

**The Last Great Ape Organization – LA GA
October 2014 Report**



Highlights

- **Five operations saw arrest of 8 traffickers over several wildlife products including fresh gorilla and chimp heads**
- **Two traffickers engaged in cross-border trafficking of chimpanzee heads to Nigeria arrested**
- **Two major traffickers arrested in the East Region, during two separate operations. Giant pangolin scales, elephant bones, gorilla bones, chimp heads and bones seized.**
- **A man and woman arrested for illegal possession and commercialisation of chimp and gorilla skulls.**
- **Head of the Legal Department travelled to Senegal to provide assistance during big operation leading to seizure of 2 753 products.**

General

This month saw the arrest of eight traffickers during five operations with chimpanzee and gorilla heads and limbs, chimpanzee and gorilla skulls seized and a 6-month old baby chimpanzee rescued.

The first of the five operations took place in Ambam where **two traffickers were arrested and 5 chimpanzee skulls, 1 gorilla skull and 1 pair of buffalo horns were seized.**

In the second operation, in Sangmelima, South, **three traffickers were arrested, 2 chimpanzee skulls, 1 wild hog skull and 26 bones and other parts of an elephant seized.** One of the traffickers doubles as a poacher and confessed to have been killing elephants, had escaped arrest once at a check point mounted by wildlife officials. He is also involved in ivory trafficking..

During the third operation of the month, **in Batouri, East, a major trafficker was arrested.** He had engaged negotiations to sell a huge haul of wildlife products that included **100 kg of giant pangolin scales, 5 gorilla skulls and a jawbone, 7 chimpanzee skulls and an elephant molar.** He is a leading trafficker in the area and has international connections.

In Bertoua, still in the East Region, **a major wildlife trafficker was arrested with 1 chimpanzee head, 4 hands, 3 elephant skins, 6 molars and 8 fingernails.** He violently attacked the arresting officers as he fought to set himself free but was subsequently subdued and arrested. He is known to be one of the biggest traffickers in the region and has a network of poachers to whom his supplies ammunitions for the shooting of wildlife including elephants.

During the last of the five operations carried out this month, **a network of chimpanzee heads and limb trafficking to Nigeria was uncovered and two arrested while trying to sell 7 chimp heads and 30 limbs. Giant pangolin scales were also seized from them.**

Four court rulings were passed this month and **two traffickers were convicted and sentenced to a year in prison** while three others were found guilty and ordered to pay fines and damages ranging from **2 000 000 CFA francs to 5 000 000 CFA francs..**

The Head of the Legal Department travelled to Senegal under the framework of the EAGLE exchange project to assist SALF during two operations that saw the arrest of 5 traffickers. He assisted in the legal process before, during and after the operations.

Investigations

- **24 investigations** of varying lengths were carried out in **6 Regions** of Cameroon-Littoral, East, Centre, Adamawa, South and West Regions.
- Good investigations in Ambam led to the arrest of two traffickers in possession of gorilla and chimp skulls.
- Excellent investigations in **Sangmelima** resulted in the arrest of three traffickers in several elephant and gorilla parts.
- Investigations in **Batouri** led to an operation where a trafficker was apprehended trying to sell 8 chimp skulls, 4 gorilla skulls and 100 kg of giant pangolin scales.
- Good investigations in **Bertoua** saw the arrest of a trafficker in possession of a good quantity of elephant and chimp parts.
- Excellent investigations in **Bankim** led to the arrest of two traffickers trying to sell a live chimp and several chimp heads and limbs in **Magba**.

Operations

Five operations carried out this month with MINFOF arresting **8 traffickers**

- **01/10/14 – 2 traffickers arrested with 5 chimpanzee skulls, 1 gorilla skull and 1 buffalo horn** – Ambam, South while illegally trying to trade in them. The couple, a woman and a man were arrested as they approached a bar to carry out their transaction. The man uses the cover of a cocoa beans dealer to access poachers around the area and also to hide his illegal wildlife activity. He focuses in Mevo Centre that has a vibrant illegal wildlife trade but his activity goes as far as the Campo Ma'an National Park.
- **08/10/14 – 3 traffickers arrested in Sangmelima, South during an operation with the seizure of 2 chimpanzee skulls, 1 wild hog skull, 3 elephant knee bones, 1 jawbone, 7 tibia bones, 3 teeth, 3 teeth, 3 radius bones, 1 skull and 11 yet to be identified elephant parts.** The three travelled from Bengbis to Sangmelima using public transportation with the elephant and primate bones carefully packaged into two bags to avoid detection. One of the main suspects is also known to be an elephant poacher and had earlier narrowly escaped arrest at a check point mounted by wildlife officials.
- **14/10/14 - a major trafficker was arrested Batouri, East Region and 5 gorilla skulls, 7 chimpanzee skulls, an elephant molar, 1 gorilla jawbone and 100 kg of giant pangolin scales seized.** He is the leading trafficker in Mbang Subdivision of the East Region, owns a bike to transport his products and wildlife officials had earlier arrested but curiously enough was released without any charges brought against him.
- **18/10/14 – 1 big trafficker arrested with 1 chimpanzee head and 4 hands, 3 elephant skins, 6 molars and 8 fingernails** – Bertoua, East while illegally trying to trade in them. He is known to be a seasoned professional wildlife trafficker around the area where he owns a network of poachers who kill wildlife including elephant for him after provision of ammunition to the poachers. He violently resisted arrest and attacked the gendarmerie officers who were carrying out the arrest operations. He was forcefully subdued and ferried by a car to the gendarmerie office. He is a repeat offender who has been supplying wildlife products to clients of different nationalities and he recently supplied a haul of chimpanzee heads and limbs to a Nigerian.
- **27/10/14 – two major traffickers arrested in Magba, West Region with 7 chimpanzee heads, 30 chimpanzee hands, 4 kg of giant pangolin scales seized while a 6-month old baby chimp rescued and taken to Mefou National Park.** The two own a bush house where they store the parts of chimpanzee after poaching. They are actively engaged in the cross-border trade in chimp parts as they are major suppliers of these parts to Nigerians who

easily cross the border to Cameroon. They are seasoned professional traffickers and travel as far as Yaounde to supply illegal wildlife products to clients. Their involvement in the giant pangolin scale trade that is linked principally to China confirms their international connections.

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **25 missions** out of Yaounde- Centre Region: 2 in Mfou (Centre), 2 in Nanga Eboko (Centre), 1 in Douala (Littoral), 3 in Edea (Littoral), 2 in Batouri (East), 3 in Bertoua (East), 1 in Magba (West), 2 in Mbouda (West), 2 in Djoum (South), 2 in Sangmelima (South), 2 in Ambam (South), 1 in Ebolowa (South), 2 in Tombel (South West),
- There are **42 traffickers behind bars during this month**: 13 in the East Region, 9 in Centre region, 2 in Littoral Region, 9 in South Region, 2 in West Region and 7 in South West Region.
- **39 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **38 cases** scheduled and being tried in court this month.
- **Prosecutions**: 4 judgments were passed this month.
 - 08/10/2014: The Bertoua Court of First Instance – East, convicted CAPITA MICHAEL and SAMBA RICHARD to **12 months of imprisonment** and to pay **17.000.000 CFA Frs as damages**. They were also ordered to pay cost fees of **28.840 FCA Frs**. They were arrested in Bertoua for illegal possession and commercialization of 10 elephant skulls and 2 gorilla jawbones.
 - 13/10/2014: The Nanga-Eboko Court of First Instance – Center, convicted MEBANA TENA PAUL to pay **2.000.000 CFA Frs as damages**. He was also ordered to pay cost fees of **28.425 FCA Frs and 150.000 FCFA frs as fines or serve 9 months imprisonment in default of payment of the said fines**. He was arrested in Mbandjock for illegal possession and commercialization of 01 Lion skin.
 - 14/10/2014: The Mfou Court of First Instance – Center, convicted LIU JULONG to pay **3.645.000 CFA Frs as damages**. He was also ordered to pay cost fees of **212.000 FCA Frs and 4.788.000 FCFA frs as fines. He was also ordered to pay 5.000.000FCFA Frs as Pecuniary losses suffered by MINFOF**. He was arrested in Nsimalen International Airport - Yaounde for illegal exportation of 4 elephant tusks, 25 worked pieces of Ivory and 44 kg of Giant Pangolin scales.
- 22/10/2014: The Bafoussam Court of First Instance – West, convicted MABOU BENJAMIN and ordered him to pay **130.000 CFA Frs as damages and 170.000 FCFA Frs as procedural fees**. He was also ordered to pay **5.000.000FCFA Frs as fines and 226.400 FCFA Frs as Court Fines**. He was arrested in Baham- West for illegal possession and commercialization of 2 leopard skin.
- The Head of Legal Department travelled to Senegal for a crackdown operation with the SALF team leading to 5 traffickers arrested in two separate operations. He assisted in the legal follow up before, during and after the operations. He also assisted in court proceedings leading to first hearing of the case.

Media front

- **43 media pieces** were produced and pushed through tv, the written press, radio, and internet including: 5 tv news feature (2 in English and 3 in French) 21 written press material (11 in English 10 in French), 2 radio talk shows all in English, 13 news flashes (10 in English and 3 in French) and 2 internet publication all in English.
- **Guests include:** WWF law enforcement officer.
- **Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including:** arrest of two traffickers with chimp and gorilla skulls in Ambam, arrest of 3 traffickers in elephant and primates bones in Sangmelima, a man arrested with ivory in Djoum, a trafficker arrested with pangolin scales and primate bones in Batouri..
- 27 media pieces in English, 16 in French making a percentage of 62.7 % in English and 37.3% in French.
- For the first time in the history of the media department of LAGA, Cameroon national Television - the CRTV, broadcast LAGA's successful arrest operations over 2 days on regional and major news on Friday the 24 to Tuesday 28th of October 2014 cumulating to 6 broadcasts. The story was broadcast in three different news cast that's 6pm, 7.30pm, 8.30 pm and 8am morning news in English and French for at least three times in each language. The story broadcast reported on 3 successful arrest operations in Ambam, Sangmelima and Nanga Eboko in ape heads, skulls and bones.

External Relations and Policy

A meeting was held with the former director of Garoua Wildlife School and the deputy director to discuss issues related to the fate of the pangolin and the recent upsurge in the illegal pangolins scales trade and its connection with China. The deputy director equally held a discussion with Dirck Byler of the US Fish and Wildlife Service who was on a visit to Cameroon. Discussions focused on the wildlife law enforcement process in the country. A meeting was also held with officials of the WCS Ebo Forest Research Project on the continuous poaching of elephants in the forest and on possibilities of collaboration. The interim director held a meeting with the technical director of Deng Deng National Park on information exchange and the poaching of gorilla and chimpanzees in the park. The aim was to initiate a collaborative platform in tackling wildlife trafficking. The head of the investigations department met with the MINFOF South regional delegate in the presence of his divisional delegates and chiefs of wildlife posts and the message was to inform his collaborators to team up efforts and work with LAGA that already has a convention with the ministry.

Activism front

Power point presentation: Boko Haram. Qui est Boko Haram?

The presentation dwells on the insurgent group's origin, history and the role it plays in the destabilization of peace in the sub region through kidnapping and theft. It equally looks at the different suggestions as solutions to the crises:

- Placing a ransom on Aboubakar Shekau to facilitate his capture or denunciation.
- Organizing a join, cross-country military unit at the sub region to fight the insurgency.
- The intelligence of holding peace talks with the insurgency and their operation mechanisms.

Replication

LAGA assisted SALF in two operations leading to the arrest of 5 traffickers and the seizure of 2633 wildlife products in Senegal. The Head of the Legal Department travelled to Senegal under the framework of the EAGLE exchange to assist during the operations.

Film projection: Bring down a dictator

Binging down a dictator is a documentary that portrays a nonviolent protest by a group of young university students in Serbia that led to the down fall of Slobodan Milosevic in October 2000. Unlike many had thought that only the force of arm would sack the tyrant president, he was driven from power by a strong unified student group known as Otpor. Trained in nonviolent action they instigated a unified political opposition to the regime, fought to stop electoral fraud, and systematically undermined police and army loyalty to the regime. Otpor’s weapon was rock concerts, ridicule, nonviolent acts and a fearless resistance to intimidation attempts. The documentary depicts nonviolent action to fight and win a common cause at super stages. The take home message here to overcome dictators is that of unity, clever codification of messages, patriotism and good planning.

Finance

LAGA Expenditure by line for October 2014

| Total Expenditures CFA | | Total Expenditures USD | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|----------|
| 2,625,765 | | Investigations | 24 Investigations, 6 Regions | \$5,079 |
| 1,479,550 | | Operations | 5 Operation against 8 subjects | \$2,862 |
| 4,235,823 | | Legal | follow up 39 cases 42 locked subjects | \$8,193 |
| 2,844,125 | | Media | 43 Media pieces | \$5,501 |
| 1,284,930 | | Policy & External Relations | Kenya Mission/Israel | \$2,485 |
| 1,622,300 | | Management | Coordination | \$3,138 |
| 1,536,300 | | Office | | \$2,972 |
| 76,250 | | LAGA Family | | \$147 |
| 15,705,043 | TOTAL EXPENDITURE OCTOBER | | | \$30,377 |

LAGA Expenditure by Donors for October 2014

| Amount CFA | Donor | Amount USD |
|------------|-----------------|------------|
| 160,050 | Kuenzi | \$309.6 |
| 0 | FWS-Replication | \$0.0 |
| 176,500 | BornFree UK | \$341.4 |
| 607,000 | Rufford | \$1,174.1 |
| 0 | IFAW | \$0.0 |
| 155,000 | NEU Foundation | \$299.8 |
| 14,206,243 | WILD CAT | \$27,478.2 |
| 266,250 | Prowildlife | \$515.0 |
| 134,000 | BornFree USA | \$259.2 |
| 15,705,043 | TOTAL | \$30,377.3 |

This Month in Pictures



Baby chimp rescued and network of chimp heads and limbs trafficking to Nigeria uncovered. Two were arrested (*above*) Three arrested for trafficking of dozens of elephant and primate bones packaged in two bags (*below*)



He violent attacked arresting team as he was whisked away by law enforcement officers (*above*). Major trafficker arrested with a consignment of ape skulls (*below*)



The couple attempted to sell the parts but were arrested. He uses cover of cocoa dealer (*right*)



Link of the month

CRTV broadcast the arrest of 6 persons with elephant bones, ape heads and limbs among other wildlife species during three operations carried out in Nanga Eboko, Centre, Ambam and Sangmelima South The operations where carried out by the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife's Divisional Delegations of Upper Sanaga, Ntem Valley and Dja and Lobo. The broadcasts caught the attention of the state media as it took it 6 times.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3f1-BWs6fIM&list=UUWxddJzBucEWcir16QegjKO>