

The Last Great Ape Organization – LA GA

July 2014 Report



Highlights

- **6 traffickers arrested in Mamfe during two swift operations with 19 elephant bones and a gorilla skull**
- **One of the 6 traffickers is an assistant lawyer**
- **2 traffickers arrested in Djoum with elephant bones**
- **A trafficker in live apes arrested in Ndeng – Zoatele but the chimpanzee baby died shortly before the arrest.**

General

This month was marked by the arrest of **9 traffickers during four operations with 26 elephant bones, a gorilla skull seized while a live baby gorilla that could have been saved** unfortunately died shortly before it was rescued and the trafficker arrested.

In two swift back to back operations, **19 elephant bones and a gorilla skull were seized from 6 traffickers who were arrested** this month in Mamfe and one of the six traffickers is a well-known Mamfe based assistant lawyer.

In an operation carried out in Djoum, South, **2 traffickers were arrested, seven elephant bones seized**. They are habitual traffickers in parts obtained from protected wildlife species from the Dja Biosphere Reserve. The two rode a bright new bike that ferried the products from Mintom to Djoum where they regularly sell parts of protected wildlife species.

In Ndjeng, in the Zoatele Subdivision, South, a live primate trafficker was arrested. He had engaged attempts to sell a baby gorilla but, despite a swift reaction to the discovery of the baby chimp the arresting team arrived shortly after it had died.

Two appeals was filed, one in the Bertoua Court of Appeal against a ruling passed in the Abong Court of First Instance on illegal ivory possession and commercialization against a trafficker and another in the Buea Court of Appeal against a ruling on the possession of ostriches.

The Director of LAGA continues his stay in Kenya, working on the establishment of a replication project in the country.

Investigations

- 9 investigation missions of varying lengths were carried out in 4 Regions of Cameroon- Littoral, South, Centre and South West Regions.
- Good investigations in Djoum led to the arrest of two traffickers with elephant bones.
- Excellent investigations in Mamfe led to the arrest of 6 traffickers in 19 elephant bones and a gorilla skull
- An investigation was carried out in Ndeng (Zoatele Subdivision – South Region) that led to the arrest of a trafficker in live primate but shortly before the operation, the baby gorilla died.

Operations

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

- **09/07/14 – 2 major traffickers arrested with elephant bones including 1 skull, 2 femur bones, 1 jawbone and 3 molars** – Djoum, South while illegally trying to trade in them; they are professional traffickers in elephant parts and other wildlife species. They used a bright new motorbike to transport the products hidden in a white sac from Mintom where they are resident to Djoum where they regular sell parts of protected wildlife species. They are also known to sell ivory and the motorbike was bought with proceeds from one of such sales. They equally sell other wildlife species and they had recently sold a serval before they were arrested. Their manner of operation was identified. They transport their products on Sundays when controls are not very tight, late in the night, between 11 pm and 5 am when checkpoints are absent and they employ accomplices along the road, who would inform them of the movements of wildlife officials around checkpoints.
- **14/07/14 – 6 traffickers arrested in Mamfe during two swift back to back operations** carried out within an interval of 30 minutes. During the first operation 3 traffickers were arrested with 2 elephant skulls, 3 molars, 2 jawbones and 3 tibia bones during their attempts at selling them and 30 minutes later a second operation saw the arrest of another three traffickers with elephant bones including 4 tibia bones, 2 molars, 3 premolars and a chimpanzee skull. One of the suspects is a pupil who is undergoing pupilage at a Mamfe-based law chambers. The 6 traffickers who had transported the bones from two localities close to Mamfe are suspected to have bought the parts from poachers around the Korup National Park where an elephant was reported killed not long before the operations were carried out.
- **16/07/14 - a trafficker was arrested in Ndeng Zoatele subdivion, South and a dead baby gorilla seized.** He is a live primate trafficker and he was arrested shortly after the animal died. He had initially wanted to sell the live animal.

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **17 missions** out of Yaounde- Centre Region: 2 in Mfou (Centre), 2 in Nanga Eboko (Centre), 1 in Djoum (South), 1 in Zoetele (South), 1 in Sangmelima (South), 2 in Douala (Littoral), 1 in Edea (Littoral), 1 in Abong-Mbang (East), 1 in Bertoua (East), 1 in Bangangté (West), 1 in Dschang (West), 1 in Limbe (South West), 1 in Mundembe (South West) and 1 in Mamfe (South West).
- There are **34 traffickers behind bars during this month**: 15 in the East Region, 8 in Centre region, 2 in South Region, 1 in West Region, and 8 in South West Region.
- **40 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **36 cases** are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.
- **Prosecutions**: We had 3 judgments this month.
 - 01/07/2014: The Court of First Instance in Abong-Mbang passed judgment on MPOUL John Stephane, he was found not guilty and acquitted by the court. He was

arrested in Mindourou for illegal detention of four elephant skulls and four elephant jawbones.

- 02/07/2014: The Court of First Instance in Bertoua convicted AKONO Nang 9 months suspended sentence during 5 years and to pay **1.800.000 CFA frs as damages**. He was arrested in Bertoua for illegal detention of a two gorilla skins, two gorilla skulls, 1 elephant jawbone and one ivory tusk.
 - 09/07/2014: The Court of First Instance in Mamfe passed judgment on MOHAMADOU Habibou, he was found not guilty and acquitted by the court. He was arrested in Eyomujock for illegal detention of 8 ostriches.
- **Appeal:** Two appeals have been filed in the case of MPOUL John Stephane in the Bertoua Court of Appeal and in the case of MOHAMADOU Habibou in the Buea Court of Appeal.

Media front

- **28 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to radio, written press, and tv including: 19 written press material (7 in English 12 in French), 2 radio talk shows all in English, 5 news flashes all in English, and 2 tv productions in French.
- **Guests include:** The conservator of Mount Cameroon national park and the conservator of Korup National Park.
- **Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including:** two traffickers arrested with elephant parts in Djoum, six traffickers arrested in Mamfe with elephant bones and baby gorilla trafficker arrest in Ndeng - Zoatele.
- 14 media pieces in English, 14 in French making a percentage of 50% in English and 50% in French.

External Relations and Policy

- The Deputy Director of LAGA held a meeting with ZSL officials to discuss opportunities for partnership in wildlife law enforcement and the officials also sought to seek advice on how to fine tune their activities linked to wildlife law enforcement in their area of operation.
- The Heads of the Legal and Investigations Departments held a working session with the Regional Head of Interpol based in Yaounde on the signing of an MoU and on wildlife law enforcement operations. They equally discussed the forthcoming Interpol Regional Conference billed for the 8th of September 2014 in the Equatoguinean capital Malabo.

Management

- LAGA Director continued stay in Kenya working on the establishment of a replication project in Kenya while work on the structuring basic EAGLE network procedures and operationalization continues.

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

The management department assisted in compiling financial data for the new replication project that is underway in Kenya.

Finance

LAGA Expenditure by line for July 2014

Total Expenditures CFA				Total Expenditures USD
6,109,640		Investigations	9 Investigations, 4 Regions	\$12,597
937,300		Operations	4 Operations against 9 subjects	\$1,933
3,320,908		Legal	follow up 40 cases 36 locked traffickers	\$6,847
1,661,505		Media	28 Media pieces	\$3,426
1,257,903		Policy & External Relations	Kenya Mission/Portugal	\$2,594
1,410,760		Management	Coordination	\$2,909
1,167,536		Office		\$2,407
437,200		LAGA Family	Ebogo Trip	\$901
16,302,752	TOTAL EXPENDITURE JULY			\$33,614

LAGA Expenditure by Donors for July 2014

Amount CFA	Donor	Amount USD
2,286,551	FWS	\$4,714.5
608,242	FWS-Replication	\$1,254.1
2,436,845	BornFree UK	\$5,024.4
334,927	Rufford	\$690.6
0	IFAW	\$0.0
3,473,447	NEU Foundation	\$7,161.7
6,289,640	WILD CAT	\$12,968.3
873,100	Prowildlife	\$0.0
16,302,752	TOTAL	\$33,613.9

This Month in Pictures



Six, including a pupil lawyer arrested while attempting to illegally trade in elephant bones and a gorilla skull in Mamfe, South West (*above*) Gendarme officer looks on at seized elephant bones (*below*)



Two arrested with elephant bones in Djoum, they are professional traffickers also involved in the illegal ivory trade (*above*) and (*below*) live primate trafficker arrested with dead baby gorilla



This baby gorilla died shortly before it was rescued from a live primate trafficker who was offering it for sale. The trafficker picture right was arrested for illegal possession of a dead wildlife species.



Link of the month

CRTV broadcast the arrest of 6 persons with elephant bones and a gorilla skull. The 6 suspected traffickers were arrested in a crackdown operation jointly carried out by officials of the Gendarmerie and the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife of the Manyu division, South West. They are behind bars waiting for the court to decide their fate, if found guilty, they risk a maximum prison term of 3 years and/or pay a fine of up to 10 million francs.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s8_20mHYTrI&feature=youtu.be