

Macao Prohibits Internal Trade in Rhino Horn and Musk

Traders in the tiny Portuguese territory of Macao on southern China's coast were some of the largest importers of African rhinoceros horn and hide in the mid-1980s. The traders re-exported most of these two rhino products to mainland China and to Hong Kong; the remainder they sold to the owners of Macao's traditional Chinese medicine shops for local consumption. In 1987, 65% of the 34 pharmacies surveyed in Macao offered rhino horn for sale, and 56% had rhino hide. These percentages were among the highest recorded for retail trade in rhino products anywhere in South East Asia.

In order to restrict the availability of rhino products and to try to curtail further trade internationally, the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, in July 1987, passed Resolution Conf. 6.10 which urged Party states to ban their internal sales of rhinoceros products. On 24 March 1988, the Macao Government, through the Director of Economic Services in the Departamento do Comercio, responded by issuing an official circular (No. c.c. 13/88/DCO) in Portuguese and Chinese to the owners of pharmacies, stating that all internal trade in rhino commodities would be prohibited on 1 July 1988:

"... We hereby give notice to all those with musk and parts of the rhinoceros that they should get rid of them without fail by 1 July, it being forbidden from that date to trade and keep stocks of these products."

This circular was followed up with a media campaign, informing the general public of the importance of not purchasing rhino horn and hide.

The Macao Government is to be congratulated for its new law, and it is hoped that other governments in Asia will also soon implement CITES Resolution Conf. 6.10 which should greatly enhance efforts to conserve the remaining 10 500 rhinos in the wild.

Source: Esmond Bradley Martin and Direcção dos Serviços de Economia, Departamento do Comercio, Macao

Rhino Horn Smugglers Arrested in the USA

Three US citizens were arrested on 2 November 1988 for conspiring to import rhinoceros horns and specimens of other protected wildlife species illegally into the USA from South Africa. Three South African nationals were charged for their roles in the conspiracy.

John Lukman, a US citizen, was arrested on his return from South Africa where he had travelled to obtain rhino horns from a friend and member of the South African Defence Force, Marius Meiring. According to a Press Release issued on 3 November 1988 by the US Department of Justice, the defendants had agreed to sell five to seven rhino horns for US\$40 000 each to a Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) undercover agent. At the time of his arrest, Lukman was carrying two rhino horns which he had apparently obtained, with the help of Meiring, from Angola the previous week. A further 14 rhino horns were being transported to Namibia from Angola in South African military vehicles for subsequent shipment to the USA.

The investigation began in February 1988 when the USFWS learned that Lukman was attempting to sell a leopard mount. Between April and June that year, in violation of both the US Endangered Species Act and CITES, Lukman sold to an undercover agent two Leopard *Panthera pardus* rugs for US\$2000, a Leopard head mount for US\$550 and a Cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus* rug and Cheetah head for US\$2400.

Rhino Horn ctd.

Subsequently, Lukman indicated that he could obtain an "unlimited" number of rhino horns and AK-47 machine guns from Meiring, who was on active duty in Namibia, and from Mrs Meiring. As the investigation progressed, two other US citizens, Mary Ann McAllister and Russell Beveridge were found to have assisted Lukman in the importation and distribution of the illegally imported goods.

Another member of the South African Defence Force, Sgt. Major Waldemar Schutte, illegally smuggled a rhino horn into the USA, in August 1988, for which he was paid US\$1800 by Lukman. The horn was purchased for US\$40 000 by the undercover agent.

An affidavit filed in the US District Court by the principal undercover agent, Richard Moulton of the USFWS, disclosed that the horns involved in this case were apparently obtained from rhinos killed by South African army troops in Angola.

The six defendants have been charged only with conspiracy to commit an offence against the United States. This charge carries a maximum term of five years imprisonment and a US\$250 000 fine. The US Attorney has stated that he expects each will be charged with several other offences, including violations of federal wildlife laws and firearms and Customs statutes. Charges may also be brought against other, unidentified, individuals.

Source: Press Release, US Dept. of Justice, 3 November 1988

USA Declares African Chimpanzees "Endangered"

A US proposal to change the legal status of the Chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes* and the Pygmy Chimpanzee *Pan paniscus* in Africa from 'threatened' to 'endangered' under the Endangered Species Act, is expected to come into effect at the end of April 1989. From that date, the import into the USA of any wild-caught or captive-bred specimen from Africa will be prohibited.

The proposal, submitted to the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) in 1987 by primatologist Jane Goodall, WWF-US and the Humane Society of the United States, requested the reclassification of the chimpanzees as 'endangered', citing as justification the drastic decline of chimpanzee populations in Africa due to massive habitat destruction, population fragmentation, excessive local hunting, and international trade. The international biomedical establishment was identified in the proposal as one of the greatest threats to the continued existence of wild chimpanzees, because demand for animals for research was encouraging poachers.

The National Institutes of Health opposed reclassification on the grounds that it could permanently preclude medical research on chimpanzees now in captivity in the USA. The new ruling thus does not include those chimpanzees outside of Africa, which will remain available for essential medical research. But by including captive chimpanzees in Africa within the 'endangered' classification, the USFWS will forestall the possibility for wild-caught animals to be laundered through "captive" colonies and imported into the USA pursuant to less restrictive regulations.

Sources: US Federal Register, 24 February 1989; WWF-US News Release, 27 February 1989