

The Last Great Ape Organization - LAGA

June 2009 Report



Highlights

- A network of **4 wildlife traffickers from Nigeria** dealing in live primates busted.
- **3 dealers** arrested for **killing 2 chimps** and regularly trading in chimp meat.
- **2 wildlife dealers convicted** for illegally trading in leopard skins.
- **A total of 7 dealers arrested.**

General

This month was marked by a special focus on operations in the West and North West Regions involving **the arrest of 7 dealers.**

An international network of **4 wildlife traffickers made up of 1 Cameroonian and 3 Nigerians** was busted in Bafoussam – West Region. They were arrested while illegally trafficking 4 live baboons from Nigeria and were using falsified documents they claimed permitted their movement with the animals. The Nigerian traffickers had no valid documents for entry into Cameroon and they entered through Banyo – Adamawa and were moving to Douala – Littoral Region. Corruption attempts were also registered. The 4 baboons were rescued and taken to the Mvog Betsi zoo in Yaounde.

3 dealers were arrested in Nkambe – North West Region for **killing 2 chimps** and illegally trading in the chimp meat and trophies. They are well known dealers in the area and have been involved in the killing of apes and other primates for a long time.

2 wildlife dealers were **sentenced** this month in Bafoussam – West Region. The Court of First Instance of Bafoussam convicts 2 wildlife dealers to 8 months suspended sentence for three years, and to pay jointly a total of about 1.3 million Frs. (about \$2500) as damages and fine. They will be retained in prison for 18 months in case of non payment of the damages and fine. They were arrested in Bafoussam for illegal detention and commercialisation of leopard skins.

Investigations

- **29 investigations** of varying lengths were carried out in **8 Regions** of Cameroon- North West, South West, West, East, Littoral, South, Adamawa and Center.
- **Field Investigations led to 1 successful operation** after targeting international wildlife traffickers. 4 traffickers were arrested in Bafoussam – West Region.
- Internet Investigations targeted 4 Internet wildlife dealers engaged in fraud in Bamenda – North West Region and Buea – South West Region. Investigations are still ongoing.
- Field tests continue for new candidates.
- A new strategy was initiated this month involving the recruitment of informers in the main wildlife trade hotspots in Cameroon. Informers were recruited in Buea, Muyuka, Kumba, Limbe and Idenau in the South West Region; and Douala in the Littoral Region. This exercise will be carried out in all the Regions of Cameroon. This will permit real time information on illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products.

Operations

2 operations were carried out this month with MINFOF against **7 subjects.**

- **02/06/09** – An international network of **4 wildlife traffickers made up of 1 Cameroonian and 3 Nigerians** was busted in Bafoussam – West Region. They were arrested while illegally trafficking 4 live baboons from Nigeria and were using falsified documents they

claimed permitted their movement with the animals. The Nigerian traffickers had no valid documents for entry into Cameroon and they entered through Banyo – Adamawa and were moving to Douala – Littoral Region. Corruption attempts were also registered. The 4 baboons were rescued and taken to the Mvog Betsi zoo in Yaounde.

- **16/06/09 - 3 dealers** were arrested in Nkambe – North West Region for **killing 2 chimps** and illegally trading in the chimp meat and trophies. They are well known dealers in the area and have been involved in the killing of apes and other primates for a long time. One of the cases started in June and the other 2 were in July.

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **15 missions** out of Yaounde- Centre Region: : 2 in Buea (South West), 1 in Mamfe (South West), 1 in Ebolowa (South), 5 in Bafoussam (West), 3 in Douala (Littoral), 1 in Bamenda (North West), 1 in Ntui (Centre) and 1 in Abong-Mbang (East).
- There are **6 dealers behind bars during this month**: 2 in the West Region and 4 in the South West Region.
- **24 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **23 cases** are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.
- The transmission of the case of the baboon traffickers to the court is delayed raising suspicion of corruption. They re-appeared in the Mvog Betsi Zoo trying to negotiate the recovery of the animals.
- **Prosecutions**: 1 case was sentenced this month
- **22/06**: the Court of First Instance of Bafoussam convicts Kamwa and Kuate Joseph to 8 months of prison suspended sentence during three years, and to pay jointly 785,000 Frs. as damages and 500,000 Frs. as fine. They will be retained in prison for 18 months in case of non payment of fine. They were arrested in Bafoussam for illegal detention and commercialisation of 1 leopard skin.
- 1 appeal was registered this month against the ruling given by the court of first instance of Bafoussam in the matter of MINFOF Vs Kamwa and Kuate Joseph.

Media front

- **14 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to radio, and written press including: 2 written press materials, 1 in English and 1 in French, 8 radio news flashes (1 in English, 7 in French), 1 radio news feature in French, 1 TV news feature in English and 2 radio talk shows in English.
- Guests include: Prime Minister of Cameroon, Andrew Dunn of WCS Calabar - Nigeria, Ugandan Minister of State for Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities. Minister of Forestry and Wildlife, National Control Unit of the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including; Gorilla symposium in Germany, Italian logging Director arrested with 3 chimps, Yaounde elephant teeth and mandrill arrest, sentence on elephant dealers in Mamfe Court and Abong Mbang arrest of ivory and African grey parrot.
- 5 media pieces in English, 9 in French making a percentage of 35.7% in English and 64.3% in French.

External Relations and Policy

- Launch meeting between British Members of Parliament, High Commissioner and LAGA Director. The following issues were discussed; evaluating Cameroon's achievement, reporting the Millennium Development Goals, democracy, corruption in general and corruption in the environment sector.

- The LAGA Director held meeting with the Directorate General for External Research at the Presidency of the Republic to discuss on increasing collaboration with the Unit on Wildlife Law Enforcement including building better mechanism on reporting.
- Meeting between the French Delegation of the Ministry in charge of Wildlife, and the French Technical Adviser to MINFOF and MINEP at the French Embassy, issues discussed include fighting corruption in the forest sector, increasing accountability and transparency in NGO projects.
- The Program Officer of ICCO had a meeting with LAGA Director, fighting corruption in forest sector and increasing accountability and transparency in NGO projects were the issues discussed.

Management

- Mr. Ononino Alain was appointed as the new Head of the Legal Department. He is in charge in overseeing the smooth functioning and increase in performance of the Department.
- One Legal Assistant resumed duties after 3 months of maternal leave after she had put to birth.
- 2 volunteers were tried out in the Media Department. One was not retained because she did not meet up with the standards set up by the Department. One was retained but he later on withdrew because of other engagements that could not permit him to cope with the demands of the Media Department.

Finance

In preparation, will be made available shortly.

THIS MONTH IN PICTURES



4 baboons rescued in Bafoussam – West Region. An international network of 4 wildlife traffickers made up of 1 Cameroonian and 3 Nigerians was busted in Bafoussam – West Region. They were arrested while illegally trafficking 4 live baboons from Nigeria with no permits. The Nigerian traffickers had no valid documents for entry into Cameroon

Links of this month

- Illegal dealers in protected wildlife species arrested - German National Television Broadcast. 2 operations targeting 3 dealers were carried out in Yaounde against 2 dealers for illegally trading in a live mandrill and an elephant foot, and in Douala against a regular dealer who was trying to illegally trade in a full dead chimp. LAGA and MINFOF regularly arrest major wildlife dealers in protected wildlife species and products during the enforcement of the wildlife law in Cameroon.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jvne-jBgW60>