

The Last Great Ape Organization - LAGA

December 2009 Report



Highlights

- **4 operations carried out against 11 suspects.**
- Operations started against **4 international parrot traffickers** in Douala – Littoral following the seizure of more than **300 parrots**.
- A network of **4 ivory dealers** busted in Meyomessala – South Region.
- An operation carried out against **2 dealers in Mamfe** – South West for killing an elephant and illegally trading in the products.
- A dealer **arrested in Bazou – West Region for illegal detention of a chimp**.
- **LAGA family goes for holiday.**
- **LAGA annual objectives met with 1 case per week and 1 media piece per day.**

General

This month was marked by 4 operations carried out against 11 subjects, and a continuation on the fight against illegal trafficking of parrots and a crackdown on ivory trafficking in Cameroon. The LAGA family also had a holiday.

An operation was started against a well known **international illegal wildlife trafficker of Ghanaian nationality** and 3 of his accomplices, 2 Ghanaians and 1 Guinean (Guinea – Conakry). The trafficker who is connected to a big export network uses much money to sponsor the illegal export of African Grey parrots with the use of falsified government documents. More than 300 parrots were seized at the Douala International airport by MINFOF Littoral Region about to be illegally exported using a falsified CITES permit purported to have been delivered in Congo – Kinshasa by the Guinean national. **The Ghanaian exporter was arrested in 2007** with more than 500 African Grey parrots destined for Bahrain. This furthermore validated information we had before about the organized chain of complicity in the parrot trade and how **white-collar criminals thrive on this complicity gaining a legitimate cover and eliminating the risk factor**. The profit margins are huge.

A network of **4 ivory traffickers and elephant poachers** was busted in Meyomessala – South Region. They were arrested for killing and illegally trading I ivory and elephant meat. One member of the network is **an Ecoguard working with the Dja Biosphere Reserve**. He was responsible for the acquisition of the gun and ammunition used for hunting and responsible for the sale of the ivory. Another member of the network is of **Malian nationality**. They were arrested with a **military gun and ammunition** and investigations are being carried out to get the military person responsible for the supply of the gun. The operation was carried out with ECOFAC.

In another operation, one **lady was arrested in Bazou – West Region for illegally keeping a big chimp**. A chimp of more than 10 years old was rescued and sent to the Limbe Wildlife Center.

An operation was **carried out against 2 well-known dealers** in Mamfe – South West region who were involved in the killing of an elephant and illegally trading in its tusk, the elephant meat and other products. This was done with MINFOF – Mamfe in the South West Region.

The LAGA family members went out on **3 weeks holidays** that started on the 17th of December and ends on the 4th January 2010.

Investigations

- **18 investigations** of varying lengths were carried out in **7 Regions** of Cameroon- North West, West, South West, South, Littoral, East and Center.
- Investigations are ongoing concerning the **more than 300 parrots seized** at the Douala International Airport about to be illegally exported by a **well known trafficker of Ghanaian nationality who had been arrested before.**
- **Investigations are ongoing pertaining to a military** man who supplied a gun and ammunition to a network of ivory dealers and elephant poachers arrested in Meyomessala – South Region.
- Field investigations led to the arrest of one lady for illegally keeping a chimp in Bazou – West region. The chimp was rescued and sent to the Limbe Wildlife Center – South West Region.
- Internet Investigations targeted 2 Internet wildlife dealers engaged in fraud in Bamenda – North West Region and Buea – South West Region. Investigations are still ongoing.
- Field tests continue for 2 new candidates.

Operations

4 operations were carried out this month against **11 subjects completing the target of 52 cases - 1 case per week for this year.**

- **01/12/09** – an operation was started against a well known **international illegal wildlife trafficker of Ghanaian nationality** and 3 of his accomplices, 2 Ghanaians and 1 Guinean (Guinea – Conakry). The trafficker who is connected to a big export network uses much money to sponsor the illegal export of African Grey parrots with the use of falsified government documents. More than 300 parrots were seized at the Douala International airport about to be illegally exported using a falsified CITES permit purported to have been delivered in Congo – Kinshasa by the Guinean national. **The well known Ghanaian exporter was arrested in 2007** with more than 500 African Grey parrots destined for Bahrain. The value of the shipment seized is huge. This operation was carried out with MINFOF Douala – Littoral.
- **02/12/09** – One lady was arrested in Bazou – West Region for illegally keeping a big chimp. A chimp of more than 10 years old was rescued and sent to the Limbe Wildlife Center with much difficulty following the gathering of a **large crowd that objected to the animal being taken.** The situation was calmed down after much diplomacy from the LAGA team and after explaining that it is illegal to keep a chimp without authorization.
- **18/12/09** - A network of 4 **ivory traffickers and elephant poachers** was busted in Meyomessala – South Region. They were arrested for killing and illegally trading I ivory and elephant meat. One member of the network is **an Ecoguard working with the Dja Biosphere Reserve.** He was responsible for the acquisition of the gun and ammunition used for hunting and responsible for the sale of the ivory. Another member of the network is of **Malian nationality.** They were arrested with a **military gun and ammunition** and investigations are being carried out to get the military person responsible for the supply of the gun. The operation was carried out with ECOFAC.
- **30/12/09** - An operation was **carried out against 2 well-known dealers** in Mamfe – South West region who were involved in the killing of an elephant and illegally trading in its tusk, the elephant meat and other products. This was done with MINFOF Mamfe.

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **15 missions** out of Yaounde- Centre Region: 2 in Mamfe (South West), 1 in Limbe (South West), 1 in Bafoussam (West), 1 in Bazou (West), 3 in Douala (Littoral), 2 in Bamenda (North West), 1 in Ntui (Centre), 2 in Djoum (South), 1 in Sangmelima (South) and 1 in Meyomessala (South).

- There are **15 dealers behind bars during this month**: 2 in the West Region, 1 in the East Region, 6 in South Region, 2 in the North West Region and 4 in the South West Region.
- **20 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **10 cases** are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.
- **Prosecutions**: 1 dealer was sentenced this month
 - **11/12/09** - The Court of First Instance of Bafoussam sentenced Simo Victor to pay a total of 588.350 FCFA (about \$1200) as fines and damages. He will be retained in jail for 6 months in default of payment of fines and damages. Simo Victor was arrested for illegal trade in leopard skins.

Media front

- **24 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to radio, TV and written press including: 4 written press materials, 3 in English and 1 in French, 16 radio news flashes (7 in English, 9 in French), 1 TV news feature in French and 3 radio talk shows, 2 in English and 1 in French.
- Guests include: The Minister of Forestry and Wildlife, Head of LAGA Legal unit, LAGA Head of media and external department, MINFOF Control Brigade officer, South West Regional delegate for Forestry and Wildlife.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including; Seizure of 300 parrots in Douala, arrest of 3 leopard skins and hippo teeth in Bangui, Mamfe prosecution of 3 wildlife dealers in ivory, controlling wildlife meat trade, traditional rulers fight wildlife crime and prosecution of chimp dealer in Bangui
- 12 media pieces in English, 12 in French making a percentage of 50% in English and 50% in French.
- Envoyée Speciale - France 2 Television Broadcast of the 1 ton ivory seizure covered by Barbara – a journalist with the TV network.
- **The target of 1 media piece per week was completed for this year.**

External Relations and Policy

- LAGA Director and Regional logistics Manager of WWF – CARPO held meeting to discuss on combating corruption in the NGO sector.
- Meeting between WWF and LAGA Director: Issue discussed, the SDO of Boumba and Ngoko and the forensic audit of projects.
- LAGA Director met the Minister of Justice accompanied by the U.S Ambassador to discuss legal threats on LAGA.
- Discussion between the Fon of Bali and LAGA Media crew centred on the education of local communities on denouncing wildlife traffickers in their villages, using annual traditional dance festivals.
- A meeting was held among the Programme Coordinators for Protected Areas of Central and West Africa, UNESCO official and the Director of LAGA: fighting corruption within the environmental sector was top on the agenda.

Management

- The LAGA family members went out on **holidays** that started on the 17th of December 2009 to 4th January 2010 with a special lunch and Christmas bonuses. The LAGA family members discussed about the target indicators that were met – 1 case per week and 1 media piece per day and how to build on these results and improve upon them in 2010. The LAGA Director was not present during the special lunch because he was in the U.S.A.

Activism Front

- Film Show – The Corporation, Is it worth existing? A critical look at corporations' social responsibilities: exposing their failures in assuming their responsibilities and their denial tendencies in cases of negative effects emanating from their actions. It evaluates the extent to which corporations' assume or do not assume these responsibilities.

Finance

LAGA Expenditure by budget line for December 09

Amount CFA	Budget line	Details	Amount USD
1,219,151	Investigations	19 inv, 7 Regions	\$2,709
774,150	Operations	4 Operation against 11 subjects	\$1,720
2,826,320	legal	follow up 20 cases 15 locked subjects	\$6,281
1,342,675	Media	24 media pieces	\$2,984
248,700	Policy & External Relations	Congo/CAR/UK/USA	\$553
865,900	Management	Coordination	\$1,924
1,231,971	Office		\$2,738
8,508,867	TOTAL EXPENDITURE DECEMBER		\$18,909

LAGA Expenditure by donor for December 09

AmountCFA	Donor	Amount USD
2,927,650	FWS	\$6,505.9
2,139,162	NEU Foundation	\$4,753.7
2,566,520	ARCUS Foundation	\$5,703.4
875,535	EIA	\$1,945.6
8,508,867	TOTAL	\$18,908.6

THIS MONTH IN PICTURES



The big chimp rescued during an operation in Bazou – West Region. The chimp had been in the keeping of one lady for more than 10 years and was rescued with much difficulty following the gathering of a large crowd that objected to the animal being taken. The situation was calmed down after much diplomacy from the LAGA team.

Links of this month

- 1 ton ivory seizure in Cameroon - Envoyée Speciale over France 2- a French based TV Channel broadcast. The seizure of 1 ton ivory in Douala was led by the joint collaboration of the Ministry of Wildlife, the Delegation of National Security of the Littoral Region and technically assisted by LAGA in the establishment of a case file against the traffickers.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jXy0WeBe8-Q>