

The Last Great Ape Organization – LAGA

October 2022 Report



Highlights

- **2 traffickers arrested with 66 kg of giant pangolin scales in Yaounde, Centre Region.**
- **2 traffickers arrested with 180 kg of giant pangolin scales in Yaounde, Centre Region during a crackdown on a pangolin scales trafficking ring in the East Region.**
- **3 human skeleton traffickers arrested last month were sentenced to 5 years in prison.**
- **The Heads of the Legal and Investigations Departments participated in joint evaluation missions with Ministry officials**

General

The month was marked by the **arrest of 4 traffickers with 246 kg of giant pangolin scales during two operations in Yaounde.**

2 traffickers arrested with 66 kg of giant pangolin scales in Yaounde, Centre Region..

One of the traffickers, a Nigerian, has been operating his ring for at least four years and this was known during investigations into the illegal trade in pangolin scales in the area. They were arrested at a bus station where they concealed the pangolin scales while attempting to sell it.

2 traffickers arrested with 180 kg of giant pangolin scales in Yaounde, Centre Region.

They smuggled the 7 sacks from the east of the country to Yaounde. The quantity of giant pangolin scales seized is very significant considering it is from the species of pangolin that is most difficult to find and very elusive.

The Heads of the Legal and Investigations Departments participated in joint missions with officials of the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF) to evaluate activities carried out under the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding

Investigations

- **21 investigation missions** carried out in **6** of the 10 **Regions** of Cameroon including Littoral, West, Centre, South, Adamawa and East Regions.
- Good investigation in Ntui led to the arrest of 2 pangolin scale traffickers with 66 kg of giant pangolin scales in Yaounde.
- Good investigation in Lomie led to the arrest of 2 pangolin scales traffickers with the seizure of 180.7kg of giant pangolin scales in Yaounde.
- The Head of Department met with the Chief of External Research at the Douala port, the Conservator of the Dja Reserve, the Conservator of the Mengueme Gorilla Sanctuary and the Divisional Delegate of Forestry and Wildlife of the Dja and Lobo Division to build collaborative platforms.

Investigations Table

| Investigation Missions | Regions | No. of Operations | No of traffickers arrested |
|-------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 21 | 6 | 2 | 4 |

Operation

2 operations carried out this month with MINFOF **arresting 4 traffickers**.

15/10/2022 – 2 traffickers arrested with 66 kg of giant pangolin scales in Yaounde, Centre Region. One of the traffickers, a Nigerian, has been operating his ring for at least four years and this was known during investigations into the illegal trade in pangolin scales in the area. They travelled from Ntui to Yaounde with the giant pangolin scales concealed in 2 grains bags. They activated several smaller traffickers in the Ntui – Yoko area that is well known for wildlife trafficking activities. They were arrested at a bus station where they concealed the pangolin scales while attempting to sell it.

29/10/2022 – 2 traffickers arrested with 180 kg of giant pangolin scales in Yaounde, Centre Region. They smuggled the 7 sacks from Lomie, in the East Region to Yaounde. The sacks were hidden in pepper and wild fruits and transported in trucks. One of the traffickers was arrested as he attempted to sell the scales. He denounced the second who was arrested a couple of hours later. They are experienced traffickers who used dealing in wild mango from Lomie to Yaounde as a front business for their trafficking. They equally had several smaller traffickers they activated in Lomie and its environs.

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Operations Table

| <i>No of Operations</i> | <i>Regions</i> | <i>No of Traffickers Arrested</i> | <i>Contraband</i> |
|-------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 2 | 2 | 7 | 5 elephant tusks and chimpanzee meat, 2 young chimpanzees. |

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **8 missions** out of Yaounde - Centre Region: 2 in Ebolowa (South), 1 in Akonolinga (Centre), 1 in Nkongsamba (Littoral) and 4 in Douala (Littoral).
- There are **21 traffickers behind bars this month**: 2 in East Region, 2 in South Region, 4 in Centre Region, 7 in Littoral Region and 6 in West Region.
- 41 cases were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **38 cases** were scheduled in court this month.
- **7 traffickers** were convicted this month.
- **Prosecutions**: There was 3 court ruling this month.
 - **06/10/2022**: The Yaounde - Ekounou Court of First Instance found the accused **BAH Abasse and WANDJI Paul Eloi guilty. The court sentenced them to 13 months in prison and to jointly pay 581.300 FCFA as fines and 290.650 FCFA each as court fees. They were also sentenced to pay 10.000.000 FCFA as damages.**

They were arrested in Yaounde on the 23/04/2022 for the illegal possession of 386 kg of pangolin scales.

- **07/10/2022**: The Nkongsamba Court of First Instance found the accused **NGUEKENG Gilbert Pacôme and LAPA Dieudonné Gabri guilty. The court ruled that they should pay 3.000.000 FCFA each as fines and 150.000 each as court fees.**

They were arrested in Melong on the 23/02/2022 for the illegal possession of a leopard skin and a civet skin.

- **28/10/2022**: The Douala - Bonassama Court of First Instance found the accused **AKO Vialli EBOT, CHE Eric and RAMDY GUEMOH 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 19/09/2022 for the illegal possession and sale of human skeletons.

Legal Table

| <i>No of Missions (Out of Centre Region)</i> | <i>No of Court Judgements</i> | <i>No of Traffickers Given Prison Sentence</i> | <i>Prison term (in months)</i> | <i>No of Traffickers Sanctioned (No prison sentence)</i> | <i>No of Appeals lodged</i> | <i>No of Cases Tried in Courts</i> |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| 8 | 3 | 5 | 13 months and 60 months | 2 | 0 | 38 |

Media

- 39 media pieces were produced and pushed to the media including: written press, radio and internet. That is 7 written press (5 in English and 2 in French), 26 radio broadcast (18 in French, and 8 in English) and 6 internet publication all in French.
- Giving a total of 26 media pieces produced in the French language, and 13 in English making 66.7% in French, and 33.3% in English.
- Interviews and quotes were from: IUCN Director General & the founding Director of EAGLE.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including: the court hearing of three traffickers arrest with 386kg of pangolin scales in Yaounde, the Mbankomo arrest of 2 mandrill traffickers, the Yaounde arrest of 2 traffickers with 66kg of pangolin scales and the court hearing of the 3 human skeleton traffickers arrested in Douala.

Media table

| <i>No of media pieces</i> | TV | Radio | Newspapers | Internet |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 39 | 0 | 26 | 7 | 6 |

External Relations and Policy

- The Heads of the Legal and Investigations Department participated in joint missions MINFOF officials in Yaounde and Ebolowa to evaluate activities carried out under the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding.
- . The Deputy Director held a meeting with the Director of Criminal Affairs at the Ministry of Justice to discuss an ongoing matter and strengthen collaboration.

- The Deputy Director participated at a meeting that focused on improving the proposed operational procedures for the management of ivory stocks.
- He participated at the Cameroon Pangolin Working group meeting that was focused on revamping the activities of the group and prepare for the 2023 World Pangolin Day.
- The Head of the Department and a legal adviser held a meeting with the State Council of Douala – Bonassama to discuss legal strategies on an ongoing case.
- A legal adviser held a meeting with the Attorney General of Ebolowa to discuss an ongoing matter.
- Another legal adviser held a meeting with the Douala Attorney General to discuss legal strategies on a matter and a third legal adviser held a meeting with the State Council in Akonolinga for the similar purpose.

Management

- The legal adviser from Cote d’Ivoire returned to Abidjan following a one-month experience sharing mission to the country.

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

Camer be, an online news site this month published the story of two traffickers arrested with a leopard skin and a civet skin in Melong.

<https://www.camer.be/mobile/90174/11:1/cameroun-two-men-arrested-with-a-leopard-skin-cameroon.html>

This Month in Pictures



2 traffickers at police station following arrests with 66 kg of giant pangolin scales



2 traffickers at police station following arrests with 180 kg of giant pangolin scales

