

The Last Great Ape Organization – LA GA

March 2012 Report



Highlights

- **Replication in Guinea – Conakry was concretized with the arrest of 7 major dealers.**
- **7 dealers arrested in East Region in 3 separate operations.**
- LAGA Director continued with a **special mission on Bouba Ndjida elephant massacre.**

General

This month was marked by the concretization of replication in Guinea – Conakry with the arrest of 7 major dealers, and the continuation of focus on the Bouba Ndjida elephant massacre.

Guinea had its first ever arrests of wildlife traffickers, and the beginning of its application of its wildlife law. 7 major traffickers were arrested after having been identified and recorded explaining their international illegal activity, their methods of evading law enforcement authorities around the world, and their vast international networks. They were arrested in a sting operation trying to sell more than 60 Kg of ivory and 10 leopard skins. The operation was taken by the Interpol team by the order of the Director of Police, a team sent by the Minister of Environment, assisted by the state counsel who was personally present in the operation. One of the agents participating in the operation said in the press conference - "this is the first time we have this since independence" This operation followed after an initial mission undertaken last month by the LAGA Director and it marks the launching of replication in Guinea. This could have never happened without the direct involvement of the Minister of Environment, the Minister of Justice and the Minister delegate of Security, Director of National Police and Head of Interpol NCB. The recordings of the traffickers are very interesting exposing new modus operandi, networks with representatives in China and Europe, sales in the US, containers etc. As sources to all of Central Africa via Nigeria and Abidjan we had two suspects talking of Zimbabwe and Burundi as sources of ivory. This is very worrying if confirmed as it implies illegal sales of government stock.

LAGA Director continued with a special mission on the Bouba Ndjida massacre. His investigations had revealed that the poachers seem to be many in number, and Sudanese. These poachers were sighted in south east corner of Chad. Prior to that, they were spotted in north east CAR moving west, and projecting their route, the Chadian authorities were alerted that the poachers may move south of Am Timan towards Sudan. They are said to be 27, with horses and 4 camels. As the armed group is about to cross the border into Sudan in the forthcoming days, follow up investigation in North Sudan remains the last hope for effective action against this group, that is very likely to return and threaten both elephants as well as cross border security for Chad, CAR and Cameroon.

7 dealers were arrested in 3 different operations in the East Region all involved in dealing in ivory and other elephant products. 1 was arrested in Mindaourou with elephant meat; a network busted in Messok with 4 dealers arrested and also found in possession of 3 packets of marijuana and 2 hunting rifles; 2 well known dealers arrested in Yokadouma with 12 elephant tusks after killing 6 elephants. One of the dealers is a recidivist who had been arrested before in Abong Mbang and after being granted bail, he went straight back to poaching elephants. The operations were initiated by MINFOF and LAGA was responsible in controlling the adherence to strict legal procedure and on time follow-up of the court cases.

Investigations

- **27 investigations** of varying lengths were carried out in **6 Regions** of Cameroon- South West, West, South, East, Littoral and Center.
- More focused and high level investigations started this month with regards to the hundreds of elephants killed by international poachers in the Bouba Ndjida National Park in the Northern region of Cameroon, Central African Republic and Chad.
- An International Investigator was used this month to get more information about the Bouba Ndjida poachers.
- LAGA Investigations Department assisted PALF-Congo Investigations Department on Investigations and Operation Procedures.
- The Department continued with the use of informants, a strategy that yielded a good operation in Abong Mbang.

Operations

3 operation were carried out this month against **7 subjects** with MINFOF

- **23/03/12** – Following good and reliable information, **a dealer in elephant products was arrested** with more than 10 large chunks of elephant meat in Ebola – Mindaourou - East. He is known to be a regular dealer in elephant products including ivory. The operation was carried out with MINFOF agents from the East Regional Delegation.
- **23/03/12** – A network of dealers in ivory and other elephant products was busted in Messok – East Region. **4 dealers were arrested for the killing of elephants and illegally trading in their products and trophies.** During the arrest, they were in possession of **3 packets of marijuana and 2 hunting rifles.** The operation was initiated by MINFOF and LAGA was instrumental in controlling the legal procedure, assuring the dealers were conveyed to the court and followed-up the court cases in Abong Mbang - East.
- **24/03/12** – **2 well known dealers were arrested in Yokadouma - East with 12 elephant tusks after killing 6 elephants.** One of the dealers is a recidivist who had been arrested before in Abong Mbang and after being granted bail, he went straight back to poaching elephants. The operation was initiated by MINFOF and LAGA was responsible in controlling the adherence to strict legal procedure and on time follow-up of the court cases.

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **20 missions** out of Yaounde - Centre Region: 1 in Nanga-Eboko (Centre), 1 in Akonolinga (Centre), 2 in Douala (Littoral), 1 in Bamenda (North West), 3 in Bertoua (East), 2 in Abong-Mbang (East), 3 in Kribi (South), 1 in Ambam (South), 1 in Djoum (South), 1 in Sangmelima (South), 1 in Bafoussam (West), 1 in Dschang (West), 1 in Muyuka (South West), and 1 in Mamfe (South West).
- There are **21 dealers behind bars during this month:** 10 in the East Region, 2 in the South West Region, 1 in Littoral Region, 1 in North West Region, 5 in South Region and 2 in West Region.
- **29 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **26 cases** are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.
- **Prosecutions:** 1 dealer was sentenced this month.
 - **20/03/2012:** The Court of First Instance of Bafoussam - West sentenced DJOMOU Etienne Roussel to 1 year suspended sentence during 3 years and to pay **\$4.000 as damages.** He was arrested in Bafoussam for the illegal detaining 2 live baboons.

Media front

- **37 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to radio, TV and written press including: 16 written press materials (8 in English and 8 in French), 4 radio talk shows (3 in

English and 1 in French), 4 TV news features all in English, 8 radio news features (5 in English and 3 in French) and 5 news flashes (1 in English and 4 in French).

- Guests include: LAGA Director, LAGA Deputy Director and Head of LAGA Unit, and Head of Communication Unit.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including; Yaounde arrest of dealer in elephant parts, judgment of Yokadouma ivory dealers, Djoum arrest of elephant traffickers and INTERPOL steps in to fight against the killing of elephants.
- 21 media pieces in English, 16 in French making a percentage of 56.8% in English and 43.2% in French.

External Relations and Policy

- LAGA Director met with the Minister of Forestry and Wildlife to discuss issues concerning wildlife law enforcement and the fight against corruption.
- LAGA Director travelled to Guinea – Conakry and concretized the replication of LAGA activities there with a sting arrest operation. 7 major traffickers were arrested while trying to sell more than 60 Kg of ivory and 10 leopard skins. Luc Mathot left Gabon to assist in investigations and recruitment of local team and the replication will be assured by Charlotte Houpline of Wara Conservation Project with the support of USFS.
- LAGA Director continued with a special mission on the Bouba Ndjida massacre. These poachers have been seen in south east corner of Chad and this can be the last chance of intercepting them. Prior to that, they have been spotted in north east CAR moving west, and projecting their route, the Chadian authorities were alerted that the poachers may move south of Am Timan towards Sudan. As the armed group is about to cross the border into Sudan in the forthcoming days, follow up investigation in North Sudan remains the last hope for effective action against this group, that is very likely to return and threaten both elephants as well as cross border security for Chad, CAR and Cameroon.

Management

- For further improvement and more operations in regional enforcement, training sessions continue to be held in Yaounde – Cameroon. 2 Jurists from AALF Gabon were trained under the regional exchange program. Training and exchange of project personnel in regional enforcement will continue with the other projects in the forthcoming months. Others that had been trained before include the Coordinator of RALF – CAR, Jurist – PALF Congo, Investigator – PALF Congo, Jurists - AALF Gabon and Investigator AALF - Gabon.

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>. Activism this month was on:

- **Books published by Sone Nkoke Christopher and Alain Bernard Ononino.**
Sone's book is titled Cameroon's Wildlife – Endangered Animal Species, a handbook that captures the splendour of Cameroon, its socio-cultural and touristic attractions; national parks and sanctuaries which serve as important habitats for endangered wildlife and most importantly, the identification of Class A animals and the laws aimed at protecting them.

Alain's book is titled 'Lois et Procédures en Matière Faunique' (Laws and Procedures Governing the Wildlife Sector in Cameroon) is a compilation of relevant provisions of all the laws and regulations governing the wildlife sector, an analysis of administrative and legal procedures to be followed as far as wildlife matters are concerned and how to fight corruption and related offences in the wildlife sector.

- **Film: Bringing Down a Dictator**

It shows astonishing details on how OTPOR brought together the key elements for the non-violent destruction of the Milosevic regime. The video shows how its demonstrations successfully persuaded the Yugoslavian opposition to run one presidential candidate against the dictator, ending the destructive bickering among opponents that had helped Milosevic cling to power. It also details, through an interview with Daniel Serwer, Director of the US Institute for Peace Balkan Initiative, the successful meetings between himself and OTPOR, which resulted in American and European funding of \$25 million for nonviolent resistance.

Replication

During this month, LAGA helped other replication projects in carrying out arrest operations and following up court cases.

In the Replication of LAGA activities and Regional Law Enforcement, March month was marked by the concretization of replication in Guinea- Conakry. LAGA Director travelled to Guinea – Conakry and concretized the replication of LAGA activities there with a sting arrest operation. 7 major traffickers were arrested while trying to sell more than 80 Kg of ivory and 10 leopard skins. Luc Mathot left Gabon to assist in investigations and recruitment of local team and the replication will be assured by Charlotte Houpline of Wara Conservation Project with the support of USFS.

Special mission carried out in Chad and in the CAR by RALF concerning the Bouba Ndjida elephant massacre were supervised by LAGA. These missions in the South East of Chad and North East of CAR were focused on getting more information and tracking the poachers alleged to come from Sudan who killed more than 300 elephants. Missions in Chad were carried out by a local Chadian Investigator and an International Investigator. In CAR, missions were carried out by RALF Coordinator and other informants contacted and recruited locally in the Northern part of CAR.

LAGA assisted PALF in planning and coordinating missions. LAGA also helped PALF and RALF in the legal follow-up of the cases as a result of the arrest operations.

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Finance

LAGA Expenditure by budget line for March 2012

Amount CFA	Budget Line		Amount USD
5,764,892	Investigations	30 inv, 9 Regions	\$11,646
473,600	Operations	1 Operation against 1 subjects	\$957
2,211,190	Legal	follow up 21 cases 14 locked subjects	\$4,467
1,498,065	Media	37 Media pieces	\$3,026
2,818,054	Policy & External Relations	Congo/Gabon/CAR/Kenya/France/USA/Thailand	\$5,693
860,400	Management	Coordination	\$1,738
1,731,056	Office		\$3,497
15,357,257	TOTAL EXPENDITURE MARCH		\$31,025

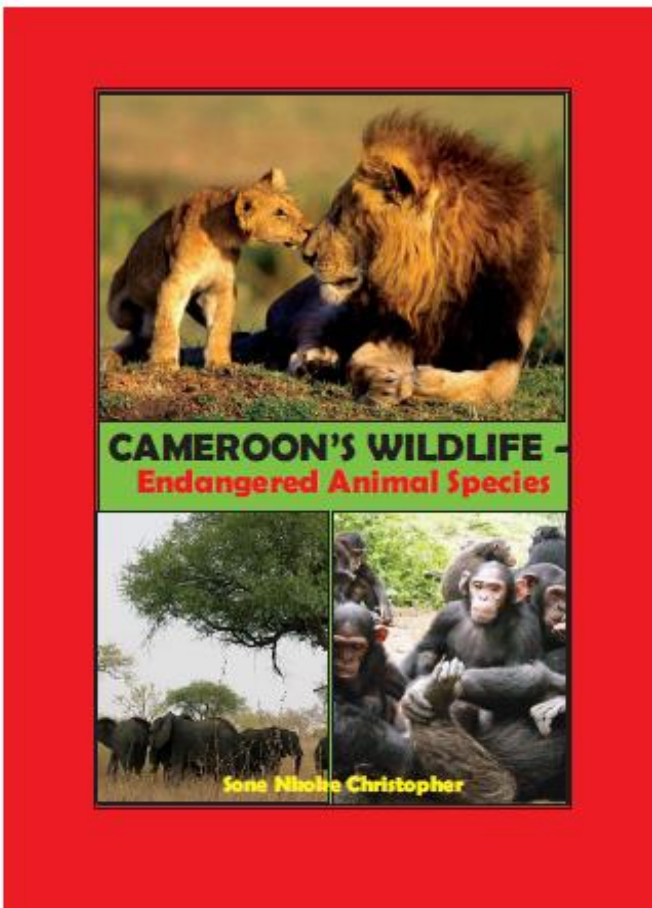
LAGA Expenditure by Donor for March 2012

AmountCFA	Donor	Amount USD
1,909,530	FWS	\$3,857.6
199,400	FWS-Replication	\$402.8
537,531	BornFree UK	\$1,085.9
425,390	Rufford	\$859.4
100,500	IFAW	\$203.0
3,223,726	Darwin	\$6,512.6
	BornFree USA	\$0.0
5,756,988	Future for Nature	\$11,630.3
3,204,192	ARCUS Foundation	\$6,473.1
15,357,257	TOTAL	\$31,024.8

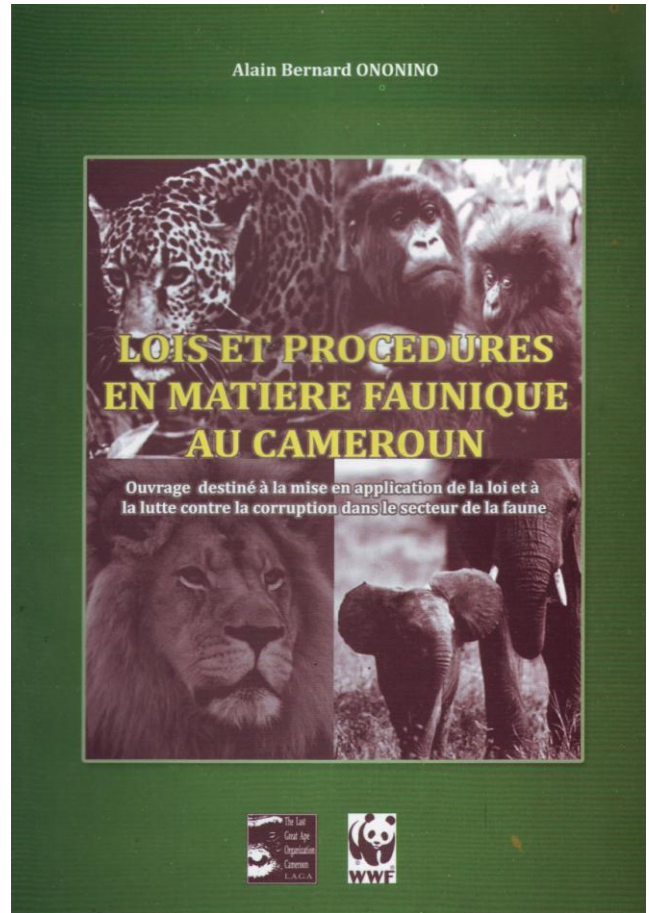
THIS MONTH IN PICTURES



Dealer in elephant products arrested in Ebola – Mindaourou - East. He is known to be a regular dealer in elephant products including ivory. The operation was carried out with MINFOF agents from the East Regional Delegation



Cameroon’s Wildlife – Endangered Animal Species written by Sone Nkoke Christopher is a handbook that captures the splendour of Cameroon, its socio-cultural and touristic attractions; national parks and sanctuaries which serve as important habitats for endangered wildlife and most importantly, the identification of Class A animals and the laws aimed at protecting them.



‘Lois et Procédures en Matière Faunique’ (Laws and Procedures Governing the Wildlife Sector in Cameroon) by Alain Bernard Ononino is a compilation of relevant provisions of all the laws and regulations governing the wildlife sector, an analysis of administrative and legal procedures to be followed as far as wildlife matters are concerned and how to fight corruption and related offences in the wildlife sector.

Links of this month

- More than 300 elephants massacred in the Bouba Ndjida National Park of Cameroon – Cameroon National Television Broadcast – Hello Program. The massacre of these elephants is alleged to have been carried out by foreigners who came from Sudan following investigations. The implications of this act were explained by the Deputy LAGA Director and Head of the LAGA Legal Department.

<http://youtu.be/IQo16TyVuUo>

- Dealer in elephant products arrested in Yaounde - Cameroon National Television News Broadcast. The dealer who came from Djoum - South was arrested with 2 elephant tails which he intended to sell to a client in Yaounde. The case against the alleged trafficker is ongoing in the Court of First Instance in Yaounde and if found guilty, he will face an imprisonment term and/or a payment of a fine.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-F5ROOX6FVA>