



TRAFFIC BULLETIN SEIZURES AND PROSECUTIONS

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TRAFFIC[®]
the wildlife trade monitoring network

Cover photograph: tips of hornbill beaks seized in Malaysia, 2016.
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The following pages comprise a selection of seizures and prosecutions cases extracted from the *TRAFFIC Bulletin* and based on media and other reports published between March 1997 and October 2019 that are considered significant in terms of species/volumes seized, *modus operandi*, penalties imposed, or to highlight enforcement action. Sources are cited at the end of each country/territory section and have not been checked for accuracy and authenticity. They are not intended to represent TRAFFIC's policies, positions or opinions. The CITES Appendix listing for each species is placed in parentheses, where applicable.

VOL. 16 NO. 3 (MARCH 1997)

EUROPE

BELGIUM: In January 1997, 160 kg of African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (App. I) ivory were seized by the Customs' Anti-Drugs team at Brussels National Airport. The eight packages, which contained a total of 2900 semi-worked pieces, had arrived in three separate consignments from Libreville, Gabon, on route to Seoul, South Korea. Documents accompanying the packages listed the contents as "wood and salted fish".

During 1996, the same enforcement team intercepted some 28.5 kg of ivory arriving from Nigeria, bound for China. The items were sent as 10 separate parcels and included both raw ivory (tusks and blocks) and worked pieces, variously labelled as "toy"; "gift" and "musical". All except one were from the same address in Lagos, Nigeria.

TRAFFIC Europe

FRANCE: On 10 November 1996, Customs officers at Thionville seized over 30 birds during a search of two vehicles. A number of specimens in the consignment were of species listed in CITES Appendix I and Annex C1 of EU Regulation 3626/92; the requisite CITES permits and sanitary/EU transit certificates had not been issued. The birds included Lesser Rhea *Rhea pennata* (App. I), Demoiselle Crane *Grus virgo*, Baikal Teal *Anas formosa* (App. II), Coscoroba Swan *Coscoroba coscoroba*, Great Argus *Argusianus argus* (App. II and Annex C1) and Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus* (App. III). Specimens protected under French law included Eider Duck *Somateria mollissima*, Common Merganser *Mergus merganser* and Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*. The two French drivers of the vehicles had transported the birds from Belgium. The case is under investigation.

WWF France Press Release, 15 November 1996; TRAFFIC Europe

GERMANY: On 1 July 1996, the Customs Investigation Agency in Munich confiscated a large number of CITES-listed turtles and tortoises from two German citizens arriving from Yugoslavia. These included 88 Hermann's Tortoises *Testudo hermanni*, 122 Spur-thighed Tortoises *Testudo graeca* (both App. II), as well as 118 *Emys orbicularis* specimens (non-CITES, but protected by Germany's *Nature Conservation Act*); all were clearly wild-collected. The animals had been concealed in eight travelling bags. One of the suspects confessed to having smuggled protected turtles since 1991 using the same *modus operandi*. Based on the account of this individual, it is estimated that, since that time, at least 3000 turtles will have been smuggled into Germany by this suspect; these were all sold to private keepers. The case is under investigation.

On 31 July 1996, the Customs Investigation Agency in Munich confiscated a second large shipment of CITES-listed reptiles. These included 3 Radiated Tortoises *Geochelone radiata* (App. I), and the following Appendix II-listed species: 282 Horsfield's Tortoises *Testudo horsfieldii*, 30 Hermann's Tortoises *Testudo hermanni*, 22 Spur-thighed Tortoises *Testudo graeca*, 5 Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans*, 48 Burmese Pythons *Python molurus*, 20 Boa Constrictors *Boa constrictor* and 14 Rainbow Boas *Epicrates cenchria*. The animals had been smuggled into the country by four Slovakian citizens and were to be sold to reptile traders or private collectors. The tortoises, believed to have

been wild-collected, and the other reptiles (provenance not confirmed) are being cared for by 'bona fide' zoological and private collections in Germany. The case is under investigation.

In November 1996, in a joint Customs and TRAFFIC Network effort, two rhino horns were seized. One had been offered for sale in the South China Morning Post (Hong Kong) of 5 October, and the other offered to a TCM pharmacist in Germany on 18 October. The horns, one African and the other of Asian origin, weighed over a kilogramme. The suspects are under investigation.

CITES Management Authority, Germany; Customs Investigations Agency, Munich; TRAFFIC Europe

SWEDEN: On 18 October 1996, Customs officers at Arlanda Airport seized 1000 Horsfield's Tortoises *Testudo horsfieldii* (App. II) from a Syrian national travelling from Tadjikistan; owing to their poor health, the reptiles were killed (see pages 82–83 of this issue).

UK: On 4 January 1996, at Felixstowe, Customs officers seized a consignment of packages of traditional Chinese medicines arriving from China and claiming to contain cobra bile, musk *Moschus*, orchid, pangolin *Manis*, bear bile, monkey gall stone and Saiga Antelope *Saiga tatarica* (App. II). The case is pending.

On 15 July 1996, 373 poison-arrow frogs—Strawberry Poison Frog *Dendrobates pumilio* and Green and Black Poison Frogs *D. auratus* (App. II)—were found in plastic tubs in the suitcase of a British passenger arriving from Panama. A number of non-CITES-listed tree frogs, 5 scorpions *Centroides* spp., and 7 spiders were also discovered. Panama prohibits the export of its native wildlife. Most of the frogs, which had been collected in the wild, have been rehoused in zoological institutions in the UK and USA. The case is continuing following raids on several premises in southern England where poison-arrow frogs were also seized; an individual is assisting Customs with their enquiries.

On 3 September 1996, 127 rhino horns were seized in London by police officers of the Southeast Regional Crime Squad. This is the largest-ever seizure of rhino horn in the UK; there were four arrests (see page 82 of this issue).

On 19 February 1997, police in London seized 138 shawls made of pure Tibetan Antelope wool *Pantholops hodgsoni* (App. I), a luxury fleece commonly known as 'shahtoosh'. This is the largest-known seizure of this commodity. The case is being investigated.

H.M. Customs & Excise, CITES Enforcement Team; Heathrow and London Central Customs Support Team; TRAFFIC International

A F R I C A

MOZAMBIQUE: On 16 August 1996, the CITES Management Authority in Mozambique seized 3 Tigers *Panthera tigris*, 6 Lions *Panthera leo* (both App. I) and 1 African Python *Python sebae* (App. II) from a circus that has been under investigation by the CITES Secretariat and TRAFFIC since 1992. During its movement through a number of African countries, Akef Egyptian Circus has allegedly transported wildlife in contravention of CITES; 4 Chimpanzees *Pan troglodytes* (App. I) were previously seized from the circus by enforcement authorities in Uganda and 2 Chimpanzees and 1 African Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus* (App. II) in Zambia. The animals are to be temporarily resettled in South Africa because of current difficulties in housing them in Mozambique. No charges have been laid against the circus.

TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa

A S I A

EAST ASIA

HONG KONG SAR: On 25 September 1996, following the largest seizure of ivory in the territory for four years (292 kg), four men (a resident of Hong Kong and three Chinese seamen) pleaded guilty at Tsuan Wan Magistracy to charges of attempting to export ivory without a valid licence.

The case came to light on 10 September when Customs officials intercepted four men and seized 113 kg of raw ivory tusks and 9 kg of worked ivory chops which were being loaded onto a vessel at the Kwai Chung Container Terminal, bound for China. Semi-finished ivory products were found concealed in the engine room and further enquiries led authorities to stocks of raw ivory at a Hong Kong residence.

The Hong Kong resident and one of the seamen were sentenced to four months' imprisonment, the former to a further four weeks in gaol for possession of ivory without a licence. The other seamen were each sentenced to two months' imprisonment for charges of assisting in the export of concealed cargo.

Agriculture and Fisheries Department Press Release, 3 October 1996; South China Morning Post (Hong Kong), 13 September 1996; TRAFFIC East Asia

JAPAN: On 16 January 1997, at Kansai International Airport, two Japanese nationals arriving from Singapore were arrested following their attempts to smuggle 352 kg of African Elephant ivory into the country in the form of 13 800 hankos (signature seals). The case is under investigation.

TRAFFIC East Asia

TAIWAN: On 29 October 1996, police in Taipei county seized a number of rhino horns, rhino horn powder and other wildlife parts and ingredients at two locations in Shulin township. The seizures followed a month of undercover investigation by police and the Wildlife Protection Unit of the Council of Agriculture, after information revealed that a man and his wife were selling illegal traditional Chinese medicines at their residence and on the premises of a place of worship. The following were seized: 7 rhino horns; 4 pieces of rhino horn; 2 whole alleged rhino horns; 13 bottles and 2 packets alleged to contain rhino horn powder; 21 antelope horns; 10 deer penises; 1 antler; 1 alleged Tiger *Panthera tigris* skin; 1 packet of deer velvet; 3 pieces of glue made from ginseng, deer velvet and Tiger bone; an ivory pipe; and, 14 whole gall bladders, allegedly bear. Various grinding tools were also seized. Two people were arrested. The case is under investigation.

Council of Agriculture News Release, 29 October 1996; TRAFFIC East Asia

INDIA: A summary follows of the seizures/poaching incidents in India since May to December 1996, following on from reports in 16(2):

25 May: 2 Tiger skins (Andhra Pradesh);

27 May: 1 Tiger skin and 20 Tiger nails (Madhya Pradesh);

May–June: at least 10 rhinos poached in Kaziranga National Park (Assam);

12 June: 1 Asiatic Lion *Panthera leo persica* (App. I) skin;

13 May: 1 dead elephant in Kankrajhore—tusks removed (West Bengal);

end June: 1 Tiger found poisoned in Sanjay National Park, (Madhya Pradesh);

mid–July: 1 Tiger skin, 4 Leopard skins, 270 kg ivory (Arunachal Pradesh).

19 August: 1 Leopard skin; 1 wild dog *Cuon alpinus* skin; 3 Chital *Axis axis* antlers. Three arrests in Ambedkar Nagar, Bihar.

end August: 2 Tigers; 2 elephant calves allegedly killed with poisoned arrows by tribal poachers, Palamau Tiger Reserve (Bihar).

9 September: 1 Leopard skin in Rishikesh, Uttar Pradesh. Two arrests.

end September: 1 Tiger skin seized by Uttar Pradesh Forest Department, Kalagarh, near Corbett Tiger Reserve.

17 September: 2 Leopard skins seized by Forest and Wildlife Department. One arrest in Delhi.

27 September: 1 Tiger found dead in Hemnagar, Sunderbans Tiger Reserve, West Bengal (unconfirmed poaching case).

26 October: 1 Leopard, 2 Leopard cubs found poisoned in Dangs District, Gujarat.

30 October: 1.1 kg ivory articles, Palika Bazaar, New Delhi, seized by Delhi Administration and Wildlife Preservation acting on information from TRAFFIC India.

1 November: 1 Leopard skin; 2 Jungle Cat *Felis chaus* skins (Delhi). One arrest by office of Deputy Director of Wildlife Preservation, Northern Region.

3 November: 1 Leopard skin (Indore, Madhya Pradesh). One arrest.

5 November: Fur coats: 2 Red Fox, 5 Jungle Cat and 2 Jackal from shop in Chanakyapuri, New Delhi. Seizure by Delhi Administration.

8 November: Deputy Conservator of Forests seized 10 shawls made of wool of Tibetan *Antelope Pantholops hodgsoni* (App. I) (shahtoosh). 1 person arrested at shop in New Delhi hotel, with assistance of Wildlife Protection Society of India.

12 November: 12 pure 'shahtoosh' wool shawls at Indira Gandhi International Airport. Bound for London, UK.

18 November: 5 pure 'shahtoosh' wool shawls/15 shawls of pashmina/'shahtoosh' mix from shop in Dilli Hat, New Delhi, following information provided by TRAFFIC India.

9 December: 108 articles from taxidermist in Chandigarh including rhino, 1 mounted Tiger cub, 1 piece of Tiger skin, 1 Jungle Cat trophy, 1 Jungle Cat skin, 1 Leopard Cat *Prionailurus bengalensis* (App. II) skin; 1 mounted Jaguar *Panthera onca* (App. I), 2 Leopard skins, Lion *Panthera leo persica*, Sambar *Cervus unicolor*, Chinkara *Gazella gazella*, Chital and Gharial *Gavialis gangeticus*.

12 December: 2 elephant tusks (21.5 kg total) by Jaipur flying squad (Rajasthan), assisted by TRAFFIC India and Wildlife Preservation officials.

In early July 1996, the following articles were seized from a group of Narikorava tribals of southern India: 150 heads/140 tails of jackal, skins of 3 Slender Lorises *Nycticebus tardigradus* (App. II), 7 Chital *Axis axis* skins, and an undisclosed number of skins of monitor lizards, hedgehogs and crocodiles. The tribals claimed that the items were to be smuggled to Malaysia for sale. Some members of this tribe—which is reported to be regularly involved in the trade of wildlife articles—were apprehended two years' ago while trying to sell Tiger parts in Singapore.

On 11 July 1996, the Director General of Border Roads seized 270 kg of ivory, skins of 1 Tiger *Panthera tigris* and 4 Leopards *Panthera pardus* (App. I) at Bomdila, Arunachal Pradesh. The contraband was seized from a Nepali who had concealed the articles in a truck belonging to the Central Public Works Department.

During 24 to 28 July 1996, an undercover operation near Corbett Tiger Reserve yielded the skin and skeleton of a Tiger *Panthera tigris* (App. I) and led to the arrest of two men wanted for involvement in the trade in Tigers.

Members of the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI), acting on information provided by the authorities of Corbett Nature Reserve, posed as decoy buyers at a rest house adjacent to Project Tiger headquarters in Ramnagar, in an attempt to apprehend a well-known Tiger poacher and trader, and his associates, who were known to be operating in the area. After locating the traders and four days spent winning their confidence, WPSI was offered (but not shown) 3 Tiger skeletons and up to 7 Tiger skins. Refusing to give cash in advance, the investigators struck a deal and, on 28 July, a stock of Tiger bones and a large Tiger skin were brought to the rest house by three men. The skin, in poor condition and marked with a bullet hole, and the 12 kg of bones are believed to derive from one specimen that one of the men admitted to having killed near the park over a year earlier. Two men were arrested by Forestry authorities; the third escaped. The pair face up to seven years' imprisonment and a fine of Rs10 000 (USD278). This is the fourth major offence detected within and around Corbett National Park during 1996 as part of Operation Monsoon, initiated in 1994 to maintain and strengthen security measures in the reserve during the monsoon

season. This latest operation was carried out jointly by officials of Corbett Tiger Reserve and adjoining forestry divisions.

On 14 August 1996, the Forest Department of Tamil Nadu seized 1016 juvenile Indian Star *Tortoises* *Geochelone elegans* (App. II) from a vehicle at Vellai Gate, near Kancheepuram. Three people were arrested. A few weeks earlier, one of the three suspects had assisted the Regional Deputy Director, Wildlife Preservation in Madras, during a raid on the residences of two field collectors of Indian Star Tortoises. On that occasion, 222 specimens were seized and three people arrested. All the tortoises allegedly had been destined for export to Southeast Asia, Singapore in particular.

On 31 October 1996, as a result of an investigation by TRAFFIC India, Wildlife Preservation officials in New Delhi seized the mounted head of 1 Leopard *Panthera pardus* (App. I), and skins of 2 Jungle Cats *Felis chaus* (App. II) which had been painted to resemble a Leopard and a Marbled Cat *Pardofelis marmorata* (both App. I). Two Kashmiri youths were arrested.

Wildlife Protection Society of India; TRAFFIC India

SOUTHEAST ASIA

MALAYSIA: On 3 July 1996, a Singaporean was sentenced to one day's imprisonment and fined RMD5000 (USD2000) for removing a Scaly Clam *Tridacna squamosa* (App. II) from Pulau Redang Marine Park. He pleaded guilty to the charge, the first to be instituted by the Fisheries Department under wildlife laws for protected marine areas.

Soh Kay Lin was charged under section 43(1)b of the *Fisheries Act 1985 (Amendment) 1993* and was sentenced under section 25(b) of the same Act, which carries a two-year gaol sentence and a maximum fine of RM20 000.

New Straits Times (Malaysia), 3 July 1996

THAILAND: On 11 July 1996, at Ayuthaya province criminal court, five South Koreans and three Thai nationals were found guilty of killing six bears in violation of the *Wildlife Reservation [sic] and Protection Act 1992*. The Thais were given two-year suspended gaol terms and each fined 20 000 Bhat (USD800 each). The South Koreans—three men and two women—received 18-month suspended gaol terms and were each fined 15 000 Bhat. Should they be prosecuted in Thailand at any time in the future, this gaol term will be added to their sentence.

The eight pleaded guilty to killing the bears to make soup for South Korean tourists. They said that they had purchased the animals from wildlife smugglers on the Thai-Myanmar border. Police arrested the group at a highway checkpoint, after finding the heads of the animals and a number of bear paws in their vehicle.

Between July and December 1996, police recovered 33 bears following a period during which owners were able to hand over any bears in their possession without being prosecuted: most specimens were less than a year old. A further 11 bears were confiscated during August to October at the Nakon Sawan Province. The Government is in the process of tagging captive bears with microchips; of 100 in captivity, 27 have been tagged.

In June 1996, Tahia Customs officials seized a large consignment of caged and boxed animals from a trawler at Samut Sakorn port, south of Bangkok. These included 70 young Saltwater Crocodiles *Crocodylus porosus* (App. II), at least 70 Sulphur-crested Cockatoos *Cacatua galerita* (App. II), and undisclosed numbers of Emus *Dromaius novaehollandiae*, wallabies and crowned pigeons; many specimens were already dead. The crocodiles had been destined for breeders in Thailand who were to raise the animals for their skins. The Thai captain of the ship, which had travelled from Indonesia, was arrested on charges of violating CITES. Surviving specimens are at the Forestry Department Breeding Station at Banglamung.

On 8 January 1997, officials of the Forest Protection Division and forest police arrested 20 suspects for their alleged part in the sale of wild orchids to shop owners in Bangkok's weekend market. The orchids, together with other plants, had been loaded onto six pick-up trucks and three six-wheel lorries; included among the orchid specimens were *Dendrobium* spp., *Vanda* spp., and *Paphiopedilum* spp. The suspects claimed the plants had come from Lao PDR, but officials believe them to have been gathered locally in national parks. If that is the case, this is the single, largest haul of wild plants in the country. The specimens are to be returned to their natural habitat.

Some of those arrested had been apprehended in November 1996 for illegal possession of wild plants following a similar raid on the market. On that occasion, only a few orchids were seized.

TRAFFIC Southeast Asia; International Primate Protection League; Bangkok Post (Thailand), 9 January 1997

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA: On 1 March 1996, the excellent co-operation between enforcement authorities in Australia and New Zealand was demonstrated when a joint investigation by both countries culminated in the conviction of one Heidi Kiskinnin, the last of 11 individuals convicted for involvement in a bird smuggling operation. The case began in September 1993, when a light aircraft under surveillance by enforcement authorities in both countries, was flown from Redcliffe airfield in Queensland, Australia, to Waharoa airfield near Matamata in the North Island of New Zealand. Its illegal cargo of birds was unloaded and transported to a stud farm; the birds were later distributed to a number of individuals. A subsequent search of the property and van of one of these individuals yielded 21 Major Mitchell's Cockatoos *Cacatua leadbeateri* (App. II), and 10 Gang-gang Cockatoos *Callocephalon fimbriatum*; these specimens were subsequently repatriated to Australia.

A similar operation involving the same group was found to have taken place in May 1993 and involved the smuggling of over 100 native psittacines.

The following individuals have been sentenced in New Zealand for their part in the operation: David John Cutmore (to 13 months' imprisonment); Paul Anthony Lewin (six months'); John Banks Price (16 months'); Ivan Edward Baney (eight months' NZD5000 (USD3400) fine); Wayne Gilbert Macdonald (six months'); Barry Martin Ryan (22 months'/forfeiture of van).

Sentenced in Australia on charges which included exporting scheduled species without a permit, in breach of Section 21 of the *Wildlife Protection (Regulation of Exports and Imports) Act 1982* were: David Cutmore (six months', plus New Zealand sentence); Dallas Albert (Jimmy) Hill (18 months'); Ronald Eric Prince (21 months'); Anne Brodie (two-year good behaviour bond); Heidi Kiskinnin (AUD3000 (USD2300) good behaviour bond).

In April 1996, Huy Chi Chou was convicted and fined AUD5000 (USD3800) for importing two Red-billed Leiothrixes *Leiothrix lutea* without a permit, contrary to Section 22 of the *Wildlife Protection Act*.

On 2 August 1996, at Brisbane District Court, Brian Walter Carter was convicted of illegally importing two Birds of Paradise Paradisaeidae from Papua New Guinea, contrary to Section 22 of the *Wildlife Protection Act*. He was fined AUD4000 (USD3000).

On 29 October 1996, at Brisbane District Court, Menno Okhuijsen, a Dutch national, was charged with exporting native species in contravention of Section 21 of the *Wildlife Protection (Regulation of Exports and Imports) Act 1982*. Okhuijsen had been apprehended on 14 August at Brisbane Airport as he attempted to export 53 parrot eggs. These were later identified as including Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos *Calyptorhynchus funereus* (App. II) and Australian King Parrots *Alisterus scapularis*. He received an 18-month gaol sentence.

TRAFFIC Oceania

AMERICAS

CANADA: On 28 June 1996, Canadian Customs inspectors in Vancouver, together with Canadian Wildlife Service authorities, seized almost 20 000 items of illegally imported Asian medicine products, containing or purporting to contain parts and derivatives of endangered wildlife. The shipment had been sent from Hong Kong and is believed to have been destined for Canada's growing ethnic Chinese communities in Vancouver and Toronto. Reportedly, more than 211 000 illicit items claiming to contain derivatives of endangered wildlife were seized at Canada's west coast port in 1995, compared to 1200 items seized in 1987.

On 20 November, British national Chow Shing Kwong pleaded guilty to charges of attempting to smuggle Indian Star Tortoises into Canada contrary to the *Wildlife and Trade Act*. He was fined CAD7500 (USD5500). Chow had been arrested the previous day following his arrival at Toronto Airport on a flight from southern India. Contained in egg cartons in his hand luggage were 232 Indian Star Tortoises. One specimen was dead, nine later succumbed to dehydration, and about half the remaining specimens were to spend several weeks recuperating before being returned to India; the others were in good health.

TRAFFIC USA

MEXICO: On 28 January 1997, at Mexico City Airport, enforcement officials seized a shipment of 843 orchids in the process of being exported to Australia by Mexico's biggest orchid exporter. Inspectors considered the specimens, which carried a CITES permit for artificially propagated orchids, to be wild collected. Orchid experts from the Mexican National Autonomous University confirmed this to be the case. Forty species were identified and included specimens of *Laelia speciosa*, *Encyclia hanburii*, *E. mariae*, *Maxillaria densa*, *Oncidium cebolleta*, *Alamania punicea*, *Mormodes maculata* var. *unicolor*, *Epidendrum stanfordianum*, *Meiracylium trinasutum* and *Lemboglossum rossii*. At least 10 of the species contained in the shipment are considered to be threatened in Mexico. The exporter faces a penalty of up to six years in gaol.

PROFEPA Press Release, 2 February 1997; TRAFFIC International

USA: On 17 May 1996, in the Western District of Virginia, Rainer Schimpf of Rimbach, Germany, pleaded guilty to charges of falsely labelling wildlife for shipment to the USA. The charge arose out of an investigation conducted by Customs and the US Fish and Wildlife Service after a package containing 18 juvenile Monocellate Cobras *Naja naja kaouthia* (App. II) was intercepted by Customs officers at the United Parcel Service facility in Louisville, Kentucky. Documents accompanying the shipment indicated the package contained bracelets. Schimpf pleaded guilty to falsely labelling a wildlife shipment and, pursuant to a plea agreement, agreed to pay USD17 000. A percentage of this money will go towards national wildlife conservation projects. He was also ordered to remain outside the USA for a period of three years.

Scuba diver August Angelo Vichi faces a three-year prison sentence and up to USD50 000 in fines for his involvement in the largest-ever operation involving the illegal collection of abalone *Haliotis* in the state of California; since 1994, 10 others have been convicted in the case.

The operation was first uncovered in September 1994, when some 20 tonnes of abalone were found to have been collected along a five-mile stretch of the Sonoma County coast and sold to a commercial fisherman. Although up to four abalones may be collected per day in Sonoma County for sport, it is illegal to sell specimens. In this operation, as many as 82 were being gathered daily. Van Howard Johnson, the fisherman responsible for masterminding the operation, was sentenced in May 1996 to three years in prison, ordered to pay USD40 000 into the North Coast Abalone Restoration Fund, and fined USD10 000. Other members of the group have been sentenced to shorter gaol terms and/or probation and ordered to pay into the same fund amounts ranging from USD7000 to USD20 000. The group set up abalone processing centres in residences in Cazadero

and Santa Rosa and sold the meat to Johnson, who in turn sold the meat to restaurants and east coast and Asian markets.

Biologists estimate that it will take 15 years to undo the damage to the North Coast abalone population.

On 18 November 1996, a federal court in Chicago, Illinois, sentenced Tony Silva to nearly seven years' imprisonment without parole for his role in leading an international parrot smuggling conspiracy (see page 83 of this issue and *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 15(2):95/16(1):32).

On 10 January 1997, in Orlando, Florida, a German national was sentenced to nearly four years' imprisonment for conspiring to smuggle rare and endangered snakes and tortoises into North America; an accomplice was placed on three years' probation (see page 83 of this issue).

On 3 February 1997, in the Southern District of Florida, Tim Eaton of Tequesta, Florida, was sentenced to two years in gaol and ordered to pay a fine of USD25 000 following his conviction on charges of smuggling snakes. Between February and November 1993 Eaton conspired to smuggle 141 Red-tail Boa *Constrictors Boa constrictor ortonii*, 1 Rainbow Boa *Epicrates cenchria* and 2 Anacondas *Eunectes murinus* (all App. II) from Peru, in violation of the *US Endangered Species Act*, and without CITES permits. Peru prohibits the export of these species. Eaton is the president of a Peruvian company which imports and distributes 'cat's claw', a herbal remedy (see page 87 of this issue).

TRAFFIC USA; Front Page (USA), 10 January 1996; Empire News (USA), 10 August 1996; TRAFFIC USA; US Fish and Wildlife Service Press Release, 3 February 1997

VOL. 17 NO. 1 (SEPTEMBER 1997)

E U R O P E

BELGIUM: On 8 January 1997, at Brussels National Airport, Customs officers of the GAD (Anti-Drug Group) Inspection Service seized a box containing 10 reptiles which had been included in a shipment of live tropical fish arriving from the USA. They included 2 Gold-Dust Day Geckos *Phelsuma laticauda*, 2 Madagascar Day Geckos *P. madagascariensis grandis*, 2 Four-spot Day Geckos *P. quadriocellata*, 2 Common Iguanas *Iguana iguana* (all App. II) and 3 Leopard Geckos *Eublepharis macularius*. The reptiles have been placed at Antwerp Zoo. The addressee, a Belgian trader, denies ordering the reptiles.

TRAFFIC Europe

FRANCE: On 8 January 1997, Customs officers at Roissy Airport apprehended nine Syrians who were transporting 53 birds from Côte d'Ivoire, for sale in Syria. These included 42 African Grey Parrots *Psittacus erithacus*, 1 Meyer's Parrot *Poicephalus meyeri*, 8 Senegal Parrots *P. senegalus* (all App. II), and 2 Ring-necked Parakeets *Psittacula krameri* (App. III). The next day, Customs officers in Gironde recovered 97 Senegal Parrots from the vehicle of a Portuguese national.

On 7 February 1997, Customs officers at Orly Airport seized some 540 cacti that had been transported, without authorization, by a German national arriving from Dallas, USA. They were handed to the Natural History Museum and identified as Mexican species mainly of *Ariocarpus* (App. I) and *Echinocereus* (App. I/II): several specimens of *Ariocarpus* and *Astrophytum* species were estimated to be between 50 and 80 years old; many other plants in the consignment are believed to be over 20 years, including 105 *Echinocereus pectinatus* plants.

On 27 May 1997, Customs officers at Orly Airport seized a commercial shipment of 1738 Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius* teeth (App. II), one tusk of an African Elephant *Loxodonta*

africana (App. I) and 4 Warthog *Phacochoerus africanus* teeth. The items, weighing a total of 840 kg, had been shipped from Uganda, and were bound for Hong Kong.

WWF Press Releases, 15 January/5 June 1997; WWF News Bulletins, 27 February/15 March 1997; TRAFFIC Europe

GERMANY: On 17 December 1996, the Customs Investigation Agency of Munich confiscated a large number of live tortoises. These included 204 Hermann's Tortoises *Testudo hermanni*, 198 Horsfield's Tortoises *T. horsfieldii*, 26 Spur-thighed Tortoises *T. graeca* (all App. II), 47 Egyptian Tortoises *T. kleinmanni* (App. I), and 2110 Red-eared Sliders *Trachemys scripta elegans* (listed in EU Annex B which imposes import controls). The reptiles had been concealed in two vehicles being driven from Poland to Germany by Polish nationals. Three people were imprisoned, two were later released.

On 21 December 1996, the Customs Investigation Agency of Munich confiscated a number of protected reptiles from three Czech nationals. These included 124 Hermann's Tortoises *Testudo hermanni* (App. II), 11 Egyptian Tortoises *T. kleinmanni* (App. I), 100 Common Iguanas *Iguana iguana*, 12 pythons *Python*, 67 Yellow Anacondas *Eunectes notaeus* (App. II), 20 Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (App. II), 49 day geckos *Phelsuma* and 374 Red-eared Sliders *Trachemys scripta elegans* (listed in EU Annex B which imposes import controls). The animals had been smuggled in two cars and were to be sold in Germany. Two people were imprisoned; one has been released from custody.

On 20 February 1997, Customs officers at Düsseldorf Airport confiscated 330 live Strawberry Poison Frogs *Dendrobates pumilio* and 30 live Green and Black Poison Frogs *D. auratus* (both App. II). A German citizen, who had collected the specimens in Costa Rica, had attempted to smuggle the frogs in three plastic boxes he had concealed in the hidden compartment of a sports bag. About half the specimens were dead on arrival or have since died. Shortly after this incident, Customs officers at Munich Airport seized about 30 Strawberry Poison Frogs from another German citizen arriving from Costa Rica.

On 18 April 1997, Customs officers at Nürnberg confiscated the following reptiles being smuggled into the country by a German citizen arriving from the Czech Republic: 8 Sepik Monitors *Varanus jobiensis*, 14 Emerald Monitors *V. prasinus*, 5 Timor Tree Monitors *V. timorensis*, 47 Green Tree Pythons *Morelia viridis* (all App. II), and 1 Blue-tongued Skink *Tiliqua gigas* (protected by German law).

All the above cases are under investigation. Confiscated specimens have been deposited in bona fide zoological and private collections in Germany, in accordance with the provisions of CITES Resolution Conf. 9.11.

On 18 June 1997, following a search of apartments in the provinces of Bayern, Baden-Wuerttemberg, Rheinland-Pfalz and Hessen, a number of individuals were picked up in connection with the alleged smuggling of reptiles into the country from Madagascar. Sixteen snakes were seized. One man, charged with being the ring leader of an operation which involved the smuggling of some 800 reptiles from Madagascar over the past five years, has been detained. A warrant for his arrest has already been issued by authorities in the USA. The case is under investigation.

CITES Management Authority, Germany; TRAFFIC Europe

ITALY: On 10 April 1997, authorities in Calabria seized 168 dead birds, a number of which were of indigenous species including Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* (App. I), Lanner Falcon *F. biarmicus*, Short-toed Snake-Eagle *Circaetus gallicus* and Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* (all App. II), as well as Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* from Spain, Little Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis*, Blacksmith Lapwing *Vanellus armatus* (all App. II) and Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus* (App. III) from Africa, and Wattled Jacana *Jacana jacana* and a kite *Rostrhamus* sp. (App. II) from South America. The birds had

been found in a laboratory, together with chemicals, tools and a number of guns. The seizure of 130 birds in the same area on a previous occasion leads authorities to believe that this region is a focal point in Italy for the illegal trade in birds.

On 21 May 1997, the Forest Corps CITES Service at Fiumicino Airport, Rome, seized one live juvenile Red Howler *Alouatta seniculus* (App. II) from a Venezuelan tourist. The two-month-old animal was in a stressed condition and had been injured during his period in captivity. It is being cared for at Rome's zoo.

TRAFFIC Europe

NETHERLANDS: On 21 May 1997, Customs officers seized 50 Giant Clams *Tridacna gigas* (App. II) from a container in transit through Rotterdam harbour. The shipment, which also contained non-CITES items, was labelled as "wooden handicrafts" and had arrived from Surabaya, Indonesia, bound for Tenerife. Forty-six of the clams were complete double shells. Customs officers at Rotterdam are reported to be particularly vigilant of containers arriving from the Philippines, following the seizure in Rotterdam last year of 11 000 *Tridacna* shells from that country.

TRAFFIC Europe

UK: On 13 March 1997, at Hampshire Magistrates' Court, Bang Hue Thi, a Vietnamese, pleaded guilty to four charges under the *Control of Trade in Endangered Species (Enforcement) Regulation 1985* (COTES) of illegal sale of traditional Chinese medicines. She was fined GBP2000 (USD3336) and GBP150 costs.

Among the items seized were packages which listed derivatives of the following CITES species among their ingredients: Tiger *Panthera tigris*, Leopard *P. pardus* (both App. I), Bear *Ursus*, Musk Deer *Moschus*, Saiga Antelope *Saiga tatarica*, Costus Root *Saussurea costus* and American Ginseng *Panax quinquefolius* (all App. II). These items had been purchased in Hong Kong.

Ms Bang's shop in Portsmouth had been under surveillance since early 1996, prompted by a covert investigation by TRAFFIC. She was arrested in August of that year when Hampshire police, assisted by TRAFFIC staff, carried out a raid on the premises.

In April 1997, at Luton Crown Court, Paul Noble of Sandy, Bedfordshire, was sentenced to eight months' imprisonment after being found guilty on three charges relating to the illegal sale of Eleonora's Falcons *Falco eleonora* (App. II) and one charge of keeping the birds for sale. The evidence clearly suggested that the birds had been taken from the wild as eggs in Majorca in 1994 and 1995, and smuggled into the UK where they were hatched.

Six juvenile birds were seized from Noble's home by Bedfordshire police, assisted by staff of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds who had been alerted by an advertisement placed by Noble offering the birds for sale. A further eight birds taken as eggs in 1994 and which had been sold to falconers who were told that the birds had been captive bred, were traced and seized.

The juvenile birds have been returned to Majorca for reintroduction to the wild; the other eight are not suited for release, however.

On 15 April 1997, 199 Kenyan Sand Boas *Eryx colubrinus* (App. II) were seized by the Customs CITES Enforcement Team at Heathrow Airport. On 2 June, a further 95 specimens were seized. Both shipments had been in transit from Zambia to the USA. The reptiles were identified on the permit as being of wild origin; the species does not occur in Zambia, however. They have been placed with UK zoos and reptile societies.

On 24 April 1997, hundreds of reptiles and amphibians from Madagascar were seized at Heathrow Airport, among which were 231 day geckos *Phelsuma*, including Side-striped Day Geckos (30 *P. lineata lineata* and 15 *P.l. bifasciata*), Gold-Dust Day Geckos (30 *P. laticauda laticauda* and 20 *P.l.*

angularis), Madagascar Day Geckos (30 *P. madagascariensis grandis*, 48 *P.m. kochi* and 30 *P.m. madagascariensis*), 28 Four-spot Day Geckos *P. quadriocellata quadriocellata*, 2 Madagascar Giant Chameleons *Chamaeleo verrucosus* (all App. II); 30 Panther Chameleons *C. pardalis*, Carpet Chameleons (25 *C. lateralis lateralis* and 15 *C.l. major*) and 60 Golden Mantellas *Mantella aurantiaca* (all App. II). No documentation accompanied the shipment and the animals have been placed with UK zoos.

On 5 May 1997, the Customs CITES Enforcement Team at Heathrow Airport intercepted a package arriving from Brazil which was found to contain a fresh Jaguar *Panthera onca* (App. I) skin. The item, labelled as "shoes", continued its journey to its destination in Italy where the recipient was questioned by Italian authorities but later released without charge.

On 19 May 1997, at Gatwick Airport, officers of the Customs CITES Enforcement Team seized 366 kg ivory that had arrived in transit from Zambia, bound for Sabah, Malaysia. The items had been sent air freight in three metal boxes which claimed to contain malachite (a mineral). The ivory was in the form of sawn 30-cm lengths of unprocessed tusks, including 58 tusk tips. Some of the ivory was clearly freshly cut and bore machine oil traces on the cut areas. TRAFFIC has been assisting Customs in their enquiries.

In June 1997, a consignment of 1115 Rajah Brook's Birdwings *Trogonoptera brookiana* (App. II), which had no accompanying documentation, was seized by the Customs CITES Enforcement Team at Heathrow Airport. The shipment was in transit from Malaysia to Turkey.

TRAFFIC International; Cage & Aviary Birds, April 19 1997; Wingtips, No. 5, July 1997

AFRICA

MALAWI: On 18 July 1997, at Area 43, in Lilongwe, security officials seized 2 African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* tusks, each weighing 5 kg, and 2 Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius* teeth, of 1 kg each. Two men who were seeking prospective buyers for the trophies were arrested. The items are in the custody of Lingadzi police and a trial is pending.

Department of National Parks and Wildlife, Lilongwe, Malawi

ASIA

EAST ASIA

CHINA: Five men have been sentenced to prison terms of between 7 and 14 years for their part in selling the pelt of a Giant Panda *Ailuropoda melanoleuca* (App. I), according to a report in the Beijing Daily newspaper. The men were trying to sell the pelt for 200 000 yuan (USD24 000).

International Herald Tribune, 28 August 1997

HONG KONG: A HKD200 000 (USD25 840) fine has been imposed on a firm found guilty of possessing for sale medicines purporting to contain Tiger bone and rhino horn.

The TCM wholesale firm Van Due Co of Sheung Wan was convicted in September 1996 following a raid on the premises uncovered 166 packets of controlled medicines: 142 listed rhino horn among the ingredients, while the remainder listed Tiger *Panthera tigris* (both App. I) bone. Although no forensic test was performed to confirm that the products contained traces of these species, it is illegal in Hong Kong to sell products claiming to contain derivatives or parts of Tiger or rhino.

Following the conviction, the firm appealed to the High Court against the verdict, stating that the fine was too high. The appeal was subsequently withdrawn, however.

TRAFFIC East Asia

INDIA: Major seizures/poaching incidents in India since December 1996 to July 1997 are summarized below and follow on from reports in 16(3). Staff of TRAFFIC India and the Wildlife Protection Society of India assisted authorities in a number of these investigations:

15–20 December 1996: 3 rhinos poached inside Orang Wildlife Sanctuary and Kaziranga National Park (Assam) in separate incidents (horns had been removed).

25 December: 670 live turtles seized in Hooghly and Raiganj District, North Dinajpur (West Bengal). 2 arrests.

end December: 5 Leopards *Panthera pardus* (App. I) poached from hills of Pithorgarh and Uttar Pradesh (UP).

1 January 1997: 1 female rhino poached inside Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary (Assam) (horn removed).

4 January: 1460 live freshwater turtles seized Mizapur Railway Station (UP). 2 arrests.

8 January: skins of 3 Desert Cats *Felis silvestris* (App. II), 3 Indian Foxes *Vulpes bengalensis* and 3 Red Foxes *V. vulpes* seized in Rajasthan. 3 arrests.

9 January: 3 shawls of *Pantholops hodgsoni* (App. I) wool (shahtoosh) seized from Jammu & Kashmir Government emporium, Calcutta.

20 January: 37 animal skins including Tiger *Panthera tigris* (App. I), Leopard, antelope and jackal, seized from a house in Kohlapur, Maharashtra. 1 arrest.

23 January: 1 Tiger skin seized in Bangalore (Karnataka). 3 arrests.

28 January: 28.5 kg of Tiger bones and 3 Tiger skulls seized near Corbett Tiger Reserve (UP). 5 arrests.

31 January: 3 Leopard skins seized in Satna (Madhya Pradesh (MP)). 2 arrests.

1 February: 11 Leopard skins, 25 jackal skins, 9 fox skins and 9 civet cat skins seized in Satna (MP). 1 arrest.

2 February: 2 Leopard skins, 56 Sambar *Cervus unicolor* horns and 1 Chital *Axis axis* skin seized in Satna (MP).

10 February: 5 Leopard skins seized. 2 arrests in Satna (MP).

10 February: 2 male elephants poached in Nilgiri area (Tamil Nadu (TN)) (tusks removed).

11 February: 9 kg raw ivory seized. 3 arrests in Kokrajhar District (Assam).

11 February: 1 Leopard skin seized at Dadakhar village, Betul District (Andhra Pradesh (AP)). 1 arrest.

15 February: 2 male elephants poached in Nilgiri area (TN) (tusks removed).

16 February: 1 male rhino poached in Orang Wildlife Sanctuary (Assam) (horn removed).

18 February: 1 Leopard skin seized. 2 arrests at Tilak Marg, New Delhi.

19 February: 1 Leopard skin (cub) seized. 1 arrest at Khatauli (UP).

19 February: 2 Leopard skins seized on Sarnath Express train near Satna (MP). 2 arrests.

20 February: 1 Leopard skin seized in Sundernagar, Sarkaghat District (Himachal Pradesh (HP)). 2 arrests.

21 February: 1 Tiger trophy (mounted) and 2 Tiger skins seized in Katni (MP). 1 arrest.

5 March: 700 live Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (App. II) seized at Chennai International Airport (TN). 3 arrests.

17 March: 2 Leopard skins and 9 skins of other endangered species seized at Darjeeling (West Bengal). 1 arrest.

18 March: 2.5 kg of Leopard bones seized in Corbett National Park (UP). 2 arrests.

27 March: 6 Alexandrine Parakeets *Psittacula eupatria* (App. II), 160 Rose-ringed Parakeets *P. krameri* (App. III), 300 Blossom-headed Parakeets *P. roseata* (App. II), 200 Red Munias *Lonchura bicolor*, 7 Baya Weavers *Ploceus philippinus* and 56 pigeons, seized in Delhi.

3 April: 18 jackal skins seized at Chennai International Airport (TN).

5 April: 1 Leopard skin recovered by Forest Department, Calcutta. 3 arrests.

7 April: 1 rhino horn seized in Jalpaiguri District (West Bengal).

13 April: 1000 live turtles seized at Konaseema, East Godavari District (AP). 2 arrests.

13 April: 4 Leopard skins seized at Kondli, East Delhi.

17 April: 3 Leopard skins seized at Deeddag village, Sirmour District (HP).

19 April: 5000 live turtles seized at Chakdah village, Nadia Murshidabad District (West Bengal).

1 arrest.

4 May: 16 Goral *Naemorhedus goral* (App. I) skins seized in the Terai District (UP).

4 May: 1 male elephant poached in Rajaji National Park (UP) (tusks removed).

14 May: 1 Leopard skin and 4 Chital skins seized in Bhuvaneshwar (Orissa).

15 May: 3 Leopard skins seized in Bhuvaneshwar (Orissa). 2 arrests.

16 May: 8 Leopard skins seized in Vikas Nagar, Dehradun (UP). 5 arrests.

17 May: 1 Tiger skin seized in Jamshedpur (Bihar). 1 arrest.

20 May: 2 Leopard skins seized in Vikas Nagar, Dehradun (UP). 1 arrest.

22 May: 3 Leopard skins seized in Dehradun (UP). 1 arrest.

22 May: 237 live turtles seized in Saharanpur (UP).

23 May: 4 Leopard skins and 1 Chital skin seized in Dehradun (UP). 1 arrest.

26 May: 712 processed skins and 96 coats made out of Jungle Cat *Felis chaus* (App. II) skins recovered by city police of Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir. 2 arrests.

28 May: 1 Leopard skin seized in Cuttack (Orissa). 1 arrest.

29 May: 6 Tiger skins and 3 Leopard skins seized from a circus in Nagpur (Maharashtra). 1 arrest.

8 June: Skins of 1 Tiger, 1 Chital, 1 Indian Rock Python *Python molurus molurus* (App. I) and 1 crocodile, and a quantity of raw ivory seized from a hotel in Palia, Lakhimpur Kheri District (UP). 8 arrests.

10 June: 93 Desert Fox skins, 19 Jungle Cat *Felis chaus* (App. II) skins and 1 jackal skin seized in Sadar Bazar, Delhi. 2 arrests.

11 June: 1 Tiger skin and 1 Leopard skin seized in Bijnore District (UP). 1 arrest.

17–26 June: In separate incidents, 4 elephants found poached in Athgarh Division, Kuru Reserved Forest (Orissa), in Simlipal Tiger Reserve and in Angul Forest Division (Orissa). The tusks had been removed.

4 July: 4 Leopard skins were recovered in Shimla (HP) by Enforcement Directorate. 2 arrests.

11 July: Skins of 2 Tigers and 43 snakes (species not yet known) seized by Criminal Investigation Department of West Bengal, Calcutta. 4 arrests.

Wildlife Protection Society of India; TRAFFIC India

SOUTH KOREA: Four attempts to smuggle ivory into South Korea have been detected this year, three involving considerable quantities from Gabon.

The first case was uncovered in January by Belgian Customs officials who seized 8 postal parcels containing semi-worked ivory bound for South Korea from Libreville (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 16(3):113).

The second case, currently under investigation by Seoul Customs officials, involved the attempted illegal import of 87 pieces of ivory tusks, 800 ivory blocks and 2 Leopard *Panthera pardus* (App. I) skins which were found at Seoul Customs depot. The goods, contained in three large metal boxes, had arrived in November 1996 from Libreville. The consignee has not claimed the items.

Thirdly, in July, Customs authorities in Pusan uncovered 82 kg of ivory tusks and 2410 ivory blocks concealed in items of furniture. The owner was returning to the country from Gabon. His scheme was uncovered when, judging that clearance of the goods through Customs would not be easy, he attempted to have them sent back to Gabon.

Korean Customs Service; TRAFFIC East Asia

TAIWAN: On 26 June 1997, after months of investigation, the Ministry of Justice Investigation Bureau (Pingtung county office) arrested three individuals for alleged involvement in the smuggling of ivory and rhino products from South Africa to Taiwan. Investigators seized items, including one rhino horn (5.5 kg), with an estimated total value of more than New Taiwan Dollars NTD30 million (USD1.1 million), from locations in four cities around the island. Investigations continue.

Ministry of Justice Investigation Bureau Press Release (Chinese); English summary by TRAFFIC East Asia-Taipei

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA: On 20 January 1997, at Bunbury Court, Bunbury, Western Australia, brothers Brett Steven Hahn and Graham Robin Hahn pleaded guilty to nine charges under the WA *Fish Resources Management Act* of illegally collecting and selling abalone *Haliotis* spp. The conviction came after seven months of surveillance by the WA Fisheries Special Investigation Unit. Friends and relatives of the pair had acted as couriers, transporting the molluscs, which had been poached in Augusta over a period of several years. The pair were fined AUD240 000 (USD178 632).

TRAFFIC Oceania

AMERICAS

ARGENTINA: On 19 November 1996, a consignment of 82 marmosets *Callithrix* sp. bound for Bangkok, Thailand, was detected at Ezeiza International Airport, Buenos Aires; two specimens were dead and two were to die later, following their transport in three boxes measuring 60 cm x 40 cm x 20 cm, each divided into six compartments. The exporter is well known to the authorities and the police were granted a warrant to search two of his properties. They found 1 Hyacinth Macaw *Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*, 1 Scarlet Macaw *Ara macao* (both App. I), 1 Blue-and-yellow Macaw *Ara ararauna*, 2 Red-and-green Macaws *Ara chloropterus*, 1 Red-fan Parrot *Deroptyus accipitrinus*, 3 Mitred Parakeets *Aratinga mitrata* and 7 Maroon-bellied Parakeets *Pyrrhura frontalis* (all App. II), in addition to false transport documents. An investigation is under way.

CITES Management Authority, Argentina

USA: On 31 January 1997, in Miami, Florida, Michael J. Van Nostrand, Dale Marantz and the firm Strictly Reptiles, Inc., were indicted by a federal grand jury on 13 charges relating to a conspiracy to smuggle reptiles from Argentina into Miami International Airport. The alleged misdemeanours, which contravened the *US Endangered Species Act*, the *US Lacey Act* (a federal statute which prohibits interstate wildlife trade in violation of State laws and laws of other countries) and CITES, took place between November 1990 and April 1992 and involved over 750 specimens of six species: Argentine Boa Constrictors *Boa constrictor occidentalis* (App. I), Rainbow Boas *Epicrates cenchris alvarezii*, Chaco Tortoises *Geochelone chilensis*, Red-footed Tortoises *G. carbonaria*, tegu lizards *Tupinambis* and Yellow-spotted Amazon Turtles *Podocnemis unifilis* (all App. II). The case is pending.

On 26 March 1997, at Benton District Court, Illinois, James P. Zaworski of Marion, Illinois, pleaded guilty to charges relating to a conspiracy to smuggle reptiles into the USA from Spain, as well as to shipping nearly 70 poisonous snakes through the US mail in unmarked packages. Zaworski, a reptile dealer, faces five years' imprisonment and/or a USD250 000 fine.

The investigation into Zaworski's activities began in 1994 at John F. Kennedy Airport, New York, where US Fish and Wildlife Service wildlife inspectors discovered a postal package from Spain addressed to Zaworski. Hidden inside were 13 Lilford's Wall Lizards *Podarcis lilfordi* (App. II). The package was sent on to its destination and collaboration between officials of the USFWS, the US Post Office and the police led to a search of Zaworski's residence. In addition to the discovery of records chronicling 10 years of reptile smuggling to and from Spain, France and South Africa, a number of reptiles were also found. These included the 13 Lilford's Wall Lizards, Ladder Snakes *Elaphe scalaris* which had also been smuggled from Spain, box turtles *Terrapene carolina* illegally collected from a National Wildlife Refuge, Massasauga Rattlesnakes *Sistrurus catenatus* mailed illegally from Florida, a Timber Rattlesnake *Crotalus horridus* and Great Plains Rat Snakes *Elaphe guttata emoryi* listed as threatened in Illinois, and two Desert Tortoises *Gopherus agassizii*, a species listed as threatened under the *US Endangered Species Act*.

Zaworski allegedly solicited and traded reptiles through the mail with a reptile supplier in Barcelona, Spain, on whom search warrants have also been served, and where investigations are under way.

In a related smuggling investigation, Robert L. Mitchell, of St. Charles, Missouri, pleaded guilty in April 1996 for violations of the *Lacey Act*. Mitchell was fined USD10 000 for unlawfully importing 18 live Hermann's Tortoises *Testudo hermanni* (App. II) through the mail. The tortoises had been sent by the same Spanish dealer with whom Zaworski had collaborated.

On 14 July 1997, Adolph "Buzz" Pare, of Miami, Florida, was sentenced to a year and a day in gaol for illegally smuggling more than 4000 "Congo" African Grey Parrots *Psittacus erithacus erithacus* (App. II) into the USA and for filing false importation documents. He was also ordered to pay USD300 000 in fines, the largest sum ever levied against a defendant in a federal wildlife smuggling case.

Pare is director of Gators of Miami, Inc., the nation's largest importer of African Grey Parrots during the late 80s and early 90s: between February 1988 and August 1991, the defendant conspired to smuggle more than 4000 specimens into Miami in approximately 14 shipments. The birds had been illegally taken from their wild habitat in Zaire, smuggled into Senegal, and exported to the USA under false CITES export documents. These stated that the birds had originated in Guinea or Côte d'Ivoire, countries where this subspecies does not occur in the wild.

Pare is the 38th and last person to be convicted as a result of "Operation Renegade", a three-year undercover investigation by the US Fish and Wildlife Service into schemes involving the smuggling of birds or their eggs into the USA.

US Department of Justice News Releases, 31 January/26 March/29 July 1997; TRAFFIC USA; US Fish and Wildlife Service, CITES Update 52, May 1997

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EUROPE

BELGIUM: On 11 December 1997, at Zaventem Airport, Brussels, Customs officers arrested a Dutch citizen returning from Kenya with live reptiles concealed in his luggage. These included 76 chameleons, including 22 Jackson's Three-horned Chameleons *Chamaeleo jacksonii* (App. II), 130 tree frogs, 266 geckos, and a Bell's Hinged Tortoise *Kinixys belliana* (App. II). One third of the animals were dead on arrival; the live specimens were placed at Antwerp Zoo. By early January 1998, 17 chameleons and most of the geckos had died; a number of pregnant females in the shipment had produced 14 young. The importer, who is already subject to a criminal investigation, was cautioned for cruelty to animals and for illegal importation of protected animals, and released.

TRAFFIC Europe

GERMANY: Two cacti collectors charged in June 1995 with smuggling some 576 cacti from Mexico to Germany have each been fined DM18 000 (USD10 000). The specimens, which included wild-collected *Ariocarpus* and *Turbincarpus* spp. (both App. I/II), were seized from the homes of the German pair (*TRAFFIC Bulletin* 15(3):116).

CITES Management Authority, Germany

NETHERLANDS: On 12 February 1998, during a routine inspection, Customs officers at Schiphol Airport seized a large number of reptiles from the luggage of a Czech national travelling from Peru to Prague: 151 turtles, 54 snakes, 43 crocodiles and caimans were discovered in a suitcase and a rucksack in the suspect's possession, including Boa Constrictors *Boa constrictor* and Rainbow Boas

Epicrates cenchria (both App. II). The animals had been placed in plastic boxes within small plastic bags. At the time of the arrest, 13 animals were dead and the remainder were underweight. The case is under investigation.

On 26 March 1998, Zhi Lin Dong and his company, Chinese Medical Centre, in Utrecht, were found guilty of trading packages claiming to contain ingredients of CITES-listed species. Dong was sentenced to gaol for three months' and fined HFL10 000 (USD5000); the company was fined HFL80 000 (of which HFL50 000 was suspended). The prosecution follows a raid of the premises in February 1996, after an investigation of the company by TRAFFIC. Eight lorry-loads of traditional Chinese medicines were seized. Some packets claimed to contain, among others, derivatives of Tiger *Panthera tigris* bone and rhino horn (both App. I), bear gall bladder and musk deer *Moschus* (both App. I/II), Saiga Antelope *Saiga tatarica* and pangolin *Manis* (both App. II). Many of these claims were supported by forensic tests of the items, which was organized by TRAFFIC.

Telegraaf (Netherlands), 13 February 1998; TRAFFIC Europe

SPAIN: An investigation which began in Colombia in 1995 recently culminated in the seizure of 125 000 illegally acquired dead butterflies, beetles and tarantulas from a private residence in Madrid. Some 1642 specimens were CITES Appendix II-listed butterflies from Indonesia.

Authorities in Colombia had sought the assistance of Spain's CITES Management Authority after advertisements giving a Spanish address seeking to purchase butterflies and beetles appeared in Colombian newspapers. The commercial export of wildlife from Colombia is prohibited with the exception of captive-bred specimens under licence.

After a lengthy investigation, the Guardia Civil seized the following dried birdwing butterflies from the Madrid residence: 140 Goliath Birdwings *Ornithoptera goliath*; 10 Paradise Birdwings *O. paradisea*; 100 Priam's Birdwings *O. priamus poseidon*; 201 *O. priamus* ssp. (*euphorion* and others); 120 Rothschild's Birdwings *O. rothschildi*; 140 *O. tithonus*; 4 *Troides haliphron*; 185 *T. hypolitus*; 1 *T. magellanus*; 640 *T. oblongomaculatus*; 100 *T.o. thestius*; and, 1 *T. rhadamantus*. Also seized were a further 124 000 butterflies and over 4000 beetles and tarantulas. All specimens had originated in South America, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Taiwan and other countries.

The insects have been placed with the Environmental Sciences and Natural Resources Department at the University of Alicante. Prosecution of the person suspected of being involved in the importation of these insects is in the hands of the Spanish authorities.

CITES Management Authority, Spain

UK: On 11 March 1998, at King's Lynn Crown Court, Norfolk, Wilfred Bull, serving a life sentence for murdering his wife, was found guilty of masterminding a conspiracy to sell 127 rhino horns. Bull, an antiques dealer, acquired the horns legally prior to his murder conviction in 1985 and before their sale had become illegal in the UK, which happened later that year. Believing that he was close to release from gaol, Bull contacted girlfriend Carol Scotchford-Hughes to sell the horns and launder the money through a firm of solicitors. She enlisted the assistance of friends David Eley and Elaine Arscott. The latter, using a false name, contacted the London Stock Exchange to enquire about selling rhino horn. The man she spoke to tipped-off the RSPCA and an undercover operation was launched. Posing as buyers, police officers, assisted by RSPCA personnel, subsequently arrested the couple and seized the horns from storage in London.

Bull, formerly of Coggeshall, Essex, was sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment to run concurrent with his life term. Scotchford-Hughes, of Willingham, Cambridgeshire, received a 120-hour community service order. Eley, of Great Shelford, Cambridgeshire, was gaoled for nine months and Arscott, also of Great Shelford, ordered to serve a community service order. The rhino horns have been confiscated.

TRAFFIC International

On 2 April 1998, following a lengthy investigation, Customs officers seized three specimens of one of the world's rarest birds from three houses in Yorkshire. The Lear's Macaws *Anodorhynchus leari* (App. I) were among a large haul of birds and eggs thought to have been smuggled into Britain from South America, Australia and Malaysia. The species was believed to be extinct in the wild until 1978 when fewer than 100 breeding pairs were found in north-eastern Brazil. Also seized were Palm Cockatoos *Probosciger aterrimus* (App. I) and several Yellow-tailed and Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos *Calyptorhynchus funereus* and *C. banksii* (both App. II). Three men were arrested and the case is under investigation.

Daily Mail (UK), 3 April 1998

ASIA

EAST ASIA

HONG KONG SAR: On 3 September 1997, at South Kowloon Magistracy, a restaurant in Tsim Sha Tsui was fined HKD15 000 (USD1936) for possession of 344 g of whale meat without a licence. The finding, made by Agriculture and Fisheries Department (AFD) officers in February, prompted the AFD to issue a press release reminding restaurants that possession or sale of endangered species without a licence is an offence under the *Animals and Plants (Protection of Endangered Species) Ordinance* and offenders liable to a maximum penalty of HKD5 million and two years' imprisonment. On 22 September 1997, the AFD seized 30 Common Iguanas *Iguana iguana* and a Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo* from a reptile shop in Causeway Bay. Both species are listed in CITES App. II and protected under the *Animals and Plants (Protection of Endangered Species) Ordinance*. A trial is pending.

On 17/18 December 1997, the AFD seized a total of 186 shahtoosh shawls during raids on a number of premises: some 130 were seized from a private exhibition at the Furama Hotel and a further 10 from the exhibitor's shop; the following day 46 specimens were seized from another three shops. Shahtoosh shawls are made from the wool of the Tibetan Antelope *Pantholops hodgsonii* (App. I) and consumers in Hong Kong will pay between HKD8000 (USD1000) and HKD40 000 for one specimen, depending on colour, embroidery and softness; however, illegal possession in the region contravenes section 6(3) of the *Animals and Plants (Protection of Endangered Species) Ordinance*.

Agriculture and Fisheries Department Press Releases, 18/23 September 1997; WWF-Hong Press Release, 19 December 1997; TRAFFIC East-Asia

TAIWAN: On 11 November 1997, Kaohsiung Customs officers discovered over 2000 kg of medicinal materials in a container of TCM ingredients that had been imported from Hong Kong by a local trading company. These included over 1200 kg pangolin *Manis* (App. II) scales, importation of which is in violation of the *Wildlife Conservation Law*.

On 25 December 1997, Hsinchu city police arrested three individuals for their alleged involvement in smuggling 212 parrots (including 209 lovebirds *Agapornis* spp. (App. II), 12 of which were Black-masked Lovebirds *A. personatus*), as well as non-wildlife items, on a local fishing craft. The captain of the vessel claims to have purchased the birds at Hsinchu flower market, for release offshore as "fang sheng", a Buddhist practice of releasing captive wild animals to gain merit. Several of the parrots were of species protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Law*. The case is being investigated.

On 12 March 1998, police in Tainan city searched the homes of three people suspected of involvement in ivory smuggling and uncovered a number of ivory items, including name seals, pipes, mahjong tiles, and Buddhist figures. The three have been turned over to the Tainan District Court on charges of violating the *Wildlife Conservation Law*. Police are continuing to search for other ivory products.

On 14 January 1998, two people (a Taiwan national and a Canadian national) were arrested at Chiang Kai-Shek International Airport for allegedly smuggling a large number of endangered species,

including over 200 lizards, pythons and frogs, several of which are thought to have originated in Madagascar. Included in the pair's luggage were Veiled Chameleon *Chamaeleo calyptratus* (App. II), Carpet Chameleon *C. lateralis*, Panther Chameleon *C. pardalis* and *Brookesia perarmata*; frogs, including *Mantella madagascariensis* and *Mantella aurantiaca*, and snakes, including Boa Constrictor *Boa constrictor* and *Tropidurus melanoleucus*; many specimens had perished on their journey from Prague, via Paris and Kuala Lumpur. The couple were referred to the Taoyuan District Prosecutor's office on charges of violating the *Wildlife Conservation Law*.

On 2 April 1998, police in Keelung seized 190 tusks and 383 ivory pieces weighing a total of 1454 kg. Police and Customs officials, acting on a tip-off, raided the China Freight Station in the northeastern port city of Keelung and found the smuggled items in two boxes hidden behind loads of heavy timber. The tusks had been imported from Nigeria and registered to a local trading firm.

China News (Taiwan), 14 March 1998; Kaohsiung Customs Office Press Release (Chinese), 11 November 1997; United Daily News (Taiwan), 26 December 1997; China Post (Taiwan), 15 January/3 April 1998; summaries and English translations by TRAFFIC East Asia-Taipei

SOUTH ASIA

INDIA: On 7 October 1997, authorities arrested two traders and seized one Tiger *Panthera tigris* (App. I) skin, after staff of the Wildlife Protection Society of India, working undercover, were shown the skin as an example of further such items (and Tiger bones) that the traders claimed they could procure. A second Tiger skin was seized the same day and investigations are underway. Both skins had come from animals poached in the Sunderbans Tiger Reserve, an area considered to contain the largest single population of Tigers in the world: the last official census which took place in 1993 placed the number there at 251.

On 6 November 1997, in Meghalaya, Assam, the following materials being transported from Jowai to Champai in the Garo Hills were seized: 113 kg of ivory; a 9 ft piece of Tiger *Panthera tigris* (App. I) skin and 13.5 kg of Tiger bones; 4 pieces of Leopard *P. pardus* (App. I) skins, 13 pieces of river otter skins; and 20 kg of Pangolin *Manis* (App. II) scales. The items were to be sent to Myanmar and onto China.

Three persons who were arrested in connection with the incident were released on bail but a notice was issued for their re-arrest.

In early November 1997, two rhino horns were recovered from smugglers near Kaziranga National Park.

Wildlife Protection Society of India; Aaranyak Nature Club, Guwahati, India

PAKISTAN: On 3 November 1997, at Quaid-i-Azam International Airport, Karachi, a consignment of 18 Houbara Bustards *Chlamydotis undulata* (App. I) bound for Muscat, Oman, was seized during a random inspection. These migratory birds were contained in cages, together with waterfowl specimens, and were to be exported as local pet birds. One bustard was dead and remaining specimens were released in Khirthar National Park.

A few weeks earlier, on 30 September, 10 Houbara Bustards were seized by the Sindh Wildlife Department from a man travelling by bus to Karachi. The birds were in a carton and one specimen was dead. The suspect was fined Rs7000 (USD160) and the birds released in Khirthar National Park.

TRAFFIC International; Dawn (Pakistan), 6 November 1998

SOUTHEAST ASIA

MALAYSIA: On 18 December 1997, a restaurateur from Taman Datuk, Kandan Baru, Puchong, pleaded guilty to three charges of keeping parts of protected animals, allegedly for medicinal purposes. Officials of DWNP had discovered a variety of animal parts in the defendant's fridge, including 1 kg of Leopard *Panthera pardus* meat, the leg of a Malayan Sun Bear *Helarctos malayanus*, 8

Marbled Cats *Pardofelis marmorata* (all App. I), 9 Leopard Cats *Prionailurus bengalensis* (App. I/II), 111 Large Flying Foxes *Pteropus vampyrus* (App. II), 1 Indian Muntjac *Muntiacus muntjak* trophy, 1 Lesser Mouse Deer *Tragulus javanicus*, 1 Malay Civet *Viverra zibetha*, parts of a Pig-tailed Macaque *Macaca nemestrina* and Common Water Monitor *Varanus salvator* (both App. II). The defendant was fined RM9000 (USD2250).

On 7 January 1998, a raid on a house at Taman Muda, Ampang, by the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP), yielded 18 Large Flying Foxes *Pteropus vampyrus*, 13 kg of Common Water Monitor *Varanus salvator* meat (both App. II), and 9 Common Palm Civets *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus* (App. III). A restaurant worker was subsequently charged under the *Wildlife Protection Act* for keeping and trading in endangered species. He was fined RM7500 (USD1800) and gaoled for one day. The defendant had previously been directed to obtain a licence but had failed to do so.

Department of Wildlife and National Parks of Peninsular Malaysia

OCEANIA

NEW ZEALAND

On 29 June 1997, at Otahuhu District Court, Loraine Dale Tait of Havelock North, was charged with importing elephant hide products (a rifle scabbard, wallet and belt) and ivory jewellery upon her return from safari in Zimbabwe in October 1996. She is reported to have placed stickers stamped with the words "genuine buffalo" on the rifle case and belt, and had obtained a false purchase invoice which was presented to Customs on arrival. She claimed that the jewellery was made of bone.

Tait pleaded guilty to two charges (trading in endangered species and producing a false invoice) and was fined a total of NZD250 (USD142); this was raised to NZD1000 following an appeal by the Wildlife Enforcement Group, on behalf of the Department of Conservation and Customs.

TRAFFIC Oceania; CITES Task Force, New Zealand

AMERICAS

PERU: On 23 August 1997, Customs officers at Jorge Chávez International Airport, Lima, seized some 1000 animals concealed in a shipment of ornamental fish. The consignment, which was found in an airport shop, included 3 Common Iguanas *Iguana iguana*, 30 Yellow-footed Tortoises *Geochelone denticulata*, 24 Matamata Turtles *Chelus fimbriatus*, 13 Giant South American Turtles *Podocnemis expansa*, 8 Guyana Caiman Lizards *Dracaena guianensis*, 6 Anacondas *Eunectes murinus*, 6 Rainbow Boas *Epicrates cenchria*, 6 Boa Constrictors *Boa constrictor* (all App. II), 18 dwarf caimans *Paleosuchus* sp., 310 Jungle runners [skinks] *Ameiva* sp., 117 seasnakes, 242 tree frogs including 150 Hylidae spp. Some 200 of the skinks had perished.

The specimens were being shipped without the necessary permits by an aquarium firm and were bound for the USA. They are now being cared for by Las Leyendas Park, the State zoo. The CITES Management Authority—the National Institute of Natural Resources (INRENA)—fined the company the equivalent of USD5400.

CITES Management Authority, Peru

USA: On 14 August 1997, in the Southern District of Florida, three local men were charged with conspiracy and with illegally taking and poaching 610 Loggerhead Turtles *Caretta caretta* (App. I) in violation of the *Endangered Species Act* and the *Lacey Act*. The charges arise following an incident on the night of 19 June, when defendants Barry A. Hayes and Bruce Bivens were approached by Florida Marine Patrol officers as they collected the eggs on Singer Island Beach (a third man, Leonard Bertoloti was waiting in a vehicle). In trying to rid themselves of the evidence, the two flung a sack containing the eggs into the air, scattering and breaking many of them. The eggs are reported to be used as barter for crack cocaine, or sold locally as aphrodisiacs.

The trial is pending.

On 28 August 1997, in the Southern District of Florida, Juan Morales, of Miami, pleaded guilty to charges of illegal commercial sponge collecting and lobster harvesting. Morales was observed on two occasions as he fished in the lobster sanctuary in Biscayne National Park and prised sponges from the sea bed in the Everglades National Park—in November 1996 and July 1997, respectively. In both instances he had docked his ship outside park boundaries and used small skiffs to enter the protected areas. The trial is pending.

On 2 September 1997, in the Southern District of Florida, five individuals were charged with killing a Loggerhead Turtle *Caretta caretta* (App. I) and taking 458 Queen Conches *Strombus gigas* (App. II) from the waters of Biscayne National Park. Sentenced to three years' probation, a three-year ban from all national parks in the State of Florida, and 100 hours of community service devoted to environmental clean-up were: Omar Marine, Angel Marine, Mariano Acosta Sr., Mariano Acosta Jr., and Miguel Bonachea, all of Hialeah, Florida.

The five had been fishing near Bache Shoal when a park ranger boarded their vessel and discovered the specimens. The taking of Queen Conch is strictly prohibited by both State and federal law. There are estimated to be only three breeding aggregations of Queen Conch in the park and the poachings were considered by the court to have a very serious effect on the recovery of conch populations in that area. The defendants were also in possession of 37 protected fish.

On 3 November 1997, Theodora Swanson, of Memphis, Tennessee, sentenced in April 1996 to 37 months' imprisonment for her role in smuggling over 400 cockatoo eggs from Australia to the USA, had her sentence reduced to 30 months. Swanson had remained free pending an appeal hearing. The sentence was to take effect on 5 January 1998 (*TRAFFIC Bulletin* 15(3):119; 16(2):76).

On 2 February 1998, Michael J. Van Nostrand, owner and president of Strictly Reptiles, Hollywood, Florida, was convicted of smuggling more than 1500 rare reptiles into the USA. He was sentenced to eight months' imprisonment and a further eight months' home confinement as part of a plea agreement. He was also ordered to pay nearly USD250 000 to the WWF Indonesia Programme to implement a government-supervised programme which will focus on initiating, expanding, improving and maintaining wildlife projects in Irian Jaya, from where many of the smuggled animals had been trapped. Additionally, the agreement bars the company and its owner from trading, selling or handling any endangered or threatened wildlife, as well as certain species specifically identified in the agreement, for five years.

The sentencing follows charges, in July 1997, that Van Nostrand conspired to purchase Frilled Dragon Lizards *Chlamydosaurus kingii* and Fly River Turtles *Carettochelys insculpta* exported from Indonesia, via the Netherlands, in violation of Indonesian law. Further charges included the purchasing and illegal importation to the USA of Argentinean reptiles including Argentine Boa Constrictors *Boa constrictor occidentalis* (App. I), Red-footed Tortoises *Geochelone carbonaria*, Chaco Tortoises *G. chilensis*, Rainbow Boas *Epicrates cenchria*, tegu lizards *Tupinambis* ssp. and Yellow-spotted Amazon Turtles *Podocnemis unifilis* (all App. II).

The investigation was conducted with the co-operation of authorities in the Netherlands, including the Netherlands National Police and the District Office of the Public Prosecutor at Breda. The Netherlands National Police provided the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) with audiotapes from electronic surveillance of Dutch reptiles dealers revealing that protected Indonesian reptiles were being laundered through the Netherlands and shipped to Strictly Reptiles Inc., falsely labelled as captive bred.

On 11 March 1998, at Orlando federal court, Florida, Friedrich Karl Postma of the Netherlands was found guilty of illegally importing reptiles. He had been arrested on 28 August 1997 at Orlando International Airport, after US Customs Service Agents, working in conjunction with the USFWS, found 13 Radiated Tortoises *Geochelone radiata* (App. I and listed in the *US Endangered Species Act*) concealed in five socks in Postma's luggage. The animals are indigenous to Madagascar.

Postma, who runs a reptile business in the Netherlands, had been under observation by the authorities in both countries. He was sentenced to time already served plus six months in a community detention centre and a USD3000 fine. The USFWS and Department of Justice have requested an appeal because the sentence was less than had been agreed upon during a plea agreement reached between the Department of Justice and Postma.

*US Department of Justice News Releases, 14/28 August/4 September 1997/February 3 1998;
US Fish and Wildlife Service*

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E U R O P E

BELGIUM: From 1 January to 16 November 1998, police officers seized a number of live animals listed below; most countries of origin and source were unknown, except where stated; all were of Appendix II-listed species except where stated: 2 Tigers *Panthera tigris* (App. I) (bred in captivity in Belgium); 5 Spider Tortoises *Pyxis arachnoides* (probably from Madagascar); 1 Radiated Tortoise *Geochelone radiata* (App. I); 3 Madagascar Tortoises *G. yniphora* (App. I) (rached specimens from Madagascar); 2 Spur-thighed Tortoises *Testudo graeca* (and 2 *T. graeca graeca* from Tunisia); 7 Hermann's Tortoises *T. hermanni*; 8 Horsfield's Tortoises *T. horsfieldii*; 21 Egyptian Tortoises *T. kleinmanni* (App. I) (probably from Egypt or Libya); 22 Marginated Tortoises *T. marginata* (probably from Greece); 3 Pancake Tortoises *Malacochersus tornieri* (rached specimens from Zambia); 26 Madagascar Tree Boas *Sanzinia madagascariensis* (App. I); 3 Eurasian Eagle-Owls *Bubo bubo*, 1 Black Kite *Milvus migrans*, 1 Laggar Falcon *Falco jugger* (App. I); 43 Uzungwe Three-horned Chameleons *Chamaeleo werneri* (Tanzania). Also seized were the skulls of 1 Black Crowned Crane *Balearica pavonina*, 1 Caribbean Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber* and 1 Writhed Hornbill *Aceros leucocephalus*; shell of 1 Green Turtle *Chelonia mydas* (App. I); and 1 Lion *Panthera leo* skull (App. I/II).

From 1 January to 1 July 1998, the following items, many in transit, were seized at Zaventem Airport: 50 Mantella *Mantella* frogs (App. II) from Madagascar; 22 kg of ivory from the Democratic Republic of the Congo; 1 Leopard *Panthera pardus* skin from Lagos, Nigeria, to France; 2 kg ivory figurines from Congo to Italy; 4 cacti *Fouquieria* (EU Annex I) and *Urpusii* (Annex I); and 2 aloe specimens from California, USA, to Belgium; 8 dozen boxes of traditional Chinese medicines (TCM) containing musk *Moschus*, from China to Belgium; 83 tubes of TCM containing musk, from China to Mali; 2 stuffed Slender-tailed Meerkats *Suricata suricatta*, 1 *Cercopithecus* sp., and 1 Duiker *Cephalophus* sp. (App. I/II) from Mali.

Anti-Drug Group (GAD) Inspection Service, Zaventem Airport; TRAFFIC Europe

FRANCE: On 21 October 1998, Customs officers at Charles de Gaulle Airport discovered 576 kg of ivory tusks contained in the luggage of a North Korean diplomat. Their suspicions were aroused because the passenger was travelling with 20 suitcases; on inspection, all were found to contain the ivory, which consisted of whole tusks and 92 large pieces. The diplomat, arriving from Douala, Cameroon, in transit to Beijing, China, was not travelling under his diplomatic status. Nevertheless, the Public Prosecutor decided not to make an arrest and the man was released.

WWF and French Customs Press Release, 28 October 1998; TRAFFIC Europe

GERMANY: On 29 September 1998, Customs officers at Frankfurt/Main Airport confiscated 4 juvenile Palm Cockatoos *Probosciger aterrimus* (App. I) from a French citizen arriving from Thailand. The birds had been packed in tubes and concealed in hand luggage. The suspect, who was arrested, claimed to have bought the cockatoos from a market in Bangkok (though the species are native to

Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Australia, only). The birds were in good health and have been placed at a quarantine station. The case is under investigation.

CITES Management Authority, Germany; Customs Agency of Frankfurt/Main; TRAFFIC Europe

UK: On 9 May 1998, 489 preserved specimens of Rajah Brooke's Birdwing butterflies *Trogonoptera brookiana* (App. II) were seized by Customs officers at Heathrow Airport. The specimens were found in a parcel posted from Malaysia, en route to Russia. Information relating to the case has been passed to the Russian authorities.

On 9 May 1998, a parcel arriving from Hong Kong and declared as Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius* (App. II) teeth was detained after it was found to contain 87 carved elephant ivory items and a few pieces of mammoth ivory. No permits were presented with the shipment and it was confiscated.

On 22 June 1998, Wilfred Bull, sentenced in March after pleading guilty to his part in the conspiracy to sell 128 rhino horns illegally (*TRAFFIC Bulletin* 17(2):87), appealed against the forfeiture of the horns. The Court of Appeal ruled that as there was no proof that the horns had not been legally acquired, the penalty of forfeiture had been inappropriate and the horns were returned to Bull; his conviction and gaol sentence still stand. The decision to return the horns was based on the fact that the Crown, at the original trial, had not challenged a claim by Bull that he had acquired the horns legitimately prior to 1985 when the laws regulating the sale of CITES specimens came into force. This was an oversight on the part of the Crown, which should have pressed for Bull to prove that the horns had been acquired legally. As this did not happen, the Court of Appeal assumed that the Crown must have accepted this claim.

On 31 July, the Crown returned to the Court of Appeal to see whether the decision to return the rhino horns to Bull could be overturned or, failing that, taken to the House of Lords for further debate. However, the Crown was refused leave to appeal to the House of Lords, and the original decision of the Court of Appeal stands.

The UK CITES Management Authority have written to Bull's solicitors to ensure that he is aware that it is an offence to sell, attempt to sell, or to buy rhino horn, no matter how old or from whatever source, without specific approval from the CITES Management Authority, and that such approval would not be forthcoming for commercial transactions in raw, unworked rhino horn. Under legislation introduced on 1 June 1997, forfeiture is now mandatory for similar offences committed after this date.

On 26 June 1998, Customs officers at Heathrow Airport detained 63 White Cockatoos *Cacatua alba*, 3 Citron-crested Cockatoos *C. sulphurea citrinocristata* and 10 Yellow-crested Cockatoos *C. sulphurea* (all App. II) contained in a shipment of birds arriving from Singapore, bound for Mexico. The accompanying CITES re-export certificates for the cockatoos, which showed Indonesia as country of origin, ranged in date from 1985 to 1993 and were suspected as being unlikely to apply to the specimens in the shipment. A veterinary examination made it possible to age the birds, which were found to be much younger than specified on the certificates. Customs officers were therefore able to declare the documents as being invalid and the shipment was seized on 9 September. All birds had psittacosis when they arrived and were treated for the disease while in the care of Customs. The cockatoos are being found homes in breeding programmes. Owing to restricted housing facilities, the other birds in the shipment were allowed to continue their journey after the Mexican authorities were informed by the CITES Secretariat of their impending arrival.

Between 21 May 1998 and 15 October 1998, a large number of medicinal products were seized by Felixstowe Customs officers at UK ports of entry. The products claimed to contain plant and animal derivatives which are listed in CITES and were without the requisite documentation. Three companies were fined and action in the remaining cases was limited to seizures. Some of these products and their ingredients are itemized below:

75 000 pills/9600 capsules/25 kg/790 ampoules (all containing orchids *Gastrodia elata*, App. II); 400 000 pills (*Costus Root Saussurea costus*, App. I, and *Gastrodia elata*); 360 tea pills (*Gastrodia elata* and musk deer *Moschus*, App. I); 7176 sachets/136 000 pills/35 kg/400 000 pills (all containing *Costus Root*); 200 000 pills (*Costus Root* and tree fern *Cibotium barometz*, Ann. B); 4000 plasters (musk deer); 390 tea pills (musk deer and Saiga Antelope *Saiga tatarica*, App. II); 2360 tea pills (*Saiga Antelope*) and 20 kg (tortoiseshell).

TRAFFIC International; The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions Press Release, 31 July 1998; CITES Enforcement Team, Heathrow Airport; H.M. Customs and Excise, Felixstowe

AFRICA

SOMALIA: On 16 January 1998, the captain and crew of a Taiwanese ship were ordered to pay approximately USD1 million for fishing illegally in Somali waters. The court at Jarriban, some 700 km north of Mogadishu, said that if the fine was not paid within 15 days, the ship's cargo of 50 t of shark fins would be sold and the vessel auctioned. The captain was ordered to pay a fine of USD800 000 for the ship and USD40 000 as a personal penalty. Each of the 16 crew members were ordered to pay USD10 000.

Reuters, 20 February 1998, cited in Horn of Africa Bulletin 10(1), January-February 1998

SOUTH AFRICA: Between 27 August and 14 October 1998, the Endangered Species Protection Unit arrested some 30 people, including an attorney and a former policeman, and confiscated elephant tusks, rhino horns, and a variety of live reptile species, some of which had been imported. Specimens included Rock Pythons *Python sebae*, cobras, mambas *Dendroaspis*, house snakes, Gabon Vipers *Bitis gabonica*, Horned adders *Bitis*, and girdled lizards *Cordylus*. It is thought that most of the snakes were bound for the USA and 160 Leopard Tortoises *Geochelone pardalis* (App. II) were on their way via Mozambique to Europe.

The attorney and one other person were arrested in the Northern Cape in early August on charges of hunting without permits. They appeared in court and were released on their own recognizances. A former policeman was one of four men arrested in Gauteng and North West Province for illegal trading in rhino horn. All are in custody and 7 rhino horns, weighing a total of 25 kg, were confiscated. Arrests were made in connection with the illegal possession, trading in and/or the export of reptiles and eight people were arrested for illegal ivory trading. Seven elephant tusks, weighing a total of 78 kg were confiscated; the source of the rhino horns has not been confirmed but three are thought to have been from rhinos in Pilanesberg Reserve, an undisclosed number from Hluhluwe Reserve, and two from the suburb of Benoni, Johannesburg.

Business Day (South Africa), 18 October 1998; TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa

ASIA

EAST ASIA

JAPAN: On 9 September 1998, police officers from Aichi Prefecture and Customs officers from Nagoya arrested five people in connection with a failed attempt to smuggle 66 kg of Hawksbill Turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata* (App. I) shell into Japan from Singapore. It is alleged that three of the suspects obtained the shell in Singapore in order to sell it to one of those arrested. The shell is believed to have been imported for ornamental purposes, the plates of the Hawksbill Turtle shell (known in Japan as 'bekko') being highly prized for use in traditional tortoiseshell products. Japan dropped its reservation on the Appendix I-listing of the Hawksbill Turtle in 1994, since when importation of specimens/derivatives of the species has been illegal.

Japan Bekko Association Press Release 2 October 1998; Japan Bekko Association, in litt., 30 November 1998; TRAFFIC International

TAIWAN: On 27 June 1998, officials at Taiwan's Chiang Kai-shek International Airport seized 89 live reptiles from a Taiwan national. These included 2 Ball Pythons *Python regius*, 15 Horsfield's Tortoises *Testudo horsfieldii*, 20 Red-footed Tortoises *Geochelone carbonaria*, 31 African Spurred Tortoises *Geochelone sulcata*, 20 Common Iguanas *Iguana iguana* (all App. II), and 1 unidentified lizard. Allegedly all specimens had been imported legally into Japan and then re-exported to Taiwan.

Under the terms of Taiwan's *Wildlife Conservation Law*, four of the six species seized are protected and commercial trade is prohibited. Also, under the terms of the WCL, a permit must be obtained for the importation of all live wildlife. Because such a permit had not been obtained, specimens of the two non-protected species (Ball Python and the lizard) were also seized. The case has been referred to the Taoyuan District Prosecutor's office.

On 14 October 1998, a Canadian and a Dutch national were arrested at Chiang Kai-shek International Airport after attempting to smuggle 303 reptiles and amphibians into Taiwan in their luggage. One of the suspects had been arrested in January for a similar offence involving over 200 animals.

In the most recent incident, officials seized Flat-tailed Day Geckos *Phelsuma laticauda*, Fan-tailed Day Geckos *P. serratacauda*, Banded Day Geckos *P. standingi*, Carpet Chameleons *Chamaeleo lateralis*, South-central Chameleons *C. minor*, Panther Chameleons *C. pardalis*, frogs *Mantella* spp. (all App. II), and salamanders *Salamandra* spp. As no import permits accompanied the shipment, all specimens were seized.

The Canadian, François Le Berre, had been fined NTD50 000 (USD1450) for the first offence; in the latest case the government has initiated procedures to bar Mr Le Berre from future entry to Taiwan. The case against the Dutch national is pending.

Wildlife Protection Unit (Taiwan); TRAFFIC East Asia

SOUTH ASIA

INDIA: The following were among specimens seized by authorities in India from January to August 1998:

5 Tiger *Panthera tigris* skins; 10 Tigers (whole or parts); 42 Leopard *Panthera pardus* skins; 7 Leopards (whole animals), assorted bones and teeth; 57 shahtoosh shawls, made from wool of the Tibetan Antelope *Pantholops hodgsonii* (App. I) (with some items a mix of wool of domesticated goats (known as pashmina) and shahtoosh); 1784 freshwater turtles (Testudinata); 3 Himalayan Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus* (App. I) gall bladders and 3 bear skins, 1 elephant (App. I), 2 tusks, 67 pieces and 246 kg elephant ivory; 7 civet skins; 1 Goral *Naemorhedus goral* (App. I). Sixty-eight people were arrested.

On 14 April 1998, two consignments of Ayurvedic tablets containing Indian Barberry *Berberis aristata* (128 tablets) (see box), and *Commiphora wightii* (50 tablets), a tree known as Guggal, the resin of which is used to treat various ailments and as an ingredient in incense, were seized by Wildlife Preservation officials of Western Region, at the Air Cargo Complex, Sahar, Mumbai (Maharashtra).

On 5 June, 1200 bottles of Ayurvedic medicines containing Aconite *Aconitum* spp. were seized by Wildlife Preservation officials of Western Region from the seaport in Mumbai (Maharashtra). Export of these ingredients is prohibited; the ban on *Commiphora wightii* was lifted on 14 April.

TRAFFIC India; Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI); Aaranyak Nature Club

SOUTHEAST ASIA

INDONESIA: In July 1998, Customs officers at Soekarno-Hatta International Airport, Jakarta, seized 1020 live Indian Spectacled Cobras *Naja naja* (App. II) from 54 boxes labelled as containing live eels, bound for China. The snakes are in the temporary care of Ragunan Zoo, south Jakarta, until a more suitable environment is found for them. One man is helping the police with their enquiries.

The Jakarta Post (Indonesia), 30 July 1998

MALAYSIA: On 28 July 1998, Customs officers at the Causeway (the border crossing to Singapore) seized 772 birds from a car in which two individuals were travelling to Singapore. The birds were concealed in the boot of the vehicle and included 615 Oriental White-eyes *Zosterops palpebrosus*, 77 White-rumped Shamas *Copsychus malabaricus*, and 80 Thick-billed Green-Pigeons *Treron curvirostra*. The first two species may be kept as pets in Malaysia if a permit for such a purpose has been issued by the authorities. Both suspects were charged under the *Wildlife Protection Act 1972* and sentenced to a fine of RM1500 (USD400) each or three months' gaol. The birds were to be released in the wild.

New Straits Times (Malaysia), 28 July 1998; TRAFFIC Southeast Asia

VIET NAM: On 25 August 1998, Forest Protection authorities, acting on a tip-off, stopped a public bus as it reached the city of Ninh Binh, 100 km south of Hanoi. Contained in 17 bags and crates inside the vehicle they found an estimated 700 (800 kg) turtles and tortoises of 13 species, representing perhaps the most diverse number of turtle species ever contained in one seizure in Viet Nam. Most of the bags held Elongated Tortoises *Indotestudo elongata* (App. II) (weighing a total of 470 kg), with Giant Asian Pond Turtles *Heosemys grandis* representing the second-most numerous species, Keeled Box Turtles *Pyxidea mouhoti*, and smaller quantities of Malayan Box Turtles *Cuora ambionensis*, Indochinese Box Turtles *Cuora (=Cistoclemmys) galbinifrons*, Impressed Tortoises *Manouria impressa* (App. II), Malayan Snail-eating Turtles *Malayemys subtrijuga*, Stripe-necked Leaf Turtles *Cyclemys tchepouensis*, Annam Leaf Turtles *Annamemys annamensis*, Asiatic Softshell Turtles *Amyda cartilaginea*, Chinese Softshell Turtles *Pelodiscus sinensis*, Black Marsh Turtles *Siebenrockiella crassicollis* and Big-headed Turtles *Platysternon megacephalum*. Additionally, there were some 15 Common Water Monitors *Varanus salvator* (App. II), 6 pangolins *Manis*, gekkos, and 34 Common Palm Civets *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus* (App. III). Apart from one dead specimen, all the animals were in good condition. The trader claimed that the turtles and tortoises in the shipment were raised on farms in south Viet Nam but authorities were provided with information that suggests that they were collected from the wild throughout the southern and central regions of Viet Nam, as well as in neighbouring Laos and possibly Cambodia. The cargo had been bound for Hanoi and for possible onward shipment to the Chinese market.

A large number of the turtles were placed with the Cuc Phuong Conservation Project in support of a pilot study being carried out at Cuc Phuong National Park. In co-operation with authorities from the National Park, and provincial and national Forest Protection Department officials, the aim of the project is to establish practical solutions for dealing with the vast numbers of illegally traded turtles that are seized in Viet Nam. The programme has received several turtles from previous confiscations, and intends to develop guidelines for effective quarantine, habitat assessment, release and monitoring of specimens for the purposes of reintroduction, as well as focus on raising the level of awareness and education in local communities about the need to conserve and protect Viet Nam's tortoise and freshwater turtle species. National level improvements in wildlife trade regulation are currently the focus of a broader project proposal being co-ordinated by TRAFFIC Southeast Asia.

Cuc Phuong Conservation Project, Ninh Binh Province, Viet Nam, 6 September 1998

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA: On 25 May 1998, at Cairns Airport, 10 live, juvenile Green Tree Pythons *Morelia viridis* (App. II) were found concealed under the clothing of a passenger on a Qantas flight from Singapore. At Cairns Magistrates' Court the following day, two male Singapore nationals were charged with importation without a permit or authority in contravention of the *Wildlife Protection (Regulation of Exports and Imports) Act* and one was charged with animal cruelty. Mr Chee Meng Chong and Mr Sheu Yang Yap were sentenced to three months' imprisonment. Customs officers

were assisted in this case by the Queensland Police Fauna Squad and the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage. All pythons were infected with a virus which had not previously been seen in Australia and those snakes that had not already perished, were put down.

A short time later, Customs officers at Sydney Airport seized a further 3 Green Tree Pythons from two packages that had been sent air freight from the USA, bound for a residential address in Sydney. The snakes were each in cloth bags that contained damp cloths to keep the animals moist and alive; these had been placed in plastic containers inside cardboard packages. The reptiles are being held in quarantine at Taronga Zoo and the case is under investigation.

Green Tree Pythons, which are non-venomous, are indigenous to Papua New Guinea and Northeastern Australia.

On 14 October 1998, Spanish national Juan Antonio Argibay-Perez, was fined AUD100 000 (USD61 600) for illegally fishing Patagonian Toothfish *Dissostichus eleginoides*. The captain of the Seychelles-registered fishing boat pleaded guilty to taking the fish from Australia's fishing zone.

On 23 August 1998, at Benalla Magistrate's Court, Victoria, Tod Osborne was charged with deliberately keeping incorrect records of Hyacinth Macaws *Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus* (App. I) that he was allowed to keep under the National Exotic Bird Registration Scheme (NEBRS). The court did not accept Osborne's claim that he had bred a pair of Hyacinth Macaws from a female that had since died. Osborne's evidence involved claiming that he had failed to record the death of the female macaw, or the fact that it had bred, and admitting that he had failed to seek veterinary assistance when the bird allegedly became ill. However, the court accepted expert evidence from a molecular biologist, based on DNA fingerprinting, that the young birds were not siblings and could not have had the same mother. Mr Osborne was also charged with incorrectly recording the number of Eclectus Parrots *Eclectus roratus* (App. II) that were in his care.

Osborne was ordered to pay a fine and costs totalling almost AUD7000 (USD4300). The court did not order him to forfeit the macaws, which had been seized in August 1997 and are being cared for at Adelaide Zoo, and he has applied to have them returned to him.

This is the first prosecution under the NEBRS, which was set up to provide a national approach for those registered as being in possession of exotic birds in Australia. The scheme aims to help discourage illegal trade in endangered species and prevent the introduction of exotic species that may become pests or introduce disease. Under the terms of the scheme, owners of all CITES Appendix I and certain Appendix II-listed bird species have to be registered with the Government. Failure to keep proper records will result in prosecution.

Australian Customs Service News Releases, 26 May/9 July 1998; Sydney Morning Herald (Australia), 28 August 1998; Hong Kong Standard (Hong Kong), 15 October 1998; TRAFFIC Oceania; Joint Media Statement of Environment Australia and Victorian Department of Natural Resources and Environment

AMERICAS

MEXICO: On 14 September 1998, an animal trader from Malaysia was arrested at Mexico City for smuggling more than 300 animals into the country from Asia over a period of several years. Anson Wong, a licensed trader based in Penang, had been under investigation by the US Fish & Wildlife Service since 1992 and was apprehended as he tried to complete a deal with undercover federal agents in the guise of reptile dealers. He is being held by Mexican police pending his extradition to San Francisco where he faces a 51-count federal indictment alleging conspiracy, smuggling, money laundering, lying to the Government and violating wildlife laws. Among the animals he was involved in smuggling to the USA were Ploughshare Tortoises *Geochelone yniphora*, one of the rarest of all tortoise species, which occurs at only a few sites in Madagascar, the Komodo Dragon *Varanus komodoensis*, native to a relatively small area of Indonesia, and Tuataras *Sphenodon punctatus* (all three species are in App. I). Two alleged accomplices of the suspect were arrested separately in the USA on the same day, charged with conspiracy, smuggling and other crimes. All specimens are being kept by various zoos, federal employees and private collectors as evidence for the case.

Operation Chameleon, as the investigation is named, has already been responsible for the arrest of 18 others that were involved in the scheme to export species from Madagascar and other countries to Germany and then on to markets in the USA (see below) and Canada. International co-operation in the case included assistance from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Mexican Government and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

US Fish and Wildlife Service News Release, 15 September; New Straits Times (Malaysia), 18 September; Los Angeles Times (USA), 16 September 1998

USA: On 25 June 1998, William Stevens, of Marion, Illinois, was sentenced to 16 months' imprisonment and ordered to pay a fine of USD29 000 for offering for sale dead protected animal species, and the human skulls and bones of at least 20 Native Americans. The fine included USD9000 to cover costs of collection and repatriation of the Native American remains.

The investigation began in April 1997 after USFWS agents and US Customs inspectors at New York's John F Kennedy International (JFK) Airport discovered stuffed Indian Spectacled Cobras *Naja naja* (App. II) in a box addressed by Stevens and posted from Thailand. The package lacked the necessary permits. In July 1997, wildlife agents at JFK Airport intercepted a second package that contained skulls of protected species. Stevens had posted the box, labelled as clothing, from France to his employees. A third shipment addressed to the shop was inspected by wildlife agents at JFK Airport last September and found to contain 100 Golden Birdwing *Troides aeacus* (App. II) butterflies; again, no permit had been issued for the specimens which had been falsely labelled before being exported from Thailand. A search of Stevens' premises revealed other items including the skulls and/or parts of Bald Eagles *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, gorillas *Gorilla gorilla*, Babirusas *Babirusa babyrussa*, and Chimpanzees *Pan troglodytes* (all App. I).

The investigation was conducted by the USFWS and the New York Department of Environmental Conservation, with assistance from the US Customs Service and the National Park Service.

On 6 August 1998, at Miami International Airport, Tommy Edward Crutchfield, a major reptile dealer in the USA, was arrested following his expulsion from Belize. The arrest arises from a five-year investigation by the USFWS of an international live reptile smuggling ring that has seen the conviction of major reptile dealers around the world (see Mexico).

Crutchfield had been indicted last October, accused of smuggling rare and endangered snakes and tortoises out of Madagascar into Germany. From there, the animals were allegedly smuggled into the USA and Canada for sale to dealers and collectors. The reptiles, which were concealed in suitcases and transported aboard commercial airlines, included Madagascar Tree Boas *Sanzinia madagascariensis*, Madagascar Ground Boas *Acrantophis dumerili*, Radiated Tortoises *Geochelone radiata* (all App. I) and Spider Tortoises *Pyxis arachnoides* (App. II), all of which occur only in Madagascar. Protected reptiles from Australia, Indonesia, and various South American and Caribbean countries were also traded.

At the time of his arrest Crutchfield was on supervised release, following completion of a five-month gaol term for a 1995 conviction for smuggling iguanas *Brachylophus* from the Fiji Islands. He had fled to Belize after being notified by the US Justice Department that he was under investigation.

Others already prosecuted in the USA as part of this investigation, named Operation Chameleon, include Wolfgang Michael Kloe of Germany, fined USD10 000 and sentenced to 46 months in gaol (TRAFFIC Bulletin 16(3):83), and Friedrich Karl Postma of the Netherlands, who was sentenced to one year in gaol and fined USD3000 (TRAFFIC Bulletin 17(2):90). Three other German nationals charged in the case remain at large.

US Fish and Wildlife Service Press Releases, 26 June/7 August 1998

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EUROPE

BELGIUM: On 8 May 1999, Customs officers seized 450 live tortoises at Orly Airport, Paris, which had arrived from Madagascar. The animals had been smuggled by three Malagasy citizens living in Paris. The shipment consisted of 120 Radiated Tortoises *Geochelone radiata* (App. I) and 330 Spider Tortoises *Pyxis arachnoides* (App. II). The specimens have been transferred to a breeding centre in Corsica. The suspects were not arrested.

Among wildlife specimens seized by Customs officers at Zaventem Airport between January and April 1999 were the following: skins of 12 African Pythons *Python sebae* (EU Annex B/App. II) (see box for explanation of EU listings) in transit from Nigeria to Italy (postal package with no CITES documents); 2 pairs of shoes made from Python *Python* spp. (EU Annex B/App. II) skin, in transit from Nigeria to the Netherlands (postal package with no CITES documents); 49 geckos *Phelsuma leiogaster* (EU Annex B/App. II) from Belgium to Madagascar (air cargo with no CITES documents); 30 belts and 51 handbags of skins of crocodiles *Crocodylus* spp., monitor lizards *Varanus* spp. and pythons *Python* spp. from Senegal to Belgium (CITES documentation did not correspond to the shipment).

Info Tortues, Association Cupulatta, Vignola, Corsica; TRAFFIC Europe

GERMANY: During 1998, a total of 425 kg of caviar arriving by freight was seized in 12 separate incidents at Frankfurt/Main International Airport. The largest single consignment, from Israel, weighed 251 kg. The principal countries of origin for the remaining shipments were Russia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan. Fifty seizures of caviar, totalling 108 kg, took place in the airport's passenger section during the same period.

Frankfurt Airport Customs Authority; TRAFFIC Europe

UK: Cambridgeshire Police and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) have been involved in the first conviction for the new offence of 'purchasing an EU Annex A specimen' (under the *Control of Trade in Endangered Species (Enforcement) Regulations 1997* (COTES 1997)). The purchase was the exchange of a Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis* for a Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* (both App. II and also listed in EU Annex A which provides a higher level of protection). During a search at an address in Peterborough in July 1998, a cable-tied wild male Goshawk was seized. The keeper of the bird, Gerald Frederick Chester, was serving a five-year ban on the keeping of Schedule 4 birds following his 1997 conviction for an offence under Section 8(1) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

On 5 October 1998, at Peterborough Magistrates' Court, Chester pleaded guilty to one charge of making a false declaration to obtain a registration of a Schedule 4 bird contrary to Section 17(1) of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981*, and one charge of purchasing an Annex A bird contrary to Regulation 8(1) of COTES. Chester received a two-year conditional discharge and was ordered to pay GBP69 (USD110) costs.

Between October 1998 and June 1999, a number of seizures of caviar have occurred at Heathrow Airport, the largest being 350 kg, with the others weighing 35 kg, 35 kg, 36 kg, 2.5 kg, 40 kg and 25 kg. Passengers were travelling from Iran, Turkey and Dubai when they were stopped.

Between 19 November 1998 and 17 March 1999, Felixstowe Customs and Excise authorities seized commercial imports of traditional Chinese medicines from China, amongst which were the following ingredients:

76 080 pills (Costus Root *Saussurea costus*, App. I, and Musk Deer *Moschus* App. I/II); 492 aerosols (Musk Deer, App I/II, and seahorse, EU Annex D); 8000 pills (seahorse, EU Annex D); 131 kg/300 pills (orchid *Gastrodia elata*, App. II); 53.5 kg (*Bletilla Bletilla* orchid, App. II); 800 capsules (Cantor's Rat Snake *Zaocys dhumnades*, EU Annex D).

The cases involved three companies, one of which was fined for two separate incidents and given a warning. Action in the case of the other two companies was limited to seizure.

Between December 1998 and May 1999, Customs officers at Heathrow Airport seized the following (the country of dispatch appears in parentheses):

December 1998: 15 Horsfield's Tortoises *Testudo horsfieldii* (App. II) (Uzbekistan). The consignment exceeded the permit limit.

January 1999: 100 Tiger *Panthera tigris* (App. I) bone plasters (Hong Kong) destined for a food shop. Police and Customs investigations are under way.

February: 6 Mona Monkeys *Cercopithecus mona* and Lesser Spot-nosed Guenons *C. petaurista* (both App. II) (Ghana). Too young to travel and therefore contravened IATA regulations.

April: 168 sea turtle eggs (Brunei) failed to be collected. All sea turtles are listed in App. I and prohibited from commercial trade.

2 Black-necked Swans *Cygnus melanocorypha* (App. II) (USA) in transit to Nigeria. Without CITES permits.

May: 100 Spectacled Caimans *Caiman crocodilus* (App. I/II), and the following Appendix II-listed specimens: 15 Dwarf Caimans *Palaeosuchus palpebrosus*, 18 Red-footed Tortoises *Geochelone carbonaria*, 2 Emerald Tree Boas *Corallus caninus*, 25 Cook's Tree Boas *C.enydris*, 11 Boa Constrictors *Boa constrictor*, 3 Anacondas *Eunectes murinus*, and including 3 Matamata Turtles *Chelus fimbriatus* and 757 tarantulas (not controlled) (Guyana). Export and import permits had expired.

On 28 January 1999, at Inverness Sheriff Court, Scotland, Wilhelmus Hubertus Josephus Enzlin, from Eindhoven, Netherlands, was charged with violating the *Control of Trade in Endangered Species (Enforcement) Regulations 1997* (COTES 1997) after offering to purchase 16 Peregrine Falcons *Falco peregrinus* (App. I) chicks. The case arose after Enzlin wrote a series of letters to Peregrine breeders in the UK requesting wild Peregrine chicks. One recipient, a Scottish falconer, informed the RSPB. Taking advice from the police, a representative of the RSPB arranged to meet with Enzlin under the pretext of offering Peregrine chicks for sale. On 24 May 1998 Enzlin and two others were arrested as they met the fictional Peregrine supplier and a Special Constable in the guise of a local gamekeeper. Enzlin had GBP4000 (USD6360) in his possession, and this, along with two cars being used, were seized. He pleaded guilty and was fined GBP2000 (USD3200) and was ordered to forfeit his car and the GBP4000, despite a plea by the other two defendants that the money was theirs and should therefore not be forfeited.

This case is the first successful implementation of COTES 97 in Scotland.

In April 1999, Customs officers at Falmouth discovered a four-month-old female Green Monkey *Chlorocebus aethiops* (App. II) in a taped-up cardboard box in the ship's air conditioning system. The owner, a Portuguese national, was arrested and fined GBP500 (USD795). The primate was seized and will spend six months in quarantine before being transferred to a permanent home in a British zoo.

In May 1999, at Northallerton Magistrates' Court, Harry Sissen, of Northallerton, was charged on three counts of illegally importing three Lear's Macaws *Anodorhynchus leari* (App. I) from an unknown source contrary to the Customs and Excise Management Act (CEMA) 1979. He was further charged with illegally importing 6 Blue-headed Macaws *Ara couloni* (App. II), contrary to CEMA, and of selling a Palm Cockatoo *Probosciger aterrimus* and a Hyacinth Macaw *Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus* (both App. I) contrary to the *Control of Trade in Endangered Species (Enforcement) Regulations 1985* (COTES 1985). Sissen pleaded not guilty to all charges.

The incident came to light following a raid on an address in North Yorkshire in April 1998 (TRAFFIC Bulletin 17(2):88). The case has been adjourned until further notice.

On 18 May 1999, at Manchester Airport, the CITES enforcement team seized a shipment of 200 Horsfield's Tortoises *Testudo horsfieldii* (App. II) from a flight arriving from Frankfurt, Germany, bound for a pet wholesaler in Manchester. The trader had contravened the export licence laws. The 12-cm long specimens—of one of the smallest breeds of tortoise—had originated in the grasslands of Tadzhikistan, near the China-Afghanistan border, and had been dispatched from the Ukraine. They had been wedged into packing pallets and were dehydrated and undernourished; one specimen died. The remaining tortoises have been placed with British zoos, wildlife parks and specialist conservation groups.

H.M. Customs and Excise, Felixstowe; CITES Enforcement Team, Heathrow; Portcullis, July 1999; The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

A F R I C A

KENYA: On 4 September 1998, a shipment of 200 African Grey Parrots *Psittacus erithacus* (App. II) was seized at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi. The consignment had been exported from Cameroon and was travelling via Nairobi, to South Africa. The accompanying permits were not the original documents and contained falsified entries. Upon seizure, the parrots were transported to the offices of the Kenya Society for the Protection and Care of Animals. Of the original 200 birds, just over 100 remain in the care of the KSPCA, the others having died from disease. The Kenya Wildlife Service has been in contact with the authorities in Cameroon, and a decision over the fate of the birds is yet to be decided.

TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa

SOUTH AFRICA: On 1 February 1999, at Bethlehem Magistrates' Court, Free State Province, Jacobus du Plessis, of Welkom, was charged with illegally trading in rhino horns. The case arose following an attempt by du Plessis to sell two rhino horns to officers from Free State Nature Conservation and from the KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Service. Du Plessis was sentenced to a fine of R40 000 (USD6390) or two years' imprisonment, with a further two years' imprisonment suspended for two years. The sentence is the highest ever for a nature conservation-related offence in the Free State.

On 12 February 1999, at Thabazimbi Magistrates' Court, Northern Province, three men aged from 22 to 26 years of age were each sentenced to 29 years' gaol following charges of rhino poaching, housebreaking and theft; one of the four rhinos poached was heavily pregnant. The poaching is reported to have taken place in December 1997 on a farm in Thabazimbi and reported to the Endangered Species Protection Unit by the owner of the farm. The suspects were also accused of housebreaking and theft during this period, including theft of the weapons used to kill the rhinos.

On 19 February 1999, at Paarl Magistrates' Court, Samuel Le Roux, of Johannesburg, was sentenced to a 12-month prison term or a fine of R12 000, suspended for five years. The previous day, police recovered 1113 (400 kg) perlemoen (abalone) *Haliotis* spp. after stopping Le Roux's car and trailer near Paarl, Western Cape. He had been under observation by the police, and is believed to be a member of a perlemoen poaching syndicate. It is compulsory for individuals to purchase permits to harvest perlemoen in South African waters, which Le Roux had not done, and, moreover, perlemoen harvesting is strictly regulated by a quota system.

On 26 July 1999, five men were apprehended after being caught in possession of a number of Arum Lilies *Zantedeschia aethiopica* that they had illegally collected from a property owned by the Helderberg municipality, in Western Cape Province. The incident was investigated by Cape Nature Conservation district service officers after the vehicle in which the men were travelling was stopped

by law enforcement officers in Macassar. Inside were 3289 Arum Lilies that had been picked without the landowner's authority and therefore in breach of the provincial nature conservation ordinance. A fine of R300 (USD50) imposed for each defendant remains unpaid and the five are due to appear at Helderberg Magistrates' Court on 9 September.

A recent viability study into the picking of Arum Lilies in the region recommends the implementation of a pilot wetland cultivation project for the planting and harvesting of this species in order to generate income for local communities. Two initial sites for this project have already been identified.

TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa; KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Service, 3 February 1999; Saturday Star (South Africa), 13 February 1999; The Star (South Africa), 29 July 1999

ASIA

EAST ASIA

CHINA: In the early part of 1999, Linhu Ye and Wanming Tan were charged in the Haixi Prefecture, Qinghai Province, with the killing of Tibetan Antelopes *Pantholops hodgsonii* (App. I). The pair were accused of leading a group of poachers into Arjin Nature Reserve in May 1996 and killing 170 Antelopes; 120 skins were later sold. The Medium Court sentenced them to eight and four years' imprisonment, with fines of 10 000 yuan and 8000 yuan (USD1200 and USD966), respectively.

A further two poachers, Haimai Han and Xuejun Ma, have been convicted in Xining, capital of Qinghai Province, for poaching Tibetan Antelopes and have been sentenced to seven and six years' imprisonment, respectively. The pair were accused of killing 110 Tibetan Antelopes in Kekexili Nature Reserve and of selling 200 Tibetan Antelope skins. Two cars purchased with money raised from the sale of the skins were confiscated.

These two verdicts are the first since the Procuratorate of Qinghai Province issued an order in November 1998 to "take stronger measures against the illegal poaching of Tibetan Antelope."

Customs officials in Yunnan Province recently uncovered a scheme involving the smuggling of vast numbers of animals through the post. During routine checks in Ruili, on the border with Myanmar, post sacks weighing some 470 kg were found to contain skins of bear, cobra and viper. Wildlife inspectors traced the information contained on the sacks to a house where 575 python skins, 11 Tiger *Panthera tigris* (App. I) skins and numerous skins of Leopard *P. pardus* (App. I), bear and Gaur *Bos gaurus* (App. I), and a large number of monkey skulls and elephant tusks awaited dispatch by post. The suspects involved are believed to have smuggled around 5000 animal skins by post to avoid border checks. The case is under investigation.

On 7 July 1999, police in Fuzhou, capital of Fujian Province, seized a number of skins, antlers and other animal parts from a truck on its way to Guangdong Province. Later the same day, more than 1000 other animal parts were found at a smuggler's hideaway, bringing the total number of items in the haul to 1229. Items included skins of Tiger *Panthera tigris* and Leopard *P. pardus* (both App. I).

Guangming Daily, Qinghai (China), 6 February 1999 (translation by Shelly Shi, WWF China Programme); <http://bbc.co.uk>, 9 July 1999; China Daily (China), 8 July

HONG KONG SAR: In December 1998, a local exporter of traditional Chinese medicines pleaded guilty to charges of illegal possession of protected species following the discovery of ivory scraps, monkey bones, rhino skin, rhino horn scraps, and medicines claiming to contain Tiger ingredients at his premises in July 1998. The case came to light in March that year after the Royal Canadian Mounted Police informed Hong Kong's Agriculture and Fisheries Department (AFD) that a shipment of TCM medicines and plants had arrived in Canada from Hong Kong in December 1997. The defendant was sentenced to two months' imprisonment and fined HKD5000 (USD645). The case was a joint operation of the AFD and Hong Kong Customs & Excise officials.

On 22 January 1999, at the Western Magistracy, Shah Syed Mujtaba was fined HKD20 000 (USD2580) for the illegal possession of 21 pieces of shahtoosh shawls. The garments were recovered from a hotel room in Central following a raid by AFD staff in December 1997.

On 25 February 1999, Bharati Ashok Assomull was convicted at South Kowloon Magistracy of illegal possession of shahtoosh shawls—garments made from the fleece of the Tibetan Antelope *Pantholops hodgsonii* (App. I). The case came to light in December 1997 when AFD officers, acting on information, raided two premises of a firm in Central and Tsim Sha Tsui and seized 140 shawls. At a court hearing in January an expert was invited to give professional evidence that the seized shawls were shahtoosh.

On 13 April, Assomull was fined HKD300 000 (USD38 687) and sentenced to three months' imprisonment suspended for 12 months. The shawls were forfeited to the Government. This fine is the highest ever imposed for a single charge of violating Hong Kong's *Animal and Plants (Protection of Endangered Species) Ordinance*. The case sets an important precedent in Hong Kong because it is the first successful prosecution that is based on the use of forensic techniques to confirm that the wool in question came from the Tibetan Antelope.

On 17 May 1999, at San Po Kong Magistracy, a man was charged with possession of two live Slow Lorises *Nycticebus coucang* (App. II) without a licence. The case came to light on 12 May when AFD officers, acting on information, posed as interested buyers and raided premises in To Kwa Wan, Kowloon. Under the *Animals and Plants (Protection of Endangered Species) Ordinance*, it is an offence to import, export or possess endangered species without a licence. The man pleaded guilty and was fined HKD20 000 (USD2580) and sentenced to two months' imprisonment, suspended for 12 months.

Agriculture and Fisheries Department Press Releases, 13 April/25 February/18 May 1999; TRAFFIC East Asia; South China Morning Post (Hong Kong), 26 February 1999

JAPAN: On 24 May 1999, police officers seized the following live animals from a pet shop in Osaka: 1 Puma *Puma concolor*, 1 Serval *Leptailurus serval*, 3 Spectacled Caimans *Caiman crocodilus*, 3 Talapoin *Miopithecus talapoin* (all App. II), the sale of which is prohibited by Osaka prefectural ordinance.

On 1 June, police officers found 4 Orang-utans *Pongo pygmaeus* and 1 Siamang *Hylobates syndactylus* (both App. I) at the above premises. The case is under investigation.

On 25 June 1999, police officers seized 16 live and 2 stuffed Radiated Tortoises *Geochelone radiata* (App. I) (between 5 cm and 30 cm in length) from a pet shop in Kanagawa prefecture. The sale of specimens of Appendix I-listed species is prohibited under domestic law. The case is under investigation.

TRAFFIC East Asia

TAIWAN: On 6 March 1999, harbour police in Kaohsiung county confiscated two mullet fishing boats with 350 kg of dolphin meat aboard. The two vessels were manned by more than 20 fishermen who admitted to catching a total of five dolphins. All cetaceans are protected under Taiwan's *Wildlife Conservation Law*. Two of the boats' owners were arrested.

On 17 March 1999, Customs officials at Chiang Kai-shek International Airport discovered 156 amphibians and reptiles concealed in luggage belonging to a man arriving from Bangkok, Thailand. The animals included 18 milk snakes *Lampropeltis triangulum annulata*, 6 Boa Constrictors *Boa constrictor* (App. I/II) and 132 Veiled Chameleons *Chamaeleo calyptratus* (App. II); 32 of the chameleons, all of which had been placed in plastic boxes, had perished. Taipei Zoo is caring for the remaining animals.

TRAFFIC East Asia; The China Post (Taiwan), 18 March 1999; The Liberty Times (Taiwan), 7 March 1999

SOUTH ASIA

INDIA: The following seizures of Tiger and Leopard parts, and related arrests, took place between November 1998 and May 1999:

- 1 November 1998: 1 Tiger *Panthera tigris* skin. 3 arrests. Delhi.
- 6 December: 1 Tiger skin. 1 arrest. Kotwali District, Uttar Pradesh (UP).
- 13 January 1999: 1 Tiger skin. Dehradun, UP.
- 15 February: 1 Tiger skin; 3 Leopard *P. pardus* skins. 15 arrests. Hoshangabad District, Madhya Pradesh (MP).
- 24 February: 2 Tiger skins and 2 Leopard skins. 5 arrests. Bilaspur, MP.
- 28 March: 1 Tiger skin. 2 arrests. East Delhi.
- 19/20 April: 6 complete Tiger skeletons (55 kg); 3 Tiger skins; 6 Leopard skins. 15 arrests. Near Kanha Tiger Reserve, Balaghat District, MP.
- 21 April: 1 Tiger skin. 2 arrests. Pilibhit Forest Division, near Indo-Nepal border, UP.
- 24 April: 84 kg of Tiger bones. Dharchula, near Indo-Nepal border, UP.
- 25 April: 1 Tiger skin. Near Kagaznagar, Adilabad District, Andhra Pradesh.
- 20–29 May: 2 Tiger skins; 2.5 kg of Tiger bones; 2 Leopard skins. 8 poachers and traders arrested. Near Melghat Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra. The traders had offered to supply up to 50 kg of Tiger and Leopard bones.

TRAFFIC India

SOUTHEAST ASIA

MALAYSIA: On 29 March 1999, police seized 120 Asian Cobras *Naja naja* (App. II) in a raid in Rantau Panjang, in the State of Kelantan. The snakes, believed to have been smuggled into the State, were packed in 18 small baskets that had been loaded from a sampan onto a lorry. They were reportedly destined for delivery to restaurant owners in Tanah Merah and to other States. One man was arrested and fined RMI000 (USD263).

On 23 May, in what is believed to be a related incident, police in Rantau Panjang seized 3000 snakes of various species from a house in Pengkalan Haram Bagus, following a tip-off. The snakes, contained in 149 baskets, were being carried from a small boat to the house; the four men involved in the incident managed to flee.

On 12 April 1999, the anti-smuggling unit in Perlis State foiled an attempt to smuggle 105 Asian Cobras *Naja naja*, 2441 Common Rat Snakes *Ptyas mucosus* (both App. II) and 377 Pit vipers Viperidae spp. into the country via the town of Padang Besar at the border with Thailand. The lorry-load of reptiles were recovered from 400 boxes. One man was arrested.

TRAFFIC Southeast Asia; New Straits Times (Malaysia), 31 March 1999; The Sun (Malaysia), 25 May 1999; The Star (Malaysia), 13 April 1999; Department of Wildlife and National Parks, Peninsular Malaysia

PHILIPPINES: On 17 December 1998, at Ninoy Aquino International Airport, Manila, officials from the Bureau of Fisheries & Aquatic Resources (BFAR) seized 812 kg of Whale Shark *Rhincodon typus* meat. The shipment, declared as "chilled dogfish", consisted of 23 boxes that had arrived from the island of Palawan, bound for Taiwan, where Whale Shark meat is considered a delicacy.

The Government of the Philippines banned the killing and sale of Whale Sharks on 25 March 1998.

Bureau of Fisheries & Aquatic Resources, Philippines; TRAFFIC International

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA: On 16 November 1998, at the Court of Petty Sessions, Perth, Shinji Sugimoto and Mikako Sigami of Japan pleaded guilty to charges of attempting to export wildlife in contravention of

The *Wildlife Protection (Regulation of Exports and Imports) Act 1982* and State legislation. The couple, who had married in Brisbane and travelled to Western Australia, were arrested after police had searched their luggage as they prepared to leave Perth on a flight to Japan. Wrapped inside wedding present parcels, Customs officers found 3 Western Swamp Turtles *Pseudemydura umbrina* (App. I); 1 Thorny Mountain Devil *Moloch horridus*, 1 Spiny-tailed Gecko *Diplodactylus ciliaris* and 4 skinks; a further 6 skinks and a Western Blue-tongued Lizard *Tiliqua occipitalis* were found in an air parcel dispatched by the couple. Sugimoto was fined AUD13 000 (USD8600) and AUD135 costs; Sigami was fined AUD6000 and AUD135. The couple were also fined AUD4500 for breaching State legislation.

Investigations Case Officer, Australian Customs Service, Western Australia

AMERICAS

ECUADOR: On 31 March 1999, 17 500 sea cucumbers were seized at Isabela Island Airport in the Galapagos Islands. The incident occurred after inspectors from the Galapagos National Park observed boxes and suitcases being unloaded from a Civil Aviation vehicle and transferred to a plane bound for Guayaquil, on the mainland. The luggage did not bear the requisite pre-check and destination labels. Although the sea cucumber fishery was opened for a period of two months from 1 April, the specimens in this consignment had already been processed, indicating that they had been caught well before this date. A sergeant from Ecuador's Air Force was transferred to Guayaquil and will be subject to military proceedings for the offence. The other person involved, a Mrs Flores, the owner of the sea cucumbers, was fined (sum unknown) and the sea cucumbers were confiscated and later sold at auction. The money received has been deposited in the conservation accounts of the Galapagos National Park.

El Comercio (Ecuador), 3 April 1999; TRAFFIC International

USA: On 29 October 1998, in Brooklyn District Court, Andrzej Lepowski, Helena Koczuk and Wieslaw Rozbicki were charged with smuggling 450 kg of caviar into New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport, on a flight from Poland via Finland. Six other passengers arriving in New York with Lepowski the previous day claimed that they were being paid by Koczuk and Rozbicki to bring the caviar into the country and were to meet the pair at the airport terminal where they would receive payment in return for the caviar. When arrested, Koczuk had four envelopes containing a total of USD2600 in cash and Rozbicki three envelopes containing USD1500. Agents seized 901 tins of caviar (450 kg) from suitcases. The caviar is to be DNA-tested but is believed to have originated in Russia's Caspian Sea. Koczuk and Rozbicki, both residents of Stamford, Connecticut, were freed on USD25 000 personal recognizance bonds and Lepowski, a Polish national who entered the USA illegally, was detained. The case is under investigation.

TRAFFIC North America

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EUROPE

UK: Between July 1999 and January 2000, the UK CITES Enforcement Team seized a total of 220 kg of caviar from passengers arriving at Heathrow and Gatwick Airports. Iran, Russia and Dubai were the principal sources. The largest amount found on one person was 179 kg. An allowance of up to 250 g of caviar per person is exempted from CITES requirements.

On 9 August 1999, Customs officers at Heathrow Airport seized a consignment of 4500 cyclamen *Cyclamen* (App. II) bulbs that had arrived on a flight from Israel without the correct paperwork. The importer received a formal warning. The bulbs were donated to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

On 4 October 1999, a postal package arriving from Australia was found to contain five Diamond Pythons *Morelia spilota* (App. II). Four people were arrested and a number of lizards and snakes removed from several addresses; these included two Bearded Dragons *Pogona barbata*, 30 lizards (non-controlled), seven pythons (one Children's Python *Morelia childreni*, four Carpet Pythons *M. spilota* and two Green Tree Pythons *M. viridis*, (all App. II)). An investigation is under way.

On 4 November 1999, a crew of Russian seamen in transit from Morocco to Russia were stopped at Gatwick Airport. A search of their luggage revealed 22 Spur-thighed Tortoises *Testudo graeca* (App. II) and seven Mediterranean Chameleons *Chamaeleo chamaeleon* (App. II). The crew were released after questioning and the reptiles placed with zoological gardens/societies and specialist keepers.

On 10 November 1999, following up on information received from the International Primate Protection League (IPPL), Customs officers, accompanied by TRAFFIC and IPPL, raided a premises in east London and arrested two Nigerian nationals involved in the smuggling of bushmeat and seized smoked Green Monkey *Chlorocebus aethiops*, Blue Duiker *Cephalophus monticola*, African Python *Python sebae*, Asian Cobra *Naja naja*, African Large-grain Lizard *Varanus exanthematicus* (all App. II), Maxwell's Duiker *Cephalophus maxwelli* and African Brush-tailed Porcupine *Atherurus africanus*. The dead specimens had been smuggled into the country in hand luggage, and were being sold for human consumption. The case is under investigation.

On 2 January 2000, a consignment of 149 spiny-tailed lizards arriving at Heathrow Airport from Sudan, in transit to Spain, was seized after it was found to contain 68 Bell's Dabb Lizards *Uromastyx acanthinurus* (App. II and subject to an EU import ban) and 81 Eyed Dabb Lizards *U. ocellatus* (App. II). The export permit accompanying the shipment identified all specimens as Eyed Dabb Lizards.

On 25 January 2000, Customs officers at Gatwick Airport intercepted a shipment in transit from Côte d'Ivoire to the USA. On inspection they found 72 pieces of elephant ivory (78 kg) carvings concealed among wooden handicrafts. Collaboration between UK and US officials led to one arrest in the USA. The case is under investigation.

H.M. Customs & Excise CITES Enforcement Team, Heathrow; National Investigation Service

FRANCE: On 8 November 1999, Customs officers at Roissy Airport, Paris, seized 600 carved ivory (App. I) items which had arrived in transit from Rwanda to Japan. The goods, contained in 10 parcels and weighing a total of 420 kg, were described as "craft items". Two Leopard *Panthera pardus* (App. I) skins were also seized.

TRAFFIC Europe

PORTUGAL: On 18 October 1999, at a court in Lisbon, a South African and three Portuguese citizens were charged with illegal trade in ivory following their arrest on 10 October for possession of 150 African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (App. I) tusks. The ivory was seized in Portugal during a joint South African and Portuguese operation and the case is under investigation.

TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa

A S I A

JAPAN: On 21 October 1999, Customs officers at Narita Airport, Tokyo, seized 92 tortoises, among which were 83 Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (App. II). A pet shop dealer who had bought the reptiles in Myanmar was arrested.

On 9 November 1999, Customs officers at Narita Airport, Tokyo, seized 65 tortoises, among which were seven Radiated Tortoises *Geochelone radiata* (App. I) and 58 Indian Star Tortoises. These specimens had been purchased in Bangkok.

TRAFFIC East Asia

SOUTH ASIA

INDIA: On 27 November 1999, the director of an auction house in Delhi was arrested at a hotel where he was auctioning an antique shahtoosh shawl; the owner of the shawl was also arrested. Both were charged and have been released on bail. Further seizures of shahtoosh shawls were made on 5 March.

In early December 1999, police in Karnataka confiscated more than 600 Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* and five Alexandrine Parakeets *Psittacula eupatria* (both App. II) in a raid on the house of a suspected smuggler.

Two of the largest seizures of Leopard skins have recently been made in India; on 20 December 1999, 50 Leopard *Panthera pardus* and three Tiger *P. tigris* skins were discovered in Ghaziabad, near Delhi, in a lorry carrying denim cloth to east India; the skins, packed in eight jute bags, bore no bullet marks indicating that the animals had been captured using poison, snares or had been electrocuted. Three arrests have been made and further leads are being examined.

On 12 January 2000, in Khaga, Uttar Pradesh, local police, assisted by the Wildlife Preservation Office in New Delhi and TRAFFIC India personnel, seized 70 Leopard skins and four Tiger skins, more than 18 000 Leopard claws and 221 Black Buck *Antelope cervicapra* skins (listed as Vulnerable in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals). The items, recovered from a taxidermy workshop, are from animals believed to have been poisoned. Seven people were arrested. The investigation and subsequent seizure of items in this case was made possible via information provided by informants to TRAFFIC India's Enforcement Assistance Unit, which is funded by The Rufford Foundation.

TRAFFIC India

SOUTHEAST ASIA

MALAYSIA: On 29 September 1999, at the High Court in Kangar, Perlis, an appeal by Gek Sing Kalliappan against sentencing for the smuggling of snakes was dismissed and gaol terms of seven days on each of three charges were increased to 14 days, to run concurrently. The judge explained that the increased prison term had to be imposed as the maximum fines set for previous cases had not been effective in curtailing snake smuggling. The original fine of RM3000 (USD790) per charge was increased to a total fine of RM11 000.

The defendant, who had acted as the attendant of a Thai-registered lorry carrying the snakes, had been convicted in April 1998 of illegal possession of 105 Asian Cobras *Naja naja* (App. II), 2441 Common Rat Snakes *Ptyas mucosus* (App. II) and faced a further charge of cruelty to animals.

On 1 February 2000, a total of 901 snakes, including Asian Cobras *Naja naja* and Common Rat Snakes *Ptyas mucosus* (both App. II) were seized during two raids in Grik; five men were arrested. Fifty tortoises were returned to the men as they were of non-protected species. According to the smugglers, the reptiles, which were being imported into Malaysia from Thailand, were for delivery to Singapore and thence to China, Taiwan and Hong Kong. Court cases are pending.

The Sun (Malaysia), 2 February 2000; TRAFFIC Southeast Asia; The Star (Malaysia), 30 September 1999

THAILAND: In May 1999, the Wildlife Protection Section of the Forest Protection Division I (Central Division) of the Royal Forest Department seized from the premises of an exporter in Samutprakahn 561 Common Rat Snakes *Ptyas mucosus* (App. II) and the following nationally protected species: 256 Yellow-headed Temple Turtles, *Hieremys annandalii*, 135 Asian Leaf Turtles *Cyclemys dentata*, 17 Asian Box Turtles *Cuora amboinensis*, 56 Malayan Snail-eating Turtles *Malayemys*

subtrijuga, 12 Black Marsh Turtles *Siebenrockiella crassicollis*, three Asiatic Softshell Turtles *Amyda cartilaginea*, 122 Copperhead Racers *Elaphe radiata*, and 602 Chinese Rat Snakes *Ptyas korros*. It is suspected that the reptiles were to be exported to Hong Kong and Malaysia, and sold domestically as food. The case is with the police and a prosecution is pending. All specimens were released into suitable habitat or placed in Royal Forest Department Wildlife Breeding Centres.

In July 1999, following a lead from TRAFFIC Southeast Asia, the Royal Forest Department of the Forest Protection Office Division and CITES Division raided three TCM shops in the Chinatown district of Bangkok. One rhino horn weighing 70 g and 36 pieces of rhino skin totalling approximately 2.5 kg were seized. According to one storeowner, the rhino was killed in Myanmar and brought to Bangkok where it was divided up amongst various people. The rhino parts are believed to be from a Sumatran Rhino *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis* (App. I). Also seized were 13 gall bladders, originally suspected as being from bears, but which, upon forensic examination by USFWS, were found to be from pigs. Prosecutions for the rhino-related offences are pending.

In July 1999, following up on information from TRAFFIC Southeast Asia, the Royal Forest Department of the Forest Protection Office Division and CITES Division conducted a search on five stalls selling tourist items in the town of Betong, in the Yala Province, near the Malaysian border. All the stalls are owned by the same individual, and had the following Appendix I-listed items for sale, which were seized: seven Malayan Sun Bear *Helarctos malayanus*, canines, seven claws, 20 teeth; more than 100 pieces of skin (2–5 cm square) from at least one Clouded Leopard *Neofelis nebulosa*; one Leopard *Panthera pardus* skull; one Tiger *Panthera tigris*, skull, dozens of pieces of skin from at least four individual Tigers as well as 48 claws, including two fashioned into pendants, from a Clouded Leopard, Leopard or Tiger; part of an upper jaw most likely originating from a Leopard or a Clouded Leopard fashioned into a pen holder; four 10 cm elephant tusk tips (carved ivory on sale was not seized as it is legal in Thailand to sell carved ivory from domestic elephants); and, one Serow *Naemorhedus sumatraensis* horn.

Also seized were 48 claws derived from smaller wild cats, 53 canine teeth including 12 that had been fashioned into pendants; 45 key-rings made from Common Muntjac *Muntiacus muntjac* antlers; four deer teeth; one pair of Hog Deer *Axis porcinus* antlers attached to a skull made from resin; skin of one Red Giant Flying Squirrel *Petaurista petaurista*; and, 13 quills from the Malayan Porcupine *Hystrix brachyura*. Prosecutions are pending.

In July 1999, the Royal Forest Department's CITES checkpoint staff seized the following wildlife products at Poi Pet, in Sak Keaw Province, near the Cambodia border: two quartered Common Muntjacs *Muntiacus muntjac*; two de-scaled Pangolins *Manis* spp; and one whole charred civet. Prosecutions are pending.

In November 1999, the following nationally protected species were confiscated by the Wildlife Protection Section of the Forest Protection Division I (Central Division) of the Royal Forest Department. The animals were confiscated from two shops in Samutprakahn, approximately 15 km from Bangkok. Both shops were owned by the same person. Species seized include 10 Yellow-headed Temple Turtles *Hieremys annandalii*, 154 Asian Box Turtles *Cuora amboinensis* and 147 Malayan Snail-eating Turtles *Malayemys subtrijuga*. All specimens were released or placed with Royal Forest Department Wildlife Breeding Centres. The turtles were intended to be sold for release, according to a Buddhist practice. The case is with the police and prosecutions are pending.

On 25 December 1999, the Wildlife Protection Section of the Forest Protection Division I (Central Division) of the Royal Forest Department, carried out raids at the Miniburi Market, situated some 20 km from Bangkok. The following CITES Appendix II-listed and/or nationally protected birds were seized from five stalls: one Hill Myna *Gracula religiosa* (App. II); five Vernal Hanging-Parrots *Loriculus vernalis* (App. II); two White-crested Laughingthrushes *Garrulax leucolophus*; eight Greater Necklaced Laughingthrushes *G. pectoralis*; seven Lesser Whistling-Ducks *Dendrocygna javanica*; seven Thick-billed Green-pigeons *Treron curvirostra*; three Grey-headed Parakeets *Psittacula finschii*; three Large Hawk-

Cuckoos *Cuculus sparverioides*; two Asian Koels *Eudynamis scolopacea*; one Green-eared Barbet *Megalaima faiostricta*; five Coppersmith Barbets *M. haemacephala*; four Lineated Barbets *M. lineata*; two Greater Yellownapes *Picus flavinucha*; two Blue-winged Leafbirds *Chloropsis cochinchinensis*; 16 Red-whiskered Bulbuls *Pycnonotus jocosus*; one Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*; nine Black-naped Orioles *Oriolus chinensis*; nine Asian Fairy-bluebirds *Irena puella*; one Eyebrowed Thrush *Turdus obscurus*; 11 Golden-crested Mynas *Ampeliceps coronatus*; and, five Black-headed Munias *Lonchura malacca*.

The birds were released or placed with Royal Forest Department Breeding Centres. All cases have been turned over to the local police and prosecutions are pending.

TRAFFIC Southeast Asia

VIET NAM: The volume of trade in wildlife in Viet Nam remains high despite the efforts of the under-resourced local enforcement agencies. Statistical records provided to TRAFFIC Southeast Asia-Viet Nam by the Forest Protection Department (FPD) on wildlife confiscations in 21 provinces (calculated by provincial FPD officials as numbers of individuals or by weight) numbered 1267 specimens and 6244 kg between June and December 1999. The department cannot provide names of species as the records are non-specific. However, some CITES-listed species were recorded, including 127 kg of live pangolins *Manis javanica* or *M. pentadactyla* (App. II), 220 kg of live crocodiles *Crocodylus porosus* or *C. siamensis* (App. II/I), two bears *Ursus thibetanus* or *Helarctos malayanus* (both App. I), one Binturong *Arctictus binturong* (App. III) and one Leopard *Panthera pardus* (App. I).

Although the FPD is unable to identify all the species, the data still illustrate the current status of wildlife trade in the country, with reptiles representing the highest proportion. According to FPD statistics, 866.5 kg and 73 reptile specimens—under the categories of snake, turtle, tortoise, monitor lizard—were seized during this period. The agency indicates that the reptile seizures were most likely en route to China to satisfy demand for food and medicine. It states that the actual total number of confiscations for the 61 provinces in Viet Nam should be much higher.

TRAFFIC Southeast Asia

A F R I C A

SOUTH AFRICA: Hartmut Möhr of Ebsdorfergrund, Germany, has been charged under the Western Cape Nature Conservation Ordinance (Ordinance 19 of 1974) of exporting Angulated Tortoises *Chersina angulata* (App. II) without the necessary permits. He was sentenced to a fine of R10 000 (USD1625) or 18 months' imprisonment. His conviction comes after an incident in 1997 when Cape Nature Conservation confiscated two parcels at Cape Town International Airport: one contained 15 girdled lizards Cordylidae, and the other five Angulated Tortoises. Both packages were addressed to Möhr, who, together with his alleged accomplices, had left South Africa by the time the parcels were discovered. He was arrested following an investigation by the South African Endangered Species Protection Unit (ESPU), Cape Nature Conservation and the Northern Cape Nature Conservation Service. As Möhr had been a suspect in the 1997 case, the German Customs investigation office advised ESPU on 7 October 1999 that he had again entered the country. Möhr and his companions were followed for days prior to the arrest of Möhr and another man at Vioolsdrif when they tried to cross the border into Namibia; a third suspect was arrested at Clanwilliam. Möhr's address and handwriting on the parcels and his credit card payment for the postage of the parcels linked him to the tortoise incident. Owing to lack of evidence, his companions were not prosecuted.

On 29 September 1999, Czech citizen Petr Pavelka was arrested for illegal possession of succulents. Cape Nature Conservation staff acted on information received from the local community on Pavelka's activities on the Knersvlakte, an area within Namaqualand. He was caught with 149 protected succulents, including some endemic species that were discovered and described only recently. Pavelka was sentenced under the *Western Cape Nature Conservation Ordinance* (Ordinance

19 of 1974) to a R3000 (USD488) fine or an eight-month prison sentence, suspended for five years. Pavelka paid the fine. Collectors of flora in the province have to apply for permits from Cape Nature Conservation, and must also obtain written approval from the landowner.

On 22 December 1999, the longest-ever sentence for poaching in South Africa was imposed at a regional court when Shalate Khoza was given a 20-year gaol term following his arrest in July, in Kruger National Park; he received a further 10-year sentence for an earlier poaching offence.

Khoza had been found in possession of elephant meat, an automatic rifle and ammunition in Kruger National Park, in July. Subsequent to his arrest, he took wardens to the carcass of a bull elephant he had shot for its 65 kg tusks which he had removed. For these offences, Khoza was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment for killing an elephant and 10 years' for arms-related offences.

At the time of his arrest, Khoza was wanted for killing a Black Rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* (App. I) in the park in 1998. For this offence he was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment. The 10- and 20-year terms will run concurrently.

TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa; Reuters News Agency

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA: On 16 November 1999, Customs officers at Perth International Airport arrested German nationals Ralf Thomas Andres and Tanja Herter and charged them with attempting to smuggle wildlife out of the country contrary to the *Wildlife Protection (Regulation of Imports and Exports) Act 1982*.

The pair were picked up prior to boarding a flight to Mauritius, after hand luggage passing through X-ray was found to contain three Shingleback Lizards *Tiliqua rugosa* in two pencil cases; inspection of other bags belonging to Andres revealed three Oblong Turtles *Chelodina oblonga* and four eggs. During interrogation, Andres admitted that he had collected the animals for his personal collection. He had no knowledge of the eggs and insisted that Harter had played no part in the scheme. Officers of Western Australia's Department of Conservation and Land Management are caring for the animals.

On 10 February 2000, at Broadmeadows Magistrates' Court, Ales Havelka of the Czech Republic was charged under the *Wildlife Protection (Regulations of Imports and Exports) Act 1982* and Victoria's *Wildlife Act 1975* for attempting to export geckos *Gekko* spp. and sentenced to one month's imprisonment.

Customs officers intercepted Havelka prior to his departure from Melbourne Airport on 7 February. He was found to be carrying 31 geckos in small pouches in his pockets. He revealed that he had been detained in other countries for similar offences.

Australian Customs Service, Perth; TRAFFIC Oceania

AMERICAS

ECUADOR: On 10 December 1999, 750 kg of sea cucumbers were seized from a boat headed for the dock of Caraguay market, Guayaquil. The harbour master, alerted by a staff member of the Galapagos National Park, boarded the boat prior to its docking and discovered the sea cucumbers, a box of shark fins (12.5 kg), and lobsters that were below the minimum size permitted to be caught. The shipment, from San Cristobal, in the Galapagos, is currently in storage in Guayaquil under the control of the General Direction of Fisheries; the boat has been detained in Guayaquil. The trial of the ship's owner continues.

The sea cucumber fishery in the Galapagos was opened up for the period 1 April to 31 May 1999, with shipment to the mainland allowed until 9 June 1999 (*TRAFFIC Bulletin* 18(1):10).

El Comercio (Ecuador), 12 December 1999

USA: On 4 November 1999, a federal jury at Brooklyn, New York, marked the first successful criminal prosecution in the USA upholding CITES provisions—enacted on 1 April 1998—that require that caviar imports to CITES Parties be accompanied by CITES permits from the exporting nation.

Eugeniusz Koczuk, the owner of Gino International, an import company in Stamford, Connecticut, was found guilty of smuggling caviar into the USA; Koczuk's business associate, Wieslaw Rozbicki, was convicted of one felony violation of the *Lacey Act*. A third individual, Polish national Andrzej Lepkowski, who was Warsaw's deputy police chief at the time of his arrest, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to smuggle wildlife.

Koczuk and Rozbicki ignored the new wildlife trade controls and paid off-duty airline employees to smuggle suitcases packed with caviar tins into the USA (*TRAFFIC Bulletin* 18(1):34). On 28 October 1998, federal investigators acting on a tip-off met an inbound flight from Poland and apprehended seven couriers whose 16 suitcases contained 450 kg of caviar; another 450 kg were later seized at Koczuk's home. Investigators found that between 1 April and 3 November 1998, Koczuk's company, Gino International, sold 9450 kg of caviar although import/export declarations filed with the USFWS show that the company legally imported only 38 kg during this period. The trial date has not been set.

On 18 November 1999, at the federal court in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Dwayne D. Cunningham and Robert A. Lawracy, were charged with illegal trade in Caribbean reptiles. The pair had been found guilty in May 1999 of conspiring with one another to violate the *Lacey Act*, the federal smuggling statute, and CITES. Cunningham was also sentenced for having sold two smuggled ground iguanas *Cyclura* spp. (App. I) and Lawracy was sentenced for illegally importing 49 undersized Red Footed Tortoises *Geochelone carbonaria* (App. II). Cunningham was sentenced to 14 months' imprisonment and Lawracy to 24 months' imprisonment.

On 2 December 1999, in the first successful felony prosecution in the USA for illegal trade in corals, Petros Leventis was sentenced in the district court, Tampa, Florida, to 18 months' imprisonment for illegally importing corals and seashells from the Philippines. He was further sentenced to three years' supervised release and fined USD5000 and a USD200 special assessment for his role in a smuggling operation that used false declarations, invoices, and shipping documents to circumvent trade restrictions. His company, Greek Island Imports Inc., a giftshop selling ocean products, was fined USD25 000 and USD800 special assessment, and given five years' probation.

USFWS agents have documented transactions between Leventis and the owner of a Philippine seashell and souvenir exporting business going back six years. In November 1998, the pair were indicted on smuggling and wildlife charges. In February 1999, the Justice Department filed papers with the Philippines seeking the extradition of the Philippine exporter.

The species targeted by Leventis included blue coral *Heliopora* spp., organ-pipe coral *Tubipora* spp., staghorn *Acropora* spp., brown stem coral *Pocillopora* spp., mushroom and feather corals Fungiidae (all App. II).

The Philippines banned the export of coral in 1997 and the USA bars importation without a valid export permit from the country of origin.

TRAFFIC North America; US Fish & Wildlife Services Press Releases 13 August/4 November/2 December 1999 US Dept of Justice News Release, 18 November 1999; USFWS in litt., 13 March 2000

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E U R O P E

BELGIUM: The following seizures took place at Zaventem Airport, Brussels, by the Anti-Drug Group (GAD) Inspection Service team: 14 March 2000: 8 kg carved ivory arriving by courier from Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

May: 62 live cacti, sent by post from Bogota, Colombia, without CITES papers. Included 10 Artichoke Cacti *Obregonia denegrii* (CITES I) and specimens of the following CITES II-listed species: 10 *Coryphantha* spp., 12 *Lophophora williamsii*, 10 *Mammillaria* cf. *multiceps*, 10 *Mammillaria* spp., 10 *Matucana* spp.

On three separate occasions in June, in cargo shipments, without requisite papers: two python *Python* (CITES I/II) skins, 13 python belts, 21 python handbags, 18 python wallets, five monitor *Varanus* (CITES I/II) handbags, three monitor *Varanus* wallets that had arrived from Senegal, bound for Brussels; 15 wallets made of python, crocodilian and monitor skins and 74 python skin belts from Mali, destination Bucharest, Romania; and, four monitor handbags, four monitor wallets and one python wallet from Senegal, bound for Lisbon, Portugal.

On 27 April 2000, federal police conducted raids on three Asian grocery shops in Brussels and seized several TCM products that claimed to contain ingredients derived from CITES-listed species. Items seized included dried ginseng *Panax* roots and 1200 packages containing some 6000 plasters said to contain musk *Moschus* and Tiger *Panthera tigris* bone. The ginseng is being examined by the CITES Scientific Authority to establish which species was being offered. The raids were initiated following information obtained by TRAFFIC Europe during investigations conducted in December 1999.

TRAFFIC Europe

GERMANY: In the largest-ever seizure of spiders in Germany, on 24 September 1999, Customs officers arrested a French woman after she attempted to smuggle 1221 adult tarantulas from Mexico. These included Mexican Red-kneed Tarantula *Brachypelma smithi*, Flame-knee Tarantula *B. auratum* and Guerrero Orange Legs *B. boehmei* (all EU Annex B/CITES II). The specimens, 112 of which had perished, were all female and many were carrying fertilized eggs. They had been placed in 34 boxes within 18 cardboard containers inside one suitcase. The suspect is accused of violating federal conservation law linked to *Council Regulation (EC) No. 338/97*.

Since July 1999, several postal packages containing the same species of spiders have been found in Saint-Priest, near Lyon, by French Customs officers.

On 10 April 2000, Customs officers in Hamburg and Frankfurt seized 264 kg of caviar and arrested three Iranian citizens. The caviar, reportedly from Russia, was contained in 250 g-cans and was seized after Customs officials set up a fictional firm which attracted the sellers. The men are accused of violating federal conservation law which is linked to *Council Regulation (EC) No. 338/97*.

In July 2000, Customs officers at Frankfurt Airport seized 770 live Yellow-banded Poison Frogs *Dendrobates leucomelas* (CITES II) that were hidden in three plastic containers and held in the hand luggage of a person arriving from Venezuela. The frogs have been given to Frankfurt Zoo. The case is under investigation.

Federal Ministry of Finance, Berlin; Central Customs Criminal Investigation Authority, Cologne; TRAFFIC Europe

SPAIN: Following investigations conducted by TRAFFIC Europe in Marbella in September 1999, authorities seized nine shahtoosh shawls (made of fleece from the Tibetan Antelope *Pantholops hodgsoni* (CITES I)), from a fashion boutique in the city in December. The owner of the shop has been prosecuted and fined 2 025 000 pesetas (USD10 500).

TRAFFIC Europe

UK: CITES-related TCM seizures by Felixstowe Customs officers during 2000 (to 25 April) included 20 kg and seven packages of Costus root *Saussurea costus* (CITES I). On 4/5 May, in two separate shipments, 30 kg of *Costus* roots, 14 boxes of *Costus* roots and tortoise or turtle shell (species not known), arriving from China. No CITES documents.

On 12 April 2000, at Horseferry Road Magistrates' Court, London, The Renaissance Corporation—retailers of Indian artefacts and woollen goods—was fined GBP1500 for illegally importing and selling shahtoosh shawls. The garments were seized in 1997 by the Metropolitan police from the company's premises in Mayfair during raids as part of Operation Charm. The Renaissance Corporation had imported 138 shawls, believed to derive from some 1000 Tibetan Antelopes *Pantholops hodgsoni* (CITES I).

On 14 April 2000, Harold Sissen, of Northallerton, was found guilty of four counts of illegally importing three Lear's Macaws *Anodorhynchus leari* (CITES I) and six Blue-headed Macaws *Ara couloni* (CITES II) in February 1997 and March 1998 (TRAFFIC Bulletin 17(2):88; 18(1):32). Further charges of selling a Palm Cockatoo *Probosciger aterrimus* and a Hyacinth Macaw *Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus* (both CITES I) contrary to the *Control of Trade in Endangered Species (Enforcement) Regulations 1985* (COTES), were dismissed owing to lack of evidence. Sissen, a bird breeder, was sentenced to two and a half years' imprisonment on each count, to be served concurrently. He was also ordered to pay costs of GBP10 000 (USD16 000) (reduced to GBP5000).

An appeal lodged by Sissen was heard at the Royal Courts of Justice in London on 8 December. All points of law raised by the defence were dismissed. The judges upheld that the EU regulations for the protection of wildlife are directly applicable in the UK; any offence committed does not end at first point of entry into the EU; and, the powers of Customs & Excise Management Act (CEMA) are activated and can be applied under EU regulations. Sissen was refused leave of appeal to the House of Lords. His sentence was reduced to 18 months, however.

On 5 December 2000, at Snaresbrook Crown Court, Robert Sclare, of London, was sentenced to six months' imprisonment—three of them suspended. At an earlier hearing Sclare, a trader in taxidermy specimens, was charged with 59 counts relating to infringements of the *Control of Trade in Endangered Species Regulations 1997* and the *Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981*. Items on sale illegally at his shop "Get Stuffed" in Islington, London, and seized during a police raid in 1998 included the skull of a Gorilla *Gorilla gorilla*, a Tiger *Panthera tigris* and her young litter and a Leopard *P. pardus*, as well as vultures, sparrowhawks *Accipiter* spp. (CITES II) and Snowy Owls *Nyctea scandiaca* (CITES II).

Sclare pleaded guilty to 27 counts of forgery relating to applications to obtain permits to trade in the animals and admitted 13 counts of illegally displaying the animals for a commercial purpose. The raid took place following an investigation by TRAFFIC which was acting on information passed to the WWF-UK Eyes and Ears Campaign.

Metropolitan Police Service News Release, 12 April 2000; TRAFFIC International

A F R I C A

EGYPT: In August 2000, 1525 kg of uncut ivory were seized by authorities in the southern town of Kom Ombo. One Egyptian and a Sudanese confessed to illegally entering Egypt for the purpose of selling the ivory after they were caught trying to return to Sudan, from where the ivory had been smuggled. They led authorities to the home of another Egyptian in Kom Ombo, where 29 sacks containing the uncut ivory were found. All three men were arrested and the pieces transferred to the Aswan Customs office to be kept as evidence. A court ruling has been postponed.

From September 1999 to April 2000, authorities made nine separate seizures of worked and raw ivory from traders and tourists leaving the country. The largest by far was 79 tusks (173 kg), confiscated from an Egyptian trader in Aswan, who claimed that the ivory came from "Sudan and other countries".

Sapa-Associated Press, 15 August 2000; Pachyderm No. 28, January—June 2000

SOUTH AFRICA: On 20 June 2000, at Johannesburg Regional Court, Rolf Dieterich Bauer of Glenvista, Johannesburg, pleaded guilty to a charge of collecting and conveying specially protected cycads from the provincially-owned Songimvelo Game Reserve, without a permit. He was fined ZAR10 000 (USD1436) or sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment, with a further 12 months' suspended for three years. He was also ordered to forfeit his vehicle to the Mpumalanga Parks Board.

Bauer was caught on 22 March by Mpumalanga Parks Board officials while in the illegal possession of nine specially protected cycads *Ecephalartos paucidentatus*. It was later established that the accused had commissioned three men to steal the plants from Songimvelo Game Reserve. They await trial.

In 1996, Bauer, who runs a small nursery from his farm, was fined after being caught illegally dealing in specially protected plants.

Mpumalanga Parks Board News Report, 20 June 2000

ASIA

JAPAN: On 26 April 2000, Tokyo Customs seized about 500 kg (132 cut pieces) of ivory that had been concealed among 300 boxes of chopsticks shipped from Singapore to Kobe port. A British national from Hong Kong had imported the shipment and a manufacturer of ivory products—a board member of the Japan Ivory Association—went to collect the shipment after it had been transported from the port to Saitama prefecture. Both men were arrested. The ivory manufacturer was tried in a magistrates' court and fined JPY300 000 (USD2777); he later changed his statement and pleaded not guilty to the charges. This case, and the date of the trial of the British national, is pending.

Yomiuri (Japan), 19 May 2000; TRAFFIC East Asia

EAST ASIA

HONG KONG: Large amounts of pangolin *Manis* scales and sea turtle skin were discovered in Hong Kong in March 2000 in separate consignments en route from the Philippines and Indonesia, to Shenzhen, China.

On 15 March, Customs officials at Fanling seized 2145 kg of pangolin scales and 53 kg of sea turtle skins (species not specified) exported from Indonesia by boat in a container declared as seaweed; the shipment was bound for China. The pangolin scales were packed in 39 bags, the sea turtle skins in one bag, and all were concealed under two containers of seaweed. Customs officials estimated that the scales came from some 3900 pangolins.

On 21 March, 14 bags of pangolin scales and 14 bags of turtle *Cheloniidae* spp. scales were found hidden among 4000 bags of wet seaweed in two shipments from Indonesia and one shipment from the Philippines. The haul of turtle scales is thought to represent between 400 and 800 turtles and is described as the biggest such seizure in the last 10 years.

The consignee of the four shipments is the owner of a trading company who was arrested when he arrived to collect the first shipment. He was released on HKD10 000 bail. The haul is thought to have been destined for medicinal use.

The three Asian pangolin species are listed in CITES App. II; *Cheloniidae* species are listed in App. I.

On 18 September 2000, at Tuen Mun Court, Ruan Shuiguang and Chen Changxiang were gaoled for eight months for smuggling in animals from Taishan, in Guangdong, China.

Customs officers seized a Spotted Linsang *Prionodon pardicolor* (CITES I) and a Leopard Cat *Prionailurus bengalensis* (CITES I/II) from a shipment of 1172 animals that included rodents, hedgehogs and turtles, all of which were being unloaded by the pair at the Tuen Mun Public Cargo Working

Area. The defendants claimed they were each paid 300 yuan (HKD280) to bring the animals across the border and that they had been unaware of the legal consequences.

Ming Pao Daily (Hong Kong), 16 March 2000; South China Morning Post (Hong Kong), 17/23 March 2000; 19 September; Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, Hong Kong

TAIWAN: Customs officials have reported what they believe to be one of Taiwan's largest-ever hauls of smuggled ivory following the seizure at Keelung, on 5 May 2000, of 332 tusks weighing over two tonnes that were concealed in two wooden crates. The items, which consisted of whole tusks and pieces of ivory, had been shipped from Douala, Cameroon, to Kaohsiung in southern Taiwan, before being transferred to the port of Keelung in the north for Customs clearance. Some of the ivory had been stamped, indicating that it had been registered with the local authorities and was subject to regulation in Cameroon.

China Post (Taiwan), 5 June 2000

SOUTH ASIA

INDIA: On 23 March 2000, income tax officials in Delhi seized shahtoosh shawls from the residence of a prominent builder in the city. The seizure was made possible owing to the alertness of income tax officials during a series of raids conducted since February 2000 on all establishments belonging to the builder. The department sealed 55 shawls along with other valuables in the house and, while estimating their cost, became suspicious that some shawls were of shahtoosh (wool of the Tibetan Antelope *Pantholops hodgsoni* (CITES I)). The Wildlife Department was alerted and staff were able to confirm that seven shawls were made from shahtoosh and the remainder of pashmina (the wool of a domesticated goat).

Between April and August 2000, support by TRAFFIC India's enforcement assistance unit to enforcement agencies led to the arrest of 17 people and the seizure of 250 g of musk and 10 ivory (CITES I) pieces, as well as skins of the following animals: three Tigers *Panthera tigris*, 86 Leopards *P. pardus*, three Himalayan Black Bears *Ursus thibetanus*, one Snow Leopard *Uncia uncia* (all CITES I species), five Red Foxes *Pseudalopex culpaeus* and 15 Smooth-coated Otters *Lutrogale perspicillata* (both CITES II). The cases are being investigated.

TRAFFIC India

SOUTH-EAST ASIA

INDONESIA: On April 26 2000, the Natural Resource Conservation Unit (Unit Konservasi Sumberdaya Alam-KSDA) raided the Jalan Bintang bird market in Medan, north Sumatra, and seized a number of species that are protected by national legislation. These included three Siamang *Hylobates synactylus* (CITES I) and the following CITES II-listed species: two Slow Lorises *Nycticebus coucang*; one Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malayensis*; 13 cockatoos—Sulphur-crested Cockatoos *Cacatua galerita* and Lesser Sulphur-crested Cockatoos *C. sulphurea*—and two Eclectus Parrots *Eclectus roratus*. All animals were given to Siantar Zoo in north Sumatra.

TRAFFIC Southeast Asia

On 2 October 2000, Sabun Yani was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment after being found guilty of transporting and planning to sell the pelt and bones of a newly killed young Sumatran tigress *Panthera tigris*. Yani was arrested in Kerinci Seblat National Park following an undercover investigation by members of the park's Tiger Protection and Conservation Unit.

Fauna and Flora International: Indonesia Programme

MALAYSIA: On 12 February 2000, police detained a man and seized more than 1000 snakes of various species from his lorry at a road block on Tanah Merah-Jell road. The snakes, contained in 150 plastic bags, are believed to have been smuggled in from Thailand and were bound for Penang.

The suspect has been released on bail and the snakes handed over to the State Wildlife and National Parks Department.

The previous week some 5000 Common Rat Snakes *Ptyas mucosus* (CITES II) were seized at Sungai Golok by members of the Territorial Army stationed at the Malaysia-Thai border. The snakes had been destined for the west coast for processing before being exported.

The Sun (Malaysia), 12 February 2000

THAILAND: On 28 April 2000, Customs officers at Don Muang Airport, Bangkok, seized 488 kg of raw ivory in the form of 112 tusk pieces. These were contained in three iron boxes arriving from Zambia and had been concealed under a thick layer of uncut gemstones. Documents with the shipment said the boxes contained gemstones. A citizen of Guinea was arrested when he arrived at the airport's cargo terminal to claim the goods but was later released when he agreed to sign over all the tusks to the Government. According to the law in Thailand, the owner of illegally imported goods is freed if he gives all contraband to the Government, except in certain cases, for example where illegal drugs are concerned, an offence governed by other legislation specifying harsher penalties.

The Associated Press, 1 May 2000

VIET NAM: On 14 March 2000, Ninh Binh Forest Protection Department (FPD) officials confiscated a consignment of more than 700 Malayan Snail-eating Turtles *Malayemys subtrijuga*, weighing 350 kg, and various other reptile species and birds. The turtles were contained in 100 kg burlap rice bags, together with 800 kg of Asiatic Rock Pythons *Python molurus* (CITES I/II). Other species included Tokay Geckos *Gekko gecko* (30 kg), Bocourt's Watersnakes *Enhydryis bocourti* (200 kg), and 56 ducks *Heliopais* sp.

The consignment, from the southern-most tip of Viet Nam, was being shipped under a permit issued by the Kien Giang FPD. It was confiscated because it exceeded the weight authorized under the permit.

The seizure of so many *Malayemys subtrijuga* presented a problem for the Turtle Conservation and Ecology Project (TCEP) in that this species is difficult to maintain in captivity for any length of time and the volume of turtles confiscated would have exceeded TCEP's holding capacity for aquatic species. The case highlights the urgent need to develop a contingency plan that would permit the project to ship southern species back to potential translocation sites within their natural range, following quarantine and rehabilitation. New regulations that will be issued by the national government in the near future are also likely to increase the numbers of turtles confiscated by authorities.

The shipment of *Malayemys* was returned to the traders but a fine was imposed for exceeding weight restrictions.

On 15 March 2000, Ninh Binh Forest Protection Department rangers seized a second shipment of wildlife being transported north by lorry on Highway One, travelling from Soc Trang Province in the south of the country, apparently destined for the Chinese border. The cargo comprised 83 turtles and three snakes: six Impressed Tortoises *Manouria impressa* (CITES II), 19 Elongated Tortoises *Indotestudo elongata* (CITES II) four Asian Box Turtles *Cuora amboinensis*, 18 Radiated Leaf Turtles *Cyclemys pulchristriata*, nine Giant Asian Pond Turtles *Heosemys grandis*, two Yellow-headed Temple Turtles *Hieremys annandalii*, 24 Malayan Snail-eating Turtles *Malayemys subtrijuga* and Black Marsh Turtles *Siebenrockiella crassicollis*; one Chinese Rat Snake *Ptyas korros*, one Common Rat Snake *P. mucosus* and one Copperhead Racer *Elaphe radiata*.

The trader had exceeded the weight authorized by a permit in his possession and issued by the Soc Trang Provincial FPD; most specimens were returned to him.

On 28 May 2000, Ninh Binh rangers confiscated a cargo of reptiles and birds from a public bus on Highway One in Tam Diep, Ninh Binh Province. The bus had travelled from Ca Mau Province in the

south of Viet Nam and was destined for the Mong Cai border crossing with China in Quang Ninh Province. Ten Asian Box Turtles *Cuora amboinensis*, 10 Yellow-headed Temple Turtles *Hieremys annandalii*, 1209 Malayan Snail-eating Turtles *Malayemys subtrijuga* (identification by rangers not verified), 102 Water Monitors *Varanus salvator*, 360 kg Bocourt's Watersnakes *Enhydryis bocourti*, 390 Tokay Geckos *Gekko gecko*, and 494 birds (species not given) were seized.

Cuc Phuong Conservation Project; TRAFFIC Southeast Asia

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA: On 15 March 2000, at Perth District Court, German national Lutz Obelgoenner was sentenced to three and a half years' in gaol for the attempted illegal export of more than 80 native snakes and lizards from Western Australia on 24 December 1999. Obelgoenner had undertaken a highly organized operation and had caught the animals himself. His sentence was reduced to two and a half years' following a guilty plea and for his co-operation with the investigation. He was also fined AUD2000 (USD1180) on two cruelty charges.

Obelgoenner attempted to export six pythons, eight monitor lizards, 68 skink lizards native to the Pilbara and Murchison regions, and numerous geckos from Geraldton. A further 27 reptiles were found in a portable cooler in his vehicle. The animals are in the care of the Department of Conservation and Land Management and are to be released in the wild.

On 28 April 2000, at the Supreme Court, South Australia, German citizen Ralph Dieter Zeiler pleaded guilty to charges of attempting to export Australian wildlife without authority and was sentenced to 18 months' gaol (reduced to six months upon entering into a one-year good behaviour bond).

Zeiler had attempted to smuggle 75 native lizards from Adelaide international airport to Germany in 1999, including Spiny-tailed Geckos *Strophurus intermedius*, Beaded Geckos *Diplodactylus damaeus*, Western Stone Geckos *D. granariensis*, Barking Geckos *Nephrurus milii*, Starred Knob-tailed Geckos *N. stellatus* and the very rare Pernatty Knob-tailed Geckos *N. deleani*. The lizards had been concealed in Zeiler's hand luggage, suitcase and on his person. He claimed that he intended to establish a self-sustaining population of the lizards, and planned to swap and sell the animals to other people who shared his hobby. The reptiles were reported to be too territorial to be returned to their original environment and have been placed in Monarto Zoological Park in South Australia.

On 4 May 2000, at Hobart Magistrates' Court, Tasmania, David Campbell Strachan, from Brighton, Victoria, pleaded guilty to nine charges, including breaching two control orders imposed to keep him out of Tasmanian waters following previous convictions for illegal fishing of abalone. Strachan, who has some 95 convictions for fisheries offences dating back to 1970, was fined AUD800 000 (USD470 000), ordered to forfeit his boat and diving gear, and sentenced to 27 months in gaol.

In March 1997, Strachan became the first person in Australia gaoled for fisheries offences when he was sentenced to six months' imprisonment and fined more than AUD10 000.

Minister for Justice and Customs (Australia) Media Release, 16 March 2000; TRAFFIC Oceania; Marine and Rescue Unit, Tasmanian Police Service

NEW ZEALAND: Between August and December 1999, nine shipments of furs (predominantly alpaca rugs) from Bolivia were intercepted in Auckland on the basis of under-declared value and possible revenue offences. On inspection, however, eight rugs made of Vicuña *Vicugna vicugna* (CITES I/II) skins were found concealed amongst the fur bales. Each rug had been made up of approximately 15 skins—a total of 122 skins.

While identification of the skins was awaiting verification, the four importers—all Korean nationals—became aware of the investigation and fled the country. Consideration is being given to charging them in absentia so that they can be arrested should they return to New Zealand.

The Vicuña is the smallest member of the Camelid family standing 0.8–1.1m at the shoulder, typically weighing 45–55 kg and producing extremely fine and highly sought-after wool.

Wildlife Enforcement Group (Agriculture, Conservation, Customs), New Zealand

VANUATU: In July 2000, police officers seized 63 pieces of ivory. Vanuatu lacks the forensic facilities to identify the material for the evidence before the court. The Vanuatu MA is forwarding a sample to the USFWS Forensic Laboratory.

The case is under investigation.

Environment Unit, Government of Vanuatu

A M E R I C A S

CANADA: In July 2000, the Ontario Court of Justice in Welland, Ontario, handed down the largest fine ever imposed under federal legislation in Canada for a wildlife smuggling offence. Mike Flikkema was gaoled for three months and fined, together with his son, Harold Flikkema, a total of CAD75 000 (USD50 676) after they entered guilty pleas to criminal charges of smuggling tropical finches across international borders.

Mike Flikkema, his wife Johanne and son were arrested in February in Canada following a 17-month investigation by Environment Canada and the USFWS that involved almost 5000 birds. Johanne Flikkema was convicted and fined US\$7500 in a US court. She is currently serving a six-month sentence in that country following her conviction on two felony charges in this case. She will face similar charges in Canadian courts upon her release.

Between 1997 to 1999, the Flikkemas, through their company Flikkema Aviaries, of Fenwick, Ontario, imported 19 bird shipments containing some 12 000 finches, of which an estimated 5000 were CITES-listed species including 756 finches, 30 parakeets and 20 Hill Mynahs *Gracula religiosa* (CITES II). The birds were then forwarded to the USA without valid export permits.

In June 1999, Johanne and Mike Flikkema, each pleaded guilty to four counts of violations relating to import violations in 1997 and 1998. These charges stemmed from two occurrences involving the illegal importation of CITES-listed birds from Europe to Canada and the later distribution of these birds. They were fined CAD8500 (USD5760).

Environment News Service, 12 July 2000; Environment Canada, 4 February 2000; Environment Canada News Release, 7 July 2000

COLOMBIA: On 9 June 2000, Denis González Ayarza, of Panama, was sentenced to two years' imprisonment and fined 8 million pesos (USD13 864).

Ayarza was arrested on 11 May 2000 at El Dorado airport, Bogotá after he was caught attempting to smuggle 344 Matamata Turtles *Chelus fimbriatus* (a protected species in Colombia) and 196 Harlequin Poison Frogs *Dendrobates histrionicus* (CITES II) out of the country in his luggage.

This is reportedly the first time anyone in Colombia has been prosecuted for a wildlife smuggling offence.

El Tiempo (Colombia), 4 September 2000

USA: On 6 June 2000, at the District Court in the Eastern District of New York, Eugeniusz Koczuk, of Connecticut, was sentenced to 20 months' imprisonment and fined USD25 000; he was also ordered to forfeit just under a tonne of caviar. Koczuk was found guilty in November 1999 of smuggling caviar into the USA (*TRAFFIC Bulletin* 18(2):76). Two co-defendants have yet to be sentenced.

On 21 July 2000, three members of a Maryland company pleaded guilty to charges of smuggling caviar into the country and have agreed to pay a fine of USD10.4 million, reportedly the largest ever in a wildlife prosecution.

Hossein Lolavar, president of US Caviar & Caviar, Faye Briggs, a corporate officer and the company's sales manager, and Ken Noroozi, the president of Kenfood Trading LLC, each pleaded guilty to charges including conspiracy, smuggling and making false statements in violation of the *Endangered Species Act*. If the plea agreements are accepted by the court, each defendant will receive between one and four years in gaol.

The defendants admitted smuggling black market sturgeon caviar into the USA with forged Russian caviar labels. In 1998 alone, US Caviar & Caviar purchased more than 13 600 kg of Caspian Sea sturgeon caviar, more than half of which was imported using false documents. They also admitted selling fish roe from North American Paddlefish *Polyodon spathula* and Shovelnose Sturgeon *Scaphirynchus platyrhynchus* with false documents claiming that the roe was actually caviar from Russia; both species are protected in the USA.

TRAFFIC North America 3(2), July 2000; WWF-US Press Release, 24 July 2000

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EUROPE

BELGIUM: In October 2000, the Anti-Drug Group (GAD) Inspection Service team raided several antique shops in Brussels following information obtained by TRAFFIC Europe. Skins of two Tigers *Panthera tigris* and three Leopards *Panthera pardus* (both CITES I), 15 primate skulls (CITES I/II), one large python skin (CITES II), one stuffed Gaviel *Gavialis gangeticus* (CITES I) and some 230 carved items made of elephant and hippo ivory were seized. The shop owners claimed the goods were 'antiques' which did not require documentation; experts consulted by Customs, however, concluded that most items had been acquired recently.

The GAD Inspection Service team at Zaventem Airport, Brussels, have informed TRAFFIC Europe that shipments of caviar have been sent illegally from Azerbaijan about once a month by courier to a private address in Brussels. The packets usually contain 0.5 kg of caviar. Up to 250 g of caviar per person may be carried as personal effects but applies only to passengers accompanying their cargo. Five shipments have been seized during 2001.

Further seizures by the GAD team at Zaventem Airport include:

26 May 2001: nine live Bell's Dabb Lizards *Uromastyx acanthinurus*, one Spur-thighed Tortoise *Testudo graeca* (both CITES II), two live scorpions and a number of cacti were confiscated from the hand luggage of three Belgian nationals returning from Tunisia. The men are accused of violating national law which is linked to Council Regulation 338/97 which implements CITES in the EU. The seizure took place following information obtained from TRAFFIC. The animals are being cared for by the Sabena rescue centre.

27 May 2001: 310 CITES Appendix II-listed wild orchids, arriving by post from Costa Rica, including two *Dichaea* specimens, five *Epidendrum*, 12 *Leptotes*, three *Lycaste*, nine *Masdevallia*, 31 *Maxillaria*, eight *Oncidium*, 11 *Pleurothallis*, 57 *Psycmorchis*, 52 *Stelis*, five *Telipogon*.

30 June 2001: a shipment of ivory from Mali, bound for China, consisting of 45 unworked and 29 worked tusks and 405 ivory items (total 150 kg). Most of the tusks were less than 70 cm. On 5 August, 15 doctors returning to China after a two-year period working in Mali, were charged with smuggling the ivory and other goods after being detained by police as they passed through Zaventem Airport in transit. Personal effects found among the ivory linked the men to the consignment. However, because the maximum penalty for smuggling wildlife listed under EU Regulations 338/97 in

Belgium is only three months' imprisonment, the suspects could not be held in custody and left the country some days later. The date for a court hearing has not yet been set.

GAD, Brussels; TRAFFIC Europe; <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english>; *New Straits Times (Malaysia)*, 6 August 2001

GERMANY: In January 2001, Victor Franck of Germany was found guilty and sentenced to three years' imprisonment on charges relating to 15 cases of smuggling or attempting to smuggle protected live animals for zoos and wildlife parks. Joint investigations by Customs officials and police began when a mis-addressed fax reached TRAFFIC which included offers of CITES-listed animals. Four Germans and one Russian were initially charged with comprising a criminal organization under Paragraph 129 under the Criminal Code of German law and accused of 41 cases of smuggling or attempting to smuggle the following CITES I-listed species: Orang-utans *Pongo pygmaeus*, Javan Gibbons *Hylobates moloch*, Komodo Monitor lizards *Varanus komodoensis*, Red-crowned Cranes *Grus japonensis*, Arabian Oryx *Oryx leucoryx*, Asian Elephants *Elephas maximus* and CITES II-listed Ural Owls *Strix uralensis*, overall involving more than 25 countries. However, the Higher Regional Court in Frankfurt did not pursue charges relating to the formation of a criminal organization and, for simplicity, narrowed the court procedure to the respective 15 cases. The other defendants were released after being held in custody for between a few days to up to eight months. Two were fined. In Germany, the smuggling of wildlife can lead to a prison term of up to five years and a fine of DM 100 000 (USD46 000) and this is one of the most severe sentences to be imposed in Germany for a wildlife trade offence in more than ten years.

TRAFFIC Europe

ITALY: In March 2001, some 8000 stuffed and live birds were seized during raids on the houses of breeders and national animal traders. Species included Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* (CITES I/Annex A), Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*, Eurasian Eagle-Owl *Bubo bubo*, Eurasian Griffon *Gyps fulvus*, Red Kite *Milvus milvus*, Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo* (all CITES II/EU Annex A), as well as parrots (CITES I/II EU Annex A/B), ciconiiformes, herons and thousands of passeriformes. The seizures followed a year-long investigation involving the co-operation of the Italian Forestry Corps, the Regional Corp of Regione Veneto (North Italy) and the Guardia di Finanza. Some 20 people have been questioned by the police and the investigation continues.

TRAFFIC Europe

POLAND: On 4 June 2001, at Warsaw National Airport, Customs officials seized 649 live Spur-thighed Tortoises *Testudo graeca* (CITES II) and Egyptian Tortoises *Testudo kleinmanni* (CITES I), and eight Grey Parrots *Psittacus erithacus* (CITES II) from two Lithuanians who had travelled from Syria. The animals had been transported in small cages that were wrapped with plastic bags and hidden in hand luggage. No CITES permits could be presented. The pair has been banned from entering Poland for two years. The reptiles have been placed with Warsaw Zoo.

Frankfurter Rundschau (Germany), 8 June 2001

RUSSIA: On 11 August 2001, Russian guards arrested two Dagestan residents attempting to smuggle 54 caviar-bearing sturgeon out of the vicinity of the Caspian Sea. Nine of the fish were Beluga *Huso huso*. In July, Russia halted commercial fishing of sturgeon in the Caspian Sea for the rest of the year owing to depletion of stocks (see page 33 of this issue).

Associated Press; TRAFFIC International

UK: In January and March 2001, the Customs CITES team at Heathrow seized 18 kg and 120 kg of caviar, respectively, imported by post from Dubai, destined for the UK. Enquiries are continuing.

In March 2001, the Customs CITES team at Heathrow seized 710 Horsfield's Tortoises *Testudo horsfieldii* (CITES II) from three suitcases of a passenger arriving from Russia, in transit to Tunisia. The suspect was arrested owing to lack of CITES permits and for infringing IATA regulations. The case is continuing. In April 2001, the Customs CITES team at Gatwick Airport seized 445 kg of raw ivory from a consignment of stone carvings from Kenya, in transit to China. The Chinese authorities took on the case after being informed and arrested one individual.

On 11 July 2001, at North Sefton Magistrates' Court, Douglas Petrie, owner of Southport Zoo, was charged with the illegal display of CITES Appendix I-listed (Annex A) specimens for commercial purposes, in contravention of EU regulations. The case arose following a search of Petrie's premises by Merseyside Police, accompanied by staff of TRAFFIC International and the RSPCA, on 20 November 2000. The following specimens were on commercial display: one Radiated Tortoise *Geochelone radiata*, one Scarlet Macaw *Ara macao*, three Ocelots *Leopardus pardalis* and three Cotton-headed Tamarins *Saguinus oedipus* (all CITES I), and nine Hermann's Tortoises *Testudo hermanni*, 10 Spur-thighed Tortoises *Testudo graeca*, three Barn Owls *Tyto alba* and four Tawny Owls *Strix aluco* (all CITES II). Petrie was unable to provide the necessary paperwork. During his trial, Petrie changed his plea from not guilty to guilty. He was fined GBP5000 (USD7116) and GBP350 costs and was ordered to forfeit all the animals mentioned in the charges.

HM Customs & Excise CITES Team, Heathrow Airport; Merseyside Police; TRAFFIC International

A F R I C A

DJIBOUTI: On 8 June 2001, officials of the Ministère de l'Habitat, de l'Urbanisme, de l'Environnement et de l'Aménagement du Territoire, assisted by 25 police officers, inspected over 40 stalls selling wildlife in Djibouti-ville's central market and seized a number of items including 16 elephant ivory pieces, shells of three Hawksbill Turtles *Eretmochelys imbricata*, skins of nine Leopards *Panthera pardus* and two Cheetahs *Acinonyx jubatus* (all CITES I), and the hide of a Spotted Hyaena *Crocuta crocuta*. The raid followed a meeting with representatives from TRAFFIC who were in Djibouti to encourage awareness of CITES-related issues and to foster support and co-operation among the various government agencies involved in CITES implementation. Most of these wildlife products are imported from neighbouring countries and the majority are sold to non-Djiboutians who export them (see also *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 18(2):58).

www.traffic.org

A S I A

EAST ASIA

CHINA: On 12 March 2001, at the Zhefang toll station, along the Yunnan and Myanmar border, at Luxi City, Dehong Prefecture, Yunnan Province, border police conducting a routine check on a lorry coming from Myanmar found 1178 snakes in 88 crates concealed under 20 bags of rice husk. Specimens included 42 Asian Cobras *Naja naja* (CITES II) (weighing a total of 42 kg, contained in 3 crates), 650 Rat Snakes *Ptyas* spp. (654 kg in 54 crates), and 486 vipers (380 kg in 31 crates). All the snakes are listed as protected species in the province. The driver of the lorry and one passenger were detained while another passenger escaped.

Yunnan Daily (China), 14 March, 2001

HONG KONG: On 29 January 2001, at Chek Lap Kok Airport, Customs officers examining a box being carried by a businessman arriving from Johannesburg discovered the stuffed head of a male adult Lion *Panthera leo* (CITES II) with its skin, four limbs and tail still attached. The man claimed the specimen, which weighed 11.9 kg and measured 3.32 m from head to tail, was for decoration in his home. An export permit had been issued by South Africa but the traveller was unable to produce an import permit. He was handed over to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department but later released with the specimen.

TRAFFIC East Asia

JAPAN: On 30 July 2001, at Tokyo District Court, Hirotaka Sakai, president of a clothing retailer, his manager Yuji Katsumata, and the company, were each fined 500 000 yen (USD4260) for illegally importing and attempting to sell shawls from Nepal made from the wool of Tibetan Antelopes *Pantholops hodgsonii* (CITES I), in April 2001. Five shawls were seized.

Police began investigating the company following information received from TRAFFIC East Asia-Japan.

TRAFFIC East Asia

NEPAL: On 6 August 2001, Kathmandu District Office officials arrested three Nepalis for questioning in relation to an attempt to smuggle beetles to Japan. Their identities were revealed by two Japanese men who were arrested on 29 July as they attempted to smuggle 271 beetles on a flight to Osaka. The insects are kept as pets and are in high demand in Japan.

<http://www.nepalnews.com/> 1/7 August 2001

SOUTH ASIA

INDIA: On 27/28 April 2001, during two raids, police in Uttar Pradesh, India, arrested five members of a gang involved in the international trade in animal skins and seized skins of 25 Tigers *Panthera tigris* and Leopards *P. pardus* (both CITES I). The suspects were reportedly sending the skins to international markets via Nepal after acquiring them from poachers in Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan. In the first incident, a Special Task Force (STF) team of the police arrested four persons including two Nepali citizens from Kooli Bazar area of Kanpur and seized skins of 19 Leopards and one Tiger. In the second case, another STF team seized five Leopard skins and 10 Leopard nails from a person in Lucknow. Two of the skins had been packed in stamped parcels, which were allegedly sent by courier from Bilaspur.

Enforcement agencies reveal that those arrested in the first incident have been involved in the international smuggling of cat skins, bones and other parts from various places in north and Central India. One is the son of a person arrested in Khaga in January 2000 (*TRAFFIC Bulletin* 18(2):74), pointing to clear links between these seizures.

On 30 July 2001, two Russian insect collectors were arrested in remote forest in the Kanchenjunga National Park in the Indian State of Sikkim, with some 2000 butterflies and 15 kg of insects in their possession. Four porters, two of whom are Nepali nationals, were also arrested. The Russian pair are reported to have been involved in organizing large-scale expeditions to Russian, China and Tajikistan for decades, and have sold specimens to collectors in Germany and Japan. The Russians have been detained under the *Wildlife Protection Act*. The collectors were believed to be hunting rare specimens, including the Bhutan Glory *Bhutanitis lidderdalii* and Kaiserihind *Teinopalpus imperialis* butterflies (both CITES II), as well as moths and stag beetles.

www.indya.com, 28 April 2001; *TRAFFIC India*; *Wildlife Protection Society of India*, 9 August 2001; *The Independent (UK)*, 9 August 2001

SOUTHEAST ASIA

MALAYSIA: On 19 February 2001, at Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport, Customs officials and staff of Selangor Wildlife and National Parks Department impounded 1176 Oriental Rat Snakes *Ptyas mucosus* and 516 Asian Cobras *Naja naja* (both CITES II) awaiting transportation overseas (destination unreported). Both species, which are non-venomous, had been smuggled in from a neighbouring country in transparent sacks inside 141 boxes. Rat snakes are reportedly caught for their meat whereas Asian Cobras serve medicinal purposes. Two men were detained when they failed to produce valid documents for their cargo but were later released; further action may be taken against them, however.

On 13 March and 2 April 2001, acting on information supplied by TRAFFIC, the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (PERHILITAN) raided three locations in Kuala Lumpur selling pieces of carved elephant ivory (CITES I). In the first, a shop in the Equatorial Hotel, 14 ivory items were seized including carved boxes, fans and bowls. A few pieces of carved Hawksbill Turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata* (CITES I) shell were also seized. The owner of the shop, Mr Sunny Ng, was fined 1500 Ringgit (USD392). A further two shops, known as King Art, situated in the Park Royal Hotel and the Shangri-La Hotel, both owned by Mr Tee Siyo Koog, were found to have a total of 13 ivory items, including one chess set and earrings. Mr Tee was fined 2500 Ringgit (USD653), which was reduced to 2000R (USD522) after an appeal. Both dealers appealed to have their ivory returned to them, claiming it was antique and therefore owned by them before the elephant ivory trade ban came into effect. However, as they did not have any documentation or proof of origin, the ivory was confiscated.

A large number of Malayan Pangolins *Manis javanica* (CITES II and fully protected under Malaysia's *Wildlife Protection Act 1972*) have been seized in separate incidents in Malaysia in recent months. On 26 April 2001, staff of the General Operations Force seized more than 2000 kg of Malayan Pangolins. Some weeks earlier, on 18 March, more than 100 pangolins contained in 60 plastic baskets were seized from a jetty on the Kelantan side of Golok River; two men from Terengganu were detained. The specimens were believed to have been brought from Johor and were bound for Thailand. By law, anyone who possesses, kills and hunts this species faces a maximum fine of RM5000 (USD1317) or five years' gaol or both. The pangolins were to be sent to a zoo or released in the wild.

On 9 May, 202 pangolins were seized by the Wildlife and National Parks Department (PERHILITAN) from a house in Yong Peng that they had been monitoring for two days. The pangolins were found in plastic cages normally used for transporting chickens; some were already dead. One man was detained and subsequently released on bail. It is believed the animals were due to be smuggled into Thailand. The Magistrates' Court issued an order to have the pangolins released into a forest reserve.

On 20 May 2001, police officials arrested four Thai nationals in possession of a consignment of agarwood *Aquilaria* at a road block in Selama. The wood is believed to have been extracted illegally from a forest reserve in Kedah. The suspects, in a taxi bound for the Thai border town of Betong, had no identification papers. They were remanded in custody and were to be handed over to immigration and forestry authorities for illegal entry and possession of agarwood without a permit.

On 25 May 2001, in a joint operation of the police, Perak Forestry Department and Rela (civil defence volunteers), five Thais were arrested on suspicion of stealing sandalwood *Santalum* from jungle on the Malaysian-Thai border near Batu, Jalan Kinjang, Sahom, Chenderiang in Kampar. A further two people are being sought. The men are reported to be part of a syndicate stealing sandalwood in an area that extends from Hulu Perak district to the forest reserve in Batang Padang-Kampar.

New Straits Times (Malaysia), 19 February; 21 April; 10/28 May 2001; TRAFFIC Southeast Asia; BERNAMA, 23 May 2001

SINGAPORE: On 2 November 2000, Lawrence Kuan Kok Choon of Singapore was sentenced to one year in prison and fined SGD10 000 (USD5630) for the possession of two Lear's Macaws *Anodorhynchus leari* (CITES I) that he had smuggled from Brazil in 1996. The birds were found in Kuan's flat after he had been caught at a Paris airport on his way from Brazil to Singapore with a different pair of macaws.

In collaboration with the Management Authority of Brazil, Singapore arranged for the birds to be repatriated on 21 March 2001. They have been placed at Sao Paulo Zoo.

Agri-food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore; Straits (Singapore), 21 March 2001

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA: On 11 April 2001, at Adelaide Magistrates' Court, Kimihito Takahashi, charged with the illegal possession and attempted export of five Shingleback Lizards *Trachydosaurus rugosus*, was sentenced to three months' imprisonment (suspended) and was fined a total of AUD1000 (USD494). The reptiles had been wrapped individually in fabric pouches and were found in a room at the Murray Bridge backpacker hostel following a tip-off to Customs. A box with a Tokyo address was found in the room. The lizards have been released in the wild.

On 16 April 2001, with the co-operation of their South African counterparts, troops of Australia's Defence Force (ADF) apprehended a Togo-flagged ship off the coast of South Africa. The vessel had first been sighted on 29 March reportedly poaching Patagonian Toothfish *Dissostichus eleginoides* in Australian waters off the McDonald and Heard Islands in the Indian Ocean near Antarctica. It was apprehended about 540 km south of Cape Town after being chased for two weeks over a distance of 3200 km as it headed across the Indian Ocean towards South Africa. Some 100 t of Patagonian Toothfish was estimated to be on board. The operation to board the vessel involved co-operation between the Australian Fisheries Management Agency, the ADF and the South African National Defence Force. This operation marks the first time the ADF has worked in conjunction with the SANDF to capture an illegal fishing vessel.

The vessel was towed from South African waters to Fremantle, Western Australia. On 21 September 2001, at Perth District Court, the captain, Leonardo Aviles pleaded guilty to charges of illegal fishing inside Australia's EEZ. On 11 October he was fined a total of AUD136 000 (USD69 000). Forfeiture of the vessel, gear and catch is still subject to litigation (see also page 23 of this issue).

The Advertiser (Adelaide), 11 April 2001; Reuters News; Service, 17 April 2001; Sydney Morning Herald, 13 April 2001; TRAFFIC Oceania

NEW ZEALAND: In January 2001, the activities of a German couple visiting Stewart Island (south of South Island) attracted the attention of the Department of Conservation who in turn contacted the Wildlife Enforcement Group. Enquiries culminated in the couple's apprehension at Auckland Airport on 28 January when the male was found to be carrying one pair of Gray's Tree Geckos *Naultinus grayii* in his underwear. As a result, Jorg Kreutz from Frankfurt, Germany, was convicted in Manukau District Court and fined NZD10 000 (USD4117) plus NZD1000 per head of animal, resulting in a total fine of NZD12 000.

TRAFFIC Oceania

AMERICAS

BRAZIL: On 12 February 2001, police in Rio de Janeiro arrested Austrian botanist Johann Zillinger following the discovery of 25 birds and two snakes in his luggage; eggs of five Orange-winged Amazons *Amazona amazonica* (CITES II) had been placed in a sock and tucked into his underwear so they would be at nest temperature. Zillinger reportedly bought the animals in the port of Belém and planned to take them to Austria for sale in Europe. Police also arrested a worker at the airport who they believe was set to help Zillinger move his baggage through Customs. The birds included 10 Red-capped Parrots *Pionopsitta pileata* (CITES I), seven Yellow-fronted Amazons *Amazona ochrocephala*, one Festive Parrot *A. festiva*, five Orange-winged Amazons and four Canary-winged Parakeets *Brotogeris versicolurus* (all CITES II). Zillinger has been released on bail but faces charges of smuggling.

Reuters, 14 February 2001; Cage & Aviary Birds, 17 March 2001

ECUADOR: On 12 June 2001, a court in Guayaquil ruled as unacceptable a claim by the owners of an illegal shark-finning vessel that their constitutional rights had been violated by the seizure of their

vessel and destruction of their catch. The industrial longliner *María Canela II* was apprehended by Galapagos Park rangers on 22 March inside the Galapagos Marine Reserve. The vessel had 40 sharks on 15 km of long-line and 78 sharks and 1044 shark fins in her hold.

The owners of the vessel appealed the court ruling. The appeal was heard by the Constitutional Court in Quito on 25 October but was rejected and endorsement given to the Galapagos National Park for whatever action the Park considered it would be pertinent to take (see page 3 of this issue).

TRAFFIC South America; Press Release of WWF-Galapagos Program and Fundacion Natura, 29 October 2001; <http://www.seashepherd.org>, 8 November 2001

USA: On 9 and 11 April 2001, Customs officials at Los Angeles International Airport discovered 99 kg of African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I) ivory concealed inside a shipment of furniture that had originated in Nigeria. A further 18 kg of ivory was subsequently confiscated from a Hollywood, California, residence. The total haul was made up of more than 480 pieces of ivory, both carved and raw, including 38 tusks, some no longer than 15 cm–20 cm. Two men have been charged.

On 29 May 2001, Maxfield Enterprises, Inc., which operates a retail shop in Beverly Hills, and its principal owner, Thomas Perse of Los Angeles, California, entered into a civil settlement with the US attorney's office in Newark, New Jersey, following Maxfield's conviction of being involved in the purchase, sale and import of shahtoosh shawls from 1994 to 1996. As a result, Perse agreed to pay a fine of USD175 000. This is the largest fine a business has paid in the USA for dealing in shahtoosh shawls.

As part of the settlement, Maxfield Enterprises will run a black and white public service advertisement in a fashion magazine expressing contrition and describing the threats to the Tibetan Antelope *Pantholops hodgsonii* (CITES I) and the illegal status of this product.

The USFWS has been able to recover some of the shawls from Maxfield which will be shared with other Customs officers for identification purposes. Some shawls will be cut into pieces and placed in identification kits, which will assist officers in distinguishing between pashmina and shahtoosh.

By contrast, on 20 February 2001, at the federal District Court in Newark, New Jersey, Navrang Exports based in Mumbai, India, was fined USD5000 and the company sentenced to five years' probation for smuggling 308 shahtoosh shawls into the country six years earlier. This is the first US felony case involving illegal trade in shahtoosh to be prosecuted, but the penalty was criticised by conservationists for its leniency.

One of the longest gaol sentences for the illegal trade in live animals was imposed on 7 June 2001, at San Francisco federal court. Keng Liang "Anson" Wong of Malaysia was sentenced to almost six years' imprisonment and fined USD60 000. He had faced 40 federal felony charges relating to illegal wildlife trade activities from 1996 to 1998 that infringed domestic, national and international laws and involved some 300 protected reptiles. Amongst these were two particularly rare reptiles from island nations: the Komodo Dragon *Varanus komodoensis* (CITES I), the world's largest lizard, native to a small area of Indonesia, and the Ploughshare Tortoise *Geochelone yniphora* (CITES I), which occurs only on the island of Madagascar.

Wong pleaded guilty in December 2000 after being lured to Mexico by undercover investigators in 1998 where he was arrested and, ultimately, extradited to the USA.

In 1991, Wong was indicted in Florida on charges of conspiring to smuggle Fiji Banded Iguanas *Brachyophis fasciatus* (CITES I) (*TRAFFIC Bulletin* 13(1):37).

On 6 July 2001, at US District Court, Eastern District of New York, Grigori Oudovenko was sentenced to 27 months' imprisonment for attempting to smuggle 765 kg of caviar into the country—the largest single seizure of caviar since trade controls went into effect three years ago. A Russian citizen, Oudovenko is president of MNA Atlantic, a caviar-exporting firm with offices in St Petersburg, Moscow and New York. Ossetra caviar (derived from Russian Sturgeons *Acipenser*

gueldenstaedtii) and sevruga caviar (of the Stellate Sturgeon *A. stellatus*) was found in a container with dried fish and labelled to match the rest of the shipment. The illegal shipment was discovered in July 2000 at the Port of Newark, New Jersey.

In a related investigation, a shipment of 171 kg of caviar was intercepted at John F. Kennedy Airport, New York, in January. The caviar had been sent from MNA Atlantic to a US company and labelled as ossetra and sevruga caviar. However, DNA testing revealed that most of the shipment consisted of Beluga *Huso huso* caviar—the most expensive caviar available.

On 20 July 2001, at San Francisco District Court, Peter H. Heibloem of Queensland, Australia, and Ernest J. Bouwer, of Sandton, South Africa, were charged with illegally sending protected cycads to the USA from South Africa, Australia and Zimbabwe. The pair were arrested by USFWS officials that day. Donald Joseph Wiener of Mexico, alleged to have knowingly purchased some of these plants from Heibloem, was also charged and arrested in Mexico. On the same day, Jose "Pepe" Portilla, of Ecuador was charged in Los Angeles District Court with sending 10 protected cycads to the USA. Three other individuals—John Baker of Gauteng, South Africa, Ian Turner of Harare, Zimbabwe, and Rolf Kyburz, of Queensland, Australia—were charged but remain at large.

In separate indictments, Rolf Bauer and Jan Van Vuuren, of South Africa, were arrested on 20 July and charged with conspiracy, smuggling and making false statements in relation to the illegal import of cycads from South Africa to the USA.

All the accused are charged with using invalid CITES permits for the shipments and falsely labelling many of the plants shipped to cover up the lack of a valid permit.

The USFWS investigation also resulted in charges against three individuals accused of trafficking in protected orchids. Antonius Junioarto of Surabaya, Indonesia, and Iwan Kolopaking of Jakarta, Indonesia, have been indicted in the Northern District of California on 21 counts of conspiracy, smuggling, and false statements related to the shipment of CITES Appendix I-listed orchids from Hong Kong to the USA. Both remain at large. They are accused of sending multiple packages of orchids through the mail with Customs declarations falsely identifying the contents as toys. A separate indictment in the Northern District of California charges Terence Leung of Hong Kong with smuggling related shipments of CITES Appendix II orchids from Hong Kong into the USA. Leung also remains at liberty.

TRAFFIC provided information to the investigation which was assisted by the Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and Office of Inspector General, as well as the Endangered Species Protection Unit of the South African Police, Australian Customs and Environment Australia.

On 1 August 2001, at the Federal Court for the Eastern District of New York, Oumar Keita, of Abidjan, Ivory Coast, was convicted of attempting to smuggle 57 African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I) ivory carvings into the country. He was sentenced to serve 11 months and 10 days in gaol.

The offence took place on 17 September 2000 when Keita arrived at John F. Kennedy Airport, New York, from Abidjan, with the ivory concealed inside a sand and paper substance designed to resemble carved stone. Agents recognized the concealment technique which was identical to that used in a smuggling attempt in January 2000 by another Ivory Coast citizen—Bayo Namory—who is serving a year in prison for the offence. Letters to Keita from Namory were found in Keita's luggage, along with business cards listing African art dealers in New York.

WWF News Release, 11 June; 24 July 2001; Environmental News Service, <http://ens-news.com/ens/jul2001/2001L-07-24-01.html>; http://library.northernlight.com/FD20010706_070000047.html?cb=0&dx=1006&sc=0#doc; USFWS, 6 July; 1 August; USFWS 26 June 2001, cited in Tibetan Plateau Alert, Tibetan Antelope Project, 28 June 2001; Los Angeles Times (USA), 2 March 2001, cited in Tibetan Plateau Alert, Tibetan Antelope Project; IFAW Press release, 5 May 2001; <http://www.ifaw.com/press/pr010505.html>

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ERRATUM

In Vol. 19 No. 1, the Anti-Drug Group (GAD) was incorrectly credited with the seizure, in October 2000, of wildlife items from antique shops in Brussels, Belgium. We should like to point out that this case was in fact handled by the Customs Investigation Branch, Brussels.

TRAFFIC Europe

EUROPE

RUSSIA: On 28 April 2002, Federal Security Service agents ambushed a jeep attempting to cross into China near the Pogranichny district of Primorsky Krai and seized 18 Asiatic Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus* (CITES I) cubs. The bears had been drugged, wrapped in burlap and hidden in apple crates; one cub died from an overdose. The driver and the commander of the border outpost that oversees the area where the incident occurred were detained.

The cubs were reportedly to be sold to a farm in China for extraction of bile from their gall bladders for use in traditional medicine. Following the seizure, the cubs were to be sent to a rehabilitation centre and would later be released back into the Russian taiga.

TRAFFIC Europe; Associated Press

UK: On 11 January 2002, at Uxbridge Magistrates' Court, Richard Lincoln John Butler of London was found guilty of illegally importing reptiles into the UK at Gatwick Airport, from Orlando, USA. He was convicted on seven charges of knowingly importing live reptiles listed as an endangered species without an import permit. The species were identified as one Harlequin Monitor *Varanus rudicollis*, four Dumeril's Monitors *Varanus dumerilli*, two Bell's Dabb Lizards *Uromastix acanthinura*, one Argentine Teju *Tupinambis rufescens* and four Ball Pythons *Python regius*. Accompanying these CITES II-listed species was a non-CITES snake identified as *Dasypeltis atra* which was seized because it had been included in an illegal consignment.

Two of the charges of knowingly having acquired possession of goods subject to a restriction on importation of reptiles listed as an endangered species with intent to evade restrictions on importation relate to two Banded Tegus *Tupinambis teguixin* and one Argentine Teju *Tupinambis rufescens* (both CITES II) which were found during a search of Butler's premises.

In sentencing, Butler was given a reduced penalty owing to his financial situation and fined GBP50 per charge (GBP350 in total) (USD511) and GBP250 towards costs.

In the longest sentence ever to be imposed in the UK for a wildlife trade offence, on 18 January 2002, at Isleworth Crown Court, Raymond Humphrey of King's Lynn was gaoled for six and a half years following his conviction for smuggling, keeping and trading in rare birds. Humphrey was arrested at Heathrow Airport on 25 July 2000 after arriving to meet Thai national Peera Jungthirapanich and Wayne Standley of Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire, who had both flown in from Bangkok. In their luggage, Customs officers found 23 birds in 15 cm-diameter plastic tubes, their feet bound with tape; six had perished and most of the surviving birds were in a poor condition. None can be returned to the wild. The species (all CITES II) were: two Asian Barred Owlets *Glaucidium cuculoides*; two Mountain Hawk-Eagles *Spizaetus nipalensis*; one Brown Wood Owl *Strix leptogrammica*; one Pied Harrier *Circus melanoleucos*; five Brahminy Kites *Haliastur indus*; one Eastern Marsh-Harrier *Circus spilonotus*; one Forest Eagle-Owl *Bubo nipalensis*; two Oriental Bay-Owls *Phodilus badius*; one Harrier *Circus*; one Brown Fish-Owl *Ketupa zelonensis*; three Malay Fish-Owls *K. ketupa*; one Indian Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malayensis*; and, one Barred Eagle Owl *Bubo sumatranus*.

Customs and police officers subsequently searched Humphrey's premises in Norfolk and seized a Buff-cheeked Gibbon *Hylobates [=Nomascus] gabriellae* (CITES I); seven Slow Lorises *Nycticebus*

couang (CITES II); five tortoises, one of which was dead; two Goffin's Cockatoos *Cacatua goffini* (CITES I) and the following CITES II-listed birds: three Black Kites *Milvus migrans*; six Changeable Hawk-Eagles *Spizaetus cirrhatus*; four Crested Serpent-Eagles *Spilornis cheela*; one African White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus*; four Brahminy Kites; one Blyth's Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus alboniger*; two Red Bellied Macaws *Ara manilata*; one Philippine Serpent Eagle *Spilornis holospilus*; and, one hawk. Dead birds and a dead Slow Loris which were found in the freezer were also seized.

All three suspects were charged with being knowingly concerned in the fraudulent evasion of a restriction on the importation of goods, contrary to section 170(2) of the *Customs and Excise Management Act 1979*. Further charges relating to possession of and sale of prohibited specimens were brought against Humphrey only, to which he pleaded not guilty.

Jungthirapanich was sentenced to 22 months' imprisonment for his part in the smuggling. Standley was found not guilty to his one charge and acquitted.

The case—known as Operation Retort—is the biggest joint investigation of UK police and Customs into wildlife trade.

On 14 July 2002, at Heathrow Airport, 10 African Dwarf Crocodiles *Osteolaemus tetraspus* (CITES I) were discovered by Customs officers inspecting a shipment in transit from Nigeria to South Korea. Twelve Royal Pythons *Python regius* (CITES II) and 13 monitor lizards *Varanus* spp. (CITES I/II) were among 95 other reptiles in the consignment. Documents alleging that the reptiles were genuine exports from Benin and claiming the crocodiles to be of common species that had been farmed, had been forged. The crocodiles were cared for at the Animal Reception Centre at Heathrow. Four specimens subsequently died from internal injuries incurred from hooks with which they appear to have been caught and which were still lodged in their bodies. The remaining six were sent to breeding centres in the UK and France.

HM Customs & Excise, CITES Team, Heathrow Airport

A F R I C A

SOUTH AFRICA: On 28 November 2001, at Johannesburg International Airport, an official of the Directorate of Nature Conservation of Gauteng's Provincial Government's Department of Agriculture, Conservation, Environment and Land Affairs detained two Czech males after they attempted to export endangered cycad *Encephalartos* seeds and various invertebrates to the Czech Republic via the UK. The suspects' luggage contained various traps, containers and equipment used for the capture of small mammals and reptiles, as well as cycad seeds, live giant land snails *Achatina*, and other invertebrates, all of which were seized. The specimens had been collected without approval or permits from sites in the Eastern Cape, Western Cape, Northern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and the North West Province.

One of the suspects, Tomas Pes, was charged with "prohibited acts with endangered species" and paid an admission of guilt fine of ZAR1500 (USD147). The suspect was released and has returned to the Czech Republic. The second suspect was released without charge.

All the invertebrates were donated to the Transvaal Museum (Northern Flagship Institute) for a live public display; the other items were forfeited to the State.

On 30 April 2002, following a ten-month investigation, Arnold Maurice Bengis, chairman of Hout Bay Fishing Industries (Pty) Ltd, pleaded guilty to 28 charges of contravening the *Marine Living Resources Act*. He admitted that between 1999 and 2001 the company had knowingly and intentionally participated in the overfishing of Rock Lobster *Jasus lalandii* and Hake *Merluccias capensis*. A director of the company, Colin van Schalkwyk, pleaded guilty to 301 charges of corruption relating to the bribing of fisheries inspectors.

The discovery of a refrigerated container in Cape Town harbour by officials of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) in June 2001, led to the intensification of investigations into the company's activities. The container, which was to be shipped to the USA by Hout Bay

Fishing Industries, was found to contain 17859 kg of Rock Lobster tails and 2844 kg of Patagonian Toothfish *Dissostichus eleginoides*.

Under the terms of a plea bargain, Hout Bay Fishing Industries will forfeit the fishing vessel *Sandalene* and the contents of the container to DEAT. The total penalty imposed on Hout Bay Fishing Industries amounts to ZAR40 million (USD3.8 m), including ZAR750 000 to DEAT for legal costs that have been incurred by the Department in various High Court matters relating to the case. Mr van Schalkwyk received a sentence of ZAR1 million, or five years' imprisonment, and a five-year suspended sentence.

This is the first occasion that the extensive powers contained in the *Marine Living Resources Act* have been invoked in full.

The investigation was conducted by a multi-disciplinary task team comprising officials from the Directorate of Special Operations (Scorpions), DEAT, the South African Revenue Service and the Asset Forfeiture Unit and spanned a number of continents.

Department of Agriculture, Conservation, Environment and Land Affairs, Gauteng Province Press Release, 30 November 2001; Ministry of Environmental Affairs and Tourism Media Release, 30 April 2002

ASIA

EAST ASIA

CHINA: On 25 July 2001, one of the country's largest-ever seizures of wildlife products was discovered when two lorries with false military registration number plates were stopped by border police at Tiandu Town in Sanya City, Hainan Province. Inside the vehicles were 566 Water Monitors *Varanus salvator* (CITES II), 259 Asiatic Rock Pythons *Python molurus* (CITES I/II), five pangolins *Manis*, 168 Asian Cobras *Naja naja* (CITES II), and 2956 Chinese Rat Snakes *Ptyas korros*. Four people were arrested.

On 29 July 2001, Huang Huaqiu was sentenced to death, postponed for two years, for smuggling 44 live Saker Falcons *Falco cherrug* (CITES II) into the country at Tianjin International Airport on 13 September 2000. His personal property was also ordered confiscated. Wang Yuhua and Zhang Ying were both sentenced to life imprisonment for their part in the incident, and their personal property was also ordered to be confiscated. Two former policemen at the airport, Zuo Xiguang and Fen Jianghong were sentenced, respectively, to 15 years' and 13 years' imprisonment and both were fined USD5890.

On 8 August 2001, armed soldiers at the Manhai Inspection Station in Baoshan, Yunnan, seized animal skins from a lorry used for transporting dried fish skins. They included 23 pieces of Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) skin, 33 pieces of Leopard *P. pardus* (CITES I) skin and 134 pieces of otter skin. Two people who were arrested claimed that the skins had been purchased in a neighbouring country and were to be smuggled out of China after being processed into luxury items. The case is being investigated by Baoshan Forest Police Bureau.

On 11 March 2002, the Anti-Smuggling Taskforce seized some 9000 live freshwater turtles from the cargo holds of two mainland vessels off Po Toi Island, southeast of Hong Kong, close to mainland waters. Eleven crew members were arrested. The consignment had been issued with a health certificate by Thai authorities and was imported from Bangkok by cargo plane on the same day. However, there was no export document.

The turtles had been taken to the cargo handling area in Wan Chai by an employee of a local company. About 30 police and Customs officers then mounted a surveillance operation during which time the boxes were seen to be loaded on to a fishing boat and later transferred to another boat off Po Toi Island, where police speedboats were sent to intercept them. The consignment was reported to be destined for Huiyang, Guangdong. The turtles are a popular delicacy in many mainland restaurants.

On 18 April 2002, Liu Huasheng was sentenced to life imprisonment and fined RMB500 000 (USD60 000) for smuggling ivory into China. Two others, Shi Zongying and Lu Baolai, were sentenced, respectively, to 10 years and nine years' imprisonment and fined RMB100 000 and RMB50000.

The sentence relates to the seizure by Customs officials at Dagang, Qingdao, Shangdong, of 295 pieces of ivory (CITES I) tusks, weighing 2613.5 kg. The items had been concealed in a container loaded with teak lumber arriving by sea from Nigeria on 16 May 2001.

Yunnan Daily (China), 29 August 2001; *Reuters News Service*, 28 November 2001; *South China Morning Post (China)*, 13 March 2002; *Jinan Branch, CITES Management Authority of China*, in litt., to CITES Secretariat, 10 September 2001; 29 April 2002

HONG KONG SAR: On 25 October 2001, Customs officials seized 2.7 t of pangolin *Manis* scales, reportedly estimated to represent 5000–6000 pangolins. The bags had been hidden behind dried sea cucumbers which arrived on a ship from Indonesia.

On 11 December 2001, an illegal shipment of 9300 live turtles was seized at the Yau Ma Tei Public Cargo Working Area during a joint operation involving the Customs Ship Search and Cargo Command and the Agriculture Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD). This is the largest-ever seizure of live turtles in Hong Kong. The animals, on route from Singapore via Macau to China, were in four three-metre containers and were intended for the food trade. They were in a poor condition and had clearly been caught in the wild: many still had hooks in their mouths. They were placed at the Wild Animal Rescue Centre at Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden (KFBG) for identification and initial triage. With the help of the IUCN Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA), the turtles have been placed with reputable establishments throughout the USA and at EAZA-registered zoos (members of the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria) for rehabilitation and long-term management.

The species included Black Marsh Turtle *Siebenrockiella crassicollis*; Malaysian Giant Turtle *Orlitia borniensis*; Yellow-headed Temple Turtle *Hieremys annandalii*, River Terrapin *Batagur baska* (CITES I); Giant Asian Pond Turtle *Heosemys grandis*; Malayan Flat-shelled Turtle *Notochelys platynota*; Spiny Turtle *H. spinosa*; Asian Giant Tortoise *Manouria emys* (CITES II); Asian Box Turtle *Cuora amboinensis*; Malayan Snail-eating Turtle *Malayemys subtrijuga*; Painted Batagur *Callagur borneoensis* (CITES II); and, *Cyclemys* spp.

On 17 July 2002, Lu Hui, a citizen of mainland China, was fined HKD40 000 (USD5128) for the illegal importation of rhino horn and ivory following his arrest the previous day at Hong Kong International Airport. Customs officers carrying out a random check discovered one rhino horn (1.2 kg) and 79 pieces of ivory (1.7 kg) in his luggage. All specimens were wrapped in aluminium foil and placed in boxes. The defendant claimed that the specimens had been purchased in Dubai and were destined for mainland China. The wildlife items were forfeited.

Agriculture, Fisheries & Conservation Department, Hong Kong, in litt. to *TRAFFIC East Asia*, 16 August 2002; *Press Release, Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden, Hong Kong*, 12 December 2001; *European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) News*, 38 2002; *Turtle and Tortoise Newsletter* 5, January 2002; *TRAFFIC East Asia*

JAPAN: On 17 July 2001, at Narita International Airport, a Japanese trader was arrested for the illegal trade of 10 Radiated Tortoises *Geochelone radiata* (CITES I). The 8–10 cm-long specimens, purchased in Thailand, were concealed in the suspect's suitcase and had been intended for sale to one individual. The investigation is ongoing.

On 3 October 2001, police in Aichi Prefecture arrested Takahiko Shibata and Yuki Yoshi Azuma on suspicion of illegally importing and selling 12 Hyacinth Macaws *Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus* (CITES I). The suspects had persuaded the curator of a private zoo to breed macaws and lend his name to

applications to import these and other birds from the Philippines for breeding purposes. In April 2000, Shibata sold two of the Hyacinth Macaws for commercial purposes. Shibata was sentenced to 16 months in gaol, given a four-year suspended sentence and fined JPY800 000 (USD6550). Azuma was sentenced to 10 months' imprisonment and given a four-year suspended sentence.

On 8 November 2001, at Osaka District Court, former pet shop company president Hiroharu Kaito was sentenced to 32 months' imprisonment and fined 2.5 million yen (USD20 558) for illegally importing four Orang-utans *Pongo pygmaeus*, one Siamang *Hylobates syndactylus* and two Hoolock Gibbons *H. hoolock* (all CITES I species) in 1997 and 1998. Four others involved in the case received sentences ranging from 12 to 22 months' imprisonment and fines of between JPY700 000 and 200 million yen (USD5756 and USD16 446).

TRAFFIC East Asia-Japan; Mainichi Shimbun (Japan), 8 November 2001

TAIWAN: On 9 April 2002, Customs officers at Chiang Kai-shek Airport seized animals parts, including skins of one Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) one Leopard Cat *Prionailurus bengalensis* (CITES I/II), seven Tiger *P. tigris* (CITES I) skin wallets, and one bear leg/paw. The items were detected by X-ray inspection of the luggage of a Taiwan national returning from Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam.

On 5 May 2002, General Maritime Patrol Agents confiscated 350 juvenile Amur Sturgeons *Acipenser schrencki* (CITES II) (initially mistakenly identified as *Acipenser sinensis*) from a fishing boat in the Taiwan Strait. The fishermen on board claimed that they had smuggled 800 sturgeons across the Taiwan Strait to Taiwan on each of two previous occasions. They claimed not to know the source or intended destination of the fish but stated that they had been received at sea and were to be collected in Taiwan.

TRAFFIC East Asia; China Times (Taiwan) 6 May 2002

SOUTH ASIA

INDIA: In February 2002, in a landmark judgement, the Chief Judicial Magistrate of Katni in Madhya Pradesh convicted Shrimati Tulasia and Shrimati Mantoshi to one year's 'rigorous' imprisonment and fined both women Rs.10 000 (USD205) for possessing four Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) skins. The court ordered that if they failed to pay the fine within 30 days, they would have to undergo another five months' imprisonment.

The two residents of Katni were arrested with the fresh skins while travelling on the Utkal Express train from Budhar to Delhi.

The case was disposed of in a record ten months from the time of arrest to the delivery of the judgement in the Trial Court.

On 17 March 2002, the Special Branch of the Delhi Police arrested two traders and seized 80 shahtoosh shawls at Jangpura Extension in New Delhi. The two traders, both residents of Srinagar in Jammu and Kashmir, are believed to be among the biggest suppliers of shahtoosh shawls in Delhi and connected with the largest suppliers and exporters of shahtoosh in the world. They stated that they had been involved in the trade since 1978. The shawls are of top quality and are estimated to represent about 240 Tibetan Antelopes *Pantholops hodsgonii* (CITES I). The accused were remanded in custody for 14 days.

On 17 May 2002, the Kerala State Forest Department, with the assistance of the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI), seized a huge cache of ivory carvings in Trivandrum. An ivory trader well-known to the police, his son, and two others, were arrested. Four ivory carvings were seized, including one of almost 1.2 m in length and weighing over 40 kg. The other carvings were 43–45 cm high. The tusks had come from elephants poached in south India.

Wildlife Protection Society of India [www.wpsi-india.org], 20 February/18 March/20 May 2002

SOUTHEAST ASIA

INDONESIA: On 12 July 2002, Customs officials at Soekarno-Hatta International Airport foiled an attempt to export illegally 1526 live turtles, arriving from Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, bound for Ghuangzou, China. The reptiles—1423 Asian Box Turtles *Cuora amboinensis* (CITES II) and 113 River Terrapins *Batagur baska* (CITES I)—were destined for the food and medicine trades. The case is under investigation.

Jakarta Post (Indonesia), 17 July 2002, cited in cites-I-digest VI

MALAYSIA: On 8 August 2002, the Wildlife and National Parks Department seized 46 specimens at a roadblock in Tanjung Karang, Selangor. Two men, on their way to a processing centre in Selangor with the animals, were released on bail. The pangolins are believed to have been collected in Perak, Negri Sembilan and Selangor.

New Straits Times (Malaysia), 23 July/9 August 2002

SINGAPORE: On 28 June 2002, at PSU port, the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) seized six tonnes of African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* ivory tusks and over 40 000 ivory pieces (intended for making name seals) which had been shipped in six crates. AVA, which is responsible for the implementation and enforcement of CITES in Singapore, is investigating and working closely with Singapore Customs, police and other international agencies on this case.

The Lusaka Agreement Task Force (LATF), an inter-governmental institution that seeks to reduce illegal trade in wildlife in Africa with the support of international law enforcement agencies, co-operated to effect the interception of the ivory in Singapore. The Task Force had been conducting investigations on the ivory for the last few months, and indicated that the consignment had moved from Zambia, Malawi, and South Africa before the interception in Singapore. One man has been arrested in connection with the incident and is in police custody.

In August 2002, 1000 Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II) were seized from the luggage of an Indian national arriving at Changi Airport. He was fined SGD5000 (USD2800) and gaoled for eight weeks. The tortoises were sent back to India.

Some 2400 Star Tortoises have been seized at the airport this year.

Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority, Ministry of National Development Press Release, 11 July 2002; International Fund for Animal Welfare [www.ifaw.org], 9 July 2002; cites-I-digest VI

THAILAND: On 8 January 2002, Customs officials in Muang district of Chumphon province seized some 400 pangolins *Manis* from a lorry. The driver of the vehicle and others fled before the authorities arrived. The animals are believed to have been smuggled from Malaysia, on route to China, Hong Kong or Taiwan, for use in traditional Chinese medicines.

In July, police seized 712 pangolins and arrested two Thai men after the lorry in which they were travelling was stopped in the Lang Suan district of Chumphon province. The specimens, concealed in 70 plastic crates, are believed to have been brought from Malaysia and destined for mainland China, Hong Kong or Taiwan to be used as a TCM ingredient. They were to be taken to a Thai Forestry Department wildlife centre.

Nearly 3000 pangolins are reported to have been seized by Thai police this year.

Bangkok Post (Thailand), 10 January 2002

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA: On 31 May 2002, at Western Australia District Court, Captain Joseph Franco Rivas was charged with four counts of being in charge of a foreign vessel fishing in Australian waters without a licence. He was fined AUD50 000 (USD27 000). Two officers, Jose Fraga Sanchez and

Jesus Jose Quelle Marina, were each fined AUD25 000. The Spaniards were crew aboard the *Lena*, one of two Russian fishing boats captured by the Australian Navy in February near Heard Island, 2200 nautical miles southwest of Perth, after being found catching Patagonian Toothfish *Dissostichus eleginoides*.

The Russian captain of the other boat, the *Volga*, died in March, three weeks after drinking cleaning fluid and orange juice cocktails with three Russian crew mates while in detention aboard his boat in Fremantle Harbour, near Perth. It is believed they mistook a bottle of Indonesian cleaning fluid for alcohol. The three other Russians survived and have been charged with using a foreign boat for fishing without a licence. They have been released on bail of AUD75000 each and a preliminary hearing will take place in November 2002.

Both vessels were confiscated and a total of 200 t of toothfish seized.

Environment News Service, 12 February 2002; Associated Press, 23 April 2002; TRAFFIC Oceania

AMERICAS

CANADA: On 22 October 2001, at Vancouver Provincial Court, Gilles Deslisle of St. Raymond, Quebec, was fined CAD50 000 (USD31 000) for the illegal importation of six Queen Alexandra's Birdwing *Ornithoptera alexandrae* butterflies (CITES I). He was charged with one count of importing wildlife which was taken in contravention of a foreign law under s. 6(1) WAPPRIITA (*Wild Animal and Plant Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act*) and one count of importing wildlife without a permit under s. 6(2) WAPPRIITA. Mr Deslisle was acquitted of four other counts relating to two other importations. The butterflies were ordered forfeit to the Crown.

The charges stemmed from an incident which took place on 28 September 1998 when a parcel containing a hollowed out hardcover book concealing six Queen Alexandra's Birdwing butterflies was intercepted at the Customs Mail Centre in Vancouver. A lengthy investigation by officers of the Wildlife Enforcement Section, Pacific and Yukon Region, revealed that the originator of the package was a villager from Papua New Guinea. Working with the Papua New Guinea authorities, the Wildlife Enforcement Section arranged for immunity from prosecution for the villager and arranged for his travel to Canada to testify against Deslisle. The evidence showed that Deslisle conspired with the villager to smuggle the butterflies knowing that the activity was contrary to the laws of Papua New Guinea and Canada. A representative of the Government of Papua New Guinea also travelled to Canada to testify as to the laws of Papua New Guinea.

Gilles Deslisle is a renowned researcher in this field and has published several scientific articles on *Ornithoptera* spp.

On 30 October 2001, at Ontario Court of Justice, Welland, Ontario, Johanne Flikkema, of Fenwick, Ontario, was sentenced to one year of imprisonment, "to be served in the community", and fined CAD50000 and ordered to perform 40 hours of community service work.

Flikkema's husband, Mike Flikkema, and their son, Harold, were convicted and fined a total of CAD75 000 on similar charges in 2000 (*TRAFFIC Bulletin* 18(3):128). Mike Flikkema was also sentenced to three months in gaol.

The Flikkemas operated Flikkema Aviaries in Fenwick, Ontario, a major supplier of exotic birds. The investigation by Environment Canada's Canadian Wildlife Service and the US Fish and Wildlife Service revealed that from 1 December 1997 to 6 October 1999, Flikkema Aviaries illegally exported 3882 tropical finches and illegally imported approximately 756 tropical finches, 30 parakeets and 20 Hill Mynas *Gracula religiosa* (CITES II).

Both Johanne Flikkema and Mike Flikkema have several previous convictions involving the illegal import and export of live birds. On 1 June 2000, Johanne Flikkema was gaoled in the USA for six months for smuggling approximately 1000 tropical finches into the USA and for making false statements.

Environment Canada

USA: On 13 August 2002, the US Coast Guard seized a Honolulu-based fishing vessel about 350 miles southeast of Acapulco, Mexico. The vessel was found to be carrying 12 tonnes of shark fins in violation of the US *Shark Finning Prohibition Act*.

The case is under investigation.

<http://www.uscg.mil/pacareal/pcp/newsreleases>

CARIBBEAN

JAMAICA: On 24 January 2002, Clifford Meja and Ashley Hinds, of Honduras, were charged under the *Wildlife Protection Act*, the *Aquaculture Act* and the *Fishing Industry Act* with unlawfully handling, harvesting and processing Queen Conch *Strombus gigas* (CITES II), taken from the Pedro Banks in Jamaican waters without a licence. The pair, captain and chief mate, respectively, of the vessel Thunder Ridge, pleaded guilty to the charges and were each fined JDI million (USD22 000) or sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment—the highest fines ever imposed in Jamaica for an environmental offence. In addition, Meja was fined JD80 000 and Hinds was fined JD60 000 or six months' imprisonment for possession of a Hawksbill Turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata* (CITES I). They were also fined JDI000 or nine months' imprisonment for fishing without a licence and JD500 or six months' imprisonment for fishing for conch during a closed season.

On 26 April 2002, 104 Honduran fishermen were charged with poaching in Jamaica's territorial waters following their arrest by marine police after more than 450 kg of Queen Conch (and 3 kg of lobster) was seized from their vessel.

The captain of the vessel, Jose Nagera, was fined JMD1 million (USD22 000) for operating a factory vessel for the purposes of processing for export; the chief mate is in remand awaiting charges. The fishermen were each fined JMD1000 or sentenced to 30 days in gaol for fishing without a licence; fined JMD500 or 30 days in gaol for possession of undersized lobsters, and fined JMD200 or 30 days in gaol for operating an unlicensed boat. The vessel, equipment and catch were seized.

Environment News Service, 24 January 2002; TRAFFIC International; <http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news>

*The Queen Conch *Strombus gigas* is one of the most economically valuable fisheries resources in the Caribbean. Overfishing to meet the demand of conch meat is considered to be the principal cause of declining *S. gigas* populations. The use of scuba equipment has allowed expansion of the fishery into previously unexploited areas thereby placing many deep water populations at risk.*

Jamaica, where a number of cases involving the illegal harvesting of Queen Conch have recently been prosecuted, is one of the largest producers and exporters of Queen Conch meat in the region. Up to 95% is harvested from the offshore Pedro Banks, an area where probably more than 50% of all Queen Conch meat in international trade originates.

Although still a small-scale artisanal fishery in the mid-1980s, by the end of the decade significant landings of Queen Conch were being recorded. Following indications that the fishery was in danger of collapsing, a Management Plan was drawn up that included the establishment of a quota system, one which has been refined and revised several times over the past decade. The fishery was closed in 1999 due to a revision of the relevant legislation and a dispute about the allocation of quotas; it reopened in May 2001 but closed again after a short period. At the time of writing the fishery has not reopened.

TRAFFIC is undertaking a 'significant trade review' of the Queen Conch following the decision of the CITES Animals Committee in August 2001 to reintroduce the species into the process. This will be reviewed and discussed at the 19th Animals Committee meeting to be held early in 2003.

TRAFFIC Bulletin 16(1):17–28; Queen Conch Fisheries and their Management in the Caribbean, TRAFFIC Europe, December 2001.

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EUROPE

DENMARK: On 6 October 2002, Customs officials at Copenhagen Airport seized 103 Sperm Whale *Physeter catodon* (CITES I) teeth and three Walrus *Odobenus rosmarus* (CITES III) tusks from a Danish national travelling to Bangkok, Thailand. There was no accompanying documentation and the case was handed over to the police. The suspect stated that he had purchased the items in Greenland.

The country of origin of these teeth is not clear to the Greenlandic or Danish CITES authorities. Currently, CITES is implemented in Greenland via executive orders that govern the importation and export of specific species of wildlife and related products. According to Greenlandic legislation, it is unlawful to export Sperm Whale teeth and Walrus tusks without a CITES permit. The CITES Management Authority in Greenland has informed all handicraft shops in Greenland of the regulations applying to wildlife products, and information booklets aimed at tourists have been produced in several languages outlining the rules governing wildlife exports. New legislation specifically designed to apply the provisions of CITES in Greenland is currently in preparation. The case is under investigation.

T. Hjarsen, EcoAdvise, Copenhagen; Berlingske Tidende (Denmark), 7 October 2002; Ø. Slettermark, CITES Management Authority, Greenland; N.K. Nielsen, CITES Management Authority, Denmark; TRAFFIC Southeast Asia

MALTA: On 11 August 2003, Customs officials seized skins of some 700 protected birds, 23 mammals and three reptiles from two people returning from Cairo via Athens. The items, which were in four suitcases, were detected during a random luggage scan. Three men have been detained by police.

The birds, which had been shot, included skins of Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus axillaris/caeruleus* and Steppe Eagles *Aquila nipalensis* (both CITES II), Long-legged Buzzards *Buteo rufinus*, Little Green Bee-eaters *Merops orientalis*, pelicans and storks. From the condition of the plumage, the birds are thought to have been shot between March and May. The shooting of protected birds in Egypt by Maltese hunters has long been suspected: shooting holidays are reported to take place during winter months and the birds left in cold storage in Egypt and smuggled in the summer when the hunting season is closed. At this time the volume of work for Customs officials is heavier, and monitoring, it is perceived, is lower.

The Times of Malta, 13 August 2003; www.timesofmalta.com/core/article.php?id=133012

RUSSIA: During February and March 2003, operations directed at preventing the gathering and sale of rare and protected species of wild flowers were carried out in Moscow by the Environmental Protection Team of the Student Movement of Russia, which includes members of the Biology faculty of Moscow State University (MSU) who have specialist botanical training; two raids alone resulted in the seizure of some 75 000 snowdrop *Galanthus* (CITES II) plants.

Trains arriving at two railway stations from Crimea and the Caucasus were searched for wild flower shipments. On 10 February, at Kazansky station, almost 800 bouquets with up to 50 snowdrop plants in each, were confiscated from one person. At Kursky station the following morning, two suspects were detained with 1000 bouquets each containing up to 35 snowdrops.

Snowdrops, among the first flowers to appear in February/March, are gathered in Crimea, the Caucasus and in southern Russia, leading to the trampling of vast areas of reserved forest. One third of all the plants collected are thrown away during sorting, transportation and sale. These seizures form just a part of the enforcement work taking place in Russia to stop the illegal trade in wild plants.

In an anti-poaching campaign that started on 17 May 2003, by mid-June police had already detained almost 1000 poachers and seized nearly 1000 kg of caviar and 43 000 kg of sturgeon and other fish. The largest single seizure of caviar—some 500 kg from Amur Sturgeon *Acipenser schrencki*—took place at a storage and canning plant, which had been disguised as a garage, in a village near the Russian Far Eastern city of Khabarovsk. A targeted sturgeon fishery is banned on the Russian bank of the Amur River, to which the Amur Sturgeon is endemic (*TRAFFIC Bulletin* 19(1):38). The case is under investigation.

Natalia Kurbatova, Student Movement of Russia, Biology faculty of Moscow State University; The Vladivostok News (Russia), 24 June 2003: www.vlad.tribnet.com/news

SWITZERLAND: Between January and April 2003, Customs officers at Zurich Airport seized consignments of ivory that had arrived from Douala, Cameroon. Some of the ivory had been concealed inside clay sculptures and declared as terracotta/cowry shell sculptures. Four of these shipments—of six kg (one tusk), 11 kg (four tusks and one statue), 1.5 kg, and seven kg (three carved tusks and three figures)—had been destined for New York; one, bound for Barcelona, contained 3.3 kg of ivory jewellery; another consisting of 31.5 kg (eight tusks, five carved tusks, 28 figures, and jewellery) was to go to Madrid, and 300 g of ivory was destined for Brussels. A further 71.4 kg of ivory was seized on 6 May, bound for New York, and consisted of carved figures that had been painted black. Earlier this year, 800 g of ivory from Nairobi, destined for Moscow, were seized.

Authorities in the respective destination countries and the CITES Secretariat have been informed.

Swiss Customs Administration, April/May 2003

UK: In February 2003, Arqadia Ltd., one of the biggest firms in the UK picture framing industry, was fined GBP80 000 (USD127 000) after pleading guilty to illegally importing 700 cubic metres of picture frame mouldings constructed from Ramin *Gonystylus* spp. The goods, from Indonesia, had been seized by Customs officials at Felixstowe port and from the premises of Arqadia Ltd in Bedford, in March 2002. Samples of the wood were passed to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, for identification, which confirmed that the majority of the samples were of Ramin. The genus is listed by Indonesia in CITES Appendix III, which means that the export of Ramin or related products is banned without an export permit. When arrested and interviewed, staff at the company claimed to be unaware of the CITES restrictions on Ramin imports. However, documents found during the search of Arqadia's offices suggested that the company had actively colluded with their Indonesian suppliers to evade restrictions. Customs officers are currently working with the Indonesian CITES Management Authority to help them prosecute the Indonesian supply company. The information, initially supplied to Customs by the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), was acted on by the Customs Wildlife and Endangered Species Officer in Felixstowe, the Customs National Investigation Services and the Heathrow CITES teams.

On 23 June 2003, at the Court of Appeal in London, bird smuggler Ray Humphrey had his gaol sentence reduced from 6.5 years to 5.5 years. Refusing to cut his sentence by any more, Mr Justice Gray said that Humphrey was a professional criminal who had shown utter disregard for the law (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 19(2):76).

HM Customs & Excise, National Investigation Services; <http://209.68.34.145/eia/cgi/news/news.cgi?a=125&t=template.htm>; Norfolk News (UK), 24 June 2003

A F R I C A

KENYA: On 23 February 2003, game wardens of the Kenya Wildlife Service intercepted a jeep in the Lare Soro area of Marsabit district, near Kenya's border with Ethiopia, and seized 33 tusks of African Elephants *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I); five suspected poachers were arrested. It was not

immediately clear where the suspects acquired the tusks or whether they had killed any elephants in Kenya.

<http://abc.net.au/news/newsitems/s792768.htm>, 25 February 25, 2003

SOUTH AFRICA: On 15 July 2003, a container of shells on route from Nacala, Mozambique, to Naples, Italy, was intercepted by port authorities in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. Alarmed at the size of the shipment, the Port Anti-Narcotics Unit alerted KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife officials who seized the cargo for further investigation under South Africa's *Marine Living Resources Act*.

The shipment of almost 50 000 shells, weighing approximately 11 t comprised: 17 308 Spiny Murex *Chicoreus ramosus*; 15 450 Red Helmet Shells *Cypaecassis rufa*; 12470 Pink-lipped Agate Snails *Achatina immaculata*; 1500 Common Spider Shells *Lambis lambis*; 830 Arthritic Spider Shells *Lambis chiragra arthritica* and 661 Frog Shells *Tutufa bubo*.

All of the ornamental species were without doubt collected alive—the fresh condition of the shells and the smell of the rotting remains of the animals inside the shells was clear evidence of this. They would have been collected, probably by subsistence gatherers, in the sheltered lagoons and reefs on the northern Mozambique coast. They were almost certainly destined for the ornamental shell trade.

While none of the species is listed in the CITES Appendices nor protected under Mozambican law, collection on this scale must be a matter of concern. Although the species involved may be common in pristine tropical habitats, there is no information available to indicate whether this level of harvesting of living molluscs is sustainable. Similarly, there is no information regarding the frequency with which such shipments occur. Subsequent investigation has shown that permits for shipping this cargo were issued, but that these originated from the Mozambican Ministry of Agriculture and concerned matters relating to animal and plant health. The National Directorate of Fisheries Administration in the Ministry of Fisheries was evidently not aware of the shipment. As the consignment did not contravene any law, it has been allowed to continue its journey to Italy. The Mozambican fisheries authorities are to investigate the case.

Dr D. Herbert, Natal Museum, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa

The 50 000 shells seized in Durban, South Africa, were almost certainly destined for the ornamental shell trade. Weighing some 11 t, the shipment consisted of Spiny Murex Chicoreus ramosus, Frog Shells Tutufa bubo, Common Spider Shells Lambis lambis, Arthritic Spider Shells Lambis chiragra arthritica, Pink-lipped Agate Snails Achatina immaculata (x 2) and Red Helmet Shells Cypaecassis rufa (x 2).

These species, with the exception of the agate snails, are all spectacular tropical marine species. The Red Helmet Shells would most likely be used to make cameo jewellery, a popular item in Italy. The possible use of the agate snails is not clear but it could be that they would be ground up and used as ingredients of specialized products, for example pottery glazes.

ASIA

EAST ASIA

CHINA: On 23 October 2002, at the court of the capital of Hainan Province, Liang Huijiang, Zheng Songchang, both of Guangdong Province, and Liang Yushen, a resident of Thailand, were sentenced to life imprisonment for the illegal trafficking of wild animals to the port of Sanya, Hainan, on 24 July 2001. The animals, which were seized, included 566 monitor lizards, 259 pythons, five pangolins *Manis* and 7563 snakes from Thailand (168 cobras, 2956 Indochinese Rat Snakes *Ptyas korros* and 4439 Oriental Rat Snakes *Ptyas mucosus*).

In early January 2003, police in 14 provinces and municipalities—including Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong—confiscated more than 107 000 birds, of which 1223 were protected species, during a

10-day nationwide crackdown on illegal trade. Police raided more than 3370 bird markets, as well as 16 380 hotels and restaurants, and arrested 318 people.

In April 2003, the Shanghai No.1 Intermediate People's Court sentenced one man to death for his part in the illegal trade in more than three tonnes of ivory seized last year. If the accused is of good behaviour in gaol for a period of two years, the sentence will be commuted to life imprisonment. Another man has been sentenced to life imprisonment and had all of his personal property confiscated. Customs officials in Shanghai arrested the two Chinese traders on 30 August 2002 in possession of the ivory, which was thought to have originated in the Democratic Republic of Congo and routed to Mombasa via Uganda.

On 11 April 2003, Guangdong forest police seized 85 Water Monitors *Varanus salvator* (CITES II) from a coach travelling from Hepu, Guangxi Province, to Guangzhou. The specimens, ranging from between 1.5 kg to 5 kg, were found in five boxes that had been covered by fish; three lizards were dead. The species is nationally protected.

Agence France Presse, 4 January 2003; CITES Secretariat; China Daily: www.chinadaily.com.cn, 28 October 2002; New China News Agency report, 11 April 2003; TRAFFIC East Asia/WWF China-China Programme

HONG KONG: During the last two weeks of January 2003, 25 seizures of orchids were carried out at Customs checkpoints (18 at the border with mainland China and seven at the Hong Kong-Macau and Hong Kong-China ferry terminals). Most of the orchids seized were of *Cymbidium* and *Phalaenopsis* species. The same number was made for the same period last year. Illegal orchid imports are commonly found among travellers returning from mainland China. Under the *Animals and Plants (Protection of Endangered Species) Ordinance*, trade in highly endangered wild orchids is prohibited. The importation, export or possession of other wild orchids, including their parts and derivatives, requires a licence, which must be obtained in advance. Artificially propagated orchids including their parts and derivatives also require a valid export permit issued by the exporting country.

Press release of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, Hong Kong, 6 February 2003

SOUTH ASIA

INDIA: In November 2002, in a landmark judgement, two Nepalese labourers were imprisoned in Uttaranchal State, Dehradun, for three months and fined Rs.5000 (USD108) following their arrest in May 2002 for possession of one musk pod. This is the first case in India where a conviction has been ordered within six months from the date of the arrest.

On 12 February 2003, a raid conducted in the Matigara area yielded the skins of 20 Leopards *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) and 19 civets Viverridae (listed in Schedule II of India's *Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972*). This is reportedly the largest haul of wildlife products ever made in North Bengal.

On 1 April 2003, a special police unit seized a consignment of skins of 15 Leopards *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) near Dharchula from people crossing Kali river along the border between Nepal and India. Upon being challenged, the suspects ran into Nepal but dropped the parcel of skins they were carrying.

On 13 May 2003, some 47 shahtoosh items (made from the wool of the Tibetan Antelope *Pantholops hodgsoni* (CITES I)) were seized in Delhi by the Central Bureau of Investigation of the Indian Government in a series of raids. These consisted of two kurtas (long shirt-like garment), 45 shawls, and one seven-metre length of shahtoosh fabric. One man was arrested.

On 7 April, wildlife officials of Delhi's government seized a consignment of 211 kg raw shahtoosh wool packed in 11 sacks. This quantity of wool is estimated to derive from nearly 3000 Tibetan Antelopes. It came by lorry from Haldwani town in Uttaranchal. Interrogation of the owner of the goods revealed that the wool had been transported to India from Nepal via the border town of

Dharchula. Three people are in custody. A lawyer from the Wildlife Trust of India was present in court to oppose bail.

In Resolution Conf. 11.8 (Rev. CoP12), the Conference of the Parties to CITES recommended that all Parties and non-Parties, especially consumer and range States, adopt comprehensive legislation and enforcement controls as a matter of urgency, with the aim of eliminating commercial trade in Tibetan Antelope parts and derivatives, especially shahtoosh, in order to reduce demonstrably the illegal trade in products of this species. It also urges the processing countries of the products of Tibetan Antelope to continue their efforts to ban the processing of Tibetan Antelope wool.

On 29 July 2003, Customs officials at Chennai Airport, Tamil Nadu, acting on information received from the Deputy Directorate of Wildlife, Southern Region, seized about 980 kg of dried sea cucumbers from a flight bound for Singapore. The items had been packed in 32 cartons and declared as 'dried rays and skin fish'. Pursuant to Notification No. 665(E) of 11 July 2001, sea cucumbers Holothuroidea are classified under Schedule I of India's *Wildlife Protection Act 1972*, which prohibits all trade in holothurians.

On 7 August 2003, at Chennai Airport, authorities of the Deputy Directorate of Wildlife, Southern Region, seized 900 Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II) from the luggage of a passenger bound for Singapore. The man was taken into custody but later escaped. The tortoises have been released in Guindy National Park. With a maximum carapace length of about 35 cm, the Star Tortoise is popular in the pet trade.

CITES Management Authority, India; Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, Ph.D., Wildlife Crime Monitoring Center of AARANYAK; CITES Secretariat; Ashok Kumar, Wildlife Trust of India; The Hindu (India), 31 July/11 August 2003

NEPAL: On 4 April 2003, police seized skins of 109 Leopards *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) that had been concealed in sacks of pepper on a bus bound for Dhading at Halchowk in Swayambhu, Kathmandu. The owner of the sacks, who was arrested, claimed that in return for a remuneration, he had been asked by a Tibetan to transport the sacks to Tibet via Chhekemar, through Dhading district. The skins were handed over to the National Wildlife Preservation Department in Babarmahal.

In September 2003, at the district forest office in Bharatpur, Chitwan, Ram Bahadur Praja, Sukra Bahadur Praja and Prem Bahadur Praja were sentenced to 15 years in gaol for killing 17 rhinos; they were also fined Rs.100 000 (USD1337) each.

The Himalayan Times (Nepal), 4 April 2003: www.thehimalayantimes.com; www.nepalnews.com.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

INDONESIA: On 23 March 2003, two Czech citizens who entered Indonesia on tourist visas were detained by officers at South Bukit Barisan National Park, West Lampung, after they were found to have collected more than 300 insect species [sic] and their larva inside the park. In addition to the insects, authorities seized two nets, ether, cellulose, tissues, preservatives and tubes. The case is being investigated by the police.

Jakarta Post (Indonesia), 29 March 2003

MALAYSIA: On 17 January 2003, Wildlife and National Parks Department officials seized more than 220 kg of wild meat from a restaurant in Segamat, Johor, and arrested the owner. In addition to two bear paws, the meat was of mainland Serow *Naemorhedus sumatraensis*, Malayan Porcupine *Hystrix brachyura*, Wild Pig *Sus scrofa*, civet, monitor lizard, monkey and deer. The owner's licence to sell had expired in February; he had previously been fined for a similar offence. He was to be charged under Section 64(1) and Section 68 of the *Wildlife Protection Act 1972* with illegal possession

of animals, which are fully protected under the Act, and with smuggling the specimens. Three pangolins *Manis* were seized from an adjacent restaurant.

The department has reportedly stepped up enforcement and is closing in on restaurants known to be serving wild animal dishes. Over the previous month, staff had detained nine people for illegally trading and serving dishes containing meat of protected animals.

On 26 June 2003, 207 Malayan Pangolins *Manis javanica* (CITES II) were to be released in the wild in Langkawi and Pahang following their seizure two days earlier in Jalan Batu by National Parks and Wildlife Protection Department officials. Some of the pangolins have been tagged with chips so that their development and adaptation can be studied.

One man was detained after the pangolins were found in 26 plastic baskets in a lorry. They had been taken from forests in Johor and are believed to have been trapped for a syndicate supplying the international black market for exotic animals. The meat, blood and scales of the pangolin are said to be delicacies and of medicinal value, while the body parts are used to make bags and decorative items. The species is protected under the *Wildlife Preservation Act 1972*. Anyone caught in possession of the animal without a permit faces a fine of RM3000 or two years in gaol, or both.

Following an investigation prompted by the CITES Secretariat, the Government of Malaysia announced in October 2002 that it would confiscate four young Gorillas *Gorilla gorilla* (CITES I) imported into the country earlier in the year. The investigation found that the Gorillas were not born in a Nigerian zoo as claimed, but had been captured in the wild, either in Nigeria or, more likely, in a neighbouring country. The commercial trade in all wild Gorillas is strictly forbidden under CITES.

The Gorillas were imported into Malaysia from Nigeria by Taiping Zoo on the basis of falsified documents. The CITES Secretariat took action after receiving information from several sources questioning the claim that the animals had been born in captivity. It has been firmly established that the Gorillas were traded illegally and in violation of the treaty.

In July 2003, Malaysian Environment Minister Law Hieng Ding announced that the Gorillas would be transferred to Pretoria Zoo in South Africa which, he stated, is best equipped to care for the animals.

On 24 July 2003, authorities in Kuala Lumpur seized 580 Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II) from an Indian national. Sixty-five of the tortoises had died and the remainder were cared for by the National Parks and Wildlife Department before being transported back to Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, via Chennai, Tamil Nadu, from where they had been smuggled. It is reported that the tortoises will eventually be rehabilitated in protected areas in Andhra Pradesh and their movements closely monitored by electronic tags.

In August 2003, police seized over 700 logs from illegally felled trees in the province of Papua and 533 logs in Semarang. Six Malaysians and two Indonesians were arrested. The logging had reportedly taken place in the forestry concession of PT Rimba Kayu Arthamas in Merdey district, Bintuni regency in Papua. Unauthorized logging is prohibited by *Forestry Law No 41/1999* but illegal logging is reported to have increased across the country owing to the inability or unwillingness of local administrations to enforce the law.

New Straits Times (Malaysia), 26 June 2003; Jakarta Post (Indonesia), 25 January/15 August 2003; CITES Secretariat, 11 October 2002; www.news.bbc.co.uk: 9 July 2003; The Hindu (India), 11 August 2003; http://hinduonnet.com; Islamic Republic News Agency, 8 July 2003

THAILAND: Thousands of logs and pieces of processed Teak *Tectona grandis* were seized in forests nationwide during a three-month crackdown in early 2003, during which the northern province of Phrae was found to be the most active in the illegal trade. Businessmen in Phrae were reportedly illegally purchasing logs from nearby Phayao and Lampang provinces, causing heavy deforestation along the border. Some areas of these provinces located within Mae Yom National Park have been declared wildlife refuges.

Bangkok Post (Thailand), 31 March 2003 cited in Community Forestry E-News No. 2003/5, 17 April 2003

VIET NAM: On 11 February 2003, Customs officials at Noi Bai International Airport, Hanoi, discovered more than 2.6 t of monitor lizards on board a flight from Malaysia. Although its final destination was thought to be China, the shipment was addressed to a trading company in Hanoi which has denied any knowledge of the order.

During late February/early March 2003, Customs officers at Noi Bai International Airport, Hanoi, seized two separate shipments containing a total of nearly four tonnes of iguanas and pangolins *Manis* (CITES II). The reptiles—which included 616 pangolins—had arrived on a cargo flight from Malaysia.

All living specimens were transferred to Hanoi's Wild Life Rescue Centre but most of the animals have subsequently perished following the poor condition they were in when they arrived.

The animals were apparently on their way to China where they were destined to be used in traditional medicines.

In March 2003, Customs officers seized a shipment containing 4889 kg of turtles at Noi Bai Airport, Hanoi, following their arrival from Kuala Lumpur; only 1800 softshelled turtles had been declared on the freight bill. In addition to softshells, however, the consignment was found to contain Giant Asian Pond Turtles *Heosemys grandis*, Yellow-headed Temple Turtles *Hieremys annandalii*, Black Marsh Turtles *Siebenrockiella crassicollis*, and Southeast Asian Box Turtles *Cuora amboinensis*. Most of the specimens have since died and were burned to prevent pollution and disease.

Agence France Presse, 18 February/13 March 2003; South China Morning Post (China), 15 March 2003; TRAFFIC Southeast Asia; www.trafficindo.org

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA: In late December 2002, at Sydney Airport, Customs officials foiled an attempt to export illegally approximately 600 beetles and larvae. Two men bound for Bangkok were arrested. About two thirds of the specimens, which had been discovered in cereal and biscuit packets in the pair's luggage, were alive and were handed over for identification to the veterinary quarantine centre at Taronga Zoo, Sydney. The suspects, both Japanese nationals, had been visiting Lord Howe Island, a World Heritage Protection Area. They have been charged under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

On 28 August 2003, a Uruguyan fishing vessel suspected of illegally catching Patagonian Toothfish *Dissostichus eleginoides* in Australian waters, was apprehended some 2000 nautical miles south-west of Cape Town after being pursued for 20 days by Australian, South African and British vessels.

The vessel was first seen fishing inside Australian waters on 8 August and fled at high speed after ignoring radio orders from the Australian authorities to stop. After a 4000-nautical-mile chase through difficult sea conditions, the vessel was boarded and detained. It was escorted, with its 40-member crew, to Fremantle, Australia, where it arrived on 3 October; the detainees face charges of illegal fishing.

A range of measures to address the problem of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing has been introduced by the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), including an automated satellite-linked vessel monitoring system (VMS) and a Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS). However, IUU fishing continues to jeopardize the management and conservation of Patagonian Toothfish, which is highly prized in restaurants in Japan and the USA, the principal consumer markets for this fish.

The episode clearly demonstrates the importance of international co-operation in tackling illegal fishing.

TRAFFIC Oceania press release, 28 August 2003; Australian Customs Service Minister media release,

31 December 2002; *www.traffic.org*; TRAFFIC press release, 28 August 2003

AMERICAS

MEXICO: On 12 October 2002, a group of seven fishermen were arrested after being caught in two small boats in a specially protected area of the Sea of Cortes, off Isla Estanque, south of Bahia de los Angeles. On their vessels police found recently caught—and cooked—sea cucumbers.

For Profepa, Mexico's environmental police, these arrests are something of a coup as the agency tries to crack down on illegal fishing in the Sea of Cortes. Poachers have been stopped in the past, but were usually released after posting bail. Earlier this year, however, reforms to Mexico's penal code increased the maximum penalties from six to nine years. The increase allowed judges to deny bail to serious offenders.

The men, all from the Sea of Cortes fishing community of Bahia Kino in the state of Sonora, have been in custody since their arrests. The charge of catching a protected species in a protected natural area is considered so serious that the men are not allowed to post bail.

The shipment is believed to have comprised specimens of *Isostichopus fuscus*, the species of sea cucumber most commonly caught in these waters. In 1994, it was listed by the Government of Mexico as an endangered species and harvesting was banned. Though its status has since been downgraded to protected, the ban remains in place.

Sea cucumbers are often cooked immediately after being caught to reduce the specimens' size for easier transportation.

San Diego Tribune (USA), 2002; TRAFFIC North America-Mexico

USA: On 31 January 2003, Mikhail Kovtun of Moscow was sentenced to 30 months' imprisonment for illegally importing 44 kg of osietra caviar (derived from the Russian Sturgeon *Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*) without the required permits; he was also ordered to be deported following his gaol term. Kovtun was arrested at Miami Airport in August 2001 with two other passengers who had tins and a bag of the roe hidden in their suitcases. Kovtun is reported to have organized the trio's journey from Moscow through Zurich to Miami. His two companions, also Russian citizens, pleaded guilty to smuggling charges and have already received gaol sentences of six and seven months, respectively.

Reuters, 3 February 2003; The Miami Herald (USA), 1 February 2003; TRAFFIC International

On 30 July 2003, a federal grand jury in Orlando, Florida, indicted a Singaporean reptile trader on three counts for conspiracy, smuggling of protected reptiles and false labelling of imported animals following his arrest on 28 June at Orlando International Airport, on arrival from Singapore.

The indictment alleges that the suspect conspired with others to smuggle, in January 2003, a variety of protected animals from Singapore, including Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II), Fly River Turtles *Carettochelys insculpta* and monitor lizards. The consignment, destined for Orlando but intercepted by inspectors in Memphis, Tennessee, had been labelled as containing magazines and book samples.

See also page 113 of this issue for information on sturgeon and paddlefish seizures.

US Fish & Wildlife Service news release, 5 August 2003; New Straits Times (Malaysia), 1 August 2003

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EUROPE

CZECH REPUBLIC: On 21 January 2004, at Ruzyně Airport, Prague, a Czech citizen returning from Indonesia was detained by Customs officials after X-ray inspection of his luggage revealed some 115 reptiles concealed within. These were found to be 55 Radiated Tortoises *Geochelone radiata* (CITES I), and the following CITES II-listed species: 18 Emerald Monitors *Varanus prasinus*, 2 Crocodile Monitors *V. salvadorii*, 2 *Varanus* sp., 19 Green Tree Pythons *Morelia viridis*, 3 Flat-backed Spider Tortoises *Pyxis planicauda*, 6 Spider Tortoises *P. arachnoides*, as well as 10 unidentified turtles. One Radiated Tortoise had died; the remaining reptiles, many in poor health, were sent to a rescue centre at Plzeň Zoo. The importer, who claimed not to know anything about the reptiles in his luggage, is believed to be a courier. He was released but the case is under investigation.

Czech Environmental Inspectorate via the CITES Management Authority, Czech Republic, 21 January 2004

DENMARK: On 8 December 2003, at Copenhagen City Court, a Norwegian citizen was sentenced to a fine of DKK140 000 (EUR18 800) for violating CITES and laws relating to veterinary, tax and animal welfare. The man had brought 125 live juvenile Spur-thighed Tortoises *Testudo graeca* (CITES II) through Copenhagen Airport from Syria in 2002. He claimed they were for medicinal purposes and that the specimens were to be roasted and ground to a powder for ingestion to heal an aching back.

CITES Management Authority, Denmark

GERMANY: During November and December 2003, some 235 kg of caviar was seized in four separate cases: in November, at Cologne Airport, Customs officials seized a container arriving from Turkey, declared as "pulp". The strong odour coming from the cartons alerted officials who found 354 cans of caviar weighing 177 kg. During the same month, Customs inspectors in Cologne caught a Polish lorry driver handing over 48 kg of caviar to a middleman in a car park. Both men were detained. In December, Customs officials in north Germany stopped a Lithuanian lorry driver and found 27 kg of caviar hidden in his vehicle.

In what is reported to be the largest-ever seizure of illegal coral imports to Germany, on 8 April 2004, Customs officials at Düsseldorf Airport seized 30 boxes containing 800 kg of stony corals, including *Acropora* spp. (CITES II), from a Dutch wholesaler arriving from Kenya. The shipment, labelled as "aquarium stones", also contained living marine organisms and was inspected since it was without the necessary documentation. All specimens have been placed in an aquarium in northern Germany. Following an investigation, it was found that the Dutch wholesaler had already illegally imported three tonnes of stony corals this year. Investigations are ongoing.

Zollfahndungsamt Essen, 4 December 2003; AFP, 4 December 2003; www.iol.co.za/index.php?click_id=3&art_id=qw1070552161146B265&set_id=1; Expanding borders: new challenges for wildlife trade controls in the European Union, TRAFFIC International, 2004; Pressemitteilung Zollfahndungsamt Essen, Oberfinanzdirektion Köln, No. 13, 6 May 2004; Nordrhein-Westfalen Customs press release, 6 May 2004, translated by TRAFFIC Europe

RUSSIA: On 19 March 2004, at the border crossing at Poltavka, Primorskiy Krai, on the border with China, Customs officials seized what is reported to be the largest haul of poached animal products apprehended in the country over the past decade. The animal parts, concealed in a lorry, included 768 paws (thought to be from the Himalayan Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus* (CITES I)), 24 bear gall bladders, over 5500 fur skins (including Siberian Weasel *Mustela sibirica*, Sable *Martes zibellina*, Raccoon Dog *Nyctereutes procyonoides*, Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes* and Red Squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris*), 280 musk deer pods, 64 deer penises, 142 deer antlers, 388 kg of sea cucumber *Stichopus japonicus* and 49 kg of frog fat (estimated to come from 100 000 frogs). The lorry was bound for China. The Chinese driver reportedly has been detained pending further investigation of the case.

TRAFFIC Europe; AFP, 22 March 2004; www.terradaily.com 2004/040322052702.son30vwd.html; Reuters

SWITZERLAND: In October 2003, after a two-year investigation, the Swiss federal veterinary office confiscated two tonnes of caviar that had been imported illegally in 2001. Investigations revealed that the shipment had been despatched to a duty-free warehouse in Geneva by a distributor based in the United Arab Emirates. Flawed Russian permits indicated that the caviar originated from Kazakhstan, although the trade was never authorized by Kazakh authorities; further the amount listed on the permit was much less than that which was seized.

"This is one of the most important cases of a CITES violation" said Thomas Althaus, head of the veterinary authority's conservation section. The full confiscation of the caviar was allowed after a legal dispute with the Geneva-based importers and a "revolutionary" ruling by Switzerland's supreme court, the authorities said.

From now on "outlawed goods can be seized even if we can't prove that the importer knew that they were of illegal origin" said Amadeo Baumgartner, a legal expert with the veterinary office.

The true origin of the caviar remains unknown.

On 4 February 2004, Customs officials at Zurich Airport seized 790 live arachnids discovered in cartons inside two suitcases belonging to a German national travelling from Mexico via Frankfurt. The specimens included tarantulas *Brachypelma annitha*, Guerrero Orange Legs Tarantula *B. boehmei*, Mexican Black-cap Tarantula *B. emilia* and Mexican Red-kneed Tarantula *B. smithi* (CITES II), each contained in individual plastic pouches. The luggage was marked as personal effects. Following an investigation, it was discovered that the suspect owns an exotic animal business in Germany. He stated that he had chosen the Mexico-Frankfurt-Zurich route in an attempt to circumvent the vigilance of Customs officials.

www.terraily.com/2003/03/11/03123627.aam0pm8t.html; Swiss federal veterinary office press release, 3 November 2004; www.bvet.admin.ch, 3 November 2003; Swiss Customs Administration

UK: In December 2003, at Heathrow Airport, 98 Senegal Chameleons *Chamaeleo senegalensis* (CITES II) were seized from a reptile shipment in transit from Benin to the USA. The invoice and CITES permits incorrectly stated that the consignment contained 50 *C. gracilus* specimens.

In January 2004, 126 coral pieces were seized from a shipment of live corals from Indonesia. These were either excess to the accompanying CITES permits or were not covered by CITES permits.

In January 2004, after examination of a hunting trophy shipment in transit from Zimbabwe to the USA, an adult stuffed Lion *Panthera leo* (CITES I/II) and two mounted Chacma Baboon *Papio hamadryas* (CITES II) heads were seized owing to the absence of CITES permits.

HM Customs and Excise CITES Team, Heathrow Airport

A F R I C A

SOUTH AFRICA: In January 2004, the Environmental Affairs and Tourism Department of South Africa seized 16 968 abalone *Haliotis midae* in four separate incidents and apprehended 41 people in its efforts to halt the illegal fishing of abalone. The offences took place in the Eastern Cape Province. Some 390 west coast rock lobsters *Jasus lalandii* were also seized.

More than 95% of the abalone destined for countries overseas, especially China, is reported to be harvested illegally; such depletion is having a catastrophic effect on abalone populations in the country. The species is endemic to South Africa.

Horst Kleinschmidt, the Department's Deputy Director General for Marine and Coastal Management, said that the Department had significantly stepped up its compliance, monitoring and surveillance activities pertaining to abalone, in particular, and was at an advanced stage of developing a strategic plan for the management of the abalone resource in the Eastern Cape.

On 20 January 2004, at Clanwilliam Regional Court, three Japanese nationals Sindji Yamada, Yoshiyuki Abiko and Ryuji Sakamoto were each fined R106 000 (USD15 000) for the illegal collection of native wildlife. They were arrested near Clanwilliam in December 2003 following information received from farm workers who had been approached by the suspects requesting assistance in collecting wildlife. When apprehended, the trio had in their possession 14 Angulated Tortoises *Chersina angulata* (CITES II), maps, collecting equipment and snake anti-venom kits, as well as digital photographs of themselves poaching the tortoises.

Angulated Tortoises are protected and it is illegal to capture or sell them. The fines will go to the Cape Nature Conservation Board's crime enforcement unit.

On 4 February 2004, at Paarl Regional Court, cousins Albert Rautenstrauch and Günther Rautenstrauch were each sentenced to six years' imprisonment or a fine of R60 000 (USD9000) for collecting stag beetles *Colophon* illegally in the Western Cape. The pair and two friends, who received light sentences, were arrested on 9 January at a roadblock near Ceres. A search of the guest house where the men had been staying uncovered 211 *Colophon* beetles among a total of 842 insects seized, in addition to capture equipment and a map marked with the likely locations of the insects.

Colophon beetles are listed as Threatened in South Africa and any international trade in the species requires a CITES permit.

On 21 April 2004, at Vredendal Regional Court, Western Cape, Japanese nationals Terutoshi Terada and Masato Araki were found guilty under the *Nature Conservation Ordinance* of three charges relating to the collection, possession and transportation of reptiles without the necessary permits. Each received a fine of R110 000 (USD16 500) or a four-year gaol sentence. The sentence follows their arrest in Vredendal by Cape Nature Conservation's environmental crime unit after they had been found in possession of 5 Angulated Tortoises *Chersina angulata* (CITES II), 51 Armadillo Girdled Lizards *Cordylus cataphractus* (CITES II), 1 Karoo Girdled Lizard *C. polyzonus* (CITES II) and 1 Bribron's Thick-toed Gecko *Pachydactylus bribronii*.

Business Day (Johannesburg), 22 January 2004; <http://allafrica.com/stories/200401220402.html>; *The Cape Times (South Africa)*: www.capetimes.co.za, 21 January 2004; *Mail and Guardian (South Africa)*, 27 January 2004; www.mg.co.za/Content/13.asp?ao=30200; *The Cape Times (South Africa)*, 4 February 2004; www.greenclippings.co.za; *The Western Cape Nature Conservation Board press release*, 21 April 2004; *The Star (South Africa)*, 22 April 2004

ASIA

EAST ASIA

CHINA: On 8 October 2003, at a police checkpoint in Sansan, Angren County, officials seized skins of 31 Tigers *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) and 581 Leopards *P. pardus* (CITES I), 778 otters and two lynxes concealed in a lorry en route from India to Lhasa. Three Tibetans were arrested.

According to Li Jianwen, Vice Director of the Anti-Smuggling Bureau of Lhasa Customs, many of the Tiger skins had bullet holes and the size of some specimens suggest the animals were only a few months' old.

On 27 October 2003, police in Gansu Province arrested one man on the Turpan to Korla highway as he transported 7 Saker Falcons *Falco cherrug* (CITES II) by taxi. Two other men escaped. The birds, wrapped in white cloths and with their eyes sewn up, had been trapped in the Jiu-quan Area, an important area on the migrating route between Mongolia and Tibet. There is reported to be a decrease in the number of recorded incidents of Saker Falcons being caught illegally in China. This, it is said, may be explained by a change in the means of transport by foreign trappers and smugglers—from aeroplanes and trains to the use of taxis to cross the Chinese borders, which makes offenders harder to detect. There has also been a change in the trapping area and the smuggling route, with groups penetrating into the centre of the country, e.g., Qinghai, Gansu, Ningxia, moving inland from

the border areas along the bird migration routes. Punishments imposed by China are stricter than other countries, and several poachers and smugglers have been sentenced to life imprisonment or even to death (*TRAFFIC Bulletin* 19(2):77).

On 8/9 March 2004, forestry police in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, seized 595 kg of illegal ivory in the form of carvings, chopsticks and necklaces while carrying out inspections at seven antique shops.

According to Wan Ziming, an official with the State Administrative Office on Endangered Species Import and Export, the Chinese Government has intensified the crackdown on ivory smuggling, seizing a total of more than 40 t of ivory products over the past seven years. China has also launched projects to supervise and prevent poaching and illegal trade of elephant products, said Ziming.

Beijing Youth Daily (China), 14 February 2004, translated from Chinese into English by Wen Bo; Recent data on Saker smuggling in China, by Ming Ma, in Falco, the newsletter of the Middle East Falcon Research Group, 23 January 2004; Xinhua News Agency: news.xinhuanet.com/english/2004-03/10/content_1358268.htm, 10 March 2004

HONG KONG SAR: In October 2003, Customs officers at Kwai Chung Container Terminal seized 279 African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I) tusks (1932 kg) from a lorry. They had been concealed in 47 bags behind a shipment of wood, and declared as wood carvings. The items were reported to have been smuggled into Hong Kong from Tanzania via Indonesia. Two employees of a trading company in Western district on Hong Kong island, and the lorry driver, were arrested. Investigations revealed that the trading company was linked to a Taiwan-based establishment. Investigations are continuing.

On 5 May 2004, the proprietor of a shop in Kowloon was fined over HKD30 000 (USD3800) for possessing 0.863 kg of ivory products without a licence. The conviction follows investigations by the Environmental Investigation Agency in October 2003 into the ivory trade in Hong Kong Central and Kowloon, which uncovered two shops trading in ivory. Officials of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department carried out investigations into both operations and visited one of the shops. Posing as buyers, it was confirmed that worked ivory seals were offered for sale in the shop. The items were found following a search.

The Standard (Hong Kong), 3 February 2004; www.thestandard.com.hk/thestandard/news_detail_frame.cfm?articleid=44977&intcatid=1; EIA Press Release, 1 June 2004; Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

SOUTH ASIA

INDIA: On 22 October 2003, in the area of Mannady, Chennai, police seized 6 kg of dead seahorses, reported to represent approximately 450 specimens. Two persons, who were arrested, allegedly had collected the seahorses from coastal areas around Ramanathapuram. They had been brought to the city reportedly to be handed over to 'couriers', who were to take them to Japan. Each specimen was about 12 cm long and weighed between three and six grammes. Seahorses Syngnathidae are mainly used as an ingredient in traditional medicine preparations. All species were listed in CITES Appendix II with effect from 15 May 2004.

www.hindu.com/2003/10/24/stories/2003102409730300.htm; TRAFFIC International

SOUTHEAST ASIA

BRUNEI: On 24 September 2003, five Malaysians were gaoled for four months after pleading guilty to collecting agarwood *Aquilaria beccariana* (Vulnerable, 2003 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species) illegally in Andulau Forest Reserve. They were also charged with illegally entering Brunei. The accused had entered Brunei via the jungles of Limbang and were picked up by a guide at the Kuala

Lurah border. They spent two weeks in the forest scraping agarwood from trees and were arrested by police as they left the area with a plastic bag containing the wood scrapings. These were analysed and weighed 550 g. On 7 October 2003, the guide was found guilty of abetting the collection of agarwood and sentenced to eight months' imprisonment.

www.brudirect.com/DailyInfo/News/Archive/Sept03/240903/nite09.htm; *TRAFFIC International*; *BruneiDirect.com*, 24 September 2003

INDONESIA: On 25 January 2004, police in Bintuni arrested 15 Malaysians for illegal logging in the Tohiba sub-district, Papua, and confiscated some 10 000 logs of Merbau *Intsia palembanica*—a much sought-after timber species—as well as three boats and logging equipment. The suspects were reported to have been hired originally by a logging company in Bintuni to clear nearby forests. The director of the timber company is being sought. Illegal logging is reported to be rampant in Papua. Early last year, nine Malaysians were arrested for alleged illegal logging in the province and another Malaysian was arrested in December for similar offences. Between 19 February and 10 March, police arrested another 38 suspected illegal loggers in Kalimantan and seized over 20 m³ of processed logs and 22 886 raw logs, boats and guns. The operation included raids on several locations, mostly in Mount Palung National Park in West Kalimantan and on the border with Malaysia. According to National Police deputy spokesman Brigadier General Soenarko, his forces have been working together with the West Kalimantan police and forest rangers to curb illegal logging in the area. With so many locations to observe, police will be conducting more operations and mobilize forest rangers, helicopters, and speedboats. He stated that the police and forest rangers in Kalimantan would form a joint team, comprising some 300 task force personnel.

On 15 February 2004, police in Jambi city, Sumatra, arrested six men suspected of trading in Sumatran Tigers *Panthera tigris* (CITES I). Three days later two suspected hunters and a middleman were also arrested. The arrests came just days after the release of TRAFFIC's report *Nowhere to Hide: the Trade in Sumatran Tiger* which urges the Indonesian Government to take urgent action to stop Tiger poaching and the destruction of the species' habitat.

On 29 February 2004, Customs officers, assisted by forestry ministry officers and environmental activists, foiled an attempt to smuggle 309 Fly River Turtles *Carettochelys insculpta* through Soekarno-Hatta International Airport. One person—a courier for a fish company—was arrested. He confessed to attempting to smuggle 100 Fly River Turtle hatchlings in early February and 390 two weeks earlier, which had also been seized. All consignments were bound for Japan.

The one-month-old live hatchlings are being kept in Tegal Alur animal transit centre in West Jakarta. The species is protected in Indonesia and listed as Vulnerable in the 2003 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

www.thejakartapost.com, 30 January 2004; *New Straits Times (Indonesia)*, 31 January 2004; *The Jakarta Post (Indonesia)*, 3 March/12 April/2 March 2004; *Agence France Presse*, 19 March 2004

MALAYSIA: On 7 October 2003, at Penang Magistrates' Court, Marlina Sitepu, a textile trader from Indonesia, pleaded guilty to two counts of illegally possessing 186 exotic birds of 12 species protected under the *Wildlife Protection Act 1972*. These included 2 Moluccan Cockatoos *Cacatua moluccensis*, 4 Palm Cockatoos *Probosciger aterrimus*, 15 Goffin's Cockatoos *Cacatua goffini* (all CITES I), and the following CITES II species: 8 Blue Crowned-Pigeons *Goura cristata*, 1 Umbrella Cockatoo *Cacatua alba*, 9 Greater-Sulphur-crested Cockatoos *C. galerita*, 9 Leadbeater's Cockatoos *C. leadbeateri*, 2 Blue-eyed Cockatoos *C. ophthalmica*, 10 Chattering Lorries *Lorius garrulus*, 90 Black-capped Lorries *L. lory*, 34 Olive-headed Lorikeets *Trichoglossus euteles* and two Brown Lorries *Chalcopsitta duivenbodei*. Most of the birds had been smuggled from Papua New Guinea. Sitepu was bailed to appear in court at a later date and ordered to surrender her passport.

On 2 May 2004, marine police arrested 16 Chinese fishermen for suspected poaching after discovering some 160 marine turtles aboard a trawler. The suspects were arrested off the north-eastern coast of Borneo. They are believed to have poisoned the waters with cyanide to catch the turtles which were to be sold as decorative ornaments. The specimens consisted mostly of Hawksbill Turtles *Eretmochelys imbricata* and Green Turtles *Chelonia mydas* (both CITES I). The fishermen were to be charged with illegally entering Malaysian waters and catching protected species.

New Straits Times (Malaysia), 9 October 2003; New Straits Times (Singapore) 5 May 2004

THAILAND: On 1 November 2003, police carried out a series of raids on Chatuchak Weekend Market in Bangkok, marking the start of a campaign against trade in protected wildlife. About 300 police and forestry officials seized some 1000 wild animals. The operation was spearheaded by the Protection and Suppression Unit of the National Park, Wildlife and Plant Conservation Department and was prompted by the discovery of animal carcasses and body parts in a slaughterhouse outside Bangkok by police and forestry officials. These included carcasses of Tigers *Panthera tigris* (CITES I), bears, a pair of Orang-utans *Pongo pygmaeus* (CITES I), snakes, turtles and birds.

On 9 September, a 120-day amnesty period for wildlife owners to report and register specimens of wild species they kept, came to a close. During this period, 1.1 million protected animals are reported to have been recorded.

On 13 November 2003, wildlife officials at Bangkok Airport seized 288 Malayan Pangolins *Manis javanica* (CITES II) packed in 72 boxes travelling from Malaysia, bound for Lao PDR, and believed to be destined for the food trade in China. No arrests were made.

On 18 November, 509 Malayan Pangolins, contained in 102 boxes, were intercepted at the airport. The shipment was travelling the same route as the earlier consignment.

Xinhua News Agency, 3 November 2003: news.xinhuanet.com/english/2003-11/03/content_1156841.htm; Agence France Presse, 14/18 November 2003; www.terradaily.com

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA: On 10 October 2003, the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) charged five foreign nationals with the illegal fishing of Patagonian Toothfish *Dissostichus eleginoides* within the 200-nautical mile Australian fishing zone. This follows the seizure of the Uruguayan-flagged vessel *Viarsa I* in August 2003 (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 19(3):152). Four of the suspects are senior crew members of the vessel—the Uruguayan captain, three Spanish nationals and a Chilean. All have been charged with offences under the Fisheries Management Act 1991. The vessel, the 92.4 t catch and equipment were formally seized by the AFMA under the provisions of the *Fisheries Management Act*.

On 20 April 2004, all five crew members appealed their bail conditions but this was refused by the Federal Court except in the case of one crew member who was permitted to return home for family reasons. He must return to Australia for the trial which has been set for October 2004.

On 15 October 2003, at the District Court of New South Wales Criminal Jurisdiction, Sydney, two men were convicted and given a two-year suspended sentence after being found guilty of attempting to export wildlife specimens illegally on 29 December 2002. The pair had been found with 289 *Laprima insularis* and 20 *Figulus howei* beetles that they had collected from Lord Howe Island (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 19(3):152). They were also each fined AUD200 (USD140) and placed on good behaviour bonds for three years and required to appear for sentencing if called upon to do so. Their passports were seized and will not be returned as a condition of their bail.

On 18 October 2003, at Mascot, Sydney, air freight workers alerted Customs officials after becoming suspicious of cargo during a routine x-ray. Upon examination 47 native lizards were found to be concealed inside computer hardware, reportedly destined for the Czech Republic. Customs

investigators also searched a residence at Arncliffe, Sydney, and made further seizures. The following lizards were deposited at Taronga Zoo's Veterinary Quarantine Centre: 14 Lesueur's Velvet Geckos *Oedura lesueurii*, 11 Tryon's Velvet Geckos *O. tryoni*, 3 Thick-tailed Geckos *Underwoodisaurus milii*, 3 Granite belt Thick-tailed Geckos *U. sphyrurus*, 14 Shingleback Lizards *Tiliqua rugosa*, 1 Cunningham's Skink *Egernia cunninghami*, and 1 Nobby Dragon *Amphibolurus nobbi*. A Shovel-nosed Snake *Brachyuophis fasciolatus* found in the consignment was also confiscated.

A Czech national pleaded guilty and was convicted on 3 December 2003 under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. Owing to the time spent in custody prior to the hearing, the defendant was released without further penalty.

On 12 December 2003, at Perth District Court, Michael Linley, a British national, was fined AUD8000 (USD5724) for attempting to export more than 200 native reptiles on 20 October 2003.

Following information received from a member of the public who had noticed a man catching wildlife and reported the incident to the Customs Hotline, a joint investigation carried out between the Western Australian Department of Conservation and Land Management and Customs officials led to Linley's arrest as he attempted to board a flight at Perth International Airport. Some 219 reptiles and frogs were concealed in his luggage, including Marbled Geckos *Christinus marmoratus*, Clicking Froglets *Crinia glauerti*, Squelching Froglets *C. insignifera*, Desert Tree Frogs *Litoria rubella*, Western Bearded Dragons *Pogona minor minor*, geckos *Diplodactylus* spp. and *Strophurus* spp., skinks and snakes.

Linley, a wildlife film maker, who had pleaded guilty, was also fined a further AUD2000 (USD1430) under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* for exporting two Spiny-tailed Geckos *Strophurus ciliaris* in January 2003.

All the animals have been returned to the wild.

On 22 March 2004, at Perth Court of Petty Sessions, the captain and crew members of the ship *Maya V*, operated by a Uruguayan fishing company, were charged under the *Fisheries Management Act* with the unauthorized use of a foreign boat within the Australian fishing zones. The ship had a record 191 t of Patagonian Toothfish *Dissostichus eleginoides* when apprehended in January. On 21 May, the vessel was forfeited to the AFMA after its owner did not challenge the forfeiture of the vessel within the legislated timeframe.

On 1 April 2004, at Perth's Court of Petty Sessions, 32 crewmen from *Maya V* were each fined AUD1000 (USD760), placed on a five-year good behaviour bond and have been deported. A further three crew members have pleaded not guilty and a trial date for their hearing has been set for 15 November. The senior crew members will face trial on 13 August.

On 18 June 2004, raids on five complementary medicine outlets in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane yielded one of Australia's largest illegal wildlife hauls to date. The raids formed part of a joint operation by the federal police, the Department of Environment and Heritage, the Australian Customs Service, and the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service. Among the items seized were products labelled as containing bear bile, Tiger bone and rhinoceros horn (all from CITES I-listed species) and American Ginseng *Panax quinquefolius* (CITES II).

Australian Fisheries Management Authority; MercoPress (Falklands/Malvinas), 10 October 2003; www.falkland-malvinas.com/; Australian Customs Service; Customs media releases, 24 October/12 December 2003/18 June 2004; TRAFFIC Oceania; www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/3313385.stm; www.news.com.au; www.enn.com; www.heraldsun.news.com.au; Veterinary Quarantine Centre, Taronga Zoo; Nature Protection Branch, Conservation and Land Management, Western Australia

NEW ZEALAND: On 27 February 2004, at Manukau District Court, Czech nationals Cestmir Cihalik, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at Palackeho University, Olomouc, and Jindrich Smitak, an environmental inspector with the Czech Environmental Inspectorate, Brno, were found guilty of collecting some 363 wild plants, including 93 endemic orchids (representing 23 species), predominantly from national parks. Both men are amateur botanists and members of the Czech

Orchid Society. The plants included *Carex* sedges, mixed native beeches and podocarps—*Podocarpus totara* and *Phyllocladus trichomanoides*—and ferns. The orchids (including epiphytes) included *Pterostylis australis*, *P. banksii*, *P. irsoniana*, *P. venosa*, *Orthoceras novaezeelandiae* and *Microtis unifolia*.

Both were convicted under the Trade in Endangered Species Act and each fined NZD7500 (USD5100) and a further NZD1000 (USD680) towards the cost of prosecution. These charges related to the attempted export of the orchids. Smitak was further charged and convicted with removing plants from national parks, an offence under the *National Parks Act*. No penalty was imposed for this offence, but the conviction was entered. The Judge stated that if clear evidence of an intent to trade/sell had been established she would have had no hesitation in imposing a custodial sentence for both persons.

The investigation began in August 2003 when Cihalik approached the Department of Conservation (the CITES Management Authority) to obtain permission to collect and export *Carex* grasses (unprotected) and to photograph orchids and ferns. Permission for the pair to remove any flora/fauna or parts thereof was not granted. They were advised that non-protected plants may be taken from private land with the owners' permission. Most of the samples came from Crown-administered land.

The Czechs were closely monitored during their travels in the country; on 18 January they were intercepted as they attempted to leave Auckland Airport. Both live orchids (and therefore capable of propagation) and pressed orchids (complete with flowers and developing seed) were found in their luggage, together with hundreds of other plants.

New Zealand Wildlife Enforcement Group

AMERICAS

CANADA: On 26 March 2004, at the Ontario Court of Justice, Mr Choo-Sin Chang of Ontario pleaded guilty to unlawfully possessing American Black Bear *Ursus americanus* (CITES II) gall bladders at his business premises in Toronto and to exporting Black Bear gall bladders unlawfully to the USA. He was fined CAD32 000 (USD24 000) and a mandatory victim surcharge of CAD8000 (USD6000).

The charges were brought under the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act* and the *Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act* (WAPPRIITA). They follow an investigation by Quebec and Ontario wildlife officers that effectively dismantled a bear gall bladder poaching and trafficking network operating from Quebec.

Bear gall bladders are sought after in traditional Asian medicine. Canada has the largest remaining American Black Bear habitat in the world.

Environment Canada news release, 26 March 2004; TRAFFIC International

GUAM: Guam seafood company, Polar International, was fined USD20 000 for receiving 1360 kg of illegal shark fins offloaded from a Taiwanese fishing vessel. The vessel owners were fined USD10 000.

The weight in fins probably represents thousands of sharks. The number of shark carcasses on the vessel did not come close to the estimated 29 000 kg of carcasses that should have accompanied the fins.

This is the third case of illegal fin importation into Guam in less than a year. US law prohibits fishing vessels and companies from offloading shark fins without the corresponding shark carcasses. This law is intended to promote a more humane taking-process, and prevent fishing vessels from removing fins and dumping the often still-living sharks back into the water to die. The fins, which are considered a delicacy in South-east Asia, are enormously more valuable than the carcasses.

Pacific Daily News, 11 December 2003; www.guampdn.com/news/stories/20031211/localnews/11596.html

USA: On 11 December 2003, at Orlando, Florida, Lawrence Wee Soon Chye, of Singapore, was sentenced to 37 months' imprisonment after pleading guilty to charges of smuggling several hundred protected species into and out of the country in 2002 and 2003 (*TRAFFIC Bulletin* 19(3):152). The animals, discovered in express mail packages in Memphis, Tennessee, mislabelled as "books and magazines", included Fly River Turtles *Carettochelys insculpta*, Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II), and Radiated Tortoises *Geochelone radiata* (CITES I); many specimens had died. Chye was arrested after arriving in Orlando to meet buyers.

On 5 March 2004, at Milwaukee District Court, Wisconsin, Leong Tian Kum of Singapore was sentenced to 41 months' in gaol for wildlife smuggling and money laundering. On 16 April, also at Milwaukee District Court, Reid Turowski was sentenced to 10 months' imprisonment and fined USD500 for his role in smuggling 183 reptiles into the country. He was also ordered to serve two years' probation following his gaol term and to reimburse the government USD2223 for costs it incurred to care for live reptiles seized from him during the investigation.

Between September 2002 and June 2003, Kum and associates in Thailand and Singapore obtained more than 150 protected wildlife species and shipped them to animal dealer Turowski in the USA via express mail, for further distribution to customers. Specimens included Radiated Tortoises *Geochelone radiata* (CITES I), the following CITES II-listed species: Indian Star Tortoises *G. elegans*, Burmese Starred Tortoises *G. platynota*, Hermann's Tortoises *Testudo hermannii*, Pancake Tortoises *Malacochersus tornieri*, as well as Fly River Turtles *Carettochelys insculpta*. Funds received in exchange for the shipments were wired to a bank account in Thailand.

Kum's sentence was heavier than guidelines advise for such a wildlife offence owing to the fact that the authorities also found evidence that he conspired to smuggle women from Thailand to Singapore to work as prostitutes.

US Fish & Wildlife Service news releases, 11 December 2003/5 March/16 April 2004; The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, 21 December 2003: www.ajc.com

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E U R O P E

BELGIUM: The Anti-Drug team at Zaventem airport have made the following seizures in recent months:

20 July 2004: more than 100 ivory (CITES I) statues (10 kg total) concealed in wooden statues from Kenya. Declared as handicrafts. A further 100 statues found during a house search. The suspect will stand trial.

16 September 2004: some 13 Bell's Hinged Tortoises *Kinixys belliana* (II), from Hollywood, Florida, concealed in a legal shipment of reptiles destined for Brussels. No links to other airwaybills, and origin of animals unknown. The turtles are now in Antwerp Zoo.

21 October 2004: CITES II-listed Flaming Poison Frogs *Dendrobates pumilio* (580) and Green Poison Frogs *D. auratus* (22) hidden in the canisters of more than 200 film rolls. Each container held two to three frogs. Ten per cent of the frogs died during transport. Three Belgian citizens, who had arrived from Panama, via Madrid, were arrested.

28 October 2004: about 2 kg of caviar in four registered post parcels sent from an individual in Turkey to another in Belgium. The caviar had been placed in plastic bags and hidden in towels. Together with the caviar, metal covers, cans in glass and a special machine to seal the covers on the cans were discovered.

In December 2004: a shipment from Dubai containing 800 kg of caviar, in cans ranging in size from 1.8 kg, 0.5 kg and 0.095 kg. The caviar, from the Republic of Kazakhstan, was accompanied by a re-export CITES licence (which contained errors) issued in Dubai but there was no import licence

and the health certificates were not valid for Europe. The Ministry of Public Health refused entry of the shipment, a decision endorsed by the CITES Management Authority in Belgium. The caviar was returned to Dubai on 24 December.

In January 2005: 10 birds of prey from Cameroon declared on paperwork as Tawny Eagles *Aquila rapax* (CITES II) on further investigation were found to be Black Kites *Milvus migrans* (CITES II). IATA regulations had also been contravened. The birds were to be returned to Douala in new cages, paid for by the importer. The shipment was destined for Portugal, via the Netherlands.
Belgian Customs Airport News, CITES 09-16; 18 2004; GAD (Anti-Drug Customs) team

FRANCE: On 15 September 2004, Customs drug squad officers at Roissy Airport seized one skin and one skull of Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) that had arrived on a flight from Bangui, Central African Republic. The items formed part of a consignment from a trophy hunting expedition. CITES documents presented to Customs were not applicable.

On 22 September 2004, 14 pieces of worked ivory (CITES I) and one rhinoceros horn (I) were seized by Customs officers.

On 6 October 2004, Customs drug squad officers at the airport seized 1100 kg of corals arriving from Indonesia. Items were distributed among 51 packages. The requisite import documents could not be presented. A week earlier, 1017 kg of corals were seized by the same Customs service and were sent to the Nausicaa centre, Boulogne-sur-Mer.

Direction Generale des douanes et des Droits Indirects—Bureau de l'Information et de la Communication

ITALY: Between 2002 and July 2004, the State Forest Corps (CFS) carried out an investigation into the trade and use of Asian medicine products that may have entered the country illegally. With the co-operation of the Dutch authorities, the INTERPOL-Wildlife Crime Group and with technical support from TRAFFIC Europe-Italy, the process culminated in *Operation Marco Polo*, which, in August 2004, saw joint police raids take place in shops in Rome, Prato, Bologna, Reggio Emilia and Milan and the seizure of some 9000 products said to contain parts and derivatives of CITES-listed species. These included musk deer *Moschus* (CITES I/II), rhinoceros (I/II), Leopards *Panthera pardus* (I), Saiga Antelope *Saiga tatarica* (II), pangolin *Manis* (II), Kuth *Saussurea costus* (I), Red Ginseng *Panax ginseng* (II), and *Cibotium baronetz* (II).

The investigation into illegal trade in wildlife for traditional medicine will continue and there are plans to develop a database and a national guide to parts and derivatives and medicinal products in trade, in Italian, for all the investigators involved in this field. The guide will be based on TRAFFIC's *Traditional Asian Medicine Identification Guide for Law Enforcers*, which was of vital assistance to the authorities during *Operation Marco Polo*.

Operation Marco Polo: an Italian investigation on the illegal trade in Asian traditional medicine, CoP13 Inf. 45; TRAFFIC Europe

KAZAKHSTAN: On 21 June 2004, Customs officials seized 1500 Horsfield's Tortoises *Testudo horsfieldii* (CITES II) that were being smuggled into Russia on a passenger train. The tortoises were found sewn into sacks and stuffed into a ventilation pipe on the Moscow-bound train after it was stopped at the Kazakh-Russian border. No documents accompanied the consignment. The case is being investigated.

23 June 2004; <http://www.terradaily.com>

KYRGYZSTAN: On 27 October 2004, 127 Saker Falcons *Falco cherrug* (CITES II) contained in wooden crates were discovered being loaded onto a civilian plane on a runway at a military airbase outside the capital Bishkek. The plane was bound for Syria. The birds were wearing high quality leather hoods and were to be used in falconry in the Middle East, where they are traditionally used for hunting Houbara Bustards *Chlamydotis undulata* (I). Members of NABU-Kyrgyzstan assisted with

identification, ringing, expertise in handling the falcons, and in giving advice. Within a week, 114 of the birds had been released into the wild, leaving just a few poorly individuals being treated in captivity. One man was detained and an investigation is being carried out.

The total Kyrgyzstan Saker population is estimated at 60 individuals, indicating that the birds had either been trapped on migration or brought into Kyrgyzstan, possibly from Kazakhstan.

World Birdwatch 26(4):8, December 2004. *BirdLife International; Institute for War and Peace Reporting*: www.iwpr.net/index

MALTA: On 19 January 2005, Customs officials at Malta International Airport seized some 500 animal skins from four suitcases in what has been described as one of the largest hauls involving illicit wildlife trade in the country. The cargo, from Cairo, via Italy, and which had been abandoned at the baggage claims hall, was found to consist of animal carcasses, mainly birds. These included egrets, eagles, ducks, a kingfisher, as well as an Egyptian Mongoose *Herpestes ichneumon* and a Jungle Cat *Felis chaus* (CITES II). Two people were questioned in connection with the case. Further investigations showed that the owners of the suitcases had arrived in Malta a few days earlier. A Customs spokes man said the perpetrators probably had a short connection time and the bags never made it to the same flight. Realizing they could land themselves in trouble, they never reported the lost luggage to the airline. BirdLife Malta president Joseph Mangion said he hoped the haul would alert the authorities to the extent of the illicit wildlife trade and the number of bird poachers. In August 2003, some 700 dead birds being transported from Egypt were seized at the airport (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 19(3):149). Mr Mangion said such skins were likely used by taxidermists. <http://www.timesofmalta.com>

RUSSIA: Two citizens of Mongolia were detained by officials at Altai on the border with Mongolia, after being found in possession of the skins of 15 Snow Leopards *Uncia uncia* (CITES I).

www.gazeta.ru, 1 June 2004

UK: In June 2004, a shipment of living rock from Indonesia was examined at Heathrow Airport. As a result, 136 kg of readily identifiable hard corals were confiscated as the coral was not shown on the accompanying CITES documents, and 72 pieces of live coral were confiscated as the species were misdescribed.

In September 2004, a shipment of traditional medicines from Hong Kong destined for the UK was examined at Felixstowe. 690 kg of traditional medicine advertised as containing the plant *Kuth Saussurea costus* (CITES I) were confiscated as no CITES export or import documents were available.

On 15 November 2004, police officers carried out simultaneous warrants on a number of premises believed to be involved in the manufacture and sale of personal grooming items made from ivory and tortoiseshell (both CITES I). Based on information provided by TRAFFIC, the operation, spearheaded by the Metropolitan Police Wildlife Crime Unit, and involving Gloucestershire and Avon and Somerset Constabularies, involved the seizure of 174 worked elephant ivory items and a substantial amount of unworked and partially worked ivory (estimated at 125 kg). The HM Customs and Excise CITES Team, based at Heathrow, and TRAFFIC, also assisted the police with the search warrants. Enquiries are continuing.

HM Customs & Excise; TRAFFIC International

A F R I C A

SOUTH AFRICA: On 22 June 2004, at Krugersdorp Magistrates' Court, Andre Viljoen of Krugersdorp was found guilty of smuggling cycads (specially protected plants) into Gauteng Province from Mpumalanga Province and sentenced to three months' and three years' imprisonment for transgressing, respectively, Sections 95 and 96 of the *Nature Conservation Ordinance 12 of 1983*. He

was given an option of paying a fine of R45000 (USD6900) for both offences. Viljoen had been apprehended on 10 June in Krugersdorp in possession of 57 plants following three days of close monitoring by officials of the Special Investigation Unit of the Gauteng Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Environment (GDACE) who are conducting a campaign to thwart the smuggling of wildlife and wildlife products. The plants—specimens of *Encephalartos altensteinii*, *E. humilus*, *E. inopinus*, *E. lanatus* and *E. villosus*—were treated and have been replanted at Walter Sisulu Botanical Gardens.

In June, the Bellville Regional Court imposed fines of R320 000 (USD49 000) on an Indonesian and two Japanese who tried to smuggle 37 live Armadillo Girdled Lizards *Cordylus cataphractus* (CITES II) out of the country. A month earlier, three Japanese men were arrested at the airport in Cape Town trying to smuggle out 37 Armadillo Girdled Lizards in their hand luggage and pockets. One of the men had already been arrested in March trying to smuggle out 57 Armadillo Girdled Lizards but was released after paying a fine of USD18 300.

On 1 July 2004, at Vredendal Regional Court, Czech national Erik Covacs and brothers Bohus and Marian Simek from Slovakia, were convicted of illegally collecting 94 Angulated Tortoises *Chersina angulata* (CITES II) and transporting 13 of them without permits. They had intended to courier all specimens out of the country. They were each sentenced to five years' imprisonment or ordered to pay a fine of R130 000 (USD20 000). The men were gaoled as they were unable to pay the fine. Petr Motycka, who was convicted of possessing 13 tortoises and transporting them without a permit, was sentenced to a fine of R48 000 or three-years in gaol. In his defence he stated that he had merely been taking nature photographs in the area and had not been aware that his companions were hunting tortoises. He has paid his fine and been released from custody.

While there have been a number of visiting foreigners convicted of attempting to smuggle reptiles out of South Africa, it is the first time any are serving a gaol sentence. The three had been stopped in their car by police outside Doringbaai on 11 May. Thirteen tortoises were found in the boot of the car and the other 65 specimens were found wrapped in cloth bags in holes in the veld in the same area.

The Angulated Tortoise is protected under the Western Cape's *Nature Conservation Ordinance*. No tortoise may be collected from the wild, possessed, imported or exported without a permit.

Gauteng Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Environment, 9 July 2004; 25 January 2005; South African Press Agency SAPA, 25 June 2004; <http://iafrica.com/news/sa/331066.htm>; The Star (South Africa), 2 July 2004; Khaleej Times Online (AFP), 18 July 2004

ASIA

EAST ASIA

CHINA: On 26 May 2004, forestry officials in Yunnan province, at the border with Myanmar, seized a 500 kg shipment of shells of tortoises and freshwater turtles coming into the country. These are estimated to derive from some 5000 specimens, including Elongated Tortoise *Indotestudo elongata* (CITES II), Malaysian Giant Turtle *Orlitia borneensis*, and Bengal Eyed Terrapin *Morenia ocellata* (I). They were reported to have been destined for sale in Chengdu city in Sichuan province. The biggest TCM market in south-east China is located in Chengdu city.

On 13 August 2004, at the Middle People's Court in Xi'an City, Shanxi Province, the manager of Beijing Xie'er Company was given a 14-year gaol term and fined RMB200 000 (USD24 000). Eight accomplices were sentenced to between three and 14 years' imprisonment and fined between RMB30 000 (USD3500) and RMB100 000 for their part in the illegal trade of macaques *Macaca* spp.

The judgement follows the confiscation of two macaques, in November 2002, by Shanxi forest police at Xi'an railway station and the subsequent discovery of a criminal network involved in the illegal purchase, transport and sale of more than 3000 macaques between November 2001 and May 2002.

In a landmark judgement, on 5 October 2004, the intermediate court at Lhasa, Tibet, sentenced two people to death and another person to life imprisonment for smuggling skins of 31 Tigers, 581 Leopards and 778 otter skins (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 20(1):36). The skins, from India, and on route to Lhasa, were seized by the Anti-Smuggling Bureau from a lorry on 8 October 2003. The Chinese leader of the group, Wang Jie, was sentenced to death, Gongby (Gonpo), a native Tibetan, was sentenced to death with a two-year reprieve, and Laba Ciren, also of Tibet, was gaoled for life.

According to a recent report by the Environmental Investigation Agency—which documents the trade in cat skins between India, Nepal and China—Tiger and Leopard skins are often seized with huge volumes of otter skins. It reports that Leopard and otter skins are used as trim on traditional costumes worn by Tibetans, and that whole Leopard skins are sewn into the backs of traditional costumes worn by Tibetans in Zorgei market, Sichuan Province, China. Around 10 otter pelts are used to make a warm jacket called a "bhatta" which is also sold in Tibet.

TRAFFIC East Asia China Programme; <http://big5.china.com.cn/ChineseLaw/634757.htm>; Wildlife Protection Society of India, 11 October 2004; The Tiger Skin Trail, Environmental Investigation Agency, October 2004

HONG KONG SAR: On 1 March 2004, Customs officials discovered 307 live Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II), and some live soft-shelled turtles (non-CITES), while examining two unclaimed bags that had arrived from Malaysia. A joint operation between the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department and Customs and Excise Department was carried out to investigate the case. The following day, a man was arrested as he was about to leave Hong Kong. He was later prosecuted and fined HKD29 000 (USD3700) for the illegal importation of endangered species, HKD1000 for cruelty to animals, and two months' imprisonment, suspended for two years.

Fort Worth Zoo, USA, is caring for 157 of the tortoises and 112 have been sent to Rotterdam Zoo, Netherlands. These specimens will be used for conservation and education purposes.

On 27 June 2004, Customs officials at Kwai Chung Terminal examining an unclaimed container from Malaysia found 3580 dead turtles (including Malaysian Box Turtle *Cuora amboinensis* (CITES II), Black Marsh Turtle *Siebenrockiella crassicollis* and Giant Asian Pond Turtle *Heosemys grandis*). Since the owner could not be traced, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department applied for a court order to forfeit the specimens.

On 9 September 2004, Customs officers at Kwai Chung Terminal intercepted a shipment of 939 frozen pangolin *Manis* carcasses and 1005 kg of pangolin scales that had arrived from Malaysia. The case was under application for a court forfeiture order.

On 4 November 2004, Customs officials apprehended a local resident who had arrived from Thailand. In his baggage were 23 Radiated Tortoises *Geochelone radiata* (CITES I), 7 Indian Star Tortoises *G. elegans* (II), 3 Leopard Tortoises *G. pardalis* (II) and 1 monitor lizard. He was later prosecuted and fined HKD30 000 (USD3800).

On 6 December 2004, Customs officials at Kwai Chung Terminal intercepted a consignment of 97 cartons containing 1973 kg of black coral *Antipatharia* spp., in transit from Indonesia to mainland China.

On 5 January 2005, a shipment of 11 cartons holding 428 kg of stony coral from mainland China, destined for Malaysia, was seized. Both cases are under investigation.

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 20/26 January 2005

SOUTH ASIA

INDIA: Sansar Chand, who has been pursued by the police in India for many years for a string of poaching offences, was finally apprehended and sentenced to five years' of "rigorous imprisonment" on 29 April 2004. This is the highest punishment ever awarded under the *Wild Life (Protection) Act 1972*. However, Chand appealed the conviction and was granted bail on 19 May. He has subsequently been connected with another wildlife case in Jaipur but has eluded capture (see below).

Chand has been associated with wildlife crime since at least 1974, when he was first arrested in connection with a seizure which included Tiger and Leopard skins. He was sentenced in this case, in 1982, to 18 months' imprisonment. However, he appealed to the Delhi High Court and was bailed. He returned to gaol in 1994 following a petition lodged by the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI). He appealed, was fined, but released after he had served six months on the grounds that he was under age at the time the crime was committed. Since then, Sansar Chand has been connected to, implicated, or named in about 21 wildlife cases throughout India (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 15(3):102).

According to Belinda Wright, Executive Director of WPSI, Sansar Chand is probably responsible for more Tiger and Leopard deaths than anyone else in India.

On 18 July 2004, at Anna International Airport, Chennai, a Bangkok-bound passenger attempting to smuggle more than 600 live Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II) was apprehended by CISF (Central Industrial Security Force) personnel. The tortoises were discovered during an x-ray scan of the suitcase in which they had been concealed. The passenger was arrested.

A week earlier, on 12 July 2004, airport officials seized 450 Indian Star Tortoises from a man as he attempted to board a flight to Kuala Lumpur. Investigations by officials revealed that the person was acting as a conduit for a much larger scheme that operated out of Burma Bazaar in the city.

In July 2004, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence seized a consignment of seahorses *Hippocampus* spp. from a vessel at Chennai port, arriving from Guntur, Andhra Pradesh. The vessel had already arrived in Singapore, before being recalled on discovery of the violation. On inspection, the two tonnes-consignment was found to consist of 76 bags of dried seahorses. These had been concealed behind bags of chillies, which were used both as a camouflage and to disguise the odour of the seahorses.

In July 2004, police in Chennai investigating a statewide racket in the sale of Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) skins, arrested a smuggler and seized skins of 4 Tigers, 2 Leopards *P. pardus* (I) and 21 pairs of Tiger nails. The suspect told police that he used to smuggle cosmetics and fancy items from Chennai to Andhra and his contacts there gave him Tiger skins in return. The case is under investigation.

On 16 August 2004, approximately 16 kg of raw shahtoosh wool (of Tibetan Antelope *Pantholops hodgsonii*, CITES I) were seized by police in the remote Uttaranchal town of Dharchula, near the border with Nepal, following a routine check of a vehicle. It is believed that the shahtoosh was hidden among 66 kg of pashmina. The driver, who had been bound for Delhi, was arrested. He revealed that the shahtoosh belonged to a local trader, who had absconded.

On 16 October 2004, police in Rajasthan arrested a man in North Jaipur who was in possession of Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) claws. After the man claimed to be working for the notorious wildlife trader Sansar Chand (see above), Rajasthan police raided Chand's house on 18 October and arrested some members of his family. His wife and son are still in custody, while Chand has absconded. The Rajasthan police have promised a detailed investigation of the *modus operandi* of this illegal trade network.

On 4 November 2004, enforcement officials of Uttaranchal State Forest Department seized 14 bear gall bladders weighing 1130 g and one musk pod weighing 30 g from an international smuggler at

Munsiyari near Dharchula, near the border with Nepal. The person is in custody and the case is under investigation.

On 27 December 2004, at Katni Magistrates' Court, Madhya Pradesh, Lala Qureshi and Lallan Pardi were each sentenced to three years of "rigorous imprisonment" and fined Rs10000 (USD230) following their involvement in the illegal trade in 7 Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) skins, seized in June 2004, in Shahdol. Three others were acquitted owing to lack of evidence. Following the seizure, WPSI co-ordinated raids with enforcement personnel in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh to try to get the suspects in the case arrested.

Lala Qureshi is believed to be an important supplier of another trader who was accused, in 2000, of the illegal trade of, among other items, 70 Leopards skins, 18000 Leopard claws and 4 Tiger skins (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 18(2):74). That case is pending in the courts.

On 1 February 2005, a huge consignment of wildlife products was seized by Delhi police from a warehouse in Patel Nagar. Items included skins of 39 Leopards (CITES I) (including a Snow Leopard *Uncia uncia* (I)), 2 Tigers (I) and 42 otters; 3 kg of Tiger claws, 14 Tiger canines, 10 Tiger jaw bones, 60 kg of Tiger and Leopard paws, 20 small pieces of bone that appear to be Tiger and Leopard 'floating' clavicle bones, and about 135 kg of porcupine quills. Four people were arrested, including the niece and another relative of Sansar Chand (see above), and two employees at the warehouse. The accused were remanded in custody and the case has been handed over to the Delhi Forest and Wildlife authorities.

Wildlife Protection Society of India, 12 June/18 August/19 October/28 December 2004: www.wpsi-india.org; B.Wright, WPSI, in litt., 1/2 February 2005; The Hindu (India), 19 July 2004; Chennai online news service, 12 July 2004; The Times of India, 12 July 2004; The Tribune (India), 19 September 2004; The Independent (UK), 20 October 2004; <http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk>; <http://news.bbc.co.uk>; <http://us.rediff.com/news/2004>; Shri K.N. Thakur, Assistant, CITES Management Authority, India

SOUTH-EAST ASIA

INDONESIA: On 6 August 2004, the Bali Natural Resources Conservation Body (BKSDA) raided four houses and a meat processing factory in Sanur and Denpasar belonging to a well-known businessman in Bali and seized 164 rare species in what is believed to be the single largest seizure of rare animals in Bali to date.

The businessman claimed to have the requisite licences but stated that some had expired. The seized animals included Lions *Panthera leo* (CITES I), Tigers *P. tigris* (I), Malayan Sun Bears *Helarctos malayanus* (I), Orang-utans *Pongo pygmaeus* (I), New Guinea Crocodiles *Crocodylus novaeguineae* (I/II), Hill Mynas *Gracula religiosa* (II), Burmese Pythons *Python molurus* (I/II), deer *Cervus timorensis*, Sea eagles Pandionidae, all of which are being held at BKSDA's animal rehabilitation centre in Tabanan.

In August 2004, at a court in Rengat, Riau province, Sumatra, five people were convicted of poaching and illegal trade in the Sumatran Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 20(1):37). Five were sentenced to six years' imprisonment and fined 70 million Rupiah (USD7750). A sixth person, and alleged buyer of the bones and pelts, is awaiting trial. This case is the first to be fully prosecuted under *Conservation Law No 5/1990* in this region of Sumatra. The activities of the defendants were uncovered by the Department of Forestry and Sumatran Tiger Conservation Program operating across Riau and Jambi provinces of Sumatra following investigations by the police, park rangers and Tiger Protection Units into the poisoning of the Tigers in Bukit Tigapuluh National Park. A further four traders have been arrested. Intelligence suggests that at least 60 wild Tigers have been sold through this network over the last 10 years.

On 11 September 2004, 21 Jakarta-bound *Leucocephalon yuwonoi* were reportedly confiscated from a trader in Sulawesi. The turtles were handed over to the Tasikoki Wildlife Rescue Center in North Sulawesi.

The Star online [<http://thestar.com.my>], 22 July 2004; *The Jakarta Post (Indonesia)*, 7 August 2004; *The Tiger Foundation-Sumatran Tiger Trust*; *The Asian Turtle Conservation Network (Ha Noi, Viet Nam)*: www.asianturtle-network.org

MALAYSIA: On 20 July 2004, 103 pangolins *Manis* were seized from a Thai-registered cargo lorry at a checkpoint in Padang Besar, at the border with Thailand. The animals, reportedly bound for southern Thailand, were seized and handed over to the State wildlife authorities. The lorry driver was detained for further interrogation.

On 25 July 2004, a syndicate tried to smuggle 33 t of ramin *Gonystylus* logs via Sungai Batu Pahat after unloading them from Indonesian vessels at a well-guarded and isolated spot. With the co-operation of the Customs Department and the Malaysian Timber Industry Board (MTIB), the timber was seized from two lorries at a sawn log processing factory in Pontian.

The factory owners have been fined RM35000 (USD9000) under the *Customs Act 1967* for keeping smuggled timber. In May 2004, MTIB and Selangor Customs seized 32m² of ramin from a private jetty in Port Klang.

At the time of the seizure, ramin was listed in CITES Appendix III and imports had to be accompanied by an Indonesian CITES permit. At CoPI3, the genus *Gonystylus* was transferred to Appendix II.

MTIB is reported to have offered to return the logs to the Indonesian CITES authorities but would destroy them if no response is received by an agreed date.

The Malaysian Government banned the importation of logs from Indonesia in 2002.

On 26 October 2004, 49 pangolins *Manis* and a python were discovered during a routine police check on a lorry at a roadblock at Jalan Segamat. The animals were believed to be destined for the food trade. Two people were arrested and the animals released at Taman Negara Salai.

The two suspects, from Batu Pahat, were released after posting RM5000 (USD1300) bail and were due to be charged in court at a later date.

This is the second such incident in Segamat in less than six months. In June, wildlife enforcement officers seized 280 pangolins from a lorry and arrested two men and a Thai woman following a tip off. The suspects were believed to be members of an international syndicate of poachers and suppliers of the protected species.

In January 2005, the National Parks and Wildlife Protection Department seized 999 Bengal Monitors *Varanus bengalensis* (CITES I) as they were about to be smuggled on board a plane to Hong Kong. The reptiles, which weighed a total of over 4000 kg, were packed in 70 wooden boxes. The species is protected in Malaysia and may not enter trade.

Utusan Malaysia, 12 August 2004; http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/content.asp?y=2004&dt=0813&pub=Utusan_Express&sec=Home_News&pg=hn_07.htm; *New Straits Times (Malaysia)*, 29 October 2004/27 January 2005

SINGAPORE: Three seizures containing a total of 56 t of Red Sandalwood *Pterocarpus santalinus* (CITES II) were made by Customs officials in 2004. All shipments had arrived from India.

In September 2004, authorities seized 6555 eggs of Green Turtle *Chelonia mydas* (CITES I) and Hawksbill Turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata* (I), concealed with the day's catch of fish on board a vessel from Indonesia, bound for Jurong fishing port.

In October 2004, Customs officers seized 40 000 skin pieces of Reticulated Python *Python reticulata* (CITES II) and Water Monitor Lizard *Varanus salvator* (II) hidden among plywood products on board an Indonesian tugboat. The skins were believed to have originated from the Indonesian province of Jambi, Sumatra. The captain of the vessel was fined SGD5000 (USD3000) and gaoled for three months.

TRAFFIC Southeast Asia

VIET NAM: On 22 September 2004, police in Nghe An Province stopped a bus on its way to Vinh City carrying wildlife including 277 kg of turtles, possibly representing 10 species. The police suspect that the turtles came across the border from Laos, though based upon the species composition, it is probable that the shipment originated further south. Many of the turtles have been released in Pu Mat National Park though some are being held in captivity in the park pending a decision as to their disposition. The species comprised Malaysian Box Turtle *Cuora amboinensis* (CITES II) (4.4kg), Indochinese Box Turtle *Cuora galbinifrons* (II) (unknown amount), *Cyclemys dentata* complex (44 kg), Giant Asian Pond Turtle *Heosemys grandis* (24 kg), Yellow-headed Temple Turtle *Hieremys annandalii* (97.7 kg), Malayan Snail-eating Turtle *Malayemys subtrijuga* (21.6 kg), Keeled Box Turtle *Pyxidea mouhotii* (4 kg), Black Marsh Turtle *Siebenrockiella crassicollis* (21 kg), Elongated Tortoise *Indotestudo elongata* (38 kg) (II), and Impressed Tortoise *Manouria impressa* (15 kg) (II).

On 4 December 2004, police confiscated 730 kg of ivory tusks at a warehouse in the Long Bien District of Hanoi City. Most of the tusks had been cut into pieces and placed in 40 bags. The driver declared that the owner of the ivory tusks was the manager of an import and export company who had fled that morning. Major General Cao Ngoc Oanh, Vice-Head of the National Police Department under the Ministry of Police states that this is the biggest ever confiscation of ivory in Viet Nam. Based on an initial examination, investigators have concluded that the ivory came from outside the country. The case is being investigated.

The Asian Turtle Crisis Bulletin (Asian Turtle Conservation Network), Vol. 1 Issues 1/2, September/October 2004; The Pioneer Newspaper (Viet Nam), 6 December 2004 (translated by Education for Nature-Vietnam)

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA: In an unprecedented move, all 40 crew members of a vessel found fishing illegally in Australian waters have been charged.

On 9 September 2004, at Perth District Court, Charles Thomas Pena of Uruguay and Manuel Torres Regueira of Spain were each fined AUD30 000 (USD22 000) after pleading guilty to poaching Patagonian Toothfish *Dissostichus eleginoides* from Australian waters. The judge said he would have imposed bigger fines if he thought the men could pay.

The Australian Navy boarded their vessel, *Maya V*, on 21 January 2004 from a helicopter in Antarctic seas 4000 km southwest of Perth. On board they found 202 t of the fish.

Pena, the ship's captain and first mate Regueira, pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing to one count each of having a foreign boat equipped for fishing in Australia's fishing zone and intentionally using a foreign boat for fishing in the area. The men were repatriated after paying their fines.

The master and fishing master of the vessel also received AUD30 000 fines and three crew members were each fined AUD1500 and given AUD6000 five-year good behaviour bonds. A further 32 crew members were also fined (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 20(1):38). Three junior crew who pleaded not guilty are still facing court proceedings.

On 17 October 2004, Customs officers at the Post Handling Unit at Sydney Airport found 50 Shingleback Lizards *Tiliqua rugosa* wrapped in socks and towels inside 10 postal packages destined for Japan. The reptiles were to be held at the Veterinary and Quarantine Centre at Taronga Zoo, Sydney, while their future is determined. Customs has been unable to determine the senders' identity and investigations are continuing.

A number of attempts to import bird eggs illegally have been uncovered at Sydney and Brisbane airports. An Australian national arriving in Brisbane from Singapore was found to be concealing 52 bird eggs inside a body vest. He was charged with importing regulated live specimens without a permit and was bailed to appear at Brisbane Magistrates' Court at a later date. A passenger due to leave Sydney on a flight to Zurich on 12 November 2004 was detained by Customs officers at

Sydney Airport for a frisk search. Twenty-three bird eggs were discovered hidden in the passenger's underwear. He was charged under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* with attempting to export regulated native specimens.

The detection follows two bird smuggling attempts in October in which Customs officers at Sydney Airport detained two passengers. A resident of Adelaide arrived on a flight from Johannesburg, South Africa, with nine eggs concealed in pockets sewn into the inner lining of his underwear; three were crushed. Two days later, another man was allegedly attempting to leave the country for Johannesburg, with 24 eggs concealed in a body vest. Only two eggs remained viable. Both men were charged under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* with attempting to import and export, respectively, regulated wildlife. They were bailed to appear in court at a later date.

Associated Press, 14 September 2004; Australian Fisheries Management Authority; Australian Customs media releases, 11/12 September, 17/19 October/13 November 2004

AMERICAS

CANADA: On 3 November 2004, in Vancouver provincial court, Joseph Ho was fined CAD50 000 (USD40 000) following a year-long investigation by fisheries officers into the poaching of Northern Abalone *Haliotis kamtschatkana* in the southern coastal area of British Columbia. Ho, an operator of a Vancouver seafood wholesale/retail company, pleaded guilty to purchasing and selling abalone illegally. Of the fine, CAD22 500 will go to Bamfield Huu-ay-aht Community Abalone Project Society and CAD22 500 to the West Coast Vancouver Island Aquatic Management Board for the conservation and protection of abalone.

In October 2004, at Western Communities provincial court, near Victoria, British Columbia, David McGuire of Victoria was fined CAD25 000 after pleading guilty to 13 counts of fishing for, possessing and selling Northern Abalone. His fishing gear and vehicle were forfeited and a 10-year diving ban was imposed. A number of individuals are also awaiting trial for allegedly harvesting, buying and selling abalone.

The abalone fishery in British Columbia has been closed since 1990 with the intention of halting the decline of the wild Northern Abalone population. Illegal harvest is considered to be one of the main factors affecting recovery of this species.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada news releases, 1/8 November 2004

USA: On 6 October 2004, at Florida District Court, George Norris, of Spring, Texas, was sentenced to 17 months' imprisonment, followed by two years of supervised release after pleading guilty to attempting to smuggle protected orchid specimens into the country from Peru, including species of tropical lady's slipper orchids *Phragmipedium* (CITES II). Norris conspired with Manuel Arias Silva of Lima, Peru, to import orchids in falsely labelled packages between January 1999 and October 2003. Both admitted in their pleas that they used invalid permits for the shipments and falsely labelled many of the plants to cover up the lack of a valid permit. Silva was previously sentenced to 21 months in gaol, three years' supervised release and ordered to pay USD5000.

An Arizona reptile dealer is facing federal charges for the second time for allegedly importing nearly 130 rare reptiles such as tortoises and pythons, some of which died after they were hidden in Federal Express packages that passed through the company's Oakland facility.

The suspect, of Buckeye, Arizona, ran a wildlife import-export business from his home, and was part of an international smuggling ring busted in 1998 in a five-year sting called *Operation Chameleon*. Most of the gang were charged and convicted, including the defendant, a herpetologist who was sentenced to three years in gaol. However, a federal appeals court reversed the conviction in November 2003 for failing to grant him a speedy trial.

Federal prosecutors in San Francisco refiled charges against the defendant in June 2004, saying he had been paid in 1997 and 1998 to illegally import and resell 126 reptiles, including Indian Star

Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II), Radiated Tortoises *G. radiata* (I), Fly River Turtles *Carettochelys insculpta* (CITES II with effect from 12 January 2005), a False Gharial *Tomistoma schlegelii* (I), Boelen's Pythons *Morelia boeleni* (II), Green Tree Pythons *M. viridis* (II) and Gray's Monitors *Varanus olivaceus* (II). The suspect faces charges of conspiracy, smuggling, sale and purchase of illegal wildlife and money laundering. The animals were shipped by Federal Express through Oakland in packages with false invoices and shipping documents, with the help of an employee of the shipping company.

A key figure in the ring, Ken Liang "Anson" Wong of Malaysia, was sentenced in 2001 to 71 months in gaol and fined USD60 000 after pleading guilty to 40 felony charges (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 19(1):48).

On 14 November 2004, Optimus, Inc., a Miami-based gourmet company doing business as Marky's Caviar and the International Food Emporium, and one of the largest importers of sturgeon caviar in the USA (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 19(3):112), pleaded guilty to purchasing approximately 5.9 t of smuggled caviar. Under the terms of a plea agreement, Optimus, Inc. will pay a USD1 million fine. The company is also being required to develop a stringent wildlife compliance plan and remain subject to government and court supervision while serving five years of probation. The plea agreement is subject to approval by the court.

Most of the criminal activity of which the company is accused occurred between late 1999 and early 2000. Among the charges, Optimus, Inc. directed its suppliers to provide invoices stating that the caviar had been lawfully imported into the USA, even though there were indications to the contrary. Sentencing has yet to take place.

On 20 December 2004, 90 parrots that had been smuggled into the country from Mexico for the pet trade were returned by the federal authorities at Otay Mesa, on the US/Mexico border. The parrots—which included 68 Lilac-crowned Parrots *Amazona finschi* (transferred from CITES II to Appendix I at CoP13, effective 12 January 2005) and 22 Red-crowned Amazons *Amazona viridigenalis* (CITES I)—are species native only to Mexico. They were among specimens seized in two separate foiled smuggling attempts. In the first case, the defendant, who has pleaded guilty to smuggling and wildlife trafficking charges, was under surveillance by Service special agents before his arrest. US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) inspectors stopped the suspect at the San Ysidro border crossing on 28 August 2004 as he was returning from an overnight trip to Mexico; they discovered 128 birds hidden in the side panels and under the rear seats of his vehicle, including 48 Lilac-crowned Amazons, Orange-fronted Conures *Aratinga canicularis* (CITES II), cardinals *Cardinalis* spp., and mockingbirds. During investigation the subject admitted smuggling birds on as many as 20 different occasions.

In the second incident, CBP stopped a Los Angeles resident returning from Mexico via Otay Mesa on 30 October 2004. The man had 45 parrots (including Lilac-crowned Amazons and Red-crowned Amazons) concealed behind the rear seat of his car. He pleaded guilty to charges. Both defendants await sentencing.

After being seized by the Service, the birds returned to Mexico all completed the required quarantine period.

TRAFFIC North America; US Fish & Wildlife Service Press Release, <http://news.fws.gov/NewsReleases/R2/48D8BF48-65B8-D693-772A93C6A6C7CEF8.html>; San Francisco Chronicle (USA), 7 July 2004 US Fish and Wildlife Service news release (news.fws.gov/NewsReleases), 23 December 2004; http://www.lawfuel.com/index.php?page=press_releases&handler=focus&pressreleaseid=1944&category=&return=list-publications&sortby=timestamp&screen=1, 14 November

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EUROPE

BELGIUM: On 14 February 2005, elephant ointment was found in a postal shipment, sent from an individual in Ghana to a private address in Brussels. As the prescription indicated the presence of elephant (CITES I) oil (0.3%), a CITES licence should have accompanied the package, which it did not. The item was confiscated.

On 27 April 2005, the Anti-Drug team at Zaventem Airport confiscated 50 Graceful Chameleons *Chamaeleo gracilis* (CITES II) and more than 50 African Forest Turtles *Pelusios gabonensis* arriving from Congo, bound for a trader in Germany. The chameleons were covered by a copy of a CITES export permit. There was no paperwork accompanying the turtle shipment. All the animals were sent to the national zoo in Antwerp.

In August 2005, Customs officers at Zaventem Airport seized a cargo shipment containing more than 1000 kg of African Teak *Pericopsis elata* (CITES II). The items, arriving from Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, were in the form of wooden steps and doors and declared as personal effects. The consignee, a private individual, was not in possession of a CITES permit.

Belgian Customs Airport News, CITES 02; 07; 12/2005; GAD (Anti-Drug Customs) team

CROATIA: On 28 November 2004, Customs officials at Zagreb Airport seized 50 Emerald Monitors *Varanus prasinus* (CITES II) from a Croatian citizen returning from Indonesia via Kuala Lumpur and Amsterdam, without CITES permits. The animals had been placed, five to a sack, in two plastic baskets inside hand luggage. The suspect stated that he had been in Indonesia as a tourist and had purchased the reptiles from a market in Jakarta. His intention was to start breeding Emerald Monitors in captivity. He claimed to be unaware of the need for a CITES permit to export/import the specimens. When approached to have his luggage inspected, the suspect declared the reptiles, thus avoiding a violation of the Customs Code for importing animals into the country. The following day, the lizards were taken into the care of the Nature Protection Inspection with the Ministry of Culture, Department for Nature Protection and placed in a rescue centre near Zagreb.

The CITES Management Authorities in Croatia and Indonesia arranged for all specimens, excepting 13 that had died and four that were too ill to travel (and which remain at the rescue centre), to be issued with the necessary CITES re-export permits and health certificates. They were permitted entry to Indonesia in February 2005 and sent to Tegal Alur Rescue Centre in Jakarta. Personnel at the Centre, in collaboration with Wasur National Park in Papua and local tribes inhabiting the area, identified a suitable release site in the park after a one-month habitat assessment was carried out. The forestry department issued a permit to allow the lizards' release and the local indigenous group—the Morori Mengey tribe—activated a traditional law against hunting in the area. The reptiles were flown by a medical team from Tegal Alur Rescue Centre to the park on 10 May where they spent a further 12 days in a pre-release cage for further medical checks and to acclimatize them for release. On 22 May they were successfully released and were soon observed climbing trees and feeding on ant nests.

Katica Bezuh, Nature Protection Senior Inspector, Ministry of Culture, Nature Protection Directorate, Department for Legal Affairs and Nature Protection Inspection, Zagreb, Croatia; Femke den Haas, Manager, Tegal Alur Rescue Centre, Jakarta, Indonesia

GERMANY: On 18 June 2005, Customs officers from Mukran and RFCgen boarded a Russian motorboat docked at the harbour in Sassnitz-Mukran and discovered some 67 reptilian skin products inside the captain's cabin. The items included handbags, wallets and a 4.5 metre long skin

piece (species not disclosed). The boat had arrived from Guinea Bissau via Sweden. The captain could not present an import permit for the items.

In August 2005, Customs officers at Frankfurt Airport uncovered an attempt to smuggle 375 Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II) in two suitcases. Thirty specimens had died. The reptiles, contained in jute sacks and bound with elastic bands, were found by sniffer dogs during a routine check of luggage. The shipment was in transit from Dubai to Zagreb, where they were to be sold. A Croatian citizen was taken into custody. The tortoises were malnourished and were to be cared for at the airport before being sent to a zoo.

www.zoll.de/f0_veroeffentlichungen/a0_pressemitteilungen/q68_artenschutz;www.spiegel.de/panorama/0,1518,370205,00.html

GREENLAND: In June 2005, a Danish court fined the smuggler of 15 figures made from teeth of Sperm Whale *Physeter catodon* (CITES I) and Walrus *Odobenus rosmarus* (III) DKK15000 (EUR7200). In May 2003 he had tried to import the items from Bali inside a hollow statue. The case is reported to be related to a seizure of Sperm Whale and Walrus teeth in October 2002 (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 19(3):149).

AG/Gronlandsposten (Greenland), 16 June 2005

ITALY: In July 2005, investigators of the Corpo Forestale dello Stato (the CITES enforcement authority) seized some 200 raptors illegally imported over a five-year period. This follows the seizure in May in Ancona seaport of 13 eggs of Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* and Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* (both CITESII), illegally imported from Greece by an Austrian national.

The seized raptors included the following CITES II species: Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus*, Ruppell's Vulture *Gyps rueppellii*, White-backed Vulture *G. africanus*, Secretary-bird *Sagittarius serpentarius*, Palm-nut Vulture *Gypohierax angolensis*, Jackal Buzzard *Buteo rufofuscus*, Red-necked Buzzard *B. auguralis*, Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*, Steppe Eagle *A. nipalensis*, Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug*, Forster's Caracara *Phalacrocorax australis* and Mountain Caracara *P. megalopterus*.

TRAFFIC Europe

NETHERLANDS: On 17 February 2005, the General Inspection Service and Customs officials at Schiphol Airport seized an illegal shipment of parts belonging to eight African Elephants *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I), including 22 legs, 8 tusks, 8 ears, 3 tails, a skull and one complete hide—all packed in salt. Also included were the horns and hides of Lechwe *Kobus lechwe* (II). The shipment originated in southern Africa and was to be shipped to Portugal, Spain and the Czech Republic, via Germany. The case is under investigation.

Reuters, 18 February 2005: <http://today.reuters.co.uk/news>

SLOVAKIA: On 29 November 2004, police officers searched the house of a Slovakian citizen in Bratislava following a joint investigation by the police, Customs and the Environmental Inspectorate. The police seized from the wildlife trader, who had already been convicted of wildlife trade crimes abroad, a total of 218 reptiles, including 55 Radiated Tortoises *Geochelone radiata* (CITES I), 28 Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (II), 12 Marginated Tortoises *Testudo marginata* (II), 65 Spur-thighed Tortoises *T. graeca* (II), 48 Hermann's Tortoises *T. hermanni* (II), 8 Fiji Banded Iguanas *Brachylophus fasciatus* (I) and 2 Madagascar Tree Boas *Sanzinia madagascariensis* (I). The animals were placed at the rescue centre of Bojnice Zoo.

Judicial and Criminal Police Office of Slovakia, Environmental Crime Group and Customs Directorate of Slovakia, Customs Criminal Office

SWITZERLAND: Investigations by Swiss Customs, in co-operation with the Swiss Federal Veterinary Office, have revealed that 537 shahtoosh shawls (made from the wool of the Tibetan Antelope *Pantholops hodgsonii* (CITES I)), have been illegally imported into Switzerland over a five-year period. The smuggling network was uncovered by Customs in January 2003 after they carried out investigations at a shop in St Moritz and a dealer's premises in Geneva. Some 38 shawls were seized.

The majority of the shawls were smuggled from India to Geneva by airline passengers and from there were sent to St Moritz. However, the investigations also revealed that other western European countries such as Germany served as transit points and that shawls were also smuggled by car and courier service. The shawls were sold through the shop in St Moritz and it is believed that a number of the shawls were taken out of Switzerland.

Swiss federal Customs administration press release, 15 June 2005

UK: In April 2005, Customs officials at Heathrow Airport seized approximately nine kilogrammes of African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I) ivory, in transit from Nigeria to China. The raw tusks were found inside a postal package described as gifts. Investigations are continuing.

HM Revenue & Customs CITES Team, Heathrow Airport

A F R I C A

ETHIOPIA: In January 2005, 66 outlets in Addis Ababa were raided by the combined effort of 262 officers, including 50 code enforcement guards, 136 policemen, 66 security guards and 10 wildlife inspectors. A total of some 500kg of ivory and other wild animal products (including Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) skins and Ostrich (CITES I) *Struthio camelus* eggs) valued at one million Birr (USD115600) were confiscated, and charges made against personnel at all 66 outlets. Under new legislation, they may face a Birr 5000 (USD578) fine and up to two years in gaol.

TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa

KENYA: On 31 January 2005, six young Chimpanzees *Pan troglodytes* (CITES I) and four guenons (species not disclosed) were seized by Customs officials at Kenyatta International Airport. The animals, all in one small crate, were reported to be in a pitiful condition and one Chimpanzee later died from malnutrition. The shipment was believed to have been en route from Egypt to Nigeria.

The primates were taken into the care of the Kenya Wildlife Service. The Lusaka Agreement Task Force, an African organization charged with investigating illegal trade in flora and fauna, is working with the Egyptian and Nigerian authorities to determine the origin of the animals.

On 30 August 2005, Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) rangers arrested three Kenyan men and seized 22 elephant tusks (CITES I) weighing 130kg. KWS was passed information that the three were looking for buyers in the town of Garsen, 460 km south-east of Nairobi. Two rangers posed as buyers and arrested the men. Two other suspects got away. The three men were charged in court on 1 September. Investigations are continuing.

Reuters, www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/29543/story.htm, 16 February 2005; www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=87&art_id=qw1125927001824B251

A S I A

EAST ASIA

HONG KONG SAR: On 23 May 2005, Customs officers at Kwai Chung Customhouse foiled an attempt to smuggle 503 kg (229 pieces) of ivory (CITES I) tusks and 556 kg (51 bags) of scales of Hawksbill Turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata* (I) into Hong Kong. The consignment, originating from

Tanzania, had been shipped via Singapore in a seven-metre container declared as containing "dried fish maws". The items were handed over to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department for further investigation. No arrests have been made.

On 4 July 2005, Customs officers at Kwai Chung Customhouse arrested an Indian national arriving from Sri Lanka following the discovery of over 50 kg of dried seahorses *Hippocampus* in his luggage. He was later prosecuted and fined HKD10 000 (USD1280).

On 4 August 2005, at Kwai Chung Customhouse, officials of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, acting on information, intercepted a shipment of 57 live parrots, including amazons and cockatoos, of CITES I- and II-listed species from Guinea. It became evident that the declared origin and identity of some of the parrots had been falsely declared in the exporting documents. The case is under investigation.

Police uncovered a shipment of 2000 pangolins *Manis* on a beach in Hoi Ha Wan after residents became suspicious when a group of people started visiting the area and unloading up to 200 boxes from lorries at a time; these were claimed to be frozen chicken wings. The police were called to investigate and the parcels found to contain the pangolins—their scales removed, frozen, and individually vacuum-packed. They were destined for restaurants in China. Three men were arrested.

*Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, Hong Kong, 24 May 2005: www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/200505/24/05240217.htm; in litt., 23 September 2005; *The Electric New Paper*, 9 September 2005*

JAPAN: On 25 November 2004, at a court in Tokyo, two people were charged under the *Law for the Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora* with the illegal trade in a stuffed Giant Panda *Ailuropoda melanoleuca* (CITES I). The seller of the specimen was sentenced to one year in gaol, placed on probation for three years, and fined 800 000 Yen (USD7638). The buyer was sentenced to gaol for one year and placed on probation for three years.

On 14 January 2005, Tomishiro police at Naha Airport, Okinawa Islands, arrested two residents of Taiwan for smuggling 1738 semi-worked ivory products.

On 20 January 2005, police arrested two people for the smuggling and illegal trade in Radiated Tortoises *Geochelone radiata* (CITES I) in contravention of the *Law for the Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora*. The nine tortoises had been posted in 2004 by express postal service. Some of the specimens had been offered for sale over the internet which was detected by the Osaka squad of special prosecutors who were posing as buyers.

TRAFFIC East Asia

NEPAL: On 2 September 2005, the Royal Nepal Army (RNA) arrested two Nepalis and a Tibetan in the Rasuwa district, on the border with the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) of China. In their possession were skins of five Tigers *Panthera tigris* (CITES I), 36 Leopards *P. pardus* (I), 238 otters and 113 kg of Tiger and Leopard bones. According to staff of the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI), who interrogated the poachers at Kathmandu, the accused were delivering the articles to a trader in Bouddha, Kathmandu, after which they were to be routed to TAR via Bidur, Dhunche and Syabru.

The seizure was the third major haul of wildlife products in Nepal this year: in August, skins of a Tiger, one Leopard and 103 pieces of Tiger and Leopard bones were seized in Kathmandu. The poachers—from the Bawaria community of Haryana—were arrested. Two Tiger skins were seized in Tatopani in April, en route to the TAR.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow>

TAIWAN: On 4 July 2005, in the largest-ever single seizure of Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) bone in Taiwan, and one of the largest in Asia since 2000, Kaohsiung Customs authorities confiscated over 140 kg of Tiger bones, including 24 skulls, in a shipment from Jakarta, Indonesia. The contraband was hidden in a container of deer antlers being exported to Taiwan for use in traditional medicines. Also seized were 400 kg of pangolin *Manis* scales and five pieces of carved ivory weighing one kilogramme.

TRAFFIC press release, 8 August 2005

SOUTH ASIA

INDIA: On 8 March 2005, police seized three skins of Leopards *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) and four other wild cats, and arrested two people during routine vehicle checks in Mukherjee Nagar in north-west Delhi. Two others fled. The detained pair revealed that they used to bring skins from the Terai region of the Himalayas and sell them to Sansar Chand (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 20(2):85) who was himself arrested by police in Delhi in June (see below).

On 6 April 2005, police in Delhi seized a consignment of skins of 45 Leopards *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) and 14 otters on its way to Nepal (with the final destination believed to be China). Three people acting as couriers—two Tibetans and one Nepali—were placed under arrest.

Most of the skins were in good condition and bore signatures in Tibetan script. According to Belinda Wright of the Wildlife Protection Society of India, the signatures indicate that the skins had been checked for quality and were ready to be sent abroad.

On 11 April 2005, two people, including the son of a government official, were arrested in Ranchi, in the State of Jharkhand, while trying to sell five kilogrammes of ivory. One of the pair absconded with 25 kg of ivory. The police posed as customers following information received that the pair was trying to sell 30 kg of ivory.

On 19 May 2005, 41 dead sharks (species not reported) were seized by West Bengal's wildlife authorities from a trawler some 150 km from Kolkata. Fourteen people on the trawler were taken into custody on charges of violating the *Wildlife Protection Act*. It is reported that the sharks were destined for domestic and probably foreign fish markets.

On 30 June 2005, Sansar Chand, one of India's most wanted poachers, was arrested by Delhi police in Patel Nagar in connection with several new Tiger poaching cases filed against him. Chand has been sought by officials in nine States for his involvement in over 50 cases of poaching and animal skin smuggling that have taken place over a period of many years. He had been on the run since he jumped bail in May 2004 (see also *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 20(2):85).

On 29 July 2005, a poacher arrested by the police in Chhatarpur, Madhya Pradesh, confessed to killing at least five Tigers *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) in the Panna National Park/Tiger Reserve in that State, and admitted to his role in smuggling skins of 30 Leopards *P. pardus* (I) in the past few years. He is reported to have confessed to supplying skins to a number of dealers known to police, including Sansar Chand (see above). He was arrested in March after police had traced him from his mobile phone conversations with different contacts in India and Nepal. A Tiger trap and some deer skins were recovered from him. The previous day, Bhopal police arrested a youth in possession of a fresh Leopard skin, reportedly being taken for delivery to Shivpuri. Police are trying to ascertain if there are any links between the two cases.

On 30 July 2005, acting on information, forest staff of Kalamati Forest Gate, under the Missamari police station near Tezpur, Assam, apprehended a person in possession of a 2.2m-long Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) skin and some 10.5 kg of Tiger bones. The body parts had come from a freshly killed animal along the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border. The trader, suspected of being involved in the Tiger trade for some years, used a police vehicle to transport the Tiger. One police

officer who was in the vehicle has been suspended from service. The case is under investigation.

On 20 September 2005, Customs officials at Chennai Airport, Tamil Nadu, seized about 350 Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II) from a Malaysian national bound for Kuala Lumpur. The reptiles were handed over to the Tamil Nadu Forest Department officials.

www.ndtv.com, 7 April/19 May 2005; *India News*, 9 March/12 April 2005, *Indo-Asian News Service*; *www.indianexpress.com*, 1 July 2005; Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, Secretary General, Aaranyak; *Chennai Online*, 20 September 2005; Manoj Kumar Misra, Executive Director, Peace Institute

SOUTH-EAST ASIA

CAMBODIA: On 2 September 2005, Yor Ngun, one of the country's wildlife hunters most wanted by the authorities, was sentenced to seven years in gaol for killing more than 600 animals since 2001. According to US-based conservation group WildAid, Yor had killed over 500 wild cattle (banteng) and specimens of the following CITES I-listed species: 19 Tigers *Panthera tigris*, 40 Leopards *P. pardus*, 30 Asian Elephants *Elephas maximus*, 40 Malayan Sun Bears *Helarctos malayanus* and three Asiatic Black Bears *Ursus thibetanus* across 10 provinces. He was first arrested by the Forestry Administration in September 2004 in the eastern province of Mondul Kiri, but was released after signing a promise not to re-offend. However, he was caught earlier this year in the south-western province of Koh Kong carrying 82 bear claws and 25 bear jaws.

A wildlife trader was ordered to pay an immediate penalty of USD543 after the conservation group WildAid's Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team (WRRT) raided her house in Phnom Penh and seized 12 Elongated Tortoises *Indotestudo elongata* (CITES II), 9 Giant Asian Pond Turtles *Heosemys grandis* (II), 3 Malayan Snail-eating Turtles *Malayemys subtrijuga* (II), 2 Asian soft-shelled turtles *Trionyx* (I), Asian box turtle *Cuora* sp. (II) and 1 watersnake. The operation was conducted after a search warrant was issued by the Municipality Court of Phnom Penh. The offender, Ms Suon Pov, a Phnom Penh citizen, and a known major wildlife dealer, admitted stockpiling wildlife which was to be taken to the south-east province of Kampong Cham the following day, before being taken to Viet Nam for sale. The animals were thoroughly assessed before being considered suitable for release. None was injured and all of a suitable age and were subsequently transported to Bokor National Park and released in their appropriate habitats.

A well-known wildlife trader was put under house arrest by WildAid's Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team (WRRT) after a search warrant was issued by the provincial court of the province of Mondul Kiri and his premises raided. WRRT confiscated 2 pangolins *Manis* (CITES II), 1 Burmese Python *Python molurus* (I/II), 54 Elongated Tortoises *Indotestudo elongata* (II), 9 Giant Asian Pond Turtles *Heosemys grandis* (II) 3 Gaur *Bos gaurus* (I) heads and horns, 7 pairs of Sambar Deer *Cervus unicolor* horns, 3 pairs of wild cattle (banteng) horns, 5kg of Serow *Naemorhedus sumatraensis* (I) bones, 18 kg of turtle shells and plastrons, 1 Burmese Python skin, 5 dried Slow Lorises *Nycticebus coucang* (II), 14 kg of wild boar meat, 1 kg of Muntjac *Muntiacus* meat and 1156 AK47 bullets. The goods were destined to be brought to Viet Nam via the province of Kampong Cham. The offender was charged with illegal wildlife trading and illegal trade of weapons and ammunition and is now in custody awaiting prosecution in the provincial court of Mondul Kiri. The live animals were released back into the wild and animal parts were kept by a WRRT Forestry Officer as evidence in the court.

Reuters, 5 September 2005; *WildAid*: *www.wildaid.org*, 12 August/12 July 2005

INDONESIA: On 27 January 2005, police in Papua intercepted a boat in Naramasa waters near Manokwari and seized 639 logs of Merbau *Intsia palembanica* wood, with a total volume of about 2123 cubic metres. Three suspects—a Malaysian and two Indonesian citizens—were arrested on 3 February in Manokwari. The barge was reported to be on its way to meet buyers in Gresik, near the East Java capital of Surabaya. Police questioned the owner of the tugboat and two alleged buyers,

along with eight others aboard the tug. Merbau timber—one of the most valuable species in South-east Asia—is used for furniture and flooring.

On 14 March 2005, the East Java Natural Resources Conservation Body (BKSDA) foiled an attempt to smuggle 7275 Pig-nosed Turtles *Carettochelys insculpta* from Merauke, Papua, during a raid in Tanjung Perak seaport, Surabaya. The animals were concealed in drums on board a vessel. A Black-capped Lory *Lorius lory* (CITES II) was also seized. One hundred and forty-five turtles died from lack of oxygen. Four people—the captain of the vessel and crew members—were arrested. Pig-nosed Turtles were listed in CITES Appendix II in January 2005.

The Jakarta Post (Indonesia), 22 February/16 March 2005

MALAYSIA: On 15 June 2005, officers of Selangor's Wildlife and National Parks Department seized 175 boxes of monitor lizard *Varanus* sp. (CITES II) and python *Python* sp. (II) meat from a lorry that had been stopped at Bukit Raja toll booth. Reported as the biggest seizure by the department this year, the meat had been bound for China and Taiwan. The driver was detained and the investigation continues. It is suspected that the consignment originated from Johor and was on its way to Port Klang for shipment.

www.thestar.com.my, 16 June 2005

VIET NAM: On 2/3 December 2004, police officials inspecting two lorries discovered over seven tonnes of wildlife specimens, including approximately 217 kg of pangolins *Manis* sp. (CITES II), 20 kg of Keeled Box Turtles *Pyxidea mouhoti* (II), 12 kg of Malayan Box Turtles *Cuora amboinensis* (II), 28 kg of Banded Kraits *Bungarus fasciatus*, 94 kg of Radiated Rat Snakes *Elaphe radiata*, 3 kg of King Cobras *Ophiophagus hannah* (II), 20 kg of Water Monitors *Varanus salvator* (II), 4 kg of Big-headed Turtles *Platysternon megacephalum* (II), and 7 kg of Common Palm Civets *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus* (III). The drivers declared that they were transporting dried fish to China and were hired by traders to transport the goods to the Viet Nam-China border in Quang Ninh Province.

On 5 April 2005, authorities seized over five tonnes of wild animals being transported by lorry from the southern Mekong Delta province of Long An. The animals, bound for restaurants in China, included approximately three tonnes of turtles and two tonnes of monitor lizards *Varanus* sp. (CITES II), pangolins *Manis* sp. (II) and snakes (species not reported). The driver of the vehicle was detained for questioning. The Thanh Hoa Forest Protection Department released hundreds (400 kg) of healthy turtles in the shipment in Xuan Lien Nature Reserve in Truong Xuan District and Pu Hu Nature Reserve in Quan Hoa District. The remaining animals were sold to local villagers.

The People's Police Newspaper, 7 December 2004 and Labor Newspaper, 6 April 2005, cited in Nature and the Environment in the News, Education for Nature-Vietnam, April 2005: www.envietnam.org

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA: On 10 March 2005, at Melbourne International Airport, 16 live fish were found concealed in water-filled plastic bags in the luggage of a flight attendant arriving from Viet Nam. Experts at Melbourne Museum identified the fish, each approximately 20 cm in length, as Asian Arowana *Scleropages formosus* (CITES I).

Following 12 months of planning, a series of raids on 46 restaurants and houses by fisheries officers from the Department of Primary Industries in Victoria has led to seven people being charged with 36 offences relating to trafficking in abalone *Haliotis*. Some 485 kg of abalone meat was seized. Another 15 people and a company are to be charged.

On 18 August 2005, at Perth Magistrates' Court, Japanese national Kazutaka Ogawa was found guilty of three offences in relation to exportation and cruelty under the *Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999*. He was also found guilty under Western Australia's *Conservation*

and Land Management Act 1984 of taking from the wild. Ogawa had tried to export illegally to Japan 24 Oblong Turtles *Chelodina oblonga* and one Shingleback Lizard *Tiliqua rugosa* on 23 March 2004. He was fined a total of AUD24 600 (USD19 000). The reptiles, 13 of which perished, were found when Australia Post staff at Perth International Mail Centre alerted Customs and Conservation and Land Management (CALM) officers to a suspicious package following screenings of outgoing mail.

After extensive investigation, Customs identified Ogawa as responsible for the attempted smuggling. However, he had left the country within hours of the package being discovered. On 26 June, Ogawa returned to Australia and was identified by Customs officers at Adelaide International Airport and subsequently arrested.

On 14 October 2005, in Sydney District Court, Keith Lionel Miller, of Lurnea, was found guilty of attempting to export native specimens in contravention of the *Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999*. Miller pleaded guilty to concealing eggs of 23 native birds in his clothing as he prepared to depart Australia for Zurich on 12 November 2004 (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 20(2):87). The eggs, discovered during a frisk search, included specimens of Leadbeater's Cockatoo *Cacatua leadbeateri* and Gang-gang Cockatoo *Callocephalon fimbriatum* (both CITES II). Miller was given a two-year gaol sentence; a non-parole period of 14 months was imposed.

Australian Customs media releases, 11 March/18 August/14 October 2005; Media release, Dept of Primary Industries: 12/26 May 2005; www.customs.gov.au/site/page.cfm?c=6305

AMERICAS

CANADA: On 14 March 2005, at the Court of Quebec, Criminal and Penal Chamber, Marc Langlois of Lévis, Quebec, pleaded guilty to 45 charges relating to the purchase, sale and possession of gall bladders of American Black Bear *Ursus americanus* (CITES II) for the purpose of illegal interprovincial trade. He was fined CAD47 456 (USD39 000), one of the highest fines ever imposed in Canada for possession of bear parts.

The case came to light during the course of investigations carried out between 2001 and 2003 which targeted the poaching and illicit trade of American Black Bear parts and other game. Search warrants were carried out in over 60 locations in Quebec, Ontario, Alberta, and the USA and involved over 200 officers from the Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune du Québec, Environment Canada (Canadian Wildlife Service), Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (see also *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 20(1):38).

Langlois was charged with 25 counts under the federal *Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act*. He was found guilty of possessing American Black Bear gall bladders for trafficking purposes between February 2001 and November 2002. He was also found guilty, under the provincial *Act Respecting the Conservation and Development of Wildlife*, of 20 charges relating to the purchase or sale of American Black Bear gall bladders.

To date, some 56 people have been fined and CAD382 921 in fines collected during the course of the investigation, code-named Operation America.

On 31 May 2005 at Colwood provincial court, Michael William John McGuire pleaded guilty to several *Fisheries Act* violations, which included the illegal possession of Northern Abalone *Haliotis kamtschatkana*. He was fined USD35 000 and his vehicle, fishing vessels, fishing equipment and diving gear duties were forfeited to the Crown. He was also banned from diving in Canadian waters for a period of 20 years.

On 13 July 2005, a man from Ontario faced 44 counts under the *Wild Animal Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act* relating to the possession, offering for sale, sale, import, export and interprovincial transport of endangered animals and their parts between October 2002 and May 2005. The animals included: African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I), birds-of-paradise (II), Sperm Whale *Physeter catodon* (I), Walrus *Odobenus rosmarus* (III) and Long-

eared Owls *Asio otus* (II). The majority of the sales investigated took place on an internet auction site.

The suspect was arrested in May 2005 by US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Special Agents at LaGuardia International Airport in New York City for similar offences in the USA. The charges conclude a 17-month investigation jointly undertaken by special agents of the USFWS and federal wildlife officers employed by Environment Canada's Canadian Wildlife Service in Ontario.

Environment Canada News Release, 14 March/14 July 2005: www.ec.gc.ca/media_e.htm; Fisheries and Oceans Canada news release, 8 June 2005: www-comm.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/pages/release/p-releas/2005/nr042_e.htm

USA: On 22 July 2005, at the federal court in Columbus, Ohio, Donald B. Hamper, a former reptile dealer from Columbus, was sentenced to one year and one day confinement and fined USD3300 after pleading guilty in February to illegally buying, selling and transporting Blanding's Turtles *Emydoidea blandingii* and other wildlife protected by federal and State laws. He was also ordered to pay USD7000 in restitution to Michigan's Fish and Game Protection Fund and will be placed on three years' supervised probation following his release from gaol, during which time he is prohibited from handling any reptiles or amphibians.

In his plea agreement, Hamper admitted that between June 2001 and June 2003, he knowingly participated in illegal interstate purchases and sales involving 53 Blanding's Turtles and other wildlife including spotted turtles, wood turtles, and several species of snakes (species not reported). Hamper also faced prosecution in Franklin County for offences involving record keeping, tagging and harbouring numerous venomous Gila Monsters *Heloderma suspectum* and Beaded Lizards *H. horridum* (both CITES II). As part of a separate plea agreement with Franklin County Prosecutor's Office, Hamper agreed to relinquish ownership of all wildlife seized from him during the course of the investigation. He agreed to donate USD2500 to the Wildlife Education Fund operated by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and publish a statement in Reptile Magazine acknowledging his criminal conduct and describing his penalties.

<http://ars.fws.gov>

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E U R O P E

BELGIUM: On 10 April 2006, at Zaventem Airport, Brussels, Customs officials seized 21 Senegal Galagos *Galago senegalensis* (CITES II) upon arrival from Conakry, Guinea, bound for the Czech Republic. Three animals perished. The CITES documents and health certificates were not correct.

Belgian Customs Airport News, CITES 08/2006

CROATIA: On 19 February 2006, Customs officers on the Croatian-Serbian border at Bajakovo confiscated 22 live specimens of Spur-thighed Tortoises *Testudo graeca* and Hermann's Tortoises *T. hermanni* (both CITES II). The reptiles had been concealed in luggage space on a bus travelling from Macedonia en route to Germany. The bus driver was fined a total of 802340 (USD3000) under the *Customs Law, Nature Protection Law* and the *Penal Code*. The tortoises are being held in a rescue centre prior to repatriation.

Katica Bezuh, Head of Department for Inspection and Legal Affairs, Ministry of Culture, Nature Protection Directorate, Zagreb

FRANCE: On 13 December 2005, Customs officials at Roissy Airport seized worked elephant ivory pieces weighing a total of 60 kg arriving from Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, en route to New York. The pieces were disguised to resemble wooden items and the accompanying export permit related to wooden items. Closer inspection showed that the pieces had been covered by adhesive tape and coated with clay and sand to resemble wood. A total of 12 tusks and 43 figurines in worked ivory were unwrapped.

On 19 November 2005, Customs officials at the airport seized 22 elephant ivory items arriving from Nigeria, bound for the UK.

French Custom—Direction Generale des Douanes et des Droits Indirects

GERMANY: In March 2006, Victor Franck, widely referred to as one of Germany's most wanted animal smugglers, was detained in Malaga, Spain. Franck had been found guilty of wildlife trade offences and sentenced to three years' imprisonment without probation in January 2001—one of the longest sentences ever imposed in Germany for a wildlife trade violation (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 19(1):45). Directly after his conviction, however, Franck disappeared. An international warrant for his arrest was issued but it was to be five years before the authorities caught up with him. A decision on whether to extradite Franck to Germany, as requested by the German authorities, is awaited.

Four Germans and one Russian were initially charged in 2001 with comprising a criminal organization under Section Paragraph 129 under the Criminal Code of German law and accused of 41 cases of smuggling or attempting to smuggle a range of species which included CITES I-listed Orang-utan *Pongo pygmaeus*, Javan Gibbon *Hylobates moloch*, Komodo Monitor Lizard *Varanus komodoensis*, Red-crowned Crane *Grus japonensis* and Arabian Oryx *Oryx leucoryx*. The other defendants were released after being held in custody for between a few days and eight months. Two were fined.

TRAFFIC Europe; TRAFFIC Bulletin 19(1):45

HUNGARY: On 12 April 2006, at Ferihegy International Airport, Budapest, a Slovakian citizen was arrested after being found in possession of 36 live Spiny-tailed Lizards *Uromastix ornatus* and *U. aegyptia* (CITES II, EU Annex B) and 18 Egyptian Tortoises *Testudo kleinmannii* (CITES I, EU Annex A) from Egypt. They had been concealed in boxes containing spices and tea; some of the lizards were in a very poor condition. The offender was released following interrogation and an investigation is in progress.

Hungarian CITES Management Authority

UK: On 2 December 2005, at Swaffham (Central Norfolk) Magistrates' Court, Mark Rowland of Hilborough was sentenced to eight months in custody, suspended for two years, for illegally purchasing via the internet and keeping for sale CITES-listed taxidermy specimens. He was also given a 200-hour community order, all seized specimens were forfeited and he was ordered to pay GBP225 (USD416) costs. The transactions, which took place within the UK, involved Buzzard *Buteo buteo* (CITES II), Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* (II), Barn Owl *Tyto alba* (II/WCA Sch. 1), Long-eared Owl *Asio otus* (II), Tawny Owl *Strix aluco* (II) and Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* (II/EU Annex A). Rowland was also involved in the importation of American Black Bear *Ursus americanus* (II) from Canada.

In December 2005, Customs officers from the CITES Team at Heathrow Airport seized 12 live Ring-tailed Lemurs *Lemur catta* (CITES I) in transit from Canada to China. In line with CITES recommendations the microchip details were obtained from the specimens and were found not to correspond to the accompanying CITES permit. Following investigations undertaken in Canada the specimens were seized.

In February 2006, Customs officers from the CITES Team seized 240 live Spectacled Caimans *Caiman crocodylus* (I/II) in transit from Guyana to Russia. The accompanying CITES export permit was invalid.

In January 2006, at Stansted Airport, Customs officers seized 102 live seahorses imported from the USA in an Air Express courier parcel. No CITES documents accompanied the shipment.

On 17 January 2006, at Isleworth Crown Court, Dr Sian Tiong Lim from London pleaded guilty to 11 charges of illegally importing orchids into Britain from his native Malaysia. He was sentenced to four months in gaol.

Dr Lim was detained at Heathrow Airport in May 2004. Officers from the Customs CITES Team and specialists from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, examined Dr Lim's baggage and found 126 CITES I-listed orchids (without permits) including Asian slipper orchids *Paphiopedilum rothschildianum*, *P. gigantifolium* and *P. sanderianum*, and a large quantity of CITES II-listed orchids.

Paphiopedilum gigantifolium is thought to be extinct in its original locality due to overcollecting, and *P. rothschildianum* is one of the rarest *Paphiopedilum* species in nature. *Paphiopedilum sanderianum*—easily recognizable by its long drooping petals which can grow to a length of more than a metre—is only known from a single national park in Borneo. As many slipper orchid species grow in small populations with a limited distribution, their survival in the wild can be seriously affected by the removal of only a small number of individuals.

HM Revenue & Customs CITES Team, Heathrow Airport; Cuttings (Botanic Gardens Conservation International Quarterly Newsletter) 3(2) April 2006; www.sun2surf.com/article.cfm?id=12680, 18 January 2006; Nicholas Crampton, Crime Prosecution Service, Norfolk.

A F R I C A

KENYA: In three separate raids in April 2006, rangers of the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) recovered more than 160 kg of elephant tusks and processed ivory, two rhino horns, as well as other illegal wildlife trophies and large quantities of illegal bushmeat. A total of 14 people, including six Italians, were arrested and charged with illegal hunting and possession of trophies without a licence. The raids were carried out following information received from members of the public. The suspects have all pleaded not guilty. KWS deputy chief Peter Leitoro said the agency had stepped up surveillance on illegal poaching, which is reported to have risen in recent months.

In March, the government blamed increasing incidents of poaching and illegal trade in bushmeat in the country on a drought that has put millions of people across East Africa at risk of famine.

Mail and Guardian (South Africa), 7 April 2006: www.mg.co.za/articlepage.aspx?area=/breaking_news/breaking_news_africa/&articleid=268838

SOUTH AFRICA: On 30 March 2006, three foreign nationals were arrested by CapeNature staff at Vrolijkheid Nature Reserve outside Robertson, Western Cape, after being found in illegal possession of spiders and scorpions. Richard Gallon and Guy Tansley of the UK, and Thomas Ezendam from the Netherlands, had 27 baboon spiders Theraphosidae, 20 other spiders and four scorpions. The three were found guilty by a Robertson magistrate on charges of collecting, possessing and transporting the arachnids without permits. They were each fined R10 000 (USD1611), of which R7000 was suspended.

CapeNature said Gallon was an internationally recognized spider expert, working closely with researchers in South Africa. Tansley and Ezendam were also spider enthusiasts and freelance researchers. The three claimed that while they realized what they were doing was illegal, they did not realize the seriousness of the offence.

On 25 May 2006, police acting on information arrested two men in Ocean View after finding them in possession of two bags containing 833 West Coast Rock Lobster *Jasus lalandii* tails without the requisite permits. Both men appeared in Simonstown Court later that day.

Earlier in the week, officials from the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism retrieved nearly 1200 poached abalones at Cape Receife, near Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape after Departmental officials on a road patrol noticed approximately 20 divers on the beach and in the water. Back up assistance was called for from the South African Police Service (SAPS) Abalone Task Team but before they arrived the officials were spotted and the divers fled. No arrests were made.

In a separate incident in Port Elizabeth, members of the SAPS Organized Crime and Departmental inspectors arrested one suspect for the possession of 9974 units of shucked abalone weighing more than 815 kg. A vehicle was also seized. The suspect appeared in court. He is also wanted in connection with another case involving abalone in the Cradock area.

www.iafrica.com/pls/cms/liac.page?p_t1=2&p_t2=1&p_t3=0&p_t4=0&p_dynamic=YP&p_content_id=283475&p_site_id=2 13 April 2006; Media statement, Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 26 May 2006

ASIA

EAST ASIA

CHINA: A campaign to crack down on the poaching of wild Asian Elephants *Elephas maximus* (CITES I) in Yunnan Province has led to the arrest of eight people. Forest police and the forestry administration in Xishuangbanna Daizu Autonomous Prefecture jointly launched the campaign in December 2005.

Though protected as Class I animals by China's *Wild Animal Conservation Law*, the number of wild Asian Elephants is declining in Xishuangbanna and border areas of Yunnan: according to the *China Red Data Book of Endangered Animals* (Wang Sung, 1998), only 250 Asian Elephants live in the wild in Yunnan Province.

In March 2006, at the People's Court of Gerze County, in the Ngari Prefecture, two people were gaoled for 13 years for killing more than 150 Tibetan Antelopes *Pantholops hodgsonii* (CITES I and Class-A protected animal species under China's *Wildlife Protection Law 1989*) at the Qiangtang Nature Reserve during 2005. A third person was sentenced to four years in gaol.

On 23 April 2006, police in the southwestern province of Yunnan announced that 20 members of an animal smuggling ring had been arrested for their part in smuggling hundreds of bear paws and dead pangolins *Manis*. Some 278 bear paws and 416 pangolins that had been smuggled by lorry or train from Yunnan to three neighbouring provinces over a period of 45 days, from December 2005 to January 2006, were seized.

[www.shanghaidaily.com/art/2006/01/19/236879/Police, 19 January 2005; Wang Sung \(Ed.\)\(1998\). China Red Data Book of Endangered Animals. Science Press. Beijing. TRAFFIC East Asia; http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2006-03/23/content_4337692.htm](http://www.shanghaidaily.com/art/2006/01/19/236879/Police,19January2005;WangSung(Ed.)(1998).ChinaRedDataBookofEndangeredAnimals.SciencePress.Beijing.TRAFFICEastAsia;http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2006-03/23/content_4337692.htm), Yunnan Daily, 27 April 2006

HONG KONG SAR: On 24 August 2005, marine police intercepted a speedboat found to be carrying 36 drums (1800 kg) of American Ginseng *Panax quinquefolius* roots. No arrests were made but all the ginseng roots were forfeited to the government pending their disposal.

On 17 January 2006, Customs officers at Kwai Chung Customhouse seized 25 cartons of turtle plastrons (the bony plate forming the ventricle part of the turtle) from an incoming container. The consignment, weighing a total of 897 kg, consisted of 602 kg of Malaysian Box Turtles *Cuora amboinensis*, 260 kg of Black Marsh Turtles *Siebenrockiella crassicollis* and 35kg of Malaysian Giant Turtles *Orlitia borneensis* (all CITES II). The plastrons were concealed under dried snakes in a

container declared as dry snakes and Red-eared Sliders *Trachemys scripta elegans*. The consignment had been shipped from Indonesia to Hong Kong on 14 January, for re-export to the Mainland. No arrests have been made. The seized goods were handed over to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) for further investigation.

On 22 February 2006, at Kwun Tong Magistrates' Court, a male Hong Kong resident was fined HKD15 000 (USD1923) under the *Animals and Plants (Protection of Endangered Species) Ordinance, Cap. 187* for the illegal possession of a highly endangered species.

On 9 September 2005, an AFCD officer acting on information provided by TRAFFIC, approached a suspect on the internet who was offering what was claimed to be a piece of Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) skin (6.5 cm x 6.5 cm) and a piece of Tiger skin product (4 cm x 7 cm). The officer, posing as a buyer, met the seller and seized the items from him. The specimens have been forfeited to the government in accordance with the Ordinance.

On 9 May 2006, at Kwai Chung Customhouse, Customs officers of Ports and Maritime Command carried out its largest seizure of elephant (CITES I) tusks in 20 years. While examining a 12-metre container the officers found a concealed compartment with the assistance of the Mobile X-ray Vehicle Scanning System; inside were 3.5 t of tusks.

The container originated from Douala, Cameroon, and was intended for re-export to Macau. It was declared to be carrying timber.

One man has been arrested.

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, Hong Kong; www.customs.gov.hk/eng/new_release_20060118_turtle_plastrons_e.html, 18 January 2006; TRAFFIC East Asia; Customs and Excise Department, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, press release, 10 May 2006

TAIWAN: On 12 October 2005, at Taipei District Court, the manager of Breeze Center, a department store in Taipei, and the importer were each fined TWD50000 (USD1520) for the illegal sale of whale meat cans in the shop's supermarket. Ninety-six cans had been imported from Japan. The whale meat was identified as Minke Whale *Balaenoptera acutorostrata* (CITES I/II).

On 9 March 2006, Taiwan Customs officials seized a large package of plants, including 352 *Paphiopedilum* (CITES I) specimens, that had arrived from Surabaya, Indonesia. The case is under investigation.

The plants were sent to the Taiwan Seed Improvement and Propagation Station for research purposes. The consignment is thought to comprise three *Paphiopedilum* species but confirmation of their identification will not be possible until the plants have flowered.

Over three days, Taiwanese authorities have confiscated more than 5 t of ivory at Kaohsiung Harbour—all from the same exporter.

On 6 July 2006, Kaohsiung harbour Customs officials discovered 744 pieces of African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I) ivory (including whole tusks) (3026 kg), hidden in wooden boxes. The consignment originated in Tanzania and was routed through Singapore, where it remained in transit for a period of time. It departed for Manila, and was then re-routed to Taiwan. It resumed its journey to Manila, but returned to Taiwan without the contraband cargo being offloaded. After the cargo had remained in Kaohsiung harbour unattended for three weeks, Customs officials decided to inspect the container and discovered the ivory. Two days earlier, Kaohsiung harbour Customs officials seized 2.5 t of ivory, also from Tanzania, bound for Manila, in 18 wooden boxes. Both shipments had been sent by the same exporter, but were for two different importers in the Philippines.

"Kaohsiung Customs should be commended for their efforts as well as for the urgent follow-up measures now under way with their counterparts in Tanzania and the Philippines, as well as with Interpol" said Joyce Wu of TRAFFIC East Asia.

The ivory's routing through the Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore comes at a time when South-east Asian nations have formed the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN) to work more closely together to confront increasingly sophisticated wildlife crime syndicates.

www.traffic.org/25/network9/ASEAN/index.html

SOUTH ASIA

INDIA: On 20 December 2005, over 55 000 reptile skins were seized by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence at the Mumbai Port, representing one of the largest-ever seizures of snakeskins. The skins had been concealed in 80 jute bags that were booked for export to Singapore and marked as 'red chillies'. At least three species of snakes were identified—Python *Python*, cobra and Rat Snake *Ptyas mucosus* (CITES II). Three people were arrested by the State Forest Department.

On 10 January 2006, police raided a house in Fatehpur, Uttar Pradesh, and seized 14 fresh Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) skins and an otter skin following information provided by the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI) in collaboration with the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department. The police were trying to trace the owner of the house—an offender known to the authorities for the illegal possession on a previous occasion of Tiger *Panthera tigris* (I) and Leopard skins.

In a second case on 10 January, police in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, seized a fresh, adult Tiger skin, two Leopard skins and a hyaena skin. Three persons from Dindori who had travelled to Jabalpur to sell the skins were arrested.

On 24 March 2006, at Thiruvananthapuram Airport, Kerala, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) seized 482 Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II/protected under the *Wild Life (Protection) Act 1972*) from the baggage of a passenger bound for Colombo. Three persons from Tamil Nadu were arrested. The specimens had been bound for aquaria and pet stores in Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur. The tortoises, which included hatchlings, were discovered during x-ray examination of luggage. They had been sedated and were later handed over to the Forest Department.

Large numbers of Indian Star Tortoises continue to be seized at Chennai Airport: most recently, on 8 May 2006, 200 specimens were seized from a passenger bound for Bangkok; and, on 5 June, 540 specimens en route to Kuala Lumpur were seized and one person arrested.

In late 2005, wildlife department officials in Chennai arrested the kingpin of a smuggling racket involved in the illegal export of Indian Star Tortoises to Malaysia, for onward shipment to countries including Singapore and the USA. Preliminary investigation by the authorities revealed that the suspect had purchased the tortoises from hunters from Madanapalli in Andhra Pradesh, who had collected the reptiles from the wild.

Wildlife Protection Society of India, www.wpsi-india.org/news/21122005.php, 21 December 2005; www.wpsi-india.org/news/10012006.php, 10 January 2006; *The Hindu*, 26 March 2006; www.thehindu.com/2006/03/26/stories/2006032613720400.htm; Belinda Wright, Executive Director, *Wildlife Protection Society of India*, in litt., 6 June 2006; WWF-India

SOUTH-EAST ASIA

INDONESIA: Three large seizures of Humphead Wrasses *Cheilinus undulatus* have been made in Indonesia since the species was listed in CITES Appendix II in 2005:

On 13 January 2006, 207 live specimens were seized from a fisherman in Bunaken National Marine Park—an important protected area for marine species. The fish were released into the water.

On 25 January 2006, Water Police working with the North Sulawesi Management Unit of Natural Resources Conservation seized 450 Humphead Wrasses from a fisherman in Likupang, North Minahasa District. The surviving 357 wrasses were released. In both the above cases, the fishermen

were charged under Act No.5/90, Government Regulation 8/99, Ministry Decree of Ministry of Forestry of Republic of Indonesia No. 447/2003 and await court proceedings.

On 30 June 2006, Fisheries Quarantine officers at Manado Airport seized 36 Humphead Wrasses. The specimens had been harvested in Malalayang, Manado, and were destined for Hong Kong. Only 25 survived and have been released in Bunaken National Marine Park. An Indonesian citizen was detained for questioning.

TRAFFIC Southeast Asia press release: www.traffic.org/news/Airport_law.html, 11 July 2006

PHILIPPINES: On 16 March 2006, at a cargo warehouse at Ninoy Aquino International Airport, authorities seized two crates containing 144 snakes and reptiles. The shipment, which was not accompanied by export documents, was bound for a trader in Penang, Malaysia. The consignment comprised 52 Philippine Pit Vipers *Trimeresurus flavomaculatus* (four dead), 14 monitor lizards *Varanus* sp. (CITES I/II), one Philippine Cobra *Naja philippinensis* (II), three Reticulated Pythons *Python reticulatus* (II), 22 sea snakes, a mangrove snake, 20 sailfin lizards (one dead) and 20 skinks, all believed to be wild-caught.

All wildlife in the Philippines is protected and only captive-bred reptiles are allowed to be exported, provided permits are obtained.

The Star (Malaysia), 25 March 2006; TRAFFIC International

SINGAPORE: In February 2006, at Changi Airport, 83 wild orchid plants belonging to 24 species (including *Dendrobium brymerianum*, *D. pachyphyllum*, *D. secundum*, *Trias picta*, and *Vanda testacea*—CITES II) were seized from a Singaporean national returning from Thailand. No CITES export permit accompanied the consignment which had been purchased in Chiang Mi. The plants were confiscated and are being kept in the custody of the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) (the CITES Management Authority of Singapore), for research and conservation purposes. The offender was fined SD5000 (USD3160).

On 13 February 2006, at Changi Airport, Immigration and Checkpoints Authority officers detained a Singaporean national who was attempting to import 11 Blue-eyed Cockatoos *Cacatua ophthalmica* and one Black-capped Lory *Lorius lory* (both CITES II) in his luggage. The birds had been tranquilized and wrapped in cloth or paper. Three had died and the others were unconscious. Preliminary findings reveal that the man had bought the birds from a market in Indonesia. Investigations continue.

On 13 June 2006, AVA enforcement officers seized an illegal cargo of freshwater turtles from a ship that had arrived at the Jurong Fishing Port from Tembilahan in Sumatra, Indonesia. This was the first significant confiscation since Singapore's revised *Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act 2005* (ESA) came into force on 1 March 2006 and the first case in Singapore involving trans-shipment without a valid permit from the exporting country—an enforcement action that would not have been possible under the previous legislation.

The shipment of 72 crates contained 2520 South-east Asian Box Turtles *Cuora amboinensis* (CITESII) and non-CITES listed Malayan Softshell Turtles *Dogania subplana* and Asian Leaf Turtles *Cyclemys dentata*. A fake CITES permit was produced in an attempt to evade prosecution. The captain of the Indonesian ship pleaded guilty to the illegal transportation and was sentenced to a term of five months' gaol and fined SGD20 000 (USD12 500). It is likely that he will spend an additional two months in prison because he is unable to pay the fine.

The captain and another crew member claimed that the ultimate destination market for the box turtles was Hong Kong via the Indonesian island of Batam, according to AVA's Wildlife Regulatory Branch Head, Lye Fong Keng. "We are working closely with the Indonesian authorities to repatriate the box turtles, and to see that the exporters in Sumatra are apprehended", said Lye.

Under the revised ESA, violators now face fines of up to SGD50 000 (USD31 362) per specimen, subject to a maximum of SGD500 000 (USD31 3620), and a maximum gaol term of two years upon conviction.

Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority; The Straits Times (Singapore), 16 February 2006: www.wildsingapore.com/news/20060102/060216-1.htm; TRAFFIC Southeast Asia

THAILAND: On 10 January 2006, police in Phitsanulok province arrested a man in illegal possession of 69 Malayan Pangolins *Manis javanica* (CITES II) (240 kg) which had been concealed inside a sedan en route to deliver the goods for sale. The suspect confessed this was his second time smuggling the animals, and that he received 5000 baht (USD133) per trip. The animals, which are protected by law, were confiscated and passed on to forestry officials.

On 7 April 2006, in the north-eastern province of Nong Khai, bordering Lao PDR, Customs and immigration officials arrested a Thai government official working at the Friendship Bridge toll booth at the bridge border checkpoint. He and his accomplice were attempting to export some 80 live pangolins *Manis* and the remains of dead animals (9 kg), to China. The two men were charged with violating laws protecting wildlife.

On 26 June 2006, authorities at Don Muang Airport, Bangkok, seized a shipment of 245 Malayan Pangolins *Manis javanica*, 63 Black Marsh Turtles *Siebenrockiella crassicollis* and one Malayan Snail-Eating Turtle *Malayemys subtrijuga* (all CITES II). The cargo was in transit from Penang, Malaysia, to Lao PDR. Two Thai nationals were held for questioning.

The animals had been concealed in 60 crates falsely declared as Red-eared Sliders *Trachemys scripta elegans*—an unprotected North American freshwater turtle. As the seized species are listed in CITES Appendix II, trade is legal only with a valid CITES permit. The pangolins, however, are subject to a zero quota which means that all international trade is illegal. Thailand has become a major transit hub for pangolins smuggled from Malaysia and Indonesia en route to Lao PDR, Viet Nam and China.

www.thaisnews.com/news_detail.php?newsid=157932, 11 January 2006; <http://etna.mcot.net/query.php?nid=8007>, 7 April 2006; www.traffic.org/25/network9/ASEAN/index.html

VIET NAM: On 6 February 2006, police officers of Quang Ninh province confiscated 61 Crab-eating Macaques *Macaca fascicularis* (CITES II) (181kg) from a lorry. Three people were apprehended.

On 28 February 2006, Quang Ninh forest rangers detected another lorry at the Bai Chay Ferry Landing carrying 100 Crab-eating Macaques.

On 2 March 2006, transport police from Ha Long City in Quang Ninh province stopped a coach that was found to be carrying 147 Crab-eating Macaques (291 kg); eight specimens had perished. Three men in the vehicle told the authorities that they had received the animals in Hai Phong City and were taking them to the Mong Cai border gate, on the border with China, in Quang Ninh province.

The species is listed in Group IB of Decree 48 which means that specimens may be traded with a permit.

http://english.vietnamnet.vn/service/printversion.vnn?article_id=770763, 3 March 2006; The People's Police, Issue 331, 9 February 2006, translated by Education for Nature-Vietnam

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA: On 4 November 2005, at Perth District Court, five men were acquitted of illegally taking Patagonian Toothfish *Dissostichus eleginoides* from Australian waters. It was the second time the men were tried for the alleged offences after a jury last year was unable to make a decision. The

men were crew members of the *Viarsa*, which was chased for 21 days across the Southern Ocean by the Australian Navy before being apprehended (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 20(1):37). The men, from Spain, Uruguay and Chile, were on bail during the trial.

On 23 March 2006, the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) seized two Chinese trawler vessels inside the Australian Fishing Zone north-west of the Wessels, off the Northern Territory coast. Initial investigations by AFMA officers on board the first vessel uncovered approximately 4000 kg of reef fish and 3000 kg on board the second vessel.

Both vessels resisted apprehension and opposed boarding. The boat was escorted to Darwin and, following investigations by AFMA, the captains of both vessels were charged with illegal fishing and resisting apprehension.

On 12 April 2006, at Perth Magistrates' Court, Mitsuhiro Yokota pleaded guilty to six charges of attempting to export native animals under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. He was fined AUD24 000 (USD18 000) and a further AUD7000 after pleading guilty to further charges relating to possession under state wildlife legislation.

Investigations began in August 2005 after two reports from members of the public to a 24-hour Customs Hotline that detailed suspicious activity witnessed on Scarborough Beach. Customs officers arrested Yokota as he attempted to leave Perth International Airport on a flight to Singapore in March. X-rays of his luggage revealed the presence of a number of reptiles. During the baggage search, officers found six live, native Shingleback Lizards *Tiliqua rugosa* inside a plastic container.

Mr Yakota will be held in custody for a maximum of six months or until the fine has been paid.

On 20 April 2006, at Downing Centre District Court, Sydney, Henri Robert Morgan pleaded guilty to charges under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* of attempting to export cockatoo and Galah *Eolophus roseicapillus* (CITES II) eggs out of Australia. He was also charged under the *Criminal Code Act 1995* with hindering a Customs officer by smashing the eggs hidden under his clothing following detection.

Morgan had tried to leave Sydney International Airport for South Africa on 16 October 2004. After arousing the suspicion of Customs officers, he slapped his body when detained for a frisk search, smashing all but two of the 24 bird eggs under his clothing. DNA tests on the eggs revealed that eight were Sulphur-crested Cockatoos *Cacatua galerita* (II), nine were Leadbeater's Cockatoos *Cacatua leadbeateri* (II) and seven were Galahs.

On the attempted exportation charge Morgan was sentenced to two years' imprisonment, and 18 months' in gaol for hindering a Customs officer. He will serve 18 months' imprisonment, after which he will be subject to a 12-month AUD1000 (USD752) good behaviour bond.

In May 2006, 11 Indonesian fishermen were gaoled after being caught poaching sea cucumbers in Australian waters north of Broome, Western Australia. They were on board two boats intercepted by the Navy at Scott Reef. One of the captains has been sentenced to seven months in gaol, while the other captain and nine crew members have been fined. They will spend between three and six months in gaol because they could not pay the penalties. Another man is yet to face court while seven people, who were not charged, are believed to have been repatriated to Indonesia.

www.abc.net.au/news/items/2005/1/1/498373.htm?perth, 5 November 2005; www.theage.com.au/news/national/jury-sinks-canberra-in-patagonian-toothfish-case/2005/11/06/1131211945815.html, 7 November 2005; Joint Media Release, Ministers for Defence, for Justice and Customs, and for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation, 24 March 2006; www.mffc.gov.au/releases/2006/06031a.htm; Australian Customs media releases, 13/21 April 2006; www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/2006/s1655398.htm, 5 June 2006

AMERICAS

CANADA: Although all abalone fisheries have been closed to all user groups along the coast of British Columbia (BC) since December 1990, continued harvesting is one of the biggest threats to their survival. The species targeted is the Northern or Pinto Abalone *Haliotis kamtschatkana* which is patchily distributed and has been declining in numbers and distribution in surveyed areas of BC since the late 1970s. The molluscs are prized for their meat, and for the decorative, mother-of-pearl lining of their shells. According to surveys undertaken by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), which is responsible for the management of Canada's oceans and freshwater resources, over 70% of the sites that formerly had an abundance of abalones now contain no abalones at all. The Northern Abalone was assigned a Threatened status by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) in April 1999. A recovery team was formed in November 2001 which has prepared a National Recovery Strategy for this species in BC. The recovery team considers illegal harvest and low recruitment to be the most significant threats to *H. kamtschatkana*, affecting both its recovery capacity and reproductive abilities.

Large numbers of abalones have been illegally harvested over the past year and the following cases are among the most significant in BC that have come to the attention of the authorities:

On 13 October 2005, at Prince Rupert Provincial Court, Kendall Ross and Floyd Sampson from the northern community of Lax Kw'alaams pleaded guilty to harvesting abalones illegally. During sentencing, the court accepted the recommendations of the Prince Rupert Restorative Justice Program, which stressed the importance of taking into account both fisheries conservation objectives and aboriginal perspectives in imposing a sentence on First Nations offenders. Under the terms of the probation order, DFO will be assisting Ross and Sampson to complete a research project designed to educate them on the detrimental effects of harvesting abalones. They will also be required to present their research project to local schools, at their own expense, and perform 80 hours of supervised community service.

On 14 October 2005, at Ucluelet Provincial Court, John Albert Frank, of Ahousat was fined CAD35000 (USD30400) after pleading guilty to one count of unlawful possession of abalones. CAD30 000 of the fine will be directed towards DFO for the purpose of promoting and fostering the recovery of abalone stocks on the west coast of Canada, and for the conservation and protection of abalones and abalone habitat. Frank was apprehended in the city of Port Alberni in 2004 with 196 abalones in his possession.

On 20 February 2006, fisheries officers seized the largest consignment of illegally caught abalones in BC's history, after receiving reports of a vessel acting suspiciously in waters near Port Edward. Camouflaged officers spent several nights watching the vessel before stopping a heavily laden vehicle in the vicinity. Inside they discovered about 1130 kg of abalones still in the shell, most still alive. The mollusks—estimated at up to 11 000 individuals—were returned to the water where their progress is being monitored. Three men were detained. According to DFO, the suspects had been operating for some time and the abalones seized had been taken from all along the coast, not just locally. It is the DFO's opinion that the impact of these poachers on the conservation of the species is likely to have been significant (DFO, pers. comm. to E. Cooper, TRAFFIC North America, 8 March 2006). Fisheries officials are still preparing the case against the three men.

In March 2006, at Vancouver Provincial court, Sin Kae of the Rupert Fish Market, Vancouver, was fined CAD10000 after pleading guilty to the unlawful possession of abalones. During a routine inspection of his shop, fishery officers seized abalones which were identified by the DFO Molecular Genetics Laboratory as wild *Haliotis kamtschatkana*. CAD500 of the penalty constituted a fine and the remaining CAD9500 is directed towards the DFO Molecular Genetics Laboratory at the Pacific Biological Station in Nanaimo which conducts forensic analysis of seized abalone stock and is responsible for providing evidence on abalone species and stock identification.

A woman was detained earlier this year at Vancouver International Airport, BC, on arrival from Prince Rupert (BC). She was met from the aircraft by officials from the DFO and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) following a tip-off from security at Prince Rupert Airport that she had

boarded the plane with a suspected illegal consignment of abalones. Thirty-four specimens were found inside a cooler in her possession.

On 17 May 2006, a man was arrested by the RCMP in Prince Rupert after being found in possession of a bag of abalones. An investigation led officers to a hotel where a further two bags were found; 34 abalones were seized.

Both individuals in the latter two cases face charges.

On 15 May 2006, at Pincher Creek Provincial Court, Martin Benjamin Walter, Steven Darrell Walter and Edward John Walter, all of Livingstone Hutterite Colony, south-west of Calgary, were fined a total of CAD44 000 for trafficking parts from poached eagles, hawks and owls. The fine was based on the sale of parts from three Bald Eagles *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* (CITES I), one Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* (II), one Great Horned Owl *Bubo virginianus* (II) and one Rough-legged Hawk *Buteo lagopus* (II). Four more people will stand trial in October.

The men were caught during an undercover investigation (Operation Chinook) which had unearthed parts of at least 37 Bald Eagles, 24 Golden Eagles and 22 other birds of prey when the investigation was concluded in January 2005. Hundreds of parts from poached birds of prey were found in Pincher Creek, Wetaskiwin and Cardston during two undercover operations. Most of the parts, including feathers and talons, are sold to make Native ceremonial objects or costumes.

On 21 June 2006, at Bridgewater Provincial Court, Halifax, a Nova Scotia fishing company was ordered to pay what amounts to the largest fine in Canadian history, following a five-year investigation. Ivy Fisheries Ltd and five fishermen linked to the company were fined CAD839 734.82 (USD751 440.55) for violating the federal *Fisheries Act*.

The company was found guilty of a range of offences including failing to return unlicensed species to the water, selling fish illegally, fishing two or more licences concurrently, and failing to enter confirmation numbers in log books. They had failed to document immediately a catch of bluefin tuna *Thunnus* which, the judge ruled, could lead to fishermen discarding smaller fish in favour of larger ones and jeopardize conservation efforts. Scott Mossman, the fishery officer who led the investigation, said it is likely the fishermen were catching the bluefin tuna with shark gear, a practice that allowed them to catch 135 bluefin in less than three months.

The investigation (Operation Octopi) began in late 2000 when fisheries officials noticed irregularities in the company's records and that certain boats appeared to be bringing in large catches. Some 30 000 documents were seized from the Sambro-based company in 2001. The trial began in 2003 and involved an international trail that tracked 176 tagged bluefin tuna from where they were caught to the distant clients who bought them. "We had to trace every fish from the water to the end sale and see who profited from it", Mossman said.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada press releases, 13/14 October 2005: www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/ops/fm/shellfish/abalone/default_e.htm; www.comm.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/pages/release/p-releas/2005/nr063_e.htm; www.comm.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/pages/release/p-releas/2005/nr064_e.htm; TRAFFIC Bulletin 20(3):118; www.canada.com/vancouver/news/westcoastnews/story.html?id=810651f4-2bd4-453f-9f5d-62db52c2600a; 22 February 2006; Fisheries and Oceans Canada, pers. comm. to E. Cooper, 8 March 2006; Calgary Sun (Canada), Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), 31 March 2006; <http://cnews.canoe.ca/CNEWS/Canada/2006/05/26/1599957.html>; The Edmonton Journal, 22 June 2006; The Daily News (Halifax), 22 June 2006

COLOMBIA: In April 2006, police in Sucre detained 218 people for their part in the illegal hunting and trade in Red-eared Slider Turtles *Trachemys scripta*. More than 10 000 of these freshwater turtles were recovered and returned to the wild. In one raid alone, police detained 52 people involved in transporting 5000 specimens by lorry for sale to markets along the coast.

Traditionally the hunting of turtles increases in Colombia during Lent or Semana Santa—the Catholic Holy Week preceding Easter—as the meat is used by coastal peoples to make a special dish.

TRAFFIC South America; www.caracol.com.co/nota.asp?id=275133

WWF-Germany reports on the consumption of marine turtles during Lent in Latin America—with a case study of this tradition in Mexico. *When Reptiles Become Fish: On the Consumption of Sea Turtles during Lent* can be downloaded at: www.wwf.de/presse/pressearchiv/artikel/02974/index.html

USA: On 10 April 2005, Jianyang Huang, Zi Qi Tan, and Yao Quin Zhuang of San Francisco were convicted in San Mateo County, California, of illegally removing 56 abalones from San Mateo County waters on 4 July 2004 during a moratorium on fishing for abalones without a licence. Tan and Zhuang were convicted of both charges while Huang, the group's lookout, was acquitted of the second misdemeanour. All seized diving gear was forfeited, the defendants fishing licences were revoked and they were banned from commercial and sport fishing for life.

In 1997, commercial abalone fishing south of San Francisco to the Mexican border was banned owing to a dwindling population, and White Abalone *Haliotis sorenseni* was declared endangered under the *Marine Life Protection Act*. During the abalone fishing season, divers are limited to catching three specimens a day north of San Francisco.

In April 2006, a Chinese restaurant cook received three years' probation and a fine after pleading no contest to poaching 20 abalones in November 2003.

The Daily Journal (USA): www.smdailyjournal.com/article_preview.php?id=50633

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EUROPE

CROATIA: On 11 November 2006, Croatian Customs service at Batina (Croatian–Serbian border crossing) seized nine parrots: Red-fronted Parakeet *Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae* (CITES I) (5 live specimens, 2 dead); Red-rumped Parrot *Psephotus haematonotus* (CITES II) (1 live specimen); and Australian King-Parrot *Alisterus scapularis* (CITES II) (1 live specimen). The birds had been wrapped in clothing and placed in luggage concealed in the car of a Serbian citizen arriving from Serbia. Nature Protection Inspectors confiscated the birds and placed them in the country's official rescue centre. The suspect was charged with violating the country's *Customs Law* and *Nature Protection Law* and fined HRK7000 (80930/USD1252).

On 1 April 2007, at Zagreb Airport, Customs officers stopped a Croatian citizen returning from Bangkok, Thailand, via Budapest, Hungary, after he was found to be carrying in his luggage 10 tortoises and 175 chameleons. The animals were confiscated and placed in quarantine. The species have been identified as: Radiated Tortoise *Geochelone radiata* (CITES I), Flat-casqued Chameleon *Calumma globifer* (CITES II) and Parson's Giant Chameleon *Calumma parsonii* (CITES II). All specimens originated from Madagascar. Seven chameleons died during transport owing to inadequate conditions in the cargo hold, and more specimens died following their arrival. Owing to the failure of the perpetrator to declare the goods and present the requisite veterinary and CITES documents, a court hearing is pending.

On 30 May it was confirmed that the surviving specimens had been returned to Antananarivo. Fourteen of the chameleons perished on the two-day journey, leaving alive only about half the original number. All the tortoises survived.

Ministry of Culture, Nature Protection Directorate, Zagreb

CZECH REPUBLIC: On 3 November 2006, a Czech citizen arriving at Rozyne International Airport, Prague, from Tunis, Tunisia, was found with geckos *Hemidactylus* sp. and *Tarentola* sp., beetle larvae and 11 Spur-thighed Tortoises *Testudo graeca* (CITES II/EU(B)) concealed in his luggage. The tortoises had been restrained by adhesive tape and were unable to move. The requisite certificates were not available. Customs officers and inspectors of the Czech Environmental Inspectorate also carried out a house search at the suspect's address and found six Hermann's Tortoises *Testudo hermanni* (CITES II/EU(A)), three Caucasian Sand Boas *Eryx jaculus* (CITES II/EU(A)) and one Bell's Dabb Lizard *Uromastyx acanthinura* (CITES II/EU(B)), also without documents. All animals were seized and a prosecution is pending.

CITES News 17, 2006, Czech Environmental Inspectorate, Rozyne International Airport, Prague

ESTONIA: On 6 March 2007, an Estonian citizen travelling by car from Russia was caught in Narva at the Narva Road border point with 12.5 kg of Russian caviar (CITES II/EU(B)) (sturgeon species unidentified). The suspect claimed to have received the caviar in exchange for money from an unknown person in Ivangorod, Russian Federation. The goods, which were hidden in a loudspeaker, were seized and the suspect was fined EEK6000 (80380 Euros/USD510); the caviar was confiscated. The Environmental Inspectorate has also charged the individual with causing harm to nature and an additional fine is pending.

Estonian Tax and Customs Board, CITES Info 3, 2007; Tax and Customs Board, in litt., 16 April 2007

GERMANY: On 25 January 2007, Customs officials at Cologne Airport seized a consignment containing 24 kg of caviar after detecting it by chance. The shipment, which had been sent by post from Marbella, Spain, did not adhere to the labelling requirements for caviar which have been compulsory in the EU since July 2006. Analysis of the caviar revealed it to be of Russian origin (sturgeon species unidentified).

It is the first time that caviar has been seized on this transit route into the EU. One German national was identified as being involved in the case, which is under investigation.

Press release Zollfahndungsamt Essen, 6 January 2007; TRAFFIC Europe

HUNGARY: On 17 July 2006, officials at Roszke on the Hungarian–Serbian border, seized 48 Radiated Tortoises *Geochelone radiata* (CITES I), 68 Leopard Tortoises *G. pardalis* (CITES II) and 55 Pancake Tortoises *Malacochersus tornieri* (CITES II) from a lorry arriving from Serbia. The driver was transporting the shipment to Rotterdam, where it was to be collected.

CITES Management Authority, Hungary

ROMANIA: On 7 December 2006, Otopeni Customs officers seized a parcel from Botswana containing two pieces of African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I) ivory and two pieces of elephant leg skin. The addressee was a Moldavian citizen living in Bucharest. Although the recipient was in receipt of a CITES export permit, an import permit had not been issued. The CITES Management Authority was consequently asked to issue an import permit within 30 days. A permit was issued in 2007 following the entering into force of Regulation No. 338/97 which states that an import permit may be granted in exceptional cases once the goods in question have been declared. The National Customs Authority of Romania, however, declared the shipment to be in breach of Ministerial Order No. 647/2001, which was in force at the time of the seizure and which prohibited the entry into the country of CITES-listed specimens without a CITES import permit. The ivory items were confiscated.

National Customs Authority, Anti Fraud Directorate, Bucharest

RUSSIA: On 18 January 2007, at the Kharol settlement in Primorsky Krai, police stopped a car and seized an amount of animal derivatives prepared for illegal transportation through the Russian–Chinese border. These included: 531 horns of Saiga Antelope *Saiga tatarica* (CITES II); 8 skinned

Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) paws; 3 Tiger skins; 332 Tiger bones; 2 Tiger skulls; and, 283 bear paws. The case was prosecuted and all commodities and the car were confiscated.

TRAFFIC Europe

UK: On 24 October 2006, at Westminster Magistrates' Court, a leading London gentleman's barber was fined GBP10 000 (US19 460) after 24 grooming accessories made from ivory were found for sale on his premises during a raid by officers from the Metropolitan Police Wildlife Crime Unit, acting on information received from TRAFFIC. This is the maximum penalty available to the court for offering for sale items derived from EU Annex A species as per the *Control of Trade in Endangered Species (Enforcement) Regulations 1997 (COTES)* as amended 2005. The items, at three shops in Mayfair, included shaving brushes—bearing the stamp "real ivory"—as well as ivory hairbrushes, glove stretchers and an elephant's tusk. All items were forfeited by the court.

It is illegal to sell ivory in the UK unless it is a worked item and an antique (i.e. pre-1947). Lawyers representing the firm, Geo. F. Trumper Ltd, pleaded guilty to keeping items from an endangered species for sale.

[www.lse.co.uk/ShowStory.asp?story=NL2430391F&news_headline=barber_fin, 24 October 2006;](http://www.lse.co.uk/ShowStory.asp?story=NL2430391F&news_headline=barber_fin,24%20October%202006;)
TRAFFIC International

A F R I C A

SOUTH AFRICA: On 8 February 2007, 12 people were arrested and an undisclosed amount of abalone *Haliotis* (known in South Africa as perlemoen) was confiscated in Bronkhorstspuit following an operation carried out by Pretoria police's organized crime unit and the Bronkhorstspuit police. Six Chinese and six Mozambican nationals were arrested and the abalone was confiscated.

The arrests were made on two plots in Bronkhorstspuit where the molluscs were allegedly processed. Other assets including cars were also confiscated.

On 11 April 2007, between five and six tonnes of abalone *Haliotis* was seized at Camperdown, KwaZulu-Natal, the largest amount to be seized in the province. Teams from the South African Police Service, the South African Revenue Service, the Directorate of Special Operations, Maritime and Coastal Management and the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism raided a farm and arrested six people, among them individuals from South Africa, China and Mexico. Wet, or shucked, abalone was found in the garage. Fans were being used to dry the molluscs. The case continues.

www.int.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=14&click_id=14&art_id=iol1170912053890B265, 8 February 2007;
The Mercury (South Africa): www.themercury.co.za, 12 April 2007

A S I A

EAST ASIA

CHINA

On 19 November 2006, police from the Guangxi Qinlian forestry centre acting on information stopped a car at the border of Guangxi Province with Guangdong Province and seized 53 pangolins *Manis* (CITES II) packed in the trunk of the car; 14 specimens were dead. The people in the car evaded capture. The surviving pangolins have been sent to the Guangxi Endangered Wild Animals Aid Center.

Xinhua Net, www.cwca.org.cn/Article/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=2242, 20 November 2006;
TRAFFIC East Asia

A large number of elephant ivory seizures have taken place in China over the past year. Examples include, most recently, on 13 February 2007, 67.5 kg by Customs officers at Beijing Capital International Airport. The ivory, representing approximately seven elephants, was found in the luggage of a female passenger from the Democratic Republic of Congo, arriving from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, who was standing in the nothing-to-declare Customs area. Items found included half-finished mahjong sets, bracelets, necklaces and other ornaments.

On 7 August 2006, Nanjing (Jiangsu Province) Customs Bureau confiscated 145 pieces of African ivory products (chopsticks and bracelets) (2730 kg) at Nanjing Airport, on a flight arriving from Hong Kong.

On the same day at Hangzhou Airport, Zhejiang Province, Hangzhou Customs Bureau seized 122 ivory products (bracelets, chopsticks and name seals) from a passenger's luggage (route not reported). Officials suspect the items were purchased in Africa. This marked the 30th ivory seizure by Hangzhou Customs between January and August, twice the amount seized the previous year over the same period of time.

During January to June 2006, Shanghai Customs uncovered 13 cases of ivory smuggling involving 16 ivory tusks and 229 ivory products. There is reported to be concern that with the routing of flights between Shanghai and West Asia, passengers are travelling from Africa to Shanghai via Dubai or Doha. Shanghai Customs uncovered seven ivory smuggling cases from inward passengers from Dubai to Shanghai and seized 12 ivory tusks during this period. Among the 13 cases, some suspects attempted to smuggle ivory into China to sell by using fake documentation, or by concealing the items. Others brought them back for personal use or as gifts, claiming that they had been purchased legally and in some cases were in possession of licences issued by local government.

A Yemeni businessman, who had attempted to smuggle over 60 kg of ivory into the country in June 2006 went on trial on 9 April 2007 at Guangzhou Intermediate People's Court, Guangdong Province, on charges of smuggling ivory. Customs officials discovered 60.73 kg in the defendant's luggage at Baiyun Airport, Guangzhou, on 7 June 2006. He stated that he had tried to tell Customs officials he was carrying the ivory but because he couldn't speak Chinese or English, couldn't make himself understood and he failed to declare the 14 pieces of ivory. He claimed the ivory had been purchased from a businessman in Yemen and that he intended to sell it in China. A verdict is expected later this year.

In early 2007, at the People's Court of Longfeng District, Daqing, Heilongjiang Province, Wang Yuying, of Daqing, was sentenced to 10 years in gaol and fined JPY20 000 (USD2588), after being convicted of illegally purchasing a Tiger skin. Wang had purchased the skin from an antique market in Sa'ertu District of Daqing in 2004 and had hidden it in a factory warehouse in Longfeng District. He decided to sell it but was charged last September by forestry police acting on information.

Laboratory work conducted by the Wildlife and Plant Testing Center with the State Forestry Bureau showed that the skin belonged to that of a South China Tiger (or Amoy Tiger) *Panthera tigris amoyensis* (CITES I and fully protected nationally).

Xinhua Net, Shanghai, 21 July 2006, reported by Yu Wu and Xuan Guan; TRAFFIC East Asia; IFAW press release, 19 February 2007: www.ifaw.org/ifaw/general/default.aspx?oid=208268; China Broadcast Net, 8 August 2006; www.cnr.cn/2004news/international/200608/t20060808_504265682.html (Chinese only); <http://news.cctv.com/law/20060812/100771.shtml> (in Chinese only); http://english.people.com.cn/200704/10/eng20070410_365063.html, 10 April 2007; http://english.people.com.cn/200704/12/eng20070412_366041.html, 12 April 2007

HONG KONG SAR: On 9 January 2007, at Tsuen Wan Magistrates' Court, a Chinese male was fined HKD16 000 (USD2000) and sentenced to six months' imprisonment, suspended for two years, following his attempt the previous day to import an illegal shipment of animals from Thailand, destined for China, through Hong Kong International Airport. The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) and Customs officials arrested the man following the detection of the following specimens in his luggage: a Fish-eating Crocodile (Gharial) *Gavialis gangeticus* (CITES

l), six snakes *Bodiae/Pythonidae* spp. (CITES II), 46 turtles/tortoises (Three-keeled Land Tortoise *Melanochelys tricarinata*, Black Pond Turtle *Geodemys hamiltonii*, Radiated Tortoise *Geochelone radiata* (all CITES I species) and true tortoises *Testudinidae* spp. (CITES II), and 11 flying squirrels *Petaurista* spp. (non-CITES). The requisite permit and health certificates were missing. The man was charged under the *Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance, Cap 586*, and the *Rabies Ordinance, Cap 421*.

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, Hong Kong, press release, 9 January 2007; TRAFFIC East Asia

JAPAN: On 7 February 2007, at Tokyo District Court, Shi Guo Qi was sentenced to six-months' imprisonment, suspended for three years, and We Sheng received a one-year gaol sentence, suspended for three years, and fined JPY300000 (USD2460), for their part in the illegal sale of Asian slipper orchids *Paphiopedilum* spp.

The pair—students from China—were initially arrested on 11 October 2006, together with one other student, by officers of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), and including the involvement of the Oi Police Station and 16 other police stations, for their part in the illegal sale of slipper orchids *Paphiopedilum* spp. in violation of the *Law for the Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (LCES)*. A Japanese company employee who conspired with them was arrested the following day. All *Paphiopedilum* species are listed in CITES Appendix I and the LCES prohibits their domestic trade.

Shi Guo Qi had been suspected of listing nine orchids *Paphiopedilum* spp. on an internet auction site as wild *Paphiopedilum malipoense* collected in Yunnan Province, China, and to have sold two of these specimens. The other two individuals were suspected to have listed seven orchids on an auction site as wild specimens collected in Guangxi Province, China, and to have sold one specimen. They were suspected of selling the orchids via the email address of the Japanese co-conspirator and of smuggling the specimens by international mail—according to the MPD, from Yunnan Province through a company in Shanghai.

On 1 November 2006, Shi Guo Qi and We Sheng were rearrested. Shi Guo Qi was suspected of selling two *Paphiopedilum* specimens during April to July 2006 and We Sheng was under suspicion of selling 33 slipper orchids *Paphiopedilum* spp. to 11 people on 25 occasions during April to September 2006.

On 30 November 2006, officers of the MPD with assistance from three police stations, rearrested the latter individual [it is not known whether or when this person had been released] for his part in smuggling slipper orchids in violation of the *Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Law*. Eight orchids had been imported from China in May 2006 via an express mail service without the approval of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. A further 27 orchids were imported on two occasions using the same method. A company employee in Wakayama Prefecture who bought four orchids from We Sheng during June to August 2006 was also arrested for violating the LCES.

On 7 February 2007, Osaka Prefectural Police and Osaka Customs officials arrested two brothers who attempted to import 2.8 t of African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I) ivory. The ivory shipment left Malaysia on 6 August, was transferred to another ship in South Korea, and arrived in Osaka Nanko Port on 21 August. Customs officials confiscated the ivory after screening the ship's cargo; it had been disguised to look like marble and was described as such in false import permits. The consignment consisted of 608 pieces of cut ivory and 17 928 smaller cut pieces for *hanko* (signature stamps) and represents a record amount of ivory seized in the country since the international ivory trade ban went into effect in 1989.

One of the men was indicted on charges of violating the *Customs Law*, while indictment of the other has been shelved.

On 2 May 2007, at Narita International Airport, Customs officials foiled an attempt by a Japanese national to smuggle some 40 slow lorises *Nycticebus* sp. (CITES II) into the country from Bangkok,

Thailand. It is the largest number of this species brought into Japan at one time, according to the Finance Ministry's Customs and Tariff Bureau. All of the animals, contained in small boxes, were alive when seized but about a dozen were reported to have later died (see also under Thailand).

The Nihon Keizai Shimbun, 11/12 October/11 November 2006; *The Nikkei Sankei Shimbun*, 11/12 October/11 November 2006/8 February 2007; *The Sankei Shimbun*, 8 February/10 February/11 March 2007; *The Mainichi Newspapers*, 11 October/12 November 2006; www.france24.com/france24Public/en/administration/afpnews.html?id=070207114347.ndz9cly&cat=null; TRAFFIC East Asia; <http://home.kyodo.co.jp/>; <http://home.kyodo.co.jp/>, 25 May 2007

TAIWAN: In April 2007, police officers posing as buyers seized the skin of a Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) and arrested a Taiwanese national. The suspect had purchased the item from South Africa some years earlier and had advertised its sale via the internet in late 2006. He was charged with illegal possession of a protected species and a trial date is to be announced.

In April 2007, Customs officials at Keelung port seized 680 Saiga Antelope *Saiga tatarica* (CITES II) horns and dried skins of 302 Hundred-pace Vipers *Deinagkistrodon acutus*. The specimens had been concealed in a container of traditional Chinese medicines on a vessel arriving by sea from China via Hong Kong. One of the horns was embedded with a bullet.

Taiwan Council of Agriculture pers. comm., April 2007; *Liberty Times (Taiwan)*, 18 April 2007; *United Evening News (Taiwan)*, 17 April 2007; www.libertytimes.com.tw/2007/new/may/2/today-so2.htm; TRAFFIC East Asia

SOUTH ASIA

INDIA: On 4 October 2006, police arrested two Bangladeshi nationals as they carried two Tiger skins near Ghaziabad border in East Delhi. The accused told police that they were smuggling the skins to Bangladesh. They revealed that they used to hunt Tigers in Rajaji National Park in Rishikesh or nearby parks in Uttaranchal hills whenever they could gain entry into the areas. They would also buy skins from local hunters and supply them to a contact in Bangladesh for profit. According to a senior police official, they were paid on a commission basis.

The following cases are just some examples of seizures of Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II) that have taken place in India in recent months and reflect the extent of trade in this species from India, export of which is banned under the *Wild Life Protection Act, 1972*. Two key suspects in this trade were recently arrested.

In October 2006, Customs officials at Bangalore (HAL) Airport, Karnataka, in association with the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), seized 447 Indian Star Tortoises. One person was detained. The tortoises weighed between 10 g and 350 g and some had perished. Preliminary investigation revealed that they had been procured in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, and were being smuggled to Kuala Lumpur, via Sri Lanka. The specimens were seized under the provisions of the *Customs Act 1962* and handed over to the Forest Department; they were later taken to the Bannerghatta National Park.

On 23 November 2006, a flight to Kuala Lumpur was recalled moments before take-off following information received by the Customs Air Intelligence Unit that a narcotics consignment was being carried on board. The consignment turned out to contain, rather, 430 live Indian Star Tortoises that had not been detected during screening. The suspect involved in the smuggling comes from the Ramnad area of Tamil Nadu, which is the natural habitat of this species. According to an official, Kuala Lumpur was a transit point and it is believed that the tortoises were going to Europe where they are in demand as pets. The turtles were taken to Sanjay Gandhi National Park.

Two key figures involved in this trade were arrested in October and November 2006, respectively. On 29 October 2006, wildlife authorities in Koyambedu, Chennai, acting on information, arrested a key figure in the co-ordination of the collection of this species from the wild

in Karnataka. Suspect A of Kolar district in Karnataka was remanded in custody. Following interrogation, it was revealed that he had been involved in the work for over three years, hiring tribals and sending them into the Badravathi forest areas to collect the tortoises. The specimens were then stacked at a particular location and once a sizeable number had been collected, prospective buyers were contacted. According to a senior official, this is the first time that a coordinator who was directly involved in collecting the live specimens from the wild has been arrested. On almost all previous occasions, only the carriers had been arrested.

On 28 November 2006, wildlife officials in George Town, Chennai, arrested a key person allegedly involved in the collection of Indian Star Tortoises from the wild, for smuggling to South-east Asia. Suspect B is reported to have hired tribals to collect the tortoises from the forests of Palmaner and Chittoor in Andhra Pradesh, and areas in Karnataka. A week earlier, anti-poaching authorities of the Mumbai Metro railway system seized a consignment of Indian Star Tortoises at Mumbai Airport which had been supplied by Suspect B. In 2005, a passenger who was apprehended boarding a Malaysia-bound flight with 989 Indian Star Tortoises revealed that Suspect B had handed the tortoises to him. Similarly this year another consignment of Indian Star Tortoises was seized at the airport, which again had been collected and given to a 'carrier' by Suspect B.

Both suspects have been remanded in custody.

On 5 February 2007, the Delhi Police Crime Branch, acting on information, seized nine shahtoosh shawls (made from the wool of the Tibetan Antelope *Pantholops hodgsonii*, CITES I), from a trader in Delhi. Police sought the assistance of TRAFFIC India in the *prima facie* identification of the items. The arrested trader is being held in custody and the shawls were sent to the Wildlife Institute of India for forensic tests.

TRAFFIC India; *The Hindu (India)* 1 December/31 October 2006: www.hinduonnet.com; *Hindustan Times (India)*, 24 November 2006: http://epaper.hindustantimes.com/ArticleText.aspx?article=24_11_2006_003_00; WWF Nepal

NEPAL: On 12 February 2007, in the area of Dhangadi, three persons were arrested after being found in possession of five Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) skins and 11 kg of bones including five skulls (Leopard/Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I)). This seizure marks the beginning of a collaborative initiative between TRAFFIC India, WWF Nepal, and Nepalese enforcement agencies, to halt illegal wildlife trade along the Indo–Nepal border.

Prompted by information received from TRAFFIC/WWF India, a mission headed by the Chief Warden of Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve, Mr Puran Bhakta Shrestha, and supported by the Buffer Zone Management Council Chairman, Mr Labha Bista, the traders were apprehended. The mission was co-ordinated and supported by WWF Nepal as well as by the police and the District Forest Office in Kailali.

All those arrested are reported to have been long engaged in the cross-border illegal wildlife trade between Nepal and India. They are in the custody of Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve and an investigation is under way.

On 5 June 2007, the Kathmandu Metropolitan Police Crime Division (MPCD) arrested three persons involved in selling shahtoosh shawls (made from the fur of Tibetan Antelope *Pantholops hodgsonii* (CITES I)). "Operation Heritage", led by Superintendent of Police Devendra Subedi, took more than a month's preparation. Those arrested were Indian nationals of Kashmiri origin; 19 pieces of shahtoosh shawls were seized. According to SP Subedi, investigations show that Nepal is being used as a transit point for smuggling shahtoosh shawls and other illegal wildlife parts. From India, the shahtoosh travels to China via Nepal and to markets in Europe and beyond. The shawls are also sold locally to tourists. He mentioned that this was the first case in which fully woven shahtoosh ready for sale was seized in such quantities in Kathmandu.

TRAFFIC India; WWF Nepal; www.panda.org/about_wwf/where_we_work/asia_pacific/our_programmes/areas/news/index.cfm?uNewsID=106140

SOUTH-EAST ASIA

LAO PDR: On 29 August 2006, the Lao embassy and forestry police confiscated 1664 high-grade logs believed to belong to a transnational illegal logging network preparing to export the timber to China. The wood, which was kept in 11 containers at a Lat Krabang warehouse, was identified as the rare Payoong or Thailand Rosewood *Dalbergia cochinchinensis* timber, which is one of the most expensive hardwoods. In Southeast Asia, it is found in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Viet Nam.

The Customs invoice showed that the logs had been transported to the depot by a Thai freight company and destined for export to China by a Lao firm but no export permit had been issued. It is possible that the seized timber had been smuggled in from a neighbouring country and may have been illegally felled from a Thai forest. Police were to summon the companies' operators for questioning. They could be charged with smuggling timber into the country and being in possession of a protected species.

www.bangkokpost.com/News/30Aug2006_news13.php; TRAFFIC Southeast Asia

MALAYSIA: On 19 October 2006, Eastern region marine police acting on information seized 5000 Water Monitors *Varanus salvator* (CITES II) at a jetty in Batu Tiga, Jalan Gambang. The animals, contained in 448 boxes, were being unloaded from a trailer to a waiting vessel. A number of people eluded capture but five Chinese nationals and one local person were arrested. The lizards are protected by law and no licences had been issued to hunt or catch the animals. The suspects were to be investigated under the *Wildlife Protection Act 1972*. Once investigations were completed, it was reported that the foreign suspects were to be handed over to the Immigration Department and the lizards released in Tasik Cini, Tasik Bera National Park and Kuala Krau forest reserve.

On 13 November 2006, thousands of cobras *Naja*, pythons *Python* and Malayan Pangolins *Manis javanica* (CITES I) were seized from fishermen's jetties at Losong Pasir and Losong Paloh near Kuala Terengganu after being found by villagers in some 650 boxes. Some of animals were believed to have been smuggled in from Indonesia and Thailand. Terengganu Wildlife and National Park assistant director Nurullza Wagiman believed the animals had been left there before they were to be sent to other destinations.

On 2 December 2006, Customs officers acting on information raided a shrimp paste factory near the Sungai Kapal beach in Kampung Sungai Kepal, Penggerang, Johor State, and seized a large consignment of reptiles. Several men escaped but the driver and co-driver of a lorry were arrested. Inside the vehicle, officers found 50 crates containing 444 snakes, mainly cobras, 191 boxes containing 2488 Bengal Monitors *Varanus bengalensis* (CITES I), and more crates with 1889 tortoises (species not reported). More tortoises were found in 11 crates stacked under some trees. The animals were believed to be destined for the restaurant trade in a neighbouring country. A man thought to be the owner of the factory, and the employer of the lorry drivers, were later arrested near Penggerang. The owner faces charges of possessing prohibited goods and trying to avoid payment of export duties. The animals were handed over to wildlife department officials and were due to be released into the wild.

On 30 January 2007, a man was caught with nearly 300 Malayan Pangolins *Manis javanica* (CITES II) which were about to be smuggled into Thailand. State Wildlife and National Parks Department officials, acting on information, inspected a lorry parked outside a house in Bekelam, Backok and found 36 plastic crates containing 288 pangolins. The suspect was held for possession of the pangolins, which are fully protected under the *Wildlife Protection Act 1972*. The specimens weighed between three and five kilogrammes each, and had reportedly been brought from other States such as Johor and Negri Sembilan.

On 6 March 2007, wildlife officers acting on information conducted a raid at the Second Air Cargo Complex in Batu Maung. Inside 86 crates they found 2400 Common Rat Snakes *Ptyas mucosus* (CITES II), bound for Hong Kong.

The species, protected under the *Wildlife Protection Act 1972*, is only common in the northern part of the country, and could also have been brought in from Thailand.

On 14 March 2007, a tannery owner was charged with concealing illegal activities relating to the processing of skins at his tannery in Jalan Gambang. His assistant faces three charges for illegal possession of wildlife.

The tannery was authorized to deal only in python skin but when State Wildlife and National Parks Department officers raided the premises, they found 748 Clouded Monitor Lizards *Varanus nebulosus* (CITES I), 231 Oriental Rat Snakes *Ptyas mucosus* and four King Cobras *Ophiophagus hannah* (both CITES II and protected under the *Wildlife Protection Act 1972*), as well as 800 g of pangolin *Manis javanica* (CITES II) bones and scales. A trial hearing was set for 18 September 2007.

On 11 April 2007, at Kota Kinabalu Magistrates' Court, the skipper and crew of a Chinese trawler that was apprehended on 29 March with 274 marine turtles on board, were fined more than RM1.88m (USD55 000). The same court also fined nine Vietnamese RM720 000 for illegally fishing in Malaysian waters on 3 April. The fishermen were unable to pay their fines and were each gaoled for between six and 18 months in default.

The Chinese nationals, from Hainan Island, were accused of fishing illegally in Malaysian waters 17.5 nautical miles off Pulau Mengalum on 28 March and of poaching 185 Green Turtles *Chelonia mydas* (CITES I) and 89 Hawksbill Turtles *Eretmochelys imbricata* (CITES I). The Vietnamese had been apprehended 80 nautical miles off Kota Kinabalu.

The Star (Malaysia), 21 October/14 November 2006/7 March 2007: www.thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2007/13/7/nation/17065647; <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2006/10/21/nation/20061021161145>; <http://archives.thestar.com.my/search/default.aspx?query=illegally+fishing>; *New Straits Times (Malaysia)*, 5 December 2006: www.nst.com.my/Current_News/nst/Tuesday/National/20061205080416/Article/index_html; http://rawstory.com/news/2006/Malaysian_police_save_5_000_smuggle_12042006.html; www.nst.com.my/Current_News/nst/Wednesday/NewsBreak/20070131183625/Article/index_html; www.nst.com.my/Current_News/nst/Thursday/National/20070315083140/Article/index_html, *New Straits Times (Malaysia)*, 15 March 2007

THAILAND: On 11 October 2006, authorities seized over 200 live Siamese Crocodiles *Crocodylus siamensis* (CITES I) being transported by lorry from the Thai/Cambodia border to a private crocodile farm. Acting on information, Customs officials followed the vehicle as it crossed into Thailand at Aranyaprathet District, Sakeaw Province. Officials detained the driver and seized the crocodiles together with one freezer box of crocodile skins.

The source of the crocodiles has not been confirmed. Crocodiles are protected in Thailand. Although they can be found in many captive-breeding facilities in the country, they are almost extinct in the wild. An official from the Fisheries Department of Thailand has already confirmed that no permit was issued recently for the import of these crocodiles. The confiscation and arrest was reported to be as a result of the increased awareness in the role of Customs officials in helping to stop illegal wildlife trade and Thailand's role as principal lead in the ASEAN-Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN). ASEAN-WEN is a multi-lateral initiative designed to protect Asia's wildlife by facilitating cross-border inter-agencies co-operation and the exchange of vital information.

The lorry driver, a Thai national, was charged under the *Customs Act* and the *Wildlife Law Act*. The crocodiles were to be transported to a wildlife holding facility outside Bangkok.

On 19 November 2006, anti-wildlife trafficking officials at the Thai–Laos border seized 260 Malayan Pangolins *Manis javanica* (CITES II) which were about to be shipped to Laos, thence to China, where

they were to be sold as food. The seizure came after authorities raided a lorry parked near the Mekong River border with Laos. The driver and another person were charged with illegal animal trafficking and were detained under police custody.

During January and February 2007, there were four separate attempts by Japanese nationals to smuggle Slow Lorises *Nycticebus coucang* (CITES II) out of Suvarnabhumi Airport, Bangkok, to Japan. Three people were arrested last year for smuggling this species.

The most recent attempt took place on 24 February 2007, when 23, mostly new-born Slow Lorises, were checked onto a flight bound for Narita Airport. The suspect, who never boarded the plane and eluded arrest, is now being sought by police in Bangkok. Airport authorities were alerted by noises coming from the suspect's luggage and upon investigation found the 23 specimens inside tiny cages. One of the animals died from suffocation but the remainder were placed under the care of a government-run wildlife sanctuary.

The airport authorities are reported to be in talks with wildlife crime police and Customs officials with regard to conducting an investigation into this illegal trade between Thailand and Japan (see also under Japan).

In early 2007, some 1000 Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II) being smuggled into Thailand were found by Customs officers during a routine inspection of luggage. The consignment, which also contained Snake-necked Turtles *Chelodina siebenrocki* and other aquatic animals, was confiscated.

*Kampuchea Thmey Daily (Cambodia), No. 1163, year 5th, 13 October 2006; Raksmeay Kampuchea Daily (Cambodia), No. 4105, year 14th, 13 October 2006; WildAid Foundation (Thailand) release of 28 February 2007 posted at www.tatnews.org/special_interest?Wildlife/3324.asp (Tourism Authority of Thailand); www.playfuls.com/news_10_16713-Slow-Lorises-Smuggler-Eludes-Arrest-In-Thailand.html; http://us.il.yimg.com/us.yimg.com/il/us/nws/plap_small.gif, 19 November 2006; *The Times*, 1 February 2007: www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,2576995,00.html*

VIET NAM: On 23 October 2006, police in Quang Nam Province seized over 344 kg of snakes, turtles and Monitor Lizards *Varanus salvator* (CITES II) being transported in bags and cages from Ho Chi Minh City to China by bus. The animals were destined for sale to restaurants. The owner of the bus was detained. Most of the animals were healthy, and it is reported that they were likely to be sent to a rescue centre at Cuc Phuong National Park.

www.voanews.com/english/2006-10-24-voa20.cfm, 24 October 2006

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA: On 19 January 2007, at Downing Centre District Court, French national Pascal Rene Della Zuana was fined AUD10 000 (USD8294) and sentenced to two years in gaol after being convicted of attempting to smuggle 23 exotic bird eggs into Australia from Bangkok, Thailand, in contravention of the *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act*, CITES, the *Customs Act 1901* and the *Quarantine Act 1908*. Della Zuana was stopped by Customs officers at Sydney International Airport on 2 August 2006 after he arrived on a flight from Bangkok. He was found to be wearing a specially constructed singlet underneath his clothing which held bird eggs including macaws (species not reported), Grey Parrots *Psittacus erithacus*, Eclectus Parrots *Eclectus roratus* (both CITES II) and one Moluccan Cockatoo *Cacatua moluccensis* (CITES I). Della Zuana was subsequently charged by Customs investigators and had been on remand since his arrest in August. Due to the quarantine risk the eggs had to be destroyed by irradiation. Identification of the birds was possible through DNA analysis.

On 8 February 2007, at Ceduna Magistrates' Court, Nicholas Karagiannis, of Coorabie, South Australia, was sentenced to 18 months in gaol with a 12-month non-parole period for abalone

Haliotis poaching and fined AUD30 000 (USD24 883)—the maximum fine allowable under existing fisheries laws—making this a record sentence imposed by South Australia for such an offence. A vehicle, boat, diving gear and camping equipment belonging to Karagiannis were also forfeited. Karagiannis had been gaoled twice before for abalone poaching offences.

This case follows a joint Fisheries and police operation in June 2005. As a result of that operation, Karagiannis and two others were caught with almost 2000 abalones: Robert Hedley Miller, of Croydon, pleaded guilty to possessing a commercial quantity of abalone for the purpose of sale and was placed on a two-year good behaviour bond. The third person is still before the court.

On 15 February 2007, at Geelong County Court, three abalone poachers had gaol sentences re-imposed after losing their appeal for the sentence to be revoked. Hung Quoc Doan of Lalor, Peter Phung of Sunshine West and Lung Van Luu of Lalor, pleaded guilty in Geelong Magistrates' Court in November 2006 to trafficking in a commercial quantity of abalone and other charges relating to illegal fishing. All were convicted and given custodial sentences but were later bailed after lodging appeals against their sentences.

On 4 May 2006, the three men travelled on Phung's boat from Werribee South to Point Wilson where Doan and Luu dived for abalone. The abalones were then shucked and placed inside bags which were later hidden on the river bank at Werribee. A vehicle carrying the three collected the abalones and drove off. Fisheries officers followed but when they attempted to pull the car over, it accelerated away with Doan and Luu throwing the bags containing 517 abalones out the windows.

The judge ruled that there had been no valid reason given for the men taking more than five times the commercial quantity of abalone and rejected any suggestion they were for their own use. Doan was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment with a non-parole period of three months, the remainder suspended for 12 months. He was also fined AUD1250 (USD1036). Phung was convicted and sentenced to nine months in gaol with a non-parole period of three months and the remainder suspended for 12 months. He was also fined AUD400 (USD330). Luu was convicted and sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment with a non-parole period of six months and the remainder suspended for 12 months. He was also fined AUD750 (US622).

Personal items (boat, car and mobile phone) were forfeited to the Crown and each was ordered to pay AUD1550 (USD1285) in compensation and costs.

On 26 February 2007, at Perth Magistrates' Court, three people were each fined up to AUD3500 (USD2795) after pleading guilty to trying to take large numbers of abalone out of the country. The two women and a man were caught at Perth International Airport in November and December 2006 during a joint operation involving Customs and Western Australian Department of Fisheries officers. Each person had more than four times the legal limit of 20 Roe's Abalones *Haliotis roei* in their hand luggage. The court was told all three had misunderstood Western Australia's fisheries laws and were intending to give the shellfish to family in Asia.

Australian Customs media release, 20 January 2007: www.customs.gov.au/site/page.cfm?c=8431;
www.geelongadvertiser.com.au/article/2007/02/15/1434_news.html, 15 February 2007;
Western Australian Department of Fisheries media release, 25 February 2007;
ABC Newsonline, 26 February 2007:
www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200702/s1857591.htm;
www.news.com.au/adelaidenow/story/0,22606,21203831-2682,00.html?from=public_rss, 11 February 2007

A M E R I C A S

CANADA: Thousands of diet pill shipments ordered by Canadians are arriving at Canada's borders and being detained by federal wildlife and Customs officials because they contain the plant *Hoodia Hoodia* (listed in CITES II since 12 January 2005).

Hoodia is used as an appetite suppressant. Foreign marketers, based predominantly in the USA, are advertising to Canadians who place orders, often unaware that the seller is outside Canada. Since May 2006, these shipments have been intercepted daily at international mail centres, courier

facilities and airports in Montreal, Quebec City, Mississauga, Calgary and Vancouver because importers do not have the proper permits. In excess of 2000 shipments had been detained by August 2006. No charges have been laid, but federal wildlife officers may charge importers who have not obtained the proper permits.

Hoodia is a cactus native to Namibia, Botswana and South Africa.

Environment Canada has laid 14 charges against Wing Quon Enterprises Ltd for allegedly importing specimens of CITES-listed species without the required permits and for unlawfully possessing and distributing medicines containing Tiger *Panthera tigris*, bear *Ursus*, pangolin *Manis*, musk deer *Moschus* and rhinoceros derivatives. The company has been charged with three counts of importing CITES-listed plant species without a permit in contravention of Section 6(2) of the *Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act* (WAPPRITA), the legislative vehicle by which Canada meets its obligations under CITES. The company has also been charged with nine counts under Section 8(a) of the Act for unlawful possession of medicines containing bear, pangolin, musk deer and rhinoceros derivatives and two counts under Section 8(c) of the Act related to the distribution of medicines containing Tiger and rhinoceros. The charges follow an investigation by the Wildlife Enforcement Division.

On 14 November 2006, in the Ontario Court of Justice Criminal Division, Caviar Centre Inc. was convicted of unlawfully importing sturgeon caviar into Canada from Turkey without a permit. The company, one of Canada's premier caviar import and wholesale operations, was fined CAD3000 (USD2640) and ordered to forfeit the 126 kg of seized caviar. It is alleged that the caviar in question originated in the Caspian Sea region.

The conviction concluded an investigation undertaken by Environment Canada in late 2004 and early 2005. The investigation included the detection and detention of large quantities of caviar entering Canada at Pearson International Airport, Toronto, and a search warrant executed at the Toronto address of Caviar Centre Inc.

All species of sturgeon are listed in CITES as well as being protected under WAPPRITA. The convicted company attempted to import caviar using falsified CITES permits.

The forfeited caviar was to be destroyed owing to its age, as its human consumption in any manner would likely constitute a health hazard.

On 18 April 2007, in Prince Rupert, British Columbia, three people received the heaviest penalties that have ever been imposed for abalone poaching in BC. The men had been caught with 11 000 Northern or Pinto Abalone *Haliotis kamschatkana* in February 2006 (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 21(1):40), the largest consignment of illegally caught abalones ever made in the province. The species was assigned a Threatened status in 1999.

Each poacher received a conditional sentence which includes house arrest, a new form of punishment for abalone poaching in BC. Michael McNeill was given a 12-month conditional sentence with six months house arrest, a five-year scuba-diving prohibition and was fined CAD20 000 (USD17 850). His lorry, boat and equipment used during the crime were forfeited. Daniel McNeill and Randall Graff each received four-month conditional sentences, with three months of house arrest, two-year diving bans, CAD10 000 (USD8926) in fines, and 80 hours of community work involving presentations on abalone conservation. They also had to forfeit CAD4000 worth of equipment.

The men were apprehended leaving Port Edward, near Prince Rupert, on their way to Vancouver to sell the abalone. They are the first abalone poachers convicted under the four-year old *Species at Risk Act* (SARA).

*Environment Canada, Press Releases, 28/29 August, 14 November 2006: www.ec.gc.ca/press/2006/060828_n_e.htm; Globe and Mail (Canada), 20 April 2007: www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/LAC.20070420.BCABALONE20/TPStory/TPNational/BritishColumbia; *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 21(1):40*

COLOMBIA: On 11 April 2007, marine troops seized 1030 Spectacled Caiman *Caiman crocodylus fuscus* (CITES II) skins which reportedly were to be traded in the municipality of Magangué. The skins had been concealed on board a wooden vessel manned by four crew members who were handed over to the custody of the authorities.

www.armada.mil.col/index.php?idcategoria=274336

USA: On 13 November 2006 it was announced that Antonio Vidal Pego of Rebeira, Spain, and Fadilur, S.A., a Uruguayan corporation, had been found guilty of charges related to an attempt to import and sell illegally possessed Patagonian Toothfish *Dissostichus eleginoides*, in what is the first successful federal felony prosecution in the USA for activities involving illegal importation and sale of toothfish. Sentencing included a fine of USD400 000 and USD100 000 for Vidal and Fadilur, S.A., respectively.

Fadilur was convicted on its plea to false labelling, importation of illegally possessed fish, and attempted sale of that fish. Additionally, both Fadilur and defendant Vidal were convicted of obstructing justice. In May 2004, Vidal and Fadilur, S.A., knowingly attempted to import approximately 24 000 kg of toothfish from Singapore into Miami, for sale in the USA, knowing that the fish were taken and transported in violation of CCAMLR (Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources) and US law. The defendants made and submitted a false record and account for fish intended to be imported into the USA from Singapore. Finally, in July 2004, the defendants knowingly altered and made a false entry in a survey report purporting to reflect a toothfish cargo off-loaded at Singapore from the F/V CARRAN with the intent to obstruct and influence the investigation and proper administration of a matter within the jurisdiction of NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration).

According to records in the case, the government seized the toothfish which arrived in the USA in a total of 11 cargo containers on three separate vessels, all of which were derived from the F/V CARRAN catch. NOAA and ICE agents in Miami, Los Angeles, and New York seized all the containers. The plea agreements in this case include provisions requiring the forfeiture of all the fish, or the proceeds of the government's sale of the fish, to the USA. Vidal, as a result of co-operation provided to the US Government in the investigation or prosecution of others, was placed on probation for a period of four years, and is required as a condition of that probation to cease all involvement in the toothfish industry. The Court's Probation Office and the US Government are empowered to enforce this provision by examining the books and records of any business activities of Vidal and to require his appearance in the USA as necessary. Further, Vidal has been required to provide a waiver of extradition for use in the event of a violation of the terms of the sentence. The USD400 000 fine imposed against Vidal will be paid into the *Magnuson–Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Fund*. Fadilur, S.A. was also placed on probation for a period of four years and fined USD100 000, payable to the *Magnuson–Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Fund*, and is required by the terms of its plea and the sentence to cease all corporate activities and dissolve as a business entity within 45 days.

The harvest and trade of Patagonian Toothfish is regulated under CCAMLR, implemented in the USA through the *Antarctic Marine Living Resources Act*.

On 14 November 2006, NOAA announced that it had issued a USD68 000 civil penalty and a 100-day permit sanction to the owner and operator of the fishing vessel Sea Angel for multiple violations of the *Magnuson–Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act*, which included shark finning, possession of large coastal sharks during a closure, possession of prohibited sharks, and possession of undersized swordfish.

On 18 May 2006, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission officers, operating under a Cooperative Enforcement Agreement with NOAA Fisheries Service Office for Law Enforcement, conducted a dockside inspection of the fishing vessel in Port Canaveral, Florida, and discovered fins of large coastal sharks on board. The fishing season for large coastal sharks had already ended. Accordingly, the FWC officers contacted NOAA special agents, who initiated an investigation. Subsequently, the agents seized 41 kg of shark fins and an undersized Swordfish *Xiphias gladius*

carcass.

Identification by a shark fin expert and DNA analysis indicated that some of the fins seized were from protected shark species, including Dusky Sharks *Carcharhinus obscurus*.

On 22 January 2007, Kevin Thompson, pastor of the Bay Area Family Church, Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity in San Leandro, California, and five other individuals, were found guilty of being involved in the illegal catching of thousands of undersized juvenile Leopard Sharks *Triakis semifasciata* from San Francisco Bay and selling them to aquarium dealers throughout the country, the UK and the Netherlands. Thompson pleaded guilty and was sentenced to one year and one day in prison and ordered to pay USD100 000 in fines. The five others charged in connection with the case, and who were sentenced on separate occasions, were: Ira Gass of Azusa, California (fined USD100 000 and sentenced to eight months' imprisonment and three years of supervised release); John Newberry of Hayward, California (fined USD50 000 and sentenced to six months' imprisonment and six months of community confinement); Hiroshi Ishikawa of San Leandro, California (fined USD40 000 and sentenced to three years' probation); and, Sion Lim, a citizen of Singapore (fined USD25 000 and sentenced to one year's probation). These monies have been designated for rehabilitating and restoring marine wildlife habitat in San Francisco Bay.

From 1992 to 2003, Thompson led a scheme whereby members of his church illegally harvested undersized Leopard Sharks from San Francisco Bay and sold them throughout the USA and overseas. John Newberry admitted that from 1992 to 2004, he and other church members fished for undersized Leopard Sharks using church vessels and stored the sharks at a facility located in San Leandro, owned by a business associated with the church. They then shipped the sharks out of Oakland and San Francisco airports for sale to dealers throughout the country and abroad. Thompson came under suspicion when a pet trade distributor in Miami was caught with 18 juvenile Leopard Sharks from California and given an 18-month gaol sentence. The case eventually led investigators back to the Bay Area where the principal suppliers were based. Some 465 juvenile Leopard Sharks were sold.

Leopard Sharks are commonly found in ocean waters along the Oregon, California and Baja Mexico coasts. The sharks gained extra protection in 1994 when the State Department of Fish and Game placed a minimum size catch limit of 36 inches (91.5 cm) on the species. This size limit was implemented because the Leopard Shark is a slow-growing species that does not reach sexual maturity until it is between 7 and 13 years of age. The species may live as long as 30 years. Because of these factors and others, including increased commercial and sport fishing, California State wildlife authorities have established these management measures to ensure the species' ability to maintain healthy stocks in the wild. Both the Monterey Bay Aquarium in Monterey, California, the John G. Shedd Aquarium in Chicago, Illinois, and the Cabrillo Aquarium in San Pedro, California, assisted federal wildlife investigators and Illinois Conservation officers in the transport and care of 19 juvenile Leopard Sharks confiscated during the course of the investigation. Nine of the sharks were ultimately returned to the wild in Monterey Bay, four remain on exhibit at Monterey Bay Aquarium and seven died.

The case is the result of an investigation conducted by agencies across borders, including NOAA, Fisheries Service's Office of Law Enforcement, US Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Department of Fish and Game, the UK's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Fish Health Inspectorate, and the Netherlands' General Inspection Service. TRAFFIC North America assisted with the investigation.

On 26 January 2007, Alvin G. Keel was sentenced in the Southern District of Florida to 60 months' imprisonment and three years' supervised release.

Keel was convicted on 30 October 2006 of the unlawful possession of Loggerhead *Caretta caretta* (CITES I) eggs, in violation of the *Endangered Species Act*, and the unlawful transportation of sea turtle eggs, in violation of the *Lacey Act*. Keel was reportedly seen digging up four separate nests of freshly

laid Loggerhead eggs on 4 June 2004. The next day, law enforcement officers discovered a large bag containing two pillowcases filled with 481 sea turtle eggs near to where Keel had been caught.

Keel has three prior federal convictions in the Southern District of Florida for crimes involving the illegal taking of protected sea turtle eggs, as well as four other state convictions involving the taking of sea turtle eggs.

On 16 April 2007, at Los Angeles federal court, Hisayoshi Kojima, of Kyoto, Japan, was sentenced to 21 months' imprisonment and fined a total of USD38 831 for trafficking in protected butterfly species. US Fish and Wildlife special agents began investigating Kojima in 2003 after an insect dealer told agents of Kojima's reputation within the trade as the world's top smuggler of protected butterflies. He was indicted by a grand jury and arrested in July 2006. He pleaded guilty in January 2007 to 17 criminal charges related to the sale and smuggling of butterfly species, including the CITES-I listed Homerus Swallowtail *Papilio homerus*. Forty-three butterflies were sold to undercover agents, including two Alexandra's Birdwings *Ornithoptera alexandrae* (CITES I), two Luzon Peacock Swallowtails *Papilio chikae* (CITES I), six Corsican Swallowtails *Papilio hospiton* (CITES I), three Paradise Birdwings *Ornithoptera paradisia* (CITES II), two *Ornithoptera meridionalis* (CITES II) and three Bhutan Glory butterflies *Bhutanitis lidderdalii* (CITES II), as well as 23 other species.

Department of Justice press releases, www.usdoj.gov/usao/fls/PressReleases/061113-01.html; www.usdoj.gov/usao/can/press/2007/2007_01_23_Thompson.sentencing.press.html, 23 January; 12 February 2007: www.usdoj.gov/usao/can/press/2007/2007_02_12_Leopardsharks.sentencing.press.html; www.usdoj.gov/usao/fls/PressReleases/070126-04.html; NOAA Fisheries Service press release, 14 November 2006: www.nmfs.noaa.gov; US Fish & Wildlife Service News Release, 16 April 2007: www.fws.gov/news/NewsReleases/showNews.cfm?newsId=FCD050C1-E3EE-5FF3-85B01AEA2953D852

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EUROPE

BELGIUM: On 11 June 2007, 80 kg of dried sea horses were seized at Zaventem Airport, Brussels. They had been sent by cargo from Conakry, Guinea, destined for Hong Kong. A forged licence accompanied this shipment. A CITES alert (a communication sent out by the CITES Secretariat to law enforcement personnel) issued on 22 April 2006 from Geneva underlined that old CITES export licences from Guinea were being misused.

Belgian Customs Airport News, CITES 05, 2007

RUSSIA: On 22 and 23 August 2007, police officials confiscated some 1833 kg of black caviar from two of the largest supermarket chains in Moscow and surrounding areas. The caviar was uncovered during raids involving 137 police agents and resulted in the seizure of 1833 kg of the high-grade beluga caviar (from the Beluga Sturgeon *Huso huso* (CITES II)) and 466 kg of sevruga caviar (from the Stellate Sturgeon *Acipenser stellatus* (CITES II)).

On 28 August 2007, Customs and the Frontier Service in the Primorskii Province in the Russian Far East seized a massive cache of illegal wildlife products bound for China. Among the items were 480 paws from Brown Bear *Ursus arctus* (CITES I/II) and Asiatic Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus* (CITES I), and a Siberian Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) pelt and bones, as well as 20 kg of wild ginseng *Panax*. Legal proceedings have been instigated against Chinese and Russian nationals involved in the case (see also under China).

On September 2007, three men were arrested near Moscow after Customs and traffic police officers stopped a car and seized 14 Saker Falcons *Falco cherrug* (CITES II; Endangered, IUCN Red List,

2007). The birds are believed to have originated from the Altai region and were packed and ready to be shipped to the Middle East.

The Saker Falcon has undergone a rapid population decline, particularly on the central Asian breeding grounds, owing to inadequately controlled capture for the falconry trade. Between 6825–8400 wild individuals are trapped each year, mostly in Central Asia, and exported to the Middle East, up to half of them going to Saudi Arabia. More than 90 per cent are believed to be females, potentially leading to an abnormal sex ratio in wild populations, further threatening the species's survival.

"The enforcement officers are to be congratulated for this successful seizure, which is the result of careful intelligence work," said Alexey Vaisman, Senior Programme Officer of TRAFFIC Europe's office based in Moscow.

www.sowetan.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=548795, 27 August 2007; www.kommersant.com/p798678/endan-gered-species/, 27 August 2007; www.panda.org/about_wwf/what_we_do/species/news/index.cfm?uNewsID=112020; TRAFFIC Europe; BirdLife International (2007) Species factsheet: Falco cherrug. www.birdlife.org. Viewed 28 November 2007.

UK: In July 2007, Dr Sian Lim, of London, who was gaoled for four months in January 2006 for the illegal importation and trade in Annex A and B orchids into Heathrow Airport from his native Malaysia in 2004, was fined more than GBP125 000 (USD256 515) for this offence.

Pharmaceutical researcher Dr Lim was caught smuggling some of the most sought-after orchids in the history of orchid collection and among some of the most rare in the world, including *Paphiopedilum rothschildianum*, *P. gigantifolium* and *P. sanderianum* (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 21(1):35). He admitted 13 charges of smuggling rare orchids although he claimed these activities were not for commercial gain.

He was ordered to pay GBP110 331 from the proceeds of his trade, and GBP15 000 in costs, including costs towards research by experts at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. If the money is not paid, Dr Lim will have to serve a further three years in gaol.

The orchids have been formally handed over to Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, which is in the process of liaising with the Malaysians regarding further research and possible return of some of the orchids.

On 20 June 2007, HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) officers, supported by Bedfordshire police, arrested a British national at a residential address in Barton-Le-Clay, in connection with the illegal trade and smuggling of ivory to the USA. They also executed a number of search warrants at residential addresses in the town. Items seized from one address included two raw elephant tusks, whale and Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius* (CITES II) teeth and carved ivory.

The action follows an investigation by HMRC, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and US Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) into the sale of ivory using an online auction site. Among the items thought to have been traded over a two-year period are whole African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I) tusks and Sperm Whale *Physeter catodon* (CITES I) teeth.

In September 2007, at Manchester Airport, HMRC officers, working with their counterparts at Heathrow Airport, seized the largest illegal live coral consignment discovered in the UK to date. The animals consisted of 350 live corals and clams, including a significant number of rare corals which are banned from importation into the EU; they had been falsely declared on the Customs import permit. They were discovered in air freight shipped from Indonesia via Malaysia. Following the discovery, Customs officers attended a number of premises in Manchester, Cheshire, West Midlands, Northamptonshire, Yorkshire and Scotland issuing warning notices to an aquarium wholesaler and a number of aquarium traders across the UK in relation to the seizure.

The consignment was detected in September and details were kept confidential whilst investigations were made and checks were carried out on the various aquarium businesses involved. The coral has been transported to ZSL London Zoo, where tanks large enough to cope with them

were available. Thanks to the fast action of the Customs officers at the airport the majority of the corals (and clams) survived and are now flourishing in a specialist aquarium. Owing to the difficulties in identifying many corals to species level, experts were called in to assist officers with this task. Species identified included CITES II-listed corals such as Elegant Coral *Catalaphyllia jardinei*, Crater Coral *Trachyphyllia geoffroyi* and species from the genera *Plerogyra* Bubble corals. The shipment had been destined for retail traders based across the UK who had pre-ordered the items via one wholesaler. Investigation of the case is continuing.

www.lse.co.uk/ShowStory.asp?story=K12740202C&news_headline=scientist_fined_for_smuggling_orchids, 27 July 2007; HM Revenue & Customs CITES Team; HM Revenue & Customs Press Office, 20 June 2007; HM Revenue & Customs (North West), 15 January 2008

ASIA

EAST ASIA

CHINA: On 19 June 2007, Customs officers in Dongning, Heilongjiang Province, discovered 39 bear paws contained in a black plastic bag under the driver's seat of a Chinese bus returning from the Russian Far East. The case is being investigated.

On 27 July 2007, forest police from Xining, Qinghai Province, in co-operation with police from Gansu Province, arrested a person and confiscated Snow Leopard *Uncia uncia* (CITES I) parts, including 27 skins, three heads and two skeletons, one Clouded Leopard *Neofelis nebulosa* (CITES I) skin, one bear skin, two skins and eight lynx skeletons, and other protected wildlife products. The suspect said that he had been buying these skins and skeletons in Qinghai and Tibet since November 2006 and had sold two Snow Leopard skins. The case is under investigation. The man was apprehended after a person arrested in Qinghai Province on 23 July in possession of a Snow Leopard skin, stated that he had purchased the skin from this individual.

In August 2007, Dehong Intermediate People's Court of Yunnan Province sentenced two men to 10 years' and five years' imprisonment for the illegal trafficking of rare wild animal products, and fined them CNY20000 (USD2800) and CNY10000, respectively. The suspects had purchased pelts of four otters and one Bengal Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) in Myanmar in October 2006. They were apprehended by police from Lianghe County, Yunnan Province, after transporting the pelts from Yingjiang to Tengchong by bus.

Ivory seizures in China:

On 3 August 2007, Customs officials at Wenzhou Airport, Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, discovered 34 ivory items of African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I) during x-ray examination of the luggage of a South African national arriving from South Africa via Hong Kong. The suspect claimed that he was asked to carry the luggage by a friend and did not know what was inside. Requisite documentation was not available. The case is under investigation. It is reported that Wenzhou Customs have uncovered three cases of ivory smuggling during the year.

On 22 August 2007, Customs officers at Xiaoshan Airport in Hangzhou city, Zhejiang Province, confiscated 74 items of ivory (1814 g) arriving from Africa [country not specified]. Items included seals, chopsticks and jewellery. There were 20 ivory smuggling cases in Xiaoshan Airport between January and July 2007, and a total of 229 items were confiscated.

Recently, Customs officials at Baiyun Airport, Guangzhou, seized a total of 805 g of ivory pieces from a Singaporean who declared them to be wood. There have been four ivory seizures at Baiyun Airport since June 2006 and a total of 116 kg has been confiscated.

Recently, Customs officials in Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, seized two whole tusks of Asian Elephant *Elephas maximus* (CITES I), which were smuggled via international mail. One suspect was detained. The tusks had been purchased via the internet from a man in Thailand and were disguised as crafts.

On 16 October 2007, at Changle Airport, Fuzhou, Fujian Province, Customs officers seized 41 ivory items (2.2 kg) from the luggage of a Chinese national returning from South Africa. The case is

under investigation. This is reported to be the 19th case involving ivory seizures by Fuzhou Customs during 2007.

In September 2007, at the Intermediate People's Court of Hulun Buir city, in northern China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, two Chinese nationals from Yakeshi, Inner Mongolia, and two Russians, were convicted of smuggling 35 bear paws into China. Zhou Xinquan was gaoled for three years, suspended for three years, and fined 70 000 yuan (USD9440). Jiang Zhenyoushi was sentenced to one year in gaol, suspended for two years, and fined 40 000 yuan. The two Russians, diesel train drivers from Zabaikalsk, were deported after being fined 80 000 yuan.

Zhou had ordered the bear paws from a Russian trader at the market in Zabaikalsk City, in the state of Chita, in Russia, in December 2006, who informed Zhou the following month that he had 35 bear paws for him. With the help of Jiang Zhenyou, Zhou found the two Russian train drivers who agreed to hide the bear paws inside their trains and smuggle them to the railway station in the border city of Manzhouli, Inner Mongolia.

On 12 September 2007, fishermen in Fujian Province caught a female Whale Shark *Rhincodon typus* (CITES II) which was later sold. The shark was 8.5 m long, and weighed 8.5 t. Several days earlier, the fishermen also caught four Whale Sharks in Qingdao, Shandong Province, one of which weighed only 4t. It was reported that all four animals had been caught in the same location 38km from land and that they were migrating through the area.

On 14 October 2007, police officers from Xing An, a county of Guilin, Guangxi Province, seized 64 bear paws. Two of the paws were of Malayan Sun-bear *Helarctos malayanus* (CITES I), and the remainder were from Asiatic Black Bears *Ursus thibetanus* (CITES I). The total weight of the paws was more than 130 kg. The smallest weighed 1.5 kg, and the largest 4 kg.

On 24 October 2007, more than 50 live Common Water Monitors *Varanus salvator* (CITES II) were seized in Fang Cheng, Guangxi Province, from a bus which was travelling from Dongxing to Beihai city. This is the third case involving the seizure of Common Water Monitors since July, and almost 200 specimens have been confiscated.

On 6 November 2007, at Xiamen Intermediate Court, Fujian Province, two suspects were given a stay of execution after having been sentenced to death for their involvement in what is the biggest pangolin smuggling case in China to date. A further three suspects were sentenced to life imprisonment or ten years.

From September 2005 to May 2006, this group smuggled 68 000 kg of pangolin meat, 900kg of pangolin scales, 2849 pangolins and 2600 geckos from Indonesia to Xiamen; the animals and products were then transported to Guangzhou and Shantou in Guangdong Province.

On 23 November 2007, railway police in Lanzhou, Gansu Province, detained two people during routine inspections after they were found transporting 62 owls [species not stated; all owl species are protected in China] in several boxes by train to Guangzhou, Guangdong Province. The suspects claimed the birds had been purchased in Tianshui, Gansu Province, and were bound for restaurants in Guangzhou. Twelve of the owls had died from asphyxiation. The birds and the two suspects were handed over to Hunan railway police when the train arrived at Chenzhou. This was reported to be the biggest wildlife seizure carried out by Lanzhou railway police to date.

In January 2008, in a joint operation, forest police from Gansu Province and from the capital Lanzhou, seized products being offered for sale illegally at markets in the province, including 90 ivory items (38 kg), six Saiga Antelope *Saiga tatarica* horns and one fox pelt. Twelve suspects were detained.

The authorities were acting on information passed to them by TRAFFIC staff who had carried out a market survey of curio markets and TCM outlets in Lanzhou and another city in the province in November 2007. TRAFFIC has subsequently been asked to assist with identification of the sellers.

Following this action, TRAFFIC asked a local volunteer who had assisted with the November survey to return to the markets. No ivory or Saiga Antelope horns were found; further checks will be carried out in due course.

On 18 January 2008, Guangzhou forest police seized 53 pangolins *Manis* and detained four suspects after a raid on three rented premises on a street in Baiyun district that had formerly formed part of a wild meat market that had been closed down. They confiscated 16 live pangolins, 37 dead pangolins and one bear paw. The Guangzhou forest police said that while there was little illegal wildlife trade in markets, it had gone underground, which has resulted in greater difficulty in enforcement.

On 24 January 2008, two people were sentenced to five and two years' imprisonment for illegally transporting 11 pangolins *Manis* (CITES II), and were fined CNY2000 (USD280) and CNY1000, respectively.

The suspects had been apprehended on 14 June 2007 while unloading the pangolins at a restaurant after having transported them from Guangxi province to Gaoming, Guangdong province.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2008-01/18/content_7449338.htm, 19 January 2008; http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/200801/16/content_7432855.htm; TRAFFIC East Asia; <http://shuangyashan.northeast.cn/system/2007/06/22/050864344.shtml> 22 June 2007; www.gscn.com.cn/Get/gnews/078708321860691_83.htm; <http://lzcb.gansudaily.com.cn/system/2007/08/07/010433699.shtml>; <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asiapacific/6932613.stm>; www.gy.yn.gov.cn/lynsgirfy/2378467951251554304/20070824/157292.htm; www.zj.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/200708/07/content_10793346.htm; http://news.xinhuanet.com/video/200708/24/content_6599016.htm; www.gd.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/200711/21/content_11724412.htm, 21 November 2007; www.jschina.com.cn/gbljschina/js/suzhou/userobject/ai/700220.html; www.fujianese.com/news/gnxw/2007/10/18/241753.htm; www.china.org.cn/english/environment/223870.htm, Xinhua News Agency, 10 September 2007; <http://news.qq.com/a/20070913/003292.htm>; <http://news.qq.com/a/20070910/001441.htm>; <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2007106/144214170618.shtml>; www.bbnews.com.cn/ReadNews.aspx?ID=35746; TRAFFIC East Asia; <http://news.163.com/07/11/07/05/3SM2O8OK0001124j.html>; http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2007-12/01/content_7180115.htm, 1 December 2007; Foshan Daily, 25 January 2008: www.fsonline.com.cn/gaomingtoday/gmzh/200801250214.htm

HONG KONG SAR: On 12 November 2007, at Hong Kong International Airport, an attempt to import a consignment of reptiles from Indonesia, destined for mainland China, was foiled by officials of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), with the assistance of the Aviation Security Company Limited. The shipment included 15 snakes (including 13 pythons) and 22 lizards (including 12 monitor lizards), which were tightly packed inside nylon stockings and cigarette cartons.

A man was arrested after being found hiding the animals inside his luggage; he was unable to produce a permit or health certificate. He was charged under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Ordinance (Cap 169), the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance (Cap 586) and the Public Health (Animals and Birds) Ordinance (Cap 139). He was fined HKD2000 (USD256) and sentenced to three months' imprisonment.

The seized animals were to be sent to the department's Animal Management Centre in Sheung Shui.

On 20 November 2007, marine police seized 20 boxes containing 320 Common Rat Snakes *Ptyas mucosus* (CITES II) and six snapping turtles [species not stated] in a crackdown on illegal trafficking between the mainland and Hong Kong. The snakes were being transferred to a boat at Lung Kwu Tan by two men from the mainland when they were stopped. Both reptile species need a licence

from the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department to be traded. Two men were arrested on suspicion of being illegal immigrants and exporting unmanifested cargo.

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) press release, 13 November 2007; The Standard (Hong Kong), 21 November 2007

JAPAN: On 12 March 2007, the boss and members of a Japanese gang in Nagano were arrested on suspicion of smuggling bear gall bladders and for allegedly violating Japan's *Pharmaceutical Affairs Law* by selling the items without permission.

On 31 January 2007, Nagano police seized 85 animal gall bladders weighing 4.2 kg from the house of the boss who had been arrested on another charge. The method of thin layer chromatography (TCL) conducted by experts to identify the gall bladders revealed that 36 were from bears, and the remainder a mixture from bear, cow and pig; four gall bladders from cows and pigs had had their colour and shape altered to give the appearance of the more valuable bear gall bladder.

A joint investigation between the Japan Coast Guard and the police revealed that the gall bladders had been illegally imported from Russia and a Russian national was subsequently arrested on a charge of smuggling bear gall bladders. A Russian working with the boss, and the two gang members, are suspected to have illegally imported about 2 kg of gall bladders at Ishimaki port in Miyagi prefecture around July 2005 and about 2 kg at Fukui port in Fukui prefecture in November 2005. The boss and gang members are also suspected to have stored 4.2 kg of the bear gall bladders illegally imported for sale without permission under the *Pharmaceutical Affairs Law*.

On 31 May 2007, police officials in Osaka and Okayama charged two men with violating the *Customs Law* and the *Law for the Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora* (LCES) following their arrest for allegedly smuggling and selling billiard cue sticks made from ivory. The pair are president and vice president of a billiards goods maker in Okayama Prefecture.

The case broke on 17 October 2006, when Customs officials at Kansai International Airport, Osaka, seized a courier package addressed to the billiards goods' maker that had arrived from Chicago, USA, and which contained 12 products made of elephant ivory. The ivory parts consisted of ferrules—small rods placed at the tip end of billiard cue sticks—measuring 15 cm in length and 3 cm wide. Police subsequently raided the company's premises; according to a police investigation, the two men are suspected of having manufactured and sold 15 cue sticks using ivory. Many other parts and cues made from ivory were found during the raid. According to the company's accounting books, it appears that they have sold 147 cue sticks over a period of about seven years, which the police are investigating.

On 10 July 2007, at Osaka District Court, a man who attempted to import 2.8 t of African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I) ivory in August 2006, was found guilty and sentenced to one year in prison, suspended for three years, and fined JPY800 000 (USD6932). Two Korean nationals, who had approached him and had suggested smuggling the items, were placed on an international wanted list on a charge of violating the *Customs Law*.

The ivory had arrived in Osaka Nanko Port on 21 August 2006, disguised to resemble marble and described as such in false import permits. This consignment represents the largest amount of ivory seized in the country since the international ivory ban was implemented in 1989 (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 21(2):69).

On 21 July 2007, the president of one of Japan's biggest reptile wholesalers "Rep JAPAN" was sentenced following his conviction on charges relating to fraudulent registration and fraudulent trading of reptiles during 2004 to 2005. Tsuyoshi Shirawa, who was sentenced to a gaol term of two years and six months and fined JPY1800000 (USD15330), had stated that False Gaviel *Tomistoma schlegelii* (CITES I) and Radiated Tortoise *Geochelone radiata* (CITES I) specimens that he had been involved in trading in, had been captive bred in Japan. An appeal to the Supreme Court was dismissed.

Two smugglers were also charged with illegally importing Rhinoceros Iguana *Cyclura cornuta* (CITES I), False Gavia and Radiated Tortoise. One was sentenced to two years' imprisonment and fined JPY2 000 000 and the other was sentenced to three years' imprisonment and fined JPY3 000 000. The pair sold the reptiles to Shirawa who obtained legal registration cards for these reptiles, required under the *Law for the Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora* (LCES), by submitting fraudulent applications to the registration agency in collusion with an employee at his firm and the director of a zoo in Gunma prefecture. For their part in the collaboration, the director of the zoo was fined JPY500 000. The employee was sentenced to six months' imprisonment, suspended for three years.

15 February/3 March/25 April 2007, Shinano Mainichi Shimbun; 15 February/13 March/25 April 2007, Chunichi Shimbun; 11 May 2007, Kyodo Press; Sankei Shimbun/Asahi Shimbun and Yomiuri Shimbun, 10 November 2006; Mainichi Shimbun, Asahi Shimbun and Yomiuri Shimbun, 1 June 2007; Kyodo Press, 21 June 2007; www.asahi.com, 10 July 2007, viewed 25 July 2007; TRAFFIC Bulletin 21(2):69, July 2007; TRAFFIC East Asia

MONGOLIA: On 7 October 2007, following the tireless efforts of WWF Mongolia and members of the Government's Mobile Anti-poaching Unit (funded by WWF Mongolia), a case involving an attempt to smuggle 108 Saiga Antelope *Saiga tatarica mongolica* horns was ordered by the General Prosecutor's office in Ulaanbaatar to be reinvestigated by the Prosecutor's office in Khovd.

An offender from Khovd was detained at the crime scene in October 2006 in the county of Chandmani in Khovd Province when the Saiga horns were found concealed in the spare tyre of his vehicle; another 12 people were found to be involved in the offence. Although a local court in Khovd found the offenders guilty of illegal activity, certain reasons emerged that resulted in their sentences being repealed. These reasons included the fact that the court had found that the horns derived from antelopes that had been killed before December 2005 when the value of the horns had increased from USD65–1850; further, a law granting clemency to criminals had been approved in June 2006.

WWF Mongolia, in co-operation with the Division of Criminal Cases against Wildlife Crime of the General Police Office determined that only 19 of the antelopes had been killed prior to December 2005. In referring the case for reinvestigation, the General Prosecutor's office has placed an attorney, local prosecutor and a local police officer under special inspection following suspicion of their involvement in the alleged diversion of a criminal case.

A census of Saiga Antelopes in Mongolia was conducted by WWF Mongolia, in co-operation with the Institute of Biology, in January 2007 (Amgalan, 2007). During this survey, researchers recorded a total of 1734 Saiga Antelopes along the 2139 km-long route in Sharga Gobi, Huisiin Gobi and Durgon Tal in the Great Lakes Basin. With the help of an extrapolation method used for population censuses, some 2800 Saiga Antelopes were found to be inhabiting the Great Lakes Basin, which supports Mongolia's entire Saiga Antelope population. The population here has increased by 50 per cent since 2006 (Amgalan, 2007).

Amgalan, L., (2007). Report on Saiga Census, the Institute of Biology, Academy of Sciences, Mongolia. Unpublished report. WWF Mongolia

TAIWAN: On 25 June 2007, at Taipei Airport, a Taiwanese tourist returning from South Africa, was found in possession of a rhino horn in his golf club bag. The horn, which weighed 4.8 kg and was 61 cm long, was sent to the forensic lab for examination. The case was prosecuted on 17 December 2007 but at the time of writing is still being processed through the courts.

On 21 August 2007, Customs officials at Taipei Airport found two ivory tusks (total of 5 kg) in the luggage of a Taiwanese national arriving from Thailand. The suspect will be prosecuted for violating the *Wildlife Conservation Act*.

On 6 January 2008, Customs officials at the airport seized 324 ivory chops (around 9.7 kg) from the luggage of a Taiwanese national returning from Hong Kong.

<http://news.yam.com/udn/society/200706/20070626420968.html>; TRAFFIC East Asia;
<http://udn.com/news/domestic/dom/3982350.shtml>; www.mof.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=43160&ctNode=657&mp=1

SOUTH ASIA

BANGLADESH: On 28 December 2007, officials of the Department of Forest and Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh seized two Olive Ridley turtles *Lepidochelys olivacea* (CITES I) from sellers at Taantibazar, in Dhaka. The specimens had been brought to the city from Patharghata, Bargun. The turtles are reported to be sold for consumption. The suspect was charged under the *Wildlife Act 1974*. Plans were immediately put in place for the turtles to be repatriated to a beach in Chittagong.

The Daily Star (Bangladesh), 29 December 2007: www.thedailystar.net/story.php?nid=16948

INDIA: In August 2007, a Central Bureau of Investigation team seized 57 shahtoosh shawls (made from the wool of the Tibetan Antelope *Pantholops hodgsonii* (CITES I and domestic trade is banned except for registered items within the States of Jammu and Kashmir)) from three traders who were trying to sell them to a customer at an hotel in central Delhi.

The three were arrested and a car was also seized. The traders, who had brought the shawls from Kashmir, covertly advertised the products on the internet to attract foreign buyers.

Indian Star Tortoise seizures in India: On 7 July 2007, railway police at Yeshwantpur railway station, Shivajinagar, seized 681 Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II), bound for Howrah in West Bengal. They had been packed in gunny bags contained within seven cardboard boxes labelled as live tropical fish and fish food.

The Bannerghatta Biological Park (BBP) will be the tortoises' temporary home until the court decides their fate. In June, 300 Indian Star Tortoises seized in 2006 at Bangalore Airport and being cared for at BBP, were released into the wild after a court granted permission for their release.

Consignments of Indian Star Tortoises reported to have been seized at Anna International Airport, Chennai, on 30 July, 3 October, 26 October, 29 October and 28 November, involved 320, 333, 555, 600 and 909 specimens, respectively. In many, if not all cases, the specimens were destined for Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur.

A senior officer said that on three occasions on which attempts were made to smuggle Indian Star Tortoises through the airport recently, the passengers invariably managed to bypass the scanning of baggage by fixing an old security strap on them. Customs officials stated that airport security and airline ground staff should check whether the security strap was fresh or used.

On 24 August 2007, at Mumbai International Airport, 2016 Indian Star Tortoises were seized from two people who had checked in to board a flight to Kuala Lumpur with the tortoises concealed in their luggage. The pair were remanded in custody.

On 19 and 22 October, 610 and 365 Indian Star Tortoises, respectively, were seized from passengers at the airport on their way to Bangkok.

On 29 August 2007, wildlife authorities in Assam seized an estimated 3000 Indian Bullfrogs *Hoplobatrachus tigerinus* (CITES II) from a roadside. A police patrol spotted 14 jute bags lying on the side of a road near the Kaziranga National Park. At least 300 to 400 specimens had died of suffocation.

Wildlife officials said the smugglers probably offloaded the bags from a vehicle, as they feared being caught by forest guards and police officials in the area who were checking vehicles following reports of a tortoise being smuggled in a vehicle.

The surviving frogs were later released in the park.

On 25 October 2007, police in Sonbhadra district, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, carried out a raid on Karaundhi village and seized skins of 10 Leopards *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) and arrested two people. The case is under investigation.

On 7 November 2007, at least six tonnes of dried orchids were seized in Manas in Chirang district, Assam. Forestry personnel stumbled upon the nine bags of *Dendrobium* (CITES I/II) orchids on the banks of the Kuklong river. The suspects fled. The 20 km stretch from Kuklong to Kanamakra is reported to be one of the richest orchid zones in the Bodoland area. Kuklong is only 30 km from the Indo-Bhutan border which has raised suspicions that the flowers were to be smuggled across the border. The export of *Dendrobium* spp. is prohibited.

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Delhi/57_shahtoosh_shawls_seized/articleshow/2302397.cms, 23 August 2007; *The Times of India*: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Bangalore/Rly_police_stumble_upon_tortoise_trade/articleshow/2187154.cms, 9 July 2007; <http://news.oneindia.in/2007/07/30/star-tortoises-seized-from-air-passenger-1185771881.html>; <http://news.oneindia.in/2007/10/04/star-tortoises-seized-at-chennai-airport-1191481872.html>, 4 October 2007; *The Hindu (India)*, 31 October 2007: www.hindu.com/2007/10/31/stories/2007103161780700.htm; *The Hindu (India)*, 28 October: www.hindu.com/2007/10/28/stories/2007102861190700.htm; www.expressindia.com/latest-news/975-star-tortoises-rescued-sent-to-Sanjay-Gandhi-park-for-care/231595/, 24 October 2007; <http://news.oneindia.in/2007/11/28/man-held-possessing-star-tortoises.html>; www.mumbaimirror.com/net/mmpaper.aspx?page=article§id=35&contentid=2007082520070825035537984411400f9; www.indiaenews.com/india/20070906/68963.htm; http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Ten_leopard_skins_seized_in_UP/articleshow/2492049.cms, 26 October 2007; *The Telegraph (India)*, 9 November 2007: www.telegraphindia.com/1071109/asp/northeast/story_8526453.asp

NEPAL: On 10 August 2007, the skins of one Tiger *Panthera tigris* and two Leopards *Panthera pardus* were seized as a result of an undercover operation conducted by Wildlife Conservation Nepal (WCN), the District Forest Office and the Nepal police. The three-metre-long Tiger skin was wrapped in sheets of the *Times of India* newspaper.

On 6 January 2008, the Chief Warden of Langtang National Park sentenced four people to gaol terms and fines for their involvement in illegal wildlife trade in violation of the *National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1973*.

Chhewang Utke Lama (also known as Tashi Tshering) of Humala district and Karsang Lama, a Tibetan living in Nepal, were gaoled for 15 years and each fined 100 000 rupees (USD1590); Mingmar Tamang of Briddim VDC, Rasuwa, and Balram Shrestha of Gorkha were each sentenced to five years in gaol.

The suspects were arrested in September 2005 on charges of smuggling five full size Tiger *Panthera tigris* skins, 37 Leopard *Panthera pardus* skins, 238 otter skins and 113 kg of Tiger bones hidden inside noodle cartons; the consignment had been transported by lorry to Syphru Bensi, Rasuwa district, from where it was to be carried by porters—owing to lack of roads for vehicle transport—to the border with Tibet. The seizure was made at Syphru Bensi by Nepal Army personnel stationed at Langtang National Park to protect the park.

Similarly, police in Surkhet district arrested three people involved in smuggling Tiger skins from India on 4 January 2008. They were arrested with a Tiger skin, 125 pieces of Tiger bones and 22 dried meat pieces at Surkhet while trying to smuggle the consignment to Tibet Autonomous Region, China.

Wildlife Conservation Nepal, 14 August 2007; *WWF Nepal*

SOUTH-EAST ASIA

MALAYSIA: On 12 June 2007, a postal employee at the Low Cost Carrier Terminal in Sepang became suspicious when a parcel from Tanzania labelled "claypots" started to shake. Upon

investigation, 76 Leopard Tortoises *Geochelone pardalis* (CITES II) were found strapped down inside two parcels, their heads tied back to prevent movement; two had died. Discussions were under way with the Government of Tanzania to decide the fate of the reptiles.

On 26 June 2007, 385 Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II) were repatriated to India following their seizure at Kuala Lumpur International Airport in April.

On 7 July 2007, authorities in Malaysia seized more than 900 live Crab-eating Macaques *Macaca fascicularis* (CITES II) in what officials have called their largest seizure of this species. The primates, confined to cages and sacks, were seized during a raid on a plantation in the southern state of Johor. According to a wildlife official, it was believed that they were destined for food in China and for laboratory studies in the Netherlands. A heap of more than 100 dead Crab-eating Macaques was also found nearby.

Some of the animals were so hungry that they had started to eat their newborn offspring or had hurt each other in fights. They were to be released in stages in protected forest reserves across the nation in order to prevent their being recaptured. Three of the four men arrested face charges under wildlife protection laws but the fourth, an Indonesian, whose visa had expired, was handed over to immigration authorities.

In September 2007, Department of Wildlife and National Parks (PERHILITAN) officials at Kuala Lumpur International Airport seized 37 Radiated Tortoises *Geochelone radiata* and two Ploughshare Tortoises *Geochelone yniphora* (CITES I) from luggage in transit to Penang. It is unclear why the owner was not stopped in Penang. Both species, which are found in the semi-arid region of Madagascar, are listed in the IUCN Red List as Vulnerable and Endangered, respectively. The reptiles are being housed in Malacca Zoo, PERHILITAN's official rescue centre.

<http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2007/6/25/nation/20070625144012&sec=nation>, 25 June 2007; www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=31&art_id=nw20070625083903261C358074, 25 June 2007; <http://uk.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUKKLR30398920070709>, 9 July 2007; <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2007/10/21/nation/19211556>; <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2007/10/21/nation/19211556&sec=nation>, 21 October 2007

THAILAND: On 3 July 2007, Customs officials confiscated 102 live pangolins *Manis* in plastic baskets in a lorry headed from Pattani to Bangkok at the Pranburi checkpoint, Sam Roi Yot sub-district, Prachaub Khiri Khan, southern Thailand. The driver of the lorry fled the scene. The pangolins were to be transferred to the Customs Department in Bangkok and then placed in the care of the Department of National Parks.

On 27 August 2007, Reyaz Ahmad Mir, an Indian national from Kashmir, was convicted of importing and selling shahtoosh shawls (made from the wool of the Tibetan Antelope *Pantholops hodgsonii* (CITES I)). Mir, the owner of a shop selling luxury goods in Bangkok, pleaded guilty and was fined US\$300 and given a two years' suspended prison sentence. The police acted on information provided by TRAFFIC.

A second and larger case against other Bangkok-based traffickers in shahtoosh is pending.

Thailand's wildlife-crime task force spent four months in undercover investigations before shops selling shahtoosh in Bangkok were raided in July 2006. Three Indian nationals arrested during the raid told undercover investigators that their customers were normally wealthy tourists.

US Fish and Wildlife Service forensics experts travelled to Bangkok in December 2006 to verify that the shawls were derived from wool from the Tibetan Antelope. The defendants initially claimed they were fakes and therefore not illegal.

On 7 October 2007, police in Chumphon arrested two men and seized 130 pangolins *Manis* (CITES II and fully protected under the *Wild Animal Protection Act*) from their vehicle which was headed for

Nong Khai. The animals were probably destined for restaurants in Lao PDR and China, police said.

The two men admitted that they had been hired to transport the pangolins from Sadao, Songkhla, on the border with Malaysia, to Nong Khai in the north-east.

The pangolins had been stored for many hours and in dreadful conditions in the van and some specimens were extremely weak. They were to be sent to Huay Sai wild animal research station in Phetchaburi's Cha-am district to recover before being released in the wild.

On 20 October 2007, highway police in Prachin Buri's Si Maha Phot district seized 300 logs of protected rosewood [species not ascertained] that was being smuggled out of the country in a container lorry that had travelled from Sa Kaeo's Watthana Nakhon district to Klong Toey port in Bangkok. The lorry driver was charged with illegal possession of protected wood. The driver of another lorry that had travelled in convoy with him, was charged with providing support to offenders. Pasin Noksakul, commander of the Highway Police, said the pair had admitted that they were hired by a company to transport the logs to Klong Toey port for export to China. The company is being investigated. Pol Maj-Gen Pasin said that between 1 and 20 October, highway police confiscated 2496 rosewood logs and 155 sheets of processed rosewood.

On 29 January 2008, the Royal Thai Navy's Khong River Coast Guard seized 275 live pangolins *Manis* (CITES II) and six dead Tigers *Panthera tigris* (CITES I), three Leopards *P. pardus* (CITES I) and two Clouded Leopards *Uncia uncia* (CITES I) from two lorries at Khub Pung village of Tambon Nam Kham, near the border with Lao PDR. Most of the big cats had been cut in half and their organs removed. They were about to be loaded into boats bound for Lao PDR, for delivery to customers from Viet Nam and China.

PeunPa (a Thai wildlife conservation foundation) confirms the seizure was made possible as a result of cross-border information-sharing under ASEAN-WEN—the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network which was established in 2006 to create a strong law enforcement response against poachers and traders who operate across South-east Asia—with assistance from the ASEAN-WEN Support Program. The ASEAN-WEN Task Force was to meet with international investigators to discuss the next steps in their efforts to track down the traffickers.

Enforcement Division, Customs Department, Thailand, 3 July 2007, Pranburi Province, Southern Thailand; www.bangkokpost.com/breaking_news/breakingnews.php?id=121152; TRAFFIC Southeast Asia; www.wildlifealliance.org/news/press-releases/bangkok-luxury-store-owner.html;www.bangkokpost.com/News/08Oct2007_news12.php; www.bangkokpost.com/News/21Oct2007_news06.php; www.traffic.org/home/2008/11/30/cross-border-intelligence-sharing-leads-to-major-seizure-in.html

VIET NAM: On 4 September 2007, in co-operation with the Viet Nam Forest Protection Department, police officers in Ha Noi seized two dead Tigers *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) as part of a raid on an operation producing medicinal balm. The Tigers, weighing 250 kg each, were stored in two freezer containers, while organs and Tiger meat were scattered throughout the apartment. In a refrigerator, investigators discovered bear paws and two 100-litre aluminium pots containing monkey bones. A search of another apartment rented by one of the suspects yielded four elephant tusks (more than 1.2 m in length), a whole stuffed Tiger, eight bull heads with horns attached, two stag heads, and several bags containing monkey and horse bones. The police took four people into custody and prosecution of the case is pending.

On 19 September 2007, authorities in Quang Ninh confiscated 91 Crab-eating Macaques *Macaca fascicularis* (CITES II) from a lorry heading for China. The monkeys, 19 of which had perished, had been smuggled from the south of the country; the consignment weighed more than 200 kg. The primates were to be used in traditional Asian medicine and for meat. The lorry was seized and the surviving specimens taken to a local conservation centre.

On 7 January 2008, the Ha Noi Department of Police seized two sedated Tigers *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) from a vehicle in central Ha Noi. The traffickers were engaged in a sale and in addition to

the two live Tigers, authorities also found a large quantity of various animal parts in the car. A further examination of the traffickers' homes in Ha Dong City by the Environmental Protection Division of the Ha Noi Department of Police also yielded four frozen Tigers (weighing at least 100 kg each) that had been cut into pieces, 11 live bears [likely Asiatic Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus* (CITES I)] and bear parts, rhinoceros horns, and elephant tusks. Five men were detained and the two live Tigers were transferred to the Ha Noi Wildlife Rescue Center.

<http://english.vietnamnet.vn/social/2008/01/763243/>; *Education for Nature in Vietnam, Nature and the Environment in the News*, 4 September 2007. Translated from www.tienphongonline.com.vn; http://news.aol.com/story/_alvietnamese-police-confiscatemonkeys/20070919041909990006?ecid=RSS0001>

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA: Australian Customs and Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) officers have foiled two attempts to smuggle snakes and lizard species into Australia through the post. In the first attempt, on 10 June 2007, a Customs officer checking international mail at Australia Post's International Gateway Facility at Clyde, Sydney, discovered two snakes and three lizards concealed in the hollow areas of three ceramic garden gnomes. The following day, Customs and AQIS officers at the same facility x-rayed a second package which was found to contain five snakes and five lizards hidden in pottery figures and ornaments. The species have been identified as: four Australian 'jungle phase' Carpet Pythons *Morelia spilota variegata* (CITES II); three Leopard Geckos *Eublepharis macularius*; one colour morph of Rosy Boa *Lichanura trivirgata* (CITES II); three New Caledonian Guichenot's Giant Geckos *Rhacodactylus ciliatus*; two juvenile North African agamids *Uromastix* sp. (CITES II); one East African Sand Boa *Gongylophis colubrinus* (CITES II), and one snake (unidentified). Customs officers checking post at Australia Post's International Gateway Facility at Clyde, Sydney, are each month intercepting more than 100 packages containing products derived from Hoodia *Hoodia*—a cactus that is in demand for its purported appetite-suppressant properties (see also *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 20(2):64; 21(2):72–73).

Australian Customs is warning the public that they should take care when ordering certain commercial weight-loss products over the internet as they risk having the goods seized. To date, more than 2500 postal packages have been seized. According to a spokesperson, "It appears that most if not all of these packages have been ordered over the internet and no permission has been given to allow the products into Australia. Customs has no alternative but to seize them and it is likely that eventually they will be destroyed."

Ongoing operations co-ordinated by Border Protection Command and which have involved Customs and the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA), with the use of surveillance aircraft and patrol boats, are targeting a seasonal surge in sea cucumber poaching in Australia's northern waters.

On 24 November 2007, Customs and AFMA officers apprehended five Indonesian fishing boats carrying a total of 53 crew who had also allegedly been targeting sea cucumbers in the vicinity of Evans Shoal, approximately 170 nautical miles north-west of Darwin. A few nights later, on 27/28 November, two Australian Customs patrol vessels apprehended seven Indonesian boats carrying 65 fishermen suspected of fishing illegally in Australia's northern waters overnight. A total of approximately one tonne of sea cucumbers and diving equipment on six of the seven vessels was seized.

On 8 and 9 December 2007, a further seven boats and 43 foreign fishermen were apprehended. Up to 100 kg of sea cucumbers was reported to have been found on board one of the vessels and another was allegedly equipped to fish in Australian waters.

All vessels were destroyed at sea due to quarantine risks and their unseaworthy state. All the illegal fishers were transferred to Darwin where the cases were to be investigated.

Australian Customs Service media releases, 11 September/28 November/10 December 2007;
TRAFFIC International

AMERICAS

BRAZIL: In October 2007, police launched an operation in six States to dismantle a gang alleged to have illegally cut down Brazilian Rosewood *Dalbergia nigra* (CITES I and legally protected under Brazilian law) and exported at least 13 t of the wood over the past four years, principally to the USA. Some 350 federal officers, backed by State police and government environmental agents, reportedly arrested 23 people and were searching for two others. Police also began serving 67 search and seizure warrants for the illegal extraction of the wood.

The rosewood was concealed amid cheaper wood, and false export licences had been used. The suspects will be charged with using false documents, criminal association and smuggling contraband.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service is reported to be working with Brazilian police to investigate the alleged illegal trade.

The species is native to eastern Brazil and found only in that country (where it is known as *jacaranda da bahia*). Its wood is hard and dense and prized for use in making fine guitars and other instruments, as well as, for example, for flooring, furniture and chess sets.

International Herald Tribune: www.ihf.com/articles/ap/2007/10/18/america/LA-GEN-Brazil-Illegal-Wood.php, 18 October 2007

CANADA: On 11 October 2007, at Richard Provincial Court, Yuk Ming (Peter) Ho, of Richmond, British Columbia, was fined CAD9000 (USD9151) after pleading guilty to importing illegally from Hong Kong over 30 000 pieces (10kg) of ivory of African Elephant *Loxodonta africana*. He was also ordered to pay a further CAD9000 to TRAFFIC to support programmes for the conservation of the African Elephant, and to forfeit all of the ivory seized during the investigation.

TRAFFIC North America-Canada was involved in the investigation from the start, providing identification assistance and documentation on the conservation impact of the illegal trade in elephant ivory. The documentation that was provided helped to convince both the prosecutor and the judge as to the seriousness of the crime. It is the first time that a judge has ordered a donation to TRAFFIC as part of a penalty.

This is the largest number of ivory items seized and investigated by Environment Canada's Wildlife Enforcement Division in recent years. The items seized included various carvings, jewellery and other crafts. The investigation was assisted by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation in Hong Kong, who worked in tandem with Environment Canada to verify information regarding the export of the ivory. The investigation established that while Mr Ho was in Hong Kong in February 2005, he sent himself the parcel in question using a false name and Hong Kong address. The carvings were initially detected by Canada Border Services Agency Officers at the International Mail Centre in Vancouver, who then referred the items to Environment Canada for identification and investigation.

On 8 November 2007, at Halifax Provincial Court, Ramon Placeres and Janitse Martinez, of Florida, USA, were charged under the *Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act* (WAPPRIITA) for their roles in a major smuggling ring involving Queen Conch *Strombus gigas* (CITES II). Both were convicted and each fined USD10 000 for unlawfully importing Queen Conch meat into Canada and USD10 000 for unlawfully exporting Queen Conch meat from Canada. Of this amount, USD20 000 will be placed in the Environmental Damages Fund that is administered by Environment Canada on behalf of the Government of Canada. The Fund provides courts with a way to direct money from fines to pay for work to restore and protect the environment.

The convictions are part of an 18-month-long investigation involving federal wildlife officers in Nova Scotia, Ontario, Quebec, and British Columbia, and US officers from Florida. Canadian and US

federal wildlife officials announced on 26 September 2007 that the smuggling ring had been dismantled.

The smuggling operation is believed to have been responsible for illegally importing and exporting 119 978 kg of Queen Conch meat from several Caribbean and South American countries to and from Canada and the USA between 2004 and 2006. Environment Canada Enforcement Officers seized 17 672 kg of the meat in Halifax, the largest amount seized in Canada. There were also seizures in Montreal and in Buffalo, New York. The US Fish and Wildlife Service, the US National Marine Fisheries Service, and Canadian and US border officials also contributed to the investigation that led to the seizures. It has been estimated that the meat of between 798 000 and 1.05 million individual conches was seized from the smuggling ring.

Proceedings are ongoing in Vancouver Provincial Court against others for their alleged role in the smuggling ring.

Environment Canada News Releases, 12 October/8 November 2007;

www.ec.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=714D9AAE-1&news=E456290A-CB9E-4457-AE21-8F5FF7AD491F

CHILE: On 2 October 2007, following a full-scale investigation that began on 28 September 2007, personnel of the National Fish Service (VIII region) seized a container from a lorry which was found to contain 4.3 t of Chilean Abalones *Concholepas concholepas* (known as *loco*); the shipment was destined for Taiwan.

The case came to light when the permits accompanying a shipment claiming to contain mackerel appeared to have been altered. Customs alerted the National Fish Service and when the container was opened it was found to contain fish, including mackerel, and the abalones. The lorry driver was located and he directed the authorities to the factory in Coronel where the abalones had been processed. The premises were searched and abalone entrails were discovered.

This evidence was passed on to the office of the public prosecutor and in the following days, lawyers of the Customs authority and the National Fish Service laid charges against the company.

Servicio Nacional de Pesca: www.sernapesca.cl, Motorizado por Joomla! Generado, 17 January 2008

ECUADOR: On 13 June 2007, operatives of the Ecuadorian environmental police, with ngo support, seized over 19000 shark fins and arrested four people. The initial seizure, at the immigration checkpoint between Guayaquil and Huaquillas on the Peruvian border, included four sacks with over 227 kg of shark fins that were hidden in a passenger bus travelling to Huaquillas. An Ecuadorian and two Peruvian men were arrested. A further two boxes of shark fins (44.5 kg) were found on a second passenger bus travelling from Guayaquil towards the Peruvian border. A Peruvian man was arrested.

This number of shark fins is reported to represent approximately 4500 sharks. Four species of shark were identified following forensic analysis of the fins: Bigeye Thresher Shark *Alopias superciliosus*, Pelagic Thresher Shark *Alopias pelagicus*, Scalloped Hammerhead Shark *Sphyrna lewini* (listed as Lower Risk-Near Threatened in the *IUCN Red List*) and Sandbar Shark *Carcharhinus plumbeus* (listed as Lower Risk-Near Threatened in the *IUCN Red List*). The fins were incinerated to ensure that they do not re-enter the black market.

A law introduced for six months in July 2007 allowing the sale and exportation of shark fins from sharks caught incidentally in Ecuador, has been extended; the capture and sale of sharks in the waters of the Galapagos remains illegal.

Press Release: Sea Shepherd Conservation Society Sea Shepherd Galapagos sting results in seizure of over 18000 shark fins, 25 June 2007; The Shark Trust: www.sharktrust.org/v.asp?level2=6365&depth=2&level3=6365&level2id=6365&rootid=6209&nextlevel=6365

USA: In April 2007, Hisayoshi Kojima, a kingpin in the world of illegal butterfly collecting, was sentenced to 21 months in prison and fined USD38 731 following an undercover operation by the

US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) that had taken place over many years. He pleaded guilty to 17 charges related to the sale and smuggling of endangered butterflies.

Kojima, a Japanese native who lived in Los Angeles and Kyoto, was initially placed under investigation in 2003 after an undercover USFWS agent, acting as a buyer, made contact with him at an insect fair in Los Angeles. There ensued intermittent contact where Kojima promised to send samples and US Customs were alerted. Some years were to elapse before Kojima could be apprehended with samples in his possession, however. On 31 July 2007, on arriving at Los Angeles Airport, he was searched as he came through Customs. In his possession was a wooden box containing the following species: *Dynastes Hercules* (beetle), *Dynastes satanus*, Golden Kaiserihind *Teinopalpus aureus* (CITES II), *Ornithoptera croesus* (CITES II); Homerus Swallowtail *Papilio homerus* (CITES I); Luzon Peacock Swallowtail *Papilio chikae* (CITES I); and Queen Alexandra's Birdwing *Ornithoptera alexandrae* (CITES I). The seized specimens are in the care of the USFWS and were to be donated to a museum.

In June 2007, a Portland man pleaded guilty to unlawfully selling shavings from the horn of a Black Rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* (CITES I). He was released pending sentencing.

The shavings were sold for purported "medicinal" use at a shop in Portland. The sale was a violation of the *Endangered Species Act*. Identification of the Black Rhinoceros shavings resulted from genetics laboratory analysis at the National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory in Ashland, Oregon. This was the first instance in which a product offered as "rhino horn" did in fact contain shavings from a Black Rhinoceros. All previously sampled medicinal products claiming to contain Black Rhinoceros instead contained substitutes such as bone from more common species.

On 25 September 2007, at US District Court, Eastern District of Kentucky, Lucian Robinson, Jr, was placed on probation for 18 months and fined USD 14 000 for engaging in the interstate commerce of unlawfully purchased wild American Ginseng *Panax quinquefolium*, in violation of the *Lacey Act*. The *Lacey Act* makes it a federal violation to import, export, transport, sell, receive, acquire, or purchase in interstate or foreign commerce any fish, wildlife or plants, taken, possessed, transported, or sold in violation of any law or regulation of any State.

Robinson, a licensed ginseng dealer, admitted as part of a plea agreement that he unlawfully purchased, certified, and/or sold wild ginseng between November 2004 and August 2006. The investigation was conducted by the USFWS, Office of Law Enforcement, with the co-operation of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture.

Kentucky is the largest supplier of wild ginseng in the USA, averaging approximately 16% of the national harvest annually. Seasons are established for harvesting to ensure that ginseng plants reach maturity each year and produce seeds prior to being harvested, thereby ensuring the sustainability of the wild ginseng population.

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture implements the ginseng management programme in Kentucky, which is required by Federal regulations in order for Kentucky's ginseng to be eligible for export from the USA. A high percentage of Kentucky's ginseng is exported to South-east Asia where it is used in the medicinal trade.

A Californian man has been charged with using his false leg to smuggle three Fiji Banded Iguanas *Brachylophus fasciatus* (CITES I) from a nature reserve in Fiji to the USA. Officials began investigating the suspect after receiving a tip-off that he was in possession of several specimens. Prosecutors say that he stole the reptiles while on a visit to the South Pacific island in 2002. He is alleged to have constructed a special compartment inside his prosthetic limb to move the reptiles.

Having been informed that the suspect had several specimens at his home, the USFWS launched an undercover investigation into his activities. When his house was searched in July 2007, agents are said to have found a further four Fiji Banded Iguanas. Officials say they think the suspect was breeding the animals for sale. It was reported that the iguanas would now be placed in a breeding programme in the USA.

www.usatoday.com/news/nation/environment/2007-08-18-butterfly-smuggler_N.htm; US Fish and Wildlife Service News Releases, 26 June/25 September 2007; TRAFFIC International; <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/7007942.stm>, 22 September 2007

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EUROPE

FRANCE: On 12 March 2008, 215 hunting trophies of protected animals were seized from a taxidermist's premises on the outskirts of Paris by Customs agents of the Blanc-Mesnil internal surveillance squad, in close collaboration with the Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage (French Environmental Inspectorate). Items seized included teeth, skins, feet and tusks of elephant (CITES I); skins of Cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus* (I) Leopard *Panthera pardus* (I) Brown Bear *Ursus arctos* (I/II) and Polar Bear *U. maritimus* (II); stuffed Tigers *Panthera tigris* (I) and Lions *P. leo* (I) (two of each); a whole Leopard; 33 baboon *Papio* skulls; 68 Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius* (II) teeth; two skins each of Nile Monitor *Varanus niloticus* (II) and Hartmann's Mountain Zebra *Equus zebra hartmannae* (II).

On 21 March, the same officials discovered 137 hunting trophies of protected animals at the premises of another taxidermist, including some rare bird species which were being kept in freezers.

The taxidermists were either unable to produce the requisite CITES permits or produced inapplicable or false documents. Both individuals faced fines.

Customs, France

GERMANY: In early May 2008, Customs officers in Cologne seized two live Chinese Alligators *Alligator sinensis* (CITES I) (60 cm in length), following information received from officials at Frankfurt Airport. An import permit could not be supplied and two people were arrested.

The Chinese Alligator is classified by IUCN as Critically Endangered. It is distributed in the lower reaches of the Yangtze River in the southern part of Anhui Province and in some parts of the neighbouring provinces of Zhejiang and Jiangsu.

Pressemitteilung Zollfahndungsamt Essen, No. 9, 13 May 2008; Crocodile Specialist Group 1996. Alligator sinensis. In: IUCN 2008. 2008 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. www.iucnredlist.org. Viewed 14 October 2008.

RUSSIA: In May 2008, at Primorsky regional court, Alexei Razumenko and Ji Wenbin were each sentenced to eight years in gaol and fined RUB200 000 (USD8500) after being found guilty of attempting to smuggle some 900 bear paws and other wildlife from the Russian Far East to China during 2007, in what has been described as the biggest wildlife seizure ever made in Primorsky Province in the Russian Far East (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 21(3):115). Two Chinese accomplices each received gaol sentences of seven years and six months, whilst two Russian accomplices were each sentenced to four years and six months.

Arrests were made in August 2007 following a six-month operation by Customs and the Frontier Service in Primorsky Province which uncovered the entire smuggling chain, from source to destination. The haul consisted of around 900 paws of Brown Bear *Ursus arctos* (CITES I/II) and Asiatic Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus* (I), four Amur Tiger *Panthera tigris* (I) skins, more than 60 kg of Tiger bones and 531 Saiga *Saiga tatarica* (II) horns.

"This latest prosecution marks the start of wildlife crime being treated with the seriousness it deserves" commented Natalia Pervushina, co-ordinator of TRAFFIC's Russian Far East programme, adding that the trial had created a great deal of public interest because of the exceptionally high number of threatened wildlife parts involved.

"Unfortunately there was no follow-up to prosecute those responsible for the illegal killing of Tigers and bears to supply the smugglers," commented Gennady Zherebkin, a law enforcement advisor from the Amur branch of WWF Russia.

The case first came to light in January 2007 when a car containing eight bags of bear paws, three Tiger skins, several horns and other animal parts was stopped by police on the road to Khorol village, Russia. The car was being driven by the person said to be managing logistics from the Russian side. After close monitoring of a second individual by police, in March 2007, sledges with a cargo of 120 bear paws were intercepted as they were being transported across the frozen Khanka Lake into China, but the smugglers escaped on snow mobiles.

Following the two seizures, Ji assembled a large shipment of Tiger skin and bones, and bear paws, and bribed local policemen to ensure the shipment's smooth passage to Khanka Lake where Razumenko had paid a villager to turn off the border tracking system. However, enforcement authorities were ready, and the smugglers were arrested.

The sentences were handed out as punishment for the August shipment only.

On 3 August 2008, Customs officials at Vladivostok airport seized eight plastic containers containing roots (510 g) of wild ginseng *Panax* (CITES II) from the luggage of six South Korean citizens. The roots were sliced and dried, and some had been preserved in honey. The suspects were passing through Customs, bound for Seoul. The person who sold the ginseng to the South Koreans was identified following interrogation of the suspects and more than 100 wild ginseng roots, 16 musk *Moschus* (I/II) pods and one bear (I/II) gall bladder were subsequently confiscated from his house. This individual is now under investigation.

WWF Russia and TRAFFIC Europe-Russia have worked closely with Customs officials and over the last four years have assisted in the training of Customs officers on CITES issues and capacity building with regard to the control of wildlife trade, an arrangement that is being developed on a permanent basis. This training and increased collaboration has resulted in a growing number of seizures in recent years.

WWF Russia 30 May 2008; www.traffic.org/home/2008/5/30/tough-penalties-for-organized-smuggling-gang.html; Vladivostok (Russia), 12 February 2008: www.vladnews.ru/2288/Zakon/Medvezhja_tropa_perekryta; TRAFFIC Europe-Russia press release, 11 August 2008

SWITZERLAND: Investigators have seized about 300 wildlife items, including rhinoceros teeth, tortoise shells, snake skins and a crocodile [species not reported] from a collector in what is described as the biggest haul of illegal wild animal trophies in western Switzerland.

The collector is said to have acquired about 600 trophies; about 200 items were apparently imported illegally and 350 were later sold over the internet and by post.

www.swissinfo.ch/eng/news_digest/Record_number_of_animal_trophies_confiscated.html?siteSect=104&sid=8888787&cKey=1206295606000&ty=nd, 23 March 2008

UK: In January 2008, at the port of Felixstowe, a detailed examination by UK Border Agency officers of a sea container holding traditional medicinal products from China revealed 19180 items containing *Dendrobium* orchids (CITES I/II). No valid CITES export permit accompanied the shipment and the goods were seized.

In March 2008, a container of traditional medicinal products from Pakistan was seized after it was found to hold 396 items containing ingredients from the following species: Costus root *Saussurea costus* (I), orchid spp. (I/II), musk *Moschus* (I/II) and spiny-tailed lizards *Uromastyx* spp. (II). No CITES export permit accompanied the shipment.

In June 2008, UK Border Agency CITES Team officers at Heathrow Airport seized a shipment of 110 live Leopard Tortoises *Geochelone pardalis* (CITES II) from Zambia because they did not match the size stated on the CITES export permit.

In the same month, a shipment of 98 live Sahara Mastigure *Uromastyx geyri* (II) hatchlings imported

into Heathrow from Ghana was seized as the CITES export permit stated that the specimens were a minimum of 18 months old. In addition, 100 Bell's Hinged Tortoises *Kinixys belliana* (II) were seized as the specimens displayed the characteristics of being wild taken and not ranches as shown on the CITES export permit.

On 5 August 2008, at Snaresbrook Crown Court, Heng Low, of Ilford, Essex, pleaded guilty to two charges of selling Asian Arowana *Scleropages formosus* (CITES I). He was fined UKP2000 (USD3680) and ordered to pay UKP800 costs. Mr Low had licences permitting importation of the fish but these did not allow sale.

These offences were uncovered after enquiries by HM Revenue and Customs officers showed that Low had imported a large number of fish from Singapore over two years, which amounted to a commercial operation. In October 2007 police officers from Redbridge Borough, assisted by the Metropolitan Police Wildlife Crime Unit, and the national Wildlife Crime Unit, executed a search warrant at Low's home address where they found tanks holding some 20 fish. Examination of computers that were seized, revealed over 600 e-mails between Low and customers; there were also advertisements offering the fish for sale.

In August 2008, at the port of Felixstowe, examination of a container of wooden items from Taiwan by UK Border Agency officers revealed 39998 wooden tassels thought to be Ramin *Gonystylus* spp. (CITES II). Scientific comparisons were undertaken in the laboratory of the UK CITES Scientific Authority for flora at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, which confirmed the initial identification. No valid CITES export permit accompanied the shipment and the items were seized.

www.operationcharm.org/news/20080811.jsp, 11 August 2008; UK Border Agency CITES Team

A F R I C A

CAMEROON: In April 2008, two wildlife dealers were arrested in Douala, Littoral Province, after being found trying to sell Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) skins, and trophies derived from other species. The arrest was carried out by the Provincial Delegation of Forestry and Wildlife in collaboration with the Forces of Law and Order, the Judiciary and The Last Great Ape Organization (LAGA), and was part of a nationwide programme launched in 2003 by the Government of Cameroon, with technical assistance from LAGA, which aims at the effective enforcement of the country's 1994 wildlife law. The enforcement programme targets wealthy dealers rather than villagers.

Game rangers in Yokadouma, East Province, recently confiscated 13 African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I) tusks concealed in bags on a lorry carrying timber. The tusks had originated from elephants in Lobeke National Park. The driver of the lorry, who was detained, gave information that led to the arrest of another suspect who was waiting to collect the tusks in Bertoua, East Province. A third person is being sought.

On 5 September 2008, a Douala-based businessman was fined USD4989 and sentenced to 45 days in gaol for poaching and trafficking in 22 ivory tusks and 11 elephant tails. Mahama Sani was found guilty on charges pressed by Cameroon's Forestry and Wildlife Ministry at Yokadouma. Sani confessed during interrogation that he bought the tusks from poachers in Libongo, on the outskirts of Lobeke National Park. He had spent more than two months in the town gathering tusks, which he intended to supply to a Nigerian businessman in Douala. The tusks were then to be transported to other West African countries. The whereabouts of the Nigerian is not known.

Rangers have been trained and reinforced, and regular joint patrols are being organized with rangers from the Central African Republic and Congo Brazzaville under the auspices of a trans-boundary conservation initiative. Agreements have also been reached with logging companies and sport hunting outfits in a concerted move to fight poaching.

Cameroon Tribune, 17 April 2008: www.cameroontribune.net/article.php?lang=Fr&oled=j2807

2008&idart= 10327&olarch=j17042008; *The Post* (Buea), 18 April 2008, cited in <http://allafrica.com/stories/200804180663.html>; www.africanews.com/site/list_messages/20378, 8 September 2008

KENYA: Ivory seizures at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (January to July 2008):

24 January: Customs officials seized an assortment of ivory products weighing 83.5 kg destined for Asian markets.

14 May: police arrested two persons who were in possession of elephant tusk pieces weighing 110.5 kg, destined for China.

13 July: Kenya Airports Authority officers recovered two pieces of raw ivory weighing 0.5 kg. The suspect was attempting to smuggle the ivory to China through Doha.

16 July: three Chinese nationals travelling to Harare, Zimbabwe, via Nairobi, were arraigned in court following their arrest by Kenya Wildlife Service officials, in collaboration with the Kenya Airport Authority. They had been found in possession of 2.2 kg of processed ivory without CITES permits.

Kenya Wildlife Service, 16 July 2008: www.kws.org/ivory-seizure.html

SUDAN: In August 2008, the Interior Ministry of the Sudanese Government is reported to have announced the discovery of a major illicit ivory trade, following the seizure in the country of 470 ivory pieces and the arrest of a number of suspects. Items seized included 309 ivory sculptures and 147 bracelets.

www.afrol.com/printable_article/30180, 7 August 2008

ZAMBIA: In March 2008, the Drug Enforcement Commission (DEC) arrested a businesswoman from Matero Township in Lusaka for illegally selling ivory belonging to the equivalent of 8 elephants. She was handed over to the Zambia Wildlife Authority for prosecution.

The Times of Zambia, 17 March 2008

ZIMBABWE: On 30 April 2008, Emmerson Buruvuru of Harare was convicted of illegally possessing 1.2kg of ivory in contravention of the *Parks and Wildlife Act* and was fined ZWD25 billion. Buruvuru, who was convicted on his own guilty plea, was initially sentenced to six months in gaol; this was later changed to three months, suspended for three years, on condition of payment of the fine.

Buruvuru was arrested on 10 April after a policeman on patrol in Harare found him acting suspiciously while carrying a small bag which was found to contain the ivory.

The Herald (Harare), 2 May 2008, cited in <http://allafrica.com/stories/200805020070.html>

ASIA

EAST ASIA

CHINA: On 29 December 2007, officials from Manzhouli Inspection and Quarantine Bureau, on the border with Russia, seized 100 g musk *Moschus* (CITES I/II) and five Sables *Martes zibellina* from a Russian driver while undertaking a routine inspection.

On 1 February 2008, anti-smuggling officers searching a vessel in Shantou, Guangdong Province, seized 5776 monitor lizards *Varanus* (CITES I/II), 260 Malaysian Box Turtles *Cuora amboinensis*, and 370 Giant Asian Pond Turtles *Heosemys grandis* (the latter two both CITES II species and all nationally protected), as well as 1170 cobras. The animals were reported to have been smuggled from South-east Asia. Three suspects were detained and several are being sought. Most of the animals had perished.

In March 2008, Customs officials at Dalian Airport seized 37 raw musk *Moschus* (CITES I/II) pods from the luggage of a suspect from South Korea.

In March 2008, Xinjiang police apprehended six people involved in the poaching of and dealing in Snow Leopards *Uncia uncia* (CITES I). From November 2007 to January 2008, the suspects used wire loops to poach four Snow Leopards, five Sables *Martes zibellina* and two red deer.

On 3 March 2008, the Ruili Customs of Yunnan Province seized 19 Burmese Eyed Turtles *Morenia ocellata* (CITES I), one Elongated Tortoise *Indotestudo elongata* (II) and 177 Indian Flapshell Turtles *Lissemys punctata* (II), which had been smuggled from Myanmar. Two suspects were detained.

On 19 March 2008, Guangxi forestry police seized 790 kg of elephant ivory (CITES I), including 139 whole tusks, from a lorry on the road between Pingxiang to Nanning. The longest tusk was 1.83 m and the diameter of the thickest one was 20 cm. The confiscated ivory was transferred to the provincial wildlife rescue centre and the case is under investigation.

Two people were recently sentenced to 10 years in gaol and fined CNY6000 (USD880) at Xin'an Court, Guangxi Province, for illegally transporting 64 bear paws from Xin'an to Quanzhou, Fujian Province. Sixty-two paws were from Asiatic Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus* (CITES I and on China's second-class protection list) and the remaining two were from Malayan Sun Bears *Helarctos malayanus* (CITES I and on China's first-class protection list).

In April 2008, a sailor was sentenced in Hongkou Court, Shanghai, to eight months' imprisonment and fined CNY10000 (USD1466) for illegally trading in a Clouded Leopard *Neofelis nebulosa* (CITES I) skin. He had purchased the skin in Bengal, India, and brought it back to China where, in January 2008, he sold it to a citizen of Hong Kong. The item was seized by Shanghai police.

On 2 April 2008, 20 Rhesus Macaques *Macaca mulatta* (CITES II) were seized by police in Rongshui county, Guangxi Province. The suspect claimed that the macaques were purchased in areas of Rongshui and that he planned to sell them in Guilin city, Guangxi Province.

The Rhesus Macaque is on China's second-class protected wild animal list which means that collection and trade in this species is prohibited unless accompanied by a permit.

On 9 May 2008, Customs officials at Kunming Airport, Yunnan Province, discovered 57 elephant ivory (CITES I) items (carved figures, necklaces, rings, chopsticks) during examination of belongings of a Chinese national arriving from Bangkok. The items (3.4 kg) had been purchased in Africa [country not reported].

On 13 May 2008, officers at Erlan frontier checkpoint, on the border with Mongolia, seized the pelt of a Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) from under the seat of a car they were searching. The case was transferred to the Customs anti-smuggling department for investigation.

On 23 May 2008, border soldiers in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan Province, seized 19 wildlife products, including Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) bone, red deer heart and horn, Gaur *Bos gaurus* (I) horn, and bear (I/II) gall bladder. Two suspects from Myanmar claimed that they had purchased the products from an agriculture market east of Danbang, Myanmar.

On 4 July 2008, forest police of Manzhouli, Inner Mongolia, seized 190 bear (CITES I/II) paws and 14 Moose *Alces alces* noses, which were to be sent to Harbin, Heilongjiang Province, by train. The case is under investigation.

On 13 July 2008, a Chinese passenger returning from Ethiopia via Hong Kong, attempted to carry 2.255 kg of ivory carvings into Baiyun Airport, Guangzhou Province. The ivory was wrapped in cloth and hidden in three woodcarvings and was revealed during X-ray examination.

On 14 August, Luohu Customs officials at the immigration control point between Hong Kong and mainland China, in Shenzhen City, Guangdong Province, seized 129 Saiga *Saiga tatarica* (CITES II) horn cores (7.6 kg), which were being smuggled by a Hong Kong passenger arriving from Hong Kong.

www.nmg.xinhuanet.com/xwzx/2008-01/07/content_12147011.htm, Xinhuanet-Inner Mongolia Channel, 7 January 2008; *China Daily*, 22 March 2008: www.china.org.cn/environment/news/2008-03/22/content_13290738.htm; www.ln.xinhuanet.com/dalian/2008-03/20/content_12743560.htm; <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2008-03-11/180415125275.shtml>, Xinhua, 11 March 2008; www.yndaily.com.cn/html/20080314/news_98_142841.html; <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/l/p/2008-03-20/021815184096.shtml>; <http://news.gxnews.com.cn/staticpages/20080320/newgx47e1ac56-1421248.shtml>; www.gx.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2008-03/20/content_12743719.htm; <http://news.sohu.com/20080319/n255795243.shtml>; www.chinanews.com.cn/sh/news/2008/04-03/1211183.shtml; www.cwca.org.cn/Article/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=9996; *The Southern Daily*: <http://news.nmr.cn/hynews/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=85717>; www.cwca.org.cn/Article/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=10604; www.cwca.org.cn/Article/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=11586; *The Southern Daily*: <http://news.sohu.com/20080723/n258313098.shtml>; http://news.sznews.com/content/2008-08/15/content_3187372.htm

Seizures in China involving pangolins:

All pangolin *Manis* species are included in CITES Appendix II. To help countries further in their efforts to stop the illegal trade, and to ensure that the trade will not cause the species to become extinct, the Conference of the Parties have adopted a zero export quota for the four Asian pangolin species (Indian Pangolin *Manis crassicaudata*, Philippine Pangolin *M. culionensis*, Chinese Pangolin *M. pentadactyla* and Malayan Pangolin *M. javanica*) for trade in wild specimens for commercial purposes (see pages 13–14).

Recently, forest police from Lianghe County, Yunnan Province, seized 40 kg of pangolin scales and 49 kg of Asian Elephant *Elephas maximus* (CITES I) skins from an agricultural vehicle travelling from Lianghe to Baoshan. The suspect was detained and the case is under investigation.

In March 2008, 91 pangolins were seized in Qujing during a routine check; 62 specimens were dead. A number of suspects were detained. The live pangolins were transferred to Yunnan Wildlife Rescue Centre.

On 3 April 2008, traffic police seized 18 pangolins from a coach travelling from Fangcheng Gang, Guangxi Province, to Jiangxi Province. The pangolins were sent to the police station at Guilin National Forestry Park.

On 2 May 2008, Customs officials at Baiyun Airport, Guangzhou Province, seized 74kg ivory (I), 4 kg pangolin scales and two African Dwarf Crocodiles *Osteolaemus tetraspis* (I) from Chinese passengers arriving from Nairobi. One person was carrying 64.5 kg of ivory reported to have been purchased in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo.

On 12 May 2008, Zhengyi Net, a news website of Jiangxi Province, reported that one person had been sentenced to seven years' imprisonment and fined CNY30000 (USD4290) for illegally transporting 13 pangolins. The person was arrested by Jiangxi Security policemen on 12 November 2007 en route to Quzhou, Zhejiang Province, with two boxes of pangolins that he had collected in Yushan county, Jiangxi Province.

The following day, the 13 pangolins were sent to Jiangxi Shuguang Farming Development Limited Company for captive breeding purposes, with the approval of Jiangxi Forest Police and Jiangxi Wildlife Conservation Administration.

On 1 June 2008, Baoshan Forest Police in Yunnan Province made the biggest seizure of illegal wildlife products in recent years, confiscating 281 kg of pangolin scales and 734 kg of elephant skins.

On 17 July 2008, Simao Customs and Pu'er police seized 30 kg of pangolin scales from a coach travelling from Jinghong (near the Myanmar border) to Kunming. The case is under investigation.

On 20 July, officials at Tongle checkpoint, Shenzhen Special Economic Zone, Guangdong Province, seized 11 live pangolins from a car arriving from Guangxi Province. The animals were released in the wild.

A total of 39 pangolins have been seized at this checkpoint since June 2008.

Yunnan Daily (China), 24 December 2007: www.yndaily.com/html/20071224/news_97_39210.html; <http://news.qq.com/a/20080318/000431.htm>; www.gx.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2008-04/05/content_n12882006.htm; www.dsb.gd.gov.cn/ruizheng/Article/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=8178; *TRAFFIC East Asia*; www.jcrb.com/200805/ca707119.htm; http://news.yninfo.com/yn/dzxw/200806/t20080605_654513.htm; <http://kunming.customs.gov.cn/publish/portal174/tab20163/module4053/info119779.htm>; http://news.sznews.com/content/2008-07/22/content_3125468.htm

HONG KONG SAR: On 5 May 2008, at Hong Kong International Airport, a woman from Kenya was found by Customs in possession of two ivory (CITES I) tusks (16.8 kg) and six bags of processed ivory beads (17.4 kg). She was gaoled for two months.

Hong Kong Daily News, 7 May 2008: <http://hk.news.yahoo.com/article/080506/3/6bui.html>

JAPAN: On 5 October 2007, at Narita Airport, Tokyo, a pet shop owner who tried to smuggle Common Marmosets *Callithrix jacchus* (CITES II and banned from import under Japan's *Law Concerning the Prevention of Infections and Medical Care for Patients of Infections*), was gaoled for 10 months and fined JPY800000 (USD7453).

The suspect, who had previously faced criminal charges for wildlife trade offences, was arrested in September by Tokyo Customs and Narita Police Department officials following his arrival on a flight from Bangkok. Three juvenile marmosets were concealed in clothing in his luggage.

On 5 December 2007, officers of the Consumer and Environmental Protection Division of Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department arrested a former pet shop owner for falsifying registration cards and selling two Radiated Tortoises *Astrochelys (=Geochelone) radiata* (CITES I). The registration card is needed to trade legally in species protected under the *Law for the Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora* (LCES). The suspect created the registration cards for the tortoises from a card he already had for trade in Asian Arowana *Scleropages formosus* (CITES I) and sold them to a pet shop.

On 6 February 2008, at Maebashi District Court, the head of a company dealing in billiards products was sentenced to one year in gaol, suspended for three years, and fined JPY1500000 (USD14000) for the illegal trade in ivory (CITES I). The company was fined JPY2000 000.

Officers of the Consumer and Environmental Protection Division of Gunma Prefectural Police Department and Tomioka police station arrested the man and the head of the company's factory in October 2007 after the investigation was triggered when an advertisement for the company was seen in a magazine. The pair was found guilty of violating the *Customs Law* and *LCES*. They had purchased two kilogrammes of ivory in the USA and brought it into Japan in a suitcase via Narita Airport. They had also ordered a further two kilogrammes of ivory.

Between 2006 and 2007, 14 billiard cues were made using ivory, 12 of which are believed to have been sold. The ivory was used in the grip of the cue and for the small rods (or ferrules) which are placed at the tip end.

On 12 June 2008, two people were sentenced at Tokyo District Court to gaol for, respectively, a year and ten months and a year and six months (suspended for three years), and fined JPY800 000 (USD7453) and JPY400 000.

The pair had illegally imported nine Lesser Slow Lorises *Nycticebus pygmaeus* (CITES I) and five Radiated Tortoises *Astrochelys* (= *Geochelone*) *radiata* (I) from Bangkok, Thailand, between February 2007 and November 2007. All except two lorises had been sold.

Fuji TV FNN News: www.fnn-news.com, viewed 10 September 2007; Nippon Television Network News 24, 10 September 2007: www.news24.jp/, viewed 10 September 2007; TRAFFIC East Asia; Yomiuri Shimbun, 1 November/6 December 2007; Asahi Shimbun, 6 December 2007; Nikkei Shimbun, 31 October/6 December 2007; Mainichi Shimbun, 1 November 2007; Kyodo Press, 31 October 2007; NHK News, 31 October 2007; Nikkan Sports News, 6 February 2008; www.nikkansports.com/general/f-gn-tp0-20080206-317474.html, viewed 6 February 2008; www.yomiuri.co.jp/national/news/20080116i104.htm?from=navr, viewed 16 January 2008; Kyodo News (Japan), 12 June 2008

TAIWAN: On 15 February 2008, at Taoyuan International Airport, Taipei, enforcement officers seized 13 bird eggs from a couple returning from Bangkok. The authorities were acting on information alerting them that a couple was travelling to Thailand to buy eggs of CITES-listed parrots. It was known that 15 eggs were obtained in Thailand, and that two of them had broken. Each egg was carried in an individual box and placed in a specially made belt (provided by sellers) and worn by the couple. The eggs have been identified as Blue-and-yellow Macaws *Ara ararauna* (eight eggs) (CITES II) and *Cacatua* spp. (five eggs, CITES I or II).

The couple was arrested and the case is under investigation.

On 8 March 2008, enforcers at Taoyuan International Airport, Taipei, seized around 48 000 fertile Chinese Sturgeon *Acipenser sinensis* (CITES II) eggs. The eggs were obtained in China and had been sent to Taiwan via Kinman (an island close to China). The offender said he had sent two similar shipments before, and had sold to fish farms in Taiwan. It is reported that the eggs would need to spend a further six to seven years at a hatchery before they can be consumed.

On 28 April 2008, 102 elephant (CITES I) ivory *hankos* (small blocks used as seals or stamps) (5.8 kg) were seized at Taoyuan International Airport, Taipei, from a suspect arriving from Malawi via South Africa and Hong Kong. The pieces were concealed in two wood carvings.

www.ettoday.com/2008/02/16/138-2231757.htm; Liberty Times (Taiwan), 10 March 2008; <http://news.epochtimes.com/b5/8/4/28/n2097875.htm>

SOUTH ASIA

INDIA: Emil Kucera, one of two Czech nationals convicted of illegally collecting rare insect species from Singhalila National Park in June, has been sentenced to three years' imprisonment. He was fined INR50 000 (USD1090). Petr Svacha, an entomologist, was fined INR20 000.

Kucera and Svacha were convicted under the *Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972* (WPA) and the *Biological Diversity Act, 2002* (BDA), the first time anyone has been convicted under the BDA. Svacha has already paid his fine and will be confined to India during the appeal period of four months.

About 500 live and preserved insects were seized from the pair's hotel rooms in Shrikhola, near Darjeeling. Among the collection, which has been sent to the Zoological Survey of India for identification, forest officials identified *Delias sanaca*, a butterfly listed under Schedule I of the *Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act*.

The accused had pleaded that they were collecting the insects for research purposes and that they were unaware of the laws. However, investigations revealed that Kucera, a forester, was involved in the trade of insects. They were also found to have violated other administrative procedures, as required by local laws.

On 21 July 2008, Customs officials at Chennai Airport, Tamil Nadu, conducting a routine inspection, found 231 Asian Arowanas *Scleropages formosus* (CITES I) in the possession of an Indian national returning to the country from Kuala Lumpur. The fish had been intended for a local buyer and it is believed that the suspect was used as a courier by a Chennai-based syndicate. Since no valid documentation to import the live fish could be presented, the shipment was confiscated under the *Customs Act 1962* and the suspect detained for further investigation. All the fish were returned to Malaysia.

On 2 August 2008, Customs officials at Chennai Airport, Tamil Nadu, seized 950 live Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II) from the baggage of a city resident bound for Bangkok via Colombo.

The suspect admitted that he had been lured by a financial bribe by an unknown person to carry the bag. He was handed over to the authorities and the case is under investigation.

Recent Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) seizures include:

- 22 July 2008: One skin, Almora. Two held.
- 27 July: Eight skins, Saharanpur. Three arrests.
- 28 July: One skin, Vikasnagar. One arrest.
- End July: One skin, Chhattisgarh. Two arrests.
- 1 August: One skin, Delhi. One held.
- 6 August: One skin, Vikasnagar, near Dehradun. One arrest.
- 13 August: three skins, Dehradun, Uttarakhand. Two arrests.

Wildlife Trust of India, 24 July/September 2008: <http://wildlifetrustofindia.org/news-archives/2008/07/24/czech-insect-collectors-remain-in-jail/>; www.wildlifeextra.com/go/news/india-insects734.html; *The Malaysian Insider*, 6 August 2008: <http://themalaysianinsider.com/index.php/malaysian-news/34-malaysian-news/2092-indian-customs-find-chappati-maker-fishy>; *The Times of India (India)*, 2 August 2008: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Earth/TN_950_star_tortoises_seized/articleshow/3318785.cms; www.indianexpress.com/story/347207.html, 11 August 2008; *Sindh Today*: www.sindhoday.net/south-asia/11961.htm, 14 August 2008

NEPAL: On 8 and 10 February 2008, the anti-poaching team (APT) of Chitwan National Park arrested six poachers after receiving intelligence that the poachers were planning to hunt Great Indian Rhinoceroses *Rhinoceros unicornis* (CITES I) and Tigers *Panthera tigris* (I) in the park and in the adjoining Parsa Wildlife Reserve (PWR).

WWF Nepal has been actively engaged in efforts to control poaching in Chitwan National Park and surrounding areas by providing technical and financial support to enforcement agencies to mobilize the anti-poaching team, community based anti-poaching groups and informant networks.

Diwakar Chapagain, WWF Nepal: www.wwfnepal.org

SOUTH-EAST ASIA

CAMBODIA: On 28 April 2008, authorities seized a cargo (418.5kg) of live pythons and turtles in Battambang Province that was being smuggled from Thailand to Viet Nam. The animals included 11 Reticulated Pythons *Python reticulatus* (CITES II), 13 Burmese Pythons *Python molurus* (I/II) and 257 turtles, including Asian box turtles *Cuora* spp., Malayan Snail-eating Turtles *Malayemys subtrijuga*,

Black Marsh Turtles *Siebenrockiella crassicolis*, and 12 Yellow-headed Temple Turtles *Hieremys annandalii* (all CITES II).

Most of the animals, which had been illegally collected in Cambodia, were released into their natural habitats, including Tonle Sap lake.

Yellow-headed Temple Turtles, which are depicted on the walls of the Angkor temples, are of special cultural significance in Cambodian folklore and legend.

<http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5hF2MtvP6dDNTdR0j-C2779CzlpA>, 1 May 2008

INDONESIA: On 3 March 2008, police intercepted a shipment of 3500 eggs of Green Turtles *Chelonia mydas* (CITES I) which were being smuggled by motorboat on a river in Derawan Island, East Kalimantan.

On 10 March 2008, Customs officials at Soekarno-Hatta International Airport seized a shipment of 23000 dried seahorses *Hippo campus* (CITES II) destined for South Korea.

On 3 June 2008, police officers on an anti-crime operation, boarded the vessel of fisherman Zulkarnain Ajib of Tanjung Balai, and found sacks of pangolin scales and reptile skins.

Zulkarnain pleaded guilty to the illegal possession of 199.9kg of Malayan Pangolin *Manis javanica* (CITES II and protected by the *Wildlife Protection Act 1972*), 100 pieces of Reticulated Python *Python reticulatus* (CITES II) skins, 37 pieces of Sumatran Short-tailed Python *Python curtus* (CITES II) skins and 100 pieces of Water Monitor *Varanus salvator* (CITES II) skins. He was sentenced to 32 months' imprisonment.

On 30 July 2008, officers from the Indonesian National Police Criminal Investigation Bureau raided the warehouse of a suspected illegal wildlife trader in the city of Palembang in south Sumatra, and uncovered some 14t of frozen Malayan Pangolins *Manis javanica* (CITES II) and about 50 kg of scales (see page 13), ready for export to China via seaports in Sumatra and Java. Fourteen people were arrested.

This is the largest seizure of pangolins ever made in Indonesia. The species is fully protected by Indonesian law (and listed in CITES Appendix II, but with a zero quota). Police are linking the arrests to two seizures earlier this year by Customs authorities in Viet Nam of more than 23 t of frozen pangolins known to have originated in Indonesia.

In August, police in Palembang destroyed the pangolin meat and scales in the presence of high-ranking police officers and other officials.

South Sumatra police Chief Inspector Gen. Ito Sumardi D.S. said suspects involved in the case would be charged; three had so far been named. Preliminary investigations reveal that foreign financiers were likely involved in the trade. "We are also questioning a number of individuals from the police who are believed to be involved," Sumardi said.

On 26 August 2008, a raid by authorities in Sumatra has resulted in the arrest of four people found to be selling Tiger (CITES I) parts. Officials of the Department of Forestry, Directorate-General for Forest Protection and Nature Conservation (PHKA), working in conjunction with the Wildlife Conservation Society's Wildlife Crime Unit, conducted the raid as part of the recent stepped-up efforts to control illegal wildlife trade in Indonesia. Items seized included Tiger bones, skins, teeth, and claws, along with other protected wildlife. Ten people have now been arrested for trading in Tiger parts in the past three months. All cases are now being prosecuted by the authorities.

In Indonesia, Tigers are now only found on the island of Sumatra, where the species is considered a distinct form *Panthera tigris sumatrae*. The population here is reported to be probably fewer than 1000.

www.bernama.com.my/bernama/state_news/news.php?id=338208;

www.bernama.com.my/bernama/state_news/news.php?id=338208&cat=ct>&cat=ct, 9 June 2008;

www.asean-wen.org/uplodimg/new/actu/Mar_08%20newsletter.html; Joint press release, TRAFFIC and Wildlife Conservation Society, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 4 August 2008;

www.thejakartapost.com/news/2008/08/30/police-destroy-138-tons-rare-anteater-meat-south-sumatra.html, 30 August 2008; Wildlife Conservation Society News Release, www.wcs.org, 2 September 2008

MALAYSIA: Pangolin seizures: On 15 April 2008, Malaysian Wildlife and National Parks Department officers raided a storehouse in Kampung Kubang Menerung and rescued 98 live pangolins *Manis* (CITES II). Three arrests were made.

On 3 June 2008, marine police confiscated six sacks of pangolin scales, 137 python skins and 100 monitor lizard *Varanus* (I/II) skin pieces near Port Klang; there were seven arrests.

On 8 September 2008, marine police officials in Muar seized 16 pangolins on land off Sungai Sarang Buaya and arrested eight men who were waiting for a boat to arrive from the island of Bengkalis, Sumatra. The group's activities had been monitored by police as they are believed to have been involved in the smuggling of pangolins into the country from Bengkalis for several months.

www.asean-wen.org/uplodimg/new/actu/Jul08%20newsletter.html; <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2008/9/9/nation/20080909/15939&sec=nation>

PHILIPPINES: In August 2008, members of the Joint Task Force Malampaya (JTFM) boarded a Viet nameese fishing vessel 80 km off the coast of Palawan Island in the South China Sea, and found 101 dead Hawksbill Turtles *Eretmochelys imbricata* (CITES I) on board. The fishing boat's 13-man crew flooded their vessel as the JTFM boat approached; the turtles were found drowned in the vessel's cargo hold. Resting sea turtles can remain submerged for up to two hours but stressed individuals must resurface every few minutes.

"Again and again, foreign nationals have encroached upon Philippine waters to plunder our nation's dwindling marine resources," said WWF Project Manager R.J. de la Calzada. "It disheartens us to find the animals we work so hard to conserve slaughtered on a wholesale basis."

The Vietnamese crewmen will be charged with violating the *Wildlife Conservation and Protection Act* and may also be charged with illegal incursion and breaking the *Fisheries Code of 1998*.

www.wwf.org.ph/main.php; www.panda.org/news_facts/newsroom/news/index.cfm?uNewsID=144741

THAILAND: On 20 March 2008, Customs officials seized 113 pangolins *Manis* (CITES II) and other contraband from the vehicle of a person travelling on the Phet Kasem Road in Songkhla's Rattaphum district. The individual was arrested.

The Nation, 20 March 2008

VIET NAM: On 14 February 2008, border guards in rural Binh Son district's Binh Hai commune in the central province of Quang Ngai seized 143 kg of live black coral Antipathidae (CITES II) which was being illegally transported across the border to China.

In January 2008, Customs officials at Ha Noi Airport seized about one tonne of live Common Rat Snakes *Ptyas mucosus* (CITES II) that had been hidden in 60 ice boxes marked "fresh fish" and concealed on board a flight from Bangkok. Many of the snakes, destined for the restaurant trade in China or Viet Nam, had perished; surviving specimens were sent to the Wild Animal Rescue Centre near Ha Noi.

On 7 June 2008, police in Lao Cai arrested a man for illegally transporting five White Rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* (CITES I/II) (18 kg) horns into the country. The horns had been obtained during a hunting expedition in South Africa and were to be used in traditional medicine.

According to reports in the *Earth Times*, Customs police originally seized the horns at Tan Son Nhat Airport in Ho Chi Minh City, but did not arrest the suspect until the horns had been positively identified.

Viet Nam's Decree 32 prohibits the commercial exploitation and use of the rhinoceros, but under law, horns can be kept as trophies with proper documentation. The suspect produced

documentation for four of the five horns. Police, however, are currently questioning the validity of the documents.

Sulma Warne, Co-ordinator of TRAFFIC Southeast Asia's Greater Mekong Programme, commented: "The police should be applauded for their excellent work, and no doubt current efforts to improve co-ordination between key enforcement agencies will only serve to strengthen Viet Nam's commitment to combating illegal and unsustainable wildlife trade."

According to Warne, Viet Nam is increasingly being recognised as a hub for illegal wildlife trade, playing the roles of source, transit, as well as consumer and the two smuggling incidents highlight a need for greater public awareness and increased government capacity to address the illegal and unsustainable wildlife trade.

In July 2008, environment police and Customs officers acting on information seized more than two tonnes of live snakes and 770 kg of tortoises being transported by lorry in Quang Ninh Province, destined for China. It was reported that the animals, all in good condition, had been illegally imported from Lao PDR and may have been bound for Chinese restaurants. The specific species involved was not reported but the tortoises were said to consist of six species listed in CITES. All animals have been transferred to the Soc Son Wild Animal Rescue Center in Ha Noi.

In February and March 2008, Customs authorities in Hai Phong Port discovered two shipments containing a total of some 23 t of dead pangolins *Manis* (CITES II, with a zero quota) and pangolin scales, as they were being offloaded from a ship originating in Indonesia. The consignments were reportedly to be smuggled to China (see page 13).

www.vnagency.com.vn/Home/EN/tabid/119/itemid/236062/Default.aspx, 16 February 2008; www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2008/01/18/wsnake118.xml, 18 January 2008; www.traffic.org/home/2008/6/13/viet-nam-police-arrest-two-suspects-in-separate-smuggling-in.html; www.topnews.in/law/vietnam-seizes-tons-live-wild-animals-bound-china, 29 July 2008; *Wildlife Crime Vietnam newsletter, Education for Nature-Vietnam (ENV)*, March 2008; www.envietnam.org; TRAFFIC International

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA: Investigations are under way in four Australian cities and overseas in an effort to identify and prosecute those responsible for attempting to smuggle Northern Leaf-tailed Geckos *Saltuarius cornutus* and Southern Leaf-tailed Geckos *Saltuarius swaini* to Europe using the international postal system. All attempts appear to be linked, with each package intended for delivery in the Czech Republic.

Between December 2007 and March 2008, Customs and Australia Post detected six packages. Most recently, on 17 March, a package containing a hollowed-out book enclosed one adult Southern Leaf-tailed Gecko, 27 dead beetles and several other insects and egg cases; on 14 March, a similar package containing a hollowed-out book was found to contain two adult and two baby Southern Leaf-tailed Geckos. Both packages appeared to be from the same source.

The six parcels were posted in Cairns, Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne and contained a total of 15 specimens concealed inside books or picture frames. Many of the reptiles were already dead when the packages were opened. Those that survived are being looked after by registered wildlife carers.

Customs investigators are working within Australia and with their Czech counterparts in an effort to disrupt and dismantle the smuggling network.

On 3 April 2008, at the Downing Centre District Court, Sydney, Antonius Duindam was sentenced to a gaol term of four months and 25 days after attempting to smuggle eggs of 10 Senegal Parrots *Poicephalus senegalus* (CITES II) into Australia at Sydney Airport, from the Netherlands, via Hong Kong. The eggs had been concealed in a purpose-made body vest. Duindam had already served the sentence following his arrest in 2007.

On 8 April 2008, Customs officers at Perth International Airport foiled an attempt to smuggle more than 1300 native beetles to the USA after acting on information given to a Customs hotline; two US citizens were arrested. During a search of one of the men's luggage, officers allegedly found up to 1000 beetles concealed inside six plastic containers; luggage belonging to the second suspect was found to contain some 350 beetles in glass vials which had been concealed inside five empty yoghurt containers. Some of the seized beetles have been identified as *Megacephala blackburni*.

An export permit is needed to export native beetles. Both men were charged with exporting a regulated native species without a permit, under section 303DD of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

On 15 May 2008, at Melbourne Magistrates' Court, Meyndert Jacobus Bornman was fined AUD3000 (USD2600) following his attempts to smuggle four live Green Tree Pythons *Morelia viridis* (CITES II) into the country from South Africa in separate parcels in March. He was also ordered to pay court costs of AUD300. Customs officers at the Sydney International Mail Centre intercepted the parcels after x-ray revealed their contents.

In April, Customs investigators had executed search and seizure warrants in Melbourne's suburbs which led to Mr Bornman's arrest and charge. Officers of the Department of Sustainability and the Environment in Victoria also provided assistance.

In April 2008, Alex Bendikov and Jay Justin Hoklas, both from Adelaide, pleaded guilty to catching 184 abalones *Haliotis* illegally. The men were fined more than AUD15000 (USD13 300) each.

Fisheries officers caught the men taking the specimens from the Little Dip Conservation Park near Robe, South Australia. They were convicted of exceeding the abalone bag limit, taking undersized abalones and failing to bring abalones above the high water mark before shucking.

Australian Customs media releases, 3 April/10 April/11 April/16 May/20 May 2008; www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/04/30/2231903.htm?site=southeasts, 30 April 2008; Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, Australian Government

NEW ZEALAND: In October 2007, Customs officials at Auckland Airport arrested a South African national arriving from Johannesburg via Sydney after he was found to be wearing a vest containing 44 psittacine eggs. Some of the eggs have been identified as belonging to *Amazona* spp. but DNA analysis is ongoing.

The courier, Philippus Francois Fourie, pleaded guilty to charges laid pursuant to section 44(1)(B) *Trade in Endangered Species Act* and S154 *Biosecurity Act*, and was convicted and fined a total of NZD20 000 (USD14 000). He spent one month in custody before being deported to South Africa.

New Zealand Customs

AMERICAS

CANADA: On 24 April 2008, at Richmond Provincial Court, British Columbia, Loan Thi Dinh of Vancouver, BC, was convicted of illegal possession of 32 Northern Abalones *Haliotis kamtschatkana*, a species listed as Threatened under the *Species at Risk Act* and as Endangered by IUCN. She was fined CAD7000 (USD6500), to be paid within one year, and ordered to forfeit the illegally harvested molluscs to the Crown.

Investigation into the case began on 29 April 2006 after Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) was informed by Air Canada staff in Prince Rupert (BC) that a woman was believed to be transporting abalones on a flight from Prince Rupert to Vancouver International Airport. When the plane arrived in Vancouver, DFO fishery officers, aided by an officer of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, conducted an inspection of Dinh's luggage which was found to contain the specimens (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 21(1):40).

Fisheries and Oceans Canada news release: www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/media/npres-communique/2008/pr22-eng.htm, 11 August 2008; IUCN (2008). 2008 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. www.iucnredlist.org. Viewed 21 October 2008

USA: On 20 December 2007, in federal District Court, West Palm Beach, Florida, Lawrence W. Beckman of Florida, was sentenced to three months in custody followed by a two-year term of supervised release, and fined USD2000.

Beckman pleaded guilty in October to the illegal importation of approximately 227 kg of live rock and coral, and 500 sea fans *Gorgonia* illegally harvested from Bahamian waters in 2002. He had failed to obtain written permission from Bahamian authorities, as required by Bahamian conservation laws, to harvest hard and soft coral. Such activity contravenes the US *Lacey Act* which prohibits the possession, importation, and transport of wildlife which has been taken or possessed in violation of a conservation law of a foreign country.

Although eligible for a probationary sentence, a period of incarceration was warranted in light of Beckman's history of repeated violations despite being charged and paying fines under State law over the past 10 years.

On 1 April 2008, Wai Ho Gin of Diamond Bar, California, was sentenced to 6.5 months' imprisonment and a further 6.5 months of home detention for participating in the smuggling of Asian tortoises into the country.

Gin had earlier pleaded guilty to smuggling and conspiracy charges and in his plea agreement admitted to receiving Radiated Tortoises *Astrochelys* (= *Geochelone*) *radiata* (CITES I) and Indian Star Tortoises *G. elegans* (CITES II) from an accomplice in Singapore and smuggling the specimens into the country. The accomplice has been charged with conspiracy, smuggling and money laundering but remains at large.

On 2 June 2008, in Miami federal court, George A. Townsend III, of St Petersburg, Florida, was sentenced to two years' probation and fined USD3000 after pleading guilty to the illegal importation of more than 4990 kg of Yellowfin Tuna *Thunnus albacares* from Trinidad and Tobago, contrary to the US *Lacey Act*. He was also ordered to forfeit some USD23 000 in funds derived from the criminal conduct and was placed under a special condition that his finances, employment information, and all travel be fully disclosed to the Court's Probation Office over the term of his supervision.

On 14 July 2008, at a federal court in Los Angeles, Jereme Lee James of Long Beach, California, was ordered to perform 2500 hours of community service, pay a USD2000 fine and USD125 special assessment fee and serve five years probation for illegally importing Fiji Island Banded Iguanas *Brachylophus fasciatus* (CITES I) into the USA (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 21(3):122).

On 6 August 2008, in Denver, Colorado, two men from South Dakota were indicted on charges of smuggling two Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) hides and a Leopard skull into the country. One of the men is charged with smuggling a Leopard hide and skull, and the other with smuggling a hide.

The pair travelled to South Africa in 2002 and killed the Leopards illegally. Since they would therefore have been unable to obtain valid CITES export permits in South Africa, the hides were smuggled to Zimbabwe, where fraudulent export permits were purchased. Applications were made to the US Fish and Wildlife Service, claiming falsely that the animals had been hunted and killed in Zimbabwe. Jan Groenewald Swart, a South African outfitter who helped the pair bring the hides back to the USA, pleaded guilty to smuggling charges in May 2007 and was gaoled for 18-months.

The items were seized by USFWS inspectors at Denver International Airport in 2004.

On 6 August 2008, in Akron, Ohio, Tania Siyam, a Canadian citizen, was sentenced to five years' imprisonment and fined USD100 000 for illegally importing ivory from Cameroon. The sentence is the result of an international investigation by special agents of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, wildlife officials from Environment Canada and the US Attorney's Office in Cleveland, Ohio.

Siyam was indicted in Cleveland, Ohio, in 2004 on two felony *Lacey Act* violations and two felony smuggling counts for activities relating to the illegal trade in raw African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I) ivory from Cameroon to the USA. At the time of the indictment, Siyam was being held by Canadian officials for extradition to the USA. Pursuant to treaties established between the USA and Canada, and following numerous Canadian hearings over nearly four years, Siyam was extradited to the USA to face criminal charges in December 2007. On 21 March 2008, she pleaded guilty to the four federal felony charges.

Siyam originally operated art import and export businesses in Canada and Cameroon that were fronts for smuggling wildlife products, including raw elephant ivory. She moved her base of operation from Canada to Cameroon in 2002 where she orchestrated a scheme to smuggle items by soliciting local artists, operatives within international commercial shipping companies, and contacts in the illegal ivory trade. In 2002, USFWS special agents and Environment Canada wildlife officials were alerted that raw elephant ivory and other wildlife items were being advertised for sale on the internet. Siyam was identified as the central person involved in the scheme. With the assistance of a local Ohio business owner, USFWS special agents purchased an illegal shipment of raw elephant ivory from Siyam that had been concealed inside pottery, labelled as art, and sent by courier from Cameroon to Montreal. Once in Canada, the goods were repackaged and posted by Siyam's Canadian partner to the Ohio business address.

In December 2003, the co-operating Ohio business owner, working with USFWS special agents, made a second purchase of 56 kg of illegal raw elephant ivory. Siyam shipped the raw ivory by courier from Cameroon concealed inside terracotta pots, directly to the business owner's address. Additional shipments of raw elephant tusks and ivory carvings were sent to other customers in 2003, including USFWS special agents in New York. By the end of 2003, sufficient evidence had been obtained to charge Siyam with multiple felony *Lacey Act* and smuggling violations.

On 8 August 2008, Nicki Phung of Hercules, California, was sentenced to six months' home confinement and three years' probation for her role in illegally importing a mounted and stuffed Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) from Viet Nam, which she had listed as a "stuffed toy". She was also ordered to pay USD5000 in restitution to a non-profit organization that protects big cats throughout the world.

Phung admitted that she imported the tiger from Ho Chi Minh City, into San Francisco International Airport in December 2007 without obtaining an export permit from Viet Nam or an import permit from the USA. Her prosecution resulted from a three-month investigation by the US Fish & Wildlife Service and US Customs and Border Protection.

On 8 October 2008, at US District Court, Denver, Colorado, Martin Villegas Terrones, a Mexican national, was sentenced to 24 months in prison and three years' supervised release for his role in the illegal smuggling of marine turtle species (CITES I).

Villegas pleaded guilty on 11 March 2008 to federal smuggling charges in connection with the sale and shipment of marine turtle skins and skin products from Mexico to the USA. He and ten others were indicted in August 2007 following a multi-year undercover investigation named Operation Central. Four of those indicted remain at large. Six were sentenced earlier in the year. These persons include Fu Yiner (138 days' imprisonment (time served)/three years' supervised release); Wang Hong (167 days' imprisonment (time served)/three years' supervised release); Carlos Leal Barragan (16 months' imprisonment/three years' supervised release); Esteban Lopez Estrada (24 months' imprisonment/three years' supervised release/fined US\$1700); Oscar Cueva (16 months' imprisonment/three years' supervised release with the option of paying USD5000 to a specific marine turtle awareness programme, performing 350 hours of community service for the benefit of a marine turtle conservation programme, or participating in a public service announcement about the dangers and consequences of marine turtle smuggling); and Jorge Caraveo (18 months' imprisonment/three years' supervised release).

This prosecution is the result of an investigation by the US Fish and Wildlife Service Branch of Special Operations. The Court's conclusions regarding fair market retail value of the wildlife smuggled in the Operation Central cases was informed by an economic evaluation performed by TRAFFIC.

The United States Attorney's Office Southern District of Florida press releases, 20 December 2007/2 June 2008/15 July 2008/9 October 2008: www.usdoj.gov; www.suntimes.com/news/nation/873095,turtle040208.article, 2 April 2008; US Fish & Wildlife Service news releases, 15 July/7 August 2008: www.fws.gov; http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5j_HZKEKJ5fc0ZOR5QSaj-MvQf14LQD92CTS900; <http://cbs5.com/localwire/22.0.html?type=bcn&item=TIGER-IMPORTER-SENTENCED-baglm>, 11 August 2008

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EUROPE

FRANCE: On 20 January 2009, Customs officials at Viry, Haute-Savoie, stopped a vehicle travelling in the direction of Geneva. Inside the boot they discovered 33 carcasses of smoked animals, including three pythons, three monkeys and 22 porcupines (all reportedly CITES species). The goods originated from Central Africa, had entered the country through Roissy Airport, and were destined for restaurants in France and Switzerland. All items were seized and the case was referred to the Public Prosecutor's office.

On 7 April 2009, some 15 Parisian jewellers appeared before a Magistrates' court accused of having illegally traded in bracelets made from elephant (CITES I) hair between 1998 and 2008. The police were alerted to the sale of the bracelets on the internet auction site e-Bay, where they were directed to the jewellers and a wholesale dealer. During the course of their inquiry, the police seized more than 700 bracelets, and around 100 rings. The outcome of the case was not reported.

Similar cases have taken place in recent months, with another Parisian jeweller receiving a three-month suspended prison sentence and a fine of EUR3000 (USD4000) for selling elephant hair jewellery. In February, another individual appeared at Créteil Magistrates' Court and received a suspended fine of EUR1500.

Tribune de Genève, 13 February 2009: www.tdg.ch:80/gen-evel/actu/saisie-boas-porcs-epics-fumes-2009-02-13; www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gfC_z0Sjwk-idohPOENOAR0OWtVQ, 7 April 2009

NETHERLANDS: In January 2009, police officers, acting on information received from TRAFFIC, seized 249 veneer sheets of Brazilian Rosewood *Dalbergia nigra* (CITES I) from two companies based in Rotterdam and 's-Gravendeel. Neither company was able to provide documentation to prove the wood had been legally imported or that it had been legally obtained.

"The Rotterdam police are to be congratulated for their vigilance and decisive action against illegal timber imports," commented Rob Parry-Jones, Director of TRAFFIC Europe.

Brazilian Rosewood is used for making musical instruments and furniture, but is threatened by habitat loss. It is endemic to Brazil and is classified as Vulnerable by IUCN.

19 February 2009, www.traffic.org/home/2009/2/19/rotterdam-police-score-musical-wood.html; IUCN 2009. 2009 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2009.1. www.iucnredlist.org. Downloaded on 4 June 2009.

RUSSIA: On 11 November 2008, traffic police from Milkovo District, Kamchatka, stopped a lorry carrying 38 Gyr Falcons *Falco rusticolus* (CITES I), a species in demand for use in falconry, particularly in the Middle East. Under Russian law, possession of a Gyr Falcon from Kamchatka is illegal. This was the biggest such case recorded in recent years, according to Alexey Vaisman of TRAFFIC Europe's Russia office.

The smugglers claimed to have bought the birds from an unidentified source in the town of Ossora in Karaginsky District in the northern part of Kamchatka. Experts said that collection of such

a large number of birds would have taken several months, which indicated a highly organized criminal smuggling operation.

Enforcement officers and representatives from the Federal Service for Supervision of Natural Resources (Rosprirodnadzor) travelled to Milkovo to carry out further investigations.

Following veterinary inspection, three of the birds were kept for treatment, but the remainder were released.

According to local ornithologists, as many as 100 Gyr Falcons are smuggled from Kamchatka each year and overall numbers in the region have dwindled to 500 pairs.

On 11 January 2009, at Domodedovo International Airport, Moscow, Customs officials seized a parcel containing hides, skulls and horns. The expertise of TRAFFIC Europe-Russia, in collaboration with the Russian CITES Scientific Authority, was called upon to identify the trophies, which were found to consist of two sets (two skulls; two pairs of horns) of Markhor *Capra falconeri* (CITES I), six sets (six hides; six skulls; six pairs of horns) of Argali or Marco Polo Sheep *Ovis ammon polii* (II), and one set (hide, skull and pair of horns) of Ibex *Capra sibirica*.

All trophies had been transported from Tajikistan with fake CITES permits. Hunting of Marco Polo sheep was closed this year by the decision of the President of Tajikistan. Trophy hunting of Markhor is allowed only in Pakistan, and is restricted to six elderly male specimens and under strict international supervision.

On 3 April 2009, police officers inspecting a car in Ussuriisk, in Primorsky Province in the Russian Far East, discovered the skin of an Amur Leopard *Panthera pardus orientalis* (CITES I). Only an estimated 14 to 20 adult Amur Leopards and five or six cubs survive in an area of just 2500 km² in Russia's south-western Primorye region, according to the *IUCN Red List*, which classifies this subspecies as Critically Endangered. It is extinct in China and the Korean Peninsula.

The skin's identity was confirmed by experts from the Institute of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Medicine of the Primorsky State Agricultural Academy, experts from Primorsky Province Hunting Department and WWF-Russia. They noted damage to the skin indicating that the animal, probably an adult male, had been shot, most likely in 2008.

Photographs of the skin may help identify the Leopard by comparing it against a database of known surviving Amur Leopards.

TRAFFIC Europe, 12 November 2008; www.wwf.ru/resour-ces/news/article/eng/4475 15 January 2009; www.traffic.org/home/2009/4/7/amur-leopard-skin-seized-by-russian-police.html, 7 April 2009; Jackson, P. and Nowell, K. 2008. *Panthera pardus ssp. orientalis*. In: IUCN 2009. 2009 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2009.1. www.iucnredlist.org. Downloaded on 4 June 2009

SWEDEN: On 5 November 2008, at Varberg district court, nine fishermen were found guilty of illegally fishing more than 100 t of Atlantic Cod *Gadus morhua* in the country's largest-ever poaching case. The species is listed as Vulnerable by IUCN. They were accused of incorrect book-keeping of catches in the spring of 2005 in the Kattegat Strait.

The fishermen were all fined between SEK3740 and 70 000 (EUR375–7016, USD486–9096), and one of them, who was also found guilty of other crimes, was sentenced to five months in prison.

In all, 16 fishermen were charged with catching 109 t of Atlantic Cod and passing it off as unquoted Pollack *Pollachius pollachius* (a member of the cod family), in what appeared to be a ploy to circumvent EU quotas limiting cod fishing.

The court however found that they had not exceeded the permitted quota for 2005, and decided to drop charges against seven fishermen who had not been captains on their ships at the time.

The court also dropped the case against a purchaser of fish who had been accused of facilitating the scam.

According to the Swedish Board of Fisheries, the case is serious since the illegal fishing of this species puts further pressure on dwindling cod stocks in the Kattegat Strait.

Enforcement action against illegal caviar traders in Sweden is paying dividends, with just two tins of illicit caviar discovered by county regulators between 2006 and 2008, and the conviction on 19 December 2008 of two fishmongers and a retailer. At the Court of Uppsala, they were convicted of illegally selling 21 tins of caviar in 2005 and were fined a total of SEK22 200 (USD2500).

The clampdown on illegal caviar in Sweden began in 2005, mainly in Uppsala and Stockholm. In November 2005, the 21 tins of osetra (roe, most commonly from the Persian Sturgeon *Acipenser persicus*), sevruga (from the Stellate Sturgeon *Acipenser stellatus*) and beluga caviar (from Beluga *Huso huso*), were confiscated in Uppsala. In court, it was revealed that the caviar had come from Estonia via Finland, was half the normal price, and lacked appropriate documentation.

In Gothenburg the same month, police confiscated 12 tins of caviar from three different retailers, who were similarly unable to produce the correct documentation. All were subsequently convicted of selling illegal caviar and fined a total of SEK11 400 (USD1300).

The cases attracted high profile media attention, with fish retailers claiming that they were unaware of the legislation. Subsequently, the relevant Swedish trade association contacted its members to inform them about the rules covering the caviar trade.

"Thanks to the authorities and the high profile media coverage, fish retailers and traders in Sweden are all aware of the regulations concerning caviar, and the illegal trade has been reduced significantly," commented Mats Forslund, TRAFFIC Europe's representative based in Sweden.

5 November 2008, <http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5hCcdCRIwOEBHJsZ4sEibLP0X7IFg>; IUCN 2009. 2009 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2009.1. www.iucnredlist.org. Downloaded on 4 June 2009; TRAFFIC Europe, 3 March 2009; TRAFFIC Bulletin 19(1)

UK: In November 2008, UK Border Agency officers at Dover Ferry Terminal intercepted a British-registered vehicle driven by two Vietnamese individuals and found over 100 kg of meat concealed inside a stereo speaker system and in bags. Further examination by the CITES Team and the removal of samples for DNA testing revealed that the produce was a mixture of Siamese Crocodile *Crocodylus siamensis* (Annex A; CITES I), freshwater turtle, dog and cat meat. Investigations are continuing.

In November 2008, UK Border Agency CITES team officers at Heathrow Airport examined a shipment of tropical fish and seized 86 Banggai Cardinal Fish *Pterapogon kauderni*, a species recently listed on Annex D of the EU regulations and therefore in need of an import notification. Following the seizure, it was discovered that the ornamental fish trade had not been informed of this listing.

In January 2009, UK Border Agency officers at the airport intercepted a Chinese national arriving from Shanghai after a positive reaction from a detection dog of the passenger's baggage. Further examination revealed a cooked bear Ursidae (CITES I/II) paw amongst other food items. Use of dogs specializing in detection of Products of Animal Origin (POAO) has recently provided a large number of CITES-related seizures, including traditional medicines, seahorses *Hippocampus* (CITES II), ginseng *Panax* (II) and Houbara Bustards *Chlamydotis undulata* (I).

In February 2009, UK Border Agency officers at the airport seized two boxes of unaccompanied baggage containing nine dead Houbara Bustards imported from Morocco. The baggage was unclaimed and all the specimens were confiscated. One of the dead birds was wearing a leg ring indicating it had been bred at a conservation centre in Morocco.

In March 2009, the UK Border Agency CITES team at the airport seized 26 Royal Pythons *Python regius* (CITES II/Annex B) being imported from the USA without correct import documentation.

In December 2008, UK Border Agency officers at Manchester Airport seized a shipment of live reptiles imported from the USA which were not accompanied by CITES import permits. Forty-four specimens were seized including African Spurred Tortoises *Geochelone sulcata*, Common Iguanas

Iguana iguana, Royal Python *Python regius* and East African Spiny-tailed Lizards *Cordylus tropidosternum* (all CITES II).

In January 2009, UK Border Agency officers at the airport examined an air cargo shipment of 1000 kg of Hoodia *Hoodia gordonii* (CITES II) powder imported from South Africa. Follow-up checks revealed that a UK CITES import permit had not been issued for the shipment, which was confiscated. Hoodia is a succulent in the Apocynaceae family of flowering plants and is in demand for its purported appetite-suppressant properties.

In December 2008, UK Border Agency officers at Coventry International Parcels Hub detected one complete tusk of African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I) in a postal parcel in transit from Lesotho to China. No CITES permits were available and the tusk was seized.

In February 2009, UK Border Agency officers at London Gatwick Airport seized two kilogrammes of unlicensed beluga caviar (roe from Beluga *Huso huso*, CITES II) being imported in baggage accompanied by passengers arriving from Turkey. The caviar tins had no CITES labels. DNA forensic testing of the caviar revealed that it was from the Siberian Sturgeon *Acipenser baerii* (II).

On 14 May 2009, at Shrewsbury Crown Court, David Neville Johnson, of Telford, was gaoled for eight months and became the first person in the UK to be given a three-year Serious Crime Prevention Order (SCPO) for wildlife offences. Johnson was charged with the illegal sale of 191 Hermann's Tortoises *Testudo hermanni* and seven Spur-thighed Tortoises *T. graeca* (both CITES II and EU Annex A, trade in which is subject to the strictest controls), making false statements to obtain permits and the prohibited purchase of 200 Hermann's Tortoises.

The SCPO bans Johnson from possessing any EU Annex A species for three years. The judge also ordered an inquiry under the provisions of the *Proceeds of Crime Act*.

In March 2008, Johnson applied to the UK CITES Management Authority (Animal Health) for permits to sell 100 Hermann's Tortoises. Owing to anomalies in information provided, an AH Wildlife Inspector, accompanied by an officer from NWCUC, conducted an inspection at his Telford address in order to examine the specimens that were the subject of the application. As a result of the inspection and anomalies discovered, the application was refused.

In November 2008, following a protracted investigation and based on intelligence which suggested that Johnson had sold tortoises illegally, NWCUC officers, AH Wildlife Inspectors and UK Border Agency Officers, supported by officers from West Mercia Police and West Midlands Police, executed search warrants at various addresses associated with Johnson. He was subsequently arrested and a large quantity of documentation was seized. Whilst on police bail, Johnson bought a further 200 Hermann's Tortoises illegally, which were sold on without valid permits.

UK Border Agency CITES Team; NWCUC press release, 15 May 2009

A F R I C A

On 15/16 November 2008, dozens of suspected dealers in illegal wildlife products were arrested and one tonne of raw, powdered and processed ivory seized in an operation encompassing five African countries. The raids, which were the culmination of a four-month undercover operation code-named Operation Baba, co-ordinated by INTERPOL and involving the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and the Lusaka Agreement Task Force, targeted local ivory markets, airports and border crossings in Kenya, Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Uganda and Zambia. Fifty seven people were arrested. Also seized were teeth of Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius* (CITES II) and skins of Cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus* (I), Leopard *Panthera pardus* (I), Serval *Leptailurus serval* (II) and python Pythonidae (I/II).

Some 36 of the suspects were arrested in Kenya, and included three Chinese nationals.

INTERPOL Secretary General Ronald K. Noble said that Operation Baba was the first in a series of such operations being planned worldwide [see also under Indonesia].

The German Government was one of the major funders of the operation.

www.earthtimes.org/articles/show/241972,massive-african-operation-traps-scores-of-illegal-ivory-dealers.html, 17 November 2008; *Africa World News*, 17 November 2008; www.blueridgenow.com/article/20081117/API/811171996

DEMOCRATIC REP. OF THE CONGO: On 26 April 2009, a suspected trafficker was caught and arrested at Goma International Airport while disembarking from a flight from Walikale (in the interior of the country and close to gorilla habitat). In his possession was a young female Eastern Gorilla *Gorilla beringei* (CITES I). The animal was concealed in a bag and was suffering from overheating and dehydration after having spent over six hours in transit.

The seizure follows a three-month undercover investigation by the Congolese Wildlife Authority (ICCN) to bust an international wildlife smuggling ring in the country. According to Emmanuel de Merode, Director of Virunga National Park, there has been a significant upsurge in the trafficking of baby Gorillas in recent months. Investigations have yet to reveal where these animals are being sent and who is buying them.

<http://liccn.gorilla.cd>

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO: On 19 March 2009, in Brazzaville, a Congolese national was sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment and fined XAF100 000 (USD145) and ordered to pay a further one million francs to the Ministry of the Forestry Economy. Another suspect fled before he could be brought to court.

The pair was apprehended by the authorities on 20 December 2008 as they prepared to sell a live Chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes* (CITES I and protected in Congo).

www.brazzavilleadiac.com/index.php?action=depeche&dep_id=28217&oldaction=liste®pay_id=0&them_id=0&cat_id=3&ss_cat_id=54&LISTE_FROM=0&select_month=03&select_year=2009

KENYA: On 23 January 2009, at Makadara law courts, three Chinese men were charged with illegal possession of government trophies following their arrest, in three separate cases the previous day at Jomo Kenyatta Airport, in possession of ivory. All suspects, who were travelling to different destinations in China, were also found with Lion *Panthera leo* (CITES I/II) teeth, ivory bracelets and necklaces.

Kenya Wildlife Service sniffer dogs detected two processed ivory carvings weighing 2.5 kg and one necklace concealed in a bag. The second suspect was arrested by Customs officials in possession of two necklaces, four Lion teeth and four bracelets, while the third was in possession of 380 g of carved ivory. Two of the suspects were travelling from Kenya, while the third had arrived from Uganda.

On 31 January 2009, a Nairobi businesswoman was arrested with 74 kg of bushmeat at a popular meat-eating market in downtown Nairobi.

On 27 April 2009, at Kajiado court, south of Nairobi, a Kenyan and a Tanzanian pleaded guilty to charges of illegally possessing 512 kg of elephant tusks in what is believed to be the largest seizure of illegal ivory in recent years.

The ivory had been seized from the car the pair was travelling in at Mbirikani on the Mali-Lokitoktok road, some 50 km from the border with Tanzania, on 25 April. The ivory was estimated to have derived from 70 elephants, based on the weight of the tusks seized.

Kenya Wildlife Service, 23 January 2009; http://africasciencenews.org/asns/index.php?option=com_content&ta=view&id=973&Itemid=2, 1 February 2009; www.coast-week.com/3218-05.htm

MADAGASCAR: On 9 December 2008, Jo van Niekerk, a zoology student from Pretoria, South Africa, was sentenced to one year in gaol. He was arrested in November at Antananarivo Airport in possession of some 388 animals, including around 100 lizards and frogs that were found in the lining of his jacket. Among the specimens were several species only found on Madagascar, including a fanged snake and the nocturnal leaf-tailed gecko [species not reported]. Van Niekerk insisted his interest in the animals was for research purposes and that he would be appealing the ruling.

A separate arrest warrant was issued for an alleged accomplice who was reported to be on the run. All the recovered animals are now at Antananarivo's main zoo. It is not clear whether they will be returned to their natural habitat.

Associated Press, 9 December 2008

SOUTH AFRICA: On 6 February 2009, three Chinese business-men appeared in the Middelburg Regional Court in connection with the smuggling of around 50 rhino horns, mainly out of Kruger National Park. It is the largest rhino-horn poaching event in South Africa's legal history. The trio, who were arrested in January 2009, were part of an illegal hunting ring also consisting of South African and Mozambican members.

At the end of March/early April 2009, the skipper of a Taiwanese-flagged vessel, the *Chien Jui No 102*, was fined R1.5m (USD166 000) for contravening permit conditions for foreign vessels entering the South African Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). This is the highest fine ever imposed for such a transgression. Shark skin and shark trunks confiscated from the vessel were also forfeited to the State.

The *Chien Jui No 102* was seized by fishery control inspectors of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) on 14 March 2009 and more than 1.6 t of dried shark fins and 5.1 t of shark trunks were seized. The proportion of fins reported was in excess of the 15% tolerance limit permitted by the permit conditions. In addition, the permit conditions for foreign vessels entering the South African EEZ require such vessels to conduct fishing activities in accordance with the management and conservation measures of the relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs), including the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). The *Chien Jui No 102* had on board approximately 1.6 t of shark fins without the appropriate corresponding quantity of shark trunks present. The variance of the shark fin to trunk ratio was more than five percent in contravention of ICCAT recommendations.

The vessel's owner applied to amend the permit after the discrepancy was discovered. The South African-based representatives for the owner of the vessel communicated to the department on behalf of their client that "the delay in applying for the amended EEZ permit was due to a misunderstanding as to when the amended permit ought to be applied for".

The vessel will be blacklisted on the IUU (Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated) fishing list of vessels involved in illegal fishing practice.

On 6 April 2009, DEAT officials arrested a man near Hermanus, after more than 2000 abalones *Haliotis* were found in the vehicle he was driving.

On 4 April 2009 another person was arrested in Hermanus and a total of 2474 abalones and a vehicle were confiscated. Court hearings are pending.

In April 2009, the Master and First Officer of two Korean-flagged vessels, the *MFV Oryong 371* and the *MFV Oryong 373*, were each sentenced to a fine of R500 000 (USD60 000), or five years' imprisonment. The sailors were guilty of contravening the permit conditions for foreign vessels entering the South African EEZ. Both vessels had discharged quantities of fish other than what was stipulated in their respective applications for an EEZ permit as well as exceeded the limit as set out in the application.

The *MFV Oryong 371* discharged a total of 18.5 t of fish although their application states they only had 7.5 t of fish on board the vessel for discharge. A total of 667 kg undeclared shark fins was also confiscated. The vessel was found guilty of transshipping 18.1 t of fish illegally without a valid permit.

The *MFV Oryong 373* discharged a total of approximately 10 t of fish. In their application they declared a total of 17.5 t of fish on board the vessel for discharge. Upon investigation, DEAT inspectors found that the species did not match the species stated on the application in addition to the lesser amount of fish discharged. Approximately 10 t of fish had been transshipped illegally without a valid permit. The vessel discharged a total of 389 kg of shark fin which exceeded the 15% tolerance limit permitted by the permit conditions. The crew also did not discharge shark trunks.

In addition to the sentences meted out, all the fish confiscated by the department was forfeited to the State. The department is in the process of providing all the details of both vessels to the appropriate international and regional fisheries organizations for consideration for further sanctions.

Drie Chinese in hof in SA se grootste renostersaak Die-burger.com, 8 February 2009; Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism media statement, 14 March/6 April/29 April 2009: www.deat.gov.za; www.environment.gov.za/NewsMedia/MedStat/2009-Mar16/14032009_MedStatmnt.html; www.environment.gov.za/NewsMedia/MedStat/2009Apr6/medStat-mnt-06042009.doc

ZAMBIA: On 2 March 2009, four people, including two police officers, were arrested in Kafue for trading in 72 pieces of elephant ivory and five pieces of rhino horns. The items were packed in trunks with pieces of amethyst gemstones.

Officials of the Zambia Wildlife Authority (Zawa), Zambia police and Chilanga traffic officers carried out the arrests following information received from a member of the public.

Zawa Director General, Lewis Saiwana, said that for such a large amount of ivory, the poachers had killed 36 elephants but he said it was suspected that the animals were killed in neighbouring countries and not in Zambia.

"In our continued effort to clamp down on the scourge and illegal trafficking of wildlife products, Zawa stepped up its operations to arrest the situation".

Dr Saiwana said all Zambian rhinoceroses were safe and not endangered because of the stringent 24-hour security services provided by Zawa.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200903021407.html>

ASIA

EAST ASIA

CHINA

On 25 February 2009, at Yunnan Provincial Higher People's Court, Li Miwei was sentenced to life imprisonment for smuggling, over a period of several years, tablets containing pangolin *Manis* (CITES II) ingredients. Li, who ran a smuggling ring, was also fined CNY300 000 (USD44 000).

He was arrested in March 2007 along with other gang members, who received gaol terms of between three and five years.

At the Intermediate People's Court of Kunming City, Yunnan Province, on 21 August 2008, Li and seven others were charged with smuggling more than 20 t of pangolin scales. Li, who managed an internet bar in Menglian County, Pu'er City, as a front, was responsible for contacting buyers and purchasing pangolin scales from sellers in Myanmar which were then transported by his gang to Menglian County. He also bribed two post office clerks and posted the scales to buyers across the country.

The court said the gang had been smuggling pangolin scales on the border with Myanmar since 2001. The scales were mostly brought from India, Thailand, Nepal and Lao PDR before being transported to Yunnan via Myanmar.

In March 2009, at Dehong Prefecture Intermediate People's Court, Yunnan Province, Chinese businessman, Mr Yu, was sentenced to life imprisonment and his property confiscated after being found guilty of smuggling 78 python *Pythonidae* skins (CITES II and national Grade I protected wildlife). Yu was asked by his Burmese partner to transport the skins from Myanmar to Ruili City in

Yunnan. Police seized the snakes from a taxi in Husa Village, Longchuan County, in July 2008. Yu's partner is still at large.

On 26 March 2009, at Ningbo Middle People's Court, Zhejiang Province, Cen Zhangyao was sentenced to death for smuggling Saker Falcons *Falco cherrug* (CITES II). Others involved in the smuggling—Wu Zheng, Zhang Hao and Qian Wenbin—were sentenced to life imprisonment.

All the birds had been transported to Ningbo by Cen Zhangyao for short-term feeding while illegal paperwork for their export was being prepared. Zhang Hao, a Ningbo Customs staff member, applied to export the birds under a false name. Wu Zheng and Qian Wenbin, who were responsible for security in Shanghai Pudong International Airport, allowed the falcons to be exported illegally. During the past year, the gang have smuggled 82 Saker Falcons.

www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2009-02/26/content_7514712.htm; 26 February 2009; www.chinaview.cn/index.htm; www.chinaview.cn/2008-08-2207:35:32; <http://foster.aweb.com.cn/2009/0402/658101539380.shtml>, 8 April 2009; www.cwca.org.cn/Article/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=14862

Seizures in China involving ivory:

On 5 January 2009, border soldiers at the Hengjiang checkpoint, Fangchenggang City, Guangxi Province, confiscated 150 kg of suspected elephant tusks from a coach in Dongxing City, on route to Xiamen City, Fujian Province. The material was to be identified by the relevant authority.

On 6 January 2009, Kunming forest police seized 31 Asian Elephant *Elephas maximus* (CITES I) tusks (36 kg) that had been purchased in Yingjiang City, on the border with Myanmar. Two suspects were detained.

On 21 May 2009, at Chongqing No. 1 Intermediate People's Court, Chongqing City, a man, surname Cao, was sentenced to three years in gaol for smuggling ivory into the country which he had obtained while working in Japan; he sold 1.5 kg of ivory to two buyers over the internet.

Customs police officers found the ivory in the post in September and arrested Cao in October when he arrived in Shanghai from Japan.

The two buyers, named Qin and Zhang, were sentenced, respectively, to one year of imprisonment (with a one-year reprieve) and a six-month gaol term (with six-months' reprieve).

<http://news.sohu.com/20090107/n261621955.shtml>; http://yn.yunnan.cn/html/2009-01/08/content_189454.htm; http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-05/23/content_11424030.htm

HONG KONG SAR: On 9 February 2009, at Hong Kong International Airport, Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department personnel, in collaboration with the Customs and Excise Department, foiled an attempt by a Hong Kong resident to import in his luggage two Angonoka [Ploughshare] Tortoises *Astrochelys yniphora* (CITES I), 21 hedgehogs and 23 sugar gliders [species not reported] from Thailand.

The man will be charged under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Ordinance (Cap 169)*, the *Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance (Cap 586)*, and the *Rabies Ordinance (Cap 421)*.

A total of 59 wildlife seizures have been made at Customs checkpoints from January to March this year, compared to 44 cases for the same period last year, according to a department spokesman.

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department press releases, 10 February/9 April 2009

TAIWAN: On 12 February 2009, at Taipei International Airport, luggage from Indonesia was seized after it was found to contain, in baskets and tubes, two Slow Lorises *Nycticebus coucang* (CITES I) and eight CITES II parrots (Moustached Parakeet *Psittacula alexandri*, Moluccan Lory *Eos bornea*, Eclectus Parrot *Eclectus roratus*, and Green-naped Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus*).

In March 2009, Customs officials intercepted a parcel arriving by post from Tanzania. Inside they found 84 Leopard Tortoises *Geochelone pardalis* (CITES II).

The reptiles were destroyed owing to quarantine regulations. Since 2002, Taiwan has banned the importation of three tortoise species—Leopard Tortoise, African Spurred Tortoise *G. sulcata* (CITES II), and Bell's Hinged Tortoise *Kinixys belliana* (II)—owing to the risk of heartwater disease.

On 11 May 2009, at Taipei International Airport, two people returning from Jakarta, Indonesia, were stopped by Customs after 27 kg and 14.9 kg of agarwood *Aquilaria* (CITES II) was discovered in their respective luggage; no CITES permit could be presented. The agarwood was seized and the case has been sent to the district prosecution office.

www.libertytimes.com.tw/2009/new/feb/14/today-life4.htm; Customs and Forestry police, Taiwan;
<http://news.chinatimes.com/2007Cti/2007Cti-Rtn/2007Cti-Rtn-Content/0,4526,110105+112009051100884,00.html>

SOUTH ASIA

INDIA: In the latter part of 2008, Kerala State Forest Department officials became aware that some 11 species of owl were being smuggled from Kerala to Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, north India and Gujarat. The eyes of the birds are reportedly used in black magic rituals in the belief that consumption will improve eyesight; the blood is also consumed. Investigations to locate agents trading in owls are now under way in the light of the findings that there is a well-established smuggling chain. Owls are fully protected under Schedule I of the *Wild Life Act*.

On 7 January 2009, personnel of the Customs Preventative Force stationed at Pallel Gate, Chandel district, Manipur, seized 58.4 kg of deer [species not reported] horn antlers and 116 kg of pangolin *Manis* scales from a lorry travelling from Imphal towards Moreh, Manipur, on the border with Myanmar.

On 9 January 2009 it was reported that as many as 43 people were sentenced in Katni, Madhya Pradesh, for poaching and smuggling animal parts, including skins of Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) and Tiger *P. tigris* (I). Eleven people were sentenced to three-years' imprisonment, prominent among them known poachers Shabbir Qureshi, Darya Singh and Ashok Pardhi, who were arrested in June 2004. Singh had cases registered against him in Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. A further 18 people were sentenced to two years' imprisonment and the remainder to one year in gaol.

On 22 January 2009, more than five tonnes of tortoises—some 3000 animals—were seized in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, by the Special Task Force (STF) of the Uttar Pradesh police. This is one of the largest freshwater turtle hauls ever recorded. Three species listed in Schedule I of the *Wild Life (Protection) Act* were identified: Indian Softshell Turtle *Aspideretes gangeticus* (CITES I), Black Pond Turtle *Geoclemys hamiltonii* (I) and Indian Flapshell Turtle *Lissemys punctata punctata* (II). The reptiles were contained in 60 jute sacks, some 50–55 specimens in each. They were released under a court order on the banks of the Yamuna, in the presence of STF officers, Uttar Pradesh State Forest Department officials, and two representatives from the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI) who assisted in the case. Three people, who were transporting the turtles in a lorry, were arrested and sent to Naini Jail.

On 7 February 2009, a jeep carrying three tonnes of live tortoises [species not reported], again sourced from Uttar Pradesh and bound for Kolkata, was seized at a forest checkpoint near Barachatti in Gaya, Bihar.

On 31 January 2009, the north-east district police of Delhi confiscated a large consignment of art brushes made out of mongoose hair at a factory in the Bhajanpura area. Police officers arrested two people and the owner is being sought. All species of mongoose *Herpestes* are protected under Schedule 2 Part II of the *Wildlife Protection Act, 1972*.

According to Saurabh Gupta, wildlife officer from People for Animals, who notified the police about the consignment, more than 30 000 brushes were confiscated, part of a consignment to be sent by road from Delhi to Mumbai. Gupta states that to make the brushes, the live mongoose is killed by placing it in boiling water where it remains for several hours, after which time its skin and hair is removed by machine. Between one and five grammes of hair are recovered from one mongoose, which means that this consignment was derived from over 100 000 specimens. The brushes are made in the Sherkot area of Bijnor district, Uttar Pradesh, and are sold worldwide. The owner of the factory has similar cases registered against him following raids at outlets belonging to him in other parts of the city. A case under the *Wildlife Protection Act* has been registered and investigations into the matter continue.

On 16 February 2009, personnel from Assam Rifle's 20th battalion in Chandel district, Manipur, seized animal parts, including skulls of two Tigers *Panthera tigris* (CITES I), two Tiger paws, 16 kg of Tiger bones, 340 kg of pangolin *Manis* (CITES II) shell and 191 deer antlers from a lorry at a checkpoint in Bongyang village. The vehicle was heading towards Moreh, on the border with Myanmar. Sources said that the consignment was to be smuggled to Myanmar from where it would have headed to East and South-east Asian markets.

According to Pranabesh Sanyal, former director of the Sunderbans Tiger Reserve, it is possible that the animals were poached in eastern Uttar Pradesh. "This seems to be a new route that the poachers are using to smuggle animal parts to South-east Asia," he said.

The Moreh-Myanmar and Assam-Siliguri routes are the major conduits for trade in illegal wildlife parts from the north-eastern region and, reportedly, from other States in the country, including Red Sandalwood *Pterocarpus santalinus* (CITES II) from Andhra Pradesh (see below).

On 26 February 2009, at Bhavnagar Court, in Gir, Gujarat, Prabhakar Keshav Gajakosh was sentenced to five years' 'rigorous' imprisonment (or hard labour) for poaching Asiatic Lions *Panthera leo persica* (CITES I). Others, members of a gang of which Gajakosh was leader, and who are already in prison for an earlier Lion smuggling case, were sentenced to terms of up to five years' 'rigorous' imprisonment and fines of Rs2000 (USD40). They will serve both sentences concurrently and were also each fined Rs2000. This is a landmark judgement in the country for a wildlife poaching case.

Gajakosh, well known to the police and with national and international links, was arrested on 13 December 2007 following information passed on to Karnataka police officials by the Gujarat police force. In his possession were skins of 23 Leopards *Panthera pardus* (CITES I), three Tiger (I) skins and 20 river otter skins.

On 20 March 2009, in one of the biggest operations to combat the illegal trade in wildlife parts, officers of the Assam police, the Central Reserve Police Force and State Wildlife officials carried out search operations near Manas National Park in Barpeta district where they recovered skins and bones of animals including Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I), Tiger *P. tigris* (I), Gaur *Bos gaurus* (I), and deer. Sixteen people were arrested.

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Earth/Kerala_Smuggling_of_owls/articleshow/3749664.cms, 24 November 2008; *The Sangai Express*, 12 January 2009, www.e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=3.130109.jan09;
http://timesofindia.india-times.com/Health_Science/Earth/43_jailed_for_smuggling_animal_parts_in_MP/articleshow/3962751.cms; Wildlife Protection Society of India, www.wpsi-india.org/news/-25012009.php, 25 January 2009; www.zeenews.com/states/2009-02-07/505638news.html; http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Delhi/30000_mongoose_hair_brushes_seized_2_held/articleshow/4057990.cms;
www.the-states-man.net/-page.arcview.php?clid=-10&id=276710&usrss=1, 14 February 2009;
http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Health_Science/Earth/Tiger-skulls-drugs-bound-for-China-seized-in-Manipur/articleshow/4152868.cms, 19 February 2009; <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/India/16-poachers-get-5-yr-jail-for-killing-Gir-lions/rssarticleshow/4198248.cms>; <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Cities/Rajkot/From-timber-to-tiger-skin-trade-Gajakosh-did-it-all/articleshow/4197270.cms>, 26/27 February 2009; www.theshillongtimes.com, 23 March 2009; Akhilesh Kumar, *TRAFFIC India*, in litt., 16 April 2009

Seizures involving Red Sandalwood *Pterocarpus santalinus* (CITES II)

In December 2008, personnel of Assam Rifles 20th battalion (a paramilitary force) at Bongyang village, Chandel district, Manipur, seized 75 kg of Red Sandalwood *Pterocarpus santalinus* (CITES II), along with elephant (I) tusks, trunks and jaw parts, deer skins and deer antlers. The consignment had been on its way to Myanmar through Moreh, Manipur, on the border with Myanmar.

On 9 December 2008, officials of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), Coimbatore, seized 10.51 t of Red Sandalwood logs. The consignment was bound for Kochi from Bangalore and was intended for export. The logs have been deposited at the Inland Container Depot at Singanallur, Tamil Nadu.

On 24 December 2008, a joint raid conducted by the police and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) (a border guarding force) at Gossaigaon, in Kokrajhar district, Western Assam, yielded around 630 deer antlers and nearly 3000 kg of Red Sandalwood. No arrests were made. The raid was carried out at a saw mill that had closed down several years earlier following a Supreme Court ban on tree-felling in the north-eastern region in 1996. Kokrajhar Divisional Forest Officer (Wildlife), Sonali Ghosh, said the recovery of such a huge consignment had confirmed that a powerful international racket was at work in the area.

On 3 April 2009, police and forest personnel seized an undisclosed amount of Red Sandalwood from a lorry at Kurunji Nagar checkpoint, Dharmapuri, Tamil Nadu. There were three arrests.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Health-Science/Earth/Tiger-skulls-drugs-bound-for-China-seized-in-Manipur/articleshow/4152868.cms>; www.thehindu.com/2008/12/12/stories/2008121260250800.htm; www.indianexpress.com/news/huge-haul-of-animal-parts-in-assam/403031/; www.hindu.com/2009/04/05/stories/2009040558940800.htm; Akhilesh Kumar, TRAFFIC India, in litt., 16 April 2009

PAKISTAN: In March 2009, Sindh Wildlife Department officials seized a consignment of some 550 Horsefield's Tortoises *Testudo horsefieldii* (CITES II) from the cargo compartment of a Quetta-Karachi bound train. The Pakistan Railways must check before registering any cargo to see what it holds; these boxes had been officially registered as normal cargo. Daulat Khan was arrested and fined Rs2000 (USD40). He was ordered to sign an agreement that he will stop capturing and trading tortoises; if he reoffends he will be fined Rs0.5 million.

The tortoises were to be released in the wild. They had been collected from the apple and grape orchards of Quetta, Naushaki and other districts of Balochistan; they were to be sold at market in Karachi. Fish aquaria in Karachi have apparently started to keep this species as showpieces and the reptile is also in demand in the pet trade.

www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C03%5C05%5Cstory_5-3-2009_pg12_6, 5 March 2009

SOUTH-EAST ASIA

In the last six months of 2008, law enforcement action against illegal wildlife traders throughout South-east Asia was stepped up and resulted in the seizure of more than 24 175 specimens of protected species destined for restaurants, tanneries, the pet trade and other industries, and led to more than 100 arrests. This action reflects the commitment and increasing capacity of the ASEAN-WEN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations Wildlife Enforcement Network) to fight wildlife crime. Under ASEAN-WEN, more officers are being trained to detect, investigate and act against illegal trade.

"The number of illegal wildlife shipments being seized shows that authorities throughout South-east Asia have stepped up their efforts to stop trafficking in protected species this year," said Dr Chumphon Suckaseam, Senior Officer for the ASEAN-WEN Program Co-ordination Unit (the Bangkok-based operational headquarters of ASEAN-WEN).

In total, 25 major wildlife law enforcement actions have been reported by local authorities since July 2008, eclipsing the 16 reported for the same period in 2007. Where possible, rescued animals

were placed in rehabilitation centres. Over 14 t of dead animals were also recovered by authorities in the second half of 2008, most of which were destroyed.

ASEAN-WEN PressRelease_ASEANStepsupFightAgainstWildlifeCrim.pdf, 18 December 2008

CAMBODIA: On 9 November 2008, Cambodia's Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team (WRRT) rescued hundreds of live reptiles from traffickers in Kg Chnnang Province. More than 485 kg of turtles, tortoises and snakes, including Burmese Pythons *Python molurus* (CITES II) and Yellow-headed Temple Turtles *Hieremys annandalii* (II) were recovered from two vehicles headed for the Viet Nam border. Two people were arrested.

www.asean-wen.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=75:major-wildlife-law-enforcement-actions-southeast-asia-july-december-2008&catid=34:law-enforcement-actions&Itemid=86

INDONESIA: On 16 November 2008, sea port police seized some 150 kg of frozen pangolin *Manis* (CITES II) meat found in boxes in an empty taxi at Bahauheni Port, Lampung.

On 23 March 2009, police in Bali arrested a Czech national wanted internationally for his alleged leading role in a wildlife smuggling network in Brazil. The arrest came after intensive investigative and surveillance work by Indonesian police officers who were able to locate and arrest him on the basis of an INTERPOL Red Notice (issued to seek the provisional arrest of a wanted person with a view to extradition based on an arrest warrant or court decision), and international law enforcement intelligence after he entered the country. The operation followed information received from the Czech police and involved collaboration between INTERPOL's National Central Bureaus (NCBs) in Brasilia, Jakarta, Prague, Malaysia and Qatar, the Czech Environmental Inspectorate, Austrian authorities, and INTERPOL's Fugitive Investigative Support (FIS) unit in Geneva.

"All crimes with an international dimension call for international law enforcement co-operation. The arrest of this wanted individual demonstrates the results that can be achieved when the fight against crime is taken to the frontline as part of concerted international action using global law enforcement networks and resources," said INTERPOL's Executive Director of Police Services, Jean-Michel Louboutin.

www.asean-wen.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=75:major-wildlife-law-enforcement-actions-southeast-asia-july-december-2008&catid=34:law-enforcement-actions&Itemid=86; Interpol media release, 24 March 2009: www.interpol.int/Public/ICPO/PressReleases/PR2009/PR200925.asp

MALAYSIA: On 2 November 2008, marine police based in Sandakan seized 10 000 Green Turtle *Chelonia mydas* (CITES I) eggs that had been abandoned on Kampung Forest beach; four people escaped by speedboat. This is the largest seizure of turtle eggs by local authorities in 2009 to date.

On 29 April 2009, 15 t of Red Sandalwood (CITES II) *Pterocarpus santalinus* was seized at the Westport Free Zone, following weeks of surveillance by the Port Klang Authority and the Malaysian Timber Industry Board (MTIB). The wood was exported from Haldia Port in Orissa, India (where it is found only in Cuddhpah and Chittoore, in Andhra Pradesh), and was on its way to China where it is in high demand.

MTIB Director-General Dr Jalaluddin Harun said the huge demand for the rare sandalwood had enticed smugglers to use Westport as a transshipment route in the illegal trading of the exotic wood.

"The sandalwood was declared as galvanized iron. Cut as logs measuring 1.2 m to 3.4 m with a width of 20 cm, all the 269 Red Sandalwood logs were stacked in a container," he said. He added that smugglers had attempted to use Malaysia, Singapore and even Myanmar as transshipment hubs to bring the wood to China.

Red Sandalwood does not yield oil and is fragrant when fresh. It is used in the carving of statues of Chinese deities, altars, traditional musical instruments and furniture.

Dr Jalaluddin said that MTIB had uncovered seven smuggling cases involving Red Sandalwood this year to date.

Port Klang Free Zone manager R. Sri Muhunan said the port risk management team would continue to be on high alert for such smugglers.

"We will work with the authorities and neighbouring ports to ensure that illegal trading of exotic wood is curbed."

http://asean-wen.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=75:major-wildlife-law-enforcement-actions-southeast-asia-july-december-2008&catid=34:law-enforcement-actions&Itemid=86<http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2009/5/20/nation/3944561&sec=nation>

Pangolin seizures in Malaysia:

On 19 October 2008, marine police seized 42 pangolins *Manis* (CITES II) from a vessel in the Malacca Straits and arrested two people who are being investigated under Sections 64 and 66(2)(a) of the *Wildlife Protection Act 1972*. The boat was handed over to the Department of Wildlife and National Parks.

On 25 November, Malaysian marine police from Maur seized 65 pangolins in a raid on a house in Bukit Pasir. Three people were detained. On 3 December 2008 they seized a further 44 pangolins from a fishing boat near Sungai Balang. Two suspects were detained.

The New Straits Times (Malaysia): www.nst.com.my/Current_News/NST/Sunday/NewsBreak/20081019220721/Article/pppull_index_html; 19 October 2008; http://asean-wen.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=75:major-wildlife-law-enforcement-actions-southeast-asia-july-december-2008&catid=34:law-enforcement-actions&Itemid=86

Seizures in Malaysia including Clouded Monitors:

Several major seizures over the last year highlight the high volume of Clouded Monitors *Varanus nebulosus* in illegal trade. The species is listed in CITES I and totally protected under Malaysian law.

On 21 October 2008, the East Coast Marine Police Intelligence Unit seized a total of 1272 animals, including 1244 Clouded Monitors that were stored in plastic containers and wooden crates in a jungle cabin at Bukit Astana, Indera Mahkota, in Kuantan, the capital of Pahang. Also seized were 17 Common Water Monitors *Varanus salvator* (CITES II) and 11 pythons *Pythonidae*. All animals, which are protected under the *Wildlife Animal Protection Act 1972*, were handed over to the Wildlife and National Parks Department (Perhilitan). It is believed they were being stored before shipment to markets in China, Hong Kong and Thailand. No-one was present when the cabin was raided but the case is under investigation.

During two raids in November 2008, staff of Perhilitan seized over 7000 live Clouded Monitors and almost 900 dead owls. A local man was arrested but pleaded not guilty and has been released on bail.

During the first raid, on 4 November, in Muar, in the State of Johor, officials recovered from a freezer and storage room some 796 Barn Owls *Tyto alba*, 95 Spotted Wood-Owls *Strix selaputo*, 14 Buffy Fish Owls *Ketupa ketupu*, eight Barred Eagle-Owls *Bubo sumatranus* and four Brown Wood-Owls *Strix leptogrammica*, two Crested Serpent-Eagles *Spilornis cheela*, Reticulated Python *Python reticulatus*, Malayan Pangolin *Manis javanica* (all species listed in CITES II); 51 live Clouded Monitors, Sun Bear *Helarctos malayanus* (CITES I), four live juvenile Wild Pigs *Sus scrofa*, plus parts of one or more Wild Pig, Malayan Porcupine *Hystrix brachyura* and Greater Mouse Deer *Tragulus napu*.

Information obtained during that raid led to a search of a storage facility in Segamat, Johor, on 7 November, where 7093 live Clouded Monitors were seized.

"The number of owls and monitor lizards seized is truly staggering," said Chris R. Shepherd, Senior Programme Officer for TRAFFIC's Southeast Asia office. "This is the first time we know of where 'ready-prepared' owls have been seized in Malaysia, and it may mark the start of a new trend in wild meat from the region. We will be monitoring developments closely."

As well as being listed in CITES, all the species receive some degree of protection under Malaysian legislation. The specimens are believed to have originated in Malaysia and were probably bound for China, to be sold in wild meat restaurants.

In December 2008, at Kuala Lumpur International Airport cargo complex, Perhilitan staff foiled an attempt to smuggle 676 Clouded Monitors out of the country during an inspection of white gunny sacks. The lizards were found hidden under boxes of fish; also seized were python meat and skin, and civet meat. A man was arrested.

On 11 January 2009, Perhilitan staff raided a car repair workshop in Jalan Bukit Ubi and discovered a massive haul of meat destined for the restaurant trade, and over two thousand live reptiles being held in cages, including 2330 live Clouded Monitors, as well as 25 hind legs and 22 paws of Malayan Sun Bears *Helarctos malayanus* (CITES I) and 319 skinned owl carcasses. Three men were arrested and released. The department was to use DNA samples to confirm the origin of the animals. All the remains were sent to Perhilitan headquarters in Kuala Lumpur. The Clouded Monitors were to be released in their natural habitat.

On 15 April 2009, Perhilitan officials stopped a lorry carrying 1202 Clouded Monitors on a highway in Pahang. The officers from Pahang, joined by their counterparts from the department's Wildlife Crime Unit in Kuala Lumpur, gave chase when a five-tonnes-lorry they flagged down refused to stop. The officers discovered the live lizards in bags in the back of the lorry. Initial investigations revealed the lorry driver and two assistants had come from the southern state of Johor to buy the lizards from indigenous people who had caught the reptiles along the east coast of Peninsula Malaysia.

The haul was believed to be destined for the restaurant trade overseas. Based on information from this seizure, the team later raided the home of a man in an indigenous peoples' settlement nearby and seized another 34 more Clouded Monitors and two Dumeril's Monitor Lizards *V. dumerilii*. All the lizards have since been released back into the wild.

www.nst.com.my/Current_News/NST/Wednesday/National/2382187/Article/index_html, 22 October 2008; *TRAFFIC Southeast Asia*; www.wildlifeextra.com/go/news/malaysia-crime827.html, 19 November 2009; *The Star (Malaysia)*, 21 December 2008; www.traffic.org/home/2009/4/17/clouded-and-dumerils-monitor-lizards-seized-in-malaysia.html, 17 April 2009; www.nst.com.my/Current_News/NST/Tuesday/National/2451713/Article/pppull_index_html, 13 January 2009

PHILIPPINES: On 19 October 2008, rangers guarding the Tubbataha National Marine Park arrested 45 suspected poachers from Cebu after they tried to bribe the guards to allow them to collect samung, or Top Shell *Trochus niloticus* (a marine gastropod). Park manager Angelique Songco expressed concern over the increasing illegal incursion of samung gatherers in Tubbataha, stating that they had already apprehended over 200 samung gatherers from Cebu and northern Palawan in the past year.

The suspects face criminal charges, including violation of *Fisheries Administrative Order No 28* which classifies samung as a threatened species.

The shell of the snail is characterized by a lustrous mother-of-pearl layering and used primarily for high-quality buttons and ornamental materials. It is reportedly bought at a high price by traders mainly based in Cebu.

On 8 December 2008, police officials recovered 300 Common Hill Mynahs *Gracula religiosa* (CITES II), three Mongooses *Herpestes* and a Binturong *Arctictis binturong* (III).

Southern Luzon Bureau, 22 October 2008, <http://news.inquirer.net/breakingnews/regions/view/20081022-167879/45-poachers-nabbed-in-Tubbataha-Reefs>; www.asean-wen.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=75:major-wildlife-law-enforcement-actions-southeast-asia-july-december-2008&catid=34:law-enforcement-actions&Itemid=86

THAILAND: On 18 December 2008, Customs officers intercepted a lorry in Prachuab Khirikhan Province and found 130 pangolins *Manis* (CITES II) in cases. The Thai driver was arrested. The mammals, brought in from Songkhla Province, were believed to be for export to China.

In February 2009, police at a checkpoint in Chaiyaphum intercepted a vehicle carrying 66 pangolins into Lao PDR. Two people were arrested. The pangolins had been purchased at a petrol station from a Thai man who had smuggled the animals from the south of the country; they were to be transported to an individual in Nonthaburi in Lao PDR.

Fishermen in Trang, a coastal province on the Indian Ocean, have asked the government to control the illegal trade in Dugongs *Dugong dugon* (CITES I) after they found many foreign fishermen hunting the animals and smuggling them out to Singapore. The illegal hunt is reported to be carried out by foreign fishermen especially from the neighbouring southern province of Satun, on the border with Malaysia, who reportedly throw bombs into cairns or near coral reefs, with the resulting explosion bringing up many fish. Singapore is said to be the biggest market for the trade in Dugongs for medicine and amulets.

www.straitstimes.com/print/Breaking%2BNews/SE%2BAsia/Story/STIStory_316412.html, 19 December 2008; www.newvision.co.ug/D/18/12/1675746, 24 March, 2009; www.nationmultimedia.com/breakingnews/30095160/Police-rescue-pangolins-in-Chaiyaphum; 23 March 2009; www.asiaone.com/News/Latest%2BNews/Asia/Story/A/Story20090323-130364.html

VIET NAM: On 19 December 2008, Customs officials seized some five tonnes of frozen pangolin *Manis* (CITES II) meat in northern Quang Ninh Province, believed to be bound for China. The consignment, in 270 boxes, was reported to have come from 1481 pangolins.

On 10 January 2009, in the country's largest-ever seizure of illegally traded wildlife products, Hanoi's Environmental Police confiscated more than two tonnes of Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) bones, bear paws and gall bladders, as well as piles of other animal bones.

The investigation began after Environmental Police officers apprehended a man who was found to be transporting a set of Tiger bones and 10 kg of bones and horns of Serow *Naemorhedus sumatraensis* (CITES II) in the city's Ba Dinh district. That same day, 10 police officers raided a store in the Dong Da district belonging to the suspect where the wildlife parts were destined. Another set of Tiger bones, six frozen pieces of Tiger skin, seven bear (CITES I) paws, 16 bear gall bladders, six porcupine stomachs and 69 bags of bones from various wild animals were discovered. The testimony of the suspect led to the arrest of a man manufacturing Tiger bone gel in a warehouse belonging to the suspect.

"While this case underscores the very serious threat that illegal trade poses to many of Viet Nam's endangered wildlife populations, we continue to be impressed and encouraged by the good work that the Environmental Police are doing," said Nguyen Dao Ngoc Van, of TRAFFIC's Greater Mekong Programme in Viet Nam. Van says the case is the latest in a string of major seizures, and reflects Hanoi's improved enforcement capacity since the Environmental Police were established as a division of the Hanoi Police Department in 2007.

"The presence of the Environmental Police in Viet Nam will change illegal wildlife trade for the better," Van said.

Nevertheless, TRAFFIC was critical of Viet Nam's decision to auction off confiscated pangolins in Hai Phong in October 2008. Two months later Customs officials seized another 4400 kg of frozen pangolins and 900 kg of pangolin scales in Cai Lan seaport, Quang Ninh.

"Selling off the seized pangolins sent out entirely the wrong message," said Sulma Warne, TRAFFIC's Greater Mekong Programme Co-ordinator. "Whilst it was permissible under Vietnamese law, it undermined the very enforcement efforts that led to the seizure, for which the government received much-deserved praise."

"The latest seizure in Quang Ninh reaffirms the need to destroy all seized wildlife products, as sell-offs such as the one in October only help to increase demand for pangolins in the region. We

call on the authorities to think carefully about how they deal with the seized pangolins in this case," Warne added.

In January 2009, Forest Protection Department officials acting on information, intercepted a lorry in Binh Dinh Province travelling towards the Chinese border with 24 King Cobras *Ophiophagus hannah* (CITES II) (40 kg) on board. The driver stated that the snakes had been collected from the wild just hours before; once the specimens had been individually inspected and found to be in good condition, it was decided to release them immediately in selected sites in Cat Tien National Park. Staff of Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Centre (CCWRC) assisted in the confiscation and release of the snakes.

On 6 March 2009, at Dinh Vu Port, Hai Phong city, Customs officials discovered over six tonnes of tusks contained in 114 boxes of cartons covered with bags of plastic waste—the largest-ever seizure of tusks in the country. The container was on a ship carrying a Malaysian flag which arrived at the port on 28 February. The receiver written in the bill of lading is a company based in Hai Phong city. The smuggled goods started their journey in Tanzania in late January 2009, and transited Malaysia before entering Viet Nam.

Each of the tusks was cut into two to three sections and numbered. According to the initial appraisal, the tusks belong to African Elephants *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I) and were from specimens of all ages. It was reported that the department would be handing all documents and exhibits from the case over to the Hai Phong police for further investigation.

"The Vietnamese enforcement authorities are to be congratulated for their vigilance in bringing about this important seizure," commented Steven Broad, Executive Director of TRAFFIC. "This incident underlines TRAFFIC's earlier warnings about the involvement of organized criminal gangs in ivory smuggling," he said.

In February 2009, a TRAFFIC report revealed record prices for illegal ivory in Viet Nam and in 2007 another TRAFFIC report presented to the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES warned that Asian-run organized crime syndicates based in Africa were being implicated in the increase in illegal elephant ivory trade in Asia (see also pages 83–91 in this issue).

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/msid-3873473,prtpage-1.cms>, 22 December 2008; www.ens-newswire.com/ens/jan2009/2009-01-21-02.asp, 21 January 2009; www.traffic.org/home/2009/11/19/hanoi-environmental-police-record-largest-ever-seizure.html; www.nhandan.com.vn/english/life/300309/life_cas.htm, 30 March 2009; www.traffic.org/home/2009/3/9/massive-ivory-seizure-in-viet-nam.html, 9 March 2009; www.wildlifeextra.com/go/news/vietnam-cobras009.htm#cr27/03/209

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA: On 7 January 2009, an Indonesian fishing vessel was apprehended inside the Australian Fishing Zone, 320 nautical miles north-west of Broome, Western Australia, during an operation co-ordinated by Border Protection Command. On board were approximately two tonnes of tuna, 30 kg of shark fin and 10 kg of shark fillet. The 12 crew members were to be transported to Darwin for further investigation by the Australian Fisheries Management Authority.

On 20 February 2009, Customs and Border Protection officials arrested a Sydney man for allegedly attempting to smuggle 44 native reptiles out of Australia through Sydney International Airport, bound for Bangkok. The reptiles, detected during x-ray screening of the man's luggage, consisted of 24 Shingleback Lizards *Tiliqua rugosus*, 16 bluetongue lizards *Tiliqua*, three Black-headed Pythons *Aspidites melanocephalus* (CITES II) and one albino Carpet Python *Morelia spilota* (II), an endangered species with numbers in the wild estimated to be as low as 100.

Officials removed the man from the aircraft and he was subsequently arrested and granted conditional bail. He will face charges relating to the export of native species without a permit under section 303DD(1) of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

The reptiles are being cared for at Sydney Wildlife World.

Australian Customs media releases, 8 January/23 February 2009

NEW ZEALAND: In June 2008, at Auckland Airport, Border Inspection officials intercepted a Vietnamese national arriving from Viet Nam after she was found to be concealing 24 vials of bear bile inside packets of tea contained in her baggage, in contravention of S44(1)(b) of the *Trade in Endangered Species Act 1989*.

The suspect claimed the substance was tree oil but forensic analysis confirmed the presence of Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus* (CITES I). She was charged and appeared in court, was granted bail and absconded. She is believed to be in Viet Nam and a warrant has been issued for her arrest.

New Zealand Wildlife Enforcement Group

AMERICAS

CANADA: On 17 February 2009, at Richmond Provincial Court, Wing Quon Enterprises Ltd of Richmond, British Columbia, was fined CAD45 000 (USD36 500) after pleading guilty to possessing medicines containing Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) parts for the purpose of offering for sale. The company was also ordered to forfeit medicines and products containing wildlife ingredients from the following CITES species: Tiger, Costus root *Saussurea costus* (I), Agarwood *Aquilaria* (II), bear, pangolin *Manis* (II) musk deer *Moschus* (I/II) and rhinoceros (I).

This is the first conviction in Canada under the *Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act* (WAPPRIITA) for the offence of possessing Tiger, for the purpose of selling or offering to sell it.

CAD40 000 of the fine will be directed to TRAFFIC, which has been assisting Environment Canada on this investigation—which began three years ago—by providing information on the trade and conservation of the species involved.

Environment Canada news release, 18 February 2009: www.ec.gc.ca

CHILE: A navy patrol boat in Arica captured a small vessel travelling by night from Peru after it was found to contain more than 400 wildlife specimens. The animals, in nets and cages, included 308 marine turtles, 40 tortoises, 11 caimans, 20 macaws, 20 loros, three toucans and 25 squirrels [species undisclosed].

A crew member of the vessel, who was detained, confessed that the animals had been obtained in Los Palos, Peru, and were being brought to Chile for sale. He was prosecuted for possession of illegal contraband and mistreatment of animals. The shipment was returned to Peru.

www.elcomercio.com.pe/ediciononline/HTML/2009-01-13/capturan-chile-lancha-peruana-animales-exoticos-contrabando.html

PERU: On 14 January 2009, a lorry containing some 12–14 t of seaweed was intercepted and three people were arrested. The suspects—miners and farmers who had left their usual activities motivated by the demand for seaweed as manure and for food—had been operating on various beaches in Ocucaje (Ica district, southern Peru), in contravention of a Ministerial Resolution (No. 839), issued on 5 December 2008, which prohibits the extraction, removal or processing of this resource in coastal regions.

The authorities indicated that the seaweed would either be incinerated or sold to a firm operating legitimately. The case is under investigation.

On 11 February 2009, ecology police officials undertaking a routine search of a national police aircraft in the province of Purus uncovered more than 3500 pieces of Big-leaf Mahogany *Swietenia macrophylla* (CITES II). The police were initially refused entry to the aircraft and had to get a search warrant. Following seizure of the timber, it was transported to a warehouse belonging to INRENA

(National Institute of Natural Resources); the plane was grounded until the investigation is concluded.

On 14 February 2009, some 150 Vicuñas *Vicugna vicugna* (CITES I/II) in the Huancabamba community in Andahuaylas Province were killed for their fleeces; the poachers fled the scene when police arrived, leaving the wool behind. Other items left at the scene suggest an organized criminal gang from Bolivia may have been responsible.

www.elcomercio.com.pe/edicionimpresa/HTML/2009-01-15/decomisan-mas-10-toneladas-algas.html;
www.gacetaucayalina.com/2009/02/intervienen-avion-de-la-pnp-con-carga-ilegal-de-caoba-en-aeropuerto-de-pucallpa.html, 11 February 2009; www.elcomercio.com.pe/noticia/246982/caz-adores-furtivos-matan-mas-50-vicunas-andahuaylas, 16 February 2009; www.elcomercio.com.pe/noticia/247986/ banda-internacional-podria-culpable-matanza-vicunas-apurimac, 18 February 2009

USA: On 13 January 2009, Pa Lor and Tia Yang, both of Minnesota, were sentenced for conspiracy to import wildlife into the country and were sentenced to two years' probation. In addition, Yang was sentenced to five months' home confinement, 40 hours of community service and fined USD9000. As part of Lor's sentence, she also agreed to work with federal officials to develop educational materials designed specifically for the Hmong community.

The case against the two women began in October 2005 when Lor was found attempting to smuggle 1388 pieces of wildlife into the country through the Minneapolis-St Paul International Airport following her return from Lao PDR. This led to a three-year, multi-agency investigation into Lor's and Yang's illegal wildlife smuggling operation, and involved co-operation between the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Customs and Border Protection and the US Food and Drug Administration.

Over 5000 items and body parts were seized during the investigation and derived from, among many species, Asian Elephant *Elephas maximus* (CITES I), Serow *Naemorhedus sumatraensis* (I), Red-shanked Douc Langur *Pygathrix nemaeus nemaeus* (I), Clouded Leopard *Neofelis nebulosa* (I), Asiatic Golden Cat *Catopuma temminckii* (I), Leopard Cat *Prionailurus bengalensis* (I/II), Slow Loris *Nycticebus coucang* (I), Asian Tapir *Tapirus indicus* (I), pangolin *Manis* (II) and included some 120 Asian Salamanders *Paramesotriton laoensis*—a species only discovered in 2002, and only found in Lao PDR.

As part of the investigation, the USFWS arranged for two undercover operations at Lor's place of business during both of which agents were sold parts of endangered species. On one of these occasions, Lor explained how she was able to bring these items into the country illegally. In addition, she told the agent that because these items were illegal to possess, he needed to be careful how he transported them to ensure he wasn't caught with the items.

On 13 February 2009, a German national, was arraigned in the US District Court in Alexandria, Virginia, charged on three felony counts with smuggling protected coral into the port of Portland, Oregon, three felony counts of violating the *Lacey Act* and three misdemeanor charges of violating the *Endangered Species Act*.

Law enforcement officials arrested the suspect on 11 February as he entered the country at Dulles Airport, en route to the Global Pet Expo in Orlando, Florida. He is reported to own a company, based in Essen, Germany, and has sold various coral products to retailers in the USA. An investigation was launched in 2007 after the suspect tried to ship to Portland a container loaded with fragments of coral taken from reefs off the Philippine coast. After this initial shipment, agents subsequently seized two full containers of endangered coral shipped by the suspect to a customer in Portland. These two shipments made up a total of over 40 t of coral.

The seized corals have been identified as species in the order Scleractinia, and *Porites*, *Acropora*, and *Pocillopora* spp. (all CITES species). Philippine law specifically forbids exports of all coral and permits are required for importation of CITES species.

On 24 February 2009, Toru Shimoji of Smyrna, Georgia, was fined USD15 000 for the illegal possession of a Snow Leopard *Uncia uncia* (CITES I) carcass and skulls of protected animals, in violation of the *Endangered Species Act*, the *Lacey Act*, and the *Migratory Bird Act*. He was ordered to pay a fine of USD15 000 to the *Lacey Act Reward Account* and placed on probation for two years; all seized wildlife was forfeited.

In December 2007, Shimoji had purchased the Snow Leopard carcass over the internet. The "seller" was in fact a US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) Special Agent working undercover. A search warrant was executed at Shimoji's home where agents discovered over 45 skulls of protected animals in his collection.

On 24 February 2009, Max Moghaddam (also known as Bahmadi Moghaddam Mohammad and Mohammad Moghaddam), of Plantation, Florida, and Bemka Corporation House of Caviar and Fine Foods, of Fort Lauderdale, were sentenced for their involvement in conspiracy, false labelling of export shipments, and the illegal export of internationally protected fish roe during the period July 2005 through April 2007.

Moghaddam and Bemka were convicted in December 2008 for their participation in the export of significant quantities of the roe of the Mississippi Paddlefish *Polyodon spathula* (CITES II), contrary to the *Lacey Act* and the *Endangered Species Act*.

Moghaddam was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment, fined USD100 000, and ordered to serve a three-year period of supervision upon his release. Bemka was fined USD200 000 and ordered to serve a four-year term of probation. The paddlefish roe were forfeited.

According to the evidence and documents presented, none of the participants in the shipments applied for or secured the necessary permits, and the Mississippi Paddlefish was falsely described on shipping invoices and Customs documents as bowfin roe. The scheme was detected when a wildlife inspector on duty at Atlanta-Hartsfield Airport became suspicious of the appearance of the fish roe in a shipment awaiting transport to Brussels.

On 19 March 2009, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) announced that 18 individuals had been charged following an extensive undercover investigation into the poaching, smuggling and illegal sale of protected reptiles and amphibians. Operation Shellshock uncovered a lucrative, international black market for poaching and selling native, protected New York species through the internet and at herpetological shows. Investigators found thousands of turtles being laundered through middlemen in other States, and shipped overseas for meat and other uses. The species—some 2400 specimens—included: Wood Turtles *Glyptemys insculpta* (classified as Vulnerable by IUCN), Common Snapping Turtles *Chelydra serpentina*, box turtles *Terrapene* spp. (CITES I/II); Blanding's Turtles *Eumeces blandingii*, and two Yellow-spotted Sideneck Turtles *Podocnemis unifilis* (CITES II and classified as Vulnerable by IUCN); Timber Rattlesnakes *Crotalus horridus*, Massasauga Rattlesnakes *Sistrurus catenatus*, Northern Copperheads *Agkistrodon contortrix*, and Eastern Hognose Snakes *Heterodon platyrhinos*.

The investigation, which began in 2007 and was co-ordinated through DEC's Bureau of Environmental Crimes Investigation (BECI), was one of the most extensive undercover operations DEC has ever undertaken. Investigators worked closely with officials from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Florida, the USFWS, the US Immigration and Customs Service, the New York State Attorney General's Office, Environment Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

The investigation found that New York's Timber Rattlesnakes and Wood Turtles were shipped out of State and out of the country to support high-end collectors. Thousands of Common Snapping Turtles laundered through a Louisiana turtle farm were illegally shipped to China and poachers were stealing turtle eggs as soon as they were laid. Investigators were able to recover some 33 Massasauga Rattlesnakes from a smuggler from Canada.

As a result of Operation Shellshock, the USFWS and the US Attorney's Office for the Western District of New York are also pursuing *Lacey Act* charges against a Maryland meat processor for the knowing purchase of illegally trapped Common Snapping Turtles, and against a Louisiana turtle farm

operator for the knowing purchase of illegally taken Common Snapping Turtle hatchlings and the export of such hatchlings to China.

Pennsylvania authorities have charged six individuals and are continuing their investigation. Canadian officials have charged one individual.

New York prohibits the illegal trade in wildlife; a law enacted in 2006 gives protection to all reptiles and amphibians. The State also bans unlawful possession of protected species.

On 1 May 2009, at US District Court, Camden, New Jersey, Style Craft Furniture Co. Ltd, pleaded guilty to one count of smuggling cribs made from material which contained tropical hardwood Ramin *Gonystylus bancanus* (CITES II). The company was sentenced, according to the terms of a plea agreement, to pay USD40 000 and serve three years of probation. In addition, the corporation must pay for an advertisement in a publication in China, and a second in a publication in the USA, advising other members of the industry of its actions and the consequences.

The company is a manufacturer of wooden furniture for infants, based primarily in China. According to documents filed with the court, the company shipped a container of furniture, including cribs and changing tables, from China to the USA at Port Elizabeth, New Jersey. The invoice that Style Craft Furniture Co. Ltd initially submitted to federal authorities when the shipment arrived stated that the wood was Brazilian Marupa *Simarouba* and New Zealand pine, species which are not protected by international or US law.

After the shipment was detained for further examination, Style Craft Furniture Co. Ltd provided a CITES re-export certificate for the shipment, which authorized the re-export of 1.08³ of Ramin from China on 25 May 2005. Sampling of the shipment indicated that the volume of Ramin contained in the shipment was approximately 6.121³.

The president of Style Craft Furniture Co. Ltd was also charged for the smuggling violation. He has agreed to participate in the District of New Jersey's pretrial diversion programme. Under this agreement, he accepts responsibility for his conduct and agrees to comply with conditions for a period of six months; if he successfully completes the programme, the charge against him will be dismissed.

The government's tools to combat the over-harvesting and exploitation of timber and plants were expanded last year when Congress passed the *Food, Conservation and Energy Act 2008*, which became effective on 22 May 2008. The law amended the *Lacey Act* by extending its protection to a broader range of plants and plant products. With effect from 15 December 2008, the *Lacey Act* makes it unlawful, among other things, to import certain plants and plant products without an import declaration.

USFWS news release, 13 January 2009, www.fws.gov/news/NewsReleases/showNews.cfm?newsId=D5F79DE3-DCDF-E6FD-186B78EE1537BEF5; www.fws.gov/midwest/LawEnforcement/traffic.html; Stuart, B.C. and Papenfuss, T.J. (2002). A New Salamander of the Genus *Paramesotriton* (Caudata: Salamandridae) from Laos. *Journal of Herpetology*, 36(2):145–148; www.bioone.org/doi/abs/10.1670/0022-1511%282002%29036%5B0145%3AANSO%5D2.0.CO%3B2?journalCode=hpet; US Department of Justice, 13 February 2009, www.usdoj.gov/opa/pr/2009/February/09-enrd-125.html; Department of Justice press release, 24 February 2009, www.us-doj.gov/usao/gan/press/2009/02-24-09b.pdf; US Department of Justice press release, [www.usdoj.gov/usao/fls/Press Releases/090224-01.html](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/fls/Press%20Releases/090224-01.html), 24 February 2009; New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, 19 March 2009; www.dec.ny.gov/press/52868.html; IUCN 2009. 2009 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2009.1. www.iucnredlist.org. Downloaded on 4 June 2009; TRAFFIC North America; US Department of Justice media release: www.usdoj.gov/opa/pr/2009/May/09-enrd-424.htm, 1 May 2009

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E U R O P E

FRANCE: On 18 August 2009, Bordeaux Customs seized 20 live Spur-thighed Tortoises *Testudo graeca graeca* (CITES II) from a van. The van owner said he wanted to offer them to family members living in France. The tortoises, which were covered in oil (reason unknown, although it has been suggested that this may have been carried out to deter detection by sniffer dogs), came from Morocco and were not accompanied by CITES paperwork. They were sent to a veterinarian for treatment and were to be released either in the wild or in a sanctuary.

On 10 September 2009, Customs officers at Roissy Airport, Paris, inspected nine boxes arriving from Niamey, Niger, on route to Miami; two were labelled as Sahara Mastigures *Uromastyx geyri* (CITES II) and contained 193 live lizards (155 kg, five of which were dead). The CITES documentation presented with the shipment was not accepted because it is illegal in Niger to export wild specimens of this species; the specimens were seized. The shipment owner had correct documentation for the other seven boxes (unspecified reptiles).

The seized reptiles were placed in a farm in Paris in order to acclimatize them for eventual release in their natural habitat or an animal reserve.

www.douane.gouv.fr/page.asp?id=3809, 24 August 2009; TRAFFIC Europe;
www.douane.gouv.fr/page.asp?id=3815, 17 September 2009

NORWAY: On 25 October 2009, authorities in Kristiansand arrested a Norwegian national when he was stopped for a spot check after leaving a passenger ferry arriving from Denmark. Suspicions were aroused when a tarantula was found loose in his bag. A body search revealed that the man was carrying 14 non-venomous young Royal Pythons *Python regius* (CITES II) that had been rolled up and placed in several layers of socks taped to his chest and legs. Ten cans taped to his legs each contained an albino Leopard Gecko *Eublepharis macularius*.

The man was fined NOK12 500 (USD2220). While the fate of the reptiles was being decided by the authorities, the animals were handed into the care of a security firm.

www.dailymail.co.uk/news/worldnews/article-1223122/Snakes-smuggled-plane-Man-arrested-illegally-importing-snakes-lizards-Norway—taping-reptiles-body.html#ixzz0V85ZbKTV

POLAND: On 31 August 2009, a shipment of 25 t of eels declared as *Anguilla japonica* specimens arrived at the port of Szczecin, via Hamburg, from China. Polish Customs carried out DNA tests on the specimens and confirmed that they included European Eels *Anguilla anguilla* (CITES II) as well as *Anguilla japonica* specimens. The importer claims he was not aware of this fact. The consignment was seized and the case is under investigation. The listing of the European Eel in CITES Appendix II came into effect in March 2009.

A Polish company has been found guilty of illegally importing 14 t of *Ginjal*, a drug which contains powdered seahorse *Hippocampus* (CITES II). Although this transaction was in violation of the *Nature Conservation Act*, the court ruled the stock should be returned to the company.

“The illegal tablets should have been confiscated so they can never reach the market-place,” commented Magdalena Romanowicz, Head of WWF Poland’s Reducing Illegal Wildlife Trade initiative.

Ginjal is made in Indonesia exclusively for the Polish market and is used to treat urinary infections. One of its principal ingredients is powdered seahorses, which require CITES permits to be internationally traded.

According to Polish Customs, the company in question had imported around 135 million *Ginjal* tablets since 2004 without the necessary documentation. Although Polish police and Customs had on several occasions raised concerns over the legality of such imports, no action was taken because the drug had been registered by the Ministry of Health.

“This clearly indicates a need for greater communication between the Polish authorities: drugs entering the market should be checked not only for health safety but also for adherence to

environmental regulations to ensure endangered species are not further threatened”, said Romanowicz.

“The history of use of *Ginjal* in Poland clearly shows how a lack of effective action by governmental agencies has allowed a market to exist for a product that should never have made it to our stores”, she added.

On 25 October 2009, at Warsaw’s international airport, Customs officials seized bushmeat from the luggage of a woman travelling from Cameroon, via Frankfurt, and entering the country via the green “nothing to declare” channel. Her luggage was selected for checking and found to contain carcasses of unidentified, small (circa 40 cm-long) apes/monkeys that had been smoked. The items were confiscated and the police informed.

CITES Management Authority, Poland; www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jFg9HENos0-Lxatmxwbal 5W2RFfw, 7 September 2009; WWF Poland; www.traffic.org

RUSSIA: It was reported on 2 December 2009 that police officers at Petropavlovsk Airport, Kamchatka, seized nine Gyrfalcons *Falco rusticolus* (CITES I) from the baggage of a Russian national bound for Vladivostok. According to the Kamchatka Krai Wildlife Protection Agency, the rare birds had been wrapped in cloth and hidden in bags equipped with a cooling agent to protect them from overheating on route.

An administrative offence case was instituted against the Russian national on charges of the illegal smuggling of birds listed in the *Russian Red Book*. Veterinarians had already examined the birds, which were due to be released into the wild on 2 December.

The Gyrfalcon is very popular in Arab countries where it is used for hunting. In the last few years, Kamchatka has experienced a massive surge in the poaching of this species. A woman was detained in Petropavlovsk Airport earlier in 2009 on allegations of smuggling Gyrfalcons from Kamchatka (see also *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 22(2):73).

www.vostokmedia.com/n60943.html, 2 December 2009

UK: In July 2009, UK Border Agency (UKBA) CITES Team officers at Heathrow Airport examined two shipments of cosmetics being imported from the USA. In total some 136 products were seized as they were found to contain Candelilla *Euphorbia antisiphilitica* (CITES II). The shipments were accompanied by valid US CITES export permits but neither had UK CITES import permits, which are required for CITES Appendix II imports to the EU.

The resin-free wax of the plant is used in emollients to protect the skin against water loss and in lipsticks, for example, as well as in the production of food additives and confectionery.

On 5 November 2009, UKBA officers at Heathrow seized a number of African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I) ivory items: 219 ivory beads (1.6 kg) were found sewn into items of clothing in transit from Nigeria to China, and an ivory carving concealed inside a wooden statue in transit from Kenya to France. Both had been concealed in express courier parcels. In addition, on 31 August 2009, UKBA officers found eight ivory carvings from Cameroon concealed inside a vessel at Liverpool docks.

On 21 July 2009, the UK National Wildlife Crime Unit, UKBA, Animal Health Agency Inspectors and Greater Manchester Police executed a search warrant at a Chinese medicine centre in Manchester city centre and seized a large quantity of raw and prepared medicines. The raw ingredients included: Costus root *Saussurea costus* (CITES I); tortoises (I/II); Seahorses *Hippocampus* spp. (II); *Cibotium barometz* Dicksoniaceae; American Ginseng *Panax quinquefolius* (II); Desert-living Cistanche *Cistanche deserticola* (II); *Flickingeria* spp. Orchidaceae (II); *Dendrobium* spp. Orchidaceae (II); and *Gastrodia elata* Orchidaceae (II).

Between September and November 2009 at the port of Felixstowe, UKBA officers seized 13 large drums of oil of Guaiacwood or Palo santo *Bulnesia sarmientoi* (CITES III) in three separate seizures (2375 kg). The oil was being imported from Paraguay without the requisite CITES documentation and certificate of origin. Paraguay had a moratorium on exports at the time of export.

In September 2009, at the port of Felixstowe, UKBA officers detected 20 000 kg of frozen European Eel *Anguilla anguilla* (II) being imported from China. The shipment was accompanied by a valid CITES re-export permit but no UK CITES import permit; all the eels were seized.

In December 2009, UKBA officers at the port of Dover intercepted a lorry travelling from Morocco to the UK. Following a thorough inspection of the vehicle, a small box containing four Spur-thighed Tortoises *Testudo graeca* (II) was found. The driver of the vehicle had no CITES import documentation for the specimens, which were all seized.

On 20 August 2009, the Metropolitan Police's Wildlife Crime Unit raided a shop in London's Chinatown and seized over 200 medicinal products claiming to contain the following ingredients: Leopards *Panthera pardus* and Tigers *P. tigris* (both CITES I), musk deer *Moschus* (I/II), and Costus root *Saussurea costus* (I). Officers carried out the raid as part of Operation Charm, a continuing partnership initiative taking action against the illegal trade in endangered species in London. The searches coincided with the coming into effect of an amendment that closes a loophole in the law. These regulations relate to species that are "split-listed" (i.e. different populations or subspecies that are placed in different CITES Appendices, or a population or subspecies listed where another may not be) (see page 95). Previously, investigators were unable to determine the provenance of a specimen listed in the ingredients of manufactured products and therefore which part of the regulations applied. The amendment to the regulation now means that the higher level of protection applies unless there is evidence to the contrary. The shop manager was questioned and enquiries are continuing.

On 5 October 2009, at Luton Crown Court, Nicholas Noonan of Bedfordshire pleaded guilty to charges relating to the illegal trade in CITES I-listed African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* tusks and Sperm Whale *Physeter catodon* teeth, as well as ivory artefacts. He was gaoled for 10 months.

The investigation was launched in 2006 when covert agents from the US Fish and Wildlife Service received an unsolicited e-mail, via eBay, asking them to look at a number of tusks that were listed for sale by Noonan. Over the following months, Noonan traded various tusks, teeth and artefacts with the undercover agents; evidence was then passed on to HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) officers. Noonan's home was subsequently raided by HMRC officers who found various items which, following examination by experts at the Natural History Museum, were confirmed to be elephants' tusks and whales' teeth; some of these had been fashioned into corkscrews or carved with decorative images. In an attempt to continue trading on eBay, Noonan had illegally obtained a certificate of exemption which he then altered and used.

On 23 November 2009, at Manchester Magistrates' Court, Ching Kun Liu was charged with offering for sale plasters said to contain Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) products. He was fined GBP1000 (USD662) and GBP100 costs.

In December 2009, at Gloucester Crown Court, Christopher Surfleet was sentenced to 27 weeks' imprisonment suspended for 18 months, and ordered to do 150 hours community service. Surfleet, an auctioneer, sold a client's rhinoceros horn to dealers in the Far East without the client's knowledge. He was also ordered to pay UKP2500 (USD1650) compensation to the client and UKP250 costs.

The horn was part of an assortment of property which the client had brought to the company in which Surfleet worked in November 2007, to be auctioned on her behalf.

On 17 February 2010, Natalija Grinova appeared at Liverpool City Magistrates' Court charged with three offences under COTES relating to the prohibited sale of 34 x 50 g jars of caviar and keeping a further 22 jars of caviar for sale. She pleaded guilty and was fined £350 (USD548) plus £80 costs and a £15 victim surcharge. The 22 caviar jars were also forfeited. The caviar had been imported from Ukraine.

National Wildlife Crime Unit; UK Border Agency (UKBA); TRAFFIC Bulletin 20(1):6–7; www.operationcharm.org/news/20090820.jsp, 20 August 2009; HM Revenue & Customs Press Office, 16 October 2009; www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/6790269/PLEASE-PIC-Auctioneer-sold-rhino-horn-for-Chinese-aphrodisiac-market.html, 12 December 2009

AFRICA

More than two tonnes of illegal ivory have been seized and more than 100 people arrested in recent months in the largest-ever transnational operation co-ordinated by INTERPOL targeting wildlife crime across Africa. Codenamed Operation Costa, the series of actions involved officers from police, national wildlife, Customs and national intelligence agencies across six countries—Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.

Officers in all six countries carried out inspections on shops and markets and checks on suspect vehicles at border crossing points. Other wildlife products, in addition to weapons, ammunition and vehicles, were also seized.

“The success of Operation Costa is notable not only for the sheer volume of illegal ivory that has been recovered, which is among the biggest-ever haul recorded, but because it also clearly shows the ability and will of law enforcement to tackle wildlife crime effectively”, said Peter Younger, manager of INTERPOL’s OASIS Africa (Operational Assistance, Services and Infrastructure Support to African Police Forces) wildlife crime programme.

Supported by INTERPOL’s National Central Bureaus and INTERPOL’s Regional Bureau in Nairobi, Operation Costa is the second such initiative targeting wildlife crime in Africa co-ordinated by INTERPOL. The first, Operation Baba, was conducted in November 2008 and resulted in the arrests of nearly 60 people and the seizure of one tonne of elephant ivory, following co-ordinated actions in Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda and Zambia (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin 22(2):75*).

INTERPOL media release, 30 November 2009: www.interpol.int/Public/ICPO/PressReleases/PR2009/PR2009113.asp

CAMEROON: On 21 July 2009, two wildlife traffickers were found in illegal possession of two fresh skins of Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I and totally protected in Cameroon). A case file has been established against the dealers in the court in Bafoussam. This action follows an intensification by the West Regional Delegation of Forestry and Wildlife of operations to crack down on wildlife crimes in the region. The West Regional Forces of Law and Order and The Last Great Ape Organization (LAGA) assisted in the operation.

A person was arrested in Bissombo, Bengbis, in the South Region, in possession of a live Chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes* (CITES I), as well as elephant parts and Chimpanzee skulls, some of which were fresh. The animals are suspected to have been captured or killed within the Dja Reserve. The trafficker was gaoled and the live Chimpanzee was taken to Mefou National Park by the Cameroon Wildlife Aid Fund (CWAFF) where it is receiving care.

Before this, a trafficker with a long history of illegal killing of elephants was arrested in possession of elephant parts in the Dja Reserve area in Somalomo, Messamena, in the Upper Nyong Division of the East Region.

The operations that led to these arrests were carried out by the East and South Regional Delegations of Forestry and Wildlife in collaboration with the Forces of Law and Order, the Upper Nyong Divisional Delegation of Forestry and Wildlife and the judiciary, and were in consonant with

the nationwide programme on wildlife law enforcement launched by the government in 2003, with technical assistance from local NGO LAGA.

On 16 October 2009, a team of law enforcement officers, including the anti-poaching brigade of the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF), staff from the Direction Générale à la Recherche Extérieure (DGRE) and others, swooped on markets throughout Yaoundé to seize bushmeat illegally on sale.

Codenamed “Coup de poing” (Operation Punch), the team confiscated 45 live animals, 228 carcasses plus 42 assorted animal parts following raids at Nkolndongo and Nkolndongo Texaco markets and the railway station. Three shop owners were arrested. The confiscated animals ranged from parts of gorillas and pythons to monkeys, pangolins, turtles, crocodiles, snakes, antelopes, monitor lizards, hornbills and rodents. The live animals were transferred to Mvog Betsi Zoo, while the confiscated meat was later auctioned off.

According to Celestine Ndonga of DGRE, the area had been identified as important for illegal trade in wildlife products and had been under surveillance for several months leading up to the operation.

TRAFFIC is helping to build the capacity of the Cameroon Government’s wildlife monitoring patrols through a project funded by WWF Poland. Elvis Ngolle Ngolle, Minister of Forests and Wildlife, said: “We are pleased with our co-operation with partners TRAFFIC Central Africa and [local NGO] LAGA.” “Although sale of some of these species is not prohibited, this activity must be conducted in compliance with existing regulations to control the trade and ensure State revenues, the welfare of communities and the conservation of biodiversity.”

On 1 February 2010, police seized more than 1000 Grey Parrots *Psittacus erithacus* (CITES II) at Douala Airport as they were about to be smuggled out of the country to Kuwait and Bahrain. No CITES documentation accompanied the shipment. Many of the parrots were dead; the surviving specimens were delivered to the Limbe Wildlife Center. It is the third major seizure of Grey Parrots in Cameroon in the past two years.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200908101311.html>, 10 August 2009; *Cameroon Tribune*, 10 August 2009; www.cameroon-tribune.net/article.php?lang=Fr&oled=j31082009&idart=56122&olarch=j10082009, 10 August 2009; <http://allafrica.com/stories/200910010512.html>, 1 October 2009; www.traffic.org/home/2009/10/21/operation-punch-delivers-knockout-blow-to-illegal-bushmeat-m.html, 21 October 2009; *Pan African Sanctuary Alliance*, 2 February 2010

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO: On 18 January 2010, four Chinese nationals were arrested for illegally dealing in ivory—the first arrests of Chinese nationals in the country in connection with the trade, according to police sources.

The arrests were made after a raid on premises in central Brazzaville produced a haul of ivory bracelets, statues and other goods.

<http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJ0E60H0FT20100118>, 18 January 2010

ETHIOPIA: On 27 September 2009, a consignment of 637 kg of ivory was intercepted by Ethiopian authorities in Addis Ababa. The consignment had originated from Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi, Kenya, destined for Bangkok, Thailand, via Addis Ababa, by the same consignee involved in a seizure of ivory in Kenya on 29 September (see Kenya).

www.kws.org/info/news/2009/01oct09.html, 1 October 2009; <http://www.interpol.int/Public/EnvironmentalCrime/Wildlife/WorkingGroup/Newsletter60.pdf>

KENYA: On 14 July 2009, wildlife officials seized more than 300 kg of illegal ivory and two Black Rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* (CITES I) horns from a cargo plane in transit from Mozambique, bound for Lao PDR via Thailand.

Blood on some of the 16 elephant tusks and the rhinoceros horns suggested the animals had been recently killed. The contraband, whose provenance was unclear, was concealed in coffin-shaped wooden boxes.

On 29 September 2009, at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi, Kenya Wildlife Service law enforcement officers, in liaison with Kenya Airways, Ethiopian Airlines, Lusaka Task Force and airport police, impounded 61 whole tusks of raw ivory (CITES I) (532 kg). The trophies were discovered in the Kenya Airways warehouse and were to be air freighted to Bangkok, Thailand, via Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (see Ethiopia).

Wildlife rangers arrested 12 men involved in an illicit game trade syndicate suspected of killing a female White Rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* (CITES I) at a private ranch on 28 December 2009, and removing its horns. The horns were recovered. The suspects were to be arraigned before a court in Nairobi's Kibera district.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20090714/ap_on_re_af/af_kenya_illegal_ivory, 14 July 2009; www.timeslive.co.za/news/africa/article248538.ece?service=print; www.kws.org/info/news/2009/01oct09.html, 1 October 2009; www.interpol.int/Public/EnvironmentalCrime/Wildlife/WorkingGroup/Newsletter60.pdf

SOUTH AFRICA: In July 2009, at Grahamstown Magistrates' Court, Mbulelo Mgxoteni and Thembela Msila, both of Port Elizabeth, pleaded guilty and were charged in connection with the theft of elephant tusks from Kwandwe Game Reserve. They were each gaoled for a year, suspended for three years, and sentenced to a fine of R9000 (USD1200) or 18 months in prison. Two thirds of the fine was suspended.

Msila, a former employee at the reserve, and his uncle Mgxoteni, tried to get information on elephant tusks from a reserve worker who subsequently tipped off management who, in turn, alerted the police. A trap was set: two elephant tusks were left in an office on the reserve to which Msila and Mgxoteni had obtained a key. After breaking in and stealing the tusks, the pair was stopped at the gates of the reserve as they were leaving.

The apparent light sentence was attributed to various factors, including the fact that the pair were first time offenders and that no animals had been killed.

On 24 July 2009, Vaughan Corlett was found guilty of being in possession of specially protected plants without permits following the seizure of 268 cycad plants at his property. He was sentenced on 7 August 2009, at Randburg Magistrates' Court, Gauteng, to a fine of R500 000 (USD68 000) or imprisonment for four years, plus two years' imprisonment, suspended for five years. This is believed to be the first sentence of its kind in South Africa for the illegal trade in cycads.

The investigation began in late February 2007 when the Organized Crime Unit of the South African Police Service (SAPS) in Johannesburg was asked to assist with an investigation regarding the possible possession of indigenous cycads *Encephalartos* at a smallholding owned by the defendant in Honeydew. The property was visited on 1 March 2007 where a large number of indigenous cycad plants were found planted in the ground and in pots or plastic bags. Fourteen cycad *Encephalartos laevifolius* stems were found. Suspicions were aroused as the species originates from a nature reserve in Mpumalanga and the stems of these specimens had no leaves and their roots were badly damaged and cut off from the stem; furthermore, their stems were covered with old burn marks caused by veld fires that are common to plants from the wild.

With the assistance of the forensic laboratory of SAPS and officers from Mpumalanga Parks Agencies based in Nelspruit, the 268 plants were found to include 18 plants (four of which were microchipped) that were positively identified as stolen from nature reserves in Mpumalanga. The 14 *E. laevifolius* specimens were linked to their natural habitat with soil and rock samples collected by the SAPS forensic laboratory. One of the stolen microchipped plants found in the possession of Mr Corlett was identified as *Encephalartos heenanii*, which was one metre in length.

Microchips are implanted into rare cycad plants in their natural habitat to make it possible to track them down should they be found in private possession.

The suspect was charged with possession of stolen goods, possession of specially protected plants without permits, and receipt, possession, acquisition or handling of protected plants in accordance with the *Gauteng Nature Conservation Ordinance 12 of 1983*.

All of the cycad plants were forfeited to the State. Plants taken from Mpumalanga were to be returned and the remainder handed over to Walter Sisulu National Botanical Garden.

On 31 July 2009, at Bellville Specialized Commercial Crime Court, Kiyaam Rinqest was gaoled for 32 years. Rinqest had been found guilty of receiving drugs worth millions of rands as payment for illegal abalone *Haliotis* exports to the Far East.

He was found guilty on 10 of the 23 charges—two of dealing in drugs, two of possession of abalone, two involving the possession of abalone-processing equipment, one concerning the illegal use of the proceeds of crime and three of car theft.

By poaching undersized abalone, in addition to removing abalone without a permit, Rinqest had “aggravated an already desperate situation”, the judge said. He said there was also a connection between abalone poaching and the trade in drugs, which were used as payment for illegally collected abalones.

On 7 August 2009, Eastern Cape police seized two tonnes of abalones *Haliotis* and arrested a Port Elizabeth man after seeing abalone in his pick-up truck. After following the vehicle to the suburb of Collenglen, police uncovered the goods from the vehicle and the man’s property.

The previous day, another person from Port Elizabeth was arrested when police, acting on information, found three tonnes of abalones at his house in Greenbushes.

On 20 August 2009, two men were arrested for allegedly poaching rhinoceroses at a game reserve between Ulundi and Melmoth, managed by Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife. The arrests follow a reported spate of rhinoceros poaching incidents in the reserve. Weapons and ammunition were confiscated.

On 23 October 2009, two men were arrested by police following a search of a property in Louterwater, Uitenhage, Eastern Cape, which uncovered 121 kg of abalones *Haliotis* (and drugs and firearms). The pair was to appear in court at a later date.

The Herald (South Africa), 14 December 2009; *Gauteng Nature Conservation: Projects Resource Protection*; www.the.times.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=1042801, 31 July 2009; www.int.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=nw20090807170312621C266509, 7 August 2009; www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=nw20090824182106241C675711, August 24 2009; www.week-endpost.co.za/article.aspx?id=489114

TANZANIA: On 21 July 2009, at Dar es Salaam’s Magistrates’ Court, six Tanzanian businessmen were charged with smuggling 11 t of elephant ivory to the Philippines and Viet Nam between October 2008 and March 2009. They were also charged with 11 counts of conspiracy, unlawful hunting, exporting concealed and undeclared items, as well as making false documents. The men, who denied the charges and were remanded in custody until 28 July pending bail application, run several export and cargo clearing firms in Dar es Salaam. The tusks were impounded by authorities in the Philippines and Viet Nam through co-operation with INTERPOL (see also Viet Nam).

An anti-poaching operation involving police officers and wildlife rangers has resulted in the arrest of poachers and the seizure of more than 100 kg of ivory (and weapons). The operation, codenamed Operation Kipepeo—or Operation Butterfly—owing to the use of helicopters with infantry support to scan poachers in the Selous Game Reserve, resulted in the arrest of 70 poachers in the first week of operation. The government subsequently announced an award of USD1000 for information leading to the arrest of poachers. Eight cases have been filed in connection with the operation: at least four are at the hearing stage and involve individuals in possession of over 800 kg of ivory.

www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gQykXh; pFaORKfQj66cec3e2vSiw, 21 July 2009;

TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa

ZIMBABWE: On 11 January 2010, at Masvingo Magistrates' Court, Victoria, Tendai Mutyairi of Masvingo was sentenced to 17 years' imprisonment for poaching a rhinoceros at Matendere Range. The sentence was suspended for 10 years on condition that USD120 000 in restitution was paid to the State.

Mutyairi and two cousins went to Matendere Range with the intention of poaching rhinoceroses. The trio killed one rhinoceros and wounded another, which managed to escape. The horn of the dead rhinoceros had been removed. The suspects were intercepted by a team from the police and the Parks and Wildlife Management Authority. Mutyairi was shot in the abdomen after an exchange of gunfire with the police. The other two escaped.

"This sentence is a welcome move that will work as a deterrent to would-be offenders. In the past, most poachers were getting away with lighter sentences such as fines and community services," said Parks and Wildlife Management Authority public relations manager Caroline Washaya-Moyo. She added that the sentencing was a culmination of efforts made by the Authority to curb poaching across the country.

On 6 December 2009, two South Africans and a Mozambican were arrested in Springs for the possession of illegal ivory. The men were travelling in a vehicle when they were stopped by police. The three were to appear in Springs Magistrates' Court on 8 December. No update was available.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201001150219.html>, 15 January 2010; www.iol.co.za, 7 December 2009

MIDDLE EAST

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: The Dubai Municipality has seized animal skins during an inspection of various veterinary establishments and antique shops, including those of four Pythons *Pythonidae* (CITES I/II) and two Nile Crocodiles *Crocodylus niloticus* (I/II). The skins were up to nine metres in length.

Eng. Hashim Al Awadhi, Head of the Veterinary Services Section, said the Section plays an important role in implementing the terms of CITES in regulating the international trade of flora and fauna that are at risk of extinction. He said that the Veterinary Services Section takes extra efforts to educate the public and those who work in pet shops and shops that sell souvenirs on the provisions of CITES, endangered animals, the purpose of protecting these animals and organizing their trade through the provision of CITES certificates.

Emirates News Agency, 28 September 2009

ASIA**EAST ASIA**

CHINA: On 8 June 2009, the Yunnan Honghe forest police seized two Common Water Monitors *Varanus salvator* (CITES II) and one Burmese Python *Python molurus* (II) from a minibus travelling from Honghe to Kaiyuan, Yunnan Province. The following day, the police discovered 88 skins of Leopard Cats *Prionailurus bengalensis* (II) and some cobras on the premises of two people, who were detained. The case is under investigation.

On 7 July 2009, Shantou Customs reported that a gang leader had been sentenced to life imprisonment by the Middle People's Court of Shanwei, Guangdong Province, following a charge of involvement in the smuggling of 2023 frozen pangolins *Manis* (CITES II), 153 kg of frozen pangolin viscera, 800 kg of pangolin scales, 732 live Monocellate Cobras *Naja kaouthia* (II), 3904 live rat snakes, 363 frozen civet cats and 32 292 dried Chinese Rat Snakes *Ptyas korros*. The man's personal property was also confiscated. Six others involved received suspended gaol terms of between three and 15 years.

On 9 July 2009, traffic police at the Guang-Jing highway of Taizhou, Jiangsu Province, discovered 24 paws of Asiatic Black Bears *Ursus thibetanus* (CITES I), 11 Common Monitors *Varanus bengalensis* (I), seven Chinese Giant Salamanders *Andrias davidianus* (I), six Monocellate Cobras *Naja kaouthia* (II) and two Hundred-pace Snakes *Deinagkistrodon acutus* in a vehicle travelling from Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, to Jinan, Shandong Province. All the live lizards and snakes were sent to Nanjing Hongshan Forest Zoo. The driver was detained and the case is under investigation.

On 15 July 2009, Guangzhou Customs officials seized 1194 kg of frozen pangolins *Manis* (CITES II) and 602 kg of dried rat snake skins at a gravel dock of the Pearl River Estuary.

On 25 July 2009, Fangchenggang traffic police in Guangxi Province seized 39 live pangolins *Manis* (CITES II) from a car; the passengers fled. All the animals were transferred to the local wildlife conservation department.

On 6 August 2009, Customs officials in Gongbei, Zhuhai City, Guangdong Province, seized a total of 47 kg of Agarwood *Aquilaria sinensis* (CITES II/National Grade 2 Specially Protected) from two mainland travellers who tried to clear Customs in possession of the undeclared fragrant wood.

On 18 August 2009, police in Fangchenggang city, Guangxi Province, arrested two people and confiscated 39 live pangolins *Manis* (CITES II) from a local garage. All the animals were transferred to the forestry department. The case is under investigation.

On 7 September 2009, policemen from the Nantou checkpoint of Shenzhen city found 12 Slow Lorises *Nycticebus coucang* (a species listed under national first-class protection/CITES I) in a coach travelling from Nanning, Guangxi Province. In addition, 18 live pangolins *Manis* (II) were seized from a car. Two suspects were detained and all animals were sent to the local safari park.

On 12 September 2009, Lincang traffic police, Yunnan Province, found an employee of a local construction company illegally transporting two Asiatic Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus* (CITES I) paws. The suspect claimed he had planned to give the animal parts as a gift. He was detained and the vehicle was impounded.

On 19 October 2009, Gengma forest police of Lincang, Yunnan Province, seized from two apartments eight bear paws, one bear penis, one bear gall bladder, the skin of one Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I), three Serow *Naemorhedus sumatraensis* (I) horns, and other animal products. The suspects claimed that the items had been smuggled from Myanmar via Yonghe port of Cangyuan county.

On 19 October 2009, after five months of careful investigation, Hengyang Forest police, Hunan Province, seized 24 live pangolins *Manis* (CITES II), and arrested three suspects. The animals had been transported from south-west China and were thought to be bound for Guangdong Province. The animals were sent to the local wildlife rescue centre and the suspects were detained.

On 13 November 2009, Yongping forest police of Dali, Yunnan Province, seized 23 paws of Asiatic Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus* (CITES I) (147.5 kg) from a vehicle on the 320 State road. The suspect was detained and the seizure was to be investigated.

On 23 November 2009, in a Beijing coach station, two bear paws and three frozen pangolins *Manis* (CITES II) were found in a coach arriving from Shanghai. The delivery man, a native of Guangdong Province, claimed that he had purchased the items via the internet.

In December 2009, a court in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan Province, sentenced Kang Wannian to 12 years in gaol for killing an Indochinese Tiger *Panthera tigris corbetti* (CITES I) in southwestern China. He was also ordered to pay a fine of CNY100 000 (USD14 600), plus CNY480 000 for State economic losses.

Kang said he shot the animal after dark and did not know it was an endangered Indochinese Tiger. The incident took place in February 2009, and Kang surrendered to police in June.

Fewer than 10 specimens of this subspecies are distributed in the south of Yunnan Province, which borders Myanmar.

On 21 December 2009, Luohu Customs officials at Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, detected 17 pieces of animal bones on the x-ray of a carton in the possession of a Chinese national. The items were identified by the South China Endangered Animal Institute as Tiger bone. The suspect claimed that the bones had been purchased in Malaysia and were to be used to treat his rheumatism. The case has been transferred to the local anti-smuggling department for further investigation.

In an earlier incident, in June 2009, Luohu Customs officials seized 70 Tiger bones (2.2 kg). It is reported that some 20 kg of ivory and two kilogrammes of Saiga Antelope *Saiga tatarica* (CITES II) were among wildlife items seized by Luohu Customs during 2009.

On 13 January 2010, the Tengchong branch of Kunming Customs seized 946 g of rhinoceros horn from a vehicle. Two suspects claimed that they had purchased the horn in Myanmar and had smuggled it through the border. The case is under investigation.

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Seizures in China involving ivory:

On 9 May 2009, Chengdu Middle Court sentenced a man to three years' probation and a fine of CNY500 000 (USD73 000). He had auctioned eight ivory carvings that he had purchased by phone from a US auctioneer in December 2007. He posted four of these items to an individual in Guangzhou which were discovered by Chengdu Airport Customs officials. When sentencing, the court took into consideration the fact that the individual had purchased the ivory legitimately and there was no evidence to show that his purpose was to make a profit. He was found guilty of violating the Customs laws and wildlife protection laws on importing endangered species products without relevant CITES import certification. The carvings were estimated to have come from four whole elephant tusks.

On 11 May 2009, Wuhan Customs in Hubei Province seized a case of smuggled ivory at Tianhe Airport, on arrival from Hong Kong. A total of 125 ivory items (7.8 kg) were discovered following an x-ray check. The suspect claimed that he had purchased the items in the Democratic Republic of Congo and did not know it was illegal to carry them back to China. The case is under investigation.

In July 2009, Customs officials at Hefei, Anhui Province, seized 25 kg of ivory pieces from 38 parcels which had been posted from Zimbabwe. They included three 50 cm-long tusks and over 1000 small items, such as necklaces, bracelets and chopsticks. They had been sent by Chinese workers in Zimbabwe who claimed that they were not familiar with international regulations relating to the transportation of ivory.

In August 2009, the Guandu People's Court in Kunming City, Yunnan Province, sentenced two people to 12 years' imprisonment for attempting to transport 33 elephant (CITES I) tusks (36 kg) out of Kunming on 6 January 2009. They were also fined CNY12 000 (USD1756).

In August 2009, Customs officials at Baiyun Airport, Guangzhou, seized ivory products (4.08 kg and 3.95 kg) from two passengers arriving from Ethiopia, bringing to 140 the number of ivory smuggling cases at Guangzhou Customs since the beginning of 2009. The cases involved items amounting to a total of circa 190 kg, all from African countries.

On 18 November 2009, the Guangzhou Baiyun Airport Security found one passenger with ivory bangles bound by elastic to the upper part of his body. Further ivory products, rhinoceros horns and some animal furs were found in his luggage. The passenger had planned to fly to Qingdao City, Shandong Province.

On 24 November 2009, Shanghai Customs announced that they had found an African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I) tusk (1.4 m long and 21.5 kg) in a parcel that had arrived from Japan on 26 October 2009.

On 22 December 2009, at Jiaojiang Court, in Taizhou City, Zhejiang Province, three people were convicted of illegally trading endangered animal products: Dong Wenming was sentenced to 10 years' in gaol and fined CNY120 000 (USD17 500); Zhang Zhangman was gaoled for eight years and fined CNY120 000; Ren Changzhi was sentenced to two years' imprisonment, suspended for three years, and fined CNY50 000.

In October 2008, Jiaojiang police officers conducted an undercover investigation into this case after they were informed that Zhang Zhangman, the manager of an antiques outlet in Jiaojiang illegally purchased endangered animal products. On 24 March 2009, a search of Zhang's apartments uncovered 377 ivory pieces (134.07 kg) and 1.68 kg of rhinoceros horn products. Further investigation indicated that, since 2004, Dong Wenming had purchased ivory and rhinoceros horn products in Hangzhou, Shanghai and Beijing on many occasions, and sold the items to Zhang Zhangman and others.

On 22 December 2009, at Zhengzhou Intermediate Court, Wang Fukang, Wang Yueyi and Zhang Juanjuan were convicted of smuggling ivory: Wang Fukang was sentenced to life imprisonment, deprived of political rights for life and his personal property was confiscated; Wang Yueyi was gaoled for 15 years and fined CNY300 000 (USD44 000); and Zhang Juanjuan was sentenced to 13 years in prison and fined CNY200 000 (USD29 400).

In addition, the court convicted Chen Weiren, Zheng Zhiyong and Wu Guodong of illegally purchasing ivory; they were each sentenced to between six and 10 years in prison and fined CNY100 000–200 000 (USD14 700–29 400).

On 29 December 2009, joint enforcement action involving the Guangdong forest police bureau and other related agencies, resulted in the seizure of 73 ivory items (7.3 kg) and the arrest of three traders at Hualin International Market, Guangzhou City. Two hundred copies of public awareness materials relating to the illegal ivory trade were distributed to all traders at this market.

On 31 December 2009, the Shantou Inter-mediate Court convicted six suspects of smuggling 770 pieces of tusks (2167 kg). One suspect was sentenced to death, suspended for two years, the other was sentenced to life imprisonment, and the remaining four were each sentenced to between three

TAIWAN

On 9 July 2009, at Kaohsiung Airport, authorities seized a Ploughshare Tortoise *Astrochelys yniphora* (CITES I) that was found concealed in the luggage of a businessman returning from China. The case is under investigation.

On 18 July 2009, Customs officials seized 231 Chinese Box Turtles *Cuora flavomarginata* (CITES II) from the freezer of a vessel flying a Hong Kong flag. The suspect, an Indonesian national crew member, said that he planned to sell the reptiles in Hong Kong.

On 29 August 2009, Kaohsiung Customs officials detected 1255 Chinese Box Turtles concealed in export cargo declared as Chinese Striped-necked Turtles *Ocadia [Mauremys] sinensis*, destined for Hong Kong.

On 22 July 2009, Customs officials at Kaohsiung Airport found two Ploughshare Tortoises *Astrochelys yniphora*, 12 Radiated Tortoises *Astrochelys radiata* and seven Black Pond Turtles *Geodemys hamiltonii* (all CITES I species) hidden inside a pile of boxes arriving on a cargo flight from Hong Kong. The reptiles were to be sent to a rescue centre in Taipei Zoo. The case is under investigation for violation of the *Wildlife Conservation Act*.

On 23 September 2009, Keelung Customs Office (KCO) discovered 16 undeclared ivory (CITES I) carvings in unaccompanied baggage shipped from the Netherlands.

On 2 October 2009, a man from Shenzhen, China, was detained at Kaohsiung Airport after being found with six live Chinese Hwameis *Garrulax canorus* (CITES II) concealed in wooden boxes in luggage. The birds were first detected by a newly trained sniffer dog. The suspect may be charged with violation of quarantine regulations and the *Wildlife Conservation Act*.

On 11 November 2009, at Taipei Airport, Customs officials seized 27 Radiated Tortoises *Astrochelys radiata* (CITES I) and 30 Leopard Tortoises *Stigmochelys pardalis* (II) that had been concealed in personal luggage arriving on a flight from Macau. Importation of Leopard Tortoises to Taiwan is prohibited as the species is a carrier of heartwater disease. The tortoises were confiscated and the suspect was to be charged with violation of the *Wildlife Conservation Act*.

On 20 November 2009, a man arriving on a flight from Macau was caught at Taipei Airport with eight Radiated Tortoises *Astrochelys radiata* (CITES I), 22 Leopard Tortoises *Stigmochelys pardalis* (II) and 116 songbirds of 13 species. He claimed that these animals were bought in Zhuhai, Guangdong Province, China.

On 19 December 2009, a man arriving from Myanmar was caught at Taipei Airport with one rhino (CITES I) horn (one kilogramme) concealed in his luggage.

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SOUTH ASIA

INDIA: On 18 June 2009, at Katni courts, Madhya Pradesh, a Tiger poacher well known to the authorities was sentenced to three years' rigorous imprisonment and fined Rs.10 000 (USD214). The person, called Dariya (and not to be confused with another Tiger poacher with this name who was

arrested in April 2008), had been arrested by the Katni Forest Division. In his possession were spring traps to catch Tigers *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) and Leopards *P. pardus* (I), skin and antlers of a Chital *Axis axis*, a spear and other poaching equipment. Leopard hairs had been identified on one of the traps by forensic experts. This is a unique judgement where conviction has been granted on the seizure of spring traps.

The defendant had previously been booked in four separate cases involving the poaching of Tigers and Leopards in Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Bihar. In July 2000, two Leopard skins were seized from his residence by police in Pinjore, Haryana. In November 2005, he was arrested again at Katarniaghat, Dudhwa Tiger Reserve, with poaching equipment and served a five-and-a-half-month gaol term in Bahraich, UP. After being released, he was accused in a case involving the seizure of a fresh Tiger skin in December 2006 on the Indo-Nepal border. On this occasion, he absconded and it is expected that he will now be taken to Bihar to stand trial.

On 24 July 2009, a team comprising staff of Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, Sawai Madhopur District of Rajasthan State, and a representative of an NGO—the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI)—arrested three poachers at Dumariya village in Bharatpur District. All belong to the Mogiya community.

One of those detained is a well-known Tiger poacher who has been operating in Ranthambore and Sariska Tiger Reserves for several years. He is believed to have been an accomplice in two Tiger poaching incidents in Ranthambore, in 1992 and 2001, and a further two in 2002. He absconded in all cases.

On 26 July 2009, three Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) skins were seized by the Uttarakhand Forest Department from a hotel at Birhi, near Chamoli. One person was arrested and three people absconded. The Leopards are believed to have been killed in the Nizmullah valley.

The previous day, the remains of an Asiatic Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus* (CITES I) were found in the Bhadrinath Forest Division; the animal's gall bladder and fat had been removed.

In the first six months of 2009, it is reported that at least 16 Leopard skins were seized in the State of Uttarakhand.

On 31 July 2009, a Nepali citizen was arrested by Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) paramilitary officials at Dandahead in Sonauli, along the border with Nepal, in possession of one Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) skin, five Tiger nails and some Tiger bones.

On 2 August 2009, SSB officials acting on information arrested a further two Nepali citizens in Sonauli in possession of Tiger meat and a Tiger nail. The pair was travelling on a Nepali tourist bus coming from Delhi. The case is under investigation.

On 3 September 2009, police in Bhavnagar, Gujarat, arrested a man in possession of 98 kg of ivory at Randhanpuri market (items included tusks weighing around three kilogrammes, ivory ornaments, bangles and 87 kg of raw ivory).

The suspect's forefathers were craftsmen who made ivory ornaments under licence from the government. They had a shop in the Randhanpuri market in the city. Following the ivory trade ban, their licences were cancelled, but the family had allegedly continued to make and sell ornaments illegally.

On 16 September 2009, Assam Rifles personnel seized 25 kg of horns of the Great Indian Rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis* (CITES I), 5.5 kg of rhinoceros skins and bones; 10 gall bladders of the Asiatic Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus* (I) and 482 kg of pangolin *Manis* (II) scales from two persons at Tengnoupal near Manipur's Moreh town in Chandel district bordering Myanmar.

Poachers generally take away the horn and leave behind the carcass after killing a rhinoceros. But the present haul hints at a departure, said a wildlife crime expert. "If rhino bones and skin are being smuggled, then it gives a completely new dimension to the illegal wildlife trade in the north-eastern region," he added. Assam holds two-thirds of the world's Great Indian Rhinoceros population and

the animals are frequently poached for their horns, which are smuggled mostly through the Myanmar border into China and South-east Asia for use in traditional Chinese medicine.

Both persons, along with the seized items, were handed over to the Manipur forest office at Pallel. Forensic tests would be carried out to confirm the source of the horns.

The porous India-Myanmar international border near Moreh is said to be one of the major conduits for smuggling wildlife parts.

On 16 September 2009, a crime branch squad arrested two people in Chhattisgarh's Kanker district while they were allegedly waiting to sell the 1.5 m skin of a Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) to a customer. The skin bore bullet marks. Police have been interrogating the men in a bid to unravel an interstate animal poachers' gang which they believe has been in operation for several years.

On 19 September 2009, a group of three poachers shot and killed a Great Indian Rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis* (CITES I) in the Burapahar Range of Kaziranga National Park (KNP), Assam, and removed its horn. The poachers were arrested on 24 September by foresters and handed over to the police. The horn was misplaced by the poachers during an exchange of gunfire with forest guards, and a search was under way to retrieve it.

On 22 December 2009, it was reported that two Great Indian Rhinoceroses were killed in separate incidents by poachers at the park; the horns had been removed.

On 19 September, a Royal Bengal Tiger in the park also died of suspected poisoning, reportedly a new method adopted by poachers, and a male elephant migrating out of the park was shot by poachers on 17 September.

Forest rangers complain about poor infrastructure and obsolete weapons compared to the sophisticated assault rifles used by poachers.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) arrested two persons accused of being responsible for the majority of Tiger poaching at Sariska Tiger Reserve, Rajasthan, and on whose trail the authorities have been for the past five years. They were apprehended in Bathinda, Punjab.

In early October 2009, the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) and State forest department officials seized wildlife items from various locations: on 10 October, an operation, jointly conducted by the WCCB and the Uttarakhand Special Task Force, led to the arrest of two people in Vikasnagar near Dehradun. The skins of two Leopards *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) and the gall bladder of a Sloth Bear *Melursus ursinus* (I) were recovered. Three poachers were arrested in Panna Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh, in possession of iron traps.

In Matheran, the WCCB seized 72 monitor lizard skins, four purses made of cobra skins and 29 wallets, suspected to be made of skins of protected reptiles, all being offered as tourist curios.

On 31 October 2009, forest guards in Orang National Park, Assam, killed two poachers who had killed a female Great Indian Rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis* (CITES I) and removed its horn. Two others escaped. One of the deceased, identified as Hormuz Ali, had carried a price on his head. He had earlier been caught but released after serving three months in gaol.

The poachers, officials said, had struck during Diwali festivities hoping that the sound of gun shots would be masked by the din of crackers.

The rhinoceros horn was recovered, together with an axe and cartridges.

Two Tibetans arrested at a refugee camp at Manju Ka Tilla in Delhi are believed to have played a pivotal role in what has been identified as an international smuggling syndicate believed to be routing wildlife products through China to Tibet. Items uncovered during raids in Nagpur and Delhi included skins of two Tigers *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) and two Leopards *P. pardus* (I), more than 50 kg of bones, as well as Red Sandalwood *Pterocarpus santalinus* (II). A number of others have been taken into custody and more arrests are expected.

On 22 November 2009, troops of the 42 Assam Rifles apprehended three persons and confiscated 365 pangolin *Manis* (CITES II) scales, as well as banned drugs and arms and ammunition from the vehicle in which they were travelling in Lamkhang, Chandel district.

On 22/23 November 2009, police officers in the Leh district of eastern Ladakh seized 75 kg of *Cardyiceps sinensis*, a fungus which parasitizes the larvae of a moth of the genus *Thitarodes*. Five persons were arrested as they tried to cross the Mahey bridge, 80 km from the Sino-Indian border. The items had been brought to Leh from Delhi by cargo courier, labelled as noodles and blankets. The kingpin of the operation is being sought.

The fungus is commonly known as “caterpillar mushroom” and is widely used in Chinese medicine for curing hypertension, cancer and impotency. It is considered a unique example of the symbiotic relationship between flora and fauna: the fungus kills the insect and occupies the body’s cavity. In spring, the fungus sends out a stalk from its dead host to release spores which go on to infect other caterpillars.

On 26 November 2009, at Bansbari, Assam, six poachers surrendered during a ceremony organized by TRAFFIC India.

The poachers turned themselves in to Bodo Territorial Council (BTC) with three deer antlers and two deer skins along with firearms, traps and nets in their possession. The poachers operated in and around Manas National Park and most were known to be active in the region. Between them they are said to have killed two Tigers *Panthera tigris* (CITES I), a Great Indian Rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis* (I) and three Asian Elephants *Elephas maximus* (I) in recent years.

Their surrender is a boost to conservation efforts in the region, where poaching is commonplace. In October 2009, three poachers were arrested, based on information provided to the Forest Department through an intelligence network established by TRAFFIC India. Two poachers were shot dead in Orang the same month.

Earlier, the apprehended individuals had indicated that poachers active in Kaziranga, Orang, Pobitaro and Manas were interested in changing their ways and surrendering if support for an alternative source of livelihood could be provided. This led to co-operation between TRAFFIC India and BTC to identify the relevant individuals, resulting in the recent surrender.

Sh. Khampha Bargayari, Deputy Chief of BTC said at the surrender ceremony “In the coming year, BTC plans to budget a rehabilitation programme for the surrendered poachers where they will be provided with employment at dairy farms and co-operative stores set up by BTC.”

Mr Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India said, “We are hopeful that the surrender of these poachers will set a positive example for all others operating in the area. This is surely a step ahead in our mission to curb illegal wildlife trade. TRAFFIC India and WWF-India have been working with the Assam Forest Department on various conservation issues in the past and we hope our association with the department will help make significant contributions towards conservation of species in the wild.”

On 1 December 2009, police acting on information arrested four persons in Kochi for attempting to sell two pieces of ivory weighing nearly 25 kg. The suspects were approached by police officials acting as prospective buyers. A deal was struck before the accused were arrested. Another individual is being sought.

On 1 January 2010, three men were arrested by forestry personnel in Venamani, Kozhikode, in possession of a Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) skin bearing a bullet mark.

On 11 January 2010, a court in Delhi convicted a man accused of trading in shahtoosh shawls. Mohammed Ishaq Baig was found to be in possession of the shawls following a raid at his house in March 1999. Of the 159 items recovered from his possession, 10 were confirmed to be made of shahtoosh, the wool of Tibetan Antelope *Pantholops hodgsonii* (CITES I). Baig was sentenced to one year’s imprisonment and fined INR5000 (USD108).

On 12 January 2010, and based on specific information provided by TRAFFIC India, army personnel and forest guards sealed a 15 km stretch along the Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park to apprehend a group of poachers who had shot dead a Great Indian Rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis* (CITES I) near Amulya anti-poaching camp, and removed the horn. Four alleged poachers who were armed with weapons and ammunition, were apprehended. Sources said the group of poachers had entered the park from the Lahori or the Horujan *chapories* in the Brahmaputra.

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Seizures in India including Red Sandalwood:

Red Sandalwood Pterocarpus santalinus is a CITES Appendix-II species, and in India is also protected under Red Sanders and Sandalwood Transit Rules of the Andhra Pradesh Forest Act, 1967. According to The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, Red Sandalwood is Endangered and is restricted to the southern parts of the Eastern Ghats (IUCN, 2009).

On 22 June 2009, Assam Rifle troops seized 20 t of Red Sandalwood and a number of vehicles at Bongyang checkpost, as well as other wildlife products including 580 pangolin *Manis* (CITES II) shells, from a vehicle travelling along the Imphal-Moreh road. All items were handed over to the Forest Department.

Investigating agencies in India have tracked a major international racket reportedly involved in the smuggling of Red Sandalwood from Andhra Pradesh to China through the Moreh border.

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence near Aizawl intercepted a consignment of around 2000 logs in October 2009. At the same time, six Chinese nationals were apprehended from a retired police officer's residence in Aizawl, where the consignment had been hidden. Three of the individuals did not have a visa or papers; the others did not have a permit to enter Mizoram. They were, however, released without any action being taken.

Since August 2009, at least 100 t of Red Sandalwood has been seized in Manipur and Mizoram. Six hundred tonnes of wood were in transit in Dhubri and Burdawan, where it was seized by the forest department.

B.B. Dhar, Chief Conservator of Forests (Vigilance), Assam, states that the wood is smuggled out of India mainly through Manipur and Mizoram and that a smuggling racket is operating. It is reported that the wood has no known use in India but is used internationally in the making of Japanese musical instruments and Chinese medicine.

It is reportedly the first time that the Aizawl-Chemphai route has been used to smuggle Red Sandalwood, possibly owing to greater vigilance on the Moreh route.

On 10 November 2009, officials of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) claimed to have detected a major smuggling racket in the city, following the seizure of 32 t of Red Sandalwood from the container terminal at Chennai port. Two licensed clearing agents, alleged to be behind the scheme, were arrested.

On 22 December 2009, Directorate of Revenue Officials reported what is probably north India's biggest seizure of Red Sandalwood. A total of over 36 t (10.72 t from Ludhiana and 25.8 t from Delhi), was seized, together with nearly five tonnes of Organ-pipe Corals *Tubipora musica* (CITES II) from import and export containers. Five men were arrested.

The export container held 10.72 t of Red Sandalwood that had been concealed in pebbles which had been declared on accompanying documentation. The import consignment was found to contain undeclared Organ-pipe Coral weighing circa 4.8 t, imported under the guise of declared "Cypraea annulus (sea shells)" [cowrie shells], a species free from trade restrictions. During the follow-up action, a further 25.8 t of Red Sandalwood, destined for export to Dubai, were recovered in Delhi. Investigations are in progress.

On 23 December 2009, it was reported that police in the State of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) had seized more than 50 t of Red Sandalwood from Shey village in Leh where it had been transported from Andhra Pradesh and was reportedly bound for China. One man was arrested.

On 13 February 2010, regional unit officials of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) in Sanathnagar, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, seized 10 570 kg of Red Sandalwood logs at an inland container depot. The shipment was allegedly being smuggled to Dubai. Two people were arrested.

www.e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=12.240609.jun09; www.ndtv.com/news/india/rare_indian_wood_smuggled_into_china.php; TRAFFIC India; IUCN 2009. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2009.2. www.iucnredlist.org. Downloaded on 21 January 2010; http://timesofindia.india-times.com/city/chennai/DRI-seizes-Rs-26-crore-worth-red-sanders/article_show/5217283.cms, 11 November 2009; <http://news.webindia123.com/news/articles/India/2009/1222/1410845.html>, 22 December 2009; TRAFFIC India; www.indianexpress.com/news/50-tonnes-of-rare-andhra-wood-headed-for-china-seized-in-leh/557920/, 23 December 2009; www.ptinews.com/news/523137_Red-sand-ers-logs-being-smuggled-to-Dubai-seized-DRI,17February2010.

SOUTH-EAST ASIA

INDONESIA: On 16 July 2009, a raid in Sumatra recovered 33 Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) skin pieces, ranging in size from a few centimetres to larger pieces; one person was arrested.

On 7 August 2009, authorities in Jakarta carried out a second raid that resulted in the arrests of four suspects for attempting to sell two complete Sumatran Tiger skins, in addition to specimens of other protected wildlife species.

Both raids were conducted by the police, the Indonesian Department of Forestry, Directorate-General for Forest Protection and Nature Conservation (PHKA), working in conjunction with the Wildlife Conservation Society's Wildlife Crime Unit and local partners.

These raids, part of recent stepped-up efforts by Indonesian authorities to control the illegal wildlife trade, bring to 20 the number of arrests made over the previous 18 months for the trade in Tiger parts. Seven of these cases have already resulted in prison sentences and fines, and the rest await trial.

www.wcs.org/press/press-releases/tiger-skins.aspx, 13 August 2009

MALAYSIA: On 16 August 2009, police arrested a Thai poacher from Chiang Rai, Thailand, and recovered scales of a pangolin *Manis* (CITES II) and six sacks of Agarwood *Aquilaria* (II). The arrest was made in a forested area just off the Gerik-Jeli Highway in the Belum-Temengor Forest Complex in the northern State of Perak, which shares a border with Thailand. Police were acting on information provided by WWF's Wildlife Protection Unit (WPU), which regularly patrols the area with other enforcement agencies.

The poacher was among a party of five poachers ambushed by police. Four others escaped, leaving behind a camp stocked with 30 kg of rice and other essentials, indicating they were planning long-term operations. The suspect now faces charges under Section 6 of the *Immigration Act*, for illegally entering the country as well as charges under Section 64 (2) (a) of the *Protection of Wildlife Act* for possession of the pangolin scales and Section 15 of the *Forestry Act*, for collecting Agarwood without a licence.

On 26 August 2009, staff of the Wildlife Crime Unit of the Wildlife and National Parks Department confiscated 98 live animals from a house in Alor Setar in the northern State of Kedah, following three weeks of surveillance and investigations. The animals were hidden in a store room. A man was arrested and released on bail. He faces five separate charges under the *Protection of Wildlife Act 1972* including a charge of cruelty to wildlife.

The seizure included 58 adult male pangolins, 38 adult females, two juveniles and 3.2 kg of pangolin scales. The pangolins were later released into a protected area. They are believed to have been destined for export.

On 7 September 2009, 93 live pangolins *Manis*, each weighing 12 kg, were seized by staff of the State Wildlife Department in Kampung Cherang, Bachok. The animals, which had been destined for sale to restaurants, were packed in individual plastic boxes and were being loaded into a car; a man evaded capture. The specimens were to be released in a national park.

On 13 September 2009, Malaysian marine police officials caught two Malaysian nationals loading wildlife into a boat in eastern Terengganu State and seized 264 dead owls, 33 Sun Bear *Helarctos malayanus* (I) parts and 4800 live monitor lizards; the men were arrested on suspicion of trying to smuggle them abroad. The lizards were to be released into the wild.

On 27 September 2009, police from the sixth General Operation Force (GOF) battalion in Bakri seized about 40 live pangolins following a car chase along Sungai Sarang Buaya. One man was arrested.

The unit spent four days staking out the river estuary before spotting two boats approaching the coast. One vessel returned to sea after the other landed near the estuary. Two men then began loading sacks of live pangolins into a car before realising they were being watched and sped away. One man was captured and the animals were handed over to the State's Wildlife and National Parks Department.

On 8 October 2008, marine police seized 27 plastic crates filled with some 4000 live frogs from a boat arriving from Indonesia, off Tanjung Harapan. The amphibians were believed to have been destined for local restaurants. The skipper was detained but 14 crew members were released after questioning.

On 5 November 2009, the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency seized 55 live pangolins *Manis* (CITES II) from a boat coasting near the mangrove forest. The animals, which had been destined to be used as food, were handed over to the Department of Wildlife and National Parks.

On 15 December 2009, marine police in Muar seized 62 pangolins *Manis* (CITES II): 31 live specimens were found inside cars and a house in Taman Tasik Ria in Tangkak, while another 31 frozen pangolins were found in a freezer. The seizures follow surveillance by the police over two

weeks of the activities of a group of people who evaded capture during the incident. All the pangolins were taken to the Muar marine police jetty before being surrendered to the Wildlife Department.

www.traffic.org/home/2009/8/26/bear-paws-turn-up-in-nationwide-raids.html, 26 August 2009; www.traffic.org/home/2009/8/28/pangolins-saved-from-slaughter.html, 28 August 2009; www.nst.com.my/Current_News/NST/articles/21pgo/Article/index_html; 2009/09/09; <http://help.yahoo.com/my/yahoo/news/>; <http://malaysia.news.yahoo.com/ap/20090914/tap-as-malaysia-smuggled-wildlife-b3c65ae.html?printer=114>, September 2009; <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2009/9/28/nation/20090928143215>; [http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2009/9/28/nation/20090928143215 &sec=nation](http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2009/9/28/nation/20090928143215&sec=nation); 28 September 2009; www.nst.com.my/articles/20091009213703/Article/index_html, 9 October 2009; www.nst.com.my/Current_News/NST/articles/26kot/Article/index_html, 6 November 2009; <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2009/12/17/nation/5316794&sec=nation>

THAILAND: In June 2009, one of the country's most prolific wildlife traffickers was sentenced to two years' imprisonment. He was found guilty of attempting to smuggle 245 live Malayan Pangolins *Manis javanica* (CITES II) and 63 Black Marsh Turtles *Siebenrockiella crassicollis* (II), into Bangkok via Don Mueang Airport in June 2006. The animals, contained in wooden boxes and accompanied by false papers, had arrived from Kuala Lumpur International Airport and had been destined for China. The police investigation into the role of other gang members involved in this case is under way.

"The success of this legal procedure against wildlife traffickers shows that South-east Asian authorities recognize the value of law enforcement as the major tool in combating wildlife trafficking," said Chumphon Sukkaseam, senior officer of the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN) in Bangkok.

On 21 August 2009, according to information provided by the Thailand CITES Management Authority, Customs officials at Suvarnabhumi Airport, Bangkok, seized 316 pieces of raw ivory weighing 812.5 kg. The ivory originated from Uganda and Kenya and was illegally imported into Thailand from Qatar. One tonne of ivory was impounded by Customs officials in Bangkok, Thailand, and traced back to Uganda's Entebbe International Airport early this year.

On 27 October 2009, 46 rare Malagasy turtles were seized, following a request to Thailand by the Japanese Government to follow up and arrest a gang of smugglers. Among the turtles seized were Ploughshare Tortoises *Astrochelys yniphora* (CITES I), a species which only occurs in Madagascar and is classified by IUCN as Critically Endangered.

On 20 January 2010, following a 17-month investigation involving the first collaboration between US and Thai law enforcement authorities, a Thai national was charged with trafficking ivory. Earlier in the week, Thailand's nature crime police also raided ivory shops, seized tusks and arrested two other dealers.

Undercover Customs investigators tracked the suspects by following the source of ivory products sold in the USA back to Asia with support from regional and independent conservation groups.

The individual was arrested in November 2009 in Bangkok. He could now be prosecuted in both Thailand and the USA. The two other dealers who were arrested had been caught with six tusks (weighing a total of 32 kg). Sources close to the operation said this was likely to be a fraction of the overall trade and the kingpins were still to be found.

The first fruits of collaboration were hailed as an important step forward in international efforts to co-ordinate a crackdown on the trade. The next step was to target the leaders of the smuggling chain.

On 24 February 2010, Customs officials at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport, acting on information, seized 239 African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I) tusks hidden in two pallets labelled as mobile phone parts. It is the country's largest ivory seizure to date.

The consignment is reported to have originated in Kenya, on a flight routed via Dubai, and was declared as destined for Lao PDR. A Thai national attempted to pick up the cargo and was detained.

Asia-Pacific News, 30 June, 2009: www.phnompenhpost.com/index.php/2009063026799/National-news/Animal-trafficker-hurt-in-alleged-revenge-hit-after-pangolin-escape.html; www.asean-wen.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=100:major-wildlife-trafficker-sentenced-to-thai-prison&catid=45:press-releases&Itemid=89; CITES Management Authority, Thailand; *The New Vision*, 29 June 2009: www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/13/686334; www.asiantribune.com/news/2009/10/28/malagasy-turtles-seized, 28 October 2009; IUCN, 2009. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2009.1. www.iucnredlist.org. Viewed on 30 October 2009; www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/jan/20/ivory-smuggling-ring-thailand; www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/02/25/AR2010022500297_pf.html; TRAFFIC International

VIET NAM: In January 2009, two men were apprehended after killing two Black-shanked Douc Langurs *Pygathrix nigripes* (CITES I) in Khanh Hoa Province's Hon Heo peninsula.

On 10 March 2009, police detained three men who had allegedly killed five Black-shanked Douc Langurs in Cam Lam district. A patrol unit from the Hon Ba Natural Reserve spotted the three men with the dead animals, and two guns.

On 11 May 2009, forest wardens in Khanh Hoa Province, Ninh Hoa district, found five disembowelled animals inside a bag, each weighing between six and 10.5 kg, after they gave chase to a person on a motorbike on the National Highway 1A. The person fled leaving the bike and bag behind. The dead animals were identified by the Institute of Tropical Biology under the Vietnam Academy of Science and Technology as Black-shanked Douc Langurs. The Khanh Hoa provincial police said they would launch criminal proceedings to track down the suspect.

All the detained men are facing charges of violating regulations on protecting endangered species. On 16 July 2009, Ha Noi's Environmental Police at Hoang Cau Stadium in Dong Da District seized a frozen Tiger and more than 11 kg of Tiger bones that had been transported from Thanh Hoa Province to Ha Noi via taxi. Three individuals were in the taxi, including the man who claimed ownership of the Tiger.

The bones were identified by the Institute of Ecology and Biological Resources (IEBR), Viet Nam's CITES Scientific Authority, which speculated that the animal, which weighed 57 kg, was probably a young individual that had been recently killed and that the bones had come from at least two adult Tigers.

The Environmental Police believe the Tiger was transported from Central Viet Nam, but it is unknown whether the animal originated in Viet Nam or whether it was a wild or captive-bred specimen.

"To complete the police investigation, we call upon the authorities to carry out DNA testing to help determine where these Tigers came from," said Nguyen Dao Ngoc Van, of TRAFFIC's Ha Noi-based office. "While the continuing trade in Tigers and Tiger parts is of great concern, the work of the Environmental Police towards stopping the trade is encouraging and impressive," added Van. "Although only recently formed, the Environmental Police are quickly improving Viet Nam's capacity to enforce its existing wildlife trade legislation," she said.

On 24 August 2009, Customs officers in the northern port city of Hai Phong seized a consignment from Indonesia of around four kilogrammes of pangolin *Manis* (CITES II) scales concealed in bags of dried seaweed, and 51 sacks containing two tonnes of tortoise shells. The items were found in a container whose waybill declared the contents as dried tuna stomach. The goods were destined for the same company in Ha Noi as an ivory shipment seized in the port on 21 August (see below). The case is being investigated.

In October 2009, the Thanh Hoa Provincial People's Committee fined a man almost VND300 million (USD16 200) for illegally transporting 226.6 kg of pangolins *Manis* (CITES II) through the province.

On 2 October 2009, Viet Nam's Environmental Police and the local Ha Long Police caught employees of the Dai Yen farm extracting and selling bear bile to Korean tourists. The police had staked out the bear farm for days before raiding the facility, located on the outskirts of the town. Police seized more than 200 bottles of gall bile as well as equipment used to tap the bears' gall bladders. The farm owners could not produce valid documentation for 24 of the 81 Asiatic Black Bears *Ursus thibetanus* (CITES I) found in captivity there. Five workers and two South Koreans, who had been visiting the farm on an organized tour, were temporarily taken into custody for questioning.

Bear farming for bile is illegal in Viet Nam, but farmers are allowed to keep bears to display to tourists. In an attempt to protect the few bears remaining in the wild, the authorities microchipped the 4000 bears on farms. The 24 bears involved in this raid had no microchips, which means they were likely illegally caught in the wild.

On 4 November 2009, the People's Committee in Bo Trach district of Quang Binh Province sentenced seven subjects to a total imprisonment of 43 months. The subjects had mobilized hundreds of local people in helping them to blockade local forest rangers in order to snatch timber that had been seized in an illegal logging case.

On 7 December 2009, police in Ha Tinh Province recovered 54 pangolins *Manis* (CITES II) (300 kg) from a car during a patrol conducted by the province's Environment Police, in co-operation with Huong Son District's forest rangers on National Highway 8A. The driver escaped. The specimens, which were being transported from the border with Lao PDR, were handed over to the forest rangers for release into the wild. The case is under investigation.

<http://thanhniennews.com/features/?catid=10>, 25 May 2009; <http://thanhniennews.com/features/?catid=10&newsid=49125>, 24 May 2009; www.traffic.org/home/2009/7/17/ha-nois-environmental-police-seize-frozen-tiger-and-tiger-bo.html, 17 July 2009; Thanh Nien News, 25 August 2009: www.thanhniennews.com/society/?catid=3&newsid=52052; http://envietnam.org/E_News/E_339/Buon_lau_te_te_bi_phat_gan_300_trieu_dong.html; www.lookatvietnam.com/2009/11/freedom-sought-for-bile-farm-bears.html, 18 November 2009; http://envietnam.org/E_News/E_339/Doi_tuong_bao_vay_kiem_lam_lanh_an_tu.html; Thanh Nien News, www.thanh-nien-news.com/society/?catid=3&newsid=54125, 11 December 2009

Ivory seizures in Viet Nam: It was reported on 29 July 2009 that Customs officials had uncovered 200 kg of elephant ivory tusks illegally imported from Kenya. The items were found hidden in timber inside a container at Hai Phong port. The authorities are seeking the owner of the container, who did not turn up to receive the goods when they arrived in April.

The week prior, in Tanzania, six businessmen were charged with smuggling 11 t of elephant ivory to the Philippines and Viet Nam over the previous six months (see Tanzania).

On 20 August 2009, police officers in Thanh Hoa Province seized 16 elephant tusks (94 kg) concealed in a car headed for Ha Noi after it was stopped for driving in the wrong lane. Police arrested the driver on suspicion of smuggling and seized the car and the tusks as evidence; they were reportedly bound for Ha Noi to be sold.

On 21 August 2009, Customs officers in the northern port city of Hai Phong found more than two tonnes (326 pieces) of elephant tusks in a container from Tanzania claimed to be carrying snail shells. The consignment was destined for a company in Ha Noi. The case is being investigated.

www.straitstimes.com/Breaking+News/SE+Asia/Story/STIStory_409631.html, 29 July 2009;
www.topnews.in/vietnam-police-seize-elephant-tusks-2204473, 21 August 2009; Thanh Nien News, 25 August 2009: www.thanhniennews.com/society/?catid=3&newsid=52052

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA: On 6 September 2009, at Perth International Airport, Customs and Border Protection officers arrested an Australian national on arrival from Bali after 39 parrot eggs were found concealed in a specially made vest he was wearing under clothing. He was charged with attempting to smuggle wildlife into Australia.

The eggs were secured by the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service and have been sterilized owing to the high biosecurity risk.

Australian Customs Service Media release, 9 September 2009: www.customs.gov.au

NEW ZEALAND: The director of a company selling medicinal herbs has pleaded guilty to the illegal trade of products derived from CITES-listed animal and plant species. Her company also pleaded guilty.

The case began in August 2007 after an import entry form accompanying a shipment and lodged with the New Zealand Customs Service (NZCS) on behalf of the company, was found not to include a large number of additional items that were subsequently discovered in the shipment. These included: Ginseng *Panax ginseng* (CITES II), deer horn glue, shaved animal horn, curcuma (turmeric) and plant material believed to be *Dendrobium* Orchidaceae (I/II). All the undeclared items were concealed inside cartons containing other goods which were found to be derived from Siberian Musk Deer *Moschus moschiferus* (I), Saiga Antelope *Saiga tatarica* (II) and *Dendrobium*. No appropriate permit accompanied the shipment.

On 17 October 2007, search warrants were executed at the company's premises where items found included products derived from Hawksbill Turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata* (CITES I), Saiga Antelope, Bletillae (*Bletilla* spp. (I) [Orchidaceae]); Rhizoma cibotii *Cibotium barometz*; Aucklandia lappa [= *Costus Saussurea costus* (I)]; and Agarwood *Aquilaria*. A further inspection in December uncovered products relating to: pangolin *Manis*, Saiga Antelope, Indian Roofed Turtle *Kachuga tecta* (I), *Ephemerantha fimbriata* [= *Flickingeria* Orchidaceae (II)], and Hawksbill Turtle.

The defendants have subsequently pleaded guilty to the illegal trade of herbal products and sentencing was set for 4 March 2010.

On 7 December 2009, at Christchurch District Court, Hans Kurt Kubus, a German national, pleaded guilty to seven charges pursuant to both the *Wildlife Act* (x2) and CITES (x5). He was convicted on all charges and, on 25 January 2010, was sentenced to NZD5000 (USD3500) (NZD1000 per CITES violation) and a total of 14 weeks' imprisonment for the two *Wildlife Act* violations.

Kubus had been apprehended as he was about to depart Christchurch Airport for Frankfurt, in possession of 24 Sticky-toed geckos *Hoplodactylus* sp. and 20 skinks *Oligosoma* sp. that he had illegally collected from the wild. One gecko was found during a baggage search; the other 43 reptiles were found in a purpose-built body pack concealed in Kubus's underwear.

All endemic New Zealand geckos and skinks are absolutely protected pursuant to the *Wildlife Act* and all endemic geckos are listed in CITES Appendix III.

New Zealand Wildlife Enforcement Group (WEG), Department of Conservation

AMERICAS

CANADA: The Conservation and Protection Intelligence and Investigation Services Unit from Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) successfully concluded a three-year multi-country, multi-agency operation involving the illegal sale and possession of Northern Abalone *Haliotis kamtschatkana*, listed as a threatened species under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) and as Endangered by IUCN.

The investigation was triggered in 2007 and a team of DFO fishery officers spent months unravelling a complex trail of illegally harvested and traded abalone. In August 2008, a woman was fined CAD25 000 (USD23 500) in Richmond Provincial Court, British Columbia, for the illegal possession of Northern Abalone and, in a connected case, on 2 June 2009, a representative of Momoji Seafood Packaging and Exporting Ltd appeared in Richmond Provincial Court after being found in possession of approximately 54 kg of Northern Abalones. A guilty plea was accepted and a fine of CAD35 500 imposed. CAD34 500 of that amount was to be directed to DFO to promote conservation and protection of Northern Abalone through scientific research. The company was also prohibited from possessing any species of abalone for the next two years.

In addition to the above prosecutions and abalone seizures, the investigation led to the discovery of around 340 kg of Northern Abalones in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, which were subsequently forfeited under court order. Molecular Genetics Research Scientists from DFO's Pacific Biological Station in Nanaimo provided conclusive forensic DNA evidence for the Court that aided in successful prosecutions or guilty pleas. Members of DFO's Conservation and Protection Intelligence and Investigation Services Unit travelled to the USA and Mexico as part of the investigation, which also uncovered a related abalone smuggling operation at the US-Mexico border near Tijuana (see USA).

The Northern Abalone fisheries have been closed since 1990 to halt the decline of the existing wild population and reduce the risk of this species becoming extinct in British Columbia. In 2009, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), an independent scientific group, recommended a change in SARA status of Northern Abalone to "endangered". Illegal harvesting of the mollusc is considered the biggest factor affecting recovery of the species, and poaching and trafficking abalone is a serious offence under the *Fisheries Act*.

www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/media/npres-communique/2009/pr23-eng.htm, 30 October 2009; www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/media/back-fiche/2009/pr14-eng.htm; IUCN 2009. *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2009.2.* www.iucnredlist.org. Viewed on 5 January 2010

USA: On 18 July 2009, at Atlanta Hartsfield International Airport, Charlotte, Customs inspectors found two Asian Bonytongues *Scleropages formosus* (CITES I) packed inside a cooler bag containing plastic bottles of fish sauce belonging to a Charlotte woman arriving from Viet Nam. US Fish and Wildlife Service Inspectors found two black plastic bags inside the bottles, inside each of which was a live fish.

The defendant was charged with violating the *Endangered Species Act* by attempting to import two Asian Bonytongue fish without a permit. She told an inspector that her mother-in-law had given her the boxes of food as a surprise gift at the airport in Viet Nam and that she did not know the live fish were inside her luggage.

The suspect was released on a USD25 000 bond and ordered to appear in court in Atlanta where the charges are pending.

In September 2009, Henry Chan and the company Zenith Trading pleaded guilty to misdemeanor counts under the *Lacey Act* for the illegal possession of White Abalone *Haliotis sorenseni* under the US *Endangered Species Act*. Chan was fined USD50 000, USD10 000 of which is earmarked for abalone research and education in the USA.

The prosecution follows a three-year investigation into the illegal possession and sale of Northern Abalone *Haliotis kamtschatkana* undertaken by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in San Diego, with the assistance of The Conservation and Protection Intelligence and Investigation Services Unit from Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) Intelligence and Investigation unit (see Canada).

On 28 January 2010, at the US District Court, Boston, a Nantucket scrimshaw artist was convicted of one count of conspiracy to smuggle wildlife, six counts of smuggling wildlife and two counts of lying to investigators. The suspect was charged with smuggling teeth of Sperm Whale *Physeter*

catodon (CITES I) and elephant ivory (I) into the country in violation of CITES and federal endangered species protection laws. He etched pictures onto ivory and whale teeth for sale and had conspired with a Ukrainian man to import the pieces. Sentencing was set for 6 May 2010.

www.charlotteobserver.com/local/v-print/story/965412.html, 23 September 2009; Fisheries and Oceans Canada press release, 30 October 2009; IUCN 200, IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2009.2. www.iucnredlist.org. Downloaded on 3 November 2009. www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/media/npres-communicue/2009/pr23-eng.htm; www.bostonherald.com/news/regional/view.bg?articleid=1229132, 29 January 2010

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EUROPE

BELGIUM: INTERPOL, WCO (World Customs Organization) and CITES informed China's CITES Management Authority that during May and June 2010 Customs officials at Brussels Airport confiscated over 3000 dried sea horses *Hippocampus* (CITES II), 250 ivory items (I) and 25 crocodile (I/II) bags from the luggage of around 100 Chinese passengers who were in transit from Guinea, bound for Beijing.

As a result, Customs at Beijing Airport have enhanced controls on passengers returning from Africa and made some additional seizures of ivory. Moreover, the Chinese authorities have carried out a campaign to warn travellers not to buy endangered wildlife products and bring them back to China.

China Green Times, 7 July 2010: www.forestry.gov.cn/portal/main/s/72/content_430369.html; World Customs Organization pers. comm. to TRAFFIC Europe, 13 July 2010

CROATIA: In late August 2010, Customs officers stopped four Italian hunters attempting to smuggle 627 dead songbirds in a van travelling from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Croatia. The birds, concealed under the driver's seat, had been shot. Among them were Tree Pipits *Anthus trivialis* and Skylarks *Alauda arvensis*, both protected species under European Community (EC) and national legislation. A quarter of the birds had already been plucked, making identification impossible.

The principal hunter received a two-year gaol sentence suspended for five years and was fined a total of HRK78 885 (EUR10 800/USD13 778). His vehicle was impounded and he was banned from re-entering Croatia for four years.

"TRAFFIC congratulates the Croatian Customs on this recent seizure and welcomes the quick application of heavy penalties by the Croatian Court," said Rob Parry-Jones, Director of TRAFFIC Europe. "This case highlights the need for better control over the activities of Italian hunters to ensure they are not acting outside the law. This should be a joint responsibility between the Italian authorities and hunting agencies."

Croatian Nature Protection Inspection

FRANCE: On 13 July 2010, an illegal shipment of 252 kg of glass eels coming from Spain and destined for China was seized by the French authorities at Roissy Charles de Gaulle Airport. The surviving specimens have now been re-introduced into the Loire River.

www.eldiariomontanes.es/agencias/20100723/economia/aduana-francesa-intercepta-carga-ilegal_201007231706.html; CITES Management Authority, France

GERMANY: In September 2010, Customs officials and the German CITES Management Authorities carried out investigations in various parts of the country and seized 98 rare tortoises, all strictly protected, among them Ploughshare Tortoises *Astrochelys yniphora* (CITES I), a Madagascan species of which only about 100 specimens remain in the wild. Six people are being investigated.

Press release, CITES Management Authority, Germany, 3 October 2010

RUSSIA: On 13 April 2010, the Border Service of the Russian Federal Security Service arrested two Chinese smugglers at the border with China who were trying to smuggle out of the country the skins of three Amur Tigers *Panthera tigris altaica* (CITES I) and Tiger bones belonging to two animals.

Customs agents at Blagoveschensk, at the border with Russia and China, recently apprehended a woman whose bulky clothing aroused suspicion. On investigation she was found to be concealing bear paws taped to her torso.

Closed for decades, the border at Blagoveschensk has reportedly been allowing more trade and travellers through in recent years which has led to animal parts being smuggled in for traditional medicine and food.

“It is very widespread just now”, Alexei Vaisman of TRAFFIC Europe-Russia said of the illicit trade in animal parts in the Far East. Items reportedly smuggled daily into China include bear paws, bear gallbladders, frogs, Tiger bones, musk deer *Moschus* and the genitals of spotted deer. Bear paws are the most common commodities in this underground market, Mr Vaisman says. He estimates that thousands are smuggled each year. They are reported to be derived from the Siberian population of the Brown Bear *Ursus arctos* (CITES II), from specimens killed legally by hunters and also by poachers.

On 8 February 2010, Russian border patrol agents stopped two lorries carrying 447 bear paws (515 kg) in the village of Leninskoye, close to the Chinese border, and arrested two Russians and a Chinese national.

On 15 July 2010, Amur Customs detected an attempt to smuggle 6.7 t of furs from Russia to China by lorry. These included more than four tonnes of Muskrat *Ondatra zibethicus*; the others were from Mink *Mustela lutreola*, weasel *Mustela* and Sable *Martes zibellina*. The case is under investigation to identify the specific species and to estimate their total value.

www.wwf.ru/resources/news/article/eng/6448; www.nytimes.com/2010/06/30/world/asia/30animals.html, 29 June 2010; <http://news.163.com/1010716/23/6BOGPFUO000146BD.html>; *Global Times* (Beijing), 16 July 2010

SERBIA: On 22 September 2010, at Belgrade International Airport, 22 toucans were discovered in a shipment of live birds during the course of a routine inspection by border veterinary inspectors and environmental officers, with co-operation from Customs officials. The CITES II-listed birds, which arrived from the United Arab Emirates, were identified by the Serbian CITES Scientific Authority as eight Black-necked Aracari *Pteroglossus aracari*, eight Channel-billed Toucans *Ramphastos vitellinus* and six Red-billed Toucans *R. tucanus*. The specimens, which were not accompanied by CITES permits, were confiscated.

CITES Management Authority, Serbia

UK: On 15 April 2010, at Leeds Crown Court, Norah and Graham Pitchforth of West Yorkshire were each sentenced to 44 weeks' imprisonment, suspended for 18 months, plus a total of 400 hours of unpaid community service, after being convicted of selling animal skulls on eBay and of smuggling animal skulls from Indonesia and South Africa. The specimens included a Lion *Panthera leo* cub (CITES I), flying foxes, monkeys, a sea otter, Sparrowhawks *Accipiter* (CITES II), owls, a Crocodile Monitor *Varanus salvadorii* (CITES II) and a collection of more than 60 animal skulls.

On 11 June 2010, at Norwich Crown Court, Mark Rowland of Swaffham pleaded guilty to nine offences under the *Control of Trade in Endangered Species (Enforcement) Regulations 1997* (COTES), in relation to various taxidermy specimens (Annex A), including rhinoceros horn. He was sentenced to nine months in gaol and subject to a Serious Crime Prevention Order (SCPO).

On 18 August 2010, at Warwick Crown Court, Jeffrey Lendrum, of dual Irish and Zimbabwean nationality, pleaded guilty to attempting to smuggle out of the country 14 eggs of Peregrine Falcons *Falco peregrinus* (CITES I and protected under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981*). He had collected the eggs in south Wales and was to travel to South Africa, and reportedly aimed to hand over the eggs to an individual while the flight was in transit in Dubai. He was arrested at Birmingham Airport in May 2010 after a cleaner found discarded egg cartons in a bin following Lendrum's use of the shower facilities, which remained dry. The authorities were alerted and Lendrum searched; the eggs were found in socks strapped to his body. After seizing the eggs, the officers placed them on their office computers to keep warm: 11 went on to hatch and were successfully raised. Most of the birds have already been released in the wild in Scotland.

Andy McWilliam, from the National Wildlife Crime Unit, who led the investigation, said it was serious organized crime, well planned, with extremely high financial rewards. "Lendrum is the highest level of wildlife criminal," he said. "The eggs for him are a commodity. This is his profession, he knew exactly what he was doing." According to the evidence, the eggs were stolen to order.

Guy Shorrock of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) said: "This is one of the biggest wildlife cases in years."

Lendrum was first convicted of offences involving the taking of birds of prey from the wild in 1984, in Zimbabwe, and again, in 2002, in Canada.

On 20 August 2010, at Coventry Crown Court, taxidermist Alan Dudley of Coventry was given a 50-week gaol term suspended for two years after admitting charges related to buying and offering for sale the skulls of protected species. He was ordered to be electronically tagged and a nightly curfew was imposed on his movements for three months. He was also fined GBP1000 (US\$1538) plus prosecution costs of GBP1500. The skulls were to be destroyed.

Dudley's home was searched by police in March 2008 where a room was found dedicated to his collection of animal skulls, on show in display cases lining the walls. The majority of the hoard was lawfully held, but an investigation found that some of the skulls had been bought without the necessary licences. The items seized included lemurs, a Goeldi's Marmoset *Callimico goeldii* (CITES I and classified by IUCN as Vulnerable), Sparrowhawks *Accipiter nisus* (CITES II), Buzzards *Buteo buteo* (CITES II), a Goshawk *Accipiter*, and owls. Dudley denied charges of keeping a Tiger in his freezer, and smuggling the skulls of a Chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes* (CITES I) and a fur seal *Arctocephalus* (CITES II). His not guilty pleas were accepted by the Crown Prosecution Service.

The court heard that Dudley had an arrangement with a number of local zoos and academic institutions to "clean up" the carcasses of dead animals and return the skeletons. He had been an avid collector of skulls for years and was licensed to dispose of animal waste, including zoo animals. He combined the two and used his access to dead zoo animals to obtain potential taxidermy specimens and skulls.

Dudley was caught after a complex investigation led by West Midlands Police, in partnership with the National Wildlife Crime Unit and UK Border Agency.

On 20 September 2010, at Aberystwyth Magistrates' Court, Jean and Alan Mumbray, the owners of a zoo in the Aberystwyth area, pleaded guilty to charges in connection with the sale and display of endangered animals.

The offences included the offering for sale of two Spur-thighed Tortoises *Testudo graeca* (CITES II) and the illegal display for commercial purposes of three Spur-thighed Tortoises and a Leopard *Panthera pardus* (I). Jean Mowbray was further charged in connection with the illegal display for commercial purposes of two Ring-tailed Lemurs *Lemur catta* (I), two Ruffed Lemurs *Varecia variegata* (I), and two Lynxes *Lynx lynx* (II). She was fined GBP937.50 (USD1482) plus GBP250 costs; Alan Mumbray was fined GBP300 plus GBP100 costs.

On 5 October 2010, Donald Allison of Preston pleaded guilty to charges of trying to smuggle two horns of a White Rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* (CITES I) through Manchester Airport. He was gaoled for 12 months. Allison, who was en route to China, had concealed the horns in the false base of a sculpture.

Following forensic analysis, the UK Border Agency and UK National Wildlife Crime Unit traced the horns to a rhinoceros formerly kept at Colchester Zoo that had died of natural causes in 2009.

On 26 October 2010, at Carlisle Crown Court, Robert Struthers, a UK-based tortoise seller, received a 24-week suspended gaol sentence after he confessed to five charges of selling 11 tortoises without the relevant government permits (and one charge of fraud). He was also ordered to carry out 250 hours of unpaid work and fined GBP1200 (USD1900). The reptiles involved were Spur-thighed Tortoise *Testudo graeca* and Marginated Tortoise *T. marginata* (both CITES II).

Struthers admitted supplying a bogus certificate to a customer who had threatened to report the lack of proper paperwork to the authorities following her purchase of two tortoises. Later, it emerged the certificate had been issued for a separate concern in Essex.

In the UK, exemption certificates from Animal Health are necessary before certain tortoises (including these species) can be sold legally.

Although the tortoises were captive-bred and properly cared for, the failure to comply with certification processes could encourage illegal trade because the authorities would be unable to determine the origins of specimens, the court heard.

National Wildlife Crime Unit; www.lynnnews.co.uk/news/features/swaffham_jail_for_selling_scarce_wildlife_1_660218; www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-11182666; West Midlands Police press releases, 23 July: www.west-midlands.police.uk/latest-news/press-release.asp?id=1807; 23 August: www.west-midlands.police.uk/latest-news/press-release.asp?id=1838; Coventry Telegraph (UK): www.coventrytelegraph.net/news/coventry-news/2010/08/21/suspended-sentence-for-man-who-imported-endangered-animal-skulls-92746-27105970; www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/apr/15/taxidermist-endangered-species-ebay; Cornejo, F. 2008. Callimico goeldii. In: IUCN 2010. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2010.3. www.iucnredlist.org. Downloaded on 28 September 2010; www.dyfed-powys.police.uk/en/news/2010/9/16/, 22 September 2010; www.wwf.org.uk/wwf_articles.cfm?unewsid=4263; www.traffic.org/home/2010/10/26/lack-of-paperwork-lands-tortoise-seller-24-week-suspended-se.html

A F R I C A

DEM. REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO: On 7 September 2010, at Lumumbashi Airport, police arrested three Chinese nationals carrying six suitcases of elephant tusks. The men claimed to have purchased the ivory from antique dealers and were intending to export the consignment to Nairobi.

In August, police seized 116 elephant tusks and arrested two Congolese men in the north-east of the country. The ivory was found inside jerry cans that had tumbled off a lorry involved in a crash near Kisangani.

www.boston.com/news/world/africa/articles/2010/09/07/congo_police_arrest_3_men_carrying_elephant_ivory/, 7 September 2010; The Canadian Press

KENYA: On 25 August 2010, at Makadara Law Courts, Nairobi, a Chinese national was gaoled for 18 months for illegal possession of ivory. He had been arrested the previous day at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi, after his hand luggage was found to contain 10 worked ivory chopsticks and two bangles. It appeared the man was taking the finished products home for his personal use.

The previous day, authorities confiscated unaccompanied cargo containing two tonnes of ivory and five rhino horns at the airport. A suspect charged in connection with the case has denied the charges and was released on bail. Kenya's Wildlife Service said that several other suspects, including the owner of the consignment, were being sought.

The cargo was falsely declared as containing avocados. Authorities believe the tusks and horns were en route to Asia and had been collected from animals that had died from natural causes over a 20-year period.

http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/africa/08/26/kenya.ivory.smuggling/

SOUTH AFRICA: In early February 2010, six people illegally selling Leopard Tortoises *Stigmochelys pardalis* (CITES II) were arrested in the province of North West by police officials, with the assistance of the environmental management inspector unit (the Green Scorpions), during a crackdown on illegal traders that began in Rustenburg two weeks earlier. Eleven Leopard Tortoises were confiscated.

In March 2010, a range of animal parts was confiscated from Asian and traditional healers in Gauteng during a police operation that involved the collaboration of INTERPOL and nature conservation groups.

Items seized included parts belonging to Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I), Lion *P. leo* (II), African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (I), rhinoceros (I), crocodile (I/II), python (II) and African Wild Dog *Lycaon pictus*.

On 31 May 2010, at Port Shepstone Magistrates' Court, three Chinese nationals living in Kwazulu-Natal received heavy penalties after pleading guilty to removing over 5678 East Coast Brown Mussels *Perna perna* from rocks in the Shaka's Rock area of Umtentweni on 17 April, and illegal possession of implements to remove the molluscs.

Jiankang Wang, Yingpingdi Gao and Enguang Weng all pleaded guilty to two counts under the *Marine Living Resources Act* and were each sentenced to a fine of R120 000 (USD16 584) or two years' imprisonment, half of which was suspended for two years on condition they do not commit a similar offence.

A recreational permit is needed to pick mussels in Kwazulu-Natal, and the bag limit is 30 specimens a day. They may not be stockpiled over several days. Mussels may be legally picked by hand or with the aid of an implement of which the blade or flat edge does not exceed 12 mm in width.

On 30 June 2010, at Kempton Park Magistrates' Court, Xuan Hoang of Viet Nam was convicted on seven counts of illegal possession of rhinoceros horn and sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment with no option of a fine despite his pleas for mercy and a fine in place of a gaol sentence. This follows the defendant's arrest at O.R. Tambo International Airport on 29 March in possession of seven rhinoceros horns (16 kg), representing four poached animals.

Magistrate Manyathi said that he wanted to send a strong message to Viet Nam with this sentence, as fines did not seem to be a deterrent. He also stressed the fact that Xuan Hoang had travelled to South Africa specifically to commit a crime with self-enrichment as motivation, without taking the effect of the damage into consideration.

On 21 September 2010, a man appeared at Strand Magistrates' Court, Cape Town, after more than 444 abalones *Haliotis midae* were found at his home following information passed to the police from a member of the public.

On 22 September 2010, at Musina Magistrates' Court, 11 people, including two veterinarians, were released on bail following their arrest for alleged involvement in a rhinoceros poaching syndicate operating in the Limpopo province. The case was postponed to 11 April 2011.

An undisclosed number of rhinoceros horns were seized during a raid in Musina, on the border with Zimbabwe, where the group was operating.

The accused are reportedly linked to "hundreds of other incidents" (see also page 3).

www.thestar.co.za/index.php?fArticleId=5355017, 17 February 2010; [www.pretorianews.co.za/index.php?from=rss Pretoria%20News&fArticleId=5379247](http://www.pretorianews.co.za/index.php?from=rss%20News&fArticleId=5379247), 5 March 2010; Ezemvelo Kwazulu-Natal Wildlife news item, 1 June 2010; www.eyewitnessnews.co.za/articleprog.aspx?id=49026, 21 September 2010; Endangered Wildlife Trust media release, 2 July 2010; www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-11381686; www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/Rhino-poaching-vets-arrested-20100920

SWAZILAND: On 15 June 2010, a court in Nhlanguano ordered two women each to pay fines of SZL4000 (USD557) after they were arrested in a crackdown on traditional healers whose medicines depend on parts from protected animals.

Nomsa Nhlabatsi and Thuli Irene Mdluli pleaded guilty and asked for leniency, saying that they were caring for husbands and children. The pair was found with crocodile (CITES I/II) heads and skins of Lion *Panthera leo* (II) and python (II) during a raid a month earlier as part of Operation Tilwane (Operation Animals).

www.iol.co.za/index.php?from=rss_Africa&set_id=1&click_id=68&art_id=nw2010615203647887C349918

TANZANIA: Between January and June 2010 there were 16 cases reported by the Wildlife Division involving the seizure of elephant tusks, both raw and worked ivory. Twenty-two suspects were arrested in possession of 291 raw pieces of tusks (1266 kg) and two other pieces of worked ivory (1.2 kg).

In another development, on 11 October 2010, police impounded 154 pieces of elephant tusks (weight not indicated) and eight skins of Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I); three people were arrested.

TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa; www.dailynews.co.tz/home/?n=13726&cat=home

ZIMBABWE: Three members of the Zimbabwe Republic Police have been charged with stealing elephant tusks (59 kg) and selling them in Botswana. They were to appear in court on 1 November 2010 after they appeared before Harare Magistrates' Court on charges of possession and sale of ivory without a permit.

The three were stationed at Kazungula police station in Matabeleland North province and, it is alleged, in October 2008, two of the suspects went to Matetsi Unit 6 safari area where they found six pieces of elephant tusks. The pair did not report their finding to the authorities but, together with the assistance of the third officer, transferred the tusks to the no-man's land between Zimbabwe and Botswana. It is also alleged that they made arrangements to sell the tusks to a Tswana national.

News Day (Zimbabwe), 16 September 2010; www.dailynews.co.zw/news/34-news/690-two-policemen-arrested-for-smuggling-ivory.html, 15 September 2010

ASIA

EAST ASIA

CHINA: On 7 March 2010, two herders in Manas county, Xinjiang province, were sentenced to between eight and 10 years' imprisonment for killing a Snow Leopard *Uncia uncia* (listed under national first-class protection/CITES I). The animal was caught in a trap the pair had set to catch predators that had been attacking their livestock. They killed the trapped cat with stones and distributed the body parts and skin to others.

Other sentences relating to the poaching of Snow Leopards include the arrest by Luntai police, in January 2010, of five suspects who poached two specimens. In November 2008, at Yining People's Court, three people were sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment for killing four Snow Leopards.

On 8 March 2010, Guangzhou forest police reported on the Internet sale of Slow Lorises *Nycticebus coucang* (CITES I). Eight live Slow Lorises contained in two cartons had been seized at Guangzhou Baiyun Airport on 30 January 2010; they were bound for Shanghai and Harbin. In connection with this, on 31 January, a suspect apprehended near Fangcun Flower and Bird Market confessed to purchasing the Slow Lorises online from Yunnan province, and transporting them to Guangzhou on 29 January. He found buyers online and by phone. Another suspect arrested soon afterwards was found to have been sending Slow Lorises and snakes to the primary suspect, for sale, since June 2009.

On 14 March 2010, at Nenjiang railway station, Heilongjiang province, police officers foiled an attempt by local people to carry four frozen bear paws to Beijing. Two of the paws were identified by the Wildlife Identification Center of the State Forestry Administration as deriving from Asiatic Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus* (CITES I) and the others from Brown Bear *Ursus arctos* (CITES I/II).

On 15 March 2010, at Lvshunkou People's Court, Liaoning province, a man was sentenced to three years in goal, suspended for three years, and fined CNY5000 (USD738) for poaching four Scops Owls *Otus scops* (CITES II) in Laotieshan Snake Island National Nature Reserve in September 2009. He confessed to profiting from the poaching of birds.

On 10 April 2010, Customs officials at Horgos Port, Xinjiang province, seized a parcel containing 68 horns of Saiga Antelopes *Saiga tatarica* (CITES II). The two female smugglers travelled by coach from Alma Ata, Kazakhstan, to Urumchi, where they tried to evade X-ray examination at immigration.

On 14 April 2010, frontier soldiers of Dehong State, Yunnan province, seized skins and skeletons of two Leopards *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) during a routine check of a taxi travelling from Ruili to Yingjiang. Two Burmese men were arrested. The case has been transferred to the Longchuan forest police, Yunnan province.

On 5 May 2010, at a hearing in Kunming Environment Crime Court, Yunnan province, two suspects were charged with involvement in illegal trade following the seizure in 2009 of 10 slices of Javan Rhinoceros *Rhinoceros sondaicus* (CITES I) horn, and antlers from Eld's Deer *Cervus eldii hainanus* (CITES I). The items, which were identified by the Kunming Institute of Zoology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, were found in a car at Nabang Port checkpoint, Yingjiang city (on the border with Myanmar). The court said that the pair would be sentenced to more than 15 years in goal.

On 1 June 2010, two Russian train drivers were arrested at Manzhouli Customs, Inner Mongolia, for smuggling 15 Brown Bear *Ursus arctos* (CITES I/II) paws which they had concealed under the floor of the train. They were discovered by Customs officials as they arrived at Manzhouli station.

On 18 July 2010, Customs officials at Beijing Airport seized 131.7 kg of freeze-dried seahorses *Hippocampus* (CITES II). The specimens had been smuggled from Cairo, Egypt, by two Chinese passengers.

On 29 July 2010, Changlizi Branch of Hunchun Customs found 46 pieces of animal bone in luggage during X-ray examination. The Russian suspect admitted that they were Tiger bones, a fact later confirmed by the national Wildlife Detection Center.

In early August 2010, Gengma forest police, Lincang City, Yunnan province, detected 73.4 kg of tortoises along the border with Myanmar, including 46 Elongated Tortoises *Indotestudo elongata* (CITES II) and 21 Wattle-necked Soft shelled Turtles *Palea steindachneri* (national second class protected species). One suspect was arrested. The reptiles had been purchased in Myanmar.

On 24 August 2010, at Jiangnan District Court, Nanning City, Guangxi province, a person was charged with the illegal transportation of two rhinoceros horns. The defendant was accused of purchasing the horns from a Vietnamese national in Pingxiang City, at the border with Viet Nam, on 30 December 2009. From there, he took a taxi to Nanning City where he was arrested by police as he passed through Wu Yu toll station of Nanyou highway.

The defendant has been sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment for the offence and fined RMB30 000 (USD4500).

http://news.xinhuanet.com/legal/2010-03/07/content_13117074.htm; www.gd.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2010-03/09/content19194059.htm; http://news.xinhuanet.com/legal/201003/30/c_127418.htm;
http://news.lnd.com.cn/html/2010-04/24/content_1173220.htm; www.nihaotw.com/xw/xwfl/dl/201004/t20100420_559272.htm; <http://news.163.com/10/04/16/16/64DHBGP1000146BC.html>;

http://society.yunnan.cn/html/2010-05/06/content_1169753.htm; http://news.china.com.cn/rollnews/201008/22/content_3920066.htm, 22 August 2010; http://english.ntdtv.com/ntdtv_en/ns_china/2010-07-19/299928944385.html; <http://video.sina.com.cn/p/news/clv/2010%2007%2019/142861065401.html#31187308>; www.infohc.com/News/Hc/law/201008/24417.html, 23 August 2010; www.yn.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/201008/09/content_20567496.htm; <http://news.gxnews.com.cn/staticpages/20100826/newgx4c759a6c3213787.shtml>; www.gxnews.com.cn/staticpages/20101009/newgx4cafa1e73313337.shtml

Seizures in China including pangolins *Manis* (CITES II)

On 27 February 2010, Haikou forest police in Hainan province seized three frozen pangolins and 3.2 kg of pangolin scales from an apartment. A suspect claimed that the animals had been purchased in Guangxi province and shipped to Xingang dock, Haikou. On 27 March 2010, four people were arrested.

On 26 March 2010, the local anti-drugs police and traffic police seized 13 pangolins from a minibus in Longling County, Baoshan City, Yunnan province. Two specimens were dead.

On 30 April 2010, in Fangchenggang City, Guangxi province, traffic police seized 76 dead pangolins (average weight: seven kilogrammes) and seven paws of Asiatic Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus* (CITES I and listed nationally as second-class protected species) (average weight: three kilogrammes) from a coach travelling from Dongxin (Guangxi) to Xiamen (Fujian). Neither the driver nor the passengers admitted to owning the specimens, which had been packed in 10 boxes; they were subsequently transferred to the local wildlife conservation department.

In May 2010, Zhengxiang People's Court in Hengyang city, Hunan province, sentenced three suspects, respectively, to 10, five and three years' imprisonment and fines of CNY100 000 (USD15 000), CNY60 000 and CNY60 000, for their involvement in the illegal purchase, transport and sale of 24 pangolins. They were arrested by Hengyang forest police in October 2009. The pangolins had originally been purchased between March and June 2009 by a fourth person (who has evaded capture) in Guangxi province.

On 6 June 2010, Customs officers in Guangdong province seized more than 7.8 t of frozen pangolins and nearly two tonnes of pangolin scales from a fishing vessel after it was stopped for inspection at Zhuhai's Gaolan Island, having been sighted by a Guangdong Jiangmen Customs patrol boat in the Chuandao Sea. Some 2090 frozen pangolins—each weighing between one and 10 kg—and 92 cases of pangolin scales were found.

The crew of five Chinese and a Malaysian claimed they had been hired to sail the vessel from Xiangzhou Port, Zhuhai, to South-east Asia to pick up the cargo. The Malaysian was said to have received instructions by satellite phone on where to pick up the contraband at sea. They were intercepted before they could transfer the cargo to another vessel.

"The use of satellite phones and trans-shipment of cargo at sea are indicative of the increasingly sophisticated methods being used by the organized criminal gangs involved in wildlife crime," said James Compton, TRAFFIC's Asia Pacific Co-ordinator.

The Chinese authorities have shared intelligence on the seizures with enforcement agencies operating in the region, including INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization (WCO) and ASEAN-Wildlife Enforcement Network, plus CITES officials, and are seeking co-operation with Malaysia's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment on a joint investigation.

"Guangdong Customs are to be congratulated on this important action against wildlife smugglers operating between South-east Asia and China," said Professor Xu Hongfa, Director of TRAFFIC's China Programme. "TRAFFIC stands ready to support international co-operation between enforcement agencies that will ensure those who organize and mastermind such wildlife crimes, as well as those who carry them out, are made to face the consequences of their actions," added Compton.

On 12 July 2010, Guangzhou Customs officials seized a consignment of 136.38 kg of pangolin scales at Guangzhou Customs Post Office that had arrived from Malaysia. Packed in 10 sacks and declared as food (black fungus), they were bound for the local seafood market and TCM wholesale market in Guangzhou. The case was referred to the anti-smuggling bureau of Guangzhou Customs for investigation.

On 5 August 2010, frontier soldiers of Guangzhou security police boarded a ship in Hongqilishui Dao, Nansha district and found that 37 boxes contained live pythons and King Cobras *Ophiophagus hannah* and 11 held frozen pangolins (all CITES II). The case is under investigation.

On 12 August 2010, Shenzhen Luohu Customs of Guangdong province seized 14.5 kg of pangolin scales following X-ray examination of a passenger's luggage on his arrival from Hong Kong. The case is under investigation.

On 6 September 2010, officials at Kunming Airport, Yunnan province, found three frozen bear paws and three frozen pangolins in a passenger's luggage following an X-ray scan. The passenger was about to travel to Hangzhou, Zhejiang province. The suspect and the specimens were transferred to the Kunming Airport Security Police for further investigation.

<http://news.163.com/10/0401/05/635N14MV000146BB.html>; http://news.jcrb.com/jxsw/201003/t20100330_338174.html; www.cwca.org.cn/Article/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=19365; http://news.changsha.cn/hn/2/200910/t20091021_1021265.htm; www.cwca.org.cn/Article/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=19443; www.traffic.org, 13 July 2010; www.jisi.gov.cn/Article/szsm/gd/201007/20100714162812_4013.html; http://news.ifeng.com/society/1/detail_2010_08/08/1908305_0.shtml; www.jisi.gov.cn/Article/szsm/gd/201008/20100817113055_4143.html; <http://news.carnoc.com/list/169/169980.html>

Seizures and prosecutions in China involving ivory

On 17 January 2010, a suspect allegedly involved in smuggling 480 kg of ivory [origin not disclosed] to Beijing went into exile after a search warrant was issued for his arrest through the police network by Beijing Customs anti-smuggling bureau. He was eventually arrested on 29 March.

On 18 January 2010, Customs officials in Fujian province seized 61 ivory items (chopsticks, cigarette holders and bangles totalling 1.45 kg) on three occasions over the previous six days. All suspects were returning from Africa via Hong Kong.

On 3 February 2010, Customs officers at Harbin post office in Heilongjiang province confiscated 194 items of ivory (989.6 g) in a postal express parcel arriving from Kenya, declared as nuts. The case is under investigation.

On 4 February 2010, Fangchenggang forest police of Guangxi province foiled an attempt by two suspects disguised as policemen to transport three elephant tusks from Dongxing city, Guangxi province, to Yiwu city, Zhejiang province. They were travelling in a jeep with fake number plates. The pair later confessed to using the same method to transport another three elephant tusks from Dongxing to Yiwu some weeks earlier.

On 18 March 2010, a Customs official at Taiping International Airport in Harbin, Heilongjiang province, found 78 ivory items (3.8 kg) in the hand luggage of a Chinese passenger during an X-ray examination. The suspect claimed that a friend in South Africa had asked him to bring the ivory back with him. The man was to be charged under Article 151 of China's *Criminal Law*.

On 16 April 2010, Customs officers at Wenzhou post office, Zhejiang province, confiscated three ivory sculptures (1300 g) contained in a postal express parcel arriving from Portugal. The case is under investigation by the anti-smuggling department of Wenzhou Customs.

On 19 June 2010, Dalian forest police seized suspected ivory and rhinoceros horn items from a stall at the International Jewellery Exhibition in Xinghai Conference and Exhibition Center. Two people were detained. The forensics centre of the National Forest Police Bureau subsequently confirmed the identity of the products, which included six elephant tusks and a further 71 ivory items (9.152 kg), and five rhinoceros horn items (0.35 kg).

On 2 July, in collaboration with Shanghai security police, Dalian forest police apprehended the boss of the company in Shanghai that owns the stall (another suspect evaded capture); she was sent to Dalian where she was detained. On 23 July, authorities in Dalian granted approval for the three suspects to be arrested.

On 9 July 2010, Customs officers at Changsha Huanghua Airport, in Changsha, Hunan province, uncovered 10 ivory items (0.15 kg) from a passenger returning from the World Cup in South Africa. A few days later, another four passengers arriving from South Africa via Hong Kong following the World Cup were found to be carrying 21 ivory items (1.56 kg).

On 12 July 2010 it was reported that Shanghai Hongkou Court had sentenced a person to 11 years' imprisonment and fined him CNY50 000 (USD7387) for his involvement in the illegal sale of four elephant tusks. The suspect was apprehended on 3 March as he carried the tusks and electronic scales to the buyer's flat for trade. The Shanghai Wildlife Identification Center identified the tusks as coming from African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I).

On 21 July 2010, Kunming security police of Yunnan province found a pair of elephant tusks (1 m x 10 cm diameter) during a routine check on a car on Raocheng Highway. The case was transferred to Yunnan forestry police bureau. The tusks were believed to be from an adult Asian Elephant *Elephas maximus* (CITES I). A suspect was detained.

On 9 August 2010, in a coach travelling from Hong Kong, Shenzhen Bay Customs officials of Guangdong province found a passenger carrying 12 ivory products (2.52 kg) and two rhinoceros horn products (0.18 kg). The suspect had purchased the products at a second-hand market and did not know that they could not be carried across the border.

www.chinanews.com.cn/sh/news/2010/0120/2080867.shtml; www.hljtv.com/weishi/lb/lb_20100304_0003.htm; www.chinanews.com.cn/sh/news/2010/0209/2117819.shtml; http://cbs.cnr.cn/syzz/201003/t20100325_506201676.html; www.jisi.gov.cn/%e7%a5%9e%e5%b7%9e%e6%89%ab%e6%8f%8f/tabid/66/ctl/Detail/mid/437/ld/3735/Default.aspx; www.jisi.gov.cn/%e7%a5%9e%e5%b7%9e%e6%89%ab%e6%8f%8f/tabid/66/ctl/Detail/mid/437/ld/3876/Default.aspx; www.ljy.dl.gov.cn/news/shownews.asp?id=5271&filename=20100730160146; <http://travel.hsw.cn/system/2010/07/21/050572214.shtml>; <http://xmwb.eastday.com/x/20100712/ula772193.html>; Xinmin Evening News, 12 July 2010; Yunnan Information News paper, http://news.yninfo.com/yn/shxw/201007/t20100722_1568742.htm; http://gzdaily.dayoo.com/html/201008/11/content_1058711.htm

In March 2010, at Lhasa Middle People's Court, Tibet Autonomous Region, a Mr Yi was sentenced to 13 years in gaol and fined CNY30 000 (USD4400) for illegally purchasing and transporting 101.15 kg of wool of Tibetan Antelope *Pantholops hodgsonii* (CITES I). The aim had been to smuggle the wool out of China from Ngari, west Tibet, via the border with China and India.

<http://news.sohu.com/20100310/n270720292.shtml>

HONG KONG SAR: On 11 February 2010, marine police foiled an attempt to smuggle over 1000 freshwater turtles to mainland China. Acting on information, police laid an ambush on Lantau Island resulting in confiscation of the consignment believed to have originated in Indonesia. The boxes

containing the reptiles were being moved from lorries onto speedboats which were to take them to the coast of mainland China. Six species were identified, including Asian Leaf Turtle *Cyclemys dentata* and the following CITES II-listed species: Black Marsh Turtle *Siebenrockiella crassicollis*, Yellow-headed Temple Turtle *Hieremys annandalii*, Malaysian Box Turtle *Cuora amboinensis*, Giant Asian Pond Turtle *Heosemys grandis* and Malayan Flat-shelled Turtle *Notochelys platynota*. Part of the consignment was receiving temporary care at the Wild Animals Rescue Centre at Kadoorie Farm & Botanic Garden while placement options were explored.

On 2/3 September 2010, officers from Hong Kong and Guangdong Customs, together with marine police, conducted a joint operation codenamed “Minesweeper” against cross-boundary smuggling activity by speedboats. Among a range of items seized were 288 live monitor lizards *Varanus (I/II)* contained in the cargo compartment of a light goods vehicle parked near a pier in Tuen Mun. Three men from Hong Kong were arrested.

On 5 September 2010, Customs officers seized 384 elephant (CITES I) tusks packed in two shipping containers that had arrived from Tanzania, via Malaysia, in packages declared as “dried anchovies”. Two men who went to collect the consignment at the Tsing Yi container terminal were arrested.

Kadoorie Farm & Botanic Garden, 11 February 2010, www.turtlesurvival.org/storage/documents/confiscation_press_release_kfbg.pdf; Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department: www.customs.gov.hk/en/publication_press/press/index_id_743.html, 4 September 2010; www.businessweek.com/news/2010-09-10/hong-kong-seizes-384-ivory-tusks-shipped-from-africa.html, 10 September 2010; Radio Television Hong Kong, 10 September 2010

JAPAN: On 8 September 2010, Aichi Prefectural Police Department arrested a man for allegedly smuggling feathers of Scarlet Macaw *Ara macao* (CITES I) in violation of the *Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Law*.

The suspect is reported to have confessed to importing seven Scarlet Macaw feathers via an Internet auction in December 2009 without the requisite approval of Japan’s Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. The man, who sells articles for outdoor activities via the Internet, was selling the feathers for fishing bait.

In June 2010, Customs officials at Kansai International Airport, Osaka, discovered a person attempting to import a Slow Loris *Nycticebus coucang* (CITES I) and five wild cats from Indonesia. Three of the cats were dead.

http://mytown.asahi.com/aichi/news.php?k_id=24000001_009090002;
www.yomiuri.co.jp/national/news/20100908-OYTIT00644.htm; TRAFFIC East Asia

TAIWAN: On 17 April 2010, the following CITES Appendix I species were seized by the coastal guard in Taipei county: one Rhinoceros Iguana *Cyclura cornuta*, four Radiated Tortoises *Astrochelys radiata*, and two Black Pond Turtles *Geoclemys hamiltonii*. The animals were found in a cage on the roof of an apartment.

On 27 May 2010, police confiscated a Radiated Tortoise *Astrochelys radiata* (CITES I) and a Leopard Tortoise *Stigmochelys pardalis* (II) from a person selling tortoises on the Internet. The animals were sent to the wildlife rescue centre at Taipei Zoo.

In a separate incident, on 26 April 2010, a tortoise seller, Mr Huang, was sentenced to 10 months’ imprisonment after he was found to have purchased a total of 70 Radiated Tortoises and Leopard Tortoises over the Internet, nine of which he sold online. The individual already had a criminal record for selling protected species.

www.libertytimes.com.tw/2010/new/apr/17/today taipei 12.htm; http://tw.nextmedia.com/rnews/article/Artl D/70387/IssueID/20100427/SecID/102; www.libertytimes.com.tw/2010/new/may/27/today life4.htm;

TRAFFIC East Asia

SOUTH ASIA

BANGLADESH: According to a report in February 2010, the forest department with the help of CARINAM, a research centre, recently seized seven Olive Ridley Turtles *Lepidochelys olivacea* (CITES I) from poachers in Rupsha, Khulna, and released them in the sea. The turtles had been poached for human consumption.

On 24 May 2010, Immigration officials at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, Dhaka, seized a consignment of 480 Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II) and arrested a Malaysia-bound Indian national. The reptiles were later handed over to the Dhaka Forest office at Agargaon.

On 2 July 2010, Customs officials at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, Dhaka, seized from a Pakistani national travelling to Pakistan around 1000 birds, including Hill Mynahs *Gracula religiosa* (CITES II), Tricoloured Munias *Lonchura malacca* and Chestnut Munias *L. atricapilla*. News of the seizure and a photograph of the seized specimens was circulated which, upon examination by TRAFFIC India, was noted to include Green Avadavats *Amandava formosa* (CITES II), a species endemic to central India and listed as Vulnerable (IUCN, 2010). TRAFFIC India immediately alerted the authorities and requested that the birds be returned to India for release. The Bangladeshi authorities acknowledged that 35 Green Avadavats were included in the consignment and reported that 20 had died. All the surviving specimens were moved to a rescue centre in Bangladesh.

www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=127387;

www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/latest_news.php?nid=23879; *Tehelka Magazine* 7(34), 28 August 2010:

www.tehelka.com/story_main46.asp?filename=hub_280810Afourletter.asp; *Pioneer (India)*, 18 July 2010:

www.dailypioneer.com/269976/Mynahs-stranded-at-Dhaka-airport.html; Ministry of Environment & Forests (Wildlife division), Government of India; Abrar Ahmed, Consultant Bird Trade Project, TRAFFIC India; Ahmed, A. (2008) Green Avadavat—A silent victim of illegal bird trade. *TRAFFIC Post*, Issue 5, November 2008.

TRAFFIC India: www.wwf.org/india/about_wwf/enablers/traffic/newsletter/

INDIA: On 7 February 2010, 11 Myanmar and three Thai nationals were held by coast guards near Bompaka in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands; their boat containing 700 kg of ornamental fish was seized, as well as diving gear and other equipment.

On 5 April 2010, Bishan Singh was sentenced in Delhi to imprisonment for one year and fined INR 10 000 (USD 218) for his involvement in illegal wildlife trade, almost 13 years after he was arrested in Delhi, in March 1997, for illegal trade in articles relating to Fishing Cat *Prionailurus viverrinus* (CITES II) and Wild Cat *Felis silvestris*.

On 12 April 2010, Additional Commissioner, Customs, Delhi, passed an order against a multinational—Cottage Industries Exposition—following the attempt by the company to export shahtoosh shawls (made from wool of the Tibetan Antelope *Pantholops hodgsonii* (CITES I)). A fine of INR 1 lakh (USD 2208), plus INR 1 lakh redemption fine was imposed.

On 2 May 2010, Delhi police arrested two people for illegally supplying seashells at Sadar Bazar; 1150 shells were recovered from a shop and 7800 shells from a factory. The pair was taken to Tihar gaol. Their construction business at Bari market in Sadar Bazar was found to be a front for their illegal activity, aimed principally at foreign customers. The specimens included Green Snail *Turbo marmoratus*, Glory of India *Conus milneedwardsi* and Triton's Trumpet *Charonia tritonis*.

Officers, who had been tracking the pair, acted as decoy customers who handed over an advance for the shells. In order to obtain more money, the suspects revealed details of their factory, which they were using to store shells.

On 9 June 2010, officials of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) arrested five persons for smuggling 388 kg of sea cucumbers to Sri Lanka; the ringleaders in the gang were being sought. The

officials were acting on information that sea cucumbers were being caught illegally, processed and smuggled out of India by a gang in Tuticorin. The officials maintained a watch on the shore near Arumuganeri and intercepted a jeep; a search led to the seizure of 12 plastic cans containing boiled sea cucumbers. Sea cucumbers are listed under Schedule I of the *Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972*.

On 17 June 2010, Andaman and Nicobar Islands police officials seized 80 kg of top shells *Trochus* from three poachers from North Andaman's Diglipur Island. The suspects confessed that they had supplied *Trochus* shells to Myanmarese poachers several times; police were to check their contact details in an attempt to identify these links. All three were handed over to the authorities; five other poachers were apprehended earlier in the month for similar offences. The case is under investigation.

On 25 September 2010, it was reported that, in just 20 days, the Andaman and Nicobar region coast guard had apprehended 88 Myanmarese poachers, along with seven boats loaded with diving equipment. The increased apprehension of poachers is a result of heightened surveillance.

On 31 July 2010, police officials arrested seven people in Kamalapur, Bellary district, on a charge of poaching pangolins *Manis* (CITES II and listed in Schedule I of the Indian *Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972*); 2.5 kg of scales were seized. The accused had placed snares around the animals' burrows to catch them and used dogs to trace their scent. The police suspect that the group was part of a large network with links in several places, including Bangalore, New Delhi and Anantpur in Andhra Pradesh.

It was reported in August 2010 that around 1000 pangolins had been hunted in the region during the previous two months; poachers are reported to get circa two kilogrammes of scales from each animal. The pangolins are sold to traders in Bengaluru, Delhi and Anantapur in Andhra Pradesh who in turn sell to buyers in the international market, it is alleged. Some 2000 kg of scales were reportedly sold to traders overseas, in particular in China and South Korea during this period.

www.andamansheekha.com/, 23 June 2010; *www.ptinews.com/news/505547_Myanmarese-and-Thai-poachers-held-in-Andamans*; *http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/environment/flora-fauna/Court-complaint-against-multinational-for-trading-in-Shahtoosh/articleshow/5890811.cms**www.mid-day.com/news/2010/apr/050410-Delhi-sea-shells-trafficker-raid.htm*, 4 May 2010; *www.thehindu.com/2010/06/11/stories/2010061152900400.htm*, 11 June 2010; *The Daily Telegrams*, 26 Sep-tember 2010; *The Hindu*, 2 August 2010: *www.thehindu.com/2010/08/02/stories/2010080255320300.htm*; *Deccan Chronicle*, 15 August 2010: *www.deccanchronicle.com/bengaluru/1000-pangolins-hunted-2-months-020*; Akhilesh Kumar, *TRAFFIC India*

Seizures in India including Tiger parts

On 9 February 2010, forest officials seized 53 Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) bones weighing 4.1 kg and arrested a man in Kanha Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh.

On 25 May 2010, in a landmark judgement, 12 people were convicted of Tiger poaching at Allahabad Court, Uttar Pradesh. The defendants were sentenced to three years' rigorous imprisonment and fined Rs10 000 (USD218). Ten of the twelve convicted were women.

These persons had been arrested in Allahabad in December 2007 when three Tiger skins and 75 kg of Tiger bones were seized. A further four people also arrested at the time are being tried in a separate case; one of these individuals is the principal suspect in four other wildlife cases, one of which involved a seizure, in January 2000, of skins of four Tigers, 70 Leopards *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) and 18 000 Leopard claws.

On 24/25 June 2010, the pelt of a Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) and a pair of ivory (I) tusks (11.5 kg) were seized on two separate operations in Kollegal taluk, Chamarajanagar district, by staff of the CID forest cell. The ivory was seized near Dinnahalli in Ramapura police limits; three persons were

arrested. The Tiger pelt—from a specimen killed six months earlier—was seized in Palar forests near Gopinatham on the Tamil Nadu border; one person was arrested.

Over four days in June 2010, officials at Guwahati Airport, Assam, seized packages containing two Bengal Tiger skeletons *Panthera tigris tigris* (CITES I), and 600 kg of pangolin *Manis* (II) scales. The Tiger parts had arrived via the railway mail service from Dimapur (Nagaland) leading authorities to suspect that the specimens had been poached in Kaziranga National Park, which has amongst the highest density of Tigers in India. Some of the pangolin scales were from Dimapur and Berhampur in Orissa. The items were reportedly on their way to China, via Imphal, Moreh and Myanmar.

On 29 July 2010, in Sihora, Jabalpur district, Madhya Pradesh, Dariya, a Tiger poacher well-known to the authorities was convicted, along with his wife Bhagwati, under the *Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972*. Dariya was sentenced to three years of rigorous imprisonment and fined INR10 000 (USD218); his wife was sentenced to the same punishment, with one and a half years' probation. The trial of this case has been pending for more than 21 years and has been declared a major victory for Tiger conservation in India.

The case dates back to 1988 when the pair, along with seven accomplices, were arrested in Baboriband range of the then Jabalpur Territorial Division in Madhya Pradesh in possession of one Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) skin, Tiger bones, four Tiger paws, three cans of Tiger fat, one hyaena skin and eight spring traps. All the accused were granted bail and subsequently absconded.

Dariya was arrested again on 28 April 2008 at Corbett Tiger Reserve with two Tiger traps and other poaching equipment, but was once again granted bail after a few months. On 27 March 2009, officers of the Katni Forest Division arrested Dariya and his wife in Ramnagar, Uttarakhand, as they posed as beggars in a market in Ramnagar.

On 17 September 2010, Customs officers at Chennai airport seized a Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) skin that had been sent from London as a parcel, addressed to a person in Chennai. The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has confirmed that the skin and skull belonged to an Indian Tiger. The case is under investigation.

http://tigernet.nic.in/Alluser/Statistics.aspx?OYear=2010&MorS=S&Animal_name=tiger; Press Trust of India: www.ptinews.com/news/596836_Court-sentences-man-for-illegal-trade-in-wildlife;
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/12-poachers-get-3-years-RII/articleshow/5975055.cms>; *The Hindu*, 26 June 2010; www.ndtv.com/news/india/assam-tiger-skull-pangolin-scales-seized-from-airport-32803.php?u=1234&cp, 20 June 2010; www.bombaynews.net/story/650041, 21 June 2010;
http://epaper.dailypioneer.com/ThePioneer/Pioneer/2010/07/29/ArticleHtmls/29_07_2010_005_011.shtml; <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/Tiger-skin-seized-from-post-parcel-at-airport/articleshow/6581763.cms>, 19 September 2010; Akhilesh Kumar, TRAFFIC India

Seizures and prosecutions in India relating to Leopard *Panthera pardus* (Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife Protection Act/CITES I)

On 26 February 2010, police seized skins of four adult Leopards and arrested four people in Solan town, Himachal Pradesh.

On 18 March 2010, two Nepali men and a person from Uttar Pradesh were arrested in Basti, UP, with three Leopard skins. They confessed that they had been involved in the illegal trade for five years.

On 28 June 2010, Vadodara forest officials of the Ratanmahal Sanctuary in Devgadhi Baria Taluka, Dahod district, arrested two persons after four Leopard skins and nails were recovered from them. The items were reportedly bound for Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

On 26 August 2010, at Delhi Tis Hazari court, Sansar Chand was sentenced to six years in gaol in a case relating to the seizure of the skin of a Leopard in New Delhi in 1995. He was also fined INR50 000 (USD1070). The gaol term was the maximum term prescribed under the *Wildlife Protection Act*.

Chand, who has been in gaol in Jaipur since 2005 for a separate offence, has been sought by police in India for many alleged wildlife offences since the 1970s. However, he has only spent brief periods in custody and, in at least four cases in Delhi, tried on the basis of confessional statements of various accused traders but discharged owing to lack of direct recovery of contraband from his possession (see also *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 14(2):42; 15(3):102; 20(2):85 and 20(3):116).

Chand sought acquittal in a case involving trade of animal parts which he claimed he was not involved in. On 4 October 2010, the Supreme Court rejected this plea.

On 15 September 2010, the anti-poaching cell of Uttarakhand forest department seized two Leopard skins from Chakrata, Dehradun district.

www.littleabout.com/news/74807,four-leopard-skins-seized-himachal.html, 26 February 2010; <http://in.news.yahoo.com/43/20100318/812/tnl-three-arrested-with-leopard-skins-in.html>, 18 March 2010; *Express News Service*, 30 June 2010; www.expressindia.com/latest-news/four-leopard-skins-seized-two-arrested-in-dahod/640354/; www.dnaindia.com/india/report_even-human-skin-will-be-traded-some-day-supreme-court_1447730-all; <http://in.news.yahoo.com/20/20100822/1416/tnl-notorious-poacher-convicted-15-yrs-a.html>, 22 August 2010; www.thehindu.com/2010/08/26/stories/2010082659530400.htm, 26 August 2010; <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/environment/flora-fauna/Over-130-leopards-killed-this-year-Report/articleshows/6576183.cms>, 18 September 2010; www.wpsi-india.org/wpsil/index.php; Akhilesh Kumar, *TRAFFIC India*

Seizures in India involving Red Sandalwood *Pterocarpus santalinus* (CITES II/prohibited from export from India)

Red Sandalwood (or Red Sanders) is endemic to the southern parts of India's Eastern Ghats, mainly in Andhra Pradesh (mostly in Chittoor, Kadapa, Nellore and Kurnool districts). The tree is commercially valuable for its timber and for the extraction of dye, for medicine and in cosmetics and has been overexploited in the past (IUCN, 2010). It is reported to be in huge demand in China and Japan for making musical instruments, furniture and toys and recent reports suggest it is also in demand for the manufacture of aphrodisiac pills.

"We are seeing several changes to the nature and scale of the illicit trade in the prized wood. For example, logs are being transported via different routes overland and are being shipped to the Middle East," says Samir Sinha, head of the TRAFFIC office in India. "It is evident from the spate of seizures that Red Sanders smugglers are operating on a massive scale backed by a highly organized international racket," he adds.

Details relating to a selection of major seizures of Red Sandalwood that have recently taken place in India follow:

On 23 February 2010, authorities intercepted a lorry near Alamkhanpalle near Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh, and seized 4.50 t of Red Sandalwood logs. The wood, felled at Jandlavaram in Mydukur forest range, Kadapa, was bound for Madanapalle in the Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh.

On 25 February 2010, forest officials seized Red Sandalwood logs on Bengaluru–Chennai highway from a lorry following a chase which resulted in the lorry overturning. The driver and an associate escaped from the scene. The vehicle was found to contain over 100 Red Sandalwood logs.

On 3 March 2010, Khajipet police and forest officials arrested 10 men and seized 220 Red Sandalwood logs at two separate places in Khajipet mandal of Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh. Officials seized 80 Red Sandalwood logs from Lankamala forest and arrested four persons. A further 140 logs were seized from Kannelavagu in Khajipet mandal and six persons were arrested.

On 16 March 2010, approximately 11 t of Red Sandalwood was seized by DRI officials just prior to its shipment at Kochi port, Kerala. The container had arrived from Madurai in a lorry two days earlier and, according to records, was booked by a private shipping agent to be sent to Dubai. The container was later taken to a freight station at Kalamassery. The shipping agent was being sought.

On 16 March 2010, officials from the anti-smuggling unit of Guwahati Customs division seized 1016 kg of logs at Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport, Guwahati. The consignment, from Andhra Pradesh, was believed to have been bound for China or Japan through the Moreh border via Myanmar. The logs were packed in 26 gunny bags and seized from the cargo of a private domestic airline. The case is being investigated.

On 24 March 2010, police officials arrested eight persons allegedly involved in the smuggling of Red Sandalwood; 274 logs were seized from Mydukur, Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh.

The police intercepted a car near Mudireddi-palle on Mydukur-Porumamilla road and seized nine logs.

Following the confession of those in custody, 56 logs kept near a temple in Mudireddipalle were seized and two persons arrested.

Six men were arrested for allegedly trading in a Japan-bound consignment of Red Sandalwood coming from Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh, and intercepted in Chhattisgarh. Two trucks laden with sandalwood were seized from the Hirapur area of the capital.

On 16 April 2010, DRI officers seized an export container at N.S. Dock, Kolkata, bound for Dubai, following the discovery of wood thought to be Red Sandalwood (9210 kg) concealed under bags of mica powder.

On 26 April 2010, DRI officers seized 8688.90 kg Red Sandalwood from a lorry at Changsari, Assam. The items were believed to be bound for Myanmar. Two people were arrested.

In April 2010, a container which sailed to Dubai with 12.5 t of Red Sandalwood logs was recalled from Colombo, where it was in transit, by DRI officials at Tuticorin Port, Chennai. Preliminary investigations revealed that the Import Export Code of the original exporter was misused for this purpose and the smugglers also forged the stamp and signature of the officers.

During the follow-up investigation, a lorry laden with 5.2 t of Red Sandalwood was intercepted at Tada Integrated checkpoint on the Andhra Pradesh–Tamil Nadu border. The driver evaded capture.

On 8 June 2010, DRI officials in Chennai seized Red Sandalwood logs following information received that they were being transported from Andhra Pradesh to Chennai and then smuggled out through various ports. Officers of the DRI launched a search for two containers which had already set sail for Malaysia which were subsequently returned to Chennai Port. Preliminary investigation of the documents revealed that the exporter was a handicrafts company in Jodhpur, Rajasthan; the consignee was based in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia. Further investigation of the company's premises resulted in the seizure of a further 40 t of Red Sandalwood.

It was reported on 17 June 2010 by the Minister of State for Environment and Forest (Independent Charge) in Tirupati, Jairam Ramesh, that 6000 t of seized Red Sandalwood would be auctioned through the global tender process.

“According to the State government, about 6000 t of Red Sandalwood has been seized and is lying in different godowns. The request was made by the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh that we should give the State government permission to dispose of this wood,” said Ramesh. “It’s a one-time permission to dispose of 6000 t by global auction.”

On 19 June 2010, 10 people were arrested and 34 Red Sandalwood logs were seized by forest officials of Tirupati Division, Andhra Pradesh, during two raids.

Three more smugglers were arrested in the Narabail area and three Red Sandalwood logs and a vehicle were seized.

Officials arrested six members of a gang and seized six logs at Bakarapet.

On 28 June 2010, DRI officers intercepted a lorry near Chennai port and seized 10.78 t of Red Sandalwood logs allegedly being smuggled to Malaysia; one person was arrested. Preliminary investigations revealed the details of exporters and the consignee were fake. A person was later arrested and held in custody.

On 27 July 2010, DRI officials seized 6.3 t of Red Sandalwood in Pallavaram from a Chennai-bound lorry travelling from Andhra Pradesh; the timber had been destined for illegal export to China. The driver was arrested but the lorry owner absconded. After interrogating the driver, DRI officials raided a locked godown at Thirumudivakkam and seized 538 Red Sandalwood logs. The owner of the godown said it was rented to a person involved in exporting furniture to China, who, together with the lorry owner, was subsequently apprehended by DRI officials on 5 August 2010.

On 23 August 2010, two trucks transporting 12 t of Red Sandalwood were seized at Kaurik and the drivers arrested. Both had in their possession valid permits issued by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) that authorized them to move close to the border. A senior police official investigating the case said the wood had reached Kaza town in Spiti district, Himachal Pradesh, in May, and that the stocks were illegally kept in some houses.

Two ITBP officials were arrested in September 2010 accused of having issued permits to carry Red Sandalwood closer to the India-China border in Lahaul and Spiti district. On 21 September 2010, police recovered money that one of the officers allegedly received to help in the smuggling of Red Sandalwood to China from Shimla. Both officers have been suspended.

Himachal Pradesh shares a porous border with China and the police say smuggling of rare species of fauna and other items across the border is quite frequent.

In September 2010, the Central Intelligence Unit of the Jawaharlal Nehru Custom house, at the port of Nhava Sheva, near Mumbai, seized two containers holding 18.8 t of Red Sandalwood. The shipment had been brought from Karnataka to Mumbai, and was being exported, with five other containers of electronics, to Dubai. Documents for the containers were falsely labelled as containing aluminium alloy conductors. The case is under investigation. It is reportedly the 14th seizure at the port this year bringing the total amount of Red Sandalwood seized there to 230 t.

www.deccanchronicle.com/international/chinese-use-red-sanders-enhance-their-sex-life-699; Press Trust of India, 13 July 2010; *CAMP Workshops on Medicinal Plants, India 1998*. *Pterocarpus santalinus*. In: IUCN 2010. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2010.3. *www.iucnredlist.org*. Downloaded on 27 September 2010. *www.deccanchronicle.com/chennai/red-sanders-impounded-cops-413*; *http://hindu.com/2010/02/24/stories/2010022453750300.htm*; *www.thehindu.com/2010/03/04/stories/2010030453700300.htm*; *http://expressbuzz.com/States/Kerala/red-sanders-worth-rs-1-cr-seized-at-kochi-port/156972.html*; *The Telegraph (India)*, 18 March 2010; *www.thehindu.com/2010/03/25/stories/201003252290300.htm*; *www.dnaindia.com/india/report_japan-bound-sandalwood-worth-rs2-crore-seized-in-chhattisgarh_1367492-all*; Press Releases, 23 April/5 May 2010 Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, Government of India, Kolkata Zonal Unit; *The Hindu (India)*, 29 April 2010; *http://expressbuzz.com/cities/chennai/red-sanders-worth-rs-468-cr-seized/180068.html*; *http://news.chennaionline.com/national/Over-40-000-kg-of-red-sanders-wood-seized/f2d32025-0a33-4436-9fd6-f2f79de06291.col*; *http://breakingnews.gaeatimes.com/2010/06/18/jairam-ramesh-announces-global-auction-of-seized-red-sanders-34724/*, 18 June 2010; *http://news.webindia123.com/news/articles/India/20100619/1530306.html*; *www.ptinews.com/news/751507_Red-sander-logs-seized-from-container*; *www.newkerala.com/news2/fullnews-10221.html*; *www.newkerala.com/news2/fullnews-14282.html*; *http://sify.com/news/police-seize-bribe-money-in-rare-wood-smuggling-case-news-national-kjwaEdibeaj.html*, 22 September 2010; Akhilesh Kumar, *TRAFFIC India*

NEPAL: On 16 June 2010, the District Forest Office (DFO) in Sindhupalchowk filed a case against two Chinese nationals for allegedly poaching pangolins *Manis* (listed in Nepal's *National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1973/CITES II*).

Police had arrested the pair on 22 May as they were trying to cross by car into Chinese territory at Barhabese checkpoint in Sindhupal-chowk district, allegedly in possession of 46 kg of pangolin scales. Officials suspect that the parts had been smuggled from India and were to be used in traditional Chinese medicines.

Two Indians and a Nepali who were also arrested and later released owing to insufficient evidence of their involvement, were rearrested for further investigation.

On 28 July 2010, police seized the skin of a Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) in Bhaktapur and arrested three individuals. The investigation team involved in the seizure was led by Wildlife Conservation Nepal (WCN) and supported by Bhaktapur district police. WCN said the arrests were made while the three were trying to sell the skin. The case is under investigation.

On 3 August 2010, two people were arrested for possessing a Tiger skin and 1.7 kg of bones. They were handed over to Bardiya Forest Office.

On 8 August 2010, police arrested two members of a smuggling racket and seized one rhinoceros horn (1.278 kg) and two bear gall bladders (total 396 g) in Nilopul district, Kathmandu; the items are believed to have been destined for use in traditional medicines in China. The policemen, acting on information, had assumed the identities of prospective buyers of animal organs. One of the suspects was reported to have been a member of a poaching syndicate involved in killing rhinoceroses and bears in wildlife sanctuaries, removing the organs, and smuggling the parts to China and other South Asian countries.

www.myrepublica.com, 17 June 2010; www.myrepublica.com/portall/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=19990#; www.myrepublica.com/portall/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=18948; www.myrepublica.com/portall/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=21542#; www.wcn.org.np/wcn/news.php?&cat=&page=1, 4 August 2010; www.ekantipur.com/2010/08/10/capital/two-caught-with-rhino-horn-bear-gall-bladders/320148/

SOUTH-EAST ASIA

INDONESIA: On 18 July 2010, police in eastern Sumatra foiled an attempt to smuggle body parts of Sumatran Tiger *Panthera tigris sumatrae* (CITES I) out of Riau province; two men transporting three cartons were arrested after the packages were found to contain bones and skins from six Tigers. The pair confessed to smuggling Tiger parts and skins up to four times in a week, but it was not clear how long the men had been involved in the trade.

On 9 August 2010, forestry officers on patrol confiscated 27 Chattering Lorries *Lorius garrulus* (CITES II) from a dealer in Tobelo, North Halmahera, Maluku Island; the parrots were about to be smuggled from the island. After a medical check-up, the birds were released in Halmahera forest in north Maluku.

<http://sify.com/news/police-arrests-smugglers-of-rare-sumatran-tiger-body-parts-news-international-khttp://Effihij.html>, 20 July 2010; ProFauna, 25 August 2010: www.profauna.org/content/en/news/2010/forestry_officers_supported_by_profauna_indonesia_confiscated_and_released_27_parrots_in_maluku.html

MALAYSIA: It was reported in February 2010 that a week-long surveillance by authorities off the coastal waters of Ujong Pasir for possible illegal wildlife trade resulted in the seizure of 35 pangolins *Manis* (CITES II) by marine police; the live animals had been caught by poachers in Sumatra and were about to be smuggled into the country for sale to restaurants in Malacca and the Klang Valley. Two men evaded capture.

In March 2010, the Department of Wildlife and National Parks Department (Perhilitan) confiscated over 26 000 pieces of python (CITES II) gall bladders, 35 000 pieces of python skins, and three pangolins *Manis* (II) in two operations in Kedah and Perak.

On 24 April 2010, Perhilitan officials in Penang seized 67 pangolins *Manis* (CITES II) in a raid on a house at Jalan Raja Uda, Butterworth. Two people were arrested. The animals were believed to be destined for export for the purposes of food or medicine.

Four Ploughshare Tortoises *Astrochelys yniphora* (CITES I) and classified by IUCN as Critically Endangered) have been returned to Madagascar following the seizure of an illegal shipment of animals by authorities at Kuala Lumpur International Airport. Repatriations are rare and this is an important achievement for the conservation of the species, reports the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust.

Four hundred Radiated Tortoises *Astrochelys radiata* (CITES I), 11 Spider Tortoises *Pyxis arachnoides* (I) and four Ploughshare Tortoises were seized in May and July 2010. Two women travelling with the suitcases containing the animals were arrested and have since been sentenced to a year in gaol under the *International Trade in Endangered Species Act 2008*. They were the first to be prosecuted under the Act, which came into force on 28 June 2010 and which imposes stricter penalties for wildlife trade violations.

The four Ploughshares were to be given to Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust's Madagascar Programme and the Radiated and Spider Tortoises were to be taken to SOPTOM (Station d'Observation et de Protection des Tortues et de leurs Milieux) facility in Madagascar. Once the animals have been given a health check and have spent time in quarantine they will join Durrell's captive breeding programme.

In May 2009, four Ploughshares were stolen from a Durrell's release programme for the species. One was found in a shipment of tortoises seized at Antananarivo Airport later that year and a second was seen for sale on a Malaysian website. However on 11 October 2010, two suitcases were seized at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport and found to contain 217 Radiated Tortoises and one Ploughshare. The Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust is working with local authorities to determine whether this is one of the stolen animals (see also Thailand).

Other seizures undertaken by Perhilitan's Wildlife Crime Unit (WCU) during July include, on 11 July, the seizure from the premises of a flea market trader in the State of Selangor of five Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) claws, the casks and beaks of two Rhinoceros Hornbills *Buceros rhinoceros* (CITES II), antlers from Sambar *Cervus unicolor* and Barking Deer *Muntiacus muntjac*, bags and shoes made of python (II) and cobra (II) skins and 96 items made of elephant (I) ivory. On 13 July, the WCU and Malaysian police raided a car workshop in Kuala Lumpur and discovered over 600 birds, many of them protected under local legislation and/or CITES, including three Straw-headed Bulbuls *Pycnonotus zeylanicus* (CITES II), a Blue-and-yellow Macaw *Ara ararauna* (II) nine Greater Sulphur-crested Cockatoos *Cacatua galerita* (II) three Palm Cockatoos *Probosciger aterrimus* (I) and a pair of Twelve-wired Birds-of-paradise *Seleucidis melanoleuca* (II). Two men linked to this case are still at large.

In early August 2010, a newly created anti-poaching task force seized two tonnes of Agarwood *Aquilaria* (CITES II) from a jetty on Banding Island, located near Belum-Temengor Forest Complex in the north of Peninsular Malaysia, as well as 31 Mahseer *Tor putitora*, a freshwater edible game fish protected under State law but highly sought after by poachers.

The task force brings together Perak State and federal agencies including the Anti-Smuggling Unit, the Royal Malaysian Police, the Perak State Parks Corporation, the Department of Wildlife and National Parks, the Fisheries Department and the Perak State Forestry Department. Individually, these agencies are often hampered by a lack of funds and manpower necessary to mount large-scale operations against well-networked poachers and wildlife traffickers. Traditionally, they have also tended to focus on issues relating directly to their own departments.

On 21 September 2010, Perhilitan officers in Kampung Gajah, Kluang, seized a shipment of 422 Clouded Monitors *Varanus nebulosus* (CITES I) from a lorry; two men were detained. The lizards, classified in Malaysia as Totally Protected under the *Protection of Wildlife Act 1972*, were wrapped in nets and placed in fruit crates. It is believed they were being transported to neighbouring countries. The specimens were to be returned to their natural habitat.

On 4 November 2010, Anson Wong, sentenced to six months in gaol in September, had his sentence increased to five years. The change followed an appeal by the Attorney-General's Chambers over the earlier sentence. In his judgement, Justice Mohtarudin Baki of the Shah Alam High Court said that the Sessions Court judge, who initially sentenced Wong, had not taken into account in his ruling the large number of snakes in Wong's possession. Had the snakes escaped, the safety of the airport staff and passengers would have been in jeopardy, he said. He added that the accused was motivated by profit and was willing to smuggle with no concern for the safety of those around him and had no regard for the law. The earlier sentence of six-months' imprisonment and RM190 000 (USD61 500) fine was over-ruled and the longer prison sentence and a fine of RM190 000 imposed. Wong's defence counsel Datuk Seri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah immediately announced his intention to appeal the sentence.

"The message to wildlife smugglers in Malaysia is loud and clear: carry on as you are and you will be spending years of your life behind bars," said TRAFFIC Southeast Asia senior programme officer Kanitha Krishnasamy.

TRAFFIC Southeast Asia Regional Director, William Schaedla also expressed optimism over the sentence. "This is a great start. We hope Malaysia's new 'get-tough' stance will continue with investigations and convictions of other large-scale wildlife smugglers still operating in the country. We also hope other nations in South-east Asia take notice of today's watershed ruling. For far too long, countries in this region have allowed their reputations to be tarnished and their natural treasures to be taken by thieves. This bold sentence shows they can address wildlife crime when the will is there."

In the 1990s, Wong was arrested for smuggling following a five-year undercover operation by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, for which he served more than five years in gaol (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 17(3):122; 19(1):48; 20(2):88).

www.thesundaily.com/article.cfm?id=45963; <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2010/2/20/nation/5713733&sec=nation>, 20 February 2010; www.thesundaily.com/article.cfm?id=45963; <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2010/2/20/nation/5713733&sec=nation>, 20 February 2010; *The Star (Malaysia)*, 17 March 2010: <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2010/3/17/nation/5876902&sec=nation>; www.traffic.org, 16 July 2010; Education for Nature-Vietnam (ENV); www.asianturtle.org/library/ATCN_news/2010_articles/Hundreds_of_Malagasy_tortoises_seized_in_Malaysia.html; <http://www.durrell.org/Latest/News/Critically-endangered-ploughshare-tortoises-returned-to-Madagascar/>, 21 October 2010; TRAFFIC International, 10 August 2010; www.mmail.com.my/content/47864-no-perhilitan-protection-lizard-king, 30 August 2010; www.traffic.org; <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2010/10/3/nation/7151408&sec=nation>; <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2010/9/22/nation/7078061&sec=nation>, 22 September 2010; <http://www.traffic.org/home/2010/11/4/wongs-sentence-increased-to-five-years.html>

MYANMAR: Between May and August 2010, the Forest Department, Department of Border Trade, Myanmar Police Force and the Army, together seized more than 1100 live turtles, tortoises and wildlife products including pangolin *Manis* (CITES II) scales, ivory (I) tusks, wild cat skins and Sambar *Cervus unicolor* antlers. The majority of seizures took place at checkpoints on the borders with China and Thailand.

On 16 July 2010, authorities seized 35 Big-headed Turtles *Platysternon megacephalum* (CITES II and protected in Myanmar; and classified by IUCN as Endangered) at Lashio, Northern Shan State. The

reptiles were subsequently cared for at the Yadanabon Zoological Garden in Mandalay before being released into their natural habitat in Kyaik Hti Yo Wildlife Sanctuary in Mon State.

ASEAN-Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN), 13 September 2010

PHILIPPINES: In August 2010, 13 Vietnamese poachers were convicted some two years after they were caught with Hawksbill Turtles *Eretmochelys imbricata* (CITES I and protected under Philippine law) on a vessel near Caaluan Island, El Nido (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 22(1):38). As the individuals had been in detention in Puerto Princesa since September 2008 and the longest gaol-term imposed had been 18 months, the court ruled that only fines, which in some cases were as much as USD98 800, remained to be paid.

The Vietnamese vessel was stopped by the members of the Joint Task Force Malampaya (JTFM) in August 2008. The 13-man crew attempted to scuttle the craft by flooding the holds, which led to the death of the turtles from drowning.

www.wildlifeextra.com/go/news/poaching-turtle.html, 12 August 2010

THAILAND: On 18 August 2010, officials arrested two men at a checkpoint in Muang district, Nakhon Ratchasima province, after 105 pangolins *Manis* (CITES II) were found in the back of their lorry. The men were being paid to take the animals from a petrol station in Ayutthaya to a client in Nong Khai, from where they were to be smuggled across the border to Lao PDR and on to China. The specimens had been smuggled in from Malaysia.

On 28 September 2010, at Suvarnabhumi Airport, Bangkok, police arrested a man arriving from Bangladesh with four suitcases containing 1140 live Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II). The small reptiles are popular in the exotic pet trade and were understood to have been destined for Bangkok's Chatuchak weekend market.

On 11 October 2010, two suitcases seized at Suvarnabhumi Airport were found to contain 217 Radiated Tortoises *Astrochelys radiata* and one Ploughshare Tortoise *A. yniphora* (both CITES I) (see also under Malaysia).

Bangkok Post (Thailand), 19 August 2010; www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hd2CEzD9WmpgaZOXOUXOcCh9CuLA?docId=CNG.e55d9835e2250788596c5b66d59298d4.31; www.earthtimes.org/articles/news/346308,smuggling-1000-live-tortoises.html, 29 September 2010; www.durrell.org/Latest/News/Critically-endangered-ploughshare-tortoises-returned-to-Madagascar/, 21 October 2010

Ivory seizures in Thailand

On 17 April 2010, Customs officers at Suvarnabhumi Airport, Bangkok, seized 296 tusks of African Elephants *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I) (circa 1.4 t) contained in three crates on board a flight from Qatar, the consignment, most likely originally from southern Africa, was labelled as "printing metal" and addressed to a Thai company in Bangkok. No arrests have been made and the case is under investigation.

On 14 July 2010, 117 elephant tusks and nine ivory pieces (765 kg) were seized at the airport following their arrival on a flight from Kenya. The consignment was labelled as furniture and plastic folders. To date, no arrests have been made.

On 28 August 2010, 16 pieces (90 kg) of cut ivory were seized from four suitcases belonging to a Malaysian national arriving at the airport from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Although Ethiopia has made strides in addressing illegal trade in ivory in recent years, Addis Ababa airport remains a major

transport hub through which contraband ivory continues to move. China, for example, made 139 ivory seizures in 2009 alone from Chinese nationals coming from Addis Ababa.

“The Customs officers responsible for these ivory seizures in Thailand are to be commended, although the fact this trade continues illustrates that Thailand’s domestic ivory market remains a serious issue,” said Chris R. Shepherd, Deputy Regional Director of TRAFFIC’s office in South-east Asia. “Unless Thailand starts making ivory seizures in the marketplace, we fear its ivory trade will continue. Airlines also need to be increasingly aware and vigilant in order to ensure they are not used and therefore implicated in the global ivory trade,” he added.

Thailand, together with Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo, were identified as the three countries most heavily implicated in the global illicit ivory trade in the most recent analysis of the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS), the world’s largest database of elephant product seizure records which is managed by TRAFFIC on behalf of CITES Parties.

www.straitstimes.com/BreakingNews/SEAsia/Story/STIStory_517331.html;

www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hazVlgOJ2PVGM_ul0_Qu3sjfcm2GA, 16 July 2010;

www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/thailand/7895175/1600-pounds-of-ivory-seized-in-Thailand.html, 16 July 2010; TRAFFIC International

VIET NAM: On 20 March 2010, a man was detained at Ho Chi Minh City Airport while trying to check 11 boxes containing 33 live pangolins *Manis* onto a flight to Hanoi. The animals (CITES II and protected in Viet Nam) had been discovered concealed beneath a layer of live common turtles during X-ray scans. There were no papers authorizing transport of the animals, which were subsequently sent to a wild animal rescue centre in Ho Chi Minh City. The suspect said a neighbour had bought the pangolins in Cambodia and had hired him to transport them to China.

On 26 August 2010, nearly 100 forest rangers and experts from the US-based Wildlife Conservation Society recovered some 312 kg of wild animals from 12 restaurants in Da Lat. Tran Thanh Binh, Chief Forest Ranger for Lam Dong province, said the raids resulted in the most successful operation in the province’s history. One restaurant was found to be in possession of a range of banned meats, including two bear paws, three pangolins *Manis*, musk deer *Moschus*, and porcupine. Most of the animal parts were found soaking in formaldehyde.

A team at another restaurant seized 27 snakes weighing a total of 14 kg. The owner failed to demonstrate any proof of his claim that he had bred the reptiles.

Some restaurants did not have any illicit meat in stock but their menus suggested that they served dishes derived from wild animals.

On 15 September 2010, Hanoi Environmental Police, in conjunction with relevant authorities, uncovered a wildlife bone trade network operated by a couple at their home in Ha Noi’s Hoang Mai district. In total, 900 kg of animal bones from four different locations were seized and included six complete Tiger skeletons and six skulls, 32 kg of additional Tiger bones, two elephant tusks, three skulls and one skeleton of Clouded Leopard *Neofelis nebulosa* (CITES I), six bear skulls and one stuffed bear head. In addition, about 730 kg of Serow *Naemorhedus sumatraensis* (CITES I), deer, turtle shell, horns of Gaur *Bos gaurus* (CITES I), bone glue, dried bile, and dried porcupine stomachs were seized. The couple were transporting two sacks of animal bones when their car was stopped by authorities.

A further three locations in Me Linh, Cau Giay and Hai Ba Trung districts were raided, where some 100 animal bones and other products were seized. These locations are believed to be part of the same network, which had been under investigation for several months. Six people were arrested in connection with the case, which remains under investigation.

www.earthtimes.org/articles/show/315179,anteaters-on-a-plane-vietnam-man-tries-to-check-33-pangolins.html; www.thanhniennews.com/2010/Pages/20100826211841.aspx, 26 August 2010; www.traffic.org; Education for Nature –Vietnam (ENV)

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA: In early March 2010, at Perth District Court, Kevin Gledhill of Western Australia pleaded guilty and was convicted of importing parrot eggs contrary to Regulation 303CD of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999*. He was sentenced to 16 months' imprisonment with a minimum of eight months to serve.

Customs and Border Protection officers stopped Gledhill at Perth Airport in September 2009 on his arrival from Bali. During a baggage examination, officers became suspicious that he was concealing prohibited items under his clothing. He was searched and found to be carrying 37 parrot eggs in a specially made vest.

During March 2010, fisheries officers seized 337 abalones *Haliotis* during compliance operations on the New South Wales south coast and arrested several men. Three men, believed to be part of a syndicate operating at South Durras, were allegedly caught with 99 abalones at Richmond Beach in the Murramarang National Park. Another three were apprehended for allegedly possessing 90 abalones after being observed diving around the northern headland of Cudmirrah Beach at Sussex Inlet. Further down the coast, two men allegedly in possession of 144 abalones were apprehended south of Bermagui. The possession limit in waters open to the taking of abalone in NSW is two per person.

On 27 July 2010, at Esperance Magistrates' court, Western Australia, Koon Ping Ho and Poh Mun Mok of Mount Pleasant, Perth, pleaded guilty to charges of being in possession of more than the permitted quantity of abalone and possessing totally protected fish. They were fined a total of AUD25 000 (USD23 500) (AUD600 on three charges, related to the excess possession of various abalone species and totally protected fish, and each ordered to pay related mandatory additional penalties of AUD10 683, plus court costs of AUD119); their diving gear was also forfeited.

The men were discovered by fisheries officers in Esperance on 12 December 2009 with 125 Green Lip Abalones *Haliotis laevis*, two Brown Lip Abalones *H. conicopora* and 161 Roes Abalones *H. roei*. Sixty abalones were under-sized. Both men had fishing licences and said they had intended to take the abalones back to Perth for their personal use. Although fishing in season, they broke sustainability rules in the State that limits possession to 20 Roes, 10 Green Lip or Brown Lip Abalones (combined), unless a person is fishing in their permanent place of residence, when the maximum number is 20 Roes and 80 Green Lips.

According to defence counsel, both men felt humiliated about their offences and had suffered significant loss of face in their community.

www.customs.gov.au/site/100322mediarelease.asp, 22 March 2010; <http://fis.com/fis/worldnews/worldnews.asp?l=e&ndb=1&id=36284>, 21 April 2010; *Esperance Express News*, 30 July/5 August 2010

NEW ZEALAND: On 4 March 2010, at Auckland District Court, Tong de Tang Trade and Tina Xu were sentenced for the attempted importation of traditional Asian medicines containing wildlife products (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 22(3):140).

Tina Xu, who had earlier pleaded guilty to 12 charges pursuant to the *Trade in Endangered Species Act*, was sentenced to five months' community detention and ordered to pay reparation to the Department of Conservation of NZD10 000 (USD7300).

Xu's company, Tong de Tang Trade 2005 (NZ) Ltd, was fined a total of NZD22 250 (NZD11 250 on a charge relating to trading in a CITES Appendix I species (Hawksbill Turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata*) and NZD1000 on each of 11 charges relating to trading in and possession of CITES Appendix II species).

On 29 March 2010, at Christchurch District Court, Thomas Benjamin Price, a US national resident in Switzerland, and Gustavo Eduardo Toledo Albarran, a Mexican national resident in Spain, were each sentenced to 18 weeks' imprisonment for their roles in the poaching and attempted export of 16 South Island Tree Geckos *Naultinus gemmeus* (CITES III). The geckos have been returned to the wild.

In early February 2010, the pair and another person, Manfred Walter Bachmann, embarked on a gecko-collecting expedition on the Otago Peninsula, the purpose of which was to obtain geckos for illegal export. Two of the group caught 16 South Island Tree Geckos. Of these, 11 were females (nine gravid). The specimens had been packed into individual lengths of plastic tubing and handed to Bachmann who was to act as courier. The group was apprehended in Christchurch on 14 February 2010.

Bachmann, a German national resident in Uganda, was charged with possession of totally protected wildlife. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 15 weeks' imprisonment.

On 8 May 2010, at Auckland Airport, a Cambodian woman arriving from Singapore was found smuggling what was suspected to be the penis and gallbladder of a Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I). The items, which had been concealed in a stocking tied around the passenger's waist and in a plastic bag around her leg, were found by a MAF Biosecurity New Zealand (MAFBNZ) detector dog.

MAFBNZ Detector Dog Programme Manager, Craig Hughes said "This find highlights the important role the detector dog teams play at the border and sends a strong signal to those thinking about smuggling illegal goods into New Zealand". "The Detector Dog Programme is an important part of MAFBNZ operations. Our dogs consistently find items that would other-wise prove difficult for our inspectors to locate" said Hughes.

The case will be considered for prosecution under the *Trade in Endangered Species Act*.

New Zealand Wildlife Enforcement Group (WEG), Department of Conservation; <http://tvnz.co.nz/national-news/tiger-penis-seized-auckland-airport-3540100>

AMERICAS

BRAZIL: On 20 April 2010, one tonne of frozen shark fins destined for the Japanese market were seized by prosecutors from IBAMA's Fish and Wildlife Division. The owner of the export company was fined BRL52 000 (USD29 700) and the boats responsible for catching the sharks were also expected to be subject to legal action; the fins were to be destroyed.

www.nst.com.my/articles/20100421103142/Article/inde_html, 21 April 2010

CANADA: On 14 May 2010, Canada Border Services at Edmonton International Airport were alerted by the handlers of a detector dog to some luggage on a carousel in the international arrivals area. The bags were removed for closer inspection and found to contain three Spur-thighed Tortoises *Testudo graeca* (CITES II), along with prohibited plant material and food. The reptiles were seized and handed over to Environment Canada for care while the investigation continues.

www.inews880.com/Channels/Reg/LocalNews/story.aspx?ID=1232573, 21 May 2010

MEXICO: On 6 July 2010, more than 190 birds and turtles were seized in Mexico City. The species included Yellow-headed Parrots *Amazona ochrocephala oratrix* (CITES I), a Cooper's Hawk *Accipiter cooperii* (II), Blue Jays *Cyanocitta cristata*, sparrows, and owls. The species are protected under Mexican law. One person was arrested.

On 20 July 2010, enforcement officers at Mexico City's International Airport stopped a man who was acting nervously as he arrived on a flight from Lima, Peru. Upon inspection, they found 18 monkeys placed in a girdle around his waist. These were later identified as 15 Pygmy Marmosets *Callithrix pygmaea* (CITES II), two Black Mantle Tamarins *Saguinus nigricollis* (II) and a Goeldi's Marmoset *Callimico goeldii*, the latter classified as Vulnerable by IUCN/CITES I). Two specimens had

died. The animals had initially been transported in socks in the suspect's luggage but later transferred to the girdle to protect them from X-rays.

The seizure came just days after TRAFFIC and Mexico's environmental protection agency (PROFEPA) had signed an agreement to combat illicit wildlife trafficking in Mexico (see page 12).

<http://news-views.in/over-190-endangered-animals-seized-in-mexico/>, 7 July 2010; TRAFFIC International, 20 July 2010

USA: On 23 June 2010, in the federal court in the US Virgin Islands, two Taiwanese nationals were sentenced to gaol for conspiracy to ship black coral *Antipatharia* (CITES II) into the USA. Ivan Chu of Taipei was sentenced to 30 months' imprisonment and fined USD12 500; Gloria Chu, also of Taipei, was sentenced to 20 months' imprisonment and fined USD12 500. The pair has also been prohibited from shipping coral and other wildlife products to the USA for a three-year period following their release from prison. These are the longest gaol sentences to date for illegal trade in coral.

The pair pleaded guilty on 11 March 2010 to nine counts including conspiracy, false statements, and violations of both the *Endangered Species Act* and the *Lacey Act*. They admitted to running a business named Peng Chia Enterprise Co. Ltd, which supplied materials including black coral to customers outside Taiwan for jewellery design and manufacture. At times prior to 2007, they had been issued with CITES export permits by the Taiwanese authorities in order to ship black coral overseas. Since 2007, however, they had been unable to obtain permits because they were not able to produce a legitimate certificate of origin.

They admitted that, in order to supply a company based in the Virgin Islands with black coral, they would falsely label shipments in order to conceal the coral from US Customs and Border Protection officers. The conspiracy included travel to a warehouse in mainland China to choose coral from a Chinese supplier and the use of an intermediary to ship the coral from Hong Kong to a company in St Thomas. The scheme took place for at least two years prior to the Customs seizure in August 2009 of a shipment destined for the company. This comprised 10 boxes of black coral labelled "plastic of craft work." Suspicious of the consignment, a US Customs' Contraband Enforcement Team contacted the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). As a result, a joint investigation "Operation Black Gold" was opened by USFWS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, that led to the arrest of the Chus in January 2010. Analysis by the USFWS's National Forensics Laboratory revealed that the shipment contained black coral. The Chus admitted that from 2007 to 2009, they sent black coral to the company in St Thomas.

Department of Justice media release, 23 June 2010, www.justice.gov/opa/pr/2010/June/10-enrd-733.html

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The *TRAFFIC Bulletin* will henceforward carry only a selection of seizures and prosecutions that TRAFFIC considers to be particularly significant. Readers are asked to refer to the seizures section of the TRAFFIC website (www.traffic.org) for regular updates on cases reported from around the world.

ABALONE

AUSTRALIA: In February 2011, at Warrnambool and Hamilton Magistrates' Courts, Hoa Chieu Nguyen and Mot Dang, both of Melbourne, Victoria, were banned from dealing in abalone for up to 10 years after being found guilty of abalone poaching.

On 12 March 2010, fisheries officers questioned the men after they appeared to have been diving in the Crown of Thorns areas near Peterborough. While the pair was found to have the legal

allowable catch of five abalones, fisheries officers later uncovered 77 abalones and one undersized rock lobster in scrubland. Warrnambool and Apollo Bay fisheries officers set up a joint surveillance operation and the poachers were arrested when they later returned to the scene.

Charges of using commercial abalone equipment to take more than twice the allowable catch, taking undersize rock lobster, taking and failing to mark rock lobster tails and illegally possessing rock lobster were found proven.

Nguyen was sentenced to 120 days' in gaol, with 14 days to be served immediately and the remainder suspended for two years. He has two prior convictions for similar offences and was banned from having any involvement with abalone for 10 years. He was also ordered to pay costs of AUD4630 (USD4640). Dang was fined AUD2500, ordered to pay costs of AUD4888 and banned from having any dealings in abalone for five years.

On 22 February 2011, in one of the largest and most significant seizures of illegal abalone in New South Wales, two men were charged with three counts of poaching and trafficking in abalone after some 122 kg of abalones (more than 1300 specimens) were seized during Operation Fusion. The NSW Police Marine Area Command and the Fisheries Statewide Operations and Investigations Group arrested one of the men at Batemans Bay; a second man was later arrested and search warrants conducted at various private residences in Mogo and Moruya.

Operation Fusion had been examining the activities of the syndicate, which is believed to have been trafficking in abalone illegally for well over a decade. Investigations by Fisheries have reportedly uncovered an intricate system of dive locations, abalone theft, surveillance techniques, storage locations, transport operations and illegal trade in Sydney. The latest seizure brings the total of abalone seized during the operation to more than 380 kg.

Marine Area Commander, Superintendent Mark Hutchings, said this was the first joint operation of its kind targeting such a sophisticated and large-scale trafficking ring.

"By taking out significant players of this alleged trafficking ring we are effectively dismantling its operations," Superintendent Hutchings said. "This is going to have a significant impact on the black market for abalone in NSW."

The catch limit under NSW law is two abalones per person in waters open to the taking of abalone.

www.standard.net.au/news/local/news/general/abalone-poachers-convicted/2075617.aspx, 15 February 2011; New South Wales Police Force media release, 23 February 2011: www.police.nsw.gov.au/news/latest_releases?sq_content_src=%2BdXjsPWh0dHBzJTnBJTjGJTjGd3d3LmViaXoucG9saWNILm5zdy5nb3YuYXUIMkZtZWRpYSUyRjEINDUzLmh0bWwmYWxsPTE%3D

SOUTH AFRICA: On 20 January 2011, two men were arrested and 42 bags containing 7235 shucked abalones were seized by authorities following a car chase from Gordon's Bay to Mitchells Plain, Cape Town.

On 25 January 2011, three people were arrested in East London, Eastern Cape, with 30 kg of abalones in their possession during one of a series of recent busts by police and Marine and Coastal Management (MCM) officials. The majority of the specimens were undersized.

On 16 February 2011, at Cape Town Regional Court, Chinese nationals Zhi Wen and Wei Lin were each sentenced to 30 months' imprisonment; a third man, Jason Ho, was gaoled for 36 months.

"It is the first time ever that a sentence of this nature has been imposed on foreign nationals for abalone-related crimes," said Carol Moses, spokesperson for the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF).

A joint operation involving officials from the Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Unit of the department and members of the SAPS Organised Crime Unit led to the arrest of the three men in Cape Town in July 2010. The operation followed extensive surveillance on two suspected illegal abalone processing establishments in Table View and Parklands where, respectively, 14 140 and 16 976 dried and processed abalone specimens were found. A further 1093 wet abalones were also seized at the Table View premises.

On 23 February 2011, Cape Town police reported that they were investigating whether five foreign nationals—from Burundi, Congo and China—arrested in Table View, are part of the same abalone poaching syndicate.

www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/two-in-court-over-abalone-haul-1.1016710, 25 January 2011;
www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/abalone-confiscated-from-trio-1.1016959, 26 January 2011;
www.buanews.gov.za/news/11111021713151001, 17 February 2011; *www.eyewitnessnews.co.za/articleprog.aspx?id=60100, 23 February 2011*

USA: On 19 February 2011, two men were arrested for poaching abalone, one of whom was facing his third abalone poaching violation in as many weeks. Suspect A was arrested in Van Damme State Park, Mendocino County, California. US Fish and Game wardens watched the suspect and an accomplice as they kayaked in the ocean and used scuba gear, allegedly to collect abalones. The 55 abalone specimens they collected were left near the beach while they returned their rented kayak to a dive shop. Wardens arrested the men at the shop and recovered the abalone, a vehicle and the pair's dive gear. The suspects were booked into Mendocino County Jail for felony conspiracy, the taking of abalone for commercial purposes, and other charges.

On 12 February 2011, suspect A was stopped for speeding and was found in possession of bags containing 36 fresh Red Abalones *Haliotis rufescens*, five of them undersized, as well as diving equipment. He was booked into Mendocino County Jail for possession of abalone for commercial sale and his equipment was confiscated; he was released on 14 February.

On 2 February, while investigating another crime, Petaluma police found suspect A and his accomplice in Petaluma, allegedly in possession of five abalones during the closed season, which runs from 1 December until 1 April.

http://sfappeal.com/news/2011/02/sf-man-arrested-for-abalone-poaching-three-times-in-three-weeks.php, 23 February 2011

IVORY

INDIA: On 5 March 2011, at Esplanade Court, Mumbai, Farooq Issa was found guilty of selling ivory items and was sentenced to three years' in gaol and fined Rs10 000 (USD222). This is the first time a person has received such a lengthy gaol term in the State, and follows an investigation by the Forest Department that started in 1998.

Issa, the owner of an antique shop, was first investigated by Colaba police acting on a tip-off, who sent a decoy to his shop to purchase an ivory item. The police raided the outlet and seized 61 ivory items.

www.mid-day.com/news/2011/mar/110311-Wildlife-Act-Forest-Department-legal-battle-reached-Farooq-Issa.htm | March 2011, 11 March 2011

KENYA: On 25 December 2010, at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, police arrested a Thai national arriving from Maputo, Mozambique, as she prepared to board a flight to Bangkok. In two suitcases in her possession were 19.5 kg of ivory in the form of bangles, necklaces and two tusks. The items were detected by sniffer dogs.

The arrest comes barely two weeks after a Singaporean travelling from Lilongwe, Malawi, was arrested at the airport with 92 kg of ivory. He too was preparing to board a plane to Thailand.

On 7 January 2011, the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) arrested three people and seized 81 elephant tusks and two rhinoceros horns from a car on the Isiolo-Meru highway, as well as firearms, ammunition, night-vision equipment to enable hunting at night, and poisoned arrows. Intelligence officers had been tracking the suspects' movements for two months.

On 18 January 2011, a Chinese citizen pleaded guilty to charges of attempting to smuggle 65 kg of ivory through Jomo Kenyatta International Airport. A court case is pending.

The suspect was arrested the previous day as he caught a connecting flight to Guangzhou following his arrival from Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo. He was allegedly carrying 278 pieces of worked and raw ivory. He may also be charged with attempting to bribe officials.

Daily Nation (Kenya), 11 January 2011; 15 April 2011;
www.monstersandcritics.com/news/asiapacific/news/article_1612508.php/Chinese-citizen-to-face-ivory-smuggling-charges-in-Kenya

TANZANIA: On 4 January 2011, a Chinese national was arrested in Dar es Salaam following an investigation co-ordinated by the Lusaka Agreement Task Force into a seizure of 769 pieces of elephant tusks (2005 kg) in Viet Nam, originating from Zanzibar, in August 2009. The suspect is believed to be one of the kingpins in the smuggling ring, which is understood to have been illegally exporting elephant tusks to the Far East from the region. The suspect was charged at Kisumu Residents Magistrates' Court for committing an economic crime.

www.lusakaagreement.org/kingpin.html

THAILAND: On 5 January 2011, Customs officials seized a shipment of 73 pieces of ivory (435 kg) that had been smuggled from Mozambique on pallets labelled as personal property. The items were en route to Lao PDR.

On 25 February 2011, Customs officials at Suvarnabhumi International Airport, Bangkok, seized 118 elephant tusks (over 1000 kg) and three rhinoceros horns (circa three kilogrammes) in a shipment from Nigeria.

The items passed through Doha, Qatar, and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, before reaching Bangkok. The shipment, declared as "craft work" in the airway bill, was unclaimed.

The Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS) (the world's largest database of records of seizures of elephant products, compiled by TRAFFIC on behalf of CITES), lists Thailand as one of three countries most heavily implicated in the illegal global ivory trade and Malaysia as a country of concern because of its role as a significant transit point.

In an effort to address the problem, Customs authorities in Thailand teamed up with TRAFFIC Southeast Asia to raise awareness among Customs officers based at airports and other key checkpoints about ways to tackle the illegal ivory trade. The Customs Department has seen a series of successful raids at Suvarnabhumi International Airport since stepping up its efforts (see also page 57).

<http://engnews.gazeta.kz/art.asp?aid=330982>; www.traffic.org/home/2011/2/25/more-than-1-tonne-of-ivory-and-rhino-horns-seized-in-thailand.html

USA: On 15 December 2010, at the US Court-house, Brooklyn, New York, Tamba Kaba was sentenced to 33 months' imprisonment and fined USD25 000 for importing 71 elephant ivory carvings into the country via JFK International Airport, from Nigeria and Uganda.

The items had been concealed inside hollow cavities of wooden and metal handicrafts. Kaba was convicted in June 2010 following a probe by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and US Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

On 9 March 2011, at the US Attorney's Office, northern District of Atlanta, Pascal Vieillard, a piano importer of Lilburn, Georgia, was sentenced to three years' probation for illegally importing 855 elephant ivory key tops, totalling 1710 pieces of ivory. He was also fined USD17 500. His company—A-440 Pianos—was also ordered to pay USD17 500 with the condition that all pianos imported by the company are brought through the Port of Atlanta.

US Department of Justice press releases, 15 December 2010: www.fws.gov/home/feature/2010/pdf/pressrelease-Kabasentence.pdf; 9 March 2011: www.justice.gov/usao/gan/press/2011/03-09-11.html

PANGOLIN and BEAR

CHINA: A man convicted after 115 bear paws and 40 pangolins *Manis* (CITES II) were seized from a minibus in November 2009 has been sentenced to 10 years in gaol. Four others are being sought in connection with the case.

In February 2011, at Youjiang District Court, in Baise city, Guangxi province, a person named Zhou was convicted of illegally purchasing and transporting endangered animals and their products. He was sentenced to 11 years' in gaol and fined CNY10 000 (USD1520).

On 18 March 2010, Zhou and another suspect bought eight paws of Asiatic Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus* (CITES I) and 27 pangolins from a woman in Yingjiang county, Yunnan province; they hired two others to transport the items to Guangzhou city. On 20 March, all specimens and the suspects were seized by Baise police.

On the same day, the court sentenced a person named Xiao to 13 years' imprisonment and imposed a fine of CNY20 000 (USD3040) for his involvement in the illegal trade and transport of 10 bear paws and 34 pangolins. The source, trade route and destination of the confiscated specimens, as well as the location of the seizure, were the same as those of the first seizure.

In February 2011, the Meilan District Procuratorate of Haikou city, Hainan province, indicted four suspects for illegally trading and transporting pangolins. Suspect Liang, the principal criminal who was in charge of purchasing and transporting the animals, was sentenced to six years' and six months' imprisonment and fined CNY30 000 (USD4566).

On 27 January 2010, three pangolins and two packets of pangolin scales were seized by Haikou Forest police. Suspect Chen who was involved in trading and transporting pangolins, was sentenced to five years and six months in gaol and fined CNY20 000. The other two people hired by Liang to transport and sell the pangolins, were gaoled for three years and six months, and three years, respectively, and each fined CNY3000.

News/aljx/201101/20110105162925_4603.html (in Chinese); www.cwca.org.cn/Article/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=21982; www.cwca.org.cn/Article/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=21981; www.cwca.org.cn/Article/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=22024

MALAYSIA: On 16 December 2010, the Perak Wildlife and National Parks Department (Perhilitan) seized 153 pangolins and arrested three Indonesians who attempted to smuggle the animals by boat, near Lumut, from Thailand.

The arrests were made by the Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) which detected that the boat had crossed 12 nautical miles from the Malaysia-Thailand maritime border.

Following inspection, the team found that the three men from Belawan, Sumatra, did not have valid travel documents. They were arrested and handed over to Perhilitan's Enforcement Division and remanded in custody for further investigation.

On 24 February 2011, officials of the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (Perhilitan) seized 135 pangolins and arrested two men who were believed to be members of an illegal wildlife trade syndicate bringing pangolins in from other States and smuggling them out to neighbouring countries.

A court order was obtained to release the pangolins into the wild.

www.mysinchew.com/node/49853, 18 December 2010; <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2011/2/26/nation/8146711&sec=nation>, 26 February 2011

RED SANDALWOOD

INDIA: At the end of December 2010, Customs authorities seized around 24 000 kg of Red Sandalwood (also known as Red Sanders) *Pterocarpus santalinus* (CITES II and protected from export from India) at Nhava Sheva port as it was about to be loaded on to a vessel bound for Dubai. The container had been cleared for shipment as the documents indicated that it contained synthetic yarn from Surat that had been packed under supervision of the Central Excise officials. However, Customs officers became suspicious and found that fake seals and stamps had been used. The smugglers had also used the import-export code (IEC) of an exporter.

On 5 January 2011, a lorry containing between seven and eight tonnes of Red Sandalwood logs was seized by staff of the Bureau of Investigation of Economic Offences and local police, in Patgaon, Kokrajhar district, Guwahati, Assam. The logs had been concealed under sacks of rice and soya beans. The driver was arrested.

On 7 January 2011, officials of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) seized five tonnes of Red Sandalwood logs at Sikka port, Jamnagar district, Gujarat, from a vessel bound for Dubai.

On 28 January 2011, Special Investigation and Intelligence Branch (SIIB) Customs officials at Nhava Sheva port seized a container carrying 25.3 t of Red Sandalwood that was being smuggled as yarn. The container was destined for Dubai. The name of the fabric company cited on documents was found not to exist.

In January 2011, the Special Investigation and Intelligence Branch (SIIB) and Customs Intelligence Unit (CIU) of Nhava Sheva, Mumbai, seized a container carrying 590 kg of Red Sandalwood, bound for Dubai. The consignment had used the name of a reputable exporter without his knowledge.

Concerned at the huge quantity of Red Sandalwood being smuggled from Nhava Sheva port, the Customs department at the port is to obtain two advanced scanners to restrict attempts to smuggle consignments out of the country.

www.hindustantimes.com/Red-sanders-worth-2-cr-seized/Article1-646146.aspx, 4 January 2011;
www.telegraphindia.com/1110107/jsp/northeast/story_13402333.jsp;
<http://news.in.msn.com/national/article.aspx?cp-documentid=4777770>; www.dnaindia.com/mumbai/report_customs-seizes-rare-timber-worth-rs3-crore-in-mumbai_1502032, 2 February 2011;
www.dnaindia.com/mumbai/report_red-sanders-worth-rs1-crore-seized-by-customs_1512797, 10 January 2011; www.hindustantimes.com/Nhava-Sheva-port-to-get-hi-tech-scanners/Article1-648418.aspx, 26 February 2011

RHINOCEROS

NEPAL: On 26 February 2011, five people from one family were arrested in connection with the poaching of seven Great Indian Rhinoceroses *Rhinoceros unicornis* (CITES I) in Chitwan National Park over the course of one year. This was reported to be the largest group of rhinoceros poachers ever apprehended by police in the country.

Operation Hunt of Central Investigation Bureau at Nepal Police Headquarters, backed by WWF, resulted in the arrests of the poachers, one of whom was on the park's most-wanted list. The suspects have been handed over to Chitwan National Park and await prosecution.

www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=Five+poachers+of+a+family+in+police+net&NewsID=278057

SOUTH AFRICA: A veterinarian was granted bail at Musina Magistrates' Court following his arrest on 21 January 2011 for illegally removing the horns of 15 rhinoceroses.

The man was charged with violating the *Biodiversity Act*, which prohibits a person from carrying out a restricted activity involving a specimen of a listed, threatened or protected species without a permit. He was released on R10 000 (USD1400) bail and the case was postponed for further investigation.

The suspect is accused of dehorning more than a dozen rhinoceroses in the Maremani Game Reserve in Limpopo. His arrest was made by the national wildlife crime reaction unit, led by the Hawks.

A further two veterinarians and others are due to stand trial in April 2011 following their arrests in September 2010 in connection with their alleged involvement with a syndicate dealing in rhinoceros horn.

www.thenewage.co.za/8583-1013-53-Vet_in_court_for_removing_rhino_horns, 24 January 2011

UK: On 21 February 2011, police officers in Stansted, responding to an alarm at Sworders auction house, found that the head of a Black Rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* (CITES I) had been stolen from the salesroom. They believe the item was the subject of a targeted burglary. Details of the forthcoming auction and a photograph of the trophy had been posted on the Internet.

www.hertsandessexobserver.co.uk/Dunmow-Stansted/Raiders-snatch-50000-rhino-head-from-Stansted-sales-room.htm

TIGER

CHINA: A court in Panzihua City, Sichuan province, sentenced a man to 14 years in gaol and fined him CNY50 000 (USD7600) after he was found guilty of illegally selling the skins of two Tigers *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) in 2009.

INDIA: On 6 April 2011, at Lakhimpur Kheri Court, Uttar Pradesh, a female Tiger poacher was sentenced to five years and three months' imprisonment and fined Rs50 000 (USD1105) for poaching a Tiger in Dudhwa Tiger Reserve in 2007. The Bawariya tribal woman had been involved in activities relating to other wildlife violations in various parts of the State since 1992. This is reportedly the maximum sentence ever imposed in the country for Tiger poaching.

RUSSIA: On 24 January 2011, at the border crossing point Pokrovka of Bikinskiy Customs checkpoint in the Far East, Customs officers, in co-operation with other law enforcement bodies, seized some 21.5 kg of bones and cartilage of Siberian Tiger *Panthera tigris altaica* (CITES I) being transported on a passenger coach bound for China. The items had been concealed inside the driver's door and under the dashboard. The driver was arrested.

www.cwca.org.cn/Article/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=21695, 17 January 2011; <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/lucknow/Woman-poacher-sentenced-for-5-yrs-3-months/articleshow/7908125.cms>; World Customs Organization, Central Enforcement Network Alert, 2011

TURTLE

MALAYSIA: On 20 December 2010, Malaysian Customs officials reported their largest contraband seizure of the year following the confiscation of 4.3 t of reptiles. The animals were seized from a lorry parked near the border with Thailand. Among the haul of 1800 CITES-II listed specimens were 10 Yellow-headed Temple Turtles *Heosemys annandalii* and 18 Brown Tortoises *Manouria emys*, both of which are classified as Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, as well as over 400 Giant Asian Pond Turtles *Heosemys grandis*, which are listed as Vulnerable. These three species, as well as Bengal Monitors *Varanus (nebulosa) bengalensis*, which were also seized, are protected in Malaysia according to the *Wildlife Protection Act (1972)*. Monitor lizards, snakes and freshwater turtles were among the haul.

“TRAFFIC highly commends the Customs officers responsible for this seizure. However, the scale of this haul underlines the fact that the illegal trade of protected wildlife in Malaysia remains a serious problem”, said Chris R. Shepherd, Deputy Director of TRAFFIC Southeast Asia.

“Without the commitment of Customs and enforcement bodies alike across the network of ASEAN countries, the illegal trade in endangered species will continue threatening the future survival of wild animals and plants.”

Following this seizure, the majority of animals were auctioned off to wildlife dealers while the remainder that are protected in Malaysia, were handed over to the Wildlife and National Parks Department.

www.traffic.org, 24 December 2010; Asian Turtle Trade Working Group 2000. Heosemys annandalii. In: IUCN 2010. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2010.4. www.iucnredlist.org. Viewed on 26 January 2011

SOUTH AFRICA: In March 2011, at Ingwavuma regional court, KwaZulu-Natal province, Makotikoti Zikhali was sentenced to five years’ imprisonment for the killing of a mature female Loggerhead Turtle *Caretta caretta* (CITES I) in 2009.

The case against Zikhali was brought by iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority and Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, who said the ruling was an “important conservation and development victory in a case involving the poaching of an endangered Loggerhead turtle in one of the last remaining breeding sites in the world.”

Zikhali was caught chopping up the carcass of the turtle, which had come on to the beach in the iSimangaliso Wetland Park to lay eggs. She had been tagged just three days earlier for monitoring and research purposes.

In handing down his sentence, the Magistrate said that the offence was so serious that it outweighed the personal circumstances of Zikhali, who was a first offender.

www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/2011/03/11/5-years-jailtime-for-killing-of-turtle, 11 March 2011

OTHER SEIZURES

AFRICA: During January and February 2011, more than 22 t and 13 000 items derived from some 31 species were seized in a number of African countries by enforcement officials conducting operations to combat trans-border wildlife trade. Items included more than 57 kg of raw ivory and 295 ivory statues, jewellery and chopsticks; four rhino horns, 4726 kg of pangolin meat and 323 seahorses.

The main objective of the operation was to raise awareness, encourage effective enforcement and co-operation among identified international agencies and CITES implementation. The operation was conducted within the framework of Project Great Apes and Integrity (Gapin), a Swedish government-financed project designed to stem illegal trade while cracking down on corrupt practices that helped to fuel illicit trafficking.

Fourteen African countries participated in the operation, supported by 25 countries in Asia and Europe, WCO Regional Intelligence Liaison Offices, Asian Wildlife Enforcement Network, Lusaka Agreement Task Force, Pan African Sanctuary Alliance, and national CITES Management Authorities, wildlife enforcement agencies and in some countries, the police.

The balance of arrests were made in countries/regions outside Africa, such as Belgium, China, Czech Republic, France, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Israel, Japan, the Netherlands, Romania, Spain, the UK and Viet Nam. Customs officials in Viet Nam seized 1.2 t of ivory shipped from Tanzania via Singapore just prior to the start of the operation.

www.traffic.org/home/2011/3/2/wcos-operation-gapin-yields-spectacular-results.html

GABON: Raids conducted by the country’s Water and Forest and Defense Ministries, with the assistance of WWF partner AALF (a joint programme of Gabon’s Water and Forest Ministry with

the organizations Conservation Justice and Brainforest), yielded an alarming number of wild animal parts. Among the CITES-listed specimens confiscated were the head and hands of a Gorilla *Gorilla gorilla* (CITES I), 12 Chimpanzee *Pan paniscus* (I) heads and 30 Chimpanzee hands. The skins of 12 Leopards *Panthera pardus* (I), a portion of Lion *P. leo* (CITES II) skin, snakeskins and five elephant tails were also discovered.

“WWF commends the Water and Forest Ministry and AALF for this important arrest,” said David Greer, WWF African Great Ape Manager. “However, the massive collection of protected species confiscated in this operation is highly disturbing. To my knowledge, there has not been a seizure of great ape body parts of this magnitude in Central Africa over the last ten years.”

The suspects are being held in custody while an investigation is conducted.

www.panda.org/?uNewsID=199074&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+wwf%2Fnews+%28WWF+-+News%29, 19 January 2011

INDONESIA: On 31 January 2011, at Jakarta Airport, Quarantine and Airport Security officers found a pair of Bali Mynas *Leucopsar rothschildi*—one of the world’s rarest birds (CITES I; IUCN Critically Endangered)—in the luggage of a Singaporean man. With fewer than 50 mature individuals estimated to survive in the wild, the seizure is a significant find. Endemic to the island of Bali and once common across the north-west of the island, the wild population of this species has plummeted due to illegal poaching for the cage bird trade.

The suspect was also carrying four slow lorises *Nycticebus* spp. (CITES I) and eight Pig-nosed Turtles *Carettochelys insculpta* (II). The suspect was released on bail and the animals were taken into quarantine.

On 17 February 2011, an Indonesian national was arrested for allegedly using the Internet to sell hundreds of wildlife parts illegally, including CITES I-listed ivory, skins of Tiger *Panthera tigris*, and teeth of Malayan Sun Bear *Helarctos malayanus*. The parts were allegedly destined for domestic and inter-national markets and other suspects were being pursued. The Indonesian was arrested in his art shop on 9 February during a raid carried out by police and forestry officials in Jakarta. Twenty-six items were found at the scene and hundreds more were waiting to be shipped by courier service.

www.traffic.org/home/2011/2/19/rare-birds-and-other-wildlife-seized-at-jakarta-airport-duri.html, 19 February 2011; www.insidebayarea.com/news/ci_17410656, 17 February 2011

PANAMA: On 14 February 2010, Customs officials seized 20 000 seahorses *Hippocampus* (CITES II) from underneath a cargo of fish stomachs arriving at Tocumen International Airport from Peru.

www.informador.com.mx/tecnologia/2011/2/17/76066/decomisan-en-panama-20-mil-caballitos-de-mar-disecados.htm, 17 February 2011

USA: In January 2011, a German national agreed to plead guilty to smuggling tarantulas from Germany to the USA following an investigation into his activities by agents of the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The suspect had allegedly been smuggling tarantulas through the post for a number of years and selling them to customers in dozens of countries, including nine buyers in the USA.

In 2010, an investigation codenamed “Operation Spiderman” was set up to detain the suspect. When FWS agents discovered a package containing nearly 250 live tarantulas being posted to Los Angeles through the US Postal Service, agents posed as customers and placed orders for tarantulas with the suspect; they subsequently received dozens of specimens from him, including 22 Mexican Redknee Tarantulas *Brachypelma smithi* (CITES II). The suspect was arrested by FWS agents upon his arrival in the USA in December 2010.

Almost 625 tarantulas were seized and were to be sent to local zoos. The suspect was to face trial in April 2011.

Environmental Crime Media Update 31 January 2011; www.moveoneinc.com/blog/expat-life/entarantula-smuggler-faces-20-years-prisonsentence

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The following cases relate to incidents in South-east Asia.

I V O R Y

MALAYSIA: On 2 September 2011, authorities confiscated some 700 African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I) tusks destined for China. The tusks were packed in sacks and hidden in two containers of recycled plastic from Tanzania. More than 1000 African Elephant tusks were seized by officials in two earlier shipments. No arrests have been made but the cases are being investigated.

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5gEnCyK7VbmJcryDqvSINPWInWThw?docId=d2316efe71ed4b9da1d22b998dd345dd>

THAILAND: On 1 April 2011, Customs officials seized 2033 kg of ivory (CITES I) (247 tusks) that had been hidden among hundreds of boxes of frozen mackerel in a boat at Bangkok port; the shipment, apparently from Kenya, was reported to be the largest in the country in a year.

<http://www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/Kenyanews/Thai-customs-seize-two-tonnes-of-ivory-12263.html#ixzz1RslLuNBu>

VIET NAM: On 18 April 2011, police in the northern province of Quang Ninh seized 122 tusks and ivory (CITES I) pieces (300 kg) from the warehouse of a company based in Mong Cai City. The pieces had been packed in sacks and covered by soya beans. The warehouse manager confessed to police that he rented the space out to a stranger in Hai Phong.

On 6 May 2011, Customs officials at the port of Hai Phong, acting on information, discovered nearly 600 kg of African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I) tusks hidden in a shipping container of rubber from Tanzania. The suspects had placed the ivory in the tanks by cutting them open and soldering them shut. The container had been labelled for temporary import, and was already registered for re-export to China by a Vietnamese company in the neighbouring province of Quang Ninh.

On 29 September 2011, police in the central Nghe An Province, acting on information, caught three men with 209 kg of ivory (CITES I) thought to have been smuggled into the country.

The men were transporting the ivory by van on National Highway 1A in the provincial capital Vinh.

Another man escaped when three police cars stopped the vehicle for examination. The suspects told the police they had been taking the ivory for delivery to a trader in Vinh. The fourth person is being sought.

This was the largest ivory smuggling case ever discovered in the province.

<http://envietnam.org/library/Articles%20for%20news%20media%20section/Ivory-seized-from-Quang-Ninh-warehouse.html>; www.thanhniennews.com/2010/Pages/20110419162522.aspx; <http://www.timeslive.co.za/africa/article1053100.ece/Smuggled-African-ivory-tusks-seized-in-Vietnam>;
<http://tuoitrenews.vn/cmlink/tuoitrenews/society/209-kg-ivory-worth-288-000-seized-in-nghe-an-1.46252>

P A N G O L I N

CAMBODIA: On 29 June 2011, the government-run Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team (WRRT), acting on information, halted a bus heading south on National Road 5 to Phnom Penh; a passenger was

found to be in possession of seven live Sunda Pangolins *Manis javanica* (CITES II) (21 kg) packed in a suitcase under his seat. After a health check, the animals were released in appropriate habitats.

<http://www.wildlifealliance.org/press-releases/2011/6/30/seven-live-pangolins-rescued-from-smuggler-on-bus.html>

INDONESIA: On 26 May 2011, Customs officials foiled an effort to ship 7.5 t of pangolin *Manis* (CITES II) meat to Viet Nam. A total of 309 crates, each containing between six and 10 adult and baby pangolins, were seized at the country's biggest port in Jakarta following x-ray examination of the shipment, which had been concealed under frozen fish. Some 65 kg of pangolin scales were also recovered.

Local media reported earlier in the month that a Customs office in northern Sumatra had also foiled an attempt to smuggle about 1700 pangolins to Viet Nam.

On 10 July 2011, Customs officers at Soekarno-Hatta International Airport seized 1.732 t of Sunda Pangolin *Manis javanica* (CITES II) meat and 380 kg of scales contained in 20 boxes, labelled as 'frozen fish'; some of the boxes had been stored in a warehouse in Bandengan. The shipment was believed to be destined for Singapore.

On 2 August 2011, a lorry containing hundreds of frozen pangolins *Manis* (CITES II) was secured by Belawan port police in Medan. The police initially retreated after being told by guards on the vehicle that the shipment contained rabbit meat; however they followed the lorry to Belawan port to a cold storage area that contained fish products awaiting export. When the contents of the lorry were unloaded, police saw that hundreds of dead pangolins were being removed from the vehicle and loaded into a freezer. The driver and guards were arrested.

On 28 September 2011, marine police in north Sumatra seized 111 Sunda Pangolins *Manis javanica* (CITES II) and arrested three men who were en route to Malaysia with the animals. The pangolins, three of which had perished, were hidden in 20 sacks on a boat seized in waters off Belawan. The suspects were believed to have left from Pantai Cermin, a beach resort near Medan. The animals were to be released into the wild.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/05/26/us-indonesia-environment-wildlife-idUSTRE74P47K20110526> to improve health; <http://www.bcsoetta.net/index.php/berita>; <http://asiancorrespondent.com/61734/pangolin-meat-smuggling-foiled/>; <http://www.traffic.org/home/2011/9/30/indonesia-foils-pangolin-smuggling-attempt.html>

MALAYSIA: On 12 June 2011, the Penang Department of Wildlife and National Parks seized 35 pangolins *Manis* (CITES II) in a raid at Mak Mandin in Butterworth, Penang. A man was arrested while transferring the animals from one car to another. It is believed that he was trying to smuggle the pangolins to neighbouring countries by road. Both vehicles had been modified to conceal the animals.

On 20 September 2011, at Kota Baru Sessions Court, a man pleaded guilty to the illegal possession of 40 pangolins *Manis* (CITES II) (200 kg) and was fined MYR50 000 (USD16 000).

The mammals had been hidden in a car believed to be heading for China via Thailand and which was stopped on 4 April by Perhilitan's Wildlife Crime Unit and the police at Bukit Yong, Pasir Putih, in the northern State of Kelantan. The pangolins were to be released in the wild.

<http://my.news.yahoo.com/35-pangolins-worth-rm50-000-seized-104334862.html>;
http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/asiapacific/news/article_1630549.php/Malaysian-wildlife-officers-seize-40-live-pangolins-bound-for-China; <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2011/9/21/courts/9542321&sec=courts>

THAILAND: On 20 April 2011, a van packed with 173 live pangolins *Manis* (CITES II) and 130 kg of dried snake skins was confiscated by Customs officials in Prachuap Khiri Khan. The driver, a Thai

national, is believed to have transported the cargo from the southern town of Had Yai to Songkla, and was bound for Bangkok. He was handed over to the National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation Department charged with violating Customs regulations and for infringing CITES; the pangolins were also placed in their charge.

Prachuap Khiri Khan is a transit point through which all traffic from Indonesia and Malaysia must pass to access central and northern Thailand, and the rest of Indochina, and is an ideal location for authorities to focus their enforcement attention.

On 25 September 2011, authorities seized nearly 100 pangolins *Manis* (CITES II) from a lorry at a checkpoint in Prachuap Khiri Khan; the driver was detained. It was reported that the specimens, believed to be destined for consumption overseas, had come from Malaysia or Indonesia and were en route to Viet Nam or China.

<http://www.traffic.org/home/2011/4/20/live-pangolins-and-dried-snake-skins-seized-in-thailand.html>;
<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2011/09/26/ap/asia/main20111448.shtml>

VIET NAM: On 8 July 2011, Quang Ninh police stopped a car and discovered a sack containing 83 Chinese Pangolins *Manis pentadactyla* (CITES II) (424 kg). The driver admitted that he had transported the specimens from Bac Ninh province to sell in Mong Cai, Quang Ninh. The pangolins were transferred to the Forest Protection Department (FPD) of Tien Yen district.

On 10 August 2011, a Thai Binh border guard apprehended three people who were found to have illegally transported 12 pangolins *Manis* (CITES II) (60 kg). The animals were taken as evidence and the case was transferred to Thai Binh's Forest Protection Department for investigation.

Education for Nature-Vietnam (ENV); http://envietnam.org/E_News/E_430/E_430.html

REPTILES

BRUNEI: On 18 August 2011, marine police detained a boat in Brunei near the border with Malaysia during a routine check; some 4700 turtle eggs were seized from Sundar in the town of Lawas, Sarawak (Malaysia). A fisherman was arrested and the case is being investigated by the Royal Brunei Customs.

Turtles are protected in Brunei under the *Wildlife Protection Act* of 1984 and the *Customs Act* and are listed in CITES Appendix I.

www.brunei-online.com/sunday/news/aug21h1.htm

INDONESIA: On 5 July 2011, maritime police arrested three men in Denpasar, Bali, who were allegedly attempting to smuggle 18 live Green Turtles *Chelonia mydas* (CITES I) onto the island; a fourth man fled the scene. The police had approached the suspects from their patrol boat as the men offloaded the reptiles onto a beach at Tanjung Bena Bay. The agency released 16 of the reptiles into the sea, while the remaining two were sent to the agency's turtle conservation centre on Serangan Island, where they will be used as evidence.

<http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/news/sea-turtle-smugglers-hooked-in-bali/450818>

MALAYSIA: On 16 August 2011, the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (Perhilitan) seized 589 Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II) at Kuala Lumpur International Airport. The department said the reptiles, a species protected under the *International Trade in Endangered Species Act 2008* (Act 686), were found in two unclaimed bags. No arrest was made and the tortoises were taken to Perhilitan headquarters for safekeeping.

<http://www.nst.com.my/nst/articles/11kura2/Article#ixzz1VLGWEuY9>

THAILAND: On 8 April 2011, it was reported that authorities at a checkpoint in southern Thailand had seized 1800 Bengal Monitors (CITES I) being smuggled in three pickup trucks headed to Bangkok. Customs officials say the lizards were hidden in mesh bags and stashed in open containers behind fruit boxes. The specimens were thought to have been destined for human consumption.

On 10 June 2011, authorities found nearly 400 protected tortoises in unclaimed bags at Suvarnabhumi International Airport, Bangkok. The Indian and Burmese Star Tortoises (*Geochelone elegans* and *G. platynota*, both CITES II) had been in luggage for about 10 days by the time they were found; loading tags suggested they had originally come from Dhaka, Bangladesh, before going to Japan, via Bangkok, and returning to Bangkok to be collected. Four specimens had perished.

On 5 July 2011, two people were arrested in the north-eastern province of Nong Khai while transporting 1000 wild animals in Pak Khat district. Personnel from Forest Protection Unit I and Nong Khai police arrested the pair near the Mekong River in Fao Rai district. Inside 186 plastic containers were 85 boxes of monitor lizards *Varanus* (CITES II), 17 boxes of Pythons *Python* (CITES II) and 84 boxes of rat snakes.

The detainees said they had been hired by a wildlife trafficking agent in Ayutthaya to transport and send the wildlife to the Mekong River where other agents were to take the animals to Lao PDR, from where they would be transhipped to customers in Viet Nam.

On 12 July 2011, authorities at Suvarnabhumi International Airport discovered two Radiated Tortoises *Astrochelys radiata* (CITES I), four Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II), three Bearded Dragons *Pogona vitticeps* and 10 (unidentified) frogs during x-ray examination of luggage belonging to a Chinese national bound for Hong Kong. The suspect was arrested.

On 20 August 2011, the Thai Mekong River patrol unit in Nong Khai's Ratana Wapi district seized 100 monitor lizards *Varanus* sp. (CITES II), 100 rat snakes, 30 turtles and six soft-shelled turtles, as well as frozen parts of a Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) and three bear paws. Lt Weerawat Yasothon, head of the unit's Ratana Wapi boat station, said the seizure was ordered after the officers received an intelligence report that wildlife parts and animals would be smuggled out of the country across the Mekong River at Ban Tarn Choom village in Ratana Wapi. Officers set up an ambush and waited until a group of men turned up and started to load items on to a boat docked on the riverbank. The men fled. The seized animals were believed to be destined for China or Viet Nam.

On 14 September 2011, the Department of Wildlife and National Parks seized 100 Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II) from a warehouse containing aquaculture products in Batu Berendam, Melaka. The owner failed to show any documents or letters of authorization to keep wildlife and did not have a licence for the business. Investigations will be carried out under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 2010* and the *International Trade in Endangered Species Act 2008*.

On 14 September 2011, nearly 2000 monitor lizards *Varanus*, and hundreds of turtles were among a huge haul of live animals found concealed in a lorry at a checkpoint in Pranburi, central Thailand. The vehicle is believed to have been on its way across Thailand to Lao PDR. It was the second seizure at the checkpoint this year. In total, Customs officials found 1940 monitor lizards, 717 turtles, 44 civets, 15 cobras and five pythons. The driver of the van was arrested. Thailand's fisheries department was to release the turtles into the wild and the other animals were to be sent to a government park centre.

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2011/04/08/thailand-seizes-1800-monitor-lizards/#ixzz1RsKQBbpH>; <http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/al-/world/9624057/hundreds-of-tortoises-seized-at-thai-airport/>; <http://www.pattayamail.com/news/two-suspected-wildlife-smugglers-detained-with-1-000-animals-4610>; <https://www.facebook.com/notes/traffic-southeast-asia/four-star-seizure-smuggler-with-endangered-tortoises-nabbed-at-bangkok-airport/232916080072577>;

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/local/252713/animal-parts-wildlife-seized>; <http://my.news.yahoo.com/100-protected-tortoises-seized-melaka-142654063.html>; <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5h3oZTWk2M5BoX5N0BtzfpBsd2whQ?docId=CNG.84013840d691548b4d501bfc5f665885.531>

VIET NAM: On 19 April 2011, traffic police in Ba Ria Vung Tau province stopped a van and discovered 18 Green Turtles *Chelonia mydas* (CITES I) (279 kg); 12 were dead. An initial investigation showed the driver had been hired by a man in Ho Chi Minh City to transport the turtles to Vung Tau City for sale. The authorities released the live turtles into the sea.

On 20 April 2011, rangers of Dak Rong Nature Reserve stopped a van and seized a large amount of wildlife including two Reticulated Pythons *Python reticulatus* (CITES II), three Brush-tailed Porcupines *Atherurus macrourus*, four Common Palm Civets *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, seven Impressed Tortoises *Manouria impressa* (CITES II), a Giant Asian Pond Turtle *Heosemys grandis* (CITES II) and four Asian Leaf Turtles *Cyclemys tcheponensis* (CITES II). The driver and the owner could not produce permits showing that the animals were of legal origin and registered. All the animals were released into the wild and the suspects received administrative fines.

On 20 April 2011, Nghe An Forest Protection Department (FPD) stopped a freezer van and discovered 349 Giant Asian Pond Turtles *Heosemys grandis* (CITES II) and Yellow-headed Temple Turtles *Hieremys annandalii* (CITES II) weighing approximately 1.5 t. The driver was unable to produce permits showing the turtles were of legal origin and registered. He admitted he had been hired by a local resident to transport the reptiles to Quang Ninh province for sale. The case is under investigation.

On 30 April 2011, Thanh Hoa authority confiscated more than 1000 wild animals including 465 Common Rat Snakes *Ptyas mucosus* (CITES II), 350 Indochinese Rat Snakes *Ptyas korros* (CITES II), 135 Radiated Rat Snakes *Elaphe radiata*, nine Water Monitors *Varanus salvator* (CITES II), four Masked Palm Civets *Paguma larvata* and 138 Asian Leaf Turtles *Cyclemys tcheponensis* (CITES II). A person was fined VND490 million (USD23 615).

On 12 May 2011, Quang Binh environmental police stopped a bus from Lao PDR and seized a number of wild animals including five Clouded Monitors *Varanus nebulosus* (CITES I), three King Cobras *Ophiophagus hannah* (CITES II), a Giant Asian Pond Turtle *Heosemys grandis* (CITES II) and two Keeled Box Turtles *Cuora mouhotii* (CITES II). All the animals were transferred to the Forest Protection Department (FPD) Mobile Team of Quang Binh province.

Previously, on 6 May 2011, Ca Mau authorities confiscated five Common Palm Civets *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus* that had been kept illegally at a local residence. The animals were released into the U Minh Ha's Nature Park by the FPD Mobile Team, No. 1 Forest Fire Team and the environment police of Ca Mau province.

On 27 May 2011, security staff at Quang Ngai station found four bags containing 45 kg of King Cobras *Ophiophagus hannah* (CITES II) and Chinese Cobras *Naja atra* (CITES II) hidden under a seat on a train travelling from Ho Chi Minh City to Hanoi. After the discovery was made, panic broke out and passengers fled the carriage allowing the smuggler to escape in the ensuing confusion. Officers handed the snakes over to Quang Ngai province FPD for release into the wild.

<http://thiennhien.org/index.php?page=about&parent=0&id=294>; Education for Nature-Vietnam (ENV); <http://thiennhien.org/index.php?page=about&parent=0&id=297> <http://thiennhien.org/index.php?page=about&parent=0&id=304>; www.envietnam.org/E_News/E_417/E_417.html; www.envietnam.org/E_News/E_419/E_419.html

OTHER SEIZURES

MALAYSIA: On 16 May 2011, officers of the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (Perhilitan), acting on information, seized eight bear parts, five Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) parts, eight dead mouse deer and seven pieces of deer meat at Kampung Ayer Molek in Bukit Ibam, Muadzam Shah, Pahang. The suspect was arrested and detained at Bukit Ibam police station to aid investigations under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 2010*.

On 5 July 2011, officers of the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (Perhilitan) seized two pieces of cooked wild meat (1.27 kg) from a restaurant in Jalan Kuching. The items were believed to be parts of Malayan Sun Bear *Helarctos malayanus* (CITES I), a species protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 2010*. The case is being investigated.

<http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2011/5/16/nation/8689981&sec=nation>;
<http://news.asiaone.com/News/AsiaOne%2BNews/Malaysia/Story/AlStory20110706-287695.html>

THAILAND: On 13 May 2011, authorities at Suvarnabhumi International Airport arrested a passenger whose suitcases were found to contain two baby Leopards *Panthera pardus* (CITES I), one Malayan Sun Bear *Helarctos malayanus* (CITES I) cub and two baby macaques. The animals had been drugged and were bound for Dubai. The suspect, a United Arab Emirates citizen, was waiting to check in for his flight when he was apprehended by undercover anti-trafficking officers who had been monitoring him since his purchase of the animals.

The sedated animals were in flat cages inside canisters containing air holes. Authorities believe the man was part of a trafficking network and were searching for accomplices. It was not known if the animals were destined to be resold or to be kept as exotic pets.

TRAFFIC Southeast Asia; <http://www.arabtimesonline.com/NewsDetails/tabid/96/smId/414/ArticleID/169101/t/Thais-hold-UAE-man-in-wildlife-smuggling-bust/Default.aspx>

PHILIPPINES: On 25 May 2011, the prime suspect in the foiled smuggling of corals, marine turtles and other marine resources at the Port of Manila surrendered to the authorities. The consignee of two container vans loaded with the items that were about to be exported to China and to Europe told the authorities that he would help identify other persons involved.

The shipment was reported to include 161 preserved Hawksbill Turtles *Eretmochelys imbricata* (CITES I) and Green Turtles *Chelonia mydas* (CITES I), 21 000 pieces of black corals (CITES II), more than 7300 pieces of seashells, and 196 kg of sea whips Gorgonacea. The marine turtles and corals had been preserved in formalin and wrapped in newspaper.

Some of the turtles were estimated to be between 80 and 100 years of age; juvenile turtles were also included in the shipment.

On 10 August 2011, authorities seized a specimen of one of the world's rarest parrots after boarding a boat suspected of being involved in illegal wildlife trading. The critically endangered Red-vented Cockatoo *Cacatua haematuropygia* (CITES I), found only in the Philippines, was seized along with 71 Hill Mynahs *Gracula* spp. (CITES II) and 42 Blue-naped Parrots *Tanygnathus lucionensis* (CITES II) from a boat at the resort of El Nido. Coastguard and environmental protection officers boarded the vessel before it set sail for Manila. The authorities are seeking the owners of the cargo, while the captain of the boat was fined for carrying prohibited goods.

<http://www.manilastandardtoday.com/insideMetro.htm?f=2011/may/25/metro3.isx&d=2011/may/25>;
<http://www.arabtimesonline.com/NewsDetails/tabid/96/smId/414/ArticleID/172460/reftab/149/t/Rare-Philippine-parrot-seized-from-boat/Default.aspx>

VIET NAM: On 12 April 2011, Hanoi's environmental police in collaboration with Thach That district police discovered a dead Leopard Cat *Prionailurus bengalensis* (CITES I) at a local restaurant.

Authorities searched the premises and found two other Leopard Cats, two civets and 10 Brush-tailed Porcupines *Atherurus macrourus* that were being held captive. All the animals were confiscated and trans-ferred to Soc Son rescue centre.

<http://thienhien.org/index.php?page=newsView&id=411>

On 9 May 2011, Hanoi's environmental police found a number of wild animals including a frozen Leopard Cat *Prionailurus bengalensis* (CITES I), a Masked Palm Civet *Paguma larvata* and 10 Coucals *Centropus* spp. The suspect involved admitted purchasing the specimens from an indigenous person in Tuyen Quang and transporting them to Hanoi to sell. A number of the animals have been transferred to the Institute of Environmental Ecology and Biological Resources for preservation, in accordance with the law. The case is being investigated.

On 18 June 2011, Binh Phuoc's environment police, in co-operation with the provincial Forest Protection Department, investigated a restaurant at Bu Gia Map district where they discovered eight Bamboo Rats *Rhizomyinae*, two caged monitor lizards *Varanus* (CITES II), nine civets, 57 dead mouse deer and 50 kg of frozen Sambar Deer *Cervus unicolor*. The authorities temporarily suspended all trading activities of the restaurant.

Education for Nature-Vietnam (ENV): http://www.envietnam.org/E_News/E_416/E_416.html;
http://www.envietnam.org/E_News/E_422/E_422.html

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A B A L O N E

AUSTRALIA: On 8 December 2011, two people were arrested north of Eden, New South Wales, after police found 265 shucked Blacklip Abalones *Haliotis rubra* in their car; the molluscs, car and diving gear were seized. The previous day, fisheries officers and police seized some 429 live abalones, a vehicle and diving equipment south of Bodalla.

The recreational bag and transporting limit for abalone in New South Wales is two per person.

On 28 January 2012, NSW fisheries officers arrested a man at Batemans Bay who was in possession of 161 Blacklip Abalones. The suspect hid up a tree in an attempt to evade capture.

In February 2012, at Burwood Local Court, a Sydney man pleaded guilty to charges of trafficking 473 abalones *Haliotis* (and possessing over 500 cockles). He was sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment and fined AUD70 000 (USD74 000). He was granted bail and is banned from fishing.

According to NSW Department of Industries Director of Fisheries Compliance, Glenn Tritton, the penalty was one of the highest for a fisheries offence in the State's history. The penalties followed the introduction of tough laws introduced in April 2012 designed to protect abalone.

On 19 February 2012, officers of the Department of Primary Industries arrested two men who were diving offshore at Mordialloc, Victoria, and shucking abalone underwater. In their possession were 490 abalones—almost 50 times the legal limit in the State of five per person per day.

In early March 2012, at Elizabeth Magistrates' Court, two ringleaders of an abalone poaching gang were given suspended gaol terms and fines following a two-year undercover operation by police and officers from Primary Industries and Resources, in South Australia. Ringleader Van Tai Huynh, of Virginia, pleaded guilty to five counts of illegally trafficking in a commercial quantity of abalone and was given a suspended 16-months' gaol term and fined AUD10 000 (USD10 500). Huynh oversaw the illegal sale of 480 kg of abalones poached from waters on the State's west coast. Thanh Minh

Tran, of Parafield Gardens, was given a 12-month suspended gaol term and fined AUD5000 for helping under-cover officers to buy three shipments of poached abalone in August and September 2010. Two others were fined and sentenced to community service, while the remaining three alleged members of the racket remain before the court.

In March 2012, during a four-day undercover operation along South Coast, NSW, the Department of Primary Industries fisheries officers apprehended eight men and seized 460 abalones and six sets of dive gear in the Ulladulla area. The suspects were to appear in court at a later date.

In March 2012, at a court in Hobart, Tasmania, Flora Ou of Bridgewater was convicted of unlawfully trading in 420 kg of abalone. She became the focus of a lengthy covert police investigation and on at least two occasions had illegally purchased abalone from an undercover officer. She was fined more than AUD340 000 (USD352 000). A six-month gaol sentence was suspended for two years.

www.abc.net.au/news/2012-02-24/trio-jailed-for-trafficking-abalone/3850568, 24 February 2012;
www.edenmagnet.com.au/news/local/news/general/haycock-abalone-bust/2394194.aspx, 15 December 2011;
Illawarra Mercury, 19 December 2011/2 February 2012; www.theage.com.au/environment/pair-charged-over-huge-abalone-haul-20120220-1tj5j.html; 20 February 2012; www.adelaidenow.com.au/big-fines-for-abalone-thieves/story-e6frea6u-1226295912072, 10 March 2012;
<http://news.ninensn.com.au/national/8437514/abalone-trafficker-jailed-for-12-months>, 19 March 2012;
www.naroomanewsonline.com.au/news/local/news/general/abalone-thieves-busted-in-ulladulla-crackdown/2497381.aspx; www.abc.net.au/news/2012-03-29/abalone-ring-paid-for-gambling-addiction/3921146?section=tas

CANADA: On 27 January 2012, at Duncan Provincial Court, Michael McGuire pleaded guilty to fishing for abalone illegally and to obstructing a fisheries officer during the course of his duties. He was sentenced to eight months in gaol for failure to pay a fine of CAD35 000 (USD35 072) arising from a previous conviction in 2005 for abalone poaching in contravention of the *Fisheries Act*.

www.fis.com/fis/worldnews/worldnews.asp?l=e&country=0&special=&monthyear=&day=&id=50496&ndb=1&df=0, 7 March 2012

SOUTH AFRICA: On 26 December 2011, a man from Hout Bay was arrested after 1603 abalones were found in his vehicle.

On 9 February 2012, members of the Mitchell's Plain tactical response unit seized 5127 abalones after searching a vehicle in Khayelitsha, Cape Town. A Zimbabwean man was arrested.

On 21 February 2012, Western Cape police seized 40 bags containing 6562 abalones from a vehicle; one person was arrested.

www.thenewage.co.za/39156-1008-53-Man_behind_bars_for_abalone_haul, 30 December 2011;
www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/abalone-worth-r5m-seized-1.1231037;
www.sapsjournalonline.gov.za/dynamicjournal_dynamic.aspx?pageid=414&jid=28736, 22 February 2012

BIG CATS

Tiger *Panthera tigris* and Leopard *Panthera pardus* are listed in CITES Appendix I.

INDIA: It has been reported that 356 Leopards were killed during 2011, of which more than half the deaths were attributed to poaching. During the first two months of 2012, the number of Leopard skins confiscated from various parts of Uttarakhand State reached 25 according to Anil Baluni, Deputy Chairman of Forest and Environment Advisory Committee, Uttarakhand. He added that Leopards were being killed not just for their skins but also for their bones; at least two dozen tribesmen of the Bawaria gang had been apprehended, he said. Although Baluni maintains the

situation is more alarming than before, he stated that the high number of seizures is also an indication of efficient work by officers.

Examples of seizures during 2012 to date include the uncovering of a network of Tiger and Leopard poachers spanning four States and the arrest of 11 members of three gangs. Skins of eight Leopards and Tigers and five kilogrammes of bones were seized. The suspects claimed to have killed between eight and ten Tigers in less than six months—about 40% of poaching incidents involving big cat deaths during the period.

One suspect and four accomplices were arrested in Bijnore, Uttar Pradesh, and the skins of four Leopards and one Tiger were seized. The animals had reportedly been killed with the use of iron traps in Corbett National Park and Rajaji National Park in Uttarakhand. In order to protect Tigers in the park—which has the highest Tiger density in India—a special Tiger protection force is in place.

On 22 February 2012, in Uttarakhand, five Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) skins were seized from poachers.

www.mid-day.com/news/2012/feb/280212-356-leopard-deaths-in-India-in-365-days.htm;
www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/NewDelhi/National-network-of-tiger-poachers-busted/Article1-809187.aspx, 9 February 2012; http://zeenews.india.com/news/tamil-nadu/five-held-leopard-skin-tiger-s-skull-seized_752110.html, 12 January 2012; www.deccanherald.com/content/229678/leopards-poachers-mercy-natural-habitat.html, 23 February 2012

MALAYSIA: On 15 February 2012, at Alor Setar Sessions Court, a local man was charged under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 2010* with possession of skins of eight Tigers *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) and 22 Tiger bone pieces (as well as six African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (I) tusks and one antelope horn). He was released on bail and a trial date is pending. The items were found after officers from Malaysia's Wildlife and National Parks Department, Perhilitan, raided a house following a tip-off on 10 February.

“TRAFFIC warmly congratulates the wildlife department on this important seizure,” said Kanitha Krishnasamy, Senior Programme Officer with TRAFFIC Southeast Asia. “However, it is vital that thorough investigations are undertaken of all seized items to determine their origin, who was behind the trafficking, and where the buyers are, so that they can be brought to book.”

www.traffic.org/home/2012/2/10/tiger-skins-elephant-ivory-and-bones-seized-in-malaysia.html

THAILAND: In early January 2012, at Bangkok's main post office, Customs officials acting on information seized four boxes, each containing one Tiger skin, bones and a skull. The parts, en route to Mae Sai in northern Thailand, were thought to have come from Indonesia, destined for China, reportedly for interior design purposes.

On 9 January 2012, police confiscated the carcass of a Tiger (150 kg) from a Hanoi restaurant which the owner was boiling to make a paste, reportedly used in traditional medicine as a pain killer. The owner had been sentenced in 2007 to 18 months in gaol for possessing carcasses of two wild Tigers.

On 19 February 2012, two poachers received sentences that were among the most severe ever imposed in Thailand for wildlife poaching: a Thai Hmong was sentenced to five years in gaol while a Vietnamese citizen will serve four.

These sentences are the result of an investigation that began in July 2011 after park rangers patrolling the Western Forest Complex encountered a group of poachers. The poachers fled, but left behind a mobile phone containing their images, posing with a dead Tiger and holding rifles, as well as evidence of their involvement in the ivory trade. They also left behind animal body parts and insecticides that are sometimes used to poison Tigers.

The dead Tiger was identified from the photo by its stripe pattern—a visual “thumbprint” unique to each Tiger—and was shown to be one of the animals being tracked with camera traps by researchers at the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). Their database of Tiger images not only helps researchers understand the ecological needs of Tigers, but also gives law enforcement an important resource in successfully prosecuting illegal hunters.

www.skynews.com.au/world/article.aspx?id=704449&vld=, 6 January 2012;
<http://asiancorrespondent.com/73455/vietnam-police-seize-tiger-carcass-from-restaurant-2/>, 10 January 2012; http://news.mongabay.com/2011/07/14-wcs_tiger_poaching_camera.html, 14 July 2011;
www.wcs.org/news-and-features-main/cellphone-poachers-jail-time.aspx, 7 March 2012;

IVORY

African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* and Asian Elephant *Elephas maximus* are listed in CITES Appendix I.

CHINA: On 27 October 2011, Gongbei Customs, in Zhuhai city, Guangdong province, seized 16 elephant tusks (60 kg) concealed in a car travelling from Macao.

On 28 December 2011, police in Jinghong, Yunnan province, seized 93 suspected ivory items after a raid on 293 shops in the city, as part of a crackdown on illegal ivory trading.

Jinghong, bordering Myanmar to its south, is situated in the rugged Xishuangbanna region, which is home to about 250 Asian Elephants *Elephas maximus* (CITES I). The elephants are reportedly frequently seen crossing borders into neighbouring countries. China and Lao PDR recently signed an agreement to build a second cross-border nature reserve—which stretches across 55 000 hectares of rainforests in the two countries—in order to provide better protection for the elephants.

On 6 March 2012, at the Intermediate People’s Court in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, a man stood trial after more than 10 kg of ivory was found in his luggage at Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport following his return from a trip to Angola in July 2011. He fled after officials checked his luggage, but later surrendered to police. The man argued in court that he purchased the ivory as a gift for his friends rather than for resale and stated that he believed the most serious punishment would be a large fine. A verdict has not been announced.

www.jisi.gov.cn/News/szsm/gd/201111/2011112111504_6171.html [in Chinese];
<http://english.cri.cn/6909/2012/01/05/2561s674853.htm>, 5 January 2012; www.shanghai.com/article/?id=496074&type=National, 8 March 2012

REPUBLIC OF CONGO: On 10 August 2011, a landmark ruling was passed by the Brazzaville High Court when it sentenced a Chinese national to four years’ imprisonment. The man was arrested as he boarded a flight en route to Beijing with five elephant tusks, 80 ivory chopsticks, hankos (name seals), three ivory carvings and many small ivory items. Enforcement officials discovered the pieces wrapped in “metal sheets” inside his hand luggage. The arrest was carried out by the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Forest Economy and the Environment, with support from the Gendarmerie and technical assistance from PALF (Project for the Application of Law for Fauna), a wildlife law enforcement project pushing for the arrest and prosecution of wildlife criminals in Congo.

www.nikela.org/elephant/chinese-wildlife-trafficker-gets-slammed/

INDIA: On 9 February 2012 it was reported that two Asian Elephant *Elephas maximus* (CITES I) tusks (32 kg) had been detected in Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary in Jharkhand by an Alsatian dog trained under a TRAFFIC/WWF programme to trace wildlife products. The tusks were from an elephant

that had died two days earlier; when forest officials inspected the carcass they found the tusks had been removed. The sniffer dog, which is currently deployed at nearby Betla Tiger Reserve, led forest guards to the spot where the tusks had been concealed.

The dog is one of seven trained under the TRAFFIC India/WWF-India's sniffer dog training programme, initiated in 2008 and the first of its kind in India to use dogs for detecting illegal wildlife products. Some 14 handlers and seven dogs have been successfully trained to detect wildlife articles such as Tiger bone, Tiger skin, Leopard bone, Leopard skin and bear bile. The dogs and trainers are currently placed with the Forest Departments of Haryana, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand.

According to M.K.S. Pasha, of TRAFFIC India, "Using sniffer dogs for crime detection and prevention is one technique TRAFFIC has experience of running in several countries. We are happy it is making a difference in India too and hope more States will come forward to adopt this as a tool in the fight against wildlife crime".

<http://dailypioneer.com/nation/41263-tracey-sniffs-out-32-kg-ivory-in-dalma.html>;
www.traffic.org/home/2012/2/9/sniffer-dog-tracey-helps-recover-32-kg-of-ivory.html

KENYA: On 26 November 2011, authorities in Nairobi seized from a depot a container holding ivory disguised as soapstone carvings. The shipment, destined for Hong Kong, comprised 25 elephant tusks and 61 tusk pieces. The source of the shipment was unknown.

On 3 December 2011, the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) seized 465 ivory tusks that had arrived in Mombasa Port from Nairobi on 28 November, again declared as soapstone. Before it was impounded, KWS had tracked the consignment for three weeks. The source of the tusks could not be immediately established but the shipment was reportedly bound for Cambodia.

<http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJOE7AP00420111126?feedType=RSS&feedName=topNews>,
26 November 2011; www.africareview.com/News/+17m+ivory+haul+seize+at+Kenyan+port/-1979180/1283626/-lom6000/-/

MALAYSIA: On 6 January 2012, Customs officials in West Port, Port Klang complex, seized 492 kg of ivory exported from Cape Town, South Africa. This was the third ivory seizure at the port in six months.

The tusks, hidden in a container holding tyres and flooring material, had been falsely declared as polyester and nylon strand matting. Shipping documents listed a Malaysian company as the importer and Port Klang as the final destination, an unusual development since all previous large ivory seizures in Malaysian ports have been in transit.

www.traffic.org/home/2012/1/9/malaysia-seizes-half-a-tonne-of-ivory.html?utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter, 9 January 2012

SOUTH AFRICA: On 29 February 2012, at Cape Town International Airport, officials from the Border Control Unit detected a consignment of ivory that had arrived in four boxes from O.R. Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg. The shipment was allowed by Revenue Service officers to continue its journey to a city business premises, closely monitored by enforcement officials, which in turn led to the discovery of a larger number of ivory products. One man was arrested. The confiscated items remained unquantified but were substantial and included whole tusks and several bags of cut ivory as well as ivory necklaces and bangles. A machine to cut ivory was also found. A Chinese national was arrested.

Cape Times, 1 March 2012: www.iol.co.za/capetimes/tusks-and-ivory-seized-at-airport-1.1246355

UGANDA: On 14 February 2012, officials seized nearly 162 kg of ivory and other animal parts and products including bones, teeth and animal skins that were being smuggled into and out of the

country. In 2010, wildlife authorities started a sensitization campaign that they say has led to increased awareness among Customs agents of what is contraband and stated that the latest seizure is a sign of progress.

lol news: www.iol.co.za/dailynews/news/uganda-seizes-ivory-animal-parts-1.1234396, 14 February 2012

UK: On 10 October 2011, at Basildon Crown Court, Francis Benyure was sentenced to 10 months' imprisonment, suspended for 18 months, after posting more than 3000 listings for elephant ivory and elephant hair bracelets on an online auction website. He was also fined GBP500 (USD780) and ordered to carry out 150 hours community service and to obey a 9pm-6am curfew for four months.

www.london24.com/news/illegal_elephant_ivory_trade_run_from_romford_home_1_1089942, 13 October 2011

VIET NAM: On 22 October 2011, Customs officials announced that they had seized more than a tonne of ivory, believed to be from elephant tusks, being smuggled through the country's border with China. Around 221 tusk portions had been concealed on a boat that was intercepted on the northern frontier with China. Three people, including two Chinese nationals, were arrested and taken into custody.

On 2 November 2011, authorities at Hai Phong port seized 300 kg of ivory from a shipment declared as cloth rags, imported from an undisclosed country by an import-export trading company located in Mong Cai, Quang Ninh. The shipment was sealed at Hai Phong Customs Department for further investigation.

www.focus-fen.net/index.php?id=n262570, Focus Information Agency, 24 October 2011; Translated from <http://vtv.vn/Article/Get/Hai-Phong-Bat-giu-300kg-nga-voi-nhap-lau-9acf5bf785.html>

ZAMBIA: It was reported on 29 December 2011 that, at Ndola Magistrates' Court, John Kalume, a Congolese business executive, had been sentenced to five years' imprisonment with hard labour for the illegal possession of 169 elephant tusks. Kalume, who was charged with possession of prescribed trophies contrary to section 91 and 133(1)(a) of the *Wildlife Act 1988*, was arrested on 2 September 2011 in Ndola as he tried to transport the tusks to the Democratic Republic of Congo in a vehicle bearing a diplomatic number plate. Ownership of the vehicle had not been established. Two co-accused were acquitted.

Times of Zambia, 29 December 2011: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201112290492.html>

PANGOLINS

All pangolins *Manis* spp. are listed in CITES Appendix II.

CHINA: On 28 February 2012, police in Fujian province seized 39 frozen pangolins, six live pangolins (and 11 live monitor lizards) from a coach travelling to Fuzhou city, Fujian province, from Shantou city, Guangdong province. The case was referred to the local forest police for further investigation. The live pangolins were released and the monitor lizards were sent to Zhangzhou Zoo.

In early March 2012, Fangchenggang police, Guangxi province, seized 59 live pangolins. The animals were transferred to Fangchenggang forest police who were to investigate the case.

www.cwca.org.cn/Article/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=25459;
www.cwca.org.cn/Article/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=25511

INDIA: On 2 November 2011, troops of the 31 Assam Rifles of 26 Sector under HQ IGAR (S) launched an operation in Khudengthabi, Chandel district, and apprehended two individuals in

possession of 14 kg of pangolin scales; the suspects and seized items were handed over to the Wildlife Department.

www.e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=22.041111.nov11, 3 November 2011

THAILAND: On 25 December 2011, Army rangers seized 74 live pangolins being prepared for shipment in Nong Khai, a province bordering Lao PDR. Members of a suspected syndicate of wildlife smugglers evaded capture. The seized pangolins were to be sent to a wildlife breeding centre in Chaiyaphum.

On 13 January 2012 it was reported that a man had been arrested in Prachuap Khiri Khan in possession of 180 pangolins in his vehicle. He confessed to being hired to deliver the animals from Surat Thani to Bangkok.

On 30 January 2012, two Malaysians were arrested for smuggling 45 pangolins (over 100 kg) while passing through the inbound immigration border checkpoint in Sadao district. The animals were contained in net bags under a seat in the suspects' vehicle. The pair confessed that they had brought the specimens from Malaysia in order to deliver them to customers in Thailand's Sadao district.

On 21 February 2012, 111 pangolins were seized in a crackdown on a wildlife smuggling syndicate; two suspects were arrested in Trang province; a further two evaded capture. Police also seized a customer list book, scales and a vehicle. Most customers were dealers in Satun and Songkhla provinces aiming to export and trade the specimens to a neighbouring country.

www.pattayamail.com/news/thai-authorities-seize-endangered-species-anteaters-in-nong-khai-8972;

www.mcot.net/cfcustom/cache_page/317881.html, 13 Jan-uary 2012;

www.mcot.net/cfcustom/cache_page/324812.html; www.mcot.net/cfcustom/cache_page/333612.html, 21 February 2012

MALAYSIA: In January 2012, Aivon Vencer of the Philippines was gaoled for three years after pleading guilty to smuggling pangolin meat. He had been arrested on 7 December 2011, in Batu Sapi waters, near Kampung Bahagia, after the Customs marine special team pursued his vessel which was found to contain the frozen meat (4988 kg) of an estimated 1068 pangolins. This is reported to be the largest seizure of pangolin meat by Sabah Customs.

On 1 March 2012, at Kuala Lumpur International Airport, Customs Department officers seized 50 pangolins from a shipment intended for Vientiane, Lao PDR. The consignment, labelled as containing live crabs, had arrived from Penang. The pangolins were to be handed over to the Wildlife Department for further action.

http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2012/1/6/nation/20120106180628&sec=nation, 6 January 2012; www.newsabahtimes.com.my/nstweb/fullstory/54594; www.nst.com.my/local/general/50-pangolins-en-route-to-laos-seized-1.54317#ixzz1nxPffRWj

VIET NAM: On 11 December 2011, environmental crime investigation police confiscated 106 pangolins (400 kg) from a car in Duc Long Commune in Duc Tho District, Ha Tinh province.

Two days later, police found 56 live pangolins inside a vehicle. The driver confessed that he had been hired to transport the animals from Ha Tinh to Hanoi, for sale.

On 30 December 2011, guards at the Cau Treo border with Lao PDR seized live pangolins (350 kg) from a vehicle. The lorry driver initially failed to stop his vehicle and was eventually forced to stop in Son Tay Town but he evaded capture. The seized specimens were handed over to the provincial Forestry Protection Department.

www.tuoitrenews.vn/cmlink/tuoitrenews/society/2-tons-of-wild-animals-seized-in-ha-tinh-1.56196;
www.tuoitrenews.vn/cmlink/tuoitrenews/society/350-kg-of-trafficked-pangolin-seized-in-ha-tinh-1.56815#

REPTILES / AMPHIBIANS

BANGLADESH: On 15 February 2012, 16 gecko smugglers were gaoled for up to two years after they were arrested by the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) in Dhaka the previous day. They were tried and sentenced on the spot by a magistrate. [The animals are understood to be Tokay Geckos *Gekko gecko*]. In August 2011, a man was fined BDT1000 (USD12.00) after attempting to sell two Tokay Geckos in Dighinala Upazila, Khagrachhari district.

It is reported that Bangladesh has emerged as a key source of Tokay Geckos for other Asian nations. Experts have said a lack of law enforcement has turned that country into a key wildlife trafficking corridor in the region, with its porous land border and ports being used for the smuggling.

www.haveeru.com.mv/south_asia/40284, 15 February 2012;
www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=198271

COSTA RICA: On 30 November 2011, Limón fisherman Javier Fallas lost his home, was fined USD79 286 and sentenced to one year in gaol, reduced to three years' probation, for illegally harvesting eggs of Green Turtles *Chelonia mydas* (CITES I and protected in Costa Rica). He was found in possession of over 10 000 eggs at his home for the purposes of selling.

www.fijatevos.com/latest-articles/the-nation/1225-fisherman-fined-for-turtle-egg-harvest.html, 6 January 2012

INDONESIA: On 1 March 2012, the Natural Resources Conservation Agency (BKSDA) in Merauke released into the wild 1967 confiscated Fly River Turtles *Carettochelys insculpta* (CITES II and totally protected in Indonesia). The turtles were from two seizures that took place at Mopah Airport, Merauke, in Papua province. The first, on 25 January, involved some 1500 live specimens found in two suitcases en route to Jakarta. On 8 February, 690 juvenile Fly River Turtles were detected in a suitcase. In total, 2185 turtles were seized, 218 of which died in quarantine. The cases are under investigation.

“The deaths in quarantine are indicative of the high mortality levels incurred in illegal wildlife trade,” said Chris R. Shepherd, Deputy Regional Director of TRAFFIC Southeast Asia. “Often far fewer, if any, animals survive to be returned to the wild.”

This species is reportedly being smuggled out of Indonesia by the thousands. Sources allege that shipments such as this are common, with dealers in Jakarta buying the turtles from hunters/agents in Papua, and selling them on to contacts abroad. Many are destined for the pet markets of East Asia, to places such as Hong Kong where demand for this species is reportedly rising; they are also possibly consumed as meat in some countries.

It was reported on 12 March 2012 that 19 Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II) seized at Jakarta's Soekarno Hatta airport in November 2011 had been returned to India, their country of origin, the first time that Indian Star Tortoises seized in Indonesia have been repatriated. Some 47 specimens and various snakes had been found in the possession of an Indonesian woman returning to the country from Bangkok. Twenty-eight specimens had already died or subsequently perished.

“Although the number of tortoises represents a tiny fraction of those being trafficked, their repatriation is symbolic of the growing commitment, dedication and co-operation between enforcement officers within Asia to tackle rising wildlife crime in the region,” said Chris R. Shepherd, Deputy Regional Director of TRAFFIC Southeast Asia.

The care and return of the tortoises was co-ordinated in Indonesia by Customs, Quarantine and the Directorate General of Forest Protection and Nature Conservation. The reptiles have been sent to Arignar Anna Zoological Park (AAZP), Chennai, from where it is anticipated they will be released into the wild.

www.traffic.org/home/2012/3/2/almost-1500-turtles-crammed-like-sardines-into-suitcases.html;
www.traffic.org/home/2012/3/13/indian-star-tortoises-sent-home.html

MALAYSIA: On 12 October 2011, the Marine Operations Force (MOF) thwarted an attempt to smuggle 5000 turtle eggs into Sabah after detaining a boat in waters off Kampung Forest. The boat's skipper evaded capture. Possession or sale of turtle eggs in Sabah is an offence under the State's *Wildlife Conservation Enactment 1997*. The eggs were surrendered to the Sabah Wildlife Department.

On 22 December 2011, over 600 Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II) were repatriated to India. These included specimens seized after the bags in which they were travelling remained unclaimed at Kuala Lumpur International Airport in August, as well as 100 Indian Star Tortoises seized a month later by the country's Wildlife and National Parks Department, Perhilitan, in Malacca. The owner was given a "very stern warning".

On 22 February 2012, Anson Wong Keng Liang was released from gaol after the Court of Appeal in Putrajaya allowed his appeal to have his gaol sentence for illegally exporting Boa Constrictors *Boa constrictor* (CITES I/II) reduced. The Court held that the 17 months and 15 days served since his sentencing on 7 September 2010 would serve the interests of justice. It allowed Wong's appeal to set aside a High Court's decision in enhancing his gaol term from six months, imposed by the Magistrate's Court on him, to five years' gaol. The panel also affirmed the High Court's decision in setting aside the RM190 000 (USD62 000) fine imposed on Wong as it was beyond the ceiling of RM10 000 which the Sessions Court could legally impose.

Wong was in Kuala Lumpur International Airport en route from Penang to Jakarta when the snakes were found in his suitcase. The High Court imposed the five-year gaol term on Wong after allowing the prosecution's appeal for a heavier sentence, but set aside the RM190 000 fine.

New Straits Times (Malaysia), 13 October 2011:

www.nst.com.my/Inst/articles/MOFseizes5_000turtleeggs/Article/#ixzz1ahDkIPu; TRAFFIC Southeast Asia;
www.nst.com.my/local/general/rescued-indian-star-tortoises-sent-home-1.24246#ixzz1hjxhGVMz, 27
 December 2011; <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2012/2/22/nation/20120222193558&sec=nation>

PHILIPPINES: On 12 October 2011, three men were arrested at a police checkpoint in Quiapo, Manila, after the van in which they were travelling was found to contain 11 geckos that allegedly were to be sold to a buyer in Quezon City. The lizards, reportedly from Cavite, were to be handed over to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

www.abs-cbnnews.com/nation/metro-manila/10/12/11/13-tuko-traders-nabbed-quiapo

R H I N O C E R O S

All rhinoceroses Rhinocerotidae are listed in CITES Appendix I.

The following cases highlight the growing number of rhinoceros horn thefts from museums and other establishments throughout Europe over the past 12 months. The UK's National Wildlife Crime Unit has warned all British zoos with rhinoceroses of the threat of thefts. As a consequence, Colchester Zoo has strengthened its security. Some museums have replaced their rhinoceros horn stock with fake specimens to deter robbers. Examples of cases are recorded below:

AUSTRIA: On 8 November 2011 it was reported that a rhinoceros horn had been snatched from an auction house in Vienna by two men; a second horn was dropped. The stolen horn (5.68 kg) was part of a collection on show before a sale at the city's Dorotheum auctioneers and was from a rhinoceros shot in Sudan in the 1930s.

Days later, a rhinoceros horn was stolen from a taxidermist shop in Margareten, Vienna, by two men who showed interest in the horn that the taxidermist had purchased at an auction at the Dorotheum the previous day. They grabbed the horn when the shop owner was on the 'phone.

A 'rhinoceros' head stolen from a pub in Weisskirchen, Styria, was a fake. Four Polish nationals were arrested in connection with the incident the following day when they tried to break into Schloss Rastenberg at Gmünd in Waldviertel. Police found the wooden rhinoceros horn stolen in Styria in their car.

http://viennatimes.at/news/Panorama/2011-11-08/27707/Rhino_horn_stolen_from_Dorotheum_auction_house,_Austrian_Times,_9_November_2011; <http://bikya.masr.com/61421/rhino-thieves-arrested-in-austria/>

GERMANY: On 12 March 2012 it was reported that police in Munich had arrested one woman and two men after a routine check of their vehicle indicated that it had been stolen in the UK. The trio was thought to be part of a group that has been operating in the UK, Sweden, France and the Czech Republic, responsible for stealing rhinoceros horns, including the theft of horns from a museum in Offenburg on 18 February. On that occasion, a couple distracted museum staff while two men climbed onto a display case, took the head from where it was hanging on the wall and knocked its horns off with a sledgehammer. They then fled with the horns concealed in their coats.

*www.thelocal.de/society/20120312-41279.html, 12 March 2012;
www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5g18bUyW5xU-kTa0niUp_g4GZdjiw?docId=CNG.3191dc24cc5938d2422343290ecaad45.7c1*

UK: On 20 February 2012, four men were prevented from stealing the mounted head of a rhinoceros from Norwich Castle Museum after forcing open the display case in which it was held. After snatching the head, they were foiled in their attempt to leave by two staff members who recovered the specimen; the men ran off. The museum said it would replace the horn with a replica, so that it would no longer be a target for thieves.

www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-norfolk-17112582, 21 February 2012

OTHER RHINOCEROS CASES:

SOUTH AFRICA: On 14 December 2011, at Germiston Magistrates' Court, Hsu Hsien Lung was sentenced to six years' imprisonment following his arrest in May in possession of almost 10 kg of rhinoceros horn.

On 10 January 2012, the dehorned carcasses of eight adult rhinoceroses were discovered in Kruger National Park; a further three were found two days later following an aerial search. The animals had been shot. Two suspected poachers were arrested.

On 12 January 2012, in North West province, enforcement officials arrested five suspected rhinoceros poachers following a year-long investigation. One suspect evaded capture and remains at large. The group was allegedly on route to carry out a poaching attack.

On 31 January 2012, at Phalaborwa Regional Court, Mozambican nationals Aselmo Baloyi, Jawaki Nkuna and Ismael Baloy were each sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment after being found guilty of poaching rhinoceroses in Kruger National Park in July 2010, as well as of possessing weapons and ammunition. They were caught with two freshly removed rhinoceros horns, an axe and other weapons.

"This is an indication that, as a country, we are taking more stringent measures in the fight against rhino poaching," said SANParks CEO David Mabunda.

On 2 March 2012, a former police officer alleged to be one of the most wanted masterminds in the rhinoceros poaching underworld was arrested in Hazyview, Mpumalanga. Four horns, found behind a seat in his vehicle, were suspected to be from two rhinoceroses killed in Kruger National Park the previous week. Four park staff, including two game guides, were arrested in connection with that incident. The suspect was taken into custody.

On 3/4 March 2012, two farmers from KwaZulu-Natal, and a game ranger were arrested after a poaching attempt at Mkhuze Falls private game reserve.

On 12 March 2012, at Makhado Magistrates' Court, Jaques Els, a Limpopo game farmer, was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment for his involvement in rhinoceros poaching and fined R1 million (USD132 000). Els was granted bail pending his intention to lodge an appeal and will appear in court again on 2 June.

www.eyewitnessnews.co.za/Story.aspx?id=79288; www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/3-more-rhino-carcasses-found-20120112; www.eyewitnessnews.co.za/Story.aspx?id=80677; www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/2-poachers-shot-dead-in-Kruger-Park-20120112; www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/trio-sentenced-for-rhino-poaching-1.1224523; www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/syndicate-broken-in-midnight-blitz-1.1234815?showComments=true, 15 February 2012; [www.witness.co.za/index.php?showcontent&global\[_id\]=77616](http://www.witness.co.za/index.php?showcontent&global[_id]=77616); www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/farmers-ranger-ex-cop-in-poaching-net-1.1249815; www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/farmer-sentenced-for-rhino-poaching-1.1255909?showComments=true

ZIMBABWE: On 14 March 2012 it was reported that Munhuhaashati Bungumupeye of Bikita had been sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment for tracking a rhinoceros's spoor in the Chipangayi Intensive Rhino Protection Zone with the intention of poaching. On 5 March, Bungumupeye and an accomplice tracked down a rhinoceros to a watering hole before being spotted by rangers. Bungumupeye was arrested; his accomplice escaped. Bungumupeye was found in possession of a rifle fitted with a silencer and three rounds of live ammunition. His sentence comprised three years' imprisonment for unlawful possession of a gun and 11 years for unlawful possession of ammunition and for hunting an endangered species.

www.newsday.co.zw/article/2012-03-14-14-years-for-rhino-poaching/, 14 March 2012

T I M B E R

CHINA: In March 2012, Customs officials at Beijing Capital Airport arrested a passenger in possession of undeclared Red Sandalwood *Pterocarpus santalinus* (CITES II) (23.5 kg). This was the first case involving a seizure of this species at the airport.

www.customs.gov.cn/publish/portal0/tab39267/info361015.htm [in Chinese]

INDIA: On 28 October 2011, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) seized 17 t of Red Sandalwood *Pterocarpus santalinus* (CITES II) from a container at Vallarpadam International Container Trans-shipment Terminal (ICTT), thus foiling a bid to export the timber to Hong Kong, via Dubai. The wood had reportedly been brought from Andhra Pradesh by road.

The DRI are reported to have identified the kingpins of a sandalwood smuggling racket who are stationed in Dubai and said to have been shipping the timber to Hong Kong and China after receiving it in Dubai from India. The DRI has learned that the scheme involves operations in Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Dubai, Hong Kong and China and it has sought the assistance of INTERPOL to return the suspects to India.

On 16 February 2012, it was reported that Customs officials at Nhava Sheva port, Maharashtra, near Mumbai, recalled a shipment of 40 000 kg of Red Sandalwood *Pterocarpus santalinus* (CITES II), declared as paperboard and shipped to Dubai. A tip-off led officials to act before the timber had

reached its destination. A duplicate Central Excise department seal had been used to avoid scrutiny by Customs officials.

An official is reported to have said that the smugglers bring Red Sandalwood from the border of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka to the outskirts of Mumbai where it is kept illegally in warehouses.

“The syndicate members then bring containers which contain legitimate goods stuffed in factories in the presence of Excise officials,” the official said, adding that the legitimate goods are replaced with Red Sandalwood by opening the Central Excise seal. “They then put on a duplicate seal,” the official said.

<http://dailypioneer.com/nation/17231-red-sandlewood-racket-kingpins-based-in-dubai.html>; www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/Mumbai/Customs-seize-40-000kg-of-red-sanders/Article1-812129.aspx

GUATEMALA: Between November and December 2011, authorities seized three shipping containers, each holding 58.28 m³ of rosewood *Dalbergia* (CITES I/II) which were due to leave from the port of Santo Tomas de Castilla. A further 3.5 m³ of illegally logged wood was seized in national parks across the country.

<http://insightcrime.org/insight-latest-news/item/2242-seizures-point-to-timber-trafficking-ring-in-guatemala>

MALAYSIA: On 13 February 2012, at Butterworth Sessions Court, Nguyen Van Tien of Viet Nam, was sentenced to six years in gaol and fined RM200 000 (USD65 000), after pleading guilty to felling agarwood *Aquilaria* trees. Two others remain at large. The trees were taken from the Bukit Panchor Forest Reserve in Nibong Tebal.

www.thestar.my/news/story.asp?file=/2012/2/13/nation/20120213114854&sec=nation

OTHER SEIZURES / PROSECUTIONS

CANADA: On 9 December 2011, Jason Daeninck of Winnipeg was found guilty of 18 charges under the *Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act* in relation to the smuggling into the city from Indonesia of protected coral, sea horses and Giant Clams *Tridacna gigas* (CITES II). A court hearing is pending.

Daeninck was arrested in 2007 after Customs officials intercepted a shipment of 9000 kg of Stony Coral *Scleratinia* (CITES II) in British Columbia. Investigators linked the shipment to Daeninck and executed a search warrant at his home and business. They learned that he had been involved in other illegal shipments of CITES-listed sea horses and Giant Clams. However, none of those items were recovered and officials believe they were brought into Canada and subsequently sold on the black market.

www.thestarphoenix.com/Coral+wildlife+smuggling+fine+could+reach+million/5840193/story.html#ixzz1g9H2M0B5, 10 December 2011

CHINA: On 21 November 2011, Customs officials at Huanggang port seized 104 python *Python* spp. (CITES II), gallbladders, eight Lion *Panthera pardus* (I) teeth, one Gorilla *Gorilla gorilla* (I) claw, one pangolin *Manis* (II) and two frogs following x-ray examination of a passenger's luggage.

On 14 December 2011, Hunchun Anti-smuggling Sub-bureau confiscated 117 bear paws in Hunchun, Jilin province, at the border with the Russian Far East. On 5 January 2012, the National Wildlife Detection Center identified 103 of the specimens as belonging to Asiatic Black Bears *Ursus thibetanus* (CITES I) and 14 to Brown Bears *Ursus arctos* (I/II) (total weight 125.82 kg).

On 30 March 2012, during a routine check at Jimunai Port bordering Kazakhstan, Altay Customs officials seized 876 horns of Saiga Antelope *Saiga tatarica* (CITES II) (163 kg) that were concealed in the luggage compartment of an international coach (see also under Kazakhstan).

<http://shenzhen.customs.gov.cn/publish/portal109/tab31107/info327499.htm> [in Chinese];
<http://finance.huanqiu.com/data/2012-01/2329935.html>; http://health.gmw.cn/2012-04/03/content_3899842.htm [in Chinese]

COLOMBIA: On 2 February 2012, a fishing boat flying a Costa Rican flag was apprehended by the navy while fishing in Malpelo Island Sanctuary, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and an area where fishing is prohibited. Some 1406 kg of sharks and other fish were seized. The boat was taken to the port of Buenaventura to be made available to the authorities.

www.armada.mil.co/index.php?idcategoria=775768, 2 February 2012

HONG KONG SAR: On 14 November 2011, Customs officials discovered 33 rhinoceros horns (86 kg) that had been hidden in a container arriving by ship from Cape Town and marked as carrying scrap plastic; 758 ivory chopsticks and 127 ivory bracelets were also seized.

www.jisi.gov.cn/News/szsm/hongkong/201111/20111117151825_6142.html [in Chinese]

HUNGARY: On 5 November 2011, authorities intercepted a Romanian refrigerated lorry near Szeged, close to the border with Romania, and found concealed inside some 10 000 dead birds wrapped in plastic bags. The majority of specimens were Eurasian Skylarks *Alauda arvensis*, but also included Bluethroats *Luscinia svecica*, Goldfinches *Carduelis carduelis*, Fieldfares *Turdus pilaris*, Mistle Thrushes *Turdus viscivorus*, Reed Buntings *Emberiza schoeniclus* and White Wagtails *Motacilla alba*. The driver was arrested and has already been prosecuted under a fast-track procedure and now faces 10-months' imprisonment.

www.traffic.org/home/201111/19/hungarian-police-seize-thousands-of-dead-songbirds.html

KAZAKHSTAN: On 19 March 2012, police at checkpoint "Ily" stopped a vehicle being driven by a resident of the Eastern-Kazakh province and seized 4704 horns of Saiga Antelope *Saiga tatarica* (CITES II), 10 608 skins of Muskrat *Ondatra zibethicus*, and roots of *Fritillaria pallidiflora*. The driver claimed that the items were to be transported to China. The materials were handed over to the police department of Almaty province.

On 20 March, police at the checkpoint "Kurmangazy", in Atyrau province (Western Kazakhstan), seized 178 Saiga Antelope horns from a car and arrested the driver (see also under China).

Zakon.kz citing the press service of the Ministry of Agriculture

PHILIPPINES: Scales from some 100 pangolins *Manis* (CITES II) contained in four boxes were seized by the Philippines National Police (PNP) Aviation Security Group at Puerto Princesa airport, Palawan, as well as shells from circa 40 Green Turtles *Chelonia mydas* and Hawksbill Turtles *Eretmochelys imbricata* (both CITES I).

www.abs-cbnnews.com/nation/regions/01/03/12/anteater-scales-turtle-shells-seized-palawan, 3 January 2012

SPAIN: The Civil Guard has thwarted the operations of an organization that illegally exported around 5000 kg of baby eels a year; some 1500 kg of eels have been seized.

Operation Succulent, conducted by the Environmental Procedure Central Unit (UCOMA) from the Nature Protection Service (Seprona) of the Civil Guard, resulted in the arrest of 14 people who are reported to have purchased the eels in Asturias and Galicia (although many of them were actually captured in Portugal). The goods were declared as mullet, a fish that has no legal protection.

The investigation began in October 2011, when UCOMA noted a possible smuggling of the species, which as fry has a high economic value. A few weeks previously, a company allegedly involved in the illegal shipping had been set up in the municipality of Salceda de Caselas. The accused have reportedly been involved in eel farming and marketing for years.

The procedure was assisted by Bulgarian authorities, as it was found that the baby eels were packed in Galicia and transported by air to Sofia. After an alleged sale to a local company, the eels were to be sent to their final destination in the Philippines.

Charges against four other Romanian and Belgian people are expected. Export of the European Eel *Anguilla anguilla* (CITES II) to countries outside the EU is banned.

www.fis.com/fis/worldnews/worldnews.asp?monthyear=&day=26&id=50962&l=e&special=&ndb=1%20target=

SRI LANKA: On 14 February 2012, naval personnel uncovered 11 050 conch shells buried in the Palliwasalthurai area, Kalpitiya. It is suspected that they were hidden pending transfer to India by sea.

www.navy.lk/index.php?id=332

SWITZERLAND: In October 2011, Customs officials at Zurich Airport found 261 Mexican Redknee Tarantulas *Brachypelma smithi* (CITES II) inside six boxes, each specimen packed in a plastic bag; 10 were dead. The shipment had arrived from the Dominican Republic, bound for a Swiss dealer whose home was later searched and where a further 665 tarantulas were found.

All the spiders were taken into care at the Federal Veterinary Office.

www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2051210/The-real-Spiderman-Customs-halt-smuggler-airport-261-Mexican-tarantulas-luggage.htm#ixzz1bLx117E, 20 October 2011

TAIWAN: On 13 December 2011, police at TaiYuan International Airport seized around 20 000 live eel fry (5 kg) destined for Hong Kong; the eels had been packed into bags with a cooling function. Taiwan bans the export of eel fry, glass eels and young eels between November and March.

<http://iservice.libertytimes.com.tw/liveNews/news.php?no=579467&type=%E7%A4%BE%E6%9C%83>

USA: On 26 October 2011, a US Virgin Islands company based in St Thomas was fined USD1.8 million for knowingly trading in black coral (CITES II) that had been falsely labelled. Forfeiture of jewellery and other items amounted to a total loss to the company of USD4.47 million making this the highest penalty for the illegal trade in coral, the largest non-seafood wildlife trafficking financial penalty and the fourth largest for any US case involving the illegal trade of wildlife.

GEM Manufacturing LLC pleaded guilty to seven counts of violations of both the *Endangered Species Act* and the *Lacey Act*. The fine will be apportioned between the Lacey Act Reward Fund and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Asset Forfeiture Fund, accounts established by Congress to assist US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and NOAA in the enforcement of federal conservation laws. GEM was sentenced to pay an additional USD500 000 in community service payments for projects to study and protect black coral and ordered to forfeit dozens of jewellery items, sculptures and raw black coral. The company was also sentenced to three and a half years of probation and a 10-point compliance plan and was banned from doing business with a former coral supplier.

On 14 December 2011, Chee Chaw of Queens was sentenced at a Brooklyn court to one year in gaol and fined USD4000 for smuggling Asian Bonytongue *Scleropages formosus* (CITES I) into the country. The suitcase carrying the fish was misplaced during a transfer from Hong Kong, and its contents discovered after the bag arrived on a later flight. Nine of the 16 fish, packed in water-filled plastic bags, had died. Four more fish from a previous smuggling mission were recovered from Chaw's flat. It was revealed that he had smuggled fish on at least three occasions since 2004.

US Department of Justice: www.justice.gov/opa/pr/2011/October/11-enrd-1410.html;
www.nydailynews.com/news/crime/queens-man-smuggled-rare-fish-suitcase-slapped-year-jail-article-1.991626#ixzz1gZVPp6CY, 14 December 2011

VIET NAM: On 13 December 2011, police in Ho Chi Minh City arrested two locals after they were caught buying a Tiger skeleton (9.4 kg) from another person. Subsequent searches at properties in Districts 12 and Cu Chi turned up large amounts of wildlife bones and processed animals. Tests by Vietnam Science and Technology confirmed that the items included the skeletons of six Lions *Panthera leo* and one bear, two Tigers *P. tigris* soaked in wine, a Tiger head, a rhinoceros horn, four pairs of elephant tusks, three elephant tails (all CITES I), and five kilogrammes of monkey bones.

www.vnnnews.net/endangered-wildlife-dealers-arrested-in-southern-vietnam

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A B A L O N E

AUSTRALIA: On 25 September 2012, a man was sentenced to four years' imprisonment, reportedly the toughest sentence ever to be imposed for abalone trafficking in New South Wales. The man's son was gaoled for 19 months. In separate events, authorities seized 389 kg (almost 4500 abalones) from the two, who were allegedly ringleaders of a large syndicate on the south coast.

www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/201209/s3597584.htm 25 September 2012

CANADA: In June 2012, Kai Kin Ng, owner of Kin Seafood Importing Corporation, was fined USD40 000 for illegal possession of Northern Abalone *Haliotis kamtschatkana*, a species listed as endangered under the *Species at Risk Act*. Authorities seized 960 kg of abalones from the defendant's business premises in Richmond in 2010.

[www.worldfishing.net/news/101/seafood-importer-is-fined-us\\$40,000](http://www.worldfishing.net/news/101/seafood-importer-is-fined-us$40,000), 19 June 2012

SOUTH AFRICA: On 17 July 2012, three people were arrested in Milnerton, Western Cape, in possession of bags holding 4315 abalones.

On 13 September 2012, the Maitland Flying Squad seized 2000 abalones from a vehicle in Capricorn, Muizenberg, Western Cape. Two men were detained.

On 21 September 2012, the South African Police Service (SAPS) in Stanford, Western Cape, seized bags of abalones from bushes near a car that had been abandoned following a high-speed chase. While still patrolling the area, the SAPS and the K9 Unit recovered over 8000 abalones from bags inside another vehicle. One person was arrested and the abalones handed over to the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. In a separate incident on the same day, police in Lwandle, Western Cape, arrested four people who were found in the process of counting some 2000 abalones, which were confiscated.

Media Statements by Western Cape Media Centre, Corporate Communication, South African Police Service, September 2012: www.saps.gov.za/

USA: In April 2012, at Mendocino County Superior Court, Qiong Wang of San Francisco pleaded guilty to taking abalone for commercial purposes and was sentenced to one year in gaol and three years' probation. He was also fined USD20 000, his vehicle and diving equipment were forfeited and his fishing licence revoked for life. Wang had been caught in Mendocino County taking 96 abalones

out of season over the course of 17 days in February 2012, five days after he had been released from gaol on an earlier poaching incident. The abalone season is closed between 1 December and 1 April.

On 12 September 2012, Hoang Tan Dinh, of Marina, California, was sentenced to three years' probation and fined USD15 000 for possession of 22 Black Abalones *Haliotis cracherodii* for sale. He was also sentenced to a 90-days' suspended gaol sentence; his commercial fishing licence was permanently revoked and he was prohibited from recreational fishing during probation.

www.pressdemocrat.com/article/20110421/ARTICLES/110429860/1350?Title=Abalone-poacher-gets-one-year-jail, 21 April 2012; www.thecalifornian.com/article/20120921/NEWS09/309210073/Marina-man-sentenced-poaching-black-abalone, 21 September 2012

ZIMBABWE: On 1 May 2012, at Beitbridge, on the border with South Africa, a South African lorry driver was arrested as he attempted to smuggle into the country some 500 packets of abalones concealed under a consignment of charcoal. The abalone shipment was reported to have been ordered by a company in Harare but was believed to have been destined for the Far East. The suspect was released on bail.

[www.newzimbabwe.com/NEWS-7942-Truck+driver+in+US\\$4m+shellfish+bust/NEWS.aspx](http://www.newzimbabwe.com/NEWS-7942-Truck+driver+in+US$4m+shellfish+bust/NEWS.aspx), 11 May 2012

B I G C A T S

CHINA: On 10 May 2012, at Zhengzhou Middle People's Court, Henan province, Wang Yannan was sentenced to five years' imprisonment and fined CNY20 000 (USD3100) for smuggling the skins of two Leopards *Panthera pardus* (CITES I and completely protected in China).

Post officials of Zhengzhou Customs had detected the skins in a parcel arriving from Senegal on 20 February and which were identified by the Judicial Identification Center of National Forest Police Bureau. Wang Yannan, a businessman in Senegal, had sent the skins to his wife in Zhengzhou. He was arrested in July following his return to China.

On 14 June 2012, Manzhouli Customs, Inner Mongolia, seized 28 pieces of Amur Tiger *Panthera tigris* ssp. *altaica* (CITES I) bone (150 g) from a Chinese national returning from Russia. The items were found in plastic bags concealed in the suspect's socks and later identified by the National Wildlife Detection Center.

On 3 August 2012, it was reported that officials in Hunchun had seized 40 bottles of Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) bone wine.

<http://zy.takungpao.com/n/20120510/123842.html>; www.nmg.xinhuanet.com/xwzx/2012-06/24/content_25427768.htm; www.ybnews.cn/news/newsyb/201208/144313.html (in Chinese), 3 August 2012

INDIA: On 1 August 2012, in Gurgaon, Haryana, a man was arrested in possession of a Tiger skin and skeleton (and two live turtles, ivory and poaching equipment). The suspect had been arrested in 2009 for possession of a Tiger skin and skeleton but released on bail and disappeared. He had been sought in connection with a number of other cases.

On 28 September 2012, Rani Chand was sentenced in Uttarakhand to seven years' imprisonment for the illegal trade in 2004 of skins of two Leopards *Panthera pardus* (CITES II) and two jackals. This is only the second time in India that the maximum punishment has been imposed for a wildlife offence under the *Wildlife Protection Act*. Chand, the wife of convicted poacher Sansar Chand, had reportedly been involved with other family members of spearheading illegal wildlife trade activities in northern India.

www.traffic.org/home/2012/8/3/notorious-wildlife-dealer-caught-red-handed-in-india.html;
<http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-09-29/flora-fauna/341633411wild-life-trade-7-yr-jail-term-sansar-chand>

INDONESIA: In July 2012, police confiscated 14 stuffed Tigers *Panthera tigris* and other animals from the home of a taxidermist in Depok, West Java. Among the items seized were two Leopards *Panthera pardus*, one Clouded Leopard *Neofelis nebulosa*, a Lion *Panthera leo*, as well as two sacks of Tiger pelts, and a stuffed Tiger head, all CITES I-listed species.

www.thejakartaglobe.com/news/stuffed-animals-pelts-to-be-tested-by-indonesian-police/532275, 24 July 2012

LIBERIA: On 26 August 2012, at Roberts International Airport, a Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) skin was detected during the screening of luggage belonging to a foreign national leaving the country. The authorities alerted other collaborating security agencies, including the Liberia National Police, INTERPOL and Customs and refused all pleas from the suspect for clear passage of the illicit shipment.

www.liberianobserver.com/index.php/news/item/2574-leopard-skin-trafficker-arrested-by-ria-security, 21 September 2012

RUSSIA: On 27 August 2012, it was announced that Primorsky province enforcement agencies, in co-operation with WWF Russia, had seized the skins of eight Amur Tigers *Panthera tigris ssp. altaica* (CITES I) and other wildlife products, and arrested one person. Preliminary examination of the products lead police to believe that the suspect was engaged in buying and reselling wildlife products on China's domestic market. According to Sergei Aramilev, at WWF-Russia's Amur branch, the Tiger population has suffered a severe loss as the skins belonged to a male Tiger, two females, one young Tiger and four cubs. More female Tiger(s) were likely killed and sold since there were no skins of nursing females and yet one of the cubs was suckling. Taking into account that only between eight and 11 Tigers roam over 120 000 hectares of the Lazovsky Nature Reserve, theoretically poachers have destroyed a similar-sized Tiger group that would have covered a similar area, he said. The case is being investigated.

www.wwf.ru/resources/news/article/eng/10031, 27 August 2012

UK: On 22 July 2012, at Felixstowe Port, herbal remedies and massage oils purported to contain ground Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) claws were seized by border officials. Forty-five large boxes containing these and other products had been illegally imported from India and were bound for an address in Birmingham. Cycads, Agarwood *Aquilaria* and goat meat were also listed in the ingredients of the herbal remedies and five-litre bottles of massage oil. Details of the seizure have been referred to Customs authorities in India, which will decide whether to take action against the exporter. The importer in Birmingham was contacted by officials and issued with a warning, a Border Force official said.

www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/tiger-claw-products-seized-at-suffolk-port-8053405.html, 16 August 2012; www.ipswichstar.co.uk/news/felixstowe_tiger_claws_found_in_haul_of_herbal_medicines_at_britain_s_top_port_1_1484300, 16 August 2012

IVORY

A three-month operation conducted by INTERPOL has led to more than 200 arrests and yielded nearly two tonnes of ivory. Operation Worthy, involving 320 officials from the police, Customs and environmental protection agencies, and the biggest international operation against ivory traffickers to date, was conducted across 14 African countries; 20 kg of rhinoceros (CITES I) horn, skins of Leopard *Panthera pardus* (I), Cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus* (I), crocodile (I/II) and python (II) were also

seized. Countries participating in the operation were South Africa, Botswana, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe; some of these cases are referred to in more detail below.

www.news24.com/SciTech/News/Interpol-seizes-ivory-200-held-20120619, 19 June 2012

CHINA: On 18 March 2012, at Shenyang Intermediate People's Court, Li Dongmei was sentenced to eight years in gaol and a fine of up to CNY50 000 (USD7900) for smuggling 8.4 kg of ivory from France and selling it on the internet.

On 9 May 2012, at Chongqing First Middle People's Court, a suspect was accused of smuggling ivory (2.63 kg) into the country between 2007 and January 2012, during his period of employment in Nigeria. On 17 January 2012, he had concealed ivory products, including five carvings, seven bracelets, and two seals in carry-on luggage on a flight from Nigeria, via Qatar; he was arrested the following day.

On 19 June 2012, it was announced that Hongkou district police had seized more than 780 ivory carvings and arrested five people suspected of participating in the illegal ivory trade.

It was reportedly the largest amount of illegal ivory seized in the past five years in Shanghai; the police believe that they have broken up an ivory smuggling syndicate that has operated for more than a decade in the city. They were able to track down the suspects after arresting a man in January who sold ivory carvings at a market, and who provided information that led to the arrest of the five suspects, all of whom were related to him. The informant was sentenced to seven years in gaol and fined CNY30 000 (USD4742).

Plain-clothes police officers collected evidence of the ivory smuggling ring after following the suspects for two weeks; they were arrested on 9 May 2012 during a raid of two shops that sold illegal ivory pieces in Huangpu district.

In June 2012, a man was sentenced to 2.5 years in gaol with four years' probation and fined CNY4000 (USD645) after he attempted to purchase an ivory statue from an internet auction website.

*http://gongyi.people.com.cn/h/2012/0321/c227937-149_1588153.html?anchor=1 (in Chinese);
http://cq.cqnews.net/html/2012-05/09/content_15490468.htm; www.globaltimes.cn/content/716215.shtml,
20 June 2012; www.cwca.org.cn/Article/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=26434 (in Chinese)*

GUINEA: On 28 March 2012, seven suspected traffickers of protected species were arrested, reportedly a first in the country since independence in 1958; 80 kg of sculpted ivory were seized.

On 19/21 May 2012, police in Conakry seized over 800 ivory pieces, including sculptures and elephant tusks, during a raid that led to six arrests.

www.starafrika.com/en/news/detail-news/view/guinea-police-seize-800-pieces-of-ivory-234424.html, 25 May 2012

KENYA: On 14 September 2012, officials seized 62 pieces of elephant ivory (255 kg) at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport. Preliminary investigation indicated that the shipment had been bound for Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, via Doha, Qatar. Declared as avocados, the consignment had been sprayed with pepper and tobacco in an attempt to avoid detection by sniffer dogs. The owners of the shipment fled the scene before being arrested. The origin of the seizure has not been established.

On 22 September 2012, authorities seized a suitcase carrying carved ivory that had arrived from Luanda, Angola, bound for Bangkok. The items had been packed in a suitcase but the name on the tag was not on the list of passengers on board the plane. Police said this is one of the methods criminals use to transport ivory. A Chinese national was being sought.

The previous day, another person was arrested in Mlango Kubwa trying to sell genuine and fake ivory.

Kenyan Wildlife Service, 18 September 2012; [www.stand-ardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000066828&story_title=Police-unearth-illegal-ivory-from-Angola](http://www.stand-ardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000066828&story_title=Police-uneearth-illegal-ivory-from-Angola), 24 September 2012

MOZAMBIQUE: It was reported in June 2012 that police at Maputo International Airport had arrested two Chinese nationals arriving from Nairobi with 25 kg of ivory in their possession. The two were in transit to an undisclosed destination. The items were distributed in small packets inside the suspects' luggage, reportedly in an attempt to avoid detection.

www.bernama.com/bernama/v6/newsindex.php?id=671093, 6 June 2012

SOUTH AFRICA: On 10 July 2012, Customs officials and members of the SA Revenue Service (Sars) dog unit seized 46 elephant tusks (400–500 kg) following a routine inspection of two cargo containers at a storage facility near Cape Town International Airport; two people were arrested. The illegal cargo was destined for Hong Kong. The origin of the tusks was not clear and the case was under investigation.

www.iol.co.za/capetimes/huge-ivory-bust-at-city-airport-1.1338864#.T_lq_jvqm-Y, 11 July 2012

SRI LANKA: On 22 May 2012, the Central Intelligence Unit of Sri Lanka Customs seized 400 ivory tusks and logs that had transshipped through Colombo's sea port from Kenya, destined for Dubai. The ivory was believed to be of South African origin. According to Customs officials, this was one of the largest consignments of illegal ivory ever detected in the country.

www.colombopage.com/archive_12/May22_1337702547CH.php, 22 May 2012

USA: On 12 July 2012, two New York ivory dealers pleaded guilty to selling and offering for sale circa one tonne of illegal ivory, including jewellery and carved tusks.

Under plea agreements, Mukesh Gupta and his company Raja Jewels were ordered to forfeit the ivory and fined USD45 000, which will be donated to the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) for projects relating to elephant conservation. Johnson Jung-Chien Lu and his company, New York Jewellery Mart Corp, were also ordered to forfeit the ivory in their possession and to donate USD10 000 to WCS.

District Attorney, New York County media release, 12 July 2012

THAILAND: On 25 April 2012, authorities at Suvarnabhumi Airport seized 22 elephant tusks, and 44 sawn pieces of ivory (58.54 kg) from boxes falsely declared as gemstones and shipped from Nigeria.

www.mcot.net/cfcustom/cache_page/357799.html, 25 April 2012

VIET NAM: On 18 July 2012, Customs officials at Tan Son Nhat Airport in Ho Chi Minh City seized 137 kg of ivory from the luggage of two Vietnamese passengers. The items had been transported from Angola via Kenya, and were destined for a customer in Ho Chi Minh City.

On 17 September 2012, at Noi Bai International Airport, Hanoi, a woman was caught with 677 pieces of ivory, as well as 15 bracelets, 90 pairs of chopsticks, and 10 chains made of ivory (19 kg in total). The suspect confessed to bringing the ivory from Angola to sell in Viet Nam.

www.tuoitrenews.vn/cmlink/tuoitrenews/society/vietnam-police-seize-137-kilos-of-ivory-from-kenya-1.80353, 19 July 2012; Thanh Nien News: www.thanhniennews.com/index/pages/20120919-woman-caught-with-ivory-tusks-at-vietnam-airport.aspx, 19 September 2012

ZIMBABWE: It was reported on 28 May 2012 that game rangers had killed a poacher and seized 28 elephant tusks during a weekend raid in Binga. This brought to 50 the number of tusks recovered in the region in less than a week; a gunfight the previous week left one poacher wounded and yielded 22 tusks.

www.news24.com/Africa/Zimbabwe/Zim-rangers-kill-poacher-seize-28-tusks-20120528, 28 May 2012

PANGOLIN

All pangolin species are listed in CITES Appendix II.

Forty people were arrested during June and July 2012 in five South-east Asian countries in the largest co-ordinated operation against the illegal poaching and trade in pangolins *Manis*. Operation Libra, co-ordinated by INTERPOL's Environmental Crime Programme, involved investigations and enforcement actions across Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Thailand and Viet Nam. Conducted with the assistance of the World Customs Organization and the ASEAN-Wildlife Enforcement Network, the operation included raids on restaurants and other premises and led to the arrest of more than 40 individuals, with some 200 additional cases currently under investigation across the region. Some 1220 pangolins were recovered, almost half of them still alive. In addition to pangolins, birds, snakes and eight Tiger cubs were also seized.

Environment News Service: <http://ens-newswire.com/2012/09/03/pangolin-traffickers-across-southeast-asia-busted/>, 3 September 2012

CHINA: On 11 May 2012, at Tengchong County People's Court, Yunnan province, Cai Qiang and Cai Xue were each sentenced to 10 years in gaol and fined CNY8000 (USD1200). On 25 November 2011, the two, along with their employer [sentence not known] transported 42 pangolins from Zhanggeng village, Longchuan county, Yunnan province, but were intercepted when passing the Xinzhai section of Tengchong county.

On 13 May 2012, Shenzhen Bay Customs intercepted a bus travelling from Hong Kong to Shenzhen. A Chinese passenger was found to be carrying 12 bags of pangolin scales (25.4 kg). The suspect confessed to obtaining the scales when he worked in Pakistan and had planned to sell them in China. The case is under investigation.

On 17 June 2012, Beijing Airport Customs confiscated 42 kg of pangolin scales (and 0.31 kg of rhino horns), which were being carried by two Chinese nationals returning from Doha, Qatar.

http://yn.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2012-05/11/c_131581343.htm; www.customs.gov.cn/publish/portal0/tab39267/info365276.htm; www.customs.gov.cn/publish/portal0/tab39267/info375634.htm

HONG KONG SAR: On 26 June 2012, Customs officials seized 208 kg of pangolin scales in Sai Kung, which were being loaded onto a speedboat. Seven suspects escaped. Also seized were 11 kg of birds' nests, a delicacy in Chinese cuisine.

On 2 August 2012, marine officials seized 20 boxes containing 600 kg of frozen pangolins from a boat in Deep Bay, bound for mainland China. Two people evaded capture.

<http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2012/6/28/reutersworld/20120628141016&sec=reutersworld>, 28 June 2012; *South China Morning Post*, 4 August 2012

INDIA: Pangolin scales (19.8 kg) handed over to the Central Forest Division by Sekmai police, Manipur, in July, were recently incinerated at the Forest Training School, Koirengai, following a court proceeding.

On 6 September 2012, Customs officials seized more than 386 kg of pangolin scales at Tuirial Airfield village, reportedly bound for Myanmar. One person was arrested.

[www.e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=Snipp7.200912.sep12, 19 September 2012](http://www.e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=Snipp7.200912.sep12,19%20September%202012); www.business-standard.com/generalnews/news/pangolin-scales-seized-in-mizoram/53362/, 7 September 2012

INDONESIA: On 28 July 2012, police in Medan, north Sumatra, seized sacks containing 85 pangolins from a bus station. Most specimens were alive. They were thought to be en route via Malaysia to Hong Kong or mainland China. No arrests were made but the case is being investigated and the animals were to be released in the wild.

www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gnLzIXR3I8SyNrySIB5gMKDqwFWg?docId=CNG.8e48523cf8117b8f862f81dcf0fc05e5.471

MALAYSIA: On 10 May 2012, the Penang Wildlife and National Parks Department seized 94 live pangolins from the cargo complex in Batu Maung, George Town. The animals were in 40 boxes together with live crabs. The specimens were believed to have been brought in from a neighbouring country and were headed for Hong Kong.

www.nst.com.my/nation/general/bid-to-smuggle-pangolins-among-live-crabs-foiled-1.82991#ixzz246ZjzHv2, 12 May 2012

On 2 June 2012, police in Kota Baru seized 171 pangolins *Manis javanica* and arrested five people in two operations: two men were detained by police at a roadblock in Jeli; 16 pangolins were seized. A police team in Bachok seized 155 pangolins packed into nets at a house in Kampung Alur Tok Majan; the animals and three suspects were handed over to the State Wildlife and National Parks Department. The pangolins were believed to have been brought into Kelantan from other States, bound for Thailand through Bukit Kayu Hitam in Kedah and Rantau Panjang.

www.nst.com.my/nation/general/171-pangolins-bound-for-thailand-seized-1.90678, 4 June 2012

NEPAL: On 25 June 2012, Sindhupalchowk police detained a person found in possession of nearly 40 kg of pangolin scales. He was arrested at Khokundol bazaar, along the Araniko highway, en route to the border with China.

On 14 September 2012, police in Bhadrapur confiscated 13.6 kg of pangolin scales from a house in Mechinagar municipality. The suspect was being sought.

www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=One+held+with+pangolin+scales&NewsID=337426; www.my-republica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=41777, 15 September 2012

UGANDA: In early 2012, police arrested a man for allegedly trying to sell about 115 kg of pangolin scales. The suspect, from Kisoro, was intercepted as he was driving to meet clients in Kampala. He claimed that he had many suppliers and that he always exported the pangolin scales to China. He declined to reveal the identity of the Chinese men who buy the scales from him but stated that he received deliveries from Gulu, Mbarara, Fort Portal, Mukono [within Uganda], as well as the Democratic Republic of Congo “and other places”.

According to the Ugandan Wildlife Authority (UWA), wealthy Chinese were encouraging the illegal trade.

“UWA is now implementing an aggressive campaign to stop the killing of pangolins by cutting off the ready market provided by the Chinese nationals”, Lillian Nsubuga Public Relations Manager explained. She noted that in May, a person was arrested in Kampala with kilogrammes of pangolin scales. She added that informers had mentioned that some Chinese in Uganda are buying the pangolin scales and shipping them to Asia.

www.newvision.co.ug/news/632887-police-foil-attempt-to-smuggle-pangolin-scales.html, 12 July 2012

VIET NAM: During Operation Libra (see above), Indonesian authorities discovered a shipment of 260 cartons of frozen pangolins (five tonnes) bound for Viet Nam. INTERPOL's I-24/7 secure communications system was used and additional assistance provided by the World Customs Organization (WCO) to track the shipment to Hai Phong, Viet Nam, where it was intercepted by Customs. The two countries are working together to identify the suspects.

In April 2012, enforcement authorities acting on information seized 71 live pangolins from a car in Nghe An province.

On 4 September 2012, police in Ha Tinh province seized sacks containing 119 live pangolins (and four live Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) cubs) being transported by car. The consignment was reported to have come from Lao PDR. Two men were arrested.

"Countries with wild pangolin populations and those key to the ongoing illegal trade are ramping up efforts to combat the problem," said TRAFFIC's Naomi Doak, Greater Mekong Programme Co-ordinator.

"However, without stricter enforcement of current laws and tougher sentences for illegal wildlife traders, the future for this species in Asia looks very bleak," said Dr Doak.

Environment News Service: <http://ens-newswire.com/2012/09/03/pangolin-traffickers-across-southeast-asia-busted/>, 3 September 2012; www.tigertime.info/tiger-blog.php?entry_id=1346924172&title=four-live-tiger-cubs-seized-in-vietnam, 6 September 2012

RHINOCEROS

All rhinoceroses Rhinocerotidae are listed in CITES Appendix I

GERMANY: In September 2012, two Britons were convicted at Offenburg district court of the theft of two rhinoceros horns from the city's Ritterhaus Museum in February 2012 (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* (24(1):28). The two, who were described as members of a global network of rhinoceros horn traders organized from the UK and Ireland, were sentenced to gaol terms of 3 and 2.5 years, respectively. A third person remains at large. The horns have not been traced.

www.spiegel.de/panorama/justiz/diebstahl-von-nashorn-hoernern-zwei-briten-muessen-in-haft-a-855868.html, 14 September 2012

INDIA: On 6 July 2012, two poachers were arrested in connection with the killing of a Great Indian Rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis* in Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, Assam. Another person who had allegedly shot the adult male rhinoceros two days earlier evaded capture. The three had arrived by boat and fled with the animal's horn after it had been killed.

On 16 September 2012, a Great Indian Rhinoceros was killed by poachers in Kaziranga National Park's (KNP) Bagori forest range. The adult male had been shot and its horn removed. An axe was found at the scene. Five days earlier, a female Great Indian Rhinoceros was killed in the park and dehorned. Six poachers were later arrested during a joint operation conducted by police and forest personnel in and around KNP. A rifle was recovered during the operation and the poachers were taken into custody.

www.business-standard.com/generalnews/news/two-poachers-arrested/289711, 6 July 2012; <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/environment/wild-wacky/Another-rhino-killed-horn-chopped-off/article-show/16426179.cms>; www.business-standard.com/generalnews/news/six-poachers-arrested-in-kaziranga/58689/

MOZAMBIQUE: In May 2012, at Maputo International Airport, Customs officers arrested a Vietnamese national as he prepared to board a flight with seven rhinoceros horns in his possession. The suspect remains in custody.

www.bernama.com/bernama/v6/newsindex.php?id=6710936 June 2012

PHILIPPINES: On 7 September 2012, authorities at Manila port seized six rhinoceros horns (8.5 kg) that had arrived from Mozambique on 25 August, concealed inside a shipment containing 300 sacks of cashew nuts. No arrests have been made.

TRAFFIC's Chris Shepherd said the only previous known smuggling through Manila was two years ago when two White Rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* horns were found among seized elephant tusks.

"The Philippines would not have been the end destination. It would have been Viet Nam, and possibly China", Shepherd said.

"There seems to have been a definite increase in enforcement efforts in the source countries, but we're not seeing any definite actions in the consumer countries to shut the markets down," he added.

www.nzherald.co.nz/world/news/article.cfm?c_id=2&objectid=10832477, 7 September 2012

SOUTH AFRICA: On 10 May 2012, three rhinoceros poachers were arrested in Crocodile Bridge Ranger Section of Kruger National Park (KNP) during a joint operation between South African National Parks (SANParks) Environmental Crime Investigators and rangers, the South African Police Services (SAPS) and South African National Defence Force (SANDF). The team had come upon the carcasses of a female rhinoceros and a calf, both of which had been dehorned; during a follow-up investigation they came into contact with the three who were armed. A shoot-out led to one suspect being fatally wounded; the other two were arrested. Four fresh rhinoceros horns, a hunting rifle and an axe were recovered from the poachers.

On 27 August 2012, at Shangoni Section of the park, rangers and investigators again came into contact with a group of suspected poachers, one of whom was fatally wounded. A firearm and a set of rhino horns were recovered. On the same day, in the Lower Sabie Section of KNP, three suspected poachers were arrested and a firearm and an axe were recovered. In a follow-up anti-poaching operation at the Crocodile Bridge Section the following day, rangers encountered another group of suspected poachers; one of the group was wounded and two were fatally wounded. A firearm and two axes were recovered.

On 31 August 2012, at Nelspruit Regional Court, Mozambican citizen, Ali Cossa, and Gerson Nkuna of South Africa, were each sentenced to 29 years' imprisonment for killing a rhinoceros cow and calf at the Nwanetsi Section of KNP in June. They were each sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment for killing an adult female rhinoceros, and another 10 years each for killing a calf. They were further sentenced to an effective four years each on charges of possession of illegal firearms and two years for illegal possession of ammunition as well as three years each for trespassing. Cossa received a further three-month sentence for being an undocumented migrant in the country.

On 14 June 2012, at Germiston Magistrates' Court, Johannesburg, a resident of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), three Chinese nationals, one Malawian and two Vietnamese faced charges of dealing in rhinoceros horn. All suspects were arrested two weeks earlier during two sting operations in Gauteng. It has been alleged they were linked to an international syndicate dealing in rhinoceros horns. During both raids, police seized 12 horns, apparently destined for China, as well as elephant tusks and Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) skins.

The arrests came after a six-month covert operation in KZN and Gauteng that investigated the sale of rhino horns to international buyers.

In July 2012, an appeals court upheld an eight-year gaol sentence imposed in March on J. Els, a game farm owner from Thabazimbi, who had been found guilty of the illegal possession of 38 rhinoceros horns (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 24(1):29).

Els had purchased 30 horns from the manager of another game farm who later committed suicide. Els was arrested in October 2010 and later sentenced for transporting the horns without a permit. The horns had been cut from rhinoceroses that had been drugged. He was given a suspended sentence for the illegal possession of eight horns from his own animals and ordered to pay R1m (USD121 000) to the country's environmental police.

On 20 July 2012, law enforcement agencies seized R11m of Els's assets, including his game farm, other goods, company shares, and the contents of his bank accounts. None of the rhinoceros horns was recovered, which Els claimed had been stolen.

In August 2012, at Vryheid Regional Court, two farmers from KZN, Ewart Potgieter and Riaan Vermaak, were sentenced to 18 years' and 10 and-half-years' imprisonment, respectively; they will serve 11 years and seven-and-a-half years. The two, with other accomplices who were to appear in court at a later date, were arrested five months earlier during a sting operation.

UK: In July 2012, at Norwich Crown Court, Nihad Mahmud, an Iraqi immigrant of no fixed address, was gaoled for two-and-a-half years for attempting to steal a rhinoceros horn from Norwich Castle in February 2012. Three others involved in the incident have not been caught (see also *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 24(1):29). The museum has replaced the horn with a replica.

On 7 September 2012, at Guildford Crown Court, Jamie Channon and Tony Moore were gaoled for seven and five years, respectively, for stealing a rhinoceros head from Haslemere Educational Museum in May 2011. The men will serve half of their sentences.

SANParks media releases: www.sanparks.org/, 10 May/29 August/31 August 2012; www.iol.co.za/dailynews/news/rhino-horn-bust-1.1318975#.UFryCVH4Jvl, 14 June 2012; www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jkYSLtMMON5CsJPgOXSa1llUhwq?docId=CNG.3d4dfb998642cb4dc07e4b704572326d.241; www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/R11m-in-assets-seized-from-game-farmer-20120720, 20 July 2012; www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/rhino-poachers-sentenced-to-28-years-11363903#.UFsDa1H4Jvl, 16 August 2012; www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-norfolk-18810176, 12 July 2012; www.getsurrey.co.uk/news/s/2120509_pair_jailed_for_haslemere_museum_rhino_head_theft, 13 September 2012

ZIMBABWE: It was reported on 17 August 2012 that two people had been sentenced to an effective 21 years in gaol for killing and dehorning two Black Rhinoceroses *Diceros bicornis* in Bube Valley Conservancy outside Beitbridge. Mateu Mahlangu of Johannesburg and Dovhani Sibanda of Driehoek village, Beitbridge, pleaded not guilty to charges of killing an endangered species and possession of rhinoceros horns and an unlicensed firearm.

On 8 April 2012, the two men reportedly shot and killed the two animals and removed the horns before taking them to Sibanda's home, where they removed a tracking transmitter from one of the horns and burnt it. The device is used in tracking and monitoring the movement of rhinoceroses within the sanctuary.

The offence was discovered by game rangers who reported the matter to police. Four rhinoceros horns, knives and a firearm and ammunition, were also recovered from where they were hidden underground. The court heard that the two men intended to smuggle the horns into South Africa.

On 28 June 2012, Zivanai Masvaire, Charles Dowerowe and Shepherd Naite were sentenced to 17 years' imprisonment for rhinoceros poaching; Masvaire and Dowerowe will each serve an effective nine years in gaol, while Naite will complete seven years after two years were suspended from their respective sentences on condition they would not contravene any section of the *Wildlife Act*. It was also ruled that a further three-year gaol term would run concurrently for each of the accused

persons. The three were convicted of killing a male rhinoceros at a farm in Macheke; they were arrested as they attempted to smuggle the horns (8.2 kg) to South Africa. They were also ordered to pay the owner of the farm where the rhinoceros was killed ZWD20 000 (USD55) in compensation.

www.zoutnet.co.za/details/17-08-2012/21_years_in_jail_for_two_rhino_poachers/14483, 17 August 2012; www.newsday.co.zw/article/2012-06-29-poachers-jailed-17-years, 29 June 2012

REPTILES and AMPHIBIANS

BANGLADESH: On 7 August 2012, police at Shahjalal International Airport seized 108 live Tricarinate Hill Turtles *Melanochelys tricarinata* (CITES I) being smuggled to Thailand. Two people were arrested.

www.asianturtleprogram.org/pages/turtle-bulletin/Bulletin_41_12th_Aug12/Bulletin_41_12th_Aug12.htm, 12 August 2012

ECUADOR: On 8 July 2012, Galapagos National Park officials at Baltra Island airport detected four Galapagos Land Iguanas *Conolophus subcristatus* (CITES II/IUCN Red List: Vulnerable) in the luggage of a German national during routine x-ray inspection of luggage, assisted by police sniffer dogs. The suspect, who was gaoled while he awaits sentencing, is reported to have been prosecuted in December 2011 for exporting a Fiji Crested Iguana *Brachylophus vitiensis* (CITES I).

http://elcomercio.com/sociedad/ciudadano-intentaba-Islas-Galapagos-arrestado_0_733726715.html, 9 July 2012

INDIA: On 7 May 2012, it was reported that the Air Intelligence Unit (AIU) of Customs at Bengaluru International Airport had seized 483 live Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II) that were being smuggled to Bangkok, Thailand, by an Indian national.

On 30 July 2012, Bishnupur District Divisional Forest Office, and Nambol police seized eight Tokay Geckos *Gekko gekko* in the Kamong area, Bishnupur District, Manipur; another seizure involving this species had been made in the same location in the recent past.

On 10 October 2012, Manipur police seized a further 30 Tokay Geckos from two people during an operation in Thoubal district; the following day, a local court fined each of them Rs10 000 (USD190).

It is reported that most of the specimens of this species caught in Manipur are taken to Thailand via Myanmar, for onward transport-ation to Malaysia and Indonesia.

www.deccanherald.com/content/247765/483-star-tortoises-seized-bia.html, 7 May 2012; <http://sevensisterspost.com/tokay-geckos-seized-in-manipur/>; <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/guwahati/30-tokay-geckos-seized-in-Manipur/articleshow/16759303.cms>; <http://m.timesofindia.com/city/guwahati/Tokay-gecko-poachers-fined-Rs-10000-each/articleshow/16777034.cms>

NEW ZEALAND: On 4 May 2012, at Christchurch District Court, Andreas Hahn, a German national, pleaded guilty to charges of hunting and possessing four South Island Tree Geckos *Naultinus gemmeus* (CITES III) which he had attempted to smuggle out of the country. The judge accepted that Hahn was more of a “mad collector” than a “cynical commercial poacher” and gaoled him for four months. The geckos were released into the wild.

www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10803541&ref=rss, 4 May 2012

THAILAND: On 27 August 2012, at Bangkok’s Suvarnabhumi International Airport, police and Customs officers seized 890 juvenile Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II) concealed in

six pillow cases in a suitcase being brought into the country from Calcutta. One Indian national was arrested. Days earlier, TRAFFIC observed at least 122 Indian Star Tortoises openly for sale at Bangkok's weekend market, Chatuchak.

The species is legally protected across its range in India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan and exports from these countries are prohibited. All three countries have banned the species' international commercial export under national legislation, making all shipments from these countries illegal anywhere in the world.

TRAFFIC urged Thai authorities to increase enforcement efforts at local markets to remove Indian Star Tortoises, while working with their counterparts in India to ensure a speedy repatriation of the tortoises, as authorities in Malaysia and Indonesia have done in the past.

www.traffic.org/home/2012/8/29/almost-900-star-tortoises-seized-in-thailand.html, 29 August 2012

USA: On 26 April 2012, Elidoro Soria Fonseca was sentenced to two years' imprisonment following his attempt to smuggle into the USA from Mexico iguana (CITES II) meat derived from 110 animals. US Customs and Border Protection Officials were alerted by the smell coming from Fonseca's vehicle at the Otay Mesa border crossing in June 2011. Inside were 110 headless, skinned and deboned iguanas packed in ice.

www.utsandiego.com/news/2012/apr/26/iguana-meat-smuggler-gets-two-years/, 26 April 2012

FLORA

CANADA: On 11 September 2012, at Richmond Provincial Court, J&A Health Food International Ltd was fined CAD45 000 (USD45 700) for importing wild American Ginseng *Panax quinquefolius* (CITES II) roots and orchid species *Dendrobium* spp. (I/II) without a permit. The company was ordered to forfeit 19 kg of ginseng (wild and cultivated) and five kilogrammes of orchids. The plants, seized on 28 January 2010, had been concealed in a shipment of legally acquired ginseng roots.

The penalties consist of a fine of CAD2500 for each of three counts under the *Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act* (WAPPRITA); CAD7500 was to be directed to the Environmental Damages Fund and CAD30 000 was awarded directly to TRAFFIC.

www.ec.gc.ca/alef-ewe/default.asp?lang=En&n=3E7B1278-1, 25 September 2012

CHILE: On 11 September 2012, the Chilean Supreme Court upheld a guilty verdict in the case of the former mayor of Fresia, Puerto Montt, Nelson Schwerter, accused in 1996 of illegally trading in Alerce *Fitroya cupressoides* (CITES I/nationally protected). The decision upheld the verdicts of lower courts maintaining that Schwerter knew the Alerce wood he had exported had been obtained by illegal means. He had been accused of building an illegal network of loggers who took much of the Alerce they trafficked from Forestal Sarao company property, one of Chile's privately owned natural reserves which was established in 1988 to protect Alerce.

While the controversy was first made public in the mid-1990s, Schwerter and some 30 associates were not convicted until 2009. In April 2011, the decision was upheld for 12 of the accused in a Court of Appeals and Schwerter's was the only case outstanding to be brought to the Supreme Court.

www.santiagotimes.cl/chile/other/25176-former-mayor-convicted-of-trafficking-chilean-endangered-species, 14 September 2012

CHINA: In May 2012, Dalian Customs seized 440 seedlings of Chinese Yew *Taxus chinensis* (CITES II) from a suspect from South Korea.

On 4 May 2012, at Luohu Port, Guangdong Province, Customs officials seized 9.5 kg of agarwood *Aquilaria* (CITES II) from the backpack of a passenger. During the first five months of the year, Luohu Customs have reportedly uncovered 19 cases involving the illegal transportation of agarwood (total weight 56.2kg).

Also in May, Wuhan Customs seized 460 *Cymbidium* (CITES I/II) orchids from a foreign national travelling to South Korea.

www.customs.gov.cn/publish/portal0/tab39267/info372255.htm (in Chinese), 20 June 2012;
www.legaldaily.com.cn/index/content/2012-05/10/content_3561008.htm?node=20908;
www.customs.gov.cn/publish/portal0/tab39267/info372004.htm (in Chinese), 20 June 2012

INDIA: The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) seized around 611.76 t of Red Sandalwood (Red Sanders) *Pterocarpus santalinus* (CITES II) across the country during 2011–12 fiscal year. It is reported that DRI officials suspect that around double the quantity of the seized goods has been successfully smuggled out of India. DRI's data point out that this period experienced the highest quantity of Red Sandalwood being smuggled out of the country, with some 34 cases registered across the country. By comparison, during 2010–11, there were 27 cases registered and 373.3 t of Red Sandalwood was seized; 337.2 t was seized in 2009–10.

The following are a selection of recent cases involving the illegal trade in Red Sandalwood:

On 4 April 2012, police seized 600 Red Sandalwood logs and 150 teak logs (total weight 15 t) at Eguya Tambaalapalli village, YSR district.

On 1 September 2012, Customs officials arrested 11 people in locations in Ramanathapuram and Madurai in connection with an alleged bid to smuggle Red Sandalwood to Sri Lanka from Olaikuda.

On 8 September, police seized seven tonnes of Red Sandalwood logs near Vaniyambadi toll plaza; one person was arrested and a vehicle seized. The wood, which was being transported from Chennai to Hosur, was handed over to the Forest Department Depot at Tirupattur.

On 15 September, Tirupati forest staff and Chandragiri police recovered 10 t of Red Sandalwood logs during three separate incidents. The wood was being transported at Chandamamapalle near Srinivasa Mangapuram.

<http://libnlive.in.com/news/smuggling-of-red-sanders-on-the-rise/289115-60-122.html>, 9 September 2012;
<http://libnlive.in.com/generalnewsfeed/news/police-seize-wood-logs-worth-rs-3-cr-in-ap-village/983369.html>, 5 April 2012; <http://libnlive.in.com/generalnewsfeed/news/11-held-for-bid-to-smuggle-red-sanders/1055688.html>, 1 September 2012; <http://libnlive.in.com/news/red-sanders-worth-rs-35-lakh-seized/289814-60-118.html>, 11 September 2012; <http://libnlive.in.com/news/red-sanders-seized/291957-60-114.html>, 18 September 2012

OTHER SEIZURES

CAMEROON: On 12 September 2012, authorities arrested one woman in Yaounde who was trying to sell the skull and other body parts of a Gorilla *Gorilla gorilla* (CITES I). Another woman was earlier arrested by officials acting on information as she alighted from a bus on the Lomie—Yaounde highway with sacks containing illegal wildlife species, including Gorilla parts.

www.causes.com/causes/388319-laga/actions/1682998, 12 September 2012; www.4apes.com/news/Two-Women-Arrested-With-Gorilla-Parts-20120919.htm, 19 September 2012

CHINA: In April 2012, the State Forestry Administration announced that police had uncovered more than 700 cases involving illegal wildlife trade on websites and at antique markets. Police officers inspected 5962 markets and 13 gangs were infiltrated, 1031 illegal traders were prosecuted, and over 130 000 wild animals and 2000 animal products were seized. Some 7155 high-street shops and 628 websites selling banned animals were shut down.

In May 2012, Zhanjiang Customs acting on information intercepted a car on the Maozhan Highway and found 49 monitor lizards *Varanus* (CITES I/II) contained in bags and cages.

On 25 June 2012, Nanning forest police, Guangxi province, seized 343 frozen pangolins (2.2 t), 141 bear paws, 37 frozen Big-headed Turtles *Platysternon megacephalum* (CITES II) and 20 kg of meat suspected to be of Asiatic Black Bears *Ursus thibetanus* (CITES I). Three people were arrested. At least 43 bears and 343 pangolins were killed to supply these items, which had been transported from Dongxing city (bordering Viet Nam), Guangxi province.

On 4 July 2012, it was reported that police in Jilin province had arrested six men on suspicion of poaching five wild Asiatic Black Bears *Ursus thibetanus* (CITES I) on Changbai Mountain. The animals had been killed by explosives; a shotgun, bullets and two homemade explosive devices were seized. The suspects are reported to have sold the bear products, including the gallbladders and paws.

On 13 September 2012, Shenzhen Forest Police seized 122 pangolins *Manis*, six giant salamanders, one bear paw and 27 frozen owls from a rental house in Dongmen, Luohu District. Four suspects were detained.

http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-04/28/content_15172382.htm; http://zjphoto.yinsha.com/file/201205/20_12053015322738.htm (in Chinese), 20 June 2012; www.gx.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2012-06/26/content_25434371.htm; <http://news.asiaone.com/News/AsiaOne%2BNews/Crime/Story/AlStory/20120705-357298.html>, 5 July 2012; http://city.sz.net.cn/city/2012-09/16/content_3014151.htm

MALAYSIA: On 11 May 2012, at Penang International Airport, the State Fisheries Department detained a Taiwanese man who was carrying 241 arowana *Scleropages* fish in two bags; he was bound for Guangzhou, China.

www.nst.com.my/nation/general/bid-to-smuggle-pangolins-among-live-crabs-foiled-1.82991

PERU: On 23 August 2012, police in Lima seized more than 16 000 (160 kg) dried seahorses *Hippocampus* (CITES II) destined for illegal export to Asia. Seahorse fishing has been banned in Peru since 2004. Last year, two tonnes of seahorses destined for export were seized by the authorities.

<http://phys.org/news/2012-08-peru-seizes-dried-seahorses-asia.html>, 24 August 2012

PHILIPPINES: On 8 July 2012, at Ninoy Aquino International Airport, officials of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) intercepted 949 kg of eel fingerlings contained in 332 plastic bags during a routine check of a warehouse. The shipment, from Cagayan province and bound for Hong Kong, had been abandoned. The fingerlings were thought to be destined for the restaurant trade once they had reached maturity. It is unlawful to export eel fry/fingerlings without a permit issued for purposes of education and scientific research. The specimens were taken to a BFAR hatchery in Tanay.

On 16 September 2012, Customs officials at the airport intercepted at least 13 boxes of live eel fry bound for Kaoshiung, Taiwan.

www.philstar.com/Article.aspx?articleId=825594&publicationSubCategoryId=63, 9 July 2012;
www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/274321/news/metromanila/13-boxes-of-taiwan-bound-live-eels-intercepted-at-naia, 17 September 2012

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ABALONE

AUSTRALIA: On 23 November 2012, Simon Hillman and Andrew Carpmael of Victoria pleaded guilty to a charge of trafficking in a commercial quantity of abalone following their arrest in November 2010 in possession of 30 kg of abalone. The pair was found to have taken abalone from waters in East Gippsland on six occasions, and once at Cape Otway over four months in 2010, amounting to some 30 and 60 kg on each occasion. The abalone was sold to a co-defendant who owned a restaurant.

Carpmael was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment, with a minimum of nine months; Hillman received a 12-month gaol sentence suspended for two years. Carpmael was banned for 10 years and Hillman for three years from any dealings with abalone. The co-defendant, who gave evidence against the pair, was given a wholly suspended sentence for his role.

On 1 March 2013, at Joondalup Magistrates' Court, Duy Cam Dao of Girrawheen was fined more than AUD25 000 (USD25 600) for illegally harvesting 326 abalones. Dao had been under surveillance as part of a Fisheries WA operation at Ocean Reef beach to identify people actively involved in the illegal take/illegal distribution of abalone. He was apprehended with the abalone in his backpack, including 13 undersized specimens. Dao was already banned from abalone fishing at the time of the offence and had harvested them during a prohibited period.

His fine consisted of AUD8000 for breaching the original 2007 court-imposed ban, AUD8600 for fishing during a prohibited period, AUD7200 for exceeding the bag limit and AUD1100 for the undersized abalone. He was also issued a court order that banned him from being in possession of abalone.

www.watoday.com.au/national/abalone-poachers-given-jail-sentences-20121123-29z9t.html
23 November 2012; *http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/al/-/breaking/16320519/fisher-fined-25-000-for-abalone-haul/*, 7 March 2013

MOZAMBIQUE: It was reported in October 2012 that the Tax Authority had recently seized about a tonne of abalone in Maputo thought to have come from South Africa and believed to be destined for Hong Kong.

http://allafrica.com/stories/201210121341.html, 12 October 2012

SOUTH AFRICA: On 21 November 2012, officials arrested 19 people—reportedly the highest number of people in one single incident to date in relation to abalone offences. The men had been diving for abalones at Soetfontein near Gans Bay and were found in possession of 3838 shucked abalones (527.6 kg). Three of the men had been arrested in August 2012 for a similar offence. On the same day, police also found 1351 shucked and 182 whole abalones (291 kg) at a house in Hangklip. On 19 November, three men were also arrested when the SAPS's Flying Squad discovered 36 929 dried abalones—the largest consignment of abalones this year—in a minibus in which the suspects were travelling.

http://allafrica.com/stories/201211220533.html, 21 November 2012

BIG CATS

INDONESIA: In December 2012, police in Pekanbaru seized skins of 11 Tigers *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) (in addition to skins of four Sun Bears *Helarctos malayanus* (CITES II) and 13 Sambar Deer *Rusa unicolor* antlers) from the house of a tanner. Police said they were going to have the skins DNA-tested to establish where they had been poached.

www.antaranews.com/berita/349343/polresta-pekanbaru-sita-11-kulit-harimau, 19 December 2012

MALAYSIA: In February 2013, a man was sentenced to a total of 60 months' in gaol after being found guilty on two charges of illegal possession of Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) parts (and one for possession of African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I) ivory). However the judge ordered that the sentences run concurrently and the defendant was to serve only 24 months in gaol. A conviction under the section of the law involving Tiger parts carries a mandatory fine of "not less than RM100 000 [USD32 000] and not more than RM500 000 and a jail term not exceeding five years." The court did not issue the mandatory fine.

The man was arrested in northern Malaysia in February 2012 with eight Tiger skins and a bag of Tiger bones including 22 skulls, plus an undisclosed number of elephant tusks.

PERHILITAN, Department of Wildlife and National Parks, Malaysia

NEPAL: In two operations in January 2013, police arrested seven members of a Tiger smuggling ring and recovered seven Tiger skins, hundreds of Tiger body parts, and bones. In the first incident, on 11 January, officers of Manaslu Conservation Area seized four Tiger skins, 53 kg of Tiger bones and arrested four people who were allegedly trying to smuggle the Tiger parts into Tibet, China. The following day, police conducting road checks near the border with China seized five Tiger skins and 114 kg of Tiger bones that were concealed in bags of rice in a van also heading to China. The operation came shortly after members of the Nepalese police undertook a training course in Kathmandu organized by INTERPOL, which aimed to improve environmental law enforcement capacity in the region, with a specific focus on illegal poaching and the illicit trade in Tigers and other Asian big cats.

<http://dailypioneer.com/nation/131309-wildlife-contraband-seizure-case-in-nepal-takes-new-turn.html>, 5 March 2013; www.interpol.int/News-and-media/News-media-releases/2013/N20130123, 23 January 2013

RUSSIA: On 13 November 2012, at Khasan District Court, Primorsky Krai, a hunter was sentenced to 18 months' community service and fined USD18 500 for killing an Amur Tiger *Panthera tigris altaica* (CITES I), reportedly a rare case in the country of punishment for Tiger poaching. The perpetrator's hunting rights were also revoked and his firearm confiscated. The court found the suspect guilty of killing one of the 500 Tigers remaining in the Maritime Territory and the Khabarovsk Territory.

<http://articles.latimes.com/2012/nov/13/world/la-fg-wn-russia-punishment-poaching-tigers-20121113>, 13 November 2012; http://wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/?206730/Tiger-killer-given-strong-punishment, 15 November 2012

THAILAND: In October 2012, authorities arrested a lorry driver after 16 Tiger cubs were discovered in the back of his vehicle. The man was stopped near the border with Lao PDR after avoiding a police checkpoint.

www.scmp.com/news/asia/article/1071285/thai-police-stop-pickup-truck-find-16-tiger-cubs, 27 October 2012

F L O R A

CANADA: On 9 October 2012, in British Columbia Provincial Court, Nam Bak Enterprises Limited was fined CAD50 000 (USD49 000) under the *Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act* (WAPPRITA) for importing without a permit American Ginseng *Panax quinquefolius* (wild and cultivated) (CITES II). Of that amount, the company was ordered to pay a CAD45 000 fine and CAD5000 to the Environmental Damages Fund (EDF); CAD40 000 of the fine was directed by the court to be donated to TRAFFIC.

www.ec.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=714D9AAE-1&news=188C32A1-1744-4244-AD2F-EBA8A77C4423; E. Cooper, TRAFFIC, in litt., 2 April 2013

INDIA: Red Sandalwood *Pterocarpus santalinus* (CITES II and export from India prohibited under the Customs Act 1962)

On 23 October 2012, officials of the Mangalore unit of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) arrested four persons at New Mangalore Port and seized six tonnes of Red Sandalwood concealed under plywood and awaiting shipment to Jebel Ali, Dubai. A raid was also carried out in Kannur, Kerala, where 18 t of Red Sandalwood was seized.

On 13 December 2012, Delhi police acting on information, and working with the DRI, seized 10 t of Red Sandalwood from a warehouse in Janakpuri, destined to be smuggled to China.

On 6 January 2013, police seized 36 Red Sandalwood logs (900 kg) from a car during a routine vehicle check in Gummidipoondi, Tamil Nadu. Two people fled the scene.

On 25 January 2013, Chakan police officers acting on information raided two warehouses at Waki Budruk village, Pune district, Maharashtra, and seized circa 16 t of Red Sandalwood.

On 10 February 2013, during a special anti-smuggling drive undertaken jointly by police and Forest Department officials in Andhra Pradesh, 22 people from neighbouring Tamil Nadu were arrested for their part in smuggling Red Sandalwood from the forests of Kadapa.

On 28 February 2013, police attached to Virinchipuram station arrested four persons who were attempting to smuggle 250 kg of Red Sandalwood from Andhra Pradesh to Bangalore via Vellore district. The gang revealed that they smuggled Red Sandalwood from forest areas on the Tamil Nadu-Andhra Pradesh border to Bangalore via Palamaneri and Vellore. Forest department officials registered a case against the four under the provisions of the *Tamil Nadu Forest Act*. They were to be remanded to the Vellore Central Prison for Men after being produced in the district court.

All the above cases are being investigated.

www.dajjiworld.com/news/news_disp.asp?n_id=153464, 24 October 2012; www.indianexpress.com/news/red-sanders-worth-rs-2-cr-seized-from-west-delhi/10450571, 14 December 2012; http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-01-08/chennai/36215679_1_sanders-logs-red-sanders-police-officer, 8 January 2012; <http://expressindia.indianexpress.com/latest-news/red-sandalwood-teak-wood-worth-rs-3-cr-seized-from-chakan/1065188/>, 26 January 2013; <http://english.samaylive.com/regional-news/others-news/676523738/red-sandalwood-red-sanders-smugglers-police-forest-official-arre.html>, 12 February 2013; http://newindianexpress.com/states/tamil_nadu/article1484402.ece, 2 March 2013

USA: On 16/17 October 2012, rangers at Cumberland Gap National Historical Park caught five people in the process of illegally collecting American Ginseng *Panax quinquefolius* (CITES II); 415 roots were seized in two separate cases. The rangers noticed suspicious behaviour and hid in the woods to make the arrests. Both cases were made in the Virginia portion of the park, where park rangers have been using surveillance to target illegal digging.

Uprooting ginseng is illegal in national parks. In recent years this park and others have cracked down on ginseng poaching using remote sensing cameras and special dyes and metal chips to mark the plants as being property of the parks. Digging is legal on private property with the landowner's permission. It is reported that the ginseng roots confiscated during the second seizure were very small and most likely came from plants that were too young to have developed seeds.

After sorting the ginseng roots by age—the oldest was 31 years old—rangers marked them with a special dye and replanted them in the park.

All the defendants were to appear in court at a later date. It is reported that a conviction typically amounts to a fine plus restitution at a cost of USD15 per root. It was reported that the restitution collected from the poachers would help fund the marking and replanting as a way of recovering the cost of that work.

www.knoxnews.com/news/2012/oct/26/ginseng-poachers-nabbed-at-cumberland-gap-park/, 26 October 2012

IVORY

CAMEROON: On 4 October 2012, police officers in Yokadouma arrested one of Central Africa's most wanted elephant poachers and ivory smugglers. In addition to killing elephants for their tusks, the suspect has also been accused of serving as a guide to Sudanese poachers, who in 2010 crossed the Central African Republic and poached 25 elephants before being stopped by local authorities. He was reportedly mostly active in the Sangha Trinational Protected Area complex, a network of protected areas straddling the countries of Cameroon, the Central African Republic and the Republic of Congo which, in July 2012, was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

http://wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/?206372/Cameroon-arrests-one-of-Central-Africas-most-notorious-poachers, 5 October 2012

CHINA: Between 6 January and 5 February 2013, Operation Cobra—a multi-national law enforcement initiative undertaken in some 22 Asian and African countries (see page 3)—saw 80 cases uncovered in China and over 90 people arrested; among many wildlife items seized were ivory and ivory products (200 kg) (plus 10 rhinoceros horns and four rhinoceros horn products, and 50 kg of pangolin scales).

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/762127.shtml>

GABON: On 22 January 2013, authorities acting on information intercepted a ship flying a Cameroonian flag at Mole Port, Libreville, and seized 18 elephant tusks (178 kg). The vessel was heading to Benin via São Tomé and Príncipe and Nigeria. Two suspects were detained and were assisting police in the investigation.

www.shanghaidaily.com/article/article_xinhua.asp?id=122140, 28 January 2013

HONG KONG SAR: On 3 January 2013, Customs officials uncovered a consignment of 779 elephant tusks (1300 kg) during x-ray examination of wooden boxes labelled as containing construction stones, which had arrived from Kenya, via Malaysia. The tusks were wrapped in canvas bags that were covered by stones. Officers were reportedly on the alert because imports of construction material from Kenya were unusual and the receiving company was new.

In October 2012, 3800 kg of ivory was found in two shipments, from Kenya and Tanzania, and in November the department seized 1330 kg of tusks in a container of sunflower seeds shipped from Tanzania.

www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1119782/hong-kong-customs-seize-over-hk10m-illegal-ivory, 4 January 2013

MALAYSIA: In December 2012, Selangor Customs at Westports seized 1500 (24 t) elephant tusks that had arrived by ship in two containers declared as “wooden floor tiles”. The contraband originated from Togo, and had been transported via Spain, to Malaysia, for transshipment to China. The tusks were hidden under wooden planks. No arrests have been made, but the local company handling the containers is being investigated.

<http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2012/12/11/nation/20121211191659&sec=nation>, 11 December 2012

SINGAPORE: On 30 January 2013, Customs officials uncovered a shipment of 1.8 t of ivory, in what was described as the biggest ivory haul in the country in more than a decade. The consignment,

marked as being wastepaper, had come from an undisclosed African country and was reportedly passing through Singapore. A total of 1099 pieces of raw tusks were found in 65 sacks.
www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-21257745, 30 January 2013

THAILAND: On 15 December 2012, at Suvarnabhumi Airport, authorities confiscated 11 African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I) tusks arriving on a flight from Ethiopia. One Vietnamese national was arrested while waiting to board a flight to Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/326630/ivory-tusks-seized-at-suvarnabhumi, 17 December 2012

TURKEY: On 22 October 2012, it was reported that the Istanbul Police Department's Financial Crime Division had confiscated 635 cylindrically cut ivory pieces that had been sent from D.R. Congo via Europe. This is reportedly the first time that ivory has been seized in Istanbul. The items were confiscated from a shop in Fatih district that manufactures ornaments and beads. The ivory had reportedly been painted red in D.R. Congo and exported as "rosewood". One person was detained.

www.hurriyetdailynews.com/illegal-ivory-pieces-seized-in-istanbul.aspx?pageID=238&nID=32977&NewsCatID=341, 22 October 2012

UK: In November 2012, officers from the Border Force at Heathrow Airport intercepted two courier packages addressed to an individual in Hong Kong from Nigeria, described as "sculptures and engine parts". Both packages were found to contain a total of 130 ivory (Annex A/CITES I) beads, and seven ivory bangles (two kilogrammes) concealed within boxes of engine parts and handicrafts.

In January 2013, officers from the Border Force at Coventry postal depot intercepted three packages on arrival from D.R. Congo. Within the packages, a number of wooden statues were found to be concealing ivory (Annex A/CITES I) artefacts. One person was arrested and investigations are continuing.

UK Border Force

USA: On 13 March 2013, it was reported that Stonex Corp., a Manhattan-based jewellery wholesaler, pleaded guilty to one count of illegal trade in wildlife. Shashikumar Krishnaswamy, the company's owner, will forfeit more than 32 kg of ivory pieces. He was ordered to donate USD10 000 to the Wildlife Conservation Society for use in elephant conservation.

www.jckonline.com/2013/03/13/jewelry-wholesaler-pleads-guilty-to-illegal-ivory-trading, 13 March 2013

P A N G O L I N

All pangolin species are listed in CITES Appendix II

CHINA: On 14 November 2012, at Jinshan District People's Court, Zhang Qianjin, a farmer, was sentenced to two years in gaol for illegally transporting five Chinese Pangolins *Manis pentadactyla* from Fujian province to Shanghai. He was also fined 10 000 yuan (USD1606). He had reportedly purchased the pangolins from a street vendor in Fujian Province on 6 June and was stopped at a checkpoint on the Jinshan section of Shenhai Highway, which links Shanghai to Zhejiang province, after he had taken a wrong turning. Prosecutors said Zhang had purchased the pangolins at a high price, which meant he knew the animals were protected and could be sold for profit. Zhang argued that he had purchased the pangolins to eat.

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90882/8020758.html>, 15 November 2012

FRANCE: On 22 October 2012, Customs officials at Roissy Airport seized several hundred kilogrammes of pangolin *Manis* meat (as well as meat from antelope, monkey or crocodile) that had

been concealed in luggage arriving from undisclosed African locations. The wild meat was reportedly bound for sale at the African quarter of the Château-Rouge market, in Paris's 18th arrondissement.

www.metrofrance.com/paris/de-la-viande-de-pangolin-et-de-crocodile-saisie-a-roissy/mjw!aipLnSLtLpGAI, 23 October 2012

INDIA: In February 2013, Rajaji National Park officials arrested three persons from the Kansrao forest area and recovered about 30 kg of pangolin *Manis* scales. Officials described it as one of the biggest seizures of pangolin scales in the country. The operation was reportedly launched after several SIM cards and mobile phones were recovered from Kansrao forest.

www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/30-kg-of-pangolin-scales-seized-three-arrested/article4443776.ece, 23 February 2013

INDONESIA: On 3 January 2013, at Soekarno- Hatta International Airport, Customs officials arrested four Chinese nationals for attempting to smuggle in their luggage 189 pangolin *Manis* scales (and 248 hornbill beaks) to Hong Kong. The case was being investigated by the Jakarta Natural Resources Conservation Center (BKSDA).

www.thejakartapost.com/news/2013/01/04/four-chinese-arrested-smuggling-protected-species-body-parts.html, 4 January 2013

MALAYSIA: On 16 October 2012, a man was arrested trying to smuggle 23 pangolins *Manis* to a neighbouring country at Bukit Kayu Kitam on the border with Thailand. The pangolins were being transported in several sacks weighing a total of 70 kg which had been placed in the spare tyre compartment to avoid detection. A friend who tried to bribe the officers in order to release the offender was also arrested. The pangolins were to be sent to the Wildlife Department for further action.

<http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2012/10/16/nation/20121016173325&sec=nation>, 16 October 2012

NEPAL: On 13 October 2012, personnel carrying out a security check at Lamosangu checkpost, Sindhupalchowk district, seized 37.8 kg of pangolin *Manis* scales (as well as 28 kg of Walrus *Odobenus rosmarus* and two kilogrammes of orchids) which were being transported to China. One person was arrested.

www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=Police+seize+contraband+being+smuggled+to+China&NewsID=350805&a=3, 13 October 2012

NETHERLANDS: On 27 November 2012, Customs officials at Schiphol Airport, Amsterdam, seized a cargo shipment containing 540 000 (630 kg) capsules used in the treatment of prostate-related diseases; according to the packaging, the product contained pangolin scales. The shipment was sent from Shanghai, China, via Amsterdam to Accra, Ghana, without CITES documents.

Customs Administration of the Netherlands

THAILAND: On 25 March 2013, the navy intercepted an attempt to smuggle 104 live pangolins *Manis* to China, via Lao PDR, on the Mekong River. The animals were believed to have originated in Malaysia or southern Thailand. Two suspects were arrested before they were able to load the live pangolins onto a boat.

www.france24.com/en/20130326-thailand-seizes-104-smuggled-endangered-pangolins

REPTILES

CHINA: On 22 February 2013, almost four tonnes of live snakes were confiscated by police near Ruili, on the border with Myanmar, in one of the largest wildlife seizures along the border in recent history. Police found 176 wooden crates with 4815 live cobras, vipers and Indian rat snakes in a vehicle. One person, nationality undisclosed, was arrested.

Police were acting on a tip-off and had set up roadblocks earlier in February; after 20 days of futile inspections, some roadblocks were relaxed to mislead the smugglers. Roadblocks are reportedly a daily sight along the border, with travellers complaining about going through up to three checks on the five-hour journey to neighbouring Tengchong County.

www.irrawaddy.org/archives/27620, 25 February 2013

THAILAND: On 7 February 2013, at Suvarnabhumi Airport, officials took possession of a cargo containing more than 2000 live snakes that had been returned by authorities in Hong Kong after the shipment had been illegally exported to Hong Kong. The snakes, comprising a range of species, had been placed in 203 boxes falsely declared as containing fruit. The reptiles were believed to be destined for China. An investigation is under way.

On 15 March 2013, authorities at Suvarnabhumi International Airport seized 54 Ploughshare Tortoises *Astrochelys yniphora* and 21 Radiated Tortoises *Astrochelys radiata* (CITES I and both assessed as being Critically Endangered). Two people were arrested (see page 23).

“TRAFFIC congratulates the Thai authorities for these very significant seizures” said Chris R. Shepherd, Deputy Director of TRAFFIC, Southeast Asia. “The criminals behind this shipment of Ploughshare Tortoises have effectively stolen over 10% of the estimated population in the wild ... They should face the full force of the law. We urge authorities to go after the criminal masterminds behind these shipments and break the trade chains that threaten these incredibly rare animals”, he said.

www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/334839/customs-seize-2000-live-snakes, 7 February 2013;
<http://www.traffic.org/home/2013/3/19/largest-seizure-of-critically-endangered-ploughshare-tortois.html>

RHINOCEROSSES

All species of rhinoceros Rhinocerotidae are listed in CITES Appendix I.

CHINA: On 20 March 2013, two passengers were arrested at Pudong International airport, Shanghai, after attempting to import illegally 11 rhinoceros horns (and over 30 ivory items). The men stated that they bought the items at “auction houses, antique shops and fairs in Paris”. Officials said that while the men “knew it was illegal to bring the products into China” they “anticipated hefty profits.”

http://shanghaiist.com/2013/03/21/two_men_caught_attempting_to_smuggle_800000_dollars_worth_of_ivory_into_china.php, 21 March 2013

INDIA: On 16 October 2012, a group of 18 people allegedly responsible for the poaching of at least six rhinoceroses in Kaziranga National Park over the past three years were arrested by Assam police. The apprehensions took place in Bokolia after the gang’s leader was arrested and interrogated the previous day. Two forest employees were also held on suspicion of involvement in the poaching.

www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/a-gang-of-18-rhino-poachers-nabbed-in-assam/article4002582.ece, 16 October 2012

IRELAND: On 15 March 2013, at Ennis District Court, brothers Jeremiah and Michael O'Brien of Limerick were each fined €500 (USD655) with three months to pay after they were caught illegally attempting to import rhinoceros horns through Shannon Airport in January 2010. Customs officers seized eight rhinoceros horns following the brothers' return from Portugal. They each pleaded guilty to importing four rhinoceros horns.

The judge accepted jurisdiction on the basis that the offence was germane to the breach of the regulations and not the value of the horns which, according to evidence provided by an auctioneer, would have been some three times lower at the time of the seizure.

The court was told that the horns were antique, dating from the 1960s, and not from a freshly killed rhinoceros. They had reportedly been acquired from a Portuguese antique dealer who had entrusted the brothers with the horns so that they could be mounted on a board before being returned to Portugal. The pair had no previous convictions and had made no effort to conceal the horns.

<http://www.clarepeople.com/2013/03/19/e500-fine-for-e500000-rhino-horn-dealers/>, 19 March 2013

MOZAMBIQUE: It was reported on 16 October 2012, that police had arrested two suspected poachers in Gaza province with 11 kg of rhinoceros horns that they were transporting in a vehicle. The horns had reportedly been taken from rhinoceroses that were killed in Limpopo National Park, South Africa.

On 24 February 2013, police officers at Maputo International Airport arrested a Vietnamese citizen in possession of six rhinoceros horns (17 kg). The suspect was about to board an international flight. The horns had been wrapped in tinfoil and placed in a suitcase with clothing and surrounded by garlic in an attempt to disguise the smell.

In February 2013, police arrested a Mozambican citizen in Mandimba district, in the northern province of Niassa, who was in possession of eight rhinoceros horns (20 kg) and in the process of attempting to sell rhinoceros horn to a Chinese buyer. The Chinese citizen evaded capture.

www.newstrackindia.com/newsdetails/2012/10/16/280-11-kg-of-rhino-horns-seized-in-Mozambique.html, 16 October 2012; <http://allafrica.com/stories/201302260215.html>, 25 February 2013; <http://allafrica.com/stories/201302210175.html>, 20 February 2013

SOUTH AFRICA: On 9 November 2012, at Kempton Park Magistrates' Court, Chumlong Lemtongthai of Thailand was sentenced to 40 years in gaol for his role in organizing illegal rhinoceros poaching expeditions. The sentence is the longest-ever imposed for poaching in South Africa and follows a year-long investigation.

Chumlong Lemtongthai pleaded guilty to paying people to pose as big game hunters with permits. They were each given USD800 to go to game farms, take a few shots with small calibre rifles and pose next to rhinoceroses killed by someone else.

South African authorities currently issue permits to what it terms "bona fide" hunters for trophy hunting. The Department for Environmental Affairs says "a hunting client may only hunt one White Rhinoceros within a specific calendar year".

On 23 November 2012, at Pretoria Magistrates' Court, Rogers Mukwena of Mpande, southern Zimbabwe, was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment for rhino poaching. He was arrested in January 2012 in northern Pretoria in possession of three rhinoceros horns. DNA tests later linked them to a poaching incident in which a White Rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* cow and calf had been killed.

In 2012, Mukwena was arrested in Masvingo province, Zimbabwe, with six others after being found with a fresh rhinoceros horn but he skipped bail and fled to South Africa.

www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-20267967, 9 November 2012; www.newsday.co.zw/2012/11/27/ex-teacher-jailed-for-poaching/, 27 November 2012

THAILAND: In early January 2013, it was reported that a Vietnamese citizen was arrested at Suvarnabhumi Airport with six rhinoceros horns (10.6 kg). He had come from Mozambique, and was awaiting a flight to Hanoi, Viet Nam.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201302210175.html>, 20 February, 2012

VIET NAM: In early January 2013, police in Ho Chi Minh City arrested a man who had arrived from Maputo, Mozambique, via Doha, carrying six rhinoceros horns (16.5 kg).

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201302210175.html>, 20 February, 2012

OTHER SEIZURES

CANADA: On 17 October 2012, at Manitoba Provincial Court, Jayson Daeninck and his company, Saltwater Connection, were fined a total of CAD135 822 (USD134 000) for illegally importing from Indonesia live rock which included species of giant clams, seahorses and stony corals, all protected under CITES and Canada's *Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act*.

Environment Canada: www.ec.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=714D9AAE-1&news=B8BEA2A8-2363-4874-8EEA-51BB34A331F5

NEPAL: On 6 January 2013, the Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) of Nepal Police confiscated over 1000 kg of shahtoosh—wool derived from the Tibetan Antelope *Pantholops hodgsonii* (protected under the *National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1973* and in CITES Appendix I). The seizure is probably the biggest ever, both in terms of size and monetary value, in Nepal (see page 3).

www.wfnepal.org/?207229/Biggest-ever-seizure-of-Shahtoosh-in-Nepal, 11 January 2013

USA: On 31 January 2013, Ashu Bhandari, former president and CEO of GEM Manufacturing LLC, a US Virgin Islands-based company, was sentenced in St Thomas, US Virgin Islands, for his role in a scheme to illegally import black coral (CITES II) into the USA; two trading partners have already been gaoled.

On 2 February 2013, Bhandari was fined USD918 950 and sentenced to one month in gaol, to be followed by one month of home confinement and one year of supervised release, during which he would be required to complete 300 hours of community service and be banned from any business venture involving coral or coral products. He was also ordered to pay USD229 687 to the University of the Virgin Islands to be used for community service projects designed for research into and protection of black corals.

http://7thspace.com/headlines/431987/usdoj_former_jewelry_company_executive_sentenced_in_usvi_to_pay_11_million_in_fines_and_community_service_for_illegal_trade_of_protected_black_coral.html, 2 February 2013

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BIG CATS

INDIA: On 8 September 2013, Delhi police infiltrated a poaching gang who are believed to have evaded capture for over 20 years, and seized 18 kg of Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) body parts, including skulls, bones, nails and teeth. Three people were arrested, one of whom has been described as the

“best supplier of Tiger skins in the country”, with contacts in 50–60 families responsible for killing the animals on his behalf.

www.deccanherald.com/content/356173/poaching-gang-busted-20-years.html, 10 September 2013

MACAU SAR: On 25 July 2013, a man travelling from Indonesia, via Hong Kong, was arrested at Macau airport after being found in possession of 78 Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) teeth (1.7 kg), 69 Tiger claws (190 g) (plus dried bear gall bladders (300 g), frozen birds’ nests (1 kg) and frozen turtle meat (7.5 kg)). The body parts had been wrapped in foil and placed inside egg roll containers.

www.macaudailytimes.com.mo/macau/45690-tiger-teeth-claws-and-bear-bile-smuggled-as-egg-rolls.html, 26 July 2013

USA: On 11 July 2013, the US Fish and Wildlife Service announced the arrests of more than 150 people accused of operating an illegal online wildlife trade operation following an undercover investigation involving officers from 16 States, three federal agencies and three Asian countries. Items seized included the pelts of Sumatran Tiger *Panthera tigris sumatrae*, Leopard *Panthera pardus* and Jaguar *Panthera onca* (CITES I species) and other wildlife.

<http://news.sky.com/story/1114679/wildlife-trafficking-feds-bust-internet-ring>, 11 July 2013

ELEPHANTS

BURUNDI: On 27 July 2013, police announced the seizure of 28 kg of ivory (CITES I) at Bujumbura International Airport from a man from Guinea Conakry, living in Burundi.

www.cbfp.org/news_en/Traffic-News-, 7 August 2013

CAMEROON: On 2 July 2013, police announced that four ivory traders had been arrested in Douala in possession of 32 elephant tusks.

On 24 September 2013, Symphorien Sangha was sentenced to three years’ imprisonment and fined USD43 000 for his role in the killing of more than 100 elephants in Central Africa.

www.Journalducameroun.com, 2 July 2013; <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/convicted-elephant-poacher-jailed-cameroon-20358994>, 24 September 2013

CHAD: On 14 June 2013, authorities arrested a man said to be behind the slaughter by 50 horsemen of 89 elephants (CITES I) (including 33 pregnant females and 15 juveniles) in one night (14–15 March) near Ganba; he is also thought to have headed a gang of poachers that have killed 192 elephants since August 2012. At the time of his capture he had 124 tusks in his possession.

<http://wildlifeneews.co.uk/2013/poacher-behind-march-slaughter-of-89-elephants-captured-in-chad>

CHINA: On 5 April 2013, at Heping District People’s Court, Tianjin, a person was sentenced to 68 months in gaol and fined CNY12 000 (USD1905) for selling ivory products in Shenyangdao Antiques Market in Tianjin; 21 kg of ivory products were seized. A further five ivory sellers arrested on the same day also received gaol sentences.

A man was recently sentenced to 15 years’ in gaol for smuggling 7.7 t of ivory from Africa to Fujian province, China, since 2011. Customs seized 2154 whole elephant tusks/segments.

<http://news.enorth.com.cn/system/2013/04/26/010896260.shtml>, 26 April 2013;
www.jisi.gov.cn/News/ztbd/201305/20130522144336_9282.html, 22 May 2013

CONGO, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF: On 15 July 2013, at Ewo Supreme Court, Ghislain Ngondjo, alias "Pépito", was sentenced to five years in gaol for elephant poaching. He is reported to have operated in Odzala-Kokoua National Park and environs for over a decade, recruiting poachers and assisting with the killing of scores of elephants and of selling the ivory. Two others were also convicted: one received a five-year sentence and the other was gaoled for two years.

www.examiner.com/article/several-elephant-poaching-arrests-congo?cid=rss;
<http://ens-newswire.com/2013/07/25/congolese-ivory-kingpin-imprisoned-for-five-years/>, 25 July 2013

HONG KONG SAR: On 20 April 2013, Customs officials at Hong Kong International Airport seized 113 ivory tusks (300 kg) in cargo declared as "spare parts", arriving from Burundi, bound for Singapore.

On 18 July, 1148 ivory tusks (2 t) declared as timber and concealed in a container on a vessel from Togo was seized (see Togo).

On 6 August 2013, Customs officers seized 1120 polished ivory tusks from a container arriving from Nigeria, via mainland China (and skins of five Leopards *Panthera pardus* and 13 rhinoceros horns (all CITES I)).

http://7thspace.com/headlines/436870/hong_kong_customs_seizes_ivory_tusks_at_hong_kong_international_airport.html, 30 April 2013; *South China Morning Post*, 14 August 2013: www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1294945/customs-seize-hk41m-ivory-rhino-horns-leopard-skins; www.traffic.org/home/2013/8/7/seizure-of-1148-ivory-tusks-underscores-hong-kongs-transit-r.html

KENYA: On 16 April 2013, at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, a Vietnamese national in transit from Cotonou, Benin, bound for Bangkok, Thailand, was arrested after 488 painted ivory bangles (33 kg) were found in his possession, in boxes labelled as flower vases.

On 3 July 2013, officials at Mombasa port seized 775 pieces of elephant ivory (1.3 t) in a container of dried fish from Uganda, destined for Malaysia.

On 8 July 2013, three tonnes of ivory declared as bags of peanuts, for export to Malaysia, were seized at the port in what has been described as the largest illegal consignment of ivory at the port this year. Three clearing agents at Mombasa have since been arrested over their alleged involvement in the illegal ivory trade.

On 21 August 2013, a shipment of 1.8 t of ivory illegally exported in January 2012 was returned by authorities in Singapore, where it had been seized in December 2012, in transit to Viet Nam. The shipping line transporting the shipment responded to an urgent appeal by the Kenyan authorities to co-operate when it was realised that the container could be carrying illegal ivory, and a stopover was made at the vessel's next port of call, Singapore.

On 22 August 2013, Chen Biemei was gaoled for 31 months after she pleaded guilty to attempting to smuggle to Hong Kong 6.9 kg of worked ivory, disguised as bags of macadamia nuts, on 14 August.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201304170954.html>, 16 April 2013; www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/03/us-kenya-ivory-poaching-idUSBRE9620XU20130703; www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/07/09/illegal-ivory-kenya-poaching_n_3566779.html, 9 July 2013; www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000091567&story_title=seized-ivory-shipped-back-to-kenya, 23 August 2013; www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/2013/08/kenya-jails-chinese-ivory-smuggler/, 22 August 2013

MACAU SAR: On 17 July 2013, two South Africans arriving from Hong Kong were arrested after failing to smuggle 34 kg of ivory into Macau that had been disguised as 583 chocolate bars.

<http://english.cri.cn/11354/2013/07/18/191s776661.htm>, 18 July 2013

NEW ZEALAND: On 10 July 2013, at Manukau District Court, Jiezhen Jiang was convicted of trading in ivory and fined NZD12 000 (USD10 000) after two parcels containing ivory and posted from Portugal and the UK were intercepted at the international mail centre; a further six ivory items were found at his property.

Between May 2010 and September 2011 Jiang bought ivory items online; he sold two pieces to people in China through a website and bid on and bought ivory items which he sent back to China. He told the authorities that he knew elephants were being killed for their ivory, but thought the pieces would be good investments. In sentencing, the judge said that he had taken into account an Impact Statement from TRAFFIC's Elephant and Rhino Programme Leader and Director of the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS), Tom Milliken, who pointed out that the African Elephant population had been halved in the decade to 1999, and has been in steady decline since then because of illegal killing. Milliken said that, to a conservationist, the idea that the defendant was aware that elephants were being killed for their ivory and therefore thought that ivory would be a good investment, is an attitude that no endangered species can survive.

www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1 & objectid=10896358, 10 July 2013

TANZANIA: On 12 July 2013, a person was charged with illegal trade in 1000+ elephant tusks. He is believed to have exported 781 tusks through Malawi in May, and was arrested in Dar es Salaam in early July in possession of 347 tusks.

www.france24.com/en/20130712-tanzanian-charged-smuggling-over-1000-elephant-tusks, 12 July 2013

THAILAND: On 30 August 2013, Customs officials at Bangkok's International Airport seized 105 kg of ivory tusks/ivory beads from two Vietnamese nationals arriving on a flight from Angola via Ethiopia, bound for Cambodia.

http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/thai-officials-seize-illegal-ivory-airport-20130830, 30 August 2013

TOGO: On 6 August 2013, a man was arrested at his shop in Lome and 700 kg of ivory seized from his premises. Some claim the suspect to be the kingpin in Togo's ivory trade, while others believe he is a retail dealer who serves as a convenient scapegoat to show law enforcement action in the face of international condemnation.

It is reported that Togo has only 60 elephants and that the country has recently become a transit point for ivory dealers using Lome's harbour after finding access to other West African ports difficult. In July, Customs officials in Hong Kong seized more than two tonnes of elephant tusks hidden in cargo from Togo (see Hong Kong).

www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-23599721, 7 August 2013; TRAFFIC

UK: In July 2013, at the Old Bailey, Gary Bolton was sentenced to seven years in gaol after devices he sold to detect bombs, ivory and tobacco, were found to be just empty boxes with handles and antennae. The instruments were marketed successfully to military, police and private clients around the world, including wildlife enforcement authorities in Africa, who were led to believe that efforts to control the illegal ivory trade could be strengthened by the use of these gadgets. Bolton's company was said to have an annual turnover of GBP3 million (USD4.7 million) selling the devices.

In a separate but similar case, James McCormick was gaoled for 10 years in May for selling more than 7000 fake detectors, which he claimed were able to detect explosives, drugs, ivory and money.

www.traffic.org/home/2013/8/27/ivory-detector-fraudster-sentenced-to-7-years-in-jail.html

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, DUBAI: In May 2013 it was reported that almost 260 pieces of raw ivory, disguised as furniture, had been seized from a shipment arriving at Jebel Ali Port from Mombasa, Kenya.

On 4 September 2013, police announced that half a tonne of ivory had been intercepted at Dubai International Airport, which they described as one of the largest ivory seizures in the emirate. No further details as to its provenance are currently available.

www.thenational.ae/news/uae-news/hundreds-of-ivory-seized-in-dubai, 21 May 2013;

www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/03/us-kenya-ivory-poaching-idUSBRE9620XU20130703;

www.thenational.ae/news/uae-news/dubai-police-intercept-half-a-ton-of-smuggled-ivory, 6 September 2013

VIET NAM: On 30 June 2013, Ho Chi Minh City Customs authorities at Tan Son Hhat International Airport seized ivory handicrafts (21 kg) that had been smuggled in from France. A Vietnamese national was arrested.

On 6 August 2013, it was reported that Customs officers at Hanoi's Noi Bai International Airport had arrested two Vietnamese nationals carrying 50 kg of ivory into the country from Russia, and that another two individuals had recently been arrested after attempting to import from Singapore 122 kg of ivory.

www.thanhniennews.com/index/pages/20130701-vietnamese-man-caught-smuggling-21kg-of-ivory.aspx, 1 July 2013; <http://english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/society/81031/over-50kg-of-ivory-seized.html>, 6 August 2013

FLORA

CHINA: In May 2013, at Tianjin Second Intermediate Court, suspect Wang was sentenced to one year and six months in prison for smuggling 45 t of Red Sanders (Red Sandalwood) *Pterocarpus santalinus* (CITES II); another defendant, Fan, was sentenced to two years' imprisonment, suspended for three years, in one of the country's largest illegal cases involving the smuggling of flora.

On 27 May 2013, an Indian national was intercepted by the Luohu Customs, Guangdong province, for illegally carrying 48 kg of Red Sanders wood. This was the largest case involving Red Sanders by Luohu Customs this year.

www.customs.gov.cn/publish/portal0/tab39267/info429667.htm, 17 May 2013;

www.jisi.gov.cn/News/szsm/gd/201306/20130609095238_9398.html, 9 June 2013

INDIA: On 16 June 2013, forest department staff seized some 209 Red Sanders logs and arrested seven smugglers after conducting raids in the forest areas in Kadapa, Chittoor and Nellore districts.

On 27 June 2013, Customs officials at Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport intercepted 11 Chinese passengers as they tried to smuggle 308 kg of Red Sanders out of the country in their luggage.

In early September 2013, at Chennai airport, three Chinese nationals bound for Bangkok were arrested, each in possession of some 50 kg of Red Sanders.

On 3 July 2013, Tirupati police seized one tonne of Red Sanders logs and arrested 45 people in Seshachalam forests, Andhra Pradesh.

On 15 July 2013, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) seized 133 t of Red Sanders allegedly being smuggled out to Dubai at the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust in Navi Mumbai. Four of the eight containers were marked as marbles and tiles, the rest as carrying onions.

On 18 August 2013, Customs officers at Pune seized 442 Red Sanders logs from vehicles in Kanhe Phata on the Pune-Mumbai highway, following the arrest of eight drivers on 16/17 August. The wood was bound for export. The drivers had fake documents stating that they were transporting mangoes and papaya.

On 19 August 2013, six people were arrested and some 30 t of Red Sanders from Andhra Pradesh, bound for Kerala, was seized near Pollachi, in Tamil Nadu's Coimbatore district.

http://newindianexpress.com/states/andhra_pradesh/Seven-smugglers-arrested-209-red-sanders-logs-seized/2013/06/17/article1638558.ece, 17 June 2013; www.indianexpress.com/news/11-chinese-travellers-held-for-smuggling-bid/1137898/, 5 July 2013; www.ptinews.com/news/3957997_3-Chinese-arrested-for-trying-to-smuggle-red-sanders, 6 September 2013; www.thehindu.com/news/national/andhra-pradesh/red-sanders-smuggling-foiled/article4878322.ece, 4 July 2013; www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/dri-seizes-133-mt-tonnes-of-red-sanders-at-jnpt-113071501041_1.html, 15 July 2013; <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/pune/Red-sanders-worth-3-crore-seized-8-held/articleshow/21927910.cms>, 20 August 2013; http://zeenews.india.com/news/tamil-nadu/six-arrested-30-tons-of-red-sanders-seized-in-tn_870054.html, 19 August 2013

UK: In August 2013, Border Force Officers at Heathrow Airport intercepted four consignments (three destined for the UK and one to Greece) on arrival from India, described as “Wooden Handicrafts”. Examination revealed three consignments of sawn Red Sandalwood (Annex B /CITES II) and one of Red Sandalwood prayer beads. In total, some 100 kg of wood was seized.

UK Border Force

M A R I N E

AUSTRALIA: In April 2013, Van Thanh Le from Darch, Perth, was convicted of taking abalones out of season and exceeding the possession limit with 60 undersized abalones *Haliotis*. He was the second target of Operation Ratchet, a Department of Fisheries sting on people illegally taking or distributing the shellfish in the metropolitan area. He was fined AUD15 341 (USD14 400).

In May 2013, at Holden Hill Magistrates’ Court, Adelaide, Dang Duong of Pooraka was found guilty of possessing 70 abalones and ordered to pay AUD9452 (USD8800), bringing to a conclusion the largest case involving the illegal trade in abalones in the State’s history. The investigation, which began in 2010, has resulted in the conviction of six others involved in the trade of some 480 kg of abalones. Three were given suspended gaol sentences, and fines imposed amounted to a total of AUD28 952 and 360 hours’ community service.

www.watoday.com.au/wa-news/15000-fine-for-illegal-wa-abalone-catch-20130409-2hiuk.html, 9 April 2013; www.thefishsite.com/fishnews/20552/abalone-trafficking-ring-dismantled, 20 June 2013

CAYMAN ISLANDS: During July 2013, four poachers were arrested in connection with two separate incidents involving the illegal collection of 156 and 119 Queen Conch *Tridacna gigas* (CITES II), respectively. Harvesting conch between May and the end of October is illegal; during open season, which runs from 1 November to 30 April, the daily limit is five. These restrictions are in place because the Cayman Islands’ conch population, while sufficient for limited personal consumption within the law, cannot support a commercial fishery.

www.caymannewsservice.com/science-and-nature/2013/07/29/275-poached-conch-recovered-doe, 29 July 2013

CHINA: On 24 May 2013, Shekou Customs of Shenzhen seized 12 kg of dried seahorses *Hippocampus* concealed in luggage being carried by an African passenger. In the same month, suspect Zhang was sentenced to 10 months in gaol for illegally carrying 19 kg of dried seahorses from the Philippines to Jinjiang City, Fujian province, in October 2012. In July 2013, the post office branch of Jinling Customs of Nanjing, Jiangsu province, detected over 6000 dried seahorses (10 kg) in a parcel from South Asia.

www.customs.gov.cn/publish/portal0/tab39267/info431465.htm, 31 May 2013; http://qz.fjsen.com/2013-05/10/content_11356901.htm, 10 May 2013; <http://news.xinmin.cn/domestic/2013/07/18/21111645.html>, 18 July 2013

SOUTH AFRICA: On 25 July 2013, three men were arrested on a farm near Alexandria, Eastern Cape, after being found in possession of 1630 kg of abalone *Haliotis midae*. Two of the men were Chinese nationals while the third was the farm's owner.

www.enca.com/south-africa/eastern-cape-men-stash-worth-millions; <http://ewn.co.za/2013/08/27/Abalone-possession-case-postponed>

SPAIN: On 4 June 2013, authorities in Madrid investigated 13 facilities and seized some 500 000 pieces of coral, including *Acropora*, *Leptoria*, *Pocillopora*, *Fungia*, *Antipathes*, *Heliopora* (all CITES II). Two people were arrested and a further six charged.

www.interior.gob.es/press/intervenidas-mas-de-512-000-piezas-de-coral-que-eran-vendidas-vulnerando-el-convenio-internacional-sobre-especies-amenazadas-15270?set_locale=ca

UK: On 22 May 2013, at Crown Square Crown Court, Manchester, Alex Montgomery of Manchester was sentenced to six months in gaol after pleading guilty to charges of attempting to smuggle 750 kg of live hard corals through Manchester airport from Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam, in May 2012, in boxes labelled "Marine fish and Soft Corals". More specimens were seized from Montgomery's business premises, along with his computer, which had information regarding his business dealings with foreign suppliers.

www.gov.uk/government/news/man-jailed-for-smuggling-coral-and-clams, 22 May 2013; www.traffic.org/home/2013/5/23/uk-hands-down-custodial-sentence-for-coral-smuggling.html

VIET NAM: On 9 June 2013, Con Dao Forest Rangers arrested two local men collecting a total of 498 Green Turtle *Chelonia mydas* (CITES I) eggs from nests on a protected beach. Each person has been fined VND23 million (USD1090).

Environmental News Vietnam Newsletter, August 2013

PANGOLINS

CHINA: In April 2013, Luohu District People's Court, Guangdong province, sentenced defendant Zhu to 10.5 years in gaol (and a fine of CNY10 000(USD1587)); defendant Wu to four years in gaol (fined CNY10 000); and defendant Zhuo to four years in gaol (fined CNY10 000). The three had been arrested in September 2012 for illegally trading a total of 122 pangolins *Manis* (CITES II) and other wildlife items.

http://sztqb.sznews.com/html/2013-04/13/content_2441852.htm

FRANCE: On 30 April 2013, Customs authorities at Charles de Gaulle Airport, Paris, announced the seizure of 50 kg of pangolin *Manis* (CITES II) scales from Cameroon bound for Viet Nam, the third pangolin seizure in April, amounting to a total of nearly 100 kg and representing between 300–400 pangolins.

www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/130430/french-customs-seize-pangolin-scales-headed-vietnam, 30 April 2013

INDIA: On 19 July 2013, Customs officers in Guwahati seized 85 kg of pangolin *Manis* (CITES II) scales in a consignment of drugs (pseudoephedrine tablets) at a house in the Beltola area.

On 31 July 2013, 70 kg of pangolin scales, reportedly from some 300 pangolins, were seized and seven people arrested in Siliguri, West Bengal. The scales had been brought from Kalka in Haryana and were to be handed over to smugglers based in Nepal, Nagaland and Manipur.

Business Standard 19 July 2013: www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/customs-department-seizes-drugs-worth-millions-in-guwahati-113071900684_1.html;
www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/70-kg-pangolin-scales-seized-113073101243_1.html, 31 July 2013

MALAYSIA: On 26 June 2013, at the Sessions Court, six people were each gaoled for one year and fined RM330 000 (USD103 000) for attempting to smuggle 150 pangolins *Manis* (CITES II) into Thailand in 2012. The defendants were granted bail pending an appeal.

www.nst.com.my/nation/general/six-jailed-over-pangolins-in-car-1.308395, 27 June 2013;
www.traffic.org/home/2013/7/15/world-experts-all-pangolin-species-at-risk-from-illegal-trad.html

THAILAND: On 16 September 2013, 200 live pangolins *Manis* (CITES II) were retrieved by police from two vehicles in Udon Thani; the drivers fled. The pangolins were believed to have been destined for China or Viet Nam, via Lao PDR.

www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/370180/pangolins-seized-in-udon-thani, 17 September 2013

VIET NAM: In August 2013, Customs officials at Hai Phong port found more than six tonnes of live pangolins *Manis* (CITES II) inside a container purportedly containing frozen fish. The cargo, from Indonesia, was due for onward shipment to an undisclosed destination. This year to date, more than 10 t of pangolins—both live and frozen—and 1.2 t of pangolin scales, have reportedly been confiscated at Hai Phong port.

www.nst.com.my/latest/over-six-tonnes-of-rare-live-pangolins-found-in-vietnam-1.337605, 14 August 2013

RHINOCEROSSES

CHINA: On 18 June 2013, at Shanghai No. 1 Intermediate People's Court, Dong Fengrong was sentenced to seven years in gaol and fined CNY150 000 (USD24 000) after attempting to smuggle into the country from France seven rhinoceros (CITES I) horns and products (8 kg) (and 14 ivory items) at Pudong International Airport on 23 January.

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90882/8289766.html>, 19 June 2013

CZECH REPUBLIC: On 23 July 2013, authorities seized 24 White Rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* (CITES I) horns and arrested members of an international gang that had hired Czech nationals to hunt rhinoceroses in South Africa to obtain their horns. Sixteen people have been charged in connection with the case, initiated after the Czech Environmental Inspectorate became suspicious that people applying for import permits for rhinoceros horns were not importing them from South Africa as personal hunting trophies, which may be allowed with a CITES permit.

www.radio.cz/en/section/curaffrs/czech-authorities-seize-record-amount-of-rhino-horns, 23 July 2013

KENYA: On 17 September 2013, at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, a Vietnamese national in transit from Maputo, Mozambique, en route to Hong Kong via Doha, Qatar, was arrested with five rhinoceros (CITES I) horns.

www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/2013/09/vietnamese-arrested-rhino-horns-jkia/, 17 September 2013

NEPAL: On 19 June 2013, 12 rhinoceros poachers from Nawalparasi district were given gaol sentences ranging from 10–15 years and fines of between USD550–1100 each. The poaching of rhinoceroses (CITES I) in Nepal is reported to have significantly reduced over the last decade owing in large part to increased security and the involvement of government personnel in wildlife management.

On 16 September 2013, Sita Bahadur Dhenga Magar, of Nawalparasi district, was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment, five years after being convicted. He had absconded following his conviction in June 2008 for killing a rhinoceros in 2005 and selling the horn; he was arrested in Chitwan National Park on 2 September.

www.shanghaidaily.com/article/article_xinhua.asp?id=148371, 19 June 2013;

www.myrepublica.com/portall/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=61549, 16 September 2013

SOUTH AFRICA: In April 2013, at Phalaborwa Magistrates' Court, Inaso Makhubela of Mozambique and Jorudo Ngobeni of South Africa, were sentenced to 15 years in gaol for shooting dead and dehorning a rhinoceros (CITES I) in Limpopo in 2011.

On 10 July 2013, at Makhado Regional Court, Limpopo, three Mozambican nationals were each gaoled for five years for rhinoceros poaching in Nwandeni Resort. Augustus Nkuna, Foster Nyoni and Manyanga Shiringa were also given a 12-month suspended sentence. The trio was arrested in May 2012.

On 29 July 2013, at Makhado Magistrates' Court, Limpopo, Enock Mutungi, and Mozambican national Daniel Dumusani, were each sentenced to six years' imprisonment after being found guilty of rhinoceros poaching in Masisi, Kruger National Park (KNP).

On 15 August 2013, in Nelspruit Regional Court, Leonard Mhlongo from Mozambique was sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment for killing and dehorning a Black Rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* (CITES I) and her calf in KNP. His sentence consisted of four years in gaol for entering the KNP illegally, 10 years for killing the rhinoceros cow, and eight years for killing the calf. The eight years would run concurrently with the 10 years.

On 30 August 2013, at Nelspruit Regional Court, Mozambican nationals Julius Ngwenya, Daniel Jadere and Antonio Malunga, were each gaoled for 16 years for killing and dehorning a White Rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* and her calf in KNP in May. During their arrest, a fourth suspect was shot dead.

www.thenewage.co.za/90163-1007-53-15_years_behind_bars_for_rhino_poachers, 3 April 2013;

www.timeslive.co.za/scitech/2013/07/11/three-rhino-poachers-sentenced-five-years-in-limpopo, 11 July 2013;

www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/jail-terms-for-limpopo-rhino-poachers-1.1554429#UfeAb23DJu1,

29 July 2013; www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/mpuma-rhino-poacher-jailed-1.1563117, 15 August 2013;

www.timeslive.co.za/scitech/2013/08/30/three-poachers-get-16-years-each-for-killing-rhino-and-calf, 30 August 2013

VIET NAM: On 20 May 2013, Customs officers at Ho Chi Minh City's Tan Son Nhat airport arrested a man arriving from Europe with six pieces of rhinoceros (CITES I) horn (5 kg).

www.thanhniennews.com/index/pages/20130521-vietnam-passenger-caught-with-5kg-of-rhino-horns.aspx, 21 May 2013

OTHER CASES

CANADA: On 5 April 2013, at a court in Winnipeg, four Mexican hunters were fined CAD10 000–30 000 (USD9700–29 137) for attempting to return from Nunavut to Mexico in a private jet with the skins of three Polar Bears *Ursus maritimus* (CITES I) and three Narwhal *Monodon monoceros* (II) tusks following a hunting trip; while their sport hunting trophies were in order, they had not applied for the requisite CITES permits to take the items back to Canada, nor does Mexico permit the

importation of marine mammals. The fine will go to a federal programme, the Environmental Defence Fund, which distributes money to environmental groups.

www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674illegal_trophy_export_attempt_of_arctic_trophies_costs_mexican_hunters/8 April 2013

CHINA: On 22 May 2013, Customs officers at Manzhouli border crossing with Russia in the Inner Mongolia region seized 213 bear paws from a van being driven into China. Two Russian nationals were arrested. The paws had been concealed inside five tyres and derived from at least 54 bears [species not reported]: the largest paw weighed two kilogrammes and the smallest 200 g. On 20 August 2013, 169 bear paws (138 from Brown Bears *Ursus arctos* (CITES II) and the remainder from Asiatic Black Bears *Ursus thibetanus* (CITES I)), smuggled from Russia, were seized by Harbin Customs officials, Heilongjiang province. Five suspects from a wildlife smuggling ring, which was busted on 12 July, have been arrested.

On 29 April 2013, border police in Duoma, Nagqu Prefecture, seized 102 Tibetan Antelope *Pantholops hodgsonii* (CITES I) skins and three skulls.

On 12 May 2013, Customs officials at Alashankou (on the border with Kazakhstan), detected 719 horns of Saiga Antelope *Saiga tatarica* (CITES II) on a train arriving from Kazakhstan. Four suspects were detained.

Defendant Yu was recently sentenced to five years in gaol (and fined CNY20 000 (USD3174) after being arrested in January by Gongbei Customs, Zhuhai, for smuggling 76 hornbill skulls (7.7 kg).

www.china.org.cn/video/2013-06/20/content_29175449.htm, 20 June 2013;

www.globaltimes.cn/content/805314.shtml#.Uhs6tj-yQ0I, 21 August 2013;

http://news.2500sz.com/news/gn/2013-5/10_1987960.shtml, 10 May 2013;

<http://legal.people.com.cn/n/2013/0521/c203936-21559782.html>, 21 May 2013;

www.chinadaily.com.cn/hqgj/jryw/2013-07-11/content_9550529.html, 11 July 2013

COLOMBIA: On 22 August 2013, it was reported that Janer de Jesús Sarmiento, of Santa Ana (Magdalena), had been sentenced at the Juez Treinta Criminal Circuit Court, Bogotá, to 56 months in gaol and fined for transporting 2.9 kg of meat and body parts of some 150 Colombian Sliders *Trachemys callirostris*. Sarmiento had been detained by the authorities in April 2012 at Salitre Transport Terminal in Bogotá.

www.elespectador.com/noticias/bogota/hombre-debera-pagar-cuatro-anos-de-carcel-traficar-carn-articulo-441712, 22 August 2013

REPUBLIC OF GUINEA: In August 2013, a man was sentenced to a fine and one year in gaol for the illegal trade of Chimpanzees *Pan troglodytes* (CITES I), Lions *Panthera leo* (I), Leopards *P. pardus* (I), hyaenas and tropical birds over the past decade. Two accomplices also received gaol sentences. During the 10-month operation to apprehend the group, some 150 seized birds were released in the wild.

http://wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/?210073/Kingpin-behind-bars-for-poaching-chimps, 26 August 2013

INDIA: On 1 September 2013, at Tentulberia area, West Bengal, border troops seized 952 Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II) from two people crossing the border into Bangladesh; the duo fled.

www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/big-seizure-of-952-star-tortoises-on-indo-bangla-border-113090200864_1.html

ITALY: On 14 June 2013, three Maltese nationals returning to Malta were detained in transit at Linate airport, Milan, on a flight from Argentina, after their luggage was found to contain 180 dead birds, including Wattled Jacana *Jacana jacana*, Silver Teal *Anas versicolor*, Nacunda Nighthawk *Chordeiles nacunda* and Whistling Heron *Syrigma sibilatrix*.

www.maltatoday.com.mt/en/newsdetails/news/courtandpolice/Maltese-nationals-stopped-at-Milan-airport-carrying-180-dead-birds-20130626, 26 June 2013

NEPAL: On 1 June 2013, police in Darchula seized skins and bones of Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) and Leopard *P. pardus* (I), ivory (I), pangolin (II) scales, and musk (I/II) that had been concealed in a cave. One man and two porters were arrested; seven others fled. During an exchange of fire, one of the suspected smugglers sustained bullet injuries. The porters were being paid to transport the contraband to Taklakot in Tibet Autonomous Region, China, about three days walk from Darchula.

www.nzweek.com/world/smuggler-arrested-in-nepal-with-large-cache-of-banned-animal-parts-64710/, 3 June 2013

SRI LANKA: On 5 September 2013, 450 kg of sea cucumbers were seized from a van at a coastal area near Mandapam refugee camp.

www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/450-kg-of-sea-cucumber-seized-113090500859_1.html, 5 September 2013

TAIWAN: On 24 August 2013, in what has been described as the biggest smuggling case of its kind in Taiwan, coastguards seized 1180 Yellow Pond Turtles *Mauremys mutica* and 1446 Yellow-margined Box Turtles *Cuora flavomarginata* (both CITES II) from a vessel in the port of Kaohsiung.

www.abc.net.au/news/2013-08-25/taiwan-seizes-2500-rare-turtles-bound-for-dinner-plate/4911168, 25 August 2013

USA: On 23 August 2013, Olivia Terrance of Hogansburg, New York, was sentenced to 18 months in gaol after pleading guilty to smuggling turtles and other reptiles into Canada from the USA in 2009/2010, for sale. Her sentence includes three years' supervision after her release.

www.therepublic.com/view/story/2bba110379fb4665a5cd8019cefc9315/NY-Wildlife-Smuggling, 24 August 2013

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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/hd2011/2014/01-22/294873.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 spokes-person, 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

E L E P H A N T S

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#UwXyH4XWBUl, 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 XFAI 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 SAR: 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 seashells. On 4 October, another container arriving from Malaysia and also said to be carrying seashells, 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/ALeqM5hN0dtfAAjezJSe3yI8vFkUACuklg?docId=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.ece, 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-a-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 Madagascan 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, 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-6492477/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 \[in Chinese\]](http://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 (USD21 150) 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-vietnam-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

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* (WAPPRIITA). 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/29831856.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 Vitora-Oliva 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/endangered-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/2013/1223-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-hailed, 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/#.UyLU4XsxuI>, 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/2013/11/06/1184543689/Russian-Border-Agents-Seize-Half-Ton-of-Bear-Paws.html, 6 November 2013; http://en.ria.ru/russia/2013/12/11/1185452358/Police-Swoop-on-Russian-Falcon-Smugglers.html

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A B A L O N E

AUSTRALIA: On 17 July 2014, Milton Local Court, New South Wales, Hyeong Sung Kim, of Newton, and Hwan Gon Kim, of Lidcombe, were each fined AUD10 000 (USD8700) in their absence, after being caught in February diving off Bawley point and later found in possession of 378 abalones (67 kg); 372 were undersized. The bag limit per person is two abalones.

South Coast Register: http://bit.ly/Wvg0N4, 22 July 2014

HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION: On 9 May 2014, Customs officials seized 989 kg of dried abalones from a container at Kwai Chung Customhouse Cargo Examination

Compound that had arrived from South Africa declared as “dry goods pillow inner waste”. One arrest.

Hong Kong Customs & Excise Department, Press Release: <http://bit.ly/lrDXZtg>, 9 May 2014

SOUTH AFRICA: On 8 July 2014, police in Benoni, near Johannesburg, arrested a Chinese national and three Mozambicans following a raid on an illegal abalone-drying facility; five tonnes of abalones were seized. This is reportedly one of the largest-ever inland confiscations. The seized abalones will be processed and auctioned off to raise money for government efforts to combat wildlife poaching and smuggling.

On 1 August 2014, two men were to appear in Kimberley Magistrates’ Court, Northern Cape Province, after police stopped their vehicle at a road block near Kimberley and seized 76 kg of abalones.

On 4 August 2014, a Chinese national and a Malawian were expected to appear in Beaufort West Magistrate’s Court, Western Cape, after being found with 32 bags (1257 abalones) in the boot of their vehicle on 1 August during a routine patrol near Karoo National Park.

On 14 September 2014, three Chinese nationals were arrested at an illegal abalone processing facility in Van Dyk Park, Boksburg. 10 508 dry abalones (860 kg) and *ca.* a tonne of wet abalones and drying equipment were confiscated.

The Star: <http://bit.ly/lqWxXxo> 9 July 2014; SABC: <http://bit.ly/lc952r>, 31 July 2014; The New Age: <http://bit.ly/l58ZKv6>, 5 August 2014; AllAfrica: <http://bit.ly/luzWmwv>, 15 September 2014

B I G C A T S

CHINA: In April 2014, in Wenzhou, Zhejiang province, a man arrested in January 2014 in possession of a dead Siberian Tiger *Panthera tigris altaica* (CITES I) was sentenced to seven and a half years’ imprisonment and fined USD8000.

On the Trail No. 5, Robin des Bois, 29 July 2014

IRAN: In August 2014, it was reported that a poacher arrested in Northern Khorasan while selling the skin of a Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) had been sentenced to three years in gaol. The head of the Northern Khorasan Department of the Environment said the individual had been under surveillance by investigators for some time.

Iranian courts have reportedly been handing out more severe sentences to poachers in the past year following reports of a declining number of Leopards and Cheetahs *Acinonyx jubatus* (CITES I) in the country.

Payvand Iran News: <http://bit.ly/ltnFB8z>, 30 August 2014

NEPAL: On 21 July 2014, Chitwan National Park (CNP) imposed a five-year gaol term on Sita Ram Thing of Manahari-2 for his involvement in poaching and smuggling Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) body parts. Thing was caught while selling Tiger skins in Makwanpur district on 27 July 2012. Although CNP had already announced the gaol term last year, affirmation of the punishment was made public on 21 July. Two accomplices, who had escaped from detention, were returned to Bharatpur Jail.

MY Republica: <http://bit.ly/lr6vj88>, 22 July 2014

BIRDS

BELGIUM: In June 2014, a six-year investigation by the Belgian Federal Police resulted in the conviction of five people in Ghent; gaol terms range from between one and four years, with fines in excess of €200 000 (USD254 000). The group was convicted of being part of a criminal organization that had acquired protected birds of prey and passed them off as captive-bred using falsified and forged permits. Enforcement action involved five countries and included search warrants being executed in the UK by the police and the UK National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU). The court ordered the forfeiture of cash and assets in excess of €700K.

Dozens of birds of prey are now in the care of the Belgian authorities, but any cost is being borne by the defendants by order of the trial judge.

Following a two-year investigation by Gloucestershire police and the NWCU, in May 2013 a Gloucestershire man was convicted of fraud and trading in Black Kites *Milvus migrans* (CITES II); documentation in that case was linked directly to one of the defendants convicted in Belgium.

UK National Wildlife Crime Unit: <http://bit.ly/1vlybeL>

CUBA: On 16 May 2014, at Ignacio Agramonte International Airport, Camaguay, a man was arrested after attempting to smuggle 66 hummingbirds and finches to the USA that had been placed in pouches sewn into his trousers.

Mail Online: <http://dailym.ai/1137woW>, 3 June 2014

MALAYSIA: On 10 June 2014, the Wildlife and National Parks Department (Perhilitan) seized 241 White-rumped Shamas *Copsychus malabaricus* at an oil palm estate in Kampung Sepakat. The bird is protected under the nation's *Wildlife Conservation Act*. Enforcement officers detained two suspects after they found the songbirds in cages believed to have been built as a collection centre for the birds. Two Indonesian suspects were remanded in custody.

www.thestar.com.my/News/Nation/2014/06/12/Wildlife-smugglers-sing-the-blues-after-songbird-seizure/, 12 June 2014

MALTA: On 6 June 2014, the Court of Appeal halved the fine imposed on a reoffending hunter, Branco Fenech, ruling that the first court had been too severe in its punishment.

In June last year, the man was convicted of trapping protected birds by using a mist net during the closed season. He was also found guilty of keeping protected birds and using them as bait for trapping in July 2012 at Ta' Qali. He had already been convicted of the same offence in April 2010.

The first court fined Fenech €3000 (USD3800), seized the items and disqualified him from keeping a hunter's licence for three years. However he appealed the judgement stating that he had admitted his guilt and had immediately removed the illegal trapping equipment. The Court of Appeal upheld the guilty judgement, confirmed the seizure of the illegal trapping equipment, and the three-year disqualification of a hunter's licence, but reduced the fine to €1500.

On 23 July 2014, a passenger arriving on a flight from Frankfurt, Germany, was found in possession of 411 bird skins in his luggage. The person, from Malta, had just returned from a hunting trip in Argentina. The consignment was made up of grebes, swans, ducks, eagles, hawks, falcons, storks, flamingos, ibises, crakes, gulls, owls and passerines, the majority of which are protected in their country of origin and some 120 specimens were CITES-listed.

An official of the Wild Birds Regulation Unit said that the consignment represented one of the most significant cases of wildlife smuggling attempts involving dead protected birds during the last decade.

Malta Today: <http://bit.ly/1trvvlz>, 6 June 2014; Malta Independent, <http://bit.ly/1pjSSYT>, 25 July 2014

SRI LANKA: On 16 September 2014, at Colombo airport, a Chinese man en route to Guangzhou, China, was arrested while trying to smuggle out in cans of tea some five kilogrammes of edible nests, a delicacy in China. The confiscated nests were to be sent for display in Colombo's museum.

Channel News Asia: <http://bit.ly/1oUp59C>, 25 September 2014

USA: On 16 May 2014, it was reported that a Dallas man had been indicted after allegedly smuggling 61 dead hummingbirds into the country from Mexico for sale between February 2013 and January 2014. Specimens, all CITES-II listed, included 14 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds *Archilochus colubris*, three Black-chinned Hummingbirds *A. alexandri*, five Violet-crowned Hummingbirds *Agyrtria violiceps*, one Allen's Hummingbird *Selasphorus sasin* and 38 female hummingbirds of unreported species. USFWS agents said that hummingbirds are commonly intercepted by agents in the post and at the nation's airports. They are reportedly dried and sold as good luck charms in some cultures, known as *chuparrosas* (Spanish for "rose sucker").

KLTV: <http://bit.ly/1mRqeAn>, 17 May 2014

ELEPHANTS

CAMBODIA: On 9 May 2014, Customs officers at Sihanoukville Autonomous Port in Preah Sihanouk province confiscated three tonnes of elephant tusks, reportedly the largest-ever confiscation of elephant tusks in the country. The tusks, placed in 108 sacks and concealed in a container of beans, were in transit—their provenance and destination not disclosed. An investigation is under way. It was the third recent seizure of ivory tusks in Cambodia: in February, Customs officers arrested two Vietnamese nationals at Siem Reap International Airport for smuggling 79.5 kg of illegal elephant tusks (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 26(1):22) and in March, 263 kg of ivory tusks were seized in eastern Svay Rieng province, bordering Viet Nam.

<http://bit.ly/RG6nj7>, 9 May 2014

CAMEROON: On 1 September 2014, 197 ivory tusks were seized at a local checkpoint 20 km from Yaoundé. It is estimated that around 100 elephants were killed to provide the quantity of ivory seized. The offenders evaded capture but are being sought. The source of the tusks is under investigation but is believed to be the southern part of the country, around the Cameroon-Gabon border.

<http://bit.ly/1sAC55s>, 18 September 2014

CHINA: On 27 March 2014, at Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, a detector dog with the Guangzhou Customs Anti-smuggling Police detected ivory in the suitcase of an inbound passenger; some 13 ivory bracelets (total 420 g) were confiscated. The dog is one of the first graduates of a detector dog training programme run by the China Customs Anti-smuggling Bureau, in co-operation with TRAFFIC and supported by WWF-Germany and WWF-UK. The reaction to the discovery from a fellow passenger raised the suspicions of the anti-smuggling police. Following another positive reaction to the second passenger's luggage by the dog, officers carried out a search and found ivory necklaces, pangolin scales and other items, weighing a total of 500 g.

These are the first seizures of endangered wildlife goods made by Customs officers in China using a detector dog.

TRAFFIC: <http://bit.ly/Qh63j4>, 17 April 2014

CZECH REPUBLIC: On 23 July 2014, authorities at Václav Havel Airport, Prague, seized 24 kg of elephant ivory from the luggage of a Vietnamese national living in the country who was travelling to Hanoi; four complete tusks divided into 15 pieces were confiscated and the suspect taken into custody. Two earlier ivory shipments, on 15 June and 28 January, comprising 35 kg and 33 kg

respectively, were seized at the airport, again from Vietnamese citizens living in the Czech Republic and travelling to Viet Nam. Samples of the ivory have been sent for isotope analysis to determine their origin.

CITES Department, Czech Environmental Inspectorate, CITES News, Prague Airport No. 112, 2014

FRANCE: On 21 May 2014, it was reported that authorities in Var had seized at least 280 carved ivory pieces from the premises of a retired couple. The items included carved statues, lamps and jewellery, most of which had been purchased over the internet. The pieces are to be sent to museums or destroyed.

http://bit.ly/ZAbKxj (in French), 24 May 2014

GERMANY: Two cases involving Vietnamese citizens, living in the Czech Republic, and travelling to Viet Nam: in May 2014, 60 kg of ivory was seized [location not specified]; on 8 June, 31 kg of ivory was seized at Frankfurt airport.

CITES Department, Czech Environmental Inspectorate, CITES News, Prague Airport No. 112, 2014

HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION: On 24 July 2014, at Tsuen Wan Court, 15 Vietnamese passengers were each gaoled for six months after being arrested on 10 June following their arrival on a flight from Angola, via Ethiopia, with a total of 790 kg of ivory in their baggage, the largest-ever seizure of ivory brought in by plane. The suspects had reportedly been bound for Cambodia via South Korea.

“The Hong Kong authorities are to be congratulated for their diligence in detecting this sizeable quantity of ivory, but the case throws up many questions and could be a harbinger of new criminal tactics emerging in the illicit ivory trade,” said Tom Milliken, TRAFFIC’s Elephant and Rhinoceros Programme Leader. “This case seems to suggest employing a veritable team of “mules” to move a large quantity of ivory by dividing it up into check-in baggage-sized units for air travel. That’s something very different to what we typically see: the large-scale movement of ivory in containerized shipments through seaports,” said Milliken.

“Angola has one of the world’s largest unregulated illegal ivory markets and these products could have been mass-produced there”, he said. [See pages 44–46].

http://bit.ly/rF1jE8, 25 July 2014

KENYA: On 25 July 2014, Customs officers at the Swissport Cargo Service at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport seized 1350 pieces of worked ivory (260 kg) from boxes declared as containing live dogs. The shipment, destined for Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, had been disguised as wood carvings, and the ivory painted black and red. The source of the ivory is being investigated.

Environment News Service: bit.ly/1o1BcQk, 25 July 2014

MALAWI: On 17 September 2014, at Kamuzu International Airport (KIA), Lilongwe, officials intercepted nine boxes containing some 50 kg of worked ivory destined for China via express delivery service. The owners of the ivory, two Chinese nationals working at an hotel in the capital, were later arrested and granted police bail; a resident acting as the middleman was tracked down but it is not clear whether he will be prosecuted.

Agriculture, Environment and Development: http://bit.ly/1v4jenS, 24 September 2014

SOUTH AFRICA: On 5 September 2014, at Khayelitsha Magistrates’ Court, Cape Town, Cheng Jie Liang was sentenced to 10 years in gaol for illegal possession of ivory—the highest penalty ever imposed in South Africa for such an offence. He was also fined R5 million (USD443 000) for possessing one tonne of poached elephant tusks; his gaol sentence was to be suspended if he could pay the fine within a year.

Liang, a Chinese national who has been living in South Africa since 2003, was sentenced to a further two years in gaol for the illegal possession of abalone. The court heard he was probably part of an international ivory smuggling syndicate working at a high level as a courier and exporter. He was arrested in September 2012 in Milnerton, where the ivory was being stored in two units. The stash included 67 tusk tips, the nerve cavities of which were mostly still moist with blood and tissue, indicating that at least 34 elephants had been killed.

iol news: <http://bit.ly/1uGT10d>, 8 September 2013

USA: On 4 June 2014, Victor Gordon, a Philadelphia shop owner was sentenced to 30 months in gaol for smuggling into the country a total of 400 pieces of carved elephant ivory over a period of nine years. On four occasions, beginning in 2006, he paid a smuggler to bring ivory from Gabon through John F. Kennedy Airport. In some instances, he stained the ivory and created false receipts to make it appear as though it had been lawfully acquired prior to the 1989 international ivory trade ban. Gordon was also ordered to forfeit USD150 000, along with a tonne of elephant ivory that agents seized from his shop in April 2009. The sentence marks the close of an eight-year investigation that has yielded nine convictions for smuggling and related offences. The government believes Gordon's illegal ivory collection to be the largest uncovered by law enforcement in the USA to date.

Philly.com: <http://bit.ly/1i4pmDR>, 4 June 2014

VIET NAM: On 24 May 2014, Customs officials in Hai Phong seized more than one tonne of cut ivory pieces smuggled from Hong Kong, by sea, in a container bound for China which was claimed to contain charcoal. The declaration form had been completed by a construction company based in Quang Ninh province.

Tuoi Tre News: <http://bit.ly/1jVNpc8>, 25 May 2014

On 11 June 2014, Customs officials at Tan Son Nhat Airport, Ho Chi Minh City, seized 77 elephant tusks (110 kg) in luggage declared as personal goods. The ivory reportedly originated from Nigeria and had arrived on a flight from Doha, Qatar. No arrests reported.

On 22 June 2014, Customs officers at the airport seized 39 elephant tusks and 100 ivory items (total of 90 kg) that had been smuggled through several transit airports, described as food.

Wall Street Journal, Southeast Asia: <http://on.wsj.com/1yBZbB6>, 11 June 2014;

Thanh Nien News: <http://bit.ly/1uhVZbl>, 23 June 2014

PANGOLINS

CAMEROON: In April 2014, a woman known to the police for the illegal trade in protected species was arrested in Yaoundé in possession of 120 kg of pangolin scales, some derived from Giant Ground Pangolins *Manis gigantea* (CITES II). She had previously been arrested in December 2012 for smuggling Gorilla *Gorilla gorilla* (CITES I) parts.

On the Trail No. 5, Robin des Bois, 29 July 2014

CHINA: On 12 May 2014, border police in Guangdong province seized 956 dead pangolins *Manis* (CITES II) from a vehicle. The carcasses (nearly four tonnes) had been concealed in 189 cool boxes. One arrest. This is reported to be one of the biggest pangolin trafficking cases ever recorded in China.

Shanghai Daily: <http://bit.ly/QEFpjZ>, 13 May 2014

FRANCE: On 9 July 2014, it was reported that Customs officials at Roissy Charles de Gaulle Airport had seized 250 kg of pangolin (*Manis*, CITES II) scales, the most important case of its kind to have taken place in France. Some three or four pangolins are reportedly needed to obtain one kilogramme of scales. Declared as “fish scales”, the shipment had arrived from Nigeria, bound for Lao PDR. A total of 558 kg of pangolin scales have been seized at the airport since 2009.

French Government Customs: <http://bit.ly/1rQVWAZ>, 9 July 2014

HONG KONG: In two separate shipments arriving via Malaysia in May and June 2014, Customs seized what has been described as the largest amount of pangolin scales in Hong Kong in the past five years. The haul weighed 3.3 t.

On 28 May, 1000 kg of pangolin scales were detected in a container at Kwai Chung Customhouse Cargo Examination Compound. Customs officers selected a shipment arriving from South Africa, declared as “Plastic pet”, for inspection and found pangolin scales in 40 of the 510 bags of goods in the container.

On 11 June, another container in which the contents were declared as sawn timber from Cameroon, was found to contain 2.34 t of pangolin scales packed in 115 bags. A Malaysian businessman has been released on bail in connection with both shipments.

Hong Kong Customs Press Release: <http://bit.ly/1oGPKAv>, 28 May 2014; The Star: <http://bit.ly/1leVidD>, 19 June 2014

THAILAND: On 16 May 2014, three people were arrested after 130 pangolins were found in a warehouse in Pathum Thani.

Bangkok Post: <http://bit.ly/1gfSrR3>, 17 May 2014

VIET NAM: On 30 June 2014, police from the Ministry of Public Security rescued 350 kg of live pangolins in Quang Ninh province. According to a report in Tuoi Tre newspaper, one worker said hundreds of pangolins are smuggled into China every day after being gathered in Quang Ninh to be force-fed a rice flour solution that increases their weight (and price). A member of the smuggling team said that he and five others were tasked with stuffing the animals with between 300 g to 500 g of the solution daily.

Thanh Nien News: <http://bit.ly/1mNxF7D>, 1 July 2014

On 23 July 2014, Customs officers at Hai Phong port seized 1.4 t of pangolin scales smuggled on a container ship from Sierra Leone. The scales were concealed under a layer of dried sardines.

The designated receiver sent a letter to Hai Phong Port authority refusing to receive the consignment soon after the case was uncovered.

<http://bit.ly/1vzMLEj>, 25 July 2014

ZAMBIA: On 11 April 2014, at a court in Chipata, Eastern Province, two men were sentenced to three years of forced labour after being found in possession of a live pangolin (CITES II and nationally protected).

On the Trail No. 5, Robin des Bois, 29 July 2014

ZIMBABWE: On 12 June 2014, Nyasha Binga and Gift Famba were sentenced to the maximum nine years in gaol after being found guilty of poaching a pangolin, a Specially Protected Species. In the same week, another two people were arrested for pangolin poaching; two live pangolins were confiscated.

On 25 August 2014, it was reported that a Frank Mutanha of Harare had been sentenced to nine years in gaol after being found trying to sell a pangolin.

Tikki Hywood Trust, 16 June 2014; Bulawayo 24: bit.ly/lmMaFaM, 25 August 2014

REPTILES

BRAZIL: On 8 August 2014, a two-year police investigation culminated in the dismantling of an operation involving the illegal hunting, transport and sale of Giant South American Turtles *Podocnemis expansa* and Yellow-spotted River Turtles *P. unifilis* (both CITES II). Dozens of search and seizure warrants were issued for premises in Manaus (AM), Boa Vista and Caracaraí, in the State of Roraima.

D24am: http://bit.ly/Xcrglv (in Portuguese), 8 August 2014

FRANCE: On 28 April 2014, Customs officials seized 70 live Spur-thighed Tortoises *Testudo graeca* (CITES II/Annex A) from a vehicle disembarking from a ferry arriving at the port of Sète from Nador, Morocco. The animals were concealed in two bags in the vehicle's engine compartment. The driver was reportedly on his way to Belgium.

French Government Customs: bit.ly/l0GQgon (in French), 7 May 2014

INDIA: On 1 August 2014, Customs officials at Chennai airport detained a man who was attempting to smuggle 88 Black Pond Turtles *Geoclemys hamiltonii* (CITES I and Schedule I protected species in India) to Bangkok, Thailand. The suspect, who had placed the specimens in his bag underneath clothing, was handed over to forest officials. The turtles, which were examined by a veterinarian, are to be kept in a unit at Velachery, before being handed over to the children's park in Guindy.

The New Indian Express, bit.ly/ZA9HJV, 3 August 2014

PAKISTAN: On 20 September 2014, at Karachi airport, authorities foiled an attempt to smuggle to Thailand more than 218 Black Pond Turtles *Geoclemys hamiltonii* (CITES I). The reptiles, one of which had perished, were found in the luggage of a man who had boarded a flight to Bangkok after arriving from Lahore; he was removed from the aircraft and taken into custody. The reptiles are being kept at the Indus Dolphin Centre in Sukkur and are to be released into the wild.

Two hundred Black Pond Turtles smuggled out of Sindh to China were confiscated by Chinese authorities last month. Two Pakistanis and five Chinese poachers were held. The turtles were later handed over to the Pakistani authorities.

bit.ly/lviPCRG, 21 September 2014

PHILIPPINES: On 6 May 2014, authorities seized 555 marine turtles from a vessel off Palawan Island, including Hawksbill Turtles *Eretmochelys imbricata* and Green Turtles *Chelonia mydas* (both CITES I). The turtles had reportedly been fished by Filipino fishermen and delivered to the Chinese vessel. Eleven arrests. A local fishing boat was apprehended at the same time with 70 turtles on board.

On The Trail No. 5, Robin des Bois, 29 July 2014

UK: On 9 July 2014, 12 critically endangered Bahamian Rock Iguanas *Cyclura rileyi* sp. (CITES I) were repatriated to their native Bahamas following the seizure, at Heathrow Airport, by officers of the United Kingdom Border force in February. Of the 13 specimens seized, one had died and three more perished following repatriation. In April, two Romanian women were each sentenced in the UK to 12 months' imprisonment (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 26(1):25).

Officers from Border Force's specialist CITES team worked with the Bahamas High Commission in London to arrange for repatriation of the iguanas and IAG Cargo arranged for their complimentary carriage: special dispensation was given to carry them in the main cabin of the aircraft. The animals were initially rehabilitated at the Gerace Research Center in San Salvador before being released in Moriah Harbour Cay National Park in Exuma.

bit.ly/1mYIZoC, 11 July 2014; bit.ly/1BDhSRj, 25 September 2014

BOX: THE SAN SALVADOR ROCK IGUANA consists of three subspecies: *Cyclura rileyi rileyi* from San Salvador cays; *C.r. nuchalis* from Bush Hill Cay in the Exumas; and *C.r. cristata* from White (Sandy) Cay in the Exumas, the subspecies that was smuggled to the UK (see text). This animal (listed as Critically Endangered, B1+2e, C2b in the IUCN Red List) is probably the rarest of all the Rock Iguanas and may be the rarest iguana in the world. Numbers may have been decimated by raccoons which will catch and eat iguanas; the footprints of one raccoon were observed on White Cay in 1996 but the animal has since been confirmed dead. At that time, the count of *C.r. cristata* specimens was about 180 individuals and over the years has ranged from between 100 and 200 specimens. Latest sightings put the current figure as very low, maybe fewer than 100. Some individuals have been offered for sale in Europe as "captive bred" but as no permission has ever been granted for their export, they could not be of legal origin. Subsequent to this smuggling incident, the Bahamian authorities have said that two more shipments of unidentified Appendix-I Bahamian *Cyclura* sp. iguanas have taken place this year.

John Bendon, IUCN/SSC Iguana Specialist Group

RHINOCEROSSES

INDIA: On 18 July 2014, in Kaziranga National Park, forest guards found the carcass of an adult male Great Indian Rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis* (CITES I) that had been killed by poachers and the horn removed. Empty cartridges and ammunition were found at the spot. It was reported that the total number of rhinoceroses killed by poachers in the park had gone up to 21 this year to date.

India Times: bit.ly/1rlaguo, 19 July 2014

MOZAMBIQUE: On 16 May 2014, at Mtubatuba Regional Court, KwaZulu-Natal, Antonio Sendes Langa of Mozambique was gaoled for eight years for killing a White Rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* (CITES I) in Imfolozi Game Reserve in September 2013.

iol news: bit.ly/1yBYgRm, 19 May 2014

SOUTH AFRICA: On 22 May 2014, three Chinese nationals were arrested in Gauteng for possession of and dealing in rhinoceros horn, whilst six suspected poachers were arrested in the surrounding areas just outside Kruger National Park (KNP), and a further two arrested and two fatally wounded inside the park.

On 27 May 2014, a former SANParks ranger and two policemen based at Skukuza police station in KNP were arrested for alleged involvement in rhinoceros poaching. Park rangers and officers of the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (known as the Hawks) came across a Black Rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* (CITES I) carcass during a routine patrol. Acting on information, the team pulled a marked police van over and found inside a person suspected of being a poacher, armed with a hunting rifle and ammunition. Both policemen face charges of corruption and the suspected poacher is facing charges of being in possession of unlicensed firearms and ammunition. In another operation on the same day, rangers at Pretoriuskop came across a group of suspected poachers; during the encounter, one of the suspects was fatally wounded and the remaining two managed to escape. Poaching equipment, a hunting rifle and ammunition were recovered during the operation.

On 9 June 2014, Hawks personnel reported that two men had been arrested in connection with the theft in April of rhinoceros horns from Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency, near Johannesburg. They had cut into a strong box and made off with 112 pieces of rhinoceros horn (80 kg), the first known theft of its kind. Most of the horns, which have not been recovered, were from dehorning operations undertaken by local authorities. A third suspect was arrested on 24 June.

On 23 June 2014, at Naphuno Regional Court, Limpopo, Hlengani Reckson Mathebula and Erick Mathebula, both of Mozambique, were each sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment for rhinoceros poaching. The Hawks arrested the men after a shoot-out between a group of poachers and KNP rangers in February last year. Three poachers were shot dead while the two managed to escape. They were tracked down and arrested in Lulekani and Phalaborwa, respectively. Each was in possession of a fresh rhinoceros horn when arrested.

On 8 July 2014, at Nelspruit Regional Court, Mozambicans Joseph Ephraim Bila and Ndombama Salvatore Nkuna were each sentenced to 16 years in gaol for their involvement in killing a White Rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* (CITES I) (10 years for killing and dehorning the animal; four years for trespassing and carrying out a restricted activity in a restricted area, and six years for illegal possession of a firearm and ammunition). The 10- and four-year sentences would run concurrently. The pair, arrested by rangers in KNP in April last year, pleaded guilty to the charges.

On 23 July 2014, at Nelspruit Magistrates' Court, Mandla Chauke was sentenced to 77 years in gaol on charges relating to the hunting of three rhinoceroses in KNP in 2011. Chauke and two others had just shot a rhinoceros bull, a cow, and a calf when discovered by rangers in the park; the cow and calf were badly wounded and the adult bull was killed. A shoot-out ensued and Chauke and one other man were wounded. The third man escaped and was still at large. The wounded man died in hospital. Chauke was sentenced to 15 years for the murder of his accomplice, eight years for theft of horns, 15 years for illegal possession of a firearm, seven years for illegal possession of ammunition, two years for trespassing, and 10 years each for illegally hunting each rhinoceros.

On 19 September 2014, the Hawks arrested the alleged kingpin of one of South Africa's biggest and most violent rhinoceros poaching syndicates; nine other members of the syndicate were arrested in various parts of the country as part of an operation that has been under way for a year; another member handed himself over to police. The arrest took place in front of Pretoria North Magistrates' Court where the suspect was due to appear on firearms charges. He is accused of obtaining 84 rhinoceros horns via illegal means.

The syndicate is believed to be responsible for the killing of 24 rhinoceroses in State and privately owned reserves around the country between June 2008 and June 2012. Of the poached animals, 22 were darted; the other two were shot. Only two animals survived the attacks. The syndicate operated in the Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North-West, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Free State. It is alleged that members obtained up to 84 rhinoceros horns by poaching, as well as stealing the horns and obtaining them in other illegal ways: 41 of the horns were taken from 24 poached animals; 14 horns were stolen; 29 were obtained by other means. The 10 suspects were due to appear in Hatfield Court in Pretoria on 29 September.

On 21 September 2014, three SANParks workers were arrested for alleged rhinoceros poaching in KNP after reportedly being found with a hunting rifle, ammunition, vehicle and poaching equipment shortly after the discovery of a freshly killed rhinoceros in the area where they worked.

On 25 September 2014, Chumlong Lemthongthai, a Thai national, had his sentence for illegal trade in rhinoceros horn reduced from 30 to 13 years by the Supreme Court of Appeal (SCA). The judge said the sentence was too severe and disproportionate when compared to the minimum sentences statutorily prescribed for other serious offences. However, he stipulated that Lemthongthai had to pay a R1 million (USD89 000) fine or his sentence would be extended by five years.

Lemthongthai was arrested in 2011 after organizing illegal rhinoceros poaching expeditions having

obtained 26 permits from the environmental affairs department to conduct rhinoceros trophy hunts (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 25(1):34); he then unlawfully used Customs documents in an attempt to export the horns. He was sentenced to 40 years' imprisonment by a regional magistrate; however after taking the matter to the High Court in Pretoria, Lemthongthai had the sentence reduced to 30 years. He subsequently approached the SCA, arguing a non-custodial sentence would be better suited in his case, but this request was turned down.

www.politicsweb.co.za, 28 May 2014; *Reuters Africa*: bit.ly/lrlamlu, 9 June 2014; *SABC*: bit.ly/lqdrOuO, 25 June 2014; *The Citizen*: bit.ly/lSbtchq, 24 June 2014; <http://bit.ly/VGtyEZ>, 8 July 2014; *iol news*: <http://bit.ly/lvDYvXu>, 23 July 2014; *The Citizen*: <http://bit.ly/lmkVpai>, 19 September 2014; bit.ly/lqtrbwK, 22 September 2014; <http://bit.ly/l0iwx8R>, 26 September 2014

USA: On 27 May 2014, at Newark federal court, Zhifei Li, the owner of an antique business in Shandong, China, received a 70-month gaol term—one of the longest sentences to be imposed in the USA for a wildlife smuggling offence—for his role in trafficking 30 rhinoceros horns and rhinoceros horn (and elephant ivory) artefacts from the USA to China. He was also ordered to serve two years of supervised release and to forfeit USD3.5 million of the proceeds from his criminal activity.

TRAFFIC: <http://bit.ly/liuLhUD>, 28 May 2014

FLORA

INDIA: Red Sandalwood (Red Sanders) *Pterocarpus santalinus* (CITES II), selected seizures:

23 April 2014: 8.5 t from containers in Irugur, Coimbatore. 18 arrests.

28 May 2014: at Walajapet station, Vellore, 757 kg of logs from a vehicle smuggled from the reserve forest area in Andhra Pradesh via Tiruvallur, bound for Tiruvannamalai. One arrest.

Over three weeks in June 2014, Chennai port: 60 t from seven containers, some of which were recalled from overseas ports in China, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong and Dubai. 8 June 2014: four tonnes being loaded onto a container lorry at a nursery near Madhavaram at Moola Chatiram Main Road, Chennai. Seven arrests.

27 June 2014: 287 kg at Palasa railway station, Andhra Pradesh. The driver fled but was later arrested and taken into custody.

4 July 2014: 15 t from a godown in Nadiad town, Kheda district, Gujarat.

3 August 2014: four tonnes from a vehicle in Ambattur Estate, Chennai.

4 August 2014: 400 kg in Muttathara, Thiruvananthapuram district, Kerala, during raids on five houses; four arrests. The wood, which included carvings, was reportedly from Marayur, Aryanad and Kulathupuzha in Kerala and from Karnataka.

New Indian Express: bit.ly/YWEmzW, 15 May 2014; <http://bit.ly/lviWCy2>, 29 May 2014; *The Times of India*, bit.ly/Tlxuy6, 22 June 2014; *New Indian Express*: bit.ly/lUGQQK5, 9 June 2014; *The New Indian Express*, bit.ly/lujlRj8, 27 June 2014; *Business Standard*: bit.ly/lmtTA9S, 4 July 2014; *The Times of India*: <http://bit.ly/lorc7mr>, 4 August 2014; *The New Indian Express*, bit.ly/ltrfwPd, 5 August 2014

THAILAND: On 31 May 2014, police acting on information that a large number of rosewood *Dalbergia* logs had been concealed in a village pending their sale to foreign buyers, seized about 3000 illegally cut rosewood logs at the village in Khun Han district, Si Sa Ket province, close to the border with Cambodia.

Bangkok Post, <http://bit.ly/lr8lQbR>, 31 May 2014

USA: On 17 September 2014, West Virginia Division of Natural Resources Law Enforcement displayed during a press conference what they revealed to be the largest seizure of illegally harvested American Ginseng *Panax quinquefolius* (CITES II) in the State's history. Approximately 86 kg of the root had been seized in Wyoming, McDowell, Fayette and Raleigh counties before 1 September, when the ginseng season officially began. Any digging, possession or selling of ginseng before that date is a criminal offence. Eleven arrests have been made and more were likely to follow, it was reported. Officers confirmed that many prescription drug dealers will buy the ginseng, which is prized for its purported healing properties, for practically nothing and then hold on to the root until they can sell it for a much higher price when it is in season.

These arrests are the result of a year-long investigation. Additionally, some eight kilogrammes of ginseng were seized in August.

The Charleston Gazette, bit.ly/1sAytjU, 17 September 2014

OTHER / MULTI-SPECIES

AUSTRALIA: On 2 May 2014, it was reported that John Kolettas of Sydney, New South Wales, was given a 12-month suspended gaol sentence and is required to perform 384 hours of community service after reportedly the largest recorded haul of illegal wildlife items was seized from his home in 2013. Items included skulls and teeth of Orang-utans *Pongo pygmaeus* (CITES I), bears Ursidae (CITES I/II) and Tigers *Panthera tigris* (CITES I). He was also fined AUD4000 (USD3700) for firearms offences.

The Guardian: bit.ly/1xKb9Y8, 2 May 2014

CHINA: On 8 May 2014, in Yongren, Yunnan province, one person was sentenced to six years' imprisonment and fined 10 000 yuan (USD1600) for smuggling 10 paws of Asiatic Black Bears *Ursus thibetanus* (CITES I), two bear gall bladders and 10 live pangolins *Manis* (CITES II). The items were seized in September 2013 from a van heading to Panzhihua, Sichuan province; various deer specimens were also found following a search of defendant's home.

On 28 May 2014, border police in south China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region seized a number of wild animal products along the border with Viet Nam, including the carcasses of 14 Francois's Leaf Monkeys *Trachypithecus francoisi* (CITES II), seven pangolins *Manis* (CITES II), six Leopard Cats *Prionailurus bengalensis* (CITES I/II), and five bear gall bladders (CITES I/II). Two suspected smugglers arrested as part of the case said they had purchased the animal products from Viet Nam with the aim of selling them in Nanning at a profit.

On 1 June 2014, after a six-month investigation, Customs officials in Khorgas, Xinjiang province, near the border with Kazakhstan, seized 2351 Saiga Antelope *Saiga tatarica* (CITES II) antlers contained in 66 boxes. One arrest was reported.

On 22 July 2014, at the Intermediate People's Court in Hulunbuir City, in the Inner Mongolia region, two Chinese and two Russian nationals were sentenced to gaol terms for smuggling 213 bear paws from Russia to China, the largest amount ever seized by China's Customs. The Chinese defendants were gaoled, respectively, to seven years and six years (and fined 300 000 yuan (USD49 000)); the Russians were each sentenced to five years in gaol.

The bear paws were seized on 22 May 2013, in the border city of Manzhouli; they had been taken from at least 63 Brown Bears *Ursus arctos* (CITES I/II) and were concealed in the tyres of a van entering the city (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 25(2):72).

On The Trail No. 5, Robin des Bois, 29 July 2014; *CRI English*: bit.ly/1jLlypq, 30 May 2014; <http://bit.ly/1n8FM3N>, 22 July 2014

FRANCE: On 17 June 2014, authorities in the region of Poitou-Charente seized more than one tonne of European glass eels *Anguilla anguilla* (CITES II) and dismantled an international network involved in the illegal trade of eels. Seven arrests.

France 3: bit.ly/1E8wewZ, 19 June 2014; On The Trail No. 5, Robin des Bois, 29 July 2014

HONG KONG: On 6 August 2014, Hong Kong Customs Marine Enforcement Group seized 250 kg of edible birds' nests, 550 kg of fur and assorted electrical goods from a river vessel in waters off Lung Kwu Tan, Tuen Mun. Five arrests.

7th Space Interactive, 8 June 2014

INDIA: On 7 June 2014, in Haldwani, Uttarakhand, eight people were sentenced to seven years' imprisonment (and fined Rs20 000 (USD320) for poaching Tigers *Panthera tigris* (CITES I), otters *Lutrinae* spp. (CITES I/II) and turtles. They were reportedly working on the orders of a close relative of Sansar Chand, a poacher and smuggler well known to the authorities, whose death was announced in March 2014 (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 26(1):22).

On 21 July 2014, a Delhi court upheld a decision, made in June 2014, which sentenced Hilal Ahmad Wani to one year in gaol for keeping 49 shahtoosh shawls (made from the wool of the Tibetan Antelope *Pantholops hodgsonii*, CITES I), without a valid permit. Hani had appealed the decision and sought release on probation on the grounds that he had no previous conviction, but this was dismissed. However, a fine of Rs10 000 (USD160) was reduced to Rs5000.

On The Trail No. 5, Robin des Bois, 29 July 2014; Greater Kashmir: bit.ly/WBwFhY, 21 July 2014

MALAYSIA: On 13 May 2014, at the Session Court in Johor Baru, Mohd Roshdam Bilal was fined RM35 000 (USD10 500) in default of eight months' gaol after he pleaded guilty to possessing a Sun Bear *Helarctos malayanus* (CITES II and a protected species in Malaysia). The animal was found in a cage in a shop in Jalan Tun Razak. Mohd Roshdam did not settle the fine.

The Star online: bit.ly/R3s30G, 20 May 2014

ROMANIA: In May 2014, raids carried out by more than 400 policemen yielded four tonnes of sturgeon meat and 80 kg of caviar, among other fish. The seizures were carried out at commercial premises involved in fishing storage and sale, farms, restaurants and private houses in Bucharest and the counties of Tulcea, Braila, Ialomita, Calarasi, Galati and Constanta. Many tools and illegal nets used for poaching were also seized.

Gazetta de Agricultura: http://bit.ly/1xpIWnB, (in Romanian), 18 May 2014

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B I R D S

BULGARIA: On 22 October 2014, at a court in Burgas, egg collector Jan Frederick Ross, formerly of Manchester, UK, received a suspended six-month gaol sentence and a fine of EUR2550 (USD3200) following a lengthy investigation by police, assisted by the Bulgarian Society for Bird Protection and the RSPB. Ross pleaded guilty to the illegal possession of 16 birds' eggs, including the egg of a Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus* (CITES II), a rare breeding bird in Bulgaria (60 pairs), and three taxidermy specimens. He had already been sentenced three times in the UK for egg collecting; following reports that he was continuing his illegal collecting in Bulgaria, a search of his flat revealed photographs and diaries hidden behind artwork which pointed to the potentially illegal collection of over a thousand

birds' eggs including a number of rare breeding birds, such as a clutch of eggs from the Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* (CITES II) (24 pairs in Bulgaria). No charges could be brought against Ross for the taking of these eggs and their location remains unknown.

RSPB: <http://bit.ly/1CPss7L>, 22 October 2014

CAMEROON: On 27 January 2015, more than 300 Grey Parrots *Psittacus erithacus* (CITES II) were seized from a private home in Yaounde. A further 120 were later seized from the same address. A number of Cameroonians and Ghanaians were arrested.

Radio Environment: <http://bit.ly/1LxIEpt>

HUNGARY: On 7 December 2014, 114 live Grey Parrots *Psittacus erithacus* (CITES II) were seized from the car of a Bulgarian citizen at a crossing point in Kiszombor, on the border with Romania. Most of the birds were fitted with closed plastic foot rings, however circumstances suggest that they had been wild-caught. They have been placed in the rescue centre of Szeged Zoo.

CITES Management Authority, Hungary, 7 December 2014

IRAN: In October 2014, a total of 19 Peregrine Falcons *Falco peregrinus* and five Barbary Falcons *F. pelegrinoides* (both CITES I) were seized at the port of Jask, in Hormozgan province. The birds, thought to have been smuggled in from Pakistan, had been destined for export to a neighbouring country. Two specimens had perished and the remainder were released in the plains of Hormozgan. One arrest.

On 23 November 2014, some 240 Houbara Bustards *Chlamydotis undulata* (CITES I) and 140 falcons Falconidae spp. (CITES I/II) leaving Iran for Saudi Arabia were seized by maritime police from a dhow in the Sea of Oman. The Iranian captain of the dhow and a Pakistani national have been gaoled. Many of the birds, which had been caught in Pakistan, had perished and the surviving specimens were released in the wild.

Robin des Bois, *On the Trail* No. 7: <http://bit.ly/19CJGi0>

SPAIN: On 23 March 2015, it was reported that two Spanish nationals had been fined EUR50 000 and EUR5000, respectively (USD55 500/5500) for the illegal trade in and possession of Peregrine Falcons *Falco peregrinus* (CITES I). The penalties were imposed following a protracted investigation by the Catalonia Rural Ranger Corps investigating the suspected laundering of Peregrine Falcons. The UK National Wildlife Crime Unit was asked to verify the authenticity of UK-issued permits for some of the birds. Although the permits were genuine, fake leg rings had been fitted to the falcons to give the impression they had been captive bred. Agents also used DNA profiling to prove that the falcons were not related to their alleged parents. Agents seized 18 Peregrine Falcons, which were being held illegally, and are working to re-home the falcons.

UK National Wildlife Crime Unit :<http://bit.ly/1EMEqTr>, 23 March 2015

C A T S

CHINA: On 23 October 2014, at Jinan Intermediate People's Court, Shandong province, a man identified as Zhang was gaoled for six years for smuggling Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) bones (plus ivory and other wildlife products). He was also fined 50 000 yuan (USD8000). Customs officers at Jinan International Airport discovered the bones in three suitcases in March 2014. Zhang, a resident of Zhejiang province, had arrived from Hong Kong with the items, including a Tiger skull which he reportedly had smuggled from Indonesia.

Shanghai Daily (China): <http://bit.ly/1AKjmjj>, 17 November 2014

INDONESIA: On 12 February 2015, the South Sumatra Military Police, South Sumatra Provincial Natural Resource Conservation Office (BKSDA), and the Wildlife Conservation Society's Wildlife Crimes Unit (WCU) announced the recent arrest of a person who allegedly sold more than 100 stuffed Tigers *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) over a ten-year period. The trafficker is reported to have traded the illegal goods to buyers in southern Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and to a middleman in Jakarta. He subsequently confessed that he purchased Tiger skins and stuffed Tigers in Lampung, Bengkulu, Jambi, and north Sumatra to supply demand in Jakarta and Java. His arrest concluded an investigation that began in 2009 with the arrest of a middleman.

Newswise: <http://bit.ly/1GuDhjk>, 12 February 2015

MALAWI: On 30 January 2015, at Kasungu Magistrates' Court, Ganizani Nkhata was sentenced to four years in gaol after being unable to pay a fine of MK450 000 (USD1000) following his conviction for poaching a Serval Cat *Leptailurus serval* (CITES II) in August 2014. The cat had earlier been rescued and later reintroduced into Kasungu National Park by Lilongwe Wildlife Trust. A GPS tracking collar fitted on the animal for research purposes to monitor its movement in the park and to inform future releases, assisted the authorities in catching the defendant. The signal from the collar led to the roof of the suspect's house in Munye village in Traditional Authority Kawamba.

Nkhata was found guilty on two counts—first for killing the cat, for which he received a fine of MK350 000, and second for malicious damage to GPS equipment (fine of MK100 000).

Lilongwe Wildlife Trust: <http://bit.ly/194Ujtu>, 4 February 2015

RUSSIA: On 6 February 2015, it was reported that a Vietnamese man had been detained on suspicion of involvement in the killing and trading in endangered animals and supplying eating establishments with illegal meat after the authorities raided a restaurant in Moscow and seized big cat skins, heads and around 50 kg of meat. The meat is believed to be from an Amur (Siberian) Tiger *Panthera tigris altaica* and an Amur Leopard *P. pardus orientalis* (both CITES I); fewer than 500 Amur Tigers and only 45 adult Amur Leopards are estimated to remain in the wild. The body parts were sent away for scientific analysis. Officials conducting a subsequent investigation at Sadovod market, Moscow, uncovered what are believed to be the skins of an Amur Tiger and an Amur Leopard.

WWF: <http://bit.ly/1B5KmlG>, 6 February 2015

VIET NAM: On 15 January 2015, police in Bac Kan province seized from a lorry the frozen carcass of a 303 kg Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) and detained the driver. The animal had been cut into five parts and placed in sacks, wrapped in blankets. Police also seized two sacks containing 53 kg of animal bones, 3 kg of animal bone glue and 3 kg of turtle shells.

Thanhniennews (Viet Nam): <http://bit.ly/1zrx2go>, 16 January 2015

E L E P H A N T S

The African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* and Asian Elephant *Elephas maximus* are listed in CITES Appendix I

AUSTRALIA: On 5 April 2015, Customs officers at Perth airport seized 110 kg of elephant tusks. The shipment was believed to be travelling through Perth on its way from Africa, en route to Malaysia. An investigation into an international ivory smuggling ring moving goods through Australia is under way by federal authorities.

The ivory, made up of numerous cut tusk parts of varying sizes, is being stored at a secure Customs detained goods storage and is now the property of the Australian Government.

Bunbury Mail (Australia), <http://bit.ly/1CujcRn>, 9 April 2015

CHINA: On 20 January 2015, Hengshui police in Hebei province arrested 14 suspects in an ivory trading ring. Police acted on information that sculptors who appeared to be doing business legally were actually trading ivory. Officers spent about 10 months infiltrating the gang and collecting evidence and later arrested all core members over the following three months.

The Standard (Hong Kong): <http://bit.ly/1uk9CCO>, 20 January 2015

ERRATUM: In Vol. 26(1):22, it was incorrectly stated that almost 12 t of ivory had been seized in early November 2013 by Customs officers in Xiamen city, China. The report should have stated that officials had infiltrated two groups responsible for smuggling this amount of ivory over a period of years (see: <http://bit.ly/1Gcxkel>). We apologise for this error.

CONGO, DEM. REP. OF: On 30 January 2015, police displayed a large consignment of ivory, seized the previous week and believed to derive from more than 15 forest adult elephants from the country's Salonga National Park. It was reported that most of the ivory had been carved in Kinshasa. The shipment was handed over to the Congolese Institute for the Conservation of Nature (ICCN).

Radio Okapi: <http://bit.ly/1F1VxA6>, 31 January 2015

CONGO, REP. OF: On 28 January 2015, it was reported that authorities had seized 126 kg of ivory in Brazzaville and placed in custody two suspects trying to sell the ivory. A third person evaded arrest. The ivory was estimated to derive from 30 forest elephants, which, it is reported, were probably poached in northern Congo.

WWF: <http://bit.ly/1MReJmw>, 28 January 2015

EGYPT: In late October 2014, Customs officers at Safaga seaport seized 300 kg of raw elephant ivory from a lorry. The shipment mainly originated from East Africa and had been sent to Kuwait where it was taken by truck through Saudi Arabia, passing through Dubai seaport before arriving at Safaga seaport.

In November 2014, Customs officers at Safaga seaport seized 200 kg of raw and worked ivory imported from Saudi Arabia. Some of the raw ivory had been painted with a black stain to resemble coal or wood.

IFAW: <http://bit.ly/1BCfrgP>, 30 January 2015

GABON: On 9 April 2015, it was reported that Jean François Ombenda and Eugene Ndjouhou had each been sentenced at a court in Franceville to six months in gaol and fined one million CFA Francs (USD1000). The pair, arrested in Mounana on 25 February as they were about to finalize a sale of elephant ivory (circa 18 kg), were charged with hunting, possession, transport, selling trophies and illegal possession of a firearm.

Gabon News: <http://bit.ly/1FOdhjs>, 2 March 2015; *Gabon Review (in French):* <http://bit.ly/1JDVE7o>, 10 April 2015

In March 2015, it was reported that a person arrested in possession of 12 elephant tusks had been sentenced to two years in gaol for illegal possession of ivory and corruption attempts.

The Eagle Network, March 2015

HONG KONG SAR: On 10 and 16 February 2015, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), with the assistance of quarantine detector dogs, seized a total of 60 kg of worked ivory inside 12 parcels from Nigeria at the Air Mail Centre, Chek Lap Kok, Lantau Island. The investigation continues.

Press release, GovHK (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government) <http://bit.ly/IEykIkM>, 18 February 2015

INDIA: On 16 March 2015, police in Kolkata seized one tusk, nine statuettes and other objects made of ivory from the premises of a Salt Lake resident and arrested two persons. Sources said the accused had put up an advertisement on an online shopping portal to sell the items. Officials of the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau traced the objects to the address, and posed as buyers before making their arrests.

Times of India (India): <http://bit.ly/1bd8Q7D>, 17 March 2015

KENYA: A court that granted bail to the suspected ringleader of an ivory smuggling gang on medical grounds has had the ruling overturned by the Director of Public Prosecutions until the suspect's appeal is heard. The Kenyan national, who featured on an INTERPOL list of the nine most wanted suspects linked to crimes against the environment, was arrested by international police agents in Tanzania in December 2014 after fleeing Kenya and extradited to face charges in Mombasa. He is charged with possession of and dealing in elephant tusks weighing more than two tonnes. The haul was discovered by Kenyan police in June when they raided a car dealership in Mombasa, after which the suspect fled to Tanzania.

Defence lawyers had argued that their client required medical treatment for diabetes that could not be provided while in custody.

Times Live (South Africa): <http://bit.ly/1xBZYNu>, 18 March 2015

SAUDI ARABIA: On 18 October 2014, it was reported that authorities at King Khaled International Airport, Riyadh, had foiled an attempt to smuggle 588 pieces (reportedly 490 kg) of elephant tusks to east Asia. The ivory was concealed in the luggage of a passenger in transit from an undisclosed African country.

Saudi Gazette (Saudi Arabia): <http://bit.ly/110jCun>; 19 October 2014

THAILAND: In early January 2015, a man from Surin was arrested after 51 tusks (135 kg) of African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* were found in his Taklang village home in Tha Tum district.

Bangkok Post (Thailand), <http://bit.ly/1Aispmu>, 2 January 2015

UGANDA: On 25 January 2015, it was reported that wildlife officers at Entebbe International Airport had seized a shipment containing nearly 800 kg of ivory (CITES I) (and over two tonnes of pangolin *Manis* (CITES II) skins), due for export to Amsterdam, Netherlands. The tusks, which appeared to have been recently removed, were cut into several pieces. The boxes were labelled as communications equipment that needed repairs in Amsterdam, and had been cleared for export by Customs officials, who reportedly said that the containers were too heavy to be scanned by X-ray machines. However, wildlife surveillance teams insisted that they be searched. Three people, including a clerk at the airport, a Customs officer and the driver of a lorry that delivered the cargo were arrested.

In November 2014, it was discovered that more than a tonne of seized ivory had disappeared from government strongrooms. Some of the ivory in this shipment is believed to have been part of that stock (see also under Pangolins).

The Rakyat Post (Malaysia): <http://bit.ly/1Gy2yZP>, 26 January 2015; *New Vision (Uganda):* <http://bit.ly/1zwngtU>, 27 January 2015

On 17 March 2015, Customs officials at Kampala airport seized 50 pieces of ivory from a shipment declared as containing 1000 kg of shea butter, bound via cargo plane for Singapore. Closer

inspection uncovered the ivory in barrels of the butter. The persons who delivered the consignment are being sought.

The News Hub: <http://bit.ly/IH3MT4k>, 17 March 2015

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: On 16 March 2015, it was announced that over 200 kg of ivory being transported through Dubai International Airport had been seized. No more details were available as to provenance or proposed destination. The ivory has been handed over to the UAE Ministry of Environment and Water.

The National UAE: <http://bit.ly/1B5TkiW>, 16 March 2015

VIET NAM: On 27 October 2014, Customs officers in the northern city of Hai Phong, Hai An District, confiscated nearly one tonne of elephant tusks stashed in a container of rubber gloves imported from an unknown country/territory, and bound for a third, undisclosed country. According to the shipping documents, the consignment was part of a shipment of two containers of rubber gloves that were being sent to a company in Ha Long City, Quang Ninh province.

Tuoitrenews (Viet Nam): <http://bit.ly/196rDja>, 28 October 2014

On 14 March 2015, Customs officers at Tan Son Nhat International Airport, Ho Chi Minh City, discovered 43.5 kg of elephant tusks hidden in the baggage of two Vietnamese nationals returning to the country from Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Subsequent testing conducted by the Institute of Forensic Science under the Ministry of Public Security showed that the tusks were taken from African Elephants *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I). One of the suspects confessed that the two had been hired to transport the ivory from Dubai to Viet Nam.

Tuoitrenews (Viet Nam): <http://bit.ly/1EjrK3C>, 16 March 2015

ZAMBIA: On 30 March 2015, at Livingstone Magistrates' Court, five people caught in February with 14 raw ivory pieces (210 kg) that they were trying to sell to an undercover operative, were each sentenced to five years in gaol.

Game Rangers International press release: <http://bit.ly/1FQxcAY>, 9 April 2015

MARINE / FRESHWATER

BULGARIA: On 23 January 2015 it was reported that Customs officials at Sofia airport had seized two million baby European Eels *Anguilla anguilla* (CITES II) from eight styrofoam containers declared as food items. Two Chinese nationals travelling from Madrid, Spain, were detained. The eels were taken to a rescue centre at the public aquarium in Varna.

Reuters: <http://bit.ly/11499wh>, 23 January 2015

CHINA: In November 2014, a court in Taizhou city, Zhejiang province, sentenced 13 red coral poachers to between one year and six months to six years in gaol and fined the group nearly one million yuan (USD161 440). The two key figures employed 11 sailors to obtain red coral; their vessel was stopped by coast guards in April 2014 with 7 kg of red coral on board.

Ecns.cn: <http://bit.ly/1C48TfX>, 3 November 2014

COSTA RICA: On 19 November 2014, at San José Airport, two tonnes of shark fins bound for Hong Kong were seized. Some 50 bags contained fins from Hammerhead Sharks *Sphyrna lewini* and Oceanic Whitetip Sharks *Carcharhinus longimanus* (both CITES II).

Robin des Bois, On the Trail No. 7: <http://bit.ly/19CJGi0>

FRANCE: On 5 February 2015, at Roissy Charles-de-Gaulle Airport, Paris, Customs officials seized a shipment of 18 688 dried seahorses *Hippocampus* spp. (CITES II) en route between Madagascar and Hong Kong.

On 15 January, 112 seahorses were found in the luggage of a couple travelling from Shanghai to Spain. They claimed the specimens were to be used to make a broth. The animals were seized and the couple fined an undisclosed amount.

Le Parisien (France): <http://bit.ly/1Cctmv1> (in French), 9 February 2015

INDONESIA: On 27 January 2015, at the District Court in Cirebon, West Java, a trader was sentenced to one year and four months in gaol and fined USD5000 after being arrested with 27 kg of manta ray *Manta* (CITES II) plates. This is the first law enforcement action to have taken place under a new manta ray protection decree approved early in 2014 to protect manta rays and to stop illegal fishing and trading.

On 7 November 2014, some 103 kg of manta ray gills were seized from a suspect's house near Pengambangan Negara fisheries landing area in Bali. This was the largest-ever seizure of manta ray gill plates in the country, which took place as part of a major enforcement initiative against the illegal trade of sharks and rays in Indonesia, which has the largest shark fisheries in the world.

On 10 November 2014, at Surabaya International Airport, East Java province, 226 kg of manta ray gills corresponding to 80 adult manta rays were seized before their onward shipment to Hong Kong.

Currently, two of the suspected illegal traders are on trial separately in Surabaya and Bali; one was arrested in Surabaya last August with 8 kg of manta ray plates while the other was arrested in Bali in September with 103 kg of manta ray plates.

Wildlife Conservation Society: <http://bit.ly/1CAucbb>; *Robin des Bois, On the Trail No. 7:* <http://bit.ly/19CJGi0>; <http://bit.ly/1Cx66MD>, 2 February 2015

PHILIPPINES: On 10 October 2014, a businesswoman whose company was allegedly involved in a smuggling attempt of some 41 t of protected marine species detected at the port of Manila in 2011 was arrested and released on bail. The case involved two containers declared to be transporting rubber that were found to be loaded with 21 169 black coral pieces (*Antipatharia* spp., CITES II), 163 Green Turtles *Chelonia mydas* and Hawksbill Turtles *Eretmochelys imbricata* (both CITES I), 7340 shells and conches *Cassidae*, and 196 kg of sea fans *Alcyonacea*.

Robin des Bois, On the Trail No. 7: <http://bit.ly/19CJGi0>

On 22 November 2014, in Puerto Princesa, Palawan, nine Chinese fishermen were each fined USD100 000 and in the case of non-compliance sentenced to six months in gaol for smuggling 555 marine turtles (CITES I). Most of those convicted have already spent six months in temporary detention.

Robin des Bois, On the Trail No. 7: <http://bit.ly/19CJGi0>

SOUTH AFRICA: On 3 November 2014, Kraaifontein SAPS confiscated approximately 160 kg of dried abalones *Haliotis* (and 1127 dried shark fins) from a storage warehouse in Uitzicht, Kraaifontein, after an employee contacted police complaining of a strong smell from one of the units. The case is under investigation.

Allafrica.com: <http://bit.ly/1tPiumZ>, 4 November 2014

On 7 November 2014, in Cape Town, a tip-off led to one of the biggest abalone busts of the year when officials from the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries department joined police to raid an illegal

processing plant. Two Chinese nationals and a Congolese man were arrested. A total of 14 631 dried abalones and 5850 wet abalones was seized.

IOL news (South Africa): <http://bit.ly/1FFtM2k>, 8 November 2014

On 16 February 2015, police acting on information arrested a man from Gordon's Bay travelling in his car in Somerset West, bound for Cape Town, with 15 bags containing 1958 shucked abalones. The man was detained at Somerset West police station.

IOL news (South Africa): bit.ly/1Lxrd7n, 17 February 2015

P A N G O L I N S

All pangolin species are listed in CITES Appendix II

CHINA: On 3 November 2014, a father and son received gaol sentences for smuggling 10 pangolins *Manis*—the father to three years and his son to two years and six months and fined 15 000 Yuan (USD2443). In 2012, the son had transported the pangolins from Guangzhou province to Hengyang, Hunan province, when the specimens were seized.

Robin des Bois, On the Trail No. 7: <http://bit.ly/19CJGi0>

HONG KONG: On 17 March 2015, Hong Kong Customs seized 2000 kg of pangolin *Manis* scales from a container at Kwai Chung Customhouse Cargo Examination Compound. Customs officers, through risk assessment, selected the shipment, arriving from Nigeria, for inspection and found the scales in 44 bags.

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region press release (info.gov.hk): <http://bit.ly/1FtMbR4>, 20 March 2015

MALAYSIA: On 26 March 2015, the Chief Judge of Sabah and Sarawak, Tan Sri Richard Malanjum, called for a review of the law against wildlife crime after imposing the maximum gaol term provided for under the *Wildlife Conservation Enactment 1997* during the appeal hearing of a man previously sentenced for illegal pangolin *Manis* trade. Calvin Cher Jia Wei of Johor was fined RM10 000 (USD2800) in November 2014 after 12 pangolins were found in the storage compartment of his vehicle.

During the appeal hearing, the judge said that the current law was too lenient and the defendant's previous sentence "grossly inadequate". He gaolled him for three years and increased the fine to RM25 000 or six months in gaol.

The Star online (Malaysia): bit.ly/1GuT29U, 25 November 2014; New Sabah Times: <http://bit.ly/1anrPLt>, 27 March 2015

In December 2014, in the State of Sarawak, 100 kg of scales and other pangolin *Manis* parts found in parcels bound for China were seized by local Customs officials. A court ordered the destruction of the body parts.

Robin des Bois, On the Trail No. 7: <http://bit.ly/19CJGi0>

UGANDA: On 25 January 2015, it was reported that wildlife officers at Entebbe International Airport had seized a shipment containing over two tonnes of pangolin *Manis* (CITES II) skins (and 800 kg of ivory) that had been due to be exported to Amsterdam, Netherlands (see also under Elephants).

The Rakyat Post (Malaysia): <http://bit.ly/1Gy2yZP>, 26 January 2015

VIET NAM: On 20 December 2014, 59 pangolins *Manis* were seized from a vehicle in Mong Cai, Quang Ninh province, travelling from the south of Ha Long Bay, heading for the border with China.

In February 2015, police in northern Bac Ninh province seized 42 live Sunda Pangolins *Manis javanica* from poachers—who received fines of undisclosed amounts—and delivered the animals to forest rangers for safekeeping; the rangers then sold the animals to local restaurants.

Until recently, it was legal for registered traders or government authorities to auction off some seized pangolins, but a new law introduced in November 2013 outlawed the hunting, trade, and consumption of any of Asia's four pangolin species.

Robin des Bois, On the Trail No. 7: <http://bit.ly/19CJGi0>; The Guardian (UK): bit.ly/1EvDIqT, 20 February 2015

REPTILES / AMPHIBIANS

AUSTRALIA: On 6 February 2015, at Perth International Airport, two Russian nationals and two Czech nationals were arrested after earlier attempts to export 157 native reptiles and amphibians in packages sent from destinations including Carnarvon, Tom Price and Geraldton, all bound for Europe. Many of the animals were concealed in hollowed-out books and in cigarette packets and included skinks, geckos, frogs and pygmy pythons. Also uncovered were 33 dead reptiles that appeared to have been tagged for use as specimens. Two of the men also allegedly had reptiles hidden in their luggage.

During a separate incident in February, 92 reptiles including specially protected species, were seized from post offices in Broome, Derby and NSW, and from a vehicle intercepted in Broome by WA Police. Three arrests. More than 20 of the reptiles were dead or have since died.

Australian Customs and Border Protection Service: bit.ly/1BCrAT4, 16 February 2015

BANGLADESH: On 20 November 2014, police in Magura District, Khulna Division searching a bus travelling from Jessore to Dhaka, seized 499 Black Pond Turtles *Geoclemys hamiltonii* (CITES I). One arrest.

Robin des Bois, On the Trail No. 7: <http://bit.ly/19CJGi0>

FRANCE: On 14 December 2014, Customs officers at Roissy Charles-de-Gaulle Airport, Paris, discovered 170 Radiated Tortoises *Astrochelys radiata* (CITES I) concealed in the false bottom of six containers of sea cucumbers. The shipment was en route from Madagascar to Lao PDR. Five tortoises perished; the remaining specimens were to be placed in authorized facilities.

Customs National Intelligence and Investigations Service (France), 18 December 2014

HONG KONG SAR: On 27 February 2015, authorities seized 279 Black Pond Turtles *Geoclemys hamiltonii* (CITES I) from a vessel and arrested the captain and crew members. It was reported that the animals were likely to be destroyed as no facility in Hong Kong was large enough to accommodate the turtles.

inmediahk.net: bit.ly/18LD1Bj (in Chinese), 8 March 2015

INDIA: On 7 December 2014, in Venkatapuram, Andhra Pradesh, police seized bags containing over 800 Indian Softshell Turtles *Nilssonina gangetica* (CITES I). Caught from the rivers of Andhra Pradesh, they were awaiting delivery to the States of Bihar and Odisha. The turtles were released into Kolleru Lake.

Robin des Bois, On the Trail No. 7: <http://bit.ly/19CJGi0>

INDONESIA: On 22 January 2015, Fish Quarantine and Inspection (BKIPM) officers in Timika and Denpasar foiled an attempt to smuggle 6500 baby Pig-nosed Turtles *Carettochelys insculpta* (CITES II). Some 1226 animals were seized from a suitcase being loaded onto a flight to Denpasar.

Further investigations revealed that two more suspect suitcases were on the same flight which resulted in the seizure of an additional 5284 turtles in Denpasar.

BKIPM: <http://bit.ly/1FFzxtgl> (in Bahasa Indonesia), 26 January 2015

PHILIPPINES: In December 2014 and January 2015, some 186 endemic Palawan Forest Turtles *Siebenrockiella leytensis* (CITES I) were seized by authorities during five raids in Manila and in Taytay. The species occurs only on the island of Palawan.

TRAFFIC: bit.ly/1zMKeNC, 2 February 2015

SPAIN: On 6 November 2014 it was reported that officials of the Guardia Civil had seized 8300 tanned skins of various species of snake, lizard and crocodile from a warehouse in Manises, Valencia. The skins were to be made into belts, bags and wallets. The trader, a Spanish national, lacked the documentation proving the legal origin of the skins.

Levante El Mercantil Valenciano: <http://bit.ly/1N45XUc>, 6 November 2015

UK: On 25 March 2015, it was reported that Border Force officers at Heathrow Airport had seized 165 Turquoise Dwarf Geckos *Lygodactylus williamsi* (EU Annex B and classified by IUCN as Critically Endangered). The geckos had been imported in February from Tanzania where the species is found in only two locations. They are now being cared for at a secure facility.

According to Grant Miller, head of the Border Force CITES team, “this was a highly significant seizure. This particular species of gecko is incredibly rare and there are strict laws against its capture in Tanzania”.

Other animals were seized from the same consignment and included 136 Bearded Pygmy Chameleons *Rieppeleon brevicaudatus*, 66 Yellow-headed Dwarf Geckos *Lygodactylus luteopicturatus*, 112 Peacock Tree Frogs *Leptopelis vermiculatus* and 192 whip scorpions Thelyphonida. The case is under investigation.

UK Border Force: <http://bit.ly/1NlxCyj>, 25 March 2015; in litt., 12 April 2015

VIET NAM: On 19 November 2014, authorities seized a record haul of over 1000 dead marine turtles (mostly Green *Chelonia mydas* and Hawksbill *Eretmochelys imbricata* turtles (CITES I)) during raids on a warehouse in the coastal resort of Nha Trang. All the specimens were being processed into handicrafts, reportedly for illegal export to China. The case is under investigation.

Times of India (India): bit.ly/1zp9wMV, 25 November 2014

R H I N O C E R O S E S

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

CZECH REPUBLIC: On 7 January 2015, three Vietnamese nationals were charged with the illegal export of rhinoceros horns. The suspects have been in custody since July 2014. A shipment of two horns of White Rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* was discovered at Vaclav Havel Airport, Prague, in December 2013 after attempts were being made to export the horns to Viet Nam. The rhinoceros had been killed by a Czech national in South Africa. The three Vietnamese had reportedly acted in

collusion with an organized group operating in several States. During home searches the police carried out in two Czech towns and in Prague's Sapa market place, further items and documents were seized.

Prague Monitor (Czech Republic): bit.ly/lzp9wMV, 8 January 2015

MALAYSIA: In January 2015, the convicted leader of a rhinoceros poaching network in Nepal was arrested by the Royal Malaysian Police and deported to Nepal. The suspect had reportedly fled Nepal after authorities requested that INTERPOL issue an international wanted persons alert for him. In 2013, the Nepal police, with the support of the Nepalese Army and the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, arrested a network of more than a dozen poachers suspected of killing 19 rhinoceroses in Chitwan National Park, including the suspect, who managed to escape. INTERPOL National Central Bureaus in Nepal and Malaysia exchanged information that eventually resulted in the arrest of the suspect.

Environment New Service: bit.ly/lEyt3OE, 23 February 2015

SOUTH AFRICA: On 1 November 2014, at Johannesburg airport, Customs officials seized 41 kg of rhinoceros horns—34 large pieces—reportedly the largest-ever seizure of rhinoceros horns in the country. The luggage of two Vietnamese citizens on a brief stopover from Maputo, Mozambique, bound for Hanoi via Doha, was searched after an official on the aeroplane became suspicious of the cargo and reported his concerns to the South African authorities on landing at the airport.

It was reported on 15 December 2014 that security staff and other officials at Maputo international airport were under investigation for their alleged involvement in the case; the luggage of the two suspects had evaded scanning controls usually undertaken on all consignments.

E. Cooper Environmental Consulting: bit.ly/lCAGNlj, 16 December 2014

USA: On 14 January 2015, at Miami District Court, the president and owner of an auction house in Florida pleaded guilty to selling illegal rhinoceros horns (and elephant ivory). He will pay a fine of USD1.5 million and also faces imprisonment.

The suspect pleaded guilty to an illegal wildlife trafficking and smuggling conspiracy in which the auction house sold rhinoceros horns and objects made from rhinoceros horn (as well as elephant ivory and coral) that were smuggled from the USA to China. He was caught as part of Operation Crash—an investigation that has netted numerous criminals in the rhinoceros horn trade in recent years. The defendant and his company sold six Black Rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* horns; two were sold to a Texas resident involved in smuggling the horns to China. Undercover USFWS agents bought two more, and another undercover agent consigned two horns for auction.

Malay Mail online: bit.ly/lBTx9zT, 15 January 2015

VIET NAM: On 27 October 2014, police and Customs officials at Noi Bai International Airport, Hanoi, arrested a Vietnamese national flying in from Bangkok, Thailand, and seized six kilogrammes of rhinoceros horn from her bag, after they were detected by scanners. The suspect said that a person in Bangkok had paid her to carry the horns.

It was reported on 18 March 2015 that a Vietnamese national had attempted to smuggle through Tan Son Nhat International Airport, Ho Chi Minh City, 1.39 kg of rhinoceros horns which had been cut into small pieces and hidden in lobster heads held in a freezing container.

ThanhNien News (Viet Nam): bit.ly/lwDrOcl, 28 October 2014; bit.ly/lIMNEUwj, 18 March 2015

FLORA

HONG KONG SAR: On 26 November 2014, Customs officials detected 92 t of “Honduras rosewood” logs being smuggled in four containers at Kwai Chung Customhouse Cargo Examination Compound. The shipment had been declared to contain “rubber waste” and had arrived from Guatemala via Mexico. Two people were arrested and released on bail pending further investigation.

Hong Kong Information Services Department (news.gov.hk): <http://bit.ly/1xd6kYD>, 17 December 2014

INDIA: On 27 November 2014, the Srikalahasthi police and Special Task Force (STF) acting on information seized some 60 (1.5 t) logs of Red Sanders (Sandalwood) *Pterocarpus santalinus* (CITES II) and arrested 84 people near Srikalahasthi who were in the process of transporting the contraband in seven vehicles.

In a separate incident the following day, Forest Department officials recovered Red Sanders dumps at two locations near Rangampet, Tirupati. The logs were found during operations in the Seshachalam forests undertaken by five teams of the Forest Department. A total of 1.8 t of logs was recovered.

The Hindu (India): bit.ly/1ttPxcd, 28 November 2014

On 2 February 2015, Bengaluru Rural police acting on information raided the house of a convicted criminal in Kattigenahalli in Hoskote Taluk and seized some four tonnes of Red Sanders. The suspect was reported to have planned to export the timber to China.

The New Indian Express (India): bit.ly/1z7z4j4, 3 February 2015

MALAYSIA: On 19 November 2014, Sarawak forestry authorities announced the seizure of 22 306 illegally felled logs in Bintulu, one of the largest such seizures recorded in the State. No arrests. Enforcement officers backed by police were dropped by helicopters into an area in Tatau, Bintulu, to carry out raids, the culmination of two weeks surveillance in Bintulu and Miri.

The Malaysian Insider: bit.ly/1F3oRoh, 19 November 2014

OTHER / MULTI SEIZURES

CAMEROON: Two people have been arrested in Djoum–South in possession of the skulls of three Gorillas *Gorilla gorilla* and one Chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes* (both CITES I). One of the suspects was reported to be a high profile trader in apes, belonging to a large illegal network.

Eagle network, January 2015

The body parts of a dead adult Chimpanzee were found in a bag at the gendarmerie in Campo Ma’an, close to the border with Equatorial Guinea. A number of people—believed to be residents of the area—were arrested on 13 March. The case was to be transferred to the tribunal at Kribi. The seized meat (leg and parts of the torso) was burned.

Sonja Metzger, in litt. to R. Melisch, TRAFFIC, 16 March 2015

MEXICO: On 10 March 2015, it was reported that an investigation by authorities into the purchase and sale of wildlife via the internet had led to a raid on a storage site in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, where some 40 dead animals were found in a freezer including: a Cotton-top Tamarin *Saguinus oedipus* (CITES I), a Common Squirrel Monkey *Saimiri sciureus* (CITES II), 17 Ball Pythons *Python regius* (II), two Common Kestrels *Falco tinnunculus* (II), three Water Monitors *Varanus salvator* (II), four Burmese Pythons *Python bivittatus* (II) and Red-eyed Leaf Frogs *Agalychnis callidryas* (II). Also recovered were 12 animals that were being kept in poor conditions, including a Sun Parakeet

Aratinga solstitialis (II), two Blue-and-gold Macaws *Ara ararauna* (II) and two Monk Parakeets *Myiopsitta monachus* (II), as well as Sugar Gliders *Petaurus breviceps*, Eastern Grey Squirrels *Sciurus carolinensis*, Black-tailed Prairie Dogs *Cynomys ludovicianus*, Swamp Crocodiles *Crocodylus moreletti*, a chinchilla *Chinchilla*, and a corn snake *Pantherophis guttatus*. The live animals were taken to La Pastora Zoo Park, where they were to be assessed by veterinarians.

Fox New Latino: <http://bit.ly/1FJ67OH>, 10 March 2015

SENEGAL: On 31 October 2014, authorities arrested four Nigerians and seized 2600 skins and animal parts, including those of Lions *Panthera leo* (CITES I), Leopards *P. pardus* (I), hyaenas, antelopes and pythons. These dealers were involved in the illegal importation of animals from African countries, for export overseas as well as to supply local sellers.

At the court in Dakar, the four received gaol terms of between one and three months' imprisonment and fines ranging from 100 000 CFA francs to 1.2 million CFA francs (USD900–9000).

Dakaractu.com: <http://bit.ly/1FcwwWb>, 14 November 2014

THAILAND: Two tourists were arrested at Suvarnabhumi Airport, Bangkok, as they tried to smuggle 144 animals out of the country to Japan in their luggage. These included 110 Pig-nosed turtles *Carettochelys insculpta* (CITES II), groundhogs *Marmota*, snakes and geckos (species not reported). The animals had been purchased at the city's Chatuchak weekend market.

The Daily Mail (UK): <http://dailym.ai/1Ha2yTs>, 20 February 2015

UK: On 24 November 2014, at Newport Crown Court, Sun Liu, of Pontypridd, was fined GBP2250 (USD3330) in total (GBP750 for each of three offences), and has to pay GBP1500 costs.

In July 2012, she was stopped by officers as she arrived on a flight from Beijing via Amsterdam. Three boxes held medicines purportedly containing ground rhinoceros horn (CITES I); one had eight portions of a medicine containing bear (I/II) bile and two contained *shenrong weisheng wan* (which includes extracts of Desert Living Cistanche *Cistanche deserticola* (II), *Aquilaria* (II) and Ginseng *Panax ginseng*). Liu was arrested at her home in Pontypridd five months later and charged with three counts of trying to smuggle the items into the UK.

BBC: <http://bbc.in/1Ha4M5e>, 25 November 2014

On 9 December 2014, at Croydon Crown Court, Peter Prineas of Orpington received a suspended gaol sentence of 10 months after being found guilty of purchasing animal body parts from online auction sites and private sellers. The sentence was suspended for 18 months.

When Scotland Yard's Wildlife Crime Unit searched his home, they seized the skins of a Cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus* and a Leopard *Panthera pardus*, the skulls of a Drill *Mandrillus leucophaeus* and four Chimpanzees *Pan troglodytes* (all CITES I), a langur *Trachypithecus* (I/II), and other specimens of protected species.

BBC News: <http://bbc.in/19MtvIG>, 10 December 2014; *Robin des Bois, On the Trail No. 7*: <http://bit.ly/19CJGi0>

USA: On 25 March 2015, antiques dealer Tony Guan from Richmond, British Columbia, Canada, pleaded guilty in New York to smuggling rhinoceros horn, elephant ivory and coral to Canada. He was sentenced to 30 months in gaol.

Bao Antiques bought nine items online from an auction house in Florida. Owner Xiao Ju (Tony) Guan was arrested in New York in March 2014 by US Fish and Wildlife Service agents. He purchased two horns of Black Rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* (CITES I) from undercover officers and

shipped them to Point Roberts, Washington, a short drive from Richmond, falsely labelling the box as containing “handicrafts”. A search of his shop by Canadian police uncovered ivory, coral and other wildlife items purchased in the USA.

The Canadian Press: <http://bit.ly/1bBxQWi>, 25 March 2015

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B I R D S

INDONESIA: On 4 May 2015, harbour police at Tanjung Perak port, Surabaya, caught a passenger disembarking with two birds packed in jerry cans; a search of the boat uncovered some travel bags that were found to contain 21 Yellow-crested Cockatoos *Cacatua sulphurea* (CITES I) that had been placed in plastic water bottles. Officials had to cut the birds free; seven subsequently died.

According to BirdLife, this species has declined extremely rapidly owing to international trade and widespread deforestation within its range, with an estimated global population of fewer than 7000 individuals.

On 12 June 2015, two people were arrested in Langkat, Sumatra; the beaks or casques of 12 Helmeted Hornbills *Rhinoplax vigil* (CITES I) were confiscated, together with firearms. Langkat is an important entry point for poachers trespassing in the Gunung Leuser National Park (GLNP). The suspects’ operation involved 30 hunters who poached the birds inside Indonesia’s Leuser landscape—a continuous forest covering more than 25 000 km², most of which lies in the province of Aceh, including GLNP.

Helmeted Hornbills are one of Indonesia’s most hunted bird species. In recent years, international trade for their casques has increased sharply, owing to demand for their use as carved decorations. The suspects confessed to selling at least 124 casques within six months to a Chinese middleman.

A shipment of Helmeted Hornbill casques was seized with pangolin scales and other wildlife in Hong Kong in May 2015 (see Pangolins).

CNN: <http://cnn.it/1EWRUxz>; 7 May 2015; Newswise: <http://bit.ly/1MTgldW>, 19 June 2015

E L E P H A N T S

see also under Other / Multi-seizures

BENIN: In August 2015, a former eco-guard with CENAGREF (Centre National de Gestion des Réserves de Faune) was sentenced to 18 months’ imprisonment and ordered to pay USD13 000 for killing an elephant (CITES I) and its baby for ivory.

The Eagle Network, August 2015

CHINA: On 7 September 2015, it was reported that an antique shop owner called Tai of Shandong province had been gaoled for 15 years for smuggling 18 ivory (CITES I) tusks into China (131.36 kg). Qingdao Customs found the tusks in 7 parcels arriving by post from Japan in October 2014. Police traced the suspect from the recipient’s telephone number.

In September 2015, it was reported that a woman in Beijing had been gaoled for 6.5 years for smuggling six ivory (CITES I) pieces into China (14.5 kg) that she had purchased in Côte d’Ivoire. The woman was stopped at Beijing international airport in December 2013 with the ivory in her luggage. She claimed that

she had purchased the ivory from a Chinese person as souvenirs. The pieces had been wrapped in aluminium foil and prosecutors alleged this was to try to prevent the items showing on airport X-ray machines.

http://news.sina.com.cn/o/2015-09-08/doc-ifxhqhuf8218843.shtml; South China Morning Post: http://bit.ly/1Gpv8kR, 16 September 2015

FRANCE: On 27 May 2015, Customs officials at Paris-Roissy Charles de Gaulle Airport seized 136 kg of raw elephant ivory (CITES I) from two suitcases in transit from Democratic Republic of Congo to Viet Nam, labelled as “spare parts”. The dozen ivory tusks had been cut into 39 pieces and concealed under sheets of aluminium plates.

French Customs: http://bit.ly/1Ggl3CI, 11 June 2015

HONG KONG: A number of shipments of ivory (CITES I) have been seized at Hong Kong International Airport in recent months, several of which have involved the same modus operandi of concealment of items in tailor-made vests and arriving from African countries via Dubai, United Arab Emirates:

On 7 August 2015, a man travelling from Harare, Zimbabwe, via Dubai, was arrested in possession of 15 kg of ivory (CITES I) pieces concealed in a tailor-made vest he was wearing; another 15 kg of ivory products were concealed in a tailor-made vest in the hand luggage of a man arriving from Abuja, Nigeria, via Dubai, on 24 August.

On 2 September, authorities seized a parcel of 24 kg of ivory sent from Zimbabwe, via Amsterdam, the Netherlands, declared as “decorative tiles”. On 6 September, 51 kg of ivory pieces were seized from two inbound airmail parcels, again declared as “decorative tiles” and using the same route from Zimbabwe. On 25 September, a man arriving from Harare, Zimbabwe, via Dubai, was arrested after officials seized 13 kg of suspected worked ivory products from a tailor-made vest found in hand luggage. On 29 September 2015, 16 kg of suspected ivory pieces similarly concealed were found in the luggage of a man arriving from Abuja, Nigeria, via Dubai.

Hong Kong Customs press releases: www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201508/07/P201508070420.htm, 7 August 2015; http://bit.ly/1jAPais, 24 August 2015; www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201509/04/P201509040446.htm, 4 September 2015; www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201509/26/P201509260213.htm, 26 September 2015; The Standard: http://bit.ly/1W5rjs5, 7 September 2015; South China Morning Post: http://bit.ly/1jTk2Kv, 29 September 2015

MALAWI: In August 2015, brothers Patrick and Chancy Kaunda were each fined MK2.5 million (USD5500) at the High Court of Malawi after pleading guilty to charges of ivory trafficking and money laundering; they chose to pay the fine instead of serving the seven-year gaol term for their involvement in the illegal trade in 2.6 t of elephant ivory (CITES I). These are reportedly the harshest sentences ever handed down for wildlife crimes in the country. Brighton Kumchedwa, Director of Parks & Wildlife, added, “The fine is the highest in the history of wildlife in Malawi. However we are aware that this is not commensurate with the sentencing of other countries, and with this in mind we look forward to the imminent review of the *Wildlife Act* and associated legislation.”

African Conservation Foundation: http://bit.ly/1W45lkb, 5 August 2015

MOZAMBIQUE: Over one tonne of ivory was seized in May 2015 with rhinoceros horns (see under Rhinoceroses)

SINGAPORE: On 19 May 2015, the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA), with the support of Singapore Customs and the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority, seized a shipment of two containers from Kenya, destined for Viet Nam, which held 3.7 t of illegal ivory (CITES I) declared as “tea leaves”. Concealed among bags of tea, authorities uncovered some 1783 pieces of

raw ivory tusks (whole/cut), as well as four pieces of rhinoceros (CITES I) horns and 22 pieces of canine teeth believed to be from African big cats. One man and his two sons were arrested at their home in Kenya for their alleged involvement in the case, which is under investigation and follows the interception of another 3 t of Kenyan ivory in Thailand.

Joint media release: Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority and the Singapore Customs: <http://bit.ly/1NnsZG8> 19 May 2015; The Star (Kenya): <http://allafrica.com/stories/201506040374.html>, 5 June 2015

SWITZERLAND: On 6 July 2015, Customs officials at Zurich airport seized 262 kg of ivory that three Chinese men had dispatched from Tanzania. Estimated to derive from up to 50 elephants, the ivory (CITES I) had been cut into 172 pieces and packed in eight suitcases, together with 21 teeth and claws of Lion *Panthera leo* (CITES II). The shipment was being transported from Tanzania's capital, Dar es Salaam, to Beijing via Zurich. It is reported that the trio were charged and fined (amount not reported).

www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2015/08/04/swiss-customs-seize-578-pounds-of-ivory-en-route-to-china, 4 August 2015; The Citizen: <http://bit.ly/1jTkCle>, 17 August 2015

UGANDA: On 4 June 2015, it was reported that aviation police had seized six boxes in transit to Singapore which contained over 740 kg of ivory (plus 100 ivory bangles) that had eluded airport security. The ivory was registered in the names of a Ugandan and was being sent to a company in Singapore dealing in ivory. The tusk markings indicate that the ivory was from outside Uganda. Five security personnel were arrested for alleged connivance to export the ivory; the Ugandan suspect is on the run.

Kfm: <http://bit.ly/1KefhoA>, 4 June 2015

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: On 7 May 2015, it was reported that police at Dubai airport had seized 84 pieces (300 kg) of raw ivory (CITES I) that had originated from Côte d'Ivoire, bound for Viet Nam. The consignment was to be handed over to the Ministry of Environment and Water and would be destroyed.

In July 2015, police seized a total of 622 kg of ivory from travellers in transit through Dubai airport in five separate incidents, and involving passengers travelling from African countries to the USA and Asia.

Khaleej Times: <http://yhoo.it/1QSYOr1>, 7 May 2015; www.emirates247.com/news/emirates/622kg-ivory-worth-dh5m-seized-in-dubai-2015-08-25-1.601353, 25 August 2015

VIET NAM: On 16 April 2015, Customs officers at Noi Bai Airport, Ha Noi, discovered 18 suspected ivory (CITES I) pieces (60 kg) and three rhinoceros (CITES I) horns (4.86 kg) packed in two boxes arriving from France. The case is under investigation.

On 30 June 2015, border police at Ha Tien International Border Gate and Kien Giang Province seized 387 kg of elephant tusks in a lorry travelling from Cambodia. The case is being investigated.

www.thanhniennews.com/society/65-kgs-of-smuggled-rhino-horns-ivory-busted-at-hanoi-airport-42265.html, 17 April 2015; <http://english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/society/135037/social-news-4-7.html>, 4 July 2015

MARINE / FRESHWATER

AUSTRALIA: On May 2015, at Warrnambool Magistrates' Court, Cuong Van Hoang, Nhan Ngoc Hoang and Vinh Thanh Pham pleaded guilty to fisheries offences. The trio were arrested at Griffith Island, Port Fairy, after being observed by authorities fishing and carrying bags of abalones (304 specimens, 173 under the 13-cm size limit). Two of the men, who were charged with further offences relating to the possession of commercial mesh nets, were fined AUD7500 and the third,

who had been keeping watch during the fishing operation, was fined AUD5000. All were sentenced to one month in gaol, suspended for two years.

The Standard (Australia): <http://bit.ly/1RW8dii>, 25 May 2015

CAMEROON: One person has been sentenced at a court in Buea to two years' imprisonment after being arrested in April 2015 in possession of nine marine turtle shells; the defendant was also ordered to pay USD10 000 damages to the government.

The Eagle Network, August 2015

CHINA: Between March and May 2015, the China Coast Guard (CCG) impounded 140 vessels used in the trade in red coral, detained 80 suspects and seized large amounts of coral, a protected species. It is reported that cases of red coral poaching are on the rise in coastal provinces such as Zhejiang, Fujian and Guangdong, severely harming the marine environment. The CCG has set up checkpoints targeting vessels without names, numbers, certificates or home ports.

Eco-Business: <http://bit.ly/1LLpgCX>, 26 May 2015

ECUADOR: In May 2015, police seized around 200 000 sharks fins which were about to be illegally exported to Asia. The fins were discovered after raids on nine locations in the port city of Manta. Six people, including a Chinese national, were arrested.

Interior Minister Jose Serrano said at least 50 000 sharks had been killed by the traffickers. He said the authorities had "dealt a major blow to an international network that trafficked shark fins". "We must end these criminal networks that are only interested in their own economic interests and are destroying the ecosystem."

BBC News: <http://bbc.in/1PSlwTI>, 29 May 2015

SOUTH AFRICA: On 11 May 2015, a raid on a house in Texas, Hangberg, led authorities to an operation involving five people who were discovered cleaning and packing bags with abalones *Haliotis midae*. The suspects fled when approached. Eleven bags each containing 100 abalones (45 kg/bag) and one bag containing 70 abalones (30 kg) were confiscated and handed over to Marine Coastal Management.

On 12 May 2015, a joint effort between members from Port Elizabeth K9-Unit, Kabega Park Crime Prevention Unit and Abalone Task Team led to one arrest in Westering in Port Elizabeth and the seizure of 7570 abalones *Haliotis midae*.

On 12 May 2015, police attached to Philippi SAPS acting on information found 8300 unshelled abalones *Haliotis midae* at a house at 6th Avenue Philippi. No arrests at time of report.

On 5 July 2015, two men were arrested for being in possession of 2915 abalones *Haliotis midae* when they were apprehended in their car near Rivieronderend, Western Cape.

On 5 August 2015, police arrested two suspects and seized over 4000 abalones *Haliotis midae* concealed in a coffin being transported in Beaufort West, bound for Johannesburg. One of the suspects is reportedly a former police officer previously convicted of poaching and illegal abalone trade.

On 14 August 2015, it was reported that a man had been arrested after some 6965 abalones *Haliotis midae* were discovered in his vehicle after he was apprehended following a high-speed chase in the Western Cape.

On 26 August 2015, police in East London recovered 1576 units of frozen unshelled abalones *Haliotis midae* (10 kg) and 669 dried abalones following a raid on a house in Gonubie. Items linked to the

illegal harvesting of abalone such as diving equipment and weighing scales were also confiscated. A suspect was arrested.

On 29 August 2015, at O.R. Tambo International Airport, a 100 kg-consignment of abalones *Haliotis midae* arriving from Cape Town and disguised as frozen fish, was seized following a routine check; one person was arrested when he came to collect the cargo.

On 15 September 2015, a suspect was arrested while driving erratically and was found to be transporting 6824 shucked abalones. *Haliotis midae*.

Allafrica.com: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201505121471.html>, 11 May 2015;

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201505130974.html>, 12 May 2015;

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201505140824.html>, 13 May 2015; www.thenewage.co.za/159906-1008-53-Cape_police_arrest_man_for_possession_of_abalone_worth_R150000, 23 May 2015;

www.thenewage.co.za/164061-1008-53-Two_people_arrested_for_possession_of_abalone, 6 July 2015;

iol news: <http://bit.ly/1W5IPOf>, 7 August 2015; iol news: <http://bit.ly/1XjUa9o>, 14 August 2015; iol news:

<http://bit.ly/1GT033R>, 26 August 2015; www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/R100-000-worth-of-abalone-sized-at-OR-Tambo-20150830, 30 August 2015; Times Live: <http://bit.ly/1Fd4tHk>, 15 September 2015

PANGOLINS

All pangolin species are listed in CITES Appendix II, with a zero quota for Asian species.

See also under Other / Multi-seizures

HONG KONG: On 6 May 2015, Customs and the Marine police seized 129 kg of suspected pangolin *Manis* scales, live tortoises, lizards, spiders, and some 10 kg of Helmeted Hornbill *Rhinoplax vigil* (CITES I) casques, plus a large haul of electronic goods. Several men were discovered by the authorities loading boxes of goods onto a speedboat at Rambler Channel Public Cargo Working Area; several suspects fled in the speedboat. One arrest. The items were retrieved from 150 boxes and 30 bags. The investigation is continuing.

Hong Kong Government press release: <http://bit.ly/1kqFIOD>, 7 May 2015

INDIA: On 11 May 2015, Madhya Pradesh forest department officials arrested 13 people involved in the smuggling of pangolins *Manis* to China and Viet Nam; two kilogrammes of pangolin scales were seized. The accused allegedly confessed to poaching and trafficking 100 pangolins from Madhya Pradesh to China over the previous 12 months, employing tribal people to collect the animals from the wild.

On 29 May 2015, police in Kohima, the capital of Nagaland, north-east India, uncovered a shipment of at least 10 t of pangolin *Manis* scales during a routine car check. Six people travelling in three cars were detained. Ginseng *Panax* (500 kg) was also seized.

The Times of India: <http://bit.ly/1K6cMWq>, 12 May 2015; <http://wildlifeneews.co.uk/2015/05/indian-police-seized-10-tonnes-of-pangolin-scales/>, 30 May 2015

INDONESIA: On 23 April 2015, at Belawan seaport, Medan, Sumatra, authorities seized five tonnes of frozen pangolins *Manis*, 77 kg of pangolin scales, and 96 live pangolins. A suspect who was arrested allegedly dealt and exported pangolins that he ordered from local dealers in Aceh and north Sumatra. In order to avoid detection, the suspect had exported the cargo of pangolins from a secondary port to a cargo ferry offshore, where it was obscured by other containers. The cargo ferry then docked at Belawan port where the container was to be transferred to a vessel destined for China via Hai Phong Seaport in Viet Nam. The exporter reportedly also shipped live pangolins to Penang, Malaysia, through a remote seaport in Medan.

On 8 July 2015, Customs officials at Surabaya's Juanda International Airport foiled an attempt to smuggle 455 (1390 kg) dead pangolins *Manis* to Singapore. Suspicious of a man with 43 cartons he claimed were full of fish, officers checked the boxes to find the pangolins packed with fresh fish.

Newswise: www.newswise.com/articles/indonesian-national-police-seize-major-shipment-of-pangolins-arrest-smuggler, 27 April 2015; *Mongabay*: <http://bit.ly/1ZXs2uYl>, 9 July 2015

MALAYSIA: On 10 September 2015, authorities foiled an attempt to smuggle 97 live pangolins *Manis* across the country's northern border into Thailand. The pangolins were found in two cars at a house in the village of Padang Buloh in the State of Kedah. One arrest. The pangolins were subsequently kept at a wildlife centre in the State and would be released back into the wild.

www.news24.com/Green/News/Nearly-100-live-pangolins-saved-in-Malaysia-anti-smuggling-raid-20150910, 10 September 2015

VIET NAM: On 17 August 2015, authorities rescued 56 Sunda Pangolins *Manis javanica* (232 kg) from various locations in Nga Son district, Thanh Hoa Province, the largest incidence in which officials rescued pangolins being illegally sold in Viet Nam. The animals were to be released in the wild. A Chinese Pangolin *Manis pentadactyla* was among a further seven pangolins seized from Pu Mat National Park in Nghe An Province and taken into the care of the Carnivore and Pangolin Education Centre, a joint-programme between Save Vietnam's Wildlife and Cuc Phuong National Park which were involved in the earlier rescue of the 56 specimens.

Viet Nam News: <http://bit.ly/1gXY3kb>, 17 August 2015

ZIMBABWE: Nine-year gaol terms have been imposed for pangolin offences in a number of recent cases:

In May 2015, Noel Holman and Tendai Musatyira of Harare each received mandatory nine-year gaol terms after being convicted in a Harare courtroom of possessing a pangolin. The pair was apprehended by authorities on 18 January 2015. Acting on information, police joined Zimparks officials masquerading as buyers; the duo was apprehended after a pangolin contained in a sack was presented to the "buyers" to view. They have since filed an application for bail pending appeal at the High Court.

On 18 June 2015, Gilbert Nyamuziwa Karanda and Oliver Kakumura of Harare were each sentenced to nine years in gaol for possessing a pangolin carcass. A third person is on the run.

On 8 August 2015, at Chiredzi Magistrates' Court, Mozambique national Blessing Aron was sentenced to nine years' imprisonment for the possession of a pangolin in violation of the *Parks & Wildlife Act*. The pangolin was released into a safe environment.

Newsday: <http://bit.ly/1Gi90cf>, 21 May 2015; <http://allafrica.com/stories/201506190111.html>, 19 June 2015; *Tikki Hywood Trust*, 16 August 2015

REPTILES / AMPHIBIANS

CHINA: On 4 August 2015, at Guangzhou Airport, Guangdong, forest police arrested two people arriving from Madagascar with 298 Radiated Tortoises *Astrochelys radiata* (CITES I) in their luggage; an airport worker reportedly helped the duo to clear Customs checks. The case is under investigation.

In August 2015, Customs officials at Xiamen airport, Fujian Province, arrested a Chinese national after an X-ray image of his carry-on luggage looked suspicious. On opening his luggage, they found what were later identified as 182 gall bladders of Reticulated Pythons *Python reticulatus* (CITES II). The case is under investigation.

China Wildlife Conservation Association,
www.cwca.org.cn/news/tidings/ff808081471ed293014efb222e6e5037.html, 5 August 2015;
http://digi.dnkb.com.cn/dnkb/html/2015-08/15/content_391128.htm, 15 August 2015

INDIA: On 25 July 2015, at Chennai airport, Customs officials seized 50 live Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II) from the luggage of a passenger bound for Malaysia. On 2 July, 60 Indian Star Tortoises were seized from the luggage of another passenger and seven days later, 41 specimens of this species, also bound for Malaysia, were seized. Forest department officials reportedly suspect the involvement of a gang in the sourcing and smuggling of this species (see also pages 73–78 of this issue).

On 9 August 2015, at Kempe Gowda International Airport, Bangalore, two people arriving from Chennai were arrested for trying to smuggle 59 Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II) and 20 Spotted Black Terrapins [believed to be Black Spotted Turtles *Geoclemys hamiltonii* CITES I] to Malaysia. The reptiles, which had been bound using tapes to restrict their movements, were moved to a PFA (People for Animals) wildlife rehabilitation centre.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/Malaysia-bound-flyer-held-with-suitcase-full-of-star-7tortoises/articleshow/48220382.cms>, 26 July 2015; *Bangalore Mirror*: <http://bit.ly/1Gi98IT>, 14 August 2015

JAPAN: In early May 2015, at Chubu Airport, Aichi Prefecture, a couple was caught trying to smuggle some 400 turtles including Yellow Pond Turtles *Mauremys mutica* (CITES II) and Japanese Pond Turtles *M. japonica* (CITES II) out of the country. The turtles, valued in China for their medicinal properties and as pets, had been placed inside socks, and packed in suitcases. The couple's nationality and their destination have not been disclosed.

The Asahi Shimbun, <http://bit.ly/1NU4cfH>, 25 May 2015

MADAGASCAR: On 29 September 2015, at Antananarivo's Ivato International Airport, Customs and border police officials scanning luggage discovered 771 wild native tortoises in two wooden boxes being sent as freight to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, via Mauritius. The seizure was described by Customs as the largest ever of its kind at the airport. It included eight Ploughshare Tortoises *Astrochelys yniphora* (CITES I)—considered to be the world's rarest tortoise—and 763 Radiated Tortoises *A. radiata* (CITES I); both species—classified by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species as Critically Endangered—are found only in Madagascar.

The contents of the containers had been misdeclared and the tortoises concealed beneath clothing. Twenty Radiated Tortoises are understood to have died subsequently; the surviving specimens were handed over to the Turtle Survival Alliance. The Ploughshare Tortoises have been sent to the Durrell Conservation Trust for rehabilitation, before their release into the wild (see also pages 79–84 of this issue).

TRAFFIC: <http://bit.ly/1MU4q3e>, 5 October 2015

PHILIPPINES: In June 2015, over 4000 endangered turtles were confiscated from a well-known syndicate of poachers in the Philippines. Some 3800 specimens were Philippine Forest Turtles *Siebenrockiella leytensis* (CITES II), a Critically Endangered species that is endemic to the island of Palawan; historically this species was known from just four specimens, before being rediscovered in 2004 in northern Palawan where it is known to have a very restricted range. These specimens were destined for the illegal food and pet trade markets in East Asia. The Katala Foundation based on Palawan was alerted to this massive confiscation: to cope with such large numbers of turtles, a coalition of turtle conservation groups rapidly united and sent veterinarians and additional manpower, supplies and funds to the Philippines. The Director of Katala's Foundation's Philippine Freshwater Turtle Conservation Program, Dr Sabine Schoppe, and her small team found a temporary location at the Palawan Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Center to manage and triage

the confiscation and created suitable makeshift ponds. Some 2828 turtles have been released to date and after an initial peak of deaths in the first days, very few further deaths had occurred. Approximately 505 turtles remained in poor condition at the time of the report and had been started on a treatment regime.

Turtle Conservancy: <http://bit.ly/IGpDSHN>, 29 June 2015

SPAIN: On 15 July 2015, it was reported that some 40 Spur-thighed Tortoises *Testudo graeca* (CITES II) that had been left in crates, apparently abandoned in the street in Malaguete, Malaga, were seized by the authorities. The specimens were to be examined with the aim of returning them to the wild.

Spanish News Today: http://spanishnewstoday.com/endangered-native-spanish-tortoises-dumped-in-m%C3%A1laga_21848-a.htm#. VabOuNoaySN, 15 July 2015

TAIWAN: On 16 July 2015, Tainan Coast Guard officials seized a total of 3876 turtles, including 2286 Chinese Box Turtles *Cuora flavomarginata* and 920 Yellow Pond Turtles *Mauremys mutica* (both CITES II), 469 Reeves' Turtles *Mauremys reevesii* (IUCN Endangered), and one Keeled Box Turtle *Coura mouhotii* (IUCN Endangered). The specimens were believed to be bound for mainland China.

Yam News: <http://bit.ly/IW4kWQK>, (in Chinese), 18 July 2015

R H I N O C E R O S E S

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

See also under Other / Multi-seizures

CZECH REPUBLIC: On 19 June 2015, at Prague 6 district court, three Vietnamese nationals were convicted of the illegal export of rhinoceros horns; two received gaol terms of five years and the third to three years after they were caught trying to export to Viet Nam the horns (6.7 kg) of a rhinoceros hunted by a Czech hunter in South Africa. The consignment was seized at Václav Havel Airport in December 2013 following a routine x-ray baggage check; the horns had been concealed under layers of resin, plastic wrap and tar in a parcel containing electrical insulation material.

Prague Post: <http://bit.ly/IGi9AqC>, 19 June 2015

HONG KONG: On 27 July 2015, at the freight delivery centre at Hong Kong International Airport, Customs officers seized 10 pieces of suspected rhinoceros horns (6.71 kg) in three express parcels mixed with wood products. Each item had been wrapped in foil and plastic sheets. The parcels had arrived on different flights on 26 and 27 July from Pemba, Mozambique, via Johannesburg, South Africa. The slabs were suspected to have been cut from two whole horns, and believed to be intended for delivery in separate consignments to evade detection. The case was handed over to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department for follow-up action.

Hong Kong Customs press release: <http://bit.ly/IRWaz0H>, 29 July 2015

INDIA: On 1 May 2015, Gohpur police in Biswanath police district apprehended nine rhinoceros poachers at several locations in Gohpur and Bandardewa, among them an Arunachal police inspector. One rhinoceros horn was recovered.

www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=may0215/at054, 2 May 2015

KENYA: On 23 May 2015, at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi, a Vietnamese citizen in transit to Ha Noi, was arrested for smuggling seven pieces of rhinoceros horn, rhinoceros tails and Lion *Panthera leo* (CITES II) teeth (total 12 kg) out of Maputo, Mozambique.

http://en.starafrika.com/news/kenya-nabs-vietnamese-for-alleged-rhino-horn-smuggling.html, 25 May 2015

MOZAMBIQUE: On 3 May 2015, police in central Maputo seized 4.6 kg of rhinoceros horn and large sums of foreign currency from two Mozambicans and two South Koreans resident in South Africa and believed to be part of an international ring of traffickers in rhinoceros horn. The items were found in a car the group was using.

http://allafrica.com/stories/201505060127.html, 5 May 2015

It is reported that 12 of 65 rhinoceros horns seized in early May 2015 were stolen from a police strongroom in Matulo, Maputo province, on 22 May. A number of arrests have been made in connection with the latest theft. Mozambican police confirmed on 2 June that four individuals detained in connection with the theft of the 12 rhinoceros horns are senior police officers. The 65 horns and 340 elephant tusks (1.1 t) were found at a house on the outskirts of Maputo.

The seizure was originally heralded as a significant breakthrough in international efforts to clamp down on the criminal syndicates behind rhinoceros poaching and the smuggling of horn from Africa to Asia, although considerable confusion still exists over the number and nationality of people arrested in connection with the record bust. However, news of the police strong-room theft represents a serious setback in efforts to follow up the seizure with significant investigations that could help break a major trafficking network.

“TRAFFIC again urges Mozambique to seek the assistance of INTERPOL in providing the specialist support needed when significant seizures are made, to ensure that vital law enforcement opportunities are not squandered,” said Tom Milliken, TRAFFIC’s Elephant and Rhino Programme Leader.

“Mozambique should share with INTERPOL all evidence relating either to the original seizure or the subsequent theft.”

The theft is a significant blow to the newly elected government, which has publicly signalled its intent to address the country’s poor law enforcement record and corruption.

“While there are encouraging signs that the political will exists to get to grips with the corruption and crime that is undermining Mozambican society, this latest law enforcement lapse will come as a huge setback. Mozambique now has an opportunity to act on its stated commitments to stamp out corruption and demonstrate to the world that it is serious about tackling wildlife crimes, but a failure to do so will result in a serious loss of credibility for the new government,” said Milliken.

TRAFFIC: *http://bit.ly/1MEd5UU, 15 May 2015; http://bit.ly/1ZXv7LH, 1 June 2015; News Ghana: http://bit.ly/1GTayV0, 2 June 2015*

SOUTH AFRICA: On 6 May 2015, four members of Middelburg Flying Squad Unit were arrested in Mpumalanga. The constables had allegedly seized a rhinoceros horn and cash from a vehicle that they had stopped while on duty. Instead of arresting the five occupants, they reportedly demanded a bribe for the horn’s release. The five suspects handed themselves over to members of the Organised Crime Unit in Middleburg and provided details of the event. A subsequent sting operation led to the arrest of the four constables and seizure of the horn.

Sowetan Live: www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/2015/05/08/four-cops-arrested-for-possession-of-rhino-horn-corruption, 8 May 2015

On 31 August 2015, at White River Magistrates’ Court, Mpumalanga, Mozambican nationals Phinias Sithole and France Nkuna, were convicted and each sentenced to 11 years’ imprisonment after being arrested in Kruger National Park on 27 October 2014, armed with a hunting rifle and an axe. They

were sentenced to five years in gaol for possession of an unlicensed firearm, five years in gaol for unlawful possession of ammunition and one year in gaol for trespassing.

“This conviction will serve as a deterrent to other would-be poachers; they will know that the task teams will stop them in their tracks even before committing the crime,” said national police spokesperson, Brigadier Vishnu Naidoo.

MY Lowveld: <http://bit.ly/1MTnfW2>, 3 September 2015

USA: On 20 May 2015, in a federal court in Florida, Christopher Hayes, the President and owner of an auction house was sentenced to 36 months in gaol followed by two years of supervised release for his role in the purchase, sale and smuggling of rhinoceros horns and objects made from rhinoceros horn, elephant ivory and coral that were smuggled from the USA to China. Hayes’ corporation, Elite Estate Buyers Inc., located in Florida, was ordered to pay a USD1.5 million fine to the *Lacey Act* reward fund. The court also banned the corporation from trading wildlife during a five-year term of probation.

Hayes and his company reportedly sold six horns of Black Rhinoceroses *Diceros bicornis* (CITES I); two of the horns were sold to Ning Qiu, a Texas resident who was involved in smuggling the horns to China. Qiu pleaded guilty to being part of a broader conspiracy to smuggle rhinoceros horns and items made from rhinoceros horns to Zhifei Li, the owner of an antiques business in China and the ringleader of a criminal enterprise that smuggled 30 rhinoceros horns and objects made from rhinoceros horn and elephant ivory from the USA to China. Qiu was sentenced to 25 months in gaol on 14 May 2015, in Frisco, Texas, and Li to a gaol term of 70 months in New Jersey in June 2014.

Elite and Hayes also admitted selling items made from rhinoceros horn, elephant ivory and coral to the president of an antiques business in Canada, who they then directed to a local shipper who agreed to post the items in Canada without the required permits. That individual, Xiao Ju Guan, was sentenced to 30 months in gaol on 25 March 2015 in New York.

The prosecution of Elite and Hayes is part of Operation Crash, a continuing effort by the Special Investigations Unit for the Fish and Wildlife Service’s Office of Law Enforcement, in co-ordination with the Department of Justice to detect, deter and prosecute those engaged in the illegal killing of rhinoceroses and the unlawful trafficking of rhinoceros horns and elephant ivory.

US Department of Justice: <http://1.usa.gov/1M6RWIG>, 20 May 2015

VIET NAM: On 11 May 2015, police in Nghe An seized 31 rhinoceros horns (37 kg) and arrested two men as they disembarked from a railway station with the horns concealed in three bags. During questioning, one of the suspects confessed that he had been hired to transport the consignment from Ho Chi Minh City to Nghe An. The case is under investigation.

Thanhniem News (Viet Nam): <http://bit.ly/1NnH4TP>, 10 May 2015

F L O R A

Red Sandalwood (also known as Red Sanders) *Pterocarpus santalinus* is listed in

CITES Appendix II.

HONG KONG SAR: On 9 July 2015, Customs officials at the Kwai Chung Customhouse Cargo Examination Compound seized a container holding 10 600 kg of logs of suspected Red Sandalwood from a container arriving from India by sea. The shipment was declared as “glass flower pots”. On 22 September 2015, Customs officials and marine police seized 446 kg of suspected Red Sandalwood being loaded by four people onto speedboats at Tsam Chuk Wan, Sai Kung. The suspects fled on one of the boats. The case is under investigation.

Hong Kong Customs press releases: <http://bit.ly/1LEJTNA>, 9 July 2015; <http://bit.ly/1NnHzgT>, 22 September 2015

INDIA: It was reported on 4 September 2015, that some 13 000 t of Red Sanders had been seized in Andhra Pradesh, 12 573 cases had been booked, 7354 vehicles seized and 19 852 people arrested for involvement in the illegal cutting and transportation of Red Sanders in the State, according to the State's Minister for Forests, Environment, Science and Technology in a written reply to a question in the AP assembly. The reporting period was not specified. The reply stated that 12 armed mobile teams and 19 observation posts with 40 CCTV cameras had been deployed. A special task force has been established to curb organized Red Sanders smuggling and an amendment to the AP Forest Act 1967 was also proposed as a deterrent against illegal cutting and smuggling of Red Sanders trees, the reply stated.

Business Standard: <http://bit.ly/1PAi9jhl>, 4 September 2015

In early May 2015, 20 t of Red Sanders was seized from a container in Korampallam, Tuticorin.

On 12 May 2015, 2700 kg of Red Sanders was seized from a lorry on Jharsa Chowk flyover, Gurgaon, after police, acting on information, put up barricades. Four suspects, who were arrested, had brought the wood from Khushkhera in Rajasthan, destined for a warehouse in Delhi.

On 16 May 2015, two policemen in Kadapa District were suspended for alleged dereliction of duty in connection with the theft of 18 Red Sanders logs from the premises of a police station in Vontimitta town. Three other policemen from Sambepalli police station were also suspended for alleged involvement in the smuggling of Red Sanders. The trio reportedly had supported the smugglers in transporting the logs from Dudyala and Yerramorampalli.

On 19 May 2015, a police constable in Kalamboli was arrested for allegedly conspiring with smugglers and abetting the crime; he is being held in custody. Four others were arrested. The case relates to an incident on 6 April 2015, when a container loaded with 7.5 t of smuggled Red Sanders arrived from Tamil Nadu and was delivered to a warehouse in Kalamboli steel market. The contraband, which was to be exported, had been sent from Tamil Nadu by a man, who is still at large.

On 28 May 2015, police in Kadapa district, Andhra Pradesh, arrested 72 people and confiscated 77 logs weighing 1.5 t. The smugglers had tried to dupe the police by disguising themselves as a marriage party. Woodcutter blades and axes were seized, together with 77 logs being transported on a bus.

On 5 June 2015, it was reported that a Chinese suspect detained for smuggling Red Sanders had told police that large quantities of Red Sanders are being sent to Dubai, mainly by sea.

On 29 June 2015, the anti-poaching flying squad of the Tirupati Wildlife Division seized more than a tonne of Red Sanders logs in Devarakonda in the Chamala range of the Seshachalam hills after they came across a group loading logs into vehicles; there were several arrests, though a number of people fled.

On 14 July 2015, Kadapa district police arrested a timber merchant and alleged international Red Sanders smuggler in Navrangpur village in Gurgaon district of Haryana, Kadapa. The suspect is accused in two cases relating to Red Sanders smuggling in Obulavaripalle and Pedlimarri police stations. Information leading to his arrest was provided by three recently-arrested Red Sanders smugglers. The accused are reported to have smuggled nearly 120 t of Red Sanders logs out of the country to Dubai, Nepal and China.

On 17 August 2015, three alleged smugglers were arrested and 2 t of Red Sanders (122 logs) recovered by Red Sanders Anti-Smuggling Task Force officers. The suspects were reportedly associates of a known international Red Sanders smuggler. Their modus operandi involved procuring the wood from other smugglers, transporting it as waste paper, fruit and vegetables, and supplying

the logs to smugglers in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Delhi and other northern States of the country with links to international smugglers.

www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/3-red-sanders-smugglers-held-logs-worth-over-rs-2-cr-seized-115081700839_1.html, 17 August 2015; <http://bit.ly/1jTzg21>, 2 May 2015; Times of India, 14 May 2015: <http://bit.ly/1Fi5ziN>; Deccan Herald: <http://bit.ly/1LnPj8g>, 16 May 2015; Times of India: <http://bit.ly/1W5AicS>, 24 May 2015; The New Indian Express: <http://bit.ly/1W4edGe>, 30 May 2015; The Hindu: www.thehindu.com/news/national/andhra-pradesh/dubai-a-thriving-hub-of-red-sanders-smuggling/article7284277.ece, 5 June 2015; www.thehindu.com/news/national/andhra-pradesh/rs-2-cr-worth-red-sanders-logs-seized-smugglers-held/article7368517.ece, 30 June 2015; The New Indian Express: <http://bit.ly/1PAaWzK>, 19 July 2015

OTHER / MULTI-SEIZURES

Operation COBRA III, the biggest ever co-ordinated international law enforcement operation targeting the illegal trade in endangered species, has led to the recovery of a huge amount of wildlife contraband, including over 12 t of elephant ivory and at least 119 rhinoceros horns.

European seizures included 11 439 dead and live specimens, almost 2000 parts and products, and over 6 t of timber, plants and animal parts. In addition, 100 000 pills of traditional Asian medicine were confiscated. Several individuals have been arrested and investigations are continuing in many countries.

Conducted in two phases between mid-March and the end of May 2015, Operation Cobra saw the participation of law enforcement teams and agencies from 62 countries in Europe, Africa, Asia and America. The operation was organized by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN) and the Lusaka Agreement Task Force (LATF), and supported by numerous international agencies and organizations such as Europol and INTERPOL.

Europol: <http://bit.ly/1RnVPqo>, 18 June 2015

BANGLADESH: On 6 September 2015, skins and body parts of Bengal Tigers *Panthera tigris tigris* (CITES I) and other wildlife products were seized at Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Market in Gulshan-2. A raid of a leather shop at the market yielded skulls of a Tiger and Fishing Cat *Prionailurus viverrinus* (CITES II), skins of Tiger, deer and snake, animal bones and a further 20 bags and belts made from skins of Tiger, snake, Fishing Cat and monitor lizards *Varanus* spp. (CITES I/II). The shopkeepers reportedly escaped.

www.thedailystar.net/backpage/tiger-skins-body-parts-seized-139138, 7 September 2015

CHINA: In April 2015, Shangluo police, Shanxi Province, spent six months investigating and subsequently arresting 50 suspects from more than 20 provinces and cities; some 1000 national first-class protected animals were seized. The first arrested suspects were Liu Liang, Gou Yu and Wang Xiao who were respectively sentenced to five years, 10 years and three years in gaol (suspended for five years) and fined CNY20 000 (USD3000), CNY15 000 and CNY10 000.

On 3 July 2015, border police at Jimunai, Xinjiang, found packages of Chinese Caterpillar Fungus *Ophiocordyceps sinensis* (15.66 kg), the skin of a bear *Ursus* (CITES I) and 35 bear paws concealed in a car. The driver confessed that a Kazakhstan national had paid him to transport the items to China.

On 7 August 2015, at Yuwang district court, Kaifeng city, a Mr Li was sentenced to three years' imprisonment, suspended for four years and fined CNY20 000 (USD3000). This follows his arrest in 2014 when forest police raided his shop in Kaifeng city and seized 68 ivory pieces (1.5 kg) (CITES I), one piece of Saiga Antelope *Saiga tatarica* (CITES II) horn and one piece of Helmeted Hornbill *Rhinoplax vigil* (CITES I) product.

On 18 August 2015, it was reported that the former director of Liupanshui Zoo, Guizhou province, Mr Yin, had been sentenced to 11 years' imprisonment and fined CNY100 000 (USD15 700) for purchasing five Francois' Langur *T. francoisi* (CITES I) from local hunters, Mr Yang and Mr Zhao during 2011 and 2014. Mr Zhao was given a 15-years prison sentence, and fined CNY150 000 (USD23 565) for hunting, transporting and selling three monkeys; Mr Yang was given a 10-year prison sentence and fined CNY50 000 (USD7800) for hunting and selling two monkeys.

China Wildlife Conservation Association: <http://bit.ly/1PAj2bx>, 10 July 2015 [in Chinese]; www.jisi.gov.cn/News/szsm/xinj/201507/20150713111641_13679.html, 13 July 2015; www.cwca.org.cn/news/tidings/ff808081471ed293014f05a4215150e8.html, 7 August 2015 [in Chinese]; www.cwca.org.cn/news/tidings/ff808081471ed293014f488ef10f534f.html, 20 August 2015

UGANDA: A woman arrested with the skin of a Cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus* (CITES I), antelope horns, skins of Serval *Leptailurus serval* (CITES II), python (CITES I/II) skin and other contraband has been sentenced to 1.5 years in gaol and fined USD280.

The Eagle network, August 2015

VIET NAM: The port of Da Nang has been the entry point into the country for a number of shipments involving elephant, rhinoceros and pangolin products in recent months, in sharp contrast to previous ivory seizures that have taken place in either Hai Phong port or Mong Cai province, further north in the country.

On 13 August, Customs at Tien Sa port, Da Nang, seized a shipment of almost 600 kg of elephant ivory and 142 kg of rhinoceros horns declared by a local company as marble and imported from Mozambique.

This was followed by a seizure on 21 August of over 2 t of ivory inside a container full of timber from Nigeria. The recipient of this shipment was the same as the one on 13 August. On 25 August, Customs in Da Nang seized 1023 kg of tusks and over 4 t of pangolin scales that reportedly arrived from Malaysia. The tusks were hidden among sacks of beans in a shipment weighing nearly 20 t. The confiscation of a large amount of ivory, pangolin scales and rhinoceros horn by authorities shows the vigilance of Viet Nam Customs. However, it is worrying as it also points to Da Nang as a new port of entry for illegal wildlife trade in Viet Nam.

“With ivory and other wildlife smuggling at the forefront of global attention and enforcement efforts, traffickers are constantly exploring new routes and ports to exploit in the movement of illicit goods. The seizures in Da Nang are a perfect illustration of this,” said Madelon Willemsen, TRAFFIC’s Head of Office in Viet Nam.

“Although some ivory processing in Viet Nam does take place and may actually be increasing, the evidence suggests that most of the raw ivory imported into Viet Nam is re-exported to China using land routes over the terrestrial border in the far north. Thus, trafficking through Da Nang represents increased transport costs as it is much further away from the Chinese border than the port of Hai Phong where most seizures of transit trade in the past occurred,” said Tom Milliken, TRAFFIC’s Elephant and Rhino Programme Leader.

www.traffic.org/home/2015/9/24/spotlight-on-da-nang-as-new-conduit-in-global-ivory-traffick.html, 24 September 2015

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B E A R S

CANADA: On 4 March 2016, at the provincial court in Port Coquitlam, British Columbia, acupuncturist and traditional Chinese medicine practitioner Yunhee (Sarah) Kim was fined CAD22 400 (USD17 000) for the illegal trade in bear *Ursus* (CITES I/II) gall bladders and paws.

The Province (Canada): <http://bit.ly/1oyf1HY>, 4 March 2016

RUSSIA: On 23 December 2015, it was reported that police in Chuguyevsky district, Primorsky region, had seized 527 bear *Ursus* (CITES I/II) paws, 11 bear gall bladders (and three musk *Moschus* (CITES I/II) deer gall bladders) concealed in bags of sawdust in railway carriages at the premises of a timber processing company.

Siberian Times: bit.ly/1RW44Mj, 3 December 2015

B I R D S

BRAZIL: On 11 January 2016, Jeffrey Lendrum was sentenced to gaol for four and a half years for the illegal trade in Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* (CITES I) eggs that had been collected days earlier in Patagonia, Chile. He was fined BRL40 000 (USD10 000).

Lendrum, a serial offender previously convicted of trying to smuggle birds of prey eggs out of Britain and elsewhere (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 23(1):30), was arrested in October 2015 at São Paulo Airport, in transit to Dubai, with four eggs in his possession after authorities in Chile were alerted by IBAMA, Brazil's federal environmental enforcement agency, that Lendrum was preparing to strike again.

Two of the eggs subsequently hatched but only one chick survived; it was returned to Chile where it was placed on an existing Peregrine Falcon nest.

UK National Wildlife Crime Unit press release: <http://bit.ly/23tRVaa>; *Shanghai Daily:* <http://bit.ly/1WRFPjO>, 29 January 2016; Daniel Eduardo Visciano de Carvalho, IBAMA, in litt. to R. Thomas, *TRAFFIC*, 22 February 2016

CONGO, DEM. REP. OF: On 14 February 2016, some 420 Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus* (CITES II) chicks were seized from a holding facility in Kindu, Maniema, before their shipment to Kinshasa. Two local buyers were arrested and later gaoled; at least 65 birds subsequently perished and 295 live birds were transferred to the Congolese Conservation Institute.

<http://bit.ly/1Wrl407>, 10 March 2016

INDONESIA: On 3 December 2015, authorities in East Java seized 2711 live native birds from a passenger ship at Tanjung Perak port, Surabaya. One person suspected of purchasing the birds from collectors in Kalimantan was arrested. It is believed the birds were destined for Jakarta's Pramuka bird market. The shipment included 1411 Greater Green Leafbirds *Chloropsis sonnerati*, 712 White-rumped Shamas *Copsychus malabaricus*, 557 Hill Mynas *Gracula religiosa*, 20 Australasian Larks *Mirafra javanica*, eight Crested Jays *Platylophus galericulatus*, two Oriental Magpie-robins *Copsychus saularis* and a Red-eyed Bulbul *Pycnonotus brunneus*. 1192 birds died (678 Greater Green Leafbirds); the condition of 1230 birds was being assessed. 308 birds were returned to East Kalimantan.

On 11 November 2015, 200 Greater Green Leafbirds were seized at the same port; 25 were dead. A day earlier, 1014 birds were seized from a passenger vessel arriving from Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, including 468 White-rumped Shamas, 408 Greater Green Leafbirds, and 24 Hill Mynas, all believed to be destined for Pramuka bird market.

TRAFFIC: <http://bit.ly/1t8BET>, 4 December 2015; *Surya Online:* <http://bit.ly/1You7Qp> (in Indonesian)

E L E P H A N T S

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

CAMBODIA: On 4 October 2015, at Siem Reap Airport, a Vietnamese national was arrested after arriving on a flight from Angola with 46 kg of ivory and 11 elephant tails in his suitcase. The buyers were believed to live locally. The suspect awaits trial.

The Phnom Penh Post: <http://bit.ly/1Nnd0KX>, 7 October 2015

CAMEROON: In February 2016, it was reported that three ivory traffickers had been sentenced to one year in gaol and fined USD11 000.

The Eagle Network: [EAGLE_Briefing_February_2016_public.pdf](#)

CHINA: On 10 October 2015, at Lichuan Court, Jiangxi province, Hong Kong resident Xu was sentenced to 10.5 years in gaol and fined CNY200 000 (USD33 333). In November 2014, Lichuan police intercepted a vehicle carrying 22 figurines (13 kg), claimed to be mammoth products but subsequently identified as ivory. During their investigation of another suspect, police found that Xu had rented a certified ivory processing factory but was carrying out business involving ivory from both legal and illegal sources. He was arrested in February 2015 with 600 kg of ivory products.

On 23 November 2015, officials in Xiamen, Fujian province, confiscated 57 elephant tusks, allegedly imported from Uganda, declared as timber, and concealed in a container of wood. One arrest.

In December 2015, suspect Zhao was sentenced in Taiyuan People's Court, Shanxi province, to 11 years in gaol/fined CNY300 000 (USD46 000) and suspect Dongmou was gaoled for three years/fined CNY50 000 (USD7700) for their role in smuggling over 10 kg of ivory from Japan in 2013. Further investigations by Taiyuan Customs anti-smuggling bureau subsequently resulted in the confiscation of over 70 kg of smuggled ivory products, involving 16 suspects.

On 4 March 2016, border guards in Zhuhai, Guangdong province, seized 221 cut ivory pieces (450 kg) being transported by speedboat from Hong Kong; the suspects had fled.

<http://bit.ly/1Sz4Agu> [in Chinese], 18 November 2015; *Daily Mail (UK):* <http://dailym.ai/1HzrPlx>, 24 November 2015; <http://bit.ly/1Sf9oh2> [in Chinese], 27 January 2016; *Macau Daily Times:* <http://bit.ly/1S9S3TH>, 22 March 2016

CONGO, DEM. REP. OF: During the first quarter of 2016, authorities arrested a dozen people and seized a total of 80 kg of ivory during three separate operations.

WWF–Democratic Republic of Congo media release, 21 March 2016

GABON: In December 2015, a forest official and one other person arrested in possession of 206 kg of ivory, were gaoled for six months and fined USD35 000.

The EAGLE network: www.eagle-enforcement.org/data/files/eagle-briefing-january-2016-public.pdf, January 2016

HONG KONG: During November 2015, Customs officials at Hong Kong International Airport seized a total of 146.5 kg of suspected ivory products from five separate shipments; the ivory had been concealed in tailor-made vests or in hand luggage; one package arrived by courier from

Malaysia declared as pet food. A number of arrests; two prosecutions at Tsuen Wan Magistrates' Court both resulted in fines of HKD65 000 (USD8300); another person was fined HKD90 000. All items had been shipped from, respectively, Harare, Zimbabwe; Abuja, Nigeria; Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, via Dubai, and one direct from Dubai. A further two shipments (10 kg and 26 kg) from Abidjan, via Dubai, arrived in luggage on 14 March and 16 April 2016, respectively.

Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region press releases: <http://bit.ly/1H6ihEx>, 3 November 2015; <http://bit.ly/1Sf9y85>, 4 November 2015; <http://bit.ly/1Q6uYgh>, 7 November 2015; <http://bit.ly/1S9SIKm>, 14 November 2015; <http://bit.ly/1V0UOu8>, 19 November 2015; <http://bit.ly/1Q6vkmQ>, 14 March 2016; <http://bit.ly/23W1NWX>, 17 April 2016

INDIA: On 10 October 2015, officials in New Delhi arrested a key ivory trader known to the authorities and subsequently seized 488 kg of ivory—believed to be the largest haul of ivory in the city; another suspect was arrested when the tusks and ivory artefacts were seized from a house in Maujpur, New Delhi.

The Hindu: <http://bit.ly/1SMp2uD>, 12 October 2015

INDONESIA: On 16 February 2016, it was reported that Customs officers at Soekarno-Hatta Airport had arrested a Chinese citizen smuggling elephant tusks (109 kg) from Abu Dhabi and a Zambian national arriving from Zambia in possession of 163 elephant tusks (and two rhinoceros horns), which he claimed were to be carved into table decorations.

Tempo.co: <http://bit.ly/1NnYGgK>, 16 February 2016

MALAYSIA: On 26 February 2016, at Kuala Lumpur International Airport, in two separate incidents, Customs officials seized a total of 159 kg of ivory tusks: two Vietnamese nationals believed to have been travelling from Angola were found with 101 kg in their luggage; some 58 kg was recovered from unidentified luggage bound for Hanoi, Viet Nam.

The Sun Daily (Malaysia): <http://bit.ly/23tUg4O>, 2 March 2016

MOZAMBIQUE: On 3 October 2015, two Chinese nationals bound for Qatar were arrested in Nampula with 104 kg of elephant tusks.

Bloomberg: <http://bloom.bg/1Rs6iSp>, 6 October 2015

MYANMAR: On 1 January 2016, police in Irrawaddy Division arrested two suspected members of an elephant poaching ring in Chaungtha Forest Reserve; 66 pieces of elephant trunks and tails, dried elephant hide and a knife were seized. A skinned elephant and a structure to cure the hide was also found.

The Irrawaddy: <http://bit.ly/1O4TVuY>, 5 January 2016

SINGAPORE: On 12 December 2015, authorities impounded 505 kg of elephant tusks in reportedly one of the largest ivory seizures made in the territory in over a decade. The tusks were found with 324 kg of pangolin scales in an air shipment from Nigeria, bound for Lao PDR, labelled as synthetic wigs.

Asiaone: <http://bit.ly/1mpfjly>, 17 December 2015

TAIWAN: In December 2015 and January 2016, officials seized seven parcels (six from UK; one from France) containing 45 ivory pieces; two suspects claimed to have purchased the items at antique auction websites overseas. Further pieces were recovered from their premises (a total of

400 pieces/28 kg). The suspects were reportedly also selling ivory products on a social media site in Taiwan.

Liberty Times Net: <http://bit.ly/1WrmJ5U>, 19 February 2016; Taiwan Customs pers. comm. to J. Wu, TRAFFIC, 11 March 2016

TANZANIA: On 18 December 2015, at Mpanda District Magistrate Court in Katavi Region, two local men Justin Bruno and Philbert Leo were gaoled for 42 years after being apprehended transporting four elephant tusks (47 kg) on a motorbike.

On 22 December 2015, it was reported that authorities had seized 156 ivory tusks (200 kg); two Tanzanian suspects were arrested in Dar es Salaam.

On 29 December 2015 it was reported that Stephano Jonas and Franko Hamisi, Burundian refugees from Katumba refugee camp at Mlele District, Katavi Region, had been sentenced at Mpanda District Court to 20 years in gaol for possession of elephants tusks. Police arrested the duo in May 2015 at the camp, where they found the tusks under a bed.

On 19 March 2016, at Kisutu Resident Magistrate's Court, Dar es Salaam, Chinese nationals Huang Gin and Xu Fujie were each sentenced to 30 years in gaol or ordered to pay a fine of Sh54.3 billion (USD25 million) each following their arrest in 2013 after 707 tusk pieces (1.8 t) were found in sacks of garlic at their house.

The Citizen: <http://bit.ly/1PjMSif>, 19 December 2015; Voice of America: <http://bit.ly/1NNkS3W>, 23 December 2015; allAfrica: <http://bit.ly/1XuYfam>, 29 December 2015 Reuters: <http://reut.rs/1Sz6Dkx>, 19 March 2016; The Citizen: <http://bit.ly/1Uc4QIS>, 19 March 2016

UK: On 14 October 2015, Border Force officers at Heathrow Airport seized 110 kg of raw elephant tusks, carved ivory bangles and beads from luggage abandoned in transit from Angola to Hanover, Germany. The items were taken away for forensic analysis and confirmed to be ivory; the case is being investigated by the National Crime Agency.

UK Border Force

UGANDA: In November 2015, at Entebbe International Airport, four Vietnamese nationals were arrested attempting to export 36 kg of ivory (and 3 kg of rhinoceros horn). The contraband was declared as wood samples, destined for Viet Nam. The suspects were gaoled (term not reported).

EAGLE_ Briefing_December_20s15_public.pdf

VIET NAM: On 29 November 2015, a container holding 835 (2204 kg) African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* tusks hidden in beans, arriving by sea from Mozambique, was seized.

On 29 January 2016, at Hanoi's Noi Bai Airport, 137 kg of elephant tusks and ivory carvings were seized from six checked-in cases arriving from Angola, via Malaysia.

(see also Other / multi-seizures)

Haiquan online: <http://bit.ly/1T3vLYb>, 17 December 2015; Thanh Nien News: <http://bit.ly/1S6fE5B>, 30 January 2016; <http://bit.ly/1NnZout>, 30 January 2016

ZIMBABWE: On 24/25 October 2015, at Harare International Airport, Customs officials seized 173 kg of ivory on route to Singapore; three locals and a Malian national were arrested. It is reported that an

undisclosed amount of ivory was recently seized at the airport allegedly involving officials at Hwange National Park who were trying to smuggle the ivory out of the country.

Newsdze Zimbabwe: <http://bit.ly/1R95sts>, 26 October 2015

MARINE / FRESHWATER

AUSTRALIA: On 3 February 2016, at the County Court, Victoria, the ringleader [name not reported] of an illegal abalone *Haliotis* syndicate based in Melbourne was gaoled for 23 months and 14 days, with a non-parole period of 12 months. She was also convicted and banned indefinitely from all fishing activity, ordered to pay AUD18 007 (USD13 700) and a vehicle was forfeited. She had pleaded guilty to trafficking commercial quantities of abalone, and also to selling rock lobsters and molluscs without authorization. The 10-month investigation, code-named Operation Quantum, had observed the woman repeatedly selling illegally taken abalone at a discounted price around St Albans and Sunshine, Victoria, supplied by a team of ten divers. Four divers were gaoled on 11 January for periods of up to two months, however those sentences remain under appeal. The other six men were required to complete between 60 and 280 hours of unpaid community work, were banned from all fishing activity indefinitely and ordered to pay between AUD220 and AUD16 500 (USD168 and USD12 600) each.

Fishing World: <http://bit.ly/1KZICka>, 3 February 2016; *The Standard*, <http://bit.ly/119bboj>, 12 January 2016; <http://bit.ly/1XuYKBf>, 12 January 2016

HONG KONG: On 11 December 2015, officials with a quarantine detector dog at the Air Mail Centre of Hong Kong International Airport seized a shipment containing 9 kg of dried seahorses *Hippocampus* spp. (CITES II).

Customs officials at Hong Kong International Airport have seized five separate shipments of suspected European Eels *Anguilla anguilla* (CITES II) in 2016 to date (total 341 kg) from the check-in luggage of passengers arriving from Spain and Portugal via Abu Dhabi, Paris, Amsterdam and Istanbul without the requisite licences.

On 7 March 2016, at Hong Kong International Airport, an unclaimed bag was found to contain 46 kg of suspected dried fins of Smooth Hammerhead Sharks *Sphyrna zygaena* (CITES II).

On 14 December 2015, some 16 kg of suspected dried shark fins of Sphyrnidae spp. (three species in CITES II) were seized from a passenger arriving from Mozambique via Johannesburg, South Africa. Both shipments were without the requisite licences.

Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region press releases: <http://bit.ly/1Sz7gL2>; <http://bit.ly/1qHELoj>, 14 December 2015; <http://bit.ly/1qotk4k>, 8 March 2016; <http://bit.ly/1Z5doi1>, 5 January 2016; <http://bit.ly/1XkThx9>, 11 February 2016; <http://bit.ly/1XuZ5Un>, 25 February 2016; <http://bit.ly/1Le8Kxx>, 4 March 2016; <http://bit.ly/1qotk4k>, 8 March 2016

INDIA: On 1 February 2016, at Alanthalai, in Thoothukudi district, two persons were arrested during a vehicle check in possession of 2500 conch shells (protected under Schedule I and II of the *Wildlife Protection Act*) reportedly bound for tourist destinations such as Kanyakumari and Rameshwaram. They included Horned Helmets *Cassis cornuta*, Horse Conch *Fasciolaria trapezium*, Scorpion Spider Conch, *Lambis scorpius* and *Lambis chiragra arthritica*.

The Hindu, <http://bit.ly/2092xUE>, 3 February 2016

INDONESIA: In early October 2015, authorities at Jakarta International Airport seized some 3000 fins of Oceanic Whitetip Sharks *Carcharhinus longimanus* (CITES II; protected in Indonesia and banned from export) bound for Hong Kong, reportedly from sharks caught in waters around Java island.

Close to 8000 freshwater turtles were confiscated in recent seizures in Indonesia, the majority of them protected Pig-nosed Turtles *Carettochelys insculpta*.

On 21 February, officials at Jakarta's Soekarno Hatta International Airport discovered 3737 Pig-nosed Turtles and 883 Snake-necked Turtles *Macrochelodina rugosa* in boxes headed for Hong Kong. The turtles were placed in quarantine and were to be returned to the wild.

Days earlier, authorities foiled an attempt to smuggle 3230 Pig-nosed Turtles out of Mozes Kilangin Airport in Timika, Papua province, bound for Jakarta, via Jayapura.

<http://lyhoo.it/1MeqqqG>, 7 October 2015; TRAFFIC: <http://bit.ly/1SMqg9d>, 23 February 2016

MEXICO: On 11 October 2015, it was reported that 3.5 t of dried shark fins and 529 kg of fish swim bladders had been seized from a container in Manzanillo, Colima, bound for Hong Kong. The seizure was made because the shipper did not present documents confirming the legal provenance of the products or authorization for harvesting the animal parts.

Fox News: <http://bit.ly/1MtOnwR>, 11 October 2015

PAKISTAN: On 11 March 2016, it was reported that Punjab Wildlife and Parks Department officials at Faisalabad Airport had seized 45 Black-spotted Turtles *Geoclemys hamiltonii* (CITES I) from suitcases ready for loading onto a Malaysia-bound flight.

Customs officials seized two consignments at Lahore Airport earlier this year containing some 184 Black-spotted Turtles.

<http://bit.ly/1S6h8g7>, 11 March 2016

SOUTH AFRICA: On 29 October 2015, an undisclosed amount of abalone (Perlemoen) *Haliotis midae* was stolen from the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries' storage facility for confiscated abalones in Paarden Island, Cape Town, after armed and masked men overpowered security personnel.

In November 2015, in separate cases, at least four tonnes; 73 bags; 985 kg of abalones *Haliotis midae* were seized in Western/Eastern Cape provinces from vehicles and a number of arrests were made; another 39 627 abalones being processed at a suspected abalone factory were seized and four Mozambicans and three South African nationals were arrested.

Other significant cases in these provinces during 2016 to date include seizures of 620 kg and 8000 abalones from vehicles and from one property; a further 6151 shucked wet and 14014 dry abalones from a property in Atlantis; numerous arrests.

Times Live: www.timeslive.co.za/scitech/2015/11/02Abalone-storage-facility-hit-by-poachers, 2 November 2015; IOL news: <http://bit.ly/1TQTPeL>, 1 November 2015; News24: <http://bit.ly/1MtOt7V>, 1 November 2015; <http://bit.ly/1S6hhAc>, 6 November 2015; IOL News: <http://bit.ly/1oX6lfj>, 5 November 2015; RNews: <http://bit.ly/1o079B2>, 8 February 2016; Eyewitness News: <http://bit.ly/1QhjZRo>; Times Live: <http://bit.ly/21x8nju>, 17 March 2016

SPAIN: On 9 March 2016 it was reported that six people in Galicia had been arrested on charges of illegal fishing of Patagonian Toothfish *Dissostichus eleginoides* in Antarctic waters, reportedly the first illegal fishing investigation involving collaboration between the Spanish Civil Guard, INTERPOL and Europol.

The Guardian: <http://bit.ly/1T3yIKI>, 9 March 2016

TOGO: In January 2016, a Ghanaian fisherman living in Nigeria was arrested as he crossed the Hilla-Condji (Togo-Benin) border en route to Ghana, in possession of almost 80 kg of shark fins.

ANCE (*Alliance Nationale des Consommateurs et de l'Environnement*) Togo newsletter: <http://bit.ly/1TQUgWA>, 11 January 2016

P A N G O L I N S

All pangolin species are listed in CITES Appendix II

CAMEROON: On 11 November 2015, a person was arrested at an unnamed airport with 100 kg of Giant Pangolin *Smutsia gigantea* scales contained in sacks stamped with Chinese characters.

In February 2016, a Nigerian ivory trader was arrested with 200 kg of pangolin scales (and 12 ivory tusks).

The Eagle network: <http://bit.ly/1Q6yuqQ>, 11 November 2015; *EAGLE_Briefing_February_2016_public.pdf*

CHINA: On 8 December 2015, at Fangshenggang Intermediate People's Court, Tang Guoli was gaoled for five years and fined CNY50 000 (USD8065); He Bingyuan was gaoled for one year and fined CNY20 000 (USD3226). The duo had reportedly been hired to deliver live pangolins from Dongxing, Guangxi province, to Guangdong province; the animals had arrived by boat from Viet Nam. Dongxing Customs officers intercepted the suspects in April 2015 and seized 20 live Sunda Pangolins *Manis javanica* and six live Chinese Pangolins *M. pentadactyla*.

On 15 January 2016, at Baiyun International Airport, Guangzhou, the luggage of a passenger arriving from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, was found to contain 30 kg of pangolin scales.

On 17 January 2016, 51 live pangolins were discovered by police in the boot of a car that had been involved in an accident in Yulin City, Guangxi province.

On 19 January 2016, suspect Zhou was sentenced to over five years in gaol/fined CNY100 000 (USD15 385) following his arrest in 2014 after Zizhong forest police in Sichuan province seized 60 kg of pangolin scales from him.

On 28 January 2016, it was reported that one person hired to deliver 960 dead pangolins from Haiquan Bay to Guangchang Market in Zhuhai, Guangdong province, seized by police in May 2014, had been sentenced to five years in gaol/fined CNY20 000 (USD3000).

On 10 April 2016, officials in Guangdong province seized 76 bags containing 1.6 t of pangolin scales from a speedboat in waters off Zhongshan City. One person was detained.

<http://bit.ly/1HA98EK>, 23 October 2015; <http://bit.ly/1WrsfFH> [in Chinese], 9 December 2015; <http://bit.ly/1RMOTpB>, 14 December 2015; *Southcn.com:* <http://bit.ly/1Xv0HgZ> [in Chinese], 15 January 2016; *Eastday.com:* <http://bit.ly/1MtWc5J> [in Chinese], 18 January 2016; *SCOL.com:* <http://bit.ly/1T3yZqp> [in Chinese], 19 January 2016; *SINA:* <http://bit.ly/1oX8U1i>, 28 January 2016; <http://bit.ly/1VzzRan>, 16 April 2016

HONG KONG: On 17 December 2015, marine police arrested eight mainland sailors and confiscated 50 boxes of pangolin meat (weight not reported) after intercepting their mainland-bound boat off Lung Kwu Tan.

On 12 December, police seized another shipment of pangolin scales during an anti-smuggling operation in Sai Kung. During pursuit by police, two speedboats ran aground off Sharp Island. Six crew members fled; no arrests.

South China Morning Post: <http://bit.ly/1Qr7mZR>, 17 December 2015

INDONESIA: On 11 November 2015, police in north Sumatra province seized 91 pangolins from a boat in the waters off Belawan port; the animals were to be smuggled to Malaysia. Nine specimens had perished. Four crew members were arrested.

Malaysiakini: <http://bit.ly/1N8fwFP>, 11 November 2015

MALAYSIA: On 6 November 2015, Penang's Wildlife and National Parks Department (Perhilitan) found 46 pangolins in the boot of an abandoned car in Butterworth.

New Straits Times: <http://bit.ly/1RTNsWG>, 6 November 2015

VIET NAM: On 25 March 2016, 129 suspected Sunda Pangolins *Manis javanica* (535 kg) were seized from a car at Mong Cai, Quang Ninh province. Two people were arrested.

On the same day, in Quang Ninh province, 104 kg of pangolins *Manis* spp. were recovered from a vehicle. One arrest.

(see also Other / multi-seizures)

<http://bit.ly/23xiCL7>, 30 March 2016; <http://bit.ly/23Hq3fg>, 4 April 2016

ZIMBABWE: Zimbabwe imposes a nine-year minimum mandatory gaol sentence for pangolin trade offences.

In November 2015, it was reported that police officers Tinashe Mushaikwa and Albert Gwere from Gokwe had been sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment after being found in possession of a pangolin. The duo had been part of a four-member gang; their accomplices Gordon Chitima, and James Matsungu were sentenced to imprisonment for nine years. They were caught in October 2015 after authorities were tipped off and a detective posed as a buyer. The police officers will effectively serve nine years: according to the Magistrate, each of the 10 years is suspended for six months on condition the duo do not commit a similar offence in the next five years, and four months suspended on condition of good behaviour.

On 9 December 2015, Osman Friday of Harare was gaoled for nine years for possessing a pangolin. He was arrested after police officers posed as potential pangolin buyers.

On 14 December 2015, two men were each given nine-year gaol sentences for possessing a pangolin after attempting to sell the animal to undercover police officers. Joseph Masakanya went straight to gaol; the court had not decided what action to be taken in the case of the second subject, Stanley Madhaiza, who was unwell.

On 8 February 2016, Moses Gatsi was sentenced to nine years' imprisonment for being in possession of a pangolin. He was arrested after offering a pangolin for sale to police, who were acting as buyers.

(see also Other / multi-seizures)

<http://bit.ly/1GHEEA1>, 2 November 2015; New Zimbabwe: <http://bit.ly/25ZGe9S>, 9 December 2015; New Zimbabwe, <http://bit.ly/1NQI8Bq>, 14 December 2015; Newsday: <http://bit.ly/1TQZrFK>, 9 February 2016

REPTILES / AMPHIBIANS

CHINA: In November 2015, Customs officials at Shanghai Pudong International Airport intercepted a parcel declared as “crabs” arriving from Indonesia. On inspection it was found to contain 2000 live turtles, including 53 Black Pond Turtles *Geoclemys hamiltonii* (CITES I), and the following CITES-II listed species: 1290 South Asian Box Turtles *Cuora amboinensis*, 1002 Pig-nosed Turtles *Carettochelys insculpta*, 30 Asian Leaf Turtles *Cyclemys dentata*, plus 160 *Emydura subglobosa*.

On 29 January 2016, Customs officials in Haikou, Hainan province, seized 68 000 pieces of python skins and arrested 16 suspects during a raid in five cities in Hainan, Fujian and Guangxi provinces. A local company is alleged to have obtained a wild animal import licence to produce folk instruments, but since 2014 had been smuggling python skins from Viet Nam.

<http://bit.ly/25ZHlpZ> [in Chinese] 31 January 2016; Shanghai Daily: <http://bit.ly/1VyyzL5>, 18 March 2016

INDIA: On 12 January 2016, at least 5000 tortoises were seized from 75 sacks on a lorry at a check post in Dumka district, Jharkhand, including Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (CITES II); around 107 tortoises were dead. Two people evaded capture. The live animals were released into a lake in Dumka district.

On 20 March 2016, at Mumbai Airport, Customs officials seized 146 tortoises from the luggage of a Nepali in transit from Madagascar who had continued on to Kathmandu leaving the bag behind; it was left undetected for a week. The consignment included 139 Radiated Tortoises *Astrochelys radiata* (two dead), and seven Ploughshare Tortoises *A. yniphora*, both Critically Endangered tortoise species of Madagascar and CITES I-listed. Efforts were under way to return the tortoises to Madagascar.

<http://bit.ly/1KeXBX5>, 13 January 2016; DNA India: <http://bit.ly/1pV8rxU>, 20 March 2016; Mid-day: <http://bit.ly/1SMuxK3>, 22 March 2016

INDONESIA: In January 2016, a tip-off from the Australian police led to the arrest of two Indonesian students who had smuggled from Papua a Yellow Monitor *Varanus flavescens* (CITES I), 30 Green Tree Pythons *Morelia viridis* (CITES II), three Emerald Tree Monitors *V. prasinus* (CITES II), a Peach-throated Monitor *V. jobiensis* (CITES II), a Blue-tailed Skink *Cryptoblepharus egeriae* and a Frilled-neck Lizard *Chlamydosaurus kingii*. The duo had reportedly been involved in an online international wildlife trafficking operation since 2012, primarily trading in reptiles. Both were sentenced to five months' gaol.

The Sydney Morning Herald (Australia): <http://bit.ly/1QXR3Rv>, 11 February 2016

SINGAPORE: On 14 October 2015, Russian nationals Maksim Pavlychev and Aleksei Radkov were each sentenced to 15 months' in gaol for the attempted smuggling of 206 Black Pond Turtles *Geoclemys hamiltonii* (CITES I). Their sentences were backdated to 9 July when they were detained after the reptiles were found in their luggage as they transited Changi Airport, en route from Bangladesh to Surabaya, Indonesia. The turtles were dehydrated and in poor condition; 27 have since perished or were put down. The remaining specimens were placed under the care of Wildlife Reserves Singapore.

Today: <http://bit.ly/1Lm4xBU>, 14 October 2015

THAILAND: On 22 December 2015, a man was arrested in Prayuen district, Khon Kaen province, after he offered several protected wildlife species for sale over the internet, including Burmese Starred Tortoises *Geochelone platynota* (CITES I) stolen from a Myanmar wildlife conservation centre in October. Also seized were African Spurred Tortoises *Geochelone sulcata* (CITES II) and marmosets.

Markings on the Burmese Starred Tortoise shells matched those of specimens for which the Burmese authorities had sought the co-operation of the Thai authorities in the recovery of the specimens following their theft.

<http://bit.ly/1TR0vtl>, 23 December 2015

R H I N O C E R O S E S

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

MOZAMBIQUE: On 9 November 2015, at Maputo International Airport, police arrested a Vietnamese national carrying 14 pieces of rhinoceros horn (plus 59 Lion *Panthera leo* (CITES II) claws and 49 teeth believed to be Lion).

On 11 March 2016, police at the airport seized 76 kg of rhinoceros horns from two cases as they were being put on a flight to Kenya.

Star Africa: <http://oran.ge/1MtUlse>, 9 November 2015; *Shanghai Daily:* <http://bit.ly/1M49zsU>, 15 March 2016

NAMIBIA: On 21 December 2015, at Opuwo Magistrates' Court, Chinese businessman Xu Jin Den was sentenced to 10 years in gaol (or ordered to pay NAD100 000 (USD6500) for the illegal possession of two rhinoceros horns which the defendant said he had purchased from local people in Sesfontein.

The Namibian: <http://bit.ly/22tYsfd>, 22 December 2015

SOUTH AFRICA: On 27 October 2015, at Nelspruit Regional Court, Andolino Mulcubé and Jermano Tive were gaoled for 14 years for killing and dehorning a White Rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* and for killing a second rhinoceros, in Kruger National Park in January 2013. Their sentences comprised three months for entering South Africa illegally, four years for illegal entry into the park, seven years for killing and dehorning a rhinoceros, and seven years for killing the second rhinoceros (sentences on count one and two to run concurrently, while count three and four would run consecutively).

On 12 November 2015, at Klerksdorp Regional Court, Bennet Navunga of Mozambique was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment after being found in possession of an unlicensed hunting rifle. He was arrested with five other suspects in July 2013 during a road block in Klerksdorp, North West, after authorities established that the suspects were intending to poach rhinoceroses at a game reserve. Three were granted bail and are still at large. Navunga will have to spend two-thirds of his sentence in gaol before he becomes eligible for parole.

On 11 March 2016, at Ladysmith Regional Court, two women received gaol terms for rhinoceros poaching: Confidence "Angel" Mlambo was sentenced to three years for conspiracy to hunt rhinoceroses; four years for illegal possession of a firearm and six months for possession of ammunition. On all counts, half of the imprisonment is suspended, making her effective gaol term two years. Nokwanda Khumalo was sentenced to three years for conspiracy to hunt rhinoceroses;

four years for illegal possession of an unlicensed firearm and a further six months for possession of ammunition. On all counts, half of the imprisonment is suspended, making her effective gaol term also two years.

News24: <http://bit.ly/1GlehK8>, 27 October 2015; *Times Live:* <http://bit.ly/1N8hNAI>, 12 November 2015; *Ladysmith Gazette (South Africa):* <http://bit.ly/1P9CRB0>, 11 March 2016

TANZANIA: On 17 December 2015, at Mbeya Resident Magistrates' Court, Chinese nationals Song Lei, Xiao Shaodan, Chen Jianlin, and Hu Liang, were each sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment for smuggling 11 rhinoceros horns into the country from Malawi by car. They were also fined Sh9 billion (USD2.8 m) each.

Reuters: <http://reut.rs/1YqIA9H>, 18 December 2015

UK: On 4/5 April 2016, at Birmingham Crown Court, members of an organized crime gang accused of carrying out raids on museums and auction houses to steal rhinoceros horn and high-value artefacts from UK museums were given gaol sentences of up to six-and-a-half years. In all, 13 men were sentenced over two days resulting in convictions for a conspiracy that spanned the UK, the Irish Republic, several European countries, Hong Kong and the USA. The gang also recruited others to undertake some of the raids to secure the rhinoceros horn and other artefacts which were reportedly later smuggled to Asia.

Daniel "Turkey" O'Brien of Cottenham, Cambridgeshire, was gaoled for 6 years, 8 months. John "Kerry" O'Brien and Michael Hegarty both of Cottenham, Cambridgeshire and Rathkeale, Ireland, were gaoled for 6 and a half years. Gaoled for 5 and a half years were: Richard "Kerry" O'Brien Jr, of Cottenham, Cambridgeshire; Paul Pammen of Southend-on-Sea; Alan Clarke of London; Richard Sheridan of Cottenham, Cambridgeshire, Patrick Clarke of London and Donald Wong of London. John "Cash" O'Brien of Wolverhampton was sentenced to 5 years, 3 months in gaol, as was Ashley Dad, of Wolverhampton, who did not appear in court; Terrence McNamara of Belfast, and Daniel Flynn of Cottenham, Cambridgeshire, were gaoled for 4 years. A 14th man was convicted and sentenced last year for his part in the crime. None of the stolen items has been recovered.

The Guardian (UK): <http://bit.ly/1N8rejz>, 4 April 2016; *The Irish Times:* <http://bit.ly/1NobRIm>, 4 April 2016; <http://bit.ly/1XviAML>, 5 April 2016

USA: On 21 October 2015, taxidermist James Hess of Iowa was sentenced to 27 months in gaol for buying and selling Black Rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* horns, plus three years' supervised release after serving his gaol term. Hess arranged to acquire horns from an Oregon man in August 2011 and ship them to Iowa, where another man was to transfer them to California. He also purchased and resold at least two sets of Black Rhinoceros horns in 2011.

On 16 December 2015, San Francisco art dealer Lumsden Quan was sentenced in Las Vegas to a year in gaol for illegally selling Black Rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* horns to an undercover agent. He was also given three years of supervision after his gaol sentence has been completed, fined USD10 000, and banned from working in the arts/antiques business for three years.

On 13 January 2016, Irish national Patrick Sheridan was sentenced to one year in gaol for the illegal trade in Black Rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* horns. British agents, acting on a US warrant, arrested Sheridan in Holyhead, Wales, in 2015 and extradited him to the USA. Along with two others, he illegally bought rhino horns in Texas through a "straw buyer"—someone who makes a purchase for a client—and resold the horns in New York. Sheridan also used false documents to try to hide the illegal purchase. One of the other suspects was gaoled for a year in 2014.

<http://yhoo.it/1PlwIQT>, 21 October 2015; *Washington Times*: <http://bit.ly/1Ypp5Qa>, 17 December 2015; *Voice of America*: <http://bit.ly/1TXcl8N>, 13 January 2016

ZIMBABWE: In January 2016, a court in Masvingo sentenced Tawengwa Machona to 35 years' in gaol for the poaching of two rhinoceroses. His sentence will be reduced to 20 years if he pays USD480 000—the estimated value of the animals—within five years.

The animals were killed in 2014/2015 in the Save Valley Conservancy. Two accomplices are being charged separately. The alleged ringleader is reportedly an assistant officer in Zimbabwe's secret service. Two others are on the run.

News 24: <http://bit.ly/1UpPqMV>, 1 January 2016

F L O R A

HONG KONG: On 8 October 2015, Customs detected 7015 logs (a reported one million kg) of suspected Malagasy Rosewood *Dalbergia baronii* (CITES II) from incoming cargo from Tanzania.

Hong Kong government press releases: <http://bit.ly/1VISWfs>, 12 October 2015; <http://bit.ly/1Q6Qsth>, 4 February 2016

INDIA: On 4 November 2015, 94 logs (3740 kg) of Red Sanders *Pterocarpus santalinus* (CITES II) were seized from a cattle shed during a raid in Vizianagaram, Andhra Pradesh.

On 24 March 2016, the Red Sanders Anti-Smuggling Task Force seized two tonnes of Red Sanders logs after being notified that woodcutters, after felling trees at Pincha and Rollamadugu on the Chittoor-Kadapa border, were loading the logs into a tipper near Chandragiri.

Business Standard: <http://bit.ly/1WzHg4Y>, 4 November 2015; *The Hindu*: <http://bit.ly/22QBzVe>, 25 March 2016

USA: On 1 February 2016, at a federal court in Norfolk, Virginia, the largest-ever penalty for violation of the *Lacey Act* was imposed on Lumber Liquidators Inc. for the illegal importation of hardwood flooring, much of which was manufactured in China from timber that had been illegally logged in Far Eastern Russia. The company was fined more than USD13 million, including USD7.8 million in criminal fines, USD1.23 million in community service and USD969 175 in forfeited assets; they agreed to a five-year term of organizational probation and mandatory implementation of a government-approved environmental compliance plan and independent audits and were also ordered to pay more than USD3.15 million in cash through a related civil forfeiture.

Department of Justice Office of Public Affairs: <http://l.usa.gov/1QCZu2e>, 1 February 2016

OTHER / MULTI-SEIZURES

CHINA: On 21 January 2016, at Jiaocheng District People's Court, Bozhou City, Anhui province, a man and his wife were respectively sentenced to eight years in gaol/fined CNY800 000 (USD123 000) and eight months/ fined CNY2000 for buying wildlife products and selling them in their pharmacy in Bozhou.

In 2015, police confiscated from them 10 kg of pangolin scales, 103 musk *Moschus* (CITES I/II) pods, and Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES II) bones.

On 4 February 2016 at the Takenhenken border check point, Altay Prefecture, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, police arrested a gang attempting to import wolf *Canis* carcasses. A total of 148 wolf skins, six carcasses and 255 decorative amulets made from wolf bones, meat and offal were

discovered after police noticed that several containers smelled of rotting fish. The items were reportedly destined for sale on the exotic animal meat black market.

On 24 March 2016, seven people were gaoled for between 18 months and 12 years for illegally killing, transporting and trading protected species. The investigation began in October 2014 when police were called to a flat in Chengdu, Sichuan province, after a resident reported blood seeping from the ceiling of his flat; after breaking into the room above, police discovered 804 kg of ivory (CITES I), plus rhinoceros horn, five Golden Snub-nosed Monkeys *Rhinopithecus roxellana* (CITES I)—two still alive—Red Pandas *Ailurus fulgens* (CITES I), as well as bear *Ursus* (CITES I/II) body parts (including six heads and 76 limbs and paws) on the blood-soaked floor and in freezers. The two surviving monkeys were sent to a zoo.

China Wildlife Conservation Association: <http://bit.ly/1Mu5wGT>, 21 January 2016; *Daily Mail (UK)*: <http://dailym.ai/1XffU5U>, 8 February 2016; *South China Morning Post*: <http://bit.ly/1S6EDWj>, 27 March 2016

GUINEA: On 9 February 2016, three people were arrested in possession of 106 kg of wild meat, including that of Chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes* (CITES I). A motorbike rider arrested while distributing Chimpanzee meat gave police the identity of the owner of the meat and reportedly the head of a regional network of traffickers in Chimpanzee and ape meat involving poachers and traffickers from Sierra Leone over a 14 year-period. The third member of the gang was arrested in another operation with several bags of meat of Chimpanzees and other protected species.

The EAGLE network: <http://bit.ly/1qHV8Bi>, 9 February 2016

INDIA: On 10 December 2015, in Amravati, Nagpur, Ranjit Bhatia, Dalbir Bawariya and Sarju Bawariya were sentenced to gaol for seven years and fined Rs10 000 (USD150) for involvement in Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) poaching in Melghat Tiger Reserve in February 2013.

This is one of the first cases in the country where DNA analysis was used to conclude that a Tiger had been poached. Officials had seized an iron trap, rotten Tiger meat and cash and investigations involved preparation of maps of the crime scene, sniffer dogs and metal detectors. The poachers were part of an international racket to hunt Tigers and smuggle their body parts to China. They were in gaol during the trial where they have already spent two years for previous Tiger poaching incidents.

On 11 February 2016, Customs officials at the Inland Container Depot in Tughlaqabad seized more than 15 000 kg of coral, later identified as Organ-pipe Coral *Tubipora musica* (CITES II) from a container arriving from China, apparently destined for medicinal and ornamental purposes. A Delhi-based importer was arrested. Officials claim this to be the biggest haul of red corals in the South-east Asian region in recent times.

On 13 March 2016, a man was arrested in possession of five Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) skins and bone (125 kg) in Haridwar district, Uttarakhand. It was reportedly the first case where Tiger skins and bones have been recovered in such quantities in the State.

Times of India: <http://bit.ly/1SRGZJQ>, 11 December 2015; <http://bit.ly/1PzueDv>, 13 February 2016; *Kaumidi online*: <http://bit.ly/1U3ocQm>, 14 March 2016

INDONESIA: On 20 November 2015, it was reported that a person appearing at the district court of Langsa, Aceh, had been gaoled for two years for trading in Sumatran Orang-utans *Pongo pygmaeus* (CITES I). He was also fined Rp50 million (USD3700) or ordered to serve three more months in gaol. The defendant had been arrested on 1 August and three Orang-utans and a Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus* (CITES II), among other birds, were seized.

<http://bit.ly/1RU48xr>, 20 November 2015

THAILAND: On 10 December 2015, Customs officials at Samui International Airport in Surat Thani confiscated 280 African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* tusks (789 kg) and 587 kg of pangolin scales from a container labelled as “wigs” that had arrived on a flight from Nigeria via Singapore, destined for Lao PDR.

OANA news: <http://bit.ly/1RqvXxK>, 12 December 2015; Samui-passion.com: <http://bit.ly/1Vp8tvm>, 19 December 2015

VIET NAM: On 22 November 2015, Customs officers at Hoanh Mo Border Gate, Quang Ninh, seized 860 kg of tusks of Indian Elephant *Elephas maximus* (CITES I) and 2116 kg of pangolin (*Manis*, CITES II) scales that had been smuggled into the country from Taiwan in 105 boxes of frozen fish heads, bound for an undisclosed destination.

On 31 March 2016, Customs officials at Noi Bai Airport seized 238 kg of ivory and 248 kg of pangolins *Manis* scales arriving from Nigeria via Turkey by air, described as “hair attachments”.

Haiquan online: <http://bit.ly/1SfCdtU>, 23 November 2015; TRAFFIC

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Note that all cases reported here took place prior to the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES and/or before any resulting listing amendments/adoptions take effect.

E L E P H A N T S

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

CAMBODIA: On 5 August 2016, Customs officers seized more than 600 kg of ivory from a container packed with corn that had languished unclaimed at Sihanoukville port for two years after being shipped by sea from Africa (country unknown). The ivory was destined for a third, undisclosed, destination.

Dunya News: <http://bit.ly/2dKusLL>, 5 August 2016

CHINA: Reports of a recent seizure of 421 kg of elephant hide in south-west China.

Mailonline (UK): <http://dailym.ai/2e5j40v>, 24 September 2016

FRANCE: On 25 May 2016, investigations ensuing from the discovery by Customs agents of four elephant tusks in a car led authorities to a French-Vietnamese businessman in Paris who was found to have 212 kg of tusks hidden in wooden pallets in his office. The suspect’s company dealt in cosmetics and antiques which he reportedly used to organize the trafficking of ivory.

On 1 June 2016, Customs officials at Charles de Gaulle Airport, Paris, intercepted a man on his way from Angola to Viet Nam with 26 elephant tusks (142 kg) in his luggage. He was sentenced to 18 months in gaol and fined EUR140 000 (USD160 000).

<http://bit.ly/1XdIwPU>, 8 June 2016

GERMANY: On 20 May 2016, 625 kg of African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* ivory was detected at Berlin Schönefeld Airport packed in 11 cases. A company from Berlin trying to ship the boxes to Hanoi, Viet Nam, declared as wall clocks, is now under investigation. This case led authorities, on 25 August 2016, to an industrial building near Koblenz, Rheinland-Pfalz, where a further 570 kg of whole and cut tusks and processed ivory was uncovered. Grinders, milling machines, lathes and drills were also seized. Two Vietnamese nationals were apprehended at the site during the course of processing the ivory into pearls and figurines. The provenance of the ivory is being investigated.

ZOLL: <http://bit.ly/2dR8gQA>, 30 May 2016; taatsanwaltschaft Cottbus Press release: <http://bit.ly/2e5jZOH>, 6 September 2016

INDONESIA: On 21 May 2016, Customs officers at Soekarno-Hatta Airport seized 377 pieces (weight not reported) of raw elephant ivory from two Chinese nationals travelling from Lagos, Nigeria, via Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, to Tangerang, Banten.

Tangerang online: <http://bit.ly/2dvK9oi>, 26 May 2016

KENYA: On 22 July 2016, Feisal Mohamed Ali was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment and fined KES20 million (USD197 000); other suspects were acquitted for lack of evidence. The case relates to the seizure from a warehouse in Mombasa in June 2014 of over 2000 kg of ivory (228 elephant tusks and 74 ivory pieces).

Daily Nation (Kenya): <http://bit.ly/2aBdEVh>, 22 July 2016

MALAYSIA: On 21 July 2016, at Kuala Lumpur International Airport, Customs officials foiled an attempt to smuggle 1001 kg of raw ivory arriving from N'djili International Airport, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, via Ataturk Airport, Turkey, believed to be bound for China, Thailand and Viet Nam. The 23 packages declared as baked clay and wooden samples, were addressed to two recipients whose addresses in Selangor and Johor were found to be fictitious.

Malay Mail online: <http://bit.ly/2aGoc8w>, 1 August 2016

SOUTH SUDAN: In June 2016, at Juba International Airport, authorities recovered 1200 kg of ivory being smuggled from Entebbe, Uganda, from 25 boxes declared as food items, believed to be bound for Egypt and later Malaysia. Four suspects were arrested, including a South Sudanese national and a person from Uganda.

Radio Tamazuj: <http://bit.ly/1tujqQj>, 17 June 2016

SPAIN: In May 2016 it was reported that the Nature Protection Service (SEPRONA) of the Spanish Civil Guard, following an investigation in collaboration with Mozambique, had seized 74 elephant tusks (744 kg) from a man in Colmenar de Oreja, south-west of Madrid, who was allegedly trying to sell the pieces using a doctored hunting licence issued in 1970 in Mozambique. The hunting licence allowed for one elephant to be killed, not 37 as the amended version of the document claimed.

NEWS 24: <http://bit.ly/1XWqqRQ>, 26 May 2016; The Local (Spain): <http://bit.ly/2d79j0F>, 26 May 2016

TANZANIA: On 3 June 2016, at Manyoni District Court, Juma Kitwanga and Nsalamba Katuku Nsalambae were each sentenced to 40 years in gaol and both fined TZS166 500 000 (USD76 000) after being convicted of two counts of unlawful dealing in government trophies (two elephant tusks and nine elephant tails). Ramadhani Shaban and Yusto Paul were gaoled for 20 years each, plus four years in gaol or a fine of TZS1 million, after being convicted of two offences of unlawful possession

of firearms; Hamidu Nsolezi received a one year suspended gaol sentence. The offences took place between 1–4 April 2016.

Between 26 and 30 June 2016, police seized more than 666 (1200 kg) elephant tusks and arrested nine suspects during a countrywide operation to eradicate crime. The operation was conducted with the collaboration of INTERPOL in Zimbabwe and Kenya and government officials, which led to hundreds of arrests for various offences.

On 8 August 2016, at Kigoma Resident Magistrates' Court, Edward Ibrahimu of Kasulu District, Kigoma Region, was sentenced to 20 years in gaol after being convicted of illegal possession of six pieces of elephant tusks. The judge said that the court had delivered the severe punishment as a lesson to the public. Acting on information, wildlife officers pretended to be ivory buyers and arrested Ibrahimu after he turned up with six pieces of elephant tusks that he had agreed to deliver to them.

Daily News (Tanzania): <http://bit.ly/2e71hRe>, 6 June 2016; <http://bit.ly/2d78ULo>, 6 June 2016; <http://dailynews.co.tz/index.php/home-news/51575-9-arrested-4-6-billion-trophies-seized-in-police-interpol-operation>, 12 July 2016; <http://allafrica.com/stories/201607120116.html>, 12 July 2016 <http://bit.ly/2dVXVIJ>, 9 August 2016

VIET NAM: On 21 May 2016, police in Bac Giang province arrested a lorry driver transporting 553 kg of elephant tusks from Hanoi to Lang Son Province after he failed to present documents verifying their origin. Police officers also accused the driver of offering to pay them a bribe of VND500 million (USD22 400) to evade arrest.

On 1 October 2016, Customs officials at Noi Bai International Airport, Hanoi, seized 309 kg of ivory originating from Nigeria, falsely declared as glass.

On 6 October 2016, Customs officials at Cat Lai Port, Ho Chi Minh City, inspected a shipment arriving from Mozambique declared as “Sapele wood”. Upon investigation they found 569 pieces of ivory (2052 kg) concealed inside 12 hollowed-out blocks of wood. Tests on the ivory by the Ecology and Biodiversity Resources indicated that it derived from African Elephants *Loxodonta africana* from various countries, including Mozambique and Angola. The Customs declaration form indicated that the owner of the cargo was a company in Tan Binh, Ho Chi Minh City. The case is under investigation.

Thanhniennews: <http://bit.ly/2dLFUKR>, 22 May 2016; <http://bit.ly/2d8Ynv8>, 2 October 2016; <http://bit.ly/2dZEkmU>, 9 October 2016; <http://customsnews.vn/prosecute-the-smuggling-case-of-more-than-2-tons-of-ivory-through-cat-lai-1376.html>, 20 October 2016

ZAMBIA: On 14 July 2016, at Nakonde Magistrates' Court, Kizito Sikazwe and Andrew Nelson Simunde were each sentenced to five years' imprisonment after being found guilty of the illegal possession of two pieces of ivory (17 kg).

Mwebantu: <http://bit.ly/2efLpkj>, 20 July 2016

MARINE

AUSTRALIA: On 12 April 2016, Van Nguyen of Cairnlea, Victoria, was gaoled for two years and eight months for his lead role in an illegal abalone poaching network. He must serve 16 months before he is eligible for parole. He was described in court as the top of one of two co-existing pyramids of abalone poachers, who would dive with associates near Warrnambool, buy his colleagues' catches and then sell his yield in Melbourne's western suburbs. Thirteen people involved

in the two syndicates have been prosecuted in Victorian courts this year; the other group's head, Phong Hoai Thuy Nguyen [no relation], was gaoled for two years earlier in the year.

The Age (Australia): <http://bit.ly/1V49FE2>, 12 April 2016

CHINA: On 9 April 2016, about 100 juvenile Scalloped Hammerhead Sharks *Sphyrna lewini* (CITES II) were on sale in Sanya fish market, Hainan province. A Sanya Ocean and Fisheries Bureau (SOFB) representative confiscated a total of about 600 kg of hammerhead shark meat on sale in the market that was alleged to be bycatch. The incident is under investigation.

http://on.china.cn/2es1Bye; 12 April 2016; *http://bit.ly/2e1xtWZ*, 12 April 2016

HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION: On 4 July 2016, at Kwai Chung Customshouse, authorities seized a shipment of dried shark fins (880 kg) of suspected Scalloped Hammerhead Sharks *Sphyrna lewini* (CITES II) arriving from Panama without permits.

News.gov.hk: <http://bit.ly/29ncufG>, 5 July 2016

PERU: On 7 June 2016, authorities at the Port of Callao seized some eight million dried seahorses *Hippocampus* (CITES II) from the hold of a Chinese-flagged ship bound for Asia. The Chinese captain of the ship was arrested.

Channel News Asia: www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/peru-seizes-8-million/2892524.html, 21 June 2016

SOUTH AFRICA: On 28 April 2016, Western Cape police near Caledon arrested a man driving a heavily loaded vehicle which was found to be loaded with 14 432 of Abalones, or Perlemoen, *Haliotis midae*.

On 12 May 2016, police acting on information seized bags containing 2858 Abalones *Haliotis midae* and diving equipment from a vessel entering Hout Bay harbour. The crew and divers on board the vessel evaded arrest by jumping onto the quayside and disappearing.

On 30 May 2016, at Khayelitsha Regional Court, Chinese nationals Jiam Liang Hong and Guohui-Li were gaoled for a year after being found guilty of contravening the *Marine Living Resource Act* in connection with the poaching and illegal processing of Abalone *Haliotis midae*. They were arrested on 9 May in Genadendal, Caledon, in Overberg District, Western Cape. They admitted operating an illegal fish processing establishment and possession of Abalones without the necessary permit. Some 25 679 dried Abalones were seized from a property.

www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/caledon-cops-bust-man-with-abalone-worth-r2m-2015960, 29 April 2016; *Times Live:* <http://bit.ly/2dWvOml>, 13 May 2016; *Network 24:* <http://bit.ly/2dLODLb>, 6 June 2016; *Times Live:* <http://bit.ly/1P0u8T5>, 31 May 2016

PANGOLINS

All cases reported here took place prior to the adoption of proposals to transfer all pangolin species from Appendix II to I at the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES.

CAMEROON: On 30 August 2016, two people were arrested for illegal possession of 128 kg of Giant Pangolin *Manis gigantea* scales which had reportedly been transported from Tibati to Ngaoundal, where they were to be sold. A receipt recovered from one of the suspects indicated a payment for a previous wildlife trafficking offence, with subsequent investigations revealing his part in a network of pangolin traffickers.

AllAfrica: <http://bit.ly/2eSfypC>, 8 September 2016

CHINA: On 10 April 2016, authorities in waters off Zhongshan city, Guangdong province, seized 1600 kg of pangolin *Manis* scales from a speedboat. One arrest.

<http://bit.ly/1VzzRan>, 16 April 2016

HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION: On 12 May 2016, 130 kg of pangolin scales and 310 kg of animal furs [species not reported] were seized from a speedboat in Lau Fau Shan after Customs officers detected suspects loading goods onto the vessel.

On 23 June 2016, Hong Kong Customs at the Kwai Chung Customhouse Cargo Examination Compound undertaking a risk assessment seized 201 bags containing 4000 kg of suspected pangolin scales after selecting for inspection a shipment arriving from Cameroon declared as 1260 bags of sliced plastics.

On 19 July 2016, Customs officers, again undertaking a risk assessment procedure at the Compound, selected for inspection a shipment arriving from Nigeria declared as recycled plastic particles. They found 259 bags containing 7300 kg of suspected pangolin scales. As they had not been declared on the manifest, the scales were seized by Customs officers for further investigation.

The Standard: <http://bit.ly/2e9yjBK>, 12 May 2016; *Hong Kong Customs press release:* <http://bit.ly/28Ylvej>, 23 June 2016; *The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region press release:* <http://bit.ly/29RMzer>, 19 July 2016

INDONESIA: On 15 August 2016, authorities in East Java raided a house in Jombang district and seized 657 Sunda Pangolins *Manis javanica* from freezers; one person was arrested.

The Guardian (UK): <http://bit.ly/2dXy3Yx>, 26 August 2016

KENYA: On 8 June 2016, authorities at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) seized 500 kg of pangolin *Manis* scales from an unaccompanied consignment bearing fake documents that had originated in Conakry, Guinea, destined for Lao PDR.

Kenya Wildlife Service: <http://bit.ly/2dczGgA>, 10 June 2016

VIET NAM: On 6 June 2016, at a court in Ho Chi Minh City, Vo Ta Dung was sentenced to one and half years in gaol after being caught in December 2015 transporting three Sunda Pangolins *Manis javanica*; two accomplices received gaol sentences of five months and 11 days, a period they had already spent in detention and they were released after the trial. Another person received a suspended sentence of one year. Dung had reportedly hired the three to transport pangolins bought from hunters in Ho Chi Minh City to a storage facility in neighbouring Binh Duong Province from where they had delivered at least 12 pangolins to buyers in northern Viet Nam.

Thanhien News: <http://bit.ly/2dwk4Wk>, 6 June 2016

ZAMBIA: On 2 July 2016, Cephaz Zulu and Mayungano Musheke were sentenced to five years' imprisonment with hard labour for unlawful possession of a pangolin *Manis*. Three others were acquitted. The duo was arrested by police in Monze in November in 2015 in possession of a live pangolin without the necessary documentation.

ZNBC: www.znbc.co.zm/?p=40938, 8 July 2016

ZIMBABWE: Zimbabwe imposes a nine-year minimum mandatory gaol sentence for pangolin trade offences.

On 20 April 2016, at a court in Harare, Henry Makunde of Mbare was sentenced to nine years' imprisonment after a dead pangolin *Manis* was seized from a refrigerator at his home. Makunde's nephew, Desire Murire had reportedly found the live animal in the wild and, with the assistance of his uncle, transported the pangolin to the latter's home. The nephew, aged 19, was considered a special circumstance on account of his age and was given a lesser sentence of two years.

New Zimbabwe: <http://bit.ly/2e7MhT4>, 20 April 2016

R E P T I L E S

BANGLADESH: On 6 September 2016, authorities in Chittagong seized 4000 kg of shells of *Batagur* turtles (II), Elongated Tortoises *Indotestudo elongata* (CITES II) and Trionychidae spp. stored in sacks in a building in Khulshi. No arrests. The shipment, which had been declared as dry fish, had been destined for Hong Kong.

The Daily Star (Bangladesh): <http://bit.ly/2e1zP8q>, 8 September 2016

CHINA: On 26 July 2016, at Guangzhou Intermediate People's Court, a gang found guilty of attempting to smuggle tortoises into the country from Madagascar was gaoled for between one and 11 years. Tortoises seized at Guangzhou Baiyun Airport and at various residences included 91 Leopard Tortoises *Stigmochelys pardalis* (CITES II) and 39 Radiated Tortoises *Astrochelys radiata* (CITES I). The defendants had bought off an airport staff member (Chen Junyi) so that they were able to make use of his pass to evade Customs. The gang was arrested in April/May 2015: Chen Junyi was sentenced to five years in gaol and fined CNY50 000 (USD7500); Huang Weizhe (11-years in gaol and CNY50 000 worth of property forfeited); five others were gaoled for between one year and nine months, and seven years. The tortoises had been packed in tinfoil and placed in canvas sacks in Madagascar; Chen Junyi was arrested at the airport during a routine inspection; he was carrying two backpacks containing 316 tortoises; later that day Huang Weizhe was arrested as he arrived at the airport to collect the consignment.

<http://bit.ly/2e5VDEj>, 28 July 2016

INDONESIA: On 6 April 2016, 40 Green Turtles *Chelonia mydas* (CITES I) were confiscated in Karangasem, Bali, during a routine patrol. The turtles had their flippers tied; one perished but the others were being observed at Serangan Center with a view to being released. Three fishermen from Madura were taken into custody.

On 16 April 2016, 70 Green Turtles *Chelonia mydas* (CITES I) (one perished) were recovered from a boat in Padei Village, Menui Island, central Sulawesi, destined for Bali, reportedly to be sold as meat.

On 30 August 2016, authorities in West Java foiled an attempt to smuggle 2000 python (CITES I/II) skins from Palembang, South Sumatra to Surabaya, East Java, by courier. Officers stopped the lorry holding the skins in Cikupa toll road, Tangerang, Banten. Some 800 skins of monitor lizards *Varanus* (CITES I/II) (and dozens of live bonytongue fish) were also seized. No permit accompanied the shipment.

www.facebook.com/1176585509072713/videos/1163501477047773/, 7 April 2016; Metrobali: <http://bit.ly/2dJGCFZ>, 7 April 2016; Kontan.co.id: <http://bit.ly/2dL7d48>, 18 April 2016; <http://bit.ly/2e9Br08>, 29 August 2016; <http://bit.ly/2dRVOA9>, 30 August 2016

MALAYSIA: On 12 May 2016, at Kuala Lumpur International Airport, two Customs officers were detained by officials after 55 Black Pond Turtles *Geoclemys hamiltonii* (CITES I) wrapped in tape were found in bags arriving on a flight from Dhaka, Bangladesh.

On 2 June 2016, Royal Malaysian Customs officers at Port Klang seized a shipment of 508 Black Pond Turtles *Geoclemys hamiltonii* (CITES I) that had been placed in 76 sacks with a cargo of potatoes. The consignment had come from Karachi, Pakistan, via Myanmar, and was reportedly destined for the restaurant trade.

On 1 August 2016, in Kuala Lumpur, Indian nationals Nagoor Kani Kamal Basha and Nizamudeen Shamshudeen were each gaoled for 24 months on three counts of keeping 36 Black Pond Turtles *Geoclemys hamiltonii* (CITES I) without a permit and causing pain to the reptiles.

http://bit.ly/2dcD3nN, 12 May 2016; *www.bharian.com.my/node/160497*, 3 June 2016; Royal Malaysian Customs pers comm. to TRAFFIC, 13 June 2016; *The Star*: *http://bit.ly/2dXAYKL*, 1 August 2016

PAKISTAN: On 9 September 2016, 780 live Spotted Turtles *Clemmys guttata* (CITES II) were seized during a raid on a house in Karachi. Six Pakistani suspects were granted bail on the surety of Rs50 000 (USD750) each on condition that they deposit the amount the same day; three Chinese nationals and three Pakistanis were also taken into custody during the raid for allegedly illegally trapping and trading the wild animals. The Sindh Wildlife Department has been ordered by a court to release the turtles at specified locations in the Indus River.

The Express Tribune: *http://bit.ly/2egaQIL*, 10 September 2016

UGANDA: On 16 May 2016, the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) impounded 152 Leopard Tortoises *Stigmochelys pardalis* (CITES II) from a vehicle in the Eastern Uganda district of Mbale; the specimens were handed over to the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) with the aim of returning them to Nakapiririt where the smugglers were alleged to have sourced the reptiles.

AllAfrica: *http://allafrica.com/stories/201605180222.html*, 17 May 2016; *The Insider*: *www.theinsider.ug/two-arrested-for-smuggling-152-tortoises*, 17 May 2016

USA: On 13 April 2016, at the US District Court for Eastern District of Michigan, Kai Xu, a Canadian citizen of Chinese origin, was sentenced to almost five years in gaol for smuggling turtles to China, including Eastern Box Turtles *Terrapene carolina*, Diamondback Terrapins *Malaclemys terrapin* and Spotted Turtles *Clemmys guttata* (all CITES II), as well as Red-eared Sliders *Trachemys scripta elegans*, one of the world's most invasive species. Xu had smuggled the turtles out of the country using three methods: repackaged and shipped directly to China, concealed in snow boots; on one occasion with 51 live turtles taped to his legs and groin; and, on the day of his arrest in September 2014 at Detroit Metropolitan Airport, 1000 turtles had been packed in boots and cereal boxes inside suitcases that he sent with a runner he had hired to fly directly from Detroit to Shanghai. As part of his sentence, he was ordered to pay USD17 000 in restitution for the care of the turtles, which were placed with Detroit Zoo.

On 6 May 2016, Olga Jimenez and her husband Luis Jimenez of southern California were each sentenced to six months' imprisonment for smuggling more than 900 eggs of Olive Ridley Turtles *Lepidochelys olivacea* and Kemp's Ridley Turtles *L. kempii* (both CITES I) across the border from Nayarit, Mexico, in November 2014. The couple intended to sell the eggs on the black market for use in Asian delicacies. They were also ordered to pay USD9000 in restitution to the Mexican government for stealing its natural resources and were placed on probation for three years.

US Department of Justice media release: <http://bit.ly/2e7Mfe5>, 13 April 2016; Detroit News: <http://detne.ws/2dL5Cvn>; 26 September 2014; <http://bit.ly/1oBcSNW>, 20 February 2016; Courthouse News Service: <http://bit.ly/2dkMTYb>, 6 May 2016

RHINOCEROSSES

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

CAMBODIA: On 17 August 2016, at Phnom Penh International Airport, the luggage of a Chinese man travelling from Namibia via Doha, Qatar, was found to contain eight pieces of rhinoceros horns (4.38 kg).

The Cambodia Daily: <http://bit.ly/2dL8ZT4>, 17 August 2016

HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION: On 14 May 2016, at Hong Kong International Airport, Customs officials seized five pieces of suspected rhinoceros horn (10 kg) from an express air parcel that had been declared as “resin crafts” originating from South Africa. Suspicious images of the cargo were found during X-ray inspection. One person was arrested and released on bail pending further investigation.

Hong Kong information service press release: <http://bit.ly/2e7MKF4>, 17 May 2016

MOZAMBIQUE: On 2 May 2016, at Maputo International Airport, authorities arrested a Vietnamese citizen, bound for Nairobi, who was found to have in his luggage 11 White Rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* horns (total of 22 kg) and rhinoceros horn pieces disguised as cylinders.

<http://bit.ly/2dcCWJ3>, 8 May 2016

SOUTH AFRICA: In May 2016, at Bushbuckridge Magistrates’ Court, Mpumalanga, two Mozambican nationals were sentenced to 21 years in gaol for a range of crimes, including trespassing in Kruger National Park (KNP), possession of an unlicensed firearm, possession of ammunition and conspiring to poach. They had been arrested in April in Mkhuhlu, near KNP. The police were acting on information that the suspects were planning to poach rhinoceroses.

SABC: <http://bit.ly/2dwqnJE>, 7 May 2016

FLORA

BRAZIL: On 30 June 2016 authorities reportedly dismantled the country’s largest illegal logging and land-grabbing organization. Twenty-four arrest warrants were issued as part of a three-year investigation into the country’s largest illegal logging ring, which authorities believe is responsible for the deforestation of around 10 000 hectares of Amazon forest over a two-year period. The syndicate allegedly operated as a business through the use of sophisticated technology and companies to launder the money generated from the illegal logging operation. The person accused of leading the operation’s financial division is being sought.

Meanwhile, law enforcement officials discovered new methods of deforestation that logged the forest from beneath the tree canopy and left a vegetation cover that eluded satellite surveillance. It is reported that among the gang members were experts with satellite monitoring knowledge who would review data to plan their logging activities.

Telesur: <http://bit.ly/29hb2x3>, 2 July 2016

CAMBODIA: On 19 July 2016, forestry officials in Preah Vihear province confiscated more than 1100 kg of rosewood *Dalbergia* (CITES I/II/III/NC) from two cars which had failed to stop when forestry officials attempted to pull the drivers over in Choam Ksan district.

The Cambodia Daily: <http://bit.ly/2dcDvma>, 20 July 2016

INDIA: On 14 April 2016, police acting on information seized nearly 1500 kg of smuggled Red Sanders *Pterocarpus santalinus* (CITES II) at Katigundenahalli in Hosakote taluk where it had been stored in the garden of three houses. The offenders, who were known to police but had fled, were reportedly using the village as a transit point.

On 16 April 2016, Kadapa police arrested four forest officials and 12 others and seized 2500 kg of logs in two incidents in the district. The officials were charged with having links with inter-State Red Sanders smugglers in Karnataka, receiving bribes and facilitating smuggling of nearly 300 000 kg of Red Sanders logs in the last four to five years by guiding woodcutters of Tamil Nadu, piloting their vehicles, providing police clearance and extending logistic support.

On 20 April 2016, Customs officials at Mundra port, Ahmedabad, recovered 17 500 kg of Red Sanders logs concealed in bags of maize from a vessel that had already started on its journey to Sharjah. The container had been loaded in Delhi under Central Excise supervision and transported to Mundra by rail. As it had already been cleared in Delhi, it was loaded directly onto the vessel.

On 29 April 2016, 5000 kg of Red Sanders logs were seized in the Mamanduru forest in Seshachalam hills. After questioning, one led forest personnel to the 100 logs. Another person escaped.

On 30 May 2016, police on night patrol in Kancheepuram district, Chennai, seized 1000 kg of Red Sanders logs from an abandoned lorry.

On 29 June 2016, four inter-State smugglers and 24 local operatives were arrested in two incidents in Vurlagaddapodu of Railway Kodur mandal and Gadela ST Colony of Obularipalle mandal in Kadapa district. A total of 58 Red Sanders logs weighing 1516 kg was seized.

On 30 June 2016, police in Chennai seized 237 Red Sanders logs (7000 kg), plus weighing machines and woodcutting instruments. This action follows the arrest of a smuggler in May and to the arrest of a further two alleged smugglers in Chennai who had purchased the logs from smugglers. Another person was arrested on 14 June.

In early July 2016, at Chennai port, authorities seized a container holding 36 000 kg of Red Sanders (652 logs) being loaded onto a ship bound for United Arab Emirates (UAE). Further information led them to more logs (amount unreported) being stored at Vanagaram. A number of arrests.

On 11 August 2016, Red Sanders Anti-Smuggling Task Force (RSASTF) personnel recovered 58 Red Sanders logs (2000 kg) in forest 25 km from Tirupati. Three persons were arrested in Mamanduru forest area.

On 31 August 2016, Tirupati police seized 9586 kg of Red Sanders logs in Ponduru village in Kanchipuram district, Tamil Nadu, plus a lorry, weighing and woodcutting machines, following interrogation of suspects arrested on 19 August.

The Hindu: <http://bit.ly/2dkTaDm>, 15 April 2016; *The Hindu:* <http://bit.ly/2dJMZsY>, 17 April 2016; *The Times of India:* <http://bit.ly/2dkUrtX>, 21 April 2016; *Business Standard:* <http://bit.ly/2dJOLdj>, 30 April 2016; *Times of India:* <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/1-tonne-red-sanders-seized-on-GST-Road/arcshow/52530080.cms>, 1 June 2016; *The Hindu:* <http://bit.ly/2e9Id65>, 30 June 2016; *The Hans India:* <http://bit.ly/2dkUi9U>, 2 July 2016; *New Indian Express:* <http://bit.ly/2dJOoJg>, 10 July 2016; *The Hans India:* <http://bit.ly/2dXLEz2>, 11 August 2016; *The Hans, India:* <http://bit.ly/2esiGlz>, 1 September 2016

INDONESIA: On 8 August 2016, at Supadio Airport, Pontianak, West Kalimantan, authorities seized 712 nationally protected *Nepenthes* (CITES I/II) plant parts, arriving from Singkawang, West Kalimantan, reportedly en route to Jakarta.

www.pontianakpost.com/bksda-kalbar-gagalkan-penyelundupan-712-kantong-semar, 9 August 2016

PERU: On 22 April 2016, 19 members of an illegal logging gang were arrested in Ucuyali, in the Amazon rainforest, including two police officers and two regional forestry officials. The gang was characterized as the “mafia of illegal logging.” Two lorries and a trailer loaded with timber and money were seized. The principal destination for the logs had been China, Mexico and the USA. Prosecutors estimated that the illegal logging ring was exporting about 300 cubic metres of illegal timber per month for the past six years. The gang’s main target was *Dipteryx micrantha*.

The Peruvian Government’s Independent Forest Sector Oversight Agency (OSINFOR) is reported to have found evidence of illegal practices in 93.75% of logging operations it audited.

<http://bit.ly/1pWjZ3p>, 27 April 2016

THAILAND: In April 2016, authorities seized 3153 logs in separate raids in several provinces; at one timber processing plant in Nakhon Pathom province they seized Siam Rosewood *Dalbergia cochinchinensis* (CITES II) and *D. olivieri*; the plant’s two owners were taken into custody. Their company has allegedly been exporting processed wood to foreign markets such as China. Subsequent raids seized wood in Samut Prakan, Chanthaburi and Pathum Thani, all with links to the timber seized in Nakhon Pathom. Nine people were arrested. The combined task force seized a total of 188 pieces of Siam Rosewood, 2950 pieces of *Dalbergia olivieri* wood and 15 pieces of teak *Tectona grandis*.

Environmental Investigation Agency:

www.facebook.com/environmentalinvestigationagency/9330647110156729695385648/?type=3

OTHER / MULTI-SEIZURES

CAMEROON: On 9 June 2016, two people were arrested by the Upper Nyong Divisional Delegation of Forestry and Wildlife and police in Abong Mbang in possession of 9 Chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes* (CITES I) skulls. The couple had travelled from Somalomo, near Dja Faunal Reserve. It was discovered that the group (which included one other who evaded capture on this occasion), regularly ferried Chimpanzee meat from Somalomo to Abong Mbang and Yaoundé for sale.

Camer.be: <http://bit.ly/2d7KHVh>

CHINA: On 5 May 2016, a liquor manufacturer in Zengcheng District of Guangzhou, Guangdong Province (surnamed Liang) was sentenced to 10 years and six months in gaol/fined CNY50 000 (USD7690) for making alcoholic drinks containing derivatives from animals such as Water Monitor *Varanus salvator* (CITES II), Tokay Gecko *Gekko gekko* and Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis*, all species under State protection. Police seized 24 bottles of the illegal liquor during an investigation into the company in January 2015. Liang surrendered to police months later.

On 23 May 2016, Yang Xiaoxiao was sentenced to 10 years in prison and fined CNY10 000 (USD1500). This prosecution relates to a case from July 2014, when police in Putian City, Fujian Province discovered a group selling wildlife products to buyers in China via social media, including rhinoceros horn carved cups, ivory carvings, and casques of Helmeted Hornbills *Rhinoplax vigil* (all from CITES I species). Sichuan forest police arrested 11 people and seized 1200 pieces of wild animal products in what is reported to be the largest haul of illegal wildlife seized in the province in recent years.

On 7 June 2016, at Yongjia County People's Court, Zhejiang Province, 32 people from 10 provinces and cities were gaoled for illegal trade in wildlife, including pangolins *Manis*, bear claws and salamanders. One person, surnamed Kan, was gaoled for 13 years and fined CNY130 000 (USD19 500). Four were sentenced to over 10 years in prison and Kan's wife to six years. Others received suspended gaol terms of between four months and three years. More than 10 of the defendants are owners of restaurants and clubs who bought the animal parts and processed them as food.

ECNS Wire: www.ecns.cn/cns-wire/2016/05-05/209392.shtml, 5 May 2016; China Wildlife Conservation Association: <http://bit.ly/2egLYPM>, 16 January 2016; <http://bit.ly/2esjEEy>, 27 May 2016; China.org.cn: www.china.org.cn/environment/2016-06/08/content_38625076.htm, 8 June 2016

HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION: On 22 June 2016, at Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts, a man was sentenced to two months in gaol and fined HKD5000 (USD645) for smuggling 99 kg of ivory (CITES I), seven kg of casques of Helmeted Hornbills *Rhinoplax vigil* (CITES I) and two kg of agarwood *Aquilaria* (CITES II) in his luggage. He was arrested in his car on 19 May at Shenzhen Bay Control Point, en route to mainland China.

<http://hongkong.coconuts.co/2016/06/24/man-jailed-2-months-fined-hkd5000-smuggling-hkd1-million-worth-ivory-hornbill-and>, 24 June 2016

KUWAIT: In early September 2016, coastguards inspecting foreign ships that were heading to Doha Port, Qatar, intercepted an Iranian-registered vessel that was found to be transporting a consignment of 100 Asian Houbara *Chlamydotis macqueenii* (CITES I and IUCN: Vulnerable). The species is in demand in the region for use as live prey in falconry training. Also seized were 16 falcons of various species, mostly Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* (CITES I). Kuwait Environment Protection Society investigated the case and confirmed that all the birds on board had been poached from the wild and transported without legal documents. The offenders were taken into custody.

BirdLife International: <http://bit.ly/2e9MLtr>, 8 September 2016

MALAYSIA: During a five-day period in August 2016, Peninsular Malaysia's Department of Wildlife and National Parks (Perhilitan) seized animal parts including elephant ivory (CITES I), pangolin *Manis* (CITES II) scales, two Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) skins, bones of a big cat, bear and Tiger teeth and claws, gallbladders, the casque of a Helmeted Hornbill *Rhinoplax vigil* (CITES I) and at least 45 tips of hornbill beaks. Two Malaysians, two Chinese and eight Vietnamese nationals were arrested at five locations near Kuala Lumpur. The provenance of the seized items is not known. Perhilitan's forensics lab were to conduct DNA tests on the items.

TRAFFIC: <http://bit.ly/2bW5wOO>, 2 September 2016

NETHERLANDS: On 17 August 2016, authorities seized over 2000 kg of coral and animal parts from an office building and five warehouses in Brabant. The find was made during an investigation launched after 345 kg of coral was recovered from a shipping container arriving from China at the Port of Rotterdam without an accompanying permit. According to an environmental police spokesperson, the coral alone represents a complete coral reef, with some pieces over 100 years old. It took the authorities three days to search through the haul, which also included snake and lizard skins, skulls of turtles and monkeys, swordfish horns, mounted crocodiles, bones of several different animals and ivory (CITES I/II) jewellery.

DutchNews.nl: <http://bit.ly/2esmxoJ>, 29 August 2016; <http://bit.ly/2dMszC5>, 29 August 2016

NIGERIA: On 10 June 2016, at Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos, Customs officials arrested two Chinese nationals for attempting to smuggle out of the country 678 pieces of raw and processed elephant tusks (CITES I) and 381 kg of pangolin *Manis* (CITES II) scales.

The Guardian: <http://bit.ly/2dkX0w6>, 11 June 2016

RUSSIA: On 27 July 2016, some 525 bear paws were seized by authorities from a local resident in the Khabarovsk Region. The body parts—later confirmed as coming from both Brown Bear *Ursus arctos* (CITES I/II) and Himalayan Black Bear *U. thibetanus* (CITES I)—were due to be shipped to Tongjiang city in the Heilongjiang province of China (also seized were 3978 mustelid skins).

The Siberian Times: <http://bit.ly/2ahqeNM>, 27 July 2016

THAILAND: On 1 June 2016, at least 40 dead Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) cubs were discovered in a freezer inside a temple in Kanchanaburi province west of Bangkok on the third day of an operation by wildlife authorities to remove 147 Tigers from the temple. The management of the temple had repeatedly resisted efforts by the Department of National Parks to remove the Tigers and only relented when officials issued a court order. The temple promoted itself as a wildlife sanctuary, but in recent years had been investigated for suspected links to wildlife trafficking and animal abuse. Wildlife activists have accused the temple's monks of illegally breeding Tigers, while some visitors have said the animals appeared to be sedated. The temple denies the accusations. It was reported that the animals would be sent to State-owned sanctuaries.

<http://bit.ly/2e80yPZI>, 1 June 2016

USA: On 24 June 2016, Joseph Chait was sentenced in Manhattan to one year and one day in gaol, three years of supervised release, and fined USD10 000 after pleading guilty to conspiring to smuggle wildlife products that included rhinoceros horn, elephant ivory, hornbill products and coral between 2008 and 2013.

United States District Court Southern District of New York: <http://bit.ly/2d7LmWJ>; *Reuters:* <http://reut.rs/28NsAxQ>, 22 June 2016; *iThink:* <http://bit.ly/2e9NOCG>, 24 June 2016

VIET NAM: On 10 May 2016, 680 suspected Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) claws were seized from a house in Dien Chau district, Nghe An province. The owner stated that he had purchased the claws in Lao PDR, and transported them across the border to Viet Nam; they were intended to be carved into trinkets.

A forensic analysis of the claws was to be carried out, but it is reported that the authorities suspect they are from Tigers and that they derive from an estimated 34 animals.

On 8 June 2016, police in Mong Cai town seized 32 bear (CITES I/II) paws (58 kg) from a sack being carried by a man on a motorbike. The suspect confessed that he had been hired by a Chinese national to transport the cargo to a location near the Chinese border.

The paws were to be sent for scientific testing.

On 26 July 2016, a bag containing 18 legs of Sun Bear *Helarctos malayanus* (CITES I) (38 kg) was seized in Thanh Hoa province from a bus travelling from Lao PDR. The destination of the cargo was unknown.

VN Express: <http://bit.ly/2dLgQ36>, 11 May 2016; <http://bit.ly/2dMxjxW>, 10 May 2016;
The Nation: <http://bit.ly/2dwxwtu>, 9 June 2016; *Nature World News:* <http://www.natureworldnews.com/articles/126136/20160802/sun-bear-legs-found-bus-vietnam.htm>, 2 August 2016

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ELEPHANTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Free Malaysia Today: <http://bit.ly/2ou6nMs>, 4 January 2017; *New Straits Times:* <http://bit.ly/2oNN2ZW>, 4 January 2017

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<http://bit.ly/2f2LzLD>, 22 October 2016; <http://fxn.ws/2ez8Hxv>, 1 November 2016; <http://bit.ly/2op07Eq> (in Vietnamese), 22 October 2016; L. Sangalakula, ETIS Database Manager, in litt. to TRAFFIC, 13 April 2017; <http://bit.ly/2piHw2H>, 20 November 2016; <http://bit.ly/2oSGs2u> (in Vietnamese); Haiquan online: <http://bit.ly/2pFPT8w> (in Vietnamese), 26 October 2016; <http://bit.ly/2oYuBIB>; <http://bit.ly/2piPTM3>, 27 October 2016; <http://apne.ws/2o6TPiq>, 25 November 2016; *The Nation*: <http://bit.ly/2grrgH2>, 30 November 2016; <http://bit.ly/2pFv9L0>, 1 December 2016; <http://bit.ly/2oSBQcH>, 2 December 2016

F L O R A

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

M A R I N E

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kathimerini: http://bit.ly/2oO1mS6, 7 February 2017

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

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region press release: http://bit.ly/2piDOq2, 6 March 2017

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

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

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

On 17 February 2017, authorities recovered over 23 000 wet and dry abalones from a house in Durbanville, Western Cape, bringing to over 52 000 the number of specimens seized in a week. Twelve arrests, more expected; 8000 abalones were seized from a vehicle in Worcester on the same day; the driver fled.

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

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

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

SPAIN: In February 2017, authorities dismantled an international criminal network involved in the smuggling of over 10 t of juvenile European Eels *Anguilla anguilla* (CITES II) from the EU to Asia. The investigation, co-ordinated by Europol and Eurojust, and with the participation of authorities in Portugal,

Italy, France, Greece and the UK, resulted in the arrest of eight people (see also Greece and UK). The operation was initiated by the Spanish Guardia Civil's Environmental Protection Service SEPRONA after investigators discovered a company had been purchasing eels from a number of countries. Once the eels were introduced into the legal market, the company would deliver them to Greece using false documentation; the eels were subsequently exported illegally to Asia as "fresh fish".

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

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

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

PANGOLINS

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

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

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

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

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

Global Times: <http://bit.ly/2oYCKAiI>, 27 December 2016; <http://bit.ly/2hdiBu8>, 21 December 2016; *South China Morning Post:* <http://bit.ly/2o73q9j>, 28 December 2016

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

L. Sangalakula, ETIS Database Manager, in litt. to *TRAFFIC*, 13 April 2017; *Haiquan online*: <http://bit.ly/2pFJ2sC>, 28 February 2017; <http://bit.ly/2pVnis5>, 3 March 2017

REPTILES

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

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

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

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

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

Taiwan News: <http://bit.ly/2opY1pG>, 13 March 2017; *IUCN Red List*: <http://bit.ly/2oO4spc>. Viewed 10 April 2017

RHINOCEROSSES

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

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

Cambodia Daily: <http://bit.ly/2o04ihx>, 3 November 2016

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fox News: <http://fxn.ws/2mnsdRf>, 14 March 2017; <http://reut.rs/2pG4yhh>; *BBC:* <http://bbc.in/2oYVvtj>, 14 March 2017; *Bangkok Post:* <http://bit.ly/2pGlsME>, 28 March 2017; <http://bit.ly/2pVUDmN>, 29 March 2017

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

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

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

OTHER SEIZURES

CAMBODIA: On 16 December 2016, officials at Kandal dry port, Phnom Penh, seized 1.3 t of ivory and animal parts hidden in a timber shipment from Mozambique, destined for China, together with 10 Cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus* (CITES I) skulls, 137 kg of pangolin *Manis* scales (CITES II (CITES I from 2 January 2017)) and 82 kg of animal bones. The shipping company on the manifest was the same as one

involved in a seizure in Viet Nam in October in which nearly a tonne of ivory was discovered (see Viet Nam). The chief suspect is a Vietnamese national, a known smuggler, who remains at large.

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

CAMEROON: On 24 March 2017, a Ghanaian man allegedly part of an international parrot smuggling network, was arrested in Nkoabang, Yaoundé, after attempting to export illegally 300 Grey Parrots *Psittacus erithacus* (CITES I). Another member of the network was recently arrested in Ghana with 100 Grey Parrots smuggled from Nsimalen International Airport via Abidjan.

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

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

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

South China Morning Post: <http://bit.ly/2oTI38j>, 4 January 2017; *China News*: <http://bit.ly/2pGZCeN> [in Chinese], 5 March 2017

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RUSSIA: On 1 February 2017, at a court in Primorsky, Evgeniy Romanov was fined the equivalent of USD155 000 to reimburse damage to the environment caused by his killing of rare birds and other animals, including six Amur Tigers *Panthera tigris altaica* (CITES I) and 34 Himalayan Black Bears *Ursus thibetanus* (CITES I).

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E L E P H A N T S

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>

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-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/2l9KE>, 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 Kisumu 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/2yLMucb>, 19 August 2017; Daily News: <http://bit.ly/2I9GuVJ>, 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/2zwGdIn>, 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. Sangalakula, *ETIS Database Manager*, in litt. to *TRAFFIC*, 12 October 2017; *Bangkok Post*: <http://bit.ly/2gNPEoW>, 7 September 2017; *Xinhuanet*: <http://bit.ly/2gwaaHh>, 6 September 2017; *VOV.vn*: <http://bit.ly/2gDXXUG> (in Vietnamese), 8 September 2017; *DTI News*: <http://bit.ly/2i09Pgk>, 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/2itofu>, 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 Sanders (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 Eliyarpathi toll gate, Madurai, bound for Malaysia.

FirstPost: <http://bit.ly/2h0ij7t>, 26 July 2017; *The Hindu:* <http://bit.ly/2vIDIG8>, 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 rosaeodora* (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.

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/2vGZKLQ>, 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/2l9elhk>, 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; *iol:* <http://bit.ly/2hZuNfo>, 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/2gwOn45>, 5 September 2017; *Eye Witness News:* <http://bit.ly/2y0eEffH>, 21 August 2017; <http://bit.ly/2z2ylda>, 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://dailym.ai/2yKlglr>, 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; Tienphong: <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 Rameswaramthem, 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 *Cyclemys 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/2y0jg5l> (in Bahasa Indonesia), 21 June 2016; Detik News: <http://bit.ly/2yIRBJL> (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

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 unicolor* 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/2yIj4E>, 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 Dumarán town in northern Palawan. The vessel was reportedly bound for Balabac, an island town in southern Palawan. The animals had been collected from Barangay Maytegued, 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/2I9UnmU>, 19 May; <http://bit.ly/2yIMbNu>, 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 Mahlauli 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, Mahluli was arrested while his accomplice escaped. Arms, ammunition, an axe and a fresh set of rhinoceros horns were recovered from the scene.

Mahluli'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/2zlw5RU>, 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.

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 Sepanggar 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/2h1ZeSI>, 8 September 2017; *The Star online:* <http://bit.ly/2yJj8ef>, 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://dailym.ai/2zjO6kY>, 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).

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 (NWCU) 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.

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

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E L E P H A N T S

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

CAMBODIA: On 5 December 2017, authorities seized 279 pieces (941 kg) of ivory hidden inside 22 hollowed-out wooden posts from two containers at Sihanoukville port. The consignment had arrived from Mozambique in December 2016; scanners detected suspect items within the cargo, but the consignee failed to respond to a request to fill out paperwork for the shipment's release.

Khmer Times: <https://bit.ly/2kqv7Zq>, 6 December 2017; *The Phnom Penh Post*: <https://bit.ly/2qWv882>, 6 December 2017

CAMEROON: On 11 December 2017, rangers in Dja Biosphere Reserve seized 216 elephant tusks and 81 elephant tails. Two arrests. See also other / multi-seizures.

WWF Media release: 14 December 2017

CONGO, REP. OF: On 28 December 2017, at the Tribunal de Grande Instance in Pointe-Noire, six people were sentenced to five years in gaol for the illegal trade in a 10-kg ivory tip. Adama

Sangaré, Diallo Bakary, Oumar Diaby, Konate Moussa, Josephine Lemingui and Nestor Mainkoma, from Mali, Guinea, DRC and the Republic of Congo, were also fined XAF10 m (USD19,000).

On 15 February 2018, Jonathan Kweme, Bolia Ezengue, and Gloire Ekumu Mozuba, from D.R. Congo, were each sentenced to five years in gaol and fined XAF5.5 m (USD10,000), reportedly the highest sentence for a wildlife offence in the country. The conviction relates to their role in the poaching of 11 elephants in and around Nouabale-Ndoki National Park in January. The head of the poaching group and two other gang members are at large. All three convicted admitted their involvement in numerous illegal incursions into the NNNP, collectively removing nearly 400 kg of ivory from the forest in the previous four years.

VOX: <https://bit.ly/2Kek263>, 13 January 2018; Infos Plus Gabon: <https://bit.ly/211WRLS>, 15 January 2018; Newswise: <https://bit.ly/2JlQBxG>, 23 February 2018

CÔTE D'IVOIRE: On 31 October 2017, four traffickers—two Ivorians, including a Customs officer at Abidjan airport, and two Guineans—were arrested in possession of 53 elephant tails and two tusks (52 kg).

On 18 January 2018, authorities in Abidjan arrested a Vietnamese national, the alleged leader of a criminal syndicate and five other members of his network. The gang had reportedly been operating for years poaching elephants in at least seven countries. The arrest led to the confiscation of 478 kg of ivory, (plus 600 kg of pangolin scales, Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) parts, including crushed and boiled bones), and cutting and carving machines and handguns).

The *modus operandi* of the syndicate consisted of hollowing out wooden logs in which to conceal the ivory, sealing them with wax and glue, and exporting them to Asia in containers holding timber. The same method has been observed in seizures in Kenya and Mozambique, where some two tonnes of ivory have been seized. At least four African countries (Kenya, Mozambique, Uganda, Côte d'Ivoire) as well as Cambodia and Viet Nam, are implicated. The suspects came from Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Viet Nam and China, and the ivory reportedly from Gabon, Nigeria, Mozambique and Uganda.

Daily Mail online: <https://dailymail.com/2HZFNWY>, 7 November 2017; The Eagle Network, January 2018; <https://reut.rs/2EayHgb>, 25 January 2018

KENYA: In January 2018, Ndare ole Koshal and Julius Kituber Sopia were charged with possessing two elephant tusks and each fined Sh20 million (USD195,000), or sentenced to life imprisonment. The duo was arrested in January 2015 after authorities acting on information found an elephant carcass with both tusks removed; the tusks were later recovered.

Standard Digital: <https://bit.ly/2qUwro0>, 26 January 2018

MALAWI: On 4 October 2017, two brothers arrested by police, in co-operation with Tanzanian authorities and supported by INTERPOL, were charged with attempting to smuggle into the country, in bags of cement, 781 elephant tusks from Tanzania in 2013.

On 12 October 2017, at Lilongwe Magistrates' Court, Winston Humba of Ntcheu was sentenced to seven years in gaol. Humba was captured in December 2016 at his concealed ivory "factory" in Lilongwe, which contained machinery to process raw ivory into smaller pieces, allegedly for easier transport by air to addresses in Thailand and Malaysia. Some 126 kg of ivory pieces found on the floor were reportedly offcuts of a 475 kg consignment smuggled from Zambia. Four others convicted separately each received gaol terms of four years.

On 4 November 2017, a court in Nkhotakota sentenced Faliki Simeon and Thomson Zindo each to 13 years in gaol for killing an elephant (and removing the tusks); the animal had just been translocated to Nkhotakota Game Reserve.

On 24 November 2017, at Kasungu First Grade Magistrates' Court, Robert Jackson Gondwe was sentenced to 14 years in gaol after being found in possession of 31 kg of ivory at Chinsanjire village. On 27 March 2018, Jafali Gunde of Machinga District was gaoled for 18 months with hard labour after attempting to sell two African Elephant tusks.

INTERPOL: <https://bit.ly/2FgmSE6>, 6 October 2017; <https://bit.ly/2hYkSH2>, 7 October 2017; *The Nation (Malawi)*: <https://bit.ly/2HK5UmO>, 13 October 2017; *Malawi 24*: <https://bit.ly/2qXFvaT>, 4 November 2017; *The Nation*: <https://bit.ly/2qWBKTI>, 29 November 2017; *Nyasa Times*: <https://bit.ly/2vH4eWt>, 30 March 2018

NIGERIA: see other / multi-seizures

SINGAPORE: On 5 March 2018, authorities at the Pasir Panjang Scanning Station, uncovered a shipment of 3,480 kg (1,787 pieces) of elephant ivory in a container arriving from Apapa, Nigeria, via Tanjung Pelepas, Johor, Malaysia, declared to contain ground nuts. The haul was destined for re-export to Viet Nam.

Agri-food & Veterinary Authority and Immigration & Checkpoints Authority Joint News Release: <https://bit.ly/2Jq4Dyr>, 8 March 2018; TRAFFIC

UK: On 22 January 2018, at Westminster Magistrates' Court, Janet Winstanley was fined GBP1,000 (USD1,400) following her conviction for offences relating to the offering of ivory items for sale online.

A researcher from the Metropolitan Police's Wildlife Crime Unit discovered objects described as carved "bovine bone" offered for sale by Winstanley on an online trading site. Closer inspection of the images revealed "schreger lines" on the pieces which are unique to elephant ivory. A warrant to search Winstanley's address in November 2016 led to the seizure of more than 100 ivory items.

UK Metropolitan Police: <https://bit.ly/2FftVvf>, 24 January 2018

VIET NAM: On 6 February 2018, police officers seized 971 kg of ivory and ivory products from a house in Khanh Ha Commune. The owner of the ivory said that she had hired the house in order to store ivory.

Vietnamnet: <https://bit.ly/2EbM9DV>, 8 February 2018

ZIMBABWE: On 25 January 2018, at Harare Magistrates' Court, Onesimo Tafiraje of Chitungwiza was sentenced to 10 years in gaol for possession of one kilogramme of ivory after he failed to put forward special circumstances to have his sentence reduced. In December 2017, authorities received information that Tafiraje was in possession of ivory and looking for a buyer. He was apprehended after offering a tusk to detectives posing as buyers.

In February 2018, at Harare Magistrates' Court, Collen Dick, Christopher Chapata and Alwis Paundi were each sentenced to nine years in gaol for the possession of elephant tusks. They were arrested in November 2017 after eight tusks were found at Chapata's property; no licence authorising possession could be produced.

NewsDay: <https://bit.ly/2JsYAJI>, 26 January 2018; *New Zimbabwe*: <https://bit.ly/2vjzI3B>, 11 February 2018; TRAFFIC

FLORA

HONG KONG SAR: On 16 January 2018, at Kwai Chung Customhouse Cargo Examination Compound, Customs officials inspecting a container arriving from Guatemala, seized just over 29 t of suspected Honduras Rosewood *Dalbergia stevensonii* (CITES II). One arrest.

On 5 February 2018, Customs officials at Kwai Chung Customhouse Cargo Examination Compound seized 26 t of suspected Siamese Rosewood *Dalbergia cochinchinensis* (CITES II) logs from two containers arriving from Thailand, believed to have been destined for onward shipment.

Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department press releases: <https://bit.ly/2HI67HI>, 17 January 2018; <https://bit.ly/2vJWiUd>, 8 February 2018; *Hong Kong CITES Management Authority in litt. to TRAFFIC*, 26 April 2018

THAILAND: On 25 January 2018, police arrested five Thai nationals and two Chinese nationals following a raid on two warehouses in Samut Prakan, and seized 35 t of Siamese Rosewood *Dalbergia cochinchinensis* (CITES II) logs destined for China.

Bangkok Post: <https://bit.ly/2HOsOJS>, 26 January 2018

MARINE

BELGIUM: In March 2018, three Chinese nationals were sentenced to 15 months in gaol (half the sentence suspended) after being arrested at Zaventem Airport in transit from Sierra Leone, bound for Beijing, with 2,063 seahorses *Hippocampus* spp. (CITES II) in their luggage.

Flanders Today: <https://bit.ly/2zvBcGd>, 8 March 2018

LATVIA: In December 2017, the Customs Board of the State Revenue Service (VID) seized a shipment of over 14 t of coral rock in transit from China to Belarus, reportedly the largest seizure of coral in the country. It was suspected during inspection that the specimens were of CITES-listed species. This was confirmed by representatives of the Nature Protection Board, together with experts of the Latvian Museum of Natural History who examined the pieces. A requisite permit could not be presented by the freight agent.

LSM.LV: <https://bit.ly/2Jskmgj>, 14 February 2018

NETHERLANDS: In November 2017, a passenger caught at Schiphol Airport with 144,000 dead seahorses *Hippocampus* spp. (CITES II) was sentenced to six months in gaol, three of which were conditionally suspended.

NL Times: <https://bit.ly/2j55jyq>, 29 November 2017

PORTUGAL: In January 2018, at Lisbon Airport, 317 kg of live baby European Eels *Anguilla anguilla* (CITES II) held in water-filled plastic bags were seized from luggage belonging to eight passengers bound for Viet Nam.

<https://bit.ly/2FePX2P>, 22 January 2018

SOUTH AFRICA: All South African abalone (perlemoen) cases below involve *Haliotis midae*:

On 31 October 2017, 40,000 abalones (2,233 kg) were seized from premises in Brackenfell, Cape Town, containing an illegal abalone processing facility. Two arrests.

On 3 November 2017, two suspects were arrested in Caledon, Western Cape, after authorities responding to reports of a suspicious smell coming from premises found inside 67,258 abalones and processing equipment.

On 6 November 2017, police in Mfuleni stopped a vehicle and seized 5,553 abalones. Three arrests.

In January 2018, police officers uncovered an abalone processing plant at premises in Monte Vista, Western Cape. Four arrests. Besides huge quantities of abalones, abalone processing apparatus was seized. The case was described as a significant blow to the illegal abalone trade.

On 24 January 2018, a woman was arrested in possession of 6,276 abalones following a raid on a house in Kraaifontein.

On 6 February 2018, an illegal abalone processing facility was uncovered in the Goodwood area after police received complaints of a bad odour coming from a residence. Numerous shelves of abalones—many undersized—were seized. Three arrests.

On 8 February 2018, an explosion at a house in Maitland exposed the presence of an illegal abalone processing facility and a large amount of abalones and processing equipment. Two arrests.

On 15 February 2018, authorities in Cape Town seized 2,162 abalones from a car following a car chase. One arrest.

On 16 February 2018, authorities in Cape Town seized 2,225 units of dried abalones from three residences in Table View. Seven arrests.

In separate cases on the same day, in the Western Cape, two men were arrested in Grabouw following a car chase after 4,445 abalones were found in their vehicle, and in Hermanus, police arrested a man in possession of over 5,000 abalones.

On 21 February 2018, authorities in the Eastern Cape confiscated 1.6 t of abalones at Durban harbour following information received during the seizure of 8.6 t of abalones at Port Elizabeth harbour on 26 January. Based on intelligence from that bust, a ship travelling to Sri Lanka was ordered to return to Durban and a container was inspected after the behaviour of two SARS Customs sniffer dogs indicated the possible concealment of prohibited goods. Inside were 156 boxes of frozen abalones hidden amongst other items. No arrests.

On 19 March 2018, at the High Court in Cape Town, Adriaan Wildschutt and Tony Du Toit were each sentenced to gaol for 15 years. The duo were kingpins of a criminal syndicate responsible for harvesting some 400 t of abalones along South Africa's coast and shipping it to Hong Kong. The case has been running for 11 years and also resulted in gaol terms for Willem van Rensburg of eight years, Phillip Miller, of four years and Johannes Liebenberg, a one-year suspended sentence. Van Rensburg, Wildschutt, and Du Toit were granted bail with strict conditions following sentencing after they were granted leave to appeal.

Meanwhile, nine Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries anti-poaching officials and another eight individuals, each representing a separate abalone syndicate, have appeared in Cape Town District Court on charges of poaching and racketeering.

On 1 March 2018, in Klapmuts, Western Cape, three people were arrested after 1011 kg of poached abalones were found in their vehicles. They were remanded in custody.

IOL: <https://bit.ly/2HLq7bY>, 1 November 2017; South African Police Service media statements: <https://bit.ly/2FeMRf6>, 4 November 2017; <https://bit.ly/2Hr4wGu>, 18 January 2018; <https://bit.ly/2vOB3ko>, 7 February 2018; <https://bit.ly/2Hto716>, 8 February 2018; <https://bit.ly/2qYukhY>, 16 February 2018; <https://bit.ly/2Hr4wGu>; <https://bit.ly/2JqLwEi>, 22 February 2018; Sandton24 News: <https://bit.ly/2HWz7bS>,

18 February 2018; IOL: <https://bit.ly/2r1hlqn>, 18 February 2018; South Africa Police Service on Facebook: <https://bit.ly/2HrajYl>, 7 November 2017; <https://bit.ly/2vGSoeZ>, 18 January 2018; IOL: <https://bit.ly/2HpBzKQ>, 22 February 2018; Business Live: <https://bit.ly/2qWT3nO>, 20 March 2018; News24: <https://bit.ly/2qUWmMm>, 5 March 2018

SPAIN: Seizures of European Eels *Anguilla anguilla* (CITES II) have taken place during Operation Elvers, led by the Guardia Civil in collaboration with the Portuguese authorities and the support of EUROPOL; suspects based in Spain, but also operating out of Portugal and Morocco, have been arrested. Glass eels have been sent by the ring from Madrid to Porto, Portugal, and from Algeciras, southern Spain to Morocco. In addition to the cases reported below, police found 364 travel bags in Spain that were being prepared for transport to China with more than 5 t of eels inside. Ten suspects—Spanish, Chinese and Moroccan nationals—have been arrested. See also under Portugal.

In February 2018, at Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas Airport, authorities seized two consignments (310 kg) of European Eels *Anguilla anguilla* (CITES II, with a zero quota for EU trade), that were about to be exported to Asia. In the first case, several boxes containing 250 kg of elvers were discovered at the cargo terminal amongst a shipment of barnacles that were destined for Viet Nam; a few days later, four suitcases carrying 60 kg of eels were detected on a flight to Hong Kong. In both cases, the eels were contained in bags of water and later released into rivers.

EUROPOL press release: <https://bit.ly/2Hj56C>, 6 April 2018; American Press: <https://bit.ly/2FefmK3>, 6 April 2018; Government of Spain, Guardia Civil press release: <https://bit.ly/2JlpPpl>, 10 February 2018

PANGOLINS

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

BENIN: On 19 March 2018, at Bernardin Cardinal Gantin Airport, Cotonou, three people bound for Viet Nam, including a Chinese national, were arrested after 513 kg of pangolin scales were found in their luggage.

Actubenin: <https://bit.ly/211YUj2>, 5 April 2018

CHINA: On 29 November 2017, Customs officials at Yantian Port, Shenzhen, Guangdong province, intercepted a consignment of 11.9 t of pangolin scales smuggled in from Africa [country not reported] in July, reportedly the largest volume of pangolin scales detected by the authorities. The items had been concealed under pieces of coal. Two Chinese nationals are being sought.

HONG KONG SAR: On 7 March 2018, Customs officials at Tsing Yi Cargo Examination Compound seized 2,800 kg of suspected pangolin scales from a container from Nigeria declared to contain scrap metal.

ECNS.cn: <https://bit.ly/2Hqqzjf>, 30 November 2017; Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department: <https://bit.ly/2KbtR4S>, 7 March 2018

INDONESIA: On 7 March 2018, at Bengkalis District Court, Riau, two people [names not reported] were sentenced to three years in gaol for the illegal trade in 101 Sunda Pangolins *Manis javanica* and fined Rp100 million (USD7,250). The duo were reportedly couriers assigned to transport the pangolins from Paknik River in Riau to Malaysian-flagged boats, for onward shipment to Malaysia, China and Viet Nam. The animals were rescued and later released.

Antara News: <https://bit.ly/2HLRGIs>, 8 March 2018

MALAWI: In November 2017, at a court in Lilongwe, Habarawo Jyaima, a Mozambican national, and Joseph Mankhokwe Banda from Malawi, were each sentenced to nine years in gaol after pleading guilty to possessing and trying to sell a live pangolin at Nsundwe Trading Centre. The animal had reportedly been procured in Mozambique.

Malawi 24: <https://bit.ly/2KfBBTC>, 29 November 2017

MALAYSIA: On 7 October 2017, officials seized 127 live Sunda Pangolins *Manis javanica* from premises at Hosba, Kubang Pasu district. Two Malaysians and two Thai nationals were detained.

On 6 November 2017, authorities foiled an attempt by a Thai man to smuggle in his car 55 sacks of live pangolins and five sacks of pangolin scales to Thailand. The suspect was detained at a border checkpoint. Each of the sacks containing the scales weighed about 5 kg. The animals were reported to have originated from Negeri Sembilan, in Kedah.

On 7 November 2017, 85 Sunda Pangolins *Manis javanica* destined from Thailand, Viet Nam and China were seized from a house in Changlun, Kampung Darat. One arrest; two Thai nationals evaded capture. A permit to keep the pangolins could not be produced.

On 16/17 November 2017, at Kuala Lumpur International Airport, Customs seized two separate batches of pangolin scales (totalling 337 kg) bound for Hong Kong. All parcels arrived from Sabah and Sarawak in boxes labelled as “kids clothes” and “filter packs”. The sender was reported to be local with registered addresses in Sabah and Sarawak.

New Straits Times: <https://bit.ly/2Hrktlp>, 9 October 2017; <https://bit.ly/2JoGPLh>, 8 November 2017; <https://bit.ly/2Hsclre>, 8 November 2017; <https://bit.ly/2JrVq9I>, 27 November 2017; *The Sun Daily:* <https://bit.ly/2vjrMtQ>, 27 November 2017

NEPAL: On 29 March 2018, police officials at Tribhuvan International Airport, Kathmandu, arrested two Chinese nationals in transit from Istanbul, in possession of 162 kg of pangolin scales in what is reportedly the single-largest haul of pangolin scales in Nepal. The provenance of the scales is being investigated. The investigation uncovered a transnational connection involving Congolese, Chinese, Bangladeshi and Nepali nationals.

The Himalayan Times: <https://bit.ly/2H870pM>, 30 March 2018

NIGERIA: In March 2018, Customs officials impounded 329 sacks of pangolin scales (weight not reported) at Ikeja, Lagos, and arrested a Chinese national (see also other/multi-seizures).

New Telegraph: <https://bit.ly/2qWYpzn>, 8 March 2018

SRI LANKA: On 12 November 2017, police seized 130 kg scales of Indian Pangolins *Manis crassicaudata* from a house at Tiladiya in Kalpitiya, reportedly bound for China via India. Three arrests.

Daily News: <https://bit.ly/2qZzB9f>, 13 November 2017

TAIWAN: On 30 January 2018, in reportedly the largest-ever pangolin smuggling case at Kaohsiung port, authorities inspecting a container discovered some 4,000 pangolin carcasses, their scales removed, concealed beneath frozen sardines. The shipment had arrived from Malaysia a month earlier and had not been collected by the domestic consignee.

Liberty Times Net: <https://bit.ly/2FAd0W8>, 1 February 2018

THAILAND: On 21 November 2017, two Thai men were arrested at Chong Sam Mor checkpoint, Chaiyaphum province, after police found 105 live pangolins concealed in vehicles heading for the border with Lao PDR in Nong Khai. The specimens were reportedly purchased in Lad Lum Kaew District.

On 24 November 2017, officials at a cargo terminal in the border town of Mae Sot, Tak province, seized 84 pangolins believed to have been smuggled from Myanmar. This is reportedly the first time a shipment of pangolin scales from Myanmar has been seized in the country; the suspects fled.

The Nation: <https://bit.ly/2mRYuEH>, 21 November 2017; *Komchadluek.net:* <https://bit.ly/2HrH5bV>, 21 November 2017; *Thai PBS:* <https://bit.ly/2r2SGHE>, 24 November 2017

REPTILES

MADAGASCAR: On 10 January 2018, 460 Radiated Turtles *Astrochelys radiata* (CITES I) were seized from a boat stranded on a beach in Morondava. A strong odour emanating from the vessel caused nearby residents to alert the authorities. Only 217 specimens could be saved and were expected to be repatriated and released in the wild.

On 10 April 2018 at Betsinjaka, Toliara II, more than 5,000 Radiated Tortoises were seized from two houses. Requisite documentation was not produced; two arrests. The reptiles were to be released in the wild following a period in quarantine. A further 26 specimens were seized at Ivato Airport on 3 April.

Midi Madagasikara: <https://bit.ly/2I3whC9>, 20 January 2018; *L'Express de Madagascar:* <https://bit.ly/2HveRgj>, 11 April 2018; *Newsmada:* <https://bit.ly/2vjOG4j>, 5 April 2018

MEXICO: On 3 December 2017, authorities in Guerrero seized 1,823 eggs of Olive Ridley Turtles *Lepidochelys olivacea* (CITES I); the eggs were no longer viable and were destroyed.

On 11 December, a further 3,172 Olive Ridley Turtle eggs were seized in two incidents; two arrests in Jalisco.

Gob mx: <https://bit.ly/2HRWLZH>, 3 December 2017; <https://bit.ly/2HsGATf>, 11 December 2017

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: On 29 October 2017, a Chinese national in transit from Maputo, Mozambique, was detained at Guangzhou International Airport in possession of a suitcase containing 11 rhino horns (30 kg).

@Verdade: <https://bit.ly/2HM7hI3> (in Portuguese), 2 November 2017

LAO PDR: On 23 October 2017, two Chinese nationals were arrested at Wattay International Airport, Vientiane, after arriving on a flight from Singapore with five pieces of rhino horn (11 kg).

World News: <https://bit.ly/2vIcMfA>, 25 October 2017

NEPAL: On 28 February 2018, at Patan High Court, Kathmandu, Ram Sharan BK and Santa Bahadur Chepang were sentenced to gaol for 15 and 14 years, respectively, after being convicted of poaching a Greater One-horned Rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis* in Chitwan National Park in 2011. Seven others received gaol terms of between five and eight years.

The previous day the court gaoled Ramesh Tamang for 14 years for a separate rhino poaching incident.

Kathmandu Post: <https://bit.ly/2qZ9fnv>, 1 March 2018

NETHERLANDS: On 6 April 2018, a court in Amsterdam sentenced a Chinese man to one year in gaol and fined him USD613,000 for smuggling five rhino horns and four other horn objects in his luggage (and for falsifying a visa). The suspect, arrested in December 2017 at Schiphol Airport, was in transit from South Africa, bound for Shanghai, China.

South China Morning Post: <https://bit.ly/2Glw4Xm>, 7 April 2018

SINGAPORE: On 26 February 2018, Nguyen Vinh Hai, a Vietnamese national was sentenced to 15 months in gaol after he was detained at Changi Airport in transit from Angola to Luang Prabang, Lao PDR, on 31 August 2017 in possession of eight pieces of cut rhino horns (3 kg) and a packet of unidentified powder, all wrapped in foil. The cut horns were reportedly derived from three horns, at least two of which were from two Black Rhinoceroses *Diceros bicornis* (CITES I).

The Straits Times: <https://bit.ly/2EX8hOI>, 26 February 2018

SOUTH AFRICA: On 12 October 2017, at Kempton Park Magistrates' Court, The Shuangshuang Xue, a Chinese national, was sentenced to four years in gaol after being arrested in July at O.R. Tambo International Airport after arriving from Lusaka, Zambia, bound for Hong Kong, with 14 pieces of rhino horn (16 kg). Genetic profiling of the horn identified it as being from the southern White Rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum simum* (four males and one female). None of the pieces could be linked to any poaching incidents or registered stockpile.

In January 2018, at Empangeni Magistrates' Court, KwaZulu-Natal, four people were found guilty of rhino poaching and possession of firearms: Mduduzi Magwaza, Emmanuel Xulu, Bonginhlanhla Khumalo and Vela Madela were sentenced to gaol for 9, 12, 6 and 3 years.

On 25 January 2018, at Middelburg Regional Court, four of five syndicate members arrested for illegal possession and trade in rhino horn were found guilty and fined. Yansen Fenc, a Chinese national, was sentenced to pay ZAR60,000 (USD5,000) or gaoled for six months and a further 18 months suspended for five years. He was also ordered to pay R1 million compensation to the Stop Rhino Poaching Project. South Africans Jozeph Albertus Du Plessis and his wife Johanna Du Plessis were each fined ZAR20 000 or sentenced to two years in gaol for dealing in rhino horns. The case against a South African game farmer is pending.

In March 2018, at Lephalale Regional Court, Kenny Mthethi and Sam None were each sentenced to 58 years in gaol after being apprehended on 10 February 2014 on a farm outside Lephalale in possession of two rhino horns, a hunting rifle and ammunition.

South African Environment Affairs media releases: <https://bit.ly/2HpYwxv>, 26 July 2018; <https://bit.ly/2lctL4K>, 18 October 2018; *East Coast Radio*: <https://bit.ly/2qWZvet>, 30 January 2018; *South African Police Service media statements*: <https://bit.ly/2JnN8Po>, 26 January 2018; <https://bit.ly/2HrTEbe>, 24 March 2018

SWAZILAND: On 9 November 2017, at the High Court of Swaziland, Hsiao Chen Hao and Chen Bei-Hsun of Taiwan were each sentenced to 11 years in gaol for killing four rhinos; nine years and 11 years for trafficking the horn pieces and nine years for exporting the trophies. The judge ordered that these sentences should run concurrently, which means each will serve a gaol term of 11 years. The duo was also ordered to pay USD13,300 in compensation to the rhino owners which, if they failed to do so, will result in an additional sentence of four years each.

Three of the rhinos were poached in South Africa, while the fourth was dehorned in Swaziland. The defendants were arrested in February 2017 at King Mswati III International Airport, bound for Taiwan, in possession of 24 pieces of rhino horn.

APA News: <https://bit.ly/2Jot3s8>, 10 November 2017

THAILAND: On 10 October 2017, authorities at Suvarnabhumi Airport seized eight rhino horns (6.3 kg). Two Chinese nationals were arrested, in transit from Zambia to Cambodia.

On 12 December 2017, officials at the airport seized 14 (11 kg) African rhino horns. A plant quarantine official is accused of picking up a case containing the horns and bypassing a Customs check before passing it on to a Vietnamese courier; both were arrested along with a Chinese national.

On 20 January 2018, at Nakhon Phanom Airport, an alleged kingpin of illegal wildlife trade over a 10-year period—including the illegal trade in 14 rhino horns—was arrested. Together with family members, he allegedly ran a large trafficking network on the Thai-Lao PDR border that spread into Viet Nam and involved the smuggling of CITES I-listed specimens and products, including ivory, Tigers *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) and Lions *P. leo* (CITES II).

Travelwire News: travelwirenews.com/two-chinese-men-arrested-with-eight-rhino-horns-466919/, 11 October 2017; Bangkok Post: <https://bit.ly/2Kg5zXg>, 14 December 2017; <https://bit.ly/2JrZar5>, 12 December 2017; Bossip: <https://bit.ly/2JrZXs3>, 21 January 2018

USA: In November 2017, at a federal court in Miami, Michael Hegarty of Ireland was sentenced to 18 months in gaol followed by three years of supervised release. Hegarty was part of an international criminal gang known as the Rathkeale Rovers (other members have already been sentenced, see 28(1):33).

Together with another man, Richard Sheridan, and a third man from Florida, they purchased a libation cup in North Carolina made from rhino horn and transported it to Florida, where they falsified papers to smuggle it out of the USA.

Raidió Teilifís Éireann: <https://bit.ly/2AHKEHc>, 15 November 2017

ZIMBABWE: A poacher who left his phone at the crime scene leading to his arrest, has been gaoled for 10 years for killing two Black Rhinoceroses *Diceros bicornis* (CITES I).

NewsdzeZimbabwe: <https://bit.ly/2qX1AXJ>, 17 January 2018

OTHER / MULTI-SEIZURES

AUSTRALIA: On 8 February 2018, at ACT Magistrates' Court, Brent Philip Counsell was fined AUD5,500 (USD4,265) and placed on a two-year good behaviour bond after he pleaded guilty to 14 charges relating to importing CITES-listed animal remains without a permit, including skulls of Asian wild cats, bears, a gibbon, monkeys, a water monitor, owls, and hornbill skulls. Some 100 specimens seized from Counsell's home in June 2016 were intended for sale at markets and via his online business.

Australian Government Department of Environment and Energy: <https://bit.ly/2qZD7QZ>, 8 February 2018

CAMEROON: On 10 November 2017, authorities in Douala seized 158 raw ivory pieces (250 kg); pangolin scales (1,050 kg); 124 dried Grey Parrots *Psittacus erithacus* (CITES I) and 1,394 Grey Parrot feathers. The items, concealed under bags of foodstuffs, had reportedly been despatched from Ebolowa in Yokadouma, to Douala, destined for Nigeria. Three arrests.

Business in Cameroon: <https://bit.ly/2qUp004>, 14 November 2017; Journal du Cameroun.com: <https://bit.ly/2HpFdEw>

GUINEA: In December 2017, two people arrested in possession of two dead Chimpanzees *Pan troglodytes* (CITES I) and a live baby chimp, were each sentenced to the maximum one year gaol sentence and ordered to pay a fine of over USD55,000.

The Eagle Network, January 2018

INDIA: On 22 October 2017, officials in Harmuty, Lakhimpur district, recovered 42 gall bladders of Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus* (CITES I), 12 bear skins and Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) nails. Two people arrested said they had been involved in the trade for two years and had purchased the organs from villagers in Arunachal Pradesh to sell in Shillong.

Arunachal Times: <https://bit.ly/2FgeDrB>, 23 October 2017

NIGERIA: On 15 February 2018, authorities in Ikeja seized sacks containing 218 pieces (343 kg) of elephant tusks and 2 t of pangolin scales from an apartment; a Chinese national was arrested.

Punchng: <https://bit.ly/2KfzGhS>, 16 February 2018

RUSSIA: On 27/28 January 2018, a group of Russian and Chinese nationals were arrested as they prepared to cross a frozen Lake Khanka into China with vehicles found to be carrying 870 bear (CITES I) paws, the remains of at least four Siberian Tigers *Panthera tigris* (CITES I), bear teeth, and other wildlife.

Phys.org: <https://bit.ly/2HKjbvN>, 31 January 2018

TANZANIA: In January 2018, the Court of Appeal dismissed an appeal lodged by a poacher, Mandela Masikini, alias Kasalama, who was challenging both a conviction and a 20 years' gaol sentence (or fine of TZS78.4 m (USD34,350)) imposed on him for the illegal possession of the skin of a Lion *Panthera leo* (CITES II), which was a government trophy.

Daily News: <https://bit.ly/2Kfv1MN>, 2 January 2018

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B I G C A T S

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

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/2CZaU5I> (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 (US880), 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/2OEA2EI>, 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

M A R I N E

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/2MOfHI5>, 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 sun-dried 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 Blignaut, 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/2Jdi0mA>, 14 September 2018; The News Lens: <http://bit.ly/2OhexEf>, 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%2Fenforcement%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/2PjrJNK>, 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/201807/20/P2018072000784.htm, 20 July 2018; South China Morning Post: <http://bit.ly/2EPEID1>, 20 July 2018

MALAYSIA: A man has been charged with attempting to export to China via Sepangar 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/2JbOm14>, 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/2R749RA>, 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/2q1sexU>, 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

RHINOCEROSES

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

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/2PNNX7K> (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/2Pe8l4Y>, 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/2NWREej>, 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

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 Orang-utans *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/2CySnvx>, 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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BIG CATS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

BIRDS

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

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

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

All surviving specimens have since been released in Sumatran forests.

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

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

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

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

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

ELEPHANTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NBC Universal: <https://bit.ly/2DdL3Eh>, 5 February 2019

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

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

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

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

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

M A R I N E

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

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

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

South China Morning Post:

<https://bit.ly/2USMC6e>, 8 February 2019

GERMANY: On 28 November 2018, authorities at Frankfurt Airport seized a consignment of 5,000 juvenile European Eels *Anguilla anguilla* (CITES II) in luggage belonging to a Malaysian passenger who had boarded her flight to Viet Nam and evaded arrest. The eels were later released in the river Rhine.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Star: <https://bit.ly/2GDJIA8>, 3 October 2018; <https://bit.ly/2KZ3kvZ>, 29 October 2018; <https://bit.ly/2vguzaN>, 18 February 2019

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

Newsie (New Zealand): <https://bit.ly/2GtiFQ0>, 6 December 2018

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

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

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

On 14 February 2019, at the Western Cape High Court, André Johannes Minnaar and sons Rudolf and Marthinus were each sentenced to five years' imprisonment, suspended for five years on strict conditions; André and Rudolf were also fined R100 000 (USD7,000) or eight years' imprisonment for abalone poaching and money laundering, of which half the sentence was suspended for five years. Marthinus was additionally sentenced to a further eight years' imprisonment for abalone poaching, which was wholly suspended for five years, again with stringent conditions. Seven others earlier pleaded guilty to all charges for which they were sentenced in December 2018.

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

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

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

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

Jacob Naumann, Frederick Nance, Petrus Smit and Willie Nance were convicted on related charges and received sentences ranging from five to 12 years, while Nance Snr received the option of a ZAR20,000 (USD1,430) fine or 18 months in prison. He was convicted on charges of contravening the *Marine Living Resources Act* after he was caught assisting his son, Frederick, with transporting processed abalone from a farm outside Port Elizabeth where the Blignaults' illegal

operations were conducted. Naumann received two 12-year sentences for racketeering as well as one four-year sentence and two three-year sentences for contravening the *Marine Living Resources Act*. His sentences will run concurrently.

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

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

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

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

Liberty Times Net, 28 December 2018

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

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

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

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

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

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

US Department of Justice media release: <https://bit.ly/2KX0WWI>, 11 December 2018.

PANGOLINS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

National Prosecuting Authority media statement: <https://bit.ly/2IQI5de>; 2 November 2018; *The Citizen*: <https://bit.ly/2Pv8X3S>, 22 February 2019

THAILAND: On 28 February 2019, a Malaysian policeman was detained for allegedly trying to smuggle 47 pangolins into the country from Malaysia. He had arrived by car at Sadao Customs

House; officers found a number of sacks containing live pangolins hidden under the bonnet. He admitted that the pangolins had been procured in Alor Setar, Kedah, and were to be sold in Sadao town for export to China.

On 2 March 2019, a man was arrested at a police checkpoint near Sam Roi Yot Police Station in Prachuap Khiri Khan province after police found 76 pangolins in 18 sacks in the back of his vehicle. He reportedly confessed that it was his third run trafficking the animals, which came from Indonesia, and for which he had been paid.

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

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

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

Daily Mail: https://bit.ly/2IRrRR4, 27 October 2018; Lusaka Times: https://bit.ly/2UQicBC, 19 February 2019

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

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

News Day: https://bit.ly/2UxCniK, 19 October 2018; Chronicle: https://bit.ly/2KYTtX7, 27 October 2018

REPTILES

INDIA: On 25 March 2019, Customs officials at Chennai International Airport arrested a passenger arriving from Bangkok, Thailand, who was found with a number of reptiles contained in plastic containers and boxes of confectionery in his luggage. Upon inspection by the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, the specimens were identified as 22 specimens of the critically endangered Kleinmann's Tortoise *Testudo kleinmanni* (CITES I), two Rhinoceros Iguanas *Cyclura cornuta* (CITES I), rock iguanas *Cyclura* spp., four Blue-tongued Lizards *Tiliqua* spp. and a horned pit viper Crotalinae. The animals were to be returned to Bangkok.

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

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

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

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

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

MALAYSIA: On 30 October 2018, ex-Customs officers Abdul Razak Abdul Shukor and Mohd Hazwan Musa'Almudin were sentenced to five years in prison and fined for illegal possession of 31 Black Spotted Turtles *Geoclemys hamiltonii* (CITES I). The men were arrested in May 2016 at Kuala Lumpur International Airport where they were serving Customs officers at the time of the arrest; they were apprehended after lifting two bags off a carousel which were found to contain six adult, six immature and 19 female turtles. The men were each given the maximum sentence for the first charge—possession of a totally protected species without a special permit, which is three years in prison and a fine of MYR100,000 (USD23,949). On the second charge of illegal possession of an immature animal, they were each sentenced to one year in prison and fined MYR80,000 (USD19,159) and one year in prison for the illegal possession of female wildlife, plus a fine of MYR50,000 (USD11,974). The prison terms are to run concurrently from the date of arrest but a stay of execution on the prison terms was allowed, pending an appeal.

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

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

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

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

RHINOCEROSES

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

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

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

The Government of the Hong Kong SAR media release: <https://bit.ly/2vi3l3t>, 14 February 2019; Channel News Asia: <https://bit.ly/2KYwwn2>, 6 April 2019

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

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

Club of Mozambique: <https://bit.ly/2lQLf0A>; AllAfrica: <https://bit.ly/2P4KfcM>, 17 October 2018

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FLORA

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

Journal du Cameroun: <https://bit.ly/2KYwpl9>, 8 April 2019

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

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

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

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

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

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

OTHER / MULTI-SEIZURES

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

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

CONGO: On 14 December 2018, at Impfondo District Court, Likouala, Didier Wilibona and Richard Ngombe of Central African Republic, were sentenced to three years' imprisonment, and fined CFA200,000 (USD345) and CFA1 million in damages after being found guilty of possessing and attempting to sell the meat of Gorilla *Gorilla gorilla* (CITES I).

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

HONG KONG SAR: On 16 January 2019, Hong Kong Customs mounted a joint operation with mainland Customs to combat cross-boundary wildlife smuggling activities. A shipping container arriving at Kwai Chung Customs House Cargo Examination Compound from Nigeria, bound for Viet Nam, and said to be carrying frozen beef, was found to be holding over 8 t of pangolin scales and

over 2 t of ivory. It took four hours to crack open the consignment; the contraband was found beneath frozen meat and a thick layer of ice, reportedly the first time that officers had come across this method of concealment. This is the largest seizure ever made of pangolin scales in Hong Kong. Two people were arrested and the case is under investigation.

BBC: <https://bbc.in/2E8p3fO>, 1 February 2019; The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region press release. <https://bit.ly/2vjagJZ>, 1 February 2019; Rthk.hk news: <https://bit.ly/2ZrbT5X>, 1 February 2019

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

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

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

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

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

PHILIPPINES: On 8 April 2019, authorities seized a consignment that included hundreds of birds, and dozens of reptiles and a Critically Endangered and rarely seen Western Long-beaked Echidna *Zaglossus bruijnii* from premises in Mati City, Davao Oriental province.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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BIG CATS

CAMEROON: On 26 May 2019, it was reported that a police officer responsible for the protection of wildlife in the hunting areas surrounding Bouba Ndjida National Park had been arrested in Odza, Yaoundé, after being found in possession of a Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I)

skin and five Lion *P. leo* (CITES II) skulls (and an elephant (CITES I) tusk). The officer allegedly transported the items to a hotel in Yaoundé with the aim of selling the products, but his activities were already under investigation by the park. He is alleged to have played a role in transporting illegal products and connecting buyers across the country, as well as activating a group of poachers and offering them protection and business opportunities. Shortly before his arrest, he had reportedly sold two fresh cat Felidae skins.

Alwidha: <https://bit.ly/36g6zFW>, 26 May 2019

SOMALIA: On 20 July 2019, it was reported that authorities in Somaliland had seized 29 Cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus* (CITES I) cubs.

Research by the Cheetah Conservation Fund indicates an estimated 300 Cheetahs are poached and smuggled into the Arabian Peninsula each year, to be sold in the illegal pet trade where demand for the cubs as status symbols is thriving, particularly in the Gulf States. The animals are believed to originate in Ethiopia, northern Kenya, Somalia and Somaliland. Somaliland is reportedly the main transit route for Cheetahs trafficked out of East Africa (see also *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 30(2):72).

The rescued cubs are being kept in a safe place with a long-term aim of reintroducing them into the wild, although following contact with humans this may pose a problem, particularly with Cheetahs under three months-old, it is reported.

News24: <https://bit.ly/2NmQQRb>, 20 July 2019

VIET NAM: On 26 July 2019, three Vietnamese nationals were detained in Cau Giay District for involvement in the illegal trade in seven frozen Tiger *Panthera tigris* (CITES I) carcasses from Lao PDR. The men were part of a gang that had reportedly been trafficking tiger carcasses from Lao PDR to Viet Nam over several years; the chief operator allegedly used his business as a cover and travelled to Lao PDR to buy and freeze the tiger carcasses before transporting them to Viet Nam.

Xinhuanet: <https://bit.ly/2PrLHFL>, 26 July 2019; *VnExpress*: <https://bit.ly/2MTAxYQ>, 26 July 2019

B I R D S

HONG KONG SAR: On 30 July 2019, a man was sentenced at the District Court to 32 months' imprisonment for smuggling into Hong Kong International Airport from Malaysia two air parcels containing 27 Helmeted Hornbill *Rhinoplax vigil* (CITES I) casques in January 2019.

Hong Kong Customs & Excise press release:

https://www.customs.gov.hk/en/publication_press/press/index_id_2646.html, 30 July 2019

INDONESIA: On 26 June 2019, authorities arrested two people who were selling birds and other wildlife in their shops in Telangkah Village Katingan Hilir District. Among the 119 birds confiscated was the Common Hill Myna *Gracula religiosa*, Blue-crowned Hanging Parrot *Loriculus galgulus* (both CITES II) and Greater Green Leafbird *Chloropsis sonnerati*. According to the perpetrators, they have been trading since 2013; the birds would usually be sent to Surabaya and Semarang in the Sampit City of East Kotawaringin Regency (Central Kalimantan) and Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan.

On 17 July 2019, officials at Soekarno-Hatta International Airport foiled an attempt to smuggle 72 Helmeted Hornbill *Rhinoplax vigil* (CITES I) casques that were bound for Hong Kong. One woman

was arrested. The beaks had been wrapped in aluminium foil and placed under bread in a tin being carried in a tote bag.

PPID: <https://bit.ly/2owjjHG>, 17 July 2019;

Mongabay: <https://bit.ly/2MW52x7>, 17 July 2019; Kalteng Ekspres.com: <https://bit.ly/2MXDFTE>,

26 June 2019

PHILIPPINES: Jomar L. Toledo and Rompas M. Lumakore of General Santos City, arrested on 8 April 2019 for illegal trade in wildlife, including 345 birds (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 31(1):44), have each been fined P30,000 (USD580); the specimens, believed to be from Papua New Guinea, were being held in a warehouse in Mati City and the men were acting as caretakers. Species seized included Red-and-Blue Lorries *Eos histrio* and Palm Cockatoos *Probosciger aterrimus* (both CITES I).

Manila News: <https://bit.ly/36fcpYb>, 9 April 2019

E L E P H A N T S

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.

CHINA: On 28 May 2019, Changzhou Customs Anti-smuggling Branch of Nanjing Customs, Jiangsu province, broke up a gang that smuggled, processed and sold ivory; three suspects were arrested.

The investigation began in 2018, when Nanjing Customs received intelligence that criminal gangs were smuggling ivory by land to Changzhou for carving. They identified one person who reportedly had a close relationship with ivory smuggling gangs abroad as well as local ivory carvers and sellers. He and two others were arrested and 34 pieces of ivory and 39 ivory products were found on their premises; the total amount smuggled by the principal suspect is estimated at 563 kg. The provenance of the ivory is not reported. The head of the smuggling gang suspected of supplying the suspect has also been arrested and is being investigated separately.

<https://bit.ly/34fsN99>, 29 May 2019

GABON: On 30 September 2019, guards in Minkébé National Park in Woleu-Ntem seized 41 pairs of tusks (200 kg) and 37 elephant tails from Cameroonian poachers following an exchange of fire.

Gabon Review: <https://bit.ly/2poflkz>, 2 October 2019; <https://bit.ly/2JtUEdO>, 5 October 2019

KENYA: On 10 June 2019, a Meru magistrate sentenced Francis Muriithi to 10 years' imprisonment, or a fine of KES3 million (USD28,500), for possession of an elephant tusk (6.5 kg) without a permit.

On 15 August 2019, at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA), Laazibi Amal, a French national, in transit from France to Dzaoudzi Island, was arrested for being in possession of an ivory bangle. She was subsequently fined KES1 million (USD9,500). The court allowed her to access the bank in the airport to withdraw the funds or surrender to the court, along with her passport.

In the same month it was reported that Spanish national Maria Pich-Aguilera, in transit from Nairobi to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, had been detained at JKIA in possession of an ivory bangle and fined KES1 million.

On 20 August 2019, at a court in Kibera, four police officers were sentenced to life imprisonment, or ordered to pay a fine of KES20 million (USD190,000) each, after being found guilty of elephant poaching. Stephen Ngawai, Martin Mwititi, Francis Karanja and Peter Kuria Kimungi were caught in Nairobi West in 2016 with a 5 kg elephant tusk.

The Star: <https://bit.ly/36dNyUL>, 13 June 2019; <https://bit.ly/2MXp2PS>, 19 August 2019; <https://bit.ly/2jvb8IX>, 21 August 2019; *Nairobi News*: <https://bit.ly/2Nlc3GL>, 15 August 2019; <https://bit.ly/32Wr0Ww>, 23 August 2019

LIBERIA: At Salayea Magisterial Court, John Z. David of Salayea District, Lofa County, was sentenced to one year in prison and fined USD2,500 after he pleaded guilty to killing more than six elephants.

Daily Observer: <https://bit.ly/2polJHr>, 10 October 2019

MALAWI: On 20 June 2019, at Zomba Magistrates' Court, Fanness Dickson of Machinga was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment with hard labour for possession of two pieces of raw ivory (742 g) and three elephant leg bones without a permit. Dickson was apprehended at Nselema Trading Centre in January as he attempted to sell the pieces.

On 15 July 2019, in a landmark ruling, the Supreme Court overturned a MK2.5 million (USD3,300) fine imposed on two brothers for their role in the trafficking of 2.6 t of ivory and sentenced each to prison for eight years. Patrick and Chancy Kaunda were apprehended in 2013 when their vehicle was intercepted in Rumphu, en route to Lilongwe from Tanzania; inside were 781 pieces of raw ivory tusks concealed amongst bags of cement, representing the death of almost 400 elephants.

On 3 October 2019, it was reported that Nickson Nthukwa Banda and Assani Phiri had been sentenced to imprisonment at Kasungu Senior Resident Magistrates' Court for six-and-a-half years and four years, respectively, after being found guilty of killing an elephant in Kasungu National Park in July 2019. The duo was convicted on three game offences which included entering a protected area, conveying weapons into a protected area, killing a wild animal from a protected area, illegal possession of a specimen of a listed species, and possessing a firearm and ammunitions without a permit.

Department of National Parks and Wildlife, Malawi: <https://bit.ly/2MTkjln>, 21 June 2019; <https://bit.ly/2poKcNX>, 17 July 2019; *Malawi24*: <https://bit.ly/2PsNafd>, 3 October 2019

SINGAPORE: see Other/multi-seizures.

TANZANIA: On 1 June 2019, at Manyoni District Court, Singida Region, Rhamadan Saidi and Mohamed Rashid Sanda were each sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment for the killing of four elephants (and one Giraffe *Giraffa* sp.), and the illegal possession of a firearm. The original sentence of 80 years' in jail for each suspect was revised to 20 years, with separate charges to run concurrently.

On 21 June 2019, at Songea District Court, Maxmilian Mwenda from Lilondo Village in Madaba Council and Rashid Migoha alias Mwendomchanja from Ifakara in Morogoro Region were sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment for the possession of 12 elephant tusks.

In November 2016, authorities acting on information arrested the duo at Mwenda's house in Lilongo Village in possession of the tusks. During an earlier hearing, the accused were set free but later rearrested and the case reopened.

On 3 September 2019, authorities in Dar es Salaam seized 338 pieces of elephant tusks from premises in Chamanzi Saku. One person, sought by police for several years, was among several arrested, including two policemen.

On 16 October 2019, it is reported that a High Court judge rejected an appeal by Chinese national Yang Fenglan and two Tanzanian co-defendants who were sentenced in February to 15 years in prison. Labelled the "Ivory Queen", Fenglan was charged with smuggling 2 t of ivory and for orchestrating an ivory smuggling racket.

Daily News: <https://bit.ly/2WrqEEL>, 2 June 2019; AllAfrica: <https://bit.ly/2BQO9xN>, 23 June 2019; Mwananchi: <https://bit.ly/32XKtGa>, 4 September 2019; High Court of Tanzania Dar es Salaam District Registry Criminal Appeal No. 95 of 2019, 16 October 2019; TRAFFIC

ZIMBABWE: On 21 June 2019, at Matabeleland North Provincial Magistrates' Court, Hwange, six poachers charged with illegal possession of ivory were each sentenced to nine years in prison.

In November 2018, the authorities received information that the men were in possession of ivory at Dete, which they intended to sell. Officers pretending to be trophy dealers intercepted the group and seized two pieces of ivory (37 kg).

On 18 July 2016, at Hwange Magistrates' Court, Alois Savanhu was sentenced to nine years in prison after being found in the illegal possession of almost 77 kg of raw ivory. Three others jointly charged were acquitted.

NewsDay: <https://bit.ly/2JtkGhC>, 24 June 2019; <https://bit.ly/2MSSaYF>, 20 July 2019

M A R I N E

BELGIUM: On 30 May 2019, it was reported that officers at Zaventem Airport had seized 24 bags containing 1.2 t of shark fins and ray wings which were being transported on a flight from Liberia to Hong Kong, labelled as dried fish and fish entrails. Among the consignment were wings of guitarfish *Glaucostegus* spp. and fins of hammerhead sharks *Sphyrnidae* spp. The shipment reportedly derived from some 1,600 to 2,000 animals, most of them young.

Guitarfish were listed in CITES Appendix II at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES in August 2019 (effective 26 November 2019). Three species of hammerhead sharks were listed in CITES Appendix II in 2013.

The Brussels Times: <https://bit.ly/345A4Zc>, 14 October 2019

CHINA: In early April 2019, Qingdao Customs officials in Qingdao port, Shangdong province, alerted that a horse trading company was involved in illegal wildlife shipments, seized a container arriving from Peru, declared as horse hides. Following X-ray inspection, the consignment was found

to contain 560 kg of dried seahorses *Hippocampus* spp. (CITES II) concealed within layers of horse hides. A number of suspects were arrested and subsequent inspection of a warehouse yielded a further 200 kg of dried seahorses.

On 20 May, a shipment containing 520 kg of dried seahorses and reportedly involving the same gang, was seized at the port. The cases are being investigated.

Xinhuanet: <https://bit.ly/2Jxf4CZ>, 20 May 2019; <https://bit.ly/2MWv2sv>, 26 June 2019

GHANA: Authorities have fined the owners of a Chinese vessel USD1 million (plus USD22,700 (GHI24,000) for engaging in illegal fishing. The vessel, Lu Rong Yuan Yu 956, was apprehended off Cape Three Points in June 2019 with a crew comprising 22 Ghanaians and five Chinese nationals. Authorities decided to drop charges against the vessel owners after they agreed to pay the fine, opting for an out of court settlement. They had 30 days to pay the fine. Among the items on board the vessel were “405 cartons and 864 slabs of frozen mixed pelagic fish species generally below the minimum landing size”; they were also charged with non-logging of catch on board and nets with undersized mesh sizes.

Africa Feeds: <https://bit.ly/2PpN47Q>, 10 October 2019

HONG KONG SAR: On 12 July 2019, Customs officials at Man Kam To Control Point seized 44 kg of dried sea cucumbers *Holothuroidea* in a consignment of bottles of red wine being smuggled on three outgoing lorries. Three people were arrested.

On 23 August 2019, Customs officials at Hong Kong International Airport seized suspected dried shark fin (180 kg) and dried seahorses *Hippocampus* spp. (CITES II) (500 g), and arrested three passengers arriving from Manila, the Philippines. The items were found in check-in luggage.

Customs and Excise Department, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region press releases: <https://bit.ly/31RkheF>, 13 July 2019; <https://bit.ly/36dTVap>, 24 August 2019

MEXICO: On 27 May 2019, it was reported that Customs agents in Manzanillo, Colima, had confiscated ca. 10.4 t of shark fins [species not reported] from over 500 crates bound for the Philippines. Mexico prohibits the export of shark fins.

Mexico News Daily: <https://bit.ly/31X7CXW>, 27 May 2019

PERU: On 30 September 2019, a ship bound for Asia containing over 12 m illegally caught seahorses *Hippocampus* spp. (CITES II) was seized by Coast Guard officials in waters off the coastal city of Callao; the vessel had been monitored by the authorities for several days. Three Peruvian nationals and a Venezuelan national were arrested. Fishing, transportation and trade in seahorses has been prohibited in Peru since August 2004.

Daily Mail: <https://daily.m.ai/31YsZbs>, 2 October 2019

SOUTH AFRICA: a selection of incidents involving abalone (perlemoen) *Haliotis midae*:

On 3 May 2019, a man was arrested in Table View, Cape Town, after being found in possession of 13,042 dried and shucked abalones in his vehicle.

On 8 May 2019, a vehicle leaving a warehouse in Cape Town was searched by authorities and found to contain boxes of dried abalones (348 kg). A subsequent search of the warehouse uncovered an illegal abalone processing facility. A Chinese national was arrested.

On 16 July 2019, authorities in Milnerton, Cape Town, uncovered an illegal abalone processing facility and vehicles containing boxes of abalones. A second premises in the area uncovered further quantities, yielding a total of 19,032 dried abalones and 5,064 wet abalones. Four suspects were arrested. The raid is deemed to be a significant blow to the illegal abalone trade in this province.

On 6 August 2019, authorities in the Western Cape arrested two foreign nationals after an abalone processing facility was discovered in premises in Protea Park, Hermanus. A total of 1,170 kg of wet and dried abalones was seized.

On 5 September 2019, police at Lingeletu West Police station, Western Cape, arrested an employee of the South African National Parks (SANParks) in possession of 936 abalones at premises in Velani Crescent in C-Section, Khayelitsha. On 10 September 2019, 5,000 dried abalones were seized from premises in Loarti Village, Kraaifontein. No arrests were made and the case is under investigation.

On 12 September 2019, three Western Cape police officers who are part of the Major Offences Reaction Team were arrested for armed robbery. The charges relate to an incident on 21 July when the driver of a taxi transporting poached abalones from Hermanus to Cape Town was pulled over by the officers in Somerset West; one of the officers drove the taxi to his residence, where the abalones were allegedly offloaded. The driver was dropped off and instructed to return to his vehicle which was found without the abalones. An investigation led to the arrest of the suspects.

On 3 October 2019, authorities acting on information intercepted a vehicle in the Table View area and seized bags containing shucked abalones (1,973). A suspect was arrested.

News24: <https://bit.ly/2pmjQMD>, 6 May 2019; South African Police Service media statements: <https://bit.ly/36d2aDL>, 8 May 2019; <https://bit.ly/2jxglEF>, 17 July 2019; <https://bit.ly/2pdamn1>, 6 August 2019; <https://bit.ly/2BQpx8d>, 5 September 2019; <https://bit.ly/31WRkhY>, 3 October 2019; Independent Online (IOL): <https://bit.ly/2Jv3ng4>, 9 May 2019; IOL: <https://bit.ly/31WQRMK>, 12 September 2019
News24: <https://bit.ly/31QkM9e>, 15 September 2019

SPAIN: On 31 May 2019, at Madrid Criminal Court, a criminal network accused of removing 724 kg of juvenile European Eels *Anguilla anguilla* (CITES II) from Spain in 500 suitcases between 2011 and 2012 was fined EUR580,000 (USD652,700). The eels were exported using falsified permits that declared the shipment contained the unprotected American Eel *Anguilla rostrata*.

El Pais: <https://bit.ly/34ajS95>, 12 June 2019

PANGOLINS

All eight species of pangolins *Manis* spp. are listed in CITES Appendix I.

CAMEROON: On 31 May 2019, it was reported that four people had been arrested in Tonga, Ndé department, after attempting to smuggle nearly 100 kg of pangolin scales into a hotel. The two women and two men allegedly bought the scales from wild meat sellers and other dealers in Tonga and Makenéné.

In a separate case, police in Douala arrested two people carrying five bags of pangolin scales (200 kg) from a transportation agency.

On 12 August 2019, authorities seized 383 kg of Giant Ground Pangolin *Manis gigantea* scales in Bamenda, North-West region. No further details reported.

Camernews: <https://bit.ly/349PtHX>, 31 May 2019; *Le360afrique.com*: <https://bit.ly/2C3X1jL>, 15 August 2019

CONGO, DEM. REP. OF: On 24 July 2019, police in Kinshasa arrested an individual in possession of 300 kg of pangolin scales. The seizure results from collaboration between the Garamba National Park and African Parks Network.

Congo Actuel: <https://bit.ly/2poLV5R>, 29 July 2019

CÔTE D'IVOIRE: On 23 July 2019, authorities seized three tonnes of pangolin scales, reportedly the largest consignment of pangolin scales ever recorded in the country. Eight people were arrested.

VOA: <https://bit.ly/31UEukh>, 27 July 2019

HONG KONG SAR: On 17 July 2019, Customs officials at Hong Kong International Airport detained two male passengers arriving, respectively, from Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Xiamen, Fujian Province, China, after a total of 100 kg of suspected pangolin *Manis* spp. scales were found in their suitcases.

On 10 September 2019, at District Court, a man was sentenced to 34 months' imprisonment for smuggling 64 kg of pangolin scales (and for breaching a condition of stay). He was arrested after Customs officials at Hong Kong International Airport uncovered the consignment arriving from Malaysia; a further 190 kg of pangolin scales were seized from industrial premises in Sheung Shui where the suspect was working.

Customs and Excise Department, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region press releases: <https://bit.ly/2PvduoH>, 17 July 2019; https://www.customs.gov.hk/en/publication_press/press/index_id_2696.html, 10 September 2019

MALAWI: In September 2019, at a court in Lilongwe, Jimmy Mkwelzalembe and Julius Sanudia of Malawi were sentenced to three years in prison for smuggling and the illegal possession of pangolins following their arrest in May 2019. Both men are thought to be part of one of Africa's largest transnational wildlife trafficking syndicates.

The suspected chief operator of the trafficking network, a Chinese national, was arrested in August 2019. He has reportedly been linked to a range of wildlife crimes including the possession and smuggling of processed elephant ivory, 103 pieces of rhino horn, 556 pangolin scales and three live pangolins, and had been on the run following the May arrests that included his wife.

Mongabay: <https://bit.ly/348ZHIH>

NIGERIA: On 17 July 2019, it was reported that Customs officials had seized some 670 kg of pangolin scales from a warehouse in Lagos. No details on provenance or of any ensuing arrests were reported.

The Sun: <https://bit.ly/3475hLu>, 17 July 2019

SINGAPORE: see Other/multi-seizures

SOUTH AFRICA: On 14 June 2019, it was reported that Shadrack Malatji, Israel Mametja and France Shai had each been sentenced at Lenyenye Regional Court, Limpopo, to an effective five years in prison for possession of a live pangolin. The animal, which was seized from a vehicle, was returned to the wild.

In August 2019, at Mhala Regional Court, Vincent Nyathi was sentenced to eight years in prison after being found in possession of a pangolin. He was arrested in Rietboklaagte near Acornhoek; a pangolin found in a drum at his house was later released following treatment.

Bosveld Weekend Review: <https://bit.ly/2BXRbQx>, 14 June 2019; *Lowvelder*: <https://bit.ly/36doFsd>, 29 August 2019

TURKEY: On 29 July 2019 it was announced that security forces at Istanbul Airport had seized over 1.2 t of pangolin scales after becoming suspicious of a shipment declared as “simply prepared (animal) bones or horn cores.” Authorities were initially alerted by Customs to a possible health and safety hazard before the contents were found to consist of pangolin scales. No further details reported.

Daily Sabah: <https://bit.ly/2WmsbMt>, 29 July 2019

VIET NAM: In May 2019, authorities announced a seizure of 8.3 t of pangolin scales from “an African country” in the northern Haiphong port. In total, officials discovered 311 bags hidden beneath sacks of *Cassia Senna siamea* seeds; each bag of scales weighed between 25 kg to 30 kg.

On 23 May 2019, Customs officials at Cai Mep International Port Terminal, Ba Ria-Vung Tau, made a record seizure of more than 5.2 t of pangolin scales concealed in a shipment of cashew nuts from Nigeria. The scales were reported to derive from Giant Ground Pangolin *Manis gigantea*, Black-bellied Pangolin *M. tetradactyla* and White-bellied Pangolin *M. tricuspis*.

Phys.org: <https://bit.ly/2MTT33h>, 24 May 2019; <https://bit.ly/2Jy3S93>, 16 May 2019; *Saigon Giai Phong Online (SGGP)*: <http://sggpnews.org.vn/national/over-5-tons-of-pangolin-scales-seized-at-cai-mep-intl-port-81945.html>, 24 May 2019

ZIMBABWE: On 21 August 2019, it was reported that Matabeleland North Provincial Magistrates’ Court, Hwange, had sentenced Killion Siacho of Lusulu, Binga, to a total of 24 years’ imprisonment: 15 years for illegal possession of 175 pangolin scales (2,525 kg) and nine years for possession of a firearm.

Newsday: <https://bit.ly/2WlYrz6>, 21 August 2019

REPTILES

AUSTRALIA: On 5 June 2019, authorities at Perth Airport arrested two Japanese nationals attempting to smuggle 13 bobtail lizards *Tiliqua* spp. out of the country. The men were about to board separate flights to Singapore and Kuala Lumpur; one of them was found to have 13 native

bobtail lizards in his check-in luggage. The lizards, packed in net bags wrapped in towels and placed in plastic containers, appeared to be in poor health and were without food or water. Similar containers were found inside the suitcase of the other suspect and photos of the lizards discovered on his phone. The two were subsequently investigated for possible involvement in an international wildlife smuggling syndicate linked to three other Japanese nationals charged with similar offences in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth over the previous six months.

Kyodo News: <https://bit.ly/2NntvdH>, 6 June 2019

CANADA: On 4 June 2019, it was reported that Li Wan of Vancouver had been fined CAD18,000 (USD13,700) after pleading guilty to attempting to smuggle 19 live turtles Testudines into the country from the USA in a duffel bag. The money from the fine will go into the federal government's environmental damages fund. Li was caught with the undeclared turtles in his vehicle at Point Roberts border crossing on 27 January.

The animals were reportedly ordered online from different locations and picked up by Li at a US mailing outlet, and included CITES-listed species: Black Pond Turtle *Geoclemys hamiltonii* (CITES I); Diamondback Terrapin *Malaclemys terrapin* (CITES II); Pig-nosed Turtle *Carettochelys insculpta* (CITES II); and CITES III-listed Pearl River Map Turtle *Graptemys pearlensis* and Black-knobbed Map Turtle *G. nigrinoda*.

CBC: <https://bit.ly/2C4Ienz>, 4 June 2019

MADAGASCAR: On 22 May 2019, it was reported that an appeals court in Tulear had upheld a six-year sentence against three people convicted of dealing in over 10,000 Radiated Tortoises *Geochelone radiata* (CITES I). The court also fined the defendants MGA100 million (USD26,500) and ordered them to pay MGA100 million to the environment ministry. The men were arrested at a house in possession of the turtles in April 2018.

AFP: <https://yhoo.it/2WzuSsA>, 22 May 2019

MALAYSIA: On 18 May 2019, Sabah Wildlife Department seized 220 crocodiles *Crocodylia* spp. at a swamp in Kampung Pasir Putih, Tawau, believed to have been smuggled in from neighbouring Kalimantan. This was reported to be the first time that the authorities had uncovered crocodile smuggling from outside the State; the provenance (and intended purpose) of the animals was being investigated, including whether they were to supply local crocodile farms. Five had perished; the surviving specimens were released in the wild and two Malaysians and two Indonesians were arrested.

Under Schedule 2 of the *Sabah Wildlife Conservation Enactment*, it is illegal to hunt, collect the eggs or remove the crocodiles from the wild under any circumstances.

The Jakarta Post: <https://bit.ly/2WnA7Nm>, 20 May 2019

ZIMBABWE: On 2 August 2019, at Harare provincial magistrates' court, Blessed Morris of Beatrice was sentenced to the mandatory minimum nine years' imprisonment for possession of protected wildlife without the requisite permits. He was apprehended on 28 July while walking in Mbare in possession of a woman's handbag, prompting the police to investigate. Inside the bag, wrapped in cloth, were specimens later identified as a Yellow-throated Plated Lizard *Gerrhosaurus*

flavigularis, a Mozambican Spitting Cobra *Naja mossambica*, two Olive Grass Snakes *Psammophis mossambicus*, and a python Pythonidae, all protected species.

ZimLive: <https://bit.ly/2NiCbll>, 2 August 2019

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: On 16 August 2019 it was reported that Beijing Second Intermediate People's Court had rejected an appeal by four people sentenced to prison for up to 13 years for trading in 33 kg of African rhino horn.

Defendants Hou and Xin bought the horn through the online platform Wechat, which they sold to co-defendants Lin and Chen. On 26 April 2018, police arrested Hou, Lin and Chen in a vehicle and seized 19 pieces of rhino horns. Xin was arrested at a hotel in Huairou, Beijing.

The four had been sentenced in Xicheng District Court: Lin to 13 years and six months in prison, and fined CNY26,000 (USD3,600); Hou to 13 years, fined CNY26,000; Chen to 13 years in prison, fined CNY2,400, and Xin was sentenced to nine years in prison and fined CNY18,000.

Weixin: <https://bit.ly/2JwLAoA>, 16 August 2019

MOZAMBIQUE: On 26 August 2019, at Maputo City Court, Chinese national Pu Chiunjiang was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment following his arrest at Maputo International Airport on 15 April 2018 with 4.2 kg of rhino horn pieces in a suitcase. Pu, who had been bound for Hong Kong via Doha, was also fined an undisclosed amount.

This is reportedly the first case of a foreign national imprisoned in Mozambique for a wildlife crime. The provenance of the horns has not been established.

On 2 September 2019, it was reported that two poachers had been given prison sentences of 17 and 16 years, respectively, for killing two rhinos in Kruger National Park, South Africa, and for the unlawful possession of unlicensed weapons. The duo, from Gaza Province, also received fines. It is reported to be the first conviction and sentencing in Mozambique for rhino poaching since 2008.

Club of Mozambique: <https://bit.ly/2NpwKl5>, 27 August 2019; AllAfrica: <https://bit.ly/2BQTDsb>, 27 August 2019; South African National Parks media release: <https://bit.ly/32Xlkl>, 2 September 2019

SOUTH AFRICA: During 12–16 August 2019, at Skukuza Regional Court, three people received prison sentences for rhino poaching in Kruger National Park. Adolph Ndlovu, convicted of trespassing, being in possession of an unlicensed firearm, unlicensed ammunition, and possession of a firearm with intent to commit a crime, was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment. Abednigo Mahlabane, arrested in 2017, was convicted of trespassing, being an illegal immigrant, possession of and pointing an unlicensed firearm, and given an effective sentence of 10 years in prison. Jeffrey Mathebula, arrested in 2015, was fined R10,000 (USD678) or sentenced to two years' imprisonment of which half is suspended for five years.

South African National Parks media release: <https://bit.ly/2BOxzi1>, 16 August 2019

USA: On 1 October 2019, Richard Sheridan, an Irish national, pleaded guilty to trafficking a “libation cup” carved from the horn of a Black Rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* and was sentenced to 14 months in prison, with two years of supervised release.

Sheridan was extradited to the USA in August following his indictment in May charging him and an accomplice, Irish national Michael Hegarty, with “conspiracy to traffic in a libation cup made from the horn of protected rhinoceros”. Sheridan was also charged with smuggling the cup out of the USA. He was arrested in the UK as part of an ongoing criminal investigation.

Sheridan and Hegarty were alleged to be members of an organised crime gang accused of carrying out raids on museums and auction houses to steal rhino horn and high-value artefacts from UK museums and from European countries, Hong Kong SAR and the USA. Both have previously served prison sentences in connection with related offences (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 28(1):33; 30(1):32).

NY Daily News: <https://bit.ly/2BTyT36>; *The Irish Sun:* <https://bit.ly/2Nn0Wgz/>, 3 October 2019; *TRAFFIC*

VIET NAM: On 16 May 2019, in a Lao Cai courtroom, three men received prison sentences for attempting to smuggle rhino horn across the border into China. The sentences were prosecuted under the country’s recently amended penal code, which includes a provision for higher penalties for those convicted of wildlife crime.

Two of the men, Duong Van Thanh and Duong Van Sang, were arrested in May 2018 in Lao Cai after police received information that they would be transporting the horn over the border. They were caught in a car with 20 kg of rhino horn concealed in vases and a nylon bag. Police later arrested the owner of the rhino horn, Duong Van Chiem.

Duong Van Thanh and Duong Van Sang were each imprisoned for 8.5 years, while Duong Van Chiem received a 10-year sentence.

On 25 July 2019, authorities at Hanoi’s Noi Bai airport seized 55 pieces (125 kg) of rhino horn that had been encased in plaster. The provenance of the horn, which was bound for the United Arab Emirates, was not known.

TRAFFIC: <https://bit.ly/36cl39U>, 17 May 2019; *Haiquan Online:* <https://bit.ly/2WnCDmM>, 27 July 2019; *Herald Live:* <https://bit.ly/2ow3HE0>, 28 July 2018

ZIMBABWE: A man serving 10 years in jail for poaching a rhino in Beitbridge has been jailed for a further nine years for poaching another rhino at a safari lodge in Chipinge. Godknows Mashame was found guilty at Chipinge Magistrates’ Court after a witness provided evidence against him. He will finish serving one sentence before serving the second term.

It is alleged that Mashame entered the safari lodge area in July 2011 without a permit and poached a Black Rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* (CITES I) using a gaming GPS monitor, with intentions to sell the horn to foreign buyers. He fled after committing the crime.

The Herald: <https://bit.ly/3493CVV>, 21 May 2019

FLORA

CHINA: In July 2019, a raid involving 100 wildlife law enforcement officers resulted in the seizure of many tonnes of teak *Tectona* spp. and rosewood *Dalbergia* (CITES II) logs and the dismantling of a major crime syndicate involved in the smuggling of timber from Myanmar to Yunnan Province. The timber was seized from eight warehouses around Nongdao. Anticipating resistance from workers

and villagers employed by the timber smuggling syndicates, helicopters were used for initial surveillance and power was cut to the town to disable CCTV cameras and prevent news of the raid spreading.

Several major operators involved in the syndicate, one of whom owned a wood processing factory in Ruili, on the border with Myanmar, were arrested and await trial.

Environmental Investigation Agency: [https://bit.ly/ 2PtIOWj](https://bit.ly/2PtIOWj), 2 September 2019

INDIA: On 10 September 2019, authorities in Mumbai disrupted an international smuggling racket and arrested three people in possession of 1,556 kg of Red Sandalwood (Red Sanders) *Pterocarpus santalinus* (CITES II). The consignment had been transported from Chennai and was bound for Hong Kong via contacts in Goa.

On 27 September 2019, at Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi, authorities arrested three people for illegal possession and an attempt to smuggle to Hong Kong 160 kg of Red Sandalwood. Bundles of sandalwood were detected in the luggage of one suspect; he was allowed to check in while being kept under surveillance, during which time it was evident that two other passengers were accompanying him; all three were apprehended. Others are believed to be involved and the case is under investigation.

During two separate incidents at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, Mumbai, on 4 October 2018, officials seized a total of 87 kg of Red Sandalwood chips from two Sudanese nationals. The first man, flying to Addis Ababa, was carrying 75 kg of the wood in his carry-on luggage (9 kg) and checked-in baggage (66 kg); the second case involved 10 kg of sandalwood chips in plastic packets in the possession of a passenger bound for Doha, Qatar.

Hindustan Times: <https://bit.ly/2MWlzkY>, 11 September 2019; <https://bit.ly/343QLEu>, 28 September 2019; India Today: <https://bit.ly/32SDChg>, 8 October 2019; The Hindu: <https://bit.ly/2WxCrSh>, 6 October 2019

PERU: On 8 August 2019, at Second Unipersonal Penal Court of Maynas, Rubén Antonio Espinoza, director of Cacao del Perú Norte SAC, a company charged with the illegal trade in timber and obstruction, was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment; Ernesto Vega Delgado and Giovanni Cubas Ramírez of the same company, were given a four-year suspended sentence for related offences.

The three are linked to a Czech-American businessman, who since 2010 established a network of companies for the large-scale cultivation of oil palm and cocoa in the country. Cacao del Perú Norte SAC (now called Tamshi SAC), was one of these companies, accused of deforesting more than 13,000 ha of forests in Loreto and Ucayali, in the Peruvian Amazon, and for the illegal trade in timber forest products. The company prevented inspections of the deforested areas leading to a charge of obstruction.

On 2 September 2019 the company was also ordered to pay the State the equivalent of USD4,626,750 within the first year of the sentence as compensation for the transformation of 1,950 ha of forest in Tamshiyacu, in the district of Fernando Lores, in Loreto. Images and testimony presented during the trial showed what the area had looked like before the arrival of the company and the subsequent extent of deforestation; it was also able to prove that the wood had been extracted and later processed and illegally traded commercially without a permit.

The accused, who did not attend the hearing, have appealed their sentences.

SERFOR Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation: <https://bit.ly/332Ljli>, 9 August 2019;
Mongabay: <https://bit.ly/2MX06ID>, 30 July 2019

SOUTH AFRICA: On 12 September 2019, at Cape Town Regional Court, Czech nationals Jaromir Chvastek and Tomas Malir were sentenced to prison for two years, suspended for five years, and each fined ZAR500,000 (USD33,500).

The duo was apprehended in Rietpoort, Western Cape, on 7 August 2019 after more than 1,000 plants were found in their possession. The specimens had been collected near Bitterfontein, including several “critically rare” plants and more than 900 vulnerable or protected plants, predominantly *Conophytum* and *Adromischus* spp., as well as some aloes *Aloe* spp. (CITES II) and *Haworthia* spp. Also in their possession were collection bags and GPS co-ordinates to pinpoint the location of these commercially valuable plants. It is reported that Chvastek operated a website in the Czech Republic in which a wide variety of succulent plants, including South African species, were offered for sale. The men were ordered to be deported once the case was completed.

On 8 October 2019, two suspects were arrested in a vehicle travelling between Ashton and Robertson, Western Cape, while transporting 60,397 *Conophytum* succulents.

News24: <https://bit.ly/2NfCU72>, 21 September 2019; South African Police Service media statement: <https://bit.ly/2MVe8dr>, 9 October 2019

USA: A three-year investigation has concluded with the imprisonment of William Starr Schwartz after he was found guilty of stealing more than 500 federally protected cactus plants from Lake Mead National Recreation Area (Arizona/Nevada). Schwartz, who has been ordered to serve 24 months in prison, will then serve three years of supervised release, during which time he is banned from entering the park and surrounding public land. He must also pay USD22,655 in restitution.

Court documents detail how Schwartz stole and directed others to steal the plants for him between October 2014 and August 2018. He sold the cacti via the internet, illegally shipping specimens to more than 20 countries. Numerous cacti plants obtained illegally were recovered during a search of Schwartz’s residence in August 2018.

US National Park Service: <https://bit.ly/2qTZlaA>, 2 May 2019

OTHER/MULTI-SEIZURES

CHINA: On 16 May 2019, Gongbei Customs officials in Zhuhai city, Guangdong province, seized 1.6 t of ivory, later identified as teeth of Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius* (CITES II) and related products during inspection of a craft manufacturing company. The company allegedly imported the items from overseas and hired workers to process and sell them illegally.

Economic Daily, <https://bit.ly/369gsp3>, 20 June 2019; China Daily: <https://bit.ly/36ep3qu>, 20 June 2019

CONGO: On 13 May 2019, Congo nationals Armand Tonton Ibanda and Justin Wawa were sentenced to two years in prison and each fined FCFA1 million (USD1,680). The duo was caught in possession of a bag holding 260 ivory (CITES I) chopsticks, 100 ivory bracelets, necklaces and rings, 100 ivory pendants, seven ivory statuettes, two ivory pieces, as well as skins of three Leopards *Panthera pardus* (CITES I).

Journal de Brazza.com: <https://bit.ly/2WIGil0>, 16 May 2019; *Africa Sustainable Conservation News*: <https://bit.ly/3495Rsj>, 17 May 2019

GUINEA: On 7 May 2019, two brothers were arrested in Kissidougou with more than 60 skins of 15 protected species (felines, mammals, antelopes, crocodiles, pythons). Reportedly, they had been supplying traffickers in Senegal, Mali and Côte d'Ivoire since the 1980s. They await trial.

VisionGuinee.info: <https://bit.ly/2Nnglls>, 14 May 2019

INDONESIA: On 19 September 2019, four people were each sentenced to four years in prison and fined IDR50 million (USD3,500). They were found guilty of attempting to smuggle by boat to Malaysia via Rupert Island, in March, 40 protected animals, including 38 birds (including Palm Cockatoo *Probosciger aterrimus*, Helmeted Hornbill *Rhinoplax vigil* (both CITES I)) and Macgregor's Honeyeater *Macgregoria pulchra* (CITES II), and two Agile Gibbons *Hylobates agilis* (CITES I), before being foiled by the authorities.

<http://archive.is/6lph0>, 21 March 2019; *Garda Animalia*: <https://bit.ly/31WAPSM>, 20 September 2019; <http://archive.is/7rnll>, 22 September 2019

MALAYSIA: On 15 May 2019, at Kuala Terengganu Sessions Court, Vietnamese nationals Hoang Van Viet and Nguyen Van Thiet were convicted of the illegal possession of threatened wildlife and each sentenced to two years in prison and fined MYR1.56 million (USD390,000). The duo was caught in April 2019 in Hulu Sungai Tersat in Taman Negara Pahang National Park, with 22 snares and 138 parts of the following CITES I-listed species: Leopard *Panthera pardus*, Serow *Capricornis sumatraensis*, Tapir *Tapirus indicus*, Sun Bear *Helarctos malayanus*, and Golden Cat *Catapuma temminckii*. It is the first time in Malaysia's history a fine of more than MYR1 million has been imposed for wildlife crime. The duo face a further 16 years in prison if they fail to pay the fines.

On 5 October 2019, almost 800 animal parts were seized during a raid on premises in Kapit, Sarawak, Borneo, including casques of 148 hornbills Bucerotidae, hornbill feathers, pangolin *Manis* spp. (CITES I) scales, porcupine quills, bear (CITES I/II) bile and deer antlers. One man was arrested. *TRAFFIC*: <https://bit.ly/2Jw4Fam>, 15 May 2019; *AFP*: <https://yhoo.it/2Ws60VI>, 10 October 2019; *New Straits Times*: <https://bit.ly/2MUskn2>, 9 October 2019

NORWAY: On 1 August 2019, two Danish nationals were detained after being observed collecting butterflies in the Gjendebu area near Jotunheimen; in their possession were some 35–40 Apollo Butterflies *Parnassius apollo* (CITES II and listed in EU Annex A); the specimens seized were the endemic subspecies, which is rare. The duo was released from custody but reportedly face criminal action.

Ekstra Bladet: <https://bit.ly/2MZgpVn>, 1 August 2019

PHILIPPINES: On 30 May 2019, Ninoy Aquino International Airport officials, at the Central Mail Exchange Center in Pasay City, intercepted six packages of wildlife, two of which contained 100 live tarantulas Theraphosidae in plastic containers declared as “mails and toys”; they had arrive from Malaysia and Poland and were addressed to residents of Sto Tomas, Batangas, Naga City, and Cebu. Stingray *Myliobatoidei* skins (71) were also found in a package from Jakarta, Indonesia.

Inquirer.net: <https://bit.ly/2BQWT6P>, 31 May 2019; *Manila Bulletin*: <https://bit.ly/2PrgH8Y>, 31 May 2019

SINGAPORE: On 21 September 2019, authorities seized three containers declared to contain timber arriving from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in transit for Viet Nam. One was found to contain 8.8 t of ivory from African Elephants *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I), Singapore's largest seizure of ivory to date, and 11.9 t of pangolin scales contained in 237 sacks, later identified as being from Giant Ground Pangolins *Manis gigantea* (CITES I).

This case brings the volume of pangolin scales reportedly seized in Singapore since April 2019 to 37.5 t. The items were to be destroyed to prevent them entering the market.

The seizure was made possible following information shared by the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China.

National Parks, Singapore: <https://bit.ly/2PoPZON>, 23 July 2019

VIET NAM: On 12 April 2019, authorities at Nam Hai Dinh Vu Port, Hai Phong, discovered a shipment transporting 3.5 t of ivory and 4 t of pangolin *Manis* spp. scales, (both CITES I), concealed in containers of asphalt.

Viet Nam News: <https://bit.ly/31XUwJY>, 13 June 2019; Haiquaonline: <https://bit.ly/36jhdvU>, 13 June 2019; <https://bit.ly/36d6nr2>, 13 June 2019

ZIMBABWE: On 27 April 2019, it was reported that Never Ndlovu of Dete, had been sentenced at Hwange Provincial Magistrates' Court to 27 years' imprisonment. He was convicted of the unlawful possession of Lion *Panthera leo* (CITES II) skin, a python Pythonidae and raw ivory (CITES I). He claimed to have picked up the items while herding cattle in Hwange National Park, intending to use them for medicinal purposes.

Newsday: <https://bit.ly/31XmXbc>, 27 April 2019

TRAFFIC BULLETIN SEIZURES AND PROSECUTIONS

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