



## THE FIGHT AGAINST ILLEGAL IVORY TRADE

“Hierarchy has prescribed the implementation of the ivory action plan”.

- *Tabi Phillip, South West Forestry and Wildlife Delegate*

**Illegal ivory dealer serves three-year jail term**

**How the ivory market operates**

## THE FIGHT AGAINST ILLEGAL IVORY TRADE



*Illegal ivory trade is an international criminal business well connected to organised crime syndicates. The more enforcement work is being carried against major dealers in Cameroon, the more we learn that poachers are merely a small part of a much larger sophisticated international network.*

*Deficiencies in illegal ivory trade control include inadequate regulations, insufficient penalties particularly at risk are those in range states that have little or no resources to combat the activities of both poachers and illegal traders*

*This edition of Wildlife Justice takes a look at illegal ivory trade in the world with a view to providing professionals and actors involved in wildlife law enforcement in Cameroon with important information that is relevant to their work, as well as, Cameroon's political will to implement Convention on International Trade in Endangered Wildlife Species (CITES) legislation.*

*By highlighting illegal trade in ivory, this edition of Wildlife Justice, points to the fact that domestic ivory trade control mechanisms need to be intensified to ensure that illegal trade in ivory does not pave the way for the extinction of the elephant populations in Africa. This is important given the observation that Africa is the main source for smuggled ivory entering illicit world trade in smuggled ivory.*

*Experienced illegal ivory traders tend to know more about the loopholes in government ivory trade control systems and have worked out evasion measures. There is therefore the urgent need for wildlife law enforcement officials in Cameroon to be given adequate training to improve their ivory identification skills, their understanding of legal procedures and ivory smuggling detection methods.*

*Education initiatives which Wildlife Justice is undertaking, targets special interest professional groups and stakeholders in a bid to promote their understanding of national and international laws such as CITES and domestic regulations pertaining to elephant ivory trade as contained in Cameroon's 1994 wildlife law.*

*This edition of the journal draws inspiration through consultation with practical researchers in the field, government and international institutions, scholars and legal experts, as well as, news from world conferences, political processes and field operations.*

*At the last moment before we closed this edition, we were pleased to include a news brief with a mile stone event-military person engaging in illegal ivory trafficking has received by the courts the maximum punishment the wildlife law provides-3 years imprisonment*

*Cameroon as a world leader in wildlife law enforcement is undertaking positive operations involving arrests and prosecutions weekly to curb sophisticated forms of illegal national and cross border ivory trade.*

**Ofir Drori**  
**Director, LAGA**

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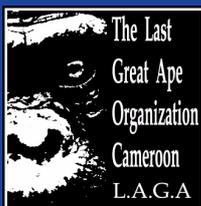
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Cover Picture: Ivory seized in Douala. Fresh Tusks from illegally killed elephants are transformed to chinese market designs. Defaulters were prosecuted.

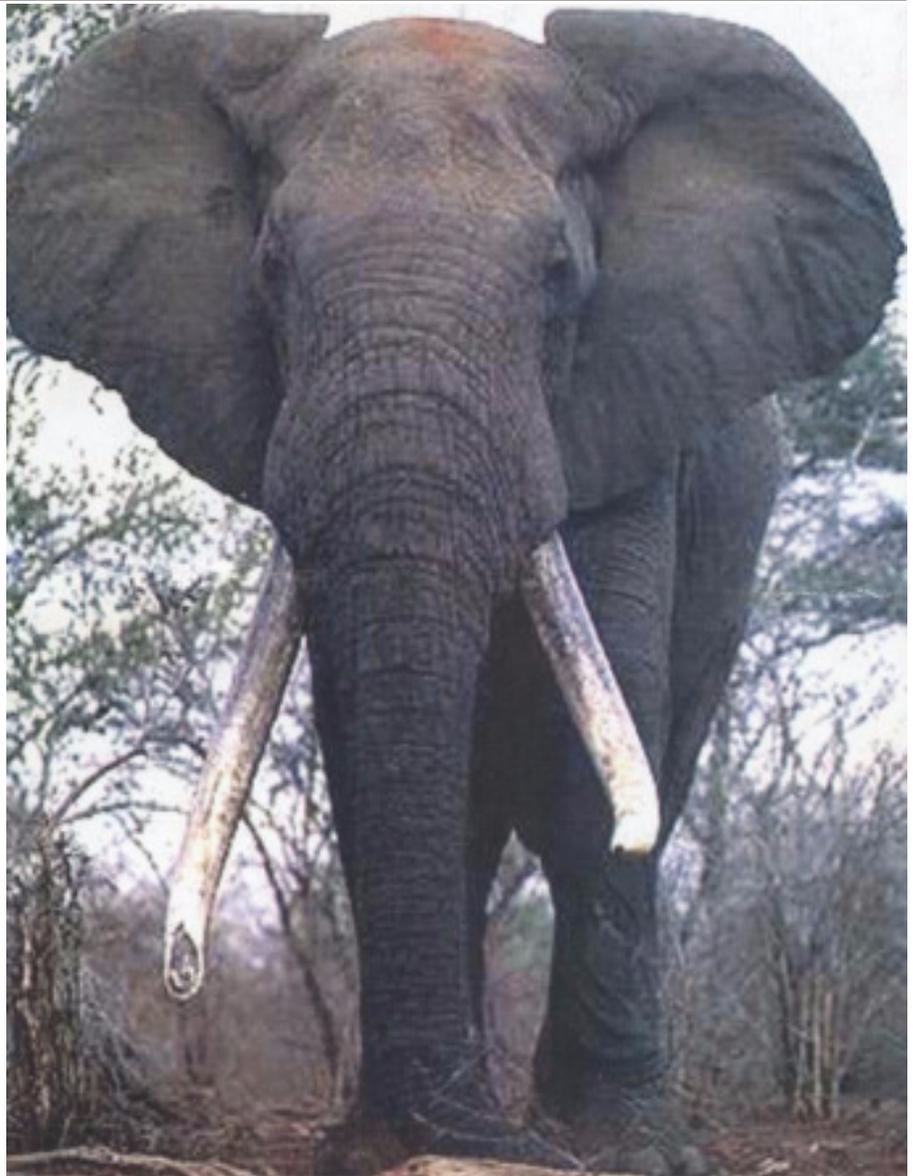
# How the Ivory Market Operates

By \*Vincent Gudmia Mfonfu

Countries that produce, transit and consume ivory products need to take full measure of the situation by collecting information on actual stockpile use, legal and illegal ivory trade, illegal elephant hunting areas, the structure of the market and who gets the most profit, a knowledge of who is buying and selling from whom and at what rate and the movement of ivory from the dead elephant in African forest to the sophisticated Asian market.

In spite of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) efforts on the control of ivory import and export, huge problems remain for compliance with international law. Most of these problems include, a weak wildlife enforcement capacity which calls for skilled manpower, equipment and finance, simple non-compliance with national and international wildlife laws and lack of local community participation which means that locals don't have the zeal to comply with the law even if big-time dealers make all the profit at their expense.

This last point is especially burdensome to locals since they do not know the value of the service they render to urban-based big operators-the generators of illegal commercial hunting. Based on a study carried out by the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) on world trade in ivory from Africa mostly to the Far East, it has been established that the Far East reaps at least 6 times the illegal profit of his African



*The survival of elephants depending on combating illegal ivory trade in an international level*

counterpart.

## WAY FORWARD

A way forward would involve more regulation on the ivory market; more controls on internal movement of ivory; registration of processed and raw ivory stocks; enhancing law enforcement; securing more international cooperation in combating illicit ivory trade; capacity building for wildlife law enforcement authorities and the establishment of an internal ivory market monitoring network for registration and the progress of law enforcement activities and encouraging substitutes for ivory like buffalo and cow bones.

Combating illicit ivory trade and establishing effective control mechanism for both external and internal trade is certainly an uphill task but not entirely impossible if more public awareness is raised on the problem, if enforcement officers are better trained and if resources are focused.

It is the survival of the elephant that is at stake. Its disappearance through the ivory trade represents an incalculable loss for the world's ecosystem and the future of mankind as a whole.

*\*Communication Officer, LAGA.*

# Elephant Conservation – Fact Sheet

## Estimated Elephant Population In Cameroon

Sahalian zone: 1,100  
Sub sahalian zone: 1,620  
Forest zone: 24,899  
Total: 27,619

**Source:** 1997 report on the National Elephant Action Plan, Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife

## Size And Appearance

Elephants weigh between 900kg for a small female forest elephant to 3,500kg for a large male bush elephant. Their height can be between 1.7 metres to 3.4 metres at the shoulder. Both female and male African elephants grow tusks, but usually only male Asian elephants have them. Elephants use their tusks to gather and carry food, and as weapons. They use their trunks to manipulate objects, smell, eat, drink, bathe and communicate with other elephants.

## Habit

Elephants are highly intelligent animals and have a complex, social structure based around family groups which are led by an old and experienced female known as a matriarch. The matriarch knows where to find water in the dry season and leads the herd's migration between dry and wet season feeding grounds.

## Diet

An elephant diet is made up of grass, shoots, tree buds, shrubs, bark and also fruit and vegetable crops that they come across. Elephants need 30-50 gallons of water every day.

## Life Expectancy

Elephants live between 60 and 70 years on average and their rate of development is similar to humans.

## Range Of The Elephant

Asian elephants: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Borneo, Cambodia, China, India, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Peninsular Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Sumatra, Thailand and Vietnam.  
African elephants: South of the Sahara, from the deserts of Namibia to the tropical forests of Central and West Africa.

## Conservation & Threats

The African elephant population plummeted from 1.3 million to 625,000 between 1979 and 1989 as a result of poaching for ivory before the international ivory ban was implemented. The African elephant population today is thought to be around 350,000.

Illegal poaching for ivory remains a threat to African and Asian elephants. The Asian elephant population has declined almost 97% from the early 1900s. Today, there are probably fewer than 40,000 Asian elephants in the wild.

Both the Asian and African elephant are officially classified as endangered. All Asian elephants and most of Africa's elephants are listed on Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) which bans all international trade.

Elephants have a major impact on their habitat. They knock down trees, encouraging new growth and allowing grassland to regenerate, as part of long-term woodland/grassland cycles. They dig for water and their excavations can lead to formation of water holes. They create paths, which open up thickets to other species, and help to disperse seeds, which pass unharmed through their digestive system - they are the gardeners of Africa.

African and Asian elephant populations were decimated by poachers before the international ivory ban was put in place. The ban was a huge success, but some illegal poaching continues to supply black markets for ivory products in the Far East.

**Source:** Care For The Wild International

4000 elephants killed per year to supply the ivory markets of Africa and Asia.

95.309kg of ivory of African origin seized in Asia from 1998-2004 representing about 15,347 elephants killed for illegal trade. Preference within Asian markets is given for "hard" Central and West African forest elephant ivory

**Source:** Born Free Foundation, 2004

# “Hierarchy has prescribed that the Ivory Action Plan be implemented”

**Mr. Tabi Phillip: South West Forestry and Wildlife Delegate**

*Saving the elephant depends directly on focusing on the ivory trade and bringing it as much under control as is possible. As Cameroon’s Forestry and Wildlife Administration prescribes the implementation of the Ivory Action Plan, Wildlife Justice Editor-in-chief, Mr. Vincent Gudmia Mfonfu, sought to know from the South West Delegate of Forestry and Wildlife, Mr. Tabi Phillip, the threats to the remaining elephant population and other endangered wildlife species. Excerpts.*

**What is the wildlife potential of the South West Province?**

Well, the wildlife potential of the South West is very encouraging. The Korup National Park harbours quite a number of wildlife species of great values and importance. We have the Mount Cameroon region, which also harbours a number of species of wildlife, which are endemic, only found in the area. We have the Takamanda Forest Reserve, whose status we are now proposing to be raised to a National Park, and which equally harbours a great number of wildlife species. The Bayang Mbo Wildlife Sanctuary is also rich in wild animal species.

As concerns those listed by the 1994 wildlife law as protected species, we have elephants, chimpanzees, gorillas and other great apes.

**How are traditional rulers involved in the fight against illegal hunting in your area?**

The traditional leaders are very involved, very particular and even eager, knowing fully well that they are the first custodians of these animals. They are working hard to educate their subjects to be vigilant against wildlife law defaulters.

**What about the Forces of Law and Order and the Judiciary?**

I wish to seize this opportunity to thank the Forces of Law and Order, as well as, the Judiciary for the collaboration they have been giving us, particularly the Forces of Law and Order that most often give us their support during raids and routine patrols.

Recently we organized a training work to educate ourselves more on the



*A wildlife operation against Guinean ivory dealers in*

applicability of the Forestry and Wildlife law.

**How are animals classified by the wildlife law?**

You see, wildlife has been categorized into three classes. You have class A which are totally protected and may, for no reason be killed or captured. There is class B which are also protected but may be hunted with the necessary permit and there is class C which are partially protected.

This classification based on endangered species listed by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) leads us to understand that if somebody is dealing in wildlife products, which are totally protected, he or she stands the chance of being prosecuted.

The law stipulates that anyone caught with part of dead or live protected wildlife that is, class A animal, he or she is liable

to a prison term of up to 3 years and or a fine of up to 10 million CFA francs. One typical example of class A animals is the elephant.

**What is the elephant population in your Province?**

To give a precise number is very difficult because all the counting during inventories is being done approximately.

But I must tell you that at the Bayang Mbo Wildlife Sanctuary, we have quite a good number of elephants, close to about a hundred. It is true of the Mount Cameroon area where we still have a considerable number of elephant population. We can still find elephant in the Takamanda Forest Reserve.

The threat is nothing more than commercial hunting, where urban-based dealers are looking for

trophies such as the feet and tusks, which fetch them so much money in the international illicit trade in protected wildlife species closely linked to drug and arms trade.

We are doing everything within our means to track down these dealers and bring them to justice with the technical assistance of international conservation partners including LAGA.

**How is the Ivory Action Plan of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) being implemented in the South West Province?**

Yes, hierarchy has prescribed that the Ivory Action Plan be implemented. We have in turn requested, all the Divisional Delegates to do all that they can to move into houses and market places where they suspect trophies like ivory without certificates of origin are kept. Soon we will be going to the field to effectively enforce the law on defaulters.

## “Offenders under the 1994 wildlife law are criminals”

*The effective enforcement of existing wildlife laws is seen as the only means of preventing the extinction of protected and endangered animal species. In an interview with Wildlife Justice editor in Chief, Vincent Gudmia Mfonfu, a senior lecturer on international environmental law at the University of Douala and the International Relations Institute of Cameroon (IRIC), Dr. Chi Augustine, assesses the evolution and effective enforcement of wildlife laws in Cameroon.*



*How far can the history of wildlife law in Cameroon be traced?*

*116kg of ivory seized in a raid on two centres transforming fresh tusks into ivory articles designed for international markets*

We can trace it back to the United Nations Conference on Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972 which Cameroon attended. The conference came up with the Stockholm Declaration on Human Environment. Although the Declaration was not legally binding, it acted as an eye-opener on environmental issues the world over.

After the conference, Cameroon came up with the 1983 law governing forestry and wildlife. Unfortunately, that law did not actually respond to the environmental issues at the time. Then came the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 in which Cameroon also took part. The conference came up with, among other things, two legally binding documents which were endorsed by participating countries, namely, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on Climate Change.

In order to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Cameroon

government came up with the 1994 forestry and wildlife law. That law was to ensure the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity which requires of its parties to conserve their biodiversity, ensure their sustainable use and ensure equitable distribution of benefits from their conservation and management.

*How many conventions are the 1994 forest and wildlife law targeting for implementation?*

As a matter of fact, the law was targeting the implementation of two conventions, namely: the Convention on Biological

Diversity and indirectly, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). CITES was signed in 1973, but after signing no law actually came up for its implementation. CITES mainly regulates trade in endangered species.

Consequently another law was voted in 2005 to fully implement CITES. So the 2005 law is to implement CITES just like the 1994 law is to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity.

CITES has listed all the animal in the world considered as endangered species. This list is attached to the annex of CITES and is constantly revised as time goes on. The 2005 law has taken on board all the animals contained in the CITES list of endangered species.

*Continued on next page*

## *Legal*

### *How would you describe offences under the 1994 wildlife law?*

The offences under this law are not only criminal but also against the state because we are talking about a resource which is within the public estate or domain. Environmental resources belong to the state. The state is there to regulate the use of these resources. In other words, when you violate the wildlife law it is considered a crime against the state because you have illegally exploited a property regulated by the state. These also include government officials involved in corrupt practices in the law enforcement process. In fact, their sanctions are even doubled. This, without prejudice to administrative sanctions, implying that he/she could either be suspended or dismissed from the serve where he/she belongs.

Though the law provides for negotiations (compoundment) out of the court making judicial sanctions, the law provides that this should be

done within 72 hours. But when it has to do with species of wildlife in class A which are totally protected, negotiations are out of question.

As soon as an individual contravenes the law, he or she is considered to be a criminal and must be charged with a sentence of up to 3 years and/or a fine of up to 10 million FCFA for anyone found in possession of part of dead or live protected animal species including apes, elephants, lions leopards etc.

### **What, from your assessment, is the impact of wildlife crimes that have already appeared in the court?**

We have heard of about 60 cases of wildlife crimes that have appeared in the courts across Cameroon since 2003 when the government launched the nation-wide operation aimed at effectively applying the law by bringing offenders to justice. We have also heard through the media the severe sanctions meted on some

of them in accordance with the provisions of the law, including the case of a military driver caught transporting ivory products for sale and who is now serving a 3-year jail term at the Ebolowa prison in the South Province

The government with the technical support of international conservation partners such as The Last Great Ape Organisation (LAGA) is ensuring that the wildlife law it has voted and which provides for penalties is effectively applied. The courts are there to judge the offenders and if they are found guilty they are severely punished. This punishment goes to serve as deterrence for others not to commit the same crime. I think this effective wildlife law enforcement by government, has a positive impact on the management of wildlife resources because those who don't want to obey the law are forced to suffer the consequences of their malpractices.

*\*Senior Lecturer International Relations Institute (IRIC), Yaounde*

## **REGULATION ON IVORY TRADE IN CAMEROON HIGHLIGHT**

*By \*Horline Njike*

**O**n the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 2004, the Forestry and Wildlife Administration in Cameroon signed an Arrête laying down rules for obtaining permits on the transformation of ivory into local crafts in Cameroon as stipulated in article 100 of the law of 20<sup>th</sup> January 1994 on forests, wildlife and fisheries. The law stipulates that the transformation of ivory into commercial purposes shall be subject to obtaining a license issued by the administration in charge of wildlife in accordance with conditions fixed by order of the Minister in charge of wildlife and on Resolution 10.10 of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Wildlife Species (CITES) and of decisions 12.36 to 12.39 of the CITES Secretariat. The Ministerial Decree was signed and rendered public in the light of the above texts.

This Arrête in no way compromises the provisions of the 1994 wildlife law whose Article 98 states that the possession or circulation of live protected animals, their hides and skins or trophies within the national territory shall be subject to obtaining a certificate of origin from the services in charge of wildlife and Article 101 states that any person found at any time or any place in possession of a whole or part of a live or dead protected animal shall to considered to have captures or killed the animal.

The Arrête states that keepers of stocked ivory have 6 months from the date of publication of the Arrête to apply for a license. The stock remains illegal as long as its keeper has not presented a certificate of origin within that time. a certificate of origin contains specific measurement, weight and special marks unique to the specific piece to avoid laundry of illegal ivory

*\*Head of Legal Department, LAGA*

# IVORY DEALER ARRESTED ONBOARD CHINESE SHIP

By \*Eugene Nforngwa

A dealer in protected wildlife species was recently arrested

on board a Chinese ship at the Douala Port, advertising sample ivory products to potential buyers.

The dealer recruited buyers, mainly Chinese businessmen and crew and carried them to illegal shops in the city where sales are made, according to Cameroon wildlife law enforcement officials. Officials said he was being held in custody while a case file has been opened on him in Douala court. The arrest was part of a nationwide campaign to check illegal trade in protected wildlife species through persecution and publication of defaulters.

According to a 1994 law, anyone in possession of part of dead or live protected wildlife species including elephants is a criminal. Violators face a prison sentence of up to three years and/or a fine of up to 10 million FCFA. For instance, a military driver involved in ivory trade in Cameroon is now serving a 3 year jail term in the Ebolowa prison.

A nationwide operation against illegal trade in protected wildlife was launched by government of Cameroon in 2003 with the aim of effectively applying the 1994 wildlife law by bringing offenders to justice. The Operation is being undertaken by the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF), in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, the Forces of Law and Order and with the technical support of The Last Great Ape Organisation, (LAGA).

Over the last 3 years many violators of the law involved in all sorts of illegal wildlife crimes, from trade in protected species to illegally owning or trafficking protected species have been jailed. Wildlife experts say illegal trade in protected wildlife poses the biggest threat to the endangered wildlife species, and unless checked, most of it could be depleted in the decade. Illegal trade in protected wildlife species was for the first time, on the agenda of the United Nations UN Crime Congress held in Bangkok, Thailand from 18 to 25 April 2005.

According to Debbie banks, Senior Campaigner of the Environment

Investigation Agency (EIA) who took part in that UN Congress, "International illegal trade in wildlife, which is second in value only to the illegal drugs trade,

is driven by powerful sophisticated international networks". To her, "Wildlife criminals are taking advantage of the weak laws, uncoordinated enforcement and light penalties related to wildlife trafficking".

The placing of the wildlife crime on the agenda of the UN crime congress is thus seen by Banks as, "a step in the right direction". According to her, this will require bold leadership to translate rhetoric into action.

\* Editor in Chief, *The Herald*

## ILLEGAL IVORY TRADE AND WORLD MARKETS

The Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) has stated that China has historically been a significant destination for illicit trade in ivory and has been identified as the single most important influence on the increasing trends in illegal trade in ivory since 1995. IFAW in June 2006, states that the problem of illegal trade in China is exacerbated or worsened by a burgeoning economy and increase in consumer power, resulting in a freer and easier flow of ivory across borders for Chinese doing business in Africa

Following several operations involving Asians in wildlife trade in the country, Cameroon has constantly alerted the international community during the Conference of Parties (CoP) meeting of CITES about the threat on Cameroon's elephant population posed by Chinese markets where large amounts of ivory are easily exported illegally from Douala in different containers.

During the 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of Parties (CoP), to CITES, Cameroon initiated a meeting with a Chinese delegation and a delegation of Central and West Africa to discuss this matter.

The Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife in collaboration with custom officials, LAGA, Interpol, CITES and CITES relevant managing authorities is currently investigating a trafficking affair involving Asian citizens involved in large scale ivory trade in Cameroon



*One shipment of 603 tusks arriving from Douala seized by the HongKong authorities (May 2006). The case was successfully investigated by the Cameroonian authorities*

# CONTROLLING ILLEGAL IVORY TRADE TO SAVE ELEPHANT POPULATION

By \*Vincent Gudmia  
Mfonfu

Elephants and ivory trade have been a major focus of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) parties including Cameroon for many years. Yet, more still needs to be achieved before illegal hunting of elephants for ivory is brought under control.

In 1989, it was recognized that most ivory in trade actually originated from illegal hunting of elephants and many elephant range states saw their elephant populations declining drastically. And so in that year, CITES Parties declared as illegal international commercial trade in African elephant ivory and other elephant products. The declaration was given the fact that the preference for "hard" Central and West African forest ivory, particularly in the Asian markets represents a very worrying and unsustainable situation. It has been estimated that some 4.000 elephants are required each year to supply the ivory markets of Africa and Asia.

Born Free Foundation published a report captioned, "stop the clock" for the Conference of Parties 11 (CoP11) of CITES in which it demonstrated that thousands of elephants were being killed annually to meet the demands for ivory trade. Again at CoP12 of CITES, it published another report demonstrating that illegal ivory trade was continuing unabated and that elephants continued to be illegally hunted in large numbers.

## RECOMMENDATION

It was therefore recommended at Cop12 of CITES that countries with unregulated markets, for which fingers were pointed to some 10 countries including Cameroon, should carry out a number of activities such as, introducing inspection procedures and, law enforcement systems to bring their internal ivory markets under control.

As part of response to this strong recommendation, Officials of the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF) on December 3, 2006 in Djoum, near the Dja Wildlife Reserve, covering parts of the South and East Provinces, seized a consignment of trophies derived from protected wildlife species particularly elephants, including 81 kilograms of ivory, elephant tails and teeth, leopard skins, chimpanzee skull etc. A case file is being established in the local court against the



*Mr. Nti, Sub Director of Wildlife and Protected Areas, MINFOF, with seized elephant ivory*

two dealers involved in this illegal trade in protected Wildlife species in accordance with the provisions of the 1994 wildlife law. The law stipulates that anyone found in possession of part of dead or live protected elephants is liable to a prison term of from 1 to 3 years and or a fine of from 3 to 10 million CFA francs.

During a press briefing in Yaounde after the seizure, the Sub-Director of Conservation in the Department of Wildlife and Protected Species, Mr. Nti Mefe Solomon called for vigilance against illegal ivory trade on part of the local population. Hear him, "I am convinced that this exercise is once more an occasion to call on our conservation services to be more vigilant and not to rest on their laurels because the enemies are not at sleep". On measures being taken by government to bring the dealers to justice, Mr. Nti replied, "We have to reinforce control, despite the lack of adequate means our conservation services are making tremendous efforts and we are certain these efforts will be intensified to bring law breakers to order".

## CITES IVORY ACTION PLAN

The trade in ivory is regulated by CITES which have endorsed what is called the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS) to track illegal ivory trade. This monitoring system in 2002 reported records of over 7.000 illegal ivory seizures equivalent to 200 tons of ivory worldwide since 1989.

Despite series of successful seizures of African ivory over the last four years, the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) points to the fact that, "attempts to control illegal ivory trade are

profoundly hindered by inadequate legislation which allows for trade in ivory obtained prior to the ban"

Nevertheless, CITES Secretariat expects Parties to implement the Ivory Action Plan which expects Parties to put in place control mechanisms to monitor internal ivory trade. While acknowledging the fact that there are many people in Cameroon illegally keeping ivory in their homes, Mr. Nti told journalists that government is bent on implementing the Ivory Action Plan said Nti; "We have started with sensitization and information campaigns with our partners such as LAGA, giving the population all the necessary information on the conditions for possessing ivory". To him, this is the first strategy. The last phase, he explained, would involve going to the field with repressive measures against those in possession of undeclared ivory. The law, he warned, will be severe on such people.

\*Communication Officer, LAGA

# ELEPHANTS- POACHING WEAPONS AND NEW EXPERIENCE FROM THE BANYANG-MBO WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, CAMEROON

By \*Anthony C. Nchanji(PhD)

## EXTRACT

Although elephant poaching has been well studied there have been few reports of the equipment poachers use and the danger it poses to all forest users. Information about this equipment, especially the cheap, locally available inventions and innovations, would improve anti poaching planning and the safety of all forest users including the elephants. This paper reports on confiscated firearms and cheap, locally made slugs, pin-board traps, cable snares; it explains the inventions, innovations and strategies poachers have used during the last 10years of the anti-poaching campaign the wildlife conservation society initiated in the Banyang-Mbo wildlife sanctuary in south western Cameroon. Further, it identifies the origin of poachers and their driving forces and highlights the strategy the wildlife conservation society uses to conserve forest elephants in the sanctuary.



*Both the Asian and African elephant are officially classified as endangered*

## INTRODUCTION

For the last two decades, poaching has been a well known and well studied conservation problem for both African and Asian elephants (Bell 1984; Cumming et al. 1984; fay and ruggiero 1986; doug las Hamilton 1987 anon. 1989 western and cobb 1989 ruggiero 1990; Dublin and jachmann 1992; bell et al. 1993; fay and agnagna 1993; milner gullard and beddington 1993; bublin et al. 1995 jachmann 1998 mkanda 1993; waithaka 1997, 1998; mbalama 2000; mbalama and mapilanga 2001) these studies have examined poaching in terms of its magnitude trends, serious negative effect on elephant populations (number and densities, structures and distribution) and elephant behaviour, or they have examined ivory trade and law enforcement. However, only a few of these studies (such as Nishihara 2003) have addressed the equipment that is used for poaching. Knowledge of poaching weapons seems to be limited mainly to conservation agents- both non governmental organizations (NGOs) and government departments- or the writers assume that the weapons are known. this could explain why most anti-poaching teams are ill equipped to face their enemy, the poachers. it is imperative that researchers

and protected-areas have good knowledge of this equipment, especially in forest ecosystems where visibility is poor. Otherwise, they risk being intimidated, sustaining serious injuries, or even being killed if they are confronted by well-equipped poachers

Poachers also use various camouflaged, familiar looking traps and tools, often local inventions and innovations, making detection difficult. Acquiring good knowledge of this equipment and its application will improve the ability of forest users to reconnoiter the forest and detect traps- and hence improve their marging of safety. Therefore, it is important for researchers, protected-area managers and agencies funding anti-poaching efforts to know the different types of weapons and locally developed techniques that poachers use in various elephant conservation areas, so they can equip themselves or ther anti-poaching teams against risk.

This article reports on the different weapons and techniques used for capturing and killing elephants in the Banyang Mbo Wildlife Sanctuary (BMWS) that poachers poachers who have been arrested have used over the last ten years

and local techniques recently developed for poaching. It does not however discuss antipoaching operations and strategy or law enforcement and its effectiveness that lead to arrests; these are being reported in detail elsewhere (Anthony C Nchanji and TCH Sunderland, in prep).

## STUDYAREA

The Banyang-Mbo Wildlife Sanctuary in the South Western Cameroon in Central Africa; extends form 5\*8' to 5\*36' to 9\*47' E and covers an area of about 66,200ha. The climate is hot and humid with distinct but unusual dry and rainy seasons. The rainy season runs from about mid-march to the end of October. However, seldom is a month completely devoid of significant precipitation. Nchanji and Plumtre (2003) with weather data in Nguti from 1993 to 2002 with weather data in Nguti from 1993 to 2002 show that the heaviest rainfall occurs between June and October. August with mean rainfall of 782+/- 178 mm is the wettest month while February with mean rainfall of 4 +/- 3.6 mm is the driest. However, the months of

*Continued next page*

June to September each have more days of rainfall (almost daily) than others. annual rainfall ranges from 3438 to 5429 mm with a mean of 4526 mm. relative humidity and daily temperature are fairly constant throughout the year and respectively range from 84% to 90% and 27 C to 29 C with means of 87% and 27 C. Altitude ranges from 120m in the northern part to 1756m in the south eastern part of the sanctuary. The sanctuary is drained with numerous permanent and seasonal streams that rise from the highlands in the south and flow into the rivers Mbei (Mbu) and Mfi. Vegetation is generally evergreen rainforest; it falls within the Guinea-Congolian forest region as described by White (1983). Plant species diversity in the sanctuary is among the highest in Africa (T. Duncan, pers. Comm.). Presently BMWS is the only submontane protected habitat in Cameroon with a potential viable elephant population. This population of 2002 to 400 remains probably the largest in the Cross-Sanaga region.

Ethnologically, BMWS is inhabited to the north by the Banyangi people, to the east by the Mbo and Banyui, to the south by the Bakossi and to the west by the Mbo and Bassosi. There are about 60 villages with a total human population of about 25000 within 5 to 20km of the sanctuary boundaries; another other 300 to 400 villages plus 5 suburban and 2 urban sites are within 30 to 150 km of the boundaries. Therefore BMWS is in a landscape dominated by humans. The economy of the entire region is predominantly agriculture—small-scale cash crops (cocoa and coffee) and subsistence crops (oil palm, banana, plantain, cassava, cocoyam, various vegetables)—widely supplemented by hunting and collection of several non-timber forest products

**WCS AND ANTI- POACHING INITIATIVES IN THE BAYANGMBO SANCTUARY**

Although elephant poaching has been well studied, there have been few reports on the equipment Poachers use and the danger it poses to all forest users. Information about this equipment, especially the cheap, locally available inventions and innovation, would improve anti-poaching planning and safety of the forest users including the elephants. Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) field biologists carrying out research in Korup National park on the



**Elephants live between 60 and 70 years on average and their rate of development is similar to humans.**

ecology of forest elephants from 1988 to 1991 were unsuccessful at the Radio collaring due to the low elephant population in the park, perhaps because of previous excessive poaching before the park's status was upgraded in 1986 to increase protection. In 1992 WCS extended the study area 80 km east to include the Baying-Mbo Council Forest Reserve (BMCFR) where elephant density was found to be about five times higher

**WCS instituted an anti-poaching campaign to protect the tagged elephants while lobbying the government of Cameroon to increase protection of this forest for general biodiversity conservation and elephant protection.**

than in the park (B. Powel, per comm.); BMCFR also had high biodiversity. Within two search days in BMCFR, an elephant was successfully darted and radio collared, and later two more elephants were collared. However, active elephant poaching was serious in this unprotected forest. WCS instituted an anti-poaching campaign to protect the tagged elephants while lobbying the government of Cameroon to increase protection of this forest for general biodiversity conservation and elephant protection.

In 1996 BMCFR, plus an additional adjacent forest to its south, was upgraded to become the Bayang-Mbo Wildlife sanctuary (BMWS) with an area of about 665 km<sup>2</sup>. WCS continued to implement anti

poaching activities, using informants, intelligent and sporadic interventions of gendarmerie and police in the area as government did not immediately appoint a conservator and guards. Meanwhile it worked with the government of Cameroon and local communities to design a community-based conservation programme to protect biodiversity and the elephants. Poaching, however, especially of elephants continues to be a great threat

to conservation in this sanctuary despite the serious commitment of the local communities

and WCS. Nchanji (2004) reported 186 elephants killed in and around BMWS between January 1993 and June 2004 (Figure. 1) and a remaining estimated population of 240 ±159 elephants in the sanctuary. Despite the poaching, this sanctuary still holds the largest elephant population in south western Cameroon and may be the entire region west of R. Sanaga to Senegal. Poaching in this region is encouraged by the large domestic clandestine ivory market that flourishes in Douala, Cameroon, and the relative ease of smuggling ivory from this region into Nigeria.

*\*Culled from Pachyderm No. 39 July –December 2005*

## HIGHLIGHTS ON IVORY TRADE

The large scale of the illegal trade in ivory presents enforcement officers in developing countries including Cameroon, as well as, developed countries, with an enormous challenge. The sophistication and scope of organized syndicates far outweigh the capacity and resources of many enforcement agencies.

Problems associated with enforcing meaningful control over the trade and circumventing them will be a gradual, but vital process. Salient amongst these problems is the need to improve communication and cooperation between various enforcement agencies at national and international levels using existing mechanisms like Interpol and National Task Forces.

Other deficiencies in illegal ivory trade control include: inadequate regulations, insufficient penalties, judicial failures and corruption. Imposing insufficient penalties results in demoralized officers and provides little or no deterrent to criminals.

Elephant populations particularly at risk are those in range states that have little or no resources to combat the activities of both poachers and smugglers. The individuals who benefit most from

the illegal ivory trade are those highest up the commodity chain.

If illegal ivory trade is to be tackled, enforcement measures must be strengthened and implemented as a matter of urgency. For this to happen, the awareness of wildlife issues and the seriousness of wildlife crimes at judicial and governmental levels must be revised as a matter of urgency.

The trade in ivory is regulated by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) to which Cameroon is a signatory. The illegal trade in Ivory is tracked by the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS)- a CITES endorsed monitoring system which in 2002 reported records of over 7000 illegal ivory seizures made worldwide since 1989.

Those involved in the trafficking of ivory range from carriers such as tourists or workers returning home with souvenirs, to big urban bases dealers who form organized wildlife crime syndicates, involving large consignments sent by air freight or shipping containers

**Source Born Free Foundation 2004**

### **POLICY**

#### **NEWLY APPOINTED OFFICIALS OF THE NATIONAL FOREST AND CONTROL BRIGADE**

**A Prime ministerial Decree of September 11, 2006 appointed new officials of the National Forest and Wildlife Control Brigade as follows:**

Chief of Brigade: Issola Dipanda Francois  
Controller No 1: Medjo Frédéric  
Controller No 2: Ouldra Malai Jean Claude  
Controller No 3: Woambe Kambang Alfred  
Controller No 4: Tanaffo Nuele Nicolas  
Controller No 5: Asanga Christian Azenui  
Controller No 6: Ndongmo Pierre  
Controller No 7: Kouamedjo Thomas  
Controller No 8: Eya'ane Nsengue  
Bannister  
Controller No 9: Adamou Ndjere  
Controller No 10: Mrs. Nsangué Gisele  
Controller No 11: Mbarga Mbarga Michel  
Controller No 12: Njoya Martin

## **ILLEGAL IVORY DEALER SERVES 3-YEAR JAIL TERM**

### **NEWS IN BRIEF**

*\*By Akwen Cynthia*

The Court of First Instance in Sangmelima, South Province has ordered six dealers in products of protected wildlife species including a military driver to collectively pay as damages to government the sum of 17 million CFA francs. While the truck driver transporting trophies of protected wildlife species including ivory has been ordered by the court to serve a prison term of three years besides the payment of fines, the rest are to serve a jail term of 10 months each.

Similarly, a dealer in protected wildlife species was on August 1, 2006 arrested in Yaounde selling a live baby chimpanzee which is not in accordance with the provisions of the 1994 wildlife law which provides for a prison term of up to three years and or a fine of up to 10 million CFA francs for anyone caught in possession of part of dead or live protected wildlife species including the great apes.

**\* Assistant Communication Officer, LAGA**