

# The Last Great Ape Organization – LAGA

## September 2011 Report



### Highlights

- **2 Internet wildlife dealers arrested in collaboration with US authorities after offering rhino horns for sale with falsified official documents.**
- **7 major wildlife dealers sentenced to serve prison terms.**
- **3 dealers sentenced to 6 months imprisonment each in Abong Mbang - East.**

### General

This month was marked by the arrest of 2 Internet wildlife dealers and a continuation of good prosecutions against major wildlife dealers – a total of 10 in number.

Following a report to **LAGA and international collaboration with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, 2 well-known Internet wildlife dealers** were arrested in Ekona and Muea in the South West Region after offering for sale **rhinoceros horns through the Internet to a customer in USA**. They had in their possession a falsified export permit, an official document. They had scanned a national identity card, and then proceeded to falsify the scanned copy which was then posted over the Internet to lure and convince victims to send money while pretending to be credible sellers. **They have been engaged in this form of falsification and trade for more than 3 years**. No horns were actually found. Their link to other forms of fraud is being investigated. This case again proves that while the Internet trade in Cameroon is connected to fraud, it does not mean that actual transactions do not take place.

**10 major wildlife dealers were sentenced this month, 7 to serve prison terms and 3 to pay fines and damages.** The Court of First Instance of Abong-Mbang – East sentenced **3 dealers to 6 months of prison** term each and **2 others** to pay \$60 each as fines. They were also sentenced to **pay jointly \$7600 as damages**. They were arrested in February 2011 in Ntam – East at the border between Congo and Cameroon for illegal detention and traffic of 20 ivory tusks. In another case, the Court of First Instance of Ebolowa – South sentenced **1 dealer to 2 months of imprisonment** and to pay \$300 as fine, and another to pay \$200. They were also sentenced to **pay jointly \$1000 as damages**. These dealers were arrested on the January 2011 in Ebolowa while trying to trade in a live mandrill. Also, the Court of First Instance of Djoum – South Region sentenced **3 dealers to 2 months of prison term each** and to pay **\$1300** as fines and damages. They were arrested in July 2011 in Djoum for illegally killing an elephant and trying to trade in its parts.

In Regional Enforcement, RALF-CAR carried out good arrest operations- a dealer was arrested with a lion skin, four leopard skins, and skins of Bongo and crocodile, highlighting the trade in trophies and trade in lions, soon to become extinct in the region. Another dealer was arrested with 28 wart hog tusks.

### Investigations

- **22 investigation missions** of varying lengths were carried out in **6 Regions** of Cameroon- East, South West, Littoral, South, West and Center.
- **Internet Investigations** led to the identification and **arrest of 2 Internet wildlife dealers** in Ekona – South West Region.
- 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.
- There will be continued 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 new Investigators were tried this month in the field with encouraging results. The Department is short of engaged investigators.

## Operations

**1 operation** carried out this month against **2 Internet wildlife dealers**

- **14/09/11** – Following a report to **LAGA and international collaboration with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, 2 well-known Internet wildlife dealers** were arrested in Ekona and Muea in the South West Region after offering for sale **rhino via the Internet to a customer in USA**. They had in their possession a falsified export permit, an official document. They had scanned a national identity card, and then proceeded to falsify the scanned copy which was then posted over the Internet to lure and convince victims to send money while pretending to be credible sellers. **They have been engaged in this form of falsification and trade for more than 3 years**. No horns were actually found. Their link to other forms of fraud is being investigated. This case again proves that while the Internet trade in Cameroon is connected to fraud, it does not mean that actual transactions do not take place.

## Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **17 missions** out of Yaounde- Centre Region: 2 in Douala (Littoral), 2 in Buea (South West), 1 in Limbe (South West), 1 in Muyuka (South West), 1 in Mamfe (South West), 2 in Bamenda (North West), 1 in Abong-Mbang (East), 1 in Kribi (South), 3 in Djoum (South), 1 in Ebolowa (South), 1 in Bafoussam (West), 1 in Fouban (West).
- There are **16 dealers behind bars during this month**: 2 in the East Region, 3 in the South West Region, 9 in South Region and 2 in West Region.
- **45 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **37 cases** are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.
- **Prosecutions: 10 dealers were sentenced this month.**
  - **06/09/2011**: The Court of First Instance of Ebolowa – South Region sentenced ANGO Jacques to **2 months of prison** term and to pay 150.000 FCFA as fine, and MINKO Nkomo to pay 100.000 FCFA as fine. They were also sentenced to pay jointly 547.500 FCFA as damages. ANGO Jacques and MINKO Nkomo were arrested on the January 2011 in Ebolowa while trying to trade in a live mandrill.
  - **13/09/2011**: The Court of First Instance of Abong-Mbang – East Region sentenced OUMAROU Bouba, ABO Mohamadou, LINTOUOT Salifou to **6 months of prison** term each and NITEDEM Jean Ledoux and MEKIAPE Nganyou to pay 30.000 FCFA each as fine. They will be retained in jail for 3 months in default of payment of fine. They were also sentenced to pay jointly 3.827.500 FCFA as damages. They were arrested in February 2011 in Ntam – East at the border between Congo and Cameroon for illegal detention and traffic of 20 ivory tusks.
  - **27/09/2011**: The Court of First Instance of Djoum – South Region sentenced Eva Eva Mathurin, Ntyame Endanete and Youba Oumarou to 2 months of prison term each and to pay 645.000 FCFA as fines and damages. They will be retained in jail for 3 months in default of payment of the fines and damages. They were arrested in July 2011 in Djoum for illegally killing an elephant and trying to trade in its parts.

## Media front

- **28 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to radio, and written press including: 17 written press articles (11 in English and 6 in French), 3 talk shows all in English, 2 news

- feature (1 in English and 1 in French) and 6 news flashes in French.
- Guests include: North West Regional Delegate of MINFOF, Conservationist with Agriculture and Nature Conservation organisation, The Secretary General of CITES - John E. Scanlon, the former Mboscuda Enterprise development trainer, and Head of Donga Muntung Community Radio.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including; Buea Internet wildlife dealers arrest, prosecution of Ebolowa mandrill traffickers, prosecution of Abong Mbang ivory traffickers network, prosecution of Djoum ivory traffickers, Bangui arrest of lion, crocodile and leopard skins, Chinese ivory dealer judgment in Congo, 14 wildlife traffickers slammed a total of 18 years in jail and the CITES decision on elephant.
- 15 media pieces in English, 13 in French making a percentage of 53.6% in English and 46.4% in French.

### **External Relations and Policy**

- LAGA Director participates in the World Bank Africa Strategy conference call meeting chaired by the World Bank Deputy Director for Africa.
- LAGA Director met with the British High Commissioner on Wildlife Law Enforcement, situation in Gabon, The Fight against corruption and space for Civil Society among others.
- LAGA director met with Tayler Guitars and collaborators on setting an exemplary model of Ebony extraction. Discussions revolved around the challenges of corruption in Cameroon and ways forward.
- LAGA Director met with Christine Lippai, TRAFFIC coordinator for a China-Africa Wildlife Trade study. Discussions included – Chinese connection to illegal wildlife trade, corruption, CITES ivory politics, change of perspective in conservation and innovation in wildlife law enforcement among others.
- LAGA Director met with the World Bank Governance Specialist on increasing transparency and accountability in World Bank projects and Corruption in the Forest Sector.
- LAGA Director met with TRAFFIC Central Africa supervisor on development of Wildlife Law Enforcement and roles TRAFFIC can play in the sub-region. Other issues discussed were corruption, Illegal Trade in African Grey Parrots, and Transparency among others.
- LAGA Director met with Ape Alliance Bushmeat Working Group Representative on the need of innovation in Conservation, Mistakes in Conservation Education, misconceptions in Conservation campaigns, corruption, and development of wildlife law enforcement in Equatorial Guinea among others.

### **Management**

- The various Departments are continuing to effectively put in place plans to reconstruct and measures to cut costs while maintaining the good results.
- 1 new volunteer tried in the Legal Department this month.
- 2 new investigators tried this month with encouraging 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 activity for this month was on:

#### **The Cove – A Film**

The film portrays the activities of an activist in the fight against the killing of whales and dauphins in Japan. He goes extreme miles to film the illegal abuses (massacred) meted on these species by fishermen in Taiji. Investigations and high level of technology coverage with cameras is the method employed by this activist rather than a violent fight. It is risky yet someone has to go for the survival

of these animals.

#### Some questions for debate

1. How can you compare the activities of LAGA to that of the film?
2. Do you think seminars and conferences are worth the issue for the protection of these species and other endangered ones?

### **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>

September has been a good month for arrests and prosecutions in the region. In Cameroon prosecution rate continues to be exceptionally high, while collaboration with FWS produced good arrests of internet wildlife traffickers. In CAR the project was getting back on track with arrest operations relating to trade in lions – soon to be extinct in the sub-region. Gabon focused on bushmeat trade arrests and building capacity for intensified law enforcement in the north. In Congo arrests continue to focus on the trade in sea turtle shells.

But the most important theme common to all four countries this month was complicity and involvement of local authorities in the trade. In Congo widespread corruption in Ouessou is investigated by the Anti-Corruption Commission, In CAR an arrest led to an Ex-Minister and in Gabon a well organized system putting local authorities on “pay-rolls” to insure impunity of illegal activities. In Cameroon a project official of a conservation project is suspected to have activated elephant poachers.

In CAR, RALF carried out good arrest operations; a dealer was arrested with a lion skin, four leopard skins, and skins of Bongo and crocodile, highlighting the trade in trophies and trade in lions, soon to become extinct in the region. Another dealer was arrested with 28 wart hog tusks.

In Congo, PALF arrested 2 dealers with sea turtle shells in Pointe-Noire.

In Gabon, 2 cars seized by gendarmes with big quantities of bushmeat in Ntoum, highlight complicity of local authorities being on “pay-roll” of the dealers to ensure impunity for their illegal activities. And as a part of a long term bushmeat trade investigation, a Cameroonian dealer was arrested in Lambarene.

A formal request for collaboration with WCS-LAGA was sent to Nigerian Federal Ministry of Environment and Director General of Nigerian Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) ahead of the official beginning of LAGA model replication activities in Nigeria.

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 operations leading to the arrest of 2 dealers in sea turtle shells.
- Assisting Hubert (RALF) on Investigations and Operations procedures.

- Ensuring that the media pieces concerning the various operations and court decisions 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 September 2011**

<b>Amount CFA</b>	<b>Budget Line</b>		<b>Amount USD</b>
<b>1,622,370</b>	<b>Investigations</b>	22 inv, 6 Regions	<b>\$3,380</b>
<b>757,000</b>	<b>Operations</b>	1 Operation against 2 subjects	<b>\$1,577</b>
<b>2,983,185</b>	<b>Legal</b>	follow up 45 cases 16 locked subjects	<b>\$6,215</b>
<b>1,421,745</b>	<b>Media</b>	28 Media pieces	<b>\$2,962</b>
<b>1,426,290</b>	<b>Policy &amp; External Relations</b>	Congo/Gabon/RCA	<b>\$2,971</b>
<b>974,400</b>	<b>Management</b>	Coordination	<b>\$2,030</b>
<b>1,225,939</b>	<b>Office</b>		<b>\$2,554</b>
<b>10,410,929</b>	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE SEPTEMBER</b>		<b>\$21,689</b>


### **LAGA Expenditure by Donor for September 2011**

<b>Amount CFA</b>	<b>Donor</b>	<b>Amount USD</b>
3,142,570	FWS	\$6,547.0
1,376,290	FWS-Replication	\$2,867.3
252,569	BornFree Foundation	\$526.2
879,245	Rufford Foundation	\$1,831.8
2,174,570	Neu Foundation	\$4,530.4
1,790,685	Future for Nature	\$3,730.6
795,000	ARCUS Foundation	\$1,656.3
<b>10,410,929</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$21,689.4</b>

**THIS MONTH IN PICTURES**

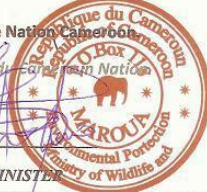


2 well-known Internet wildlife dealers engaged in the trade of rhino horns and other protected wildlife products over the Internet for more than 3 years arrested in Ekona – South West Region. This arrest was carried out following a report to LAGA and international collaboration with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Their link to other forms of fraud is being investigated.

<p>République du Cameroun Paix – Travail – Patrie</p> <p>MINISTÈRE DE LA FAUNE de la sylviculture Et Ministère de la faune et la nature</p>		<p>Republic Of Cameroon Peace – Work – Fatherland</p> <p>Ministry of Livestock and Animal Husbandry And Ministry of Wildlife and Environmental Protection</p>
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**AN AUTHORIZATION TO EXPORT / AUTORISATION D'EXPORTATION**

By virtue of the power vested in me as the Minister of Wildlife and  
*En vertu du pouvoir que me confèrent la ministre de la Faune et  
Environmental Protection, THOMAS EKAKE MUNA OFEMBE and with  
Protection de l'environnement, THOMAS EKAKE MUNA OFEMBE et avec...*  
accordance to Article #35 Sub Section VII/CAM/ORDER-06-03-1992/  
*conformément à l'article n ° 35 Section Sous VII/CAM/ORDER-06-03-1992 /*  
of the Constitution governing the Wildlife Sector in the Republic  
*de la Constitution régissant le secteur de la faune en République*  
of Cameroon, I hereby authorize Mr. Maidon Muskard Techa, born on  
*du Cameroun, j'autorise M. Maidon Muskard Techa, né le*  
the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November, 1972 and holder of National Identity Card  
*le 22 Novembre, 1972 et titulaire de carte d'identité nationale*  
Number 1066422025 issued on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February, 2005 at Maroua  
*Nombre 1066422025 émis le 22 Février 2005 à Maroua*  
And Permit N° 04CMR00469 and Security Stamp N° CMR9122882  
*Et n'admettent pas d'04CMR00469 timbre et de la sécurité Aucune CMR9122882*  
to export Rhino Extracts both within and outside the Nation Cameroon  
*Extraits d'exporter Rhino tant au sein qu'à l'extérieur du Cameroun*



Done at Yaoundé on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March, 2007 Tel: (+237) 70306206 Email: cam\_wildlifeconservation@hotmail.com

Falsified official document used by the Internet wildlife dealers arrested in Ekona to lure and convince victims to send money while pretending to be credible sellers.



**A lion skin with skins of Bongo, leopard and crocodile seized following the arrest of a dealer by RALF in CAR highlighting the trade in trophies and trade in lions, soon to become extinct in the region**

### **Links of this month**

- **The President of WWF-International, Yolanda Kalabadse, in an article titled - "The fight against wildlife crime - Enforcement vs. Corruption" published in Environmental Policy and Law, credits LAGA's innovation in showing the way forward in fighting corruption, an approach that needs to be assimilated.**

In Africa, WWF came to recognise the importance of corruption as an issue in combating wildlife crime largely thanks to the way shown by other NGOs. One such NGO whose story encapsulates the struggle is LAGA, founded in Cameroon by Ofir Drori. Ofir's main approach to fight corruption is to bring out into the open by assigning teams to shadow suspects at all times as they made their way through the legal process; to use the media and the donor community to shine a spotlight on cases. Because corruption flourishes where there is lack of transparency and accountability, Ofir's approach has proven to be very successful. This approach as shown the way to others, and led to the foundation of similar NGOs in other countries in the region, such as AALF – Gabon. Recently, these NGOs, working in concert, were successful in breaking up a wildlife smuggling ring that spanned four countries (Cameroon, Gabon, the Central African Republic and the Republic of Congo).

**[http://www.laga-enforcement.org/Portals/0/Corruption/ Env%20Policy%20 and%20Law %20article.pdf](http://www.laga-enforcement.org/Portals/0/Corruption/Env%20Policy%20and%20Law%20article.pdf)**