southern Region, Malawi

Sentencing of Fanness Dickson to 8 years' imprisonment with hard labour for trying to sell raw ivory (792 g) and 3 elephant femurs.¹⁹



MOZAMBIQUE

**Beginning of April 2019
Mozambique**

The traps are silent killers. The vets came running across the savanna to the bedside of an elephant calf. His left hind leg was encircled to the bone by a steel wire. Favourable prognosis.²⁰



Mid-April 2019

Maputo Reserve, Maputo Province, Mozambique

The young male, about 12 years old, was put out of pain by the vets of Saving the Survivors in agreement with the reserve's management and the Peace Parks Foundation. Despite the intensive care, he was suffering more and more and hardly moved. His ordeal had lasted since April 17. Saving the Survivors had anaesthetized him from a helicopter and then delivered him from the steel rope of a trap that crushed the flesh to the bone at the bottom of his left hind leg.²¹



April 17, 2019

Pemba, Cabo Delgado Province, Mozambique

Fourteen years in prison for Fernando Mohamed. 17 tusks weighing a total of 20 kg were seized last year at home. The elephant had been poached in the Niassa reserve.²²



April 21, 2019

Dondo, Sofala Province, Mozambique

Seizure of 2 tusks, the pair weighing 75 kg. Arrest of 2 middlemen. Their meeting with 4 buyers came to a sudden end when they took off as police officers were approaching. According to them, the starting price for the transaction was 187,500 meticaís, or about 2,900 US\$, and the their share was set at a modest 10,000 meticaís or 155 US\$. The adult elephant, almost a super tusker, was poached in Gorongosa National Park.²³

May 27, 2019

Niassa National Reserve, Cabo Delgado and Niassa Provinces, Mozambique

After a long series of bloody poaching cases and massive smugglings in and from the Niassa National Reserve, which stretches across 42,000 km² in the north the country near Tanzania, ANAC (Administração Nacional das Áreas de Conservação) celebrated the year's beginning free of elephant poaching (see "On the Trail" n°6 p. 84, n°7 p. 77, 15 p. 89, n°19 p. 93).²⁴

UGANDA

June 2, 2019

Kampala, Central Region, Uganda

A retired national army man now presents himself as a “businessman”. However, he specifies that he is still a reserve officer. He is in pre-trial detention in Kampala central prison due to raw ivory trafficking. He is liable to 5 years’ imprisonment or a fine equivalent to half the value of the 16 tusks weighing a total of 23.5 kg and valued at 64 million shillings, or 730 US\$/kg. He requests his release on bail, emphasizing that he is the sole provider for 3 wives, 11 children and 4 grandchildren.²⁵

June 20, 2019

Atar, Northern Region, Uganda

Another servant of God and the faithful caught in an ivory trade. Pastor Amos Richard Primer, 51, was caught with his hand in the cookie jar. The jar was full of raw ivory (80.06 kg). The value is estimated at 220 million shillings, or 58,700 US\$ and 733 US\$/kg. Primer was accompanied by Ochen, a building contractor.²⁶

TANZANIA

April 1, 2019

Dodoma, Dodoma Region, Tanzania

Arrest in the street of a prison guard carrying 6 tusks weighing a total of 13 kg, the value of which is estimated at 103.5 million shillings, or 44,900 US\$ and 3,500 US\$/kg.²⁷

Beginning of April 2019

Babati, Manyara Region, Tanzania

Sentences of 20 years in prison for:
- Iddy Myombo and Hamis Kidindi for the transport and attempted sale of 2 elephant tusks with a total weight of 67.2 kg and an estimated value of 82.5 million shillings (37,240 US\$ or 590 US\$/kg).

- Vitalis John and Dismas Kendi for the transport and attempted sale of 4 tusks or sections of tusks with a total weight of 18.1 kg and an estimated value of 67 million shillings (30,200 US\$ or 1,670 US\$/kg).²⁸

June 21, 2019

Songea District, Ruvuma Region, Tanzania

Sentencing of Maximilian Mwenda and Rashid Migoha (alias Mwendomchanja), both aged 58, to 20 years in prison for having detained and attempted to sell 12 elephant tusks worth an estimated 65,000 US\$ in November 2016. They arrived free at the trial. They left handcuffed.²⁹



ZAMBIA

April 2019

Zimba District, Southern Province, Zambia

Big case in Zambia. Seizure of 241 kg of raw ivory from a poaching campaign in neighbouring countries. 10 elephants died. The focus is on Zimbabwe and Botswana.³⁰

End of May 2019

Chinsali District, Muchinga Province, Zambia

Five years in prison for Clement Mwila and Tedson Mukupa. In June 2018, they had been caught red-handed with 12 kg of raw ivory.³¹



ZIMBABWE

April 8, 2019

Kazangarare, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe

Sentence of a minor under 18 years of age to 9 years’ imprisonment for having transported and offered for sale at a price of 250 US\$ /kg 2 tusks 87 and 78.5 cm long, the pair weighing just under 9 kg.³²



April 10, 2019

Zimbabwe

At the age of 80, Ron Thomson, professional hunter, claims the death of 5000 elephants, 40 leopards, 60 lions including 6 “man-eaters”, 50 hippos and 800 buffaloes. In the evening of his life, he claims to be a regulator of wildlife and a protector of human populations. He accuses Western NGOs of spreading lies to extract money from public opinion without knowing anything about wildlife management.

In response to an NGO accusing him of being co-responsible for the gradual disappearance of elephants, he replied that he was never attracted to killing and that he had simply done his job. When he shot a “big five”, he would kill him with a single bullet. In his interview with the Independent, he would almost present himself as a pioneer in animal welfare.³³

May 8, 2019

Masunda, Manicaland Province, Zimbabwe

Bruce Moyana, a 45 year old teacher, was reported by a phone call. Police searched his Nissan Hardbody. Under the driver’s seat, they found an AK47, ammunition and ivory whose weight was not reported. He was released on bail of 200 US\$.³⁴

June 12, 2019

Hwange, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Acquittal of 3 presumed traffickers. They had been intercepted by a road patrol and a search of their vehicles that resulted in the seizure of 76.7 kilograms of raw ivory. Faunel Luphahla, deserter of the Zimbabwean army, Ndaba Ncube and Innocencia Siwela are doing well while Alos Savanhu, owner of the tusks, remains in prison pending possible release on bail (see "On the Trail" n°24 p. 72).³⁵



June 20, 2019

Bulawayo, Bulawayo Province, Zimbabwe

Arrest after surveillance of Peter Phosa, presenting himself as a computer scientist and carrying in the trunk of his car 15 kg of raw ivory. He says he borrowed the vehicle and was the victim of a conspiracy.³⁶

June 21, 2019

Hwange, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

Appearance of Austin Sibanda, Morris Munkombwe, Shingai Sithole, Kemesi Shoko, Tariro Mateyaunga and Phenias Ncube. They are accused of possession in conspiracy of 2 tusks weighing a total of 37 kg. The value is estimated at 9,250 US\$ or 250 US\$/kg. They plead not guilty. They are all living along Hwange Park.³⁷

June 2019

Mana Pools National Park, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe

They were armed with axes, knives and...cyanide. The 3 poisonous and silent poachers were apprehended as they were stealthily entering Mana Pools National Park.³⁸



SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

April 9, 2019

Kempton Park, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Arrest of 3 men aged 28, 37, and 39. They were trying to sell 2 tusks near a shopping centre for more than 150,000 rand, or 10,200 US\$.³⁹

April 30, 2019

Kuruman, Northern Cape Province, South Africa

Sentencing of Riaan Malgas, 33, Albert Mosimanyane, 55, and Mothusi Joel Tshibithi, 38, to a fine of 6,800 US\$ or imprisonment if non-payment. See "On the Trail" n°19 p. 99.⁴⁰



May 25, 2019

Durbanville, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Raid of a vacant house by the bomb squad. Discovery of ammunition, explosives, fire-arms, and 2 elephant tusks. The former occupant of the place, now deceased, had worked in the private armament industry and in a government technology watch agency.⁴¹



June 26, 2019

Kempton Park, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Arrest of 2 men. They were trying to sell 4 small tusks in town.⁴²

BOTSWANA

May 7, 2019

Kasane, Chobe District, Botswana. Border with Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Resurgence of Botswana's colonial past. President Masi offered an elephant stool to his counterparts of Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe at the exceptional meeting of the KAZA (Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area) preceding by a few days the CITES plenary session in Sri Lanka which was finally postponed to Geneva in August due to the Colombo, Negombo and Batticaloa attacks (see "On the Trail" n°24).⁴³

June 2019

CT/1 hunting concession, Central District, Botswana

Mass poisoning : 3 elephants, 2 tawny eagles (*Aquila rapax*, Appendix II), 10 cape vultures (*Gyps coprotheres*, Appendix II), 14 lappet-faced vultures (*Torgos tracheliotus*, Appendix II), 468 white backed vultures (*Gyps africanus*, Appendix II), 17 white headed vultures (*Trigonoceps occipitalis*, Appendix II) et 28 hooded vultures (*Necrosyrtes monachus*, Appendix II). The law enforcement team is at the crime scene, working to decontaminate the soil and keep dead bodies out of the reach of wildlife and local populations.⁴⁴



NAMIBIA

April 5, 2019

Ohangwena Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.

In the miscellaneous news items section, between an armed robbery, the rapes of minors and suicides of young men, 2 arrests for the transport and sale of an elephant tusk.⁴⁵

April 9, 2019

Tsumeb, Oshikoto Region, Namibia

Fine of 30,000 N\$ or 2,040 US\$ or 3 years in prison if failure to pay for Johannes Bokoma Nashikaku for holding and transporting 2 calf's tusks with a combined weight of 3.98 kg. The trafficker's pick-up has permanently become property of the State.⁴⁶



April 30, 2019

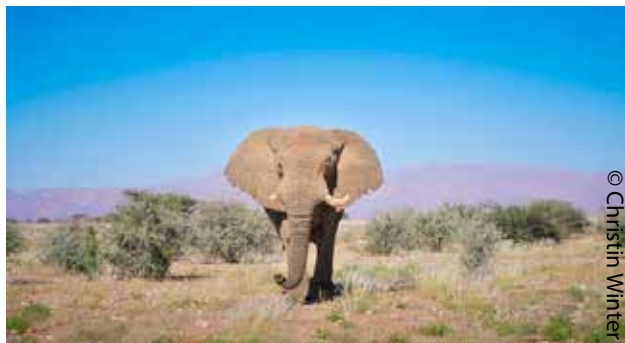
Kopani, Zambezi Region, Namibia. Border with Botswana.

Mathew Mwilima was denied bail after being caught during the night carrying 6 elephant tusks. Three accomplices fled. The elephants were reportedly poached in Botswana and the loot was being transferred to Zambia.⁴⁷

End of June 2019

Omatjete, Erongo Region, Namibia

Voortrekker (Pioneer) was about 40 years old. He was the most famous elephant in Namibia. Not really a super tusker since in undefined times and under unknown circumstances, his right tusk was broken in two. Most visitors to the region dreamed of having seen or made out Voortrekker's silhouette and his 2 large ears in the arid savannah. The license to kill this southern African icon was given to a professional hunter for a sum equal to 8,000 US\$. Voortrekker had supposedly become a nuisance. In these periods of drought, he was accused with his scarce family, of which he was one of the 2 dominant males, of drinking too much water in the Ugab River basin.⁴⁸



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WESTERN AFRICA

BENIN

April 15, 2019

Cotonou, Littoral Department, Benin

Seizure of 3 tusks. Arrests of 2 traffickers and then a third who had fled and was found in a shed in a very old lady's house.⁴⁹



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June 27 and July 18, 2019

Kandi, Alibori Department, Benin

Sentencing of 3 ivory traffickers to 48 months, including a suspended sentence of 24 months, and 36 months in prison. The most severely punished is a member of a village council. They were prosecuted for transporting and marketing 2 tusks.⁵⁰



SENEGAL

April 9, 2019

Blaise Diagne International Airport, Thiès Region, Senegal

The Chinese national recalcitrant to CITES was about to fly to China with 27 freshly carved ivories and 11 jewels made of ebony as a bonus. He works for a well-established Chinese construction company in Dakar.⁵¹

May 15, 2019

Blaise Diagne International Airport, Thiès Region, Senegal

Arrest by CAAT (Anti-Trafficking Airport Task Force) of 2 Chinese nationals who were about to fly to their country with 50 objects made of ivory, ebony (genus *Diospyros*, Appendix II) and African rosewood (*Pterocarpus erinaceus*, Appendix II) in their luggage. Also found in their suitcases were 200 seahorses (*Hippocampus*), some sea cucumbers and shark fins. The total value of the seizure is estimated at 32 million CFA francs or 3,048 US\$.⁵²



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CAMEROON

Beginning of April 2019**Sangmélima, Dja-et-Lobo Department, Cameroon**

Seizure of 5 tusks 15 cm long and less than one kilo. They were fresh and stinking. Two arrests at a bar in town. One of the suspects is the son of a retired police officer whose firearm was allegedly used to kill the calves.⁵³

GABON

Beginning of April 2019**Libreville, Estuaire Province, Gabon**

Arrest of Francois Ollame Ondo. The 4 tusks he was carrying had been spotted in a motel room.⁵⁴

Beginning of April 2019**Haut-Ogooué Province, Gabon**

Arrests of Serge Bangoula and Fabrice Mougoubadi, alleged elephant poachers. Seizure of 2 Kalashnikov and 114 cartridges. According to the suspects, war weapons were used to kill wild boars and to supply the bushmeat market. This is not the opinion of the NGO Wildlife Conservation Society based in Congo Brazzaville, which rather suspects ivory trafficking between Congo and Gabon.⁵⁵

April 13, 2019**Mayumba, Nyanga Province, Gabon**

The offender's identity is unclear. His name is Elvis Jackson and he is a native of Gabon. He quickly admitted that he forged this fake ID in an Internet café. His real name would be Fabrice Biakeu and his country Cameroon. What is certain is that he had accumulated several boxes in his hotel room and that they were filled with 16 tusks cut into 28 sections and 2 elephant calf tusks.⁵⁶

Mid-April 2019**West of Gabon**

Six tusks seized, again from elephant calves. One arrest.⁵⁷

May 3, 2019**Oyem, Woleu-Ntem Province, Gabon**

Arrest of Georgelin Becka Mbeng, teacher, Gustave Assoumou, hospital officer and Maxime Owono, fisherman. Seizure of 2 tusks cut into 4 sections and 3 firearms including a caliber .458 used for very large game.⁵⁸

**May 4, 2019****Minvoul, Woleu-Ntem Province, Gabon**

Arrest in a hotel of Issa Moloma, a Burkina Faso national and Sylvain Bilié, a Gabon national. They were about to sell 2 tusks cut in half. They have been accomplices for 30 years. They will be heard by the judge in Oyem and detained in the city's central prison.⁵⁹

May 6, 2019**Mouila, Ngounié Province, Gabon**

The unscrupulous are not nobodies. They are the prefect of the Lower Banio department and his concubine. Eugene Nziengui, 54 years old and Mariette Kogue Moukambi, 46 years old, were surprised Monday morning bargaining with a buyer the sale of 2 tusks of beautiful size that Mariette, driven in an official car by her partner, had bought the day before in Mouila for 200,000 CFA francs or 340 US\$. Release due to procedural error.⁶⁰

**May 23, 2019****Makokou, Ogooué-Ivindo Province, Gabon**

Successive postponements of the trial of Oswald Ndong Nze, released on health grounds. Justice can no longer get its hands on him. In June 2018, he was caught with 2 calf tusks (see "On the Trail" n°21 p. 91).⁶¹

REPEATED OFFENSE**End of May 2019****Franceville, Haut-Ogooué Province, Gabon**

Sentencing of Djamel Hamadou (Habib) to a year in prison for the repeated trafficking of ivory. He had already appeared before the same court for similar acts committed in April 2014 and 2013 (see "On the Trail" n°5 p. 82).⁶²

**May 2019****Mouila, Ngounié Province, Gabon**

Sentencing of Steve Gandza Gandza and Charles Gaétan, convicted of detaining and transporting raw ivory, to 3 months in prison, including 2 months suspended, and a fine of 500,000 CFA francs (850 US\$) to the benefit of Water and Forests.⁶³



Beginning of June 2019

Oyem, Woleu-Ntem Province, Gabon

Arrest in a motel of Avomé Delali and Hugues Ndiffou, who are from Togo and Cameroon respectively. They were seeking to sell 4 tusks. According to them, it was Mrs. Moughola Coth Flore who delivered the forbidden goods to them in a bag. Arrested in turn, Flore says she acted on her husband's instructions and was unaware of the contents of the bag.⁶⁴



June 12, 2019

Libreville, Estuaire Province, Gabon

Arrest in flagrante delicto of Alex Ada Mba, prison guard and elephant shooter in the forest 11 km from Makokou in the Ogooué-Ivindo Province (540 km from Libreville), and his 2 accomplices, Martial Akoré and Michel Axel Ndong Odzaghé.⁶⁵

June 15, 2019

Tchibanga, Nyanga Province, Gabon

Arrest of a Ghanian aged 28 years old. Samuel Adama was transporting a tusk of 22 kg cut into 3 parts. He revealed the name and address of his accomplice. Yves Kevin Mihindou was arrested at his house. This one in turn gave the names and addresses of 2 others. Cédric Moundounga and Lewis Mouketou, aged 31 and 25 respectively, were arrested immediately after.⁶⁶

FAMILY AFFAIRS

June 2019

Lambaréné, Moyen-Ogooué Province, Gabon

Ivory family matter. The son broke into his father's room to steal 2 tusks. He got caught in a city hotel while waiting for a buyer. Father and son are in custody.⁶⁷

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

April 4, 2019

Owando, Department of Cuvette, Republic of the Congo

Sentencing of 3 ivory traffickers to 3 years in prison. They are Evoura Vianney and Ngoua Issoko Justin, Congolese citizens, and Kolon Koumaré, Malian citizen. They had been caught red-handed with 6 tusks, illegally carrying an AK47 and its ammunition.⁶⁸



April 26, 2019

Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo

One arrest. He was transporting 3 tusks in a backpack from the north of the country and the border with Gabon.⁶⁹

CHAD

April 23, 2019

South-west of Chad

Discovery of a decapitated elephant gunned down by a Kalashnikov, in the basin of the river Chari, which flows into Lake Chad. The NGO SOS Elephant, directed by Stephanie Vergniault, regrets that for the past 3 months the anti-poaching brigades have not been paid.⁷⁰

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

April 2, 2019

Seattle and Snohomish, State of Washington, United States of America

First indictment for violation of the Washington Animal Trafficking Act, which since 2016 prohibits the sale, purchase, and trade of parts of elephants, rhinos, tigers, lions, leopards, cheetahs, pangolins, sharks and rays.

A US Fish and Wildlife undercover investigator responded to Craigslist ads posted by Donald Rooney, 71, selling "wooden" netsukes for 35 US\$ each. The meeting took place in the dark in Rooney's pseudo-home.

However, there was enough light for the detective to see all around shelves full of statuettes and ornaments made of white ivory. After a 20 minutes chat, she wanted to take pictures to document a friend in Japan who might be interested in buying the collection. She then bought 3 figurines in cash for 300 US\$. Genetic analyses proved that it was African elephant ivory. In the end, 1,600 ivory objects were seized from Mr. Rooney's shelves. Trial is upcoming.⁷¹



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CHINA



HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION

April, May and June 2019
Hong Kong-West Kowloon Railway Station, Hong Kong, China

- Seizures of 10 worked ivories, necklaces, pendants and rings. Total weight: 108 g. One of the boxes used for transport has instructions in French.⁷²



- A bracelet in the hands of a passenger returning from South Africa (78 g).⁷³
- A presumed ivory bracelet (16 g) and necklace.⁷⁴
- Seizure of a presumed ivory bracelet, necklace, beads and a pendant from the belongings of 3 passengers.⁷⁵
- Seizure of 2 ivory bracelets on 2 passengers.⁷⁶



CHONGQING MUNICIPALITY

April 22, 2019
Chongqing-Jiangbei National Airport, Chongqing Municipality, China

Seizure on a Chinese passenger coming from Yangon, Myanmar, of ivory bracelets of a total weight of 85g.⁷⁷

May 27 and 28, 2019
Chongqing-Jiangbei International Airport, Chongqing Municipality, China

And another 2 bracelets, one on a passenger departing for Hong Kong, the other on a passenger departing for Malaysia.⁷⁸

FUJIAN PROVINCE

May 2019

Fuzhou Changle International Airport, Fujian Province, China

- Seizure of a bracelet on a passenger coming from Hong Kong.⁷⁹
- Seizure of 3 pendants and a bracelet. The passengers were coming from Hong Kong.⁸⁰



GUANGDONG PROVINCE

Early 2019

Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

Seizure since the beginning of the year, at an undetermined date, of a parcel from Japan containing 13 worked ivories officially described as "models" weighing a total of more than 4.5 kg.⁸¹



April 2019

Luohu District, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

- Seizure of ivory miniatures.⁸²



Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

- Seizure of 876 alleged ivory pearls in plastic bags in an express parcel from Hong Kong.⁸³



Shekou Port, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China

- Seizure of a bracelet at the exit of the Taizwan cruise terminal.⁸⁴

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

- Seizure of an engraved manuscripts scroll.⁸⁵



Jieyang Chaoshan International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

- Seizure of an alleged ivory necklace (65g) on a passenger disembarking from the Lanmei Airlines flight L980 coming from Viet Nam. Two days after, genetic analyses confirmed that it was recent elephant ivory.⁸⁶
- Seizures of 2 ivory necklaces in the bags of a Chinese and a Thai traveller coming from Bangkok. The genetic analyses prove that that they are recent elephant ivories that cannot be assimilated to antiquities.⁸⁷

Luohu District, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

- Seizure of an ivory plate with the words "lucky treasure" on the front and an engraved dragon on the back.⁸⁸
- Seizure of 7,746 t of raw and worked ivory in the first 4 months of the year in Guangdong province. The import of ivory has been banned in mainland China since 2015 and since 2017, it has been prohibited to work and sell ivory.⁸⁹

May 2019

Fuzhou, Guangdong Province, China

- Seizure of 350 kg of raw ivory divided into 81 tusks sections and of the 3 vehicles used to support the traffic.⁹⁰

June 2019

Futian Border Post, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. Border with Hong Kong.

- Seizure of ivory necklaces on several passengers coming from Hong Kong.⁹¹

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

- Seizure of 2 bracelets. Under x-rays, ivory appears fluorescent green. "I didn't know it was forbidden to carry ivory," says one of the offenders.⁹²

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China

- Seizure in the suitcases of 4 passengers coming from Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia, via Doha, Qatar, of 18 worked ivories of a total weight of 581 g.⁹³



GUANGXI PROVINCE

June 2019

Dongxing Border Post, Guangxi Province, China. Border with Viet Nam.

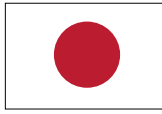
- Seizure by the port customs of 2 ivory necklaces and a Buddha effigy from 2 passengers. Since the beginning of the year, 232 worked ivories of a total weight of 7.6 kg have been intercepted by the port customs.⁹⁴
- Seizure of 6 worked ivories including 2 effigies of Buddha. Total weight : 244 g.⁹⁵

JIANGSU PROVINCE

April 2019

Sunan Shuofang International Airport, Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, China

- Seizure by customs of 2 necklaces, of a cube and of 4 seals of elephant ivory on passengers coming from Bangkok, Singapore and Japan.⁹⁶



Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China

- Seizure of presumed ivory pendants, necklaces, beads, statuettes, and bracelets. Total weight : 380g.⁹⁷

May 28, 2019

Sunan Shuofang International Airport, Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure of 2 worked ivories (13 and 51g) on a Chinese passenger coming from Kaohsiung, Taiwan, and rosewood jewellery on a passenger who came from Taipei, Taiwan.⁹⁸

June 15, 2019

Sunan Shuofang International Airport, Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, China

Seizure of 46 pearls and 2 bracelets made of ivory.⁹⁹

JIANGXI PROVINCE

April 20 and 22, 2019

Pingxiang, Jiangxi Province, China

Seizure of a Buddha pendant and of 2 ivory bracelets.¹⁰⁰

JILIN PROVINCE

May 27, 2019

Changchun, Jilin Province, China

Seizure of a carved tusk (1.13 kg) coming from Estonia in a postal parcel.¹⁰¹



LIAONING PROVINCE

LIAONING

May 2019

Port of Dalian, Liaoning Province, China

- Another ivory bracelet at the disembarking of a passenger ship coming from Incheon, South Korea.¹⁰²

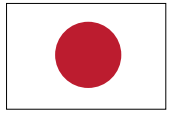
- New seizure of an ivory bracelet in the port.¹⁰³

June 2019

Port of Dalian, Liaoning Province, China

- Seizure of an ivory bracelet (10g) at the disembarking of a passenger ship connecting Incheon, South Korea, and Dalian.¹⁰⁴

- Seizure by port customs of an ivory bracelet in the luggage of a cruise ship passenger coming from Fukuoka, Japan.¹⁰⁵



Dalian International Airport, Liaoning Province, China

- Seizure of 3 ivory necklaces with a total weight of 158g in the luggage of a passenger.¹⁰⁶

Shenyang, Liaoning Province, China

- Seizure of elephant ivory in a package coming from Japan (1.7 kg).¹⁰⁷



SHANDONG PROVINCE

May 2019

Qingdao, Shandong Province, China

- Seizure of 66 pieces of carved ivory and 6 red corals (*Corallium rubrum*) in the luggage of a passenger coming from Japan. A second step in the operation led to the seizure of 14 additional pieces of carved ivory in a shop run by the trafficker.¹⁰⁸

- Seizure of several ivory painting scrolls in a postal package coming from Japan.¹⁰⁹



Yucheng, Shandong Province, China

- Seizure of 6 fans with ivory blades and handles in a parcel from the United Kingdom.¹¹⁰



Qingdao Liuting International Airport, Shandong Province, China

- Seizure of an ivory bracelet on a Chinese passenger disembarking from an airplane coming from Fukuoka, Japan.¹¹¹



Yucheng, Shandong Province, China

- Seizure in a parcel from Japan of an ivory painting scroll (39 g).¹¹²



June 26, 2019

Qingdao Liuting International Airport, Shandong Province, China

Seizure of 283 g of worked ivories in the form of chopsticks, bracelets, pendants and beads.¹¹³

MUNICIPALITY OF SHANGHAI

April 7 and 8, 2019

Shanghai Pudong International Airport, Municipality of Shanghai, China

Seizure of 62 worked ivories on 2 Chinese passengers coming from Ethiopia.¹¹⁴



May 2019

Municipality of Shanghai, China

- Seizure of 3 worked ivories from abroad. 552g in total.¹¹⁵

Shanghai Station, Jing'An District, Municipality of Shanghai, China

- Seizure of 25 worked ivories in the luggage of several female passengers arriving by train from Hong Kong—bracelets, rings, necklaces, and figurines.

- Seizure of ivory necklaces on a Kowloon-Shanghai train.¹¹⁶

SICHUAN PROVINCE

Beginning of 2019

Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China

246 seizures during the first 3 months of the year. 20 kg of raw and worked ivory in total.¹¹⁷

April 27, 2019

Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China



Seizure in a private home of several hundred pieces of worked ivory : cutlery, necklaces, bracelets, for a total weight of 25 kg and a value close to a million yuan, or 148,000 US\$ and nearly 6,000 US\$ per kg.¹¹⁸

YUNNAN PROVINCE

April 2019

Yunnan Province, China. Border with Laos.

- Seizure of 4 worked ivories with a total weight of 125 g.¹¹⁹

Kunming Changshui International Airport, Yunnan Province, China

- Seizure of 7 alleged ivory bracelets with a total weight of 96.6 g in the cabin luggage of 2 passengers.¹²⁰

Overall seizure by airport customs between January and May 2019 of 221 worked ivories with a total weight of 7.3 kg.¹²¹

ZHEJIANG PROVINCE

April 24, 2019

Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China

Repeated seizures of ivory jewellery.¹²²



May 2019

Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of 3 worked ivories weighing a total of 67 g in a parcel from Cambodia.¹²³

June 2019

Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, China

Seizure of several worked ivories with a total weight of 240 g.¹²⁴

TIBET

May 16, 2019

Gyirong County, Autonomous Region of Tibet, China. Border with Nepal.

Seizure of 20 alleged ivory balls. Total weight: 152 g.¹²⁵

INDIA

April 3, 2019

Sirumugai, Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu State, India

A male aged approximately 10 years was electrocuted by an illegal fence protecting a banana plantation. Like many others, Nazar Ali planted his banana farm on land squatted along the banks of the Bhavanisagar Dam. Before the Forest Department agents arrived, he quickly took down the fence and threw the electric wire in the lake. An autopsy of the elephant has been requested. Environmental activists have put out a reminder that illegal plantations around the lake are a scourge and that in June 2018, the Madras High Court ordered the state of Tamil Nadu to dismantle all of the electric fences along a 20-km distance on the embankment. The fences were dismantled. But this year, the illegal plantations reappeared, and there was no reaction from the administration.¹²⁶



April 4, 2019

Pallangala, Kodagu District, Karnataka State, India

A bullet perforated the lung of a young male, aged 7 to 8. He dragged himself away over a distance of 50 m and then succumbed.

The Forest Department has their radar set on a fugitive suspect. He apparently modified his ammunition to increase its effectiveness at short range.¹²⁷

April 4 and 11, 2019

Gaimukh, Thane District, Maharashtra State, India

The Crime Branch Unit-5 first captured Sachin Ramchandra Chougule and Pravin Ramesh Shere in the evening as they transported a bag containing a tusk weighing one pound. They hoped to sell it for 500,000 rupees (7,200 US\$). During the interrogation described as "intensive" by the Times of India, they gave the name of their supplier. Ganesh (!) Dhere was arrested on April 11. Dhere was allegedly just another middleman. Now, the police want to dismantle the entire rig.¹²⁸

April 12, 2019

Kheroni, Karbi Anglong District, Assam State, India

Another elephant poisoned. This one was found in a sugar cane field. He was part of a herd of elephants that made their way into a densely-populated area. The human population in Assam is growing (+17% between 2001 and 2011) and human-elephant conflicts are increasing.¹²⁹



May 15, 2019

Narla Forest, Kalahandi District, Odisha State, India

The carcass of an elephant was found on May 7, without his tusks. The Forest Department investigation led to Ishwar Bhoi, Samel Majhi and Sindura Majhi, who were arrested. They admitted that they had cut off the tusks and hidden them in the forest.¹³⁰

May 17, 2019

Veerapandi, Theni District, Tamil Nadu State, India

On July 29, 2016, R. Rajendran, alias Senga, and 2 accomplices set a homemade bomb (*avuttukkai* in tamil) hidden in a fruit in the Chinnathadagam Forest Reserve. An elephant calf died in the explosion after taking the bait. The 3 men were arrested one month later, but Rajendran managed to escape. Intelligence information enabled the forest rangers to arrest him again as he waited for a bus.¹³¹

May 29, 2019

Pasunapuram, Erode District, Tamil Nadu State, India

A 12-year-old elephant died after touching a fence that was illegally hooked up to a medium-voltage power supply line. Rajendran, owner of the field that was rented to a corn-growing farmer, was brought in for questioning by forest agents.¹³²



May 30, 2019

Kadayanallur, Tirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu State, India

Subbaiah was arrested. The farmer is responsible for the death, on May 28, of an elephant calf electrocuted by an illegal electric fence installed around his mango and coconut plantation. The little elephant, between one and three years old, was part of a herd that was often foraging on agricultural land. According to the farmers, the animals have already dug up 25 coconut trees and damaged over 50 mango trees. Electric fences are only authorized if they are powered by solar panels; but Subbaiah only had 2 solar panels, and their batteries were empty. He made up for it by hooking his fence up to an electric and deadly power line.¹³³



May 31, 2019

Gochha Reserve Forest, Nayagarh District, Odisha State, India

On May 28, villagers found the carcass of a 5-year-old male in the forest with his tusks cut off. The incident highlighted the lack of vigilance from the forest rangers in the reserve. According to villagers around the reserve, no rangers have been seen for months. Poachers have an open reign. Worse yet, some people accuse the forest rangers of collusion with the poachers. Rangers Kailash Pradhan and Biswajit Samantaray were suspended today for “dereliction of duty”.¹³⁴

June 1, 2019

Gandhi Nagar, Thoothukudi District, Tamil Nadu State, India

Four teams of forest rangers are actively looking for the tusks of a 20-year-old male cut off his carcass after he died from what appears to be a “digestive disease”. The nearby villagers are being questioned.¹³⁵

June 1, 2019

Matikhola, Dhemaji District, Assam State, India

Bulu Saikia was hiding a piece of ivory in his home. It weighed 2.8 kg and he wanted to sell it. The Golaghat police got wind and raided his house. Saikia allegedly got the ivory from a trafficker of animal parts. The Forest Department contacted the Kaziranga National Park to see if an elephant had been poached recently or found dead without his tusks.¹³⁶

June 2, 2019

Bhutiachang, Udalguri District, Assam State, India

Yet another victim to add to the list of elephants electrocuted by farm fences. This one died during the night, and someone then came and cut off the tip of his trunk for obscure reasons, possibly related to some sort of sorcery. In the district, forest degradation and the fragmentation of migrating corridors are increasing the number of conflicts between farmers and elephants.¹³⁷



June 5, 2019

Sajanagad, Balasore District, Odisha State, India

The decaying corpse of a 40-year-old male was found by a forest ranger patrol in the Kuldiha Wildlife Sanctuary. The elephant had been poached and his tusks robbed about 10 days earlier.¹³⁸

REPEATED OFFENSE

June 17, 2019

Hindol, Dhenkanal District, Odisha State, India

The same thing happens over and over – to avoid wearing themselves out in the forest looking for game, poachers set up stripped electric cables near villages and wait for animals to be electrocuted. But on June 12, a 25-year-old male elephant was killed. The Forest Department investigation revealed that Biswanath Samal was using electric traps to hunt boars and hares. He has now been arrested and admitted his crime. He even added that he had burned his own leg with an electric shock.¹³⁹



FAMILY AFFAIRS

June 17 and 25, 2019

Tinsukia, Tinsukia District, and Gauhati, Kamrup Metropolitan District, Assam State, India

The intense drought and record temperatures that occurred in northern India this year brought to light the deplorable living conditions of elephants in temples and the traffic involved in exhibiting them during religious celebrations. The case of 4 elephants “rented” by the state of Assam to the Jagannath temple (located in Jamalpur, in the state of Gujarat) so they could parade during Rath Yatra festivities, mobilized wildlife activists and revealed that certain members of the administration were involved with wildlife traffickers. It was the transport authorization issued on June 17 by the Forest Department that triggered it all. A heat wave with temperatures as high as 50°C in some areas was crushing India at the time. The 4 elephants were scheduled to make a 4-day trip covering over 3000 km in a train car attached to the end of a passenger train. The Indian NGOs Voice of Asian Elephants Society and Avinava Prayash lodged an appeal to get the authorization cancelled. They explained that elephants do not perspire, need large quantities of water to cool off and that the current temperatures would turn their trip into an excruciating ordeal. A hearing at the Gauhati High Court was set for June 25. The national press picked up the story and began to investigate. Very quickly the “domestic” origin of the 4 elephants was contested: they did not appear in the official list of 905 captive elephants registered in Assam as of 12/30/2018. In fact, they were captured in the wild last January. One of them even has a scar from a poorly treated gunshot wound to his leg. The profile of the middlemen between the animals’ “owners” and the temple darkens the picture even more. Imran Siddiqui, alias Imran Khan, and Hukumdar Khan, alias Munna Khan, paid villagers to catch young elephants in the forest. Siddiqui’s father is a well-known poacher who has allegedly exported at least 12 elephants to the states of Bihar, Gujarat and Kerala. Recognizing the corroborating unfavorable evidence and the legally questionable documents presented at the hearing, the Gauhati High Court, in all its wisdom, cancelled the transport authorization.¹⁴⁰

June 18, 2019

Kurichiad, Wayanad District, Kerala State, India

In Kerala alone, he is the 16th elephant to die in the same way since the beginning of the year. A 25-year-old male was found electrocuted by a fence surrounding a plantain banana plantation 200 m from the edge of the forest.¹⁴¹



June 24, 2019

Bangalore, Bangalore Urban District, Karnataka State, India

No one was convinced by the story Basavaraja told the police. He supposedly found a blue bag containing the tusks hidden in the bushes on his farmland 3 months ago, and decided then to come looking for customers in Bangalore. Basavaraja lives near Denkanikottai in Tamil Nadu, not far from the border with Karnataka.¹⁴²

June 26, 2019

Pune, Pune District, Maharashtra State, India

Aditya Khandge, Hrushikesh Gaikwad, Aniket Astekar and Amit Piska arrived in town to find a buyer for 2 tusks. The police were expecting them.¹⁴³

INDONESIA

April 28, 2019

Pati Regency, Central Java Province, Island of Java, Indonesia

Three Facebook ivory vendors are locked up. Seizure of 19 tusks or pieces of tusk, 20-30 cm long, of 53 ivory bracelets, 53 ivory rings, 4 ivory necklaces, 175 ivory cigarette-smokers, 17 Malayan sun bear claws (*Helarctos malayanus*, Appendix I), and 7 deer antlers (Cervidae family).¹⁴⁴

facebook



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JAPAN

April 2019

Japan



A joint investigation by the EIA (Environmental Investigation Agency) and the JTEF (Japan Tiger and Elephant Fund) shows that among 303 stores in Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya and other cities that sell customized ivory seals, 70 are willing to sell them to foreign buyers and 3 to ship them outside Japan upon request. The myth of Japan as a self-consumer continues to crack.¹⁴⁵

MALAYSIA

April 30, 2019

Port Dickson, State of Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

Xavier Jayakumar, the Minister of Water, Land and Natural Resources, accompanied by agents from his services, threw into an industrial incinerator nearly 4 tons of ivory seized between 2011 and 2017 in the form of raw tusks, jewellery, chopsticks and statuettes, all estimated today at 13.26 million ringgits, or 3.2 million US\$ (816 US\$/kg). Malaysia has acquired the bad reputation to be a favoured ivory transit point between Africa and China. "Seized ivory is burned to ensure that it will not be stolen and put back on the black market," confirms the Minister.¹⁴⁶



© Associated Press Photo

June 4, 2019

Kampung Sri Timur, State of Johor, Malaysia

Poisoning of 3 elephants aged about 18, 20 and 22 years in the buffer zone of the Lenggong Forest Reserve. The fate of the tusks is not mentioned. Negotiations are underway to force the Malaysian Palm Oil Council to install electric fences around the plantations.¹⁴⁷



NEPAL

May 2, 2019

Suryabinayak, Bhaktapur District, Province No. 3, Nepal

Rupesh Khadka and Bhaskar Poudel were arrested in possession of an elephant calf's tusk weighing 250 g.¹⁴⁸

June 27, 2019

Ranakali Community Forest, Jhapa District, Province No. 1, Nepal

Like in India, wild elephants living in Nepal are victims of the extension of farmland and the fragmentation of their habitat. Like in India, the deadly technique consisting of installing electric lines around fields is wreaking havoc. Today, a 3-year-old male, 4.87 m long and 2.43 m tall, succumbed. He was part of a herd of 10 elephants who had wandered near the corn plantation.¹⁴⁹



SRI LANKA

April 11, 2019

Somawathiya National Park, North Central and Eastern Provinces, Sri Lanka

He was in his twenties and about 2.4 metres high. He was shot in the head. The fate of the tusks is not mentioned.¹⁵⁰

May 29, 2019

Mahapitiya, North Western Province, Sri Lanka

An elephant riddled with bullets was stuck in a rice field. Despite the care he received on the spot, he died. He was about 20 years old. A religious ceremony was held at the crime scene.¹⁵¹

June 25, 2019

Imaduwa, Galle, Southern Province, Sri Lanka

Detention of a 58-year-old man from whom 4 elephant tusks and 2 firearms were seized.¹⁵²

June 25, 2019

Sri Lanka

Charges brought against the Deputy Director of Wildlife Protection Upali Pathmasiri and 7 employees. They are suspected of having organized the capture of 40 wild elephants over the past 10 years and of having sold them to public figures for the equivalent of about 125,000 US\$ each. The population of wild elephants in Sri Lanka is said to be at 7500 individuals.¹⁵³

Domestic elephants, see "On the Trail" n°5 p. 97-98, n°6 p. 91-92, n°7 p. 91, n°8 p. 87, n°9 p. 86, n°11 p. 85, n°12 p. 95, n°13 p. 95, n°15 p. 103, n°17 p. 103-104, n°18 p. 105, n°19 p. 112.

THAILAND

April 10, 2019

Thailand

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in agreement with the Ministry of Trade, intends to lift the ban on the export of live elephants that has been in place since ten years. Exports must comply with the standards of the World Association of Zoos and CITES regulations. This new trend is based on an alleged increase in the wild elephant population at a rate of 7% per year and is in conflict with CITES decisions taken in Geneva in August 2019 banning international trade in live elephants apart from exceptional circumstances.¹⁵⁴

VIET NAM

April 7, 2019

Noi Bai International Airport, Hanoi, Viet Nam

Seizure in the luggage of Dinh Thi Tuyet Mai, disembarking from flight BL171 from Osaka, Japan, of 28 statuettes weighing from 71 g to 2,796 g and inspired by religion or poetry.¹⁵⁵



April 24, 2019

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

Attempted bringing in of 2 tusks, weighing a total of 10 kg, painted black, wrapped in foil and hidden in a polystyrene box containing dried seafood products. Genetic analysis by the Institute of Tropical Biology is proving that it is in fact the ivory of *Loxodonta Africana*. One arrest. The man aged 37 arrived from Africa via Dubai.¹⁵⁶



© Tien phong

May 24, 2019

Binh Duong Province, Viet Nam

Fine of 100 million dongs or 4,270 US\$ against the owner of a second-hand goods store, among which ivory pendants, bracelets and brooches of unknown origin. Additional fine of 70 million dongs or 3,000 US\$ for illegal advertising.¹⁵⁷



June 5, 2019

Thuong, Tu Son, Bac Ninh Province, Viet Nam

Seizure of wristbands, necklaces and other worked presumed-ivories weighing a total of 6 kg in a craft shop run by Mrs Ltt. Thuong, near the city of Tu Son, nicknamed "the capital of white ivory". The thorough investigation of a team of journalists has proven that this nickname is not usurped.



© Anh Tuc - Police

To prove that the ivory is not fake, sellers use several schemes. They throw chopsticks into the air and ensure that when they fall down they will not break. They display the items under halogen lamps and describe Schreger's lines as evidence of the authenticity of ivory. "If it is fake, you will be refunded," they assure the buyers not yet convinced, in the secret of a small shed at the back of the store of which shop windows and shelves are full of incense sticks and statuettes made of jade, marble and other minerals. Bracelets sell for 50-400 US\$, combs for 130 US\$, a pair of chopsticks for 85 US\$, statuettes for 1,700 US\$ and a ring, the loss leader, for 8 US\$.¹⁵⁸

June 6, 2019

Hanoi, Viet Nam

Hard blow for business. Seizure of ivory statuettes weighing a total of 4.4 kg and 2 arrests thanks to ENV's spotters.¹⁵⁹



June 27, 2019

Hoang Mai District, Hanoi, Viet Nam

Seizure in 2 steps of 207 kg of ivory in the form of 29 tusks and fragments of tusks. Arrest of Pham Quyet.¹⁶⁰



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EUROPE

SPAIN

Beginning of April 2019

Province of Alicante, Valencian Community, Spain

Seizure of 26 worked ivories sold on the Internet by 3 individuals, 2 of whom present themselves as antique dealers. The items were sold between 68 and 1,900 €.¹⁶¹

Beginning of April 2019

Valence, Valencian Community, Spain

Elephant's foot stools are a must from Western Europe's colonial past (see "On the Trail" n°8 p. 89, n°20 p. 109, n°24 p. 79). New seizure. The stool was sold on the Internet. Arrest of a 41-year-old man.¹⁶²



End of April 2019

Barcelona, Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain

Seizure of an elephant's foot turned into an umbrella holder.¹⁶³



© Agents Rurals

FRANCE

May 28, 2019

Saint-Martin-le-Vinoux, Department of Isère, France

German artillery rockets and shells from the Second World War, about 20 shotguns, handguns, 7,500 cartridges, 48,000 € in cash hidden in a refrigerator and an elephant tusk, this is the detail of the loot seized by customs officers in Lyon and Grenoble from an 85-year-old gunsmith claiming to be retired and suspected of supplying weapons to the mob in the Rhône-Alpes region.¹⁶⁴



© Fce Bleu Isere

May 31, 2019

Domats, Department of Yonne, France

Seizure of ivory items of questionable origin with a total weight of 7kg. The current price of a raw ivory kilo in France is around 600 € (670 US\$). The suspect was betrayed by his Internet business. Intervention by the ONCFS (Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune sauvage) and the Gendarmes of Saint-Valerien.¹⁶⁵

SWITZERLAND

April 15, 2019

Switzerland

Switzerland, an ivory sieve? There is a heated controversy between the Tanzanian General Prosecutor's Office and the Swiss authorities. In July 2015, 3 Chinese people coming from Dar es Salaam were intercepted in Zurich airport before taking a flight to Beijing (see "On the Trail" n°10 p. 67). They got away with it with a fine of 3,200 US\$. In their suitcases, there was 262 kg of raw ivory corresponding to the poaching of at least 40 elephants. The Tanzanian authorities were informed about the seizure one month afterward. "If the traffickers had been extradited to Tanzania, they would have been sentenced to 20 years in prison," wrote the Attorney General of Tanzania.

The Federal Office for Food Safety and Veterinary Affairs recognizes a missed opportunity. "We learn from our mistakes." "The proof is that in January of this year, we put eel traffickers in prison" (see "On the Trail" n°23 p. 18) and the Office's spokesman recalls that last year, 2 members of the Dar es Salaam prosecutor's office came to Switzerland to meet the police at Zurich airport and take samples of the seizure.

The 3 Chinese traffickers were not just carriers. Aged 21 to 37, they claimed to be businessmen and had the means to be. They were the ones who bought the ivory from a Sino-Tanzanian network. Four employees of Dar es Salaam Airport are now under investigation. They helped the 3 Chinese traffickers to leave Tanzania safely. Their trial will take place in the coming months.¹⁶⁶



Other Mammals

AFRICA

ETHIOPIA

April 14-21, 2019

Gibe Sheleko National Park, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region, Ethiopia

Unexplained death of 28 hippopotamuses (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II). The park was established in 2011. It houses more than 200 hippopotamuses. The total population is estimated to be around 100,000 individuals. The semi-aquatic mammals are threatened by the loss of their habitat, pollution, infectious diseases and poaching. The ivory from their teeth is prized as a replacement for elephant ivory. In Namibia, more than 200 hippopotamuses were victims of an anthrax outbreak. In Zambia, the species is in danger of a culling plan by approved hunters. 1,000 individuals over 5 years. (see "On The Trail" n°21 p. 72).¹

KENYA

April 4, 2019

Close to Machakos, Machakos County, Kenya

Rescue of a zebra (*Equus quagga*) attacked by villagers. Anaesthesia, cleaning and disinfection of wounds. Truck transfer to the ILRI (International Livestock Research Institute) protected area near the road between Nairobi and Mombasa. Wake-up by antidote, favourable prognosis.²



May 14, 2019

Tsavo East National Park, Kenya

Rescue of a waterbuck (*Kobus ellipsiprymnus*) at the Voi Wildlife Lodge near a water point. Reported by a tourist, he was strangled by the cable of a trap, away from his herd. After the treatment, he ran away.³

May 17, 2019

Oloisukut Conservancy, Narok County, Kenya

An arrow in the back of her left knee. She was limping, she had been in pain for 2 days. Intervention by the KWS and the DSWT (David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust). Prognosis is good.⁴

