

THE LAST GREAT APE ORGANIZATION, CAMEROON LAGA

FIRST SEMESTER REPORT JANUARY - JUNE 2019



Executive Summary

LAGA's collaboration with MINFOF produced tangible results in the fields of investigation, arrest, legal prosecution and media exposure, during the first semester of 2019. The focus was on intensifying wildlife law enforcement operations principally against the trafficking in pangolin scales and ivory while emphasis was equally placed on expanding government collaboration. These activities included relations with the government and international bodies, the signing of a protocol agreement with Customs and the setting up of a committee to oversee the implementation of the agreement, meetings with regional customs officials and follow up of seizures made by customs. The EAGLE network's Central Coordination Unit (CCU) continued to provide vital technical and organisation support that facilitated several operations resulting in a significant number of arrests. The results of the semester witnessed improvements in both the quality and numbers of those arrested, the first strong indication of the improved standards of the various departments concerned. Trafficking in pangolin scales, ivory and other wildlife contraband was targeted and one major trafficking network stretched over CAR Cameroon and Nigeria was dismantled. Large quantities of ivory and pangolin scales were seized and a baby chimp was rescued in another operation.

22 major traffickers were arrested at a rate of one per 9 days, approximately 91 % stayed behind bars from the day of arrest. Corruption was observed and combated in a number of the cases, including an arrest of a police officer. Accordingly, 22 new cases were brought to the courts. 22 traffickers were found guilty and the courts ordered the payment of damages totalling 154,500,000 F CFA (about \$309,000) to MINFOF by the convicted traffickers. Media exposure was at a rate of more than one media piece per day.

The EAGLE network achieved remarkable results as 105 traffickers were arrested across 8 countries. A French super volunteer was trained in the various departments during a five-week period and he later moved to Ivory Coast for the same purpose.

The Deputy Director held several meetings with wildlife and diplomatic officials in Yaounde and with many other stakeholders within the wildlife law enforcement domain.

The work of LAGA was supported by: Wildcat, US Fish and Wildlife Service, AVAAZ, Dutch Gorilla Foundation, The Born Free Foundation, NABU International Foundation for Nature, No Wildlife Crime, Remembering Wildlife

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LAST GREAT APE ORGANISATION, CAMEROON (LAGA)
SEMESTER REPORT
January - June 2019

OVERVIEW

Investigations

- A total of 94 investigation missions (of varying lengths) were carried out in 7 regions.

Operations

- Operations were carried out in 5 regions arresting 22 major traffickers resulting in 22 court cases at a rate of 1 per 9 days. LAGA provided legal assistance in 4 other cases following arrest of 2 traffickers by the customs with ivory, pangolin scales in Meiganga and African grey parrots in Kirbi and 2 other traffickers by the police with pangolin scales in Douala.
- Operations on pangolin scales and ivory accounted for 69% of arrests while the remaining 31% were shared among chimp, lion and leopard parts operations.
- The rate of imprisonment of arrested offenders was 91%.
- A major trafficking network stretched over CAR, Cameroon and Nigeria was dismantled with the arrest of four.
- A baby chimpanzee was rescued early on in January.
- A policeman was arrested with several wildlife products including lion skulls

Legal

- 22 new cases were brought to court. Many of the 22 cases began during the period have not yet reached the prosecution stage but procedures are ongoing.
- 22 traffickers were found guilty and handed prison sentences and or fines, damages and penalties. Damages amounted to some 154,500,000FCFA (about \$309,000) to be paid to MINFOF.
- 8 court judgements were passed during the 6-month period.
- A very high number of appeals (3) were lodged because of many very weak court rulings handed out by some of the courts.
- Corruption and complicity were witnessed in some of the judicial processes.

Media

- A total of 228 media pieces were produced in national media (radio, TV, written press and internet) achieved at a rate of more than one media piece per day.

Management

- The annual report of 2018 was made available online.
- One candidate started training and testing period for the position of legal adviser while an internet investigator was recruited.
- Focus was on moving the organisation to even higher levels with recruitment and upgrading of present personnel

External Relations and Policy

- Efforts to expand collaboration came to fruition with the signing of a protocol agreement with customs.
- Several meetings were held with MINFOF officials, the diplomatic community, national and international NGOs to discuss corruption issues and wildlife law enforcement etc.

- The Deputy Director alongside two other organisation heads, accompanied four visiting Representatives of the US Congress and the Ambassador to the Mefou Park.
- The Deputy Director travelled to Ndjamena where he participated at the CBFP organized ministerial conference

Strategic Highlights

- The operational focus over this period was on pangolins scales and ivory
- The strategic focus was consolidating the professional standards of the various departments and expanding of collaboration with government.
- External relations activities principally targeted high level discussions at the Ministry to tackle issues of collaboration and with diplomatic missions to improve communication and collaboration.
- New rounds of recruitment targeting two sensitive departments (legal and investigations) were initiated
- The CCU evaluated and provided strategic assistance to management and organisational functioning.
- An internal auditing was carried out to ensure high standards of financial reporting and probity.

EAGLE Activities

- A total of 105 traffickers were arrested across 9 countries of the network during this semester.
- A super volunteer was given a 5-week training and he would later move to the Ivory Coast project for the same purpose.

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Also available:

1. Annual Financial Statement 2018
2. Monthly Financial and Activity Reports January to December 2018
3. Media archive – Excel database linked to recorded media pieces
4. Photo archive for media use

For copies contact email; eric@laga-enforcement.org

NARRATIVE REPORT

This report covers the period January to June 2019 and it focuses on progress in the activities of each department notably investigations, operations, legal, media and management, strategic overview of and the impact of operations on wildlife crime in Cameroon, progress in relations with the Cameroonian government, non-governmental bodies, collaboration with international partners and non-enforcement initiatives that LAGA undertook.

1. Investigations

LAGA's investigation unit carried out 94 investigation missions in 7 regions of the country during this period. Improvements in the collaboration with all departments were made and the CCU, as usual, provided vital investigation support and guidance. The internet investigations section provided essential technical support to the various investigators and operations team and launched several investigations some of which are ongoing.

The department held several meetings with some wildlife and customs officials to build collaborative platforms; enabling effective investigations and information exchange. Meetings were held with customs and or police officials in Douala (Littoral Region), Yaounde (Centre), and in Meiganga in the Adamawa with customs and gendarmerie officials.

A new investigator. was recruited after going through the rigorous volunteer training programme and meeting up with the requirements of being a capable field investigator. It is expected that this would improve on results in the department. The head of the investigation department and his deputy carried out several training sessions for the benefit of investigators.

Investigations were not carried out in some regions of the country because of the challenging security situation in these areas and shall be covered immediately the situation gets better.

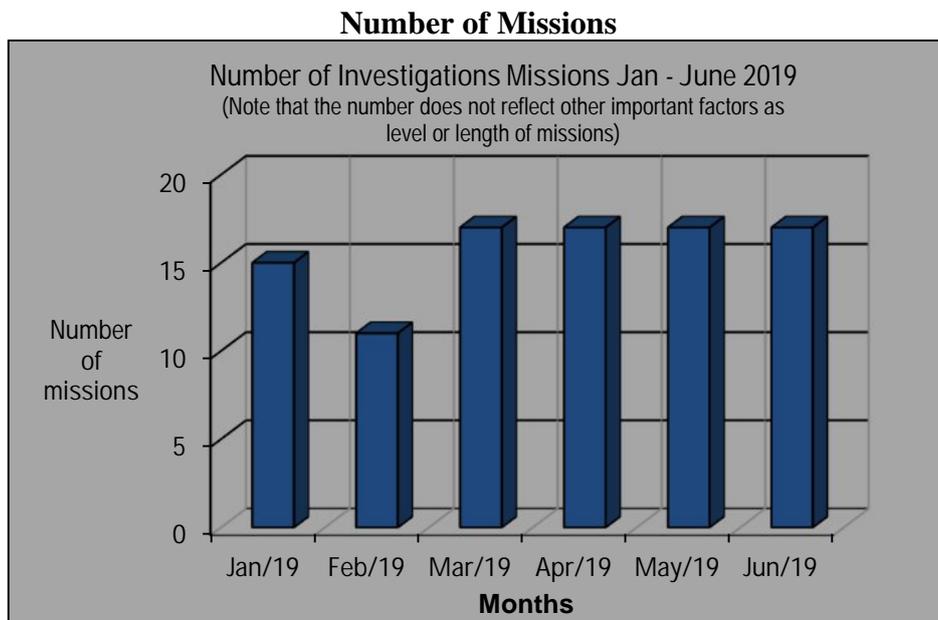


Figure 1: Number of Investigations Missions per Month

2. Operations

LAGA and the Government of Cameroon carried out operations in 5 regions against 22 individuals resulting in 22 court cases at a rate of one every 9 days. Bolder and newly initiated professional techniques were used during operation. Several pangolin scales operation were carried out and this represented 45% of those arrested, 24 % for ivory and the remaining 31% represented the operations related to the seizure of a chimpanzee, lion skulls and bones and hippo teeth.

In January, 2 traffickers were arrested in Douala, Littoral Region with a live baby chimpanzee. The couple had been planning to export the chimpanzee as they have been doing in the past with the support of one of their sons who is based in Europe. They had been trafficking live animals for a long time, shipping chimpanzees to Europe. The man claimed to have sold gorillas and chimps.

The second operation of the month saw the arrest of 4 traffickers in Douala, Littoral Region with 54kg of pangolin scales, 5 hippo teeth and 2 unidentified precious stones. The pangolin scales were packed inside 3 bags and transported in a taxi car that was watched and followed closely by one of the traffickers on a motorbike. The traffickers, who seemed to be very professional in their dealings as testified by the precaution they took in moving the scales, activated a network of poachers and smaller traffickers in towns and villages around Douala. The hippo teeth were brought in from Chad by two of the traffickers. Two of them have been in the pangolin scales business for long time.

A trafficker was arrested in Doume, East Region with 40kg of pangolin scales. He was found pulling a bag of pangolin scales out from his home. He was one of two traffickers targeted for their involvement in a pangolin trafficking ring in the area and a sudden influx of gendarmerie officers passing through the town scared one of the traffickers who immediately escaped when he saw the trucks ferrying the gendarme officers stationed in the town. The ring is known to be heavily involved in trafficking pangolin scales in large quantities in an area that is fast becoming the center for pangolin scales trafficking in the East Region. Truck drivers use the town as a resting spot and traffickers seem to be taking advantage of the presence of transport facilities that can hold bulks which is a main condition for trafficking in pangolin scales.

In February, 2 traffickers were arrested in Yaounde, Centre Region with 42kg of pangolin scales. The two are very popular with bushmeat sellers in a notorious neighbourhood that is well known for illegal trafficking in bushmeat and other parts especially pangolin scales in Yaounde. The neighbourhood has proven over the years to be very tough to tackle, with several law enforcement attempts aborted in the area. They activated a whole network of smaller poachers and traffickers in a number of towns especially Nanga Eboko and villages around the town.

The month of March saw the arrest of 4 traffickers in Douala, East Region with 73 ivory tusks and 1.7 tons of pangolin scales. The four are big time professional traffickers who have been exporting contraband to Nigeria. They activated a complicated chain of smaller traffickers and poachers in three regions of the country including Centre, East and South. Several towns and villages (Batouri, Messanmena, Ngoyla, Abong Mbang Yoko Ayos) known for being hotbeds for wildlife trafficking are among centers where they collected the contraband that was assembled and stored in Douala before export. They equally used front businesses to cover up their illegal trafficking and adopted sophisticated concealment techniques to move the products around. One of the traffickers owns a telephone shop in the Douala central market which was used as a front business and he had made trips to China. A second trafficker dealt in pepper and a local spices called "djansang". He concealed ivory and pangolin scales inside the djansang bags when transporting the contraband from the three regions where they activated several small traffickers and poachers.

In April, 3 traffickers were arrested in Sangmelima, South Region with 5 ivory tusks and an elephant tail. 5 tiny elephant tusks and a tail were seized from the traffickers who shot and killed baby elephants at the Dja Biosphere Reserve. A retired policeman's gun was used in shooting the baby elephants. The tusks were cut out of the heads of the elephants and taken to Sangmelima where the traffickers tried to sell them and this led to their arrest. 5 fresh little tusks that measured about 14 centimetres long each and weighed a total 1kg for all of the five tusks were seized. The sight of the tusks was heart-breaking and this kind of destruction was rarely seen in ivory trafficking. Over the years this reserve was protected to some extent by its natural borders such as rivers but it is now increasingly coming under attacks from traffickers who have been selecting and using very difficult entry points to discourage ecoguards from going after them, while they butcher elephants and other wildlife in the reserve.

May month saw a senior police constable arrested in Yaounde with an ivory tusk, leopard skin and 5 lion skulls. The policeman who was in charge of protecting the Bouba Ndjidda National Park travelled more than 1000km from the park with products hidden inside his car and arrived Ngaoundere where he boarded a commercial bus that took him to Yaounde. He was sent on duty to protect the park but organized a poaching ring that sourced wildlife products from animals poached in the park. He used his police cover and credentials to protect traffickers in that part of the country while also ferrying wildlife products to various cities.

4 traffickers were arrested in Tonga, West Region with 96.5kg of pangolin scales. The group that was made of two women and two men, was very organized and ran a network specializing in pangolin scales and was the main part of a chain that connected pangolin scales traffickers from big cities to several local traffickers and bushmeat sellers in the area.

As a part of LAGA's newly established collaboration with customs and following the arrest by customs of a long time Ghanaian parrot trafficker with 20 African grey parrots, LAGA assisted customs and wildlife officials with interrogation and prosecution procedures. The repeat offender has been arrested twice for the same offence and released by officials with no prison sentence. In 2015 he was arrested in the South with a consignment of African grey parrots and released. In 2017 he was arrested with an accomplice in Yaounde with over 200 parrots but was released. These two incidents explained why he could feel free to continue trafficking in parrots. He is connected to an international group specialized in the illegal export of parrots from the country to Europe, Asia and other African countries.

In June, a trafficker was arrested in Douala with 95kg of pangolin scales. He belongs to an international network of pangolin scales traffickers that was the focus of an operation last year but seemingly the network was not totally dismantled. He linked up traffickers in Cameroon with those based in Bangui in the Central African Republic thereby facilitating the illegal wildlife trade from the Central African Republic. The pangolin scales are sent through trucks plying the Douala – Bangui corridor and sold in Douala. The notorious network has been trafficking in several tons of pangolin scales and at least one of its members who was arrested last year and released was connected to the present deal. The modus operandi for these international trafficking networks is simple, and consist of buying the scales from smaller traffickers in Cameroon, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and exporting to Nigeria via Cameroon.

Operations Table

<i>Number of Operations</i>	<i>Number of Traffickers</i>	<i>Contraband</i>
8	22	54kg pangolin scales, 40kg pangolin scales, a live baby chimpanzee 42kg pangolin scales, 73 ivory tusks weighing 150kg, 1.7 tons pangolin scales, 5 ivory tusks and an elephant tail, 96,5kg pangolin scales, an ivory tusk, a leopard skin, 5 lion skulls, 95kg pangolin scales

Figure 2: Operation Table

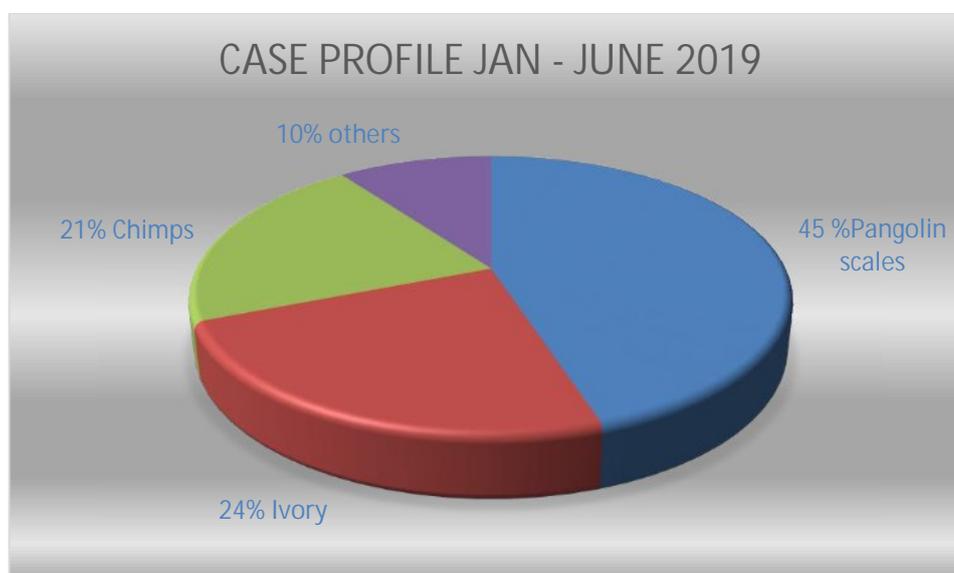


Figure 3: Operations profile

3. Legal

A total of 22 new cases reached the court and the cases joined old cases that were scheduled, followed-up, tried in various courts and jail visits were organized. LAGA provided legal assistance in 4 other cases following arrest of 4 traffickers; one by customs in Meiganga with 5 ivory tusks and pangolin scales, another by customs again with 20 Africa grey parrots in Meiganga and 2 others by police in Douala with pangolin scales. Most of the cases initiated within this period have not yet reached the judgement stage with 91% imprisoned during trial. Two traffickers arrested during this period were not prosecuted but simply released. Corruption and complicity in the handling of some wildlife cases was witnessed.

A total of 50 missions were carried out of the Centre Region for follow-up of new cases and the creation and strengthening of relations with judicial authorities. More emphasis as a direct result of operations was on pangolin scales that produced close to half of all the cases while ivory cases followed in second.

During the period, 8 court judgements were passed with 22 traffickers found guilty and 12 of them given a prison sentence while 1 received a suspended sentence and 9 others ordered to pay fines and damages. The high number of weak sentences account for the high number of appeals, 3 appeals out

of the 8 rulings, as 5 suspects were simply declared not guilty. A total of 154,500,000 FCFA (about \$309,000) was awarded as damages.

The Douala – Bonanjo Court of First Instance found the accused HAPPY Mathias, NGHOUROUPOUO Shouiboua and TUMUYA Seidou guilty as charged and sentenced them as follows: HAPPY Mathias 2 months imprisonment term; NGHOUROUPOUO Shouiboua and TUMUYA Seidou to pay 50,000 FCFA (about \$100) as fines each. They were also ordered to pay 100,000,000 FCFA (about \$200,000) jointly as damages. They were arrested in Douala on the 09/11/2018 for illegal possession of 472 kg of ivory tusks.

The Abong-Mbang Court of First Instance found the accused NJOYA NSANGOU Mouhamed guilty as charged and sentenced him to 6 months suspended sentence during 3 years and to pay 50,000 FCFA (about \$100) as fines and 1,500,000 FCFA (about \$3000) as damages. He was arrested in Doume for illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of 24kg of pangolin scales.

The Douala – Ndokoti Court of First Instance found the accused NDOKO Chacard, KOUNGOUE Simon Pierre, OUIINWE Sariga and NYAMSI Dipelec guilty as charged and sentenced them to 45 days imprisonment each and to pay 500,000 FCFA (about \$1000) each as fines and 10,000,000 FCFA (about \$20,000) jointly as damages. They were arrested in Douala on the 24/01/2019 for illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of 54kg of pangolin scales.

The Yaounde – Centre Administratif Court of First Instance found the accused MESSI MEDOU Jean Pierre and MBAH Timothé guilty as charged and sentenced them to 1-month imprisonment each. The court also sentenced them to pay 100,000 FCFA (about \$200) each as fines and 2,000,000 FCFA (about \$4000) jointly as damages. They were arrested in Yaounde on the 20/02/2019 for illegal possession of 42kg of pangolin scales.

The Abong-Mbang Court of First Instance found the accused NGUELE Jean and MINKANG ABONDO not guilty, but the Court found the accused NGONO NGOUE Julienne, ATEK Elodie and MPOUMEDA MPANDA Thierry guilty and sentenced them to pay 100,000 FCFA (about \$200) each as fines, 41,500 FCFA (about \$90) each as court charges and 1,000,000 FCFA (about \$2000) jointly as damages. They were arrested in Abong-Mbang for illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of 31kg of pangolin scales.

The Douala - Bonanjo Court of First Instance found the accused ARREY ETA Morine, MBAH Jacqueline MUBANG, PEYUKKUE Mama and PEPOUNA NJIKANZIE Abdou guilty as charged and sentenced them to pay 1,000,000 FCFA (about \$2000) each as fines and 21,000,000 FCFA (about \$42,000) jointly as damages. They were arrested in Douala for the illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of 432 Kgs of pangolin scales.

The East Region Appeal Court, found the accused NJEUDJI Jules, TIKAYA Franc and TOUE Moussa Liboire guilty of illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of a live chimpanzee. They were ordered to pay 2,000,000 FCFA (about \$4000) as civil damages and 38,000 FCFA (about \$78) as court cost. They were arrested in Batouri for illegal possession and commercialization of a live chimpanzee.

The Douala - Bonaberie Court of First Instance found the accused TEGOUM Alphonse Raoul, BOUGNIA Kamta Francis and TCHAMTCHEU Francis Romuald not guilty, but the court found the accused AKANZE AKONGLO Bertrand guilty and sentenced him to 6 months imprisonment term and to pay 945,000 FCFA as fines and 15,000,000 FCFA as damages. They were arrested in Douala

on the 14/03/2019 for the illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of 156kg of ivory tusks and 1.500kg of pangolin scales.

The Bangangte Court of First Instance found the accused NYONSE NANDEP Stéphanie, ABAGNO Joséphine, NOUNKEU Romuld and BAKATCHOU FEUTEU guilty as charged and sentenced them to 22 days imprisonment term each and to pay 38,000 FCFA each as court charges and 1,000,000 FCFA jointly as damages. They were arrested in Tonga on the 23/05/2019 for the illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of 96,5kg of pangolin scales.

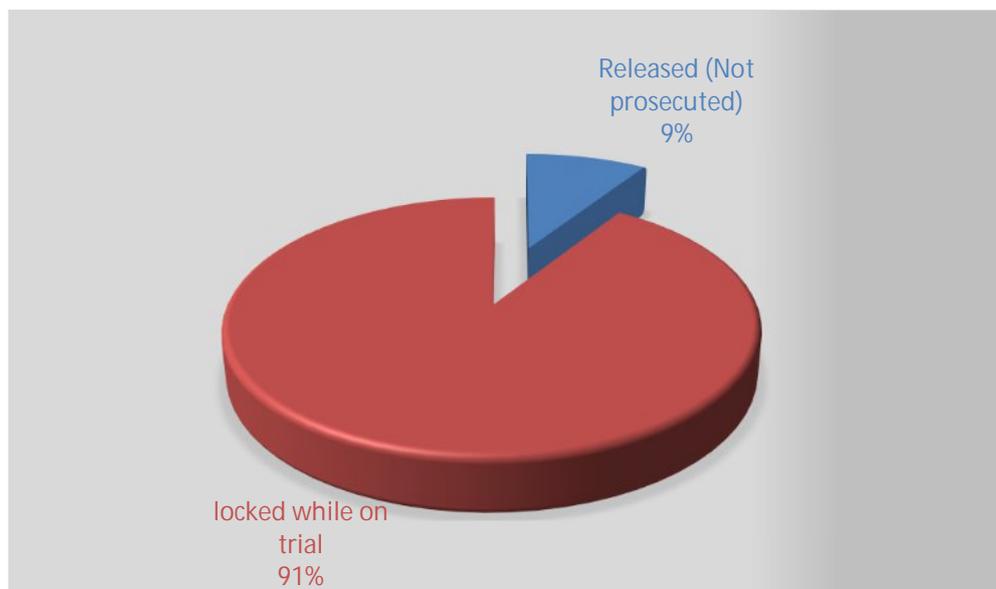


Figure 4: Rate of locking accused behind bars

4. Media

A total of 228 media pieces were produced and pushed into media including numerous articles in all media – radio, television, written press and the internet; achieved at a rate of one media piece per day. February and April months recorded the highest number of media pieces and January witnessed the lowest record because part of the month was taken up by the annual leave that was granted to all LAGA members in December 2018.

Subjects were on a broad range of wildlife law enforcement issues including all of LAGA-MINFOF operations, prosecutions and efforts aimed at improving the fight against wildlife crime. These included the Abong Mbang arrest of five people with pangolin scales; the arrest of four in Douala with pangolin scales, the arrest of a couple with a baby chimpanzee; the Doume arrest of a trafficker in pangolin scales, the Yaounde arrest of two with over 40kg of pangolin scales; the seizure of close to 2 tons of pangolin scales and 73 ivory tusks and arrest of two traffickers; the arrest of two in Yaounde with over 40kg of pangolin scales; the Tonga arrest of four traffickers with 100kg of pangolin scales; the arrest by customs of a parrot trafficker with a consignment of African grey parrots; the Sangmelima arrest of three people with ivory; the Doula court hearing of four traffickers arrested with close to 2 tons of pangolin scales and 73 ivory tusks; the arrest of a trafficker in Meiganga with over 24kg of ivory and some 12kg of pangolin scales; the Yaounde arrest of a policeman with an ivory tusk, a leopard skin, 5 fresh lion skulls, and 3 lion jawbones; the Douala arrest of a trafficker with 100kg of pangolin scales; the signing a protocol agreement between LAGA and Customs and spotlight on world pangolin day sensitization.

Interviews and quotes used in the various media pieces were from; the Kribi customs mobile unit head, Tarla Francis a wildlife specialist and consultant with ZSL, Littoral Regional Delegate of the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife and the Deputy Director of the Last Great Ape Organisation - LAGA.

The distribution of Wildlife Justice Magazine continued. Wildlife Justice is a thematic journal that focuses on wildlife law enforcement and conservation issues.

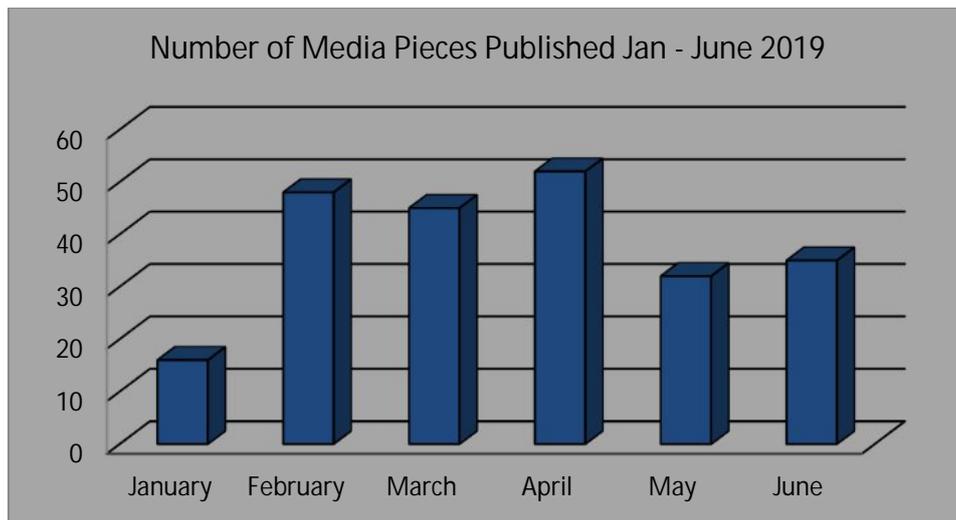


Figure 5: Number of Media Pieces Produced and Published

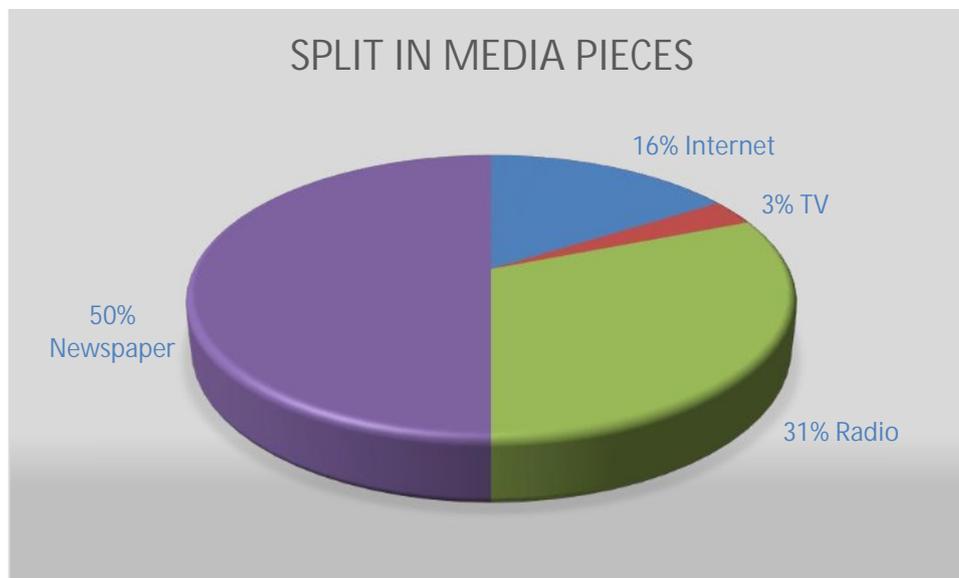


Figure 6: Split in Media Pieces

5. Management

LAGA took a critical step in the fight against wildlife crime with the signing of a protocol agreement with Customs. This was quickly followed by the setting up by the Director of Customs, of a committee comprising customs and LAGA members to follow up the implementation of the protocol agreement and a tour by LAGA members of the committee in 8 of the 10 regions of the country to inform the various customs sectors chiefs and to assist them in understanding modalities for the implementation

of the agreement. Two other regions of the country that are seared by security problems shall be visited when the situation improves.

Emphasis was put on strict respect for financial rules and procedures while an internal audit by a professional firm was carried out. Several recommendations were made by the auditing team and are being scrupulously respected and implemented while changes are continuously being made to meet the high standards of financial probity as stipulated by the EAGLE charter. These efforts were carried out in strict collaboration with the EAGLE CCU financial officer.

The Interim Director participated at a training course titled Advanced Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation and Microsoft Project Training at the Shama Consult Africa in Nairobi, Kenya.

A legal adviser successfully completed a three-month wildlife management course at the Durrell Endangered Species Management 2019 programmed offered by the Durrell Conservation Academy in New Jersey and returned to the country

Management organised several courses to upgrade LAGA members and these courses included first aid course and special self-defence courses. The last sessions for the remaining members to take the two courses shall take place during next semester.

Recruitment for various positions within the organisation continued with two volunteers recruited for the test period. An accountant, who had been recruited on a part time basis was given a full time employment. An investigator was equally recruited after successfully undergoing a full time training at the investigation department.

A French super volunteer travelled to Yaounde for a five-week training session and he was trained on the various activities of the organisation in the different departments.

LAGA finally moved into a new office with enough space to hold the growing organisation.

The annual report of 2018 was uploaded online. The electronic versions are available online on the LAGA website www.laga-enforcement.org. This is a result of teamwork involving all the departments in LAGA – Investigations, Legal, Media, Operations and Management.

A series of thought-provoking sessions of presentations and debates for the LAGA team were organised to foster activism and leadership skills. A wide range of topics including activism were presented and debated. This initiative also aims at strengthening the capacity, unity and values of the LAGA family.

6. External Relations and Policy

The Customs Director and the Deputy Director signed a protocol agreement to collaborate in the fight against wildlife crime and later on installed committee members of the Customs-LAGA joint committee put in place to oversee the implementation of the protocol agreement

The Deputy Director with the Director of ZSL and AWF accompanied four visiting Representatives and the US Ambassador to the Mefou Park where he took an opportunity to brief the distinguish guests from the US Congress on LAGA's activities and some pressing conservation needs of the country.

The Deputy Director travelled to Ndjamena where he participated at the CBFP organized ministerial conference to tackle threats posed by armed groups moving between the Sahel, Sudan and north of Equatorial Africa in protected areas and within local communities. During the meeting he met with several high authorities including the Secretary of State for Defence in charge of the Gendarmerie, a GIZ official, who is about to run a project on elephant and rhino poaching on the continent, the TRAFFIC Director, South Sudan Undersecretary at the Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism, the Regional Coordinator for Central Africa for the Global Programme for Combatting Wildlife and Forest Crime of the UNODC.

The Assistant Head of the Media and External Relations Department travelled for a short visit to the US where she participated at the International Visitor Leadership Programme that focused on the theme Combatting Corruption: Promoting Transparency and Accountability in Business.

During this period the Deputy Director held several meetings with some government and diplomatic officials including, European Union officials, the Director of Penal Affairs at MINJUSTICE, several wildlife officials, to discuss strategies for effective wildlife law enforcement.

The Deputy Director and the Head of Investigations Department visited and held meetings with customs officials of the three Northern regions, that is the Extreme Nord, North and Adamawa regions. During the visits they equally held meetings with state counsels and wildlife officials of the various regions.

The Head of the Legal Department and the Assistant Head of Investigations equally held similar meetings with customs officials in the East and Littoral Regions, with state counsels in the various regions and with wildlife officials.

The Deputy Director held a meeting with a pangolin conservationist from the Tikki Hywood Cameroon office on ways of improving pangolin conservation through sensitization. He equally held a meeting with a filmmaker to discuss possibilities of featuring a LAGA staff in a film. He held another meeting with an official from the Fondation la Tri-National de la Sangha (FTNS) to discuss the state of wildlife law enforcement in the area that covers three parks among three countries including Cameroon, Gabon and the Central African Republic.

7. LAGA and the EAGLE Network

LAGA's new model for NGO – Government collaboration establishing wildlife law enforcement, bringing about results with an innovative approach geared at changing the existing system and triggering a paradigm shift in the way NGOs tackle wildlife crime is being realised within the EAGLE network. The model is focusing on the prosecution of major traffickers, not the small-time poacher who is motivated by the city dwelling traffickers. This involves fighting head on the major obstacle to the application of the wildlife law in Africa – Corruption. LAGA's experience and model is currently operating within the EAGLE network that group 9 countries.

The replication of the LAGA model is also geared at taking cross section lessons outside of wildlife conservation; these include the fight against corruption, fostering activism, fight against child trafficking etc.

<http://www.laga-enforcement.org/Replication/tabid/166/Default.aspx>

The EAGLE network is now responsible for the replication activity of the LAGA model but LAGA continued to host training sessions in the country and in this regard, LAGA hosted a super volunteer who received training and participated in numerous field activities.

8. Fostering Activism

During this period, LAGA continued to foster activism internally and externally. Creating independent activists is one aspect that LAGA uses to foster activism. The NGO members are encouraged to develop their own projects on the various development issues of their country and are given NGO time and management time to develop the project in the vision of turning it in to an independent NGO paperbook. The function of leadership is not producing more followers but to produce more leaders.

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

Activism was focused on documentaries and presentations listed below.

Retrospections of the International Women's Day in Cameroon as a prelude to the celebration of the 2019 International Women's (something that is always celebrated in LAGA with a time for reflection every year) one of the ladies picks up the challenge and takes us through this very popular event. She describes the day as a day set aside to bring women issues to the public and it aims at empowering women through advocating for equal opportunities. This, she continued, may be translated as access to quality childhood development for young girls, elimination of harmful practices such as forced and or early marriages, discrimination against women and elimination of all forms of violence. She normatively condemns some wayward practices and celebrations done on that day by the Cameroonian woman and highlights the huge importance of the day in emphasizing the problems faced by women. The discussions were interestingly hot with some accusing women to be part of the problem and the necessity for equal opportunities and need to stop discrimination.

Female Genital Mutilations: As a continuation of the celebration of the 2019 International Women's and the earlier presentation on the retrospections of the celebration in Cameroon, another lady picks up the challenge and talks about the plight of victims of Female Genital Mutilations. She explores the cultural and historical dimensions of FGM and gives us a rare insight into how the phenomenon is spread in Africa. While some countries could have as low as 1.4 % of the female population that has suffered FGM, another African country – Guinea, has an alarming 96% rate. The causes and consequences were presented, analysed and later debated during discussions that looked at some more problems connected to trying to change an ugly tradition that is simply just denying to go away.

The Telegram (a messaging app): We are introduced to a new messaging app, which according to the presenter says is safer and more secure than what we use today for our job; WhatsApp. He indicates that this is a great tool for activists who need to communicate all the time and needs to know their backyard is being covered appropriately by a trusting software. The presenter identifies basic but important features that Telegram has different and that could indeed improve on security. Departs were on the technicalities of the software, on its merits and what may be some of its loopholes. Questions were asked on the reason behind a need to change.

Illegal Immigrations: We have witnessed over the last two decades or so, an incessant growth in illegal immigration from the continent to Europe and the presenter takes the opportunity to help us understand what is happening. He gives a historical background of the phenomenon while explaining some of the terms (immigration and emigration) associated to it. There is a lot of high risk involved

in migrating and the reasons young people would take such risks must be very strong and he explains the causes that push Africans to take the perilous journey across desert and sea to Europe. He demonstrates with the aid of maps and statistics what are the routes and who are those involved. He finally tells us what are some of the possible solutions to mitigating the problem and these are socio-politico-economic solutions with the reduction of poverty at the helm. Discussion focused on what solutions and the role of African governments in ensuring for the welfare of their citizens and elaborating policies that may mitigate the phenomenon.

The Franc CFA, a tool to control African states within the franc zone: The presentation that was done by the head of the legal department goes down memory lane, explaining how the colonial history of a currency that was forced upon African French colonies and designed singularly for the benefit of the metropole – France. It describes the changes that took place after independence and the split into the West and Central Africa franc zones. The presenter argues that it is a system that blocks economic growth for these countries and hampers their economic independence with France holding exchange reserves worth 12 billion euros for these countries. The fixed exchange rate to the euro has disadvantaged the competitiveness of these economies and France’s participation in the management of the two central banks is an absurdity considering these banks are for independent states. Criticisms of CFA F was unanimous and bitter because of the inability or the unwillingness of African leaders to strip off this currency for independent national currencies. The currency is a reminder of the hated colonial past and the master perpetuating the legacy. This is just one of the reasons France is not roundly loved by the people of Francophone Africa.

9. Strategic Overview of Wildlife Crime in Cameroon and Operations’ Impact

Beyond the number of operations and their effectiveness, there is an even more important factor in evaluating LAGA’s work – the strategic value of the operations and its impact on the illegal wildlife trade. In this regard, LAGA is choosing diversified operations, which carry an added value to expose and map the different angles of wildlife crime in Cameroon. Consequently, the LAGA-MINFOF work sheds light on the nature of illegal wildlife trade in the sub-region. The strategic focus over this period was on pangolin scales, primates (chimps and a mandrill), ivory and leopard skins.

9.1 Pangolin Scales

The intensity of the pangolins scales trade was once more witnessed during period. The illicit trade attracts every sort of trafficker because of the high margin of illicit profit. One of the main differences with ivory trafficking is the easy access to pangolin scales as compared to ivory although both trafficking is similar on many fronts. The driver is fast changing as the value of meat is not far less than the value of scales so in fact meat becomes almost a side product for the main trade driving this. Ivory traffickers are taking advantage of their vast experience in ivory trafficking to equally involve in pangolin scales trafficking. This was the case in Douala when four international traffickers were arrested with 1.7 tons of pangolin scales and 73 ivory tusks. The traffickers would move scales from the South East of the country right to Nigeria. The skills used in collecting, storing and moving huge bulk of scales learned probably from ivory trafficking was very handy here and a house search that followed the operation revealed that the house where the scales were stored was strategically placed and had very little occupancy at the time of the operation. Their knowledge of using corruption was evident and the trial that ensued resulted in an extremely lenient sentence and an outright acquittal of the suspects.

Another pangolin scales trafficker was arrested in Douala and he belonged to another group of traffickers, this time from the East border. The Douala – Bangui axes of trafficking was finally confirmed this year with the arrest of the trafficker with close to 100kg of pangolin scales in Douala. He facilitated the movement and sale of pangolin scales coming from Bangui in the Central African Republic through Kenzou in the East Region to Douala, which can now be considered the pangolin scales trafficking hub in the sub region.

As earlier indicated, the high margin of illicit revenue in pangolin scales is attracting to several kind of traffickers. Four people were arrested with close to 100kg of pangolin scales in the West and it turned out that they were organised in a group that sourced pangolin scales from local bushmeat sellers and poachers while supplying even bigger traffickers from the major cities. These were ordinary people turned pangolin scales traffickers, attracted by the huge profits to be made and the easy access to collecting the scales which were available in the locality and beyond.

9.2 Ivory

It is well known that organized ivory trade relies heavily on complicity and corruption. This was once again exemplified when four people were arrested with 73 ivory tusks weighing 153kg and 1.7 tons of pangolin scales and the trial that ensued actually liberated three of them in the awe and shock of several people who were involved in the operation. These were experienced and hardened wildlife traffickers who plied the Cameroon – Nigeria route and had been doing business for quite a long time. With the increasing emphasis on effective law enforcement in the country, many traffickers have been using the Nigeria route, either through the Southwest or the North regions, to smuggle ivory and other wildlife products to Nigeria where it is relatively easily exported.

In another ivory trafficking case, five little ivory tusks were seized from traffickers and all the ivory put together could weighed only 1kg, demonstrating the extent to which ivory trafficking has gone. These were baby elephants shot dead and the tusks were still very fresh. The damage done has been devastating and traffickers are stopping at nothing getting any kind of ivory. This also means the scarcity of tusks is becoming severe and the illegal appetite to source it is still very strong.

9.3 Chimp

A chimp was rescued in January from a couple specialized in chimp trafficking and had exported chimp to Europe with the assistance of a relative there.

10. Corruption and Wildlife Crime

LAGA has been an experiment field for methods of fighting corruption within a law enforcement and application process. All bribing attempts are documented into our case tracking systems. LAGA is not an observer of corruption; it was created to fight corruption, redirecting the positive pressures existing within the system, usually wasted in large conferences, to specific corruption attempts and the field realities that form corruption. These bribery attempts are vigorously fought against and vehemently condemned by LAGA. LAGA is not a watchdog group and not created as an observer, it fights directly whenever corrupt practices or bribery attempts have been observed.

This ongoing fight is directed towards issues that touch on corruption and bad governance. Following arrests made in January involving pangolin scales traffickers, a family member of one of the arrested, made several visits to some judicial officials handling the matter, raising grave suspicions as to the motives of such visits considering the case was enrolled and being tried already. A second corruption

attempt was observed in Doume in the East Region, still within the same month, when a pangolin scale trafficker was arrested and as law wildlife enforcement officials were establishing the offence report, they received pressure from Njoya's family members. They proposed money to the judicial police officer and the wildlife officials handling the matter who stood their ground. After witnessing the steadfast attitude of law enforcement officials, another approach consisting basically of negotiating for their release was initiated by approaching a substitute of the prosecutor.

In March, a major trafficking network was dismantled and four traffickers arrested. Their main trafficking was pangolin scales to Nigeria and while the wildlife law enforcement officials were establishing the offence report, they received pressure from one the traffickers' relation working at the Regional MINFOF Delegation. She tried to influence her colleagues to free the suspects at their level but the wildlife officials and police handling the matter stood their ground. Seeing that her colleagues could not help, she approached the LAGA team but unfortunately for her this too failed to produce any effect. The trial was strange and curious as only one of them was found guilty and given a very lenient sentence that was appealed anyway by dissatisfied wildlife officials and the procureur. Three of them were simply declared not guilty. This was received with shock and disappointment by many who worked on the case.

In April, as law wildlife enforcement officials were establishing the offence report at the police station, when two were arrested with 5 elephant tusks, they received pressure from the main trafficker's family. They suggested to the gendarmes to find a way to stop the matter at their level but wildlife officials and police refused. After witnessing the steadfast attitude of law enforcement officials, they approached the LAGA team but equally failed.

Following the arrest of a policeman in Yaounde in May and as wildlife law enforcement officials were establishing the offence report, some police officials came to Odza Gendarmerie Brigade to pressure the gendarmes to forward the file and procedure to them but the brigade commander was firm and refused to comply to their request and decided to rather collaborate with the competent authority, that is MINFOF officials.

The case in Tonga where four were arrested for trafficking in close to 100kg of pangolin scales is a typical example of what happens in the country almost always when traffickers are arrested. Pressure was put by family members on law wildlife enforcement officials writing the offence report at the delegation (there was a gendarmerie brigade commander among the family members). They suggested that the MINFOF divisional delegate should find a way to stop the matter at his level but the wildlife officials handling the matter refused. Failing to secure any release, they tried another classical and routine approach consisting basically of approaching the Senior state counsel and his team handling the matter. but this too failed to produce any effect. Cameroonians generally do not give up when trying to influence decisions in favour of their family members. The trial that followed was bizarre and at the end of the procedure the punishment for the traffickers was less than a month – 22 days only.

Annex I – List of Cases Semester 1, 2019

Case No	Operation date	Location	Case name	Offence	Profile	Remarks	Int. Connection	Status
603	23/01/2019	Douala Littoral	NGO Pagbe Charlotte	illegal possession of 1 chimpanzee	Herbalist Trafficker	A couple involved in the traffic of apes	None	free while on trial
604	23/01/2019	Douala Littoral	POUGA Hans	illegal possession of 1 chimpanzee	Unemployed	He claimed to have sold gorillas and chimps in the past	None	free while on trial
605	24/01/2019	Douala Littoral	NDOKO Chacard Claude	illegal possession and commercialization of 54 Kg of pangolin scales and 5 hippopotamus teeth	Commercial bike rider	He is the one responsible for seeking customers for the purchase of products. He is a regular trafficker in wildlife	Chad	locked while on trial
606	24/01/2019	Douala Littoral	KOUNGOUE Simon Pierre	illegal possession and commercialization of 54 Kg of pangolin scales and 5 hippopotamus teeth	Commercial bike rider	A member of a big network involved in pangolins scales. He is in charge of collecting pangolin scales in South region especially in Lele, Mintom.	Chad	Free while on trial
607	24/01/2019	Douala Littoral	OUIINWE Sariga	illegal possession and commercialization of 54 Kg of pangolin scales and 5 hippopotamus teeth	Trader / trafficker	A Member of a big network dealing between Chad Cameroun involved in pangolins scales and hippopotamus teeth	Chad	locked while on trial
608	24/01/2019	Douala Littoral	NYAMSSI Dipelec Antoine	illegal possession and commercialization of 54 Kg of pangolin scales and 5 hippopotamus teeth	Bushmeat seller	A member of a big network involved in pangolins scales. He is in charge of collecting pangolin scales in Littoral region especially in Douala, Edéa, Yabassi and Nkondjock.	Chad	locked while on trial
609	31/01/2019	Doume East	NJOYA Nsangou Mohamed	illegal possession and commercialization of 24 Kg of pangolin scales	Trader/trafficker	Used cover as a shopkeeper to carry out illegal trade in wildlife.	None	locked while on trial
610	20/02/2019	Yaoundé Centre	MBA Thimothé	illegal possession and commercialization of 42 Kg of pangolin scales	Trader/trafficker	A big network of traffickers dealing between Centre region, south region and East region	None	locked while on trial
611	20/02/2019	Yaoundé Centre	MESSI MEDOU Jean Pierre	illegal possession and commercialization of 42kg of pangolin scales	Trader/trafficker	Accomplice of Messi also involved in a large network of traffickers dealing in pangolin scales	None	locked while on trial
612	14/03/2019	Douala Littoral	AKANZE AKONLO Bertrand	illegal possession and commercialization of more than 1500 Kg of pangolin scales and 151 kg of ivory tusks (74 ivory tusks)	Trader /trafficker	Head of a big network that exports ivory tusks and pangolin scales from Cameroon to Nigeria. Belonging to the international black market	Nigeria	locked while on trial

<u>Case No</u>	<u>Operation date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Case name</u>	<u>Offence</u>	<u>Profile</u>	<u>Remarks</u>	<u>Int. Connection</u>	<u>Status</u>
613	14/03/2019	Douala Littoral	TEGOU M Alphonse Raoul	illegal possession and commercialization of more than 1500 Kg of pangolin scales and 151 kg ivory tusks (74 ivory tusks)	Driver	Another member of the international illegal traffic of pangolin scales and ivory tusks . He was a middleman who helped to transport the scales	Nigeria	locked while on trial
614	14/03/2019	Douala Littoral	BOUGNIA KAMTA Basile	illegal possession and commercialization of more than 1500 Kg of pangolin scales and 151 kg (74 ivory tusks)	Assistant driver	Another member of the international illegal traffic of pangolin scales and ivory tusks . He was a middleman who help in the transportation of the scales	Nigeria	locked while on trial
615	14/03/2019	Douala Littoral	TCHAMTCHEU Francis Romuald alis Bafana	illegal possession and commercialization of more than 1500 Kg of pangolin scales and 151 kg (74 ivory tusks)	Phone seller/traffic ker	Accomplice of AKANZE AKONLO Bertrand, Used cover as a phone trader to carry out illegal trade in wildlife. He traveled many times to Nigeria.	Nigeria	locked while on trial
616	11/04/2019	Sangmelima South	BERRY NGANE	Illegal killing of baby elephant and illegal possession of 5 ivory tusks and 1 elephant tail	Poacher / hairdresser	Accomplice of ZANG Afane and Banga Ruphin. He kills elephants and gives the products to Zang to look	None	locked while on trial
617	11/04/2019	Sangmelima South	ZANG AFANE	Illegal killing of baby elephant and illegal possession of 5 ivory tusks and 1 elephant tail	civil servant / Ivory trafficker	He is a civil servant and his role is looking for clients .	None	locked while on trial
618	11/04/2019	Sangmelima South	BANGA RUPHIN	Illegal killing of baby elephant and illegal possession of 5 ivory tusks and 1 elephant tail	Poacher	He is specialised for killing of elephants and other wildlife species .	None	locked while on trial
619	18/05/2019	Yaounde Centre	ENGUELE Jean Bernard	Illegal killing of an elephant, 5 lions and 1 leopard. Arrested with 1 elephant tusks, 1 leopard skin and 5 lion skulls	Policeman / Poacher	He is a policeman who was sent to the Bouba Djida park for the protection of wildlife animals. he is at the center of a vast network of traffickers. He is the one who gives the munitions to the poachers and he usually uses his weapon to slaughter the animals in the park. When poachers kill animals, he is the one who has the responsibility of selling	None	locked while on trial
620	23/05/2019	Tonga West	NYONSE NANDEP STEPHANIE	Illegal possession of 96,5 kilograms of pangolins scales	Trafficker / hairdresser	she was a hairdresser who turned trafficker	None	Locked while on trial

Case No	Operation date	Location	Case name	Offence	Profile	Remarks	Int. Connection	Status
621	23/05/2019	Tonga West	BAKATCHOU FEUTEU WILLIAM TONTON	Illegal possession of 96,5 kilograms of pangolins scales	Builder	Accomplicetof NYONSE NANADEP	None	Locked while on trial
622	23/05/2019	Tonga	ABAGNO JESEPHINE BEONCE	Illegal possession of 96,5 kilograms of pangolins scales	Vendor	Accomplice to NYONSE NANADEP	None	Locked while on trial
623	23/05/2019	Tonga West	NOUNKEU ROMUALD	Illegal possession of 96,5 kilograms of pangolins scales	Moto bike driver	Accomplice to NYONSE NANADEP	None	Locked while on trial
624	20/06/2019	Douala Littoral	ABDOUL NASSIR SALI	Illegal possession of 95 kilograms of pangolins scales	Vendor	middle man, whose role is to sell wildlife products collected by poachers and others wildlife traffickers	Central Africa Republic	Locked while on trial

Annex II the Semester in Pictures



In March, four were arrested with ivory and pangolin scales await being moved to wildlife office



Close to 2 tons of seized pangolin scales seized and transported to wildlife office (above and below)



Dozens of ivory tusks stored at wildlife office after seizure (above and below)





An ivory tusk, a leopard skin, lion skulls seized from a senior police constable



Lion skulls seized from police officer assigned to a national park to protect the animals



Couple arrested for illegal trafficking in chimp. They had shipped chimps to Europe in the past, using a son who is based there



Chimp was just about to be trafficked and was rescued.



Four in arrested with pangolins scales arrive the gendarmerie brigade after their arrest



Two men who were part of the group that specialized in trafficking pangolin scales



Traffickers at police station shortly after arrest, during the arrest one of them attempted to escape, he ran and hid in a nearby hotel but was searched and arrested



T They shot and killed baby elephants, were arrested and waiting for prosecution proceedings to commence



Tiny little elephant tusks near traffickers who were arrested during attempts to sell the tusks



Five elephant tusks and a tail seized from traffickers

Al LAGA legal adviser receives an end of course certificate from the Governor of New Jersey after successfully attending a course at the Durrell Conservation Academy





Impounded bike used by trafficker

Trafficker at the wildlife office in Douala shortly after arrest, he belongs to an international network of pangolin scales traffickers, bags of pangolins scales weighing 95kg were seized



Deputy Director, in the middle with white cap at the Mefou park with visiting Representatives from the US Congress and the Ambassador

First Semester 2019 Links

In January, Camer.be, an online news site publishes the story of the arrest of four individuals in connection with the trafficking of pangolin scales in the Douala and tells the story also of the arrest of a couple with a baby chimpanzee.

<https://www.camer.be/72824/11:1/cameroon-alertela-faune-de-plus-en-plus-menacee-au-cameroun.html>

In February, Journal du Cameroun, an online news site publishes the story of the arrest of two traffickers in Yaounde with pangolin scales and narrating the story of the attempted escape staged by the two traffickers.

<https://www.journalducameroun.com/cameroun-yaounde-des-especes-protegees-a-ciel-ouvert-au-quartier-nkolndongo/>

In March, 4 persons were arrested in Douala with close to 2 tons of pangolin scales and 73 ivory tusks by wildlife officials of the Littoral Regional Delegation of Forestry and Wildlife in collaboration with Judicial police officials: It was reported by several national and international online news site including:

<https://www.camer.be/73289/11:1/cameroon-cameroun-mobilization-to-fight-the-destruction-of-wildlife.html>

<https://information.tv5monde.com/info/cameroun-saisie-de-2-tonnes-d-ecailles-de-pangolins-et-200-pointes-d-ivoire-290126>

<https://www.geo.fr/environnement/cameroun-saisie-de-2-tonnes-decailles-de-pangolins-et-200-pointes-d-ivoire-194910>

<https://www.voanews.com/a/cameroon-busts-ivory-pangolin-traffickers/4839359.html>

<http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20190315-saisie-record-deux-tonnes-ecailles-pangolin-cameroun>

In April, 3 persons were arrested in Sangmelima with 5 ivory tusks weighing less than 1kg. These traffickers shot and killed baby elephants and the news was taken up by a news site; alwihda info.

https://www.alwihdainfo.com/Cameroun-des-bebes-elephants-tues-Sangmelima_a72221.html

In May, a website reporting on news in Cameroon takes up the story of the arrest of persons arrested with 100kg of pangolin scales and highlights how organized they were as a group that supplied several pangolin scales traffickers.

<https://www.camer.be/75105/11:1/cameroun-quat-rafiquants-de-la-faune-sauvage-arretes-dans-la-localite-de-tonga-cameroon.html>

In June, the news website, Alwihda info, published the arrest of three traffickers in Doume in East region of Cameroon with 35kg of pangolin scales. One of the traffickers who escaped the initial arrest could not stand losing his bike and decided to come back and corrupt the gendarmes who could not have dreamt better, he was immediately arrested.

https://www.alwihdainfo.com/Cameroun-des-rafiquants-fauniques-arretes-a-Doume_a64294.html