

The Last Great Ape Organization - LAGA

July 2009 Report



Highlights

- **A well known dealer arrested** in Somalomo – East. Investigations show that a **Gendarme officer supplies him arms and ammunition** used for poaching.
- **A principal Internet wildlife dealer** arrested in Bamenda – North West Region.
- **2 dealers arrested** in Bafoussam – West for illegally trading in leopard skins.
- **A dealer convicted** in Douala – Littoral for illegally **killing and trading in a chimp**.

General

This month was marked by a special focus on operations the East, West and North West Regions involving **the arrest of 4 dealers**.

A well known poacher, **dealer** and trafficker whose area of operation is the Dja Reserve was arrested in Somalomo – East Region. He has been in this activity for long and **well connected to the local authorities and Gendarmerie**. He has as an accomplice, a **Gendarme officer working in the Brigade of Messamena – East who supplies him ammunition and the military gun he uses for poaching**. The gun seems to have been stolen and more investigations are being carried out on this. After killing elephants, he supplied meat, ivory and other products of the elephants to the Gendarme officer directly through a network of motorbike riders.

A principal Internet wildlife dealer engaged in fraud and illegal wildlife trade over the Internet was arrested in Bamenda – North West Region. He was acting with an accomplice who supplies him with **falsified CITES Permits**. He was arrested trying to sell a capuchin monkey to a victim in Netherlands using falsified government documents and CITES Permits. His connection to other forms of fraud including illegal immigration and adoption scams is still being investigated.

2 dealers were arrested in Bafoussam – West for **illegally trading in leopard skins**. They are well known dealers with suppliers in the West Region and a ready market in the Littoral Region. They have been involved in this illegal wildlife trade for many years.

One case was prosecuted this month. The Court of First Instance of Ndokoti - Douala convicts a major wildlife dealer to 6 months suspended sentence during 3 years and to pay an amount 300.000 Frs. (About \$600) as fine, 1.000.000 Frs. (About \$2000) as damages and 76.000 Frs. (More than \$150) as judiciary fine. He will be retained in prison for 11 months in case of non-payment of fine and court charges. He was arrested in Douala for illegal killing and trying to illegally trade in a chimpanzee.

Investigations

- **23 investigations** of varying lengths were carried out in **7 Regions** of Cameroon- North West, South West, West, East, Littoral, Adamawa and Center.
- **Field Investigations led to 2 successful operations** after targeting wildlife dealers and Internet wildlife dealers. 2 targets were arrested in Bafoussam – West Region, 1 in Somalomo – East Region, 1 Gendarme officer at Messamena – East Region was identified as an accomplice of the dealer arrested in Somalomo and more investigations are being carried out to arrest him as well.
- **Internet Investigations led to 1 successful operation** after targeting an Internet wildlife dealer in Bamenda – North West Region. 2 Internet wildlife dealers engaged in fraud in

Bamenda – North West Region and Buea – South West Region were targeted. Investigations are still ongoing.

- A new strategy was initiated that involves the recruitment of informers in the main wildlife trade hotspots in Cameroon continued. Informers were recruited in Lomie, Abong Mbang, Bertoua and Touki in the East Region. This exercise will be carried out in all the Regions of Cameroon and will permit real time information on illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products.
- One field Investigator was suspended for 2 months with no salary for that period.

Operations

3 operations were carried out this month with MINFOF against **5 subjects**.

- **08/07/09** – A well known poacher, dealer and trafficker whose area of operation is the Dja Reserve. He has been in this activity for long and well connected to the local authorities and Gendarmerie. He has as an accomplice a Gendarme officer working in the Brigade of Messamena – East who supplies him ammunition and the military gun he uses for poaching. The gun seems to have been stolen. After killing elephants, he supplied meat, ivory and other products of the elephants to the Gendarme officer directly through a network of motorbike riders.
- **21/07/09 - 2 dealers** were arrested in Bafoussam – West for illegally trading in leopard skins. They are well known dealers with suppliers in the West Region and a ready market in the Littoral Region.
- **23/07/09** – A principal Internet wildlife dealer engaged in fraud and illegal wildlife trade over the Internet was arrested in Bamenda – North West Region. He was acting with an accomplice who supplies him with falsified CITES Permits. He was arrested trying to sell a capuchin monkey to a victim in Netherlands using falsified government documents and CITES Permits. His connection to other forms of fraud including illegal immigration and adoption scams is still being investigated.

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **17 missions** out of Yaounde- Centre Region: 1 in Limbe (South West), 1 in Mamfe (South West), 2 in Bafoussam (West), 3 in Douala (Littoral), 5 in Bamenda (North West), 1 in Ntui (Centre), 1 in Bertoua (East) and 3 in Abong-Mbang (East).
- There are **14 dealers behind bars during this month**: 4 in the West Region, 2 in East Region, 4 in North West Region and 4 in the South West Region.
- **25 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **24 cases** are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.
- **Prosecutions**: 1 case was sentenced this month
-15/07/09: The Court of First Instance of Ndokoti - Douala convicts Siani to 6 months suspended sentence during 3 years and to pay an amount 300.000 as fine, 1.000.000 francs as damages and 76.000 francs as judiciary fine. He will be retained in prison for 11 months in case of non-payment of fine and court charges. He was arrested in Douala for illegal killing and trying to illegally trade in a chimpanzee.

Media front

- **30 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to radio, TV and written press including: 6 written press materials, 3 in English and 3 in French, 17 radio news flashes (9 in English, 8 in French), 2 radio news feature, 1 in English, 1 in French, 2 TV news feature in English and 3 radio talk shows 2 in English and 1 in French.

- Guests include: Minister of Forestry and Wildlife, South West Regional Delegate for Forestry and Wildlife, Congo Ambassador, Director of Wildlife and Protected Areas, MINFOF Divisional Delegate Ndian, LAGA Legal Unit Head.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including; Gorilla symposium in Germany, arrest of ivory trafficker around Dja reserve, arrest of leopard skin dealers in Bafoussam, Bamenda internet wildlife trade arrest and Extinction of elephants South West Region.
- 17 media pieces in English, 13 in French making a percentage of 56.7% in English and 43.3% in French.

External Relations and Policy

- LAGA Director held a series of meetings with US Peace Corps on the collaboration between LAGA and Peace Corps volunteers, wildlife enforcement, fostering activism within their volunteer work and target communities, fighting corruption in the NGO sector were issues discussed.
- The LAGA Director held a meeting with wildlife experts on replication of LAGA model to Central Africa Republic.
- Meeting between the Director of Wildlife and Protected Areas and LAGA Director to discuss issue concerning the Standing Committee meeting of CITES.
- LAGA Director held meeting with the US Ambassador, issue discussed - the role of civil society in the fight against corruption.
- The new Regional Director of WWF met with LAGA Director to discuss wildlife law enforcement and corruption in NGO sector.
- LAGA Director met with the World Bank to discuss on increasing collaboration on wildlife law enforcement using World Bank facilities for meeting on the fight against corruption and increasing the accountability and transparency in World Bank projects.
- US Embassy and LAGA Director held meeting to discuss on corruption in the wildlife sector, increasing accountability and transparency in US projects.
- RELUFA and LAGA Director held meeting on corruption in NGO sector, Extractive industry, transparency in industries and setting up a platform for NGOs against corruption that abide with the APT-AID principles of transparency and accountability.
- LAGA Director met with AFP journalist to talk on wildlife law enforcement, the LAGA model, anti-corruption organization and fighting corruption through citizen legal action.
- LAGA Director met with World Bank to discuss on how to recover stolen Funds from AIDS project specifically World Bank project on HIV AIDS, the World Bank adaptation of APT AID principles and wildlife enforcement and the use of World Bank facilities for NGO meeting against corruption was also discussed.
- Meeting between LAGA Director and TRAFIC on the collaboration on investigation on trade in African grey parrots.
- Meeting with Dutch embassy to discuss on the fight against corruption and projects of anti corruption.

Management

- One field Investigator was suspended for 2 months with no salary for that period. She presented unclear receipts for lodging and transportation and could not furnish convincing explanation
- 1 volunteer was tried out in the Media Department but was not retained because he did not meet up with the standards set up by the Department.
- LAGA experienced severe cash flow problems in the month of July that slowed down the work and results of the various departments. There were no salaries paid but despite this, 3 successful operations against 5 suspects were carried out showing the commitment of LAGA staff to function with limited financial resources.

Activism Front

- Internet trade in wildlife product - Wildlife law enforcement
Paper presented to LAGA staff aimed at showing the different stages that are involved in the arrest and prosecution of wildlife internet dealers. That is from investigation, arrest, judicial procedure, media and prosecution.
Presented by LAGA Head of Investigation Department.
- Books that change the world – how effective in the world?
The presentation of this paper examines the various books written by authors that went a long way to change the history of the world.
Presented by Arrey Emmanuel - Management Department

Finance

In preparation, will be made available shortly.

THIS MONTH IN PICTURES



Elephant parts seized from a dealer in Somalomo – East Region where he was arrested. He has as an accomplice a Gendarme officer working in the Brigade of Messamena – East who supplies him ammunition and the military gun he uses for poaching. After killing elephants, he supplied meat, ivory and other products of the elephants to the Gendarme officer directly through a network of motorbike riders.



2 dealers arrested with 2 leopard skins in Bafoussam – West Region. They are well known dealers with suppliers in the West Region and a ready market in the Littoral Region.

Links of this month

- The Law and Wildlife Internet Trade – Cameroon National Television Broadcast. Broadcast of Wildlife Internet trade which is a crime punishable under section 203 as provided in Cameroon penal code which gives a maximum of 20 years prison terms for anyone found guilty of using forged documents.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zM8BeF_hjk

- A notorious elephant dealer arrested – Cameroon National Television Broadcast. A well known wildlife trafficker involved in a long story of illegal killing of elephants in and around the Dja Reserve area was arrested in Somalomo, Messamena in the Upper - Nyong Division of the East Region.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4tRsvt8Vo5E>