

# The Last Great Ape Organization – LAGA May 2015 Report



## Highlights

- **2 traffickers arrested with giant pangolin scales, hippo skull and ivory and other wildlife contraband.**
- **LAGA assist in case of 3 arrested over illegal ivory possession and trafficking after one complained his ivory was stolen.**
- **LAGA's Head of Investigation travelled to Senegal for an operation**
- **Investigator from Togo – TALFF finishes a successful training in LAGA.**

## General

This month was marked by a very unusual arrest by police of 3 people following the theft and trafficking of ivory and the arrest of two traffickers in the East Region.

**Hippopotamus skull and ivory, giant pangolin scales and chimpanzee skulls** were among the products seized during an operation carried out in the **Batouri, East Region** that saw **two traffickers arrested**. The two worked as a team with one ferrying products to Batouri while the other stationed in Batouri looked out for clients.

In Yaounde, in the Centre Region, **two ivory sellers and one buyer were arrested over the theft and sale of 2 two-metre-long ivory tusks**. Police opened investigations into the incidents after one of them complained that ivory has been stolen from his residence. The result was all three arrested and indicted as LAGA assists all legal aspects of the case.

LAGA's Head of Investigation Department travelled to Senegal to provide assistance in terms of investigations, operations and training.

## Investigations

1. **15 investigations** of varying lengths were carried out **5 Regions** of Cameroon-Littoral, East, West, Centre and South Regions.
2. Good investigations in Batouri led to the arrest of 2 traffickers in possession of 2 chimp skulls and giant pangolins scales, hippopotamus ivory still lodged in its skull.

## Operations

**1 operation** carried out this month with MINFOF arresting **2 traffickers** and **1 other operation** carried out by **police** leading to **3 people** being arrested.

1. **27/05/15 – 2 traffickers arrested with 2 chimp skulls, giant pangolins scales in an operation that also witnessed the recovery of a hippopotamus skull carrying teeth** – Bertouri, East while illegally trying to trade in them. They are known to have been in the business for some time as investigations unravelled previous incidents of ivory and python skin trafficking. One of them ferried the products from Mbang, a subdivision that is notorious for ivory and pangolins scales trafficking to Bertouri where he partnered with another trafficker who resides in the town and is suspected to be the main link to clients. He may have been using the cover of commercial motorbike riding to get in contact with potential clients.
2. **28/05/15 – 3 arrested and charged by police over an ivory theft and trafficking incident.** The three were all arrested after the theft of the ivory by one of them leading the “owner” to lodge a complaint at the police, who opened investigations that enabled them to arrest the thief and the buyer who is suspected to be a big time ivory trafficker. The supposed “owner” did not prove any legal rights to own ivory. LAGA assisted in all legal aspects enabling prosecution.

## Legal

1. LAGA Legal Department carried out **10 missions** out of Yaounde- Centre Region:1 in Kribi (South) 1 in Djoum (South), 1 in Bertoua (East), 1 in Batouri (East), 1 in Dschang (West), 1 in Douala (Littoral), 1 in Nkongsamba (Littoral) and 2 in Limbe (South West), 1 in Buea (South West).
2. There are **38 traffickers behind bars during this month**: 11 in East Region, 7 in Centre region, 3 in Littoral Region, 4 in South Region, 5 in West Region and 6 in South West Region and 2 in North West.
3. **28 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
4. **27 cases** scheduled and being tried in court this month.
5. **Prosecutions**: We had 3 judgments this month.
  - 07/05/2015: The Nkongsamba Court of First Instance – Littoral, convicted **NGALLE JEAN JEROME and MOTO JOEL to 45 days imprisonment** and to jointly pay **600.000 CFA F as damages**. They were also convicted to pay **60.000 CFA F and 50,000 CFA F respectively as fines and jointly pay 32.550 CFA F as costs fees or serve another 3 months imprisonment in the case of failure to pay the said costs fees**. They were arrested in Manjo for illegal possession and circulation of 4 chimp skulls.
  - 15/05/2015: The Yaounde Court of First Instance – Centre, convicted **ONANA PATRICE to 1 month imprisonment** and to pay **300.000 CFA F as damages**. He

was also convicted to pay **300.000 CFA F as fines and 26.400 CFA F as costs fees or serve another 3 months imprisonment term in default of payment of the said costs fees**. He was arrested in Yaounde for illegal possession and circulation of a live mandrill.

- 18/05/2015: The Ekounou Court of First Instance – Centre found **NGASSA MBELLE LUCILLE not guilty for all the charges and was discharge and acquitted**. She was arrested in Yaounde for illegal possession and commercialization of 4 big sacs of giant pangolin scales and other related scales.
6. **Appeal:** an appeal has been filed this month in the case of **NGASSA MBELLE LUCILLE** in the Centre Court of Appeal.
  7. Three volunteers tested and one retained to undergo a trial period in the department

### **Media front**

1. **20 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to written press, radio, and internet including: 9 written press material (3 in English 6 in French), 5 radio talk shows all in English, 3 news flashes 1 in English and 2 in French and 2 internet publication 1 each in English and in French.
2. **Guests include:** American researchers and a Kenyan lawyer
3. **Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including:** Limbe sea turtle arrest of 4, the judgement of Manjo 2 ape skulls traffickers and Batouri arrest of 2 with ivory and chimp pangolin and hippo parts. Other conservation issues added to the same media pieces included the International Biodiversity Day, the Earth Day, The World Environment Day , the extinction of Africa’s wildlife, the destruction of ivory and hippo behaviour.
4. 10 media pieces in English, 10 in French making a percentage of 50% each in English and in French.

### **External Relations and Policy**

1. The Deputy Director had a meeting with the Head of the Political Section at the British High Commission on recent developments in the wildlife sector in the country and on areas of cooperation with the diplomatic mission. The BHC official promised to channel some of the concerns raised by the Deputy Director to the High Commissioner for subsequent actions.
2. Several meetings were held by legal advisors with state prosecutors in jurisdictions handling some wildlife matters in court and these include, Limbe, Buea and Nkongsamba

### **Management**

1. In recruitment efforts in legal department, 15 application files for volunteer recruitment were examined and 3 underwent an interview while one retained to start a test.
2. An investigator lost her child and assistance was provided to enable the burial of the child. A committee was setup to assist her in the logistics, mourning and burial programme while a solidarity fund created to receive funds from those who wish to assist her in the EAGLE family and the financial assistance is ongoing.

### **Activism Front**

Screening of the Documentary: Au dela des faits (Beyond Facts)

The documentary describes the calamitous state of some of Cameroon’s most important parks in the country including the Bouba Ndjidda, the Benoue and the Faro parks that are facing

unprecedented poaching, gold digging and transhumance activities. The parks are dying very fast while wildlife authorities in the country are not only slow to act but seem to lack the willingness to do so. The documentary exposes little known activities of migrating herdsmen who cause havoc and fear in the regions and their illegal activities is suspected to be facilitated by some local traditional and administrative officials through corruption.

The situation needs urgent action to bring back the parks to their glorious past, when it was a nation's pride attracting foreign dignitaries, even presidents who frequently visited the parks. Discussions were held on some possible solutions to this problem and definitely wildlife law enforcement and other conservation and policy measures floated as possible solutions.

All activism fostering activities carried out by the LAGA family are online: <http://www.laga-enforcement.org/Actiwithvism/tabid/77/Default.aspx>

### **Replication**

The EAGLE exchange programme enabled the training of an investigator from TALFF – Togo and LAGA's Head of Investigations Department travelled to Senegal to assist the SALF project in carrying out an operation. He is equally expected to assist in legal procedures and provide a week-long assistance to new legal advisers recruited for the project.

### **Finance**

**In preparation, shall be made available as soon as possible**

### **Link of this month**

[Beninese, Nigerian Arrested for Wildlife Trafficking](#)



#### **Beninese, Nigerian Arrested for Wildlife Trafficking**

Four traffickers in protected wildlife species were arrested on Tuesday April 29, 2015 during two back to back operations carried out in Ide

View on [cameroonmirror.com](http://cameroonmirror.com)

Preview by Yahoo

<http://cameroonmirror.com/beninese-nigerian-arrested-for-wildlife-trafficking/>

**This Month in Pictures**



**Two arrested for wildlife trafficking, one get supplies of wildlife products from the poachers and partners with the other who is based in the town to sell products in Batouri, East.**

**Products seized from two wildlife traffickers in Batouri, as they attempt to sell them**



**Crackdown operation in Batouri, recovers a hippo skull with some teeth lodged into it (above)**



**Ivory stolen at a private residence in Yaounde ends up in a police station with three arrested.**