

# The Last Great Ape Organization – LA GA May 2012 Report



## Highlights

- **6 dealers were sentenced this month in 3 different prosecutions.**
- **An Internet wildlife dealer sentenced to 2 years imprisonment** in Muyuka – South West.
- LAGA wins another award - **The Marsh Christian Trust Award.**
- **6 dealers arrested** with more than **800 items, mostly ivory in Guinea-Conakry by GALF.**
- **A Jurist sent to Chad to initiate court cases against dealers.**
- **Hotline established in Investigations Department.**

## General

This month was marked by good operations in Guinea – Conakry in the replication of LAGA activities, the prosecution of 6 dealers in Cameroon, and another award won by LAGA.

LAGA wins the Marsh Christian Trust Award after being nominated by WSPA. The Award seeks to recognise unsung heroes who aim to improve the world, giving their time unselfishly. It is the fifth in connection to LAGA's work, and is hoped to give more credibility to and acceptance of LAGA's message and help in its long term quest to affect conservation in a meaningful way.

The newest LAGA's replication and member of our Regional Wildlife Law Enforcement Network – GALF Guinea Conakry carried out a new wave of arrests. 6 major dealers were arrested with more than 800 items, mostly ivory, from hankos and figurines to raw tusks. The operation has been coordinated with Interpol and the head of Police, the Ministry of Environment Water and Forests, and the Ministry of Justice at the highest levels.

This came about following Naftali Honig's (PALF Congo Coordinator) successful mission to assist Charlotte Houpline (GALF Coordinator) to ensure our law enforcement efforts are sustainable. To give an insight to the influence and bribing-power such big dealers have in an impoverished country like Guinea:

- According to investigations, one single ivory sculpture was valued at \$55,000.
- More than \$30,000 in foreign currency cash was found on site (mostly 100\$ notes and Euros).

6 dealers were sentenced this month. The Court of First Instance of Muyuka – South West Region sentenced an Internet wildlife dealer to 2 years imprisonment. He was arrested with his accomplice following a report to LAGA and international collaboration with the US Fish and Wildlife Service while attempting to sell rhino horns over the Internet using a falsified CITES permit and other official documents. 2 dealers in ivory were sentenced to 1 year in prison each, and 3 other dealers to 4 months imprisonment by the Court of First Instance Abong Mbang – East.

The Delegation of MINFOF Mamfe – South West Region arrested an international trafficker while attempting to illegally enter with 8 ostriches into Cameroon from Nigeria with no official documents or permits. High level government officials of the South West Region were trying to intimidate MINFOF officials for their release and it is alleged that the birds were ordered by a multi-millionaire in the North West Region. LAGA assisted MINFOF to open a case file against the dealer in the Court of First Instance – Mamfe.

As part of a new strategy to get credible information and to make the Investigation missions more effective, a hotline was established and a flyer was produced this month in French. This will be distributed to a specific set of informants like those working in the airports, call box operators, security guards etc. The English version will be produced as well.

## Investigations

- **21 investigations** of varying lengths were carried out in **5 Regions** of Cameroon- South West, West, South, East and Center.
- 1 Investigator was let go this month because of lack of produced operations. It is hoped that she will continue to undertake Investigations on her own and will be given a bonus in case of a successful operation.
- 3 new Investigators were tested with encouraging results. This is in line to compensate for the lack of results and to make the Department more performant.
- As part of a new strategy to get credible information and to make the Investigation missions more effective, a hotline was established and a flyer was produced this month in French. This will be distributed to a specific set of informants like those working in the airports, call box operators, security guards etc. The English version will be produced as well.
- LAGA Investigations Department assisted PALF-Congo Investigations Department on Investigations and Operation Procedures.

## Operations

- No operations were produced by LAGA this month because of the dismissal of one investigator and the trial of new investigators in the field. This lack of produced operations will be compensated next month to meet up with the set target of 1 operation per week.

## Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **17 missions** out of Yaounde - Centre Region: 1 in Nanga Eboko (Centre), 1 in Douala (Littoral), 1 in Bamenda (North West), 2 in Bertoua (East), 2 in Abong-Mbang (East), 1 in Ebolowa (South), 1 in Kribi (South), 2 in Djoum (South), 1 in Oveng (South), 1 in Mamfe (South West), 1 in Buea South West, 1 in Limbe (South West) and 2 in Muyuka (South West).
- There are **34 dealers behind bars during this month**: 23 in the East Region, 2 in the South West Region, 1 in North West region, 6 in South Region and 2 in West Region.
- **39 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **37 cases** are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.
- **Prosecutions**: 6 dealers were sentenced this month.
  - 08/05/2012: The Court of First Instance of Abong-Mbang sentenced AYE Mondo Hélène and MELOLODOM Richard to **1 year of prison** and to pay a sum of **\$3.290 as damages**. They were arrested in Mindourou for illegally trying to trade in ivory.
  - 16/05/2012: The Court of First Instance of Muyuka sentenced Theophilus Tandjong to **2 years in prison** and to pay a sum of **\$100 as damages**. He was arrested in Muyuka for falsifying official documents and trying to trade in rhino horns over the internet.
  - 22/05/2012: The Court of First Instance of Abong-Mbang sentenced Ndamano Felix, Okala Gervais and Metsie Atsenkel Symphorien to **4 months of prison** and to pay a sum of **\$3520 as damages**. They were arrested Messok for illegal killing of elephants.

## Media front

- **41 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to radio, TV and written press including: 20 written press materials (14 in English and 6 in French), 1 radio talk show in English, 6 news features (4 in English and 2 in French) and 14 news flashes (5 in English and 9 in French).
- Guests include: North West Delegate – MINFOF, LAGA Director, Environmentalist and Journalist.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including; 6 traffickers arrested in Guinea, Muyuka Internet wildlife scammer sentenced, Mintom arrest of elephant trafficker –

hearing, Mindourou judgment of elephant trafficker, Messok judgment of elephant trafficker, Yokadouma judgment of ivory and African grey parrot traffickers.

- 24 media pieces in English, 17 in French making a percentage of 58.5% in English and 41.5% in French.

### **External Relations and Policy**

- A Jurist was sent to Chad to evaluate and initiate court cases against dealers arrested; discuss with local authorities for the legal follow-up of cases initiated; to recruit a lawyer as well. 2 cases were effectively sent to court against 7 dealers in Amtiman. A lawyer was recruited in N'djamena and discussions held with authorities, Ecoguards of Zakouma national park and NGOs.
- The Head of Investigations Department and the Head of Legal Department held a meeting with Interpol in Yaounde to discuss on collaboration pertaining to cyber wildlife crime Investigations.
- Due to Director's ill health, many planned meetings were cancelled.

### **Management**

- LAGA wins the Marsh Christian Trust Award after being nominated by WSPA. The Award seeks to recognise unsung heroes who aim to improve the world, giving their time unselfishly. It is the fifth in connection to LAGA's work, and is hoped to give more credibility to and acceptance of LAGA's message and help in its long term quest to affect conservation in a meaningful way.
- 1 Investigator was let go this month because of lack of produced operations. It is hoped that she will continue to undertake Investigations on her own and will be given a bonus in case of a successful operation.

### **Activism Front**

All the education 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>. Activism this month was on:

**The Film - Bringing Down a Dictator:** It is about young activists who through non-violence contributed to topple the government of Milosevic in Serbia in 1999/2000. With the same repressive machinery used by authoritarian regimes, the engagement of the masses is seen here as the real catalyst for change. Is this applicable to Cameroon?

### **Replication**

During this month, LAGA helped other replication projects in planning investigations and operations, following up court cases and the production of media pieces.

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LAGA assisted PALF and RALF in planning and coordinating missions. LAGA and AALF worked on joint investigations in the South of Cameroon.

## **Finance**

### **LAGA Expenditure by budget line for May 2012**

<b>Amount CFA</b>	<b>Budget Line</b>		<b>Amount USD</b>
1,691,160	Investigations	23 inv, 5 Regions	\$3,221
260,000	Operations	0 Operations	\$495
4,063,040	Legal	follow up 39 cases 34 locked subjects	\$7,739
1,311,515	Media	41 Media pieces	\$2,498
1,501,099	Policy & External Relations	Chad Mission/Gabon/CAR/Guinea	\$2,859
985,800	Management	Coordination	\$1,878
1,797,032	Office		\$3,423
11,609,646	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE MAY</b>		<b>\$22,114</b>

### **LAGA Expenditure by Donor for May 2012**

<b>AmountCFA</b>	<b>Donor</b>	<b>Amount USD</b>
1,926,430	FWS	\$3,669.4
115,900	FWS-Replication	\$220.8
0	BornFree UK	\$0.0
0	Rufford	\$0.0
1,012,500	IFAW	\$1,928.6
0	IPPL	\$0.0
5,610,457	Darwin	\$10,686.6
0	BornFree USA	\$0.0
2,944,359	ARCUS Foundation	\$5,608.3
<b>11,609,646</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$22,113.6</b>

## THIS MONTH IN PICTURES



**Internet wildlife dealer sentenced to 2 years imprisonment by the Court of First Instance – Muyuka (left), and his accomplice (right). They were arrested for trying to sell rhino horns over the Internet using falsified official documents.**



**Cash in Dollars and Euros, ivory items and raw ivory seized following the arrest of 6 dealers in Guinea – Conakry by GALF, the newest member of our Regional Wildlife Law Enforcement Network of following a new wave arrest operations. This huge amount in cash gives an insight to the influence and bribing-power such big dealers have in an impoverished country like Guinea.**





8 ostriches seized by the MINFOF Delegation – Mamfe. An international trafficker was attempting to illegally enter with them in a car from Nigeria with no official documents or permits. High level government officials of the South West Region were trying to intimate MINFOF officials for their release and it is alleged that the birds were ordered by a multi-millionaire in the North West Region.

**SAUVEZ NOS ANIMAUX EN VOIE D'EXTINCTION**

**Si vous avez des informations sur le trafic en tous genres (commerce, détention, abattage etc.) d'animaux sauvages, contactez nous. Votre identité restera secrète.**

**71 68 70 70**

**Recevez une prime d'au moins 50 000 FCFA pour toute information fiable et discrète pouvant conduire à l'appréhension d'un trafiquant.**

**71 68 70 70**

Par LAGA - "The Last Great Ape Organization"

Hotline established and flyers produced in French as part of a new strategy to get credible information and to make the Investigation missions more effective. This is being distributed to a specific set of informants like those working in the airports, call box operators, security guards etc; with a clear message of being compensated for credible and useable information. The English version will be produced as well.

## **Links of this month**

The LAGA family thanks the Marsh Christian Trust for the 2012 Award. The Award seeks to recognise unsung heroes who aim to improve the world, giving their time unselfishly. It is the fifth in connection to LAGA's work and the LAGA family thanked the Marsh Christian Trust for the award, highlighting their appreciation and excitement as the award gives legitimacy, confidence, credibility and sharing in their fight in establishing wildlife law enforcement in the Central African sub-region, the mission to stop illegal wildlife trade, and acceptance of LAGA's message in its long term quest to affect conservation in a meaningful way.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qMkKXj4V6CY>