

The Last Great Ape Organization – LAGA

February 2021 Report



Highlights

- A customs official arrested with a live mandrill in Ambam in the South Region after travelling from Kye-Ossi with the animal in his car.
- Mandrill rescued and taken to the Mvogbetsi zoo in Yaoundé
- The Deputy Director trained ecoguards of the East Antenna of the Dja reserve during workshop organised by ZSL.

General

This month was marked by the arrest of **one trafficker**.

A **customs official** was arrested with a **live mandrill in Ambam, South Region** after driving his green Toyota carina car from Kye- Ossi where he is stationed to Ambam. He drove the car with the animal clinging on him and arrived Ambam where he tried to sell the mandrill.. He had been keeping the animal in iron chains in a small and unsuitable cage for over one year. He had earlier traded a mandrill in the same town to a live animal trafficker who travelled from Douala for the deal. He had been searching for a baby gorilla to buy before his arrest. The hungry and frail looking mandrill was immediately taken care off following its rescue and moved to the zoo for further care

The Deputy Director trained ecoguards of the East Antenna of the Dja reserve on information collection and management and the fight against corruption during a workshop organised by ZSL.

The Head of the Legal Department participated at a training of trainers in wildlife law enforcement workshop organised by wildlife trade monitoring group TRAFFIC

Investigations

- **10 investigation missions** out in **5 Regions** out of 10 of Cameroon including: Littoral, West, South, Centre and East Regions.
- Credible information from an informant in Kye-Ossi led to the arrest of 1 primate traffickers and a live mandrill seized in Ambam.

Investigations Table

| Investigation Missions | Regions | No. of Operations | No of traffickers arrested |
|-------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 10 | 5 | 1 | 1 |

Operation

An operation carried out with MINFOF this month **arresting one trafficker**.

26/02/2021 – a trafficker arrested with a live mandrill in Ambam, South. The young and hungry animal was rescued from the hands of the trafficker, a customs official who had been keeping the animal for over one year at his residence. He was arrested as he tried to sell the animal in Amabam. He is specialized in animal trafficking as he had earlier sold a mandrill to another trafficker who travelled from Douala. He was planning to continue dealing in primates and planned to buy a baby gorilla for the same business. He bought the primates from a Lele, a locality closed to Djoum, the ivory trafficking hub in the South. The mandrill was immediately provided first aid care and food. It was later transported to Yaoundé, Mvogbetsi zoo for further care.

Operations Table

| No of Operations | Regions | No of Traffickers Arrested | Contraband |
|-------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 1 | 1 | A live mandrill |

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **5 missions** out of Yaounde - Centre Region: 1 in Foubot (West), 1 in Bertoua (East), 1 in Ebolowa (South) and 2 in Douala (Littoral).

- There are **13 traffickers behind bars this month**: 3 in East Region, 2 in Centre Region, 1 in Littoral Region, 1 in South Region and 6 in West Region.
- **27 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **22 cases** were scheduled in court this month.
- **2 traffickers** were convicted this month.
- **Prosecutions**: There was 1 court ruling this month.
 - **01/02/2021**: The Foubot Court of First Instance found the accused **LONTSI Saint-Claire guilty and FONDIKOU FAKOUO Aminou guilty and sentenced them to 5 years in prison and to pay 100.000 each FCFA as fines**

They are wildlife traffickers arrested on the 26/06/2020 for the illegal sale of two human skeletons.

Legal Table

| No of Missions (Out of Centre Region) | No of Court Judgements | No of Traffickers Given Prison Sentence | Prison term (in months) | No of Traffickers Sanctioned (No prison sentence) | No of Appeals lodged | No of Cases Tried in Courts |
|---|------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|---|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 11 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 28 |

Media

- **14 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to written press, internet and the radio, including: 2 written press materials in the French language, 1 internet publication in French, and 11 radio news flashes (6 in French and 5 in English).
- Interviewees and quotes were from: Director of Wildlife and Protected Areas at the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife, the Director of the Lion Recovery Fund, the Deputy Director of LAGA, and Pricelia Tumenta, Cameroon Lion specialist.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including: Court hearings of a wildlife trafficker arrested with 40kg of pangolin scales in Doume, the court hearing of 2 traffickers arrested with one lion skin and a leopard skin in Yaounde, the publication of Wildlife Justice journal, and The World Pangolin Day.
- 7 media pieces in the French language and 7 in the English language making a percentage of 50% in French and 50% in English.

Media table

| <i>No of media pieces</i> | TV | Radio | Newspapers | Internet |
|-------------------------------|-----------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 14 | 0 | 11 | 2 | 1 |

External Relations and Policy

- The Deputy Director trained ecoguards of the East Antenna of the Dja Biosphere Reserve on information collection and management and on techniques in fighting corruption during a workshop organised by ZSL to strengthen the law enforcement capacity of the ecoguards.
- The Head of the Legal Department actively participated in a workshop in Douala which sought to train the trainers in wildlife law enforcement and strengthen collaboration in the fight against wildlife crime in Cameroon. Within the course of the workshop, he did two presentations; the first on the basic wildlife law procedure and the second on the calculation of civil damages in wildlife cases.
- The Head of the Investigation Department held a meeting with Conservator of the Dja Reserve to discuss possible areas of collaboration.
- A legal adviser held a meeting with the Douala Attorney General to discuss legal strategies on a matter pending before the court and he equally held another meeting with the State Counsel in Foubot for similar discussions on another matter before the court.
- Another legal adviser held a meeting with the state counsel in Ebolowa to discuss a case pending at his court and a third legal adviser held a meeting with the Bertoua Attorney General to discuss strategies concerning a matter pending before the court in Bertoua.

Management

- With the resurgence and rapid spread of Covid-19, new measures were put in place and old measures recalled and implemented to protect the team
- An investigator travelled to Uganda to provide assistance and experience sharing with the young Ugandan team.
- A volunteer started their testing and trial period for a role in investigations.

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>.

Link of the month

The online news site Camer.be focused this month on the court hearing of two people arrested in Yaounde with one lion skin and a leopard skin. They shall be heard on March 25, 2021 at the Court of First Instance of Yaoundé. The news site underlines the fact that lions and leopards are totally protected species by the wildlife law of the country.

<https://www.camer.be/mobile/84817/11:1/cameroun-deux-trafiquants-despeces-sauvages-au-tribunal-a-yaounde-le-25-mars-prochain-cameroon.html>

Finance

Please check LAGA website www.laga-enforcement.org for monthly financial reports.

This Month in Pictures



Customs official arrested for mandrill trafficking, he transported the mandrill over 40km in his car to do business



Rescued mandrill was immediately care and food.



Deputy Director trains ecoguards on fighting corruption