

The Last Great Ape Organization – LAGA

September 2015 Report



Highlights

- **2 major wildlife traffickers arrested with mandrill skulls, among several contraband products.**
- **Court rulings convicted and sentenced three traffickers to prison terms and one ruling appealed.**
- **Under the EAGLE Network Exchange Programme, two arrived Cameroon and two on mission from LAGA to other projects returned.**
- **Media Assistant Head attended Jackson Hole Elephant Summit in the United States.**

General

This month was marked by two operations that led to the arrest of two wildlife traffickers and two court rulings sending traffickers to jail.

The first operation resulted in the arrest of a **major trafficker in Kumbo** where he intended to sell his contraband. During the operation **mandrills skulls and a live Mona monkey, both totally protected species** were among the contraband seized. He travelled all the way from Ako a locality close to the Nigerian border to the inland town of Kumbo, where he was arrested. He used a couple of inventive tactics and hid the monkey before arriving Kumbo.

During the second operation carried out in **Wum, a wildlife trafficker was arrested with several bones including chimpanzee and Mona monkey bones.**

Two, a Congolese jurist and a Gabonese investigator, arrived Cameroon under the EAGLE Exchange Network Programme for experience sharing missions while two LAGA members returned to the country after missions in Togo and Gabon.

The assistant head of the media and external relations department attended The Jackson Hole Elephant Summit in the USA where she shared ideas and LAGA's experience with other participants. The summit that holds once every two years brings together scientists, conservationists and media practitioners who meet to discuss solutions to conservation's gruelling enigma – the steady decline of wildlife species.

Three court rulings passed this month with three people getting prison sentences and fines while another court ruling was appealed.

Investigations

- **19 investigations** of varying lengths were carried out in **5 Regions** of Cameroon - East, Centre, West, Littoral and North West Regions.
- Good investigations in **Kumbo** led to the arrest of one trafficker in possession of 3 mandrill skulls and several other contraband products.
- Good investigations in **Wum** resulted in the arrest of one trafficker trying to sell 9 chimpanzee skulls, 5 Mona monkey skulls and several other bones.

Operation

2 operations carried out this month with MINFOF **arresting 2 traffickers.**

- **26/09/15 – A trafficker arrested after leaving Ako, close to the Nigeria border with contraband to sell in Kumbo, in the North West Region.** He was arrested as he attempted to sell **3 mandrill skulls and a live Mona monkey**, totally protected species, **5 red river hog skulls and a bay duicker skull.** He had been assisting wildlife officials during field trips but seemingly used this to his advantage, carrying out trafficking activities. He tried to evade wildlife officials in the area and actually hid the monkey some 30 km before arriving Kumbo his place of transaction. He is well known to some law enforcement officials in the area and is considered to be a big time trafficker with links to Nigeria.
- **28/09/2015 – One trafficker arrested trafficking primate bones during a successful operation** carried out in **Wum, North West Region.** He was found with the following contraband: **3 chimpanzee skulls, 5 Mona monkey skulls and 9 chimpanzee bones**, which are totally protected species. He has been regularly trafficking in wildlife and has a contact person in Bamenda with whom he does transactions. A suspicious link was uncovered with an international contact.

Legal

- LAGA legal Department carried out **20 missions** out of Yaounde- Centre Region: 2 in Kribi (South) 1 in Djoum (South), 2 in Batouri (East), 2 in Dschang (West), 2 in Douala (Littoral), 3 in Limbe (South West), 1 in Wum (North West), 1 in Bafoussam (West), 1 in Boumyebel (Centre) 1 in Mamfe (South West), 1 in Kumbo (North West), 1 in Abong Mbang (East), 1 in Foumban(West) and 1 in Yoko (Centre).
- There are **33 dealers behind bars during this month:** 12 in East Region, 7 in Centre region, 4 in North West Region, 3 in South 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 3 judgments this month.
 - 01/09/2015: The Yaoundé Court of First Instance – Centre, found the accused **EDJIM Elie** guilty of illegally killing totally protected species and sentenced as follows: **6 months imprisonment** and to pay **24,650 CFA F as cost fees and 3 months imprisonment in default of payment of the said costs. Edjim Elie was arrested on the 14/04/2015 in Yaoundé** for illegal possession of **4 gorilla skulls.**

- 03/9/2015: The Yaounde Court of First Instance – Centre, found the accused persons **BOTONDONO Moussa Ibrahim and ZOA Martin Marinos** guilty of illegal possession and commercialization of totally protected species and sentenced to **1 month imprisonment term each and to pay a fine of 100 000F CFA F each. They were also convicted to pay 4.860.000 CFA F as civil damages and 28, 300F CFA F as cost fees or serve a 9-month jail term in default of the payment of the said cost fees and fines.** They were arrested in Yaoundé on the 24/6/2015 for illegal possession and circulation of **27 sculptured ivory objects and 2 sculptured ivory tusks.**
- 25/09/2015: The Batouri Court of First Instance – East found the accused guilty of illegal killing, commercialization and circulation of totally protected species and convicted **NGONGHO Francis Senghor to serve a 1-year suspended sentence and a fine of 100,000 CFA F with 9 months imprisonment in default of payment of such fines.** Ngongho Francis Senghor was arrested in Batouri on the 24/10/2014 for illegal detention and circulation of **7 chimpanzee skulls, 5 gorilla skulls, 1 elephant molar, and giant pangolin scales.**
- **Appeal:** An appeal has been filed this month in the case of **Ngongho Francis** in the East Court of Appeal.

Media

- **23 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to written press, radio and internet and TV including: 14 written press material (9 in English 5 in French), 3 radio talk shows all in English, 3 news flashes all in English, 2 internet publication 1 in English and 1 in French and 1 TV broadcast in French.
- **Guests include:** Two NGO officials; Etone Martin from CAD and Dominic Ngwesse from Nature Cameroon, both South West based conservation organisations; two wildlife officials, Bobo Kadir Serge, Director Garoua Wildlife School and Vitalis Chuyeh Tuncha, Conservator Kwageme Gorilla Sanctuary.
- **Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including;** the arrest of a senior wildlife official in Guinea, the trial of ivory traffickers arrested in Dschang and giant pangolin scale traffickers arrested in Yaounde..
- 19 media pieces in English and 4 in French making a percentage of 82% in English and 18% in French.

External Relations and Policy

- The deputy director and the heads of investigation and legal departments held a meeting with a US Embassy official to discuss recent trends in wildlife crime.
- The deputy director held a meeting with the Director of Wildlife and Protected Areas at the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife and discussions focused on specific areas of collaboration between LAGA and the Ministry that needed some clarifications.
- The deputy director attended a three-day reflection forum organised by IUCN and Well Grounded and discussions focused on identifying weaknesses within the NGO sector, especially the conservation sector and proposing some solutions. As part of the initiative to find successful solutions, he did a presentation on the LAGA-MINFOF collaboration in wildlife law enforcement.
- The assistant head of the media and external relations department attended the Jackson Hole Elephant summit and she held discussions and shared experiences with several other conservationists. The summit was focused on searching solutions to stop the rapid decline of elephant populations.

- The head of the legal department had a meeting with the Littoral Regional Delegate to discuss some wildlife law enforcement strategies in the region.

Management

- Data security measures were applied to protect LAGA members from the theft of important data.
- Work on reformatting and auditing LAGA's finance continued.
- A volunteer successfully completed his test period and was recruited. Njuana Gilbert Atem joined the LAGA family after over 3 months of successful volunteering.
- Tchakounte Guy, the accountant, left the organization for further studies on finance in the United States. We wished him goodbye and urged him to take along the LAGA spirit and become a shining example of the dedication and activism he learnt in LAGA.

Activism Front

Pay it forward – film projection

- One may never be too small to make a change; that is one of lessons from the movie that demonstrates the importance of good thinking and most especially the importance of putting this into action. A kid, through his social studies classes develops a wonderful idea that principally says, to change the world each person should help at least three people in need and should not expect anything from them in return except for the fact that these three should each assist three others. What a wonderful idea to change our world and Trevor, our kid puts this into action. Although it seems as if he fails trying it out on a homeless man, his actions save his mother and put her back to track. A complex mix of happy and tragic ends mesmerizes on as Trevor is stabbed by a classmate while he tries to save another; then the world takes note of his action: his charitable movement. Discussions focused on the importance of his idea, the need for compassion and assistance to people in distress and the tragedy – our kid gives his life.

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>.

EAGLE Front

- The assistant head of media and external relations department returned from Gabon after an experience-sharing mission under the framework of EAGLE Network Exchange Programme (ENEP) and similarly, an investigator returned after a successful mission to TALFF – Togo where she assisted the investigation department with several missions.
- A Congolese from PALF and an investigator from the AALF – Gabon arrived in the country for the EAGLE Network Exchange Programme.
- The head of investigations provided technical assistance on the case against a senior wildlife official and former head of CITES authority in Guinea who was arrested for wildlife trafficking. He equally provided operational support to SALF – Senegal in view of an operation against parrot traffickers.

Finance

In preparation and would be made available soon as possible.

This Month in Pictures



He assisted wildlife officials in checking wildlife trafficking in the field but was a trafficker himself. He is answering to questions after his arrest



Mandrill skulls among several wildlife contraband products seized from trafficker who attempted to evade detection by wildlife officials as he ferried the products to place of transaction



Shortly after his arrest, he was found with several primate bones.



Rescued from the hands of a trafficker



Several primate bones seized from trafficker in North West, the region is losing its endangered species with just a few left in patches of forest

Link of this month

[Ako Hunting Guide Arrested for Wildlife Trafficking](#)



Ako Hunting Guide Arrested for Wildlife Trafficking

A wildlife trafficker was arrested in Kumbo, in the Bui division of the North West Region for illegal commercialization of protected species. He was arrested as he ...

[View on cameroonmirror.com](#)

Preview by Yahoo

<http://cameroonmirror.com/ako-hunting-guide-arrested-for-wildlife-trafficking/>

Arrest in Kumbo for trafficking in mandrill bones and other protected species, he is presently detained while awaiting the completion of prosecution procedures for his indictment. He was arrested by wildlife officials of the Bui Divisional Delegation of Forestry and Wildlife.