

ON_{the} TRAIL

The defaunation bulletin
n°36. Events from the 1st April to the 30th June, 2022



Quarterly information and analysis report on endangered
animals poaching and smuggling
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ON_{the} TRAIL

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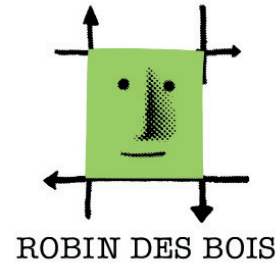
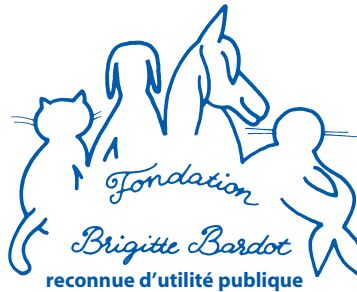
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NOTE AND ADVICE TO READERS

"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.

- 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 + elephants / felines
 - Elephants + felines
 - Elephants + rhinos / hippos / sperm whales / walruses
 - 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 US\$ conversion rates used are those applicable during the month of the event.
- 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 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. Details of the sources are available on request by email to contact@robindesbois.org indicating the "On the Trail" issue number, chapter and reference 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 at the time of the event, 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

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ELEPHANTS, RHINOS / HIPPOS SPERM WHALES / WALRUSES

AFRICA / AMERICA

KENYA / UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

May 26-September 3, 2022
Kenya - United States



- May 26. A reward of up to one million US\$ is promised to anyone who can provide to the US Fish and Wildlife via the US Embassy in Kenya or the DCI (Directorate of Criminal Investigations, Kenya) information leading to the arrest of Abdi Hussein Ahmed and Badru Abdulaziz Saleh, Kenyan nationals.

- May 31. Arrest of Badru Abdulaziz Saleh aka Badro a few kilometres from the border with Somalia.

- August 2. Arrest of Abdi Hussein Ahmed aka Abu Khadi in Maua, Meru County.

- June 16. Extradition of Badru alias Badro to the United States on a Kenya Airways flight to New York.

- September 3. Extradition of Abdi Hussein Ahmed aka Abu Khadi to the United States on a Kenya Airways flight to New York.

The 2 men are suspected of conspiring with Mansur Mohammed Surur, a Kenyan citizen, Amara Cherif, a Guinean citizen, and Moazu Kromah, a Liberian citizen, from December 2012 to May 2019 to smuggle 190 kg of rhino horns, 10 tonnes of elephant ivory and 10 kg of heroin into the United States (see "On the Trail" n°25 p.81). Kromah, aka Ayoub, aka Ayuba, aka Kampala Man, was arrested in June 2019 in Uganda and immediately extradited to the United States (see "On the Trail" n°25 p.81 and n°29 p.42). Cherif was arrested on June 7, 2019 in Senegal and extradited to the United States in early April 2020 (see "On the Trail" n°25 p.81 and n°29 p.42). Mansur Surur alias Mansour was arrested on July 29, 2020 at Moi airport (Kenya) when he got off a plane from Yemen and extradited to the United States on December 18, 2020 (see "On the Trail" n°30 p.41 and n°31 p.42).

On June 1, Mansur Mohammed Surur pleaded guilty before the Attorney for the Southern District of New York. He admitted to conspiring to trafficking rhino horns and heroin into the United States of America. According to him, he merely acted as a middleman for the sale of one kilo of heroin, one black rhino horn and 2 white rhino horns.

The investigations and trials should confirm or refute the existence of a transnational syndicate dedicated to the trafficking of rhino horns, elephant tusks and drugs. To be continued.

International Policy Digest, August 24, 2019; Directorate of Criminal Investigations, May 26 and 31, June 2 and 17, August 2 and September 4, 2022; Inner City Press, June 1, 2022; SEEJ-AFRICA (Saving Elephants through Education and Justice), June 2, 2022.¹

EUROPE

FRANCE

April 2022

Labarthe-sur-Lèze, Department of Haute-Garonne, France



Seizure of a hundred carved ivories by the OFB and by the gendarmes of Muret. The investigation file will tell how elephants, sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*, Appendix I), hippopotamuses (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, Appendix II) and walruses (*Odobenus rosmarus*, Appendix III in Canada) arrived in spare and worked parts in the small town of 6,000 inhabitants.

Gendarmerie of Haute-Garonne, April 19, 2022.²

Seizure of hippopotamus teeth, see also pages 120 and 185.

RHINOCEROSSES



White rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum*). Photo pfaucher

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°36
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	Pays	US\$	Ref. (year)
Asia	India	71,900	42 (2012)
		167,033	43 (2022)
Europe	Germany	64,525	45 (2022)

EASTERN AFRICA

UGANDA

May 29 and September 14, 2022 Entebbe International Airport, Central Region, Uganda

Seizure of 26 fragments of horns weighing 15 kg in total thanks to the vigilance of the dog squad. They were concealed by pineapples in the suitcase of Al-Maamari Maged Mutahar Ali, a Yemeni national. He was accompanied by a Ugandan national, Mustapha Abubakhar.

Al-Maamari Maged Mutahar Ali was fined 120 million shillings (31,650 US\$) and will be deported to Yemen. Mustapha Abubakhar was fined 40 million shillings (10,550 US\$).

The Independent (Uganda), May 29, 2022; New Vision, August 24, 2022 ; Sabasabaupdates, September 15, 2022.¹



© Uganda Wildlife Authority

ZAMBIA

Beginning of June 2022 Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park, Southern Province, Zambia

The 4 men were heavily armed. Clearly, they were not going to pick mushrooms. They agreed that they were going to "pick" rhino horns. Benjamin Anedal is Angolan, Belters Sililo Swenyeho Kambonde is Namibian, Kambonde Ushuka and Samayiwa Samayiwa are Zambian. Daily News Agency, June 9, 2022.²



© DNPW

ZIMBABWE

April 4, 2022 Masvingo, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe



Wellington Bonga was sentenced to 9 years in prison for breaking and entering the Savé Valley Conservancy and possessing an FN shotgun rifle with modified bullets with solid heads. His arrest is credited to the K9 team of ATS (Anti-Poaching Tracking Specialists) who, thanks to the mobilization of 11 Belgian Malinois, claim to have arrested 29 rhino poachers in the last 4 years. Zim Morning Post, May 18, 2022.³

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

April 1, 2022 Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

His 2 accomplices escaped, but the poacher was caught by rangers in possession of a .458 Win Mag bolt-action rifle with no serial number, 2 rounds of ammunition, 3 backpacks, and an axe. N. Rich Ricardo Chauke, age 23, an illegal immigrant from Mozambique, was sentenced to 9 years in prison. SAPS, April 3, 2022.⁴



April 3, 2022 Kruger National Park, Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces, South Africa



© Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary

A mother rhino was killed by poachers. The orphaned calf, about 2 months old, laid down next to her body and was attacked by hyenas who ripped off part of his tail. Found in extremis, he was transferred to Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary. Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary, April 4, 2022.⁵

April 7, 2022

Between Hluhluwe and Mbazwana, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Since January 1, 77 rhinos have been poached. The integrity of the Prime Minister of the province is being questioned by public opinion. KwaZulu-Natal has become the epicenter of the crisis. The Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Game Reserve is being overwhelmed by a tsunami of poaching.

A retired colonel, speaking on condition of anonymity, denounced the inertia of the authorities: "The fact that 77 rhinos have been slaughtered, yet only one arrest has been made, is an appalling indictment on Ezemvelo's readiness [the agency in charge of the fight against poaching in the province] and the shockingly poor level of South Africa's crime intelligence agencies."

A man early Thursday evening was intercepted in his car on Route 22 from Hluhluwe to Mbazwana. He was in possession of a large 375 heavy-caliber hunting rifle. His arrest caused a stir. It was motivated by an anonymous phone call. But there is no indication at this time that this 54-year-old suspect was able to poach 77 rhinos, or even one. Save the Beasts, April 8, 2022.⁶

April 8, 2022

Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

- Munandi Mathebula, age 42, and Eugene Malungane, age 36, were arrested in possession of a .375 H&H bolt action rifle, 10 rounds of ammunition, and an axe. The poachers were released on bail and failed to appear at their court date. The former was caught and sentenced to 13 years in prison.



- Cassamo Chauke, age 59, had killed no less than 3 rhinos. A fourth, cut off from his horns but still alive, had to be finished off. The Mozambican illegal immigrant was sentenced to 19 years in prison. SAPS, April 10, 2022.⁷

April 11, 2022

Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary, Barberton Nature Reserve, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Arrival of an orphan female aged 20 to 24 months. The mother was poached. She was "taken in charge" by an elder known in the refuge for her maternal instincts and her capacities of transmission of the rhinoceros' manners.

Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary, May 2022.⁸

April 14, 2022

Zeerust, North West Province, South Africa

Alfredo Siteo and Thomas Mlambo were sentenced to 44 years in prison for trespassing on a game reserve, using a firearm without a licence, poaching rhinos, and illegally possessing 4 horns. The sentences were combined. The 2 men will spend, unless appealed, pardoned, or paroled, 12 years in prison. One "companion" was acquitted for lack of sufficient evidence of his involvement and 2 accomplices are on the run. The minibus carrying the 5 men was the object of a chase on Wednesday, November 20, 2021, near Zeerust. See "On the Trail" n°34 p.54. SAPS, April 16, 2022.⁹



April 18 and 19, 2022

Houtboshrand and Tshokwane Sections, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

- Tracked by a trained dog, the 2 poachers were caught. Raydon Zitha, age 24, and Ernesto Zitha, age 27, were in possession of a rifle whose serial numbers had been erased, 8 rounds of ammunition, and an axe.

- The next day, Maxiye Hlungwana, age 33, and Khensani Chauke, age 26, were arrested in possession of a rifle, 4 rounds of ammunition, and an axe.

The 4 Mozambican illegal immigrants were taken into custody.

SAPS, April 21, 2022.¹⁰



April 19, 2022

Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

A trio of Mozambican illegal poachers were arrested in possession of a rifle (.458 Win Mag CZ 580 Magnum bolt action) equipped with a silencer, 7 rounds of ammunition, a magazine, and a knife. Antony Tembe, released on bail, fled. But Lawrence Flaveo Cuetsese, age 21, and Nelson Mhlongo, age 34, were sentenced to 19 years in prison.

SAPS, April 20, 2022.¹¹



April 22, 2022

Lower Sabie section, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Searched by helicopter, 2 poachers were extracted from their hiding place in the bushes. A knife and a shotgun with a silencer as well as ammunition were found on Patrick Nguntshane, age 32, and Freddie Mahlaule, age 48, both from Mozambique, who remain in custody. "We hope by now everyone is aware that whoever attempts to poach inside the park will be caught and brought to book," said Lieutenant General Semakaleng Daphney Manamela.

SAPS, April 26, 2022.¹²

FAMILY AFFAIRS

April 23, December 6 and 14, 2022

Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Corruption, money laundering and fraud linked to wildlife trafficking. Two rangers, aged 56 and 60, provided information to rhino poachers in exchange for large sums of money. David Chikwa Maluleke, age 60, and Solly Ubisi, age 56, were arrested and later released on bail.

Five relatives of David Chikwa Maluleke also served time in jail (Joyce Maluleke, Stephinah Mbhombi, Oters Maluleke, Miyelani Maluleke, and Nkhesane Maluleke) and were later released on bail.

Four relatives of Solly Ubisi's family remain in prison (Thandi Makhuvele, Alsina Mkhonto, Ignatia Mnisi, Given Mzimba) pending a review of their cases by the courts.

On December 14, a woman (Eunice Lekhuleni) and a man (Martin Prince Lekhuleni) surrendered at the police station. They are suspected of being active links in the Maluleke and Ubisi corruption chain.

SAPS, April 24 and December 6, 2022; Save the Beasts, April 25, 2022 City Press, August 13, 2022 ; Letaba Herald, December 7, 2022.¹³



The traitors condemned to death the rhinos they were supposed to protect.

April 26, 2022

Waterberg District, Limpopo Province, South Africa

A female rhino shot and killed in the early morning. Her shot baby was found lying on her dead mother's leg, trying to drink her milk. If she survives, the orphan will have to be bottle-fed with Rhinomel, a specially formulated milk.

Food for Rhinos, April 26, 2022.¹⁴



The desperate orphan girl was found wounded, lying on the remains of her mother.

April 29, 2022

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

Seizure of 12 rhino horns weighing 30.7 kg in the luggage of a South African woman going to Dubai.



Between July 2020 and December 2021, authorities confiscated 125 horns or horn fragments weighing 425 kg in total at OR Tambo airport (see "On the Trail" n°30 p.44, n°31 p.46, n°32 p.61, n°33 p.66 and n°34 p.56). A new seizure of 11 horns took place on January 31 (see "On the Trail" n°35 p.38). Almost all the shipments were destined for Malaysia. South African Revenue Service, April 29, 2022.¹⁵

April 30, 2022

Inverdoorn Private Game Reserve, Western Cape Province, South Africa

The survivor of the Inverdoorn massacre (see "On the Trail" n°34 p.56) gave birth to a premature baby and the mother did not have enough milk to feed him. Knowing that gestation lasts about 16 months, the mother was pregnant at the time of the carnage and during the facial reconstruction care under the direction of veterinary doctor Douw Grobler. On a night in mid-December 2021, she was shot in the head and at close range.

News24, May 6, 2022; Saving Private Rhino, May 17, 2022.¹⁶

FAMILY AFFAIRS / REPEATED OFFENCE
May 4, 2022
Giyani, Limpopo Province, South Africa



Sentencing of Gideon van Deventer, age 53, and Niklaas van Deventer, age 56, to 44 and 54 years in prison. Several sentences run concurrently. They will have to serve 10 and 15 years respectively and will soon be eligible for parole. They have already served half and one third of the sentence in pre-trial detention. They were convicted of poaching in conspiracy of a female rhino and her calf, dehorning, unlawful possession and selling of horns, possession of firearms and ammunition without a licence, and unlawfully entering land with a firearm where wild animals were found. Their last act of rhino warfare was in late December 2016. They had been chased by the Limpopo police and had thrown a horn in a plastic bag through a window of their bakkie (see "On the Trail" n°16 p.65 and n°17 p.77). In 2007, the van Deventer brothers had already been sentenced to years in prison, 10 for Gideon, 5 for Niklaas, for having poached 2 rhinos in the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park, KwaZulu-Natal, a year before.
Daily Maverick, May 5, 2022.¹⁷

May 4 and 6, 2022
Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

- Arrest of 2 suspected poachers acting in conspiracy. Seizure of a firearm.
- SAPS and Ezemvelo arrested 3 suspected poachers at their homes near Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park. Publication of a new appalling toll. 106 rhinos have been poached since the beginning of the year.
Save the Beasts, May 12, 2022.¹⁸

May 13, 2022
Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

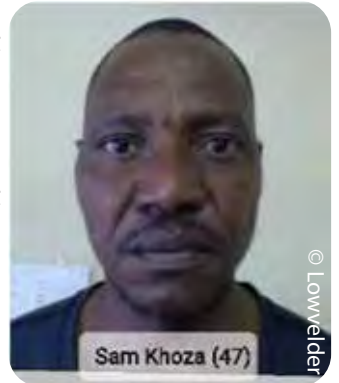


Wade Van Staden was sentenced to an 18-month suspended prison term. For 5 years, he must not commit another NEMBA (National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act) violation and must not be found in possession of any rhino parts. The black rhino horn that brought Van Staden to justice was seized from under the seat of his BMW during a road check in October 2020 (see "On the Trail" n°31 p.44).
The Citizen, May 14, 2022 ; SAPS, May 17, 2022.¹⁹

May 20, 2022
Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa



One poacher injured in a shootout with park rangers. Two accomplices escaped, but Sam Khoza, age 47, was apprehended in possession of a rifle, some ammunition and a silencer. The illegal immigrant from Mozambique was sentenced to 9 years in prison.
Lowvelder, May 24, 2022.²⁰



May 24, 2022
Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa



Three deterrent convictions and a frantic escape
On March 19, 2017, rangers in the Stolzneke section heard gunshots. The suspects were tracked down and apprehended. They were Richard Mkhombo, Isaac Zitha and Oscar Ndlovu. A rifle with serial number filed off, 7 rounds of ammunition, an axe and 2 freshly cut horns were seized. The Skukuza police arrived at the scene and the suspects were formally charged. They were later released on bail pending trial.

On May 12, 2018, Isaac Zitha and Oscar Ndlovu, accompanied by Given Zitha, a Mozambican national who entered South Africa illegally, were again in the act of poaching, this time in the Kingfisherspruit section of Kruger Park. They were pursued by rangers and following an exchange of fire, the 3 poachers, 2 of whom were wounded, were arrested in possession of 2 freshly cut horns, a rifle with serial number filed off and ammunition. They were remanded in custody and charged by the Skukuza police.

On January 17, 2019, Given Zitha on his return from a hearing at the court in Skukuza managed to escape.

For poaching in 2017, Isaac Zitha, Richard Mkhombo and Oscar Ndlovu were sentenced to 3 years on the charge of trespassing, 6 years for possession of an illegal firearm with serial number filed off, 2 years for possession of ammunition, 11 years for poaching a rhino and possession of an axe.

Oscar Ndlovu and Isaac Zitha were sentenced to 44 years in prison for poaching in 2018. Some of these sentences are to run concurrently. Richard Mkhombo is expected to spend 21 years in prison, and Oscar Ndlovu and Isaac Zitha 38 years in prison. Police are still looking for Given Zitha.

Lowvelder, May 25, 2022; SAPS, May 26, 2022.²¹

May 26, 2022

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

With rhino horns weighing 26 kg in his hand luggage, the 41-year-old Singapore-bound man was arrested and will appear in the Kempton Park Magistrates' Court. SAPS, May 26, 2022.²²



May 30, 2022

Empangeni, Kwazulu-Natal Province, South Africa

A deterrent sentence. Michael Kleinbaas Masuku, age 45, was sentenced to 28 years in prison for shooting a white and a black rhino in the Hluhluwe Imfolozi Game Reserve. TimesLIVE, May 30, 2022.²³



Beginning of June 2022

Pilanesberg National Park, North West Province, South Africa

Big dehorning campaign in the park. It has not been decided on happily and is not considered a miracle solution. It is not a substitute for the 24-hour surveillance systems in the park. The Pilanesberg is one of the poachers' favourite targets (see "On the Trail" n°7 p.65, n°9 p.59, n°10 p.45, n°12 p.69 and 70, n°14 p.63 and 64, n°15 p.77, 78 and 81, n°16 p.68, n°18 p.70, 73 and 74, n°19 p.85, n°20 p.82, n°21 p.77, n°22 p.78 and 80, n°23 p.106, n°26 p.76, n°27 p.87, n°28 p.94, n°31 p.46 and n°32 p.61). Perry Steve Dell, June 15, 2022.²⁴

Beginning of June 2022

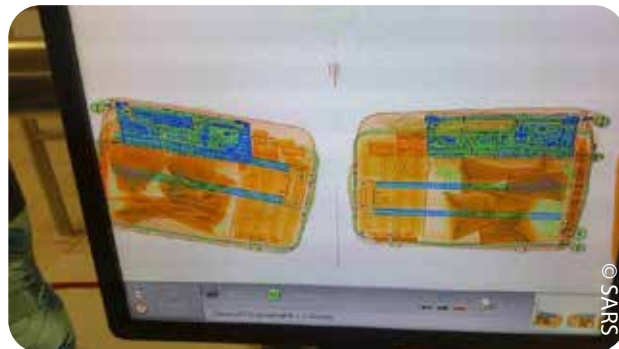
Kalahari Desert, Northern Cape Province, South Africa

Frenzy of preventive dehornings in a private reserve in the north of the country, near the border with Botswana. The helicopter flew over it for 31 hours in three and a half days. "Sometimes when a mother and calf are darted they become separated if they run in a different direction." "Before the reversal drug was administered in this cow, we walked her calf right to her side so when they "woke up" they could instantly see, touch and smell each other." The team on the ground is then forced to separate to take care of the 2 at the same time. The rhinos are marked on their backs with a spray to be easily spotted from the helicopter. "We dehorned as many rhinos as we could find last week." "We also found new white rhino calves that the reserve did not know about yet. But unfortunately, the chopper also found 2 older carcasses of poached rhinos that the reserve was not aware." Council of Contributors, June 2022.²⁵

June 3, 2022

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

Seizure from the luggage of a passenger flying to Abu Dhabi of 17 horns and fragments of horns. Total weight: 25 kg.



Between July 2020 and June 2022, 507 kg of horns were seized at Johannesburg International Airport. This record is a testament to the vigilance of customs officers. At the same time, it reveals a relentless haemorrhage of horns flowing out of South Africa. According to Interpol, the seizures represent only 10 to 15% of the total volume of smuggled animals and animal parts. Independent Online, June 3, 2022 ; South African Revenue Service, June 3, 2022.²⁶

Monday June 6, 2022

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

Arrest of Vusi Mdluli in HiP (Hluhluwe-iMfolozi) Park. Spotted by a trap camera, followed by a helicopter and tracked by the dog squad, he threw away his T-shirt during the chase. "It is common for poachers to try to hide from the Ezemvelo chopper by removing their clothes," says the HiP spokesman. There is no trace in Ezemvelo's statements of weapons or other evidence that would decisively prove the involvement of Vusi Mdluli in rhino poaching or intent to commit it. Perhaps he dropped some evidence during the chase. Daily Maverick, May 31 and June 13, 2022 ; Save the Beasts, June 12, 2022 ; The Witness, June 12, 2022.²⁷

June 7, 2022

North West Province, South Africa

John Hume wants to repopulate the wilderness each year with 100 white rhinos from his ranch. He now has 2,004 of them on the 8,400 hectares of his Buffalo Dream Ranch. He is looking for experts in rhino relocation. He has informed SANParks and private reserves of his project and has not yet received any response from potential partners who would be willing to cover the financial costs of the operation and provide the logistics. John Hume, see "On the Trail" n°35 p.38. News24, June 7, 2022 ; Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE), June 15, 2022.²⁸

June 8, 2022

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

Arrest of 2 armed poachers in HiP by rangers reinforced by the canine unit and by a helicopter flight. Sizwe Tivane and Samkele Sithole from Mpumalanga Province had just rented a house within a stone's throw of the HiP. "The proximity of the house to the park provided the two with a vantage point to observe everything that was happening inside the park. They were not only able to monitor the Field Rangers on foot patrol, but were also able to scan the movement of rhinos," according to Musa Mntambo, spokesperson for Ezemvelo, the province's wildlife management body.

The prevention of poaching in HiP is now consolidated by the presence of a motorcycle brigade. The strengthening of ranger mobility was a recommendation by a report commissioned in 2016, completed in 2019 and swept under the carpet by the then Prime Minister. It was made public in May 2022 after the Democratic Alliance's Freedom of Information Act request. The report also calls for immediate availability of dog squads and systematic checks by guards and dogs of vehicles entering and leaving the HiP.

Ezemvelo has been in turmoil for more than 10 years. Its executive director resigned in 2017 and in 2020 all 11 board members were suspended from their positions following suspicions of mismanagement of the agency, whose annual budget, not counting private contributions, exceeds 1 billion rand or 64.6 million US\$. "Our improved and random deployment of field rangers, as well as the presence of SAPS inside HiP have made it difficult for would-be poachers to fully understand our movements. The K9 Unit is also proving to be a welcome addition to our fight against rhino poachers," says Ntsikelelo Dlulane, the park's new CEO.

Save the Beasts, June 12, 2022; The Witness, June 12, 2022.²⁹

June 10, 2022

Hoedspruit, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Arrival at the shelter of an orphan male aged about 3 months thanks to the aerial means of the "The Bateleurs", an organization which employs several voluntary pilots. A veterinarian proceeded to sedate him before boarding and to monitor him during the transfer. Landed on the airstrip of the private reserve of Kapama, the poaching survivor then reached the refuge by road. The prognosis is favourable.

Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre, June 10 and 11, 2022.³⁰

June 16, 2022

Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa



The 2 fresh horns were hidden under the engine hood. The car was intercepted in the Van Buren tunnel. The Toyota Fortuner is registered in Eshowe (KwaZulu-Natal province). The horns may have come from KwaZulu-Natal and the Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park where rhinos have been subjected to frenetic poaching since the beginning of the year. Save the Beasts, June 17, 2022.³¹

End of June 2022

KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Arrival at the orphanage of a baby rhino whose nasal horn is already visible, about 6 months old, saved by the rangers 3 days after the poaching of his mother. The prognosis is guarded.

Ben Wallace, June 24 and 30, 2022 ; Zululand Rhino Orphanage, June 27 and September 4, 2022 ; Helping Rhinos, July 1 and 12, 2022.³²

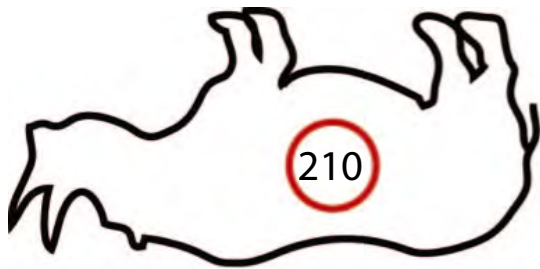
June 2022

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

Seizure of 8 kg of rhino horn within a FedEx package bound for the United States of America that was supposed to contain "wooden art pieces".

Since the beginning of the year, 56 horns have been seized at the airport and 4 horn traffickers arrested. Cooperation with authorities in Malaysia and Qatar also led to the arrest of a trafficker at Doha airport. In the same period, 210 rhinos have been poached in the country and 69 people have been arrested in connection with these events.

Krugersdorp News, September 1, 2022.³³



NAMIBIA

Tuesday June 14, 2022

Etosha National Park, Oshikoto Region, Namibia

John Grobler, a tireless advocate for Namibia's large fauna, wonders, with statistics, if there will still be rhinos in Namibia in 2025. The rush on rhinos in Namibia, especially the black ones whose horns sell for more money, echoes what is happening in KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. The demand is there, the transfer routes to Asia are being reinvented by the mafias and for the moment "the anti-poaching forces are out of date." The strengthening of financial and criminal sanctions is not enough to put out the fire. Since the beginning of June, patrols in the national park, which covers more than 22,000 km², have produced a disturbing picture. Eleven black rhino carcasses have been discovered. Their deaths date back to 3 weeks and more. Since the beginning of the year, 22 rhinos have been poached.

In an interview with New Era, Namibia's police director says he is stunned and concerned, "I am caught by surprise that after we did a good job by reducing the poaching activities in the country and set up a robust prevention intervention," "the criminal syndicate might have regrouped, re-strategised and saw the loopholes. The market has also probably found another way to acquire rhino horns and other proceeds." The Ministry of Environment spokesperson calls on members of the public who may have useful information to contact the police or his ministry's departments.

John Grobler, June 14, 2022; Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, June 14, 2022; New Era, June 15, 2022.³⁴

Thursday June 16, 2022

Etosha National Park, Oshikoto Region, Namibia



Exchange of fire inside the park. A 19-year-old suspected poacher and a guard were injured. They were taken to Omuthiyagwiipundi hospital. An accomplice was arrested. He is believed to be 26 years old. Others fled, leaving behind backpacks with ammunition, food, clothing and a telescopic sight.

New Era, June 17, 2022 ; Namibia Daily News, June 20, 2022 ; The Namibian, June 21, 2022.³⁵

June 24 and 25, 2022

Okanguati, Sesfontein, Kunene Region, Utsathima, Omusati Region, Namibia

The Namibian police are on alert. According to their spokesperson, seizures in the Kunene and Omusati areas of assault rifles and high-powered guns hidden in bushes and a maize silo may have been linked to a series of rhino poachings in Etosha National Park, some 300-400 km away.

Informanté, June 28, 2022.³⁶

June 27, 2022

Etosha National Park, Oshikoto Region, Namibia

The spokesperson for the Ministry of the Environment announced that a 12th rhino was found dead in Etosha Park. Minister Pohamba Shifeta went to the scene. He appointed police commissioner Ndahangwapo Kashihakumwa as head of the anti-poaching force.

Allgemeine Zeitung (Namibia), June 27, 2022.³⁷

Saturday July 9, 2022

Ondangwa, Oshana Region, Tsumeb, Oshikoto Region, and Okahao, Omusati Region, Namibia

Eleven suspects allegedly linked to the recent poaching of 12 rhinos in Etosha Park are being questioned. They were arrested in four hauls by police, domestic intelligence, MEFT (Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism) officers, the Namibian Defence Force and the Blue Rhino Task Force. Two vehicles, five guns, ammunition, torches, cutlasses and 50,000 Namibian dollars (3,100 US\$) were seized. The 11 suspects appeared separately before the magistrates of Ondangwa, Tsumeb and Okahao. They remain in custody pending investigation.

Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, July 9, 2022 ; Namibia Daily News, July 9, 2022.³⁸

EASTERN ASIA

JAPAN

May 31, 2022

Shizuoka, Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan



The glass case that housed it was broken during the night. A white rhinoceros horn weighing 5 kg and measuring 40 to 50 centimetres long was stolen from Nihondaira Zoo. It is surprising that the management of the zoo did not take the precaution to display a resin horn.

The Asahi Shimbun, June 3, 2022.³⁹

SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

May 9, 2022

Orang National Park, Darrang and Sonitpur Districts, State of Assam, India

Surprise in the park. A sub-adult rhino is staggering and bleeding from the head. His horn was cut off with little more care than anaesthetizing him. Attempts to dehorn under anaesthesia had already been spotted in Kaziranga. Two or three poachers were arrested with tranquiliser darts and drugs. They had not had the opportunity to take action. Indian veterinarians are skeptical. They hardly believe the anaesthesia scenario. M99 is not manufactured in India. It is not easily available, except from veterinarians and zoos. Moreover, a professor from Cambridge University tells Mongabay India that such a scenario, if true, can only be achieved with the support of veterinary expertise.

In southern Africa, poaching and dehorning a rhino under anaesthesia is not common but it does happen (M99 and rhinoceros, see "On the Trail" n°2 p.45 and 51, n°6 p.67, n°7 p.71, n°12 p.68, n°13 p.72, n°17 p.77, n°18 p.70, n°19 p.85, n°20 p.81, n°21 p.77, n°25 p.76, n°30 p.47 and n°33 p.64). On the other hand, preventive dehorning preceded by general anaesthesia is a widespread practice. Animals are also voluntarily put to sleep in the savannah to be treated on site by veterinary teams. They are then awakened by an antidote but sometimes do not wake up.

News May 13, 18, 2022; The Hindu, May 13, 2022; East Mojo, June 3, 2022.⁴⁰

May 29, 2022

Suwaguri, Biswanath District, State of Assam, India

A poacher suspected of being involved in the January rhino poaching in Kaziranga Park (see "On the Trail" n°35 p.41-42) was arrested on Saturday May 28 in Nagaon district. His name is said to be Zagir Hussain or Zakir Hussain. On Sunday night, the police took him to a place near Suwaguri in the neighbouring district of Biswanath where he claimed to have hidden the weapons. When he got out of the cell van, he tried to flee. The police shot him in the leg. He was taken to the hospital in Biswanath and then to the hospital in Tezpur. He was released on bail.

Since May 2021 and the accession of the Himanta Biswa Sarma government, 48 people have been killed and 117 injured while trying to escape from police custody by fleeing or attacking law enforcement officers, according to official reports. For the record, the other poachers allegedly involved in the January poaching are said to be Uttam Khaklary, Asmat Ali aka Nalco, Diluwar Hussain, Aatur Rahman aka Bassa and Abdul Matin aka Kala.

New Delhi Television, May 30, 2022; Time8, May 30, 2022; India Today, May 31, 2022.⁴¹

Night of June 2 to June 3, 2022

Roing, Lower Dibang Valley District, State of Arunachal Pradesh, and Sonitpur District, State of Assam, India

Arrest of Habibur Rahman in Roing, Arunachal Pradesh. He is suspected of poaching a rhino in Kaziranga Park in September 2012 and selling 400 grams of horn for 1.6 million rupees or 28,760 US\$ and 71,900 US\$/kg. He had been arrested in 2018 in Biswanath district, released on bail, and has since then disappeared from the radar. Thanks to his tip, a second suspect, Johor Ali, was arrested in Sonitpur district 500 km from Roing and an alleged rhino horn weighing 2 kg was seized.



The Times of India, April 8, 2014; The Sentinel, August 3, 2018 and June 4 and 5, 2022; Sadiya Police, June 4, 2022; Time8, June 5, 2022.⁴²

Night of June 5 to June 6, 2022
Teliapatty, Jorhat District, State of Assam, India



After receiving confidential information, seizure by the police of an alleged rhinoceros horn weighing 1.158 kg with an estimated value of 15 million rupees (193,425 US\$). Rajen Bauri and Azizul Rahman arrested.
The Print, June 6, 2022.⁴³

NEPAL

REPEATED OFFENCE

Night of June 30 to July 1, 2022
Malekhu, Dhading District, Bagmati Province, Nepal

Bam Bahadur Praja has poaching in his blood. Having already been arrested in 2004 for poaching 17 rhinos, sentenced to 15 years in prison, released in 2019, he has just been arrested by the CIB (Criminal Investigation Bureau). He is suspected of being involved in poaching and smuggling horns and hooves of his animal martyr. He was handed over to the authorities of Chitwan National Park where a female rhino and her 3-year-old calf in the winter of 2020 had been poached at the Narayani River. The 2 horns had been cut off (see "On the Trail" n°31 p.50).
Nepal News, July 3, 2022.⁴⁴

WESTERN EUROPE

GERMANY

End of May 2022

Leipzig/Halle International Airport, Saxony State, Germany

German customs seized 16 pieces of rhino horns with a total weight of 6.76 kg valued at 400,000 € (419,400 US\$, or 64,525 US\$/kg). Discovered at the end of May, the wildlife contraband was stuffed into the double bottom of a box filled with sawdust. Germany is a transit country. The horns shipped from Angola were destined for Viet Nam. The Angola/Viet Nam pipeline is well established. In December 2021, German customs discovered 15 sections of rhino horns weighing 3.8 kg taking the same route. Hidden in a loudspeaker and a soldering station, they were covered with expanding foam. Rhinos are extinct in Angola and the horns are certainly from southern Africa (South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe).

Seizures in Viet Nam of rhinoceros horns from Angola, see also "On the Trail" n°15 p. 87, n°22 p. 85, n°29 p. 51 and n°31 p. 49.

Seizure in Thailand of rhino horns in the hands of Vietnamese citizens coming from Angola, see "On the Trail" n°18 p. 80 (August 8 and September 22, 2017).

Bild, May 31, 2022; German Customs, May 31, 2022.⁴⁵

