

The Last Great Ape Organization – LAGA

October 2016 Report



Highlights

- **2 traffickers arrested with two leopard skins and 14 pieces of carved ivory contraband seized.**
- **The Deputy Director travelled to the US to participate in a USFWS Commercial Bushmeat Trade workshop and attend meetings with US Government officials**
- **Training sessions continue with a Senegalese investigator spent for three weeks in the country while an investigator from Madagascar and a super volunteer from Holland arrived for further training.**

General

This month was marked by the arrest of **2 major ivory and leopard skins trafficker during an operation.**

The operation that was carried out in **Dschang in the West Region witnessed the arrest of 2 traffickers with 14 pieces of carved ivory and two leopard skins.** The first trafficker specialises in carving art objects from wood and ivory; a bowl where the ivory pieces were stored was later found in the shop where he sells the objects. He has been in the business for a very long time and the second trafficker who attempted to sell the leopard skins is a 3rd degree traditional chief in a village of the West Region. These chiefs are expected to be the custodians of traditional symbols but he engaged in leopard skin trafficking that is very rife in the region and across to Nigeria where the skins are in high demand because of their traditional value. Leopard skins are widely and illegally commercialised in this part of the country and across to Nigeria. It should be noted that the region has no populations of leopards left and the animals are killed in the South East section of the country and the skins trafficked to these areas.

The Deputy Director travelled to the United States where he held a number of meetings with some staffers of the Senate, two senior counsels of the Justice Department, several US Fish and Wildlife officials including law enforcement officials, zoo officials and with some young tech experts. Several presentations on EAGLE's wildlife law enforcement model and its implementation on the ground were carried out during the workshop and meetings that included government, NGO officials and several other stakeholders. Issues of poor governance hampering conservation initiatives in general and wildlife law enforcement in particular were elaborately presented and discussed with focus on possible solutions to address these setbacks.

Several training sessions took place within the month as a part of the EAGLE Network exchange program and the first was with a Senegalese investigator who completed 3 weeks of training with the investigation department and this was followed by the arrival of another investigator from Madagascar for training and testing while a super volunteer equally arrived within the month for training.

Investigations

- **29 investigations** of varying lengths were carried out in **8 Regions** of Cameroon including Littoral, East, West, Centre, North West, South West, Adamaoua and South Regions.
- Good investigations in Dschang led to the arrest of two traffickers in possession of two leopard skins and 14 carved ivory objects.
- The department hosted an investigator who arrived from Senegal and one from Madagascar

Investigations Table

Investigation Missions	Regions	No. of Operations	No of traffickers arrested
29	8	1	2

Operation

One operation carried out this month with MINFOF **arresting two traffickers**.

- **28/10/16 – two traffickers arrested in Dschang, West Region with 14 carved objects and two leopard skins.** One of them is a sculptor who carves various kinds of arts objects from wood and from ivory which he sells. He owns a shop and this serves as his base to conduct illegal ivory sales in the town and the second is said to be a 3rd degree traditional head. It has been reported that these traditional rulers sell leopard skins and reports them as stolen and this operation is a tangible proof of what is going on with the leopard skins in the West Region. A bowl that contained the seized ivory was found in the shop one of the traffickers among several carved wood objects. The trafficker who had ivory had been into trafficking for a long time.

Operations Table

No of Operations	Regions	No of Traffickers Arrested	Contraband
1	1	2	14 ivory pieces 2 leopard skins

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried **15 missions** out of Yaoundé- Centre Region: 4 in Douala (Littoral), 1 in Mbanga (Littoral), 1 in Akonolinga (Centre), 1 in Bafang (West), 1 in Dschang (West), 1 in Mamfe (South-West), 1 in Lomie (East), 2 in Bertoua (East) and 3 in Tibati (Ngaoundere).

- There are **38 traffickers behind bars this month**: 10 in East Region, 4 in Centre Region, 5 in North West Region, 4 in South West Region, 1 in North region, 5 in West Region, 2 in Adamaoua Region, 5 in South Region and 2 in Littoral Region.
- **34 cases** were followed up by the legal department this month.
- **31 cases** were scheduled and being tried in court this month.
- **One trafficker** was convicted this month.
- **Prosecutions**: We had one judgment this month.
 - **10/10/2016**: The Bafang Court of First Instance – West, found the accused **SAMBA VENANT** guilty of the illegal detention, circulation and commercialization of trophies of totally protected species and was sentenced to **4 months imprisonment and to pay 500.000 F CFA for civil damages; 150.000 F CFA as fine, 27.950 F CFA for costs fees and a further 9 months imprisonment in default of payment of costs fees and fines**. He was arrested in Bafang for illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of 10 chimpanzee skulls, 1 mandrill skull, 1 python skin and 1 elephant tail.

Legal Table

No of Missions (Out of Centre Region)	No of Court Judgements	No of Traffickers Given Prison Sentence	Prison term (in months)	No of Traffickers Sanctioned (No prison sentence)	No of Appeals lodged	No of Cases Tried in Courts
15	1	1	4	0	0	31

Media front

- **22 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to written press, radio and internet including; 14 written press material (9 in English and 5 in French), 5 radio news flashes (3 in French and 2 in English) and 3 internet publications (2 in French and 1 in English).
- Interviewee: Chief Section of Wildlife and Protected Areas at the Menoua. Divisional Delegation of Forestry and Wildlife
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including: Douala arrest major ivory trafficker, the arrest of two men trading in pangolin scales in Ngaoundal and Dschang arrest of two with skins from leopard, python and ivory.
- 12 media pieces in English and 10 in French making a percentage of 54% in English and 46% in French.

Media Table

No of Media Pieces	TV	Radio	Newspapers	Internet
22	0	5	14	3

External Relations and Policy

- The Deputy Director travelled to the United States where he held a number of meetings with some staffers of the Senate, two senior counsels of the Justice Department, several US Fish and Wildlife officials including law enforcement officials and with national zoo officials and with some young tech experts. Also present during the trip was Vincent Opyene head of EAGLE Uganda and they carried out several presentations on the EAGLE's law enforcement model and their implementation on the ground in Cameroon and Uganda. The meetings equally looked at possible areas of collaboration and highlighted the importance of successful application of wildlife laws within the EAGLE network.
- The presentations were done to a number of US government officials, to NGO colleagues and US Fish and Wildlife Service officials, zoo officials, computer tech experts and to the general public. They equally did an interview with CBS – an American television channel that has a worldwide reach. Presentations were carried out in the zoo to officials there and to a group of young information technology experts working on possible solutions to assist wildlife conservation. This group held several meetings with the two EAGLE officials to look at various solutions to field problems and the writing of a software to enable fast communication between investigators and the office when in need. They spent one week participating in a workshop on the illegal commercial bushmeat trade organised by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. They attended a talk on bankrupting kleptocracy at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Several meetings were held by Head of the Legal Department; some legal advisers with different state counsels and advocate generals on matters in court while the Head of Department equally held a meeting with the Focal Point of Interpol Central Africa.

Management

- A new accountant who started his test period last month continued this month while introducing slight changes and modification to the individual financial reporting formats for effective and simplified reporting
- As a part of the EAGLE Network exchange program a Senegalese investigator completed a 3-week training period while an investigator and a super volunteer arrived the country for training.
- A Soa University student started a 45-day internship programme and she is hosted by the legal department.

Activism Front

Two presentations were carried out this month.

1. Immunity

The presentation that was done by the Head of the Legal Department takes a look at the various types of immunities as set forth by the law in the country and among these are parliamentary, presidential, diplomatic and immunities that protect members of government. The point of focus was immunities provided for to members of government and this constituted the main reason why the newly adopted penal code had to be sent back to parliament by the president for revision following the first, after more than 40 years of existence. This provided for heated debates and the Head of the Legal Department of the Togolese project was present and made comparative analyses with the situation in Togo

2. Individual Financial Reporting Format

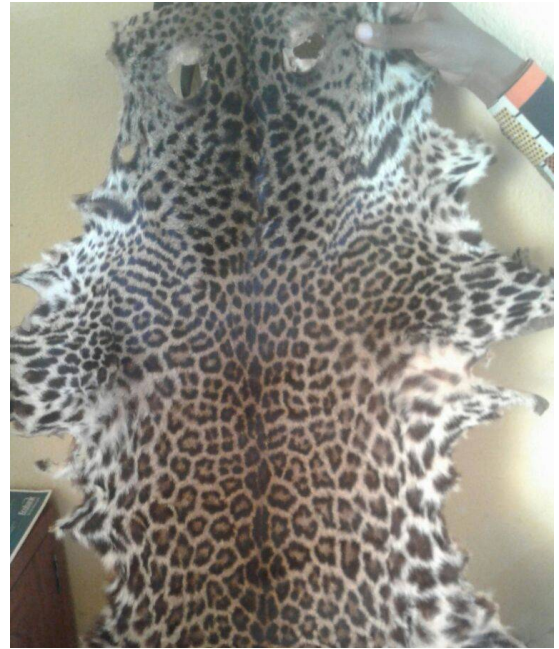
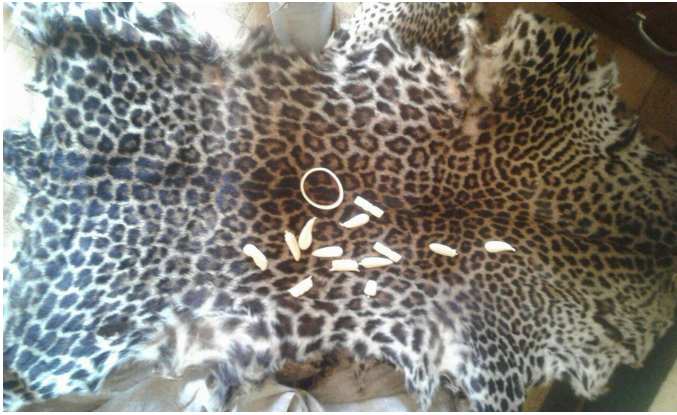
The presentation instructs LAGA staff on the modified and simplified financial reporting format for greater efficiency.

All the activism fostering 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>.

Finance

In preparation and would be made available soon as possible.

This Month in Pictures



Carved ivory pieces and leopard skins seized from two in the West of the country as they attempt to sell the contraband (above and top left)



Two arrested traffickers shortly after they had been brought to the gendarmerie office for interrogation on their illegal activity (left)



The Deputy Director (left) and EAGLE Uganda Coordinator (right) at the US National Conservation Training Centre where they participated in a workshop

Link of the month

[Douala: Un trafiquant d'ivoire arrêté](#)

Douala: Un trafiquant d'ivoire arrêté

By Abraham Ndjana Modo

Un présumé trafiquant faunique a récemment été arrêté dans la capitale économique camerounaise avec plus de 100 ...

The arrest of a trafficker is reported online by al wihda info and the site highlights the resistance to arrest orchestrated by the trafficker and his friends and the fact that he had earlier escaped arrest following a prior investigation that unveiled his criminal activity.