

The Last Great Ape Organization – LA GA

March 2010 Report



Highlights

- **2 ivory dealers involved in 1 ton ivory trafficking sentenced to 1 year imprisonment and to pay a record sum of over \$116,500 as fines and damages.**
- **2 dealers arrested in Kribi – South Region with 14 sea turtle shells, an area where several projects claimed to work on the protection of sea turtles for years.**
- **Ivory dealer arrested in Abong Mbang – East Region with elephant tusks.**
- **3 cases were prosecuted this month against 4 dealers.**
- **LAGA participates in the 15th CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP) in Doha - Qatar.**

General

This month was marked by a big court prosecution and record award of damages pertaining to 2 dealers arrested while trafficking 1 ton of ivory representing more than 150 killed elephants.

3 cases were sentenced this month against 4 subjects. The Court of First Instance of Bonanjo-Douala – Littoral sentenced 2 ivory dealers to **1 year of imprisonment** and to pay **over \$116,500** as damages and fine. They were arrested in Douala for illegal dealing in and ready to export 1 ton of ivory representing **more than 150 killed elephants**. LAGA played a pivotal role in establishing a case file against the traffickers. **The illegal ivory trade is rooted in corruption.** Fighting corruption is therefore necessary in stopping illegal ivory trade; through effective wildlife law enforcement and prosecuting the heads of the criminal ivory trafficking cartels.

2 dealers were arrested in Kribi – South Region with 14 sea turtle shells. They have been in this illegal business for long and were carrying out their illegal activities openly and with impunity because of the lack of any concrete action to repel this illegal trade. This operation proves that illegal trade in sea turtle shells has been ongoing for long and very strong in that area. This problem necessitated LAGA's intervention in hitting main actors and exposing this illegal trade. The LAGA Director have been using in some of his presentations for a long time the example of Kribi and Campo **where several projects claimed to work on the protection of sea turtles for years with strong contrast to the open sale of sea turtle shells.** This contrast, a symptom for a larger failure can be seen in the sign in the photograph (this month in pictures), one of many decorating the area around where sea turtle products were openly sold for a long time. One of the hopes is that this serves as a message that we **demand more from conservation, than publicity and workshops.**

In another operation, **a well known dealer and trafficker in ivory was arrested in Abong Mbang** - East region with elephant tusks of less than 5 kg. The operation was carried out with MINFOF Divisional Delegation - Abong Mbang.

LAGA participates in the 15th CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP) in Doha – Qatar. The meeting was used to push for wildlife law enforcement in different forums, and many side meetings with countries to replicate the LAGA model; NGOs, other state agencies to collaborate on international law enforcement, researchers and donors.

Investigations

- **15 investigation missions** of varying lengths were carried out in **5 Regions** of Cameroon- North West, South, West, Littoral and Center.
- **Investigations are still ongoing pertaining to 3 targets** that are implicated in trying to illegally export the more than 1000 parrots seized at the Douala International Airport destined for Bahrain and Kuwait.

- Internet Investigations are still ongoing concerning 1 Internet Wildlife trafficker in Bamenda – North West Region. He is engaged in the falsification of government documents and CITES Permit.
- Field tests continued with more candidates as the department is experiencing a shortage in effective investigators. 1 new candidate was tested with encouraging results.

Operations

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

- **19/03/10 – 2 dealers were arrested in Kribi – South Region with 14 sea turtle shells.** They have been in this illegal business for long and were carrying out their illegal activities openly and with impunity because of the lack of any concrete action to repel this illegal trade. This operation proves that illegal trade in sea turtle shells has been ongoing for long and very strong in that area, a problem that necessitated LAGA's intervention in hitting main actors and exposing this illegal trade.
- **30/03/10 - A well known dealer and trafficker in ivory was arrested in Abong Mbang -** East region with elephant tusks of less than 5 kg. The operation was carried out with MINFOF Divisional Delegation - Abong Mbang.

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **10 missions** out of Yaounde- Central Region: 1 in Bafoussam (West), 1 in Dschang (West), 3 in Douala (Littoral), 1 in Ntui (Centre), 3 in Kribi (South), 1 in Abong-Mbang (East).
- There are **10 dealers behind bars during this month**: 1 in the East Region, 2 in South Region, 4 in the South West Region, 3 in Littoral region.
- **21 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **19 cases** are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.
- **Prosecutions**: 4 dealers were sentenced this month.
 - **19/03/2010-** The Court of First Instance of Bonanjo-Douala – Littoral sentenced Bate Valentine and Nkengoung Dieudonne to 1 year of imprisonment and to pay over \$116500 as damages and fine. They were arrested in Douala for illegal dealing in and ready to export 1 ton of ivory.
 - **02/03/2010-** The Court of Appeal of West Region confirmed the judgement of the Court of First Instance against Njikombe Daouda to pay over \$660 as fine and damages. He was arrested in Fouban – West Region for illegally trading in elephant tusks.
 - **25/03/2010-** The court of First Instance of Ntui - Center sentenced Ramoni Mirko to pay over \$7726 as fine and damages. He is of Italian Nationality and the Director of a Logging company (SMK). He was arrested in Ngambe Tikar - Center for illegally detaining 3 live chimpanzees and 1 crocodile skin.
- **1 appeal** was registered this month against the ruling gave by the court of first instance of Ntui - Center in the matter of MINFOF Vs Ramoni Mirko.

Media front

- **27 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to radio and written press including: 5 written press (4 in English and 1 in French), 18 radio news flashes (12 in English, 6 in French), 2 radio news features all in English and 2 radio talk shows in English.
- Guests include: MINFOF Minister, South West Regional Delegate for Forestry and Wildlife and Barrister Victor Djimi.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including; prosecution of ivory dealer (ivory

dealer arrest Yaounde), Kribi arrest of dealers in sea turtle shells and Buea Internet wildlife trader arrest.

- 19 media pieces in English, 8 in French making a percentage of 70.4% in English and 29.6% in French.

External Relations and Policy

- LAGA participates in the 15th CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP) in Doha – Qatar. The meeting was used to push for wildlife law enforcement in different forums, and many side meetings with countries to replicate the LAGA model; NGOs, other state agencies to collaborate on international law enforcement, researchers and donors.
- LAGA Director held a meeting with CHOC to discuss on corruption in the forest sector, the involvement of government officials in wildlife trafficking and the APT – AID principles.
- LAGA Director did a presentation on corruption, wildlife crime and the need for WWF to undertake responsibilities of wildlife enforcement based on the LAGA model to Country Directors and some project managers of WWF CARPO. Emphasis was also made on the disconnection between the core values of WWF and the realities in the field.
- Meeting held between LAGA and US Fish and Wildlife Service to discuss on separate budget for the replication phase of LAGA throughout the Sub region, exchange with other part of Africa, education modules for wildlife law enforcement, replication of LAGA model in Nigeria, combating corruption in the wildlife sector and the APT –AID principles for increasing accountability and transparency in projects.
- Shannon Randolph, a PHD student/researcher working on bush meat trade met with LAGA Director to discuss on corruption in NGO projects.
- Peace Corps volunteer, LAGA Director held meeting and discussed on the criticism of the NGO business and the APT – AID principle.
- Meeting between Director of Wildlife and Protected Areas and LAGA Head of Media and External department to discuss CoP 15 to CITES Declarations.
- LAGA Head of Media and External Relations met Francoise Moyart of PASOC and discussed possibilities for funding small projects on wildlife protection.
- The Manager of CORUD – the Centre for Communication in Rural Development and LAGA Head of Media and External Relations held meeting to discuss on future research work on corruption and bush meat trade.

Management

- LAGA participates in the 15th CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP) in Doha – Qatar. The meeting was used to push for wildlife law enforcement in different forums, and many side meetings with countries to replicate the LAGA model; NGOs, other state agencies to collaborate on international law enforcement, researchers and donors.
- LAGA still experienced severe cash flow problems this month that slowed down the work and results of the LAGA's departments. Despite this problem, successful operations were carried out against 3 main dealers, 2 dealing in 14 sea turtle shells and 1 dealer of ivory thereby showing the commitment of LAGA staff to function with limited financial resources
- The weekly meetings introduced by the LAGA Director continue with LAGA family members taking on more responsibilities.

Activism Front

- Education activities were carried out on the following: Assessment of the international solidarity in front of natural disasters: The case of earthquake in Haiti. The aid nations give to countries in natural disasters is most often double minded and goes beyond solidarity. Even though the responses are bounded by cooperation, human affection (through government and non-governmental humanitarian organizations), the reasons for

such responses are diplomatic, economic, political, affective and for advertisement. This is what the presentation seeks to evaluate.

- Sunset in Beijing - The explanation of the Beijing summit on the Rights of Women, and an analysis of the result obtained. The presentation concludes with a reflection question on the way forward for not only the women but men in the fight.

Finance

LAGA Expenditure by budget line for March 2010

Amount CFA	Budget line	Details	Amount USD
762,065	investigations	15 inv, 5 Regions	\$1,571
474,400	Operations	2 Operations against 3 subjects	\$978
1,914,845	legal	follow up 21 cases 10 locked subjects	\$3,948
1,169,100	Media	27 media pieces	\$2,411
616,996	Policy & External Relations	CAR/CITES	\$1,272
857,900	Management	Coordination	\$1,769
1,380,607	Office		\$2,847
7,175,913	TOTAL EXPENDITURE MARCH		\$14,796

LAGA Expenditure by donor for March 2010

AmountCFA	Donor	Amount USD
4,313,110	FWS	\$8,893.0
67,717	NEU Foundation	\$139.6
1,236,465	ARCUS Foundation	\$2,549.4
	EIA	\$0.0
	World Parrot Trust	\$0.0
1,526,621	BornFree Foundation	\$2.5
32,000	SFS France	\$2.1
7,175,913	TOTAL	\$14,795.7

THIS MONTH IN PICTURES



The 2 dealers were arrested in Kribi – South Region with 14 sea turtle shells, one of Malian Nationality. They have been in this illegal business for long and were carrying out their illegal activities openly and with impunity because of the lack of any concrete action to repel this illegal trade. This operation proves that illegal trade in sea turtle shells has been ongoing for long and very strong in that area. This problem necessitated LAGA’s intervention in hitting main actors and exposing this illegal trade.





A poster put up by some projects claiming to protect sea turtles in the town of Kribi. The LAGA Director have been using in some of his presentations for a long time the example of Kribi and Campo where several projects claimed to work on the protection of sea turtles for years with strong contrast to the open sale of sea turtle shells. This contrast, a symptom for a larger failure can be seen in the sign in the photograph, one of many decorating the area around where sea turtle products were openly sold for a long time. One of the hopes is that this serves as a message that we demand more from conservation, than publicity and workshops.

Links of this month

Conservation Justice Gabon – a project initiated and to be managed by Luc Mathot will effectively kick-off by June 2010. Luc was in charge of assuring the effective functioning of the PALF Project in the Republic of Congo with the assistance of LAGA. LAGA's goal from 2003 has been to create a new model for NGO-Government collaboration establishing wildlife law enforcement. Our hope was that by bringing about results with an innovative approach, we will be able to change the existing system and trigger a paradigm shift in the way NGOs tackle wildlife crime. **Conservation Justice Gabon** aims to facilitate the replication of the LAGA Model in the Central African sub-region already successful with the projects PALF (Republic of Congo) and RALF (Central African Republic).

<http://striderlittle.myftp.org/wordpress/>