



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 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.

BENIN: On 24 August 2017, at Natitingou court, Kora Basile and Doko David were sentenced to gaol for 48 months and 40 months, respectively, for attempting to sell 14 (24 kg) elephant tusks on 11 August. The two were also jointly fined CFA400 000 (USD715) and ordered to pay CFA3m (USD5370) in damages to the State of Benin.

Fraternite: <http://bit.ly/2z1ioTa> (in French), 25 August 2017

CHINA: On 12 July 2017, authorities in Beijing seized 3185 ivory products (48 kg) during a raid on Guanxin market, Chaoyang District. Ten people were arrested. This is reportedly the largest ivory seizure in Beijing since the announcement of China's ivory trade ban, which is scheduled to take place at the end of the year.

Xinhuanet: <http://bit.ly/2vuErvL>, 12 July 2017; TRAFFIC

DEM. REP. OF CONGO: On 14 August 2017, at the High Court of Goma, North Kivu, Muhindo Paluku and Jerome Kaseraka were sentenced to three years and two years in gaol, respectively, for the illegal trade in elephant ivory (and Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius* (CITES II) teeth and two Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) skins). Paluku must also pay a fine of CDF1.5m (USD961) and Kaseraka CDF1m (USD700) for complicity. The two were arrested in Goma in June 2016.

Enviro News: <http://bit.ly/2yHtR7v>, 16 August 2017

REP. OF CONGO: On 19 May 2017, Daring Dissaka, an ivory poacher well-known to the authorities and with links to international ivory dealers, was sentenced to five years in gaol—the maximum penalty for a wildlife violation in the country—and fined USD5000. A warrant had been issued for Dissaka's arrest; he has already served periods in gaol for wildlife offences.

WCS Newsroom: <http://bit.ly/2h1bQcG>

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.



HONG KONG CUSTOMS

HONG KONG SAR: On 4 July 2017, officials at Kwai Chung Customhouse Cargo Examination Compound seized 7.2 t of ivory tusks from a container arriving from Malaysia, declared to contain frozen fish. This is the largest confiscation of its kind in Hong Kong in 30 years. Three people have been arrested.

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region media release: <http://bit.ly/2hYBFcR>, 6 July 2017; *Hong Kong Free Press:* <http://bit.ly/2zJ5UMV>, 6 July 2017

KENYA: On 27 June 2017, six men were arrested in possession of 216 kg of ivory in a house in Utawala, Nairobi. They were reportedly bound for Hong Kong. Among the suspects was a businessman who allegedly works with Guinean nationals based in Uganda and with Chinese nationals abroad; the ivory he was found with has been sourced to D.R. Congo.

Standard Digital: <http://bit.ly/2zJ5UMV>, 12 July 2017

MALAWI: On 10 May 2017, at Lilongwe Magistrates' Court, two South Koreans were fined MK2.2m (USD4000) in default of a two-

△ Customs officers seized 7.2 t of ivory from a container arriving from Malaysia in July 2017, the largest confiscation of its kind in Hong Kong in 30 years.

year gaol sentence with hard labour for the illegal possession and attempted export of ivory. The duo had been arrested the previous day at Kamuzu International Airport in possession of five pieces (1.5 kg) of carved ivory.

In early October 2017, two brothers reportedly among East Africa's most wanted wildlife criminals, were arrested on charges of attempting to smuggle 781 elephant tusks. The duo, who were the subjects of Interpol Red Notices issued at the request of Tanzania, are suspected of attempting to export the tusks from Tanzania to Malawi in 2013 without the requisite permits. The tusks were concealed in a shipment of bags of cement.

The Maravi Post: <http://bit.ly/2la19KE>, 11 May 2017; *Environment News Service:* <http://bit.ly/2hYkSH2>, 7 October 2017

MALAYSIA: (see other/multi-seizures)

SENEGAL: (see other/multi-seizures)

SINGAPORE: On 2 August 2017, a Vietnamese man was fined SGD10 000 (USD7360) for smuggling ivory products into Singapore. The suspect and his family were stopped on arrival at Changi Airport on 14 July; two ivory bird cage accessories and four ivory bracelets were found in his luggage. The items are understood to have been obtained in Viet Nam.

VnExpress: <http://bit.ly/2yLBCLM>, 3 August 2017

TANZANIA: On 25 August 2017, at Kisutu Resident Magistrates' Court, Dar es Salaam, six people, including a local government official, were charged with the unlawful possession of 28 ivory tusks (377 kg) which were seized by the authorities on 17 August. The tusks were not fresh. The case was adjourned to a later date and the accused were ordered to remain in custody.

All Africa: <http://bit.ly/2yLMuch>, 19 August 2017; *Daily News:* <http://bit.ly/219GuVj>, 26 August 2017

THAILAND: On 11 October 2017, authorities at Suvarnabhumi International Airport seized eight rhinoceros horns from the luggage of two Chinese nationals who were in transit from Zambia to Cambodia.

The Nation: <http://bit.ly/2zwGd1n>, 12 October 2017

UGANDA: see other/multi-seizures

VIET NAM: On 8 July 2017, a lorry that was stopped by police for traffic violations in Quang Xuong District, in Thanh Hoa province, was found to be transporting nearly 2.7 t of ivory items, reported to have come from Africa, hidden among boxes of fruit. The driver, who claimed to be unaware of his cargo, said he had been hired to transport the shipment from southern Dong Nai province to Hanoi. This case is the biggest of its kind to be uncovered in the province.

On 6 September 2017, authorities in Cat Lai port seized 1.35 t of ivory that had been concealed in barrels declared to contain bitumen and smuggled from Benin, bound for Cambodia.

On 8 September 2017, authorities in Hanoi prosecuted three people, including a Customs officer, after the anti-smuggling unit of the Hanoi Customs department discovered that 240 kg of ivory seized by the unit had been replaced with fake materials (also stolen (and sold) were six kilogrammes of rhinoceros horn). The principal suspect had been employed to manage and monitor the warehouse where the seized ivory was being stored; together with a friend—who made fake ivory from wood or plastic to replace the stolen items—they stole the ivory which was sold to a Chinese national. Police found an 80-cm elephant tusk, three ivory statues and various ivory bracelets at the house of one of the suspects.

On 17 September 2017, police in Bac Lieu province seized 1.4 t of African Elephant ivory that had been smuggled by fishing boat from Malaysia and loaded onto a lorry for delivery to customers in the north of the country.

VietnamPlus: <http://bit.ly/2y00yj6>, 10 July 2017; *Phys.org:* <http://bit.ly/2t1msv7>, 9 July 2017; *L. Sangalaku, ETIS Database Manager*, in litt to *TRAFFIC*, 12 October 2017; *Bangkok Post:* <http://bit.ly/2gNPEoW>, 7 September 2017; *Xinhuanet:* <http://bit.ly/2gwaalHh>, 6 September 2017; *VOV.vn:* <http://bit.ly/2gDXXUG> (in Vietnamese), 8 September 2017; *DTI News:* <http://bit.ly/2i09Ppk>, 10 September 2017; *VnExpress:* <http://bit.ly/2hZEU3U>, 20 September 2017

ZIMBABWE: Two people arrested on 4 July 2017 at Cross Dete, Matabeleland North, for the illegal possession of three pieces of ivory (and an amount of cyanide) that they were offering for sale have each been gaoled for nine years. David Ndlovu and Nkathazo Penga confessed to killing five elephants with oranges laced with cyanide.

On 4 October 2017, it was reported that Willers Matonhodze of Mpilo Line had been gaoled for 10 years after police and Zimparks rangers, acting on information, found one elephant tusk (three kilogrammes) in a sack in his house without a requisite accompanying permit.

Team Zimbabwe: <http://bit.ly/2xZMcDY>, 22 July 2017; *Chronicle:* <http://bit.ly/2itooFU>, 4 October 2017

FLORA

CAMBODIA: On 30 May 2017, Battambang's Ratanak Mondol District Military Police arrested two men after confiscating 92 logs (two tonnes) of rosewood *Dalbergia* sp. (CITES I/II) hidden in a petrol tanker that had travelled from Sala Krao district, Pailin province.

http://bit.ly/2yjmbSc, 1 June 2017

HONG KONG SAR: On 5 May 2017, Customs officials at Kwai Chung Customhouse Cargo Examination Compound seized 1.4 t of suspected Red Sandalwood *Pterocarpus santalinus* (CITES II) from a container arriving from Bangladesh.

On 19 June 2017, police in Sai Kung East Country Park, New Territories, intercepted a shipment of boxes being loaded onto a speedboat that were found to contain 300 kg of fur items, 48 kg of suspected sandalwood *Santalum* sp., 45 kg of bird nests (and electronic components). The suspects escaped by boat.

Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department media release: <http://bit.ly/2hYNb8f>, 5 May 2017; *South China Morning Post:* <http://bit.ly/2itXRj0>, 20 June 2017

INDIA: On 23 July 2017, at the Indira Gandhi International Airport, Customs officials arrested a Chinese national bound for Kunming, China, after more than 86 kg of Red Sandalwood (or Red Sanders, as it is referred to in India) *Pterocarpus santalinus* (CITES II) was found in his luggage.

On 24 July 2017, a lorry driver was arrested en route to a village in Ramanathapuram district, Tamil Nadu, after 1.5 t of Red Sanders *Pterocarpus santalinus* (CITES II) logs concealed under bags of onions were seized from his vehicle, which had been bound for Sri Lanka. During his interrogation, police learned that it was a regular feature for some members of the Red Sanders smuggling network to operate between Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu via Karnataka, and that the coastal district of Ramanathapuram reportedly remained the ideal destination for the onward shipment of Red Sanders to Sri Lanka.

On 13 September 2017, officials in Shillong seized 110 logs (2.4 t) of Red Sanders *Pterocarpus santalinus* (CITES II) near Silchar-Mizoram national highway. Reports indicate that the consignment had been transported from south India and was destined for Myanmar.

On 23 September 2017, 9.5 t of Red Sanders *Pterocarpus santalinus* (CITES II) was seized from a lorry near Eliyapathi toll gate, Madurai, bound for Malaysia.

FirstPost: <http://bit.ly/2h0ij7t>, 26 July 2017; *The Hindu:* <http://bit.ly/2vDIG8>, 26 July 2017; *Outlook:* <http://bit.ly/2gE0luC>, 13 September 2017; *The Hindu:* <http://bit.ly/2yHwPsF>, 23 September 2017

THAILAND: On 27 August 2017, one man was arrested after being found illegally transporting 80 blocks (one tonne) of Siamese Rosewood *Dalbergia cochinchinensis* (CITES II) in a sedan from Buri Ram, for delivery to a Cambodian investor in the Rong Klua border market of Sa Kaeo's Aranyaprathet district. The suspect said that he had undertaken two similar deliveries prior to his arrest.

The Nation: <http://bit.ly/2yEiCeV>, 28 August 2017

USA: On 18 September 2017, Young Living Essential Oils, L.C. of Utah pleaded guilty to charges regarding the company's involvement in the illegal trade in oil of Brazilian Rosewood *Aniba roseoedora* (CITES II) and of Spikenard *Nardostachys jatamansi* (CITES II), in violation of the *Lacey Act* and the *Endangered Species Act*. Pursuant to the terms of the plea agreement, the company was sentenced to a fine of USD500 000, USD135 000 in restitution, a community service payment of USD125 000 for the conservation of protected species of plants used in essential oils, and five years' probation with special conditions, including the implementation of a corporate compliance plan, audits, and the publication of statements regarding its convictions.

Between June 2010 and October 2014, several company employees and contractors harvested and transported 86 t of rosewood in Peru, distilled the oil and imported some of it into the USA through Ecuador. Peruvian law prohibits the unauthorized harvest and transport of timber, including rosewood, and the company had not obtained any CITES export permits from Peru. Further, between November 2014 and January 2016, the company purchased over 1100 kg of rosewood oil from a supplier/importer in the USA without conducting sufficient due diligence to verify lawful sourcing of that oil.



◀ An estimated 3244 t of abalone *Haliotis midae* was poached in South Africa in 2016, which equates to over nine million animals and is approximately 33 times the Total Allowable Catch of the legal fishery. Seizures of abalone often involve confiscations of other contraband—commonly cash, drugs or more recently, other illegal wildlife products, highlighting the involvement of organized crime in the illegal trade. In 2016, at least three seizures of abalone involved other high-value wildlife products such as elephant ivory, rhino horn and shark jaws.

In addition, the company disclosed that it had exported Spikenard oil harvested in Nepal to the UK without a CITES permit; the oil had previously been imported from a company in the UK that had obtained a CITES export permit; Young Living Essential Oils, L.C., found the product to be unsatisfactory and shipped it back to the UK, applying for a CITES permit after the fact.

US Department of Justice media release:
<http://bit.ly/2laimSI>, 18 September 2017

MARINE

BELGIUM: On 8 June 2017, three Chinese nationals were each sentenced to 15 months in gaol (half of which is suspended) after being caught at Zaventem airport, Brussels, with 2063 seahorses *Hippocampus* (CITES II) in their baggage. The animals are used in traditional Chinese medicine. The three were on a flight from Sierra Leone to Beijing via Zaventem in April.

Flanders Today: <http://bit.ly/2zvBcGd>, 12 June 2017

CANADA: On 25 August 2017, at the Ontario Court of Justice, Aquatic Kingdom Inc. was fined CAD25 000 (USD20 000) for violations relating to the illegal importation of CITES-listed corals Anthozoa. The fine will be directed to the Environmental Damages Fund.

The case relates to the inspection in November 2015 of a shipment of live tropical fish being imported by the company that was found to contain coral without the requisite accompanying CITES permit.

Cision: <http://bit.ly/2yCbTFH>, 1 September 2017

CHINA: On 10 September 2017, authorities in Jiangmen, Guangdong, infiltrated a criminal syndicate and seized some 50 t of shark fins, sea cucumbers, and abalones [species not reported]. The sharks had been killed with the use of chemicals. Thirty five suspects were arrested in Jiangmen, Guangzhou, Maoming and Yunnan.

The network had been transporting the goods by sea to Viet Nam through the Sino-Vietnamese border crossing, into Yunnan and by train and other transport to Guangzhou and Maoming, Guangdong province, for further distribution.

On.cc: <http://bit.ly/2l96joJ> [in Chinese],
13 September 2017

ECUADOR: In August 2017, the captain of a Chinese-flagged vessel operating in the Galapagos and found to be illegally carrying 300 t of frozen sharks—reportedly the single largest haul of sharks ever seized in the Galapagos—was sentenced to four years in gaol. Three assistants were sentenced to gaol for three years and 16 crew to one year, with total fines imposed amounting to USD5.9 million.

On 13 August, their boat was boarded by authorities near the island of San Cristóbal, in an area of the Galapagos National Park where no fishing is allowed. These waters have one of the greatest abundances of sharks known in the world which has reportedly made the area a target of fishermen looking to supply Asian markets with shark fin and meat.

It is surmised that the vessel was a “mothership” or reefer, which collects fish from smaller fishing boats, allowing them to stay out at sea longer. The ship’s log stated that there were about 300 t of fish on board. From photographs, Scalloped Hammerheads *Sphyrna lewini* (CITES II) and Silky Sharks *Carcharhinus falciformis* (CITES II, effective 4 October 2017), as well as tuna, were identified in the report.

Independent: <http://ind.pn/2wiaBOa>, 30 August 2017; National Geographic: <http://bit.ly/2vGZKLO>, 15 August 2017

HONG KONG SAR: On 18 September 2017, Customs officers at Tsing Yi Cargo Examination Compound seized some 350 kg of dried fins of suspected hammerhead sharks *Sphyrna* spp. (three species listed in CITES Appendix II), and Oceanic Whitetip Sharks *Carcharhinus longimanus* (CITES II) from a container arriving from the United Arab Emirates.

Customs & Excise Department, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region: <http://bit.ly/2y0kqOZ>, 18 September 2017

NETHERLANDS: On 17 April 2017, at Schiphol Airport, Amsterdam, authorities seized 36 water-filled plastic bags containing 72 kg of live (glass) European Eels *Anguilla anguilla* (CITES II) concealed in six suitcases.

The shipment was destined for mainland China. Two Chinese nationals—who did not have the necessary permits—were arrested.

NLTimes: <http://bit.ly/2z1OXjE>, 19 April 2017

SOUTH AFRICA: All South African abalone (perlemoen) seizures below refer to *Haliotis midae*.

On 17 May 2017, a suspect was arrested in Philippi East as he loaded some 5.2 t of abalones (260 bags) from a vehicle into freezers at the back of a funeral parlour.

On 28 May 2017, police responding to a gas explosion at a property in a Cape Flats suburb of Mowbray, at which residents suffered severe burns, came across an abalone depot. They seized at least 28 bags (200 abalones/bag), with more stored elsewhere on the premises.

On 10 July 2017, police in Cape Town seized 6878 wet abalones and 24 922 dried abalones (weight not reported) from an illegal processing facility in Brackenfell; two men were arrested. Shortly afterwards, a further five tonnes of frozen abalones contained in 213 bags were seized from a refrigerated lorry; four people were arrested.

On 3 August 2017, authorities at Table View, Western Cape, arrested one man for the illegal possession of abalone and for operating a fish processing plant without a valid permit; 23 357 dried abalones and 3915 wet abalones were confiscated, together with processing equipment.

During a search operation at another residence in Table View the same day, a man was arrested in possession of 10 919 dried abalones and 4340 wet abalones. The suspect was to be charged with the illegal possession of abalones and for operating a fish processing plant without a valid permit.

On 8 August 2017, at Danger Point, Gansbaai, in the Western Cape, some 3100 abalones were seized in one of the biggest abalone raids along the Overberg coast; more than 100 people were reportedly harvesting abalones in an area next to an abalone farm; three people were later arrested in the Buffeljags area.

On 15 August 2017, authorities arrested two people in the process of transporting 483 kg of dried abalones in Philippi, Cape Town.

On 19 August 2017, police seized 840 kg of abalones from a vehicle travelling on N2 Highway, Somerset West. The driver fled.

On 29 August 2017, authorities in Hawston in the Western Cape seized 500 kg of abalones being offloaded from a vehicle.

On 5 September 2017, the Western Cape High Court convicted a group of men for illegally exporting abalones to Hong Kong, labelled as frozen pilchards. The case dates back to 2006, and involved seizures of around 82 700 abalones from a cold storage unit in the Port of Cape Town and around 24 600 dried abalones at a farm in Rawsonville.

On 12 September 2017, police officials in Paarl arrested one man after five freezers at a vegetable shop were found to contain 175 bags containing 17 237 frozen and fresh abalones.

On 28 September 2017 it was reported that an undisclosed, but reportedly “massive” amount of abalones had been stolen in Gansbaai, Western Cape, after nine armed men stormed a building. After loading the molluscs onto their vehicles, the suspects then apparently kidnapped three security guards who they later released in the Strandfontein area.

On 29 September 2017, the authorities acting on information searched two vehicles at a shopping centre in Eersterivier and seized 1573 abalones.

During early October 2017, Western Cape police confiscated three separate shipments of abalone in, respectively, Napier, Chatsworth and Parow North—one case involved some 500 kg.

South African Police Service media statements: <http://bit.ly/2gBhBk6>, 18 May 2017; <http://bit.ly/2I9elhk>, 4 August 2017; <http://bit.ly/2yDjyic>, 4 August 2017; <http://bit.ly/2yCzYfv>, 29 August 2017; <http://bit.ly/2yDr7KA>, 12 September 2017; <http://bit.ly/2yLYFWr>, 29 September 2017; <http://bit.ly/2yZuNfo>, 29 May 2017; *Times Live:* <http://bit.ly/2yCXWXZ>, 11 July 2017; <http://bit.ly/2yHrTUC>, 15 August 2017; *News 24:* <http://bit.ly/2h1hHPe9>, 9 August 2017; <http://bit.ly/2gw0n45>, 5 September 2017; *Eye Witness News:* <http://bit.ly/2yOeEffH>, 21 August 2017; <http://bit.ly/2z2y1da>, 28 September 2017; *SABC:* <http://bit.ly/2gDmN7p>, 14 October 2017

USA: On 29 June 2017, ISF Trading Co., a Portland seafood company, was fined more than USD550 000 for violating the *Lacey Act*, which prohibits trading in wildlife that has been caught, owned, transported or sold illegally. The company was also ordered to forfeit nearly USD300 000 and placed on one year’s probation.

ISF had purchased sea urchins Echinoidea from a supplier in Canada who under Canadian

law was not permitted to export the seafood. ISF then brought the urchins into the USA using labels from another Canadian supplier who at certain periods was allowed to export the urchins. ISF, reportedly one of the largest sea urchin exporters to Japan from the USA, was charged with illegally importing about 22 000 kg of sea urchins between 31 December 2010 and 1 February 2011.

On 20 September 2017, Gregory Logan of New Brunswick, Canada, and a retired Royal Canadian Mounted Police officer, was sentenced to five years and two months in gaol after pleading guilty to 10 money laundering charges related to a scheme to smuggle Narwhal *Monodon monoceros* (CITES II) tusks. He had been accused of smuggling more than 250 tusks into the USA from Canada between 2000 and 2010 in a scheme to sell tusks to collectors.

Portland Press Herald, <http://bit.ly/2hZWhl8>, 29 June 2017 *Daily Mail:* <http://daily.mai/2yK1glr>, 22 September 2017

PANGOLINS

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

CÔTE D’IVOIRE: On 25 July 2017, authorities seized a record haul of three tonnes of pangolin *Manis* spp. scales and apprehended eight men from Côte d’Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Guinea, all reportedly part of a “large mafia-like network”, as they prepared to sell their merchandise. The scales, contained in more than 60 bags, reportedly represent about 4000 pangolins which had been captured in Côte d’Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Liberia. The seized scales were to be destroyed.

Phys.org: <http://bit.ly/2h6PpoG>, 27 July 2017

HONG KONG SAR: On 29 May 2017, Customs officers at Kwai Chung container terminal uncovered 7.2 t of pangolin *Manis* spp. scales from a shipping container arriving by ship from Nigeria and labelled as “charcoal”. This is reported to be the largest seizure of its kind in Hong Kong in recent history.

South China Morning Post: <http://bit.ly/2rk1lqC>, 30 May 2017

INDIA: (see other/multi-seizures)

INDONESIA: On 13 June 2017, authorities arrested two people following a raid at Belawan port, Medan, in Sumatra, and uncovered more than 225 Sunda Pangolins *Manis javanica*; only 110 specimens were alive. Two dozen of the dead pangolins had already been skinned. The shipment was destined for Malaysia.

Wtop: <http://bit.ly/2xixijg>, 14 June 2017

MALAYSIA: (see also other/multi-seizures) In early May 2017, Customs officers at Kuala Lumpur International Airport seized two shipments containing a total of 712 kg scales of pangolins *Manis* spp. (estimated to derive from

circa 1400 adult pangolins) arriving from Accra, Ghana (408 kg), and Kinshasa, D.R. Congo (304 kg), and labelled “general products” and “dry herbs”. Both shipments transited Dubai and bore fake company information.

On 9 June 2017, Customs officers at Kuala Lumpur International Airport foiled an attempt to smuggle 288 kg of pangolin *Manis* spp. scales from Ghana to Malaysia labelled as “oyster shells”, bound for a false address in Ampang, Selangor.

On 15 June 2017, another shipment from Ghana labelled “oyster shells” was found to contain almost 400 kg of pangolin *Manis* spp. scales—three people arrested in late July claimed that the scales had been supplied by a Chinese national who had arranged for the stock to be sent to Ghana via an accomplice in Nigeria; the export from Ghana to Malaysia had allegedly been facilitated by one of those arrested.

On 29 July 2017, at Sepanggar container port, Sabah, Customs officials seized eight tonnes of pangolin scales from 226 sacks—reportedly the largest-ever seizure of pangolin scales in Sabah. The scales were to be subject to DNA testing to determine their origin. The owner of the company shipping the goods was arrested on 11 August.

On 30 July 2017, authorities at Kuala Lumpur International airport seized 301 kg of pangolin *Manis* spp. scales arriving from D.R. Congo, in boxes declared as “fish maw”; the airway bill bore a fake destination.

The Star online: <http://bit.ly/2xgVRgs>, 9 May 2017; *New Straits Times:* <http://bit.ly/2zKOiR6>, 8 May 2017; *The Malay online:* <http://bit.ly/2xhHicG>, 13 June 2017; *FMT News:* <http://bit.ly/2hGxx4v>, 7 August 2017; *The Star:* <http://bit.ly/2zx3ujL>, 12 August 2017

THAILAND: On 8 August 2017, police officers arrested a man from Narathiwat province as he attempted to transport 93 pangolins *Manis* spp. to Pathum Thani for onward shipment to China.

On 28 August 2017, some 88 live pangolins *Manis* spp. were rescued from a car involved in an accident in Kanchanadit district, Surat Thani. The animals were believed to be destined for use in traditional medicines, and for the restaurant trade in China. The driver of the vehicle fled and is being sought. The pangolins are to be cared for at a wildlife station in Phangnga before being released in the wild.

On 30 August 2017, officers at Prachuap Khiri Khan’s Pran Buri Customs checkpoint searched two lorries and found 136 live pangolins *Manis* spp. and 450 kg of pangolin scales that were being smuggled from Malaysia to China.

Asia Times: <http://bit.ly/2xb2ukP>, 22 August 2017; *Bangkok Post:* <http://bit.ly/2wMEVf6>, 28 August

2017; *The Nation*: <http://bit.ly/2hZ5w51>, 31 August 2017

UGANDA: On 13 September 2017, it was reported that eight suspects had been arrested and six tonnes of pangolin *Manis* spp. scales seized during a multi-nation operation.

New Vision: www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1461528/uwa-apprehends-pangolin-scales, 13 September 2017

VIET NAM: On 5 April 2017, police in Hoa Binh, Yen Thuy District, seized 118 (556 kg) Sunda Pangolins *Manis javanica* from a car following a chase that ended with the police shooting the car's tyres to make it stop. Five pangolins were dead; the remaining specimens were to be sent to a national park for rehabilitation.

VnExpress: <http://bit.ly/2oKHjVr>, 6 April 2017; *Tien-phong*: <http://bit.ly/2gEjVXE> (in Vietnamese), 6 April 2017

REPTILES

INDIA: On 30 May 2017, 210 *hatha jodi* were seized from a house in Bhubaneswar, in the State of Odisha. *Hatha jodi* are the male reproductive organs of monitor lizards, in this case identified as belonging to the Bengal Monitor *Varanus bengalensis* and Yellow Monitor *V. flavescens* (both CITES I), which had been offered for sale online. Reportedly, buyers are largely under the mistaken belief that the organs are plant roots that have magical qualities.

It is reported that six seizures have taken place in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Odisha this year, in which 331 monitor lizard *Varanus* spp. reproductive organs have been recovered. Most recently, on 4 September, 34 pairs of *hatha jodi* were seized in Odisha.

Since it is hard to capture only the males, it is reported that poachers trap or chase monitor lizards into nets, tie their legs, and place them in sacks; the males are only separated later. While

the lizard is still alive, the area around the hemipenis is burnt so that the organ protrudes further, after which it is removed with a knife and dried in the sun. The lizard's meat is eaten, its skin is used to make drums, and the fat is sold or boiled to extract oil, which is also sold.

On 21 August 2017, authorities infiltrated a gang involved in smuggling Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II), and seized more than 2500 specimens from a house in Avadi. Three people had illegally procured the specimens from various parts of the country and had smuggled some 10 000 Star Tortoises to the southern coast of Tamil Nadu, in particular to Rameswaram, in the district of Ramanathapuram, for export to Sri Lanka and other countries [note district also apparently favoured for export of Red Sanders to Sri Lanka (see Flora)]. The mastermind behind the operation was being sought.

The Indian Express: <http://bit.ly/2hYjgYS>, 14 September 2017; *The New Indian Express*: <http://bit.ly/2xhNXU9>, 31 May 2017; *The New Indian Express*: <http://bit.ly/2zw0eoP>, 23 August 2017

INDONESIA: On 15 May 2017, an attempt to smuggle 253 reptiles was foiled at Soekarno-Hatta Airport when officials suspicious of two suitcases in transit and passing through an X-ray scan found that they contained: 33 Blood Pythons *Python brongersmai* (CITES II), three Green Tree Pythons *Morelia viridis* (CITES II), four Borneo lizards (reportedly likely to be Earless Monitor Lizards *Lanthanotus borneensis* (CITES II)), 42 Panama lizards (likely Blue-tongued skinks *Tiliqua* spp.), 65 Crocodile Skinks *Tribolonotus gracilis*, 69 monitor lizards *Varanus* spp. (CITES I/II), one Pig-nosed Turtle *Carettochelys insculpta* (CITES II), six Asian Leaf Turtles *Cyclanops dentata* (CITES II), Green Tree Pythons *Morelia viridis* (CITES II) and 19 small brown snakes. The owner of the suitcases, a Japanese national, had begun his journey at Kualanamu Airport, Medan, and was bound for Haneda Airport, Tokyo, Japan.

On 16 June 2017, Tanjung Priok Port police acting on information seized from the luggage of an individual hundreds of reptiles from a ship arriving from Papua, including 20 Green Tree Pythons *Morelia viridis* (CITES II), 96 Pacific Ground Boas *Candoia carinata* (CITES II), five Amethystine Pythons *Morelia amethystina* (CITES II), four D'Albert's Water Pythons *Leiopython albertisii* (CITES II), 89 New Guinea Viper Boas *Candoia aspera* (CITES II), 11 Burton's Legless Lizards *Lialis burtonis*, 9 pit vipers *Crotalinae*, 2 Peach-throated Monitors *Varanus jobiensis* (CITES II), nine Panama lizards/Blue-tongued skinks *Tiliqua* spp., 33 Crocodile Skinks *Tribolonotus gracilis*, and one Green Lizard (possibly *Dasia olivacea*). The animals, placed in plastic containers, wrapped in white bags and placed in cardboard boxes, were destined for sale in Jakarta.

OKEZONE: <http://bit.ly/2y0rPx2> (in Bahasa Indonesia), 16 May 2017; <http://bit.ly/2y0jg5I> (in Bahasa Indonesia), 21 June 2016; *Detik News*: <http://bit.ly/2y1RBJL> (in Bahasa Indonesia), 20 June 2016

LIBYA: On 28 April 2017, some 1870 Kleinmann's Tortoises *Testudo kleinmanni* (CITES I) were seized by the Coast Guard in the Sidi Khalifa area of Benghazi [not reported whether the specimens were alive or not]. The smugglers are alleged to be members of an international trafficking syndicate that harvests tortoises from the coastal areas of eastern Libya, which are reportedly smuggled out of the country via both land and sea routes to lucrative pet markets in Egypt. The species is also reported to be targeted by traditional hunters for its body parts for use in traditional medicines.

Libya Herald: <http://bit.ly/2laSkii>, 28 April 2017; *LinkedIn*: <http://bit.ly/2irGMpP>, 28 April 2017

MADAGASCAR: On 26 June 2017, 350 Radiated Tortoises *Astrochelys radiata* and two Ploughshare Tortoises *Astrochelys yniphora* (both CITES I) were seized from three suitcases at Antananarivo-Ivato International Airport. A Malagasy national bound for Hanoi-Viet Nam, via Nairobi, was arrested.

RFI Afrique: <http://bit.ly/2y05Pte>, 28 June 2017

Five Ploughshare Tortoises and 325 Radiated Tortoises smuggled from Madagascar were seized at Kuala Lumpur International Airport in May 2017.



ELIZABETH JOHN / TRAFFIC

MALAYSIA: In May 2017, Indian national Fakruddin Ali Ahmed Habeeb was sentenced to 39 months in gaol after he was arrested in a hotel room in Kuala Lumpur in possession of 20 Black Pond Turtles *Geoclemys hamiltonii* (CITES I) contained in three suitcases; also seized were specimens of Red Crowned Roof Turtle *Batagur kachuga* (CITES II), Dhongoka Roofed Turtle *Batagur dhongoka* (CITES II), and Indian Tent Turtle *Pangshura tentoria* (CITES II). Peninsular Malaysia Department of Wildlife and National Parks (PERHILITAN) is working to repatriate the reptiles.

On 14 May 2017, Customs officials at Kuala Lumpur International Airport foiled an attempt to smuggle 325 Radiated Tortoises *Astrochelys radiata* and five Ploughshare Tortoises *A. yniphora* (both CITES I) on a flight from Antananarivo airport, Madagascar. The live

specimens were contained in crates labelled as “stones”; the address of the recipient was found to be false.

On 26 August 2017, officials in Sungai Siput, Perak, seized 200 wildlife items from a car being driven by a Vietnamese national, including 188 Sun Bear *Helarctos malayanus* (CITES I) claws, 21 Sun Bear (CITES I) teeth, 17 Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) claws, eight Tiger teeth, one Sambar Deer *Rusa unicorn* horn, and parts of other unidentified wildlife.

Hindustan Times: <http://bit.ly/2ppLiYy>, 11 May 2017; *TRAFFIC*: <http://bit.ly/2zKqyMU>, 23 May 2017; *Gulf News*: <http://bit.ly/2ylJj4E>, 16 May 2017; *TRAFFIC*: <http://bit.ly/2y0pLW8>, 11 September 2017

PHILIPPINES: On 6 July 2017, authorities intercepted a boat carrying 70 dead Hawksbill Turtles *Eretmochelys imbricata* (CITES I) off the coast of Dumaratan town in northern Palawan. The vessel was reportedly bound for Balabac, an island town in southern Palawan. The animals had been collected from Barangay Mayteged, Taytay, in northern mainland Palawan.

Rappler: <http://bit.ly/2tyxHNv>, 7 July 2017

RHINOCEROS

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.

MALAYSIA: On 7 April 2017, authorities at Kuala Lumpur International Airport seized 18 rhinoceros horns (51 kg) packed in wooden crates. The items had been shipped from Mozambique via Qatar using false documents and declared as “obra de arte” [works of art].

Reuters: <http://reut.rs/2it5bLU>, 10 April 2017

SOUTH AFRICA: Rhinoceros horn seizures at O.R. Tambo Airport, Johannesburg: On 17 May 2017, Customs officers seized a foil parcel containing eight pieces (7 kg) of rhinoceros horn concealed among packets of confectionery destined for Hong Kong via Qatar. The consignment was declared as “tea bags”.

On 22 May 2017, officials intercepted a parcel containing nine rhinoceros horns (13 kg) destined for Hong Kong.

On 11 June 2017, 10 rhinoceros horns (25 kg) were found in two bags bound for Turkey; their final destination was believed to be Hong Kong. The couriers, two Chinese nationals who had already boarded the flight, were removed from the aircraft and arrested.

On 14 June 2017, Customs officials seized 28.7 kg of rhinoceros horn from the luggage of a Vietnamese national. The five horns had been coated in hard wax and wrapped in newspaper. The suspect was arrested.

On 25 July 2017, a Chinese national, Shuangshuang Xue, arriving from Lusaka, Zambia, bound for Hong Kong, was arrested after 14 (20 kg) pieces of rhinoceros horn were found in her luggage. On 12 October 2017, at Kempton Park Regional Court, she was sentenced to four years in gaol. Following genetic profiling it was discovered that the horns derived from the White Rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum*, and from five different animals (four males and one female). None of the 14 pieces could be linked to any poaching incidents or registered stockpile.

On 8 September 2017, a man bound for Hong Kong was arrested after five rhinoceros horns (12 kg) wrapped in foil were found in his luggage.

SARS media releases: <http://bit.ly/219UnmU>, 19 May; <http://bit.ly/2ylMbNu>, 23 May 2017; www.saps.gov.za/newsroom/selnewsdetails.php?nid=12603, 11 September 2017; *ENCA*: <http://bit.ly/2gyHzrV>, 13 June 2017; *News 24*: <http://bit.ly/2i073rA>, 14 June 2017; *News 24*: <http://bit.ly/2xZGMo2>, 15 June 2017; <http://bit.ly/2yHCqjC>, 26 July 2017; *ENCA*: <http://bit.ly/2zw5ecV>, 26 July 2017; *Department of Environmental Affairs media release*: <http://bit.ly/2lctL4K>, 18 October 2017; *IOL*: <http://bit.ly/2v1xTbs>, 27 July 2017

On 5 June 2017, police in Hoedspruit, Limpopo, arrested three members of a suspected cross-border rhinoceros poaching syndicate linked to two cases of rhinoceros poaching in the Hoedspruit area. It is reported that the suspects were found in possession of a firearm which connected them to more than 60 cases of rhinoceros poaching countrywide, two in Hoedspruit.

On 19 August 2017, a farm manager was arrested at Sandringham Game Reserve, Hoedspruit, Limpopo, after authorities discovered 10 rhinoceros horns (and two ivory tusks and a huge arsenal of weapons and ammunition). The suspect, a member of the Professional Hunters Association of South Africa, was remanded in custody.

In September 2017, over the course of a week, 18 suspects were arrested in Skukuza, Hluhluwe, Barberton, KwaMsane, Nongoma and Gluckstadt, for offences relating to rhinoceros poaching and possession of rhinoceros horns.

Most suspects have appeared in court, with five receiving a collective 30-year gaol term. On 7 September 2017, at Skukuza Regional Court, Mapoyisa Mahlauri was sentenced to an effective 20 years in gaol after he was found guilty of rhinoceros poaching. He was arrested in March 2016 in the Satara section of Kruger National Park (KNP) after rangers, alerted to gunshots, discovered a Southern White Rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum simum* that had been shot dead and the horns sawn off; the suspects were picked up by their tracks. During a shootout, Mahlauri was arrested while his accomplice escaped. Arms, ammunition, an axe and a fresh set of rhinoceros horns were recovered from the scene.

Mahlauri's sentence includes two years in gaol for trespassing in KNP, 10 years for the illegal hunting of a rhinoceros, eight years for the possession of a firearm with intent to commit a crime, and three years for possession of an unlicensed firearm.

Algoa.fm: <http://bit.ly/2yMkRQk>, 7 June 2017; *News 24*: <http://bit.ly/2uSkWBb>, 19 August 2017; *Herald Live*: <http://bit.ly/2gDal7z>, 22 September 2017; *South African Police Service media statement*: <http://bit.ly/2yJhZU9>, 11 September 2017

VIET NAM: see other/multi-seizures

ZAMBIA: On 13 July 2017, authorities arrested three Chinese nationals and two locals found carrying 25 pieces (32 kg) of rhinoceros horn at the Chanida border post with Mozambique. The origin of the horns could not be immediately confirmed.

ENCA: <http://bit.ly/2zw5ecV>, 30 July 2017

OTHER / MULTI-SEIZURES

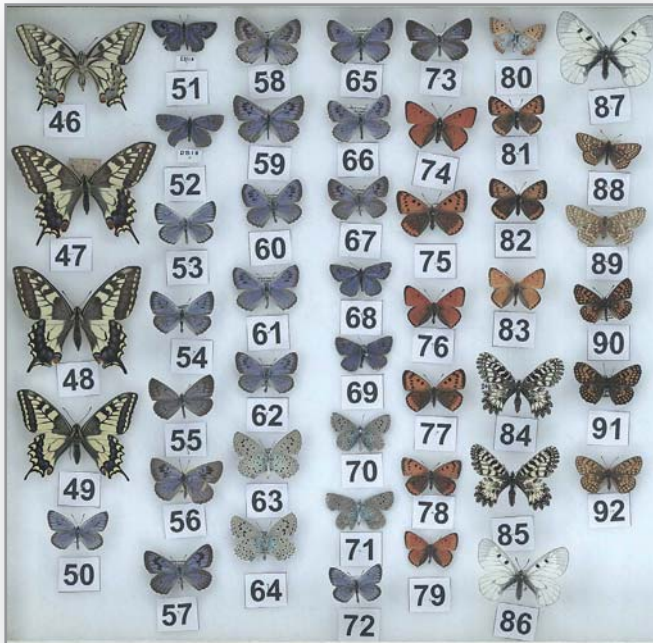
CHINA: On 31 July 2017, police in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, announced that they had seized over 10 000 wild animals, along with almost one tonne of animal products since they began cracking down on the illegal online animal trade in April. Police investigated reports that animals were being traded through WeChat social media site; subsequently Weibo, WeChat and QQ, and a number of live streaming sites were reportedly being closely monitored by authorities. A total of 5380 messages relating to the illegal sale and distribution of animals was uncovered and traced back to perpetrators in the province. In one incident alone, authorities seized over 1000 animals from a vehicle at a market in the capital.

That's mags: <http://bit.ly/2z1w5RU>, 27 July 2017

INDIA: On 21 August 2017, in what is believed to be one of the largest seizures of its kind in the country, authorities seized 32 985 mongoose hair painting brushes from the wholesale market in Kolkata's Burrabazar area. Four shopkeepers were arrested.

Mongoose *Herpestidae* are protected species under the *Wildlife Protection Act, 1972*. It is reported that several hundred animals would have been killed to make these brushes. The arrests revealed an inter-State network of the illegal wildlife trade of mongoose hair, with a village in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas, 50 km from Kolkata, serving as the centre for the manufacture of the brushes.

On 9 October 2017, officials in Gujarat arrested a suspect wanted in connection with Lion *Panthera leo* (CITES II) poaching cases dating back to 2007. During that year, 10 Lions were poached from Babariya range in Amreli and Junagadh. Some 32 suspects arrested at the time were sentenced to three years in gaol but two people, including the latest suspect arrested, absconded. He is accused of selling Lion bones and teeth as Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) parts.



◀ One of 13 trays of mounted butterflies seized from a collector in the UK.

Acting on information, a warrant was issued for officers of the Avon and Somerset police to search Cullen's home. Accompanied by personnel from the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCUC) and the Natural History Museum, London, 13 trays of mounted butterflies were seized and Cullen was arrested in relation to offences under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* and *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010*. The seized butterflies were examined by experts at the Natural History Museum, where 89 specimens that are protected by UK and European legislation were identified.

In October 2017, at a court in Madhya Pradesh, four people were sentenced to four years in gaol and each fined INR10 000 (USD150). One of the suspects, well-known to the authorities for previous offences, confessed to smuggling the body parts of some 125 Tigers *Panthera tigris* (CITES I), the skins of 1200 Leopards *P. pardus* (CITES I) and other wildlife, including pangolins *Manis* spp., both within India and to international markets, via Nepal and Tibet.

INDONESIA: Authorities recently shut down a wildlife trafficking network that was using social media to sell animals, and seized nine Slow Lorises *Nycticebus* spp. One loris perished. It was apparent that they had been captured recently and their teeth, which are often removed after trapping, were intact; it was therefore anticipated that the surviving specimens would be returned to the wild.

The Hindu: <http://bit.ly/2vi0Yw4>, 23 August 2017; *Times of India:* <http://bit.ly/2y0HsVm>, 10 October 2017; *Hindustan Times:* <http://bit.ly/2gdYZTH>, 16 October 2017; *Care2:* <http://bit.ly/2y0AhwB>, 2 October 2017

MALAYSIA: On 29 August 2017, Customs officials at Sepang container port terminal, Sabah, seized 1148 ivory tusks (CITES I) (three tonnes) and five tonnes of pangolin *Manis* spp. (CITES I) scales concealed in sacks of ground nuts; the shipment was believed to have originated in Nigeria, bound for China.

Malay Mailonline: <http://bit.ly/2h1ZeSl>, 8 September 2017; *The Star online:* <http://bit.ly/2ylj8ef>, 8 September 2017

SENEGAL: On 22 August 2017, two men were given gaol sentences of three months and one month, respectively, and fined almost USD10 000 in damages for the illegal trade in ivory (and other wildlife products), and in respect of reportedly the largest ivory haul

ever seized in the country. An appeal has been lodged to secure a more severe punishment.

The sentencing follows the seizure of 780 ivory figurines and 20 kg of raw ivory, the teeth of Lion *Panthera leo* (CITES I), Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius* (CITES II) and warthogs; most items are thought to have been purchased in Nigeria and smuggled into the country.

Daily Mail: <http://dailymail.co.uk/22j06kY>, 24 August 2017; *DakarActu:* <http://bit.ly/2yCyNgf>, 23 August 2017

UGANDA: On 22 August 2017 it was announced that police had arrested seven people in Rukungiri district over three days and seized 74 kg of Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius* (CITES II) teeth and 33 kg of ivory (CITES I). The ivory was believed to have been imported from neighbouring Tanzania or D.R. Congo.

Xinhuanet: <http://bit.ly/2y0LVYa>, 23 August 2017

UK: On 7 April 2017, at Bristol Magistrates' Court, Phillip Cullen of Bristol was given a six-month sentence, suspended for two years, after being found guilty of capturing, killing and possession of two Large Blue *Phengaris arion* butterflies, the largest and rarest butterfly in the UK. He had previously pleaded guilty to possessing, contrary to regulations, 36 dead specimens of the Large Blue, Large Copper *Lycaena dispar*, Southern Festoon *Zerynthia polyxena* and Clouded Apollo *Parnassius mnemosyne*, and of possessing 49 dead specimens of Black Veined Moth *Siona lineata*, Fiery Clearwing *Pyropteron chrysidiformis*, Marsh Fritillary *Euphydryas aurinia*, Heath Fritillary *Melitaea athalia*, High Brown Fritillary *Argynnis adippe* and Swallowtail *Papilio machaon*.

He was also ordered to carry out 250 hours of unpaid work, given a five-year criminal behaviour order banning him from three nature reserves managed for the Large Blue, plus costs of GBP380 (USD500).

On 29 September 2017, at Inner London Crown Court, Peter Bailey of Lambeth was found guilty of keeping and offering for sale without the requisite documentation a variety of animal skulls and other derivatives. He was sentenced to a total of 26 months' imprisonment, suspended for 18 months, and ordered to complete 120 hours of unpaid work and pay court costs of GBP4000 (USD5278).

Among the skulls seized were those of the following CITES-I listed species: Chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes*, Drill *Mandrillus* sp., Leopard *Panthera pardus*, African Dwarf Crocodile *Osteolaemus tetraspis*, Himalayan Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus*, as well as derivatives of elephant and whale, amongst other wildlife.

The items were examined by the authorities who concluded that many of the primate specimens originated from West or Central Africa and were taken from the wild recently. Bailey admitted that he had imported specimens from Africa. Two baboon *Cercopithecidae* sp. (CITES II) skulls were sold to a UK buyer after they were advertised via an online marketplace as "taxidermy monkey skull, baboon, curio, collectable skull."

UK National Wildlife Crime Unit: <http://bit.ly/2yLUWsi>; *UK Metropolitan Police:* <http://bit.ly/2yHLALS>, 29 September 2017

VIET NAM: On 27 April 2017, police arrested three alleged members of a wildlife trafficking ring who were in possession of 33 kg of rhinoceros horn (CITES I) at Hanoi Railway Station. A subsequent raid on the house of the suspected kingpin uncovered a further three kilogrammes of rhinoceros horn, plus two frozen Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) cubs, four Lion *Panthera leo* (CITES I) pelts and raw ivory (CITES I).

The suspects claimed to have purchased the items from South Africa, before moving them by air to Malaysia, Thailand and Cambodia from where they were brought by ship and train to Viet Nam, allegedly to avoid detection.

VnExpress: <http://bit.ly/2z2azNd>, 29 April 2017; *Save the Rhino:* <http://bit.ly/2yNMbOp>, May 2017; *Education for Nature:* <http://bit.ly/2zjYtVO>, 4 May 2017