



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 2016 and March 2017. Sources are cited at the end of each country section. Readers are referred to the TRAFFIC website (www.traffic.org/media-reports/) for regular updates on cases reported from around the world.

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.

AUSTRIA: In early November 2016, reports to the police of two people seen openly exchanging three elephant tusks and cash in a street in Vienna, led to a search by officials of two flats owned by the buyer, an Austrian national. Some 90 raw and worked elephant tusks (563 kg) concealed behind cupboards were seized.

Bundesministerium für Finanzen: <http://bit.ly/2pViHpm> (in German), 16 November 2016; *Die Presse:* <http://bit.ly/2pUVxQL> (in German), 16 November 2016

CHINA: On 1 November 2016, at Beijing's No. 4 Intermediate People's Court, a man from Shaanxi Province was sentenced to four years in gaol and fined CNY40 000 (USD5912) for illegally smuggling 52 ivory items (10 kg) from Cape Town, South Africa, to Beijing, in June 2014, in his shoes and in metal boxes in his luggage.

Global Times: www.globaltimes.cn/content/1015476.shtml, 2 November 2016

CONGO, REP. OF: On 27 October 2016, at Ouésso Court, Hamadou Abbo and accomplices Minda Xavier and Gonock Evouanga Edgard were each sentenced to five years in gaol for their role in the killing of elephants and the marketing of nine ivory tusks. Minda and Gonock were also ordered to pay the Department of Forestry CFA1 000 000 (USD740) for damages inflicted and a further sum of CFA500 000.

Save the Elephants: <http://bit.ly/2piGdRk>, 29 October 2016

HONG KONG SAR: On 28 March 2017, two people were fined HKD6000 (USD770) and HKD8000 (USD1000) respectively after carbon-14 forensic analysis, used for the first time as evidence in a wildlife crime in Hong Kong, proved that the ivory in a pair of chopsticks for sale in a licensed ivory outlet was obtained after 1990 and therefore illegally for sale.

TRAFFIC: <http://bit.ly/2pFEiFX>, 28 March 2017; <http://bit.ly/2ZounsWB>, 17 February 2017

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.

KENYA: On 21 December 2016, officials at the Port of Mombasa arrested a suspect following the seizure of 1.97 t of ivory that had been concealed in hollowed-out wooden blocks, declared as ceramics, in a shipment en route to Cambodia. Authorities in Singapore returned the consignment to Mombasa after Kenya, acting on intelligence, raised the alarm that it contained illegal cargo. Many of the 334 ivory pieces bore red ink marks reportedly consistent with them being police evidence exhibits.

On 24 February 2017, US national Donna Pontier was sentenced to a gaol term of five years or a fine of KES1 million (USD9600) after being stopped on 20 February at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi, en route to Uganda, in possession of an ivory bangle (10 g) without a permit. Pontier stated that she had received the piece as a gift nearly three decades earlier and had not been aware it was ivory. The judge ordered the return of the bangle to the Kenya Wildlife Service.

The Star: <http://bit.ly/2ZouhVIA>, 15 December 2016; <http://bit.ly/2pVfs1H>, 23 December 2016; <http://bit.ly/2pis7iX>, 24 February 2017; <http://ireut.rs/2hhoYfR>, 22 December 2016

MALAYSIA: On 1 January 2017, Customs officials at Kuala Lumpur International Airport seized 846 kg (254 tusks) of ivory that had been shipped from Kinshasa International Airport, Democratic Republic of Congo, via Ataturk Airport, Istanbul, Turkey, in 17 crates labelled as wood samples, and with documents bearing a false address. No arrests.

Free Malaysia Today: <http://bit.ly/2Zou6nMs>, 4 January 2017; *New Straits Times:* <http://bit.ly/2oNN2ZW>, 4 January 2017

SOUTH SUDAN: On 6 December 2016, at Juba International Airport, authorities seized 500 kg of ivory arriving from either Kenya or Ethiopia (reports vary) but originating from an unspecified neighbouring country, reportedly bound for Asia, via Cairo, Egypt. The ivory had been wrapped in sponge. Three arrests.

World Bulletin: <http://bit.ly/2gGbi9X>, 7 December 2016; *Pulse ng:* <http://bit.ly/2oNNyXS>, 7 December 2016

TANZANIA: On 3 March 2017, at Dodoma Resident Magistrates' Court, Boniface Matthew Mariango and his brothers Lucas Mariango and Abdallah Ally Chaoga were each sentenced to 12 years in gaol; they were arrested in Dar es Salaam in October 2015 while attempting to smuggle 118 elephant tusks (weight not reported). Mariango had been sought by the authorities for a year for allegedly running an ivory trafficking network that spanned Tanzania, Burundi, Zambia, and Mozambique.

BBC: <http://bbc.in/2o6VMf3>, 3 March 2017; *Daily News:* <http://bit.ly/2opNaMm>, 4 March 2017

UGANDA: On 17 February 2017, authorities seized 1.3 t (437 pieces) of ivory from a residence in a Kampala suburb; a Liberian and two Guinea-Bissau nationals planning to ship the items overseas were arrested. It was stated that the ivory had likely been imported as it bore markings unfamiliar to the authorities.

Beloit Daily News (Uganda): <http://bit.ly/2pV46L4>, 18 February 2017; <http://bit.ly/2oZ8Xh5>, 19 February 2017

UK: On 3 November 2016, at Portsmouth Magistrates' Court, Chao Xi of Portsmouth was sentenced to gaol for one year, suspended for two, for the illegal sale and export of elephant ivory from the UK. He was given a one-year community order with a requirement to do 150 hours unpaid work; a fine of GBP85 (USD106) and a victim surcharge of GBP85 was also imposed.

In October 2015, the National Wildlife Crime Unit became aware objects suspected to be ivory were being sold on an auction website as "bovine bone". Enquiries revealed that over a two-year period Xi sold 78 ivory items. A search of his home in February 2016 uncovered 43 ivory pieces.

UK National Wildlife Crime Unit: <http://bit.ly/2piHtnz>; *The News:* <http://bit.ly/2opL3Zh>, 7 November 2016

VIET NAM: Authorities at Cat Lai Port, Ho Chi Minh City, have seized seven large shipments of ivory over recent months, many involving the use of hollowed-out logs or wooden blocks as the method of concealment:

On 6 October 2016, 2052 kg of ivory arriving from Mozambique concealed in hollow wooden blocks; a week earlier, some 309 kg from Nigeria was seized at Noi Bai International Airport (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 28(2):75).

On 20 October 2016, 595 kg of elephant tusks (and 277 kg of pangolin scales) in two timber containers imported from Mozambique. The items had been stuck to timber blocks with glue or wax.

On 26 October, a tonne of ivory from containers that had arrived from Mozambique in September but were unclaimed; again concealed in hollow wooden blocks, covered by kaolin powder, glued and covered by soil.

On 26 October, 700 kg of ivory reportedly originating in Kenya's Mombasa port, via Malaysia's Tanjung port and en route to Cambodia.

On 24 November, 619 kg illegally shipped from Nigeria and sealed into timber boxes with wax; wooden, rather than metal nails had been used reportedly to give the impression of a block of wood and to bypass x-ray detection.

On 30 November, 537 kg of ivory from three hollowed-out blocks of timber arriving from Nigeria, bound for Cambodia.

On 1 December, 529 kg from Nigeria concealed in hollowed-out wooden logs.

<http://bit.ly/2fZLzLD>, 22 October 2016; <http://fxn.ws/2ez8Hxv>, 1 November 2016; <http://bit.ly/2opO7Eq> (in Vietnamese), 22 October 2016; L. Sangalaku, ETIS Database Manager, in litt. to *TRAFFIC*, 13 April 2017; <http://bit.ly/2piHw2H>, 20 November 2016; <http://bit.ly/2oSs2u> (in Vietnamese); Haiquan online: <http://bit.ly/2pFPT8w> (in Vietnamese), 26 October 2016; <http://bit.ly/2oYuBB>; <http://bit.ly/2piPTM3>, 27 October 2016; <http://apne.ws/2o6TPiq>, 25 November 2016; *The Nation*: <http://bit.ly/2grrgH2>, 30 November 2016; <http://bit.ly/2pFv9L0>, 1 December 2016; <http://bit.ly/2oSBQcH>, 2 December 2016

FLORA

HONG KONG SAR: On 16 February 2017, 100 police and Customs officials were involved in the arrest of 11 people allegedly part of a cross-border syndicate involved in the illegal trade of Red Sandalwood *Pterocarpus santalinus* (CITES II) and electronic goods to mainland China. Three vehicles carrying 4.5 t of Red Sandalwood logs were intercepted in Ma On Shan.

South China Morning Post: <http://bit.ly/2oYvs5N>, 16 February 2017

INDIA: A selection of cases involving the seizure of Red Sanders (Red Sandalwood) *Pterocarpus santalinus* (CITES II):

On 3 November 2016, two tonnes seized at two locations in Kattigenahalli village, Karnataka, and on 4 January 2017, 1.5 t seized during a raid in the village. Three arrests. During the last two years, about 20 t of logs have been seized in Kattigenahalli, and several arrests, including two Chinese nationals.

On 7 January 2017, 4.7 t seized from a shed in Gowalkot, Chiplun, Ratnagiri district, Maharashtra State, reportedly the fourth such seizure in Chiplun in a fortnight: on 30/31 December 2016, 9 t were seized at three locations in Chiplun; some concealed in sofa seats destined for export.

On 13 January 2017, police seized nine tonnes of Red Sanders from two warehouses, including logs, powder, chips, beads and art pieces, reportedly the first time Red Sanders has been seized in the form of finished products.

On 24 January 2017, over 12 t awaiting export (destination not reported) at Jawaharlal Nehru Port, Maharashtra, at the air cargo terminal in Andheri (east) and at a warehouse in Kopar Khairane. Several arrests.

On 29 January 2017, 11 people, including an assistant forest beat officer and four protection watchers were arrested for their alleged role in the smuggling of 1.3 t of Red Sanders logs, seized at three places in Kadapa district. One of the suspects had previously worked in the Anti-Red Sanders Task Force in Tirupati.

On 18 February 2017, five tonnes of logs seized by officials at exit points in three locations in Chittoor and Kadapa districts; nine arrests.

On 28 February 2017, 20 t seized from a warehouse in Kancheepuram, Tamil Nadu; three arrests.

On 12 March 2017, 10 t seized from a lorry at the check-post at Kavarappetai on the Chennai-Kolkata Highway.

On 16 March 2017, seven tonnes (541 logs) seized from a warehouse in Tiruvallur, Tamil Nadu.

The Hindu: <http://bit.ly/2pFMTcb>, 5 November 2016; <http://bit.ly/2piCseQ>, 5 January 2017; <http://bit.ly/2o6WvNb>, 16 January 2017; <http://bit.ly/2ouqslM>, 31 January 2017; <http://bit.ly/2oNR9oX>, 1 February 2017; <http://bit.ly/2ouriyA>, 30 January 2017; www.thehindu.com/news/national/andhra-pradesh/193-red-sanders-logs-worth-%E2%82%B915-crore-seized/article17326636.e, 19 February 2017; <http://bit.ly/2ouhTHC>, 13 March 2017; <http://bit.ly/2oNPz6s>, 17 March 2017; *Times of India*: <http://bit.ly/2pFztdg>, 10 January 2017; *Daily News and Analysis (DNA)*: <http://bit.ly/2o6UNvj>, 3 January 2017; *Deccan Chronicle*: <http://bit.ly/2opxeKp>, 2 March 2017

MYANMAR: Between April and October 2016, Myanmar authorities seized over 27 000 t of illegal timber. In one case alone, 7000 t of logs were confiscated in Putao, Kachin, and 3000 t of illegally felled Teak *Tectona grandis* and other hardwoods were confiscated in Bago region; over 500 arrests.

On 18/19 March 2017, military personnel seized 950 t of logs that had been illegally logged near Mabane Township, Shan State, including Teak *Tectona grandis* (402 t), Burmese Rosewood *Dalbergia oliveri* (1 t) (CITES II), and Padauk *Pterocarpus macrocarpus* (1.5 t). Logging equipment, including saw mills, one crane and 13 vehicles were seized.

Global Times: <http://bit.ly/2piPhWp>, 31 October 2016; *Burma News International*: <http://bit.ly/2pFOgYA>, 22 March 2017

MARINE

AUSTRALIA: On 22 March 2017, it was reported that Wewei Zhou of Riverwood had been sentenced at Bankstown local court, Sydney, New South Wales (NSW), to a 12-month suspended gaol term for illegal possession of abalones. He was fined AUD3000 (USD2280) and directed to enter into a good behaviour bond for three years as an alternative to gaol. His vehicle was forfeited and he was ordered to pay the Department of Primary Industries' legal costs of AUD5280, plus AUD2070 for the Department's towing and vehicle storage costs. Zhou was caught in Ulladulla, NSW, with 741 Black-lip Abalones *Haliotis rubra*, including undersized specimens.

Narooma News: <http://bit.ly/2o7dkaL>, 22 March 2017

CHINA: On 31 October 2016, Customs in Pingxiang, Guangxi, intercepted a vehicle entering the country from Viet Nam with cargo declared as snail shells and which was found to contain a dismembered turtle, giant clams Tridacnidae (CITES II/1st class State protection) and Horned Helmet sea snails *Cassis cornuta* (2nd class State protection). Customs traced other vehicles that had entered the country that day with goods declared as snail shells and found similar items in four other vehicles, resulting in the total seizure of 17.5 t of giant clams/related products, 109 Hawksbill Turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata* (CITES I) bodies, 102 Hawksbill Turtle heads, and 1110 Horned Helmet sea snails.

Environmental Investigation Agency: <http://bit.ly/2nAotki>, 1 December 2016; <http://bit.ly/2oSTJlv>, 26 November 2016 [in Chinese]

COSTA RICA: On 6 February 2017, at Puntarenas Criminal Court, Hue Ju Tseng Chang of Taiwan was sentenced to six months in gaol for her involvement in the unloading of 652 shark fins, destined for sale abroad; she was fined CRC3 million (USD5450). The investigation began in 2011 when Tseng's Belize-flagged fishing boat at El Carmen de Puntarenas pier was found to be carrying 151 sharks [species not reported], their fins removed. Tseng was acquitted at the first trial in April 2014 but the San Ramon appeals court ordered a retrial. It is reported to be the first time that there has been a criminal conviction in Costa Rica for shark finning.

<http://bit.ly/2oYxlzD>, 11 February 2017

GREECE: On 3 February 2017, nine people were arrested in the Attica region for their part in the smuggling of juvenile European Eels *Anguilla anguilla* (CITES II), transported from Spain, France and Portugal, via Italy. From Greece, the shipments were sent by air to Hong Kong via Istanbul, Turkey (see also Spain and UK).

Kathimerini: <http://bit.ly/2oOImS6>, 7 February 2017

HONG KONG SAR: On 6 March 2017, it was reported that the authorities had seized 1280 kg of illegally-imported dried shark fins from four containers at Kwai Chung Custom-house Cargo Examination Compound that had arrived from India, Egypt, Kenya and Peru without permits. The fins derived from eight species, including CITES-II listed hammerheads *Sphyrna* sp. and Oceanic Whitetips *Carcharhinus longimanus*.

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region press release: <http://bit.ly/2piDQq2>, 6 March 2017

NEW CALEDONIA: It was reported in March 2017 that authorities had seized several tonnes of sea cucumbers [species not reported] from ships illegally fishing in waters of the South Pacific French territory following a nine-month investigation. Fines were imposed on 55 vessels and five Vietnamese ship captains were gaoled.

Spiegel: <http://bit.ly/2nyHD6l> (in German), 11 March 2017

SOUTH AFRICA: On 17 October 2016, officials in Somerset West seized nearly 12 000 wet abalones or perlemoen *Haliotis midae* from two vehicles. Two arrests.

On 17 February 2017, authorities recovered over 23 000 wet and dry abalones from a

house in Durbanville, Western Cape, bringing to over 52 000 the number of specimens seized in a week. Twelve arrests, more expected; 8000 abalones were seized from a vehicle in Worcester on the same day; the driver fled.

On 22 February 2017, three men were arrested after abalones were seized from a vehicle in Cape Town; a subsequent raid on a warehouse in Parow uncovered an illegal abalone processing facility. In total, 12 295 dried abalones and 1222 pieces of wet shucked abalones were seized.

On 31 March 2017, at Khayelitsha Priority Court, two people were each fined R1 million (USD72 600) and sentenced to five years in gaol, of which three are suspended for five years, after being convicted of abalone smuggling.

News24: <http://bit.ly/2oNQ5RG>, 18 October 2016; Facebook: <http://bit.ly/2oSUS2Q>, 18 February 2017; Eyewitness News: <http://bit.ly/2o77mGW>, 18 February 2017; Times Live: <http://bit.ly/2o7ha3R>, 22 February 2017; The Citizen: <http://bit.ly/2pVntE5>, 4 April 2017

SPAIN: In February 2017, authorities dismantled an international criminal network involved in the smuggling of over 10 t of juvenile European Eels *Anguilla anguilla* (CITES II) from the EU to Asia. The investigation, co-ordinated by Europol and Eurojust, and with the participation of authorities in Portugal, Italy, France, Greece and the UK, resulted in the arrest of eight people (see also Greece and UK). The operation was initiated by the Spanish Guardia Civil's Environmental Protection Service SEPRONA after investigators discovered a company had been purchasing eels from a number of countries. Once the eels were introduced into the legal market, the company would deliver them to Greece using false documentation; the eels were subsequently exported illegally to Asia as "fresh fish".

EUROPOL press release: <http://bit.ly/2o6V3KG>, 8 March 2017; Guardia Civil press release: <http://bit.ly/2oujKfv>, 8 March 2017

UK: On 15 February 2017, Border Force officials at Heathrow Airport seized a consignment of some 600 000 (200 kg) live juvenile European Eels *Anguilla anguilla* (CITES II) that had arrived from Spain for export to Hong Kong, concealed under a consignment of chilled fish. A man was subsequently arrested in Chessington and bailed until August. The eels were returned to Spain.

The Standard: <http://bit.ly/2mTL059>, 3 March 2017; Get West London: <http://bit.ly/2piVv8K>, 3 March 2017

PANGOLINS

All eight species of pangolins have been transferred from CITES Appendix II to Appendix I, effective 2 January 2017

CAMEROON: In December 2016, Customs officials at Yaoundé-Nsimalen Airport seized 670 kg of pangolin scales concealed in meat packets, destined for Malaysia. It is reported that there have been regular seizures of between three and five kilogrammes of pangolin scales and meat hidden in small containers.

In January 2017, two Chinese nationals were arrested in Douala with five tonnes of pangolin scales destined for export.

EIA: <http://bit.ly/2pYg1bN>, 20 January 2017

CHINA: On 10 December 2016, at Shanghai port, Customs officials seized three tonnes of pangolin scales, reportedly the largest amount ever seized in China, concealed in a container arriving from Nigeria, via Singapore, and registered as carrying *Afzelia xylocarpa* timber. Three arrests; one suspect confessed to smuggling pangolin scales from Africa to China since 2015.

GlobalTimes: <http://bit.ly/2oYCKAil>, 27 December 2016; <http://bit.ly/2hdiBu8>, 21 December 2016; South China Morning Post: <http://bit.ly/2o73q9j>, 28 December 2016

INDONESIA: In early November 2016, police in Jambi, Sumatra, confiscated 2.5 t of pangolin meat and 279 kg of pangolin scales from a warehouse in Kilangan village, Batanghari District; three arrests. The meat was reportedly destined for sale in China, Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan, and the scales bound for China.

Antara News: <http://bit.ly/2oYzPxY>, 10 November 2016

THAILAND: In December 2016, Customs officials at Suvarnabhumi Airport, Bangkok, seized 2.9 t of pangolin scales from two shipments in transit from the Democratic Republic of Congo to Lao PDR. On 4 December, they uncovered 34 packages containing 1700 kg of pangolin scales arriving from Kinshasa, bound for Vientiane via Turkey and Thailand. On 23 December, another shipment of 24 packages (1200 kg) of pangolin scales travelling the same route was seized at the airport.

On 14 February 2017, 1066 kg of pangolin scales packed into 22 containers were seized at the airport, again bound for Vientiane. The shipment was labelled as "fish maw" and had arrived from Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo, via Nairobi.

Bangkok Post: <http://bit.ly/2kntSWQ>, 2 February 2017; ASEAN-WEN: <http://bit.ly/2oYtQca>

UGANDA: On 9 January 2017, it was reported that authorities had arrested suspects allegedly responsible for the seizure in Tanzania of six tonnes of pangolin scales. One Ugandan, one Malian and eight Tanzanian nationals were due to be deported to Tanzania following a multi-nation operation. Part of the confiscated stock has been traced to West Africa, D.R. Congo and Uganda, from where it was smuggled to Tanzania by buses shuttling between Kampala and Dar es Salaam via the Mutukula border.

New Vision: <http://bit.ly/2piF5NC>, 9 January 2017

VIET NAM: On 20 October 2016, at Cat Lai Port, Ho Chi Minh City, 277 kg of pangolin scales were seized in an ivory consignment (see Elephants).

On 24 February 2017, Customs at Noi Bai International Airport found four packages (322 kg) of pangolin scales arriving from Nigeria, declared as stationery. On 3 March 2017, 357 kg of pangolin scales from Cameroon were seized at the airport.

L. Sangalaku, ETIS Database Manager, in litt. to TRAFFIC, 13 April 2017; Haiquan online: <http://bit.ly/2pFJzSc>, 28 February 2017; <http://bit.ly/2pVnis5>, 3 March 2017

REPTILES

CROATIA: In November 2016, Customs officials in Osijek, near the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina, foiled an attempt to smuggle 635 Hermann's Tortoises *Testudo hermanni* (CITES II) and 80 pond turtles *Mauremys rivulata* in what has been reported as the largest single seizure of live animals in the country. The reptiles were being shipped by lorry from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Hungary, declared as table salt. Two citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina were arrested.

ABC News: <http://abcn.ws/2opLZN8>; Radio Osijek: <http://bit.ly/2oYqQgg>

SENEGAL: On 28 March 2017, at the District Court of Dakar, Mbacké Thiam and Ibrahima Sacko were sentenced to four months' gaol and fined CFA2 million (USD3275) damages to the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development. The penalties relate to a seizure of reptile skins on 14 March from a house in Guédiawaye that had been converted to a processing laboratory. Included were skins of 91 Nile Crocodiles *Crocodylus niloticus* (CITES I); 354 African Rock Pythons *Python sebae* (CITES II) and 110 Nile Monitors *Varanus niloticus* (CITES II) originating in Senegal and Mali and being used by Dakar leatherworkers for the manufacture of luxury items for sale to Europe and Asia.

Ndarinfo: <http://bit.ly/2pVih2K>, 15 March 2017; AllAfrica: <http://bit.ly/2oT3wyp>, 29 March 2017

TAIWAN: On 13 March 2017, Customs officials confiscated 15 live turtles (one Ploughshare Tortoise *Astrochelys yniphora* (CITES I)—native to Madagascar and one of the rarest land tortoises in the world, with an estimated wild population possibly as low as 400 (IUCN)—and 14 Painted Terrapins *Batagur borneoensis* (CITES II). The reptiles had been placed inside sports shoes contained in parcels arriving on a flight from Malaysia; they were subsequently sent to a wildlife centre in northern Taiwan.

Taiwan News: <http://bit.ly/2opY1pG>, 13 March 2017; IUCN Red List: <http://bit.ly/2oO4sps>. Viewed 10 April 2017

RHINOCEROSSES

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

CAMBODIA: On 1 November 2016, officials at Phnom Penh International Airport seized 35 kg of rhinoceros horn from the luggage of a Chinese national and suspected to have been smuggled from Johannesburg via Singapore.

Cambodia Daily: <http://bit.ly/2oO4ihx>, 3 November 2016

HONG KONG SAR: On 8 March 2017, at Hong Kong International Airport, one person arriving from Maputo, Mozambique, via Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, was arrested with seven kilogrammes of rhinoceros horns wrapped in aluminium foil and tape and concealed in luggage.

On 22 March 2017, Customs officers at the airport seized 12 pieces of suspected rhinoceros horn (6.6 kg) from two express air parcels arriving from Namibia declared as coffee.

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region press releases: <http://bit.ly/2oNZfOe>, 8 March 2017; <http://bit.ly/2nwcens>, 24 March 2017

MOZAMBIQUE: On 30 October 2016, authorities at Maputo International Airport seized eight rhinoceros horns (8.8 kg) from a suitcase belonging to a Vietnamese national travelling to Viet Nam, and who is being sought by police.

AllAfrica: <http://bit.ly/2piY0YG>, 1 November 2016

SOUTH AFRICA: On 23 November 2016, at O.R. Tambo International Airport, 18 rhinoceros horns (43 kg) were found in the luggage of a Chinese national, in transit from Namibia to Hong Kong.

Times Live: <http://bit.ly/2o785YJ>, 24 November 2016

THAILAND: On 10 March 2017, it was reported that 21 rhinoceros horns (50 kg) had been seized at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi International Airport from luggage sent from Ethiopia. Two Thai women, travelling from Viet Nam and Cambodia, who came to collect the horns, reportedly fled when the bags were examined. On 27 March, one of them surrendered to police claiming that she had been unaware of the bags' contents; a public prosecutor has been implicated in the case, which is under investigation.

Fox News: <http://fxn.ws/2mnsdRf>, 14 March 2017; <http://reut.rs/2pG4yhj>; BBC: <http://bbc.in/2oYVvtj>, 14 March 2017; Bangkok Post: <http://bit.ly/2pGlsME>, 28 March 2017; <http://bit.ly/2pVUDmN>, 29 March 2017

VIET NAM: On 29 December 2016, authorities at Noi Bai International Airport, Hanoi, seized nine (50 kg) rhinoceros horns (one over seven kg) and ten rhinoceros horn fragments from a suitcase that had arrived on a cargo plane from Nairobi, Kenya. The luggage lacked a registered sender or recipient.

On 14 March 2017, authorities at the airport seized more than 100 kg of rhinoceros horn from two suitcases arriving on a flight from Nairobi. Officials were not able to trace the contraband back to any traveller.

VN Express: <http://bit.ly/2pGY98h>, 30 December 2016; TRAFFIC: <http://bit.ly/2pGhdQW>; Yahoo News: <https://yhoo.it/2pGBetw>, 14 March 2017

OTHER SEIZURES

CAMBODIA: On 16 December 2016, officials at Kandal dry port, Phnom Penh, seized 1.3 t of ivory and animal parts hidden in a timber shipment from Mozambique, destined for China, together with 10 Cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus* (CITES I) skulls, 137 kg of pangolin *Manis scales* (CITES II (CITES I from 2 January 2017)) and 82 kg of animal bones. The shipping company on the manifest was the same as one involved in a seizure in Viet Nam in October in which nearly a tonne of ivory was discovered (see Viet Nam). The chief suspect is a Vietnamese national, a known smuggler, who remains at large.

The Nation: <http://bit.ly/2oTCmY9>; The Phnom Penh Post: <http://bit.ly/2o7AT3q>, 22 December 2016; <http://bit.ly/2o7AT3q>, 23 December 2016

CAMEROON: On 24 March 2017, a Ghanaian man allegedly part of an international parrot smuggling network, was arrested in Nkoabang,

Yaoundé, after attempting to export illegally 300 Grey Parrots *Psittacus erithacus* (CITES I). Another member of the network was recently arrested in Ghana with 100 Grey Parrots smuggled from Nsimalen International Airport via Abidjan.

Camer.be: <http://bit.ly/2pVV6FF>

CHINA: In October 2016, Sichuan police seized two tonnes of dismembered wild animals in Mianyang in its largest operation relating to wildlife poaching. Six arrests. Seizures included Asiatic Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus* (CITES I) heads, owls and products made from the scales of pangolins *Manis* (CITES II (CITES I from 2 January 2017)) and alligators. The suspect reportedly received wildlife products from suppliers all over the country which he sold in Sichuan; he admitted working with three bear slaughterhouse owners and two others who served as go-betweens for the business.

On 2 March 2017, police on patrol in the Pearl River Delta in Huizhou City, Guangdong Province, seized 138 skulls of Helmeted Hornbills *Rhinoplax vigil* (CITES I) from vessels near Sanmen Island. The beaks had been taped and stored in boxes. Two arrests.

South China Morning Post: <http://bit.ly/2oTl38j>, 4 January 2017; China News: <http://bit.ly/2pGZCeN> [in Chinese], 5 March 2017

On 31 March 2017, authorities in Lhasa, Tibet Autonomous Region, announced that in late 2016 they had seized the skins of 20 Snow Leopards *Uncia uncia* (CITES I) and two Tigers *Panthera tigris* (CITES I), plus two sets of Tibetan Antelope *Pantholops hodgsonii* (CITES I) horns, as well as Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) bones and meat, and bear (CITES I/II) paws and teeth. A man was arrested in February in connection with the seizure. According to Customs, it is the largest haul of animal parts seized in recent years.

Xinhuanet: <http://bit.ly/2oOkzww>, 31 March 2017

GUINEA: On 18 February 2017, a Guinean national was arrested for his alleged role in the illegal trade in apes and other wildlife, bringing to an end a five-year investigation by the authorities. The suspect was convicted in absentia to five years in gaol in July 2016 but went on the run; he was arrested at his home and is being held in Conakry central prison; other family members were reportedly active in trafficking over a 30-year period involving five countries and had paid as many as 100 poachers to capture Chimpanzees *Pan troglodytes* (CITES I); warrants have been issued for their arrests. The suspect confirmed to police that he had received fraudulently issued CITES permits that facilitated the illegal export of many species, including 130 Chimpanzees and 10 Gorillas *Gorilla* (CITES I), which were illegally exported to China, declared as specimens that had been "bred in captivity".

BBC: <http://bbc.in/2pGlfus>, 9 March 2017

INDONESIA: In October 2016, 34 Slow Lorises *Nycticebus javanicus* (CITES I) were rescued in Bandung, West Java, after being offered for sale on social media. Three suspected hunters and two dealers were arrested and the animals placed in the care of the International Animal Rescue Centre (IAR) in Java.

Merdeka.com: <http://bit.ly/2ouQSDL>, 18 October 2016 [in Indonesian]; Daily Mail: <http://dailymail.2pGsrVJ>, 23 October 2016

JORDAN: In October 2016, authorities announced the seizure of 7000 dead birds in the largest illegal hunting violation ever recorded in the Kingdom. Rangers seized from one hunter 6800 Blackcaps *Sylvia atricapilla*, 40 Eurasian Golden Orioles *Oriolus oriolus* and 45 Laughing Doves *Spilopelia senegalensis*. The birds had been frozen and packaged, reportedly either for export to a Gulf country or for sale to restaurants. It is illegal in Jordan to hunt wild birds without a licence and in areas and at times where and when hunting is not permitted.

BirdLife International Middle East: <http://bit.ly/2pGdSBz>, 1 November 2016

RUSSIA: On 1 February 2017, at a court in Primorsky, Evgeniy Romanov was fined the equivalent of USD 155 000 to reimburse damage to the environment caused by his killing of rare birds and other animals, including six Amur Tigers *Panthera tigris altaica* (CITES I) and 34 Himalayan Black Bears *Ursus thibetanus* (CITES I). In 2012, police found in a refrigerated container on his premises in Nakhodka, the Tiger and Black Bear parts, as well as parts of 12 Brown Bears *U. arctos* (CITES II), five Steller's Sea Eagles *Haliaeetus pelagicus* (CITES II), a Black Vulture *Aegypius monachus* (CITES II) and other wildlife. This is reportedly the largest fine ever imposed on a poacher in the Primorsky region for damage to the environment.

The Siberian Times: <http://bit.ly/2kYbCXo>, 2 February 2017

SOUTH AFRICA: Two Chinese nationals have been deported after being found guilty of the unlawful possession of rhinoceros horn (CITES I), ivory (CITES I) and abalones *Haliotis midae*. The men had left a bag holding the items and their passports in a backpack after dining at a restaurant in Hout Bay on 29 January. They were arrested the following day when they went to collect their parcel at a police station where the parcel had been handed in for safekeeping. The duo entered a plea bargain and each received a five-year gaol term, suspended for five years, and were ordered to pay R35 000 (USD 2700), half of which will be go into the Western Cape Nature Conservation Board (WCNCB) and the rest to the Criminal Asset Recovery Account (CARA).

Times Live: <http://bit.ly/2oZ7fwq>, 31 January 2017; The Citizen: <http://bit.ly/2pj8U0P>, 3 February 2017

UK: On 16 January 2017, at Exeter Crown Court, Daniel Stocks of Newton Abbot was gaoled for six months for illegally selling taxidermy specimens over the internet. A Veiled Chameleon *Chamaeleo calyptratus* (CITES II), imported without a licence from the USA and seized at Heathrow by Border Force officials, led to a search of Stocks's premises, where they found a stuffed African White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus* (CITES II), macaque (CITES II) heads and skulls, and framed monkey tails and paws (CITES I/II). The investigation revealed that Stocks had also traded illegally in ivory (CITES I) items, hornbills (CITES I/II), Leopard Cats *Prionailurus bengalensis* (CITES II), Langur monkeys *Semnopithecus* sp. (CITES I) and Green Monkeys *Chlorocebus sabaeus* (CITES II).

National Crime Agency: <http://bit.ly/2pGKEIZ>, 17 January 2017