

# INTERPOL

## Working Group on Wildlife Crime

### OPEN SOURCE # 52

26<sup>th</sup> January 2009

Dear friends and colleagues,

Welcome to Open Source #52. Today's news includes 25 wildlife law enforcement media reports.

Condolences to colleagues in D.R. Congo – another ranger has been killed. D.R. Congo suffers dozens of ranger fatalities annually. And sometimes the number exceeds 100.

There are more reports of rhinoceros poaching. A couple of months ago, India's Kaziranga National Park reported a historical peak in poaching. Now South Africa is reporting a similar crisis. It is clear the rhinoceros horn market is becoming increasingly active. I hope the discussions at the CITES workshop on this issue this past November provided useful guidelines and initiatives to address the issue.

Wildlife law enforcement agencies in Southeast Asia have been very active, and very successful, in recent weeks. Major seizures are reported in Vietnam and Malaysia. Indian authorities rescued 3,000 live turtles.

KWS rangers killed a notorious poacher in a shoot-out in the Tsavos, Indian rangers killed another poacher in a tiger reserve, and a mortally wounded Botswanan buffalo killed his poacher in his dying moments.

Let us start thinking of ways we can address the financial incentives that underlie nearly all of this tragic killing and trafficking.

Friendly greetings to all!

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Chairman

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## Synopses

**1. Gorilla ranger killed in Congo** -- Ranger Safari Kakule was killed by rebel forces during an attack on the evening of January 8 in Congo's Virguna National Park. Safari, along with six other rangers, were attacked while on patrol. They were "far outnumbered" by armed members of the Mai Mai militia according to Wildlife Direct.

**2. Armed Poacher Gunned Down in Kenya's Tsavo East National Park** -- Kenya Wildlife Service rangers on a routine foot patrol exchanged fire with two poachers, who were waiting to ambush animals at a water point about 60 km. south of Ithumba . A semi-automatic G3 rifle, 17 rounds of ammunition, a bicycle, food, a bundle of snares, bows and seven poisoned arrows were recovered in the incident.

**3. Forest pellets fell poacher - 2 smugglers arrested** -- A poacher, who was injured by pellets fired from a forest muzzleloader while trying to flee, died on way to hospital on 22<sup>nd</sup> January in India. Two others of the same gang who were also hurt by the splinters surrendered the following morning. The incident occurred in Buxa Tiger Reserve (East)

**4. Dramatic increase in rhino-poaching** -- There has been a dramatic increase in rhinoceros-poaching in South Africa, with at least 76 animals recorded killed last year, according to the environment ministry.

**5. 2,300 lizards escape Malaysia cooking pot threat** -- The clouded monitor lizards, which are about 1.5 meters long, were found in cages at a storage facility holding live and dead animals that were destined for cooking pots in Malaysia and abroad, said an official with the state wildlife department.

**6. Rhino poachers in court** - Seven men accused of killing six rhinos around Limpopo, in south Africa. Are scheduled to appear in the Thabazimbi Magistrate's Court.

**7. Poaching syndicate: probe into KZN links** – South African police arrest five Mozambicans, three Chines and two South Africans accused of comprising a rhinoceros poaching syndicate.

**8. Chinese found with rhino horns** – South African joint operation arrests three in possession of four rhinoceros horns with presumed intention of smuggling them to China.

**9. Three charged with illegal possession of ivory** – Three more Chinese caught in Nairobi by Kenya Wildlife Service sniffer dogs who detected the ivory in their luggage.

**10. Botswana: Dying Buffalo Takes Down Its Killer** – The 60-year old poacher from the Okavango district was gored by a buffalo he had shot. According to police, the incident occurred on New Year's Eve in the Moremi Game Reserve.

**11. Killed Duma Envoy Accused of Poaching** – Russian Duma envoy accused of poaching endangered argali wild sheep from helicopter which subsequently crashed.

**12. Wildlife poaching, trafficking on the rise** – Vietnam's Forestry Management reports about 1,300 violations, confiscated about 20,000 animals and more than 60 tons of exotic products every year since Viet Nam signed the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species in 1994.

**13. Two warehouses of wildlife bones discovered in Hanoi** -- Police officers discovered various kinds of bones in the two warehouses in this house. Police seized around two tonnes of animal bones, seven bear hands, six pieces of tiger skin, sixteen bear galls, six porcupine stomachs, as well as many teeth and the claws of wild animals and some books recording wildlife trading affairs.

**14. Exposing the dangers of illegal wildlife trade** -- Dubai: Baby cheetahs, African grey parrots and reptiles often suffer and die from diseases caught in transit to the UAE and are putting humans and other animals at risk of disease, said an exotic pet veterinarian. "We treat a lot of falcons primarily and slowly more and more exotic animals [are] being brought in for treatment," said Christopher Lloyd, head veterinarian at Nad Al Sheba Veterinarian Hospital.

**15. Thailand to issue identification cards for individual captive tigers** – The ID card will be accompanied with a photograph of the tiger's skin print, which is a unique characteristic of each tiger. "A tiger's skin print is like a human's fingerprints. In foreign countries, wildlife authorities use the skin print to prove a tiger's origin in an illegal wildlife trade case," said Saksit Simcharoen, director of the wildlife protection division in Nakhon Sawan province.

**16. RAT to save big cats** -- A crack force of rangers, ex-army jawans and forest volunteers, called the Rapid Action Team (RAT), is on the prowl for tiger poachers in Jim Corbett National Park. It is possibly India's first dedicated anti-poaching squad.

**17. Alleged poachers caught near Cape landmark** – South African authorities arrest eight persons accused of abalone poaching near Robben Island

**18. Five tons of live turtles seized near Allahabad** – Indian authorities make one of the largest seizures ever with about 3,000 live turtles recovered and three persons arrested.

**19. Dubai Customs Launches Campaign to Combat Smuggling of Rare and Endangered Animals** – Dubai Customs reports defeating attempts to smuggle lions, ivory, crocodiles, rare birds, deer, falcons and stuffed foxes.

**20. R3m+ in smuggled goods seized** – Joint operation with South Africa's Green Scorpions recovers two crates of dried abalone, 12 dried shark fins, counterfeit DVDs and "Five boxes of counterfeit Viagra were found at the same location."

**21. India allowed to take back seized red sandalwood** – Nepali authorities agree to return 243 tons of seized red sandalwood to India.

**22. Live lizards, skinned owls and sun-bear limbs seized** – Malaysian wildlife authorities seize 2,330 clouded monitor lizards, 319 owl carcasses and 47 limbs of endangered sun bears. Three persons arrested.

**23. Seychelles alarmed by increasing poaching of turtles** – Environment department says hawksbill turtles are being targeted with more than 20 incidents recently reported.

**24. FOILED: SMUGGLING OF SIX ECLECTUS PARROTS FROM NORTH MALUKU** – Indonesian authorities foil attempt to smuggle six eclectus parrots out of the country.

**25. Chile: Exotic animals intercepted at sea** – “a small boat with no lights that arrived at night to the port... they expected to find drugs, the sailors instead found 407 contraband animals of the amazonian rainforest in small cages among boxes of banana and bags of fishing nets.”

## Articles

### 1. Gorilla ranger killed in Congo

[mongabay.com](http://mongabay.com)

January 12, 2009

A wildlife ranger has paid the ultimate price in the effort to protect endangered mountain gorillas in Democratic Republic of Congo, reports Wildlife Direct, a group that promotes wildlife protection through blogs by rangers and conservationists.

Ranger Safari Kakule was killed by a rebel forces during an attack on the evening of January 8 in Congo's Virunga National Park. Safari, along with six other rangers, were attacked while on patrol. They were "far outnumbered" by armed members of the Mai Mai militia according to Wildlife Direct.

Safari's body was carried out of the forest by his colleagues and brought to Kyondo. He leaves behind a widow and three children.

"Safari was such a hardworking and dedicated ranger, with a great personality," said Gladys Kalema, a gorilla veterinarian who trained Safari last year in Bwindi, Uganda. "May God rest him in peace."

"Safari was an exceptional ranger, who had worked on the Gorilla Organization project at Mount Tshiaberimu for over three years," wrote Tuver, a colleague and friend of Safari, on the Tshiaberimu gorilla blog. "Recently Safari had taken part in gorilla health monitoring training organized by the Gorilla Organization through Conservation through Public Health (CTPH). He was expected to play a very important role in protecting the gorillas of Tshiaberimu."

"Safari was a brave, dedicated ranger who gave his life to the gorillas. His untimely death is a reminder to us all of the ultimate sacrifices that rangers make in the name of conservation. We can never thank him enough for what he has done for the gorillas. Rest in peace Safari."

More than 120 rangers have been killed in the line of duty in Congo over the past decade due to the ongoing war in the eastern part of the country. Rangers have had to flee parts of Virunga National Park several times over the past year due to incursions by armed militias and violence.

There are around 700 mountain gorillas left in the world -- 380 in Virunga and 320 in neighboring Uganda's Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park. Mountain gorillas are generally well-protected relative to the more common lowland gorillas in other parts of Africa.

Until the recent troubles, Virunga had been seen as one of the few bright spots in the eastern Congo. Rangers have been working to "habituate" gorillas in hopes of again attracting high-paying ecotourists to eastern Congo. In neighboring Rwanda and Uganda, visitors pay more than \$300 for a chance to spend a few minutes seeing gorillas in their natural habitat.

<http://news.mongabay.com/2009/0112-congo.html>

## **2. Armed Poacher Gunned Down in Kenya's Tsavo East National Park**

An armed poacher hiding at an animal watering point was yesterday shot dead while another is on the run after a shootout in Tsavo East National Park.

Kenya Wildlife Service rangers on a routine foot patrol exchanged fire with the poachers, who were waiting for animals seeking drinking water at the place between Umbi Airstrip and Shimo la Shetani, about 60 km from Ithumba in Kitui District.

A semi automatic G3 rifle, 17 rounds of ammunition, a bicycle, food, a bundle of snares, bows and seven poisoned arrows were recovered in the incident.

The security team has intensified a hunt for the poacher who escaped.

The suspects are believed to have been involved in other poaching incidents in expansive 11,747 km square Tsavo East National Park lying east of the Nairobi-Mombasa highway.

### **2.a Elephant Poacher Shot and Killed in Kenyan National Park**

NAIROBI - January 22 - An armed poacher suspected to be behind a spate of elephant killings was shot and killed by Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) rangers during a gun battle yesterday in Tsavo East National Park. A semi-automatic rifle, 17 rounds of ammunition and poisoned arrows were recovered from the scene. Ivory was the primary motivation here, according to officials.

Rangers had trailed the poacher and his accomplice for 17 hours on foot, according to area warden Josphat Erupe. "We noticed one poacher on top of a tree but he jumped down and vanished. We only became aware that there was a second man when he opened fire at our rangers from behind the tree but he was shot and killed in the ensuing battle."

According to unnamed sources in KWS, elephant poaching rose by 60 per cent from 2007 to 2008.

TELEGRAPH, 23 Jan 09

## **3. Forest pellets fell poacher - 2 smugglers arrested**

Alipurduar, Jan. 22: A poacher, who was injured by pellets fired from a forest muzzleloader while trying to flee, died on way to hospital last night. Two others of the same gang who were also hurt by the splinters surrendered this morning.

The gang of 10 smugglers had entered Compartment-II of New Land beat of Buxa Tiger Reserve (East), 65km from here, around 5pm yesterday.

The sound of a tree being hacked had prompted a team of five on-duty forest employees to investigate. They spotted the gang and challenged them. The timber thieves, who are also smugglers in animal parts, fled while hurling stones at the foresters.

The forest employees followed. The gang then turned around and first started shooting arrows and then firing in the air from an improvised firearm.

"We fired back and pellets from the muzzleloader hit Suroj Kharia and he fell to the ground. The others fled. The entire operation lasted for around 20 minutes," said a forest employee who was part of the team.

Suroj, a 24-year-old resident of Top Line of New Lands Tea Estate, was taken to the Kumargram block hospital from where he was referred to the Alipurduar hospital.

On the way, he died. Today, Bijoy Kharia and Gabriel Gullu, who were also injured from splinters, surrendered in Kumargram police station and were forwarded to the court of additional chief judicial magistrate of Alipurduar.

Suvankar Sengupta, the deputy field director of the reserve, said: "After spotting the gang in the Critical Tiger Habitat area of the forest, our staff challenged them. They fired from a muzzleloader after the smugglers started shooting arrows. Three persons were injured from the splinters. One of them died and the other two surrendered later. We have recovered one improvised gun, few rounds of cartridges, bicycle and timber from the spot."

"We have started investigating and a hunt is on for the other members of the gang, which is involved in timber smuggling as well as poaching," Sengupta added.

The officer said the gang also smuggled in animal parts. "They had arms like an improvised gun and even bows and arrows with them. Usually timber smugglers come with axe and choppers, not gun or arrows. In this case, we suspect the gang wanted to kill animals," he added.

[http://www.telegraphindia.com/1090123/jsp/siliguri/story\\_10427238.jsp](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1090123/jsp/siliguri/story_10427238.jsp)

#### **4. Dramatic increase in rhino-poaching**

Sapa-dpa Published: Jan 10, 2009

There has been a dramatic increase in rhinoceros-poaching in South Africa, with at least 76 animals recorded killed last year, according to the environment ministry.

The true figure was believed to be far higher, the Saturday Star

reported. It said 37 rhinoceros were shot in the Krueger National Park alone, while only ten were shot countrywide the previous year.

The well-organised poaching gangs were using automatic weapons and taking advantage of legal loopholes in order to trade the animal's horn, which is prized as a potency agent in Asian countries.

A Vietnamese diplomat was recently recalled from Pretoria after a television team secretly filmed him in smuggling operations.

<http://www.thetimes.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=915754>

## **5. 2,300 lizards escape Malaysia cooking pot threat**

By JULIA ZAPPEI – 7 hours ago

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — Malaysian wildlife authorities rescued 2,300 endangered lizards headed for restaurants that offer exotic meat, an official said Tuesday.

The clouded monitor lizards were found in cages at a storage facility holding live and dead animals that were destined for cooking pots in Malaysia and abroad, said an official with the state wildlife department.

The lizards, which are about 5 feet (1.5 meters) long, will be released into the wild soon, the official said on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to make public statements.

Officials also found 319 owl carcasses and 22 paws of the protected Malayan sun bear, he said. The meat, which was worth about 500,000 ringgit (\$140,000), was believed to be on its way to China, the official said.

Three men were arrested at the location and will likely be charged with confining wild animals, which carries a maximum prison term of three years.

Activists have warned that the illegal trade of endangered animals is flourishing in Malaysia because of demand from restaurants in Asian nations where exotic meat dishes are prized.

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5hqsdQWLfihte4OOGyPFoB8l526VgD95M22H03>

## **6. Rhino poachers in court**

13/01/2009 20:31 - (SA)

Thandy Ndlovu

Thabazimbi - Seven men accused of poaching rhinos around Limpopo will appear in the Thabazimbi Magistrate's Court on Wednesday.

Thabazimbi police spokesperson Inspector Puleng Thapela said poachers shot nine and killed six rhinos in the area in December.

Tip-offs led to seven suspects who are believed to be part of a poaching syndicate.

He said high-calibre firearms and ammunition were recovered during the arrests, including AK-47s.

"We are on the trail of the mastermind who comes from Soweto. He apparently drops off a group of men in a specific area and returns to collect the horns and pay them," said Thapela.

Police expect to make more arrests soon.

- African Eye

## **7. Poaching syndicate: probe into KZN links**

January 19, 2009 at 11:27AM

By Arthi Sanpath

Police bust a rhino poaching syndicate and are now hoping to link the men to a spate of poaching incidents in KwaZulu-Natal.

To date 11 people have been arrested and charged for the poaching of black and white rhino, police spokesman Senior Superintendent Vish Naidoo said.

Five Mozambicans, three Chinese men, two South Africans and one other person were arrested, he said.

The national department of environmental affairs revealed earlier this month that 76 rhinos were poached last year.

Sonja Meintjes, the deputy director of biodiversity compliance at the department of environmental affairs and tourism, said in reports that this figure was a far cry from the 10 rhino killed in 2007.

The arrests come after a joint operation by the South African Police Service, including the Mpumalanga, Limpopo and North West organised crime units, the Gauteng provincial task team and the South African National Parks.

Naidoo said on Sunday that although they had focused on the Mpumalanga, Limpopo and North West provinces, there were a number of rhino poaching incidents in KwaZulu-Natal.

"While we are conducting the investigation, we will be concentrating on incidents in KZN and Eastern Cape that could be linked to the eleven individuals," he said.

He said that there had been "sporadic slaughtering" of rhinos in national and provincial parks and private game reserves in the Mpumalanga, Limpopo and North West Provinces.

"Since 2006 several rhinos were shot and their horns were hacked out in some cases, brutally, while the animals were still alive," he said.

These suspects have been charged with illegal hunting of game within national parks, unlawful possession and dealing in Rhino horn and unlawful possession of firearms.

Naidoo added that the rhino horns were suspected to have been sold to the eastern market from between R18 000 and R25 000 a kilogram.

World Wildlife Fund/ Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife Black Rhino Range Expansion Project leader, Dr Jacques Flamand said the arrests were a positive step, as rhino poaching was a major problem.

He explained that there was a wide demand for rhino horn in the Far East.

"They use the rhino horn as an ingredient in their traditional medicine, mainly as a fever-reducing ingredient," he explained.

Flamand added that the demand for rhino horn was increasing as the population in the Far East increased and became more affluent, making the horn more affordable to people.

o This article was originally published on page 3 of Daily News on January 19, 2009

## **8. Chinese found with rhino horns**

14/01/2009 22:23 - (SA)

Johannesburg - Three men were arrested on Wednesday for possession of four rhino horns, Mpumalanga police said.

"The men, aged 33, 43 and 46, were being monitored by police for a while," said spokesperson Malcolm Mokomeni.

They were arrested at Bruma Lake in Gauteng, near Cyrildene during a joint operation by Mpumalanga police, the Gauteng provincial task team and the SA National Parks Unit.

The men are thought to be Chinese nationals.

"Besides the four horns, they were also found with R16 000 cash. We are not sure if they live in South Africa, or if they are from another country...they are being very stubborn and just won't talk to police when they are asked these kind of questions."

He said police believe the horns were to be smuggled into China for certain business deals.

"There is a lot of money to be made from rhino horns," he said.

More arrests were to be made. The men were being held and would appear in court soon.

The name of the court could not be disclosed in case investigations were jeopardised, Mokomeni said.

- SAPA

### **9. Three charged with illegal possession of ivory**

Written by: Claire Wanja, Posted: Fri, Jan 23, 2009

Three Chinese men were Friday charged with illegal possession of government trophies at Makadara law courts.

The suspects were seized with the illegal ivory at Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta Airport on Thursday.

Yu Zhong, Zhngle Chen and Liu Songlu, who were all travelling to different destinations in China, were also found with lion teeth, ivory bracelets and necklaces.

Kenya Wildlife Service sniffer dogs stationed at the international airport detected two processed ivory carvings weighing 2.5 kg and one necklace concealed in a bag at 10am.

The second suspect was seized by Customs officials at 2.30pm with two necklaces, four lion teeth and four bracelets while the third one was arrested at 10 pm with 380g of carved ivory.

Two of the suspects were travelling from Kenya while the third was from Uganda.

On Thursday, an armed poacher was killed in Tsavo East National Park during a shootout with KWS rangers but his accomplice escaped.

A statement from the wildlife service said the two were hiding at an animal watering point between Umbi airstrip and Shimo la Shetani, 60 km from the border with Kitui District.

A G3 rifle, 17 bullets, a bundle of snares, bows and poisoned arrows were recovered.

<http://www.kbc.co.ke/story.asp?ID=55127>

## **10. Botswana: Dying Buffalo Takes Down Its Killer**

Nomsa Ndlovu

13 January 2009

It is said that the kicks of a dying horse are dangerous.

This proved true to the Seronga poacher, who paid with his life for shooting a buffalo. The 60-year old poacher of Gudigwa village in the Okavango district was horned down by the buffalo he had gunned down before it breathed its last breath. The incident, according Senior Superintendent Robert Masebe of Maun Police station, occurred on New Year's eve at Moremi Game reserve.

The deceased's three counterparts survived the incident unhurt and are assisting Seronga police with investigation. The deceased was buried a day after the incident at his home village.

"When my men collected the body from the scene it was already in a rotting state", Masebe said adding that they rushed to the scene as soon as the poachers reported the incident to them.

Source: [allafrica.com](http://allafrica.com)

## **11. Killed Duma Envoy Accused of Poaching**

14 January 2009

Conservationists have asked prosecutors to investigate whether the Kremlin's envoy to the State Duma was participating in an illegal hunt of endangered animals when the helicopter he was riding in crashed last week in the Altai region, killing him and six others.

Photographic evidence suggests that the late Duma envoy, Alexander Kosopkin, may have been part of a hunting expedition targeting an endangered species of wild sheep from the air when the group's Mi-171 helicopter went down last Friday, the World Wide Fund for Nature, or WWF, said Wednesday.

The organization asked the Prosecutor General's Office on Tuesday to open a criminal investigation into the expedition's purported poaching of the argali, a rare breed of wild sheep listed in Russia's Red Book of endangered species, said Igor Chestin, director of WWF's Russian operations.

Greenpeace said it would join the WWF in pushing for an investigation.

Calls to the Prosecutor General's Office for comment went unanswered

Wednesday, while an Investigative Committee spokeswoman said it had not opened up a probe.

Under the Criminal Code, a state official using his position to hunt illegally can be punished by up to three years in prison and fined up to 300,000 rubles (\$9,500).

Photographs of the crash site taken by Altai journalists and published on the web site Altapress.ru show dead argali sheep on the ground near the wreckage of the helicopter.

"Cases of top officials engaging in illegal hunting in Russia happen quite often, but most of them can't be proved," Chestin said.

The Argali is a globally endangered species, of which there are just 200 specimens remaining on the territory of the Altai region and Mongolia, Chestin said.

Natural Resources and Environment Ministry spokeswoman Anna Medoyan said she was unaware of any allegations of illegal hunting of the endangered species.

The helicopter took off with eight passengers and three crew members from the Altai regional town of Biisk at 8:30 a.m. Friday and failed to contact dispatchers as planned at 2 p.m. when it was scheduled to land in the village of Kosh-Agach, 500 kilometers away, according to the Altai government.

The wreckage of the white-and-blue helicopter was located at 3:35 p.m. Sunday in snowy mountainous terrain. Four injured survivors were rushed to the hospital.

Killed in the crash along with Kosopkin was Sergei Livishin, a senior member of the presidential administration; Viktor Kaymin, a senior Altai environmental official; Gorno-Altai aircraft division head Vladimir Podoprigora; and Vasily Vyalkov, the frontman of the regional music band Armarka.

Survivors included Nikolai Kopranov, an adviser to the Duma's Economic Policy Committee, and Boris Belinsky, a Moscow entrepreneur.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/article/600/42/373555.htm>

## **12. Wildlife poaching, trafficking on the rise**

Trafficking of wildlife and exotic products has worsened and become a more complex problem in Viet Nam, a conference heard yesterday. The sobering assessment was made by the Forestry Management Department under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

According to the department, relevant authorities have dealt with about

1,300 violations, confiscated about 20,000 animals and more than 60 tons of exotic products every year since Viet Nam signed the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species in 1994.

<http://vietnamnews.vnagency.com.vn/showarticle.php?num=01DOM120109>

### **13. Two warehouses of wildlife bones discovered in Hanoi**

16:16' 12/01/2009 (GMT+7)

VietNamNet Bridge – Hanoi police have detected two warehouses full of the bones of wild animals in the centre of Hanoi, which has been there for several years.

The Hanoi Environment Police Department and the Dong Da District Police Department on Saturday suddenly searched a house on Quoc Tu Giam Street, Dong Da District, Hanoi. The house owner, Nguyen Thi Thanh Tam, did not respond timely though she equipped the house with modern cameras.

Police officers discovered various kinds of bones in the two warehouses in this house. Police seized around two tonnes of animal bones, seven bear hands, six pieces of tiger skin, sixteen bear galls, six porcupine stomachs, as well as many teeth and the claws of wild animals and some books recording wildlife trading affairs.

Tam declared that she has been trading wildlife products for more than ten years.

Some photos of the bone warehouses:

Available at link:

<http://english.vietnamnet.vn/social/2009/01/823491/>

### **14. Exposing the dangers of illegal wildlife trade**

By Emmanuelle Landais, Staff Reporter

Published: January 17, 2009, 23:27

Dubai: Baby cheetahs, African grey parrots and reptiles often suffer and die from diseases caught in transit to the UAE and are putting humans and other animals at risk of disease, said an exotic pet veterinarian.

"We treat a lot of falcons primarily and slowly more and more exotic animals [are] being brought in for treatment," said Christopher Lloyd, head veterinarian at Nad Al Sheba Veterinarian Hospital.

"There are a lot of problems with exotic birds and parrots. They can be unsuitable animals but are sold by pet shops and souqs without giving the buyer correct information," said Lloyd.

"Some animals are smuggled into the country or [brought in] by devious means but the major issue are the diseases and viruses they can carry. There is a [prevalence of] psittacosis...and in African Grey Parrots it is almost always fatal," he said. An avian form of HIV, psittacosis is carried by animals in souqs which usually catch it from older birds.

"In closed environments like a souq where there are hundreds of birds crowded together, birds can become very sick. Animals shed it from their skin. When birds pick and clean their feathers, younger birds inhale the virus and fall sick," said Lloyd.

"If looked after properly of course they can make good pets. Some requirements are quite specialised," he said.

### Ending illegal imports

Lloyd also takes care of animals in private collections and sometimes somebody will walk in with an unusual animal, such as a six-week old baby cheetah or a baby baboon.

"Animals from other parts of the world are available here but the worry is that they are not checked for tuberculosis or rabies. Some primates or bushbabies are not legally imported. Seeing the end of that would be brilliant," he said.

Lloyd's veterinary clinic has been open for five years. In the beginning he tried to forge links with pet shops to educate them on animal care. "I did some reports for pet shops but when I went back to check on things a while later, nothing had been applied," he said.

The baby cheetah brought to the clinic died soon after. "It was removed from its mother far too soon. It was only six to eight weeks," he said.

The International Foundation for Animal Welfare (IFAW) recently launched their Think Twice public awareness campaign aimed at educating tourists and consumers about the impact of wildlife souvenirs on the survival of endangered species.

The campaign aims to protect endangered wildlife species from the growing illegal commercial wildlife trade around the world. IFAW's approach to combating illegal wildlife trade in the Middle East and North Africa region is to work in cooperation with local governments and agencies.

"Think Twice Dubai" was launched in cooperation with Dubai Municipality and the Global Village.

<http://www.gulfnews.com/nation/Environment/10276090.html>  
*Tigers get own ID cards*

## **15. Thailand to issue identification cards for individual captive tigers**

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/local/9807/tigers-get-own-id-cards>

By: Apinya Wipatayotin

Published: 16/01/2009

Bangkok Post

Tiger identification cards will be issued for captive tigers at private farms and zoos nationwide to help authorities verify the protected animals' sources of origin.

The ID card will be accompanied with a photograph of the tiger's skin print, which is a unique characteristic of each tiger.

"A tiger's skin print is like a human's fingerprints. In foreign countries, wildlife authorities use the skin print to prove a tiger's origin in an illegal wildlife trade case," said Saksit Simcharoen, director of the wildlife protection division in Nakhon Sawan province.

Mr Saksit last year led a team of officials to make skin-print profiles of 30 tigers raised at Wat Pa Luangta Bua Yannasampanno forest monastery, better known as the Tiger Temple, in Kanchanaburi province to help monitor its tiger population.

A wildlife protection group has asked the authorities to check the tiger population at the temple for fear they might be sold to wildlife traders.

Temple officials claimed the first 10 tigers came from private owners but the number later increased to over 30, making the temple popular among tourists who wish to have a close encounter with the beasts.

Mr Saksit said Sri Racha Tiger Zoo, the largest private tiger farm in Chon Buri province, is the major target of the tiger ID scheme, as there are over 400 tigers kept at the zoo.

Under the law, owners of private zoos and animal farms are required to inform authorities about the birth and death of members of protected animal species, including tigers. A new-born tiger must also be planted with a microchip as an official record of registration.

However, many tigers are believed to remain unregistered.

## **16. RAT to save big cats** TAPAS CHAKRABORTY

Lucknow, Jan. 25: A RAT is out, to protect the big cats.

A crack force of rangers, ex-army jawans and forest volunteers, called the Rapid Action Team (RAT), is on the prowl for tiger poachers in Jim Corbett National Park. It is possibly India's first dedicated anti-poaching squad.

The RAT will have other jobs, too: stop animals from straying into the human settlements on the park's edges and keep a leash on the "jungle mafia" smuggling forest produce.

"The rapid action team has been set up to fight poachers and keep wild animals from drifting into human habitations," said Heera Singh Bisht,

who heads the 22-member squad that began its work early this month.

The timing has been carefully chosen: January is the time when the park sees a rush and it becomes tough to spot suspected poachers from the large number of visitors.

Former soldiers, primarily those who opted for voluntary retirement, have been brought in because of their marksmanship, which can be used to thwart poachers who are often laced with modern weapons and gadgets.

The RAT, under the forest department, is modelled on a force raised in a Zambian national park where poaching had reached alarming proportions five years back.

Poaching has also been on the rise in the 1318sqkm Corbett park, part of the centre's Project Tiger initiative, near Uttarakhand's Nainital.

The carcass of a tigress was found in March last year. Park deputy director Parag Dagate had suspected that poachers could poison it and removed the body parts.

In September 2006, a full-grown tiger was killed on the fringes of the park. Uttarakhand chief wildlife conservator S.K. Chandola had said one of the poachers, wounded after an attack by the animal, was arrested. The poachers, he had said, fired at the tiger from close range. In 2001, suspected ivory poachers killed six elephants.

Now, with RAT in action, hopes have risen that such incidents will be rare. "The team has been sensitised to animal behaviour," said Corbett park warden D.S. Rawat.

He expects the kind of success achieved in South Luangwa National Park, the Zambian reserve whose anti-poaching force became an independent law-enforcing agency last year. RAT, too, has the powers to start a case.

Squads like RAT could be raised in other reserves of the country, such as the Dudhwa National Park (Uttar Pradesh), Gir (Gujarat) and Kaziranga National Park (Assam).

[http://www.telegraphindia.com/1090126/jsp/nation/story\\_10441257.jsp](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1090126/jsp/nation/story_10441257.jsp)

### **17. Alleged poachers caught near Cape landmark**

Eight people were arrested early on Monday morning for allegedly poaching near Robben Island, Western Cape police said.

Inspector Bernadine Steyn said the people, aged between 22 and 51, were arrested following investigations into abalone poaching conducted from Sunday night to Monday morning.

The suspects were arrested after being found on a boat in the restricted sea area about 50m from the shore.

They allegedly tried to flee when approached by the authorities and attempted to overturn one of the police boats by driving into it.

Steyn said in a statement that the police boat was damaged and rubber bullets were fired in an attempt to stop the suspects.

"When the boat still did not stop, shots were fired at the engine, after which the boat came to a stop," she said.

Diving equipment was found on the boat.

The suspects were arrested for allegedly contravening the Marine Living Resources Act. - Sapa

### **18. Five tons of live turtles seized near Allahabad**

In one of the largest freshwater turtle hauls ever to be recorded, five tons of live turtles, numbering about 3,000 animals, were seized in Allahabad on Thursday, January 22nd by the Special Task Force (STF) of the Uttar Pradesh Police. The seizure took place at night and three people, who were transporting the turtles in a truck apparently to Kolkata, were arrested and sent to Naini Jail.

Three species listed in Schedule 1 of The Wild Life (Protection) Act were identified; (1) the Indian Flapshell Turtle (*Lissemys punctata punctata*), (2) the Ganges or Indian Softshell Turtle (*Trionyx gangeticus*, *Milsonia gangeticus*), and (3) the Spotted Black Terrapin or Spotted Pond Turtle (*Geoclemys hamiltoni*). The heaving mass of turtles were stuffed into about 60 jute sacks, with about 50 to 55 turtles in each. The turtles were released under a court order on the banks of the Yamuna River on Friday, in the presence of STF officers, UP state Forest Department officials, and two representatives from WPSI who travelled to Allahabad to assist the authorities in this case.

Earlier in the week, 250 tortoises were seized in Kanpur, also in the state of UP, and one woman was arrested. On Sunday, 25 January, four men were arrested by police in Mainpuri district in UP in possession of 150 tortoises.

There is only limited information on the trade in live turtles and tortoises, but going by this huge haul in Allahabad and the other recent seizures, the trade appears to be controlled by an organised nexus of cross-border wildlife criminals, and to be on the rise.

### **19. Dubai Customs Launches Campaign to Combat Smuggling of Rare and Endangered Animals**

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates, January 14 /PRNewswire/ -- Mr. Abdul Rahman Al Saleh, the senior Executive Director of Corporate Affairs at Dubai Customs has revealed that he foiled a number of attempts last year to smuggle banned rare animals into the country.

This was announced at the press conference held on Wednesday 14th January 2009 at Dubai Customs main building. Mr. Yousif Al Sahlawi,

Executive Director of Customs Policies and Legislations and Mr. Mohammed Al Marri, Executive Director of Customs Cargo Operations took part, in the presence of a number of media representatives and Arab and International news agencies' correspondents.

Mr. Al Saleh announced the discovery of attempts to bring into Dubai or re-export rare animal products including endangered lions, smuggled ivory, stuffed crocodiles, rare birds, deers, falcons and stuffed foxes. Many of these articles are internationally banned under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and international laws prohibiting trade in endangered species of animals.

"Dubai Customs being committed to international laws and agreements and the Common Customs Law of the GCC States lurks in all attempts to bring into the country prohibited products including endangered animals manufactured products," he affirmed.

Mr. Al Saleh pointed out that the UAE joined CITES, which controls trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora to protect human natural legacy, in 1990.

For his part, Mr. Yousif Al Sahlawi stated that "The UAE complying with CITES and recognizing the importance of maintaining worldwide animal and plant wealth in general and UAE in particular, has issued the Federal Law No. (11) Of 2002 to regulate and control international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora. A guide identifying the most important species of animals and plants being popular in international trade and wild life, particularly those existing in UAE, was issued as well."

Mr. Mohammed Al Marri confirmed that, "Dubai Customs demonstrates special interest in combating smuggling of prohibited and restricted goods including endangered animals. To this end, a number of workshops for customs inspectors have been conducted. Dubai Customs uses the latest technologies and equipment in the world to prohibit entry of these products into Dubai and seeks to develop the appropriate plans forbidding smuggling of prohibited and restricted goods and those requiring a procedure as the relevant restrictions and controls have been circulated to all respective customs centers."

The World Customs Organization (WCO) has designated January 15, 2009 as a day for intensifying efforts and tightening measures for combating the smuggling of endangered species of animals and plants. Dubai Customs plans to participate in this campaign by instigating effective initiatives which it will present on Customs International Day on 26th January 2009, which will be held under the theme of "Customs and Environment - Protection of Natural Legacy".

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Photo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20090114/334645>

[http://sev.prnewswire.com/environmental-services/20090114/3816927en\\_iCrossing14012009-1.html](http://sev.prnewswire.com/environmental-services/20090114/3816927en_iCrossing14012009-1.html)

## **20. R3m+ in smuggled goods seized**

15/01/2009 20:23 - (SA)

Pretoria - Over R3m worth of illicit and smuggled goods was seized in Gauteng on Thursday, said the SA Revenue Service (Sars).

In a joint operation, Sars customs officers and investigators from the department of environmental affairs - the Green Scorpions - uncovered various illicit goods and smuggling networks.

In a search of cargo goods at OR Tambo International Airport, sniffer dogs uncovered two crates of dried abalone destined for Hong Kong.

The abalone - 560kg with an estimated street value of R1.8m - was concealed in black bags.

In China City in Bruma, east of Johannesburg, investigations led to the discovery of 12 dried shark fins in a butchery shop.

In Crown Mines, south of Johannesburg, investigators raided premises and found seven DVD burners and counterfeit DVDs with an estimated street value of more than R2m.

Five boxes of counterfeit Viagra were found at the same location.

"It is suspected that the tablets were smuggled into South Africa from China," said Sars.

The efficacy of the counterfeit Viagra had not been determined as yet and samples would be sent to the department of health for analysis.

The operation was in response to a directive from the World Customs Organisation for member states to intensify their focus on smuggling of endangered species.

"The abalone found at the airport indicates a scant regard for the moratorium on abalone fishing which government imposed some months ago," Sars said.

No arrests had been made and investigations would continue.

- SAPA

[http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set\\_id=1&click\\_id=13&art\\_id=vn20090116112013107C462072](http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=13&art_id=vn20090116112013107C462072)

## **21. India allowed to take back seized red sandalwood**

KIRAN CHAPAGAIN

KATHMANDU, Jan 19: The government has decided to allow India to take back all seized red sandalwood weighing thousands of kilograms and worth millions of rupees.

A high-ranking government official told myrepublica.com that the cabinet meeting last Thursday took a decision to this effect in response to a request made by the southern neighbor on December 1, 2008.

Nepali authorities, with the help of the Young Communist League (YCL), had seized altogether 243,529.5 kilograms of red sandalwood from different parts of the country last year when Matrika Yadav was forest minister, in a bid to check smuggling of the endangered fragrant wood to China and uphold a commitment to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

CITES, an international agreement between governments and aims at ensuring that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival, lists red sandalwood as a plant whose trade is illegal.

According to the cabinet decision, India has been allowed to take back only 54,112 kg of the red sandalwood immediately as the rest of the red sandalwood – 189,091 kg – is subjudice at different courts in Nepal.

“The rest of the red sandalwood will be returned to India only after the cases are finalized by the courts,” said Dr Annapurna Das, spokesperson at the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation which presented the proposal to allow India to take back the red sandalwood.

In a letter dated December 1, 2008, India had requested the Nepal government to “return the seized red sandalwood at the earliest”, reminding Nepal of its obligation under CITES. CITES, of which Nepal is a signatory, requires a signatory country to return all illegal wild animals and plants to the country of origin. In this case, all the seized red sandalwood originated from India, according to government officials.

The government officials said that they had been allocating scarce police personnel and resources to preserve the seized red sandalwood currently stored in different parts of the country.

Red sandalwood, also known as Rakta Chandana, is used in Ayurvedic medicine as an antiseptic, wound-healing agent, and as an anti-acne

treatment, according to officials. It is smuggled from India to China via Nepal. Officials believe that the endangered wood has high demand in China where it is used to make incense, medicines, facial creams, fragrant furniture and other materials, among other things.

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[http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news\\_details&news\\_id=1255](http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=1255)

Thursday January 22, 2009

## **22. Live lizards, skinned owls and sun-bear limbs seized**

By SIMON KHOO

KUANTAN: A gang using a car workshop as a transit centre to smuggle exotic animals was crippled with the arrest of three suspects and the seizure of items worth about RM500,000.

Among the items seized were 2,330 clouded monitor lizards, 319 carcasses of skinned owls and 47 limbs of the endangered sun bear.

State Wildlife and National Parks Department director Khairiah Mohd Shariff said that, acting on a tip-off, her officers raided the workshop in Jalan Bukit Ubi at 9.30pm Sunday recently.

She said the limbs of the bears were found in two refrigerators at the back of the workshop while the skinned owls were kept in polystyrene boxes and the monitor lizards locked in 233 cages.

“The suspects aged between 30 and 54 years, including the premise owner, were caught red-handed while unloading the items.

“We believe the animals had just arrived at the transit centre and awaiting export to other countries for consumption and preparation of traditional food,” she said at a press conference.

Khairiah said the success was the first for the department this year.

She said that investigations showed the suspects had been operating under the guise of the workshop for several months.

“We are investigating whether the suspects are linked to an international syndicate. They face charges under the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 for having possession of endangered animals,” she said, adding that the offence carried a jail term of up to five years, a fine of up to RM5,000, or both, if convicted.

Khairiah said the items would be sent to the department’s conservation centre in Jenderak, Jerantut, for tests and the lizards would later be released in the wild.

<http://thestar.com.my/metro/story.asp?file=/2009/1/22/southeast/3003819&sec=southneast>

### **23. Seychelles alarmed by increasing poaching of turtles**

APA-Victoria (Seychelles) Seychelles Department of Environment is alarmed by increasing hawksbill turtles poaching especially on the main island of Mahé.

Gilberte Gendron, marine ranger in the department said on Friday in Victoria that more than 20 cases of poaching have already.

Turtles are a protected species in Seychelles and the hawksbill turtle is on the critically endangered list of the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

She said the hawksbills come to lay eggs on the beaches during the months of September to March and it is mostly at that time that they are killed.

She added that people can die from eating the meat because of the food the turtle itself eats in the sea. Gendron said the poachers also spear fish the turtles while they are still at sea and kill them on the beaches during the night.

She said her department has taken many steps to stop turtle poachers but it will need the participation of the public to put an end to the poaching.

She said a green line has been put at the disposal of the public to report any incident of turtle poaching.

SR/pm/APA  
2009-01-23

[http://www.apanews.net/apa.php?page=show\\_article\\_eng&id\\_article=86587](http://www.apanews.net/apa.php?page=show_article_eng&id_article=86587)

### **24. FOILED: SMUGGLING OF SIX ECLECTUS PARROTS FROM NORTH MALUKU**

The Natural Resources Conservation Center (KSDA) of North Maluku forestry department succeeded in foiling the trafficking attempt of six Eclectus parrots (*Eclectus roratus*) in Goto sea port, Tidore, North Maluku (01/22/2009). The protected birds were poached from the wild in Halmahera Island and about to be smuggled outside the island.

The confiscated birds are now going through medical examination. If their condition is good, ProFauna will assist the birds release back to the wild.

In May 2008, ProFauna, the Indonesian wildlife protection NGO in collaboration with RSPCA, launched a report entitled *Pirated Parrots* revealing the fact that about 10,000

parrots were caught from the wild in North Maluku each year to supply the domestic and international (Philippines) illegal wildlife trade.

Following the report launch, ProFauna, working together with a local organization in North Maluku, *Yayasan KAMU*, has actively campaigned against parrot illegal trade. ProFauna's campaign has brought positive response by the government as the law has been fully enforced. As a result, in the last three months ProFauna recorded that KSDA of North Maluku had conducted two confiscation operations on parrots illegally traded in Maluku.

ProFauna Campaign Officer, Tri Prayudhi, stated "ProFauna believes that the effective way to tackle parrot illegal trade is by law enforcement, not to mention by public campaign and education to raise people's awareness".

**Editor's Notes:**

- ProFauna Indonesia ([www.profauna.org](http://www.profauna.org)) is an active and dynamic wildlife protection organization, established in 1994. ProFauna works through education, campaign, investigation, and rescue, to save wildlife in Indonesia.
- For further information please contact: Butet A. Sitohang, *International Communication Officer*, mobile: +628133899741 or email: [international@profauna.org](mailto:international@profauna.org)

## **25. Chile: Exotic animals intercepted at sea**

14 January

The authorities of the city of Arica, in the extreme north of Arica, intercepted an exotic animal shipment that arrived at night on the coast.

The illicit shipment was found by personnel of the Navy's Vigilance System, which was alerted to the presence of a small boat with no lights that arrived at night to the port.

And although they expected to find drugs, the sailors instead found 407 contraband animals of the amazonian rainforest in small cages among boxes of banana and bags of fishing nets. One of those arrested, a Chilean, Moisés Segundo Díaz Verdugo, said that he received the shipment shipment at the Peruvian beach Los Palos, 10 kilometers to the north of the marine limit, and that their plans were to sell shipment in the illegal market of Arica.

All the specimens are protected by CITES. These include 18 parrots of six different species, one of which is an endangered macaw. Also included were three toucans, 11 baby caimans, 308 yellow-eared river turtles, 40 South American tortoises and 27 squirrels, which were lethargic and in bad condition.

.....  
Chile: Descubren contrabando por mar de animales exóticos

SANTIAGO, Chile, ene 14 --

Las autoridades de la ciudad de Arica, en el extremo norte de Arica, desbarataron un cargamento de animales exóticos que llegó por la noche a la costa.

El ilícito lo descubrió personal del Sistema de Vigilancia de la Armada, al que le llamó la presencia de una pequeña embarcación que llegó al puerto por la noche con sus luces apagadas.

Y aunque esperaban encontrarse con droga, los marinos descubrieron en cambio que se trataba del contrabando de 407 animales de la selva amazónica que viajaban en estrechas jaulas dentro de cajas de plátano y en bolsas de redes marinas. Uno de los detenidos, el chileno Moisés Segundo Díaz Verdugo, dijo que el cargamento lo recibió en la la playa peruana Los Palos, 10 kilómetros al norte del límite marítimo, y que sus planes eran vender su carga en el mercado ilegal de Arica.

Todos los ejemplares que traía están protegidos por el Cites (Convenio sobre el Comercio de Especies de Fauna Salvaje Amenazada). Son 18 loros y papagayos amazónicos de seis especies diferentes, una de las cuales, la arawana, está en riesgo de extinción. También habán tres tucanes *Ramphastus coco*, 11 caimanes-bebé (que en pocos años alcanzan 5 metros de largo), 308 tortugas oreja amarilla de río, 40 tortugas de tierra y 27 ardillas sudamericanas, que se veían aletargadas y exánimes.

<http://www.timesoftheinternet.com/espanol/13422.html>