

THE LAST GREAT APE ORGANIZATION, CAMEROON LAGA

FIRST SEMESTER REPORT JANUARY – JUNE 2017



Executive Summary

Despite many obstacles, tangible achievements were made over this period in LAGA's collaboration with MINFOF in the fields of investigation, arrest, prosecution, media exposure, government relations and international activities with focus on the fight against corruption, illegal wildlife trade, principally traffickers in ivory, leopard skins and pangolin scales. The team stepped up its professionalism following new instructions, recommendations and proposals during in house meetings and the results were forthcoming with important pangolin scales and ivory operations carried out with high levels of expertise. Trafficking in leopard skins and others including lion, zebra and crocodile skins was targeted within this period as a new dangerous trend was established - skin traffickers have improved their professionalism and organisation. An operation against live chimp traffickers attracted a lot of attention and hard work but was hugely rewarded with the rescue of two adult female chimps.

15 major traffickers were arrested, at a rate of one for every 12 days, approximately. 73 % stayed behind bars from the day of arrest. Corruption was observed and combated in a number of the cases. 15 new cases were brought to the courts and 19 traffickers were found guilty and given prison sentences, fines, damages and penalties and with two traffickers given the maximum penalty of 3 years and in another matter a trafficker was ordered to pay damages totalling 107, 559, 000 F CFA (about \$215,120) to MINFOF. Media exposure was at a rate of approximately one media piece per day.

The EAGLE network achieved remarkable results as 217 traffickers were arrested across 9 countries within the network during this semester. The LAGA team hosted activists from other countries for an intense training program including legal advisers from Guinea and Madagascar and the Assistant Coordinator from SALF. The Deputy Director and the Interim Director travelled to Ivory Coast for coordination assistance to the new replication project.

Several meetings were held by the Director and Deputy Director with government and diplomatic officials in Yaoundé and with many other stakeholders within the wildlife law enforcement domain.

The work of The Last Great Ape Organization was supported by: Wildcat, US Fish and Wildlife Service, AVAAZ, MRS France, Axel, Pro Wildlife, IPPL, Neu Foundation, Revolution in Kindness, Dutch Gorilla Foundation.

LAST GREAT APE ORGANISATION, CAMEROON (LAGA)
SEMESTER REPORT
January - June 2017

OVERVIEW

Investigations

- A total of 110 investigation missions (of varying lengths) were carried out in 8 regions.
- Network of informants continued producing results leading to good operations.

Operations

- Operations were carried out in 4 regions arresting 15 major traffickers resulting in 15 court cases at a rate of 1 per 12 days.
- Operations on leopard skins and ivory accounted for over 40% of the total number of operations
- The rate of imprisonment of arrested offenders was 73%.
- 2 adult chimpanzees were rescued from two ape traffickers.
- A record breaking 5.4 tonnes of pangolin scales ready for illegal shipment was recovered from 2 Chinese nationals arrested in January.

Legal

- 15 new cases were brought to court and represented (many of the cases began during the period have not yet reached the prosecution stage but procedures still ongoing).
- 19 traffickers were found guilty and handed prison sentences, fines, damages and penalties. Damages amounted to some 182,241,500 F CFA (about \$364,480) to be paid to MINFOF.
- 13 court judgements were passed during the 6-month period and one of the court rulings gave the full prison sentence of 3 years.
- January had a record number of court judgements with 8 handed down by the various courts.

Media

- A total of 161 media pieces were produced in national media (television, radio, press and internet) achieved at a rate of approximately one media piece per day.

Management

- The annual report for 2016 was printed and distributed to all stakeholders.
- A new legal adviser was recruited.
- Focus was on stepping up professionalism, general effectiveness and optimising investigation procedures.

External Relations and Policy

- Several meetings were held with MINFOF officials, the diplomatic community, national and international NGOs to discuss corruption issues and wildlife law enforcement etc.
- LAGA carried out activities in celebrating the World Environment Day and this cumulated in tree planting at the Mefou National Park.

Strategic Highlights

- The strategic focus over this period was on leopard skins and ivory trafficking representing 23% and 16% respectively

- Moving to higher levels – improved effectiveness and professionalism and optimisation of already existing procedures constituted the major strategic framework within this period.
- Pangolin scales trafficking received further attention within this period with several operations targeting traffickers and 5.4 tonnes of scales were seized. .
- Strategies to improve on an effective recruitment process were initiated.

EAGLE Activities

- A total of 217 traffickers were arrested across 9 countries of the network during this semester.
- Exchange visits continued among the countries and legal advisers from Madagascar, Guinea and an Assistant Coordinator visited the country while the Deputy Director and the Interim Director travelled to Ivory Coast.

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Also available:

1. Annual Financial Statement and Semester I 2017
2. Monthly Financial and Activity Reports January to June 2017
3. Media archive – Excel database linked to recorded media pieces
4. Photo archive for media use

For copies contact email; eric@laga-enforcement.org

NARRATIVE REPORT

This report concerns the activities from January to June 2017. The report includes: the progress in each department of activities (Investigations, Operations, Legal, Media and Management), strategic overview of and the impact of our operations on wildlife crime in Cameroon, progress in relations with the Cameroonian Government, non-governmental bodies, in the international arena, and in non-enforcement initiatives LAGA has undertaken.

1. Investigations

LAGA's investigation unit carried out 110 investigation missions in 8 regions of the country during this period. High level investigations were carried out with improved and sustained collaboration with the EAGLE Central Coordination Unit (CCU). Several meetings on improving investigative standards and collaboration with other departments were held.

New strategies were formulated and implemented to meet up with changing tactics by traffickers. One of the strategies included improving investigation and information sources and this essentially consisted in recruiting informers at new strategic positions over the national territory and at trafficking hubs. The improvement in strategy resulted in the improvement in the quality of investigations and results.

The Head of the Investigations Department held several meetings with some wildlife and customs officials to build collaborative platforms; enabling effective investigations and information exchange. Meetings were held with Chiefs of Posts of Lubing, Salapoumbe, Djoum and Mintom in the South and East regions and Customs officials in Douala (Littoral region), Limbe, Tiko and the Anti Trafficking Unit at the Douala and Yaoundé airports.

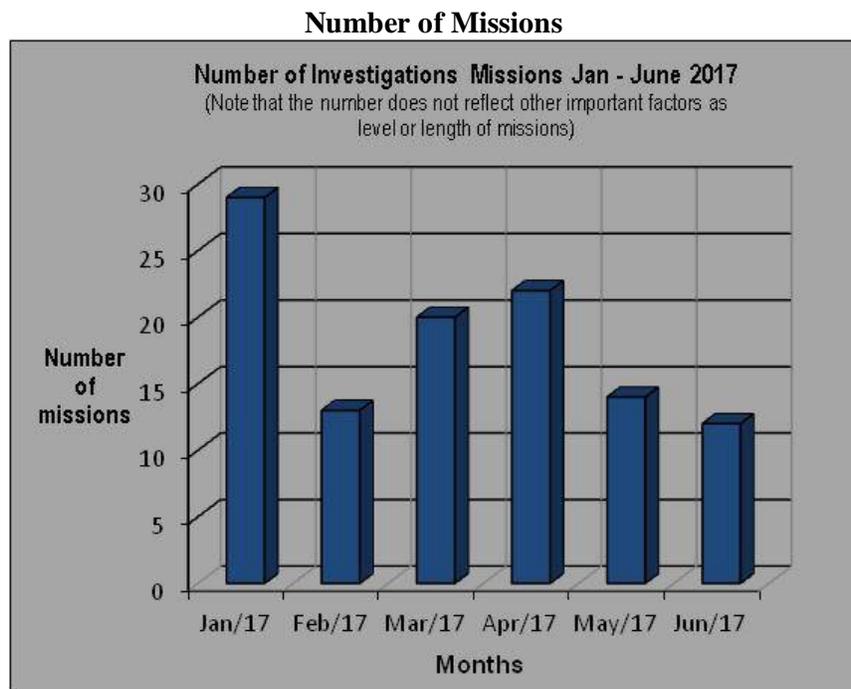


Figure 1: Number of Investigations Missions per Month

2. Operations

LAGA and the Government of Cameroon carried out operations in 4 regions against 15 individuals resulting in 15 court cases at a rate of one every 12 days. Efforts are being made to improve on the number of arrests to keep the standard of one arrest every week. New techniques were used during operations. This quickly resulted in the arrest of two Chinese traffickers as early as January. Other bigger and important targets were equally investigated during this period and operations on these targets resulted in the arrests of leopard skin traffickers representing 23%, ivory traffickers representing 16%, pangolin scales traffickers representing 15%. Operations against traffickers in lion skins, crocodile skins stood at 11% each, parrots, zebra skins and live chimps represented 8% each.

In January, 2 Chinese nationals were arrested in Douala, Littoral, with 5.4 tons of pangolin scales ready for illegal export to China. The scales were packed inside two containers. The scales were packed inside 300 iron boxes that were welded into frames that partitioned the container. This arrangement made it difficult to investigate the containers as it took hours for a trained welder to cut open the containers and the boxes to enable wildlife officials to have a glimpse of the content of the boxes. The iron boxes were covered with lead that hampers a clear reading of the content of the boxes when passed through the scanner. These arrangements were strong indication of the professionalism of the Chinese traffickers who earlier claimed the containers were loaded with broken machines they intended to export to China for repairs.

During the second operation in January, 2 traffickers were arrested in Yaoundé, Centre, with 3 zebra skins, a leopard skin and 40 pieces of carved ivory. Cameroon has no wild populations of zebra and the skins came all the way from Tanzania and this is the first ever arrest operation involving the zebra species in the country. The traffickers worked as a team of at least three. The third member of the gang who is the supplier, furnishing the wildlife products, is still at large. One of the traffickers sells diverse art objects in front of a popular bank opposite the CNPS head office in Yaoundé. The second trafficker is a sculptor who carves ivory among other products. Transporting zebra skins all the way from Tanzania to Cameroon indicates a chain of traffickers with the required skills to move wildlife contraband over long distances.

In March, 2 traffickers were arrested in Yaoundé, Centre Region, for unlawful possession and export of African grey parrots. The Ghanaian parrot trafficker and his accomplice were arrested with 218 African grey parrots they were about to illegally export from Cameroon. Shortly before their arrest, they had illegally assisted in the shipment of a haul of the parrots through an Air Ivoire flight to Ghana via Ivory Coast where they were intercepted in Accra. The network that is big, experienced and complex involves parrot traffickers dealing in an international illegal trade in countries of the West and Central African sub regions and connecting to Asia and Europe. The organisation and sophistication is professional with several layers of trafficking existing within the chain.

In April, 3 traffickers arrested in Meiganga, Adamoua Region with a lion skin, 2 leopard skins and 2 crocodile skins. Using a car, one of the traffickers transported the contraband hidden inside bags containing maize, for hundreds of kilometres and joined an accomplice shortly before their arrest. He equally had supporting documents showing he was travelling with maize. The traffickers supply wildlife contraband to clients based in Yaounde and Douala. One of them is suspected of gold trafficking. The lion is facing serious threats with just a few hundred remaining in the wild in the Northern part of the country.

A second operation was carried out in April and a trafficker arrested in Massamena in the East Region with 94kg of pangolin scales. The trafficker who owns a store is suspected to have been regularly supplying pangolin scales to clients in Yaounde and Douala. He would transport and sell bags of scales and on returning to his base, he would buy provisions and supplies for his store.

A Catholic priest arrested during a third operation carried out in April, in Sangmelima in the South Region with 2 ivory tusks, a skin and 4 teeth from a recently killed leopard. The clergyman has been trafficking ivory for over 5 years, working with a network of poachers which he ran, providing money and supplies of essentials for poaching, such as bullets and clothing while equally giving food to the families of the poachers. He supplied the towns of Yaounde, Douala and Sangmelima with raw ivory, transporting the ivory without raising suspicion at checkpoints. Hiding behind the impression of high morality and was never bothered or his car searched. The arrest highlights those religious positions just as any other influential position can be used as a cover for the illegal wildlife trade.

In May, a trafficker was arrested in Yaoundé, Centre Region, with 2 carved ivory tusks. He travelled all the way from Kribi to link up with the ivory underworld in Yaounde to sell the contraband. He had carefully wrapped the ivory in his underwear to conceal and repulse anyone who could have any intentions of trying to know what was bulging inside his bag during the journey to Yaoundé.

In June, a trafficker was arrested in Yaoundé, Centre Region, with a leopard skin and 45kg of pangolin scales. He travelled from Douala with the contraband to sell in Yaoundé and was arrested in the act. He is part of a network that uses the social media to advertise wildlife contraband to prospective buyers all over the world. He resides in Gabon where he ran a criminal ring of small traffickers supplying the contraband and a network of Chinese and Nigerians with whom he did business.

During the second operation of the month, 2 ape traffickers were arrested at the entrance to the freight terminal at the Douala airport with 2 female adult chimps, crammed into tiny cages that could not contain their size. They had been living in these tiny cages for years and could not even stand up. One of the traffickers has been in the business of trafficking primates for a long time. He had been trying to buy a male chimp to mate and reproduce with the two female chimps. He demonstrated his expertise, presumably from his experience, in transporting the adult chimps as he drove the truck across the town, with the chimps hooting, grunting and screaming behind the car in their cages. They were immediately attended to by a veterinarian from the Limbe Wildlife Centre and then quickly taken to the centre for the commencement of treatment and lifetime support and care by the experienced caregivers. The trafficker equally had used Facebook to advertise the presence of one of the chimps in his company. On the instructions of the state prosecutor, a house search carried out at the residence of the traffickers found a patas monkey and a Nile monitor.

Operations Table

<i>Number of Operations</i>	<i>Number of Traffickers</i>	<i>Contraband</i>
9	15	5545kg of pangolin scales, 3 zebra skins, 218 African grey parrots, 2 croc skins, 1 lion skin, 2 adult chimps, 4 ivory tusks and 40 ivory pieces, 5 leopard skins and 4 teeth

Figure 2: Operation Table

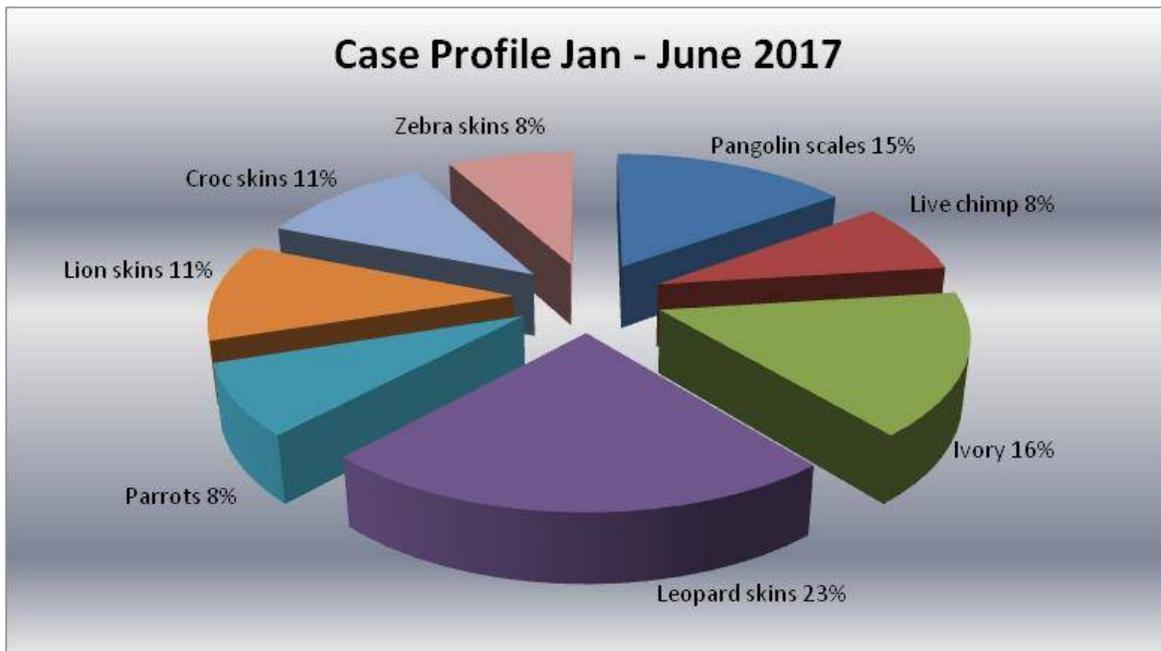


Figure 3: Operations profile

3. Legal

During this period, 15 new cases reached the court and the cases joined old cases that were scheduled, followed-up, tried in various courts and jail visits were organized. Most of the cases initiated within this period have not yet reached the prosecution stage with 73% imprisoned throughout the process.

A total of 61 missions were carried out of the Centre Region for follow-up of new cases and the creation and strengthening of relations with judiciary authorities. More emphasis as a direct result of operations was on leopard skins, ivory and pangolin scales.

During this period, 13 court judgements were passed with 19 traffickers found guilty and 10 of them given prison sentences while 9 others were either given suspended prison sentences or were heavily fined. Two appeals were lodged against some weak court rulings.

In January, a record 8 court judgements were passed and 2 other judgements were passed in March and April while one was handed down in June. Two significant court judgements were passed in the Courts of First Instance in Abong Mbang where two were found guilty and given full three years sentenced as stipulated by the law for ape skull trafficking while still in the same month; a court ordered a wildlife law offender to pay damages totalling 107,559,000 F CFA (about \$215,118).

In January 8 judgements were passed and in the first judgement the Yaoundé, Centre-Administratif Court of First Instance, found the accused MFOPOU Felix Desire guilty of illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of trophies of totally protected species. He was sentenced to 2 months imprisonment and to pay 2,000,000 F CFA (about \$4000) as civil damages and 122,000 F CFA (about \$244) as fines. He was arrested in Yaoundé for illegal possession and commercialization of 14 sculptured pieces of ivory.

The Garoua Court of First Instance – North, found the accused ABDOU Bratal and ADIMIKO Bakary guilty of illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of trophies of totally protected species. They were sentenced to one month imprisonment term each and to pay 300,000

FCFA (about \$600) as fines and 2,000,000 FCFA (about \$4000) as civil damages. They were arrested in Garoua on the 6th of May 2016 for illegal possession, and commercialization of 25 pieces of ivory objects.

The Akonolinga Court of First Instance found the accused NDONGO Désiré and BIWOLE Georges Brice guilty. NDONGO Désiré was sentenced to a suspended prison term of 2 years within 5 years; he was further sanctioned to pay 200,000 F CFA (about \$400) as fines. BIWOLE Georges Brice was sentenced to 1 year imprisonment suspended for 3 years. They were ordered to pay the sum of 30,450 F CFA (about \$7) as court costs. They were arrested in Ayos on the 9th of May 2016, for illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of 4 gorilla skulls and 6 chimpanzee skulls.

The Bertoua Court of Appeal found the accused Anthony NWABU NWANNE NWOYE guilty and sentenced him to 10 months imprisonment and to pay 107,559,000 F CFA (about \$215,120) as civil damages and 57,900 F CFA (about \$116) as court costs. He was arrested in Bertoua for illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of 5 bags full with pangolins scales weighing 200kg and 12 elephant tusks.

TCHABO BAKOP Norbert was found guilty as charged and sentenced them to pay 42,175 F CFA (about \$84) each as court costs or to serve further 6 months in default of payment of the said cost, awarded the civil party damages of 20, 900,000 F CFA (about \$41,800). They were arrested in Bimako for illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of chimpanzee skulls.

The Nkongsamba Court of First Instance found the accused TCHOUATOU Elvis Diderot guilty and sentenced him to 2 months of imprisonment and to pay 650,000 F CFA (about \$1300) of civil damages and 69,550 F CFA (about \$140) as court costs or to serve further 6 months in default of payment of the said cost. He was arrested in Melong on the 4th of November 2016 for illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of one leopard skin, a python skin, a chimpanzee skull, and 2 marine snail shells.

The Abong-Mbang Court of First Instance found the accused person BOTTO KANGA and MILLAH Bernard guilty as charged and sentenced them to 3 years of imprisonment, they were further sanctioned to jointly pay 133.366 F CFA (about \$267) as court costs immediately or to serve further 6 months of additional imprisonment term. The court awarded the sum of 2,500,000 F CFA (about \$5000) as civil damages to the MINFOF. They were arrested in Lomié on the 19th of August 2015 for illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of 2 chimpanzee skulls, 2 gorilla skulls and other products.

The Yaoundé Centre- Administrative Court of First Instance found the accused MAKAWO Clarisse & WAKAN Robert guilty as charged and sentenced them to jointly pay 200,000 F CFA (about \$400) as fines and to pay 7,300 F CFA (about \$ 15) as court costs. The court ordered them to pay the sum of 1,000,000 F CFA (about \$2000) as civil damages to the MINFOF. They were arrested in Yaoundé on the 20th of July 2013 for illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of 2 leopard skins.

Two appeals were lodged during this period against court rulings; one in March and the other in June.

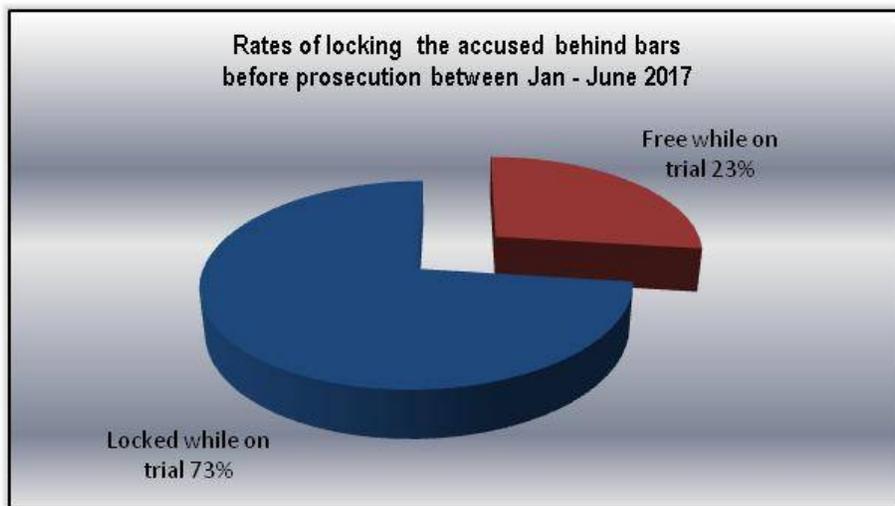


Figure 4: Rate of locking accused behind bars

4. Media

A total of 161 media pieces were produced and pushed into media including numerous articles in all media – radio, television, written press and the internet; achieved at a rate of one media piece per day. March and June month saw the lowest number of media pieces while April recorded the highest numbers to clear the discrepancies in March while that of June shall be corrected in the following months.

Subjects were on a broad range of wildlife law enforcement issues including all of LAGA-MINFOF operations, prosecutions and fighting corruption. These included; the arrest of 3 traffickers at the Nsimalen international airport with 679kg of pangolin scales, the Douala arrest of 2 Chinese nationals with over 5.4 tons of pangolin scales, the Yaoundé arrest of 2 traffickers with zebra, leopard skins and ivory objects, the arrest of a big time primate trafficker in Guinea, the incineration of over 3 tons pangolin scales by the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife, the Nkoabang arrest of 2 for African grey parrots trafficking, the unprecedented arrest of 64 wildlife traffickers across Africa in one month, the Meiganga arrest of 3 with lion, crocodile and leopard skins, the arrest of a trafficker in Messamena with over 100kg of pangolin scales, the arrest of a Reverend Father with ivory, leopard skin and teeth in Sangmelima, an ivory trafficker arrest in Yaoundé, the arrest of a trafficker in Yaoundé with 41kg of pangolin scales and a leopard skin

Interviews and quotes used in the various media pieces were from; Head of Nsimaen International Airport Anti-Trafficking Unit and his Assistant, Forestry Engineer Tchasso Rachel of the Douala Regional Delegation of Forestry and Wildlife, Charlotte Houpline Coordinator of SALF, Ofir Drori, the Director of LAGA and Jonathan Stark, Conservationist.

The distribution of Wildlife Justice Magazine continued. Wildlife Justice is a thematic journal that focuses on wildlife law enforcement and conservation issues.

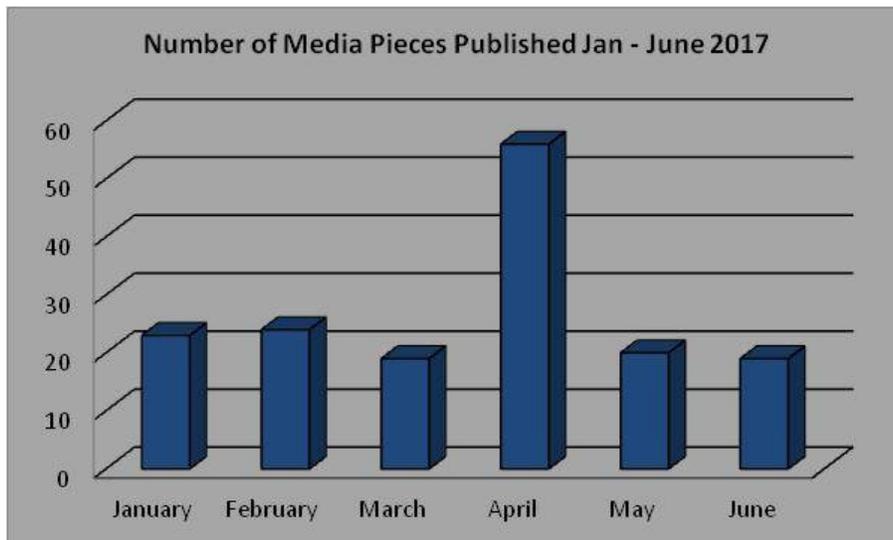


Figure 5: Number of Media Pieces Produced and Published

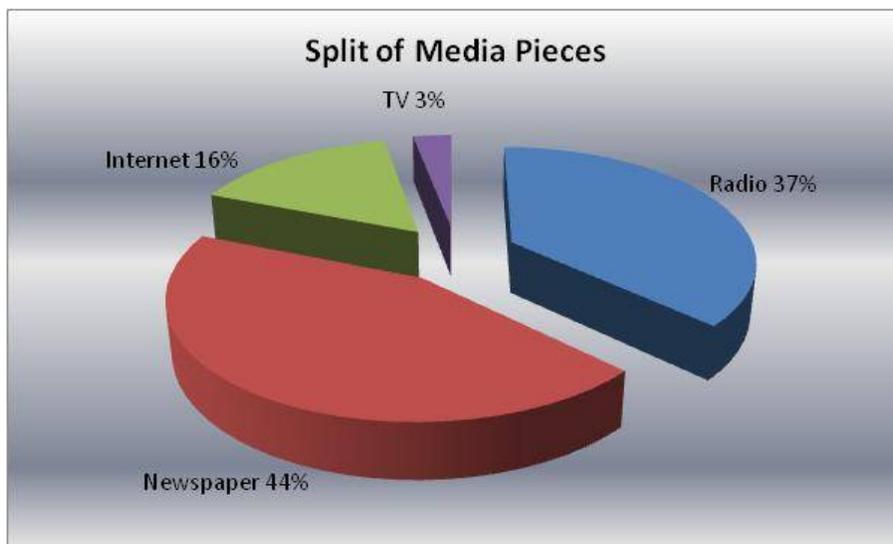


Figure 6: Split of Media Pieces

5. Management

LAGA stepped up its professionalism by capitalising on the huge experience of its staff with many having over 10 years experience. Management equally liaised effectively with the Central Coordination Unit on several activities. The work of improving and upholding the finest moral and ethical values among staff that was started last year continued with visible signs of significant and encouraging improvements in this regard. The Deputy Director and the Interim Director travelled to Ivory Coast to coordinate the new replication project in the country. The EAGLE Exchange programme witnessed several visits while the recruitment process for new investigators and legal advisers continued and one legal adviser was recruited.

The Annual report of 2016 was printed and with copies available upon request. The electronic versions are available on line on the LAGA website www.laga-enforcement.org. This is a result of teamwork involving all the departments in LAGA – Investigations, Legal, Media, Operations and Management.

Under the EAGLE Exchange Programme, training sessions continued to be held in Yaoundé – Cameroon, with the Coordination Assistant from SALF (Senegal) joining the team for training as part of her preparation for being appointed the coordinator of SALF and this took place in February while in March a volunteer from Madagascar completed a three-week-long training session. In April, a legal adviser from Guinea arrived the country for a month-long organisational training.

The Director travelled to Cameroon twice within this period. The first visit was carried out in March and he spent one full working week with the staff and he would later come in June when he spent another full week.

A new legal adviser, Herve Nkoudou Amang was recruited to fill the gap created by the sacking of two legal advisers last year ethical shortcomings.

A series of thought-provoking sessions of presentations and debates for the LAGA team were organised to foster activism and leadership skills. A wide range of topics including activism were presented and debated. This initiative also aims at strengthening the capacity, unity and values of the LAGA family.

The recruitment process of a new internet started since last year continued with the screening of curriculum vitae and interviews conducted.

6. External Relations and Policy

The Director and the Deputy Director held meetings with the US Ambassador, the Canadian High Commissioner and the Counsellor at the German Embassy in March and the Director held a series of meetings including meetings with the British High Commissioner and the American Ambassador to discuss challenges to wildlife law enforcement in the country and the progress of the EAGLE network among other issues

The Deputy Director and the Head of the Legal Department held a meeting with the Secretary General at the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife on a number of issues pertaining to effective collaboration and strategic challenges within the mutual relationship.

The Deputy Director held several meetings with the Coordinator and fellows of the Mentor PoP programme on their mentorship, on preparing several events including Promote Exhibition at the Yaoundé Conference Centre and on preparations to celebrate World Pangolin Day.

The Deputy Director attended the occasion that was organized by the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife to burn three tons of pangolin scales seized during wildlife law enforcement operations in the country and prior to the event he held a brief meeting with the Director of Wildlife and Protected Areas to discuss pangolin matters and the scales destruction. He was accompanied to the scales destruction ceremony by the Head of Investigations Department.

The Deputy Director attended a meeting of technical partners of the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife who work under the group called CCPM. Discussions focused on various conservation issues including wildlife law enforcement and LAGA was present for the first time after several months of absence.

The Head of the Legal Department did a presentation on writing complaint statements and follow up of cases during an international workshop bringing together participants from the magistracy,

customs, police, wildlife department and NGOs. The objectives of the workshop that was organized by TRAFFIC included training of personnel on product identification and techniques and procedures on wildlife crime investigations.

The Head of the Investigation Department attended the National Anti Poaching committee meeting that sought to revamp its activities. He introduced key concepts on wildlife crime that may lead to changes in the name of the committee.

7. LAGA and the EAGLE Network

LAGA's new model for NGO – Government collaboration establishing wildlife law enforcement, bringing about results with an innovative approach geared at changing the existing system and triggering a paradigm shift in the way NGOs tackle wildlife crime is being realised within the EAGLE network. The model is focusing on the prosecution of major traffickers, not the small-time poacher who is motivated by the city dwelling traffickers. This involves fighting head on the major obstacle to the application of the wildlife law in Africa – Corruption. LAGA's experience and model is currently operating within the EAGLE network that group 9 countries.

The replication of the LAGA model is also geared at taking cross section lessons outside of wildlife conservation; these include the fight against corruption, fostering activism, fight against child trafficking etc.

<http://www.laga-enforcement.org/Replication/tabid/166/Default.aspx>

The EAGLE network is now responsible for the replication activity of the LAGA model that was formerly the preserve of LAGA and the youngest project is in Ivory Coast where the Deputy Director and the Interim Director have contributed to coordinating during two separate visits to the country. Collaboration between the EAGLE CCU and LAGA were intensified during this semester at all levels including investigations, operations, legal, media and management. LAGA continued to host training sessions in the country and in this regard, LAGA hosted two legal advisers from Guinea and Madagascar who received training and participated in numerous field activities while the Assistant Coordinator from the Senegal project travelled to Cameroon for a month-long intensive training.

8. Fostering Activism

During this period, LAGA continued to foster activism internally and externally. Creating independent activists is one aspect that LAGA uses to foster activism. The NGO members are encouraged to develop their own projects on the various development issues of their country and are given NGO time and management time to develop the project in the vision of turning it in to an independent NGO/paper/book. The function of leadership is not producing more followers but to produce more leaders.

<http://www.laga-enforcement.org/Activism/tabid/77/Default.aspx>

Activism was focused on documentaries and presentations listed below and also tree planting at the Mefou Park.

- ***Climate Change:*** The presentation walks us through the concept of climate change as it delves into the explanation of change and the mechanism of green house effects is adequately explained by an investigator who was the presenter of the day. The presentation looks at the problems, the causes and the consequences, the natural catastrophes from

devastating climatic changes and the role played by some western powers in the present predicament. The refusal even by some who don't even want to acknowledge there is a problem is perplexing. Discussions focused mostly on enabling the presenter and those who are still to present to grasp the intricacies of successful PowerPoint presentations, the Paris agreement and the denial of some of the changing climate and their effects on the ordinary man.

- ***Racing Extinction:*** An award nominated movie that describes the extinction of wildlife species in a comprehensive and holistic manner, looking at the problem from several sides while portraying the work of artists, scientists, journalists and others who attempt to bring to light the role of man in this unprecedented destruction. They equally look IT solutions to the problems. The 2015 film is an excellent showpiece of the extinction problem and the politics of getting humans to work for conservation. It exposes the huge illegal trade in wildlife and its ability to destroy whole species to extinction. For example, horrific scenes show thousands of shark fins destined for the restaurant business. The role of global warming is highlighted as some species cannot adapt to temperature changes and chemical composition of oceans etc. Discussions focused on the role of man, the work we (LAGA) are doing, the politics of conservation and politicians unwilling to make the right decisions.
- ***The Queen of Katwe:*** Many succumb to poverty and deprivation but not Fiona, a genius in chess who comes from the earth's poorest of the poorest but who refused to carve in to this fate. She fights her way through a slim chance of hope, her ability to play chess like a grand master and undo the odds by bringing in success and dragging her family from the filth and insecurity of one of Africa's slumps to a shining new house at a suburb she could only dream off. This could not have been possible without the dedication of a bright and young coach who gives all he could to save desperate children and coaches Fiona to believe in her abilities while guiding her to meander through huge challenges. The movie is a shining example of poverty in Africa, bravery and determination to succeed if given the minimum of opportunities. The movie is culled from a life experience. The Queen of Katwe draws the members of the LAGA family to heightened levels of emotion as they go through the 2-hour long movie without visibly feeling time passing. Discussion focused on determination and the will to succeed, courage and the never-let-go attitude that we all need to pass through. It equally points out the activism of our young coach who stands by his poor chess players who beat the odds against life and vanity.
- ***Suffragette:*** The moving struggle, determination and sacrifice put up by women to change the working life of wives and mothers. Maud a working wife sacrificed her home to join and fight for the political, social and economic rights of women. The film depicts the length at which a woman can go to obtain what she wants as the sacrificial death of one of them finally gave them the rights to all they ever wanted (the right to vote, the right to have same wages like men and the right to have a say in their children's lives). The debating question was to know if sacrificing one's life necessary mean to die. This question was argued from different angles with some concluding that a sacrifice for a cause is worth losing anything that one holds dearly. However, death can only come by chance and not by choice.
- ***Talking to the Media:*** The Deputy Director uses the occasion of activities to mark World Environment Day to carry out a presentation on a topic which is rarely discussed but which activists absolutely need for their communication - that is how to talk to the media. He describes the processes and the tips to use when talking to the media with emphasises on the dos and don'ts. Discussions were mainly on understanding the pitfalls and problems.
- ***Talk on World Environment Day:*** The Deputy Director also used the occasion to give a

brief talk on the topic - the World Environment Day - describing its history, its importance, what the organisation has planned and what commitments, we as individuals, are taking, in ensuring that we live to the canons of proper environmental protection.

- ***Tree Planting at the Mefou Park:*** The entire LAGA family, on the occasion of World Environment Day, visited the Mefou National Park and joined several volunteers to plant several trees and held discussions with park management. They equally briefly watched the chimps and gorillas found in the park which caters for primates that have been rescued. After the tree planting, prizes were given to winners of the *LAGA Environment Day Poem Competition* that involved staff writing poems on the theme “Protection of the Environment”.

9. Strategic Overview of Wildlife Crime in Cameroon and Operations’ Impact

Beyond the number of operations and their effectiveness, there is an even more important factor in evaluating LAGA’s work – the strategic value of the operations in reducing the level of illegal wildlife trade. In this regard, LAGA is choosing diversified operations, which carry an added value to expose and map the different angles of wildlife crime in Cameroon. Consequently, the LAGA-MINFOF work sheds light on the nature of illegal wildlife trade in the sub-region. The strategic focus over this period was on, apes, ivory and other elephant parts while sea turtles, pangolins and other wildlife received some attention too.

9.1 Leopard Skin

Many operations carried out within this period witnessed the arrest of several leopard skin traffickers indicating the continuous trade in the feline skins. This is one area of trafficking that has always been ongoing and it suffices to dig deep to uncover it. Since the work on wildlife law enforcement started in earnest, each year, a good number of leopard skins traffickers is arrested.

The first leopard skin operation of the month was conducted in January when 2 traffickers were arrested in Yaoundé, Centre, with several contraband including zebra skins, carved ivory pieces and leopard skins. The traffickers operated as a well-oiled gang with specific tasks indicating the professional of traffickers these days. Traffickers seem to have developed their skills across the board and those working on skins are no different. This was once more proven in April when 3 traffickers were arrested trafficking in skins of three protected species including the lion, the crocodile and the leopard. They carried out a number of tricks to travel over 300 km to traffic the skins in Meiganga in the Adamaoua region. They immersed the skins in bags of maize and used documents showing they were indeed transporting maize. Their ability in travelling long distances to supply skins was once more demonstrated in June when a trafficker was arrested with leopard skins and pangolin scales. He travelled close to 300km from to Yaoundé to supply the contraband. Strikingly enough was the fact that during all three operations carried out within the semester, the leopard skin traffickers also had contraband from other protected species.

9.2 Pangolin Scales

One of the biggest ever seizure of pangolin scales in the sub region was carried out in June, in Douala with the seizure of 5.4 tons of scales that had been parked for illegal export. The arrest of two Chinese nationals tells us all we need to know about the booming illegal trade in pangolin scales. Chinese traffickers are more than ever before taking advantage of the circuits and tactics of ivory trafficking because ivory and pangolin scales are similar in bulk. Chinese involvement in pangolin scale trafficking pushed prices for pangolin scales up and unbelievable prices are being quoted for pangolin scales in every remote supply zone.

Another pangolin scale operation was carried out in April with the arrest of a trafficker and seizure of 94kg of pangolin scales in the East region. He also developed a tactic in developing his illicit trade and handling the bulk of scales trafficking. He posed as a businessman, travelling to major cities with bags of scales to sell and on returning to his base, he filled the bags with groceries for his store. In June, an operation involving pangolin scales was carried out in Yaoundé with the arrest of a trafficker who had 45kg of pangolin scales stuffed inside a travelling bag. He was equally arrested with leopard skin as indicated above.

9.3 Ivory and Elephant parts

Ivory trafficking continues to be of huge interest as traffickers, try to find new ways of getting ivory out. Even people from very unsuspecting corners are pulled by the profit they can get from ivory that commands huge attention from international trafficking networks.

In this regard, the most significant ivory operation was carried out in April when a Reverend Father of the Catholic Church was arrested with 2 ivory tusks. The trafficker has been in the business for a long time and had built a network of poachers who he supplied hunting accessories including bullets and was in return supplied with ivory which he sold at some major towns in the country. He used his car to personally transport the wildlife contraband, taking advantage of his religious status while sailing through control points unchecked

In May, a trafficker who seems to be linked with the ivory trafficking network in the north of the country was arrested in Yaoundé with 2 ivory tusks. He travelled from Kribi where is based to Yaoundé with the contraband. He intended to travel north after selling the ivory to get new supplies.

9.4 Live Chimpanzees

During the second operation of the month, 2 traffickers were arrested at the entrance to the Douala airport freight terminal with two female chimpanzees, crammed into two small cages. One of the traffickers had been in the business of primate trafficking for a long time. A house search that followed at his premises found a patas monkey and a Nile monitor. Live animals are still very much the focus of traffickers and generally, these are traffickers with a certain kind of skill needed to keep live animals for long years, transport and sell or export them.

9.5 African grey parrots

A trafficking network of African grey parrots was busted in March. The network that spans West and Central Africa and specialising in the trafficking of African grey parrots had been in the business for a long time. Two were arrested in Yaoundé with 218 parrots which were being packaged for illegal air transport. Shortly before their arrest they had illegally exported the parrots through the Nsimalen International Airport to Ghana although the ultimate destination of the parrots was said to be Hong Kong. African grey parrot traffickers are among the best in using air transport for exportation of their contraband and understand the mechanism involved in slipping illegal cargo into airplanes.

9.6 Zebra, crocodile and lion skins

For the very first time in the country, a zebra skin was seized in January from two traffickers. They equally had a leopard skin and ivory pieces, the zebra skins came all the way from Tanzania, pointing to their ability to move contraband over long distances. The traffickers worked as a team of at least three, as indicated earlier, this is another evidence of skin traffickers stepping up professionalism and teamwork. The third member of the gang who is the supplier, furnishing the wildlife products, is still at large.

Lion skin operations have become a rarity during these last few years, attesting to the diminishing population of the lion that has been killed to near extinction. An operation carried out in April saw the seizure of lion and crocodile skins in the north of the country where the remaining few lions are located. The traffickers work as a team, once more establishing the fact that skin traffickers are getting better organisation. They sell wildlife contraband to clients based in Yaoundé and Douala and one of them is involved in gold trafficking.

10. Corruption and Wildlife Crime

LAGA was an experiment field for methods of fighting corruption within a law enforcement and application process. All bribing attempts are documented into our case tracking systems. LAGA is not an observer of corruption; it was created to fight corruption, redirecting the positive pressures existing within the system, usually wasted in large conference, to specific corruption attempts and the field realities that form corruption. These bribery attempts are vigorously fought against and vehemently condemned by LAGA. LAGA is not a watchdog group and not created as an observer, it fight directly whenever corrupt practices or bribery attempts have been observed.

This ongoing fight is being manifested in some results either directly or indirectly. It all started at the beginning of the year with external pressures from the Chinese nationals arrested for pangolin scales trafficking, being exerted on the judicial system and this resulted in a request for a college of judges to handle the matter, this, as an attempt to undermine the negative influence being brought to bear on the system by the Chinese. Still in January the arrest of skins traffickers was followed by attempts at corrupting the judicial police officer handling the matter. He was proposed money but he stood his ground and when the family members failed, they turned over to LAGA staff to press forward their attempts which, of course, were doomed...

In May, an ivory trafficker was arrested in Yaoundé and taken to a police station for the procedure to begin and as law wildlife law enforcement officials were establishing the offence report, they received pressure from the trafficker's brother, who is a wildlife official working at the ministry. He suggested to his colleague, the judicial police officer, to find a way to stop the matter at his level but the wildlife official and police handling the matter stood their ground. After witnessing the steadfast attitude of law officials, another approach consisting basically of negotiating for the release was initiated by approaching the LAGA team. But this too failed to produce any effect.

The same situation was witnessed in June during the establishment of the offence report at the police station. The trafficker's brother who is a policeman piled pressure on the law enforcement officers. He suggested to his colleague, the assistant superintendent, to find a way to stop the matter at his level but the wildlife officials and police handling the matter again stood their ground. After failing at this, he changed tactics and approached the LAGA team for negotiations but the outcome could only be a dismal failure for him.

Overview of International Wildlife Traffic in Cameroon



Base 802575 (R02413) 7-98

Annex I – Case Tracking System – January – June 2017

Case No.	Operation Date	Location (Town/Region)	Location (Town/Region)	Case Name	Offence	Profile	Remarks	Int. Connection (countries Involved)	Status
525	17/01/2017	Littoral	Douala (Littoral)	Yaobao Long	illegal detention of more than 5 tons of pangolins scales	Illegal exporter of endanger wildlife products	Chinese dealer, he is the manager of a company called TL Tian Li Lambris PVC which he uses as a cover to carry out illegal trade in wildlife	Chinese	locked while on trial
526	17/01/2017	Littoral	Douala (Littoral)	Chen Peng	illegal detention of more than 5 tons of pangolins scales	Illegal exporter of endanger wildlife products	Accomplice of Yaobao Long in the illegal trafficking of pangolins scales	Chinese	locked while on trial
527	27/01/2017	Centre	Yaoundé (Centre)	Njikam Jean Esai	illegal detention circulation and commercialization of 40 sculptured ivory pieces, 3 zebra skins and 1 leopard skin	Craftman/seller	The dealer is a notorious trafficker in Ivory and zebra skins. He works in partnership with a certain Papa Ivoire who supplies him sculptured ivory objects for him to sell to potential buyers. He paints the sculptured Ivory in wood paint so he could sell easily due to the high demand of this sculptured ivory objects in wood paint. He intended to sell the skins for 2,000,000 FCFA.	Tanzania and Congo	locked while on trial
528	27/01/2017	Centre	Yaoundé (Centre)	Nsanqou Ndassa	illegal detention circulation and commercialization of 40 sculptured	Craftman/seller	The dealer is a co-offender to Njikam Jean who both belong to the same notorious network. He got the 3 zebra skins from	Tanzania and Congo	locked while on trial
529	24/03/2017	Centre	Yaoundé (Centre)	Dramaini Osman	Illegal capturing, detention circulation and Exportation of 218 African gray red-tail parrots	Capturer	The dealers are employees of a network of parrots dealers with base in Cameroon Ghana Europe and Asia. They forge export and veterinary documents to facilitates the export of parrots with the aid of their accomplices in the ministry and at airports. On the 23rd March They succeeded to pass through the Nsimalem airport with 60 parrots.	Ivory coast, Ghana and Hong Kong	Looked while matter is at the examining magistrate

Case No.	Operation Date	Location (Town/Region)	Location (Town/Region)	Case Name	Offence	Profile	Remarks	Int. Connection (countries Involved)	Status
530	24/03/2017	Centre	Yaoundé (Centre)	Mativi Ezechiel	Illegal capturing, detention, circulation and Exportation of 218 African gray red-tail parrots	Capturer	The dealers are employees of a network of parrots dealers with base in Cameroon, Ghana, Europe and Asia. They forge export and veterinary documents to facilitate the export of parrots with the aid of their accomplices in the ministry and at airports. On the 23rd	Ivory coast, Ghana and Hong Kong	Locked while matter is at the examining magistrate
531	13/04/2017	Adamawa	Meiganga	Nassourou Abdoulaye	Illegal detention, circulation and commercialization of 02 Panther skins, 02 crocodile skin and 01 Lion skin	Seller	The accused is high profiled dealer belonging to a network of protected animal skins trade; notably Leopards, Lions and Crocodile skins. They make contacts with poachers in Garoua and its environs to get the skins transport them to where ever their customers are found.	None	Locked while on trial
532	13/04/2017	Adamawa	Meiganga	Aboubakary	Illegal detention, circulation and commercialization of 02 Panther skins, 02 crocodile skin and 01 Lion skin	Seller	The accused is high profiled dealer belonging to a network of protected animal skins trade; notably Leopards, Lions and Crocodile skins. They make contacts with poachers in Garoua and its environs to get the skins transport them to where ever their customers are found.	None	Locked while on trial
533	13/04/2017	Adamawa	Meiganga (Adamawa)	Yaya Boubakary	Illegal detention, circulation and commercialization of 02 Panther skins, 02 crocodile skin and 01 Lion skin	Seller	The accused is high profiled dealer belonging to a network of protected animal skins trade; notably Leopards, Lions and Crocodile skins. They make contacts with poachers in Garoua and its environs to get the skins transport them to where ever their customers are found.	None	Locked while on trial

Case No.	Operation Date	Location (Town/Region)	Location (Town/Region)	Case Name	Offence	Profile	Remarks	Int. Connection (countries Involved)	Status
534	14/4/2017	East	Messamina (Adamaoua)	Feussi Andre	Illegal detention, circulation and commercialization of 118kg of pangolin scales	Seller	he collects pangolin scales arounds Dja reserve and sell it in Douala and Yaounde	None	Locked while on trial
535	20/4/2017	South	Sangmelima (South)	Evege Frederick Marie	illegal detention, circulation and commercialization of 02 elephant tusks, 04 pleopard teeth and 01 leopard skin.	Seller	The dealer is a Reverend priest of the Roman catholic, who outside his normal activities he is in the centre of illegal wildlife trade in protected species. He has his collaborators which he sends to the forest to kill and extract the trophies which he then sells to his customers with the pretext that he was searching for money to build a new church for his community.	None	free while on trial
536	22/05/2017	Centre	Yaoundé (Centre)	Oumarou Bouka Aboubakar	illegal detention, circulation and commercialization of 02 calved ivory objects	Calver / Seller	The dealer is based Kribi and has collaborators in major towns. They have their sources where they buy raw ivory calve them into various valuable objects and sell to their customers and potential customers. This is done by hiding behind other calved products made in wood, clay soil etc which they expose on their stands to distract the authorities.	None	Locked while on trial
537	8/6/2017	Centre	Yaoundé (Centre)	Donfack Alphonse Thomas	illegal detention of 45 kgs of giant pangolin scales and 01 Leopard skin.	Seller	The dealer is a Cameronian based in Gabon, he buys his wildlife products in Gabon from his numerous suppliers, transport them to Cameroon where he resell to Nigerians and other buyers depending on who pays what. He claims to be a traditional practitioner who hides behind the said activity to do his illegal businesses. He hides his products in travelling bags to divert the attention of the authorities.	Gabon,	looked while on Trial

<u>Case No.</u>	<u>Operation Date</u>	<u>Location (Town/Region)</u>	<u>Location (Town Region)</u>	<u>Case Name</u>	<u>Offence</u>	<u>Profile</u>	<u>Remarks</u>	<u>Int. Connection (countries Involved)</u>	<u>Status</u>
538	30/06/2017	Littoral	Douala (Littoral)	Tchindji Francois	Illegal detention, circulation and commercialization of 02 adult Chimpanzees	Seller	The dealer is a very wealthy notable based in Douala who is the head of a network specialized in the export of primate. They have connections with some authorities of the Douala international airport who aid their evacuations out the the airport	Ghana	looked while on Trial
539	30/06/2017	Littoral	Douala (Littoral)	Ayataga Djalla Martial	Illegal detention, circulation and commercialization of 02 adult Chimpanzees	Seller	He is a middle man and makes the contacts of the markets where their products are sold, he also owns a mini zoo in his residence and where he also sell his live species to his partners who are at time foreigners. Following a house search ordersd by the state counsel, a live monkey, Aligator and a tutle were found in his mini zoo.	Chana	looked while on Trial

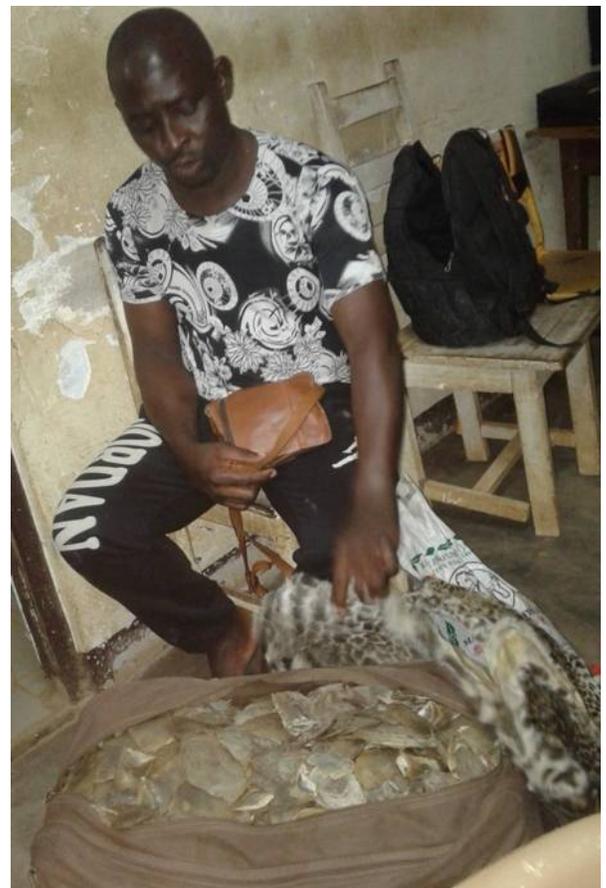
Annex II - Semester in Pictures



Two Chinese nationals (above) wait for prosecutorial process to begin at the wildlife office in Douala following their arrest with an impressive haul of 5.4 tons of pangolin scales loaded into two containers that were about to be illegally shipped out of the country. Close to 300 boxes of scales seized(right)

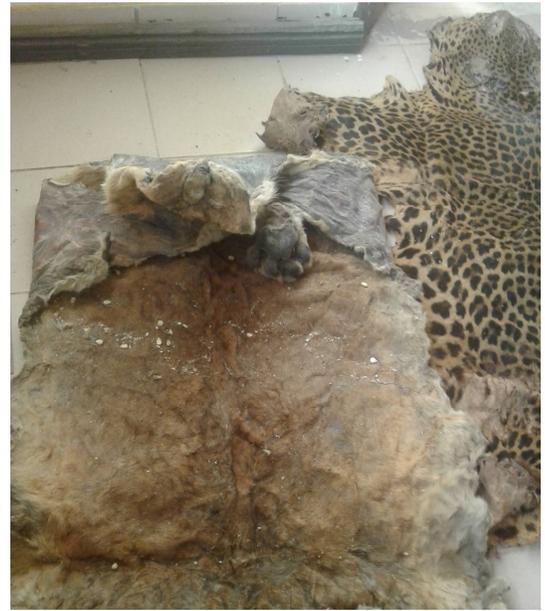


Pangolin scales trafficker arrested in the East squats at the wildlife office shortly before legal procedures begin , he was found with close to 100kg of scales (above). Trafficker arrested in Yaounde with a leopard skin and pangolin scales at police station waiting for the commencement of legal proceedings (right)

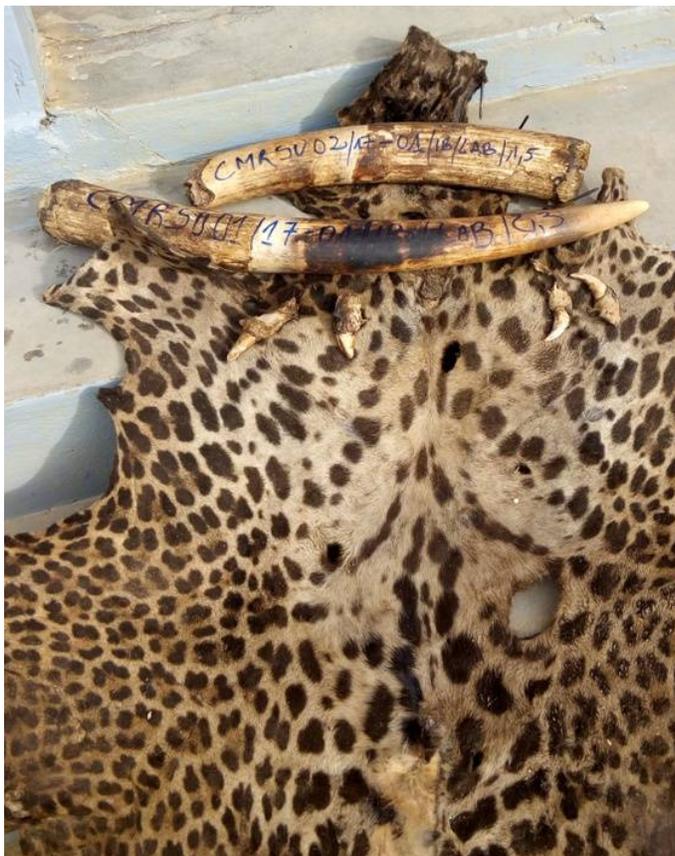




Three arrested in Adamawa for trafficking in lion, leopard and croc skins, they stand in front of the wildlife office and the skins are displayed, skins were hidden inside bags of maize as they were transported over long distances (above and top right)



Zebra skins all the way from Tanzania seized in Yaoundé. One of the traffickers at a police station shortly after their arrest (above)



Leopard skin and ivory seized from arrested Catholic priest who attempts to sell them. He had turned to wildlife trafficking transporting ivory to deliver in major cities without being detected. (left)



Two chimpanzees rescued from traffickers at the entrance to Douala freight terminal and one of the chimps inside a tiny cage at trafficker's residents (top left) and at Limbe Wildlife Centre, chimps are now enjoying life following their rescue from gruelling experience (top right)



218 parrots packed inside a cage at the outskirts of Yaoundé ready for illegal shipment (above) and newly produced cages ready for packaging of parrots to be transported by flight found at the premises of the parrot traffickers (left).

Annex III - Semester Media Links

In February the French based online site, [alwihdainfo](http://www.alwihdainfo.com) reported on the arrest of two Chinese nationals with over 5 tons of pangolin scales. The two expatriates were arrested at the Douala at their base as they prepare to ship 5.4 tons of pangolin scale out of the country.

http://www.alwihdainfo.com/Criminalite-faunique-deux-Chinois-arretes-a-Douala_a49807.html

In March, the online site, [alwihdainfo](http://www.alwihdainfo.com) that reports in French, comes back on the arrest of two Chinese nationals with over 5 tons of pangolin scales. The two traffickers were arrested in Douala as they prepared to ship 5.4 tons of pangolin scales out of the country.

http://www.alwihdainfo.com/Criminalite-faunique-deux-Chinois-arretes-a-Douala_a49807.html

In April, the news site, alwihda info reports on the arrest of 3 wildlife traffickers in Meiganga, the Adamawa Region of Cameroon. The three were caught red handed with a lion skin, 2 leopard skins and 2 crocodile skins hidden in bags of grains.

http://www.alwihdainfo.com/Cameroun-Meiganga-Trois-trafiquants-arretes_a53847.html

In May, the Cameroonian run online site, [camer.be](http://www.camer.be) reported the story of a wildlife traffickers arrested at the Bastos neighbourhood in Yaounde. The trafficker was arrested for the illegal possession of 2 carved ivory.

<http://www.camer.be/60438/11:1/cameroun-cameroon-two-ivory-tusks-seized-in-yaounde-and-man-arrested.html>

In June, , [camer.be](http://www.camer.be) posts an online article telling the story of the arrest of a trafficker in Yaounde who travelled from Douala with a leopard skin and pangolin scales to sell in the capital.

<http://www.camer.be/60774/11:1/cameroun-cameroon-from-douala-to-yaounde-wildlife-trafficker-arrest.html>