

ON_{the} TRAIL

The defaunation bulletin
n°40. Events from the 1st March to the 31th May, 2023



Quarterly information and analysis report on endangered
animals poaching and smuggling
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ON_{the} TRAIL

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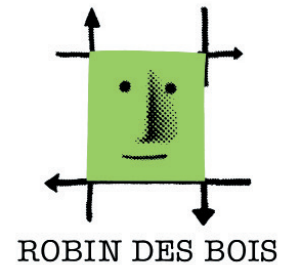
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NOTE AND ADVICE TO READERS

"On the Trail", the defaunation magazine, aims to get out of the drip of daily news and to draw up every three months an organized and analyzed survey of poaching, smuggling and worldwide market of animal species protected by national laws and international conventions. "On the Trail" also relates ongoing trials and the evolution of regulations and sanctions.

• A single event may refer to several species (e.g. simultaneous seizure of ivory, bear bile and snake skins); it is then analysed in the "Multi-species" chapter, with the exception of events that bring together the following species and which have their own chapter:

- Pangolins + elephants + rhinos + hippos
- Elephants + felines + rhinos + sperm whales
- Various reptile species (simultaneous seizure of several reptile species)
- Various marine species (simultaneous seizure of several aquatic species)

• Geographic regions at the continental scale are based on the UN classification.

• The US\$ conversion rates used are those applicable during the month of the event.

• The main sources are indicated at the end of each event. Each event reported and/or analysed is from a recension of one or more articles or press releases. This critical review eliminates inconsistencies in date, price and quantity if necessary, and if possible mistakes or looseness about the description of the species. The original source(s) are enriched by cross-checking and additional information from previous issues of "On the Trail", by Robin des Bois' investigations and archives, and by international bibliography and iconography. Details of the sources are available on request by email to contact@robindesbois.org indicating the "On the Trail" issue number, chapter and reference of the event.

Robin des Bois thanks the Species Survival Network, the NGO Save the Elephants and the Eagle Network for their alerts which enrich the daily monitoring carried out by the "On the Trail" team.

• When a species is CITES-listed at the time of the event, the Appendix is specified after its scientific name.

CITES APPENDICES

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (182 Member States).

Appendix I : species threatened with extinction. Trade in specimens of these species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances and under import and export permits.

Appendix II : export permit required in order to avoid utilization incompatible with the species survival. Import permit if required by national law.

Appendix III : species that are protected in at least one country, which has asked other CITES Parties for assistance in controlling the trade. In the case of trade from a State that included the species in Appendix III, an export permit of that State is required.

PICTOS



Human death. Guard, ranger, policeman, poacher... by firearm or other means.



Judgment and sanction. Condemnation, acquittal, fine...



Trapping. Poaching by jaw trap, snare, net ...



Poisoning. By chemicals, pesticides and medicines: cyanide, carbofuran, diclofenac, M99 ...



Full moon. Moonlight poaching

ACRONYMS

EAGLE : Eco Activists for Governance and Law Enforcement

ENV : Education for Nature – Vietnam

IBAMA : Instituto brasileiro do meio ambiente e dos recursos naturais renováveis

KWS : Kenya Wildlife Service

LAGA : Last Great Ape Organization

PROFEPA : Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente

SAPS : South African Police Service

SPCA : Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

SSB : Sashastra Seema Bal

SVW : Save Vietnam Wildlife

SWT : Sheldrick Wildlife Trust

USFWS : United States Fish and Wildlife Service

WCCB : Wildlife Crime Control Bureau

CONTENTS

3	NOTE AND ADVICE TO READERS
5	ON THE FRONT LINES
9	PANGOLINS
17	PANGOLINS, ELEPHANTS, RHINOS AND HIPPOS
17	ELEPHANTS
36	MAMMOTHS
37	ELEPHANTS, FELINES, RHINOS, SPERM WHALES
40	RHINOCEROSSES
48	FELINES
64	WOLVES, ASIATIC WILD DOGS, FOXES, COYOTES AND HYAENAS
70	BEARS
78	SAIGAS, GAZELLES, ANTELOPES, URIALS, MARKHORS, WILD GOATS...
84	GIRAFFES AND OKAPIS
85	ZEBRAS AND DONKEYS
87	HIPPOPOTAMUSES
89	BUFFALOES, BANTENGS AND GAURS
91	DEER, ROE DEER, DEER AND ELK
95	GUANACOS AND VICUÑAS
97	PRIMATES
115	PACAS, CAPYBARAS, ARMADILLOS AND PECCARIES
116	BATS
117	OTHER MAMMALS
123	BIRDS
164	VARIOUS REPTILE SPECIES
167	TORTOISES AND FRESHWATER TURTLES
173	SNAKES
179	IGUANAS, GECKOS, MONITOR LIZARDS, CHAMELEONS, SKINKS ...
182	ALLIGATORS, CROCODILES AND CAIMANS
187	AMPHIBIANS
188	INSECTS AND ARACHNIDS
191	MULTI-SPECIES
210	VARIOUS MARINE SPECIES
214	CORALS
216	GIANT CLAMS, QUEEN CONCHES, GOOSENECK BARNACLES, DATE MUSSELS, HORNED HELMETS...
219	ABALONES
224	SEA CUCUMBERS AND SEA URCHINS
231	SEAHORSES AND PIPEFISHES
232	MARINE OR FRESHWATER FISH
252	MARINE TURTLES
254	MARINE MAMMALS
257	MAP SOURCES
259	INDEX

RHINOCEROSES



Indian rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*). Photo Opicak

The white rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* and black rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* ranging in Africa are listed in Appendix I, except for the white rhinoceros populations of Eswatini and South Africa which are listed in Appendix II for trade of live animals and hunting trophies.

The 3 Asian rhinoceros species are in Appendix I: the Indian rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis*, the Sumatran rhinoceros *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*, and the Javan rhinoceros *Rhinoceros sondaicus*.

On the Trail n°40

Estimation of the economic value of a rhinoceros

Continent	Country	US\$	Ref. (year)
Africa	Zimbabwe	120,000	4 (2022)
	Namibia	22,780	28 (2023)

EASTERN AFRICA

KENYA

April 21, 2023
Ruma National Park, Homa Bay County, Kenya



Attempt to rescue a juvenile black rhino. She had been trapped by a leg and chained to a tree for several days. Very quickly, she was diagnosed with a rupture of her hip joint and ligaments of the left hind leg. Following emergency treatment under anaesthetic and a thorough examination of the irreparable injuries, she was put down. The horns were cut off and placed in a safe place.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, April 2023.¹

May 20, 2023
Ruma National Park, Homa Bay County, Kenya



A rhino had been dead for at least 2 weeks when he was found, meaning a post-mortem examination was no longer feasible. A steel trap attached to a tree was visible around the victim's cervical region.

SWT/KWS Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit, May 2023.²

MOZAMBIQUE

Beginning of April 2023
Mozambique

In prison for 30 years for trafficking rhino horns (see "On the Trail" n°37 p.39, ref.2), Valoi fell into a trap. A guard offered him a cell phone in exchange for a bit of change so that he could communicate with his family. Instead of contacting his mom and dad, he reactivated his network of poachers and planned a new poaching campaign in South Africa from his cell, unaware that he was being strung along. The telephone was tapped and all Valoi's conversations were analyzed, enabling the Sernic to arrest all his accomplices, whose identities he had refused to give at the time of his arrest. The courts charged Valoi with rhino poaching for a second time, with the aggravating circumstance that it was carried out in conspiracy.

Integrity Magazine, April 10, 2023; Club of Mozambique, April 17, 2023.³

ZIMBABWE

March 26 and 29 and April 2023
Bubye Valley Conservancy and Beitbridge, Matabeleland South Province, Zimbabwe



Prince Mudenda (24), a former ZimParks (Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority) ranger, was sentenced to 9 years in prison for killing and amputating a black rhinoceros in conspiracy on July 14, 2022. The horns were allegedly sold in Harare. The economic value of the victim is estimated at 120,000 US\$.

Several other ZimParks rangers and lookouts are involved in arms and ammunition trafficking, as well as clandestine mining activities. The monthly salary of a ZimParks ranger is said to be 200 US\$. Their 3,500 families live below the poverty line. Due to insufficient pay for day or night work, which exposes them to multiple risks, many professionals succumb to bribes to improve their family standard of living.

The Chronicle (Zimbabwe), May 11, 2023; She Corresponds Africa, June 27, 2023.⁴

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

March 2, 2023
Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province South Africa



The Zitha brothers, ages 30 and 34, are in trouble far from their Mozambique home for attempts to poach one or more rhinos in conspiracy in the Kingfisher section of the Kruger. They have been sentenced by the Skukuza specialised court:

- Trespassing in a national park: 2 years.
- Contravention of Immigration Act: one year.
- Possession of a prohibited firearm with no serial numbers: 6 years.
- Possession of unlicensed ammunition: 2 years.
- Conspiracy to commit a crime: 4 years.
- Possession of a dangerous weapon (an axe): one year.

Some sentences run concurrently. Effective sentences are 11 years.

Lowvelder, March 3, 2023; SAPS, March 3, 2023.⁵

Saturday March 4, 2023

Lalibela Game Reserve, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

A routine assessment of the reserve's fences led to a break-in and the painful, rare discovery of the corpses of a mother and her 2 cubs, all 3 having had their nasal and frontal horns hacked off with axes and saws.

In 2,300 days, the reserve's superintendent had never witnessed such a massacre and such relentlessness. The province is afflicted by the horn's evil. Let's not forget the death of Bonnie and Clyde (see "On the Trail" n°39 p.28, ref.8).

The Lalibela Game Reserve (105 km²) offers tourist packages for families with children, with safaris to observe the "Big Five" (elephants, rhinos, lions, leopards and buffalo) and accommodation.

The Herald (South Africa), March 6, 2023; News24, March 7, 2023.⁶

March 9, 2023

Piet Retief, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

They were under the hood! Authorities spotted and followed a Gauteng-registered Nissan Qashqai on the R534 road. Just before entering Piet Retief (population 57,500 according to the last census in 2011), police pulled the vehicle over. SAPS seized 2 rhino horns and 27-year-old Ntsako Prince Letswele was arrested.

SAPS, March 10, 2023.⁷



March 13, 2023

Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa



From Mozambique, 32-year-old Benedicto Tovela was sentenced to 22 years in prison for poaching 2 rhinos in the Stolzneck section of the Kruger in July 2015. He and at least one accomplice were in possession of 4 fresh horns, an axe, ammunition and a firearm, which ballistics tests proved were responsible for the 2 rhinos' deaths. His accomplice plead not guilty and will be tried later by the wildlife court.

The National Prosecuting Authority of South Africa, March 13, 2023.⁸

March 2023

Polokwane, Limpopo Province, South Africa



During his trial, Bethuel Mdubane, 36,

pleaded not guilty and consequently expressed no remorse. A former security guard for a private company, he was in charge of rhino protection at the Lapalala Wilderness Nature Reserve. Yet he was sentenced to 24 years in prison for poaching 2 rhinos with the help of Primar Salazar Maluleque, and for then killing his accomplice



on the spot. According to the investigation file, he wanted to profit alone from the resale of the 2 nasal horns, estimated at the time of the crimes in March 2020 at one million rand (65,000 US\$). They were never found. During his arrest, police seized a large-calibre rifle, ammunition, a silencer, an axe and a dagger (see "On the Trail" n°28 p.4, ref.3). Independent Online, March 17, 2023.⁹

March 17, 2023

Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa



Thembi Juliegirl Mangane, 37, was sentenced to 16 years in prison. She acted as accomplice to Matsinye Joao Sithole and Vasco Tibane, convicted in June 2021 (see "On the Trail" n°25 p.77, ref.12 and n°33 p.66, ref.25) for killing a rhino in the Crocodile Bridge section of the Kruger and taking his 2 horns. Juliegirl, a South African, drove the getaway car for the 2 Mozambican poachers.

SAPS, March 19, 2023.¹⁰

**March 26 and April 4, 2023
White River, Mpumalanga Province,
South Africa**



- Clyde Mnisi, 37, head of the Bushbuckridge clan, was killed by 5 guys who emerged from a black BMW in balaclavas and armed with high-caliber rifles. Mnisi was stranded in the evening on the road to Kruger International Airport. His car had a flat tire and he was in the passenger seat. His driver suffered leg injuries.

- Charlene Felicity Mathews, 30, Clyde Mnisi's wife, was murdered in her home between 1 and 2 a.m. by assailants who fled the scene and left no claim. Beside her body, 2 men were seriously wounded. They were taken to hospital.

For the record, Mister Big, whose real name was Petros Sidney Mabuza, had been riddled with 17 bullets on June 17, 2021 as he left a shopping mall. He was at the wheel of his Ford Ranger (see "On the Trail" n°33 p.65, ref.20). The Mpumalanga gang is shrinking fast. The trial of these thieves and rhinoceros horn sellers should open before the summer (year 2023), barring further postponement. Big Joe, whose real name is Joseph Nyalunga, and 3 accomplices, including a former SAPS agent, will remain on the stand, barring any further setbacks. Lieutenant-Colonel Leroy Bruwer previously led the investigation into the gang before he was killed in a road ambush on March 17, 2020 (see "On the Trail" n°28 p.4, ref.4 and n°30 p.45, ref.18).

Lowvelder, March 27, 2023; News24, March 27 and April 4, 2023.¹¹

Gang Mabuza-Nyalunga-Mnisi, see "On the Trail" n°6 p.62-63 (ref.16), n°7 p.62 (ref.5), n°9 p.66 (ref.44), n°12 p.69 (ref.19), n°15 p.82 (ref.41), n°21 p.77 (ref.30), n°22 p.79 and p.81 and n°23 p.104 (ref.26) and this issue p. 45 réf.25.

**March 30, 2023
Between Tzaneen and Hoedspruit, Limpopo
Province, South Africa**

Hoedspruit ranch lookouts reported a vehicle bound for Gravelotte, which was then stopped by Hawks on the R521 road. Under the hood was a .308-calibre rifle with the numbers obliterated, and 14 rounds of ammunition. The 2 occupants are suspected of wanting to poach rhinos. SAPS, March 31, 2023.¹²

**April and May 2023
Balule Nature Reserve, Limpopo Province, South
Africa**

In 2019, a preventive dehorning campaign was instituted at the Balule Reserve, which neighbours the Kruger Park. Only one rhino has been poached since, and the reserve has gone 1,089 days without losing a rhino – a new record for Balule.

In addition to the 11,000 US\$ per year it costs to protect a single black or white rhino by training a canine brigade and arming and training rangers, Balule is a firm believer that dehorning practices carry a deterrent effect. Ian Nowak, head of the reserve's rangers, even views dehorning as a means to reduce natural mortality. "There are always territorial disputes," he says, "but before they often ended in hernias or other deep, fatal wounds, and now the losers retire unharmed to the reserve in search of territory to invest in."

Eyewitness News, May 16, 2023.¹³

**April 4 and 5, 2023
Sibuya Game Reserve, Eastern Cape Province,
South Africa**

- 2 pregnant females were poached and had their horns amputated.

- The following day, the one-year-old daughter of one of the slaughtered females was found shot in the reserve. She was rushed to an orphanage. The reserve's management reluctantly decided to proceed with preventatively dehorning its rhinos. Sibuya Game Reserve, April 6, 11 and 12, 2023; The Herald (South Africa), April 7, 2023.¹⁴

**April 4, 2023
Kempton Park, Gauteng Province,
South Africa**



Shuihau Chen was sentenced to pay 500,000 rand (27,700 US\$) or spend 5 years in prison. He was arrested in 2019 for trafficking horns. He is part of the same gang as Ping Wu, who was sentenced to 5 years in prison for money laundering (see "On the Trail" n°35 p.40, ref.19).



SAPS, April 5, 2023; Oxpeckers, April 6, 2023.¹⁵

April 10, 2023

Makhanda, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

At 2 a.m., 3 men climbed over the fence of a private ranch. The anti-poaching unit let 2 of them slip away and stopped one. It was an old acquaintance. Abraham Moyane, a Zimbabwean national aged around 30, is one of the escapees on October 18, 2022. He had been arrested in 2018 as part of Operation Full Moon for the poaching of 13 rhinos (see "On the Trail" n°22 p. 80 and n°37 p.42, ref.17). Abraham Moyane was sentenced on June 14, 2023 (see page 45, ref. 24). SAPS, April 11 and 12, 2023.¹⁶

April 25, 2023

Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa



The 5 rhino stalkers and killers who, according to a sensationalized police recount, were overpowered by a single ranger in the Kruger in November 2019 (see "On the Trail" n°27 p.88, ref.14) were released on bail after all the fuss. Three never responded to their summonses, and the 2 men, ages 37 and 39, who chose to take the stand in their own trials were sentenced to 34 and 39 years in prison, respectively. Independent Online, April 26, 2023; SAPS, April 26, 2023.¹⁷

End of April to the beginning of May, 2023

Klaserie Private Nature Reserve, Limpopo Province, South Africa

With 2 airplanes, a helicopter, drones, all-terrain vehicles, veterinarians and nurses, an army-like task force traverses the 60,000-hectare reserve to locate, approach, anaesthetise and dehorn rhinos. Colin Rowles, general-in-chief of this "mammoth dehorning plan", sends "A sincere thanks to the pilots and capture teams who made the operation the success that it was, and this, without any veterinary or other complications."

Dehorning in the Klaserie Reserve, see "On the Trail" n°34 p.55, ref.26. The Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary has published striking photos of rhinos being groped, painted, bandaged, truncated and, as a bonus, given vaccines and vitamins after undergoing anaesthesia from helicopters and armoured 4x4s.

Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary, April 30, 2023; Letaba Herald, May 5, 2023.¹⁸

Beginning of May 2023

Kariega Game Reserve, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

The Helping Rhinos charity continues to promote dehorning by touting the benefits of its annual intervention in the private Kariega Reserve.

The Kariega Reserve covers an area of 115 km², and both the Kariega River and Bushmans River run through it. Guests can take part in photo safaris to witness the "Big 5" (elephants, rhinos, lions, leopards and buffalo). On its website, the reserve's management praises the absence of malaria risk, the "warm" atmosphere, and an experience that's both traditional and luxurious, altogether an excellent value for money.

Helping Rhinos, May 9, 2023.¹⁹

May 2, 2023

Mtubatuba, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa



Dumisani Gwala is a mainstay in "On the Trail". Nine articles have been devoted to him: "On the Trail" n°12 p.71 (ref.39), n°14 p.63 (ref.21) and 66 (ref.41), n°18 p.72 (ref.31), n°19 p.86 (ref.20), n°20 p.81 (ref.15), n°21 p.75 (ref.17), n°31 p.45 (ref.15) and n°32 p.62 (ref.18), involving violence against police, colluding with magistrates, buying horns from undercover police officers, repeatedly changing lawyers, intimidating journalists and garnering 30 trial postponements.

This Tuesday, May 2, he reappeared in court and deployed a new defense system. He claimed that police mistook his identity during an arrest in 2014, and intended to arrest his brother Senzo "Shibilika" Gwala instead. Zwelonke Ngwenya, the nefarious lawyer who defended him in 2014 and obtained his release on 10,000-rand (600 US\$) bail and regained his client custody of 5 previously seized luxury cars, is once again Gwala's counsel. Gwala exercised his constitutional right to remain silent following his revelations about the alleged miscarriage of justice. Zululand Observer, May 2 and July 25, 2023.²⁰

May 3, 2023

George, Western Cape Province, South Africa

After police stopped a civilian car just outside George upon witnessing one of its passengers throw a package out the window, a car chase ensued. The civilian vehicle continued on towards the Eastern Cape before being brought to a halt. The driver fled the scene. The package was found and inside was the nasal horn of a rhinoceros whose body had just been found in the Botlierskop private hunting reserve.

Independent Online, May 7, 2023.²¹

REPEATED OFFENCE

May 6, 2023

Kabokweni, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Odis Maluleke, 47, was arrested in a gambling den 27 km from Kruger. Originally from Mozambique, he has 3 known weapon offences.



- July 2015. Maluleke attempted to enter the Kruger through the large Skukuza

gate entrance with 3 accomplices from South Africa wielding ammunition, a large-caliber firearm, an axe, and the intent to attack rhinos and seize their horns. The 4 men were arrested, and Maluleke was released on bail of 20,000 rand (1,630 US\$). He disappeared into the wild, never again responding to law summonses.

- May 2017. Maluleke, now a member of the Mercedes gang, was involved in a rhino poaching incident in a private reserve near the Botswana border. He was wounded during a shootout with guards, taken to the nearest hospital and again released on bail by a local court.

- February 2019. After poaching at least one rhino in the Kruger alongside 3 men, including a park employee, Maluleke was arrested again as a helicopter landed in the middle of the gang's escape route. Despite vehement opposition on behalf of the examiners, Maluleke was granted bail by a 3rd court and escaped again.

TimesLIVE (South Africa), May 8, 2023; SAPS, May 9, 2023.²²

May 21, 2023

Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary, Barberton Nature Reserve, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

A young orphan on the brink of death arrives at the sanctuary. After his mother was killed by poachers, he was chased and wounded by hyenas.

Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary, May 24, 2023.²³

May 21 and June 14, 2023

Mthatha and Makhanda, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa



- Francis Chitiyo and Nhambo Muyambo, the last 2 horn traffickers who escaped from Grahamstown prison in October 2022, are back behind bars. They were newly part of a gang of telephone battery thieves. A car carrying 5 people, including a man wanted for rhino poaching, was intercepted near Tarkastad on road 61 with all the tools needed to carry out a burglary inside. It was during the search of their hideout that Muyambo and Chitiyo were arrested again. See "On the Trail" n°22 p. 80 and n°37 p.42 (ref.17).

- Sentencing of Francis Chitiyo to 20 years' imprisonment, Nyamo Moyambo or Nhamo Muyambo to 19 years' imprisonment, Abraham Moyambo or Abraham Moyane to 18 years' imprisonment, Trymore Chauke to 17 years' imprisonment, Simba Masinge to 17 years' imprisonment and Mischek Chauke to 16 years' imprisonment. During Operation Full Moon, they were arrested in July 2018 on suspicion of poaching 13 rhinos in 2 years (see "On the Trail" n°22 p.80). They escaped from prison on October 18, 2022, with the exception of Mischek Chauke (see "On the Trail" n°37 p.42 (ref.17)). They were one by one recaptured by the police between October 21, 2022 and May 21, 2023. All 6 are Zimbabwean nationals. At the time of their arrest, they were aged between 25 and 30. See also page 44 ref.16.

Talk of the Town, May 22, 2023; Grocott's Mail, June 15, 2023; SAPS, June 15, 2023.²⁴

REPEATED OFFENCE

May 27 and December 7, 2023

Kampersrus and Lenyenye, Limpopo Province, South Africa

- Big Joe Nyalunga arrested again (see p. 43 ref. 11). After a chase due to suspicion of involvement in rhino poaching in Lydenburg, his vehicle was stopped. Nyalunga was immediately arrested by the Hoedspruit Police and the Limpopo Stock Theft Unit. A sum of cash was seized from inside the vehicle. Three knives, a silencer, and 6 rounds of high-caliber ammunition were seized from a garbage bag that an accomplice had thrown onto the side of the road before fleeing into the bush. The police press release does not mention Nyalunga's identity. It refers to a 59-year-old suspect considered to be the kingpin of a rhino poaching syndicate in Mpumalanga and Limpopo Provinces. The Lowvelder media clearly revealed his identity.

- Big Joe Nyalunga has been released on bail for 10,000 rand (540 US\$) pending trial in 2024.

Big Joe Nyalunga, see "On the Trail" n°6 p.62 (ref.16), n°7 p.62 (ref.5), n°9 p.66 (ref.44), n°12 p.69 (ref.19), n°22 p.81 and n°23 p.103 (ref.26).

SAPS, May 28, 2023; Lowvelder, May 29 and December 16, 2023.²⁵

BOTSWANA

Beginning of April 2023

Khama Rhino Sanctuary, Central District, Botswana

Four rhinos were shot dead in the Botswana sanctuary where white and black rhinos are placed under military protection. Authorities had nothing to say except "Investigations on the matter are ongoing to identify the cause of death." According to other sources, the death toll has risen to 7 in just a few days. WAR (Wildlife At Risk) estimates the death toll as high as 9 and asserts that since Covid-19, assailants from Zambia and Namibia have crossed rivers on inflatable mattresses and other makeshift boats, entered empty parks, and are tracking rhinos disoriented and moved from a sanctuary to another and horns.

Namibia Daily News, April 13, 2023; Save the Beasts, April 13, 2023; Wildlife At Risk, April 22, 2023.²⁶

NAMIBIA

Beginning of March 2023

Okahandja, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

Employees discover the carcasses of 2 white rhinos in a private reserve. The horns were missing. The police estimate that they were killed between Friday 3 and Monday 6 March and that their total economic value is 840,000 dollars (45,560 US\$). Namibia News Digest, March 9, 2023.²⁷

March 6, 2023

Waterberg, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

The 4 poachers broke into the lodge on Sunday or Monday, killed a male white rhino on Monday evening, took his horns and disappeared, leaving behind footprints that the police and owners of neighbouring reserves tried to follow. They were never found. The economic value of the rhino is estimated at 420,000 dollars (22,780 US\$). Namibia News Digest, March 8, 2023.²⁸

March 16, 2023

Dordabis, Khomas Region, Namibia

Arrest at around 9 a.m. of 2 men aged 27 and 47. They are accused of killing a female rhinoceros and her calf in a private reserve. They were in possession of 2 horns, a rifle and several cartridges, 3 of which were empty. Informanté, March 17, 2023.²⁹

April 3 and 5, 2023

Etosha National Park, Oshikoto Region, Namibia

Following the discovery of 2 rhino carcasses, 4 men were apprehended by the park's anti-poaching unit. The men had horns and rifles in their possession. The Namibian, April 11, 2023.³⁰

April 6, 2023

Between Otavi and Tsumeb, and Etosha National Park, Oshikoto and Otjozondjupa Regions, Namibia

Sakaria Johannes and Tomas Domingos were arrested at a roadblock carrying 2 rhinoceros horns. Investigators, suspecting poaching in Etosha National Park a hundred kilometers away, traveled there and discovered a fresh carcass. The Namibian, April 13, 2023.³¹

April 7, 2023

Between Outjo and Otavi, and Outjo District, Kunene and Otjozondjupa Regions, Namibia

Two suspects are intercepted on the road between Outjo and Otavi. They were carrying a pair of rhino horns. The investigation led to the arrest of 4 accomplices employed by an anti-poaching unit in a private reserve. One woman, Magdalena Mavandje Mukuve, is part of the conspiracy. Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism Namibia, April 13, 2023; The Namibian, April 13, 2023.³²

April 17, 2023

Opuwo, Kunene Region, Namibia

Tjimbari Tjitauro, Museveni Uakazapi and Ngatjijande Rutjindo were in possession of 4 fake rhino horns and arrested. Namibian Sun, May 2, 2023.³³

April 2023

Otjituuo, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

The condition of the black rhinoceros' corpse with his horns amputated suggests he was poached in the private reserve several weeks back. The victim was shot twice in the head. Namibia News Digest, May 5, 2023.³⁴

May 7 and 24, 2023

Between Dordabis and Windhoek, Khomas Region, and Etosha National Park, Oshikoto Region, Namibia

Between Dordabis and Windhoek, officials arrested 3 Namibians and a Zambian coming from Katima Mulilo with knives, large-caliber ammunition, a pistol, and firearms with suppressors and no numbers in their car.

Since the start of 2023, 15 rhinos have reportedly been poached in the country, despite directives from the Ministry of the Environment to dehorn 2,000 rhinos from an estimated herd of 3,000 as a preventative measure. Pohamba Shifeta, the Minister of the Environment, explains: "The idea is to dehorn and store them in the bank until we have the opportunity, in cooperation with the international community, to find a buyer. This will add value to our Rhinos and their products. Currently, these products only have value in the hands of criminals. Even private owners of white Rhinos cannot sell their horns, while poachers sell them for millions. .../..."

SOUTHERN ASIA

INDIA

March 23, 2023

Ambagan, Nagaon District, State of Assam, India

Khaliluddin, Jakir Hussain and Akbar Ali are arrested in possession of a rhinoceros horn. To date, no poaching has been recorded in Kaziranga or in the State since the beginning of the year. Northeast Now, March 24, 2023.³⁹



March 26 and 31 and April 1, 2023

Kaziranga National Park and Jakhlabandha, Nagaon District, State of Assam, India

- A dehorned rhino carcass was discovered after floating 6-7 days in a pond during rainy season in the western sector of the park, marking the first discovery of 2023. A reward of 500,000 rupees (6,042 US\$) is promised to anyone who can help apprehend the culprits.

- Harun Islam, Joban Ali and Rekot Ali, between 25-45 years old, were arrested on the night of Friday March 31st into Saturday April 1st. They are suspected to be involved in the poaching. The Print, March 27, 2023; The Times of India, March 28, 2023; Deccan Herald, March 31, 2023; Pratidin Time, April 1, 2023; Time8, April 1, 2023.⁴⁰

April 3, 2023

Gogamukh, Dhemaji District, State of Assam, India

Seizure of what is suspected to be a rhinoceros horn (950 grams, 20.3 cm long) from Doley, Mili, and Pegu.

Pratidin Time, April 3, 2023.⁴¹

April 27, 2023

Lhomithi, Dimapur District, State of Nagaland, India

Raidang Engti was arrested in the Dimapur district nearly 13 years after poaching a rhino and amputating his horn on July 3, 2012, in the Karbi Anglong district, near Kaziranga in Assam. Dimapur is located 35 km from the Karbi Anglong district. The years 2012, 2013 and 2014 were the worst for rhinos in Assam, with 25 to 27 poaching acts per year. In 2018 and 2021, poachers reportedly sold horns to Engti.

Hindustan Times, April 27, 2023.⁴²

We are currently seeking a legal means of selling them." For security reasons, black rhino population figures have not been disclosed, as their horns are most sought after by Vietnamese and Chinese brokers.

Namibian Sun, May 24, 2023; Informanté, May 25, 2023.³⁵

May 15, 2023

Grootfontein, Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

The carcass of a pregnant female black rhino shot inside a private reserve is discovered.

Xinhua, May 22, 2023.³⁶

AMERICA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FAMILY AFFAIRS

March 22, 2023

Waterloo, State of New York, United States of America

A search by the Narcotics Unit at 66 Stark Street resulted in the indictment of Brian E. MacGill, Kristie L. Pontius and Mark P. Pontius for possessing and intending to distribute cocaine, and for possessing a rhinoceros horn.

Seneca County Sheriff's Office, March 23, 2023.³⁷

SOUTHEASTERN ASIA

VIET NAM

REPEATED OFFENCE

May 12, 2023

Hanoi Municipality, Viet Nam

Sentencing of Nguyen Van Tuyen to 42 months in prison and a fine equal to 2,130 US\$, Nguyen Van Ngoc to 36 months in prison, and Nguyen Van Chinh to 30 months in prison for transporting and attempting to sell 2 kg of rhinoceros horns on September 14, 2022 in Hanoi. Van Tuyen had already received a 30-month suspended prison sentence in 2019 for illegally trafficking 2 king cobras (*Ophiophagus hannah*, Appendix II).

Cơ quan Trung ương Đảng Cộng sản Việt Nam, May 13, 2023.³⁸