



Wildlife Law

Enforcement Briefing

- ✓ **22 significant traffickers arrested this month**
- ✓ **Gabon: Ivory trafficker arrested with 12 tusks and rapidly sentenced to 2 years imprisonment for wildlife crime and corruption attempts.**
- ✓ **Togo: Huge quantities of West African Manatee bones seized from arrested specialized trafficker**
- ✓ **Benin: 150 wildlife contrabands of 20 different species seized, two traffickers arrested.**
- ✓ **Congo: Sniffer dogs hit again, marijuana uncovered in luggage 35 km to Brazzaville.**
- ✓ **Uganda: Major trafficker arrested with 128 kg of giant pangolin scales and proof for trading in rhino horns and ivory.**
- ✓ **Guinea: Saidou Barry appointed GALF coordinator after a trip to Congo within the framework of EAGLE exchange programme.**
- ✓ **Cameroon: One year jail term to ivory trafficker**

Summary

This month was marked by good arrest operations in most of the network's country members with 22 wildlife traffickers arrested. Gabon showed an exceptional number of 9 traffickers arrested. A trafficker has been arrested in Togo with 20 skulls and skeletons of West African Manatees. A similar amount has just been sold to Malians the previous week, exposing an organized trade in this threatened animal in a surprising magnitude. In Uganda, the newest EAGLE member continued its brilliant start with another operation that resulted in the arrest of a giant pangolin scales trafficker with a proof of rhino horns and ivory trafficking.

Many good arrest operations were also carried out in Cameroon, Congo, Guinea and Benin. Two ape traffickers were arrested in Cameroon following their attempts at selling four chimpanzee skulls. In neighbouring Congo, three wildlife traffickers were arrested for ivory trafficking. The biggest known ivory trafficker in Congo – Francois Ikama has been arrested but escaped his arrest as his son and rebel leader Marien Ikama violently intervened the operation with his gang, physically assaulting the police force and the project's

team. Corruption remains a challenge for prosecuting this powerful individual. In Guinea, 2 traffickers were arrested with 6 crocodiles, a giant tortoise, 3 vultures and a Patas Monkey. Over 150 wildlife products from 20 different wildlife species including the lion and the zebra were seized from two traffickers in Benin while investigations enabled the recovery and hatching of hundreds of sea turtle eggs.

Two years and one year imprisonment sentences were handed in Gabon and Cameroon respectively.

Two traffickers with a shocking collection of internationally traded species arrested in Benin



Cameroon – LAGA

- Two ape traffickers arrested following their attempts at selling four chimpanzee skulls in a continued crackdown on specialized trade in apes skulls.
- 3 judgements were obtained this month as the Djoum court convicted an ape skulls traffickers to 2 months of imprisonment and about 1,000 USD as damages. An ivory trafficker was convicted to one year imprisonment and about 90,000 USD in damages awarded. Ekouma Guy was convicted and given a 1 year suspended sentence and to pay around 5,500 USD as damages. An appeal was filed this month against this ruling. He was arrested for shooting and killing an orphan chimpanzee whose parts he later sold as a bushmeat.



Two ape traffickers arrested as they attempted to sell four chimpanzee skulls which they collected from a poacher. In an attempt to look into the future and understand whether they would be arrested or not, knowing fully well that the activity was illegal they had consulted a witch doctor before proceeding with negotiations to sell the skulls. They also promised to supply more if business was good.

Congo – PALF

- 3 traffickers were arrested with 3 tusks in Pointe Noire. GALF assistant coordinator, Saidou Barry participated in the operations as a part of the EA-GLE exchange program.
- The biggest known ivory trafficker in Congo – Francois Ikama has been arrested but escaped his arrest as his son and rebel leader Marien Ikama violently intervened the operation with his gang, physically assaulting the police force and the project's team. Corruption remains a cha-

- llenge for prosecuting this powerful individual.
- Hundreds of kilos of bushmeat were seized in Brazzaville, including over a dozen crocodiles and two dozen turtles, which were later released. Bushmeat seized at Kintele was destined for the Elonda Lodge at the outskirts of Brazzaville, despite it being closed hunting season. Instead of allowing the seizure, a powerful colonel came to the control post and forcibly seized the bushmeat from forestry officials. The same vehicle was later



Two arrested in Brazzaville, Congo for ivory trafficking. One of the arrested traffickers is from the DRC and runs an artefact shop (above).

Marien Ikama attacking local police.

- observed at the Elonda Lodge and the menu filled with bushmeat,
- GALF's coordinator Saidou Barry arrived to PALF Congo after participating in arrest operations in Guinea, and assisted in 2 investigations and arrest of 3 wildlife traffickers. The training falls within the EAGLE exchange programme.
- Naftali Honig made a presentation in Washington DC to the US State Department Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement on the use of sniffer dogs to combat wildlife crime.
- Formal complaint launched to Ministry of Justice about the governance problems of the judiciary in Brazzaville regarding bad prosecution of wildlife cases.
- Sniffer dog team enabled the accidental seizure of over 10 kg of marijuana at a control point 35 km from Brazzaville through luggage check.
- Trials follow up in northern Congo and in Brazzaville against Chinese ivory smugglers and one Chinese citizen who attempted to bribe officials with about 4,000 USD. The Chinese traffickers were arrested last month.



Francois Ikama caught red handed, but corruption remains a challenge for prosecuting.



Gabon – AALF

- 9 traffickers were arrested in 3 operations, initiated by AALF during the month in the Estuaire and Ngounié Provinces. Meanwhile the project provided legal follow up for additional 3 cases following two other operations initiated by local partners.
- Arrest of a trafficker with 12 ivory tusks. He was sentenced to two years imprisonment for illegal possession of ivory and corruption attempts.
- Three people were arrested for poaching, illegal possession and commercialization of trophies of a protected wildlife species and the parts included

leopard skins, teeth and liver. The follow-up of this case resulted in the opening of further investigations. The suspects are under detention.

- Three traffickers were arrested for illegal possession of 4 ivory tusks and while three of them were sentenced by the court the prosecution process against one of them was halted for reasons said to be particular military procedures.
- A leopard skin trafficker arrested.
- Police mission enabled the arrest of two wildlife traffickers, charges brought against them included illegal possession, transportation of totally protected wildlife species (Water Chevrotain), illegal possession and transportation of wild animal species without authorization. They are expected to appear in court in April.
- 3 poachers found in illegal possession of a leopard skin, 2 ivory tusks and many other animal trophies were arrested.
- A wood sawing verification mission was carried out in the Ogooué-Ivindo Province; a follow-up of

the case on an illegal wood exploiter who escaped and left behind a truck full of sawn wood was also done.

- Two suspects were declared not guilty by the Oyem court of the following charges: illegal possession, transportation and attempts at selling trophies of totally protected wildlife species. They had been notified of an appeal hearing against this judgment.



A man arrested for ivory trafficking, 4 tusks seized (above)

Arrested for illegal possession and trade with protected wildlife species; the guy with the leopard skin is a repeat offender and his gun had earlier been seized by wildlife officials (bellow).



C.A.R – RALF

- RALF project is frozen because of security problems in the country, no veritable activity was

undertaken. This situation may continue for the next couple of months.

Guinea – Conakry – GALF

- Arrest of 2 traffickers with 6 crocodiles, a giant tortoise, 3 vultures and a Patas Monkey. The GALF team under the coordination of Mamadou Saidou worked in collaboration with Interpol NCB. Such a collection of animals often passes through the GALF premises. After the prosecution of the traffickers, the crocs and monkeys were released in the Badiar National Park while the birds and the tortoise were transferred to Senegal.
- The two traffickers were prosecuted for illegal capture and possession of totally protected wildlife species. They were found guilty and sentenced to 6 months comprising 3 months suspended sentence and 3 months of imprisonment.
- Trans-boundary missions and collaboration between the Guinean and Senegalese authorities on one hand and GALF and SALF on the other hand enabled to realize the transfer of animals seized in Conakry, which are not original Guinean species,



Two men arrested with a series of wildlife species, crocs, vultures, tortoise and Patas Monkey which can be seen watching its captors.

Togo – TALFF

- A trafficker caught with 20 skulls and skeletons of West African Manatees. A similar amount has just been sold to Malians the previous week, exposing an organized trade in this threatened animal in a surprising magnitude. His 19 years involvement in the illegal trade in marine species is still being investigated.
- Another sea-turtle trafficker arrested in a continued crackdown with 7 sea turtle shells.
- Organization of a stakeholders coordination meeting in Lomé to discuss how to strengthen col-



laboration among stakeholders in fighting illicit trade in fauna and flora species in Togo. The meeting was attended by 50 participants, including the French ambassador in Togo, the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Interpol, representatives of Ministry of Security, and the Ministry of Justice among others.



Dozens of West African manatee bones seized from traffickers in Togo, who has 19 years experience fishing threatened species.



The West African Manatee, sometimes called Seacow, least studied large mammal in Africa, faces serious threats. The manatees are often referred to as the „forgotten“ sirenian. The African Manatee has become a vulnerable species because it is hunted for its meat, oil, bones (used to make walking stick handles), and skin. In some countries, African Manatees are illegally exported and sold to zoos. The connection to Mali is not surprising as ear infections, rheumatism, and skin conditions are supposedly cured there by manatee oil. Their number was reduced to less than 10,000 and is in decline. It is not even clear if the small

population of Togo still survived, so this seizure came as a surprise.

SENEGAL - SALF

- Legal follow-up of the case against the traffickers of Nigerien nationality arrested with 2,753 wildlife products. The session will start soon at the appeal court.
- Recruitment of a new jurist after 8 months of test.
- Recruitment process to get jurist and investigators started in January and continued currently.
- Training of magistrates (judges, prosecutor) on wildlife crime and CITES in the context of MOJ-USEN project on organized crime, a international program funded by the French State in Senegal.
- Meeting with UNODC regarding SALF and EAGLE network.
- Trans-boundary missions and collaboration between the Guinean and Senegalese authorities on



Handing over native Senegalese species to officials. The species were seized from traffickers in Guinea and authorities of both countries as well as the two projects SALF and GALF collaborated on the transfer.

one hand and GALF and SALF on the other hand enabled to realize the transfer of animals seized in Conakry, which are not original Guinean species, to Dakar for their rehabilitation and a subsequent

release into their natural milieu in Senegal. Official handing was realized over in the presence of authorities (customs, gendarmerie, the director of parks, water and forestry) from both countries.

Benin – AALF-B

- Two traffickers arrested with a shocking collection of internationally traded species including zebra, elephant and lion. The huge seizure represents illegal international trade from different parts of the continent. The list of this huge seizure included 3 Tigrine Genet skins, 1 Blesbok Antelope skin, 6 Sitatunga Antelope skins, 1 remains of a vulture, 3 hides and three Nile crocodile heads, 95 specimens of chameleons, 9 turtle shells, 2 elephant bones, a horn of a wildebeest, 1 Patas Monkey skin, 11 Red Duiker skin, 3 jackal skins, 2 python skins, 1 leg of an ostrich, 1 pair of Guib horns, 1 head of a lion cub, 1 remains of a Hornbill, 1 squirrel, 4 hare heads and 1 zebra head.
- Green Sea Turtle and eggs were recovered. The turtle was released and eggs guarded to hatch safely, and hundreds of hatchlings later walked to the sea. This occasion was used to engage local population in protecting sea turtles in Benin.
- Finalization of the legal guide of wildlife law in Benin. Arrangements are being made for its printing and distribution.
- A mission was led to the Pendjari Park to gather information and photos on latest wildlife massacre of elephants in this important National Park, in order to obtain necessary arguments for lobbying against local authorities sabotaging the enfor-



Wildlife products from some 20 species were seized from traffickers in Benin. Wildlife not native to Benin indicated the international dimension of the trafficking



Green Sea Turtle and eggs were seized. The turtle and the hatchlings were released to the wild.



cement efforts of AVIGREF, which resulted in a widespread massacre of protected species in the park.

- Participating in the finalization of a report of study on the application of legal instruments governing wildlife and protected areas within the framework of support to the Pendjari biosphere reserve.
- Contributing in the elaboration and publication of a press release and a petition on the situation in the Pendjari park titled: Massacre of wildlife in Benin: the last Eden threatened, resulting in a renewed engagement of the government to address the crisis.
- A poster on endangered wildlife species in Benin edited and published by Nature Tropicale and the Ecosystems Alliance and distributed to inform the public on actions being carried out by AALF-B.



The seized sea turtle eggs were guarded to hatch safely, and hundreds of hatchlings later walked to the sea. This occasion was used to engage local population in protecting sea turtles in Benin.



Uganda - EAGLE Uganda

- Investigators exchange and a visit by Ofir Drori led to the arrest of a trafficker with 128 kg of Giant Pangolin scales. The arrested suspect together with an accomplice had in their possession two pieces of rhino horn. They were arrested by the investigating officer, present in the operation, while they were trafficking ivory. When they spot the officer, they run away abandoning their vehicles.

Proof of the traffickers trading in rhino horns and ivory has been obtained.

- EAGLE Uganda assisted in the investigation of seizure of 500 kg of ivory at Entebbe International Airport on March 13. The ivory pieces were disguised as Sheer butter. NRCN, EAGLE host project in Uganda as a part of the joint investigation wrote

A vehicle loaded with 128 kg of giant pangolin scales was impounded.





to Uganda Revenue Authority Commissioner to revoke the license of the involved shipping company. NRCN also contacted Uganda Clearing and Forwarding Association (UCFA) who invited NRCN team to give a talk on wildlife crime and the implication of clearing contraband on clearing firms; the member resolved that Uganda Revenue Authority Customs Department should give reasons why they are not revoking the license of the shipping company.

New method of ivory concealment disguised as sheer butter, 500 kg seized at the Entebbe airport

Headquarters

■ EAGLE Network Monitoring & Evaluation officer started training program. The M&E Officer is a permanent position in the Central Coordination Unit. His monitoring and validation is both monthly and ad-hoc with missions to Member operations as required. On a monthly basis the M&E Officer is to review and verify the Enforcement Results Report and a summary of results for the Network report. The information and targets to be included in the reports are details on circumstances, names of arrested and prosecuted individuals, corruption incidents and suspicions, analysis of causes, reasons for lack of results and photos. Specifically, the M&E Officer is to check procedures stipulated

in the Procedure Manual and results of the Enforcement Model.

- Naftali Honig carried the first EAGLE steering group visit in Senegal working with Charlotte Houpline on different aspects of this replication.
- Naftali Honig represents the EAGLE Network in the Roundtable with Assistant Secretary of State William Brownfield. He raised corruption and governance as major factors effecting the fight against wildlife crime. Many others showed support for the work of EAGLE, and it's importance and ability to bring significant results with very limited means.

THE EAGLE Network

EAGLE: Eco Activists for Governance and Law Enforcement, is a network of members across Africa, who are replicating effectively a program and operational model to undertake wildlife law enforcement, which is based on the LAGA-Cameroon model, trailed, practiced and tested since 2003. The EAGLE Network currently operates in eight African countries and keeps expanding.

The over-arching objective of the EAGLE Network is: *Developing civic activism and collaborating with governments and civil society to improve the application of national and international environmental legislation, through a program of activities: investigations, arrests, prosecutions and publicity. Through this, EAGLE aims to generate*

a strong deterrent against the illegal trade in wildlife, timber and related criminal activities, including corruption.

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