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The *TRAFFIC Bulletin* publishes information and original papers on the subject of trade in wild animals and plants, and strives to be a source of accurate and objective information.

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Temminck's Ground Pangolin *Smutsia temminckii*
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Bêche-de-mer on sale in seafood market, Hong Kong
(© Fion Cheung);
Galapagos Land Iguana *Conolophus subcristatus*
(© Y.-J. Rey-Millet / WWF-Canon);
Green-winged Saltator *Saltator similis*
(© WWF-Brazil / Adriano Gambarini)

TRAFFIC

BULLETIN

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

The *TRAFFIC Bulletin* carries a selection of seizures and prosecutions. 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: 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 kamschatkana*, 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\\$40,000,19June2012](http://www.worldfishing.net/news/101/seafood-importer-is-fined-us$40,000,19June2012)

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

CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora)

establishes international controls over trade in wild plants and animals, or related products, of species that have been, or may be, threatened due to excessive commercial exploitation. Parties have their own legislative instrument by which to meet their obligations under CITES. The species covered by CITES are listed in three Appendices, according to the degree of protection they need:

APPENDIX I includes species threatened with extinction which are or may be threatened by trade.

Trade in specimens of these species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances. An export permit from the country of origin (or a re-export certificate from other exporting countries) and an import permit from the country of importation are required.

APPENDIX II includes species not necessarily yet threatened, but which could become so if trade is not strictly controlled. Species are also included in Appendix II if they are difficult to distinguish from other species in Appendix II, in order to make it more difficult for illegal trade to take place through misidentification or mislabelling. An export permit from the country of origin (or a re-export certificate from other exporting countries) is required, but not an import permit.

APPENDIX III includes species that any Party identifies as being subject to regulation within its jurisdiction for the purpose of preventing or restricting exploitation and as needing the co-operation of other Parties in the control of trade. Imports require a certificate of origin and, if the importation is from the State that has included the species in Appendix III, an export permit is required.

All imports into the European Union of CITES Appendix II-listed species require both an export permit/re-export certificate and an import permit.

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,21April2012; www.thecalifornian.com/article/20120921/NEWS09/309210073/Marina-man-sentenced-poaching-black-abalone,21September2012

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,11May2012](http://www.newzimbabwe.com/NEWS-7942-Truck+driver+in+US$4m+shellfish+bust/NEWS.aspx,11May2012)

BIG CATS

CHINA: On 10 May 2012, at Zhengzhou Middle People's Court, Henan province, Wang Yinnan 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 Yinnan, 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/34163341/wild-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/c227937-1491588153.htm?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.starafrica.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](http://www.kenyanwildliveservice.com/18-september-2012); www.standardmedia.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_jvgn-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 transhipped 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.tuoiitrenews.vn/cmlink/tuoiitrenews/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://lyn.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 SPECIAL

ADMINISTRATIVE REGION: 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, Koirengi, 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; www.business-standard.com/generalnews/news/pangolin-scales-seized-in-mizoram/533621, 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/ALeqM5gnLzIXR3l8SyNryS1B5gMKDqWFWg?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.republica.com/portallindex.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 kilograms 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-fail-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://lens-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.bemama.com/bemama/v6/newsindex.php?id=671093 6 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&object_id=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 R1m 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.

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

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 Rs 10 000 (USD 190).

It is reported that most of the specimens of this species caught in Manipur are taken to Thailand via Myanmar, for onward transportation 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>

“ IF THE BATTLE AGAINST WILDLIFE CRIME IS TO BE WON, THE OUTCOME OF CASES THAT ARE PROSECUTED MUST BE MORE WIDELY PUBLICIZED SO THAT PEOPLE ARE AWARE OF THE HEAVY PRICE THEY PAY FOR TRAFFICKING WILDLIFE. ” William Schaedla, *TRAFFIC*

SANParks media releases: www.sanparks.org/, 10 May/29 August/31 August 2012; www.iol.co.za/dailynews/news/rhino-horn-bust-1.1318975#.UFryCVH4JvI, 14 June 2012; www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jkYSLtM MON5CsPgOXSa1ILLUhwq?docId=CNG.3d4dfb998642cb4dc07e4b704572326d.241; www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/RI11m-in-assets-seized-from-game-farmer-20120720, 20 July 2012; www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/rhino-poachers-sentenced-to-28-years-11363903#.UFsDa1H4JvI, 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 Buby 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

REPTILES and AMPHIBIANS

BANGLADESH: On 7 August 2012, police at Shahjalal International Airport seized 108 live Tricarinata 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-las-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.

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