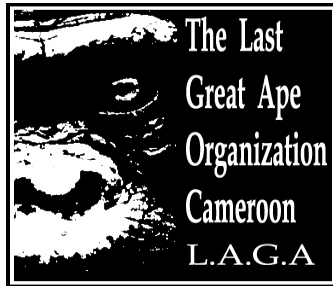


# THE LAST GREAT APE ORGANIZATION, CAMEROON LAGA

ANNUAL REPORT JANUARY – DECEMBER 2020



## Executive Summary

Despite the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic and several other difficulties, the LAGA team pushed forward and through, obtaining tangible achievements in its collaboration with the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife. Achievements were obtained in the fields of investigation, arrest, prosecution, media exposure, government relations and international activities with focus on the fight against corruption and the illegal wildlife trade; principally trafficking in ivory, pangolin scales, leopard and lion skins. Government measures and guidelines, alongside organisational measures put in place to prevent the spread of the corona virus, were strictly respected. The efforts produced sterling results in combatting the trafficking in pangolin scales, ivory, human bones, mandrills and leopard and lion skins. An operation against two corrupt military men witnessed the seizure of 380kg of pangolin scales while wildlife investigations uncovered a sinister trade in human skeletons in the West of the country with the arrest of 6 traffickers. A network of 6 ivory traffickers located in the East of the country with connections to Nigeria was dismantled.

39 traffickers were arrested, at a rate of one for every 9 days. Approximately. 50 % stayed behind bars from the day of arrest. The very average rate of imprisonment was partly due to the respect of guidelines put in place by the Ministry of Justice to reduce promiscuity at the various prisons as the health crisis raged on. Corruption was observed and combated in a number of the cases. 40 new cases were brought to the courts and 32 traffickers were found guilty and given prison sentences and or fines, damages and penalties. Damages awarded the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF) stood at 128,534,00 F CFA (about \$257,068). Media exposure was at the rate of one media piece per day.

The EAGLE network had significant results taking into considerations the lockdown measures implemented in the various countries as 138 traffickers were arrested across 7 countries within the network. The handling of the Covid-19 crisis for all the EAGLE countries was effectively managed by the Central Coordination Unit working in collaboration with the management of the various countries. The LAGA team hosted an activist from Gabon for a month-long experience sharing visit and a super volunteer during a 3-month training period.

The death of one of LAGA's founding fathers was announced. Vincent Gudmia Mfonfu died on December 26, 2020 in Yaounde.

**The work of The Last Great Ape Organization was supported by: Wildcat, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Born Free, CIDT, Neu Foundation, Pro Wildlife**

**LAST GREAT APE ORGANISATION, CAMEROON (LAGA)**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
January - December 2020

**OVERVIEW**

**Investigations**

- A total of 179 investigation missions (of varying lengths) were carried out in 6 regions.
- The network of informants continued producing results leading to a couple of good operations.

**Operations**

- Operations carried out in 5 regions arresting 39 major traffickers resulting in 40 court cases at a rate of 1 per 9 days.
- Operations on ivory, pangolin scales, leopard and lion skins accounted for 68% of the total number of operations
- The rate of imprisonment of arrested offenders stood at 50%, a comparatively very average rate as a result of measures taken by authorities to decongest prisons to prevent the spread of Covid-19.
- 3 live mandrills rescued from 4 primate traffickers.
- 2 military men arrested for trafficking in pangolin scales
- An international ivory trafficking network with connections to Nigeria dismantled; 6 traffickers arrested.
- 6 traffickers arrested for dealing in human skeletons.

**Legal**

- 40 new cases brought to court and represented (many of the cases began during the period have not yet reached the prosecution stage but procedures still ongoing).
- 32 traffickers found guilty and 12 handed prison sentences, fines and damages while 20 were given fines and or damages only. Damages amounted to some 128,534,000 F CFA (about \$257,068) to be paid to MINFOF.
- 14 court judgements were passed during the 6-month period and a court gave a full one-year sentence to a wildlife trafficker and another court gave a 6-month imprisonment term to 3 traffickers and ordered them to pay fines and damages amounting to some 90,592 000 FCFA (About \$181,184).

**Media**

- A total of 372 media pieces published in national media (television, radio, press and internet) achieved at a rate of one media piece per day.
- French TV channel France 2 broadcast a LAGA pangolin scales operation during its prime time programme “Sur le Front”.
- The three top TV channels in Cameroon covered and broadcast the human bones trafficking operations carried out in the West of the country.
- Over 20 media pieces published on the link between wildlife trade and Covid-19 pandemic.
- The Deputy Director was guest on a TV news programme that discussed ivory trafficking and the seizure of 118 ivory tusks with the arrest of a trafficker by customs in the south of the country.

**Management**

- The Annual Report of 2019 and First Report of 2020 were made available online.
- Focus was on respecting measures to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic and the push forward for operations.
- Internal collaboration amongst the departments was redesigned to suit the trying moments and emphasis was placed on distant communication even when everyone was present in office.
- A new head of the Media Department was appointed and Anna Etaka Egbe has been with the department since joining the organisation in 2006.
- A super volunteer finished her 3 months long training, working with the various departments of the organization.
- An internet investigator came to end of his stay with the organisation and moved on for newer challenges.
- An investigator was relieved of her duties after close to 7 years of fruitful collaboration.
- The 9<sup>th</sup> Edition of Wildlife Justice Magazine was published under the theme “Pangolin Trafficking”.

### **External Relations and Policy**

- The Covid-19 pandemic limited the possibility of holding several high level meetings. Nevertheless, some meetings were held with MINFOF and Justice officials, the diplomatic community, national and international NGOs to discuss issues on collaboration, governance, wildlife law enforcement among others.
- LAGA pushed for articles in newspapers as part of activities to celebrate the World Pangolin Day and the Deputy Director joined the Cameroon Pangolin Working Group to carry out several activities marking celebrations for the day.

### **Strategic Highlights**

- The strategic focus during the years was on ivory and pangolin scales trafficking. Focus was shifted early on to the uncovering of the human bones trafficking in the West of the country.
- Attention was also concentrated on pushing on and getting operations carried out while respecting organisational and government’s measures put in place to prevent coronavirus infections.

### **EAGLE Activities**

- A total of 138 traffickers were arrested across 7 countries of the network.
- Under the framework of the EAGLE exchange visits, an investigator from Gabon arrived the country where he stayed for a month.
- LAGA provided technical support during investigations, legal activity and media outreach to some of the projects across the network
- At least 144 media pieces were published in the countries spreading the message about the link between the illegal wildlife trade and the Covid-19 pandemic.

## CONTENTS

- Executive Summary.....	1
- Overview .....	2
- Contents .....	4
- Narrative Report .....	5
1 Investigation .....	5
2 Operations .....	6
3 Legal .....	9
4 Media .....	12
5 Management.....	11
6 External Relations and Policy.....	15
7 LAGA and the EAGLE Network.....	17
8 Fostering Activism .....	18
9 Strategic Overview of Wildlife Crime in Cameroon and Operations’ Impact .....	18
10 Corruption and Wildlife Crime.....	21

### Annexes

Annex I - List of Cases initiated in 2020.....	24
Annex II – The Year in Pictures – Some Important Events.....	27
Annex III –Media Links 2020.....	34

### Charts and Tables

1 Figure 1: Number of investigation missions per month .....	6
2 Figure 1 Operations Table .....	9
3 Figure 3: Case profile.....	9
4 Figure 4: Rate of locking accused behind bars before prosecution ... ..	12
5 Figure 5: Number of media pieces published.....	13
6 Figure 6: Split of media pieces.....	13
Overview of international trade in Cameroon and operation sites .....	23

### Also available:

1. Annual, Financial Statement and Semesters Reports 2020
2. Monthly Financial and Activity Reports January to December 2020
3. Media archive – Excel database linked to recorded media pieces
4. Photo archive for media use

For copies contact email; [eric@laga-enforcement.org](mailto:eric@laga-enforcement.org)

## **NARRATIVE REPORT**

This report covers activities from January to December 2020. The report includes: the progress in activities of each department (Investigations, Operations, Legal, Media and Management), strategic overview and the impact of the operations on wildlife crime in Cameroon, progress in relations with the Cameroonian Government, non-governmental bodies, in the international arena, and in non-enforcement initiatives LAGA undertook.

### **1. Investigations**

LAGA's investigation unit carried out 179 investigation missions in 6 regions of the country. Collaboration with CCU investigation officer was very efficient and produced many good operations. Weekly meetings were held in the department to plan activities, develop strategies, techniques and team spirit to improve results, identify and cover key trafficking areas especially as the Covid-19 raged on.

Early on before the onset of the pandemic, the department carried out a series of trainings and recycling sessions to upgrade the skills of investigators. New methods of carrying out information collection and analysis were developed and tried, while teamwork and combination of efforts were used in several instances to enable smooth investigations, elaboration and execution of strategies. These strategies led to the uncovering of human bone trafficking networks in the west of the country.

Later on, new investigative methods and techniques based on the advent of the coronavirus were elaborated and made adaptable to the health crisis raging across the globe. This enabled the department to continue carrying out its activities despite the challenges posed by the situation.

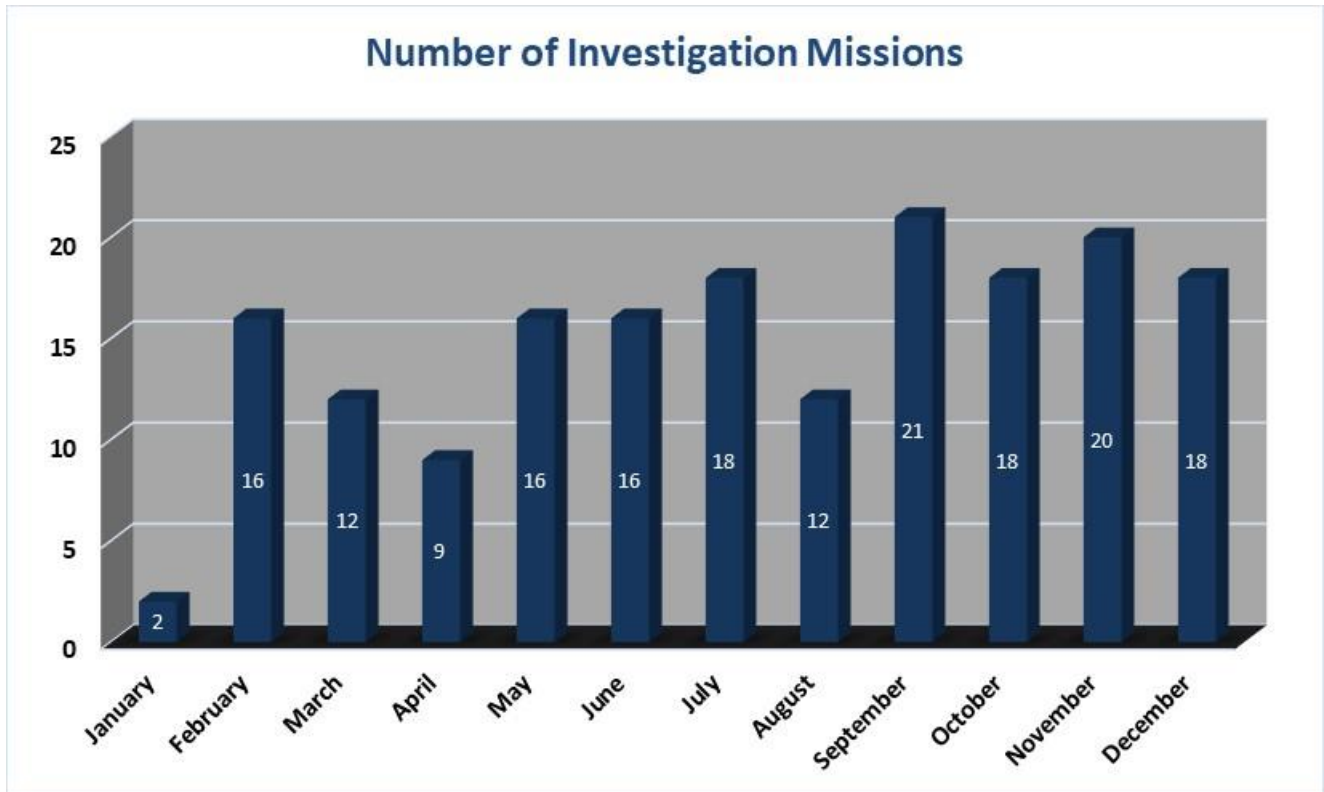
The Head of the Investigations Department held meetings with some customs and security officials at the Nsimalen International Airport and the Douala International Airport to enhance and strengthen collaborative platforms; that have been built over the years. He equally held meetings with some security and customs officials at the Douala International Airport for the same purpose and was accompanied by the Head of the Legal Department.

No arrests were done during the months of January, March, July and October and this was caused by diverse reasons. In January the team just returned from vacation while in March, the whole country was coming to terms with the onset of the coronavirus and in July, the country witnessed peaks of the coronavirus trends. Nevertheless, the department put in effective strategies which brought very good results especially in April when 8 traffickers were arrested, in June when 7 traffickers were arrested and December that recorded the highest number of traffickers (10) arrested within year.

Under the framework of the EAGLE exchange programme an investigator from Gabon spent a month-long training and experience sharing visit to the country.

An investigator was relieved of her duties after coming to the end of the road following 7 years' collaboration and fruitful relationship with the organisation. An internet investigator came to end of his stay with the organisation and moved on for newer challenges.

## Number of Missions



*Figure 1: Number of Investigations Missions per Month*

## 2. Operations

LAGA and the Government of Cameroon carried out operations in 5 regions against 39 individuals resulting in 40 court cases at a rate of one every 9 days. This represented roughly 80% of the targeted results expected for the year. At the beginning of the year, new techniques were used during investigations and operations and it produced some stellar results with the arrest of two military men with 380kg of pangolin scales and the dismantling of some human bones trafficking networks in the West Region. Later on, the techniques were recycled and redesigned to adapt to the Covid-19 pandemic, thereby producing more good results including the arrest of 6 traffickers in December when an ivory trafficking network with connections to Nigeria was dismantled in the East Region. 4 of the traffickers were arrested in Yokadouma by the police after a follow up investigations following the arrest of the first 2 in Bertoua. LAGA provided legal assistance to all of the cases and to a case that resulted from an operation carried out by customs in Ambam in the south of the country.

Some bigger and important targets were equally investigated and it is expected that these would produce some important operations in the near future. Meanwhile operations carried out were distributed as follows: 29% for ivory trafficking, 21% for pangolin scales trafficking, 18% for leopard and lion skins trafficking, 15%, human bones trafficking, and 10% for mandrill trafficking and 7% for parrot trafficking.

In February, a trafficker was arrested in Bandjoun, West Region with 5 leopard skins. The trafficker belongs to a network of leopard skins trafficking that is rife in the region. Members of the network are located in different towns of the region. The trafficker is a businessman in one of Bafoussam's main markets where he owns a shop. He equally passes as a traditional herbalist.

In April, 4 significant operations were carried and during the first operation, 4 traffickers arrested in Kye-Ossi, South Region with a leopard skin. The traffickers belong to a trafficking ring close to the Gabon border, operating along three countries, Cameroon, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea, ensuring smooth illegal trade in parts of protected wildlife species including leopard skins and ivory. While two are dealers, two others are professional drivers ensuring the transboundary trafficking is expertly carried on in the area.

During the second operation, a trafficker was arrested in Dimako, East Region with 50kg of pangolin scales. The woman had been arrested several times by the gendarmerie and released without any charges brought against her. She kept a gang of several poachers in several localities including Mbang and Atchoc in the East Region,. They supplied her with wildlife products. She would travel to the notorious Nkolndongo market in Yaounde where she supplied traffickers. She violently resisted arrest during the operation hoping his friends at the gendarmerie who constantly release her following each arrest would come to her rescue.

A third operation of the month would see a trafficker arrested in Yaounde, Centre Region with a young mandrill. He had been keeping the mandrill he had bought in Akom II in the South Region for some time while exploring opportunities to sell the animal.

During the last operation of the month,2 traffickers were arrested in Lolodorf, South Region with a young and wounded mandrill. The pair had travelled overnight to avoid detection and arrived the town of Lolodorf where they set out to sell the animal before their arrest. They collaborated in wildlife trafficking; one of them specializing in the buying and the other checking out clients. They bought the mandrill in a small village called Bipindi.

In May, 3 traffickers were arrested in Douala, Littoral Region with two ivory tusks weighing 26kg. The three ran a small ivory trafficking group that was very cautious in their dealings but at the end the operation succeeded in ensuring all were arrested.

Still in May, 4 traffickers were arrested in Foubot in the West Region with human bones, following a wildlife crime investigation. Three of them were arrested with an almost complete human skeleton that still had dried up flesh on the bones and a human skull with hair on it. Further investigation by the gendarmerie led to the arrest of a 4th trafficker. The four belong to a larger network that was specialized in trafficking human bones and had connections to other countries of the sub region. Investigations show they seem to be able to supply dozens of human bones. The corpse of the deceased young lady was dug out from Kouoptamo in the West Region. They operated an organized network with each having a specific role to play; those who dug out the corpses; those who did the marketing, searching for customers and the lady who was the 4<sup>th</sup> to be arrested kept the human remains at her residence.

During the second operation of May, 3 traffickers including two military men were arrested in Yaounde in the Centre Region with 380kg of pangolin scales. A woman who was part of the deal was arrested a couple of hours later at her residence following the arrest of the two military men. She is a well-known trafficker in several wildlife products at the Nkolndongo bushmeat market and a house search at her premises would reveal several animal carcasses including pangolins. She had been the target of investigations for at least two years. The military men explained explicitly how they used their military status to avoid arrest during trafficking. One of them was of the Presidential Guard, and was swiftly removed by his hierarchy following this arrest in a strong message that its uniforms will not be used to cover illegal activities, and any knowledge of an illegal activity will result in swift action.

During the third operation, 2 traffickers were arrested in Foubot in the West Region with human bones, following a wildlife crime investigation. The two were arrested with two almost complete human skeletons that had been carefully packed in two suitcases. They used the internet to carry out their illegal activity where they advertised their products under code names and equally searched for clients who they claim included clients from abroad. One of the traffickers travelled from Ambam near the Cameroon south border to the west to carry out the transaction.

In June, 2 traffickers were arrested in Bertoua, East Region with two ivory tusks. One of the two had been under investigations for a long time as he had been involved in ivory trafficking for several years. He violently resisted arrest during the operation. They are part of a network stretching to CAR and connected to Congo.

In August, 2 traffickers were arrested in Yaounde, Centre Region with a lion skin and a leopard skin. The first trafficker who was very cautious was arrested shortly after he had consulted a soothsayer to determine if his illegal business was going to be risk free and he changed destinations several times as he moved the products. He had two artisanal shops as front businesses for cover of the illegal wildlife trafficking he carried out. A woman who was formerly a secondary school teacher was arrested an hour later at her residence and she claimed the skins belong to her.

During the second operation in August, a trafficker was arrested in Ebolowa, South Region with 23kg of pangolin scales. He had under his employ several small time traffickers he activated in several villages in the south. Their job was to collect the scales for him. He travelled by night to avoid arrest from Akom II to Ebolowa where he tried to sell the scales, shortly before his arrest.

In September, 2 traffickers were arrested in Yaounde, Centre Region with 3 African grey parrots and 6 Rose-ringed parakeets. The first trafficker was arrested selling 2 African grey parrots and 4 Rose-ringed parakeets at the Vogt Junction in Yaounde and the owner of the parrots and parakeets was arrested one hour later at his residence with one additional African grey parrot and 2 Rose-ringed parakeets. The second trafficker is a major dealer who belongs to one of the most important international bird trafficking networks in the country and has spent 3 years evading justice. They had to be arrested twice because, the Company Commander who had the responsibility of keeping them in custody simply released them following the first arrest and this necessitated rearrests after LAGA intervened. This would prove a very complicated tasks as one of them simply tried to escape and was given chase and in a desperate attempt to flee he jumped in a stream close to his residence but was pursued into it and arrested.

In November, a trafficker was arrested in Yaounde, Centre Region in connection with the case against two arrested in Yaounde for parrot trafficking in September. He is a long time parrot's traffickers with dozens of years of experience and had been evading justice. He was arrested following an arrest warrant issued by an examining judge handling the case against the two parrot traffickers arrested in September. They all revealed who supplied the parrots and this led the examining judge issuing an arrest warrant for the big time trafficker who is credited with dozens of years in the illegal parrot business in the country.

In December, three operations were carried with 10 traffickers arrested. During the first operation, 2 traffickers were arrested with 4 ivory tusks in Bertoua and 4 more arrested the next day in Yokadouma in the East Region. One of the traffickers is a Nigerian national who had been the target of law enforcement and had served jail term for ivory trafficking. He is one of the backbones in the criminal gang that moves ivory from the East Region, across the country to Nigeria. One of the traffickers travelled from Yokadouma to Bertoua with the ivory and was arrested as he arrived the residence of one of the suspects who was also arrested. The gang proved difficult to break and was very cautious in their undertakings.



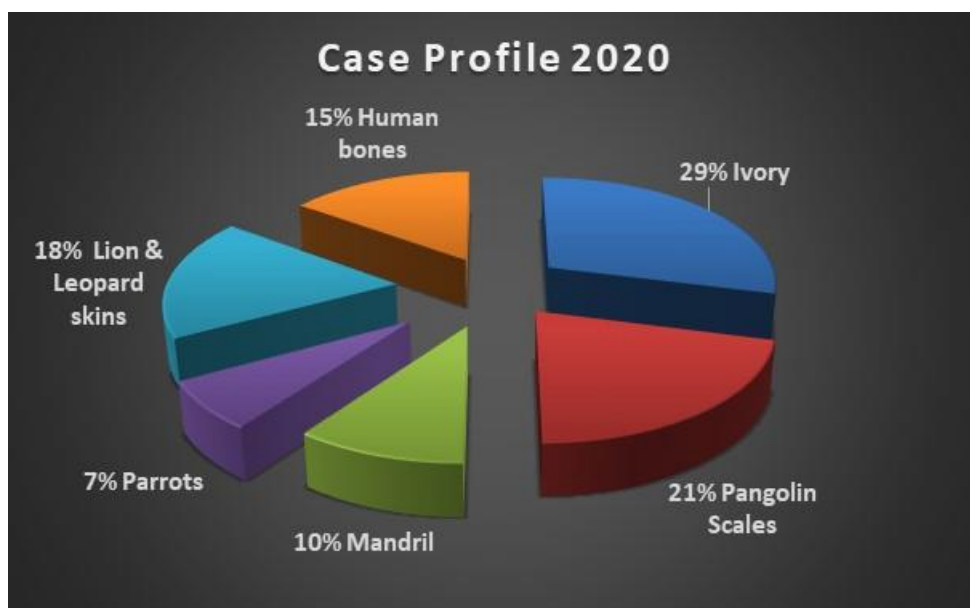
During the second operation, 3 traffickers including an ex-military man were arrested in Batouri, East Region with 70kg of pangolin scales. Under the protection of the former soldier, they travelled from Mindourou to Batouri and were arrested shortly before their planned transaction to sell the scales could go ahead. They activated a host of smaller traffickers and poachers who supplied the pangolin scales in and around Mindourou.

During the third operation, a live animal trafficker was arrested and a young mandrill safely rescued. The young and hungry animal was immediately provided first aid care and food as it thirstily clung to a water bottle. As often is the case, the young animal lived in a filthy small cage. Earlier, another mandrill the animal trafficker tried to sell died in her possession

*Operations Table*

<i>Number of Operations</i>	<i>Number of Traffickers</i>	<i>Contraband</i>
15	39	5 leopard skins, 1 leopard skin, 2 live mandrills, 50kg pangolin scales, 2 ivory tusks, an almost complete human skeleton, 2 full human skeletons, 380kg of pangolin scales, 2 ivory tusks, A lion skin, a leopard skin, 23 kg of pangolin scales, 3 African grey parrots, 6 Rose-ringed Parakeets, 4 ivory tusks, 70kg pangolin scales, a live mandrill

*Figure 2: Operation Table*



*Figure 3: Case profile*

### **3. Legal**

During this period, 40 new cases reached the court and the cases joined old cases that were scheduled, followed-up, tried in various courts and jail visits were organized. Most of the cases initiated within this period have not yet reached the prosecution stage with 50% imprisoned throughout the process. On the instruction of the government department in charge of justice and because of the Covid-19 pandemic, state prosecutors were given new guidelines on releasing on bail, people arrested for

offences following measures aimed at reducing congestion at prisons where people are kept while their trials take place.

A total of 110 missions were carried out of the Centre Region for follow-up of new cases and the creation and strengthening of relations with judicial authorities. More emphasis as a direct result of operations was on, pangolin scales and ivory.

During this period, 14 court judgements were passed with 32 traffickers found guilty and 2 not guilty. 12 were given prison sentences while 20 were either given suspended sentences and or were ordered to pay fines and damages or fines only. A very high number of weak sentences were witnessed and this is a continuing trend that has been witnessed over a couple of years now. Two appeals were lodged. The court gave a full one-year sentence to a wildlife trafficker. A court in Douala gave a 6-month imprisonment term to three who were found in possession of 274 African grey parrots, 3 ivory tusk and 3 bags of pangolins and ordered them to pay fines and damages amounting to some 90,592 000 FCFA (About \$181,184).

Two significant court judgements were passed in the Court of First Instance in Foubot where 4 suspected wildlife traffickers were found guilty and given 5 years in prison for trafficking in human bones. and in the second case another set of 4 suspected wildlife traffickers were found guilty by the same court and sentenced to 5 years jail term for human bones trafficking.

Damages awarded to MINFOF amounted to some 128,534,000 F CFA (about \$257,068).

The department assisted the Ministry and Customs in the follow up of a very high profile case in Ambam in the South Region where customs seized 118 ivory tusks from an international trafficker.

In February 2 judgements were passed and in the first judgement, the Ekounou Court of First Instance found the accused LOKO BASSILIKIN, FOGANG FOKOUA Bruno, NKOUGA Valère, OUSMANOU Baba and KENNE Emmanuel guilty and sentenced them to pay 200,000 FCFA (about \$400) each as fines, 46,000 FCFA (about \$90) each as court fees and 400,000 FCFA (about \$800) jointly as damages. They were arrested in Yaounde on the 05/09/2019 for the illegal possession of 2 elephant tusks.

In April, the Douala - Bonanjo Court of First Instance found the accused SUA Jocelin not guilty and LADINGA Joseph NCHUNU guilty, and sentenced him to pay 100,000 FCFA (about \$200) as fines and 1,000,000 FCFA (about \$2000) as damages. They were arrested in Douala on the 24/05/2019 for the illegal possession and circulation of 237 kg of pangolin scales.

In June, three court rulings were passed and included the judgement at the Kribi Court of First Instance that found the accused NGAMBI Ruben and TSOGO BIKUE Sinclair guilty and sentenced them to pay 50,000 FCFA (about \$100) each as fine and 500,000 FCFA (about \$1000) as damages. He was arrested in Lolodorf on the 25/04/2020 for illegal possession of a mandrill.

The Foubot Court of First Instance found the accused AMADOU TIJANI, KPOUHENZEN Radifatou, SAPTT Aboubakar and ABDEL Aziz guilty and sentenced them to a 5-year imprisonment term and to pay 100,000 each FCFA as fines. They were arrested on the 20/05/2020 for illegal sale of a human skeleton.

The Douala – Ndokoti Court of First Instance found the accused ABDOUL NASSIR Sali guilty and sentenced him to 20 days closed imprisonment term and to pay 54,000 FCFA (about \$108) as fines and 1,042,000 FCFA (about \$2084) as damages. He was arrested in Douala on the 20/06/2019 for the illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of 95 Kgs of pangolin scales

The Abong-Mbang Court of First Instance found the accused NGOBA Lucie guilty and sentenced her to pay 500,000 FCFA as fine and 3,000,000 FCFA (about \$6000) as damages. She was arrested in Dimako on the 09/04/2020 for the illegal possession, circulation and sale of 50kg of pangolin scales.

The Mfou Court of First Instance found the accused BIKAI ONGUENE Joseph Kevin guilty and sentenced him to 6 months suspended sentence during 3 years and to pay 100,000 FCFA (about \$200) as fines. He was arrested in Yaounde on the 17/04/2020 for illegal possession of a mandrill.

The Bandjoun Court of First Instance found the accused TCHAPCHET Noe guilty and sentenced him to pay 100,000 FCFA (about \$200) as fines. He was arrested in Bandjoun on the 24/02/2020 for illegal possession of 5 leopard skins.

The Douala – Bonaberi Court of First Instance found the accused NDONGO Jean, TEGWI TIKU Clifford and Emmanuel Willy BRIGHT guilty and sentenced them to 6 months' imprisonment and to jointly pay 90,592 000 FCFA (About \$181,184) as damages. They were arrested in Douala on the 23/12/2020 for the illegal possession and circulation of 274 African grey parrots, 3 ivory tusks and 3 bags of pangolin scales.

The Yaounde – Ekounou Court of First Instance found the accused ATOUBA BEKONO Martin Paul, AYO'O ATOUBA Marguérite Nélie and ETOA MVIE Marcelin Junior guilty and sentenced them to one year suspended sentences during 3 years and to pay 500,000 FCFA (about \$1000) each as fines, 8,000,000 FCFA (about \$16,000) jointly as damages. They were arrested in Yaounde on the 07/06/2020 for the illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of 400kg of pangolin scales.

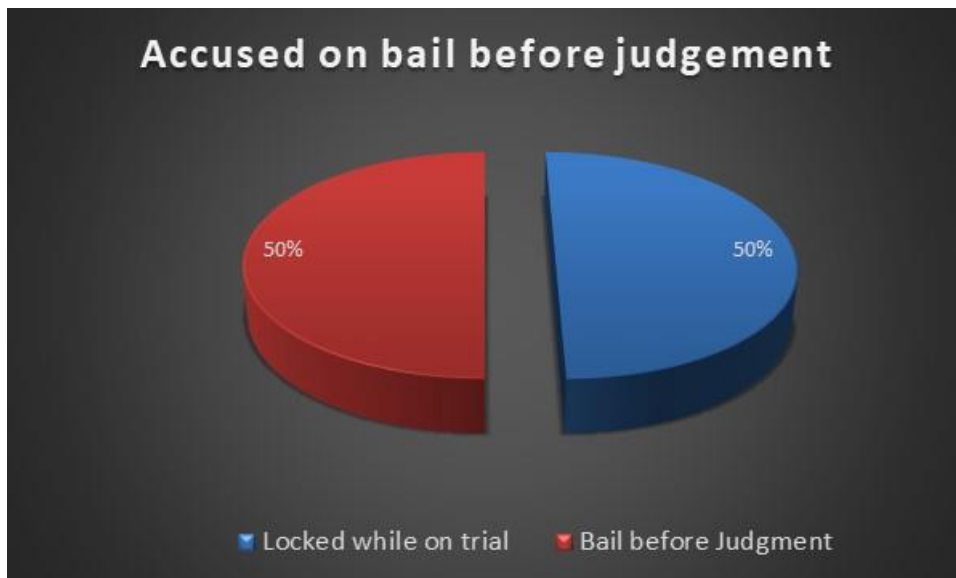
The Bertoua Court of First Instance found the accused NDINGA BABA Stanislas and TOUMAYA Jérémie guilty and sentenced them to 3 months' imprisonment and to pay 33,500 FCFA (about \$67) each as court charges. They were arrested in Bertoua on the 03/06/2020 for the illegal possession of 2 ivory tusks.

The Douala - Ndokoti Court of First Instance found the accused TCHIEKOU Théophile, MANYOMBE Samuel and MAKEMBE Lydie guilty. TCHIEKOU Théophile and MAKEMBE Lydie were sentenced to one year suspended sentence during 3 years and MANYOMBE Samuel was sentenced to a one-year imprisonment term. They were also sentenced to pay 200,000 FCFA (about \$400) each as fines and 6,000,000 FCFA (about 1200) jointly as damages. They were arrested in Douala on the 07/05/2020 for the illegal possession of 2 ivory tusks.

The Foubot Court of First Instance found the accused AMADOU TIJANI, KPOUHENZEN Radifatou, SAPTT Aboubakar and ABDEL Aziz guilty and sentenced them to 5 years in prison and to pay 100,000 FCFA (about \$200) each as fines. They are suspected wildlife traffickers arrested on the 20/05/2020 for illegal sale of a human skeleton.

The Batouri Court of First Instance found the accused ZOLA BEINA Roland not guilty and NDAYA Jean Balise and, NSANGO guilty. NDAYA Jean Balise and NSANGO were sentenced to pay 100,000 FCFA (about \$200) each as fines and 2,000,000 FCFA (about \$4000) jointly as damages. They were arrested in Batouri on the 03/12/2020 for the illegal possession of 70 kg of pangolin scales.

Two appeals were lodged during this period against court rulings; one in July and the other in December



**Figure 4: Rate of locking accused behind bars**

#### **4. Media**

A new head of the Media Department was appointed and Anna Etaka Egbe has been with the department since joining the organisation in 2006.

A total of 372 media pieces were produced and pushed into media including numerous articles in all media – radio, television, written press and the internet; achieved at a rate of one media piece per day. April, August and November had the highest number of media pieces while January recorded no media pieces because of the absence of operations and important court trials and work resumed mid-way through the month following the annual vacation.

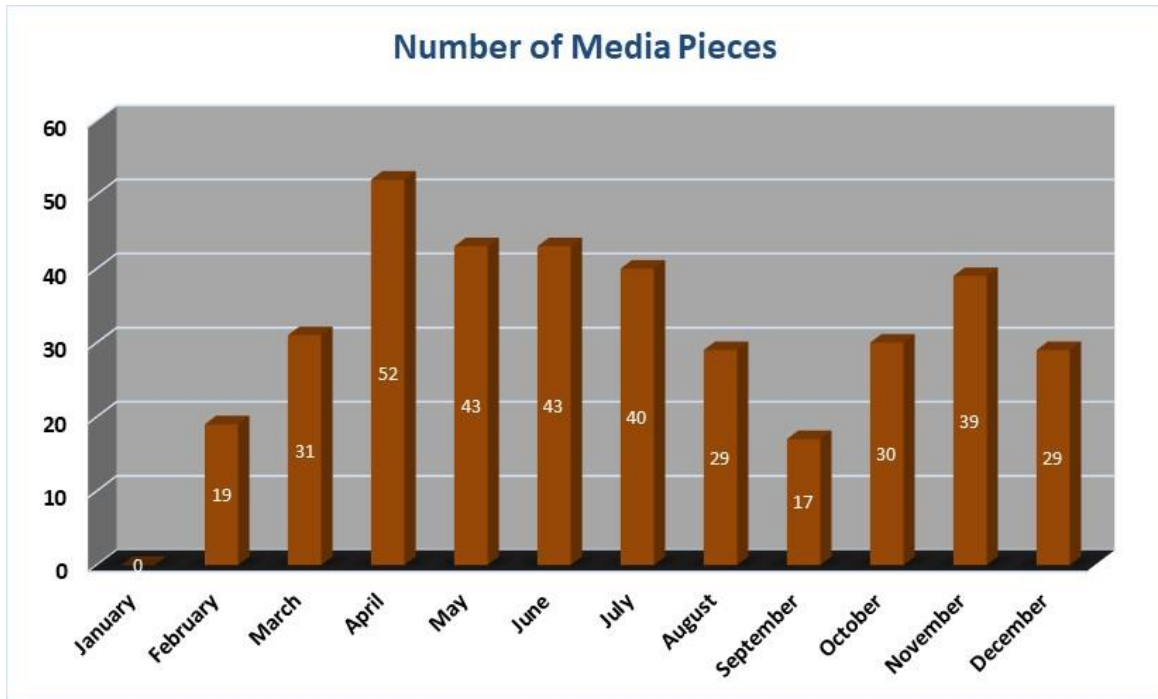
Special efforts were made on spreading the message on the link between the illegal wildlife trade and the Covid-19 pandemic with over 20 media pieces published.

Subjects were on a broad range of wildlife law enforcement issues including all of LAGA-MINFOF operations, prosecutions and fighting corruption. Among the topics featuring in the media include, the celebration of the World Pangolin Day; the Bandjoun arrest of a trafficker with five leopard skins and the court hearing; parrot traffickers' arrests in Kribi; the Kye-Ossi arrest of four with a leopard skin; the Dimako arrest of a trafficker with two bags of pangolin scales; Covid-19 and wildlife trade; the Yaounde arrest of a trafficker with a live mandrill; the Lolodorf arrest of two with a live mandrill; the Douala arrest of three ivory traffickers; the Foubot arrest of human bones traffickers; the arrest of three traffickers with close to 400kg of pangolin scales in Yaoundé; the Bertoua arrest of two with ivory tusks; the court hearing of 3 ivory traffickers arrested in Douala; the court hearing of the 2 human skeleton traffickers that were arrested in Foubot; the Yaounde arrest of two people with a leopard skin and a lion skin; the Ebolowa arrest of a trafficker with 23kg of pangolin scales and the subsequent court hearing; the arrest of two people with 3 African grey parrots and 6 Rose-ringed parakeets in Yaounde; the arrest of an ivory trafficker with 626kg of ivory in Ambam; the court hearing of three traffickers arrested with 26kg of ivory tusks in Douala as well as their judgement and the Bertoua arrest of six traffickers with four ivory tusks.

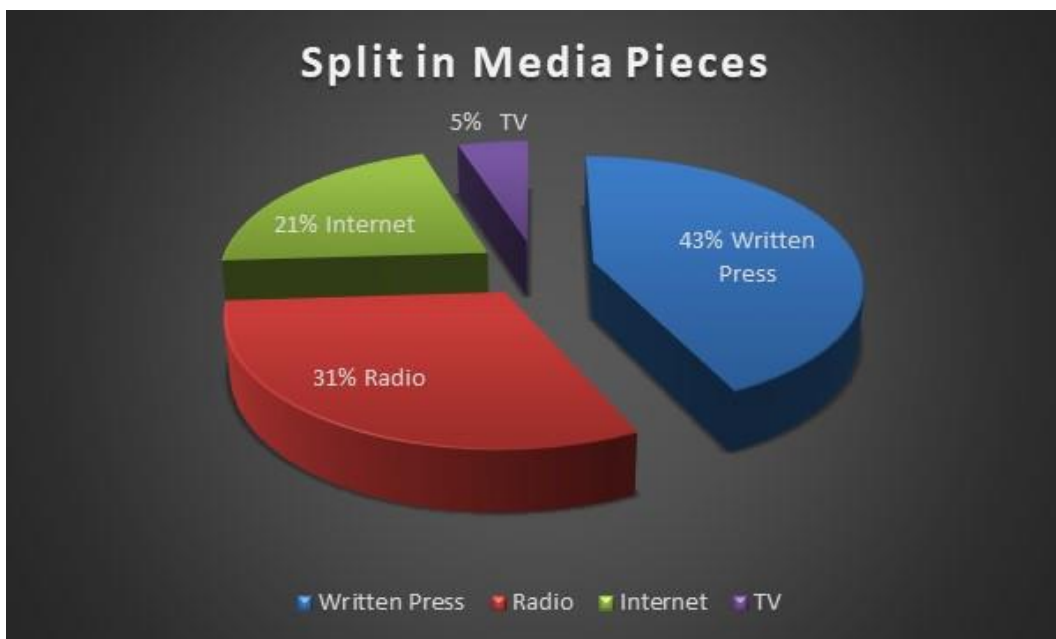
Interviews and quotes used in the various media pieces were from the Director of LAGA, the Gendarmerie Company Commander in Foubot, the Foubot Gendarmerie Brigade Commander, Precillia Tumenta, a lion specialist and Coordinator of the Center for Environment and Development Studies and the Deputy Director of LAGA

The 9<sup>th</sup> edition of Wildlife Justice was published and distributed to the media, authorities, NGOs and Universities, among several other stakeholders. It focused on the theme “Pangolin Trafficking”.

The Deputy Director was guest on prime time CRTV News programme Twilight to talk on the seizure of 118 ivory tusks in the south of the country, the causes and consequences of ivory trafficking and elephant extinction.



**Figure 5: Number of Media Pieces Produced and Published**



**Figure 6: Split of Media Pieces**

## **5. Management**

Covid-19 pandemic piled obstacles but the LAGA team kept pushing forward. As with many other organisations, the pandemic affected the normal functioning and management put in place adaptive measures to address the situation. The entire team was sent home following the increase in cases of Covid-19 but came back quickly to push for operations with remarkable success, courage and activism. Some preventive measures accompanied government's own measures to fight the pandemic and ensuring the spread did not affect members of the organisation. Management placed emphasis on the conscientious application of the prescribed measures. The measures included governments instructions to preventing Covid-19 in the country and supplementary directives developed by the organization to fully reinforce and protect the health of every LAGA member. Wearing of facemasks in office and out, social distancing and disinfecting hands and surfaces were some of the measures strictly applied. Those travelling on public buses were allowed to pay for two seats to enable distancing in the buses. Anyone who felt sick was immediately isolated and asked to return home. A protocol to take charge of anyone who was suspected of exposure to Covid-19 was put in place. Members were equally obliged to do a Covid-19 test and other tests to determine the cause of any malaise or affliction. All staff did a routine Covid-19 test that returned negative.

In cases where live animals were seized, extra measures were put in place and applied, in addition to the animal first aid measures that are normally applied. Management equally liaised effectively with the Central Coordination Unit on reporting and updating on the situation in all EAGLE countries and the prescription of barrier measures to be applied.

Coordination of field activity and ensuring financial activities were efficiently carried out despite the difficulties presented by the situation.

A couple of team building activities were carried out during the period and included common office lunch and a visit to the seaside resort town of Kribi.

A team from an audit firm worked with the finance department for an in-depth auditing of the organisation.

Under the EAGLE exchange programme, training sessions continued to be held in Yaoundé – Cameroon, with an investigator from Gabon arriving the country for a month-long training and experience sharing visit. A super volunteer completed a three and a half month working visit. She worked with all departments and AC, our sister anti-corruption organisation to build her skills in fighting corruption.

The internet investigator who had been with the organisation for over two years came to the end of his stay and moved on to newer challenges. An investigator was relieved of her duties after coming to the end of the road following seven years of fruitful collaboration.

The monthly thought-provoking sessions of presentations and debates were suspended as part of measures put in place to fight the Covid-19 pandemic.

The LAGA team travelled to Batie, West Region to participate at funeral activities of their former colleague and member, Ma Mado who died after a long illness. The death of one of our founding fathers Vincent Gudmia Mfonfu was announced.

An Italian movie crew returned to the country to continue filming with the investigation and legal departments for the production of a movie depicting efforts may by the Cameroon government in fighting the illegal pangolins scales trade.

A thought-provoking session of presentation and debates for the LAGA team was organised to foster activism and leadership skills. This initiative also aims at strengthening the capacity, unity and values of the LAGA family.

The entire LAGA team went on annual vacation and end of year activities were carried out. Office reopens in January 2021. Everyone gathered at the table and extended season's greetings during an end of year lunch. Christmas gifts were equally distributed to every member.

Two fellows from the Mentor Bushmeat Programme of ZSL were hosted and trained on wildlife law enforcement.

The Annual Report of 2019 and the First Semester Report of 2020 made available upon request. The electronic versions are available on line on the LAGA website [www.laga-enforcement.org](http://www.laga-enforcement.org). This is a result of teamwork involving all the departments in LAGA including Investigations, Legal, Media, Operations and Management.

## **6. External Relations and Policy**

Early on, at the onset of the Covid-19 spread, government strongly advised and instructed that physical meetings and contacts should be avoided as much as possible and the use virtual meetings whenever possible, and in this light, external relations activities were reduced to the barest minimum.

The Deputy Director held a meeting with the ZSL law enforcement advisor who was visiting the country. Discussions focused principally on wildlife law enforcement strategies, techniques and conservation in general. They also explored possible areas of cooperation and assistance.

The Deputy Director participated at meetings organized by the Cameroon Pangolin Working Group that was focused on preparations for the World Pangolin Day that took place on the 15<sup>th</sup> of February. Activities were carried out by several conservation organisations including LAGA, working under the framework of the Cameroon Pangolin Working Group and a press conference facilitated by the Deputy Director was done.

The Deputy Director did a short talk on LAGA's activities and its collaboration with Interpol at a three-day Interpol meeting that brought together Interpol, Wildlife and Customs officials who focused on finding state-level priorities and needs for an upcoming Interpol operation against wildlife trafficking.

On the invitation of the Belgian Ambassador, the Deputy Director participated at a meeting at the Secretariat of Defence in Charge of the Gendarmerie that brought together 5 top gendarmerie officials including the Central Deputy Director of Coordination and a technical adviser. The meeting was focused on discussing some wildlife cases at the courts with links to the gendarmerie.

The Deputy Director held a meeting with the President of Global Earth Watch and a consultant working for the conservation group. They discussed conservation problems in the northern regions of Cameroon including public awareness campaigns, transhumant pastoralism, community participation in initiatives. He exchanged with them, some experiences and practical ideas on how to optimise efforts towards the achievement of conservation objectives in the region.

The Deputy Director held a meeting with the Director of Criminal Matters at the Ministry of Justice to discuss a wildlife case.

The Deputy Director accompanied by the heads of investigations and legal departments and a controller from the regional delegation held a meeting with the Commander of the Gendarmerie Operational Command Post to discuss issues pertaining to parrot trafficking and the rearrests of two parrot traffickers who had earlier on been illegally released.

The Deputy Director did three presentations in Sangmelima (South) on Information Gathering within the context of wildlife law enforcement, on Investigation Techniques and on Information Management and Operations during a workshop organized by ZSL that brought together stakeholders from the South and East regions that is home to some of the most important parks such as the Dja Biosphere Reserve – a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The Head of the Legal Department and the Investigations Department held meetings with the South Regional Police Chief, the South Regional Forestry and Wildlife Delegate, the Head of Customs at the Freight Department at the Douala Airport and at the Nsimalen Airport and the Nsimalen Chief of Forestry and Wildlife Post. The focus of the meetings was on building active and collaborative platforms for eventual operations. The Heads of the Legal Department and the Investigation Department held a meeting with the Foubot Public Security Commissioner on discussions to foster collaboration.

The Deputy Director, heads of the legal department and the investigations department held a working session with the Centre Regional Delegate, during which they discussed collaborative initiatives to improve on wildlife law enforcement in the area and worked on strategies which would lead to the arrest of the 2 parrot traffickers. Before the meeting, the Deputy Director had held an earlier meeting with the newly appointed Delegate to appraise the wildlife law enforcement situation in the region.

He equally held a meeting with the Research Officer No. 2 at MINFOF on issues connected to the Memorandum of Understanding binding the two parties.

The Deputy Director attended the ceremony presided over by the Minister of Forestry and Wildlife that saw the presentation of the National Anti-Poaching and Wildlife Crime Strategy document and a copy of the document was given to LAGA that participated in the elaboration of the strategy.

The Deputy Director facilitated a workshop that focused on contributing to the deepening and harmonization of the understanding of institutional actors of the causes and consequences of agro-pastoral conflicts. The workshop, organized by human rights group Recodh brought together state actors and NGOs working in the domain.

He participated at a workshop organized by TRAFFIC that focused on presenting the preliminary analysis of the impact of training workshops organized and the tools developed by TRAFFIC and WWF to combat wildlife crime in Cameroon between 2015 and 2019.

The Deputy Director did a presentation on the trafficking of the African grey parrot in the country during a virtual workshop organized in Nigeria to discuss issues related to the conservation of the species which has been intensely trafficked over the years in the country and in the Central African sub region.



He held a meeting with the new Project Manager of the Tikki Hywood Foundation who arrived the country and they discussed several issues relating to pangolin conservation and wildlife conservation in general.

The Deputy Director held another meeting with GFA consultant Stephane Crayne to discuss law enforcement initiatives around the Mt. Cameroon area and strategies to effectively fight wildlife crime in the area.

He participated at a Cameroon Pangolin Working Group meeting that was aimed at relaunching the activities of the group that has been lethargic since the coming of Covid 19.

The Deputy Director did a presentation on the legal procedure relating to the prosecution of wildlife offenders during a TRAFFIC organised workshop in Douala that focused on introducing an INL funded project that shall work to strengthening the capacity of law enforcement in the country

The Head of the Investigations Department held a meeting with the Project Manager of the Ebo Forest Research Project to discuss issues pertaining to the proposed plan to contract portions of the forest to logging companies.

A legal adviser participated at a workshop organized by ZSL that aimed at training ecoguards of the TRIDOM on the protection of African grey parrots. She did two presentations, one on law enforcement activities carried out by LAGA against parrot traffickers and the other on the calculation of damages to be awarded MINFOF in wildlife cases.

Two legal advisers met with the Director of Criminal Matters at the Ministry of Justice to discuss the fight against wildlife crime.

## **7. LAGA and the EAGLE Network**

LAGA's new model for NGO – Government collaboration establishing wildlife law enforcement, bringing about results with an innovative approach geared at changing the existing system and triggering a paradigm shift in the way NGOs tackle wildlife crime is being realised within the EAGLE network. The model is focusing on the prosecution of major traffickers, not the small-time poacher who is motivated by the city dwelling traffickers. This involves fighting head on the major obstacle to the application of the wildlife law in Africa – Corruption. LAGA's experience and model is currently operating within the EAGLE network that group 9 countries.

The replication of the LAGA model is also geared at taking cross section lessons outside of wildlife conservation; these include the fight against corruption, fostering activism, fight against child trafficking etc.

**<http://www.laga-enforcement.org/Replication/tabid/166/Default.aspx>**

The EAGLE network is now responsible for the replication activity of the LAGA model that was formerly the preserve of LAGA. Collaboration between the EAGLE CCU and LAGA was intensified during this semester at all levels including investigations, operations, legal, media and management levels. LAGA continued to host training sessions in the country and in this regard, LAGA hosted an investigator from Gabon.

## **8. Fostering Activism**

LAGA continued to foster activism internally and externally. Creating independent activists is one aspect that LAGA uses to foster activism. The NGO members are encouraged to develop their own projects on the various development issues of their country and are given NGO time and management time to develop the project in the vision of turning it in to an independent NGO/paper/book. The function of leadership is not producing more followers but to produce more leaders.

**<http://www.laga-enforcement.org/Activism/tabid/77/Default.aspx>**

Every normal year, activism activities include a couple of monthly documentaries and presentations to building the activism insight and spirit of members but due to the measures enforced to preventing Covid-19, the presentations were suspended. Only a couple of events were therefore carried -one presentation was done, a movie projection took place and a family dinner was held to celebrate women's rights with the LAGA team members.

**Control and Co-ordination in an organization:** The presentation is on how to control and coordinate an organization, in other to achieve organizational objectives. The presenter mentions the fact that control and coordination are crucial managerial functions for every entrepreneur, to make sure that their goals are achieved within a given time. The presenter started by defining the main concept, and explains how these two functions are often confused with each other and sometimes seem to mean the same thing. Discussion focused on the difference between control and coordination, and how to effectively put these functions in place. In conclusion, it turns out that control is part of coordination, and one cannot be done without the other for the proper functioning of an organization.

**Movie: Harriett:** When a young black woman escapes from her slave master she comes back to take the man she loved to her new abode only to get disappointment as he is married off to another woman and this mission turns into a slave freeing mission as she uses underground routes to start freeing slaves. Harriett is a captivating movie and she is a heroine of the slave era with courage, determination and commitment. The young lady demonstrates extraordinary bravery and leadership in the dangerous task of freeing slaves under the noses of rampaging gun welding white men. Her guide is her religion she constantly calls upon to lead her way. Discussions focused on slavery, activism, Black Lives Matter and other social ills faced by the society in those days and faced by the society today.

## **9. Strategic Overview of Wildlife Crime in Cameroon and Operations' Impact**

Beyond the number of operations and their effectiveness, there is an even more important factor in evaluating LAGA's work – the strategic value of the operations in reducing the level of illegal wildlife trade. In this regard, LAGA is choosing diversified operations, which carry an added value to expose and map the different angles of wildlife crime in Cameroon. Consequently, the LAGA-MINFOF work sheds light on the nature of illegal wildlife trade in the sub-region. The strategic focus over this period was on, apes, ivory and other elephant parts while sea turtles, pangolins and other wildlife received some attention too.

### ***9.1 Ivory***

Operations against ivory trafficking constituted the biggest share of operations carried within the year. A big ivory trafficking network was dismantled in the East of the country and two members of the network were arrested in Bertoua while 4 others were later arrested in Yokadouma not too far from the border with the Republic of Congo. They had connections with ivory trafficking across the country to Nigeria and one of the traffickers is a repeat offender who had earlier served jail term for the same offence. They moved the ivory from the Yokadouma travelling several hundreds of

kilometres to Bertoua not only demonstrating their ability to safely move contraband over long distances but equally hitting home the idea that ivory trafficking is invariably international and attracts huge interest from traffickers from every part of the sub region.

Three were arrested in an operation carried out in Douala, the most important ivory trafficking hotspot in the country. This is true by nature of its location as the exit port of the country where ivory can easily be exported to several destinations.

A long time ivory trafficker who had been under investigations for a long time was finally arrested alongside an accomplice in Bertoua with two ivory tusks at his disposal. The arrest that was carried out in June concluded a long running investigations against him. He was well known to carry out illegal activities and he admitted to gold trafficking. They are part of a network stretching to CAR and connected to Congo.

The two more ivory operations carried out indicate the nature of ivory trafficking that is connected to other forms of trafficking such as gold trafficking, it extends beyond borders in the sub region and it is a permanent feature in Cameroon's port city of Douala. Ivory trafficking is ongoing all the time there.

### ***9.2 Pangolin scales***

A relatively significant seizure of pangolin scales was done in the depth of the health crisis highlighting the resolve of traffickers to carry out their illegal business irrespective of the dangers and threats associated with their activity. This was further compounded by the fact that the two who were arrested with 380kg of pangolin scales were military men who used that status to foster impunity in trafficking. They took advantage of the fact that they belonged to the Cameroon military and would inevitably never be arrested, using their uniforms to scare anyone, especially wildlife officials who attempt to create any problems for them. To exemplify the case, a woman was arrested a couple of hours after the arrest and one of the two military men is her son she sent because of his military status to ensuring the illegal business was conducted to completion without any obstacles for them.

Another pangolin scale operation was carried out in April with the arrest of another woman who had in the past been arrested several times by the gendarmerie and released without any charges brought against her. This was because a boyfriend of hers who is gendarmerie brigade commander in the town would use his uniform to get her out of trouble.

The trafficking of pangolin scales seems to be going unabated despite the health crisis enveloping the world today. Despite the link of pangolins with the Covid-19 pandemic, pangolin scales traffickers still calmly run their business. She kept a gang of several poachers who supplied her with wildlife products. She would travel to the notorious Nkolndongo market in Yaounde where she supplied other traffickers.

An ex-soldier was arrested alongside two others as they attempted to supply pangolin scales in the East Region. Some military people never hesitate to use their status to protect the illegal wildlife business. He accompanied his accomplices to the town where they intended to sell the scales and provided the much needed protection as they travelled with the contraband

Pangolin scales trafficking has ultimately become a permanent feature in the illegal wildlife trade in the country and 8 traffickers out of the 39 traffickers arrested were trafficking in pangolin scales. One peculiar feature with pangolin scales, unlike ivory, is that everyone, even the very ordinary person, can become involved in the trafficking chain making it a very expansive and inclusive illegal trade. From the village consumer of pangolin who sells scales to the first line of traffickers who collect

them, the chain moves up to big time Chinese traffickers with logistical capabilities to export several tons of pangolin scales out of the region to Asia.

### ***9.3 Leopard and lion Skin***

Two operations carried out witnessed the arrest of several leopard skin traffickers amidst the continuous trade in the feline skins. As natural as it already looks, one of the operations was carried out in the West Region where traffickers are now using traditions and rites to justify trafficking in leopard skins. Because leopard skins are a huge part of the tradition of the people of the West Region, traffickers are taking advantage of tradition to attempt “leopard skin launder”. Fresh skins are seized from traffickers who most of the time lie they are traditional products of the various palaces. There is also a new phenomenon in the area where traffickers steal skins from the palaces and sell. The trafficker who was arrested in Bandjoun with five leopard skins had travelled to the East Region where he bought one of the skins. He owns a shop at one of the main markets in Bafoussam, the capital of the West Region.

During a second leopard skin operation four traffickers were arrested in Kye-ossi, South, with a leopard skin. They ran an illegal business of leopard skins across the border from the neighbouring countries to Cameroon extending to the West Region. That is the nature of leopard skin trafficking, sourcing the skins from areas where demand is not very strong to areas where demand is strong in the country.

Two traffickers were arrested in Yaounde with a lion skin and a leopard skin. The first trafficker who was very cautious was arrested shortly after he had consulted a soothsayer to determine if his illegal business was going to be risk free. In this respect he changed destinations several times as he moved the products. He had two artisanal shops as front businesses for cover of the illegal wildlife trafficking he carried out. A woman who was formerly a secondary school teacher was arrested an hour later at her residence and she claimed the skins belong to her. The issue of using front business comes up regularly as traffickers do business with lots of planning and strategy to avoid arrest. They strategically plan their business as intelligent professionals.

### ***9.4 Mandrills***

Mandrills do not frequently come up in illegal trade as their cousins the chimps and gorillas but three operations were carried out and three live mandrills were rescued. A trafficker was arrested in Yaounde, with a young mandrill he had been keeping for a while after buying it in the south of the country, home to mandrill populations. And still in the south, two traffickers were arrested in Lolodorf, South Region with a young and wounded mandrill. They collaborated in wildlife trafficking; one of them specializing in the buying and the other checking out clients.

A woman was arrested in the south of the country with a young mandrill and it was found out that another mandrill had died in her possession. She had a bar and had contacts to several people. The trade in young primates continue to be carried out also by ordinary people doing ordinary jobs. They are the bedrock on which bigger and international pet traffickers build their trafficking syndicates. Live animals need special care and attention otherwise they simply die and arrest operations tell us that ordinary folks are a vital clog in the chain that supplies illegal and legal zoos around the world.

### ***9.5 Human bones***

In the fight against wildlife trafficking, several other areas of criminality have been brought to the fore to enforcement officials. The trafficking in drugs, human beings, arms, terrorism are all other forms of criminality that wildlife law enforcement is constantly and increasingly uncovering. In carrying out wildlife investigations, severally traffickers have been found to engage in these forms

and this was the case when six traffickers were arrested during two separate operations with human skeletons. The link between wildlife criminality and other forms is being proven on the ground every day.

In May, during investigations into wildlife trafficking in the West Region, leads were found into human bones trafficking and this resulted in the arrest of four traffickers with an almost complete human skeleton that still had dried up flesh on the bones and a human skull with hair on it.

In June, during a new round of wildlife investigations in the same area, human bones trafficking was gains discovered and this led to the arrest of two with two almost full human skeletons. One of them left from the border town of Ambam in the south to complete business in the area that has become notorious for human bones trafficking. Ivory investigations were being carried out in the area leading to this discovery.

## **10. Corruption and Wildlife Crime**

LAGA was an experiment field for methods of fighting corruption within a law enforcement and application process. All bribing attempts are documented into our case tracking systems. LAGA is not an observer of corruption; it was created to fight corruption, redirecting the positive pressures existing within the system, usually wasted in large conferences, to specific corruption attempts and the field realities that form corruption. These bribery attempts are vigorously fought against and vehemently condemned by LAGA. LAGA is not a watchdog group and not created as an observer, it fight directly whenever corrupt practices or bribery attempts have been observed.

This ongoing fight is being manifested in some results either directly or indirectly. In March and following the arrest of leopard skin traffickers in Kye-ossi and as wildlife law enforcement officials were establishing the offence report, they received pressure from one member of a trafficker's family and the chief of the Bamoun community in Kye-Ossi. They proposed money to the judicial police officers to facilitate the release of those arrested but the officers who were in charge of writing the offence reports refused. Failing to bring in their expected results, they turned to the LAGA team on the ground but failed.

In April, when a trafficker was arrested with 50kg of pangolin scales, the wildlife law enforcement officials establishing the offence report received pressure from the boyfriend of the suspect who is a Brigade commander. He tried to influence his colleagues to free her at their level but the wildlife officials and police handling the matter stood their ground. Seeing that his colleagues could not help, he approached the LAGA team, unfortunately this too failed to produce any effect. He wanted to use his position to influence the preliminary enquiries. When the state prosecutor became aware of the situation he decided to direct and control the preliminary enquiries himself.

Still in April when a mandrill trafficker was arrested, his mother would arrive the offices of the gendarmerie to find a way to stop the matter at the level of the gendarmerie but the wildlife officials and gendarmes handling the matter again stood their ground. She would attempt the same approach with the LAGA team on the ground for the same results.

The same situation would obtain in Lolodorf in the south following the arrest of two with a live mandrill and as wildlife law enforcement officials were writing the offence report, family members of the traffickers came to the brigade to propose a bribe to the brigade commander to end the procedure there but he chased them away. He also said MINFOF officials had full control of the procedure. Such strong commitment to fighting corruption may not have been the same after the prosecution file went further than the judicial police officers and at the end of the day one of them was found not guilty.

When three were arrested in Douala for unlawful possession of two ivory tusks, the commonly used tactics of trying to influence officers doing offense reports was once again witnessed as they approached the Littoral Regional Delegate of Forestry and Wildlife to influence the procedure and get the traffickers released but this failed and their next move was to try the same tactics with the state prosecutor.

In a totally different town this time in Bertoua, same offence, unlawful possession of two ivory tusks and same commonly used tactics; trying to get officers drop the prosecution was again witnessed. As wildlife law enforcement officials wrote the offence report at the offices of the regional delegation, one of the traffickers' brother proposed a huge amount of money as bribe to the MINFOF official, who was in charge of the matter for him to find a way to stop the matter at his level but he simply refused to take the money. They equally approached the LAGA team but obviously failed to get any results.

When two traffickers were arrested in Yaounde in August, one of the traffickers who said the lion skin belonged to her proposed a huge amount of money to the gendarmerie brigade commandant, who was handling the matter to stop the prosecution at his level and surprisingly asking that her lion and leopard skins be given back to her. This was categorically rebuffed but she continued and tried to negotiate with the LAGA team who accompanied the gendarmerie on the ground and was quickly shut up.

When two parrot traffickers were arrested in Yaounde in September and held in police custody at the Yaoundé II Gendarmerie Company, the commandant illegally released them from the cell for very dubious motives. The LAGA team worked hard to ensure the illegal procedure was rectified and the traffickers rearrested. A third trafficker, allegedly the brain behind the trafficking, was later arrested following an arrest warrant by an examining judge. He had earlier been treated to an abnormally lenient preliminary process by wildlife officials handling the matter

# Overview of International Wildlife Traffic in Cameroon



## Annex I – Case Tracking System – January – December 2020

<u>Case No.</u>	<u>Operation date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Case name</u>	<u>Offence</u>	<u>Profile</u>	<u>Remarks</u>	<u>Int. Connection</u>	<u>Status</u>
640	24/02/2020	Bandjoun , West	<a href="#">TCHAPTCHET Noe</a>	Illegal possession of 5 leopard skins	Tradi-practitioner	He belongs to a network of trafficking in varied wildlife products notably leopard skins and elephant trophies. He is based in Bafoussam and receives products from partners, use his connections to sell them and his commission is paid based on the sales he makes.	None	Free on settlement
641	03/04/2020	Kye-ossi, South	<a href="#">TCHATCHOUA NG Duclou</a>	Illegal possession of 01 leopard skin	Driver	He is part of a network that deals with leopard skins and ivory, he is one of the main person in charge of publicizing their products to get potential buyers then have his own commission.	Gabon	Free on settlement
642	03/04/2020	Kye-ossi, South	<a href="#">MBENMOUN Aboubakar</a>	Illegal possession of 01 leopard skin	Trader	Being part of the network, he has relations in Fouban where he places orders and organises products to be sent using travelling agencies to be sold.	Gabon	Free on settlement
643	03/04/2020	Kye-ossi, South	<a href="#">ABBA Boukar</a>	Illegal possession of 01 leopard skin	Trader	He is a tradipractitioner and hides behind it to propose the real business to customers who come to buy his medicine, once a product is sold he receives his own share	Gabon	Free on settlement
644	03/04/2020	Kye-ossi, South	<a href="#">NGOUNGA YAONGOUO Ismaïla</a>	Illegal possession of 01 leopard skin	Driver	He is the main brain of this network, he organises and make all sales arrangements and plans when and where the transaction is to take place.	Gabon	Free on settlement
645	09/04/2020	Dimako, East	<a href="#">NGOBA Lucie</a>	Illegal possession of 22 Kg of pangolin scales	Trader	She is a big business woman who does many types of businesses including wildlife protected products, she is highly connected with the forces of law and order with whom she counts on her protection. She supplies great quantities of products to	None	Free on settlement
646	17/04/2020	Yaounde, Centre	<a href="#">BIKAÏ ONGUENE Joseph</a>	Illegal possession of 1 live Mandrill	Student	He is a student and take selling of live protected animals like a business, he buys live primate, grow and sell them to interested persons . He usually buys from far off villages and	None	Free on settlement
647	25/04/2020	Lolodorf	<a href="#">NGAMBI NGAMBI Ruben</a>	Illegal possession of 1 live Mandrill	Trader	He belongs to a network of primate selling, he has agents he sends to the villages to get animals while he maintains and	None	Free on settlement
648	25/04/2020	Lolodorf, South	<a href="#">TSOGO BIKUE Sinclair</a>	Illegal possession of 1 live Mandrill	Trader	He is one of the errand boys of Ngambi who goes around looking for live protected animals while his boss negotiates the market then get paid depending on the	None	Free on settlement



Case No.	Operation date	Location	Case name	Offence	Profile	Remarks	Int. Connection	Status
649	07/05/2020	Douala, Littoral	<a href="#">TCHEUKOU Théophile</a>	Illegal possession of 2 ivory tusks	Mechanic	He is accomplice of Makembe and Manyombe. He was in charge of transporting of the ivory tusks	None	Free on settlement
650	07/05/2020	Douala, Littoral	<a href="#">MANYOMBE Samuel</a>	Illegal possession of 2 ivory tusks	Former stewardess	She is owner of the ivory seized. She is the one organized the traffic of wildlife products in their	None	Free on settlement
651	07/05/2020	Douala, Littoral	<a href="#">MAKEMBE Juliette Lydie</a>	Illegal possession of 2 ivory tusks	Businessman	In the network, he is in charge seeking customers for saling of wildlife products. He also smuggled gold and mercury	None	Free on settlement
652	20/05/2020	Foumbot, West	<a href="#">KPOUHENZEN Radifatou</a>	illegal traffic of skeletons	Farmer	Member of a well established network of the human bone traffickers. She is in charge of keeping of the products when they are dug up. It is a old traffickers network of wildlife products	Gabon, Nigeria	locked while on trial
653	20/05/2020	Foumbot, West	<a href="#">AMADOU Tijani</a>	illegal traffic of skeletons	Taxi driver	His is the head of the well established network of skeleton. Its roles to seek customers	Gabon, Nigeria	locked while on trial
654	20/05/2020	Foumbot, West	<a href="#">SAPTT Aboubakar</a>	illegal traffic of skeletons	Farmer	Another member of a well established network of skeleton. His role is to unearth the bodies and hand ove to Tijani who is looking for buyers	Gabon, Nigeria	locked while on trial
655	20/05/2020	Foumbot, West	<a href="#">ABDEL Aziz</a>	illegal traffic of skeletons	Farmer	Another member of a well established network of skeleton. His role is also to unearth the bodies and hand ove to Tijani who is looking for buyers	Gabon, Nigeria	locked while on trial
656	03/06/2020	Bertoua, East	<a href="#">NDINGA BabasStanislas</a>	Illegal possession of 2 ivory tusks	Cashier in a microfinance	A well-known dealer arrested for trading in the ivory tusk. Used cover as a banker to carry out illegal trade in wildlife. He has been doing this business for years with his accomplice	CRA	locked while on trial
657	03/06/2020	Bertoua, East	<a href="#">TOUMAYA Gérémie</a>	Illegal possession of 2 ivory tusks	motobike rider	A member of NDINGA Baba network involved in ivory trafficking in the east region and between CRA and Cameroon. He is responsible for searching clients. Arrested in Yaounde while trying to illegally trade in 2 elephant	CRA	locked while on trial
658	07/06/2020	Yaounde, Centre	<a href="#">ATOUBA Bekono Martin Paul</a>	illegal possession of 359 kg of pangolins scales	Military at the presidential guard	The biggest wildife trafficker he is a sergent at the garde présidentielle. He is at the center of a vast network of traffickers. He uses his military status to traffic	None	Free on settlement
659	07/06/2020	Yaounde, Centre	<a href="#">AYOO ATOUBA Marguerite</a>	illegal possession of 359 kg of pangolins scales	trader	The biggest wildlife trafficker in Cameroon arrested in yaounde two milary and a high level trafficker in wildlife products arrested with 359 kg Pangolin scales while attempting to sell.	None	Free on settlement
660	07/06/2020	Yaounde, Centre	<a href="#">ETO ETOA MVE Marcelin Junior</a>	illegal possession of 359 kg of pangolins scales	Second class navy soldier	He is the son of madame AYOO Atouba. His role is to collect the money and hand it over to hi mother who is the head of the network	None	Free on settlement

Case No.	Operation date	Location	Case name	Offence	Profile	Remarks	Int. Connect ion	Status
661	26/06/2020	Foumbot, West	<a href="#">LONTSI Saint Claire</a>	illegal traffic of 2 human skeletons	Trader	Member of a well established network of the human bone traffickers. Its role is to seek customers. It is a old traffickers network of wildlife products. He also smuggled gold and mercury	None	locked while on trial
662	26/06/2020	Foumbot, West	<a href="#">AMINOUE Fakoue</a>	illegal traffic of 2 human skeletons	Trader	Member of a well established network of the human bone traffickers. She is in charge of keeping of the products when they are dug up.	None	locked while on trial
663	06/08/2020	Yaounde, Centre	<a href="#">ADAMA Mama</a>	illegal possession of 1 leopard skin and 1 lion skin	Craftsman / Seller	He belongs to a network of trafficking in varied wildlife products notably leopard skins, lion skins and elephant trophies. He is based in Yaounde and receives products from partners, use his connections to sell them and his commission is paid	Botswana	Free on settlement
664	06/08/2020	Yaounde, Centre	<a href="#">KAMGAM Epse TCHAMGME NDJENDE Mario</a>	illegal possession of 1 leopard skin and 1 lion skin	retired teacher	Anotehr member of a big network that exports leopard skin and lion skin coming from Botswana to the international black market. She is real owner of 2 skins seized	Botswana	Free on settlement
665	26/08/2020	Ebolowa, South	<a href="#">ANGO O ASSAKO Samson</a>	illegal possession of 23 kg of pangolin scales	Sawyer	A member of a big network involved in pangolin scales. He is in charge to collect pangolin scales in South region especially in Akom 2, Campo and sell	None	Free on settlement
666	25/09/2020	Yaounde, Centre	<a href="#">BEKOMBO GUIWA Bruno</a>	illegal possession of 1 Grey parrots and 2 rose-ringed parakeet	Farmer	Head of a big network of captor of totally protected species, particularly the grey parrots and rose-ringed parakeet.	None	locked while on trial
667	25/09/2020	Yaounde, Centre	<a href="#">NKWASSI Sylvester</a>	Illegal possession of 2 Grey parrots and 4 rose-ringed parakeet	Farmer	Another member of a well established network of captor of grey parrots and rose-ringed parakeet	None	locked while on trial
668	21/10/2020	Ambam, South	<a href="#">MOHAMADOU Ibrahim</a>	illegal possession of 626 kg of ivory tusks	Driver	A notorious dealer and member of an international network involved in trafficking Ivory tusks. He works in partnership with some traffickers in Gabon and Equatorial Guinea. He was caught in Ambam trying to transport huge quantities of Ivories (118) From Ambam to Yaounde	Gabon, Equatorial Guinea	locked while on trial
669	04/11/2020	Yaounde, Centre	<a href="#">NDZANA Celestin</a>	Illegal possession of 2 Grey parrots and 4 rose-ringed parakeet	Capturer	A well-known international parrot trafficker 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	None	Free on settlement
670	02/12/2020	Bertoua, East	<a href="#">MBOKI MPORI Clément</a>	illegal possession of 4 ivory tusks	Teacher /Seller	Another member of a well established network of ivory trafiker between Messok, Lomie Yokadouma and Bertoua around Dja Biosphere reserve and national Park of Boumba Bek who are known for illegal killing for illegal of protected species principally elephants	Nigeria	locked while on trial

<b>Case No.</b>	<b>Operation date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Case name</b>	<b>Offence</b>	<b>Profile</b>	<b>Remarks</b>	<b>Int. Connection</b>	<b>Status</b>
671	02/12/2020	Bertoua, East	TCHENE Maxime	illegal possession of 4 ivory tusks	Civil servant	Used cover as a civil servant to carry out illegal trade in wildlife.	Nigeria	Free on settlement
672	02/12/2020	Bertoua, East	JOVAH YAHWE Christian	illegal possession of 4 ivory tusks	businessman	A regular dealer of Nigerian nationality with no official resident documents for Cameroon. He is well known by the divisional delegation to be a ivory dealer	Nigeria	locked while on trial
673	02/12/2020	Bertoua, East	POMELA ABELA Aimé	illegal possession of 4 ivory tusks		A member of JAVAH network involved in ivory trafficking in the east region. He is responsible for searching clients.	Nigeria	locked while on trial
674	02/12/2020	Bertoua, East	NGOUALONG KUETE	illegal possession of 4 ivory tusks	Farmer	A well-known dealer arrested for trading in the ivory tusk. Used cover as a farmer to carry out illegal trade in wildlife.	Nigeria	locked while on trial
675	02/12/2020	Bertoua, East	MOHAMADOU Nabi	illegal possession of 4 ivory tusks	trader	He is a middleman and does many activities and gets his commission.	Nigeria	locked while on trial
676	03/12/2020	Batouri, East	ZOLA BEINA Roland	illegal possession of 52 kg of pangolin scales	Retired military	The biggest wildlife trafficker he is a retired military. He is at the center of a vast network of traffickers. He uses his military status to traffic wildlife products	None	locked while on trial
677	03/12/2020	Batouri, East	NSANGOU Aboubacar	illegal possession of 52 kg of pangolin scales	Driver	A member of a big network involved in pangolin scales. He is in charge to collect pangolin scales. Used cover as driver to sell pangolin scales	None	locked while on trial
678	03/12/2020	Batouri, East	NDAYA Jean Blaise	illegal possession of 52 kg of pangolin scales	Farmer		None	locked while on trial
679	10/12/2020	Kribi, South	BEMEHIHE Clara Rosalie	illegal possession of 1 mandrill	trader	She belongs to a network of primate selling, she has agents she sends to the villages to get animals while she maintains and	None	locked while on trial

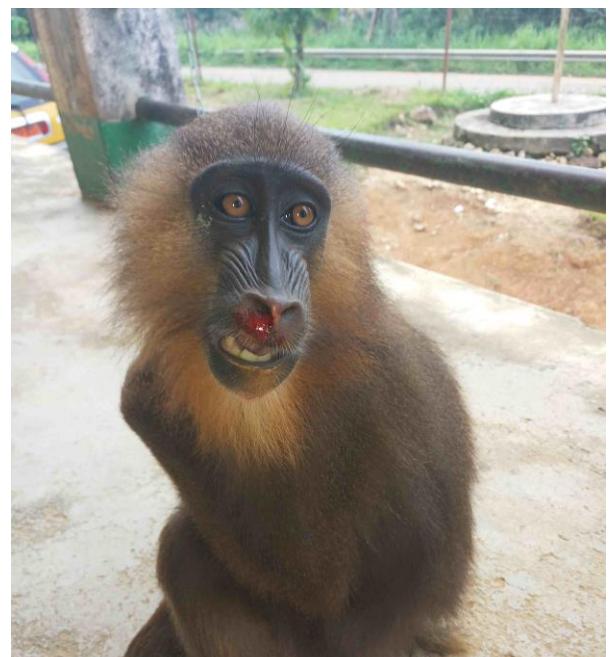
**Annex II - Year in Pictures**



*Gendarmes arrest human bones traffickers in the West Region (above) the woman kept the bones at her residence (right)*



*Two arrested in Fombot for human bones trafficking (left and above)*



*Rescued mandrill*



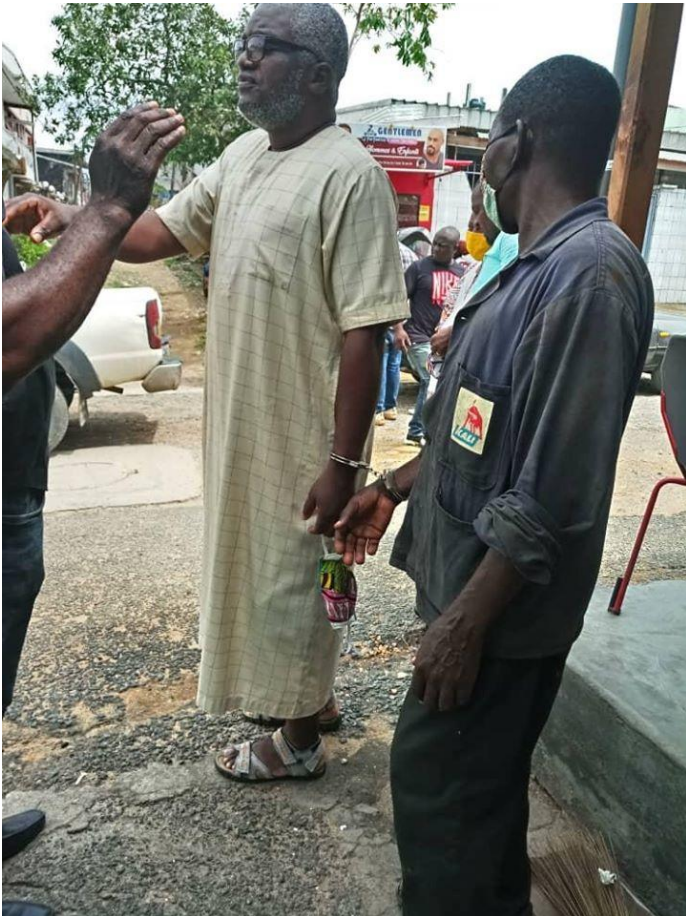
*Gendarmes arrest military men trafficking in pangolin scales weighing 380kg (left and above)*



*50kg of pangolin scales seized from a trafficker*



*Wildlife officials measure ivory seized from two traffickers*



*Two arrested in Douala for ivory trafficking in Douala (left) and two arrested ivory traffickers in Bertoua (above)*



*Five big leopard skins seized from trafficker in Bandjoun West Region*



*He awaits the start of prosecutorial proceedings at the gendarmerie after his arrest with leopard skins*



***African grey parrots in tiny little cages and sold along the streets of Yaounde. They were seized in September with two traffickers arrested leading to the issuance of an arrest warrant and the arrest of a big time parrot trafficker who supplied the parrots to other traffickers and street vendors***



*Lion and leopard skin trafficker arrested and at the gendarmerie office shortly before the legal process to prosecute him began. It should be noted that experts say less than 300 lions are found in the wild in the country.*



*Woman arrested for trafficking in mandrills and baby mandrill rescued*





*One member of a gang of 6 arrested for ivory trafficking 4 ivory tusks in Bertoua, East, is taken to police station.*



*Arrested for pangolin scales trafficking in the East, one is an ex-soldier*



*He activated several poachers and traffickers in pangolin scales in the South of the country. He was arrested as he attempted to sell 23kg of pangolin scales in Ebolowa*

### **Annex III - Media Links**

In February Alwihda info, an online news website, focused on preparations for the celebration of the World Pangolin Day, which was held on February 15, 2020. It mentions the holding of a press conference in collaboration with other organizations such as TRAFFIC and TIKKI HYWOOD Foundation. The publication highlights the fact that the public must be informed and alerted to the threats facing the pangolin so as to act for the preservation of the endangered species.

[https://www.alwihdainfo.com/Cameroun-Journee-mondiale-du-Pangolin-Les-preparatifs-s-accelerent\\_a82604.html](https://www.alwihdainfo.com/Cameroun-Journee-mondiale-du-Pangolin-Les-preparatifs-s-accelerent_a82604.html)

In March, Camer.be, an online news site focused on the arrest of a wildlife trafficker with 5 leopard skins in Bandjoun, West Region. The article also draws attention to the trafficking in leopard skins amidst the fact that the leopard is a totally protected species.

<https://www.camer.be/79324/11:1/cameroun-trafficker-arrested-in-bandjoun-cameroon.html>

In April, Camer.be, looked at the Covid-19 pandemic and its relationship with the illegal trade in pangolins. The article equally calls attention to the ban of wildlife trade as part of the solution to contain Covid-19 as well as prevent future health crisis.

<https://www.camer.be/mobile/79884/11:1/cameroun-covid-19-and-wildlife-trade-cameroon.html>

In May, Camer.be was on the arrest of human bones traffickers in Foumbot. The news site exposes the fact that it was an investigation on illegal wildlife trafficking that led to the arrest.

<https://www.camer.be/mobile/80579/11:1/cameroun-gendarmes-arrest-three-with-full-human-skeleton-cameroon.html>

In June, , the link of the month was on our YouTube channel, and it focuses on human bones traffickers arrested in Foumbot on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 2020. The 3 traffickers were about to sell a full skeleton when they were arrested. Several traffickers in human bones have been arrested in the Noun Division.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izFzdyh0EPE>

In July, the online news site Camer.be focused on the arrest of two human bones traffickers in Foumbot with almost two entire human skeletons. The news site underlines the fact that it is the second time in just a month that human bones traffickers are arrested in Foumbot.

<https://www.camer.be/mobile/81115/11:1/cameroun-two-entire-human-skeletons-seized-from-traffickers-cameroon.html>

In August, the online news site Africtelegaph.com published the arrest of two wildlife traffickers with a lion and a leopard skin in Yaounde. The news site says both lions and leopards are threatened and totally protected species.

<https://africtelegaph.com/cameroun-deux-personnes-arretees-pour-traffic-illegal-despeces-sauvages/>

In September, the online news site Alwihda.info highlights the court case against a man arrested with 23 kg of pangolin scales in Ebolowa. The article underlines the fact that pangolin scales trafficking still continues despite the Covid-19 pandemic.

[https://www.alwihdainfo.com/Cameroun-Ebolowa-Un-homme-arrete-avec-des-ecailles-de-pangolin\\_a93336.html](https://www.alwihdainfo.com/Cameroun-Ebolowa-Un-homme-arrete-avec-des-ecailles-de-pangolin_a93336.html)

In October, the online news site Camer.be focused on the arrest of the two with 3 African grey parrots and 6 Rose-ringed parakeets in Yaounde. They belong to a big parrot trafficking network in the country.

<https://www.camer.be/mobile/82568/11:1/cameroun-arrest-of-a-notorious-african-grey-parrots-trafficker-cameroon.html>

In November, the online news site Stopblablacam publishes the court hearing of three traffickers arrested with two ivory tusks in Douala. The news site underlines the need for an exemplary sanction to serve as deterrence.

<https://www.stopblablacam.com/societe/1911-5478-douala-trois-hommes-au-tribunal-pour-un-traffic-d-ivoire>

In December Africtelegraph focused on the arrest of six people in connection to ivory trafficking in the East Region. They were arrested in Bertoua and Yokadouma with four ivory tusks.

<https://africtelegraph.com/cameroun-arrestation-de-six-trafiquants-presumes-divoire/>