



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 April and mid-October 2018. Sources are cited at the end of each country 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

CZECH REPUBLIC: On 16 July 2018, authorities seized a freshly killed Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I), the skins of tigers and other big cats, as well as the frozen bodies of various protected animal species during raids around the country, including at Sapa, a large Vietnamese market on the outskirts of Prague, and at a zoo park in Doksy, in north Bohemia. The owner of the park, who was arrested, is accused of breeding tigers and supplying their bodies to a taxidermist, who processes them and offers the resulting products for sale on the black market. Three men have been charged with unlawful treatment of protected wildlife and a further two have been detained. The raids are the result of more than two years of gathering material. Investigations continue.

Radio Praha: <https://bit.ly/2LloSsO>, 19 July 2018; VN Express International: <https://bit.ly/2NZ7iBj>, 19 July 2018

MALAYSIA: On 4 July 2018, authorities acting on information seized 60 animal parts from a sawmill in Kuala Lipis, Pahang, including two complete Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) skins, 10 smaller pieces of tiger skin, one piece of Clouded Leopard *Neofelis nebulosa* (CITES I), four horns of Sumatran Serow *Capricornis sumatraensis* (CITES I) and suspected serow tails, seven bear canine teeth, 20 bear claws (CITES I/II) and 39 kg of unspecified animal ivory. Three wire snares were seized. Six Vietnamese nationals were arrested.

The Star Online: <https://bit.ly/2q6CDZg>, 7 July 2018; FMT News: <https://bit.ly/2Pd2AnV>, 6 July 2018

PERU: On 23 September 2018, it was reported that a team of journalists visiting markets over the course of a week in the port of Iquitos found body parts derived from an estimated 24 Jaguars *Panthera onca* (CITES I) including 44 teeth, four skulls, five skins and 70 claws.

Mongabay: <https://bit.ly/2OEEqDn>, 23 September 2018

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.

SOMALIA: On 5 August 2018, two people were sentenced to three years in prison and each fined the equivalent of USD300. The case relates to the seizure in Berbera district, Somaliland, of six Cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus* (CITES I) cubs and a further two cubs in a remote part of the Hargeisa region. This is reportedly the first wildlife conviction in the region. It is reported that some 35 cubs have been offered for sale by traders in the Gulf, including two sellers in the United Arab Emirates in 2018. The rescued cubs are in the care of the Cheetah Conservation Fund.

The National, UAE: <https://bit.ly/2CYB0oM>, 5 September 2018

UK: On 20 September 2018, at Croydon Magistrates' Court, Timothy Norris from Surrey was found guilty of selling clothing fashioned from Leopard *Panthera pardus*, Ocelot *Leopardus pardalis* (both CITES I), lynx *Lynx* spp. and wolf *Canis* spp. (CITES I/II), which he had illegally listed for sale on a social media site. Police wildlife unit officers seized from his home 24 items of clothing made from the above species. He was ordered to serve 200 hours of community service.

Shropshire Star: <https://bit.ly/2Am7ly4>, 21 September 2018

USA: On 1 August 2018, at Sherman, Texas, Arogkron "Paul" Malasukum, of New York, was sentenced to nine months in prison followed by one year of supervised release for the illegal trade in Lions *Panthera leo* (CITES II) and Tigers *P. tigris* (CITES I). He admitted to meeting undercover agents from the US Fish and Wildlife Service and purchasing a tiger skull from the agents; he also admitted to purchasing lion skulls from an auction house in Texas via the undercover agents who were acting as

"straw buyers" for him. Malasukum provided them with cash and directed them on which items to bid for. He shipped the tiger and lion skulls to his home in New York, from where he sent some 68 packages containing skulls, claws and other wildlife items to Thailand for sale to a wholesale buyer.

US Department of Justice new release: <https://bit.ly/2ytst9r>, 1 August 2018

ZAMBIA: On 6 August 2018, at Lusaka Subordinate Court, Scholastica Chisimba was sentenced to five years' imprisonment with hard labour for unlawful possession of two Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) skins. Beatrice Lupazula was given the same sentence for possession of one Lion *Panthera leo* (CITES I) skin.

Zambia Reports: <https://bit.ly/2J99SDG>, 6 August 2018

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: On 22 June 2018, at Vienna Provincial Court, a man was sentenced to one year of imprisonment for the illegal possession of ivory. The case relates to an investigation during which 88 elephant tusks (560 kg) were recovered from the defendant's flat in Vienna (see TRAFFIC Bulletin 29(1):33).

Wien.org.at: <https://bit.ly/2CZaU51> (in German), 22 June 2018

BENIN: On 23 July 2018, at Ouidah Court of First Instance, six people were sentenced to 24 months in prison for possession of two ivory tusks and ordered to pay CFA500,000 (USD880) in fines and CFA10 million (USD17,600) in damages. The six were absent at the hearing, and an arrest warrant was issued.

La Nouvelle Tribune: <https://bit.ly/2J9mOcQ>, 7 December 2017; *Quotidien Béninoise: Le Matinal:* <https://bit.ly/2Ra0seb>, 5 July 2018

CAMEROON: On 16 September 2018, it was reported that two people had been sentenced at Bertoua Court of Appeal to 15 years in prison after being arrested in May 2017 in possession of 160 tusk tips. They were also ordered to pay a fine of CFA14 million (USD25,000) and CFA253 million (USD446,000) in damages. The duo had already served three months in custody before filing an appeal (see also Other/multi-seizures).

Le Bled Parle: <https://bit.ly/2OCsXEI>, 16 September 2018

CHINA: Between January and May 2018, a wide-ranging law enforcement sweep of Yunnan border areas, with a focus on elephant products, ended with the confiscation of some 1,900 ivory items, including at least five elephant tusks and hundreds of pieces of ivory jewellery. Authorities also seized 1,500 other products of threatened animal species and illegally imported timber reportedly from sources in Lao PDR and Myanmar. There were 45 arrests for a range of offences (see also Rhinoceroses and Other/multi-seizures).

GoKunming: <https://bit.ly/2PLEGNI>, 26 June 2018

CONGO: On 19 May 2018, at Ouésso District Court, Sangha, five Congolese nationals were sentenced to between two and three years in prison in relation to elephant poaching and the illegal possession of and attempt to sell 15 ivory tusks, representing eight elephants. The three defendants who were sentenced to three years' imprisonment were also fined CFA500,000 (US\$880), plus CFA5 million (USD8,800) in damages.

Infos Plus Gabon: <https://bit.ly/2NWsiZ2>, 19 May 2018

FRANCE: During dates in May and August 2018, authorities seized a total of 292 ivory pieces and other assorted wildlife items, and arrested 32 people during investigations of flea markets in Sens, Aillant-sur-Tholon and Mézilles, Auxerre.

France bleu: <https://bit.ly/2S8WKCO>, 17 August 2018; *L'Yonne Républicaine:* <https://bit.ly/2R6yCIN>, 17 August 2018

HONG KONG SAR: On 25 June 2018, Customs officers near the city's boundary with mainland China seized 47 kg of suspected ivory in a joint operation with their counterparts

in mainland China; six people were arrested. The raid followed an investigation by mainland authorities into a suspected ivory-smuggling syndicate.

On 2 July, Customs officers raided a warehouse used by the syndicate in San Tin, near Lok Ma Chau, where they recovered some 277 kg of ivory; eight people were arrested.

South China Morning Herald: <https://bit.ly/2q7EwVf>, 4 July 2018

INDIA: On 13 June 2018, at Kotagiri Magistrates' Court, three Indian nationals K. Annadurai, M. Premkumar and B. Sankar from Bhavani, Erode, were each sentenced to three years' imprisonment and fined Rs.10,500 (USD155) for poaching an elephant for its tusks in Kookalthorai in 2011.

The Hindu: <https://bit.ly/2yWyZou>, 14 June 2018

KENYA: In June 2018, at Mombasa Magistrates' Court, Morris Molimu was sentenced to eight years in prison for possession of 13 pieces of ivory (28 kg) without a permit. He was arrested in April 2017 at a petrol station while looking for buyers for the ivory.

On 3 August 2018, at the High Court in Mombasa, Feisal Mohammed Ali, who was convicted in July 2016 of involvement in the illegal ivory trade (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 28(2):74), had his 20-year prison sentence overturned following an appeal. The court deemed his sentence unconstitutional and ruled that the prosecution had failed to prove he was the owner of the ivory or engaged in trafficking trophies. The case relates to the seizure of two tonnes of ivory in June 2014.

In October 2018, it was reported that two men had been sentenced to six years in prison for possession of 15 kg of elephant tusks. Erastus Mugambi and Lawrence Mugambi were found with the trophies in Kibumbu, in Chuka/Igambang'ombe, in August 2017. They have been in remand for the past year and were given the option of paying a KES2 million (USD19,750) fine each.

allAfrica: <https://bit.ly/2yu6YVX>, 20 June 2018; *Daily Nation:* <https://bit.ly/2AnQCQa>, 20 June 2018; <https://bit.ly/2OEAZEI>, 3 August 2018; <https://bit.ly/2EzJSD6>, 6 March 2017; *Standard Media:* <https://bit.ly/2NXqfEm>, 14 October 2018

MALAWI: On 16 April 2018, in the district of Mzimba, Eliza Mtonga and Gideon Ngwenya of Zambia were each sentenced to four years in prison for possession of 16 pieces of raw ivory (41 kg) and a further one year in prison for attempting to sell the items. The sentences are to run concurrently. Another Zambian, Richard Phiri, was sentenced to 36 months in prison (suspended for 36 months) for carrying the pieces into the country. The three attempted to sell the ivory (derived from four elephants) to undercover police officers at Jenda Trading Center in Mzimba.

Zodiak Online: <https://bit.ly/2CvR6Fq>, 16 July 2018; *Nyasa Times:* <https://bit.ly/2CYK5hc>, 12 July 2018

MOZAMBIQUE: On 12 April 2018, Customs officials at Maputo port seized from a lorry some 867 pieces (3.4 t) of ivory concealed in bundles of plastic bottles destined for recycling. The lorry driver was arrested. The containers, declared to be destined for Cambodia, came from a Chinese company based in Beluluane, in Maputo province, which was subsequently searched and found to be locked and unattended. The case is being investigated.

Club of Mozambique: <https://bit.ly/2Hx8Lgu>, 12 April 2018; <https://bit.ly/2OCus5o>, 13 April 2018

TANZANIA: On 15 August 2018, at Serengeti District Resident Magistrates' Court, Paul Ryoba, Petro Mikwabe, and Yagara Mang'era, were each sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment for possession of two ivory pieces. They were found guilty of entering Serengeti National Park in January 2017 and of hunting elephants without valid permits and the illegal possession of national trophies.

Azania Post: <https://bit.ly/2R3Q33x>, 16 August 2018; *The Citizen:* <https://bit.ly/2ODNzYA>, 15 August 2018

UGANDA: On 24 June 2018, police officer Abel Immanuel was sentenced to two years in prison for selling ivory. He was arrested in May at the Uganda Manufacturers' Association showground after police officers caught him in the process of receiving a bag containing the pieces from another person who was also taken into custody and is awaiting trial.

New Vision: <https://bit.ly/2OITKis>, 27 June 2018; <https://bit.ly/2MhfoEA>, 25 June 2018

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: On 4 July 2018, it was reported that officials at Dubai International Airport had seized some 1,849 pieces (76 kg) of ivory smuggled in a shipment in transit from Africa to Asia; the shipment was en route from Djibouti to Hong Kong. The pieces, painted and camouflaged with black material, were concealed in parcels labelled "imported shoes".

UAE CITES Management Authority in litt. to ETIS, 7 July 2018; *Gulf Today:* <https://bit.ly/2S93Hnm>, 4 July 2018

ZAMBIA: On 27 July 2018, at Chipata Subordinate Court, Howard Nyirenda was sentenced to five years' imprisonment with hard labour for unlawful possession of two ivory pieces (6.6 kg).

Zambia Reports: <https://bit.ly/2J99SDG>, 6 August 2018

ZIMBABWE: On 11 April 2018, at Gokwe Magistrates' Court, Cuthbert Sibanda of Ngondoma Village was imprisoned for nine

years for illegally trading in ivory. On 23 March 2018, police received information that Sibanda was at Gokwe Centre looking for buyers for the ivory. Authorities posing as prospective buyers approached him and agreed on a price for the pieces. Sibanda was arrested when he took them to the place where he was hiding the ivory.

On 8 October 2018, it was reported that Juliet Simango of Muzondakaya Village, Chipinge, had been sentenced to seven years' imprisonment for the illegal possession of two ivory tusks. Simango was herding cattle when she reportedly stumbled upon a dead elephant; she removed one tusk and took it home and returned the following day to collect the second tusk. These were seized from her home by the authorities acting on information.

The Herald: <https://bit.ly/2q7BWIL>, 12 April 2018; <https://bit.ly/2EAsuhd>, 8 October 2018

MARINE

CANADA: On 20 June 2018, it was reported that 18 t of eel meat, much of it believed to be from the European Eel *Anguilla anguilla* (CITES II), had been seized from a shipping container in the Port of Vancouver, destined for the food market. According to Sheldon Jordan, director of wildlife enforcement for Environment Canada, it is probably the country's largest-ever seizure and formed part of Operation Thunderstorm, a global effort of law enforcement bodies to crack down on illegal wildlife trade (see Other/multi-seizures).

"We're estimating that at least 50% of the eel on the Canadian retail market is probably European Eel that was brought in unlawfully", said Jordan. "It's mainly being used in sushi."

The case is being investigated and, according to Jordan, is complicated by the existence of a legal and regulated harvest of American Eel *Anguilla rostrata*; the two species are reportedly often mixed in illegal shipments and can only be distinguished from each other by DNA analysis.

CTV News: <https://bit.ly/2Pk9VIA>, 20 June 2018; <https://bit.ly/2MOFH15>, 21 June 2018; <https://bit.ly/2K9M2KU>, 20 June 2018

CHINA: On 11 May 2018, Xiamen Customs seized a total of 662 nautilus Nautilidae spp. shells (CITES II) and 2.8 t of stony corals Scleractinia (CITES II) imported from the Philippines. Two suspects who fled were later apprehended.

China National Times: <https://bit.ly/2q4MKNW> (in Chinese), 8 October 2018

HONG KONG SAR: On 4 June 2018, Customs officials at Kwai Chung Customhouse Cargo Examination Compound seized 140 kg of suspected dried seahorses *Hippocampus* spp. (CITES II) and 220 kg of dried shark fins from a container arriving from Indonesia declared to contain fish maw. Two directors of a dried

seafood shop were arrested on 6 June and released on bail pending further investigation.

On 13 August 2018, Customs officials at Man Kam To Control Point seized about 316 kg of suspected dried abalones *Haliotis* spp. from luggage contained inside two outgoing vehicles. Four people arrested have been released on bail pending further investigation.

The Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region press release: <https://bit.ly/2CxoHib>, 7 June 2018; *Customs and Excise Department, the Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region press release*: <https://bit.ly/2CXImZK>, 14 August 2018

INDIA: On 3 September 2018, officials seized some eight tonnes of shark fins from Mumbai and Gujarat which were to be exported illegally to China and Hong Kong (see Malaysia).

Zee News: <https://bit.ly/2CxxOQ4>, 6 September 2018

ITALY: On 3 May 2018, at Venice Marco Polo Airport, officials seized some 700,000 (500 kg) European Eels *Anguilla anguilla* (CITES II) bound for Asia. The eels, which were in their larval state, were contained in 90 goatskins filled with water; they were later released in locations along the Sile river. One Italian national was arrested.

Venezia Today: <https://bit.ly/2AnKyY9>, 3 May 2018; *Robin des Bois On the Trail No. 21 July 2018*

MALAYSIA: On 4 September 2018, a container from Chennai, India, bound for Hong Kong and suspected to contain some four tonnes of shark fins, was intercepted at the request of the Indian authorities following raids in India during which eight tonnes of shark fins were seized in early September (see India). The contents of the Malaysia seizure were labelled as "dried ray skins". According to an alleged organiser known to have hired shark hunters and who has been arrested, the fins are sundried at a warehouse in Sewri, Maharashtra, sent to Veraval in Gujarat for polishing and processing and returned to Sewri for onward shipment to Chennai and Kerala; they are then packaged and loaded onto containers. Four people were taken into custody.

This case comes a week after five tonnes of marine life, including 230 live Tiger Sharks *Galeocerdo cuvier* that had been kept in modified water tanks, were seized from three trawlers off Sabah, manned by Vietnamese crew. The case is under investigation.

Free Malaysia Today: <https://bit.ly/2EFowzj>, 5 September 2018

SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE: On 22 September 2018, authorities seized approximately two tonnes of sharks from a Senegalese-flagged, but Spanish-linked, long-line fishing vessel; the cargo included shark fins severed from their torsos. Although the

vessel was licensed to fish for "tuna and similar species", inspections revealed their fish holds were solely filled with sharks, predominantly Blue Sharks *Prionace glauca*. Fishing line tracers, or snoods—monofilament segments that support the fishing hooks—were reinforced with steel wire, which are used to prevent sharks from biting through fishing line. This finding underlined the suspicion that the targeted species were mainly sharks, not tuna. Fish on board were also gutted and processed which, unless authorised, is a violation of São Toméan fisheries regulations.

EcoWatch: <https://bit.ly/2yqUjDm>, 26 September 2018

SOUTH AFRICA: A selection of incidents involving abalone *Haliotis midae*:

On 22 May 2018, authorities seized 7,670 abalones from a residence in Ottery, Western Cape. One arrest.

On 13 June 2018, at Cape Town District Court, government officials were among a number of people allegedly associated with a large abalone smuggling network who were granted bail (two were not). The nine government personnel were believed to have converted the local anti-poaching office in Gansbaai into a criminal enterprise. The group was arrested in early 2018 in an undercover police operation aimed at taking down syndicates involved in the harvesting of abalone stocks between Cape Town and Cape Agulhas.

On 13 June 2018, police seized 8,330 shelled abalones from a car that was abandoned after a high-speed chase through Gordon's Bay, Western Cape.

On 22 June 2018, bags containing 2,326 shucked abalones were seized from a vehicle outside Aliwal-North, Eastern Cape Province, reportedly en route from East London to Johannesburg.

On 26 July 2018, authorities arrested three men at an address in Plumstead who were found in possession of over 19,000 abalones and abalone processing machinery.

On 17 August 2018, for the fourth time in three years, the government's stock of confiscated abalones was stolen from the central depot in Paarden Island, Cape Town. Gunmen held up guards at the warehouse and left with an undisclosed volume of dried abalones.

On 29 August 2018, 350 kg of abalones were confiscated from a vehicle in Winburg, Free State Province, travelling from Cape Town to Johannesburg. One arrest.

On 12 September 2018, police in the Western Cape acting on information searched a residence on Burgundy Estate where bags containing 2,064 shucked abalones and abalone processing equipment were found.

On 13 September 2018, authorities in Cape Town searching premises in Bur-Hein Estate,

Kraaifontein, discovered an illegal abalone processing facility and racks holding large [unspecified] amounts of abalones, as well as bags of dried abalones. Further investigation led to two other residences where numerous containers filled with bags of shucked abalones, cash and processing equipment were seized. Four men were arrested and vehicles seized.

On 20 September 2018, at Port Elizabeth High Court, Morne Bignaut, the mastermind behind an abalone poaching enterprise, was sentenced to 20 years in prison. He pleaded guilty to two charges of racketeering and one charge of contravening the *Marine Living Resources Act*. Sentencing of five co-accused was postponed.

On 26 September 2018, two Chinese nationals appeared at the East London Magistrates' Court after being arrested for processing abalones in a house in Greenfields. Over 1,000 abalones were seized.

On 3 October 2018, at Groblersburg port of entry, Limpopo, at the border with Botswana, officials searching a vehicle found a concealed compartment containing potato bags, inside of which was over one tonne of abalones. The shipment was bound for Zimbabwe via Botswana but more details of the origin and destination are under investigation; the suspects are being sought.

The Citizen: <https://bit.ly/2POfyWc>, 27 August 2018; *South African Police Service media release*: <https://bit.ly/2Ra2tad>, 23 May 2018; *Times Live*: <https://bit.ly/2q6TRFM>, 13 June 2018; *News24*: <https://bit.ly/2q3jQxM>, 25 July 2018; *Times Live*: <https://bit.ly/2S99vxa>, 13 June 2018; *eNews Channel Africa*: <https://bit.ly/2AmomgL>, 24 June 2018; *South African Police Service media statement*: <https://bit.ly/2R2o8Rs>, 27 July 2018; *Sowetan Live*: <https://bit.ly/2NVVnnB>, 18 August 2018; *South African Police Service media release*: <https://bit.ly/2SeUQAG>, 12 September 2018; *South African Police Service media release*: <https://bit.ly/2NYioGD>, 13 September 2018; *Pressreader*: <https://bit.ly/2CYX0Qo>, 26 September 2018; *Herald Live*: <https://bit.ly/2PdZ55p>, 19 September 2018; *Dispatch Live*: <https://bit.ly/2yYG8ES>, 1 October 2018; *South African Police Service media statement*: <https://bit.ly/2yVrUVu>, 4 October 2018

TAIWAN: On 5 October 2018, it was reported that the company and captain of *Jin Chang 6* fishing vessel had been fined TWD9.5 million (USD307,000) and TWD1.9 million (USD61,000), respectively. Their fishing licences were also suspended for six months.

On 5 September 2018, port inspectors at Kaohsiung Xiaogang Fishing Port seized from the vessel some 3,260 trunks (>34 t) that were subsequently identified as Silky Sharks *Carcharhinus falciformis* (CITES II). The vessel violated Taiwan fisheries regulations banning the harvest of Silky Shark and contravened the stipulation that shark fins should be attached to the shark's body at landing.

Taiwan Environmental Information Center (TEIA): <https://bit.ly/2JdiOmA>, 14 September 2018; *The News Lens*: <http://bit.ly/2OhaXef>, 5 October 2018

USA: On 4 October 2018, it was reported that Ramon Mayorquin and David Mayorquin, had been sentenced to 12 years of probation and fined USD1.25 million for their roles in trafficking sea cucumbers. The funds will be distributed to the US and Mexican governments.

On 9 October 2018, it was reported that Anthony James Buccola, the owner of an antiques shop in Los Angeles who sold two Narwhal *Monodon monoceros* (CITES II) tusks to an undercover officer, had been fined USD20,507 and sentenced to 36 months of probation, and either 200 hours of community service or 20 days in prison. His company is required to pay the same fine.

US Fish and Wildlife Service Law Enforcement news release: <https://bit.ly/2S9uWxZ>, 4 October 2018; *The Sacramento Bee*: <https://bit.ly/2ytDKqf>, 9 October 2018

PANGOLINS

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

CAMEROON: In September 2018, it was reported that four people, including a policeman, had been arrested in Yaoundé with 270 kg of pangolin scales; the group are allegedly part of a well-organised ring operating in the south of the country.

In August 2018, six people, including Cameroonian and Central African nationals, were arrested while trying to sell 718 kg of pangolin scales in Douala. They were released on bail; only three attended court (see also Other/multi-seizures).

Eagle Network: www.facebook.com/plugins/post.php?href=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fpage.enforcement%2Fposts%2F1896359927115022&width=500, September 2018; *Journal du Cameroun*: <https://bit.ly/2R1CL7I>, 23 August 2018

CHINA: On 26 September 2018, Guangzhou Customs held a press conference to report the recent seizure of 7.2 t of pangolin scales in three shipments. One consignment was uncovered when the declared weight of the cargo, labelled as granite slabs, was found to be suspicious. On inspection, concealed under granite slabs were 113 woven bags each containing some 20 kg of pangolin scales (total 2.2 t). A task force was set up and further shipments containing 2.6 t and 2.3 t of pangolin scales were intercepted. Four people were arrested.

Guangzhou Customs press release, <https://bit.ly/2SaQJpk> (in Chinese), 26 September 2018

CONGO, DEM. REP.: On 3 August 2018, authorities in Zongo, South Kivu province, seized 230 kg of pangolin scales from a person preparing to cross into the Central African

Republic, destined for Asia; the goods had reportedly originated in North Ubangi.

On 21 June 2018, four men were arrested as they crossed a coastal border point from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Brazzaville, Congo, in possession of 1.8 t of pangolin scales; a fifth person was subsequently arrested. The suspects were reportedly planning to transport the contraband via Brazzaville to the port city of Douala, Cameroon, and on to Lagos, Nigeria. The group are allegedly part of a major criminal supply chain that has been smuggling elephant tusks and pangolin scales from Africa to Asia for several years. Officers from six African countries are involved in investigating the case and in efforts to identify the financiers behind the shipments, which are said to represent hundreds of elephants and thousands of pangolins.

Afrique News: <https://bit.ly/2PNe4vr>, 21 August 2018; *AsiaTimes*: <https://bit.ly/2PjJNK>, 26 July 2018

CÔTE D'IVOIRE: On 20 July 2018, at the Court of First Instance, Abidjan, Yao Kouassi Sébastien, Angha Agnan Joseph, Assi Seka Jocelin, and Kanga Raymond received the maximum sentence of one year in prison and were each fined CFA300,000 (USD528) after they were apprehended in July 2017 in possession of three tonnes of pangolin scales. The court ordered the scales to be incinerated.

Fratmat.info: <https://bit.ly/2JbOc9Y>, 22 July 2018

HONG KONG SAR: On 15 May 2018, authorities at the Tsing Yi Customs Cargo Examination Compound, Kwai Tsing, seized a shipment from Indonesia declared as plastic scrap which was found to contain circa 630 kg of suspected pangolin scales.

On 20 July 2018, Customs officials at Tsing Yi Customs Cargo Examination Compound seized 284 bags containing seven tonnes of suspected pangolin scales. The shipment had arrived from Nigeria, bound for Guangdong province, mainland China, and was declared to contain plastic materials (see also Congo).

7th Space: <https://bit.ly/2PMJ8LV>, 15 May 2018; *Government of the Hong Kong SAR press release*: www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201807/20IP2018072000784.htm, 20 July 2018; *South China Morning Post*: <http://bit.ly/2EPEIDI>, 20 July 2018

MALAYSIA: A man has been charged with attempting to export to China via Sepanggar Port, Sabah, some eight tonnes of pangolin scales in July 2017. On 8 October 2018, the case was transferred to the Sessions Court in Kota Kinabalu and the suspect released on bail. The case is significant as it is the first trial linked to Malaysia's transit role in the global illicit pangolin trade.

New Straits Times: <https://bit.ly/2vL3H4N>, 11 August 2017; *Daily Express*: <https://bit.ly/2q3IRtQ>, 25 September 2018; *Pressreader*: <https://bit.ly/2NVGiCF>, 9 October 2018

NIGERIA: On 1 August 2018, it was reported that authorities had seized from a shop in Oba Elegushi international market, Ajah, some one tonne of pangolin scales (and four pieces of elephant tusks (29 kg)). The occupants of the shop are at large. Three other pangolin seizures took place in early 2018 (see also *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 30(1):32), all reportedly involving Chinese nationals.

Oracle Today: <https://bit.ly/2ysRAJo> [undated]; *Africa Sustainable Conservation News:* <https://bit.ly/2AoMq2N>, 15 August 2018

VIET NAM: On 27 April 2018, Customs officials in Cat Lai port, Ho Chi Minh City, seized 3.8 t of pangolin scales from two containers imported from Congo declared as logs. This is reported to be the largest-ever seizure of animal parts by Ho Chi Minh City Customs. The authorities were alerted to the shipment by Congolese Customs and had been monitoring the containers since their arrival from a transit port in Singapore. Scanners revealed suspicious empty spaces at the centre of each container, surrounded by logs. As no recipient came to claim the consignment, officials opened it up on 1 June to discover the full contents.

On 3 May 2018, at Saigon Port, Ho Chi Minh City, authorities seized 3.3 t of pangolin scales in transit from Nigeria bound for Cambodia in a shipment of cashew nuts (see also Other/multi-seizures).

Tuoi Tre News: <https://bit.ly/2w7mtEP>, 27 April 2018; *Viet Nam.net:* <https://bit.ly/2JbOmI4>, 4 May 2018

ZIMBABWE: On 11 April 2018, in Masvingo, Zimbabwe nationals Brighton Ngwenyama, Tatenda Mhango and Kudzai Shava were each sentenced to the mandatory nine years in prison for possession of a pangolin (CITES I). Police received information in April 2016 that the trio was selling a pangolin at a location near Mushandike and posed as buyers. After being offered the live pangolin for sale, they asked the three to place the animal in the car while the payment was being processed. Other detectives moved in and arrested the suspects; Shava tried to flee, but was shot in the leg.

The Herald: <https://bit.ly/2AnbpTZ>, 11 April 2018

REPTILES

INDIA: On 4 August 2018, some 1,125 Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II) concealed in cloth bags were seized from three passengers travelling by train from Vijayawada; they were arrested at Visakhapatnam railway station, Andhra Pradesh. The reptiles were reportedly to be passed over to an accomplice in Howrah before being smuggled to Bangladesh.

On 6 September 2018, authorities seized 523 Indian Star Tortoises from a passenger

at Lokmanya Tilak railway station who was arrested.

On 6 October 2018, authorities acting on information seized 584 Indian Star Tortoises and arrested two persons at Triplicane, Chennai, breaking up an inter-state gang operating in Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh (AP). The tortoises were reportedly destined for export and had been brought from AP for onward transportation through Tamil Nadu.

NDTV: <https://bit.ly/2ODkiBD>, 6 August 2018; *Zee News:* <https://bit.ly/2CxxOQ4>, 6 September 2018; *The Business Standard:* <https://bit.ly/2yQaRUw>, 6 October 2018

INDONESIA: In September 2018, Jakarta police arrested a man in Tangerang, Banten, for his involvement in the illegal trade in and possession of 128 Pig-nosed Turtles *Carettochelys insculpta* (CITES II). The turtles were being traded illegally via social media.

The Jakarta Post: <https://bit.ly/2S7W40o>, 28 September 2018

SPAIN: In August 2018, it was reported that authorities in Mallorca had shut down what has been described as the largest illegal turtle hatchery in Europe, and seized 1,110 turtles and tortoises of 62 species, including Radiated Tortoises *Astrochelys radiata* (CITES I) and box turtles (CITES II) and species endemic to Mexico, USA, and Canada. The farm was not registered with the CITES Secretariat as required for the commercial breeding of CITES species. Three people were arrested and more arrests are expected.

National Geographic: <https://on.natgeo.com/2R-749RA>, 23 August 2018

USA: On 23 July 2018, Chinese nationals Huaqian Qu and Renfeng Gao were fined USD5,500 (to be paid to the US Fish and Wildlife Service) and were ordered to return to China within 72 hours after they attempted to smuggle 31 Spotted Turtles *Clemmys guttata* (CITES II) and 14 box turtles *Terrapene* spp. in carry-on bags on a flight from Los Angeles to China without the requisite CITES permits. Flight attendants Qu and Gao were arrested at Los Angeles International Airport on 12 May 2018.

San Bernardino Sun: <https://bit.ly/2qIsexU>, 21 June 2018; *Whittier Daily News:* <https://bit.ly/2AmNpAp>, 23 July 2018; *Newsweek:* <https://bit.ly/2PdMISc>, 11 October 2018

VIET NAM: On 20 September 2018, it was reported that the People's Court of Dien Bien district, Dien Bien province, had sentenced Cao Xuan Nai to 10 years in prison after he was found guilty of violating wildlife regulations. He was arrested near the Tay Trang Border Gate in April 2018 with 27 (10.5 kg) Big-headed Turtles *Platysternon megacephalum* (CITES I) and four Asian Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus* (CITES I)

paws. The arrest was processed over three months, after the revised 2015 Penal Code had taken effect, which raises the maximum penalty for wildlife-related violations for individuals to 15 years or VND2 billion (USD85,900) in fines.

Viet Nam Plus: <https://bit.ly/2CX6ED3>, 20 September 2018

RHINOCEROSSES

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.

CHINA: As part of a nationwide investigation into wildlife crime code-named "Operation Thunder", which was launched on 1 April 2018, authorities in Yunnan province uncovered a network selling illegal wildlife products online and seized 53 rhino horn pieces.

On 3 July 2018, authorities seized 5.5 kg of rhino horns and 121 suspected rhino products (273 kg) in Chongzuo, Guangxi province. Four suspects were transporting the items to the border city of Pingxiang in two vehicles, reportedly en route from Africa to Viet Nam. The suspects were apprehended following investigations undertaken by multiple police forces in Pingxiang City, Longzhou County, Guangxi and Xia Shizhi (see also Other/multi-seizures).

China News: <https://bit.ly/2PNX7K> (in Chinese), 8 May 2018; *Legal Daily:* <https://bit.ly/2ysFTcw> (in Chinese), 23 July 2018

MALAYSIA: On 13 August 2018, authorities at Kuala Lumpur International Airport discovered 50 rhino horns at a postal aviation centre in what is believed to be South-east Asia's largest single seizure of rhino horns. The horns were packed in boxes that also contained nine whole carnivore carcasses, all bound for Ha Noi, Viet Nam; their provenance is not reported.

<https://bit.ly/2Pe8I4Y>, 18 August 2018

MOZAMBIQUE: On 7 October 2018, at Maputo International Airport, a Chinese citizen bound for Viet Nam was detained after nine rhino horns wrapped in aluminium foil and mixed with food products were found in his luggage.

Club of Mozambique: <https://bit.ly/2y9HxJ4>, 8 October 2018

SOUTH AFRICA: On 7 May 2018, at Lephale Regional Court, Limpopo, Antonio Xavier Freitas was fined R1 million (USD72,000) or sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment. Freitas was charged with hunting specially protected animals without a permit, possession/donation of rhino parts without a permit, and selling rhino meat without a permit.

On 17 May 2018 at the Zeerust Regional Court, four people accused of rhino poaching received prison sentences of between 10 and 30 years. The accused entered Madikwe Game Reserve on 29 March 2017 and allegedly killed a rhino; they abandoned their vehicle and fled on foot after being pursued by the authorities. Their vehicle was found to contain two rhino horns, a rifle, and knives. The suspects were arrested in Winterveldt near Soshanguve on 4 April 2017. Patrick Khoza and Samuel Masive were each sentenced to 30 years in prison; Johannes Mthopa was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment and Monda Ndlovu to 20 years.

On 31 May 2018, at Cape Town Regional Court, Alexandre Dias Shintlhangu was gaoled for five years for attempted rhino poaching. He was found guilty of: conspiracy to commit a crime by attempting to kill a rhino in Karoo National Park (five years' imprisonment); entering, residing and hunting in a national park without authorisation (five years' imprisonment); possession of a firearm (five years' imprisonment) and possession of ammunition without a licence (three years' imprisonment). All four counts will run concurrently.

The case relates to an incident in August 2017 when three men allegedly from a rhino poaching syndicate in Limpopo province illegally entered Karoo National Park, Western Cape, with the intention of killing a Black Rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis bicornis* (CITES I) for its horns. They gained entry by cutting a hole in the electrified fence. Discovering the hole, field rangers tracked the spoor of the suspects and arrested Shintlhangu; the other two fled (one was later arrested in Vaalwater but charges were withdrawn pending DNA results). Poaching equipment was recovered.

On 2 August 2018, at Saselamani Magistrates' Court, Limpopo, Joseph Molapo and Sebastian Mbhombhi were sentenced to 15 years and six months' imprisonment following their arrest in Kruger National Park in October 2014. They were sentenced to four years for rhino poaching; six months for trespassing; eight years and three years respectively for possession of an unlicensed firearm and ammunition.

On 18 September 2018, six key syndicate members implicated in the trafficking of poached rhino horns were arrested in various locations in Mpumalanga. Included among them were two alleged syndicate leaders, two police officers and a former policeman; another police officer was arrested on 20 September.

The arrests relate to an investigation, Project Broadbill, which is focused on the criminal supply chain of poached rhinos within Kruger National Park, Kwazulu Natal, Gauteng and other private or state-owned reserves. The syndicate members allegedly ran poaching groups with the support of corrupt police officials as well as authorities from private game farms. More seizures and arrests are expected.

On 20 September 2018, authorities conducting a raid on a property in Standerton, Mpumalanga,

seized 20 rhino horns as well as firearms and ammunition. Two people were arrested.

Capricorn Voice: <https://bit.ly/2O2Klx6>, 9 May 2018; *South African Police Service media statement*: <https://bit.ly/2Cw74PU>, 18 May 2018; *South African National Parks*: <https://bit.ly/2NWrfEej>, 27 June 2018; *The Citizen*: <https://bit.ly/2JadsxA>, 27 June 2018; *South African Police Service media statement*: <http://bit.ly/2Saoffl>, 2 August 2018; *South African Police Service media statement*: <http://bit.ly/2PmFyLH>, 19 September 2018; *News24*: <http://bit.ly/2q4XCve>, 20 September 2018; *South African Police Service media release*: <http://bit.ly/2PmFyLH>, 21 September 2018

TURKEY: On 7 August 2018, Customs officials at Atatürk Airport, Istanbul, seized nine rhino horns from luggage arriving from South Africa and belonging to a passenger who had left the airport without collecting his luggage. The horns were detected by x-ray machine.

Hurriyet Daily News: <http://bit.ly/2yTJDMV>, 8 August 2018

VIET NAM: On 24 May 2018, Lao Cai City police discovered more than 20 kg of rhino horns being illegally transported in a car from Vinh Phuc to Lao Cai. The pieces had been wrapped in black bags and concealed in vases of hyacinths that were destined for sale to China. Two arrests.

On 15 July 2018, authorities at Tan Son Nhat International Airport, Ho Chi Minh City, seized 12 rhino horns (7 kg) from luggage belonging to a Vietnamese man arriving from Angola. The horns were concealed in cans of milk powder.

RFA: <http://bit.ly/2NVLM0d>, 25 May 2018; *TUOITRE.VN*: <http://bit.ly/2EFEoqt>, 13 July 2018; <http://bit.ly/2PON7rt>, 17 July 2018

ZIMBABWE: On 11 July 2018, in Masvingo, Godfrey Makechemu, Ignatius Maiga, Farai Chauno and Celestino Shate were each sentenced to nine years' imprisonment after being convicted of unlawfully hunting rhinos and for the illegal possession of a firearm and silencing device. The defendants shot and wounded a male Black Rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* (CITES I) in the Save Valley Conservancy, in Bikita, in December 2017. The rhino escaped, bleeding heavily.

The suspects were picked up after rangers on patrol discovered rhino spoor and traces of blood alongside human footprints and lay in wait for the suspects after tracking the spoor.

NewsDzeZimbabwe: <http://bit.ly/2PkkMvQ>, 21 July 2018; *Nehanda Radio*: <http://bit.ly/2Jb8C2X>, 11 July 2018

OTHER / MULTI-SEIZURES

During May 2018, an international operation codenamed Thunderstorm initiated by INTERPOL and involving intergovernmental

organisations, police, Customs, and wildlife agencies in some 92 countries, resulted in nearly 2,000 wildlife seizures and the identification of some 1,400 suspects. Further arrests and prosecutions are foreseen. Total worldwide seizures reported during May include: 43 t of wild meat (including bear, elephant, crocodile, whale and zebra); 1.3 t of raw/processed ivory; 869 alligators/crocodiles, 9,590 turtles and 10,000 snakes; some 4,000 birds; several tonnes of timber; 48 live primates; 14 big cats; the carcasses of seven bears; eight tonnes of pangolin scales including almost four tonnes by Vietnamese maritime authorities on board a ship arriving from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (see also Marine and Pangolins).

INTERPOL: <http://bit.ly/2S9CTTS>, 20 June 2018

ANGOLA: On 4 June 2018, police handed over to the Environment Ministry 60 African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I) tusks (262 kg) and 266 kg of pangolin *Manis* (CITES I) scales that had been seized at Luanda's Quatro de Fevereiro International Airport. The remaining amount [undisclosed] was in France in the possession of INTERPOL. Seven Angolan citizens were reportedly aiming to trade the ivory in the United Arab Emirates.

On 22 August 2018, five Vietnamese nationals were arrested in São Paulo district and the following were seized: 535 kg of raw ivory, 263 kg of worked ivory, 895 kg of pangolin scales and 10 kg of CITES-listed medicinal plants. Two workshops had been set up in a residential property to work the ivory. Of the four detainees, two were reportedly preparing to travel to Viet Nam with suitcases containing 20 kg of rhino horns concealed in packs of toys, lamps and fruit.

The case was triggered when another Vietnamese citizen was detained on 12 May; he had reportedly been intending to board a flight from Luanda International Airport on 4 February with 20 kg of rhino horn (see also Elephants and Pangolins).

Angola CITES Management Authority in litt. to *ETIS*, 25 August 2018; *allAfrica*: <http://bit.ly/2AnPts5>, 21 June 2018; *Observador*: <http://bit.ly/2NYHUV8>, 23 August 2018

CAMEROON: On 6 April 2018, at Douala International Airport, one tonne of pangolin scales and an unconfirmed number of elephant tusks were seized from containers of cocoa that were to be transported to China. The country of origin was being investigated. Three Chinese nationals were arrested (see also Elephants and Pangolins).

Voice of America (VOA): <http://bit.ly/2EMITke>, 13 April 2018

CHINA: On 26 March 2018, Jilin forest police uncovered a chain of illegal purchasing and sale of wildlife; 18 people were arrested and 26 rhino horns and 110 ivory products were seized (see also Elephants and Rhinoceroses).

On 26 April 2018, Harbin Customs officials in Hulin port, Heilongjiang, noticed irregularities with the shape of a vehicle chassis they were inspecting and that rivets had been replaced. The trailer was demolished to access the interior and the following wildlife items were found: 1,276 Saiga Antelope *Saiga tatarica* (CITES II) horns (from an estimated 638 animals), 156 pieces of mammoth ivory, 406 Walrus *Odobenus rosmarus* (CITES III) tusks, two African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I) tusks, 226 Narwhal *Monodon monoceros* (CITES II) tusks, 70 bear (CITES I/II) teeth and 44 bear gall bladders, and 320 kg of sea cucumbers. Eight Chinese and Russian nationals were taken into custody and the case is under investigation.

CCTV.com: <http://bit.ly/2ySpAps>, 8 October 2018; Guizhou People.cn: <http://bit.ly/2RafhgN>, 18 July 2018; Robin des Bois, *On the Trail* No. 21 July 2018

CONGO: On 4 October 2018, at a court in Owando, Cuvette, Henri Roland Botata was sentenced to two years' imprisonment for killing a gorilla *Gorilla* sp. and an African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (both CITES I). The offences took place in Ntokou-Pikounda National Park.

Agence d'Information d'Afrique Centrale (ADIAC): <http://bit.ly/2ySLwke>, 4 October 2018

MALAYSIA: On 24 September 2018, more than 400 animals, including two young Orangutans *Pongo pygmaeus* (CITES I), dozens of marine crocodiles, 350 "flying gliders" [likely *Petaurus* spp.] and parrots were seized as they were being transported by boat from Sumatra, Indonesia, via the Strait of Malacca, bound for Thailand. Three suspected traffickers were arrested.

Journal du Cameroun.com: <http://bit.ly/2R78Jzg>, 24 September 2018

SOUTH AFRICA: In July 2018, police in Rust De Winter, Limpopo, launched a search for suspects who killed six Lions *Panthera leo* (CITES II) at a local farm. Four of the animals had been decapitated and their paws removed.

South African Police Service media release: <http://bit.ly/2D2qfSq>, 1 July 2018

VIET NAM: On 29 August 2018, at Ha Noi's People's Court, former Customs officer Pham Minh Hoang and accomplice Tran Trong Cuong were each sentenced to 16 years in prison for embezzlement after they were caught stealing seized ivory and rhino horn (both CITES I) stocks from a Customs warehouse and replacing the goods with fakes. A third man, Hoang Van Dien, was sentenced to two years for trading prohibited goods. The group stole nearly 240 kg of ivory and 6 kg of rhino horn pieces over April and May 2017. Ivory, including bracelets, statues, and a tusk, were recovered from Dien's house (see also *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 29(2):74).

On 28 September 2018, at Noi Bai International Airport, Ha Noi, authorities seized 805 kg of pangolin *Manis* (CITES I) scales and 193 kg of ivory (CITES I) hidden inside boxes on a flight from Nigeria. The goods, reportedly sent from two companies based in Nigeria, had arrived on 21 September but were not collected.

On 4 October 2018, authorities at Tien Sa port, Danang, seized six tonnes of pangolin scales and two tonnes of ivory in reportedly one of the country's largest wildlife trafficking cases for years. The items were found hidden in a plastic waste container, owned by a Vietnamese company and originating in Nigeria.

TRAFFIC: <http://bit.ly/2OGuNnJ>, 29 August 2018; ManilaStandard.net: <http://bit.ly/2R7obf0>, 30 September 2018; US News: <http://bit.ly/2PcNFua>, 5 October 2018

FLORA

CAMBODIA: On 23 August 2018, wildlife rangers conducting a patrol in Phnom Tnout Wildlife Sanctuary, Preah Vihear province, seized over 2 m³ of rosewood (CITES II), chainsaws, guns, bullets and 40 m of net for wildlife traps. Five people have been given prison sentences of between five and 10 years.

Wildlife Alliance: <http://bit.ly/2R4vtA7>, 25 August 2018

HONG KONG SAR: On 19 April 2018, authorities at Kwai Chung Cargo Examination Compound seized nearly 24 t of Honduras Rosewood *Dalbergia stevensonii* (CITES II) that had been concealed in a shipping container arriving from Honduras.

On 27 June 2018, authorities at Tsing Yi Cargo Examination Compound seized 29 t of Guatemalan Rosewood *Dalbergia tucurensis* (CITES III) from a container arriving from Honduras.

On 6 July 2018, 8.7 t of suspected Siamese Rosewood *Dalbergia cochinchinensis* was seized from a container arriving at Kwai Chung Cargo Examination Compound from Cambodia.

On 10 September 2018, Cai Huimian was given a three-month prison sentence for importing from Guatemala a 29 t shipment of Honduras Rosewood *Dalbergia stevensonii* (CITES II) in January. The cargo was bound for mainland China.

On 5 June 2018, Customs officers at Kwai Chung Cargo Examination Compound, discovered 5.7 t of suspected Red Sandalwood

Pterocarpus santalinus (CITES II) in a shipment of gypsum boards arriving from Port Klang on 30 May. The container was selected for inspection because it contained gypsum boards, which are rarely shipped from Malaysia. Investigations are continuing. No arrests.

On 8 August 2018, Customs officers at Man Kam To Control Point intercepted a vehicle and seized 6.4 t of suspected American Ginseng *Panax quinquefolius* (CITES II).

Hong Kong Customs and Excise press release: <http://bit.ly/2PVu9z6>, 20 April 2018; South China Morning Post: <http://bit.ly/2JbsHGq>, 11 June 2018; Hong Kong Customs and Excise press release: <http://bit.ly/2PcOt2a>, 7 July 2018; South China Morning Post: <http://bit.ly/2EEImka>, 28 June 2018; The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region: <http://bit.ly/2CySnnx>, 9 August 2018; Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP): <http://bit.ly/2yXZsC7>, 11 September 2018

INDIA: On 29 September 2018, police reported that four persons had been arrested for their alleged involvement in the smuggling of Red Sandalwood *Pterocarpus santalinus* (CITES II). Police, acting on information, recovered 133 logs (4.5 t) arriving by lorry, reportedly from Bengaluru. In order to mask the smell of sandalwood, the suspects had placed incense sticks in the cartons carrying the timber. The cargo was destined for Delhi, for onward shipment within India and overseas.

The Hindu: <http://bit.ly/2CxZkNc>, 30 September 2018



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Hong Kong Customs seized over six tonnes of suspected American Ginseng *Panax quinquefolius* (CITES II) at Man Kam To Control Point in August 2018.