

The Last Great Ape Organization – LAGA

September 2023 Report



Highlights

- **3 traffickers arrested with 91kg of pangolin scales in back-to-back arrests in Ntui, Centre Region.**
- **The first two traffickers arrested with 70kg of pangolin scales while a third trafficker arrested shortly after with 21kg of pangolin scales.**
- **The Deputy Director and the Interim Director held discussions with two officials of the London-based Environmental Investigations Agency who were on a working visit to the country.**
- **The Legal Team held meetings with several State Counsels to discuss ongoing cases in their respective jurisdictions.**

General

This month was marked by the arrest of **3 traffickers, 2 for trafficking in over 70kg of pangolin scales and one other for illegal possession of over 21kg of pangolin scales.**

3 traffickers arrested with **91kg of pangolin scales** in back-to-back arrests in **Ntui, in the Centre Region**. 2 traffickers were arrested as they attempted to sell a bag of pangolin scales. A third trafficker was arrested immediately after he arrived in the town where the arrest took place. He transported the pangolin scales on a motorbike from a nearby locality. They are well connected, at a significantly high level, to trafficking of pangolin scales in the area.

The Deputy Director and the Interim Director held discussions with two officials of the London-based Environmental Investigations Agency who were on a working visit to the country. They focused on wildlife crime and collaboration.

The legal advisers held meetings with several State Counsels to discuss ongoing cases in their respective jurisdictions.

Investigations

- **11 investigation missions** were carried out in **4 regions** including the Littoral, Centre, West and South.
- Good investigation in **Ntui** led to the arrest of 3 pangolin scales traffickers with **91kg of pangolin scales seized in Ntui**.

Investigations Table

Investigation Missions	Regions	No. of Operations	No of traffickers arrested
11	4	1	3

Operation

An operation carried out this month with MINFOF **arresting 3 traffickers**.

- **14/09/2023 – 3 pangolin scales traffickers arrested in Ntui in the Centre Region during two back to back arrests.** 2 traffickers were arrested as they attempted to sell a bag of pangolin scales. A third trafficker was arrested immediately after he arrived in Ntui, where the arrest took place. He transported the pangolin scales on a motorbike from a nearby locality. They are well connected, at a significantly high level, to trafficking of pangolin scales in the area. They were known to some local law enforcement officials as traffickers and had links to smaller traffickers of pangolin scales. Wildlife trafficking is rife in the area that has historically been weak in wildlife law enforcement. Before a road was tarred and a bridge built over the Sanaga River, it was very difficult to access and wildlife trafficking was intense. The tide seems to be turning and couple of operations has been carried out in towns not too far away from the Sanaga River.

Operations Table

No of Operations	Regions	No of Traffickers Arrested	Contraband
1	1	3	91kg of pangolin scales

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **12 missions** out of Yaounde - Centre Region: 2 in Akonolinga (Centre), 1 in Bafia (Centre), 1 in Nanga-Eboko (Centre), 2 in Ntui (Centre), 1 in Ebolowa (South), 1 in Djoum (South), 1 in Ambam (South), 2 in Douala (Littoral) and 1 in Bertoua (East).
- There are **20 traffickers behind bars this month**: 2 in East region, 4 in South region, 5 in Centre, 3 in Littoral region and 6 in West region.
- **32 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **29 cases** were scheduled in court this month.
- **A trafficker** was convicted this month.
- **Prosecutions**: There was a court ruling this month.
 - **05/09/2023**: The East Appeal Court in the case of **MINFOF against NJOYA NSANGOU** upheld the decision of the Court of First Instance of Abong Mbang. He had been sentenced to pay 150,000 FCFA as fine and 1,500,000 as damages.

He was arrested in Doume on the 31/01/2019 for the illegal possession of 27 kg of pangolin scales.

Legal Table

No of Missions (Out of Yaoundé)	No of Court Judgements	No of Traffickers Given Prison Sentence	Prison term (in)	No of Traffickers Sanctioned (No prison sentence)	No of Appeals lodged	No of Cases Tried in Courts
12	1	0	0	Appeal sentence upheld	0	29

Media

- **31** media pieces were produced and pushed to the media including 11 radio news flashes (7 in French and 4 in English), 16 written presses (10 in English and 6 in French) and 4 internet publications (2 each in English and in French).
- Giving a total of 16 media pieces produced in the English and 15 in French representing 51.6% in English and 48.4% in French.
- Quotes used where from the Ofir Drori EAGLE founder, Luc Mathot, the Director of AALF Gabon and Eric Tah, the Deputy Director of LAGA
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including: The Ebolowa arrest of 3 traffickers with a chimp and a mandrill, the Nkoteng arrest of 2 traffickers with 47kg of pangolin

scales, the dismantling of an international ivory ring in Gabon and the arrest of three traffickers with 91kg of pangolin scales in Ntui.

Media Table

<i>No of media pieces</i>	TV	Radio	Newspapers	Internet
31	0	11	16	4

External Relations and Policy

- The Deputy Director and the Interim Director held discussions with two officials of the London-based Environmental Investigations Agency who were on a working visit to the country. They focused on wildlife crime and collaboration.
- The Head of Department held a meeting with the State Counsel of Ebolowa to discuss legal strategies on a matter pending before the court.
- He and a legal adviser held a meeting with the State Council of Ntui and the MINFOF Divisional Delegate of Mbam and Kim to discuss legal strategies before and after carrying out the operation.
- A legal adviser held a meeting with the Attorney General of Douala to discuss a case pending before the Littoral Appeals Court
- She held two other meetings with the State Counsel of Akonlinga and Bafia respectively to discuss cases at their various courts.
- A legal adviser held a meeting with the State Counsel of Yaounde – Centre Administratif to discuss legal strategies on a matter pending before the court.
- He held two other meetings with the State Counsel of Ntui and Akonlinga respectively to discuss cases at their various courts

Management

- The Team visited Eunice who put to birth some 3 months ago to welcome the new baby and celebrate with her.

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/Actiwithvism/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

Cameroon fact finder, a news site, this month published the arrest of 3 traffickers arrested with a chimp and a mandrill. Click the link below to get the full story:

<https://cameroonfactfinder.com/a-chimp-and-mandrill-rescued-from-traffickers-find-temporal-refuge-at-the-mvog-betsi-botanical-zoological-garden/>

This Month in Pictures



Traffickers dragged to the wildlife police station following their arrest attempting to sell pangolin scales

