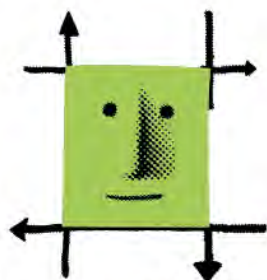


ON the TRAIL

The defaunation bulletin
n°34. Events from the 1st September to the 31th December, 2021



Quarterly information and analysis report on endangered
animals poaching and smuggling
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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 + felines / elephants
- Elephants + hippos / rhinos / sperm whales
- 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 : Sashtra 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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RHINOCEROSSES



White rhinoceroses (*Ceratotherium simum*). Photo Charleyhesse

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°34

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	Zimbabwe	18,500	4 (2021)
	South Africa	65,000	11 (2019)
Africa / America	DRC / USA	8,000	2* (2021)
Asia	India	25,000	53 (2021)
Europe	France	59,000	61 (2021)

* cf. chapter Pangolins, felines / elephants / rhinos

CENTRAL AFRICA

ANGOLA

October 28, 2021

Lubango, Huila Province, Angola

The 2 men, aged 21 and 32, claim to have the 10 horns from a man whose age and identity are uncertain and who promised them a commission if they sold them for 4 million kwanzas (6,600 US\$). The unknown man is believed to be hiding in the Cuando-Cubango province, where a forest ranger was recently involved in elephant poaching, ivory trafficking and the sale of skins with pangolin scales. The rhinos have disappeared from Angola, unless some of them, ignoring the borders and braving the minefields, have returned. Novo Jornal, October 28, 2021.¹

EASTERN AFRICA

MALAWI

**September 28 and October 26, 2021
Lilongwe, Central Region, Malawi**

Sentencing of Yun Hua Lin to 14 years in prison. He is the leader of the Lin-Zhang gang. In his private properties, 103 sections of horns from 5 rhinos were seized. On October 26, Yun Hua Lin filed an appeal. The judgement requires Lin, after serving his sentence, to be returned to China. See "On the Trail" n°25 p.104, n°26 p.101 and n°29 p.20.

Malawi 24, June 11 and September 28, 2021; The Nation, June 12, 2021; Nyasa Times, August 31 and October 28, 2021; Environmental Investigation Agency, September 28, 2021.²



MOZAMBIQUE

December 10, 2021

National Road 4, Maputo Province, Mozambique



They were arrested at night on National Road 4 in a minibus that was traveling towards Maputo. The 3 men were carrying 2 horns in a satchel, which they said they were going to sell in the capital on behalf of a "boss" from the Moamba district.

Club of Mozambique (with Miramar), December 14, 2021.³

ZIMBABWE

October 12, 2021

Bulawayo, Bulawayo Province, Zimbabwe

Mpumelelo Moyo, Bongani Akim Zwelibanzi Gazi and Mbonisi Ndlovu were in possession of a 20-cm-long horn, weighing 6.5 kg and with an estimated value of 120,000 US\$ or 18,500 US\$/kg. Pindula, October 15, 2021.⁴

FAMILY AFFAIRS

October 13, 2021

Maranda, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe

The trick for these 2 cousins, aged 37 and 48, was to be disguised as construction workers. Tipped off by an anonymous phone call, they were easily recognizable at the crossroads at about 6 a.m. on their way out of town. Underneath the trowels, bubble levels and yardsticks, they had a disassembled 303 caliber rifle along with 8 rounds of ammunition hidden in a sugar box in their saddlebags. Police suspect they waited for a third man to drive them to the Buby Valley Conservancy where, abandoning their masonry tools, they used the reassembled gun and 7.62 mm bullets to poach rhinos.

ZimEye, October 28, 2021.⁵

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

September 2, 2021

Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa



The 3 men, on November 26, 2017, had broken into the Kruger Park with the intention of killing rhinos. They were heavily armed. When rangers heard the echoes of gunfire, they approached the area with tracking dogs. They saw the 3 poachers shooting at 2 rhinos and called a helicopter to assist. They eventually neutralized the gang, seized the horns, and photographed and collected the evidence.

Walter Hendrik Mangane, age 59, was sentenced to 45 years in prison and Shangani Mathebula, age 26, and Emmanuel Mdluli, age 33, were sentenced to 30 years in prison.

Lowvelder, September 3, 2021; SAPS, September 4, 2021.⁶

September 9, 2021

Greater Kruger National Park, Limpopo Province, South Africa

The Council of Contributors reported the discovery of a gunshot wound on a rhino during a dehorning operation that began in August 2021 (see "On the Trail" n°33 p.67). A few



days after this preventive operation, another rhino, this time just dehorned, was found wounded by 2 bullets. He was treated and fitted with a GPS transmitter before being released.

Jana Meyer, September 9, 2021; Council of Contributors, September 12 and 19, 2021.⁷

September 9, 2021

Hoedspruit, Limpopo Province, South Africa

STIHL saws everything from okoumé trees in Gabon, firs in the Arctic, cedars in California, hedges in Normandy and rhinoceros horns in South Africa. In 45 minutes, the victim was disfigured. They anaesthetized him, cut his horns, rounded the 2 stumps, coated them with oil, and woke him up.



Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre, September 9, 2021.⁸

September 12, 2021

Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

The orphaned rhino cub rushed from the Kruger Park to the care center was received with fervor but was wounded in the neck and starving. He died 3 days later.

Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary, September 12, 13 and 15, 2021.⁹



September 15, 2021

Bothongo Rhino and Lion Nature Reserve, Gauteng Province, South Africa

Poaching around 4 a.m. of a mother and her daughter. The management of the reserve is devastated. The anti-poaching force seemed proportionate to the risks. The APU (Anti-Poaching Unit) costs an average of 30,000 US\$ per month. Krugersdorp News, September 15, 2021.¹⁰

September 16, 2021

Brakpan and Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa



Arrest of Stephanus Peter Peters, 53, police inspector, and Lina Zhang, 39, sworn interpreter. They are suspected of attempting to ship 30 rhino horns with a total weight of approximately 40 kg and an estimated value at the time of the crime (May 2019) of 2.6 million US\$ to Malaysia. The cargo was concealed in a wooden box declared to contain wine. See "On the Trail" n°25 p.77.

They were released on bail for 5,000 and 20,000 rand (340 and 1,370 US\$).

Independent Online, September 17, 2021.¹¹

September 21, 2021

Vrededorst, Free State Province, South Africa

The men were looking to kill rhinos in an organized gang. They were tracked down by police officers. An exchange of fire took place in the early evening and one of the police officers was injured in the leg. He was rushed to the hospital while the suspects vanished into thin air leaving a .375 caliber rifle, 16 rounds of ammunition, a silencer and an axe. SAPS, September 22, 2021.¹²

September 26, 2021

Barberton Nature Reserve, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

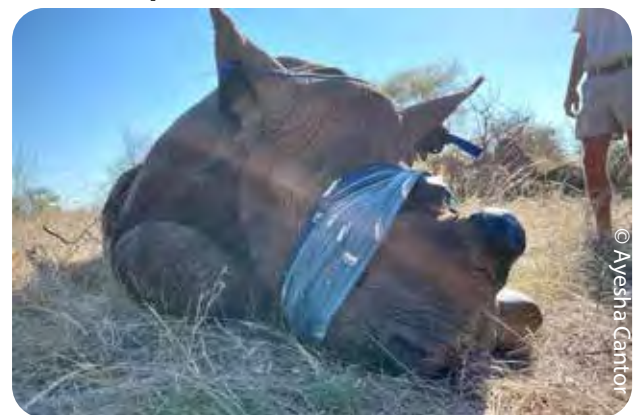
To reduce the risk of poaching and attacks on staff, rhinos housed and cared for at the refuge are dehorned whenever possible and the horns are immediately transported elsewhere. "A sad but necessary evil in the fight to keep these animals alive." As if to apologize, refuge officials say it's as easy as cutting your fingernails.

Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary, September 26, 2021.¹³



October 1, 2021

Eastern Cape Province, South Africa



Rhinos are dehorned everywhere and one can't help but wonder about the future of the horns, about the safety of storage, about their status, and about attempts to recover them by Chinese and Vietnamese mafias or by lone opportunists.

Council of Contributors, October 1, 14 and 21, 2021; Dr William Fowlds, October 15, 2021.¹⁴

**October 7, 2021
Rustenburg and Mahikeng, North West Province,
South Africa**

Stephen Maqoboza is the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Officer for Economic Development, Environment, Conservation and Tourism.

Motsamai Wells Masigo has had a career with the police force for 19 years. He is now the director of a fictitious security agency. They were both caught in the act of transporting 17 horns from a "a well-known game farm near Upington in the Northern Cape."

Maqoboza made connections by attending several pseudo-rhino hunts by Vietnamese, Laotian and Thai bit players after which the horns were cut up and shipped to Asia as trophies (Chumlong Lemtongthai, see "On the Trail" n°2 p.47, n°6 p.68 and n°22 p.81).

They were each released on bail of 50,000 rand or 3,325 US\$.
News24, October 8, 2021; Foreign Brief, October 11, 2021; Oxpeckers, October 13, 2021.¹⁵



© SAPS



© SAPS

**October 8, 2021
Thornybush Nature Reserve, Limpopo Province,
South Africa**



© Panthera Photo Safaris

Dehorning is surging. Rhino Revolution demands the removal of the nasal and frontal horns of 250 rhinos in the reserves around Kruger Park. Rhino Revolution, October 8 and 24, 2021.¹⁶

**October 11, 2021
Ntambanana, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South
Africa**



© Thula Thula

Cutting rhino horns is as easy and natural as cutting your own nails. The horns are put in a safe place as soon as possible.

Thula Thula - Exclusive Private Game Reserve, October 11, 2021.¹⁷

October 14 and November 18, 2021, and January 16, 2022

Bapsfontein, Gauteng Province, and Delmas, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

On October 14, Rogerio Domingo Moiane, a Mozambican national, and Clifford Mashego, walking along Road 50, attracted the attention of a patrol. The search of their bag led to the discovery of a big rhino horn. The 2 men live in the Ivory Park township near Tembisa, which is home to 200,000 people in an area of about 10 km².

During his first appearance, Moiane claimed that the 4 police officers, 3 men and a woman, demanded 30,000 rand or 2,000 US\$ in exchange for their freedom. The prosecutor denied Moiane's claim. The tracking of the police car and its AVL (Automatic Vehicle Locating) trajectory



© Samora Mzizi

did not record the stops at the Delmas golf course and near the KFC restaurant where Moiane claimed he was robbed. The suspect said he worked for a Chinese metrics company, earned 7,500 rand (500 US\$) a month and had travelled to Africa and Asia. The prosecutor confirmed that Moiane travelled to China, Australia, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Eswatini, Mauritius, Uganda and Zambia.

Moiane was already subject of an arrest warrant for allegedly possessing an unlicensed firearm in 2016 or 2017, according to sources. He had been released on bail and had freed himself from his legal obligations.

Moiane is now in Modderbee prison.

Daily Maverick, November 18, 2021; SAPS, January 16, 2022.¹⁸

**October 15, 2021
Stolznek Section, Kruger National Park,
Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**

The two poachers were sitting under a tree. They tried to run away before being surrounded by the rangers. They were arrested. They had with them a high-powered rifle, ammunition and the whole equipment of dehorning.
DefenceWeb, October 18, 2021.¹⁹

**October 20, 2021
Mogwase, North West Province, South Africa**



Sentence of Arlindo Muhlana, Adam Hlongwane and Gamula Chauke, citizens of Mozambique, to 35 years in prison each for illegally hunting rhino cows, illegally chopping off rhino horns, illegal possession and transfer of 6 rhino horns, illegal possession of firearms and ammunition, and trespassing in a protected area. They were arrested after the poaching of 3 white rhinos in the Pilanesberg Reserve in 2018 (see "On the Trail" n°22 p.78).
News24, October 21, 2021; Daily Dispatch, October 24, 2021.²⁰

**REPEATED OFFENSE
October 20 and November 3, 2021
Zeerust, North West Province, South Africa**

Thomas Chauke was caught with 3 accomplices on October 20 in flagrante delicto. They were transporting 4 fresh horns cut from 2 rhinos they had just killed in the Madikwe Reserve, which was decrypted on November 2 by AFIS (Automated Fingerprint Identification System). Thabo Zachariah Muyambo had been sentenced to life imprisonment in June 2019 for kidnapping. He was released from kgosi Mampuru Prison, Pretoria, in December 2020 after using an underground tunnel that had escaped the guards' attention. After this discreet and spectacular escape, there was talk of complicity among prison staff.



© Mail & Guardian

And Muyambo did it again when, on November 3, 2021, just before appearing in Zeerust for his bail hearing, he managed, under unknown circumstances, to escape through corridors linking his prison cell to the courtroom. The question is whether Muyambo benefited from the incompetence of his escort, from his complicity, or from a lack of coordination between the AFIS and the court in Zeerust. Is Muyambo protected, and if so, why?

Save the Beasts, November 3, 2021; Mail & Guardian, November 26, 2021.²¹

**October 21, 2021
KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa**



© African Wildlife Vets

The rhino had survived poaching and the removal of his 2 horns. He was anesthetized and the wounds were treated by veterinary doctor Rowan Leeming. A geolocation collar was fixed over a hoof. His movements will be monitored. The prognosis is relatively good.
African Wildlife Vets, October 21, 2021.²²

**October 30-31, 2021
Limpopo Province, South Africa**

It is the beginning of the high poaching season. Already, 4 rhinos have died in 48 hours. The Limpopo Rhino Conservation group includes several private owners. All precautions are taken to avoid a massacre in the run-up to the end of the year celebrations.
Limpopo Rhino Conservation, November 1, 2021.²³

**November 5, 2021
Skukuza, Kruger National Park,
Mpumalanga Province, South Africa**



© Lowvelder

Sentencing of Jordan Samuel Mathonsi and Gorge Masangu to 27 years' imprisonment for unauthorized entry into a national park, illegal immigration, poaching rhinos, possession of a weapon without a license, possession of ammunition without a license, and possession of a prohibited weapon with the serial number removed. Most of the sentences are combined. The 2 Mozambican nationals are expected to each spend 16 years in prison.
Lowvelder, November 7, 2021.²⁴

November 12, 2021

Bloemfontein, Free State Province, South Africa



Wilson Kwintshana is sentenced to 7 years in prison. In April 2017, armed with a gun, he broke into the store of a taxidermist called "African Artistry." He stole 2 rhinoceros horns. According to the investigation file, they were sold to an intermediary in Johannesburg for 200,000 rand (13,210 US\$) and then shipped to Switzerland. News24, November 24, 2021.²⁵

Mid-November 2021

Klaserie Private Nature Reserve, Limpopo Province, and KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

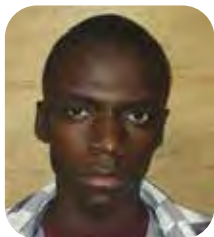


The dehorners are working hard to anaesthetize the animals. In one day, 2 teams cut off the horns of as many black and white rhinos as possible who had not been dehorned for 2 years and that, on the eve of the end of year celebrations and the full moon, could have attracted poachers. Klaserie Private Nature Reserve, November 19, 2021; Council of Contributors, November 22 and 24, 2021.²⁶

FAMILY AFFAIRS

November 19, 2021

Middelburg, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa



"On the Trail" n°30 p.45 retraces the arrest of the father and the son. They were returning from Mozambique, their country of origin, with 2 horns and a garbage bag full of shark fins. They were sentenced to 6 years in prison for possession the horns, 5 years for attempted bribery and 3 years for possession of the shark fins. News24, November 20, 2021; SAPS, November 20, 2021; Save the Beasts, November 20, 2021.²⁷

November 22, 2021

Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

At dusk on Monday, poachers took advantage of stormy weather and rain to kill a female black rhino in an undisclosed reserve. Her orphaned offspring, an 18-month-old male, was found on Wednesday. Under police escort, a pick-up truck transported the little victim to the Care for Wild orphanage. Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary, November 26, 2021.²⁸

November 2021

Hazyview, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Eight suspects are arrested on the outskirts of Kruger Park. They were in possession of 4 firearms, ammunition and rhino horns. DefenceWeb, December 10, 2021; Independent Online, December 13, 2021.²⁹

2014 - end of November 2021

South Africa

In response to a question from Member of Parliament Annerie Weber, Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana said that between 2014 and 2021, the tax department seized 865 kg of horns via customs. The largest seizures were in July 2021, October 2019 and July 2017. The minister did not respond to all of the member's requests. She wanted the overall record of Customs seizures between 2011 and 2021 and each of the reports. On this particular point, she was told that the Hawks and the DFFE (Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment) were in a better position to answer her. See on this subject "On the Trail" n°33 p.66, n°27 p.90 and n°18 p.72. Independent Online, November 25, 2021.³⁰

November 23 and December 1, 2021

Selati Game Reserve, Limpopo Province, South Africa

In the Selati Private Game Reserve, the body of a female white rhino was discovered on November 23. She had been poached and her horns were removed despite having been previously dehorned. The horns grow back, as do fingernails. Her calf was found 9 days later at the edge of a waterhole, 6 km from the carcass of his mother. Emergency care was given by Ben Muller and he was taken to the Care for Wild shelter. After a few days, the caretakers gave him a new companion, a zebra who was also orphaned.



Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary, December 1, 2021; Letaba Herald, December 10, 2021.³¹

End of November 2021

South Africa

Last-ditch rescue of a poached southern white rhino (*Ceratotherium simum simum*), shot in the neck and left for dead in the bush.

Saving the Survivors, December 3, 2021.³²

December 8, 12 and 17, 2021

Inverdoorn Private Game Reserve, Western Cape Province, South Africa

It is carnage. A first and a second rhino uncovered in the night with flashlights, bloody, crouched or upside down, dehorned and dead. Two others suffered the same fate and are still alive, breathing with heartbeats. A fifth has a bullet in her head, she is barely living.

All the horns are gone. Everything happened between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m.

The reserve had converted to preventive dehorning and had even replaced the original horns with synthetic prostheses. The information had been widely spread by the media and word of mouth. At the entrance to some banks, there is a notice saying that there is no cash inside; outside the electric fence of the peri-urban reserve, there are signs saying that inside the horns are worthless. At least one rhino was savagely assaulted and amputated by poachers who took 2 fiberglass horns.

Four days later, 4 men were arrested, aged between 27 and 56. They are from Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi and on December 17 a fifth man from Zimbabwe was arrested. He is 23 years old.

The female survived. The veterinarians are considering a long facial reconstruction protocol for her.

Aquila Collection, December 9, 12 and 17, 2021; Save the Beasts, December 13, 14 and 20, 2021; TimesLIVE, December 13, 2021; Independent Online, December 15, 2021.³³

December 9, 2021

Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Kruger says in a statement that a team dedicated to preventive dehorning came across a dying female rhino with several bullets in her head and front legs and a huge hole in her nasal cavity instead of the main horn. The rhino was put out of her misery.

The Witness, December 11, 2021.³⁴

December 10, 2021

Barberton Nature Reserve, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Mothers are murdered in the reserves, and orphans flock to Care for the Wild. Sixteen months old, a few months or even a few hours old, still carrying the umbilical cord. The younger they are, the less of a chance there is of saving them.

Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary, December 11, 12 and 14, 2021.³⁵



December 1-15, 2021

MalaMala Game Reserve, Mpumalanga Province, Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park, KwaZulu-Natal Province, Kruger National Park, Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces, and Inverdoorn Game Reserve, Western Cape Province Western Cape Province, South Africa

The counters are ticking away as if from one or several origins, the urgent orders for fresh horns are coming in and special courier lines are going to deliver them without fail. There must be a lot of horns in the FedEx bags or packages.

30 between December 1 and 15.

Council of Contributors, December 15, 2021.³⁶

December 22, 2021

Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Arrest of 2 men in the early morning. They came from Mozambique with firearms, ammunition, a large knife, and some food as luggage. Esau Dlamini and Samson Maluleke are in custody after appearing before the special rhino court.

Eyewitness News, December 23, 2021; SAPS, December 23, 2021.³⁷

December 23, 2021

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



A suspicious package comes under close scrutiny in the cargo section of Tambo International Airport. In boxes of Cadbury and Ferrero chocolate that were the official subject of the shipment, 6 horns and fragments (4 kg in total) were slipped in. Ah, the perfect holiday gift! The Chinese sender was arrested at his home in the suburbs of Johannesburg and large sums of cash were seized under the driver's seat of his car.

SAPS, December 24, 2021; Save the Beasts, December 24, 2021.³⁸

December 30, 2021

Jock Safari Lodge, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

During the morning inspection, something abnormal is spotted. A male is moving strangely and a young one is circling him. Both were anaesthetized during the day. The male was shot through the jaw, the cub was airlifted to Care for the Wild. The body of the mother, who was probably poached to death, has not yet been found.

Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary, December 30, 2021; Jock Safari Lodge, December 30, 2021.³⁹

BOTSWANA

October 1 and 4, 2021

Kiri and Chitabe Camps, Okavango Delta, North West District, Botswana

Ian Khama, Botswana's former president, who has always shown his willingness to conserve wildlife and sees wildlife tourism as a major economic resource and source of international prestige for the country, announces that a rhino has been poached in Kiri camp on October 1 and another on October 4 in Chitabe camp. "Therefore with no end in sight to this massacre, the extinction of rhinos in the Okavango is imminent."

Seretse Khama Ian Khama, October 5, 2021; Voice of America, October 20, 2021; Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Tourism, October 22, 2021.⁴⁰



October 22, 2021

Okavango Delta, North West District, Botswana

In response to Ian Khama's statements, the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Tourism issued the following statement :

"Rhinos became extinct in the wild in the then Bechuanaland Protectorate in the late 1800s. The Government re-introduced 138 white rhinos into northern Botswana between 1967 and 1986. These animals were distributed between 3 game reserves in northern Botswana. An aerial count shortly thereafter recorded a 20% decline from the expected population size. Another aerial count done in the early 1990s pointed out an 80% population decline with some carcasses observed on-site. This decline was attributed to poaching.

A decision was made in the early 1990s to relocate the remaining animals to a fenced sanctuary. This led to the establishment of Khama Rhino Sanctuary (KRS), and the few animals that could be recovered were moved there in 1993. The KRS demonstrated the importance and success of managing small

populations of endangered species under fenced conditions for the purposes of concentrating security effort in small areas while providing optimal environment for rapid population growth. Fenced estates are important in maintaining stock where later, animals can be used to re-stock other areas once the species population increase."

"Following the surge in rhino poaching within the Okavango Delta a number of initiatives were implemented to address the problem. These included increase in foot and aerial patrols, dehorning of rhinos and removal of the critically endangered black rhinos to fenced areas. While these measures have worked to differing levels, following from the successes gained from using sanctuaries to protect the species. Government has now taken a decision to move all rhinos from the Okavango Delta into sanctuaries. This environment will allow for conservation and rapid propagation of the species under a secure and smaller area. Over the next few years, the animals from the sanctuary will be used to re-populate other areas, including the Okavango Delta."

Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Tourism, October 22, 2021.⁴¹

NAMIBIA

September 17, 2021

Outjo, Kunene Region, Namibia

Arrest of Ignasius Mbaraka Mutunda. He is suspected of rhino poaching in June 2020. The Namibian, September 22, 2021.⁴²

September 19, 2021

Bukalo, Zambezi Region, Namibia



The police have been on alert for 2 days. A source informed them of the presence of poachers in possession of rhinoceros horns. On Sunday, they spotted a suspicious car coming from Ngoma, about 30 km away, and followed it. The driver tried to lose his pursuers, but the race came to an abrupt halt with a collision at a roadblock. No injuries were reported. The 2 suspects were arrested, and fake rhino horns were seized.

The Namibian, September 20, 2021.⁴³

VIET NAM

October 29, 2021

Otjiwarongo, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

Champion Haraseb, Paulus Daniel, Josia Many, Mbike Kakonda and Absalom David were arrested. They are suspected of planning to poach rhinos.

According to official sources, 14 rhinos have been poached since the beginning of the year and 113 people have been arrested in connection with rhino poaching or horn trafficking.

Namibia Economist, October 8, 2021; The Namibian, October 13, 2021; Namibian Sun, November 4, 2021.⁴⁴

January-November 2021

Namibia

112 rhinos have been dehorned in the country so far this year, 82 black and 30 white. In Namibia, dehorning operations have been taking place since 2014. Since 2018, 778 rhinos have been dehorned. These amputations must be repeated regularly.

Namibia Daily News (with Xinhua), November 22, 2021.⁴⁵

December 5 and 12, 2021

Okakarara, Otjozondjupa Region, and Okahao, Omusati Region, Namibia

- Patric Tjiposa, David Petrus, Kapenda Tjiposa, Puuta Muhenje and Gilberto Fortunato are arrested for conspiring to poach a rhino. Their vehicle, a firearm and ammunition are seized.

- David Kashenye and Ruben David are arrested for poaching rhinos in October.

Namibian Sun, December 15, 2021.⁴⁶

December 12, 2021

Namibia

Two arrests for poaching a rhino in October 2020. Allgemeine Zeitung Namibia, December 14, 2021.⁴⁷

SOUTHEASTERN ASIA

MALAYSIA

September 9, 2021

Near Kuala Lumpur International Airport, Malaysia



Seizure of 50 horns and horn fragments from a truck near the airport mosque. Two men were arrested. They are facing 3 years in prison and a fine of 100,000 ringgit or 24,055 US\$. According to the Perhilitan, this is the biggest seizure in Malaysia over the last 5 years. Analyses are underway to verify the authenticity

of the horns and to date them. Rhinos have been extinct in Malaysia since 2019.

The Star, September 15 and 22, 2021; Traffic, September 21, 2021.⁴⁸

September 9, 2021

Hung Nguyen District, Nghe An Province, Viet Nam

Seizure at Le Dung Thai's home, a truck driver, of ecstasy, marijuana and 711.915 grams of suspected rhino horn fragments.

Phap Luat Plus, September 17, 2021.⁴⁹

September 23, 2021

Noi Bai International Airport, Hanoi Municipality, Viet Nam

Seizure of 26 fragments of suspected rhinoceros horn from the luggage of 2 passengers on a Qatar Airways flight. Total weight: 9,345 grams.

Thuong hieu & Cong luan, November 2, 2021.⁵⁰

November 18, 2021

Haiphong Port, Viet Nam



Seizure in 2 containers from Manila, Philippines, of 19.5 kg of rhino horns. Authenticity was confirmed by the Academy of Science and Technology.

VietNamNet, December 1, 2021.⁵¹

Beginning of December 2021

Viet Nam

36-year-old Do Minh Toan was sentenced to 14 years in prison for his involvement in smuggling 125 kg of horns in July 2019 (see "On the Trail" n°26 p. 78)

The Phnom Penh Post (with AFP), December 9, 2021; Voice of Ho Chi Minh City's People, December 6, 2021.⁵²



SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

September 22, 2021

Bokakhat, Golaghat District, State of Assam, India



Deliberate destruction by fire of 2,479 rhino horns seized from poachers and traffickers or cut from the carcasses of rhinos who had died since 1979 and were previously stored in vaults. The longest was 57 cm long and the heaviest weighed 3 kg. The average weight of the destroyed horns was 560 grams. The total weight was 1,305 kg and their financial value on the black market was almost 33 million US\$ on the basis of 25,000 US\$/kg. "Through this event, we want to convey to the world that rhino horns are just a mass of compacted hair and there is no medicinal value to them," said Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. "Some are saying that instead of destroying the horns we should have sold them." "But like the way we can't sell seized drugs to earn revenue, the same way a government can't earn money by selling rhino horns." "All horns recovered from rhinos dying naturally or during disasters and accidents would henceforth be burned annually." Before being burned, the horns were cleaned, weighed, photographed, wrapped and sealed by a team of scientists in front of several witnesses. 21 horns were fake and 15 were from African rhinos. 94 exceptional horns were kept for display and educational purposes. 50 horns were kept in court offices as evidence. The "cremation" of the horns accompanied by Vedic mantras and rituals took place in a stadium some 20 km from Kaziranga Park. The 6 pyres were lit by drones. Hindustan Times, September 22, 2021; The Hindu, September 22, 2021; The Indian Express, September 22, 2021; WCCB, September 22, 2021; The Times of India, September 23, 2021.⁵³

NEPAL

End of September 2021

Kathmandu, Kathmandu District, Bagmati Province, Nepal

They allegedly joined 15 others to kill a rhino in Chitwan National Park a year ago. Nange Tamang Lama is the sixth to be arrested. He has been transferred to Bharatpur jail.

The Rising Nepal, September 24, 2021.⁵⁴

September 27, 2021

Chitwan National Park, Bagmati Province, Nepal

Death of a female about 10 years old. After entering a rice field, she was retaliated against and was killed by a throwing weapon. The body was not amputated of its hooves or horn.

Online Khabar, September 28, 2021.⁵⁵

December 8, 2021

Butwal, Rupandehi District, Lumbini Province, Nepal

Arrest of 3 persons aged 28 to 58 years in room 118 of Hariyali Hotel. Seizure of a horn.

Khabarhub, December 9, 2021.⁵⁶

December 20, 2021

Kathmandu, Kathmandu District, Bagmati Province, Nepal

Six men aged between 20 and 42 years were holding a horn. It was seized. They have been arrested.

Khabarhub, December 20, 2021.⁵⁷

WESTERN ASIA

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

October 15, 2021

United Arab Emirates

Arrest in Abu Dhabi of Zeng Denghui. He was the subject of an Interpol red notice. He had fled from 858 Aerodrome Road in Victoria Falls where he was under house arrest with 6 accomplices. On December 23, 2018, between 20 and 30 kg of rhino horn sections had been seized from their home. In April 2019, they had been released on bail and under judicial supervision. A few months later, thanks to the complicity of a Bulawayo police officer, they managed to reach the Sango border post in eastern Zimbabwe with a stolen car before reaching Maputo in Mozambique and reportedly boarding a Chinese fishing boat in the hope of reaching mainland China. This scenario did not succeed, at least for Zeng, whose extradition Zimbabwe is requesting. Peicong Wang, Liu Cheng, Yu Xian, Long Zhu, Chen Xianfu and Qiu Jinchang are still on the run. See "On the Trail" n°23 p.101 and n°26 p.75.

The Sunday Mail, December 5, 2021.⁵⁸

QATAR

OPERATION GOLDEN STRIKE August-September 2021 Qatar

Seizure of 10 kg of rhino horns from Mozambique to Viet Nam.

Interpol, January 24, 2022.⁵⁹

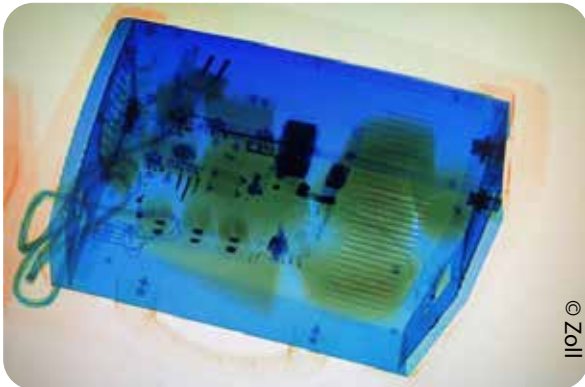
WESTERN EUROPE

GERMANY

December 2021 Leipzig/Halle Airport, Saxony State, Germany

Seizure in 2 parcels going from Angola to Viet Nam with transit through Germany of 3.8 kg of horns. In the first package there was a loudspeaker filled with polyurethane foam where 8 pieces of horn were hidden. In the second package, there was a soldering station filled with foam where 7 pieces of horn were hidden. The authenticity was confirmed by the Senckenberg Institute in Dresden.

German Customs, January 18, 2022.⁶⁰



FRANCE

September 23, 2021 Nantes, Department of Loire-Atlantique, France



The Cameroonian subject defends himself without a lawyer at the bar of the court. He is accused of having imported a small rhinoceros horn weighing 120 g into France. He swears that this family heirloom transmitted from father to son for 3 generations is made of bull horn. "My father drank from it all his life, I am his successor," he proclaims. "It can be used as a dowry." Three experts, including one from the Museum of Natural History, confirm the rhinoceros origin. On the basis of 50,000 €/kg (59,000 US\$/kg) as postulated by the customs representative, the value of the horn is 6,000 € (7,080 US\$). The Cameroonian electrician who has no fixed address and who says he sleeps in his car in the suburbs of Paris was sentenced to 3 months in prison because of a previous suspended sentence for fraud, and to a fine of 1,000 € (1,180 US\$). The controversial horn seized at the Nantes airport has been definitively placed under the responsibility of the French State. Ouest-France, September 24, 2021.⁶¹

SOUTHERN EUROPE

ITALY

October 12, 2021 Verona International Airport, Province of Verona, Region of Veneto, Italy

The Rathkeale Rovers may have made a brief and tumultuous appearance in Verona. A British registered Ford C Max with a broken rear window was found in the airport's short-term parking lot. The barrier of the lot was broken. In the car there were burglar tools, a portable generator, English truck license plates, and ropes. Near the exit of the parking lot, an open backpack was abandoned with what is presumed to be 2 rhino horns in excellent condition weighing 1,647 grams and 496 grams. "We are dealing with a well-organized criminal organization," says the head of the airport's air police.

An organized and sprawling gang, but one that sometimes gets out of hand and has misadventures worthy of the Pieds Nickelés. Between 2011 and 2018, the Rathkeale Rovers have been involved in theft, smuggling, expertise of rhinoceros horns, whose authenticity has yet to be verified, but also in the express sale of low-quality bitumen and the sale of classic cars. They have no doubt other trades to their bows.

Rathkeale Rovers, see "On the Trail" n°32 p.56. VeronaSera, October 12, 2021.⁶²