

# The Last Great Ape Organization – LA GA

## March 2013 Report



### Highlights

- **7 dealers arrested in 4 different operations**
- **2 international ivory traffickers** with a base in the Republic of Congo **arrested.**
- **LAGA Director invited to speak in the European Parliament.**
- **LAGA Director participated in CITES 16<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties** as a member of the Cameroon Government Delegation in Thailand.

### General

This month was marked by the arrest of more international ivory traffickers and the sentencing of 4 dealers in Cameroon.

A total of 7 dealers arrested this month, 4 dealing in elephant tusks and 3 in sea turtle shells. **2 international ivory traffickers with a base in the Republic of Congo** from where they drive the illegal trade in ivory to Cameroon and other countries were **arrested in Yaounde - Center** with 4 small elephant tusks. One of them was caught on camera burying ivory in a small hut in his compound in Congo and both have been in the business for more than 20 years. They transport ivory using 20 litre gallons that pass for oil.

In another operation, **2 major traffickers of elephant tusks** with suppliers in the Eastern Region and customers based in the city of Yaounde - Center and others in the Northern part of Cameroon **were arrested in Lomie – East** with 2 elephant tusks. The operation was jointly coordinated by LAGA and MINFOF with LAGA responsible for the legal procedure and follow-up in court.

3 dealers were arrested with 9 sea turtle shells within 2 days in 2 different operations. One of them **was arrested with 7 sea turtle shells in Campo - South.** He initially resisted arrest, claiming to have high connections with MINFOF officials but he was successfully transported to Kribi for legal follow-up without any major difficulties. **2 others were arrested** with 2 sea turtle shells **in Kribi – South.** They have a motor – bike that they use in transporting the shells.

**4 dealers were sentenced this month,** 2 by the Court of First Instance of Bangangte – West for the illegally trying to trade in live primates including a chimp, drill and mangabey. 2 other dealers were sentenced by the Court of First Instance of Sangmelima – South; one received an imprisonment term of 45 days for trying to illegally trade in 3 protected primates including a De Brazza's monkey; the other was **sentenced to 3 months imprisonment** for trying to illegally traffic elephant tusks. All the dealers were also sentenced to pay damages to MINFOF.

LAGA director was invited by the European Parliament to speak in a joint hearing of Development Committee and Organized Crime, Corruption and Money Laundering Committee. The presentation was on Wildlife crime, corruption and how conservation funding can actually encourage corruption. Other meetings with EP Members of Parliament focused on improving the EU wildlife Crime action plan, getting wildlife crime on Organized Crime Report agenda, and improving EU investment in Africa. He also participated in CITES 16<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties as a member of the Cameroon Government Delegation. Thailand hosted the two weeks meeting with more than 2,000 participants and 178 countries represented. LAGA was dominant on issues of enforcement, transparency and accountability, elephants and apes among others. Time was used to make more than 100 new contacts discussing with government and NGO representatives.

## Investigations

- **24 investigations** of varying lengths were carried out in **6 Regions** of Cameroon- North West, South West, South, East, Littoral and Center.
- One Investigator traveled to Gabon to carry out trans-boundary investigations as part of the strategy to arrest more international; traffickers of protected wildlife products.
- Good investigations led to the arrest of 2 major ivory traffickers in the Central African sub-region with connections to the republic of Congo.
- Field tests continued with 2 candidates.
- LAGA Investigations Department assisted PALF-Congo Investigations Department on Investigations and Operation Procedures resulting in an arrest operation.

## Operations

**4 operations** carried out this month led to the arrest of **7 major dealers**

- **02/03/13 – 2 international ivory traffickers with a base in the Republic of Congo** from where they drive the illegal trade in ivory to Cameroon and other countries were **arrested in Yaounde - Center** with 4 small elephant tusks **following the use of an international investigator**. One of them was caught on camera burying ivory in a small hut in his compound in Congo and both have been in the business for more than 20 years. They transport ivory using 20 litre gallons that pass for oil.
- **06/03/13 - 2 other major traffickers of elephant tusks** with suppliers in the Eastern Region and customers based in the city of Yaounde - Center and others in the Northern part of Cameroon **were arrested in Lomie – East** with 2 elephant tusks. The operation was jointly coordinated by LAGA and MINFOF with LAGA responsible for the legal procedure and follow-up in court.
- **19/03/13 - A dealer was arrested with 7 sea turtle shells** while trying to illegally trade in them **in Campo - South**. He initially resisted arrest, claiming to have high connections with MINFOF officials but he was successfully transported to Kribi for legal follow-up without any major difficulties.
- **20/03/13 – 2 other dealers in sea turtle products were arrested** with 2 sea turtle shells **in Kribi – South**. They have a motor – bike that they use in transporting the shells.

## Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **17 missions** out of Yaounde - Centre Region: 2 in Douala (Littoral), 1 in Bangangte (West), 1 in Dschang (West), 1 in Limbe (South West), 2 in Djoum (South), 1 in Ebolowa (South), 3 in Kribi (South), 2 in Sangmelima (South), 2 in Abong-Mbang (East), 1 in Yokadouma (East) and 1 in Bamenda (North West).
- There are **40 dealers behind bars during this month**: 16 in the East Region, 1 in the South West Region, 5 in Centre region, 1 in North West region, 15 in South Region and 2 in West Region.
- **29 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **26 cases** are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.
- **Prosecutions**: 4 dealers were sentenced this month.
  - 12/03/2013: The Court of First Instance of Bangangte sentenced NJE Dieudonné to **6 months suspended sentence during five years** and to pay a sum of **300.000 FCFA** as damages. He was arrested in Tonga for illegal detention of a live drill.
  - 12/03/2013: The Court of First Instance of Bangangté sentenced ATCHOUMOU Prosper **6 months suspended sentence during three years** and to pay a sum of **350.000 FCFA as damages**. He was arrested in Tonga for illegal detention of a live chimp and a mangabey.

- 12/03/2013: The Court of First Instance of Sangmelima sentenced AKO'O BITOUMOU Joseph to **45 days of prison** and to pay a sum of **1.400.000 FCFA as damages and 1.000.000 FCFA as fine**. He was arrested in Meyomessala for illegal detention of protected primates.
- 26/03/2013: The Court of First Instance of Sangmelima sentenced AVA Joseph to **3 months of prison** and to pay a sum of **3.807.500 FCFA as damages and 1.000.000 FCFA as fine**. He was arrested in Meyomessala for illegal detention of 2 elephant tusks.

### **Media front**

- **49 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to TV, radio, and written press including: 38 written press material (20 in English 18 in French), 3 radio talk shows in English, 1 TV news feature in French and 7 news flashes (3 in English and 4 in French).
- **Guests include:** Country director of WWF-Cameroon, journalist from Burundi and chief of Centre regional brigade – MINFOF.
- **Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including;** ivory trafficker prosecution in Sangmelima, sea turtle shell traffickers arrest in two different arrest operations in the Ocean division, two ivory trafficker arrest in Dja reserve, CITES, Yaounde arrest of ivory dealers.
- 26 media pieces in English, 22 in French making a percentage of 54.2% in English and 45.8% in French.

### **External Relations and Policy**

- LAGA Director participates in CITES 16<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties as a member of the Cameroon Government Delegation. Thailand hosted the two weeks meeting with more than 2,000 participants and 178 countries represented. LAGA was dominant on issues of enforcement, transparency and accountability, elephants and apes among others. Time was used to make more than 100 new contacts discussing with government and NGO representatives.
- LAGA Director participated in the presentation of the GRASP report on Ape trade, after contributing a preface to the report.
- LAGA Director was invited to present and participate in the Symposium on Combating Wildlife Crime organized by the Asian Development Bank, talking on the links between wildlife crime and corruption.
- LAGA director was invited by the European Parliament to speak in a joint hearing of Development Committee and Organized Crime, Corruption and Money Laundering Committee. The presentation was on Wildlife crime, corruption and how conservation funding can actually encourage corruption. Other meetings with EP Members of Parliament focused on improving the EU wildlife Crime action plan, getting wildlife crime on Organized Crime Report agenda, and improving EU investment in Africa.

### **Management**

- This month saw the departure of Replication Coordinator to Zimbabwe for further studies; and preparation for maternity leave of Assistant Manager.

### **Activism Front**

All the education 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>.

Education activity this month was on:

#### **Film projection: The Ambassador**

The Ambassador is a documentary that unmask some of the filthy businesses that go underneath

diplomacy relationship in Africa. In other words diplomats who leave Europe, Asian etc. come to Africa not just for the purpose of diplomacy but to run businesses and other illegal transaction like trafficking of drugs. The many interests (the quest for African resources) of these European and other diplomats in Africa at times spark conflicts in the region. The film shows a high level of corruption between diplomats, the states and individuals.

## **Replication**

During this month, LAGA helped other replication projects in planning and coordinating missions with the PALF and AALF Investigations Department as well as operations.

LAGA Director and PALF Coordinator participated in CITES 16<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties in Thailand. Time was used to make more than 100 new contacts discussing with government and NGO representatives.

## **Finance**

### **LAGA Expenditure by Budget Line for March 2013**

<b>Amount CFA</b>			<b>Amount USD</b>
<b>2,087,608</b>	<b>Investigations</b>	27 Inv, 7 Regions	\$4,142
<b>985,000</b>	<b>Operations</b>	4 Operations against 4 subjects	\$1,954
<b>2,652,673</b>	<b>Legal</b>	follow up 27 cases 37 locked subjects	\$5,263
<b>540,000</b>	<b>Media</b>	7 Media pieces	\$1,071
<b>75,000</b>	<b>Policy &amp; External Relations</b>	Congo/Gabon/Togo/Chad/Guinea/Malaysia/S. Africa/UK	\$149
<b>270,060</b>	<b>Office</b>		\$536
<b>6,610,340</b>	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE MARCH</b>		<b>\$13,116</b>

### **LAGA Expenditure by Donor for March 2013**

<b>Amount CFA</b>	<b>Donor</b>	<b>Amount USD</b>
2,142,155	FWS	\$4,250.3
4,099,042	FWS-Replication	\$8,133.0
1,557,633	BornFree UK	\$3,090.5
286,300	Rufford	\$568.1
	IFAW	\$0.0
0	EIA	\$0.0
200,000	ProWildlife	\$396.8
6,610,340	ARCUS Foundation	\$13,115.8
	Conde Nast Award	\$0.0
<b>14,895,470</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$29,554.5</b>

## This Month in Pictures



**The 2 international ivory traffickers (left and above) with a base in the Republic of Congo arrested in Yaounde - Center with 4 small elephant tusks following the use of an international investigator. One of them was caught on camera burying ivory in a small hut in his compound in Congo and both have been in the business for more than 20 years.**



**2 ivory traffickers with suppliers in the Eastern Region and customers based in the city of Yaounde and in the Northern part of Cameroon arrested in Lomie – East with 2 elephant tusks.**



**One of the three dealers arrested with 9 sea turtle shells within 2 days in 2 different operations. He was arrested with 7 sea turtle shells in Campo – South.**

## **Links of this month**

2 international ivory traffickers arrested in Yaounde – Cameroon National Television Broadcast. The trade in ivory has become rampant in the city of Yaounde; in less than a month, ivory dealers have been arrested in crack down wildlife arrest operations in the capital of Cameroon. The suspected men are locked up while waiting the provisions of the 1994 wildlife law to be applied.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=J fp8 D5LHkk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J fp8 D5LHkk)