

# The Last Great Ape Organization – LA GA

## May 2014 Report



### Highlights

- **3 dealers arrested during two operations with 27 gorilla and chimpanzee skulls seized**
- **Long time LAGA staff and Head of Investigations and Operations moves to another organisation working in wildlife domain.**
- **LAGA Director continues stay in Kenya working on the initial stages of a replication project in the country.**
- **Kenyan Jurist trained on wildlife law enforcement**

### General

This month was marked by the arrest of three traffickers in two separate operations with a total of 27 gorilla and chimpanzee skulls seized.

In two unprecedented seizures of gorilla and chimpanzee skulls, three traffickers were arrested this month and a total of 27 gorilla and chimpanzee skulls seized. In an operation carried out in Bertoua, East, **two traffickers were arrested, 10 gorilla skulls and 2 elephant jawbones seized.** The two who are seasoned professionals left Dimako on a motorbike passing through bush roads to Bertoua, the place of their transaction.

In Yaounde in the Centre Region, a **wildlife trafficker was arrested with 7 gorilla, 10 chimpanzee skulls and 1 elephant tooth found in his possession.** He was tracked from Ebolowa, where he is resident to Yaounde where he attempted to carry out his illegal trade. It is one of the biggest hauls in ape trafficking in Africa.

On the situation observed in the South Region where lack of collaboration and breach of procedure was observed when Regional officials of MINFOF and those of the Ntem Valley Divisional Delegation failed to arrest a man who was found to be in illegal possession of a live chimpanzee by refusing to send a team to the field, a letter was sent to the Ministry to this effect and the situation remains unchanged..

The Director of LAGA continues his stay in Kenya, working on the establishment of a replication project in the country.

## Investigations

- 22 investigations of varying lengths were carried out in 6 Regions of Cameroon-Littoral, West, South, Centre, South West and East Regions.
- Good investigations in Bertoua led to the arrest of two dealers with 10 gorilla skulls.
- Excellent investigations in Ebolowa led to the arrest of a dealer in Yaounde. The dealer was in possession of 10 chimpanzee and 7 gorilla skulls and travelled from Ebolowa to Yaounde with the skulls.
- An investigation was carried out in Yaounde that led to the identification of a live mandrill in the Nkolbison neighbourhood. Strategies for the release of the animal are still to be put in place.
- Good investigations in the East (Abong-Mbang) led to the identification and displacement of dealers in ivory though the operation failed.

## Operations

**2 operations** carried out this month with MINFOF arresting **3 suspects**

- **08/05/14 – 2 major dealers arrested with 10 gorilla skulls and 2 elephant jawbones** – Bertoua, East while illegally trying to trade in them; they are known to be seasoned professionals in killing and trafficking gorillas as they used expert tactics to elope check points along the Dimako – Bertoua highway which they used to ferry the illegal wildlife product from their base in Dimako. They transported the booty in a bag tied to a motorbike and used roads hidden inside the forests and bushes to avoid detection. A Chinese national was connected to the trafficking of the skulls. 6 of the skulls were bought in the villages of Kotogo, Djangalagos and Ndema in the East Region.
- **21/05/14 – a dealer arrested in Yaounde with 10 chimpanzee skulls, 7 gorilla skulls and 1 elephant teeth seized.** The man travelled from the Ebolowa, South region with the products. He bought the skulls in the villages of Meka'a I, Alam, Bibounoumam and Ebemvok in the South Region and used a private car to transport the products to Yaounde.

## Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **14 missions** out of Yaounde - Centre Region: 2 in Mfou (Centre); 1 in Nanga Eboko (Centre); 2 in Kribi and 1 in Djoum (South); 2 in Douala (Littoral); 1 in Abong Mbang (East); 2 in Bangante and 1 in Dschang (West); 1 in Bamenda (North West) and 1 in Mamfe (South West),
- There are **32 dealers behind bars during this month**: 16 in the East Region, 10 in Centre region, 3 in South Region, and 3 in West Region.
- **29 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **28 cases** are scheduled and being tried in the court this month.
- **Prosecutions**: No dealer was sentenced this month.

## Media front

- **53 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to radio, written press, tv and including: 28 written press material (9 in English 18 in French), 4 radio talk show all in English, 17 news flashes (11 in English and 6 in French), 1 radio news feature in English and 3 tv productions (1 in English and 2 in French).
- **Guests include**: Central African Coordinator of CARPE, Regional Chief of Wildlife Bertoua and senior forestry engineer and controller at the Centre Delegation of Forestry and Wildlife.
- **Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including**: Bertoua arrest of 2 dealers with 10 primate skulls, Yaounde arrest of primate skulls and elephant jawbones, court hearing of

suspects arrested in Bertoua with 10 primates skulls and Court hearing of wildlife cases in Kribi, Mfou and Bangante concerning the arrest of suspects with wildlife product including, leopard, giant pangolin skins and tortoise.

- 27 media pieces in English, 26 in French making a percentage of 51% in English and 49% in French.

## **External Relations and Policy**

- The Deputy British High Commissioner held a meeting with the Deputy Director of LAGA as a follow-up of an earlier meeting that took place between the British High Commissioner and his deputy and on the other hand the Director of LAGA and his deputy. The meeting sought to assist the Embassy understand the problems connected with the wildlife law enforcement process in the country.

## **Management**

- LAGA Director continued stay in Kenya to fine tune the groundwork for a replication project in Kenya and worked on the restructuring of the EAGLE network.
- Long time LAGA staff, Sone Christopher Nkoke, head of investigations and operations who worked in these departments for over 7 years resigned his position and took up post at TRAPS a new wildlife project under IUCN, as project officer.

## **Activism Front**

Documentary: Le monde en face: Un empire en Afrique

The documentary narrates the fight of a Cameroon based milk industry against Nestle. Puis Bissek, the boss of the milk company in Douala accuses the giant Swiss agro alimentation company for importing contraband milk made out of palm and coconut oil causing the collapse of his industry. His struggle for justice together with some of his former employees has been ongoing for ten years and at the moment is at the level of the Supreme Court of Cameroon.

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>.

## **Replication**

During this month, LAGA worked with other replication projects in planning and coordinating missions with PALF, AALF, TALFF and GALF on investigations, operations and financial procedures.

A Kenyan jurist took a training session hosted by the Legal Department and he was drilled on the wildlife law enforcement process in Cameroon. He participated in several field missions and equally witnessed an operation that led to the arrest of a dealer in Yaounde.

## Finance

### LAGA Expenditure by line for May 2014

Total Expenditures CFA				Total Expenditures USD
2,194,300		<b>Investigations</b>	22 Investigations, 6 Regions	\$4,610
627,500		<b>Operations</b>	2 Operations against 3 subjects	\$1,318
4,434,658		<b>Legal</b>	follow up 39 cases 32 locked dealers	\$9,317
1,851,405		<b>Media</b>	53 Media pieces	\$3,890
2,732,194		<b>Policy &amp; External Relations</b>	Kenya Training of Jurist/Nigeria/Israel	\$5,740
800,000		<b>Management</b>	Coordination	\$1,681
2,956,909		<b>Office</b>		\$6,212
15,596,966	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE MAY</b>			\$32,767

### LAGA Expenditure by Donors for May 2014

Amount CFA	Donor	Amount USD
5,492,621	FWS	\$11,443.0
0	FWS-Replication	\$0.0
639,000	BornFree UK	\$1,331.3
1,501,288	Rufford	\$3,127.7
0	IFAW	\$0.0
5,769,757	NEU Foundation	\$12,020.3
2,194,300	WILD CAT	\$4,571.5
15,596,966	TOTAL	\$32,493.7

## **This Month in Pictures**



**Two poachers/traffickers arrested in Bertoua in the East Region with 10 gorilla skulls and 2 elephant jawbones seized. They used tricks to escape detection as they moved from Dimako to Bertoua the regional headquarters with their booty.**



**A carton full of gorilla skulls seized from the two dealers. They said they could provide up to 50 skulls at a single delivery. A gendarme officer checks out the stock of gorilla skulls**



**Dealer arrested in Yaounde, he travelled all the way from Ebolowa, South Region. He is a seasoned professional, he used a private car to escape recognition by the Forces of Law and Order.**



**10 chimpanzee and 7 gorilla skulls were found stuffed inside a bag by the dealer. He bought the skulls in four villages in the South Region**

## **Link of this month**

- Journal de faits divers a CRTV program broadcast the arrest of wildlife dealers with 10 gorilla skulls and 2 jawbones. The dealers were arrested in Mindourou in the East region of Cameroon trying to sell the protected wildlife products to a client.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bIELrYM-fys>