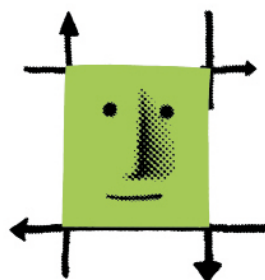


ON_{the} TRAIL

The defaunation bulletin
n°32. Events from the 1st January to the 30th April, 2021



Quarterly information and analysis report on animal poaching and smuggling
Published on April 12, 2022
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ROBIN DES BOIS

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Since 1985

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Wildlife is the silent victim of war. Unexploded ordnance, tanks and other engines of war pollute fields, rivers and marshes with oils and fuels. Factories and hydrocarbon depots burn and toxic plumes engulf birds. Ecosystems are torn apart. Food shortages encourage poaching. Uncontrolled dumping by occupying forces or residents increases the risk of forest fires. Wars are human disasters whose effects are immediate and disasters for animals and trees whose effects are hidden and delayed.

Ukraine and border with Ukraine, in this issue see pages 195, 196, 289, 293 and 294



Black stork (*Ciconia nigra*, Appendix II), Vyshhorod, Kyiv Oblast, Ukraine



European goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*, Appendix III in Ukraine), Irpin, Kyiv Oblast, Ukraine



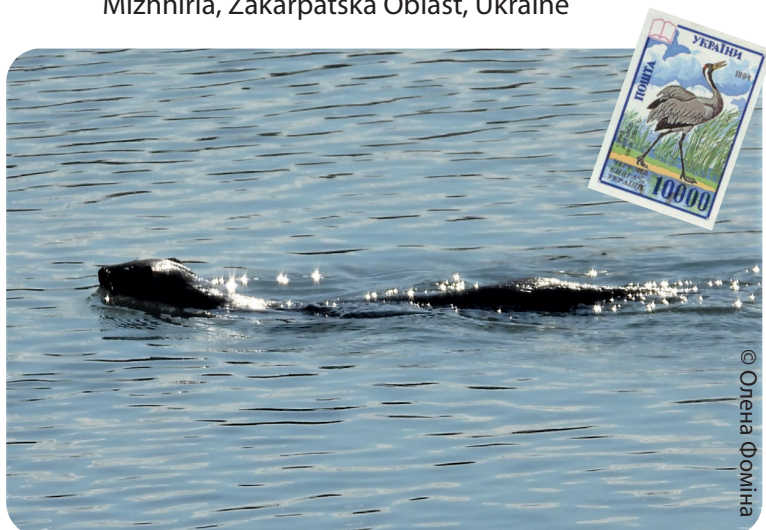
Bog orchid (*Anacamptis palustris*, Appendix II), Konotop, Sumy Oblast, Ukraine



Brown bear (*Ursus arctos*, Appendix II), Mizhhiria, Zakarpatska Oblast, Ukraine



Grey wolf (*Canis lupus*, Appendix II) footprints, Kharkiv Oblast, Ukraine



Common otter (*Lutra lutra*, Appendix I), Vyshhorod, Kyiv Oblast, Ukraine

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, net ...



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

CASE OF THE DISMANTLING OF AN INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF ELEPHANT IVORY AND RHINOCEROS HORN TRAFFICKERS OPERATING FROM FRANCE - PART 1

On September 10, 2015 at 11:30 p.m., leaving the A10 freeway which passes a few kilometers away, a BMW enters the French town of Dangé-Saint-Romain, 3,000 inhabitants. A squad of 9 customs officers accompanied by a dog handler stops the vehicle at a traffic circle. On board, Tom Greene, Edward Gammel and Richard O'Riley seem uncontrollably nervous, which is behavior considered by customs officers around the world to signal a confession. Tom, acting as the group's spokesman, declares in English that they are antique dealers coming from Bordeaux (300 km) on their way to Tours (60 km) and then to Paris (300 km). "We are touring France for our business." At 11:40 p.m., a first elephant tusk is discovered wrapped in a bathrobe. Next to it, a travel bag contains an envelope of banknotes. Then under the floor mat and under the steering wheel, 3 more tusks and additional bundles of cash are uncovered. To provide supporting legal documents, Tom presents an auction slip dated July 11, 2015 issued by the Hôtel des Ventes Cannes Enchères. But the tusks in the car do not correspond to those sold in Cannes that day.

Details of the tusks seized in the BMW:

- 1- 140 cm for 15.7 kg
- 2- 139 cm for 15.8 kg
- 3- 96 cm for 5.6 kg
- 4- 94 cm for 5.5 kg

Excerpts from the catalog of the Cannes Enchères sale of July 11, 2015 (Robin des Bois Archives)

SAMEDI 11 JUILLET 2015



Paire de défenses d'éléphant d'Afrique

L environ : 188 et 187,5 cm (courbe externe)
Poids environ : 32 et 31,5 Kg
Provenance : Tchad
CITES français pre-convention 1974
(origine OW) : FR1103101274-K et
FR1103101275-K

Expert : Jean-Yves Nathan - T : 06 16 68 15 80
10 000 / 15 000 €

Paire de défenses d'éléphant d'Afrique

L environ : 183 et 175,2 cm (courbe externe)
Poids environ : 15 et 15,6 Kg
Provenance : République Centrafricaine
CITES français pre-convention 1965
(origine OW) : FR1208300226-K et
FR1208300227-K

Expert : Jean-Yves Nathan - T : 06 16 68 15 80
5 000 / 7 000 €

Paire de défenses d'éléphant d'Afrique

L environ : 112 et 114 cm (courbe externe)
Poids environ : 9 et 9 Kg
Provenance : République Centrafricaine
CITES français pre-convention avant
1963 (origine OW) : FR1501100054-K et
FR1501100053-K

Expert : Jean-Yves Nathan - T : 06 16 68 15 80
3 000 / 4 000 €

20

Tom claims to have bought the tusks for 4,200 € at an open-air market in Bordeaux from a Turkish man's van. The overall value of the 4 tusks weighing a total of 42.6 kg is estimated by the customs officers to be 42,600 €. The trio was traveling with a total of 32,800 € in cash.

Taken to the customs office, Tom declares that he is the only one responsible for the "merchandise." Well informed but perhaps not fully awake, the deputy prosecutor authorizes, as the French regulation, alas, allows it, a customs transaction. On September 11, 2015 at 3:30 a.m., after paying 10,000 € in cash, the 3 traffickers left freely, with 22,800 € in cash, a properly stamped receipt, but without the 4 tusks that were seized. We can imagine their immense joy. 3 days later, they were caught by a traffic camera for speeding at 1:45 a.m. in the south of France, in the opposite direction of Paris where they claimed to be going.

However, the case is not yet closed. The Customs Settlement Form still lacks the signature of the Regional Director.

During the inspection in Dangé-Saint-Romain, a customs officer discovered a passport and a driver's license issued in the name of Joseph Doyle on the back seat of the BMW among other personal items. Upon questioning, Tom Greene answered that the papers belonged to one of his cousins. After the 3 men departed, the customs officers realized that the identity photograph, date and place of birth of Joseph Doyle are the same as those of Tom Greene.

Tom Greene and Joseph Doyle are the same man. The continued investigation eventually revealed that he is also Joseph O'Brien, in long form Joseph O'Brien "Cotton Eye" Junior, and that he is additionally called John Greene.

The investigations then concern the Cannes Enchères auction slip created in the name of the SAS E2AR Distribution located in Le Blanc-Mesnil in the Parisian suburbs. This company is run by David Ta, a French-Vietnamese man inspected 2 months earlier in July 2015 by the customs of Angers on the A11 highway with tusks acquired in auction rooms in Angers and Toulouse along with their certificates. At that time, trade in raw ivory was still authorized in France, but exports had been suspended since January of the same year; because of David Ta's regular trips to Viet Nam, customs officials had activated a special vigilance procedure. In the meantime, customs officials are making connections with the National Intelligence Directorate's notice issued in 2012 on the organized group of Irish criminals called the Rathkeale Rovers, who are known for their use of false identity documents and are involved in stealing and trafficking rhinoceros horns and elephant ivory, among other crimes. The Rathkeale Rovers are versatile (Rathkeale Rovers, see "On the Trail" n°1 p.22, n°2 p. 48, 49, 50 and 52, n°4 p.67 and p.69-70, n°5 p.76, n°7 p.75, n°8 p.66, n°9 p.69, n°10 p.49, n°12 p.72, n°13 p.76, n°14 p.97, n°15 p.86, n°16 p.70, n°18 p.78, n°19 p.87, n°27 p.88 and n°30 p.49). The customs transaction is not validated. 10,000 € is withheld for "penalty securities" and the preliminary investigation is entrusted to the National Judicial Customs Service (SNDJ).

Within the framework of the investigation, the specialized customs officers arrive at the campsite "Le Soleil de Crécy" in Crécy-la-Chapelle, 50 km from Paris. The Rathkeale clan are regulars here, so much so that the manager opened a binder labeled "Rathkeale" on its spine, which recorded the many appearances from February to November 2014 of the O'Briens, Culligans, Quilligans, Sheridans, Flynns, McCarthy's, etc., names, nicknames, aliases, homonyms, and all the rest going around in high-end vehicles. They also shipped 36 mobile homes from "Le Soleil de Crécy" to camping/caravanning sites in Germany. Our 3 men, Tom Greene, Edward Gammel and Richard O'Riley, are not listed as "campers," at least not under those names. But obviously, France is a primary base for the Rathkeale gang.

Alexandre Debussy, associate director of Cannes Enchères, was called to witness on December 3, 2015. He has made a specialty of circumventing the ban on exports of raw ivory from France by transporting the tusks through Belgium under the cover of a CITES certificate authorizing the intra-European circulation of the tusks (Cannes Enchères, see "On the Trail" n°5 p.105, n°6 p.72, n°8 p.68-69). Exports are then made from Belgium to Asia where there is demand and wealthy customers. David Ta, with whom Mr. Debussy is on a first-name basis, is a loyal customer: he made 197,500 € in purchases between July 2013 and October 2015 including 24 raw tusks, 3 carved tusks, 24 objects made of ivory or with ivory inlay and one Ottoman dagger with a rhinoceros horn handle. Before the investigators, Mr. Debussy insists on the legality of this trade within the European community. It is without unnecessary questions that he met Mr. Ta's expectations by issuing auction slips for the benefit of E2AR Distribution, address: Hanoi, Viet Nam. At the request of the investigators, Alexandre Debussy explained his "special elephant and rhinoceros tax", i.e. 1% deducted in addition to the sale costs to be paid to animal protection associations preferring to remain anonymous, which we understand. "We are the only ones to have instituted this tax that Ségolène Royal was aware of." Mr. Debussy is thus trying to exploit the Minister of the Environment who banned raw ivory exports from France and who provoked a raid by inspectors at Cannes Enchères in March 2015. At the end of his hearing, the self-proclaimed ivory and horn specialist claimed to have no knowledge of ivory, elephant tusks, rhino heads or horns being stolen from private collections or national museums. He is the only one in the industry not to be aware of the surge in thefts that has been raging throughout Europe since 2011.

In December 2015, the 4 tusks seized from the Rathkeale Rovers' BMW were submitted to the expertise of the Paris Natural History Museum. The African elephant tusks are obviously relatively new, "collections made after 2000 are very likely." One of the pairs is attributed to an elephant under 10 years old and another to a young adult.

The international smuggling network is taking shape. The 2 statues of a deity in the form of an elephant framing the entrance door of the E2AR Distribution company show the investigators the way. Banking profiles from the investigation suggest that there is often confusion between the E2AR company accounts and David Ta's personal account. Textiles plus hygiene and beauty products apparently form the heart of his business. Despite numerous incoming bank movements to its account from Asia (Viet Nam, China, Thailand and Hong Kong), Europe (Great Britain, Poland, Switzerland), Canada and Panama as well as outgoing movements to Hong Kong and France, the customs database has never recorded any import or export transactions from E2AR since 2014. David Ta and E2AR also do not appear in the i-CITES database which lists all applicants for and holders of CITES permits or certificates. On May 23, 2016, the judge of liberty and detention signs "the authorization of search without the consent of the persons" on the premises of E2AR Distribution where Mr. Ta also lives.

The search at E2AR takes place on May 25, 2016 at 10:50 a.m. An expert in zoology and animal collections from the Court of Appeal of Paris was requested. Less than 4 hours later, customs left with 14 tusks found under a blanket and a pallet, 2 tusks found under a piece of furniture, a jar containing 20 seahorses, a plethora of auction slips, Intra-Community Certificates (ICC), summons for a hunting permit, accounting documents, correspondences ... The value of the 16 tusks seized (212 kg) is estimated to be 212,000 €. There is no correlation between the tusks and the certificates found at E2AR: the 16 tusks seized are undocumented while the 23 tusks with a total weight of 417.5 kg corresponding to the certificates have probably already been smuggled to Asia. Mr. Ta's passport bears the marks of his many return trips to Viet Nam and he carries a FlyingBlue Air France/KLM "Ivory" frequent flyer card and a Viet Nam Airlines "Golden Lotus Plus Silver" frequent flyer card.



Unregistered tusks at E2AR on May 25, 2015
Le Blanc-Mesnil, Seine-Saint-Denis Department

David Ta was taken into custody at 2:30 p.m. He had in his pocket a small exchange office - euros, Vietnamese dong, Singapore dollars, US dollars, Yen, and Czech crowns -, 3 credit cards, business cards from antique dealers and second hand dealers in France and Belgium, from hotels in Hong Kong and Viet Nam, a logistician and customs broker, pharmaceutical salesmen in Viet Nam, a Vietnamese woman living in the Czech Republic, a French health insurance card, a German health insurance card in the name of David Ta, a drouot.com card and of course Alexandre Debussy's card.

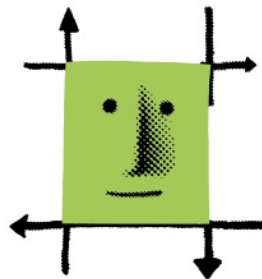
David Ta reveals that he alternates staying for one month in France, then for one month in Viet Nam to develop his cosmetic brand and has been several times to Cambodia, once to Singapore, once to Hong Kong and once to Japan "to see the market." In his absence, his partner takes care of the company. Buying and selling antiques is a recent activity for him. He began at most 3 years ago. He scours the Internet sites of auctions by professionals or private individuals plus flea markets, secondhand trades and auction houses throughout France and in Monaco. His remote purchases are sometimes picked up by acquaintances of his, such as his friend the "ex-ambassador of Belgium in Viet Nam." David Ta remembers buying 10 or so pairs of tusks and about a hundred worked ivory objects "over 50 or 60 years old." Why are the tusks seized at E2AR's premises not accompanied by CITES or CIC certificates? Because Mr. Ta is not always there to verify everything at the time of delivery. Why do these tusks bear the marks of debasement and other manipulations? "Because I wanted to change the base to a more beautiful Asian style one." For the Vietnamese customers? "No! I keep them for myself, for my collection (...) it is to show my success to the customers." A collection of pomp and circumstance, but hidden under a blanket and a pallet. Of course, Mr. Ta denies having exported the 23 missing tusks. He says he makes 100% of his sales in Viet Nam, except for the ivory he collects and with the exception of 2 pairs of tusks sold to the China Shanghai restaurant in Lucerne, Switzerland, for which an invoice from E2AR is put in front of him. And why does Mr. Ta want to obtain a hunting license? "So that I can hunt wild boar and pheasant." Another propensity for animals? "I only bought a stuffed cobra with a mongoose." And the jar of seahorses? "A Vietnamese friend gave it to me maybe 10 years ago. It comes from Viet Nam. In fact, it is based on a preparation called vodka and seahorse. In Viet Nam it is consumed as an aperitif or digestive."

David Ta affirms he doesn't know O'Brien, Greene, Gamel, or any of the Rathkeale Rovers. If the latter group possessed an auction slip from Cannes Enchères belonging to E2AR Distribution, it was because of a fortuitous meeting. "When I was at the flea market in Lille, the first week of September 2015, I was approached by a young man who said he was of Dutch origin and that his name was Eddy. He was interested in comparing ivory prices. I had sent him a picture with my camera of this auction slip. After that I had no more news. A few weeks later he offered me some red coral and a rhinoceros horn as well as some furniture and a statue. But I was not interested." Mr. Ta varied his version of events slightly the next day by claiming that he had on his person the auction slip from Cannes Enchères and that Eddy took a picture of it using his phone. "I don't know why he showed this document when he was checked in Poitiers, because it wasn't the tusks that matched. Those tusks are still in Cannes, I didn't have time to go get them." David Ta does not know that Alexandre Debussy affirmed in front of the investigators that these tusks had been taken, with a voucher for their removal by one of his friends.

During his 48-hours in custody, Mr. Ta also pretended not to know the name of an assistant auctioneer at Tessier-Sarrou with whom he conversed by e-mail, who addressed him informally with "tu," who tried to reach him "in complete confidentiality." Above all, she counted on him to go urgently to a gas station or a tobacco shop to buy 1,500 € in PCS Mastercard prepaid payment coupons and to send him the activation codes, in short, a financial transaction that occurred without any trace. The Tessier-Sarrou firm notably conducted a remarkable sale of "Asian Art" in December 2014 including 3 rhinoceros horn libation cups and various ivory objects. Neither Cannes Enchères nor Tessier-Sarrou will be worried during the rest of the proceedings.

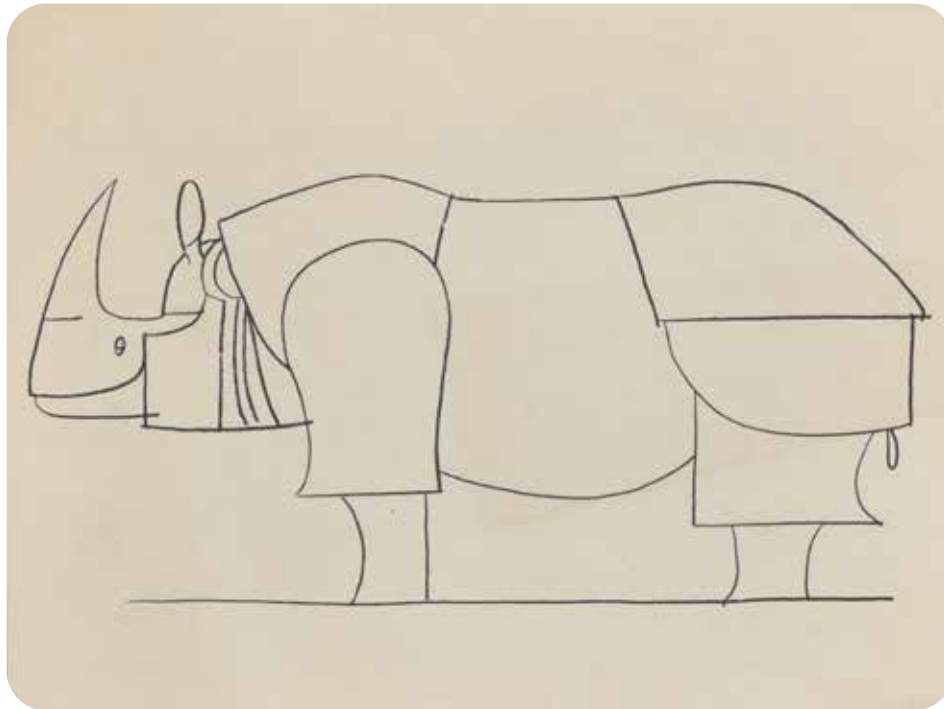
It is different for Mr. Ta, David by his French first name, Vi Dan by his Vietnamese first name, who was already convicted in 2012 for receiving property derived from an aggravated theft. He was placed in pre-trial detention and imprisoned on May 27, 2016 at 7:10 p.m. in the prison of Rennes-Vézin le Coquet for possession and trafficking of ivory as well as associating with criminals. In vain, he protests, "It was not I who killed the elephants."

Part 2 in the next issue of "On the Trail."



ROBIN DES BOIS

RHINOCEROSES



Claude and François-Xavier Lalanne

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°32

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	South Africa	55,200	8 (2021)
		8,600	10 (2021)

CENTRAL AFRICA

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO/SINGAPORE

February 2021

Kinshasa, Kinshasa Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Singapore

The parcel came from Kinshasa and was headed for Viet Nam. This upscale package was supposed to contain "traditional handicrafts" stamped by the Ministry of Culture and Arts. In Singapore, airport customs did not let it past them. Inside the cultural parcel was a 1,500-gram white rhino horn. The artist in the DRC fled. His alleged agent was arrested. Medafrica Times, February 19, 2021; RFI, February 19, 2021.¹

EASTERN AFRICA

MALAWI

Mid-March 2021

Liwonde, Southern Region, Malawi

Mapondera Mmora, 41, sentenced to 18 years in prison with hard labour for killing a rhino in Liwonde national park.

Nyasa Times, March 16, 2021; The Times Group, March 18, 2021.²



ZIMBABWE

January 13, 2021

Gokwe, Midlands Province, Zimbabwe

Arrest of 7 men posing as ZimParks rangers with fake IDs. They were trying to sell 18 fake rhino horns. ZimParks spokesperson Tinashe Farawo confirmed the arrests without giving the names of the impersonators.

New Ziana, January 14, 2021; ZimEye, January 14, 2021; Independent Online, April 26, 2021.³

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

January 1, 2021

Endangered Rhino Conservation Reserve, North West Province, South Africa



The mother and daughter were killed at dawn. The year begins very badly. All the keratin on the 2 victims was taken by the poachers but there was not much of it because the mother had been dehorned as a precaution. A Rhino 911 helicopter and 2 microlights flew over the scene to see if there were any other victims on the battlefield. Luke, the dominant male, was lucky. A bullet scraped him. He is limping badly but the doctors at Zodiac Dierkliniek make an optimistic diagnosis.

Endangered Rhino Conservation, January 8, 2021; Emma Louise Edwards, January 9, 2021; Council of Contributors, January 15, 2021.⁴

January 22 and 23, 2021

Lephalale and Gravelotte, Limpopo Province, South Africa

The death of the black rhino occurred 3 to 4 days ago. The horns are in place.

The death of the 2 black and dehorned rhinos with partially amputated ears occurred a few days ago.

Polokwane Review, January 25, 2021.⁵



February 1 and week of February 8, 2021

Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Naomi Engelbrecht, as Mpumalanga regional court president, had ordered the closure of the Skukuza court, known as the "rhino court" because of its proximity to Kruger national park. Since then, poaching hearings have been held at the Mhala court, if they could be held at all, because of case stacking and Covid restrictions.

After a series of legal hurdles, Francis Legodi, president of the provincial High court, and the national prosecutor's office overcame Ms. Engelbrecht's stunt, the secret aspects of which have not yet been unraveled. We advise our readers to refer to n°29 of "On the Trail" p. 44 to better appreciate the context of this brawl that shook the judiciary all the way up to the Constitutional Court. The Skukuza Regional Court is essentially dedicated to the indictment and trial of suspected poachers and traffickers arrested by the rangers and the SAPS (South African Police Service) in Kruger national park or its periphery. The reopening of proceedings in Skukuza is welcomed by SanParks. However, in other courts whose activities have not been suspended, the justice system is bogged down and keeps postponing the trials of prominent figures like Big Joe as well as Dawie Groenewald, his wife, his brothers, his safari hunting partners and his veterinarians, who have been charged with more than a thousand counts of rhino poaching, horn trafficking, money laundering and racketeering over the past 10 years.

The Citizen, February 4, 2021; Independent Online, February 10, 2021; Lowvelder, February 12, and April 4, 2021; Oxpeckers, February 19, 2021.⁶

Beginning of February 2021

KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Thanks to the good services of Heligistix Helicopters and African Wildlife Vets, the orphaned rhino secluded in a remote area of a reserve was transported to the orphanage. Thanks to a surrogate mother, he will learn to graze and communicate with other rhinos.

African Wildlife Vets, February 4, 2021.⁷



February 4, 2021

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

The 3 parcels bound for Malaysia are supposed to contain "printer ink cartridges." The dog didn't believe it. He signalled and alerted authorities about the packages. Inside, there were 18 horns or horn sections, weighing 63 kg, valued at 14 million US\$ or 55,200 US\$/kg.

Eyewitness News, February 4, 2021; South African Revenue Service, February 4, 2021; TimesLIVE, February 4, 2021; Independent Online, June 2, 2021; Jacaranda FM, August 14, 2021.⁸

February 5, 2021

Near Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Dangerous liaison between a member of the SAPS and 3 poachers. In the police car, the 4 night-travellers had a large-calibre firearm, the corresponding ammunition and a butcher knife. Simon Bloch, February 5, 2021.⁹

February 12, March 11 and July 15, 2021

Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

Dark Water Ops and SAPS team up and arrest 2 men, Jonathan Jeremy Perring and Keanon Terblanche, in a restaurant, who were about to deal in a 3.8 kg black rhino horn valued at 32,800 US\$ or 8,600 US\$/kg. The horn and the 2 cars were seized.



An accomplice, Christo Shaun Swartz, is arrested in March. He stole the horn from his employer and sold it to Perring and Terblanche.

The 3 men were sentenced in July to 15 months in prison or a fine of 5,200 US\$.

Dark Water Ops, February 13, 2021; SAPS, February 14 and July 19, 2021; News24, February 15, 2021.¹⁰

February 23, 2021

Bushbuckridge, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Sentencing of Peter Mathebula to 23 years in prison and Mustard Mathebula and Artur Valoyi to 4 years in prison. They were arrested in 2018 inside the Kruger park in the Houtboschrand section with 2 pairs of horns, a large-calibre firearm and ammunition in their hands.

Wildlife at Risk, February 26, 2021; SA-People, March 17, 2021.¹¹

February 26, 2021

Pilanesberg National Park, North West Province, South Africa

The mother rhino was poached on Thursday night. During all of Friday, the park was searched by the guards and no trace of the killers or any other crime was found.



Her 6-month-old daughter, who was previously a very cheerful rhino, is in a terrible physical and psychological state. The Rhino Orphanage team went to pick her up. After an exhausting return trip for everyone involved, she initially refused any contact with the caretakers and refused to drink any milk.

Perry Steve Dell, February 27, 2021; The Rhino Orphanage, February 27 and 28, 2021.¹²

March 2021

Gauteng Province, South Africa



A pair of rhinos were going about their daily business when they were ambushed by poachers. The female died of her injuries. The male was taken into care by the vets. Favourable prognosis. But low spirits. The reserve is very well guarded and the poachers were informed by someone "from the inside."

Saving the Survivors, March 22, 2021.¹³

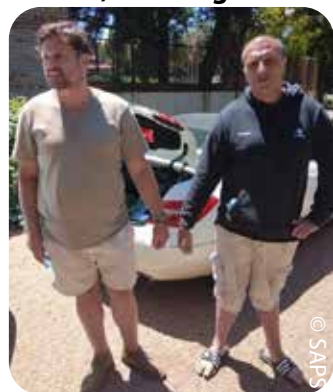
**Beginning of March, 2021
South Africa**

A pregnant female was shot at close range but the bullet got stuck in a muscle and did not reach her brain. She was able to escape. She is currently being treated. Favourable prognosis.

Saving the Survivors, March 9, 2021.¹⁴

March 1, 2021

Benoni, Gauteng Province, South Africa



The 2 White men in the luxury Mercedes were carrying a horn. One is the grandson of a former mayor of Rustenburg and the other is a familiar name in the celebrity column. Of Polish origin, his greatest claims to fame are having knocked out a sheriff who came to seize his furniture and having lived for a time with

the ex-girlfriend of Mark Fish, the Bafana Bafana legend. He just spent 2 years in London as a bodyguard. Both were released on bail of 20,000 rand which is 1,350 US\$. They have to report to the police station every Monday or Friday.

SAPS, March 2, 2021; TimesLIVE, March 2, 2021; Save the Beasts, March 8, 2021; Benoni City Times, March 17, 2021.¹⁵

March 1, 2021

Hoedspruit, Limpopo Province, South Africa

A former resident of the orphanage who arrived in 2016 in a poor physical and psychological state and was then released in 2019 was recently the victim of an attack. She died like her mother, savagely dehorned.

Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre, March 3, 2021.¹⁶

March 15, 2021

Bushbuckridge, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Sentencing of Bennet Martin Lubisi and Bennet Johannes Bendane to 8 years in prison for entering the Kruger park without authorisation in 2016 in possession of an undeclared firearm and ammunition and with the intention to poach rhinos.

SA-People, March 17, 2021.¹⁷

March 19, 2021

KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Since October 2018, Eric Nzimande has been on house arrest while continuing to receive his salary equal to 7,750 US\$ per month (see "On the Trail" n°23 p.102). He is now facing 112 charges, compared to 50 at the beginning of his dismissal from the judiciary. The inspector in charge of the Nzimande case reportedly received several death threats. The computer of Sharon Marks, who succeeded him as president of the regional court, was hacked and confidential information was leaked. Nzimande is suspected of having connections with the lawyers of notorious and violent rhino horn traffickers, including Dumisani Gwala (see "On the Trail" n°12 p.71, n°14 p.63 and 66, n°18 p.72, n°19 p.86, n°20 p.81 and n°21 p.75). The Magistrates Commission of the province refuses to communicate about the new charges against him.

TimesLIVE, April 5, 2021.¹⁸

March 20 to 21, 2021

Gravelotte, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Gunshots muffled by a silencer alert the guards. Unfortunately, the bodies of a mother and an 18-month-old calf are found.

The chopper, the Tactico Security guys, the reserve guards, Marius and Andri's K9 brigade, and the blocking of all the surrounding roads resulted in the interception of a large pick-up truck on a side road. Two suspects disappeared in the bush and 2 others were immobilised. A horn was found nearby and the silencer of a firearm was located in the car.

Hope for Wildlife Helicopter Services, March 22, 2021; SanWild Wildlife Sanctuary, March 23, 2021; SAPS, March 24, 2021.¹⁹



March 22, 2021

Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa



Fatal poaching of Big Boy. "The red-billed oxpeckers will miss him." Stories abound of his patience, strength and tranquility.

Haley Dahl, March 26, 2021; Wildlife at Risk, March 29, 2021.²⁰

End of March, 2021

South Africa

Since the year 2019, 40 South African Police Service officers have been removed from their positions for contributing to the poaching of rhinos. In addition to this professional sanction, the alleged culprits are being prosecuted. To date, only one has been sentenced to 4 years in prison or a fine of 20,000 rand or 1,350 US\$. On appeal, the 4-year sentence was reduced to 2 years.

Independent Online, March 29, 2021.²¹

April 16, 2021

Kruger National Park, Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces, South Africa

Another hard blow in the Kruger national park.

Nora Abdu, April 16, 2021.²²



April 17, 2021

Kruger National Park, Pretoriuskop Section, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Rangers assisted by the K9 unit and air support spot a gang of 3 attempting to flee, who throw an axe and a bag of provisions in the process. One poacher is arrested. His 2 accomplices run through a herd of elephants. One of them is trampled and does not survive his injuries. The other, although injured, managed to escape.

Independent Online, April 18, 2021; SANParks, April 19, 2021.²³

April 18, 2021

Kruger National Park, Pretoriuskop Section, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Arrest of 3 suspected poachers. Seizure of a rifle, ammunition and other poaching paraphernalia.

SANParks, April 19, 2021; Independent Online, April 26, 2021.²⁴

April 27, 2021

Ingwavuma, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Seizure of a rhinoceros horn during a road check. The 3 men, aged between 27 and 33 years, wanted to sell it. Estimated value, 500,000 rand or 33,470 US\$. Three arrests.

SAPS, April 28, 2021.²⁵

BOTSWANA

End of February, 2021

Chitabe Camp, Chief's Island, Okavango Delta, North West District, Botswana

The female and the male were each shot with one .375 bullet, and the baby rhino was shot twice. The crime scene was discovered a few hours after the event. A gang of Zambians is suspected of having entered Botswana and the Rhino Conservation Botswana sanctuary under the cover of a full moon. The Botswana Gazette mentions other accomplices besides the moon: the geolocation collars attached to the rhinos. Some of them are running out of power because of the batteries, which have a life span of 3 years. It is suspected that the poachers considered this programmed obsolescence and reserved their attacks for rhinos whose movements were no longer known to the Botswana Defense Force and the rangers. The poachers, who seem well-informed from the inside, are literally running circles around the BDF.

Chief's Island, see "On the Trail" n°28 p.5 and 95, n°29 p.7 and 48.

Displacement and preventive dehorning of rhinos in the Okavango Delta, see "On the Trail" n°29 p.48.

The Botswana Gazette, March 5, 2021.²⁶

March 1, 2021

Okavango Delta, North West District, Botswana

Bhejane Trust is very active in the fight against Big Five poaching. Based in Zimbabwe, it is influential thanks to its transnational network. They recently announced that over 2 weeks, 12 rhinos have been poached in Botswana, including a complete family (one male, one female, one cub).

Bhejane Trust, March 1, 2021.²⁷



March 1, 2021

Okavango Delta, North West District, Botswana

Ian Khama, president of Botswana from April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2018, relays via Facebook the Bhejane Trust statement and says that in the last 18 months (September 2019-February 2021), about 120 rhinos have been slaughtered in the country. "There is no lockdown or curfew for poachers apparently. After corona there will be none left for tourists to come and see." Ian Khama has always considered Botswana's natural heritage to be a major asset to the country's economy and influence.

Seretse Khama Ian Khama, March 1, 2021.²⁸

March 2, 2021

Okavango Delta, North West District, Botswana

President Mokgweetsi Masisi's administration responded with a press release at 8:08 a.m. The Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) says the information from a "formerly highly ranking Government official" is false, risks damaging the tourism industry (the country's second largest financial resource) and is close to economic sabotage. According to DWNP, environmental crime has decreased by 70% between March 2020 and February 2021 compared to the pre-Covid period of March 2019 to February 2020. The specific case of rhino poaching is not mentioned. "The DWNP rangers and their collaborating partners from other security agencies already work tirelessly to protect the country's natural resources, mostly in very tough and uninhabitable terrain. DWNP sees no benefit whatsoever in exposing them to further danger by discussing the number and locations of the cases that the rangers are dealing with."

Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources Conservation and Tourism, March 2, 2021.²⁹

NAMIBIA

January 9 and 15, 2021

Okahandja, Otjozondjupa Region, and Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia

Poaching and dehorning of a male. Discovery of the carcass at 7:30 a.m. on Saturday January 9. On Friday 15, 2 suspects in an industrial area of Windhoek are arrested. They have 2 fresh horns in their possession. On the same day, 4 other suspects are arrested in Okahandja. They hold an unregistered weapon, ammunition, and tools required for poaching. One of the suspects is employed in the farm where the poaching took place. Jeff Makayi Nadango, Stefanus Muyenga Musore, Zekka Petrus Ihemba, Mayembe Alfeus Kamwengo, Matyayi Thomas Sivambo and Kativa Frans Musenge are between 36 and 50 years old.

Namibian Sun, January 15, 2021.³⁰

February 2021

Oshikango, Oshana Region, Namibia. Border with Angola.

Sentencing of Immanuel Musenge to a fine equal to 1,000 US\$, of which 400 US\$ is suspended, or to 24 months in prison, of which 8 months are suspended. See "On the Trail" n°29 p.49. Namibian Broadcasting Corporation, March 5, 2021.³¹



March 5, 2021

Otiwarongo, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

Sentencing of Robertos Ipinge to a fine equal to 33,700 US\$ or to 2 years in prison for illegal possession and attempted commercialisation of a horn.

Republikein, March 11, 2021.³²



March 6, 2021

Otiwarongo, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

33 and 60 years old, an Angolan and a Namibian. Joaquim Soma and Correia Matheus Gayeta were in possession of a horn inside the Erindi game reserve. Namibian Broadcasting Corporation, March 8, 2021; Namibian Sun, March 10, 2021.³³

REPEATED OFFENSE

March 26, 2021

Omuthiya, Oshikoto Region, Namibia

Seizure in the trunk of a white Volkswagen Polo of a rhinoceros horn hidden in a black bag. Three arrests: Michael Muronga, police officer, Alfons Tjukuru, pastor and Paulus Pendapala Herman. They had attempted to pass the road check at 2:15 in the morning in violation of the Covid-19 curfew. Muronga claimed he was on duty, but the police had been tipped off and were not fooled. Herman was no novice; he had already been involved in a rhino horn theft (see "On the Trail" n°30 p. 48). He was released on bail. On May 15, Herman died of unknown causes.

New Era, March 29, 2021; Republikein, March 31, 2021; Allgemeine Zeitung, April 1, 2021; The Namibian, May 3 and 19, 2021.³⁴

April 1, 2021

Okahao, Omusati Region, Namibia

Arrest of David Daniel Shilongo, Asser Ndiili Amwaama and Alex Shipingana Nampweya. They are suspected of rhino poaching. They were in possession of a firearm and 9 munitions.

Republikein, April 12, 2021.³⁵

April 2, 3 and 6, 2021

Gobabis, Omaheke Region, Namibia

A pregnant female is poached in a lodge on Friday, April 2. The car of 3 suspects is intercepted at a roadblock the next day. Their clothes and shoes are stained with blood. They are carrying a firearm. Their names are Zondundi Tjipuiko, Frederik Hamukoto and Tjimbaka Mbatiminua. On April 6, a fourth man, Hamukoto Kanana Erastus, is arrested. Blood, a gun, ammunition, suspects, but the horns remain missing.



Republikein, April 6, 12 and 13, 2021; Allgemeine Zeitung, April 7, 2021; Namibia Press Agency, April 9, 2021.³⁶

April 8, 2021

Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia

Seizure of 2 horns and a mini horn. Arrest of Salomon Erastus Nghidinwa and Lukas Nepwayu.

Republikein, April 14, 2021; Allgemeine Zeitung, April 16, 2021.³⁷



April 12, 2021

Orupembe, Kunene Region, Namibia

6 years after the crime, Haita Paulus Tjambiru is arrested. He is allegedly involved in a poaching incident in October 2015. In October 2015, the only poaching incident recorded by "On the Trail" in the region was in Puros. A rhino had been shot 5 times to death (see "On the Trail" n°11 p.65).

Republikein, April 20, 2021; Namibian Sun, April 22, 2021.³⁸

April 30, 2021

Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia



© The Namibian

Sentencing of Tangi Sheefeni Namwandi alias Mox to a fine equal to 1,350 US\$ or 4 years in prison. Definitive seizure of his Mercedes-Benz worth 40,000 US\$. He admitted that he held and transported 4 horns without authorisation. The case dates back to 2016 (see "On the Trail" n°13 p.72). The Namibian, May 3, 2021.³⁹

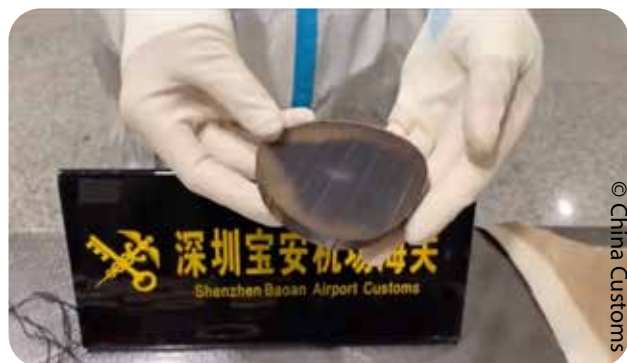


EASTERN ASIA

CHINA

Early January 2021

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



© China Customs

Seizure of one slice of an alleged rhino horn from a passenger.

Chinese Customs, January 15, 2021.⁴⁰

January 2021

Dalian, Dalian Prefecture, Liaoning Province, China

Liang, 28, had left for South Africa from Shenyang airport. A WeChat contact offered to bring back rhino horns for a fee. Liang had taken every precaution to conceal the 4 horns weighing 2.71 kg including a layer of plastic film, a layer of aluminum foil, a cookie jar full of sweets, a layer of tape, and even a laptop computer. Dalian Customs proved to be more vigilant than he had anticipated. He was sentenced to 5 years in prison and fined the equivalent of 30,700 US\$. Liaoshen Evening News, January 31, 2021.⁴¹



SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

THAILAND

March 12, 2021

Nakhon Phanom and Chaiyaphum Provinces, Thailand

The Anti-Money Laundering Office (AMLO) opened a new case against Boonchai Bach (see "On the Trail" n°20 p. 87 and n°21 p. 81) following a change in the story of the case's main witness and his acquittal in January 2019. The investigation lasted more than a year and led to several searches in the provinces of Nakhon Phanom and Chaiyaphum. In total, the AMLO seized and froze 330 million baht in assets (11 million US\$), including cash, firearms, amulets, wild animals and a hotel. According to the Freedom Foundation, which has been following Boonchai's adventures since the beginning, he has 90 days to justify the origin of these assets.

Bangkok Post, January 30, 2019 (with AFP) and March 17, 2021; The Thaiger, March 18, 2021.⁴²

VIET NAM

March 2021

Van Don International Airport, Quang Ninh Province, Viet Nam



© ENV

Seizure of about 50 kgs of rhinoceros horns and 400 teeth and claws of unidentified wild animals in the luggage of 3 passengers of a flight from Angola. ENV, May 14, 2021.⁴³

SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

Mid-January, 2021

Jhagrarpar, Dhubri District, State of Assam, India

Seizure of a horn weighing approximately 2 kg. Four arrests. Nur Md. Sk, Azaharul Islam, Jiaul Hoque and Raju Sarkar were preparing to sell it. Northeast Now, January 23, 2021.⁴⁴

January 20, 2021

Dilai, Karbi Anglong District, State of Assam, India

Arif Jakaria intended to sell the piece of horn weighing about 390 grams in Dimapur (Nagaland State, 50 km away). But, he did not get the chance. Cases of rhino poaching or horn smuggling are not uncommon in the Karbi Anglong district, adjacent to Kaziranga national park (see. "On the Trail" n°5 p.79, n°6 p.71, n°8 p.64, n°9 p.72, n°14 p.69 and p.71, n°15 p.85, n°16 p.71, n°19 p.88, n°21 p.79 and p.80, n°28 p.97, n°29 p.50 and n°30 p.50 and p.51). The Sentinel, January 21, 2021.⁴⁵

February 4, 2021

Naharlagun, Papum Pare District, State of Arunachal Pradesh, India

Jobi Gadi, 40, one of the most wanted rhino poachers, has finally been arrested. The forest department, assisted by specialized investigators from the State police, had been searching for a man named "Gadi" for several years. This elusive poacher started his criminal activities in 2011 in the Kaziranga national park specifically in the Biswanath Wildlife Division. He is involved in at least 3 cases of poaching and horn smuggling. But there is no shortage of Gadis in India. It was only in 2019 that investigators established his identity with certainty. The Biswanath court issues a warrant for his arrest for rhino poaching in April 2019. Unfortunately, the Covid crisis erupted and Jobi Gadi took the opportunity to vanish, changing all his tapped phone numbers and moving from Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh) to Naharlagun, about 10 km away.

In January 2021, the authorities traced him following information about arms trafficking and poaching. The man maintains that all of his income comes from farming in the Western Siang district (Arunachal Pradesh).

According to a Kaziranga park official, it is possible that Gadi did not actually engage in poaching himself. His role could have been to supply the weapons and market the horns.

East Mojo, February 5, 2021; India Today, February 5, 2021; The Sentinel, February 6, 2021.⁴⁶

April 4 and 5, May 13, 2021

Jaldapara National Park, Alipurduar District, State of West Bengal, and State of Manipur, India

A female rhino aged about 15 years was found dead and dehorned on Sunday morning, April 4. She had been shot several times at close range about 2 days earlier. Park officials suspect poachers from another State. Officials expected the criminals would have stayed nearby in the forest of Chilapata. They immediately informed their counterparts in surrounding States.

The same evening, 2 poachers are arrested in Manipur (approximately 800 km away). A third arrest took place the next morning.

On May 13, on the indications of the 3 poachers, a final suspect, Parimal Barman, was arrested at his home in Bonchukamari, in the district of Alipurduar. Rifles, silencers and ammunition were seized. The Times of India, April 5, 2021; The Telegraph India, April 6 and May 15, 2021; The Statesman, May 15, 2021.⁴⁷

REPEATED OFFENSE

April 19, 2021

Kaziranga National Park, Nagaon District, State of West Bengal, India

Arrest of 2 rhino poachers, Anowar Hussain, 23, and Rofiqul Islam, 45, locals, and Deni Yephthomi, 27, from the neighboring State of Nagaland. Yephthomi was recruited for his shooting skills. Anowar Hussain was previously arrested in 2019 for his involvement in a rhino poaching case.

The Sentinel, April 20, 2021.⁴⁸

April 20, 2021

Kaziranga National Park, Golaghat District, State of Assam, India



Discovery of the carcass of the first poached rhino of the year in Kaziranga park. The horn was taken away by the poachers. They left behind only a munitions cartridge. India Today, April 21, 2021.⁴⁹

NEPAL

December 18, 2020 to February 10, 2021

Kathmandu and Gandaki, Bagmati and Madhesh Provinces, Nepal

Since July 2020, 4 rhinos have been killed in Chitwan national park which disrupts improving trends in recent years. This led the authorities to re-launch investigations. As a result, since December 18, 14 people have been arrested and 25 others are wanted. The Himalayan Times, February 10, 2021.⁵⁰

WESTERN EUROPE

THE NETHERLANDS

March 26, 2021

Hillegom, Province of South Holland, The Netherlands

Seizure of a suspected rhino horn from a private home.

National Police, April 14, 2021.⁵¹

FELINES, ELEPHANTS / RHINOCEROSES

AFRICA

KENYA

Beginning of January 2021

Amboseli-Tsavo-Kilimandjaro Ecosystem, Kenya

They had purchased 42 ribs, 8 canine teeth and 21 lion claws (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II), plus 2.8 kg of elephant ivory in Tanzania, all of which they intended to sell for a good profit in Kenya. The Big Life Foundation's intelligence network jumped into action and the 2 men were arrested with the help of the KWS. The foundation has noticed an increase in the trafficking of lion parts, but whether this is a growing trend or if it is due to the increasing effectiveness of anti-trafficking efforts is unknown.

Big Life Foundation, January 14, 2021.¹

ASIA

CHINA

January 2021

Jiaozuo, Jiaozuo Prefecture, Henan Province, China

Zhou and Xiong spontaneously confessed their crimes. They pleaded guilty, admitted their responsibility, and voluntarily handed over the evidence they still held to the court. Zhou was sentenced to 5 years in prison and a fine of 30,000 yuan (4,600 US\$). Xiong was sentenced to 2 years in prison and a fine of 10,000 yuan (1,530 US\$). Between 2014 and 2018, Zhou bought 11 tiger teeth, 2 lion claws, 6 ivory items and one rhino horn item here and there for 170,000 yuan (26,000 US\$) and resold them to Xiong, who took a commission in the process and resold them to other people who have not yet been convicted.

Jiaozuo Daily, January 29, 2021.²

Beginning of March 2021

Zhanjiang, Zhanjiang Prefecture, Guangdong Province, China



1,204 grams

The food package contained 2 tiger bones, 2 tiger teeth and another 2 worked ivories.

Chinese Customs, March 9, 2021.³

INDIA

February 7, 2021

Kendujhar, Kendujhar District, State of Odisha, India



This Sunday, 3 individuals were about to sell 2 tusks and one leopard skin. The Special Task Force prevented them from doing so and seized the items. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), February 9, 2021; The Hindu, February 9, 2021.⁴

March 19 and 20, 2021

Thirunelveli District and surroundings of Kodaikanal, Dindigul District, State of Tamil Nadu, India



Seizure of two elephant tusks, 4 claws and 4 tiger teeth. This was part of an operation carried out by federal agents of the WCCB in cooperation with State rangers.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India), March 23, 2021.⁵

April 24, 2021

Raigadia, Nayagarh District, State of Odisha, India

Two arrests on the banks of the Mahanadi River near the Maa Kalapata Temple. Seizure of 2 elephant tusks and a leopard skin (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I).

The New Indian Express, April 26, 2021.⁶



INDONESIA

March 23 and 24, 2021

Merangin and Sarolangun Regencies, Jambi Province, Sumatra Island, Indonesia

The 3 suspects are in custody in Jambi. They were buying and selling stuffed tigers (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) and raw elephant ivory in an organized gang.

Detikcom, March 30, 2021; Traffic Southeast Asia, March 31, 2021.⁷

VIET NAM

Beginning of January 2021

Cao Bang Province, Viet Nam. Border with China.

Voice of Viet Nam reports with photos that on Sunday, 32-year-old Nong Van Nhan was intercepted while driving his vehicle and was carrying 3 tiger skins, worked ivories and 2 patches of black skin of unknown origin without any documentation.

VnExpress International, January 5, 2021; ENV, January 7, 2021.⁸

March 29, 2021

Thach Thanh District, Thanh Hoa Province, Viet Nam



Nguyen Huu Thang, 51 months in prison. Nguyen Khac Hai, 48 months in prison. These are the judicial consequences of the incredible settlement of accounts that "On the Trail" reported (see n°29 p. 51) between a seller of fake tiger bones (*Panthera tigris*, Appendix I) (they were goat bones) and 2 buyers who, in retaliation, had beaten him up, taken him hostage and demanded a ransom of 500 million dong (21,000 US\$) in exchange for his release. The seller of fake tiger bones who had sold instead 141.7 grams of goat bones for 10.5 million dong (444 US\$) with a stump of fake rhino horn in addition escaped any prosecution.

Xa Luan, March 29, 2021.⁹

