

The Last Great Ape Organization - LAGA

May 2009 Report



Highlights

- **Italian Director of a Logging Company arrested with 3 live chimps and 1 big fresh crocodile skin.**
- **2 ivory dealers arrested** in Abong Mbang – East Region.

General

This month was marked by a special focus in Ngambe Tikar regarding a logging company and illegal trade in apes, and operations in Abong Mbang.

The Director of a logging company of Italian nationality was arrested and put behind bars for illegally dealing with 3 chimps and a big fresh crocodile skin in Ngambe Tikar – Central Region. Early this year the director of the logging company was identified as **a major client of protected species** ordering chimps, antelopes and other illegal trophies. For sometime LAGA has observed his activities and investigations are ongoing on his links to other dealers and international export. 3 chimps represent 30 others killed according to the statistics of the Jane Goodall Institute.

A similar case was registered in 2008 when a **manager in a logging company of Greek nationality** was arrested for illegally dealing with 2 chimps, 5 parrots and a DeBrazza's monkey at Pela – Nanga Eboko in the Center Region. He was also caught with a hunting rifle with no sufficient permit.

The operations come at a time when while in conference halls the logging industry is pledging its commitment not only to minimize their damage but to be considered as partners of wildlife law enforcement and conservation, the field realities offer a striking contrast. The logging industry that signed so many commitments to protect wildlife appears again in the top list of the illegal wildlife trade in the highest level.

2 ivory dealers were arrested in Abong Mbang – East Region for illegally dealing in ivory and African Grey parrots. They have been carrying out this illegal trade for a very long time supplying protected wildlife products especially ivory and African Grey parrots to exporters. They affirmed that they supply parrots to the biggest wildlife exporter in Cameroon. This exporter was arrested in December 2007 while trying to illegally export 720 parrots out of Cameroon through the Douala International Airport. The operation against the exporter uncovered issues of complicity and corruption within the Ministry (MINFOF).

Investigations

- **26 investigations** of varying lengths were carried out in **6 Regions** of Cameroon- North West, South West, West, East, Littoral and Center.
- **Field Investigations led to 2 successful operations** after targeting dealers: 3 dealers were arrested - a manager of a logging company was arrested in Ngambe Tikar – Center Region; 2 wildlife dealers were arrested in Abong Mbang – East Region.
- Internet Investigations targeted 3 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. **1 new candidate was tested** this month with encouraging results.

Operations

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

- **14/05/09** – The **Director of a logging company – SMK of Italian nationality** was arrested and put behind bars for illegally dealing with 3 chimps and a big fresh crocodile skin in Ngambe Tikar – Central Region. Early this year the director of the logging company was identified as a **major client of protected species** ordering chimps, antelopes and other illegal trophies. For sometime LAGA has observed his activities and investigations are ongoing on his links to other dealers and international export.
- **25/05/09 - 2 wildlife dealers were arrested** in Abong Mbang – East Region for illegally dealing in ivory and African Grey parrots. They have been carrying out this illegal trade for a very long time supplying protected wildlife products especially ivory and African Grey parrots to exporters. They affirmed that they supply parrots to the biggest wildlife exporter in Cameroon. This exporter was arrested in December 2007 while trying to illegally export 720 parrots out of Cameroon through the Douala International Airport. The operation against the exporter uncovered issues of complicity and corruption within the Ministry (MINFOF).

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **14 missions** out of Yaounde- Centre Region: 1 in Limbe (South West), 2 in Buea (South West), 3 in Bafoussam (West), 2 in Douala (Littoral), 1 in Bamenda (North West), 3 in Ntui (Centre), 1 in Ngambe Tikar (Centre), 1 in Abong-Mbang (East).
- There are **4 dealers behind bars during this month**: 2 in the West Region, 1 in South West Region and 1 in the East Region.
- **25 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **16 cases** are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.

Media front

- **23 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to radio, and written press including: 5 written press materials, 2 in English and 3 in French, 14 radio news flashes (10 in English, 4 in French), 4 radio talk shows in English.
- Guests include: Minister of Forestry and Wildlife, Director of In Defence of Animal Africa, Directors of programmes CRTV, Sub Director of programme CRTV, Director of Hello Cameroon (CRTV), South West Regional Delegate for Forestry and Wildlife.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including; 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 dealers.
- 16 media pieces in English, 7 in French making a percentage of 69.6% in English and 30.4% in French.

External Relations and Policy

- LAGA Head of Media and External Relations met with Director of Wildlife and Protected Areas to follow up issues related to the DNA test on Cameroon chimpanzees in Egypt and to obtain a copy of the letter forwarded to External Relations Ministry requesting for the test to be carried out.
- LAGA Director, Head of Media and External Relations, met with Sub – Directors in the Ministry of External Relations in charge of Southern and East African Affairs and Northern African Affairs respectively over the proposed DNA test on the chimpanzees in Egypt. A copy of the letter written to the Egyptian Ambassador in Yaounde on authorisation for the test to be carried out was obtained.
- Meeting was held between LAGA Head of Media and External Relations and Regional

Delegate of MINFOF, South West Region to discuss on the Takamanda National Park management plan and enforcement needs.

- The Director of Wildlife and Protected Areas held meeting with LAGA Head of Media and External Relations to discuss the composition of the Cameroon Delegation to the up - coming CITES standing Committee.
- LAGA Director held a meeting with the US Embassy on wildlife law enforcement and the fight against corruption, and foreign nationals' involvement in illegal wildlife trade.

Management

- LAGA family had a special lunch during the Labour Day celebration with everyone clad in newly acquired T-shirts bearing the LAGA Logo. The T-shirts were a special gift from the Director's family in Israel. During the celebrations, LAGA members were told to place a high value on LAGA's mission, ready to participate and contribute fully to the realization of LAGA's goals, as opposed to those seeking for financial compensation as the main motivational factor.
- 2 ivory dealers were arrested when the Director of LAGA was out of the country. He was out for half a month and these arrests attest to the continued independence of the LAGA family.

Finance

LAGA Expenditure by budget line for May 09

Amount CFA	Budget line	Details	Amount USD
1,877,996	Investigations	25 inv, 6 Regions	\$3,954
1,550,550	Operations	2 Operations 3 dealers arrested	\$3,264
2,507,510	legal	follow up 25 cases 4 locked subjects	\$5,279
1,543,034	Media	23 media pieces	\$3,248
233,500	Policy & External Relations	Congo/USA/UK	\$492
932,900	Management	Coordination	\$1,964
1,125,063	Office		\$2,369
9,770,553	TOTAL EXPENDITURE MAY		\$20,570

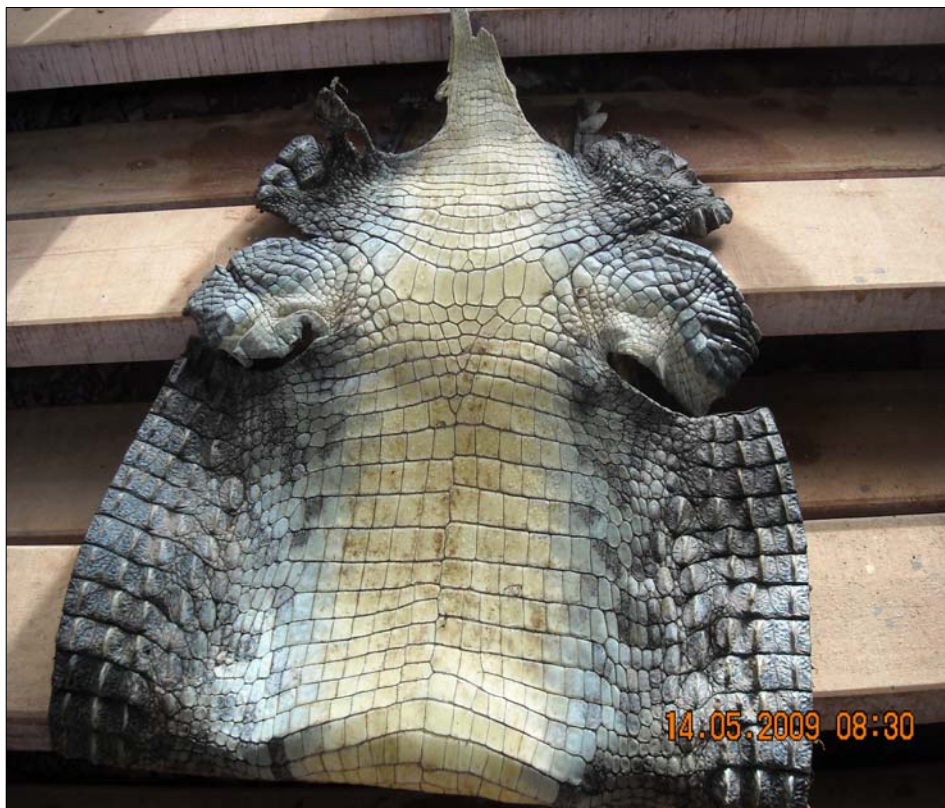
LAGA Expenditure by donor for May 09

AmountCFA	Donor	Amount USD
4,058,322	FWS	\$8543.8
1,276,741	Rufford Foundation	\$2,687.9
2,113,096	Arcus	\$4,448.6
2,322,394	NEU Foundation	\$4,889.3
9,770,553	TOTAL	\$20,569.6

THIS MONTH IN PICTURES



Some of the chimps seized at Ngambe Tikar. The Director of a Logging company of Italian nationality was arrested for illegally keeping 3 chimps and a crocodile skin. For sometime LAGA has observed his activities and investigations are ongoing on his links to other dealers and international export. 3 chimps represent 30 others killed according to the statistics of the Jane Goodall Institute.



Crocodile skin seized when Italian Director of a logging company was arrested. Early this year the director of the logging company was identified as a major client of protected species ordering chimps, antelopes and other illegal trophies.

Links of this month

- The Director of a Logging Company arrested – Cameroon National Television Broadcast – “Hello Cameroon”. The Director of a logging company – SMK of Italian nationality was arrested and put behind bars for illegally dealing with 3 chimps and a big fresh crocodile skin in Ngambe Tikar – Central Region. Early this year the director of the logging company was identified as a major client of protected species ordering chimps, antelopes and other illegal trophies.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hANj4Un9IFE>