

Last Great Ape Organization - LAGA

March 2007 Report



Highlights -

- **3 Operations** were carried out arresting **8 dealers**.
- **A record of 32 investigations** carried out.
- LAGA increased **international investigations** including a mission to **Nigeria**
- Beginning of **capitalization of LAGA** and plans for the **two Congos**.
- A meeting with the **Minister of Forestry and Wildlife**.

General

March month continued the political achievements of last month and successfully doubled the target for arrested dealers per month. But more than this March month gave the first indications that LAGA's vision for 2007 can be realized LAGA already succeeded in establishing a National model for NGO-Government collaboration on wildlife law enforcement moving Cameroon from a baseline of zero wildlife prosecutions in mid 2003 to a prosecution once a week against a major wildlife dealers mostly engaged in cross border trafficking (See LAGA 2006 Annual report).

In 2007 LAGA's objective is to replicate this model to two more countries in the sub-region and establish a similar model for international collaboration on large scale wildlife trafficking. This month LAGA carried important investigations outside of Cameroon and increased collaboration with other countries in field missions. LAGA's program to replicate Cameroon's wildlife law enforcement process in DRC and Congo-Brazzaville has received an important boost with the UNEP Great Apes Survival Project (GRASP) approving funds for wildlife law enforcement workshops in Kinshasa and Brazzaville to be lead by LAGA with other regional experts.

Investigations

- **32 investigations** were carried out in **6 provinces** including-North West, Littoral, South West, West, East and Centre + Nigeria.
- **Recruitment** of field investigators continued and field test continue where six candidates were rejected. The process will continue in April.
- LAGA increased **international investigations** including a mission to **Nigeria** resulting in many findings on the trafficking from Cameroon of apes, lions, African gray parrots and ivory.
- The department continued to build its capacity and collaboration with other countries. As procedures for collaborative operations were agreed with the relevant enforcement authorities in France and South Africa.
- Training was carried out for **3 Internet Investigators** and will continue the following month with fieldwork.
- Procedures of operations against Internet scammers were tested locally and internationally in a dry run.
- This month LAGA carried important investigations outside of Cameroon and increased collaboration with other countries in field missions. This is the cause for the increase in expenditure compared to other months.

Operations

- **3 Operations** were carried out arresting **8 dealers**.
- 27/03- An Operation in the West Province, **3 Leopard skins**, with difficulties and resistance. **3 dealers** specialised in protected wildlife trade for a long time have been arrested trying to sell 3 leopard skins in Bafoussam in the West Province.

- 29/03 – An operation in the North-West province. **2 leopard skins** were seized in Bamenda, the investigation led to the arrest of **4 dealers**.
- 20/3- A **woman dealer** regularly supplying Bamenda from Kumbo-Bui was caught transporting in a **private pickup track** the enormous quantity of 8 big bags of bushmeat. The bushmeat included among others **chimpanzee, giant pangolin**, and several other totally protected species. The operation was initiated by the provincial delegation itself and stands as evidence against the risk of dependence of the government on LAGA.

Legal

- There are **20 dealers behind bars during this month**: 7 in the South province; 1 in the Littoral; 1 in the North, 2 in the extreme north, and 1 in the central province. 5 in North West, 3 in West.
- 10 cases are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.
- 7 cases waiting for the process of appeal to reach the court of appeal. 2 in the west, 1 in the littoral and 2 in the central province, and 2 in the north province. The court of first instance has not completed the file needed for the transmission to the attorney general. With the new criminal code procedure, the person appealing has to reformulate his request before the file is sent to the appeal court.
- 3 of 4 problematic cases presented to the secretary general (Fonseca, Catherine Fouda, Ngbwa Ella, and Eyong James) have not move forward. They are still not transmitted to court.
- 15 cases on execution process.
- The provincial delegation of North West requests the legal assistance of LAGA for a court case initiated by them.
- Legal department was sending **7 missions** out of the Central Province during this month.
- Regarding recruitment, 2 volunteers were rejected after a testing period of two months. 6 interviews were held and 2 new volunteers will be field tested by the next month.

Media front

- Media department showed a sharp drop in media pieces aired. This will have to be compensated in the following months to maintain the “1 piece per day” objective.
- **8 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to radio including: 2 radio news flashes (all in English), 1 radio news features (English), 5 radio talkshows (3 in French, 2in English).
- Guest include: Minister of MINFOF, SG MINFOF, Technical Adiviser DFAP Director of Forestry School Mbalmayo. West Provincial Delegate MINFOF, Sub Director of Protected Areas, CARPE Focal Point.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including; Lion skins dealers far North, Djoum operation, Wildlife Justice magazine , Bafia drug and ape dealer.
- 5 pieces in English, 3 in French making a percentage of 62%in English and 37 % in French
- Two volunteers have been tested this month in a recruitment process for the media department.
- The media department was focused on planning collaboration on pilots, trying to expand LAGA’s communication strategy.
- Meeting with the Director of CCORUD to explore possible areas of collaboration on communication in rural areas.
- Meeting with Better World on exploring collaboration with local organizations in the domain of non-conventional media, like mobilization of youth or drama.
- LAGA printed and laminated 100 PASA cards to be used for sensitisation campaigns against trade in apes in all border exists of Cameroon.

- LAGA assisted EIA in the production of a training film by carrying out interviews and sending to them seven tapes containing interviews from a lawyer, ministry officials, custom officer in the field, police officer, provincial delegate from different provinces involved in wildlife law enforcement and specifically on the trade in ivory. Also included were footages of several operations carried out by LAGA

External Relations and Policy

- Meeting with the **Minister of Forestry and Wildlife**, focusing on the Djoum case and the assistance of the judiciary in the suspension and arrest of the offenders and building of capacity in the Department of Wildlife considering the failure of the National Control Brigade.
- Meeting with Technical Adviser No 1 of MINEP on the return of **the Taiping 4 Gorillas**.
- Meeting with the **British High Commissioner** as a follow up of the meeting with the Prime Minister of Cameroon, the current challenges and problems faced in wildlife cases, solving of specific wildlife cases with the Minister of MINFOF and the 3.9tons of ivory case with the Minister of Justice
- Meeting with the representative of the German Cooperation in Cameroon (**GTZ**) on the support of the Prime Minister to wildlife law enforcement and building relations with the German Embassy.
- Meeting with the Focal Point of **CARPE** on including LAGA in CARPE's institutions as stirring committee and advisory board (members), application for CARPE funds and seeking assistance from CARPE Focal Point in Congo DRC and Congo Brazzaville for LAGA's future work in the sub-region.
- Meeting with **UNDP APREN** to solicit political support to the wildlife law enforcement process and verifying possibilities of grants outside the APREN programme.
- Meeting with the Executive Secretary of BDCPC on the inclusion of LAGA's case study with wildlife law enforcement in the national assessment of the **Access Initiative**.
- The UNEP Great Apes Survival Project (GRASP) approved funds for wildlife law enforcement workshops in Kinshasa and Brazzaville to be lead by LAGA with other regional experts, providing an important boost to LAGA's program to replicate Cameroon's wildlife law enforcement process in DRC and Congo-Brazzaville.

Management

- Beginning of work on capitalization of the LAGA experience in manuals and assays in order to disseminate LAGA's lessons on wildlife law enforcement and the fight against corruption.
- The recruitment process for three of LAGA's departments is proving lengthy. The following is a two years old text for LAGA recruitment Policy:

“LAGA is more of a family than an NGO – a very small group of people who stand up for each other. Friendship formed by sharing the hardship of our struggle and the constant tension that accompanies our mission - a family fighting together for one goal. This is much more than an anecdote, this is a management approach - one that is more developed in the competitive private sector- develop the inner motivation of your staff appealing to their psychological need of belonging and make them stakeholders in the success or failure of your organization.

No post in LAGA is a job, we screen out and even dismiss individuals who are excellent professionally but do not possess inner motivation. With certain people the need for pride and respect accedes their material needs - that's what build the LAGA family.”

Finance

LAGA Expenditure by budget line for March 07

Amount CFA	Budget line	Details	Amount USD
2,461,690	Investigations	32 investigations, 6 provinces + Nigeria + Internet	\$4,923
531,800	Operations	3 operations against 8 dealers	\$1,064
1,518,965	legal	follow up 22 cases 12 locked subjects	\$3,038
1,626,575	Media	8 media pieces	\$3,253
364,460	Policy /External	T4/Nigeria/CITES	\$736
1,475,550	Management	Coordination	\$2,981
754,383	Office		\$1,524
8,733,423	TOTAL EXPENDITURE MARCH		\$17,643

LAGA Expenditure by donor for March 07

AmountCFA	Donor	Amount USD
76,100	Born Free	\$154
1,536,325	BHC	\$3,104
3,284,658	FWS	\$6,636
2,654,590	Arcus	\$5,363
1,181,750	Body Shop	\$2,387
8,733,423	TOTAL	\$17,643

Ofir Drori
Director
LAGA - The Last Great Ape Organization

THIS MONTH IN PICTURES



A woman dealer regularly supplying Bamenda from Kumbo-Bui was caught transporting in a private pickup truck the enormous quantity of 8 big bags of bushmeat. The bushmeat included among others chimpanzee, giant pangolin,



2 leopard skins were seized in Bamenda, the investigation led to the arrest of 4 dealers – North-West Province



Arrest of 3 dealers specialised in protected wildlife trying to sell 3 leopard skins in Bafoussam – West Province



Links of this month

- Hidden camera captures a leopard skin as the dealer tries to negotiate its price some days before his arrest. This investigation led to the arrest of 3 dealers specialised in protected wildlife trade trying to sell 3 leopard skins in Bafoussam in the West Province. Leopards are threatened and protected by the wildlife law in Cameroon providing a prison term of up to 3years. The dealers are behind bars.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GdKDikECocw>