

The Last Great Ape Organization – LAGA July 2021 Report



Highlights

- **3 traffickers arrested during 3 operations with pangolin scales, leopard skins and mandrills.**
- **A pangolin scales trafficker arrested in Yaounde with 331kg pangolin scales and 3 leopard skin**
- **A primate trafficker arrested in Kribi with a live mandrill**
- **Another primate trafficker arrested in Djoum with a live baby mandrill**
- **The Deputy Director was guest on CRTV News channel during a prime time news programme.**

General

The month was marked by the **arrest of 3 traffickers with 331kg of pangolin scales, leopard skins and mandrills**

A pangolin scales trafficker arrested in one of the most dangerous neighbourhoods in Yaounde with 3 leopard skins and 331kg of pangolin scales. The pangolin scales were packed in 32 sacks and found in several storerooms during the crackdown on a regional criminal group. The Briqueterie neighbourhood is known to be hiding several wildlife traffickers in Cameroon's capital city. The arrest is part of an intricate investigations into this major criminal group that has tentacles in the Central African sub region and in Nigeria.

A trafficker arrested and a mandrill rescued in Kribi, South Region. He is a city council worker with connections to high officials in a popular seaside resort town in Cameroon. The female was found chained to a very inhospitable cage and placed in open space at the residence of the trafficker. She was immediately released and moved to the Yaounde zoo for further care.

A trafficker arrested and another mandrill rescued in Djoum in the South Region. The animal was weak, fragile and malnourished. A cord that was tied around the waist of the little female inflicted injuries on her and left a gaping wound. Immediately, the rescue team released the animal of the unbearable chain and instant first aid measures applied. This is the fourth baby mandrill that has been rescued this year.

The Deputy Director was guest on CRTV News channel programme Twilight to discuss the arrest of a pangolin scales trafficker with links to Nigeria.

Investigations

- **15 investigation missions in 5 out of 10 Regions** of Cameroon including: Littoral, West, South, Centre and East Regions.
- Good information from an informant **in Kribi** led to the arrest of a primate trafficker and a **live mandrill seized in Kribi**.
- Good investigation in **Melen village via Djoum** led to the arrest of a primate trafficker and a **baby mandrill seized in Melen-Djoum**
- Good investigation in collaboration with the CCU led to the arrest of a trafficker with **331kg of pangolin scales and 3 leopard skins in the Briqueterie neighborhood in Yaounde**

Investigations Table

Investigation Missions	Regions	No. of Operations	No of traffickers arrested
10	5	3	3

Operation

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

7/7/2021 – A trafficker arrested in Kribi, South Region with a live mandrill. The female mandrill was found chained to a very inhospitable cage and placed in open space at the residence of the trafficker. She was immediately released and moved to the zoo for further care. The trafficker bought the animal from a small town called Bipindi, situated some 78km from Kribi. He was advised to hand over the animal to wildlife officials but he refused, rather opting to sell the her.

14/7/2021 – A trafficker arrested in Djoum in the South Region with another live mandrill. The trafficker was arrested at Melen, a village not far from Djoum and the animal sustained injuries inflicted by a cord that was tied around the waist of the little female. Immediately, the rescue team released the animal of the unbearable chain and instant first aid measures applied. A veterinarian was brought to apply treatment to the animal before she was moved to the Yaounde zoo for special care and comfort. He worked in collaboration with a poacher who is on the run, to get the mandrill which he intended to travel to Djoum to sell before his arrest.

21/7/2021 – a trafficker arrested in Yaounde in the Centre Region with 331.55kg of pangolin scales and 3 leopard skins, following a wildlife crime investigation carried out in close collaboration with the CCU and other partners. He was found in possession of 32 bags of pangolin scales and 3 leopard skins hidden in several storerooms at the Briqueterie neighbourhood in Yaounde. The neighbourhood is known to hide several wildlife law offenders and their illegal

products. The arrest is part of an intricate investigations into this major criminal group that has tentacles in the Central African sub region and in Nigeria. It could provide a trove of valuable information into the ring that involves several traffickers including some closely related family members. The trafficking ring had regularly been sending huge quantities of pangolin scales to Nigeria. Some of its members are based near the Cameroon, Gabon, and Equatorial Guinea borders raising possibility that some of the contraband is coming in from these countries.

Operations Table

<i>No of Operations</i>	<i>Regions</i>	<i>No of Traffickers Arrested</i>	<i>Contraband</i>
3	2	3	331.55kg of pangolin scales, 2 live mandrills and 3leopard skins.

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **9 missions** out of Yaounde - Centre Region: 2 in Abong-Mbang (East), 3 in Djoum (South), 1 in Ebolowa (South), 2 in Kribi (South) and 1 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 Region, and 6 in West Region.
- **28 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **24 cases** were scheduled in court this month.
- **1 trafficker** was convicted this month.
- **Prosecutions**: There was a court ruling this month.
- **28/07/2021**: The Abong-Mbang Court of First Instance found the accused **NFENJOU YAYA guilty and sentenced him 2 months in prison and to pay 2,285,000 FCFA as damages.**

He was arrested in Dimako on the 03/06/2021 for illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of 58kg 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	1	2 months	0	0	28

Media

- **67** media pieces were produced and pushed to the media including: TV, written press, radio, and internet. That is, 10 TV productions (5 in French, 3 in English & 2 in Cameroon Pidgin English), 28 written press (15 in English and 13 in French), 19 radio news flashes (11 in English and 8 in French) and, 10 internet publications (6 in French and 4 in English).
- Interviews and quotes were from: The Centre Regional Control Chief of Brigade at the Delegation of Forestry and Wildlife, the Divisional Officer of Yaounde 1, the Commander of Nlongkak Gendarmerie Brigade, the Director and the Deputy Director of LAGA.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including: The Dschang arrest of 4 traffickers with 3 leopard skins and a crocodile skin, the Mintom arrest of a mandrill trafficker, the Djoum arrest of another trafficker with a baby mandrill, the city council worker arrest in Kribi with a mandrill, and the Yaounde arrest of a trafficker with 331 kg of pangolin scales and 3 leopard skins.
- 33 media pieces were produced in the English language, 32 in the French language and 2 in Cameroon Pidgin English making 49% in the English, 48% in the French and, 3% in Pidgin English.
- The Deputy Director was a guest on prime-time news programme on the channel CRTV News. The national TV channel broadcast the arrest of a pangolin trafficker with 331kg of pangolin scales.
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Media table

<i>No of media pieces</i>	TV	Radio	Newspapers	Internet
67	10	19	28	10

External Relations and Policy

- The Deputy Director joined a one-month long US State Department's International Visitor Leadership Programme. The theme of this session is Combatting Wildlife Trafficking; it is being done virtually because of the Covid 19 pandemic.
- The Deputy Director held a zoom meeting with Lucie Bird of Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime to discuss wildlife trafficking hotspots and routes in the country.

- He did a presentation on the role of the media in the enforcement of wildlife law during a training for environmental journalists.
- The Head of the Legal Department held a meeting with the State Counsel of Kribi on legal strategies on a matter pending before the court and he equally met with the State Counsel of Djoum for a matter pending before the Djoum court.
- Accompanied by a legal adviser, he held a meeting with the State Counsel of Yaounde Centre Administratif following an operation to discuss case strategies.
- A legal adviser had a meeting with the State Counsel of Abong Mbang to discuss legal strategies concerning the matter pending before the court, while a second legal adviser had a meeting with the State Counsel of Douala Bonanjo for the same purpose.

Management

- The auditors from Moore Stephens started the yearly auditing with finance and management that prepared all technical and logistical requirements involved in the auditing operation.

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/Activism/tabid/77/Default.aspx>.

Presentation: Due to the Covid-19 situation the number of presentations to be carried out have been reduced.

Finance

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

Link of the month

Voice of America, the renowned American broadcaster published on its website, the story of the arrest of a trafficker with 331kg of pangolin scales and 3 leopard skins in Yaounde. The report highlights the international dimension of the illegal activity with links to Nigeria and other sub regional countries. The was arrested in one of the most dangerous neighborhoods in Yaounde and bags of pangolin scales and leopard skins were discovered and seized by wildlife and gendarmerie officials.

<https://www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/cameroon-police-intercept-pangolin-scales-trafficked-3-central-african-states>

This Month in Pictures



Mandrill seized from a city council worker (above and left)



Arrested in a Yaounde for involvement in cross border trafficking (left)



Mandrill rescued from probable death from hands of trafficker (right)