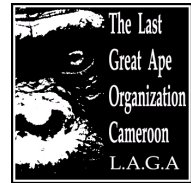


The Last Great Ape Organization – LAGA

December 2018 Report



Highlights

- **5 wildlife traffickers arrested in Abong Mbang in the East Region with over 31kg of pangolin scales.**
- **Recruitment of volunteers for the position of legal advisers started with several interviews conducted.**
- **The entire LAGA team went on annual vacation and end of year activities were carried out. Office reopens in January 2019.**
- **2 traffickers slammed one-year jail term following their arrest in March with ivory, hunting rifle and military fatigues.**

General

This month was marked by the arrest of **5 traffickers with 31kg of pangolin scales**

Five people were arrested in connection with the trafficking of 31kg pangolin scales and one the traffickers managed to escape on the pretext of going to the toilets. The person who provided assistance to the fugitive was immediately arrested and all suspects moved to the police station after family members of the traffickers stormed the wildlife office creating chaos and violence while attempting to force the release of the traffickers. It is during the turmoil that one of the traffickers escaped. We are pushing for the arrest of the fugitive once again.

Two traffickers were given a one-year imprisonment term by a court following their arrest in March this year with 4 ivory tusks, military fatigues and a rifle which was used in killing elephants. They were ordered to pay fines and damages of over 10 million CFA Francs.

Investigations

- **15 investigation missions** of varying lengths were carried out in **4 Regions** of Cameroon including Littoral, Centre, South and East Regions.
- Good investigations in Abong Mbang led to the arrest of 5 pangolin scales traffickers in Abong Mbang with 31kg of pangolin scales.

Investigations Table

Investigation Missions	Regions	No. of Operations	No of traffickers arrested
15	4	1	5

Operation

One operation carried out this month with MINFOF **arresting 5 traffickers**.

- **6/12/2018 – 5 traffickers arrested in Abong Mbang, East Region with 31kg of pangolins scales.** The pangolin scales were stuffed into rice bags and knacksacks when wildlife officials found them as the traffickers were carrying out the transaction. They are specialized pangolin scale traffickers who connect the big time city dwelling traffickers and the local poachers who collect the scales. They supply the big cities of Yaounde and Douala. Following their arrest family members would arrive the wildlife office creating chaos and violence. One of the traffickers, aided by one of those who arrived, escaped and the facilitator was immediately arrested and all five taken to the police station. The confidence demonstrated by the family members during their attempts at releasing the traffickers is an indication of the weakened authority of the wildlife office in that particular area that is notorious for corruption and weak law enforcement.

Operations Table

No of Operations	Regions	No of Traffickers Arrested	Contraband
1	1	5	31kg pangolin scales

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried **5 missions** out of Yaounde-Centre Region: 3 in Douala (Littoral) and 2 in Abong-Mbang (East).
- There are **15 dealers behind bars this month**: 8 in East Region, 6 in South Region and 1 in Littoral Region.

- **28 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **23 cases** were scheduled in court this month.
- **10 traffickers** were convicted this month.
- **Prosecutions:** There were four court rulings this month.
 - **05/12/2018:** The Douala – Ndokoti Court of First Instance found the accused **KANA DOUANYA HERVE and DIGSIA Timothée** guilty as charge and sentenced them to 8 months suspended sentence during 3 years and **to pay 100.000 FCFA each as fine and 3.350.000 FCFA jointly as damages.**

They were arrested in Douala on the 12/07/2018 for the illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of a live chimpanzee.

- **13/12/2018:** The Ambam Court of First Instance found the accused **NKOMO Joseph, AWOUKA Basile and MBO Epse ASSAM Bernadette** guilty as charged and sentenced them as follows:

NKOMO Joseph and AWOUKA Basile one (1) year closed imprisonment each, MBO Epse ASSAM Bernadette 6 months suspended sentence during 2 years.
They were also sentenced to pay **10.500.000 FCFA jointly as damages.**

They were arrested in Meyo-Centre on the 02/03/2018 for the illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of two ivory tusks and killing of an elephant.

- **28/12/2018:** The Douala – Bonanjo Court of First Instance found the accused **MAHAMA Rabiou** guilty as charge and sentenced him to pay **30.475.000 FCFA as damages and 200.000 FCFA as fine**
He was arrested in Douala on the 18/08/2018 for illegal possession of 80 Kg of pangolin scales.
- **28/12/2018:** The Douala – Bonanjo Court of First Instance found the accused **Garba Hamadou, Abdoul Karim, Laminou Abbo et Mohamadou Habibou** guilty as charged and sentenced them to pay **50.855.000 FCFA jointly as damages and 200.000 FCFA each as fine.**

They were arrested in Douala on the 18/08/2018 for illegal possession of 630 Kg of pangolin scales.

An appeal shall be filed against ruling in the case of **MAHAMA Rabiou, Garba Hamadou, Abdoul Karim, Laminou Abbo and Mohamadou Habibou** in the Littoral Court of Appeal.

Media

- **22 media pieces** were produced and push into the various media including the written press, radio and internet during the month ending a **successful year with 371 media pieces passed** at the various news outlet at the rate of one per day.
- During the month, the following statistics were recorded: 11 written press material (6 in English and 5 in French), 10 radio news flashes (5 in French and 5 in English), and 1 internet

publication in French. 11 media pieces were in French and 11 in English making a perfect balance of 50% each

- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including the Douala arrest of 3 persons with 125 tusk and dozens of ivory pieces, and the Abong Mbang arrest of 5 people with pangolin scales.

Media Table

No of Media Pieces	TV	Radio	Newspapers	Internet
22	0	10	11	1

External Relations and Policy

- The Head of the Legal Department and the Assistant Head of Media participated at a two-day training workshop organized by Forest Law Enforcement Governance (FLEGT) in partnership with FLAG and FODER. The aim of the workshop was to equip participants with the skills that are required to be able to use the new FLEGT watch tool and determine possible areas of application in participants’ core activity.
- The Head of the Legal Department held meetings with state counsels in Douala – Bonanjo to discuss cases pending in their courts and ongoing investigations.
- Accompanied by a legal adviser, he held a meeting with the state counsel in Abong Mbang shortly before the operation against the pangolin scales traffickers was carried out.
- A second legal adviser equally held a meeting with the Abong Mbang State Counsel to discuss matters pending at his court.

Management

- The recruitment process in the legal department move a step further with several interviews conducted.
- Several end of year activities including gift sharing, bonuses award and annual end of lunch were carried out under the stewardship of the management team.

Presentation: Annual Leave

On the last day of work, the presenter gets in the holiday mood with the rest of the team in discussing annual leave. He explains that it is the worker’s right and it is in the interest of the employer and the employee to take annual leaves because studies have proven it to be beneficial for the health of the employee and the organisation benefits in improved performances. He outlines some of the characteristics of annual leave including, it being paid leave, it is a right, it is negotiated, it is regulatory, it is associated with travelling, rest and holidaying etc. Discussions focused on each outlining how they are going to spend their annual leave and advice on ensuring each takes time off, shut out from work and gets some much deserved rest.

Activism Front

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 on the LAGA website www.laga-enforcement.org .

Link of the month

Al wihda info, an online news site publishes the story of the arrest of five people in connection with the trafficking of pangolin scales in the Abong Mbang and recounts how the one of them escaped and his facilitator was arrested.

https://www.alwihdainfo.com/Cameroun-Abong-Mbang-Cinq-personnes-arretees-pour-traffic-d-ecailles-de-pangolin_a69072.html

This Month in Pictures



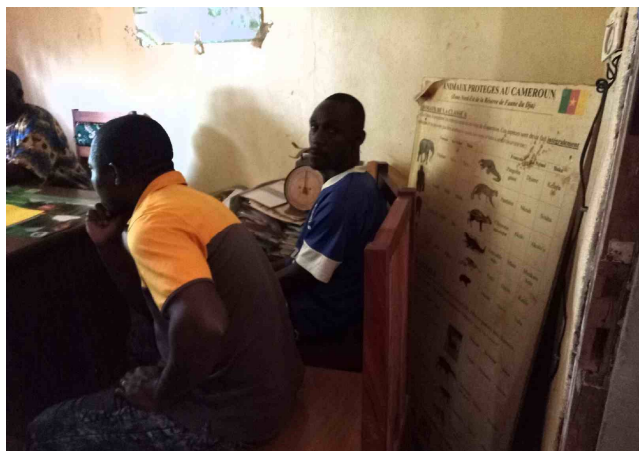
Police officers move pangolin scales traffickers shortly after their arrest in the East of the country



Arrested pangolin scales traffickers at the police station waiting for the commencement of interrogations



The illegal trade in pangolin scales is driving the scaly anteater to extinction and the scales are hotly demanded in Asian markets; scales seized from the traffickers



One of them arrested for facilitating the escape of one of the traffickers.