

The Last Great Ape Organization – LAGA

December 2020 Report



Highlights

- **6 traffickers arrested during 2 operations dismantling an ivory trafficking network in the East of the country**
- **2 arrested in Bertoua during first operation with 4 ivory tusks and further investigations led to the arrest of 4 others in Yokadouma.**
- **3 including an ex-military man arrested in connection with the trafficking of 70kg pangolin scales in Batouri, East Region**
- **A live mandrill rescued and animal trafficker arrested in Kribi, South Region**
- **The Deputy Director did a presentation on the legal procedure relating to the prosecution of wildlife offenders during a TRAFFIC organised workshop in Douala.**
- **The entire LAGA team went on annual vacation and end of year activities were carried out. Office reopens in January 2021**
- **A super volunteer came to the end of her volunteering period with us after spending over 3 months working with the various departments of the organization.**

General

This month was marked by the arrest of **10 traffickers**.

6 wildlife traffickers arrested in Bertoua and Yokadouma in the East Region for ivory trafficking. The criminal gang was dismantled during two separate operations. During the first operation, 2 traffickers were arrested in Bertoua with 4 ivory tusks and follow up investigations by the police led to the arrest of 4 others in Yokadouma. They are connected to the trafficking of ivory from the east of the country to Nigeria. Among those arrested is a Nigerian national who is a repeat offender and had served jail term for ivory trafficking.

3 traffickers arrested with 70kg of pangolin scales in Batouri. Among the 3 arrested is an ex-military man who protected the gang that was organized around one experienced pangolin scales trafficker. This seizure, a snapshot of the ongoing trade of these criminals, represents probably more than 200 slaughtered pangolins.

A live animal trafficker arrested and young mandrill safely rescued in Kribi. As often is the case, the young animal lived in a filthy small cage. Earlier, another mandrill the animal trafficker tried to sell died in her possession

The Deputy Director did a presentation on the prosecution procedure during TRAFFIC organised workshop that focused on presenting a new project that focus on strengthening the capacity of wildlife law enforcement.

Investigations

- **18 investigation missions** were carried out in **4 Regions** out of the 10 Regions of Cameroon including the Centre, East, Littoral and South Regions.
- Good investigation in **Ntui** led to the arrest of **2 ivory traffickers** with 4 elephant tusks weighing 30kg in **Bertoua**, further investigations led to the arrest of 4 accomplices in **Yokadouma**.
- Good investigation in **Mindourou** led the arrest of **3 traffickers** with 70kg of pangolin scales in Batouri.
- Credible information from an informant in **Kribi** led to the rescue of a baby mandrill and the arrest of a trafficker in **Kribi**.

Investigations Table

Investigation Missions	Regions	No. of Operations	No of traffickers arrested
18	4	3	10

Operation

An operation carried out with MINFOF this month **arresting one trafficker**.

02/12/2020 – 2 traffickers arrested with 4 ivory tusks in Bertoua and 4 more arrested the next day in Yokadouma. One of the traffickers arrested is a Nigerian national who had been the target of law enforcement and had served jail term for ivory trafficking. He is one of the backbones in the criminal gang that moves ivory from the East Region, across the country to Nigeria. One of the traffickers travelled from Yokadouma to Bertoua with the ivory and was arrested as he arrived the residence of one of the suspects who was also arrested. The gang proved difficult to break and was very cautious in their undertakings.

03/12/2020 – 3 traffickers including an ex-military man arrested in Batouri with 70kg of pangolin scales. Under the protection of the former soldier, they travelled from Mindourou to Batouri and were arrested shortly before their planned transaction to sell the scales could go ahead. They activated a host of smaller traffickers and poachers who supplied the pangolin scales in and around Mindourou. The scales were carefully back in four bags.

10/12/2020 - A live animal trafficker arrested and young mandrill safely rescued. The young and hungry animal was immediately provided first aid care and food as it thirstily clung to a water bottle. As often is the case, the young animal lived in a filthy small cage. Earlier, another mandrill the animal trafficker tried to sell died in her possession

Operations Table

No of Operations	Regions	No of Traffickers Arrested	Contraband
3	2	10	4 ivory tusks, 70kg pangolin scales A live mandrill

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **11 missions** out of Yaounde - Centre Region: 1 in Foubot (West), 3 in Bertoua (East), 3 in Batouri (East), 1 in Abong-Mbang (East), 1 in Kribi (South), 1 in Ambam (South) and 1 in Maroua (Far North).
- There are **22 traffickers behind bars this month**: 11 in East region, 2 in Centre region, 1 in Littoral region, 2 in South region and 6 in West region.
- **32 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **28 cases** were scheduled in court this month.
- **2 traffickers** were convicted this month.
- **Prosecutions**: There was a court ruling this month.
 - **22/12/2020**: The Batouri Court of First Instance found the accused **ZOLA BEINA Roland non guilty and NDAYA Jean Balise, NSANGOU guilty**. **NDAYA Jean Balise and NSANGOU were sentenced to pay 100.000 FCFA each as fine and 2.000.000 FCFA jointly as damages**.

They were arrested in Batouri on the 03/12/2020 for the illegal possession of 70 kg of pangolin scales.

- **Appeal**: An appeal has been filed this month in the case of **ZOLA BEINA Roland, NDAYA Jean Balise and NSANGOU** in the East Court of Appeal.

Legal Table

No of Missions (Out of Centre Region)	No of Court Judgements	No of Traffickers Given Prison Sentence	Prison term (in months)	No of Traffickers Sanctioned (No prison sentence)	No of Appeals lodged	No of Cases Tried in Courts
11	1	0	0	1	1	28

Media

- **28 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to written press, internet and radio including: 14 written press materials (7 in English and 7 in French), 8 internet publications (6 in French and 2 in English), and 6 radio news flashes (3 in English and 3 in French).
- Subjects focused this month on wildlife law enforcement including: The court judgment of three traffickers arrested with 26kg of ivory tusks in Douala, and the Bertoua arrest of six traffickers with four ivory tusks.
- 16 media pieces in French language and 12 in English language making a percentage of 57.14% in French and 42.8% in English.

Media Table

No of Media Pieces	TV	Radio	Newspapers	Internet
28	0	6	14	8

External Relations and Policy

- The Deputy Director did a presentation on the legal procedure relating to the prosecution of wildlife offenders during a TRAFFIC organised workshop in Douala that focused on introducing an INL funded project that shall work to strengthening the capacity of law enforcement in the country.
- The Head of the Legal Department held a meeting with the state counsel of Bertoua to discuss legal matters concerning cases pending in the courts and a legal adviser equally held various meetings with the state counsels of Ambam and Foubot to discuss legal issues on cases in courts within their respective jurisdictions. She was joined by a super volunteer to hold a meeting with the state counsel of Kribi to discuss strategies in carrying out an operation and a second legal adviser held a meeting with the state counsel in Bertoua and Batouri respective to discuss issues related to matters pending at the courts.

Management

- End of year activities were successfully carried and this included the sharing of Christmas gifts to every member of the team and a traditional end of year lunch in a restaurant. The entire team was roundly congratulated for their resilience and hard work during the year that witnessed the Covid 19 pandemic hampering the functioning of normal life and wished season greetings from the management department.
- A super volunteer came to the end of her period with us after spending over 3 months working with the various departments of the organization. She was given a befitting send off.

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>.

Link of the month

The online news site Africtelegraph focused this month on the arrest of six people in connection to ivory trafficking in the East Region. They were arrested in Bertoua and Yokadouma with four ivory tusks.

<https://africtelegraph.com/cameroun-arrestation-de-six-trafiquants-presumes-divoire/>

Finance

Please check LAGA website www.laga-enforcement.org for monthly financial reports.

This Month in Pictures



One of 6 gang members arrested for ivory trafficking in Bertoua, East, is taken to police station.



4 ivory tusks were seized from gang that has connections to Nigeria.



Woman arrested for trafficking in mandrills (above). Baby mandrill rescued (below)



Arrested for pangolin scales trafficking in the East, prosecution proceedings to become against them, one is an e soldier (above and below)

