

# The Last Great Ape Organization – LA GA

## March 2015 Report



### Highlights

- **2 traffickers arrested for chimp skull trafficking**
- **Major ivory trafficker sentenced to 1 year imprisonment**

### General

This month was marked by the arrest of 2 traffickers and the sentencing of a major ivory trafficker.

An operation carried out this month led to **the arrest of 2 ape traffickers** caught in the act of attempting to sell four chimpanzee skulls. The arrest was carried out by the **Manjo forestry and wildlife control post working in collaboration with the gendarmerie**. The two had travelled from Mangamba where they met a poacher who supplied the skulls and travelled back to Manjo where they intended to sell the chimpanzee skulls.

3 judgements were obtained this month, starting with the Djoum Court of First Instance that gave an ape trafficker 2 months imprisonment and this was followed by the Edea Court of First Instance that gave a **1 year jail term** to a **major ivory trafficker** who was arrested with **30 ivory tusks** in Edea in 2014. The last judgement of the month was made by the Nanga Eboko Court of First instance that meted a suspended sentence to the killer of a chimpanzee but this decision was quickly appealed.

### Investigations

- **16 investigations** of varying lengths were carried out in **6 Regions** of Cameroon-Littoral, East, Centre, South, West and South West Regions.
- Good investigations in Manjo led to the arrest of two traffickers in possession of 4 chimpanzee skulls.

### Operations

**1 operation** carried out this month with MINFOF and Gendarmerie arresting **2 suspects**

**24/03/15 – 2 ape traffickers arrested with 4 chimpanzee skulls in Manjo, Littoral Region..**

They had obtained the chimpanzee skulls from a poacher in Mangamba and they had planned to sell the four skulls as an initial transaction and then proceed to supplying more if their first transaction passed safely. But before carrying out the transaction, they had contacted a witch doctor to try and find out what will become of the transaction, to know whether they would be arrested or not. Witch doctors and soothsayers it is believed, have the ability to foretell events in the future and could therefore advise the two on whether to carry on with the sale of the chimpanzee skulls or hold on.

### Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **15 missions** out of Yaounde- Centre Region: 3 in Nanga Eboko (Centre), 1 in Ntui ( Centre), 1 in Djoum (South), 1 in Ambam (South), 1 in Sangmelima (South), 1 in Bangangte (West), 1 in Dschang (West), 3 in Edea (Littoral), 1 in Manjo (Littoral), 1 in Batouri (East) and 1 in Bertoua ( East).

- There are **29 dealers behind bars during this month**: 10 in East Region, 2 in Centre region, 3 in Littoral Region, 8 in South Region, 3 in West Region and 3 in South West Region.
- **30 cases** were followed up by the legal department this month.
- **29 cases** scheduled and being tried in court this month.
- **Prosecutions**: We had 3 judgments this month.
  - 03/03/2015: The Djoum Court of First Instance – South, convicted **EKOUMOU JOSEPH to 2 months of imprisonment** and to pay **500.000 CFA F (about \$1000) as damages**. He was also convicted to pay **29.650 CFA F (about \$60) as fines**. He was arrested in Djoum for illegal possession and circulation of 1 chimpanzee and 3 gorilla skulls
  - 16/03/2015: The Edea Court of First Instance – Littoral, convicted **NOUROU ABDOURAMAN to 12 months of imprisonment** and to pay **44.500.000 CFA F (about \$89.000) as damages**. He was also convicted to pay **29.950 CFA F (about \$60) as fines or serve another 3 months imprisonment in default of payment of the said fines**. He was arrested in Edea for illegal possession and circulation of 30 raw elephant tusks.
  - 23/03/2015: The Nanga Eboko Court of First Instance, Centre, convicted **EKOUMA Guy to 1 year suspended sentence for 3 years and to pay 2.750.000 CFA F (about \$5500) as damages**. He was arrested in Belabo for illegally shooting, killing and selling the meat of an orphaned chimpanzee that was brought up in the Sanaga Yong Chimpanzee Sanctuary.
- **Appeal**: An appeal has been filed this month in the case of **EKOUMA GUY** in the Centre Court of Appeal.

## Media

- **38 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to written press, radio and internet including: 26 written press material (14 in English 12 in French), 3 radio talk shows all in English, 8 news flashes, 6 in English and 2 in French, and 1 internet publication in English.
- **Guests include**: Mbam and Kim Delegate of Forestry and Wildlife
- **Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including**: a number of arrest operations; the Ambam arrest of a suspected primate skulls trafficker, a retired civil servant with a man arrested over the commercialisation of elephant bones, 2 traffickers arrested in Uganda over 38 hippo ivory tusks and 4 buffalo horns, the arrest of 2 traffickers in possession of 4 chimp skulls and the court sentencing of an ivory trafficker arrested last year in Edea while themes used this month include, the crushing of ivory, the new and dangerous trend in China of banking on wildlife products in anticipation of the species extinction and the role of corruption in hampering wildlife conservation, .
- 23 media pieces in English, 15 in French making a percentage of 60.5% in English and 39.5% in French.

## External Relations and Policy

- The head of legal department attended a two days workshop in Sangmelima and Bertoua on the sensitization and reinforcement of the capacity of young and newly appointed magistrates in the East and South regions on the enforcement of wildlife laws while the head of the media and external relations department did a presentation on assisting wildlife law enforcement during a meeting to sensitize journalists on the negative effects of wildlife crime and illicit bushmeat trade. The workshop and meeting were organized by WWF.
- The legal department also held a meeting with the state prosecutor in Nkongsamba while another jurists in the department held meetings with the state counsels in Nanga Eboko and Edea. Meetings were also held with wildlife officials in Batouri, Kagnol and Mbang to improve collaboration and gather information on crocodile trafficking in the Mbang area.
- An American documentary crew worked with LAGA for two weeks to film a documentary that shall focus on the elephant crisis.

### **Management**

- Carried out work on financial reports from the Kenyan replication project and preparations for the arrival of activists from PALF and Chad under the EAGLE exchange programme.
- An investigator was sacked for failure to produce satisfying results.

### **Activism Front**

*Presentation: Conspiracy Theories: Didymus & Mug Punter*

The presentation elucidates the widely used but badly understood term. It attempts to define the term while explaining the sources of theories, why after all conspiracy theories exist, who generates them for what purposes and how are they manifested. These explanations are aimed at enabling a clearer grasp of the term that is wildly used in politics and in the international area and most often with a prejudicial sense. The presentation gives categories and kinds of conspiracy theories while using international and local examples to elucidate these forms. The Ebola crisis produced one of the greatest conspiracy theories of our time and the presentation delves into it. The message after all is to help activist to understand the power and limits of conspiracy theories.

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 other replication projects and provided assistance and coordination in the arrest of a trafficking and the seizing of dozens of West African manatees in Togo and on ivory investigations. Managerial and human resources management assistance was also given to the SALF project while groundwork and preparations for the coming to LAGA, under the EAGLE exchange programme, of Chadian activists, Mahamat Moussa and two jurists from the PALF project were undertaken.

**Finance**

Shall be made available as soon as possible

**This Month in Pictures**



**Two brothers arrested for trafficking in chimpanzee skulls. They would consult a witch doctor 24 hours before their arrest to find out if the business was going to fruitful and wildlife officials would not arrest them. Unfortunately for them they were advised to go ahead with the business by the sooth sayer and they would be arrested on March 24, 2015**



**Chimpanzees are facing serious threats and the illegal trade in its meat and other parts including skulls and fresh heads are thought to be responsible for this state of affairs. Wildlife officials seized 4 chimp skulls from traffickers.**

### **Link of this month**

Footage on two brothers arrested for illegal possession of 4 chimp skulls. The suspected chimp traffickers were arrested by the forestry and wildlife control unit in Manjo in Mungo division of the Littoral region of Cameroon in collaboration with the gendarmerie brigade of that locality.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=70Yh0Y4ujiQ>