

# The Last Great Ape Organization – LA GA

## August 2013 Report



### Highlights

- **10 suspects arrested** this month in **5 different operations**
- **A high level MINFOF official arrested for suspected complicity and corruption in connection to ivory stolen from national stock.**
- **The biggest wildlife trafficker in Cameroon arrested in connection to Chinese giant pangolin scales dealer in Limbe.**
- **Chinese trafficker arrested at Nsimalen Airport with ivory and giant pangolin scales.**
- **A network of 5 parrot traffickers using a military matriculated vehicle busted**
- **2 dealers arrested with a live chimp** in Bafut – North West

### General

This month was marked by the arrest of 10 suspects including a high level MINFOF official, a well-known and influential wildlife trafficker, another Chinese trafficker, and a network of traffickers using a military vehicle.

**The former Conservator of Mvog-Betsi Zoo, a highly placed official in MINFOF arrested following on-going investigations to track the source of the stolen elephant tusks especially in MINFOF looking into complicity and corruption in that Ministry.** He is accused of being implicated in the disappearance of more than 200 elephant tusks from the national stock. Some were amongst the 18 elephant tusks seized in Douala in June following another LAGA-MINFOF operation arresting 2 major ivory traffickers.

**The biggest wildlife trafficker in Cameroon arrested in Limbe - South West Region in connection to Wei Tao, a Chinese national and a high level trafficker in wildlife products arrested with 7 big sacs of Giant Pangolin scales while attempting to send them to Nigeria through the Bota Port in Limbe in April.** The Chinese claims to be working for him and used his permits in the attempt to traffic the pangolin scales. He has been arrested several times before in connection to illegal trafficking of more than 1200 African Grey parrots.

Another Chinese national was **arrested at the Nsimalen International Airport - Yaounde with 4 elephant tusks, 25 worked pieces of ivory and 44kg of giant pangolin scales 7 big sacs of Giant Pangolin scales while attempting to traffic them to Hong Kong.** He is based in Equatorial Guinea and is connected to other Chinese working in a road construction company in Djoum - South. He claims to have bought the ivory at Djoum and came to Cameroon because it is easy to get products and transport them in Cameroon. He was arrested by the Gendarmes of the Freight - Nsimalen Brigade and LAGA is responsible for the proper legal follow-up.

**A network of parrot traffickers was busted, arresting 5 dealers with 72 live African Grey parrots while transporting them in a military matriculated car - a 4x4 Toyota Hilux pickup.** They use the military car to avoid controls and they agreed to have functioned in this manner many times. The parrots were being transported from Mbalmayo - Center where they have a quarantine and a network of suppliers to Yaounde. They also produced illegal documents that he uses to carry out the trade. In another operation, – **2 dealers** in live animals and bushmeat dealers were **arrested with a live baby chimpanzee** while trying to illegally trade in it in Bafut - North West Region. One of them initially resisted arrest and refused to collaborate during the writing of the offence statement (PV). The chimp was provided by one of their suppliers in Wum - North West Region, **about to be taken to Nigeria.**

## Investigations

- **30 investigations** of varying lengths were carried out in **8 Regions** of Cameroon- North West, South West, South, East, West, Littoral, North and Center.
- 2 Investigations on trial gave good results this month – 2 operations arresting 7 suspects. Products included a live baby chimp and 72 live African grey parrots.
- The distribution of flyers in both English and French was re-launched last month continued.
- Joint investigations carried out between LAGA and AALF on an international ivory trafficker based in Gabon and selling in Cameroon.
- LAGA Investigations Department assisted PALF-Congo and GALF-Guinea Investigations Department on Investigations and Operations procedures.

## Operations

**5 operations** carried out this month led to the **arrest of 10 major dealers** including international wildlife traffickers.

- **02/08/13 – 2 dealers** in live animals and bushmeat **arrested with a live baby chimpanzee** while trying to illegally trade in it in Bafut - North West Region. One of them initially resisted arrest and refused to collaborate during the writing of the offence statement (PV). The chimp was provided by one of their suppliers in Wum - North West Region, **about to be taken to Nigeria**. The rescued chimp was taken to the Mvog-Betsi Zoo in Yaounde.
- **08/08/13 – Former Conservator of Mvog-Betsi Zoo**, a highly placed official in MINFOF **arrested following on-going investigations to track the source of the stolen elephant tusks especially in MINFOF looking into complicity and corruption in that Ministry**. He is accused of being implicated in the disappearance of more than 200 elephant tusks from the national stock. Some were amongst the 18 elephant tusks seized in Douala in June following another LAGA-MINFOF operation arresting 2 major ivory traffickers
- **14/08/13 – A Chinese national and a high level trafficker in wildlife products arrested at the Nsimalen International Airport - Yaounde with 4 elephant tusks, 25 worked pieces of ivory and 44kg of giant pangolin scales 7 big sacs of Giant Pangolin scales while attempting to traffic them to Hong Kong**. He is based in Equatorial Guinea and is connected to other Chinese working in a road construction company in Djoum - South. He claims to have bought the ivory at Djoum and came to Cameroon because it is easy to get products and transport them in Cameroon. He was arrested by the Gendarmes of the Freight - Nsimalen Brigade and LAGA is responsible for the proper legal follow-up.
- **14/08/13 - The biggest wildlife trafficker in Cameroon arrested in Limbe - South West Region in connection to Wei Tao, a Chinese national and a high level trafficker in wildlife products arrested with 7 big sacs of Giant Pangolin scales while attempting to send them to Nigeria through the Bota Port in Limbe in April**. The Chinese claims to be working for him and used his permits in the attempt to traffic the pangolin scales. He has been arrested several times before in connection to illegal trafficking of more than 1200 African Grey parrots.
- **16/08/13 – A network of parrot traffickers was busted, arresting 5 dealers with 72 live African Grey parrots while transporting them in a military matriculated car - a 4x4 Toyota Hilux pickup**. They use the military car to avoid controls and they agreed to have functioned in this manner many times. The parrots were being transported from Mbalmayo - Center where they have quarantines and a network of suppliers to Yaounde. They also produced illegal documents that he uses to carry out the trade.

## Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **15 missions** out of Yaounde - Centre Region:, 1 in Nanga Eboko (Centre), 2 in Mamfe (South West), 2 in Limbe (South West), 2 in Djoum

(South), 2 in Kribi (South), 1 in Yokadouma (East), 1 in Bertoua (East), 1 in Bafoussam (West) and 3 in Bamenda (North West).

- There are **46 dealers behind bars during this month**: 14 in the East Region, 5 in the South West Region, 12 in Centre region, 2 in North West region, and 13 in South Region.
- **34 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **31 cases** are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.

### **Media front**

- **35 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to radio, TV and written press including: 23 written press material (14 in English 9 in French), 5 radio talk shows in English, 2 TV news features (1 in English and French each) and 5 news flashes (2 in English and 3 in French).
- **Guests include:** Forest Engineer and lecturer at the Garoua wildlife school and conservationist biologist and lecturer at Dschang University.
- **Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including:** Bafut chimp arrest, Guinea prosecution of a trafficker of over 500 chimps, Prosecution of Djoum trafficker in elephant meat and human parts and Nsimalen seizure and arrest of ivory – Yaounde.
- 22 media pieces in English, 13 in French making a percentage of 62.9% in English and 37.1% in French.

### **External Relations and Policy**

- LAGA Director presented at a Central Africa meeting on using anti money laundering techniques to combat wildlife crime. The meeting was in Gabon so time was allocated to discuss with Luc Mathot the network's strategy to rebrand itself as the EAGLE network and revise investigation strategies.
- LAGA Director trained on Wildlife Law Enforcement and corruption at the American International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Botswana.
- LAGA trained teachers of the Garoua Wildlife School on wildlife law enforcement procedures including Investigations, Operations, Legal follow-up, Media publication and the fight against corruption. A training module was also produced to strengthen the capacity of officials engaged in the fight against wildlife criminality.
- LAGA Director went to Togo to follow up arrests and investigations on high level ivory trafficking connected to 27 different countries.
- LAGA met with WWF, WCS, GIZ, ZSL, and Traffic on rising corruption in the wildlife sector.
- LAGA Director and Head of Investigation met with ZSL on wildlife law enforcement in east of Cameroon.
- LAGA met with the BIR on wildlife law enforcement and related corruption.

### **Management**

- RALF Coordinator arrived from CAR arrived Yaounde - Cameroon to be trained under the regional exchange program for further improvement and more operations in regional enforcement.
- A volunteer was let go in the Legal Department for lack of engagement and not able to meet up with LAGA standards after many months.

### **Activism Front**

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/Activism/tabid/77/Default.aspx>.

## **Replication**

During this month, LAGA worked with other replication projects in planning and coordinating missions with PALF, AALF and GALF on investigations and operations.

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LAGA Investigations Department assisted PALF-Congo Investigations Department on Investigations and assisted in operations; collaborated with AALF-Gabon Investigators and Jurists on setting up a network of informants and joint investigations in North Gabon and South Cameroon.

## **Finance**

### **LAGA Expenditure by Budget Line for August 2013**

<b>Amount FCFA</b>			<b>Amount USD</b>
2,688,095	<b>Investigations</b>	30 inv, 8 Regions	\$5,430
1,011,000	<b>Operations</b>	5 Operations against 10 subjects	\$2,042
3,087,108	<b>Legal</b>	follow up 34 cases 46 locked subjects	\$6,237
1,806,267	<b>Media</b>	35 Media pieces	\$3,649
4,200,670	<b>Policy &amp; External Relations</b>	CAR Training RALF Coordinator/Togo Mission/Guinea/Gabon/Botswana/Kenya	\$8,486
908,900	<b>Management</b>	Coordination	\$1,836
1,881,134	<b>Office</b>		\$3,800
100,000	<b>LAGA Family</b>		\$202
15,683,173	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE AUGUST</b>		<b>\$31,683</b>

### **LAGA Expenditure by Donor for August 2013**

<b>Amount FCFA</b>	<b>Donor</b>	<b>Amount USD</b>
3,398,630	FWS	\$6,865.9
4,200,670	FWS-Replication	\$8,486.2
1,057,754	BornFree UK	\$2,136.9
1,210,283	Rufford	\$2,445.0
0	IFAW	\$0.0
879,500	J M FNN	\$1,776.8
	ProWildlife	\$0.0
4,804,837	ARCUS Foundation	\$9,706.7
131,500	Conde Nast Award	\$265.7
	NEU Foundation	\$0.0
15,683,173	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$31,683.2</b>

## This Month in Pictures



**Top Left** – military matriculated 4x4 Toyota Hilux pickup used in the transportation of African Grey parrots on several occasions to avoid road control. **Top Right** – members of the busted network of parrot traffickers during the writing of PVs, 5 of them were arrested. **Left** – the leader of the network carrying one of the cages containing the African Grey parrots; 72 live parrots were seized. The parrots were being transported from Mbal Mayo - Center where they have quarantines and a network of suppliers to Yaounde. They also produced illegal documents that he uses to carry out the trade.



**2 dealers in live animals and bushmeat (left) arrested with a live baby chimp while trying to illegally trade in it in Bafut - North West Region. The chimp was provided by one of their suppliers in Wum - North West Region, about to be taken to Nigeria. The chimp was wrapped in a bag and put in a carton during transportation.**

## **Links of this month**

- 5 traffickers arrested transporting more than 70 parrots in a military matriculated vehicle – Cameroon National Television Broadcast – Hello Program. The seizure and arrest of the 5 traffickers with more than 70 African grey parrots was carried out on the Mbalmayo – Yaounde highway; 5 traffickers were arrested transporting the parrots in a car bearing a military matriculation plate. The birds were seized and transported to the Mvog Betsi zoo.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5RN25uS890>