



THE TRAFFIC BULLETIN SEIZURES AND PROSECUTIONS SECTION IS SPONSORED BY THE FORESTRY BUREAU, COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURE, TAIWAN: COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING CITES ENFORCEMENT

The following section features a selection of seizures and prosecutions reported between October 2018 and mid-April 2019. Sources are cited at the end of each country/territory section. Readers are referred to the TRAFFIC website (<https://www.traffic.org/news/>) for regular updates on cases reported from around the world.

BIG CATS

INDONESIA: On 27 February 2019, Falalini Halawa was sentenced to three years in prison and fined IDR100 million (USD7,000) for poaching a Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I). The pregnant animal had been caught in a wire mesh, close to Bukit Rimbang Wildlife Reserve Bukit Batu (Rimbang Baling), an important habitat for Sumatran tigers.

Mongabay: <https://bit.ly/2VnvDbE>, 29 September 2018

NAMIBIA: On 14 March 2019, at Katima Mulilo Magistrates' Court, Tobolo Luwaile and Sindiwe Manyando, both Zambian nationals, were each sentenced to three years in prison for possession of a Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) skin.

AllAfrica: <https://bit.ly/2vj8tVi>, 20 March 2019

SOUTH AFRICA: On 25 November 2018, police officers in North-West province intercepted vehicles transporting six Vietnamese nationals, two South African nationals and a haul of Lion *Panthera leo* (CITES II) bones and meat, Tiger *P. tigris* (CITES I) skins, and equipment suspected to be used for making lion and tiger bone glue. More lion and tiger carcasses and processing equipment were recovered from a farm where, it is reported, some 40 lions had been killed. A ninth person surrendered to the police.

Baomoi.com: <https://bit.ly/2UvYJRG>, 29 November 2018

ZAMBIA: On 15 November 2018, at Lundazi Subordinate Court, Derrick Nyirenda was sentenced to five years' imprisonment with hard labour after being found in possession of the skin of a Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I).

On 19 February 2019, it was reported that James Zulu, Harrison Chongo and Mathias Muwowo had each been sentenced at Kalulushi Subordinate Court to five years' imprisonment with hard labour for the unlawful possession of a Leopard skin (CITES I).

Lusaka Times: <https://bit.ly/2GvDxWY>, 16 November 2018; <https://bit.ly/2UQicBC>, 19 February 2019

CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) establishes international controls over trade in wild plants and animals, or related products, of species that have been, or may be, threatened due to excessive commercial exploitation. Parties have their own legislative instrument by which to meet their obligations under CITES. The species covered by CITES are listed in three Appendices, according to the degree of protection they need:

APPENDIX I includes species threatened with extinction which are or may be threatened by trade. Trade in specimens of these species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances. An export permit from the country of origin (or a re-export certificate from other exporting countries) and an import permit from the country of importation are required.

APPENDIX II includes species not necessarily yet threatened, but which could become so if trade is not strictly controlled. Species are also included in Appendix II if they are difficult to distinguish from other species in Appendix II, in order to make it more difficult for illegal trade to take place through misidentification or mislabelling. An export permit from the country of origin (or a re-export certificate from other exporting countries) is required, but not an import permit.

APPENDIX III includes species that any Party identifies as being subject to regulation within its jurisdiction for the purpose of preventing or restricting exploitation and as needing the co-operation of other Parties in the control of trade. Imports require a certificate of origin and, if the importation is from the State that has included the species in Appendix III, an export permit is required.

All imports into the European Union of CITES Appendix II-listed species require both an export permit/re-export certificate and an import permit.

BIRDS

INDONESIA: In November 2018, 2,140 birds were seized at Merak port, Java; a consignment of 4,851 birds arriving from Lampung, Sumatra, bound for Java, was seized in Kota Serang, Sumatra; ca. 1,500 birds stuffed into plastic crates in the luggage compartment of a bus at Bakauheni Port, Sumatra, was confiscated.

On 3 December 2018, authorities seized over 8,000 birds during three incidents over a 10-day period. All the birds had originated from Sumatra, Indonesia, and were destined for sale in Java.

On 10 December 2018, over 3,000 birds were seized from two vehicles at Bakauheni, Lampung, including Sumatran Laughingthrush *Garrulax bicolor*, Crested Jay *Platylophus galericalatus*, Maroon-bellied Sunbird *Cinnyris lotenius*, Javan Myna *Acridotheres javanicus*, Greater Green Leafbird *Chloropsis sonnerati*, white-eyes *Zosteropidae*, prinias *Prinia* spp. and tailorbirds *Orthotomus* spp. The requisite documentation was missing.

All surviving specimens have since been released in Sumatran forests.

TRAFFIC: <https://bit.ly/2XEXH7B>, 3 December 2018

TURKEY: In January 2019, it was reported that Customs officials at Atatürk Airport, Istanbul, had seized more than 300 Grey Parrots *Psittacus erithacus* (CITES I) smuggled from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, en route to Iraq. Ten birds had perished, the surviving specimens were taken to a rehabilitation centre in Bursa province.

Anadolu Agency: <https://bit.ly/2UzNyam>, 9 January 2019

UK: On 10 January 2019, at Snaresbrook Crown Court, Jeffrey Lendrum was sentenced to imprisonment for three years. He was arrested in June 2018 by Border Force officials at Heathrow Airport as he attempted to enter the country from South Africa with 19 eggs of CITES-listed birds strapped to his chest. Lendrum has served time in prison for previous egg smuggling offences (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 23(1):30; 28(1):29).

Gov.uk: <https://bit.ly/2Cehbak>, 10 January 2019; *BBC:* <https://bbc.in/2URuv0d>, 10 January 2019

ELEPHANTS

The African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* is listed in CITES Appendix I, except the populations of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe, which are included in Appendix II; the Asian Elephant *Elephas maximus* is listed in Appendix I.

CAMBODIA: On 13 December 2018, at Phnom Penh Autonomous Port, authorities acting on information from the US embassy seized more than 1,026 tusks (3.2 t) hidden amongst marble in a container that had arrived from Mozambique and was unclaimed.

The Independent: <https://bit.ly/2GvEPkM>, 16 December 2018

CHINA: On 30 March 2019, Huangpu Anti-smuggling Bureau seized 2748 tusks (7.48 t) in a single enforcement action that comprised separate shipments seized from around the country and which involved some 20 suspects who had purchased the tusks in Nigeria and other African countries. The ivory had been misreported as timber.

China Daily: <https://bit.ly/2J4CDDE>, 15 April 2018



◀ **Almost 8 t of elephant ivory, a consolidation of separate shipments from around the country, was confiscated in a single enforcement action by Huangpu Anti-smuggling Bureau in March 2019.**

CONGO: On 22 November 2018, at a court in Brazzaville, Leonard Beckou, Levi Bonaventure Lognangue, and Bienvenu Nsimbizoina from Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Farvin Abegou from Congo, were each sentenced to five years in prison and fined CFA5 million (USD8,500)—the highest sentences that can be imposed for wildlife crime in Congo.

The group was apprehended after being pursued over three days by tracking specialists after poaching four elephants to the south of Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park; reportedly they were planning to pursue their hunting activities claiming the tusks of the elephants they had killed were too small to cover the costs of the operation and to compensate for the risks they had undertaken.

In February 2019, at the Court of Ouésso, Jouanin Andoula and Michel Anoumzock were each sentenced to three years' in prison and fined CFA2 million (USD3,400) for killing an elephant. Andoula admitted that he had been hunting elephants for several years and had offered his services to shoot elephants to obtain ivory. Anoumzock owned the weapon used to poach the elephant; an elephant trunk and tail were recovered from his bags.

On 28 March 2019, at the High Court of Oyo, Cuvette, Congolese national Blandain Mefouta was sentenced to five years' imprisonment and fined CFA10 million (USD17,000) after being found in possession of four elephant tusks. He had reportedly activated a ring of poachers and provided them with ammunition, which resulted in elephants being poached in Odzala-Kokoua National Park.

On 4 April 2019, at the High Court of Owando, Cuvette, Congolese nationals Evoura Vianney and Ngoua Issoko Justin, and Kolon Koumaré from Mali, were each sentenced to three years in prison and fined CFA2 million (USD3,400) for possession of ammunition and six elephant tusks. Vianney was also ordered to pay CFA200,000 (USD340). The three were arrested in Odzala-Kokoua National Park.

Environment News Service: <https://bit.ly/2GsAUVF>, 30 November 2018; *Agence d'Information d'Afrique Centrale:* <https://bit.ly/2DsGIU3>, 19 February 2019; *Eagle Network:* <https://bit.ly/2VjGBIS>, March 2019; *Groupe Congo Medias:* <https://bit.ly/2PrdoN0>, 29 March 2019; *First Mediac:* <https://bit.ly/2Du8U3s>, 8 April 2019

INDONESIA: On 20 December 2018, Amiruddin Wansyah and Alidin Jalaluddin were sentenced to four years in prison for the killing of an Asian Elephant *Elephas maximus sumatranus* in East Aceh, Sumatra, and fined IDR100 m (USD6,900). Two others are sought.

Laboratory tests carried out on the elephant, found dead in June 2018 near Serbajadi Conservation Response Unit, indicated that the animal had been poisoned. The elephant was one of four tame elephants trained by forest rangers in Aceh to ward off wild elephant herds encroaching on farms and villages. The suspects confessed that they had given the animal fruit covered with poison, having initially intended to target another elephant with larger tusks.

Waspada medan.com: <https://bit.ly/2Dw09FU>; *Mongabay:* <https://bit.ly/2Ppo2DS>, 8 July 2018

NAMIBIA: On 9 April 2019, at Tsumeb Magistrates' Court, Johannes Bokoma Nashikaku, was fined NAD30 000 (USD2,000) or alternatively sentenced to three years' imprisonment. He was arrested in March in possession of two elephant tusks; the ivory and a vehicle were forfeited.

New Era: <https://bit.ly/2DvHTwr>, 11 April 2019

TANZANIA: On 19 February 2019, at Kisutu Court, Chinese national Yang Fenglan, together with two Tanzanian accomplices, was sentenced to 15 years in prison. Fenglan had been in custody since the three were arrested in 2015 on charges of ivory smuggling. Labelled the "Ivory Queen" she was charged with smuggling nearly 2 t of ivory, and for orchestrating an ivory smuggling racket.

Tuko: <https://bit.ly/2ZrGEYy>; *Al Jazeera News:* <https://bit.ly/2Sbn5io>, 20 February 2019

USA: Jewellery shop owner Victor Cohen, and salesperson, Sheldon Kupersmith, have been fined a combined USD210,000—the largest fine in California's history for the illegal sale of ivory. Some 300 pieces of elephant ivory were discovered at Carlton Gallery, in La Jolla, California, and at a warehouse. The duo was placed on probation for three years which, if violated, will result in a year in custody and an additional fine of USD100,000; they were also ordered to complete 200 hours of community service at San Diego Zoo.

NBC Universal: <https://bit.ly/2DdL3EH>, 5 February 2019

VIET NAM: On 26 March 2019, Customs officials at Tien Sa Port, Da Nang, seized over 9 t of elephant tusks hidden in timber containers. Preliminary investigations indicated that the consignment was imported from Congo via Singapore and registered for a business in neighbouring Quang Nam Province. This is reported to be the largest-ever seizure of ivory on record (see also Other / multi seizures).

VN Express International: <https://bit.ly/2VXIGxy>, 28 March 2019

ZAMBIA: In February 2018, it was reported that Lubinda Lay had been sentenced at Lundazi Subordinate Court to six years' imprisonment with hard labour for the unlawful possession of three pairs of ivory tusks (and six months for the illegal possession of a firearm).

The Solwezi Subordinate Court recently sentenced Esther Malata to five years' imprisonment with hard labour for the unlawful possession of ivory (17 kg).

News Diggers Media Ltd: <https://bit.ly/2URvHkx>, 6 February 2019; *Lusaka Times:* <https://bit.ly/2UQicBC>, 19 February 2019

MARINE

CHINA: Authorities in Guangdong province are reported to have charged 11 people for smuggling 20,000 swim bladders of *Totoaba macdonaldi* from the Gulf of California in Mexico and selling them in China where they are an ingredient in traditional medicine. The species is classified by IUCN as Critically Endangered.

BBC News: <https://bbc.in/2GzfExt>, 7 March 2019

CROATIA: On 6 February 2019, at Zagreb International Airport, two people were caught with suitcases containing tens of thousands of juvenile European Eels *Anguilla anguilla* (CITES II) or "glass eels". The specimens were placed in the care of a zoo.

South China Morning Post: <https://bit.ly/2USMC6e>, 8 February 2019

GERMANY: On 28 November 2018, authorities at Frankfurt Airport seized a consignment of 5000 juvenile European Eels *Anguilla anguilla* (CITES II) in luggage belonging to a Malaysian passenger who had boarded her flight to Viet Nam and evaded arrest. The eels were later released in the river Rhine.

On 2 February 2019, Customs officials acting on information seized 210,000 live juvenile eels from a former Chinese restaurant in Liederbach, Frankfurt am Main; the animals were recovered from one of several large water-filled basins; investigators also found packing material for the transport of the animals as well as thousands of dead juvenile eels. A rental vehicle, registered in a neighbouring country, belonged to a group under investigation for suspected involvement in juvenile eel smuggling. Three people—two Malaysian nationals and one Chinese national—were arrested. The seized live specimens were released in the river Rhine.

DW Akademie: <https://bit.ly/2ViOPY1>, 4 December 2018; Zoll: <https://bit.ly/2DxYMqn>, 5 February 2019

INDIA: On 6 March 2019, at Mumbai International Airport, a man bound for Kuala Lumpur was detained after 30 kg of dried seahorses *Hippocampus* spp. (CITES II) wrapped in plastic were found in his bag. The species are protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act 1972.

DNA India: <https://bit.ly/2Zvj0u3>, 8 March 2019

MALAYSIA: In October 2018, three Philippines nationals were sentenced in Tawau Sessions Court for possession of Green Turtle *Chelonia mydas* (CITES I) parts. Junaidi Umarati was imprisoned for three years and fined MYR50,000 (USD12,000) in default of a year's imprisonment after being found with 92 kg of turtle shell, scales and tails in Sisipan waters off Semporna district, Sabah, in August 2018. Tambisan Pagal and Tambulang Tambisan were sentenced to prison for three years and each fined MYR100,000 (USD24,000) for hunting and killing Green Turtles. They were ordered to serve another year in prison if they failed to pay the fine.

On 18 February 2019, a further three Philippines nationals were each sentenced to two years in prison and fined MYR60,000 (USD14,500) for possessing six Green Turtle shells from specimens seized in waters off Ligitan Island. The trio will spend another year in prison if they fail to pay the fine.

The Star: <https://bit.ly/2GDJ1A8>, 3 October 2018; <https://bit.ly/2KZ3kvZ>, 29 October 2018; <https://bit.ly/2vguzaN>, 18 February 2019

NEW ZEALAND: On 5 December 2018, at Porirua District Court, Ruteru Sufia was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment after pleading guilty to taking 366 abalones *Haliotis* spp. from Makara beach, including undersized specimens. The daily limit in the area is 10 per person and the minimum legal size is 125 mm. His vehicle and gear were forfeited, and he was banned from fishing for three years.

Newsie (New Zealand): <https://bit.ly/2GüFQ0>, 6 December 2018

NORTH MACEDONIA: On 11 April 2019, police detained four men, including two Chinese nationals, who were transporting 60 kg of juvenile or glass European Eels *Anguilla anguilla* (CITES II) to Skopje's International Airport; the live cargo was bound for Kuala Lumpur. The suspects had allegedly purchased the eels in Bulgaria for a buyer in Malaysia. A Customs official is accused of granting the men a free pass into the country from Bulgaria.

Star Tribune: <http://strib.mn/2GxPGdl>, 11 April 2019

SOUTH AFRICA: On 14 November 2018, authorities seized over 4,000 dried and frozen abalones from 10 chest freezers in a house in Welgemoed, Western Cape, and arrested a foreign national.

On 14 February 2019, at the Western Cape High Court, André Johannes Minnaar and sons

Rudolf and Marthinus were each sentenced to five years' imprisonment, suspended for five years on strict conditions; André and Rudolf were also fined R100 000 (USD7,000) or eight years' imprisonment for abalone poaching and money laundering, of which half the sentence was suspended for five years. Marthinus was additionally sentenced to a further eight years' imprisonment for abalone poaching, which was wholly suspended for five years, again with stringent conditions. Seven others earlier pleaded guilty to all charges for which they were sentenced in December 2018.

The group was linked to a syndicate that carried out illegal abalone operations at various premises in the Western Cape and Gauteng, where wet abalone was delivered, stored, dried and packaged.

On 28 February 2019, at Strand Magistrates' Court, Constable Frederico Franke was sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment for the illegal possession and transport of circa 1.5 t of abalones *Haliotis midae*. In May 2016, Franke and another police officer hatched a plan with two suspects (awaiting trial) to apprehend their vehicle carrying abalones from Hermanus to Kleinmond, seize the abalone, keeping some for themselves to sell at a later date and submitting the remainder for investigation, while allowing the suspects to flee. The case against the co-accused is pending.

In February 2019, at Port Elizabeth High Court, Julian Brown was sentenced to 18 years in prison for running an illegal abalone poaching enterprise (and three years for poaching). Both sentences will run concurrently. Brown, along with Eugene Victor and Brandon Turner, was convicted on charges of racketeering and contravening the *Marine Living Resources Act*. Victor was also convicted on additional charges, including forgery and fraud. Victor and Turner were each sentenced to an effective 15 years behind bars.

On 29 March 2019, at Port Elizabeth High Court, Marshelle Bignault was sentenced to imprisonment for 12 years for her role in running an illegal abalone enterprise (her ex-husband Morne Bignault was convicted in September 2018 of racketeering and abalone poaching and sentenced to 20 years in prison (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 30(2):75)).

Jacob Naumann, Frederick Nance, Petrus Smit and Willie Nance were convicted on related charges and received sentences ranging from five to 12 years, while Nance Snr received the option of a ZAR20,000 (USD1,430) fine or 18 months in prison. He was convicted on charges of contravening the *Marine Living Resources Act* after he was caught assisting his son, Frederick, with transporting processed abalone from a farm outside Port Elizabeth where the Bignaults' illegal operations were conducted. Naumann received two 12-year sentences for racketeering as well as one four-year sentence and two three-year sentences for contravening the *Marine Living Resources Act*. His sentences will run concurrently.

South African Police Service press release: <https://bit.ly/2vgHSI7>, 14 November 2018; News24: <https://bit.ly/2KXHpFF>, 15 February 2019; South Africa National Prosecuting Authority: <https://bit.ly/2UcttPu>, 1 March 2019; Herald Live: <https://bit.ly/2Gu9DCw>, 2 March 2019; Herald Live: <https://bit.ly/2UeNdOx>, 30 March 2019

SWITZERLAND: In mid-January 2019, at airports in Geneva and Zurich, authorities seized some 250,000 juvenile European Eels *Anguilla anguilla* (CITES II), many of which were later released in Lake Murten.

vaaju.com: <https://bit.ly/2Du6bXz>, 9 February 2019

TAIWAN: On 28 December 2018, Customs and Excise Department seized more than 80,000 young eels *Anguilla* spp. in a shipment declared to contain tropical fish.

Liberty Times Net, 28 December 2018

TANZANIA: In January 2019, the Taiwanese Captain of a Malaysian long liner, Han Ming Chuan, along with the owner, Dato Seri Lee Yee Jiat, and agent, Abubakar Salum Hassan, were sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment or a fine of TZS1 billion (USD435,000). Their vessel was intercepted in January 2018; on board over 90 kg of shark fin [species not reported] was discovered, in violation of Tanzanian law and international regulations.

Stop Illegal Fishing: <https://bit.ly/2vhe3au>, 15 January 2019

THAILAND: On 19 December, officials at Suvarnabhumi Airport seized two shipments of juvenile European Eels *Anguilla anguilla* (CITES II) declared as shrimps. The first (357 kg) came from Romania; provenance of the second shipment (352 kg) was not reported.

The Nation: <https://bit.ly/2IPDhEV>, 21 December 2018

USA: On 11 December 2018, the owner and officers of a Japanese-flagged fishing vessel were charged in a federal court with aiding and abetting the trafficking and smuggling of 962 shark fins into and out of Hawaii on 7 November 2018. Their vessel had been engaged in longline tuna fishing in the southern Pacific Ocean for a year. During the voyage, fins were harvested from approximately 300 sharks, in some instances while the fish were stunned but still alive, and the finless bodies were discarded overboard.

All fins derived from specimens of CITES-II species: Oceanic Whitetip Shark *Carcharhinus longimanus*, Silky Sharks *Carcharhinus falcaformis* and Bigeye Thresher Sharks *Alopias superciliosus*.

US Department of Justice media release: <https://bit.ly/2KXOWWI>, 11 December 2018.

PANGOLINS

All eight species of pangolins *Manis* spp. are listed in CITES Appendix I, effective 2 January 2017

HONG KONG SAR: In January 2019, authorities seized over 8 t of pangolin scales en route to Viet Nam from Nigeria.

TRAFFIC: <https://bit.ly/2UuqY32>, 16 February 2019

MALAYSIA: On 7 February 2019, authorities in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, seized a record 30 t of pangolins and pangolin scales and uncovered the workings of a syndicate that has reportedly been operating for seven years. At a factory and warehouse, they seized from refrigerated containers some 1,800 boxes of frozen pangolins, 572 frozen pangolins in separate freezers, 61 live pangolins and 360 kg of pangolin scales. A Malaysian national and owner of the factory was detained; he had reportedly purchased the pangolins from local hunters for distribution locally and in neighbouring Sarawak.

TRAFFIC: <https://bit.ly/2UBb3Qu>, 11 February 2019

SINGAPORE: On 3 April 2019, at Pasir Panjang Export Inspection Station, authorities seized 12.9 t of pangolin scales. Just days later, on 8 April, a further 12.7 t were seized; both shipments were on their way from Nigeria to Viet Nam.

The latest haul was hidden in a container declared to contain cassia seeds. On inspection, officers discovered the pangolin scales, estimated to have been taken from some 21,000 pangolins, packed in 474 bags.

The scales seized in the first shipment derive from the White-bellied Tree Pangolin *Manis tricuspis* and the Giant Ground Pangolin *M. gigantea*; those from the second include scales from these species and from the Black-bellied Tree Pangolin *M. tetradactyla* and Temminck's Ground Pangolin *Manis temminckii*.

Today online: <https://bit.ly/2W0WE1C>, 10 April 2019

SOUTH AFRICA: On 2 November 2018, at Tzaneen Regional Court, Limpopo Province, Golden Khumalo and Sjabuliso Mpofu were sentenced to seven years' imprisonment for the unlawful possession of a pangolin. During the trial, the court heard how the accused would hunt this species to sell to an underground market of locals and foreigners around Tzaneen.

On 22 February 2019, at Middleburg Regional Magistrates' Court, Mpumalunga, Zimbabwean national Senior Mabena was sentenced to six years in prison after being found in possession of a live pangolin. He was also sentenced to three months' imprisonment for being in South Africa illegally.

*National Prosecuting Authority media statement: <https://bit.ly/2lQl5de>; 2 November 2018; *The Citizen*: <https://bit.ly/2Pv8X3S>, 22 February 2019*

THAILAND: On 28 February 2019, a Malaysian policeman was detained for allegedly trying to smuggle 47 pangolins into the country from Malaysia. He had arrived by car at Sadao Customs House; officers found a number of sacks containing live pangolins hidden under the bonnet. He admitted that the pangolins had been procured in Alor Setar, Kedah, and were to be sold in Sadao town for export to China.

On 2 March 2019, a man was arrested at a police checkpoint near Sam Roi Yot Police Station in Prachuap Khiri Khan province after police

Customs officers ► in Sabah, Malaysia, in February 2019 examining part of a consignment that included a record-breaking 30 t of pangolins and pangolin scales.



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found 76 pangolins in 18 sacks in the back of his vehicle. He reportedly confessed that it was his third run trafficking the animals, which came from Indonesia, and for which he had been paid.

*<https://bit.ly/2EEiL7S>, 28 February 2019; *Khaosod English*: <https://bit.ly/2C84RsL>, 5 March 2019*

ZAMBIA: On 17 October 2018, Charles Simulambo was sentenced to five years' imprisonment with labour for selling a live pangolin in Livingstone.

On 19 February 2019 it was reported that Mangani Phiri had been sentenced at the High Court in Chipata to five years' imprisonment for the unlawful possession of a live pangolin.

*Daily Mail: <https://bit.ly/2lRrRR4>, 27 October 2018; *Lusaka Times*: <https://bit.ly/2UQicBC>, 19 February 2019*

ZIMBABWE: On 18 October 2018, at Hwange Magistrates' Court, Zanu PF Matabeleland North Deputy provincial secretary Robert John Khumalo and traditional healer Sithembiso Tshuma, were each sentenced to the mandatory nine years in prison for the illegal possession of a pangolin skin. Khumalo was arrested while seated in a car in Hwange negotiating a price for the animal's scales with Tshuma. The pangolin skin with scales was found in the boot of the car.

On 19 October 2018, at Matabeleland North Magistrates' Court, three people were each sentenced to nine years in prison for an offence involving a pangolin: Tama Muleya and brothers Ernest and Clive Komonde, from Kalamenda, were found in possession of two pangolin skins (2.7 kg/2 kg) in September. They claimed they had been hired to transport the animals in exchange for beer but were unaware of the contents of the vehicle. The skins were forfeited to the State.

*News Day: <https://bit.ly/2UxChkK>, 19 October 2018; *Chronicle*: <https://bit.ly/2KYtX7>, 27 October 2018*

REPTILES

INDIA: On 25 March 2019, Customs officials at Chennai International Airport arrested a passenger arriving from Bangkok, Thailand,

who was found with a number of reptiles contained in plastic containers and boxes of confectionery in his luggage. Upon inspection by the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, the specimens were identified as 22 specimens of the critically endangered Kleinmann's Tortoise *Testudo kleinmanni* (CITES I), two Rhinoceros Iguanas *Cyclura cornuta* (CITES I), rock iguanas *Cyclura* spp., four Blue-tongued Lizards *Tiliqua* spp. and a horned pit viper *Crotalinae*. The animals were to be returned to Bangkok.

Authorities at the airport had been placed on high alert following intelligence that wildlife was likely to be smuggled from Thailand following the seizure in February of a Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) cub arriving on a flight from Bangkok.

Deccan Chronicle: <http://bit.ly/2VTAZve>, 26 March 2019

MADAGASCAR: On 24 October 2018, authorities in Madagascar confiscated 7,347 Radiated Tortoises *Astrochelys radiata* (CITES I) from wildlife traffickers. Some 200 tortoises had perished by the end of October and the remaining specimens were being cared for by staff of the Turtle Survival Alliance.

On 4 March 2019, a Chinese national was arrested at a hotel in Ankazomanga after being found in possession of drugs and 24 live Radiated Tortoises.

*Mongabay: <https://bit.ly/2KURKcd>, 31 October 2018; *LINFO*.re: <https://bit.ly/2GrWs4U>, 7 March 2019*

MALAYSIA: On 30 October 2018, ex-Customs officers Abdul Razak Abdul Shukor and Mohd Hazwan Musa'Almudin were sentenced to five years in prison and fined for illegal possession of 31 Black Spotted Turtles *Geoclemys hamiltonii* (CITES I). The men were arrested in May 2016 at Kuala Lumpur International Airport where they were serving Customs officers at the time of the arrest; they were apprehended after lifting two bags off a carousel which were found to contain six adult, six immature and 19 female turtles. The men were each given the maximum sentence for the first charge—possession of a totally protected species without a special permit, which is three years in prison and a fine of MYR100,000 (USD23,949). On the second charge of illegal possession of an immature animal, they were each sentenced to one year in prison and fined MYR80,000 (USD19,159) and one year

in prison for the illegal possession of female wildlife, plus a fine of MYR50,000 (USD11,974). The prison terms are to run concurrently from the date of arrest but a stay of execution on the prison terms was allowed, pending an appeal.

TRAFFIC: <https://bit.ly/2zhqjC>, 30 October 2018

PHILIPPINES: On 3 March 2019, authorities at Ninoy Aquino International Airport seized 1,529 tortoises from unclaimed luggage arriving on a flight from Hong Kong. The species, none native to Hong Kong, included Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans*, African Spurred Tortoises *Centrochelys sulcata*, Red-footed Tortoises *Chelonoidis carbonarius* and Hermann's Tortoises *Testudo hermanni* (all CITES II species), plus several other tortoise and freshwater turtle species.

In October 2018, authorities seized 250 live geckos Gekkonidae shipped from Hong Kong to a cargo warehouse near Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

TRAFFIC: <https://bit.ly/2UuUF45>, 5 March 2019

RHINOCEROSES

All species of Rhinocerotidae are listed in CITES Appendix I except the South African and Swaziland populations of *Ceratotherium simum*, which are listed in Appendix II.

HONG KONG SAR: On 14 February 2019, authorities at Hong Kong International Airport seized some 40 kg of rhino horns from two men in transit from Johannesburg, South Africa, bound for Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam.

On 5 April 2019, Customs officials at Hong Kong International Airport seized 82.5 kg of rhino horn/cut pieces. The consignment from South Africa, bound for Malaysia, was declared as "auto parts" and was detected following x-ray screening.

The Government of the Hong Kong SAR media release: <https://bit.ly/2vi3l3t>, 14 February 2019; Channel News Asia: <https://bit.ly/2KYwvn2>, 6 April 2019

MOZAMBIQUE: On 16 October 2018, police at Maputo International Airport detained a Vietnamese citizen bound for Viet Nam with 10 rhino horns (11.9 kg) in his luggage, in boxes labelled as industrial machinery.

The previous week, a Chinese citizen was detained in possession of nine rhino horns (see TRAFFIC Bulletin 30(2):76).

Club of Mozambique: <https://bit.ly/2lQLf0A>; AllAfrica: <https://bit.ly/2P4Kfcm>, 17 October 2018

NAMIBIA: On 8 February 2019, at Opuwo Magistrates' Court, Ruteni Muharukua of the Kunene region was fined NAD25,000 (USD1,770) (or five years in prison). He was also sentenced to two years' imprisonment, suspended for five years, on the same count on condition he is not convicted of committing a similar offence during the period of suspension.

Ruteni was arrested in October 2017 in Etosha National Park after attempting to poach a rhino; another person accompanying him was killed. Although the duo did not shoot the rhino, Muharukua was still considered guilty of the offence of hunting specially protected game.

On 12 April 2019, at Windhoek High Court, an appeal being heard against a conviction handed down to four Chinese citizens in March 2014 on charges of attempting to export rhino horns was not only dismissed but their sentences were increased. Wang Hui, Pu Xuexin, Li Zhibing and Li Xiaoliang were found guilty in 2014 of attempting to export 14 rhino horns and a Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) skin. Their original trial ended with all four being sentenced to between 11 and 14 years' imprisonment.

The appeal court decreed that the defendants should also have been found guilty of unlawfully acquiring, possessing, using or taking out of Namibia the proceeds of unlawful activities. Their sentences were replaced with one of 20 years' imprisonment, of which five years were conditionally suspended, resulting in an effective term for each of 15 years in prison, backdated to September 2016.

The Namibian: <https://www.namibian.com.na/75528/read/Etosha-poacher-gets-fines-or-eight-years-in-jail>, 11 February 2019; AllAfrica: <https://bit.ly/2vkCfbY>, 15 April 2019

SOUTH AFRICA: In November 2018, at Skukuza Regional Court, Patrick Nkuna of Mozambique was sentenced to 33 years and three months' imprisonment for trespassing, rhino poaching, possession of an illegal firearm and attempted murder.

On 19 November 2015, the accused illegally entered the Pretoriuskop area of Kruger National Park and shot and killed a Black Rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* and shot at, and damaged, a helicopter after being spotted by rangers.

On 28 November 2018, Jetro Moyagabo Malema, George Itumeleng Thutlwa and Joseph Kgosietsile Tsieme who were arrested in Madikwe Game Reserve, North West Province, after attempting to kill a rhino in June 2017, were given prison terms of up to 10 years (some sentences suspended) and a range of fines. The rhino was injured.



Rhino horns (82 kg) from South Africa, bound for Malaysia, and seized at Hong Kong International Airport in April 2019.

On 9 January 2019, at O.R. Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg, Customs officials intercepted a consignment declared as "decoration items" that were found to contain 36 rhino horns (116 kg) after being discovered by a detector dog. The goods were destined for Dubai and had been concealed under laminated wooden sheets in boxes that were otherwise filled with doormats and decorative items.

On 3 April 2019, at Grahamstown High Court, Forget Ndlovu, George Jabulani Ndlovu, and Skhumbuzo Ndlovu (not related) were each sentenced to 25 years in prison after being found guilty on 50 charges related to rhino poaching in the Eastern Cape. The men, two of whom are Zimbabwe nationals, are believed to have been involved in some 13 cases of rhino poaching in the Eastern Cape over a period of five years. They were arrested in June 2016 at Makana Resort, in Makhanda, with the freshly-harvested horn of a White Rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* in their possession. Reportedly, they also had a darting rifle, drugs to dart animals, darts, saws and knives, camping gear, cars and mobile phones. The investigation took three years and the group had twice been released on bail.

Mpumalanga News: <https://bit.ly/2DvHBpp>, 12 November 2018; <https://bit.ly/2VnN0ZU>, 30 November 2018; South African Revenue Service (SARS) media release: <https://bit.ly/2ZxIEzs>, 10 January 2019; RNews: <https://bit.ly/2DtOMhQ>, 3 April 2019

THAILAND: On 30 January 2019 it was reported that Bach Mai, aka "Boonchai", arrested at Suvarnabhumi Airport in December 2018 for attempting to smuggle 14 rhino horns into the country and who was subsequently sentenced to two and a half years in prison, had his sentence quashed after a key witness recanted his testimony in court.

Boonchai and members of his family are reportedly key players in one of Asia's biggest animal trafficking networks, allegedly responsible for exporting wildlife through Lao PDR to Viet Nam and China.

Bangkok Post: <https://bit.ly/2KYzMi>; BBC: <https://bbc.in/2VoPmYn>, 20 January 2018; The Guardian: <https://bit.ly/2cwnnvu>, 26 September 2016

TURKEY: On 8 December 2018, security forces at Atatürk Airport, Istanbul, seized 34 kg of rhino horns from luggage belonging to a Vietnamese national travelling from Mozambique to Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam. Authorities were alerted by previous trips taken by the passenger, which prompted security forces to detain the suspect on landing.

On 8 February 2019, it was reported that security forces at Atatürk Airport had seized 21 rhino horns which were detected following x-ray screening of luggage belonging to two Vietnamese passengers in transit from South Africa to Viet Nam.

Daily Sabah (Turkey): <https://bit.ly/2PrSPjx>, 9 December 2018; AA Anadolu Agency: <https://bit.ly/2tkrLs1>, 8 February 2019

FLORA

CÔTE D'IVOIRE: On 7 April 2019, two containers of African Rosewood *Pterocarpus erinaceus* (CITES II), reportedly the equivalent of 200 trees, were seized in Anougré-Kouadiokro.

Journal du Cameroun: <https://bit.ly/2KYwp19>, 8 April 2019

GABON: On 3 December 2018, a Gabonese national and a Chinese national were arrested near Lambaréné following information received by authorities of a convoy of six logging vehicles that had travelled the previous night along the Lambaréné-Fougamou axis. The team immobilised the vehicles at Ndzamba village, on one of the sites of a logging company in the province of Ngounié. Some 13 rosewood *Guibourtia* spp. (Bubinga/Kevazingo) (CITES II) trees had been felled and were reportedly due to be transported to Ndzamba and on to Nkok; the corresponding logs and the vehicles were seized.

In March 2019, about 1,000 m³ of *Guibourtia* spp. (Bubinga/Kevazingo), equivalent to some 30 large container-loads, were confiscated from a warehouse at Owendo timber port on the Libreville peninsula. The head of the Chinese business that owned the warehouse and two other employees were arrested and taken into custody.

Gabon has banned exploitation of Kevazingo trees as illegal felling had reportedly reached alarming proportions. Forest dwellers in equatorial Africa consider the tree to be sacred.

Gabon News: <https://bit.ly/2PyLsHf> 13 December 2018; *Phys.org:* <https://bit.ly/2INQSMS>, 6 March 2019;

HONG KONG: On 8 February 2019, two defendants were sentenced to 16 months' imprisonment in the District Court for smuggling into the country some 24 kg and 17 kg of agarwood *Aquilaria* spp. (CITES II), respectively.

The Government of the Hong Kong Special SAR press release: <https://bit.ly/2vi3l3t>, 14 February 2019

OTHER / MULTI-SEIZURES

CAMEROON: In March 2019, four members of a syndicate allegedly operating across Africa, were arrested in Douala in possession of 73 (300 kg) elephant (CITES I) tusks and 1.7 t of pangolin *Manis* spp. (CITES I) scales. One of the suspects used his telephone shop as a cover for the illegal trade, and allegedly made regular trips to China; a second person concealed ivory and pangolin scales inside bags of pepper and spices. The contraband was stored at a house in Douala, reportedly for onward transport to Asia via Nigeria.

The Eagle Network: <https://bit.ly/2VjGBIS>, March 2019

CONGO: On 14 December 2018, at Impfondo District Court, Likouala, Didier Wilibona and

Richard Ngombe of Central African Republic, were sentenced to three years' imprisonment, and fined CFA200,000 (USD345) and CFA1 million in damages after being found guilty of possessing and attempting to sell the meat of Gorilla *Gorilla gorilla* (CITES I).

VOX: <https://bit.ly/2GBC0zU>, 20 December 2018

HONG KONG SAR: On 16 January 2019, Hong Kong Customs mounted a joint operation with mainland Customs to combat cross-boundary wildlife smuggling activities. A shipping container arriving at Kwai Chung Customs House Cargo Examination Compound from Nigeria, bound for Viet Nam, and said to be carrying frozen beef, was found to be holding over 8 t of pangolin scales and over 2 t of ivory. It took four hours to crack open the consignment; the contraband was found beneath frozen meat and a thick layer of ice, reportedly the first time that officers had come across this method of concealment. This is the largest seizure ever made of pangolin scales in Hong Kong. Two people were arrested and the case is under investigation.

BBC: <https://bbc.in/2E8p3f0>, 1 February 2019; *The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region press release:* <https://bit.ly/2vjagjZ>, 1 February 2019; *Rthk.hk news:* <https://bit.ly/2ZrbT5X>, 1 February 2019

KAZAKHSTAN: On 10 April 2019, it is reported that an Uzbek citizen was detained by border guards of the Syri Auto branch of the Ural Frontier Detachment for attempting to smuggle into Russia by bus 148 fresh Saiga Antelope *Saiga tatarica* (CITES II) horns in a suitcase.

TAG news: <https://bit.ly/2ITieRR>, 10 April 2019

MALAYSIA: On 11 March 2019, at Raub Sessions Court, Pahang, Vietnamese national Ho Van Kien was sentenced to six years in prison (on separate charges to be served concurrently) and fined MYR400,000 (USD100,000) for the illegal possession of one Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) skin, a partial tiger skin, claws of a Leopard *P. pardus* (CITES I) and Sun Bear *Helarctos malayanus* (CITES I), as well as 150 g of tiger meat and 20 kg of Wild Pig *Sus scrofa* meat. He was arrested in July 2018 in Kuala Lipis, Pahang State, along with five other Vietnamese nationals (whose cases were acquitted). Ho was sentenced to a year in prison, and fined MYR100,000 (USD25,000) for each of the four charges of illegal possession of Totally Protected species. He will also serve a year in prison for each fine he fails to pay.

On 13 March 2019, at Kuala Kangsar Sessions Court, Vietnamese national Tran Van Sang was sentenced to 19 years in prison after being caught in August 2017 in northern Peninsular Malaysia in possession of 273 animal body parts, including those of Tiger *Panthera tigris*, Leopard *P. pardus*, Clouded Leopard *Neofelis nebulosa*, and Sun Bear *Helarctos malayanus*, all CITES-I listed species and Totally Protected under national legislation.

TRAFFIC: <https://bit.ly/2XTAoYI>, 13 March 2019

PHILIPPINES: On 8 April 2019, authorities seized a consignment that included hundreds of birds, and dozens of reptiles and a Critically

Endangered and rarely seen Western Long-beaked Echidna *Zaglossus bruijni* from premises in Mati City, Davao Oriental province.

The majority of the birds, many threatened species, came from Indonesian Papua and Papua New Guinea, including 24 Red-and-Blue Lorries *Eos histrio* and 20 Palm Cockatoos *Probosciger aterrimus* (both CITES I) and the following Appendix II-listed Pesquet's Parrot *Psittichas fulgidus*, Eclectus Parrot *Eclectus roratus* and Black-capped Lory *Lorius lory*. The animals will be assessed to determine their potential for rehabilitation. Two people were arrested.

TRAFFIC: <https://www.traffic.org/news/echidna-among-wildlife-menagerie-seized-in-philippines/>, 9 April 2019

TANZANIA: On 12 December 2018, in Singida Municipality in Manyoni district, four people were sentenced to prison for up to 20 years and received hefty fines for firearms possession and for illegally dealing in government trophies, namely 28 African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I) tusks, the skin of one Lion *Panthera leo* (CITES II) and four lion claws, the skin of a Greater Kudu *Tragelaphus strepsiceros* and Eland *Taurotragus oryx* meat.

L. Clifford, TRAFFIC, in litt., 12 December 2018

UGANDA: On 31 January 2019, authorities seized 750 pieces of elephant ivory (over 3 t) and 424 kg of pangolin *Manis* spp. scales (both CITES I) being smuggled from neighbouring South Sudan inside pieces of timber. The containers had been sealed with thick wax which required the use of chainsaws to break open. This is reportedly one of the largest seizures of wildlife contraband in the country. Four Vietnamese nationals are in custody.

Uganda Revenue Authority: <https://bit.ly/2GB32qU>, undated; *Aljazeera:* <https://bit.ly/2GbXVOg>, 31 January 2019

VIET NAM: On 2 November 2018, authorities Tan Vu Port, Hai Phong, recovered 800 kg of scales of the White-bellied Pangolin *Manis tricuspis* (CITES I), 93 mammal claws, 129 Lion *Panthera leo* (CITES II) teeth and pelts of three Leopards *P. pardus* (CITES I), from containers containing timber imported from Cameroon.

On 25 January 2019, at Hai Phong Customs Department, Danang port, an inspection uncovered ca 1 t of pangolin *Manis* spp. (CITES I) scales and 500 kg of ivory (CITES I) that had arrived at Lach Huyen port, Hai Phong, from the port of Apapa, Nigeria, in a container declared as wood. The items were discovered in crates wrapped in chains and concealed under layers of logs. The importer is an import/export company in Ha Noi.

Tuoi Tre News: <https://bit.ly/2GEmP9c>, 2 November 2018; *ANTV:* <https://bit.ly/2II20fl>, 3 November 2018; *Customs News, Viet Nam:* <https://bit.ly/2ZqEIB>, 28 January 2019

ZIMBABWE: On 4 February 2019 it was reported that Shake Mafuka of Mushumbi had been sentenced to imprisonment for 18 years after being found guilty of the illegal possession of Lion *Panthera leo* (CITES II) claws and pangolin *Manis* spp. (CITES I) scales.

Bulawayo 24 News: <https://bit.ly/2DyMMF2>, 4 February 2019