

The Last Great Ape Organization – LAGA

August 2011 Report



Highlights

- **4 years in prison** sentence for a **Chinese ivory trafficker in Brazzaville –Congo.**
- **11 major wildlife dealers sentenced to serve prison terms of 1 and 2 years** in Cameroon.
- **An Egyptian ivory dealer sentenced to serve 2 years in prison.** and 2 Cameroonians
- LAGA participates in CITES Standing Committee meeting in Geneva – Switzerland.

General

This month was marked by very good prosecutions in Congo with a Chinese sentenced to serve 4 years in prison, and Cameroon with 11 major wildlife dealers sentenced to imprisonment.

An unprecedented prosecution of a Chinese trafficker condemned to 4 years in prison was obtained by PALF – Republic of Congo. The Chinese was arrested in the Brazzaville airport with large quantities of ivory which he attempted to conceal with metal sheets. The 35 year old man was caught attempting to smuggle to China 5 large elephant tusks, 80 ivory chopsticks, Hankos (traditional name seals), 3 ivory carvings and many other small ivory items. **This is a high point for wildlife law enforcement in the Central African sub-region and an important step in the fight against illegal ivory trade across the African continent,** which has seen a rapid increase in the illegal trade in recent years. **Several law enforcement NGOs are operating in a network, with an innovative approach of fighting corruption** to get the wildlife law applied in the rainforests of Central Africa where there is still much wildlife to save.

In Cameroon, **3 cases prosecuted and 11 major wildlife dealers sentenced to imprisonment.** The court of First Instance of the Administrative Center – Yaounde sentenced 3 major ivory dealers, one of them of Egyptian nationality and 2 Cameroonians to **2 years of imprisonment** and to pay \$10.950 as damages and fine each. They were arrested for illegally trying to trade in 4 elephant tusks in Yaounde. The court of First Instance of Bengbis - South sentenced 6 dealers belonging to a network of traffickers of ivory and other elephant products to **1 year of prison** term and to pay **\$7.290** as fine and damages each. They were arrested for illegal killing and trading in elephant products especially ivory inside Dja Biosphere Reserve. The court of First Instance of Bafang - West sentenced 2 well known dealers to **1 year of imprisonment** and to pay **\$3.460** as fine and damages each. They were arrested in Bafang for illegal detention and trying to trade in leopard skin.

LAGA participated at 61st meeting of the Standing Committee of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) with discussions mostly focused on elephant conservation, the international trade in ivory, and China's increasing involvement in the illegal ivory trade. Other issues discussed included new financial mechanisms, elephant conservation, measures to reduce current levels of rhino poaching, tigers and other big cats, mahogany and other timber species, sturgeon and caviar trade, and the sourcing of reptile skins used in the leather industry. Many congratulated LAGA and PALF for the prosecutions in Cameroon and Congo the past week, including the CITES Secretariat.

LAGA's presentation was based on a new vision for conservation in CITES and how conservation NGOs are losing every year as trade industry take control over the conservation convention. In this regard, the power point got very good reaction.

LAGA Director also spent valuable time to train Naftali Honig, the project coordinator of PALF on CITES issues. A very strong report about Egypt ape trade was also distributed and talked about this in the convention as well as about trade in apes in Guinea.

Investigations

- **16 investigation missions** of varying lengths were carried out in **6 Regions** of Cameroon- Adamawa, North, East, Littoral, North West and Center.
- Training of Investigators on operations procedure continued this month so that they could start to actively assist and help in controlling some operations in the field.
- Attention shifted to the Northern part of the country after a long time without focused attention. This will continue in the next coming months.
- There will be more focus on regional enforcement with missions scheduled towards the borders with Gabon, Republic of Congo and Central African Republic.
- This month saw continued involvement in investigations and operations procedures in the replication projects especially PALF – Congo and AALF – Gabon.
- 2 informants were recruited to assist in getting on time information on major dealers.

Operations

1 operation followed up this month **against 2 dealers**

- **01/08/11 – 2 dealers were arrested in Djoum – South with elephant tusks, arm and ammunition** used in the killing of elephants and other protected wildlife species by officers of the Djoum police station. LAGA is involved in further investigations and legal follow-up, ensuring that the suspects are locked up.

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **21 missions** out of Yaounde- Centre Region: 4 in Douala (Littoral), 2 in Buea (South West), 1 in Limbe (South West), 2 in Muyuka (South West), 1 in Bamenda (North West), 1 in Abong-Mbang (East), 4 in Kribi (South), 2 in Djoum (South), 1 in Ebolowa (South), 1 in Bengbis (South), 1 in Bafoussam (West), 1 in Bafang (West).
- There are **17 dealers behind bars during this month**: 2 in the East Region, 1 in the South West Region, 11 in the South Region, 2 in the West Region and 1 in the Littoral Region.
- **49 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **45 cases** are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.
- **Prosecutions**: 11 dealers were sentenced this month.
 - **08/08/2011**: The court of First Instance of Bafang - West sentenced TEMDENOU Patrick and BOUBA Michel to **1 year of imprisonment** and to pay **\$3.460 as fine and damages** each. They were arrested in Bafang for illegal detention and trying to trade in leopard skin.
 - **10/08/2011**: The court of First Instance of Bengbis - South sentenced ATANGANA Amougou, MBITA Valentin, KEDE Armand, ONONO Thomas, NDJELE Lucas and BESSALA Jean Pierre to **1 year of prison** term and to pay **\$7.290 fine and damages each**. They were arrested for illegal killing and trading in elephant products especially ivory inside Dja Biosphere Reserve.
 - **26/08/2011**: The court of First Instance of the Administrative Center – Yaounde sentenced Mohamed Darwish Zaki of Egyptian nationality, Nkeha Georges Raoul and Mefire Rolande Renné to **2 years of imprisonment** and to pay **\$10.950 as damages and fine each**. They were arrested for illegally trying to trade in 4 elephant tusks in Yaounde.

Media front

- **35 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to radio, and written press including: 17 written press materials (8 in English and 9 in French), 3 talk shows all in English, 3 news feature in English and 12 news flashes (2 in English and 10 in French).

- Guests include: Minister of Forestry and Wildlife, LAGA Director, PALF Project Coordinator, Horizon Newspaper Editor in Chief and Chief of Station of the Donga Mantung Community Radio.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including; replication Chad - Cameroon accord, arrest of leopard skin dealer in Yaounde, Bafang judgment of leopard skin traffickers, Bengbis judgment of ivory dealers, leopard skin crackdown in the sub region, Congo judgment on the Chinese ivory trafficker and CITES meeting and decision on elephants.
- 16 media pieces in English, 19 in French making a percentage of 45.7% in English and 54.3% in French.

External Relations and Policy

- Participation at 61st meeting of the Standing Committee of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) with discussions mostly focused on elephant conservation, the international trade in ivory, and China's increasing involvement in the illegal ivory trade. Other issues discussed included new financial mechanisms, elephant conservation, measures to reduce current levels of rhino poaching, tigers and other big cats, mahogany and other timber species, sturgeon and caviar trade, and the sourcing of reptile skins used in the leather industry. LAGA equally gave a presentation on a new vision for conservation in CITES and how conservation NGOs are losing every year as trade industry take control over the conservation convention. LAGA Director also spent time to train Naftali, the project coordinator of PALF on CITES issues.
- Meeting between LAGA and Head of Interpol NCB Cameroon in preparation of a joint Interpol-LAGA-Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife operations in border areas with Congo, Gabon and C.A.R.
- Meeting with First Secretary of the British High Commission and the US embassy Head of Political and Economic section on the shrinking space of civil society in Africa and disabling environment for NGOs.
- Meeting with Simon Tamungang from the University of Dschang to discuss on serious problems with the draft of study on African grey parrots.
- LAGA Director meeting with Positive Generation on corruption in the health sector and the APT-AID Principles.
- World Bank Governance Officer and LAGA Director met and discussed on law enforcement, corruption, transparency and accountability.
- Meeting with American volunteer on wildlife law enforcement and the APT-AID principles.
- Meeting with WWF Carpo coordinator on corruption in the NGO business and the RALF project in Central Africa Republic.
- Meeting with WWF Carpo Head of logistic department on measures to combat corruption and improve transparency and accountability in WWF.

Management

- The various Departments are continuing to effectively put in place plans to reconstruct and measures to cut costs while maintaining the good results.

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>. Education activities for this month were on:

1) Mary Slessor (1848-1915) -The Barefoot Missionary/White Queen of Calabar

This presentation is centred on the missionary life of Mary Slessor, a Scottish missionary through whose Christian activity was able to open up cannibalistic tribes in the Calabar area to God and

civilisation. Through her work and sacrifice, she was able to bring health assistance and cultural influence to that part of Nigeria. The presentation also raises a controversy on the effects of Christianity on African tradition and culture as a threat, looking at both its negative and positive influences. It also tries to bring out a debate on the above topic with aim of pointing Africans back to their culture despite being African Christians.

Some questions:

- 1) If most missionaries had been like Mary would Africa have been different?
- 2) Are women today still an important part in changing their world?
- 3) Do we agree our African tradition is a part of our identity?
- 4) Is it important to you as an African?
- 5) Our traditions are being eradicated, is it negative?
- 6) Do we have some responsibility towards our tradition and its loss?

By Cynthia Akwen

2) Child Trafficking in Cameroon

The power point presentation “know to save” looks at the national and international efforts in the fight against child trafficking, laying emphasis on insufficient information faced by those engaged in the fight. The fight against child traffic has a lot of challenges in terms of definition that prevents crack down at the national level, dictated international norms that remains the principle problem and the strong link between the fight and African traditions or values.

Questions

- 1) What do you consider as child labor and child trafficking?
- 2) Do you think that a child in the village who shows his strength with the quantity of load he can carry could be classified as child abuse?

By Serge Banyimbe

3) Film - Amazing Grace

Amazing grace is a film that depicts an individual’s way and manner of fighting for a cause. In fact William is an activist who single handedly fought for slave trade abolition. What is peculiar with his type of activism is the peaceful and non violent fight he put up in the parliament to abolish slave trade in Britain against the wish of other members of parliament. William in this film has proven that violence is not the optimum in fighting a cause.

Questions

- 1) What motivates him here as an activist?
- 2) Did he give up his activism? How did he regain it?

4) Access to Information in Cameroon

The presentation was focused on four major parts: the legal framework for access to information in Cameroon (at international and national levels), mechanisms for the access to information in Cameroon (formal and informal mechanisms), obstacles to the exercise of the right of access to information in Cameroon (legal and *de facto* obstacles) and recommendations on how to improve access to information.

Questions

- 1) How is information kept in Cameroon?
- 2) What type of information could be requested?
- 3) What are the mechanisms put in place to access information?
- 4) What are the limitations of information access in Cameroon?
- 5) Should we build new legislation in Cameroon?

By Ononino Alain

Replication

The replication of the LAGA model and the transfer of LAGA experience in other countries throughout the sub-region is a continuous process whereby LAGA works with other NGOs. More information on replication is available on

<http://www.laga-enforcement.org/Replication/tabid/166/Default.aspx>

This month saw effective prosecutions of wildlife cases with very good court decisions obtained in Cameroon and Congo.

An unprecedented prosecution of a Chinese trafficker condemned to 4 years in prison was obtained by PALF – Republic of Congo. The Chinese was arrested in the Brazzaville airport with large quantities of ivory which he attempted to conceal with metal sheets. The 35 year old man was caught attempting to smuggle to China 5 large elephant tusks, 80 ivory chopsticks, Hankos (traditional name seals), 3 ivory carvings and many other small ivory items. This is a high point for wildlife law enforcement in the Central African sub-region and an important step in the fight against illegal ivory trade across the African continent, which has seen a rapid increase in the illegal trade in recent years. Several law enforcement NGOs are operating in a network, with an innovative approach of fighting corruption to get the wildlife law applied in the rainforests of Central Africa where there is still much wildlife to save.

In Gabon, AALF carried out 2 arrest operations, cracking down on leopard skin dealers. 3 major leopard skin dealers were arrested, 1 Gabonese with a leopard skin in the first operation; and 2 Senegalese trying to illegally sell leopard skins in Libreville – Gabon. These arrests were carried out with the newly created “Direction de Lutte contre le Braconnage” and Gendarmerie.

Replication further advanced this month in Nigeria. A meeting was held in Geneva with the Director General of the Special Unit in Nigeria; she was very serious and agreed on the possibility of starting replication activities as early as October in Nigeria.

Meetings were held between LAGA and Head of Interpol of National Central Bureau - Cameroon in preparation of joint simultaneous sting operations of Interpol-LAGA-Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife in the four countries by the projects.

LAGA Director also spent valuable time to train Naftali Honig, the project coordinator of PALF on CITES issues in Geneva – Switzerland during their participation in the 61st meeting of the Standing Committee of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

On a daily basis all LAGA Departments assist in the various activities of the replication projects (PALF – Congo, AALF – Gabon and RALF – Central African Republic etc.) on all managerial and financial issues especially reports; Investigations and Operations planification and supervision; legal follow-up of all court cases; and publishing and pushing through all the media pieces with all the necessary information posted on the various project websites. For this month, LAGA assisted in:

- Assisting PALF in the coordination of investigation missions and preparation of operations, working specifically with Adelphe on procedures in Manual from Investigations through to operations planification and strategies.
- Assisting Hubert (RALF) on Investigations and Operations procedures – discussing directly with the investigators concerned.
- Assisting AALF in the coordination of investigation missions and preparation of operations, working specifically on procedures in Manual from Investigations through to operations planification and strategies. Assisted in 2 arrest operations in Gabon.
- Ensuring that the media pieces concerning the various operations were produced and pushed through to the respective national media.

- Ensuring that the activity and financial reports of the past months are all updated and posted on the various websites.

Finance

LAGA Expenditure by Budget Line for August 2011

| Amount CFA | Budget Line | | Amount USD |
|-------------------|--|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1,510,640 | Investigations | 17 inv, 6 Regions | \$3,284 |
| 428,000 | Operations | 1 Operation against 2 subjects | \$930 |
| 3,012,935 | Legal | follow up 49 cases 17 locked subjects | \$6,550 |
| 1,876,045 | Media | 35 Media pieces | \$4,078 |
| 1,642,369 | Policy & External Relations | Congo/Gabon/Swiss | \$3,570 |
| 937,000 | Management | Coordination | \$2,037 |
| 2,282,358 | Office | | \$4,962 |
| 11,689,347 | TOTAL EXPENDITURE AUGUST | | \$25,412 |

LAGA Expenditure by Donor for August 2011

| AmountCFA | Donor | Amount USD |
|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 3,554,220 | FWS | \$7,726.6 |
| 348,470 | FWS-Replication | \$757.5 |
| 445,621 | BornFree Foundation | \$968.7 |
| 1,321,545 | Rufford Foundation | \$2,872.9 |
| 3,182,539 | Neu Foundation | \$6,918.6 |
| 905,685 | Future for Nature | \$1,968.9 |
| 1,931,267 | ARCUS Foundation | \$4,198.4 |
| 11,689,347 | TOTAL | \$25,411.6 |

THIS MONTH IN PICTURES



A total of 11 major wildlife dealers that were arrested for illegally trading in products of protected wildlife species were sentenced to serve prison terms this month. 3 dealers in ivory – 1 Egyptian and 2 Cameroonians were sentenced by the Court of First Instance of Yaounde – Central Administration to 2 years imprisonment each. 6 ivory dealers belonging to a network were sentenced to serve 1 year prison term each by the Court of First Instance – Bengbis. 2 leopard skin dealers were sentenced to 1 year prison term each by the Court of First Instance, Bafang-West.



Arm, elephant tusks and leopard skin seized during an arrest operation in Djoum – South. 2 major dealers were arrested by officers of the Djoum police station and LAGA is involved in further investigations and legal follow-up, ensuring that the suspects are locked up.

Links of this month

- The Enforcement of Wildlife Law in Cameroon by LAGA and MINFOF, Cameroon National Television Broadcast in the programme "You and the Law": The programme focused on the activities and collaboration of LAGA -MINFOF in enforcing the wildlife law in Cameroon. The Head of LAGA Legal unit in this program explains the law and defines in general the collaboration the organisation has with MINFOF (Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife) and the application of wildlife laws in particular.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jLdX-AKeMO0>