

# The Last Great Ape Organization - LAGA

## August 2009 Report



### Highlights

- LAGA uncovered that a **Senior Divisional Officer** is involved in illegal trade in elephant products.
- **A principal Internet wildlife dealer** arrested in Buea – South West Region.
- A well known **dealer arrested** in Bengbis – South Region **with a rifle and ammunitions.**
- **3 wildlife dealers convicted to serve 1 year imprisonment each** for illegally trading in worked ivory.

### General

This month was marked by a special focus on operations the East, South and South West Regions involving **5 suspects**.

A network of **3 wildlife dealers** was busted in Abong Mbang – East Region. They were arrested while illegally selling elephant products and meat from an industrial refrigerator. A senior government official - **The Senior Divisional Officer of Boumba and Ngoko - Yokadouma** in the East Region is said to be the main supplier of the elephant products and meat sold in Abong Mbang. He is a highly placed government official and seems to have used his post to carry out illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products at the same time providing protection for other members of the network.

**A principal Internet wildlife dealer engaged in fraud** and illegal wildlife trade over the Internet. He was arrested trying to sell a capuchin monkey to a victim in The Netherlands using falsified government documents and CITES Permits. His connection to other forms of fraud including illegal immigration and adoption scams is still being investigated.

A notorious illegal wildlife dealer arrested at Bengbis in the South Region. He was **arrested with a Hunting Rifle and 23 ammunitions**. He threatened the arresting officers with his weapon and resisted arrested. He was caught with a live chimp, other chimp parts and skulls and some elephant products. A live chimp was rescued and taken to the Mefou National Park in the Center Region by the Cameroon Wildlife AID Fund (CWAFF). The animals are suspected to have been killed and captured within the Dja Reserve which stretches between the South and East Regions.

**3 wildlife dealers** were **sentenced** this month in Bonanjo - Douala Littoral Region. The Court of First Instance of Bonanjo – Douala convicts 3 wildlife dealers to **1 year imprisonment** terms, and to pay jointly a total 2.745.500 FCFA (about \$2500) as damages, 100.000 FCFA (\$200) each as fine, and 171700 FCFA (About \$350) each as court fees. They were arrested in Douala in detention and illegal trade in wildlife trophies (worked ivory).

### Investigations

- **16 investigations** of varying lengths were carried out in **7 Regions** of Cameroon- North West, South West, West, East, Littoral, Adamawa and Center.
- **Field Investigations led to 2 successful operations** after targeting a network of dealers in elephant parts in Abong Mbang – East. This was done in collaboration with MINFOF – Abong Mbang. One other operation took place in Bengbis – South Region and was done in collaboration with ECOFAC.
- **Internet Investigations led to 1 successful operation** after targeting an Internet wildlife dealer in Buea \_South West region.

- Internet Investigations targeted 3 Internet wildlife dealers engaged in fraud in Bamenda – North West Region and Buea – South West Region. Investigations are still ongoing.
- Field tests continue for new candidates.
- One field investigator was recalled in Yaounde to give more explanations about some fraudulent receipts. Another field investigator was called up in Yaounde to be taught again on how to write a good field and financial report.

## Operations

**2 operations** were carried out this month with MINFOF against **4 subjects**, and **1 operation** with ECOFAC against **1 subject**.

- **04/08/09** – A network of **3 wildlife dealers** was busted in Abong Mbang – East Region. They were arrested while illegally selling elephant products and meat from an industrial refrigerator. A senior government official - **The Senior Divisional Officer of Boumba and Ngoko - Yokadouma** in the East Region is said to be the main supplier of the elephant products and meat sold in Abong Mbang. He is a highly placed government official and seems to have used his post to carry out illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products at the same time providing protection for other members of the network.
- **22/08/09** - A **principal Internet wildlife dealer engaged in fraud** and illegal wildlife trade over the Internet. He was arrested in Buea – South West Region while trying to sell a capuchin monkey to a victim in The Netherlands using falsified government documents and CITES Permits. His connection to other forms of fraud including illegal immigration and adoption scams is still being investigated.
- **29/08/09** – A notorious illegal wildlife dealer arrested at Bengbis in the South Region. He was **arrested with a Hunting Rifle and 23 ammunitions**. He threatened the arresting officers with his weapon and resisted arrested. He was caught with a live chimp, other chimp parts and skulls and some elephant products. **A live chimp was rescued**.

## Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **16 missions** out of Yaounde- Centre Region: 2 in Buea (South West), 3 in Bafoussam (West), 1 in Douala (Littoral), 3 in Bamenda (North West), 1 in Ntui (Centre), 1 in Bengbis (South), 2 in Bertoua (East) and 3 in Abong-Mbang (East).
- There are **13 dealers behind bars during this month**: 2 in the West Region, 1 in the East Region, 1 in South Region, 4 in the North West Region and 5 in the South West Region.
- **33 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **30 cases** are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.
- **Prosecutions**: 3 dealers were sentenced this month
  - **05/08/09** - The Court of First Instance of Bonanjo - Douala convicted Ngameni Claude, Mengue Ango Jean, Nko'o Nko'o David to pay 2.745.500 FCFA (About \$5500) jointly as damages, 100.000 FCFA (\$200) each as fine, and 171700 FCFA (About \$350) as court fees and **1 year imprisonment** term. They were arrested in Douala in detention and illegal trade in wildlife trophies (worked ivory).

## Media front

- **27 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to TV, radio, and written press including: 4 written press materials, 3 in English and 1 in French, 14 radio news flashes (7 in English, 7 in French), 2 radio news feature (1 in English and 1 in French), 5 TV news feature (4 in English and 1 in French), and 2 radio talk shows in English.
- Guests include: Minister of Forestry and Wildlife, Deputy British High Commissioner, Executive Secretary of BDCP-C, Deputy Director of Wildlife in the ministry of Wildlife in Nigeria, and the Fon of Bali Nyonga.

- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including; Chimp arrest Donga Mantung Division – North West Region and Internet Wildlife Trade arrest in Buea – South West Region.
- 17 media pieces in English, 10 in French making a percentage of 63% in English and 37% in French.

### **External Relations and Policy**

- Meeting between Director of Wildlife and Protected Areas and LAGA Media Head of Department to discuss on the following; the draft letter to be signed by the Minister instructing the East Regional Delegation of Forestry to open a case file against the SDO of Yokaduma in the East Region for illegally trading in protected wildlife species, the endorsement of collaboration between government and LAGA in the enforcement of wildlife law intended to guarantee continuous funding of the project by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.
- LAGA Director met with US Fish and Wildlife Service officials, Gary Tabor and Frederick Sowers to discuss on criticism against corruption in development projects and possible procedures to increase accountability and transparency and control corruption in US Fish and Wildlife Service grants.
- The Head of Hunters Association, Maes Koen and LAGA Director held meeting on corruption and accountability in hunting safari business, embezzlement of benefits to communities and tactical information on illegal wildlife trade.
- Meeting between LAGA Director and the US embassy issues discussed, potential of Internet and Democracy making Internet a new platform of social change in activism in Cameroon.
- The minister of Forestry and Wildlife held meeting with LAGA Director to discuss issue concerning the procedure against the SDO of Yokadouma who is implicated in elephant meat trafficking as a part of a LAGA operation.
- The Director of LAGA met with WWF Coordinator for Central Africa to discuss issues concerning the procedure against the SDO of Yokadouma who is implicated in elephant meat trafficking as a part of LAGA operation. Replication of LAGA model in Central Africa Republic and the fight against corruption within WWF.
- LAGA Director met ECOFAC and discussed on the following; collaboration on wildlife law enforcement, life threats on ecoguards, fighting corruption and complicity in the gendarmerie in the area of work.

### **Management**

- One new volunteer was recruited in the Legal Department to replace another one who was not retained because she did not meet up with the standards set up by the Department.
- One field investigator was recalled in Yaounde to give more explanations about some fraudulent receipts. Another field investigator was called up in Yaounde to be taught again on how to write a good field and financial report.
- The suspension of one field Investigator continued this month. She was suspended for 2 months with no salary for presenting unclear receipts.

### **Activism Front**

- Shark water – A film on “Marine Enforcement Activism” of a wildlife activist in establishing laws to govern marine species especially sharks and whales. The film screens the struggle of shark activists in establishing laws that protect sharks. Debate was centered around violent and peaceful ways to bring about change.
- A presentation by Afanyi – Coordinator of Anti-Corruption Organization titled “Genocide and ethnic cleansing prevention in Cameroon – A fight for Cameroon unity”. The idea of

belonging to an ethnic group considered as superior or looking low at other ethnic group is a spirit of division which if not prevented can lead to civil war and probably a genocide.

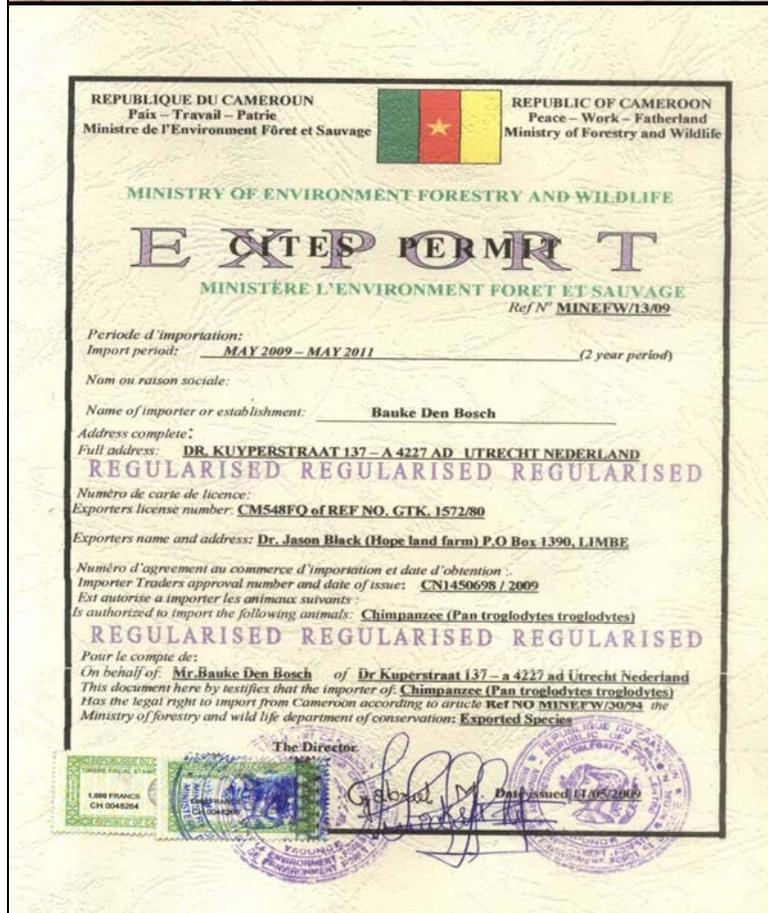
**Finance**

In preparation, will be made available shortly.

## THIS MONTH IN PICTURES



The baby chimp rescued during an operation in Bengbis – South Region. A notorious illegal wildlife dealer arrested with a hunting rifle and 23 ammunitions, threatened the arresting officers with his weapon and resisted arrested. He was caught with a live chimp, other chimp parts and skulls and some elephant products. The chimp rescued was taken to the Mefou National Park in the Center Region by the Cameroon Wildlife AID Fund (CWAFF).



A falsified CITES permit used by the Internet wildlife dealer to deceive his victim. He was arrested trying to sell a capuchin monkey to a victim in The Netherlands. His connection to other forms of fraud including illegal immigration and adoption scams is still being investigated.

## **Links of this month**

- Illegal dealer in protected wildlife species arrested – Cameroon National Television Broadcast – Hello Cameroon. The dealer was arrested in Bafoussam – West Region while trying to illegally trade in a leopard skin. LAGA and MINFOF regularly arrest major wildlife dealers in protected wildlife species and products during the enforcement of the wildlife law in Cameroon.

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

- An Internet Wildlife Dealer arrested – Cameroon National Television Broadcast – The “7:30 News”. The Internet Wildlife Dealer was arrested in Bamenda – North West Region while trying to illegally sell a capuchin over the Internet to a victim in the U.S.A. He falsified government documents he used to deceive the victim.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2SxQ6aZbK2Q>

- 3 wildlife dealers arrested – Cameroon National Radio – Regional News. 3 well known dealers were arrested in the Kurt village in Nwa – Donga Mantung Division in the North West Region for illegally killing and trading in 3 chimpanzees.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-5\\_YuVZlhDY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-5_YuVZlhDY)