

The Last Great Ape Organization - LAGA

March 2009 Report



Highlights

- **3 operations** were carried out this month **against 4 dealers**.
- **A dealer** trying to sell a full dead **chimp killed in a reserve arrested** in Douala – Littoral.
- **First prosecution** in the Republic of Congo following the **replication of LAGA activities**.

General

This month was marked by 3 successful operations against 4 dealers.

A regular dealer in protected bushmeat was arrested trying to sell a full dead chimp that he had kept in a deep freezer in Douala - Littoral Region. He has suppliers from the Eastern part of Cameroon and sells in major cities including Douala and Bafoussam. He also has a female accomplice who seeks for and supplies clients. The chimpanzee is reported to have been killed in the Ebo Reserve of the Nkam Division of the Littoral Region and more investigations are being carried out in this regard.

2 other operations resulted in the arrest of 2 dealers in Yaounde – Center Region. A shop owner laundering illegal wildlife trade in the cover of a shop was arrested trying to illegally trade in elephant teeth and leopard skin to foreign buyers. This operation was done in collaboration with French-based wildlife conservation NGO – SFS (Sauvegarde Faune Sauvage). Another dealer in live primates and other wildlife products was arrested trying to illegally trade in a live mandrill (a totally protected species) and the foot of an elephant. His father is an accomplice and a wildlife trader with 20 years experience. He does not move around to meet clients because of his age but sends his son to take protected wildlife and wildlife products to them and to carry out the illegal trade.

The Court of Brazzaville in the Republic of Congo has passed the first sentence against a wildlife dealer. The dealer (a chimp dealer arrested in December 2008) was sentenced to 1 year imprisonment and to pay a fine of over \$2000. A senior official of LAGA is part of the team set-up in Brazzaville responsible for the successful replication of Cameroon's globally acclaimed wildlife law enforcement experience in the Republic of Congo. The replication of LAGA's activities started in September 2008 with more than 10 operations being carried out against wildlife dealers as of March 2009. This demonstrates that it is possible for a country to shift from a baseline of zero prosecution of major wildlife traffickers to a rate of one per week as is the case in Cameroon today.

Investigations

- **13 investigation missions** of varying lengths were carried out in **4 Regions** of Cameroon- West, South West, Littoral and Center.
- **Field Investigations led to 3 successful operations** after targeting dealers in the Center and Littoral Regions.
- Internet Investigations targeted 4 Internet wildlife dealers engaged in fraud in Buea – South West Region. Investigations are still ongoing.
- There were few investigation missions this month because of some cash flow problems experienced by LAGA. Despite this, the few investigation missions led to 3 successful operations against regular illegal wildlife dealers.

Operations

3 operations were carried out this month with MINFOF against **4 subjects**.

- **03/03/09** - A shop owner laundering illegal wildlife trade in the cover of a shop was arrested trying to illegally trade in elephant teeth and leopard skin to foreign buyers in Yaounde – Center Region. This operation was done in collaboration with French-based wildlife conservation NGO – SFS (Sauvegarde Faune Sauvage).
- **09/03/09** – A dealer in live primates and other wildlife products was arrested trying to illegally trade in a live mandrill and the foot of an elephant. His father is an accomplice and a wildlife trader with 20 years experience. He does not move around to meet clients because of his age but sends his son to take protected wildlife and wildlife products to them and to carry out the illegal trade.
- **10/03/09** – A regular dealer in protected bushmeat was arrested trying to sell a full dead chimp that he had kept in a deep freezer in Douala - Littoral Region. He has suppliers from the Eastern part of Cameroon and sells in major cities including Douala and Bafoussam. He also has a female accomplice who seeks for and supplies clients. The chimpanzee is reported to have been killed in the Ebo Reserve of the Nkam Division of the Littoral Region and more investigations are being carried out in this regard.

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **10 missions** out of Yaounde - Center Region: 3 in Limbe (South West), 1 in Buea (South West), 2 in Bafoussam (West), 3 in Douala (Littoral) and 1 in Bamenda (North West).
- There are **6 dealers behind bars during this month**: 2 in the West Region, 1 in the South West region, 1 in the North West Region, and 2 in the Center Region.
- **32 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **29 cases** are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.

Media front

- **15 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to radio, TV and written press including: 3 TV news features (2 in English, 1 in French), 2 written press materials in English, 8 radio news flashes (4 in English, 4 in French), 2 radio talk shows in English.
- Guests include: Minister of Forestry and Wildlife, South West Regional Delegate for Forestry and Wildlife, Conservator of Mvogbetsi Zoo - Yaounde, Uganda Minister of State for Tourism, Technical Adviser N°1 MINEP, LAGA Media Assistant, Traditional Ruler of Bali Nyonga, Littoral Regional Delegate for Forestry and Wildlife.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including: Yaounde elephant teeth and leopard skin arrest - Yaounde, mandrill and elephant foot arrest in Yaounde, and chimp arrest in Douala.
- 10 media pieces in English, 5 in French making a percentage of 66.7% in English and 33.3% in French.
- German national TV visited and filmed 3 successful operations with LAGA, on the documentary about LAGA's work.
- Online sensitisation stood at **519 visits** to the LAGA website in the month of March.

External Relations and Policy

- LAGA Director met with CIFOR to discuss the problem of corruption in the Forestry sector and corruption in the NGO sector.
- LAGA Head of Media and External Department met with the Director of Wildlife and Protected Areas and discussed the following issues; the hand over of the management of the Songo Pongo Chimpanzee Sanctuary owned by Patricia of French nationality to the Conservator of the Douala Edea Reserve and eventually to PASA (pan Africa Sanctuary

Alliance), designation of power of signature of CITES permits on African grey parrot trade, empowering TRAFIC and LAGA to monitor trade in African grey parrots and notification of MINFOF Regional Delegate to facilitate media coverage of wildlife law enforcement operations.

- A short presentation was given by LAGA's Director in the Royal Geographic Society - London for the 30th year celebration of Born Free organization. The presentation touched the need for wildlife law enforcement and for a new generation of conservation focused on the fight against corruption.
- Meetings were held in the UK about wildlife law enforcement and corruption in the Environment Sector with an Academic Researcher, Official from the Prince of Wales' Rainforest Initiative, British Foreign Office and 1st Secretary of Canadian High Commission in the UK.
- Meeting in the US about international wildlife law enforcement and fighting corruption and development of enforcement in Central and West Africa with Fish and Wildlife Service international cooperation officials and Investigations Department, INTERPOL-Washington, USAID biodiversity Adviser and State Department officials.
- LAGA Director had a meeting on corruption NGO projects with WWF US.

Management

- LAGA experienced severe cash flow problems in the month of March that slowed down the work and results of the LAGA's departments. Despite this problem, 3 successful operations were carried out against 4 suspects showing the commitment of LAGA staff to function with limited financial resources.

Finance

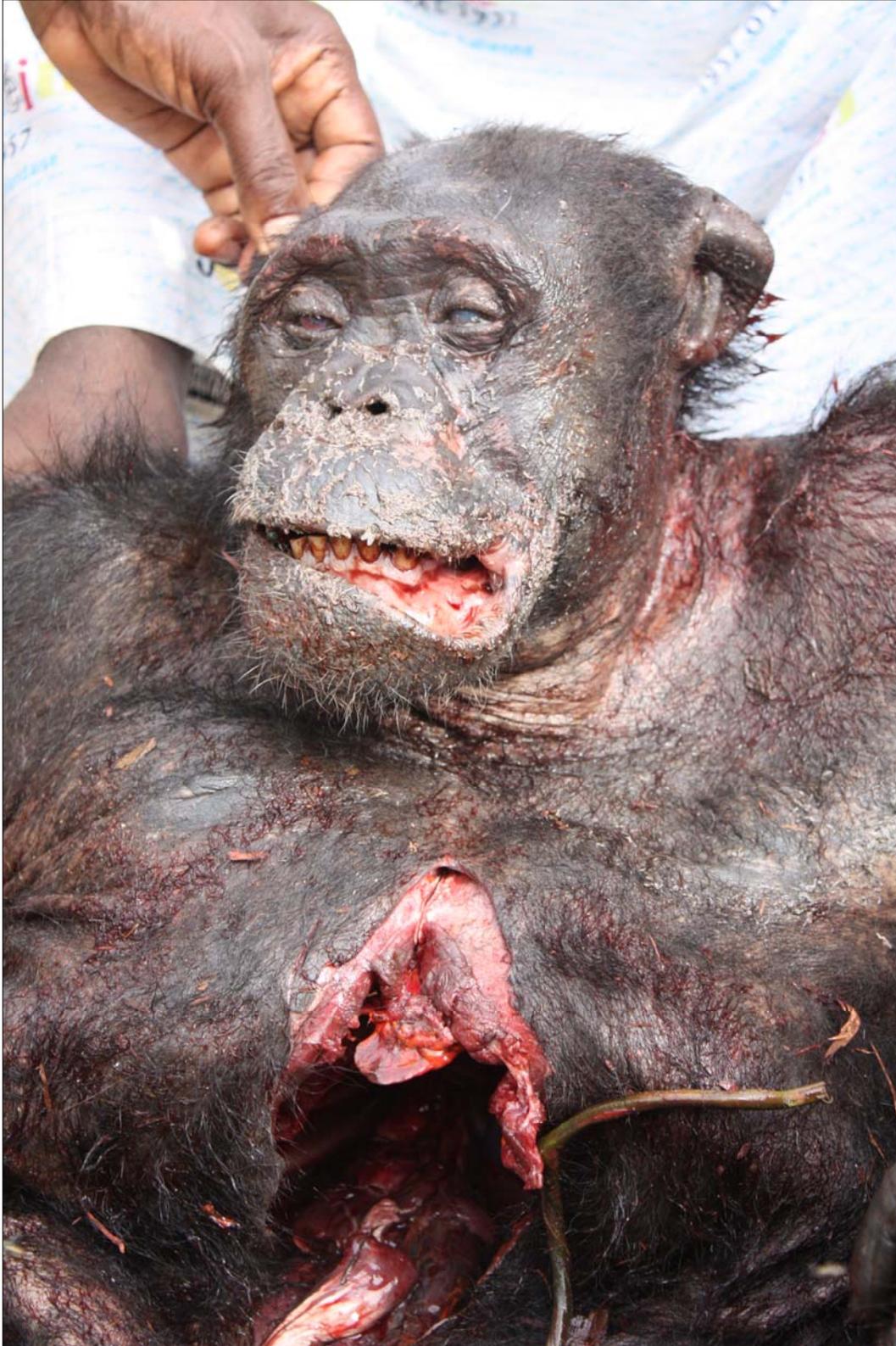
LAGA Expenditure by budget line for March 09

Amount CFA	Budget line	Details	Amount USD
1,025,580	Investigations	15 inv, 4 Regions	\$2,031
693,500	Operations	3 Operations against 4 dealers	\$1,373
1,380,020	legal	follow up 32 cases 6 locked subjects	\$2,733
1,361,870	Media	15 media pieces	\$2,697
1,428,068	Policy & External Relations	Congo/USA/UK	\$2,828
925,100	Management	Coordination	\$1,832
1,230,961	Office		\$2,438
8,045,099	TOTAL EXPENDITURE MARCH		\$15,931

LAGA Expenditure by donor for March 09

AmountCFA	Donor	Amount USD
978,261	BornFree	\$1,937.2
3,105,900	FWS	\$6,150.3
1,854,890	Rufford Foundation	\$3,673.0
1,775,000	Arcus	\$3,514.9
28,080	SFS France	\$55.6
302,968	UNEP General	\$599.9
8,045,099	TOTAL	\$15,930.9

THIS MONTH IN PICTURES



A full dead chimp reported to have been killed in the Ebo Reserve of the Nkam Division of the Littoral Region. A regular dealer in protected bushmeat was arrested trying to sell the chimp that he had kept in a deep freezer in Douala - Littoral Region. He has suppliers from the Eastern part of Cameroon and sells in major cities including Douala and Bafoussam. He also has a female accomplice who seeks for and supplies clients.



Mandrill and Elephant foot operation in Yaounde – Center Region. A dealer in live primates and other wildlife products was arrested trying to illegally trade in a live mandrill and the foot of an elephant His father is an accomplice and a wildlife trader



Leopard skin and Elephant teeth operation in Yaounde – Center Region. A shop owner laundering illegal wildlife trade in the cover of a shop was arrested trying to illegally trade in elephant teeth and leopard skin to foreign buyers. This operation was done in collaboration with French-based wildlife conservation NGO – SFS (Sauvegarde Faune Sauvage).

Links of this month

- Footages of an operation involving an elephant foot and a live mandrill dealer arrested in Yaounde. He was arrested while trying to sell the elephant foot and the mandrill. Mandrills are totally protected by Cameroon's wildlife law and anybody found in possession of parts or whole of any protected wildlife species risks imprisonment terms and/or fines.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJA3pDHfwak>

- Footages of a killed chimpanzee operation in Douala. Chimpanzees are totally protected by Cameroon's law and a prison term and or a fine awaits anyone found in possession of part or whole of chimpanzee. The dealer was arrested while trying to illegally sell the chimpanzee.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tiUOIe7B440>