

The Last Great Ape Organization – LAGA

June 2021 Report



Highlights

- **7 traffickers arrested during 3 operations with 60kg of pangolin scales seized, 3 leopard skins and a crocodile skin seized and a mandrill rescued.**
- **A trafficker arrested with 60kg of pangolin scales in Dimako.**
- **A live baby mandrill rescued and a trafficker arrested in Mintom**
- **4 traffickers, including a traditional chief, arrested in the West Region with 3 leopard skins and a crocodile skin. A fifth is on the run.**

General

The month was marked by the **arrest of 7 traffickers with 60kg of pangolin scales, baby mandrill and 3 leopard skins.**

A trafficker arrested in Dimako, East Region with 60kg of pangolin scales. He is an experienced pangolin scales trafficker who posed as a hawker in second hand dresses. He bought pangolin scales from smaller traffickers and poachers he activated in several villages. This seizure is a mere snapshot of the regular two-weeks activity of the trafficker. This one sack represents the killing of up to 300 pangolins (depending on the species).

4 traffickers arrested in Balessing in the West Region with 3 leopard skins and a crocodile skin. The traffickers belong to a network of experienced leopard skin traffickers. The region is notorious for skins trafficking and traffickers use traditional titles and functions to cover their illegal trade in leopard skin. One of the traffickers is a traditional ruler. A fifth trafficker of the gang is on the run.

A trafficker arrested in Mintom in the South Region with a baby mandrill. The plan was to rescue two mandrills but one died the day before the operation, showing how crucial it is to rescue these baby primates fast as they live on borrowed time. The trafficker admitted that a third mandrill she tried to sell died as well. She added that her father who is a traditional chief lends his gun to poachers that he activates and he is her supplier, while she has a regular buyer for live primates. He has been accused and stands prosecution

Investigations

- **17 investigation missions in 6 out of 10 Regions** of Cameroon including: Littoral, West, South, Adamawa, Centre and East Regions.
- Good investigations in **Dimako** led to the arrest of a pangolin scales trafficker with 60kg of pangolin scales in **Dimako**.
- Good investigation in **Bansoa** led to the arrest of 5 traffickers with 3 leopard skins and a crocodile skin in **Balessing**
- Good investigation in **Koungoulou** (Mintom) led to the arrest of a mandrill trafficker with a baby mandrill in Koungoulou.

Investigations Table

Investigation Missions	Regions	No. of Operations	No of traffickers arrested
17	6	3	7

Operation

3 operations carried out this month with MINFOF **arresting 7 traffickers**.

3/7/2021 – A trafficker was arrested in Dimako, East Region with 60kg of pangolin scales. He is an experienced pangolin scales trafficker who posed as a hawker in second hand dresses. He bought pangolin scales from smaller traffickers and poachers he activated in villages around Dimako where he is resident. He is connected to many pangolin scales trafficking networks in the East Region. He took every precaution to avoid arrest. He had collected the 60kg in just 6 days having profound knowledge of the area, where to get the scales and how to move them around.

23/7/2021 – 4 traffickers were arrested in Balessing in the Menoua Division of the West Region with 3 leopard skins and a crocodile skin. The traffickers belong to a network of experienced leopard skin traffickers. One of them was recently arrested but she bribed her way out of jail. They seem to have connections with a law enforcement official who supplies the skins. They arrived the place of transaction individually on bikes, with two grain bags containing the skins. They obtained the skins from other regions in the country. The region is notorious for skins trafficking and traffickers use traditional titles and functions to cover their illegal trade in leopard skin. One of the traffickers is a traditional ruler. A fifth trafficker of the gang is on the run

29/7/2021 – a trafficker was arrested in Mintom in the South Region with a live baby mandrill. She regularly traffics live primates in collaboration with her father who is a traditional ruler The operation team was gearing to rescuing two mandrills but one died the day before the operation, The trafficker admitted that a third mandrill she tried to sell died as well. She added that her father who

is a traditional chief lends his gun to poachers that he activates and he is her supplier, while she has a regular buyer for live primates. He has been accused and stands prosecution.

Operations Table

<i>No of Operations</i>	<i>Regions</i>	<i>No of Traffickers Arrested</i>	<i>Contraband</i>
3	23	7	60kg of pangolin scales, 3 crocodile skins and a crocodile skin, a live mandrill

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **9 missions** out of Yaounde - Centre Region: 2 in Nanga Eboko (Centre), 1 in Mbalmayo (Centre), 1 in Dimako (East), 1 in Djoum (South), 1 in Ebolowa (South), 1 in Dschang (West) and 2 in Douala (Littoral).
 - There are **17 traffickers behind bars this month**: 5 in East region, 1 in South region, 4 in Centre region, 1 in Littoral, and 6 in West region.
 - **26 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
 - **21 cases** were scheduled in court this month.
 - **2 traffickers** were convicted this month.
 - **Prosecutions**: There was one court ruling this month.
- **21/06/2021**: The Mbalmayo Court of First Instance found the accused **NSIA ONDOA Raphaël and EBOGO Hélène guilty and sentenced them to one month in prison and to pay 200,000 FCFA as damages**

They were arrested in Mbalmayo on the 19/05/2021 for the illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of 72kg of pangolin scales.

Legal Table

<i>No of Missions (Out of Centre Region)</i>	<i>No of Court Judgements</i>	<i>No of Traffickers Given Prison Sentence</i>	<i>Prison term (in months)</i>	<i>No of Traffickers Sanctioned (No prison sentence)</i>	<i>No of Appeals lodged</i>	<i>No of Cases Tried in Courts</i>
9	1	2	1 month	0	0	21

Media

- **34** media pieces were produced and pushed to the media including: written press, radio, and internet in this order; 18 written press (12 in English and 6 in French), 10 radio news flashes (5 each in English and in French) and 6 internet publications (5 in French and 1 in English).
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including: the arrest of a trafficker with a baby chimp at Nanga Eboko, the arrest of two traffickers with 70kg of pangolin scales in Mbalmayo, the Dimako arrest of another trafficker with 60kg of pangolin scales and the Balessing arrest of 4 traffickers in with 3 leopard skins and a crocodile skin.
- 18 media pieces were produced in the English and 16 in French making 52.9% in the English language and 47.1% in the French language.

Media table

<i>No of media pieces</i>	TV	Radio	Newspapers	Internet
34	0	10	18	6

External Relations and Policy

- The Deputy Director and the Head of the Legal Department trained some wildlife rangers and teachers of the Garoua Wildlife School during a training workshop in the North of the country that focused on the law enforcement procedure.
- The Deputy Director participated at the signing ceremony of an MoU between the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife and a pangolin rehabilitation project – the Tikki Hywood Foundation. He met with several MINFOF officials.
- The Head of the Legal Department held a meeting with the Attorney General in Douala to discuss legal strategies on a matter pending in the court. He equally held similar discussion with the State Counsel in Abong Mbang. Accompanied by a legal adviser he held a meeting with the State Counsel in Dschang to discuss pre and post operation strategies.
- A legal adviser had a meeting with the State Counsel of Douala Bonanjo to discuss legal strategies concerning a matter pending before the court, while a second legal adviser had a meeting with the State Counsel of Abong Mbang and Nanga Eboko for the same purpose. A third legal adviser had a meeting with the State Counsel of Mfou to discuss matters pending at his court.
- A legal adviser participated at a workshop in Douala where he did two presentations on the basic wildlife law enforcement procedure and the calculation of damages. The workshop focused on strengthening the capacity of law enforcement and judicial authorities in fighting wildlife crime in the Littoral and South West Regions of Cameroon.

Management

- Preparations for the reception of a super volunteer were carried and she is expected to travel from France in the next month.

Activism Front

All the activism fostering activities carried out by the LAGA family are online; this could be gotten at the LAGA website

– <http://www.laga-enforcement.org/Actiwithvism/tabid/77/Default.aspx>.

Finance

In preparation and would be made available soon as possible on the LAGA website www.laga-enforcement.org .

Link of the month

Camer.be, an online news site this month published the story of the arrest of a second hand clothes trader in Dimako with 60kg of pangolin scales. He used his business as a cover to illegally trade in pangolin scales.

<https://www.camer.be/86651/11:1/cameroun-man-arrested-with-60kg-of-pangolin-scales-cameroon.html>

This Month in Pictures



He was lucky, saved from a live animal trafficker, he was with another mandrill that died shortly before the rescue



At gendarmerie post following arrest for trafficking in mandrill



*Arrested for trafficking 60kg of pangolin scales (left)
Four arrested leopard skin trafficking (above)*