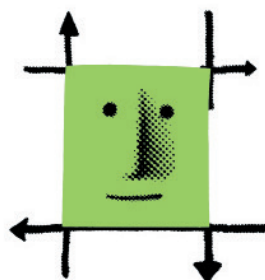


ON_{the} TRAIL

The defaunation bulletin
n°30. Events from the 1st July to the 30th September, 2020



Quarterly information and analysis report on animal poaching and smuggling
Published on August 6, 2021
Original version in French



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 : Charlotte Nithart

Editors-in-Chief: Jacky Bonnemains and Charlotte Nithart

Art Directors : Charlotte Nithart and Jacky Bonnemains

Writing : Jacky Bonnemains, Gaëlle Guilissen, Jean-Pierre Edin and Charlotte Nithart.

Research, Assistant Editor : Gaëlle Guilissen, Elodie Crépeau-Pons,
Irene Torres Márquez and Flavie Ios.

Cartography : Dylan Blandel and Nathalie Versluys

Cover : *Hystrix africaeaustralis* © Peter Erb (CC BY-NC)

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NOTE AND ADVICE TO READERS

“On the Trail”, the defaunation magazine, aims to get out of the drip of daily news and 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” also relates ongoing trials and the evolution of regulations and sanctions.

“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. No continent is spared.

• A single event may refer to several species (e.g. simultaneous seizure of ivory, bear bile and snake skins); it is then analysed in the “Multi-species” chapter, with the exception of events that bring together the following species and which have their own chapter:

- Pangolins + rhinoceroses + elephants
- Elephants + rhinoceroses
- Rhinoceroses + elephants + felines
- Marine and freshwater multispecies (simultaneous seizure of several aquatic species)
- Multi-species reptiles (simultaneous seizure of several reptile species)

• Geographic regions at the continental scale are based on the UN classification.

• The main sources are indicated at the end of each event. Each event reported and/or analysed is from a recension of one or more articles or press releases. This critical review eliminates inconsistencies in date, price and quantity if necessary, and if possible mistakes or looseness about the description of the species. The original source(s) are sometimes enriched by cross-checking and additional information from previous issues of “On the Trail”, by Robin des Bois’ investigations and archives, and by international bibliography and iconography. The US\$ conversion rates used are those applicable during the month of the event.

Robin des Bois thanks the Species Survival Network, the NGO Save the Elephants and the Eagle Network for their alerts which enrich the daily monitoring carried out by the “On the Trail” team.

• When a species is CITES-listed, the Appendix is specified after its scientific name.

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.

PICTOS



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



Judgment and sanction. Condemnation, acquittal, fine...



Trapping. Poaching by jaw trap, snare ...



Poisoning. By chemicals, pesticides and medicines: cyanide, carbofuran, diclofenac, M99 ...



Full moon. Moonlight poaching

ACRONYMS

EAGLE : Eco Activists for Governance and Law Enforcement

ENV : Education for Nature – Vietnam

IBAMA : Instituto brasileiro do meio ambiente e dos recursos naturais renováveis

IEW : Iran Environment and Wildlife Watch

KWS : Kenya Wildlife Service

LAGA : The Last Great Ape Organization

OIC : Orangutan Information Centre

PROFEPA : Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente

SAPS : South African Police Service

SPCA : Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

SSB : Sashastra Seema Bal

SVW : Save Vietnam Wildlife

SWT : Sheldrick Wildlife Trust

USFWS : United States Fish and Wildlife Service

WCCB : Wildlife Crime Control Bureau

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ELEPHANTS AND RHINOCEROSSES



AFRICA

KENYA

July 29, 2020

Moi International Airport, Mombasa County, Kenya

“Wananionea, mimi sijafanya kitu” (“They are implicating me, I am innocent”). Mansur Mohamed Surur, alias Mansour, 60 years old, got picked up at Moi International Airport coming off a flight from Yemen. The US justice has accused him of trafficking ivory, rhinoceros horns and narcotics. With 2 accomplices who are already in prison in New York and a third who is still on the run, he was identified by “C1,” a member of US special services to whom he confided, confirmed and proved that he could ship good-sized horns (7 kg) and heroine from Africa to Manhattan. Interpol stuck a red notice on him. He had been under surveillance for 2 years and interrogated by the Kenyan authorities when he moved to South Sudan, then to Sudan, before flying to Yemen, where he found himself in a haven of peace and security despite the civil war, since there are no extradition treaties between Yemen, Kenya and the United States of America. Mansour’s lawyers are trying to get him released on bail and fighting for a trial in Kenya, although the United States has made a request for extradition.

See “On the Trail” n°25 p. 81.

Capital FM, July 29, 2020; The Star, July 29, 2020; Daily Nation, August 3, 2020.¹

ASIA

TURKEY

August 6, 2020

Izmir, Izmir Province, Aegean Region, and Antalya, Antalya Province, Mediterranean Region, Turkey

Twelve arrests. The gang leader is known as Osman G. Seizure of bullet-proof vests, 12 firearms, silencers, a laser finder, rosaries and pearls made of elephant ivory, rhinoceros horns or fragments, python skins and 14 works of art. The multi-skilled traffickers had been in sight of the police for 2 years. Hürriyet, August 14, 2020.³



RHINOCEROSES



Indian rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*), Bharatpur, Madhyamanchal, Nepal. Photo 123_456

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: the Indian rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis*, the Sumatran rhinoceros *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*, and the Javan rhinoceros *Rhinoceros sondaicus*.

On the Trail n°30
Black market horn quotation from media or official sources
The values were estimated at the time of the seizures

Value of 1kg of raw horn

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref. (year)
Africa	Kenya	21,860	4 (2015)
		15,080	5 (2020)
	South Africa	3,708	9 (2020)

KENYA

July 16, 2020

Sera Wildlife Conservancy, Samburu County, Kenya

A rhinoceros orphan was bottle-fed at Reteti, then taught to keep himself, before being released at the Sera Conservancy. Very soon, his gaunt appearance and chronic diarrhea became apparent. His excrements contained fragments of plastic. He was given a deworming treatment, antibiotics, stimulants and anti-inflammatories. He is convalescing in the rangers' fenced camp. The prognosis is very uncertain. He has to be kept away from the garbage dumps where he took to eating after he was freed.

SWT/KWS, July 2020.¹

The information came from zoo veterinarians. It was collected and verified by experts at the Leibniz Institute, and the report on the parturition of 19 female rhinoceroses was published in the journal *Theriogenology*. The authors summarized the gestation cycle and parturition without going into the ante-natal and post-natal complications that are specific to rhinoceroses in captivity, which would definitely have dampened the bright picture.

For 19 mothers under observation one little rhinoceros was born, after an average gestation period of 16 months and 3 weeks. The pre-natal labour is almost unnoticeable for laypeople and non-specialized zookeepers. The new-born is delivered in less than 25 minutes. When the head (and large ears) of the rhinoceros appear first, delivery is over in less than 10 minutes. When the calf is positioned with the hind feet first, delivery can take up to 45 minutes. Delivery is undoubtedly very fast so as to avoid the curiosity of predators. The new-born weighs between 40 and 70 kg. He stands up after one hour, and after 3 to 5 hours, nurses for the first time. He remains completely dependent on his mother's milk for 6 months, more or less.

Robert Hermes and al. Parturition in white rhinoceros, *Theriogenology* (2020).²

July 28, 2020

Tsavo West National Park, Kenya

A male black rhinoceros lost his life. The cause is unknown. The body was too far decomposed to carry out an autopsy. Death had occurred two weeks earlier. The only remains are the vertebra and the large bones, as well as the 2 horns, which were put in safekeeping.

SWT/KWS, July 2020.³

August 14, 2020

Kibera, Nairobi County, Kenya

Corporal Henry Makua Onsongo, alias Masai, was sentenced to 3 years in prison and a fine of 40,000 shillings (372 US\$) or 6 additional months in prison if he does not pay. He was arrested on March 10, 2015, in the company of Richard Ngeleka Kalatanda and Eliud Wanyonyi, in possession of a rhinoceros horn weighing 600 g and estimated at 1.2 million shillings (13,117 US\$ or 21,860 US\$/kg). The irony is that the corporal was a "nightmare" for criminals. See "On the trail" n° 8 p. 62. Nairobi News, August 8, 2020; The Star, August 9, 2020.⁴



September 26, 2020

Eastleigh, Nairobi, Nairobi County, Kenya



In their car, there were 2 horns weighing a total of 1.24 kg, assessed at 18,700 US\$, or 15,080 US\$/kg, and a big wad of phony bank notes. The man, Abdikadir Mohamed Yusuf, of unknown nationality, and the woman, Kowsar Salah Ugas, Kenyan, had been on police and KWS radar for 3 months.

The couple pleaded not guilty, despite all evidence and expectations. The chief inspector of the Directorate of Criminal Investigations recommended that the court not grant a release on bail for the 2 individuals. He is afraid that the 2 suspects might disappear forever. Their lawyer claims that there is no flight risk, stressing that Yusuf is married to a female Kenyan citizen with whom he has 10 children.

The Star, September 26, 2020; Nairobi News, September 29, 2020.⁵

ZIMBABWE

Early August 2020

Bubye Valley Conservancy, Matabeleland South Province, Zimbabwe

Rangers found 2 dead black rhinoceroses. One of them no longer had his horn. They had bullets in their lungs. The poachers are on the run.

The Herald, August 3, 2020.⁶

EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

KENYA - SOUTH AFRICA

Concerning anti-intrusion measures, reserves are turning themselves into military bases or Seveso industrial sites.

- NTT and Cisco plan to equip 6 reserves covering 250 km² with optical sensors, video surveillance cameras and a dedicated software program Earthranger. Realtime data transmission would enable a checking pool to collect information, sort it, share it among a network of 6 reserves, trigger alarms and deploy rangers to the field. Connected Conservation also explain that the system could prevent conflicts with local populations when wild animals, who cause fear because of their size and concern because of their eating habits, come close to herds of domestic animals, fields of crops and villages.

- For his part, the partnership between the NGO Wildlife Act and Ezemvolvo, the wildlife management authority, plans to equip the HiP (Hluhluwe-iMfolozi park), 960 km², with a "smart" fence electrified, and equipped with optical sensors. "Two sections of fence have been upgraded to date and we have already seen a shift in rhino poaching activity away from both areas to sites where there is no detection fence."

Dispatch Live, September 21, 2020; Global Security Mag, July 2020.⁷

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

July 5, 2020

Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

A 7-month-old white rhinoceros was wandering down a tourist route south of the park. The orphan was chased by lions and elephants, and ran back to take refuge near his mother's body after she was killed and dehorned by poachers. He was transferred by helicopter to the Care for Wild refuge and placed in intensive care. He was named Nhlanhla, "the lucky one" in Shangaan, a local language.

It is apparent from reliable but incomplete statistics compiled by Save the Rhino International that at least 8,889 rhinos were poached in Africa between 2010 and 2020.

Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary, July 5 and 8, 2020; Getaway, July 13, 2020; ENV, June 29, 2020; Save the Rhino.⁸

July 13 and 14, 2020

OR Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa

- On July 13, seizure of 47 kg of rhinoceros horns headed for Malaysia. The local economic value is estimated at 3 million rand (174,260 US\$, or 3,708 US\$/kg). They were in cardboard boxes declared as "scaffolding materials."



The sender was arrested at Edenvale.



- On July 14, a sniffer dog uncovered 6 suspicious packages declared as "works of art" destined for Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, via Doha, Qatar. They contained a total of 41 horns and fragments of rhinoceros horns, estimated at 115.66 million rand (6,718,285 US\$). They were wrapped in carbon paper, aluminum foil and cloth.



SAPS, July 16, 2020; The Citizen, July 16, 2020; Eyewitness News, July 15, 2020.⁹

July 23, 2020

Beaufort West, Western Cape Province, South Africa

Pedro Baloi, 42 years old, was sentenced to 5 years in prison. He is one accomplice of Alexandre Shinthangu, also sentenced to 5 years in prison on May 31, 2018. They entered Karoo national park in August 2017 and were about to attack some rhinoceroses. See "On the Trail" n°21 p. 76.

SAPS, July 29, 2020.¹⁰



July 23, 2020

Weenen Game Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

At 4 p.m., shots were heard. A white rhinoceros was found dead and dehorned. According to Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, his horns had been removed preventatively last September. The poachers killed him for stumps. No arrest.

Ladysmith, July 24, 2020.¹¹

FAMILY AFFAIRS

End of July 2020

Middelburg, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

The father, Alberto Ernesto Nharreluga, and his son were transporting 2 rhinoceros horns and some shark fins in their car when they were arrested in April 2019 on N4 at a police roadblock. They were coming back from Mozambique and headed for Pretoria. They tried to bribe the cops. They were charged with trafficking endangered species and attempted corruption. Their lawyer was not able to get them released on bail.

SAPS, July 28, 2020.¹²

**January – Early August 2020
South Africa**

Poaching mortality remains very high for the 2 endangered African rhino species.

316 individuals were killed between January and June 2019 compared to 166 in the same period in 2020, 150 in national parks and 16 in private ranches. Private reserves are smaller, easier to protect and owners are strengthening the monitoring and deterrence arrangements with electric fencing, cameras, private militias and preventive dehornings. The decrease in poaching can also be explained by the “Stay at home order” and the unannounced roadblocks set up here and there to monitor its application on little used roads. It is difficult to go for a walk with axes, syringes, rifles or automatic weapons and return with bloody horns. All things considered, 166 rhinos in 6 months of war against Covid is a lot and suggests a strong resumption of smuggling as soon as maritime and air logistics comeback.

Africa Geographic, August 3, 2020; Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, July 31, 2020; Daily Maverick, August 7, 2020; Le Temps, July 3, 2020.¹³

August 9, 2020

Maubane, Temba, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Eight men between 31 and 47 years old were arrested. In their homes, they had unlicensed firearms and ammunition. They are suspected of rhinoceros poaching. An accomplice attempted to bribe the police with 8000 rand (477 US\$) and was arrested.

Pretoria Rekord, August 11, 2020.¹⁴

August 14, 2020

Crocodile Bridge Section, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa



A female orphan rhinoceros, between 8 and 10 months old, was wandering around alone. She was taken to the Care for Wild Rhino refuge. She seems to have been lost by her mother or his mother has been poached.

Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary, August 15 and 16, 2020; SANParks, August 14, 2020.¹⁵

August 24 and 25, 2020

Near Phalaborwa, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Two rhinoceroses were shot to death. The first was dehorned. The second still had his horns. Farm workers had arrived and the poachers fled.

Polokwane Review, August 26, 2020.¹⁶

August 31, 2020

Timbavati Game Reserve, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Poachers killed a male and a female rhinoceros. The female's orphan was taken to the Care for Wild Rhino refuge.

Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary, August 31, 2020.¹⁷

September 9, 2020 – April 6, 2021

Nelspruit, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa



Sinovuyo Salela remains in custody. He had surrendered to the police in April 2020 to confess to his involvement in the 17 March murder of Lieutenant Colonel Leroy Bruwer, the Hawks investigator who over the course of his career has brought several rhino horn

traffickers, including Mister Big and Big Joe, to the bar of the Mpumalanga courts (see “On the Trail” no. 28 p. 4). Leroy Bruwer's latest investigations are being scrutinised and the Hawks are looking into the cases of Elliot Sindane, Elvis Mlimi and Mabuthi Khoza who are suspected along with two others of of illegal hunting, illegal possession of firearms, trespassing at the Kaapmuiden Dalton farm, Mpumalanga province, and trafficking in rhino horn in 2011 and 2012. Under dubious circumstances, they were dismissed and this cold case was unearthed a few weeks before his murder by Lieutenant Colonel Leroy Bruwer and his team. Lowvelder, 19 June, 13 July, 22 September 2020; SAPS 10 September 2020 and 8 April 2021.¹⁸

September 10, 2020

South Africa

John Hume is trading in horns and defying national and international law. An email sent by Elizabeth van Niekerk, in charge of marketing and the application of legal procedures at the Buffalo Dream Ranch encouraged purchasers and potential speculators to go ahead and take the step. "We offer three classes of horns to the public at an incredibly special price for each of the classes... For both local and foreign buyers, after choosing your horn(s) from the attached list of DNA certificates (...) you must email us your choice of horns, with a certified copy of your ID or passport, proof of address and if the purchaser is a company, the certified copies of the company registration documents (in English) no older than three months. This is similar to what you need in South Africa to buy a cellphone."

"A 30% deposit will be required to be paid into our CFC account (...) upon receipt of your documents... South African buyers will be able to collect horn(s) after payment of the remaining 70% in Gauteng and we will ensure that you are in possession of all the correct permits as required by law."

"For the export of horn and upon receipt of the remaining 70%, we offer to deliver the horns free of charge to the shipping agent at O.R. Tambo (...) If you want to act as a trader for the sale of larger quantities of horns, contact us for further information."

In response, the Ministry of the Environment, Forests and Fisheries denounced "misrepresentation of the facts" and pointed out that horn sales were exclusively limited to the South African domestic market. John Hume is trying to ram open that door that was left ajar by the exemption granted to expats with dual nationality to legally export a rhinoceros horn as personal belongings or souvenirs with no commercial intent.

According to the same ministerial release, a high level panel is in charge of making recommendations on the trade, breeding, hunting and management of rhinoceroses or their parts.

John Hume, see "On the Trail" n°29 p. 46.

South African Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, September 10, 2020; Saturday Star, September 12, 2020.¹⁹

September 14, 2020
Buffelskloof and Middelburg,
Mpumalanga Province, South Africa



The judicial consequences of a sordid traffic between a respectable farmer and rhinoceros breeder, and a Chinese couple addicted to amphetamines was reported in "On the Trail" n°20 p. 85-86. The horn was attached to the Lexus chassis when it left the ranch. It was sniffed by the canine brigade. Deon Cornelius, ranch manager, was sentenced 3 years later to 2 minor fines totaling barely over 3,500 US\$, although at the time of the incident in January 2018, the white rhinoceros horn was estimated to be worth 175,000 rand, or 14,175 US\$.

SAPS, September 15, 2020; Lowvelder, September 15, 2020; Dispatch Live, September 15, 2020.²⁰

September 21, 2020

Randburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa



In some ways, Yansen Feng and Liu Li Hong are the Bonnie and Clyde of wildlife trafficking. Arrested in January 2018 for transporting rhino horn (see opposite), they were immediately fined and, in the event of non-payment, sentenced to prison. A search of Hong's house resulted in the seizure of raw ivory.

A year later, Feng, who had remained on the Hawks' radar, was caught in possession of 5 horns or horn fragments, 14 abalones, 2 sea cucumbers and 3 seahorses and remanded in custody. In March 2019, he lured the investigating officer with a 'donation' of 100,000 rand (6,800 US\$) providing that he is granted bail and a further 50,000 rand providing that his case is struck out the judicial record. Chinese expatriates in southern Africa have an overconfidence in the ability of the African judiciary to be corrupted. The Hawks pretended to give in to Feng's temptation. They set up a meeting with Feng's intermediary and an undercover policeman. It was Liu Li Hong who arrived with 100 000 rand in her pocket. She was remanded in custody for complicity in active bribery and is reportedly about to be deported from South Africa. Yansen Feng was sentenced to 10 years in prison for trafficking in rhino horn and attempting to suborning law enforcement officials.

See "On the Trail" n°20 p.85-86 and n° 28 p. 94. Save the Beast - Stop the Slaughter, September 21, 2020; SAPS September 23, 2020; Randburg Sun, October 7, 2020.²¹

See "On the Trail" n°20 p.85-86 and n° 28 p. 94.

Save the Beast - Stop the Slaughter, September 21, 2020; SAPS September 23, 2020; Randburg Sun, October 7, 2020.²¹



**September 29, 2020
Letaba Ranch, Limpopo Province,
South Africa**



In 2012, Khosa, an employee for the African Field Ranger Training Service, led a training course at the Letaba wildlife reserve. He was contacted by a certain Ngwenya, who lives in the province of Gauteng and who told him about plans to poach a rhinoceros on the ranch. Khosa's superiors advised him to cooperate and gave him the status of police informer. Khosa recommended that Ngwenya or his accomplices poach in Letaba in November 2012. He explained that it would be a good time because the rangers would supposedly be on strike. Ngwenya and his consorts did not take the bait, and Khosa, without going back to the story about a strike, advised the would-be poachers to try their luck on Saturday, January 12, 2013, when the moon was full. That night, the poachers used their vehicle to come near to the ranch and then flee. The ax, the firearm and the ammunition were on their own full responsibility. Khosa, the police informer, simply showed them how to get in. The poaching expedition was part success and part failure. Two rhinoceroses were wounded but managed to flee far enough away so they could not be tracked down and done in. The Letaba ranch stretches for 420 km² and the poachers high-tailed it. Khosa then recommended that they come back two days later, pretending to have located one wounded rhinoceros who was incapable of moving and therefore an ideal target.

Khosa also informed his superiors of the course of events and the Letaba rangers mounted an ambush to neutralize the poachers by any means, including fatal means if necessary. The sharpshooter poacher entered the ranch, Khosa followed him, and this time, he was carrying an ax in his bag. An accomplice stayed in the escape car at first and then vanished. The rangers' attention and all resources were focused on the ambush inside the ranch.

But things did not go exactly as planned or as desired. Mulalu Nemakhavhani, one of the rangers, was killed on the spot by a stray bullet during exchange of fire. Bilankulu and Mokoena, two of the poachers, were accused of murder and sentenced to 25 years in prison as a mandatory minimum sentence. They appealed against the decision on the main motive that the ranch management, the police and Khosa facilitated the acts that were committed and were therefore partly responsible. They also claimed that Khosa's testimony was false. In their opinion, the ruling should be annulled.

The Court confirmed the first instance ruling, considering that entrapment is a proactive investigative technique, that no weapons or other operational equipment had been supplied to the poachers, that Khosa did not pressure the accused into committing the crime of poaching, that all of the information provided, including some deliberately false information, was eagerly accepted and that in the end, Khosa had gone no further than providing an opportunity to commit the offence.

IOL, October 5, 2020; Bilankulu and Another v The State (Case no 188/2020) South Africa: Supreme Court of Appeal (ZASCA) 114, September 29, 2020.²²

**August 17 and November 24, 2020
Grahamstown, Western Cape Province,
South Africa**



Demonstration in front of the court. Rhino owners, game reserve employees and veterinary doctor William Fowls gathered. Jabulani Ndlovu, Forget Ndlovu and Sibusiso Ndlovu, sentenced to 25 years in prison in April 2019, are appealing. The Supreme Court found a procedural defect: the searches were conducted without a warrant issued by the prosecutor. According to William Fowls, " they were involved in far more cases than these that they have not been charged for. They were so prolific that we always assumed that there were four or five teams of poachers using darts to poach rhino. But since their arrest, I am not aware of a single darting incident in the Eastern Cape." The Ndlovu trio used M99, better known as Etorphine or Thiafentanil, to kill.

The Ndlovu are full moon workers. At work for 10 years, they were nabbed in 2016 in an Airbnb through Operation Full Moon. "At first they could only kill and take the horn from one rhino, by the time we caught them they were doing 4 a night," adds the vet who performed the autopsies on most of the trio's victims. The Ndlovu had two faces in their lives. Werewolf poachers on full moon nights, Jabulani has 5 children and ran an export business to Zimbabwe, Forget was a chicken farmer, Sibusiso was a taxi driver and aluminium window installer.

On November 24, the Ndlovu appeal was dismissed. See "On the Trail" n^o25 p. 76, n^o21 p.77, n^o19 p. 85, n^o18 p. 70, n^o17 p. 77.

Daily Maverick, August 21, 2020; SA People, November 24, 2020.²³

NAMIBIA

**Early July 2020
Namibia**

A man involved in poaching operations and rhinoceros horn smuggling was arrested. The Namibian, July 9, 2020.²⁴

**July 16, 2020
Otjondeka, Kunene Region, Namibia**

Murumbua Vetjesavi and Richard Kandjii were arrested in possession of 2 rhinoceros horns. Their vehicle was seized. The Namibian, August 4, 2020.²⁵

**July 17, 2020
Omaruru, Erongo Region, Namibia**

Sackeus Erastus was arrested. He is accused of having poached a rhinoceros in February 2020. The Namibian Sun, July 24, 2020.²⁶

January-August 2020

Namibia

Namibia has started preventively arresting poachers suspected of intending to poach rhinoceroses and steal their horns, equipping themselves for the purpose of perpetrating crimes and collecting information through reconnaissance. According to the Ministry of the Environment, Forests and Tourism, the approach pays. Poaching stats are going down: 61 in 2016, 55 in 2017, 78 in 2018, 46 in 2019 and 22 in the first 9 months of 2020. Pohamba Shifeta also wishes to recognize the canine brigades: "Since the introduction of sniffer dogs to combat poaching in Namibia, wildlife crimes have seen significant reduction." Reuters, September 22, 2020; The Namibian, July 9, 2020.²⁷

August-September 2019 / March-August 2020 Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia

In August 2019, 33 rhinoceros horns were stolen from the owner of a private reserve in Outjo. He had cut the horns off his rhinoceroses to protect them from poaching. They are worth an estimated 5 million N\$ (297,940 US\$).

Two horns were delivered to Ludwig Nangolo in Windhoek. With his accomplices, Paulus Pendapala Herman and Petrus Lipinge, he contacted Fortunato Jose Queta. For 2 years now, the Angolan teacher has been a middleman between Namibian traffickers and buyers in Angola. On August 11, 2019, Fortunato Queta put the 3 Namibians in contact with a Vietnamese known as David Somni. They met in Ondjiva, in Angola. Somni bought the 2 horns for 147,000 N\$ (8759 US\$). The 3 Namibians then obtained 6 other horns stolen in Outjo, and sold them to Somni in the same way, on August 14, for 670,000 N\$ (39,924 US\$). They were arrested in September 2019 and released on bail for 30,000 N\$ (1,990 US\$).

In the beginning of March 2020, Fortunato Queta was arrested in the Ohangwena region in Namibia. In May, the court refused to release him on bail. He appealed, but the High Court confirmed the refusal on August 3.

The 4 men have been accused of money laundering, and of possession, theft and attempted sale of 33 rhinoceros horns.

The Namibian, August 5, 2020.²⁸

August 5, 2020

Outapi, Omusati Region, and Sesfontein, Kunene Region, Namibia

- Veiyo Weyulu Nelenge was arrested for smuggling rhinoceros horns.

- Uaungumana Piriko was arrested for an old case of rhinoceros poaching.

Republikein, August 11, 2020.²⁹

August 21, 2020

Grootfontein, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

Dave Ngumbi, Alfred Rukee, Lucas Hidinwa and Hengua Kaipi were arrested during the night. Seizure of a vehicle. They are accused of poaching 2 white rhinoceroses, a male and a female, between July 22 and August 15, in a private reserve. The male died of his bullet wounds and was dehorned. The female survived and managed to flee. The 2 rhinoceroses are worth one million Namibian dollars (59,600 US\$).

NBC, August 25, 2020.³⁰

August 28, 2020

Otjomumbonde, Kunene Region, Namibia

Firearm poaching of 2 black rhinoceroses, a female and her young, in the Omatendeka reserve. Their horns were cut off. No arrests.

The Namibian, September 1st, 2020.³¹

August 31, 2020

Okahao, Omusati Region, Namibia

Esra Kariripi, Jamunika Turitjo and Uatjitavi Turitjo were arrested. Seizure of one rhinoceros horn, a hunting rifle and 23 rounds of ammunition.

The Namibian Sun, September 23, 2020.³²

September 4, 2020

Omungwelume, Ohangwena Region, Namibia

What were Mr. Jonas Indongo Valombola and Mr. Stein lipinge Shikomba up to near the Angolan border with a rhinoceros horn in their pockets?

Republikein, September 9, 2020.³³

September 7, 2020

Omitara, Omaheke Region, Namibia

Elifas Mashuna, who was involved in a case of rhinoceros poaching in August 2019, has been arrested. The region is rich in poachers, see "On the Trail" n°15 p. 84, n°16 p. 69, n°21 p. 78 and n°29 p. 79.

The Namibian Sun, September 16, 2020.³⁴

September 10, 2020

Kamanjab, Kunene Region, Namibia

Three armed men who had been surreptitiously dropped off very close to Etosha park were arrested by the police, who were on the look-out after having received a phone call. The 3 troublemakers were also in possession of marijuana.

The Namibian Sun, September 16, 2020; Republikein, September 13, 2020.³⁵

September 23, 2020

Okahao, Omusati Region, Namibia

Tobias Amutenya broke several laws, the riotous Assemblies Act, the Ruling on the preservation of species, the Law on the control and trade of products sourced from wildlife and the Law on the prevention of crime by organized gangs. He is suspected of having premeditated the poaching of at least one rhinoceros.

The Namibian Sun, October 1st, 2020.³⁶

End of September 2020

Grootfontein, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

Kaventji Ngandi, Kahama Ngumbi and Vintilinu Antonio Makopi, Angolans, were arrested. They are suspected of poaching a rhinoceros in August. Republikein, October 8, 2020.³⁷

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

May-August 2020

Ireland, United States of America

On August 1st, 2019, John Slattery, ex-John Flynn, had been arrested in Ireland under an international warrant of arrest issued by the US judicial authorities.

On May 23, 2020, in the midst of a Covid-19 lockdown, he was transferred on a private jet chartered by the US government from Ireland to the United States under the extradition treaty between the 2 countries.

On July 22, he was sentenced by the federal court in Waco (Texas) to one year in prison for his involvement as part of an organised gang in a fraudulent purchase of rhino horns and smuggling to China in 2010.

On August 28, 2020, the 2-surname trafficker returned to his country on a scheduled American Air-lines flight from Dallas to Dublin after a 3-month stay in Fort Worth penitentiary. The United States agreed to his repatriation to Ireland on the grounds that the Rathkeale Rovers member had already spent 9 months in jail in Ireland pending the finalisation of the extradition procedure. See "On the Trail" n°8 p.66, n°9 p.69, n°10 p.49, n°12 p.72.

US Department of Justice, May 26 and July 22, 2020; The Irish Sun, May 25 and August 29, 2020.^{37bis}



EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

August 3, 2020

Hong Kong, Chine

A 34-year-old woman was sentenced to 2 years in prison. On October 19, 2019, 16 kg of horn sections were found in her baggage. She was coming from Johannesburg and on her way to Viet Nam. See "On the Trail" n°27 p. 90. Government of Hong Kong, August 3, 2020.³⁸



SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

INDONESIA

September 2020

Gunung Leuser National Park, Aceh and North Sumatra Provinces, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

Gunung Leuser is as big as Sicily, 25.900 km². The Leuser protected wildlife area is threatened by traps. Nylon and iron are the worst enemies of the 50 to 60 Sumatran rhinoceroses who are caught like wild boars. The hairy little rhinoceros stands 1.5 m high, for the larges of them, and is armed with 2 horns, with the rear horn just a small bump with no point most of the time. "Elephants that are huge can be severely injured or even killed [by the traps], so imagine what will happen to the rhinos that are much smaller," says Rudi Putra, spokesperson for the FKL (Leuser Conservation Forum).

Mongabay, November 13, 2020.³⁹



VIET NAM

July 13, 2020

Viet Nam

According to a study carried out by Danish and Vietnamese universities, the Vietnamese bourgeoisie who is constituting the main clientele for traffickers of rhinoceros horns and their derivatives is impervious to the multiple NGO campaigns embodied by various celebrities. "Consumers in general will agree to sign the pledge because of pressure from their peers or superiors or simply because it does not cost them anything." "We all know that nothing is a panacea, not only rhino horn. This guy [a Vietnamese celebrity featured in a campaign] does not need to teach us," said a business owner, one of the panelists interviewed. According to the authors, the proliferation of the campaigns is counterproductive. The organizations who lead them and their illustrious spokespersons are suspected of somehow looking more for personal profit and popularity than to reduce the demand for horns and their derivatives. The multitude of messages seems to perplex and bore the public. Hoai Nam Dang Vu, the principal author of the study believes that a single national campaign backed by several stakeholders would capture more attention, and the NGOs should ask themselves whether it is really useful and productive to stick their logos all over posters and other media.

British Ecological Society, July 14, 2020; Dang Vu, Hoai Nam & Nielsen, Martin & Jacobsen, Jette. (2020). Reference group influences and campaign exposure effects on rhino horn demand: Qualitative insights from Vietnam. *People and Nature*. 2. 10.1002/pan3.10121.⁴⁰

SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

July 7, 2020

Rongmongwe, Karbi Anglong District, State of Assam, India

Eptarul Ishlam, Abdul Khalek, Jersong Teron, Krishna Bhumij, Amor Teron, Bijoy Teron, Uttam Singner and Kanplong Terrang, aged between 20 and 28 years, were arrested. They are suspected of wanting to poach in the Kaziranga national park. Four 12-caliber rifles and ammunition were found on them and seized. Every year, poachers try their luck while the park is flooded. At that time, the rhinoceroses take refuge in the hills.

Deccan Herald, July 7, 2020.⁴¹



REPEATED OFFENSE

August 8, 2020

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

Second rhinoceros poached in 2020. Forest rangers heard 6 shots in the evening. The next day, they found a female surrounded by 6 empty 303-rifle cartridges. Her horn had been sawed off. A dog was able to track a suspect, a well-known poacher. He was arrested. In total, 5 or 6 people were allegedly involved. They set up an ambush after having crossed the Brahmapoutre River. A rhinoceros horn can sell for 1 crore Rs (133.530 US\$) on the black market in South-East Asia. At least 4 attempted instances of poaching have been thwarted since the beginning of the floods in June.

The Times of India, August 9, 2020; The Hindu, August 8, 2020; The New Indian Express, August 8, 2020.⁴²

REPEATED OFFENSE

August 25, 2020

Rangsali Sonari, Biswanath District, State of Assam, India

Babul Das and Ratul Das, alias Gunda, were arrested. Gunda has been involved in numerous cases of rhinoceros poaching. He had been on the run since 2019. He admitted to having buried a rifle near his house. The police went there and put his hand on a 303-rifle, a charger and a silencer. He apparently used them for his dirty work. The boat that was used to enter the park was also seized. Its owner, Krishnadev Saikia, 55 years old, is on the run.

The Sentinel Assam, August 26 and 27, 2020; Biswanath Police, August 25, 2020.⁴³

September 17, 2020

Dimapur, Dimapur District, State of Nagaland, India

15 million rupees (205,000 US\$) in the hands of Peter Lotha.

The Sentinel Assam, September 17, 2020.⁴⁴



September 24, 2020

Bokakhat, Golaghat District, State of Assam, India

Rajen Rongfer and Mridul Pegu were arrested by the municipal police of Tarjen Terang. They were involved in the sale of a horn in 2016. They were turned over to the Department of Forests, who indicted them. In 2016, 12 rhinos were poached in the Kaziranga national park, 22 in total in Assam.

India Today, September 25, 2020; Guwahati Plus, September 25, 2020.⁴⁵

GANG

September 25 and 28, 2020

Karbi Anglong District, State of Assam, India

Hobibur and Ashok are mahouts. They are patrolling on elephants' back inside Kaziranga park. After the Brahmapoutre floods, they said they had "recovered" a horn, without going into how they recovered it. They then sold it to Hariram and Biman, who have a good reputation. They are social and cultural activity leaders in the Karbi Anglong district and participate in teaching programs on the beauty and utility of wildlife in the Kaziranga park. The horn was then passed on to Terang, an entrepreneur in public works and also involved in the socio-cultural field, who in turn sold it to a former parliamentarian from Nagaland, the state next to Assam and on the border with Myanmar and China. 18 rhinoceroses drowned because of the flooding this year

During the floods, the staff found the carcasses of drowned rhinoceroses. Sometimes the horns were gone, sometimes they were still intact, in which case, when the flooding subsided, they were cut off and regulations require them to be handed over to park management and put away for safekeeping. Horn trafficking during the monsoon apparently started 3 years ago, and it is possible that the mahouts and their accomplices could have more to add to their confessions and to their tally of poaching.

The Times of India, September 28 and October 1st, 2020.⁴⁶

NEPAL

September 6, 2020

Laukhani, Nawalparasi District, Gandaki Province, Nepal



After a 41-month lull, it has started again: a rhinoceros was poached. Between 20 and 25 years old, with 2 bullet wounds in the head, he managed to run away and then collapsed in a river, surrounded by plastic bottles and other trash. The poachers were not able to steal the horn and hooves. The death occurred 5-6 days ago. "In the aftermath of Covid-19, people working abroad and in urban areas have gone back to their villages, and illegal poaching for easy, extra money could motivate them to kill wildlife," said Prakash K Paudel, co-founder of the NGO Greenhood Nepal. Starting at the beginning of the March-April 2020 lockdown, a rise in poaching and illegal land clearing was observed in the forests.

The Kathmandu Post, September 11, 2020; Online Khabar, September 9, 2020.⁴⁷



Kaziranga National Park. Photo Mike Prince