



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

The *TRAFFIC Bulletin* carries a selection of seizures and prosecutions reports. Readers are referred to the seizures section of the TRAFFIC website (www.traffic.org/media-reports/) for regular updates on cases reported from around the world.

BIG CATS

CHINA: On 10 January 2014, in reportedly the biggest wildlife seizure in Yunnan province in the past decade, forest police seized the skins of three Bengal Tigers *Panthera tigris tigris* (CITES I), one dead Bengal Tiger cub, over 100 items of Tiger bone, Lion *Panthera leo* (CITES I/II) bone, and products from other endangered species.

www.chinanews.com/tp/hd2014/01-22/294873.shtml

INDIA: Sansar Chand, a wildlife poacher well-known to enforcement authorities for his involvement in the killing of Tigers (CITES I) and other animals over many years, died on 18 March 2014. He was facing trial in a case related to the killing of a Tiger in Sariska Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan in 2005, and had been brought to Alwar, Rajasthan, from hospital gaol for a court hearing on 14 March (see also *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 14(2):42; 15(3):102; 20(2):85; 20(3):116; 23(1):36).

http://zeenews.india.com/news/rajasthan/notorious-poacher-sansar-chand-dead_918630.html, 18 March 2014

MALAYSIA: On 17 February 2014, it was reported that authorities had arrested two men and seized the carcass of a Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I)—the fifth to be found in raids in Peninsular Malaysia in less than six months. Five months earlier, the Department arrested a man for smuggling four Leopards and a Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) from Rantau Panjang, near the border with Thailand. In both cases, markings on the animals indicated that they had been snared.

www.traffic.org/home/2014/2/17/wildlife-department-vigilance-leads-to-five-leopards-seized.html, 17 February 2014

THAILAND: On 19 February 2014, police seized from a vehicle five Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) cubs and other animals (turtles and monitor lizards) being smuggled to Lao PDR, for apparent onward sale in Viet Nam or China as delicacies. According to a police spokesperson, the cubs would normally be kept in Lao PDR for one year to be raised, before being sold on. Two arrests.

www.timeslive.co.za/scitech/2014/02/20/tiger-cubs-other-endangered-species-seized-in-wildlife-trafficking-haul, 20 February 2014

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.

ELEPHANTS

Elephant species are listed in CITES Appendix I/II

CAMBODIA: On 16 February 2014, Customs officers at Siem Reap International Airport arrested two Vietnamese nationals after almost 80 kg of elephant tusks were found in their luggage. The duo reportedly had brought the tusks from Angola via South Korea and Cambodia, before attempting to take them to Ha Noi, Viet Nam.

www.globaltimes.cn/content/843016.shtml#UwXyH4X-WBu1, 17 February 2014

CAMEROON: On 8 February 2014, Customs officials in Sengbot, near the border with the Republic of the Congo, seized 143 kg of ivory from sacks concealed in empty beer crates during the routine inspection of a lorry. The items included 69 tusks and 12 ivory pieces.

www.cameroun24.net/index.php?pg=actu&ppg=1&pp=1&id=14635, 27 February 2014

CHINA: In early November 2013, almost 12 t (3188 pieces) of ivory were seized by Customs officers in Xiamen city and arrests were made.

On 4 November 2013 it was reported that Guangdong Supreme People's Court had imposed gaol sentences in respect of defendants Yao and Wu, to 14 and 12 years, respectively. In 2010, Gongbei Customs received intelligence that a legal ivory factory was involved in ivory smuggling. Police later uncovered an ivory trafficking chain between Africa and mainland China via Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Taiwan and, in 2011, a task force detained nine people and confiscated 2762 kg of tusks and other ivory products.

Nandu.com;Sina.com.cn (both in Chinese)

GABON: On 10 January 2014, Farouk Alim, said to be a major player in the country's ivory trade, was arrested in Libreville, in possession of 16 ivory pieces corresponding to 10 tusks (34 kg). He was sentenced to six months in gaol and fined XFA 200 000 (USD2700).

<http://en.gabonews.com/environment/items/a-major-ivory-dealer-arrested-in-libreville.html>, 13 January 2014; *Conservation Justice*, 31 January 2014

HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION: On 3 October 2013, Customs agents at Hong Kong port seized 769 kg (189 tusks) of ivory that had been hidden in bags of soya beans. The consignment came by boat from Côte d'Ivoire, transiting Malaysia, and was thought to be bound for mainland China.

Between 13 and 15 December 2013, at Hong Kong International Airport, Customs officers seized some 160 kg of ivory tusks and worked ivory from the baggage of 14 persons from three in-bound flights from Dubai and Johannesburg. Seven passengers were subsequently convicted: one was sentenced to four months' imprisonment while the others were fined HKD30 000–80 000 (USD4000–10 000).

www.foxnews.com/world/2013/10/03/hong-kong-seizes-15-million-in-illegal-ivory-in-third-major-bust-since-july/, 3 October 2013; http://7thspace.com/headlines/448575/seven-travellers-sentenced_for-smuggling-ivory-tusks.html, 16 December 2013

KENYA: On 28 January 2014, Chinese national Tang Yong Jian was fined a record 20 m shillings (USD230 000) after being arrested while in transit from Mozambique to China via Nairobi in possession of one elephant tusk (3.4 kg). He was the first person to be sentenced under new anti-poaching laws which came into force in December. If Tang is unable to pay the fine, he will spend seven years in gaol.

www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-25925176#, 28 January 2014

SOUTH AFRICA: On 18 December 2013, at Kempton Park Regional Court, Jialing Yang, of Guangdong province, China, was sentenced to a fine of R50 000 (USD4600), or three years' imprisonment, for attempting to smuggle 12.7 kg of ivory through O.R. Tambo International Airport from Dubai, en route to Hong Kong. Two Lion *Panthera leo* (CITES I/II) claws and 10 pangolin *Manis* (CITES II) scales were also in her luggage. She stated that she had purchased the tusks and worked ivory (combs, ornaments and jewellery) at a flea market in Mozambique.

www.news24.com/Green/News/Woman-sentenced-for-smuggling-ivory-2013121

TANZANIA: In late October/early November 2013, police arrested three Chinese nationals and seized 797 elephant tusks in three raids during a week of anti-poaching raids. Some 706 tusks were found in sacks of garlic at the house of Chinese nationals in Dar es Salaam on 2 November, and a further two in the city on 4 November. Police in Mtwara seized 89 tusks a week earlier.

On 19 March 2014, it was reported that a court had sentenced Chinese national Yu Bo to 20 years in gaol after he was found in the illegal possession of 81 elephant tusks. The sentence was in default of his being unable to pay the TZS9 781 204 900 (USD6 million) fine imposed. He was apprehended as he attempted to transport the items out of the country at Dar es Salaam port, in December 2013.

www.reuters.com/article/2013/11/05/us-tanzania-poaching-idUSBRE9A40PC20131105, 5 November 2013; <http://allafrica.com/stories/201403200094.html>, 19 March 2014

TOGO: On 22 and 28 January 2014, authorities at the port of Lome seized nearly four tonnes of ivory tusks. The items were hidden in containers destined for Viet Nam, disguised as cashew nuts and timber. This represents one of the largest-ever ivory seizures in West Africa. Two locals and a Vietnamese national were arrested; the provenance of the ivory has not been established.

<http://in.reuters.com/article/2014/02/03/togo-poaching-ivory-idINL5N0L83F920140203>, 3 February 2014

UGANDA: A high court judge has ordered that 2.9 t (832 pieces) of ivory, seized by the Ugandan Revenue Authority (URA) in October 2013 on its arrival from D.R. Congo, should be returned to a Congolese national for onward export, despite the cargo having entered the country fraudulently declared as coffee and the fact that any onward export would be in violation of CITES. At the time of the seizure, warrants were issued for the arrest of the Congolese national and a Kenyan national, both of whom remain at large. According to Minister Mutagamba's statement, lawyers of Uganda Wildlife Authority and Uganda Revenue Authority had filed a notice of appeal to challenge the judgement application for an interim order for a stay of execution of the judgement; filing of the appeal was to be carried out immediately.

www.traffic.org/home/2014/2/27/uganda-to-return-29-tonnes-of-impounded-ivory-to-ivory-traffic.html, 27 February 2014

VIET NAM: In early October 2013, Customs officials in the northern province of Hai Phong seized ivory tusks weighing 2.4 t concealed inside a container imported from Malaysia and said to be carrying sea shells. On 4 October, another container arriving from Malaysia and also said to be carrying sea shells, was found to be carrying 2.1 t of tusks, bound for China.

www.timeslive.co.za/scitech/2013/10/22/vietnam-customs-officials-seize-ivory-hidden-in-sea-shell-crates, 22 October 2013

ZIMBABWE: On 16 October 2013, a court in Hwange sentenced Akim Masuku to 15.5 years in gaol for poisoning and killing African Elephants *Loxodonta africana* with cyanide in Hwange National Park; this was the fourth such conviction in the country during October. Masuku was also found guilty of illegal possession of ivory. The accused still faced charges for cyanide possession and for contravening environmental laws. Eight others await sentencing for the killing of up to 100 elephants in the park.

www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hN0dtfAAjezjSe3y18vFkUACuklg?doclid=c62ca733-2566-4ba3-ab17-9c10a6072eb4, 17 October 2013

FLORA

INDIA: A small selection of the many seizures of Red Sanders (Red Sandalwood) *Pterocarpus santalinus* (CITES II) that have taken place over the past six months are summarized below:

In October 2013, an international gang smuggling Red Sanders was infiltrated and 14.5 t seized as it was being imported through Mundra Port in Gujarat. Three arrests.

On 3 November 2013, Customs officials at Cochin International Airport seized 110 kg of Red Sanders logs detected following X-ray scan of luggage of three Chinese nationals, bound for Malaysia. The suspects said they were operating as carriers for a Delhi-based kingpin.

On 13 December 2013, Panvel forest department officials in Navi Mumbai seized a lorry carrying 12 t of Red Sanders concealed under bananas. Two arrests.

On 29 December 2013, 7 t of Red Sanders were seized and at least six Indian crew members of a boat were detained off Haldia coast in West Bengal during an anti-smuggling operation by the Coast Guard and the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence. The consignment was reportedly destined for Bangladesh. Customs officials earlier seized Red Sanders from Jalpaiguri district as well as from Kolkata airport and arrested over a dozen Chinese nationals.

On 25 February 2014, at Trivandrum International Airport, Kerala, Customs and Central Excise officials asked the pilot of an aircraft bound for Colombo, Sri Lanka, to land 20 minutes after it had become airborne; three passengers on board were subsequently arrested on a charge of attempting to smuggle 100 kg of Red Sanders out of the country in their check-in baggage. The wood had been covered in a black synthetic material which had not been picked up by X-ray scanner. Enforcers described the method of operation as "relatively new" and said it could be a trial

run to smuggle more valuable contraband items, including firearms.

On 3 March 2014, police seized over 2000 Red Sanders logs (40 t) in Kurnool district, Andhra Pradesh. Four arrests.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/jaipur/Red-sanders-worth-crores-seized/articleshow/23329674.cms>, 1 October 2013; www.newindianexpress.com/cities/kochi/3-Chinese-held-for-smuggling-red-sanders/2013/11/04/article1871229.ece1, 4 November 2013; http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-12-15/navi-mumbai/45216846_1_red-sanders-12-tonnes-panvel, 15 December 2013; www.ndtv.com/article/india/six-held-red-sanders-worth-crores-seized-in-bengal-464979, 30 December 2013; www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Thiruvananthapuram/red-sanders-seized-from-colombobound-flight/article5728584.ece, 26 February 2014; www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/more-than-2-000-logs-of-red-sanders-wood-seized-in-raid-114030301163_1.html, 3 March 2014

SRI LANKA: On 11 November 2013, Customs officials seized 4.5 t of Red Sanders en route from Chennai (India) to Jabel Ali (Dubai). Declared as sanitary-ware, the timber was detected following information received while the consignment was in transit at the Jaya Container Terminal, Colombo port.

On 2 April 2014, Customs officials seized 420 t of Madagascar rosewood *Dalbergia* (CITES II) that had been transported in 28 containers from Zanzibar bound for Hong Kong, via Sri Lanka, where it was detected on 24 March. This is reportedly the largest seizure ever made of this nature in the country.

[TRAFFIC Post \(20\) March 2014](http://www.traffic.org/newsletters/), www.traffic.org/newsletters/; Biodiversity Cultural & National Heritage Protection Division, Sri Lanka Customs, 2 April 2014

UK: On 9 January 2014, a rare water lily *Nymphaea thermarum*, now extinct in the wild, was apparently stolen from the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew. Discovered in 1987 in one location in Mashyuza, Rwanda, the plant grew around freshwater hot springs and needs warm, damp mud. It disappeared from the site about two years ago owing to overexploitation of the hot spring that fed the habitat.

www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-25717643, 13 January 2014

MARINE

AUSTRALIA: On 13 January 2014, at Sale Magistrates' Court, a Sydney man was gaoled for six months after being caught by fisheries officers in Gippsland with a commercial quantity (120) of abalones. He was also banned from any type of abalone fishing for 10 years. All the abalones, equipment and a vehicle were seized.

It was reported on 28 February 2014 that a person had been fined more than AUD3500 (USD3200) after pleading guilty to being in possession of 43 abalones at Kiama Heights, New South Wales. The defendant and another person were arrested in August 2012 after being observed packing dive gear into bags at Love's Bay. Twenty-seven specimens were of a prohibited size. The possession limit for abalones in NSW is two per person in waters open to the taking of abalones and the minimum prescribed legal length is 11.7 cm.

www.gippslandtimes.com.au/story/2033951/abalone-thief-sent-to-prison/?cs=1450, 20 January 2014; www.kiamaindependent.com.au/story/2120221/thousands-of-dollars-in-fines-for-illegal-abalone-fisher/, 28 February 2014; www.begadistrictnews.com.au/story/2104307/south-coast-abalone-poachers-face-serious-penalties/?cs=507, 21 February 2014

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: On 30 October 2013, officials seized 9000 kg of Queen Conch *Strombus gigas* (CITES II) from 223 boxes at Caucedo Multimodal Port, Santo Domingo; the gastropods were allegedly being exported to China by a seafood company.

www.dominicantoday.com/dr/local/2013/10/30/49467/Agents-seize-10-tons-of-smuggled-conch-headed-to-China, 30 October 2013

SOUTH AFRICA: On 6 January 2014, police carrying out a routine check arrested a man near Beaufort West in possession of 1703 abalones (300 kg). Abalone fishing in South Africa was banned in 2008.

www.4-traders.com/NISSAN-MOTOR-CO-LTD-64924771/news/Nissan-Motor-Co-Ltd--Man-held-over-abalone-177740871, 9 January 2014

PANGOLINS

All pangolin species (*Manis*, *Phataginus* and *Smutsia* spp.) are listed in CITES Appendix II

CHINA: In early October 2013, Jiangmen Customs seized 2041 frozen pangolins and over one tonne of pangolin scales (and 1113 python skins) from a fishing vessel in waters south of Taishan Kawashima.

www.chinadaily.com.cn/hqgj/jryw/2013-12-03/content_10724877.html [in Chinese]

THAILAND: On 22 November 2013, Customs officials arrested two men and seized plastic crates containing 122 pangolins after intercepting a car in Thap Sakae district of Prachuap Khiri Khan province.

www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/381209/men-caught-smuggling-122-pangolins-worth-more-than-one-million-baht, 22 November 2013

VIET NAM: On 18 November 2013, in the province of Phu Yen, Le Van Tung was fined VND450 million (USD21150) after being caught in Dong Hoa district a month earlier illegally transporting from Ho Chi Minh City to Ha Tinh Province 49 (256 kg) live pangolins in an ambulance bearing fake number plates.

www.thanhniennews.com/index/pages/2013/11/19-viet-nam-man-transporting-49-pangolins-with-ambulance-gets-fine.aspx, 19 November 2013

ZIMBABWE: On 14 October 2013, Danisa Mloyi was sentenced to nine years in gaol for poaching pangolins. The suspect was prosecuted under the *Parks and Wildlife Act*, reportedly the first time that national legislation has been correctly applied to the poaching of this species.

Tikki Hywood Trust, 17 October 2013



Almost 600 Black Pond Turtles (CITES Appendix I) were seized from three incoming shipments of turtles in Thailand in November 2013.

REPTILES

CANADA: On 5 November 2013, Dennis Day of Cobden was sentenced to 90 days in gaol, to be served at weekends, and fined CAD50 000 (USD46 000) to be paid to the Environmental Damages Fund after pleading guilty to smuggling reptiles into the country near Cornwall by a vessel originating from the USA. In August 2010, Day was found in possession of containers holding 205 animals including one Hermann's Tortoise *Testudo hermanni* (CITES II), one Serrated Hinge-backed Tortoise *Kinixys erosa* (II), eight African Spurred Tortoises *Geochelone sulcata* (II), 25 Timor Tree Monitors *Varanus timorensis* (II), 20 Green Iguanas *Iguana iguana* (II), 51 Jackson's Three-horned Chameleons *Trioceros jacksonii* (II) and 39 Helmeted Chameleons *T. hoehnelii* (II). He was also sentenced to three years' probation and is prohibited from possessing any listed species of wildlife, except in accordance with the provisions of the *Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act* (WAPPRITA). The reptiles were forfeited to the Crown.

Due to evidence obtained during the investigation, Mark Ostroff also pleaded guilty to one count of unlawfully importing animals. He was fined CAD40 000 and sentenced to three years' probation.

www.standard-freeholder.com/2013/11/15/jail-for-smuggling-reptiles, 17 November 2013

HONG KONG SPECIAL

ADMINISTRATIVE REGION: On 4 February 2014, 2265 Pig-nosed Turtles *Carettochelys insculpta* (CITES II) were repatriated to Indonesia, part of a consignment of over 2754 turtles seized on 12 January by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department. This case represents almost a quarter of the 11 122 Pig-nosed Turtles reported to have been seized in Indonesia and Hong Kong in January alone.

www.traffic.org/home/2014/2/6/over-2000-pig-nosed-turtles-fly-home-to-a-troubled-future.html, 6 February 2014

INDIA: On 3 February 2014, 4980 live Indian Softshell Turtles *Nilssonina gangetica* (CITES I) were seized as an attempt was made to take them into Bangladesh at Kalupur, near the border town of Bongaon. Three arrests. It is believed the animals, which had been procured in Vizag (Visakhapatnam), were meant for the meat trade. The turtles were to be released in the wild.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/5000-turtles-seized-on-Bangladesh-border/articleshow/129831856.cms>

THAILAND: During early November 2013, at Suvarnabhumi International Airport, Bangkok, Thai Royal Customs thwarted three attempts to smuggle tortoises and turtles into the country: these included, on 3 November 2013, 72 Black Pond Turtles *Geoclemys hamiltonii* (CITES I; protected in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Nepal), and the following CITES II-listed species: six Crowned River Turtles *Hardella thurjii*, one Three-keeled Land Tortoise *Melanochelys tricarinata* and one Indian Eyed Turtle *Morenia petersi*, from two bags that had arrived on a flight from Bangladesh. Two days later, two uncollected suitcases, also from Bangladesh, were found to contain 423 Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II; protected in range countries India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) and 52 Black Pond Turtles. On 8 November, a Pakistani national arriving from Lahore, India, was arrested with four suitcases containing 470 Black Pond Turtles.

On 10 December 2013, 62 Radiated Tortoises *Astrochelys radiata* (CITES I and protected in its native Madagascar) were seized from a Malagasy national arriving from Antananarivo. The reptiles were concealed in a foam-lined suitcase that had been left on the luggage carousel. The seizure was the result of ongoing co-operation between TRAFFIC and the Royal Thai Customs to identify and watch known wildlife smuggling routes.

www.traffic.org/home/2013/11/12/royal-thai-customs-intercept-three-attempts-to-smuggle-torto.html, 8 November 2013; www.traffic.org/home/2013/12/10/rare-malagasy-tortoises-turn-up-in-luggage-seized-in-bangkok.html, 10 December 2013

On 31 January 2014, Customs and wildlife checkpoint officers at Don Mueang International Airport seized 521 tortoises from five unclaimed bags on board a flight from Chennai, India. Among the reptiles were 65 Black Pond Turtles *Geoclemys hamiltonii* (CITES I) and 440 Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II).

On 12 March 2014, Royal Thai Customs officers discovered 218 Black Pond Turtles and 54 Indian Narrow-headed Softshell Turtles *Chitra indica* (CITES II) in check-in luggage of two Indian nationals, who had taken a flight from Gaya and Varanasi in India, to Bangkok; they were due to board a flight to Macau. Initial investigations show that the turtles were headed for Hong Kong. The duo were handed over to Royal Thai Police.

www.traffic.org/home/2014/2/28/bangkok-a-hub-in-recent-tortoise-trafficking-incidents.html, 28 February 2014; www.traffic.org/home/2014/3/27/recent-seizures-highlight-trouble-for-asias-tortoises-and-fr.html, 27 March 2014

UK: On 3 April 2014, at Isleworth Crown Court, Romanian nationals Angla-Alina Bita and Vitoria-Olivia Bucsa were each sentenced to 12 months' in gaol after their arrest at Heathrow Airport on 3 February. Border Force officers found in their possession 13 lizards, later identified as San Salvador Rock Iguanas *Cyclura rileyi* (CITES I)—native to the Bahamas. Each specimen was wrapped in a sock, and one had perished. The women had arrived on a flight from the Bahamas and were bound for Germany. The animals are being given specialist care, with the long-term aim of returning them to their native habitat.

Grant Miller, head of the Border Force CITES team, said: "This particular species of iguana is incredibly rare—only a few hundred are believed to be left in existence—so this was a remarkable and very important seizure."

www.gov.uk/government/news/angered-iguanas-seized-by-border-force-at-heathrow, 4 February 2014; www.gov.uk/government/news/smuggling-women-jailed-for-smuggling-endangered-iguanas, 4 April 2014

VIET NAM: On 23 December 2013, police in Thanh Hoa province seized 200 kg of Water Monitors *Varanus salvator*, 60 kg of Elongated Tortoises *Indotestudo elongata* (both CITES II), and 50 kg of Radiated Ratsnakes *Coelognathus radiata* from a bus as it travelled through Thanh Hoa City, apparently from the Mekong Delta province of Dong Thap to the northern province of Quang Ninh.

www.thanhniennews.com/index/pages/20131223-wild-animals-seized-from-bus-traveling-from-south-to-north-vietnam.aspx, 23 December 2013

RHINOCEROSSES

All rhinoceros species are listed in CITES Appendix I/II

HONG KONG SPECIAL

ADMINISTRATIVE REGION: The return of 33 rhinoceros horns (and carved ivory items) to South Africa in November 2013 was the result of a two-year process that began in November 2011 after Hong Kong Customs officers X-rayed a shipment of "scrap plastic" and uncovered a record haul of almost 80 kg of rhinoceros horns (plus 758 ivory chopsticks and 127 ivory bracelets). The horns and ivory were to undergo DNA analysis to provide insight into where the elephants and rhinoceroses had been poached.

South China Morning Post: www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1375717/hong-kongs-return-seized-ivory-rhino-horn-south-africa-jailed, 8 December 2013

SINGAPORE: On 16 January 2014, a Vietnamese national was sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment following his arrest at Changi Airport on 10 January after Customs officials found eight pieces of Black Rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* horn (22 kg) in his checked baggage as he travelled in transit to Viet Nam.

www.traffic.org/home/2014/1/20/singapore-and-thailand-customs-each-seize-22-kg-rhino-horn.html, 18 January 2014

SOUTH AFRICA: On 2 December 2013, at Makhado Regional Court, Limpopo, Musa Simango of Mozambique was gaoled for six years for attempted rhinoceros poaching, unlawful possession of ammunition, and trespassing. Simango and two of his accomplices were apprehended in the Punda Maria area of Kruger National Park in October. A shooting ensued and one man was killed; a third escaped.

www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/rhino-poacher-jailed-in-limpopo-1.1616088#UqIA8eLY9u2, 3 December 2013

THAILAND: On 19 January 2014, Royal Thai Customs at Suvarnabhumi International Airport, Bangkok, seized nine rhinoceros horns (21.8 kg) from a transit passenger arriving from Nairobi, Kenya, en route to Ha Noi, Viet Nam.

www.traffic.org/home/2014/1/20/singapore-and-thailand-customs-each-seize-22-kg-rhino-horn.html, 20 January 2014

UK: On 29 November 2013, at Harrow Crown Court, Darren Bennett of Leicester was gaoled for 10 months after breaking into the Natural History Museum in Tring, Hertfordshire, in 2011, and attempting to steal rhinoceros horn. Bennett damaged display cases and broke off two replica, plaster horns from rhinoceros specimens that had been collected around 1900. He was caught after a member of staff discovered a glove he had used during the raid, which contained his DNA.

In February 2014, at Nottingham Crown Court, Daniel O'Brien of Cambridge was gaoled for 16 months after pleading guilty to stealing a rhinoceros horn from an antiques dealer. O'Brien was arrested and charged in December 2011 but fled the country; police traced his whereabouts and he was rearrested in October 2013.

<http://wildlifeneews.co.uk/2013/burglar-who-steals-2-fake-rhino-horn-gets-jail-time/>, 6 December 2013; www.nottinghampost.com/Man-jailed-stealing-rhino-horn-Newark-antiques/story-20667327-detail/story.html, 20 February 2014

USA: On 5 December 2013, at Manhattan federal court, Jeffrey Wang, a New York City antiques dealer, was gaoled for three years after pleading guilty in August to smuggling artefacts made from rhinoceros horn from the USA to China and Hong Kong; he was also sentenced to three years' supervised release. He had reportedly faked US Customs documents on packages containing the items; ivory carvings were also seized from his apartment.

www.westport-news.com/news/us/article/NYC-man-who-smuggled-rhino-horns-gets-3-years-5039627.php, 10 December 2013

VIET NAM: On 10 March 2014, authorities at Tan Son Nhat International Airport, Ho Chi Minh City, arrested a Vietnamese national in possession of 13 kg of rhinoceros horn (five whole horns and pieces of horn) in his luggage.

<http://talkvietnam.com/2014/03/over-13kg-smuggled-rhino-horns-seized-at-hcmc-airport/#.UyLU4Xsxl>, 12 March 2014

OTHER SEIZURES

CANADA: On 1 October 2013, at St Stephen provincial court, New Brunswick, Gregory Logan of New Brunswick was convicted on seven counts for offences related to the illegal export of 250 Narwhal *Monodon monoceros* (CITES II) tusks to the USA over a period of seven years. He was fined CAD385 000 (USD348 000), the largest fine ever imposed in Canada for offences under the *Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act* (WAPPRITA). Further, he must serve an eight-month conditional sentence in the community, including four months of house arrest and is prohibited from possessing or purchasing marine mammal products for a period of 10 years; he was also required to forfeit vehicles that were used to smuggle the tusks across the Canada-US border.

Environment Canada: www.ec.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=714D9AAE-1&news=822339BB-4B8B-487C-9548-22CED73036EB, 2 October 2013

CHINA: According to information from Chengdu Customs, 41 kg of dried seahorses *Hippocampus* (CITES II) arriving from Kathmandu, Nepal (provenance not reported), were recently intercepted. This was the first seahorse smuggling case undertaken by Chengdu Customs.

On 13 December 2013, Fangchenggang police seized 76 frozen bear paws from a vehicle in Guangxi province. The driver evaded capture.

Chinacourt.org, 18 November 2013; <http://bit.ly/1cOkzpl>, 16 December 2013 [both in Chinese]

INDONESIA: On 15 November 2013, 238 Slow Lorises *Nycticebus coucang* (CITES I) were seized at the port of Merak, Java, en route from Sumatra to markets in Jakarta and surrounding cities, for sale as pets. Six specimens died on the way to a rescue centre. Vets were hopeful that the animals could be released back into the wild. One arrest.

www.rawstory.com/rs/2013/11/15/hundreds-of-rare-primates-seized-from-animal-smugglers-indonesia/, 15 November 2013

RUSSIA: On 6 November 2013, border control officials in the Far East discovered over 450 kg of bear paws in the border city of Blagoveshchensk, estimated to derive from some 100 animals; the items were being prepared for shipment to China.

On 11 December 2013, two men were detained by police in the Jewish Autonomous Region for smuggling 19 Gyrfalcons *Falco rusticolus* (CITES I), intended for sale overseas. One bird died and the remainder were placed in a shelter.

<http://en.ria.ru/russia/2013/11/06/184543689/Russian-Border-Agents-Seize-Half-Ton-of-Bear-Paws.html>, 6 November 2013; <http://en.ria.ru/russia/2013/12/11/185452358/Police-Swoop-on-Russian-Falcon-Smugglers.html>