

The Last Great Ape Organization – LAGA

July 2015 Report



Highlights

- **2 ape skull traffickers arrested but were curiously released by the Regional Delegate without prosecution on grounds that the skulls were very old.**
- **3 ivory trafficking suspects arrested with 2 kg illicit gold, in an important link between the two illegal trades.**
- **LAGA first semester report covering January – June 2015 published online**

General

This month was marked by the release without prosecution of **two chimpanzee skull traffickers** by a senior wildlife official after their arrest and the arrest of gold traffickers.

During the first operation, **2 traffickers** were arrested this month in **Buea, South West Region** for illegal possession and commercialisation of **chimpanzee skulls** but the case was never prosecuted. Curiously enough, after the arrest of the traffickers who were found red-handed, illegally trafficking in the ape skulls, the Regional Delegate decided to release the traffickers after the writing of the complaint report and refused to prosecute them on grounds that the skulls were very old. This is clear breach of procedures and the Minister was informed about the situation and requested to bring the procedure back on the rails as demanded by the law

Later in the month, **3 ivory trafficking suspects** were arrested and 2 Kg of **illicit gold** found in their possession. While they will not be prosecuted for ivory trafficking, they will be prosecuted for gold trafficking. This is an important case linking the wildlife trafficking with gold trafficking.

The first semester report covering activities carried out with the period January – June 2015 was completed and published online.

Investigations

- **19 investigations** of varying lengths were carried out in 7 **Regions** of Cameroon - Littoral, East, West, Centre, Nord West, South West and South Regions.
- Good investigations in Buea led to the arrest of two dealers in possession of 4 chimp skulls
- Good investigation in Abong Mbang led to arrest of three suspects who were being investigated for their connection with ivory trafficking and were found with illicit gold.
- An investigator from Senegal completed a month-long training period in the department.

Operation

1 operation carried out this month with MINFOF **arresting 2 traffickers**

- **01/07/15 – 2 traffickers arrested with 4 chimpanzee skulls in Buea, South West.** Curiously enough, after an arrest of the traffickers who were found red-handed, illegally trafficking in the ape skulls, the Regional Delegate decided to release the traffickers after the writing of the complaint report and refused to prosecute them on grounds that the skulls were very old. This is clear breach of procedures and the Minister was informed about the situation and requested to bring the procedure back on the rails as demanded by the law.
- A second operation targeting members of a ring of ivory traffickers was carried out but illicit gold was recovered instead of ivory as the targets according to initial plans were attempting to sell ivory and later decided to sell the gold they had in their possession first. This investigation was a continuation after the arrest of two traffickers last month in Yaounde for ivory trafficking. The matter was immediately handed over to the gendarmerie brigade that has the competence to continue prosecution. While they will not be prosecuted for ivory trafficking, they will be prosecuted for gold trafficking. This is an important case linking wildlife trafficking with gold trafficking.

Legal

- LAGA legal department carried out **15 missions** out of Yaounde- Centre Region: 3 in Kribi (South) 1 in Djoum (South), 1 in Abong Mbang (East), 1 in Batouri (East), 1 in Dschang (West), 2 in Douala (Littoral), 1 in Edea (Littoral), 1 in Bafia (Centre), 2 in Limbe (South West) and 2 in Buea (South West).
- There are **38 dealers behind bars this month**: 11 in East Region, 8 in Centre region, 6 in Littoral Region, 3 in South Region, 2 in North West Region and 8 in South West Region.
- **40 cases** were followed up by the legal department this month.
- **33 cases** were scheduled and tried in court this month.
- **Prosecutions**: 2 Judgments were obtained this month.
 - 15/07/2015: The Douala Court of First Instance – Littoral, convicted **Yende Abdou Dalilou** to **1 year suspended imprisonment term for 3 years** and to pay **5.360.000 CFA F as damages and fines**. He was arrested in Douala for illegal possession and circulation of 44 sculptured ivory pieces.

- 21/7/2015: The Kribi Court of First Instance – South, convicted **Akono Bekale** to pay **100,000 CFA F as Fines, 600,000 CFA F as Damages** and **3,750 FCFA as cost fees**. He was arrested in Campo for illegal possession and circulation of 6 sea turtle shells.

Media front

- **11 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to written press, radio and internet including: 7 written press material (3 in English 4 in French), 3 radio talk shows all in English, and 1 internet publication in French.
- **Guests include:** The former director of Garoua wildlife school, and the regional coordinator of ICRAF.
- **Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including:** Limbe sea turtle traffickers hearing, , Yaounde arrest of ivory trafficker and sellers..
- 6 media pieces in English and 5 in French making a percentage of 54.6% in English and 45.4% in French.
- The first semester report covering activities from January to June 2015 was completed and put online.

External Relations and Policy

- On fostering activism, the deputy director attended a consultative meeting organised by Cameroon's election body to discuss with stakeholders of the electoral process including government, political parties, civil society organisations and special guests, the ongoing voter registration process.
- He equally held two meetings whose objectives was to finalise groundwork for the running of a pangolin mentor programme in Cameroon under the auspices of former director of Garoua wildlife school. The second meeting included Nancy Gelman of the US Fish and Wildlife Service.
- The deputy director, the head of the legal and investigations department held a meeting with two NGO officials from Moloudou, East on the recent ivory fraud scandal currently ongoing in the town where dozens of ivory tusks disappeared after their seizure. These two officials claim they discovered the fraud and blew the whistle and are now being threatened and molested.

Management

- Preparations and arrangements for the stay of a Senegalese investigator who was in the country under the EAGLE exchange programme were carried out.
- Carried out changes and modifications with investigators online activity and accounts to ensure online security and protecting their cover in social networks.

Activism Front

Security Guidelines

- The deputy director, considering the dangers of activism and the necessity of protecting our security, carried out a presentation prepared by the monitoring and evaluation officer of the Central Coordination Unit. The presentation identifies the various security threats members of the various project teams could face and how to deal with these threats. The presentation identifies mainly online security issues and the dangers of social networks which could easily blow open any cover, especially those of the investigators. It also lists a series of steps and measures which must be undertaken for further protection.

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/Actiwithvism/tabid/77/Default.aspx>.

EAGLE Front

- The organizational development officer of EAGLE prepared a presentation on the role of the Central Coordination Unit within the network and this was presented to the entire LAGA team by the deputy director with explanations and illustrations done.
- A short pre-interview was carried out by the deputy director with a candidate based in Cameroon for the finance officer position and the report forwarded to the CCU's organizational development officer.
- Discussions on the EAGLE Exchange Programme were carried out and proposals for exchange of personnel for the month of August were done.

Finance

In preparation and would be made available soon as possible.

This Month in Pictures



Two traffickers at regional wildlife office after their arrest for trafficking in chimpanzee skulls, would be released, through breach of legal procedures, by a senior wildlife official – the regional delegate



Chimp skulls at wildlife office seized from two traffickers in Buea, South West



One of three suspects arrested for illegal possession of gold following an ivory investigation that targeted a trafficking ring



2 kg of illicit gold seized in place of ivory from suspects who were investigated for their connection to an ivory ring. While the traffickers will not be prosecuted for ivory trafficking, they will be prosecuted for gold trafficking. This is an important case linking the wildlife trafficking with gold trafficking.

Link of this month

[Ivory Trafficker arrested in Douala](#)



Ivory Trafficker arrested in Douala

A 39-year-old man was arrested on June 18, 2015 by wildlife officials from the Littoral Regional Delegation of Forestry and Wildlife as he a

[View on cameroonmirror.com](#)

Preview by Yahoo

<http://cameroonmirror.com/ivory-trafficker-arrested-in-douala/>