

The Last Great Ape Organization – LAGA

May 2016 Report



Highlights

- **2 operations carried out and 4 traffickers arrested with ivory and ape skulls**
- **2 traffickers arrested in Garoua with ivory bangles and chopsticks and raw ivory recovered from the home of one of them..**
- **2 traffickers arrested in Ayos with 10 ape skulls.**
- **2 fellows of the Mentor PoP Fellowship programme concluded a month-long internship course**
- **Head of Investigation Department travelled to Senegal to assist SALF in wildlife law enforcement operations.**

General

This month was marked by arrests of **4 traffickers during 2 operations.**

The first operation was carried out in **Garoua in the North Region** arresting **2 traffickers with 20 ivory chopsticks and 5 bangles and 2 ivory tusks** were later recovered from them following. The two ivory tusks were hidden deep inside the ground and the two are specialised in ivory carving business, worked as a team with one of them buying raw ivory and the second carving out ivory objects which for sale. They had been carrying their illegal activities for the past 10 years.

During the second operation **2 ape skull traffickers were arrested in Ayos, Centre Region with 6 chimpanzee skulls and 4 gorilla skulls.** The two are experienced ape skull traffickers and before their arrest were alert and cautious showing fear to be intercepted .

The Deputy Director held several meetings with officials of the Ministry of Environment to prepare for celebrations marking the World Environment Day and he was a panellist during a round table conference that discussed this year's theme. He held a meeting with a diplomatic official to discuss trends in wildlife law enforcement and the fight against corruption. He did a presentation to fellows of the US sponsored Manatee Mentor Fellowship programme on the LAGA wildlife law enforcement model and the fight against corruption.

The Head of Investigation Department travelled to Senegal to provide operational assistance to the SALF project.

Investigations

- **20 investigations** of varying lengths were carried out in 6 Regions of Cameroon-Littoral, East, South West, Center, and South Regions.
- Good investigations in **Garoua** let to the arrest of two traffickers with ivory products.
- Good investigation in **Ayos** let to the arrest of two dealers with the 6 chimp skulls and 4 gorilla skulls.
- The Head of the Investigation Department travelled to Senegal to provide operational assistance to the SALF project.
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Operation

Two operations carried out this month with MINFOF **arresting 3 traffickers**.

- **6/05/16 – 2 traffickers arrested in Garoua, North Region with 20 ivory chopsticks and 5 bangles, 2 raw ivory tusks was later recovered from them**, as, one of them admitted that he had more ivory concealed at his residence. The two tusks were hidden deep inside the ground and after the arrest, the family members tried to facilitate their release, dug up the tusks and handed them over to wildlife officials. The traffickers are specialised in processed ivory business and they worked as a team with one of them buying raw ivory and the second carving out ivory objects for sale. They had been carrying their illegal activities for the past 10 years.
- **9/05/16 – 2 ape skulls traffickers arrested in Ayos, Centre Region, 6 chimpanzee skulls and 4 gorilla skulls**. They are experienced ape skull traffickers and were arrested despite being suspicious and alert, making efforts to conceal their activities.

Legal

- The Legal Department carried **18 missions** out of Yaoundé- Centre Region:1 in Djoum (South),1 in Douala (Littoral), 1 in Bafoussam (West), 2 in Batouri (East), 3 in Abong Mbang (East), 1 in Lomie (East), 1 in Mamfe (South West), 2 in Ayos (Centre), 2 in Kumbo (North West), 1 in Ndop (Northwest), 1 in Kribi(South), 1 in Eseka (Centre), and 1 in Garoua (North).
- There are **34 dealers behind bars this month**: 8 in East region, 5 in Centre region, 6 in North West region, 3 in South West region, 2 in North region, 4 in West region and 6 in South region.
- **31 cases** were followed up by the department this month.
- **28 cases** were scheduled and being tried in court this month.
- **Prosecutions**: We had 2 judgments this month.
 - **11/05/2016**: The Kumbo Court of First Instance-, North West found the accused **NDAGE Demian ABE & ANGOH Sebastine TATO** guilty of illegal possession and commercialization of trophies of totally protected species and were sentenced as follows: Ndage Demian was sentenced to either pay a **fine of 2,500,000 F CFA or serve 2 years imprisonment term and** -Angoh Sebastian was sentenced to pay a **fine of 1,000,000 FCFA or serve 18 Months imprisonment term. Civil damages to be paid amounted to 5,090,000 F CFA, and fines to 34,500 F CFA each or serve a**

further **3 months imprisonment term**. They were arrested in Kumbo for the illegal possession of 15 Mandrill skulls, 6 gorilla skulls, 4 chimpanzee parts, 2 monkey skulls, and a pair of buffalo horns.

- **17/05/2016:** The Ndop Court of First Instance – North West, found the accused **JUNBANG ZACHARY NTIABANG** guilty of the illegal possession and commercialization of trophies of totally protected species and was sentenced to: **3 months suspended imprisonment term within 1 year, payment of 3,000,000 F CFA for civil damages, 40,000 FCFA for costs fees and 40 days imprisonment in default of payment of the costs fees**. He was arrested in Ndop for illegal possession and circulation of 13 chimpanzee skulls, 1 gorilla skull, 1 drill skull and 3 monkey skulls.

Media

- **42 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to written press, TV, radio and internet including; 27 written press material (14 in English and 13 in French), 1 TV production in French, 9 radio news flashes (6 in French and 3 in English) and 5 internet publications (3 in French and 2 in English).
- Interviewee: Bui Divisional Delegate of Forestry and Wildlife.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including: Kumbo and Nkambe arrests of 2 primate traffickers, Eseka sea turtle shell trafficker arrest, ivory incineration, Garoua arrest of 2 traffickers with ivory bangles and chopsticks, and Ayos arrest of 2 ape skull traffickers.
- 23 media pieces in French and 19 in English making a percentage of 55% in French and 45% in English.

External Relations and Policy

The Deputy Director held several meetings with the Director of Environmental Policy and other officials at the Ministry of Environment and also present were representatives of Interpol, MINFOF, Customs and other conservation groups including IUCN and WWF. The meetings were part of preparations for the World Environment Day and he was a panellist on the round table to discuss the theme of the year - Zero Tolerance to Illegal Wildlife Trade . He equally held meetings with a US Embassy official to discuss recent trends in wildlife law enforcement and with the Director of Wildlife and Protected Areas to discuss on an illegal zoo at the outskirts in Yaounde and in Douala.

The Deputy Director did a presentation to fellows of the US sponsored Mentor Manatee Fellowship programme in Dizangue, Littoral region, on the LAGA wildlife law enforcement model with emphasises on the importance of transparency, accountability and activism in conservation.

Several meetings were held by the Head of the Legal Department and some legal assistants with State Counsels in Bafang, Ebolowa, Bafoussam, Bertoua, Djoum to discuss cases in their jurisdiction and one meeting with the Procureur General of the East Region in Bertoua, on the appeal by the State Counsel in the case of Anthony Nwabu Nwoye.

Management

- The new accountant reorganised the financial reporting system for efficiency in reporting and effectiveness in its results.
- EAGLE Charter was distributed to all and a talk by the Deputy Director was carried out to enable a clear understanding of our values and the necessity to keep to them.

- Two fellows of the Pangolin Mentor PoP Fellowship programme carried out a month-long internship programme and were hosted by the legal department.

Activism Front

Film Projection: Virunga

Virunga is a complex mix of activism, conservation work, oil exploration and wars as they come to meet at the Virunga National park and there is someone to explore and document the issues. It raises the huge challenges rangers at the park have and the dangers to their lives as they seek to protect gorillas that largely have nowhere to go but face the barrel of the gun and oil companies that destroy their habitats for selfish profits. The movie is dense and provides many images of bravery and self abnegation, with rangers battling to keep their positions as war draws close. It also highlights the damaging consequences of war in the DRC and the role of mining in undermining conservation initiatives. Talking points included corruption as the big oil company try to corrupt their way through, politics, commitment, activism, humanitarian assistance and people power.

All the activism fostering activities carried out by the LAGA family are online; this could be gotten at the LAGA website – <http://www.laga-enforcement.org/Activism/tabid/77/Default.aspx>.

Finance

In preparation and would be made available soon as possible.

This Month in Pictures



Two ivory traffickers who have been processing ivory for the past 10 years arrested in the North with ivory bangles and chopsticks, raw ivory hidden deep inside the ground was later recovered from the homes of one of the traffickers



Two highly alert ape skull traffickers arrested in the Centre region are shortly to be interrogated at the wildlife office following their arrest as they took several precautionary steps to avoid being detected during moments leading to their arrest and chimpanzee and gorilla skulls recovered from the two with some still fresh looking



Links of this month

Link of the month

CRTV broadcast the ever first burning of Cameroon ivory stockpiles: During the burning, the Deputy Director, Tah Eric Kaba throws more light to why the government is incinerating stockpiled ivory..

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WODWMcbEosc&feature=youtu.be>