

ON_{the} TRAIL

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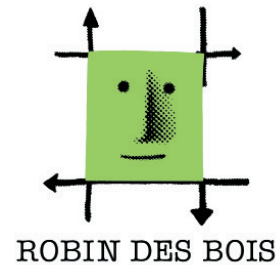
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PANGOLINS, ELEPHANTS, RHINOS AND FELINES

AFRICA

MALAWI

October 31, 2023 and March 15, 2024
Lilongwe, Central Region, and Blantyre, Southern Region, Malawi



Yun Hua Lin, leader of the Lin-Zhang gang, remains in prison. He had lodged a further appeal with the High Court seeking a reduction in the 14-year prison sentence imposed on him in September 2021. The High Court did not re-examine the substance of the case. It confined itself to the form. Lin's appeal was filed out of time. During the transfer to the hearing, Lin was severely guarded and he seems to have no other way of escaping his full sentence than to resort to legal action. The Chinese embassy in Malawi does not seem to be feeling sorry for him. See "On the Trail" n°25 p.104 (ref.7), n°26 p.101 (ref.7), n°29 p.20 (ref.1), n°34 p.50 (ref.2) and n°38 p.15 (ref.2).¹

NIGERIA

September 28, 2023
Lagos, Lagos State, Nigeria

Maiva had been on the "wanted list" since January 2021. He was arrested by Lagos Customs. He was involved in the attempted export of a 20-foot sea container bound for Haiphong, Viet Nam, with 10 tonnes of pangolin scales, raw ivory, lion bones (*Panthera leo*, Appendix II) and rhinoceros horns (see "On the Trail" n°32 p.19, ref.1). An accomplice, Felix Olame, has already been sentenced to 6 months in prison (see "On the Trail" n° 41 p.16, ref.2). A small price to pay for contraband estimated to be worth over 2 million US\$.²

October 24, 2023

Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

Customs seize 365.4 kg of pangolin scales and elephant tusks and 6 bales of used shoes, gifts from "rich" countries to the supposed barefoot ragged-clothed of West Africa. The Comptroller of Customs in the region is delighted that an armed flotilla has been made available to his department to control boats in the estuaries, mouths and waterways of Rivers State.³

ZIMBABWE

October 9, 2023

Harare, Harare Province, Zimbabwe

Seizure of a Temminck's ground pangolin (3.66 kg) and a leopard skin (*Panthera pardus*, Appendix I) valued at 5,000 and 20,000 US\$ respectively. The sellers, a 39-year-old man and a man and woman aged 70 and 73, had concluded an agreement with buyers under cover of the CID Minerals Flora and Fauna Unit on the basis of 4,000 US\$ for the pangolin and 4,000 US\$ for the feline skin.⁴

ASIA

CHINA

September 2023

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, Guangdong Province, China



Seizure in the luggage of a passenger from overseas of 65 carved pieces of ivory (878 grams), 11 giant pangolin scales, and 3,131 grams of white-bellied pangolin dried meat in 7 bottles of mineral water sold in Nigeria.⁵

RHINOCEROSSES



Southern white rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum ssp. simum*). Photo Gerold Morrison

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*.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

REPEATED OFFENCE

September 28, 2023

Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa



Three men had entered the Kruger on February 25, 2019 with the intention and means of poaching rhinos (see "On the Trail" n°24 p.66, ref.3). First-time offenders Albazino Mandlanzi and Vasco Nazovela were sentenced to 6 years' imprisonment or a fine of 30,000 rand (1,970 US\$), and Lucky Mabunda, who had already been convicted of similar offences, was sentenced to 18 years' imprisonment. Ballistics analysis subsequently proved that Mabunda had killed a rhino in the Malelane section of the Kruger in February 2019. Mabunda was extracted from prison to face the new charges. He pleaded guilty and the Skukuza court sentenced him to a further 10 years in prison.¹

October 5, 2023

Skukuza, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa



Three dead rhinos. Six fresh horns in the hands of Sibuyi (40) on July 12, 2020. 30 years in prison.²

October 9, 2023

Volkrost, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

Public appeal for information on the occupants (at least 3) of a Toyota Corolla who fled the scene. After an urban rodeo on Mandela Drive at around 10 p.m., a rhino horn concealed in a bucket wrapped with adhesive tape, an assault with 4 live rounds and a silencer hidden in a bonnet and a tower battery were discovered under the hood by police.³

EASTERN ASIA

TAIWAN

September 25, 2023
Taichung Special Municipality, Taiwan



Between 2021 and April 2023, a traditional pharmacy sold Indian rhinoceros horn powder on 6 occasions to a man suffering from terminal cancer. He spent the equivalent of 148,000 US\$, and charlatanism obviously didn't save him. To convince customers, the pharmacy owner crushed the horn or alleged horn before their very eyes. Other pharmacies are said to engage in the same deception.⁸

SOUTHERN ASIA

NEPAL

Beginning of September 2023
Kageshwori-Manohara, Kathmandu District, Bagmati Province, Nepal

Police seizure of a rhinoceros horn from 4 men between the ages of 31 and 50.⁹

September 1st, 2023
Chitwan National Park, Bagmati Province, Nepal

Discovery of a rhinoceros skeleton. The hooves and horn were reportedly found in the area of the Khagendra Malli guard post.

In 2022, 22 rhinos were poached in Chitwan National Park.¹⁰

Saturday, September 23, 2023
Hetauda, Makwanpur District, Bagmati Province, Nepal

Arrest of Bishnu Karki and Kale Baniya on suspicion of rhino poaching and horn smuggling. They are both natives of Padampur in the Chitwan district.¹¹

October 30, 2023
Waterberg District, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Sunday morning, all was well. The rhinos were located and quiet. On Monday morning, Pomo Estate rangers spotted suspicious footprints. The fence showed no signs of tampering, but in the rhino park, there were 2 dead rhinos whose 4 horns had been cut off.⁴



End of October 2023
KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

Seven months old. 298 kg. His mother was poached a few days before he was found wandering around the estate, then taken to the orphanage where, after a few days, he agreed to drink from a bottle. This is the start of a long recovery.⁵



NAMIBIA

October 4, 2023
Windhoek, Khomas Region, Namibia

Thirteen years in prison for Zee Shekumba, Erwin Tjiteere, Domingo Justice Moma and David Stephanus for poaching 4 rhinos, 2 males and 2 pregnant females, during the 2016 holiday season near Gobis (see "On the Trail" n°15 p.84, ref.53). Zee Shekumba was employed on the ranch where the tragedy occurred. Gerson Kandjii, ex-doctor of the Brave Warriors national soccer team, was one of those charged. He died in custody in 2021. The economic value of the horns at the time of the crime was estimated at 5 million US\$ (357,400 US\$).⁶



October 13, 2023
Outjo, Kunene Region, Namibia

A 28-year-old man was arrested with a rhinoceros horn worth an estimated 300,000 dollars (15,670 US\$).⁷