

The Last Great Ape Organization – LA GA

February 2015 Report



Highlights

- **Unprecedented number of 9 traffickers arrested this month during 4 operations**
- **Retired civil servant arrested for wildlife trafficking**
- **3 traffickers arrested near the Santchou game reserve for ivory trafficking.**
- **Corruption: two rearrested following LAGA anti-corruption intervention**

General

This month was marked by an exceptionally high number of arrests. The arrest of 9 traffickers including a 3 ivory traffickers near a game reserve and a civil servant who is on retirement.

9 traffickers were arrested this month during **4 separate operations** with **5 of the traffickers arrested in the West region while 4 in the South regions**. A retired civil servant and one other were arrested in Tonga in the West region for primate and elephant bones trafficking. A well-organised team made up of three ivory traffickers was dismantled following their arrest for ivory trafficking. A notorious ape trafficker was arrested in the border town of Ambam with a huge consignment of gorilla and chimpanzee skulls.

Corruption attempts: two operations carried out in quick succession in the seaside town of Kribi resulted in the **arrest of three traffickers in Kribi**, the first two with **15 sea turtle shells** and the second who came in from Campo, was arrested with **16 sea turtle shells** but they were suspiciously released un-procedurally. **Two of the three were rearrested and brought to the state counsel** following LAGA anti-corruption intervention. .

An operation carried out in frontier town, Ambam, led to the arrest of a notorious ape parts trafficker who was trying to sell a consignment of 14 gorilla skulls and 4 chimpanzee skulls.

During the last operation of the month, **three traffickers were arrested in Santchou, West for illegal possession and commercialisation of two ivory tusks. The locality hosts a game reserve.**

LAGA members grieved with the head of the legal department after the death of his baby.

Investigations

- **21 investigations** of varying lengths were carried out in **6 Regions** of Cameroon - Littoral, East, Centre, South, West and South West regions.
- Investigations in **Kribi** led to the arrest of two dealers in possession of 15 sea turtle shells.
- Investigations in **Campo** resulted in the arrest of a trafficker in Kribi following his transportation of the 16 sea turtle shells to **Kribi**.
- Investigations carried out in **Santchou** resulted in the arrest of three traffickers for illegal possession of two ivory tusks.
- Investigations in **Tonga** led to the arrest of two traffickers trying to sell elephant and mandrill parts.
- Investigations were carried out in **Ambam** which resulted in the arrest of a trafficker trying to sell chimp and gorilla skulls.

Operations

4 operations carried out this month with MINFOF arresting **9 suspects**

- **02/02/15 – 3 traffickers arrested for illegal possession of 31 sea turtles shells in Kribi – South.** One of the traffickers who came in from Campo had 16 sea turtle shells and he is known to also illegally catch the sea turtles from the sea. The two other traffickers had 15 turtle shells. Upon their arrest they were taken to the divisional delegation of forestry and wildlife in Kribi and procedures for their prosecution started and went well until the moment when some family members of the arrested traffickers came and met with the divisional delegate who decided to un-procedurally release the traffickers with strong hints of corruption observed during the dealings. Two of the traffickers were later brought to the state counsel by the divisional delegate but prosecution proceedings are still to be commenced against the trafficker from Campo.
- **13/02/15 – 1 major ape trafficker arrested in Ambam, South with 18 ape skulls.** 14 chimpanzee skulls and 4 gorilla skulls made the consignment seized from the trafficker who is well known to bushmeat sellers in the town and poachers around the areas, as he supplies poachers with ammunition and money while collecting ape parts and other protected species which he sells to the bushmeat sellers in Ambam.
- **9/02/15 – 3 traffickers arrested over ivory trafficking in Santchou, an area that hosts the Santchou game reserve.** Like international trafficking syndicates, they are a well-organised team with each having a specific role. The team was made up of a seller, a negotiator and a marketing agent. One the traffickers has a family with a history of ivory trafficking and he is equally involved in the trafficking of other wildlife species including leopard skins. Also, one of the three is a teacher working at the Santchou inspectorate of basic education.
- **25/02/15 – 2 traffickers were arrested in Tonga, West, with a mandrill skull and the remains of an elephant including 1 tibia bone, one molar** and a house search carried out at the home of one the traffickers who is a **retired civil servant** revealed he illegally kept a **rifle** and 7 locally made traps for catching of wildlife. The elephant, the traffickers confessed was shot and killed in the Waza National Park.

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **15 missions** out of Yaounde- Centre Region: 1 in Nanga Eboko (Centre), 2 in Ntui (Centre), 2 in Djoum (South), 2 in Ambam (South), 2 in Kribi (South), 1 in Bangangte (West), 1 in Dschang (West), 2 in Edea (Littoral), 1 in Douala (Littoral), and 1 in Batouri (East),

- There are **42 dealers behind bars during this month**: 13 in the East region, 6 in the Centre region, 2 in the Littoral region, 10 in the South region, 6 in the West region and 5 in South the region.
- **33 cases** were followed up by the Legal department this month.
- **31 cases** scheduled and being tried in court this month.
- **Prosecutions**: We had 03 judgments this month.
 - 03/02/2015: The Tombel Court of First Instance – South West, found **EKAH DIVINE NGULLE and MBELLE KINGSLEY** not guilty. The court discharged and acquitted both accused persons on grounds that the animal parts are relics and by their ages contemporiety was not established by the prosecution making it difficult for the court to link the killing, or capture by the accused persons even though found in possession. They were arrested in Tombel while trying to illegally trade in 01 elephant tusk, 01 elephant Jawbone, 01 elephant tail, 01 gorilla skull and 05 gorilla bones. During their arrest, they were also found in possession of some quantities of marijuana's (Cannabis).
 - 06/02/2015: The Dschang Court of First Instance – West, convicted **SOUFOUO FERDINAND and NGUEUDA MOISE** to 1 year of suspended sentence during 3 months and to pay **2.000.000 CFA F as damages**. They were also convicted to pay **59.015 FRS as cost fees and in default of payment of the said amount, they will serve an imprisonment terms fixed by the law**. They were arrested in Balessing while trying to illegally trade in 02 fresh leopard skins.
 - 17/02/2015: The Ntui Court of First Instance – Centre, convicted **NSANGOUM OUMAROU, MOUKAM LOUIS and MONDI OUMAROU** to pay **273.000 CFA frs as damages** and also to pay **30.000 FRS as fines**. They were arrested in Ngambe Tikar with a fresh colombus monkey, huge quantities of giant pangolin scales and 04 parts of giant pangolin meat.
- **Appeal**: An appeal has been filed this month in the case of **NSANGOUM OUMAROU, MOUKAM LOUIS and MONDI OUMAROU** in the Centre Court of Appeal.

Media front

- **34 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to written press, radio, TV and internet including: 20 written press material (13 in English 8 in French), 4 radio talk shows all in English, 8 news flashes 6 in English and 2 in French, 1 tv production in French and 1 internet publication in English.
- **Guests include**: sub divisional delegate of forestry and wildlife and a U.S researcher on wildlife trafficking and illicit funding.
- **Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including**: the arrest of a president of a hunters' association alongside two men over a death colubus monkey, pangolin scales and fresh pangolin meat in Ngambe Tikar; 5 ape skulls traffickers in Djoum; 3 men in Kribi for illegal possession of sea turtles shells; a teacher with two others found with elephant tusks in Santchou; a suspected primate skulls trafficker in Ambam; an ape skulls dealer in Djoum and a retired civil servant with another man over the commercialisation of elephant bones in Tonga.

- 24 media pieces in English, 10 in French making a percentage of 70.6% in English and 29.4% in French.

External Relations and Policy

The director and the deputy director held a meeting with the new Canadian High Commissioner to Cameroon on issues of collaboration in combating wildlife crime. Several meetings were held with state prosecutors in Bangangte, Ambam, Dschang and Bonanjo, Douala, Ntui on ongoing cases and with a judge in Batouri. A meeting was equally held with the Littoral regional wildlife delegate and the Ngambe Tikar divisional wildlife delegate to discuss cases on trial in the various courts. Other meetings were also held with an official from the Deng Deng national park on wildlife law enforcement activities around the park to curb the intense trafficking activities going around the park, with the Director of France-based association Sauvegarde Faune Sauvage on fighting wildlife crime in the north of the country, with an official from the Prague Zoo on the state of conservation and law enforcement in Cameroon and especially on areas such as the Dja game reserve where the zoo is carrying out sensitization projects among others, two American researchers from C4DS on illicit trafficking and its links to illicit fuding. The deputy director attended a dinner session at the residence of the US Ambassador in Yaounde.

Management

- LAGA Director arrived Cameroon from Togo for a 48-hour working visit and proceeded to Kenya.
- The LAGA family joined the head of the legal department, Nya Aime Frisco in mourning the loss of his 4-month old baby girl who was born while he was in Senegal to assist SALF.
- In order to obtain an efficient financial management, a comparative analysis of the two accounting system presently in use, the Excel spreadsheet and Sage Saari, was undertaken and with analysis showing advantages and disadvantages of each forwarded to the director for evaluation and decision making.

Activism Front

Music is the weapon: Fela Kuti

Music is the weapon is a documentary that focuses on Fela Kuti's musical career and his activism in relation to Nigerian politics. Fela Kuti is a political activist who used music to create awareness on the ills of the Nigerian society. Because Nigeria had a huge potential and a big economy, being an African giant, one would have expected issues of governance to be treated differently and appropriately in the country. This was not the case and despite Fela's gesticulations, protestations and poignant activism at the time, nothing changed and his activism still has a place in the Nigeria of today. Debates after the screening went from his special brand of activism to his personal and religious orientations.

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

Replication

During this month, LAGA worked on the collection of editing of the EAGLE report, its publication on the website and distribution to stakeholders, policy makers and the general public.

Finance

In preparation and would be made available soon as possible.

This Month in Pictures



Three arrested for ivory trafficking near a game reserve (above) and a retired civil servant and one other arrested for primate and elephant bones trafficking; elephant was killed in Cameroon's most popular park (right)



Arrested close to Cameroon's border with Gabon and Equatorial Guinea, major trafficker in ape parts in the area



Sea turtle trafficking in Kribi: corruption attempts battled during his arrest and two others who were rearrested following LAGA anti-corruption drive

Link of this month

- CRTV broadcast the arrest of the president of a hunters' association in Ngambe Tikar, Centre over giant pangolin scales and colobus monkey trafficking. He was arrested alongside two men for illegal possession and commercialisation of the dead monkey and the giant pangolin parts. The TV broadcasts highlight the protection status of the colobus monkey as well as giant pangolin which are listed as totally protected wildlife species whose hunting is forbidden by the 1994 wildlife law that punishes defaulters. In the broadcast, the case of three traffickers arrested with ivory in Santchou is treated.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vUo_kyaYkd4