

The Last Great Ape Organization – LAGA March 2022 Report



Highlights

- **6 traffickers arrested in Sangmelima with 5 elephant tusks during a series of arrests during 3 days running, in a crackdown of a criminal ring.**
- **A traditional chief arrested and 2 baby chimpanzees rescued from iron cages at his residence in Yaounde.**
- **The Deputy Director held a meeting with two officials of the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and three High Commission officials in Yaounde**
- **The Deputy Director did a presentation on the basic wildlife law enforcement process during a workshop in Garoua organised by TRAFFIC.**

General

The month was marked by the **arrest of 7 traffickers, 5 elephant tusks and 2 young chimpanzees seized.**

6 traffickers arrested in Sangmelima, South Region with 5 elephant tusks. The crackdown operation dismantled a ring of ivory traffickers who had connections to the ivory trafficking hub of Djoum. The first trafficker was arrested with the elephant tusks. He denounced the other traffickers who were arrested in a series of arrests during the following two days. One of them concealed parts of protected wildlife species including the limbs and other parts of a chimp in his car. A dead pangolin was also recovered from the vehicle

A traditional chief arrested and 2 baby chimps rescued in Yaounde, Centre Region. He had iron cages to detain and imprison wild animals including the baby chimps that kept holding the bars desperately longing to be outside. At one point during his arrest, the traditional chief shouted that they should bring his gun for him to shot and kill the baby chimpanzees, to stop the authorities from taking the animals away. He resisted arrest for a long time.

Investigations

- **18 investigation missions** out in **5 Regions** out of 10 of Cameroon including: Littoral, West, Centre, South and East Regions.
- Good investigation in Sangmelima led to the arrest of 6 ivory traffickers in three crackdown arrests in possession of 5 elephant tusks in Sangmelima
- Good information in Yaounde led to the arrest of a primate trafficker with 2 live young chimpanzees seized in Mbadoumou at the peripheries of Yaounde

Investigations Table

Investigation Missions	Regions	No. of Operations	No of traffickers arrested
18	5	2	7

Operation

2 operations carried out this month with MINFOF **arresting 7 traffickers**.

15/03/2022 – 6 traffickers arrested in Sangmelima, South Region, with 5 tusks, chimpanzee meat and parts of several other wildlife. They belong to an ivory trafficking ring that covers most of the South Region including Djoum considered to be a trafficking hotspot. The first trafficker was arrested with the elephant tusks. He denounced the other traffickers who were arrested in a series of arrests during the following two days. One of them concealed parts of protected wildlife species including the limbs and other parts of a chimp in his car. A dead pangolin was also recovered from the vehicle.

23/02/2022 – 1 trafficker arrested with 2 baby chimpanzees in Yaounde, Centre Region. The traditional chief was arrested at his residence. He had iron cages to detain and imprison wild animals including the baby chimps that kept holding the bars desperately longing to be outside. At one point during his arrest, the traditional chief shouted - “bring me my gun! I will kill these animals; they will not be taken alive from here”. He resisted arrest and tried to bully the arresting team to letting him free. He bought the animals in Djoum and attempted to sell them in Yaounde.

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Operations Table

<i>No of Operations</i>	<i>Regions</i>	<i>No of Traffickers Arrested</i>	<i>Contraband</i>
2	2	7	5 elephant tusks and chimpanzee meat, 2 young chimpanzees.

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **10 missions** out of Yaounde - Centre Region: 1 in Ebolowa (South), 1 in Ambam (South), 2 in Sangmelima (South), 1 in Douala (Littoral), 2 in Nkongsamba (Littoral), 1 in Ngoumou (Centre), 1 in Bertoua (East) and 1 in Bafang (West).
- There are **20 traffickers behind bars this month**: 5 in East Region, 7 in South Region, 1 in Centre Region, 1 in Littoral Region and 6 in West Region.
- **29 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **26 cases** were scheduled in court this month.
- **1 trafficker** was convicted this month.
- **Prosecutions**: There was 1 court ruling this month.
 - **09/03/2022**: The Bertoua Court of First Instance found the accused **NGUEKENG KITIO Chamberlain guilty and sentenced him to 19 months in jail and to pay 180,000 FCFA as court fees. He was also ordered to pay 3,000,000 FCFA as damages.** He was arrested in Bonis on the 08/02/2022 for illegal possession of 246 kg of pangolin scales and 48,5 kg of bushmeat.
- **Appeal**: An appeal has been filed this month in the case of **NGUEKENG KITIO Chamberlain** in the East Court of Appeal.

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>
10	1	1	19	0	1	26

Media

- **36** media pieces were produced and pushed to the media including: written press, radio, and internet. That is 18 written press (11 in English language and 7 in French language), 11 radio news flashes (6 in English language and 5 in French language), and 7 internet production (5 in French and 2 in English).
- Giving a total of 19 media pieces produced in the English language and 17 in the French making 52.8% in English and 47.2% in French.
- Interviewee: The Lom & Djerem Divisional Delegate of Forestry and Wildlife.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including: the sentencing of a trafficker arrested with 246kg of pangolin scales in Bertoua, and the arrest of two traffickers in possession of a leopard and civet skins in Melong.

Media table

<i>No of media pieces</i>	TV	Radio	Newspapers	Internet
35	0	11	18	7

External Relations and Policy

- The Deputy Director did a presentation on wildlife law enforcement procedures during a training for police, customs and wildlife officials of the three northern regions of the country.
- The Deputy Director held a meeting with two officials of the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and three High Commission Officials in Yaounde to discuss wildlife law enforcement in the country.
- He held a meeting with the State Counsel in Garoua to pave the way for close collaboration with the team during operations.
- He held another meeting with the Chief of Customs in the North Region to strengthen collaboration.
- The Legal Team held several meetings with State Counsels to discuss ongoing wildlife cases at their respective jurisdictions.

Management

- Coordinated the delivery of some office equipment.

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>.

Finance

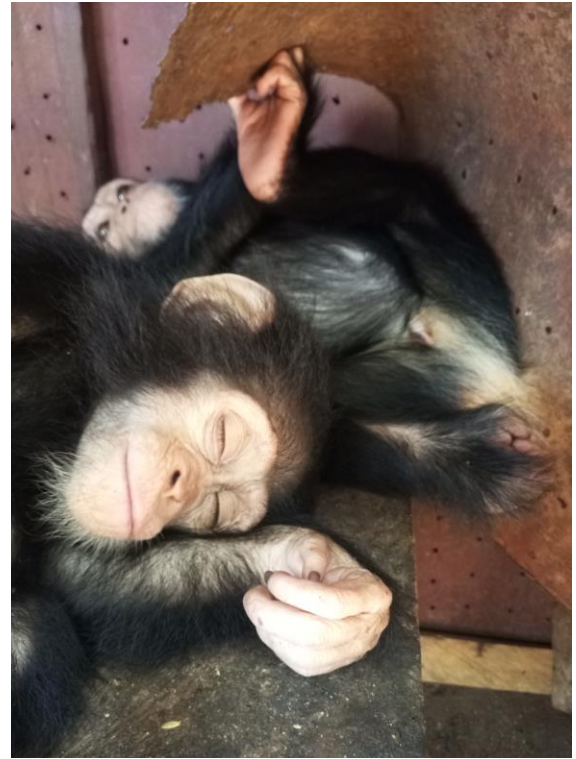
In preparation and would be made available soon as possible on the LAGA website www.laga-enforcement.org .

Link of the month

Camer be, an online news site this month published the story of two traffickers arrested with a leopard skin and a civet skin in Melong.

<https://www.camer.be/mobile/90174/11:1/cameroun-two-men-arrested-with-a-leopard-skin-cameroon.html>

This Month in Pictures



Caged chimpanzees held captive at the residence of a traditional authority (above). They were released (left)



A gang of ivory traffickers arrested in the South Region shortly before prosecution begins.