

The Last Great Ape Organization – LA GA

February 2010 Report



Highlights

- **3 international parrot traffickers arrested** in Douala – Littoral, more than 300 parrots seized exposing more of this trade due to lack of prosecutions.
- **Ivory dealer sentenced to 8 months imprisonment in Yaounde.**
- **LAGA Annual Report for 2009** completed.

General

This month was marked by a continuation of exposure of international illegal trafficking of African Grey parrots and more arrests to repel this illegal trade.

3 international parrot traffickers all of Ghanaian nationality was arrested in Douala – Littoral while trying to transport more than 300 parrots out of the country. The operation for their arrest started in 2009 and they are a part of a network of parrot traffickers in Douala, **linked to some of the biggest wildlife traffickers.** After their arrest, they stated in their statements of offence that the parrots were being taken to **2 main traffickers who were the main actors in the seizure of the more than 1000 parrots in Douala in January 2010** destined for Bahrain and Kuwait. The operation was carried out in collaboration with the Littoral Legion of Gendarmerie – Douala and ODPHE – an NGO engaged in wildlife conservation. This operation proves that **trafficking of African Grey parrots is as strong as before because of lack of prosecutions pertaining to the first cases.** This problem necessitated LAGA's intervention in hitting the same actors again and exposing the continuation of the illegal wildlife trafficking. In fact, personal attacks even continue from one of the traffickers on the LAGA Director. The trade that continues with impunity especially through the Douala International Airport shows the involvement of the concerned control authorities. LAGA had earlier informed the Minister on the implication of the MINFOF Chief of post of the Douala International Airport in the trafficking of parrots following the many operations carried out there.

Many irregularities were observed during the handling and transfer of the parrots 300 parrots seized. Out of the more than 300 parrots, only 51 reached the MINFOF Regional Delegation – Littoral from the Gendarmerie Brigade and only 27 reached the Limbe Wildlife Center from the MINFOF Delegation. Though some parrots died because of poor handling and transportation conditions by the dealers, more investigations are being carried out so as to pin-point these irregularities and acts of corruption that possibly took place.

The Court of First Instance of Yaounde – Administrative Centre sentenced an ivory dealer to **8 months** imprisonment and to pay over **\$2312** as fine and damages to MINFOF. He was arrested in Yaounde with 1 raw elephant tusk, carved elephant tusk and 29 worked pieces of ivory.

Investigations

- **15 investigation missions** of varying lengths were carried out in **5 Regions** of Cameroon- North West, South, West, Littoral and Center.
- **Investigations are still ongoing pertaining to 3 targets** that are implicated in trying to illegally export the more than 1000 parrots seized at the Douala International Airport destined for Bahrain and Kuwait.
- Internet Investigations are still ongoing concerning 1 Internet Wildlife trafficker in Bamenda – North West Region. He is engaged in the falsification of government documents and CITES Permit.
- Field tests continued with more candidates as the department is experiencing a shortage in effective investigators.

Operations

1 operation was carried out this month against **3 subjects**.

- **25/02/10 – 3 international parrot traffickers all of Ghanaian nationality were arrested** in Douala – Littoral while trying to transport more than 300 parrots out of the country. The operation for their arrest started in 2009 and they are a part of a network of parrot traffickers in Douala, **linked to some of the biggest wildlife traffickers notably Sackey Eugene of Ghanaian nationality**. After their arrest, they stated in their statements of offence that the parrots were being taken to **E.L. Nyem and Tchinda Ngu Denis Wilson of Kamerun Aquarium who were the main actors in the seizure of the more than 1000 parrots in Douala in January 2010** destined for Bahrain and Kuwait. The operation was carried out in collaboration with the elements of the Littoral Legion of Gendarmerie – Douala and ODPHE – an NGO engaged in wildlife conservation.

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **7 missions** out of Yaounde- Centre Region: 1 in Bafoussam (West), 3 in Douala (Littoral), 1 in Bamenda (North West), 1 in Ntui (Centre), 1 in Djoum (South).
- There are **6 dealers behind bars during this month**: 1 in the East Region, 1 in South Region, 5 in the South West Region, 3 in Littoral region.
- **19 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **15 cases** are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.
- **Prosecutions**: 1 dealer was sentenced this month.
-19/02/2010- The Court of First Instance of Yaounde – Administrative Centre sentenced a wildlife dealer to **8 months** imprisonment and to pay over **\$2312** as fine and damages to MINFOF. He was arrested in Yaounde with 1 raw elephant tusk, carved elephant tusk and 29 worked pieces of ivory.

Media front

- **36 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to radio, TV and written press including: 5 written press materials (4 in English and 1 in French), 2 TV news features (1 in English and 1 in French), 24 radio news flashes (18 in English, 6 in French), and 5 radio talk shows (3 in English and 2 in French).
- Guests include: MINFOF minister, Director of WCS - Cameroon, Coordinator of TRAFFIC, Focal point CARPE, Information officer at the US embassy, LAGA Head of Legal Unit, South West Regional Delegate for Forestry and Wildlife and Great Ape Officer of World Wide Fund.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including; parrot dealers arrest Douala, prosecution of ivory dealer (ivory dealer arrest Yaounde), seizure of more than 1000 parrots in Douala and Buea internet wildlife trader arrest.
- 26 media pieces in English, 10 in French making a percentage of 72.2% in English and 27.8% in French.

External Relations and Policy

- Meeting between LAGA Director and WWF: Discussion centred on the SDO of Boumba et Ngoko involvement in elephant trafficking, the use of forensic audit as a measure against corruption in project and other measures against corruption in WWF projects.
- LAGA Director met with the British High Commission and the following issues were discussed; legal threat against LAGA, APT-AID principle, LAGA application in Chad, replication of “No safe haven” as a measure against corruption.

- US embassy and LAGA Director held meeting to discuss the participation of the SDO of Boumba and Ngoko in elephant trafficking and application of proclamation 7750.
- Terry Hathaway of International Rivers and LAGA Director met and discussed on the following; environment - Lom-Pangar dam, possible conflict of interest concerning Cameroon's electricity suppliers and EU funding for the dam project.
- Meeting held between LAGA Director and the World Bank Cameroon: top on the agenda, corruption in the forest sector, and involvement of government officials in trafficking and APT-AID principles.
- LAGA Director held meeting with Canadian High Commission to discuss on corruption in the forest sector, involvement of government officials in trafficking and the APT-AID principle.

Management

- **LAGA Annual Report** for 2009 was completed, printed and posted on the LAGA website – www.laga-enforcement.org.
- LAGA experienced severe cash flow problems this month that slowed down the work and results of the LAGA's departments. Despite this problem, a successful operation was carried out against 3 international wildlife traffickers of Ghanaian nationality thereby showing the commitment of LAGA staff to function with limited financial resources.
- The weekly meetings introduced by the LAGA Director continue with LAGA family members taking on more responsibilities.

Activism Front

Education activities were carried out on the following:

- Bamako – The film Bamako is a fiction on a court case initiated by local activists in Niger against International Financial Institutions such as the World Bank and IMF; and against the Western governments for the continued pillage of natural resources and failure of programs such as the structural adjustment plans that benefit only the corrupt governments, do not address issues such as good governance and poverty alleviation that will benefit the local people and the country at large.

Finance

In preparation, will be made available shortly.

THIS MONTH IN PICTURES



Large baskets in which the more than 300 parrots seized were cramped. Many of the parrots died because of the poor handling and transportation conditions. 3 Ghanaians connected to other big wildlife exporters were arrested with the collaboration of the elements of the Littoral Legion of Gendarmerie – Douala and ODPHE – an NGO engaged in wildlife conservation.



Links of this month

- 1000 African Grey Parrots seized in Douala about to be exported to Bahrain and Kuwait – Cameroon National Television Broadcast. The seizure comes after an Internet wildlife dealer was apprehended in Buea – South West trying to sell parrots to a victim in the Netherlands using falsified government documents and CITES Permit.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-WqaGMFWd0>