

The Last Great Ape Organization – LAGA

February 2018 Report



Highlights

- **A traffickers arrested with 37kg of pangolin scales, 6 hippo teeth and 2 python skins**
- **LAGA Director and Deputy Director attended a leadership and training course organised to upgrade skills of EAGLE coordinators**
- **The Deputy Director attended a meeting with other conservation groups and the US Embassy to prepare for the World Pangolin Day that was celebrated with activities carried out by the respective organisations**
- **At the invitation of the French Embassy, the Deputy Director did a presentation on corruption in wildlife law enforcement at the French cultural centre in Yaoundé.**

General

This month was marked by the arrest of **a trafficker**.

A wildlife trafficker was arrested in Betare Oya, East Region with 37kg of pangolin scales, 6 hippopotamus teeth and 2 python skins. He was arrested in front of his bar as he prepared to evacuate the contraband for trafficking. He deals in several contraband including gold and uses the bar business to cover the illegality. He was immediately recognised by some law enforcement officers who described him as one of the most important traffickers in these parts but had never been arrested. His connections include a Chinese trafficker who was based in the locality and had since left the country.

The Director and Deputy attended a one-week leadership and training course facilitated by MDF Ghana to learn new skills and built team spirit within the EAGLE network. The training course was organised by the EAGLE network organisation officer.

Investigations

- **29 investigation missions** of varying lengths were carried out in **6 Regions** of Cameroon namely Littoral, Centre, South, East, Adamawa and West Regions.
- Good investigations in Betare-Oya led to the arrest of one trafficker with 37kg of pangolin scales, 2 python skins and 6 hippopotamus teeth in Betare-Oya.

Investigations Table

Investigation Missions	Regions	No. of Operations	No of traffickers arrested
29	6	1	1

Operation

An operation carried out with MINFOF this month **arresting one trafficker**.

06/02/2018 - A traffickers were arrested with 37kg of pangolin scales in Betare Oya, East Region. The trafficker operated a bar which was used as a perfect cover to carry out trafficking in several wildlife species and other contraband including gold. A relative of his (a junior brother) narrowly missed being arrested last year following a failed operation caused by some technical problems at the Regional Delegation of Forestry and Wildlife. They worked as a two-man team trafficking principally in pangolin scales and the team has been partially dismantled following the arrest. He is suspected to have sold two leopard skins shortly before his arrest and was immediately recognised by gendarme offices who arrived the scene of his arrest.

Operations Table

No of Operations	Regions	No of Traffickers Arrested	Contraband
1	1	1	37kg pangolin scales, 6 hippo teeth 2 boa skins

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried **17 missions** out of Yaounde-Centre Region: 2 in Douala (Littoral), 3 in Nkongsamba (Littoral), 2 in Ambam (South), 1 in Ebolowa (South), 1 in Sangmelima (South), 2 in Djoum (South), 2 in Abong-Mbang (East) and 4 in Bertoua (East).
- There are **18 dealers behind bars this month**: 3 in East region, 2 in Adamaoua region, 1 in Southwest region, 1 in West region, 9 in South region, and 2 in Littoral region.
- **28 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **26 cases** were scheduled and being tried in court this month.
- **No dealers** were convicted this month.
- **Prosecutions**: There were no court rulings this month.

Legal Table

No of Missions (Out of Centre Region)	No of Court Judgements	No of Traffickers Given Prison Sentence	Prison term (in months)	No of Traffickers Sanctioned (No prison sentence)	No of Appeals lodged	No of Cases Tried in Courts
17	0	0	0	0	0	26

Media

- **45 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to written press, radio, TV and internet including; 23 written press material (15 in English and 8 in French), 11 radio news flashes (6 in French and 5 in English), 3 TV production (2 in English and 1 in French) and 8 internet publication (6 in French and 2 in English).
- Interviewee: Ambam Divisional Delegate of MINFOF and the coordinator MENTOR PoP
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including the Ambam arrest of three with a live baby chimp and pangolin scales, the arrest of Vietnamese ivory trafficker in Ivory Coast, the 7th edition of World Pangolin Day, the ivory court case in Djoum and the apprehension of a trafficker in Betare-Oya with pangolin scales, hippo teeth and python skins.
- 24 media pieces in English and 21 in French making a percentage of 53% in English and 47% in French.

Media Table

No of Media Pieces	TV	Radio	Newspapers	Internet
--------------------	----	-------	------------	----------

45	3	11	23	8
----	---	----	----	---

External Relations and Policy

- The Deputy Director participated in the management and leadership training for EAGLE coordinators that took place in Accra, Ghana
- The Deputy Director attended a meeting that discussed activities to celebrate the World Pangolin Day and assisted in the publication of sensitization articles in several local newspapers and websites.
- The Deputy Director accompanied by the veterinarian of Ape Action Africa held a meeting with the Director of Wildlife and Protected areas to convince ministry officials to allow the baby chimpanzee that was seized during an operation last month to be sent to the Mefou wildlife sanctuary where adequate structures and support were available. The animal is presently at the hands of people with very little experience in with handling baby apes.
- He equally did a presentation on corruption in wildlife law enforcement at the French Cultural Centre and held a meeting with the officials of the CABAG project that LAGA is to host this year. The meeting focused on logistics and finances for this new project.
- The Deputy Director held a meeting with officials of the European Union to discuss the court trial of two arrested in Djoum with 216 ivory tusks in the car of a gendarmerie colonel.
- The Head of the Legal Department held meetings with the State Counsels of Douala – Bonanjo, Djoum and Bertoua. During the meeting in Bertoua, he was accompanied by a legal assistant who also held another meeting later with the same State Counsel. Another legal assistant held meetings with the State Counsels in Ambam and Nkongsamba respectively.
- The Head of Investigations and Legal Department made two courtesy visits to Sangmelima and Djoum in the South Region to meet the State Counsels and the Judges of the court of first instances, respectively, to reinforce working relations.

Management

- Some LAGA members continued their special English language classes albeit difficulties in programming due to several field activities carried out by many of those taking part.
- Some LAGA members started vaccination against communicable diseases and zoonosis for those exposed to handling baby primates during operations.
- LAGA continued search for a new office. The search was started last year because of the dilapidated state of the present office and the increase in the number of members who are finding it difficult to have enough space within the present structure.

Activism Front: Movie – Au Malawi, la violente initiation sexuelle des jeunes filles par les « hyenes »

It may look and sound surreal but it is true, a young girl is offered by her family to a man to have sex for a full night after she gets her first period. This happens in Malawi and the ancient rite for “sexual cleaning” happens in the remote southern regions of country. A violent traditional practiced on young women who are forced to have sex for the first time with these men who are called “hyena”. They say the outrageous rite is a mark of passage to womanhood, sexually cleaning the young innocent girls who are basically raped without any protection in a country that has some of

the highest levels of HIV prevalence. The events are shrouded in secrecy despite being outlawed but enforcing the law is difficult. NGOs and some female locals are now taking this on but it is a long hard battle. Discussions focused on African rites, women's rights, education, enforcement and criticism of government's role.

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>.

Link of the month

Canal 2 follows up on last month's rescue of a baby chimp at Ambam, South of Cameroon and the arrest of three persons. The baby orphan chimp was given a first aid care and transported to the Mvogbetsi zoo in Yaoundé for a better stay and the guarantee of its safety. This was broadcast on one of Cameroon's popular channels.

<https://youtu.be/wRV2OmOWApU>

Youtube Statatics:

385 views within 2 weeks

Finance

Please check LAGA website www.laga-enforcement.org for monthly financial reports.

This Month in Pictures



He uses the cover of a drinking spot he owns to traffic in illegal wildlife products and other contraband including gold. He awaits prosecution



37kg of pangolin scales, 2 python skins and 6 hippopotamus teeth were recovered from the trafficker in Betare Oya, East Cameroon as he was just about to evacuate the contraband for trafficking