

The Last Great Ape Organization – LA GA

May 2010 Report



Highlights

- LAGA presents during the **conference of the Interpol Environmental working group** in Ivory Coast.
- **A major dealer arrested with 50 python skins** in Nkambe – North West Region.
- **A parrot capturer belonging to a network arrested** in Kribi – South Region while trying to illegally trade in parrots.
- **1 case sentenced this month** in Bamenda – North West Region.

General

This month was marked by a continuation of the crackdown in the illegal wildlife trade in Kribi – South region and the arrest of a dealer in 50 python skins.

A dealer with a network of suppliers of python skins in Nkambe and buyers in Bafoussam - West Region **was arrested in Nkambe** – North West Region while **trying to illegally traffic and trade in 50 python skins**. This operation was carried out with MINFOF Divisional Delegation - Nkambe. Another dealer belonging to a network of parrot traffickers with a permanent market in Douala – Littoral was **arrested in Kribi for illegally trying to traffic and trade in African Grey parrots**. He has other accomplices amongst whom is a Ghanaian; his connection to other Ghanaian parrot traffickers who had been arrested before is being investigated. The MINFOF officials of the Ocean Regional Delegation - Kribi especially the Delegate himself acted unprocedurally. First, they took the offender from the Gendarmerie Brigade where he was kept in custody, released him and refused to sign the complaint report for a warrant for his re-arrest. The operation was carried out with the NGO - **Cameroon Environment and Development (CED)**. This operation, following those of March and April when 3 dealers were arrested with 16 sea turtle shells concretizes the fact that illegal trade in wildlife species and products has been ongoing for long and very strong in that area. This problem necessitated LAGA's intervention in hitting main actors and exposing the silence of the local authorities and projects in the area.

The Court of First Instance of Bamenda – North West Region **sentenced a female dealer** to pay over \$340 as damages and fines. She will be retained in jail for 3 months in default of payment of the damages and fines. She was arrested in Bamenda for illegal detaining of parts of a totally protected animal.

The Head of the legal department participated in the conference of the Interpol Environmental working group in Ivory Coast. He gave a presentation on the collaboration between NGO and Government in the fight against wildlife crime and international wildlife trade, as well as the replication of LAGA activities in the Central African Sub-region. The presentation was welcomed and highly appreciated.

Investigations

- **21 investigation missions** of varying lengths were carried out in **6 Regions** of Cameroon- West, South, South West, Littoral, East and Center.
- The Head of Department – Investigations had a meeting with WWF Yaounde on the modalities of identifying and training informants around the Ebo Forest Reserve in the Littoral Region where there is an increase in the illegal trade of protected wildlife species and their products.

- Internet Investigations are still ongoing concerning 1 Internet Wildlife trafficker in Bamenda – North West Region. He is engaged in the falsification of government documents and CITES Permit.
- Field tests continued with more candidates as the department is experiencing a shortage in effective investigators. 1 new candidate was tested with encouraging results.

Operations

2 operations were carried out this month against **2 subjects**.

- **04/05/10** – A dealer with a network of suppliers of python skins in Nkambe and buyers in Bafoussam - West Region **was arrested in Nkambe** – North West Region while **trying to illegally traffic and trade in 50 python skins**. This operation was carried out with MINFOF Divisional Delegation - Nkambe.
- **30/05/10** - Another dealer belonging to a network of parrot traffickers with a permanent market in Douala – Littoral **arrested in Kribi for illegally trying to traffic and trade in African Grey parrots**. He has other accomplices amongst whom is a Ghanaian; his connection to other Ghanaian parrot traffickers who had been arrested before is being investigated. The MINFOF officials of the Ocean Regional Delegation - Kribi especially the Delegate himself acted unprocedurally. First, they took the offender from the Gendarmerie Brigade where he was kept in custody, released him and refused to sign the complaint report for a warrant for his re-arrest. The operation was carried out with the NGO - **Cameroon Environment and Development (CED)**.

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **14 missions** out of Yaounde- Centre Region: 2 in Douala (Littoral), 2 in Kribi (South), 1 in Sangmélina (South), 1 in Mamfe (South West), 1 in Buea (South West), 2 in Abong-Mbang (East), 1 in Bertoua (East), 1 in Dschang (West), 2 in Bamenda (North West) and 1 out of country in Ivory Coast.
- There are **8 dealers behind bars during this month**: 1 in the East Region, 4 in the South West Region, 2 in the littoral Region and 1 in the North West Region.
- **17 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **20 cases** are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.
- **Prosecutions**: 1 dealer was sentenced this month.
 - **14/05/2010**- The Court of First Instance of Bamenda – North West Region sentenced Nfon Juliana to pay over \$340 as damages and fines. She will be retained in jail for 3 months in default of payment of fines and damages. She was arrested in Bamenda for illegal detaining of parts of a totally protected animal.

Media front

- **13 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to radio and written press including: 4 written press materials, 3 in English and 1 in French, 6 radio news flashes (3 in English, 3 in French), and 3 radio talk shows 1 in English and 2 in French.
- Guests include: MINFOF Minister, Director of the Last Great Ape Organisation, Head of Legal Department – LAGA, Coordinator in charge of LAGA Cameroon Replication model and the Executive Secretary of COMIFAC.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including; Nkambe arrest of dealer in 50 python skins and replication of LAGA’s model in the Central African sub region.
- 7 media pieces in English, 6 in French making a percentage of 53.8% in English and 46.2% in French.

The media pieces were low because of the low number of operations and cash flow problems.

External Relations and Policy

- The Deputy Country Director of World Bank held a meeting with LAGA Director to discuss on the APT – AID principles and corruption in the forest sector.
- LAGA Director met with CHOC Coordinator to discuss on the delays in the adoption of anti-corruption law using LAGA lessons and strategies to combat corruption in the judiciary and the adoption of the APT- AID principles by the CHOC project.
- Meeting held between LAGA Director and David Quommen - contributing writer of National Geographic magazine to discuss on the following; transmission of diseases by apes, involvement of LAGA in early alert system for out breaks, sciences publication involved in LAGA and the bushmeat trade.
- LAGA Director gave presentation to the PASA management meeting of all Africa Sanctuaries on wildlife law enforcement including suggestions for a harmonised form for receiving apes to encourage wildlife law enforcement. Additional discussions were held on specific enforcement issues in Congo, DRC, Guinea Conakry and Uganda.
- Meeting held between Field Finance Manager of WWF in charge of reconstruction of financial system of WWF CARPO and LAGA Director, issues discussed were fight against corruption in the NGO sector, building systems to prevent corruption and the APT – AID principle.
- Peace Corps Country Director and LAGA Director concerning the collaboration on education modules for activism based on the LAGA model.
- Danwatch, a consumer NGO from Denmark held meeting with the Director of LAGA and discussed on link between wildlife crime and logging, FSC certificate.
- Teri of International Rivers met with LAGA to give presentation that focus on unveils truth about electricity, its prices and its consumers and the Lom Pangar Dam to be built.
- Meeting of LAGA Director and Franck Chanterreau of Jeunes Animaux Confisqués au Katanga based in DRC. Top on the agenda; replication of LAGA model in the Katanga province of DRC in June 2010 under JACK (his organisation).
- Presentation given by Head of Legal Unit LAGA in Douala (on the theme wildlife enforcement in TNS (Tri National Sangah)) to talk on the collaboration between NGO and Governments in the fight against wildlife crime and corruption through the effective enforcement of wildlife law in the Central Africa sub region.
- LAGA Director met with Canadian High Commission to discuss on corruption in the forest sector.
- Kay Farmer held meeting with LAGA Director. Publications on professional literature on LAGA and lesson learnt for conservation made subject of discussion.
- LAGA Director participated in the Financial and Technical Partnership on the capacity of Cameroonian civil society seminar organised by PASOC to discuss on civil society, governance and the promotion of gender: Can Cameroon Civil society give lessons.
- US embassy held meeting with LAGA Director and discussed the following; corruption in the NGO business, the APT – AID Principles, fight against corruption in the judiciary, wildlife law enforcement, involvement of SDO of Boumba &Ngoko in wildlife case.
- Abel of World Bank held meeting with LAGA Director top on the agenda; project of anti-corruption legislation, APT-AID principles, involvement of SDO of Boumba &Ngoko in wildlife case, corruption in the NGO sector and World Bank survey of governance in governments and NGOs.
- Meeting between LAGA Director and Dan Stiles a wildlife researcher: discussion centred on ivory trade study done in the year 2000 and current IUCN study on elephant meat and ivory trade, using LAGA’s data to analyse scope and magnitude of ivory trade and social analysis of trade networks.

- Participation of LAGA in a roundtable discussion organised by ACAPA – a local association to discuss on the realness of the extinction of wildlife endangered species and the fight against corruption.
- The Head of the legal department participated in the conference of the Interpol Environmental working group in Ivory Coast. He gave a presentation on the collaboration between NGO and Government in the fight against wildlife crime and international wildlife trade, as well as the replication of LAGA activities in the Central African Sub-region. The presentation was welcomed and highly appreciated.
- A roundtable discussion organized by ACAPA – a local association, was held at the French Cultural Centre on the 27th of May was. Attendance included among others representatives of MINFOF, MINEP and some local and international organizations including the presence of Ofir and Eric. Ofir presented a talk on the realness of the extinction of our endangered species. He focused on showing that the wildlife species around us are getting extinct. He then explained the reason behind such extinction which is nothing more than the big trade in wildlife products orchestrated by dealers who will kill huge numbers of elephants for example just for their ivory. That is where LAGA comes in he says, and the problem is complicated by corruption which is what the organisation identifies and equally fights against in the process of the arrest and prosecution of wildlife dealers. Eric presented an investigative documentary movie called *The Cairo Connection* which highlights the extent and magnitude of the international trade in Cameroon's great apes, the impunity of the smugglers and non responsiveness of the Egyptian governments in tackling this crime.

Management

- LAGA family had a special lunch during the Labour Day celebration in May. During the celebrations, LAGA members were told to place a high value on LAGA's mission, ready to participate and contribute fully to the realization of LAGA's goals, as opposed to those seeking for financial compensation as the main motivational factor.

Activism Front

Film - Capitalism and the love story

Michael Moore in this film says we need a new economic order and that order can only be democracy after exposing the ills of the capitalist society in the US as we see it today. Moore exposes capitalism and demonstrates what it is all about – a few greedy super rich speculators getting everything with no risks from taxpayers. The horrendous credit crunch and the part played by the banks is testimony of the power a few hold and how the politics in Washington is masterminded by the big financiers in Wall Street. Everything is put in place by these super CEOs to ensure that they do not lose anything as testified by the huge bonuses they received for plunging the country in crisis. Moore activist documentary movie vividly describes the method that should be used for remedy – simple he goes around and asks those banks and insurance companies to give us our money back.

Finance

LAGA Expenditure by budget line for May 2010

Amount CFA	Budget line	Details	Amount USD
1,141,050	investigations	22 inv, 6 Regions	\$2,173
360,000	Operations	2 Operation against 2 subjects	\$686
1,658,170	legal	follow up 17 cases 8 locked subjects	\$3,158
1,092,700	Media	13 media pieces	\$2,081
1,143,885	Policy & External Relations	Congo/CAR/Holland/USA/Nigeria/Ivory Coast	\$2,179
919,600	Management	Coordination	\$1,752
1,287,013	Office		\$2,451
7,602,418	TOTAL EXPENDITURE MAY		\$14,481

LAGA Expenditure by donor for April 2010

AmountCFA	Donor	Amount USD
2,902,133	FWS	\$5,527.9
1,572,950	ProWildlife	\$2,996.1
221,000	ARCUS Foundation	\$421.0
	EIA	\$0.0
	World Parrot Trust	\$0.0
2,678,610	Rufford Foundation	\$4.8
227,725	SFS France	\$4.8
7,602,418	TOTAL	\$14,480.8

THIS MONTH IN PICTURES



A dealer with a network of suppliers of python skins in Nkambe and buyers in Bafoussam - West Region arrested in Nkambe – North West Region while trying to illegally traffic and trade in 50 python skins. This operation was carried out with MINFOF Divisional Delegation - Nkambe.



Links of this month

A French version of the AC (Anti-corruption) website was built this month: LAGA , AC and the fight against corruption - As activists we try to do what we can to tackle corruption issues as an NGO and prove Civil Society Organizations can and should develop a much more demanding and aggressive approach in this fight.

Our first NGO took a decade-long baseline of zero prosecutions under the existing wildlife law - a shocking baseline shared with almost all Central and western African countries with sharp contrast to the amount of public funds poured into conservation - as a symptom of failure of the aid business, and its inability to tackle the first obstacle to development - corruption.

LAGA was an experiment field for methods of fighting corruption within a law enforcement and application process. Bribing attempts are documented in 85% of our field arrest operations, and 80% of all court cases within the legal system. But LAGA is not an observer of corruption; it was created to fight corruption, redirecting the pressures existing within the political system, usually wasted in large conference halls and its useless political pledges of political will, to specific corruption attempts and the field realities that form corruption.

The project is considered to have moved Cameroon from the decade long zero wildlife prosecution baseline to a one per week rate of a major wildlife dealer arrested and prosecuted, and achieved legitimacy for an NGO to fight corruption within a governmental process.

In its structure LAGA also tried to address the issue of the illusion of civil society in Africa - civil society organizations are not distinct from the state or its elite, but rather serve as another tool to divert public funds for personal gain by the same elite.

The second NGO, AC - Cameroon, is trying to use the experience of establishing Wildlife Law Enforcement to push for Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement. In our first pilot project - "Fighting Corruption through Citizen Legal Action" we try to group ordinary victims of corruption acts and lead them to attack officials in court, then fight corruption within the legal process achieving a prosecution of an official both on civil as well as penal charges. The idea of this pilot project is empowerment of ordinary citizens to fight corruption.

<http://www.kick-corruption.org/AboutUs/tabid/148/Default.aspx>