

# The Last Great Ape Organization – LAGA

## March 2016 Report



### Highlights

- **5 wildlife traffickers were arrested during this month**
- **3 arrested in the South with 12 ape skulls among them a major ivory trafficker.**
- **A trafficker arrested in the West with 10 chimp skulls and an elephant tail.**
- **A trafficker arrested in South with 3 elephant tails and hoofs but has connections to illicit ivory trade.**
- **5 traffickers sentenced to prison terms this month.**

### General

This month was marked by **3 operations arresting 5 traffickers**

During the first week of the month, an operation was carried out in **Ebolowa, South Region** with the **arrest of a major trafficker with wildlife contraband of 3 elephant tails and 3 hoofs.** He is known to have sold ivory every two weeks and had a regular client coming in from Yaounde to Ebolowa to buy ivory. He equally doubles as a poacher and used a local gendarme officer to cover his illegal activity and provide inside information on the movements of wildlife officials.

The second operation carried **brought to the arrest of 3 ape skulls trafficker with 8 chimpanzee and 4 gorilla skulls among others in Ebolowa, South Region.** One of the traffickers is a major ivory trafficker and as with the case above, he had a connection with a client regularly coming from Yaounde for ivory. This trafficker equally doubles as a poacher killing elephants for ivory and chimpanzees.

The third operation of the month found yet a different type of trafficker, an exclusive trafficker with an assortment of various kinds of wildlife species found in his possession during **an arrest operation in Bafang in the West Region that seized 3 fresh chimpanzee heads and 7 chimp skulls, an elephant tail and a mandrill skull and a python skin, .** He has a number of poachers supplying him with various species of wildlife.

Several meetings with a diplomatic official, the judiciary, a conservation official and wildlife officials were held this month to discuss wildlife law enforcement, to review year 2015 and lay down future collaborative efforts and to examine illegal activities around the Benoue National Park.

## Investigations

- **36 investigations** of varying lengths were carried out in **7 Regions** of Cameroon- East, Centre, West, South, Littoral, South West and Nord West Regions.
- Good investigations in **Ma'an** led to the arrest of a trafficker in Ebolowa, with of 3 elephant tails and 3 elephant hoofs.
- Good investigations in **Mvangane** resulted to the arrest of 3 traffickers in **Mengon (Ebolowa)** trying to sell 8 chimpanzee skulls, 4 gorilla skulls, 2 warthog skulls and a mandrill skull.
- Good investigations in Nkonjock let to the arrest of a trafficker **in Bafang** trying to sell 10 chimpanzee skulls, one elephant tail, and one python skin

## Operation

**Three operations** carried out this month with MINFOF **arresting 5 traffickers.**

- **03/03/16 – A major trafficker arrested in Ebolowa, in the South Region with 3 elephant tails and 3 hoofs.** He has been doing ivory deals with a client who travels from Yaounde to Ebolowa where the sales are conducted. The trafficker is equally a poacher and he was found to sell ivory every two weeks. He is aware of his illegal activity and uses a local gendarme official as cover and provider of insight information on the movements of wildlife officials. He in turn corrupts the law enforcement officer with money and meat. He hires a gun from a relative at 25 000 CFA F per poaching mission which is done inside the Campo Ma'an National Park and as far as the Equatorial Guinea after crossing the Ntem River in search for elephants.
- **16/03/16 – 3 ape skull traffickers arrested in Ebolowa, in the South Region with 8 chimpanzee skulls, 4 gorilla skulls, 2 warthog skulls and a mandrill skull.** As with the first operation of the month, a client from Yaounde, this time with more precision, from the Briqueterie neighbourhood was mentioned as one of the clients of one of the arrested traffickers who mainly deals in ivory. Although mainly an ivory trafficker he kills chimpanzees also.
- **29/03/16 – Arrest of a trafficker in Bafang, in the South Region with 3 fresh chimpanzee heads and 7 skulls, an elephant tail, a mandrill skull and a skin from a young python..** This is a professional trafficker who deals in various types of wildlife species he obtains from a big base of poachers who kill all kinds of wildlife species. He differs from some who may specialise in ivory, pangolins scales etc. He sells every species he gets. **Once again fresh chimpanzee heads were recovered and again point to the parallel illicit trade alongside the bushmeat trade of chimpanzee.**

## Legal

- **LAGA Legal Department carried 22 missions** out of Yaoundé- Centre Region: 6 in Ebolowa (South), 2 in Douala (Littoral), 2 in Bafoussam (West), 2 in Bertoua ( East), 2 in Abong Mbang ( East), 1 in Lomie ( East), 1 in Mamfe ( South West), 2 in Djoum (South) 1 in Mintom ( South), 1 in Koumbo (North West), 1 in Ndop ( North West) and 1 in Bafang( West).
- There are **39 dealers behind bars during this month:** 15 in East region, 4 in Centre region, 4 in North West region, 3 in South West region, 3 in Littoral region, 4 in West region and 6 in South region.
- **29 cases** were followed up by the legal department this month.
- **28 cases** scheduled and being tried in court this month.

- **Prosecutions:** We had 3 judgments this month.
  - 18/03/2016: The Yaoundé Court of First Instance- Centre Administratif, found the accused **ESSAME CYRIL** guilty of illegal possession and commercialization of trophies of totally protected species and was sentenced to: **2 months imprisonment term with civil damages of 3.000.000 CFA F to be paid including , fines amounting to 100.000 FCFA and 9 months imprisonment in default of payment of the fines.** He was arrested in Yaoundé for the illegal possession of 17 Chimpanzee skulls and 2 mandrill skulls.
  - 23/03/2016: The Bertoua Court of First Instance – East, found the accused **ANTHONY NWABU NWANNE NYOYE** guilty of illegal possession and commercialization of trophies of totally protected species and were sentenced to **-75 days in prison, ordered to pay 27,480,000 CFA F for civil damages and fines amounting to 100.000 CFA F, 89,000 CFA F for costs and 9 months imprisonment in default of payment of the fines.** He was arrested in Bertoua for illegal possession and circulation of 12 ivory tusks, 5 bags of giant pangolin scales and 2 elephant jawbones.
  - 28/03/2016: The Ebolowa Court of First Instance- South, found the accused **ABA JEAN DIDIER, EMANE GEORGE and NYANGONO ELOM ARSENE** guilty of illegal possession and commercialization of trophies of totally protected species and was sentenced to: **4 months imprisonment term each and to pay cost fees- of 68,000 CFA F, civil damages- of 1,000,000 FCFA and fined 100,000 CFA .** They were arrested in Ebolowa for illegal possession of 4 gorilla skulls, 8 chimpanzee skulls, 2 wart hog skulls and 1 mandrill skull.
- An Appeal was filed this month in the case againsts **Anthony Nwabu Nwanne Nyoye** in the East Court of Appeal.

### Media

- **27 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to written press, radio and internet including: 16 written press material (11 in English and 5 in French), 5 radio news flashes (2 in English and 3 in French) and 5 internet publications 4 in French and 1 in English.
- **Guests include:** Upper Nkam divisional delegate for forestry and wildlife
- **Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including:** Dimako ape traffickers arrest, Ebolowa trafficker arrest with elephant 3 tails and hoofs,, Ebolowa arrest of 3 traffickers with 12 ape skulls and Bafang arrest with 10 ape skulls and elephant tail.
- 15 media pieces in English and 12 in French making a percentage of 56% in English and 44% in French.

### External Relations and Policy

- The Deputy Director held a meeting with Mihaela Biliovschi Smith, Executive Assistant Media from the US Embassy official, to review efforts at fighting wildlife crime in 2015 and brainstorm on ideas that could assist in mapping a way forward for bigger results and impact. .
- The Deputy Director held a meeting with the IUCN's PPI-PACO coordinator Thomas Bacha, on illegal activities taking place around the Benoue national park where those holding valid hunting permits and licenses are breaking the law and regulations and laundering wildlife products and an examination of actions which may be taken to address the situation.

- Heads of the Legal and Investigations Departments held a meeting the state counsel in Douala and Bafoussam with the objective in the latter case being establishing good working relations as we aim to intensify operations in that part of the country.
- The Head of the Legal Department and some legal advisers held meetings with some state counsels and presidents of courts in areas where wildlife cases are being heard or where operations were planned and the areas include Douala Bertoua in the East Region, Ebolowa and Djoum in the South Region.

### **Management**

- Several interviews were carried to replace the departed accountant, he left us last year and one of the candidates proved to have the required skill demanded for such an activist job. She shall be joining the team next month as an accountant.
- Hosting an international investigator.

### **Activism Front**

#### **Projection of Movie: *Wag the Dog***

This movie is all about strategy and spin, very useful for public action. If you get the best strategy and the right spin, you invariably come on top even though in substance, you may be found out. An American president seeking re-election is faced with a dramatic twist of events when two weeks to go for voting taking place, his sexual adventures are made public and this virtually spells the end of his career. Hold on a minute, he hires a spin doctor who hires a Hollywood producer and together they produce an exhilarating strategy and spin, to keep him in power and among the diversionary tactics that make up the strategy is a fake war the US is fighting against little known Armenia. This is a big lie but it works, attention is distracted from the scandal and the president is re-elected. The war has the advantage of drawing attention away from the president's sexual mishaps and allowing his spin doctors to do their thing. The projection comes at an opportune moment when a certain Donald Trump has come from nowhere to front run the GOP race in American 2016 primaries. It equally tells us much about our politicians, their lies and deceptions. Discussions focused on the role of spin in politics and the importance of strategy in action.

All the activism fostering activities carried out by the LAGA family are online; this could be gotten at the LAGA website – <http://www.laga-enforcement.org/Activism/tabid/77/Default.aspx>.

### **Finance**

**In preparation and would be made available soon as possible.**

**This Month in Pictures**



*Three ape traffickers standing near a gendarme official who was part of the arresting team, the three were arrested in Ebolowa and among them a major trafficker with suspected links to an ivory trafficker (Above). An elephant parts trafficker at the wildlife office after his arrest with elephant tails he carries. He is known to traffic in ivory but at the moment of his arrest he was found with these elephant parts (Right)*



*Trafficker at wildlife office for commencement of procedure after his arrest in West Region for trafficking in a variety of wildlife produce (left) and elephant tails, hoofs (above) and ape skulls seized from traffickers in Ebolowa (below)*



## **Links of this month**

### **Link of the month**

Cameroonian website Camer.be takes the story on three wildlife traffickers who were arrested on March 16, 2016 following a sting operation carried out by the South Regional Delegation of Forestry and Wildlife working in collaboration with the gendarmerie in Ebolowa. The three aged between 24 and 26 were arrested as they attempted to sell a haul of wildlife products consisting of several apes skulls, some of which were from freshly killed gorillas and chimpanzees.

<http://www.camer.be/50763/11:1/cameroun-three-wildlife-traffickers-arrested-in-ebolowa-with-14-ape-skulls-cameroon.html>