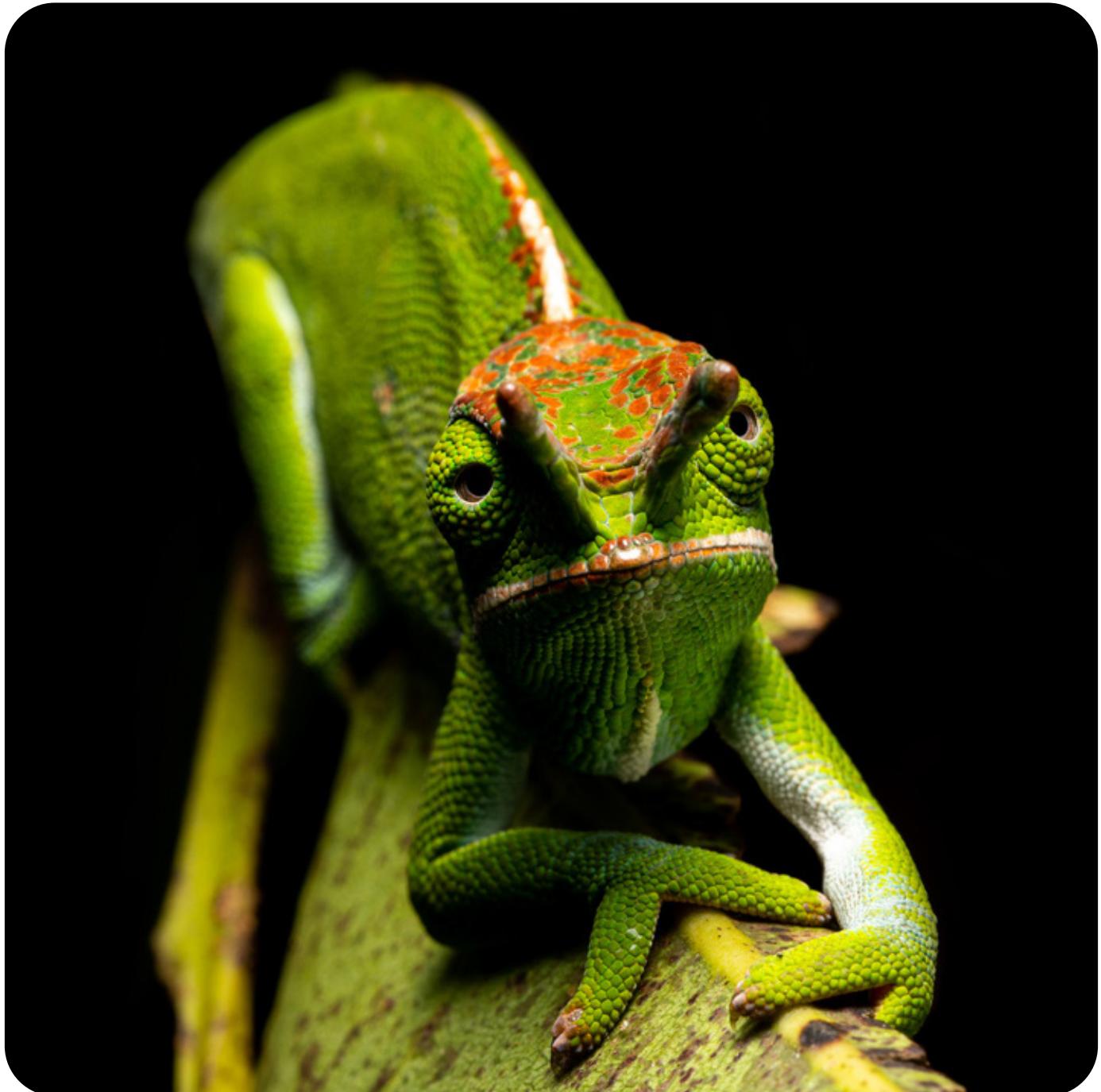


ROBIN DES BOIS

# ON the TRAIL

The defaunation bulletin  
n°45. Events from the 1<sup>st</sup> April to the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024



Quarterly information and analysis report on endangered  
animals poaching and smuggling  
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# ON the TRAIL

**Publication Director :** Charlotte Nithart.

**Editors-in-Chief :** Jacky Bonnemains and Charlotte Nithart.

**Writing :** Jacky Bonnemains, Gaëlle Guilissen,

Elodie Crépeau-Pons, Jean-Pierre Edin and Elisabeth Lavarde.

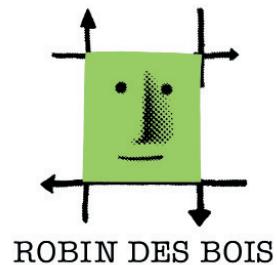
**Research :** Gaëlle Guilissen, Elodie Crépeau-Pons, Elisabeth Lavarde, Jean-Pierre Edin, Juan Andrés García Bodniza, Lise Contant and Christine Bossard.

**Cartography :** Gaëlle Guilissen and Elodie Crépeau-Pons.

**English translation :** Cora Funke and Elisabeth Lavarde.

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## Robin des Bois

Non Governmental Organization for the protection of the environment and populations

Founded in 1985

14 rue de l'Atlas 75019 Paris, France

tel : 33 (1) 48.04.09.36

[www.robindesbois.org](http://www.robindesbois.org)

[contact@robindesbois.org](mailto:contact@robindesbois.org)

# 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 / felines
- Elephants + rhinos / felines
- 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.

- 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.

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 (184 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

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# RHINOCEROSES



Javan rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*). Photo Royle Safaris

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

#### Beginning of April 2024

#### Bloemfontein, Free State Province, South Africa

Andries Melusi Mkhabela (40), Solomon Mahlaule (48), Johannes Maluleke (60) and Daniel Bqaq (31) were armed to the teeth and equipped for rhino poaching when they were arrested on September 24, 2023. They pleaded guilty and each received a 5-year prison sentence. Maluleke, as the owner of the firearms, was sentenced to a further 5 years in prison.<sup>1</sup>



#### April 8, 2024

#### Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

After more than 300 rhinos poached in the park in 2023, launch of a preventive dehorning campaign for all rhinos.<sup>2</sup>

#### April 14, 2024

#### Hoopdal, Limpopo Province, South Africa

On this Sunday, the poaching was promising. They had a rifle, a silencer, large-calibre ammunition and 2 knives with them, but their car had been followed by the police and in the chase, they lost control and fled. The rifle was stowed under the bonnet.<sup>3</sup>

#### April 21, 2024

#### Magudu, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

A mother and daughter were savagely poached and their horns cut off.<sup>4</sup>



#### May 5, 2024

#### Mahikeng, North West Province, South Africa

South African justice is baffling. Edwin Thapelo Rangaka, working for the Parks and Tourism Administration of the North West Province, was arrested on suspicion of participating in or even organising the horn heist of the century, worth 15 million US\$ at the time. He was released on bail of 270 US\$ (see "On the Trail" n°5 p.71 and n°41 p.36, ref.9).<sup>5</sup>

**May 27, 2024**

**Dwaalboom, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

It's a full moon. Poachers emerge from their dens. Gunshots around 2 a.m. General alert. The body of a white rhinoceros is discovered. The horns are still there. Two suspects are arrested in the bushes, a South African and a Mozambican. They are carrying 2 knives, a rifle (stolen in 2023 from Thabazimbi), and ammunition.<sup>6</sup>



**End of May 2024**

**South Africa**

Despite the full moon and the silhouette of a white rhinoceros shining beneath its light, the poacher or poachers missed. The bullet did not fracture the bones in the left foreleg, and the female managed to escape. Intervention by Saving The Survivors. Favourable prognosis after anaesthesia, wound cleaning, and antibiotics.<sup>7</sup>



**NAMIBIA**

**April 14, 2024**

**Etosha National Park, Oshikoto Region, Namibia**

Arrest of 2 men (aged 31 and 44) for poaching 2 rhinos (an adult female and her male calf). Four horns were seized. Four other suspects are still at large.<sup>8</sup>

**May 5 and 6, 2024**

**Gobabis Constituency, Omaheke Region, Namibia**

- On the Kinnear family ranch, a white rhinoceros about 12 years old lies on his side this Sunday morning. The 2 horns had been cut off with professional tools and techniques.

- Despite precautions confirming that they were not amateurs (they had wrapped their shoes with sponges to eliminate the prints), the 5 suspected poachers Micheal Shomeya Koshondatile, Barnabas Shitaleni Muzanime, Petrus Petrus Nghifindaka, Victory Henghono, and Imanuel Stafanus Nangwasha were arrested the next day. Their brand-new vehicle, a Toyota Fortuner, had been spotted by a hidden camera and tracked to Gobabis and the Havana slum in Windhoek.

Poaching and trafficking in Gobabis, see "On the Trail" n°15 p.84 (ref.53), n°16 p.69 (ref.28), n°29 p.48 (ref.19), n°31 p.47 (ref.28), n°32 p.64 (ref.36), n°33 p.68 (ref.40), n°37 p.43 (ref.19) and p.44 (ref.27) and n°38 p.11 (ref.32). Note that Jackson Babi, the self-proclaimed prophet, was released from prison in February 2024 after paying a fine of 230,000 \$ (12,200 US\$).<sup>9</sup>

**SOUTHEASTERN ASIA**

**INDONESIA**

**May 14, 2024**

**Ujung Kulon National Park, Pandeglang Regency, Banten Province, Java Island, Indonesia**

A.D., age 29, was arrested on suspicion of rhinoceros poaching and 7 firearms were seized in his shed, thanks to the support of the canine brigade. There are believed to be between 50 and 76 Javan rhinoceros in Ujung Kulon National Park, their only habitat (1,200 km<sup>2</sup>).<sup>10</sup>

**End of May 2024**

**Banten Province, Java Island, Indonesia**

Arrest of 13 alleged poachers. In their confession, the consistency of which has yet to be identified, they claim to have killed 26 rhinos in Ujung Kulon National Park. The provincial police and the park administration are now trying to locate and map the places where the suspects buried the carcasses, with the aim of recovering at least the bones and obtaining evidence.<sup>11</sup>

**SOUTHERN ASIA**

**INDIA**

**April 4, 2024**

**Tamulpur District, State of Assam, India**

A suspected rhinoceros horn was seized at Matia Soren's home.<sup>12</sup>

**May 2, 2024**

**Bharali Chapor, Sonitpur District, State of Assam, India**

The rhinoceros horn was transferred to a laboratory to verify its authenticity. Hanif Ali arrested. Two of his accomplices fled with the buyers caught haggling. Rhino poaching in Assam since the beginning of the year, see "On the Trail" n°44 p.33 (ref.23).<sup>13</sup>



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**NEPAL**

**April 9, 2024**

**Bharatpur, Chitwan District, Bagmati Province, Nepal**

Six arrests. They were dealing in alleged rhinoceros horn (60 grammes).<sup>14</sup>