

greys. The CITES Secretariat will notify parties of the quota for this species for the calendar 1998 only when it is satisfied with the report. The CITES Secretariat will undertake to evaluate these measures and the general problems of CITES implementation and enforcement in Cameroon.

3) All management authorities are requested to inform the Secretariat about any attempt to use Cameroonian permits for importing specimens of *Psittacus erithacus*.

4) As several shipments from Cameroon have taken place with export permits of other countries, it is strongly recommended that, before accepting any shipment of African greys from another country—in particular from one that shares a border with Cameroon—all management authorities should verify that the birds do indeed originate in the country that issued the export permit.

(CITES Notification No. 993, 29 October 1997)

## **WILDLIFE SEIZED IN CAIRO**

On 5 September 1997, airport customs officials in Cairo, Egypt, seized a large quantity of bats, rare reptiles, and aquarium fish. The animals were taken from an unnamed Russian traveler who was trying to smuggle them to Ukraine. Authorities seized 20 bats, 1,000 fish, 80 lizards, and many other species of reptiles,

including snakes. The traveler informed wildlife officials that he bought the animals in a Cairo animal market and planned to sell them when he returned home. After the shipment was checked by an airport veterinarian, all of the animals were sent to the Giza Zoo in Cairo and the traveler was allowed to leave the country.

(World Conservation Monitoring Centre, 5 September 1997)



## **AFRICAN RANGE STATES DECLARE IVORY STOCKS**

In response to CITES Notification No. 984 of 4 July 1997, the African elephant range states listed below declared their government ivory stocks in keeping with the decision made at the Tenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES in Harare, Zimbabwe. Two states

declared their stocks after the deadline of 18 September 1997, and only nine out of the 37 range states did not confirm receipt of CITES Notification 984 or the follow-up reminder dated 4 September 1997. Some of these states are not contactable by telephone or telefax due to internal civil strife. The 14 parties are: Botswana, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Niger, Sudan, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

The CITES Secretariat and TRAFFIC are preparing to undertake the auditing of the declared ivory stocks and expect to begin this project in the near future.

(CITES Notification No. 989, 13 October 1997)

## **RHINO POACHER RECEIVES MAX SENTENCE**

A landmark decision by the Empangeni Regional Court has given new impetus to the fight against poaching of endangered species in South Africa. Nsingisi Thomas Zulu received a 10-year jail sentence without the option of a fine for unlawfully killing four white rhinos in the Umfolozi section of the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park on 23 December 1994. The Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park is located in the northeast of ZwaZuluNatal, one of the smallest provinces in South Africa, stretching from the southern borders of Swaziland

and Mozambique to the Eastern Cape border. The park is famous for being the last refuge for wild white rhino (*Ceratotherium simum*) in the world.

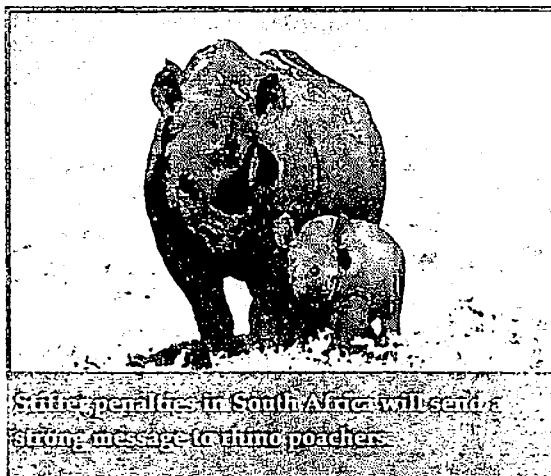
Zulu's sentence, which is the maximum penalty for an offense of this nature, ends an investigation that began on Christmas Eve 1994 by Natal Parks Board rangers, antipoaching team unit members, and local South African police. In March 1996, the Endangered Species Protection Unit (ESPU), headquartered in Pretoria, South Africa, took over the investigation. After following up many leads, ESPU members identified and arrested one suspect in September 1996. A second suspect was shot and died during this period.

Zulu, who had been arrested on suspicion of vehicle theft on Christmas Day 1994, was believed to be the brains behind the rhino poaching operation. He was already serving a four-year sentence for vehicle theft unrelated to the Christmas Day arrest when he was charged with the unlawful killing of four white rhinos and the December 1994 vehicle theft. Zulu received 10 years imprisonment for shooting the rhinos and a further four years on the vehicle theft charge. He will be behind bars for 12 years as two years of each sentence are to run concurrently.

(Pretoria News, 17 October 1997)

## **SOUTH AFRICAN REPTILE RING SHUT DOWN**

On 20 October 1997, South African police smashed a wildlife smuggling syndicate that operated out of Pretoria and had links to Europe and the United States. Seven suspects were arrested in an overnight raid that netted 150 reptiles, 185 scorpions, and scores of birds. Further arrests are anticipated. Code-named Operation Cobra, the raids across South Africa follow a



*Severe penalties in South Africa will send a strong message to rhino poachers.*

Photo © Rick Weyerhaeuser

two-year undercover probe by South Africa's Endangered Species Protection Unit (ESPU). ESPU investigators reported that buyers supplied by the syndicate were in The Netherlands, Germany, the Czech Republic, and the United States, while the suppliers of the illegal wildlife were in South Africa, Madagascar, Mozambique, and Kenya, as well as Indonesia and Colombia. According to Chief Gert van der Merwe, an Operation Cobra investigator,

reptiles are second in demand globally on the illegal pet trade market—surpassed only by the tropical fish trade. Reptiles are most often smuggled through the mail and in travelers' baggage at airports, and police estimate that between 60 and 80 percent of smuggled reptiles die in transit. Chief van der Merwe reported that highly poisonous snakes were also being brought into the country to serve the European pet trade, and added that "Some of these are so rare, we don't have the antidote in this country."

Penalties in South Africa for illegal trafficking in endangered or threatened wildlife range from \$2,000 to \$20,000 in fines or up to 10 years in prison. Historically, fines imposed by the courts have been low; however, police hope a new endangered species draft law currently under review will act as more of a deterrent.

(Reuters wire service, 21 October 1997)

## **TORTOISE SMUGGLER ARRESTED IN JAPAN**

On 5 July 1997, Japanese police at Kansai International Airport arrested a Singaporean Air Force officer for allegedly smuggling 425 star tortoises (*Geochelone elegans*) into Japan in his suitcase. Ong Teck-yeo told investigators that he was asked to bring the tortoises to Japan by Yoshiyuki Kawaguchi,