

The Last Great Ape Organization – LA GA

January 2015 Report



Highlights

- **Three operations carried out this month and six traffickers arrested**
- **A lead hunter; president of a local association of hunters and two others were arrested.**
- **Two other operations in Djoum led to the arrest of an ivory trafficker and two others trafficking in ape skulls.**
- **African grey parrot trafficker who was arrested with 72 parrots gets 18 months jail term.**
- **LAGA members resumed work after season's vacation.**

General

This month was marked by the arrest of six traffickers including the president of a local hunters' association for trafficking in wildlife products.

6 traffickers were arrested this month during **3 separate operations** carried out in **the Centre and South Regions**. 3 traffickers belonging to a local association of hunters were arrested in Ngambe Tikar and during two more separate operations carried out, three more traffickers were arrested in Djoum for ivory and ape trafficking. The ivory trafficking operation was carried out by wildlife officials in Djoum who contacted the LAGA team shortly after the operation.

During the first of the two operations carried out in Djoum, **wildlife officials arrested two people trafficking in ape skulls** and in the second operation later in the month, wildlife officials who contacted our team for support and follow-up, **arrested a major ivory trafficker in illegal possession and circulation of 18 ivory tusks.**

During the third operation, **three traffickers were arrested in Ngambe Tikar, Centre for illegal possession and commercialisation of a variety of wildlife products including giant pangolin scales, meat and a baby colobus monkey.** One of the traffickers is the president of a local hunters' association.

The Mfou Court of First Instance, Center, convicted an **African grey parrot trafficker to 18 months imprisonment** for illegal possession and circulation of 72 parrot.

The entire LAGA family resumed work during the month after a short vacation over the festive December period and LAGA Director was in Cameroon for a working visit.

Investigations

- **24 investigations** of varying lengths were carried out in **5 Regions** of Cameroon - Littoral, East, Centre, South and West Regions.
- Good investigations in **Djoum** led to the **arrest of two traffickers** in possession of 1 chimpanzee and 3 gorilla skulls.
- Excellent investigations in **Ngambe Tikar** resulted in the **arrest of three traffickers trying** to sell a dead colobus monkey, giant pangolin parts and over a kilogram of giant pangolin scales.
- Good collaboration with MINFOF led to the **arrest of a trafficker in illegal possession of 18 elephant tusks**. It should be noted that before the LAGA team arrived the scene of action, the operation had already taken place.

Operations

3 operations carried out this month with MINFOF arresting **6 suspects**

- **17/01/15 – 2 ape skull traffickers arrested in possession of 3 gorilla and 1 chimpanzee skull in Djoum – South.** One of the traffickers is a high profile ape trafficker belonging to a network involved in the buying and selling of protected wildlife and its parts. The second trafficker who is his main accomplice also involved in the network.
- **25/01/15 – 1 major ivory trafficker arrested in Djoum, South with 18 raw elephant tusk.** The dealer belongs to a notorious and high profile network involved in ivory trafficking. He works in partnership with another big time ivory trafficker who coordinates all ivory transactions carried out with the arrested trafficker. He buys these ivory tusks from Mintom, South and transports them to Yaounde, Centre.
- **27/01/15 – 3 traffickers arrested over giant pangolin meat, scales and a colobus monkey in Ngambe Tikar, Centre** while illegally trying to commercialise the wildlife products. One of the traffickers is the president of the local hunters' association who has been illegal killing wildlife for over 9 years. In March 2014, he was found poaching in Ngambe Tikar by a National Control Brigade team from the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife that was on a control mission in the Mbam and Kim Division but was never charged with any offence, warned about breaking the wildlife law and set free. The activities of the three were known by many to be illegal but wildlife officials have never been able to nail them to the crimes.

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **12 missions** out of Yaounde- Centre Region: 1 in Nanga Eboko (Centre), 1 in Mfou (Centre), 1 in Ngambe Tikar (Centre), 1 in Batouri (East), 3 in Djoum (South), 1 in Ambam (South), 1 in Mamfe (South West), 1 in Tombel (South West), 1 in Edea (Littoral), and 1 in Douala (Littoral).
- There are **42 dealers behind bars during this month**: 13 in East Region, 9 in Centre region, 2 in Littoral region, 10 in South region, 1 in West region and 7 in South West region.
- **35 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **34 cases** scheduled and being tried in court this month.
- **Prosecutions:** We had 01 judgment this month.
 - 27/01/2015: The Mfou Court of First Instance – Center, convicted **MINKADA ENGONGA MATHURIN to 18 months of imprisonment** and to pay **3.280.000**

CFA F as damages. He was also convicted to pay cost fees of **195.000 CFA F**. He was arrested at the Forestry and Wildlife Control Post of the Nsimalen International Airport for illegal possession and circulation of 72 Africa grey parrots.

Media front

- **14 media pieces** were produced and pushed through the written press, radio, and internet including: 6 written press material (4 in English 2 in French), 4 radio talk shows all in English, 3 news flashes 2 in English and 1 in French, and 1 internet publication in English.
- **Guests include:** The Mbam and Kim Forestry and Wildlife delegate.
- **Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including:** Ape trafficker nabbed in Djoum, court ruling on wildlife traffickers sentenced to imprisonment terms in Djoum and Nanga Eboko, operations carried out within the EAGLE projects in Congo, Guinea and Togo and the arrest of three traffickers with a dead baby colobus monkey, giant pangolin parts including its scales. Conservation issues discussed included the London Conference, the UNEP report: *Stolen Apes* and the arrest and release of four Chinese nationals within the Benoue National Park.
- 11 media pieces in English, 3 in French making a percentage of 78.6% in English and 21.4% in French.

External Relations and Policy

The Director and the Deputy Director held meetings with the American Ambassador, European Union officials and the donor body CCPM. The meetings discussed issues pertaining to wildlife law enforcement and conservation in general. The Head of the Legal Department had two meetings, one with the MINFOF Head of Legal Unit on the renewal of the agreement with lawyers and the other with the State Prosecutor in Ntui on the matter concerning the 3 traffickers arrested in Ngambe Tikar.

Management

- LAGA Director arrived Cameroon from Kenya for a working visit and proceeded to Togo.
- The entire LAGA family returned after a Christmas vacation that lasted three weeks.
- In order to obtain an efficient financial management, a comparative analysis of the two accounting system presently in use, the Excel spreadsheet and Sage Saari, was undertaken and a study of the two systems started.

Activism Front

PowerPoint presentation: Ritual crime

The PowerPoint presentation depicts the decadence of our society as seen through ritual crime which has become a big public issue in the country today. The situation is so worrisome that it leaves no one indifferent. Between November 2012 to February 2013, Cameroon registered the killing of about 14 young girls between the ages of 16 to 25 in the lone town of Yaounde. Similar cases were recorded in other towns of the country like Bafoussam and Douala.

The presenter who gives a description of ritual crime as understood in this context attempts to expose the alleged links between the crime and quest for political, financial power etc. The crime is quickly recognizable in Cameroon because generally the executioner often cuts off some particular parts of the death body of their victim for ritual performance.

This presentation is aimed at rekindling our love for humanity and re-awakening our survival and protective instincts by enabling us to take up one of our principal duties as human beings; guarding against child or human part trafficking.

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>.

Replication

During this month, LAGA worked with the Senegalese project SALF, assisting in preparing files for the appeal case against the ruling on 5 traffickers arrested in Senegal last year for trafficking of 2 753 wildlife products.

Finance

In preparation and would be made available soon as possible.

This Month in Pictures



Three traffickers arrested in Ngambe Tikar for trafficking in wildlife. The president of the local hunters' association is one of them (left). Two arrested for ape skull trafficking in Djoum South (above)



Sentenced to 18 months imprisonment, arrested with illegal consignment of African grey parrots near Nsimalen International Airport (above). Wildlife officials arrested him with 18 elephant tusks in South (right)



Link of this month

- Al Jazeera, on its internet site, publishes an article on the specialised trafficking in ape heads and limbs after the arrest of two in Magba over 7 chimp heads and 30 limbs and the rescue of a live chimpanzee and the arrest in Nanga Eboko of ape trafficker with 4 gorilla heads and 16 limbs. Many operations carried out recently have revealed a specialized trade in ape parts including heads, limbs and skulls and this is attracting attention from many.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2015/01/trafficking-great-ape-body-parts-cameroon-2015148945815121.html>